



# ACCESS COMMUNITY HOUSING

## TENANT NEWSLETTER October 2014

*Keeping you informed about Access Housing services and housing issues*

### Welcome from the CEO....

I must admit that prior to coming to work at Access Housing I looked at these newsletters on the website and thought what a great way to communicate with tenants and for tenants to find out what we are doing and what is going on in the Cairns community. It is great, having been in the role for a month, to now make a contribution to this newsletter.

On my first day I attended a community event for families held at Hambledon House. Since then I have had the chance to visit some of the units and houses that we manage and I have been impressed with the standard of the grounds and the pride that tenants take in these properties. I have seen some great work in the gardens and real interest in maintaining the environment for all. Our Housing Managers need to be commended for their efforts as well and I do feel fortunate to be leading such a compassionate, hardworking and dedicated team.

Affordable housing continues to be a challenge to our community as demand for housing increases and the indications are that prices will increase in the future. Being a "good tenant" will be even more important in the coming years. I look forward to working to ensure the best outcomes for our tenants, present and future.

*Donna-Maree O'Connor*

### Congratulations -

#### Access Housing Obtains Registration

Under new government rules all existing community housing providers in Queensland who are funded by Department of Housing and Public Works under the Housing Act 2003, and who want to continue to provide housing services, need to obtain registration by July 2015. In order to do this, Access Housing had to demonstrate high performance standards set by the National Regulatory System for Community Housing (NRSCH). Access Housing was informed recently that our application for registration has been successful.

This was achieved through the hardworking efforts of the management team of Access Housing. Great news for tenants and staff.

### Emergency Repairs - Out of Hours Contacts

If you have an emergency plumbing or electrical problem, and require a contractor please use the contact numbers provided on your Tenancy Agreement. Please ensure you have these numbers and **ONLY** use if you have a problem that is dangerous, a threat to your health or may cause substantial property damage. During office hours please continue to contact our office so that your Housing Manager can arrange for the repairs or maintenance to be done.



### Reminder:

Your weekly or fortnightly rent must be paid on time. You can pay your rent by direct debit, internet banking or cash at the bank. However, if you receive a Centrelink payment, the most convenient way to pay is using Centrepay – please talk to your Housing Manager for details.

**Please remember you cannot pay your rent at the Access Housing Office.**



# Important Information for tenants

All Access Housing properties have smoke alarms installed as a requirement of the *Fire & Rescue Act 1990*. It is our responsibility to make sure the smoke alarms are working and have good batteries at the beginning of each tenancy. It is then the responsibility of the tenant to test the smoke alarm at least once a year and to replace the batteries when they are flat or nearly flat. You can test the smoke alarm by pressing the 'Test' button.



We recommend tenants change the batteries once a year. This avoids the annoying beeps the smoke alarms make when their battery is low. Changing the batteries on an anniversary such as a birthday is a good way to remember. If you live in a unit block that has a fire alarm system for the whole building, there are no batteries to change. Please ask your housing manager if you are unsure.

It is important to remember that it is illegal to remove, damage or tamper with a smoke alarm, and this includes removing the battery (except when you are changing it) or covering it to make it quieter. The penalties are severe with fines up to \$27,500 or up to 12 months in prison.

**Your smoke alarms are there for your safety.** If you believe your smoke alarm is faulty (other than a low battery), please contact your Housing Manager.

## Tenant participation survey

All tenants of Access Housing have been sent surveys to find out tenants' interests and what information they would like. If you have not yet sent your survey back please do so in the reply paid envelope provided. This will help the Tenant Engagement Officer to plan future tenant meetings and community events. From the surveys received so far most tenants do read the newsletter, and find it informative.

## From Our Tenants



### Life as a single Mum....

There are many single Mums who are tenants of Access Housing and identify as Torres Strait Islander. One of them lives in Manoora....

"I have two younger kids at home, and older ones grown up. I get up at 6.30am and do the lunches for my daughters. I worked on Badu Island full time in a shop. I would like to work again, get training to work in retail. In the past I've moved around a few places, stayed with my Mother-in-law, cousins and other family till now. I like my unit. It's cosy - it's a home. I help my family out by filling out their forms, and they also come for my cooking. Friends come round. They want to eat my cooking!! I like cooking but I won't give them my coconut buns recipe but I'm happy to give out my Simur chicken recipe!"

