

MLAHMC NEWSLETTER

June 2020

Words from the General Manager

Hi All 😊

Thank you for reading the second edition of our newsletter for 2020 and boy what a year we are having starting with the fires/floods and now COVID-19 and Black Lives Matter.

COVID-19 has disrupted our normal way of life in ways we could not have imagined. At MLAHMC this placed extra burden on how we conduct our business in these unprecedented times ensuring the safety of both our staff and tenants. MLAHMC introduced our “*working from home arrangements plan*” as our measure to limit the potential of spreading COVID-19, given the large area of operation we work across.

To assist our tenancies, we implemented the following initiatives to ease rental pressure;

- 6-month delayed rent increases scheduled for May 2020
- Implementation of a new short-term hardship assistance for those tenants who have lost their job due to the impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic

It was great to see communities take the lead and work on their own local strategies including but not limited to Murrin Bridge/Lake Cargelligo, Wilcannia and Brewarrina just to name a few.

I can't stress how important it is to use good practices to slow the spread COVID-19 (*see below some tips from Health NSW*) so please take care of yourself, your family & friends and to the wider community.

The Black Lives Matter movement is gaining momentum across the globe and for us especially in Australia, we see the injustices faced by Aboriginal people and alarming statistics including deaths in police custody which has increased by 150% since the royal commission, also as an Aboriginal person you are 14.8 times more likely to be incarcerated than your non-indigenous peers and our youth making up 48% of all juveniles in custody. As disheartening as these statistics are, as a race we are very resilient and we're still here to tell our story and to fight for better conditions for ourselves, our kids, their kids and every other generation to come.

In more positive news, AHO in line with their Growth Provider strategy has announced the successful EOI applicants and MLAHMC was named as one of the Growth Aboriginal Community Housing Providers (ACHP's). A well done to the MLAHMC team for the effort and we see this as an opportunity to continually improve the service delivery to all our tenants

Please enjoy the newsletter, as you read through the many articles and as always if you have any suggestions please send them through – reminding you “**this is your newsletter**”.

GM, Seth Toomey



Meet the Staff

Russell Byrne
Regional Manager



Russell was born in Marrickville Sydney, which explains his strong love and passion for the South Sydney Rabbitohs. Russell also has strong ties to the town of Mendooran (Mundooran).

He has previously worked in the Central and Far West Regions of NSW in communities that MLAHMC services. Whilst working on Aboriginal land, Russell has worked very closely with the various communities in delivering building projects, programs, repairs and maintenance.

Russell has a wealth of knowledge and skills, in the building and construction industry. He has worked for Public Works, TAFE and the Department of Defence (including Defence Departmental Housing) with a technical background as a licensed Builder and tradesmen.

Russell looks forward to being part of a great team, meeting old acquaintances in the communities we service and ensuring housing opportunities are fulfilled for those living in the remote communities.

Danika Tonna
Corporate Services Manager



Danika has worked directly for MLAHMC as our Corporate Services Manager for the past 4 years and indirectly for another 3 years as the Manager of the Tenant Support and Education Project (TSEP).

Danika is now in her 9th year within the Aboriginal housing sector, where she has served as a valuable member and advocate for the sector. She has worked across many different roles and is proud to be serving with MLAHMC's Board of Directors and other Executive managers to continue to build MLAHMC's core systems and functions to provide the best service possible to our tenants and communities.

Unlike most of the other staff of MLAHMC, Danika is from a strange place in the world called Broken Hill, who's population largely follow this game called the AFL. I think most of us would agree that it is not as deadly as the NRL.

