

## **Retirement village legislation a "dog's breakfast"**

RESIDENTS of Queens Lake Village (QLV) turned up in numbers last Thursday to discuss with the NSW shadow minister for Fair Trading their dispute with the new owners of their retirement home complex.

Around 24 of the village's 160 or so residents attended the meeting with the Liberal Party's Greg Aplin MP, which was also attended by the Nationals' Port Macquarie candidate Leslie Williams.

The dispute centres around budget approval for QLV, sought by its owner Stockland Retirement Living (SRL) from residents. The Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Council (CTTC) has ruled in favour of the residents, in respect of their rejection of the budget - due to what they argued was a lack of detail on items of insurance and management fees. However, SRL has appealed the decision and both parties are awaiting the outcome of this, due on March 14. Mr Aplin had written to his government counterpart, the Hon. Virginia Judge MP, on behalf of the residents, asking for clarification of a key part of the budget process. He told the minister the tribunal was inadequate for this task.

"I'll watch with great interest what happens on March 14," Mr Aplin told the Courier.

"We were surprised by the large number of residents of the village that have come along today.

"It shows the depth of concern there is. There needs to be clarity in aspects of the regulation to establish the rights of both residents and operators. Unfortunately, in this case there has been so much anxiety and stress in terms of stakeholder consultation."

QLV resident John Cooper, who is also vice-president of the NSW Retirement Village Residents Association (RVRA), said he had met with Mr Aplin a number of times in recent years to discuss the industry.

"The legislation is a dog's breakfast," he said. "It is designed for elderly retired people, but it's written in legalese and takes an expert to understand it.

"It's open to interpretation and that needs to be put right."

Leslie Williams said licensing for the retirement village industry was not tight enough and it was an important issue locally.

"In terms of residential parks, the Port Macquarie electorate has the highest number of residents on the North Coast and is second only to Gosford in NSW," she said.

The shadow minister earlier accompanied Mrs Williams in Port Macquarie at the launch of the NSW Coalition's 'Caring for Seniors' plan.