

Housing Trust News

Issue 14, September 2019 Newsletter

CEO Update

Welcome to our September Newsletter!

The end of the 2018-19 financial year is the time to reflect on what's been achieved and our plans for the future. The finance team are busy finalising the accounts with our auditors and another Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be here before we know it.

In August, the Board and Executive Managers had a very productive couple of days reviewing our strategic priorities and discussing the challenges ahead. Key issues include

- Ensuring multi-unit developments, such as Market St. and Central Gardens, are welcoming and safe for all residents
- Reporting to Government on the employment, health and wellbeing, education

and social inclusion experienced by tenants, and

- How to increase the number of homes Housing Trust has available in the Illawarra.

I'm excited to be attending the 40th Annual NPH Affordable Housing Conference in San Francisco in October. The event is for the leading community housing providers from Canada, the UK, USA and Australia. We will be discussing everything from building innovation to financial investment options and visiting a number of housing projects. I'm so very proud to represent Housing Trust in these forums – to share our expertise and to learn from others.

Yours sincerely,
Michele Adair

Tenants Eager for Keys to Corrimal

We received an overwhelming number of applications for our affordable housing at Eager Street, Corrimal. All five homes have now been allocated, with all five households settled in their new homes.

Our Community Housing Worker Peta will be back on site to check in with tenants and see how they're going during their six week home visits.

Corrimal was a small but vital step towards addressing housing affordability in the Illawarra.



Fasiu's Story

Market Street tenant, Fasiu, spent ten years in the Fiji Military and the United Nations Peacekeeping Forces before immigrating to Australia in 2015. Fasiu said, "My years in the armed forces showed me the very best and the very worst of people. I never stop being amazed by what some believe are problems, and then seeing the resilience of others".

In Australia, Fasiu managed hotels and resorts and did consultancy work. He gained Australian citizenship in 2015. Within a month, Fasiu developed a blood disorder, and to save his life had to have both his legs amputated. "There was no choice. I told the Doctors, just take them, I will manage. I have faced worse".

When I was a small boy (ten years old), my father and I were lost at sea in a outrigger canoe for 12 days. We survived on rainwater, coconuts and flying fish. Every day when I woke up I asked my father if we would live and he said "of course". This man raised 14 children and I believed him. When my father and I finally made it back to our village, my mother had to have our headstones removed.

Fasiu spent 15 months in hospital fighting an infection after his double amputation. He had to argue with his Occupational Therapist to allow him to leave hospital and rent a small unit in West Wollongong. "The bathroom was on a different level to the bedroom, which was very difficult at the start, but I wanted to be independent so I made it



work. When I was offered Market Street, I could not believe how beautiful it was, and I had to rethink my perceptions of social housing."

"My life was altered forever by an unfortunate illness. But having the solid foundation of this home, I have been able to build my life back to have independence, meaning and purpose. Give me another month, and I will be walking on these prosthetics without a chair, walker or even a cane. I can never thank Housing Trust enough!"

Tenant Advisory Group

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) had the August meeting in our new Bridge Street Offices. If you would like to have your say in Housing Trusts' operations, help us identify new or innovative ways to deliver our services, and share information beneficial to other tenants, please call Joanne on 4254 1166 to discuss.



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.

Recently updated policies include:

- Abandoned Premises & Goods Policy
- Absence from Property Policy
- Pet Policy
- Social Housing Eligibility Policy
- Commencing a Social Housing Tenancy Policy

Are you going away on holidays or going to be away from your property?

If you're going to be away from your property for more than two weeks you need to let Housing Trust know. This is so that we know you won't be home and can try and arrange appointments around your availability.

It's also important to let us know in case there is an emergency at your property. If you can't be contacted while you're away you may need to appoint someone that we can contact in emergencies.

Check out our new **Absence from Property Policy** or give us a call for more information.

Pets

If you would like to have a pet, you must first seek approval from Housing Trust. Housing Trust will assess your request and where it is deemed reasonable, your request will be approved.

If you have a pet and don't have your own yard, your pet must be kept on a lead while in all common areas. This is for the safety of your pet and other residents or visitors to the complex.

You also need to make sure you clean up after your pet. For more information, please see our **Pets Policy**.

"Culture and art give me the strength to keep going", says Margaret

Although born on the coast, Margaret identifies as a Wiradjuri woman. Margaret has a strong connection with the land and sea and is very passionate about her culture and art.

Margaret has been painting since 2003, and recognises the healing powers of art. Margaret recalls her mum's dying wish that she live her life by her culture and not let it die. Margaret remembers how at peace the elders were sitting on the ground in the shade, putting their "cultural feelings onto canvas".

According to Margaret, the colours and contours of the paint are significant in telling the stories. "Stories vary with Aboriginal art with most about the land and the sea as well as the dreamtime".

For more on Margaret you can visit her website <http://www.cultureoncanvas.biz/>



Maintenance & Repairs

Did you know that we have different groups of repairs depending on how urgent they are? The more urgent the repair, the quicker it will get done. In the boxes on the right you will see examples of repair types and how we give a time period for them to be done. This will help you to understand how long it is likely to take for a job to be done.

