



# CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

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.

## Dear Customers

JUSTIN CANTELO, CEO OF HOUSING PLUS

I would like to take the opportunity to provide an update from myself.

As I am sure you are aware, we are currently facing a severe housing crisis.

These issues, caused by minimal investment in housing, remains a very high priority for the Housing Plus business.

Earlier in the year, I had the opportunity to attend the Regional Housing Summit, an event aimed to bring together Community Housing Providers to discuss the challenges of supplying social and affordable housing and to explore potential solutions. A notable topic of discussion was the recent announcement of the Australian Government's initiative aimed at addressing the housing shortage—the Housing Australia Future Fund and the Housing Accord. This fund seeks to enhance housing outcomes for Australians by collectively supporting the delivery of 20,000 new social and 20,000 new affordable homes nationwide over the course of five years. In light of this development, I want to share with you that Housing Plus is actively pursuing a portion of this funding to increase the number of social and affordable housing in the areas where we operate, particularly in Regional NSW. I look forward to providing you with more updates when the time comes.



## Newsletter Highlights

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WE'VE UPDATED OUR BANK DETAILS

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EDUCATION GRANT RECIPIENTS

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MEET OUR CADETS: RIANNA AND KAREN

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS

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SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

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COST OF LIVING TIPS

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CONTACT INFORMATION

# We have a new Identification Process!

**Housing Plus have introduced new processes to ensure we are correctly identifying our customers and keeping their information confidential.**

You will notice when calling us we will be asking you to identify yourself using a few key questions to ensure we are speaking to the right person and not providing your personal information to anyone who does not have your consent to have it. We will also be asking you at your next lease re-sign appointment to provide us with a copy of your photo ID to ensure we can correctly identify you in person.

You can be assured this personal information will be stored securely and in line with government privacy legislation. If you do not have a photo ID, and you are in receipt of Centrelink benefits, you may be entitled to a free photo ID at Service NSW. If you need support with this, please call our Support Coordination team who will be happy to assist you.

If you have any questions or concerns about our new process, please call your Housing Officer who will be happy to discuss these with you.



## Meet our Cadet's - Rianna and Karen

Welcome Rianna and Karen, our wonderful cadets that are on board with the Housing Plus team, located in our Bathurst office. Rianna and Karen's cadetship, facilitated by CHIA (Community Housing Industry Association), offers them the opportunity to gain industry experience, pursue a Cert IV in Housing, and work within our team for 12 months.

Karen was inspired by the support Housing Plus has given her and wants to be the person who helps people. Her favourite aspect of the cadetship so far has been the warm welcome from everyone in the team and learning about and meeting our customers. Karen looks forward to discovering her career path and advises others considering a similar opportunity to take the leap, even if it feels scary.

When asked about what attracted her to the cadetship opportunity, Rianna expressed her interest in helping people and making them smile, mentioning that Clare (a Plus Community Team member) referred her and she almost cried when she found out she was successful in securing a cadetship! Rianna's favourite thing so far has been visiting customers outside the office - she looks forward to gaining knowledge, new experience, and hopes to continue the opportunity into a permanent role.

We are thrilled to have Rianna and Karen on the team with us. You may meet them at your next routine inspection or over the phone - make sure you say hello!



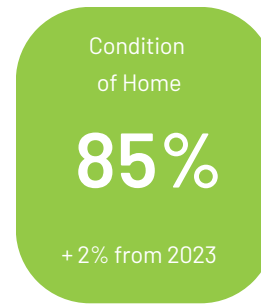
Rianna



Karen

# Customer feedback? We're on it!

Many of you would know that each year in conjunction with the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW, that we carry out our Customer Satisfaction Survey. We have now received a report from CHIA NSW indicating how 432 of our customers rated our service over the past year and we are very excited that our performance has increased and is well above the registrar and industry benchmarks.



