

MYPLACE

NEWSLETTER FOR TENANTS AND RESIDENTS OF HOME IN PLACE
ISSUE TWELVE

Home
in Place



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A Message from Emma O'Hara

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
HOME IN PLACE AUSTRALIA



“We cannot stop natural disasters but we can arm ourselves with knowledge”

– PETRA NEMCOVA

Nature has certainly shown us her might and fury recently, with severe winds, rain, storms, floods, and fires affecting many areas across the country. These events can be scary and unpredictable, but knowing what to do and being prepared can keep you as safe as possible.

There are many resources available online and in your local area to arm you with knowledge and tools in the event of a natural disaster. It's important to understand the potential risks where you live so you can make a plan.

Many states have a **State Emergency Service (SES)** or similar agency that provides emergency assistance during floods, storms, or other natural disasters. The SES can also assist with **fallen trees, tarping damaged roofs, road safety, disaster preparedness** (such as sandbagging and closing roads), and **evacuating disaster areas**.

The SES should be your first point of contact in an emergency, before reaching out to Home in Place.

NSW, Queensland, and Victoria all share the same SES phone number **132 500**. This number will automatically divert to the correct state agency based on your location.

In life-threatening emergencies, Triple Zero (000) should still be used.

There are also several websites and useful apps available on the App Store and Google Play to help you stay informed and prepare for emergency events.

► **Queensland State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service** www.ses.qld.gov.au and www.fire.qld.gov.au

► **NSW State Emergency Service and Rural Fire Service** www.ses.nsw.gov.au and www.rfs.gov.au

► **Victoria State Emergency Service and Country Fire Authority** www.ses.vic.gov.au and www.cfa.vic.gov.au

► Government websites with disaster relief and response resources and information:

▷ www.getready.qld.gov.au

▷ www.nsw.gov.au/emergency

▷ www.emergency.vic.gov.au

Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) www.bom.gov.au

The BOM is an Australia-wide government agency and the most reliable for weather forecasting and severe weather warnings by location.

Emergency+ App

A national app connecting users to emergency services based on their phone GPS location when activated. The app also provides emergency responders with the user's latitude and longitude so they can respond quickly.

In the event of an emergency, you should always follow the directions of emergency services.

Failure to follow the directions of emergency services can result in life threatening risk to your safety and the safety of others.

Tenant Representation



The Home in Place **Tenant Reference Groups** (TRGs) provide a local forum for tenants and staff to come together and discuss key aspects of the services Home in Place provides. These groups meet quarterly and offer tenants the opportunity to raise issues, share feedback from their communities, and suggest ideas for improving services and tenant wellbeing.

The TRGs also play an important role in shaping broader tenant engagement through their connection to the **Our Voice Panel** (OVP).

The OVP brings together tenant representatives from across the regions and acts as a link between tenants and the Home in Place Board, helping to ensure the tenant voice is reflected at all levels of the organisation.

At the most recent round of meetings, TRG members discussed upcoming events, local challenges and ideas for improvement.

The OVP continued its work providing input into key policies and projects that affect tenants, including sustainability initiatives, inspection processes, and tenancy policy reviews.

THE TRG IS 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!

Let's tackle rubbish together

Unfortunately we are seeing increasing instances of illegal dumping in our communities and unit complexes.

Illegal dumping can include placing unwanted household items in the bush or on the footpath, in common areas or bin bays when there is no council collection, as well as dumping rubbish or green waste in the bush or on the side of the road.

Illegal dumping is not only harmful to our health and the environment, it creates fire and safety risks for residents and community members, damages culturally sensitive environments and costs taxpayers and businesses millions of dollars a year to clean up. Money spent on removing illegally dumped waste, is money not spent on improving properties and communities.

Home in Place is committed to environmentally sustainable practices and working with residents to manage and prevent illegal dumping in our communities, and we need your help.

If you need assistance disposing of furniture or household goods, before dumping it on the kerb or leaving it in your yard, contact Home in Place for advice and assistance.

We work with a range of services in the community that may be able to assist or be able to provide you with advice about safe disposal options including upcoming kerbside pickups, available community or state government support, or upcoming community clean up events.

You can also help by reporting illegal dumping in your community.

In NSW, illegal dumping is reported to the **Environmental Protection Agency** (EPA) by calling **131 555**, or completing an online report at www.ridonline.epa.nsw.gov.au. In Queensland, illegal dumping can be reported to the **Queensland Government** (QGov) by calling **13QGOV** (137 468) or submitting an online report at www.qld.gov.au/environment/circular-economy-waste-reduction/litter-illegal-dumping and following the links to the reporting form.

