

Building Community Support for Community Housing TOOL KIT

Why do some people oppose affordable housing?



TENANT CASE STUDY HOW COMMUNITY HOUSING HAS ENABLED ME TO ESCAPE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND COMPLETE MY EDUCATION

Jessica is 23 years old. She grew up at Culburra Beach just down the road from Nowra. When she was 18 she had a baby with her 17 year old boyfriend Taj, a son that they named Jayden. She was good at school work, but had to leave early and abandon her dreams of going on to further education.

The couple were renting an old, two-bedroom house in Culburra Beach for \$280 a week. Jessica was working in town as a casual retail clerk at Kmart where she earned award wages at \$19.50 per hour. Her work roster was irregular, but she averaged earnings of around \$390 per week. Taj picked up some cash-in-hand labouring work from his cousin, but he only called a couple of times a month. He was collecting a NewStart allowance too.

They were able to scrape by with their rent, but struggled to make their other expenses and keep to fuel in their car and rego up to date. They were also struggled with their role as new parents. They started getting into lots of arguments, especially about money. Taj spent more time with his mates and was drinking a lot.

Jessica thought he may even be using drugs. When Jayden was four, they got into a huge argument one morning as Jessica was late to work because Taj had been out all night with the car. Taj flew into a rage and pushed Jessica up against wall and smashed an empty bottle next to her head. He left in the car.

Jessica packed up her and Jayden's things and called her Auntie to see if she could come and get them and give them a place to stay. She didn't want anything to do with Taj. After a few weeks with her Auntie, Jessica went into the Southern Cross Community Housing office in Nowra. She filled out a form and told them about her and Jayden's situation. After a month or so at her Auntie's, Jessica was offered a new, tidy two-bedroom house at Worrigee for her and Jayden. The worker at Southern Cross also helped her to sign up with Centrelink to get the right parenting payment and work out a rent that Jessica afford on her Kmart wage. They also connected her with a community organisation that helps young parents.

She and Jayden are now settled. He is starting at the local school soon and Jessica is getting more work at Kmart. She has enrolled in a TAFE course in Aged Care beginning in the New Year.