

# **Q&As – Amendments to Retirement Villages Code of Practice 2008**

## **What is the Retirement Villages Code of Practice?**

The Code of Practice sets out the minimum requirements that operators of retirement villages must carry out to meet their legal obligations under the Retirement Villages Act.

## **What changes are being made to the Code of Practice?**

Changes are being made to the Code of Practice to:

- include requirements to improve the information a resident receives about complaint procedures and the range of people they can talk to about making a complaint or discussing a complaint already made;
- include a diagram explaining the complaint process, to make it more user-friendly and help residents recognise that a mix of options may be used in conjunction;
- include a new step by step procedure for formal complaints to encourage earlier resolution, which includes the option of mediation;
- require operators to offer mediation to a resident when a formal complaint remains unresolved;
- require operators to pay the mediator's costs for mediations between a resident and operator; and
- require operators to report complaint data to the Retirement Commissioner every six months so the Commission can gain a better understanding of the complaints being made, whether they were resolved or not, and whether there are any trends or issues that need to be addressed.

## **What will the changes to the Code of Practice mean for retirement village residents?**

Retirement village residents will benefit from clearer information about the complaints process and faster resolution of disputes through mediation. Residents will still be able to take formal complaints to a full disputes panel process.

## **What will the changes to the Code of Practice mean for retirement village operators?**

Operators will benefit from quicker and less costly dispute resolution through the Code of Practice's emphasis on early resolution and the greater use of mediation services.

Operators will be required to report to the Retirement Commissioner about formal complaints in each village every six months. The Commission for Financial Capability will develop an online facility for these reports to be filed.

**When do the changes to the Code of Practice come into effect?**

The changes to the Code of Practice will come into effect on 1 April 2017. Formal complaints raised before that date will follow the procedures in the current Code of Practice.