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ISSN 1175-8058

# Close to Home

Issue 52 | SEPTEMBER 2019

## Mr Fix-it's 'man-cave'



Abdul and Mahmuda receiving their Pride in Your Home Award from Housing New Zealand Regional Tenancy Manager Tania.

**"I'm proud of Abdul because he's a very kind man," says Mahmuda about her husband, who is known around his pensioner complex in Hillsborough as 'Mr Fix-it'.**

The 83-year-old was fondly given this name for the work he does repairing old furniture for his neighbours and the many improvements he has made to the complex's common areas. He's also someone who will offer a helping hand to anyone who needs it - from helping residents

by carrying their shopping bags to gifting them mint and parsley from his flourishing garden.

Abdul, who is skilled in carpentry, does all his repair work from his well-stocked 'man-cave' located next to the common room that his previous tenancy manager helped him to create.

He says doing this work helps him to stay fit and healthy, keeps his mind active and is a great way to make friends.

In August Abdul and Mahmuda received a Pride in Your Home Award, for their lovely home and garden and the ongoing work Abdul does for his neighbours.

The residents at Hillsborough joined in the afternoon tea to celebrate their friend and neighbour. They laughed as they said they would be there all day if they were to list how many times Abdul had helped them.

**Housing New Zealand**  
Housing New Zealand Corporation





## Introducing Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities

We recently sent you a letter to let you know Housing New Zealand will become part of a new organisation called Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities from **1 October 2019**.

Kāinga Ora will support people across New Zealand to have good quality, affordable homes, and live in strong, healthy communities.



Kāinga Ora brings together Housing New Zealand, its subsidiary HLC, and KiwiBuild to build better cities, towns and communities for New Zealanders, in partnership with other agencies, local government, iwi and Māori, as well as private organisations.

**While our name is changing, you'll continue to receive the same level of support and care from us that you do today.**

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### Key things to remember:

-  On 1 October, Kāinga Ora will become your landlord. You'll continue to live in your home and your rent won't change when Housing New Zealand becomes part of Kāinga Ora.
  -  Our bank account number and name are not changing, so you don't need to make any changes with your bank.
  -  From 1 October, when you call our Customer Support Centre on our freephone 0800 801 601, we'll answer the phone with 'Welcome to Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities'. You can ask us the same questions you ask now, including requesting repairs to your home.
  -  If you want to write us a letter after 1 October 2019, use: Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, PO Box 2628, Wellington 6140. Apart from the new name, this is the same address you use now.
  -  If you want to send us an email after 1 October 2019, use: [enquiries1@kaingaora.govt.nz](mailto:enquiries1@kaingaora.govt.nz)
  -  The Ministry of Social Development will continue to assess people's need for a house, income-related rent and any changes in circumstances you might have.
  -  From 1 October our emails and letters to you will include our new name Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities and our new logo.
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### If you have any questions or need help

If you have any questions at all about Housing New Zealand becoming Kāinga Ora – Homes and Communities, contact us on freephone **0800 801 601** or visit one of our offices.

# 04



## FREE HEALTH ADVICE

If you need advice about influenza or immunisation, or have any other concerns about your health or your family's health, call Healthline.

☎ **0800 611 116**

🕒 **24 hours, 7 days a week**

All calls are taken by a registered nurse.



## Neat idea leads to smarter streets



Skip-tastic – the bins lined up ready to be filled.

The sun was shining and the BBQ was sizzling as Housing New Zealand tenants, staff and local volunteers all pitched in to help recycle and remove rubbish as part of Neat Streets, a community event led by Ōtara-Papatoetoe Local Board in Auckland.

The event was designed to help the local community remove rubbish and learn more about how to better reuse, recycle and reduce waste.

Tenants were provided with skip bins to help remove rubbish and were offered free lawn mowing, as well as lawn mower and bike repair services. There was also a swap meet and a composting workshop.

To keep the kids entertained, there was face painting, and a bouncy castle was onsite along with a free sausage sizzle.

