

WHY RETIREMENT VILLAGES SHOULD BE 100% SMOKE-FREE

Second-hand ('passive') tobacco smoke

- A toxic, carcinogenic airborne contaminant - including more than 250 poisons and 43 human carcinogens, including some in the highest (most carcinogenic) category.
- Experts agree there is no safe level of exposure.
- Second-hand smoke kills. It can cause significant, rapid harm even at low doses.
- Tobacco smoke can cause cancers, heart and vascular disease, respiratory diseases – asthma, bronchitis/emphysema; also mental harm.
- Especially vulnerable groups include elderly people, sufferers of heart and respiratory disease, and people repeatedly exposed, even at low levels.
- Evidence shows second-hand smoke cannot be safely controlled by ventilation or air cleaning – it can contaminate wherever the air can move. The only safe solution to this problem is to make buildings and shared areas 100% smoke-free.

Legal and civil liberties issues

- Smoke drifting into people's homes is an unacceptable invasion, and a denial of the resident's rights - leaving open possible common law actions under trespass, nuisance or strict liability.
- Any "right" to smoke does not extend to harming or irritating others. Civil Liberties Councils agree that smoking should only be permitted where it cannot affect others.
- There are many other legal activities that we properly limit to where they cannot risk harming others – for example, driving a car or operating dangerous machinery.
- SHS exposure in multi-unit housing is an infringement of Disability Discrimination law, in that it effectively bars sufferers of heart, lung and other conditions from safe access.
- There is no legal "right" to smoke and no legal requirement that any owner of premises provide areas for smoking.
- Other toxic contaminants are banned outright from areas close to other people.

Advantages of a smoke-free establishment

- It can save all unit owners money by reducing cleaning and maintenance costs, reducing resident turn-over with periods of vacancy, reducing fire risk, reducing risk of legal actions for health harm from preventable smoke exposure.
- Non-smoking units will become more attractive with increasing consumer awareness of health harm evidence and demand for smoke-free accommodation.

Retirement villages can legally, and should, adopt 100% smoke-free policies.

With possible inclusion of Designated Outdoor Smoking Areas, which should be well signposted and well away from units, shared areas and main thoroughfares.

More information on smoke-free housing at www.ashaust.org.au/lv4/housing.htm

Health evidence at www.ashaust.org.au/SF%2703/health.htm

