



# HOUSES STORIES

WINTER  
2021

## In this issue:

2021 Tenant Survey  
is now open **P3**

Nominations now  
open for the Advisory  
Committee of Tenants! **P4**

From ACT Chairperson  
Trish Owen **P5**

Tenant Art Showcase **P6**

Meet Maria Em - Staff member  
and Queen of Clean! **P8**

Maintenance Matters Q&A **P9**

Handling anti-social behaviour  
issues with neighbours **P10**

Let's talk about libraries **P11**

Winter puzzle competition **P12**

Cover Painting  
The Wagyl  
by Brett Parfitt  
**More on P3**

**HOUSING**  
**CHOICES**  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA

[www.housingchoices.org.au](http://www.housingchoices.org.au)

# From the **General Manager** **Community Housing**



**It is just lovely to be introducing another newsletter that focusses on another fabulous tenant event that was held in May - the Housing Choices WA Tenant Art Showcase.**

The event was a huge success, with more than 70 pieces of tenant art on display for tenants, staff and visiting Housing Choices Australia board members to enjoy. Thank you to all the tenants and staff that contributed to the event. We are looking forward to doing it bigger and better next year!

Excitingly, nominations are open for the next Advisory Committee of Tenants (ACT), with big shoes to fill set by the inaugural ACT. This committee has been enormously valuable for us in refining our services. I encourage anyone who would like to have input to nominate themselves for this committee.

Our Annual Tenant Survey is also now open. One of our values as an organisation is that we strive to be better and this survey is an important part of how we do this. I thank everyone in advance and appreciate you taking the time to complete the survey.

Lastly, I would like to provide an update on our reconciliation journey as a WA member of the Housing Choices Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) working group. I have been really impressed with the passion and commitment from Housing Choices Australia leaders and staff across all States. As we progress to finalising our Reflect RAP, we have been taking steps as an organisation to enhance our reconciliation journey. Such steps have included adding an acknowledgement of country to our email signatures and, for our WA RAP working group representatives, a visit to the new Boola Bardip museum.

We celebrated National Reconciliation Week between 28 May - 3 June. The theme of the week was **'More than a word. Reconciliation takes action'**. In line with this theme, Housing Choices rolled out Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Competency Training for all staff nationally. Here in WA, the Community Housing team spent Thursday 3 June attending a Reconciliation Walk in Perth, which was hosted by Reconciliation WA. This event enabled staff to better understand what

reconciliation really means on both a personal and organisational level.

Housing Choices WA also continues to uncover and support talented Aboriginal tenant artists through our Opportunities Fund and art events. To the right is some amazing artwork from one of our Aboriginal tenant artists and Opportunities Fund recipient, Brett Parfitt. Brett recently participated in Housing Choices' national RAP Artwork Competition.

Stay well, and I hope you enjoy this edition of the tenant newsletter.

**Natalie Sangalli**  
**General Manager**  
**Community Housing**





## 2021 Tenant Survey is now open!

**Tell us what you think about our services by completing the 2021 Tenant Survey and you will go in the running to win 1 of 2 \$200 gift vouchers or 1 of 10 \$50 gift vouchers!**

All tenants would have now received a survey in the post with a reply-paid envelope included. All you need to do is complete the survey and contact details form and send it to CHIA NSW in the reply-paid envelope by **Friday 16 July** and you will go in the prize draw!

Please let us know if you need another copy of the survey or more information on how to complete it. The survey will also be available to complete through our website.

To make sure you feel comfortable sharing your views, you can choose to complete the survey anonymously.

**Please do not use the survey to raise urgent tenancy issues.** If you raised an urgent issue in your last survey response, or have one now, please contact your Tenancy Officer directly to resolve the matter.



Brett Parfitt pictured with artwork from his Bush Tucker Series titled Two Goannas



Artwork by Brett Parfitt titled Derbarl Yerrigan.

# Nominations now open for the Advisory Committee of Tenants!



We are looking for tenants who would like to have their say about our services by joining the Housing Choices WA Advisory Committee of Tenants (ACT).

The ACT is a tenant-led group that meets every two months to discuss issues important to tenants and Housing Choices WA. All Housing Choices WA tenants and tenant carers are eligible to nominate.

