

WNEWS

Wentworth Community Housing
Tenant Newsletter

Issue 35 April 2018



Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the Autumn edition of WNews! It still feels a bit like summer as we have been having some considerably hot days lately and I hope you are managing to stay cool.

A lot has been happening and this edition is filled with some exciting updates. In February, we relocated our Katoomba office to a more central location and improved space. If you have already been there or if you are planning a visit, let us know how you like our new address in the Blue Mountains.

In March, our multi-awarded Heading Home – Ending Homelessness Here project launched its Stage One report, documenting our findings on homelessness in Penrith, the Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury.

We also recently released a report reviewing the first two years of the Tenancy Support Service (TSS), which aims to intervene early to prevent homelessness on three fronts: Tenancy Support, Real Estate Engagement and Sector Capacity Building. I'm very proud of our Wentworth team and the work they are doing to end homelessness across our region.

As some of you know, in April we officially opened our apartments in St Marys and we had some very special guests who joined us on the occasion. You will be able to read more about this and see some photos in this newsletter.

In this edition you will also find information about a couple of projects that could be right up your alley. We are welcoming you to join our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) and this year all volunteer tenants will receive training so you can learn about your rights and how to make a difference in your community. We are also piloting the Western Sydney Women in Social Housing (WISH) project with the aim to support women to move towards financial and housing independence.

You would have now received your tenant satisfaction survey from the NSW Federation of Housing

Association either by post or email. We encourage you to complete and return your survey as your feedback helps us understand the different issues that affect your tenancy and property.

If you complete the survey you will go into the draw to win a Penrith Westfield \$50 gift voucher!

Once we have your feedback, we can then work on improving the services for all our tenants. It is always good to reiterate that you can get in touch with our maintenance team any time to report maintenance issues.

Last but not least, a very special thank you to all the head tenants who contributed to our first Tenant Communications Survey. The results are in and we have learned a lot, please read on to find out more.

We look forward to the weather cooling down a bit and seeing you throughout 2018.

Happy reading.



Stephen McIntyre
Chief Executive Officer

Tenant Advisory Group: get amongst it



Our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) welcomes you to have a say about Wentworth's policies that affect your tenancy and property.

This year, volunteer tenants will receive training in the areas of advocacy, leadership, and organising community events.

TAG is open to all tenants of Wentworth Community Housing and you can join the team throughout the year. We value each other and welcome diversity.

For more information on next meetings and training sessions, head to our website www.wentworth.org.au/tenant-engagement-advisory-members.html or contact our Sustainable Community Officer, Vanessa Tomas on ph: (02) 4777 8078, mob: 0438 796 378 or email vanessat@wentworth.org.au

Dates and times for the next TAG meetings:

Friday, 24 August	from 11.00 – 1.00pm
Thursday, 25 October	from 6.00 – 8.00pm
Friday, 14 December	from 11.00 – 1.00pm

Dates and times for our training sessions:

All training sessions start at 10am and finish at 2pm. Spaces are limited and the dates for training are as follows:

- › Friday, 1 June
- › Friday, 15 June
- › Friday, 22 June

Western Sydney Women in Social Housing (WISH)

WISH is a pilot program from Wentworth Community Housing that aims to support women to move towards financial and housing independence through training, coaching and mentoring.

If you are a woman over 18 years old and keen to get some support with finding work or going back to study, we want to hear from you!

Contact Heather Chaffey by email at heather.chaffey@wentworth.org.au or call (02) 4777 8026.

New Katoomba Office offers improved space for clients and staff



We relocated our Katoomba office on 1 February to level 2, 98 Bathurst Road.

Situated in the centre of town, on the top level of the Upper Mountains Medical Centre, the new office will enable us to provide a higher level of service to you. It is co-located with Flourish Australia, which is a renowned mental health provider that has enabled thousands of people to fully participate within a diverse and inclusive community.

If you have the chance, let us know how you like our new address in the Blue Mountains.

Maintenance Queries

Remember for all Maintenance Queries please ring **02 4777 8000** (select option 1).



St Marys now officially open

In December last year, we completed a 49-unit affordable housing property at 11 Phillip Street, St Marys, and the building was officially opened on 4 April 2018. At the occasion, we were joined by Senator for Western Sydney and Australian Minister for Defence Marise Payne, NSW Minister for Social Housing Pru Goward and Penrith Mayor Councillor John Thain.

Raj Abeyan, one of the residents, spoke about his experience with Wentworth and opened his apartment to the other guests. The formalities were followed by morning tea.



For the fastest service call (02) 4777 8000

Advantages of providing your email address and phone number to us

When you provide your email address and your phone number, you give us different ways of getting in touch about updates on maintenance requests or any other issues you raise with us. It could also allow us to help you keep on top of managing your rent and other payments you make to Wentworth.

If you want to inform your email address and/or your phone number, so we have the most up to date details for you, contact your Client Service Officer. You can also call our contact centre on (02) 4777 8000 or alternatively email admin@wentworth.org.au with your full name and address.

