



CEO MESSAGE

Welcome to the winter edition of our Tenant Newsletter.

It is hard to believe that we are already over halfway through the year and closer to next Christmas than last. As I write this message, Greater Sydney including most of the Illawarra are under stay at home orders, while the rest of NSW are having to observe health directives in relation to other Covid safety restrictions. Southern Cross Housing have, during this time, asked our tenants to only attend our offices if it is absolutely necessary. We are able to assist with most enquiries over the phone or online. Remember you can always call us on 1300 757 885 and key in your Housing Officers' extension or select from the options. If you do need to attend the office, please wear a mask. no mask, no service. Your health and safety and the health and safety of our staff is our highest priority.

SCH is currently conducting our Annual Tenant Survey, we are delighted with the response so far. This valued information is used to improve our services, gauge the satisfaction of our tenants, and influence our future planning. Your input matters, so have your say and complete a survey today. You could also win one of 3, \$200 grocery vouchers. Please contact our Communities Assist Team if you are yet to complete your survey and need some assistance. If you think you'd like to have more input than just a survey, then you could also speak to our Communities Assist Team about our Tenant Advisory Committee's (TAC), these meet regularly to provide feedback and input from a tenant perspective.

July 1st saw the end of the Social Housing Management Transfer, Maintenance Agreement. All Maintenance enquiries regardless of whether you were a transferred tenant or not should now be reported to the SCH maintenance hotline 1300 757 885 ext. 2. If you have outstanding maintenance previously reported to Lakes Maintenance, please contact our Property Services Team for assistance. Over the next 3 years we will be conducting a property upgrade program. If you have any questions about these upgrades you can also contact our Property Services team, who will be able to assist.

Our Good Neighbour Award nominations are now closed and have been finalised. I would like to thank all those who nominated a neighbour or were nominated and congratulate the winners of each category. It is a privilege to celebrate the achievements and neighborhood contributions of the wonderful tenants of SCH.

Remember, the SCH team is always here to help, but in particular during these uncertain times please keep an eye out for each other and your neighbours.

Kind regards,



Alex Pontello
CEO



IN THIS ISSUE



What's On	1
Tenant Opportunities	3
Communities Assist News	3
Tenant Survey.....	3
Policy Update.....	3
Scholarship Program	4
Property and Assets Tips	6
Good News Stories	8
Community Housing Rent Changes	9
Neighbour Disputes	10

DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

Southern Cross Housing would like to communicate faster and more efficiently with you and we are working to ensure that we hold your current email address. Email is an easy way for you to receive information about events, activities and opportunities quickly and efficiently. Updating your email address contact is really easy, please phone the office on 1300 757 885.

WHAT'S ON



ROYAL FAR WEST HEALTHY KIDS BUS STOP EUROBODALLA

Narooma and Moruya Public Schools have teamed up to present the Healthy Kids Bus Stop which is a **FREE** health check and pathway to care program for children that are aged 3-5 years old. The program includes:

- A comprehensive child health check
- Hearing check
- Vision check
- Fine and gross motor skills assessment
- Speech assessment
- Food and nutritional assessment

The health check's will be offered in Narooma and Moruya on the week of 8-12 November 2021. Registrations are essential and can be made online at <https://www.royalfarwest.org.au/programs/healthy-kids-bus-stop/> or call 1800 500 061.

UNLEASH

UnLEASH is a study project that is being undertaken by the University of NSW. The project aims to explore lesbian, bisexual and queer women's (cisgender and transgender) health and wellbeing and their relationship with smoking, drinking, and using drugs.

Information obtained from the study will be used to help improve LBQ women's access to appropriate support services. If you would like to participate in the study, you will need to complete 3 online surveys. All information is confidential, and you will enter a prize draw for each survey that you complete! To participate, please visit <https://www.unleashstudy.org.au/participant-information> for their eligibility guidelines or email unleashstudy@unsw.edu.au for any questions related to the study.

NANA MURU DAY REHABILITATION?

If you have issues with drug or alcohol addiction, the Nana Muru service provides a free group day rehabilitation program for people of any cultural background that are aged over 18. The program includes individual counselling, case management sessions as well as treatment and relapse prevention planning.

The Nana Muru program provides participants with the practical tools and strategies that are needed to overcome the battle against addiction. To enquire about the Nana Muru Day Rehab Program, please call 1300 727 957 or visit their office at 78 Bridge Rd, Nowra to start your road to recovery.

