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Vietnamese Tenant Advisory Group

Meeting in Redfern every couple of months on a Wednesday morning is a group of Vietnamese speaking tenants who form the Vietnamese Tenant Advisory Group (VNTAG). The VNTAG members have been meeting for over five years and we asked them a few questions about their Vietnamese speaking group and why it was important to them.

How long have you been meeting?

We started this group about five years ago with the help of Bridge Housing in connecting Vietnamese speaking tenants. We started meeting in the Bridge Housing Office and now we meet in Redfern every few months.

What happens in your meeting?

The meeting usually consists of going through actions from the last meeting, followed by discussing any ideas or questions we have. There is a staff member from Bridge Housing

there who gives us an update on events or changes we need to know about. At the end, we have lunch and often a good chat and laugh.

What do you get out of meeting together?

Meeting like this gives us the opportunity to discuss things happening in our block and neighbourhood or matters with our tenancy. Sometimes one of the members comes along with an issue and we problem solve and talk about how we can help. There is a staff member from Bridge Housing which is great because we get them involved too. We get things done and we get responses to our questions. It's also a great opportunity to meet Vietnamese tenants, it's a social activity too.

What are some of the things you've done as a group?

We applied for a Big Idea Grant and used the money from the grant to launch the VNTAG by having a party.



Members of Vietnamese TAG

The VNTAG is open to all our Vietnamese speaking tenants and their families. At every meeting, there is a Vietnamese interpreter who knows the community very well. Members come from various suburbs across Sydney to meet. If you would like to join the VNTAG contact the community team on 8324 0836 or email community@bridgehousing.org.au. The next meeting is Wednesday 12 May and you can find more details on page 5 of this newsletter.

We got together and had nice food. One year we joined Bridge Housing in celebrating Harmony Day where members of VNTAG performed a cultural dance. There are a few ideas we're currently working on for the group too.

What do you see for the VNTAG in the future?

We want to have a chairperson and form a steering committee. There are Vietnamese tenants with Bridge Housing who we would love to reach to and have them join us. In our culture, we check on our families and friends. If a member of VNTAG doesn't show up to a meeting, we want to call them and check they are okay. To do this, we will need to decide as a group how to have contact outside these meetings so we can support each other and check in with each other.

General Enquiries - 8324 0800
customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au

Repairs - 8324 0886
repairs@bridgehousing.org.au

Community - 8324 0827
community@bridgehousing.org.au

Housing Pathways Applications
8324 0890
pathways@bridgehousing.org.au

Housing Team & Tenancies
8324 0885
customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au

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CEO Update

Welcome to the Autumn 2021 edition of Our Place.

We started this year with a focus on the future. What does it look like for the Bridge Housing community? The Building Bridges workshops were a success and produced such wonderful ideas for our engagement and business plan for the next 3 years. Thank you to those who came along and shared their ideas and thoughts for our future. I look forward to sharing with you our next engagement action plan and business strategy in the coming months.

What does the future look like for rough sleepers? We've entered the second phase of the Together Home program. We're housing 30 rough sleepers and working in conjunction with St Vincent's/Salvation Army to ensure these people have a suitable home and suitable support as they settle in. The impacts of Covid 19 were felt by many in different ways. For rough sleepers there was the risk of disconnect and further neglect.

We celebrated International Women's Day with Harriet Gray from Taboo, who spoke about their work in building a new social enterprise committed to addressing period poverty in Australia and globally. Bridge Housing Board Director Jill Hannaford shared her personal and career story with us too. My team joined thousands of people in the March 4 Justice Sydney rally as we demanded change and justice for women.

There is so much to focus on and so much to keep fighting for. I hope you enjoy this issue.

John Nicolades, CEO



[bridgehousing.org.au](https://www.bridgehousing.org.au)

Bridge to Work – a success story

Shanae joined the Bridge to Work program with a goal of securing a role in office administration. Shanae and Sam Belhajji, her Intensive Case Manager (ICM) worked together on developing Shanae's professional service skills, communication and resume writing before starting to apply for suitable positions. After a few months of applying for suitable positions together and not getting any responses from employers they took a different approach.

