

BUILDING BRIDGES

Community Building and
Engagement Strategy
2021-2024





Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge Aboriginal people as the traditional owners of the land, and whose culture is the oldest living culture in human history. We pay our respects to elders past and present and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and their communities.

Thank you

We would like to thank all Bridge Housing tenants, members of the Tenant Reference Group, Tenant Advisory Groups and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advisory Group, staff, and organisations who took part in workshops and surveys to help us build our new version of *Building Bridges*.

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CEO's foreword

It is a great pleasure to introduce *Building Bridges – Bridge Housing's Community Building and Engagement Strategy 2021 to 2024*.

This strategy presents Bridge Housing's framework for tenant participation over the next three years.

It sets out the key engagement principles which underpin our practice when working with communities, tenants and their families. The focus areas - Connect, Influence, Thrive and Celebrate - represent what tenants have told us are their priorities over the coming years.

Our strategic plan outlines the future direction for Bridge Housing over the coming years. At the forefront is our commitment to developing person-centred services, building tenant engagement and creating positive change in the communities where we work. At the heart of our approach is creating opportunities for tenants to be involved, have a real say and to be involved in decision-making about their homes and lives.

Over the past three years we have delivered some fantastic achievements including expanding our tenant participation structure to nine tenant groups representing tenants in the Northern Beaches and Bankstown regions, along with place-based community groups. We've delivered a comprehensive engagement plan to meet our new residents in the Northern Beaches and we have worked hard to transform our engagement practice following restrictions to face-to-face service delivery resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our Bridge To Work program has placed over 70 tenants in employment or study and we have commenced work on our third Reconciliation Action Plan which informs our engagement with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

Underlying our Building Bridges strategy is a deep sense of gratitude for the efforts of our tenant and community leaders and champions who continue to work together to build stronger communities in times of great challenge and adversity. We look forward to working with you to deliver this strategy over the next three years.

Rebecca Pinkstone

Chief Executive Officer

Who we are

About Bridge Housing

Bridge Housing is an award-winning, Tier one community housing provider innovating to create great outcomes for the communities we serve. Our mission is to change people's lives through the delivery of excellent services and increased homes for low to moderate income households.

At July 2021 we have a portfolio of 3,587 properties providing secure affordable housing to 5,065 residents. We offer secure, quality homes to people disadvantaged in Sydney's challenging housing market and who cannot afford to lease in the private rental market, let alone buy their own home. We house tenants and their families for as long as required in social, supported or affordable housing based on their income, needs and circumstances.

We are registered under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing as a Tier one provider, and under the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission. We operate to the highest standards of governance and customer service.

Our community team

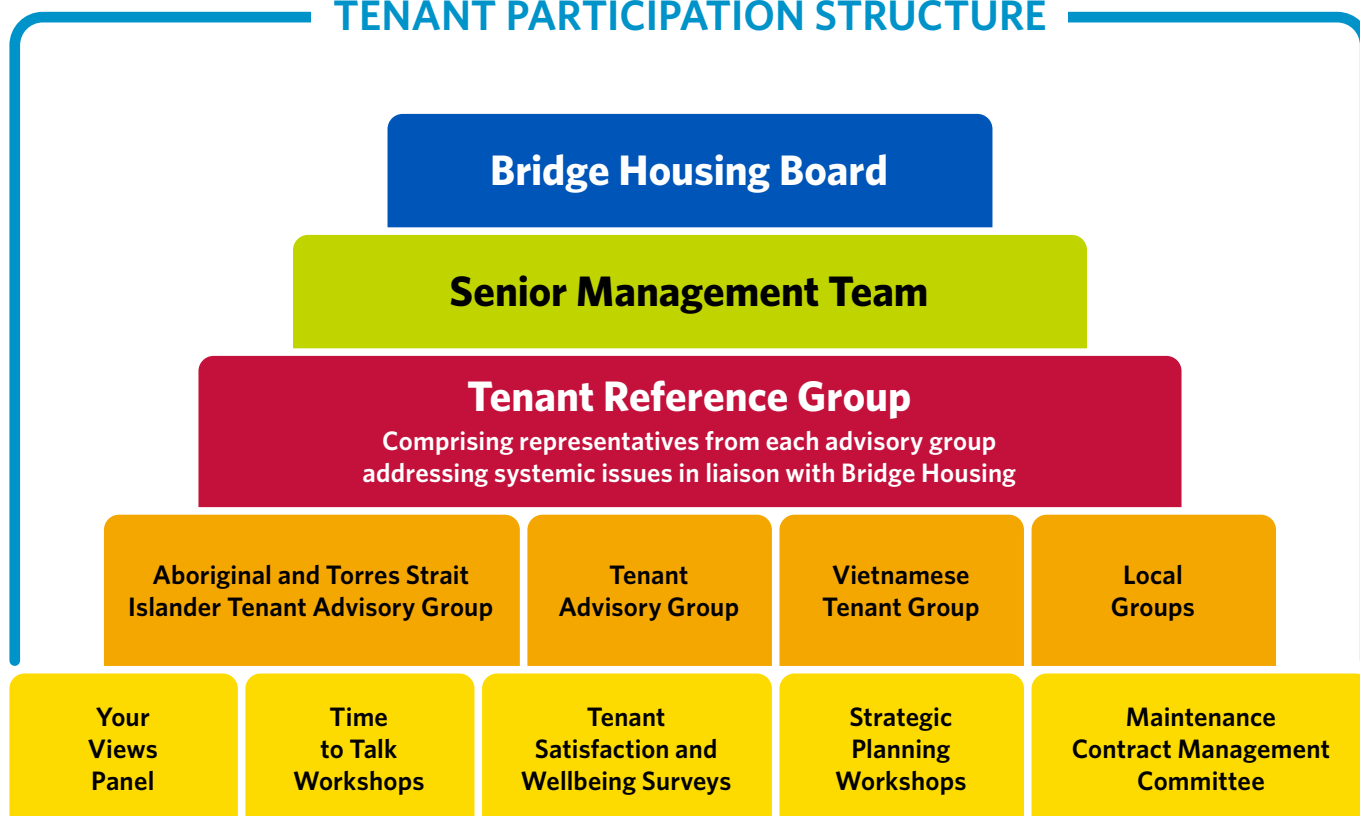
Led by the Sustainable Communities Manager, the Community Team works alongside tenants, people in need of housing and communities to develop and implement community building and engagement initiatives. We work in partnership with the whole organisation to make sure that tenant voices are throughout the work that we do.

