

The Kitchen Table

Newsletter of Women's Housing Company Ltd - March 2009



Welcome to the Women's Housing Company Newsletter

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

Introducing new Staff at Women's Housing Company

WELCOME

My Name is **Renee Gould** and it was a great pleasure to recently accept the position as a Housing Worker with Women's Housing. I was previously employed with Housing NSW as a Client Service Officer responsible for the management of a large property portfolio in Sydney's Inner West. I enjoyed working with my tenants to address and respond to their local issues and needs.

As your new Housing Worker, I am looking forward to meeting all of you and am committed to delivering excellence in service delivery.



WOULD YOU LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THIS NEWSLETTER?

The WHC Community Development team are calling for tenants to contribute to the newsletter. If you have something to say, a story to tell or a recipe you would like to share then send it to us!

Contributions could include:

- * easy recipes
- * household issues
- * film/play reviews
- * community projects
- * cheap outings ideas
- * success stories – or your story
- * poetry
- * photos

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

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

Submit entries via post to:

Jennifer and Graciela, Community Development
74 – 84 Foveaux St, Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Or email them to Jennifer@womenshousingcompany.org.au or Graciela@womenshousingcompany.org.au

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Newsletter Inserts

Women's Housing Company Ltd
level 5, 74-84 Foveaux St,
Surry Hills NSW 2010
Ph 02 9281 1764
Fax 02 9281 0148
reception@womenshousingcompany.org

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 everybody and welcome to another issue of the Kitchen Table. After a refreshing break over the festive season the community development team has started planning for the year to come.

Carrying on from last year, one of our main priorities this year is the establishment of a **tenant forum** - an arena where a core group of tenants can regularly meet to discuss tenant issues, workshop ideas and have their voices heard by our company.

Last year in December a group of 10 WHC tenants met over lunch to discuss a range of issues and begun preliminary planning of how the forum was going to work.



The group plans to meet again in March and thereafter around 4 times a year. If you wish to find out more about the forum or want to offer any feedback or suggestions please contact Graciela or Jennifer on 9281 1764.

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Interesting facts and figures...

- Domestic violence is the single biggest cause of homelessness in Australia.
- In Australia there are more young women that are homeless than young men.
- One in every 50 young women aged 18-19 will stay in a homeless assistance service this year.

(Big Issue statistics)

Women hold 34 per cent of all seats on federal Government controlled boards and around 23 per cent of chair or deputy chair positions. However, women hold only 9 per cent of private board directorships. (DFAT, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

Interesting facts and figures... (continued)

- In 2006 21% of the adult population volunteered their time more than once a fortnight.
- In 2005-06 women only receive 38% of the total combined income earned by men and women. (up only 8% since 1982)
- 64% of Australian households in 2006-7 had access to the internet.
- Currently in Australia 2/3 of women still don't have access to paid maternity leave (including at WHC).
- In 2004, 48.8% of the seats held in parliament in Rwanda were held by women. In Cuba 36% of the seats were held by women, whereas women in Australia only hold 30% of seats in federal parliament.

(UNDP, Human Development Report 2004)

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International Women's Day March 2009

Since 1911 women all around the world have come together to march for their rights. This has included protesting for voting rights, equal pay for equal work and better working conditions for women.



Today International Women's Day has become a time of reflection and a chance to celebrate the achievements of women. However women still have much to fight for and International Women's Day is an important opportunity for us to unite, fight for our rights and demand a better future for women within Australia and around the world.

This year the IWD march is being held on **Saturday March 7th**. Marchers are assembling at Sydney Town Hall, George Street at **11am**.

For more information visit <http://iwdsydney.wordpress.com/> or call the WHC office on 9281 1764 and ask for Jennifer.

CALL FOR VOLUNTEER TRANSLATORS!

WHC tenants come from a diverse range of cultural and language backgrounds. In order to deliver the best service we can, WHC recognises the importance of translating a variety of documents into languages spoken by our tenants.

WHC are looking for tenants who are interested in volunteering their time and language skills. If you are able to translate from English into your language and from your language into English, then we need you!

Volunteering is a worthwhile way for you to get involved and give back to your community. It is not only a chance to put your skills to use, it is also greatly appreciated by our many tenants who are unable to read and write English.

The main languages we require are Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian, Arabic, Spanish and Mandarin however other languages are also required. Documents to translate include newsletters, forms, surveys and letters.



For more information or to offer your skills contact Graciela or Jennifer on 9281 1764.

