

A word from our CEO



Hello and welcome to our last newsletter of the year. We have a full issue with lots of tips and suggestions to help keep you safe and well over the Christmas period and the hot summer months, with a special focus on bushfire planning and common house fire hazards. I urge to you have a look at our article on how to test your smoke alarms and RCDs and make testing these safety devices part of your routine.

On a much brighter note, our Tenant Spotlight on Page 3 of this edition falls on Mick, who among other talents, crafts and plays didgeridoos and they look and sound amazing. It is so interesting to learn how these wonderful traditional instruments are made. Thank you Mick for sharing your journey.

We hope you have an enjoyable Christmas and New Year, and we'll see you again in the first issue of 2024.

Kathryn

Kathryn Moorey, Chief Executive Officer

Christmas and New Year Closure



Please note that our office will close on **Christmas Eve 24th December 2023** and reopen on **Tuesday 1st January 2024**.

The days we will be closed are:

Monday	25/12/23	Christmas Day
Tuesday	26/12/23	Boxing Day
Wednesday	27/12/23	Office Closed
Thursday	28/12/23	Office Closed
Friday	29/12/23	Office Closed
Monday	01/01/24	New Year's Day

If you need to report an **urgent repair** over the holiday period, please call our **Out of Hours Urgent Repairs Number 1800 125 430**.

For more details of what urgent repairs are, please see Page 2.

 *The Stellar Living Team wish you, and your family, a very Happy Christmas and New Year.* 



Maintenance Matters

After Hours Urgent Repairs

During the Christmas and New Year office closure, on weekends and outside of normal office hours, urgent repairs can be reported by ringing the **Out of Hours Urgent Repairs Number 1800 125 430**.

What is an urgent repair?

An urgent repair is one that needs to be done to:

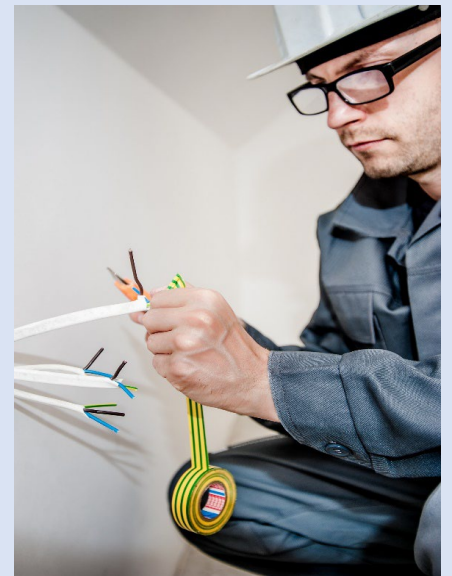
- avoid exposing someone to the risk or injury, exposing the property to damage or causing you undue hardship or inconvenience.
- restore an essential service such as gas, electricity, sewerage or water (including the supply of hot water).

Some examples of an urgent repair are:

- A fault relating to, or loss of, your electricity, gas or water (which is not due to a scheduled outage)
- A suspected gas leak
- A faulty smoke detector
- Something that makes your home vulnerable to a break-in, such as a broken window or door
- A flood, burst water pipe or major leak
- A fire
- Serious storm damage
- Major sewerage problems
- A faulty Residual Current Device (RCD)
- If there is only one toilet in your home and that toilet is not working.

These are all example of urgent repairs which if they happen over the Christmas and New Year office closure, cannot wait until the office re-opens or if they happen outside of normal business hours, cannot wait until the next working day.

Please remember that someone must be home for the emergency contractor, or you may be charged a call-out fee. You may also be charged for reporting a non-urgent repair to the After Hours Urgent Repair Number which could have waited until the next working day.



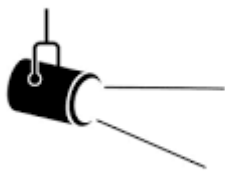
Water leak detection test

If you suspect you have a water leak, here is an easy test you can do.

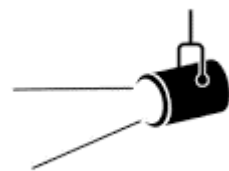
1. Turn off all taps and any appliances that use water such as your washing machine.
2. Make a note of the 3 red numbers on your water meter.
3. Wait at least 15 minutes.
4. Check the numbers on the water meter again – if they have changed, you may have a water leak.

