



Homes Out West

Making a Difference

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A Bi-monthly Insight into Community Housing

Volume 1 – Issue 20

Editorial

How time flies with spring just around the corner. As the days start to warm up it is a great opportunity to do some spring cleaning whether that be in the house or in the garden. Why not start a veggie garden this year? The veggies always taste some much better when you have grown them yourself.

This newsletter aims to keep you up to date with the activities of the organisation and the communities in which we operate. If you have any ideas or contributions for the newsletter please let us know.

Upgrading of properties

It has been 9 months since the property transfer occurred and Homes Out West are busy upgrading the properties. So far we have replaced a number of kitchens, bathrooms and carpets, while our painters and builders have been busy with roofs, walls, doors, screens, and so on.

The electricians have completed all of the safety switches in fuse boxes to ensure tenants are electrically safe in their homes. The focus so far has been on the properties that are in most need of attention, as well as vacant properties that have become available.

During the upgrades we have taken the opportunity to involve tenants in choosing colours and styles (where possible), as well as trialing different features such as energy efficient heaters and Lamipanel shower cubicles, in order to deliver a more sustainable product for our tenants.

As you would appreciate, upgrading over 200 properties across 8 towns with many trades-people is a big task. We are endeavoring to do it as quickly as we can, while ensuring that the work done is of a high quality. All transferring tenants will gradually be contacted as the upgrade schedule rolls out across the portfolio.

If you believe you need work done on your property for safety reasons, or if there is a functional problem at your property, please contact the assets team so they can investigate and respond to your concerns.



Water usage and tenant water bills



There has been some confusion about the payment of water bills by some of our tenants.

All tenants occupying stand alone properties (not units) pay for the actual water usage. As the landlord, Homes Out West (HOW) receives bills from the respective local Council and then charges the tenant for the water used at the property they lease. A letter is sent to tenants notifying them how much their water bill is.

If you are one of the tenants who pay an extra amount of money above your rent towards water charges, you do not have to do anything as you will have already paid for your water.

Tenants who do not have the above arrangement in place will need to call HOW and make arrangements to pay the water bill. If you are still in doubt, do not hesitate to call your Housing Worker for clarification.



From the Executive Officer's desk



Spring is almost upon us and hasn't it been fantastic to see such a change in the season with all the rain. In the ten years I have been in the role and travelling around our large region this is certainly the greenest I have witnessed. The positive atmosphere all this rain has brought to the region is echoed with the exciting developments that are currently occurring with Homes Out West.

58 new properties, which HOW will be managing in the Albury region, are almost completed and we are currently working hard on the process of allocation to these properties with various partner agencies. Our project looking at providing a more sustainable housing product to tenants is also nearing completion and I am sure you will hear a lot more about this in the future.

The elements and mechanisms which will guide the strategic direction of our asset planning are nearing completion. This very significant piece of work will ensure we use our valuable and limited resources in the most appropriate manner. And finally we have just undertaken a review of the organisation's staffing structure in light of the continued significant growth of the organisation and are now moving to implement these changes. So you may see some changes in staff and staff in some different roles.

As I write this we are on the eve of the Federal election, predicted to be one of the closest in history. The previous Labour Government has made decisions which have had a significant impact on the community housing sector across the nation. I look forward to seeing what lies ahead for community housing and the role it will continue to play in the social housing system with whoever wins at tomorrow's election.

Geoff Mann
Executive Officer

We continue our series on common household pests Spiders

Generally speaking spiders and their webs can help control other pests such as mosquitoes and flies. However certain types of spiders can cause painful bites. Reducing areas where spiders are likely to nest are the best ways for controlling spiders. Don't allow rubbish to build up, and keep weeds and lawns down.

