

SPECIAL ISSUE: 100 YEARS OF PUBLIC HOUSING IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Welcome to our 100th issue, in which we mark an important milestone: the centenary of the founding of the NSW public housing system. We can be proud that the people of New South Wales have provided housing for a number of its citizens. (Housing NSW reports assisting over 230,000 people in 2010–11.)

Research shows that secure housing is the basis for leading a fulfilling and productive life. Public housing* can provide such security. This is described in the tenants' stories on pages 4–6.

We acknowledge the tenants, public servants and governments who work towards the success of public housing. Together let us celebrate 100 issues of *Tenant News* and 100 years of public housing. May both continue to increase.

Julie Foreman, Executive Officer

*Public housing is now part of the social housing system, which includes community housing and Aboriginal housing. These have similar objectives to public housing.

How public housing in NSW got its start

Chris Martin, Senior Policy Officer

On 4 April 1912, the NSW Governor signed into law the *Housing Act 1912*, thus founding the public housing system in New South Wales.

The Act was introduced by state Labor treasurer and long-time housing advocate John Rowland Dacey. His government already had a public-housing project in mind: a development of 400 acres of

sandhills south of Kensington in south-eastern Sydney, which had been reserved for the Church of England. Just a week after introducing the Act, Dacey died. The public-housing project inherited his name: Daceyville.

This would not be the first time that the NSW Government had been involved in the provision of rental housing: it owned and let houses at The Rocks and Millers Point through the

offices of the Sydney Harbour Trust.

But there it was an incidental – even accidental – landlord, having acquired the houses when it resumed the area for sanitary redevelopment following an outbreak of bubonic plague in 1900.

What was new and distinctive about the *Housing Act 1912* was that it provided for the planned purchase of land and the construction, sale and letting of housing by a dedicated government housing agency, the Housing Board, with the deliberate objective of improving housing. As Dacey said in debate on the legislation:

We propose to establish a garden city, and to offer the people healthy conditions for living. It has been truthfully said that the city beautiful will yield big dividends to the nation.



Daceyville houses 1915 © State Records NSW (records.nsw.gov.au)



Daceyville schoolchildren, 1917 © State Records NSW (records.nsw.gov.au)

We propose to establish a city beautiful, which Australians abroad will be able to point to with pride and say, "There, that is how Australia builds its garden cities."

(NSW Parliamentary Debates, 28 February 1912)

The Housing Board comprised three members: T H Nesbitt (town clerk of the City of Sydney), J W Holliman (a public servant) and, as chairperson, J D Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald was a barrister, journalist, trade unionist, republican, suffragist, town planning advocate, housing reformer and occasional member of parliament. His curriculum vitae reflects the remarkable ferment at the beginning the twentieth century of ideas for reform from a particularly 'social' point of view.

In contrast to the moralising, classical liberal reformism of the previous century, this new social, or social-liberal, reformism proposed solutions

to governmental problems not through laissez faire or philanthropy or well-meaning amateurs, but instead through greater interventions in the processes of life and economy, particularly by the state and technocratic experts in programs of social security and "eugenics".

Housing was significant in these programs of reform: garden suburbs like Daceyville were described at the time as being "the great lever of social reform", and Daceyville itself was described, in Fitzgerald's own words, as "a small experiment in eugenics".

The social-liberal reform of housing was not just – or even mainly – about public housing, though: the first choice of

reformers was a reform of housing provided privately by the market. So, in the same parliamentary session as it passed the *Housing Act 1912*, the government also passed legislation to advance deposits and mortgage finance to workers for home ownership.

Less directly, private housing to an appropriate standard was supported by the state through the wage arbitration system, which formulated a 'living wage' that accounted for the reasonable cost of housing for a working-class household.

To similar ends, the state also intervened in the landlord-tenant legal relationship. The NSW Government first restricted (in the late 1890s), then abolished (in 1930), landlords' old common-law remedy of 'distress for rent' (that is, entering the house of a tenant in arrears, and seizing their personal property). It also instituted rent controls under the *Fair Rents Act 1915*. (Rent controls were partly lifted in 1928, repealed in 1937, then imposed again in 1939.)

Public housing then, was only one of several solutions proposed by reformers and

Snapshot of NSW public housing 2010–2011

- Number of tenancies: 113,023
- Number of properties under management: 120,380
- Number of people assisted: 232,584

Source: NSW Department of Family and Community Services annual report 2010–2011

never the most preferred one. Where it was implemented, it was with a considerable degree of variation and experimentation. This was especially the case in New South Wales. Daceyville was originally planned to comprise over 1,700 dwellings, but just 315 dwellings were completed when building stopped in the

1920s. The Housing Board itself was abolished in 1924.

