



Homes Out West

Making a Difference

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A Bi-monthly Insight into Community Housing

Volume 1 – Issue 19

Editorial

We are once again beginning to experience the onset of chilly weather.

What this means for households is that there will be a need to keep families warm during this period.

In so doing there will be increased use of electricity that could result in huge electricity bills if not managed correctly. Tenants are therefore advised to use energy saving tips given in this publication to save money on electricity bills.

It is important to watch closely your power usage because high bills will affect both your budget and purchasing power of basic goods.

Lucky finds a new home



Lucky, a beautiful maltese dog who was found abandoned at a Homes Out West property by his previous owner has found a new home.

The dog was found by HOW staff hungry and dirty. Every effort was made to try and unite him with an adoptive owner, and he finally was. The new owner, another HOW tenant, lost their last pet some time ago and is very grateful to have the company of a pet again. The tenant said that she has bonded well with her new prized possession.

Homes Out West wants to reiterate to all tenants and the public the importance of responsible pet ownership. A pet is a long term commitment which requires appropriate housing and care. If you can no longer care for a pet it is important to use all available options to find somewhere where they will be cared for properly.

HOW trains Murdi Paaki Staff



Above: I-r Shirley-Ann & Kendy from Murdi Paaki & far right Jennifer Townsend from Homes Out West.

Homes Out West is forming an important relationship with Murdi Paaki Regional Housing Corporation – an Aboriginal Community Housing provider based in Broken Hill.

Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) are in the process of transferring the management of AHO properties to Murdi Paaki in Wentworth, Dareton, Buronga, Gol Gol and Euston.

As Homes Out West manage properties in Wentworth and Dareton, we look forward to working closely with Murdi Paaki in these areas. Murdi Paaki staff recently attended training being offered by Homes Out West to assist them with the transfer process.



We acknowledge that we live on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's Country.

Smoke Alarms

Smoke alarms have to be installed by law in all residential properties to protect tenants from the risk of fire.

During recent inspections it was noted that in some properties tenants have disconnected their smoke alarms because they were beeping or the smoke alarm had been removed all together. Your lease states, *“the tenant agrees not to remove or interfere with the operation of any smoke alarm installed.”*

Disconnecting or removing a smoke alarm from your home is putting yourself and your family at risk in a fire. Remember when you go to sleep your sense of smell goes to sleep as well, toxic smoke fumes may overcome you before you wake up.

Tenants should notify Homes Out West if any smoke alarm is not functioning properly so that it can be fixed. DON'T DISCONNECT IT WHEN IT STARTS TO BEEP. It is beeping to let you know that the battery needs changing.

If you remove or damage a smoke alarm you will be charged the cost of replacement or repair.

Meet Your Board Member

Tony Cullenward

Tony currently holds the position of Vice Chairperson/Secretary with Homes Out West. A former Farm Manager now retired and living in Deniliquin, Tony first came to the district to work on Barratta Station in the flood year of 1956

He returned to Barratta in 1970 as Manager and his three boys attended the North school and then Deni High School.

After a spell in the Hay District as the Manager of Nap Nap Station at Maude, he and his wife Francie retired to Deni in 2003.

He was appointed a Board member of HOW in 1996

Apart from HOW, Tony is an active member and Treasurer of the local Legacy Group caring for widows of deceased men who served in the armed services as well as administering the Legacy Housing Units in Deni. He also sits on the Local Board and is a volunteer driver with Community Transport.

New Heating System

Many HOW properties are heated through either a fireplace or an electric heater. While these have proved effective in the past, in areas where natural gas is not available, the rising cost of firewood and electricity have meant that they can be very expensive to run.

In order to save tenants money, HOW has decided to replace the current electric and fireplace heaters, as they breakdown, with a convective panel heater known as the **ELEX euro convective panel heater**. Based on a combination of natural convective currents and radiant heat; cool air is warmed by a unique heating element within the heater, the warm air rises and naturally circulates around the room, and the radiant heat also emitted warms the whole area. There are no fans or other moving parts.

The biggest advantage of this type of heater is the running costs, which is due to the unique element design that converts most of the energy into heat.

