



The Tenant's Voice

CEO Message

Welcome to the spring edition of the Tenants Voice Newsletter.

This issue of the Tenants Voice demonstrates the varied range of programs and services that Hume offers to our customers and the local community.

Our commitment to working with different groups and support services to create opportunities for the future is the foundation for a new range of initiatives.

I am proud to announce that two of our recent projects, MHBiz which focused on increasing the knowledge and skills base of staff and customers to support people with mental health issues and 'The Collectives', a group collaboration focusing on hoarding and squalor; was given a Highly Commended Award for Best Partnership working and the 2016 NSW Awards for Excellence in Community Housing.

I would like to offer my congratulations to all customers and staff that participated in both these projects and recognise you as being integral in Hume receiving the award.

All of the information contained in this newsletter and more detailed descriptions of the services we offer can be found on our website www.humecha.com.au

Sincerely,



Nicola Lemon
CEO
Hume Housing

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Always ask for ID

Hume employs a panel of contractors to carry out a wide range of services to help maintain your home and for Hume to stay compliant with the latest regulations.

Hume has stipulated that all contractors must make an appointment with you in advance of them attending your home, with the exception of emergency/urgent repairs.

Hume have also asked that all of our contractors and their operatives are required to carry ID (Identification) which is to be presented to you when they attend your property and should be shown at any time when requested.

To ensure your safety and wellbeing – we encourage you to always ensure you receive an appointment prior to a contractor attending and to always check the contractors ID before allowing them access to your home. We have listed several points below to help remind you of the key points to check when using the Hume repairs and maintenance service:

Appointments

When a contractor calls, ask them to confirm the repair they are calling about to ensure it matches the repair request you sent to Hume. Take a note of the date and time provided and agreed with the contractor. Take a note of the contractors' business name.

Attendance at your home:

Does the attendance match the appointment time and date provided prior?
Does the person have ID?
Does the ID match the contractor details who made the appointment?
Ask the person to confirm the repair they have come to complete.

If you are unsure of any of the above details, please contact a member of the Hume team prior to allowing anyone access to your home.

You can call our dedicated Maintenance Line on **02 9727 0688** if you would like to check whether a contractor has been sent by Hume to your home.



Hume's Home Energy Efficiency Project

As the weather becomes warmer and the days longer, it's nice to know that our heaters will be getting less use in the months ahead.

Hume's Home Energy Efficiency Project (HEEP) will be providing energy efficiency upgrades over the coming months, aimed at reducing customer's energy use and bills

One of the ways you can participate in Hume's Home Energy Efficiency Project (HEEP) is by contributing to our energy bill data collection. We encourage customer participation, and one of the easiest ways to participate is to send in a photo of recent and future energy bills.

This will enable us to perform a before and after comparison to assess the benefits of energy efficiency upgrades that we will be providing over coming months.

The information will be kept private and only be used to help evaluate the program. You are welcome to black out your name for privacy, but we do need to be able to see the address in order to be able to use the information in the before and after comparison.

You can send photos of your recent and future energy bills to: hume@humecha.com.au

Alternatively, bring us in a copy of your bill the next time you visit the Hume Offices at Fairfield or Parramatta.

For further information contact:

Paul Riordan
Our Home Energy Efficiency Project Manager
 02 9722 4300

Customer Success Story

"I'm Amal Abdelgadir and I'm one of the Hume Community Housing customers. I'm qualified in library and information services. I had been struggling to find a job as a library technician till I met a Hume Community Housing Officer in a block meeting. I had a chat with him about finding a job. Then he raised my issue to Sarithya Tuy, the Community Cohesion officer who gave my issue a priority. He called me to further discuss my career aspirations, and asked me questions to find out my level of awareness of pathways and options available to me. Then, he provided me with some links to other job search web sites I didn't know and offered to edit my resume to make it more attractive.