Inside your house, check all taps, washing machine connections, shower heads and toilet cisterns for leaks. Outside, look for dripping taps, hoses or leaking sprinkler systems. Often damp areas or greener areas of the garden can indicate a leak.

If you suspect a leak, please report it to us on 1800 125 430 during normal office hours.



Tenant Spotlight



Mick: A Journey in Indigenous Art and Music



Recently our Property Officer, Haley, had the pleasure of visiting Mick, who has been a Stellar Living tenant for 8 years.

Over the past 5 years, Mick has embraced his indigenous culture through the traditional arts of wood carving and dot painting of didgeridoos, tapping sticks, spears, walking sticks, boomerangs, and shields. Neighbours may have heard the beautiful sounds of the didgeridoo drifting from his home.

Mick started playing the didgeridoo by practising with PVC pipe. His first didgeridoo, gifted from a friend in Queensland, is his favourite one and takes pride of place on a wall of his home.

Nowadays Mick often heads out bush with friends to find suitable hollowed logs to make his own didgeridoos. He uses a tapping technique to listen for termite eaten logs.

His preferred material is wood from the Mallee tree (Eucalyptus), known for its suitability for crafting.

Mick explained that each didgeridoo has a different and unique sound which depends on the size of the breath hole, wood used, length and width.

A traditional didgeridoo has essentially three components – the mouthpiece, the body, and the bell or flare. The longer a didgeridoo is, the lower the sound it makes.

The didgeridoo is played by vibrating the lips on the mouthpiece and by rhythmic, circular breathing. It is said to promote deeper breathing and can also put you into a more relaxed state of mind.

The didgeridoo is among the world's oldest musical instruments at 40,000 years old.



Mick loves to share his work with those close to him, gifting many of his traditional carvings to family and friends.

It's inspiring to see Mick in his element and doing something that brings him and others so much joy.

Thank you Mick for sharing your gifts with us and keep being deadly.

Trips and Falls Prevention

Do you know that 60% of falls happen in and around the home? The following advice is taken from the Department of Health and Ageing's *'Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented'* guidance brochure and can help you to take steps to reduce your risk of falling and injury.

General hazards

- Recognise your limitations. Think about the way you currently do things and ask yourself if you can do them more safely. For example, you may climb on a kitchen chair to reach something high up that you could easily store lower down, making it easier and less risky to get to.
- Avoid wearing long nighties and floor length dressing gowns that can trip you up or catch on things, pulling you over.
- Turn on lights so you can clearly see what you are doing and where you are going. Use plug-in night lights during the night, especially areas such as passageways, toilet and bathroom.

Slipping

- Avoid slips by wearing comfortable, firm fitting, flat shoes with a low broad heel and soles that grip.
- Use non-slip mats in the shower and bathroom as wet tiles can be slippery.
- Avoid slippery floors by mopping up liquid and food spills as soon as they happen.
- Don't polish floors.
- Don't wear poorly fitted slippers. If you walk around in socks, make sure they have grips on them.
- Keep paths and steps free of fallen leaves, slime and moss.

Tripping

- Keep walkways and passage ways clutter-free.
- Fix extension cords around skirting boards or tape them down.
- Report any worn, ripped or frayed carpet and uneven, cracked outside paths.
- Remove mats and rugs or make sure they have non-slip backing or are fixed securely in place with double sided tape. Don't use mats that curl up or fold over easily.
- Put away garden tools and hoses immediately after use.
- Dogs and cats can get under your feet - check where your pet is before you move.



Don't assume falls are just a part of getting older. If you have a fall, talk to your doctor. A fall can be a sign of a new medical problem, muscle weakness, balance problems, medication side effects, deteriorating eyesight or other problems.

Wearing a personal alarm such as a pendant around the neck can provide peace of mind but they must be worn all the time including when getting up during the night, bathing or showering. It is also a good idea to have a neighbour, friend or family member ring at a certain time of the day to check all is well, and to have a plan as to how they will get in your home if they need to.

If you would like to read the full version of the Department of Health and Ageing's *'Don't fall for it. Falls can be prevented'* guidance brochure it is available on line at: www.health.gov.au/resources/publications/dont-fall-for-it-falls-can-be-prevented or if you don't have internet access, please ask your Property Officer for a printed copy.