Working with our tenants

At Bridge Housing, much of our work is developed in collaboration or with input from tenants, household members, and communities. Our tenant participation structures enable tenants to get involved in a way that suits them.

Tenant Advisory Groups are run by tenants for tenants. They operate in different geographical locations and for different community groups. Representatives from each Tenant Advisory Group meet with Bridge Housing through the Tenant Reference Group to inform the decisions we make, exchange information, develop new initiatives, and review policies and communications.

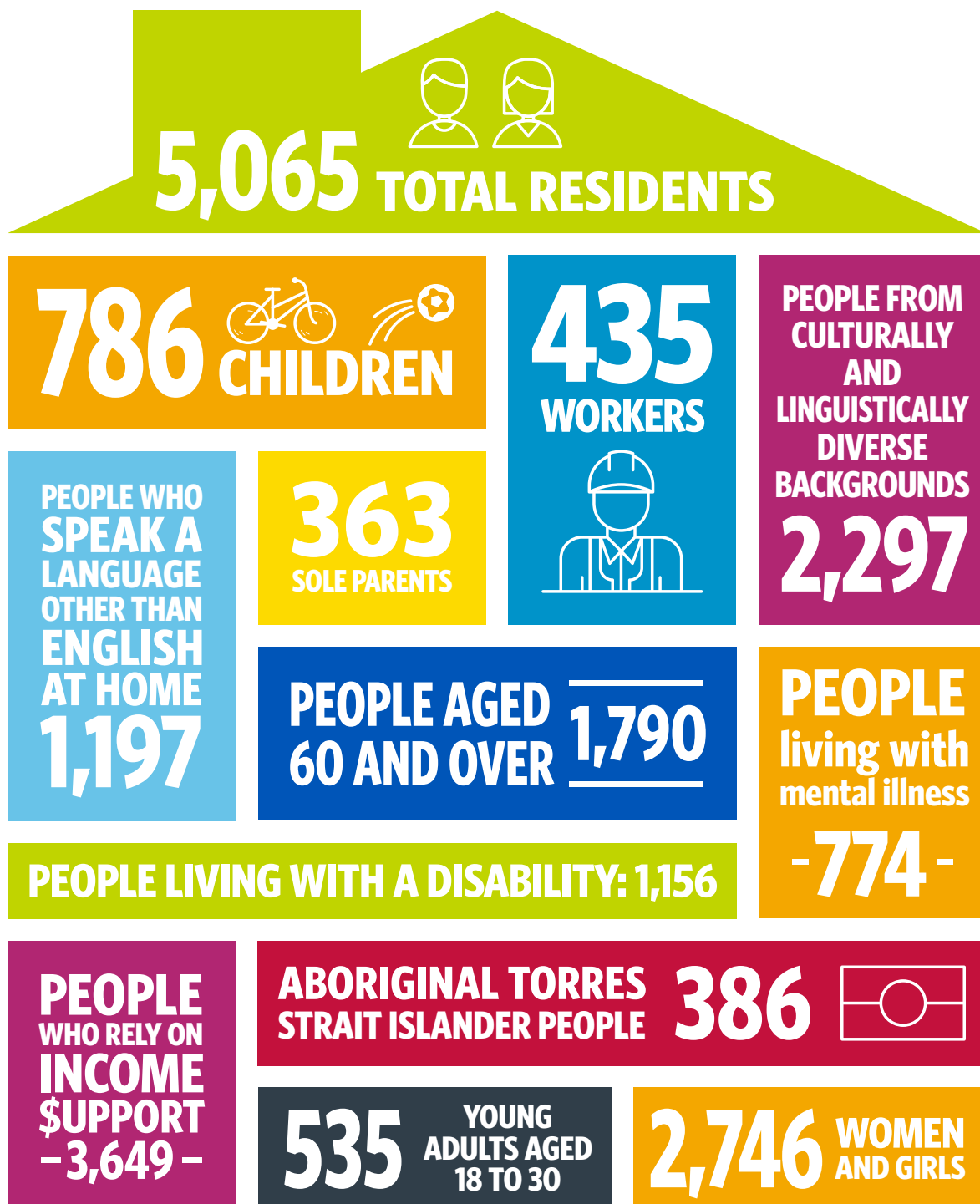
TENANT PARTICIPATION STRUCTURE



A diverse tenant community

Tenants come to Bridge Housing from all walks of life and all backgrounds. They are activists, artists, parents, volunteers and workers. They are community members, elders, leaders, survivors and everyday people with rights and responsibilities.