I told him I tried to contact local council libraries many times to do some volunteer work, but never heard back from them. Sarithya made enquiries to manager of council's library services about volunteer opportunities, and successfully linked me to manager of Fairfield Library Services. I sent my resume to the manager and got the interview for a casual position. Sarithya offered me some tips before I went to the interview. I was excited to be offered the casual position, and can't wait to start my work.

I would like to thank Hume community officers who did their best to assist me in taking the first step into doing the job I have always dreamt of doing.

So if you're like me and don't know employment pathways or options available to you, talk to Sarithya."

If there was one ACTIVITY, COURSE or JOB you would very much want to do, what would it be?

Our new Community Cohesion Team has resourceful, highly skilled, well-connected, and passionate staff members who may be able to assist you to make that happen for you.

How can you let us know?

- Call us on **9722 4349** to discuss your needs and aspirations; or
- Complete the Expression of Interest (EOI) form at Hume's Office in Fairfield or Parramatta; or
- Request for EOI form by email to get.involved@humecha.com.au and return the completed form to same email.



Where to obtain advice on your Housing Options

If you would like information on what types of housing or other services are available for you, your friends or family then contact our Housing Options team at Hume on 02 9722 4370 or speak to a member of our Customer Services team.

As a registered housing provider we are able to provide you with accurate and up to date information on the applications process, waiting times and support services. We are also happy to assist you with completing application forms and can organise a translator if English is not your first language.

Relying on friends or members of your community for information may not always provide you with the correct details. It is important that you contact a housing professional or a registered tenant's advocacy service. You can obtain further information from <https://beta.tenants.org.au> or call the Western Sydney Tenants Service on (02) 8833 0933

Advice is always free and nobody should ever charge you for assisting with an application for housing. Money should never be paid to anyone promising to help you get a property more quickly than the standard waiting times.

For further information on our housing programs contact:

Rachel or Annah

 **02 9722 4370**

 **housing.options@humecha.com.au**

Tenants Voice

If you are interested in sharing your experience, views, being involved in decisions about your community and providing feedback to Hume, attending Hume's Tenants Voice meetings is a must!

All Hume Customers are welcome to attend Tenants' Voice meetings which are held on the last Friday morning of every second month in Fairfield. Customer input ensures our services are constantly being improved to reflect customers' needs and interests.

The Tenants' Voice is an opportunity for customers to:

- Share experience of Hume's programs, policies and services
- Review and give feedback on Hume's policies
- Organise and plan social events for seniors, young people and families
- Promote and encourage new customers to get involved
- Contribute to the NSW Housing Federation Tenant's Group

The group is led by customers and Elections for Chair and Vice-Chair are held annually and will occur in September this year. To attend and have your say, meetings are held:

Hume Housing
113 The Crescent, Fairfield
11:30-1pm, last Friday of every second month

For more information and/or to get involved contact get.involved@humecha.com.au (02) 9722 4329

Customer director positions

Hume is seeking nominations from customers interested in taking a leadership role at Hume by joining the board as a director position. If you are interested in seeking nomination, please contact **Lara at get.involved@humecha.com.au or on (02) 9722 4329.**



Youth Housing Options Project (YHOP)

Hume Housing's Alison Ora has been working closely with CORE Community Services over the last 6 months, to develop the Youth Housing Options Project (YHOP), and has a lot of positive feedback from participants so far!

If you are 15 to 24 years old, at risk of homelessness and/ or looking for a comfortable space where you can build your knowledge about housing options for young adults, and developing the skills to seek and sustain a tenancy when you live independently, then YHOP is for you!

YHOP provides three innovative and energetic workshops focus on building capacity in young people to be more confident and capable to:

- Understand the various housing options available to young people
- Source and maintain long term accommodation in either the social or private housing market
- Understand and appreciate the benefit share housing
- Understand a tenant's rights and responsibilities



- Exit specialist homelessness services
- Understand the reality of common issues young people face in the housing market and how to overcome these barriers.

After the workshops, YHOP Coordinator Alison will meet with the referring service and the young person, to ensure that the goals and knowledge gained in YHOP continues to be supported in their regular case plan.

