



Affordable Community Housing TENANT NEWS

Volume 2, Issue 2

August 2009

NSW
REGISTERED
Community
Housing Provider

We are pleased to announce that Affordable Community Housing became the first growth provider that achieved full registration under the new Community Housing Regulation introduced in July 2009.

Inside this issue

Chairman Message	1
Local Tenants Zones - Update	2
Rent Arrears	2
New Manager	2
Rent Review	3
\$42.5 Million boost	4
White Goods Interest Free Loan Scheme	4

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Office Hours:

Monday to Friday
9:00 am-4:30 pm

Message from the Chair

I'm honoured to be your new Chairman and look forward to working with you and your families. Over the past few months we have witnessed significant changes in the sector. The introduction of the Commonwealth's Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan provides an historical opportunity to grow the social housing system. In NSW, Housing NSW is planning to deliver 6,000 new homes during the next three (3) years and the large majority of these homes will be transferred to the community housing sector with title.

We welcome the expansion of the sector and the transfer of title of government owned dwellings to the sector. The change in policy will enable organizations like ours to use the properties to leverage more financing from private investors into the affordable housing sector.

Against this background, the Board is currently reviewing its strategic plan. To provide ACH directors and staff with the opportunity to listen to and gain a greater understanding of stakeholders needs and expectations for ACH we held a stakeholder workshop on the 16th July for the tenant council, staff and our stakeholders (including support service providers and government agencies).

Our commitment to good governance continued with the recent appointment of a number of skilled directors who are very passionate about the differences that this organization makes to the lives of our local community. To improve the board rela-

tionship with its members we have invited tenant council members to attend board meetings and we have posted board meeting minutes on our website. This should encourage a wide dissemination of information arising from board meetings.

As you will read in other parts of the newsletter, I am pleased to advise you that ACH was successful in receiving \$42.50 million of funding under the Social Housing Growth Fund to purchase 135 new housing stock. We also received a \$360,000 maintenance grant from the Federal government that was expended on 138 of our capital properties.

I am very pleased to see the improved services for our tenants as our local tenant zones (LTZ) became operational and the tenant council is undertaking a number of new initiatives including the organic food market and no-interest loan for white goods.

My fellow board members and I are looking forward to meeting with all of you at our next Annual General Meeting that will be held on Thursday November 12th 2009.



Cliff Haynes
Chairman
Board of Directors

Local Tenant Zones (LTZs)

We have several local offices (local tenant zones) that you can go to instead of coming to the Silverwater office. **It is advisable that you make an appointment with your Housing Manager** before you go to the local tenant zone so they can prepare your documents and whatever else is required before they see you. These local tenant zones are designed to bring the service closer to all our clients, however, if you are elderly or with mobility problems we can bring the service to your home. **Please call your Housing Manager on 8622 1500** to make an appointment.

Locations

Bankstown (Inside residential complex)

Address: 42-44 Leonard St. Bankstown
Days: Wednesday and Thursday
Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Belmore (In Care Assist Office)

Address: 438 Burwood Rd. Belmore
Day: Monday
Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

Parramatta (In Parramatta MRC)

Address: Level 4, 1 Horwood Place,
Parramatta
Days: Wednesday and Friday
Time: 9:00am to 4:00pm

Blacktown (In Marist Youth Office)

Address: 151 Reservoir Rd
Blacktown
Day: Monday
Time: 9:00am-4:00pm

New Address by September, 2009

Address: 36-38 First Ave,
Blacktown

Teloepa (In Housing NSW Office)

Address: 6 Shortland St, Teloepa
Days: Thursday or Friday
(by appointment only)
Time: From 1:00pm

New Housing Manager

We have a new Housing Manager for Bankstown area, her name is Nicole Sialepis. She comes to us with an extensive knowledge of property management and we are happy to have her as part of our Housing Services Team.

Nicole will be managing Helen Ho's portfolio and Helen will be moving on to another role.

All the clients affected by this change will receive an advise by mail.

Rent Arrears

You may have noticed that recently there have been two staff members (Lina Mansour and Andrew) who have been contacting you regarding your rent arrears. This is because we have dedicated these staff members to work exclusively in trying to address the rent arrears situation.

Please don't hesitate to call them and let them know if you are having problems in paying your rent on time, they will try to work with you and help you with payment options.

Please call on 8622 1535, 8622 1536

A relieved tenant recently moved to ACH property

"This offer will drastically change my life for the better. I am currently paying \$320 per week where I am living and I could barely afford it. I only manage to get by with the help of family and friends but it's very hard to rely on them and they have their own financial obligations too. I am not expecting anything this beautiful and to top it all off, it is something that I could afford. I feel like I have won the lotto!"



