

# Summer Wrap

## Dear tenants,

Welcome to another Bric newsletter and Happy New Year! We've certainly hit the ground running here at Bric as we continue to focus on building more new homes. We know how much they are needed.



In this newsletter we look back at some great end of year celebrations that saw many tenants get together for a BBQ, Christmas cake or both! The Bric team love to support tenants coming together as a community.

We've made some changes recently to how we deal with rent arrears - please take a moment to read the article to understand our approach. The key message is that we want to help when you find it difficult to pay rent and the earlier you contact us, the easier it is to assist.

There's also an important reminder about lithium battery safety. There are too many examples of people losing everything they own, or worse, due to fires caused by batteries being charged. Please do look at the advice provided.

Lastly, it's our huge pleasure to announce the winner of our Spring Garden Competition on page 7. There are so many examples of tenants improving their spaces – sometimes individually and sometimes in partnership with their neighbours. It's always great to see.

**Jane West**  
Chief Executive Officer



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# Community events and celebrations

## 2024 closed with plenty of get togethers, celebrations and events at Bric. Here's a round up!

The Portwood Street Christmas party marked the beginning of the festive celebrations.

The level of thought and organisation that went into the afternoon was evident, and it was clear that everyone had worked together to make this gathering special. The celebration is a shining example of how well the neighbours on Portwood Street are communicating and how much the community has grown and flourished over the past year.

It was the perfect day for a Barbeque Lunch at Harcourt Street. A big thank you to everyone who offered their helping hands, from unloading the car to heating up the barbeque, and all those who joined in for lunch.





The Rainbow Street Celebration headed indoors under the aircon to enjoy a good spread of food, good conversations and the great company of SANDBAG’s Engagement Workers. SANDBAG is the local Community Centre who run a wide range of activities like men’s yoga, the Get Skilled Conservation program along with regular community meals.



The celebrations then continued at Norman Parade for a three course meal, thanks to the helping hands of Community. The dining room was looking the part thanks to a talented tenant who thoughtfully decorated with floral arrangements sourced straight from the garden. A special thanks to Community Canteen who provided the delicious three-course meal and for their generosity, which brought everyone together to enjoy this time of year.



## Curing the Boxing Day blues

What better way to spend Boxing Day than listening to some rhythm and blues! A group of tenants at Clayfield came together to enjoy the music of local artist Tui. As a tenant-driven initiative, the fee for the entertainer was funded through Containers for Change, where tenants recycled bottles and cans to raise the funds.

One of the tenant organisers commented: “The event was enjoyed tremendously by those who attended. We all went away refreshed and sated. This might encourage other housing communities to hold self-motivated/initiated functions.”



# Condition Assessments what you need to know



Over the next few months, we will be conducting Condition Assessments to check if any repairs, maintenance, or improvements are needed to the property.

Condition Assessments are an important way for us to make sure your living spaces are safe and to help us maintain property standards.

## What you can expect:

1. You will receive a letter and entry notice with the date of your property inspection.
2. A Bric Assets Officer will come to assess the property. This includes interior spaces, plumbing, electrical systems and appliances.
3. The property assessment will take approximately 30-60 minutes.

## How you can help:

- Keep bathrooms, kitchens and plumbing access points and electrical panels clear so we can easily access them.
- Report any maintenance concerns as they occur by calling us on **07 3230 5542**.
- Work with us to make sure we can access your property at the scheduled time.

We appreciate your cooperation and understanding as we carry out Condition Assessments. If you have any questions or concerns, please call us on **07 3230 5555**.



# Applications for the 2025 QDN Emerging Leaders program are now open



Queenslanders with Disability Network (QDN) supports people with disability in Queensland to complete a nine-month leadership course and pursue their passions.

Graduates of the program describe it as a life-changing experience, giving them new levels of confidence and connection, new skills, and a renewed sense of purpose.

For more information or support with your application, please contact QDN at [peersupport@qdn.org.au](mailto:peersupport@qdn.org.au) or phone **1300 363 783**.

