



Tenant News **Spring**

Churches of Christ Care Housing Services Newsletter 2014

Hello spring

The first few warm days of spring represent an opportunity to open our homes to let the fresh air in and dust the cobwebs out!

In Queensland we can generally have our windows open all year, however there are still lots of things you can do to freshen up your home this spring.

Start by making a list of all the items in your home that you have not used in the last year. If they are in good condition, consider donating them to charity or even re-gifting them. Visit regiftable.com/regifting101, for some ideas and tips.

Spring also brings out snakes from hibernation. There are many steps you can take to make your yard a less appealing habitat for snakes, like keeping the grass mowed, removing rubbish or piles of mulch, and not leaving pet food out—this attracts rodents which then attract snakes.

If your house smells musty, mix a few drops of essential oil like jasmine, vanilla or orange in a spray bottle with water and spray lightly around rooms to freshen the air.

Also invest in some indoor plants; they are capable of soaking up pollutants released from modern household furnishings and cleaning products. Ferns, lilies and many Australian rainforest species grow well indoors.

New staff members

Please join us in welcoming Housing Administration Officer, Elaine Garayeli to our Brisbane office and Housing Officer Michelle Heit, who will manage our NRAS properties, to our Ipswich office.

Tenant of the season awards

For your chance to win a \$20 gift voucher and a 'tenant of the season' award, ensure your rent account is two weeks in advance, and you have no outstanding charges or any ongoing tenancy issues.

The lucky winners will be selected from eligible tenants.

This season, we would like to thank and congratulate the following tenants:

Brisbane – Jenny and Garry

Jenny and Garry are outstanding tenants. They recently volunteered their beautifully presented property to be viewed during a Connecting with Care event.

Gold Coast – Carlos and Elsa

Carlos and Elsa are very happy and community minded tenants.

Recently, they offered Spanish lessons to all of their fellow tenants.

Ipswich - Jody

Jody always pays her rent on time and keeps her property immaculate.

She helps out her neighbours when she can and always lends an ear when people need it.

Maintenance matters



	Repair Requests Completed	Satisfaction Level	
		Very Satisfied	Satisfied
July	411	78%	18%
August	318	84%	14%

Bringing the light of Christ into communities

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





Chicken parmigiana bake

A quick (30 minute) and healthy meal that will go a long way.

Ingredients

- 1 and 1/2 tablespoons olive of oil
- 6 (700g) chicken breast schnitzels (un-crumbed), halved crossways
- 1 medium brown onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 340g jar fire-roasted pepper strips, drained
- 230g tub of diced antipasto chargrilled eggplant, drained (*try the deli section*)
- 1 and 1/2 cups tomato pasta sauce
- 1/3 cup Fountain's Spicy Red sauce
- 1/4 cup fresh basil leaves, torn
- 100g mozzarella cheese, thinly sliced
- 1/3 cup of fresh breadcrumbs
- Basil leaves, to serve

Method

1. Preheat oven to 220°C/200°C for fan-forced. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat. Cook chicken, in 2 batches, for 2 to 3 minutes each side or until browned and cooked through. Transfer to a plate.
2. Heat remaining oil in pan. Add onion and garlic. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 2 minutes or until onion has softened. Add peppers and eggplant. Cook, stirring, for 1 minute. Add pasta sauce and Spicy Red sauce. Bring to the boil. Stir in basil. Season with salt and pepper.
3. Place half the chicken in a 10 cup-capacity ovenproof dish. Pour over half the sauce mixture. Top with remaining chicken and sauce mixture. Top with cheese. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs.
4. Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until top is golden. Serve topped with basil.

Life Is – poem by Mother Teresa

Life is an opportunity, benefit from it.
Life is beauty, admire it.
Life is a dream, realise it.
Life is a challenge, meet it.
Life is a duty, complete it.
Life is a game, play it.
Life is a promise, fulfill it.
Life is sorrow, overcome it.
Life is a song, sing it.
Life is a struggle, accept it.
Life is a tragedy, confront it.
Life is an adventure, dare it.
Life is luck, make it.
Life is too precious, do not destroy it.
Life is life, fight for it.

Tenant Advisory Group update

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) held its first regional meetings in Brisbane, Ipswich and the Sunshine Coast in June.

Participants gave valuable feedback, providing constructive ideas for how we can improve our services and information provided to tenants.

The focus for the day was two important areas for tenants; rent and eligibility, and complaints and appeals.

The group reviewed the 'Rent and Eligibility FAQ Information Sheet', which is provided to tenants at their annual review.

TAG members made a number of suggestions on how we could make it more informative and easier to understand.

All of the suggestions and ideas have been actioned and incorporated in the updated information sheet and associated documents.

The group also reviewed the new 'Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Brochure', which was widely accepted. TAG members noted the information provided was clear and easy for all tenants to understand.

Members also provided feedback on *Tenant News*. It is evident that tenant input would make the newsletter more engaging. We are therefore asking for your assistance to make contributions.



