

Housing Trust News



Issue 15, December 2019 Newsletter

Housing Trust Holiday/New Year Closure

Housing Trust will be closed from 5pm Christmas Eve 24/12/2019 and reopen 9am 30/12/2019. Housing Trust will be closed New Years Day 1/01/2020. Reopening 9am 2/01/2020.

For help with any emergencies while the office is closed, please call (02) 4254 1166. If you are homeless and require urgent temporary accommodation, contact Link2Home on 1800 152 152.

CEO Update

It is hard to believe we are sending out our December newsletter already. This month's newsletter includes your invitation to our annual tenant's Christmas party on the 18th December at the Fraternity Club. I hope to meet as many of you there as possible.

I'm especially proud of the work the team have been delivering in terms of tenant satisfaction with details of the 2019 survey below. Thank you to all 420 of you who have participated in this process, your feedback is vital to help us continue to build and improve our service delivery. See below upcoming opportunities to join focus groups to build on our results in the future.

This year's Tylah West scholarship recipients have achieved fantastic outcomes with many continuing study, entering the work force and pursuing their goals. The process for the 2020 scholarships is well under way with the announcement to be made early in the New Year.

In late November some of the team attended the annual PowerHousing conference in Canberra. The team and I gained up to date insights from local and international experts in community housing and learnt more about some of the most innovative solutions to meeting the demand for housing from across the globe.

Housing Trust continues to support the Illawarra White Ribbon Day walk. We were proud to see a large contingent of staff attend the walk this year with some of our team lending a hand to cook the BBQ at the conclusion of the walk. We are committed to supporting, advocating and raising awareness of family and domestic violence in our community.

It's been a huge year for Housing Trust delivering on our vision of a decent home for everyone. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank each of you for your contributions to our vibrant communities throughout the year and wish you all the very best for a safe and peaceful Christmas and a happy new year.

Regards, CEO Michele Adair

2019 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

Housing Trust has recently received the results from the 2019 Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Thank you to all who took the time to provide us with your views and feedback. Housing Trust was delighted to receive an overall satisfaction rating of **88%**, with all indicators exceeding or meeting the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW benchmarks. The feedback provided through the survey process is independently analysed in detail to identify those areas in which we are performing well and those where we can improve. Opportunities exist for tenants to participate in a number of focus group discussions. If you would like to get involved, please contact Joanne Reed on 42541166.

Aon Partnership Day

Housing Trust has recently been working with our insurers Aon in relation to opportunities for us to partner to deliver community initiatives. Aon is committed to working with organisations that focus on community wellbeing and dedicate resources to assisting them in achieving this.

As part of this partnership, Aon and Housing Trust agreed to work together in a one-off gardening project at Central Gardens. Work undertaken on the day included cleaning, planting and mulching of common area gradens.

Aon kindly donated brand new gardening equipment including a poly garden cart, watering jugs, rakes, shovels and gloves to Housing Trust tenant programs.



Housing Trust is very appreciative of Aon's support and look forward to more communtiy initiatives in the future.

Farrell Gardens Placemaking & Social Inclusion Program

In October, we put our new gardening equipment to good use at Farrell Gardens as we commenced the Farrell Gardens Placemaking and Social Inclusion Program. Community Housing Worker Melanie is captured below with tenants working hard on the communal gardens.



Policies

Housing Trust reviews our policies on a regular basis. We value the input of our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) as part of this process.

All policies are available by visiting our website www.housingtrust.org.au. Newly updated policies are highlighted yellow for approximately 4 weeks. Policies are also available by contacting us.

Recently updated policies include:

- Affordable Housing Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Sustainable Tenancies for Tenants with Complex Needs Policy

Fire & Rescue NSW

Did you know Fire & Rescue NSW have community fire safety tips to help keep you informed and safe. Visit: fire.nsw.gov.au

Affordable Christmas Treats



3 Ingredient Chocolate Crackles

Ingredients:

200g compound chocolate
1/4 cup (20g) desiccated coconut + a little for sprinkling
3 cups rice bubbles

1. Place chocolate in a glass heat-proof bowl and microwave on medium to high for 1 minute and then stir well. You may need to heat in further 10 second bursts to entirely melt.
2. Add the coconut to the bowl and stir
3. Pour in the rice bubbles
4. Stir to coat with chocolate and fill patty pans or cupcake cups with mixture, sprinkle with coconut and refrigerate for 10 minutes to set.



