

**We acknowledge
Aboriginal people as
the traditional owners
of the land, and pay
our respects to elders
past and present.**

AGM and Membership

The Bridge Housing Annual General Meeting (AGM) is coming up in November and we are looking forward to having as many of you join us as returning or new members. After several years of virtual AGMs, we are finally able to meet face to face and we're very excited to be able to hold the meeting with you all in person!



Voting at the 2018 AGM

An AGM is a meeting that Bridge Housing is required to hold every year. Usually, a company would invite its shareholders but as Bridge Housing is a not for profit organisation, our tenants are invited to attend as members. If you are interested in becoming a member, you can sign up using the QR code below. At the AGM, members will be able to ask

the Directors questions about the Bridge Housing's operations or finance, speak on any of the agenda items, vote on any proposed resolutions and elect or re-elect board members. Even if you can't make it in person on the day, you'll be able to vote by completing a proxy nomination which means someone can vote on your behalf if they attend the meeting.

At our AGM, the Directors will present the Annual Report which will show the company's performance over the last 12 months and outline our strategy for the future. On the day, we will also be lucky enough to hear from some of our tenants, including an interview with a resident who has moved out of homelessness into a home.

If you are interested in becoming a member, use the QR code below and complete the membership form!



The AGM will be held on 16 November 2022 from 10am to 12pm at 107 Projects, 107 Redfern Street, Redfern and attendees will be able to join the Bridge Housing staff for lunch afterwards. For residents in the Northern Beaches, we will organise transport to and from the venue by bus for those interested in making the journey. We are also hoping to hear from any talented tenant musicians who might be able to perform on the day. If any of you are interested, please contact the Communities Team at **community@bridgehousing.org.au**

CEO Update

I am pleased to announce that we will be holding our Annual General Meeting on 16 November 2022. This year we will hold our meeting in-person at 107 Projects in Redfern. It will be wonderful to finally see everyone, after holding our last two AGMs online due to Covid-19.

All tenants are invited to attend and if you join Bridge Housing as a member you can vote. See details on the front page.

Our tenant survey results are in and we have achieved 81% satisfaction with our housing services. I was very pleased to see that the results for our tenants in the Northern Beaches have increased their levels of satisfaction across all areas of the survey. We use our tenant survey results and feedback through the Tenant Advisory Groups to improve our customer service to you and develop new programs.

We have just finalised our business plan and this year we had a number of successes, including:

- ▶ \$16M in new funding for more homes to house the homeless
- ▶ Purchased 30 social housing properties in Glebe
- ▶ \$12.5M invested in repairs, maintenance and upgrades to homes – a record spend
- ▶ Met all contract and regulatory benchmarks
- ▶ Tenant satisfaction rates up.



Rebecca Pinkstone,
Chief Executive Officer

We are interested in trialling different ways of being more inclusive and reach our tenants who do not speak English as their first language. This newsletter will be translated in our two most commonly spoken languages – Arabic and Vietnamese. If you are reading a translated version, please let us know what you think about it.

81% Satisfaction in Tenant Survey

Earlier this year, many of you completed the Tenant Satisfaction Survey. Bridge Housing conducts this survey each year to give residents a chance to give us feedback on our services. We have the results now and there were a few key themes we have heard from you.

Thanks to your feedback, we now have a focus on what we can do to make sure people are satisfied with our service. The top four things we heard from the survey are:

What we heard	What we'll do
Be clear and consistent when communicating with tenants	We'll deliver training to our staff so that they communicate clearly, consistently and up to date across all our regions.
Translate information into key languages	We've translated our handbooks into our top 6 languages and we'll trial translation of our newsletter into our 2 most commonly spoken languages other than English – Arabic and Vietnamese.
Make sure that repairs are carried out to a high standard	We'll be focusing on ensuring tenants are signing off on repairs and can easily raise problems with us.
Hold more face-to-face events	We heard that now that Covid-19 restrictions have been lifted, we are looking forward to seeing you join in our upcoming TAG meetings which have all gone back to in person events and we'll be looking to make them more social

Lastly, we know that we don't always get it right and we need your feedback to improve the response. We'll be looking at a clearer escalation path for issues so we can fix problems as soon as we can.

Thanks again for your feedback during the survey and at the recent TAG meetings. It is so helpful for us to hear from you on how best to improve our customer service!

