

MYPLACE

NEWSLETTER FOR TENANTS AND RESIDENTS OF HOME IN PLACE
ISSUE NINE

Home
in Place



PHOTO GALLERY

Pantry opens at Broken Hill

IN THIS ISSUE

A MESSAGE FROM EMMA
TRG AND OVP REPORT
DID YOU KNOW?
MICHELLE'S STORY
BRENDEN'S STORY
PEOPLE'S COMMISSION
AND MORE!

DATES AND VENUES ANNOUNCED THE TENANT ROADSHOWS ARE COMING TO YOU!

A Message from Emma O'Hara

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
HOME IN PLACE AUSTRALIA



Hello, and welcome to Issue 9 of the MYPLACE Newsletter.

As the mercury drops and we are all trying to keep warm, it is a great time to talk about winter fire safety.

- Check your electric heaters and electric blankets for faults before using them. This includes checking cords, controls and plugs for any fraying or damage, and checking wires in electric heaters for any abnormalities.
- Any heating appliances should be plugged in to the wall only. It is not advisable to plug these appliances in to a powerboard.
- Ensure everything is kept a metre from the heater.
- Electric blankets are not designed to be used while you are sleeping. You should switch the blanket off at the wall when going to bed.
- Check your smoke alarm is working. If not, call Home in Place immediately to report the repair.

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU WILL NOT SMELL SMOKE WHILE YOU SLEEP? ONLY WORKING SMOKE ALARMS SAVE LIVES!

Lithium-Ion batteries are reported as the fastest growing fire risk in NSW.*

Lithium-Ion batteries are used in household items such as E-Bikes, E-Scooters, laptops etc. Fires caused by Lithium-Ion batteries can take off very quickly and risk serious harm to homes and occupants.

Stay Lithium-Ion battery safe by:

- Only using approved chargers to charge the device. If your device did not come with a charger, don't use it.
- Only use chargers that have the Australian Regulatory Compliance Mark.
- Charge in a clear, open space and once the battery is full, disconnect it from the charger. Never charge E-Bikes and E-Scooters in bedrooms or living areas.
- Do not use the device if the battery or charger shows sign of damage such as bulging, leaking or overheating.

Keep yourself fire-safe this winter. More fire safety information for your home can be found at www.fire.nsw.gov.au and www.qfes.qld.gov.au.

POLICY HIGHLIGHT

Alterations to Properties Policy (Qld and NSW)

We understand that tenants may want to make alterations to improve their property for themselves and their families.

An alteration is when a tenant changes, removes, replaces or adds to the property.

Minor alterations may include installing picture hooks or curtains and blinds, securing furniture to walls for safety reasons, planting flowers, shrubs or gardens and installing security cameras. Home in Place will not unreasonably withhold consent to make minor alterations to the home.

Major alterations can include installation of air conditioners, replacing flooring or repainting, constructing sheds, fencing or other garden structures and other home renovations.

All applications should be made by submitting an 'Additions and Alterations to Property' application form, along with any associated drawings, quotes, photographs and contractor details in the event of major alterations. All applications will be assessed in a fair, transparent and timely manner.

As the tenant, you are responsible for all costs associated with installing, maintaining and removing the alteration at the end of the tenancy.

**We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming Tenant Roadshows!
Check this newsletter for details of an event near you.**

TRG and OVP Update

The Home in Place **Tenant Reference Groups** (TRGs) provide a local forum for Home in Place tenants and staff to discuss key aspects of the services provided by Home in Place. Members of this group meet quarterly to discuss a range of issues that affect their lives and provide feedback from other Home in Place tenants. The TRGs feed into the **Our Voice Panel** (OVP) which links to the Home in Place Board.



The TRG and OVP Groups completed their quarterly meetings in March and April 2024. The tenants in attendance provided positive input from their respective regions.

TRG Meetings were held in the Brisbane, East Maitland, Newcastle, Central Coast, Taree and Upper Hunter regions.

