Hello Everyone

Welcome to the July issue of Tenancy Talk, an informative and friendly newsletter for tenants.

Territory Housing’s Mission is: to provide safe, secure and affordable housing where Territorians most in need can establish a home and access and contribute to the Territory community.

Territory Housing staff have been hard at work this year in many different areas, looking at ways we can provide a better service for tenants. This issue of Tenancy Talk provides you with with information that I believe you will find both useful and interesting.

We are currently investigating ways to link government and non-government agencies so that people’s perceptions about how they value their home, street and neighbourhood can be enhanced.

I encourage you to enter this year’s Public Housing Garden Competition and I hope you can attend the Tropical Garden Spectacular, where winners in each category will be presented with a trophy and gift voucher.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the 2006 Census date is 8 August 2006 and ask you to ensure that the Census form for your household is filled in completely and accurately. It means a lot to the Territory and to you. More information about the Census is in this issue.

Elliot McAdam
MINISTER FOR HOUSING

Public Housing Garden Competition 2006

Dragonflies are buzzing, cicadas are sleeping and this year has been great for gardens, following an excellent wet season and the current cool, breezy dry season.

Every year, Territory Housing tenants are encouraged to enter the Public Housing Garden Competition. This year the competition opened on 17 July and entries close 4 August, so if you haven’t yet entered and you think your garden has attributes which meet the criteria, please pick up an entry form from any Territory Housing Office or at www.territoryhousing.nt.gov.au.

Everyone appreciates a tidy, clean environment. Children love to play in the yard, pick a flower or two and engage in a little water play. Visitors feel welcome entering an inviting environment and neighbours appreciate a well kept street. At home, all year round, Territorians
relish outdoor entertaining and an evening lounge-about in the garden under one spectacular sunset after another.

Territory Housing enjoys offering incentives to show appreciation for the efforts put in by all tenants, whether or not they enter the garden competition, who show pride in their home and environs. After all, it is your home.

Incentives offered by Territory Housing include Garden Subsidy vouchers for new or previously tenanted dwellings and for the Public Housing Garden Competition, trophies and Jape Homemaker Village vouchers. The 2006 Public Housing Garden Competition is open to all Public Housing tenants in the Darwin and Palmerston regions. Previous winners are eligible to enter. Categories are:

- Best House Garden
- Best Unit Garden
- Best recently developed/new garden (house or unit).

In each category, prizes comprise of a trophy and Jape Homemaker Village vouchers to the value of:

- 1st prize: $500
- 2nd prize: $300
- 3rd prize: $150

This year, judging will take place between 7 - 10 August and presentations to winners will take place at the Tropical Garden Spectacular at the George Brown Botanic Gardens 12 August 2006, after the official opening.

We hope to see lots of entries and to see you all at the presentations.

For information about the Public Housing Garden Competition, call 8999 8451.

Indigenous Client Liaison Officers

Territory Housing currently employees three Indigenous Client Liaison Officers (ICLO) in the Darwin Area. Palmerston, Casuarina and now Darwin have a full time ICLO in their offices.

The ICLOs are there to ensure that our Indigenous clients have the best possible support when applying for and residing in our public housing dwellings. The ICLOs assist the tenancy staff when dealing with Indigenous clients. The ICLOs have experience in tenancy management and working with the Indigenous community.

The ICLO’s main responsibility is to assist Indigenous tenants who are experiencing problems with their tenancy. These problems may include rent arrears, overcrowding, humbugging and antisocial behaviour. The ICLOs also provide assistance to those Indigenous people who are applying for public housing.

The Indigenous Client Liaison Officers can be contacted at the following offices:

**Darwin Office** – Construction House
Stephen Cardona
Ph: 08 89998875 mobile 0417841265
Fax: 08 89998844
Email: stephen.cardona@nt.gov.au

**Casuarina Office** – Ethos House
Natalie Harwood
Ph: 08 89225547 mobile 0401115776
Fax: 08 89225541
Email: natalie.harwood@nt.gov.au

**Palmerston Office** – Highway House
Chantal Cora
Ph: 08 89994494
Fax: 08 89994771
Email: chantal.cora@nt.gov.au
Pride in your tenancy home

Territory Housing’s mission, as mentioned in the Minister’s message in this issue, is to provide safe, secure and affordable housing where Territorians most in need can establish a home and access and contribute to the Territory community.

Territory Housing provides a range of services for tenants, including the Garden Subsidy Voucher. These services give tenants every opportunity to be supported in making their house, their home.