# Managing rent arrears

We'd like to let you know about some important changes we've made to how we manage rent arrears and support tenants in the best way we can at Bric. Our Customer Service Centre now leads this work, and we've introduced some new processes to make things easier and more efficient for everyone.

We know many of you have been with us for a long time, and we really appreciate your cooperation as we improve our systems. Our goal is to make sure the process is fair and supportive for all tenants.

One of the changes we've made is an automated system that will send an SMS reminder if you are two days behind on your rent. Please don't be alarmed if you get this message – it's just a reminder to make sure you're aware the payment has been missed. If you are having difficulty keeping up with your rent, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're here to support you and help ensure your tenancy remains secure.

## Rent arrears process

If you're having trouble keeping up with rent, here's what we do to support you and find a solution:



We understand that sometimes life can be tough, and we're here to help. We'll reach out to tenants who are behind on rent and try to set up a payment plan if needed. We'll make every effort to contact you by phone before sending any formal notices. We also have information on support services that may be able to help if you're struggling financially.

**To make it easier for tenants to stay on top of their rent, our Customer Service Centre can accept payments over the phone or via EFTPOS in the office. Remember, your lease requires rent payments to be made two weeks in advance. Paying your rent ensures you have stable and secure housing, and allows us to carry out necessary repairs, address maintenance issues and keep operating.**

If you have any questions or need help with your rent payments, don't hesitate to contact our Customer Service Centre on **3230 5555**.



# The dangers of lithium-Ion batteries: A real-life example

Recently we had a tragic reminder of how dangerous lithium-ion batteries can be when not handled safely. A house fire broke out in a Bric property, caused by an overheating battery. Thankfully no one was injured, but the fire destroyed belongings, displaced residents, and caused huge property damage.

*The person whose home was devastated has given permission to share these photos in the hopes of increasing awareness and warning others about the risks of these batteries.*

Lithium-ion batteries are found in lots of our devices like smartphones, laptops and e-scooters. While they are generally safe, they can become dangerous if they are damaged or charged incorrectly.

In this case, a device with a lithium-ion battery overheated while charging, causing a fire that quickly spread throughout the home. It's vital to follow safety guidelines and check for damage to your devices.

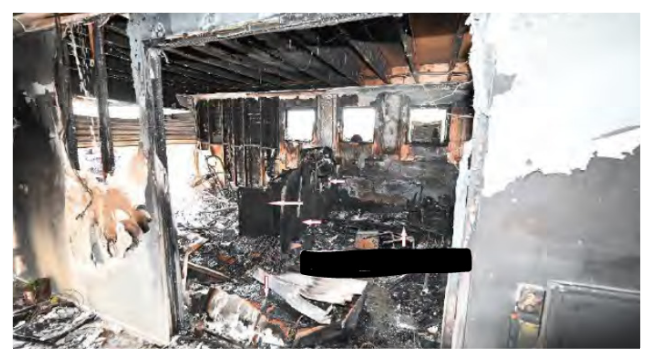
## Tips to keep safe:

- **Inspect your devices regularly:** If your e-scooter, phone, laptop, or any other battery-powered device looks damaged, swollen, cracked, or leaking, stop using it immediately. Do not charge it. It may need to be repaired or safely disposed of.
- **Use the right charger:** Always use the manufacturer-approved charging cables. Third-party chargers might be cheaper but they can cause expensive damage and may not be safe.
- **Never leave your devices unattended while charging:** Only charge them when you're awake and around to monitor them. Don't charge devices overnight or when you're not at home.
- **Keep devices away from heat and flammable materials:** Avoid charging devices on top of or near flammable surfaces like paper, curtains, or carpets. Never leave a charging device in direct sunlight or in a hot car.

