



# Retirement communities

Everything you need to know



## Welcome

When it comes to retirement living, no two communities are alike.

Each community offers different housing options, facilities and services, as well as variable contractual options - so the choice is completely yours! Retirement communities are the perfect option for those thinking of downsizing from their traditional family home and into a low-maintenance property, freeing up valuable time and money for you to enjoy this stage of your life - on your own terms. The financial and contractual arrangements in place across the retirement industry are unique, and differ to the purchase or rental of standard real estate.

It is important that you make an informed choice when considering a move into a retirement community - to ensure it's the right choice for you.

It is helpful to undertake your own research, such as visiting a variety of communities, meeting with management and current residents, and seeking professional financial and legal advice on both the contracts offered and how these may affect your personal financial situation.

In this guide, we will provide you with a general overview of the retirement industry in NSW, explain some of the many benefits of living in a retirement community, and provide you with specific information regarding the financial and contractual options available to you at Fresh Hope Communities.





## A little bit about us

Fresh Hope Communities create spaces that cultivate belonging.

For nearly 90 years, we have been providing quality support and lifestyle choices, across retirement, residential and respite settings, as well as conference and outdoor adventure facilities and experiences for local school and community groups.

At Fresh Hope Communities, we believe in supporting and encouraging your independence. This extends all the way from the management of our close-knit communities throughout NSW to our commitment towards empowering our residents, their friends and family to make the right choices for them. We believe in welcoming relatives, friends and volunteers to partner with us and we strive to ensure that individuals retain strong links to their community.

With nine retirement communities to choose from, Fresh Hope Communities offers a range of locations as well as flexible pricing options that ensures you have the opportunity to access our range of services. We also operate seven residential care services across NSW for approved residents. This means that if your needs change, some support is readily available to ensure we can change with you.

To find out more about Fresh Hope Communities and flexible entry points, or to arrange for a tour at one of our villages, please give us a call on 1800 005 484 or email us at [hello@freshhope.org.au](mailto:hello@freshhope.org.au).



## What are retirement communities?

Retirement communities are master-planned and purpose-built communities for those over the age of 55, who are generally active and independent enough to live in their own home.

When exploring your retirement options, you will find a diversity of options on offer. Villages offer a range of property sizes and styles, as well as various services and facilities. What you choose will vary depending on your needs and is entirely up to you!

It is important to note that retirement communities differ greatly from residential aged care facilities. Whilst some villages may be co-located on sites with access to aged care services, eligibility for entry to these services is dependent on an assessment of your needs by your allocated Aged Care Assessment Team (ACAT). There is no automatic right of entry into these services because you are a resident of a retirement community.

In Australia, retirement community operators are either;

- Privately owned
- Run by not-for-profit agencies
- Publicly listed companies





## The benefits of retirement communities

The decision to move into a retirement community can often be a lifestyle choice, buoyed by the sense of community, security and access to services and onsite facilities. However, there are a multitude of other advantages that you may not have considered!

### **Affordability and low maintenance living**

Retirement communities are a genuine alternative to the increasing pressures and costs of daily living. Overall, the median village entry price across Australia is just two-thirds of the price of traditional real estate in the surrounding area.

Moving into a retirement community can offer you the opportunity to unlock the equity in your family home and remove the burden of continuous maintenance responsibilities. Village grounds, common areas and facilities are maintained by management, and all of this leaves you with more time and money to enjoy your retirement in the way in which you choose.



### **Connection**

Social isolation is a growing problem for many Australians. Often, in an increasingly busy and segregated world, retirees may live alone, or far away from family and friends. It can be hard to find people who share the same interests and values as yourself. Living in a retirement community allows you to be part of a diverse community of like-minded people. Staying active and connected is good for your health and retirement communities often provide access to a range of facilities and services. This enables opportunities for social interaction, resulting in significant well-being and health benefits for residents.

Although you are not required to participate, there are many activities on offer to pique your interest and provide you the opportunity to try a new activity or experience. You may even make new social connections as you bond over your shared interests!

Fresh Hope Communities offers a range of activities and facilities across its communities\* such as swimming, beauty therapy, exercise classes, gym equipment, wine cellars, libraries, workshops, yoga, bowling, art classes, craft sessions, day trips and other social activities.

\*Facilities and activities vary between communities.

### **Safety and security**

The safety and personal security offered within retirement communities is one of the key attractions for both prospective residents and their families and friends. Residents can lock and leave their homes with the peace of mind that their belongings are safe and secure.

At Fresh Hope Communities, residents can rest easy knowing that if there is ever an emergency, they have access to village staff for support and assistance. For your safety residents are provided with a personal pendant that can be activated in case of an emergency. The alarm unit connects you to the 24-hour monitoring team who can contact emergency services, your carer, family member or friends according to your request.

### **Proximity to services**

Retirement communities are often ideally located within existing city and regional hubs, close to shopping, medical, transport and recreational amenities. This ensures residents continue to access convenient services, maintaining existing social networks and memberships, whilst still in the communities they love.



