

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

Golden Oldies at Elger Street

Interview with Tania Thompson

We had a chat with Tania about her involvement in the Golden Oldies project. This was a grant from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice to reduce isolation and loneliness amongst seniors in our community.

Tell us a bit about yourself:

I'm Tania from the Elger St Community. I love it in Elger Street, it's the one thing that has kept me on track since I retired being stuck at home is not really my thing. I've only been in community housing for four years. It has been great here, I've made so many great friends and met some amazing people. My family is happy that I live here, that I'm safe and I'm in a great apartment. I've been able to be part of different projects here. The Golden Oldies is my favourite.

How did you get Golden Oldies started?

It came about during the pandemic. Before that I spent a lot of time with our senior community members just talking to them and trying to initiate connections with aged care services. A lot of them didn't have any support in place, which shocked me a little. It was mostly due to them locking themselves in their units and not coming out during Covid. They weren't making any sort of relationships at Elger Street. That was probably the beginning of it.

During the lockdowns, one thing I did was take a chair and knock on some the doors of our aging community. I'd sit outside their door while they were inside and have a chat. Doing that helped me gauge what sort of things people would like to do, they gave me a lot of the ideas for Golden Oldies activities.



We started with arts and crafts kits and things like jigsaws, paint by numbers and embroidery. Bridge Housing helped by sending text messages and emails to get people involved. We tried to get as many seniors involved as possible.

Later we also tried gentle yoga over Zoom which was challenging since many tenants didn't have the resources to participate but it gave people a chance to have a go. Many things had to wait because of the pandemic.

We created an environment where people were checking in on each

other. They weren't lonely anymore and they weren't isolated because their neighbours were taking that time to check on them.

What difference has Golden Oldies made to Elger St Tenants?

It has been life changing for tenants here. I look at our community and people are out and doing things. Life is starting to go to the new norm. I feel the program has been overwhelmingly successful. Even though the funding has ended, we have continued some of the activities in the community. That in itself has the community talking about new ways to stay in touch and catch up. They are looking forward to what's coming next. They have relationships now, whether they are friends or they know another tenant is part of a program somewhere that could help them, so they are talking about it.

The exercise classes are making a huge difference to the health and wellbeing of the tenants.

What advice would you give to others?

If the opportunity is there, go for it! There is help out there. It is a challenge but it's worth it. It could be a walking group, card night or a picnic, don't be scared to give it a go because it can be life changing for many.

CEO Update

Last month, we held our Annual General Meeting face to face for the first time in three years. It was wonderful to see so many of our tenants together in person to celebrate our achievements. It has been a very busy year for everyone at Bridge Housing with record investment in repairs and maintenance services, tenant programs and new properties for people in need. We have purchased and upgraded 102 new units to date, 60 of these are already home to new tenants and another 42 will be ready for people in March next year. We know more needs to be done and we'll be working hard to deliver even more over the coming year. If you are interested in finding out more you can view our annual report on the website: <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au/about-us/our-business/annual-report>.

At Bridge Housing we are very privileged to have such an active tenant community who help us improve our services and support their fellow tenant community. Thank you to all our tenants who have participated in our programs and attended our tenant groups and events over the past year. We value your time and generosity to share your experience with us.

With the holiday season upon us it feels like we can finally celebrate without fear of lockdowns and restrictions. I hope you all have a very happy and safe holiday season. I know that for many people this time of year can be hard. Some people may have recently lost a loved one, are living far from their families or are living alone. We can all help overcome loneliness by reaching out to our neighbours and community members to check in on them. If you are feeling lonely, there are some great ways you can connect with others, including through volunteering. Don't hesitate to contact Bridge Housing's Community Team if you would like to find out more.

In October this year, it was great to hear that in the Federal Budget that there was additional money for social and affordable housing. After so long without any new ideas, we are finally seeing housing being treated as the serious issue that it is. We are looking forward to greater investment in social and affordable housing for our local communities.

Once again and safe and merry festive season to you all.

Rebecca Pinkstone,
Chief Executive Officer



Digital Strategy

As part of our Digital Strategy, we are re-launching our Tenant portal MyBridge in the New Year with some exciting added features! You will be able to:

- ▶ View and download rent and non rent account statements
- ▶ Update your contact details (phone number, emergency contact)
- ▶ Report a repair and track the progress with a job number

We recognise not all our tenants are able, or want, to interact with us digitally. We are still open for business by phone and you can drop in during office hours at either office to have a chat, report a repair or speak to a Housing Manager.

We are also rolling out an exciting new portal for staff. They will be able to complete wellbeing checks and forms from their mobile phones, which means less administration and more time out in our communities.

To access the new MyBridge portal, you can visit the Bridge Housing website: <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/my-tenancy/mybridge-tenantportal>

If you are interested in helping us test the new portal, please contact Sarah Barclay, Manager Business Transformation Projects on 0448 978 930 or by email s.barclay@bridgehousing.org.au for more information.



Give Your Good Neighbours a Shout Out!

Bridge Housing wants to recognise our tenants who look after their blocks, go above and beyond for their neighbours, and help to create positive spaces to live in.

