



Not lost in translation

One of the real challenges Mission Australia Housing have is communicating with tenants with low literacy and who speak different languages. So next year, we will be looking into translating some of our tenants communications into

different languages and trialling speech programs and podcasts. Further research is currently underway so stay tuned for more on this exciting project!

**Mucho gracias! Xi Xi! Merci!
Danké! Salamat! Cam on! Teşekkürler!**

See a crime? Report it!

Here are some top tips on how to report illegal and anti-social behaviours;

- Using a note pad, make notes of the details;** what colour clothes? What colour hair? How tall were they? Any tattoos etc? Or type a description into your phone.
- Who else was in the vicinity at the time** who could be involved?
- What colour, type, brand of vehicles are involved?**

- Dates and times?** What was the date and time of the incident?
- Did you know you can report a crime anonymously?** You can report crimes anonymously on Crimestoppers.

New NSW Police portal

If you see or hear anything suspicious in your complex, please take a photo or video (if it is safe to do so) and **call CrimeStoppers on 1800 333 000** or visit these websites.

crimestoppers.com.au
portal.police.nsw.gov.au



WHAT'S ON IN YOUR AREA

Blacktown
blacktown.nsw.gov.au/event
Blue Mountains
bmcc.nsw.gov.au/community

South west
cbc.city.nsw.gov.au/community
Penrith
penrithcity.nsw.gov.au/community



Stationery freebies!

School is almost finished for the year but it's never too early to get ready for the new year with a **free stationery packs** for school children.

There are even office stationery packs available for adults.

Special thanks to Officeworks for supplying these items.

Reach out to Kudzi if you want one!



CONTACT US

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



Love thy neighbour

Due to the current social climate, COVID-19 lockdowns have made it even more challenging for people when it comes to isolation, loneliness and connecting with others.

This summer, please be mindful of your mental wellbeing and that of others;

- Check on your neighbours regularly.**
- Take a neighbour out for a lunch or coffee if you can.**
- Organise a collective project with a neighbour or group of friends.**
- Organise a road day trip or attend a local event together.**

Blacktown City Christmas Lights competition

Get into the Christmas spirit with the annual Blacktown City Christmas Lights Competition. Residents are encouraged to decorate their house, town house or villa or nominate their neighbour's property. There are over \$4,000 in cash and prizes to be won!

Nominations are now open and will close at 5 pm on Friday 3 December.

Visit <https://bit.ly/3F7lwK3> for more information.



Return and Earn!

Remember, you can **make money** by returning your recyclable cans and glass bottles to your local **Return and Earn** vending machine. This will help keep your home tidy and the money you earn can pay for bills and shopping!
returnandearn.org.au

FROM OUR EXECUTIVE



As Christmas approaches and we emerge from lockdown and ever-changing restrictions, it's a good time to pause and reflect on the challenges we've faced, and how we've persevered to overcome them. Well done everyone. It's important to still be careful, get double vaccinated and maintain COVID-19 safe practices at all times in your daily life. For more information, please visit health.nsw.gov.au

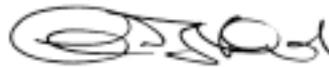
My sincere thanks to our tenants for participating in the recent **Household**

Income Review. This important process ensures that the rent you pay reflects your household income minus your Commonwealth Rent Subsidy (CRA). We show you in this newsletter how your rent is used. Please don't hesitate to contact your Housing Officer if you need assistance or further information on understanding this.

Thank you all who participated in the **Annual Tenant Survey**. This survey is very helpful in seeing how we are doing and allow you, the tenant to give us valuable feedback.

With summer rapidly approaching, I urge you to remind yourselves of ways to protect your family and property from **extreme weather events and bushfires**. Please feel free to contact our helpful staff who can support you on how to stay safe during extreme weather events in your area.

I wish you all a safe and peaceful Christmas as we remain hopeful that 2022 will bring us joy and relief from the effects of the pandemic.



