

WNEWS

Wentworth Community Housing
Tenant Newsletter

Issue 17 June 2013



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the Winter edition of *WNews*. Inside this edition you will find tips on how to stay safe this Winter, rent review and tenancy tips, modifications and opportunities for you to get involved within your community.

I am proud to say on Thursday 20th June 2013 I participated in the 8th Annual Vinnies CEO Sleepout to raise awareness about homelessness and much needed funds to support Vinnies homeless support services. In NSW we raised just short of \$2 million which will go a long way in supporting Vinnies.

I hope you enjoy this edition of *WNews*!



Nick Sabel | Chief Executive Officer

Message from your Tenant Engagement and Advisory T.E.A.M (formerly the Tenant Representative Panel)

Your Tenant Engagement Advisory Members (T.E.A.M) along with Wentworth staff have commenced tenant engagement bus trips every



second month to discuss issues within the community, build relationships and stimulate community involvement.

The first bus trip was held on Wednesday 8th May 2013 at the Church St, Windsor complex where a number of tenants attended and raised concerns regarding tenancy matters and maintenance. The residents of the Windsor area also agreed to the following community involvement activities – garden and craft clubs, gentle exercise groups and bus trips. If you would like a T.E.A.M tenant engagement bus trip in your area to raise issues or simply as a meet and greet with Wentworth please contact your CSO.



Maintenance Queries

Our maintenance line is available between the hours of 8:30am to 4:30pm to answer all of your maintenance queries. Outside of these hours Wentworth provides an after hours Emergency only service to respond to urgent and high priority calls (please see a brief list below for examples of emergency items). For all of your maintenance queries call **(02) 4777 8000** (select option 1).

Urgent work includes: broken windows, entry doors not locking, electrical faults, roof leaks, major water leak, blocked toilet, doors jammed closed or loss of power.

Please Note: For the best service, please call (02) 4777 8000 (option 1) with your repairs. Maintenance queries by email may take over 48 hours to be actioned.

What is a Rent Review and what do I need to do?

What is a rent review?

A rent review occurs every 6 months, Wentworth will automatically send you an "Application for Subsidy" to ensure that you are paying the correct amount of rent according to your household income. This includes the Energy Supplement allowance.

What do you need to do?

It is really important that you return the form by the due date, otherwise you will be placed onto Market Rent. This can cause undue stress to you because unnecessary rental arrears can escalate quickly. It is the tenants responsibility to notify Wentworth if your income or house details change within 4 weeks of the change occurring.

Centrelink Consent to Wentworth

If you have completed the income consent form, Wentworth will obtain your income and asset details direct from Centrelink. As a tenant you need to complete the following sections:

- › Form A
- › Also if someone in your household is working then Form C is to be completed by their employer

No Centrelink Consent to Wentworth

You will be required to:

- › complete form A and provide current supporting documentation (ie. Centrelink statement)
- › Also, if someone in your household is working then Form C is to be completed by their employer

Modifications

Wentworth has the capacity to undertake modification work to properties. There are 2 types of modification works:

- 1. Major Mods** involve structural changes to the property, and can include ramps or bathroom renovations.
 - › In all cases of major modifications, clients must seek the involvement of an "Occupational Therapist" (O/T) who will work with Wentworth to determine what best suits the clients needs.
- 2. Minor Mods** involve minor changes or inclusions to the property that can include grab rails or quarter lever taps.
 - › Minor Modifications will require medical advice in writing to Wentworth to determine the appropriate works. In some cases of large scale Minor Mods, an occupations therapists report may be required.

All requests can be hand delivered to your local office, mailed, or sent via email to admin@wentworth.org.au.

Filling vacant bedrooms incentive

On 26 June 2013, The Hon. Pru Goward MP, Minister for Family and Community Services, announced a new incentive to help free up larger public housing properties. This NSW Government initiative aims to fill vacant bedrooms to free up public housing for those who need it most. In order to achieve this; tenants who agree to relocate when they are

approached by Housing NSW and tenants who offer to move to a smaller home, will be given priority status on the transfer list. Those who choose not to relocate will incur a set fee for unused rooms.

At this stage Community Housing Providers are not affected and should this change Wentworth will let you know.

Did you know?



Wentworth has a variety of Fact Sheets for tenants. These include: Preventing and treating of Mould for your home / Market Rent Reviews/ Rent and Water Arrears Neighbours, Community and Dealing with Disagreements / Rent, Rent Subsidies and Reviews. Contact your Client Service Officer or call into an office to pick up any sheets you require.

Avoid the winter power bill shock

Did you know that energy prices are set to increase from 1 July 2013? Now that winter has set in and we are relying more and more on our heaters, clothes dryers and electric blankets, high energy bills may come as a shock when they arrive in Spring. With some planning and a few easy steps, you can make an informed decision about your energy use that will help you avoid the bill shock.

EWON has created a new online resource – *Chill Your Winter Power Bill* – www.ewon.com.au/index.cfm/chill-your-power-bill.