Rent Review

What is a Rent Review?

Rent Review is the process of gathering information from tenants to enable Affordable Community Housing (ACH) to assess how much rent subsidy you are eligible for (the amount that the Government provides to help you with your rent) and determine what is the right amount of your rent.

Your rent is based on your household income, so it is important that we have the right information. This policy would have been explained to you when you signed your lease with us.

What information do you need to provide ACH?

We need a "Tenant Declaration" as to who are the occupants in the premises and we need income information of all household members who are 18 years old and over.

How often is this done?

The Rent Review is done twice a year or every six (6) months.

We have done one in March, 2009, so another one is due by September, 2009 (we will try to stage the review, so some of you may get the notice later than September). You will get a letter from us soon requesting you to provide tenancy information.

What happens if I don't provide any information?

If we cannot assess how much rent subsidy you are eligible for, your rent will go up to the full market rental value of the property.

What needs to be done after a new rent is assessed?

You will need to change your rent payment on the date your new rent becomes effective.

If you have given us consent (signed the Centrelink Consent Form), then we can change your rent payment automatically. Otherwise, either you sign a new Centrelink form or change your bank payments if you are paying rent through bank deposits.

Affordable Community Housing will always work with you. Please don't hesitate to contact your Housing Manager if there is any issue that will prevent you from giving your rent review information on time.

Please contact us on 8622 1500 if you have recently changed your home phone or mobile number.

MEET OUR BOARD

Cliff Haynes



Cliff is the Executive Director for Business Management and Governance within Housing NSW and has held that position for the last 15 months. Cliff joined Housing NSW in February 2005 as General Manager, Housing Services for Greater Western Sydney.

Prior to joining Housing NSW Cliff worked in Local Government holding various executive positions in local government at a number of councils, including 6 years as Deputy General Manager at the City of Sydney, from 1995 until 2001. Cliff was President of the NSW Division of Local Government Managers Australia from 2002 to 2004 and serving on the Board for 10 years.

Rosemary Bishop



MBA, BA (Hons), Dip Ed. Rosemary is a Director of Independent, a Registered Training Organisation. Interdependent specialises in designing organisation systems and supporting sound implementation through change management and the facilitation of learning, supported by customised software.

Rosemary has developed organisational performance systems such as competency, leadership capability and career systems for public and private sector organisations. A key aspect of Rosemary's work has been the analysis, design and the facilitation of organisational change.

Paul Howlett



Joint Managing Director, Wright Corporate Strategy. Joined Wright Corporate Strategy as a Partner in 1997. Over 38 years experience in the private sector.

Specialises in policy and strategy in the environment and waste management sectors. Extensive experience advising governments and private sector organisations.

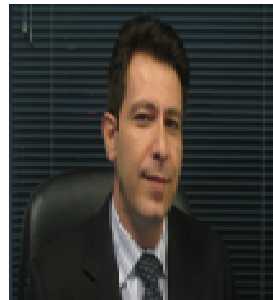
Engaged to advised three not-for-profit organisations

RSPCA, EcoForum and ACHL.

Education

Bachelor Engineering (Mining) (Honours),
University of Melbourne

Alex Lankry



Managing Director of Domain Group of companies since 1992, has overseen Property development, real estate investments and financing business from the time of conception to its current successful state, with assets in excess of \$83,700,000.

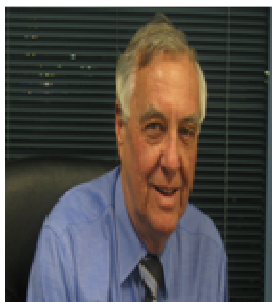
The groups of companies include Building Company, Property Management Company and Property Acquisitions Companies, which employed staff of up to a hundred (100) plus persons.

Education

Bachelor of Engineering, majoring in Electronics, Member of the HIA.

Member of the Institute of Real Estate
Member of various industry associations

Bruce McDonald



Recently retired after more than 20 years as a senior officer of Penrith City Council. From 1994 to 2005 Bruce was the Director of City Strategy and Deputy General Manager where the principal responsibilities included.

Development of Council's Strategic Plan for the City; Regional and Metropolitan Planning
Development of Council's 4-Year Strategic Program;
Preparation of Council's annual management plan;

Bruce maintains an interest in the industry and currently is the alternate chair of the PIA Local Government Planners Network and conducts a small consulting practice. Maintaining a contemporary appreciation of current planning, provisions, practice and issues.

