



ARGYLER SPRING

2018 EDITION



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CENTRELINK CONSENT FORMS

By now every tenant should have received a new Centrelink Consent Form.

If it hasn't yet been returned, could you please fill it out, sign and date it and return it to your local Argyle office. You must either circle or cross out the Yes or the No, depending on whether you give consent or not.

We are regularly audited by Centrelink and need to have this form filled out correctly. If you have any concerns or you need help, please contact your Tenancy Officer or your local Argyle office on 1300 274 953 for assistance.

If you choose not to give consent for Argyle to access your Centrelink Income Statement, or you do not wish Argyle to advise Centrelink of a change in your rent payment, you will need to provide this information yourself.

Thank you - Rent Review Team



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Welcome to the spring edition of The Argyle.

With very little rain over the last six months, the ground is dry and everything is looking worse for wear. This is the driest winter we have had since the 1960s... and still no sign of rain! The drought is really hitting our communities and although there are campaigns in place to support the farmers, recovery, after rain, will be slow and painful.

The other area that has received a lot of publicity over the past several months has been the increase in homelessness. Poverty, increased costs of private rental, electricity and fuel are the contributors to the increase. Older people and young families are really struggling to make ends meet. If you have any ideas of how Argyle can assist or get messages to the government please contact me to help.

Argyle is saying "No to domestic and family violence." We are embarking on becoming white ribbon accredited. This means that we are reviewing our policies and home modifications to keep people safe.

Thank you to all that attended the recent forums about tenant participation. We were wrapped that you want to help us review our letters and make them simple, look at our policies and make them appropriate and easy to understand. The tenancy action workers will be in touch with you in the next couple of weeks to get your help. There has been much discussion on tenant participation, the BBQ's that we used to have, the bus trips and tenant outings. We encourage tenants to be involved, however, we will be expecting you to pay a contribution towards the cost.

We have thought that we might celebrate Argyle Day in November across the major offices. It would be a thank you to all tenants and celebration of being part of the organisation and early Christmas. If you would like to be involved in getting this to happen, please make contact with your local office.

Finally, I am currently telephoning 10% of tenants in all our locations to get feedback on their experience in being in Argyle Housing. These tenants have been selected randomly and will be notified by text message on the day that I am calling. So far I have spoken to three locations and feedback has been honest and generally positive. I look forward to having a conversation with you.

Regards.



Wendy Middleton
CEO - Argyle Housing

The Spring Garden

The Brown Thumb 

CONTROLLING WATER USE

BY LYNDAL BREEN

Reducing water consumption in and around the home is a simple and easy way to decrease water and energy bills and lessen your household's impact on the environment.

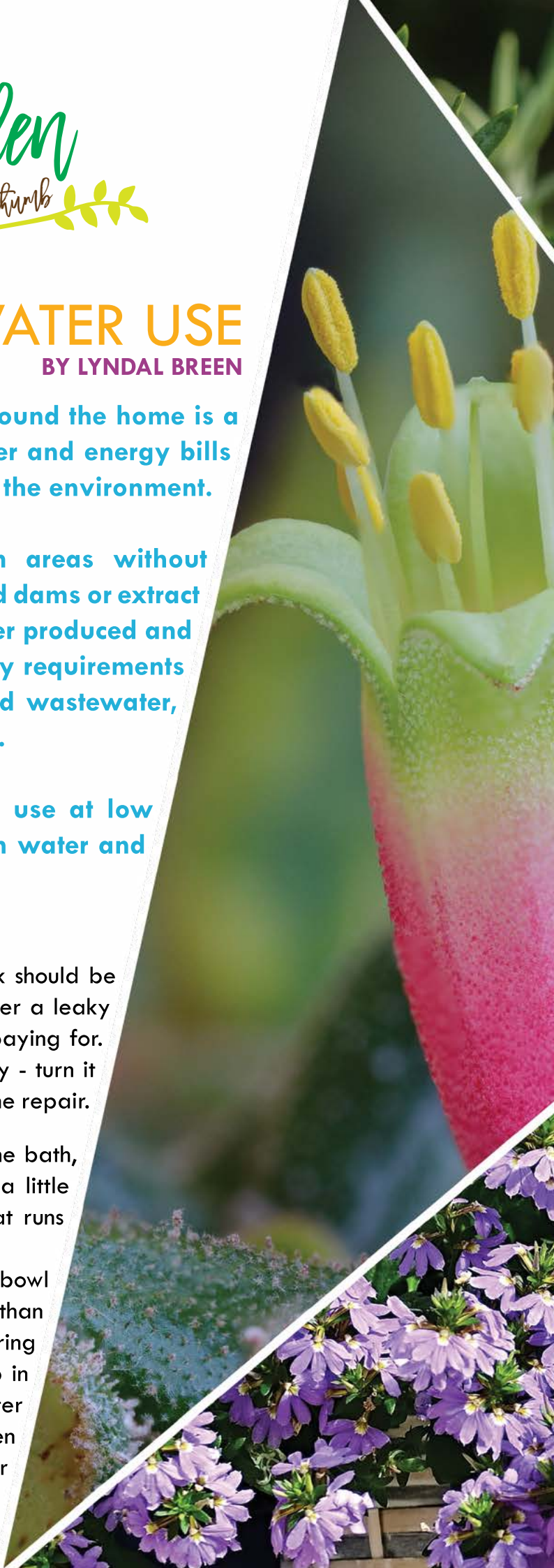
Conserving water resources, even in areas without shortages, helps reduce the need to build dams or extract water from rivers, decreases wastewater produced and treated at sewage plants, lowers energy requirements for treating and transporting water and wastewater, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.


