



A word from our CEO



Hello and a warm welcome to our spring edition of our newsletter, we have a lot of information to share with you.

We recently received our Annual Tenant Survey results which were very exciting. This year we enlisted the help of Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW to see how our services compare with national benchmarks. We were thrilled to learn that 94% of our tenants are satisfied with our services overall, which is well above the national benchmark of 75%. We also exceeded the national benchmarks for overall satisfaction with repairs and maintenance and the condition of our properties.

While this is fantastic news, it does not mean we can take it easy. There are certainly areas we can improve upon as well as making sure we continue to maintain the high standard of our services. Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey, your opinions and comments will help shape our future direction. You can read the full results of the tenant survey in this edition, as well as what we plan to do to address areas for improvement.

If you missed the opportunity to participate in the survey, don't forget we are always open to your comments and suggestions which you can email to us at enquiries@stellarliving.com.au or by using the contact form on our website at stellarliving.com.au.

We hope you enjoy this issue,

Kathryn

Kathryn Moorey, Chief Executive Officer



Stellar Living supports The Voice

The Board of Stellar Living has joined many other community organisations in supporting the referendum proposal to recognise First Nations people in the Constitution with a Voice to Parliament.

Stellar Living works in partnership with Indigenous organisations to deliver our values of Care and Respect, Integrity, Collaboration, Innovation, Acceptance and Excellence in the community housing sector.

For the first time, the referendum asks Australians to recognise the First Nations People of Australia in the Constitution – our founding document – by establishing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice made up of representatives from across the country.

The Voice will be an advisory body to both Parliament and the Executive – the arm of government where public servants make policies and deliver services to the community. We urge all Australians to ensure that they are properly informed on The Voice proposal.

If you would like further information on The Voice please go to:

<https://voice.gov.au/resources/fact-sheet-referendum-question-and-constitutional-amendment>

Information Insights

Strata and Common Area Rules

Tenants who live in a strata complex, in addition to responsibilities under the Residential Tenancies Act, have responsibilities under the Strata Titles Act, namely the Conduct By-laws. We also have Common Area Rules for non-strata complexes. It may seem like a lot of rules and responsibilities, but they exist to protect all resident's health and wellbeing, and to maintain a clean and pleasant environment.

The top 3 issues to be aware of are:

Vehicles - Tenants must obey the speed limit within the complex and not park inconsiderately e.g. blocking other resident's driveways, parking on lawns or garden areas.

Noise - Tenants must be mindful of noise especially in warmer months when windows and doors may be open. This includes playing loud music or music with a heavy bass beat, having lots of visitors late at night talking, shouting and coming and going noisily.

Pets - Tenants who have permission to keep a pet must make sure they are not allowed to roam around the complex or foul in common areas or on neighbour's properties. Under the Litter Act 1979, dog owners can be fined \$200 for not picking up after a pet.

Please follow all laws and rules by showing respect and consideration for your neighbours.



Watering Rosters

Now spring is here, sprinklers can now be switched back on.

Please remember that Water Inspectors work 7 days a week and can fine residents \$100 on the spot for breaching watering rosters.

You should only water once, either before 9am or after 6pm on your allocated watering days.

Call Handling Improvements

You may have noticed that when you ring our main office number, you will be asked to choose from 3 options which are:

- Option 1** Maintenance
- Option 2** Property Officers
- Option 3** Other

This change, along with our dedicated **1800 125 430 Maintenance Line** is aimed to connect you quickly with the best person to speak to.



Overgrown gardens

Now we are heading into the warmer months, please make sure that long grass, weeds and overgrown bushes are cut back so they do not create a fire hazard or attract vermin. Tenants are responsible for watering, mowing, edging lawns, weeding and light pruning. If you are concerned about overgrown trees on your property, please contact our Maintenance Line on 1800 125 430.

Information Insights

Cats - safe and happy at home

Cats can be great companions and benefit their owner's mental health and wellbeing. In turn, our furry friends need to be kept from harm. Indoor cats can live 4 times longer than cats left to roam and have more opportunity to bond with their owner. Roaming cats face many dangers from eating something toxic, being stolen or abused, attacked by other cats, dogs and snakes, being run over or being exposed to serious viruses, infections, ticks and fleas.

