

# Housing Trust News

Issue 10, August 2018 Newsletter

## Hello and Welcome!

It's been another very busy few months at Housing Trust. Although the highlight was opening 25 more homes at Farrell Gardens in Bulli, we've also been doing a lot behind the scene.

In June the Board signed off on a new strategic plan. This sets out the priorities for the next 3-5 years. It has four core themes

- Continuing to provide long-term and transitional housing solutions for single adults and families.
- Partnering with a wide range of service providers to support our customers.
- Buying and building more homes without waiting for Government assistance, and
- Using our charity status in fundraising activities and other ways to help our customers.

As part of the new strategic plan we're also adding more skills and resources to our team. This will include specialist skills to increase awareness about the need for affordable housing in the region and to help design and monitor our impact.

Everything we do at the Housing Trust is underpinned by the values of Respect, Integrity, Support and Collaboration. Please let us know if there's something we can do to help or if our service doesn't meet your expectations. Your feedback is so important and we can't improve without it.

Please remember that you can always contact me if you have any feedback or issues – my email address is [CEO@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:CEO@housingtrust.org.au)

Michele Adair, CEO



Farrell Gardens opening



Getting ready for the CEO sleepout



CEO sleepout



# Farrell Gardens Opening Celebrations

The Housing Trust expanded our vision of a decent home for everyone, opening 25 new homes at Farrell Gardens for social and affordable housing tenants on the 25th of June.

The Lord Mayor, Gordon Bradbery AM, opened the recently renovated complex. He spoke about his own brief experience of homelessness as a child, and the importance for Council to work with organisations such as the Housing Trust to create more affordable homes.

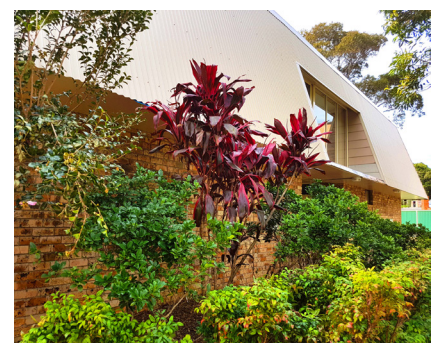
"The opening of Farrell Gardens by Housing Trust is a small but important step towards meeting the housing needs of low to middle income earners in Wollongong. Wollongong City Council is making housing affordability a priority focus during the rest of our term. It is important we work together with stakeholders such as Housing Trust to facilitate improvements in this area."



CEO Michele Adair highlighted Housing Trust's aim to make sure every home is in such a condition that "you would be happy to have your mother live in it, or your children, or yourself".

Michele also discussed the importance of providing more housing stating that "there is a long way to go to meet the needs of the Illawarra, but by working together with community partners, I am confident we can reach the target of 5000 homes within the next decade".

The Housing Trust extends a warm welcome to everyone at Farrell Gardens, and we are looking forward to working with all of our new tenants!





# Policy Update

With the invaluable input of our Tenant Advisory Group Housing Trust (TAG) has recently undertaken a review of some of our policies. New and revised policies are included on the right – and all are now available by visiting our website [housingtrust.org.au/about-us/policies/](http://housingtrust.org.au/about-us/policies/)



Housing Trust reviews its policies on a regular basis, and value the input of our Tenant Advisory Group as part of this process. If you are not a member of the TAG, but would like to assist us with future policy reviews please contact us on 4254 1166.

Revised Policies

Appeals  
Complaints  
Water Charges

New Policies

Affordable Housing  
Antisocial Behaviour

## Meet the team: Customer Service & Support

Our Customer Service & Support Team are here to help you with all aspects of your tenancy.



Housing Trust Customer Service & Support Team

Community Housing Workers will visit you at home twice a year to check on your wellbeing and see if you need any support or assistance. You can contact your Community Housing Worker if you need any help or advice.

The Community Support Worker assists tenants who need extra support, coordinating support services and helping sustain tenancies.

The Rent and Service Implementation Officer coordinates the rent subsidy review, processes change of circumstance forms and supports service improvement initiatives.

The Leasehold Officer coordinates all of the properties that the Housing Trust leases from the private sector.

The Allocations Officer places people on the waiting list into properties, making sure to allocate the property to people most in need and best suited to the property.

The Debt Recovery Officer works with tenants who have incurred a debt to help them find support and negotiate appropriate payment plans to repay the debt.

The Community Engagement Officer coordinates and runs events and training sessions that are relevant to our tenants, as well as running complex meetings and the Tenant Advisory Group.

The Team Leaders provide guidance and support to all members of the team, and are available to assist tenants with any difficult issues.

# Trainee updates

A big congratulations to Kane and Tjani who have both recently completed a Certificate II while working at the Housing Trust!

You might have seen Kane and Tjani out and about as part of our Internal Maintenance teams, helping with general maintenance, lawns and gardens.

Both Kane and Tjani have completed their time at the Housing Trust and moved on to new jobs, which is a wonderful outcome.