Other advantages are:

- **Convective Currents & Radiant Heat = Gentle, Comfortable Heat**
- **NO FAN = Natural, Healthy Heat, and silent operation.**
- **Assured Safety and Reliability through intelligent design.**
- **Simple Installation and Operation**

If one of the new heaters is installed in your property and you have any questions or comments about it please call **Felicity or Paul** at the Deniliquin office. We hope you enjoy your new heater.

Rodents resurfacing



Rats and mice carry many diseases and love setting up in homes as they can be close to warmth and food. They often come indoors during the cooler months, and make their nests inside wall cavities and roofs.

Identifying Rodent Activity

- Droppings - found near shelters/nests, feeding areas, travel paths.
- Travel Paths - greasy markings found on surfaces in continual contact with dirty rodent fur.
- Burrows - found outside, along walls, under buildings, in creek banks, roof insulation, and in stacked materials.
- Gnawing - rodents gnaw a wide variety of material including woodwork, electrical cables and food containers.
- Noise – scratching, fighting, squeaking, clawing and gnawing often heard during the night time.

Rodent Prevention

- Reduce their food source – store food in tight containers, secure rubbish in enclosed bins
- Seal access gaps. Mice can fit through a gap the size of a pencil, so all gaps must be sealed. Make sure all windows and doors are sealed.
- Remove excess rubbish and debris from the grounds of the property, as these can be ideal dwellings for rodents.

Rodent Treatment

- Rat/mouse traps to eradicate existing rodents
- Rodent poisons can be effective but may have ecological disadvantages

Expression of interest - Open

Expressions of Interest are now invited from social housing tenants interested in being considered for appointment to vacant positions on the Social Housing Tenants Advisory Committee (SHTAC).

SHTAC provides feedback and comment to Housing NSW on ways to improve policies, operations and services for tenants.

Expressions of interest will also be considered for appointment to an eligibility list, from which appointments will be made to cover future public, community and Aboriginal housing vacancies.

To obtain an information pack, please contact your local HOW office or Housing NSW on (02) 8753 8729

Download an application form:
www.housing.nsw.gov.au

Deniliquin Reconciliation Group

The Nyerna Reconciliation Group in Deniliquin started Reconciliation Week by raising the Aboriginal flag with the Deniliquin Council on Sorry Day – 26 May. Sorry Day is in recognition of the “Bringing Them Home Report” being tabled in Federal Parliament. This report of the National Inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families revealed the devastating effects of forced removal policies, which went on for 150 years into the early 1980’s. This report showed that not one Aboriginal family had escaped the effects of the forced removal policies. Sorry Day is held every year to honour the Stolen Generation.

The Nyerna Reconciliation Group also held a film night on 27 May to celebrate Reconciliation Week. We showed ‘Bran Nue Dae’ which is a 1990 musical set in Broome, Western Australia that tells stories of issues relating to Indigenous Australians. It is the first Aboriginal musical which has been turned into a feature film directed by Rachel Perkins and starring Ernie Dingo, Geoffrey Rush, Jessica Mauboy, Missy Higgins, Deborah Mailman, Magda Szubanski and Dan Sultan. The film is one of the most successful Australian films of all time which is both educational and very funny. It is certainly worth watching.

The Nyerna Reconciliation Group also held a banner making workshop where we made two banners for the group. We look forward to proudly displaying these banners whenever we are holding events.

We are looking for new members and ideas of what other Reconciliation activities we can support, please contact Jennifer Townsend (Chairperson) at Homes Out West - Deniliquin on 03 5881 4182.

Neighbourhood noise concerns



There are an increasing number of noise incidences and the breach of peace reported to Homes Out West by members of the community. Incidences reported include barking dogs, musical instruments and electrically amplified sound equipment and highly pitched arguments.

It is important for our tenants to refer to their *Residential Tenancy Agreement Item 8.3* that requires **them “ not to interfere, or cause or permit interference, with the reasonable peace, comfort or privacy of neighbours.”**

There are laws that tell us what levels of noise are acceptable and not. Try by all means to solve the problem by talking to whoever is causing the noise. They might not be aware that they are disturbing your peace and will be more than willing to work amicably with you to solve the problem.

Rent Reviews

Homes Out West would like to congratulate our tenants for the state of their properties. Reports from the ongoing property inspections point to increased property care compared to the same period last year.

Tenants who are not on Centrelink payments and have not provided us with their income statements to calculate their rent are reminded to do so by 26/06/2010.