Volunteers and services were also provided by:

- Manurewa Marae
- Kennards
- Hirepool
- De La Salle
- Māori Wardens
- Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
- Swap Sale
- Abilities Group E-Waste recycling
- Sims Pacific Metals
- Compost Collective
- Mr Tee Bike Repairs.

## Be wai wise

We don't want to run out of water this summer, so check out these tips to help save water.

### Inside your home

- Turn off the tap when brushing your teeth.
- Limit your showers to four minutes or less.
- Use a bucket to catch water while the shower warms up. You can pour this water on your garden.

### Outside your home

- Use a bucket of soapy water to clean your car. Only use the hose for a quick spray to finish.
- Use a broom to sweep your paths rather than a hose.
- Water your plants in the early morning or evening to minimise evaporation.

### Check for leaks

- Look for dripping taps.
- Check your appliances for leaks. Look behind your hot water cylinder and washing machine for leaking hoses, seals or taps and check for water pooled underneath.

If you find a leak, let us know. Call us on 0800 801 601.





Create as much space as possible between the heads of sleeping children.



Try 'topping and tailing' if your children share a bed.



Try not to have lots of people sleeping together in one room.

# CHOICE TO RETURN



**If you have to move to make way for redevelopment the choice is yours as to which community you want to live in.**

To meet growing demand for warm, dry state houses, Housing New Zealand is building thousands of new homes on land we own. Before we can start, though, we often have to re-house tenants into another home to make way for redevelopment.

If you are affected by redevelopment, and have to be re-housed, a tenancy liaison officer will ask you about where you prefer to live. They will take into account where your children are going to school or tertiary education, where your job might be and where things like your doctor or church are located.

We understand that leaving your community can be stressful and disruptive, so Housing New Zealand has created a policy to make sure all tenants affected by redevelopment have the choice to return to their local community as soon as possible.

That means that if we have to re-house you we'll try our best to find a permanent home in your current community, if that's what you'd like. If we can't find a suitable home in your local community straight away, we will move you temporarily and prioritise the search for a replacement home for you. If you don't want to remain in your local community, or if you find you're happy in a home outside the area, you won't have to return to the original suburb.

The Choice to Return policy has been created to house as many of our tenants as possible in communities that fit with their lives. It might take time to find the house that does fit, but freeing up land to build more homes improves things for everyone. If you are affected by one of our redevelopments and have to move, the decision on which community you live in will be led by you.



**The Government has introduced some new standards for all rental homes to make them warm, dry and safe for you.**

We've already done a lot of work to our homes, but work is still needed for us to meet the new standards. There are minimum requirements for:

- Insulation
- Ventilation
- Moisture and drainage
- Draught stopping
- Heating

We've also decided we'll exceed the regulations and provide you with a heating solution that helps your whole home maintain a healthy temperature.

This is a big programme that will take place over the next four years, so we have already started planning which homes we'll start work on this year. Like any planned work we do on your home, we will always let you know first.



It's also the perfect time for you to quit for your pet. When you smoke around your animal, they're twice as likely to get cancer. You can visit [quit.org.nz](http://quit.org.nz) for information and help on how to kick the habit.

## The positives of pets



Nathaniol and his dog, Apache.

Nathaniol had the world at his fingertips – he was studying construction management, working part-time as a builder and training for the Commonwealth Games in weightlifting. Then, tragically, in January 2017 a terrible trampoline accident left him paralysed from the neck down.

During his journey of recovery and rehabilitation, Nathaniol was joined by Apache, an adorable purebred German Shepherd, who has supported him mentally and emotionally. Besides the companionship, Apache has contributed to Nathaniol's independence and sense of security. Walking Apache has given Nathaniol a reason to get out of the house more and the confidence to go to the gym, shopping, physio etc.

Having a large dog in intensified housing has its own challenges, but tenancy manager Sanjay says Apache is very well trained and well behaved.

Nathaniol wants to remind people who are thinking about getting a dog that it is a big responsibility.

“From what I've seen, a lot of people like the idea of having a dog but, in reality, you have to feed, exercise, train and look after a dog like they're a young child. They are truly part of the family.”