We currently have vacancies in our TRGs due a number of members needing to step down. The TRGs are a great way to get involved in the way services are delivered at Home in Place. Contact your local TRG rep or branch for more details on joining your local TRG!

TRG MEETINGS

The following agenda items were discussed at the March/April TRG meetings:

- Home in Place Roadshows 2024
- Grow A Star youth sponsorship program
- Upcoming events at branches and event ideas
- General issues and challenges
- Ideas for improvement
- Volunteers adjudicating the Tenant Incentive Scheme awards

OVP MEETING

The OVP meeting, comprising of five members representing each region, was held on 18 April 2024. The panel discussed the following items.

Updated Tenant Handbook

The updated Tenant Handbook is in draft form, awaiting sign off for publishing. The handbook will be available on the website or in hardcopy on request.

Changing the 1300 number to a toll-free 1800 number

The costing estimate looks favourable. The OVP will provide an update when business case is considered.

Tenant Roadshows for 2024

Tenant Expos have been repurposed and renamed as the Home in Place Tenant Roadshows commencing in 2024. The roadshows will bring Home in Place services to tenants so you can expect to see staff from various departments in attendance to answer any questions. More information on the roadshows is available later in this newsletter and on the Tenant Event Calendar on the Home in Place website. www.homeinplace.org/events

Occupant Rental References

Rental references are now available for additional occupants registered in the household who require evidence of rental history when moving out. Call 1300 333 733 or contact your local branch to obtain a copy.

Anti-social Behaviour Policy

Home in Place takes Anti-Social Behaviour seriously and has reviewed and updated the policy. See the Home in Place website for details or contact your local branch.

Good Neighbour Guide

The Good Neighbour Guide was briefly discussed, and a proposal is being drafted. It will be distributed to OVP members for review once completed.

Grow a Star

The Home in Place-managed Grow a Star Program has been added as a regular agenda item for discussion at the TRG and OVP meetings. The Grow a Star coordinator will be invited to future meetings to discuss the program's success and ways we can promote opportunities to young people, with a focus on young people living in Home in Place managed properties.



Home in Place Roadshows

Commencing 5 June 2024 will be a series of Home in Place Roadshows which we invite you to attend.

You might recall that in the past, these events have been called lunches, forums and expos, but based on your feedback, the format this year will be more of a Home in Place tour where Home in Place staff from all departments come to you to answer your questions on rent reviews, the complaints process, maintenance, the Tenant Portal, volunteering, support services available to you and much more!

The roadshows won't just be a talkfest though!

Home in Place will be providing food, giveaways and lots of fun activities.

Maitland Family Support

11-13 Lawson Ave Woodberry

Wednesday 5 June 2024

10am - 1pm

Manning Uniting Church

29 Albert Street Taree

Thursday 13 June 2024

11am - 2pm

Singleton Youth Venue

**Cnr Pitt and Bathurst Street
Singleton**

Thursday 20 June 2024

10am - 12pm

Club Forster

19 Strand Street Forster

Thursday 6 June 2024

11am - 2pm

The Place Charlestown Community Centre

Frederick Street Charlestown

Monday 17 June 2024

10.30am - 12.30pm

Edgeworth Memorial Neighbourhood Centre

1 Minmi Road Edgeworth

Friday 21 June 2024

10.30am - 12.30pm

The Meeting Place

1 Northumberland Way

Tumbi Umbi

Friday 7 June 2024

11:30am - 1:30pm

Wyong District Youth and Community Centre

191 Wallarah Road Kanwal

Tuesday 18 June 2024

12pm - 2pm

Weston Workers Club

1 Government Road Weston

Monday 24 June 2024

1.30pm - 3.30pm

Erina Centre

North South Road Erina

Wednesday 12 June 2024

11am - 2pm

Uniting Church Hall

114 Bridge Street Muswellbrook

Wednesday 19 June 2024

10am - 12pm

Salvation Army Building

67 Cleary Street Hamilton

Wednesday 26 June 2024

10.30am - 12.30pm



Updates and full details are available on the Tenant Event Calendar on the Home in Place website
www.homeinplace.org/events

We will send out text reminders in the lead up to the roadshows as well.

