



**Link
Wentworth**
Providing homes, building futures.

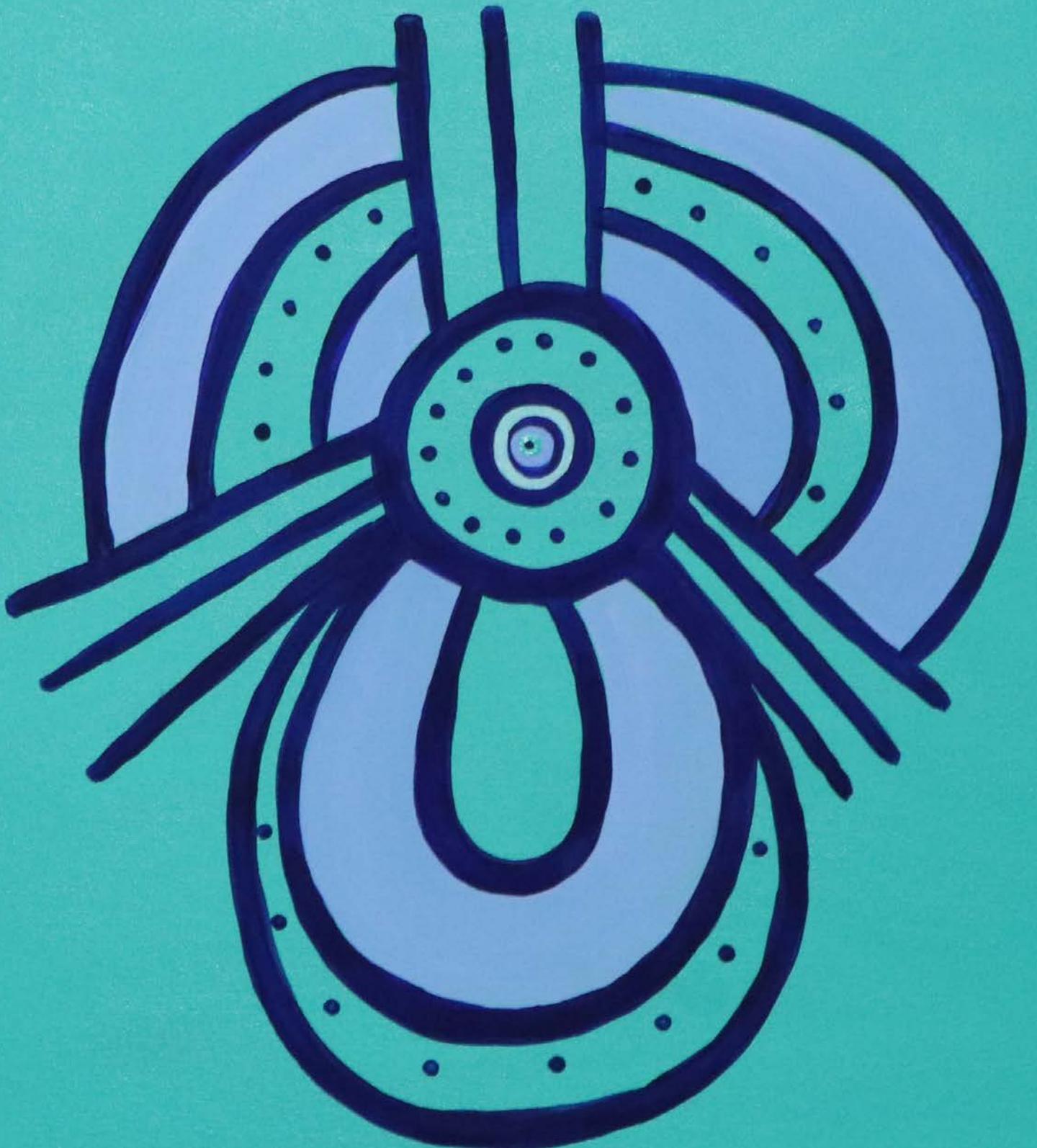
Stronger together

2020-21 Annual Report

Acknowledgement of Country

Link Wentworth wishes to acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which we work and pay our respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Artwork by Bibi Barba
Created for Link Housing
Reconciliation Action Plan 2020



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Cover photo:

Lyndal

Link Wentworth Tenant

About Link Wentworth

Welcome to our new chapter

Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing merged to become Link Wentworth Housing on 31 March 2021. Recognising the benefit of our combined influence as two Tier 1 community housing providers, we were emboldened by the opportunity to create greater change in the sector.

Now, as one of Australia's largest community housing providers, Link Wentworth is ideally positioned to help people facing housing stress or homelessness.

We're phenomenally proud of the industry-leading merger and our position to not only create new homes, but to advocate for them too. We are committed to solving the housing crisis in NSW by providing more social and affordable housing and delivering enhanced support services for those most vulnerable in our community in partnership with Government, other not-for-profits and the private sector.

Providing homes

Our property portfolio provides a range of housing options for people on low to moderate incomes and those with a disability. This includes:

- Social housing
- Affordable housing
- Disability housing
- Supported housing

Building futures

Our wraparound services give our clients support to sustain their tenancy, shape their future, strengthen their lives and participate fully in their communities. This includes:

- Case management
- Community initiatives
- Specialist Homelessness Services
- Tenancy support

Link Wentworth Values

As a new organisation, made up of two entities with rich histories and values, we recognised the need for a set of values that would encourage all staff to forge ahead on our new path together as Link Wentworth.

To facilitate this, we held focus groups throughout the organisation to help determine what these values should be. Once the five values were endorsed by the Executive Leadership Team and the Board, these were announced to staff at our Inaugural Link Wentworth Kick Off.

Our values, as endorsed by our staff, Executive Leadership Team and Board, are:

Customer Focus

Compassion

Integrity

Respect

Ambition

Chair and CEO Report

What a privilege it is for us to present our first annual report as Link Wentworth Housing Ltd.

The merger between Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing which completed on 31 March 2021, provides our organisation with the opportunity to make a greater impact in the lives of the people we serve.

Pooling the history, energy, resources, and talents of our parent companies enables Link Wentworth to be bolder and more ambitious in both our thinking and our actions. It will enable us to more effectively advocate for greater change, whilst having the capacity and capability to deliver increased housing outcomes for people in need.

We intend to be an organisation which makes a difference.

Our values

Importantly, in establishing our company values we engaged and involved not just our Board and Executive, but also our full staff team and members of our Tenant Advisory Groups (TAG).

Our values are:

- Customer focus
- Compassion
- Integrity
- Respect
- Ambition

Living by our values will guide our decisions and ensure that staff know what is expected of them – and indeed how we will need to individually and collectively act for our business to succeed.

What we achieve in the future will be partly determined by how high we set our sights. One of our core values is therefore “ambition”. We intend to be ambitious for Link Wentworth, our tenants and customers, the Community Housing Sector and critically for those who need a secure home.

We are acutely aware that NSW is in the depths of an affordable housing crisis and that solutions can not be delivered by Government alone.

Link Wentworth intend to creatively leverage our increased capacity and resources, be dynamic and contribute capital and ideas to effectively advocate for a significant increase in social and affordable housing to meet both the housing and economic needs of NSW through the creation of new homes and jobs.

Our brand

A new company needs a new brand, and we are delighted with the engagement from staff and TAG in achieving our fresh and positive logo and strap line, *Providing Homes, Building Futures*.

Providing Homes, Building Futures, re-emphasises that a safe secure home is an important first ingredient, but that at Link Wentworth, through our wide range of services, activities and partnerships showcased in this annual report, we intend to have a much broader positive impact.

Our services

Some of our services and milestones which we proudly highlight include:

- The 3-year extension of our Specialist Homelessness Services contract
- Our Together Home activity in partnership with the NSW Government – providing secure homes and support for 110 long-term homeless individuals
- The opening of our second meanwhile use project, Mosman House – in partnership with Women’s Community Shelters and Twilight Aged Care
- Delivering \$3M of increased maintenance investment in the space of 10 weeks with stimulus funding support received from the NSW Government



- Transitioning the maintenance contract for our 1,875 Social Housing Management Transfer properties in Ryde, Hornsby & Ku-ring-gai to directly deliver these services from 1 July 2021
- The comprehensive integration planning, which sets out the key integration priorities and timescales for our new company to incrementally achieve
- Progressing the transition of our successful Neighbourhood Jobs program
- Providing 76 residents with a scholarship award
- Engagement and events with our TAG groups in Chatswood, Penrith, Blue Mountains and the Hawkesbury.

Our Financials

Link Wentworth is a financially strong community housing provider and is uniquely placed to leverage our resources, innovate, partner with Government, the private sector, and grow.

Our combined entity currently has no borrowings within our structure, revenues of \$65M (full year 2021/2 projected turnover of over \$90M), net annual operating surplus excluding property revaluation of \$6.2M and net assets which exceed \$250M.

Our Development activity

On 30 June 2021, Link Wentworth had grown our number of homes in management to 6,399 providing safe and secure homes for over 10,000 people in NSW.

Our Strategic Intent states that one of the objectives of the merger was to deliver more housing. With increased scale and financial strength, we aim to become a preferred partner for initiatives that increase the supply of social and affordable housing. It is very pleasing to see so early on, the progress that is being made with a range of terrific new projects which will provide much needed social and affordable housing.

As testimony of our organisational potential, key projects secured and being progressed include:

- Lachlan's Line, Macquarie Park – A landmark mixed tenure project in partnership with Landcom
- Windsor, Safe Places Emergency Accommodation – Partnership with Commonwealth Government and NSW Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC)
- Miller Street, Cammeray – Partnership with North Sydney Council
- Lemongrove, Penrith – Partnership with Platform Youth Services and Department of Communities and Justice
- Civic Way, Rouse Hill – Link Wentworth owned site
- Lakeside Crescent, North Manly – Mixed tenure project in partnership with Landcom
- Barrett Avenue, Thornleigh - a partnership opportunity with LAHC.

Our COVID-19 response

COVID 19 gets a reduced mention in our annual report this year because of the proactive response of the NSW Government and the innovation and commitment of the staff, management and Board of Link Wentworth. We have adapted to the massive disruption caused by COVID-19 and focused on the safety and well-being of our tenants, staff, and communities.

The pace of change created by both our merger and the pandemic has led to nimble responses, positive challenge, and better ways of working constantly being on the agenda. The impossible or unheard of, now seems possible.

At the time of writing, vaccinations within NSW have just exceeded 80% and the state has come out of lockdown. It will be important for us to build on the incredible learnings we have all witnessed and ensure that social and affordable housing for key workers and those in need is not left off the State Government action plan as we move our focus to 'jobs and growth'.

Our thanks

Such an incredible 12 months has only been possible because of the dedication, support, and partnership with so many individuals and stakeholders.

We would firstly like to whole-heartedly thank our tenants and specifically our Tenant Advisory Groups for their support.

Post lockdown we look forward to meeting people again face to face at events and TAG meetings. We are committed to increasing our effectiveness, involving our tenants, and providing expanded quality services.

We would like to thank the NSW Government, including Minister Henskens and Minister Pavey, together with officers within Land and Housing Corporation, Department of Communities and Justice and Landcom for their guidance, funding and commitment.

We would like to specifically applaud the NSW Government's leadership involved in the expanded \$120M plus Together Home programme which is providing lifechanging housing and support to over 1,000 long-term homeless people.

Our thanks must also go to the former Chairs of our parent companies, Nirmal Hansra and Ken Gilbert, for their leadership during the merger process; the Directors who stood down and did not seek a role on the new Board, particularly Melanie Leijer and Amanda Anker; the Executives who put such energy into making the merger occur and did not take up roles in the new company: Stephen McIntyre (Wentworth CEO); Mark Woodward (Link CFO); and Coralie Kelly (Wentworth GM, Client Services). We also thank the Members from both parent companies who overwhelmingly voted in favour of the merger and backed the vision and ability of Link Wentworth to do more.

Finally, we would like to thank the Board, Executive and amazing staff team of our new entity Link Wentworth Housing Ltd. We are at the beginning of our new journey – a journey where we continue to believe that housing is a human right and that homelessness is a resolvable problem that with focus, investment, and ambition, can be eliminated within Australia.



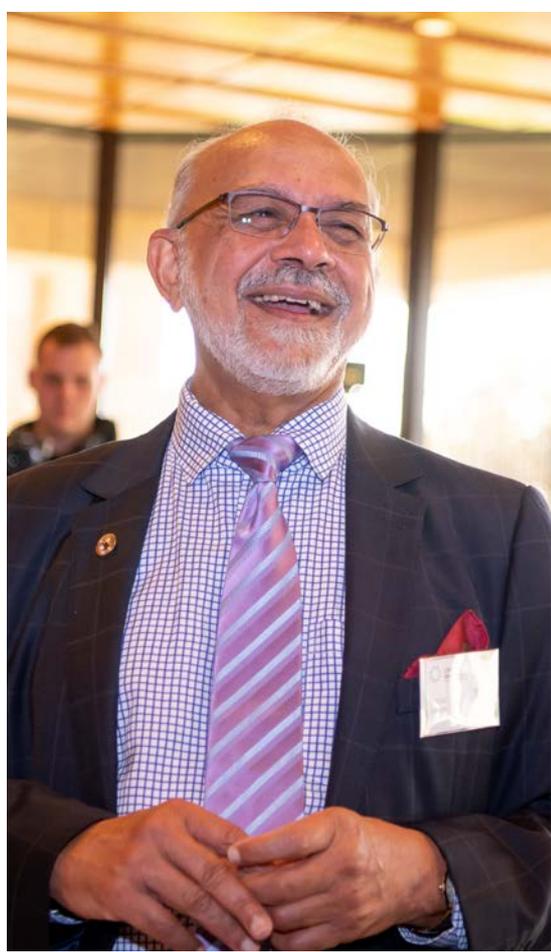
Mike Allen
Chair, Link Wentworth



Andrew McAnulty
CEO, Link Wentworth



Top: Ken Gilbert, Link Wentworth Director and former Chair, Wentworth Community Housing.
 Below left: TAG members with guest of honour, Ann Weldon, Mike Allen and Andrew McAnulty at the Link Wentworth launch.
 Below right: Nirmal Hansra, Link Wentworth Director and former Chair, Link Housing.



