



In October, Housing Trust celebrated completion of its new \$22m affordable and social rental housing project Correa Gardens in Robert Street, Corrimal.

The 34 quality new homes are a mix of one and two-bedroom units and four-bedroom townhouses. The project is a major milestone for Housing Trust and one of our largest investments in our mission to provide a decent home for everyone.

Housing Trust has worked closely with development partner Traders in Purple to deliver the homes as part of the NSW Government's Communities Plus initiative.

With virtually zero rental vacancy rates in the Illawarra and 10,000 households in rental stress, demand for the homes has been high. Housing Trust has received more than 250 enquiries for the homes with applicants ranging from singles to large families.

Traders in Purple Director Charles Daoud said the project had been built by the community for the community.

"Correa Gardens provided continued employment

for our local subcontractors and suppliers which was especially important in the early days of uncertainty during the pandemic. There are great positives both for the community and economy in having a steady pipeline of projects such as this one. It really is an exemplar of co-operation and partnership between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors and our extended team is looking forward to future projects."

The homes are close to transport, employment and vital community facilities such as schools.

Housing Trust has taken ownership of the majority of the development with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation retaining ownership of seven units that will be managed by Housing Trust.



# CEO Report

It's hard to believe we have already reached the end of 2021. The COVID pandemic has bought into stark reality the importance of having a safe affordable home and we are so proud to have welcomed many new tenants to Housing Trust, including 34 households at our new Correa Gardens property in Corrimal.

We have continued to advocate strongly for more affordable housing wherever possible. Our messages are being heard at all levels of government, industry and the community. We couldn't do this without the many tenants who have generously shared their stories to help others. Thank you to all of you.

We are looking forward to bringing more face to face services back online in 2022 and are currently making plans to reintroduce home visits and non-essential maintenance programs. We will of course continue to be guided by health authorities and restrictions.

We are pleased to have been a part of the #vaxthellawarra campaign and were so glad to see so many of you come along to our vaccination clinics which will help us all keep our families and community safe.

The challenges we have faced over the past 2 years have strengthened our resolve to live our HT purpose and values like never before. We have continued to operate 'almost' at business as usual and thank you all for your cooperation and patience in keeping you, our staff and our community safe.

My heartfelt wishes for you all to have a peaceful, happy and safe festive season.

Michele Adair, CEO



We have received an overwhelming 39 applications for our 2022 Tylah West Education Scholarship. More than double that of last year. Applications are now officially closed. The annual scholarship offers between \$500 and \$2,000 for Housing Trust residents to pursue study, traineeships or employment.

You can read more about this scholarship on our website <https://www.housingtrust.org.au/tylah-west-educational-scholarships/>.

Housing Trust will be hosting a presentation for scholarship recipients early in the new year.



Housing Trust would like to thank our amazing TAG members that have persevered with meetings throughout the last 18 months. Unable to meet in person, so many embraced Zoom technology, even without any prior experience. Well done to everyone involved.

Some of the important issues discussed this year include how Housing Trust can engage with the community to help develop an understanding of the importance of Affordable Housing. There are marked differences between Social and Affordable Housing, which many people are unaware of. For more information visit our website.

Members were also very interested to hear about this year's research into our Customer Journey and how Housing Trust is working with both staff and tenants to find the pain points in their housing experiences. We hope working together we can find ways of making meaningful improvements to enhance outcomes for tenants.

If you would like to become part of our TAG, please email [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au).

## Tenant Satisfaction Results 2021

**OVERALL  
SATISFACTION:**

**87%**

12% ABOVE NRSCH  
THRESHOLD OF 75%

**SATISFACTION WITH  
CONDITION OF  
HOMES:**

**88%**

13% ABOVE NRSCH  
THRESHOLD OF 75%

**SATISFACTION WITH  
REPAIRS &  
MAINTENANCE:**

**87%**

12% ABOVE NRSCH  
THRESHOLD OF 75%

Thank you to everyone who submitted responses to the survey earlier in the year. We had a wonderful response rate of 44% this year, which is higher than usual. We are happy to report that respondents gave an overall satisfaction rate of 87%, 12% above NRSCH threshold.

