



## CEO's Intro

Dear NCCH Tenants,

Welcome to the Winter edition of our Tenant Newsletter.  
Here's what we've been up to since our last issue....

**CHIF**

I am thrilled to announce that NCCH has been successful in obtaining \$4 million in part funding through the Department of Community & Justice Community Housing Innovation Fund (CHIF) for our projects in Lismore, Casino and South Grafton. This will allow us to develop a 30 unit apartment complex in McKenzie Street, Lismore, a 9 townhouse development in Callistemon Street, Casino and a 24 unit complex in Bimble Avenue, South Grafton over the next 12 to 18 months.

**The housing crisis in our region**

You can't turn on the TV, listen to the radio or read a news bulletin without hearing about the housing shortage in the Northern Rivers and the impact it is having on our local communities. It has reached the stage where it is no longer just a shortage of social housing it is now impacting individuals and families that have never been in housing stress before. NCCH is working across a number of initiatives in the region to assist in addressing the issue.

**Development Update**

We have continued with taking all of our vacant land through the development application process with local Councils and hope to have designs approved shortly. As noted in my comments above about the housing crisis in our region, this will allow us to provide homes for those who need it most. We hope to be developing over 80 new housing outcomes over the next 12 to 18 months. Some of our projects include:

**\* Station Street, Mullumbimby**

This project is a 25 unit development in the heart of Mullumbimby on a parcel of land NCCH purchased from Byron Shire Council for affordable housing. We are almost ready to commence on site, with an expected completion date around the middle of next year. The split up of units will likely be, 10 for social housing, 10 for affordable housing and 5 for sale to the market. We think this will provide a balanced outcome across the main areas of need in the area.

**\* Refurbishment of Laurel Lodge, Lismore**

The Department of Communities and Justice recently purchased a 12 x 2 bedroom unit complex in Lismore, with the title being transferred to NCCH. NCCH will undertake the refurbishment of the complex, which will take about 10 weeks and then we will have 12 new housing outcomes for people on the social housing waitlist in the Lismore area. This is a great outcome for the partnership between DCJ and NCCH.

**Launch of our new Property Repairs Hotline**

As part of NCCH's efforts to deliver improved maintenance services to tenants, a new dedicated Property Repairs Hotline will be available to answer your home maintenance enquiries as from Monday 2 August 2021. Please see **page 3** for further details.

*Until our next issue ... John McKenna*

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NCCH acknowledges the Bundjalung, Arakwal, Gumbaynggir and Yaegl peoples who are the traditional custodians of the land that comprises the Northern Rivers.





## SCHOLARSHIPS

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We had a total of seven successful and well-deserving recipients for Scholarships in this Round in the following Award categories:

3 x Secondary (\$800 each); 2 x Adult/TAFE (\$1,200 each), 2 x Primary (\$400) ... totalling \$5,600.

We have included photos of some of our recipients being presented with their Award certificates by CEO John McKenna.

A reminder that applications for Round Two open on 1 September 2021. For more information or an application pack, please visit our website at <https://www.ncch.org.au/ncch-scholarships-program/> or contact Julie on (02) 6627 5315 or send an email to [info@ncchc.org.au](mailto:info@ncchc.org.au).





**Updates & Info**Tenant Newsletter  
Issue 52 | Winter 2021**From our Assets Team****New Property Repairs Hotline**

As part of NCCH's efforts to deliver improved maintenance services to tenants, a new dedicated Property Repairs Hotline will be available to answer your home maintenance enquiries.

You will be able to phone the Property Repairs Hotline anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for you to report any maintenance requests.

The Property Repairs Hotline will be active from **Monday, 2 August, 2021**.

**Property Repairs Hotline: (02) 6627 5333**

Tenants have already been sent a letter about the new Property Repairs Hotline, as well as a fridge magnet and a sticker so that you can keep the details somewhere handy in case you have to phone in a maintenance request.

The launch of the Property Repairs Hotline has meant a reorganisation of our Assets Team and we said farewell to two members of the team—**Andrea Loquet** and **Khara Kubatka**. NCCH would like to thank Andrea and Khara very much for their contributions to NCCH and wish them the very best for the future.

**List of Emergency Contractors**

Due to the launch of the Property Repairs Hotline, we will no longer be including a reminder a list of emergency contractors in our newsletters or on our website.

**Smoke Alarm program**

Our Annual Smoke Alarm program has come around, it feels like we only just finished the last one. Please ensure that when your contacted by our contractors to come to your house and service your alarm your able to let them. Testing of smoke alarms is mandatory and they are an essential item to alert you to any fire and potentially save your life, and those of your loved ones and pets.

