

beyond the letterbox



SMOKE ALARM SAVES BROOME FAMILY

A newly installed smoke alarm recently saved the lives of a young Broome family, highlighting the fact that it is vital that tenants check smoke alarms and RCDs regularly and report problems if they do not work.

The property of a single dad and his three young boys underwent its annual rental inspection during which Kimberley Region Housing Service Officer (HSO), Samantha Wyborn, noticed that the smoke alarm was detached from the ceiling.

"Knowing the drastic consequences of a broken smoke alarm, I made sure I recorded this in my PDA and on return to the office, issued an immediate job order to renew the item," Ms Wyborn said.

"It is really scary to think what may have happened if I hadn't noticed the alarm was broken. This incident has really emphasised to me that these crucial inspections can actually save lives."

Living in the Broome home was Mr Hunter, a single father of four children, one of whom has a disability.

A few weeks later the new smoke alarm alerted Mr Hunter to a fire inside the home and he discovered the bedroom of his youngest son ablaze.

"Mr Hunter tried to smother the flames with his hands to no avail, but managed to get his family out of the house before trying to extinguish the fire with the garden hose," Kimberley Regional Manager, Shayne Hills said. "The house is extensively damaged having been gutted by the fire after it took hold."

THIS SPRING EDITION OF BEYOND THE LETTERBOX IS ALL ABOUT SAFETY.

We've spent the past year working on our program to ensure all of our 40,000 properties have two key safety devices - residual current devices (RCDs) to protect you from electrical faults, and smoke alarms to protect you against fire. The story here on the Hunter family in Broome will show you why this is important.

Please take the time to read this newsletter carefully and check the safety devices in your home. If you have recently come from a private rental property you may not be aware of the safety devices in your new home.

Please keep yourself and your family safe and check the RCDs and smoke alarms in your property. Call Housing Direct on 1300 137 677 if you have any concerns.

Have a safe and enjoyable spring.



***If you have a safety concern, please call
Housing Direct on 1300 137 677***

SMOKE ALARM SAVES BROOME FAMILY (CONTINUED)

“Both smoke alarms were melted to the point where it was difficult to recognise them and the heat was so intense the shower screen looked as if it had started to melt.

“Fortunately, the Department had an appropriate property available and the family were able to move, after furniture and white goods were provided from ex-Government Regional Officer Housing homes.”

Staff members from the Departments of Child Protection, Disability Services and Housing rallied round and made donations to provide the family with kitchen basics, clothes and toiletries which has helped give their new house a sense of home.

“If Samantha hadn’t been so observant at the inspection, and the smoke alarm hadn’t been replaced, there could have been a very different outcome for this family,” General Manager Service Delivery, Steve Parry said.

“This incident demonstrates that tenants should regularly check both their smoke alarms and RCDs.

“If they find they are not working they should inform their HSO immediately – it could save a life.”

Please see the diagram on page 3 of this newsletter to learn how you can check your smoke alarm and RCD switches at home.



RESIDENTS RETURN TO WARMUN

Warmun residents celebrated their return home only three months after their community was declared a disaster area and evacuated due to flooding.

Deputy Premier Kim Hames and Minister for Regional Development Brendon Grylls were on hand to welcome the community back home. Both Ministers praised the combined State Government effort to rebuild the community and re-house the evacuees.

“The Warmun Re-Establishment Taskforce coordinated this effort, overseeing the Department of Housing’s creation of 17 new homes, fully refurbishing another eight and building a temporary accommodation facility to house 200,” Dr Hames said.

“Temporary schooling and health clinic facilities have been built, in addition to the refurbishment of the community store and office, to support the residents’ return home.

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“To do this in three months is testament to what can be achieved, and all involved deserve to be congratulated because more than 90 per cent of the community’s homes had been damaged or destroyed by the flood.”

General Managers Service Delivery and Commercial and Business Operations Steve Parry and Paul Whyte both joined the celebrations.

“The rebuilding of Warmun has been a major undertaking for the Department,” Mr Parry said.

“To be here to see the work that has been completed and the happy faces of the residents is just fantastic.”

Former West Coast Eagle David Wirrpanda was present to deliver the results of a blanket and clothing drive that his foundation had run in conjunction with the Department.

The local football team, the Warmun Eagles, play in the same colours as the West Coast Eagles, so the former player was a great hit with the kids.

