



Tenant News

Churches of Christ Care Housing Services • Winter 2014

Welcome to the winter edition of Tenant News.

As we move into the cooler months, you may be inclined to plug in your electric heater.

Although heaters are a nice addition and provide that extra needed heat, they can be dangerous if not used correctly.

If using a heater this winter, please keep safety in mind as well as the extra electricity you are using and remember:

- plug your heater directly into a wall socket and avoid circuit overload
- some heaters become very hot so do not touch them and keep them away from children and pets
- never leave a heater unattended or near flammable materials.

Coogera Art Exhibition

“It’s a community effort and by doing it we are developing together as a community,” said Leslie, resident of Coogera Apartments in Caloundra.



Simon and Garfunkel sung, “I am a rock, I am an island.” Well, an apology to all the fans out there but that is just not true! The residents of Coogera Apartments, one of Churches of Christ Care’s residential unit complexes, are proof of that.

What started as a simple conversation between a resident and the Community Chaplain blossomed into something truly beautiful.

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Over the past few months, residents have been working collaboratively to organise an art exhibition that would highlight the talent, creativity, beauty and resourcefulness of those living at Coogera Apartments and those they are closest.

After three months of meetings and organising, the inaugural Coogera Art Exhibition opened with an invitation only event. Residents mingled with a mixture of Churches of Christ in Queensland staff, community members, family and friends - “showing off” their collective efforts. The response has been wonderful with many people impressed by the quality of art on display and the effort to present it.

The outcome of the exhibition is growth in confidence and pride, connection and new friendships, a chance to serve and support others, space to create and be purposeful together. One resident said, “It brought people together and meant that they participated. I spend all day by myself and it meant that I didn’t have to”. Sorry Simon and Garfunkel!



Bringing the light of Christ into communities

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





New staff members

Please join us in welcoming Trainee Administration Assistant Taren Burns-Hutchison to our Brisbane Office and Service Support Officer Dwanette Crothers to our Ipswich Office.

We would also like to introduce Housing Officer Georgie Stewart, who now manages Coogera Apartments in Caloundra.

New after-hours emergency phone number

Please be advised that the after-hours emergency maintenance number has changed. The new number is now a free call on **1800 446 604**.

The old number will continue to work but you should write down or save the new one.

Remember, the after-hours phone is only turned on when our offices are closed and is only for urgent matters. Please contact your regional office all other times.

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

Changes to repairs and maintenance surveys

Churches of Christ Care is committed to providing quality maintenance services and to do this we need your feedback.

We currently send you a feedback survey in the mail each time you request maintenance at your home. This will now change to a telephone survey with the aim of increasing the participation level and improving our responses to your feedback.

A random sample of maintenance work clients will now be surveyed by telephone seeking your feedback on the quality of work and the level of service you received from our staff and contractors.

Tenants can still provide feedback at any time about our services by using the feedback and appeals process. Simply request a feedback form from your regional office or lodge feedback online at carehousing.com.au/contact-us/feedback-and-appeal/.

Homeless Connect event

On Wednesday 28 May, Churches of Christ Care Housing Services' staff participated in the Brisbane City Council's Homeless Connect event, held at the RNA Showgrounds.

Homeless Connect brings together business and community groups on one day to provide free services and information to the homeless and those at risk.

A range of services participated including housing providers, Centrelink, Medicare and Rent Connect. Homeless people were offered free breakfast, coffee and lunch. A knitting group provided handmade blankets and another agency provided clothing and tips for job seekers.

Churches of Christ Care's contribution was a joint effort of Housing Services and support services in Churches of Christ in Queensland's Head Office including Communications, Procurement, Property and Development.

This was the second time Churches of Christ Care participated in the event and staff said they were keen to go back again next year.

"It was an eye-opener and I enjoyed it. The homeless are all around you. Homelessness can happen to anybody." Housing Officer Carol Farnham.

Service Support Officer Angela Coombes said it was worthwhile because it meant knowing that she can help.

"If it means that one person can get a meal because of us being there, that's good enough for me" Angela said.

Along with information and advice on how to register for housing, staff handed out food and toiletries as well as vouchers for a free meal at the 139 Club, a drop in centre based in Fortitude Valley.

Supply companies Bidvest and Bunzl, kindly donated food and toiletries. Coles Kenmore also donated a \$50 gift card, which was used to buy toiletries.

The event also provided a networking opportunity for organisations to come together and exchange information and ideas.

"We are always trying to improve and find out what people are actually looking for," said Angela.

For further information about Homeless Connect events visit brisbane.qld.gov.au and search Homeless Connect.





Tenant Advisory Group launch

On Tuesday 18 March, Churches of Christ Care officially launched the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG). TAG is a consultative group comprising of tenants from various regions and housing programs, and is a forum for Churches of Christ Care to consult with tenants on keys issues.



In the recent client satisfaction survey, 20% of tenants indicated they wanted to get more involved in the service and TAG now provides another mechanism for tenants to give feedback and have a say on proposed changes that could affect them.

“The launch of the Tenant Advisory Group is an important step forward for the service. What better way to ensure we are providing client focussed care than to have tenants involved in planning how we do it.” Housing Services General Manager, Frances Paterson-Fleider said.

