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Seasonal Newsletter

Summer Edition 2018



SOUTHERN CROSS
HOUSING

building real community futures



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CEO Update

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the Summer edition of your Southern Cross Housing newsletter.

It's been a huge year for Southern Cross Housing, particularly because we had to prepare ourselves for the NSW Government to transfer the management of almost 1000 social housing properties across the Shoalhaven. This has been a massive task for us and I personally want to thank all our residents for being patient with us during this transition.

To all our new residents, I would like to say welcome to the Southern Cross Housing family. Our staff have commenced a home visit program for all transferred tenants so you will soon get to meet your Housing Officer. Although we are still committed to the government's maintenance contract for the next 2 years, I would like to assure you that our aim is to provide superior service to all our clients.

We have spent the last two years consulting our community and listening to what they have to say. Based on what we have heard, SCH will be implementing programs across all our service delivery areas. The main areas of concern for our residents are; the state of lawns & grounds, property care & rubbish, noise & nuisance from neighbours, and community safety.

At SCH, it's more than affordable housing, it's about community living. Therefore, we feel everybody deserves to live in a nice, clean, peaceful environment and we are committed to improving the areas our residents live in. We will be launching a "clean up" campaign offering assistance to help people clean up unwanted items. Initially this will only be across the Shoalhaven, however we hope to be able to offer this across all our service delivery areas. Our team will be closely monitoring residents who do not maintain their homes and yards in a reasonable acceptable manner. For those residents who are genuinely unable to maintain their laws or remove their rubbish, we will find a way to help. Simply consult your Housing Officer. On this note however, I have noticed many residents who look after their homes immaculately and I would like to congratulate those people and say thank you. I'm sure your neighbours are also really appreciative.

SCH hosted Christmas events for our tenants in Cooma, Ulladulla, Nowra, Bomaderry and Batemans Bay. I truly hope you enjoyed attending these and catching up with your neighbours and other members of your community.

This year you will also see SCH implement a new Tenant Advisory Group framework whereby we hope to set up committees in all areas where we have a local office. Please stay tuned for further updates if you are interested in joining. This will provide an opportunity for our tenants to have a direct voice our Board and Management Team ensuring we listen to what you have to say.

In this edition, we provided some very helpful information in regards to Disability Modifications Funding, Appeals Policy and other handy tips in regards to your property with SCH. For more details please see page 10.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our SCH community a wonderful new year. I hope many of you have found ways to remain cool over this extremely warm weather. Let's hope temperatures settle down some time soon.

From everyone here at SCH we would like to say thank you for being part of our community.

Alex Pontello



Prosperity in the Park

A free family fun day was held at Parramatta Park in East Nowra on Tuesday 9th October.

Kids had their faces painted, hair coloured, painted rocks and had a ball on the jumping castle.

The community enjoyed a variety of stalls, entertainment and lots of free goodies to raise awareness and promote the fight to reduce poverty and build stronger communities.

Shoalhaven City Council also celebrated the official opening of the new Learn to Ride bike path.

Shoalhaven City Council Mayor Amanda Findley was delighted with the new facility and encourages the youngest residents of the Shoalhaven to come out and enjoy the new bike path enhancement.

Parramatta Park is a true collaboration project with Council staff working collaboratively with FaCS and Southern Cross Housing to make Parramatta Park a centrepiece for the "Place Planning" initiative.



Social Housing Forum - Bomaderry

Southern Cross Housing partnered with the Community Industry Group, in running a successful Social Housing Tenant Forum at Bomaderry on Thursday 15th November this year. The forum was held at the Bomaderry Bowling Club. We had a range of guest speakers such as NSW Tenants Union, NSW Ambulance Service, Office of Environment and Heritage, and NSW Tenants Advice Service. Tenants from Southern Cross Housing attended the forum.

It provides tenants with an opportunity to discuss broad ranging issues in a supportive and proactive environment. Similar events in the past have led to informal networks and partnerships developing with tenants from different locations, becoming more engaged with other groups and increasing their capacity to access relevant training and engagement opportunities. Participants also developed the skills and confidence to enable these groups to work together to plan innovative and collaborative strategies on a range of relevant issues.



Recent Events

Agy's 1st Birthday

According to national organisation, Paint the Town REaD, more than 20 per cent of Australian children arrive at school without the skills necessary to make the most of their early education.

Research shows that no matter how good their subsequent teaching, these children can fall further and further behind. They may struggle with literacy, employment, health and happiness for the rest of their life.

Paint the Town REaD works to overcome this by motivating communities across Australia to read, talk, sing and rhyme with their children so they're ready to learn to read and write at school.

During Children's Week this year we celebrated Agy's very first birthday party. We were welcomed to Country by Aunty Grace and celebrated a surprise party for Agy with friends from lots of local schools, services and playgroups.

