



David from Common Ground Art Collective



Jayne from Common Ground Art Collective



Margaret's gorgeous winning garden

## Common Ground Art Collective

**Common Ground Sydney is a community of people from all walks of life and many different backgrounds.**

It is our belief that where there is strong community, there is a strong creative culture. Whether in music, or art or writing, our voices and our experiences are valid, and we contribute these voices through our creative interests.

Our mission within the **Common Ground Art Collective** is to make a place where creativity is out and about and can be seen. We want to make our community safer and more vibrant. A place where neighbours talk to each other, work

together and feel welcome. A place where people can come to work on a project or try out new things, like painting, music performance and much, much more!

To do this, we would like to build a creative studio space. In this space we could invite resident artists to hold workshops, artist talks and exhibitions. We would also like to invite Mission Australia Housing tenants and communities from the broader Sydney region including Western Sydney to join us.



Above: Michael and Robin from Common Ground Art Collective

**Help us lift community spirit and celebrate local talent through creativity.** Your new Common Ground Art Collective; Jayne, David, Michael and Robin (see pictures above).

**If this sounds like you, please chat to your Community Development Officer, Kyle or Kudzi on 1800 269 672.**

## What's on around GWS?

### South West

Keep an eye on the **Coolaburoo Neighbourhood Centre** website and noticeboard to see all upcoming activities like yoga, Boomerang Bags, sit 'n sew or the pen pals project.

Visit their **website or call 9774 2426** for more information.



### CONTACT US

 Mission Australia Housing hotline: **1800 269 672**  
 Level 2, 81 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown NSW 2148  
 **missionaustralia.com.au/housing**  
 Facebook/**MissionAustraliaHousingSydney**



Indonesian mahogany bookshelf

### Kingswood Community Centre

Thanks to the **Kenthurst Men's Shed** for building and preparing the bookshelf for our Kingswood Community Library. The library will be run by some champion tenants and thanks to Neville, John, Kevin and their team.

### Norwest Christian College

Help us build community through gardening and connection. Dates will be announced soon on your noticeboard.

### Colyton Complex

Colyton High School students will be joining forces with tenants in our Colyton Complex to colour up the community with a bit of gardening. Groups like the Boys Shed will be helping us.

If you would like to take part in local initiatives across GWS please contact your **Community Development Officer Kudzi on 1800 269 672.**

### Looking to the future

In 2021 we will be hosting a range of workshops along with other community partners such as healthy cooking, waste management, gardening, mental wellbeing and cultural awareness. Please remember that all community activities will be following government advice around **COVID-19** guidelines.

# 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.**

We also have staff here who can connect you with a range of services that may be able to provide assistance. So get on the phone and **give Rachel or Kudzi a call on 1800 269 672.**

**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.

**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 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 that we need **more social and affordable housing across Australia.**

**We are really pleased to announce that the sales office for the redevelopment of Ivanhoe Estate in Macquarie Park is now open!** Now known as **Midtown**

**Macquarie Park** this redevelopment will be a mix of **private housing with at least 950 new community housing dwellings and 128 affordable homes.**

**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.

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



**View apartments virtually through the digitally interactive sales suite at Midtown Macquarie Park**

# Summer brings out the competition in all of us!

We have two big competitions over the summer right across the Sydney region.

## Best Christmas pet photo

Send us a creative, cute or funny photo of your pet dressed up as Christmas!



## Best Christmas tree decoration photo

Send in a photo of your Christmas tree decorated in your own home. Extra points for colour and sparkle.



Competition runs through December 2020. Winners will be announced in our first newsletter for 2021.

Submit photos to [housingenquiries@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:housingenquiries@missionaustralia.com.au).



## Updates from the TAG corner

With Christmas and the New Year just around the corner, **MONEY** can be very tricky.

Here are some quick tips from your Tenant Action Group to help you manage your money over the festive season;

1. **Write a list of who** you want to get presents for.
2. **Work within a budget.** What is your minimum and what is your maximum spend on each person. Remember, humans have holidays, bills and rent don't.
3. **Take time to go out and see what is in the shops** and also what the specials are.
4. Sometimes it helps to **ask your loved ones what they want for Christmas** rather than guess. Save yourself the pressure and stress.
5. **If you are creative**, maybe you can **make some gifts** rather than spending money.
6. **There is no shame in recycling** or 'sending forward' presents. If you get something you already have or don't really want or need, send it on to someone who would.
7. **Track your spending.** Make a list of what you have bought so far and keep an eye on it.
8. If you are planning on hosting lunches and dinners, perhaps **ask everyone to contribute** by bringing a dish or throwing in some money.
9. Do a family wide **secret Santa** that is capped. Or just for the kids.

