

newsletter

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The 2010 Tenant Survey results are in...

At the end of last year, Bridge Housing conducted its annual Tenant Survey. We sent out over 1300 surveys to all of our tenants to ask how well we are doing as a housing organisation and to ask for feedback to help shape the services we provide.

Bridge Housing would like to thank those who took part in the 2010 Annual Tenant Survey and for the positive response we received – with 88% of respondents being happy or satisfied with the overall service that Bridge Housing provides.

That doesn't mean we can't improve further. Further results and some key recommendations can be found on page 2, showing the feedback you gave and the work that we plan to do to act on this.

In fact, work is already underway on next years survey. For details on how you can be involved in the development of the 2011 Tenants Survey please see the details on page 4.

2011
Tenants
Survey
Page 4

Thank you

88% of respondents are happy or satisfied with the overall service we provide.

Introducing Your New Housing Teams

Bridge Housing has over 1500 properties spread across a wide geographical area, extending from Bondi and Coogee in the east, through the city and out to Parramatta and Bankstown in the west.

To manage these properties, they are split into property portfolios, with a dedicated Housing Manager looking after each one.

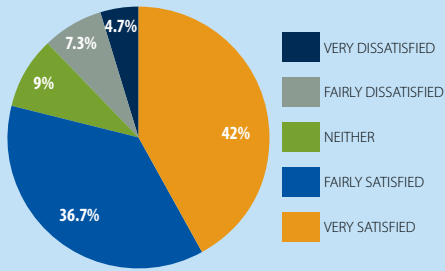
Bridge Housing has recently reviewed these property portfolios so that Housing Managers will now look after a defined geographical area. This means that Bridge Housing will be able to work more efficiently and build up our local knowledge and networks, to deliver a better service to you.

There are now two housing teams; the East team is managed by Sarah Barclay and the West team is managed by Katherine White.

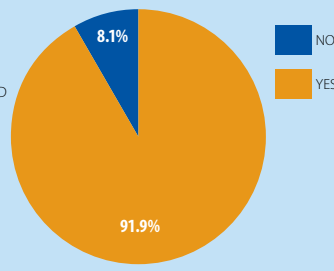
By now, you should have received a letter detailing which area your home falls into and who your Housing Manager is. If you have not received these details please call Bridge Housing on 9699 6055. These details are also available on our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.

Tenant Survey Results

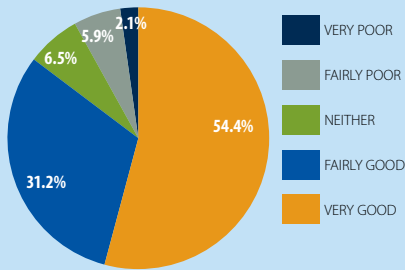
Generally, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the way Bridge Housing Limited deals with repairs and maintenance?



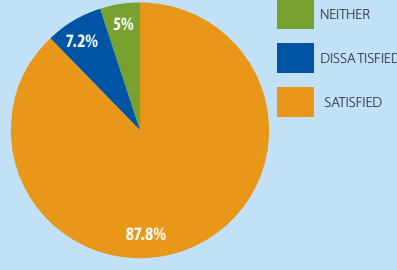
Are you happy with your neighbourhood as a place to live?



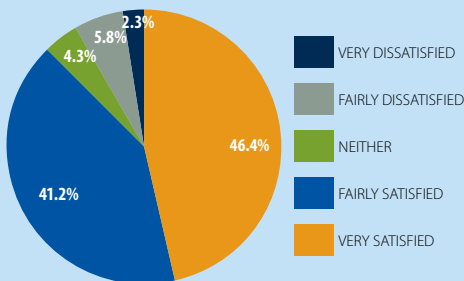
How good or poor do you feel Bridge Housing Limited is at keeping you informed about things that might affect you as a tenant?



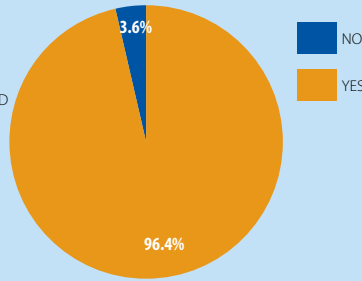
Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the services provided by Bridge Housing Limited?



Please rate your satisfaction with the general condition of your current home?



In your dealings with Bridge Housing Limited, have you found the organisation to be respectful of your culture and background?



You said, we've acted

You gave Bridge Housing lots of feedback in the survey. These are just some of the ways in which we are going to act on what you said:

You said:

Overall satisfaction levels are good with 88% of respondents saying they are happy with our service.

We've acted

Bridge Housing will use the 2011 survey to ask tenants how we can still improve.

You said:

A high number of respondents said they were happy with their neighbourhood as a place to live.

We've acted

Bridge Housing will introduce a series of local meetings to find out from residents what we can do to make those neighbourhoods even better. We will use the 2011 survey to ask what are the issues you want our help to resolve, e.g. vandalism, graffiti, parking, landscaping.

