

COMMUNITYLINK

WINTER EDITION

June 2019



Hello from Andrew

Welcome to the second edition of your tenant newsletter, *Community Link*, for this year. There have been lots of exciting changes at Link Housing in the first half of the year. Last edition, we introduced you to our Client Services Team which are the first point of contact for all tenant enquiries. This issue we introduce our new Access and Demand Team who provide Housing Assistance services. Read more about these services in our interview with team member, Sam, on page 2.



Our new website has gone live and offers you more ways to communicate with us online. You can use this website to find fact sheets and policies, apply for housing, request a repair, provide feedback, access our tenant handbook and information about upcoming community and resident programs.

There is no denying that the world we live in now is increasingly online and digital technology has the power to keep people and communities connected. You have told us through surveys that you would like more email and SMS communications and you are engaging with us on social media. For this reason, we are focused on helping our tenant community become more comfortable using online and digital technology. You can read about our new digital community program on page 4, *Digital Discoveries*.

I am also pleased to announce that from 2020, Link Housing's Community Link newsletter will be online and emailed to all our tenants. We will continue to offer a print version to those who don't have an email address and opt in for this. If you would like to continue to receive the newsletter to your mailbox, please complete the form enclosed.

This year, we are excited to be hosting our charity sleepover, *Home Sweet 2019*. Now in its second year, the sleepover will be held on the 20 September 2019 at Freshwater Surf Life Saving Club to raise funds and awareness for the most vulnerable in our community. Link Housing will be fundraising on behalf of The Burdekin Association; for the benefit of Burdekin; Women's Community Shelter and the Link Housing Scholarship Program. Follow us on Facebook for more details. I look forward to saying hello again soon.

Andrew McAnulty - CEO, Link Housing

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MEET LINK

In each issue of *Community Link*, we introduce one of our team members to help you get to know us a bit better. In this issue, we profile Access and Demand Team member, Sam.



Sam has been working in the community sector for 15 years. Outside of work Sam loves to play video games and travel. He's even spent a year living in both Canada and Japan.

What is your role at Link Housing?

I'm a Private Rental Specialist in the new Access and Demand Team. My role is to help those who are experiencing housing stress or other challenges to find and rent properties in the private rental market. This can often mean attending open inspections and completing rental applications with our clients. I also help my team to deliver other housing assistance services like temporary accommodation.

What do you like most about your role?

I have the freedom to support people in a meaningful way and the resources to make real change.

Tell us about a memorable client you have helped?

Most recently, I worked with an 83 year old client who had never rented in the private market before. I helped him find, apply and secure his first rental property in Mosman. I am continuing to support him to sustain his tenancy and make it his "home".

Link Housing's Access and Demand Team provide a range of Housing Assistance services to those in need. If you would like to find out more call us on 9412 5111 or go to our website at:

linkhousing.org.au/apply/housing-assistance/

LET'S TALK TAG

Link Housing's Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) members, John and Michael, give us an insider's perspective on what it's like to be a TAG member.

How It Works

TAG is here to give tenants a voice. In John's view, it gives members the opportunity to "provide a tenant perspective" and shape Link Housing programs and policies. Michael describes TAG as a "vehicle to exchange ideas on tenancy matters through discussions" with senior staff, including CEO Andrew McAnulty, and contribute to positive, measurable outcomes. TAG meets every 10 weeks (4-6 times a year) to review policy documents, give staff feedback on reports and new initiatives, help organise community events, speak at relevant conferences, represent Link Housing at official ceremonies and come up with ideas to create opportunities for the community.

Why Join?

Many reasons motivate tenants to become TAG members. For John, a big attraction is the feeling of "giving back" and "saying thanks for the roof over my head." It is also a great way to meet new people and make friends. Michael believes that



The TAG with Link Housing's Board and Management, March 2019

hearing other people's stories and perspectives is key to "building sound working relationships" and is a valuable learning experience. Transferable skills such as public speaking, attention to detail, active listening, professional knowledge or life experience are also put to good use and developed in the TAG context. But simply being interested, compassionate and willing to help is "a good place to begin" says Michael.

Want To Be Involved?

Link Housing's TAG is growing. Last month, we launched Regional TAG groups to allow more tenants to contribute and attend meetings close to home. Reimbursement of travel costs and associated expenses can be arranged.

To get involved fill in our online application form at: linkhousing.org.au/tag-member-application-form/

For questions, contact Natasha at: TAG@linkhousing.org.au or call 9412 5111.

TENANT STORY

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT ANN GRADUATES

With Link Housing's Education Scholarship Program now open for 2019/2020, we feature a past award recipient, Ann, who was recently featured in a local paper about her scholarship and her hopes for successful employment.

Last year Link Housing provided a total of \$48,000 in scholarships to residents to help them achieve their goals. At the Award Ceremony at the end of the year, over 30 residents, including Ann and her daughter, 9-year old Karina, were presented with their scholarships by Mayor of Willoughby, Gail Giles-Gidney and Australian Olympic sprinter, Jessica Thornton.

