

Summer 2023

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

78% satisfaction in Tenant Survey

Thank you to everyone who completed our Tenant Satisfaction Survey earlier this year. The survey gives residents the opportunity to provide feedback on our services. It also lets us know where we can focus efforts to make sure more of you are satisfied with our service.

In September, we invited tenant representatives along to our Customer Service Standards Workshop, where we shared the results of our survey and asked what we could do to deliver a better service to you.

The workshop was well attended with over 20 residents from across our portfolio sharing their experience. We know we don't always get it right but were happy to hear that most tenants were happy with our service most of the time. The group also shared ideas on ways to improve what we do. Here is what they told us and what we'll do to respond:

What we heard	What we'll do
When you report a repair, you want us to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond on time, Keep you updated if work takes longer and Let you know if something can't be done 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Complete works within agreed timeframes ✓ Send a SMS to update you if work takes longer ✓ Send a SMS to get your feedback when the job is done ✓ Tell you upfront if we can't do something ✓ Trial a Handyperson on Northern Beaches to manage minor repairs
We should be easy to contact, respond to complaints and deal with matters promptly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Respond to contact within agreed timeframes ✓ Take time to listen to complaints and explain what we can/can't do ✓ Actively seek tenant feedback on the phone ✓ Send a SMS survey after you receive a service.
You want us to take more time and care when we call or visit you	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Do extra wellbeing checks by phone for some tenants ✓ Create a Customer Care Hub as a single point of contact to improve your service experience ✓ Let the Housing Managers spend more time doing home visits so they can take their time.

Want to have a say? Get involved in Bridge Housing activities and forums and tell us what we could improve. We offer many ways to have a say, give feedback, and get to know your community. For more information on what's on, contact the Community team by calling **02 83240836** or email **community@bridgehousing.org.au**.

CEO Update

As we approach the end of the year, I wanted to provide you with an update on some key developments for Bridge Housing as well as acknowledge our achievements.

Despite the referendum results, Bridge Housing remains committed to the Uluru Statement from the Heart and a reconciliation journey with First Nations people. Our Reconciliation Action Plan will guide our work as we continue to walk alongside our community on the road to reconciliation.

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the retirement of Helen Tighe, our Executive Director of Customers and Communities. Helen has been an integral member of Bridge Housing since 2015 and has recently gained recognition for her work though winning the Australasian Achievement Award at the National Housing conference in Brisbane. We extend our gratitude to Helen for her tireless efforts and wish her a retirement filled with well-deserved relaxation and happiness. We will miss her but know her legacy will continue to inspire us.

Our most recent Tenant Satisfaction survey showed us that 78% of tenants who responded are satisfied with the services we are providing. We are pleased to know that such a high number of tenants are satisfied and we will be seeking regular feedback on the phone and via SMS so please respond and let us know how we can do better.

We recognize the invaluable role that tenant participation plays in shaping our communities and programs. Our tenants' voices and input are essential in making out housing initiatives better and responsive to your needs. In early 2024, we are hosting workshops with you to guide our next edition of the Building Bridges Strategy to ensure that these voices can be heard and to be able to provide tenants with experiences and services that enhance their tenancy and wellbeing.

Rebecca Pinkstone,
Chief Executive Officer



AGM

The Annual General Meeting held on the 15th November at Redfern Community Centre was very well attended by members, tenants, staff and stakeholders who came together to review Bridge's performance and priorities over the last year. Moving and talented performances by the rousing Sydney Street Choir, tenant poet Jonathan Foulds and Bridge's own voice contestant Gail Page brightened a grey day.



The contribution of Bridge's Tenant Representatives, current and past, was celebrated, with many able to join us for a presentation of thanks.

Tenants and management gave their heartfelt thanks to retiring chair Mark Turner, who will be missed after 9 years of volunteer service as well as to Executive Director - Customers and Communities Helen Tighe who is retiring after 7 years at Bridge. Both Mark and Helen will be missed and their contribution was recognised by all speakers. The new chair, Stephen Bull, was welcomed and spoke.

Three new volunteer directors - Tina Tang, Jacqui Christie and Matt Knight - were elected by Members, bringing a wealth of experience to the board.

Members passed changes to the Constitution which will reduce the red tape of needing to reapply each year to be a voting member at the AGM.



