



Argyle Newsletter

Summer Edition 2013

In this Edition

Welcome	Pg 1
Office closures over Christmas	Pg 1
Celebrating Life & Achievements with our Tenants	Pg 2
Kylie's Blog	Pg 3
Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions	Pg 4
Rent It Keep It Program	Pg 8
What's been Happening at Argyle	Pg 9
Annual General Meeting Report	Pg 10
Around the Regions	Pg 11
Notice Board	Pg 15
CEO Festive Season Message	Pg 15
Contact Details	Pg 16

Welcome

Welcome to the summer edition of the Argyle Tenant Newsletter. This newsletter certainly reflects what a busy time of year it is for us all with lots of news, organisational updates and information about upcoming events and office closures over Christmas.

In this addition of the newsletter we have focused on our clients, celebrating their achievements and sharing special moments with them. We have also featured an extract from a blog by a member of the community in relation to Ainslie Village in Canberra – well worth taking a moment to read. I hope you enjoy all the news and stories!

Office closures over Christmas

Over the Christmas & New Year period all Argyle offices will be closed from 5.00pm on Tuesday 24th December until 9am on Thursday 2nd January, 2014.

Emergency maintenance arrangements during office closures

During office closures, our normal after hour's maintenance services will continue to be available. For assistance with emergency maintenance, please call 1300 850 451. Non urgent maintenance requests can be reported when we re-open on Thursday 2nd January, 2014.

If you reside in a leasehold property (a property not owned by Argyle but rented through a private landlord or real estate agent), please contact the emergency contact numbers provided on the front page of your lease agreement.



Celebrating life and achievements with our tenants

Our Fabulous Prize Winning Poet

We have amazing talent here in Young and now recognised throughout New South Wales.

The Schizophrenia Fellowship of NSW has commended Mr Stephen Jeffries on his entry in the poetry category for his rather touching Poem - Street Light Pole is Drunkenly and awarded him with a certificate and published recognition on their website. You can view this at www.sfnsw.org.au.

Please join me in congratulating Stephen on this marvellous accomplishment.

Tracey Newell
CSO (Young)



Stephen proudly displaying his award

Street light pole is heavily drunk, is intoxicated
swaying and swinging on the footpath as he
advanced to the pub. Crawl one by one street
light pole enter the pub, drink brown ale old
beer in cold tankard. He enjoys it so much he
has one brown ale old beer. He moves on
stumbling along and swaying. Waltzing and
stumbling along in the cool gently breeze of late
Night.

Stephen Jeffries



Kylie's Blog

For those of you who are not aware, Ainslie Village in Canberra provides accommodation for men and women aged 18 years and older, who may be homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Ainslie Village is managed on behalf of the ACT Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services by Argyle.

The following extract is from a blog by a young woman who volunteers at the village and who has been inspired to 'stand up for Ainslie' and share her positive experiences with others. Well worth the read!

'If you're from Canberra, you would know this (Ainslie Village) is one of the roughest places to go. It's full of drunks, drug abusers, violence and horrible people on low incomes/welfare because the whole place is just a housing village.

And you'd be WRONG!

Ainslie Village is community housing, so that part is correct. It is run by Argyle, but it is no longer the rough place it used to be. I've been going every week for a few months now and I love it.

I play chess, I cut hair, I hang out and chat with people. I have had a rough year and really struggle emotionally at many times. It doesn't seem to matter how crap I feel of a Thursday or Friday morning, as soon as I get to the village I am greeted warmly, I have wonderful conversations and leave there feeling so much better than I did when I arrived.

Everyone I have had the pleasure of meeting has been really nice, friendly, helpful and fascinating. The life stories vary so much, and to hear about

everyone's week, what they have been doing, goals and things they are working on, past memories gives me a lot of joy. I feel blessed that they share their life with me.

It is so easy for us to judge and make assumptions about a person based on where they live. I know for the residents of Ainslie Village they are judged to be violent, alcoholic, druggie criminals. I won't deny there are people there who have committed crimes, or drink, or whatever, but you can find that everywhere. It's interesting to see people's perceptions of a place based on what they think they know.

