

The Kitchen Table

Newsletter of Women's Housing Company Ltd - December 2009



Welcome to the Women's Housing Company Newsletter

The Kitchen Table

Women's Housing Company Annual General Meeting

The WHC AGM was held on Nov 24 at Sydney City RSL, with over 80 tenants attending, including the WHC Board and staff. Guest speaker Councillor Di Tornai, an independent member of the Sydney City Council, gave an excellent speech on Community Housing and the future. The raffle draw was a rousing success and the hampers were gratefully accepted by the winners.

Importantly, a change to the WHC Constitution was voted on and formally adopted; this means that in future WHC can legally purchase property should the opportunity arise. And secondly we now assess individuals on an 'as needs' basis. The original Constitution was written over 20 years ago and was legally inadequate to meet our current needs in servicing tenants.

WHC Thanks Sydney City RSL, Fardoulis Chocolates and Franklins for their support

OFFICE CLOSURE

Please note the office will be closed to tenants over the festive season.

The last day the office is open to the public is **THURSDAY 24/12/2009** from 9am to 1pm. The first day the office reopens in the new year is on **MONDAY 4/1/2010**. On working days Tuesday 29, Wednesday 30 and Thursday 31 December 2009 you can call the office for Emergencies ONLY on 9281 1764 and leave a message. Calls will not be returned unless it is an emergency.

For **urgent repairs** on any of these days please call:

O'Leary for any electrical emergencies on 9712 5499 and, **BDC for any plumbing emergencies on 8748 6900**.

However, if you live in a leasehold property **please refer to the bottom of your lease** for the emergency plumber or electrician. For any other repairs or tenancy issues please wait for the office to re-open to report them. Thank you.

ARE YOU **READY** FOR DIGITAL TV

From 2010 - 2013 Australian TV will move from Analog to Digital. Digital TV has better picture and sound quality. Sydney is set for a switch over on 2013, but some digital channels are working now. Before 2013, you will need to get a digital set top box for your old TV, or purchase a new TV with a built in Digital tuner. See the Australian government site for more information, www.australia.gov.au/digitalready or phone 1800 20 10 13. There is further information at www.freeview.com.au



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womenshousingcompany.org

Linking the Women's Housing Community

Seniors Information Services (13 12 44)

Do you have a NSW Seniors Card or a Pensioner Concession Card? If you do there are a wide range of services, facilities, and venues that you can get great discounts at.

NSW Seniors Card. This card is free for NSW residents aged 60 and over who work 20 hours or less per week.

You can obtain benefits at - Movie theatres, the Opera House, Powerhouse Museum, Australian Museum, Government House, Historic Houses Trust even at the Zoo, both Taronga and Western Plains (Dubbo).

There are also a broad range of concessions available to assist in meeting day-to-day living costs (power, transport, water rates etc). Card holders can access a range of health and pharmaceutical services and subsidies.

You may also be entitled to a - Seniors Concession Allowance, a six monthly payment to assist with regular bills such as energy, and car registration. Or a telephone Allowance, paid each quarter. There are a range of NSW Government concessions for health and/or household expenses. Please call for further information or www.seniorsinfo.nsw.gov.au

National Seniors

Get online and see the great benefits of becoming a member

www.nationalseniors.com.au

Or call 1300 76 50 50



WHC wishes to send congratulations to Mardi Bell and her family who welcomed Maya into the world on 17 November. She weighed 3.3 kg (or 8.13 pounds) and was 53 cm long. Both mum and baby girl are doing fine.

What it means to be a Member of Women's Housing Company.

At the recent AGM tenants could join to become an annual member of WHC. Being a member was important this year as we were voting on a change to the Constitution. Certain agenda items can only be voted on by members.

Please contact us for the appropriate form should you wish to be a member for 2010.



Industry Updates

CEO Column

As the year draws to an end and we move into the holiday season our thoughts are with family and friends.

We must also think of those who have experienced loss during the year and for those who do not have family around them for whatever reason.

Many parts of our community do not celebrate Christmas depending upon our beliefs and circumstances. On the other hand it can be a time for reflection, to look back on what we have achieved during the year and what we aim for in the coming New Year.

There are changes in all parts of the world, in your local communities and also at Women's Housing Company.

This year staff turnover occurred with new faces in the office, along with staff having additions to their families during the latter part of this year.