WHC - electronic communication

A big thank you to everyone who returned the 2008 WHC survey!



So far 28 tenants have responded that they would like to participate in a WHC e-group.

However only 7 people have returned their contact details.

Without your details we cannot contact you!

If you are interested in participating in a WHC e-group then please send your contact details to Graciela or Jennifer.

On March 28 you can VOTE EARTH by switching off your lights for one hour.

Or you can vote global warming by leaving your lights on.



The results of the election are being presented at the Global Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen 2009.

We want one billion votes for Earth, to tell world leaders that we have to take action against global warming.

<http://www.earthhour.org/>

Industry updates

CEO Column

There has been a great deal of publicity about the recent announcement by the Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd and the Stimulus package.

The package provides funds for an additional 20,000 new units of housing across Australia. This must be newly built housing so it assists the construction industry to remain viable by keeping money within local communities across the nation.

In NSW, this will mean up to 5,000 new properties by June 2010. Most of these properties will be for community housing providers.

Along with the massive injection of funds, strict guidelines will be in place to protect government investment.

At the same time a number of reforms have been agreed to on a national basis.

Industry updates

CEO Column continued

These will aim to assist housing provision management practices including;

- Integration of public and community housing waiting lists
- Improved location of social housing especially public housing
- Better access to employment opportunities for tenants

A number of other reforms will eventuate in the coming months.

What does this mean for Women's Housing Company?

Given our membership of BlueCHP, then it is understood BlueCHP will be involved in receiving additional housing, thus any increase for BlueCHP will see WHC obtain additional housing. However details to apply for funds have not been released yet.

This will bring substantial growth for community housing, along with a number of other initiatives currently in progress. The housing sector will grow and change enormously in the next few years, with community housing developing substantial profiles within local communities.

NSW Accreditation System

The current system was subsidised and supported by government for the past ten years. Late last year the process went to tender as government wanted an external provider to provide accreditation for the community housing sector.

The tender was awarded to Global-Mark who have extensive experience in standards and accreditation.

Women's Housing Company will be renewing our status this year.

Housing NSW Review

As with all government structures, frequent reviews occur. The latest Housing NSW review has seen the Office of Community Housing be upgraded to the Division of Community Housing.

Annual Tenant Survey

Thank you to all tenants who completed and returned the Annual Survey Form. Results are being analysed and a summary of findings will be made available in next Newsletter.

Tragedy of the Victorian Bush Fires

Women's Housing Company thoughts are extended to all families who have lost loved ones and their homes in the ongoing fires across Victoria.

Bobbie Townsend, CEO

Message from the Housing Team

New Rent Policy—amounts of CRA

We would like to encourage all tenants to check if you are receiving the same amount of CRA — Commonwealth Rent Assistance from Centrelink as we highlighted to you in our letter from your last rent assessment.

If the amounts differ:

- Please check if you informed Centrelink of your new (higher) rent;
- Please check that you informed Centrelink at least 4 weeks ago about this new rent;
- If you did both of the above, please talk to your housing worker and provide WHC with a copy of an income statement from Centrelink or give WHC authority to download such income statement from the internet.

Thanking you!

Your housing team.

Message from the Finance Team

Hello Everybody!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support by providing detailed information when paying rent or non-rent accounts, which makes our life much easier – we don't have to trace back to find out who the payment was made by and what for. Thank you very much and please continue supporting us in this way.

We also would like to alert some tenants, who missed providing details when paying their accounts, that we may not be able to identify your payments and enter the payment into our computer system correctly.

Therefore, we would like to bring your attention to the following:

- You have to pay rent first and make sure your rent is not in arrears before you pay your non-rent account.
- If you pay rent and non-rent together, you need to inform the office how much is for rent and how much is for non-rent. We encourage you to pay rent and non-rent separately so that we will not assume the extra amount is rent payment.
- If you make payment through bank deposit or internet banking transfer please make sure your **bank agent** number is provided, if you make payment via money order please provide your **name and address**.

Please be advised that Women's Housing Company does not accept any personal cheques.

Finally, we would like to remind those who have non-rent debts and have never made a payment to these debts, please either pay immediately or ring your housing worker to make an arrangement to pay off the debts. Thanks everyone, we continue to look forward to your support.

Your Finance Team, Women's Housing Company

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>

Cantebury Council

Ph: 97899306

www.cantebury.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/community.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.

Community Development —Expression of Interest

Please find enclosed an information flyer about community development and an expression of interest form if you wish to get involved in community development activities.

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 and ask for Graciela or Jennifer.