**Winter Fire Safety**

Did you know that every winter, there are more than 1,000 home fires, from which around 200 fire-related injuries occur. A fire can take hold in 3 minutes, yet it only takes seconds to prevent one. We have included some winter fire safety tips on page 5 but you can visit the NSW Fire and Rescue website for more info <https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9284>.

**A reminder NOT to flush wet wipes down the toilet**

Baby wipes and sanitising wipes should be thrown away in the trash, **not** in the toilet. They don't breakdown like toilet paper and can cause unwanted back ups. They can even cause permanent and expensive damage.

**Please note that if wipes are found to be the cause of the problem, it will be a Tenant Responsible charge and you will be required to pay for the repair. Save the pipes – don't flush the wet wipes!**



**Updates & Info continued**Tenant Newsletter  
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From the 5th July 2021, there were changes made to the Community Housing Rent Policy on how Community Housing Providers are to charge rent. These have been delayed until January 2022 due to COVID, however, this is the calculation that we will be implementing when the Government provides a start date.

There is now a range of household income limit thresholds which, when reached, may trigger a rent assessment of between 25-30%. The income limits determine whether you are eligible for a rent subsidy and what percentage of rent you will pay.

Historically tenant's rent would be 25% of their main income. From the 5<sup>th</sup> of July, under this new process implemented by Department of Communities & Justice (DCJ), the rent will need to be calculated once we receive all income statements and Commonwealth Rental Assistance (CRA). An example of the changes for a single person are:

- Up to \$835 – will be charged 25% of income
- From \$836 to \$1043 – will be charged between 25% and 30% of income
- From \$1044 to \$1554 – will be charged 30% of income
- From \$1555 – market rent applies.

For families, the calculation and scale is more complicated, but your Tenancy Manager will explain your rent and the thresholds at the time of sign up.

The good news is this does not impact most of our tenants and only affects those who are earning higher incomes. Those who are affected will be contacted during the next Fixed Rent Review period which will be in around October.

If you would like to review the directive from DCJ, here is the link: [https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/333282/NSW-Community-Housing-Rent-Policy.pdf](https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0003/333282/NSW-Community-Housing-Rent-Policy.pdf) and DCJ's website <https://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/housing/policies/tenancy-charges-account-management-policy-supplement> where the thresholds are set out.

**Tenancy Changes**

There are some changes to the Tweed Tenancy office – **Kylie Faamoe** has returned from leave; **Nicole Cadby** has moved to the Tweed office from Richmond; and **Megan Caldwell** is picking up Kathleen's portfolio as Kathleen is now working fulltime on reporting, IT and business systems.

In the Richmond team, **Sue Walker** is returning to North Coast Community Housing. Sue was a Tenancy Manager at Tweed a few years ago. Finally, the Grafton Team have been helping out across Richmond and Tweed focusing on arrears management and sustaining tenancies.

**Winter Hints and Tips**

Now that it is winter and freezing at night – don't forget to cover any gaps under doors with draught stoppers. Not only do they keep the hot air from escaping your house, but it will keep your electricity bills down.

And while we are talking about keeping warm, remember to be really careful with heaters and candles. Always get your heaters checked before you turn them on and never put items to dry over the top of them. Unfortunately, most house fires start in winter so also check the batteries in your smoke alarm.

**COVID**

I wish I could say that COVID is behind us, but at the time of writing, we are all still on alert. So please keep safe and if your Tenancy Manager is conducting an inspection, they will be abiding by the strict COVID protocols.

So keep safe and if you would like to know information about 'tenancy' drop us a line to [info@ncchc.org.au](mailto:info@ncchc.org.au) and we will answer your question in the next newsletter.

*continued over the page ....*





**Updates & Info continued**

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**From our Operations Team ... continued**

**Meet Your Tenancy Manager**

Meet **Michelle McLean** who is a Tenancy Manager in the Grafton Office.

**Where are most of the properties you look after?**

Macleay, Yamba and Wooli

**How long have you worked for NCCH?**

Approximately 3 years

**What do you like most about your job?**

Every day is different and the ability to have a genuine impact in our tenants' lives.

**What do you love about Grafton?**

Our location, close to the beach, not too far from major cities. A great place to raise kiddies.

**What do you like to do in your down time?**

Walk and listen to podcasts, read, play my drums, head to the gym, annoy my children by singing very loudly in the car and dancing like a crazy woman at home!