NSW SENIORS CARD

If you are a NSW permanent resident and are aged 60 or over, you can apply for a NSW Seniors Card if you're averaging 20 hours or less of paid work a week across a 12-month period, or a NSW Senior Savers Card if you're averaging more than 20 hours of paid work a week across a 12-month period.

Both cards are free and provide discounts and special offers at over 7,400 businesses across NSW including shops, restaurants and professional services. The NSW Seniors Card gives you access to the Gold Opal Card transport concessions and public transport concessions Australia-wide. If you reduce your paid employment to 20 hours a week or less (averaged over 12 months), or you retire completely, you can convert your Senior Savers Card to a Seniors Card. For more information on these cards, visit www.seniorscard.nsw.gov.au/membership.

REGIONAL SENIORS TRAVEL CARD

The Regional Seniors Travel Card provides eligible seniors that live in regional, rural and remote areas with a \$250 prepaid card to help ease the cost of travel. You can use the Travel Card at certain retailers across Australia to help pay for fuel, taxis and pre-booked trains and buses. The travel card is valid for 14 months from the date of issue. Confirm your eligibility and apply online at <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/apply-regional-seniors-travel-card>.



WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK PROGRAM

If you are a young person that is aged 18 – 25 years and moving out of home for the first time, then the We've Got Your Back Program might be of interest. The program provides information about energy and water concessions that could help you to save money on your utility bills.

The Energy & Water Ombudsman NSW are happy to talk about energy and water with anyone who will listen! They are especially keen on assisting the young'uns in our community to reduce stress and anxiety when it comes to energy and water. Call 1800 246 545 to receive help today!

ACTIVE KIDS VOUCHERS



The Active Kids Program provides two \$100 vouchers for parents, guardians and carers of school-enrolled children. The vouchers can be used to help pay for the costs of sports fees and other active recreation expenses. For more information check out <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au>.



SERVICE NSW DISCOUNTS, REBATES AND FREE THINGS

Did you know that the NSW Government provides around 70 rebates that you may be eligible for? To discover your savings, you can meet with a service NSW specialist for a free one-hour appointment. The specialist will be able to identify any rebates and discounts you will be eligible for and assist you with the application on the same day.

You can also visit the Service NSW website and use their "Savings Finder" tool to find rebates relevant to you <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/campaign/cost-living>.

Visit your local Service NSW centre or call 137788 to book your appointment today.

SPEAKUP

Do you have a child that is aged 7 – 14 years that has a diagnosed disability and perhaps they are feeling left behind at school and lacking the confidence to voice their own concerns about their learning? If so, then the SpeakUP Program might be what they need to regain that confidence in the classroom. This program is a unique online program that is designed to build your child's skills and confidence so they can stay ahead of the pack! For more information, please call Lifestart on 1800 317 030.

WASHING MACHINE REBATE PROGRAM

If you're in the market for a new washing machine and live in the Eurobodalla Local Government Area, you could be eligible for a \$150 rebate from the Eurobodalla Shire Council. This program aims to reduce water usage and help protect our unique South Coast environment. By installing a water efficient washing machine, you can reduce your water bill too!

To claim a rebate from Council, please read the terms and conditions at www.esc.nsw.gov.au/water. You will need to have purchased a 4.5 star or higher water rated washing machine in the last 6 months. Completed application forms with supporting documents need to be sent to either Eurobodalla Shire Council, PO Box 99, Moruya NSW 2537 or council@esc.nsw.gov.au. For more information please phone Eurobodalla Shire Council on 02 4474 1234.

HEALTH MOVES

Health Moves is a gentle exercise program that is run and organised by NSW Health for people that have health conditions such as diabetes, heart problems, high cholesterol, blood pressure and osteoarthritis. This program will help you to manage your health condition and will provide you with some simple tips and ideas about how you can become healthier.

Group classes are available for all ages and will be run by trained fitness instructors who are ready to motivate you to get moving! To register, please contact the Illawarra Shoalhaven Diabetes Service on (02) 4231 1910 or you can email the team at ISLHD-WollDiabetesAdmin@health.nsw.gov.au.

MONEY SMART PROGRAM



One in three Australians find dealing with money to be stressful and overwhelming. The Money Smart Program is a **FREE** financial counselling support services that aims to help you manage your finances. It can also help you to manage fines that you are struggling to pay, utility disconnections, evictions, and handling debt collectors. If you're in financial crisis, Money Smart can connect you with charities and community organisations that have emergency relief services to assist with food, transport, clothing, and even back-to-school costs. Manage your money, reduce your debt, plan for your future, and grow your wealth!

