

# Tenant Network Newsletter

Written by the newsletter committee and contributing members of the Tenant Network

Vol. 16, March 2010

## RESIDENTIAL TENANCY LAWS

Since 2007, consultation has been taking place with regard to the Residential Tenancy Laws.

Social Housing Tenants have been involved in these consultations via the Inner Sydney Central Resource Service, with meetings organised by David White and Charmaine Jones.

The Tenants Union of NSW released a statement on the 4th of November 2009:

The Tenants' Union of NSW today welcomed the release of draft legislation that would represent the most wide-ranging reform of the State's renting laws in more than 20 years.

'Our first impressions are that most of the provisions appear to be sensible improvements on the current law,' said Chris Martin, Senior Policy Officer for the Tenants' Union.

'Some are very significant improvements. The provisions about tenant databases are especially welcome, with new rules about when a person can be listed and disputes about listings to be resolved by the Consumer, Trader and Tenancy Tribunal.'

We don't support every measure in the draft legislation, and there are some problems that this



legislation does not address', said Mr Martin.

'It does not stop landlords from ending tenancies without a reason, which makes renting unnecessarily insecure.

'And the legislation continues to leave out boarders and lodgers, who remain vulnerable to exploitation and unlawful treatment by their landlords.'

The Tenants' Union urged the Government to continue reforming the law after the draft legislation is introduced. 'The law has to keep up with changes in the rental market and the emergence of new issues,' said Mr Martin.

For example, there's growing concern that safety should be improved in rental housing – such as through the use of childproof window fastenings, and electrical safety switches. These things should be in the next round of tenancy law reform.'

We wait to hear of the outcomes and final decisions made in relation to proposed changes and will let you know when we have this information available to us.

Greta (Garrigal Housing)

**FREE TENANT WORKSHOP AT THE AT THE ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS**

**See events page on back!**

## COMMON ACCESS STRATEGY

Housing NSW, in partnership with the Community Housing Sector, has developed a detailed strategy for creating a social housing common access system in NSW.

The Common Access Strategy tackles the linked problems of disconnection and duplication within a rapidly changing social housing service delivery system.

Implementation of the Common Access Strategy will deliver:

- Improved client access by housing assistance by making it simpler, fairer and easier for people to be matched with suitable assistance

by one of their local housing providers and

- An efficient and effective system for delivering housing assistance in a diverse multi-purpose environment

The Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan is the catalyst for a number of far reaching reforms to the delivery of housing assistance in NSW

one of the specific objectives under the Plan is the integration of public and community housing waiting lists.

All public housing and housing associations will be participating in this plan

# Tenant Representative's Page

## YOUTH COMMUNITY GREENING

Youth Community Greening is an environmental education program targeting disadvantaged urban and rural youth

The program is an offspring of the Community Greening Program which has partnered Social Housing for a number of years

For information please contact Kathy Pflieger on 9231-8331 or go to the Botanical Gardens website

[www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/community\\_greening/youth\\_community\\_greening](http://www.rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au/education/community_greening/youth_community_greening)

## THE LISTENING GROUP

Mona Vale Library will be launching a book discussion group for the visually impaired.

The group, facilitated by a "reader" will meet every Friday in the Beaton Room at the Library between 10am-12pm. to listen to a chosen text and discuss the content.

If you are interested please contact Jane Smith on (02) 9970-1608 or email [jane\\_smith@pittwater.nsw.gov.au](mailto:jane_smith@pittwater.nsw.gov.au)

## COMMUNITY VISITORS - FRIENDS FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The Community Visitors Scheme (CVS) is a national program that provides companionship to socially isolated people living in Australian Government-funded aged care homes.



CVS aims to enrich the quality of life for residents of aged care homes, who are socially isolated or lonely and who would really benefit from a friendly visitor.

The Community Visitors Scheme arranges community volunteers to visit selected residents on a regular, one-to-one basis.

Any resident whose quality of life could be improved by the companionship of a regular community visitor can be referred to the Community Visitors Scheme.

The volunteer is matched with a resident of an aged care home in their local area and regularly or at least once per fortnight.

For more information about the referral process or to register as a community visitor, please call ph: (02) 9949 5522

## ENVIRONMENTAL SONG

I like walking beneath the trees  
and lying in the grass,  
I like to look at all the flowers I  
see as I go past,  
I like just about everything you  
find on sea or land,  
I like it all because I am an  
environmental fan.

I like hiking, I like to climb,  
I like to swim and dive,  
I like to sometimes stay at home,  
And wander 'round outside.

I like helping our neighbourhood,  
stay beautiful and clean,  
I'd like to think that's how I leave the places where  
I've been.

By Gavin Byrt (extracts), donated by a tenant's 6 year old daughter.



## GETTING HELP FROM THE EDO

In 1990 the Environmental Defenders Office (EDO) acted for an association to stop the dumping of coal waste and seek remediation on a site on the Illawara Escarpment.

The court ruled that the dumping of coal waste by Kembla Coal and Coke as illegal.

The parties subsequently reached an agreement that provided for the remediation of the site by the new owner

The Environmental Defenders office can help you too. They may act for you, even if you have a private interest in the matter.