Introducing Stephen Bull, Newly Elected Chairperson for Bridge Housing

At the recent Annual General Meeting Stephen Bull was elected by members as the new chairperson for the Bridge Board of Directors.

Stephen brings a great deal of experience to this volunteer role. Stephen has been on the Board for three years and has over 32 years experience in real estate, community creation and finance roles. In his executive career, he held senior roles at Westfield, AMP and Stockland. The last five years of his executive career were as Group Executive and CEO of Stockland's retirement village business. Prior to his real estate career in Australia, Stephen spent several years working in investment banking in London.

The Bridge team welcomes Stephen into his new role and looks forward to supporting his leadership. We encourage tenants to introduce themselves and say hi, if you see Stephen at any Bridge activities. If you want to know more about the Board and how Bridge operates, check out the about us pages on our website or come along to the Tenant Advice Group meetings in your area.



Advance Scholarship Outcomes

Story by Melanie

I received scholarship support for my two sons that paid for their swimming lessons and online learning to support me home schooling my eldest son.

My eldest son was very effected because we had to move home multiple times as well as the lockdown periods in 2021. This meant he fell behind in his schooling. He was very hesitant to head back to the school environment so I had made the decision to home school him right at the time the scholarship applications opened so the timing was perfect. We paid for additional online English and Maths courses from IXL. My eldest son is very interested in coding and wants to work in IT when he is older.



My younger son is almost the complete opposite of his brother. He struggled with home schooling and wanted to return to the classroom as he found the environment the best for his learning. He also loves chess and was very interested in joining his new school's chess club.

For both boys, the scholarship paid for swimming lessons which is very important for children in Australia living near the beach. I wouldn't have been able to afford the lessons without the scholarship and not only did they get the lessons, but they also got free access to the pool for their own practice.

I am so grateful that there are programs like the Advance Scholarship and thankful to Bridge Housing for this opportunity. We have applied for support for the kids again to keep the swimming lessons going and for additional distance education materials as my eldest son moves into secondary schooling.

Spring Garden competition winners!

We received 16 beautiful entries for our Spring garden competition. The Bridge Housing team voted for their favourite gardens and these are the winners:

Most Beautiful – Jacqueline

Most Edible – Rosario

Best Kept – Achieve Australia

Thankyou to everyone who sent in photos of their garden! It was great to see so many Bridge Housing tenants taking pride in their gardens.



Jacqueline's garden



Rosario's garden



Achieve Australia





Keeping Cool This Summer

Ideas to keep cool:

- ▶ Dressing in light clothing – preferably cotton
- ▶ Drink plenty of water and limit alcohol
- ▶ Freeze a bottle of water so that it can thaw into the perfect ice cold drink
- ▶ Plan outings, exercise and chores for the early morning or later evening when the weather is cooler
- ▶ Go to your local beach, ocean pool or local swimming pool
- ▶ Indoor airconditioned places like local libraries or shopping centres can give you a cool place to relax on a hot day.



Drop into our Bridge Housing Offices to cool down!

All tenants are welcome to come into the office to relax in the air-conditioning. From December until the end of February, we will provide cool water, free wifi, books and magazines so you can relax and keep cool.



For more ideas about staying cool this summer, check out the NSW Health website by clicking on this QR code:



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 community energy.

Do you have a Bridge Housing neighbour who:

- ▶ Does a great job of 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 Luisa Cortes and Enaia Mustafa!

Great Properties Prize Draw

Every month we conduct a prize draw for all tenants who have completed their Wellbeing Inspection and are looking after their homes.

Congratulations Ms Qimei Yang, Mr Garry McAlpin and Mr Davorin Damic who were the winners of our most recent monthly prize draw.

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.

Assets update

Northern Beaches Handyperson

Bridge Housing is trialling a handyperson for a 12-month period in the Northern Beaches. The aim is to provide a better customer service experience for non-urgent repairs. If the trial is successful, we will look to expand the service to other areas.

Using our existing contract with Asset Group Services(AGS), Bridge Housing will purchase the services of a dedicated handyperson to deliver non-urgent repairs to our tenants with the aim to increase tenant satisfaction, reduce response times and make cost savings. We hope to have someone ready to start working in December.



Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) Meetings

Our TAG or Tenant Advisory Groups are organised by tenants for tenants. It's a great opportunity to meet your neighbours, socialise and stay informed. TAG meetings cover a variety of topics, including updates on community events, local services, and changes to policies and to plan social activities. At the meetings, a local Housing Manager and sometimes a guest speaker will attend. Afterwards, tenants enjoy a catered lunch, have a good time, and catch up with each other.

