



Newsletter

www.housingplus.com.au

SPRING/SUMMER 2021

Dear Customers

It is hard to believe that 2021 is only a few weeks away from drawing to a close and that another 12 months has once again been dominated by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. I am delighted that Housing Plus has remained operational throughout this challenging time and I am very proud of the efforts of our Customer Service Team who have worked hard to continue to maintain a high level of service delivered in the safest and most efficient manner. We still managed to complete a number of key projects during this time which you can read about in the following pages and we look forward to further opportunities in 2022 to build and expand on those achievements. There is no doubt that we are all looking forward to re-connecting with family and friends over the coming weeks and during the festive season and I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a safe and happy 2022.

Liz Stamatelos

Head of Customer Service



27 Years with Housing Plus

Rita and Peter are the longest tenants of Housing Plus, having commenced their tenancy in 1993. Throughout that time, they have lovingly cared for their home and garden and have developed close relationships within the local community. Recently, they have had some health concerns, which has meant that they have not been able to tend to their garden as much as they previously did, and we were able to support them to ensure their garden was maintained to their high standards.



The support Housing Plus has given us has always made us feel safe and secure. It has also allowed us not to worry about housing and let us concentrate on our health, and that support is continuing as we look to transfer to Dubbo to be closer to family". RITA AND PETER



Phone numbers

Bathurst	6331 7059
Mudgee	6372 7816
Orange and Dubbo	1800 603 300
Report A Repair	1300 435 144
Domestic Violence Services	1300 384 357
Domestic Violence Services - Dubbo & Mudgee	1800 940 406
Homelessness Services	1800 674 474
Homelessness After Hours Service	
Link2Home	1800 152 152
Opportunity Pathways	1800 940 409
Initial Transition Service	1800 603 300
Men's Behaviour Change	1800 603 300
Together Home	1800 603 300



Email

Report a Repair
repairs@housingplus.com.au

Tenancy Enquiries
tenancy@housingplus.com.au

General Enquiries
info@housingplus.com.au

Domestic Violence
DV@housingplus.com.au

Homelessness Service
hsm@housingplus.com.au

Opportunity Pathways
op@housingplus.com.au

Initial Transition Services
its@housingplus.com.au



Office Hours

Orange	9am - 5pm	Mon - Fri
Bathurst	9am - 5pm	Mon - Fri
Dubbo	9am - 5pm	Mon - Fri
Mudgee	10am - 2pm	Tues and Thurs

To ensure we can provide the level of service you require please book an appointment to ensure your Housing Officer can meet with you. Your Housing Officer is available on their mobile during business hours.



Customer Community Days

Meetings postponed

Housing Plus had planned to hold a series of Customer Community Days in Bathurst, Dubbo, Orange and Mudgee in October. We have decided to postpone these events until after Christmas. These Customer Community Days are a chance for you to meet Housing Plus staff and other customers that live in your town. We will confirm the new dates in January.



Easing the Cost of Living for Families

The NSW Government have more than 70 rebates and saving available and we encourage you to see if you or a family member are eligible for any rebates or financial assistance on some household living expenses. Visit <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/cost-living> to find out more. There are also a variety of local services available to support you, so please contact your Housing Officer for more details.

Repairs and Maintenance

Housing Plus has recently completed several initiatives to help tenants reduce energy bills and improve the thermal comfort of their homes. These programs have been delivered with assistance from the NSW Home Energy Action Plan (HEAP) as well as the Federal government to support the rollout of:

- 250 Solar panels
- 150 Reverse-cycle air-conditioning systems
- Draught proofing of homes
- Installing screen doors to allow tenants to improve ventilation while maintaining security
- Upgraded roof insulation

Energy efficiency upgrades and rooftop solar installs have been completed to ensure residents stay comfortable both in winter and summer, and that they can do so while using less energy. For the homes that have installed Solar panels residents will also benefit from an expected reduction up to \$600 p.a. in electricity bills.



Tips for staying cool in Summer and warm in Winter – without breaking the bank



Using an air-conditioner for heating or cooling

At the height of Summer or in the depths of Winter, the most efficient way of both cooling AND heating our homes is with an energy efficient air-conditioner. Air-conditioners use a technology called heat pumps to cool or heat the air in our homes and are up to 4-5 times more efficient than using a bar radiator or column heater in Winter. When operating an air-conditioner, be sure to close-up the house, draw the curtains to avoid heat escaping in Winter, and condition only the rooms that you're in.