The children read, sang and danced with Agy to celebrate her special day. There was cake, a sausage sizzle, and plenty of fun activities to keep the children and Agy entertained.

Agy's friends Bright Spark from the Paint the Town REaD Wollongong and Bangu from Paint the Town REaD Shellharbour surprised Agy on the day as well.

We would like to thank everyone who attended the day. There were loads of smiles and plenty of exhausted kids by the end of the celebration.



Regional Christmas Parties

December was a very busy month for us here at Southern Cross Housing. We held parties in Bomaderry, Nowra, Ulladulla, Batemans Bay and Cooma. All events were very well attended and everyone who attended had a good time.

Below there is a collage of the events. Did you make the cut?



Upcoming Events

Shoalhaven



Animation Workshops

When: Monday 21st
January 2019

Time: 9am - 3pm

Venue: Shoalhaven Regional
Gallery - 12 Berry Street,
Nowra

For children aged between 5 and 12. There are three types of workshops on offer: Legomation, Toymation and Claymation. Phone 1300 930 702 for more info.



Caring Dads Programme

When: Thursday 7th
February 2019

Time: 10am - 12pm

Venue: Shellharbour and
Shoalhaven - TBC

A program to help fathers improve their relationships with their children and families. For more information, please contact Darren at Mission Australia on 4448 2000.



Womens Wellness Festival

When: Thursday 21st
March 2019

Time: 12pm - 7pm

Venue: Nowra Showground

Women, their families and friends are invited to come along and enjoy a variety of entertainment, performances and information sharing. There will be free stuff on the day to raise awareness and promote positive health messages.

Monaro



Craft and Cooking

When: Thursday 24th
January 2019

Time: 12pm - 2pm

Venue: Cooma Youth Hub -
39-41 Vale Street, Cooma

Design and create your own tote bag and make ice-cream! No booking required. For ages 12-24.

Contact 6452 5534 for more information.



Cheap Eats

When: Wednesday 30th
January 2019

Time: 11am - 1pm

Venue: MCAS - 90 Vale Street,
Cooma

Want to learn how to make quick, fresh and simple meals on a budget? Then come along to MCAS and we will show you how. Even better - you get to take your meal home with you.

Phone 6452 6174 for more information.

Eurobodalla



Children's Playwriting Workshop

When: Monday 21st
January 2019

Time: 10:30am - 2pm

Venue: Batemans Bay Library
Hanging Rock Place

A fun day of playwriting and performance for 10 to 13 year olds.. Phone 4472 5850 for more info.



Free Plant Swap - Narooma

When: Sunday 24th
February 2019

Time: 8:30am - 1pm

Venue: Narooma Rotary Markets

Please bring environmental weeds from your garden and exchange for native plants from the nursery at the Eurobodalla Regional Botanic Gardens.



Home Composting Workshop

When: Friday 15th
March 2019

Time: 9:30am - 11am

Venue: TBC, Moruya

Learn how to use a hot composting machine at one of our free interactive workshops. Each household will receive a voucher for one free composting kit. For more info, please call 4474 1024.

Appeals Policy

SCH have recently reviewed our Appeals policy and brochure, to better explain when you can appeal a decision we have made and how to lodge an appeal. The policy also explains your right to refer an Appeal to the Housing Appeals Committee if you are not happy with our decision on your appeal.

A copy of the updated Appeals policy is available at the Feedback link on our website www.scch.org.au, or any of our staff would be happy to help you lodge an appeal. Copies of the new Appeals and Complaints brochure is available from any of our offices or we can arrange to mail a copy to you.

Disability Modifications Funding

SCH have a new policy on funding for disability modifications. Social Housing property owners have a responsibility to fund minor modifications that are considered "reasonable adjustments" to enable you to live in your property, based on the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist. If you have a larger modification approved, it may be funded by the NDIS, or you as the tenant. In some circumstances, SCH may agree to fund a modification but ask you for a contribution towards the cost.

A copy of the policy is available on our website under Social Housing Policies. If you need more information, please contact one of our Property Services team in Nowra on (02)4421 5145.

5 Minutes With... Sarah

Customer Service is key to the service we provide at Southern Cross Housing.



This edition, we'll spending 5 minutes with Sarah, one of Southern Cross' Housing Assistants.

How long have you been at Southern Cross Housing and what does your role involve?

I have been at Southern Cross Housing for 16 months now. I began as a trainee and have learnt so much from my 12 months in that position. I have now moved into a new role in the Access and Demand team as a Housing Assistant. My role is to provide clients with Temporary Accommodation that present as homeless and need a safe place to stay. I also assist in processing applications in our office.

What was your background before Southern Cross Housing?