Nathaniol is very grateful for the support he's received from ACC and Housing New Zealand. He's keen to get back into study, and we wish him all the best in his rehabilitation journey and all his future endeavours.



### No kitten, it's the time of year to take care

It may seem like it's never going to happen again, but we're getting close to the time when the temperature finally makes it above 20 degrees Celsius. That also means we need to be extra careful with our cats.

Our feline friends breed during the warmer months, and we're soon heading into kitten season. If we don't all take responsibility for our animals, the unwanted pet population soars and puts a huge strain on owners and on organisations like the SPCA.

It's really important to ACT NOW and get your cat desexed before summer so you can avoid an unwanted litter of kittens. Most places will do this for cats as young as 14 weeks.

The SPCA and other organisations offer free or discounted desexing services for those who need them, so keep an eye out in your area. They can also help with things like vaccinations, flea or worm treatments and other ways of keeping your furry family member in good shape.





 --- 1m ---   
Keep everything at least one metre away from a heater or fireplace. **Never place or hang clothes on a heater to dry.**



**Keep an eye on what you fry!** Don't drink and fry! Save the beers for after you finish cooking.



**Working smoke alarms save lives.** Keep yourself safe from fire. Test your smoke alarms often to make sure they're working.

# Keeping safe from fire in your home

There have been some recent changes to laws in New Zealand that affect tenants living in buildings with more than one home – such as a multi-story building or a block of flats.

What you should do to stay safe in case of a fire:

- If you have friends or family visiting or staying, you are now responsible to let them know how to evacuate the building quickly and safely if there is a fire.

- Keep communal hallways and stairwells clear of rubbish and anything else so that it is easy to get out in an emergency.
- Remember that if your building has a lift, do not use the lift in the event of a fire.
- Check your smoke alarms are working properly.

A smoke alarm can help give early warning of a fire.

Housing New Zealand provides smoke alarms to most rooms in our properties. These are installed

to provide you with early warning of a fire.

Please contact the Housing New Zealand Customer Support Centre if you have any concerns that your smoke alarm is not working correctly.

Act now to help keep yourself, your family and your friends safe within your home and your building.

**Freephone 111 for fire emergencies. Visit [www.fireandemergency.nz](http://www.fireandemergency.nz) for more fire safety tips.**

## Have a complaint or feedback? We want to hear from you

It's important that you're able to live well in your home so if something is not right we want to hear from you. Your feedback is important to us because it helps us understand how we can improve the way we do things.

### Step 1

If you're not happy with something, contact us and we'll get back to you as quickly as possible.

### Step 2

If you're not happy with our response to your complaint, you can contact us again and ask us to have another look at it.

### Step 3

If you're still not happy with our decision, you can ask us to refer your complaint to our Office of the Complaints Commissioner for review. This is a new role we've introduced to give all our customers the option of an independent review of our decisions to make sure we arrived at the best possible outcome.

We also want to hear about what's working well for you,

so please also get in touch with those good news stories!

It's easy to contact us with a complaint, or to ask for a review and give more general feedback. Just use what works best for you.

- Call us free on 0800 801 601 from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and 24/7 for urgent calls.
- Talk to your tenancy manager.
- Call into your local office between 9am and 4pm Monday to Friday.
- Email: [enquiries1@hnzc.co.nz](mailto:enquiries1@hnzc.co.nz)
- Use the Feedback Form on our website [www.hnzc.co.nz/feedback](http://www.hnzc.co.nz/feedback) or click on Contact us.
- Write to us: Housing New Zealand, National Office, PO Box 2628, Wellington 6140.





## Keep our waterways clean and healthy

Don't pour fats, oil or grease down the sink, drain or toilet – help keep our waterways clean and healthy.

## Time to clean the curtains

Spring is a good time to clean your curtains. Look at the hem of your curtains for the cleaning instructions or follow these instructions:



- Do not bleach, rub or wring.
- Do not tumble dry.
- Do not use pegs for hanging on the line.

