

**INSIDE**

Orbit	2
National Reconciliation Week	2
Community Gardens!	3
What's on	4
Bridge Buddies	4
TAG	5
Good Neighbour Champion Winners!	6
Repairs Feedback Survey Winners!	6

# "It doesn't matter how others see us, what's more important is how we see ourselves"

Priscilla is an inner city tenant with Bridge Housing who kindly shares parts of her community, culture and life with us.

**My name is Priscilla, I'm originally from Cherbourg, which was an Aboriginal mission when I was a child and is currently known as an Aboriginal community in Queensland. My people are Wakka Wakka and Birri Gubba. I've lived in NSW most of my life.**



Priscilla and Kamal (Communities Team)

There are many local community examples of "In This Together" which is the National Reconciliation Week 2020 theme. The Aboriginal Medical Service (AMS) in Redfern had their recent pop up flu immunisation clinic. Held over 3 days at the National Centre of Indigenous Excellence (NCIE), this Aboriginal staff led clinic partnered with the Sydney Local Health District and OzHarvest. Also at the NCIE Redfern, their previous 2019 NAIDOC community event was deadly! More recently, NCIE had a food hamper

distribution for the community during the NSW Coronavirus restrictions. The AMS has their Koori Exercise Clinic with fitness instructor Alex. Tribal Warrior in Redfern has their Clean Slate Without Prejudice boxing program. I attend Maria's boxing fitness classes at Marrickville at PCYC which is diverse and affordable. These are all accessible and available for the community. This may not be known mainstream but this is a community. It doesn't matter how others see us, what's more important is how we see ourselves.

It's important to mention negative policing and its ongoing devastating impact on Aboriginal families and communities. My earliest memory of police had to do with police brutality. I was 7 or 8 years old and it was an incident involving two of my close family members. That was over 40 years ago. It was another time and another place but still continues in our communities today. From the current strip search powers by police on our Aboriginal children and teenagers, to the official known Aboriginal black deaths in custody. The force and abuse of power by police feels degrading and is unnecessary.

On reflection, we're all in this together and we must all stand together in hope of a better tomorrow. Us Aboriginal

Women, Mothers, Grandmothers and Auntys have always contributed towards bringing about change. I volunteer in the community by providing professional development, support and assistance to Aboriginal female front-line workers. Through development, progress and technology, our communities are doing more. It's important to always remember that our older siblings, family members and mature workers had less.

My own transition throughout life has had consistent themes to do with our rights, knowledge exchange, sharing information and considering all our options. Sometimes throughout life, for reasons out of our control, relationships may not survive but we can form new relationships and make existing ones stronger. Life goes on and it's about how we stay together as a community.

**General Enquiries** - 8324 0800  
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**Repairs** - 8324 0886  
[repairs@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:repairs@bridgehousing.org.au)

**Community** - 8324 0827  
[community@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:community@bridgehousing.org.au)

**Housing Pathways Applications**  
8324 0890  
[pathways@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:pathways@bridgehousing.org.au)

**Housing Team & Tenancies**  
8324 0885  
[customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:customerservice@bridgehousing.org.au)

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## CEO Update

I hope you are well and safe and looking forward to socialising with family and friends as Australia's COVID-19 restrictions begin to ease. It's been an unsettling time for many people as the pandemic forced us to quickly adjust to a new 'normal'.

National Reconciliation Week is a significant event we celebrate each year. We recognise the importance of reconciliation as a way to acknowledge the past and to move forward with building relationships and engaging with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants, staff and communities. Sadly we know that years of dispossession, structural racism and inequality continue to have a huge impact for Australia's First People. Myself, my team and the Bridge Housing Community express our solidarity with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with the Black Lives Matter human rights movement.

I'd like to draw your attention to Bridge Housing's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP sets out how we will work with tenants, applicants and the community to support reconciliation under the themes respect, relationships and opportunities. You can access this from our website at <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au>.

