



From our Executive



It has been a big start to the year for Mission Australia Housing with a number of exciting developments and projects happening within the housing sector and for us as a Tier 1 Community Housing Provider.

To kick start the year we launched into the NSW's Government Social and Affordable Housing (SAHF) program. Not just about bricks and mortar we will work with Mission Australia to provide a more place-based approach in our aim to Reduce Homelessness and Strengthen Communities. As a commitment to this we have also just purchased 51 social and affordable units on the NSW's Mid North Coast.

As we all know, the environment in which we live plays an important role in our wellbeing. I am very excited that we will be injecting nearly a quarter of a million dollars in to our community

housing sites across NSW through the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund (SHCIF). Over the next few months we will begin projects such as improving rubbish bin bays, upgrading safety equipment and installing community gardens for you to enjoy.

And up in Queensland I am very pleased to see our Woree development went well, opening its doors on 7 June 2016. Building on from our significant work supporting individuals and couples experiencing chronic homelessness at Douglas House, the new Woree fully self-contained units will provide an additional 18 medium term supported accommodation units in Central Cairns.

Recently we contacted you about our 7th Annual Tenant Survey that has now closed. I would like to thank all tenants who took the time to give us your valuable feedback. I look forward to sharing the results of the survey with you in our next newsletter.

Wishing you all health and happiness,

Chris Bratchford
Executive,
Mission Australia Housing

Contact us

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Mission Australia Housing Tenants visit Southern Paradise

Around an hour's drive south of Sydney is the largest Buddhist temple in the Southern Hemisphere, also known as 'Southern Paradise' or the Nan Tien Temple.

Recently, a busload of tenants from our over 55s complexes in Greater Western Sydney headed down to Wollongong to enjoy a bit of Zen time.

On arrival, everyone limbered up with a session of Tai Chi, followed by a whole body meditation. "I have been feeling really stressed lately with everyone else's problems and need to start taking care of myself. I am going to set up a little space on my balcony with all my plants, and start the day with meditation," said one tenant.



Having worked up an appetite and feeling extremely relaxed, the group enjoyed a chat over a healthy vegetarian lunch. Some tenants commenting the food was so delicious they didn't even miss the meat!

Harmony Day with Mission Australia Housing

Harmony Day is about inclusiveness, respect and a sense of belonging for everyone. And that is exactly what happened in Wentworthville this year at Mission Australia Housing's Harmony Day event for tenants.



In partnership with Evolve Housing almost 70 tenants from the Greater Western Sydney region came along to join in on the fun, either as an audience member, performer or both!

Kicking off the day, Jacinta a musical educator, composer and scriptwriter, and who received the "USUNG HERO" NAIDOC award in 2010, opened the event with a special Welcome to Country that told the story of her people of the area, the Darug people.

On behalf of the Darug people, Jacinta said that she "would like to welcome everyone home. This is because Aboriginal people believe that all our countries were once connected. We were all one and lived harmoniously together. As Country moved and started to separate so did we as people. Now in this room we are all coming back together, we are all coming home."



Dancing for over 25 years, Shyamla has taught a variety of dances in Sydney and London and got everyone up and dancing along to a couple of cheeky Bollywood routines, including Greater Western Sydney Operations

Manager for Mission Australia Housing, Sandeep Sharma (in purple shirt).

There were also a number of Chinese performers including Wai who performed an old traditional Chinese song, Vera who recited her own life story "Journey Home" and a Chinese Choir who gave everyone a rendition of a traditional Chinese Cantonese song.

Australia's Got Talent also made it in to the room with 2 former semi-finalists. **First up was 15 year old Bobby** who belted out a few old crooner tunes with his trumpet over lunch, followed by Imran who performed his native "peacock dance" from Pakistan.

Arriving in Australia as a refugee in 2001, Imran remains connected to his culture by rehearsing the peacock dance every day for 2 hours. The peacock is the national bird in Rajasthan and this traditional dance tells the story



of the sacred peacock bird that is both beautiful and ugly and its plight with accepting its ugly feet! Imran loves to perform this dance for special charity events, his most memorable in 1997 when he performed it for Princess Diana at a fundraising event for the Pakistan Cancer Hospital and even

shook hands with her!

From Liberia, this was Kadiatu's first Harmony Day event since moving to Australia in 2011. Kadiatu said that whilst she "loves Australia, I find it difficult to make friends and I miss my family back home. I can only afford to call them maybe once a fortnight."

On the opposite side of the room was Brenda who moved to Australia from Nottingham, England when she was 26 and is now 74, "although I tell people I am 47!" Brenda also misses her family, especially now that her son has returned to England.

So although worlds apart, Kadiatu and



Brenda struck up conversation and shared stories, soon realising they had similar life experiences. By the end of the day, they had also shared contact details and were planning another time to catch up. **And it is this that is what Harmony Day is all about - it is a day for all Australians to embrace cultural diversity and to share what we have in common.**

"See those flowers there Brenda, all their different colours? That is how we are made. We are all different but bleed the same colour." Brenda

Mums celebrate Mother's Day in style!



Did you know?

It was an Australian who started the tradition of giving gifts on Mother's Day. This tradition to collect gifts for lonely aged mothers started all the way back in 1924!

Today we continue to celebrate our mums on Mother's Day and that is exactly what happened for Mission Australia Housing mums at our community centre in Kingswood this year.