Contact Details and Office Hours



MLAHMC

Office Hours

Monday: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Tuesday: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Wednesday: **1.30 pm - 5.00 pm**
Thursday: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm
Friday: 9.00 am – 5.00 pm



MLAHMC

Contact Details

4/91 Clarinda St, PO Box 810 Parkes NSW 2870
or 33-37 Macquarie St, Dubbo NSW 2830
P:1800 231 160 E: mlahmc@mlahmc.org.au

Providing Housing Services During a Pandemic

Despite the crazy few months we have had due to COVID-19, MLAHMC ensured that we were still able to continue to deliver our essential service to not only our current tenants but also to people in need of quality housing.

MLAHMC was innovative on how we could remain compliant with COVID-19 restrictions but still ensure that we were still able to provide the stability of having a quality home to individuals and families during these difficult times. MLAHMC managed to sign up 20 new tenancies during this time, in both regional and remote communities.

At MLAHMC, we are dedicated to fulfilling the housing needs of our mob and will continue to adapt to provide quality housing services and management throughout the various communities we service.

Below are just two of the good news stories on the people we were able to house during COVID-19.



Meet Jillian

Jillian's property, in partnership with AHO, was modified to suit her needs, giving her peace of mind and security.

What community are you from?

Bathurst

What do you love most about your community ?

I love the people here.

What do you love most about your house?

I love it as I can move around and I don't need to be frightened anymore if something was to happen such as a fire. With the modifications, Jillian's able to move around her home with ease and promptly if there was an emergency.

Meet Kylie and her family

What community are you from?

Orange

What do you love most about your community?

Orange is a strong Aboriginal community, that's why I wanted to move back to here.

Canobolas High School offers great Aboriginal programs for Aboriginal students.

What do you love most about your house?

Everything – It's the best thing that has ever happened to me. I'm extremely grateful.



MLAHMC Photo Gallery



Dubbo FO Cindie with Anthony Mundine and Sean Choolburra at the Gulargambone TSEP event



Griffith FO Thomas pictured with comedian Kevin Kropinyeri at the Lake Cargelligo TSEP event



FO Cindie attending a meeting with the Board of Weilwan LALC



Traditional Dancers at the Gulargambone TSEP event



MLAHMC Chairperson Robert King, Board Member Allan Lamb and GM Seth pictured with Anthony Mundine at the Lake Cargelligo TSEP event



FO Thomas catching up with CEO Judy Bartholomew and Board members of the Murrin Bridge LALC

New Homes for Elders in Goodooga

At the beginning of April 2020, MLAHMC received four new homes in the remote community of Goodooga for management. These homes were made for elders and are specially designed and modified for easy access including; ramps, wider doorways for easy accessibility for mobility devices and adaptable kitchens and bathrooms to suit the individual needs of tenants.

The modular units were built by the Aboriginal Housing Office (AHO) in partnership with the Corrective Services Industry (CSI) under the Gundi Program. The Gundi program is a partnership program between AHO and CSI that enables the construction of affordable housing for Indigenous communities by Indigenous inmates who are supervised and trained by qualified tradesman. This program seeks to upskill participants in practical skills and formal TAFE qualifications in a range of construction-related jobs, improving employment prospects for these individuals post release. The individuals involved in this project received 18,700 hours of construction training and gained a sense of accomplishment by giving back to community by building much needed elder's flats for the small town of Goodooga.

MLAHMC is pleased that from the ground up, from the handover process to the management of these tenancies, this project to provide *quality and sustainable housing* in the community of Goodooga has been achieved through the collaboration of Aboriginal organisations and programs providing essential housing services to Aboriginal people in a remote community.



New Homes for Elders in Goodooga

MLAHMC takes pride in having the ability to house people on country and having the capacity to provide a service to remote Aboriginal communities across New South Wales (NSW). Here's two of our new Goodooga tenants below and what they think of their new units.

Name: Catherine Britt

What do you love about your Community?

I was born, raised and went to school in Goodooga. People from my community are friendly and are both my family and friends. Overall, Goodooga is a good community.

What would you like to see more of in your community?

I would like to see more Aboriginal housing for elders, Aboriginal services, shops and community functions to bring everyone together.