A greater voice for change

“With Australia amidst a serious housing crisis with no signs that the situation will ease any time soon, the role that community housing providers (CHPs) can play is at a critical point.”

**Opinion piece by
Andrew McAnulty,**
Link Wentworth CEO

Community housing at the crossroads to deliver the impact needed to address Australia’s housing crisis.

The decision to form Link Wentworth was based on a mutual understanding that together Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing could achieve more by combining our operational scale and experience to help address the growing demand for affordable rental housing in NSW. Following the merger, Link Wentworth is now one of the largest community housing providers (CHPs) in Australia, managing 6,400 homes with around 10,000 residents. CHPs like Link Wentworth with greater scale can more effectively help address the housing crisis.

With Australia amidst a serious housing crisis with no signs that the situation will ease any time soon, the role that CHPs can play is at a critical point. COVID-19 has only exacerbated the housing crisis, with many more Australians previously unaffected by housing and economic hardship now experiencing housing stress. Demand for affordable rentals and social housing is increasing.

We need to achieve a paradigm shift from society thinking of social and affordable housing as a cost, to governments and the community viewing social and affordable housing investment as essential infrastructure which is required within any fully functioning housing system.

The impact of COVID-19 on the Federal and State economies has the potential to create the need for a further housing stimulus, when the construction demand stimulated from the Home Builder program

completes towards the end of 2022. At the moment we have a housing led recovery, but as a CHP sector, we need to make sure this recovery does not exclude the critical area of social housing. As an industry, CHPs have done well in positioning social housing as infrastructure, but it hasn't yet been accepted as essential infrastructure. If it was deemed as essential infrastructure, it would now be funded.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, at the last budget, the federal government spent the largest amount of money on infrastructure and economic stimulus of any government in the history of Australia, but it put very little into social housing. Similarly, this year's NSW government budget had massive infrastructure and stimulus spending but little new funding for social housing. (The exception to this being the \$120M invested in the leading homelessness support program, "Together Home", which is to be applauded). Getting the advocacy right is critical so that both federal and state governments get a clear message that it makes economic sense to build social and affordable housing to both create jobs—and leave a legacy of quality homes which improve lives— as well as generating a ripple effect of long-term economic benefits for the state.

The time is now to boldly advocate, influence and make clear and convincing arguments to ensure change happens. We have families in crisis who can't wait ten years for a home. The CHP sector has delivered 4,000 homes over the last 10 years,



CEO Andrew McNulty speaking at Link Wentworth's official launch on 15 April 2021.



Link Wentworth's 49-unit building at Phillip Street, St Marys.



Link Wentworth tenant receiving a food hamper through a grant from North Sydney Council.

but we collectively need to scale up with government and the private sector if we are going to make a difference to people's lives and provide the pipeline of 5,000 social and affordable homes needed per year over the next 30 years¹. This will create jobs, economic growth and better housing futures.

Over the last ten years, partnerships have been built with the government, the private sector and CHPs, with CHPs playing an important role as a conduit between government and the private sector to deliver social and affordable housing. The private sector has shown that they are interested in partnering if there is clear policy and strategy. The foundations are there—we have the capability and capacity. Now we have built up the systems and processes, the regulation and governance structures, we need to move into the scale part of the puzzle.

Within NSW we have both the biggest need and the biggest opportunity to deliver social housing at scale. There is a once-in-a-20-year opportunity for a game-changing investment in social housing due to the likely need for further construction investment within the next 12 months. To get the "essential" into social housing as infrastructure – we must be convincing and secure the legacy of enabling policy and funding to generate the first pipeline of 5,000 homes per year.

In a recently released Equity Economics report² they demonstrate how a partnership between government, CHPs and private sectors can deliver value for money for NSW taxpayers and large benefits for the NSW economy. Modelling shows that delivering additional social housing through CHPs would generate a return on investment over 50 per cent higher, compared to delivery through government. In addition, building new dwellings would generate additional jobs and economic activity in NSW at an economic multiplier effect of three to one.³

Put simply, if the NSW government were to inject \$3 billion worth of grant funding into the social housing sector and provide \$2 billion of land, this could be doubled by CHPs through leveraging \$5 billion in bond finance from the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC). Using the economic multiplier effect of three to one, this \$10 billion of funds and land would create \$30 billion stimulus in the economy and importantly not inflate the housing market further. In summary, if the NSW government provides a grant of \$3 billion to build a pipeline of social and affordable housing it can generate \$30 billion of much-needed economic activity in the economy as we transition out of COVID-19.

As CHPs we know that social housing is essential in providing a safety net and security to vulnerable people. The issue is so big and there are so many people in need, that unless we put some urgency to this and look outside our existing constraints, we risk missing the opportunity of prioritising the huge amount of big-picture thinking occurring at the moment—and not grabbing the opportunity to invest in social housing. Conversely, if we get our messaging right and can demonstrate a deliverable pipeline of projects, the CHP sector is in a unique position to assist the NSW Government with creating jobs and growth for our economy, while providing homes for those who need them the most.

- 1 Equity Economics (2021), Maximising the Returns – the role of Community Housing in delivering NSW's future housing needs
- 2 Ibid
- 3 Australian Government (2020), National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation, Building Jobs – How residential construction drives the economy

Our year in highlights



Mosman House

Second innovative meanwhile-use project, 18 older women provided safe housing



Maintenance Stimulus package

Around \$3 million over 10 weeks for over 280 properties across our portfolio

Industry-leading merger between Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing creating Link Wentworth, one of Australia's largest Community Housing Providers



Partnering with Landcom to provide 95 affordable dwellings in the City of Ryde for key workers





Four TAGs – Chatswood, Penrith, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury

Eight key integration projects building a strong and efficient organisation



Together Home
110 packages

Scholarship program

76 residents with a scholarship, equalling a \$69,000 investment in the community



Year in Review

2020-21

Our People

Over 10,000 people
live in our homes

Over 805 instances of temporary
accommodation delivered to over
235 clients

382 people experiencing homelessness
assisted through our Together Home
and Specialist Homelessness Services

Our Performance

Revenue

\$65.9 million*

Surplus

\$6.2 million*

Net Assets

\$251.5 million

Cash Assets

\$10.7 million

*Plus \$15.4 million unrealised fair value gain on
investment properties and investment assets

Merger Completed – 31 March 2021



Our Residents*

- 40%** 55 years and over
- 17%** Children aged 16 years and under
- 56%** Female
- 46%** Single people
- 27%** Sole parents
- 10%** English as a second language**
- 3%** Identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander**

*Profile based on 9,664 tenants. Affordable tenants in our Chatswood Hub are entered into a separate tenancy system to our main housing management systems, where only the main tenant is counted. It is estimated that there is on average 2 people per Affordable property with an estimated 10,102 tenants in total.

** We believe this figure is an underrepresentation, due to this information being optional to provide.

Our Staff

6 Office locations

231 staff

Chatswood, Katoomba, Lithgow, Penrith, West Ryde & Windsor

Our Places

6,399

Tenancies under management

425

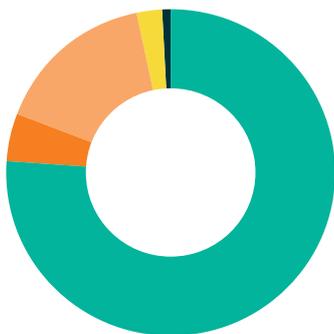
Properties owned

29

Local Government Areas

Social Housing

5,457



- Capital 4160
- Owned 263
- Leasehold 865
- Fee for Service 127
- Meanwhile Use 42

