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Public Health and Safety in Retirement Villages

It is increasingly a matter of concern for the RVRA that the various Public Health Orders which are being implemented by the Federal and NSW Governments, while recognising the special circumstances which operate within residential aged care facilities, do not seem to take account of the substantial concentrations of elderly citizens who reside in retirement villages.

Industry statistics place the average age of our 66,000 village residents at 81 years.

Clearly, retirement villages are intended to cater for elderly persons who are

capable of independent living and, while they do not, as a group, have the same care requirements as those living in residential aged care facilities they are still clearly in a high risk category if exposed to the COVID-19 virus.

The RVRA has raised this lack of recognition with Better Regulation Minister Kevin Andrews and has urged him to ensure that residents' interests are considered in the Government's pandemic responses.

Read the RVRA letter to Minister Anderson on the RVRA website.

Budget and Auditor Voting in Villages

Most villages are approaching budget time and they can be asked to vote on acceptance of budgets and the appointment of auditors. This is difficult in the current pandemic.

The Retirement Villages Act (s114) lays down voting procedures for budgets for very good reasons: for the protection of residents by allowing them to make informed decisions without pressure and

safe from voter manipulation.

The RVRA wants those protections maintained as far as possible and has written to Minister Anderson and provided advice to the Office of Fair Trading on these issues.

Our advice to the Minister can be read in the letter to the Minister referred to above and available on the RVRA website.

Payroll Tax

Some villages contribute to their operator's payroll tax obligation.

Residents of those villages should be aware that the NSW Government's economic stimulus concessions include the abatement of payroll tax for the months of April, May and June 2020.

Details can be found at:

<https://www.business.gov.au/Grants->

[and-Programs/COVID19-Tax-Relief-Measures-NSW](https://www.business.gov.au/Grants-and-Programs/COVID19-Tax-Relief-Measures-NSW)

Residents should ensure that any payroll tax component in a "Payroll Tax" or "Head Office Administration" line item included in their recurrent charges for those months is credited back to each individual's account - not left to form part of a surplus at the end of the year.