



*Dunbar Community Garden*

## Spring 2019

### Christmas Hours

The PLH office will be closed from Wednesday 25th December 2019 and reopen for business on Monday 6th January 2020.

If you require emergency repairs during this period, contact 0409 341 457.

Other emergency contacts:

- Storm / flood damage  
SES 13 25 00
- Power Failure  
AusGrid 13 13 88
- Bush fire information  
NSW Fire & Rescue  
1800 227 228 or  
download 'Fires near  
Me NSW' app

### From the CEO's desk

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Pacific Link Post. There have been quite a few changes at Pacific Link Housing (PLH) over the past few months and I am excited to let you know what has been happening. Firstly, I have recently been appointed as Chief Executive Officer following two years service as PLH's Chief Financial Officer. I would like to thank former CEO Craig for his hard work and I will continue to ensure PLH provides the best possible outcomes and support programs for our residents.

Our annual tenant survey has provided us with valuable feedback to better understand the needs of our residents, including new ideas for tenant support programs. The survey also tracks levels of satisfaction which for the second year in a row showed a 92% rating for



customer service - a reflection of the efforts of our dedicated team. While these results are pleasing, we still encourage feedback from our tenants on what we are doing well and what we can do better.

On behalf of the PLH team, I would like to wish all of our tenants a happy and safe holiday season.

Ian Lynch, CEO

## Tenancy Services Team



Francine

Aaron

Kate

Michelle B

Rebecca

Susan

Lorraine

James

Tina

Michelle G



### What are the changes?

Recently Pacific Link has made some changes to our Tenancy Services Team to provide a more efficient and customer-focussed structure. The portfolio has now been divided into three areas, two of which service our general housing tenants and the third specialises in transitional tenancies.

### Why were the changes made?

The two reasons for the restructure were to provide career progression opportunities for our team and to improve service delivery for our residents. Under the old structure, a

single housing manager was assigned around 160 properties and had to be expert across over 35 different tasks. The new structure now has two teams comprising specialists in certain areas of tenancy management.

- The Team Leaders look after new tenancy commencement and tenancies that are ending.
- The Tenancy Coordinators are office-based and administer tenancy tasks such as bond lodgements, rent calculations and reviews, follow up of arrears and Centrepay changes.

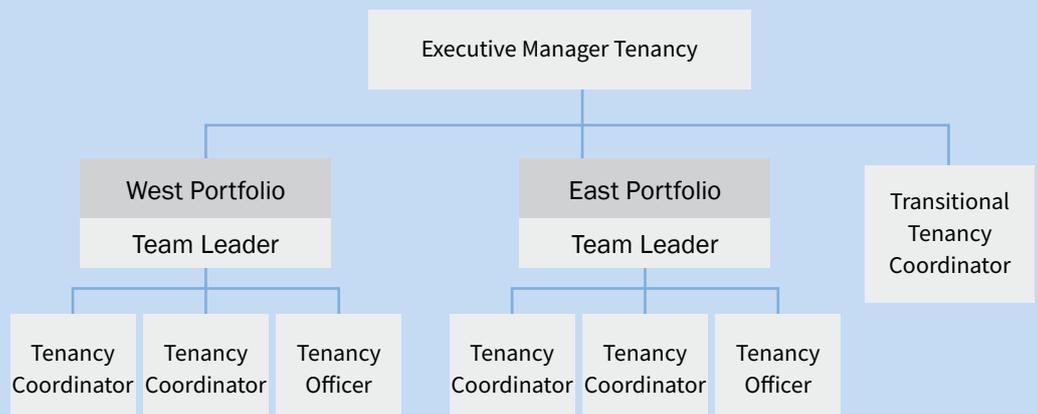
- The Tenancy Officers mainly conduct the house inspections and report any maintenance requirements.

### How is it working out?

We recently surveyed our team on how they are finding the changes. As with any job change there are still some tweaks to be made and we will continue to address these. Feedback from the team has been really positive about how they are enjoying their new roles and how the structure makes it easier to provide high quality services for our residents.