Affordable Housing

623



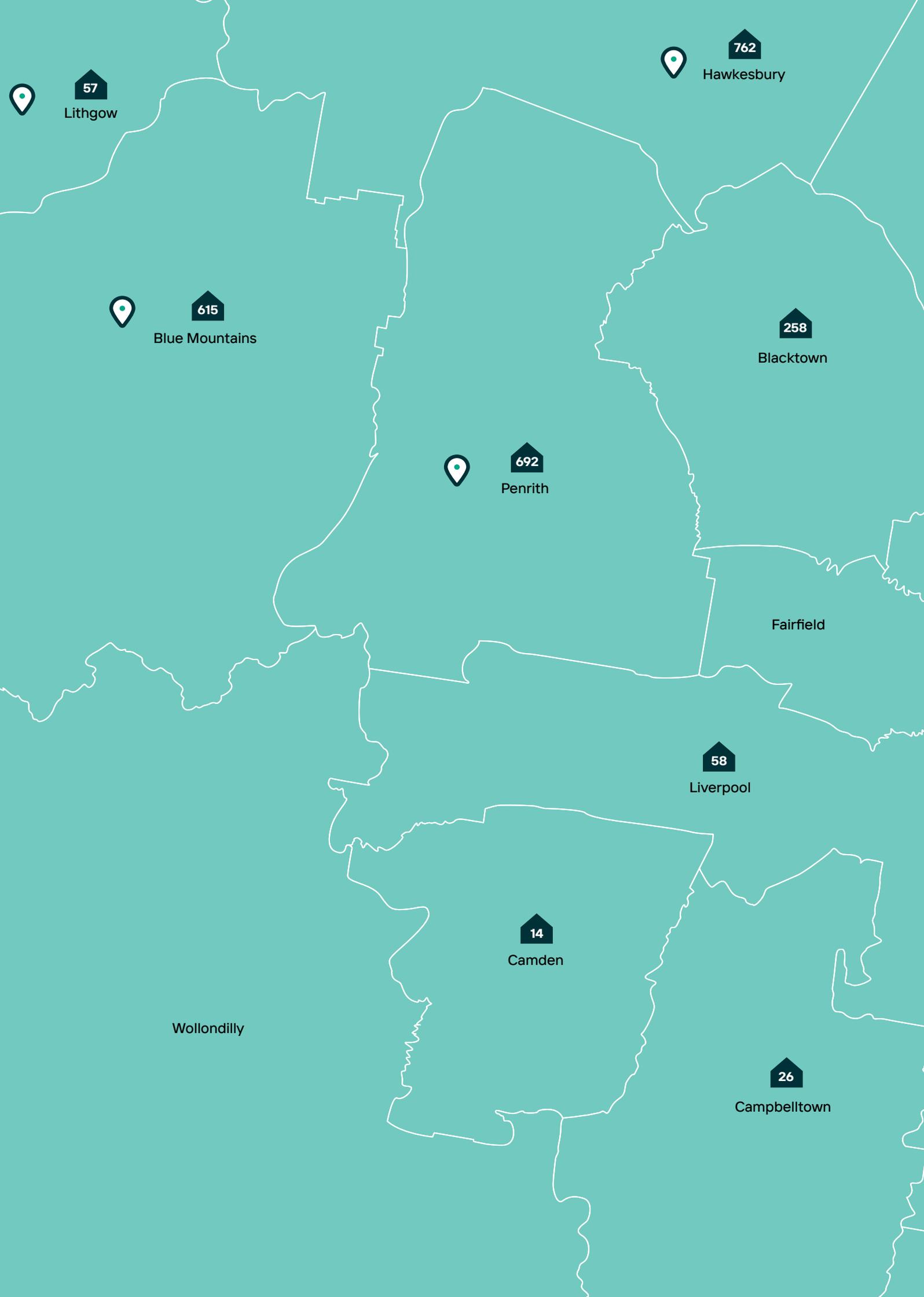
- Affordable Leases 461
- Owned 162

Disability Housing

319



- Fee for Service (SDA) 300
- Capital 19



  762
Hawkesbury

  57
Lithgow

  615
Blue Mountains

 258
Blacktown

  692
Penrith

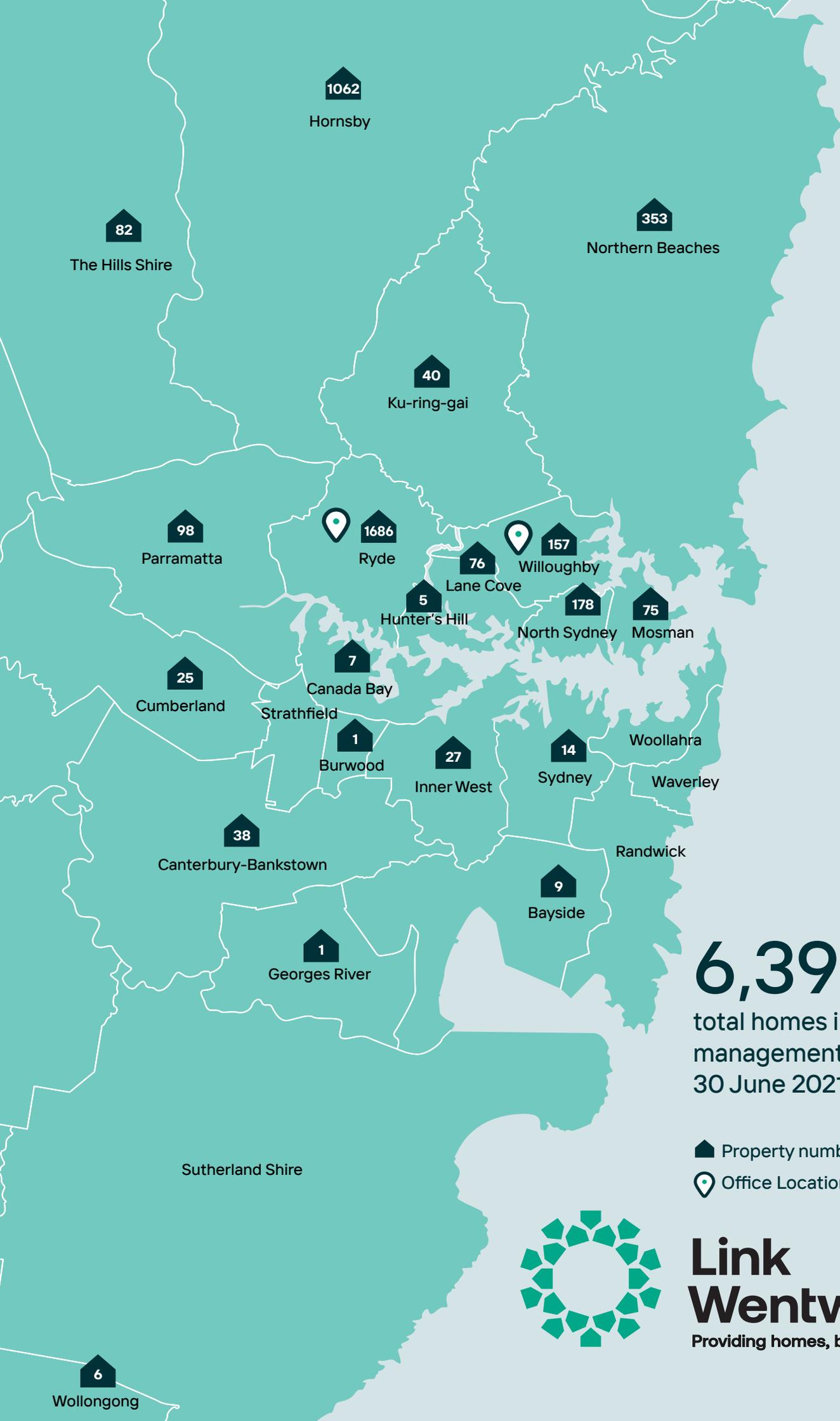
Fairfield

 58
Liverpool

 14
Camden

Wollondilly

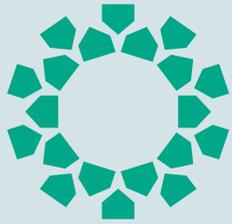
 26
Campbelltown



6,399

total homes in management at 30 June 2021

- Property numbers by LGA
- Office Locations



Link Wentworth
Providing homes, building futures.

As of 30 June 2021, Link Wentworth managed a total of 6,423 properties including 24 community rooms. The breakdown of properties from our 'parent companies' was 4,006 Link Housing and 2,417 Wentworth Community Housing.

We have homes in 29 Local Government Areas (LGA's) with a total of 5,457 Social Housing; 623 Affordable homes and 319 specialist disability tenancies.

LH Link Housing **WCH** Wentworth Community Housing **LWH** Link Wentworth Housing

LGA	Social		Affordable		Disability		Community Rooms		Total	Total	Total
	LH	WCH	LH	WCH	LH	WCH	LH	WCH	LH	WCH	LWH
Ryde	1,581		31		60		14		1,686	-	1,686
Hornsby	891		44		122		5		1,062	-	1,062
Hawkesbury		762							-	762	762
Penrith		597	2	93					2	690	692
Blue Mountains		615							-	615	615
Northern Beaches	250		19		84				353	-	353
Blacktown		242	15					1	15	243	258
North Sydney	168		9					1	178	-	178
Willoughby	89		56		12				157	-	157
Parramatta	23	1	69		5				97	1	98
The Hills	3	4	8	38	29				40	42	82
Lane Cove	61		15						76	-	76
Mosman	72							3	75	-	75
Liverpool			58						58	-	58
Lithgow		57							-	57	57
Ku-Ring-Gai Council	24		9		7				40	-	40
Canterbury-Bankstown			38						38	-	38
Inner West	2		25						27	-	27
Campbelltown		7	19						19	7	26
Cumberland	3		22						25	-	25
Camden			14						14	-	14
City of Sydney			14						14	-	14
Bayside			9						9	-	9
Canada Bay			7						7	-	7
Wollongong			6						6	-	6
Hunters Hill	5								5	-	5
Burwood			1						1	-	1
Shellharbour			1						1	-	1
Georges River Council			1						1	-	1
Grand Total	3,172	2,285	492	131	319	-	23	1	4,006	2,417	6,423



Paul

LinkWentworth Tenant

Overview of the merger

Across NSW, rents continue to escalate, and the supply of appropriate social and affordable housing is causing problems in communities as it fails to keep pace with demand. COVID-19 has only exacerbated the situation. Based on a shared understanding that increasing the scale of our operations would enable us to develop more social and affordable housing and better support our local communities, Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing started exploring opportunities to collaborate.

As Tier 1 community housing providers with a strong history of helping the most vulnerable in the community, both organisations shared a similar vision of providing secure and affordable housing and services to the community, with client wellbeing at the forefront of our work.

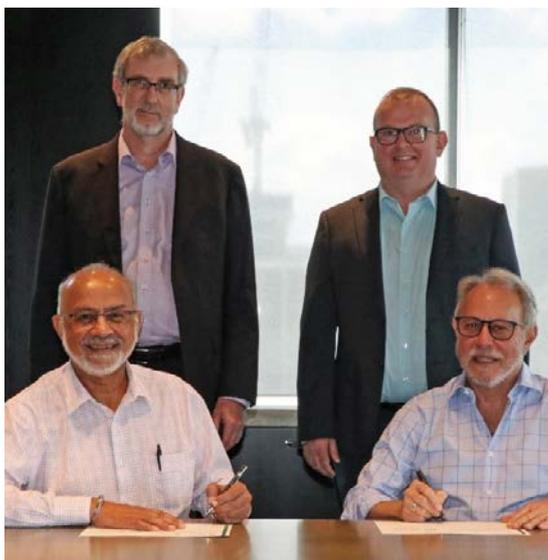
On 28 September 2020, Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing signed a merger agreement. On 26 October 2020, Members of both organisations voted in favour of the strategic move to merge. Five months and countless hours of hard work later, on 31 March 2021, Link Wentworth was born, immediately becoming one of the largest community housing providers in Australia, ideally positioned to provide more homes and services for those who need it.



Working as one to solve the housing crisis



Sean and Liz
Link Wentworth staff team



Clockwise from left: Former Wentworth Community Housing CEO Stephen McIntyre, Former Link Housing CEO Andrew McAnulty, Former Link Housing Chair Nirmal Hansra and Former Wentworth Community Housing Chair Ken Gilbert.



Link Wentworth's official launch at NSW Parliament House on 15 April 2021.

Leading up to the merger

The energy and commitment of the Boards and staff of Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing was paramount in ensuring that the two organisations came together without compromising our services to our tenants and clients. A tight governance and project structure was established to manage the vast amount of work required to merge and become Link Wentworth with nine work streams running concurrently. The workstreams were:

- Integration
- Tenant Consents
- Legal
- Branding & Communications
- Systems Data and Roll-out
- Finance
- People & Culture
- Operations
- Property

All merger integration work known as "Project Archie" was completed by the end of June 2021.

The Link Wentworth Brand

In the months leading up to the merger we embarked on a brand project to create a new identity for Link Wentworth. The project brought together staff, Board and TAG members on a journey to bring the two teams and cultures

together. Surveys, workshops, and a staff tagline competition engaged stakeholders in the journey to create a new visual and verbal identity. We had an overwhelming number of strong entries to the tagline competition with the winning tagline—*Providing Homes. Building Futures.*—encapsulating what Link Wentworth is about.

The new teal brand colour represents a fresh new start for the organisation and the new brand was rolled out from Day One of Link Wentworth.

Celebrating Day One

After months of hard work leading up to the merger, we wanted to give our staff the opportunity to celebrate the new organisation. It was our chance to come together and mark a new beginning.

Across five of our six offices—except Lithgow, which is closed on Thursdays—we held a morning tea in person and over Zoom on 1 April 2021. With participants choosing to attend from home or from the offices, we made sure we were all connected, wherever we were across our region.

The day included branded staff packs, competitions and the launch of our new company video, with delicious cakes and catering from local Aboriginal-owned and operated company Kallico Catering. The offices were festively decorated with the brand-new Link Wentworth teal.

Parliament House launch

Following on from our internal celebrations, Link Wentworth hosted an official launch at New South Wales Parliament House on 15 April 2021, attended by key stakeholders from the industry along with our TAG members, Board and staff.

Aunty Ann Weldon from Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council delivered a moving speech about the importance of social and affordable housing for all Australians, particularly those in Aboriginal communities. Her message—that people don't just deserve a place to call home, but a home to own—is one Link Wentworth vehemently endorses. Our aim is to not only give shelter to those who need it, but to equip them with the tools and self-sufficiency to branch out on their own.

Link Wentworth's newly appointed CEO, Andrew McAnulty and Chair, Mike Allen PSM, both gave moving speeches about their hopes for the company and how we can harness our influence moving forward.

The event at Parliament House solidified Link Wentworth as a new and ambitious player in the community housing sector.

Our Strategic Intent



Adapting to COVID-19

Over
805

instances of temporary accommodation delivered during 2020-21 by the Access and Demand team to over 235 clients

Like many organisations during the pandemic, Link Wentworth needed to change the way we did things in order to prioritise the safety and wellbeing of our staff and clients.

Thankfully, we were fortunate to be able to harness the energy of our staff and quickly developed a response to continue operating our essential services for the communities we serve. This included:

- Providing contactless services, whilst continuing to provide support to our tenants, including development of online forms.
- Keeping tenants updated of our service delivery changes via scheduled text messages, emails, mail as well as through our website, our newly created COVID-19 newsletter and social media channels.
- Collaborating with other CHPs to coordinate services with the aim of making it easier for people seeking housing to get the assistance they needed.
- Deciding early on to forgo 2020 annual rent reviews, and not include COVID-19 stimulus payments in rent calculation for our Social and Disability Housing tenants.
- Working with our tenants who were going through hardships to find solutions that worked for everyone, including rent reductions where possible.
- Launching a "Stay Connected" campaign to get mobile and email addresses for residents whom we didn't have details on file. Tenants were invited to a web page where they could provide their details online.

- Commencing Wellbeing calls to check in on our most vulnerable tenants. As part of this call, we asked our tenants to complete a wellbeing survey via a new app developed internally where they filled out their contact details to ensure we could stay in touch.
- Delivering food boxes to some of our most vulnerable tenants through a partnership with Rapid Relief.

We collaborated with Government including the Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) and NSW Health through the Social Housing Management Transfer Executive Implementation Group to inform our response and meet our service system obligations to support vulnerable communities.

Digital connections

Building on the success of our first Virtually Linked program we delivered online wellbeing programs to our residents. Workshops included meditation, cooking tutorials, trivia and gardening tips with Royal Botanic Gardens.

We were successful in obtaining grant funding to deliver digital skills training for a range of areas in Northern Sydney connecting with 90 residents. The program of workshops has been very successful, and we received lots of positive feedback from participants.



Mikaela and Felix, who ran our Digital Discoveries Program in 2020.

Virtual home inspections

With stay-at-home orders making it difficult for clients to safely view our affordable housing properties, the team pivoted and came up with an innovative 'virtual home inspection' option.

The virtual home inspections involved showing properties over FaceTime and offering relevant documents and information over the phone and online.

Negotiating reduced rents during COVID-19

With COVID-19 causing huge financial hardship for many across New South Wales, we wanted to ensure our tenants were presented with options that made them feel supported through this period. We approved 25 applications for reduced rents during the height of the first wave of the pandemic from 1 July 2020 to 31 October 2020.

One tenant who benefitted from this program was able to continue living in Sydney and complete her studies in nursing. Originally from a regional New South Wales town, the tenant had fallen into rental arrears due to a loss of income from the COVID-19 stay-at-home orders. Link Wentworth

negotiated rent relief with the landlord for a period of time, allowing the tenant to catch up on payments and stay in her home.

Assistance to people renting privately affected by COVID-19

Link Wentworth delivered the NSW Government's Rent Choice Assist COVID-19 (a form of Private Rental Assistance) that aims to support households to maintain affordable housing in the private rental market during the coronavirus crisis. This product provided private rental subsidy for up to 12 months for clients that were renting privately whose income has decreased due to the COVID-19 crisis and are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Over 2020-21, Link Wentworth assisted 11 clients who were all able to sustain their tenancy when the assistance ended in June 2021.

Extension of Temporary Accommodation

To ensure no one was sleeping rough during the lockdown period, we had more clients in Temporary Accommodation for a longer period of time. During 2020-21, the

Access and Demand team delivered over 805 instances of temporary accommodation to over 235 clients.

