

The Kitchen Table

Newsletter of Women's Housing Company Ltd - December 2008



Welcome to the Women's Housing Company Newsletter

This edition of *The Kitchen Table* is written with *warmest season's greetings* from all staff at Women's Housing Company.

We hope you will enjoy the public holidays and share happy moments with family and friends.

Introducing new Staff at Women's Housing Company

WELCOME

My Name is **Jennifer Vallentine**.

I have recently joined Women's Housing Company in the position of Community Development Worker. I have always had a strong interest in women's rights and social justice issues. My background includes working for NGOs and community organisations particularly in the health sector. I am looking forward to getting to know everyone and am keen to work closely with you all in the future.



Office Closure 2008 / 2009

Please be aware that the Women's Housing Company office will be closed over the festive season.

The last day the office is open is **Tuesday 23/12/2008** and the first day the office reopens in the new year is **Monday 5/1/2009**.

On working days 24 & 29 & 30 & 31 December 2008 you can call a staff member on **0408 675 401** for queries between 9am and 4.30pm.

For **urgent repairs** on public holidays or weekends please call the emergency plumber or electrician, see **bottom of your tenancy agreement** (if you live in a private rental unit).

For tenants living in a WHC unit, please call O'Leary for any **electrical emergencies** on **9712 5499** and BDC for any **plumbing emergencies** on **8748 6900**.

December 2008 Inside this issue

New Staff

Office closure

LINKS

Community
Development

Congratulations

AGM impressions

Industry Updates

New Rent Policy
Implementation

Gifts to WHC

2007 national survey

Handy Hints

Newsletter
Inserts

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LINKS Linking the Women's Housing Community

This section will give you as the tenants an opportunity to share information with other tenants. The information we would like to publish regards knowledge you have about services, organisations, and activities which could be beneficial for other tenants with a view to improve their lives emotionally, socially and

The Recipes of Community Development on the "Kitchen Table"

Hello everyone and welcome to the last edition of **The Kitchen Table** for 2008. I hope this newsletter sees you well in the lead up to the festive season.

What an exciting time it is for the Community Development team here at WHC! Lots of tenants have participated in several events and projects making the past few months enjoyable and very exciting.

Going back to the September, Graciela, myself and several tenants went on a social outing to the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

We were treated to a lovely morning tea with a spectacular view of the harbour; then, taken on a guided tour of the gallery. We were also lucky enough to be the first members of the public to see the Art Gallery's latest acquisition – one of Cezanne's famous paintings.

This outing was a fantastic opportunity for tenants to get involved with WHC and socialise with other tenants. We all had a lovely day filled with fun and laughter.

I would also like to express thanks to tenants who were able to attend our first Liverpool tenant meeting. Over food and drinks we were informed about a range of services available in the Liverpool area by local community workers.

We were fortunate enough to have a community development worker from the council as well as a woman from Vantage services talk about aged care services and emergency relief packages.



A woman from Liverpool Women's Health Clinic also spoke of the wide variety of services offered to women in the area. I have information for interested tenants unable to attend the meeting.

An enormous thanks to all our gifted tenants who took part in the Calendar project this year!! Each year we have seen more and more tenants interested in participating in this project. The calibre of photos this year was phenomenal and congratulations are definitely in order.

Preparation is underway for the launch of the calendar and we hope to have the calendars sent to all tenants before the New Year.

If you missed out in participating this year then never fail as the project will be run again next year! Please let us know early if you wish to be involved, you can leave a message for Graciela or Jennifer on 9281 1764.

Finally, I would like to stress how important your participation is to Women's Housing Company. Not only is it an important opportunity to meet and socialise with other tenants, it is a fantastic opportunity to do things you might not usually do.

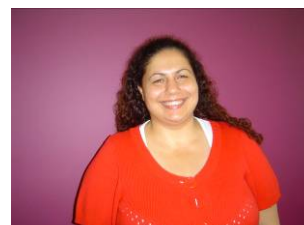
The more you participate the more involvement you have with WHC and the more say you hopefully have in the future of the company. My ears are always open and I am happy to hear any ideas you may have, so drop me a line anytime.

Take care and best wishes, Jennifer Vallentine

Congratulations

Women's Housing Company proudly announces that another staff member has been fully trained up as a Housing Worker achieving the Certificate IV in Social Housing in the shortest time ever recorded !

Congratulations to Tulin Salicioglu



AGM 2008 Impressions



Industry updates

CEO Column

I would like to thank the 75 tenants who attended the recent Women's Housing Company Annual General Meeting. This is always one of the largest turnouts of tenants for any housing association's AGM.