3 Ingredient Trifles

Ingredients:

825g canned apricot (in juice)
200g vanilla sponge cake
1 cup low-fat custard

1. Drain apricots, reserving the liquid and slice each apricot half into bite size pieces.
2. Cut sponge into bite size cubes (1cmx1cm) and soak in the apricot liquid. Sponge should be softened but not soggy so work quickly.
3. Layer apricots, sponge and light custard into individual glasses. Top with a few slices of apricot, cover and store in the fridge until ready to serve.

* Recipes are from Kidspot Kitchen. More easy and affordable recipes are available at kidspot.com.au

How about joining the Maintenance Advisory Group (MAG)?

Why

Housing Trust knows that one of the things tenants want us to do well is to maintain their home. Every time we ask tenants, it's one of the things they care about most.

In the last tenant survey 88% of tenants said that they were very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the repairs service that Housing Trust provides but we would like to do better. We talked to the Tenant Advisory Group and they agreed that we should set up a group of tenants to advise us about how to improve the repairs service.

What

Once we have the MAG Group established the members of the group will decide how they will work with us to improve services to tenants and households. For example, the group may want to:

- help decide which tradesperson we use and agree with us on how we measure the performance of trades people
- be involved in choosing paint colours for the homes we offer to our tenants

It is important to know that the MAG Group is not just an avenue for repairs to your own residence. Instead it is an important way for the members of the group to improve the services we deliver to ALL Housing Trust tenants and households.

Who

We would like a group of up to ten people to sit on the MAG. You might be, or have previously, a tradie or a builder, you might have worked in a hardware shop or interior design, or you might just be interested in helping us improve our maintenance service. Anyone over the age of 18 and lives in one of our homes is welcome to put their name forward.

When

The group will decide how often they want to meet but probably no more than four times per year.

How

If you are interested in being considered please email info@housingtrust.org.au or ring us on 4254 1166.

Centrelink Tip

Did you know you can use Centrepay to pay bills and expenses as a regular deduction from your Centrelink payments? **This can make it easy for you to budget!**

For more information visit:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/centrepay/what-centrepay/paying-bills>

