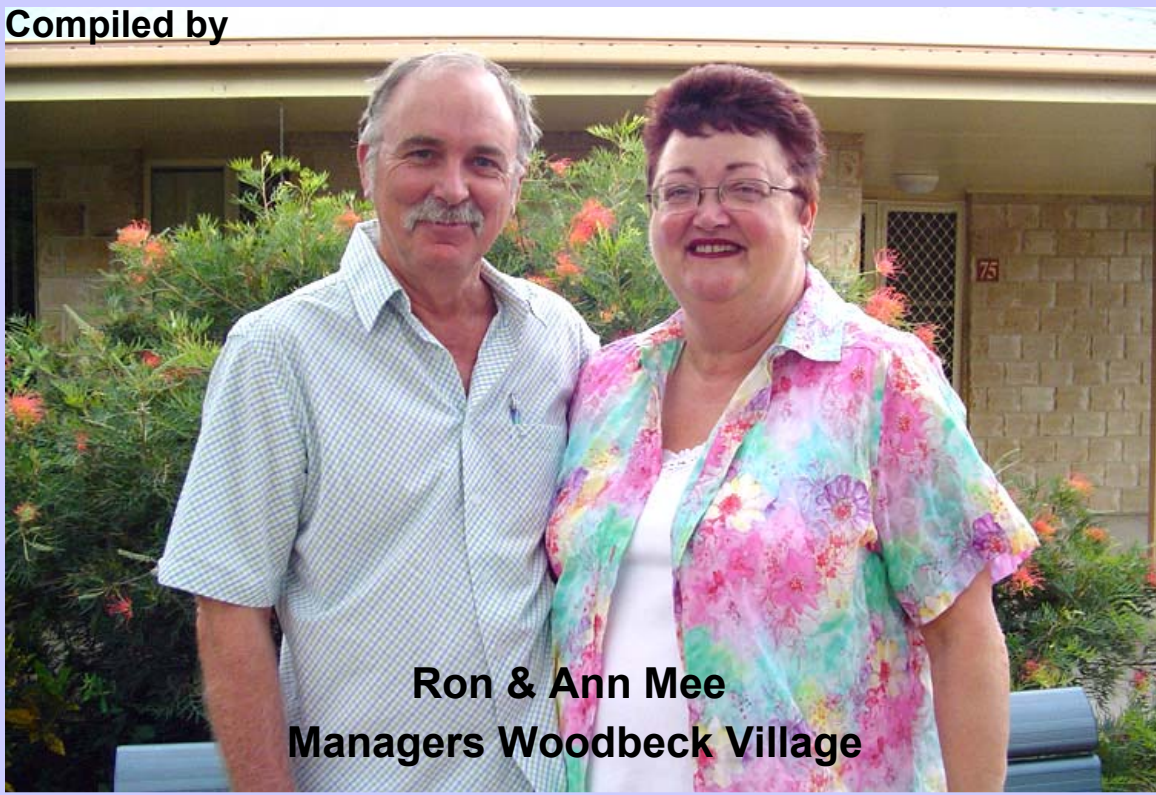




## 7 Vital Facts You Should Know About Choosing The Right Retirement Home, But Don't.

Compiled by



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'Assisted Living Accommodation' is a Retirement Village where Residents live independently in a community that offers small studio or one bedroom suite accommodation. All meals are provided and on-site managers or staff are available 24/7 to offer assistance and medical support, if needed.

Residents have the freedom to come and go as they please, enjoy the benefits of low maintenance accommodation, and have the peace and security of knowing there is assistance close by.

## 1. Your unit and village complex should be a place you are happy to call 'home'.

Your Retirement Village should be resident and visitor friendly. Ideally the complex should be on one level so there are no steps to contend with. The walkways need to be well maintained, level, well lit, and covered for protection from the sun and rain.

You are still leading a very independent life; to come and go as you please and have friends or family over to visit - just like you did before.

Ideally, your unit should have a living area, bedroom and bathroom. There should also be at least one area where a small table and a couple of chairs can be under cover outside.

Your living area should include a microwave, small fridge, toaster and electric kettle or jug – a sink and small bench preparation area is ideal. As a general rule, the whole area should be big enough to accommodate at least one guest comfortably. And keep in mind, 'less is best'. You don't want to have to thread your way through a load of furniture or squeeze between walls and benches to get through your unit.

'Comfortable' and 'Clutter-free' are the key words here. And remember: no rugs! Rugs are notorious for tripping over.