If you're interested in joining, check out the meetings listed below or get in touch with us at **02 8324 0836** or email **community@bridgehousing.org.au**.

Use the **QR code** to complete the membership form and be added to the mailing list to receive a personal invitation to your next local meeting.



Remember to tell your neighbours about TAG too

Upcoming TAG meetings:

Group	Next meeting	Location	Your Tenant Representatives
West & Bankstown TAG	Thursday 15 February 10:30am – 12:00pm	Granville Centre 2a Memorial Drive, Granville	Chair – Hugh Miller. Vice Chair – Carol Kassabian
Vietnamese TAG	Wednesday 7 February 10:30am – 12:00pm	Bridge Housing Level 9, 59 Goulburn St, Haymarket	Rotating Chair
Central & East TAG	Thursday 8 February 11am – 1pm	Redfern Town Hall	Chair – Norbert Kisorbo. Vice Chair – Noel Jeffs
Northern Beaches TAG	Tuesday 6 February 12pm – 1:30pm	Warringah Mall Library	Chair – Robby MacLaurin. Vice Chair – Grant Bannakin
Elger Street Community (ESC)	Tuesday 13 February 11am – 1pm	Elger Street Community Room	Rotating Chair – Ericka Jane Boidin, Tania Thompson, Johnathan Foulds
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG	Wednesday, 7 February 11am	Redfern Youth Connect	Rotating Chair

A poem by Bridge Housing tenant

Spring
By David B Coutts

Eucalypts sway in a medicinal motion
Springbreeze catalyst ignites
Illuminate my senses
together with this antipodean clear light.

Streaming water on sandstone
clinging lichen, alive yet so still
In this abundant living sanctuary
Spiritual desire to be fulfilled.

Traversing a hence trod path
gnarled and so worn
A man and his trusted dog
Journey into an enchanted dawn.



Shout out to all writers!

We love to share the talent of our tenants. We welcome stories, poetry, recipes or helpful tips for your home to publish in the newsletter.

Please email
community@bridgehousing.org.au

Christmas supports/whats on

Check out our What's On page on the Bridge Housing website for up to date information about what is happening over the Christmas period and supports available.

Christmas Meals

Christmas Community Hope Meal - Burwood

11:00am - 1:30pm, 23 December, 31 Wilga St, Burwood NSW 2134
Registration: burwoodcorps@salvationarmy.org.au

Wayside Chapel at Kings Cross - Christmas Day

Contact Wayside chapel on **9581 9100** for details

Exodus Foundation/Rev. Bills Crews Foundation

Address: 180 Liverpool Road, Ashfield 2131, Free Christmas Day lunch at 11am - 2pm

One Meal - Northern Beaches

Meals and BBQ at Gilbert Park every Sunday 5 - 6pm
Meals and BBQ at Beverly Job Park Narrabeena every Thursday at 3:30 - 5pm



If you need help with food hampers and gifts - reach out to your local Salvos or Vinnies for help.

Bridge Housing Opening Hours & Location

Goulburn Street Office

Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street Haymarket.

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

Brookvale Office

Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, and Brookvale.

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

Outreach Offices

Elger St - Mondays 12:30 - 3pm & Wednesdays 1:30 - 4pm in the Community room in 3 Elger St

South Coogee - Wednesdays 3pm to 4pm alongside Junction Neighbourhood Centre at 3 Yamba Pl, South Coogee, in the Orange Room.

Waverley - 1st Wednesday of the month, 2pm to 4pm at 59 Newland St Bondi Junction, Waverley

Western Sydney Outreach - 2nd Thursday of the month 2:30pm - 4:30pm at the Granville Centre, 2a Memorial Dr, Granville

Contact the Communities Team

For more information about anything you've read in the newsletter, please contact the Communities team!

Email: community@bridgehousing.org.au Ph: **8324 0836**

Call Us

General enquiries - 8324 0800

Repairs - 8324 0800 the press 1 for Repairs

Housing Management team - 8324 0885

Communities team - 8324 0836

Leasehold Manager - 8324 0858

Christmas and New Years Hours

Our offices are closed from 4:30pm on Friday 22nd December and re-open on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

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 2nd January 2024.