homesnorth

homes | lives | communities

TENANT NEWSLETTER ❖ SPRING 2025 EDITION

6 TENANTS CATCH GREEN THUMB FEVER: SEEDLING SWAPS IN ARMIDALE AND MOREE

To celebrate the arrival of spring — and to launch our From Pots to Plots Garden Competition — Homes North recently hosted seedling swaps in Armidale and Moree.

Tenants stopped by our offices to collect seedlings and kick-start their gardens. There are still a few seedlings available, so if you'd like to get growing and join the competition, now's the perfect time! Reach out to reo@homesnorth.org.au.

The competition has categories to suit all gardeners. Find out more about the From Pots to Plots Garden Competition on page 6.

From left: Homes North tenants Moira Messner & Kevin McDougall with Resident Engagement Coordinator, Bec Haney.

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9 QUICK & EASY TIPS TO REFRESH YOUR HOME

Refresh every corner and space in your home after winter with our quick and easy cleaning and decluttering tips. See page 9 for more.

ARMIDALE
246-248 Beardy Street
(PO Box 1146)
Armidale NSW 2350
02 6772 5133

GLEN INNES
268 Grey Street
(PO Box 538)
Glen Innes NSW 2370
02 6732 3652

GUNNEDAH
162 Conadilly Street
(PO Box 437)
Gunnedah NSW 2380
02 6742 0363

INVERELL
23 Oliver Street
(PO Box 426)
Inverell NSW 2360
02 6722 5137

MOREE
2/25 Auburn Street
(PO Box 487)
Moree NSW 2400
02 6752 4440

TAMWORTH
3-5 White Street
(PO Box 1452)
Tamworth NSW 2340
02 6766 6897

COLEDALE
2 Kenny Drive
(PO Box 1452)
Tamworth NSW 2340
02 6765 8879

WELCOME TO THE SPRING EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER

Hoorah for spring across the New England and North West! What a beautiful season it has been so far. It's a great time of year to think about opportunities, second chances and new beginnings.

Which brings me to share an update on our "Gen-Z Living Your Best Life" youth program. This initiative was run by the team at Homes North and has been incredibly successful in empowering our younger tenants and residents to reach their full potential. The program was run in a supportive and caring environment and provided young people with lots of resources, skills and opportunity to feel confident about their capabilities and futures. The program builds on strength and hope rather than highlight things that need fixing (that never feels good!). I attended the celebration dinner on completion of the program, along with Tamworth MP Kevin Anderson. We were both blown away by the potential in the room. It was truly inspiring to see young people that Community has neglected and often demonised looking forward to their futures. I look forward to seeing even more success stories emerge from our talented Gen-Z community.

Speaking of hope, I am thrilled to announce that our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) 2025 has been officially endorsed by Reconciliation Australia. Our original RAP was approved in 2017, and since then, we have continued to build on our efforts to promote reconciliation within our communities. Eight years later, we understand that reconciliation is a very long-term commitment that cannot be forced. It takes time, continuous engagement, effort and ongoing commitment to foster strong and respectful relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

It's important to remember that reconciliation happens bit by bit, as does the growth and development of our young people. Let's be on the side of doing our bit for both.

Warm regards,

Maree McKenzie
Chief Executive Officer

HOMES NORTH COMMUNITY NOTICE BOARD

2025 – 2027 RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN PUBLISHED

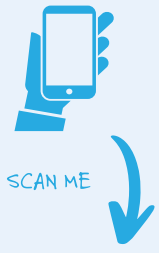
Homes North's third Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has been formally endorsed by Reconciliation Australia.

Our RAP is all about working alongside Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – listening, learning, and taking meaningful action together. It's about weaving reconciliation into everything we do – from the way we provide housing, to the relationships we build, and the communities we support.

Our commitments include:

- building respectful and genuine relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- embedding cultural awareness and safety across our services
- expanding employment and development pathways for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- advocating for equity and self-determination, and
- celebrating important cultural events including National Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks.

You can explore the full RAP, our commitments, and the stories behind the artwork on our website at https://homesnorth.org.au/reconciliation-action-plan/ – scan the QR code.



https://homesnorth.org.au/reconciliation-action-plan/

READY SET RENT PROGRAM WINS AWARD

Our Ready Set Rent program has been named the 2025 NSW/ACT Winner in the Leading Innovation category at the AHI Brighter Future Awards.