Young people are also encouraged to stay connected and get up to date housing information, employment and engagement opportunities and access to the YHOP Coordinator for tailored support via the Youth Housing Options Project Facebook page.

Here is what some recent YHOP participants had to say about YHOP:

"It was more insightful than I was expecting and offered great information about youth housing options. It was well thought out and very organised. It's definitely something helpful to those who aren't sure about their tenancy rights and their options for housing. And the pizza was great too!" - Naua age 17

"It was worth waking up early for the workshops as they were awesome. They are fun and serious all at the same time and fun activities to participate in... it was extremely helpful and wouldn't say no to going again." - Shantelle age 22

"It gives you the knowledge what to look for when you apply for a house, and make sure you do your research for when you inspect a house. I had so much fun with Alison, Colin and fellow class mates and I will do it again." - Jennifer age 21

For more information and details on how to refer; please go to <http://www.humecha.com.au/YHOP.html> or call YHOP Coordinator Alison, on 02 9722 4345.

Social Club

Tenants' Voice and Social Club Sub-Committee have made some changes to the Social Club. Starting in October, weekly fees will stop being deducted from customers' rent and activities will be:

- Open to ALL customers and their friends, family and neighbours
- Be a range of prices (free to max \$45) depending on activity
- Planned by customers as part of Tenants' Voice and the Social Club sub-committee
- Paid for and booked from Parramatta and Fairfield Offices

SPRING SOCIAL CLUB ACTIVITIES

Sydney Tower

Wednesday, 31 August 2016

Pick up 9:30am and return 4pm

Entry \$19 – includes bus from Fairfield or Telopea and Tower entry

Bus services will leave from Dale Street, Fairfield and Dundas Community Centre, Telopea

2016 End of Year Celebration Planning Meeting & Lunch

Monday, 19 September

10am -1pm

Fairfield RSL

Cost free

Seniors' Sydney Harbour Boat Cruise

Wednesday, 19 October

Pick up 9:30am return 4pm

Entry \$45 – includes bus from Fairfield or Telopea and 3.5 hour cruise, tea, lunch, games, trivia and prizes

Save the date! : End of Year Celebration

Wednesday, 30 November

Details to follow planning meeting

To join call 9722 4329 or email get.involved@humecha.com.au or ask about events in Hume's Fairfield, Claymore or Parramatta Offices.

If you are interested in getting involved in planning of activities or have ideas about future activities for children, young people and families, please call Jason on 9722 4329.



End of Year Celebration

Affordable Housing Program

Do you have friends or family that are struggling to find affordable rentals in the private market?

It is no secret that rental costs are increasing, placing further strain on the budgets of Australian families. Hume Housing has new Affordable Housing properties available for eligible customers to move into in Ashfield, Telopea, Parramatta, Northmead and Merrylands. There are also upcoming developments in Bankstown, Warwick Farm and Fairfield.

Customers living in Affordable Housing properties can expect to pay 20% less rent than in the private rental market. In order to apply for the Affordable Housing program you must:

- Be an Australian citizen or a permanent resident
- Live in NSW
- Be able to provide ID
- Have a household income within set limits (see below)
- Not own property that could help you with your housing needs

If you would like to apply for a current vacancy, be placed on our wait-list for upcoming vacancies or just get more information then contact **Housing Options Officers Rachel or Annah on 02 9722 4370** or email us at affordablehousing@humecha.com.au



Complaints, Compliments & Appeals

Hume Housing constantly looks at ways in which we can improve our customer service levels. Sometimes improvements to our practices are only reached through receiving complaints from our customers. We are always happy to receive your feedback and look at how we can review the way we operate.

How do I make a complaint?