Every customer that completed the survey by the deadline of Friday 24 May went into the draw to win one of ten \$150 gift vouchers! CHIA NSW have drawn out the 10 lucky winners from across our portfolio and the lucky recipients will be contacted by our Team and arrangements made to get these to the lucky winners.

We are very grateful to everyone that took the time to respond. Please know that we take your feedback seriously and to those who indicated that they would be happy for us to make contact, we are reviewing your comments and will be in touch if we need further details and/or to respond if you had a question. If you didn't tick that box, your data and identity remain confidential.

## Since last year's Customer Satisfaction Survey, we have:



Implemented a five-star feedback system following completion of a maintenance service request. If you rate your Repairs & Maintenance service a 3 or below or make a comment, we will call you to discuss your rating and how we can make improvements. We also want to understand what is important to you, so we will be contacting some Customers who scored us a 4 or 5.



Created a checklist for all Customer sign-ups to ensure all necessary documentation is supplied.



Implemented a new complaints and feedback procedure and created a new fact sheet with a step-by-step process on how complaints are handled.



Provided staff with refresher training to manage complaints and feedback.



Used social media to provide 'what's on' updates to our customers including information around Volunteering, our Customer Advisory Group, our rebrand and Cadetship opportunities.



Created engagement opportunities for our customers at each office location, including Coffee and a Chat meet ups each month.



Reviewed and improved the chat function on our website and created a roster to ensure minimal enquiries are missed.



Created standardised procedures for handling enquiries and providing information across all our locations to ensure consistency and improved service.

**Fun fact: As of 12 August, we have had 117 responses and an average rating of 4.14 out of 5!**

**This year we improved our complaint handling rating by 17%!**

### We have also:

- Created a service response communication plan so you know what to expect from our repairs team and repair timeframes.
- Created a fact sheet that easily explains how your rent is calculated.
- In the process of updating all policies and fact sheets which will be available on our new website over the next 2-3 months.

# Cost of living: hacks and help!

## Are you looking for ways to manage your living expenses and save money?

The NSW Government has a fantastic resource just for you! Check out the Cost of Living Hub to discover a wide range of rebates, savings, and support programs designed to help you reduce your cost of living. Don't miss out on these opportunities to make life a little easier!

Visit the Cost of Living Hub here:

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/money-and-taxes/cost-of-living-hub>

## Free WI-FI at Home for School Age Students

The School Student Broadband Initiative is an Australian Government program that offers free home internet to families and carers who look after school age children, that currently do not have a current nbn home internet connection.

Apply for the offer by 31 December 2024 to get free home internet until the end of December 2025

Contact the National Referral Centre to find out more or apply on 1800 954 610 or visit <https://www.anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet/>

# Reporting a repair to our Asset Services team

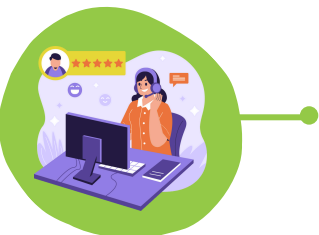
The Asset Services Team would like to take this opportunity to touch base and provide information on how you can contact us to Report-A-Repair.



**During business hours**, call 1800 603 300 and select 1 for Repairs, we have a dedicated team on hand to answer your calls.



**Outside of our business hours**, call 1800 603 300, select 1 for Repairs and you will be automatically connected with an after-hours call centre representative from Well Done. If your repair is urgent, Well Done will engage our On Call contractors. Details of all non-urgent repair requests are relayed to our Team for action the next work day from 8am.



**You can also email us at** [repairs@housingplus.com.au](mailto:repairs@housingplus.com.au) noting your name, address, phone number and details of the repair, photos are also helpful.

**It's always best to report-a-repair as soon as possible to prevent an issue from becoming worse and we encourage you to use any of the above options to get in touch.**

If you've recently had a repair at your home, you should have received a text message with a brief, 3 question survey attached. Your feedback is valuable to us, so please take a moment to let us know how we went. It helps us continually improve our service.

