

Housing Trust News

Issue 16, March 2020 Newsletter

CEO Update

2020 is shaping up to be a year of huge challenges. We began with the threat of bushfire, onto flooding and now the Coronavirus. But as you will see in our newsletter there's still so much to be positive about.

One of my favourite days of the year as CEO of Housing Trust is when we get to present the Tylah West Scholarship winners. It was fantastic to share the event with Tylah's Grandmother and Aunt and all of the recipients and their families.

Housing Trust was recently awarded \$4.2M from Wollongong City Council to build new affordable housing in the Wollongong Local Government Area. The grant will allow us to deliver at least 16 new homes in two projects.

We have secured Council land in Bellambi and are currently the process of acquiring a second site. And we are working on a number of other projects to provide even more homes in the Illawarra over the next few years and we'll keep you updated.

We've taken the proactive step of closing the office and having our staff work from home until further notice. We've spent the last few weeks testing our systems and processes and so far the transition has been almost seamless. You should expect very little change from your perspective. There's more information below. Be assured we are still here 9-5pm Monday to Friday for all of your enquiries.

Yours Sincerely, Michele Adair

Housing Trust has implemented working from home arrangements for our staff to limit potential exposure and spread of the [COVID-19 Coronavirus](#).

Even though our office will be closed from 19/03/2020 we will still be available by phone on 42541166 and email info@housingtrust.org.au for all tenant enquiries. Our hours of operation will remain to be 9.00 a.m. – 5.00 p.m. Monday to Friday. For urgent repairs or maintenance, you are able to call 42541166 at any time, 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

From Thursday 19/03/2020 all documents are to be posted to PO BOX 1, Coniston 2500 or emailed to info@housingtrust.org.au. Should you wish to hand in keys, you will need to call 42541166 and request to speak to your Community Housing Worker who will arrange a time to hand in keys at your home. Whilst scheduling this appointment your Community Housing Worker will complete a pre face to face customer screening to ensure you're feeling well.

We currently have no known cases of COVID-19 among staff, tenants or contractors of Housing Trust but we are taking the recommended precautions for the health and wellbeing of our staff, tenants and your families.

Our maintenance and repairs team and contractors will contact you individually prior to visiting your home to ask a few questions about your current health and recent travel. If any member of your household has travelled overseas within 14 days from the scheduled works or is feeling unwell with flu like symptoms repairs may be rescheduled to a later date.

Home visits by Community Housing Workers and Site Meetings will not be undertaken until further notice.

We will continue to communicate with you with any updates to the situation.

Tylah West Presentation

This is the 4th year that we have delivered the annual Tylah West Scholarships in partnership with Bank of Australia. Over the four years the scholarships have totaled more than \$70,000. Created in honour of Tylah West who tragically passed away in 2015 the scholarships are open to Housing Trust tenants to provide assistance with participation in training, education or workplace participation.

This years' recipients and their families joined Housing Trust staff in our offices for the presentation. We were honoured to have Tylah's grandmother with us at the celebration. During Tylah's time here at Housing Trust in our Aboriginal Traineeship program her positivity was felt by all who met her. Housing Trust is pleased to be able to keep Tylah's enthusiasm for life and learning alive.



Pictured above from top left to right – Tylah's Aunty, Mary. 2020 recipient Jungrae. 2020 recipient Chantel. Aunty Mary, Housing Trust Community Engagement Officer Joanne, and 2020 recipient Mary and her proud Mum Elizabeth.

Household Details

Over the coming months, our Customer Service & Support Team will be contacting you over the phone to check your household details are up to date. As always your personal details will remain private as per Housing Trust Privacy Policy.

Tenant Christmas Party

A huge thank you to all of you who attended our Tenant Christmas Party. We hope you had a great time, we know we sure did!

Please see below some snaps taken from the day. The full album is available via our Facebook page, click [HERE](#) for the link. Alternatively, you can contact your Community Housing Worker and ask them to email you or text you a snap from your table or with Santa.



Maintenance Performance Measures

In September, Housing Trust announced we would be sharing in our Newsletters our bi-annual results in delivering a good maintenance service. The following table is a representation of our repairs and maintenance performance, including the performance measure and year on year results. Satisfaction with repairs has increased by 10% in the last six months and the average time calls answered has been reduced by 3 seconds. The percentage of non-urgent repairs done on time has decreased by 4%.