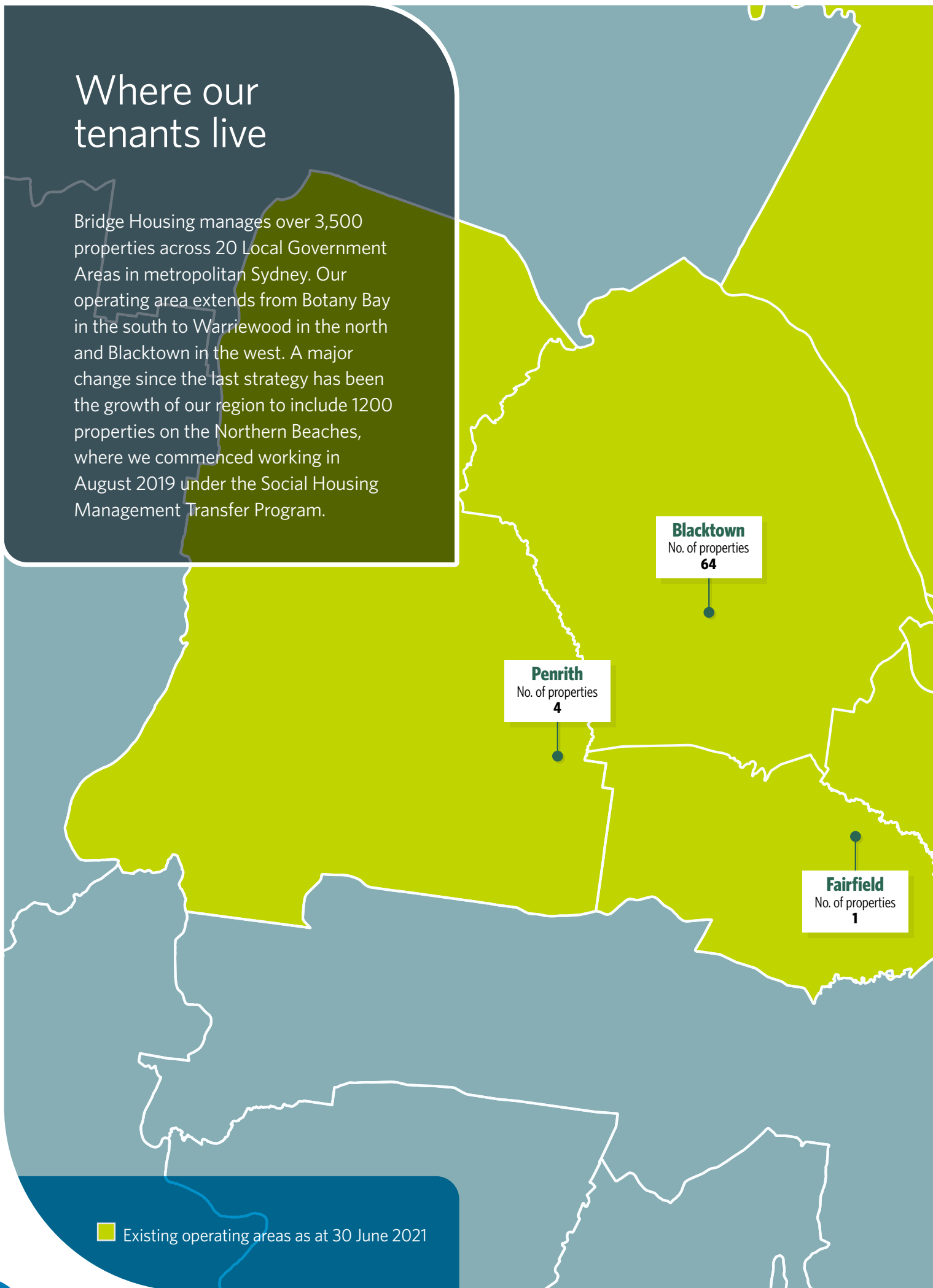
Bridge Housing tenants are also some of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable people in Sydney, with high levels of complex needs and low incomes. The vast majority of our tenants receive a statutory benefit.



All figures as at 30 June 2021

Where our tenants live

Bridge Housing manages over 3,500 properties across 20 Local Government Areas in metropolitan Sydney. Our operating area extends from Botany Bay in the south to Warriewood in the north and Blacktown in the west. A major change since the last strategy has been the growth of our region to include 1200 properties on the Northern Beaches, where we commenced working in August 2019 under the Social Housing Management Transfer Program.





A GUIDE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Bridge Housing believes that providing opportunities for tenants to be involved in decision-making about their homes is critical to their wellbeing, sense of community and belonging. Providing those opportunities is at the heart of what we do as a community housing provider, from sustaining tenancies to connecting residents and strengthening communities.

Building Bridges 2021 - 2024 is our third three year community engagement and tenant participation strategy. Over this time we have learnt a lot from our tenants and stakeholders and have worked to embed engagement and participation efforts at the core of our business. This strategy integrates our learnings from the implementation of our first two strategies and many initiatives and programs that will continue to be delivered by our team.



We want to work together to improve wellbeing and strengthen a sense of community for tenants, their families and household members by providing opportunities to:

- ▶ Connect with their neighbours and build community connections
- ▶ Influence how Bridge Housing designs and delivers services
- ▶ Thrive through strong and sustainable tenancies
- ▶ Celebrate the strength and resilience of our community.