Visit <https://moneysmart.gov.au/> for more information or call the Australian Securities & Investments Commission on 1300 300 630.

TAX TIME

It's Tax Time and the Australian National University Tax Clinic are providing free guidance and information on any tax matter.

The Tax Clinic is open to anyone that is not represented by accountants or tax agents and who have an income of \$60,000 or lower. To receive this support please email taxclinic@anu.edu.au or call them on 02 6125 4853.

DINE AND DISCOVER NSW

The NSW Government has extended Dine & Discover NSW for one month to give businesses more time to register, and NSW residents more time to apply and get out and about to use their vouchers. All NSW residents aged 18 and over can apply for 4 x \$25 vouchers, worth \$100 in total. Vouchers must be used by 31 August 2021.

SKILLED MIGRANT EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

TAFE NSW is about to commence their Skilled Migrant Program for Semester 2!

The program will be delivered online via Microsoft Teams and will start on the 13th of July. The course will run twice a week for two full days over a five-week period. The Skilled Migrant Program will fast track your statement of attainment in English for Employment and is FREE to skilled and overseas qualified professionals to prepare them for the Australian job market. The course will cover the following:

- A greater awareness of the Australian workplace, culture, and trends.
- A career portfolio, resume and cover letter.
- Strategies to identify relevant employment opportunities.
- Communication skills.

To register your interest, please contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 or email communities@scch.org.au.



TENANT OPPORTUNITIES

2020 TENANT SURVEY – RESULTS

Each year, Southern Cross Housing conducts a Tenant Survey. The survey provides residents with the opportunity to provide feedback on how we are performing. We really appreciate, the fact that many of you took the time to fill in the survey last year. Each year Southern Cross Housing carefully analyses the feedback that we obtain from the surveys and uses the information to make changes in the way we deliver our services and programs. Last year we revised our complaints handling process, ensuring that the process is easy to access by all residents and we undertook further employee training in complaints handling.

We have also worked to ensure that the Tenants' rights section of our Tenant Handbook is highlighted at every new lease sign up. Additionally, new Tenant Advisory Committees have been established in Nowra and Bega so that residents can be involved in SCH activities and provide input into service delivery and programs. Alongside these activities, we also developed a new Community Engagement Policy. Our tenants have spoken, and we are trying to adapt, improve and advance our services throughout 2021 and beyond!

2021 TENANT SURVEY

The 2021 Tenant Survey is open for submissions and you could win a \$200 Grocery Voucher!

The 2021 Tenant Survey is now open for submissions and many of you will have received an SMS message or email that asks you to complete the survey. Others will have received a hard copy of the survey in the mail. If you have not received a copy of the survey and would like to complete one, please contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885.

The survey is completely confidential, and feedback is anonymous. The survey closes on Friday 6th August 2021.

POLICY UPDATES

Southern Cross Housing will only collect, store and disclose personal information in accordance with the Southern Cross Housing Privacy Statement which is available on our website.

Individuals may request access to the personal information Southern Cross Housing hold about them, or request that Southern Cross Housing change the personal information by:

- Emailing info@scch.org.au
- Calling 1300 757 885, or
- Writing to the Privacy Officer (Audit & Compliance Officer) at P.O. Box 2351 Bomaderry NSW 2541

Before disclosing any information, Southern Cross Housing will establish the identity of the individual making the request by asking individual questions about the personal information recorded. If an individual chooses not to identify themselves, Southern Cross Housing may not be able to give the information or provide the assistance they might otherwise receive.

An individual can make a complaint about a breach of their privacy by SCH; this can be done in writing, by phone or face to face using the contact details above.

COMMUNITIES ASSIST NEWS

It's been a busy time in the Communities Assist Team with Daniel Pearson joining our Nowra Team. Daniel has extensive experience in the employment sector and has been working hard to develop a new program that aims to support our tenants to achieve their employment and education goals.



Daniel is a passionate Gridiron player and has represented NSW and Australia in the sport. The wonderful Emma Shepherd from our Bega Team has left to have her baby and we wish her all the best for a safe delivery. We are currently in the process of recruiting to fill the Southern Community Development Officer position.

During the past year, the CA Team worked collaboratively with SCH's IT Team to develop a new Communities Assist Dashboard. This new system enables the CA Team to efficiently access tenant data that is needed to streamline our communication with you.