Grow a Star *Helping young people shine*

Grow a Star is a scholarship and mentoring program that supports young people to pursue their goals in education, sport, the arts and life. Many of the young people involved face barriers like financial hardship, housing instability, or social isolation. Grow a Star steps in to offer practical help, whether it's funding course fees, travel, uniforms or access to mentors, to help young people reach their potential.

Recently, two major projects have showcased the impact of Grow a Star.



Sound Check

Sound Check 2025 was a memorable night bringing together established performers and talented young musicians from the region, all supporting the Grow a Star program.

The event was headlined by **Magpie Diaries**, the songwriting project of local legend Matt 'Magpie' Johnston.

The audience was also treated to a surprise set by acclaimed singer-songwriter **Melody Pool**, whose soulful lyrics and vocals captivated the crowd.

The lineup featured 17-year-old **Symphony Rain**, showcasing her strong vocals and original songs, alongside three young Grow a Star musicians **Johnno Villiers**, **Ash McVea-Moore** and **Alex Green**.

Thanks to sponsors and attendees, \$10,000 was raised to support Grow a Star, helping young people from disadvantaged backgrounds overcome barriers to pursue academic, sporting, and artistic goals.

Alex receives the Grow a Star Scholarship sponsored by CBB Salary Packaging, supporting tuition, performance, and equipment. She takes weekly lessons at Riffpad Academy and participates in her school's SHINE Program, aiming to study music at university and perform at festivals.

Ash dreams of a music career focusing on sound production. The scholarship helps cover lessons, performance, equipment, and recording costs.

Johnno also receives Grow a Star funding for specialised lessons, performance and equipment. He has performed at school events, local shopping centres, and community organisations.

Read more - growastar.org/sound-check

Young Gums

Two young Grow a Star participants, **Johnno Villiers** and **Declan**, shone at the 2025 Young Gums program during The Gum Ball festival in Lower Belford.

Over five days across the ANZAC Day weekend, they took part in workshops, mentoring, and hands-on training, learning about event logistics, technical production, song writing and performing on the main stage.

This year saw the introduction of a new Grow a Star scholarship to support participation in the Young Gums program, which was awarded to Declan. Johnno, a continuing Grow a Star participant, applied independently and was also selected. Fellow participant **Oliver Gream** joined the crew as a Young Gums volunteer, further demonstrating the depth of talent and commitment among Grow a Star young people.

The program not only developed their musical skills but also boosted their confidence and opened new opportunities. The Grow a Star and Young Gums partnership highlights the value of giving young people meaningful, practical experiences beyond music.

Learn more about the Young Gums partnership and how Grow a Star is supporting Declan and Johnno on the Grow a Star website at **growastar.org**



Johnno's story



Declan's story



Grow a Star was created by Home in Place and is the first of its kind to be designed and operated by a Community Housing Provider.

Do you know a young person who needs support with their education, sporting or artistic pursuits?

Contact the Grow a Star Coordinator Shane Marshall at shanem@homeinplace.org for more information or go to www.growastar.org/general-applications



PHOTO CREDIT SARA JAYNE PRINCE

Glen is finding balance through bonsai

For Home in Place tenant Glen, bonsai is more than a hobby. It brings joy, purpose and a sense of connection.

Glen has turned his backyard in Taree into a peaceful space filled with almost 100 miniature trees, each one shaped and nurtured with care.

His passion began 14 years ago, not long after moving from the Central Coast. His father, who shared the same interest, introduced him to the art of bonsai after relocating to Taree from Alice Springs.

"I started off with three," Glen says. "Now, I've got nearly 100. I even look after 37 for a mate."

Glen's love of plants began in childhood while visiting his uncle's farm, but bonsai has become something truly special.

"A lot of people think they're delicate," he says. "But they're actually pretty tough. In summer, you water them every few days. In winter, once a week. Every couple of years, you trim the roots and refresh the soil. It keeps them healthy."

His collection includes species such as Morton Bay figs and Port Jacksons. Glen also builds his own bonsai stands using aerated concrete, giving each tree a unique and solid base.

"Bonsai keeps me busy," he says. "Every day there's something to do, whether it's watering, weeding or just checking on them."

His enthusiasm has even spread to his neighbours. "My neighbour has five of her own now," Glen says. "She loves them."

