



Pacific Link
HOUSING

Pacific Link Post



Your tenant newsletter



Winter 2025 Issue

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Message from our CEO

It was a pleasure to welcome the Prime Minister to our office at the end of March for a special funding announcement. During his visit, we had the opportunity to share the positive impact of our tenant activities, programs and various partnerships in the community. It was a proud moment for our team and a great chance to highlight the work we are achieving.

In this issue, you'll find a reminder that applications for our Education Support Program are now open. If you or your children are studying, I encourage you to apply before 1st July. You can find more details inside this newsletter, along with a reminder of our other programs available to PLH tenants throughout the year.

We're also celebrating a big milestone for one of our team members. Congratulations to Cathy, who recently graduated from the CHIA NSW Cadetship Program and has also been named a finalist for a Vocational Student of the Year Award! Her journey is inspiring and if you're interested in following a similar path, we'll share details of the next Cadetship round later this year.

Finally, we've included some tips and supports that may be helpful over winter. I hope you enjoy this edition and keep warm in the months ahead.

Ian Lynch - CEO

Looking After Your Mental Wellbeing This Winter

Winter can sometimes leave us feeling a bit flat, especially if we're spending more time indoors or on our own. Shorter days and colder weather can affect our mood – but there are simple, everyday ways to support your mental and physical wellbeing. It's more common than you think!



Get some sunlight – Step outside for a short walk or a cuppa in the sun to boost vitamin D, which helps your immune system.



Stay active – Gentle movement like stretching, walking or gardening can lift your mood.



Keep a routine – Having regular sleep and daily habits can help you feel more balanced.



Stay connected – A quick chat with a friend, neighbour or family member can brighten your day.



Eat well – Warm, nourishing meals like veggie-packed soups are great for body and mind.



Be kind to yourself – Winter can be tough. It's okay to rest and take things one day at a time.



Need extra support? If you're feeling overwhelmed this winter, remember that support is just a call away. Lifeline is available 24/7 for a confidential chat with someone who will listen and understand. You don't have to face things alone.

- Call 13 11 14
- Text 0477 13 11 14
- Chat online at www.lifeline.org.au/crisis-chat

Lifeline has a fantastic self-support toolkit at www.lifeline.org.au, along with easy tips to help manage your wellbeing. These small steps can help bring a little light to your winter days!

Energy Saving Tips and Support

As the colder months set in, staying warm doesn't have to mean higher energy bills. Here are some easy ways to save energy and keep your home cosy this winter:

- **Use natural warmth** – Open curtains during the day to let the sun in, and close them at night to keep the heat in.
- **Only heat the rooms you use** – Close doors to unused areas to keep the heat where you need it.
- **Block draughts** – Use door snakes or rolled-up towels to stop cold air getting in under doors.
- **Switch off at the wall** – Unplug appliances you're not using to avoid phantom power use.

If you're struggling with the cost of energy:

- **Contact your energy provider** – Don't ignore overdue notices. You can ask for a payment plan, more time to pay, or support through their affordability program.



- **EAPA vouchers** – These are available to help pay your gas or electricity bill in a crisis. Visit www.ewon.com.au to find a provider near you.
- **Check for rebates** – The NSW Government has over 70 rebates and savings available for eligible households. Visit www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/savings-finder or go to a Service NSW Centre to check your options.

PLH's Education Support Program

We're excited to announce that Round Two of our Education Support Program is now open! This program is designed to help tenants of all ages achieve their study goals by providing practical support and resources.

If you or your children are studying, this program can help with items such as:

- **Technology needs:** Computers, laptops, software, printers
- **Educational fees:** Course fees, private tutors
- **Study materials:** Textbooks, study guides, stationery
- **Specialised equipment:** Items for medical, art, music or photographic courses
- **Other educational costs:** Other expenses are considered

Apply online before the 1st July 2025!

Visit www.pacificlink.org.au/education-support or call us at 4324 7617 if you have any questions or need help applying online.