### Simur Chicken Recipe

#### Ingredients

Whole chicken chopped or pieces

Packet vermicelli (glass noodles)

1 onion

2 tbs oil

1 tsp garlic and ginger

3 or 4 chopped potatoes

2-3 carrots and mushrooms (optional)

### Directions

1. Fry onions, garlic and ginger in oil until golden brown
2. Put 2cm approx. of water into a pot and add onion mixture, chicken pieces, carrots, mushrooms and soy sauce
3. Steam in a covered pot for 15 -20 mins medium heat
4. Soak noodles in hot water for 5mins
5. Drain and dice noodles
6. When chicken and vegies are soft, add noodles stir simmer for 5 mins
7. Serve with rice

# Community Activities and Services

Family Active Games in the Park are held every Monday from 3.15pm to 5.15pm during the school term at Ravizza Park, Ravizza Drive, Edmonton. This event is run by Hambleton Community Centre. School and pre-school aged children are invited to participate in supervised games with trained facilitators. Parents are welcome to join in the activities.



Family Active Games in Park are also held at, Bak Park, Progress Road, White Rock on Wednesdays from 3.15pm to 5.15pm.



As part of their Housing Services, Access Housing teamed up with Hambleton Community Centre on the 25th August to organise a one-off community event for our tenants and their families living in the southern suburbs of Cairns. The aim was to assist them to find out what is available in their local community. Local service providers from Ozcare, Anglicare, and Cairns Early Years Centre attended where they chatted informally to the families about their services. Families received information brochures, and there was also a BBQ and a prize hamper. Some Access Housing tenants and their families attended and enjoyed the afternoon in Ravizza Park. They now know that families can attend the friendly Family Active Games in the Park on Mondays during school term. Free afternoon tea/fruit is provided at both venues.

**For more information Contact Hambleton House on 40443410**

## Mental Health Awareness Week 5<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> October

One in five people will experience mental illness at some point in their lives. This means that a percentage of our tenants will have had or are currently experiencing mental/emotional health issues. It is therefore important to be aware of mental health issues to increase understanding and tolerance towards people who are suffering from a mental illness. There are medical and support services for people who require assistance. If you are a tenant or carer of a tenant who would like information about what's out there, please contact Ros, Tenant Engagement Officer on 4031 6702.



### Cairns Mental Health Week Art Show—Free Event!

**Venue:** In the Foyer at Cairns Regional Council Building

**Date:** 7th to 10th October 2014

**Time:** 8:00am to 4:00pm

### Cairns - Bawu Living Skills Centre –

#### Market Day

**Venue:** 23 Pease Street, Cairns

**Date:** Thursday 9th October

**Time:** 10:00am - 1:00pm

### Cairns West Service Centre

#### Description of service

Cairns West Service Centre is a neighbourhood centre servicing the western suburbs of Cairns.

- People can drop in for a cup of tea, meet others and have a yarn;
- Clients can use the phone or computer to book appointments and make online enquiries eg: Centrelink, Housing.
- Transport is available for clients with Emergency Relief and medical appointments etc.

**Located:** 98 Birch Street Westcourt Cairns 4870

**Operating Hours:** Monday to Thursday 9am-3pm. Closed for lunch 12.15-1.15pm



## Community Activities and Services Cont.

# Relationships Australia

## POPPERS


6 WEEK CHILDREN'S GROUP for 6-9 YEAR OLDS experiencing parental separation

POPPERS aims to support young people in their experience of parental separation, conflict and change in their family situation.

**Activities include:**  
Reading story books    Making treasure boxes    Making friends  
Art and craft    Sharing afternoon tea  
Sharing good ideas    Learning new stuff    Having fun

**STARTS:** Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
**FINISHES:** Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2014  
**TIME:** 3:30-5:00 pm (Afternoon tea provided)  
**PLACE:** Relationships Australia FNQ, 125 Grafton Street, Cairns  
**COST:** Free of charge

To REGISTER please PHONE 1300 364 277 and ask to be put through to Relationships Australia - FNQ Venue



## POPSTARS


6 WEEK CHILDREN'S GROUP for 10-13 YEAR OLDS experiencing parental separation

POPSTARS aims to support young people in their experience of parental separation, conflict and change in their family situation.

**Activities include:**  
Role playing    Making treasure boxes    Relaxation  
Art and craft    Sharing afternoon tea  
Sharing good ideas    Learning new stuff    Having fun

**STARTS:** Monday 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
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To REGISTER please PHONE 1300 364 277 and ask to be put through to Relationships Australia - FNQ Venue



For more information or to register please phone 1300 364 277

### Contact Us

Give us a call at the office  
Tel: 4031 6702      Fax: 4051 0743

**Access Community Housing Company Ltd.**

31 Hannam Street  
Westcourt 4870

**Postal Address:**  
PO Box 7381  
Cairns 4870

**Send emails to:**  
admin@achc.org.au

**Visit us on the web at**  
[www.achc.org.au](http://www.achc.org.au)

**Office open hours:**  
Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri 9:00am– 4:30pm  
Tues 9:00am–12:30pm

## Christmas is coming.

## You could win a Xmas Hamper!

If your rent is a fortnight in advance by Tuesday 16 December, you will be put into a draw to win one of 4 food hampers.

