

The Kitchen Table

Newsletter of Women's Housing Company Ltd - September 2009



Welcome to the Women's Housing Company Newsletter

This edition of *The Kitchen Table*
Is from all staff at Women's Housing Company.

Women's Housing Company New contact numbers

Women's Housing Company have recently updated our phones to a new digital system. This new system has several more internal lines and will enable us to serve you better. One very important change is that all housing workers have **new extension numbers**. **Reception** will remain the same number — **9281 1764**

Your calls can be transferred to workers however if you wish to contact them directly you must use their new extension number. These are

Lucille - 312
Judith - 313
Renee - 314
Juani - 315
Stephanie - 316
Kristy - 317



Please update your phone books and phones with the new contact details.

Windfall for Tenants

– you can keep your pension increase for 12 months

As announced in the budget some time ago, an increase for all single pensioners receiving the full rate came into effect last pay period. For many women this increase amounts to \$60.00 per fortnight. The NSW Government has instructed housing providers **NOT** to include this money as income for the purpose of calculating rent amounts for a period of 12 months until September 2010.

This means you get to keep the full amount for 12 months

Centrelink will identify the increased amount through their income verification scheme and highlight that this amount is to be excluded from assessment.

This will appear as **Government Housing Authority Concessional Amount** on your Centrelink Income Statement. Please remember, at the same time there is a normal CPI increase – this will be counted as income. Please be mindful that after the 12 months, a substantial rent increase will occur.

Congratulations to Nellie Talamas who has been elected on the Community Housing Tenant Network. Nellie has been actively involved in the Network for a period of time and is a long term tenant of Women's Housing. Well done Nellie.



Sept 2009
Inside this issue

NEWS

New phone numbers

Windfall for Tenants

Registration
for Womens housing

New Website for WHC

CEO Report

PETS

Ops Manager corner

Asset Management
Team message:

Community Development

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

Linking the Women's Housing Community

Industry Updates

CEO Column

Last newsletter we wrote about the New Registration System for Community Housing - 1 July 2009

Registration Success

The Registrar of Community Housing, Roxanne Shaw has announced the first ten community housing organisations to achieve registration. The providers were registered following the first



determinations under the Housing Act NSW (2001) and the Housing Regulation 2009.

Housing providers must meet performance objectives in 8 key areas:

- Fairness and Tenant Satisfaction
- Sustainable Tenancies and Communities
- Asset Management
- Sound Governance
- Standards of Probity
- Protection of Government Investment
- Efficient and Competitive Delivery of Community Housing
- Development Projects

Women's Housing Company is pleased to announce that we have obtained registration status and were one of the first ten organisations to achieve this under the above system.



Women's Housing must maintain this status with ongoing compliance to the eight performance areas.

There are many references to affordable housing options, stimulus money to aid the construction industry and thus increase housing supply; and housing aimed at key workers. Sydney has a continual lack of rental properties available to people who rely on the private rental market to address their housing needs.

Affordable housing generally means housing that has predetermined income eligibility criteria and a reduced market rent.

Key worker housing is aimed at service workers often employed in emergency services, hospitals, schools, retail, education and other essential community services. Work in these areas is often low paid, part time or casual thus making it hard for workers to live and work in the same area given the cost of housing which forces people into the outer areas of Sydney where prices are more reasonable. Many key workers travel great distances to attend work due to being unable to obtain affordable housing.

Given the part time nature of the above work, then women are often the employees in the above roles.

The increased assistance aimed at first homeowners sees many properties usually available for rental being purchased and thus further decreasing the supply of low cost housing.

Due to the stimulus money and a range of other government assisted programs aimed at increasing housing supply and in particular affordable housing, the community housing sector has slowly been able to increase the range of programs.

What does this mean for Women's Housing Company?

As a member of BlueCHP, Women's Housing Company has been allocated 37 properties for a range of affordable and low income housing. This housing has been located at Bankstown and Northmead. 29 units at Northmead which is in close proximity to Westmead and Cumberland Hospital is a mixture of low income and affordable housing. The units are part of a large development and additional units will be allocated to Women's Housing Company in the next 12 months.

Being able to offer a range of housing and programs aimed at mixed income targets ensures a good mix of programs and financial viability for the organisation. Housing associations must provide a range of services and by having diversification of services and incomes then tenants benefit overall.



