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# Because of Her, We Can!

## Aunty Shirley's Story

Bridge Housing tenant Shirley is a Gamilaroi Waka Waka woman born in Moree, now living in Petersham. Aunty Shirley is a proud Aboriginal Elder, a member of the Stolen Generation, an advocate for vulnerable people in society and an activist who is never afraid to speak out about political matters and injustice. We sat down with Shirley and asked her about NAIDOC Week and her influence as a determined Aboriginal woman.



### Tell me about your son David.

David was born with severe autism and he is non verbal. He is 36 now but he was born in a time when there was hardly any support for parents raising children with disabilities. There were some respite services but you had to compete with other parents for any respite days and the waiting lists were very long. There were no advocacy services to speak out for the rights of Aboriginal people with disability and so myself and a group of others founded the first disability advocacy service for Aboriginal Children; Disability Services Aboriginal Corporation. We advocated on behalf of Aboriginal people with disabilities, and in particular, parents with disabled children. With thanks to that group, we now have services like First Peoples Disability Network who are speaking up for the rights of Aboriginal people who have disabilities.

### What does NAIDOC Week mean to you?

NAIDOC Week is the one week of the year that we set aside to celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. NAIDOC should be 52 weeks a year! I remember in the 60's going down to the big events during the week and taking my kids along to the events

in the park. Now we start the week with the flag raising ceremony at Redfern Community Centre and then all walk down to the park. It has always been a great way for non-Aboriginal people to be exposed to our culture but it is just one part of a much bigger picture.

### The theme for NAIDOC this year is "Because of Her, We Can!" What does that theme mean to you?

It is about respecting strong Aboriginal women who have given us a platform to achieve the things we have achieved in life but I think it is more than that too. Our land is our mother and I think the theme is also about acknowledging Mother Nature and the source of life that she is.

### Are there any women that you look up to and admire?

I'm not one to single people out, but my mother gave birth to me so I have to admire her for that! I think all women are strong regardless of their race, religion or culture. When you look back over history, Aboriginal people have always been the force behind change and I think that the women who have contributed to that over the years should be acknowledged.

### You have been a force for change in the world Shirley, do you think you are one of the strong women that people will be celebrating during NAIDOC?

No, I don't think so! My son David has changed the world, not me. And he has done it all without saying a word. Children are the cornerstone of our culture and will always be the catalyst of change.

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

**Repairs** - 8324 0886  
repairs@bridgehousing.org.au

**Community** - 8324 0844  
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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# Save Money on Your Energy Bills

We all know that paying electricity and gas bills can get very expensive. Did you know that the NSW Government offers a number of rebates and concessions to eligible customers? Check out the table below to make sure you are claiming the concessions that you are eligible for.

For more information about rebates, reducing energy bills and knowing what to do if you have a high energy bill you are struggling to pay, check out [www.ewon.com.au](http://www.ewon.com.au) and click on 'Resources for customers'.

Rebate	How will it help?	Eligibility / Who can apply?	How to apply
<b>Low Income Household Rebate</b>  <b>If you receive the Low Income Household Rebate, your retailer cannot charge you late payment or early termination fees</b>	\$285 a year, credited quarterly to your bill	Energy account holders must have either a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>▶ Health Care Card</li> <li>▶ DVA Gold Card marked War Widow or War Widow Pension, Totally and Permanently Disabled or Disability Pension</li> </ul>	Call your energy retailer and notify them of the type of concession card you hold and ask them to apply the Low Income Household Rebate to your account.
<b>Gas Rebate</b>	Natural gas retail customers: \$110 a year, credited quarterly to your bill	Energy account holders must have either a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Pensioner Concession Card</li> <li>▶ Health Care Card</li> <li>▶ DVA Gold Card marked War Widow or War Widow Pension, Totally and Permanently Disabled or Disability Pension</li> </ul>	Call your energy retailer and notify them of the type of concession card you hold and ask them to apply the Gas Rebate to your account.
<b>Family Energy Rebate</b>	\$180 full credit or \$20 partial credit* to your bill.  *The partial payment is for customers who also receive the Low Income Household Rebate	Energy account holders who have received the Family Tax Benefit in the last financial year.	Apply online or download the application form.  <a href="http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates/family-energy-rebate">www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates/family-energy-rebate</a>  You need to re-apply for this rebate every year.

There are also rebates available for people who rely on life saving medical equipment at home. If you think you might be eligible for these rebates, you can learn more at [www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates](http://www.resourcesandenergy.nsw.gov.au/energy-consumers/financial-assistance/rebates).