## Tenancy Services Team Structure

**Who do I call?**  
 You still contact PLH on 4324 7617 and once you provide your name and address, your call will be passed to the relevant team. Generally you will be put through to your Tenancy Coordinator. As there are now four in your tenancy team we expect it will be easier for you to get the assistance you need.



## Tenant Feedback Survey

Firstly, thank you to all tenants who took part in our 2019 Annual Survey. We received fantastic feedback about the services we offer, in addition to some suggestions on what we can do better in the future.

The Survey was conducted independently by the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) of NSW who compare our results to other Community Housing Providers (CHPs).

We were pleased to hear that 89% of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the services provided by PLH. This is well above the average in comparison to 36 other CHPs in NSW.

*"Before PLH helped me, I lived in a refuge. Since being in a Pacific Link house, I've achieved more because of the stability."*

*"As a tenant the unit is great and my doctor says my health has begun being more healthier. I'm eating, buying healthier food instead of starving for long periods. Bills get paid on time. I finally got my life on track. My doctors and specialist would like to thank you for helping me out."*

*"When my house was burnt out and I had nowhere to go and couldn't get approved for private rental, Pacific Link went above and beyond to get me and my children a home to call our own."*



**89%** of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the services provided by PLH



**92%** of tenants surveyed were satisfied with customer service



**89%** of tenants surveyed were satisfied with the property condition

*"With the link with a men's shelter, my case was dealt with a professional, caring and compassionate response. I was destitute and I now have purpose in my life thanks to all that had the care to understand my problem. Thank you."*

*"We feel like we have won the lottery by obtaining our tenancy. Currently there are many people without a home. We don't take it for granted."*

## Congratulations

Congratulations to the following tenants who completed the Annual Tenant Survey. You are the lucky winners of a \$50 gift card.

- |             |                |               |                |
|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| • Emily S   | Tenambit       | • Alexander G | Cessnock       |
| • Sheila D  | Mayfield       | • Karen D     | North Gosford  |
| • Peter O   | East Maitland  | • Geoffrey G  | Kanwal         |
| • Maureen T | Lambton        | • David K     | Lambton        |
| • Nicole D  | Salamander Bay | • Greg R      | Ettalong Beach |

## Feedback and Suggestions

We are always open to receiving your feedback on our services and encourage you to let us know what we are doing well and what we can improve.

Call or Email us

## Developments and Projects

PLH has a strong focus on responding to the high demand for affordable housing in the Central Coast, Sydney

and Hunter communities. To address the chronic under-supply of properties, we have several development projects

underway or planned for the near future which will provide more social and affordable housing.



### Glendale

The Glendale Project in Lake Macquarie is very close to completion and will provide 21 new apartments for people on low to moderate incomes.



### Canton Beach

Work is progressing well on our joint project with Evolve Housing at Canton Beach. It will provide an additional 30 self-contained studio apartments for social and affordable housing.



### Woy Woy

There are several new developments planned in Woy Woy for 2020 which will provide much needed affordable housing in the peninsula area.



## Karina's Passion for Fashion

It was in 2011 that Karina's love affair with photography began and has continued to grow. She started photography with landscapes and animals, but has since discovered her niche is fashion. Fashion is her passion! She likes to style everything from clothes to props to create a story and now collaborates with local make-up artists and hairstylists to produce glamour and family portraits.

Karina's work has been exhibited in the Gosford Art Prize over several years and also featured in local fashion outlets. From the Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarship, Karina has benefitted from camera equipment, a printer and laptop with photoshop software. This allows her to continue with her Cert 4 in Photo Imaging and follow her dream to be a photographer in New York City one day!

© Karina Lee's Photography



## Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarship Program

Congratulations to everyone who was awarded with a Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarship in July this year. We are always inspired by the achievements of our recipients in reaching their educational goals.

