

# AMÉLIE NEWS

Winter 2022



**Amélie Housing**  
Building hope through housing

Issue No. 1



## RENEWAL AT OAKS ESTATE

A joint effort between Housing ACT, Programmed FM, Amélie Housing and the Vinnies Community Inclusion Program (CIP) Team has resulted in much needed renewal at Oaks Estate in Canberra.

In March this year, local residents were given the opportunity to dispose of any unwanted items they had within their buildings, so their individual premises and stairwells could remain clear, safe and orderly.

On the external front, staff – with the help of a specialist team of cleaning

contractors - worked to transform the outdoor areas of the Estate; removing abandoned furniture, whitegoods and car parts and taking unwanted items to the tip.

A community BBQ was also held, providing staff the opportunity to engage with residents, listen to their ideas, understand any property or tenancy related issues, and identify any support needs. A special thanks to Programmed FM for providing the food, and Housing ACT for cooking the BBQ.



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## FROM THE CEO



Welcome to the winter edition of Amélie News.

You might notice that it has undergone quite a facelift. It's been some time since our last edition so we have taken this opportunity to give it a brand new look and feel.

It would be remiss of us not to acknowledge the many challenges our community has faced in recent years. Through bushfires, COVID, unprecedented rain and flooding, we've spent more time indoors than we ever would have anticipated, and this has only emphasised the fundamental need for all of us to have a safe place to call 'home'.

At Amélie Housing, it is our vision to become "a national leader advocating justice in housing markets and a major player in the provision of Social and Affordable Housing to the most disadvantaged members of our society". Earlier this year, it was a privilege for our national team to get together at our All Staff day in Sydney to regroup and refocus on the steps ahead in achieving our vision. In all things, our focus is on improving services and achieving better outcomes for you, our customers.

We hope you enjoy this latest edition of our newsletter. It's been a busy few months with Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week, NAIDOC Week and some good progress with our Reconciliation Action Plan and community renewal initiatives. We've also included some handy home hints and tips to share about keeping warm, well and fire safe this winter.

Brian Murnane  
CEO

Mark Thompson  
National Operations Director

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### A message from our State Managers

The last 6-12 months have been testing for all Amélie Housing tenants, contractors and staff. We are pleased to have witnessed the resilience of our tenants in getting through these tough times. No doubt, COVID will be around for some time and Amélie Housing will continue to navigate our response to the pandemic by adhering to health advice. We would like to thank our contractors and staff who have shown great flexibility through this period, ensuring that our tenants receive the service and support they require.

Home visits have started again. They are a way for us to check in to see if you are doing ok or whether you might need some additional

### Amélie All Staff Team Day

The Amélie Housing team were delighted to get together in early May to participate in our All Staff Team Day in Sydney. This was the first opportunity for the whole team to get together in person since COVID.

The Team Day provided staff members the opportunity to:

- reflect on the last two years and celebrate achievements
- recognise and reward staff for their hard work and contributions
- participate in team building (problem-solving and decision-making) activities to build trust, improve communication and increase collaboration
- regroup and refocus for the year ahead.

### Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Update

The RAP working group continue to meet regularly and make progress.

In the last quarter, members of the RAP working group attended the Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Forum held on the 24-25 May 2022 in Sydney, and were fortunate to meet some Indigenous Housing Providers, as well as other Community Housing Providers (CHPs). The Forum centred around solution-focused ideas that will eliminate Indigenous homelessness, create better tenancy outcomes,

supports. Home visits also provide us with the opportunity to examine your property condition and ensure your property is safe to live in.

Finally, Amélie Housing is looking to organise a number of community events for tenants to participate in later this year and in 2023. We are currently in discussions about what these events will involve/look like. Some suggestions have included running competitions in gardening, photography and art – so if any of those domains are of interest to you – be sure to watch this space for more information as it becomes available.

Roman Kowalczyk & Poppy Whiting  
State Managers (SA) (NSW & ACT)



Amélie Housing staff members at our All Staff Team Day.

reduce overcrowding and the associated health risks, and increase the longevity of assets. We are looking forward to applying some of what we learned to our business practices here at Amélie Housing.

We are pleased to say that we are also very close to submitting our draft Reflective RAP to Reconciliation Australia for feedback and in principle endorsement. We will provide an update on this in due course once we receive further correspondence.

## NEWSROOM

### National Sorry Day and Reconciliation Week

On Thursday 26 May Amélie Housing paused to observe both National Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week. In doing so we recognised the enduring grief, trauma and loss suffered by First Nations people, as a result of the forced removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from their families, communities and culture.

In 2021-2022, we made a commitment to establish a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and Committee that would prioritise initiatives that would strengthen our relationships with First Nations people, and ensure we were making a genuine contribution to reconciliation through the work that we do and culture we foster.



The 2022 National Reconciliation Week theme was "Be Brave. Make Change."

Recognising that we have the opportunity to play our part in the healing process of our community and nation, we asked staff members to take time out to reflect on what 'reconciliation' really means, and consider what steps we could all be taking to "Be Brave" and "Make Change" by tackling the unfinished business of reconciliation.

### Updated Community Housing Rent Policy

The NSW Community Housing Rent Policy was updated and approved in July last year. The policy update means that there may be some changes to the way we calculate rent going forward. Any changes will be confirmed to you in writing. For more information on the NSW Community Housing Rent Policy go to: [facs.nsw.gov.au](https://facs.nsw.gov.au)

### Meet Amélie's:

**What is your role and where are you based:** I am a Housing Officer based in Canberra.

I've worked in the ACT's social housing sector for over 20 years.