This week the reputation of the village started to get to me. It is somewhere I look forward to going every week. I have a blast there and everyone is so nice.

So many people I know have been apprehensive about going to Ainslie Village, but once they get there you are pleasantly surprised by how friendly and easy going the place really is, nothing like its reputation'.

If you would like to read all of Kylie's blog you can access the site at <http://kylieofiu.com/2013/11/one-thing-that-brings-me-joy-every-week-ainslie-village/#comments>



Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions

Ainslie Village CSO, Emma Hogwood, recently ran a 6 week course for interested Village residents on living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions. This was the first time that Emma has run this course and she shares the experience with us below:

“While the numbers may have dwindled over the 6 weeks, the three participants who attended all weeks found the course very beneficial and all spoke warmly of the experiences they’ve had and what they’ve learnt. I am particularly proud of the three who continued to attend whilst dealing with the death of another course member and close friend.”

In the last week, we spoke about ‘looking back and planning for the future’ Looking back, the participants were all excited to share what they’d learnt about healthy eating, weight management, positive thinking and dealing with difficult emotions. They came up with some very profound thoughts on their own lives and are particularly excited to model what they’ve learnt to their friends and housemates in the hope they might be able to pass on their own experiences and knowledge.

Planning for the future brought up some very interesting and exciting ideas. They are all keen to work on their healthy eating, in particular eating breakfast, and exercise plans. I am very proud of all the participants who attended and we had some excellent and interesting discussions. I am looking forward to being able to run more Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions courses at Ainslie Village again in the future.

Photos (clockwise from left): Blaeghd Bell, James Bros, Mal Purseglove receiving their certificate.



A Magic Garden in Yass

Kelly McGrath and Debbie Wray (Queanbeyan CSOs) have recently been busy doing inspections and getting to know the tenants in Yass. They have been made to feel very welcome and it's been great to see the upgrades on properties and all the beautiful spring gardens blooming. Anthony Clarke of Yass has spent many hours creating and taking care of his garden and has kindly allowed Kelly & Debbie to photograph the garden and share the photos.



I've won a car!

Congratulations to Wingecarribee tenant Elaine Calvert, who has just won a car in the 'That's Life!' magazine competition.

Elaine was so excited when she came into the office to tell us all the good news. This is a 'life changing' experience for Elaine and will benefit her whole family. Elaine picked up her new car during November and is currently zooming around in her little red Barina.

Tai Chi at Conder

A Tai Chi class for Health and Falls Prevention has been running successfully for the tenants at the Conder complex since 2012. The program was originally funded through an ACT Seniors Grant and Argyle partnered with the YWCA of Canberra who provided the venue at no cost.

Attendance has been high with approximately 10–12 participants each week and everyone is enjoying the exercise and friendly atmosphere.

Argyle and the YWCA are hoping to continue running this program in 2014 and would like to hear from Conder residents who may be interested in joining the class. For further details, or to register your interest, please contact the Queanbeyan office.



Digital storytelling at Queanbeyan – everyday people telling their stories

In July 2013, the Queanbeyan Team was successful in obtaining funding to run a Digital Storytelling pilot program for some of our older tenants.

Digital Storytelling could be described as the modern extension of the ancient art of storytelling, now interwoven with digitised still and moving images and sound.

Tenants participate in a supportive, informal environment where they are shown how to put together a story board and use basic digital technology. There will be a screening night held at the end of the program for friends and family and we can't wait to see the final results!

Postscript: The Storytelling group has now met three times and the team in Queanbeyan has received some lovely feedback from two of the participants.

Participant 1:

"It's a nice group. Trust is imperative as you're opening up about things that are private/personal. (We are all) supportive with one another."

"A reason to get up and look forward to the day."