I am excited to say that we have opened our annual tenant survey which is administered by CHIA NSW who are the Community Housing peak body in NSW. The tenant survey will help us to understand how we can deliver better services to you and I encourage all tenants to provide us with your feedback. The survey closes 17 July 2020 and there are some great prizes up for grabs so please don't forget to complete in the mail, by email or on our website.

As this period of uncertainty continues and as we continue to adjust, I wish everyone a safe and warm winter.

**John Nicolades, CEO**



[bridgehousing.org.au](https://www.bridgehousing.org.au)

## Orbit

This year we transformed our annual kids engagement day into Orbit! Online, delivered in partnership with The Settlement and The Story Factory. Over 80 children participated, receiving an activity pack developed by The Settlement, and a series of online challenges including creating a fairy garden, building a Lego home and creating a snow wonderland. The final challenge asked children to use their imagination to help Russ and John from [The Story Factory](#), find a way to get out of the internet! We uploaded heaps of photos on Facebook, so check it out if you haven't already.



Resident Sara and her wonderful fairy garden



## National Reconciliation Week

Each year we celebrate National Reconciliation Week (NRW) which is held between 27 May and 3 June. NRW offers the opportunity to celebrate and promote respectful relationships between all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous people. This year we had to postpone our biennial Art Exhibition but we were still able to deliver a week-long awareness and activity program promoting awareness of reconciliation across our staff and tenant community. In collaboration with members of the ATTAG and the RAP working group, we held an activity each day to encourage staff to reflect and learn, as well as sharing online themes and resources through our website and Facebook page. We were fortunate to be able to sit down with Eunice, a Gomeroi woman and Bridge Housing resident who shared her recollections of growing up and of what reconciliation means to her. If you haven't seen the video, you can find it at <https://bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/get-involved-2/reconciliation-action-plan/national-reconciliation-week>

## Bridge to Work

Our Bridge To Work program can help you if you are interested in finding work, returning to education or volunteering. Sam, our Employment Support Coordinator, can meet you at a time and place that is convenient for you. Sam can assist with refreshing your resume, learning how to apply for jobs online or work with you to create an action plan to develop your skills. Sam has recently placed Ash, pictured, in a new role as an Uber driver. Sam supported Ash to negotiate part-time hours and explore training options to help him realise his employment goal after years of unemployment. For more information on the Bridge To Work program or to learn how to register, please call Sam Belhajji on **0447 092 194** or by email: [Samira.Belhajji@coact.org.au](mailto:Samira.Belhajji@coact.org.au)



Ash, Bridge to Work participant



# Community Gardens!

By Julie (tenant at South Coogee)

Bridge Housing, with the support and assistance of the Royal Botanic Gardens Community Greening Program has assisted tenants to establish nine community gardens under the Our Place Green Space Community Gardening initiative, with three more in the pipeline. Julie, a South Coogee tenant shares the story of her and her neighbour's efforts to transform a dry backyard verge into a wonderful space.

After our Community Garden project was approved late last year, the first workshop was held on January 22 on an extremely hot afternoon. As a group of 4 tenant households, ranging in age from 18 months to late 60's, all single mothers, we all spoke about our ideas to Darren, our Royal Botanic Garden's Community Greening Officer while enjoying a lovely lunch from Bridge Housing. Joanne from Bridge provided us with the hose and watering can as part of the Our Place Green Space program, and Darren guided the first planting, a navel orange tree and a lemon tree. We cheered and photographed the momentous occasion of breaking of the sandy earth. We took turns watering the two small trees before throwing down plenty of sugarcane mulch, so important for helping the new plants retain moisture in the direct sunlight and avoiding them drying out too quickly.

Unfortunately our next workshop on 25 March had to be adapted because of the COVID-19 isolation rules, but



Darren led us on a virtual workshop, installing three raised beds, planting one with six rocket plantings, a variety of lettuces and a cherry tomato. In the following days we took turns to plant veggies and herbs like silver beet, herbs, Chinese greens, tomato, and celery into the other beds, remembering to keep our distance and have one gardener working at a time. The only flowers planted at this stage are pansies, which provide lots of bright colour in and around the veggies, and attract butterflies and insects, very important for biodiversity in the garden!

