



WNews

Wentworth Community Housing Tenant Newsletter

Issue 42 | December 2019

Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to the summer edition of WNews, which comes to you after a period of already very hot and dry weather in Western Sydney. As well as having a plan in place in case of bushfire emergency—so you can protect yourself, your family and your property—it's important to stay cool and save money on energy this season. Read on to find some information.

2019 has been a busy year at Wentworth and the last quarter of this year saw us involved in crucial events and activities that held true to our aim of promoting tenant wellbeing and ending homelessness.

October marked the first anniversary of Neighbourhood Jobs and there was a lot to celebrate! We are very proud to be supporting young people across Western Sydney achieve their employment goals and at the same time offering yard maintenance services to tenants. We're delighted to share the success with you, read on to find out more.

Talking about success, our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) has received a grant from Penrith City Council to fund our Get Together project, which aims to promote tenant participation and inclusion. I'm so delighted to see our TAG grow so much! Last year, the group has tripled in size and we are always welcoming more to join. In this issue you will find more information about activities for the coming year and how you can get involved. We have also included a calendar for 2020 with all the important TAG dates for you.

Last, but not least, Wentworth is partnering with Uniting to make it easier for older tenants to get help around the house so you can continue to live independently. We bring you more information about this partnership and I hope you find it useful.

After a busy and exciting quarter, we are ready for the end of the year. On behalf of the Board and all the staff at Wentworth I would like to wish you a safe and happy festive season. Keep safe and cool this summer and looking forward to keeping in touch in 2020.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen McIntyre".

Stephen McIntyre
Chief Executive Officer

Happy birthday Neighbourhood Jobs!

In October last year, Neighbourhood Jobs got started as a training program for young people aged 15-24 years who are facing barriers to employment in Western Sydney. The aim is to help them to stand out from the crowd in the competitive job market.



As a social enterprise, Neighbourhood Jobs employs the young people to provide general maintenance services at an affordable rate to social housing tenants who need help with their properties. The service is also available to customers living in privately owned and leased properties as well as by contract to other organisations.

In September, Neighbourhood Jobs secured a 36-month contract as Uniting Blacktown's preferred provider, with the potential to service up to 150 of Uniting's home and aged care clients across Western Sydney. This is huge!

Here are some of the accomplishments of Neighbourhood Jobs so far:

- ▶ 33 young people have come through the program, with 14 identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander
- ▶ Helped 11 young people transition into work
- ▶ More than 100 skill and development sessions held to date
- ▶ Over 200 customers with 40% being Wentworth tenants spread across Blacktown, the Blue Mountains, Cumberland, Hawkesbury, Penrith & The Hills Shire LGAs
- ▶ Over 400 jobs completed.

If you need help with odd jobs like mowing, bulk waste removal, window and gutters cleaning, you can get a Wentworth tenant discount rate. If you want to become one of Neighbourhood Jobs young employees we look forward to hearing from you. Email admin@neighbourhoodjobs.org.au or get in touch with the team on **1300 NBR JBS (1300 627 527)**.



Need assistance? Ask Izzy

When you're looking for support, Ask Izzy can help you find the services you need. Ask Izzy is a free and anonymous website as well as phone app, which lists over 360,000 services including housing, meals, healthcare, counselling, legal advice, addiction treatment, and much more.

Visit askizzy.org.au for more details. If you are on the Telstra mobile network, you can access Ask Izzy without credit.

Help around the home for older tenants

Did you know that you could get some help around the home if you are over 65 or over 50 if you are Aboriginal?

As you get older, living independently in your home can get harder. If you're finding it challenging to do the things that you used to, you may be eligible for in home support.

Wentworth is partnering with Uniting to make it easier for our tenants to get information about aged care services. They have staff who can support you to get services through the aged care system. They will

sit with you, fill out forms and help you get started through the government's *My Aged Care* website so you can get a package of assistance. Uniting may also be able to help while you wait for an aged care package.

Call the Sustainable Communities Team on **4777 8000** and we can pass your details to our partners at Uniting.

We want you: get involved with Wentworth in 2020

Tenant Advisory Group—Get amongst it!

