



The Tylah West Education Scholarship Presentation for 2021 was held last month. The scholarship to date has provided nearly \$80,000 and has supported 63 tenants to help them meet the costs of training, education, or joining the workforce.

Tenants from varied backgrounds are participating in anything from graphic design to aged care. CEO Michele Adair said "The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the disadvantages people on low incomes face in pursuing educational and training opportunities.

"We have seen a big shift towards technology in this years' applications with home-based learning and remote work

relying heavily on technology. Lack of access to computers and reliable internet services are formidable barriers to learning and participating in the workforce".

Recipients have been busy heading back to uni, school and TAFE, some for the first time in years after taking time off for caring duties. The scholarship has helped them to purchase laptops, pay fees and even purchase reading glasses.

Many thanks to Tylah's family for their continued support of the scholarship in Tylah's memory, also thanks to Inside Industry for providing the venue for such an important event.

2020 Tylah West Scholarship recipient Holly is now utilising her skills in theatre, screen and media.

Holly grew up in Thirroul in the 90's. She worked as a Painter and Decorator until a back injury meant she had to give up work. After a slow recovery, Holly then trained in beauty therapy after receiving the Scholarship in 2018. Holly found ample work, but in 2020, Holly completed a Diploma in Screen and Media Studies in Stage Make-up.

She is now working in a profession that is exciting and full of interesting people. Holly said 'COVID has reduced my work prospects for the immediate future, but next year my youngest child will start school, hopefully theatre will be in full swing again, and my phone will be ringing hot for my unique skills. I would like to thank everyone involved in the scholarship for giving me this opportunity, there is no way I could have done it on my own.'

Housing Trust wishes Holly all the best in her future career.



Tenant Story - Holly

CEO Report

It's amazing to think that this month marks one year since our team commenced working from home and our office closed to the public. We are glad to see events with tenants beginning to get up and running again and will continue to monitor public health advice to keep you, our staff and community safe.



I am delighted to announce Housing Trust was awarded \$1.1 million to complete capital works on 29 homes for social housing tenants across the region. The funds are part of a \$61 million COVID-19 stimulus package being distributed by the NSW Government's Land and Housing Corporation (LaHC). Our team have wasted no time with works already underway on Housing Trust kitchens, bathrooms, roofs and other maintenance and repairs. We will continue to work with tenants to minimise disruption during the works and relocate tenants to other suitable accommodation where necessary.

In February we received the results of our Annual Compliance Report. Housing Trust was compliant across all seven of the regulatory codes with no suggestions for improvement. I would like to congratulate and thank my team for their dedication to our tenants, concern for the quality of the properties we offer and the positive impact on our community that continues to produce results like this.

Congratulations to Housing Trust resident Margaret Ewart who was awarded this year's International Women's Day Scholarship for Older Women. Housing Trust is again supporting the Illawarra International Women's Day Luncheon. Each year, the event awards seven individual scholarships of \$2,000 each to encourage women in our community, who might not otherwise have the opportunity, to expand their knowledge, skills and experience in a field of their interest. This year's event has been postponed until May.

Michele Adair, CEO

Correa Gardens Update

Building works at our Correa Gardens development are ahead of schedule with residents set to begin moving in this September. The property will include a mix of 20 x 3 bedroom units, 1 x 1 bedroom unit, 13 x 3 bedroom townhouses.

Plans are underway for an official opening of the complex in late August. For information email info@housingtrust.org.au.



Corrimal Community Garden

Tenants at one of our Corrimal properties were thrilled to help create a new community garden in their communal area last month. These gardens help provide not only fresh food, but the opportunity to get to know neighbours, get out in the fresh air, increase physical activity and improve mental health.

The Illawarra is home to 14 community gardens that anyone can join. Contact Food Fairness for more information at <https://foodfairnessillawarra.org.au/contact-us/>



The Gift of Technology

Thanks to the Department Of Communities and Justice who provided four refurbished laptops and wireless internet access to Housing Trust tenants studying at high school. One mum expressed her thanks for enabling her children to study at home and said 'Thank you so much for all the help you have given us, we really do appreciate it'.

Housing Trust Golf Day

Housing Trust is hosting its inaugural golf day on 28th May to raise funds for the Tylah West Education Scholarship.

The fundraiser will see teams of 4 tee off in an ambrose event. Registration costs \$400 per team including breakfast and lunch. There will be great prizes up for grabs including a brand new VW Polo for a hole in one!

This will be a COVIDSafe event at Wollongong Golf Club. Please contact us for more information.



