



Gardening at 91 years young



Alison and Brenden leading the way



Gardening COVID style

Connecting with nature across the Mid North Coast



COVID-19 has not been good for anyone's mental health. Getting out in the garden among plants. It is relaxing and calming, it's a great way to re-connect to nature, improves your mood and mental health, and it reduces stress and anxiety.

Our favourite local permaculturalist, Alison (in the red hat) encourages everyone to grow your own fresh

herbs, flowers and veggies. **'It's so easy to grow plants and they bring you such joy.'**

Our garden partner from the Royal Botanical Garden of Sydney, Brenden (brown hat and shovel) recommends joining him on Facebook for garden tips by searching and liking: **Community Greening NSW.**



Time to get dirty

Busy in the garden



Our MNC Garden Team have been busy around the gardens, they've been building raised garden beds, planting native gardens, getting to know our gardeners across the region and are looking forward to working with you in your garden patch. If you're interested in gardening and want to get together with us,

just call Jesse on 1800 269 672, ext 1 for MNC, then 3 for Community Development.

And remember! There are a lot of services and organisations in your local community that can help during these challenging times.



Well done MNC Garden Team!

Contact your local office on 1800 269 672 for more information.

Get connected with MyConnect

Mission Australia Housing understands how stressful moving and getting set up can be so it is really exciting that we can now offer tenants a free and friendly service to help you do just that through our new partnership with MyConnect.

Searching and connecting people with the best value for money facilities providers in their area will help you feel settled quicker. Check out more about MyConnect on their website, myconnect.com.au or have a chat with your Housing Officer.

CONTACT US



-  Mission Australia Housing hotline: **1800 269 672**
-  1/39 Gordon Street, Coffs Harbour NSW 2450
-  missionaustralia.com.au/housing
-  Facebook/[MissionAustraliaHousingMNCNSW](https://www.facebook.com/MissionAustraliaHousingMNCNSW)



CrimeStoppers 1800 333 000

Is your information urgent? CrimeStoppers will review your online report within 48 hours. Is your information about criminal activity including children that may be at risk of harm?

Call 1800 333 000 so your information can be reviewed immediately.



Tenancy matters – what is rent arrears?

It is important that as a tenant you pay your rent regularly and on time. If you do not pay your rent on time your rental account will fall behind (or be in arrears).

Being in rent arrears is the single biggest risk to your housing and places your tenancy at risk.

Rental arrears can build up quickly so it is important to **act early**. If you are having trouble paying your rent, contact us as soon as possible. The sooner we know, the sooner your Housing Officer can work with you on a payment plan so you can clear your rent debt and stay in your home.

What can you expect if you fall behind in paying your rent?

1-5 days in arrears

If your rental account is between **1-5 days** in rental arrears, your Housing Officer will usually **call you** to remind you to pay your rent. If you cannot be reached by phone, your Housing Officer will send you a friendly reminder in the mail.

5-14 days in arrears

If your rental account is between **5-14 days** in rental arrears your Housing Officer will send you a **warning letter** advising you that if your rent account becomes **more than 14 days in arrears** you may be issued with a **Termination Notice**. The letter will advise you to either pay the rental arrears immediately or if you are unable to do this, to contact the office to discuss the situation and arrange a payment plan.

14+ days in arrears

If you become **over 14 days** in arrears, the **Residential Tenancy Act states** that you can be issued with a notice requiring you to **vacate your premises**. You will be required to pay your rental

arrears within 14 days (from date notice was sent). If you receive this notice you should contact your Housing Officer immediately.

Remember, if you are having trouble paying your rent, contact your Housing Officer straight away, don't delay! We are committed to supporting you to stay on top of your rent and maintain your tenancy – talking with us early is the first step.

Our helpful staff can also support you to access a range of services that may be able to provide assistance, so get on the phone and **call us on 1800 269 672**.

Call 1800 269 672 to talk to your Housing Officer about this.

**Act early,
talk to us.**

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE



Perseverance is one of our values and **this year has certainly tested that.**

Drought, bushfires, floods and now COVID-19 have thrown light on how important having a home is to stay safe and well. This year has affected all Australians in some way, Mission Australia clients and our tenants, our staff and their families.