Identifying Spider Activity

- Cobwebs around the property
- Physical sighting of spiders



Spider Prevention

- Seal any entrance points to the house – window frames, doorways etc.
- Control insects – spiders enter the house looking for prey, and will move on without food.
- Turn off exterior lights at night time – these will attract insects into your home, encouraging spiders
- Keep your lawn mowed, bushes well pruned and yard clear of debris. This will reduce shelter for both spiders and the insects they eat.
- Remove any webs that you see and stomp on any egg cases

Spider Treatment

- Spiders can be sprayed directly with an insecticide, preferably in the web to kill any egg sacs.
- Slow-release insecticide formulations can be applied to nooks and crannies, such as corners of the home, behind and under furniture and stored items, to control active hunting spiders and prevent new spiders setting up home

Securing your tenancy

Vinnies Services will be running a course entitled "Keeping Your Tenancy Secure". The course is aimed at making participants understand their tenancy, know their rights and responsibilities and where they can get assistance at a time of need.

Guest speakers with vast experience and drawn from various housing organizations will talk about, among other things, living on a budget, your security and that of your belongings, good communication skills and conflict resolution methods.

The course will be conducted at the Vinnies offices on Tuesdays from the 12th October to 14th December 2010 from 1.00p.m. to 3.00p.m. at no cost to participants. Those interested can contact Wendy on 03 5881 7411.

So long & farewell

I just wanted to say a big goodbye to everyone, and thank you all for your support, for the friendship made and for the many congratulations received.

For those of you who aren't aware, my last day was Friday 20 August as my husband and I are expecting our first baby at the end of September.

Whilst working with Homes Out West, I have had the opportunity to meet and work with some wonderful people and have made memories which you are all part of.

Thank you all for being a part of my life for the last four years.

Chantelle Guthrie



Meet Your Board Member

..... **Scott Mildren**

Scott has been with the Homes Out West Board of Management since 1998.

He currently holds the position of Board Treasurer having been Chairperson from 2005 to 2007.

Scott hails from rural New South Wales and completed his high school education in Albury and then proceeded to do a Finance degree at the University of Canberra.

A dedicated team player, Scott has various skills in the field of finance and the ability to blend financial requirements with social needs of the housing sector.

Apart from being on the HOW Board, he has worked in the banking and insurance sector.

He currently is a finance business owner in Deniliquin.

Understanding depression & resilience

Care Assist in partnership with Black Dog Institute will be running education seminars in Albury and Deniliquin on elements of depression.

These cost free seminars will be on the following;

- What is depression?
- How to spot early warning signs
- Understanding the risk factors
- Understanding the role of personality
- How to build resilience
- What to do

The first session will be held at Club Sapphire, Merimbula(119 Main Street) 23/9/10 at 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. followed by another at Deniliquin RSL Club (72 End Street) 29/9/10 same times.

Those readers interested in attending the information sessions can contact Susan Morris at susan@careassist.org.au or 02 6021 5882 by the 18/09/10.

Tips for a clean home

1. Make the Bed

A crisply made bed makes the whole room seem more orderly, which makes it less likely that you'll let other things -- such as clothes and papers -- pile up around it.

2. Manage Clutter

Whenever you leave a room, take a quick look around for anything that isn't where it should be. Pick it up and put it where it belongs. Insist that everyone in the household do the same.

3. Sort the Mail

Take a few minutes to open, read, and sort mail as soon as you bring it inside. Keep a trash bin near your sorting area for junk mail. Drop other mail into one of four in-boxes: personal correspondence, bills, catalogs, and filing.

4. Clean as You Cook

Instead of filling the sink with pots and dishes, wash them as you prepare the meal or while the meal is cooking.

5. Wipe Up Spills While They're Fresh

Whether it's tomato sauce on the cook top or makeup on the bathroom counter, almost anything is faster and easier to remove if you attend to it immediately.

6. Sweep the Kitchen Floor

Every evening once you've finished washing up after dinner, sweep the floor. This will keep tough-to-clean dirt and grime from building up, which will make the weekly mopping much quicker.

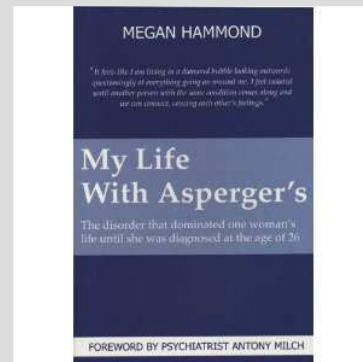
A tenant has contributed the following book recommendation for readers

My Life with Asperger's written by Megan Hammond.