## 10 Tips to Keep Your Winter Bills Down!

Winter is often the time when electricity and gas bills can skyrocket. Making a few small changes around the home and the way you stay warm over winter can make a big difference to your energy bill. Here are some ideas to help keep your bills down over the cooler months:

1. Stop heat escaping by using door snakes under doors and around windows



2. Only heat the room that you are using. Close internal doors to keep the warm air in and keep the cool air out (particularly bathrooms and laundries)

3. Instead of turning the heater up; wear warm clothes and socks, and use hot water bottles, heat packs or heated blankets



4. Visit your local Vinnies or Salvos and purchase 100% woolen blankets to snuggle under on the lounge and put on your bed at night

5. Let in the sun during the day by opening your curtains and blinds (particularly on north-facing windows) and close them in the late afternoon or evening

6. If possible, don't leave heating on overnight



7. Wash clothes in cold water and wash only full loads



8. Your microwave uses 80% less electricity than an electric stove, so reheat and cook in the microwave as much as you can

9. Resist the temptation of longer showers and use a timer to keep your showers short

10. Leave the oven door ajar after you use it to let the warm air circulate around the room.



# A Bridge to Work: helping you find employment



**Are you looking for work?** We are very happy to announce that in July 2018 we will be launching a new Employment program **A Bridge to Work** at the Bridge Housing office. Our Employment Services partner CoAct will provide an experienced Employment Support Co-ordinator to work with tenants and household members on a one to one basis.

Every resident has a different story about their journey through education and work. **A Bridge to Work** will be open to all Bridge Housing residents who are looking for work, or looking to improve their work circumstances, for example, from casual to permanent. The CoAct Employment Support Co-ordinator will work with residents to help them establish individual work goals; and will provide one on one support, coaching and mentoring to help residents find work.

CoAct has great success rates in assisting people into work and know how to find the right job for the right person. If you are a Bridge Housing resident, are looking for work, and are between 17 and 70 years of age we would love to hear from you! To register your interest, call Anna Barker on **8324 0851**. More information is available on line at **[www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au)**.



*A Bridge to Work is funded through the Strong and Resilient Communities Grants Program – Inclusive Communities, an Australian Government initiative.*

## Win a \$50 Voucher Every Month!

All completed and returned Repairs and Maintenance Feedback Surveys are entered in to a monthly prize draw. Two lucky winners will receive \$50 gift vouchers each month! To be in the running to win, all you need to do is complete and return the Repairs and Maintenance Survey after the contractor has attended your home. It's as easy as that!



## Northern Beaches Social Housing Management Transfer Update

From August 2019, 1,100 new tenants and their families will be joining Bridge Housing as part of the Northern Beaches Social Housing Management Transfer. We are working with Women's Housing Company who will manage around 150 properties with a focus on housing single women. Under the transfer program, the current public housing tenants will become community housing tenants.

You should not see any changes in your property or tenancy management. Bridge Housing will continue its high quality customer service to you!

Bridge Housing will be establishing a new office in Brookvale and a whole new team to manage the tenancies and services in the Northern Beaches.

If you have any questions please email **[northernbeaches@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:northernbeaches@bridgehousing.org.au)**.

## New and Revised Bridge Housing Policies

We want you to be aware of any changes or revisions to our policies. The following policies are either new or recently revised. To read the policies in full, head to **[www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au)** and click on 'Policies' under the Tenants tab.

- ▶ Alterations and Modifications
- ▶ Hazardous Building Material
- ▶ Pest
- ▶ Repairs and Maintenance



## CEO Update

Bridge Housing has entered a very busy period as we prepare for the transfer of an additional 1100 properties to our management in August 2019 through the Social Housing Management Transfer Program. Bridge will continue to maintain our existing service levels to you, our residents, and ensure we warmly welcome the new tenants from the Northern Beaches to Bridge Housing.

Speaking of planning, we are near completion of our new three year strategic plan, which will set the direction for the next three years for Bridge Housing. These plans provide a road map for Bridge and are critical to ensure that we grow sustainably so we can offer new and better ways of working with you. I want to thank those residents who participated in helping us develop our strategic plan.

I am delighted that Bridge Housing will be part of the NAIDOC Week celebrations this year to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The theme for this year's NAIDOC Week is Because of her, we can! Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have made, and continue to make significant contributions in our community as leaders and strong role models. I encourage you to get involved in an activity or event near you during NAIDOC Week, 8 - 15 July. Bridge will be involved in the Redfern Community Centre Flag Raising Ceremony and the Inner City NAIDOC Family and Sports Day at the NCIE in Redfern. Hope to see you at these great events, details for both are available on the back page of the newsletter. More information about NAIDOC available at [www.naidoc.org.au](http://www.naidoc.org.au).

