



The Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages Inc.

MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT OFFICER HANDBOOK

September 2019

Contacts

ARQRV office

Membership enquiries: 0429 098 417

General enquiries: 0437 906 074

Email: membership@arqrv.org.au

Email: enquiries@arqrv.org.au

Postal address:
PO Box 5057
BRENDALE QLD 4500

Website: www.arqrv.org.au

Note: Office hours may vary, if there is no answer, please leave a voice message.

ARQRV committee

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president@arqrv.org.au

VICE-PRESIDENT (1)
vicepresident@arqrv.org.au

TREASURER
treasurer@arqrv.org.au

VICE-PRESIDENT (2)
Vp1@arqrv.org.au

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Role of Membership Support Officer

The Association of Residents of Queensland Retirement Villages Inc (ARQRV) is represented by a network of Membership Support Officers (MSOs) each based within a retirement village. MSOs are the day to day face of ARQRV and a conduit between members and the ARQRV committee (the Committee).

The role of an MSO is essentially to raise the profile of ARQRV within their retirement village and to refer members who have an issue with the scheme operator of the retirement village, to the ARQRV committee. MSOs also make themselves known to new residents in the village and pass on information about the benefits of being part of an organisation devoted to helping residents in Queensland retirement villages.

The main duties of an MSO are to:

- promote the services of ARQRV to new and existing residents
- assist with new memberships
- assist with existing membership renewals
- refer members who have an issue with the retirement village scheme operator, to the ARQRV committee

Eligibility

The role of an MSO is a voluntary position. Only members with an email address are eligible to take on this position as all ARQRV communication with MSOs is via email. It follows, therefore, that should you change your email address we would appreciate it if you could advise ARQRV as soon as possible.

Villages with ARQRV members can choose an MSO or have one recruited by the ARQRV Committee. The person chosen as an MSO must be a resident of the village and must also be a financial member of ARQRV. Village management are not eligible to be MSOs.

Resources

All resources required to undertake the role of MSO are supplied by ARQRV.

This includes, brochures, membership forms, newsletters, laminated poster, list of current village members, MSO badge, receipt book, reply-paid envelopes, personalised introduction letter and bulk member payment forms. Please do not use money collected from members for any personal expenditure. Let us know what you require, and we will send it to you. Please note that ARQRV does not have a mechanism for reimbursing personal expenditure.

Contact

MSOs may contact the ARQRV office either by telephone on [0429 098 417](tel:0429098417) Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 3:30pm, or by leaving a clear voice message outside of these hours, or by email to membership@arqrv.org.au

Promoting ARQRV

New residents

Each new resident in the village should be provided with an ARQRV brochure which includes a membership form. The brochure explains the benefits of belonging to ARQRV.

It is important to remember that ARQRV's strength and effectiveness relies on a strong membership base.

It is extremely helpful to point out that ARQRV will, for a period of time, continue to provide advice to members when they relinquish their contract or upon their death, to a family member who may be looking after their interests.

Newsletter circulation

ARQRV sends a newsletter to members every two months. ARQRV *eCONNECT* is an electronic newsletter, sent in February, June and October, to all members who have provided ARQRV with an email address. ARQRV *CONNECT*, a printed newsletter, is mailed to all members in April, August (the AGM edition) and December.

ARQRV poster

MSOs can have their name and contact information included on a laminated poster to display in an appropriate and approved space for viewing by all residents in the village. If you would like a poster, please contact the office on 0429 098 417.

Other types of promotion

ARQRV will supply notices for MSOs to display on general notice boards reminding residents of the ARQRV Annual General Meeting and renewal dates for membership fees. These notices will be emailed or posted to the MSO.

MSOs can also use opportunities to actively promote ARQRV at meetings of residents and in general discussion.

Resources

Extra resources required to undertake the duties of an MSO, for example, membership forms, receipt books, personalised letters, brochures or newsletters, can be requested at any time by contacting the ARQRV Membership Officer on 0429 098 417. A detailed up-to-date membership list for your village can also be requested at any time.

Referral

Residents in your village will often approach the MSO with an issue in the village. If the resident is not a member of ARQRV, suggest they join ARQRV or search the ARQRV website for some helpful information.