Getting the most from your Solar PV system

Rooftop solar systems convert energy from the sun into electricity that we can use in our home. These systems generate about twice as much in Summer as they do in Winter so you will notice a bigger impact on your bills during the summer months. To maximise savings from solar, consider shifting any energy intensive tasks that you can into the middle of the day. For example, using a clothes dryer, dishwasher, or washing machine between about 11am-3pm can help you maximise the amount of free solar energy you take advantage of.



Actively operating your home

Sometimes we forget that a home is like any other piece of equipment – it needs to be actively operated to get the most out of it. When a cool change comes through in Summer, open the windows up to let the house cool down, and make use of screen doors to achieve cross ventilation. In the colder months, opening North facing curtains can help our homes heat up from the sun for free – but remember to close curtains again to avoid heat loss as the sun goes down. If you have blinds outside, pull them down in the summer so the sun isn't hitting your glass and heating your home.

Why is my electricity bill so high?

We are just coming out of the winter season and often we are shocked at our electricity bills at this time of the year. Sometimes we forget how expensive it was last year but also sometimes we have changed our behaviour and are using different appliances and we have been home more.

There are things we can do though.

- Avoid using energy hungry appliances: e.g. column heaters, fan heaters, clothes dryers, or even a bar fridge if you have one, can be the cause of unexpectedly high bills
- Use curtains to keep heat from escaping out your windows in Winter
- Draughts can make your home really cold in the Winter. Putting a seal around windows and doors that are draughty helps keep your home warmer. You can do this cheaply – even an old scarf along the bottoms of doors or windows can be a great way of staying warm.

Getting the best electricity deal

Many retailers start off with a great deal, but after 6 or 12 months, put you on their normal plan. It is easy to check what offers are available by visiting the government website 'Energy Made Easy' which lets you compare plans from all retailers based on your own consumption.

So visit <https://www.energymadeeasy.gov.au/> as it pays to check back every year to make sure you're on the best deal.



Hi My name is
Harmony Meath,

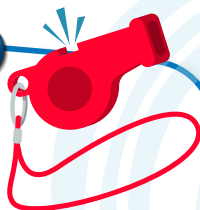
I am a Housing Officer in Orange.
I grew up in Penrith and moved to
the Central West Region 6 years ago.
My professional background is in
Property Management.
I am a diehard Rugby League fan.
I have an intense dislike for Seagulls
because when I was a toddler, to
wean me off the bottle, my mother
told me a Seagull stole all my bottles.



Hi My name is
Melissa Evans

but you can call me Mel, I am a
Housing Officer in Orange.
I grew up in Wollongong and I have been
working in the Community Service sector
for six years.

My passion is netball and I have been
playing since I was ten years old and am
a Nationally Accredited Netball Umpire.
When I was a child I dreamt of being
a Marine Biologist, but when I was
fourteen I was chased by a Stingray and
a fairy penguin and decided then Marine
Biology was not for me.



Get Involved

Housing Plus are developing
their Tenant Engagement
Strategy and we would like
to hear from you.

We would like to introduce
different ways that our
clients can be involved with
Housing Plus whether it be
forming a group who review
the policies and procedures
that directly affect tenants,
forming a group who would
like to help us put together
our newsletters, or forming
a social group for parenting
support, gardening or recipe
sharing tips, we want to hear
from you.

If you have any ideas or
suggestions on how you
would like to be involved
please contact [rochelle@](mailto:rochelle@housingplus.com.au)
housingplus.com.au or call
1800 603 300 to speak to
Rochelle.

Customer Satisfaction Survey Results

Housing Plus conducted our annual Customer Satisfaction Survey earlier this year and we sincerely thank those who provided us with valuable feedback.

The survey provides the opportunity for you to let us know what we do well and where we can improve. It provides us with a better understanding of what is important to you so we can plan and adapt our organisation to better service and support you.

From an industry perspective, the results are extremely positive particularly considering that we have been operating remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic for the better part of 18 months. This in turn has driven considerable change and re-engineering of our processes and service delivery.

We are pleased to advise that Housing Plus exceeded all benchmarks set by Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW, the industry peak body for community housing providers in NSW and NRSCH, the National Regulatory System for Community Housing, by up to 10% with the three key measures being; repairs and maintenance, condition of home and overall satisfaction.

