

# THE TENANTS VOICE NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019



## Hume opens Maitland and Raymond Terrace offices

### CEO Message

Welcome to the Spring Edition of the Tenants Voice Newsletter.

Behind the scenes, it's been a busy and successful year for Hume. We're now providing housing and services to support more than 9,000 customers throughout greater Sydney and regional NSW. We have expanded our housing portfolio, including additional homes for people with disability.

The opening of our Maitland and Raymond Terrace offices signify the end of the largest social housing management transfer in Australia to date. This was an incredible team effort where we worked closely with The Department of Communities and Justice and other service providers to achieve this great outcome.

We're looking forward to ensuring our customers in the Hunter enjoy Hume's outstanding service and customer support.

From everyone at Hume, I thank you for another wonderful year and wish you a safe and happy holiday season. We look forward to working with you in 2020..



Sincerely,

**Nicola Lemon**  
CEO Hume Housing

Hume Community Housing officially opened its office in High Street Maitland at an event attended by more than eighty guests, including Maitland Mayor Cr. Loretta Baker and senior representatives from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice.

The opening was celebrated with a Welcome to Country and smoking ceremony by elder James Wilson-Miller to recognise the transfer of around 2,200 homes and around 4,000 customers across Maitland and Port Stephens from the Department of Family and Community Services (DCJ) to Hume.

Nicola Lemon, CEO of Hume, thanked the community for welcoming Hume into the region and acknowledged the support of customers, and partners, in ensuring Hume was ready to open on time.

Hume's entry into the region has already delivered a boost to the local economy through the creation of 45 employment opportunities and the establishment of two offices – a second office in Raymond Terrace opened on November 19, 2019.

Hume has established working partnerships with a number of local service providers to support the delivery of services to customers.

Our offices are located in the heart of our communities:

-  464 High Street, Maitland 2320
-  46 William Street, Raymond Terrace 2324
-  (02) 9722 4300
-  [hume@humehousing.com.au](mailto:hume@humehousing.com.au)





Karen Thornton, Susan and Jenna Nadiotis



Mattea McIntosh, Hannah Richardson, Natalie McCloy, Timothy Grover, Kaylene Chiarelli, Angela Hughes

## Introducing our new Customer Service Team in the Hunter

Hume is committed to providing all our customers with a high level of customer service. Our friendly new team in the Hunter have been employed to assist with enquiries across all our properties in NSW and have experience in a wide range of customer focussed roles.

We look forward to welcoming you in our new Maitland and Raymond Terrace Office. The team are available to assist you with account payments, tenancy related matters and applications for housing.

Until 2021, any Maintenance requests for Hunter customers need to be made through 1800 422 322. Make sure you have a pen ready to write down the job reference number for your maintenance request. Having the job reference number will make it easier for us to make a follow up call if needed.

If you would like to speak to a member of the team, call us on 02 9722 4300 between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

## Susan's Story of Hope; "I'm in a safe place now"

Susan is a strong, determined woman who battled significant loss and trauma before coming to us for help. We supported Susan in Transitional Accommodation for 3 weeks, working with her to secure supported housing appropriate to her medical and social needs.

Susan was left with nowhere to turn to for months on end, feeling hopeless and isolated from the broader community as a series of devastating events led her to the brink of homelessness.

"I've lived with violence and traumatic experiences all my life. I lost my home as a result, going from motels to campsites," said Susan.

Due to escalating health concerns, Susan was desperate to find a stable home that supported her medical needs. After a friend recommended Hume's services to her, Susan visited the Maitland team and was on her way to finding her perfect home.

Today, Susan lives in a shared home with other women with similar stories. The friendship and support she has found with her roommates and the help she received from Hume have inspired her to finish her Diploma in Community Services Case and give back to her local community.

"I'm in a safe place now and believe I can help people who are struggling. There's more to a person than what you see. We all have a story to tell," said Susan.