Chris Bratchford
Executive, Mission Australia Housing

A quote from tenant Robyn,
"The cost of Christmas has become stressful. More families are setting up secret Santa presents to keep costs down. By setting up a dollar limit for adults and children's gifts, families can still spend Christmas together and enjoy gifts giving."

Let's grow together!

Learn how to grow and nurture native plants, fresh herbs and vegetables.

Discover which organic pest treatments work, how to grow plants from cuttings, which fertilisers are best and easy to use, and **receive free seeds** for all kinds of plants and herbs!

If you want to be a part of this hands-on gardening group, please join us on Facebook. Search **Community Greening NSW** (presented by Royal Botanic Gardens) or visit rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au.

Got a story or suggestions for the newsletter?
Call Editor Kudzi on 1800 269 672 or email housingenquiries@missionaustralia.com.au

How does Mission Australia Housing use my rent?

A few tenants have asked us **'Where does our rent go?'**

When you pay your rent, Mission Australia Housing use this to provide more services like maintenance, upgrades, housing support and community programs, as well as to provide more housing to people in need.

Here are examples of where your rent goes:

Property costs includes repairs and maintenance to your property such as for emergencies like leaky taps, blocked drains or toilets, hot water repairs, electrical repairs such as a faulty oven, broken windows, annual fire checks, council rates and insurance premiums.

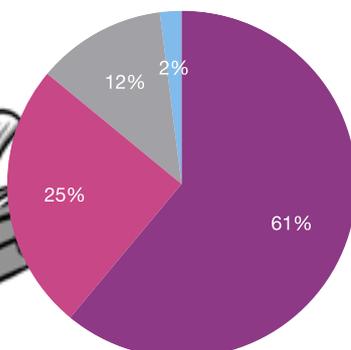
Staffing costs cover staff wages, training and resources.

Administrative costs includes office rent, office supplies, lighting and power.

Community development and tenancy support includes workshops, tenant groups, events and activities, community gardens and tenant forums.

This is why it is important that you pay your rent regularly and on time, so that we can keep providing important services to you, maintain your home and provide more homes to Australians in need.

If you need more information, please call us on 1800 269 672.



- Property costs (including maintenance)
- Staffing costs
- Administrative
- Community development and tenant support

Staying on top of your rent over Christmas

It is important 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 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, let us know as soon as possible. The sooner we know, the sooner we can work with you on a payment plan so you can clear your debt.

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

If your rent account is between 1-5 days in rental arrears, your Housing Officer will call you to remind you to pay your rent. If we can not reach you by phone, your Housing Officer will send you a friendly reminder letter in the mail.

CHAPPY CHAT

The best gift for 2021



Did you ever get a gift that you did not really want or need, or like (awkwaaard!)? Maybe you have been on the other side – stressing about what gift to get or how you would afford it?

My Grandma would often tell us grandkids that she would buy us an 'I don't know' for Christmas, because we kept saying 'I don't know' when she asked what we would like.

So why do we give gifts to each other at Christmas anyway?

At Christmas, we remember the birth of Jesus. In the story there are Magi (or Wise Men) travelling long distances and following a star to give gifts for the newborn baby Jesus. The gifts that the Magi gave Jesus were of great value and were signs that they thought Jesus was a king.

While it is good to show we value people by giving a wrapped up gift, **I think the greater gift is making time to be with people.**

Of course, we can't 'make time' we only get to spend it, which is why it is the most valuable gift we can give.

Like the Magi at the first Christmas, we show people we care by taking the time to be with them. Maybe we can

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

If you become over 14 days in arrears, please contact us immediately.

Remember, if you are having trouble paying your rent, don't delay to get in touch. We are committed to supporting you to stay on top of your rent so you can maintain your tenancy.

Our helpful staff can also help you access a range of services that may be able to provide financial assistance. Please let us know if you can't pay rent by calling us on **1800 269 672.**

share a meal or we remember stories of past Christmases together or play some back yard cricket. It really doesn't matter what traditions you have or what you do – the point is that you spend good, valuable time together.

So, the best gift for 2021 is giving your time to the ones you love, so spend it wisely.