Ending homelessness in Penrith, Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury

Wentworth Community Housing's multi-awarded Heading Home project launched its Stage One report on 22 March. The report documents the first stage of the project, which initiated a Project Group and mobilised the community, finishing in a Registry Week.

During Registry Week, held in November 2016, we identified, interviewed and assisted people who were sleeping rough in our communities.

We interviewed 91 people including 12 families. A further 44 people were identified but chose not to be interviewed, totalling 135 people across Penrith, the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury. Registry Week looked at rough sleepers and crisis centres, which means that the actual number of people homeless but not visible on the street is much higher.

Heading Home is now focussed on initiatives that can help generate new housing solutions. The team from Wentworth together with our partners, local City Councils and leading real estate agents has been busy looking for land to set up a Tiny Homes Village and planning to run an Expo later this year to encourage homeowners to build garden flats.

Evaluation of the tenancy support service

Also in our homelessness services area which is run by Wentworth's Community Services Team, we recently released our report into the Tenancy Support Service (TSS) that we have led since 2014 in partnership with Platform Youth Services, The Gender Centre and Lithgow Community Projects across the Penrith, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Lithgow Local Government Areas (LGAs). TSS aims to prevent people at risk of eviction from losing their tenancy and becoming homeless.

You can access the Heading Home and the Tenancy Support Service (TSS Project) Evaluation reports at www.wentworth.org.au

Tenant Communications Survey: what we learned about you

Thank you to all head tenants who took part in our first Tenant Communications Survey. We had 1194 participants – equivalent to 51.73% of all head tenants – which is great.

The survey was to find out the best ways to reach you and provide you with useful information. We collected 395 email addresses, 314 phone numbers and 676 mobile numbers, which allows us to reach you using various avenues.

We also took the chance to ask question about this newsletter, if you knew about our presence on social media, and if you would be interested in self service mobile apps.

Here are our findings:

611 respondents always read the WNEWS newsletters

51.17%

872 respondents are happy for us to get in touch about Wentworth activities such as events in your local community

73%

691 respondents prefer to receive WNEWS newsletter by post

57.87%

551 respondents use social media

46.23%

709 respondents said they would be happy to use a Wentworth self service mobile app or self service tools on our website as another means of checking accounts, paying rent, and submitting maintenance queries

59.38%

Active kids program



Did you know that school students across the state are eligible for the NSW Government's \$100 Active Kids program all year-round?

The Active Kids program aims to assist with the costs of sports and active recreation fees. Parents, guardians and carers can register online with Service NSW to access the funds, have a look at www.sport.nsw.gov.au/sectordevelopment/activekids

Win!

Reminder! Complete Wentworth's survey for your chance to win

**Return your completed tenant survey
by Friday 4 May and go into the draw
for your chance to win one of eight
Penrith Westfield \$50 gift vouchers.**

When you give your feedback, you're helping us understand the different issues that affect yourself, your community and your property.

Have your say and good luck!



Getting to know Wentworth people

Tabarah Hotchkins, Team Leader, Tenancy

How long have you been with Wentworth?

Just over two months.

What does a Team Leader, Tenancy, do?

My role goes beyond tenancy management. Part of my job is about supporting Wentworth clients sustain their tenancies, making sure their wellbeing is at the forefront of our work. I oversee a team of Client Service Officers providing them with guidance and mentoring, especially when they are faced with complex cases.

What do you like most about your job?

I like interacting with like minded people that share a common goal and social consciousness. The work place is dynamic, fast paced and invites creativity.

The culture here is a caring culture. Because of the way Wentworth is structured, I feel I can work closer to the communities we serve, having more influence to make changes and decisions. I realise that I can use opportunities to try different things.

There are plenty of opportunities to bond with other work colleagues at a personal level, and get to learn how their work impacts what I do.

Which areas do you cover?

The whole Penrith Local Government Area (LGA).



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

HEAD OFFICE

Penrith

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

Phone: (02) 4777 8000
Fax: (02) 4777 8099
Email: admin@wentworth.org.au

Opening hours:
8:30am–4:30pm Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
1:00pm–4:30pm Wed

BRANCHES

Hawkesbury

Address: 409A George Street
South Windsor
Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am–4:30pm Mon, Tue,
Thu, Fri (closed Wed)

Blue Mountains

Address: Shop 2, 23–27 Cascade Street
Katoomba
Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am–4:30pm Mon, Tue,
Thu, Fri (closed Wed)

Next WNEWS

Our next edition of WNEWS will be out in June 2018 and will be mailed and displayed on Wentworth's Website www.wentworth.org.au/resources-newsletters

If you would like to see an article on a specific topic please email admin@wentworth.org.au



Connect with Wentworth on Social Media

Interested in what's happening in your community, Wentworth and the housing sector? Connecting with us has never been easier.

If you are interested in finding out the latest news, job ads or up to date information from Wentworth, please like the Facebook Page today

www.facebook.com/WentworthCommunityHousing

Or connect on



Twitter / @Wentworth_CH



Instagram / Wentworth Community Housing



LinkedIn / Wentworth Community Housing