“It is important to ensure we remain connected with clients as our service grows and to do this we must involve tenants in planning and improvement processes.”

This exciting new initiative is a partnership effort between Churches of Christ Care Housing Services, community chaplains and community housing tenants. Convened by Housing Services and facilitated by community chaplains, the launch was a success with 26 tenants in attendance.

“Initial feedback from participants has been very positive,” Community Chaplain Team Leader, Murray Thomson, said.

“The Tenancy Advisory Group is a great community development initiative as it provides opportunity for tenants to engage with others, strengthening their community and empowering them with a collective voice, to address issues that impact their daily lives. This will inevitably lead to stronger more cohesive communities.”

TAG members voted on a model for how the group will operate and when meetings will occur in the

future. The group will meet four times a year and will alternate regional group meetings and central full member meetings.

The group's focus moving forward will be providing feedback to housing staff on matters that help to improve policy, operations and service delivery to increase tenant satisfaction and participation.

Members also worked together to develop a Code of Conduct which will guide how members will work together and with the service in the spirit of positive collaboration.

The group's first project is to review this Tenant Newsletter and provide advice and feedback on how to make it more engaging and informative for all tenants.

There has been lots of chatter amongst tenants about the group and its prospects and all tenants are encouraged to join.

Prayer time for the sick

Recently Pavetta Apartments' residents on the Gold Coast held a prayer time event facilitated by Community Chaplain Graham Wheat.

The idea came about because quite a few residents at the Queen Street complex are suffering from serious illness.

The event was a great success with a number of residents attending who each provided positive and encouraging feedback.

Some tenants praised the group saying “thank you all, prayers help” and another added “thank you all for all your lovely prayers”.



Prayer is not asking. It is a longing of the soul. It is daily admission of one's weakness. It is better in prayer to have a heart without words than words without a heart.

Mahatma Gandhi



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 that you 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 – Lionel and Joanne

Lionel and Joanne are outstanding tenants. Lionel contributes to his community by tidying up the communal gardens in their unit complex.

Lionel and Joanne's inspections are always great with a neat and tidy unit and their rent is always paid on time.

Gold Coast – Adrian and Elizabeth

Adrian and Elizabeth are wonderful tenants. Adrian helps with the tenant BBQs and even volunteered to pick up another tenant from hospital.

Adrian and Elizabeth are caring and helpful, their rent is paid on time and their unit is always neat and tidy.

Sunshine Coast – Rebecca

Rebecca is always helpful and looks out for other tenants and has been participating extremely well with the Cooma Café.

Rebecca's rent is paid on time and her unit is always beautifully presented.

Fast winter soup

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
 - 1 onion, chopped
 - 1 long red chilli, seeds removed, finely chopped
 - 1 celery stalk, chopped
 - 1 carrot, chopped
 - 1 teaspoon ground cumin
 - 1 teaspoon ground coriander
 - 1 cup red lentils, rinsed, drained
 - 1 litre (4 cups) chicken or vegetable stock
 - Low-fat natural yoghurt, to serve
1. Heat the olive oil in a large saucepan over medium heat, add the onion, chilli, celery and carrot and cook for 2-3 minutes.
 2. Add cumin and coriander and cook, stirring, for a further minute.
 3. Add the red lentils and chicken or vegetable stock, bring to boil and simmer for 8-10 minutes or until lentils are tender.



4. Season with salt and pepper. Serve in bowls with a dollop of yoghurt.

Safety reminder about balconies

A fall from a balcony is very dangerous and can cause serious injury. Your safety and that of your friends and family is only as good as your actions and your direct supervision of activities.



Do not move furniture or other items that can be climbed on close to balcony railings. Do not lean against railings or gates, do not attempt to climb into or over a balcony and in no circumstances ever sit on railings or gates. The railings are there to minimise the risk of an accident but also serve as a reminder on the danger of a fall.

As a tenant, you are also responsible for the safety and actions of your loved ones and visitors. Please keep safe, taking extra care on balconies and never leave young children unsupervised.

Free and low cost activities and events

Gold Coast

What: Gold Coast Multicultural Festival
Where: Evandale Parklands, Corner Bundall Road & Crombie Avenue, Bundall
When: 8 September from 10am to 4pm
Who: General public
Other: A fun day out for the whole family! Performances on four stages. International Food/Art/Craft/Info.

Ipswich

What: Oz Night Market
Where: Booval Fair Shopping Centre, Booval
When: 9 August from 5.00pm - 10.00pm
Who: General public
Other: Food, Family and Fun. Fully under cover. Live entertainment. More than 28 stall. Kids Rides.

Brisbane

What: BrisStyle Indie Market
Where: 64 Adelaide St, Brisbane
When: 9 August from 9.00am
Who: General public
Other: Get up close and personal with BrisStyle's best and brightest indie artisans at Brisbane City Hall, the perfect backdrop to the gorgeous handmade work of some of Brisbane's most talented artists.

Sunshine Coast

What: In the Raw
Where: Coolum Beach Library, Park Street, Coolum Beach
When: 26 August from 10am
Who: General public
Other: Join local raw food guru Scott Mathias as he explores techniques used to prepare raw food meals. Enjoy a raw food preparation demonstration and take some tasty ideas home to try.