

Extra Support During COVID-19

As some COVID-19 restrictions ease, it is very important to follow Government advice and take all necessary care to protect individual and community wellbeing during the pandemic. The Women's Housing Company has up to date information on our services and protocols during COVID-19, as well as links to the latest Government information on our website.

We'd like to acknowledge all the generous support that has allowed us to provide extra help to women in need and continue delivering essential services safely.

Essential Food Hampers Donated by Assett Group Services

Thirty lucky tenants recently received support in the shape of essential food hampers delivered by Assett Group Services. Assett has been providing property maintenance services to Women's Housing Company tenants since 2014.

Be Kind Sydney Grant

The Be Kind Sydney COVID-19 Appeal, launched by the Sydney Community Foundation and the Sydney Women's Fund, has helped us with a generous grant of \$10,000 for essential groceries, smartphones and data bundles to keep tenants digitally connected.

Ecstra Foundation Grant

We'd also like to thank Ecstra Foundation for their generous support to aid our COVID-19 response. Flexible funding has provided crucial immediate support while also helping to build community resilience.



NEWSLETTER WINTER 2020

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Please contact Fiona on **8202 9312** or **Fiona@womenshousingcompany.org** if you'd like more information about any of the articles in this newsletter.

BUSINESS HOURS:

9.00am – 4.30pm
Monday – Friday

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Phone: 02 8202 9313

Email: repairs@womenshousingcompany.org

Website Form: www.womenshousingcompany.org

After hours emergency repairs: 1300 556 057

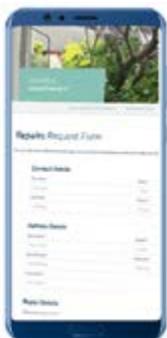
Offices currently closed for face-to-face appointments

Free Smartphone Offer

We're keen to help as many of our tenants as possible stay connected to services and loved ones, while staying safely at home.

Please get in touch if you would benefit from a free basic smartphone. We'll be running digital workshops later in the year and can also send a beginners' guide.

Hurry – free phones available while grant funding lasts!



Women's Housing Company

Suite 901, Level 9, 418A Elizabeth St, Surry Hills NSW 2010

T: 02 9281 1764 or 1300 942 111 (outside Sydney)

E: contact@womenshousingcompany.org **Interpreter:** 131 450

www.womenshousingcompany.org

CEO Message

I'd like to acknowledge what a difficult time it's been for everyone during the last three months. COVID-19 has restricted our day to day life, limited our contact with family, friends and neighbours, and forced us to operate differently.

The Women's Housing Company has focussed on the safety of our tenants and clients, as well as our staff and contractors through following Government advice. We have adapted the way we deliver some services and introduced new ways of communicating with tenants and delivering some extra services. Some highlights include:

- Introducing wellbeing calls to tenants – over 650 calls and follow-up to date

- Delivering essential items to isolated tenants – food boxes and smartphones
- Providing online programs to help tenants stay well and connected – such as yoga and T.A.G.
- Focussing on urgent repairs and external works, and limiting work inside individual homes

We are very grateful to the various government, private and philanthropic organisations that have provided extra funds and supplies during COVID-19. We are also excited to be part of the new Together Home Program, funded by the NSW Government to provide housing and support for people that have experienced homelessness – our focus will be women.



Lastly, I would like to acknowledge the Women's Housing Company staff whose efforts these last few months have been extraordinary. They adapted their work almost overnight to be able to work from home and continue delivering our core services, with care, commitment and perseverance.

Take good care and best wishes,

Debbie Georgopoulos
CEO WHC

Regional Finalist for NSW Trainee of the Year



Our very own Megan was recently celebrated for reaching the regional finals of the NSW Trainee of the Year Awards.

Through a partnership between the Women's Housing Company and WorkVentures, Megan completed her traineeship over 18 months, studying modules

to attain the qualification of Certificate IV in Social Housing, whilst working full time managing a portfolio of tenancies under the guidance of her Team Leader.

Megan embraced the opportunity to combine study and practical experience, which has cemented her learning, and she has become an integral member of the Tenancy Team.

Congratulations Megan!

Keeping Connected

In line with government advice, we continue to keep face-to-face activities to a minimum. This includes keeping our offices closed and making wellbeing calls instead of visiting tenants at home.

Since late March, Tenancy Managers have been in phone contact with over 650 of our most vulnerable tenants. We have also used text messaging to send general information to tenants

about how to contact us, how to report property repairs and the importance of paying rent.

The widespread use of video conferencing tools such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom has helped our staff stay connected, while up-to-date systems have allowed some of our processes to go paper-free and continue business-as-usual while working from home.



As social distancing measures remain, we are prioritising emergency, urgent and safety property repairs. Please continue to report all maintenance issues, so that we can log and deal with them as restrictions lift.

Tenant Satisfaction Survey Results 2020

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Tenant Satisfaction Survey 2020. Your valuable feedback is informing our planning for 2020/21 and where we focus our resources to provide the best possible service to our tenants.

We're pleased to report that overall satisfaction with housing services is well above the threshold set by the Registrar of Community Housing. Overall satisfaction with the condition of home also exceeds the Registrar's requirement, however, overall satisfaction with our repairs and maintenance service has fallen just below.

