

Housing Trust News



Growing Together

Wattle Road Gardening Group

What started as a small project to revamp the community gardens at Central Gardens has grown into a thriving space, thanks to the time, care, and commitment of our residents.

The gardens were initially established in 2016 through funding from the Family and Community Services (FaCS) Wellbeing Community Garden Project that introduced raised communal beds at HT homes. Recently, the gardens have undergone renewal and a gardening group has been organised, with HT providing fresh produce and tools.

"When I went back to my unit, I was the happiest I could remember feeling for a long time" - Gardening Group member

Residents have been showing up, whether at fortnightly catch-ups, solo visits, or with friends and pets, to help keep the garden thriving.

It's become a space to work together or unwind alone, and the results are clear - beautiful and healthy produce and a strong, active gardening group. It's a great example of what happens when community comes together.



Acknowledgement of Country

Housing Trust acknowledges the people of the Dharawal and Yuin nations, Cultural Custodians of the lands, waters and sky where we work and provide homes. We recognise their deep connection to the coastal areas stretching from south of Sydney Harbour to beyond the Shoalhaven River and throughout the escarpment. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, acknowledging their continual care and stewardship of these lands, waters and sky throughout generations. Housing Trust extends a warm invitation to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, as we work together towards harmony on lands that were never ceded. This always was and always will be Aboriginal land.

A message from our CEO

Welcome to the Winter edition of HT News.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Winter edition. As I write this, the sun is shining for what feels like the first time in a while - a welcome and gentle reminder that Spring is just around the corner, bringing with it a sense of renewal and warmth.

Despite the cool and wet conditions, I've had the pleasure of attending many wonderful events recently, including our regular HT Connect and NAIDOC Week celebrations. Thank you for welcoming me to these events, and for taking the time to share your stories and feedback from which I continue to learn so much.

It was a joy to come together with members of the HT community to mark the launch of our Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) last week. The Plan demonstrates our continued commitment to listening, learning and growing alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, as well as the steps we're taking to ensure our services are culturally appropriate and accessible. We were honoured to welcome Dr. Aunty Joyce Donovan to lead us in truth telling - a powerful moment of reflection and unity, and a milestone for HT in our journey toward a more inclusive and equitable Australia. My heartfelt thanks to our RAP Committee for their dedication in bringing this plan to life, and to everyone who has supported our journey so far.

Even with the warmth of the sun this morning, I can't help but feel it's been a cold winter. In my home, the coughs and sniffles seem never-ending. With fingers and toes firmly crossed that this hasn't been your experience, I wanted to share a little comfort: a simple chicken soup recipe that my son always asks for to soothe the ills of winter.

Chicken Soup Recipe

- 1 tbsp oil
 - 1 clove garlic, minced
 - 1 onion, diced
 - 1L chicken stock
 - 2 carrots, grated
- 2 celery sticks, diced
 - 250g chicken, diced small
 - 1 can creamed corn
 - 1-2 nests of vermicelli pasta/noodles

In a large saucepan, lightly brown oil, garlic and onion over medium heat. Add chicken stock, chicken, carrot, celery and creamed corn. Simmer for about 15 minutes. Add noodles/pasta and simmer for another 5-10 minutes (depending on your choice of pasta). Although perfect as it is, I often can't resist sneaking in some extra greens, a sprinkle of parsley, and of course a side of crusty bread and butter!

I hope this meal brings warmth and comfort to your home as it does mine.

Please reach out to the team anytime with suggestions and feedback. This newsletter is for you, and we want to make sure it hits the spot with a good balance of information and enjoyment.

Until next, time my very best wishes,

Amanda

Pictured: Dr. Aunty Joyce Donovan and her granddaughter Keira sharing stories at HT RAP Launch



Scan the QR code to read about our RAP Launch



Your 2025 Tenant Satisfaction Survey

The 2025 Tenant Satisfaction Survey is now closed. We would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their feedback. Your responses are now with the Community Housing Industry Association NSW (CHIA NSW), who will analyse the data and compare HT's results with other community housing providers across Australia. This helps us understand how we're performing and where we can improve, especially in areas like communication, safety, support, and repairs and maintenance.

Keep an eye out for the results, which will be shared soon. We'll also be announcing the four lucky winners of the \$250 gift cards, drawn from those who completed the survey.



Reconciliation Week

Bridging Now to Next

National Reconciliation Week is a time to reflect, learn, and take action. It marks two key milestones in Australia's reconciliation journey - the 1967 referendum and the 1992 Mabo decision and challenges us all to strengthen relationships between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians.

This year's theme, Bridging Now to Next, is a call to honour the past while building a better future. It's about moving forward with purpose.

Across the region, communities came together to recognise the week. HT crew and customers proudly joined local events, including the Bellambi Public School Reconciliation Walk and the Shellharbour Walk, standing alongside others in moments of connection and respect.

Reconciliation isn't a box to tick. It's a commitment, and this week reminds us to keep showing up, listening, and walking together.