Every household can cut down water use at low cost, often with costs recouped through water and energy savings within one year.

STOP LEAKS: Any dripping tap or other leak should be reported to Argyle immediately. A bucket under a leaky tap will conserve some of the water you are paying for. A leaking toilet can lose up to 400 litres a day - turn it off at the cistern between uses while awaiting the repair.

SMALL THINGS MATTER: avoid over-filling the bath, sink, basin or buckets – you can always add a little more if necessary; capture the cold water that runs from the hot tap in a container for later use.

Put the Plug in: wash fruit and vegetables in a bowl rather than under a running tap. Soak rather than rinse dishes under a running tap, whether preparing them for the dishwasher, or just for washing up in the sink. If you have an amount of clean water in the sink, think of ways to use it: wash kitchen cupboard doors, or clean a section of wall for





example. Recycling items can be rinsed at the end of a wash-up – they don't have to be squeaky clean.

IN THE BATHROOM: take shorter showers, 3 minutes is considered adequate - use a timer to help keep track of time. No need for more than one a day normally. Educate your children to understand that they cannot luxuriate in the warm shower or have a deep bath every day. Get the family to shower one straight after the other so that the water remains hot. Don't let the tap run while cleaning your teeth or washing hands.

In the kitchen: Save energy while you save water: only switch on the dishwasher when you have a full load (that also helps cut your gas or electric bills). Don't overfill the kettle; Put excess hot water in a thermos to use later when you need some warm water.

IN THE LAUNDRY: fill up the load before using the washing machine; use the water saving feature if you have one. Alternatively, run the laundry water through a hose and water the lawn - move it to different spots to prevent build-up of nutrients in one place.

IN THE GARDEN: The aim is to prevent the roots from drying out, so try to get water close to the base of the plant. Use a watering can rather than a hose or sprinkler – when you carry water you notice how much you use. Water in the cooler time of the day – morning is best. In very hot weather, deep watering a couple of times per week can be better. Thick mulching will also retain water and cool soil in your garden, particularly if your soil has been enriched with compost. Pot plants need monitoring to stop them drying out, but generally require less watering than plants in a garden. If you are growing thirsty plants, try to have them close together so they all benefit from one lot of water.

CHOOSE TO GROW MORE WATER-WISE PLANTS: succulents can be a good choice with many interesting forms and colourful flowers. Many local Australian natives are very hardy and attractive, and also support the local birds and butterflies. Plants like Scaevola (blue fan flower), Westringia (native rosemary), or Correa (native fuchsia) flower well for long periods and don't need much water once established.

CELEBRATE

LABOUR DAY LONG WEEKEND

All Argyle Offices will be closed for the Labour Day Long Weekend from 5pm on Friday 28th September until 9am Tuesday 2nd October.

Did you know?