WHC wishes to send congratulations to Nikki Katsidis and her family who welcomed Anastasia into the world in the early hours of 9/9/09. She weighs 3.3 kg (or 7.7 pounds) and was 50 cm long. Both mum and baby girl are doing fine.

WHC has a NEW WEBSITE

The wonderful design team at TAG Communications has developed a fantastic new looking website for us.

Check out the new site at -

www.womenshousingcompany.org.au



A very big **thank you** to TAG Communications, especially Greg Lee. We LOVE the new look.

26 OCT— Pink Ribbon day (Breast Cancer Awareness)

9 NOV—National Recycling week

16 NOV—International Day for Tolerance

21 NOV—World 'HELLO' Day—say hi to your neighbors

#####



Keeping pets in the premises

Some important issues have been raised lately with regards to keeping a pet within a WHC property. So here are some **very important clarifications**:

Approval for pets is generally an exception rather than the rule as most of our properties are small units, which are not suitable to keep animals.

You must complete a form - '**Permission for Pets**' and obtain WHC **approval** first.

Applications are assessed on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the well being of an animal being kept in a confined space and the potential damage the pet may cause to the unit and the common areas. Tenants are responsible to pay for damages caused by their pets in their units and the common areas.

While you may love your pet dearly, not all tenants are animal lovers. Believe it or not... pets are often the source of ongoing disputes amongst neighbors. If pets become an ongoing source of inconveniences or nuisances the approval can be withdrawn.

If an application is approved, it applies for only **1** pet. If you wish to have more than one pet you have to **reapply prior** taking the 2nd pet into the property. Unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated, WHC would very rarely give approval to keep more than 1 animal in a property.

No approval is given to use the premises to nurse injured, abandoned or wildlife animals. This is due to occupational health and safety issues which make our properties unsuitable for this purpose.

If you need to be rehoused, we may not be able to rehouse you and your pet if the new property is unsuitable for pets. It is a breach of the lease to keep animals in the premises without written approval of the landlord and WHC can apply for the removal of the pet, or for termination of your lease.

SPRING IS HERE

Time to spring clean the house, clear out those cupboards. Take care of ourselves, drink more water, eat fresh fruit and vegetables. Remember just 30 minutes of exercise every day can help you feel younger, have more energy and be healthy.

16 OCTOBER is Bread Day - All over the world Bread has highly symbolic power and stands for many things, but especially the ability to share. The Lord's Prayer, for example, contains the line 'Give us today our daily bread'; here, 'bread' is commonly understood to mean necessities in general. Bread is a staple food prepared by cooking a dough of usually flour and water (and sometimes many other ingredients). Bread dates back to the New Stone Age period 9500BC. Early breads, made from various grains, are still common in many parts of the world, including the Iranian lavash, taboos, Mexican tortilla, Indian chapattis and rotis and naans, Middle Eastern pitas and Ethiopian injera. In Medieval Europe bread was also your plate,

known as a trencher, your meal would be placed on top and the bread would soak up the flavours. Make a loaf and share a meal with friends knowing that many cultures around the world are doing the same.



Operations Manager corner

Well here I am 3 months later after having started at Women's Housing in early June.

Who am I? Lucille Bernard

Why am I here? - I have taken on the role vacated by Sibylle - former Senior Housing Manager. A slight change in roles occurred due to the changing environment in housing.

How has it been? - Very interesting and challenging as I learn the nature of housing only single women and the new processes that go with a change of organisation. And I love it!

What is my background? - I have worked in the community housing field for 25 years and that includes working for Burwood Area Community Housing, Western Suburbs Housing Co-op, Bridge Housing and for a time as a tenant advocate at Western Sydney Tenants Service.

Anyway - if anyone wants to call and speak to me my direct line is 8202 9312. If I am busy, please leave a message on my voicemail.

Looking forward to a long learning process with you all.
Cheers - Lucille

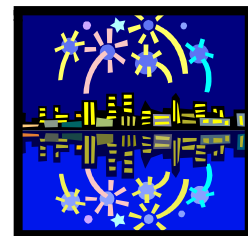
INFO CORNER



7 Bridges Walk - Sunday 25 October - This is a free event and a fantastic (and active) way to see the best Sydney Harbour has to offer.