Web forms

To ensure high-quality, efficient and contactless customer service during COVID-19, our Business Improvement Team began a project in 2020 to create web forms that tenants and clients could complete on our website.

Case Study
**Developing
a brand
with heart**

Mary

Link Wentworth Tenant



A new organisation needs a new brand—one that balances the promise and excitement of a new start with the dedication and commitment of a trusted company. In order to nail the brief, we consulted the stakeholders whose opinion we value the most: our tenants.

On 27 November 2020, four members of the Tenant Advisory Groups (TAG) from what was then Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing came together to take part in a brand workshop.

The workshop involved different brainstorming sessions with key stakeholders, followed by a get-to-know-you lunch.

Lyndal, a tenant with the former Link Housing, enjoyed the opportunity to understand Link Wentworth's goals and objectives through the creation of the new brand.

"The whole experience was uplifting," she says. "[It was good] to chat with other tenants and to get a feeling of what the merged Link Wentworth is seeking through the provision of their services and securing homes for people."

She liked hearing about those plans for the future from the newly appointed CEO and Chair. "Andrew McAnulty and Mike Allen emphasise a strong ambition to create opportunities for people to make a difference and find new pathways in their lives," she says.

With the learnings from the brand workshop and the invaluable input from our tenants, Link Wentworth proceeded with creating a new look and feel for the organisation.

"Teal to me represents a fresh contemporary view," says Lyndal, who studied and worked in interior design and fine arts. "A respectful positive shift from the old, preparing strong foundations for the future." She commented that to her, the circular logo of houses represents inclusivity, community and continued growth.

Mary, a tenant with the former Wentworth Community Housing, also took part in the brand workshop and recalls it as a positive and productive day. "It was a really good meeting," she says. "I still laugh and smile about how the meeting went. Everyone seemed to be on the same page, was smiling and happy to work with everybody."

Along with four other members of the respective TAG groups, both Lyndal and Mary attended our official launch at Parliament House.

The launch really solidified Mary's excitement about Link Wentworth as an entity. "When something is so big it loses that empathy and compassion because there's so much to keep tabs on," she says. "But I think this merger, hopefully, does not get that way. I hope it can be contained so every tenant feels like they are of value."

"From the launch, and from listening to Mike [Allen] and Andrew [McAnulty], I got the sense that that was what they were trying to achieve... that every tenant was a valued tenant and for whatever reason they're in [social] housing, that's no sort of dark spot on them, because people do need shelter and that's one of our basic rights."

We'd like to extend our sincere thanks to Lyndal, Mary, Konrad, Lynne and all our TAG members for their feedback during the brand consultation process.



"A respectful positive shift from the old, preparing strong foundations for the future."

Lyndal
Link Wentworth Tenant



Provide expanded services

We deliver housing options for people who are experiencing housing stress and homelessness. Our wraparound services and community programs give our clients the support to sustain their tenancy and build a brighter future.

Social Housing and Housing Assistance
Affordable Housing
Disability Housing
Support for people experiencing homelessness

Community programs

**Gabor, Kerri-Ann,
Dragan, Dave, Eva**

Link Wentworth team members
at the Staff Brand Workshop
on 1 December 2020.

Social Housing and Housing Assistance

We're proud to provide homes for people on low incomes who are eligible through Housing Pathways. With 5,457 social housing properties across Northern Sydney, Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains and Lithgow, Link Wentworth is committed to ensuring tenants feel comfortable and safe within their local community.

Social Housing Management Transfer

On 3 December 2018, NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) transferred 1,875 public housing properties to Link Housing, now Link Wentworth. As a result of the transfer, we expanded our programs and services to the community and social housing service system coordination in partnership with government and partner Community Housing Providers.

As we mark more than two years since the transfer was completed, we are continually dedicated to improving how maintenance is delivered to our tenants. As part of our effort to provide quality service and commitment to a better future for all our tenants, we appointed one fire contractor, MNI Electrospace and two maintenance contractors, SR Construction servicing the West portfolio and Asset Group Services servicing the Eastern portfolio.

From 1 July 2021 Link Wentworth took on all maintenance work. All maintenance work across the Chatswood Hub will be handled by our new contractors via the new maintenance app 'MAP' which was developed in house.

Maintenance Stimulus Package

Towards the end of June 2021, Link Wentworth wrapped up one of the largest stimulus packages as part of the NSW Government's stimulus and COVID-19 recovery plan to upgrade social housing. Our most ambitious maintenance project to date, saw \$3 million invested over the short space of a couple of months for over 280 properties across our portfolio.

The flexibility and hard work of our contractors was crucial to the success of this rollout. We acknowledge the NSW Government for funding these much-needed upgrades.

Customer Experience Project

The Customer Service Team initiated a strategy day in July 2020 with our key internal stakeholders to identify project priorities for training, technology and process. As a result, a number of workshops were held with each team to identify their needs which formed the basis of training and process improvements. This expanded the teams ability to offer first contact resolution in different areas of our business.

Tenant Consents Blitz

The Tenant Consents Team was established prior to the merger to ensure all necessary forms were filled out by former Wentworth Community Housing tenants. This process was important as it involved making sure each household signed the new Link Wentworth Centrepay forms, so their rent would be paid into the right place and not fall into arrears.

Client Service Officers conducted targeted client service visits with tenants whose forms remained outstanding, which sometimes included a more intensive approach such as meetings with support services. Along with one-on-one visits, a series of 'Blitz' days, open days and outreach events across 13 major housing complexes were held.

As of the end of June 2021, a total of 1,643 Centrepay forms were filled out representing a very successful 99.3% return rate.

Rachel Carroll, Artist and *No Place Like Home* Exhibition Curator during an art class for Link Wentworth tenants





Tenant Assessors

The Tenant Assessment Model was commissioned by DCJ with funding allocated to the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW to pilot the model with two community housing providers—one of which was the then Link Housing.

The aim of the project was to encourage a tenant-led approach to service improvement in an area selected by residents. We wanted to establish a feedback loop where tenants were involved as consultants and co-producers of the project, who design, test and give feedback directly.

Nineteen engaged residents were involved in a series of four dynamic and interactive workshops run by CHIA and Link Wentworth. The specific area of focus chosen by tenants was complaints handling.

During these workshops, tenants provided invaluable feedback about our complaints management approach and delivery. As a result of the Tenant Assessors initiative, we have:

- Launched a Complaints Communication Campaign outlining the difference between a complaint and a request for service, as well as our overall complaints process, in a simple flowchart
- Implemented a pilot CHIA-run post-service assessment survey for residents who had recently lodged a complaint

- Created an action plan for service improvement – using both data from our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey and feedback from the Tenant Service Assessors Project
- Compiled feedback on our Complaints & Feedback Policy to inform a policy update due for completion in November.

Assets Teams collaborating

Following the merger, our two Assets teams from across Penrith and Chatswood were the first to come together and meet one another. In December 2020 and in April 2021, prior to the All-Staff Kick Off event, the teams organised planning workshops to make plans and begin the task of creating consistency and cohesion across the two hubs. It was a great chance for each team to develop a better understanding of how things were done and why.

As part of this cohesion, the team are developing a combined Strategic Asset Management Plan around how Link Wentworth's properties are maintained, informed by demographics and system information.

Private rental assistance products

Link Wentworth offers Housing Assistance services for clients who are eligible for social housing, which includes products such as Start Safely, Private Rental Subsidy and Private Rental Brokerage Services in the

Hornsby, Ryde and Ku-ring-gai areas. Housing Assistance is delivered on behalf of the NSW Government as part of the Social Housing Management Transfer program.

In the last financial year, Link Wentworth assisted over 200 clients with private rental assistance products.

Access to housing – Housing Pathways

Link Wentworth's Housing Assistance services can provide urgent housing and support for people who are experiencing any type of homelessness or need alternative housing solutions in the private market while clients wait for social housing.

Like social housing, most of our Housing Assistance services are managed through DCJ where clients complete a Housing Pathways form. Housing Pathways provides a single application process, and wait list known as the NSW Housing Register.

Paperless forms

In response to an initiative from DCJ, Link Wentworth completed a huge process to digitise our application system. This new online system makes it much easier and more accessible for people to apply for housing and streamlines efficiencies across our Housing and Access and Demand Teams.



Link Wentworth's 16 micro-unit complex for women over 45 on Chapel Street, St Marys.

Affordable Housing

Link Wentworth is proud to provide affordable housing to people on low to moderate incomes who are not able to afford market rent, allowing them to live near their work and/or support systems.

To successfully deliver our affordable housing service, Link Wentworth is a licensed real estate office. We work in close partnership with private property owners, investors, developers, local governments and other charitable organisations.

Our portfolio continues to grow

Following the merger, we now have 623 affordable properties that reach throughout Greater Sydney and beyond—and our portfolio continues to grow.

In the last two months of the financial year, Link Wentworth added another 28 properties to our stock.

Home ownership for our Affordable Housing tenants

One of our goals as an organisation is to empower people to reshape their life and take control of their future. This financial year, we're delighted to say that a further three of our tenants were able to save a deposit to buy their own home while living in our affordable properties. This makes seven tenants since 2019 who have been able to meet this personal goal.

Community event at Potts Hill

We hosted our first ever community event at Link Wentworth's property in Potts Hill. We had a fantastic turnout for the afternoon tea, with 30% of residents coming along to say hello to the team and meet their fellow community members.

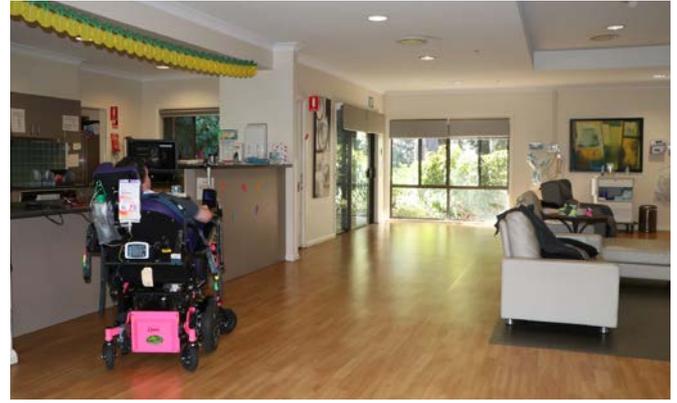
Affordable Housing program in numbers:

-66% Continuous improvement in arrears management with arrears down 66%

30 Link Wentworth scholarships awarded

28 additional homes in new business worth \$50K per annum

95% smoke alarms completed in full and on time



Group home in Lodge Street, Hornsby.

Disability Housing

Link Wentworth has been a Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) provider since March 2018, providing 56 SDA group homes to 239 tenants. We also manage a range of non-SDA group homes and dwellings.

Together with our partners, we provide a range of disability support services to help people with a disability pursue fulfilling and independent lives.

Delivering wraparound services

Our Disability Housing Team continue to deliver a range of services to assist our clients, on top of their housing needs. This includes tenancy management, rent and non-rent financial management and SDA payment management.

We keep in regular contact with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and other service providers to ensure all is running smoothly in regard to the wellbeing and safety of our clients. This also includes keeping in touch with the tenants' guardians and persons of authority. In addition to financial support and stakeholder engagement, our team also follows up maintenance enquiries, manages vacancies and generally ensures the safety of our SDA properties and group homes.

Converting Pennant Hills property into SDA

In 2021, the Affordable Housing and Disability Teams at Link Wentworth undertook a project to convert apartments in a Leasehold complex in Pennant Hills to NDIS SDA specifications. The apartments were originally built as accessible and required modifications to meet the design standards as set out by the NDIS.

Link Wentworth was successful in registering a two-bedroom apartment and a one-bedroom apartment with the NDIS. The category of SDA design was Improved Liveability which integrates accessible functions in the dwelling for people with sensory, intellectual or cognitive impairments. These two apartments are being marketed for lease through specialised SDA real estate listings.

Adapting to COVID-19

During 2020/2021, there were numerous challenges relating to the government health restrictions around the spread of the coronavirus. The SDA team worked within the government guidelines to ensure that our tenants in group homes and social housing were safe. Wellness checks were performed by the SDA team on tenants, house managers and family members, with many receiving our calls and were thankful for the interaction during this time.

Working with Inala

In July 2020 Link Wentworth entered into a Lease Agreement with DCJ for six properties in Sydney's north-west with Inala Disability Services as the service provider.

These six properties have been registered with the NDIS as SDA Basic and Fully Accessible with Link Wentworth as the accommodation provider. A total of 28 NDIS participants will be residing in these properties under their accommodation agreements, with Link Wentworth managing all reactive and preventative maintenance.

Link Wentworth and Inala have been working closely for a number of years and look forward to developing our expanded partnership to provide suitable accommodation for people with a disability.

Disability Housing in numbers:

239	SDA participants
56	SDA group homes
43	non-SDA tenants
2	non-SDA group homes
35	non-SDA separate dwellings

Support for people experiencing homelessness

Link Wentworth helps people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through our specialised support services with assistance into temporary and transitional accommodation and support to find a secure home within the local community.

As part of the NSW Government's Together Home program, which launched in July 2020, we have been able to make even more of an impact in this sector by working through our internal specialised support team and our network of partners to provide long-term and stable housing to people who have been sleeping rough during the pandemic.

In addition, following the merger in April 2021, Link Wentworth's Homelessness Services expanded to include Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) for the Nepean, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions.