Labour Day is an annual public holiday that celebrates the eight-hour working day, a victory for workers in the mid-late 19th century. The argument for the eight-hour day was based on the need for each person to have eight hours labour, eight hours recreation and eight hours rest.

argyle *Day*

In July this year all Argyle Team Leaders and Tenancy Action workers sat down for a meeting with the CEO that took place in Goulburn. Among many topics that were on the agenda, a very spirited discussion took place.

“Our memories are what gets us through the tough times and bring us so much joy as we get older. We all love to remember those times when we laughed, talked and had fun. “

It was agreed upon at the forum that we would introduce an annual “Argyle Day” This is a way that argyle can formally say thank you to tenants by having a party in each of our locations. Give out tenant awards and have some fun!

Argyle Day will be celebrated in November, this year we will be celebrating Argyle Day individually in our communities across our 7 locations. Make sure you keep an eye out for your invitation with all of the details.



REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE













For repairs and maintenance issues please follow the correct procedure below:

Office Hours (Monday - Friday 9am-5pm) excluding public holidays

Please call your Local Argyle Office

If you have an **emergency** and need to report repairs and maintenance out of office hours please call the after hours **emergency maintenance number** that is on your tenancy lease. The after hours number is for emergencies **ONLY**. If your repair is **NOT** urgent then please wait until the next working day and report via the office hours procedure.

WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

-  burst water service
-  blocked or broken toilet system
-  serious roof leak
-  gas leak
-  dangerous electrical fault
-  flooding or serious flood damage
-  serious storm or fire damage
-  failure or breakdown of the gas, electricity or water supply to the premises
-  failure of any essential service for hot water, cooking, heating or laundering
-  any fault or damage that causes the premises to be unsafe or not secure

Repair & Maintenance Response Times

Urgent Repairs: **24 Hours**

Routine Repairs: **7 Working Days**

Non Urgent Repairs: **28 Days**



LPG Gas & BBQ Gas Bottle Safety

It has come to our attention that some Tenants are using portable gas bottles and burners inside rental properties to cook.

This is a major danger. LPG gas bottles are designed to be used outdoors and cannot be ventilated inside the home properly.

Please **DO NOT** use portable LPG gas bottles inside your home.

Even if propane is not ignited, the build up of the gas can be deadly due to inhalation. Breathing the gas can cause hypoxia, which is a form of oxygen deprivation that can lead to death.

For more information please click on the below link

<https://www.elgas.com.au/swapngo/bbq-safety-tips>



Are you planning on moving or need help in choosing the right utilities provider?



The simple way
to stay connected

Convenient,
seamless and
stress free

Piece of mind.

How Fast Connect Works

Fast Connect provides a free service for customers who are moving home and wish to have one point of contact for all utility connections, disconnections and transfers. Customer information is collected and sent to their selected retailers on their behalf. All retailers have the same correct details to close the customer's old power, phone, internet and pay TV accounts, and establish new ones at their new address. This simplifies the administration of setting up a new address significantly, and customers find Fast Connect's service to be quick, easy and hassle free.

FREE TO USE

There is no charge for tenants to use Fast Connect. It is free for the customer and funded by retailers.

SINGLE CONTACT

Tenants will benefit by saving the time, money and frustration of contacting multiple retailers.

TRACK PROGRESS


Once a tenant's application has been received, tenants can track the progress of their application via fastconnect.net.au

If you would like more information or have any concerns regarding Fast Connect please do not hesitate to contact your local Argyle office on:

1300 ARGYLE
1300 274953

IS IT TIME TO DOWN SIZE?

Argyle tenant Allan Clarke made the choice to down size from a four-bedroom property



Allan Clarke has been a long time Argyle tenant in Wagga Wagga. Allan was living in a four-bedroom property with his brother in law until he moved to a smaller unit, leaving Allan on his own in a four-bedroom property. Due to Allan's disability, he had difficulties with cleaning the property and maintaining the yards.

The Tenancy Action Worker for Wagga Wagga Chantelle Hitchenor assisted Allan to make an NDIS access request along with the assistance of his support service worker at live Better and Partners in Recovery. Allan was moved to a more manageable one bedroom unit by Argyle and is now receiving an NDIS package that provides ongoing support for his health appointments, shopping days, cleaning in the home, social visits and transport.