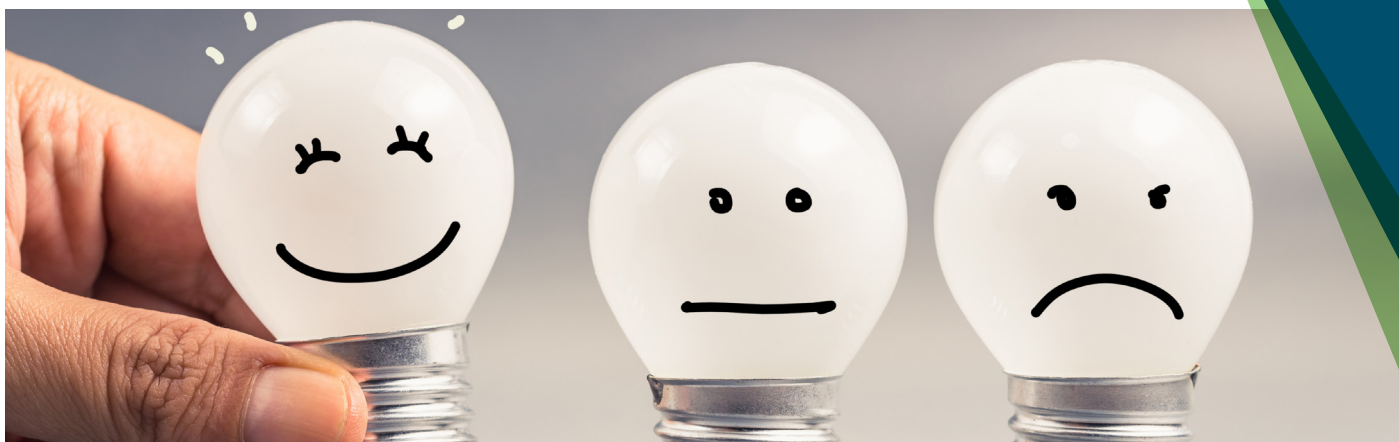
#DressedbyVinnies

On November 1st our team dressed head to toe in clothing from Vinnies in support of #DressedbyVinnies day! Australians buy an average of 27kgs of new textiles (clothing, sheets etc) each year and discard 23kgs into landfill. By shopping at Vinnies you help reduce your carbon footprint and the amount of clothing going to landfill.

You can find a Vinnies store at Wollongong, Fairy Meadow, Warrawong, Warilla, Oak Flats, and Gerringong.



It's Good to Hear from You



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

- Give you, our customers, a voice that we listen to
- Enable us to deliver effective and efficient services to you
- Improve how we deliver our services to you
- Review the decisions we make
- Helps us resolve problems you may be experiencing

You can do this by:



Calling our office to speak to one of our experienced staff on 02 4254 1166



Visiting our office and speaking to our staff. You can also talk to our staff when you see them at home visits



Completing a Complaint Form or Appeals Form available by visiting our website <https://housingtrust.org.au/contact-us/feedbackcomplaints/>



Attending Tenant Consultation / Block Meetings that are held for tenants living in Housing Trust complexes



Attending our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) Meetings. If you would like to be involved, please contact Joanne on 4254 1166.



Answering the Maintenance SMS and sending back the Maintenance & Repairs Feedback cards.

Housing Trust Socials



Jump on board and follow us to keep informed of free activities, events and training opportunities.

Opportunities & Events



Energy & Water
Ombudsman NSW

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON) assists customers who are having problems with their energy or water providers. If you or someone you know is having trouble sorting out a problem with an energy or water provider, call EWON on 1800 246 545, email complaints@ewon.com.au, or visit us online at ewon.com.au.



Are you on a low income or Centrelink benefit and finding it hard to save for a new fridge or bed? If you have lived in your place for more than three months you could be eligible for Southern Nils "No interest Loans" designed for low income earners to purchase household items and services, up to \$1,500. Call Southern Nils on 4276 2224.

Men's Shed

A Men's Shed is a community based organisation that offers men a safe and friendly environment to work on meaningful projects at their own pace in the company of other men. The wave of Men's Sheds originated in Australia as a way to improve the health and wellbeing of men over the age of 55.

Men's Shed gives back to the community, building items for disadvantaged kids and supporting families who are struggling.

To find a Mens Shed near you, call 1300 550 009 or visit <https://mensshed.org/find-a-shed/>

Water Restrictions

As of 10 December level 2 water restrictions will be in place in the Illawarra. For residents, this impacts the hours and methods you can use to water lawns and gardens, clean hard surfaces (paths and driveways) and clean vehicles and buildings.

What's allowed under level 2 water restrictions?

- ✓ You can water lawns and gardens before 10am or after 4pm using a watering can or bucket. During these times you can only use a drip irrigation or smart watering systems for a maximum of 15 mins a day.
- ✓ You can wash your vehicles with a bucket and sponge.

- ✓ Spot clean hard surfaces for health, safety or emergency reasons, using a hose fitted with a trigger nozzle or high pressure cleaning equipment.
- ✓ Wash your garbage bin using water from a bucket or a hose fitted with a trigger nozzle.
- ✓ Wash your windows or other glass surfaces with a bucket and cloth/sponge

Note: Recycled water, greywater, bore water and river water do not fall under level 2 water restrictions, however it's still important to use all water wisely.

Next Issue:

Look out for the next issue in March 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!

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