# Service Spotlight: Opportunity Pathways

Are you interested in gaining employment, working more hours or exploring training opportunities? Opportunity Pathways may be the program for you. Opportunity Pathways is a voluntary program that works with people, 17 years of age or older, who are linked in with social or community housing providers to create and achieve their own goals around employment and education.

## HOW WE CAN HELP

- Employment
- Training & qualifications
- Workshops
- Coaching and mentoring
- Case management
- On-the-job support
- Financial assistance to help obtain work



Contact us today  
on 1800 940 409  
or speak to your  
Housing Officer!

## Rebecca's\* story

Opportunity Pathways assisted Rebecca by initially linking her in with longer term mental health supports and Skillset, resulting in Rebecca maintaining good mental health and gaining casual employment in the trades sector.

Opportunity Pathways assisted Rebecca to build the confidence and practical skills to address barriers in her life, while navigating the workforce. Opportunity Pathways also purchased work clothing that was not provided by the employer.

Rebecca reports she loves her job, and has been offered a permanent part-time contract, she plans to continue with her current employer whilst working toward her long-term goal of progressing up the career ladder to eventually become a team leader and hopefully one day move into upper management.

We have coaches  
working in Orange,  
Bathurst, Dubbo, Oberon,  
Cabonne, Cowra,  
Blayney, Wellington,  
Narromine, Parkes and  
Forbes.

## From Customer to Homeowner!

Sarah's\* journey with Housing Plus began in early 2005, and she has been a valued customer for over 19 years. However, during a recent conversation Sarah\* joyfully revealed that she had taken the monumental step of purchasing her very own home marking a significant milestone in her life. With pride in her voice, she shared her excitement about her new home, a testament to her determination and hard work. In addition to our heartfelt congratulations, we assured Sarah\* that we would assist to make this a smooth transition. Sarah's\* success story serves as inspiration to us all and we wish her nothing but the best as she embarks on this exciting new chapter.



\*Names changed to protect identity

## Get involved

There are many ways you can get involved and support your community. Currently Housing Plus has some great opportunities for volunteers and fundraising in Orange, Bathurst, and Dubbo. So, if you're interested, please visit our website, email [rochelle@housingplus.com.au](mailto:rochelle@housingplus.com.au) or call 1800 603 300 to speak to Rochelle.

Additionally, if you have a good news story or would like the opportunity to be featured in a Housing Plus newsletter, please contact Chloe on [chloe@housingplus.com.au](mailto:chloe@housingplus.com.au)

## Join our Customer Advisory Group

In March we held an information session for our Customer Advisory Group (CAG), and we now have four tenants who have joined the group. The Customer Advisory Group is a key consultation and communication forum for tenants to assist and advise Housing Plus on improving service delivery. The Customer Advisory Group will represent all tenants on key service delivery issues and proposed changes which could affect them.

Our meetings will be held monthly, and our first meeting took place in June. If you are interested in finding out more about the groups or would like to be involved, please email [rochelle@housingplus.com.au](mailto:rochelle@housingplus.com.au) or call 1800 603 300.

## Feedback & 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 by investigating and responding to any issues of concern. You can contact us with your feedback, compliment or complaint by either visiting our website and filling out a Complaints & Feedback form, telephoning our Customer Service Team on 1800 603 300, emailing us at [tenancy@housingplus.com.au](mailto:tenancy@housingplus.com.au), sending a letter to Housing Plus, PO Box 968, Orange, NSW 2800 or visiting one of our local offices.