Actions arising from this strategy will be included in Bridge Housing's strategic and business plans, which guide our organisational directions.

Why develop a strategy?

Our Strategic Plan has identified tenant participation and community engagement as a central focus. Empowering our tenants to build strong communities is a fundamental principle underpinning the plan. We believe that tenants who live in our homes and experience our services are best-placed to provide feedback, inform policy and have a real say in how our housing services are delivered.

Strong engagement with our tenants also makes business sense. Research demonstrates a strong correlation between high levels of tenant involvement and improved housing provider performance. In our experience, tenants who are involved in decision-making about their lives and their homes are happier, more engaged and better connected to their communities.

Actions arising from this strategy are included in Bridge Housing's strategic and annual business plans, which guide our organisational direction and work activity. We have developed a specific budget to support initiatives under the plan and support the work of our tenant advisory groups.

A clear strategy enables us to respond effectively to tenant and community needs and to emerging opportunities with local government, partner organisations and the community housing sector. The strategy reflects our mission, vision, and corporate values of working in communities to promote community housing, to involve tenants in service delivery and to support place renewal and inclusive communities. This strategy also fulfils our responsibilities under the National Regulatory System for Community Housing.

¹ Preece 2019 Understanding Approaches to Tenant Participation in Social Housing
<https://housingevidence.ac.uk/publications/understanding-the-approaches-to-tenant-participation-in-social-housing/>



The impact of COVID-19

Since early 2020 we have been living with the effects of a world-wide COVID-19 pandemic. For many tenants this has meant having to isolate themselves and has reduced opportunity for connection with family, friends, community and services. The rapid shift to a digital economy is changing the way we work, live and connect with one another. But our research shows our tenants experience higher than average levels of digital exclusion and are often less likely to access, afford or have capacity to participate fully, online.

Older adults, who make up the majority of our residents, are more likely to experience other factors which can cause them to be isolated or to feel lonely. The stress and social isolation resulting from the pandemic is also negatively impacting our mental health and wellbeing. There is evidence that this is particularly acute for those who have experienced previous trauma, are from disadvantaged backgrounds or speak limited English.



As a social housing provider, it is important that Bridge Housing has a targeted strategy that offers ways for people to make connections with each other, with family, friends and community, as we learn to live with the impacts of COVID-19.

This strategy reflects the hopes and possibilities of a tenant community re-emerging from a hugely challenging eighteen months. The focus on social inclusion, place-making and wellbeing represents our desire to build strong, safe and healthy communities from the ground up.

Community Gardening during COVID-19

During the COVID-19 lockdown in 2020, Bridge Housing and our partner - the Royal Botanic Gardens' Community Greening program - worked together to help residents create new gardens, share knowledge and attend COVID-safe garden workshops.



Community Greening set up online gardening workshops to support safe learning for interested tenants. Socially distanced workshops were set up and the Community Greening team attended to prepare the site, and build garden beds. They left soil, plants and seeds then residents met in small groups to plant, water and nurture their new garden.



Tenants were able to gather safely outside, meet neighbours and enjoy some fresh air, exercise and gardening in their newly established gardens. A monthly harvesting roster was set up to ensure veggies, fruit and herbs were picked and distributed among tenants who enjoyed the fruits of their labour.



A collaborative process to strategy development

Building Bridges was created by working with tenants, staff, support partners and our Tenant Advisory Groups. In developing the strategy we:

- ▶ reviewed the literature on innovations in tenant participation and community engagement
- ▶ explored the particular challenges of engagement in a time when physical distancing restrictions can reduce the opportunity for face-to-face contact
- ▶ looked at what tenants have told us through the Tenant Advisory Groups and annual tenants survey
- ▶ met with government and non-government organisations and attended forums and seminars
- ▶ conducted workshops for tenants and staff
- ▶ revised drafts with the Tenant Reference Group, Tenant Advisory Groups and senior staff.

What tenants, staff and the research told us has been incorporated in this strategy and has been reflected back to them through reports and briefings throughout the strategy design process. This strategy talks about what we can and will do as an accountable, responsible and responsive community housing provider to work together to create positive change for tenants and their families.

How we engage with tenants

People who have the opportunity to play an active role in decision-making about matters that affect their housing are more likely to be satisfied with



their homes and engaged with their housing provider. But participation is not just a means to an end: having the capacity to engage and being able to choose that level of engagement is also crucial to people's wellbeing and happiness. We can support this principle by providing meaningful opportunities for all tenants to speak up, speak out and have a real say in how we make decisions.

Our tenant participation structure reflects our understanding that different people want different levels of involvement. We offer a range of ways for people to get involved to reflect the diversity among our tenant community. These might include completing one-off surveys or attending occasional focus groups, to providing insight on policy updates, co-designing a project or initiative from start to finish, or being involved in a participatory budgeting process that determines how resources are allocated. It is important that we provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to our tenants' needs and is simple, clear and consistent.

Our strategy is to work with tenants to build stronger communities, and drive an increase in participation particularly among hard to reach communities and tenants new to Bridge Housing. We will use a person-centred approach to our work, planning and clearly identifying what we are trying to achieve and who we are trying to reach. This includes developing project plans, communication schedules and clear objectives for engagement. We will measure our impact to help understand what is working, seek feedback and engage with our tenants and communities in a collaborative way.



Our engagement principles

Information

We will provide information using a range of methods to reach as wide an audience as possible. This includes using digital engagement methods that build digital literacy and reduce digital exclusion, and providing clear and accessible information about our services, strategies and initiatives.