## Cabramatta seniors unveil their garden of cultural treasures

Hume unveiled a beautiful community garden makeover at our seniors living complex in Cabramatta earlier this week.

Residents and guests mingled in their communal garden to mark the occasion, made possible by a grant from the Social Housing Community Improvement Fund (SHCIF).

Hume received funding through the SHCIF to complete a total of seven community upgrade projects. The SHCIF awards grants to local organisations to improve physical surrounds, facilities and amenities in social housing communities.

The Cabramatta complex is one of Hume's nine dedicated seniors living complexes. The project was an opportunity for our customers

to work collaboratively with us and our community partners to create a space they felt reflected their cultural backgrounds and social needs.

"Our aim for all of these projects was for customers to feel a sense of pride in their home, to feel safe and secure and to have a shared space to congregate, relax and make connections," said Sharn Chisholm, Hume's Executive Manager, People and Culture.

From hand-painted butterflies and a revitalised garden area, to new walkway safety railings and the installation of a stationary bike to encourage exercise, the improvements were the result of customer feedback.

# Fire Preparedness

How fireproof is your plan? We encourage all customers to have a bush fire survival plan ready to ensure your safety is secured. From the Hunter region to Sydney's South-West, dry weather increases the risk of a fire. By taking 20 minutes with your family to discuss what you'll do during a bushfire, you could save their lives, as well as your home. Visit [www.myfireplan.com.au](http://www.myfireplan.com.au).

## There are three simple steps to get ready for a bushfire:

### #1 Discuss what to do if a bushfire threatens your home. Your safest option is to leave early

1. When will you leave?
2. Where will you go?
3. How will you get there?
4. What will you take?
5. Who will you call to tell that you're leaving and that you've arrived safely?
6. What is your backup plan?
7. Neighbourhood Safe Places Check if there is a location near
8. you by visiting [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/nsp](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/nsp)

### #2 Know the bushfire alert levels

Use the NSW RFS website and 'Fires Near Me' app.



#### GENERAL ADVICE

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.



#### WATCH AND ACT

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action to protect you and your family.



#### EMERGENCY WARNING

An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

### #3 Have bushfire information numbers, websites and smartphone app



In an emergency, call Triple Zero (000)

For information on bush fires, call the Bush Fire Information Line 1800 NSW RFS (1800 679 737)



NSW Rural Fire Service Website: [rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://rfs.nsw.gov.au)

Fire Danger Ratings: [rfs.nsw.gov.au/fdr](http://rfs.nsw.gov.au/fdr)



**Fires Near Me**, a free smart phone app



Local radio, local ABC/emergency broadcaster frequency, TV, newspapers



[facebook.com/nswrfs](https://facebook.com/nswrfs)  
[twitter.com/nswrfs](https://twitter.com/nswrfs)

## Planning on being away?

## Here's what you need to know.....

Hume needs to know if you are going to be away from your home for a long time to ensure rent is paid on time – this includes holidays, hospital stays, incarceration, and more. The length of time you can be away from your home depends on the type of lease you have.

Please contact our team if you would like more information.

## Annual Customer Survey

At Hume, we use customer feedback from our annual Customer Survey to shape and develop our services and programs.

Did you take part in our Customer Survey recently? You may be a winner of the survey prize draw - check our website to see if you have won: <https://www.humehousing.com.au/news/customer-survey-winners>

# Rent Payments During the Holiday Break

Hume would like all of our customers to enjoy the festive period and realise that it can be a difficult time when you are trying to balance your budget.

With the holidays just around the corner, paying your bills is a worry that you can do without. However, it is important to ensure that you pay your rent every time of the year. Ensuring that you pay your rent on time gives you one less problem to think about.

**Our Sydney offices will be closed from Wednesday 25th December 2019, reopening on Thursday 2nd January 2020.**

**Our Hunter offices will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day.**

You can continue to pay your rent via Centrepay, at a local NAB bank, via internet banking or through BPAY.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, our team can help you on **02 9722 4300**.