Performance Measure	Performance this half year (1/1/19 – 30/6/19)	From July 2019 – January 2020	Difference
% of urgent repairs done on time	100%	100%	0%
% non- urgent repairs done on time	96%	92%	4%
% tenants reporting satisfaction with last repair	80%	90%	10%
Average time calls answered	10 seconds	7 seconds	3 seconds

Water Invoices

Housing Trust water invoices are going electronic! We have attached the Opt In Consent Form for you so you can take the advantage on this option right away. Once you return the consent form back to us, we will send your next water invoices to your nominated email address. If you do not wish to use this service then you don't need to do anything. This change will reduce the costs associated with printing, storage, processing, and delivery of paper invoices. This means we can spend money where it matters most, ensuring everyone has access to safe and affordable housing. This change will also help us reduce our carbon footprint!

Did you know?

- 35 billion plastic bottles end up in landfills each year
- 50 billion paper cups end up in landfills each year
- 23 percent of water bottles are recycled

By choosing a reusable water bottle or coffee cup, you can save hundreds of plastic bottles and coffee cups from ending up in landfill this year. There has also been proven benefits for both your health and savings!

Health - You can improve your health by avoiding BPA plastics typically associated with disposable plastic water bottles and coffee cups. Stainless steel water bottles for example are great for keeping mold and other bacteria at bay!

Money - You can also save money by converting to your very own keep cup or reusable water bottle. Many cafes and eateries will offer you a discount on the price of your coffee if you bring your own cup! Single use plastic bottles can range anywhere between \$1.50 to \$5.00, you can purchase a stainless steel reusable bottle from \$5.00 and up.

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



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



Completing a Complaint Form or Appeals Form available by visiting our website

<https://housingtrust.org.au/contact-us/feedbackcomplaints/>

Have Your Say as a Member of Housing Trust Maintenance Advisory Group (MAG)!

Do you have what it takes to be part of Housing Trust's first Maintenance Advisory Group (MAG?) The group will decide how they will work with Housing Trust 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 performances of trades people
- Be involved in choosing paint colours for the homes we offer to our tenants

Note: this 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.

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

Housing Trust Socials



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

Opportunities & Events

Regional Seniors Travel Card

If you're receiving the Age Pension, or a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card Holder living in Shellharbour LGA you're eligible to receive a \$250 prepaid card to help ease the cost of travel. The card is part of the Regional Seniors Travel Card Program which is available for a two-year trial period until 2021.

The card is valid at certain retailers to pay for pre-booked NSW Trainlink Regional trains and coaches, fuel and taxis. The travel card is valid for 14 months from date of issue. If you have an online MyServiceNSW Account you can apply online via the following link – service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-regional-seniors-travel-card. You can also apply at your local Service Centre or by calling 13 77 88.

Waste & Recycling Symbols Explained

The NSW Government has recently updated symbols for rubbish, recycling and soft plastics. Please use the following information as a guide to help make your household rubbish and waste disposal simpler and more environmentally friendly. More information is available online via <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/live/waste-and-recycling>



Soft Plastics

If you flip over your household food and supplies, you may see the following soft plastics symbol. This means you can collect the item, and drop it off at your local Woolworths or Coles collection box.

Examples of Common Household Soft Plastics :

- ✓ Biscuit, chip and cracker packets (outer wrapper only)
- ✓ Chocolate and snack bar wrappers
- ✓ Frozen food bags, snap lock/zip lock bags
- ✓ Cat and dog food pouches

Tip: Soft vs hard plastics – do the “scrunch test”
If you can scrunch your plastic into a ball easily, it can't go in your yellow lid bin. You can recycle soft plastics along with plastic bags through the REDcycle program at participating stores.



Yellow Recycle Bin

Based on the “scrunch test”, all hard plastics, aluminums, glass bottles and cardboard can be placed in your yellow recycling bin.

Examples of Common Household Recyclables :

- ✓ Sauce/water/juice/soft drink bottles
- ✓ Wine/beer bottles, sauces in jars
- ✓ Aluminum cans, jars and foil
- ✓ Cleaning spray/shampoo & conditioner bottles
- ✓ Pizza boxes



Not Recyclable

These items cannot be placed in kerbside recycling.

Please dispose in your red household rubbish bin.

Next Issue:

Look out for the next issue in June 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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