Consultation

We will consult with tenants when making decisions about major policy areas or changes that affect our housing service delivery. This ranges from seeking feedback at Tenant Advisory Group meetings and inviting tenants to comment on housing policy and procedure updates through the your views e-panel, to one-off focus groups and workshops exploring service improvements.

Involvement

We will seek tenant involvement in decision-making about issues that impact their homes and communities. This includes consulting with tenant leaders through the TRG, tenant scrutiny panels to provide input on major policy and service changes and larger scale place-making activities to engage communities.

Collaboration

We will partner with tenants, community leaders and organisations to solve complex problems, connect people to services and create stronger communities. This includes co-design of tenant-led initiatives like the Aunties and Uncles program, supporting local community grant proposals and developing connections with local government to access resources and build community capacity.

Empowerment

We will build strong communities by empowering tenants to increase their capability to achieve goals, sustain tenancies and participate in meaningful activity. We will do this through strategic partnerships and programs that provide opportunities for creating positive change in our communities like the Bridge To Work tenant employment program and participatory budgeting initiatives.

Feedback

We will use a 'you said, we did' approach to ensure when tenants take the time to engage with us and provide feedback we tell them how we have used that feedback to shape our services, processes and ideas for the future.

ORBIT



WIND-UP TOY CREATURE
BY ALI

1ST
PRIZE!

ORBIT



HAND MANDALA
BY AMBER

ORBIT



WIND-UP TOY CREATURE
BY AMBER + JESSE

Orbit! Online

A collaborative process to strategy development

Bridge Housing's Orbit! Family Fun Day is a great annual program that engages with and brings together children and families, delivered in partnership with The Settlement in Redfern.

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded in early 2020, people were forced to reduce face-to-face activities and move to online engagement. As part of this transition we revised our Orbit! Family Fun Day into a series of online activities to engage with our youngest residents and their families over a four week period. We partnered with the Story Factory to access engaging written and online content aimed at school-aged children.

Households with children received a personal letter and an SMS inviting them to register and like the Bridge Housing Facebook page. Tenants with children received an exciting activity pack in the mail and were invited to join in some weekly activities and competitions, including online video streams, and we offered prizes and invited Facebook friends to get involved by voting on the competition entries. The initiative was so successful we have incorporated it into this strategy as an ongoing project to build online engagement.

Orbit! Online activities included:

- ▲ Create your own wind-up clay creature
- ▲ Draw a hand mandala
- ▲ Story factory activity 'who dunnit'

"It was amazing that Bridge Housing came with this idea that brought joy at difficult times. Thank you heaps for helping me and my children find a way to spend time together in this hard lockdown time."

"We did had a lot of internet issues so even my granddaughter finished them we most of time didn't send them. But involving was so great that we didn't mind."

"We enjoyed participating because we were able to do it as a family."

The Tenant Reference Group

The Tenant Reference Group (TRG) was formed in 2015 and is made up of Tenant Advisory Group Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Tenant Leaders including the Bridge Housing NSW Tenant Network Representatives. The group meets every two months with senior managers from Bridge Housing to provide updates from the community and individual tenant groups, explore policy changes and build capacity through training.



During the first COVID lock-down the group transitioned to an online meeting with some tenants supported to use Zoom and Teams for the first time. In 2020 Bridge Housing partnered with CHIA NSW to develop Tenant Leadership training for the group, covering governance, chairing meetings and managing group dynamics to involve everyone in the room in the conversation.