May God bless your time together this Christmas,
Tim, Mission Australia's Chaplain

If you would like to talk to the NSW chaplain Robyn about this topic or anything on your mind, please make an appointment on **1800 269 672.**

Call us to talk anytime. We're here to help.

Act early, talk to us.



Beat the heat!

Get ready for a summer heatwave and have your checklist all ready! Follow this guide and you'll be the coolest person on the block.

1. **Monitor the weather**, check the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) Heatwave Service daily.
2. **Know who you will call for help.**
3. **Know who you will check on**, such as neighbours, friends, relatives and those isolated.
4. Understand how to manage your **medical condition** in the heat.
5. **Store enough medication** at the right temperature.
6. **Check fridges, freezers, fans and air-conditioners** work well.
7. Have cool packs and **make ice cubes.**
8. Check you have **enough food and drinking water.**
9. Create cool rooms and **cross breezes** in your house.
10. Protect windows from the sun by **using blinds or curtains.**
11. **Know your local cool public places.**
12. **Have a power failure emergency kit**; working torch, candles, matches etc
13. **Be bushfire prepared**



plan ahead



keep cool



stay hydrated



look out for each other

We wish you all Seasons Greetings and Happy New Year!



Your Mission Australia Housing office will be closed from **5pm Friday 24 December 2021 and reopen 9am Tuesday 4 January 2022.** For urgent assistance over this period please call **1800 269 672.**

Make your own gingerbread house

Some trivia! The tradition of decorated gingerbread houses began in Germany in the early 1800s, supposedly popular after the not-so-Christmas famous fairytale of Hansel and Gretel.

Buying a pre-baked Christmas gingerbread house can be expensive however to bake one yourself adds up to just a few dollars with most ingredients already in your pantry. All you need is a little time.

Ingredients:

- 125g butter (soft)
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup golden syrup
- 1 egg separated
- 2 ½ cups plain flour
- 1 tsp ground ginger (the dry stuff)



- 1 tsp mixed spice
- 1 tsp bicarb soda
- Icing
- Egg white
- Icing sugar (about 2 cups)
- Lemon juice

Method:

1. Mix butter and sugar together until light and creamy. Add in golden syrup and the egg yolk and mix thoroughly. Add all dry ingredients and mix until it forms a firm dough. Take out of bowl and wrap in cling film and place in fridge for 30 minutes.
2. Take dough out of fridge and roll out on a lightly floured surface (so it does not stick, or on baking paper) until about half a centimetre thick. Cut your pattern out for the house(s). Simple

house patterns can be found online. We did an 'A' frame house as they are nice and simple. Two big triangles and two big rectangles.

3. Bake at 180 degrees for around 12 minutes until golden.
4. Leave to cool.
5. Once cool use the egg white and beat until frothy. Add icing sugar slowly beating well between each addition along with a squeeze of lemon juice until it is thick. Use this to 'glue' your house together. Use extra icing to stick on decorations, such as smarties and jellies.



Moving out or transferring properties?



If you're moving out or transferring from your property, **don't forget to throw out left over furniture or rubbish left at the property** or leave them outside to avoid any additional charges to you. **The property must be left clean and empty.**