1. Remove plastic hooks before putting the curtains in the washing machine.
2. Either gently vacuum with appropriate attachment or machine wash on a gentle cycle set at up to 40°C.
3. Drip-dry in the shade, iron with a cool iron and replace hooks.



## USE THE POWER OF THE SUN – IT'S FREE!

Use the sun to your advantage – shake out your rugs, blankets, duvets and pillows, and leave them in the sun to air them. Some people say the sun is a natural disinfectant – a couple of hours outside and everything smells clean and fresh. If you can manage it, airing your bed mattress outside in the sun is good too.

## Gardening tips for spring

Even the most brown-fingered can feel when spring is in the air! Blossoms and birds are accompanied by rapid growth of lawns and weeds.

Warmth-lovers like tomatoes, beans and pumpkins need to wait until the soil really warms up (after Labour Day) before planting them outside, but leafy greens like lettuce, peas, celery, silver beet and cabbage can go in earlier. Spring is the season for all things green and crispy – lettuce, peas, parsley, coriander, spinach and silver beet all love moist, cool conditions.

Set your garden up for the rest of the year: gather as much organic material as you can find – straw, leaves, grass clippings, seaweed, manure – and either lay it directly

on your beds or pile it up, to rot into compost. The more organic matter in your soil, the better it will hold water over the summer, meaning healthier plants and less watering for you.

- **Keep one step ahead of the weeds:** Pulling them out before they go to seed, and then covering the soil surface in mulch, will save a huge amount of work later in summer.
- **Make compost:** Pile up your prunings, lawn clippings, manure and wood chips. Weeds can be added if they don't have seeds or thick roots – most home heaps don't get hot enough to kill these. Cover with a sack or some cardboard and it should be ready for your autumn plantings.

- **Plant shrubs, perennials, herbs and grasses:** There is still usually enough wet weather for them to get their roots well established before summer dries out the soil.
- **Sow:** Peas, any greens, early tomatoes and beans. Coriander, carrots and beets can be sown outside once apple trees are in blossom.
- **Plant:** Garlic, borage, calendula, greens (bok choy, cabbage, silver beet, lettuce, miner's lettuce, land cress, silver beet).

Thanks to Hannah Zwartz, Urban Kai Co-ordinator/Educator, Common Unity Project Aotearoa  
[www.commonunityproject.org.nz](http://www.commonunityproject.org.nz)



## Have a read of our Clean & Green booklet

Go to [hnzc.co.nz/publications/brochures](http://hnzc.co.nz/publications/brochures) for tips on other products you can use to keep your house clean – but be sure to store them safely too.



# 09

## Keep your whānau safe when gardening

Here are some tips on keeping yourself, your whānau and the environment safe when using chemical sprays and fertilisers:

- Always read the label on products.
- Even 'natural', 'organic' or 'environmentally friendly' products can be harmful so make sure you read those labels too.
- Wear gloves and other safety equipment as required.
- Keep products away from your eyes and face, and off your skin.
- Never pour leftover products down stormwater drains.
- Keep products in their original containers.

- Store products out of reach of tamariki and pets.

Think about whether the job you want to do could be done another way – for example, pulling weeds by hand instead of using chemical sprays.

Ask for advice on the safest and most effective product for the job. Shop staff may be able to help with this.

For more information visit [facebook.com/EPAgovtnz](https://facebook.com/EPAgovtnz) or [www.epa.govt.nz/saferhomes](http://www.epa.govt.nz/saferhomes)



## GET SOME FREE BUDGET ADVICE



There are lots of organisations around the country that can give you and your whānau free budgeting advice. The advice is completely confidential.

Most of these organisations are part of the Federation of Family Budgeting Services.

You can find one close to you. Just go to [familybudgeting.org.nz](http://familybudgeting.org.nz), email them at [adviser@familybudgeting.org.nz](mailto:adviser@familybudgeting.org.nz) or call freephone **0508 283 438** – your call will be answered by a budget adviser Monday to Friday, from 8am to 4.30pm.