The sun was shining and there was a busy beehive of activity from early in the morning to late in the afternoon!

Over 100 tenants from across our housing sites in the Greater Western Sydney region, including ladies from our Yaralla Cottages, came to join in the fun with high tea, non-alcoholic bubbly, facials, massages, and manicures from our wonderful volunteers!

And while the mums indulged in some long overdue pampering, children busily entertained themselves in the "kids corner" where they created personalised and touching mother's day cards for their mum.

"We should have this once a month, I haven't had this much attention for a long time!" said one blissed out mum.

A big thank you goes out to Penrith Women's Health Centre provided mums with a luxurious head and shoulder massage. Meanwhile, Hillsong made sure every mum left with a lucky door prize!

"I feel really special, made some new friends and feel like a million bucks!"



When 38 year old Jason and his 36 year old partner, Natalie arrived at Douglas House, their life had spiralled out of control.

Problematic drug and alcohol use coupled with escalating domestic violence incidents meant that for Jason, prison was a revolving door. The couple lived in insecure accommodation and frequently struggled with homelessness.

In 2015 Mission Australia Housing took on the management of Douglas House, a 22 bed supported housing facility in central Cairns working with individuals and couples who have experienced chronic homelessness just like Jason and Natalie. Here they were given stable accommodation for 6 months and an opportunity to address their drug and alcohol problems.

With intensive counselling the couple developed practical and emotional skills through life skills programs, support networks and activities like cooking, fishing, art and craft.

*Names have been changed to protect the privacy of tenants.

Douglas House stage 2

Jason and Natalie have made so much progress together that their caseworker is helping them to make long-term plans, which includes job searching and securing safe and secure accommodation.

That is where the development and construction of the second stage facility in Woree (Cairns) comes in to it. This 18 unit complex of fully self-contained units now provides medium term supported housing to people in similar situations to Jason and Natalie.

Construction of the facility was complete in May this year with an official opening planned for July 2016.

"Woree is an important stepping stone from Douglas House into more medium term housing. This means that we can work with tenants over an extended period of time, helping them to move into independent living."

Richard Munnich
Mission Australia Housing Manager,





Do you need help getting places?

MAH now works with the Australian Unity Aboriginal Home Care Service located in Penrith. This partnership means that we can provide free transportation for our tenants to any MAH led event.

Australian Aboriginal Unity Home Care Service can also provide discounted community transport for seniors at a minimal cost. The areas covered by the Wangary Branch include: Hawkesbury River, Nepean Blue Mountains, Holroyd, The Hills, Cumberland, Northern Beaches, Auburn, and Hornsby.

Find out if you are eligible!

Call the assessment line on 1300 797 606 to chat about what you might need.

National volunteer week

As a part of the National Volunteer Week celebration in May, Mission Australia Housing volunteers were treated to a lunch with staff and management who came along to say a personal thank you. Stella, Mission Australia Housing's Community Engagement Officer says:

"Our volunteers do a wonderful job, including our TAG team, and we wouldn't have been half as successful in our tenant engagement without them"

A very special thanks goes out to our TAG Outreach volunteers: Lois Berhane, David Ireland, and Quita Cox who provide a much appreciated service to our tenants.



Meet Siufalevalu Langi

Client Service - Allocations Officer

I am the Eldest of 5 children and am an Australian born Tongan. I believe that being a part of such a big family has always drawn me to places where there is a sense of community and unity.

"I am passionate about working with people in need from various cultural and social upbringings"

So, after high school I chose to pursue a career in Human and Community Services, leading me here to Mission Australia Housing today.

I am excited and grateful for this new opportunity to be working for an organisation that values and aims to support people in need. What better way to do so then giving someone the opportunity to have somewhere they can call "home".



Thai pumpkin soup

Ingredients

1 kg butternut pumpkin peeled and diced
2 tablespoons red curry paste
300ml coconut cream
¼ cup coriander chopped

Method

Saute pumpkin and red curry paste until it starts to stick to the saucepan. Add coconut cream, top with enough water to cover the pumpkin and bring to the boil.

Reduce heat to simmering until the pumpkin becomes soft and mushy. Puree, season with sea salt and pepper and fold in chopped coriander. And throw a little bit of chilli on top to spice it up if you dare! **Serves 4**

Tenant news and events

We want to get to know you better.

So instead of our Annual Tenant Forum, Tenant Action Group members will be visiting each complex to hold small local forums in your area **To find out more call Community Engagement on 8886 4906**



The School Holiday Fun Day is back at Blacktown International Sports Park again on Wednesday 13 July 10am!!

Parking will be available on site or catch the **free shuttle bus from rooty hill station** every 10 minutes from 9:30am to 11am and returning every 10 minutes from 2:50pm to 3:10pm.

Bring the kids to a fun day of activities!

RSVP by close of business on Monday 11 July to make sure you don't miss out on all the fun!

RSVP by Monday 11 July

To Stella **p** 02 8886 4900/8886 4906
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The tenant newsletter is for you!

Tenants are encouraged to send in their favourite recipes and stories they would like featured in the newsletter and any feedback or comments. **Send in your suggestions and go in the draw to win a hamper!!!**

Send to Stella at **p** 02 8886 4900/8886 4906
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