Bridge Housing is committed to being a progressive employer of women. I am pleased that we have achieved a 50/50 representation of men and women on our Board, through the appointment of two very experienced and talented women Jill Hannaford and Lynne Ready. We have surpassed the gender equity target set by the Board. Gender balance is not only just and fair, it ensures our governance reflects the diversity of our tenants and community, brings new perspectives to the table and informs better Board decisions.

There is also some useful information in this newsletter about rebates and concessions to help low income household save money on energy bills. Please take the time to check your electricity and/or gas bills to ensure you are claiming the rebates you are eligible for.

I was delighted to open We are Here Now at 107 Projects, Redfern on 30 May and see the works of the many talented Bridge Housing artists exhibiting at this exhibition - I was struck by the power of many of the works, the talent we have in the tenant community and the strengths we develop through our personal histories. Well done to all involved. .

**John Nicolades, CEO**



## Getting Rid of Winter Mould



Cooler temperatures in winter sometimes mean that condensation can build up in our home, which can lead to mould spores growing on walls, ceilings, doors and window frames. The best way to stop mould growing is to stop condensation building up. You can do this by:

- ▶ Maintain air flow in your home by opening doors and windows to encourage air circulation
- ▶ Keep your rooms at a consistent room temperature as much as possible. Heating a room to a high temperature can result in a large amount of condensation forming when the air cools (particularly at night)
- ▶ Open your bathroom window after showers and baths to allow the humid air to escape
- ▶ Use lids on your pots and pans when cooking
- ▶ If you have exhausts over your stove or in your bathroom, turn them on while cooking or showering
- ▶ If you see condensation forming on windows or walls, act quickly and dry the area

If you do see mould spores growing inside your home, you can take action to stop the

mould spreading and getting worse. Keep in mind that bleach does not kill mould it just removes the colour.

1. Mix 4 cups of white vinegar with 1 cup of hot water
2. Use a soft cloth to wash the area with the vinegar solution every day for three days
3. Mix 1/4 teaspoon of Clove Oil with 1 litre of water in a spray bottle and lightly mist over the area. Wipe the area clean, then repeat and leave to air dry
4. Keep the area dry and increase ventilation to the room
5. Wash any bedding or clothes that have mould growth in a hot laundry cycle with 1 cup of vinegar added with the detergent.

If you have concerns about mould forming in your home, please call Repairs on **8324 0886**.

## Free Legal Advice from Kingsford Legal Centre

Kingsford Legal Centre is a community legal centre that gives free legal advice and casework to people who live in the Randwick Council and ex-Botany Council areas (now Bayside). If you think you might need some advice around issues such as debt, fines, car accidents, Centrelink

problems, domestic violence, minor criminal charges or victims compensation; you can phone to make an appointment on **02 9385 9566** Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm. The service is entirely free and they have multiple outreach locations including Kensington, Eastlakes, Malabar and Yarra Bay.

# TAG in 2018

**Tenant Advisory Group**  
Be involved, have your say!



## Update from Pam Pryor

### Chair of Central and West

Hello Everyone, another 3 months has quickly gone

by and we are almost into winter.

There has been a meeting at the Central TAG, Rebecca Pinkstone and Anna Barker attended this meeting. Unfortunately, we were not able to have a guest speaker but the next meeting will be very interesting. We hope to have a speaker from EWON to talk about energy savings.

We attended a training session at EWON in May about energy savings and it was well worth the time. We learnt a lot about what suppliers can and can't do and what to do if you are experiencing difficulties paying your bill on time.

Look forward to seeing you at the next TAG meeting near you.

### CENTRAL:

#### Small Room, Redfern Town Hall

73 Pitt St, Redfern | 10:30am - 12pm  
RSVP to Pamela Pryor: 0409 047 301

**Friday:** 1 June, 3 August, 5 October

### WEST:

#### Darcy Room, Parramatta RSL

2 Macquarie St, Parramatta  
10:30am - 12pm  
RSVP to Pamela Pryor: 0409 047 301

**Friday:** 13 July, 14 September, 9 November



## Update from Julia Nunes

### Chair of East

Hello everyone, I trust you are all going well. Another winter

is upon us so keep yourself rugged up, warm and healthy!

