



CEO Update

The first half of 2020 has been an incredibly challenging time for us all.

Adjusting to life with COVID-19 and the "new normal" has been surreal at times. More of our community has come to understand how closely the loss of a job can bring us to homelessness and that it can happen to any of us. We are seeing more and more people facing rental stress and I have continued to advocate to all levels of government for the provision of more safe, affordable housing.

I'm incredibly grateful that we had very few disruptions to our service to our tenants when we transitioned our office-based staff to working from home in early March. We implemented extra cleaning for common areas in our multi-unit complexes and will continue to do so. However, just as we had thought restrictions may be easing a little further we have been faced with the start of new coronavirus outbreaks in Victoria and NSW. We continue to monitor the situation closely and will update you of any changes to our service.

Despite the challenges COVID-19 has presented the past few months has been an extremely busy and

productive time. In May the Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing announced Housing Trust and Traders in Purple as the Government's development partners for sites in Roberts Road Corrimal and Crown Street Wollongong set to deliver 100 social, affordable and private dwellings. We also officially opened and saw the first tenants move into our new project in Flinders.

In June we were announced as one of 19 providers across the NSW to deliver the State Governments Together Home program which will provide stable accommodation to people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We all have a responsibility to practice physical distancing and safe hygiene wherever possible and we encourage you to remain vigilant. Take care, keep looking after yourself and each other as we all remain committed to being COVID-safe.

Michele Adair
CEO Housing Trust

OFFICE CLOSURE

At Housing Trust we're still working hard to keep our tenants, staff and the community safe. Our office remains closed to the public. If you need to contact our team please call us on **02 4254 1166** or email us on info@housingtrust.org.au

Tylah West Scholarship recipient

Carol, a Tylah West Education Scholarship recipient is doing a Master's Degree in Art Therapy at the University of Western Sydney.

Carol has had a lifelong passion for the arts. She hopes when she graduates she can help people to recover their psychological wellbeing through creative methods of expression. Carol has a particular interest in working in Indigenous communities.

Originally from Rio de Janeiro Brazil, Carol now loves living in Australia with her young daughter. They have lived in the Illawarra for five years, and she says: 'Sometimes I miss the culture of Brazil, the colour, the music, the dancing, but then I look around at the amazing environment here. So much beauty, it sometimes takes my breath away'.

Carol's favourite pastime when not painting is discovering the beauty of nature in new and exciting places. Carol draws inspiration from bushland and other uniquely Australian landscapes. She does this through bushwalking and camping. Carol says 'I have a strong need to always be creative, it grounds me and brings me peace'.

Housing Trust wishes Carol all the very best in her endeavours.



Photo credit: Lisa Grant Photography

Together Home Program

Housing Trust is preparing to transition rough sleepers into secure housing after being awarded 22 places in the NSW Government's \$36 million Together Home project.



Announced in June by Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services Gareth Ward, Housing Trust is one of 19 providers across the State to deliver the program and is now seeking suitable one and two-bedroom properties in the Illawarra's private rental market.

The homes will provide stable accommodation, linked to wraparound supports such as culturally appropriate health and wellbeing services to people sleeping rough during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing Trust CEO Michele Adair welcomed the government's initiative.

"Our team is already working to secure properties in the local area and we welcome discussions with landlords and agents who have properties available for long term affordable rent," she said. "There has been a dramatic increase in the awareness and understanding of homelessness in our community. We're finding that people are looking to help and this is a perfect way to provide someone in need with a safe and secure home."

The Together Home project will help address people's support needs, build individual capability, and foster connections to the community.



During her May 20 visit to Wollongong The Hon. Melinda Pavey MP, Minister for Water, Property and Housing announced Housing Trust and Traders in Purple as the Government's development partners for two Illawarra sites set to deliver 100 social, affordable and private dwellings.

The new homes are being built in Robert Street, Corrimal and Crown Street, Wollongong as part of NSW Land and Housing Corporation's Communities Plus Program. The projects will transform vacant land into new and vibrant, mixed housing communities.

Housing Trust will purchase the major proportion of the Roberts Street property, 28 units and townhouses, and has been appointed to manage the social housing units on behalf of the NSW Government.

Construction is due to begin in August on the Robert Street site. A development application for the Crown Street site is expected to be lodged with Wollongong City Council in the second half of 2021, with construction to start in early 2022 subject to planning approvals.