SHS contract extension

Following the successful delivery of services through the Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) program since 2014, Link Wentworth was offered contract renewals for a further 3 years from 1 July 2021 by DCJ.

The SHS sector is a vital part of the broader service system that is working towards ending homelessness. Through our SHS program, Link Wentworth provides support to people who are experiencing or who are at risk of homelessness through early intervention, crisis and transitional support and post-crisis support services.

The SHS program's primary objective is to ensure people who are experiencing homelessness, or who are at risk of homelessness are supported to achieve safe and stable housing in the community.

These services are delivered in the Nepean Blue Mountains region, with our Nurreen Domestic Violence service offered exclusively in the Hawkesbury region.

SHS program in numbers (April 2021—June 2021):

118	clients through the Link Wentworth Adult Homelessness and Housing Support Service
28	clients helped through the Link Wentworth Tenancy Support Service
36	clients helped through the Link Wentworth Nurreen Domestic Violence Service

Andrew and Christy with colleagues Mavis from the local area Mental Health Team and Stacey from Department of Communities and Justice during the homelessness street count for the Hawkesbury in early March 2021





On the ground after the floods

In March 2021, a Disaster Response and Recovery effort was triggered by the Hawkesbury floods. Link Wentworth's SHS Case Workers worked closely with local services to assist people impacted by the floods. The teams responded immediately as part of the relief effort to provide support and secure temporary accommodation. This work continued for several months, delivering outreach support to people displaced from their uninhabitable homes and the Wilberforce Caravan Park.

Beyond the immediate response, the team assisted 34 people impacted by floods, completing 12 social housing applications and engaging 19 people who require ongoing specialist case management support.

A positive aspect of the coordinated response to the Hawkesbury floods has been the strong partnership and cooperation between Link Wentworth and DCJ. The partnership has ensured that housing applications were assessed in a speedy manner, properties were located, offered, and tenanted in the shortest possible time.

Together Home

Link Wentworth was allocated a total of 110 packages in the Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney District and Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains District.

Sydney, South Eastern Sydney, Northern Sydney District

	# of packages	Total \$ (ex-GST)
Tranche 1	23	2.2M
Tranche 2	47	4.3M

Western Sydney, Nepean Blue Mountains District

	# of packages	Total \$ (ex-GST)
Tranche 1	20	1.5 M
Tranche 2	20	1.5 M

In addition, we received additional funds to support people with high needs in Tranche 1, with \$260K in WSNBM and \$94K in SSESNS.

The Together Home Program is delivered in partnership with NSW Government, Community Housing Providers, Specialist Homelessness Services, and health services. The overall goal is to help people who are experiencing primary homelessness into permanent safe accommodation and support services to maintain their tenancy, improve health and wellbeing and move towards training and employment. We continue to work with Government, the sector and SHS to inform improved services.

Together Home in numbers:

110 participants have been supported

69% remain engaged with health and wellbeing supports

Homelessness Case Coordination group

We established a Homelessness Case Coordination group for the Ryde, Hornsby and Ku-ring-gai areas. The group meets monthly and has had representation from each council, Police, Health, Catholic Care and rangers. We have implemented a flag system for rough sleepers so that assertive outreach teams can go into the community and offer support.



Community programs

Kaye
Link Wentworth Tenant

When a person applies for housing through Link Wentworth, we don't stop helping them once they have a safe and affordable home. When a tenant gets settled in, we make a sustained effort to ensure they have the tools to maintain their tenancy and integrate fully into the community.

Our community programs and initiatives are just one way we walk alongside our tenants during their journey with Link Wentworth. We work within communities in partnership with other local organisations and community groups to improve outcomes for our residents.

Our Tenant Advisory Groups

We facilitate regular forums for Link Wentworth tenants to give their feedback, make suggestions and get involved with the broader community housing industry.

In addition to local resident groups across Northern Sydney, we have four Tenant Advisory Groups (TAG)—Chatswood, Penrith, Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury.

TAG members continue to provide valuable advice and support in relation to our policies, including our Complaints and Feedback Policy. A number of TAG members attended the CHIA NSW Tenant Representative training in January 2021. Members have also provided contributions to our quarterly tenant newsletter.

Additionally, we recently introduced a YarnUp group for our Aboriginal tenants in the Blue Mountains to strengthen our relationship in the community and respond to any opportunities or concerns that may arise from the meeting. YarnUp is tenant instigated and tenant led and aims to strengthen relationships with Link Wentworth management and respond to opportunities and concerns brought up by Aboriginal residents.

Our traditional large-scale end-of-year event was replaced with multiple small-scale events for our residents due to the pandemic. Held in the community rooms and community spaces of our properties, there were a total of 28 end-of-year tenant celebrations with 350 attendees.

Community Engagement Plan

Our three-year 'Creating Opportunities Strengthening Communities' Community Engagement Plan was launched in July 2020. The Plan sets out the outcomes we would like to help residents in our community to reach through participation in our community programs and initiatives. Our Chatswood TAG provided valuable feedback during the creation of the Plan.

The five key areas of focus in the plan are:

- Creating Opportunities for Residents with a Disability
- Building Communities, Building Connections
- Older people – Ageing Well and Living Independently
- Training and Employment Pathways
- Enhancing Education Opportunities

Our Community Engagement Team in Chatswood will seek feedback from program participants and formal evaluations will be undertaken for major programs.

Community Engagement Model

Link Wentworth continued our Community Engagement Model (CEM) pilot program with nine communities to improve social and wellbeing outcomes identified by the community in our Northern Sydney portfolio. The CEM was set up to assist our Housing and Asset Teams in identifying and addressing a range of tenancy and asset related issues that were raised by residents. It was also in response to our space activation strategy and community building.

This year, Link Wentworth hosted a monthly morning tea in each block to facilitate an informal consultation

session with residents. The sessions allowed us to understand what they would like to do as a community within their block.

Following this consultation, Link Wentworth implemented various ongoing programs in those blocks, including art classes, digital classes, gardening workshops, art and crafts, mah-jong groups, chair yoga and table tennis groups.

Northern Sydney Service System Coordination

Since the transfer of the management of all social housing in the Northern Sydney region, Link Wentworth has been working closely with three other community housing provider (CHP) partners to deliver social housing service system coordination. This involves implementing structures and processes that aim to achieve better outcomes for those in housing need within the Northern Sydney community.

The plan sets out our priorities for service delivery and outlines how the service system will be managed on an ongoing basis. There are five directions for the plan that will improve social housing service system coordination.

1. Coordinated responses to housing need
2. Clear communication
3. A voice for people in need
4. Innovation and service development
5. Collective advocacy to improve outcomes in Northern Sydney

This year's Tenant Voice Forum was held in June 2021 and run by Link Wentworth, Bridge Housing, SGCH and Women's Housing Company.

Residents of all participating CHPs were invited to attend and provide information about how we best serve their needs into the future. The information received from the forum is being used to inform the review of the Northern Sydney Social Housing Service System Plan.

Linking residents with employment opportunities

In 2021, Link Wentworth continued developing a new employment program for disadvantaged women in Western Sydney. Named GROW—Generating Real Opportunities for Women—the program sees women complete training and education in cleaning and aged care services with the ultimate goal to be placed into permanent work.

For the pilot program, 10 of the 18 participants have finished the course and started work placement, with three of the 10 identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. All of the women are from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds, with many having previously been incarcerated. Thank you to Women NSW for funding this project and TAFE WSI, Uniting and The Bayton Group, along with others, for partnering with us.

Link Wentworth delivered two Education and Employment Info Days in March 2021 in Ryde and Wahroonga. We had 25 clients attending and self-refer themselves to Opportunities Pathways job providers and education providers. We thank OCTEC, Max Solutions, Match Works, TAFE, Macquarie Community College, Hornsby Kuring-gai Community College and Stryde Learning as our partners in hosting these events.

Western Sydney University Cooling the Commons

The team continue to collaborate with Western Sydney University on the Cooling the Commons research grant proposal which will focus on the impact of increasing heat wave conditions on social housing tenants. The research proposal is being prepared for submission with active support from the team at Link Wentworth.

Working on a future for Neighbourhood Jobs

Our social enterprise Neighbourhood Jobs is designed to tackle poverty and intergenerational disadvantage by providing hands-on training and work opportunities to young people who face barriers to employment.

We are currently working on options to sustain the social outcomes of Neighbourhood Jobs into the future, including looking into partnership opportunities and identifying a long-term home for the program.

One of these potential initiatives is a workplace program. We are looking at developing an entryway into employment for young people who live in social housing or are at risk of getting into trouble, to introduce them

to work through the Neighbourhood Jobs program. While still in the early stages of planning, we hope to link participants to our contractors for employment opportunities.

Annual Garden Competition

With support from the Royal Botanic Gardens Trust Community Greening Team, Link Wentworth's Gardening Competition commenced in July 2020 for another year.

We received over 30 incredible entries in the categories of 'Best General Garden', 'Best Herb and Vegetable Garden' and 'Best Community/ Shared Garden'. This year, four new community gardens were established in the Northern Sydney portfolio. This increases the sense of belonging and community in those blocks

and nurtured positive relationships between neighbours. As an example, the garden set up at Higginbotham Road allowed residents to come and work on the working bee day.

Partnership to deliver SmartMeals and SleepSafe programs

Link Wentworth secured a partnership with Darcy Street Project to deliver the SmartMeals Program. Funded by StreetSmart Australia, around 100 healthy meals were delivered each week to residents in need. In total, we delivered 1,600 meals in this financial year.

The project was expanded to the delivery of the SleepSafe program, where Link Wentworth secured over 40 'basic starter kits' to set up our client's new home.

This highlights the success of the project and great partnership developed between Link Wentworth, Darcy Street Project and StreetSmart Australia.

No Place Like Home Art Exhibition moved online

To ensure our annual No Place Like Home art exhibition went ahead during COVID-19, we had to pivot and go online. Link Wentworth launched a dedicated website to showcase our residents' artworks and launched it with a virtual event on 1 September 2020 to 46 participants.

The website not only featured the artworks but a 'virtual gallery' walk-through, along with blogs from participants and our curator Rachel Carroll. In total, we sold 13 out of 26 resident artworks. To successfully facilitate the event, Link Wentworth organised videos, professional photography of the artworks, along with significant promotion through media, newsletters, website posts and social media.

Blue Mountains Community Resilience Project

Link Wentworth has joined a new collective of Blue Mountains services hosted by Blue Mountains City Council looking at disaster resilience for vulnerable residents. The project commenced with one meeting in June 2021 but was temporarily put on hold due to ongoing pandemic restrictions.

Darren-John Martin from the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney giving a gardening workshop to Link Wentworth tenants.





Link Wentworth Scholarship recipient Grahame poses with the guitar he built with funding from the program.

The Hawkesbury Nepean Flood Resilience Project

Former Wentworth Community Housing had been a significant contributor to this project, which sought to build the resilience of social housing tenants and supporting agencies in the Hawkesbury Nepean in responding to flood danger. The project involved many small community engagement activities, tenant workshops, resource production and dissemination. A key unexpected outcome has been the development of a network of emergency services for natural disaster. This project formally came to a close in June 2021 with a final review meeting.

We would like to acknowledge key community partners that we worked with over 2020-21:

SHS program partners:

- DV West
- Community Restorative Centre
- Lithgow Community Projects
- The Gender Centre
- Platform Youth Services
- Catholic Care Diocese of Broken Bay
- Mission Australia
- Manly Warringah Women's Resource Centre
- Taldumande Youth Services
- The Northern Centre
- The Burdekin Association
- Phoenix House

Disability Housing partners:

- Cerebral Palsy Alliance CPA
- Inala
- New Horizons
- The Housing Connection
- Unisson
- Dare Australia

Case Study

Home is where the new start is



Shauni & Adam
Link Wentworth Tenants

In Tranche 1 of the NSW Government's Together Home program, Link Wentworth successfully housed 44 people. Shauni and Adam, a couple from Western Sydney, are among those who found safe housing and much-needed relief through this initiative.

Before connecting with support services, Shauni and Adam each experienced some difficult personal circumstances that led to their homelessness. Shauni was escaping an abusive relationship and Adam was in the throes of grief after losing his best friend. Both struggled with mental health and addiction. Both had been incarcerated.

Adam described the experience of homelessness as feeling like he was on a downward spiral. "You don't really have anything from day to day and no hope of it getting better," he says.

"So you just accept it and things get worse. You're already in a bad situation, you have no options to choose from, so every day just gets worse... You're on a downward spiral to jail or to die."

By July 2020, when the couple were found sleeping in a car, Shauni and Adam had been homeless for six and two years respectively.

Through Together Home, former Wentworth Community Housing were able to offer them housing and intensive support. Their Case Worker, Amy, managed to set up Shauni and Adam with a house, which was equipped with necessary furniture and appliances. Amy also actively worked with them to secure high needs packages, including neuropsychological assessments, a trip to reconnect with family, psychological treatment and intensive case coordination.

"They help you sort out all that stuff and make it so you get help and understand," Shauni says of the program. "They don't just help with the house, but all our stuff."

It was the combination of support and housing that made it possible for Shauni and Adam to make a fresh start. Adam says that having the foundation of a secure home gave them the freedom to get their life back on track. He says it stopped the spiral.

"People need help to get a house before they can care about anything else," he says.

Shauni and Adam are sober and have successfully maintained their tenancy. They look forward to returning to the workforce and raising children together.