We maintain our dwellings and make any repairs as quickly as possible, and when tenants move into a property we present it as an appealing residence. From then on, it is up to those living on the property to take responsibility for their home whether it is short or long term.

Most Territory Housing residents take care of their homes and show pride in the place in which they live and in many cases bring up a family, care for a loved one or simply, conduct their lives as respected members of the community.

Every year we hold the Public Housing Garden Competition which is one way we can show our appreciation for Territory Housing tenant’s efforts. We think that tenants may sometimes feel that their efforts go by unnoticed, but we do appreciate your help.

In this issue of Tenancy Talk, we show our appreciation to all tenant’s efforts by bringing you the stories of 3 Territory Housing tenants. Thank you to all tenants.

Ms Cahill has lived in her house with her two sons for more than two years now.

Ms Cahill says “We are happy with the area as it is close to shops and the school and the boys are doing well.”

When countrymen come in from the bush and comment on how clean her property is, Ms Cahill tells them “You have to keep the place clean otherwise you have to pay lots of money for maintenance.”

Ms Cahill also says “it is up to all tenants to keep their place clean”.

Mr & Mrs Eckert and their son Robert have lived in their home since before cyclone Tracey.

“We felt honoured and blessed to be asked to have photos of our home in the Tenancy Talk” Mrs Eckert said “We treat our home like we own it”.

Mrs Eckert also said “We enjoy looking after the property and making it look nice. We all love gardening, my husband has the vegetable garden and I have my flowers.”

Mr & Mrs Crotty and elderly father, Mr Ridley, have been in their house since January 1994. The family was visiting their son in Katherine when Mr Ridley had a fall and was admitted to hospital.

“Territory Housing was very good to us, they helped us get into this house” Mrs Crotty said “We could not afford the rent in a private house.”

Mrs Crotty also said “This is your home and you want it to look as good as you can, even if it isn’t yours. If you look after your home, it means the government has to spend less money on repairs and the money can be spent on other things.”
Stand up and be counted in this year’s Census
The Australian Bureau of Statistics (the ABS) will run the Census across Australia on Tuesday 8 August. The Census is held every five years, and aims to count every person in Australia.

Why is the Census important?
Some people may not bother filling in their Census form because they don’t think it’s important or it seems like just another piece of Government bureaucracy.

However, the Census is important as it provides information that helps plan for community needs, such as housing, schools, hospitals, shopping centres and sporting facilities.

The money the Territory gets from the Commonwealth Government is based on the number of Territorians counted. Missing just a few hundred people can cost us millions of dollars over five years. It’s very important to count everyone in the Territory at Census time.

Your personal information is confidential
Information collected in the Census goes to the ABS. All personal information is kept confidential. By law, the ABS cannot give your personal information to anyone whether it be a government agency, a business or individual. All Census staff such as Census Collectors are required by law to maintain the privacy of your information.

This means that the ABS cannot give your information to Territory Housing or the Australian Taxation Department. Therefore, it is very important to be honest with your answers and complete as much of the form as possible.

How can you help?
Make sure you fill out your Census form. A Census Collector will deliver a form to your house before 8 August and pick it up sometime after that.

Make sure everyone in your household is included on the form. That means visitors, babies and young people too!

If you don’t get a form, ring the ABS Census Inquiry Service on 1300 362 883 and ask for a form to be delivered to you.

What help is available?
If you or someone you know has trouble filling in the Census form, you can ask the Census Collector for help or ring the ABS Census Inquiry Service on 1300 362 883.

In some areas, a Census Collector will be able to arrange for an Indigenous Assistant or Special Assistant to come and help by reading out the questions, filling in the form for the person, or by providing an interpreter service.

For more information...
If you have any queries, you can call the Northern Territory Government Census support team in Treasury: Mary Beneforti on 8999 6511 or Barbara Gray on 8999 7487. The Northern Territory Government is supporting the ABS to run the Census.

You can also check out the ABS website at www.abs.gov.au/census.

Stand up and be counted and make sure the Territory gets it’s fair share.

Debt Management Information Pack
Territory Housing has set in place some changes to the way that the repayment of a debt to Territory Housing is treated. You will now have options about how to pay the debt and how to avoid a Territory Housing debt.

The information pack will be coming to your letterbox in August.

The information pack includes a full page household budget planner and many tips for avoiding unnecessary bills and for avoiding a Territory Housing debt.