



Tenant News

Churches of Christ Care Housing • March 2013

Message from Churches of Christ Care Housing Services

Welcome to the March edition of our newsletter. It has been a busy few months since Christmas and we would like to extend a warm welcome to new staff members Karen Wellen, Fiona Jones and Stephanie Jose.

Karen has started at head office in Kenmore as a property manager and Fiona at the Ipswich office as a property manager for the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) program.

Stephanie has also started in the Ipswich office as the Housing Administration Officer as Michelle, who was originally covering for Melissa while she is on maternity leave, has moved into the NRAS program as their Housing Administration Officer.

We are sad to say goodbye to Rachael from head office in Kenmore and wish her well with her future endeavours.

Meanwhile, Easter is drawing closer and it is a time that fills us with hope and joy. It is also a time to get together with friends, family and loved ones.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a safe and joyful Easter.

Office hours over Easter

Please note that the Churches of Christ Care Housing Services office will be closed from Friday 29 March to Monday 1 April, reopening on Tuesday 2 April.

Please keep in mind that during the working week staff have a number of appointments they must attend. So it is important that you call ahead if you want to see a particular staff member. We cannot guarantee the person will be available if you just stop by; however, our other staff will always try to assist you.

Office hours are: Monday to Friday

Brisbane | Ph 3327 1674 8.30am – 4.30pm

Ipswich | Ph 3436 8900 8.30am – 4.30pm

Gold Coast | Ph 5503 0974 8.30am – 4.30pm

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Tenancy tips

Getting ready for inspections can often be quite a process. Here are some tips that will help ensure you pass your inspection with flying colours:

- Complete a general tidy of the property - make beds, put items away in cupboards and so on.
- Clean all floor surfaces, inside and out - dust, sweep, vacuum and mop.
- Clean all marks around the property - walls, kitchen units, mirrors and so on.
- Clean all main kitchen items - oven, grill, cooktop, range hood and so on.
- Clean all main bathroom items – toilet, shower, bath and so on.
- Remove mold from all surfaces - bleach cleaner and clove oil can help.
- Complete a general tidy of the garden - mow grass, edge and weed, dispose of any garden rubbish and so on.

Bringing the light of Christ into communities

A division of Churches of Christ in Queensland and working with Churches of Christ in Vic/Tas





Meet the Churches of Christ Care Housing Services Administration Team



The Churches of Christ Care Housing Services Administration Team includes many members who work together to support property managers, operational managers and the general manager.

The team consists of eight members.

Amy Clarke is the trainee administration assistant at head office in Kenmore. Amy also has experience in child care and has previously worked as a stable hand.

"I am thoroughly enjoying my job, learning new things and the challenges I come across," Amy said.

The administration officers are Kelly Lewis, Julia Bartrim, Meredyth Ferguson, Michelle Lehmann and Stephanie Jose, all of whom assist property managers.

Kelly, who is located at the Gold Coast office, moved to the area in 2008 after living in Geelong, Victoria for seven years. Kelly joined the team in July 2012 with a background in private real estate.

"I love working with the people here and am enjoying working for such a compassionate, yet professionally run organisation. As a single mother of 15-year-old twin girls I happily juggle work with home life after being a stay-at-home mum for 10 years," Kelly said.

Julia joined the Kenmore team in August 2012 from the Queensland Network of Alcohol and Drug Agencies (QNADA).

"Not having worked before in community housing, it has at times been a steep learning curve. I feel lucky to have joined a welcoming and supportive team," Julia said.

Michelle provides administration support to National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) property managers, preparing leases, viewing properties and answering NRAS enquiries.

"I have only been with the organisation since November 2012, first stepping into the community housing sector as an administration assistant before progressing to my current position with the NRAS team," Michelle said.

"Coming into the organisation and learning both community housing and NRAS has been fun and challenging. It's a great organisation to work with and, with such a varied role, it keeps me interested as I am always learning new things."

Stephanie joined the Ipswich office in February and, like Kelly, comes from a private real estate background.

"I enjoy working with Churches of Christ Care Housing Services, knowing that what we do can change somebody's life for the better," Stephanie said.

The final two members of the administration team are service support officers, Branka Tunjic and Kellea Seigle, who assist Business Support Officer, Angela Coombes, and General Manager, Frances Paterson-Fleider, at Kenmore.