Community Garden Competition

Spring is just around the corner and what better time to get outdoors and spend time in the garden with your neighbours. Bridge Housing is running a competition to find the best community gardens. We'll have prizes for three categories; an individual prize for Gardening Champion; a Best Garden category for the most unique, beautiful or edible garden and a Best Kept category for the best maintained garden. The team from Royal Botanical Gardens will help us judge with winners and prizes to be announced at the Annual General Meeting. If you'd like to nominate yourself or a neighbour for the Gardening Champion, use the QR code here or the link to the nomination form.



<https://bridgehousing.snapforms.com.au/form/community-garden-competition-2022>

bridge housing
Building a better future

COMMUNITY GARDENS COMPETITION

Bridge Housing and The Royal Botanic Gardens want to celebrate our Community gardens and are offering 3 prizes for:

- Gardening Champion
- Best Kept Garden
- Most Beautiful/Edible/Unique

Call the Communities team to nominate a Gardening champion on 8324 0836

WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT AGM ON 16TH NOVEMBER

SCAN QR CODE TO NOMINATE A GARDENING CHAMPION

Digital Strategy

Bridge Housing has developed a Digital Strategy to help us make sure our IT systems are safe and easy to use for our staff and customers. Our first major project later this year will be a tenant portal that will help you get your rent statements and newsletters online. You'll also be able to report any repairs and update your contact details easily, which we hope will save you more time! It will also help our staff be more mobile while working in the field which means they can spend more time in the community visiting tenants. Another project starting early next year is a review of our website to make sure you can find what you are looking for quickly and easily.

We are looking into when, how and why you contact us, so that we can improve your experience. We'd love your help with this process, called journey mapping, so if you'd like to get involved please contact Sarah Barclay, Manager Business Transformation Projects on **0448 978 930** or by email **s.barclay@bridgehousing.org.au** for more information or to register your interest.



Recognising our Good Neighbours!

Do you have a Bridge Housing neighbour who:

- ▶ Does a great job taking care of the common area?
- ▶ Helps keep the gardens at your block beautiful?
- ▶ Goes above and beyond to help other people?
- ▶ Is a great neighbour to have around?
- ▶ Contributes to creating a positive community to live in?
- ▶ Is a bin legend?

To thank your neighbour, you can nominate them to go in the running to become a Good Neighbour Champion and receive a \$50 gift card! Call our Community Team **8324 0836** or email **community@bridgehousing.org.au**.

Congratulations to our latest Good Neighbour Champions Will Boyce of Randwick and David Coutts of Brookvale.

Energy Made Easy!

The cost of living is rising and this means energy bills are increasing. To avoid paying more than you have to, the Australian government has created the website 'Energy Made Easy' (<https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au>) - a free energy price comparison service that helps you find and compare electricity and gas plans.

They are not paid by any energy company so are able to provide a non-biased result.

You might be interested in the NILS program - <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/no-interest-loans-scheme-nils>. You can apply for up to \$1,500 for a no interest loan to replace older essential household goods such as whitegoods which can cause higher energy bills. The

website has all the current eligibility details.

You could also be eligible for Energy Accounts Payment Assistance. You can find the details - <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/energy-accounts-payment-assistance-eapa-scheme>. These vouchers are sent to your energy provider electronically to help pay your electricity or gas account.

Tips to save energy and money in your home

In summer, keep cool by closing windows, doors, curtains and blinds. Try to use fans instead of air conditioners.

Take shorter showers - no more than 4 minutes. Use a low flow shower head.

In winter, close doors, windows and curtains to reduce draughts.

Use a clothesline instead of a dryer.

Switch off appliances at the wall.

Use cold water for washing.

Check the fridge seals keep the doors firmly closed.

Cover pots and pans to reduce cooking time.



Wellbeing Inspection Prize Draw

Congratulations to Janice Coleman, Scott Muir and Gulsri Sanggerdlarb who were the winners of our most recent monthly prize draw for completing a satisfactory Wellbeing check. Want to be in the prize draw? If you receive a satisfactory Wellbeing check we will automatically enter you into the draw to win a **\$100 voucher**.

Support and what's on

Food Relief Support

If you're needing food relief, these organisations can help and provide you with fresh food and pantry items.