One of our success stories this year is Rebecca who completed several funded courses offered through our partnership with Central Coast Community College, including a Beauty and Make-up course, Cert 1 in Aged Care and a Business Administration Course. She excelled in these studies and was nominated by her teacher for a Student Recognition award. What an amazing achievement!

Rebecca then decided that she would like to complete a Cert 4 in Mental Health to embark on a career in peer support. With the Education Scholarship she was able to purchase a laptop package to help with her studies.



### Next round of Education Scholarships

If you have been a PLH tenant for longer than six months, you may be eligible to apply for a Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarship. It is open to students of all ages and can be used to pay for course fees, tutoring, books or even equipment such as laptops, computers and printers. The cut-off date for the next round of Education Scholarships is the 31st December 2019.

Contact the office for more information or complete the application form online at [www.pacificlink.org.au/education-scholarships](http://www.pacificlink.org.au/education-scholarships)

### Tenant programs, activities and events

In addition to Education Scholarships, PLH also offer several other Tenant Programs to provide opportunities for self-improvement, skill development and greater independence. These Programs include:

- Learner Driver Lessons
- Sports Scholarships
- Laptop Loans
- Education and training opportunities with Central Coast Community College
- Events and activities
- Garden competitions

*If you have any suggestions for new tenant programs or activities, contact us at [events@pacificlink.org.au](mailto:events@pacificlink.org.au) or call our office. We would love to hear your ideas!*

# Christmas Budgeting Tips



## 1. Make a list and check it twice

Put together a list of what you need to buy over the festive season. Consider gifts, food, drink and any other items you might need.

## 2. Set a budget and don't budge!

Work out how much you have to spend then check it against your list. Keep your receipts and add up your spending as you go.

## 3. Rethink gift giving

If you are buying gifts for others talk to them about setting a spending limit. It might be a relief for them too!

## 4. Do your shopping early

Try to buy your Christmas necessities early so you have time to shop around. Keep an eye out for bargains in the Christmas catalogues or look for sales online.

## 5. Beware of Christmas credit

If you don't have cash to pay up-front, it can be tempting to use your credit card or use a buy now, pay later service. Make sure you are clear on what your repayments will be and when they are due.

## 6. Plan for next year

Think ahead and start putting money aside for next year. Talk to your bank about whether they have a high interest Christmas saver account.

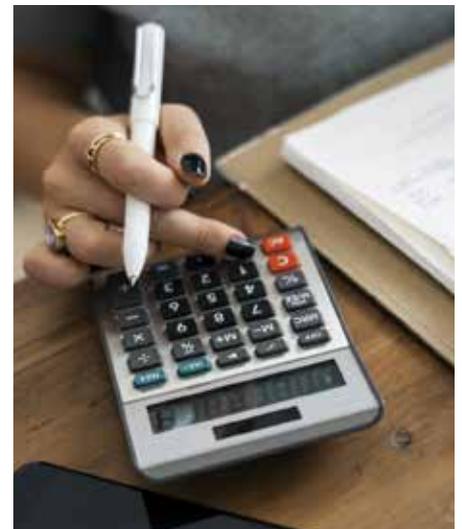
## Financial Support

Money problems can happen to anyone. If you are facing financial hardship and struggling to keep up with your bills, a good start would be to phone the National Debt Helpline. Their financial counsellors provide free, independent and confidential information to help you get back on your feet again.

They can also put you in touch with additional services you may need such as legal services, crisis food and accommodation services. When you call, try to have the following to hand:

- Details of your income
- A list of all debts
- Information on any loans
- Current / outstanding bills
- Letters about bills and debts

National Debt Helpline 1800 007 007  
9.30am - 4.30pm Monday to Friday



## Booth's Motor Group partnership

Longstanding partner, Booth's Motor Group has been supplying and servicing motor vehicles for PLH for years. Booth's have extended an offer to any Pacific Link tenant for reduced servicing of any new or used vehicle purchased through Booth's after the 1st October 2019.





