



Your Home issue 62 December 2012

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.

Please contact us:

Your Home

Media and Communications

Housing NSW Locked Bag 4001

Ashfield BC 1800

You can send us an email at
yourhome@facs.nsw.gov.au

Visit www.housing.nsw.gov.au

Is your rent up-to-date for the holiday season

The holiday season is great for enjoying time with your family and friends but it is also important to make sure your rent is paid.

A small number of tenants stop paying rent or cancel their direct deductions due to the added expenses of the holidays. In these cases Housing NSW always takes action quickly and if you stop paying rent you could be evicted from your home.

Housing NSW staff will be monitoring rental payments carefully during the holiday season. Please ensure that you keep paying the required rent in full. We strongly advise against cancelling your Rental Deduction Scheme at Christmas time.

Now is the time to make sure your rent is up-to-date.

Many tenants make extra rent payments leading up to the holidays to avoid falling behind. You can do this by using your payment card at any Australia Post Office, online at www.housing.nsw.gov.au or by BPay. If you use Centrelink Deductions to pay your rent, you still need to use one of these methods to make extra payments.

Enjoy the holiday season all the more without the worry of being behind in your rent. Please talk to your local client service team if you have any questions.

Have your say

The Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee (SHTAC) is a state-wide tenant consultative body that is made up of social housing tenants who live in public, community and Aboriginal housing. It provides feedback to Housing NSW to help improve its policies and services for tenants.

The SHTAC would love to hear your thoughts about the committee and issues that are important to you. With that in mind you are invited to complete an online survey available from the SHTAC page at www.housing.nsw.gov.au. The survey is completely anonymous and your feedback is greatly appreciated.

Minister's message

It is very important that properties managed by Housing NSW are kept in good condition; tenants need to take responsibility for reporting any maintenance needs as soon as possible.

I am very pleased that so many tenants are using the new eRepair system to lodge their non-urgent maintenance requests. eRepair can be accessed 24-hours a day, seven days a week via the Housing NSW website. This has made reporting maintenance issues quicker and easier than ever.

Remember that you are responsible for any damage you, other members of your household, a guest or a pet causes to your home so, please, make sure you take care.

I am also very pleased to advise that Housing NSW has released updated information on the expected waiting times for social housing properties across NSW. For more information visit the Housing NSW website or talk to your local office.

Finally, as the festive season is almost here, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a happy holiday and a very safe and happy new year.

Pru Goward MP

Minister for Family and Community Services, Minister for Women

Taking care of your public housing home

We are delighted that most tenants take great care of their property with some regularly winning prizes for their wonderful gardens. If you are one of those tenants we very much appreciate the way you care for your home and recognise the positive impact this has on your local community.

Under your Residential Tenancy Agreement you have agreed to take good care of your home and report any property damage as soon as possible.

We understand that accidents can happen, but as with a private rental home, in public housing you are responsible for any damage you, your family, a guest, or a pet

causes to the property including:

- broken windows
- punctured doors and walls
- carpet burns
- broken clotheslines and hoists
- broken locks
- damaged toilets and basins
- fire damage caused by deliberately or carelessly lit fires (such as leaving items unattended on the stove)
- replacing lost keys
- the removal of unwanted furniture, goods or vehicles.

If you are found responsible for the damage and the debt for this is not repaid, action will be taken to terminate your tenancy.

Causing property damage may result in you being ineligible to receive further assistance until the debt is repaid, or if the damage is serious, you may never be offered public housing again.

We would like to thank the majority of our tenants who take great care of their homes and gardens across NSW.

For more information about tenant damage please contact your local Housing NSW office or visit our website www.housing.nsw.gov.au.

Tenants learn about understanding their neighbours

Good communities are built on good neighbours, and tenants in Armidale, Coffs Harbour, Tamworth and Port Macquarie recently had the opportunity to learn all about their neighbours through a series of tenant workshops.

The workshops, conducted by Housing NSW in conjunction with Northern Links NSW Inc Tenant Participation and Resource Service, focussed on several issues including mental health, nuisances and annoyances, and tenant participation. They were very well attended with up to 30 participants at some sessions, and feedback was overwhelmingly positive.

As one participant commented, "I've come away with so many great ideas for getting people together. We're really looking forward to starting our own tenant group."

The workshops also provided an opportunity to pass on information about the upcoming Northern Links Regional Tenant Conference being held in March 2013. Tenants who had previously attended the conference heartily encouraged others to go along as they had found it to be a "fantastic" event.

Following the success of these tenant workshops, additional sessions were held in the Hunter and Central Coast in partnership with the local Tenant Participation and

Resource Service provider.

Digital TV

The digital upgrades of our multi-unit apartments are continuing with more than 55,000 properties now ready. The switchover to digital TV has already occurred in the regional areas of NSW.

If you live in Sydney or the Central Coast, it is now time to make sure your property is digital-ready before the switchover in 2013. For tenants in free-standing homes and cottages, you will need to check that your antenna can receive digital signals. If you do need to install a new antenna, remember you need to contact your Client Service Officer to obtain permission first.

The Australian Government is running a household assistance scheme to help older Australians, veterans and people with disabilities and their carers to convert to digital TV. Eligible people will receive a free digital set-top box, an in-home demonstration and a 12-month warranty.

For more information, visit www.digitalready.gov.au or call the Digital Ready Information Line on 1800 20 10 13.

Correction

The September edition of *Your Home* included a statement that requests to repair broken flyscreens could be made through the eRepair system. This is not the case. Broken flyscreens fall into the category of planned maintenance and are addressed under a program of work and cannot be actioned through the eRepair system. We apologise for any inconvenience.

Measles outbreak

protect your family through vaccination

By Stephen Conaty, A/Director Public Health, Sydney and South Western Sydney Local Health Districts

There has been an outbreak of measles over winter and spring this year. More than 150 cases have been recorded in Campbelltown, Liverpool and other parts of Western Sydney, with cases on the north coast and Illawarra as well.

Measles is a highly infectious viral illness. Symptoms include a high fever, cough, runny nose and red eyes, followed a few days later by a red, raised rash that starts on the face and extends to the rest of the body. If you think you have measles you should see your doctor for a test.

Measles was once a common childhood illness that sometimes led to serious illness and very occasionally, death. It is now rare because the vaccine which protects against it—the MMR or Measles, Mumps, Rubella vaccine—is highly effective.

You will need two doses of MRR for maximum protection. Children receive their first at 12 months and their second at age four, before they start school.

Some teenagers, young adults and older adults may have missed out on their second dose of MMR, especially if they were born in a country other than Australia. Next time you go to the doctor check if you are protected and have a second dose if your doctor recommends it. All vaccines on the National Immunisation Program are provided free.

Caring communities

Twenty-five Campbelltown tenants who participated in the nine-week Caring Communities Home Care training program recently graduated at a celebration held at Airds.

Caring Communities involves an innovative training program jointly funded under the Housing NSW Campbelltown Community Regeneration Strategy and the Land and Housing Corporation's Airds/Bradbury Renewal Project. The project provides training to residents so they can secure jobs as home carers.

As part of the program, mentoring was funded by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, and an interview with local home care providers was arranged for each course graduate by Aging Disability and Home Care.

At the graduation ceremony Ken Bone, General Manager of Housing NSW, Greater Western Sydney congratulated the participants and said, "It is important to invest in people to build strong and healthy communities. By offering individual mentoring support alongside a certificate course this helps people realise their potential and take part in their community through paid employment."

Since completing the training program some participants have achieved employment in the sector, with others placed on an e-list for future vacancies. We would like to congratulate all graduates.