



Mr Chun turns 100 alongside his daughter Cin at their home in Moonah Park, Mitchelton (Page 6).

Welcome from Alicia Follent, General Manager



Welcome to the winter edition of *HouseTalk* for 2021. I hope the first half of the year has treated you all well. Things have certainly moved quickly this year, following what has hopefully been the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic: travel bubbles have been formed, state border restrictions are relaxing, and families are being reunited with their loved ones. There is, of course, still the occasional new case, and snap lockdowns, but Australia has also started its vaccine rollout, which will surely put us in good stead to face down the remainder of this virus. If you are not up-to-date on all the COVID-19 vaccination information, you can find the most important things you need to know on page 6.

Following feedback tenants shared with us after previous editions of *HouseTalks*, we have decided this edition to include much more practical and useful information, such as tips on how to prepare for an inspection, cleaning and budgeting tips. We also continue our tradition of acknowledging Tenants of the Season and listing free events for greater Brisbane, the Gold Coast, and the Sunshine Coast.

I wish you all a warm and safe winter. Take care, be well and look after your neighbours.

Alicia Follent
General Manager – Housing Services

cofc.com.au/housing

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Contact Housing Services

Brisbane Regional Office

07 3327 1674

Ipswich Regional Office

07 3436 8900

Gold Coast Regional Office

07 5539 7655

Housing Services Email

housingservices@cofcqld.com.au

Office Hours

9.00am to 4.00pm weekdays

After Hours (Emergencies) Number

1800 446 604

Tenants of the Season – Winter 2021

Tenant of the season awards recognise tenants who have gone above and beyond in their communities. Awardees receive a certificate and gift voucher to thank them for their efforts. All participants represent the Churches of Christ community spirit and we utilise this opportunity to thank them for their contributions! Well done to the following winners!

Robyn B – Hillcrest

Robyn shows great pride in her community, going above and beyond to help out on-site. She is also a bit of a green-thumb and regularly helps out by making sure the gardens are in tip-top shape!

John M – Mitchelton

John volunteers to run the Monday morning coffee club and runs a 'Finska and Petanque' afternoon (outdoor games) on Thursdays at the Mitchelton campus. He helps out at community BBQs and any community event that he can. John also volunteered to be the first Integrated Community Champion wherein he promotes activities and integration at the Mitchelton campus, which features Housing Services and Seniors Living (Retirement Living and Residential Aged Care). John is a hardworking, passionate and enthusiastic tenant and is a great help and positive influence in his community.

If there is a tenant you wish to nominate for the next round of awards in September 2021, please email CCHSLstories@cofcqld.com.au with the subject 'TOTS NOMINATION'. Please include the nominee's name, their location, and your reason for nominating them. All submissions are looked over by a Housing Services manager before making their way into a *HouseTalk* newsletter.

Water Leaks

A recent trend of tenants noting excessive water bills has come to our attention. We would like to remind tenants that it is their responsibility to inform us of maintenance concerns – in this case, potential water leaks – in a timely manner. Water leaks, in addition to water wastage, can contribute to higher-than-usual water bills.

What are the signs of a water leak?

Wet spots: either on the floor or walls. On walls, spots may be discoloured or damp to the touch.

Green or dead lawn spots: if a particular spot in your lawn is greener than the rest, or if it is the only spot in the lawn that is dead, it could be that a pipe is broken and is 'watering' (over-watering) the particular area.

Mould patches: mould is a sign of continued dampness.

Musty smell: still water and mould can cause musty smells (even if you can't see anything).

Low water pressure: if you've noticed a drop-in water pressure and are confident that the water is not being used elsewhere in the home, it could be that a leak is reducing your water pressure.

Sound of trickling water: if all faucets are off and you still hear trickling water, try to identify the source of the sound. Leaks inside walls can cause sound.

