

Kia ora. Ngā mihi nui, he mihi makatia ki a koutou. Hello. Warm greetings to you all.

## Last chance to nominate a Housing Hero



There's a few more days to nominate a housing hero. This is our opportunity to acknowledge and show gratitude to the extraordinary individuals in our communities.

Within our communities, there are individuals who consistently go the extra mile to support their neighbours. They frequently prioritise others over themselves, strengthening and enriching our communities. Together, we can recognise their exceptional contributions and celebrate their deeds.

**You can nominate a Housing Hero by calling 0800 624 456 or sending an email to [admin@ocht.org.nz](mailto:admin@ocht.org.nz) before 4pm Friday, October 27th.**

**Please provide us with their name, where they live and a description of the actions that qualify them as a Housing Hero.**

## In this newsletter

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ŌCHT coach Jo with tenant Russell at a digital training session

## ŌCHT extends free internet offer until December

Heaps of ŌCHT tenants have enjoyed newfound freedom and convenience with ŌCHT's free internet access offer.

Tenant Kathy spotted the offer in last month's Our Chat newsletter and called ŌCHT to sign up.

"I didn't have the internet at home. I was using a friend's internet but reception was limited and it wasn't reliable. Mobile data was too expensive," she said.

"Having free internet has made things a lot easier. I don't have to think about cost. Previously I could only use the internet when I topped up my phone. Now I don't have to think about topping up my phone or paying for it."

Kathy uses the internet to message family and friends, do online banking, and do research. She has this advice for other tenants thinking about signing up:

"Give it a go. Having the internet helps you connect with other people. If you don't know how to use it then I would recommend learning about it. We all have to start somewhere."

ŌCHT is working with Enable and Skinny to offer two years free Skinny

Jump wireless internet to tenants who do not have the internet at home.

We launched the free internet initiative a few months ago, and **we're extending the sign up deadline to Sunday 15 December**. This means that you have more time to sign up and start enjoying free internet access.

Qualifying tenants are people who do not have the internet at home but who have email and an internet-ready device they can use. They'll also live in communities where Skinny Jump has the capacity and coverage to take new customers.

The modem is free and you'll get 210GB of data per month for free for 24 months.

ŌCHT also offers a free digital coaching service for tenants who would like guidance on how to use their mobile, tablet, laptop or computer and how to search the internet.

**If you're an ŌCHT tenant interested in free internet or training, please call our digital coaching team on 0800 624 456 as soon as possible to see if we can get you connected.**



## Foundation board member farewelled



ŌCHT said goodbye to a face familiar to many in our communities when it farewelled retiring Trust board member Lloyd Mander.

Lloyd has retired after more-than seven-and-a-half years at the Trust. He was on the first Trust board way back when the Trust started in 2016.

Lloyd says it was his absolute privilege to help establish the Trust and to play a part in its development and growth.

You'll remember ŌCHT was established to help provide a future for the Christchurch City Council's housing portfolio. Lloyd was there when the Trust began managing more than 2000 tenancies, and as it grew to provide maintenance services and then new developments and renewals.

Lloyd says the Trust is an incredible, purpose-driven organisation. Tenants are at the centre of all it does, as is the central value that housing is a human right and the bedrock of wellbeing.

The Trust now provides other wellbeing support outside its core tenancy services such as employment and digital coaching, and whānau support. "Routine innovation" is a hallmark of the Trust's approach.

"A massive thanks to all those whose mahi has contributed to making the Trust what it is today."

Philippa Jones and Geoff Walker join ŌCHT as new trustees. We'll introduce them soon.



## Willard Street opens and welcomes new families into community

People are settling into a community of new homes that also mark a big milestone for our city.

ŌCHT opened Willard Street last month. It is the Trust's 13th new community, delivering its 270th new home.

It was also significant for replacing accommodation lost to the Canterbury earthquakes. About 360 council-owned, one-bedroom social housing units were lost in the wake of the earthquakes.

Willard Street delivered the Trust's 410th new bedroom.

The statistics are nice, but the opportunities the new homes will bring are even better.

New tenant Sam was looking forward to her twins settling in and enjoying nearby Simeon Park.

"It's such a nice area, we've already had a look around, and I think we'll love it here," Sam said.

"The park is really great and the unit, it's amazing, so lovely and warm. We just feel so lucky right now, so lucky."

The new homes are a mix of one-, two- and three bedroom units, and one five-bedroom home.

The mix is important: more than 750 of 1947 applicants for housing in Christchurch need two or more bedrooms.

The north-facing homes are built to



Willard Street provides a mix of homes for individuals and families



Shared spaces encourage community links at Willard Street

be energy efficient to save household running costs.

The landscaped grounds have shared common spaces and easy access to Simeon Park. The homes are near Addington School, bus routes and the Selwyn Street shops.

Christchurch Mayor Phil Mauer said the homes are a "great example of the renewal we need to see more in our social housing stock".

The new homes replace 26 weatherboard bedsits built in 1939.

## Meet the team: Placements



Ros is placing tenants at our new community on Willard Street

You may know Ros. She's a long-time member of ŌCHT and works in our placements team. Here she answers our questions on what her team does day-to-day.

### What does the ŌCHT placements team do?

We respond to housing applicants in need of housing through the social housing register and talk to them about what ŌCHT can offer for their housing. If they accept an offer we draw up a tenancy agreement.

For our new tenants, the placement team manages their tenancy for the first six months just to make sure they are settled in their new home. After six months their tenancy is put into a housing portfolio which is managed by one of our experienced Tenancy Advisors. This transition is generally quite seamless.