Bedrooms should have at least one built in wardrobe and room for one double bed and dressing table. Ceiling fans in living room, bedrooms and lounge rooms are desirable.

Bathrooms should have grab rails, non slip tiles, extractor fans, heaters, and adjustable removable shower heads, and of course taps that are user friendly. Your toilet needs grab rails too. Smoke detectors in all units are obligatory.

You should be encouraged to think of your unit as your home and to personalise it as much as possible. It should be your oasis of peace in a community. The use of an outside table setting for a cuppa is particularly useful if you are a new resident establishing a group of friends.

A house is just a house until you make it your own. Put mementos and pictures of loved ones on the walls.

## **2. Professional Services should be easy to access.**

Most assisted Retirement Complexes should have access to a Doctor who attends to residents' needs and who arranges for an after hours service if necessary.

The Queensland Ambulance Service provides an excellent service – All medical emergencies should be taken seriously and the ambulance service contacted by calling triple 000. The Paramedics will transport you to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department in an emergency. Prior arrangements may be made by your doctor to transfer you to the hospital of your choice or a private hospital. The attending Paramedics will transport you to a facility of your choice if it is not an immediate emergency. In Queensland, Ambulance transport and treatment is free to pensioners.

Blue Nurses, St Lukes etc. provide care where necessary in the case of:

- wound dressings
- hygiene assistance
- respite
- continued assessment

Your private information should be kept confidential, but you can sign a form to allow your Village Managers to pass on vital information to Ambulance Officers and Doctors.

Community health provides all types of back up service from personal care to physio to outings.

A hairdresser should be onsite to provide hair care at a reasonable rate.

## **3. Always check that useful amenities are within easy reach.**

It is always preferable that all services should be a short distance from the complex you are considering. These should include:

- Doctors
- Hospital
- Dentist
- Community Care
- Senior Citizens
- Churches

- Sporting Clubs – Bowls
- Swimming Pools
- Shopping Centres with Medicare outlets
- Public Bus Service
- 'People mover' for complex...

...as well as any other amenity you would benefit from. Remember, even though you may be downscaling through to assisted living, there is no need to compromise on the quality of your lifestyle. So be fussy – this is your new home.

Retain the quality of your lifestyle – you're still independent, now you just have help closer at hand.

## 4. Security is a main factor when considering where you would like to spend your peaceful retirement.

Village Communities should take Resident's security and safety seriously.

Here is a useful checklist for when considering security at your chosen Retirement Village:

1. Is the complex surrounded by a security fence and locked up at night?
2. Do windows and doors have security?
3. Do management live onsite?
4. Are essential services – Police, Fire Brigade and Ambulance within 5 mins travelling time?
5. Is it a safe walk to shops, etc.?
6. Is there plenty of night security lighting?
7. Is there some type of 'People Mover' to local amenities?

"94% of residents felt they were as safe or safer living in a village community compared to their family home. 71% felt they were 'safer' compared to their family home." Independent Survey by David Kennedy PhD on resident satisfaction in Village Communities in Australia.

## 5. Get sound Financial Advice in regards to renting or purchasing a unit in a Retirement Village.

As people retire and decide to downscale, they may choose to move to a Retirement Village and enjoy the benefits of low maintenance accommodation. A consultation with a financial adviser is always recommended to answer any questions you may have about purchasing or renting your retirement unit.

Financial Advisers can help clear up any concerns you may have about your investments.

Sometimes circumstances can make it necessary for someone to move into a Retirement Home as perhaps the person is not coping. It may be because of problems with:

1. Physical health
2. Maintenance of home
3. Shopping and cooking of meals
4. Loneliness and isolation
5. Family support is difficult

If the situation arises and a decision has to be made about what sort of accommodation, getting all the facts on the types of care available is the next step. Visit the Woodbeck Village Website at [www.woodbeckvillage.com.au](http://www.woodbeckvillage.com.au) and look at 'Retirement Village Info' for useful information.

Something to consider if you are deciding to move to a Retirement Village is that if you do own your own home, it is an excellent compromise to rent before you enter into any financial arrangement. The government offers rental assistance for 2 years before you decide to sell your home. (Of course you cannot receive any income from the home in the meantime.)

This allows the person to look upon this period as perhaps a 'holiday' to see whether they like community living.

Rent does vary from complex to complex: Most charge from 80 – 85% of the aged pension, PLUS 85 – 100% of rental assistance from the Government.