We received an update from Emma's family, who shared how the program made a real difference by helping her access a desktop computer, which suited her needs better than a laptop.

"The Education Support Program 100% helped Emma with all her writing and being able to use a keyboard. Her internet skills have skyrocketed, we have noticed her happiness has increased at home and school. Thanks Pacific Link for the computer to help with Emma's studies!"

Need Help Accessing Aged Care or Community Support?

If you're an older person and finding it hard to access aged care or local services, the 'care finder' service may be able to help. It's a free and confidential service for people who don't have someone they trust to guide them through what can sometimes be a complicated process.

Our local partner **Bungree** provides the care finder service across the Central Coast, Lake Macquarie, Cessnock and Maitland areas. You don't need to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander to use the service – it's open to people of all cultural backgrounds who are eligible.



Who is eligible? You may be eligible if you:

- Need help with everyday tasks
- Have no one else who can help or support you
- Are aged 65+ or 50+ for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

What can care finders do? Care finders can:

- Help with My Aged Care applications and assessments
- Support you at appointments
- Link you to aged care services
- Connect you to housing, health, mental health, drug and alcohol services and other community supports

How do I access the service? You don't need a referral. Just call Bungree on 4350 0100 to find out if you're eligible and if the service is right for you. If care finder isn't the right fit, you can also contact My Aged Care on 1800 200 244 or visit a Services Australia centre for face-to-face advice or help.

Live in Newcastle or Port Stephens?

Visit www.myagedcare.gov.au/help-care-finder to find a care finder provider in your area.



Cook Up with Our Central Coast Community



Wyoming Community Centre recently hosted a hands-on cooking demonstration at one of our Central Coast complexes. It was a fantastic morning filled with laughter, shared stories and a great sense of community.

Tenants rolled up their sleeves to prepare a delicious Beef Stroganoff, with some of the ingredients coming straight from the community garden. Even seasoned home cooks picked up a few new tips during the step-by-step demonstration.

Everyone pitched in to cook and clean, turning the experience into a true team effort. The result? Full stomachs, happy hearts and new friendships formed over a shared love of good food.

“The company was lovely, and the cooking demonstration was great. There was plenty of food left over which we could all take home with us. It was very relaxing.”

“Great & delicious meal produced by Wyong Community Centre ladies; helpful recipe handout; good conversations with past & present neighbours; helpful and thoughtful PLH staff. Thank you all.”

“I want you to know just how much I appreciate all that you arrange for us. Yesterday was such a lovely day of fellowship and the meal was delightful. One is never too old to learn. I have never put mushroom soup in Stroganoff before and it was delicious. Thank you again.”

Congratulations Cathy – Cadetship Graduate and Award Finalist!

We're thrilled to celebrate Cathy's graduation from the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW Cadetship Program! Cathy joined PLH in 2024 and worked full-time while completing a Certificate IV in Housing through online learning and in-person workshops. Her dedication and commitment were recognised at a graduation ceremony held at the historic Sydney Mint.

Even more exciting, Cathy has been named a Finalist for the 2025 NSW Vocational Student of the Year for the Hunter and Central Coast region! She was nominated by CHIA NSW for her outstanding efforts throughout the program. The winner will be announced in June and the PLH team will be loudly cheering her on.

Interested in a cadetship? Keep an eye on future newsletters because a new round is coming at the end of the year. It's a great way to kickstart a career in the housing sector.



Pacific Link Housing's Tenant Programs

Pacific Link Housing offers a range of programs to support our tenants. Visit www.pacificlink.org.au/programs to find out if you're eligible and apply, or give our office a call on 4324 7617!



Tech Connect No-Interest Loan Program

With this program, you can buy new laptops and devices through affordable, interest-free repayments. It's a safer option than short-term loans, giving you access to the latest technology without financial stress.

"Thank you for the assistance to buy a new smartphone and pay it off without interest. Technology can cost a lot to replace, so this program made it possible."



