



A life story told through art

Housing Trust tenant Wanita Lowe is a proud Dunghutti Biripi woman.

"I tell stories through my art. I connect my Aboriginal culture with the everyday through my own contemporary style of urban storytelling."

After facing tragedy and adversity, Wanita has found purpose, success and a career through her art.

Wanita was a foster child, a result of parents born into the stolen generation and ill equipped to raise children. She grew up without strong cultural family ties and with little confidence.

Wanita and her partner had children young, and she was determined to raise a strong, resilient family and break the cycle.

After the tragic death of her partner, Wanita set about raising her two daughters alone. She took strength from reconnecting with her biological family and developing strong relationships with kin.

After rediscovering her culture and after years of low paid work in hospitality, Wanita went on to study visual art – her passion – and became qualified as an arts teacher and cultural arts educator. She was awarded Tylah West Education Scholarships in 2019 and again in 2021.

She says "I travel throughout the whole of NSW now, reconnecting and sharing stories with my lost family. I listen to the stories of my ancestors. I sculpt ceramic shields and plates, using traditional basket weaving techniques and natural materials like feathers and lomandra grass. Some I create for Illawarra charities."

Wanita is a mentor to Aboriginal women and teaches the Cultural Women's Groups at EORA. She also is a member of Boomalli and supports female artists. "It's important for me to show others that we all can have a better future, we have the ability to reach our goals, and we can do whatever we set out to achieve. I am so proud of my achievements, especially showing my children that it is possible to break the cycle of poverty and reconnect to land and family.

"Art brings people together. It is a healing process. It's a form of therapy that occupies the mind, not letting in the worldly troubles."

Wanita's art is also part of her legacy. If you are ever in Housing Trust offices, be sure to keep an eye out for the stunning piece of original Aboriginal art she was commissioned to create for us.



Artwork above:
"Dharawal Country" by
Wanita Lowe.

This painting celebrates Dharawal country where the spirit of the ocean meets the spirit of the mountains in the Illawarra and the community spirit Housing Trust provides, building stronger foundations for a better tomorrow.



**GET UP!
STAND UP!
SHOW UP!**

3-10 JULY 2022

For local NAIDOC Week events and initiatives visit
<https://www.naidoc.org.au/local-events/local-naidoc-week-events>

CEO Report

With each passing year, it never ceases to amaze me the amount of talent and potential we have in our midst.

It is with great pride that Housing Trust recently celebrated six years of Tylah West Education Scholarships. Named in honour of Tylah, a young Aboriginal trainee at Housing Trust, the initiative assists tenants to pursue opportunities in education, training or employment gaining. This year we were able to support 32 recipients taking the overall total to 92 tenants and almost \$100,000 in funding. Definitely one of the year's highlights so far.

The HT team recently celebrated our Housing Trust Awesome staff awards which saw Compliance Manager Marg Wearing, Team Leader (Planned Maintenance) Luke Attenborough and Receptionist Roxanne Wurzer recognised for going above and beyond in their work.

It's great to see our TAG back meeting in person again and sharing their valuable insights into our work and how we can best improve our service to our tenants. The TAG provide vital feedback and help us shape strategy and direction for a number of initiatives. I'd like to personally thank each member of our TAG for their time and commitment.

Social and Affordable housing is in short supply across the country and while there's been much talk about first home buyers in the recent Federal Election and NSW State Budget we've seen little support for renters. Housing Trust will continue to advocate to all levels of government, particularly in the lead up to the NSW State Election in March 2023. The most powerful voices to government and the media are from tenants themselves, if you would like to lend your voice to any of our advocacy efforts please contact the team.

To all of our tenants, staff, friends and family who are members of the LGBTIQ+ community happy Pride Month, we are proud to celebrate you all.

Michele



Maintenance Performance



8 seconds

May 2022

Average time calls answered by Housing Trust Maintenance Team.

86%

May 2022



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.

Tylah West Education Scholarship Presentation



TAG Update



TAG is getting personal again!