The meeting is always a time to celebrate as the year draws to an end.

Board members attended and enjoyed meeting and seeing tenants, this is essential as they focus on strategic issues through out the year, and to meet many of you makes sure their focus remains on achieving service delivery outcomes such as planning for new housing.

Again the highlight was the music with board, staff and many tenants getting up to dance along with the impressive Latin musicians.

The past month has been difficult for tenants as we implement the new Rent Policy for existing tenants as we undergo the six monthly income reviews.

I would like to say thank you for your patience during this process, as it is an extremely difficult government imposed directive we must implement.

Hopefully many of you will benefit by the additional cash payments being made during the next week for those on certain types of Centrelink payments.

Changes are still occurring in the housing sector, many of you at the AGM heard about the establishment of a new affordable housing development company called BlueCHP, of which Women's Housing Company is a partner. We have just been notified BlueCHP will receive 246 properties, it is unknown at this stage where they are located and how many are appropriate for Women's Housing Company.

It is on a sad note that in recent months a number of Women's Housing Company tenants are no longer with us. We offer our condolences to families, friends and those of you who are neighbours during this time.

On a brighter note, best wishes to you all as the year draws to an end and we look forward to welcoming in a new year soon.

Bobbie Townsend, CEO

Thank you

New Rent Policy implementation

Most tenants have now experienced the impact of the new rent policy. In order to address your concerns and queries in the most effective way, WHC employed a casual worker, Kerryn Pagett.

Kerryn has now finished up and we have had positive feedback from tenants about the communication over the past few weeks.

Kerry had contact with 116 tenants over 171 phone conversations and 9 office visits; she spent 51.4 hours talking to tenants and explaining the new rent policy. Keeryn was a great help to the housing workers who are always under a lot of time constraints at the time of the income reviews.

THANK YOU Kerryn



GIFTS to WHC staff

The festive season is often a time for our tenants to express your appreciation of the services received by WHC. A Thank You is welcome by all staff.

At times, tenants want to express their special appreciation and bring gifts to a particular worker for instance. It is important that tenants know the process for gifts received. As WHC is receiving government funds, we are required to register all gifts received at our office. Thus gifts are entered into a gift register, including the name of the person providing the gift. This is to ensure that WHC is transparent and that allegations of bribes for instance, cannot be made.

All gifts received are then evenly distributed among staff. So, if you are thinking about a gift to a particular staff member, please aware that it may end up with a different staff member.

To avoid any disappointments please accept that a THANK YOU can never go astray.

Results from the 2007 National Social Housing Survey

This national survey provides an input into the provision of social housing across all states and territories.

The results below relate to tenants living in community housing, that is rental housing managed by non-profit community based organisations.

- 51% of all households are single person households
- 76% of all households are headed by a woman
- The age group 45-54 year olds is the largest age group for the head of all households
- 78% of tenants are in receipt of a government payment as their main income source

WHC is captured well in these figures apart from our main age group being above 55 years.

Handy Hints

from the Asset Management Team

The Asset Management Team would like to wish all our tenants Season's Greetings and a safe and happy New Year for you and your loved ones.

Please see our recycling guide to help with the additional material over this period.

DO RECYCLE

- Plastic bottles, tubs and jars
- Ice cream and takeaway containers
- Milk, juice and cream cartons
- Cordial Bottles
- Empty steel cans
- Aluminum soft drink cans
- Empty aerosol cans
- Newspapers and magazines
- Envelopes and mail
- Empty glass bottles and jars



DO THE RIGHT THING

- Don't put recyclables in plastic bags
- In order to save water, it is not necessary to rinse containers, but it helps if they are clean of food scraps.
- Don't throw plastic bags in the rubbish bin. Recycle them at your nearest supermarket instead.

Enjoy the festive season and best wishes from Donna and Mardi

Newsletter Inserts

Rent Statement

Please check your rent statement and the entries of your rent payments against your own records.

At times mistakes are discovered either due to bank error, WHC entry error, or tenant error. We can only rectify such mistakes once we are aware of them, please tell us immediately if you believe a mistake has occurred.

The most recent rent statement always slightly overlaps with your previous statement to ensure that no payments are missed or that late entries and corrections can be viewed.

Fridge Magnet

Please find enclosed a fridge magnet with emergency phone numbers for our plumber & electrician.

Tenants living in leasehold properties MUST use the phone numbers listed at the bottom of your lease !

Annual Tenant Survey

Please find enclosed the annual tenant survey, return date: 31/1/09

Surveys can be requested in following languages:

Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Spanish