Still, the *Housing Act 1912* remained on the statute books. It would later form part of the legislative basis of the Housing Commission (established

1942) and the Department of Housing (established 1985). It was repealed only in 2001, when its provisions, and those of the later *Housing Act 1985*, were updated and consolidated in the present *Housing Act 2001*.

See our blog, The Brown Couch, for more of the history of public housing in New South Wales: tunswblog.blogspot.com.au

Historic announcement:

The Tenants' Union of NSW (TU) has welcomed an announcement by the NSW Ministers for Disability Services and Fair Trading of a proposal to reform the boarding house sector in New South Wales.

"As an organisation working in support of vulnerable renters, we can measure the time spent on this issue in decades. An announcement such as we've had from the ministers today can only be regarded as monumental," said Ned Cutcher, Policy Officer with the TU.

"Organisations such as the TU have lobbied successive governments on the need for boarding house reform since 1976. Our housing system has changed a lot since then – for instance, specific laws have been introduced to protect the rights of renters. But some, such as boarding house residents, are still not protected by those laws."

Mr Cutcher said reform of the marginal rental sector is needed for a number of reasons. "In particular, legal relations between marginal renters and landlords are largely ungoverned and there is no fair mechanism for resolving disputes. Unsanitary and dangerous conditions are a fact of life in some boarding houses. Sensible and enforceable regulation is

needed along with assistance to raise standards."

Mr Cutcher said the TU was pleased to see proposals that would address these issues – the introduction of occupancy rights, standards, and a system of registration for boarding houses. "The TU's own plan for reform of the marginal rental sector – released in March 2011 – includes similar proposals," he said.

"We look forward to seeing the details of this package, and working with the O'Farrell Government on these important reforms," Mr Cutcher said. "Given this has been such a long time coming, it's important that we get it right."

"For instance, occupancy rights must be given broad coverage, to ensure that no renter in New South Wales remains excluded from the protection of our state's renting laws – be they a resident of a boarding house, or some other form of marginal rental accommodation."

TU media release, 10 May 2012

For further information, see our website: www.tenantsunion.org.au/index.php/policy/marginal-renters

Public housing means security

Two tenants, Joanna and Audrey, talk about their experiences of living in public housing and the difference it has made to their lives.

Joanna's story

I first moved into Claymore, a public-housing estate in south-western Sydney, in June 1997.

I was in a women's refuge and had just given birth in late May to my second daughter, Talitha. I had just arrived from Tonga. It was overcrowded at my parents' place and my family of five needed our own space. I was extremely anxious and had survived domestic violence. I had to escape Tonga without my partner's knowledge. I waited till he fell asleep and left in the early hours of the morning with my three older children. We took only our important papers such as passports.

We had lived in Tonga for three years as my husband is Tongan. I had lived in Australia before – I was brought up here.

When we moved into Claymore, I was just concerned about shelter for my children and me. I hadn't known about the negative views others held about Claymore and public housing estates. I was so happy to have a place that we could call 'our home'. When I was settling in and reading the local papers about the

community of Claymore, I felt discouraged because that was not how I experienced it. The neighbours were very welcoming and we became like family – very close. It was a strong community. I really felt I had certainty and could put down roots and make a life for my family and me.

I met workers and got involved in community organisations. I volunteered at community lunches and events and got to meet other residents and raise concerns about issues related to living in Claymore. An active resident group began and was very good in liaising with Department of Housing.

Another resident group began with a dream of creating a laundromat and coffee shop. The idea for a laundromat came about when we noticed that other residents were walking their washing in shopping trolleys and prams down to

Campbelltown – about six kilometres away. We worked very hard for three years to open and establish the laundromat. I, with other residents, undertook TAFE training to help us manage it. I was employed for a time to coordinate the project and train volunteers. It has been operating for over 10 years.

Public housing enabled me to have a safe, stable life, to recover from the trauma of domestic violence and to participate and be included in the community. I now give back to the community with my work and other volunteer activities. Even though we have moved, Claymore residents are still part of my extended family.