## What you can do if you notice something's wrong:

If you ever see signs of overheating – like heat, smoke, or sparks – don't wait. Immediately unplug the device and move it to a cool area away from people and anything that could catch fire. **Never pour water on overheating devices – water will only make things worse and destroy the device.**

If there's a fire, call 000 immediately, afterwards contact the Bric Maintenance team on **3230 5542** to report the issue.



# Winning gardens at Bric

Thank you to everyone who entered our Spring Gardening competition. We had some wonderful entries, and we truly appreciate you taking the time to share your gardens and green spaces with us.

We've also heard that gardens can create peaceful spaces for people at home. We wanted to recognise those who are just starting out, or gardens that have taken that extra bit of effort and care, so we have awarded two honourable mention awards which will also receive a \$100 Bunnings voucher.

We're excited to see what this year's competition will bring and encourage all green thumbs to start planning for this year's Spring Gardening Competition!

It's our pleasure to announce the Overall winner for the 2024 Spring Gardening Competition is Flor and Dayle with their incredible range of balcony plants.



## DO YOU QUALIFY FOR FREE HOME INTERNET?



### Free home internet for school students and their families

This Australian Government program offers free home internet to families and carers who look after school age children and are struggling to pay bills.

To apply, follow the four steps below:

Contact the National Referral Centre on 1800 954 610 Monday - Friday, 10am - 6pm (AEDT) or visit [anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet](http://anglicarevic.org.au/student-internet)

They'll ask you some questions to see if this offer is right for you.

If you qualify, you'll get a voucher.

Use the voucher to connect through your chosen participating internet provider. Use your voucher before the 30,000 places are taken.

## Support program for single mothers

The Sociii Innerwork Program offers fully funded coaching, self-development and therapeutic support.

The program focuses on:

- Building Confidence and Self-Belief
- Goal Setting and Financial Skills
- Practical Life Skills, Stress Management Tools, and Guidance for Building a Brighter Future

If you or someone you know could benefit from this program, please encourage them to learn more by visiting [Sociii.com](http://Sociii.com)





# Changes to the Community Housing Rent Policy: Everything you need to know

Bric is now following the 2024 Community Housing Rent Policy, which changes how rent is calculated. The new policy aligns with public housing, using the same income types and percentages to set rent. This means your rent may increase more than usual at your next annual review.

## Key changes:

### 1. Family Tax Benefits and Child Support:

- Under the old policy, Family Tax Benefits and Child Support payments were assessed differently for families with children under 16.
- Now, both Family Tax Benefits A and B, and Child Support payments will be assessed at 25% of the total income (or 28% for furnished accommodation), with no cap on the number of children.

### 2. Young People's Income:

- Previously, young household members (under 25) had 10% of their income included in the rent calculation.
- Now, young people under 25 will have 25% of their income assessed for rent calculation.

### 3. Working Income for Young People:

- The old policy excluded casual earnings for full time students under 18.
- Now, young people aged 24 or younger will not have their working income included in the rent calculation if they are not the tenant.

## Will all tenants have to pay more rent?

Not everyone will see a rent increase. Only tenants receiving certain types of payments. If your rent is changing, it won't happen until your next rent review or if there's a change in your circumstances. For tenants receiving a pension, your rent increase will be small, and we'll talk to you about any changes if you're concerned.

The rent you pay will still be 25 percent of the household's assessable income (or 28 percent if you live in furnished accommodation), and 100 percent of any Commonwealth Rent Assistance you may be entitled to, or the market rent for the home, whichever is lower.

## Why is Bric tenants' rent increasing?

These changes are part of a policy to help make rent calculations more consistent and fair across all of social housing whether someone lives in community housing or public housing.

## What will happen to households who can't afford increased rent?

Not all households will have an increase in rent. Most rent increases will be small.

We will notify you of any changes at least two months in advance. If you're having trouble financially, please reach out to us. We're here to talk about your situation and find ways to help you.

## What happens next?

When your next annual rent review is due, we'll reach out to discuss your new rent amount. If there's a significant increase, we'll make sure to talk with you first. We'll also hold information sessions for tenants whose rent is affected by the changes.