



## Message from the Mission Australia Housing Tenant Action Group

**Welcome to our first article for the Mission Australia Housing Tenant newsletter.** This year we plan to have an article in each newsletter letting you know what we have been up to, our key achievements and important tenancy news.

The Mission Australia Housing Tenant Action Group (MAH TAG) are a group of like-minded tenants of Mission Australia Housing (MAH). We are committed to acting in good faith in all our dealings with tenants and MAH staff. We are here to represent tenants on housing, tenancy and community issues, while striving for the best possible outcomes that suit both MAH and tenants.

Recently we held our annual planning day in Blacktown to map out and prepare our activities for the year; some of these are listed below. At our planning day we also heard from the local Police Area Command who gave a very informative talk about the role of police in safety and security issues. You can find more info on the Crimestoppers website:

[www.nsw.crimestoppers.com.au](http://www.nsw.crimestoppers.com.au) or call  
**1800 333 000.**

### Key highlights for 2018 are:

- **MAH Tenant and Community Forum** – We will be hosting the annual MAH Tenant and Community Forum on Friday 11th May 2018. This forum will be of vital importance to you and MAH, and will include a variety of guest speakers from local community services. **The forum will be held at the Mt Druitt Community Hub from 10am to 2pm. We look forward to seeing you all there!**
- **Meet and Greet** – An important aspect of the MAH TAG is becoming familiar with MAH tenants and your complexes. To do this, we will be organising 'meet and greets' in complexes between the Blue Mountains and East Hills over the coming months. We want to work with you and understand any issues that may be of concern to you. We will be sending you a letter with

### Working together for action



details of our visit that your Housing Manager will pass on to you.

- **Welcome new members** – The role of the MAH TAG is important for tenants and for Mission Australia Housing. Our members come from diverse backgrounds and bring skills unique to them. We welcome new members Claudette and Carolyn – with their new skills together we grow! Our next election will be held in June this year so we hope to see even more new faces around the MAH TAG table.

If you would like more information on how to become a member or to join the MAH TAG please email us [tag@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:tag@missionaustralia.com.au) or leave a message for us at MAH **1800 269 672.**

All the best,  
**Jeff Coulton (MAH TAG Treasurer)**

## Contact us



Mission Australia Housing hotline: **1800 269 672**



Level 2, 81 Flushcombe Road, Blacktown NSW 2148



[missionaustralia.com.au/housing](http://missionaustralia.com.au/housing)



## Happy Easter!

# Help us help you:

We would like to keep improving the quality of houses under our care in NSW. However, every time properties are damaged or facilities are not used as they should be we have less money for planned improvements.

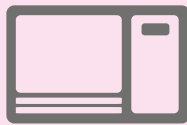
For example:

**\$50,000**

damage from a house fire

**45-50**

ovens



**\$10,000**

damage from a deliberately damaged house

up to **6**

full house re-carpets

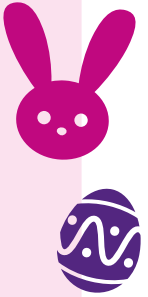


**\$5,000**

worth of property damage

**4-5**

hot water service replacements



## Zest Awards

On Friday 16th February 2018, over 500 people gathered at the ANZ Stadium to celebrate and honour some of the outstanding work achieved in our Greater Western Sydney communities at the 2018 ZEST Awards.

Hosted by The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian MP (Premier of NSW), the awards showcase the positive work being achieved in your communities.

Awards were given out across 15 very competitive categories. **Congratulations to the School Holiday Fun Day Committee**, a collaboration of Mission Australia Housing, **Evolve Housing** and **SGCH**, who were awarded 'Highly Commended' in the 'Exceptional Community Partnership Across a Region' category for their School Holiday Fun Day initiative held every year.

Watch this space for details on this years event!



