



Shane Rattenbury MLA

Attorney-General

Minister for Consumer Affairs

Minister for Water, Energy and Emissions Reduction

Minister for Gaming

Member for Kurrajong

Mr Tom Duncan

Clerk

ACT Legislative Assembly

London Circuit

CANBERRA ACT 2601

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly

Our ref: PRO23/960

Dear Mr ~~Duncan~~ Tom

Thank you for your letter of 21 March 2023 about E-petitions E-PET-038-22 and E-PET-038-23 (Establishment of an ACT Ombudsman for Retirement Villages). I am providing this response on behalf of the ACT Government, as Minister for Consumer Affairs.

The ACT Government recognises that the timely and accessible resolution of disputes is important for residents of retirement villages, and that for many residents, more formal court and tribunal processes can be complex, costly and stressful.

For this reason, the ACT Government amended the *Retirement Villages Act 2012* in 2017 to enhance dispute resolution options for residents. This included the establishment of internal disputes committees, intended to assist in the timely and local resolution of disputes. In further recognition of this issue, in July 2019, the ACT Government also expanded the functions of the ACT Human Rights Commission, to include the ability to consider retirement village disputes.

On 22 March 2023, the Legislative Assembly passed a Resolution that requires the Government to investigate the establishment of an ACT retirement villages ombudsman that is non-adversarial and accessible, with the power to make binding decisions to resolve disputes between a resident of a retirement village and the operator of the village. A copy of the Resolution can be found in Notice Paper 75 at the following link: <https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/parliamentary-business/in-the-chamber/chamber-documents>.

The ACT Government is committed to ensuring access to justice for all members of the community, and to investigating the issues and concerns raised in both the Petition and the Assembly Resolution.

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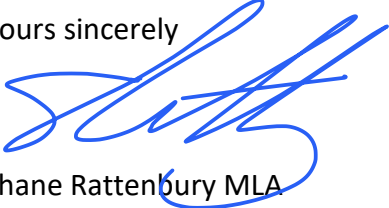
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An informed and considered response to the retirement villages ombudsman proposal will be provided through the Assembly Resolution process. The Assembly Resolution requires that this response is provided by the final sitting day in September.

I trust this information is of assistance.

Yours sincerely



Shane Rattenbury MLA
Minister for Consumer Affairs

8/6/23