Bring maintenance concerns to our attention

If you notice a water leak (or anything else that requires maintenance), you should inform us as soon as possible. You can start a maintenance request any of the following ways:

- Contacting us via phone
- Sending a request online via our website (www.carehousing.com.au/log-a-maintenance-request/)
- Completing a maintenance request form and lodging it in person at one of our offices
- Leaving a completed maintenance request form on your kitchen counter for us to collect at your next inspection

Community Connection

Did you know that plenty of areas are home to Neighbourhood Centres? Neighbourhood Centres (also called Community Centres) are community hubs that provide useful services and programs, host events and serve as a way for people to connect with their communities. We've included a few key locations below. We recommend reaching out to your local centre to get more information on their services and schedules before attending.

Red Cross Community Centre

12 Jeays Street, Bowen Hills | 07 3852 5105

Offerings include: barbecues, computer access, computer tutoring, container recycling scheme, arts/crafts groups, attending services (Valley Hearts), more.

Caloundra Community Centre

58A Queen Street, Caloundra | 07 5491 4000

Offerings include: CENTACLUB group for women over 50, art group, craft group, family wellbeing information, playgroups, parenting courses, more.

Bribie Island and District Neighbourhood Centre

9 Verdoni Street, Bellara | 07 3408 8440

Offerings include: parenting programs, personal development workshops, Smart Recovery (from addictions) Group, counselling services, more.

Leichardt One Mile Community Centre

1-17 Denman Street, Leichardt | 07 3812 1270

Offerings include: sewing group, community shed, emergency relief (food hampers), free bread, board games, community library, more.

Logan East Community Neighbourhood Centre

53-57 Cinderella Drive, Springwood | 07 3808 4529

Offerings include: life skills programs, healthy aging workshops, school holiday activities, Access to MyAgedCare Website session (11 August 2021).

Palm Beach Neighbourhood Centre

16 Third Avenue, Palm Beach | 07 5598 1505

Offerings include: child/family counselling, financial counselling, community support (food, budgeting, life skills, etc.), NDIS services, parenting programs, Gamblers Anonymous group, Dads in Distress group.

Tenancy Tips & Reminders

Inspection Readiness

Inspections are conducted to ensure both parties (tenant and provider) are meeting the obligations of the lease agreement regarding the property condition. Remember:

- We will always give you notice before conducting an inspection.
- We aim to conduct inspections when you are home, but if this is not possible, the inspection will still be conducted in line with our entry notice. Please inform us if you will be absent.
- We will provide you with feedback following an inspection, including details of items that require attention.

Pre-inspection Checklist:

- Ensure your personal details are up to date, including your telephone number.
- Provide keys to any new locks and ensure there are no obstructions to accessing the property.
- Advise us if there are any security devices in place that need to be disabled or animals on the property.
- Complete a maintenance request if required. Leave it on the kitchen bench if you will not be home.
- Report any property damage prior to the inspection.

Preparing for an Inspection:

Following the below tips will help ensure an inspection goes smoothly.

- Smoke alarms:** test, replace battery if necessary.
- Floors:** vacuum and mop.
- Walls:** clean dirty marks; dust/wipe skirting boards.
- Doors:** clean marks, pay attention to handles.
- Windows:** clean glass, sills and tracks. Identify tears in fly screens.
- Cupboards:** wipe doors, pay attention to handles; clean shelves, including dusting.
- Lighting:** dust shades; ensure all fittings have bulbs; clean switches.
- Ceiling:** clear cobwebs, debris and marks; clear fans of dust.
- Appliances:** wipe surfaces; clean stovetop and inside oven.
- Wet areas:** ensure they are free of mould/scum; clean marks/stains from toilets/sinks.
- Air con:** ensure filters/vents are clean and debris-free.
- Garage:** remove oil and other stains; keep tidy.
- Outdoor areas:** sweep; pick up debris/litter.
- Yards/gardens/courtyards:** cut grass (including edges); remove weeds; remove clippings.

Change to HS Service Hours

From Monday, May 17 2021, our new hours of service are 9.00am – 4.00pm. This change affects both our phone lines and offices. Please be mindful of this change when attempting to get in touch with us.

Proper rubbish disposal

Not properly bagging your rubbish can cause odours and result in bins becoming sticky and grotty and may even attract animals. Please remember to **bag your rubbish and tie it off in a knot** so that its contents don't fall out. If the bag is broken or torn, put a second bag around it ('**double bag it**') and tie that one off.