Alongside this the community housing sector is experiencing the greatest change since its establishment. Many organisations may not benefit from change and others will see a rapid increase in the number of properties they have in management and how they provide services.

As we look back on the successes and challenges during the year in maintaining housing services to tenants, we know our work in 2010 will bring further challenges. However staff are committed to ensuring single women, and in particular existing tenants, receive high-quality housing management services.

Women's Housing Company will be required to address a number of key priorities:

- maintaining quality service provision
- addressing the needs of homeless women
- balancing affordable housing opportunities and social housing requirements.

These are only a few key priorities and there are more at a strategic Board level to ensure Women's Housing Company continues its essential work.

I look forward to welcoming in the New Year and wish all of you best wishes for the holiday season.

Chinese New Year February 2010 Year of the TIGER

Various events held around Sydney, please check your local papers and online at -

www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/cny/

From February 14 2010 until February 2, 2011 - the Tiger is the third sign in the cycle of Chinese Zodiac. It is a sign of courage. This fearless and fiery fighter is revered by the ancient Chinese as the sign that wards off the three main disasters of a household: fire, thieves and ghosts.



Operations Manager Corner

With the end of the year fast approaching the housing team have completed the income review and thanks to all who sent their details in by the due date.

Once again the office will be closed to the public for the 3 working days between Christmas and New Years Day. Please see the separate notice for emergency contact numbers for this period.

All staff at Women's Housing wish all tenants Seasons Greetings and a Happy New Year and look forward to continuing to provide quality service for another year.

RED CROSS - Tenant connect service

If you are over 80 or an Aboriginal tenant over 55 the Red Cross offers a free service. Joining Tenant Connect means you will receive a short friendly daily call from a Red Cross volunteer at an agreed time. Call 1800 827 677 for more information. TTY uses call 1800 555 677 and ask for connection 1800 827 677.

MHLC My Home Living Care

To assist people to live in their own home environment by providing an economic and professional service, which caters to the individual needs of our clientele. MHLC provides (for a fee) services including - Transportation, Shopping, Social Outings, Personal Care, Domestic Duties and Remind and Supervise medication.

DADHC - Department of Aging, Disability and Home Care

The Home Care Service is one of a number of Home and Community Care providers subsidised by the Australian and NSW Governments to help people with a disability, older people and their carers to live independently in their own homes. To find out about other government and non-government services, call Commonwealth Carelink on 1800 052 222 Visit the www.dadhc.nsw.gov.au and click on the Home Care tab.

Healthdirect Australia

Healthdirect Australia is a free 24-hr telephone triage, information, advice service and health advice line staffed by Registered Nurses to provide expert health advice and is available to residents of NSW. Healthdirect Australia is not a replacement for your doctor or the 000 Emergency Service so in the event of a health emergency, you should always call an Ambulance on 000.

Liverpool Women's Health Centre

26 Bathurst St, Liverpool 9 - 5 Monday - Friday
The Centre is aimed at improving the quality, range and accessibility of health services for women and at improving women's lives generally.

Ice Cream Christmas Pudding

(Heather Amos)

2 litres of vanilla ice cream
125gm dark chocolate, grated
60gm glace cherries halved
60gm minced peel
125gm sultanas
125gm chopped raisins
125gm chopped dates
60gm currants
1tbsp brandy or rum
125gm chopped toasted almonds
2 tsp mixed spice.

Allow ice cream to soften slightly. Melt chocolate in a double saucepan over low heat. Combine fruit and add brandy or rum. Fold fruits, nuts and spice into chocolate and mix well. Blend into ice cream.

Freeze in a pudding basin lined with foil.

Enjoy with friends and family.

YUM.

Thanks Heather for this amazing Christmas dessert.



INFO CORNER

Your own quality computer for just \$290!

WorkVentures has professionally refurbished PC packs suitable for all key PC and internet tasks.

For just \$290 you can get a complete desktop system.

You must have a Centrelink card to be eligible for this offer.

PC upgrades and higher specification PCs are available.

A Purchase Plan (like lay-by) is available to those who cannot pay up front.

Call on 1800 112 205 or visit the website -

www.workventures.com.au/connectit

Or just get a flyer from your nearest Centrelink.



The Walker Gallery - Liverpool - William Brown Street

Present **The Rise of Women Artists** until 14 March 2010.