ARQRV does not deal with issues between residents. ARQRV acts as an advocate and provides support on issues between members and the village operator in relation to breaches of both the *Retirement Villages Act 1999* and the individual Public Information Document/Contract.

Should a member approach an MSO with an issue, the MSO must advise the member to contact the ARQRV committee direct on 0437 906 074.

NOTE: MSOs are reminded that it is not their role to provide advice to members on any issues or disputes within the village on behalf of ARQRV. To do so would be to overstep the requirements of the role and should any legal action occur as a result of this advice it will be the personal responsibility of the Member Support Officer to defend themselves. The ARQRV Committee has taken out professional indemnity insurance only for Committee members and have open access to legal advice as well as ongoing input from the Department of Housing and Public Works who implement and oversee the delivery of the *Retirement Villages Act 1999* and its amendments.

ARQRV membership

Types of membership

There are two main types of ARQRV membership within a retirement village, annual and life membership. New annual memberships must also pay a once only joining fee and will then only pay the annual membership fee each year. Life membership pay a once only fee (which includes the joining fee) and do not need to renew each year. Any non-residents wishing to join as an associate member must contact the ARQRV office.

Eligibility

The membership is per residential unit and covers all residents in the unit who meet the criteria set out in the Constitution for eligibility as a member, that is, *“Membership is available to any person who is a permanent resident of a retirement village and who accepts the objectives and rules of the Association”.*

The membership is personal to those residents. Consequently, if all the residents of the unit leave (or are deceased) and new persons become residents in that unit, this would be a new membership. The old unit membership would be closed, and a new application form must be submitted for the new resident and a new membership created.

Membership may be granted by ARQRV on written application on the prescribed form and on the payment of the relevant fee. No other form should be used as all of the information on the form is required and the form also provides the necessary assent to subscribe to email newsletters and correspondence and administrative checks.

Membership rules are defined in the ARQRV Inc. Constitution. A copy of the Constitution can be found on the ARQRV website at www.arqrv.org.au.

Membership fees

The membership fees are set out on the ARQRV website at www.arqrv.org.au.

These fees are reviewed at the ARQRV's Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in September of each year. Any increase must be approved and accepted by members at a vote taken at the AGM.

MSOs will be advised by email of any membership fee increase, if approved by members at an AGM.

Annual membership fees must be paid **by 1 March each year**. If not paid, that member becomes unfinancial and will be unable to receive individual help or support until fees are paid.

Where a membership fee remains unpaid past 30 March, a member will have to re-join as a new member (i.e. pay the joining fee in addition to the annual membership fee) to retain their membership.

New memberships

Application for membership of ARQRV must be made in writing using the ARQRV membership form and must be accompanied by the appropriate fee. Alternatively, members can join using our online service at www.arqrv.org.au.

New memberships can be taken at any time of the year.

Limitation of expenditure for new members

Expenditure outlaid by ARQRV for external services such as legal fees for new members who join for the explicit purpose of having a dispute resolved during the first twelve months of membership, is limited to the amount paid for their first yearly membership.

Membership year

The Annual Membership Year runs from 1 March to 28 February. If a new member joins between 1 September and 28 February, a pro rata (half price) membership fee is payable plus the once only administration fee. An annual renewal fee will then be due again on 1 March.

Processing new memberships

Where a resident, joins and pays online, no further action will be required by the MSO as the paperwork and payment is automatically forwarded to the ARQRV office. Residents wishing to complete a membership form can either post it themselves and arrange payment, or, hand the completed form and payment to the MSO for forwarding to ARQRV. Any cash payments received from new members must be deposited to the ARQRV bank account by way of direct credit or bank deposit. It is **essential** for the MSO to use, at least, the village name as a reference when making a bank deposit. If the member prefers to make the payment themselves, they should include a uniquely identifiable deposit reference so that their payment can be easily processed i.e. surname/unit number/village name. The membership form must be forwarded as soon as possible to the ARQRV Membership Officer for processing. A handy checklist for processing new memberships is provided at the end of this handbook.

Membership renewals

After the AGM, held in September each year, MSOs will be sent a membership list for their village (or it can be sent at any other time on request).