Over the many warm dry days of April and May since then, tenants have taken turns conscientiously watering our new veggie beds and citrus trees with our new 30.5m garden hose and watering can, taking pleasure in the rapid growth of the plants under the Autumn sunshine planted in the nutrient rich soil. After not too long we were able to harvest our own preferred plants, lemons, silver beet, herbs and rocket for meals for us and our families. This project has helped us all save a little bit of money as we are now able to pick only what we need from a plant. The taste of your own culinary garden is such a wonderful thing which I strongly encourage you to try.

The photos showing the project at its early and current stage, demonstrating we've made a great start to a delicious, healthy, increased



self-sufficiency. Recently Darren dropped off some winter plants which are now in the ground so in the next month we look forward to harvesting kale, Chinese red cabbage and Chinese greens.

Three more workshops are scheduled this year, more or less one for each season, July, September and November. Composting and worms will be one of them. We couldn't have done it without Darren, Joanne and the Bridge Housing team.



**Are you thinking of creating a community garden in your block?  
Give the Communities Team a call and find out how you can get started.  
Phone 8324 0800 or email [community@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:community@bridgehousing.org.au)**

## Energy bills support

Has your income reduced or have you lost your job as a result of COVID-19? Do you have an overdue bill or are you worried you won't be able to pay your next bill? Visit the Energy and Water Ombudsman (EWON) website <https://www.ewon.com.au/page/media-center/news/updates/covid-19-customer-support> or call **1800 246 545**. EWON provides information about rebates and how to reduce your energy and water usage. EWON also provides support if you're struggling to pay your bills and if you're having difficulty reaching an agreement with your energy and water provider.





# What's on... Online?

## Your local council:

Do you find it easy and fun to navigate the online world? Councils have so much to offer online, especially when face-to-face activities are reduced. Canterbury-Bankstown Council has Keep Connected with CBTv – a new digital place for online workouts, story times, performances, how-tos and news. Find them on Facebook, YouTube and the council website [www.cbcity.nsw.gov.au/events/cbtv](http://www.cbcity.nsw.gov.au/events/cbtv). Cumberland City Council is exploding with online activities, exercise and courses for any age. We suggest you check it out at [www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/whats-online](http://www.cumberland.nsw.gov.au/whats-online).

Northern Beaches Council has moved the 2020 Northern Beaches Art Prize exhibition online from 31 July - 20 September. Featuring 60 finalists across two categories, the winner will be announced 31 July. Find the exhibition here: <https://www.northernbeaches.nsw.gov.au/things-to-do/arts-and-culture/northern-beaches-art-prize>.

## Kanopy:

Kanopy has partnered with local libraries and universities to bring you a streaming service to watch thousands of films at no cost. The fees are covered by your local library and there are no commercials. To log in, use your library membership for access

to over 30,000 films including classic Australian, independent and world movies and documentaries. To get started, go to <https://www.kanopy.com/>.

## Be Connected:

Be Connected is an Australia wide initiative empowering all Australians to thrive in a digital world. You'll find online learning resources as well as a Network of community partners - the Be Connected Network - who offer support so you can develop your digital skills and confidence. Go to [beconnected.esafety.gov.au/](https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/) and start exploring!

# What's on... Offline?

## Western Sydney Parklands

Are you looking for a relaxing weekend activity, kid-friendly destination or just eager to get active outdoors? Look no further than Western Sydney Parklands! With over 60km of tracks and trails waiting to be explored PLUS award-winning playgrounds, activities and lookouts, there's no better time to get off the beaten track and into 'Sydney's Biggest Backyard'.



Access digital trails and information at [www.westernsydeyparklands.com.au/](http://www.westernsydeyparklands.com.au/)

## Dreamtime and Taronga Zoo

In Aboriginal culture, animals are significant and have an important part in Dreamtime stories about how life and landscapes came to be. You can find a collection of Dreamtime stories here: <https://dreamtime.net.au/dreaming/story-list/>. We would love to see your interpretations of these stories. Draw a picture and send it to us at [communities@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:communities@bridgehousing.org.au). We will be offering tickets to Taronga Zoo in return\*.