"I am thankful to Link Housing for supporting me to complete my degree," Ann said. Passionate about language, Ann started her Bachelor's degree at Macquarie University four years ago when she became a Link Housing tenant and moved to Lane Cove. With the help of Link Housing, Ann, a solo parent, graduated in April this year with a Bachelor of Arts degree (Linguistics major) and a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 6.8 out of 7.

When asked what advice she has for others, Ann explained: "Everyone travels their own path in their own shoes. But as someone who comes from a family of people who believe that education and knowledge are the most valuable things, I would just say to anyone who for any reason hasn't done a university degree when they were younger, to try and find the way to go and do one. Being a mature age student is hard but superbly rewarding. The sense of accomplishment is incredible. And the example I set for my child is invaluable."



“ Being a mature age student is hard but superbly rewarding. The sense of accomplishment is incredible. ”

The Link Housing Education Scholarship Program is part of the organisation's commitment to provide more than just a 'home', but also the support and services to help residents into education and employment. Each year, scholarships are given to mature age students, high school graduates going into tertiary education and school age children.

Link Housing is pleased to announce that we are expanding our Program this year with even more funding available for scholarships through our *Home Sweet 2019* charity sleepover fundraising event on 20 September 2019.

Scholarships range from up to \$1000 for applicants in primary school and up to \$2000 for those past school age.

If you are a Link Housing tenant and would like to apply for a Link Housing Scholarship, please complete the attached application form and return it in the reply paid envelope provided. For more information, call Suzanne at Link Housing on 9412 5111 or email her at: enquiries@linkhousing.org.au



ANNUAL TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY

Have you received Link Housing's Annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey? The Survey is sent to you by Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) on behalf of Link Housing. This year, we have a special prize draw for those who complete and return the Survey by 21 June 2019 - ten \$100 EFTPOS gift card vouchers will be given away. All our surveys help us to better understand and meet your needs and deliver outcomes. If you haven't received your copy of the Tenant Satisfaction Survey or have a question, please call our Client Services Team on 9412 5111.

COMMUNITY MATTERS



Art Exhibition and Photography Competition

Link Housing's annual art exhibition, *No Place Like Home*, kicks off again on 1 August 2019 - and is now open for applications! We welcome submissions from all tenants of all levels of experience and skill. There is no fee to exhibit, we only ask that you complete and return the attached application form and that your artwork reflects the theme - 'No Place Like Home'.

This year, we are also running a *No Place Like Home* Tenant Photography Competition so that more members of our resident community can get involved. Simply take a photo that reflects the theme 'No Place Like Home' and email it to us at enquiries@linkhousing.org.au with your full name and contact number.

Link Housing will award a first, second and third prize of \$200, \$100 and \$50, respectively. Winning photographs will also be displayed in this year's art exhibition. The deadline to enter the art exhibition and photography competition is **19 July 2019**.

For more information, call Brooke at Link Housing on 9412 5111, email us at enquiries@linkhousing.org.au or visit our Facebook events page at: facebook.com/events/656686498116396/

Digital Discoveries

We are pleased to announce the launch of *Digital Discoveries* - a program to help our tenants to get online and digitally connected! The first *Digital Discoveries* sessions will be open to tenants over 50 years old and will be run at convenient locations around Ryde, Hornsby, Northern Beaches and North Sydney in July and August.

Tenants will learn how to use a computer, how to get online and how to search the internet. Bring your own computer, mobile or tablet - or use one supplied on the day. Look out for more information in the mail or in your inbox soon. Want to learn more? Call Natasha at Link Housing on 9412 5111.

Get help finding a job. Get Job Ready!

Do you need help with your job search? We invite residents to attend an upcoming 'Job Ready' session with Job Active and Disability Employment Service (DES) provider, Olympus Solutions.

Olympus Solutions are experts in helping people who are facing obstacles to find and keep a job. Book in for one of the dates below:

- **Wednesday 24 July**
10am to 12 noon, Link Housing Chatswood office
- **Wednesday 28 August**
10am to 12 noon, Link Housing Chatswood office
- **Wednesday 25 September**
10am to 12 noon, Link Housing Chatswood office

During the session, the Olympus experts will give you advice to help you secure training or employment in your chosen field. Call Suzanne at Link Housing on 9412 5111 to book your session.

Gardening Competition

For the past five years, Link Housing has run an annual Gardening Competition. We encourage all tenants to get involved, do some gardening over the winter months and enter this fabulous competition.

Gardens will be judged across five categories:

1. **Best herb/vegetable garden**
2. **Best courtyard/balcony**
3. **Best communal/community or shared**
4. **Best kids garden**
5. **Best general garden**

Our panel of expert judges will decide the winners in October, awarding an overall winner a \$200 gift card and five category winners with a \$100 gift card each. Please find the application form enclosed to apply.

Energy Saving Tips

To help you keep your energy bills down this winter, see our Energy Saving Top Tips fact sheet enclosed. For more information, please call the Community Engagement Team on 9412 5111.