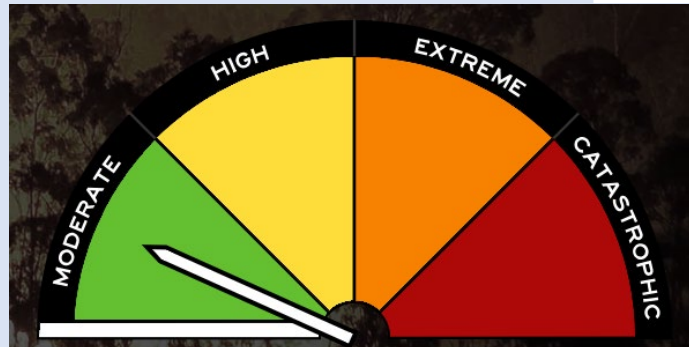
Bushfires – Are you ready?

The higher the average temperatures, dry conditions and high winds have recently resulted in uncontrolled and unpredictable bushfires threatening residential homes and forcing residents to evacuate. While bushfires are inevitable in Australia, there are some things you can do to prepare yourself for such a situation.

1. Prevention

It is important to help control the spread of bushfires around your property by:

- Keeping your grass short and pruning shrubs and trees.
- Clearing away rubbish, leaves, dry long grass and any other materials that may catch fire.
- Not storing petrol, kerosene, firewood and other flammable materials around your home.



2. Stay informed

Emergency WA is the state's official website for warnings and information - visit www.emergency.wa.gov.au or ring the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) information line on 133337 or follow the DFES Facebook page.

In an emergency, the power may go out so keep phones and laptops charged and have a battery operated radio to listen to local news updates.

3. Have a Plan

Have a clear plan as to what you and members of your household will do in an emergency situation. Decide on the following before an emergency situation arises:

- **When will you leave?** Leaving early is your safest option. It is not safe to wait and see. Know the fire danger ratings and bushfire warning system and leave as soon as possible.
- **Where will you find shelter?** Choose 2 safe places you can go to if you need to evacuate. Think about how you will get there and include an alternative route in case your usual route is blocked. In an emergency DFES will advise of a community evacuation centre.
- **Who will you notify?** Choose a relative or friend to call when you are leaving and when you arrive at your safe place.
- **What will you take with you?** Preparing an evacuation kit before an emergency situation happens is a good idea. Think about important ID documents, sentimental or valuable items, pet carry containers and a change of clothing. Documents and photos can be stored on a USB stick or saved to the Cloud. Decide where to keep your emergency kit and make sure everyone knows its location.
- **What is your back up plan?** What if you can't get home to pick up family or pets? Have a backup person you can contact and make sure they know what action to take.
- **Does everyone in the household including children and guests, understand your bushfire plan?** Make sure everyone knows your plan and what is expected of them.

You can create a free personalised bushfire plan at mybushfireplan.wa.gov.au.

4. What to take with you if you have to evacuate

Take your purse/wallet with cash, ATM or credit cards, medications/prescriptions, change of clothes, glasses/contact lenses, phone and charger, house and car keys, laptop and charger, pet essentials (food, bowls, cage, lead etc.) and your evacuation kit if you have prepared one.

Know and test your Safety Devices

Candles and Christmas tree lights used to be the biggest causes of house fires over Christmas, but with new technology, there are now other dangers. Laptops, phones, tablets and electrical appliances such as cordless stick vacuums and power tools contain rechargeable batteries which can overheat. Such devices must be charged on a hard surface with the original charging cord fully unwound, and not left unattended. They should be removed from the charger once fully charged.

Extension cords can be a fire hazard. Exposed wires, piggybacking power boards or double adapters on top of each other, running an extension cord under a rug or low furniture or allowing dust and debris to build up in empty sockets can cause them to heat up and catch fire. Damaged extension cords should be replaced.

RAC Insurance reports that the kitchen is one of the most common areas where fires start, most often from unattended cooking. This includes outside barbeque areas which are liable to be less clean and less maintained than indoor kitchens. Old spare fridges stored outside can also overheat.

Although smoke alarms and RCDs cannot prevent a fire, they can save your life. We recommend that you test your smoke alarms monthly and your RCDs every 3 months.

Smoke Alarms

A working smoke alarm will warn you if there is smoke from a fire, giving you time to escape.

How to test your smoke alarm is working

- Hold the Test button. If you can't reach, use a broom handle. Hold it until you hear the warning beeping tone.
- The alarm should stop the test beeping after a few seconds. If it doesn't, press the Test button again.
- If your alarm doesn't beep, ring us immediately on 9452 9200 or 1800 125 430. A non-working smoke alarm is an urgent repair.