Did you know?

DID YOU KNOW THAT THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT IS PROVIDING FREE NBN SERVICES TO ELIGIBLE FAMILIES?

The free internet is being offered to up to 30,000 eligible families under the **School Student Broadband Initiative**. Full details are available on the infrastructure.gov.au website at <https://t.ly/xWreC>.

DID YOU KNOW THAT IF YOU RECEIVE THE FAMILY TAX BENEFIT YOU MAY BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE 2023-24 FAMILY ENERGY REBATE?

The NSW Family Energy Rebate is up to \$180 per retail household, per financial year and helps people with dependent children pay their electricity bills.

You will also receive a one-off National Energy Bill Relief Household Payment as a lump sum of up to \$500 in the 2023-24 financial year if:

- you meet the eligibility criteria
- your application for the NSW Family Energy Rebate is successful

Full details are available at <https://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/households/rebates-grants-and-schemes/find-energy-rebate>.

NOTE: APPLICATIONS CLOSE AT 11PM ON SUNDAY 16 JUNE 2024.

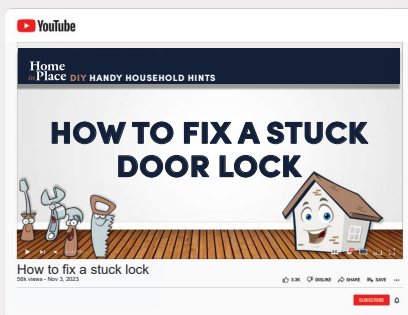
PASSWORDS – THE BIGGER THE BETTER

Cyber security has been receiving a lot more attention in the press of late. Some well-known corporations have been affected by breaches and data loss, but cyber security is something we all need to consider. Personal breaches can cause loss of our personal information or cause financial loss.

Twelve-character passwords or more are recommended, but you can really improve your password strength by using two-word passwords. An example of a great password might be a mixture of things you love and can remember. Pet names, with favourite colours, hobbies, sports and dates are perfect. Eg Rover8myFootball82.

Want to test your password strength?

Go to www.security.org/how-secure-is-my-password.



HANDY HOME HINTS VIDEO SERIES

Have you checked out our Handy Household Hints series on YouTube and on the Home in Place website?

The videos have been made in response to common issues that our maintenance and asset teams see every day.

Our video **How to Fix a Stuck Lock** has received over 56,000 views!

Check them out at www.homeinplace.org/handy-household-hints

MY PLACE PORTAL

The My Place Portal allows Home in Place tenants to view their tenancy details, payments and balances, securely, in one place.

For information and walk-through videos on accessing and navigating the portal go to www.homeinplace.org/navigating-the-my-place-portal





The true story of how a mother and son's weekend
adventure turned into a fight for survival.

LOST

MICHELLE PITTMAN

Michelle's story

After becoming homeless escaping domestic violence, Michelle Pittman is getting her life back on track. Since becoming a Home in Place social housing tenant two years ago, she has started a cadetship and written a book about her harrowing experience of being lost in the bush for 10 days.

Michelle is working at Home in Place during her 12-month Land and Housing Corporation and Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) cadetship. Home in Place provides on-the-job paid work experience while CHIA provides formal training.

Michelle feels privileged and grateful for the opportunity to have a positive career change with rewarding and meaningful work.

Before fleeing NSW to escape her partner, Michelle had been working in housekeeping management in the hotel industry.

"I had been feeling stuck in my career. I have always had an interest in real estate but didn't particularly want to work in the private rental market," Michelle said.