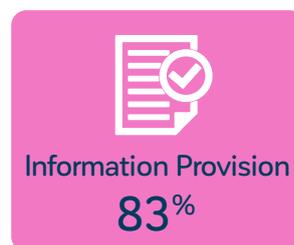
As the repairs and maintenance service is a primary priority for most tenants, and we have made significant improvements in our processes over the past 12 months, we are keen to gather more insight on how to best improve service delivery in this important area. We will be holding a Repairs and Maintenance focus group once Covid-19 restrictions are further eased and face-to-face activities resume. In the meantime, if you have specific ideas that could improve our services, please call or email us.

Handling complaints is another area where you told us that we can make improvements. As a result, we have recently adjusted our systems and process and re-trained our staff to enhance our recording, tracking and managing of complaints. We hope you notice the difference.

Despite the dip in satisfaction in complaints handling, it was good to see work we have put into communication has paid off with more tenants feeling confident about how to make a complaint and lodge an appeal. We will continue to improve communication so you are better informed and know what to expect from tenancy procedures.

Housing Services

● WHC ● NRSCH benchmark



Submit a Repair or Complaint via the WHC Website

We have extended our options for requesting a repair or making a complaint through two new e-forms located on the website – www.womenshousingcompany.org.

The **Repairs Online Form** can be used to request any property repair that is not an emergency or safety issue. You can also upload photos of the repair issue, which will assist our team to provide the most appropriate response for the job. Our Property Services team will monitor the process and ensure the repair is completed in a timely manner.

The **Complaints Online Form** can be used to lodge a complaint about the standard or type of service delivered by the Women's Housing Company, our staff or contractors. The complaint will be formally lodged and acknowledged within three business days in accordance with our Complaints Policy. A senior manager will monitor the investigation and

resolution of your complaint with a response provided within 21 days.

Other Options

If you don't have access to the internet or prefer to use another method, you can report repairs or make a complaint over the phone, via email or by post using our contact details on the front page of the newsletter.

Please note: Tenants provided with the 1800 422 322 and living in the Northern Beaches must continue to report property repairs issues using this method until July 2021.

What's On

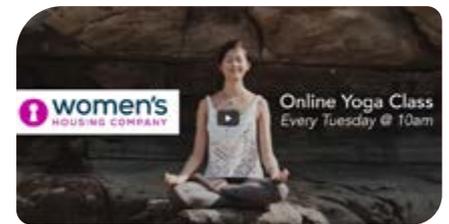
Look out for digital workshops in October to help you get online

Online Yoga for WHC Tenants

We're excited to offer more online yoga thanks to generous funding from the Icen Group. Please copy the following links to join us:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| 10am Tuesday 21 July: | https://youtu.be/PXDub_dffl8 |
| 10am Tuesday 28 July | https://youtu.be/fVmj062vxLc |
| 10am Tuesday 4 August | https://youtu.be/iY26z-yOx_k |
| 10am Tuesday 11 August | https://youtu.be/3lgfnJTavpo |
| 10am Tuesday 18 August | https://youtu.be/MKp4dk0Zc8Y |
| 10am Tuesday 25 August | https://youtu.be/wOVHz27-lvl |
| 10am Tuesday 1 September | https://youtu.be/p-wap9keve0 |
| 10am Tuesday 8 September | https://youtu.be/3qx3yscXzv0 |
| 10am Tuesday 15 September | https://youtu.be/pqvpkHlgtv8 |
| 10am Tuesday 22 September | https://youtu.be/-urlxWiDvsU |

The links will remain live so you can access recorded sessions at a time that suits you. Sessions are hosted on YouTube so you will be able to see the teacher but no one will be able to see you. All you need is a mat and comfy clothes.



Exclusive WHC Pop-Up Wardrobe – 17 July

Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre, 756 Darling St, Rozelle

The Rozelle Neighbourhood Centre has re-opened and is offering WHC tenants an exclusive opening to pick up free new clothes. Please note, numbers are restricted to a maximum of 10 people at a time, with strict social distancing in place.

Join Our Club!

We now have a Facebook group for WHC tenants to exchange tips, info and inspiration: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/656427971858272/>

Look up **Club WHC** on Facebook and click join to keep up-to-date!



Major Maintenance Improvements

Work was undertaken in June at five of our properties on the Northern Beaches and Inner West, funded jointly with the NSW Government through the economic recovery stimulus package. A big thank you to the tenants in those buildings for your cooperation as we quickly rolled-out this program.

The Women's Housing Company worked in partnership with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation to carry out common area maintenance and upgrade work. The extensive upgrade of garden and common building areas included external painting, new pathways, tree removal, new fencing, additional balustrades and general repairs. Works completed at the end of June.

WHC Newsletter Goes Digital!

This is the first edition of the WHC newsletter we are sending digitally to most tenants, where we have your email address recorded. Please help us by ensuring your contact details are up to date.

Going paper-free helps us save costs as well as saving the environment. It is also a much quicker way to receive important information. This edition and the previous four editions are available on our website – www.womenshousingcompany.org