Managing your money

Vinnies Services Deniliquin in collaboration with Mission Australia, Centrelink and Legal Aid will be running workshops on Managing Your Budget More Effectively beginning Tuesday 29th June 2010 at Inala House.

The content of the workshops will address the following; Establishing a budget and sticking to it, Why people overspend and what to do about it, Centrelink changes, entitlements and responsibilities and the New program for Legal Aid that can assist you pay off your fines if you have any.

The topics for discussion are important for our tenants and any members of the community who are experiencing financial difficulties and require assistance to cope.

These free workshops will continue to be organised as and when there are people who need the service, with morning tea and lunch provided.

For more information contact Jane/Wendy on 5881 7411

Carevan relaunched

Albury: Carevan Foundation recently relaunched its project of distributing hot soup, fresh bread, toiletry packs, muffins and hot tea, coffee and Milo and meals to the homeless and disadvantaged people in Albury. The service runs from Monday to Thursday between 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.

A pledge of \$50,000 helped launch the foundation.

More than 220 volunteers have signed up to help operate the van, which will be on the streets for two hours a night, four times a week. Father Chris Riley who became patron of the foundation announced that Media Assisting Youth, or MAYDAY, would donate funding from its annual charity auction to assist the Carevan feed the homeless.

Centrelink Service Online

Centrelink have made some recent changes that make access easier and quicker. Customers are encouraged to utilise Centrelink Online Services (www.centrelink.gov.au) for the following services:

- Update personal details
- Report earnings
- Check payments
- Apply for an advance payment
- Request replacement healthcare cards

Also most importantly for Homes Out West tenants

- Request Rent Certificates

Not everyone has access to a computer and many have never used one but it is a more convenient time saving and stress free way to access Centrelink.

Homes Out West tenants are welcome to utilise a computer at The Hub in Albury. The Albury Centrelink officers are also in discussion with many community groups throughout Albury/Wodonga to have computers available for people to use for this purpose.

For Deni. Tenants, Centrelink services can be accessed at Inala House, Intereach or the Library.

For Finley, Berrigan, Jerilderie and Tocumwal residents, Centrelink services can now be accessed from the Finley RTA offices.

Centrelink and Homes Out West staff are happy to assist where possible. Customers can use the **Centrelink Online Services Support Hotline 132 307** if you experience difficulties.

WINTER ENERGY TIPS

During the winter months, it's easy to end up with huge electricity bills due to having heaters on constantly. Here are some tips to help reduce your electricity bills:

- Wear warmer clothes or put an extra blanket on the bed;
- Close windows and doors and turn heaters off when you go to bed;
- Close doors to bathrooms with exhaust fans because they can let cold air in and make heaters work harder;
- Don't overheat your home. Keep your room heated to 18 - 21°C – every degree above 21°C adds roughly 10% extra to your heating costs;
- Energy Australia estimates that approximately ¼ of household energy use is in relation to heating and cooling costs;
- Portable heaters such as bar radiators or fan heaters are cheap to buy but expensive to run – if you need to buy a portable heater, ask about which heater is the cheapest to run and use only in small areas for short periods of time;
- Arrange for a suitable temperature for your hot water service and install AAA rated showerheads. This will reduce the amount of hot water you use and reduce the energy required to heat it;
- A lot of heat can be lost through windows so close blinds or curtains when you have the heater on.

National Green Jobs Corps – a free program

Is the Australian Government's environmentally focused work experience and accredited training program for 17-24 year olds who are receiving Youth Allowance/Newstart Allowance/Parenting Payment and not working more than 15 hours a week; Disability Support Pension recipients willing to work 15 or more hours a week, 17-20 year olds who are not in receipt of income Support Payments and not working more than 15 hours a week or in full time education.

Projects will focus on bush regeneration/beach and dune rehabilitation/wildlife and habitat protection/flora, fauna and land surveys and audits.

Wildlife and fish habitat/training and hands on experience in the energy efficiencies (such as insulation for buildings/ designed to reduce carbon emissions).

Each project will provide participants with the opportunity to develop teamwork and leadership skills while preparing for employment opportunities.

Participants might also be eligible to receive the National Green Corps Supplement of \$41.60 per fortnight in addition to regular payments to assist with the cost of participation.

For more information – call 13 17 64 or visit www.deewc.gov.au

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