



## Your Home issue 60 June 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.

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## **\$2,000 Youth Scholarships – helping students to complete the HSC**

Youth scholarships worth \$2,000 will soon be on offer to help students living in social housing successfully complete the Higher School Certificate (HSC) or TAFE equivalent.

Scholarships are open to students aged under 25 years who are living in social housing (such as public, community or Aboriginal housing) and are studying for the HSC or TAFE equivalent. Applications are also open to students if they or their family are on the NSW Housing Register.

The \$2,000 payment must be spent on items related to education such as books, computer equipment and tuition to help young people enter higher education and move into a successful career.

Applications for the 2013 scholarships open on 18 June 2012 and close on 27 July 2012 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](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au) or from your local Housing NSW office.

The selection process will be completed by the end of November 2012, with the funds available to the school or TAFE college to manage on behalf of students at the beginning of the 2013 school year.

## Minister's message

Housing NSW now publishes detailed information about social housing waiting lists. This means if you wish to apply for a transfer, you will be able to find out how long you will need to wait for a property in your chosen area. If the wait is too long, you may decide to apply in another area with a shorter waiting time.

The publication of information about waiting times for social housing has shown that there is a long wait for larger properties. Currently there are over 5,000 families, including families with children with disabilities, waiting for four-bedroom properties. At the same time, there are quite a number of single tenants living in four-bedroom properties.

I know some tenants living in larger properties are willing and indeed waiting to move to smaller ones. Sometimes we have to offer these smaller properties to people who are homeless or in a crisis, which explains why there can be a wait. But in certain locations we desperately need larger properties, and I ask tenants who do not need big properties to seriously consider moving if Housing NSW staff offer you a smaller property.

## Keep fire safe this winter

Winter is the most dangerous time of the year for house fires, which can take hold in just minutes. So now is the time to check electric blankets for damaged or frayed cords before placing on the bed and take care to keep curtains, tablecloths and bedding away from portable heaters.

Fires are also a serious problem in Housing NSW properties, with one third of all fires starting in the kitchen.

A large number of fires are caused through pots left on the stove top or through cooking with oil. So don't leave your cooking unattended and heat oil carefully and slowly in the right size pan to avoid fat splatters and potential fires.

A simple and inexpensive item to store in your kitchen is a fire safety blanket which may prevent a spark from becoming a blaze. Fire needs air to feed the flame and placing a fire blanket on a flame starves it of air and extinguishes the fire.

Fires can start so quickly. To see how easily they can occur, please see the video links on our website at [www.housing.nsw.gov.au](http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au).

Fire and Rescue NSW also have some helpful tips on how to keep safe in your home. Please visit [www.fire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au) for further information.

# Digital TV switchover

The upgrade of our multi-unit apartments continues with more than 38,000 properties already made digital ready. For tenants in free standing homes and cottages you will need to check that your antenna can receive digital TV signals. If you need to install an antenna for the first time, please contact your Client Service Officer to obtain permission.

A household assistance scheme run by the Australian Government is able to assist older Australians, veterans and people with disabilities and their carers to convert to digital TV. The scheme provides a free digital set-top box, an in-home demonstration and a 12-month warranty to eligible people.

For more information visit

[www.digitalready.gov.au](http://www.digitalready.gov.au) or call the Digital Ready information line on 1800 201 013.

# Fight the flu this winter

Influenza or flu is a respiratory illness caused by viruses which spread very easily.

People with the flu typically experience symptoms such as fever and chills, cough, sore throat and runny or stuffy nose, muscle aches, joint pains, headaches, fatigue, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea.

The flu can turn into a serious illness, with many people hospitalised due to complications. So here are a few simple steps to help you fight the flu this winter:

- Get vaccinated against the flu. Vaccine is free from your local doctor for people aged 65 years or older, Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people aged 15 years or older, pregnant women and anyone aged 6 months and over with medical conditions that make them more likely to contract severe influenza.
- Cover your face when you cough or sneeze and throw used tissues in a rubbish bin. Cough into your elbow rather than your hands if you don't have a tissue.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often for at least 10 seconds, especially after coughing, sneezing or blowing your nose, or use an alcohol-based hand rub.
- Stay at home until you are better, waiting at least 24 hours after your fever goes down before going out so you don't infect other people.
- Keep sick children away from school and other activities.
- Avoid visiting people such as pregnant women, infants, older people and people in hospital who are more likely to get sick.
- Pregnant women are at higher risk of severe flu. Vaccination during pregnancy can protect you and your baby for up to six months after birth.

# When should I use antibiotics?

Antibiotics are used to treat bacteria that can cause serious illness. They can be lifesaving in people with a serious infection and can help reduce the spread of infection.

Antibiotics are also sometimes used to treat minor viral infections, but as viruses are not killed by antibiotics using them in this instance can contribute to the development of bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics. This can be a big problem in hospitals where patients may be more at risk of serious bacterial infections.

So how to tell the difference?

Most colds and flu symptoms such as mild fever, runny or blocked nose and mild cough are caused by viral infections, so antibiotics won't help. Generally coughs and colds will start to improve within 48 hours.

In the meantime, symptoms such as fever can be relieved with Paracetamol or Aspirin. It is also very important to drink plenty of fluids and avoid cigarette smoke. Young children need to be closely watched as their condition can change quickly, so please take your children to the doctor if you are worried.

Bacterial infections usually produce a more severe illness which lasts longer. For example bacterial infections of the lungs (pneumonia) may cause breathlessness and rapid breathing in children, sharp chest pain and a cough with phlegm which is not clear in colour. Telling bacterial and viral infections apart can be tricky so always seek advice from your doctor.

## Handy hints

Recipe

Economy chicken – three meals in one

Norma has a fantastic way to use a BBQ chicken.

1. Remove the legs of a BBQ chicken. Bake a large potato, a piece of pumpkin, peas and you have a baked dinner.
2. Remove the two chicken breasts, dip in one beaten egg, roll in breadcrumbs and panfry. Serve with a salad.
3. Put the leftover bones and flesh in a large saucepan, add one sliced onion and cover with water and boil until the onion is soft. Strain and you have a nourishing soup.

We have some very timely hints from Margaret of Miranda.

For a different way to get rid of moths, sprinkle oil of cinnamon on little pieces of cotton wool and place among clothes.

To make windscreens shine, mix baking powder with water until there is a thin paste, rub on the windscreen, rinse off, dry then polish with a soft cloth.

Gaylene from Waterloo has a tip for cleaning perspiration odours from clothes. Add 1 or 1 1/2 cups of white vinegar to a bucket of water and soak for about two hours then wash clean.

Congratulations Margaret, Gaylene and Norma you have each won a \$25 voucher.

## Our new garden As told by resident Denis McAdam

The residents at our complex at Lemongrove had a problem. We wanted to establish a vegetable garden, but had no spare cash, and no 'muscle' considering that we were all old-age pensioners or had a disability.

Then I noticed an article in *Your Home* newsletter, *Growing the Community Greening Program*.

We formed a committee. One resident had a 'green thumb' and was elected president; another had a computer and was elected secretary.

The secretary then enlisted the support of Phil Pettitt from the Botanic Gardens Trust and Deborah Thomas, our Housing NSW Client Service Officer. We submitted a plan which was accepted and received a grant for our new garden.

The workers, an Irishman, Englishman and Scotsman (no jokes please) enjoyed lunch provided by the lady committee members.

We are overjoyed with the results and would like to express our thanks to all involved!