\*Tickets are limited. 2 tickets per household until tickets are exhausted.



## ATTAG wellbeing art and craft club

Are you creative? Do you like to paint or draw? Are you good with building things? Perhaps you love to knit? Whatever art and craft you enjoy doing, consider joining the ATTAG Wellbeing Art and Craft Club. Let us know what you're working on, meet people with similar interests and showcase your work! Don't have all the materials to launch your art project? Let us know, we might be able to help with purchasing the items you need. Register by emailing [communities@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:communities@bridgehousing.org.au) or call 02 8324 0800.

# Bridge Buddies

As restrictions start to lift and people slowly start to interact with one another, it is a great time to consider the Bridge Buddies program. Whether you'd like to meet new people, find a pen pal or ask someone about how to understand your rent review, Bridge Buddies can connect you with another Bridge Housing tenant. How does it work? Once you've registered, the Community Team will match you with an interested resident and help facilitate the initial contact between buddies. The buddies will then be able to arrange times that suit them to talk on the phone or meet in person. For more information or to register as a buddy and be connected with someone who has similar interests, please contact the Community Team on 8324 0800 or by email: [communitiy@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:communitiy@bridgehousing.org.au)





# Bridge Housing Tenant Advisory Groups



The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) are made up of Bridge Housing tenants who volunteer their time to give back to the tenant community and provide feedback to help Bridge Housing improve the way we do things.

## Northern Beaches TAG Workshop

On 12 June a group of 11 tenants from the Northern Beaches met virtually with Bridge Housing to learn about Tenant Advisory Groups, how tenants can get involved with Bridge Housing programs and initiatives and to share their thoughts about setting

up a local TAG meeting. Points raised by tenants included the role of advocacy and support in a tenant group, the importance of the social element, and the opportunity for people to share existing skills as well as learn new ones. We will hold a follow up

workshop using Zoom to explore the next steps in the coming weeks. You can dial into the meeting via phone or video. If you would like to contribute or share your ideas, please contact us via email [community@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:community@bridgehousing.org.au) or call 8324 0851.

## Join a TAG today!

Would you like to join a TAG? Below are the current Tenant Advisory Groups you can join which meet 5 times a year. TAG meetings are currently suspended but we are working closely with the TAG Chairs and tenant representatives to explore options for re-starting the groups as we ease out of the lock-down period. Please contact the Community team on 8324 0800, or by email at [community@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:community@bridgehousing.org.au) if you are interested in joining a TAG meeting:

- ▲ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander TAG
- ▲ Vietnamese TAG
- ▲ Central TAG
- ▲ Bankstown TAG
- ▲ East TAG
- ▲ West TAG



### Poem by Noel - Central TAG member

#### Draught Dodger

Firewall, I miss the pleasure of warmth,  
you are my door to greater horizons  
and these spaces in between need trimming.  
Am aghast at how long it takes to come and see  
me in Covid 19.

Coldness creates lack of life, is not my bread  
of heaven. Touch me finely with your lack of  
lustre, search to ensure my front door  
has created, firmness. Lock me in, keep out the  
coldness of draughts

Cresting my life, I go hither and yon,  
now treat me with a breath of fresh air, signal  
to me the meaning of life, with my common area  
in mind. I have cried out my breath even  
in these spaces.

### Practice Ujjyai Pranayama Breathing Technique with Donna - Bridge Housing tenant.

- ▲ Control the air flow through the epiglottis, or back of your throat, during the out-breathe.
- ▲ Imagine you are fogging a mirror in front of you but with your lips together.
- ▲ This breath is to be used throughout the asanas or posture during the practice.
- ▲ It sounds like a gentle snoring or soft sound of the ocean.
- ▲ It helps you to keep your practice more steady; victorious!
- ▲ Inhale deeply and exhale through the back of your throat. When exhaling, try to double time of your inhale.
- ▲ Keep your lips together and control the outer air flow through the back of your throat.

