

An illustration at the top of the page depicts a community scene. It features several blue houses of different sizes on a green hill. There are white icons of people: a family of four, a couple, and a single person. There are also green trees, including a large one with a stylized 'H' inside it. In the top left corner, there is a yellow sun and two white birds flying.

Housing Trust News

March 2022



Turning pain into empowerment

After a spate of misfortune, illness and a traumatic childhood, enjoying a quiet and restful retirement would be a top priority for most people. But not so for local treasure, Lyn. This 74-year-old dedicates her life to changing systems and attitudes so other women don't have to suffer as she did or worse.

At the age of 58, after decades spent raising four children and a lifelong career as a midwife, Wollongong tenant Lyn found herself divorced, and following the sale of the family home, unable to secure a home loan for herself. Lyn says, "This was the first time being an older woman slapped me in the face."

Not one to give up easily, Lyn eventually found her feet and was able to rent until, upon retiring, she discovered that she could no longer afford market rent on a pension. And that's when her housing crisis really began.

Like many women, Lyn worked part time while her children were young, so her superannuation was not enough to sustain her for long. Rent in the Illawarra was rising, and Lyn was facing homelessness. For a short time, Lyn lived with her daughter and son in law and looked after her grandchildren while their parents worked. It was win-win until a series of untimely events changed everything.

Lyn developed bowel cancer, underwent a brutal bout of treatment and her family moved to WA with work. With the prospect of sleeping in her car looming, Lyn threw everything she had at securing a home and found a property through Housing Trust in 2020. Since recovering from her cancer, instead of putting her feet up for a well-deserved rest, Lyn became a qualified counsellor and threw herself into charity work, advocating for more Affordable Housing and participating in groups to encourage, inspire, and embolden women.

She has a particular passion for helping older women, who are one of the fastest growing homeless demographics thanks in part to the increase in women fleeing homes of domestic violence. Lyn actively pursues opportunities to raise awareness of housing affordability issues. Recently, she was interviewed in the 7:30 Report series Why Women are Angry, she participated in the Illawarra Affordable Housing Forum, was featured in the Illawarra Mercury, and interviewed by ABC Illawarra.

Lyn uses her own experience to educate and empower women. "I grew up in a home with a violent, alcoholic father. My mother stayed until she died because she did not believe she had any options. I want to help women understand they do have options - in living without violence, having somewhere safe to live, options in their careers, how many children they have, when they retire. In ALL decisions."

CEO Report

A warm welcome to our first newsletter for 2022.

As COVID restrictions ease and more of our community are fully vaccinated our team is making plans to return to home visits and our planned maintenance program. I look forward to seeing more of you in person again in 2022 and meeting our new tenants.

Board Member Roy Rogers has moved into the position of Chair of the Board and we are looking forward to Roy's continued input and energy. Since he joined the Board in 2018 and subsequently served as Deputy Chair we have come to rely on Roy's knowledge and steadfast experience as a great asset and in helping us make a difference in so many people's lives.

There is much to look forward to in the coming months as our work delivering more Affordable homes to the Illawarra continues at a pleasing pace. Construction of new homes in the beautiful Northsea development on Crown Street will begin shortly. We have acquired properties in Wollongong and Berkeley and are progressing developments in Wollongong and Dapto.

Unfortunately for every individual, couple and family we are able to provide a new home there are hundreds more waiting. That's why we are committed to advocating for more Affordable housing. It is my personal mission to ensure housing is top of the agenda for every politician looking for votes in the upcoming Federal Election.

If you would like to lend your voice to our campaign, just like Lyn who features in our newsletter, please contact Housing Trust team or share our campaign on your social media. We've had huge success from the campaign in the run up to recent Local Council elections and have had some really encouraging meetings with the new Councils across the region. Let's keep the momentum going and find a decent home for everyone.

Yours sincerely,
Michele Adair



Maintenance Performance



13 seconds

Nov 21 – Jan 22

Average time calls answered by Housing Trust Maintenance Team. This is up 1 second from Aug 21 - Nov 21.

89 %

Oct 21 - Dec 21



Average overall satisfaction % with delivery of Housing Trust Responsive Maintenance Program. Results from CHIA NSW Repair Transaction Survey.