With the impact of these disasters on our economy we strive to remain focussed on the future. More than ever, we know we need **more social and affordable housing across Australia.**

We are proud to let you know Mission Australia has started construction in **Duke St, Coffs Harbour**. This **16-month project** is part of Mission Australia's long-term commitment to the Mid North Coast to help local people of all ages, backgrounds and incomes to have access to services they need, and a **safe and secure home.**

It includes a **Mission Australia Centre** that will offer a range of tailored community services designed to address local needs. It will provide opportunities for social connection including for those

who live in our social and affordable housing properties, with the wider community and create a space where local service providers, individuals and organisations can gather and collaborate for the benefit of the whole community.. A new property of **40 social and affordable studio apartments** is also being built next door with all construction expected to be finished by the **end of 2021**. It adds to Mission Australia Housing's footprint of more than 1,400 social and affordable homes across the Mid North Coast.

Our priority is your wellbeing and safety. Last year we saw how extremely hot and prone we are to dangerous bushfires. We urge you to be safe, be prepared, stay cool and healthy, and keep your properties clear of rubbish and garden litter over the summer months.

I would like to thank all tenants who have taken the time to work with us over the past year and who gave feedback through this year's **Annual Tenant Survey**. Your help means we can deliver the best possible services to you and we will keep working closely with our Tenant Action Groups and Committees to tailor and improve these services to you.



Building begins on Duke Street apartments and the MAC

I would also like to thank you for participating in your **Household Income Review**. We would normally do this two times a year but given the challenging and unknown circumstances 2020 brought us we only conducted one review in October. Reviewing your household income regularly means that we know we are charging all households the right rent depending on income coming in. In some cases this could rise if someone moves in to your property and in others, it could reduce if someone moves out.

As we all work towards finding our **'new normal'** it is time to stop, take a breath, reflect on what we've learnt over 2020 and spend special time with family and friends

Wishing you all a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year break.

Chris Bratchford
Executive, Mission Australia Housing

Falls *are* preventable!

Did you know that one in every three people living in community in NSW aged 65 years and over fall one to two times a year?

As people get older, the risk of falling increases. Studies have shown that falling has a significant psychological, social and economic impact, not only on the person but also on the community. People who fall often lose their self-confidence and independence which in turn can lead to more falls.

There are several things that can increase the risk of falling, including personal and environmental factors. Personal factors may include side effects from medication, loss of strength and balance, physical inactivity, poor diet, dehydration, incontinence, failing eyesight, confusion, rushing, foot problems and chronic illnesses. Environmental factors include unsafe and improper footwear, poor lighting or trip hazards found inside and outside the

home. **These all increase the risk of falling.**

The good news is that there are many easy ways to prevent falls. An effective way (but not the only one) of reducing the risk of falling is improving strength and balance and this can be done by participating in physical activity such as **tai chi, pilates, yoga, lawn balls, dancing and other gentle exercises.**

Removing trip hazards at home such as rugs and mats, having your vision checked regularly and eating healthy meals, also help to prevent falls.

Keep an eye out for more information about preventing falls in this newsletter next year. We will also be giving you more information



about FREE healthy lifestyle programs aimed at people living in community **65 years and over and Aboriginal people 45 years and over**, provided online by the Mid North Coast Local Health District.

For more information about how to prevent falls, talk to your health professional, or contact Health Promotion team on 6691 1892 to chat to us about our healthy lifestyle and active ageing programs.



MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER



GET YOUR VISION AND HEARING CHECKED



REVIEW YOUR MEDICATIONS WITH YOUR DOCTOR



STAY ACTIVE AND EXERCISE

Noisy neighbours can be a pain

Talk to your neighbours, try to sort it out. They may not realise how loud they are being, whether its music, barking dogs or just loud conversations. If that doesn't work, ask for help from a family member, friend or neighbour who knows you both

and talk with you and your neighbour together. If that still doesn't work, you may try mediation through the **NSW Community of Justice Centre: 1800 990 777** or cjc.justice.nsw.gov.au

This is a free, confidential, quick, informal and professional service.

More info on time-of-day noise restrictions can be found environment.nsw.gov.au/questions/times-residential-noise-restrictions

To talk about tenancy or repair matters,

contact us on **1800 269 672** or via email at mncenquiries@missionaustralia.com.au

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year!