You mustn't remove, tamper with or damage your smoke alarm and please keep it free of dust and cobwebs.



Residential Current Devices (RCDs)

An RCD is a safety device which prevents an electrical shock if you were to touch anything live by automatically cutting off the power.

How to test your RCDs

1. Turn off all your electronic equipment such as your TV and computer.
2. Find your RCDs – they are usually located in the outside meter box or in the switch board inside the property. All the RCDs (there will be at least 2) should be in the ON position.
3. Press the TEST (T) button on each RCD and release. You should hear a click.
4. The RCD lever should flip to the OFF position. This means the RCD is working.
5. If the RCD lever doesn't flip to the off position, there is a fault. Immediately report it to us on 9452 9200 or 1800 125 430. A non-working RCD is an urgent repair.
6. When finished testing, flip the levers upwards to ON - you may need to push firmly.



Wellness



So Good Going Solo

Many of us will be having a solo Christmas this year for a variety of reasons. It could be loss of a loved one, being far apart from family, having to work, due to illness or simply by choice. For some it will be bliss not to be caught up in the usual traditions, but for others it can be daunting.

Either way, here are some ideas to make the most of being able to celebrate the day yourself, the way you want.

1. **Spoil Yourself.** Plan ahead and make it an 'All About Me Day' – eat your favourite food, watch a good movie or tv series, play your favourite music, treat yourself to something nice - perhaps something such as a hobby starter kit e.g. knitting, ships/cars/planes model making, painting, candle making etc., a good book or jigsaw puzzle.
2. **Have a virtual meal.** If you can't get together with someone because of distance, set up a video chat. Cook a meal 'together' and then sit down and enjoy it together. It can be as good as being there, plus there's less washing up to do!
3. **Volunteer.** Organisations such as Ronald McDonalds House (RMHC), St Vincent de Paul Society and Manna Soup Kitchen, Red Cross and Meals on Wheels often need volunteers. Think about offering your services to visit patients in hospitals, chat to residents in nursing homes or help out at an animal shelter.
4. **Reach Out.** If you know of other people such as neighbours going solo this year, why not invite them to join you for lunch, breakfast or morning tea.
5. **Exercise.** Go for a walk, ride a bike, practice yoga, go for a swim, take some photographs, dance to your favourite songs.

If you'd like someone to chat to, call **FriendLine** on 08 6118 0587 (Free call 1800 424 287) 8am – 6pm, 7 days a week. It's a free service funded by the Federal Department of Social Services and operated by Friends for Good, a not-for-profit organisation.

Keep your Cool

Heatwaves not only affect your daily activities but can be a serious risk to your health and wellbeing. The Australian Red Cross has these tips for beating the heat and keeping cool this summer:

- Stay indoors: keep out of the heat if you can.
- If you need to go outside, wear light clothing and a hat, put on sunscreen and take water with you.
- Do daily activities like shopping and gardening early in the day or ask someone to help you.
- Draw blinds early in the day.
- Take cool showers and splash yourself several times a day with cold water or use a damp cloth.
- Go to an air-conditioned building in your local area to cool off: a shopping mall, community centre, cinema, library or swimming pool.
- Even when you don't feel thirsty, drink plenty of water.
- Avoid alcohol, tea, coffee and sugary or fizzy drinks. They make dehydration worse.
- Eat small meals more often, rather than large meals. Eat more cold food like salads and fruit.

If you or someone you know shows signs of heat stroke (fits, confusion, staggering), call 000 immediately.

Puzzle Page

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

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, 8th January 2023**. A winner will be drawn from all the correct entries after the closing date. Only one entry per household please.

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

Sunscreen
Presents
Cricket
Sleigh
Baubles
Swimming
Bonbons
Stocking
Turkey
Pavlova
Santa
Barbeque
Reindeer
Tinsel
Elves
Tree



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

The missing word
was SURF.

Beware of Scams

At this busy time of year when we are making more purchases than usual, we can be distracted and become vulnerable to scammers. Be suspicious of anyone asking for your personal and/or bank information. Contact the relevant authority directly to confirm the request is genuine.

Stellar Living will not ask you to pay money by text. Check with your Property Officer before paying any irregular amounts and to make sure the bank details are genuine and correct.