Allan will also be getting some maintenance alterations in the property including having grab rails added and a visual aid smoke detector due to Allan's hearing impairment. Allan informs he loves his new property and is very grateful for all the assistance Argyle provided for him along the way

REPLACE YOUR OLD APPLIANCES AND SAVE

The Office of Environment & Heritage are offering discounts on new energy efficient fridges and TVs so you can replace your old inefficient models. New appliances can cut your energy bills, improve your household and family living costs and help protect our environment.

What They Are Offering:

40% off the cost of a fridge
(save up to \$200 a year on your energy bill)

50% off the cost of a TV
(save up to \$125 a year on your energy bill)

Is this offer for you?

To receive this offer you must be a NSW resident and hold one of the following:

- Pensioner Concession Card
- Health Care Card or Low Income Health Care Card from Centrelink
- Veterans' Affairs Gold Card

A Commonwealth Seniors Health Card is not sufficient eligibility for this offer - you will need to hold one of the above cards.

Want to apply?

There are 2 easy steps and the application takes only minutes to complete. Make sure you have your valid concession card with you when you apply.

To apply simply go-online to <https://appliance.environment.nsw.gov.au/Suitability>

MEET YOUR HOUSING SERVICES MANAGER

In August of 2018 Carolyn Doherty was welcomed by the Argyle team as the new Housing Services Manager.

Having accidentally stepped into Social Welfare as a career path in her early years (maybe in retaliation for her Father's wish for her to be an accountant), Carolyn found that she was incredibly passionate about social justice, people, and working with the most vulnerable people in our community. As someone who is just as passionate about building teams she is determined to do exactly that with objective of achieving a high quality social and affordable housing experience for our tenants and our communities.

What makes you smile in life right now?

Waking up every morning with a smile on my face. I have an amazing family and I am finally back working in a sector that I absolutely love. I am excited about being able to work back in the not for profit sector, the growth, the passion and a million possibilities.

Tell us your story.

I came to management in the community sector at a relatively early age (23). Heavily pregnant with my first child (one week off giving birth to be exact), I accepted a promotion as a Program Manager for a large church based organisation running alternative care services for children and young people with highly challenging behaviours. This program was heavily in debt, owing to the Church, and to this day I swear that I was only given the job because they figured they had nothing left to lose. I took the view that I had bitten off more than I could chew so there was only one thing to do – chew like mad!!

Financial spreadsheets, rosters, budgets went hand in hand with nappies, bottles and sleep routines. Four years later when I left to have my next child, I left them with all the debt recovered and a very healthy bank account to continue what had become a dynamic and very rewarding program to work in.

I learnt so much about myself – I love taking organisations and programs that are broken and defying the odds to make them great again. I love working with people who are passionate and invested, to get the best out of them and to achieve success together. And I learnt that being a working mother is really hard but can be so incredibly rewarding at the same time.



A SNEAK PEEK INTO THE LIFE OF KATH AND HANS

Kath and Hans are the type of people you could sit and talk with for hours over a cup of peppermint tea, and that's exactly what our Tenancy Action Worker in Queanbeyan, Sally did.

The first thing you see as you approach their townhouse is the beautiful garden filled with rose bushes. Kath and Hans have been living in their Argyle home for just over seven years, ever since it was built.

Kath and Hans are well known in the complex for being great neighbours and doing things like surprising other residents with cake on their birthday, or driving a resident to the doctor when he is unwell. One of their favourite things about their home is that it feels private, yet they have a great support network and are close to everything they need. Kath described that it doesn't just feel like a house, it feels like their home. They love how residents are always helping each other with things like mowing the lawn or taking each other on outings. When asked about the things they do for each other, they said, *"That's just what neighbours do"*.

Kath and Hans live a happy and fulfilling life and enjoy coast trips, walking, spending time with family, and gardening. When asked if they have any other hobbies Hans said *"each other probably"* with a laugh. This is just one example of their fun and easy-going personalities.

They both love planning trips away and hope to caravan around Australia one day.

Kath and Hans are an integral part of both the Queanbeyan community and the Argyle community and are always present at local events, ready to share their ideas. The entire team in the Queanbeyan office are very grateful to have them as residents and as friends.