Roaming cats can also be a cause of neighbour disputes if they defecate on veggie gardens, children's play areas and sandpits and chase, injure or kill local wildlife.

As more owners become aware of the benefits of containing cats and the myth that cats must naturally roam is dispelled, the RSPCA has created a guide to keeping your cat safe and happy at home at [safeandhappycats.com.au](https://www.safeandhappycats.com.au) with tips and ideas for cats to have a long, happy and healthy life.

Please remember that by law, cats over 6 months old must be sterilised, microchipped, wear a tag in a public place and be registered with the local council. If you have been given permission from us to keep a cat, it is a condition of the approval that you comply with the law and that your pet does not cause a nuisance or annoyance to other residents.



Unhappy with a decision we have made?

Sometimes we may make a decision that you do not agree with. You may feel that all the information you have provided has not been fully considered, we have been influenced by irrelevant factors or you have not been treated fairly. Our appeal process enables you to ask for a review of the decision and the reasons why it was made.

Examples of decisions you can appeal may be that you have received a breach notice, but you do not feel you have not caused a breach of your tenancy agreement, or you have been charged for a repair that you do not feel you are responsible for. There are some decisions you can't appeal against, for example you can't appeal against our rent setting policy and the way we have calculated your rent according to that policy.

Here are the steps to make an appeal:

1. If possible, talk to the person who made the decision. They can explain why the decision was made and you can make sure that they have all the correct information.
2. If you are still unhappy, lodge an appeal. You can do this by email, letter, using our website contact form, by phone or in person. Contact details are address: PO Box 370, Thornlie WA 6988, email: enquiries@stellarliving.com.au, phone: 9452 9200 or website: [stellarliving.com.au](https://www.stellarliving.com.au). You will need to explain the decision and why you are unhappy. Please provide as much information as you can.
3. The information you have previously provided and any new information you have submitted with your appeal will be reviewed by an independent officer, who was not involved in the original decision.
4. You will be notified of the outcome of your appeal within 14 days.
5. If you are still unhappy, you can request that your appeal outcome be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer. You will receive a written outcome with 28 days. This is the final step in the appeal process.



Tenant Survey 2023 results are in!

Once a year we ask our tenants to complete a survey to see how we are doing and what we could do better. We are very pleased to share the final report with you.

46%

of tenants responded to the survey

70%

have been a Stellar Living tenant for 6 years or more

79%

said that their life has improved since becoming a tenant

95%

are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

94%

are satisfied with the overall services we provide

Customer Service

90%

found it easy to get hold of the right person



94%

were satisfied with the final outcome of their query

98%

were satisfied with how our staff dealt with their query quickly and efficiently



96%

are satisfied with the overall condition of their home



94%

are satisfied that we uphold tenant's rights



Reporting a repair

94%

were satisfied that their call was answered/ responded to in a timely manner

98%

were satisfied that staff were helpful and attentive

84%

were satisfied that they were told how long the repair would take



Rent

91%

are satisfied with the value for money for their rent

82%

understand how their rent is calculated



Repairs & Maintenance

95%

are satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance services we provide

94%

were satisfied that a contractor called them to make an appointment

93%

were satisfied that a contractor left their property clean and tidy

93%

were satisfied that a contractor was respectful and courteous

90%

were satisfied with the quality of repairs



84%

know how to make a complaint



96%

are satisfied with the way in which we provide our tenants with information



96%

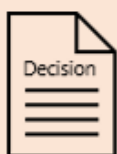
are satisfied with the way in which we communicate with our tenants

Tenant Survey 2023 results continued

What we can do better

Our Tenant Survey scores have been compared to Benchmarks set by the National Regulatory System for Community Housing and CHIA NSW's comparison with other community housing providers. A Benchmark sets a standard, in this case a percentage, which is expected to be met in order to provide a quality service.

