

Petition supported by approximately 74 signatures

Statutory review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2013

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PETITION

Review of the Residential (Land Lease) Communities Act 2021

We the undersigned Residents of the Land Lease Community "Sanctuary Lennox" make the following contribution and express our concerns for our ongoing future unless the 2021 Review of the Act provides a fair and equitable outcome for Residents.

The 2013 review appeared to relate more to caravan parks providing long-term caravan with annex accommodation, not to the modern purpose-built manufactured homes in communities on land owned by well-resourced large companies. Some being International This upcoming review of the Act must reflect those changes, and the financial reality and lack of housing options, of ageing pensioners who are the primary demographic in these communities.

This revision must also address the interests of Homeowners and Operators by placing both on an equitable footing. The current Legislation is weighted to the protection of Operators and their investors, with minimal thought given to any moral and ethical obligations to Homeowners, their security of tenure, their vulnerability due to age and their inability to deal with the arduous processes to successfully challenge or complain

A major issue for Residents is the annual site fee increase in which the current Act requires only an explanation for any increases to be given by the Operator. This review must include a requirement for the Operator to be open and transparent in disclosing its Operating Expenditure and not blatantly and dishonestly include items of a capital nature, that is, infrastructure spends such as roads. The word "**explanation**" must be changed to read, "**evidence**"

Those Residents who are single pension recipients have reached capacity in their ability to pay site fees. The pension has had no increase, but the site fees continue to rise. Homeowners can consider a site fee increase if validated, evidenced operational expenditure for the 12-month period is provided. As well as the means used to determine individual site fee increases.

During the revision of the Act in 2013 the ability of the owner to Re-assign their lease to the new owner was removed. Due to a typo This has allowed the Operator to gain a higher site fee on homes purchased by incoming Homeowners, than the site fee paid by the resident selling their property at the time. This has resulted in new residents paying significantly higher rental than the previous resident and, continues to expand the site fee divide, causing considerable discontent amongst new residents and the Operator. This action changes the "market value" and therefore allows the Operator to further increase site fees of each new home purchasers. It also allows the Operator to add many pages of additional terms that were not on the sellers site agreement **The ability to Re-Assign a lease must be reinstated in the revised Act** to stop the Operator from indiscriminately inflating the site fee increase for new homebuyers., and changing the method of site fee increases to "Fixed method", when the majority of Homeowners are on "By notice" This will further create disparity of Site fees throughout the community.

Residents' recourse against unfair treatment by an Operator is through the Fair-Trading Tribunal, with prior mediation compulsory for Homeowners, NOT OPERATORS. This is a cumbersome, legalistic and complicated exercise, Pensioners with limited resources are required to challenge within a legal setting Operators with inhouse solicitors and the resources of a large Association

behind them. This is an unconscionably unfair state of affairs. The Act needs to provide further powers to Members within the Tribunal, to ensure orders provided to Operators are completed, and referrals are made when other agencies should be involved.

Current operators are targeting the Over 55s with no consideration for the needs, physical, emotional and financial realities of this group as we age. The Act needs to reflect this.

Unless Operators are transparent and fair in their site fee increases, they will eventually in pursuit of greater Profit, force many residents out of "Sanctuary", which has 83 homes consisting primarily of Aged pensioners many on single incomes and couples relying on affordable housing. For many there is nowhere else to go, and the fear has become palpable within Communities. We feel our future security is constantly under threat and at the mercy of the Operator.

We continue to remain confident that the upcoming review of the Act will remove many of the current imbalances and provide residents with some security for their future.

We trust you will give our Petition your due consideration, taking in consideration that many of our elderly residents were more comfortable signing this petition than writing to you individually.