## From our Executive



Hello everyone,

**Welcome to 2018 and what a busy year ahead we have!**

Firstly, I would like to thank all those who participated in the **Annual Tenant Survey** last year. We listened to your feedback and based on this I am pleased to say that we have begun working on a number of major projects. These include a **new complaints process, neighbourhood safety and security programs, and more engagement with you** through tenant forums and local groups. We are also in the process of updating the Mission Australia Housing website so that you can submit repairs and maintenance requests online. Hopefully this will make it easier for you and I look forward to announcing when this goes live.

In November last year I had the great pleasure of travelling around to all our sites across Australia to talk with your local Mission Australia Housing staff. Some really great ideas came from these discussions and I am now very excited to put some of these ideas in to action.

Your feedback is invaluable in shaping the services Mission Australia Housing provides so I am really pleased to hear that the Mission Australia Housing Tenant Action Group will again be hosting the **Tenant and Community Forum** in Greater Western Sydney later this year. We learnt so much from last years Forum by collaborating with you and with local community partners. I look forward to seeing you there because together we can achieve so much more!

And finally, **congratulations to the School Holiday Fun Day Committee**, who received the 'Highly Commended' award in the 'Exceptional Community Partnership Across a Region' category at the Zest Awards earlier in the year. The Honourable Gladys Berejiklian MP (Premier of NSW) recognised the achievements of the School Holiday Fun Day made possible through the fantastic collaboration between three Community Housing Providers – Mission Australia Housing, Evolve Housing and SGCH. I look forward to working together in to the future.

**Wishing you all the best for the year ahead and a happy Easter.**



Chris Bratchford  
Executive, Mission Australia Housing

# Improvements to your complexes

## Colyton community garden

Colyton tenants, Mission Australia Housing staff and community partners all gathered at the Colyton community garden in February to celebrate a new outdoor communal area and garden with seating and shading for everyone to socialise. Improvements included landscaping, a new shade pergola, picnic table setting, a garden storage shed, as well as raised community garden beds.

Chris Bratchford from Mission Australia Housing said the makeover was a fantastic opportunity to work with tenants in the local tenant group and community to improve the safety and wellbeing of residents and surrounding neighbours.



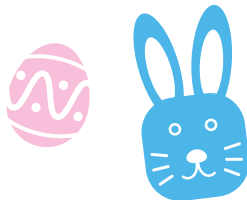
'We are committed to improving the living environment of tenants by maintaining this property and ensuring that the open spaces and communal areas here make for a safe and attractive place to call home,' said Mr Bratchford.

The project was developed in collaboration with Mission Australia Housing's local tenant group, local contractors Rapid Construction, Royal Botanical Garden Sydney Community Greening and Penrith City Council.

## Bin bays at Beames

Earlier this year 14 tenants at Beames Ave attended a waste management workshop run by Blacktown City Council in preparation for the arrival of their brand new bin bay. Council staff explained the differences between rubbish types and how to recycle items properly. Each tenant also received a very handy re-useable recycling bag to keep in their kitchen.

**Both these projects have been made possible through the NSW Department of Families and Community Services – Social Housing Community Improvement Fund.**



# Stop press!

**Sick of looking for your rent deposit book?** Mission Australia Housing is moving away from using rent deposit books. Instead, in the next few months, you will receive an easy-to-use PayWay card (similar to a bank or credit card) that you can slip into your wallet and have on you all the time. This card will make paying your rent easier as it can be used at a number of places that accept BPay payments, like Australia Post.

**Don't worry!** This does not change any arrangements you already have in place with Centrelink (Centrepay) but please contact your Housing Manager if you have any questions.

All tenants will receive a letter from Mission Australia Housing shortly outlining this change and how to use your card. **Stay tuned!**



## Save the date: MAH Tenant and Community Forum 2018

**Come and have your say! The much anticipated MAH Tenant and Community Forum will be held on Friday 11th May 2018 at the Mt Druitt Community Hub.**

# It's all too much



Sean's\* mother had Alzheimer's and passed away last year. Sean was very close to his mother and was struggling with her death. At the same time, he was also going through a legal dispute with his brother and was feeling stressed and hurt. Sean struggles on a day-to-day basis due to a shoulder injury and cannot afford physiotherapy. A spray painter by trade, his injury prevents him from working and he doesn't quite qualify for the disability pension. All this adds an extra layer of stress and frustration.