This award celebrates the impact of Ready Set Rent—a program that helps people move from homelessness and living in temporary accommodation into safe, secure, and long-term housing.

By focusing on self-care, community connection, financial literacy, and tenancy rights, Ready Set Rent helps clients prepare for the responsibilities of renting.

Since the start of the program our new tenants are building confidence and are creating a more stable home for themselves and their family.

BE FLEA-SAFE THIS SPRING

Fleas are most active during warmer months of the year. They thrive in warm and humid environments. Adult fleas reproduce rapidly leading to potential infestations in homes and on pets. Check your pet for fleas during the evening, they are most visible at this time.

IT'S A WRAP! GEN-Z LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE PROGRAM CELEBRATES GROWTH & SUCCESS

Homes North's Gen-Z Living Your Best Life program has come to a close, with twelve weeks of learning, laughter, and life skills celebrated at a celebration dinner in Tamworth.

The program gave the young participants the chance to build confidence, connect with community, and gain practical skills for adult life. The final weeks were packed with activities that tackled some of the biggest challenges young people face today.

WEEKS 7 TO 12: BIG TOPICS & REAL CONVERSATIONS

Weeks 7 to 12 of the program covered big topics that matter to young people—health and self-care, staying safe at home and in the community, mental health, relationships, and teamwork.

Program participants learnt CPR and first aid, explored healthy relationships and the role of culture in keeping communities strong, and participated in an epic treasure hunt across Tamworth. Participants built teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills they'll carry into adult life.

At the final night, Gen-Z participants, program sponsors and service providers, special guests and a number of Homes North staff attended a celebration dinner featuring guest speaker Isaiah Dawe, Founder and CEO of *ID. Know Yourself*. Isaiah was an inspirational speaker, sharing his story of resilience and leadership with the group.

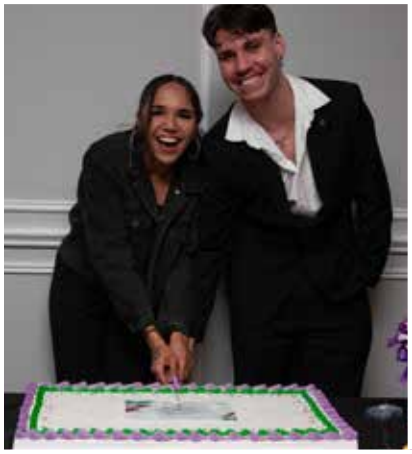
> **"The Gen-Z program was about equipping young adults with not just knowledge, but real-life experiences they can carry into the future. The growth, resilience, and confidence shown by participants is inspiring, and we're so proud of every single young person who completed the program."** – Maree McKenzie, Chief Executive Officer, Homes North

GEN-Z LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE RESULTS

Feedback showed just how valuable the program has been:

- 87% felt more confident with everyday responsibilities like budgeting and renting.
- 83% felt more connected to community and peers.
- 81% gained practical strategies to support their mental health.

Back row, from left: Thomas Dando, Rhyarna Turner, Shania Taylor, Courtney Foster, Sheyanne Davis, Maryanne Gordon, Jason Towney, Tobias White, Kevin Anderson MLA, and Homes North CEO Maree McKenzie.
Front row from left: Mitchell Hammond, Tayla Johnson, Tanisha Cooper, Brooke Vale and Damon Williams.



GEN-Z Living Your Best Life Youth Program Celebration Dinner

Above from left: Brooke Vale and Jason Towney cutting the cake; Tayla Johnson, Caitlyn Butler, and Rhyarna Turner; and Isaiah Dawe, Founder and CEO of ID. Know Yourself.

- 79% felt better prepared to make safe choices around health and relationships.

TAMWORTH HOMELESS CONNECT DAY

In the weeks after the workshops finished, Gen-Z participants joined Homes North staff at Tamworth Homeless Connect Day. It was great see them jumping in, helping wherever they could, and gaining valuable insight into the power of community action.

FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE SHORT PROGRAM

We're excited to share that Gen-Z participants have taken the next step and are now running their own self-designed project – Foundations for the Future – a series of five workshops for youth aged 14-25 years, launching during Mental Health Month.

FROM POTS TO PLOTS: BIG OR SMALL JOIN OUR GARDEN COMPETITION

A garden doesn't need to be grand to be great. And every garden has a story, some brighten up the view and many are simply a little spot of peace. We want to celebrate the green thumbs and the 'give-it-a-go' gardeners in our community.

Our gardening competition – From Pots to Plots is all about celebrating the gardens that make our homes and communities bloom. Share your garden with us – big or small – and inspire others to get growing!

FROM POTS TO PLOTS: HOMES NORTH'S GARDENING COMPETITION

We've created categories to celebrate different styles and spaces, so no matter where your garden is, you can find a category to suit you.

COMPETITION CATEGORIES

1. Potted Plant Garden
   Creative use of pots, containers, and planters, for example, on your veranda or in your courtyard.

2. Outdoor Garden
   Yards, lawns, or outdoor garden spaces around your home.

3. Indoor Garden
   Houseplants or indoor green spaces you have created inside your home.

4. Best Unit Complex Garden
   Gardens created in or around your unit complex. For example, gardens in your shared spaces.

There will be one prize awarded for each category in Armidale, Glen Innes/Tenterfield, Gunnedah, Inverell, Moree, Tamworth, and Coledale. All winners will be celebrated in our Tenant Newsletter and on our Facebook page – so no matter the size or style of your garden, your creativity could inspire others in our community to discover their own green thumb.

HOW TO ENTER

Check out the flyer and submission form in this newsletter for all the details, or contact Hayley Ford on 6772 5133.

DAMON WILLIAMS BUILDS A STABLE FUTURE WITH HOMES NORTH

Damon Williams has achieved something many young people dream of—moving into his own home and starting to build a stable future.

After eight months in temporary accommodation, Damon secured a long-term tenancy through Homes North's HYPAR program (Helping Youth Progress, Achieve, Retain). With the guidance of his Housing Support Case Worker, Alex Goodenough, Damon completed Homes North's Ready Set Rent (RSR) program, which gave him the skills and confidence to rent independently.

“I love the place and where it is at,” Damon says with a smile. “I felt ecstatic when I got the keys to my own home. There was a slight worry about the moving process, but I found I had great support from the youth team, especially Alex.”

Before starting the RSR program, Damon admits he felt overwhelmed by the idea of renting. “I didn’t understand the process of renting and was worried about the costs,” he recalls. “But RSR taught me I didn’t need to be afraid. It resolved those fears and gave me solutions.”

Damon learned about budgeting, home safety, and understanding rental agreements. A highlight was 'Finding That Extra $20' module. “I found closure in my fears of financial burden once I was educated on money-saving tips and tricks,” he said.

"Having somewhere to live comfortably, food on the table, and all my necessities covered—that's stability to me." – Damon Williams

Above from left: Damon Williams, Mitchell Hammond, Cathy Noon, Isaiah Dawe (Founder and CEO of ID. Know Yourself), Thomas Dando, and Sheyanne Davis at the Gen-Z youth program Celebration Dinner.

Damon recently completed Home North's Gen-Z: Living Your Best Life youth program, which boosted his confidence and prepared him further for independent living.

“Having somewhere to live comfortably, having food on the table, and all my necessities covered—that’s what stability means to me. I believe I have that now thanks to the Homes North Community Housing team and the programs I’ve participated in.”

Damon now encourages others in similar situations, “Take that first step. Ask for support, complete the programs—it will change your life.”

FRESH AIR IS YOUR BEST FRIEND: KEEPING MOULD AWAY

Homes North tenant, Katrina Faulkner felt like she was losing a silent battle inside her own home.

No matter how often she cleaned, that musty smell would return, and with it, patches of mould creeping across the walls and windowsills. But not anymore!

After months of trial and error, Katrina finally found a solution for her mould problem, and now, she's passionate about sharing it with others who may be facing the same hidden menace.

"The first thing I learned was how important airflow is," she said. "Just cracking the windows, even a little, makes a huge difference. Fresh air helps stop the moisture from building up in the first place."

