

Rights of elderly residential park residents face annihilation by operator-biased legislation

Written by Press Release



Sydney 15 July 2013. Tens of thousands of elderly people fear eviction if draft legislation governing residential parks, manufactured home estates and caravan parks takes effect.

The NSW Government's draft Residential (Land Lease) Communities Bill 2013 will wipe out minimal protections for residents which exist under the current Residential Parks Act 1998 when a park is to be redeveloped or closed.

The new Bill would allow park operators to reclassify a residential site from long-term to short-term, and then evict the home owner by issuing a notice of termination.

Operators could also, without reason, request a home owner to move their home to another site within the park. If the home owner refuses, the operator can simply evict them.

"These proposals are legalised asset stripping," said long-term park resident Jill Edmonds. Jill is a veteran of the fight against the exploitation of park residents and is shocked that the NSW Government would increase the powers of operators to make huge profits at the expense of pensioners.

Home owners who are able to relocate their homes to another park will be entitled to compensation, but with few sites available, this is impracticable for the majority. Compensation provisions for homes lost due to the impossibility of relocation are unclear but appear to be minimal and inequitable.

It is an affordable housing option that the NSW Government ought to support rather than undermine, particularly when the State is struggling with a housing crisis.

Mary Preston, another long term resident, fears the proposals will lead to large-scale park closures and the displacement of potentially thousands of elderly residents. "Where will all these people go?" asked Mary.

Concerned residents call on the NSW Government to retain the minimal protections currently provided by the Residential Parks Act 1998 in the new Bill.

Jill Edmonds, Central Coast