## Start now to plan for Christmas

Retailers spend a lot of money trying to lure you into buying things you don't need at Christmas. If you ask people what Christmas and the holiday season are really about, most will say relaxing and spending time with family – not spending loads of money.

So dodge the debt this year by staying away from the shops and reminding yourself that you and your family need a happy, debt-free summer.

### Spread the cost

If you're on a budget, buy what you need over the next few months so that when Christmas comes around there's not such a big bill to cope with.

- Spreading the payments out makes it far easier to budget.
- Decide what you can afford to spend.
- Break down your budget to allow for gifts, decorations, food, drink and entertainment.

- Keep track of your spending in the months leading up to Christmas – work within the budget and enjoy a stress-free Christmas.
- Another good idea is to join your local supermarket's Christmas club. Think of it as a piggy bank you can use to help spread the cost of Christmas over the year. The earlier you start contributing to your Christmas club, the more treats you'll have.



## FOR KIDS, ABOUT KIDS

# TREEHOUSE

**Kia ora!** A large community of small creatures work for us every day for free, by pollinating putiputi (flowers). These pollinators include bees, moths, butterflies and birds.

To celebrate Bee Aware Month and Māori Language Week in September, the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) is giving away:

**A SIGNED WELLINGTON RUGBY JERSEY, beeswax food wraps and lots of other goodies!**



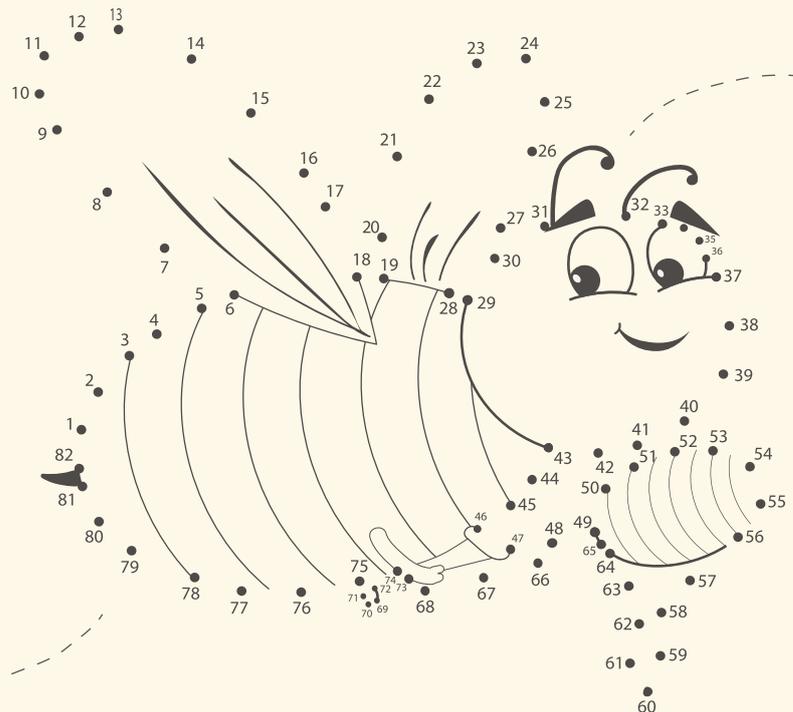
To enter the whakataetae (competition), just tell us how many pollinators are in the image.

Put your answer in Te Reo Māori under the 'How many pollinators?' post at [www.facebook.com/EPAgovtNZ](https://www.facebook.com/EPAgovtNZ) between 13 and 27 September.



## Are you trying to be funny?

- Q.** Why did the bee get married?  
**A.** Because he found his honey
- Q.** What do you call a wasp?  
**A.** A wanna-bee!
- Q.** Why did the bee go to the hairdresser?  
**A.** To get a buzz-cut
- Q.** What is a bee's favourite sport?  
**A.** Rug-bee!





## Your health and wellbeing are important

If you're worried about the condition of your home, please let us know – call us on **0800 801 601**.