### How does the team access and prioritise applicants for placements?

We get all of our clients from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) housing register. When we have a vacancy, we load that with MSD. We then get a shortlist of suitable applicants for that area which is prioritised by their need and that's sorted by MSD. We can then go through and check a few things (whether they need a downstairs unit for example) then from that shortlist we pick out two or three people, ring them and do a short telephone assessment to see if they're suitable for the home we have available.

### Can you explain the timeline from application submission to placement approval and move in?

Ideally our lead time is 11 working days from when we have a vacant home and an applicant is housed. We're aware there are people in need of a warm, dry, affordable home so we do everything in our power to make a home available as soon as possible.

### Final words from Ros

I love helping people and making a difference to their lives.

Our Placements Team is part of the overall Tenancy Management Team. There's four of us in the placements team. We do try our best to home those people in need of housing and build a community when housing applicants. We are encouraged when we see a community spirit where tenants have lots of community gatherings and support each other in their tenancies. I think this is the best job at ŌCHT.

## Spring cleaning tips

It's spring cleaning time! Here's how to give your house a thorough clean to welcome in a new season and refresh your home.



### Kitchen

- Clean out pantry
- Wash kitchen cabinets
- Deep clean oven
- Move fridge - vacuum and mop behind it
- Deep clean fridge inside - wash outside



### Living room

- Dust and wash any and all mirrors, frames and decorative items
- Vacuum carpets and upholstery
- Dust furniture and fixtures
- Wash all throw pillows and blankets (use steam)



### Bedroom

- Wash all bedding
- Wash pillows
- Move bed and vacuum underneath
- Turn, rotate and air mattress



### Bathroom

- Clean and disinfect bath tub and shower
- Wash bathmats
- Dust and replace decorative items
- Wash and /or replace shower liners and shower curtains



### Every room

- Clean window sills, doors and walls
- Clean curtains
- Clean windows inside and out

## Celebrate Housing Heroes with us

ŌCHT will be hosting an Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Tūranga Christchurch City Library in November, and as an ŌCHT tenant you're invited.

This year, we'll be combining the meeting with our Housing Heroes Awards. Housing Heroes is an annual celebration of ŌCHT tenants who go above and beyond to support their neighbours.

The AGM will cover the results from our tenant satisfaction survey, information on new builds and maintenance upgrades.

We'll be providing catering and it'll be a pre Christmas get together and celebration.

The event will be taking place November 28 at 11 am.

**If you'd like to attend, please RSVP to [admin@ocht.org.nz](mailto:admin@ocht.org.nz) or call 0800 624 456.**



## Get a \$20 gift card for completing a transport survey

For the last two years, over 320 Ōtautahi Community Housing Trust tenants participated in exciting research with the goal of making it easier for tenants to get around. This year, tenants have the chance to be involved again (and to get a gift card as a 'thank you' for helping out).

Researchers from Canterbury and Otago universities are exploring how tenants get to the places they want and need to go and what would make that easier. They're also studying whether electric vehicle and e-bike trials at some developments help tenants. They're asking ŌCHT tenants to fill in a survey to collect these results.

Last year researchers found that the half-price bus fares were a huge help to ŌCHT tenants, with many reporting that they could make extra outings or spend money on other things thanks to the national half-price fares. This year we've also seen the shared electric bike scheme launch at Brougham Street and so far we're seeing positive results.

The national half price fare scheme has ended but many ŌCHT tenants will be able to benefit from half price fares through Community Connect.

University of Otago researcher Dr Angela Curl says that hearing from residents through this survey has allowed the research to directly inform government policy

Professor Simon Kingham of the University of Canterbury (and also Chief Science Advisor to the Ministry of Transport) agrees:

"It's great that the cheap bus fares are really helping the residents, and we have some evidence that the e-bikes are benefitting those who have access to them."

The researchers really hope that everyone who has done the survey before will do it again in 2023.

In October, the researchers will be sending survey forms out to people who agreed to be contacted again this year. Anyone who returns a



completed form can get a \$20 supermarket gift card as a 'thank you' from the research team.

**Anyone who doesn't receive a survey form but would like one, or who has any questions, can contact the Getting Around team on [gettingaround@otago.ac.nz](mailto:gettingaround@otago.ac.nz) or call them on 021 0904 6594.**

## Maintenance notes



New paths and watermain repairs at Maurice Hayes

You'll be aware Christchurch City Council financed the improvement of ŌCHT managed properties to the tune of \$16 million in 2021 to meet the requirements of the Healthy Homes standards and the objective of ŌCHT to provide warm, dry homes.

Going forward ŌCHT has a ten-year plan to continue to improve properties most in need of upgrade. Although funding is limited, considerable analysis is carried out to ensure the money is well spent, getting the best return to continually improve the standard of the housing portfolio.

Some of the demands for planned maintenance includes on-going re-roofing, lighting improvements and replacing badly damaged fencing.

We've completed our spouting cleans for the year. Thank you for your co-operation with this and we hope it was not too inconvenient.

**Remember if you see anything that needs repairing, please call us on 0800 642 456 and talk to our Housing Champions.**

## Winter Energy Payment has ended for this year

The government's Winter Energy Payment ended on 1 October. If you get it, you will have received four days of Winter Energy Payment with your 10 October payment.

If you have any concerns about how you will manage without it, there may be other ways Work and Income can help.

Use their online eligibility tool (check. [msd.govt.nz](http://msd.govt.nz)) to check what you might be able to get.

There's also advice to help manage your money at [www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/managing-your-money.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/managing-your-money.html).



[workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/managing-your-money.html](http://workandincome.govt.nz/eligibility/living-expenses/managing-your-money.html).

Or, you can call the Work and Income Seniors team on 0800 552 002.

Remember, if you qualify for the Winter Energy Payment next year, you'll get it automatically from 1 May until 1 October 2024.

## Thank you!



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