

# Message from

## Executive Director

**Ms Maureen Sheehan**

Dear Tenants

Welcome to the autumn edition of *Home Front*. Autumn is a favourite season for many ACT residents, with the city's foliage showcasing its magnificent colours. It is also a great time to participate in the various events around town, such as the National Folk Festival. I am delighted to announce that eight lucky tenants, with good rental history, were randomly selected to be the recipients of 4-day passes to the festival. I would like to congratulate them, and hope they enjoyed the many high quality performances for which the festival is renowned.

This issue is a bumper one, with many of the topics proposed by the Joint Champions Group (JCG). These JCG tenant participation groups discuss matters relating to maintenance, developing neighbourhoods, community participation, and supporting older people in ACT public housing.

I would also like to let you know that the Housing ACT Client Satisfaction Survey is happening during April, with 2500 surveys being sent out to households. Participants have been randomly selected and the survey is anonymous. I encourage anyone who receives a survey to participate. Not only is it a great opportunity to give feedback to help us provide you with better services in the future, but as an incentive, each respondent has a chance to win a great prize!

Executive Director  
Housing and Community Services

## World Masters champion

Scullin Housing ACT resident and keen golfer, Kevin Chapman, successfully defended his 75-plus title at the World Masters Games in Sydney late last year. The Games are the world's largest multi-sport event, and 28,000 registrations were received in Sydney alone. Kevin, who resumed playing eight years ago after a long break, won his first men's 75-plus title at the previous games in 2005. The unassuming 80-year-old said that his "form was not that great" and that he was "very lucky to win".

A veteran of the Masters, Kevin also played tennis at the Melbourne Games of 2002, and was the Canberra President of the Umpire Association. Highlights of those heady days included umpiring Ivan Lendl and John McEnroe. Kevin shows no sign of slowing down and spends much of his spare time organising golf tournaments in the ACT.

## Have you installed blinds in your home?

Loose blinds and curtain cords can pose a serious risk for children. Secure them out of reach of children.

The Office of Regulatory Services (ORS) has **information kits** available free of charge that allow retro fitting of blinds and curtains which do not comply with current standards. Proper use of the blind cord holder reduces hazards such as strangulation.

Contact ORS on 6207 0400 or Kidsafe ACT on 6290 2244 for more information.

## A new housing choice for older public housing tenants

**Have you registered yet?** Over 300 older public housing tenants have, but Housing ACT is still accepting registrations right up until 5.00pm on Monday 31 May 2010, for the Older Persons Housing Project.

If you would like to know more about this new Housing ACT initiative, information sessions will be held in early May 2010.

The venues, dates and times of the information sessions will be posted on our website at [www.dhcs.act.gov.au/hcs/older\\_persons\\_housing](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/hcs/older_persons_housing) or please call 6207 1150 for more information.

## Tenants' Handbook an introduction to Housing ACT

The new and updated Tenants' Handbook is at the printers and will soon be available. If you would like to receive a copy please contact Housing ACT and one will be posted to you. Otherwise, your housing manager will have a new handbook available for you during your next client service visit.

Housing ACT would like to acknowledge and warmly thank our tenants from the **Joint Champions Group** for their valued contribution, and in particular, their insight into what tenants need to know.

## Shared Equity Scheme

The **Shared Equity Scheme** is the ACT Government's home ownership initiative for public housing tenants, and public information sessions will be held in **early May 2010**.

If you have already registered your interest in the scheme and have received confirmation from Housing ACT that your house can be considered for sale, you will receive a brochure about the scheme and a letter inviting you to attend one of the two information sessions.

If you have not yet registered, and would like to know more, the venues, dates and times of the information sessions will be posted on our website at [www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au), or please call 6207 4529 for more information.

## Assessing the value of Housing ACT properties

**Housing ACT's annual assessment of the value of its properties is underway and will continue into April. This process is a necessary part of accounting for the government's assets.**

About 500 dwellings across the ACT are selected each year as a sample range, upon which valuation of the entire Housing ACT property portfolio is based. These valuations are undertaken by an independent and professional firm of valuers — Herron Todd White.

Some tenants have already been sent letters advising them that their property has been selected to be included in the sample of properties to be assessed. The time for the inspection of the property must be mutually agreed between the tenant and the valuer.

This asset valuation does not change your current rent or rebate. This is simply an exercise in determining the value of the property.

## Say NO to domestic and family violence

**Even conservative estimates suggest a figure of one in five women in Australia suffer some form of physical or sexual violence during their lifetimes with devastating affects on their health and wellbeing, as well as on their families and communities.**

Most violence against women takes place in the home, and in the majority of cases the assailant is a current or previous partner, male family member or friend (VicHealth 2008)

It is a crime with far reaching consequences for our society and has a devastating effect on children.

