



Pacific Link
HOUSING

PACIFIC LINK POST

Your tenant newsletter



The Lynn Freeland Community Garden

Summer 2022

Inside this issue

- SHEW Program for Young Tenants
- Complaints, Appeals and Feedback
- Congratulations Jules!
- Introducing Adira
- Tech Connect Program
- Quit Smoking in 2022
- Garden Competition Winners
- COVID Update and Response
- No Excuse for Abuse Campaign
- Going Green for our Environment
- A Heartfelt Letter from Lynn
- Apply for an Education Scholarship

From the CEO's desk

As 2021 comes to an end, we can reflect on another year in which we had to adapt to circumstances that were beyond our control. The resilience of tenants and staff during this time has been so impressive.

We recently had one of our properties go into a two-week lockdown due to a positive COVID case. The way our tenants, staff and support agencies responded and worked together was outstanding. It shows that in times of need, the community can come together to help each other out.

In November we bid a fond farewell to Lynn Freeland as she has decided to retire after 19 years. She was such a big part of our organisation and as a testament to her career, we have proudly renamed our garden at



North Gosford, the 'Lynn Freeland Community Garden'.

Thank you again to tenants for their patience and understanding as we continue to adapt to changes caused by COVID-19. I sincerely hope that there will be brighter days ahead for us all in 2022.

Ian Lynch - CEO



SHEW Program for Young Tenants

Get your kids active in the new year with the help of Pacific Link Housing's SHEW Program. The SHEW (Sports, Health, Exercise and Wellbeing) Program is aimed at supporting the health and wellbeing of young tenants aged between 5 and 17 to take part in a registered sport, exercise or wellness activity. Each successful applicant will be provided with up to \$250 per annum to cover the costs of membership fees, classes or sporting uniforms. Other activities will also be considered.

The NSW Government can also provide two \$100 vouchers towards sport and recreation costs through their Active Kids Program. Visit the Service NSW at www.service.nsw.gov.au

For more information on the SHEW Program and to apply online, visit our website at www.pacificlink.org.au/programs



"With SHEW funding, I signed my daughter up to netball classes. It helped to pay for the registration, uniform and even some new runners! Her confidence has improved, and I love to see her being active after school with new friends."

Complaints, Appeals and Feedback

Pacific Link Housing believes that complaints, appeals and feedback help to improve the way we deliver our services. So, what is the difference? And, what is the best way for you to let us know if there is an issue?

Complaints

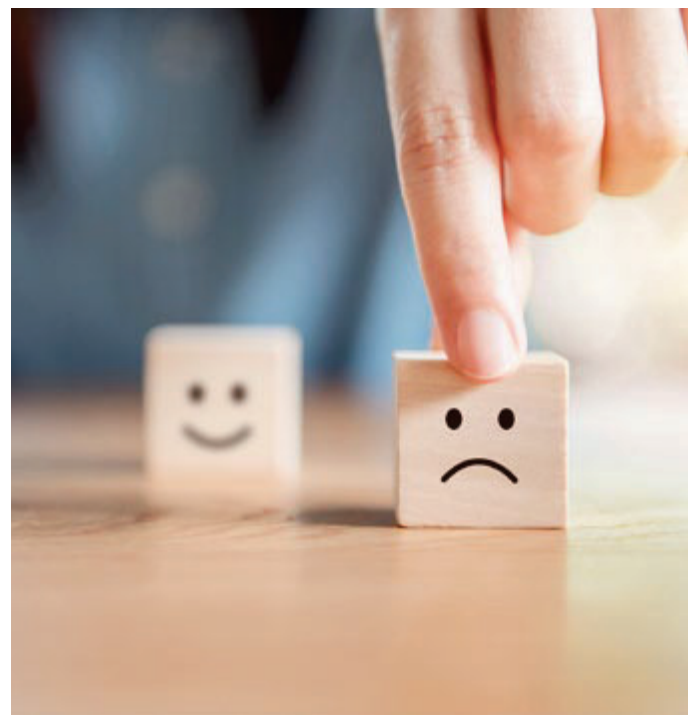
Complaints are made when you are not satisfied with the quality of service you have received. You may think we are taking too long to get something done or you are not happy with the outcome. You can complain about any part of the service you receive. We hope that most complaints can be resolved by discussing it with a staff member, however sometimes this may not be possible.

Appeals

Appeals are made when you are not satisfied with a decision we have made about your tenancy because you believe it is wrong or unfair. An appeal may be about decisions related to property modifications, transfers, tenant charges, lease terms or approval of additional occupants.

How to make a complaint or appeal

If you have a complaint or appeal, we encourage you to call us first on 4324 7617 to see if it can be resolved. If this isn't possible, you can lodge a complaint or appeal by email, post or online at www.pacificlink.org.au/complaints-appeals.