Appeals



48% of respondents said they know how to appeal a decision made by Stellar Living. This is above the Benchmark of 45%. However, we want to more of our tenants to understand our appeal process.

We will do this by including articles in our newsletter and reviewing our appeals information. When we make an unfavourable decision, we will inform the tenant of our appeal process.

Complaint handling



67% of respondents said they were satisfied with how we handle complaints. This is well above the Benchmark of 49%, but we want to increase this level of satisfaction.

We will do this by explaining the process of complaints against a staff member or contractor and the process regarding nuisance and anti-social behaviour complaints. We will also seek feedback from tenants when they access our complaints services.

Delayed repairs



96% of respondents were satisfied with our maintenance service overall, well above the Benchmark of 76%.

72% of respondents said they were satisfied at being told when a repair was not completed on time and when it would be. We want to improve in this area.

When it is necessary to delay a repair, we will keep you informed of the reason and the anticipated completion date. We will seek feedback from tenants who have experienced maintenance delays.

General Comments



In addition to the survey questions, we asked for any comments about the services we provide. We received many positive comments about Stellar Living in general and also the high standard of customer service.

We also received some very relevant comments and queries about aspects of our service which indicates that we could explain why we do some things better. Over the coming year, we will be addressing some of these comments and queries via the newsletter.

Counting Cents

Preparing for the holiday season

Dare we say it, the holiday season is just around the corner but there's still time to plan a debt-free Christmas that's filled with fun and festivities. We've put together some of our favourite tips:

1. Making a budget and sticking to it is the No. 1 key to stop over-spending. After working out your normal weekly essential expenses, work out how much you have left over to save and spend for Christmas. It is better to put aside money each week than rely on credit cards or buy now, pay later services. Once you have the amount you can afford, break this down into how much you can spend on presents, food, drinks, travel and any other Christmas related expenses and stick to this.
2. Ask family and friends to agree to set limits for presents and don't go over these amounts. Perhaps agree to buy for children only.
3. Buy small items from your budget list first, rather than the more expensive ones so you don't get an unrealistic idea of what seems like a good buy. For example, if you are spending \$10 on your nephew, \$30 for Aunt Mary seems very expensive, so you are less likely to over-spend.
4. If you are hosting a meal, ask everyone to share the catering costs by each bringing one plate of meat, nibbles, drinks, salads, sides or desserts.
5. Buy for less people. Instead of having to buy lots of presents for a group gathering, arrange a Secret Santa where each person only buys one gift for a set amount. There are lots of creative versions of Secret Santa to make the gift sharing last longer.
6. Give your time rather than money. Vouchers for babysitting, housecleaning, manicures, lawn mowing, dog walking, car washing, a monthly phone call, picnic, or homemade dinner can be priceless.
7. Use the 4-gift rule for kids - something they need, something they want, something to read and something to wear.
8. Make Christmas more about the activities than the material gifting. Make the most of free events, create family traditions like decorating the tree together, baking a cake together, making Christmas decorations.
9. Use click and collect instead of buying at the supermarket. You can select just what you need and won't be tempted by things on special you don't need.
10. Have a pre-Christmas clean out for some extra cash. You may also find something suitable for re-gifting if its in its original packaging - just remember who bought it and be sure the receiver will enjoy it more than you.
11. Thoughtful gifts such as a framed painting by a grandchild, framed photo, home-made bread, cookies, jam, candles or jewellery are things that will be appreciated.
12. Grow plants now in time to re-pot and gift at Christmas or make up a hot beverage basket - use tea, coffee and an unusual, cute or quirky mug from the wide range at an Op Shop to suit the person.
13. Buy plain wrapping paper than can be recycled (not foil, glitter or plastic) or wrap a gift in a pretty tea-towel or scarf, Furoshiki style (see photo) - watch on YouTube how to do it.
14. Don't give a pet as a present, especially a surprise one, unless the recipient has chosen the pet and has the means and commitment to look after it for its lifetime. You could be adding to financial burden and marking the pet for the refuge shelter when Christmas is over.