For further information phone 9262 6989 or 1800-626-239 or visit: [www.edo.org.au/edonsw](http://www.edo.org.au/edonsw)

## GAMBLING HELP

GAMBLING HELP is a free service that assists problem gamblers and their friends and families in NSW.

The services includes a range of counselling and self-help options that can be accessed by phone, online and face to face from most parts of the State

All gambling help services have a common goal- to help people understand and overcome problem gambling and to provide support, advice and encouragement

Ph: 1800-858-858 [www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au](http://www.gamblinghelp.nsw.gov.au)

## FOSTER CARE

Children need foster care for a number of reasons. Sometimes it is as simple as short-term parental illness. For other children it could be because of serious abuse or neglect. Some babies are placed in foster care whilst waiting to be placed with adoptive parents.



Whatever the reason, these children need safe and caring environments for however long it takes for a family problem to be dealt with.

A foster carer is part of a team that works to help the family get back together. When this is not possible foster carers can help provide stable long-term care for the child-this can mean that time spent in care can vary from just one day to many months or years, depending on a child's needs.

DoCS aims to reunite children with their parents as quickly as possible. The close bonds children have with their families and people who are significant to them are respected via the Foster Care System.

For further information contact the NSW Department of Community Services: ph: 9716-2222 or visit: [www.community.nsw.gov.au](http://www.community.nsw.gov.au)

## GETTING SUPPORT: LEGAL PROGRAM A FIRST

People with mental illness will have access to specialised legal services for the first time in NSW thanks to a new initiative by the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC).

People with mental illness have specialised legal needs, the centres chief, Robin Banks said, "Many people are living with complex, entrenched problems and often have great difficulty in accessing appropriate services".

The pilot projects aim to resolve those current problems.

Source: Central Newspaper 02.02.2010.  
If you would for more information, visit: [www.piac.asn.au/](http://www.piac.asn.au/)

## WATER EFFICIENCY LABELLING AND STANDARDS (WELS) SCHEME

Water shortages and the longer-term security of water supply are serious concerns for Australia.

The WELS SCHEME rates a range of products for water efficiency; helping Australian households to save, water and reduce their water and energy bills. In turn, these water saving products helps Australia save water.



Look for the star-rating label on the product.

By 2021 Australians could save more than \$600 million through reduced water and energy bills by simply choosing more efficient products.

Don't buy a water using product without finding out how WELS water efficiency ratings can save you money and help save water.

For more information visit: [www.waterrating.gov.au](http://www.waterrating.gov.au)  
email [ei@deh.gov.au](mailto:ei@deh.gov.au) or call 1800 803-772

## REGISTRATION UNDERWAY

Since the commencement of the Housing Regulation 2009 on 1 May 2009; the Registrar of Community Housing has made good progress with the regulation of the community housing sector.

As of the 1st November 2009 20 Organisations had achieved registration under this new system

## USEFUL LINKS

Women inspiring climate action  
[www.1millionwomen.com.au](http://www.1millionwomen.com.au) -

Community Forum Western Sydney -gives relevant news from across the state  
[www.wscf.org.au](http://www.wscf.org.au)

City of Sydney: What's On?  
<http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/WhatsOn/html/custom/2199-sydney-event-calendar.asp>

## FREE FUN AT THE MARITIME

Free fun at the Australia Maritime Museum Sydney, 22-24th March 2010  
Celebrate with other mums and children and the playgroup network.

For more details visit: [www.playgroupnsw.com.au](http://www.playgroupnsw.com.au)

## **FREE SOCIAL AND INFORMATIVE WORKSHOP AT THE ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS**

Come join us for a NO COST FUN FILLED DAY BY:

- Catching the train through the Botanical Gardens Sydney. Commentary given as we ride along
- Free picnic lunch
- Meet the Botanical Gardens Community Gardens Educational Staff who can give advice on how to set up a Community Garden Group and answer any other questions you may have
- Information about how to gain access to free vegetables and flowers for your garden.

**DATE: Wednesday 31st March, 2010**

**TIME: 10am for a 10:30am train ride**

**MEETING PLACE: Circular Quay Entrance to the Botanical Gardens near the Opera House**

**SPACE IS LIMITED TO 30 PEOPLE, YOU MUST BOOK TO ATTEND. IF YOU HAVE BOOKED BUT CAN NOT ATTEND PLEASE DEFINATELY LET US KNOW**

**To book, call Greta Angel on 9981-7658,  
or Kirrilee on 9281-7144**

**Look forward to seeing you there!!**



Midnight Basketball is a national social inclusion programme to help youth identify and embrace positive opportunities.

Dinner, compulsory lifeskills workshops and tournament basketball games are run in stadiums on Saturday nights from 7.30pm till midnight, providing a safe and motivating environment.

Midnight Basketball is open to youth aged 12 to 18 years, on Saturday nights from 7.30pm to midnight.

for more information visit: [www.midnightbasketball.org.au](http://www.midnightbasketball.org.au). If you'd like to see Midnight Basketball in your community, please contact Tess White on:

Tel: (02) 9232 8893, or

Email your details and we will call you: [webresponse1@midnightbasketball.org.au](mailto:webresponse1@midnightbasketball.org.au)

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