Following the merger, Link Wentworth continues to work with the couple to ensure they feel supported and well equipped to tackle their next steps.

"The program has given us a second chance so we can fix our mistakes from the past. Maybe by telling our story we can help other people who want to do the right thing to get help too," says Adam.

Thank you to Shauni and Adam for sharing your story.

"They help you sort out all that stuff and make it so you get help and understand. They don't just help with the house, but all our stuff."

Shauni
Link Wentworth Tenant

Deliver more housing

One of our key ambitions in becoming Link Wentworth is to meet the increasing demand for more homes for those who need them most. We are using our increased scale and financial capacity to deliver our pipeline of projects to grow social and affordable housing over the coming years.

Lachlan's Line

For our first large-scale post-merger development, Link Wentworth has been selected to partner with Landcom to provide at least 95 affordable dwellings in the City of Ryde for key workers. The landmark agreement will see new and innovative rental and ownership approaches come into the housing market with shared equity options also being available. This means key workers like nurses, childcare workers and cleaners will be able to live affordably in their local area.

We are excited about Landcom's new Affordable Housing and Diversity model and proud to be partnering on this significant demonstration project to deliver a broad range of housing opportunities, and innovation that incorporates legal, tax and commercial structures to optimise economic and social outcomes.

Creating Safe Places in the Hawkesbury

In April 2021, a development application was lodged with the NSW Land and Housing Corporation for the construction of four short-term independent units in the Hawkesbury for women and children escaping domestic violence.

Funded through the Commonwealth Department of Social Services' Safe

Places Emergency Accommodation Program, the accommodation will house women and their children, as well as a common area where community organisations can offer services and support groups.

To design the complex, Link Wentworth worked with The Women's Cottage, the primary specialist domestic violence service in the Hawkesbury which provides trauma-informed client services. We also worked closely with Hawkesbury Police, Hawkesbury Council and local community organisations to ensure the needs of women and children were met in the design.

We have also been working with the local service system to design a collaborative specialist domestic violence service for women and children from within the existing resources of service providers within the Hawkesbury local government area.

The complex is due to commence construction in late 2021 and be completed in mid-2022.

Barrett Avenue, Thornleigh

Earlier in 2020, the Board approved the strategic purchase of a privately owned property in Barrett Avenue Thornleigh. The acquisition of the Thornleigh property was finalised

in October 2020. It is intended to consolidate this acquisition into a larger development site for the delivery of 48 social and affordable rental dwellings for seniors. This project was submitted for grant funding as part of NSW Government's Community Housing Innovation Fund but was unsuccessful, with alternative funding options to be explored.

Miller Street, Cammeray

Link Wentworth lodged a development application in July 2020 to redevelop the property and deliver 12 apartments in a New Age Boarding House development. Following a council meeting in September, North Sydney Council approved a financial investment of over \$2 million for a 51% ownership stake in the building.

During this period, Link Wentworth also successfully negotiated to build over a Sydney Water drainage easement, which required amendments to the development application but provides significantly improved circulation, unit sizes and building floorplans.

On 7 July 2021, the North Sydney Planning Panel approved the development and Link Wentworth anticipate commencing construction in early 2022.



Artist's rendering of Link Wentworth's Safe Places development in the Hawkesbury.

Lakeside Crescent, North Manly

Link Wentworth submitted a Stage 1 proposal in December 2020 for adaptive re-use to create 37 homes from a community health building in Manly.

In May 2021, Landcom issued a draft Heads of Agreement and we anticipate execution of documentation in August 2021 with a development application anticipated to be lodged by the end of 2021.

Civic Way, Rouse Hill

Link Wentworth is planning a seven-storey affordable housing development consisting of 33 units in the Rouse Hill Town Centre. The proposal consists of studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom accommodation.

Our plans were submitted to The Hills Shire Council, who completed their assessment report and submitted to the Sydney Central City Planning Panel in April 2021. Approval of the development by the Planning Panel was determined in May 2021. We will continue to work on finalising the design of this affordable housing development and commence construction once funding has been secured.

Lemongrove Project, Penrith

Leveraging former Wentworth Community Housing's long-standing partnership with Platform Youth Services, Link Wentworth signed a deal to deliver accommodation for young people in Penrith. With funds awarded from the NSW Department of Communities and Justice's Community Housing Innovation Fund, we will build seven studio apartments for vulnerable young people undertaking study and training. This innovative partnership and Youth Foyer-style model will offer affordable and independent, supported social housing, designed to help young people break the cycle of disadvantage. The commencement of this project will be officially launched in late 2021.

Beecroft House

On 9 August 2020, we proudly celebrated the one-year anniversary of our Beecroft House project. The property provides safe, secure and affordable housing for older women in the Northern Sydney region. We honoured the milestone with a webinar discussing the benefits of the project in September 2020, featuring representatives from all of the key partners for the project.

We're immensely proud of Beecroft House, which was created in partnership with Women's Community

Shelters (WCS), National Projects and Maintenance, Generous & Grateful and continues to be supported by Twilight Aged Care. The innovative meanwhile use housing option was born out of a need to address the growing number of women over 55 who are experiencing, or are at risk of, homelessness.

Mosman House

Using a meanwhile use housing model similar to Beecroft House, we officially launched our Mosman House project at the end of November 2020. The house provides accommodation for up to 18 older women in the conveniently located suburb of Mosman. Mosman House is run in partnership with Women's Community Shelters and Northern Beaches Women's Shelter.

A range of local, state and federal MPs have visited the property and Link Wentworth has presented the model and outcomes for the client group. We hope that the success of both Mosman House and Beecroft House demonstrates the need for innovative housing solutions that make use of under-utilised housing assets to benefit those experiencing homelessness or housing stress in New South Wales.

In April 2021, ABC's The Drum ran a feature on Mosman House and some of the women who currently call it home.

Advocate for greater change

Using our combined voice, reputation and position, Link Wentworth is better able to influence policy and public perception about the need for more social and affordable housing.

PowerHousing Awards 2020

We're pleased to say three of our staff were honoured at the 2020 PowerHousing Awards. Congratulations to everyone who was nominated!

Maria Porter

Excellence in Remote Working and Support Award & Scholarship

Arnel Landicho

Outstanding Achievement Award & Scholarship

Nina Shlaimon

Rising Star Award & Scholarship Immersion - Highly Commended



Left to Right:
Maria Porter,
Arnel Landicho,
Nina Shlaimon

Commitment to Reconciliation

Link Wentworth is deeply committed to creating a service that is accessible and responsive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the community as well as being sensitive to individual needs. Following the merger, we are planning to continue to develop the Link Wentworth approach to reconciliation in consultation with staff, tenants and stakeholders, such as Aboriginal-led organisations.

During Reconciliation Week from 27 May to 3 June 2021, the Link Wentworth Team celebrated the strength and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a series of social media posts and activities.

A Reconciliation Week morning tea was held across all six of our offices. The morning tea featured the attendance and participation of Darug elders Aunty Carol Cooper and Aunty Jacinta Tobin, who gave an inspiring talk about their work in the community and song. Food was provided by a local Aboriginal company, Kallico Catering, and resources were distributed to promote learning among staff.

New Link Wentworth Website

An interim Link Wentworth website was launched on 1 April 2021. The website provides key corporate information and news and links tenants to the former Link Housing and Wentworth websites as an interim measure while policies and procedures are harmonised.

We commenced planning for a new combined website that efficiently assists and serves tenants from across our entire portfolio in June 2021. Both staff and tenant/TAG engagement will be built into the project, with an anticipated completion date of November 2021. We plan to decommission the Link Housing and Wentworth Community Housing websites once the new website goes live.

Social media

Social media accounts from Link Housing and Wentworth were merged in early April under Link Wentworth. The following table shows followers and likes as of April 2021. A strategy was developed to continue to grow engagement across all platforms as Link Wentworth.

2,303 Facebook
Total likes

95 Instagram
Total followers

1,034 Twitter
Total followers

1,117 LinkedIn
Total followers



Top: Link Wentworth team (Andrew, Liz, Brenda, Jenny, George, Eva, Sean, Heather) at the 2021 ZEST Awards in May.

Bottom Left: Djamel, Billie-Jo and Natasha at Link Wentworth's Staff Brand Workshop on 1 December 2020.

Bottom Right: Tenants and staff collaborate at the Brand Workshop on 27 November 2020.

Link Wentworth Tenant Handbooks

In addition to our combined website, a new Tenant Handbook for social housing tenants is being developed. Specific handbooks for Affordable Housing and Specialist Disability Accommodation tenants are also being developed. Once all feedback is received from internal stakeholders, consultations will be organised with tenants and TAG members for user input. The anticipated completion date is October 2021.

In the meantime, rebranded Interim Tenant Handbooks were developed and rolled out to new tenants across former Link and former Wentworth hubs as well as for tenants in Beecroft House and Mosman House in June 2021. This Interim Handbook included similar content to the previous organisation's handbooks but with updated Link Wentworth branding to solidify our position as a new entity.

Office re-branding

To create cohesion and community across our six offices, the Marketing and Communications Team organised for each location to be rebranded in the Link Wentworth brand. Carried out over a number of months, each office now has the bright colours of the new Link Wentworth brand on display.

It is a great vote of confidence for our clients, tenants, community members and staff to be presented with a physical manifestation of our new organisational identity.

Conference Sponsorships

Link Wentworth was a major partner in the ZEST Awards, held on 18 June 2021 at Stadium Australia, Olympic Park. The Awards are an annual celebration of community and the community services industry in Western Sydney. The awards were attended by 10 Link Wentworth Board members and staff.

CHIA NSW Conference

We also finalised an agreement to be a major Gold Sponsor of the CHIA NSW Housing Conference from 11- 12 August 2021. Our Chair, Mike Allen PSM and CEO, Andrew McNulty have been asked to participate in the conference program.

Responding to local housing strategies

We prepared a submission on the draft Willoughby Council Affordable Housing Strategy and Northern Beaches Council consultation on their Local Housing Strategy. The strategies are positive steps for the councils, and we provided advice and clarity on how some targets could be more aspirational.

Increase our effectiveness

As a newly merged entity, Link Wentworth will leverage our economies of scale to invest in improved systems, technology, services and solutions.

Integration Planning

One Link Wentworth

A key priority following the merger was to establish Link Wentworth as the one integrated and cohesive organisation. While still acknowledging the rich histories and achievements of both organisations, Link Wentworth has a goal to be a fresh, dynamic and industry-leading community housing provider.

The integration process involves many moving parts—harmonising processes, consulting staff, consolidating policies—but most importantly, it’s about ensuring our customers are treated as the first priority.

We want to be a strong and efficient organisation that is prepared and ready for future growth.

How we will integrate

We are taking a deliberate and considered approach to progress integration activities to ensure that our client experience and business as usual are maintained. We spent the first three months of Link Wentworth from April 2021 through to June 2021 setting the strategy for integration planning, engaging staff and developing a plan to commence integration activities in July 2021. It is expected that the integration activities will take about 18-24 months to complete.

During May 2021, the Project Team held workshops across all areas of the business to develop the integration plan for Link Wentworth. The Integration Plan incorporates feedback from a variety of sessions including:

- Executive Leadership Team (ELT) workshop to set the strategy for integration, including how integration will be managed and linkages with the corporate strategy for the organisation.

- Workshops across the organisation to consult more broadly on team requirements. 15 workshops have been held.
- Integration questions for all staff at the staff conference to understand the priorities and assist in bringing staff along on the journey.
- Findings and Integration Priorities agreed by ELT and Senior Management Team (SMT).

The Integration Plan sets out the key integration priorities and takes into consideration required business improvement activity and Business as Usual (BAU) activity. This plan is centred around ‘keeping customers at front of mind’, continuing BAU and continuously improving.

Eight key integration projects have been identified across the whole organisation, with an appropriate Project Governance and Reporting Framework developed to manage the program of works below.



Integration Priorities: The key integration priorities that require detailed project management and require resourcing.

Resources: Resourcing is the key piece to the puzzle, how we use the resources available to us will dictate how well we achieve success.

BAU: BAU includes business as usual activity, including the annual BAU calendar activity.

Business Improvement Activities: Business Improvement Activities that require resources from BAU and/or the transformation team.

- 1. Business Improvement Activity** – Establishing the framework for defining, prioritising, and resourcing business improvement activity.
- 2. Customers** – Setting out the strategy for delivering customer services.
- 3. Finance Systems** – Implement single finance system and processes with full integrated reporting.
- 4. Operations Systems** – Integrate the operations IT systems, including review and alignment of associated processes.
- 5. Policies** – Establishing a policy review framework and align over 120 policies over the next 15 months.
- 6. Structure** – Align the structure across the organisation through consultation.
- 7. Supporting Systems** – Implementation of technology to support integration – including SharePoint, Teams, unified communications (telephones), business intelligence, website.
- 8. Terms and Conditions** – Review staff terms and conditions and recommend process for aligning.

Detailed Project Initiation Documents (PIDs) are being developed for these eight projects in July 2021 and to shortly commence thereafter.



GROW—Generating Real Opportunities for Women—program participants

Operational improvements

Link Wentworth has been involved in a number of key projects to streamline our operations and work more efficiently as a new, improved organisation. All our operational improvements seek to enhance the experience for our customers.

Maintenance Request Handling automation

An in-house solution has been developed to automate data entry and invoices for maintenance requests. The result is an internal app, dubbed 'MAP', which is being rolled out to the Assets Team in the Chatswood Hub for greater efficiencies across their jobs.