Glen has lived in his unit for 11 years. When he first moved in, he had about a dozen bonsai. Now his collection has grown significantly.

More than a creative outlet, bonsai supports Glen's wellbeing.

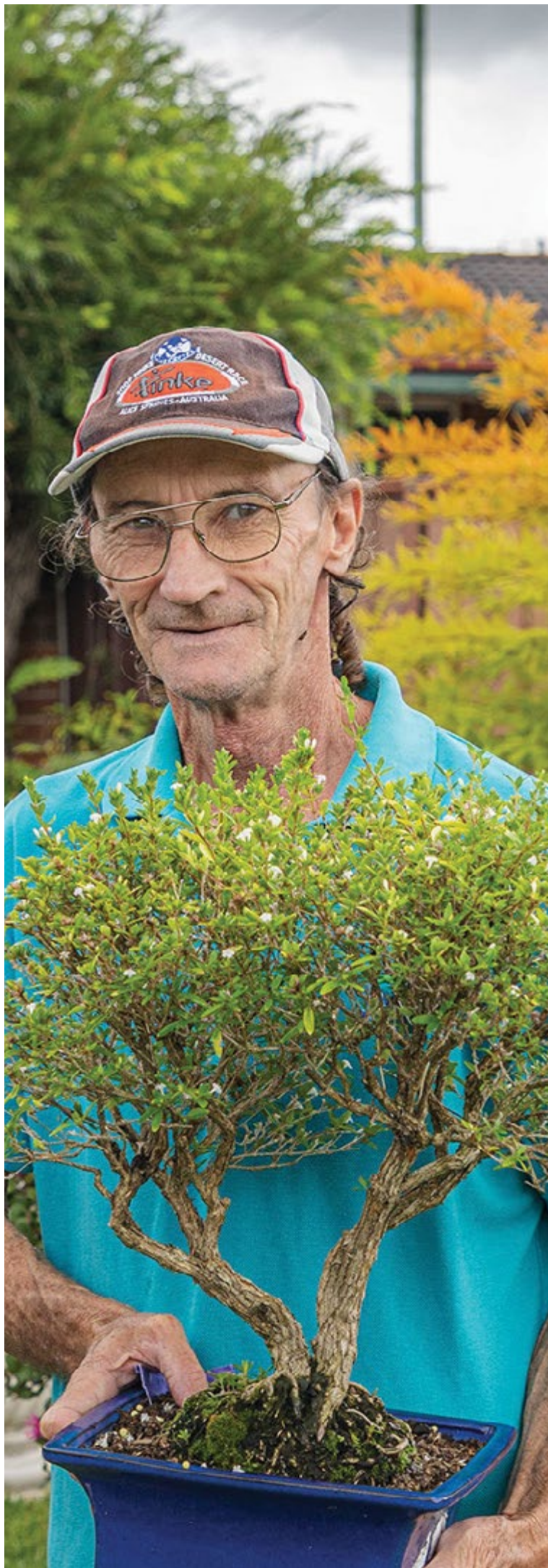
"It's good for your mental health," he says. "It keeps me focused and keeps me going."

Although Glen stepped away from his local bonsai club when his father became unwell, his dad's legacy lives on.

One tree, a privet, holds particular meaning.

"Dad wanted to buy it but couldn't afford it," Glen says. "So I bought it for him. Now, it's here with me."

Looking ahead, Glen hopes to pass the collection to his son one day.



**YOU CAN READ GLEN'S STORY,
AND OTHER TENANT STORIES AT
[HOMEINPLACE.ORG/STORY](https://homeinplace.org/story)**



Max's Story

Max Watsford is a vibrant 21-year-old with Level 3 Autism and Intellectual Impairment. While he is non-speaking and experiences complex behaviours, Max communicates in his own unique way – with honesty, warmth, and a strong sense of what he likes.

Life hasn't always been easy for Max, and the future once felt uncertain. But with the right support and environment, he's now living with greater independence, choice, and connection.

Max thrives on routine and inclusion. He enjoys the simple things – watching Thomas the Tank Engine and Fireman Sam, scrolling through YouTube, dancing to music with headphones, and spending time outdoors. Whether it's swinging at the park, bouncing at Springloaded, swimming, or walking among trees, Max is happiest when moving. He also loves exploring new places to eat, especially if there's a chance to enjoy fish and chips by the foreshore on a rainy day.

For many years, Max lived at home with his parents, who cared for him around the clock while juggling full-time work.