"My experience of homelessness and as a tenant will be helpful in working in community housing. To be on the journey with people who need housing is something I really want to do."

After spending time interstate, she and her youngest son Dylan returned to NSW to stay with Carries Place refuge service before getting an apartment in Adamstown.

Michelle was in such a state after her experience she took time away from work to work on herself and Dylan. She used the time to write a book about another experience she and Dylan had survived.

Lost recounts how exploring Mount Royal National Park on the long weekend in October 2017 turned into a 10-day ordeal that nearly cost them their lives.

Wearing thin t-shirts and leaving their water bottles in the car the pair went for a short walk. They became disoriented and were soon off the track in dense bush. Michelle only had 10 per cent battery on her mobile phone but there was no phone reception.

They hadn't told anyone where they were going, and her other son was away for the weekend. It was two days before the alarm was raised!

Recalling episodes of the TV show Bear Grylls, Michelle and Dylan survived by making shelters out of trees, drinking their own urine and licking moisture off leaves.

Eventually a list of trails left on the kitchen bench gave police and family a clue as to their possible whereabouts.

By the eighth day Michelle and Dylan were severely dehydrated. Dylan was purple. Miraculously they found pools of water and summoned all their strength to keep walking. On the tenth day they were numbly following a trail when they found a road and rescuers.

Michelle said it took her a long time to recover mentally and physically. It took her more than five years to be ready to talk about it.

Writing the book was an emotional release, like a counselling session.

"I had a few false starts, doubting myself. Then I thought I had to do it for myself, for Dylan and to inspire others who are in a situation they feel they can't get out of."

"Dylan showed amazing resilience and strength for his age when we were lost. If he finds himself doubting himself and can't get through a situation, he can refer to the book."

Lost is available on Kindle. Paperbacks are available from Amazon and selected book stores. For limited edition signed copies of Lost, email Michelle directly at amazingstorylost@gmail.com.

YOU CAN READ MORE OF MICHELLE'S STORY, AND OTHER TENANT STORIES AT [HOMEINPLACE.ORG/STORIES/TENANT](https://homeinplace.org/stories/tenant)



Cooking corner

NUTRITIOUS RECIPES WITH
FIVE INGREDIENTS OR LESS

SPEEDY SALMON NOODLE STIR-FRY Serves 4 | \$8 per serve | www.taste.com.au

INGREDIENTS

270g packet soba noodles

400g skinless salmon fillets, cut into 2cm pieces

2 carrots, peeled, cut into long matchsticks

200g snow peas, halved lengthways

175g packet chicken and cashew nut stir-fry sauce

STEP 1

Cook the noodles in a large saucepan of boiling water for 5 mins or until tender. Drain well.

STEP 2

Meanwhile, heat a greased wok or large frying pan over high heat. Stir-fry half the salmon for 2-3 mins or until golden. Transfer to a bowl. Repeat with remaining salmon.

STEP 3

Add the carrot and snow peas to the wok or pan. Stir-fry for 1-2 mins or until just tender. Return the salmon to the wok or pan with the noodles and stir-fry sauce. Stir-fry for 1-2 mins or until heated through. Serve immediately.

RICOTTA AND SPINACH GNOCCHI BAKE Serves 4 | \$4 per serve | www.taste.com.au

INGREDIENTS

500g packet potato gnocchi

120g packet Australian Baby Spinach

785g jar tomato, onion and garlic pasta sauce

200g firm ricotta

2/3 cup (80g) shredded pizza cheese

STEP 1

Cook gnocchi in a large saucepan of boiling water following packet directions or until tender. Drain. Return to pan. Add two-thirds of the spinach and half the pasta sauce. Toss to combine.

STEP 2

Preheat grill on high. Spread the remaining pasta sauce over base of a 6-cup (1.5L) baking dish. Top with gnocchi mixture. Crumble over ricotta. Sprinkle with pizza cheese and season.

