

Revised Date:	4 August 2026	By:	A.Stewart, Communications Coordinator
Approved Date:	Pending	By:	V.Chettleburgh, Manager
Board Acceptance:	Pending	By:	C.Sherer, Board Chair

1. Background

The purpose of the Village Dispute Resolution process is to:

- Provide a mechanism to manage disputes regarding management complaints and resident versus resident disputes in an efficient and effective way without the need to involve an external dispute resolution body
- Ensure residents are offered a universally accessible option to resolve problems
- Provide a process for handling minor problems, addressing them early so they do not develop into a major dispute
- Comply with the Retirement Villages Act 1986

2. Associated Documents and Folders

- **Dispute Notice Record Form** – used by the village operator to record the details of a notice of dispute as reported by a resident verbally.
- **Resident Dispute Notice Form** – can be used by Residents to make it easier to register a notice of dispute with the village operator.
- **Dispute Reporting Register** – is an internal document used by the village operator to record a list of all notices of dispute received, the date, type of dispute, actions taken, the status (open, in progress, closed) and a Unique Dispute Number (UDN). This is internal document only but does form the basis for the Annual Dispute Report. This register must be retained for 7 years.
- **Unique Dispute Number (UDN)** – a number assigned to each dispute recorded on the Dispute Reporting Register to identify all documents and correspondence pertaining to the dispute.
- **Dispute Notices Folder** – a secure digital folder on the village operators share drive that contains all Dispute Notices, and any correspondence pertaining to each dispute. These documents must be retained for 7 years.
- **Annual Dispute Report** – the village operator must at each annual general meeting (AGM) report on the number and nature of disputes in the previous year, the outcome of each dispute and any changes made or proposed in response. Within 14 days of the AGM, the village operator must provide a copy of the report to the Director of Consumer Affairs Victoria via myCAV.

3. Policy is Applicable to

Disputes between residents and the village operator, which may include

- Contract terms
- Information sharing
- Capital works
- Charges and fees
- Repairs and maintenance
- Renovations

Disputes between residents, which may include

- Noise complaints
- Car parking
- Pets
- Upkeep/tidiness
- Use of common areas and facilities
- Interpersonal interactions

4. Typical Escalation Pathway

1. Village Dispute Resolution Process
2. Conciliation via VicAssist for Retirement Villages
3. The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in some cases.

5. Village Operator Contact Persons

Primary Contact: Vicky Chettleburgh

Position: Manager, Sirovilla Retirement Village

Phone: (03) 5241 1517 Mobile: 0427 197 850

Email: vicky.chettleburgh@sirovilla.org.au

Postal Address: Sirovilla Retirement Village
32-52 Broughton Drive
Highton Victoria 3216

Secondary Contact: Thabo Bergman

Position: Services Coordinator, Sirovilla Retirement Village

Phone: (03) 5241 1517 Mobile: 0455 513 518

Email: thabo.bergman@sirovilla.org.au

Postal Address: Sirovilla Retirement Village
32-52 Broughton Drive
Highton Victoria 3216

6. Giving Notice of a Dispute to the Village Operator

A resident may give notice of a dispute to the village operator by one of the following methods,

- **Verbally**, to the Primary Operator Contact Person, (either in person or over the phone) who will ask questions to clarify the nature of the dispute and record the details on a Dispute Notice Record Form.
- **In Writing**, using the **Resident Dispute Notice Form**, which can then be handed to, emailed or posted to the Primary Operator Contact Person.
- **In Writing**, in a **letter or email** addressed to the Primary Operator Contact Person, detailing the nature of the dispute, any relevant dates, the parties involved, and the outcome they are seeking.
- **Via a Representative**. A resident may prefer to give notice of a dispute via a trusted third party, such as a carer, a family member, a power of attorney or trusted friend. A representative may also give notice of a dispute to the village operator, via any of the methods above, if they have the resident's consent to do so.

7. What Happens After Notice is Given?

Once the village operator receives notice of a dispute, they will complete the following steps,

- (1) **List the dispute on the Dispute Reporting Register**, recording such information as the date of the dispute, the parties involved, the type and nature of the dispute, actions taken and its status (open, in progress, closed).
- (2) **Assign a Unique Dispute Number (UDN)** on the Dispute Reporting Register, which will be used to identify all documents and correspondence pertaining to the dispute.
- (3) **Dispute Notices Folder**. A digital record of the Notice of Dispute must be retained in the Dispute Notices Folder on the village operator's digital share drive and will include the UDN in the file name.
- (4) **Contact the resident**. The village operator may contact the resident to discuss and resolve the dispute or to gather more information. The village operator must record that the dispute is resolved, or the additional information or actions required on the Dispute Reporting Register.
- (5) **Investigate the Dispute Further**. The village operator may be unable to resolve the dispute immediately, they may need to investigate further, receive advice, or contact other parties in disputes between residents. Notes of all actions taken/to be taken will be recorded on the Dispute Reporting Register.

- (6) **Acknowledgement of the Notice of Dispute** is provided in writing (letter or email) by the village operator to the resident (including a copy of the Dispute Notice Record Form if the dispute notice was provided verbally), if the dispute is not able to be resolved **within 3 business days** (72 hours), including the reasons it is still considered unresolved and the actions that will or may be taken.