Katrina also discovered the power of simple household products. "Vinegar became my go-to," she explained. "It's natural, effective, and really helps kill mould spores on contact."

For her bathroom, she says "Bleach is great in those really damp spots, like the shower or under the sink. I use it regularly to keep everything clean and under control."

And in the areas most prone to moisture, Katrina relies on moisture beads. "They're such an easy way to keep humidity down. I just pop them in little containers and let them do their thing."

Now, her home smells fresh, looks clean, and most importantly, is healthy.

Katrina with Homes North Resident Engagement Coordinator Caitlyn Butler.

Katrina says, in her battle against mould, the first thing she learned was how important airflow is, "Just cracking the windows, even a little, makes a huge difference. Fresh air helps stop the moisture from building up in the first place."

WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP: If mould keeps coming back, spreads quickly, or covers a large area, please contact your local Homes North office. Some mould problems may need professional attention.

QUICK & EASY TIPS TO FRESHEN UP YOUR SPACE AFTER WINTER

1 FRESHEN UP YOUR KITCHEN, BATHROOM & LAUNDRY

Kitchen: Clean stovetops, oven, rangehood filters, cupboards (inside & outside) and splashbacks.

Bathroom: Scrub grout, tiles, shower screens, exhaust fans & taps.

Laundry: Wipe lint from the dryer, clean around the taps, and sweep behind the washing machine.

2 FLOORS, WALLS, WINDOWS & SURFACES

Floors: Vacuum & mop all floors, including edges and corners.

Walls & Doors: Wipe over walls and doors with mild soapy warm water.

Windows & Sills: Clean inside windows, wipe frames and tracks, and clean dusty fly screens.

3 FRONT DOOR ENTRY & OUTDOORS

Veranda, Patio or Courtyard: Sweep, mop, or hose down surfaces.

Garden: Mow lawn, pull weeds, trim hedges, and remove rubbish.

Bins: Wash out garbage bins and recycling bins to reduce odours.

4 DECLUTTER YOUR SPACE & FRESHEN UP

Wardrobes & Cupboards: Organise your wardrobe and cupboards, including the linen cupboard, and donate what you do not wear or use.

Fridge & Pantry: Toss out expired items and clean out your fridge and freezer.

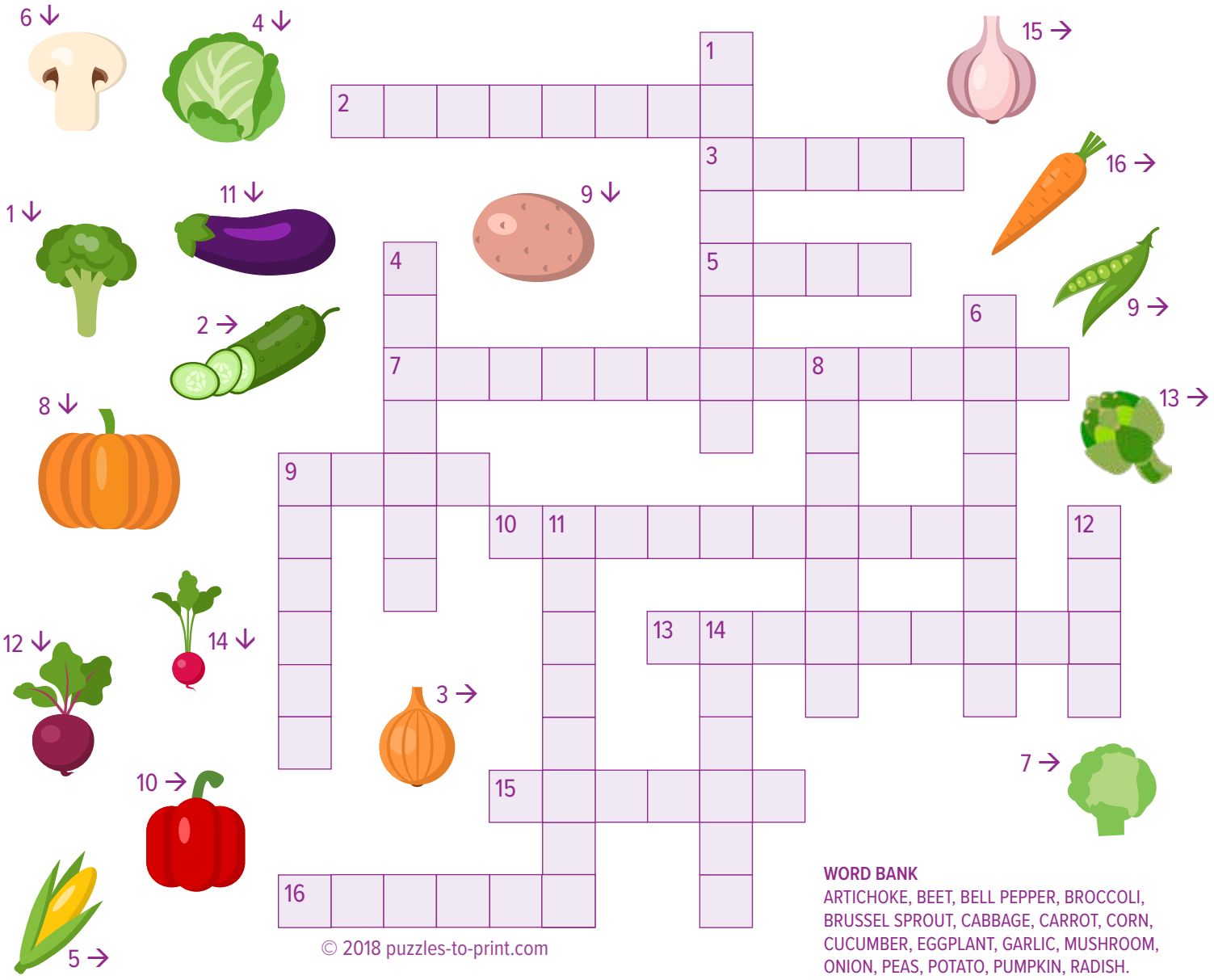
Let Fresh Air Flow: Open windows and freshen carpets with baking soda sprinkled on your carpets before vacuuming.