"Good of Argyle to do this for social housing clients"

"Jennifer (the facilitator) makes you think outside the square! It takes you out of your comfort zone"

Participant 2:

"Jennifer (the facilitator) is so easy going yet comprehensive. She runs the workshop in a way that engages everyone and all seem to participate from the soul, so to speak. She makes it like a family gathering without the feuds. A very good teacher, with an awful lot of patience."

More updates on this interesting and therapeutic initiative will be provided over the months to come.



Wagga Wagga tenants visit the Floriade

Michele, Joanne and Vicki from the Griffith and Wagga offices accompanied 12 of the tenants from Wagga on a bus trip to the Floriade in Canberra on Friday 20th September, 2013.

The first stop was in Gundagai for morning tea where it was pouring rain. However, by the time they reached Canberra the sun was shining through and it was a beautiful day to visit the gardens.

What an exciting day was had by all! One of the participants had her first 'spin' on a scooter and was photographed by the Canberra Times. Tenants also enjoyed a tour of Canberra after visiting the gardens and called into the War Memorial Museum and Parliament House.

All the tenants who participated had a wonderful day with new friendships being formed and arrangements put in place to keep in contact in the future.

Rupinder Kaur
Administrative Assistant (Wagga Wagga)



Letters to the Editor

We would love you to share your stories and ideas with us

Don't forget that we have set up an email address editor@argylehousing.com.au so you can send your comments, feedback or stories for us to include in the next Newsletter. You can also send stories or items of interest to us to the following address:

The Editor
Argyle Community Housing
P.O Box 1026
Bowral 2576

Survey Thank You

A big THANK YOU to all of our tenants who completed the Argyle Tenant Satisfaction Survey for 2013. We look forward to sharing the results of the survey with you later in the year via our website and in the next Tenant Newsletter.

THANK
YOU

The Rent It Keep It Program

Megan Ward, Regional Manager Wingecarribee and Campbelltown answers some questions in regard to the Rent It Keep It program and how it has impacted on the lives of those who have attended.

What is the Rent It Keep It program (RIKI)?

Rent It Keep It is a training program which equips participants with the knowledge and skills to obtain and sustain a private rental property. It is particularly designed for participants who have had little experience in the private rental market.

The training program runs for one day and consists of 12 topics which can be presented as a whole package, or 'mix and match', to meet the needs of the target group. Topics in the program include:

- Starting a tenancy
- Managing finances
- Repairs and maintenance
- Ending a tenancy

Some topics are designed to be used before a participant has secured accommodation in the private rental market. Others are relevant even after a tenancy has been established.

Has the program been a success?

I feel the sessions we have run have been very successful with a high percentage of clients securing a tenancy.

What feedback have you received from participants?

I can honestly say with each session the following statement has been said at least once - 'I wish I knew about that before'. Each participant always learns something new, even if they have rented before.

Who can attend a Rent It Keep It Program?

RIKI is a free program open to anyone who would like to know more about how to go about securing a private rental property – members of the community, existing tenants who wish to exit social housing, young people or those who have had applications declined by landlords or real estate agents.

In the Wingecarribee area, some real estates are recognising the certificate when participants are applying for a private rental. I am also introducing completing RIKI to support plans for transitional/nominated properties in the Macarthur area.

I guess the main benefit is educating participants to ensure they know their rights when entering a tenancy agreement.

How can I find out more information about the RIKI program and register my interest in attending?

Just contact your nearest Argyle office. All offices are not running the program as yet, however we partner with a number of agencies who run RIKI sessions and may be able to link you into upcoming sessions depending on interest levels.

What's been happening at Argyle?

Introducing our new General Managers



Debbie Skelton

General Manager Customer & Community Development

Prior to her appointment as GM, Debbie held the position of Area Manager, Southern and will be a familiar face to those of you in Queanbeyan, Young and surrounding areas.