Commonwealth Rent Assistance

Are you receiving the rent assistance you are entitled to?

Recent rent review processing has shown that not all tenants are receiving the rent assistance they are entitled to.

If you receive a Centrelink payment, and you pay rent, it is likely you are entitled to rent assistance.

The amount of rent assistance you receive is calculated by Centrelink based on the amount of rent you pay. This means every time your rent changes, the amount of rent assistance you are entitled to could change.

If you are not receiving rent assistance or think you may be receiving the incorrect amount, you will need to contact Centrelink directly. You may be asked to provide a recent rent statement, a copy of your lease agreement or a letter confirming your current rent amount. You may also be asked to complete a rent certificate.

Information about rent assistance entitlements is available on the Centrelink website at humanservices.gov.au.

After hours service

Remember, the **1800 446 604** after-hours phone service, is turned on when our offices are closed and is for **emergencies only**.

Please contact your regional office during business hours, 8:30am to 4:30pm Monday to Friday.

Tenants' corner

Do you have a story, idea, poem, recipe or joke you'd like to share? We'd love to hear from you! In the next edition of *Tenant News*, we would like to publish contributions from tenants on topics both great and small.

If you would like to contribute, please email your work to:

housingservices@cofcqld.com.au

Alternatively, post to Churches of Christ Care Housing Services at PO Box 508 Kenmore Qld 4069. Contributions should be 200 words maximum. Due to space restrictions we cannot guarantee publication.

Vinnie's Community Sleepout

Housing staff brave the cold to raise money for homelessness



Every night, more than 105,000 Australians are homeless. Just under half of these are women and a quarter under the age of 18.

To help raise funds for the homeless and increase awareness, Churches of Christ Care Housing Services' staff participated in the 2014 Vinnie's Community Sleepout.

On 26 June, 91 people slept in fridge sized cardboard boxes on the Maroochydore beach as part of the national campaign.

It was a cold night with temperatures dropping to 2.6 degrees. Participants could bring a sleeping bag and a jumper with no extra blankets allowed.

Michael Shade, Building Maintenance Coordinator and Angela Coombes, Service Support Officer, both from the UK, thought they could handle the cold but found they were freezing by daybreak.

"It's an experience we will never forget but is not one we would want to do every night. I guess we are the lucky ones," Angela said.

Floyd Stephens, Housing Coordinator said "one night was hard enough but any more would be just miserable."

Michael Shade said, "It made me appreciate how people must feel insecure sleeping on the streets, not knowing who is nearby and if they are safe."

The team raised nearly \$1,000 and are looking forward to participating next year.



Tenant Advisory Group

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) provides Churches of Christ Care Housing Services' tenants with greater access to information, advice and opportunities to be actively involved in changes relating to their housing, as well as encouraging connection with the local community.

By becoming a member of TAG, you can be more involved and feel heard. It is also a great way to make new friends.

A working lunch is provided at each TAG meeting, and transport arrangements made where required. Meetings alternate between regional group meetings and central full member meetings, as voted by TAG.

If you would like to come but have never been to an event like this before, give us a call and we can tell you all about it and get you registered.

Details of meeting locations and agenda items will be mailed to TAG members. If you would like to register as a TAG member, please phone 07 33271674. We look forward to hearing from you.

2014-15 TAG Meeting Dates

Regional Meeting

Wednesday
10 December 2014
Time to be confirmed

Central Meeting

Wednesday
11 March 2015
11am - 2pm



What's on near you this season

Free and low cost activities and events.

Gold Coast

[Bonjour French Festival](#)

Where: 50 Eureka Crescent Nerang

When: 23 November from 10.00am

Who: General public

Cost: Free entry

Details: The first French festival on the Gold Coast will showcase a number of artists, stalls and entertainers.

Sunshine Coast

[Caloundra Street Fair](#)

Where: 55 Bulcock Street, Caloundra

When: Every Sunday - 8.00am to 1.00pm

Who: General public

Cost: Free entry

Details: Immerse yourself in the best street market on the Sunshine Coast featuring over 200 unique stalls. There is something for the whole family.

Brisbane

[Pattern Bandits](#)

Where: GOMA Brisbane

When: 1 October to 2 November -10.00am to 5.00pm

Who: General public

Cost: Free entry

Details: Explore and interact with patterns, camouflage and kaleidoscopes, create a personalised bandanna, and have the opportunity to become part of Kaleidoscopic Tessellations' architectural pattern.

Ipswich

[Springfield Anglican College Twilight Markets](#)

Where: TSAC Junior Campus Oval Springfield Drive

When: 1 November - 3.00pm to 8.00pm

Who: General public

Cost: Free entry

Details: Families can enjoy five hours of carnival fun with rides for all ages, plus over 80 stall holders showcasing their wares, live entertainment, food and drinks and a spectacular fireworks display.