Despite the challenges we have faced with COVID-19 in the past year we're happy to report that residents are 88% satisfied with the condition of their home and 87% satisfied with repairs and maintenance.

We appreciate all the feedback that we received and will use it to improve our services over the next year. All participants who filled out the survey were automatically entered into a draw to win one of ten \$100 Gift Cards. Our winners have been notified and will receive their gift cards in early January 2022.

## Vax the Illawarra

During the peak of our most recent COVID-19 lockdowns, case numbers in the Illawarra crept up steadily. Sadly, we witnessed the most vulnerable cohorts of people bear the biggest burden of the pandemic, with homeless shelters going into lockdown, and numerous apartment towers in the region being affected, including social housing complexes.

In response to rising case numbers in our region Housing Trust joined the #vaxthellawarra campaign. We saw vaccination numbers also increase with heavy media coverage from the campaign getting the message out via television, radio, newspapers and social media. Local sporting heroes, educational personalities, musicians, and multicultural leaders have joined ranks to push for the Illawarra to be the first region in NSW to hit an 80% fully vaccinated population.

With the Illawarra Mass Vaccination Hub only operating at one quarter capacity due to vaccine shortages, Housing Trust worked closely with various health authorities and were successful in operating a pop up vaccine clinic in partnership with another service provider, specifically for Housing Trust tenants and staff.

Housing Trust promoted the clinic via direct text message and filled the 240 places quickly. Social housing tenants that may not have felt

comfortable booking in with their GP, or could not get appointments at the Hub, were willing to come to the pop up clinic specifically set up for their needs. Tenants brought their school aged children, elderly parents and even caregivers.

Whilst labour intensive and challenging, the project has had great outcomes with a large group of at risk, hard to reach people accessing the vaccine in a timely manner.



# Homes4LocalHeroes



The national conversation around Affordable Rental housing has shifted and Housing Trust is proud to have played an important role in this through our “Homes 4 Local Heroes” Campaign. We have given a voice to the thousands of households living in housing stress or facing homelessness and we have taken their stories to all levels of Government and national audiences.

Housing Trust held a public forum on housing and briefed all Local Council candidates in Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama and Shoalhaven to educate and discuss the options available to create more affordable housing in our region. Some incredible tenants and CEO Michele Adair have generously shared their life stories to educate the community and help others find safe, secure affordable housing. To all of our tenants who have contributed to media stories, videos, forums and round tables we are enormously grateful.

Find out more about Homes 4 Local Heroes here <https://www.homes4localheroes.com.au/>

Housing Trust’s media call out has been strongly supported, with several tenants putting their hand up to tell their stories on video, helping Housing Trust advocate for more Social and Affordable Housing in the Illawarra. Rents and mortgages are becoming increasingly unaffordable, with the impacts of COVID adding to the problem.

These personal stories help to dispel the entrenched negative stigma around social housing. It is true for so many of us, that homelessness may only be one accident, one job loss, one unplanned pregnancy, or a divorce away. Housing is a human right and together we can lobby our Federal, State and Local Governments to do more.

Thank you to our tenants Fasiu, Selai and Mary for sharing your stories.



# Maintenance Performance Measures

The collection of maintenance and repairs performance has changed since we last reported to you back in August 2020.

Housing Trust’s peak body, Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), have developed a repair transaction survey to capture tenant satisfaction with their last repair. Housing Trust will now be texting the link to tenants after works have been completed in their home. CHIA will provide Housing Trust with a report on the results. It would be greatly appreciated if you complete the survey so we can make sure you are happy with the service provided by Housing Trust and our contractors.

In late 2020 we recorded an increase in the average time to answer a call. The cause of this increase has been identified and a service improvement plan introduced to reduce wait times. A decline in wait times was recorded in May - Aug 21, however a slight increase of 0.2 seconds was recorded across Aug - Nov 21 reporting period.

| Performance Measure                   | Sep 20 – Dec 20 | Jan 20 – May 21 | May 21 - Aug 21 | Aug 21 - Nov 21 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Average time calls answered * seconds | 15              | 14              | 10              | 12              |



Housing Trust CEO Michele used her acceptance speech, having been named the Outstanding Business Leader at the 2021 Illawarra Business Awards, to plead for more to be done to provide decent homes for every Australian.