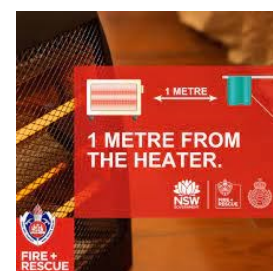
***Tania Crosbie, Operations General Manager***



**Winter fire safety tips from NSW Fire and Rescue**

- ⊙ Devastatingly, around 20 people die in home fires each year. Winter is a critical time for fire prevention and education due to the spike in home fires, fire-related deaths and injuries.
- ⊙ During winter Fire and Rescue NSW attends more than 1000 home fires – this is roughly one third of reported home fires annually.
- ⊙ Winter also makes up half of all reported fire-related injuries, with around 200 injuries.
- ⊙ Fire and Rescue NSW is dedicated to reducing these numbers to zero through their Safety Visits and educational programs. But what can *you* do to help stay out of harm?
  - ⊙ Check you have a working smoke alarm. Use a broom to click the test button of your smoke alarm. If you do not hear an alarm sound, you will need to replace the battery or replace the alarm.
  - ⊙ Create a Home Fire Escape Plan and practise it with those in your home.
  - ⊙ Keep looking when cooking.
  - ⊙ Don't overload power boards.
  - ⊙ Keep everything one metre from the heater.
  - ⊙ Never use wheat bags to warm your bed.
  - ⊙ Check electric blankets for frayed cords and other damage.
  - ⊙ Don't use outdoor heating and cooking equipment inside the home as it can be fatal.
  - ⊙ Most importantly, if a fire does occur, get out, stay out and call Triple Zero (000).

For more tips on keeping fire safe this winter visit [fire.nsw.gov.au/winter](https://fire.nsw.gov.au/winter).





**Updates & Info continued**Tenant Newsletter  
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Just a reminder that your tenant representatives—Tenant Councillors—are always happy to discuss issues with you, so please give them a call on one of the numbers listed below.

Tenant Councillors can raise matters with NCCH staff on your behalf if you don't feel confident to speak up yourself. Please be assured that all calls are treated confidentially.

**Peter** (02) 6624 2619**Walter** 0411 117 276**Diane** (02) 6674 0540**Your local NCCH office**

Lismore: (02) 6627 5300

Tweed: (07) 5523 5800

Grafton: (02) 6642 9100

General email: [info@ncchc.org.au](mailto:info@ncchc.org.au)<https://www.facebook.com/northcoastcommunityhousing/>**Community Noticeboard****"We've got your back"  
EWON campaign**

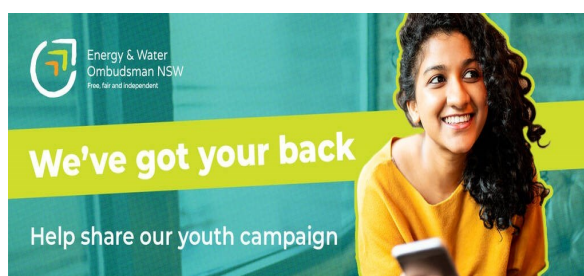
Youth today are smart cookies but they're facing new challenges. They may be moving out of home for the first time, renting or frequently moving around, studying with limited income or government support and navigating new flat mate and landlord relationships. On top of that, setting up, understanding and paying energy and water accounts can be complex and confusing territory.

EWON (Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW) has launched a new campaign called **We've Got Your Back** for young people (18-25 years) who are engaging with energy or water providers for the first time and might not know their rights and responsibilities.

The campaign offers advice about:

- \* what they can complain about and **how EWON can help**
- \* what to do if they have been threatened with **disconnection**
- \* their energy **rights and responsibilities**
- \* **opening and closing accounts** the right way
- \* paying bills and what to do if they receive a **high bill**.

EWON is a free, fair and independent dispute resolution service and they want young people to know that they've got their back, no matter what their circumstances are. Visit EWON's website at <https://www.ewon.com.au> or give them a call on **1800 246 545**.





# Census

## The Census is coming this August

### What is the Census?

The Census counts every person and household in Australia and it is done every 5 years.

### Who has to participate?

Everyone! You need to include everyone who is staying in your household on Census night. This includes visitors and babies.

### When is it?



You can start your Census as soon as you receive instructions, if you know where you'll be on Census night, Tuesday 10 August.

You can complete your Census online,  
by paper or with help from us.



[www.census.abs.gov.au](http://www.census.abs.gov.au)



1800 512 441



For help in your language, call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on **131 450**

### Need more info?



Every stat tells a **story**.



**Community Noticeboard**  
*continued*Tenant Newsletter  
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The free \$250 prepaid Visa card is available to all eligible seniors in regional NSW only and can be used for fuel and taxis.

If you are an eligible senior, you have until 30 November 2021 to apply. Seniors must be an age pensioner with a valid Pensioner Concession Card or hold a Commonwealth Seniors Health Card issued by either the Department of Human Services or Department of Veterans' Affairs.

With the current COVID-19 health advice, it is strongly suggested that applications for the card be made online at <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/regionalseniorstravel> or by phoning **13 77 88** rather than visiting a Service NSW Service Centre in your area.

Once you receive your card, you need to activate it within 45 days, however, you have at least 12 months to use your card from the date of activations.