I do have a YouTube channel which you can visit:

[https://www.youtube.com/user/donnalupu/videos?view=0&sort=dd&shelf\\_id=0&view\\_as=subscriber](https://www.youtube.com/user/donnalupu/videos?view=0&sort=dd&shelf_id=0&view_as=subscriber)



# Good Neighbour Champion Winners!



A very big thank you to everyone who nominated Bridge Housing tenants in their community who are helping to make their neighbourhood special.

We've received wonderful examples of how tenants are coming together and supporting each other to help create communities. We would like to acknowledge the two \$50 voucher winners:

- ▶ Pei Xia of Riverwood
- ▶ Frances of Narraweena

Do you have an awesome neighbour? Nominate them and let us know why they should be a Good Neighbour Champion. Email [community@bridgehousing.org.au](mailto:community@bridgehousing.org.au) or call 8324 0844.

# Repairs Feedback Survey Winners!

Please help us improve our service by completing this questionnaire about your recent repair and returning it to us

Thank you for your feedback

My call was answered in a timely manner or my voicemail / feedback email was responded to promptly  
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Bridge Housing staff were helpful and attentive  
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Did Bridge Housing staff advise you of the repair timeframe? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did the contractor make an appointment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did the contractor keep to that appointment? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Did the contractor identify himself? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Following your initial repair request when did the contractor attend your home?  
☐ Within 4 hrs ☐ Within 24 hrs ☐ Within 5 days ☐ 21 days

The contractor kept dirt and mess to a minimum and left my property clean and tidy  
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

The contractor was respectful & courteous to me and my home  
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neither ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

How satisfied are you with the overall repairs service provided by Bridge Housing and the contractor?  
☐ Very Satisfied ☐ Satisfied ☐ Neither ☐ Dissatisfied ☐ Unsatisfied

You can report a repair through our website: [www.bridgehousing.org.au](http://www.bridgehousing.org.au)  
 Our out of hours service is available for emergency repairs 24/7 all year round. Please telephone 02 8324 0886 and follow the prompts.

Any Further Comments:

SES #

# Customer Service Survey

We are trialing a new customer service feedback survey. If you call us, we may send you a text message with a link to a short survey. Please let us



know how we went by clicking the link and completing the survey. Your answers are anonymous, but you can leave your name and phone number at the end of the survey if you are dissatisfied and would like us to call you back.

All completed and returned Repairs and Maintenance Feedback Surveys are entered in to a monthly prize draw to win a \$50 gift voucher. To be in the running, complete and return the Repairs and Maintenance Survey after our contractor has attended your home. It's as easy as that!

Congratulations to the March and April winners: Lee from Erskineville, Jodie from Maroubra, Sarah from South Coogee and C.Williams

## BHL Opening Hours & Location

### Goulburn Street Office

You can find our Head Office at Level 9, 59 Goulburn Street Haymarket. When visiting the Goulburn Street office, please use the lifts that face the street to get to Level 9.

We are open 9am - 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

### Brookvale Office

You can find our Brookvale Office at Level 1, 660-664 Pittwater Road, and Brookvale. When visiting the Brookvale office you can take the lift or the stairs from outside Centrelink.

We are open 9am - 4.30pm Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 1pm - 4.30pm on Wednesday.

**Outreach Details:** Our Outreach offices are currently closed but we will be providing updates on when they will open on our website so please keep checking for the latest information: <https://www.bridgehousing.org.au/tenants/support-assistance/bridge-housing-response-to-covid19>.

### Outreach Times and Locations

#### South Coogee Outreach

3 Yamba Place  
South Coogee 2034  
Hours: Temporarily closed

#### Mill Hill Outreach

Waverley Council  
1st Floor, 31-33 Spring St.  
Bondi Junction 2022  
Hours: Temporarily closed

#### Glebe Outreach

3 Elger St, Glebe 2037  
Hours: Temporarily closed