



## Record numbers at the 2017 School Holiday Fun Day

**Rock climbing, mini golf and hip-hop demonstrations were just three of the countless activities on offer at Mission Australia Housing's School Holiday Fun Day in Blacktown in October.** The day aimed to engage and connect families living in community housing properties in the local area – and it did just that.

More than 600 children and families came together under blue skies at the Blacktown International Sports Park – which was double the number of attendees at last year's event. With the help of 70 community partners, the event was entirely free to attend, giving families the opportunity to participate in fun activities during the school holidays, a welcome relief for tenants who may be under financial stress.

This year Mission Australia Housing worked with Evolve Housing and SGCH to make the extravaganza happen. Mission Australia Housing Executive Chris Bratchford said the event was hugely successful in fulfilling the brief of 'having fun, getting active and living healthy!'

'We know that it can be challenging for some young people to achieve their potential if they don't have access to early intervention and the ongoing support they need. All young people deserve a chance to unwind and have fun during their school holidays, regardless of their background or family circumstances. This fun day is one way we can work together to build a stronger community for the young people and families who live here,' Chris said.

The day offered something for everyone. From netball clinics with a Sydney Swifts netballer, rock climbing, softball, mini golf and NRL football workshops to 'Obstacool' courses, jumping castles, cheerleader and hip hop demonstrations and cultural performances.

Based on successes like these, the three Community Housing Providers are already joining forces to make the 2018 School Holiday Fun Day bigger and better than this year's event!

## The smile on her face says it all



On Saturday the 7th of October Colleen from Lardner Road competed at the Special Olympics in Ballarat. Colleen entered three swimming events and came 1st in all of them – what an achievement!

- **25 metres back stroke in 40 seconds**
- **25 metres freestyle in 34 seconds**
- **50 metres freestyle in 1 minute**

Eighteen months ago Colleen was at risk of going into a nursing home before moving in to Mission Australia Housing's supported housing units delivered in partnership with Yooralla Support Services at Lardner Road in Melbourne.



## Contact us



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# It's that time of year again!

## GWS Tenant Christmas Party 2017

**When:** Friday 15 December

**Where:** St Marys Corner Community Centre

**Time:** 2pm

Save the date for some fun times with a roving magician, raffles, face-painting for the kids and Santa has even booked in to make a stop off for some special gift giving.

**Don't forget to reserve your place and how many children including ages and gender** (so they get an appropriate present) by Monday 27th November on 8886 4900 or see your Housing Manager. We look forward to celebrating some Christmas cheer with you.



## Fancy Christmas napkin rings

Another easy way to get extra value out of empty paper kitchen rolls – just cut them down to size and decorate with glitter, paint and stickers for crafty festive napkin rings.

One the kids will love! Keep them occupied while you're preparing for the festive lunch by decorating and then rolling up your napkins to sit inside the ring. You can even personalise by adding the names of your guests on the napkin ring.

## Going digital

Over the past year we have been working with international consultancy company- RPS Group to develop digital animations for our website to help explain some of our housing processes and systems.

A number of tenants helped out with the storylines and character development and we received great feedback from those who participated. Some being a bit nervous about the technology used in the workshops left wanting to download graphic design apps so they could continue creating characters in their own time!

You can check out the final animations next year on the MAH website and at our offices on monitors in reception areas. Storybook cartoons will also be used in this newsletter and other printed tenant material (handbooks, fact sheets etc...)

**You can meet one of our characters, Dorothy on the last page.**

## From our Executive



In October I had the pleasure of attending the School Holiday Fun Day extravaganza co-produced with Evolve Housing and SGCH in Blacktown. Having run this event for young people and their families over the past three years with Evolve Housing, we are proud to be part of this new collaboration of three of the largest Community Housing Providers in the area.

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we were chosen by the NSW Government to transform Ivanhoe estate at Macquarie Park in Sydney. One of Australia's largest social and affordable housing developments, it will create more than 3,000 much needed new dwellings.

In addition to this I am very pleased to announce that Mission Australia Housing was awarded an additional 1,050 properties to manage on the Mid North Coast of NSW. With these two projects combined, our footprint will more than double in NSW.

Meanwhile, in Tasmania we have partnered with property developers Ronald Young & Co Builders to identify land within the Clarence Plains social housing precinct to build social, affordable and market homes for the community. We have already started construction of two of the social homes.

Although it only feels like yesterday, it is Christmas time again! Already festive lights and decorations are beginning to adorn home windows and front yards but more importantly, it is time to celebrate with our loved ones.

This can also become an expensive and exhausting time of year for some. Remember that gifts do not always have to cost you money. Sometimes the cost can be your time, your thoughts and your efforts in creating personalised presents for family and friends that come from the heart to those you love. Just lending a helping hand can be worth 1000 gifts to some!

**Wishing you all a safe and very happy holiday season from all of us at Mission Australia Housing.**

Chris Bratchford  
Executive, Mission Australia Housing



# Community gardens all a buzz

Tenants at the Colyton complex in GWS were very pleased to have their community garden and project finally completed. The project, part of the Social Community Housing Improvement Fund (SCHIF) saw the installation of a shade area with table and seating, a garden shed to store tools and beautiful raised vegetable gardens. Our partner, Royal Sydney Botanical Garden, Community Greening Coordinator provided much appreciated weekly workshops and planting guides.

