

Be Kind Sydney

Funding For WHC Employment Engagement Program

The Women's Housing Company is delighted to have received Be Kind Sydney funding for our new WHC Employment Engagement Program (EEP). The program is an exciting opportunity for all residents who are job seeking to connect to providers and support.

EEP will partner with established employment services and help connect the community of WHC jobseekers to employment and education opportunities. There will also be opportunity to establish a network of peer support through regular face-to-face and online meet-ups.



Look out for details of our launch event coming soon!

Women's Housing Company COVID-19 Update

As NSW starts to ease out of lockdown, we are resuming all repairs and maintenance work with strict Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and Work Health Safety (WHS) practices in place.

If you have previously logged a repair and it was placed on hold due to COVID-19, we will contact you to check if it is okay to proceed. We will still be limiting the time we spend inside properties to minimise risks.

We are also reviewing our current schedule of planned works to see what is achievable for the remaining year. All cyclical works - such as gardening and cleaning - have now resumed.

We are in the process of expanding our face-to-face services in line with easing restrictions - please check our website or call our office for more details. If you wish to see your Tenancy Manager, you can request an appointment to meet at your home (either inside or outdoors). **Masks must be worn at face-to-face appointments.**

Women's Housing Company
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NEWSLETTER SPRING 2021

CEO Message	2
Energy bill overdue?	3
Privacy Statement Update	3
Please Help Keep Our Plumbing In Good Working Order	3
Australian Centre for Disability Law	4
Find A Local Grow Group	4
TAG News	4

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: <http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/tenants/maintenance>

After hours emergency repairs: 1300 556 057

Translations and Interpreter: 131 450

Offices closed due to COVID-19 restrictions

CEO Message

It has been such a time of change with the second round of COVID restrictions and most of us confined to our homes. The Women's Housing Company team has mainly worked from home throughout this period, delivering essential services and adapting how we do our work to comply with the public health orders. As we enter Spring, it's fair to say we are feeling optimistic and looking forward to everything 'opening up' again.

We recognise it's been a difficult time for all our tenants and our focus has been on keeping everyone safe – our tenants, staff, contractors and the broader community. The Women's Housing Company is working on a Vaccination Policy and a Return to Office Plan and we look forward to expanding face-to-face contact in the coming months.

There have been some major achievements during this time and I'm pleased to share some of the highlights:

- Completed over \$1million on maintenance for over 160 units, with funding through the NSW Government's stimulus program. This was a massive program for our staff to roll-out over a short period of time and we thank all the tenants involved.
- Released a new video on Women and Homelessness featuring some of our clients and staff.
- The video was launched in Homelessness Week 2021 to help raise awareness through the stories of women who have faced homelessness, explain the important work we do and shine a light on the difference we make.
- During the latest lockdown, our team made over 1,300 calls to tenants to check on well-being. We have spoken with over 94% of our tenants. While we all prefer face-to-face contact, this has been a great way to check in and stay connected during lockdown.
- Implemented Tranche 2 of the Together Home Program (20 packages) and preparing for some further packages in Tranche 3. This landmark program is providing housing and support to women who have been homeless.
- Funding through 'Be Kind Sydney' for our new Employment Engagement Program. We are



very grateful to the Sydney Women's Fund for their generous support and look forward to rolling out this new initiative.

- New funding secured from the NSW Government to purchase more housing for women. This is hot-off-the-press and I'll provide more information in the coming months.

And finally, our Annual General Meeting this year will be an online meeting to deal with business, given the COVID restrictions. It will be held on 25 November and information will be sent to members, and available on our website.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter.

Best regards,

Debbie Georgopoulos

CEO WHC

Are your contact details up to date?

Keeping your contact details up-to-date helps us get information to you faster. We now send SMS (text) reminders to mobile phones for important appointments.

You can also select to be paper-free in order to receive information via email. Not only is it better for the environment, but it's also cheaper and means you get important information quicker.

Get in touch if you want to go paper-free or need to update your details.



Energy bill overdue?

If your energy bill is overdue and/or you receive a reminder notice, you should contact your provider as soon as possible to discuss the best options for you. Let your provider know your current situation, and what you can afford, and ask them for more time to pay your bill.