You said:

Respondents were happy with the customer service Bridge Housing provides, but 21% said that getting hold of the right person was difficult.

We've acted

Bridge Housing will produce a customer service charter setting out the standards that tenants can expect when contacting us and will provide

training for all staff on customer service.

You said:

Respondents were generally satisfied with how Bridge Housing manages its repairs and scored the process of how repairs are completed very positively.

We've acted

Bridge Housing will issue guidance to tenants explaining how different types of repairs are completed and in what timeframe. The customer service charter will also draw material from the Contractors Code of Conduct to highlight how Bridge Housing expects contractors to behave in your home.

You said:

A high number of respondents felt that they are kept informed about things that might affect them as a tenant, but the number was slightly smaller when asked if they thought their views were taken into account.

We've acted

We will continue to work with the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) and look at how we can work with other residents to gain their views on particular policies and the way we work, e.g. working groups, expansion of TAG.

CEO Update



We reached a historical marker in April when the NSW State Government formally gave the title on the new NBESP properties to community housing providers.

This is a significant step for Bridge Housing as it moves from a housing

management entity, to an organisation with assets that enable us to procure and develop property in our own right.

This will allow greater control over our own future, providing the ability to increase affordable housing supply through borrowing.

It also provides a marker for Bridge Housing's journey. Last week I presented our 11/12 business plan to the Board and we discussed the extraordinary growth of Bridge Housing over the last three years and what the organisation has achieved over this period. This is delivered through a strong board, building our management capabilities and continuing to provide good service delivery. This is reflected in the 88% satisfaction rating achieved in this year's tenant survey which is above community housing and public housing benchmarks.

Bridge Housing's capabilities have been recognised more recently in a number of positive ways. We have been awarded additional NRAS 4 subsidies for the redevelopment of the inner city site at Cowper St. This will enable Bridge Housing to put up to \$10m into the scheme and secure title on 153 seniors units.

We have also been awarded two significant contracts; the first is \$2.7m over three years to provide accommodation for 70 rough sleepers from the Woolloomooloo area, the second to undertake upgrading work of \$900k on crisis accommodation properties.

This will build on our existing homelessness programs; My Place and the Homelessness Intervention Program.

Bridge Housing also has a very pro-active maintenance and upgrade program, and as this newsletter reports; it is pleasing to see the positive feedback we are receiving from tenants. We will seek to build upon our existing program by piloting a holistic approach to maintenance and enable further tenant input through our neighbourhood audit program.

John Nicolades
Chief Executive Officer

Investing in your homes

Bridge Housing has shown in previous newsletters the new housing that we have received from Housing NSW, but there is also a lot of work being done to look after our existing homes.

Over the past financial year, Bridge Housing has spent a total of \$2 million to improve the condition of our capital properties. In fact, over the next financial year, Bridge Housing aims to spend the same amount renovating and upgrading its homes.

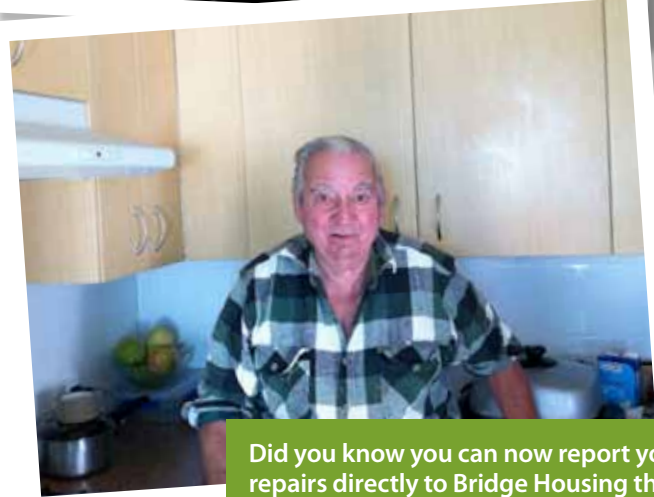
Michelle from Balmain, has been living in her property for the last 12 years. This property used to be managed by Housing NSW but was handed over to Bridge Housing to manage late last year.

Michelle had all of her bedrooms painted, along with her bathroom and had new carpets fitted throughout.

"It's lovely new carpet, and I chose the colour scheme so the paint and the carpet go very well together. I am very happy."

Randolph is also very happy with the recent renovations that were completed to his home, which included a completely new bathroom and kitchen.

"I bloody love it, its one of the greatest things that has happened. It (the property) was falling apart before and now it's so beautiful. I got to choose the colour for the bench tops. The contractors were wonderful."



Did you know you can now report your repairs directly to Bridge Housing through our web site at www.bridgehousing.org.au

Neighbourhood Audits

Following the recent team changes, Bridge Housing will be launching a new program of regular Neighbourhood Audits.



From July, instead of tenants having to call Bridge Housing or visit our offices to report a particular concern or issue, Housing Managers will be conducting regular inspections in the neighbourhoods that we operate in and we want to invite you along.