Branka joined the team in 2009. Branka had previously been a senior housing officer with another company and supported refugees during their first six months in Australia.

"I enjoy working for Churches of Christ Care Housing Services, as I truly believe that we live out our vision of bringing the light of Christ into communities and people's lives," Branka said.

Kellea joined the team in August 2012 having previously worked for a small organisation that supported children and adults with disabilities and mental health.

"I thoroughly enjoy working with Churches of Christ Care Housing Services. The whole team is very supportive and being part of an organisation that helps so many people is certainly rewarding," Kellea said.

Rent in advance

All rent must be paid at least two weeks in advance at all times. Being two weeks in advance does not mean that you have an extra two weeks rent up your sleeve, but simply that you are up-to-date and not in arrears.

When you pay your rent this must cover the rent for the coming fortnight and not the fortnight that has passed. If you do not pay in advance, your rent account will show as being in arrears.

If you are not two weeks in advance you may receive a phone call or a reminder letter in the mail from your property manager.

Tenants of the season

To be one of the lucky quarterly winners of a \$20 gift voucher, ensure your rent account is two weeks in advance and have no other outstanding debts with us or any other tenancy issues. Lucky winners will be selected from those eligible tenants. For this season, we would like to thank and congratulate the following tenants.

Ipswich: Colleen

Colleen's unit and garden were amazing during the recent inspection and her rent is always perfect.

Brisbane: Ann

Ann regularly goes out of her way to provide assistance for her fellow tenants (as well as staff) and is always on the lookout for ways to enhance the site for the enjoyment of all.

Sunshine Coast: Jessica

Jessica's routine inspections are always excellent, she is also in the process of making lots of new friends, which she has found hard to do in the past.



Avoiding Electrical Fires

During recent inspections of tenants' properties, it has been noticed that tenants are leaving electrical items, such as televisions, pedestal fans and other appliances, on while their premises are unattended.

Not only is this excessive electricity consumption, but it is also a fire hazard.

Electrical fires are the second most common fires that occur in our homes.

Leaving your electrical items on unattended not only puts your personal belongings and premises at risk, but also the lives of your neighbours and their possessions and property.

Please be sure that before you leave your home, you check that all your electrical items have been switched off and all fire hazards removed.

These small actions could prevent a potential fire.

Home security

Most break-ins to homes appear to be crimes of opportunity with the criminals gaining entry through an open or unlocked window or door.

Criminals seek out homes and very often find houses that are unlocked, which gives them easy access to get in, grab what they want and make a quick and unnoticed escape.

For example, you may be in the back garden hanging out some washing, forgetting your front door is unlocked; this is the perfect time for an intruder to enter your home and you may not even notice something is missing until much later.

To help protect your home and loved ones here are a few easy ways to increase your home security:

- Your house number should be easily seen so police and emergency services can find your premises quickly. Reflective numbers are helpful. If your house is on a corner the number should face the street named in your address.
- It is unwise to leave messages on doors as they suggest no one is home. If goods are to be delivered while you are out, have a neighbour collect them. A parcel on the doorstep also indicates no one is home.
- If you hear an intruder in your home, do not risk injury. Concentrate on raising the alarm and staying safe. If you are outside and see signs of a break-in, do not enter as the intruder may still be present. Go to a neighbour's house to call police and wait there until they arrive.
- Funeral and wedding notices containing an address can tell a potential offender when to strike. If attending such events, have a friend stay over or ask a neighbour to watch your home.
- Cash and valuables should be kept out of easy reach and out of sight. Consider a safety deposit box for particularly valuable items.
- If going on holidays, consider these few things to give your home a "lived in" look and reduce the chance of a break-in:

- Cancel milk and papers.
- Have mail held or redirected.
- Have a friend remove junk mail and mow the lawn.
- Turn down the telephone.
- Inform local police of your absence and leave your contact name and number.
- Wheelie bins should be locked away or chained to posts away from windows.

Free or low cost activities and events

Ipswich

Farm Fun Animal Nursery Open Day

Where: 828 Ipswich-Rosewood Rd, Rosewood

When: 14 April from 9am – 5pm

Who: General public

Other: \$10 entry per person, come and see farm animals in their natural environment on a real working farm. Pat, brush and cuddle baby farm animals and even help farmer Jules feed them.