The **MAH TAG Outreach** volunteers have been working with Sean and have supported him in seeking regular professional counselling. Not so long ago Sean rang to thank the volunteers who have helped him on his journey to recovery, saying that he is 'feeling much better, more able to deal with his mother's death and is slowly progressing towards a healthier mental state.'

**Sean is not an isolated story. If you feel you want to talk to someone or just have a chat please get in touch with Stella on 02 8886 4906 or [jeanlouiss@mahousing.com.au](mailto:jeanlouiss@mahousing.com.au) to register.**

\*Name has been changed to protect privacy of tenant.

The day will include:

- Presentations from MAH management and other Sydney tenants
- An update from your Tenant Action Group on what they've done and been involved in over the past year, what's to come in the next year and how you can be involved
- Award presentation for Outstanding Tenant
- Important advice on safety and elder abuse, scams, fire safety, and community services
- Roundtable discussions with Housing Managers to hear directly from tenants

Registration will open at 10am for a 10:30am start.



# Window and balcony safety



Each year, around 50 children fall from windows or balconies in Australia. Many suffer serious injuries. Sometimes these falls are fatal.

For the safety of our tenants Mission Australia Housing is currently rolling out a window lock program across all states. We commenced installing window locks in Tasmania in March

2017 and in NSW (across Greater Western Sydney and the Mid North Coast) in December 2017. We expect to have the window lock program completed by March 2018.

This means that your window locks will allow the window to be fully opened, fully closed and also locked with an opening of 12.5cm. When children are in your property, either living or visiting, it is advised that window locks are used at all times to prevent falls.

Some other window tips to help keep you and your children safe:

- **Don't be fooled by fly screens**, they are designed to keep insects out, not your kids in. They are simply not strong enough.
- **Window safety devices on all above ground floor windows within a child's reach.** When the safety device is engaged, it must stop the window opening more than 12.5cm.



## Outstanding Tenant Award



**The 2018 Outstanding Tenant Award acknowledges the extra contribution and difference that tenants have made in their complex and also for their community.** These tenants are nominated by you! Nominate a tenant today who has gone above and beyond being a good neighbour.

This can include a tenant who:

- is friendly, helpful and respectful
- joins in and volunteers in their community
- takes care and looks after their property
- is a positive leader

The Outstanding Tenant Award will be announced at the MAH Tenant and Community Forum in May this year.

**Send in your nominations by email to [jeanlouiss@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:jeanlouiss@missionaustralia.com.au) or by calling 02 8886 4906.**

## Seniors Rock

We have **6 tickets to giveaway in celebration of Seniors Week to the Toongabbie Sports Club** (12 Station Rd, Toongabbie) on Wednesday 11th April from 11.00am to 2.30pm. Your ticket includes a 2 course lunch, entertainment by the Remixes, coffee and lucky door prizes.

**To win, be one of the first 6 tenants to call Stella on 02 8886 4906.**



## Christmas was a time for coming together

Last year, tenants came together across NSW to celebrate all things Christmas! In Greater Western Sydney over 53 tenants shared Christmas cheer and spirit over afternoon tea and entertainment at St Marys Corner Community Centre. Kids were entertained by a magician and gift giving from Santa himself. It was great to see such happy, smiling faces throughout the afternoon.

Over in Albert Street, the complex was a-buzz with excitement for their first community Christmas party. Simply put by one tenant,

**'It was so beautiful, after 6 years to have our first Christmas party as an Albert Street, Werrington MAH family. Thank you to all. Our prayers and blessings to MAH for such wonderful great support providing opportunities for better families.'**

Up on the Mid North Coast tenants celebrated Christmas in the park, going home with a hamper full of surprises, all made possible through generous local support and community partners. Thank you to all who made Christmas such a special festive celebration!

## Christmas message from a tenant

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the caring team in Mission Australia Housing Taree NSW, especially Bradly Fishpool (Property Manager) who goes above and beyond his role for his tenants.**



Surprise!