The Dispute Reporting Register will be updated with the same information and a copy of this letter or email is saved in the Dispute Notices Folder including UDN in file name.

8. Resolution and Non-Resolution of Disputes

When the village operator, primary contact person or secondary contact person considers the dispute is resolved or cannot be resolved, the resident must be notified in writing as soon as practicable. This may be done via a letter or an email.

- **Resolution** – the village operator will send the resident written notice that the dispute is resolved, setting out the details of the resolution. A copy of this notice must be saved in the Dispute Notices Folder with the UDN in the file name and the Dispute Reporting Register updated accordingly.
- **Non-Resolution** – the village operator will send the resident written notice that the dispute cannot be resolved, setting out the reasons and informing the resident that they may:
 - apply for conciliation through **VicAssist for Retirement Villages**, the retirement villages conciliation service.
 - contact **Consumer Affairs Victoria** (CAV) for assistance
 - contact the **Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal** (VCAT)
 - seek independent legal advice.

A copy of this notice must be saved in the Dispute Notices Folder with the UDN in the file name and the Dispute Reporting Register updated accordingly.

9. External Paths for Dispute Resolution

Whilst it is usually best to start with the internal village operator dispute resolution process, because this is often the quickest and simplest way to resolve issues before moving to more formal processes, residents can seek alternative external pathways, such as.

VicAssist for Retirement Villages.

Consumer Affairs Victoria provides a free and voluntary service that helps manage disputes between residents, or between residents and village management.

- (1) **Contact VicAssist.** Call **1300 528 994** or complete the **online form at vic.gov.au/retirement-village-dispute-help** instead.
- (2) **Speak with a conciliator.** VicAssist will provide a dedicated conciliator you can talk to about the issue and how you've tried to resolve it. From here, our conciliator will work with you to determine whether conciliation is the best option.
- (3) **Meet to discuss options.** If conciliation is the agreed way forward, we'll arrange a time for all parties to meet, work towards a practical agreement, and outline the next steps.

Consumer Affairs Victoria

Provides extensive helpful information on their website and can be contacted via their online General Enquiry Form, online General Complaint Form at **consumer.vic.gov.au/contact-us** or by phone 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday on **1300 55 81 81** or 132 842

National Translating and Interpreting Services

If you require assistance because English is not your first language you can call **131 450** and ask to be put through to Consumer Affairs Victoria.

The Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT)

VCAT can make legally binding orders in legal matters including compliance with and rescinding retirement village contracts, maintenance charge decisions, exit entitlement payments, condition-report disagreements, and capital maintenance obligations.

In some circumstances, VCAT may consider whether the parties participated in good faith in the conciliation process before the matter was raised with VCAT. More information is available on the VCAT Website **vcat.gov.au**.

10. Dispute Reporting at the Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The village operator must keep a record of all village disputes of which notice has been given, including records of outcomes and actions taken.

This information is recorded in the Dispute Recording Register which forms the basis for the **Annual Dispute Report for each village**, which must be presented at each Annual General Meeting. This report must include:

- The number and nature of disputes in the previous year
- The outcome of each dispute, and
- Any changes made or proposed in response to each dispute

The report must not identify the parties to any dispute.

Penalties apply under the Retirement Villages Act for failing to provide the report at the Annual General Meeting.

11. Lodging the Annual Dispute Report with CAV

A copy of the Annual Dispute Report must be provided to the Director of Consumer Affairs, **14 days after** the Annual General Meeting each year.

Each village must have a separate Annual Dispute Report submitted.

To lodge the Annual Dispute Report the village operator will need to.

- log into their myCAV account
- find the Retirement Village name under the Licence and Registrations section
- below the name click on “View Registration Details”
- under the “Dispute Reports” heading, click the “Lodge annual dispute report”
- the Retirement Village Dispute Reports page will open. The Retirement Village dispute report with the applicable year available to lodge should be displayed.
- Click “Lodge” to open the dispute report form to complete and upload the Annual Dispute Report for that village.

Penalties apply under the Retirement Villages Act for failing to provide the report to the Director of Consumer Affairs.

12. Publishing this Village Dispute Resolution Procedure

In compliance with the Retirement Villages Act (1986) the village operator must establish and maintain a written village dispute procedure.

The procedure document must contain:

- the name, phone number, postal address and email address of the primary contact person and the alternative contact person for the village
- how residents may give notice of a dispute
- the process the operator will use to deal with disputes and advise residents of the outcome, including how disputes will be recorded, and what happens if a dispute is not resolved within 72 hours
- information about VicAssist Retirement Villages, the retirement villages conciliation service.

The procedure must be:

- **published on the operator's website.**
- given to any resident who requests a copy within 2 business days of the request.

Penalties apply for failure to establish, publish, or provide a copy of the village's dispute procedure on request.

Purpose:

This form is used by the village operator, Sirovilla, to record the details of a notice of dispute as reported by a resident verbally.

1. Your Details**Resident's Name:****Village:**

☐ Highton ☐ Anglesea ☐ Lorne ☐ Point Lonsdale

Unit No.**Mobile:****Email:**

Purpose:

This form can be used by Residents to make it easier to register a notice of dispute with the village operator.

1. Your Details**Resident's Name:****Village:**

☐ Highton ☐ Anglesea ☐ Lorne ☐ Point Lonsdale

Unit No.**Mobile:****Email:**