Overall how do you like the new unit?

This is a very exciting new chapter for me, the property came up at the best time as I was looking for housing. It's a new space for me to relax. The units are clean & tidy, it has nice big rooms and suits me very well. I am grateful for the opportunity to have a new home, close together with other elders from my community as we keep each other company.



Name: 'Dawn' Pamela Powell

What do you love about your Community?

It's easy to get around, I like walking to where I need to go. I love having mob close. I also love that my community is getting a new shop soon for food and petrol.

What would you like to see more of in your community?

I would like to see more Aboriginal housing and more shops.

What is the best thing to do in your hometown?

I love playing cards with everyone, spending time with my mob and playing bingo.

Overall how do you like the new unit?

I'm very happy to be able to have my own space to be able to set the house up the way I like. I love the back of the morning, having a coffee relaxing!

I love the; shed, the big rooms and the kitchen. The lemon/orange trees are my favourite. It's nice and easy to get around inside, everything is so nice!



Tenant Spotlight



Name: Darrin and Trish Atkinson

What Community are you from?.
Dareton

What do you love about your community?.

Freedom, it's not boxed in compared to the cities and other metro areas.

What would you like to see more of in your community?.

More community events to bring people together and community run programs to utilise and involve the people living on the reserve.

Name: Dorothy Johnson

What Community are you from?
Murrin Bridge

What do you love about your community?.

That the community looks after one and another.

What would you like to see more of in your community?.

More services in the community of Murrin Bridge especially in areas such as health.



MLAHMC Activities

Since our last newsletter we have:

- Completed **836 repairs and maintenance requests**
- Signed up **20 new tenancies**
- **Property inspections** have been cancelled until further notice due to COVID-19.



Service and Support Spotlight

Victims Services

Victims Services is a program funded by NSW Government that helps people who are victims of crime in NSW with information and referrals. Victim Services provides assistance to individuals to access support under the Victims Support Scheme, including;

Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance for economic losses, including out of pocket expenses, loss of actual earnings, medical and dental expenses, justice-related expenses, and assistance relating to the loss of or damage to personal effects such as clothing.
- Recognition payment financial assistance for immediate needs (up to \$5000) for expenses incurred urgently to secure the victim's safety, health and well-being.



Recognition Payment

- Fixed payments of \$1,500 to \$15,000 to recognise the trauma caused to the victim and the offence or offences committed against them.

Counselling

- 22 hours of free counselling or more if needed.

For more information on eligibility and how to make an application for you would like to application for counselling, financial assistance and/or a recognition payment, visit their website <https://www.victimsservices.justice.nsw.gov.au/>, or call their hotline 1800 019 123.

Employment Related Accommodation

Applying for ERA

To apply for ERA you must:

- be an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person over 18 years old
- have a family connection to remote NSW
- prove your enrolment in an education or training course at an approved institution such as university or TAFE or
- show that the potential employer offers long-term opportunities

What are the houses like?

ERA accommodation is similar to student accommodation at universities and TAFE NSW.

If you're a single person taking up this option you will move into a fully furnished share-accommodation house. You will have your own room and share the living, kitchen, laundry and bathroom areas with other people in similar situations.

If you have a family and you take up an opportunity to work or study in a regional centre, you can take your immediate family with you. Accommodation will be unfurnished so that you can bring your own belongings with you.

Find out more

For an application form or to find out more, please call, email or visit our website.

W: ahc.nsw.gov.au/era
E: era_ahc@faccs.nsw.gov.au

Sydney South East region:
02 9354 1550

Northern region:
02 6691 7000

Western region:
02 6841 9100



Live or relocating to Parkes or Orange for long term employment or employment related study?

In need of affordable accommodation?

We have Employment Related Accommodation (ERA) vacancies for fully furnished, shared accommodation available in these communities

Contact our Tenancy Team on 1800 231 160 for further information on eligibility or assistance in submitting an application.