

International Women's Day



An incredible turn out with a delicious lunch, painting, meditation and private tours of the garden

The Women's Housing Company (WHC) celebrated International Women's Day 2023 with some of the wonderful women in our community, hosting a picnic in the Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney

AGM and Welcome to New Patron

The WHC Annual General Meeting was held in Surry Hills in November 2022. It was refreshing to return to an in-person event with many tenants in attendance. Commencing with a Welcome to Country by Ann Weldon, the Chair Alice Spizzo conducted the official proceedings. This included introducing the Hon. Ros Kelly as the WHC Patron, a new role to champion the work of the organisation.

Key achievements for the year included:

- over \$12m secured to fund new housing
- securing funding to support 15 more women in our Together Home Program – total of 45 packages
- ongoing partnerships with Woollahra and Randwick Councils to provide housing to women and children escaping domestic violence.



The Hon. Ros Kelly, the WHC's new patron

Your Say Any Day: A review and feedback opportunity

To increase your voice across the everyday decisions we make at the WHC, we are commencing a Your Say Any Day emailing list. By signing up, you will receive policies via email requesting your feedback before we take these to TAG meetings for review. To sign up, email community@womenshousingcompany.org.

CEO Message

It's been lovely to reconnect in person over recent months at the various Women's Housing Company events. International Women's Day was an opportunity for our team, along with tenants and colleagues from other agencies to celebrate the many advances to women's rights and in particular reflect on the importance of safe, secure and affordable housing.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released new census data on homelessness. Of those experiencing homelessness in 2021, 53,974 were female - an increase of 10% from 2016.

The WHC continues to advocate strongly on the shortage of

affordable housing, the impact of cost-of-living pressures, and the need for more social housing. Both the Australian and NSW Governments have a role to play in delivering relief, particularly for older women and women with children escaping domestic and family violence.

I am pleased to share that our new housing in the Canterbury Bankstown area is now ready for occupation. Our team has been working on allocating the new housing and welcoming women and children to their new homes. We will celebrate with an official opening in the coming months.



In addition, we have several new blocks in the pipeline. These are mainly in western Sydney – South Granville, Seven Hills and North Parramatta - all areas of high need. These units are brand new, modern and well located in blocks of varying sizes, which will be managed by the WHC.

Our team works very hard to deliver services, run programs, maintain our buildings, advocate on issues affecting women, and identify opportunities for new housing. It was wonderful to have the WHC Patron spend time with the team to discuss our work, and the importance of wellbeing and resilience.

Best regards,
Debbie Georgopoulos
CEO WHC



Planned Property Upgrades

The WHC undertakes technical inspections of properties every three years to monitor property condition and plan for upgrades and renewals. The WHC then develops an annual program of planned works across the portfolio focusing on properties most in need of upgrade. These upgrades include carpet

replacement and painting, kitchen and bathroom renewal and external and common area upgrades.

The Property Services Team has commenced planned works at various blocks, with over \$1m of works scheduled to take place across the WHC portfolio in this financial year.

In addition, the WHC has been awarded approximately \$880K in funding by the Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC) to undertake upgrades to LAHC owned properties managed by the WHC. The Property Services Team has commenced contact with residents with work due to be completed by 30 June.

Exciting New Housing

Recently, the WHC was successful in securing NSW Government grants for the purchase of new housing. In total, the WHC was awarded over \$12m, which combined with a contribution from the WHC has delivered 31 new homes in the Canterbury Bankstown area.

The WHC has upgraded these properties and women and children are now moving into their new homes. Upgrade works included new kitchens, bathrooms, flooring, paint and doors, as well as upgrading balconies and common areas. The WHC will work with new residents to build strong communities in these new locations with assistance from local partners.



Staff Updates



Connie Gold
Housing Services
Manager

Connie brings a wealth of experience from 15 years in the housing and homelessness sectors, across Australia and Scotland.



Janie Maude
Property Service
Manager

Janie brings extensive experience in asset and facilities management, holding a variety of management roles.



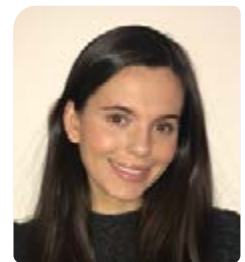
Auriane Devens
Tenancy Manager

After seven years in the real estate industry, Auriane, joined us last year passionate to help improve tenancy sustainment.



Jessica Butt
Tenancy Manager

Jessica has a background in the housing sector and believes it is a vital aspect of our well-being. She loves to work with a diverse community of women.



Erin Tracey
Asset Officer

Erin has worked in social housing for the past three years, both in the UK and Australia. She enjoys giving back through her role.