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 looking 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?

You can nominate them to go in the running to become a Good Neighbour Champion and receive a \$50 gift card! What better way to thank your amazing neighbour than to nominate them to become a Champion! Call our Community Team 8324 0836 or email community@bridgehousing.org.au.

Congratulations to our latest Good Neighbour Champions Robby MacLaurin, Kevin Flicker and Joanne Baker.

Manly walking group and one meal

On 8 September in Manly, the Cove's first walking group started up, in partnership with One Meal. Despite a few wet days, our dedicated walkers still turn up with a smile and a raincoat, poncho or umbrella. A free lunch follows the walking group from One Meal who also provide a mobile pantry with fresh fruit and vegetables as well as pantry staples. Many tenants spoke to us about feeling lonely, especially during the lockdowns. This group gets people together and was started to help them feel less isolated. It's been great connecting with neighbours, One Meal volunteers and Bridge Staff in the outdoors.



Our Place Green Space - Community Greening Program

The community garden guidelines aim to support tenant participation in garden projects that:

- ▶ provide opportunities to gain new skills in gardening and sustainability
- ▶ provide opportunities to engage with nature and improve health and wellbeing
- ▶ provide opportunities for tenants to grow their own food
- ▶ bring people together from a wide variety of backgrounds
- ▶ reduce social isolation

If you would like to apply for a Community Garden, please contact the Communities team on 8324 0836 or email community@bridgehousing.org.au.

Garden tips for Summer

- ▶ Stay on top of watering schedule
- ▶ Try to keep your pots cool - shade, extra water
- ▶ Water plants early in the day to reduce the chance of getting mildew
- ▶ Get rid of leaves left over from Autumn and Winter
- ▶ Take advantage of the warm months to grow vegetables
- ▶ Maintain the garden when it's cool in the morning or later in the afternoon.

What to plant in Summer - celery, leeks, sunflower, carrot, watermelon, beetroot, pumpkin, sweet potato and basil.



What to harvest in Summer - potato, garlic, chillies, capsicum, sweetcorn, tomato, gherkins, zucchinis and squash.

Congratulations to our winners!

Gardening Champion - **Luisa Cortes** from Wauhope Cr, South Coogee. Luisa had several nominations from her fellow tenants for her dedication to the garden where she spends a lot of time maintaining the garden, sharing the produce with her neighbours, teaching others about the garden and being friendly with her neighbours creating a social space for them. Luisa will receive a \$100 gift card from Bunnings for this award.

Best Kept Garden - **107 Malabar Rd, South Coogee**. The gardeners have expanded the food forest, managed and used the compost, added vertical planting, propagated plants through division and started making compost tea to feed the sandy soil!

Most Beautiful/Unique/Edible Garden - **105 Elliot St, Balmain!** Not a weed in sight! Pests and diseases managed! Gorgeous Vegetables and Flowers, and a successful compost system!

The winning gardens will receive 240 litre wheelie bin worm farms that have been generously donated by the judging panel at the Royal Botanic Gardens.



Support and what's on

Christmas activities

Martin Place Christmas Tree

The largest Christmas tree in NSW will delight audiences from Saturday 26 November to Saturday 1 January.



Christmas Meals

Hope dinner - Christmas Celebration - Salvation Army

5:30pm - 6:30pm - 14 December 2022

Community dinner - Salvation Army

Address: 140 Elizabeth St, SYDNEY NSW 2000

Christmas Lunch - Surry Hills - Salvation Army

12:00pm - 1:30pm - 22 December 2022

Address: Derby Lane (of Albion Street), SURRY HILLS NSW 2010

Christmas Lunch - Waterloo - Salvation Army

12:00pm - 1:30pm - 20 December 2022

Address: 117 Cope Street, WATERLOO NSW 2017

Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross - Christmas Day

9am - 10:30am: Christmas Breakfast

10:30am - 11:15am: Church Service (outside, seated)

11:30am - 2:30pm: Lunch Service (outside, on picnic blankets)

Exodus Foundation/Rev. Bills Crews Foundation

▸ Address: 180 Liverpool Road, Ashfield 2131

▸ Church service: 9:30 - 10:30am

▸ Festivities and lunch: 10:30am - 2pm

Northern Beaches

Christmas meals

A Summer Poem from one of our talented tenants, Noel Jeffs

A signage for summer

Lorikeets strumpet queer, chase out the
cackling birds of my dower space
a balcony parade and eat from the bird bath

Just that, as I wait for you and spring is flowering
as summer is coming with untold blue skies

hello to all this chirping and hang onto the moments that
are precious

Just that, I say in my specious moments
what sustains me is ritual, just that woke in my freehold to
bake, just that

a silent space where birds of variety dwell on a scenic rim
to know my landscape, create solace and destiny

the brush turkey nests in the copse of oaks
his lady visits as platinum blond the courtyards
to create menage, he scurries to make her nest and chased by
little boys to cower and native
gardening is spring and blossom and pruning
just that.