If you have an existing online account for your 2020 card, you will need to create a new online account with a new username for your 2021 card. Please note the card services website is for the management of regional seniors travel card—it is not associated with your MyServiceNSW Account.

**TAXI****What can go in your green organics bin**

Food scraps



Compostable bags



Garden waste

Meat bones  
& seafoodSoiled paper & cardboard,  
including pizza boxesTea bags and  
coffee grindings**Keep  
it  
green!**



**Community Noticeboard  
continued**Tenant Newsletter  
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Visit the Cost of Living website to find a list of over 70 NSW Government rebates and savings, including gas rebates, electricity rebates, free Power of Attorney and Will preparation appointments through the Trustee & Guardian (located in Zadoc Street, Lismore), health rebates and much more!

People who receive assistance from the Department of Human Services (such as concession cards) may be entitled to receive rebates such as the NSW Low-income Household energy rebate; NSW Gas rebate; Medical energy rebate; Active Kids Vouchers; Creative Kids Vouchers; Regional travel; Photo ID & Drivers Licence; Car registration; MPS Permit (Mobility Parking permit); Power of Attorney & Will services for residents 60+ and who receive the full AGE Pension; NSW Specs program; IPTAAS (isolated Patients Travel and Accommodation Scheme).

*Please note, not all rebates & savings are directly applicable for clients who hold Department of Human Services' benefit cards.*

Go to <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/cost-living#get-started> then click the link "Find savings now" and you may find rebates that you might be eligible for.



SENIORS CARD

**Deals for NSW Seniors Card and NSW Senior Savers Card holders!**

Check out deals that are available for NSW Seniors Card and NSW Senior Savers Card holders by visiting the NSW Seniors Card website at <https://www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au/discounts>



The NSW Government's **Dine & Discover NSW** scheme has been **extended to 31 August 2021**.

The Scheme is designed to encourage the community to get out & about, supporting dining, arts and tourism businesses and stimulate spending in the economy by providing vouchers to all NSW residents aged 18 & over.

**HOW DOES DINE & DISCOVER NSW WORK?**

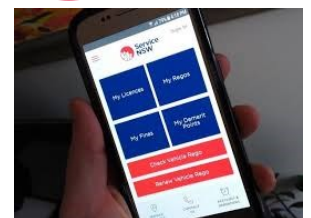
Every NSW resident aged 18 and over are eligible for four \$25 vouchers worth \$100 in total.

Vouchers can be used at participating NSW businesses who are registered as COVID safe.

The *Dine & Discover NSW* vouchers are divided into two categories:

- two \$25 vouchers to be used for eating in at restaurants, cafes, bars, pubs and clubs from 7 days a week, including public holidays;
- two \$25 vouchers to be used for entertainment and recreation, including cultural institutions, live music, and arts venues, available 7 days a week, including public holidays.

The vouchers cannot be used for retail, tobacco, alcohol, gambling and accommodation.



For more info on how to apply for vouchers and where you can use them, call Service NSW on **13 77 88** or visit the **DINE & DISCOVER NSW** website:

<https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/dine-discover-nsw>





**Community Noticeboard  
continued**

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**NCCH Community Event  
Tenant Action Group BBQ in Goonellabah — 2 June 2021**



Members of NCCH staff get to know members of the Tenant Action Group over a community BBQ in their complex



NCCH development projects help us to provide homes, improve lives and strengthen communities!

**Ground breaking Ceremony at Bimble Avenue, South Grafton development project — 27 July 2021**



Director Phil Belletty breaks the ground, watched by CEO John McKenna & Member for Clarence, Chris Gulaptis,



CEO John McKenna & NCCG Grafton Team Leader, Helen Maher proudly display the site plans for the project



Chris Gulaptis, John McKenna & Phil Belletty look over the development project plans

**Ground breaking Ceremony at Callistemon Street, Casino development project — 27 July 2021**



Chris Gulaptis, Member for Clarence, NCCG CEO John McKenna and Richmond Valley Council Mayor Cr Rob Mustow officially break the ground at our new development in Callistemon Street, Casino



CEO John McKenna, CFO Tanya Harmon & Julie Dukes

**Ground breaking Ceremony at McKenzie Street, Lismore development project — 30 July 2021**

(L to R): NCCG Chair Robyn Hordern; Ben Franklin, Member of the Legislative Council; Janelle Saffin, Member for Lismore; Vanessa Ekins, Mayor of Lismore officially break the ground at NCCG's new development project in McKenzie Street, Lismore



NCCG Communications & Engagement Lead, Elizabeth Oliveri & CFO Tanya Harmon check out the development plans



NCCG's Exec Team—Tania Crosbie, Tanya Harmon, Simon Richards, John McKenna—with Robyn Hordern and Tenant Council Member, Peter Harris