Thank you to all our tenants that took the time to complete the Tenant Satisfaction Survey late last year. We received excellent results from the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA), the independent body conducting the survey, including significantly exceeding the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH) thresholds.

To thank tenants for participating, CHIA randomly selected 10 tenants to receive \$100 gift cards. Our Community Housing Workers handed these out last month to 10 very happy tenants. Look out for the 2021 survey around October for your chance to have your say.

Illawarra Committee against Domestic Violence Forum (ICADV)

Housing Trust advocacy continues with our support of the local Family and Domestic Violence committee the ICADV. The committee aims to bring awareness of the impact of Family and Domestic Violence to the local community.

Membership includes: NSW Police, Wollongong and Shellharbour City Councils, SAHSSI, Illawarra Women's Health Centre, Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District, Baptist Care, Illawarra Aboriginal Medical Centre, Barnados, Wollongong Women's Information Service, Illawarra Domestic Violence Court Advocacy Service, and the Domestic and Family Violence and Sexual Assault Service.

This alliance of services organised a forum in February with the topic "How do we change community attitudes towards domestic and family violence?". There were over 70 people in attendance including local MP's, and representatives from 24 local services. The panel, made up of experts in the field of FDV, discussed attitudes in the community and how people can be encouraged to have the conversations and take steps towards putting an end to FDV in all of its forms.



TAG Update

The Tenant Advisory Group had its first meeting for 2021 last month. CEO Michele Adair gave the TAG an update on what lies ahead for Housing Trust in the coming months and the group started work on the new Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy.

The TAG is the perfect opportunity for collaboration between Housing Trust and tenants. We would love to hear your innovative ideas on how to better deliver our services to you and share relevant information.

The next meeting is in May. Dependant on advice from the Australian Department of Health, meetings may continue via Zoom. Contact Joanne if you would like to have a Zoom lesson and join in the conversation.



Media Call Out

Have you ever wondered where you would be if you did not have your Housing Trust property? Would you like to help us advocate for more Social and Affordable Housing?

Housing Trust is always looking for ways to secure more housing for people in need. Currently, it is estimated there are 10,000 people in the Illawarra experiencing rental stress, with that number growing due to COVID and increased financial stress.

We lobby Federal, State and Local Governments to get the message out that our community needs more affordable housing. We are currently seeking residents who are willing to share their stories in the media.

Contact us today if you would like to find out more.

Meet the Maintenance Team



Backrow: Nikayla, Christina, Josh, Katrina and Luke
Front: Glen and Adam

Housing Trust Maintenance team is made up of responsive, planned and cyclical maintenance. Our team takes care of handyman services, and lawns & grounds maintenance. Our team also manages external contractors who are utilised for other works.

We are here to ensure your property is always in a good state of repair, Please communicate any issues to us as soon as possible.

We endeavour to respond to your maintenance request emails within 2 working days, or return your call within 1 working day. If your request is urgent please call our emergency line on 4252 1166 which is available 24 hours a day.

There are different response times allocated to repairs depending on the issue:

- **Urgent repairs** have a response time of 4 hours e.g. electrical faults, gas leaks, internal flooding, lift breakdown, blocked toilets, or broken hot water systems
- **Non-urgent repairs** have a response time of between 4 and 24 hours e.g. broken windows and significant water leaks
- **Rapid schedule maintenance** will be actioned within 5 working days e.g. dripping tap, loose grab rails, and pests such as wasps
- **Scheduled maintenance** may be actioned within 28 days e.g. poor yard drainage or windows or doors sticking

For any further information, the Maintenance policy is available on our website, or contact us for a copy.

Policy Updates

Policies and procedures are an essential part of Housing Trust. Together, policies and procedures provide a roadmap for day-to-day operations. They ensure compliance with laws and regulations, give guidance for decision-making, and streamline internal processes.

You can find all the up to date policies on our website at <https://housingtrust.org.au/about-us/policies>.

Alternatively, call our friendly staff to discuss.

Feedback

Your feedback and ideas, including complaints and appeals, is valuable feedback Housing Trust can use to:

- Give you, our customers a voice
- Improve how we deliver our services to you

You can do this by:

- Calling our office to speak with staff on 4254 1166
- Responding to Maintenance SMS's or returning the Maintenance and Repairs feedback cards
- Completing a Complaints Form available online at <https://housingtrust.org.au/tenants/complaints-and-appeals/> and emailing us at info@housingtrust.org.au
- Joining our Tenant Advisory Group to offer ideas

Remember you can send compliments too!



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