Everyone has the right to live free from abuse and fear. If you are experiencing domestic violence please know that you are not to blame and you are not alone.

The Domestic Violence Crisis Service offers support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on 62 800 900.

The **Staying at Home after Domestic Violence** program is a joint partnership between Housing ACT and the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and recognises the need to address both the accommodation and support needs of women and children after domestic violence. This program aims to assist women who live in Housing ACT homes to stay safely in their home if they want to, particularly if this helps to minimise disruption to the children and establish long term stability.

If you would like more information about this program, contact the Domestic Violence project officer on 6205 7289.

## Did you know?

**Domestic and family violence is identified as the principal cause of homelessness among women and children in Australia.**

**The Road Home – Homelessness White Paper, 2008**

# Maintenance **Spotless Contractor** **Identification**

**From time to time you may have a maintenance contractor visit your home to carry out repairs.**

The contractor must carry their **identification** with them and should present it when arriving at your home. A typical contractor ID is:

If for some reason the contractor does not show their ID on arrival, you are well within your rights to ask for it. If the contractor is not able to produce identification you are not required to let them into your home.

Do not be surprised if the vehicle has something other than **SPOTLESS** on it as most sub-contractors have their own business name on their vehicles. However, if you have any concerns about contractors attending your home, phone the Maintenance Call Centre on 62071500.

# Housing ACT engages its own occupational therapist

Housing ACT has recently employed an **occupational therapist** to help Housing ACT clients access whether modifications need to be undertaken to the physical structure of their home to help tenants be more mobile and independent. This new resource is expected to significantly reduce the time normally taken for an occupational therapy assessment.

If you already have a relationship with an occupational therapist, under this new system, we will be able to liaise directly with them.

If you believe you may require modifications to the physical form of your current Housing ACT property, or you have any other questions, please contact Housing ACT on 13 34 27.

## English classes commence

The **YWCA Canberra Social Inclusion Program** has commenced **English classes** for the **migrant and refugee residents** living in public housing in the Ainslie Precinct. The classes focus on teaching day-to-day English to migrant women.

This is a great way to assist women from non-English speaking backgrounds to build confidence and increase local knowledge about the services and opportunities in their local community. It is hoped that increased language skills through the English learning journey will provide opportunities for further education and suitable employment.

Classes are held every Wednesday 10.30am–12.00noon and Thursday 11.00am–12.30pm. Contact **Helen** from YWCA Canberra on **0447 699 286** for more information.

## Community services news

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Youth and Family Support at Northside Community Services offer an array of services to tenants who reside in Canberra's Inner North. **Contact Alicia on 6163 0434** to find out more about a **playgroup** that runs on Mondays at the Majura Centre 10am–12pm.

Another current program running within the youth service is the **Homework Club**. This program is in partnership with ANU students who assist as tutors for students. The Homework Club is available to anyone aged 12–18 years. Contact **Fatmata John on 6163 0433** for more information.

Community linkages workers are available to assist in all areas of **tenancy support** (e.g. statutory declarations for third party damage, support and advocacy). For more information for Northside

contact **Sally on 6163 0432** or other regional Community Linkages:

Tuggeranong: Claudia 6294 4633,

Woden/Weston: Lynton 6234 6822,

Belconnen/Gungahlin: Tricia 6264 0280

Drip Drip Drip Drip Drip Drip Drip Drip

Do U have water tap that drips?

AND

Do U know that if you leave it for a year you'll have lost more than eleven thousand litres of water?

AND NOW...

Do U know that HOUSING will fix your dripping tap? To organise this you just have to phone 6207 1500  
and say...

'Drip, drip, I've got a dripping water tap!'

Then provide your personal details. CONSEQUENTLY ...

If U know of another tenant who has a leaky tap, you should tell her/him to get on to the Drip, drip,  
SO BE IT

This contribution was provided by a JCG member

**The ACT Government is committed to making its information, services, events and venues, accessible to as many people as possible.**

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If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like to receive this publication in an **alternative format** — such as large print or audio — please telephone **(02) 6205 0619**.

If English is not your first language and you require the **translating and interpreting service** — please telephone **131 450**.

If you are deaf or hearing impaired and require the **TTY typewriter service** — please telephone **(02) 6205 0888**.

## **CONTACT DETAILS**

### **Housing ACT General Enquiries**

Phone **13 34 27**

**[www.dhcs.act.gov.au](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au)**

### **Spotless Maintenance line**

Phone **6207 1500** (24 hours, 7 days)

### **Housing ACT Complaints Unit**

Phone **6207 1515**

### **Joint Champions Group**

Secretariat

Phone **6207 1507**