

6th March 2019

The Secretary
Joint Committee on the Valuation Policies and Charges on Retirement Villages
House of Assembly
Parliament of SA
shannon.riggs@parliament.sa.gov.au

Dear Madam/Sir

Re - Joint Committee on the Valuation Policies and Charges on Retirement Villages

I am writing on behalf of COTA SA in response to the Joint Committee on the Valuation Policies and Charges on Retirement Villages call for submissions that address -

- (a) Valuation Policies of the Valuer-General and their impact on some residents of Retirement Villages; and
- (b) Options available to both State and Local Government to alleviate any impact on SA Water and Local Government charges of these policies.

COTA SA is an older people's movement run by, for and with older people. We represent the aspirations, interests and rights of 633,000 older South Australians. COTA SA reflects the diversity of modern ageing in terms of living arrangements, relationships, income, health, ambitions and aspirations. COTA SA connects with thousands of older people each year throughout SA.

COTA SA urges attention to what seems to be both an anomalous and a potentially discriminatory and unaffordable approach by the State Valuation Office to assessing some retirement village dwellings as single dwellings.

In fact retirement village residents own a licence to occupy a dwelling which is part of a multioccupancy site owned by a village operator. Residents do not own the property itself. The move to issue separate assessment numbers for each dwelling, with the knock-on effect of creating enormous hikes in water fees and charges, does not make sense, is unfair and will have serious consequences for many older people.

There is a growing unease among older people about rapid and uncontrollable increases in their cost of living. Last year COTA SA joined with COTAs all over Australia to conduct the most comprehensive survey of older people ever undertaken. Older people reported that, after health, anxiety about finances was the second most important factor for them in assessing their quality of life. Moreover, more than a quarter of older people felt insecure about their long-term finances.

COTA is very concerned that when the Community Services Discount expires in 2025 many residents will find themselves in an unaffordable position despite their having made every attempt to budget well and anticipate costs as they planned their retirement. The SA Retirement Village Residents Association, with whom COTA SA enjoys a close working relationship, has estimated that the annual cost of water supply will increase for some residences from \$81.63 per year to \$520.20. COTA SA urges that retirement villages be assessed in the same way as other multiple occupancy complexes so that water and other bills can be levied on that basis.

I would be happy to provide any further information on telephone (08) 8232 0422 or 0408 814 483 or by email jmussared@cotasa.org.au.

Yours sincerely

JANE MUSSARED
Chief Executive