His mother, Christine, recalls, "Life for us, as parents and carers... was difficult at times. We both worked full time and Max requires support 24/7, so there was not a lot of flexibility."

As Max grew older, it became clear he was ready for more independence. A brief share-house trial wasn't the right fit, but things changed when Max moved into his own Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) home a year ago.

Located in a quiet bushland setting, Max's home is purpose-built to meet his sensory and support needs. He now receives 2:1 support during the day and 1:1

overnight, and is learning daily living skills like cooking, cleaning, and choosing his own meals and clothes. He's supported by a team who genuinely understand and celebrate him.

While Max isn't always comfortable posing for photos, he shines in candid moments – out exploring, enjoying life on his own terms. His family is proud of how far he's come.

"Our hopes for Max's future are bright," Christine says. "Inclusion is paramount in today's society and we hope that everyday society's acceptance and understanding of people living with a disability becomes a world where there is no stigma and Max becomes a valued part of society. He may not give back to society in traditional ways but the way he sees life is something we all could learn from."

Max's journey toward independence has been made possible through the thoughtful design of his home and the support of organisations like Home in Place, who manage his tenancy with respect, care, and professionalism.

**YOU CAN READ MAX'S STORY,
AND OTHER TENANT STORIES AT
[HOMEINPLACE.ORG/STORY](https://homeinplace.org/story)**

CREAMY PUMPKIN SOUP Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1kg butternut pumpkin, peeled, chopped
1 brown onion, chopped
2 cups chicken or vegetable stock
1/2 cup thin cream
1 potato, peeled, chopped

STEPS

1. Sauté onion in a large saucepan until softened.
2. Add pumpkin, potato, and stock. Bring to the boil, then simmer until vegetables are tender.
3. Blend until smooth. Stir in cream and heat through.
4. Season to taste and serve with crusty bread.

5-INGREDIENT CHICKEN AND MUSHROOM PASTA BAKE Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

300g cooked penne pasta
1 cup cooked shredded chicken
1 cup sliced mushrooms
1 cup grated cheese
1/2 cup cream

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Combine pasta, chicken, mushrooms, cream, and half the cheese in a bowl.
3. Transfer to a baking dish. Top with remaining cheese.
4. Bake for 20 minutes or until golden and bubbling.

5-INGREDIENT SAUSAGE ROLLS Makes 12

INGREDIENTS

500g sausage mince
1 sheet puff pastry
1 egg, beaten
1/4 cup breadcrumbs
1/4 cup tomato sauce

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. Mix sausage mince, breadcrumbs, and tomato sauce in a bowl.
3. Cut pastry sheet in half. Place mince mixture along the centre of each piece.
4. Roll up to enclose filling. Cut each roll into 6 pieces.
5. Place on a baking tray, brush with egg, and bake for 25 minutes or until golden.

EASY BACON AND LEEK FRITTATA Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

4 eggs
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup grated cheese
2 rashers bacon, chopped
1 leek, sliced

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. Cook bacon and leek in a frying pan until softened.
3. Whisk eggs and milk in a bowl. Stir in cheese, bacon, and leek.
4. Pour mixture into a greased baking dish.
5. Bake for 25 minutes or until set and golden.

5-INGREDIENT PASTRY TRIANGLES Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1 sheet puff pastry
1/2 cup ricotta cheese
1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese
1 cup baby spinach leaves
1 egg, beaten

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 200°C (180°C fan-forced).
2. Cut the puff pastry sheet into four equal squares.
3. In a bowl, mix ricotta, cheddar, and spinach.
4. Place a spoonful of the mixture onto each pastry square. Fold over to form triangles and seal the edges with a fork.
5. Brush the tops with beaten egg and bake for 20–25 minutes.

CREAMY SCALLOPED POTATO TRAY BAKE Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

1.5kg potatoes, peeled and thinly sliced
300ml thickened cream
1 garlic clove, crushed
1/2 cup grated cheddar cheese

STEPS

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced).
2. In a saucepan, combine cream and garlic. Heat gently until warm.
3. Layer half the potatoes in a greased baking dish. Season with salt and pepper. Pour over half the cream mixture. Repeat with remaining potatoes and cream.
4. Sprinkle cheese on top.
5. Cover with foil and bake for 45 minutes. Remove foil and bake for an additional 15 minutes or until golden and tender.