Christmas saving tips from tenants

1. **Make a Christmas budget.** Write down a budget within your reach. Split a page into categories, names, presents and price.
2. **When it comes to giving presents,** buying a bulk of gift cards valued at the same price is a clever idea, e.g. you can buy 10 x \$20 vouchers (for 10 people) for \$200 instead of buying two presents for \$200. Another good idea is buying joint gifts e.g. a foot massager or kids play sets they can share.
3. **Send a Christmas e-card.** If you are savvy with technology, perhaps send an e-card. You will save trees and the planet with creating less paper rubbish.
4. **Consider using wrapping that is not costly.** Perhaps use a creative, out of the box type of wrapping. You do not have to use the fancy pricey wrapping bought from the shops. Alternatively, use wrapping from last year (if you have some left over) or if you can get away with it, unwrap some of your early Christmas presents and re-use the wrapping for other gifts.
5. **Try to organise gatherings at a time in your calendar where you know you will have money** coming into your account. This will help your budget to breath and take the pressure off those 'surprises' that spring up.
6. **Ask your friends and family to contribute financially or practically towards the big meal you are preparing for them.** It is a time of togetherness. A tip could be to ask family members to bring an entree or a dessert.
7. **Create a separate January or February bank account** with enough savings to get through the festive season and in to the new year. As humans we stop so that we can celebrate, bills do not. Perhaps put aside some savings that you remind yourself not to touch for upcoming rent, bills, travel and school fees.
8. **Set up a Secret Santa where you budget an amount for the kids vs adults.** There could be an understanding amongst the adults that only the young people will receive presents.
9. **Save your travel money and take holidays after the busy rush holiday period ends.** Accommodation and general prices tend to drop then as well. Perhaps stay with friends or relatives. You could also suggest car-pooling with others.
10. **Boost your savings by taking part in initiatives such as Return and Earn, buying what's On Special at the supermarket and finding other online specials.** (Be careful for online scams).

Bonus tip: Get creative with recycling for presents, reusing decorations, wrapping.

Receive the latest updates via Facebook, email or SMS Join Mission Australia Housing's Facebook groups to receive updates regularly. If you prefer to receive notifications via email or SMS, please call 1800 269 672.

 [facebook.com/groups/MissionAustraliaHousingSydney](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MissionAustraliaHousingSydney)

Good people doing great things

Gardeners to the rescue

Eddie and Gavin in Colyton have been working hard on their garden and have been asked to manage and maintain the gardens in a local church. As shown below, the vegetables have grown beautifully and have since been shared for healthy meals within their complex. What lucky tenants!



Be prepared for bushfires

This year Susan, a long-time passionate and faithful community volunteer was an active member in the bushfire and hot weather preparation campaign in the Blue Mountains area. The Rural Fire Services visited our sites and Susan was able to consult face-to-face with other tenants. She is looking forward to continuing this through 2022 as we approach summer.

If you want to serve your local complex and community, please reach out to Kudzi on 1800 269 672.



Christina from our south west region was asked why she loves serving her community.
Christina said;

"...for me it's a great way to meet new people and strengthen the community"

Watch and learn!

This month we have a Summer Cooking masterclass webinar on Thursday 9 December.

Join our Facebook group for the Zoom details on how to connect. [facebook.com/groups/MissionAustraliaHousingSydney](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MissionAustraliaHousingSydney)

TAFE and employment

NSW TAFE is currently running **free courses** to achieve Statements of Attainment (conditions apply).

Mt Drutt TAFE is running classes on hospitality skills, food safety, barista courses (coffee making) etc.

If you are either working part time or looking for work, Kudzi has connections with great Employment Service Providers for all types of job seekers. You can also be enrolled into courses such as **white cards, RSA, resumé writing etc.**

Contact Kudzi your Community Development Officer for further information or visit [tafensw.edu.au](https://www.tafensw.edu.au)

Enter these competitions to win!

Decorate your Christmas tree and Home Competition

Email us photos of your Christmas tree and decorations to enter to **win five Bunnings vouchers valued at \$50 each.**

Submit your entries to your Housing Officer or Kudzi at housingenquiries@missionaustralia.com.au

The D.I.G. (Dob In a Gardener) Competition

is on again this summer. Email us photos of a neighbour's garden in your complex that has a beautiful garden or yard.

Winners and nominees will win one of five Bunnings \$50 vouchers. Contact your Housing Officer to dob in a good gardener.

Entries for both competitions close 20 December 2021.

Winners will be announced in the new year.

Let's meet staff member Isadora (aka Dora)



Smiley Dora

Here's some interesting facts about Isadora aka Dora our newest Housing Officer on the block.

What's your favourite colour and why? Rainbow colours. My favourite colour varies depends on my mood.

What's your favourite meal to eat? Traditional samoan foods such as oka, sapausai etc.

Where's your favourite holiday ever? My honeymoon to the Maldives

Who's your favourite band? Backstreet Boys. Their style of music is unparalleled.