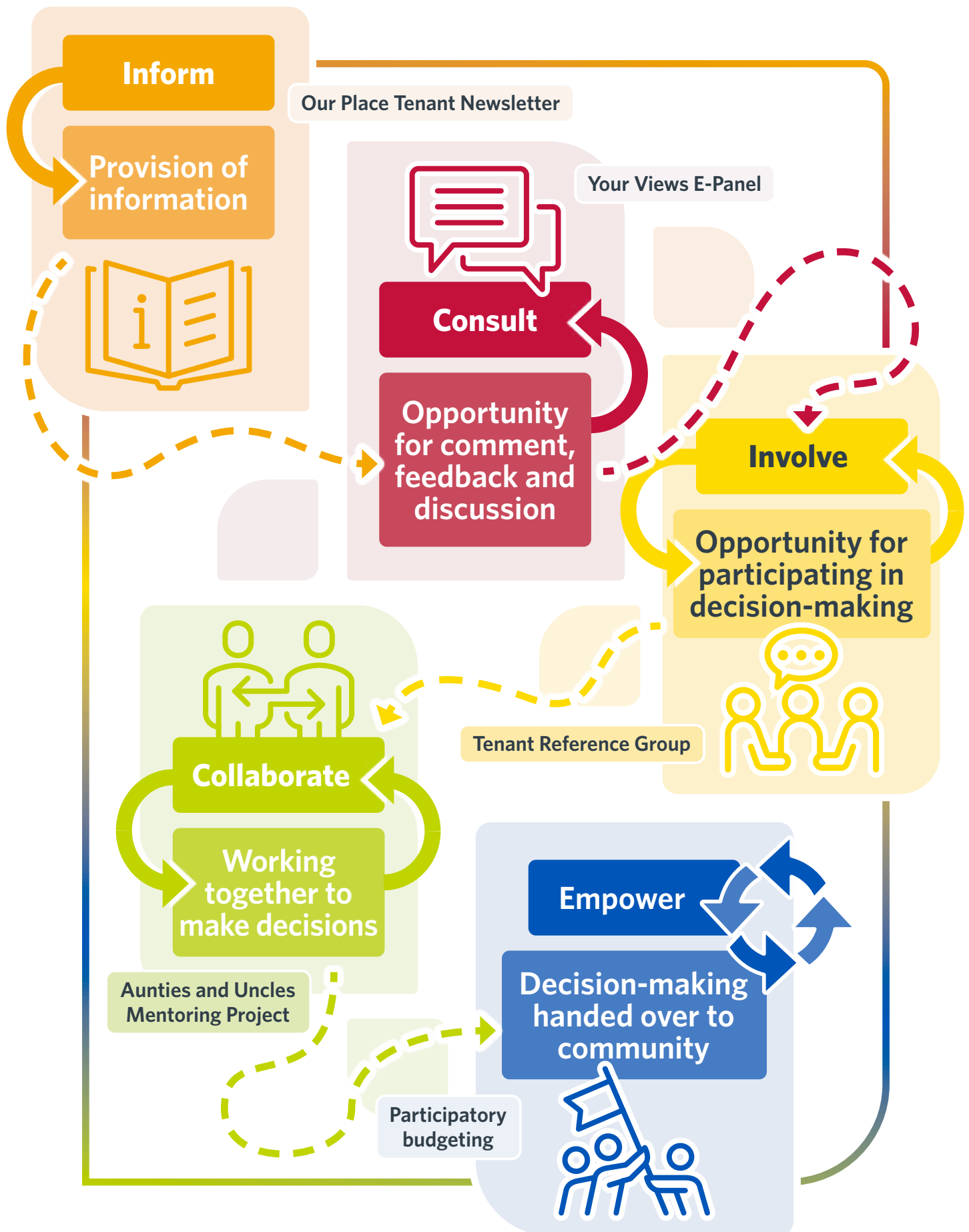


The TRG provides a way for tenants to be directly involved in shaping the way Bridge Housing delivers services. We seek feedback from members on customer service initiatives, report to the group on tenant satisfaction and other metrics and seek input on the best approach to engage with our broader tenant community. The group offers the opportunity for tenant leaders and advocates to network, to hear others' experiences and build their capacity to create change in the communities where they live.



The IAP2 Spectrum of Participation

The International Association of Participation (IAP2) have developed a participation spectrum which demonstrates the range and breadth of participation that public participation can entail (© www.iap2.org). We can use this spectrum to highlight some of the different ways Bridge Housing engages with tenants and communities.



Our key focus areas

To deliver our strategy we have developed four key focus areas that guide our work and help support our approach over the next three years. During our workshops, we asked residents and staff to tell us what their priorities were for the future for Bridge Housing. We also asked them what was important to them in their lives and for their health, wellbeing and happiness. Tenants overwhelmingly told us their number one priority is repairs. This is also reflected every year in our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey where repairs, property condition, location and suitability are the most important priorities to them.



We took over repairs and maintenance services in the Northern Beaches in July 2021 and we are already receiving positive feedback about the change. Tenant priorities in the Northern Beaches were primarily building trust and relationships with their communities. We will be following up in this region with a targeted customer service approach that includes best practice information sharing, opportunities for our staff to be out and about in communities, block meetings, 'meet your Housing Manager' sessions and repairs pop-ups in response to this priority.

We will use these priorities and focus areas as a guide for responding to opportunities over the next three years. They will be reflected in our business plan which guides our day-to-day work activity. We will report back through our website, the quarterly tenant newsletter Our Place, the Tenant Reference Group and our Facebook page about what we are doing and how it relates to the identified priorities.

Key focus area 1:

Connection: Supporting tenants to connect with their neighbours to participate and build community connections

People are social beings and fostering and maintaining social connections is an important and deep-rooted human instinct. Building relationships based on trust, mutual understanding and shared experience can support improved wellbeing and help people to participate fully in their best lives. When people connect with one another they have the opportunity to build social capital by organising, socialising, sharing ideas and hearing others' points of view.

Making connection is also critical in reducing loneliness and social isolation. Tenants expressed a desire for more social activities, including walking groups, social outings, community gardens and BBQs. Tenants also told

us about local, informal opportunities to connect with their neighbours. We will work with the tenant advisory groups, and support tenants to access community grants to bring to life tenant-led ideas and initiatives to life.

Building digital inclusion is critical to reducing isolation and enabling access, supporting affordable digital connections and improving people's ability to interact online. In this context, free or low cost access to computers and other devices, and free access to Wi-Fi is crucial. Bridge Housing has committed to developing an organisation-wide digital strategy to support these principles, enhance our engagement with tenants and improve customer experience.

What we will do:

Develop and implement a new **Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan** for 2022 to 2024. The new RAP will set out actions we will take to support reconciliation between First Nations and non-indigenous people, identifying opportunities for tenants and staff to be involved.



Develop place plans

In areas of high social housing concentration – using our People Places Want to Live strategy to guide our place-making approach with tenants and communities.

Tenant Advisory Group meetings

Increase digital inclusion

By providing opportunities for training and facilitating access to low-cost hardware and devices.

Block Meetings

Revitalise Community Rooms

Big Ideas Grants

Offering small grant seed funding from Bridge Housing to support community-led initiatives that bring neighbours and communities together.