Shanae was lacking previous work experience in office administration so Sam discussed alternative options with her such as studying a course in Business Administration. Through study Shanae could develop an understanding of the type of work and role responsibilities as well as gain a qualification. Sam sent Shanae some relevant course information as well as assisted her with the course application process.

Today, Shanae is successfully enrolled and studying a Certificate III in Business Administration through Global Training Institute. It is an online course, and she has a one-on-one meeting with her teacher via zoom each week. Global Training Institute also gives Shanae the chance to gain employment through work placement; allowing Shanae to be able to work and have time to complete the course. We are all so proud of how far Shanae has come in such a short period of time and look forward working with her to continue to improve her employment and life skills.

Our Bridge To Work program is growing from strength to strength! In the past few months we have seen strong interest from residents who are keen to connect with Sam to find out how they can learn a new skill, access free or low cost government-funded courses and get job-ready. Recent placements include nursing and business administration at TAFE, and accounting and counselling Bachelor's degrees.

Would you like to discuss your next career move and get support finding work or study that's right for you? Contact Sam on **0447 092 194** or email **S.Belhajji@bridgehousing.org.au**.

You can find out more about the Bridge To Work program by visiting our website: <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/support-assistance/work-learning>.



Sam Belhajji, case manager



Bridge Housing is committed to building relationships based on respect, openness and reconciliation with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants and communities. Our Reconciliation Action Plan sets out some of the ways we engage with tenants and applicants to support pathways into stable and secure housing and through the work we do with tenants and their families. It is time for us to start thinking about our next RAP and we would love your help! We are calling for all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants to join us for a workshop to explore the RAP themes of Respect, Relationships and Opportunities, and help us move along our reconciliation journey. The Workshop will be held at 107 Projects, Thursday 06 May from 10.30am – 12.30pm. If you are interested in being involved or would like more information please call the communities team on 8324 0836.

You said, we did!

In our 2020 Tenant Survey feedback workshops, you told us you wanted:

An organisation chart to help understand how complaints are escalated

We did: A simple chart identifying key roles is now published on our website.

Bridge Housing to provide a simple update on how to escalate unresolved on complaints

We did: Complaints, Compliments and Appeals update is included in this newsletter and we will also provide an annual review in our Winter Newsletter.

More information about repairs timeframes, inspections and how you can provide feedback to Bridge Housing

We did: We are updating our Repairs Factsheet for review by the Your Views tenant e-panel.

How complaints are escalated:

Complaints help Bridge Housing to identify service delivery problems and make changes where necessary.

We aim to resolve complaints on the spot. If you are unhappy with our service you can ask to lodge a formal complaint.

We will log your complaint into a central IT system. Your complaint should be acknowledged in writing and all complaints should be resolved within 21 days.

If you have a complaint you should first talk to the person who your complaint is about e.g. your Housing Manager or relevant staff member so that they can address this complaint directly.

If this is not possible or you are unhappy with their response, you can ask for the matter to be reviewed by a Team Leader.

If you are still unhappy you can ask for the matter to be reviewed by the Regional Manager or the Director of Housing or Assets.



Regional Managers or Directors

Team Leaders

"You can escalate your complaint to us if it is not resolved"

Bridge Housing front line staff

"We will work with you to resolve your complaint"

Important news from Rent Review Team

A new Moderate Income Rent Charge for Bridge Housing

We are implementing a moderate income rent charge for households on higher incomes to align with changes to the NSW Government's Community Housing Rent Policy. From March 2021, households will be charged between 25% to 30% of their household income plus 100% of Commonwealth Rent Assistance. This change already applies to moderate income households on the Northern Beaches. More information can be found in our Rent Policy and Rent Information page on the Bridge Housing website: <https://bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/my-tenancy/rent-payment-options>.

Water Charging Changes

We're changing the way we charge for water usage from 1 July 2021. The new charge is based on the number of people living in your property. For example, a single person will be charged \$3 per week and two people charged \$5 per week and so on. These charges will increase on a sliding scale as the number of people living in your home increases and will be capped with 5+ people.

The new charge will see all social housing households charged in the same way whether you have a metered or non-metered property and will be consistent with the NSW Government's Community Housing Water Charging Guidelines. More information about the changes will be provided directly to you in the coming months.

