

Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Amendment Bill 2024

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My name is Graeme Parr, my email address is [REDACTED]
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Government feedback

As a resident and Treasurer of the Solana Home Owners Committee since March 2021, I believe I have considerable experience in dealings with Park Owners under the Manufactured Homes Act.

In this Resort Home owners are in my opinion disrespected by the Park Owners' staff, we are merely cash cows in an industry motivated by greed for profit.

We pleaded for over four years for air conditioning in our Livewell Centre (Community Hall) which was built with glass full height glass windows facing to the heat of the western sun.

We have waited over a year for a pool shade umbrella to be repaired, since early this year the second shade umbrella has also been broken. Last month we were advised that management had decided not to repair the umbrellas until a shade sail over the pool has been installed. A shade sail we have been pleading for, for well over a year and we are still waiting.

A number of street lights including our entrance lights have not been working for over 3 years, one light has apparently never been connected to power since it was installed.

Since the Home Owners Committees inception over 5 years ago the vast majority of meetings with Park managers have resulted in advice that projects have been deferred to a later date or no progress has been made, (It took over 12 months for us to establish monthly meetings with them).

Our most recent event was when it was discovered that sewerage had been overcharged by 30% since the March quarter of 2023, a breach. We did not issue a breach notice, but did request copies of water rate bills to verify charges have been calculated correctly. We received no response within the 21 days legislated and are still waiting on a response to a reminder sent last week.

The Park Managers quite happily admit that they think that we are a bunch of constantly complaining old people.

S71 must be amended or removed, park owners are making 65% to 85% margin on these resorts and yet they are still able to increase rent for specific repairs or upgrades?

Utility charges are a mess, general rates are cut and dried but electricity and water charges are many and varied depending on the park. In our park we were told we would only pay for water used only to be charged for sewerage at a later date, being told it was a charge that had been previously waived despite homeowners never being advised that a future charge was being waived. We are unable to receive the water usage discount for using less than 822 litres per day because of the way our water is charged, we are unable to receive pensioner rebates because of the way our water usage is charged.

Because electricity is supplied through an embedded network it is extremely difficult if not impossible to negotiate deals with alternative suppliers.

The rent must be capped at the lower of 3.5% or CPI. Alternatively matched to increases in the aged pension. The higher of CPI or 3.5% is a commercial clause and has effectively over the past few years artificially increased rent above the CPI which has then enabled the market rent review mechanism to increase rents even higher. The market rent review must be removed.

The Park Owners must be more transparent and along the lines of Retirement Villages must provide Financial data relating to maintenance and capital improvements. In Solana we have to

fight tooth and nail to get anything and are told that they are a private company, allowed to make a profit and their finances are none of our business.

We have a dog park in Solana which does not comply with Council regulations with regards to minimum size, gate security and proximity to residential property, yet the Council has no say in the breach of their regulation because it is not on their property.

Payment choices were never given to us when we agreed to buy, it was direct debit only, choice must be given back to residents, a periodical payment gives us control over our finances and reduces the risk of scams and or excessive default charges for direct debit failures.

Disputes currently appear to have short time lines on them, 21 or 28 days to notify. If a change occurred 6 months ago but it has taken the Home Owners committee that amount of time to prepare a dispute it should be allowed to proceed. The Home Owners Committee cannot react as quickly as the full time employees of the Park Owners, they only meet once a month and often committee members are away touring around, after all they are retired!@!

Registration of Manufactured Home Parks and a comparison document would have enabled my wife and I to make a much better informed decision on where we settled or if indeed we chose to settle in one of these resorts.

There must be a discount in rent given to single residents, they cannot use the same amount of facility as a couple, further, all of us at some stage will be a single occupant, at this stage in our lives.

With regards to moving into care at a late stage in life it is essential that there is an easier way to exit the resort. Rent should be waived for up to six months, whilst the property is prepared for sale, if a sale is not made within six months rent should recommence at 25%, after a further 3 months 50%, a further 3 months 75% and one year 100%. This gives the resident an opportunity to finance care, but also an incentive to sell their home relatively quickly. If they are not living in the resort they cannot be benefitting from the facilities.

Should you require further explanation or information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Regards

Graeme Parr