Puzzle Time

ACROSS

- 5. Australia's highest mountain peak, located in the Snowy Mountains.
- 6. 0 degrees Celsius is equivalent to thirty-___ degrees Fahrenheit.
- 8. Australia's coldest capital city on average.
- 10. Gold medallist snowboarder Scotty ____.
- 13. Winter month in Australia.
- 14. One of the five ingredients in the sausage roll recipe.

DOWN

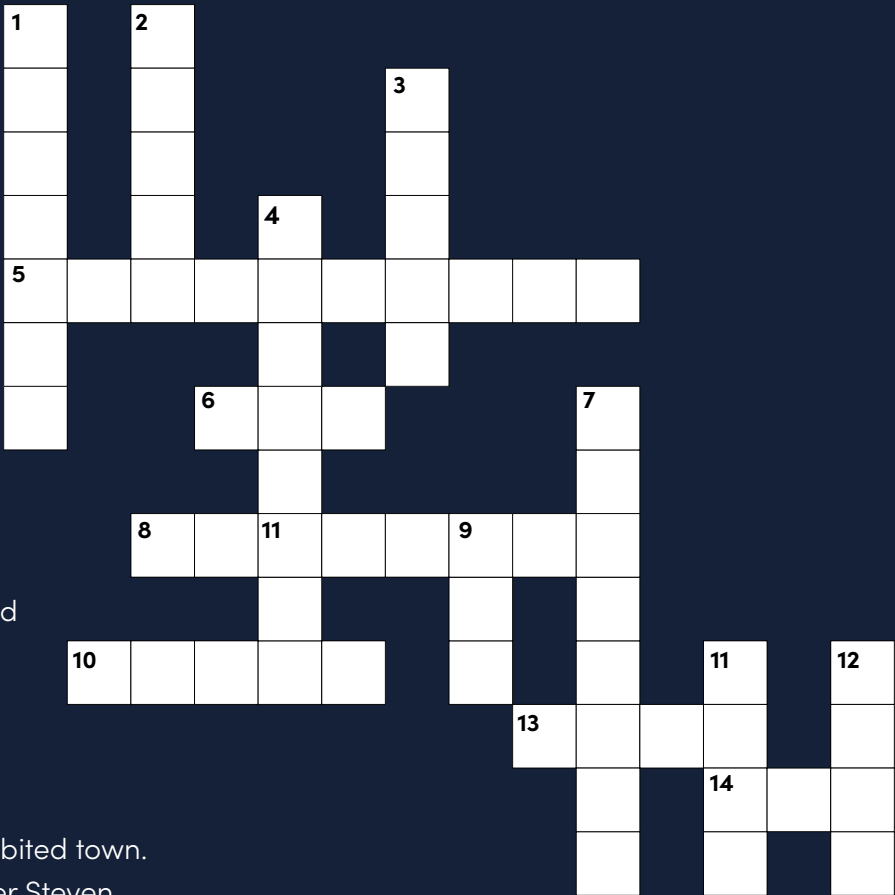
- 1. Traditional winter vegetable often used in hearty stews.
- 2. Ski resort town in Victoria popular in winter ____ Creek.
- 3. Winter Olympic gold medallist in freestyle skiing ____ Camplin.
- 4. Tasmania's coldest permanently inhabited town.
- 7. Gold medallist short track speed skater Steven ____.
- 9. Colour your nose and cheeks might go in the snow.
- 11. One of the five ingredients in the frittata recipe.
- 12. Sheepskin boots popular in winter.

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

WORD SEARCH

Bright Cosmic Galaxy Sun Light Nebula Night Twinkle Orbit Shine Shooting Supernova Sky Sparkle Star

Find the 15 hidden words related to stars. Words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other. The eight leftover letters help spell out the name of our children's sponsorship program... _____



WINTER WORD SCRAMBLE HOME EDITION

Unscramble these warm and snuggly words. They're all things that help you stay toasty at home during winter!

- RLPESPIS _____
- OANOD _____
- OTEHLTWTRABTOE _____
- PERJUM _____
- CFARS _____
- ETTLENLENAF _____
- ETKNALB _____
- SOEVGL _____
- TAREEH _____

ANSWERS
CROSSWORD
ACROSS 5. KOSCIUSZKO 6. TWO 8. CANBERRA 10. JAMES 13. JUNE 14. EGG
DOWN 1. PUMPKIN 2. FALLS 3. ALISA 4. LIAMWANE 7. BRADBURY 9. RED 11. LEEK
12. UGG
WINTER WORD SCRAMBLE 1. SLIPPERS 2. DOONA 3. HOT WATER BOTTLE
4. JUMPER 5. SCARF 6. FLANNELLETTE 7. BLANKET 8. GLOVES 9. HEATER
WORDSEARCH GROW A STAR

You're invited!