Gold Coast

Surfers Paradise Festival Lantern Parade

Where: Surfers Paradise Foreshore: The Esplanade, Surfers Paradise, Gold Coast.

When: 27 March from 7pm to 9pm

Who: General public

Other: Gold Coast music, art, food and culture - the festival is here to entertain, intrigue, dazzle and delight. Bringing together school and community groups, the parade of colourful lanterns weaves through the streets of Surfers Paradise.

Caloundra

Carnival by the Sea

Where: Mooloolaba State School, Meta Street Mooloolaba

When: 28 March to 6 April from 4.30pm to close

Who: General public

Other: Free entry. Amusements include: Hurricane, Sky Flyer, Cup n Saucer, Ferris Wheel, Circus Funhouse Castle, Speed Racer, dodgems, giant slide, rock wall, ball crawl, laughing clowns, fairy floss, Dagwood Dogs, hot chips, show bags and much, much more.

Brisbane

King George Square Games Night

Where: King George Square, 100 Adelaide Street Brisbane

When: 28 March from 5pm to 9pm

Who: General public

Other: What better way to meet new people than over a friendly, fun game of Scrabble, Chess or Connect Four? Take your own board game or join in with someone else. For those who want an audience, large-scale versions of classic games will be on offer.



Care Community Foundation 2013 Queensland Flood Appeal



Yet again we are faced with devastating weather in Queensland and around Australia. Churches of Christ in Queensland has launched the Care Community Foundation 2013 Queensland Flood Appeal and is calling on people to do what they can to assist families and individuals affected by this disaster.

Recent flooding and high winds in many parts of Queensland have had a devastating effect on local communities throughout the state, including Bundaberg, Gympie, Maryborough, Rockhampton and the Lockyer Valley. In Bundaberg and the Lockyer Valley, the floods reached levels over those seen in 2011.

Brisbane and Ipswich areas also experienced flooding. Although many areas did not reach flood levels seen in 2011, homes and property were still lost in some areas.

It has been a difficult time for all Australians with recent bushfires, cyclonic weather and floods.

We ask those of you fortunate enough to have not been directly affected to please give what you can.

Funds from this appeal will be distributed through our local churches with every dollar raised going directly to those affected.

Donations can be made by phone or direct deposit:
Phone: 1800 600 900

Direct Deposit:

Churches of Christ Care
Westpac Bank Account
BSB: 034 055 Account Number: 153472

Online donations: www.care.cofcql.com.au

Emergency phone



The emergency phone is only turned on after hours. If you have an emergency during business hours, please contact your property manager, your regional office, or the state office on 3327 1674.

Please do not text the emergency phone - your message will not be received.

Churches of Christ Care would like to remind tenants what is considered an emergency. We often receive calls outside work hours regarding non-urgent matters. Please remember that you will be interrupting someone's weekend and family time, so make sure it is an emergency, as per the following list, before you call:

- ✓ Building insecure after forced entry
- ✓ No power (lights and socket outlets)
- ✓ Gas leaks
- ✓ Major structural damage
- ✓ Fully blocked sewerage (overflowing)
- ✓ Fire
- ✓ Live bare electrical wires.

The housing staff will not attend the property if you have locked yourself out. An authorised locksmith will be called and you will be required to make the payment for that service, so please ensure that you keep your keys on you or supply a copy of your key to a trusted friend or family member.

You may also wish to consider an external key safe, which your property manager can help you with.

If a neighbour is making excessive noise or someone is acting in a threatening or aggressive manner, please ring the police immediately and advise your property manager the next working day.

Useful Numbers

Ambulance fire & police

In a life threatening emergency
000

Policelink

To report non-urgent incidents
131 444

State Emergency Services

For storm or flood 132 5000

Crime Stoppers Freecall

1800 333 000

Energex

Electricity emergencies
24 Hours a day, 7 days a week
13 19 62

Energex

Loss of power supply
13 62 62

Origin

Electricity enquiries
13 24 61

Homeless Helpline

1800 474 753

Poisons Information Centre

13 11 26

Bureau of Meteorology

1300 659 219

Lifeline

13 11 14

Kids Helpline

1800 551 800

Residential Tenancies Authority

1300 366 311

Income Support Centrelink

1800 050 000

Sper

1300 365 635

Parentline

1300 301 300

Tenants Union

1800 177 761

Domestic & Family Violence

1800 811 811