## How much does retirement living cost?

All retirement communities require you to pay a variety of costs in addition to the entry price of your home. Different villages will offer varying types of occupancy and ownership arrangements and the specific costs involved will depend on the type of village you choose and contract you enter into. Entering a retirement community is not the same as purchasing a standard residential property and so the financial terms are likely to be new for you. It is important to take your time to understand the contract and property options available to you across the industry. It is also recommended that you seek independent financial and legal advice to make the decision that is right for you and ensure that you have a clear understanding of the terms and conditions of your village contract.

The main costs of living in a Fresh Hope Communities village are outlined below;

- Entry contribution
- Ongoing recurrent charges
- Deferred management fee

### **Entry contribution (The entry price of your new home)**

Entry to Fresh Hope Communities villages is by payment of an entry contribution under a Loan Licence arrangement.\* These types of arrangements are typically offered by not-for-profit organisations such as ours. This arrangement allows you the right to occupy your dwelling, but you do not own it. The payment of your entry contribution to us is considered as a form of interest free loan, part of which may be non-refundable depending on the financial option you choose upon entry.

Stamp Duty is not payable on entry to our communities, however it may or may not be payable at other retirement communities. This will depend on the type of contract you enter into with your chosen village operator. Stamp Duty can be a significant cost, and it is important that you clarify whether you are required to pay this and include this when considering your options.

\*Excludes 'The Residences Castle Cove'

### **The security of a 90-day settling in period gives you peace of mind**

In case you change your mind about living in a retirement community, residents are protected by a 90-day settling in period under NSW legislation.

Residents only need to notify Fresh Hope Communities in writing within 90 days of commencement of your occupation and we will terminate your contract without penalty. You will receive a full refund of your entry contribution and any recurrent charges paid, and you will instead be charged fair market rent for the time you were in occupation, in addition to a reasonable administration fee. Charges for any repairs required will also be payable if the property is damaged beyond fair wear and tear.



### Recurrent charges

All residents pay regular recurrent charges. It is important to note that Fresh Hope Communities does not profit from these fees. They purely contribute towards the daily costs of operating the community. Some of these costs may include:

- Building insurance
- Council rates
- Electricity (for lights in communal areas and village amenities)
- Water usage\*
- Repairs and maintenance of common areas
- Garden maintenance and village landscaping
- Leisure facilities and some organised social activities
- Village management, concierge and maintenance staff
- 24-hour emergency assistance
- Long term maintenance fund contribution

The cost of your recurrent charges increases annually by a prescribed rate as outlined in your contract, providing you an additional level of comfort around increasing costs of living. In addition to your recurrent charges, you will also be responsible for the cost of repair, maintenance and replacement of personal fixtures and fittings within your home, and any additional expenses you may incur such as telephone, internet, electricity and contents insurance.

\*At selected villages only

### Deferred Management Fee (DMF)

Also known as departure or exit fees, the deferred management fee (DMF) is one of the lesser understood concepts of entry into retirement communities. The benefit of the DMF is twofold. For prospective residents, the DMF provides flexibility on the pricing of the entry contribution. It allows you to pay a reduced amount up front by allowing an amount to be withheld by the operator when you leave. This makes the opportunity to enter retirement communities more accessible.

From an operator's perspective, the DMF assists in ensuring the village owner maintains funds for the ongoing capital costs of redevelopment and renewal within villages and represents the operators primary source of a return on its investment.

The inclusion of a DMF is the most common contract model for entry into retirement communities and the fee charged can represent a percentage of either your entry contribution, or the sales price of your home upon permanent vacation. The percentage withheld is calculated daily, dependent on your length of stay and is generally capped at a maximum.

As the DMF is often the largest cost incurred when living within a retirement community, it is important you carefully review the differences between villages. Finding a fee structure that suits your circumstances and offers you the most security is important, as is ensuring you seek independent financial and legal advice prior to entering into a village contract.

Fresh Hope Communities' standard contract involves a 30% DMF over a period of five years calculated on the entry contribution\*, however we also provide prospective residents with a wide range of alternative finance options that can be tailored to suit your individual financial needs. These options include a fully refundable entry contribution and varying DMF rates. Our Community Managers are more than happy to explain these options further to you during your sales appointment.

\*Excludes 'The Residences Castle Cove'



Highfield Court, Mayfield



## What happens if you decide to move out?

At Fresh Hope Communities we have done our best to ensure that our contracts and related sales documentation are as clear and transparent as possible. We want you and your family to feel comfortable in knowing upfront what your requirements are upon leaving the community. Your right to occupy your dwelling ends when permanent vacation of the dwelling occurs, and your village contract is terminated. From this date you will be required to pay ongoing recurrent charges for a period of no more than 42 days, after which they will cease.

There is no requirement for you to pay a selling or agency fee to us, and you are not responsible for the sales, marketing or refurbishment costs of your dwelling.\* You are entitled to receive your refund within 14 days after your dwelling is re-sold or re-occupied or within a maximum time frame of six months from the date of your permanent vacation.