If you have any questions regarding these changes please contact the Rent Review team on **02 8324 0864** or email rentreview@bridgehousing.org.au.



New - Digital Forms!

We are always looking to provide new ways for you to interact with us and recently launched a range of forms that can be filled out on our website. No need to fill out a form and mail it to us, you can now simply fill in your details, click submit and it will be sent to the relevant team for processing. Some of the forms we have available include:

- ▶ Application for rental subsidy – update your household income details for Rent Review
- ▶ Modifications request – outline your access needs and attach your Occupational Therapist report
- ▶ Keeping a pet
- ▶ Get involved – let us know what you're interested in and our Communities Team will find something for you

The forms can be completed on a computer, tablet or smart phone.

You can access all webforms on our website www.bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/my-tenancy/policies.

All forms are still available as paper forms – it's your choice!

Food Markets!

If you're struggling to make ends meet or need support purchasing food, take a look at these low cost markets available around Sydney.

The Link Community Care

Ph: 02 9999 0475

Email: Info@Link.org.au



CAREHAMPER - staple groceries, bread and a cooked meal professionally prepared by Pittwater RSL chefs for a \$10 service and handling fee. Call The Link to pre-order a CAREHAMPER before collecting it in Warriewood.

MOBILE FOODCARE POP-UP SERVICE - affordable groceries, fruit and vegetables at a low fee. Available for any holder of a Centrelink benefit card with secondary identification (e.g. driver's licence) required. Visit Cromer Community Centre 150 Fisher Rd North Cromer, Friday from 11.30 -12.00pm. Also, at Narraweena Community Centre, 74 Oceana St, Narraweena, Friday from 12.30 - 1.00pm.

Oz Harvest Market

95 Wellington St, Waterloo



The OzHarvest Market is a food market with fresh produce and pantry essentials. Open Tuesday to Saturday from 10am to 2pm.

The Staples Bag



449 Canterbury Rd, Campsie

Ph: 9787 6832

A wide range of grocery staples at affordable prices including meat, poultry and/or fish. Open Monday to Friday 9am-5pm and Saturday to Sunday 9am-2pm.

Grace City Care

902 Pittwater Rd Dee Why

Ph: 9971 0222

COMMUNITY FOODCARE - access groceries at a low fee and get bread, fruit & vegetables free of charge. There is also a low cost café to drop in and connect with the community. Open every Wednesday from 10am-1pm.



Anglicare's Mobile Community Pantry

Anglicare's Mobile Community Pantry provide grocery or fresh food items at very low cost. The Pantry is run in partnership with local churches and visits each location on a fortnightly basis. Make a small contribution and fill a bag with items of your choice from the stock available. \$10 for groceries and \$2 for fresh food (bring along your Pension, Health Care or Immigration Card).

Available at the following locations. Call the numbers below for information of when the mobile pantry will be near you:

Suburb	Address	Phone number
Baulkham Hills	Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Cnr Cook St & Windsor Rd	9789 5991
Canterbury	St Paul's Church, 33 Church St	9789 5991
Earlwood	Anglican Church, Corner Minnamorra Ave and St Georges Pde	9558 7537
Granville	Anglican Church, 39 Jamieson St	9637 1073
Kogarah	St Paul's Anglican Church, 57 Princes Highway	9587 5951
Leichhardt	All Souls Anglican Church Cnr Norton and Marion St	9569 2646
Malabar	St Mark's Anglican Church, Cnr Franklin St and Victoria Lane	9311 0309
Marrickville	Marrickville Road Church, 336 Marrickville Rd	0449 111 780
Petersham	All Saints Anglican Church 325 Stanmore Rd	9569 4735
Riverwood	Anglican Church 9 Littleton St Riverwood	9153 7624
South Coogee	St Paul's Church 9 Littleton St Riverwood	0407 891 306
Yagoona	Anglican Church 213 Auburn Rd	9793 3062

TAG TIPS!

West TAG Chair, Danielle Condry is a big advocate for the Granville TAFE Butcher. Pop in for different cuts of meat at great prices. The butcher is located at Granville TAFE, Building KQ, Elizabeth St Granville. Open every Thursday from 11am to 1pm. The butcher only accepts EFTPOS payments.