There are different roles on the committee that you can nominate for including General Member, Secretary, Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Independent Living Program Representative.

## HOW TO NOMINATE

Complete the form below before **Monday 30 August** for the opportunity to join the committee.

**Once you have completed the form you can:**

- **post it** to Housing Choices WA, PO Box 105, Burswood WA 6100
- **hand it in** to your local Housing Choices WA office
- **email** the required information to [act@hcau.org.au](mailto:act@hcau.org.au), or
- **take a photo** of the completed nomination form and text it to 0429 858 127.



## ACT NOMINATION FORM

First name: .....

Last name: .....

Address: .....

Phone number: .....

Email address: .....

What role would you be interested in nominating for? (please select only one)

Why would you like to join the ACT?

Signature: ..... Date: .....



## Website update

In the Autumn edition of the tenant newsletter, we mentioned that the Housing Choices WA website would remain operational until we transitioned content across to the Housing Choices Australia website – [housingchoices.org.au](http://housingchoices.org.au).

We are planning to complete the transition by **Wednesday 30 June**, at which time we will retire [accesshousing.org.au](http://accesshousing.org.au) and direct tenants to access information about Housing Choices WA, the Housing Choices Australia Group and our services by visiting [housingchoices.org.au](http://housingchoices.org.au).

**If you have any queries about any of this information, please contact your Tenancy Officer.**

If you would like help completing this form, or want more information about the ACT, please contact Amy Kidner at Housing Choices WA on 0429 858 127 or via [act@hcau.org.au](mailto:act@hcau.org.au).

# From ACT Chairperson Trish Owen



**Once again, the ACT was impacted by COVID-19 lockdown measures in WA, which meant we had to postpone our April meeting until May. However, we were still able to have a meaningful meeting and our Deputy Chair, Sue, did a great job Chairing the meeting.**

Discussion topics on the table for this meeting included doing a final review of tenant inspection letters, providing feedback on the website as well as talking about how Housing Choices WA communicates to tenants regarding sudden changes to their tenancy.

We were all pretty excited to see our previous feedback implemented in the new inspection letter, outcome letter and inspection information sheet and cleaning guide! They all have a softer tone and ensure that, if we are having trouble keeping up with maintaining the property, we can ask for help. It was great to see that the perspectives of the ACT members were taken seriously and that Housing Choices WA heard us and acted on our feedback.

We would love to hear about how you find the new inspection letters and information!

Onto the website change over. We gave feedback on the transition from the WA website to the national Housing Choices website. During the meeting we gave suggestions about what we would like to see added or changed.

Speaking of websites... **did you know you can now give feedback on maintenance works done in your home via the website?**

This is something we spoke of previously and it has now been actioned!

We hope that seeing tenant feedback being actioned encourages you to nominate to be on the ACT this year to have your voice heard!

**Trish Owen**  
**ACT Chairperson**



## Thinking of accessing NDIS? We may be able to help you!

**The Mental Health Commission has allocated funding to support Independent Living Program (ILP) tenants to access the National Disability Insurance Scheme.**

This is a six-month program, which is funded through until November 2021.

The focus of this project is to provide support to people living with a psychosocial disability in ILP housing, which will assist them to apply for NDIS support.

Consumers of Mental Health WA have also been funded to provide peer support, ensuring that all referrals are informed about the NDIS and that they feel psychologically safe and secure during the process.

**If you are an ILP tenant and are interested in this opportunity to access the NDIS, please contact Housing Choices WA's Supported Tenancies Coordinator Shelley McGovern on 9430 0951 or speak to your Tenancy Officer.**



Jesse Steele, equal first place winner, Spoonbill Series.



Raymond Smith, equal second place winner, Black Cockatoo Dreaming.



Sheryl Hamilton, equal second place, sample of works.

## Artists shine at Tenant Art Showcase

**On Tuesday 11 May, Housing Choices WA residents, staff and Housing Choices Australia Group board directors celebrated the creative talents of our tenants at our biggest Tenant Art Showcase to date.**

With 25 tenant artists contributing to the event, there were many diverse skills on display including painting, poetry, sketching, photography, woodwork, embroidery and craft. Seeing proud tenants mingling and sharing the joy of art with staff and other guests made this event the highlight of the year so far for Housing Choices WA's Tenant Support and Capacity Building Team.