NRSCH thresholds

Overall Satisfaction	Condition of Home	Repairs & Maintenance
85%	85%	81%
Above NRSCH Threshold of 75%	Above NRSCH Threshold of 75%	Above NRSCH Threshold of 75%

The survey also seeks to determine what is of key importance to you so we can continue to seek out funding support and opportunities to improve living conditions and wherever possible reduce the running costs of your home. Our cyclical and legislated safety inspections are paramount to ensuring that homes remain safe and secure and while we have had to limit repairs and maintenance to emergency repairs during the pandemic, safety always comes first.

Energy efficiency and thermal comfort have been a key focus for Housing Plus over the past 2 years, having recently completed several initiatives to help you reduce energy bills and improve the thermal comfort of your homes. Co-funded by Housing Plus, the NSW Home Energy Action Plan (HEAP) as well as the Federal government the energy efficiency upgrades and rooftop solar installs have been completed to ensure residents stay comfortable both in winter and summer whilst using less energy as well as the addition benefit of a reduction in energy bills.

Volunteers

Housing Plus are looking
for volunteers to support
the delivery of some of
their services.

We are looking for people
to help out with sorting
donations and fundraising
in Orange Bathurst Dubbo
and Mudgee, and we
are looking for people to
drive our courtesy bus in
Orange.

If you would like
more information on
volunteering at Housing
Plus or would like help to
find a meaningful way to
help and become involved
in your local community
please contact [rochelle@](mailto:rochelle@housingplus.com.au)
housingplus.com.au or call
1800 603 300 to speak to
Rochelle.



YOUR HOUSING OFFICER'S CONTACT DETAILS

ORANGE

Kirsty Marcantelli 0411 865 604

Harmony Meath 0423 404 533

Chris Maybin 0435 798 571

Melissa Evans 0411 913 368

BATHURST

Bree-Anne Tremain 0401 416 750

MUDGEЕ

Sherry Fleming 0401 456 850

Debbie Hughes 0427 914 367

Helen Franks 0435 182 644




FEEDBACK AND COMPLAINTS

We are committed to delivering our services to the satisfaction of our customers. Your opinions are important to us because we use them to improve our services to the community and investigate and respond to any issues of concern. You can contact us with your feedback or complaint by telephoning our Customer Service Team on 1800 603 300, emailing us at tenancy@housingplus.com.au or sending us a letter to Housing Plus PO Box 968 Orange NSW 2800.

 HOUSINGPLUS.COM.AU

 1800 603 300

 @HousingPlusAU

 [housingplusau](https://www.instagram.com/housingplusau)

 @HousingPlusAU



Our New Houses in Bathurst

Bathurst residents with a keen eye would have noticed a hive of activity off Durham Street as the construction of our newest stage of affordable housing "Riverside" was completed in August. Backing on to the Macquarie River, these one and two-bedroom homes were constructed to meet the housing needs of singles, couples, and small families who work in the local area.

The homes have been built to a seven-star NatHERS rating, and benefit from energy efficient appliances, the installation of solar panels, as well as being well insulated to keep the temperature within the homes consistent. Each home has a covered carport, enclosed backyard, and a modern interior.

Riverside's residents moved into their homes in September, and are now looking forward to spending their first Christmas in their new homes. Housing Plus's Support Coordinator Hannah was on hand to help everyone settle into their new homes.



Moving into affordable housing has been an absolute blessing for both myself and my son. It has saved us from a lot and I couldn't be more thankful for the support and opportunities Housing Plus give us including this beautiful house that we now call home"

**NEW RIVERSIDE
TENANT**

Christmas office hours

The Housing Plus offices will be closed from 1pm Friday December 24 and will reopen the week commencing Tuesday January 4.

During this time, Domestic Violence and Homelessness services will continue to operate Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm except public holidays.

Please call the numbers below during this time:

Orange Homelessness Support 1800 674 474

Domestic Violence Services on 1300 384 357

Dubbo & Mudgee Domestic Violence Services 1800 940 406

Customers wanting to report an Emergency Repair
please call 1300 435 144



For all other urgent tenancy matters, please call 1800 603 300 and your details and message will be forwarded to the person on call.



Housing Plus respectfully acknowledges the traditional custodians of the country on which we work, and is committed to building relationships, respect and opportunities with First Nations People.