The butcher bird flummoxes into my glass pane
in search of visage, and times can be
devastating and uplifting.

burn-offs preventing bushfires with asphyxiating smoke,
catastrophic fires
and flooding rains bring fright and hysteria.

Does thankfulness overcome all of this, or are we at the mercy
of Climate Change and this is my home.

Noel Jeffs SSF | noeljeffs@hotmail.com | 20/09/2022

Are you interested in learning sign language/AUSLAN?



Hello



Please



Book



Sit Down



Bird



House



Thank You



Goodbye

<https://auslan.org.au/> - Ausland Signbank - resource and dictionary for Auslan

<https://deafnav.com.au/understand/communication/auslan/learn-auslan> - find out where to learn Auslan

<https://deafconnect.org.au/> - offers some non-accredited community courses to learn Auslan

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 chance to get an update from

us on changes to policies or fun events we have coming up. A local 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 NEW Tenant Representatives
West & Bankstown TAG	Thursday 2nd March 11am - 1pm	Granville Centre, 2a Memorial Drive, Granville	Chair - Hugh Miller
Vietnamese TAG	Wednesday 8th February 10:30am - 12pm	Bridge Housing Head Office - Level 9, 59 Goulburn St, Haymarket	Rotating Chair
Central & East TAG	Thursday 23rd February 10:30am	Redfern Townhall	Chair - Norbert Kisnorbo Vice Chair - Noel Jeffs
Northern Beaches TAG	Tuesday 14th February at 11:30am - 1pm	Warringah Mall Library	Chair - Robby MacLaurin
Elger Street Community (ESC)	Monday 31st January 11am - 1pm	Elger St Community Room	Rotating Chair - Ericka Jane Boidin, Tania Thompson, Johnathan Foulds
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG	Thursday 9th February 10:30	Elger St Community Room	Rotating Chair

TAG Updates

Congratulations to our new and continuing TAG representatives!

Reducing our waste to fight climate change!

It is important for us to know how our behaviour impacts the environment so that we can start to make the changes that will help the fight against climate change.

Something that everyone can do is be mindful of their waste and try to reduce it. Waste is a major contributor to global carbon emissions.

How to reduce waste

- 1st** - Only use what you need to avoid waste
- 2nd** - Where possible reuse items or find another a new use for them
- 3rd** - Recycle items
Put items in landfill as last resort.

Everyone has a part to play, do what you can to reduce your own waste (and let us know if you have tips we can share with other tenants!). Please don't dump items or rubbish in the common areas. It is bad for the environment, expensive to remove and it's disrespectful to neighbours.

If you have large items to get rid of, try posting on Facebook Marketplace/your local Buy Nothing page or Gumtree to see if anyone else wants them. If not, arrange a council pick up, take them to the tip, or organise a rubbish collection service to pick them up.

When you need an interpreter, phone 131 450

Arabic
عندما تحتاجون إلى مترجم إنجليزي
على الرقم 131 450

Chinese
当您需要传译员时，请拨打电话
131 450

Korean
통역사가 필요하시면 131
450 번으로 전화하세요

Spanish
Cuando necesite un
intérprete, llame al 131 450.

Russian
Когда вам потребуется
переводчик, позвоните по
номеру 131 450

Vietnamese
Khi cần thông dịch viên, xin quý
vị gọi điện thoại số 131 450

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24 HOURS A DAY, EVERY DAY OF THE YEAR

Assets Update

Our Planned Maintenance Program

Following on from our record-breaking expenditure on maintenance in 2021/22 (a record of \$13.3 million spent) we will continue these efforts in 2022-2023. The works will again mainly be focused on bringing properties up to standard, especially in the Northern Beaches portfolio. We have earmarked works across 25 sites for the first half the 2022/23 financial year.

In addition, we continue to upgrade properties when they become vacant. This includes new kitchens and bathroom upgrades (where required), new paint and new flooring.

Our property standard, Bridge Housing uses an independent contractor to assess our properties and identify what repairs are required. The assessor also helps us schedule the replacement of

major items in our properties. Each property is reviewed every three years. This information is important, as we use it to set our maintenance budget. We appreciate your assistance in providing our assessor access so that we can add your property to our planned works.

Major Storm Events

Recently, we have had an increase in major storm events. If you have an emergency during these events, it is important to call SES.

Since the beginning of the year, we have carried out over 100 roof repairs following the storms. In some circumstances we have struggled to get repairs done quickly. This has been caused by a shortage of roofers and the large number of roofs damaged in storms earlier this year. We appreciate your patience whilst waiting for repairs to be carried out.

Wellbeing Inspection Prize Draw

Congratulations to Mr Gulzar Ahmed, Ms Jodie Draper and Miss Christina Clements 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.

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.

South Coogee is on Wednesdays at 3 – 4pm at the Orange Room on Elphinstone Road, South Coogee.

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

Christmas and New Years Hours

Our offices are closed from 4:30pm on Friday 23rd December and re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2023.

During our closure period, our out of hours service will be operating for urgent and emergency repairs only.

All non-urgent repairs will be actioned when our offices re-open on 3rd January.

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