Community Gardens

Tenant Newsletter

Key focus area 2:

Influence: Enabling tenants to have a real say in how Bridge Housing designs and delivers services

We want to provide a range of opportunities for tenants to influence our service provision. Activities include developing and revising strategies, setting standards for the delivery of housing services and scrutinising our performance through our participation structure. Influencing our decision-making is a key priority for tenants reported through our annual tenant satisfaction survey. Including tenants in decisions about things that affect them is the best way for Bridge Housing to ensure we are transparent, responsive and flexible in our service delivery approach.

Tenants told us it is important for them to be able to build capacity to be involved. This includes allowing the time to plan and prepare for involvement, planning communication and offering training, support and building people's confidence. We use engagement methods that support open and honest dialogue and offer a safe space for discussion and ideas to be shared. We encourage a collaborative approach to developing initiatives and programs to ensure they are tenant-led, appropriate and culturally safe.

What we will do:

Tenant Scrutiny Panels

Tenant panels set up to provide input to major policy updates and scrutinise performance in specific service areas.

Tenant Survey

Handyperson Program

Develop a handyperson program to provide local support for our responsive maintenance program.

Tenant Reference Group

Strategic and business planning workshops

Time to Talk

Online and face-to-face sessions enabling tenants to ask any question of the Executive team. Some sessions are run in community languages supporting involvement from tenants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Maintenance Management Committee

Tenant representatives who meet with senior management staff and representatives from Bridge Housing's contracted repairs and maintenance services to scrutinise performance and provide feedback.

Tenant leaders training

Your views e-panel

A virtual tenant group who provide feedback on revisions of housing policies, procedures and factsheets via email.

Complaints handling review

Participatory budgeting

A collaborative way for communities to have a say in the expenditure of the planned maintenance budget for their block.



Key focus area 3:

Thrive: Supporting strong and sustainable tenancies

Supporting successful tenancies is at the heart of Bridge Housing's operation as a social landlord. The rise in the lack of affordable housing combined with structural inequalities that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations means that we are increasingly housing people who may have complex needs.

We recognise that to sustain tenancies some tenants may need connection to specialist support. This means we will focus on partnering with specialist service providers and taking a proactive approach to supporting tenants to access aged care, health and disability support systems.

Tenants told us they want life skills training, regular wellbeing checks and opportunities to build local connections that support health, wellbeing and positive neighbour relations.

Developing place-based strategies that support safer neighbourhoods, locally delivered services and outreach is one way we can ensure that people can reach and access the services they need. Providing opportunities to build skills, access training and employment and be involved with programs that improve financial resilience and reduce energy poverty is another.

What we will do:

Provider panels

Connecting tenants with support organisations through planned forums.

Aunties and Uncles

A co-design project to provide peer-support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants.

Tenancy Skills Institute training

A living skills program delivered for tenants in partnership with the Tenancy Skills Institute.

Solar energy installations

Bridge to Work

Our tenant employment program, supporting people into work and study using a flexible and tailored approach.

Women in social housing research project

A research project to explore women's experiences as applicants and tenants, to inform our future approaches to property acquisition and management.

Mediation and conflict resolution training

Advance Scholarships

An educational grant program to support children and young people to achieve their goals in school, training and study.

Hand Up

Arrears management program that enables tenants with high arrears to pay off their debt through engagement in financial planning and engagement in services.

Bridge Buddies

Connecting new and existing tenants and TAG leaders to learn about being a Bridge Housing tenant.

Energy Audits – working with councils and other organisations to support



Key focus area 4:

Celebrate: Honouring the strength and resilience of our community

A central principle of our community engagement approach is to recognise the strengths, resilience and spirit of our communities and to share and celebrate their successes to inspire others. This means we create opportunities to spread the word about social and affordable housing in new and existing community spaces and places, and collaborate with new partners and organisations to champion change.

Drawing on resources within communities helps us to celebrate the strength and diversity of our tenant community and creates opportunities for discussion, learning and shared understanding among each other.

Critical to this approach is to celebrate local champions within communities and to recognise that community experience, networks and strengths are critical sources of information, ideas and inspiration.

Tenants told us they wanted to celebrate great communities and tenancies and to promote tenant-led initiatives and ideas. By celebrating the diversity of our tenant community and finding ways to share their stories we can work collaboratively towards changing the narrative around social housing and provide opportunities for change at a grass-roots level.

What we will do:



Good Neighbour Champions

Celebrating positive and neighbourly behaviour among tenants.

Celebrating tenant stories

Through digital, print and social media – developing video and written content that showcases great news stories and the strengths of our tenant communities.

Orbit! Online

National Reconciliation Week Tenant Art exhibition

A biennial event supporting tenant artists to have the opportunity to generate income.

NAIDOC week activities and engagement

Bridge in Communities

Attendance of community events, festivals and outreach opportunities to promote community housing and the work Bridge Housing does.

End of year events

MEASURING OUR SUCCESS

As a social housing landlord, Bridge Housing has significant influence on the wellbeing of our tenants and their households. The foundation of our impact is the provision of good quality, secure, affordable housing to people on low and moderate incomes. Bridge Housing takes a systematic approach to measuring our impact to understand what's working, demonstrate our impact and communicate our outcomes to our stakeholders.

In the context of our Building Bridges Strategy, this means we take a structured approach to our engagement activity. We do this by planning, researching and talking to the communities where we work with to understand strengths we can call on and barriers we might need to consider. Using a data-driven approach underpins our service development and innovation work. This allows us to research and implement strategies to reach particular groups.

To support this approach we have developed indicators of success to help us understand how well we are achieving our goals. We will measure the number of engagements we have with our tenant community to measure our success at reaching the communities we are targeting with our programs and initiatives. We have a focus on connecting with new tenants and supporting them to get involved, and we are developing new tools and systems to support us with this approach.