Bruce Perry

**What are your hobbies?** I enjoy owning and modifying classic cars. I also enjoy road and trail running.

**Favourite holiday destination:** The Cook Islands - especially the island of Aitutaki. New York comes in a close second though.

**Top 3 dinner guests of your choice:** Julia Gillard, Robin Williams and Robert De Castella



### NSW Government's Washing Machine Replacement Trial

Did you know that you may be eligible to buy a new washing machine as part of the NSW Government's Washing Machine Replacement Trial with a large portion of the cost covered under the scheme.

This limited offer helps eligible social housing tenants to replace their old top loading washing machine with a new, front loading washing machine that saves on water and power.

Applications are open and will close on 30 September 2022 (unless funding under the trial is reached prior to this date). Do not miss out and apply now!

For more information: [water.nsw.gov.au/washingmachine](https://water.nsw.gov.au/washingmachine) [washingmachines@dpie.nsw.gov.au](mailto:washingmachines@dpie.nsw.gov.au)



### NAIDOC Week 2022 - "Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!"

The Amélie team were thrilled to celebrate NAIDOC Week by attending a range of local NAIDOC Week events to celebrate and recognise the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This year's theme was all about standing up for systemic change and narrowing the gap between good intent and outcome.

### Vinnies Society Members

Did you know that due to Amélie Housing's relationship with St Vincent de Paul Society (Vinnies), you have the opportunity to receive additional support through Vinnies Society members?

Vinnies Society members are passionate about helping people in need in their local community. They are available to support people in their homes and communities, providing friendship and a listening ear.

Society members will be talking to Amélie customers and Tailored Support Coordinators over the next year to find out how they can serve their local community and provide tenants with opportunities to engage in community with others (e.g. through barbecues, morning and afternoon teas, community gardens, celebration days and cultural events).

Stay tuned for more information about how Vinnies Society members can support you!



**FOR REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE: Call 1800 950 575**

# HOME HINTS AND TIPS



## Beating Mould In Your Home

After the unprecedented amount of rain we have experienced this year, thousands of homes are noticing the effects of the damp and humid weather – mostly through the appearance of mould.

If mould is not dealt with quickly, it can have adverse affects on your health and cause damage to your home.

You can reduce mould growth in your home by:

- airing rooms with open windows or doors or by using exhaust fans especially when cooking, having a bath or shower or using a clothes drier
- wiping away condensation
- heating rooms with dry heat (switch to an electric or gas heater with a flue)
- opening curtains and blinds during the day
- checking plumbing for leaks
- cleaning and drying surfaces that get wet regularly
- hanging wet clothes outside
- ensuring clothes and shoes are dry before putting them away
- airing cupboards and reducing clutter in bedrooms
- throwing away any wet, badly damaged or musty smelling items.

The best way to treat mould is by using white vinegar. Vinegar is an excellent, affordable, all-purpose item to keep in the home. It is a natural acid that is non-toxic and harmless to the environment. You can use it safely on most surfaces by pouring undiluted white vinegar into a spray bottle. You can also use vinegar undiluted or mix it with other cleaners such as baking soda.

## Feedback and Complaints

Amélie Housing takes feedback, complaints and appeals seriously. If you would like to lodge a complaint, appeal a decision, or provide feedback on what we do well or what we can improve, there are several ways you can do this:

- **Use our online Feedback form**  
(Go to <https://bit.ly/ameliefedback> or scan the QR Code).
- **Call us on 1800 950 575 (free call).**  
Note: Some charges may apply for mobile users.
- **Access independent support.**  
If you need assistance in making a complaint, appealing a decision or providing feedback you can ask a nominated person to help you. You will just need to provide consent for staff to talk with another nominated person on your behalf.

Your voice matters to us. For more information or for assistance, please speak to our staff.

## Preventing Fires this Winter

The cooler months see a 10% increase in the number of home fires. Some common causes of fires are from the use of heaters and electric blankets, cigarettes and candles.

Here are some tips on preventing fires in your home:

- keep everything one metre away from your heater
- install and use heaters and electric blankets following the manufacturer's instructions
- get indoor gas appliances like heaters checked every two years and if you suspect a fault, get your heater serviced or replaced
- always supervise young children near working heaters and candles
- keep candles away from curtains with open windows
- put candles out when you leave the room
- keep matches and lighters out of reach of children and use child-proof lighters and deep ash trays
- extinguish cigarettes properly before you throw them away and never smoke in bed
- ensure you have a fire escape plan.

## Save Energy Heating Your Home

Here are some tips on how to warm your home this winter while also reducing energy use:

- Look at the energy labels on gas heaters and reverse cycle heat pumps – the more stars, the more efficient the appliance.
- Only heat the room you are using, and keep doors closed to keep heat in.
- Keep the curtains and blinds on your south-facing windows open during the day to allow the sun to naturally heat your home.
- Close curtains and blinds at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- Wear your favourite jumper and warmest socks and turn your heater down. Try 18 to 20 degrees Celsius rather than 23 degrees Celsius. Each degree less will save about 5% to 10% on your energy use.
- Heat rises so if you have a ceiling fan, turn it on to spread the heat and circulate it more evenly. A slowly circulating fan can take up to 10% off your bill.



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