Our inaugural art display in 2018 displayed 25 works at our Rivervale office. This year, the event was held in historic Hamilton Hill Memorial Hall with more than 70 pieces of tenant art on display! We were thrilled to celebrate our growing cohort of tenant artists over some great food and fabulous artwork.

Housing Choices WA Tenant Engagement and Capacity Building Officer Alex Kepes said tenant art events had sparked positive change in the lives of many tenants since our inaugural event in 2018.

*"It's been an absolute joy to witness the growth in confidence and skills of our tenant artists," Alex said.*

*"The showcase is a wonderful opportunity for tenants to meet and share their work and inspirational stories with others.*

*Art for many of our tenants has become a passion, which has helped them mentally and brought so much positivity to their lives and to their friends and families. We are humbled by their generosity in sharing their work."*

To mark the occasion, Housing Choices Australia board directors and staff based in Adelaide, Hobart and Melbourne flew in to join Perth-based directors to meet and mingle with

WA tenants and celebrate their artistic endeavours.

Our first ever People's Choice Awards uncovered some crowd favourites, with top honours going to photographer Phillip Day for his stunning beach landscape and self-taught photographer and wildlife carer Jesse Steele for her sensitive portrayal of native birds.

We also had a tie for second place, with Raymond Smith winning his first ever art prize for his Black Cockatoo painting and Sheryl Hamilton for her beautiful free motion stitched quilt.

A photo booth set up especially for the occasion captured artists with their work, making it a true celebration of their efforts and leaving them with a memento to mark the occasion.

**If you would like to display artwork at one of Housing Choices WA's offices, please get in touch with Alex Kepes on 0437 887 675.**



Phillip Day, equal first place winner, Sunset Tranquillity, pictured with Housing Choices WA GM Community Housing Natalie Sangalli



Housing Choices WA's Amy Kidner and Alex Kepes

### From the visitors book

*Beautiful, diverse display. Info about artists and art was very interesting. Great to see the people from the board and a lovely spread. Thank you.*

*Look how far everyone has come in their own art journey. Beautiful artwork!*

*Once again, wonderful expression from our very passionate and talented artists!*



# Meet Maria Em – Staff member and

## Queen of Clean!



### How long have you been with Housing Choices WA and what is your role?

I have been with Housing Choices WA for three and a half years now. I started working on reception, so you may remember my voice on the other end of the phone! I then moved into a Tenancy Assistant role and now I am working as a Tenancy Officer three days a week and a Tenancy Assistant two days a week.

### How did you get the nickname 'Queen of Clean'?

I actually have no idea how I got this nickname! I believe it was Shelley, our Supported Tenancies Coordinator, who gave it to me. I do like to clean, so the nickname isn't a surprise. Cleaning the bathrooms and kitchen is very satisfying - I love seeing the result. It may sound weird but cleaning calms me, too!

### What are some affordable cleaning tips for bathrooms that you can share with tenants?

1. You don't need to buy an expensive cleaning product to clean your toilet. You can purchase

citric acid from the local supermarket for a couple of dollars! Empty citric acid into your toilet and leave it overnight. In the morning scrub your toilet and flush - it is as easy as that.

2. To clean your vanity and sink, use water, white vinegar and bi-carbonate soda. These products are also cheap from supermarkets! Mix 500ml of vinegar with two litres of water first, and then add in ¼ of a cup of bi-carb soda to the water/vinegar mix. Dip your sponge into the mix and off you go. Once you've finished, wipe everything down with a dry cloth.

3. To clean your mirrors or windows, mix water and dishwashing liquid in a spray bottle. Then use a cheap microfiber cloth to clean. I have found this to be much better than using any other glass cleaner and it is much cheaper too!

**Please remember to keep any unused or mixed products out of reach of animals and children.**



## Maintaining your home in storm season

**The tips below will help ensure your property remains safe and secure during Winter and the wild weather it can bring.**

- During and after heavy rains, check your roof for any signs of leaking. If you notice any leaks, call the **Maintenance Hotline on 1800 203 383**.
- When you are alerted to a storm warning, please secure outdoor furniture and put away outdoor umbrellas.
- Check that your roof and gutters are free from debris and leaf matter. You can do this by standing as far back as possible and looking up to the roof and gutters. If your gutters need cleaning due to leaves and natural debris, please call the Maintenance Hotline so we can have them cleaned. If left in there, debris might clog the gutters, which may cause water to leak into your property.