It is important to investigate hidden costs and exactly what your rent includes. When checking this, ask:

1. Do they have their own clothes lines or do you have to use dryers?
2. Is linen included?
3. Are charges made for callouts by managers?
4. Are costs involved in transport to doctors?
5. How much is the bond?

A bond is usually required and can be an amount up to a maximum of 4 times the weekly rent. This should be deposited with Residential Tenancies Act 1996 who are the holders of all bonds. When you leave your unit your bond will be refunded if the room is left in a clean and tidy state. A bond Loan is available from the Department of Housing and can be paid off in instalments.

You must be told how much money is left after rent has been deducted. Usually the only extras are electricity, phone and personal items. You may like the convenience of having tea, coffee and milk etc. in your unit, so take that into consideration. Certainly all fruit, bread and meals should be supplied if it is assisted or supported accommodation.

## 6. Food and its preparation can play a role in what level of retirement care will work best for you.

“89% of Residents believed that their village community catered to their physical needs as good or better than their family home. 62% felt their physical needs were better catered for than their home.” Independent Survey by David Kennedy PhD on resident satisfaction in Village Communities in Australia.

Most retirement village residents believe it is the best day of their lives when they no longer have to buy food and cook it. However, some still like to cook some food, and individual complexes may be able to accommodate their wishes.

Undoubtedly, food is one of the most important factors that keep a resident happy and contented. A nutritionally sound diet is often lacking in a single or frail person's diet. It's so much easier to say "I'll just have a piece of toast and jam" than it is to prepare a small salad for supper at night.

Something to note is that most assisted living complexes serve the main meal at lunch time for a number of reasons:

1. nutritionists agree that's when it should be as it is better for digestion
2. better not to go to bed with a 'too full' stomach as this can create problems with the colon
3. staffing is so much easier in the middle of the day.

Essentially, residents should receive a sound diet on a daily basis and at least:

- 2 serves of fruit
- 5 serves of vegetables
- 2 - 3 serves of dairy
- 7 serves of cereal
- 1 - 2 servings of protein

There should always be provision for diabetics, celiac and any other special diets. As a general rule, the serving of fried food should be kept to a minimum. It is just not healthy.

## 7. Remember the importance of Entertainment.

The Retirement Village you choose should allow you to be as private or as social as you like. Some may choose to only mix at lunchtime while others are out and about all the time.

At Woodbeck Village ([www.woodbeckvillage.com.au](http://www.woodbeckvillage.com.au)) the building of solid relationships is encouraged, but a high value is placed upon allowing residents the freedom to have their own space and privacy. Concerts and singers are always a welcome form of entertainment and Bingo is an all time favourite for most. Often a foursome will get together for cards.

Austar or Foxtel connected to the Community TV is also very popular. State of Origin Football Matches and Rugby Internationals and Test Cricket matches can always be an occasion for a 'get together' in the Community Room. Computers are great for the Internet and games.

Taking a small number of people out in the mini bus is a welcome outing. Simple things like 'fish and chips' on the beach is something many residents will enjoy and many stories are swapped about "remember when".

Barbeques on a weekly or fortnightly basis also break any monotony. It's amazing how a piece of marinated chicken in a slice of bread with a cold beer or wine, in a relaxing atmosphere can lift the spirits.

Happy hours are often started with a couple of neighbours and then it has the domino effect and half the neighbourhood joins in.

Often spontaneous entertainment is the most popular and should be encouraged at your Retirement Village, as it is the residents own motivation and input which makes it accelerate and happen.

## A few extra items for you to consider...

Residents meetings at your chosen Retirement Village should be held on a regular basis. These meetings should not be attended by the management to allow for a free flowing discussion. A president should report back to management with any of your recommendations, concerns or questions. Even a suggestion box should be made available.

Remember: The Retirement Village you choose is your new home. It is a place where you should enjoy comfort, peace, security and assistance when you need it.

If you are looking for rental accommodation as an independent and capable pensioner, Woodbeck Village offers a peaceful lifestyle with privacy and security, within a friendly communal environment, as well as the bonus of having full time managers living onsite to help with every day needs.

At Woodbeck Village the managers, Ron and Ann Mee are dedicated to making the Residents stay as pleasurable, peaceful, and as independent as the resident wishes it to be.

For more information about Woodbeck Village please

Visit our website at: [www.woodbeckvillage.com.au](http://www.woodbeckvillage.com.au)

Drop in and see us at: Woodbeck Village  
Cnr Pine Ave, Woodbeck & Logan Street  
Beenleigh

Or give us a call on: 07 3287 2885

We'd be delighted to hear from you.