## Get skilled and employed

NSW TAFE is currently running some free courses (conditions apply). Mt DrUITT TAFE is running classes in hospitality skills, food safety and coffee making.

Contact **TAFE on 131 601** for more info or visit their website: [tafensw.edu.au](http://tafensw.edu.au)

If you are working part time or looking for work, please

contact your **Community Development Officer, Kudzi** on **1800 269 672**.

Kudzi has connections with Employment Service Providers for all types of job seekers. You can also enrol in courses such as White Cards, RSA, and Resume Writing.



## Words from the Blue Mountains



Trish Doyle MP

**'I am contacted daily by people who are doing it tough, be it the effects of COVID-19 or the bushfires. As an MP, I hope residents feel that my office is approachable and open to their**

**concerns and worries.**

**The Blue Mountains community is well-networked and I believe a supportive one that looks out for people. There are many older residents and people who are isolated, due to frailty, ill-health and disability. My staff and I believe it is important that**

**people are supported to get the services they need that will make a difference to their lives.**

**Where ever I can I will advocate for the betterment of services in particular health and mental health services, domestic violence support services and services for people who are vulnerable.'**

*Trish Doyle,  
Member for the Blue Mountains*

**'Working with Mission Australia is refreshing because you can see their passion and interest in the wellbeing and development of their tenants'.**

*Suzie Van Opdorp, Electorate Officer/Advisor for the Office of the Blue Mountains*



## STOP PRESS! Winners are grinners

Announcing winners of the **Garden Competition** held over spring. Judges considered;

- 1. Design** – Colour and character
- 2. Culture** – Tell your story
- 3. Sustainability** – Environmentally friendly
- 4. Maintenance** – Can it be continued easily?

**1st runner up – Geoff from Kingswood.** Encouraging other neighbours, Geoff contributes to his complex by looking after their joint front garden.

**2nd runner up – Eddie from Colyton.** He champions the onsite community garden and propagates seeds into mature plants that add to the community's garden.



Runner up Eddie

And announcing the **overall winner** (drum roll!), **Margaret from Penrith!** As you can see, her garden tells a story of light, colour, culture and pattern (see picture on front). **Congratulations Margaret!**



Geoff came a close second

## 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](http://rfs.nsw.gov.au) or call the **Bushfire info line: 1800 679 737.**



## Meet Roslyn

(Team Leader Housing Services – GWS and Common Ground)

### Five words that describe a typical day at work for you:

Meetings, meetings, meetings. COVID-19 has changed the way we work together so calls and meetings take up a lot of my day.

**Place of birth:** Camden NSW

**City of childhood:** Campbelltown

**Favourite meal:** Vietnamese – anything cooked over charcoal is delicious.

**Favourite colour and why:** It changes – at the moment I'd say green as I love spring time and everything coming back to life.

**Favourite holiday:** Vietnam. Loved immersing myself in the culture.

**Hobbies:** Saturday and Sunday... Can I call that a hobby?

**How long have you been with Mission Australia Housing:** 2 years

**Favourite actor/actress:** Joaquin Phoenix, he completely reinvents himself for the roles he plays.

### Favourite band or musician:

Is constantly changing over the years, but an all-time favourite is Nirvana. Instantly takes me back to my teenage years.

**Favourite NRL team:** Haven't been following anyone for some time but if I had a choice I'd say the Tigers.

**If you were Prime Minister for a year what would you help change:** Equality across race, gender and religion.

### Why Mission Australia Housing?

I was originally drawn to working at Common Ground and the principles around the **Housing First Model**. This has since led to me working across Camperdown and our portfolio in GWS.



Roslyn

## Mission Australia Housing Christmas office closures

**Your Mission Australia Housing Office will be closed** over the Christmas and New Year period, from **5pm on Thursday, 24 December 2020 through to 9am on Monday, 4 January 2021.**



**Common Ground Sydney** will be monitored by 24/7 onsite security by Guardian Event Management.

Mission Australia support services will operate as normal between the hours of 8am to 5pm including public holidays.

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