A lot of planning work has been undertaken by the CA Team to develop an Operational Plan for the next 12 months. The new plan provides a framework for delivery of many projects that aim to deliver positive social and economic outcomes for our residents throughout the Shoalhaven and Southern Regions. Some of our planned projects include undertaking a series of safety audits in housing complexes that are located in Nowra, a program that aims to understand why some tenants have very poor property care and what we can practically do to help improve this, the development of programs that capture and build on the wealth of skills that our tenants already have and the development of a feasibility plan for the use of Social Media within Southern Cross Housing.

Interestingly, we have also undertaken some research that has shown that there is generally a lack of funding to support our tenants that are experiencing Hoarding and Squalor (both long term mental health care and clean-up services) in the Shoalhaven and have provided the outcomes of this research to authorities in the hope that more funding can be provided in the Shoalhaven.

Work commenced to strengthen our Tenants Advisory Committee's (TACS) and we are looking forward to working with our newly appointed TAC members in Bega and Nowra to further understand how SCH can improve activities and processes to ensure maximum benefit to residents.

SCH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM



The 2021 round of our Scholarship Program attracted great interest from residents. In the coming months, over \$28,000 in funding will be provided to 40 people under the program. This program assists residents to achieve their employment, sporting and health and wellbeing goals.

Successful recipients include mature aged students that are studying at University, High School Students and Primary School students and they are located across the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley and Snowy Monaro Local Government Areas.

Last year, Jasmin Wilmot received a laptop for her scholarship. Jasmine's mother Amy said "Jazz can now work from home and do homework and assignments, Jazz will get many years of school use from this, it helps many families in need, not all families can afford a computer for education, thank you Southern Cross Housing".

Stay tuned in future editions of the newsletter to hear about how some scholarship recipients are using their scholarships to help them get jobs and further their education.

Pictured on the right is Ellina Jones who will be receiving funds to help her undertake swimming lessons. Ellina bought in her beautiful golden pet bearded dragon lizard into the Southern Cross Housing Office in Kinghorne.



RECIPIENTS – 2021 GOOD NEIGHBOUR AWARDS

Neighbour Day is an annual celebration of community, and Southern Cross Housing joined in on the celebration by delivering our first Good Neighbour Awards Program. The Awards Program attracted a great deal of interest from our residents. Many of our award winners were a little bit shy about having their names publicised in the newsletter so we have only used their first names.

OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO BUILDING AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY AWARD – JACQUIE

The Outstanding Contribution to an Inclusive Community Award acknowledges a resident that has made an outstanding contribution to the community that they live in. This year's recipient is Jacquie who lives in Batemans Bay. Jacquie has been recognised for her massive 35 year effort in fostering children. Over the course of those 35 years, Jacquie has fostered 207 children! Jacquie loves taking her foster children to dance lessons, recitals, and musicals and actually hand makes all the clothes they require for dance. Jacquie is extremely passionate about helping and fostering children, ensuring they are well looked after. Even if they are only in her care for a short time, they know that they are loved and cared for. Congratulations Jacquie!

SENIORS PERSON AWARD – RUTH

For some, as we get older, tasks start to become a little harder to complete by yourself. SCH recognises that not everyone has an abundance of supports, family, or friends to look after them. Having a friendly neighbour that can assist with small tasks such as taking out the bins, shopping or just visiting for a casual chat can be the saving grace that you need in life as a senior citizen. Ruth is certainly that neighbour and is this year's recipient of the Senior Persons Award. Ruth has always been caring by nature and loves to look after those that are in need, regularly checking up on her neighbours to "make sure we're all okay". Ruth often takes the bins in for her elderly neighbours who have mobility issues themselves and takes another elderly friend shopping and to her appointments. Congratulations Ruth!

GARDENING AND PROPERTY CARE AWARD – DEBORAH

This special award was given to Deborah in recognition of her exceptional garden property care. We couldn't believe our eyes when we saw the improvements that Deborah has made to her garden. Deborah moved into her property 7 months ago, and in a short amount of time, she has hustled every day to turn it into a DIY garden masterpiece. In the front yard, Deborah has dug up the turf, laid a beautiful rocky driveway, installed a retaining wall and new garden beds. In the back yard, Deborah has created a veggie garden, pruned the main tree back to expose a stunning rock wall feature and much more. Amazingly, Deborah has only invested a small amount of money in the renovation as everything she has gathered to create her garden was either donated, purchased from an Op shop she volunteers at for a small amount or picked up materials from the side of the road or the tip. Congratulations Deborah, this is an award you have truly earned, and your creation should be celebrated.