Don't put batteries in bins, as they can cause fires. Instead, drop them off at a council Resource Recovery Centre or battery recycling point: <https://recyclingnearyou.com.au/batteries>.

Prolonged absence reminder

Tenants who plan to take a prolonged absence (longer than eight weeks) away from their home must **seek approval** before doing so. Your housing officer will be able to provide you a copy of the **Temporary Absence Application** form.

You will need to provide information about:

- the reason for the absence
- the timeframe
- your plan for who will monitor the property, collect mail, mow lawns, secure the property, etc;
- contact details for relevant parties.

If you take a prolonged absence, **you will still be charged rent**. You will also be required to facilitate any other tenancy requirements, such as inspections, that fall during this period.

No smoking inside

Since October 2017, our policies have included a clause that tenants agree to not smoke inside their properties. A smoke-free home is healthier, less of a fire risk, and keeps maintenance and cleaning costs low. If you would like information on how to quit smoking, contact Quitline on 13 78 48.

On-site tenant parking

Tenant parking is for tenants only. Please ensure that your friends, family and support workers are not parking in tenant-only parking areas. Visitors are encouraged to make use of signed visitor parking (if it is available at your complex) or park on the road.

Rent Reviews

Please remember that to avoid having your rent increase to the market rent rate, you need to return your Rent Review paperwork and any relevant accompaniments **by the due date!** Please consider the time that postage can take if mailing items.

Be Well in Winter: Tips, Tricks, Safety

Heater safety

Check your heater's condition: heaters are in storage for a good part of the year. When you get your heater out, check for damage (including on cords).

Never leave a heater unattended: someone should always be in the same room as a heater when it is on.

Keep away from other objects: try to keep a decent radius around the heater; avoid putting it right next to a couch or wall.

Don't put objects on the heater: never dry or warm up objects by placing them on a heater and leaving them there.

Don't leave a heater on while you sleep: use a hot water bottle instead.

Electric blanket safety

Don't sleep with your electric blanket on: some electric blankets have sleep timers that automatically turn them off after a certain time. If yours doesn't do this, turn it off before you go to sleep.

Only turn the electric blanket on 15 minutes before you go to bed: this is long enough for the electric blanket to warm up, and won't overheat your bed.

Don't wash electric blankets: electric blankets still have electrics in them, meaning they cannot be washed. Your electric blanket may include cleaning instructions on its packaging.

Other safety tips

Candles: if at all possible, don't use candles as they provide very little heat for the risk they pose.

Watch out for kids: anyone can easily be burnt by candles, electric blankets, standard heaters, and even hot-water bottles. If someone is burnt, run it under cool water. Assess the burn and seek further medical help if need be.

Clean dryer lint: if you have a dryer, you probably use it more in winter. Be sure to clean the lint tray to keep it operating effectively and to reduce flammable material.

Reduce energy costs

Oil heaters are more energy-efficient than electric heaters.



Close doors and windows: cordon off rooms you don't need to heat by closing internal doors.



Double up: keep the heater on low and put on a jumper.



Use a hot water bottle or a heat pack.



Heaters and air conditioners can be expensive, especially in winter. These are some tips to reduce costs while staying warm.

Mould!

Mould is a type of fungi that can be hazardous to health, and hard to get rid of once it appears. Mould is most likely to appear in damp places and areas with lots of moisture.

The best way to prevent mould is to have **adequate ventilation** in your home.

- When you don't need to have the heat on, for example while you're gardening or playing with the kids outside, **open windows** so that your home can ventilate.
- Damp areas like bathrooms and kitchens will benefit from using **exhaust fans** in addition to regular ventilation.
- **Close windows and doors when it's raining** so water can't get inside and create damp.
- **Turn off humidifiers** every once in a while, and let the room where they sit be adequately ventilated.
- **Ensure gutters are not clogged.** Backlogged gutters can damage the gutter, but also can create blockages of water that can eventually make its way inside.