Health & Wellbeing Program

We can support tenants of all ages to join registered sports, health and community activities to improve fitness and wellbeing. This program helps cover costs like registration fees, uniforms and other related expenses.

"Thanks to this program, my son was able to purchase proper boots and play his favourite sport. When he is older, he wants to teach younger kids how to play soccer and other sports"



Learner Driver Program

Get free driving lessons with a professional driving school! This program is open to tenants of all ages with a learner's licence and helps improve road safety, build driving skills and boost confidence – getting you on the road sooner.

"The professional lessons through the driving school are giving me confidence. I know this is going to be a great stepping stone to getting a job in the future."



New Tenant Program Coming Soon! PLH will soon be offering no-interest loans for lawn mowers and other garden equipment – stay tuned for more details in the next issue.



PLH Fights Against Plastic Pollution

Our CEO, Ian Lynch, recently took part in the Take 3 for the Sea CEO Clean-Up at Terrigal Haven, helping to remove rubbish from our local coastline. He was joined by representatives from our two social enterprises, Key2 Realty and Renew Projects. They were part of a group of more than 40 local business leaders and community members who rolled up their sleeves for the cause.

In just one hour, participants collected an incredible 45 kilograms of rubbish – a total of 2,009 individual pieces! Among the most commonly found items were plastic food packaging, hard plastic and a staggering 454 cigarette butts. Some of the more unusual discoveries included a pair of dentures and even a headless statue!

Together, our three representatives raised close to \$1,600 in donations, contributing to the event's total of \$8,400 raised to support Take 3 for the Sea's important environmental work. We're proud to be part of this meaningful community event and to play a role in protecting our beautiful environment for future generations.



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Mould Management for a Healthy Home

Mould is a common problem during the cooler months, especially in damp or poorly ventilated areas. While it isn't harmful to everyone, it can trigger allergic reactions in some people who are sensitive to allergens.



Need to remove mould? If you find mould in your home, it's best to clean it as soon as possible. White vinegar is an easy and affordable option that works on most surfaces. Mix equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle, spray on the mould, leave for one hour, then wipe with a damp cloth and let the area dry.

For stubborn mould, a store-bought cleaner may be needed. Always wear gloves and follow label instructions.



IMPORTANT - Please report any leaks or signs of water damage in your property to us immediately. Look out for damp carpets, moisture on walls, water stains on ceilings or plumbing issues.

Keep Your Contact Details Up to Date with PLH



Pacific Link Housing is currently updating our records and we need your help to make sure we have the right emergency contact for you. This might be a family member, friend or support person that we may call if we're worried about your wellbeing or can't reach you in an emergency.

Some tenants may have already received a call or message about this – thank you if you've responded! If not, you can provide your emergency contact by following the SMS link sent to your mobile or by calling our office. Keeping your contact details current helps us support you better and act quickly when needed.

If you have any questions or concerns about providing this information, please feel free to contact us at 4324 7617 or via email at info@pacificlink.org.au.

Prime Minister Visits to Announce Support for Trauma Recovery Centre

We were excited to welcome the Prime Minister to our office to announce a \$20 million commitment for a Women's and Children's Trauma Recovery Centre on the Central Coast. This important project is a partnership between Pacific Link Housing and the Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre.

The Centre will offer safe housing and specialist support for women and children recovering from domestic and family violence. There's a lot of planning ahead to make sure the homes are safe, welcoming and supported by the right services but we're proud to be creating a space for healing and recovery.

During the visit, the Prime Minister took time to chat with team members and learn about the work we're doing in the community, including our tenant programs and two social enterprises.



Pictured above: Dr Gordon Reid MP (Member for Robertson), Ian Lynch (Group CEO of Pacific Link Housing), the Hon. Anthony Albanese MP (Prime Minister of Australia), Senator Deborah O'Neill, Sara Foster (CEO of Central Coast Community Women's Health Centre).