## Rent Review

The August Rent Review is now complete. If you didn't return your rent review or supporting documentation you will have been placed on market rent from 8 August 2018 however you can still return your paperwork to ensure we charge you the correct rent.

We have streamlined the process for tenants who receive Centrelink payments only and have signed a Centrelink Consent form. If you have signed the consent form you will not need to provide your income details or sign a Rent Subsidy Application form for our November review. We will automatically complete a review of your rent in November and notify you of the outcome.

If you have any questions, please contact us on 4254 1166 or email [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au)

## Energy Rebates

Are you eligible for an energy rebate?

If you have a Pensioner Concession Card, Health Care Card or Veterans Affairs Card, or if you use essential medical equipment, you could get money back on your bill.

There are more details on the [website](https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates): <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates>



\$285 a year

Low Income Household Rebate



\$180

Family Energy Rebate



11c - \$3.68/day

Life Support Rebate



\$285 a year

Medical Energy Rebate



# Have your say!

The Housing Trust is committed to including our tenants in all aspects of our business, and we are always open to feedback and complaints.

## Tenant Advisory Group (TAG):

The TAG advises the Housing Trust on policies and procedures, and has genuine input into decision making. If you want to be part of the TAG, please call Joanne on 4254 1166. The next meeting will be on Wednesday 7th of November at 10am.



## Become a member and attend the AGM:

You can become a member of the Housing Trust and have a vote at the AGM each year. Please contact 4254 1166 or email [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au) for a membership form.

## Block Meetings:

HT holds regular meetings at our larger complexes to discuss issues with HT and their neighbours simultaneously.

## Appeals:

An appeal can be made if you feel we have not followed our own policies. You can make a first tier appeal by asking the Housing Trust to review our decision. If you are still dissatisfied with the outcome following our internal review, contact the Housing Appeals Committee on 1800 629 794 or 8741 2555.



## Neighbourhood Projects:

The Housing Trust has helped tenants to establish many beautiful community gardens, and we are always happy to discuss other projects that could help your neighbourhood! If you have any ideas, call Joanne on 4254 1166 or email [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au)



## Complaints:

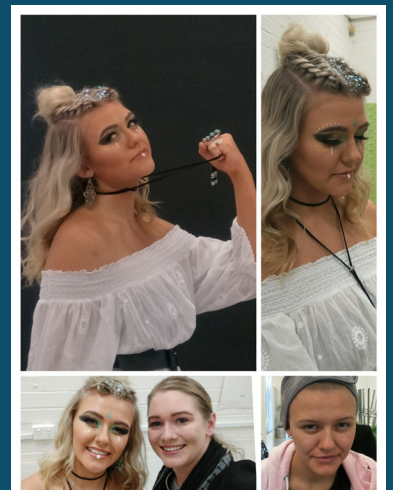
If you are unhappy with our service, you can make a complaint to the Housing Trust. We will respond to formal complaints in 28 days. If you are not happy with our response you can escalate the complaint to our Executive Management at [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au) or refer it to the Registrar of Community Housing.

# Good news!

Holly, one of our Tylah West Scholarship recipients, has just finished her Diploma in Beauty Therapy and is starting a full time job! Holly gave us photos of her final makeup assignment and some lovely feedback.

"All this would have been near impossible to complete without the help of the scholarship and every time things seemed too much, having the scholarship gave me more motivation to push through and finish. Thank you all so very much!"

The Tylah West Scholarship will be out again soon, so keep a look out and make sure to apply for assistance with education, training and employment. Any questions contact Joanne on 4254 1166 or email [info@housingtrust.org.au](mailto:info@housingtrust.org.au)



# Opportunities and Events



**TAG Meeting**  
7<sup>th</sup> November, 10am  
Have your say in how the Housing Trust runs. Call Jo on 4254 1166 to book your place.



**Whitegood recycling**  
Do you have whitegoods to dispose of? Greensolutions Australasia will come and pick up your items for FREE and recycle them! Call 0459 564 571 to book a pick up.



**White Ribbon Walk**  
23rd November, 7am  
Reddall Reserve, Lake Illawarra. Call Jo for more information on 4254 1121.



Justice

**Community Justice Centre**  
The Community Justice Centre is available to assist with mediation and dispute resolution. The service is confidential and free of charge – visit <http://www.cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au/>

## Recent Events



Fire safety training



Reconciliation Day Walk



Energy training



Ann and Tom with their Good Neighbours Award



Kidsfest



NAIDOC week kids craft at Greene Street, Warrarong

## Next Issue:

Look out for our next issue in late-2018! To stay up-to-date, check our website or Facebook page. If you would like to see any items in our Housing Trust News, please contact us. We would love to hear from you!



Like us on Facebook to keep informed of free activities, events and training opportunities: [www.facebook.com/TheHousingTrust/](http://www.facebook.com/TheHousingTrust/)

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