Please discuss with your housing officer before attempting to remove mould. Not only is mould hard to get rid of, doing so can be hazardous to your health as you are agitating the particles and dispersing them into the air where they can be inhaled.

Non-Toxic Cleaning Products

Some common household items can also be effective cleaners. If you are in a pinch, check your cupboards to see if you've got any of the below items.

Baking soda

Mix baking soda with a little bit of water to make a paste that can clean, scour and deodorise.

Good for: scouring basins and bathtubs.

White vinegar

White vinegar can remove grease, mildew and odours.

Good for: add to washing cycles both with clothes or just to clean the machine.

Good for: line drains with baking soda first, then add white vinegar and scrub to clean drains.

Cleaning Tips

It's easier and more effective to clean regularly, as opposed to trying to do a single huge clean before important events, such as inspections.

Clean as you go. Giving a spilt soft drink time to dry will mean you might have to scrub it, which is much harder than simply wiping it up with a wet cloth right after it happens.

Keep a cleaning schedule, e.g.:

- Odd weeks: vacuum, mop and sweep outdoor areas
- Even weeks: clean bathroom, toilet and kitchen

Your mattress needs cleaning too.

Change the sheets regularly, and vacuum – yes, vacuum! – the bare mattress. Spread some baking soda over it, wait and then vacuum again.

DIY 'Miracle Spray' Recipe

Miracle spray can be used to clean benches, tabletops, mirrors, glass and even floors.

Ingredients:

- 500mls water (1 cup of very hot water)
- 100mls of white vinegar
- 20mls of dishwashing liquid
- 10mls of 100% eucalyptus oil
- 1 tablespoon of Letric Soda Powder

Instructions:

- Mix Letric Soda Powder into cup of very hot water to dissolve
- Add the Letric Soda Mix to the rest of the ingredients

Thanks to the Tenancy Skills Institute for this 'recipe'!

Budgeting & Financial Literacy Tips

Did you know there are resources out there that can help you budget, save and increase your financial literacy?

MoneySmart

<https://moneysmart.gov.au>

The MoneySmart website is an Australian government initiative to help people manage their money well. It includes a number of resources and templates that you can use to easily track your expenses.

National Debt Hotline

1800 007 007

The NDH (also available online at <https://ndh.org.au>) is a free not-for-profit service that helps people tackle their debt problems. Their financial counsellors offer a confidential service, and the NDH can refer you to local supports too.

Centrepay by Centrelink

Did you know that if you receive a Centrelink payment, you can elect to participate in Centrepay? Centrepay is a service to pay bills and expenses as regular deductions from your Centrelink payments. This way, the money is taken out of your payment before you see it – it helps you to avoid 'overspending'.

Tips to make your money stretch further

Make a budget: use the MoneySmart website to track your expenses and make a budget. You will be able to see what you might not need to spend money on.

Shop around: whether it's groceries, clothes, your phone bill, or anything else, shopping around never hurts. There are websites like Canstar (<https://canstar.com.au>) that curate lists comparing various offers to help you find the best deal for you.

Use grocery lists: if you create a grocery list and stick to it when shopping, you're less likely to spend unnecessarily on things you don't need.

Unsubscribe from mailing lists: lots of stores we visit have our emails, and send us tempting news about sales or new stock. Unsubscribe from these emails so they can't tempt you.

Avoid sales: sales are a tactic that make something seem like a good deal, but if you consider the fact that you don't *need* that sale item, you're actually expending money you weren't initially going to.

Have shorter showers: long, hot showers, especially in winter, can be expensive. Consider setting a 2-minute timer on your phone.

Use banking apps: banking apps let you keep track of funds more easily.

If you are struggling to pay your rent for any reason, we hope you reach out to us. It's important we know what's happening so that we can help. If your money is not stretching as far as it needs to, for example if you do not have enough food, please let us know so we can work with you to find solutions.

Noticeboard

New Program Engagement Coordinator



We are pleased to welcome Sue Hughes to the Housing Services team as our new Program Engagement Coordinator. In her role, Sue will be on the ground engaging with tenants, chaplains and housing officers to help facilitate events, cover stories and celebrate community spirit.