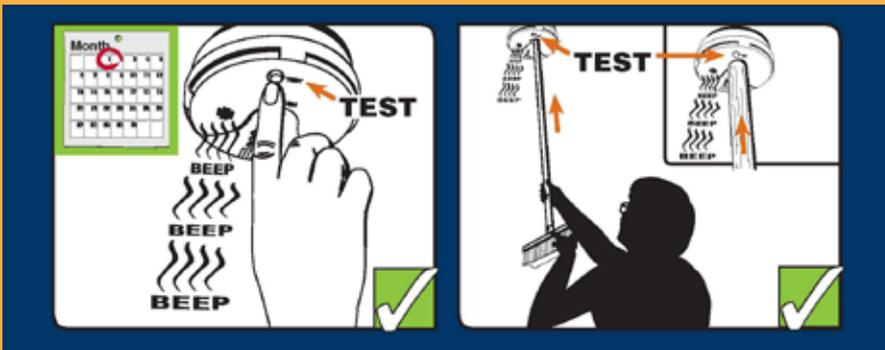
“David was kept very busy all day signing autographs and talking to the kids. They loved having him there,” Mr Parry said.

DO YOUR PART - MAKE SURE YOUR PLACE IS SAFE

To make sure that you are safe, please test your RCD and smoke alarms on a regular basis.

SMOKE ALARM TESTING

To test your smoke Alarm press the TEST button and it should make a sound, if you do not hear that sound, you need to tell your Housing Services Officer straight away.



DO NOT use a screw driver or put sticky tape over the smoke alarm.

You need to tell your Housing Services Officer straight away if you have any problems.

RCD TESTING

You should have at least 2 RCD's with test buttons.

If you do not please contact your Housing Services Officer.



1. To test your RCD, press the button on your RCD; you should hear a 'click', the lever will flip downwards in the 'off' position.
2. If the RCD does not flip downwards, you need to tell your Housing Services Officer straight away.
3. If the lever does flip downwards, then it works.
4. Flip the lever upwards to 'on' and this will turn your power on.

If you notice a problem with your RCD or smoke alarm please call Housing Direct on 1300 137 677

RESIDENTS RETURN TO WARMUN - (Continued from page 2)

"The WA Football Commission, West Coast Eagles and Netball WA all donated sporting equipment for the children of Warmun which was presented as part of the celebrations. Sport is a huge part of Warmun life and every child was presented with a sporting pack with either a netball or football."

Ensuring everyone in the Kimberley could share in the homecoming, ABC Kimberley broadcast its morning show live from Warmun. SBS and The West Australian were also in town to cover the event.



From this ...



... to this, in thirteen weeks

DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Department has introduced a new Disruptive Behaviour Management Strategy to address antisocial behaviour in public housing.

HOW MIGHT THIS AFFECT ME?

While the majority of public housing tenants are considerate neighbours and respect the community in which they live, the behaviour of a small number of tenants can disturb the peace and safety of other tenants or residents in the neighbourhood. We recognise that being a good neighbour is a two way street but it is in your interest to ensure that things don't get out of hand.

Antisocial behaviour is regarded as a breach of tenancy and is treated very seriously by the Department. Examples include fights and unruly behaviour, parties that get out of hand, playing very loud music, abusive language, entering neighbourhood properties without permission and interfering with other people's possessions. Remember: you are also responsible for the behaviour of your visitors. If they misbehave, you will have to take the blame.

Under this new strategy, the Department is taking stronger action for repeated instances of disruption, including evicting tenants who disregard intervention efforts and formal warnings or strikes.

As well as stronger sanctions, the Department is offering more support to tenants. A range of options will be offered to assist with retaining tenancies. Failure to make changes to behaviour will have serious consequences for tenants. We aim to help tenants solve problems before they get out of hand.

The Department works hard to filter out complaints that are unreasonable or trivial. We investigate the circumstances of complaints thoroughly and generally take formal action only when we have been unable to resolve the situation through other means.

HOW CAN I REPORT DISRUPTIVE BEHAVIOUR?

A central Disruptive Behaviour Reporting Line has been established to make it easier for people to raise concerns about disruptive tenants. The Disruptive Behaviour Reporting Line can be reached on:

1300 597 076. An online complaints form is also available on the Department of Housing's web site

www.housing.wa.gov.au