Tenant responses to surveys are anonymous. If you leave comments and wish to identify yourself, Housing Trust will follow up with you directly regarding your feedback.

Homes4LocalHeroes

Join us as we advocate for more affordable housing in the lead up to the next Federal election.

What can you do?

- Follow the H4LH socials.
- Share our messages on your socials
- Lend your voice to the campaign (let our team know if you'd like to get involved).

Visit www.homes4localheroes.com.au

TAG Update



Have your say!

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) convened for the first time for 2022 in February. It was a great turn out, and a great opportunity for members to get to know our new Customer Service and Support Team Leader, Nicole Horne.

During the meeting, the idea to create an online forum so tenants could have their say on issues affecting you, was raised.

Members also gave valuable feedback on the Tenant Satisfaction Survey results and offered input into the programs and events planned for the next few months.

If you would like to become a member of the TAG and attend meetings, please reach out to Joanne or Natalie on 4254 1166 or email info@housingtrust.org.au.



Policy Update



UPDATED - Social Housing Eligibility Policy

You can read a copy of this policy on our website www.housingtrust.org.au/tenants/policies/

Staff Spotlight – Tanya



ROLE: Reception and Customer Service

Meet Tanya.

Tanya has been serving our community working for Housing Trust for an impressive 16 years – starting at George Street, then on Smith Street and now at our beautiful office in Coniston. She made the move here after working in retail because she wanted a new challenge. "I wanted to work in an industry that I was passionate about and wanted to help change and enrich people's lives," she says.

In addition to Tanya's busy role running reception and front of house, she helps out her colleagues in Customer Service and Support with data entry. This time, we swing the spotlight around to shine a light on Tanya to find out all she does for Housing Trust and everything she loves about the job and the community.

What are some things about your work here that people may not know about?

Tanya: "I enjoy working with Joanne Reed on Community engagement events and am proud to be part of working on The Tyler West Scholarship. Over many years I have worked with our trainees and now our Cadetship program. I also ran THT social club for many years."

What do you love most about your job?

"Over the 16 years that I have worked here I have got to know our Tenants and enjoy engaging with them on phone calls, meeting them when they come into our office, Tag meetings and other social events. The Tenant Christmas party is always a great day and I always love to see the look on the children's faces when Santa arrives. It's very special."

Support our Campaign!



Vaccination Cashback



\$50 up for grabs for Covid jabs

One more reason to get your child vaccinated.

If you have children aged 5-11, Housing Trust is issuing eligible tenants one free \$50 Wish Gift card per child that receives a COVID-19 vaccine dose in March 2022.

Visit our website for more information
www.housingtrust.org.au/coordinate-vaccination-program/



Green Connect

Are you looking for work?

Green Connect is a social enterprise that offers jobs in gardening and waste management to young people and refugees. They have a reputation for being a caring employer, offering training, support and paid work when you're ready.

Their aim is to provide jobs 'for people and the planet' in a number of areas. Green Connect has an 11-acre farm where they grow organic and free-range food. They also help organisations reduce waste to landfill, through waste audits and management plans, and waste management. Thirdly, they connect their own employees with other businesses, industries and opportunities.

If you want to find out more and are keen to get work, give Annie at Green Connect a call on 0436 864 404 or visit their website at <https://green-connect.com.au/paid-work/>

Good News

"We've recently purchased a property in the area and thought you'd like to know."

Thanks again for all your help in our time of need."

We're so pleased for Elizabeth and Michael, recent affordable housing tenants at Eager Street, Corrimal, who have now purchased a home in the Illawarra for their young family.



Feedback

Want to leave us some feedback? Go to

www.housingtrust.org.au/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints/

Tylah West Scholarship

This year's Tylah West Scholarship presentation will be held in April. Through the support of local businesses and our supplier networks we have been able to increase the number of scholarships this year to 32.

The Scholarship is named in memory of Tylah West who participated in Housing Trust's Aboriginal Traineeship Program. Tylah's vibrant personality left a lasting impact on all who knew her. The scholarships were created with the support of Tylah's family and have helped dozens of Housing Trust residents.

Thank you again to all TWES recipients and of course Tylah's Nana Mary and family for your continued support.

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