Food Support 02 9756 3099

Call Food Support to help you find a service in your area that can support you. They can link you with a service in east, central, the west and the Northern Beaches.

OzHarvest 02 9516 3877

You can also look for services online - just add your postcode to the map on this page - <https://www.ozharvest.org/food/receive-food-individuals/> and you'll be able to find something near you. Oz Harvest has a market in Waterloo and can connect you to local food relief too.

Link Community Food Care

2084/150 Fisher Rd N, Cromer Service Opens: Fridays 10:00 AM-1:00 PM. Provides emergency relief in the form of low-cost groceries, fruit and vegetables for low-income earners and holders of a Centrelink Benefit card. Phone: 9999 0475

Emergency Relief

Community Northern Beaches, 52 Raglan St, Manly Service Opens: Monday-Friday 10:00 AM-3:00 PM. Aid includes food parcels, clothing, toiletries, pharmacy prescriptions assistance and Opal top-up cards. Phone: 9977 1066

Community Pantry

Anglicare Opportunity Shop, 71 Macquarie St, Parramatta. Service Opens: Monday-Friday 9:00 AM-4:00 PM for families and individuals experiencing disadvantage. Phone: 8774 7467

Addi Road Food Pantry

Addison Road Community Centre, 1/142 Addison Road Marrickville. Service Opens: Monday-Friday 12pm-4pm. Phone: 9569 7633

Camperdown Food Pantry

31 Pymont Bridge Rd, Camperdown. Service Opens: Tuesday-Friday 12pm-4pm. Phone: 9569 7633

Reconciliation Action Plan Call Out

We've started work on our new Reconciliation Action Plan. We are looking for people who might be interested in working on the new actions, whether you are an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person or you are non-indigenous, we'd love to have your input. Please contact the communities team on 8324 0836 or email on community@bridgehousing.org.au if you are interested.

Bridge to Work/CoAct

Bridge Housing's partnership with CoAct was formed through the successful Bridge to Work program. The program was funded for 3 years by the Federal Government and its success was based on the intensive case management model of support where a worker, Natalie Billick, was co-located with Bridge Housing. The program was voluntary and resulted in 109 tenants being supported to upskill, study or re-enter the workforce.

CoAct is now funded by Workforce Australia to provide a similar program with Bridge Housing tenants to support them to achieve long term sustainable employment. CoAct are committed to customers having a voice in the support they receive.

People in receipt of Jobseeker, Parenting Payment, Disability Support Pension or Carer Payment who currently live in social housing or are living in social or other supported housing, in private housing and at risk of eviction, as well as those referred by community organisations can be assisted. The program is currently being run from our Brookvale Office by the CoAct Mentor, Bernadette Broadman, who is passionate about assisting people gain employment.



Referrals can be made at any time by emailing querybrookvale@coact.org.au or Bernadette.broadman@coact.org.au and we can call the tenant to assess the eligibility.

CoAct/Workforce Australia website - <https://coact.org.au/job-seekers/what-we-do/workforce-australia/>



Bernadette Broadman from CoAct and client Mark Hukins

Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) Meetings

What is TAG?

If you enjoy meeting new people, catching up with friends and finding out what's on in your local community then you would enjoy TAG meetings! Tenant Advisory Groups (TAGs) are tenant-organised groups run by tenants about a wide range of topics such as information on community events or local services, as well as hear an update from us on changes

to policies or fun events we have coming up. A Housing Manager attends and sometimes a guest speaker. Following the meeting, tenants share a catered lunch and often have a laugh or two as they catch up. So if you're interested, take a look at the meetings below or contact us on **02 8324 0836** or email **community@bridgehousing.org.au**.



Don't forget to tell your neighbours about TAG too!