YOUNG PERSON AWARD – MAX

The Young Person Award is given to a young person that is aged 24 years and younger who actively engages and supports their community. The 2021 recipient is Max, a 10-year-old from our Southern Region. Max is always seeking opportunities to help people if he can, actively supporting local RFS crews during the bushfires, building nesting boxes for wildlife rescue organisations. During the bushfires, Max also delivered meals to elderly neighbours. The NSW Ambulance Service recently presented him with an Emergency Hero Award to celebrate his bravery and efforts in helping Paramedics when his mum became ill. Upon hearing that he won the Young Person's Award Max's mum noted that he was overcome with emotion and immediately called his schoolteacher to share the exciting news. The future is bright for young Max and his community are incredibly lucky to have such a fine community spirited young person living close by.

I WANT A JOB! FORUM

Re-entering the workforce can be a long and daunting process, which if left to your own devices, can leave you feeling unmotivated and disappointed. The Communities Assist Team held their first “I Want a Job!” Forum on the 30th of June at the East Nowra Community Centre and it was a big success.

Attendees were able to tell us what types of jobs they are interested in and what sort of barriers are preventing them from achieving their employment goals. We also talked about possible funding that could be provided by external agencies (transport costs, IT equipment and the purchase of spectacles) to help them gain employment.

Our tenants had this to say about the I Want a Job forum:

“Excellent workshop, all of it was perfect”

“I Learnt a lot, thank you for inviting me, getting a job would get me to be more active and feel great!”

“I enjoyed all of it! I’ll be visiting my Job Provider today”



The forum is a safe place for residents to have their say about their struggles in the current job market, what type of support you need to be successful in landing your next role or discuss any barriers that are hindering your employment or studies. If you are currently looking for work and would like some guidance on where to start your journey, please contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885.

SCH SUPPORTING 2021 SORRY DAY



Observed annually on 26 May, National Sorry Day remembers and acknowledges the mistreatment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were forcibly removed from their families and communities, which are known as ‘The Stolen Generations’.

Around Australia National Sorry Day is a day to acknowledge the strength of The Stolen Generations Survivors and reflect on how we can all play a part in the healing process for our people and nation. While this date carries great significance for the Stolen Generations and other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, it is also commemorated by Australians right around the country.

Since its inception in 2015, many have gathered in Nowra to take part in the National Sorry Day Bridge Walk. Usually the walk involves a three kilometre walk from Moorehouse Park, but due to the Nowra bridge renovations, this year’s walk began at Thurgate Oval in Bomaderry and continued along Beinda Street to the Bomaderry Homes.

Approximately 16% of all tenancies that are managed by Southern Cross Housing are held by people that are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander cultural background and Southern Cross Housing is committed to working with our Aboriginal community members to initiate and progress reconciliation activities in a proactive way.

Southern Cross Housing actively supported Sorry Day activities in Nowra by sponsoring the purchase of food for a BBQ that was provided for participants that gathered at the Bomaderry Homes in Nowra and participated in the walk.



PROPERTY AND ASSETS TIPS

PROPERTY UPGRADES

Southern Cross Housing is undertaking capital works improvements to properties that are part of the 2018 Social Housing Management Transfer. Since 2018, SCH have identified a major capital improvement program for capital works and we have developed a 3 year roll out plan to address the program. The rollout will be delivered sequentially street by street and will cover capital works upgrades such as, full internal & external painting, kitchen upgrades, floor replacements and fencing. If you would like to enquire when your street is targeted for the rollout, please contact the Property Services Team on 1300 757 885.

SMOKE ALARMS & TESTING

Winter is a good time to make sure that you have a fully functioning smoke alarm in the home. If you feel that your smoke alarm is malfunctioning please report the malfunction by phoning 1300 757 885.

When checking your smoke alarm, please ensure that you don't remove any batteries, hold down the test button until you hear a loud alert tone, then release. Southern Cross Housing conducts regular testing of smoke alarms you will be contacted by an SCH Contractor or the Agent/Owners Contractor to book a time for your check. For those tenants that live in a leasehold property you will be contacted by the owner or real estate agent to book in a date and time for a smoke alarm check. Please help us by allowing a contractor to access your property so we can maintain a safe home environment for you.

FIRE ALARMS MAINTENANCE

Mark, a tenant from our Bega Valley Region recently passed along his gratitude and thanks to everyone involved in the routine maintenance of the fire alarms at SCCH. Mark was sitting at his desk one sunny afternoon and heard a fire alarm going off. He walked out to his balcony and saw smoke billowing out of a neighbour's doorway followed by lots of noise, coughing and his neighbours rushing to get people out.