This book is written to help families and sufferers understand what it is to live with Aspergers Syndrome.

Megan Hammond writes from first hand experience and covers everything from her initial diagnosis to love, family relationships and living as an adult.

Includes a chapter from her parent's point of view in coping with a child who is suffering from Aspergers.



Recommended by butterfly.



Information on Aspergers Syndrome

Asperger syndrome is a developmental disorder that affects how the brain processes information. It shapes a person's social, emotional and communication skills, and behaviours.

Asperger syndrome usually becomes obvious during childhood and remains throughout life, with varying degrees of disability.

There is no cure. However, the skills of a person with Asperger syndrome may be aided by a combination of support, regular routine and therapeutic intervention.

More information is available at www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au

Attention Social Housing Tenants in Deniliquin!



The Tenant Participation Resource Service (TPRS) is having a **TENANT INFORMATION SESSION**

- Do you have issues with your tenancy?
- Do you want to know more about your rights and responsibilities as a tenant?
- Do you need advice or assistance with getting a community project or activity happening?

The Tenant Participation Resource Service (TPRS) provides tenants with information, advice and opportunities to actively participate in processes related to their housing. TPRS can also support you to plan and deliver activities within your community.

If you've got ideas, questions, or would just like to learn more,

please come along for coffee and cake to:

WHERE: Neighbourhood Centre Trickett Street, Deniliquin

WHEN: Wednesday 29th September 2010

TIME: 1.00pm – 2.30pm

If transport is required, please contact Rose Dunn on: 03 5881 1855

Rose Dunn
TPRS, Community Worker
Intereach
03 5881 1855



Emergency Help Lines

Kids Help Line	1800 551 800
Domestic Violence	1800 656 463
NSW Rape Crisis Centre	1800 424 017
Accessline	1800 800 944
Veterans Line	1800 011 046
Lifeline	131 114
Family Drug Support	1300 368 186
Suicide Prevention	1300 133 911
Mental health Support	1800 201 123

Do you have any articles, puzzles, recipes, green tips, gardening tips, information etc to be included in the next addition of the newsletter?

**Please post to:
PO Box 922
DENILQUIN NSW 2710**

Or

Bring in your ideas to your nearest Homes Out West Office

Spicy Lamb Kebabs with Baby Golden and Red Beetroot

BY Dixie Elliott

Serves 4

<i>12 pre-soaked bamboo skewers</i>	<i>2 tsp ground cumin</i>
<i>2 tsp sea salt flakes</i>	<i>1 tsp ground coriander</i>
<i>1 tsp smoky paprika</i>	<i>½ tsp dried oregano</i>
<i>¼ tsp ground cinnamon</i>	<i>850g lamb leg steaks, cut into 2cm pieces</i>
<i>1 cup hummus</i>	<i>½ cup Greek-style yoghurt</i>
<i>24 stuffed green olives</i>	
<i>1 bunch small yellow beetroot, trimmed, peeled, halved lengthways</i>	
<i>1 bunch small red beetroot, trimmed, peeled, halved lengthways</i>	
<i>olive oil cooking spray</i>	<i>½ cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, optional</i>

1 Combine cumin, salt, coriander, paprika, oregano and cinnamon in a large bowl. Add lamb and toss until well combined. Cover and refrigerate for at least 2 hours. Combine hummus and yoghurt in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate until required.

2 Thread 2 cubes of lamb, an olive, 2 cubes of lamb, an olive and lastly 1 cube of lamb onto each skewer. Set aside on a large plate.

3 Preheat oven to 200°C. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Place beetroot on tray. Spray with olive oil. Bake for 45 minutes or until tender. Transfer to a bowl; add parsley. Toss until well combined. Heat a chargrill or frying pan over medium high heat. Spray skewers with olive oil. Cook skewers for 4 minutes on each side or until cooked through. Serve kebabs with beetroot and dressing.