About Sue: Sue has Graduate qualifications in Human Resource and Business Management. She has

held Community Engagement roles with St Vincent de Paul and Our Healthy Clarence. Sue was also an Elected Member of Clarence Valley Council for eight years, President of the Yamba Chamber of Commerce, and the foundation chair of Light Up the Darkness (an advocacy group for Mental Health). When not working, Sue enjoys going to the AFL, art galleries, live theatre and travelling.

What's On Around Town?

Peaks to Point Free Family Day
Oxley Creek Common, Rocklea | 18 July 2021 (10am – 3pm)

This day is part of the larger Peaks to Point Festival (running from 17 July to 1 August) and features live entertainment, food trucks, children's activities, along with sustainability and environmental group exhibitors.

More info: <https://www.peakstopoints.com.au/>

Gold Coast Show
Broadwater Parklands | 27 – 29 August 2021 (9am – 9pm)

The Gold Coast Show is in its 114th year of operation. Entry is free, and you can see equestrian, side show alley, wood chopping, baby animals, arts, crafts, showbags, and more. Some stalls, rides and events have a cost associated with them.

More info: <https://goldcoastshow.com.au/>

Caloundra Spring into Scavenge
Happy Valley Park, Caloundra | 26 June 2021 (8am – 12pm)

You'll be able to clean-up your local area, sort and catalogue your litter and then exchange it for pre-loved clothes, books, toys and more that have been donated by the local community. All this whilst listening to funky live tunes!

More info: <https://bit.ly/3w1TAng>

Happy 100th Birthday, Mr Chun!

We want to congratulate Mr Chun, a resident at our Mitchelton campus, who celebrated his 100th birthday in April. When asked what the secret of living a long life is, Mr Chun's daughter Cin responded, 'eating vegetables, staying active, being peaceful and not getting stressed or angry.' Happy birthday, Mr Chun!

COVID-19 Vaccination Information

Key points

- The COVID-19 vaccine is safe, effective, has passed tests in Australia and will protect you from COVID-19.
- The COVID-19 vaccine is free and you can choose whether to have the vaccine or not.
- For the vaccine to be effective, you need two doses of the same vaccine type.

Queensland has two available COVID-19 vaccines (as of May 2021)

Pfizer (Comirnaty)	AstraZeneca
Recommended for adults under 50 years of age	Recommended for people over 50 years of age
Two doses given at least 21 days apart	Two doses given at least 28 days apart, but most likely 12 weeks apart

You cannot get a vaccine if you have had anaphylaxis (a severe allergic reaction) to a previous dose of the same COVID-19 vaccine, or to any ingredient of the COVID-19 vaccine.

People who are pregnant or breastfeeding

If you are breastfeeding you can receive a COVID-19 vaccine at any time. You do not need to stop breastfeeding before or after vaccination.

At this stage, COVID-19 vaccines are not routinely recommended to be given during pregnancy. This advice may change.

Side effects

All medicines and vaccines can cause side effects. If you do experience any side effects, most of them are minor and temporary. If you are concerned, consult your doctor or call 000.

Check your eligibility

To determine which phase you are in, either utilise the below 'eligibility checker' website, or call the Federal Coronavirus Help Information Line on 1800 020 080 who can complete your eligibility check over the phone.

<https://covid-vaccine.healthdirect.gov.au/eligibility>

If you are in the current phase, you will be given the option to select a location that is currently distributing vaccines. If you are not in the current phase, you will be given the option to register your interest so that you are notified when your phase is starting.

Where will I be vaccinated?

Every hospital and selected health services (medical centres, doctor surgeries and pharmacies) in Queensland will be providing vaccinations as part of Queensland's rollout. To confirm if your regular doctor surgery is planning to participate, call them directly (note: they may intend to participate, but simply not have the vaccines available to them yet).