OUR GARDENS

BY EDDIE BAILEY

A long-time and much loved Argyle tenant Eddie Bailey has always been an active member of the local community and especially in the apartment complex where he lives. Eddie has taken the time to write for us about his garden project-in Picton.

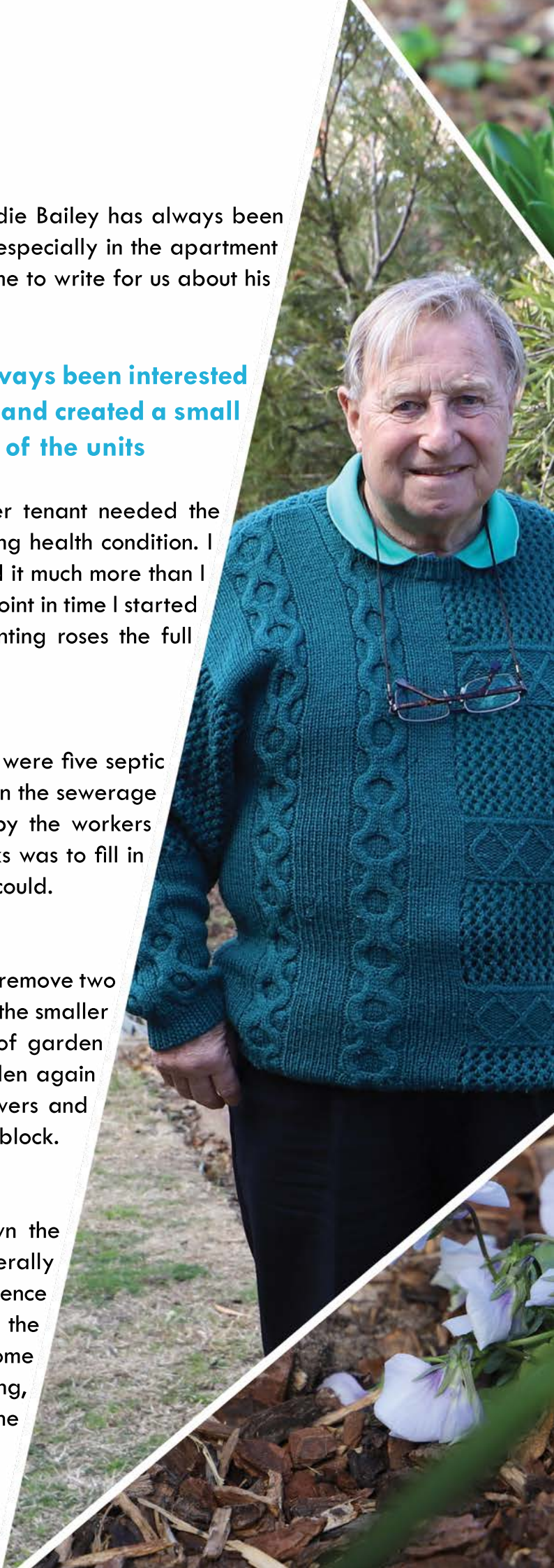
Since I first came here in 1995; I have always been interested in gardening. Originally I lived in unit 7 and created a small but easy to manage garden at the back of the units


In 2002 I moved upstairs to unit 4 as another tenant needed the ground floor unit on account of her deteriorating health condition. I was more than happy to do this as they needed it much more than I did and I have been here ever since. From this point in time I started to look after the front and side gardens, planting roses the full length of the driveway for the block of units.

When I began looking after the gardens there were five septic tanks situated underneath the front lot and when the sewerage was connected they were partly smashed in by the workers and left as they were. One of my first big tasks was to fill in where I could and repair the garden as best I could.

I began by asking the department of housing to remove two of the bigger pivot trees while I remove nine of the smaller trees. Three meters of topsoil and one meter of garden mix later, it all started to look like a new garden again and I was finally able to plant new trees, flowers and shrubs to add some vibrancy to the apartment block.

Due to the floodwater that year coming down the hill at the rear of the units, the garden was literally washed away. Unfortunately this damaged the fence and the garden, and while I was able to fix the garden I was told the fence would be fixed at some time in the future which was a little disappointing, however, I was able to fix the damage to the garden after some time.