Debbie has approximately 20 years experience working in the social housing and disability sector in policy and program development and delivery of services. During her diverse career she has held management positions working across operational and policy teams in State, Territory, Commonwealth and in non-Government organisations. Debbie blends her passion for social justice with a strong focus on customer service and continues to look for innovation through pooling resources and creating partnerships. She has led Intensive Tenancy Management teams in Housing Estate regeneration, worked closely with Aboriginal Communities on the North Coast of NSW and remains an advocate for achieving better social outcomes.

Debbie will be responsible for Tenancy Management, Property Management, Regional Management and Community Development



Wendy Middleton

General Manager Business Development & Renewal

Wendy's position is a new position at Argyle that has been created to respond to opportunities for business growth and to lead community renewal initiative. Wendy has over 30 years experience working in community services both in the government and not for profit sectors in NSW and Victoria. Wendy has had the opportunity to work across many domains in both public policy and service delivery.

One of the most rewarding and significant achievements in Wendy's career was her involvement of a resident led community renewal for a public housing estate. Most recently, through partnerships and a tenacious approach, Wendy assisted in securing funding for the development of a community hub that provided one place for the community to access the assistance they needed.

Wendy's responsibilities will include: Business Development, Policy Advocacy & Community Renewal.



Annual General Meeting Report

The Annual General Meeting of Argyle Community Housing Ltd. was held at Mittagong RSL on Wednesday November 13, 2013. Approximately 50 people including tenants, staff and interested stakeholders, attended the meeting

The Chairperson of Argyle's Board, Mr Chris Benton, addressed the meeting and talked about the last year as being a period of "consolidation and maturation which has prepared Argyle to secure the future".

This sentiment was echoed by the CEO of Argyle Mr Chris Bratchford. Chris talked about a number of key highlights during the year including the Rotaract Park project in Young, current and future development projects, participation in Phase 1 of the National Regulatory System and Argyle's search for a new integrated IT system to support future growth. The audited financial reports demonstrating strong financial performance were also tabled.

The guest speaker was Dr Tony Gilmour, President of the Australian Housing Institute and CEO, Housing Impact Network. Tony described the future of community housing as being characterised by a "Premier League". The new National Regulatory System and future stock transfers "will create significant growth opportunities for Tier 1 providers", he said. Argyle has been provisionally assessed as a Tier 1 provider and is the fifth largest community housing provider in Australia. So it makes sense for Argyle to aspire to serve more customers and communities through growth.

After the official business was concluded all who attended shared a light lunch.

Did you attend the AGM? Why don't you consider attending next year? If you would like to be involved in the AGM or any other Argyle event please speak to any member of Argyle staff, contact us via our website or write to us at P.O. Box 1026, Bowral NSW 2576



Around the Regions

Homeless Person's Week Activities 5th – 11th August, 2013

As reported in our last newsletter, Argyle staff from around the regions were busy planning activities to raise awareness of homelessness during Homeless Person's Week.

It was a very busy week with activities including:

- The Bowral staff selling sausage sandwiches in Corbett Plaza, Bowral to raise funds for the homeless.
- Danny & Emma (CSOs) from Ainslie attending the Canberra Connect Homeless Expo.
- Vicki from our Griffith office at the Wagga Homeless Action Plan Information Session and Mini Service Expo in Wagga.
- Bowral and Campbelltown staff braving the Winter Sleep out for Homelessness in Campbelltown.
- Staff from the Southern team attended the South East Homelessness forum on 13 August. The day focused around engaging with the commercial sector, Going Home Staying Home Reforms, integrated Case Management and staff debriefing mechanisms.



Terri Stiller, Snr Manager ACT,
accepting the PM award

ACT Ainslie Village

Congratulations to the management and staff at Ainslie Village on their recent success in the Australian Institute of Project Management Achievement Awards for 2013.

Ainslie Village management had been encouraged to nominate in the Not for Profit category sponsored by Big and Little Home Loans with the winner to receive \$500.

Whilst the Village did not win first prize they did receive a high commendation award for the Ainslie Village project which is very well deserved indeed!