KID'S CORNER
GAMES AND PUZZLES

VEGETABLES CROSSWORD

DIRECTIONS

Fill in the crossword puzzle grid with the names of the vegetable using the numbers and arrows.
Use the word bank if you get stuck.



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WORD BANK

ARTICHOKE, BEET, BELL PEPPER, BROCCOLI, BRUSSEL SPROUT, CABBAGE, CARROT, CORN, CUCUMBER, EGGPLANT, GARLIC, MUSHROOM, ONION, PEAS, POTATO, PUMPKIN, RADISH.

VEGETABLE & FRUIT WORD SEARCH

DIRECTIONS

Find and circle the vegetable and fruit names in the grid.
Look for them in all directions, including backwards and diagonally.

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

~~APPLE~~
APRICOT
ARTICHOKE
BANANA
BEANS
BEETROOT
BELL PEPPER
BROCCOLI
BRUSSEL SPROUT
CABBAGE
CARROTS
CELERY
CORN
CUCUMBER
EGGPLANT
FIGS
GARLIC
GRAPES
LEEKS
LEMONS
LETTUCE
MANGO
MUSHROOM
OLIVE
ONION
ORANGES
PEACH
PEAR
PEAS
PLUM
POTATO
PUMPKIN
RADISH
TOMATO
SPINACH
SQUASH

PLEASE KEEP IN TOUCH

As a **valued member** of the Homes North community, we ask that you update your contact details to make it easier for us to keep in touch with you. It's easy to update your contact details – your home phone number, email address, and mobile phone number. You can:

1. use our website contact form (simply scan the QR Code to the right and it will take you to the online form),
2. tell us in person, the next time you are in your local Homes North office, let reception know you'd like to update your contact details, or
3. phone us, see list of office phone numbers below.

HOW TO SCAN A QR CODE

1. Open the built-in camera app
2. Point the camera at the QR code
3. Tap the banner that appears on your screen

https://homesnorth.org.au/update-your-contact-details/

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Stay in-touch. Community events are advertised on our Facebook page, follow and/or like us today www.facebook.com/homesnorthcommunityhousing.

Homes North would like to acknowledge and recognise the traditional custodians of the land and waters where we work. We extend our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the tradition and culture, while encouraging the hopes of future generations.