If you would like to make a complaint about our services, then you are welcome to discuss it with a member of our staff. After the initial discussion all customers of Hume are able to lodge a formal complaint if the informal procedure is not satisfactory or the issue at hand is of a serious nature and further investigation is required. You can obtain a Complaints form from our Customer Service Officers either by coming into Fairfield or Parramatta or requesting one be sent to you. You are also able to download a copy from our website www.humecha.com.au

What happens next?

Your written complaint is added to our complaints register and you will be sent an acknowledgment letter within 48 hours of us receiving it. Your complaint will be assigned to the appropriate manager and an investigation will be conducted. You will be advised of the outcome in writing within 15 working days. The letter should explain clearly what we looked at to reach our decision and any policies and procedures that were considered. If no policy or procedure has been breached or no improvements can be identified, we will explain that no further action will be taken and why.

Alternatively we may provide:

- a. An apology
- b. An explanation
- c. An assurance about future actions
- d. Immediate change to how things are completed

I'm still not happy with the outcome. What can I do now?

If you are still not satisfied, then you can make a request to have your complaint reconsidered by a Senior Manager. You also have the right to lodge an appeal once the initial complaints procedure has been finalised.

Lodging an Appeal

If you are unhappy with a decision made as a result of the initial complaints process, then you can submit an appeal and we will review our decision. You can obtain an Appeal form from our Customer Service Officers either by coming into Fairfield or Parramatta or requesting one be sent to you. You are also able to download a copy from our website www.humecha.com.au

Requesting an Independent Review

If you are still not satisfied with our internal complaints process then you may be able to lodge an appeal with the Housing Appeals Committee (HAC). Further information can be obtained from <http://www.hac.nsw.gov.au/> or from a Hume Housing Officer.

Compliments

We always welcome positive feedback on anything you think we are doing well and look forward to hearing your good news stories.

Please contact us on **02 9722 4300** for further information or email hume@humecha.com.au

Meet the Hume Team

Assets and Maintenance

Introducing Your Customer Service Maintenance Officers – **Charlotte and Veronica.**



Charlotte Siniska
Maintenance



Veronica Potenza
Maintenance

Charlotte and Veronicas friendly caring nature and professional attitude will ensure all your property maintenance issues are handled quickly. They both have a strong sense of compassion and genuine empathy and will do their best to make you feel at ease. If at times you experience difficulties contacting them via phone– you can contact them via email at repairs@humecha.com.au

Charlotte and Veronica are eager to assist you and offer the best possible customer service possible. You can reach them on our dedicated Maintenance Hotline **02 9727 0688** which is available 24 hours day 7 days per week.

Neighbourhood & Customer Services

Introducing Your Neighbourhood Officers – **Chantelle and Vivian.**



Chantelle Woolridge
Neighbourhood Officer



Vivian Lisciotta
Neighbourhood Officer

Our current Neighbourhood Officers are Chantelle Woolridge and Vivian Lisciotta. Both team members have been employed within roles at Hume Housing for some time.

Vivian's portfolio includes Fairfield, Holroyd and Parramatta whilst Chantelle's portfolio covers Ashfield, Campbelltown, Fairfield and Liverpool.

Our previous Neighbourhood Officer Noha Gabriel has moved to a new role within Hume. Whilst we are recruiting please refer your enquiries to Chantelle or Vivian. In addition you can contact Julie Davenport, Coordinator of Neighbourhood Programs.

You may have noticed our inspection process has changed. Your Neighbourhood Officer will complete a short wellbeing survey with you at each visit. This helps us to understand your needs and preferences and identify any assistance we can offer you.

We hope you can attend some of our block events scheduled throughout the year including our environmental upgrade celebrations and get to know your Neighbourhood Officer and our Assets and Community Cohesion team staff.

Any events will be advertised in complexes, through the news letter and via direct mail outs.

Vivian Lisciotta

☎ 0419 590 518

✉ vivian.lisciotta@humecha.com.au

Chantelle Woolridge tel:

☎ 0409 517 768

✉ chantelle.woolridge@humecha.com.au

Julie Davenport (Coordinator Neighbourhood Programs) tel: 0419 130 566