Ainslie Village – New partnerships

Canberra Alliance of Harm Minimisation and Advocacy (CAHMA) attended the site on the 6th August 2013 in partnership with Ainslie Village to host a BBQ to introduce themselves to residents and explain the services they offer. 90 people attended the BBQ and CAHMA spoke with different residents as they ate their meals in the dining room informing and discussing their services.

CAHMA will now attend the site weekly to undertake:

- Information sessions about the upcoming naloxone program
- Education sessions about pharmacotherapy – methadone and bupe
- Outreach visits to discuss setting up programs that can be run on site including small group sessions initiated by resident interests such as art and craft, movies etc...

Ainslie Village is excited to work with CAHMA in the coming months.

South East Region

Young - Rotaract Park Project Update

As we are fast approaching the end of the year, the Rotaract Park committee, schools and residents are very busy. As some of you may or may not know, the park's improvements have been extensive, with the construction in the early days of an amphitheatre, turf and covered BBQ area which includes picnic tables and lighting. There is also a COLA (covered outdoor learning area) which is also very much appreciated by the local preschool and children wanting to play out of the weather.

Very recently we embarked on the garden beds which were initially delayed due to torrential rain. However this was a blessing in disguise as the copious amount of water softened the ground and eased the transition of the very healthy plants purchased from Welby Gardens. Tenants, schools, residents and council staff rallied together to plant over 400 plants, shrubs and trees. The planting commenced early in the morning and I am still amazed and proud to say that they were all successfully and carefully planted by mid afternoon. It was absolutely fantastic to see people of all ages, and from all walks of life, working side by side for a common cause.

It was particularly encouraging to see the local preschool also visit the park the day we were planting, on an outdoor excursion making terrific use of the COLA.

Already the park is seeing many BBQ's on weekends, and the positive vibe we are getting from the community at large is wonderful. Argyle have already heard a whisper that another organisation would like to book the park for a free movie night and BBQ which would be amazing and making perfect use of the lovely amphitheatre.

We are now working towards celebrating the park and recognising partnerships in an important reveal to be held at a Christmas Carols by Candlelight on the 12th December 2013.

Tracey Newell
CSO (Young)



Photos courtesy Facebook –
Positively Young

Wingecarribee

Pink Ribbon Morning Tea Fund Raiser

Lots of fun and laughter at the Bowral office on 30th October as the Bowral & Campbelltown staff joined together for a special morning tea to raise funds to fight breast and gynaecological cancers.

For the occasion, the office 'boys' agreed to have their hair sprayed pink. What followed was some hilarious fun with novice graffiti artists trying to hit the target and Bernie on tissue alert for drips and sprays that went astray. All in all, lots of good fun.

Altogether, a fantastic effort with \$733 being raised towards cancer research.



Mystery Knitters

Apparently there is a group of 'mystery knitters' in Bowral who regularly drop in woollen blankets and teddy bears for the Homeless.

Recently, they dropped in three beautiful rugs and several knitted teddy bears with a request that they go to the bushfire victims in the Blue Mountains. Thanks to the Salvation Army, the blankets and the teddy bears have found a new home with those most in need.

Thank you to our 'mystery knitters', whoever you may be.



Bowral Boarding House

Argyle has commenced construction of a new generation boarding house for homeless youth in the Wingecarribee area. The purpose designed dwelling incorporates six self-contained units together with community space. A key design principle has been to accommodate the needs of support agencies to allow them to most effectively assist these youth in areas such as life skills development, education and training. The Project is due for completion in March, 2014.



Campbelltown

The Real Estate Connect program is a collaborative program where government, non government and private sector agencies work together to help people maintain and sustain tenancies so that they do not cycle into homelessness.

The Program has been running in the Campbelltown area for 18 months and the partners include: Argyle Community Housing, Housing NSW, Centrelink, Hume Community Housing, St. Vincent de Paul Society, Burnside, Richardson and Wrench Real Estate and Combined Real Estate.