Currently employed part time by Hunters Hill Council as its Strategic Planner.

Mountaha Najjar



Has extensive experience in all facets of business management. Since becoming a Community Housing tenant, Mountaha has worked selflessly to assist other tenants and applicants of Community Housing.

She has extensive experience working with not-for-profit organizations, and she was on the board of the Islamic Women's Welfare Association a position she has held for 2 years.

Prior to becoming a director of Affordable Community Housing (ACH) Mountaha was a member of ACH Tenant Engagement Committee whose primary role was to monitor and advise the Board in relation to the provision of tenant services

During Mountaha's term as the president of the Committee ACH was awarded the "Excellence in Tenant Participation and Services to Tenants" by the NSW Federation of Housing.

Beata Kade



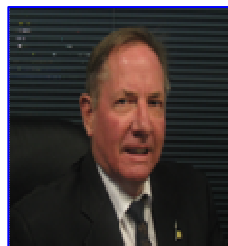
Beata is the Managing Director of Art of Multimedia, an integrated communications provider to government, private sector and organisations across all industries.

Her clients include SHFA, McWilliams Wines, Qantas, Australian Museum, OneSteel, Woolworths, Department of Ageing, DADHC and others.

Beata has 23 years experience in sales and marketing, communications and management and specialises in strategic & technical direction and planning relating to brand, customer, as well as internal communications.

Former member of Small Business, Development Corporation Board and founding Western Sydney IT Cluster Board member.

David Mead



David is recently retired after 40 years in local government, including 23 years as a CEO. David worked in 7 local authorities, Penrith City, Wollondilly Shire, Windsor Municipal, Hawkesbury City, Dungog Shire, Liverpool City and Baulkham Hills Shire.

He was shire clerk at Dungog, Town Clerk/City Manager at Liverpool, and General Manager at Baulkham Hills.

The performance of those councils where David was CEO improved significantly under his stewardship, as demonstrated by the number of awards received from both within and outside the industry.

David also served on the board of LGMA (NSW) for 4 years.



\$42.5 million boost to Affordable Community Housing

Affordable Community Housing Ltd (ACH) successfully tendered to receive \$42.50 million funding under the Social Housing Growth Fund (SHGF) to purchase 135 new housing stock. The Social Housing Growth Fund is part of The Commonwealth and the States National Partnership on Social Housing, with the Commonwealth providing \$400 million over two years, for capital investment for social housing and homelessness.

We are very pleased with the outcome of the two competitive tender processes. The success of ACH is testament to the increased confidence of Government in ACH and we look forward to working with different levels of government to address affordable housing crisis in our local communities. This fund will enable us to deliver more affordable units for people on low income. To date, we have acquired over 40 units of which some are already tenanted.

We also received \$360,000 as a maintenance grant from the Federal Government that was used on 138 ACH properties.

NIL (No Interest Loan) Scheme



ACH is going to introduce the NIL Scheme for tenants to buy essential white goods.

The loan amount will be between \$250 and \$1200, interest free. Moreover, the tenants will be able to negotiate a flexible repayment arrangement.

The Scheme will :

- Help tenants purchase essential white goods i.e. fridge or washing machine;
- Help tenants escape the traps of commercial credit companies with high interest rates, fees and charges;
- Tenants will not be burdened with high interest rates.
- Flexible repayment plan tailored to their individual circumstances and capacity to pay;
- Buying a new product will help them avoid expensive repair costs on old and second hand goods;
- It will improve their standard of living;
- NIL will help them better manage their financial situation.

If you are interested to apply please contact Scyma on 8622 1513



Tenant Markets



The Market, initiated and managed by the Tenant Council, started on 1st August in Bass Hill. The Markets offer great benefit to the tenants.

The monthly market enables tenants to network with a range of people: neighbours, relatives, families, friends, market gardeners, sellers, buyers, ACH staff Council staff and so on.

The Markets will also create an opportunity for tenants to access fresh organic food at affordable prices.

The Markets will also create an opportunity for fund raising. The income generated will be utilised to subsidise educational, recreational and social activities for tenants.

For individual tenants the Markets will create an opportunity to generate income by selling items or bric-a-brac.

The address for the Markets site is: Carysfield Park corner Hume Hwy and Johnston Rd, Bass Hill. The Markets are on the every 1st Saturday of the month from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

Next Market is on 5th September. For more information please contact the Market Manager, Allan Priestley on 9644 4862