STEP 3

Cook under grill for 5-6 mins or until the cheese is golden and the gnocchi is heated through. Serve with remaining spinach. Divide noodle mixture among serving bowls. Serve immediately.

PLUM AND GINGER CHICKEN Serves 4 | \$4 per serve | www.taste.com.au

INGREDIENTS

185ml (3/4 cup) plum sauce

2 tsp soy sauce

8 (about 1kg) skinless chicken lovely legs

1 tbsp coarsely grated fresh ginger

STEP 1

Preheat oven to 230°C. Line a large baking tray with non-stick baking paper. Combine the plum and soy sauces in a large glass or ceramic bowl. Add the chicken and turn to coat.

STEP 2

Arrange the chicken, in a single layer, on the prepared tray. Sprinkle with ginger. Bake on the top shelf of preheated oven for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Serve immediately.

3-INGREDIENT CORN SOUP Serves 4 | \$2 per serve | www.thekitchn.com

INGREDIENTS

2 x 420g cans of sweet corn kernels

2 cups unsweetened oat milk or whole milk

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

STEP 1

Toast the corn kernels in butter.

STEP 2

Blend the toasted corn kernels with milk in a high-speed blender. The kernels' natural starches contribute to a slightly thick consistency once blended.

STEP 3

Simmer your soup to the level of thickness you prefer. Finish by seasoning the soup with salt and pepper, and garnishing of your choice.

Puzzle time

Melbourne has one of the largest populations of which nationality outside of Europe?

German ☐ Spanish ☐ French ☐ Greek ☐

What is Australia's national floral emblem?

Waratah ☐ Golden Wattle ☐ Grey Gum ☐ Sturt Desert Pea ☐

In which state of Australia would you find the area known as Arnhem Land?

South Australia ☐ Western Australia ☐ Northern Territory ☐ Queensland ☐

Which Australian animal rarely needs to drink?

Koala ☐ Wallaby ☐ Kangaroo ☐ Crocodile ☐

What company currently produces Vegemite?

Walkers ☐ Heinz ☐ Kraft Foods ☐ Vegemite Inc. ☐

Which city was once known as Batmania?

Sydney ☐ Perth ☐ Melbourne ☐ Adelaide ☐

Where would you find the following:

Big Golden Guitar

Big Prawn

Big Bench

Big Potato

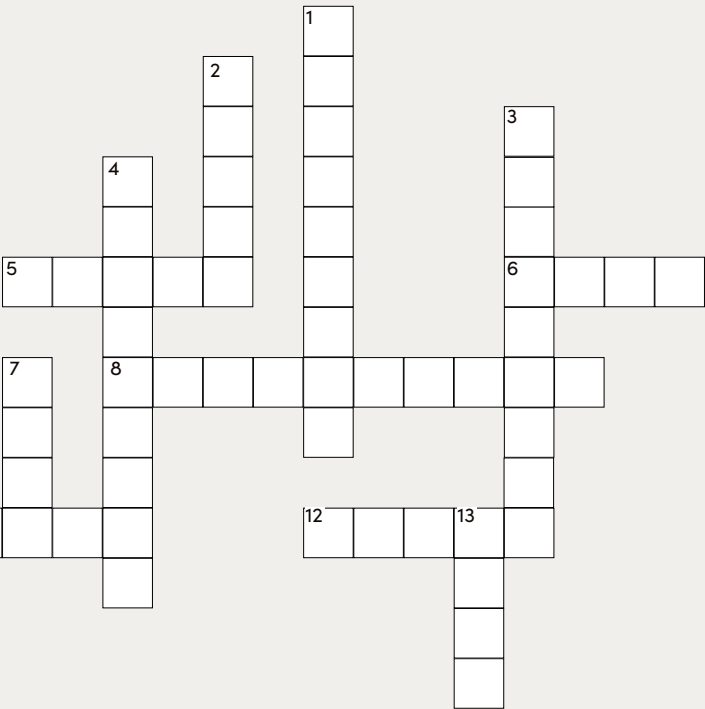
Big Pineapple

ACROSS

- 5 Location of the Mid North Coast
Home in Place office
- 6 First name of Home in Place Chief
Operating Officer
- 8 Specialist ____ Accommodation. Also
known as SDA. Type of housing
provided by Home in Place
- 11 Youth scholarship program managed
by Home in Place
- 12 Our ____ Panel. Home in Place
tenant representative group