Claymore was home to my children, where they grew up and where they went to school. They learnt much and appreciate much because



Joanna with her daughters Talitha and Vanessa (Photo: Julie Foreman)

of their time in Claymore. Families in Claymore became important influences in my children's lives. My sons in particular were mentored and coached by the men in the community via sport. They keep in touch with those families even though we moved out five years ago.

I found that the support from non-government services made a difference in dealing with government departments when I lived in public housing. (It was a little disappointing that the departments wouldn't listen to me directly but it's not something I want to dwell on.)

In 2007, we decided to move out of public housing into my mum's place. My health had deteriorated because of the condition of the house – it was impossible to heat or cool. My two sons, Jacob and Aaron, had received sporting scholarships to a selective public high school outside of the area. Moving out made it easier for me so they could make their own way to and from school and training while I continued to work. I felt it was time to move on.

In the past five years, we lived in five places: two stints at my mum's and three private rentals. This is in stark contrast to Claymore where we were in the one house for 10 years.

We had to move from the first rented place because the house was sold. These moves were expensive and very

Who funds NSW public housing?

NSW public housing has three main sources of revenue:

- rents from public-housing tenants
- grant subsidies from and through the state government
- other.

Public-housing tenants contributed \$666 million in 2010–11. This was 38 percent of the revenue of the then combined Housing NSW–NSW Land and Housing Corporation.

In the years just before the economic stimulus period, this proportion was usually just over 50 percent. The proportion dropped in the last three years because of the big (and temporary) increase in grant subsidies from government.

From Shelter NSW, Around the House, No. 88, March 2012

disruptive to the children's schooling because of travelling and enrolling in different schools. It was also stressful and hard on my health. I still struggle with a kidney condition.

I do enjoy where we live and yet I still wonder each morning when I leave the house if we will be evicted for no reason – because I know we can be. It is just another stress that seems to hang over me.

Audrey's story

"I am quite happy to be here. I am not worried about being on my own."

Audrey is an aged pensioner who has lived in her public housing flat near Parramatta in western Sydney for more than 30 years.

Audrey is aware that the government is often criticised for money spent on public

housing but she is positive about her experience of it. Her children want her to move to the country to be closer to them but she doesn't want to leave. She is part of her local community and is close to the services she needs such as the hospital, shops and transport.

For Audrey, public housing means security. "I know my rent will never be more than 25 percent of my income. It feels safe here. Having been here so long we look after each other. I call a couple of women in the units if I don't see them for a few days. Another neighbour used to take my dog for a walk."

In contrast, friends of hers have been evicted from privately rented housing for no reason.

Audrey believes that public housing allows families the opportunity to give their

children an education, a start in life and a chance to break the cycle of disadvantage. It is the vital link to enabling families to get on, lead a normal life and give back to the community. Audrey does just that and volunteers for local charitable and community organisations.

Audrey has been able to put down roots in her area and give back to the community. She knows the local councillors by name and encourages them to talk to residents and vice versa. She is confident that this has built trust and community spirit.

Together, the community has been able to work out solutions to local issues. This has included gaining wheelchair access on footpaths and at bus stops. Audrey is well known and cannot visit the shopping centre without locals stopping her for a chat. She supports new residents and involves them in community activities.

"My son was raised in this flat. I would watch him from the balcony as he walked to school. Now he has a good education, a good job and is paying off his own home. Public housing gave him that start"

Living in public housing helped when Audrey's husband was severely injured at work. While he was in hospital, the family had no income for six weeks due to a delayed worker's compensation cheque. Housing NSW put a hold on the rent until the cheque arrived. Audrey says that without this support "we would have been out on the street. I don't know what would have happened to us as a family. I often think how lucky we were to get this place and wish others in private rental could have the same security."

Housos: the series, the real life

Residents' Voices: Michael Darcy, Dallas Rogers and Kathy Arthurson

You may have seen the Australian comedy on SBS TV called 'Housos'. The series, from the makers of 'Pizza' and 'Swift and Shift Couriers', depicts the outrageous antics of a group of tenants as they try to beat the system and survive on an imaginary Sydney public-housing estate.

'Housos' was aired despite strong opposition from social-housing tenants in western Sydney who approached their local member seeking to ban the show while it was still in production. The tenants feared that the parody and highly satirical exaggerated characters would reinforce



The characters of 'Housos' (Detail from DVD cover. Image: SBS / Antichocko Productions)

negative stereotypes of public housing and lead to more prejudice and demonisation among viewers.

The series has since become an underground hit. It has been staged as a live show, shooting for a feature-length

movie begins next month and a second TV series is in preproduction.

