

Extra Housing for Women in Campsie

The Women's Housing Company (WHC) is excited to announce the purchase of two new blocks of housing for women in Campsie. The first is a block of 10 one-bedroom units which will be used to house single women, while the second block of six two-bedroom units will be used to house women with children or live-in carers. The properties will include a mixture of social and affordable housing.

Both blocks are undergoing upgrades to essential electrical, security and fire safety to provide safe homes for our new tenants.



Campsie housing before upgrades

In addition, the units and common areas are being painted and receiving upgrades to bathrooms and kitchens where required.

We look forward to officially opening this vital new housing shortly and providing new homes for women.

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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: <http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/tenants/maintenance>
After hours emergency repairs: 1300 556 057



Maintaining COVID-19 Safety

We are closely monitoring the COVID-19 situation to ensure the ongoing safety of staff, tenants, and contractors. While our Surry Hills office currently remains closed to the public, we are reviewing options for face-to-face meetings by appointment, with strict COVID-19 protocols. Please check our website and SMS alerts for the latest advice. We will continue to follow NSW Government guidelines for a safe transition back to the workplace.

Older Women and Homelessness Video

We are pleased to share a video produced by Jane Thomson for the WHC on 'Older Women and Homelessness.' The video features four WHC tenants speaking from the heart, along with some suggested solutions to ending women's homelessness.

View the video online: <http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/aboutus/videos>



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CEO Message

On behalf of the Women's Housing Company (WHC), I'd like to wish everyone a happy new year. 2020 was a year like no other.

I'd like to thank all our clients and tenants, staff, Board, maintenance contractors and supporters for working through the restrictions to ensure we could continue to deliver services, run our organisation safely and plan for the future. I'd also like to thank the NSW Government with whom we worked closely to stay on top of COVID-19 and respond quickly to changing needs in the community.

The last few months were extremely busy, and I'm pleased to share the following highlights:

- We developed and shared a very moving video on older women and homelessness. Thank you to our tenants, Homelessness NSW and Jane Thomson for your collaboration – the response has been very positive.

- The new WHC Strategic Plan 2020-2025 was finalised by the Board, sharpening our vision and purpose, and expanding our strategic objectives.
- A new Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2024 was finalised and approved by the Board, developed with generous pro bono assistance from Icen Consulting. The input of tenants, staff and partners was invaluable.
- We put out a tender for the delivery of our property maintenance services and this will be completed in the coming months.
- And most importantly, we finalised the purchase of two unit blocks in Campsie which will provide 16 new, well located homes for women.



2021 will again be different as we navigate our way through COVID-19 and the challenges of staying safe and well. Our commitment to providing housing and homelessness services is as strong as ever and we look forward to delivering quality services to our clients and tenants.

Best regards,

Debbie Georgopoulos
CEO WHC

Staff Updates



Nicole Randall,
Customer
Services Officer

Nicole joined us in October 2020. Nicole has over 10 years'

experience in customer service, complaints handling and dispute resolution in a range of settings, and a formal education in social psychology and social research. While new to the social housing sector, Nicole has brought her warmth and caring nature and is already having a positive impact on our clients. Welcome Nicole!



Tara Slater,
Trainee Tenancy
Manager

Tara has been with the WHC since August 2019, as part

of a traineeship program where she is working towards a formal qualification while putting her learning into practice on the job. A recent vacancy provided the opportunity to promote Tara into the Tenancy Team, where she now manages her own portfolio and is broadening the scope of her responsibilities. Well done Tara!



Babitha Mathews,
Case Manager,
Homelessness
Support Services

Babitha joined the team in

December and said "I've recently had the privilege of joining the Women's Housing Company as a Case Manager for the Culturally And Linguistically Diverse (CALD) outreach program. I've been in the social work field since 2006... I find it so rewarding to support clients... and be part of their journey of success and strength." Welcome Babitha!

Women's Housing Company Strategic Plan 2020-2025

We are excited to release the new Women's Housing Company Strategic Plan 2020-2025.

The vision and purpose for the Women's Housing Company (WHC) are at the centre of our Strategic Plan. They are the two pillars around which this, and future plans, are developed and set our long term direction.



Vision

Empowering women to improve their lives through the provision of housing that is affordable



Purpose

Providing quality, safe, and stable housing and homelessness services for women

The strategic objectives are the five key areas we will prioritise over the next five years to progress our vision and achieve our purpose. The strategies are high level activities that will be critical for achieving our objectives. More detailed actions under each strategy will be provided in our yearly business plans.