FEEDBACK

We encourage tenants to provide feedback and suggestions on our services so that we can better understand what we are doing well and what we can improve on. In addition to our Annual Tenant Survey, we seek feedback from residents throughout their tenancy. You can provide feedback at any time by phone, email, post or online at www.pacificlink.org.au/feedback.



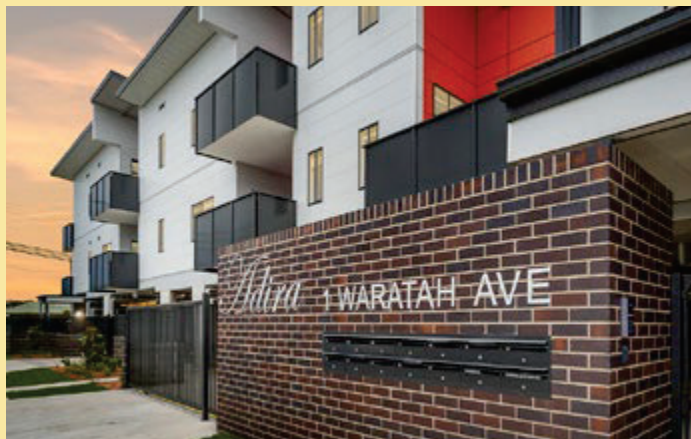
Congratulations Jules!

Jules was a recipient of Pacific Link Housing's Learner Driver Program and was successful in gaining his P's after just four months! Jules said the Program meant a great deal to him as it was hard for his family to afford private lessons and his Mum was too nervous to teach him herself. After ten professional lessons with the NRMA Safer Driving School, Jules felt much more confident on the road and was successful in getting his provisional licence after the first attempt!

Obtaining his licence gave Jules more freedom and independence and most

importantly, the opportunity to look for employment. He was lucky to find a job delivering pizzas and quickly put his licence to good use. Jules is still on the road but now delivering flowers to hospitals, nursing homes and the general public, which he loves doing. "It has meant a lot to me to be a part of the Program, and to be able to financially support myself and contribute to my family. Thank you."

Pacific Link's Learner Driver Program is open to tenants of all ages who meet the eligibility criteria. In partnership with the NRMA Safer Driving School, we can provide tenants with a package of 10 free professional driving lessons. Apply online at www.pacificlink.org.au/learner-driver-lessons



Introducing Adira

Pacific Link Housing is excited to announce that our latest development has been completed! 'Adira' is from a girl's name of Hebrew origin meaning strong, noble and powerful. The property is specifically targeted to house older women and provides an additional 12 units of social and affordable housing on the Central Coast.

Adira is our seventh development completed since 2015. We are extremely proud to build such high-quality properties for tenants so that they can feel safe and secure in their homes.

New Tech Connect Loan Program

Pacific Link Housing has introduced a new program to help tenants access technology items through a no-interest loan agreement. It's an easy way to purchase an item up front without the need for risky short-term cash loans!

Tenants can apply for a Tech Connect Loan online and select whether you need a laptop or device. You can apply for multiple items as long as the total amount is less than \$1,000. We will purchase the item and also help by reducing your loan amount by applying a \$250 subsidy! Tenants will simply need to agree to have \$20 per fortnight deducted from your Centrelink payments until the remaining loan amount is paid off.

For information and eligibility guidelines visit www.pacificlink.org.au/tech-connect. You can also contact us by phone if you have any questions or need help applying online.





Quit Smoking in 2022

Do you want to quit smoking to feel fitter? Maybe you're thinking of the money you'll save? Or are you ready to quit smoking for your family? While not every smoker has the same reason for wanting to quit, there are positive changes waiting for you no matter what your reasons are.

Some of the benefits of quitting smoking are well-known, like improving your health and saving money. Others might surprise you – for example, did you know that quitting smoking can reduce anxiety by more than a third? Visit www.icanquit.com.au to learn more benefits and take control of your journey to become a non-smoker.

Garden Competition

It was pleasing to see so many entries in this year's Tenant Garden Competition which made it very difficult to choose the winners. We have some talented tenants who take so much pride in their gardens.

"It's been fun to build it to a beautiful yard and because I don't have a lot of money, they are mostly off cuts that friends gave me and it has grown from there. So happy with it!"

"I take great pride in and feel no matter where you live your garden is a representation of yourself. It brings me great joy watching my plants flourish and grow and also brings me peace and happiness."

"I started with very little and over time have created a little oasis that I love!"

"Me and my daughter who has autism, are creating a garden for the fairies to visit in an area that grass just doesn't grow so it was just dirt. Still lots of work to be done but I think the fairies have been visiting already."