He went to check everything was ok and heard from his neighbour that they had put a pot on the stove and had fallen asleep. During that time the pot went dry and smoke started to build, setting off the alarm which woke the tenant and alerted her partner. Thankfully, giving them enough time to remove the pot and get out of the property in time! A lucky result!

Mark has a background in fire safety, which makes him very aware of how often smoke causes more deaths than actual flames. He is grateful for the importance placed by SCCH on routine maintenance and inspection of these alarms. A reminder to us all on the importance of remaining vigilant with checking your alarms and reporting back any issues with them as soon as possible.

GET INVOLVED – TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S

New Tenant Advisory Committee's (TAC's) have been set up in Nowra and Bega. The Committees are designed to provide an opportunity for tenants to discuss issues, exchange ideas and provide feedback to Southern Cross Housing Executive and Board about the organisation's services and programs.

NOWRA TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We are still seeking two nominations for our Nowra TAC, one from a resident that is aged 18 – 25 years, to represent the views of young people, and one from an Aboriginal Community Representative.

BEGA VALLEY TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Nominations for our Bega Valley TAC are still open to residents that live in the following locations.

- Bega
- Bermagui
- Cobargo
- Eden
- Merimbula
- Pambula
- Tura Beach
- Quaama

Nomination forms can be obtained from <https://www.scch.org.au/community/nowra-tenant-advisory-committee/> and will close on 1 September 2021.

NOWRA ABORIGINAL TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Southern Cross Housing is establishing an Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Tenants Advisory Committee (ATAC) in Nowra and is now accepting nominations to be part of this Committee. The ATAC will be a forum for current Southern Cross Housings (SCH) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tenants, to provide feedback on the organisations services, policies and procedures, and guide decision-making to raise the profile of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. The committee will be responsible for providing key inputs into the provision of accessible, flexible, and culturally appropriate service delivery, and participants will also provide input on the progress of the first SCCH Reconciliation Action Plan.

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?

If you would like to have a say on key issues concerning your community, tenancy and SCH services you are encouraged to self-nominate to become a TAC member. The nomination form can be downloaded from our website, and all nominations must be submitted by 5pm, 1 September 2021.

If you would like more information about the TACs, please contact a member of our Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 (Option 6).

SHOALHAVEN COMMUNITY-LED RESILIENCE PLANNING - A PART OF THE RECOVERY INTO RESILIENCE PROJECT (RRP)

As the prevalence of natural disasters rise, it is important that we have plans in place to enable us to recover and deal with natural disasters. We all know that disasters like the 2019-20 bushfires can cripple communities, businesses, and the environment, and erase hard-fought development gains. To prevent such devastation in our region, whether social or economic, an effective community-led framework must be in place before a disaster strikes.

Southern Cross Housing is working with Shoalhaven City Council to empower a diverse group of community members from our region to create a community-led Resilience Plan. It is important that our tenants have their say in this plan!

There are a few ways that you can be involved:

1. Completing a questionnaire – A questionnaire is available from getinvolved.shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/community-led-resilience.
2. Joining the Working Group – The first workshop will be held on August 16 in Nowra. Travel to and from the workshop can be arranged for you.

Participation in the Working Group requires no prior experience or knowledge of planning. Participants will be asked to commit to attending a minimum of 8 workshops over the duration of 6-8 months and to engaging with the Griffith University facilitation team when the need arises. Identifying ways to enhance the Shoalhaven's capacity to respond to current and future challenges, including increased incidents and severity of extreme weather events along with climate change. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to contribute and learn valuable skills in terms of emergency management planning!

Participants will also be given a platform to actively contribute to the development of a shared vision for the future of the region, as well as the identification and testing of a range of plans, policies and strategies that will be needed to support the delivery of that vision.

If you are interested in participating in any of the above activities, please contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 or email communities@scch.org.au

TARGETED APPRENTICESHIP/TRAINEE PROGRAM

Southern Cross Housing is working in partnership with the Housing Industry Association (HIA) to offer our tenants an opportunity to progress their careers in the Building and Construction Industry. This is a great opportunity for you to gain the skills that you need, and it is designed to support people that are living in social and community housing. Under the program all apprentices and trainees will receive:

- Incentive payments of \$500 per quarter (\$2K annually), to be paid on top of regular wages.
- Tutoring, based on the University of New England "QuickStart" Program.
- Pre-employment Job Ready course, including white card provision.
- Additional mentoring, counselling and tutoring support where required from the HIA Targeted Program Team.