2025 Tenant Forums

CONNECT, LEARN AND STAY INFORMED!

Home in Place is proud to bring back our Annual Tenant Forums in 2025!

These free events are a great way to:

- Enjoy a sit-down lunch – *back by popular demand!*
- Hear from engaging speakers on emergency preparedness, fire safety and scam awareness
- Visit information tables from local services and support providers
- Catch up with neighbours and Home in Place staff

RSVP early to secure your spot!



LOCATION	DATE AND TIME	VENUE	RSVP CODE	FULL RSVP LINK	RSVP BY
Lake Macquarie and Newcastle	Thu 12 June 11am–2pm	Club Charlestown 5 Lincoln St, Charlestown NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/lake-macquarie-and-newcastle-tenant-forum	26 May
Taree	Wed 18 June 11am–2pm	Club Taree 121 Wingham Rd, Taree NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/taree-tenant-forum	2 June
Brisbane	Wed 25 June 11am–2pm	Mount Gravatt Bowls Club 1873 Logan Rd, Upper Mount Gravatt QLD		https://events.humanitix.com/brisbane-tenant-forum	16 June
Broken Hill	Wed 25 June 11am–2pm	The Demo Club 218 Argent St, Broken Hill NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/broken-hill-tenant-forum	18 June
East Maitland	Fri 27 June 11am–2pm	East Maitland Bowling Club Banks St, East Maitland NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/east-maitland-tenant-forum	12 June
Central Coast	Wed 2 July 11am–2pm	Mingara Recreation Club 12–14 Mingara Dr, Tumbi Umbi NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/central-coast-tenant-forum	18 June
Upper Hunter	Tue 8 July 11am–2pm	Muswellbrook RSL Club 113 Bridge St, Muswellbrook NSW		https://events.humanitix.com/upper-hunter-tenant-forum	24 June



Karyn's story

From affordable housing to homeownership

Karyn is now the proud owner of her own home on the NSW Central Coast, something she never thought would be possible just a few years ago. With the support of affordable housing and a government home ownership scheme, she has been able to take a major step forward.

For two and a half years, Karyn lived in a Home in Place affordable housing property. During that time, she was able to save enough money to make her long-held dream of owning a home a reality.

"Affordable housing gave me so much relief from the financial stress I was under," Karyn said. "I felt a bit unwell

and had to drop from working five days a week to four. That would not have been possible if I was renting privately."

Affordable housing properties have capped rents, generally set at 75 to 80 percent of market rates, and are rented to lower income households who would otherwise struggle in the private market. For Karyn, the lower rent meant she could keep working, stay on top of her expenses and start building a future.

She also received support through the NSW Government's Shared Equity Home Buyer Helper Scheme, which allowed eligible buyers to purchase a home with as little as a 2 percent deposit and no lender's mortgage insurance. The scheme, which ended in mid-2024, supported key workers, single parents, older singles and survivors of domestic and family violence to get into the property market.

Before accessing affordable housing, Karyn had been finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with private rent. "Affordable housing is fantastic," she said. "It was a stepping stone into controlling my own financial future. It has been very empowering."

While she is proud of what she has achieved, Karyn is mindful that the rental crisis continues to impact others. She hopes her journey gives people encouragement to keep working towards their goals. "I was sad to leave my Home in Place affordable housing place," she said, "but I am glad to free it up for someone else who needs it."

Karyn is now settling into her new home with her teenage daughter and their dachshund. She has begun making it her own, pulling up the old carpet, putting in new floorboards, adding new window coverings and planning to repaint the pastel green walls. A new kitchen and laundry are on the wish list, but for now, she is simply enjoying the feeling of having a place to call her own.

**YOU CAN READ KARYN'S STORY,
AND OTHER TENANT STORIES AT
[HOMEINPLACE.ORG/STORY](https://homeinplace.org/story)**

**WE LOVE SHARING OUR TENANTS' STORIES.
IF YOU'D LIKE TO TELL YOURS PLEASE CONTACT US
AT [HELLO@HOMEINPLACE.ORG](mailto:hello@homeinplace.org)**

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](https://www.homeinplace.org) E [CONTACTUS@HOMEINPLACE.ORG](mailto:contactus@homeinplace.org)



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