\*Excludes 'The Residences Castle Cove'

## Commonly asked questions

### Q. When is the right time to move into a retirement community?

**A.** Only you can decide when the time is right to move into a retirement community. Most people make the choice to move once they have retired and want to downsize the family home because it's becoming too much to maintain. However, anyone aged 55 and over can live within a retirement community, whether you are retired or still working part time.

### Q. Who can move into a Fresh Hope Communities village?

**A.** Fresh Hope Communities retirement villages are most suited to meet the accommodation, social and recreational needs of those 65 and over. If you can live independently and respectfully with others and you would like a low maintenance home, we would love you to join one of our Fresh Hope Communities retirement villages. There are no restrictions on religious or spiritual beliefs, your relationship status or your lifestyle choices.

### Q. How do I express my interest?

**A.** Our Community Managers can give you an indication of any current vacancies. We encourage you to complete an Expression of Interest form and return it to the Community Manager so that we can contact you when a dwelling, suitable to your needs becomes available.

### Q. Do I own my dwelling in a retirement community?

**A.** When you move into a Fresh Hope Communities retirement village you will occupy your dwelling on a Loan License agreement. You will pay an entry contribution that secures your right to occupy. When you decide to leave, the deferred management fee you agreed to at the time you entered is deducted from your entry contribution. The remainder forms the refund that is due to you. You will not be asked to refurbish the dwelling, nor will you be responsible for selling the property.

### Q. Should I seek legal advice prior to entering into a contract to purchase in a retirement community?

**A.** Moving into a retirement community is not only a lifestyle choice, but also an important financial consideration. Fresh Hope Communities encourages anyone seriously considering a move into a retirement community to obtain independent legal and financial advice.

### Q. How do I secure my new home?

**A.** A deposit is required to secure your choice of dwelling for an agreed period and the balance will be required just prior to your move into the village.

### Q. What if I change my mind after I move in?

**A.** If a new resident is unhappy with their decision to move into a village, and they notify Fresh Hope Communities in writing within 90 days of commencement of the contract, they may terminate the contract. In this case, the former occupant would only be liable to pay fair market rent for this period.

### Q. What is the responsibility of the Community Manager?

**A.** The Community Manager attends to the day-to-day operation of the village including social activities, overseeing maintenance, promoting the general wellbeing of residents and taking financial responsibility for operations.

### Q. Will I have access to 24-hour assistance?

**A.** Our 24-hour assistance is designed for residents who need a simple and reliable way to keep connected to family, friends and others who can help them in an emergency. You will be provided with a personal waterproof pendant that can be activated in case of emergency. The alarm unit connects you to the 24-hour monitoring team who will contact emergency services, your carer, family member or friends as per your request.

### Q. Can I garden around my dwelling?

**A.** We are proud of the beautifully landscaped spaces that are curated within our communities. Some residents choose to maintain their own small garden bed at the front and rear of their dwelling. Gardens created or changed by residents will need to be maintained by them. Please speak to your Community Manager for further details.

### Q. Can I have guests stay with me?

**A.** Your dwelling is your home and you are welcome to have family or friends stay with you for short periods. If they wish to stay longer, we ask you to request written approval from the Community Manager. This is to ensure the safety, security and privacy of all residents.

### Q. What happens if I go on holidays?

**A.** If you let your Community Manager know your plans, we can ensure that your home is taken care of while you enjoy your holiday.

### Q. Can I bring my pet?

**A.** Each of our villages has its own unique environment. Please check with the Community Manager to see if you can bring your pet.



**Q. Will I have access to additional support if I need it?**

**A.** As your needs change in the future and you feel that you require residential care, Fresh Hope Communities will make every effort to accommodate your needs within our services subject to waiting lists and other eligibility criteria.

**Q. Can I make alterations to my dwelling?**

**A.** Yes, Fresh Hope Communities will not refuse any reasonable request for alterations to your dwelling. You are asked to submit a request detailing the alterations in writing for consideration and approval by the Community Manager. This is to ensure that all relevant standards and regulations are adhered to. Consent is given on the basis that on termination of your contract, the premises will be returned to the same condition as it was before the consent was given.

**Q. Where can I obtain further information about making a move into a retirement community?**

**A.** At any point in your journey, we can provide you with information to assist your understanding of the costs associated with moving into a Fresh Hope Retirement Community. We are happy to meet with you (and your nominated representative, such as a family member) to explain any of these details. NSW Fair Trading's website [www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au) is another great resource for further information on retirement living and provides online calculators to assist you in gaining a comprehensive estimate of the costs and financial obligations of your contract.



## Fresh Hope Communities service locations



## A final word

Here at Fresh Hope Communities, our villages are close-knit communities where you can continue to live on your own terms. We want to help you find the right choice and hope this guide has helped you understand your options when it comes to choosing a retirement community.

If you'd like to speak with us at Fresh Hope Communities about what we can offer you, please do get in touch. We would love to help you plan your next steps. Simply call us on 1800 005 484 or visit [www.freshhope.org.au](http://www.freshhope.org.au).



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