## Cheap and easy chicken mee goreng – spicy fried noodles



 Ready in 25 minutes  
 Feeds 4-6 people

This easy Mee Goreng style dish can be made from a bag of frozen stir fry mix from the supermarket or with fresh veggies; as contrary to popular belief spring is not when all the fresh new season's produce is abundant or reasonably priced.

It's really tasty, not too spicy for the little ones and it takes less than half an hour to make.

Substitute noodles for rice if you prefer.

### YOU WILL NEED:

300g dried noodles – soaked and drained according to the packet directions

1 tbsp oil

1 large skinless, boneless chicken breast cut in thin strips for stir frying

2 cloves garlic crushed

1 tsp grated ginger

Around 500g chopped veggies or  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a 750g bag of frozen stir fry veggie mix

1-2 cups thinly sliced cabbage

1 cup bean sprouts – optional

3 eggs

Juice of a lime or lemon

Coriander and dried chilli flakes to garnish – optional

### MEE GORENG SAUCE:

2 tbsp dark soy sauce

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup kecap manis (sweet soy sauce)

$\frac{1}{3}$  cup regular everyday type tomato sauce

3 tbsp sweet chilli sauce

1. Make the sauce: Combine the ingredients in a small bowl and set aside. Heat half the oil in a large frying pan or wok and stir fry the chicken till cooked through, then remove from the pan.
2. Heat the remaining oil and add the garlic, ginger and vegetables, stir frying for 2-3 minutes till tender if using fresh veg or heated through if frozen. Fold in the noodles and sauce and mix through until heated.
3. Return the chicken to the pan and when piping hot push the noodles and vegetables to the sides of the pan making a well in the middle. Quickly break in the eggs and whisk with a fork. Remove from the heat and toss through the mixture. It should look glossy rather than scrambled egg.
4. Add a squeeze of lime or lemon juice and fold in the bean sprouts if using. Add a handful of fresh coriander and a sprinkle of dried chilli flakes if using.



# 12

SAVE POWER  
SAVE MONEY



## Ways we keep your home safe

In our last Close to Home, we talked about inspections we make to ensure your home is warm, dry and safe to live in.

Here's what to expect when we do the following inspections:

### Health and safety inspection

You will receive a letter from our contractor SPM Assets with the day and time. If you need to change this, please phone SPM direct on 0800 776 469.

While the contractor is at your home, they will check the smoke alarms, window restrictors, and water temperature, and if you have a freestanding stove they will check the safety device.

Outside they will check the spouting and cladding and let us know about any issues we need to take care of.

### Annual gas inspection

If you have gas in your home, every year we will send a gas inspector to check all the gas appliances and the gas piping. This is a compulsory check that must be carried out to make sure the gas system is working safely.

You will receive a letter with a day and time. If you need to change this, contact the contractor in the first instance.

With both these visits, if we need to do any other repairs we'll try our best to do them while we are at your home. If we can't do this, we'll reschedule any work for a later date.

With both these visits, we will need you to be home.



### Driveway safety REMINDER

Safekids Aotearoa suggests three things you can do to make driveways and other places safer for children:

- **check** for children before driving off
- **supervise** children around vehicles - always
- **separate** play areas from driveways.



If you need to talk to us, call

**0800 801 601**

[enquiries1@hnzc.co.nz](mailto:enquiries1@hnzc.co.nz)



Non-urgent calls between 8am and 6pm weekdays only.



Urgent calls 24 hours, 7 days a week.



Local offices open for drop-in between 9am and 4pm weekdays only.

### Thanks to:



**Contact** Publication enquiries should be made to [editor@close2home.co.nz](mailto:editor@close2home.co.nz) [www.hnzc.co.nz](http://www.hnzc.co.nz)

**Printing** This document is printed on Sumo Offset, an environmentally responsible paper manufactured using pulp harvested from sustainable, well managed forests and bleached using an elemental chlorine-free process.

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**Email option** If you would prefer to receive this publication via email, send your email address to [editor@close2home.co.nz](mailto:editor@close2home.co.nz)

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