



# Women's Housing Company NEWSLETTER

## MY STORY

### Tenant Participation Project Calendar 2012

The My Story project provided an opportunity for tenants of Women's Housing Company to express and share their stories with us through photos and writings. Contributions from twelve of our tenants were chosen to be included in a 2012 Calendar for distribution to Women's Housing Company tenants, staff, board members and other stakeholders. Those who attended the Women's Housing Company Annual General Meeting would have already received their copy of the calendar; those who were unable to make the day have a copy enclosed with this edition of the newsletter.

**Women's Housing Company would like to thank all of the tenants involved in tenant participation in 2011 and strongly encourages more tenants to get involved in 2012.**

If you would like more information on how you can get involved in 2012 please contact the office on 02 9281 1764.

The WHC office will be closed on the Christmas and New Year Public Holidays. We will be open on the other days during the period but will have limited staff; no appointments will be made nor non-urgent matters attended to.

**Friday 23rd December: OPEN**

**Monday 26th December: CLOSED**

**Tuesday 27th December: CLOSED**

**Wednesday 28th December: OPEN**

**Thursday 29th December: OPEN**

**Friday 30th December: OPEN**

**Monday 2nd January 2012: CLOSED**

**Tuesday 3rd January 2012: OPEN**

(usual business resumes)



Felices fiestas | Joyeuses fêtes | Besinnliche Feiertage  
Bones Navidaes Sretan Božić | Zalig Kerstfeest | Häid Jöule  
Nollaig Shona Dhuit | Mele Kalikimaka | Selamat Hari Natal  
Gutpela Krismas Tru | Ia Manuia Le Kerisimasi | Yeni Yılınızı Kutlar  
Sinifisela Ukhisimusi Omuhle | Kilisimasi Fiefia | Ia Ora | Te Noera

## Summer 2011

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# FROM OUR CEO

This is our last newsletter for 2011 with the holiday season fast approaching and we can look back and reflect what has been achieved.

The highlight in 2011 for Women's Housing Company was the historic handover of title to 100 of our existing properties. For the past 20 years the community housing sector has worked towards gaining title with Women's Housing Company being one of the housing providers achieving success.

We increased the number of properties in management by 30 for the year and thus able to assist more women. The introduction of Housing Pathways, the common waiting list for both community and public housing, brought significant change in how Women's Housing Company allocates vacancies and manages applications. As a result we created a dedicated access and allocation position which is working extremely well. We also established a tenant participation position and completed the 'My Story' project. Further work in this area will be done during 2012.

2012: "Women's Housing Company will be looking at ways we can excel at service delivery and provide specialised partnerships for tenants who require support."

Also most of the year was spent reviewing systems, updating procedures and maintaining consistency in applying policies and practices. This work will continue throughout 2012 as Women's Housing Company prepares for accreditation against the National Community Housing Standards.

Previously Women's Housing Company was the specialist provider for housing single women; today over 55% of people housed by either community housing or public housing are single, and living alone. Therefore Women's Housing Company will be looking at ways we can excel at service delivery and provide specialised partnerships for tenants who require support.

The recently published results from the National Housing Survey 2010 also stated 90% of tenants are satisfied by living in community housing. In this edition

of the newsletter you will find the Annual Tenant Survey - please take the time to fill out and return as it gives Women's Housing Company an opportunity to hear from you.

A big thank you to all tenants who attended the Annual General Meeting. Again it was well attended and we heard Eva Cox talk about ways we can connect and make the community we live in better.

No matter what cultural occasions we celebrate, it's hard to not be affected by the end of the year when many people take holidays to spend with family and special friends.

We would like to wish all of you a happy holiday season as 2011 closes and we move towards 2012.

Bobbie Townsend

## ANNUAL TENANT SURVEY

Our Annual Tenant Survey 2011 is included with this newsletter.

Your feedback is very important in helping us to review and improve our services. All feedback is treated as private so please respond as openly and honestly as possible. If you require assistance to complete the survey please contact the office on 02 9281 1764.

Please return the survey in the reply paid envelope by **31 January 2012**.  
Thank you!

## WINNERS - \$100 gift voucher

### Tenant Rent Incentive draw

#### Congratulations

Amanda from Lurnea

&

Yee-Ming from Marrickville

They have been randomly selected from all tenants with no arrears on their account with Women's Housing Company to win a \$100 gift voucher!

To be in the running to win next quarter...

→ **ensure that your rent account is paid 2 weeks in advance** (as per your lease agreement)

→ have no arrears on your non-rent account.

If you are unsure about your current account with Women's Housing Company, please contact your Housing Worker or Reception on 02 9281 1764.

## What to do if you are unhappy with the services provided by WHC?

Women's Housing Company is committed to providing quality services to all of its tenants and applicants. Feedback on services is strongly encouraged. This includes feedback on areas where we can improve our services or where the service provided is not adequate.