Our Performance in Delivering a Good Maintenance Service

We know that our tenants expect repairs to be done on time and that our contractors are polite, clean up any mess and turn up when they say they will.

So our tenants know how we are performing, we will show results of our performance every six months in this newsletter against the measures shown below. We would love to know if there are any other measures that you would like us to report on. Email feedback to info@housingtrust.org.au.

URGENT – 1-4 hours attendance - These may be health, safety and security related emergencies

- ✓ Electrical danger
- ✓ Gas leakage
- ✓ Significant water loss due to a major water pipe failure
- ✓ Major sewer overflow inside the premises including internal common areas

NON URGENT – 4- 24 hours attendance

- ✓ Hot water system failure
- ✓ Significant leaking tap
- ✓ Broken window
- ✓ Blocked sewer if more than one toilet available

Responsive Maintenance - 1 to 28 days

- ✓ Loose tapware
- ✓ Cupboard doors off hinges
- ✓ Oven replacement
- ✓ Antenna/aerial not working
- ✓ Poor yard drainage
- ✓ Windows and doors sticking

Performance Measure	Performance last half year	Performance this half year (1/1/19 – 30/6/19)
% of urgent repairs done on time	Not applicable	100%
% non- urgent repairs done on time	Not applicable	96%
% tenants reporting satisfaction with last repair	Not applicable	80%
Average time calls answered	Not applicable	10 seconds

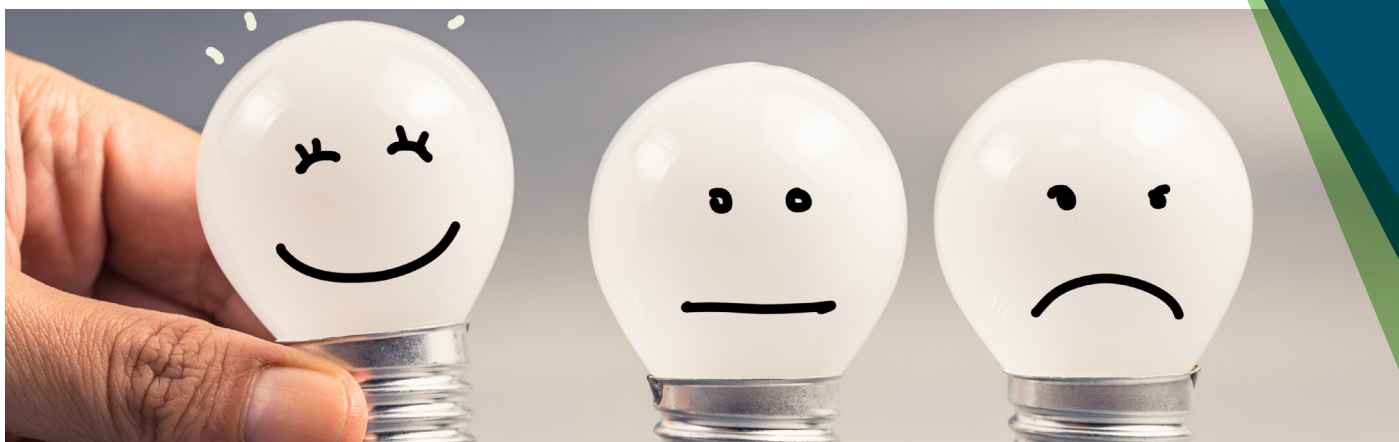
Recent Events

Dont forget to tag us in your pics!



A great time was had by all at the annual Greene Street NAIDOC event

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
www.housingtrust.org.au



Attending Tenant Consultation 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 or email Joanne.Reed@housingtrust.org.au

Housing Trust Socials



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

Opportunities



Good Shepard Microfinance partners with financial services organisations to design a range of insurance products for people on low incomes. Contents insurance for your valuable items does not have to cost the earth. Affordable comprehensive car insurance is available. Call 1800 429 598 or email contactus@essentialsbyaa.com.au.

Mission Australia is seeking young and newly emerging artists to share their culture through their art. The winning design will provide the main theme for the local Reconciliation Action Plan, be displayed on brochures and posters, and featured in the regional office. The prize is \$1500 and the closing date is 08/11/2019. Contact LoweJu@missionaustralia.com for more information.

Campbell Page

Campbell Page believes everyone deserves a chance to be seen, a chance to be heard and a chance to thrive and they're committed to making a difference in our community. Campbell Page offers ongoing training and education, counselling and employment for those with disability, injury, mental health, educational challenges and/or ongoing health conditions.

Campbell Page offers any residents help or guidance with Centrelink, obtaining medical

evidence and/or working collaboratively with other services & programs in the area, including linking into Opportunities Pathways and/or the NDIS.

Please feel free to reach out to Melissa, the Community Engagement Consultant, for any queries, questions or additional information you may require. Email hello@campbellpage.org.au.



Opportunity Pathways is an exciting program that supports you to make a positive change working towards training, employment or housing independence. To help you achieve your goals you will have access to one-on-one support coaching and mentoring, training, workshops, work experience placements, volunteering opportunities and work retention support.

Contact Wesley Mission on 1800 931 108.

Next Issue:

Look out for the next issue in December 2019! 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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