Southern Cross Housing is inviting expressions of interest from our residents that would like to complete apprenticeships or traineeships in the Building and Construction Industry. Trade qualifications that could be undertaken include: Carpentry, Cabinetmaking, Bricklaying, Plumbing, Electrical, Landscaping, Wall & Floor Tiling, Roof Tiling, Painting, Concreting and Civil Construction. Business and Administration traineeships are also available.

Please contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 for more information or to register your interest.

INDIGENOUS CAREERS HUB – ILLAWARRA SOUTH COAST



The Indigenous Careers Hub is a private Facebook Group that lists employment opportunities that are available for Aboriginal people living in the Illawarra and Shoalhaven regions. Organisations are welcome to advertise their positions and jobseekers are welcome to post jobs that they are after. Once you have found a job, you are encouraged to post and share the good news with everyone so they can celebrate with you. Navigating your way through jobseeker sites can be tough, so if you are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander heritage and you are looking for work, the Indigenous Careers Hub is a great starting point in your journey towards finding your next dream job! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/370080958333275>



GOOD NEWS STORIES

SCH OUTREACH

Southern Cross Housing in collaboration with Specialist Homelessness services and other partnering organisations, are delivering outreach services to people experiencing street homelessness. The Assertive Outreach team provide help to people that will assist them to gain a pathway to long term accommodation with support to sustain tenancies.

Upcoming Outreach times and locations are as followed:

- Nowra Showground (West Street, Nowra – In front of the poultry shed) on the first Thursday of every month from 5th August 2021 – 2:30-3:30pm.
- SALT Care (5/19 Birriley Street, Bomaderry) – Wednesdays on a fortnightly basis from the 4th August 2021 – 11am-1pm.
- John Purcell House (11 Lawrence Avenue, Nowra) – Tuesdays on a fortnightly basis from the 3rd August 2021 from 10am – 12pm.
- Nowra Homeless Hub (27 Junction Street, Nowra) – Tuesday’s on a fortnightly basis from the 10th August 2021 from 10am – 12pm



ACHIEVING CITIZENSHIP – ULLADULLA GOOD NEWS STORY

Jenjira Jones, a tenant with Southern Cross Housing, has recently become an Australian Citizen and has expressed her gratitude to Southern Cross Housing for all the assistance she has received over the years.

“My children and I are so happy and have worked so hard through many challenges to become Australian citizens. We love it here! I just want to say thank you so much to the Southern Cross Housing Team and community for always supporting me and my children, for letting us stay in such a beautiful and safe area.

We are very appreciative of your words Jenjira. We wish you all the best back to you and your family too!

SCH CELEBRATES SENIORS

Each year during April, NSW celebrates seniors with the largest festival of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere. This annual event is designed to celebrate the role seniors play and the contributions they make to communities across NSW. These celebrations give people over 60 years old the chance to make new friends or get together with old ones and connect with their community at an array of local events.

To celebrate Seniors in 2021, Southern Cross Housing hosted a Senior’s Expo in Ulladulla, bringing together Senior tenants in the area for a health & wellbeing event which featured speakers and resources from organisations including Uniting, University of the Third Age, IRT, Wesley Mission, Shoalcoast Community Legal, Service NSW, NSW RFS, NSW Health, Shoalhaven Community Transport and the Ulladulla Community Resource Centre.

The Expo commenced with Chief Operating Officer, Eric Coulter, welcoming tenants, staff, service provider representatives and Aboriginal Elder Victor Channell to the event. Eric spoke with gratitude for the contribution’s seniors make in our communities and Southern Cross Housing’s commitment to supporting our senior tenants. Victor Channell warmly welcomed all to country and we heard from presenters who shared information and opportunities available to seniors in the Ulladulla area.

Attendees were invited to connect with someone new over lunch and many took the opportunity to ask service provider representatives questions or book in follow up appointments. One tenant remarked that she would not have known about all these opportunities and support services available to her if she hadn’t come along to the event. The day finished with senior specific chair yoga and gentle movement taught by local yoga teacher Kerri Wild.

IMPORTANT NOTICE - CHANGES TO THE COMMUNITY HOUSING RENT POLICY

The NSW Government has recently changed the rate Community Housing providers are to assess the rent of their tenants. Southern Cross Housing charges market rent for all its properties. This is the maximum rent a social housing tenant can be charged. The tenant can then apply for a rent subsidy; the rent subsidy will reduce the amount of money the tenant has to pay in rent.