Darling Harbour Fiesta - 2 - 5 October
Mambo, cha cha, salsa, at Darling Harbour.
Free bands and fireworks every night.

Check out <http://www.cravesydney.com/free>



PARRAMATTA RIVERBEATS FREE EVENT 31 OCTOBER

Eats B4 Riverbeats starts at 4.30pm at Church St (between Phillip and Market Sts) \$4-\$10 tasting plates. Then **RIVERBEATS** from 7 pm to 10 pm on the Riverbank. Bring a picnic rug and enjoy the atmosphere and music.



Penrith celebrates **50 years** of being proclaimed a city in November. **Drum n Dance Free** concert Sat 14 Nov, be there 9.30am to get a seat, concert starts at 10am.

Organic Family Fun Markets

A Tenant Council Project of Affordable Community Housing Ltd
Held 1st Sat of the Month - 3 Oct, 7 Nov and 5 Dec
From 8.30am - 3.00 pm
Carysfield Park,
Cnr: Hume Hwy & Johnston Rd, Bass Hill



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

Don't forget
to wind your clocks
FORWARD!
Sunday 4 October
at 2am go forward to 3am.



Message from the Asset Management Team Fire Inspections

Women's Housing Company have been notified by Division of Community Housing that some of our properties need to be scoped for the Fire Safety Program over the coming months. This will be carried out by licensed building inspectors who will carry identification at all time.

At this stage we have notified tenants whose properties have been listed as requiring inspections and we will continue to send notification letters, as further properties are identified.

Unfortunately we have no control over the inspections and understand that these may be inconvenient, however we will endeavor to give as much notice as we can to minimise any inconvenience.

Mardi and Donna would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.



Nation Building and Economic Stimulus - Round Two – Repairs and Maintenance

Women's Housing Company received notification of an additional \$223,000 to be spent on 55 properties in specified Housing NSW contract zones. The properties have already been identified and we must agree to what they have directed Women's Housing Company to spend the money on. Whilst we welcome this additional money, we know it may cause disruption to tenants as you may not think the work being done is important. However we have signed a contract and must adhere to the guidelines stipulated. The government has recognised community housing is well placed to be able to incorporate this additional money into our existing work timetable.

Please again be patient for any disruption.

We would like to extend a very big welcome to our new tenants at our two BlueCHP / Women's Housing Company projects. There are 9 units at Bankstown and 29 units at Northmead.



NEW WATER WISE RULES

All hoses must have a trigger nozzle, To avoid the heat of the day, watering is allowed before 10am and after 4pm of any day. No hosing of hard surfaces such as paths and driveways. Washing vehicles is allowed.

Visit www.sydneywater.com.au to find out more.

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!

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:
WHC Community Development
74 – 84 Foveaux St , Surry Hills, NSW 2010

Community Development

2009 has been a year all about change. Both internally, with the addition of properties and staff, and externally of course with the global financial crisis.

It's that time of year again. WHC is compiling the **WHC 2010 Calendar**. In this climate of change we think a great idea for the 2010 calendar would be just that (change). Iconic women throughout history that brought about change. As this is your calendar WHC wants to know what influential women represent change for you?

You will find included with this newsletter the new and improved Community Development flyer.

It now provides a space for you to share your ideas, comments and feedback. Please share your thoughts with us so we can begin compiling your 2010 calendar.

You can also contact me directly on 02 8202 9314 or by email at renee@womenshousingcompany.org. Looking forward to hearing from you.

Sydney Community College

www.sydneycommunitycollege.com.au

Concessional discounts available eg: aged pension, disability pension, carer pension, newstart, sickness benefit allowance, seniors card. For further details please call 02 8752 7555

South Sydney Community Aid

Alexandria Town Hall – 73 Garden Street, Alexandria 02 9319 4037
Provides multicultural people living in Redfern/Waterloo, Alexandria, Darlington and City of Sydney LGA's - Tax Budgeting Skills, Translating, Multilingual Information, Volunteer opportunities, Community Information
Beading Classes - \$5
Computer Courses - Free
Tai Chi – Tuesday 10-11 - Gold coin donation
Knitting Group – Free
Sewing Group - Free

Newsletter Inserts

Rent Statement and explanation sheet

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 FLYER

New Community Development flyer

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 .