If you need help to understand this newsletter, please contact the Telephone Interpreters Service on **131 450** and ask them to contact us for you at no cost. You can also come into the Housing Trust Office and ask for assistance in your language.

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Tips for Managing Mould in your home

Mould isn't just unpleasant - it can affect your health, especially if you have asthma, allergies, or a weakened immune system. That's why it's important we work together to keep the mould at bay in your home.

What causes mould? Mould grows in damp, poorly ventilated spaces like bathrooms, kitchens, and laundries. It can also be triggered by leaking pipes or roofs, condensation from dryers or heaters without proper ventilation.

You've got this: It is your responsibility to keep your place clean and dry. A few simple habits can help reduce the chance of mould growing:

- Use exhaust fans or open windows when cooking, showering, or drying clothes
- Wipe down wet surfaces like bathroom tiles
- Let us know early if you spot leaks, damp patches, or signs of mould

What we'll do: We're responsible for making sure your home is in good condition. If mould is caused by a structural issue - like a leak or poor ventilation - call our maintenance team on 4254 1166.

Noticed mould - clean it! We're not responsible for cleaning mould only rectifying issues that cause ongoing mould.



BPAY Payments

If you're making BPAY payments for water or maintenance charges outside your regular tenant payment plan, please let us know as soon as possible. A quick call ensures your payment is receipted correctly and helps avoid it going towards something else.

We're here to make things easy - if you're unsure what's included in your payment plan, our team is ready to walk you through it and guide you on the best next steps.

Are You Receiving the Right Amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance?

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a payment from Centrelink to help with your rent.

To make sure you're receiving the right amount of CRA, you will need to keep your rent details up to date with Centrelink.

Here's why it matters:

- If your rent has increased, you might be missing out on extra payments
- If your rent has decreased, you could be getting more than you're entitled to - which might lead to a debt later on.

Follow these simple steps to make sure everything's accurate and your CRA is on track.

If you're unsure if you're eligible for CRA to help pay your rent, please call us on 4254 1166.

- What should you do?**
- » Log in to your Centrelink online account via myGov
 - » Go to 'Update Accommodation Details'
 - » Enter your current rent amount and housing details

Drain bugs

Noticed tiny flies hanging around your sink or drains? You're not alone!

One of our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) members recently mentioned seeing little bugs near her drain - and it turns out, quite a few of us have spotted the same thing.

What are they? They're called drain flies - small, fuzzy, moth-like insects that love damp spots like drains, potted plants, or anywhere water tends to sit.

They feed on the gunk that builds up in drains and moist areas. While they're not harmful, they can carry bacteria if they start multiplying.

Here's how to send them packing:

- Give your drains a good scrub and flush them regularly.
- Pour boiling water down the drain to clear out buildup.
- Try a drain cleaner or a simple vinegar trap.
- If they keep coming back, it might be time to call in a pest control expert.

Got your own tips or tricks for dealing with drain flies? We'd love to hear them! Call us on 4254 1166.



Check your eligibility for NSW Gov Low Income Electricity Rebate



These relaxed events are a chance to catch up with someone from our customer and maintenance team, and connect with local services - all over a cuppa and some morning tea.

Whether you've got a question about your home, need support with the cost of living, or just want to feel more connected, we're here to listen and help.

We're visting HT locations across the region, if you would like us to visit you please reach out to our team on 4254 1166.



Community Noticeboard



Do you have a Will?

End of life details can be difficult to talk about but having a will can make sure that your loved ones are protected and your wishes are made clear.

Here's how to get started:

- NSW Trustee & Guardian offers free will preparation for eligible Centrelink pensioners.
- Illawarra Legal Centre provides free legal advice, including help with wills. You can call them on 4276 1939.
- The Salvation Army offers affordable wills using Community Wills Days. Book on their website salvationarmy.org.au/gift-in-will/wills-days/



Culture Mix 2025 is coming back to Wollongong on Saturday 20th September. The event runs from 11am – 7pm in Wollongong CBD. This free, inclusive event celebrates our city's rich cultural diversity with music, dance, food, art, and workshops for all. Drop in and say hi!



NSW Government's Active and Creative Kids Vouchers are back! If you receive Family Tax Benefit and have school-aged children, you can now apply for two \$50 vouchers to help cover the cost of sport, recreation, creative or cultural activities. Apply via Service NSW App or in person at your local branch.



The Government's Little Book of Scams is a practical guide full of helpful tips to keep you and your loved ones scam savvy.



Snap, Send, Solve

Spotted something in your neighbourhood that needs fixing?

Snap, Send, Solve makes it easy to report issues straight to your local Council or Utilities. Just take a photo, send it through the app, and it'll be directed to the right team to get sorted.

Common things you can report:

- Dumped rubbish
- Abandoned vehicles
- Potholes
- Tree issues
- Water or sewer problems
- Illegal parking

Download the app from snapsendsolve.com, the App Store or Google Play.

We love your feedback!

If you have compliments or complaints please call us on 4254 1166 or go to our website housingtrust.org.au.

Dharawal Country

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