The amount of rent a tenant pays is based on household income and number of residents in the home. Note, Southern Cross Housing also received 100% of your Commonwealth Rent Assistance.

CURRENT INCOME ELIGIBILITY FOR A RENT SUBSIDY

Household income limits are a range of income thresholds that determine whether the tenant is eligible for a rent subsidy and the percentage of income the tenant pays as rent.

Southern Cross Housing will determine income limits by using different combinations of the four key household member types listed in the table below. These income limits change every year.

Definitions:

- Adult: A person who is 18 years of age or over, or the tenant and/or their partner if under 18.
- Child: A person who is under the age of 18, unless that person is the tenant or the tenant's partner.

Household member	Moderate Inc. limit	30% limit	Subsidy eligibility limit
First Adult	\$835.00	\$1,044.00	\$1,555.00
Each Additional Adult	\$220.00	\$275.00	\$415.00
First Child	\$165.00	\$206.00	\$315.00
Each Additional Child	\$115.00	\$144.00	\$205.00

This involves households who are deemed to be on moderate incomes. This will not affect most households, however it will affect some, especially those households where there is someone who receives a wage.

To determine which household income limit applies to a household, the following steps are applied:

Step 1: Add up the assessable income for each adult in the household. Do not include any Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) amounts.

Step 2: Add up the number of adults in the household.

Step 3: Add up the number of children in the household.

Step 4: For the whole household, add up the weekly income allowance from Table 1 above.

Step 5: Compare the amount at Step 4 with the assessable household income at Step 1. This comparison will show the applicable rent subsidy income limit.

Note: CRA is not taken into consideration when determining the subsidy eligibility threshold.

The new assessable rate is a sliding scale of between 25% and 30% of household income plus 100% of CRA. Once the Household subsidy eligibility limit is reached then Market rent will apply. Once the Household subsidy eligibility limit is reached then Market rent will apply. **Remember if you have more than one person in your household, the income limits that apply are increased as indicated in the Table above.

Southern Cross Housing will not apply the new scales until October 1st 2021. If you have any questions about the new scale, please feel free to speak to your Housing Officer who will be able to assist you with your enquiry.

Please also know that if you secure work and your income increases Southern Cross Housing has a program called the "Start Work Bonus" which freezes your rent at your pre employment subsidy for 6 months.

Southern Cross Housing will provide you with at least 60 days notice regarding changes to your rent.

MY NEIGHBOUR IS VERY ANNOYING! WHAT TO DO? AND WHEN TO DO IT?

NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES

In a lot of instances, issues that occur between neighbours can be dealt with without you needing to move out of the area. It is important firstly to understand that anyone can complain that another person is being a nuisance if the other person is causing damage to a property or is interfering with private right to use and enjoy one's property. For it to constitute a nuisance, the relevant activity must not be trivial or unreasonable. Examples of nuisances may include the person having noisy animals, loud air-conditioners and interference with drainage.

CAN I STOP MY NEIGHBOUR'S NOISE?

Noise is probably the most common source of contention between neighbours. If you are being disturbed, usually the best thing to do is to ask your neighbour to reduce their noise or to avoid making noise at certain times of the day. If that does not work, the next steps you should take depend on the circumstances. If you are being disturbed by a party late at night you can call the police, who have the power to ask your neighbours to stop. Your local Council and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) both have rules about when people can make noise, especially when it comes to power tools, building work and operating machinery.

CAN MY NEIGHBOUR OR THEIR PETS COME ONTO MY LAND?

A neighbour can generally only enter your property if you have told them they can, or if they have a right of way or other right of access to your land (called an easement). Usually, a right of way or easement will be brought up with you during your sign-up with Southern Cross Housing or shown your lease agreement.

People do not have any right to enter your property to retrieve something unless you have told them they can. However, if they have entered your property previously and you have not complained, a court may consider that you have given your permission. Similarly, their pets cannot come onto your property either. If you have previously told a neighbour they can enter your property, you can withdraw your permission whenever you like. Once you do, they must leave immediately, otherwise they are trespassing.

HOW CAN YOUR HOUSING OFFICER HELP?

Your Housing Officer is your most important contact at Southern Cross Housing as they can provide advice regarding what Southern Cross Housing can or can't do on your behalf/in support of you and provide information in taking the next steps in accordance to your neighbourhood complaints.



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