Information Insights

Income based rent setting

Our Tenant Survey showed that 82% of tenants who responded understand how their rent is calculated, which is fantastic to know. Although tenants pay 25% (Band A) and 30% (Band B) of their total household assessable income plus rent assistance, this is capped at a Maximum Rent, which is 75% of the private market rent for a similar property in a similar location.

Over recent years, many tenants benefitted from paying less than 25% or 30% as their Maximum Rent was capped very low, reflecting previous private rental market trends, or their rent was a set amount.

As market rents increase, more tenants have been transitioning to the income-based calculation as per our Rent Setting Policy, using current benchmark market values. As a result, some tenants are now finding that when their Annual Rent Review takes place, their rents are increasing. It is important to remember that tenants do not pay more than 25% or 30% of their household income, not all income is assessed, and all rents are less than private market rent benchmark values.



Our rent setting aims to be affordable, equitable, fair and transparent for all tenants and be reflective of the current property market and property management costs.

Elder Abuse

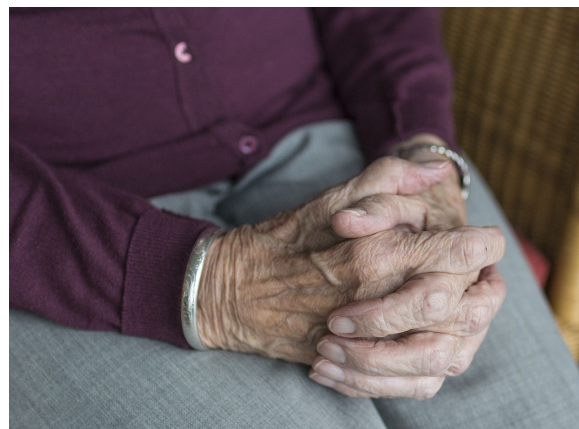
As we grow older, we are likely to face physical and mental challenges making us more susceptible to the dangers of elder abuse. Elder abuse is when an elderly vulnerable person experiences harm, or is at risk of harm, through an intentional or negligent act by a caregiver or any other person.

It may be physical harm from mild injuries to severe assaults; sexual abuse; emotional trauma caused by verbal abuse, threats, intimidation, humiliation or harassment; financial or material exploitation of the elderly person's money, property or belongings; neglect by failing to provide food, shelter, health care or protection; or abandonment by someone who is supposed to be caring for an elderly person.

An elderly person might neglect their own well-being, personal hygiene, medical requirements, or basic necessities.

Some signs that a loved one, friend or neighbour may be experiencing elder abuse may be injuries such as bruises, cuts or broken bones, looking undernourished or losing weight, poor hygiene, symptoms of anxiety, depression or confusion, unexplained loss of money and withdrawing from the company of family and friends.

If you, or someone you know, may be a victim of elder abuse, help is available. Contact the Advocare Elder Abuse on 1300 724 679 www.advocare.org.au or the Office of the Public Advocate on 1300 858 455 www.publicadvocate.wa.gov.au



Puzzle Page

Win a \$50 Bunnings voucher by completing our Word Search! This issue it's all words related to spring.

All the words are in the word search except for one, which has been left out. Words can be forwards, backwards, diagonal, up or down. Letters may be used more than once. **Let us know the missing word** by emailing your answer, name and address to enquiries@stellarliving.com.au or post it to: Stellar Living Limited, PO Box 370, Thornlie WA 6988.

Competition closes **Monday, 16th October 2023**. A winner will be drawn from all the correct entries after the closing date. Only one entry per household please.

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

Wattle
Magpie
Jacaranda
Waratah
Beach
Barbecue
Picnic
Wildflower
Sunny
Lambs
Bushwalk
Festival
Surf
Camping
Tulip



Congratulations
to
Maureen
who was the
successful draw
in our last
competition.

The missing word
was FAKE.

A reminder that our office
will be closed on
**Monday, 25th September
2023**
for the King's Birthday
Public Holiday

As the weather gets
warmer, please remember
that in the interests of child
safety, we don't allow
portable, above ground or
inground swimming pools in
our properties.



**In Australia,
on average one
child dies every year
from drowning in a
portable pool.**

stellar living

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