'Housos' certainly draws on the full range of negative stereotypes to create its image of everyday life on the estate. The main characters are

feckless and loud, they shirk work and subsist on welfare benefits, neglect their children, indulge in substance abuse, routinely commit crimes and cause general disorder. They have highly dysfunctional families and engage in all manner of problematic social relationships.

In 'Housos' such antics are an effective vehicle for humour, and we should probably not be oversensitive, but the basic premise is sadly familiar to viewers of commercial 'current affairs' and other tabloid media, and this gives a particular new edge to the comedy.

Public housing has always attracted a degree of controversy and created political division. For much of its hundred-year history, it has provided at least a respectable alternative for low-income working families, pensioners and others unable to otherwise survive in an urban housing market wracked first by postwar materials shortages, migration pressures, and poor infrastructure and lately, overheated by speculation and globalisation.

Yet when it is needed more than ever, public housing is frequently the butt of derision in the popular media, and is fiercely resisted by the home-owning mainstream, who fear for the future of their neighbourhoods should any public-housing tenants be located nearby.



Pedestrian overpass © Mixy Lorenzo (flickr.com/ladymixy-uk) Location used in publicity for 'Housos'

We know that these parodies and tabloid stories are not presented as representative of tenants' real lives, but we also know that media images shape public and political attitudes, and that stigma and demonisation have real material effects on people. So, how should we think about a multimedia production like 'Housos' and what is its effect on tenants and the wider community? Is it just another comedy or were the tenants who tried to stop it airing justified?

As the series commenced, a group of tenants approached Residents' Voices (a collaboration between tenants, university researchers, the TU and St Vincent De Paul Society) to investigate these questions. Working with tenants as co-researchers, we started with our own version of a TV current affairs panel discussion before a public audience, but with public-

housing tenants as the expert panelists.

The discussion stimulated more questions to be explored about the meanings attached by tenants, and the general viewing audience, to the highly negative representations of tenants in 'Housos'. A study was run over the nine-week series in which tenants and general audience members in New South Wales and South Australia watched each episode and responded to key research themes and questions in a creative medium of their choice, such as video diary recordings. At the conclusion of the study we held group discussions with some participants to help us to interpret the results.

Through their weekly reflections, participants provided rich new material about the intersection between popular culture and the daily experience of stigmatisation of estates and tenants. The

collaboration of university and tenant researchers resulted in a deeper understanding of how negative stereotyping affects tenants' lives, how they deal with it and even sometimes turn it into a positive.

We found it doesn't matter that the show presents satirical and exaggerated parodies: when both groups of participants talked about the show they almost always talked simultaneously about very real tenant and social issues. Tenants referred frequently to real discrimination and social barriers that can make life harder and to the effects of housing management in adding to the negative stereotype when "much more targeted allocation policy means that people with a lot more problems are allocated housing".

The 'truth' behind the fictional antisocial characters was recognised by both groups, but in very different contexts. Non-tenant participants repeated common prejudices about social housing, such as "they try and get a job for as long as it takes to get the employment agency off their backs so they can get back on the dole". So it doesn't matter if the show is real or imagined, it appeared to reinforce negative attitudes in ways that potentially affect real peoples' lives.

The study revealed examples of how tenants deal with this stigmatisation in their daily lives and found that while feeling labelled in this

way can damage confidence and isolate people, for some it underwrites community solidarity and can even be a source of strength and pride. One tenant stated: "I'm a bit perplexed, this particular show was just ridiculous, you know,

and as I maintain it was the silliest of the lot. So who was the joke on? Well I would like to think the viewers, who were silly enough to watch it".

<http://residentsvoices.net>

Reflections on working with public-housing tenants

Julie Foreman, Executive Officer

For nine years I worked with the Animation Project of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Campbelltown. It is the longest I have stayed in any job in almost 30 years of working life.

I was *initially* attracted to the job because I felt it was a social-justice focused community work position that took seriously its theoretical underpinnings. Yet, I *stayed* because of the people I

have grown to know and respect in the social-housing communities.

The people who live in these communities continue to inspire and motivate me in my work. I admire the community members I know for their resilience, humour and generosity. When the community projects I was involved in faced difficulties, challenges or barriers, I discovered that the collective wisdom and insight of the



Steering committee members Robyn Stafford and Kathy Calvert at the launch of 'Remembering Minto' (Photo: courtesy Remembering Minto Project)

resident participants have shown the way forward.