If you are on Centrelink payments, you can sign one of our Centrepay forms. This will let Centrelink pay us directly.



Ask one of our friendly staff members to print off your BPAY details, which will then allow you to pay all your bills online.



Call us on 02 9722 4300 and one of our friendly staff members will take your payment over the phone - all you need is your bank card.

## Schedule Payments

Schedule Payments are easy to set up with your bank - all you need to do is provide the bank with Hume's banking details (listed below) and tell them your tenant code.

Account Name: Hume Community Housing Association Ltd  
Bank: NAB, Macquarie Liverpool NSW 2170  
BSB: 082-343  
Account #: 627 952 830

## Cheque or Money Order

You can also send us a Cheque or Money order via Australia Post to: 7 Hamilton Rd, Fairfield NSW 2165

# Rent Subsidy Application

## A Quick Guide

Hume conducts a social housing rent subsidy review twice a year to ensure you are entitled to a reduced rent. We calculate your rental subsidy based on the combined gross income of your household. You will receive an application pack containing all the forms and instructions you need to participate in the rent review process.

To apply for a rent subsidy, you need to complete the Rent Subsidy Application Form as well as provide income documents from the last 12 weeks. This applies to all household members aged 18 years and over. A list of acceptable income documents will be included in your application pack.

You may opt out of the rent review process by completing a Consent To Pay Maximum Rent form instead. This will be included in the pack.

Each rent review cycle has a due date. It is important to note this date and ensure that you respond on time if you wish to continue receiving a rent subsidy. Your income documents must be submitted together with the application form.

What if I receive a rent subsidy and my household situation changes?

*You may request a rent review at any time outside your rent review cycle. It is important to notify us if there has been a change in your situation such as:*

- An adult household member moves in to or out of the property
- You or another household member starts a new job or leaves a job
- Changes in Centrelink payment types. For example, payment changing from Newstart to Carer Payment
- Changes in employment income – usually defined as being at least a 10% change

*Please advise us within 21 days of the change in your circumstances by completing a Rent Subsidy Application form and submitting with income documents.*

**RENT REVIEW IS NOW HAPPENING**

RENT REVIEW - We conduct a rent subsidy review twice a year to ensure that you are entitled to reduced rent. We calculate your rental subsidy based on the combined gross income of your household.

**WHAT YOU NEED TO DO:**

- 1 Read all of the letters and forms included in this package  
+ Call us if you have any questions or if you need an interpreter call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 131 450 and ask them to call 02 9722 4300
- 2 Provide all of the information we have asked for  
+ Fill in and sign all forms  
+ Tell us if your details have changed ie: who lives in your home
- 3 Scan and email the information back to us - or  
+ Drag the information into our Fairfield or Parramatta Office - or  
+ Make an appointment if you would like someone to assist you

**YOUR CHECKLIST:**

- ✓ Complete and sign the rent subsidy application
- ✓ Provide proof of income for everyone in the household
- ✓ Complete and sign a Centrelink Authorisation - Multiple Consent Authority Form

**You will pay maximum rent if**  
You choose not to apply for a rental subsidy.

**OR**

**OR**  
You do not supply income documentation and household member details by the due date.  
Your income assessment indicates that you are not eligible for a subsidised rent.

## Events and Activities

Monday, 25 November	Liverpool Tenants Voice Meeting
Wednesday, 27 November	Metford Community BBQ
Friday, 29 November	Hume's End of Year Event for Families
Thursday, 5 December	Fairfield Tenants Voice Meeting
Wednesday, 11 December	Christmas Event at Boomerang Park, Raymond Terrace
Wednesday, 18 December	Christmas Event at Maitland Park

If you would like to know more, or suggest your ideas for community cohesion activities, please email us at [get.involved@humehousing.com.au](mailto:get.involved@humehousing.com.au).