



Your Home issue 64 June 2013

Your Home is a quarterly magazine published by the Department of Family and Community Services and distributed to Housing NSW tenants.

We welcome your feedback and encourage you to share your handy tips and recipes.

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Amnesty on Unauthorised Occupants now closed

Earlier this year Housing NSW held an amnesty to encourage tenants to tell us about any undeclared people living in their property.

The Amnesty for Unauthorised Occupants ran for eight weeks and closed on 17 March. During this time 2,800 tenants declared they had 3,500 additional people living in their public housing properties. A further 1,450 people rang the amnesty line and provided information about a suspected 2,490 extra occupants. Currently we are following up with tenants who declared they had extra people living with them and have been investigating the allegations made from others.

It is your responsibility to tell us within 28 days of any changes in your household so you are paying the correct rent and we can keep our records up-to-date. If you made a declaration that you have additional occupants but have not provided all the necessary information, please call 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746) immediately otherwise your subsidy may be cancelled. Staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week to take your call.

NSW Carers Awards – a way to say thank you!

The NSW Carers Awards acknowledge and celebrate the significant contribution and tireless efforts that unpaid or 'informal' carers make to the person (or people) they care for.

Managed by the Department of Family and Community Services, the awards are open until Friday 28 June 2013.

**For more information or to nominate, please visit
www.adhc.nsw.gov.au.**

Minister's Message

Thank you to all the tenants who have done the right thing during the amnesty and declared unauthorised people they had living with them.

Housing NSW received several thousand calls from tenants declaring they have additional people living with them, and received around 1,500 calls about nearly 2,500 suspected extra people living in public housing.

We expect that the amnesty will yield an additional \$6.5 million in rent, which will flow back into the public housing system to help maintain your homes and increase the amount of public housing.

This is a great result and I thank everyone who provided information as it helps to make the public housing system fairer for everyone.

Ensuring tenants are in properties that meet their needs is another way we can make sure the public housing system is as fair as possible. By encouraging singles and couples living in large three, four and five bedroom homes to move to a more suitable property, we will reduce the number of vacant bedrooms and free up homes for larger households on the waiting list.

If you have found yourself with more bedrooms than you need, I encourage you to contact your local Housing NSW office to apply for a transfer to a more suitable home. Tenants who have moved in the past have reported that they enjoy living in more manageable properties which need less cleaning and maintenance. It might also be possible for seniors to move into seniors complexes with services close at hand. By making sure tenants are in the right-sized property we can provide more homes for

families and people with special needs who are waiting for public housing across NSW.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Women

Winter fire safety tips

Each year Fire and Rescue NSW attends over 4,500 residential fires, with nearly 30 percent occurring in winter. As people start to use heaters and electric blankets, and cook more at home, the number of fires increases.

Home fires can take hold in just minutes, but taking simple fire prevention measures takes only seconds. Here are some quick, easy steps you can take to reduce the risk of fires in your home:

- Turn off the stove before leaving the kitchen
- Consider placing a fire extinguisher and fire blanket in the kitchen
- Ensure portable heaters are at least one metre away from curtains, clothing, tablecloths and bedding. Switch them off when going to bed
- Make sure power points aren't overloaded
- Put out candles and naked flames before leaving the room
- Clean the lint filter in your clothes dryer each time before use. Synthetic clothes can produce static electricity and the heat generated from the drying process can ignite built-up lint
- Check your smoke alarm and make sure there is a green light visible and a blinking red light. Report any faults or missing detectors to 1300 HOUSING (1300 468 746)
- Practise your escape plan regularly with the whole family
- Keep matches and lighters out of reach of children
- Ensure cigarettes are fully extinguished, especially before going to bed

For more fire tips please visit the Fire and Rescue NSW website at

www.fire.nsw.gov.au.

The Ryde office has moved

The new office address is the

West Ryde Community Centre,

Level 2, 3-5 Anthony Street West Ryde.

The office phone number remains the same – 9809 8444.

Keep children safe near windows

Each year approximately 50 children fall from a window or balcony - for a small number of children this will be fatal.

Kidsafe NSW encourages everyone to be extra careful when opening windows and using balconies. To keep your children safe, Kidsafe NSW recommends:

- ensuring windows can't be opened more than 12.5cm, except by adults. Window locks and guards can help with this
- keeping furniture, including beds, chairs, toy boxes and drawers, away from windows
- being aware that flyscreens will not stop a child falling through a window
- ensuring balcony railings are at least one metre high
- keeping objects that children can stand or climb on, including pot plants, outdoor furniture and barbecues, away from balcony railings
- eliminating gaps that can be used as footholds for climbing over railings, as well as openings large enough to fit through. Cover unsafe railings with screening materials
- watching kids closely near windows and balconies.

For more information, please contact Kidsafe NSW on 02 9845 0894 or visit www.kidsafensw.org.

eRepair

Do you wish you could lodge your maintenance requests online?

You can!

Our eRepair service allows you to lodge your non-urgent maintenance requests online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Just go to the Housing NSW website www.housing.nsw.gov.au, click on the eRepair icon and follow the steps.

Housing NSW Youth Scholarships 2013

Students from across Sydney were recently presented with their Housing NSW Youth Scholarships from the Minister for Family and Community Services, Pru Goward.

The Youth Scholarships, worth \$2,000 each, support young people who are either living in social housing, are on the waiting list for social housing or are living in crisis accommodation to complete their Higher School Certificate (HSC) or TAFE equivalent. The money can be spent on educational items such as computer equipment, books or tutoring.

The scholarship aims to ensure that eligible young people have every opportunity to complete their HSC and move on to higher education. Past recipients of the scholarships have gone on to university and into successful careers.

Applications for the 2014 scholarships open on 15 July 2013 and close on 16 August 2013 and need to be supported by the student's school or TAFE. Entry forms and guidelines will be available on our website

www.housing.nsw.gov.au or from your local Housing NSW office.

Preventing mould in your home during winter

Article by Maria Beer from NSW Health

Mould is a fungal growth and can occur at any time but is more common in homes during winter when there is more moisture in the air and less ventilation. The best way to prevent mould growth is to reduce dampness in your home. You can do this by:

- maintaining good ventilation – open windows when weather permits
- using installed exhaust fans, especially when bathing, showering, cooking, doing the laundry and drying clothes in a clothes dryer.

The earlier you remove mould from walls and windows, the easier it is to keep under control. Remember that mould is likely to return unless you treat the cause. To clean mould you can:

- use mild detergent or vinegar diluted in a water solution (4 parts vinegar to 1 part water)
- use a diluted bleach solution for stubborn mould.

Remember to protect your skin, eyes and clothes from the bleach, and make sure the area is well-ventilated. Always read and follow the directions about how to use the

product.

For more information please visit www.housing.nsw.gov.au and see the 'Treating Mould in Your Home' fact sheet.

Handy hints

Joanne from **Redfern** has some great ideas for removing stains. She says to remove ink stains from white upholstery or your favourite white shirt, squirt the stain with hairspray and the ink should come right off.

To remove ink from coloured clothes, soak the stain in milk overnight then launder as usual.

Thanks **Joanne**! You have won a \$25 voucher.