Our Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) is a fantastic way to connect with others in the community and have a say about the things that affect your tenancy, your property and the lives of those around you.



TAG is a group of volunteer tenants who meet every two months to review Wentworth's policies, advocate for tenants, and work on community projects. This group is open to all tenants of Wentworth Community Housing, with regular meetings

in the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury and Penrith. We value each other and welcome diversity.

As well as meetings, we hold Tenant Advocacy Training every year, which includes workshops on:

- ▶ how the housing system works
- ▶ organising community events
- ▶ advocacy and volunteering.

We have included a 2020 TAG calendar for you to put on your fridge at home so you have all the information and dates to get involved with TAG in the new year.

If you are interested in attending TAG or the Tenant Advocacy Training and want more information, contact Vanessa Tomas at vanessa.tomas@wentworth.org.au on **02 4777 8078**.

Tenants get together to build resilient communities

On 4 December our tenants and staff participated in the first Get Together BBQ event at Quarterdeck, Penrith. The Get Together project received a grant from Penrith City Council aiming to promote tenant participation and inclusion.



We want to create an informal environment for Wentworth staff and tenants to meet and talk. This initiative is to assist our tenants to build confidence and create opportunities for residents to discuss their experiences and at the same time, identify and work through issues of common concern.

A big shout out to all the tenants who helped on the day doing various jobs, which included cooking a delicious barbecue lunch for the people who attended the event.

If you want to get involved with TAG, read the '**We want you: get involved with Wentworth in 2020**' in this newsletter.

Stay cool this summer

During the hot summer months, it can be difficult to stay cool and enjoy yourself, especially if you don't have air conditioning or need to be outside. Here's a list of what you can do to keep safe in the heat this summer:

- ▶ Drink plenty of water even if you don't feel thirsty.
- ▶ If your doctor normally limits your fluids, check how much to drink during hot weather.
- ▶ Stock up on food, water and medicines to last up to a week so you don't have to go out in a heat wave.
- ▶ Check that you can store your medication at less than 25°C.
- ▶ Consider getting cool packs to have in the fridge or freezer to help you cool down if needed.
- ▶ Put wet towels or cool packs on your arms or neck or put your feet in cool water.
- ▶ Use your stove and oven as little as possible.
- ▶ When you're outside, you can beat the heat by looking for shade, going to areas with a natural breeze, and wearing long sleeve light weight clothes.

You can get more information from the NSW Health website—www.health.nsw.gov.au/environment/beattheheat

Be inspired

In February we launched a new community choir called Inspire choir in partnership with the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre.



The Inspire Choir is all about having fun and the weekly rehearsals involve a lot of laughter. Some of the 35 members have sung in choirs before and others have never sung to anyone but themselves.

Participants are working on a range of simple songs usually in two or three parts. Nothing too complicated!

We meet from 6.30 to 8.30pm every Tuesday night during school terms only at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre on High Street, Penrith.

To find out when Inspire Choir will resume their activities in 2020 and for more information, contact Heather Chaffey at heather.chaffey@wentworth.org.au or on **02 4777 8026**.

Joining and participating is free! We hope to see you there!

Are you experiencing financial difficulty?

If you feel like you're having difficulty paying your rent and bills, please talk to us. We will work with you to see if we can find a solution.

Email admin@wentworth.org.au or call us on **02 4777 8000**

Keep on top of rent payments

We understand that the Festive Season is a busy time of year for everyone and it also comes with some financial pressure. It is important to continue to meet your obligations by paying your rent on time. Please remember that the public holidays may cause payment processing delays. While our offices are closed between Christmas & New Year, rent charges will be applied to rent accounts without disruption.

Offices closing times over the Christmas and New Year's period



All Wentworth offices will close over the Christmas and New Year period.

On Friday 20 December the Penrith, Windsor and Katoomba offices will be closed at 4.30pm.

All our offices will reopen at 8.30am Thursday 2 January.

If you have any urgent maintenance issues, you can call our maintenance line on **02 4777 8000** (choose option 1)

Bushfire season

A difficult and dangerous bushfire season has already started in Western Sydney. As we have experienced over several weeks, hot and dry conditions are likely to continue across NSW throughout summer.