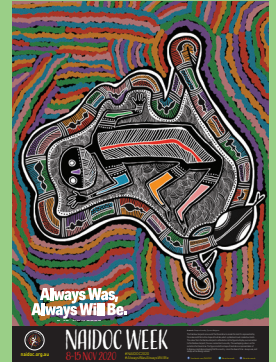


New Dapto Road Garden Project

New Dapto Road residents recently obtained a grant from Wollongong City Council and have created a community garden at their complex. This gives residents a chance to get together with neighbours and friends, grow fresh healthy food, and increase their physical activity. Well done to everyone involved.

NAIDOC Week celebrations 2020

NAIDOC Week 2020 celebrations have been postponed from July to 8-15 November 2020 following a decision by the National NAIDOC Committee. This year's theme, 'Always was, Always will be' is represented in a poster designed by Perth based artist and designer Tyrown Waigana, a Noongar and Saibai Islander man and is titled 'Shape of Land'. Tyrown's artwork tells the story of how the Rainbow Serpent came out of the Dreamtime to create this land. It is represented by the snake and it forms the shape of Australia, which symbolises how it created our lands.



Block Meetings

We are working within the COVIDsafe restrictions to develop plans to bring back block meetings as soon as we can so stay tuned. Remember, you can find all the up to date advice on restrictions at health.nsw.gov.au

Assistance with energy bills

If you are experiencing financial hardship and finding it hard to pay your energy bills, please contact your energy provider. Most providers have programs to help customers in financial difficulty manage their bills. Help may also be available from The Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme. Please call 1800 246 545 or go to www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/energy-accounts-payment-assistance-eapa-scheme

Flinders development officially open



Little more than a year after the first sod was turned on our Flinders property, we have welcomed new residents into their homes. The Willinga Road property includes two three-bedroom villas, four two-bedroom villas and a one-bedroom villa.

The tenants of the new properties are a mix of families and singles and began moving in straight after the ribbon cutting.

Shellharbour Mayor Marianne Saliba welcomed the new housing development as affordable rental housing continued to be an issue for the city.

"Housing stress affects a significant number of individuals and families in our city," she said.

"Developments such as this one will provide welcome relief to those who need it most, especially now with COVID-19 causing additional economic stress."

Maintenance performance measures

As promised, we will continue to provide a representation of our repairs and maintenance performance. We're pleased to see satisfaction of repairs has increased 2% in the last six months and the percentage of non-urgent repairs done on time has increased by 4%. The number of urgent repairs done on time has decreased by 1% bringing the total to 99%. No change for average time calls answered.

PERFORMANCE MEASURE	JUL 19 – JAN 20	FEB 20 – APR 20	DIFFERENCE
% of urgent repairs done on time	100%	99%	-1%
% non-urgent repairs done on time	92%	96%	+4%
% tenants reporting satisfaction with last repair	90%	92%	+2%
Average time calls answered	7 seconds	7 seconds	0 seconds

Property Services - Maintenance Policy Review

Recently a review of all maintenance policies was carried out. As a result Housing Trust have consolidated 15 individual policies into one policy document. This policy was sent to TAG members for review, with valuable input obtained. These updates have been made to ensure compliance in line with relevant legislation, and to ensure that tenants are aware of their rights and obligations in relation to maintenance issues.



Opportunity Pathways

Opportunity Pathways is an all-inclusive program from Wesley Mission that offers one-on-one support to people in social housing to help them gain new skills, grow in confidence and achieve their employment goals.

For more information please call **18000 931 108** or visit **wesleytraining.org.au**.

Services available to program participants

- Training
- Workshops
- One on one support
- Case management
- Wrap around support
- Coaching and mentoring
- Work experience placement
- Job placement
- Work retention support
- Brokerage support (conditions apply)

COVID 19 – Mental Health Resources

Are you or someone you know struggling with poor mental health during COVID-19? Support is always available to those who need it. The below organisations have increased resources during COVID-19 to provide 24/7 support.

- 1. Beyond Blue - 1800 512 348**
- 2. Lifeline - 13 11 14**
- 3. Kids Helpline - 1800 55 1800**
- 4. Weathering the Storm Headspace Support - 1800 650 89**

NEXT ISSUE

Look out for the next issue in September 2020! To stay up-to-date, check our website or Facebook page. If you would like to see any items in Housing Trust News, please contact us. We would love to hear from you!



For up to date information on the things that matter most to you visit **housingtrust.org.au**

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