DOWN

- 1 Location of the Home in Place
community hub on the Central Coast
- 2 Another word for location
- 3 Tenant ____ Scheme. Home in Place
awards that recognise tenants who are
excelling in one of five categories
- 4 Traditional custodians of the land that the
Home in Place Dubbo office is located
- 7 Title of Michelle Pittman's novel
- 9 Place of residence
- 10 New addition at the 123 Community Hub
in Broken Hill
- 13 Main ingredient of a recipe in this
newsletter



ANSWERS
GREEK, GOLDEN WATTLE, NORTHERN TERRITORY, KOALA, KRAFT FOODS, MELBOURNE
TAMWORTH, BALLINA, BROKEN HILL, ROBERTSON, WOOLBYE
ACROSS: 5. TAREE, 6. EMMA, 8. DISABILITY, 11. GROW A STAR, 12. VOICE.
DOWN: 1. TUMBI UMBI, 2. PLACE, 3. INCENTIVE, 4. WIRADJURI, 7. LOST, 9. HOME, 10. PANTRY,
13. CORN.



PHOTO GALLERY

The Pantry Opening

On Thursday 11 April, Home in Place Executive Manager Community Development Krystal Moores officially opened the **Pantry** at the 123 Community Hub at Broken Hill.

Around 80 people turned up for the grand opening which included a Welcome to Country, BBQ breakfast and a ribbon and cake cutting ceremony. Guests also had the opportunity to preview the Pantry before it was open to the public.

The Pantry provides the Broken Hill community access to free or low-cost grocery items and Ms Moores said the Pantry is a timely addition to the 123 Hub's service offering.

"With continuing cost of living pressures, the Pantry offers a conveniently located and affordable place to shop for our tenants and others who are doing it tougher than most." Ms Moores said.

Read more at www.homeinplace.org/new-community-pantry-opens-in-broken-hill





Brenden's story

Brenden hasn't felt this content in a long time. He says having a stable roof over his head and access to support services is a big reason for the good place he is in.

The 42-year-old has just moved into a social housing unit in the Lake Macquarie suburb of Swansea in NSW.

Brenden has already faced many challenges in his life. He has experienced mental illness and battled addiction for most of his adult life. The scarring on his face is a result of Brenden attempting to take his own life a decade ago.

Eight years ago, Brenden got divorced and he hasn't seen his son for three years.

"That's when life really took a turn for the worst," Brenden says.

Unable to afford a rental property as a single person, he lived in a caravan. The van became written off after he had a car accident while towing it. Brenden ended up in his car – living "the highway life" as he calls it.

Last year, driving offences landed him in prison for six months.

"That was a real eye opener. I wouldn't say I have been an angel all my life, but I never expected to end up in jail."

"After I got out of prison, that's when I was truly homeless. Like many others who leave prison, I went straight back on the drugs.

Brenden ended up sleeping rough in Port Macquarie. When he came to see his mum at Christmas, he told her he couldn't go back to that lifestyle.

"I rang emergency housing and they put me in touch with the St Vincent De Paul Society's Matthew Talbot Homeless Service. They got me temporary accommodation in a motel. I was very grateful to have a roof over my head, but that accommodation is difficult if you are trying to get clean."

Brenden went to live temporarily at This Way Home, a transitional housing complex managed by Home in Place in Newcastle. Brenden says if it wasn't for the

28 days he spent at This Way Home and the ongoing support of the Matthew Talbot Homeless Service he wouldn't have his new social housing unit.