Tenant Story

Mary* was born in Lebanon and came to Australia when she was a year old. She lived in a close-knit family until she got married and had three children. During this time, Mary encountered many challenges and trauma; this included physical, mental and financial abuse. After she decided to leave with her three children, Mary lived in fear, becoming isolated and depressed. With no job and her single parenting payment barely covering her expenses, Mary found housing with the Women's Housing Company, where she felt secure and was connected to the services she needed to rebuild her life. Finally able to set goals, Mary began looking at how she could best financially support her children. Mary loved working with children and wanted to become a Primary School Teacher. She studied for four years full-time until she graduated.



Today, Mary is a Primary School Teacher. She supports students from other countries with minimal English language skills and students with learning disabilities.

*Name changed

Recycling and Waste

Not only does following waste disposal procedures **help keep the environment clean, it also makes the community's overall health standards better.** With waste being properly disposed of, there are fewer health risks and hazards around to affect us.

Please refer to local Council advice on waste and recycling to ensure you are using your bins correctly. Where possible, the WHC will display information in bin areas.



Programs, Events and Resources

Empowerment through Employment

Since launching the Empowerment through Employment Program, we have held over ten workshops and seen numerous women engage with the program. Many women are proactively working with job providers while others are in educational programs.



Workshops have included starting your own business and resume writing. Look out for upcoming workshops:

- **Overcoming Barriers to Employment with Evolve, Thursday 4th May 10.00am, Liverpool**
- **Resume writing + Interviewing Skills with Ability Options, Tuesday 16th May 10.30am, Surry Hills**



Did you know that many WHC tenants are eligible to receive up to \$5,000 from the Federal Government to assist in covering costs relating to employment? This can include costs relating to transportation, clothing, childcare, respite services, training and development and any other work necessities like computers. To learn more about whether you're eligible, email us contact@womenshousingcompany.org



Let's get Digital

Digital technology is growing fast, and it is often hard to keep up with changes if you don't know the basics. The WHC is holding digital literacy workshops over the next few months to help you gain new skills and to increase your confidence when using a computer or going online. You can attend any event with any general IT questions and leave with new skills.



The Program is thanks to Sydney Community Foundation's generous contribution. We were lucky to have the co-founder, Lucinda Brogden AM join the launch.

Workshops:

- **Safety First (scam prevention), Friday 28 April, Dee Why**
- **Safety First (scam prevention), Friday 5 May, Bankstown**
- **How to use MyGov & Services NSW, Friday 12 May, Surry Hills**
- **How to use MyGov & Services NSW, Wednesday 17 May, Chester Hill**
- **Online Hobbies, Friday 26 May, Warwick Farm**
- **Online Hobbies, Wednesday 31 May, Narraweena**
- **Online Banking, coming soon.**

RSVP to any of the above events by calling the office 02 9281 1764. Or scan the QR code and scroll through the options. Morning tea provided.



ACCESS Program by WAGEC

ACCESS is a free personalised mentoring program developed by the Women and Girls' Emergency Centre (WAGEC) to support women to identify strengths, build self-confidence and set goals for the future. It is a 3–6-month program that supports women aged 18+ who would like free mentoring either in-person or virtually. ACCESS mentors are women looking to support other women to build on their goals.

ACCESS MENTORING PROGRAM



to identify your strengths, build self-confidence and set goals for the future. ACCESS is:

- free
- personalised
- for women aged 18+
- a 3–6-month program
- delivered in-person or virtually, depending on your needs.

Join us on Monday, 8 May, 10.30am at WAGEC in Redfern for a light lunch while meeting potential mentors, plus hear from mentees and how the program has supported them in reaching their goals.



SCAN QR CODE TO LEARN MORE or contact our Customer Service Team by email contact@womenshousingcompany.org.

Your Say Day 2023

Your Say Day is an opportunity for our tenant community to gather and discuss the recent Tenant Satisfaction Survey results while providing feedback to senior management about our services. It is also a great way to connect with us on how we can best work together to improve some areas of our operations highlighted by the survey.

When: Thursday 22 June, 10.30am-2pm

Where: Redfern Community Centre, 29-53 Hugo St, Redfern (Near Redfern Train Station) We will follow the session with a social lunch thanks to Two Good.

RSVP by calling our Customer Service team 02 9281 1764.



TAG Meetings

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) is your platform to share feedback, information, and experiences about WHC services. It's also a great way of upskilling and gaining confidence. For more details scan the QR code or call our Customer Service team.

Time	Date	Location
10.00am -12.00pm	Tuesday 28 April	Northern Beaches
10.00am -12.00pm	Wednesday 21 June	Woolloomooloo
11.00am -12.30pm	Wednesday 23 August	Blacktown



Did you know we have an exclusive Facebook Group?

Join our Women's Housing Company Tenants only Facebook Page Join us to learn about local events, tips and tricks and WHC updates. Every application must be verified by address or by tenancy number. Simple scan the QR code.

Business Hours: 9.00am – 4.30pm Monday – Friday

Customer Service: Phone: 02 9281 1764 **Email:** contact@womenshousingcompany.org

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