The floods of 2016 affected the whole of Picton, putting a large percentage of the area under water and leaving wide spread damage. I repaired the garden for a second time, only to have it happen again in 2017.

This time the water was extremely dirty due to the construction work on the hill behind us. I did say to myself 'I am not doing this again', however, after talking to the construction manager he informed me they were putting nine large drains up on the hill and three more on the way down, all to connect at the street drain at our driveway.

By this time the fence was completely damage so I asked if I could remove 10 meters of fence and change the garden from what it was to a rock garden. I was so happy when Argyle said yes to my request, so I began the new garden layout on the 29th of October 2017 with the removal of the fence.

The construction company gifted the rocks to the project, which was a great addition to the garden. I started to put in the hedge plants, new soil and red chips, putting the rocks around the garden with lots of new plants and bulbs.

After the continued flood water damage to the garden and my long list of health problems (including a life-long heart condition) the rock garden option has been the best choice so far. As most gardeners know, weeds grow faster than plants and this should reduce the amount of weeds overall.

Despite the aches from old age the project has been very uplifting and rewarding for me personally. During the construction of the garden I was very lucky to have a helping hand from other tenants and even their family who had come to visit. This included help with planting, lifting and weeding to keep the garden looking fresh and clean.

The construction of the garden was finished on the 30th of June 2018 and I am very proud of how it has turned out. It will always be a continuous project and one that I will always enjoy!

TENANCY ACTION WORKERS

As a tier one community-housing provider for Social and Affordable housing across the ACT and NSW Argyle Housing is responsible for the management of over 2300 rental properties, serving over 4500 tenants. With over 30 years' experience, Argyle's commitment to our Tenants not only includes providing sustainable housing to those on low to moderate incomes but also operates a widespread tenant participation program. This includes providing support through our Tenancy Action Workers in the hope they are able to help achieve social inclusion for all tenants and so they can build their own viable future.

TENANCY ACTION WORKER for YOUNG & YASS - SAMMI WILSON

You can't rush someone's journey towards recovery however you can provide the bridge that enables change. I met these two amazing single mum's mid 2015 during a round of property inspections, following the inspections the Tenancy Officer had identified they were both in need of support which they agreed to as they were living in significant hoarding conditions.

Both of these ladies had experienced significant life traumas that had sent them spiraling into a state of deep depression and anxiety. Women that were previously capable, independent and strong were now filled with shame and embarrassment which made access into their properties difficult. Little by little we developed trust with these brave women who eventually felt safe enough to allow access to a wonderful support service who enabled their recovery journey to begin.

2018 sees both these ladies house proud, employed, improved health, weight loss of 30 kilos, enrolled in further education, and in love!

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER

YVETTE PIETSCH

Yvette has over 25 years' experience in public practice as a Chartered Accountant, working with private groups and not for profit organisations.

Yvette is currently a member of NSW Council for Women's Economic Opportunity and independent member of the Governance Audit & Risk Committee for Shellharbour City Council, and was previously a Trustee and Deputy Chair of Centennial Park & Moore Park Trust. Yvette has extensive experience in financial and risk management, corporate governance, business operations and commercial management.



TERTIARY SCHOLARSHIPS

Argyle tenant Grant Wilson has made some serious changes in his daily routine that have helped him to complete his Certificate II in Business Studies at CIT.

1. You must be excited that you have completed your studies?

Very much so, I am extremely happy and excited. It took me 18 months of hard work and dedication, but it was absolutely worth it.

2. Did you celebrate?

No not yet, but definitely planning on it.

3. What was the motivation for you to complete your studies?

It was initially because I am very much interested in video games, and I would like to learn more about how to develop video games. But it turns out it helped in other aspects of my life. I used to have severe gambling problems, and the studies have directly had an impact on me and have helped me to overcome the gambling addiction as gambling and studying does not go hand in hand. I have not gambled at all for 5 months.