The ultimate goal of MAPS is to significantly improve customer experience and make our responses more efficient.

Streamlining our processes to improve service

Link Wentworth is working on improving the way we serve our tenants through redesigning our processes for speedier and more efficient response. We are using new tools to look at our processes to enhance the tenant experience.

Increasing our focus on proactive risk management

Our Legal and Risk team has implemented new risk and compliance software which is aimed at tracking and managing operational risks and compliance tasks. What this means for our tenants is that Link Wentworth can more efficiently track and respond to areas requiring proactive risk management which all adds up to improving the reliability and consistency of our services.

Integrating WHS plans across our six offices

A key task in bringing together our six offices is aligning our Work, Health & Safety at every location. The team has also been busy supporting our Assets teams with processes and technologies to deliver important repairs and maintenance work for our valued tenants in a COVID-safe way during these challenging times.

Accreditation

Link Housing passed accreditation from Independent Auditor BSI in September 2020, against the new ISO standard 45001. This is an excellent result considering the challenges of working from home and coordinating site visits against the backdrop of COVID-19.

The report states: "The WHS committee meetings and participation process was well implemented... The organisation has demonstrated effective system implementation in risk assessments, objectives and targets, internal audits, management review and corrective actions."

Registration

A significant achievement was the Registrar again determining that Link Housing (now Link Wentworth) is compliant with the Regulatory Code as required under section 15(2)(a) of the National Law. The Determination Report confirms that we have been assessed as compliant across all individual performance outcomes and overall. This is testament to all the hard work and commitment across all the organisation.

Green Electricity Contract

Pangolin and Associates (P&A) completed work to estimate the greenhouse emissions by Link Housing (now Link Wentworth) in June 2020. P&A has estimated that the net total carbon emissions for our organisation were 709.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (tCO₂-e) during 2018/19. Out of this, electricity usage was emitting 80.4 tCO₂-e; 11.3% of the total emission.

Given the significant emission caused by this one factor, Link Wentworth worked with Business Services Australia to evaluate electricity options to convert the “black carbon” into “green carbon”. In this process, Link Wentworth considered all the common area sites from its managed and owned property portfolio, along with its then two office locations.

On this basis, it is proposed to sign a “green carbon” contract for electricity for 3 years that will not only benefit the organisation financially but will also significantly improve our carbon footprint.

Outcomes Framework

In early 2019, the then Link Housing developed the ‘Enhancing Lives and Communities’ Outcomes Framework to measure the impact of our services and programs. The framework measures outcomes against the following domains:

- Emotional wellbeing
- Job readiness and employment
- Feeling of safety and security in my neighbourhood
- Overall health
- Levels of education and skills
- Satisfaction with neighbourhood and community

We report on progress in these domains, making that report available to our residents. Various data sets and performance information is used to inform our measures of progress including tenant satisfaction survey, health and well-being survey, post service survey information, feedback from residents and outcomes achieved as a result of these programs.

Link Wentworth Affordable Housing Team on 2 November 2020.
Top row: Mayra, Matthew, Ashley Bottom row: Alicia, Linda, Shannon



Outcomes Statement

2020-21 Chatswood Hub

Wellbeing

Improved emotional wellbeing and mental health



3 new Street Libraries being installed across Northern Sydney portfolio

81% artwork submissions for "No Place Like Home" Art Exhibition 2021 are Link Wentworth residents

94 residents worked with our SST to improve their overall health or condition of their property

27 End of Year celebrations delivered across the Northern Sydney portfolio

66 food boxes and helping hand packages distributed

Employment

Improvement in job readiness and employment



6 established partnerships with employment support agencies

25 residents attended Education and Employment Info Day

184 people attended Digital Discovery program resulting in improved IT skills and job readiness

17 referral to employment services

Safety

Improved feeling of safety and security in my neighbourhood



1,600

meals delivered to our Together Home and SST clients, Beecroft House and Mosman House residents

\$34,410

grant funding secured to deliver Digital Discovery program to improve knowledge about online safety in Northern Sydney portfolio

7 new locations for Local Resident Meetings being offered across Northern Sydney portfolio

2 new ongoing partnerships programs developed as a part of Blaxland Art & Cultural Hub space activation strategy

Health

Improved overall health



77 attendances recorded across 15 Tai Chi sessions offered by Hornsby LGA

4 new Vegepods installed in Northern Sydney portfolio to promote healthy eating and provide produce to be shared within the block

14 residents attended gentle exercise and chair yoga activities weekly at Ryde LGA

42 women were involved in mindfulness program at Mosman LGA

12 residents attended healthy cooking class funded by Womens NSW grant

Education

Improved education attainment



76 residents received a Link Wentworth scholarship in 2020

12 referrals to TAFE and Community Colleges

3.14 net cost benefit for Link Wentworth Scholarship program*

4 established partnerships with education support agencies

Community

Improved satisfaction with neighbourhood and community



36 residents attended the newly set up Mah-jong group

58 residents attended gardening workshop in partnership with Royal Botanic Gardens

4 community rooms reactivated with ongoing well being programs

350 residents attended local End of Year celebrations

4 new community gardens established in Northern Sydney portfolio

*The values used in these calculations, provided by the Australian Social Value Bank, are owned by Alliance Social Enterprises (www.asvb.com.au). They have been produced by Simetrica, using best practice methodology for policy evaluation. These values are used under #a5rR95 with expiry date 31/10/2021

Employer of choice

Building on our existing strengths and reputations, our future growth as Link Wentworth will create greater job and career opportunities for staff.

Our COVID-19 response in 2020

During the first phase of the pandemic, the People & Culture Team organised COVID-19 Wellbeing calls for staff to discuss their wellbeing, their working from home set up and to garner any feedback around how Link Wentworth could better support them.

A roster was organised for frontline staff/staff unable to work from home to work in our offices and in accordance with COVID-19 rules. By early July 2020, the Customer Service Team were deemed essential staff, gaining permission to return to the Chatswood office for alternating weeks. Following this, the West Ryde office re-opened its doors to the public once COVID-19 restrictions eased.

In order to ensure the safety of staff, Link Wentworth was involved in extensive planning in preparation for re-opening, with appropriate social distancing and cleaning measures in place in accordance with NSW Health Regulations. Staff steadily returned to the office as planned and many have provided positive feedback on returning to the office and working with their colleagues and clients. A COVID Return to the Office induction was rolled out to all staff to ensure all staff knew what was expected of them in the office environment and to remain COVID safe.

Link Wentworth is a registered COVID-safe business. To ensure we comply with our requirements, everyone attending our offices must sign in and staff were updated on COVID-19 at fortnightly staff meetings. By 2021,

many staff were able to be in the office regularly and move between locations. We remain committed to upholding COVID-safe protocols and are ready to adapt to any potential change in conditions.

Recruitment and policies

Harmonising key policies

Since 1 April 2021 there have been positive steps taken to build one Link Wentworth across office locations. A new Link Wentworth Code of Conduct was developed and rolled out to staff and all employees have signed their acceptance and understanding of the new Code.

Additionally, the People & Culture Team identified early that there were a number of policies that needed to be created or harmonised across Link Wentworth.

Those policies were:

- Recruitment and Selection Procedure
- Employee Complaints Grievance Handling Procedure
- Performance Improvement Policy
- Employee Planning

Performance Procedure

All of the above policies were created and put into place in the early days of the merger.

Recruitment

The People & Culture Team have put measures in place around recruitment practices, including a new Link Wentworth Recruitment policy and

procedure and an Authority to Recruit form for hiring staff and extending maximum term contracts.

Staff development

Awards

In 2020, former Link Housing hosted end-of-year awards to honour our staff for their commitment and achievements. Below are our outstanding winners.

Service Excellence Award

- Emily Mason
- Robin Fletcher
- Priscilla Aonga

Teamwork & Leadership Award

- Mladenka Stojanovic
- Dennis May

Manager of the Year

- Liz Breden

Team of the Year

Client Services

- Tracey Kahi
- Danielle Matthews
- Celiann Fofoga-Tupai
- Marie Tumbur
- Chelsea Theda
- Manickam Thiagarajan
- Diana King
- Priscilla Aonga
- Bernadette Tabula

Rising Star Award

- Matthew Jackson
- Luke Johnston
- Qilin Fan

Wellbeing

Employee Assistance Provider and Mental Health

Uprise initiated Wellbeing Checks during the month of September 2020, as part of the R U OK day. At this time, the majority of staff were working from home due to the lingering impact of the pandemic.

Our People & Culture Team endeavour to have a good understanding of employee’s mental health, in line with Link Wentworth’s culture, values and the relationships that have been established between managers and staff. Alongside People & Culture, managers organised training, checked in with staff and suggested the use of the modules in Uprise.

Staff Kick Off Event

The first Link Wentworth Staff Kick Off event was held in Parramatta on Wednesday 28 April 2021. Due to a number of restrictions, there was a morning and afternoon session where approximately 160 staff attended.

The sessions had a mix of activities where staff met and got to know each other, we used the Mentimeter technology which allowed staff to provide ideas on the integration via their mobile phones, as well as an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) panel where they were asked a series of questions by our CEO, there was lots of engagement by our staff throughout both sessions.

The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from staff, with regard to the organisation of the event, the location, environment, speakers, and the activities.

ELT participated in a facilitated session (led by Kate Boorer, Founder and CEO, Young Professional Women Australia) the day before to get to know each other better, build connectivity between ELT members and to start planning for the future. The ELT session concluded with Mike Allen joining them for dinner.

Link Wentworth Staff profile

Gender breakdown

74% Female

26% Male

Full-time/part-time

210 Full time

20 Part time

1 Casual

Permanent / Maximum Term

178 Permanent

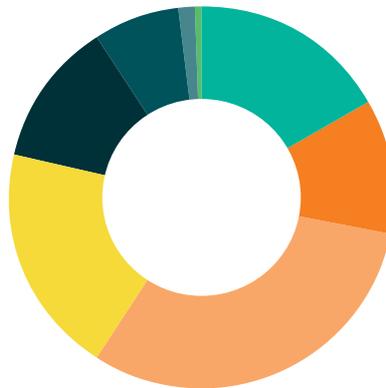
52 Maximum Term

1 Casual

Identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

4

Length of Service



- 0-6 months **39**
- 6 months - 1 year **26**
- 1 year to 3 years **72**
- 3 years to 5 years **45**
- 5 years to 10 years **28**
- 10 years to 15 years **17**
- 15 years - 20 years **3**
- 20 years + **1**

Median Length of Service: 2.6 years

Age Groups



- 15-24 **11 (4.8%)**
- 25-34 **60 (26%)**
- 35-44 **57 (25%)**
- 45-54 **64 (28%)**
- 55-64 **30 (13%)**
- 65+ **9 (3.9%)**

Average age: 42 years

Executive Leadership Team

Andrew McAnulty Chief Executive Officer

Andrew is a respected community housing figure, both nationally and internationally.

He has delivered social, affordable and large-scale urban renewal projects for more than 30 years across Australia and the United Kingdom. Andrew's experience highlights the innovation and vision required to create cutting edge outcomes for projects which link Government, the private sector and the community housing sector – in order to deliver mixed tenure housing and place based urban renewal outcomes which create places for people to thrive.



Mark Woodward Chief Financial Officer (until 30 June 2021)

Mark's experience provides him with the ability to ensure Link Wentworth

continues to be a well-managed and efficient community housing provider, with a sound approach to managing risks and focus on quality of services and outcomes. Prior to joining Link Housing Mark was a Director at KPMG and had previous senior roles at Westpac.

Mark was the former Link Housing CFO and continued with Link Wentworth until 30 June 2021, to ensure a seamless transition to our new CFO. His tremendous contribution over the last five years is gratefully acknowledged.



Sean Carty Chief Property Officer

Sean has delivered social, affordable and market-rate housing outcomes for more than 15

years. With a background in end-to-end property development and asset management, Sean has held senior roles in the government and not-for-profit sectors in the New York metropolitan area and Greater Sydney. He has extensive knowledge of Government and Community Housing and expertise in delivering collaborative housing outcomes across all sectors. Sean has a Bachelor in Financial Management and a Masters in Real Estate Development.



George Bogdanovic Chief Financial Officer (from 15 June 2021)

George has over 25 years experience in finance across the private and public sectors with senior roles in finance, enterprise risk, operations, business development and corporate strategy. He is passionate about creating inclusive communities where both safety and opportunity are available to everyone in our society.

As a C-level executive he has played key leadership roles in major transformation programs and created organisational cultures that support teams to achieve their very best. George holds a Bachelor of Economics, Master of Business Administration and is a Fellow of Chartered Accountants Australia New Zealand.



Margaret Maljkovic Chief Customer Officer

With a career in social housing spanning over 20 years, Margaret has held a series of executive management roles in Housing NSW and then Family and Community Services. She has led major initiatives in community and estate regeneration in some of Sydney's most disadvantaged communities. Her earlier work experiences in the fields of homelessness, domestic violence and drug and alcohol support services have led her to understand the profound importance of stable and affordable housing. This, she believes is both a fundamental human right and a foundation on which people can rebuild their lives and reach out to opportunities.



Eva Gerencer Acting Chief Communications Officer

Passionate about driving results for communities through collaboration, partnerships and relationships, Eva has worked for over 25 years in the community services industry covering a wide range of areas including communications, advocacy, social research and project management. She has led the rebrand of several community organisations and has extensive experience in event management. At Link Wentworth she is responsible for our brand and communications strategy.