He describes Home in Place's manager at This Way Home, Emma-Jane (EJ) as "an angel".

"EJ says I got this unit myself, but I wouldn't have got there without them. I have been at the same crossroad 20 other times in my life but I never made it happen."

Brenden has only been in his new unit a few weeks but the difference it is making is clear to him. There is another "tenant" in the unit who has a positive impact on Brenden too – his support dog Tuppence.

"I am doing great. I haven't been this content in a long time."

"This place is a gem. It is quiet. And I am around the corner from my mum. It is comforting to have a place to come back to that is mine. For the first time in my life, I have a budget and it has been a long time since I owned furniture.

"If you asked me a couple of months ago what my plan was for the future, I would have said that I had no clue. Then, I couldn't think past tomorrow. Having this place and other support means I can now focus more on my mental health, staying drug free, saving, setting myself up to getting a job and getting to see my son again."

Brenden has qualifications in working with performance horses but is going to get qualifications in working with smaller animals as a vet nurse. His long-term dream job is working with an organisation that provides support animals or pets as therapy.

YOU CAN READ MORE OF BRENDEN'S STORY, AND OTHER TENANT STORIES AT [HOMEINPLACE.ORG/STORIES/TENANT](https://homeinplace.org/stories/tenant)

People's Commission

Home in Place has made a submission to the Everybody's Home People's Commission. The People's Commission into the Housing Crisis provides a platform for everyday people and organisations to share their stories of housing insecurity. The testimony will culminate in a series of recommendations to fix Australia's housing crisis.

Home in Place's submission provides insights into the housing crisis, its flow-on effects, and the steps that governments can take to solve the crisis. Here is a summary of the main points.

The top three impacts our clients report experiencing as a result of the housing crisis

- Homelessness
- Inability to secure social and affordable housing
- Financial stress

The top three secondary impacts our clients report experiencing as a result of the housing crisis

- Mental stress or ill-health
- Physical insecurity or ill-health
- Forgoing meals, medications or other essential services

Four steps governments can take to solve the housing crisis

1. Recognising it is a fundamental duty of governments to ensure the fundamental needs of its citizens are being met
2. Increasing funding for social and affordable housing
3. Recognising social housing dwellings as assets
4. Investing in supports to make "Housing First" allocation policies fit for purpose

Read more at www.homeinplace.org/home-in-place-submission-to-everybodys-home-peoples-commission

Grow a Star

Grow a Star is an innovative, youth mentoring and scholarship program that helps young people from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome the financial or generational obstacles that are preventing them from following their academic, sporting or artistic dreams.

The program was created by Home in Place and is the first of its kind to be designed and operated by a community housing provider.

You can learn about the program at <https://growastar.org>.



One of our most recent Grow a Star recipients is Maddi.

Maddi Harper is a power-lifting champion. She only got into the sport a year ago but can deadlift almost three times her body weight. She weighs 52kg and recently deadlifted 140kg!

Grow a Star funding has helped Maddi with competition entry fees. Maddi's most recent competition was the National Championships where, with a lift total of 320kg, Maddi qualified for the World Championships to be held in Malta later in the year.

Read Maddi's story in full at <https://growastar.org/maddi-1>.

Stay in Touch

HOME IN PLACE CUSTOMER CALL CENTRE 1300 333 733

Business hours for all general tenancy enquiries or 24/7 for emergency tenancy and maintenance issues.

W WWW.HOMEINPLACE.ORG **E** CONTACTUS@HOMEINPLACE.ORG



@homeinplace



@homeinplace



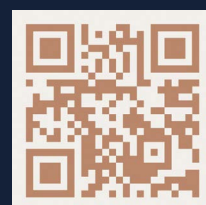
@homeinplace



youtube.com/c/HomeinPlace



@home_in_place



HOMEINPLACE.ORG