## Take care of yourself and others this Christmas

Christmas can be a time of fun and frivolity, but it can also take its toll on our mental health. Spending time with or without family and friends, financial stresses, packed calendars and long to-do lists might seem overwhelming, and more stressful than everyday life.

Remember to take care of your mental health over the festive season. If you're feeling lonely,

reach out and talk to someone. It could be as simple as inviting a neighbour over for a cuppa or calling a friend.

As a PLH tenant, you can access free counselling services at Lifeline's offices across the region - Singleton, Wyoming, Wyong/Lake Haven, Belmont, Maitland and Newcastle.

Central Coast: 4320 7400

Newcastle: 4340 2000

## PLH Client Support Officer

Our Client Support Officer, Mel is here to assist you to connect with a range of additional services that may be of assistance such as (but not limited to):

- Aged Care
- Mental Health
- Disability Services
- Family Support
- Financial or General Counselling
- Youth / Women's / Men's Services

Mel's role is to ensure our tenants are satisfied with support they have in place in their lives and discuss relevant options for assistance should you feel more is needed to improve on your well-being. If you feel this is something you would like to discuss with Mel, call the office to arrange a phone appointment.



## Dunbar Community Garden Update

Dunbar Community Garden is blooming thanks to our very talented tenants. There is lettuce, passionfruit, beetroot and herbs galore! Well done to everyone for all the hard work you have put in.



## Give Volunteering a Go

Volunteers come from all walks of life: working people, students, professionals and retirees, from every town and community. Volunteering for your community can be a very rewarding experience with many benefits including:

- Building your self-esteem
- Learning new skills
- Finding a pathway to work experience
- Enhancing your health and mental well-being
- Meeting new people
- Making a difference

Talk to your local op shop, community centre or charitable organisation about whether they need help. A lot of charities are busy over the Christmas period and would appreciate your support.

*Quick tip: Some organisations may ask you for paperwork including a Working with Children Check. This can be easily obtained from a Service NSW branch and they are free for volunteers.*



## PLH Upcoming Calendar Dates

**FRI  
29th  
NOV**

**Entries  
Close**



**TUE  
3rd  
DEC**



**TUE  
31st  
DEC**

Application close date for the Sheila Astolfi Education Scholarship Program. Contact the office or apply online at [www.pacificlink.org.au/education-scholarships](http://www.pacificlink.org.au/education-scholarships)

**TBC  
in  
2020**

There are more events planned for 2020 including additional community gardens, art competitions, funded training, sports scholarships and more!

*We will keep you up to date with what is happening on the PLH calendar through this newsletter, by email and via our Facebook Page (don't forget to like our page!).*



## Christmas Events

Christmas is fast approaching and there are lots of community events and activities to take part in. Check in with your local Council or community organisations to see what is happening in your area.

**FRI  
6th  
DEC**

Cessnock Carols in the Park  
Cessnock Sports Ground

**SAT  
7th  
DEC**

Maitland City Council  
Christmas at the Common  
Morpeth Common

**SUN  
8th  
DEC**

Lake Macquarie Carols  
Speers Point Park

**SUN  
8th  
DEC**

Newcastle Community Carols  
Henderson Park, Adamstown

**TUE  
19th  
DEC**

Port Stephens Council Carols  
Under the Stars  
Anna Bay

**FRI  
20th  
DEC**

Central Coast Carols  
Central Coast Stadium

**SUN  
22nd  
DEC**

Christmas Under the Stars  
Mingara Athletics Centre,  
Tumbi Umbi

### CONTACT DETAILS

Telephone: 02 4324 7617  
E-mail: [info@pacificlink.org.au](mailto:info@pacificlink.org.au)  
Address: Suite 2 - Level 1, 10 William Street, Gosford  
Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm  
Mail: PO Box 1888, Gosford NSW 2250

*Do you have a hidden talent, good news story or handy household tip you would like to share in our Tenant Newsletter? Get in touch with us at [events@pacificlink.org.au](mailto:events@pacificlink.org.au) or call our office!*