Over the past few months tenants have been busily attending to the garden. The vegies have grown and Colyton now has a relaxing space for everyone to meet and have a cuppa in a beautiful setting. One tenant commented **'It's nice to be able to have your family over in a very nice outdoor setting'**. Everyone is looking forward to reaping their first crop of organic tomatoes.

Meanwhile in Coffs Harbour on the Mid North Coast tenants at the West High Street complex have shown fantastic initiative and built their own Community Garden.

An area of land on the property was cleared by Mission Australia Housing to host the garden, and tenants jumped right on in, putting in garden beds, plants, and decorations. Most of the garden was provided by tenants or sourced by tenants from the community, including donations of woodchip from Coffs Harbour Council.

Margaret, who started the project, said that it has been **'great to get out in the sun and do the gardening that tenants have not been able to do before.'**

Housing Manager, Jocelyn Box, is very impressed with the work the tenants have done and says,

**'It's a fun and quirky garden. This is what a sustainable community looks like. The tenants have made most of the decisions; they have been the drivers of the work. They have made new friendships, learnt new skills, and are committed to looking after the space together.'**

There are only 5 rules for the garden and they involve respect, being helpful to others, and gardening organically.

Margaret, a passionate gardener, sourced tips from friends and found out how to get help from Council. **'They came out and had a look and really liked it. They have now delivered a few loads of wood chip for us.'**

Tenants have planted passionfruit, corn, herbs, beans, spinach and much more. There's even a pineapple on its way. **'It's the benefit of living in Coffs Harbour, pretty much anything will grow'** said Margaret.

There is a gazebo, seating, a worm farm, and compost bins for scraps, all donated or sourced by tenants. **'We've learnt a lot on the way'** said Margaret, while Catherine commented that tenants are already eating from the garden. **'Now it's daylight savings, it has been a great space to sit in the evenings together'** she said. Not just about growing vegies, Poly, another happy tenant, commented that because of **'some very talented tenants it is now possible for all of us to socialise together which we didn't have before. Now we can come out to the garden and have a chat and a cup of tea together.'**

If you think a community garden would be good for your complex, speak to your MAH Housing Manager or Community Engagement Officer.

## What you had to say...

**My son was recently diagnosed with ADHD, so I was worried about letting him play football. I thought it might cause his behaviour to become aggressive. At the School Holiday Fun Day he was able to try out softball – a sport he'd never played before. I'm now setting up a payment plan for his registration and uniform so he can join the local club and develop his new found sporting talents thanks to the School Holiday Fun Day.**

## It's beginning to sound a lot like Christmas!

It's December and it is a time of celebration. It is also a time when we pull out and dust off our Christmas decorations.

This year, we should all take the time to check that electrical items in the home are in good condition, including decorations like Christmas lights and other festive electrical displays.

And remember, when shopping around for Christmas presents you should only purchase appliances and electrical devices (including heaters) that have an independent testing laboratory label and from a known outlet that has a good reputation for fire-safe products.





## Quick and easy Christmas lunch stuffing

### Ingredients

- 10g unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 onion, chopped
- 150ml chicken stock
- 200g chopped onion
- Pinch of sage
- 2 tablespoons chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary

### Method

1. Heat butter and oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook, stirring until just softened but not brown. Add the chicken stock and bring to the boil. Remove from heat. Combine stuffing mix and onion mixture in a bowl. Add fresh herbs and stir to combine. Season and spread into a shallow, greased, lamington pan.
2. Cover with foil and cook for 20 minutes.
3. Remove foil and cook for a further 10 minutes.
4. Serve with your favourite Christmas turkey or chicken dish!



## Meet Dorothy

**One of our newly created digital animation characters designed by Robyn.**

- **75 years old**
- **Divorced – best decision she made**
- **Has lived in social housing for 40 years**
- **Used to work in a factory**
- **Grew up in Leichhardt then moved west to Mount Druitt**
- **Has 1 budgerigar**
- **Loved knitting, crochet and physical culture**
- **Has been a tenant with MAH for 6 years**

## You gotta be in it to win it!

Each year Mission Australia Housing works with the NSW Federation of Housing Associations to find out if our services are meeting your needs and where we need to make improvements.

**This year 4 tenants from the Greater Western Sydney region were awarded a \$50 gift voucher for completing the survey -**

- **Eileen from Yagoona**
- **Denis from Bidwill**
- **Adnan from Mount Druitt**
- **Diane from Colyton**

Stay tuned for the results of the survey. Early next year will be sending you information on what the 2017 survey told us.



## The sky's the limit

**Over the past few months, Lily Keenan has been painting up a storm on one of the rooftop garden areas at Common Ground.**

Originally from Western Australia, Lily is a freelance artist who now lives and works in Sydney. Inspired by patterns found in the human body, botany and tales from myth and legend her intricate and sometimes strange works are partly scientific and partly created by the imagination.

Well known for her murals from Bondi to Nicaragua, Lily's works raise awareness around the environment, climate change and developing communities. Her ultimate vision is to use art as a tool for environmental justice and social cohesion.

The World in Colour adorns the city scape at Common Ground. Bringing the peace of nature back in to the lives of residents this mural was made possible through the NSW Governments' Social Housing Community Improvement Fund.

**'Creating this mural for Common Ground was a wonderful experience. It was great to see it come together over many weekends, and really get to know tenants and staff in the process. This is probably the largest mural I've ever created, and quite an ambitious design to paint by hand! It tells a visual story of transforming a bleak urban world into a place of organic shapes, light and colour. I hope people feel hope and optimism when they are enjoying the garden, sunshine and colourful story of this mural!'**