

Settlers Lifestyle Village is the best in the North Island



Settlers Lifestyle Village in Albany is the 2021 'People's Choice Award' for best large retirement lifestyle village in the North Island. The Aged Advisor awards have been running since 2015 and recognise the best retirement villages in New Zealand.

They independently collate and review the opinions of over 8000 residents from more than 770 villages throughout the country. The villages are ranked on several variables including the quality of care, entertainment options, food, and the knowledge and care of the staff. The reviews and ratings are aggregated, and a series of algorithms are applied to identify the top facilities.

The People's Choice Award reflects what the people living in retirement villages think about their homes. Only residents' voices count. This year over 40 villages were shortlisted, and eight winners were announced.

Settlers Lifestyle Village is built like a luxurious resort. Residents enjoy facilities including a heated pool and spa, gym, movie theatre, beauty salon, restaurants, and cafes. Beautifully landscaped grounds contain picnic areas, a bowling green, and a croquet lawn. It is a retirement lifestyle more reflective of a country club. The village puts a tremendous amount of work into ensuring quality of life, activity, connection and wellbeing for their residents, Settlers Lifestyle

Villages recently whipped up 650 homemade brownies for contactless drop-off at residents' doors during lockdown. A few days later, cookies decorated with a 'Kia Kaha' message followed with fudge and cupcakes in the following weeks. The responses of residents ("Warmed the cockles of my heart"; "We feel very safe here . . . Thank you for going that extra distance") were so cheering, and it gave everyone, including the bakers and staff, a real boost to know residents felt cared for.

Commonwealth champion weightlifter Precious McKenzie moved to Settlers more than a decade ago to be closer to family on the North Shore. Not surprisingly he loves being in the gym, naming the well-attended twice-weekly aerobics classes as a highlight. His favourite village activity, however, is "lots of socialising and happy hours! The staff at Settlers are really wonderful . . . They put their heart and soul into this complex, and make sure everyone is happy and joining in. There is even a get-together for men, they bring us together for a meeting once a week. No one is isolated . . . You live longer if you aren't lonely!"

"We are delighted by Settlers Lifestyle Village's award. It reflects the superb work of our staff and management team, who - rain, hail, or shine; locked down in a pandemic or opened up - make sure that we operate according to New Zealand and international best practice standards and continue to set the highest bar for lifestyle, comfort, security, hospitality, and care in a lifestyle village," says Terry Middlemost, CEO of Premier Lifestyle Villages.

"We have a great community of residents, and we would like to thank them for being on this journey with us, for their votes, and their incredible feedback in general. This award from Aged Advisor validates their experience and rewards everyone who contributes to making Settlers the amazing place it is."

The retirement village sector in New Zealand is buoyant and demand for quality retirement living is growing as the population ages. It is forecast that the key demographic for retirement villages is expected to increase by over 70% by 2043. It is estimated that 300 new retirement villages will be required to meet this future need¹.

¹ JLL White Paper 'NZ Retirement villages and aged care' 2020

“In 2013, when then Prime Minister John Key opened Settlers Lifestyle Village - and five years after the first building was finished - he acknowledged in his speech that New Zealand needed more retirement villages like Settlers and that we gave residents the 'best of all worlds', independence, social groups and, security,” says Terry Middlemost.

“We have never lost sight of the importance of these elements and of the need we all have for community and support as we age. We appreciate the recognition by Aged Advisor of what Settlers continues to offer our residents and the wider community.”