## Housing Officer Contact Details

### Orange

**Andrea** 02 5340 5290 0466 587 499

**Kate** 02 5340 5209 0466 433 896

**Taylor** 02 5340 5205 0432 966 233

### Bathurst

**Alison** 02 5340 5296 0402 852 540

**Madison** 02 5340 5809 0431 569 967

### Mudgee

**Stacey** 02 5340 5287 0413 904 424

**Debbie** 02 5340 5127 0427 914 367

**Shanaya** 02 5340 5252 0403 277 227

### Dubbo

**Kirsten** 02 5340 5806 0432 792 826

**Lisa** [Lisa.Lyons@housingplus.com.au](mailto:Lisa.Lyons@housingplus.com.au)

Our Housing Officers are often out of the office conducting property viewings, inspections and engaging with the community. To ensure that your Housing Officer is available to provide you with a personalised service, please book an appointment. Your Housing Officer can be contacted on their mobile or on their direct number during business hours.

# HOUSING PLUS PLUS COMMUNITY



## HOW TO CONTACT US

### HOUSING PLUS

Report A Repair 24/7  
[repairs@housingplus.com.au](mailto:repairs@housingplus.com.au)  
1800 603 300

Housing Services  
[tenancy@housingplus.com.au](mailto:tenancy@housingplus.com.au)  
1800 603 300

Corporate Office  
[info@housingplus.com.au](mailto:info@housingplus.com.au)  
02 6360 3300

### PLUS COMMUNITY

Central West DV Services  
[dv@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:dv@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1300 384 357

Western DV Services  
[dv@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:dv@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 940 406

Central North DV Services  
[dv@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:dv@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 959 304

Far West DV Services  
[dv@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:dv@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 407 728

Orange Homelessness Service  
[homelessness@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:homelessness@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 674 474

Opportunity Pathways  
[op@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:op@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 940 409

Men's Behaviour Change  
[mbc@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:mbc@pluscommunity.org.au)  
1800 959 825

Together Home  
[info@housingplus.com.au](mailto:info@housingplus.com.au)  
02 6360 3300

Initial Transitional Service  
[its@pluscommunity.org.au](mailto:its@pluscommunity.org.au)  
02 6360 3300

**Postal Address**  
PO Box 968  
Orange NSW 2800

**Orange Branch**  
113 Byng Street  
Orange NSW 2800  
Monday - Friday  
9am - 5pm

**Bathurst Branch**  
61 Boyd Street  
Bathurst NSW 2795  
Monday - Friday  
9am - 5pm

**Dubbo Branch**  
3 Frith Street  
Dubbo NSW 2830  
Monday - Friday  
9am - 5pm

**Mudgee Branch**  
34 Market Street  
Mudgee NSW 2850  
Monday - Friday  
9am - 5pm



[www.housingplus.com.au](http://www.housingplus.com.au)  
[www.pluscommunity.org.au](http://www.pluscommunity.org.au)



@housingplusau  
@pluscommunityau



@housingplusau  
@pluscommunityau



# JOIN US FOR A COFFEE & A CHAT!

Feeling isolated? Want to get out and about? Get to know Housing Plus and each other with our monthly **Coffee & a Chat** meet ups at your local Housing Plus office in 2024.

## BATHURST

**10am, every 1st  
Wednesday of  
the month:**

7 August  
4 September  
2 October  
6 November  
4 December

To RSVP, call  
1800 603 300 or  
scan the QR code:



## DUBBO

**10am, every 2nd  
Wednesday of the  
month:**

14 August  
11 September  
9 October  
13 November  
11 December

To RSVP, call  
1800 603 300 or  
scan the QR code:



## MUDGEES

**10am, every 3rd  
Tuesday of the  
month:**

20 August  
17 September  
15 October  
19 November  
17 December

To RSVP, call  
1800 603 300 or  
scan the QR code:



## ORANGE

**10am, every 4th  
Wednesday of the  
month:**

28 August  
25 September  
23 October  
27 November  
**December (TBC)**

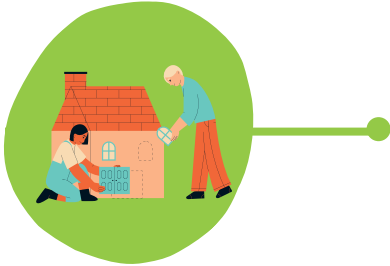
To RSVP, call  
1800 603 300 or  
scan the QR code:





You will be provided with a copy of the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy which sets out the required information for how your rent is calculated and your obligations as a social tenant with Housing Plus.