Less than a month after launching the Housing Trust’s new campaign, #Homes4LocalHeroes, Michele was recognised for championing more homes for the key and essential workers who’ve helped steer the region and the nation through the COVID-19 pandemic.

‘Our vision at the Housing Trust is a decent home for everyone,’ Michele told the audience at the Illawarra Business Awards.

‘A home that is safe, secure and affordable is a human right, It is not simply a product that is to be produced for profit.

‘In NSW we need at least 50,000 more safe, affordable, decent homes, so that people can get a job, educate their kids, manage their health and rebuild their lives.’

In calling for an end to the stigma associated with people struggling to find a home to live, Michele, spoke of her own struggles, first as a nine-year old girl, and then later as a single mother of two children.

‘I was one of those people,’ she said.

‘The crisis that we have in housing in Australia today is not just people struggling to get a mortgage. It is people simply struggling to have a home.

‘If there is anything you can do, do all that you can to work towards getting every Australian safe, secure, affordable homes. Without it we have nothing at all.’

Congratulating Michele on her Outstanding Business Leader award, Housing Trust Chair, Roy Rogers, said it was worthy recognition for a tireless advocate, ‘who lives, sleeps and breathes helping those in greatest need every day.’

‘Michele’s four years at the helm of the Housing Trust has lifted our profile dramatically but more importantly has found new, decent homes for hundreds of people facing homelessness through no fault of their own.



Scan the QR Code to watch our tenants and staff share their personal experiences with social and affordable housing.

## Next of Kin Register

NSW Government Next of Kin Register Program assists Police to know who to call in the event of an emergency. This is especially important for residents living alone.

The program stores the contact details of the Next of Kin, as well as the nominated doctor, dentist and any medical alerts can be entered onto the register. Information is securely stored and only accessed by NSW Police during the event of an emergency.

The link to the online form is

[https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/572394/next-of-kin-program-application-form.pdf](https://www.police.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/572394/next-of-kin-program-application-form.pdf)

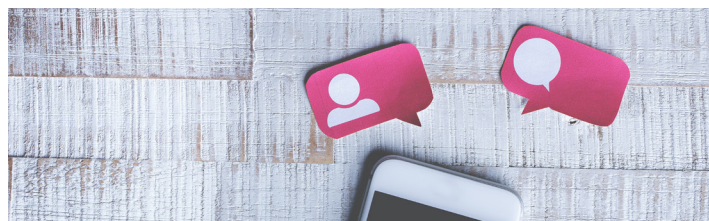


## Play Illawarra

If you haven't checked it out already, the group at Play Illawarra created a website [www.playillawarra.com.au](http://www.playillawarra.com.au) as a one-stop destination for all your play needs. Just in time for Christmas, Play Illawarra website contains a free directory of play destinations across Wollongong, Shellharbour, Kiama, and Shoalhaven LGA's.

## Feedback

Housing Trust values your feedback and ideas, including complaints and appeals. Have your say by calling our office, emailing us, completing a Complaints Form online, or joining our TAG.



## Scam Watch

Scamwatch is run by the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC). It provides information to consumers and small businesses about how to recognise, avoid and report scams.

According to Scamwatch, Australians have already lost over \$288,000 just to vehicle scams this quarter, and scammers have now begun impersonating defence personnel to con their victims. They state they need to sell their vehicle quickly and at under market value before deployment.

If you have been the victim of a scam, contact your bank as soon as possible and contact the platform on which you were scammed to inform them of the circumstances.

For more detailed information go to <https://www.scamwatch.gov.au/news-alerts/losses-to-car-ad-scams-climbing>

## HOUSING TRUST WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS

Our office will be closed from 12pm on 24th Dec and re-open on Tuesday 4th Jan 2022. For any emergency repairs during that time please call our after-hours service on 4254 1166.



For up to date information on the things that matter most to you visit [housingtrust.org.au](http://housingtrust.org.au)  
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