The membership list may contain a combination of the following information:

- unit number
- first and last name of a member
- email address for a member if applicable
- phone number of a member
- mobile phone number of a member if applicable
- type of membership (annual or life member)
- expiry date of membership if applicable

Processing membership renewals

MSOs should check the membership list for the following:

- that the list contains all financial members
- member names are correct
- unit numbers are correct

If any errors are identified, the ARQRV Membership Officer must be advised, preferably by email.

If additional information becomes known to the MSO, such as the transfer of a member to aged care, death or any other significant information regarding a member, this information should also be advised to the ARQRV Membership Officer.

MSOs will collect any membership payments and issue a receipt using the receipt book supplied for this purpose.

For a bulk deposit of separate membership fees, MSOs should complete a "MSO Multiple Payment Form" and send to the ARQRV Membership Officer as soon as possible.

Any fees received must be deposited as soon as possible into ARQRV's bank account with the Bank of Queensland by way of a direct credit using the following information:

BSB: 124-001 Account Number: 20511301

(For reconciliation purposes, you must include your retirement village name as a reference).

Bank of Queensland locations can be found on the Bank of Queensland website at www.boq.com.au

Any paperwork relevant to the deposit must then be emailed or posted to ARQRV the same day.

A handy checklist for processing renewal memberships is provided at the end of this handbook.

Payment methods

Payment can be made several ways:

- **online** at www.arqrv.org.au
- **bank deposit** to: ARQRV Inc. **BSB 124-001 Account No. 20511301** (please use name, unit number and village name as a reference i.e. Jones59Bayview)
- **cash or cheque** handed to the village **Membership Support Officer**
- **post** cheque/money order to: **ARQRV Inc P.O. Box 5057 Brendale Qld 4500**
- **phone** the ARQRV office on **0429 098 417** to pay by **credit card**.

Please note: Any membership renewal not received by 30 March will be returned to the member with a request for extra payment as explained under the heading 'Membership fees' on page 7.

Sending documentation to ARQRV

Reply Paid envelopes can be requested to send paperwork to ARQRV, by contacting the ARQRV Membership Officer on 0429 098 417 or by email to membership@arqrv.org.au.

What to do when you are no longer the MSO

If for any reason, you decide you no longer wish to continue in the role of MSO for your village, please let ARQRV know as soon as possible. You may like to consider asking another member in the village if he or she would be interested in taking on the role of MSO. Where another resident is taking on the role, please pass on any ARQRV resources you may have to that resident. We will contact that person to make sure they feel comfortable with what they need to do and answer any questions they may have.

If you are not able to find another resident willing to take on the role, please let us know and we will endeavour to find a replacement. If no-one is available to take on the role, please return any unused resources to ARQRV. A stamped addressed envelope can be supplied for this purpose.

If you are going away for more than three months you may like to ask another resident in your village to take over the MSO role for the term of your absence. Again, the resident must be a member of ARQRV. Please let ARQRV know if this happens. The MSO Handbook should be provided to your substitute (along with any other resources you have) as it will provide them with the relevant information required to undertake the role.

Checklist for processing new memberships

Have you:

- explained to prospective members the benefits of joining ARQRV and the following:
 - the limitation of expenditure for the first year of membership
 - ARQRV does not deal with resident to resident issues
 - ARQRV only deals with issues between the member and the scheme operator
 - ARQRV will deal with a family member on estate issues
 - ARQRV will assist with exit entitlement issues
- informed the prospective member of the different types of membership i.e. life and annual
- explained the relevant fees
- checked the membership form for completeness
- collected the appropriate fee or made arrangement for member to pay ARQRV direct
- written a receipt if required
- filled out the Member Support Officer Payment Form
- included the village name as a reference on the bank deposit
- posted or scanned the Member Support Officer Payment Form to ARQRV

Checklist for processing membership renewals

Have you:

- checked the membership list sent after the AGM each year
- notified ARQRV of any errors in membership list
- checked the renewal membership form for completeness
- collected the appropriate fee or made arrangement for member to pay ARQRV direct
- written a receipt if required
- filled out the Member Support Officer Payment Form
- included the village name as a reference on the bank deposit
- posted or scanned the Member Support Officer Payment Form to ARQRV