Just some of the projects I saw local residents undertake included:

- setting up a community laundromat and coffee shop
- reclaiming unused land for a community park
- hosting numerous community events
- establishing local community organisations
- advocating for better transport and housing
- documenting their communities' stories in videos and books
- conducting conferences on topical issues.

The communities taught me the importance of listening and of alternate stories. This took me a while to understand and learn – quotes from *The Lowest Rung* by academic Mark Peel

describe this in a far better way than I could:

The mistake of many ventures – and the mistake I made – is to think that you already know the story when what you must do is listen...

...I would bear witness to the inadequacies of the welfare system and to what abstractions such as 'downsizing' actually meant in people's lives. However, this wasn't the tale they wanted told. Nor did it do justice to the complicated, careful stories they shared with me. I had to learn what had to be said, about hope as well as pain...

*...their stories tell the intricate histories of individuals and families, as well as the impact of decisions taken by powerful people who don't live there.**

In daily conversation I heard expressed in different ways the common experience of marginalisation, being stereotyped or studied, a relative powerlessness, a sense of being the objects of other

people's decisions. Against these experiences, there is also the reality of wisdom, resilience, persistence, insight, creativity, and desire to work for a better world, particularly for children and grandchildren.

I am privileged to have had a small role in several local oral-history projects because such work asks people to share their hope, insight and creativity. It uses oral history in its best possible way: to endorse the importance of what people say and acknowledge them as speakers with a right to be heard.

My hope is that all of us who work alongside social-housing tenants have grasped the importance of truly listening to those most affected by our decisions and respecting what they have to say.

**The Lowest Rung: Voices of Australian Poverty* by Mark Peel

A version of this article first appeared on website 'Remembering Minto':
rememberingminto.org.au

'Stock transfer': implications for tenants

Carl Freer, Litigation Solicitor

'Administration' connotes paperwork and drudgery while the 'law' connotes arid technicality and procedural quagmire. How drab and marginal it must be to labour in 'administrative law'.

Yet you will have heard that, despite the Federal Government's stated policy, Australia will not be sending refugees to Malaysia. You probably know, too, of attempts to process refugees at Christmas Island, or offshore.

Those are just the headline grabbers. Closer to home, if you're a public-housing tenant, you probably know that you can access Housing NSW policies reasonably easily. You would be shocked to receive a termination notice without reasons (it almost

never happens). If Housing NSW investigates your income details for rent rebate purposes, it may send you correspondence titled 'natural justice letter', inviting you to explain your side of the story. You have a legally enforceable right to access your personal information.

These developments in the way that governments deal with housing and refugees have a lot to do with administrative law, which focuses on the executive branch of government (otherwise called the 'administration') and regulates the relationship between the government and those who are to be governed. It is a key part of the notion – and the reality – that the government must obey the law, just like anybody else. Administrative law is among the most important of checks and balances against arbitrary government action.

If you are or have been a tenant in the private rental market, you will know that those abovementioned habits of Housing NSW are not those of private landlords. This is because, generally speaking, administrative law only applies to government officials; it has nothing to do with relationships between private citizens. If you buy something from the corner shop and there's a problem, then you might have a contract law dispute, but administrative law won't have anything to say about it.



Open access (storefront) © Gideon Burton (flickr.com/wakingtiger)

So the existence and application of administrative law is a valuable right for public-housing tenants that is not available to other tenants. But if you are a public-housing tenant, you have probably also heard of 'stock transfer'. This is the process by which Housing NSW is handing public-housing stock to non-government organisations – otherwise known as community housing providers.

This process is relatively new to public housing, but it is part of a well-known and much remarked upon feature of modern governance: the contracting-out of public services.

This may all sound relatively innocuous, but this process may strip tenants of administrative-law rights. A tenant who is subject to stock transfer is no longer receiving government services – their agreement is with a private organisation.

This is no mere technicality. One of the most important features of public-housing is relatively secure tenure: a public tenant will not be evicted arbitrarily, or by termination without grounds. Unfortunately, we have too often seen community housing providers giving tenants termination notices without grounds.

It can be very difficult to get a copy of some providers' policies or to look at personal documents held by a provider. The work culture of many providers seems to lack an appreciation that they are in the business of providing a public good.

It is widely acknowledged that there has been chronic underinvestment in public housing stock for many years. Among other things, it is said that there are many benefits to the stock transfer program, among them, the fact that private entities will have the

incentive and wherewithal to invest in the development of affordable housing where the government has not.