The East TAG meetings have been very informative this year. At the March meeting, a guest speaker from Holdsworth Community spoke about activities and support available in the local area. At the May meeting, a speaker from the Energy and Water Ombudsman shared information about how to save money on energy bills, the rebates we can claim and knowing what to do when you find yourself in trouble paying bills. We have also had lots of discussion about things happening at Bridge and people have been able to ask Bridge staff lots of questions. Of course, we all enjoy a wonderful lunch together after the meeting.

The TAG meetings are a great opportunity to ask questions so I encourage you to come along to the next meeting. These meetings are for your benefit and will help give you peace of mind. Hope to see you at a TAG meeting soon!

### EAST:

#### Theatrette, Waverley Library

32-48 Denison St, Bondi Junction  
10am - 11.30am RSVP to Julia Nunes:  
0423 451 188

**Friday:** 6 July, 7 September, 2 November



## Update from Love Tru

### ATTAG

The ATTAG has met twice this year already. In February, we met together

for a picnic held at Redfern Oval. This was well attended with some new faces and jarjams who enjoyed face painting, delicious food and great company!

At our May meeting, Toni Smith held an informative workshop on her project that aims to inform health services on best practice when dealing with Domestic/Family Violence and sexual assault service planning from an Aboriginal perspective. Toni impressed us all with her thoroughness and dedication to making a positive impact on alleviating this from our communities.

Following on from the ATTAG meeting, the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group met to review the Cultural Competency Standards Bridge is implementing and we will continue to review these for the coming year. The Working Group is very happy with the progress being made.

There's always room for more Aboriginal tenants to join the ATTAG so if you're curious, come along to any of our meetings!

### Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Group

Bridge Housing Office  
Lawson Square, Redfern, 10am - 12 noon  
RSVP to Francesca Cathie 02 8324 0844

**Thursday:** 28 June, 23 August, 25 October

## Upcoming TAG Elections

Elections for the TAG roles are held every 2 years and will be held this year in November. If you think you would like to take on the responsibility of a formal role, contact the Community Team for more information about what is involved. Keep an eye out for the nomination and voting information in the next newsletter.

### Vietnamese Tenant Group

Contact Anna Barker to register your interest. Call **02 8324 0851**, text **0427 872 789** or email **a.barker@bridgehousing.org.au**

# What's On

## NAIDOC Inner City Family and Sports Day

A great day out for the whole family. There will be performances by local artists, children's rides and activities, sport clinics and competitions, arts & craft activities and a free BBQ.

**Where:** The National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE), Redfern

**When:** Friday 13 July

## Flag Raising Ceremony at Redfern Community Centre

A significant way to launch the NAIDOC Week celebrations. Activities include a Smoking Ceremony, speeches, performances and morning tea. Rug up – it's an outdoor event!

**Where:** Redfern Community Centre

**When:** Monday 9 July, 9am – 10:30am



## Reconciliation Action Plan. Our Progress.

We promised that we would report back every June on how we are doing with our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). So far, we have implemented 95% of the actions due by this time. Some of the highlights are:

- ▶ We have increased our Aboriginal staff to two full time staff
- ▶ We are advertising all our job vacancies through the Aboriginal Employment Strategy Inc.
- ▶ We have improved our Cultural Awareness Training (compulsory for all staff) so that it reflects our location in Redfern and acknowledges the cultural heritage of local communities
- ▶ We continue to work closely with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Tenant Advisory Group to make sure that we include an Aboriginal perspective in our service delivery and programs
- ▶ We held a successful tenant art exhibition We Are Here Now to celebrate National Reconciliation Week
- ▶ Over the past 12 months, allocations to Aboriginal people were 11% of total allocations, exceeding our target of 10%
- ▶ We continue to work in partnership with Aboriginal organisations including Wyanga, The Settlement, and Aboriginal Women and Children's Crisis Service
- ▶ We are donating funds from our next staff fundraiser to the First People's Disability Network
- ▶ We are currently working on our purchasing and procurement strategies to ensure we engage with Aboriginal businesses.

### Outreach Times and Locations

**Parramatta Outreach**  
106-108 Church Street  
Parramatta 2150 NSW  
**Hours:** All day Tuesday

**Mill Hill Outreach**  
Waverley Council  
1st Floor, 31-33 Spring Street  
Bondi Junction 2022 NSW  
**Hours:** Monday 1.30pm to 4pm

**South Coogee Outreach**  
3 Yamba Place  
South Coogee 2034 NSW  
**Hours:** Tuesday 9.30am to 12.30pm