"We have only just started to make our small veranda pretty. Each plant was planted for a family member past and present."



These garden competition winners received a Bunnings gift card to reward their hard work. Great job!

- Jason B - Toronto
- John & Ben K - Umina
- Joan M - The Entrance
- Rosella V - Ettalong Beach
- Belinda E - North Gosford
- Alison B - Watanobbi
- Louise S - Metford

COVID Update and Response

Pacific Link Housing continues to follow NSW Health guidelines to minimise the spread of COVID-19. We have developed a COVID Response Plan and still have some measures in place to minimise the risk of infection for tenants, staff and the community. We have cautiously started holding small gatherings and hope to hold more events across our footprint in 2022!

Our COVID Response Plan was recently put into action when one of our properties went into a 14 day lockdown after a positive case was confirmed. Staff did an amazing job looking after the wellbeing of 28 tenants by organising meals, groceries, a daily phone call, OzHarvest Hampers and other essentials. In addition to this we also distributed a newsletter each day with a special 'Lockdown Lift' such as chocolates, plant or craft item which were donated by Bunnings.

Tenants were so understanding and we appreciate their cooperation in following the NSW Health directives. We had lovely feedback from everyone involved in the lockdown and even received a handmade gift of a 'Thank you PLH' mirror!



We will continue to update you by post, SMS messages, email and in our newsletters. Latest information for tenants can be found at www.pacificlink.org.au/coronavirus



No Excuse for Abuse Campaign

The Pacific Link Housing team was proud to support the #noexcuseforabuse campaign, which raises awareness of non-physical abuse. This can be just as harmful as physical violence but is often overlooked. It can include financial abuse, social abuse, emotional and/or psychological abuse, spiritual abuse, technological abuse and stalking.

If you or someone you know has experienced any kind of abuse or violence, call 1800 737 732. This service is confidential, free to call and available 24/7.



Going Green for our Environment

Pacific Link Housing is passionate about conserving our environment's valuable resources. In our last tenant survey we received lots of suggestions on various green initiatives. As a result of this feedback, we are currently undertaking a trial solar panel program on 20 properties. This will help to reduce our carbon footprint and also provide savings to tenants on their electricity bills. If this trial is successful, we hope to roll it out in more locations in the future!

To support our commitment to the environment, we are giving tenants the option to receive this newsletter by email instead of by post. Update your preference at www.pacificlink.org.au/newsletter.



A Heartfelt Letter from Lynn

In November 2021, we farewelled Lynn Freeland after 19 amazing years with Pacific Link Housing. Lynn's genuine care and commitment have been an inspiration to tenants, her team members and the wider community. In recognition of Lynn's career, we have named our garden at North Gosford the 'Lynn Freeland Community Garden'. We hope she'll make a special guest appearance at tenant activities there in the future!

We appreciate all that Lynn has contributed over the years and wish her every happiness for her well-deserved retirement and future plans.



By the time you read this I will have left the workplace that I have loved for over 19 years. And, it is with a heavy heart that I do so.

It wasn't an easy decision to make but a sensible one due to health issues. I am sorry if this news has shocked you, but you can imagine the difficulty in saying a personal goodbye to all the amazing people I have had the pleasure of meeting.

I thank you for allowing me to be part of your lives, for inviting me into your homes and introducing me to your families. It has been a privilege and one of the most rewarding experiences in my time at Pacific Link Housing.

I have also been honoured to work with amazing and dedicated people in the many support services in our local communities. It has been a great partnership that has given us the opportunity to develop fantastic programs, both educational and social, which many tenants have had the pleasure of enjoying over the years.

As for my other family, thank you to my Pacific Link people for educating me, trusting me, supporting me, and allowing me to stay for a third of my life in an amazing organisation. I am so proud to have been a part of our time together and will continue to watch your progress from the side lines. And, shouting your praise from the rooftops of course!

I'll say goodbye and see you later. Hug your kids often and be kind to one another.

From Lynn

Apply for an Education Scholarship

The next round of Pacific Link Housing's Education Scholarships are now open until 31 January 2022. If you are at school or doing tertiary studies, we encourage you to apply for assistance to help cover the cost of your education. This can include:

- course fees or private tuition
- text books, workbooks, study guides or stationery supplies
- specialist equipment (e.g. medical, art, music or photographic)
- home computer or laptop, computer software, printer

- Uniforms, shoes or PPE equipment
- Other items will also be considered

It's easy to apply for a PLH scholarship at www.pacificlink.org.au/programs. Shortlisted tenants will be asked to come along to meet with us so that we can learn more about what you are studying and how the scholarship will help. We love hearing from our tenants about their ambitions and progress during their studies!

Contact us for more information on 4327 7617.