	Quality services	Providing safe and stable housing and homelessness services for women
	Enhanced wellbeing	Linking clients to the support they need to improve their lives
	Purposeful growth	Increasing the supply of housing and homelessness services for women
	Impactful advocacy	Leading voice in advocating for women's housing and homelessness services
	Sustainable business	Continuing financial and operational sustainability

You can find the new WHC Strategic Plan 2020-2025 here:

<http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/uploads/aboutus/corporate-policies/WHC0033-Strategic-Plan-Snapshot-235220.pdf>

Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2024

As part of our new Strategic Plan 2020-2025, the WHC is proud to launch our new Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-24. The Strategy was developed by Icen Management Consultants in conjunction with tenants and staff, and harnesses partnerships and community to strengthen capability, independence, and tenancy sustainment.

You can find the new Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-2024 here: <http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/aboutus/customerservice>

Focus on the Rent Subsidy Review

To ensure you are receiving the correct rent subsidy, we review household incomes twice each year, around the time that Centrelink reviews benefit rates in March and September. Please see your latest rent review notice included with this newsletter or via email if you have requested this option.

We also review your rent subsidy when your household income changes. It is important to let us know within 21 days if your circumstances change. Some examples of changes are:

- Change or cancellation of Centrelink benefits, including JobKeeper

- Starting employment
- Loss of employment
- Change in employment status (e.g. from full time to part time)
- An additional household member wishes to join the residence
- Household member turns 18

Providing Income Evidence

To accurately calculate your subsidised rent, we need evidence of every type of income earned by household members aged 18 years and over. This includes Centrelink Payments (unless you have provided authority for us to access your income details directly with Centrelink); payslips if you earn

wages; proof of income and bank statements if you are self-employed or have more than \$5,000 in savings and investments.

Failure to provide information

If you don't let us know when your household circumstances change, or if you fail to provide income evidence for a rent subsidy review, we will be unable to determine if you are eligible for subsidised rent. This may also be deemed rental fraud. We may cancel your rent subsidy and charge you market rent.

For more information please visit www.womenshousingcompany.org.au

Celebrating International Women's Day 2021

We are celebrating International Women's Day on 8 March 2021. Due to continuing COVID-19 concerns we will be celebrating this year's Choose to Challenge theme online. There are still plenty of ways you can get involved.

International Women's Day Reflections

Click on the link below from 8 March to listen to reflections from Women's Housing Company staff and tenants on what International Women's Day means to them.

<http://www.womenshousingcompany.org.au/aboutus/videos>

IWD Prize Ticket Giveaway - 10 X \$100 gift cards

As we are unable to gather in person this year, we are giving away \$100 gift cards to 10 lucky winners, selected at random (winners will be randomly selected from all WHC tenants that are up to date with their rent on 31 December 2020). Check your envelope or inbox and give us a call if you have found one of the lucky tickets.



#ChooseToChallenge

Housing and jobs: A home is where the start is

With the help of University Technology, Sydney (UTS) Business School students, the Women's Housing Company (WHC) has scoped a new WHC Employment Engagement Program (EEP) to help tenants secure work. The collaborative project is part of our Tenant and Community Engagement Strategy 2020-24 which launched this week.

Research based on surveys and interviews with tenants and other stakeholders, found a program with linking and support was

needed. "What we want to do is to try to coordinate better pathways," confirmed Chief Operating Officer Kath Cain: "give people somewhere

safe and affordable to call home, and [many] will be able to move onto training, education and employment."

Training and employment initiatives will form a key part of WHC tenant engagement over the coming years.

For an outline of the joint project, please see <https://www.uts.edu.au/news/social-justice-sustainability/housing-and-jobs-home-where-start>.



UTS Business School students and WHC staff

Fire Safety

There are lots of simple things you can do to help keep you, your neighbours and loved ones safe from fire. Some tips include:

- Never leave cooking, candles or cigarettes unattended
- If you must use candles, keep them well away from curtains and soft furnishings
- Regularly check and replace electrical leads for damage and faults
- Keep common areas clear at all times
- Never obstruct, damage or prop open a fire door
- Test your smoke alarm once a month (using a broom handle to press the test button)
- Always make sure you are available for the annual smoke alarm inspection organised by the WHC

For more information go to www.fire.nsw.gov.au/