Community Resources & Tools

Victim Assist Queensland

Victim Assist works under the *Victims of Crime Assistance Act 2009*, helping victims of a violent crime – including all forms of domestic and family violence – to recover from their injuries by:

- providing financial assistance to eligible victims
- offering information and advice to eligible victims
- advocating for victims' rights

For more info, call **1800 546 587** or visit:

<https://www.qld.gov.au/law/crime-and-police/victim-assist-queensland>.

Need to Chat?

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health. If you are feeling isolated or need help, reach out.

- Lifeline: **13 11 14**
- Suicide Call Back Service: **1300 659 467**
- Kids Helpline: **1800 551 800**
- Domestic & Family Violence Helpline: **1800 671 458**
- MensLine Australia: **1300 789 978**
- beyondblue: **1300 224 636**
- Mental Health Line: **1300 642 255**
- 1800 RESPECT (family violence): **1800 737 732**
- Alcohol & Drug Information Service: **1800 177 833**
- StandBy (support after suicide): **0438 150 180**

In an emergency, always call triple zero (000).

Resident Engagement Meetings (previously known as TAGs)

As you may be aware, Churches of Christ Housing Services used to conduct regular Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) meetings, where tenants had opportunities to discuss with us any changes to their housing; concerns and compliments they wished to share; or goals, events and opportunities for their communities.

TAGs were conducted every three months and rotated on a regional/central location schedule. TAGs were not conducted in 2020 due to COVID-19 and restrictions on gatherings. During this time, we began to review the efficacy of TAGs and how we could make them more accessible and beneficial.

We will now be hosting **Resident Engagement Meetings** in place of TAGs, starting in the next few months. Please keep an eye out for a letter in your mailbox or on a noticeboard around your home for more details on these meetings and when and where they will be held.

COVID-19 Check-In Qld App

Do you have a smartphone? You may be able to download the Queensland government's 'Check in Qld' app which makes signing into places with participating QR codes much easier.

The app's features include:

- able to check in to participating businesses without having to enter your details each time
- protecting your own personal information – data is stored by the Queensland Government and only used for contact tracing if needed
- helping make contact tracing faster, more reliable and complete.

The app is available on:

- iOS 10.0 or later
- Android 5 or later



Get the app by searching 'Check in Qld' on the app store, then look for this icon while out shopping!

LGBT+ Resources



Do you identify as part of the LGBT+ community and want or need support? Check out the following resources:

- QLife (nationwide support hotline): **1800 184 527**
- Minus18 (for LGBT+ youth):
<https://www.minus18.org.au/>
- Black Rainbow (for indigenous LGBT+ people):
<https://blackrainbow.org.au/>

If you do not identify as LGBT+ but want to support someone who does, you can utilise the following resource:

- PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays):
<https://pflagaustralia.org.au>

Contribute to *HouseTalk*

Do you have a story, event, hot tip or Tenant of the Season nomination that you think we could use in a future edition of *HouseTalk*? Do you want to provide feedback on the information we include in each edition of *HouseTalk*? If so, you can get in touch with the *HouseTalk* team by emailing us at: CCHSLstories@cofcqld.com.au.

HouseTalk is distributed quarterly, at the beginning of each season. All content is reviewed by a Housing Services manager and we cannot guarantee that all submissions will be included.



About Churches of Christ in Queensland

In communities across Queensland and Melbourne, Churches of Christ in Queensland shines Christ's light. Since 1883, individuals and families have been welcomed into our churches and services without judgement to find the support they need to live their life to the fullest.

As a leading faith-based, not-for-profit organisation, we are committed to responding to community need and helping people live hope-filled, meaningful lives through innovative and caring services.

From services for children, youth and families to community housing and support for seniors, each individual receives person-centred care that responds to their unique needs, goals and aspirations.

About Churches of Christ Housing Services Ltd

Churches of Christ Housing Services Ltd provide community housing and housing support options for individuals and families who earn low incomes, are discriminated against in the private housing market, or who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Acknowledgement of Country

Churches of Christ in Queensland acknowledges Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders as the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we work, walk and live. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, recognising their continuing connection to country, waters and community.

Churches of Christ in Queensland is committed to ensuring that children are safe, happy and empowered. We support and respect all children, and have a zero tolerance of child abuse.



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