Who's your favourite singer? Pop singer Ariana Grande

Who's your favourite actor or actress? Jason Statham, I cannot fault a single movie he is in.

Favourite destination in Australia and another one in New Zealand? Gold Coast and Auckland in New Zealand.

Who's your favourite sports team? All Blacks

Where were you born? Wellington, New Zealand

If you were not in this industry what would you be doing? Working in physiotherapy or teaching.

Favourite time wasting activity? I enjoy binge watching Netflix series.

How long have you worked for Mission Australia Housing? Approximately 6 months

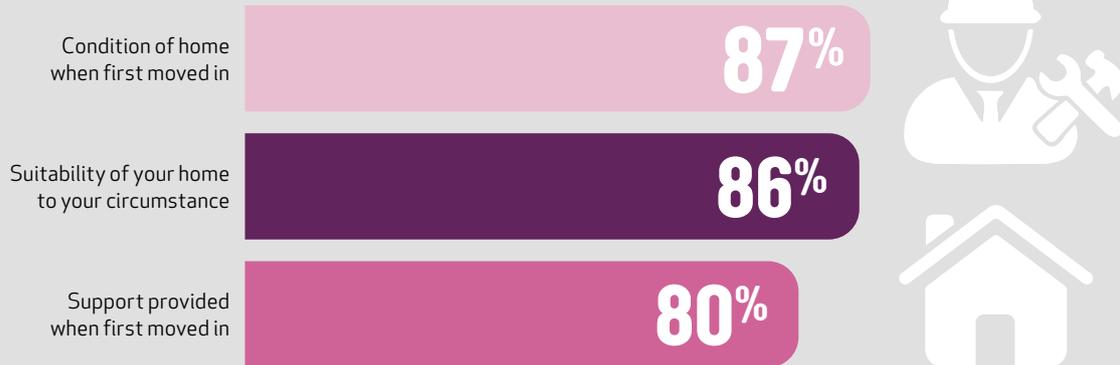
If you were to be Prime Minister of Aussie for a year, what would you change and why? Free and healthy school lunches. This would help foster healthy eating and reduce financial hardship amongst families. I am passionate about this.

Annual Tenant Survey 2021

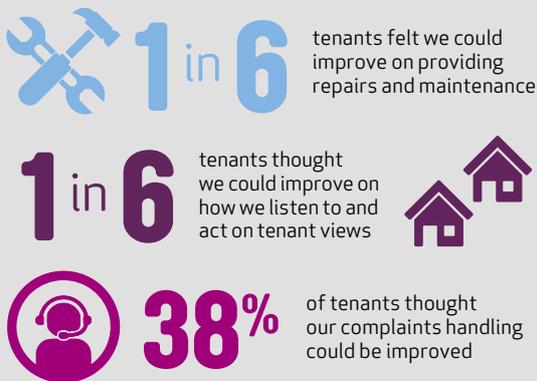
National and local results

Each year, Mission Australia Housing asks you to participate in the Annual Tenant Survey set out by the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA). The survey is a great opportunity **to give us feedback on our services and let us know how we can improve.**

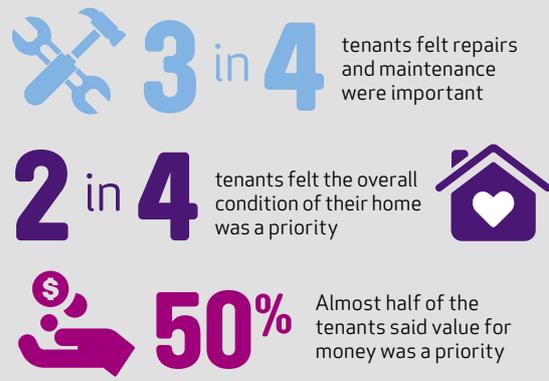
National results: Where we could improve



What we need to work on



Tenant's top priorities



In Greater Western Sydney

Tenants were happy with



Where we could improve



Thank you for taking the time to participate in the survey. We will use the feedback to develop local area plans and improve the services we provide to you.