Housing Trust's Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) recently had its first face to face meeting in two years. It was a great turn out with members animatedly discussing Housing Trust's exciting new developments, upcoming events and providing policy feedback. One of the hot topics of the night was maintenance and feedback on contractors. There was also an enthusiastic discussion on how Housing Trust can more effectively communicate with tenants.

Housing Trust would like to sincerely thank the TAG members for their continued support throughout the last two years of contending with Zoom. Your contributions are valuable and appreciated. If you would like to know more about the TAG, please contact Joanne on 4254 1166.



Policy Update

We've had a number of policy updates.

All new and updated policies are **highlighted green** on our website www.housingtrust.org.au/tenants/policies/



Read more about our Tylah West Education Scholarship Presentation 2022 on our website www.housingtrust.org.au/housing-trust-tylah-west-education-scholarship-2022/



Staff Spotlight - Jenna

Meet Jenna

ROLE: Property Services Officer in the Maintenance Team

Jenna has just clocked over one year with the Housing Trust and her role sits within Responsive Maintenance, assisting tenants with maintenance issues. After growing up in Social Housing, she wanted to be able to work to help other people just like her to live in safe and affordable homes.

What have you learnt from working at Housing Trust?

"Everyday people can find themselves in financial struggle at any time. The rental market prices are rising too high for people and the fight is ongoing to provide affordable housing. Our tenants deserve safe and secure places to live, and support services to navigate through this".

What do you love most about your job?

"I love the Housing Trust spirit, and that everyone is equal. We have a great leadership team, which makes you feel valued. Engaging with the tenants and the "thank you", we receive from them is very rewarding".

What's something people don't know about your job?

"We are frequently in training courses to further our skills on how we engage with our tenants and provide the best service possible".

Read the full story here www.housingtrust.org.au/staff-spotlight-jenna/



Everybody needs good neighbours

Who says people don't respect their elders anymore? During some routine home inspections recently, we got wind of a very heart-warming news story. One of our long term, elderly tenants has been finding it harder and harder to keep up with those little (and not so little) 'life admin' tasks like gardening and shopping. It was becoming worrying that she might not be taking care of herself as well as she should. But worry no more because it's her superstar neighbour - another Housing Trust resident - to the rescue. With a friendly helping hand, our long term tenant is now well taken care of and can continue to live independently.

Pride & Diversity

Housing Trust celebrates, values and includes people of all backgrounds, genders, sexualities, cultures, bodies and abilities. Dress code: RAINBOW for International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia (IDAHOBIT).



In honour of Pride Month you'll notice our logo has changed to the rainbow.



Savings Finder

Did you know that there are currently 70 rebates and vouchers available via NSW Government to help you save on everyday costs. To help simplify your search, use Service NSW's Savings Finder online at www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/savings-finder

Feedback

Do you have feedback about Housing Trust, our service, a staff member or a contractor? We welcome feedback from tenants because it helps us identify where we may improve our services. Our feedback process can be found here on our website www.housingtrust.org.au/contact-us/feedback-and-complaints/

Antisocial behaviour is different to a complaint. If someone is behaving in a manner that disturbs the peace, comfort or privacy of tenants, neighbours or the surrounding community, (e.g. abuse, intimidation or being noisy), Housing Trust will investigate if the alleged actions breach the Residential Tenancy Agreement. We will facilitate early intervention and referral to support services to minimise escalation.

Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP)

Housing Trust has become involved in a project organised by Keeping Women Out of Prison (KWOOP) coalition. Stable and affordable housing for women leaving prison is vital, especially given Welfare services in the Illawarra reports of an increase in the number of women leaving prison and looking for accommodation in the area.

Following an unprecedented anonymous donation of five, full refurbished units to the initiative, we are helping to design their renovation and will help manage the tenancies on an ongoing basis.

Many people getting out of prison have lost everything. This means your children, possessions, clothes — everything. These units will give a number of women the safe, secure new start they need. We are aiming to have the properties ready by July.