The resource consists of four main topics to guide you:

- › Being aware of energy use
- › Taking steps to reduce energy consumption
- › Knowing what rebates and bill assistance are available
- › Planning for the winter bill

Tenancy Tips

Handy budget tips

Knowing how to manage money and pay bills is important to living a comfortable and enjoyable lifestyle. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- › always budget for rent and water – this is your home and always comes first
- › think carefully before making major purchases
- › prepare for Christmas and special occasions by saving through the year or by paying additional rent over the months that lead up to Christmas. This will help you to bank money and avoid debt.
- › for advice on how to start a budget and save money visit www.moneysmart.gov.au

Antennas

As we approach December 2013, the federal government will have all old analogue signals turned off in favour of new Digital Signals. Many of you will have already purchased either a new TV or a Digital Set Top Box to give you access to new features and channels available within Digital TV. Wentworth Community Housing, in Partnership with HNSW, have undertaken a program to upgrade antenna's to all eligible common area systems. Most cottages, townhouse's and villa's will not be eligible for the upgrades. In these cases most pre-existing systems will not require extensive work to be digital ready, and may only require a signal booster pack (small electronic device that plugs into the aerial cable). If you have any further queries, please contact "Digital Read" on **1800 201 013** or visit the website www.australia.gov.au/digitalready

Pest Control

As Winter winds down and the weather warms up, pests often become a problem around the home. Now is the best time to think about what you can do to prevent an outbreak in spring. Most pests spring from cupboards full of items that have not been used for long periods. Airing these cupboards or blankets can help to reduce activity. Cleaning out your pantry can help to remove food sources for pests. It is important to remember that Wentworth is not responsible for the pest control on specific properties.

RENT STATEMENTS

Your rent statement included with this newsletter was printed as at 28th June 2013. If you have made payments after this date they will appear on your next rent statement.

Winter Fire Safety Tips

Each year, the NSW Fire Brigades attends approximately 4,500 residential fires in NSW with approximately 30% of them occurring in winter months. As the months become colder individuals will start to use electric blankets and heaters which increase the chances of a house fire. To ensure you and your family stay safe this Winter please read the below tips:

- › Make sure you and your family know two safe ways out of your home
- › Never ever leave cooking unattended
- › Check electric blankets for damage or frayed cords, ensure they are turned off each day
- › Take care to keep curtains, tablecloths and bedding away from portable heaters
- › Ensure your smoke alarm is in working order and if it isn't contact Wentworth Community Housing's maintenance line immediately on **(02) 4777 8000**
- › Do not overload power points
- › Clean the lint filter in your clothes dryer each time before use

NSW Government Home Power Savings Program

The NSW Government has introduced a program to help vulnerable households save power and money on their bills. Every eligible household that joins the program gets a free:

- › Home Power assessment by an energy expert
- › Power Savings Kit
- › Personal Power Savings Action Plan

You are eligible for the program if you pay for the utility bills for your property and hold any of the following: Centrelink Pensioner

Concession Card, Centrelink Low Income Health Care Card, Department of Veterans' Affairs Pensioner Concession Card or Department of Veterans' Affairs (Gold or White) Repatriation Health Card.

This is a great opportunity for you to learn how you can save electricity so you can reduce the cost of your electricity bill and lessen your household's impact on the environment.

To learn more or book a home power assessment you can call **1300 662 416** or visit savepower.nsw.gov.au

HEAD OFFICE

Penrith

Address: Borec House, Suite 1002, Level 1
29-57 Station Street, Penrith 2750
PO Box 4303, Penrith 2750

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Fax: (02) 4777 8099

Email: admin@wentworth.org.au

Opening hours:

8:30am–4:30pm Monday, Tuesday,

Thursday, Friday

1:00pm–4:30pm Wednesday

BRANCHES

Hawkesbury

Address: 409A George Street, South Windsor

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am–4:30pm Monday,
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (closed Wednesday)

Blue Mountains

Address: Shop 2, 23-27 Cascade Street, Katoomba

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am–4:30pm Monday,
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (closed Wednesday)

**OUT OF HOURS EMERGENCY
MAINTENANCE LINE
1300 761 315**

KIDS CORNER

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR HOME?

Kids, using the space below draw a picture showing **"What you love about your home"**. There is a chance to win 1 x 6 \$25 gift vouchers and have your drawing published as one of Wentworth's Christmas cards.

Send your entries to T.E.A.M,
PO Box 4303 Penrith NSW 2750 or drop
it into one of our offices.

**Don't forget your name, age, address
and telephone number.**

There will be two winners from each of
the following LGA's – Blue Mountains,
Hawkesbury and Penrith/Blacktown
with one winner chosen from the under
7's age group and the second from the
8–12's age group.

***Disclaimer:** All entries become the property of Wentworth Community Housing and could be used in publications as required. Wentworth Community Housing cannot return submitted entries and entrants are advised to keep a copy.