We regret to inform you that due to the COVID-19 public health restrictions, we will not be hosting Christmas parties this year.

Mission Australia Housing Christmas closures - Mid North Coast office

Don't forget there are changes to our office hours over the Christmas period:

Tenancy and Support Services will NOT be available on public holidays and weekends.

For any property emergencies over this period please call the Mission Australia Housing 24 hour hotline on **1800 269 672.**

Before heading to the office, it's a good idea to check if the office is open by calling ahead on the number above.

Your Tenant Action Group

Tenant Action Groups (TAG) work with Mission Australia Housing to help us deliver the right services to you. TAGs are made up of tenants interested in making a positive difference in their communities and to community housing.

Coffs Connection TAG is now up and running and would like to partner with other tenants across the MNC.

We are looking to start up Tenant Action Groups in your neighbourhood and want to hear from you. Call your **Community Development Officer, Jesse** on **1800 269 672** if you would like to become involved.

Act now for bushfire season

Our hearts go out to everyone affected by bushfires.

Be safe this bushfire season by preparing your home to survive a bushfire. Even if your plan is to leave early, the more you prepare your home, the more likely it will survive a bushfire or ember attack. A well prepared home can also be easier for firefighters to defend and is less likely to put your neighbours' homes at risk. A well prepared home will also give you more protection if a fire threatens suddenly and you cannot leave.

Here are some basic maintenance tips to prepare your property:

- **Clean up fallen leaves, twigs and debris around the property**
- **Clean your gutters of leaves and twigs**
- **Keep lawns short and gardens well maintained**
- **Cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings**
- **Have hoses long enough to reach around your house**

Visit the Rural Fire Service Website for more info: **rfs.nsw.gov.au** or call the **bushfire info line: 1800 679 737.**



Thinking about making changes to your property?

To our valued tenants, just a reminder to ask us before making any changes to your property (for example putting hooks in walls, installing an air conditioner, or putting up a shed).

If you would like to make changes to your property you will need to put a request in writing to the Assets Team by completing a 'Request to Make Alterations' form. The Assets Team will review your request and may need to do an inspection before we can agree to any changes.

Some examples of changes to your property need a 'Request to Make Alterations' form filled out includes installing:

- **Anything requiring council approval**
- **Pergolas**
- **Air-conditioning**
- **Sheds**
- **Concrete slabs**
- **Bathroom or kitchen modifications**
- **Renovations such as painting**
- **Building alterations**
- **Electrical work**
- **Additions**
- **Securing a TV to the wall**
- **Hand-held showerheads or lever style taps**
- **Flyscreens on windows**



- **Replacing internal window coverings**
- **Cleats or cord guides to secure blinds or curtain rods**
- **Child safety gates inside the property**
- **Window safety devices for child safety**
- **Replacing hooks, nails or screws to hang pictures**
- **Carriage service for connecting a phone line or accessing the internet**

The last thing we want to see is work done without approval, then you having to change the property back at your own cost!

The best thing to do is talk to your Housing Officer or the Assets Team before you change any part of the property so they can let you know if a 'Request to Make Alterations' form is required for the work you plan to do.

Need more info?

You can always contact us if you would like more information.

You can also jump online and have a look through our **Tenant Factsheets** with easy to read information on important tenancy policies, these are available on our website, **missionaustralia.com.au/housing**

Welcome new faces to Mission Australia Housing

Jo recently relocated to Coffs Harbour and is in the role of **Tenancy Team Leader**. Jo comes to us from Argyle Housing with a background in housing and social services, and is enjoying all things that Coffs Coast has to offer.

Larrissa recently started in the **Access & Demand team** as a **Client Services Officer** while Roselee is on maternity leave preparing for a new member to join her family. Larrissa has previous experience working with the Aboriginal Housing Office and as a mental health support worker.

Sam has also started in the **Access & Demand team** as a **Client Services Officer** while Peta tries something new, moving in to the role of Senior Subsidy Officer. Sam most recently worked with Centrelink and has a real passion for wanting to help people.



Left to right; Jo, Larrissa and Sam

Noticed your noticeboard?

We have installed community notice boards in many of our complexes across the MNC. **Please remember to take a weekly look at your noticeboard for important news and regular updates.**