Upcoming TAG meetings:

Group	Next meeting	Location	Your Tenant Representatives
West TAG	Thursday 3 November 10am to 11am	Yagoona Community Centre	Chair - Carol Kassabian Vice Chair - Hugh Miller Vice Chair - Abdel Rahim Alsayed
Vietnamese TAG	Thursday 20 October. 10am to 12pm	Bridge Housing Head Office - Level 9, 59 Goulburn St, Haymarket	Rotating Chair
Central & East TAG	Thursday 10TH November 11am - 12:30pm	Redfern Town Hall - 73 Pitt Street Redfern 2016	Chair - Julie Bryant Chair - Rodney Hollis
Northern Beaches TAG	Wednesday 19th October 11am - 12:30pm	Warringah Mall Community Room (above Library)	Chair - Robby MacLaurin. Vice Chair - Kathryn Pritchard
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG	Thursday 20th October 10am - 12:30pm	Pirrama Park, Pyrmont	Rotating Chair

North TAG Meeting Update

At our last North TAG meeting, we had Sylvia and Cathryn from the Waste Services team come to deliver a presentation about how to recycle our everyday waste and how to report illegal dumping and organise collection of rubbish. The information was very helpful and it sparked much discussion amongst the tenants and staff in the group.

TAG Updates

In July and August, our TAGs have had some interesting guest speakers. The West TAG had Cumberland Council come and speak about all the community events that tenants can participate in, in Bankstown the guest speaker came

from Diabetes NSW and she shared important information on staying healthy while North TAG had Northern Beaches Council come along and talk about recycling and council pick-ups.

Changes to TAG meetings

We have made some small changes to the TAGs for the next 12 months. We have joined the East and Central TAGs and the West and Bankstown TAGs as well as changed the meetings to quarterly. The aim of the changes is to increase the number of participants by giving the Chairs and the Communities team more time to plan social events as part of the meetings.

Election time!

We will also be running elections for the Chair and Vice Chair positions. We'll shortly be sending out nomination forms for people who are interested in the roles and we'll run a poll soon afterwards so that the new Chairs can start in the New Year.



Did you know?

You can recycle aerosol cans in the mixed recycling bin.

Assets - Good news story

Trevor's story



Trevor

Trevor, an indigenous father from Western Sydney, started with Assett Group Services as a handyman in 2019. While working with the other

Assett trade staff, management noticed that Trevor was very committed and had a desire to do more to progress his career beyond handyman work. Trevor reached out to discuss his future with his supervisor and after some discussion

an agreement was made to commence a formal carpentry apprenticeship, as a mature age apprentice. As part of his apprenticeship, Trevor attends TAFE one day a week. As Trevor developed his skills, he wanted to progress his career even further. Assett created a role for Trevor which allowed him to complete his carpentry apprenticeship and give him experience in the role of a Junior Project Manager. This is Trevor's current job and he is responsible for managing vacant properties after people have moved out and responsive repair escalations. Trevor regularly receives compliments from tenants and clients regarding his workmanship and his positive "can do" attitude. Trevor's success is an excellent example that desire and commitment is the key to successful achievements.



One of Trevor's colleagues, Tina, provided the following feedback - "words are not enough to describe Trevor's wonderful demeanour and genuine caring attitude towards others. I have always admired his dedication and professionalism. He will go above and beyond his call of duty. He means the world to me and having him as a colleague makes it even special. Because of him, I returned to Assett Group Services, and work has become more bearable and worthwhile. Though I don't say it to him, I cherish every moment I have."

Advance Scholarship morning tea and next round of applications coming up

To celebrate the successful recipients of the Advance Scholarship, we held a morning tea in the Haymarket office. Executive Director, Customer and Communities, Helen Tighe, presented the young people in attendance with certificates of achievement.

The Advance Scholarship program is an opportunity for tenants for who are primary, secondary and tertiary students to access resources needed for education



and extra-curricular activities such as laptops, uniforms and course fees.

We will be announcing the next round of Advance Scholarship applications for Social Housing



tenants shortly so keep an eye out!

Pictured: Executive Director, Customers & Communities, Helen Tighe with successful applicants of the Advance Scholarship at the morning tea.

Bridge Housing Opening Hours & Location

Goulburn Street Office

You can find our Head Office at Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street Haymarket. When visiting the Goulburn Street office, please use the lifts that face the street to get to Level 9.

We are open 9am - 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

Brookvale Office

You can find our Brookvale Office at Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, and Brookvale. When visiting the Brookvale office you can take the lift or the stairs from outside Centrelink.

We are open 9am - 4:30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

Outreach Details

Elger St Outreach Centre is open 1:30 - 4pm every Wednesday

All other outreach sites are temporarily closed, please visit our website and Facebook page for updates on re-opening.

Contact Us

If you want more information about anything you've read in the newsletter, please contact us!
Email: community@bridgehousing.org.au Ph: 8324 0836