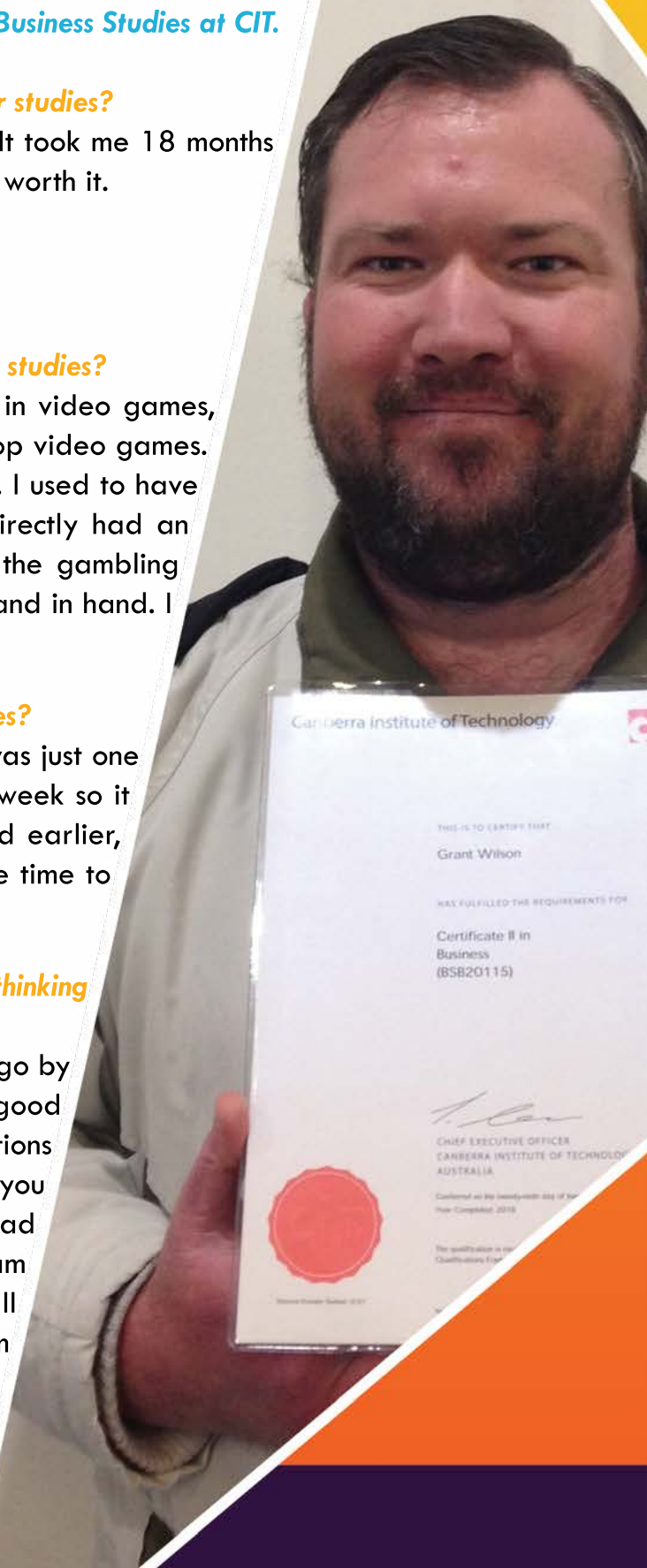
4. How did you manage your time to fit in your studies?

I found it quite easy actually. The first semester it was just one day a week and the second semester 1.5 days a week so it did not affect my time all that much. As mentioned earlier, because I have stopped gambling I had a lot more time to do other more useful things such as studying.

5. What advice would you give to others who are thinking about studying.

Just go for it, no need to delay it because time will go by quickly either way so you might as well put it to good use. Especially if you are experiencing any addictions that are stopping you from doing things in your life you may find that studying diverts the focus from other bad habits and in the end it's a win win situation. I am now a proud person who has completed his Cert II in business studies, I am no longer gambling, I am leading an active life selling the Big Issue, enjoy bowling with friends and am a regular gym visitor. Thank you very much Argyle, without you this would not have been possible.

To enquire about Argyle Tertiary Scholarships don't hesitate to speak with your TAW today!





***A better future for
our communities.***

Local Argyle Offices

1300 ARGYLE
1300 274953

AINSLIE VILLAGE

ALBURY

BOWRAL

CAMPBELLTOWN

COMMON GROUND

GOULBURN

GRIFFITH

QUEANBEYAN

TAHMOOR

WAGGA WAGGA

YASS

YOUNG



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