# Maintenance Matters Q&A

---



**We recently held a Maintenance Matters Information Session with tenants at Rockingham. During the session, tenants had some great questions about common property issues that we would like to share with all Housing Choices WA tenants.**



## **Who is responsible for maintaining trees on our properties?**

Tenants are responsible for light pruning of trees within their properties. Heavy pruning of trees is the responsibility of Housing Choices WA.

For example, if a small tree is growing near a footpath and you can comfortably prune thin branches way from the footpath – this is your responsibility.

If a large, fully grown tree has a branch that is overhanging your roof and its leaves are blocking gutters on your roof, it is the responsibility of Housing Choices WA to address this issue.

Trees growing on verges, which have been planted by the local council / shire, are the property and responsibility of the local council / shire.



## **How do we deal with pests in the home?**

The best way to deal with pests and vermin in the home is to prevent them from coming in! Keeping your house clean is an important part of preventing pest problems in your home and tenants are responsible for taking basic pest prevention measures. This includes storing food properly in airtight containers, using sprays or baits, disposing of rubbish appropriately using bin bags and regularly wiping down countertops and stovetops of food debris. Remember that pet bowls can also be a regular source of food and water for pests.

Housing Choices WA is generally responsible for dealing with infestations requiring pest control services as these situations are out of the control of the tenant. However, if an infestation is caused by a lack of cleanliness or the activities of the tenant, it is the tenant's responsibility. For example, cockroach activity within the home due to poor cleanliness standards is a tenant responsibility, but severe ant activity within the home is the responsibility of Housing Choices WA.



## **Be water wise this Winter**

---

**As a reminder, the Winter Sprinkler Ban came into effect on Tuesday 1 June and will end on Tuesday 31 August. The Water Corporation can issue warnings and fines for ignoring the Winter Sprinkler Ban, so make sure you turn your sprinklers off to help save water and avoid fines.**

Most reticulation controllers are very simple to turn off and will either have:

- a dial that you move to the off position; or
- a tap timer that can be turned off at the tap.

Complexes will have their common area reticulation turned off automatically.

# Handling anti-social behaviour issues with neighbours



## What is nuisance and anti-social behaviour (ASB)?

Nuisance and ASB can range from minor annoyances such as rowdy parties to serious acts of violence, intimidation or harassment.

## Our expectations

Housing Choices WA expects tenants to be considerate neighbours and respect the right of everyone to enjoy the peace and privacy of their own home.

Tenants are responsible not only for their own behaviour, but also the behaviour of their household members and visitors to their home.

## What to do if you have a problem

We encourage tenants to be tolerant of minor and one-off annoyances. If, however, your neighbour's behaviours are causing you distress, we have a process in place to help resolve the issue/s.

If there is no threat to safety, talking to the person who is causing the problem may help in the first instance to resolve the issue.

## Your local council / shire may be able to help

Local Government Authorities (councils and shires) can help with nuisance noise complaints and their Ranger Services can help with dog issues such as constant barking. If these issues are occurring in your area, please contact your local council or shire.

## Reporting the issue to Housing Choices WA

If you are unable to resolve the issue with your neighbour, and your local council or shire cannot assist, you can report the issue to Housing Choices WA. Contact your local office in person, by phone, post or email to lodge a complaint and give as much detail as possible about the situation. We will then investigate the situation impartially, which may include asking you to keep a record of any future incidents while we investigate and talk to all parties involved.

We will work with you and any other persons involved to try to resolve the issue/s. If the nuisance or ASB is substantiated and continues despite our attempts to resolve it, we may take action under the Residential Tenancies Act.

The action we take may be limited if there is insufficient evidence, all parties are at fault or there is evidence of retaliation, the issue is not a breach of a Tenancy Agreement or the person responsible is not a tenant of Housing Choices WA.





# Let's talk about libraries

## When is the last time you visited a library?

Libraries have changed a lot over the years and have become community hubs offering a host of services to the public.