Further to the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy we provide the following additional information:



### Market rent for Leasehold properties

Housing Plus rent properties directly through Real Estate Agents and private landlords.

Market rents for these properties are calculated by the Real Estate Agents and private landlords and adopted by Housing Plus.



### Household Information Request

When it is time to review your rent, a request for Household Information will be sent to you. Please complete and return to our office.

It is important that you notify Housing Plus of any changes to your household to ensure that the correct rent subsidy is applied.

You are responsible for advising Housing Plus of any change in your income and/or family complement within 21 days of the change.

The following table explains when your new rent will commence.

Rent Review Outcome		New Rent Start Date
<b>Rent Increases</b>	The tenant advises Housing Plus of the income change within 21 days.	No later than 4 weeks from the completion of the rent review.
	The tenant does not advise Housing Plus of the income change within 21 days.	The new rent will start the day after the review is completed.
<b>Rent Decreases</b>	The tenant advises Housing Plus of the income change within 21 days.	The new rent will start on the the date that the income changed.
	The tenant does not advise Housing Plus of the income change within 21 days.	The new rent will start the day after the review is completed.

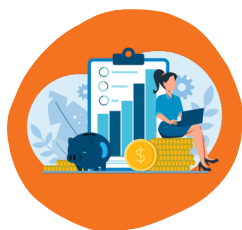
You are also asked to provide details of an emergency contact person; this person must not live with you.



## Centrelink Authorities – when do we need a new authority and what does the authority allow us to do?

Housing Plus will require a Centrelink Multiple Consent and Authority at the commencement of your tenancy, and at any point where your Centrepay deduction is cancelled with Services Australia.

You may provide consent to the following:



### **EVOR – Electronic Verification of Rent**

Allows Housing Plus to notify Services Australia of any rent change where you are in receipt of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance.



### **Centrepay – Centrelink payment description**

Allows Housing Plus to deduct an agreed amount directly from your government payment until such time as your consent is withdrawn or your payment is terminated.



### **ICS – Income Confirmation Statement**

Allows Housing Plus to obtain your Income Statement from Services Australia to confirm your household composition and payment details.



### **When your Account goes into arrears**

Please refer to the Housing Plus Arrears Fact Sheet.



## Questions?

Please contact your Housing Officer on **1800 603 300**, or your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

Tenants Union of New South Wales  
- [www.tenants.org.au](http://www.tenants.org.au)



# Join our Customer Advisory Group



## Calling Our Tenants! Help Shape the Future of Housing Plus

Do you want to make a real difference in your community? We're inviting you to join our Customer Advisory Group and be the voice of our tenants!

### Interested?

Email Rochelle on  
[rochelle@housingplus.com.au](mailto:rochelle@housingplus.com.au)  
or call 02 6360 3300



02 6360 3300



[www.housingplus.com.au](http://www.housingplus.com.au)

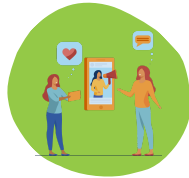
## What's in it for you?



**Influence:** Share your thoughts on key projects and help shape our services.



**Impact:** Your ideas will directly contribute to how we improve and deliver services.



**Engagement:** Dedicate just 2 hours every second Thursday of the month between 10am-12pm to meet online and discuss what truly matters to you.

## Our promise to you:



**Transparency:** You'll get exclusive insights into our strategic plans.



**Respect:** We'll listen to your feedback and make sure it's considered in our decisions.



**Collaboration:** Together, we'll identify changes that better serve our community.

# HOUSINGPLUS