On 6th August a morning tea was held with all involved to thank Richardson and Wrench Real Estate and Combined Real Estate for the wonderful work that they have done in helping to save tenancies



Riverina Region - Wagga Wagga

Open mornings - The Wagga Wagga office is offering its tenants the opportunity to come into the office, have coffee and cake and get to know the staff members of their local Argyle office.

During the open morning we offer you the use of a computer and phone and staff are also available to assist with access to other services if required.

The open mornings commenced on Friday 13th September and have been occurring fortnightly since that date. Numbers attending have been steadily increasing but we always have room for more!

The open mornings run between 10 am and 12 noon and you are welcome to drop in at any time during these hours.

Christmas recess: The last open morning prior to Christmas will be Friday 6th December. We will then have a break and resume the event again on the 17th January, 2014. If you require any further information please contact the Wagga Wagga office.



Notice Board

Bowral/Campbelltown

20th December, 2013 - Children's Christmas party at Moss Vale. Includes jumping castle, face painting, farmyard friends, vintage cars and, a visit from Santa! Registration essential! For further details contact the Bowral or Campbelltown office.

Young

12th December - Carols by Candlelight at Rotaract Park. For further details contact the Young office

Wagga Wagga

17th January, 2014 - Open mornings recommence after Christmas – 10am to 12noon at the Wagga office

Interest Free Loans Available to Argyle Tenants

General Loan Scheme

The General Loan Scheme (GLS) offers tenants of Argyle Housing the opportunity to purchase needed household items without paying any interest, fees or charges on a loan. The term of the loan is usually 12 months and we are happy to lend up to \$800. Repayments are determined on a case by case basis depending on the size of the loan. Loans will be assessed for approval by a review committee and each loan will be treated confidentially.

Loans will be given for whitegoods, gas or electrical heaters, mowers, sheds and whipper snippers. Any other reasonable requests will be considered.

For further information and to check your eligibility for a loan please contact your local Argyle office or call Bernadette Welfare on 02 48612753.

CEO Festive Season Message

We hope that you will enjoy reading this edition of the Argyle Newsletter. As mentioned in our Welcome Message, we have tried to focus this newsletter on positive and uplifting stories, celebrating the achievements and lives of our tenants and sharing inspirational moments with you all.

Throughout 2013, the management and staff at Argyle have strived to build on our past successes and to work for better outcomes for our customers. We are pleased to note that you, on the whole, believe we are doing a good job. Argyle's 2012 tenant satisfaction survey results were very positive, with tenants giving Argyle an excellent overall combined satisfaction rating of 89% and with 93% satisfied that Argyle treats them fairly. The survey also provides insights into the areas where we can improve, such as our approach to handling complaints. To address shortcomings in this important area of organisation performance we have reviewed both our complaints policy and process to improve your experience.

We have been able to celebrate many positive and outstanding results that have been achieved this year and our focus is now on maintaining and building on these results in the year ahead.

We sincerely wish all of our customers, wherever you may be, a festive season filled with laughter, companionship and good will. Stay safe and enjoy the festive season celebrations!



Chris Bratchford
Chief Executive Officer



Contact

Head Office

Level 1, 32-36 Wingecarribee Street,
PO Box 1026 Bowral
NSW 2576

Ph: (02) 4861 2753

Fax: (02) 4861 2592

info@argylehousing.com.au

www.argylehousing.com.au

ACT Office

Ainslie Village,
23 Quick Street Campbell
ACT 2612

Bowral Office

Level 1, 32-36 Wingecarribee Street,
PO Box 1026 Bowral
NSW 2576

Campbelltown Office

28 Broughton Street,
PO Box 1121 Campbelltown
NSW 2560

Queanbeyan Office

Level 1, Suite 104 Riverside Plaza,
131 Monaro Street,
PO Box 502 Queanbeyan
NSW 2620

Wagga Wagga Office

28 Fitzmaurice Street,
PO Box 550 Wagga Wagga
NSW 2650

Griffith Office

168 Yambil Street,
PO Box 389 Griffith
NSW 2680

Young Office

Shop 4, 33 Clarke Street,
PO Box 402 Young
NSW 2594