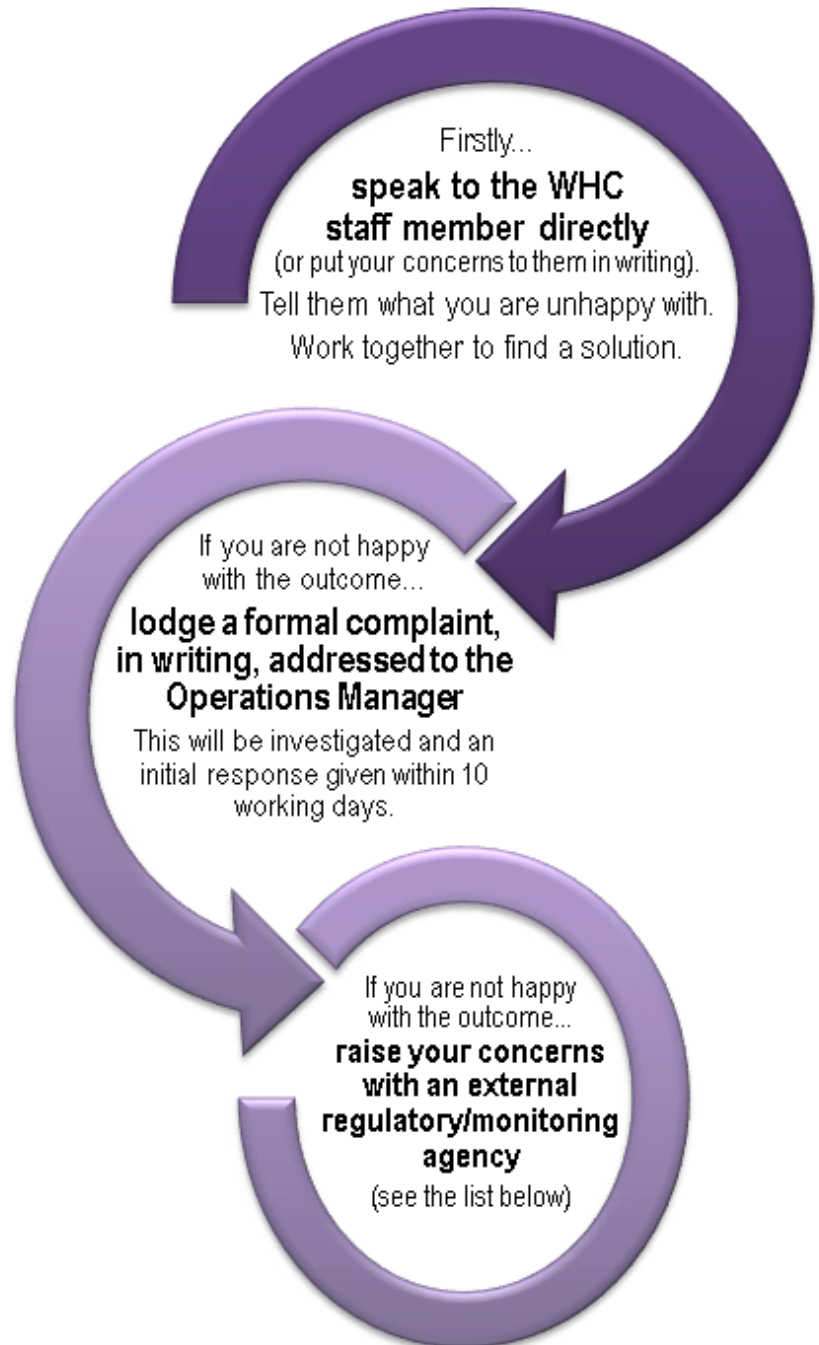
In most situations, concerns can be easily resolved by speaking directly with the relevant staff member and telling them why you are not happy with the services provided.

If you are unable to resolve the issue directly, complaints may be formally lodged with the Operations Manager. Formal complaints should be put in writing and should clearly outline what you are unhappy with and why. All concerns raised formally will be investigated with a response provided in writing. Some complaints (such as those regarding staff attitudes or personality conflicts) can be difficult to investigate but feedback is kept on file and may contribute to long term investigations/reviews of service provision.

Tenants or applicants who raise complaints or concerns will not be disadvantaged or penalised for doing so. Privacy and confidentiality are of key concern when dealing with any concerns raised.

"most concerns can be easily resolved by speaking directly with the relevant staff member..."

If you need to raise a concern, we strongly encourage you to access support with this if required. Friends or family can help support you while raising concerns or services such as your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service (more info at [www.tenants.org.au](http://www.tenants.org.au)) or Community Legal Centre (details at [www.clcnsw.org.au](http://www.clcnsw.org.au)) can help.



### Who can you speak to if you need to take your concerns further?

Women's Housing Company reports to a number of external agencies who may be approached if concerns cannot be resolved with us directly. These include:

- ◇ **The Registrar of Community Housing**  
(ph: 1800 330 940)
- ◇ **The Community Housing Division HNSW**  
(ph: 02 8753 8294)

If you believe that tenancy law is being breached you can raise concerns with, or request advice from, **NSW Fair Trading** (ph: 133 220).

Additionally, concerns could be raised with the **NSW Federation of Housing Associations** (ph: 02 9281 7144) or your **Local Member of Parliament**.

# AGM 2011



Entertainment from 'The Sisters'



**Bobbie Townsend**  
(CEO)

**Chivonne Algeo**  
(WHC Board of Directors Chair)

## Newsletter Insert

### 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 languages, please call the Women's Housing Company office on 02 9281 1764 or email:  
reception@womenshousingcompany.org



Feminist, activist, sociologist, writer and social commentator

## Eva Cox

spoke at the WHC AGM about the need for every one of us to get involved in making our society a better place to be in. She spoke about how we should think about what we want in our society (rather than focusing on what we don't like). Eva encouraged tenants of WHC to contact her and to connect with each other to discuss this desired change as well as advocating for it to those in power (for example, to your local Member of Parliament). Eva has set up a number of websites with more information and to assist in achieving these aims:

- ⇒ [www.distaff.com.au](http://www.distaff.com.au)
- ⇒ [www.thedinnerparty.net.au](http://www.thedinnerparty.net.au)
- ⇒ [www.wettank.net.au](http://www.wettank.net.au)