It's time for you to have a plan in place in case of bushfire emergency, and you can visit www.myfireplan.com.au for more information. Prepare an emergency kit, which should include critical medications, scripts, and pet supplies. Keep personal ID, mobile phone and credit cards on you.

The Rural Fire Service website is a useful resource to keep up to date with general fire information and to learn how to plan and prepare. See www.rfs.nsw.gov.au



As well as the Rural Fire Service website, you can monitor conditions by downloading the Fire Near Me app—Fires Near Me NSW.

Take precautions to protect your own and your loved ones with three simple steps:

- ▶ Drink plenty of water
- ▶ Keep cool
- ▶ Have your asthma medication on hand

We will continue to experience significant smoke drift this season. If you see an unattended fire (not just smoke) call 000 immediately.

Look out for your neighbours, especially anyone particularly vulnerable (children, the frail elderly or others with mobility issues).

Trusted sources of information are:

- ▶ ABC 702 (our emergency broadcaster)
- ▶ Your local RFS Brigade Facebook page

If you do not have access to the internet or radio, contact the Bushfire Information Line on **1800 679 737** or **1800 NSW RFS** for up-to-date information.

For people living in the Blue Mountains here are some other good resource tips: have a look at the events and activities in the Blue Mountains to help you prepare for the season by visiting www.mcrn.org.au/index.php/emergencies/emergency-pages-menu

Take care and stay safe this summer!

Save on bills

There are better ways to spend your money in summer than on energy bills. Here are some things you could do to save money:

- ▶ Keep your fan blades free of dust: by keeping your fan blades free of dust, they'll be more aerodynamic and require less power to run.
- ▶ Thaw frozen meat the best way: use the fridge instead of using the microwave. Yes, it will take longer, but by thawing meat in the fridge overnight it will defrost more consistently, as opposed to being partially cooked on the outside and still frozen in the middle. Plus, you won't be chewing up additional power by running your microwave unnecessarily.
- ▶ Change the time you use energy away from peak times: consider running your washing machine late at night for example.
- ▶ Replace inefficient appliances with energy or water saving appliances. If you need financial assistance replacing appliances, contact an agency that offers No Interest Loan Scheme (NILS). To find an agency, visit www.nilsnswfindascheme.org.au

Maintenance Queries

Remember for all Maintenance Queries please ring **02 4777 8000** (choose option 1).





**OUT OF HOURS
EMERGENCY
MAINTENANCE LINE
02 4777 8000
(choose option 1)**

Head office

Penrith

Address: Borec House
Suite 1002, Level 1
29-57 Station Street, Penrith 2750
PO Box 4303, Penrith Westfield 2750

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Fax: (02) 4777 8099

Email: admin@wentworth.org.au

Opening hours:

8:30am-4:30pm Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri
1:00pm-4:30pm Wed

Branches

Hawkesbury

Address: 409A George Street
South Windsor

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am-4:30pm
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri (closed Wed)

Blue Mountains

Address: Level 2, 98 Bathurst Road
Katoomba

Phone: (02) 4777 8000

Opening Hours: 8:30am-4:30pm
Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri (closed Wed)

Connect with Wentworth on Social Media



Interested in what's happening in your community, Wentworth and the housing sector? Connecting with us has never been easier.

If you are interested in finding out the latest news, job ads or up to date information from Wentworth, please like the Facebook Page today.

 [www.facebook.com/
WentworthCommunityHousing](https://www.facebook.com/WentworthCommunityHousing)

Or connect on

 [Twitter | @Wentworth_CH](https://twitter.com/Wentworth_CH)

 [Instagram | wentworthcommunityhousing](https://www.instagram.com/wentworthcommunityhousing)

 [LinkedIn | Wentworth Community Housing](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Wentworth-Community-Housing)

Next WNEWS

Our next edition of WNEWS will be out in March 2020 and will be mailed and displayed on Wentworth's Website www.wentworth.org.au/resources-newsletters

If you would like to see an article on a specific topic please email admin@wentworth.org.au