Setup a payment plan

A payment plan is a formal arrangement between you and your provider. It can help you avoid late payment fees and avoid disconnection of your supply. Offer to pay what you can afford and don't be pressured into offering more.

Get on an affordability program

Affordability programs (sometimes referred to as hardship programs) are designed to protect you from disconnection and help you manage the arrears on your account by paying smaller amounts over a longer period. All energy companies must have an affordability program - so ask to be referred.



They can also help by checking you are receiving government rebates and giving advice on how to reduce your bills.

Are you eligible for a rebate or EAPA vouchers?

You may be eligible for a rebate if you are a senior, on a low income, on life support or have other medical needs. You can ask your provider about the rebates available or find out more at <https://www.ewon.com.au/page/customer-resources/help-paying-bills/rebates>.

Energy Account Payment Assistant (EAPA) vouchers are also available to help pay an electricity or gas bill. These can help in emergency

situations, and you apply for these through an organisation which will assess your situation. Find out more about these vouchers <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/energy-accounts-payment-assistance-eapa-scheme>.

How to get in touch with the free and independent Energy and Water Ombudsman NSW (EWON)

Freecall: 1800 246 545,
9am - 5pm, Mon - Fri

Freepost: Reply Paid 86550
Sydney South NSW 1234

Online: [ewon.com.au](https://www.ewon.com.au)

Please Help Keep Our Plumbing In Good Working Order

With the recent lockdown and limited opportunity to go to the stores, some people may be using alternatives to toilet paper. However, items such as paper towels, tissues, cotton balls and so-called 'flushable' wipes can cause blockages in sewerage pipes. To keep our plumbing in good working order, please only flush toilet paper, and dispose of other items in the bin. Blockages caused by misuse will be charged back to tenants.



Updated Privacy Statement

We've updated the privacy statement on our policies to reflect current legislation and keep our policies up-to-date. The new statement reads:

The Women's Housing Company will ensure that all applicant and tenant information is kept confidential and is managed and protected in accordance with the WHC Privacy Policy and relevant privacy law.

From time to time, de-identified demographic information may be released to third parties for statistical purposes only.

Please visit <https://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/> for further information.

Australian Centre for Disability Law

The Australian Centre for Disability Law (ACDL) is a state-wide, specialist community legal centre located in Surry Hills. The ACDL specialises in the legal rights of people with disability (PwD) who experience discrimination on the basis of their disability.

The ACDL provides a full range of free legal services to PwD and their representatives, including representing clients during proceedings in the Australian Human Rights Commission or Anti Discrimination NSW.

Australian Centre for
Disability Law

People with disability may be subject to a range of legal issues including discrimination, employment related issues, accessing services and buildings, consumer complaints, victim compensation, domestic and family violence, exploitation, or interaction with the police due to violence in their home, or fines.

For more information visit www.disabilitylaw.org.au

Find A Local Grow Group

Grow is a mental well-being organisation that is recognised and part funded by NSW Health. It provides small, friendly groups that help people improve or overcome anxiety, depression, loneliness or other mental health challenges.

GROW | mental
wellbeing
programs

Grow groups are free to attend, and all are welcome; no referral required. Call **1800 558 268** or see www.grow.org.au for more information.

Masks still mandatory in common areas

Just a reminder that masks are still mandatory for all indoor common areas of residential premises in NSW.

Common areas include:

- lifts
- car parks
- garbage areas
- lobbies
- stairwells
- corridors
- and any indoor areas that residents may pass through.

COVID-19 spreads more easily indoors and in settings where you can't physically distance. That's why it's really important that masks are worn by every person who enters the building, including:

- residents and visitors
- contractors
- staff
- delivery drivers/riders.



For more information go to:
<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/stay-safe/rules>

TAG News

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) is your platform to share information and experiences about Women's Housing Company services. It's also a great way of upskilling and gaining confidence. We meet every two months at different locations and are always looking for new members.

Time	Dates	Location
10.00am to 12.00pm	Wednesday 15 December	Surry Hills

The next TAG meeting will take place in Surry Hills at 10am on Wednesday 15 December. Please contact Fiona on **8202 9312** or Fiona@womenshousingcompany.org if you would like to attend any event or activity.