The TU recognises that there are benefits to the stock transfer program, but would also sound a warning: when tenants participate in stock transfer they may hope to gain a nimbler, more responsive landlord; they might also find themselves with a landlord struggling to implement new policies – resulting in less security and fewer means of redress in the meantime.

Providers' policies must be accessible

The Community Housing Division (CHD), which oversees the policy and contractual framework for community housing providers, has recently updated its key policy documents.

Among the updates are requirements that providers must have written operational policies that are publicly available and easily accessible and they must explain to tenants the reasons behind seeking to end their tenancies.

Providers may take some time to adjust their policies in order to comply with these new requirements.

You can download the CHD's policy documents from www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Community+Housing+Division/Policies+and+Fact+Sheets or phone the CHD on 8753 8280.

Tell us your experiences in accessing policies

- Email us: tunsw@clc.net.au
- Phone Policy Officer, Ned Cutcher: 8117 3700

TENANCY Q&A *Grant Arbuthnot, Principal Legal Officer*



My house was moved from the housing commission to community

housing. Whenever I talk to the community housing office, they frustrate my enquiries by saying "Its our policy". This is very annoying. It seems like a brush-off. How do I find out what their policies really are?



Community housing providers should be transparent with their

policies. That is, they should make them easily available

to anyone. Some providers publish them on their websites as well as handing out printed copies.

Have a look at your provider's website or ask them for copies of their policy documents. If they decline your request, write them a letter asking them to post you the documents. This letter may be important if you later take formal action to get the documents.

If your written request is not satisfied, complain to the Community Housing Division of Housing NSW and

the Registrar of Community Housing.

You might also use the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* to make Housing NSW get your provider's policy documents and give them to you. If you want to try this, contact your local Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service.

Community Housing Division

- phone 8753 8280
- www.housing.nsw.gov.au

Registrar of Community Housing

- phone 1800 330 940
- www.rch.nsw.gov.au

The Repair Kit

Getting Housing NSW to repair your home



New resource for public-housing tenants

The Repair Kit: Getting Housing NSW to Repair Your Home

Download this guide by Redfern Legal Centre from www.rlc.org.au/publications.html or phone Phoenix on 9698 7277

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Support us in our work for safe, secure and affordable rental housing for people in New South Wales

Membership application

(Tax invoice ABN 88 984 223 164)

I apply for membership of the Tenants' Union of NSW Cooperative Limited as:

- ☐ individual tenant ☐ individual (non-tenant)
☐ tenant organisation ☐ organisation (non-tenant)

Name

Address

Suburb

State

Postcode

Phone

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Fees (GST included)

Annual fee covers 1 January–31 December

- individual low wage / pension / benefit \$ 8.00
- individual waged worker \$16.00
- organisation \$32.00

Payment

Membership fee \$

Donation \$

TOTAL \$

Signed

Date

Payment method: Please tick

☐ Enclosed cheque or money order made out to Tenants' Union of NSW

☐ Deposit into our bank account:

Account name Tenants' Union of NSW
BSB 062-004 Account No. 802624

For online deposits, please give the reference
"MEM" plus your surname

Please post this completed form to:

Tenants' Union of NSW
201/55 Holt Street
Surry Hills NSW 2010

CONTACTS

NSW Tenants Advice and Advocacy Services



Inner Sydney	9698 5975
Inner Western Sydney	9559 2899
Southern Sydney	9787 4679
South Western Sydney	1800 631 993 4628 1678
Eastern Sydney	9386 9147
Western Sydney	8833 0911
Northern Sydney	9884 9605
North Western Sydney	1800 625 956 9413 2677
Blue Mountains	4782 4155
Central Coast	4353 5515
Hunter	1800 654 504 4969 7666
Illawarra South Coast	1800 807 225 4274 3475
Mid North Coast	1800 777 722 6583 9866
Northern Rivers	1800 649 135 6621 1022
North Western NSW	1800 836 268 6772 4698
South Western NSW	1800 642 609

Specialist services

Aboriginal services	
Greater Sydney	9569 0222
Western NSW	1800 810 233
Southern NSW	1800 672 185 4472 9363
Northern NSW	1800 248 913 6643 4426
Older persons (statewide)	1800 131 310 9566 1120



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Tenants' Union of NSW

- A community legal centre specialising in NSW residential tenancies law.

- Peak resourcing body for the NSW Tenants Advice and Advocacy Program.

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