The exhibition charts the progress made by female artists from the 16th century up to the present day and is displayed chronologically in nine sections, featuring paintings, works on paper, textiles, ceramics and sculpture.

The Loaves and Fishes Free Restaurant - Ashfield

Open Monday - Saturday 9.00am - 10.30am for breakfast, and between 11.30am - 1.00pm for lunch.

The Exodus Foundation could not provide this service without donations and the volunteer efforts of many generous individuals and companies.

Australia Day celebrations - January 26 2010

Celebrations are held in suburbs all over Sydney. Check your local paper for what's on in your area. Big celebrations will be held in the city at Darling Harbour.

There are also big festivities and celebrations to be held at Parramatta - Parramatta Park cnr Pitt and Macquarie Sts



YABUN 2010

Celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Culture
YABUN 2010 is fast approaching! Come celebrate - January 26
Victoria Park, Broadway.

There will be arts, crafts, politics and literature.
The Koori Radio (97.3 FM) Broadcasting van will also broadcast live from the festival.



Message from the Asset Management Team

SMOKE ALARMS save lives.

Did you know that when you are asleep, you lose your sense of smell?

Smoke alarms provide an early warning of fire and dangerous smoke. Smoke alarms won't prevent fires, but they do increase the chance of you getting out safely.

You should test your smoke alarms every month by pressing the test button with a broom handle.

If you have any problems with your smoke alarm and notice it is not working, please contact us.

Message from the Housing Team

WHC Income Review

The income review is almost finished and once again thank you all for sending in the paperwork. Each year it seems to get a little more complicated so if you have any doubts about the result of the review, please call your housing worker.

Don't forget, if your income changes at all, even though we have just finished a review that you need to contact us to let us know. It is by keeping in touch that we avoid problems further down the track.

Thanking you!

Your housing team.

Centrelink have made minor changes to return dates over the Christmas period for those people who send in forms ie Newstart Allowance. Some payments will be made a day earlier than normal payment date to take into account Centrelink closure and public holidays from Christmas 2009 to Australia Day 2010. If you have any enquiries please call Centrelink.

Utility bills

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW recently sent a community announcement regarding high utility bills and what customers can do. Should you receive a high bill, you should check your usage and see if you can identify the reasons for the high bill. Did you use more heating or cooling during the period? Did you purchase new appliances? Does the billing include the new price increases? You should also check your current and previous bills for estimated readings. You can also contact your retailer and ask them to explain the charges on the bill. Some community agencies in your area may assist with (EAPA) Energy Accounts Payment Assistance. Low income customers may be eligible for NILS (No Interest Loan Schemes) to help replace old appliances. Contact EWON for more information 1800 246 545.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER?

WHC are calling for tenants to contribute to the newsletter. If you have any suggestions for articles, interesting hints, or know of something happening in your local area and you would like to share this information with others, then please send it to us.

Remember that this column is partly your space and is a great opportunity for you to share with other tenants your ideas.

All tenants whose work is selected to be published will be presented with a voucher (\$50).

Submit entries via post to:

WHC Newsletter

74 – 84 Foveaux St , Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Community Development

Sydney Metro Council details

Your local council has a range of services available to you in your local area. Here is a list of Sydney's councils with their websites and phone numbers.

Most council sites have links to community development pages. If you do not have access to the internet, just call and ask for the community services officer.

Ashfield Council

Ph: 9716 1800

http://www.ashfield.nsw.gov.au/community_services.htm

Auburn Council

Ph: 97351222

www.auburn.nsw.gov.au

Bankstown Council

Ph: 97079999

<http://www.bankstown.nsw.gov.au/Community-Info/default.aspx>

Canterbury Council

Ph: 97899306

www.canterbury.nsw.gov.au

City of Sydney

Ph: 92659222

<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/Community/>

Fairfield Council

Ph: 9725 0222

<http://www.fairfieldcity.nsw.gov.au>

Leichhardt Council

Ph: 93679222

<http://www.leichhardt.nsw.gov.au/Community.html>

Liverpool Council

Ph: 1300362170

www.liverpool.nsw.gov.au

Marrickville Council

Ph: 93352222

<http://www.marrickville.nsw.gov.au/munity.htm>

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.

This information is available in following languages:

Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Spanish

If you wish to receive the information in any of these language please call the WHC office on 9281 1764 .