Bridge Housing Tenant Advisory Groups (TAGs)

Tenant
Advisory Group
Be involved, have your say!

Tenant Advisory Groups (TAGs) meetings are recommencing!

TAG meetings for 2021 are well under way. Find a TAG meeting near you and come along.

What happens at TAG meetings?

Tenants can meet other residents, share ideas and information and connect with their community. A Housing Manager attends and can answer questions you have about your tenancy. TAG meetings are also an opportunity for a social gathering, meet other tenants and have lunch.

We support TAG Chairs and Vices Chairs to make the TAG meetings COVID Safe and provide an update from Bridge Housing.

Upcoming TAG meetings:

Group	Next meeting	Location	Chair and Vice Chair
Vietnamese TAG	Wednesday 12 May 11.30 – 1.00	Leichhardt Women's Community Health Centre	Rotating Chair
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG	Thursday 22 April 10.00 – 12.00	TBC	Rotating Chair
Bankstown TAG	Tuesday 11 May 11.00 – 1.00	Yagoona Community Centre	Chair - Abdel Rahim Alsayed Vice Chair - Carol Kassabian
West TAG	Friday 14 May 10.30 – 12.30	Granville Centre	Chair - Danielle Condry Vice Chair - Hugh Miller
East TAG	Friday 28 May 10.30 – 12.30	School of Arts Hall Bondi	Chair - Julie Bryant
New TAG! Northern Beaches TAG	Wednesday 26 May 11.00 – 12.30	Warringah Mall Community Room	Chair - Robby MacLaurin Vice Chair - Kathryn Pritchard

Balmain Social - Thursday 29 April 4-5.30pm

Join us for a social event, to meet other residents and share a cup of tea and a bite to eat, at the Hannaford Community Centre, 608 Darling St, Rozelle 4-5.30pm on Thursday 29 April. If you are coming along please RSVP by calling **02 8324 0836** or emailing community@bridgehousing.org.au.





Bridge Housing to take over maintenance contract from 1 July 2021 in the Northern Beaches!

We will be implementing a new maintenance contract from 1 July 2021. Our current contractor, Asset Group Services will be responsible for delivering repairs and maintenance services for all properties, including our properties on the Northern Beaches.

To prepare for the change we will be writing to all tenants on the Northern Beaches and attending TAG meetings to provide you with further information on what this means for you. In the meantime, if you live in the Northern Beaches, please continue to ring the Contractor Call Centre on **1800 422 322** to report any maintenance issues. All other tenants should report repairs directly to Bridge Housing on **8324 0886**.

A New Good Neighbour Champion

Our tenant Anselma is being recognised for being a Good Neighbour Champion. Anselma was nominated by her neighbours for helping around by taking bins out on bin collection days and for taking care of the cleanliness of common area. Well done Anselma!

A very big thank you to everyone who nominated Bridge Housing tenants in their community who are making their neighbourhood special. We've received wonderful examples of how tenants are coming together and supporting each other to help create communities. Good Neighbour Champions receive a \$50 gift card. Do you have an awesome neighbour? Contact us to nominate them and let us know why they should be a Good Neighbour Champion.



Apparitions of the Walks in Life

Everybody has a memory, prophecy and fantasy
Then you have the dream in between!
We all live one country
Living one immortal day
To know this is wisdom
To use it is the ART

P.Robbo

Bridge Housing Tenant



BHL Opening Hours & Location

Head Office - Haymarket	Northern Beaches Office - Brookvale
Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street, Haymarket NSW 2000.	Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, Brookvale NSW 2100
Opening hours: 9am - 4:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.	

Outreach Times and Locations

Glebe Outreach: 3 Elger St Glebe Community Room **Hours:** Wednesday 1pm - 4pm

Manly Outreach: Cove Ave Manly, Small office near driveway **Hours:** Every Thursday from 10.30am

South Coogee Outreach: 3 Yamba Place South Coogee 2034 **Hours:** Temporarily closed

Mill Hill Outreach Waverley Council 1st Floor, 31-33 Spring St. Bondi Junction 2022 **Hours:** Temporarily closed