Housing Managers will be assessing repairs and maintenance, neighbourhood issues (such as noise, vandalism, anti-social behaviour etc.), condition of communal areas, plus any other matters that may arise.

It is a great opportunity to get involved with the issues that affect you as a tenant. The aim is for Bridge Housing to encourage other agencies in your neighbourhood to attend when there are issues raised that we think they can help with, e.g., NSW Police, support agencies, local government agencies or various Bridge Housing Limited contractors.

Further information will be sent out when the final program of Neighbourhood Audits has been agreed and information will be available on our website www.bridgehousing.org.au.

Act Now

To Protect Your Home From Mould

Winter is the time of year when many Bridge Housing properties are affected by mould and mildew. This is because as the cold weather hits we close our windows and doors even more to protect us from the winter chill. But by warming the moisture in the air and giving it nowhere to escape to, condensation forms which then leads to mould and mildew.

This is a common issue in bathroom and kitchens, however it can happen in any room of the house. A common myth about mould and mildew is that it is a result from dampness getting into homes, when its actually caused by how our homes are used.

There are a few simple steps that you can take to prevent mould and mildew taking hold.

These include:

- opening doors and windows as much as possible, even in this weather, to improve ventilation
- putting lids on saucepans while cooking and turn on your extractor fan, to improve ventilation
- avoid cluttering rooms with furniture and boxes
- avoid drying clothes indoors

If your home is affected by mould or mildew, try cleaning affected areas with a recommended mould removal product.



Update from TAG and the NSW Tenant Network

Since the last newsletter the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) has met twice, both in April and more recently in June.

At the April meeting, Hugh Phemister, General Manager for Assets spoke to the group about his previous experience and also recent changes in the service delivery of repairs and maintenance at Bridge Housing.

The Assets team also came and spoke about their experience and current responsibilities. We had the opportunity to break into groups and discuss both the good and bad points of the current repairs and maintenance process, which were taken back to Bridge Housing for review. We also voted on a new Vice Chairperson for the Tenant Advisory Group, and I would like to welcome Clive Matthews into the Vice Chairperson position.

For the June meeting, the theme was 'Noise and Nuisance' – what other agencies can do, what we can do as tenants and also what Bridge Housing responsibilities are as a Landlord. The guest speakers for the day were Charmaine Jones

from the Inner Sydney Regional Council and Sarah Barclay, Team Leader at Bridge Housing. John Nicolades, CEO at Bridge Housing, also gave the group an update on what is currently happening at Bridge Housing, notably, what Housing Providers are doing in regard to registration. I was able to inform John that I was recently appointed as an observer to the Registrar Advisory Forum and that I attended a second meeting in May.

Both meetings were well attended and we had some new faces. We have scheduled the next two meetings for Thursday 4 August and Wednesday 5 October 2011.

Finally, the NSW Tenant Network recently held elections for all positions on the committee. The elections were held on the 7th June and I am pleased to say that all official positions were filled. I am now the Secretary and Newsletter editor. The network is currently working hard on "The Rules" for the group and we hope to have a draft in the near future. In June, the network visited the sustainable "Barrett House" in Randwick and I have also attended the Homelessness conference run by Shelter NSW.

I hope to see all our regular tenants and some more new faces at our August meeting.

Pamela Pryor
Chairperson

Connecting Communities



In early May, Bridge Housing invited all tenants who live in the Leichhardt Local Government Area to take part in an information forum named Connecting Communities. Tenants who attended the forum had the opportunity to network with council members, community agencies and other social housing tenants.

The day was a great success. Jamie Parker MP, and Mayor of Leichhardt, (seen here with Bridge Housing tenant Les Wicks), addressed the crowd along with representatives from various community agencies, promoting the many services available for people who live in the area.

Your chance to get involved....

Sign up here to help us with the 2011 Tenant Survey!

The Annual Tenant survey is all about improving the service we provide to our tenants, so who better to help us ask the right questions in the right way than you!

Bridge Housing would like to invite interested tenants to a working group to help shape the 2011 Survey.

Tenant Advisory Group Future Events

*Redfern Town Hall
73 Pitt Street, Redfern NSW 2016*

*Thursday 4 August 2011 -
10.00 - 1.00*

Tenant Survey and Fire safety

(Your chance to help Bridge Housing with the 2011 Tenant Survey and also learn about the importance of fire safety)

*Wednesday 5 October 2011 -
10.00 - 1.00*

How Can We Involve Tenants More In What We do?

(TAG will be discussing the future development of the group and how we can continue to involve Bridge tenants)



Local governments or councils provide valuable community services in the area they govern.

To find out what is on in your neck of the woods, look up your local council's website or call their switchboard to get connected!

We will be asking tenants for their input into questions surrounding some key service areas such as customer service, repairs and maintenance, cultural awareness and neighbourhoods. A working lunch will be provided and assistance given towards transport costs.

If you are interested in attending this workshop or would like further information, please call Emmanuel Smith-Aspros on 9699 6055 or email e.smith-aspros@bridgehousing.org.au.