Eva has a Bachelor of Arts, Post Graduate Diploma in Adult Education and is completing a Master of Policy and Applied Social Research.



Brianna Ragel
Chief Communications Officer

Maternity leave until November 2021

Brianna has extensive experience in media, marketing and product management that spans 15 years working in Sydney and London. Prior to moving into the not-for-profit sector as Head of Marketing and Communications at Link Housing, Brianna worked in private and corporate client-side and consulting roles.



Tony Smith
Chief Transformation and Integration Officer

Tony has held senior management roles in the financial services, energy, local government and not-for profit sectors. He is skilled in positioning organisations to be financially sustainable and adaptive in meeting opportunities for growth and efficiency. He is a Fellow of Certified Practising Accountants Australia, Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators and Governance Institute of Australia, as well as a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Tony holds a Bachelor of Business and a Graduate Diploma in Local Government Management.



Board members and ELT/SMT breakdown by gender

Board		SMT*	
8	males	11	males
3	females	13	females

*(includes ELT members)

Denise McGrath
Chief People & Culture Officer

Denise’s career in Human Resources (HR) spans more than 17 years. Her expertise includes staff recruitment, selection, induction, administration of HR programs, implementation of tools and systems and the management of performance appraisals and the salary review process. Denise has also developed and implemented employee initiatives including staff rewards and health and wellbeing programs. Her previous roles include Human Resources Associate at Hartmann ANZ and Human Resources Advisor for Link Housing.



Organisational structure

as of 30 June, 2021

Andrew McNulty
CEO

Brid Walker
Executive Assistant

Denise McGrath
Chief People & Culture Officer

Denise Hartman
Head of Learning &
Development

Eva Gerencer
Acting Chief
Communications Officer

*Head of Communications &
Marketing*

Margaret Maljkovic
Chief Customer Officer

Robin Fletcher
Head of Community &
Partnerships
(Chatswood)

Tabarah Hotchkis
Divisional Manager,
Housing Services
(Penrith)

Amanda Murray
Head of Housing Services
(Chatswood) *(Contract)*

Jenny Ranft
Divisional Manager,
Community Services
(Penrith)

Heather Chaffey
Divisional Manager,
Sustainable Communities
(Penrith)

Liz Breden
Acting Area Manager
(Chatswood)

Tony Smith
Chief Transformation & Integration Officer

Kate Smithson
Head of Business
Transformation
(Contract)

Jason Press
IT Manager
(Penrith)

George Bogdanovic
Chief Financial Officer

Dinesha Karunaratna
Acting Head of Finance
(Chatswood) *from 9 August
(Contract)*

Kugan Thiru
Finance Manager
(Penrith)

Nathan Cureton
Head of Legal & Risk

Shiva Mathivannan
Head of Finance
(Chatswood) *until 6 August*

Sean Carty
Chief Property Officer

Paul Hunt
Head of Development

Dragan Velkovski
Divisional Manager,
Asset Services (Penrith)

Gino Espinosa
Head of Assets
(Chatswood)

Case Study

Nurturing our staff

One of the key goals for the merger was to become an employer of choice, which includes creating opportunities for staff to learn, develop and grow within Link Wentworth. Sarah Barr and Billie-Jo Williams both secured promotions as a result of the merger, showing that our expanded organisation is already giving staff more room to grow.

Sarah Barr wasn't sure what to make of the merger when it was first announced.

"Initially there was anxiety," she says. "I think it wouldn't be normal not to have a bit of anxiety, it was such a big change." Sarah was asking herself questions that a lot of her team and co-workers were too—What is this going to look like? What does it mean for me personally?

Prior to 31 March 2021, Sarah was the Team Leader of Rent Review at Wentworth Community Housing. She had been at the organisation for over a decade and owes her tenure to the fact that Wentworth Community Housing was a supportive organisation that challenged her and always appreciated her input.

It was for this reason Sarah says she trusted that both companies were coming together for the right reasons. Now, she says her gut feeling was correct, saying, "I can already see the benefits of us coming together."

Following the merger, Sarah was asked to manage the Rent Review Team on the former Link Housing side too, expanding her remit to six people. "It's giving me experience in leading a bigger team, integrating teams, integrating policies and process," she says. "There's a lot of invaluable experience that I've gained."

Importantly, Sarah recognises that the merger has benefitted her team too. "We're all excited to see how we can improve our processes and service delivery," she says, noting that her staff have felt supported and heard throughout the process.

As a Link Housing employee who had previously worked for Wentworth Community Housing, Billie-Jo Williams was in a unique position when the merger was announced. Almost immediately, the initial shock wore off and she recognised the sheer benefit that the merging of two Tier 1 community housing providers could offer to her clients and to the greater community.

On a personal level, she was also excited to work with her former colleagues too. "I remembered all the awesome people that I previously worked with," she says. "Getting the opportunity to work with them again and reconnect with them was really cool."

In the early days of Link Wentworth, Billie-Jo was offered an opportunity that she was successful in gaining to transition from her office in West Ryde to Windsor and take up an identified role as Aboriginal Specialist Client Service Officer.

The role has not only allowed Billie-Jo to work closer to home but, as a Wiradjuri woman, become more connected to her community. "I feel reconnected to my culture, which has been a really big thing for me," she says. Billie-Jo also says she's observed the merger benefitting her colleagues too, noting that a number of contract roles from the Tenant Consents Team moved on to further work within the company.

"It's an exciting time. I can't wait to see what Link Wentworth does."



Top: Sarah Barr
Bottom: Billie-Jo Williams.

Our Board

Board profile

Mike Allen PSM Chair

Mike Allen is a respected industry leader, independent housing advisor and former Chief Executive Officer of Housing NSW. He has more than 30 years of experience in social housing management and asset services, homelessness, and community and Aboriginal housing. In 2011 he was awarded the Public Service Medal in recognition of his outstanding and meritorious services to the community and for his strong commitment to the values and principles of social housing. Mike holds a Graduate Diploma in Urban Estate Management; and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a Fellow of the Institute of Public Administration Australia and a Life Member Australasian Housing Institute.



Brodie Druett

Brodie is a retired senior public servant formerly with Housing NSW and the Department of Family and Community Services (FACS). He was General Manager for Southern and Western Region in Housing NSW for six years. His latest role prior to retirement was Interim District Director FACS Nepean Blue Mountains. Brodie has a Graduate Certificate in Housing Management and Policy; and is a Member of the Australasian Housing Institute (AHI) and Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Ken Gilbert

Ken is an independent consultant assisting businesses to improve the return on investment in their human capital. Previously Ken held general management roles in municipal councils, senior positions in leading community services teams, and human resources and senior executive roles in companies and management consulting firms. His experience in the corporate and not-for-profit sectors is extensive and he provides specific expertise in the areas of human resources management, strategy development and community networks. Ken holds a Bachelor of Social Work and Bachelor of Business; and is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Nirmal Hansra

Nirmal is the Chair of Campbell Page Ltd and a Non-Executive Director of National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters Ltd, Have a Voice Pty Ltd and Children's Tumour Foundation of Australia. Prior director appointments include Non-Executive Director of Eureka Group Holdings Ltd, Ku-ring-gai Financial Services Ltd and Council of the Aging NSW Inc. He is also an Independent Member of the Audit and Risk Committee for the Property Group of the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and Chair of the Compliance and Risk Committee of Gleneagles Asset Management Ltd. Nirmal has over 35 years executive experience as Finance Director/ Chief Financial Officer of both listed and unlisted companies covering operations in Australia and overseas and over 13 years board and corporate advisory services experience.



Belinda Bentley

Belinda is the founding director of 9Springs, a privately held property investment, development advisory group. Belinda's experience varies from managing complex commercial real estate transactions to being responsible for portfolios and the delivery of transformative projects across the Australian eastern seaboard. Belinda holds a Master of Property Development, NSW Real Estate License (Class 1); and is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Dr Dianne Jackson

Dr Dianne Jackson is an experienced advisor, executive director, and leader in the social sector. She has held several national CEO roles focused on improving the lives of disadvantaged children, and was formally Associate Professor and Director of Strategic Collaborations at Charles Sturt University. Dianne has a keen interest in the social determinants of health and education, and the role of place-based approaches in achieving better outcomes for children and their families. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy – Education/ Social Science, Bachelor of Social Science (Hons First Class), Bachelor of Teaching; and is a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Aimee Lindfield

Aimee is an experienced IT leader who is passionate about enabling business strategy through technology.



She has over 19 years of experience in professional services, including IT strategy and program delivery, management consulting and financial audit. Aimee holds a Bachelor of Business, a Graduate Diploma of Chartered Accounting and is a Graduate Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Simon Maughan Wright

Simon is the owner and principal of ABSA Corporate Advisory, a mergers and acquisitions advisory and transactional business and a private real estate development business. He has been a director of ANZ Investment Bank (Business Sales and Acquisitions), Westpac Business Bank Succession Services, and Group General Manager and Director of a real estate development and asset management group of companies. Simon is qualified in Law with a Post Graduate Diploma in Labour Law, a Master of Business Administration, a real estate license and a Post Graduate Certificate in Digital Management. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Mark McEnallay

Mark is an experienced senior finance executive and currently works as a consultant and Company Director. He provides Governance services to a number of organisations and is a Director of the Australian Psychological Society. Mark has previously held roles with RSL LifeCare Limited, Coca-Cola, Reckitt and Colman, Victa Lawncare and Medical Australia Limited. He is a Fellow of CPA Australia, the Australian Institute of Company Directors and the Governance Institute of Australia.



Kerry Robinson OAM

Kerry is Chief Executive Officer of Blacktown City Council where he leads a team of 2,200 staff with an annual budget of more than \$800M. He is the Deputy Chairman of: Civic Risk Mutual Limited; of Blacktown Venue Management Limited; and, of Blacktown and Mount Druitt Hospitals Foundation Limited. He is a Member of the University of New South Wales' City Futures Research Centre advisory panel. Kerry has over 30 years of experience in the property industry having held senior roles in corporations and Government and is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Andrew Sweeney

Andrew has 40 years of experience in various property sectors. This includes 14 years at Lend Lease in property development roles. In 2005, Andrew co-founded Greengate to provide quality care-based housing for the elderly. Andrew currently holds an executive role with Keppel Capital, a Singaporean property and infrastructure fund manager, and is a Director on a joint venture board with Australian Unity. In 2012 he initiated the community group Support Lindfield with other locals to create a new heart for the area. Andrew holds Built Environment and Architecture Degrees; and is a Registered Architect (Qld, NSW) and Licensed Real Estate Agent (NSW).



We also recognise the contributions of the following Directors that resigned from the Link Housing Board on 31 March 2021: Melanie Leijer and Andrew McAnulty.

We also acknowledge long-standing member of the Wentworth Community Housing Board, Amanda Anker, who did not elect to join the Link Wentworth Board.

Financials

Three-year financial results at a glance

ACN 003 084 928

The following financial information disclosures are derived from the Company's financial accounts and presented for additional information. These disclosures are not specified in Australian Accounting Standards, are not audited, and are not a substitute for the audited Statutory Accounts.

	FY 19 \$'000	FY 20 \$'000	FY 21 \$'000
Operating Results			
Property Income	30,376	39,838	46,285
Grants & Subsidies	8,858	9,355	15,664
Property Related Income	39,234	49,192	61,949
Rental & Outgoing Expenses	17,013	6,492	7,457
Property Maintenance	2,974	5,689	8,056
Tenant Support Services	7,342	9,337	12,216
Property Related Expenses	27,329	21,518	27,729
Tenant Advocacy & Governance	3,393	4,413	7,076
Depreciation & Amortisation	3,300	4,337	5,570
Operating Surplus	5,212	18,925	21,574
Net Interest Income/(Expense)	(345)	(2,902)	(2,900)
Property Revaluations	19,144	(11,555)	2,887
Net Surplus	24,011	4,468	21,561
Number of Dwellings	3,868	3,917	6,399
Balance Sheet			
Investment Properties	125,919	188,621	310,853
Cash & Term Deposits	15,580	19,430	33,220
Other Assets	23,763	27,564	44,371
Total Assets	165,262	235,615	388,444
Bank Borrowings	3,679	3,235	-
Lease Liabilities	357	68,460	101,432
Grants In Advance	2,324	3,157	12,376
Other liabilities	19,966	17,002	23,115
Total Liabilities	25,969	91,854	136,923
Net Assets	139,293	143,761	251,521

Thank you

Our funders and partners, including



Women NSW, DCJ,
Multicultural NSW



northern
beaches
council



PENRITH
CITY COUNCIL

City of Ryde



the northern centre
care. connect. grow. our community

**Darcy St.
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**WOMEN'S
COMMUNITY
SHELTERS**



Health
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Local Health District



Tzu Chi
Foundation



MAX SOLUTIONS
Employment . Support . Community





**Link
Wentworth**

Providing homes, building futures.

Chatswood

Level 10, 67 Albert Avenue,
Chatswood NSW 2067

Katoomba

Level 2, 98 Bathurst St,
Katoomba NSW 2780

Lithgow

42 Main Street,
Lithgow NSW 2790

Penrith

Borec House, Suite 1002, Level 1,
29-57 Station Street,
Penrith NSW 2750

West Ryde

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West Ryde NSW 2114

Windsor

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South Windsor NSW 2756

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