Housing Choices WA held wellbeing groups for tenants at local libraries at Rockingham, Armadale and Mandurah over the past six months. Staff and tenants who attended these groups all agreed WA libraries are awesome!

A tenant who attended our Rockingham group signed up to be a library member on the day. She had never been a library member before but couldn't say no after finding out about the amazing services available and that it was all FREE!

## Did you know libraries don't just lend books?

You can borrow DVDs, magazines, e-books and audio books. They have free wi-fi, public access computers, printers and quiet areas to sit and relax. Libraries also provide a range of community groups including book clubs, knitting/craft groups, talks, information sessions and more!

Most recently, we found out about [www.kanopy.com](http://www.kanopy.com) – a streaming service that allows you to view thousands of films for free with your library card.

Each Local Government Authority has its own local libraries and they offer a wide range of activities, groups, computer support and, of course, books. Check out your local library and join today!



## Hear from Patricia, who attended a Housing Choices WA wellbeing group at her local library at Mandurah.

*"I had such a good time on so many levels. The information given was so relevant and (there were) so many options to suit all.*

*"The library was great and had changed in content and delivery of services since I last visited six years ago.*

*"Back to important factors... the morning tea was so yummy, there was so much variety and the company was great... funny and laid back.*

*"I felt happy and motivated when I finally left after confirming my library membership!"*



# Winter Puzzle - Win a \$50 Bunnings voucher!

Find all the words in the word search except for one, which is not actually in the grid. Words may be forward, backward, up, down or diagonal.

W E B S I T E G H K L J L S H  
 I E T Y U N I A R W D F I T G  
 N D A X F V G Y Y T T S B O A  
 T R R T H J K E L P R O R R E  
 E W T E H R T V Y U E I A M P  
 R Z A S D E F R G H E J R K L  
 X C V B N M R U N M S B Y F H  
 F G H J O P O S I U Y C T F G  
 D C L I G H T N I N G H F B F  
 N E I G H B O U R J O O I Y T  
 G S T S E P T D C V B I D J A  
 F U S H O W C A S E J C L K L  
 G H V D R T Y C O S Y E I H E  
 B L K L O C A L B Y F S W G N  
 T H U N D E R V D E F R U Y T

**FIND THESE WORDS IN THE GRID:**

- |         |           |           |         |
|---------|-----------|-----------|---------|
| WINTER  | LIGHTNING | ART       | WEBSITE |
| WILD    | RAIN      | SHOWCASE  | HOME    |
| WEATHER | COSY      | TALENT    | CHOICES |
| STORM   | TREES     | NEIGHBOUR | LOCAL   |
| THUNDER | PESTS     | SURVEY    | LIBRARY |

Write this leftover word on a postcard or piece of paper with your full name, address and contact number and post it to At Home Winter Puzzle, Housing Choices Western Australia, PO Box 105, Burswood WA 6100 or hand it in at your local office. Competition closes Friday 3 September 2021.

The winner of a \$50 Bunnings voucher will be drawn from all the correct entries after this date. Only one entry per household. Good luck!

**Congratulations to Nathan, last edition's puzzle prize winner.**



## You've got talent!

We know there are so many talented and creative people in our tenant communities and we are on the search for story ideas as well as for people who want to contribute articles or pictures to Home Stories.

If you're a photographer, a writer, a cook, a gardener, a knitter, a film buff, a model builder, a painter, a poet – a hobbyist of some kind – let us know! We'd love to write a story about you and/or commission one from you about your area of passion and expertise!

Please contact us at [communications@hcau.org.au](mailto:communications@hcau.org.au) for more information.

Artwork: Untitled, Inspired by love's energy by Susan Gresham



**Perth Metro Office**

Level 7, 25 Rowe Avenue  
 Rivervale WA 6103  
 PO Box 105  
 Burswood WA 6100  
 P (08) 9430 0900

**Peel Office**

4 Stevenson Street  
 PO Box 1200  
 Mandurah WA 6210  
 P (08) 9534 0400

**South West Office**

1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 25 Victoria Street  
 PO Box 1539  
 Bunbury WA 6230  
 P (08) 9722 7200

[info-wa@hcau.org.au](mailto:info-wa@hcau.org.au) [housingchoices.org.au](http://housingchoices.org.au)

**Maintenance Hotline: 1800 203 383**