Our Outcomes Framework, *The Difference We Make* is implemented effectively through all that we do to measure the impact of our work and allow us to evaluate our performance through a structured framework. The principles behind *The Difference We Make* include:

Co-design to ensure that the views of people affected by our major community development and engagement initiatives are included in our planning and delivery of those initiatives

Using **logic models** to demonstrate how our activities lead to intended program outcomes

Employing **monitoring and evaluation** methods to assess service satisfaction and impact, and evaluations of key programs and initiatives

Using a 'we asked, you said, we did' **feedback framework** approach so tenants and other stakeholders can evaluate our responsiveness.

Tenant inclusion and empowerment are central to *The Difference We Make*. This document recognises that making a difference is a joint venture – a partnership between Bridge Housing, tenants and household members. You can read more about *The Difference We Make* on our website at www.bridgehousing.org.au.



GLOSSARY

The following key terms and concepts underpin this document and were developed from a range of online sources and our discussions with agencies, support partners, and tenants.

Co-design

Co-design engages consumers, in this case tenants, in the design process with the idea that this will ultimately lead to improvement and innovation. Co-design builds on the existing frameworks of consumer and citizen participation in developing social services. It is underpinned by the idea that collaborative, cooperative and community-centred approaches lead to more effective social services and greater social impact.

Capacity building

Working with people, organisations or communities to make sure they have the skills and knowledge to achieve their goals or participate in activities in an effective and meaningful way.

Community Building

Also referred to as community development, community building is about working alongside people and organisations to develop strong and resilient communities through collective action and positive change. It is a way of working with community strengths; recognising that the best people to decide what communities need are the people in those communities.

Empowerment

Technically this means handing decision making power over to someone. In a less formal sense it can mean giving people access to the skills, knowledge and opportunities they need to have more control over their own lives.

Engagement

A process involving a range of activities to encourage participation, such as informing people, actively listening to people, bringing people together, seeking input from them, working with them and supporting empowerment. Community engagement is about making sure that we work closely with the neighbourhoods and communities that tenants are a part of. Tenant engagement is about giving tenants the opportunity to participate in a number of ways that suit them.

Logic Model

A visual description of the relationships between a program's activities and intended outputs.

Participation

Public participation means to involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision-making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision.

Place-making

Place-making is a multi-faceted approach to the planning, design and management of places and spaces in communities. Place-making capitalises on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential, with the intention of creating places and spaces that promote people's health, happiness, and wellbeing.

Social inclusion

Many people are excluded from the opportunities they need to create the life they want. In a socially inclusive society all people feel valued and have the support and opportunity to participate fully in society.

Social justice

This term is used to describe the need for equality and fairness between people and groups of people in our community. We advance social justice when we remove barriers that people face because of gender, class, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexuality or disability.

Tenant

We often use the word tenant when we are referring to tenants and their household members. When we need to be clear that we are referring just to the people who hold the lease with Bridge Housing we refer to "head" tenants. In the context of Building Bridges 2021 to 2024 we mean all residents when we talk about tenants.

Key Programs and Initiatives

Advance Scholarships

Annual educational grant program to support children and young people to achieve their goals in school, training and study.

Aunties and Uncles

A co-design project to provide peer-support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants.

Big Idea Grants

Small grant seed funding provided by Bridge Housing for tenants to support community-led initiatives that bring neighbours and communities together.

Bridge to Work

A four-year tenant employment program funded by the Commonwealth government. Tenants are linked to intensive case management employment services delivered by CoAct to support employment and job readiness.

Bridge Buddies

Connecting new tenants with experienced ones through a simple phone call a few weeks into your new tenancy. Meet your local tenant group leader and have your questions about being a Bridge Housing tenant answered.

Bridge in Communities

An approach to raise knowledge and awareness of Bridge Housing's services in key local communities through attending events, workshops and cultural activities.

Block Meetings

Housing-led local community meetings to resolve local and neighbourhood issues, champion positive neighbours and learn about ways to get involved at Bridge Housing.

Good Neighbour Champions

An initiative to recognise and reward tenants who positively contribute to their housing community.

Hand Up

Arrears management program that enables tenants with high arrears to pay off their debt through engagement in financial planning and engagement in services that assist them to address the causes of their debt.

Management Maintenance Committee

Tenant representatives who meet with senior management staff and representatives from Bridge Housing's contracted repairs and maintenance services to scrutinise performance and provide feedback.

Orbit! Online

An annual young person's engagement event, delivered in an online format targeting engagement with young residents and their families to take part in fun activities.

Our Place Green Space

Bridge Housing's community gardening initiative, delivered in partnership with the Royal Botanic Garden's Community Greening program, to support residents to develop community gardens in their blocks.

Provider panels

Connecting tenants with support organisations through a planned series of forums introducing service offerings.

Tenant Reference Group

A meeting of the Chairs of each local Tenant Advisory Group and tenant leaders who meet every two months with senior managers to provide updates from the community, explore policy changes and build capacity through training.

Tenant Scrutiny Panels

Tenant panels set up to review and provide input to major policy updates and scrutinise our performance in specific service areas.

Time to Talk

Online and face-to-face sessions enabling tenants to ask any question of the Executive team. Some sessions are run in community languages supporting involvement from tenants from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Your views panel

An e-panel of tenants who provide feedback via email to revisions of housing policies, procedures and feedback.