Before I started at Southern Cross Housing, I worked as a Beauty Therapist in multiple day spas along the South Coast. I also come from a background of management in the retail industry.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

In my spare time I love to cook and spend time with my dog, Noodle.

Meet the Team

To improve our service to you, we have recently recruited new staff members to join our fast growing team.

We're pleased to introduce Sharee and Greg.



Sharee Nowra

Sharee has recently joined Southern Cross Housing as a Service Integration Support Officer in the Customer and Communities team. She has extensive experience in the social housing sector having come across from Family & Community Services, Housing Services where she worked for almost 16 years. Her previous position was an Aboriginal Senior Client Service Officer Specialist where she provided support and assistance to client and tenants experiencing difficulties that were impacting their housing and personal wellbeing.

She also managed relationships, partnerships and networks between communities, the Department and support services to improve communication and access to services for clients to support sustainable tenancies.

She is passionate about empowering people to enable them to make positive changes for themselves and for them to have safe and secure housing.

Sharee had the pleasure of meeting some tenants at a recent tenant forum and she is looking forward to meeting more of our tenants and clients in the future.



Greg Nowra

Greg has recently joined Southern Cross Housing as a Housing Officer in the Access and Demand team. He has extensive experience in the social housing sector having worked for Family & Community Services, Housing Services for the past 21 years and he has a wealth of knowledge in all products and services that are available.

Greg also provides the team with support through his reporting abilities which is something that he thoroughly enjoys.

Greg has already worked with a number of clients in the short time that he has been with SCH, where he has provided them with a high level of service and achieved many positive housing outcomes.

Greg enjoys helping people who are in genuine need and making a difference in their lives..... and he likes microsoft excel - which in our opinion makes him a little crazy, but to our advantage, very helpful.

FREE Rubbish Removal and Yard Clean Up Service (Shoalhaven)

Local residents and community members have told us their 3 main concerns are:

1 Unsightly rubbish & unkept lawns

2 Noise & Nuisance behaviour from neighbours

3 Pets and / or dangerous dogs being kept in premises which are inappropriate or without written permission from your landlord (SCH)



Southern Cross Housing wants to make your community a better place to live

To assist our tenants to maintain a clean, well-presented home we will be offering a **free clean-up service**.

With your permission, our “Clean Up Crew” will be able to come into your yard and **remove all your unwanted items**.

To book in your free rubbish removal and yard clean up service, **please contact your Housing Officer or your local office**.

NOWRA	(02) 4421 5145
BOMADERRY	(02) 4421 5145
ULLADULLA	(02) 4455 4543
BATEMANS BAY	(02) 4472 7681
COOMA	(02) 6452 1298



Handy Hints

What damages do Southern Cross Housing hold the tenant responsible for?

If a tenant or their invited guests either accidentally or wilfully break any part of a Southern Cross Housing managed property, they will be held liable for any costs involved in the repair or replacement of any such damaged or lost items. However, if a tenant’s property is damaged and the tenant can provide evidence confirming that there are exceptional circumstances for any damages, then charges will most likely not be forwarded on.

Below is a list of damages that may be on charged to a tenant:

Any internal damage to the property that is not considered fair, wear and tear such as:

- Broken Windows
- Damaged or missing smoke alarms/detectors
- Missing Keys
- Damaged doors and door handles
- Holes in walls
- Holes in ceilings
- Damaged Flooring
- Damaged window coverings
- Damaged window frames and window handles
- Damaged lighting
- Damaged and/or missing skirting
- Damaged and/or missing tiling
- Damaged plumbing (such as taps/shower heads)
- Any permanent fixtures to the property (such as baths/shower screens/ceiling fans/fans/kitchen cupboard & drawers/ovens/rangehoods/heating)

Any external damage to the property that is not considered fair, wear and tear such as:

- Damaged fences
- Damaged Letterboxes
- Damaged lighting
- Holes in external walls
- Damaged external doors
- Any damaged structures such as carports or sheds
- Blocked pipes
- Damaged or missing flyscreens

Tenant Refund Process

If a tenant requests a refund of any monies in advance from their rent or non rent, it is a Southern Cross Housing policy to ensure that the tenant will always be left with a minimum of 2 weeks rent in advance.

For all tenant refunds, once a refund has been approved, Southern Cross Housing take 7 business days for the request to be processed by our Finance Team. Once a refund has been processed, the funds should appear in the tenant’s nominated account within 1-2 business days. Therefore we advise tenants that it can take up to 10 working days for a refund to appear in your account.

Please be aware that Southern Cross Housing do not automatically give a refund of monies within 1 – 2 days as we adhere to the above mentioned policy.

It is also a tenant’s responsibility to ensure the correct banking details are provided.

Are you thinking of moving out of your property?

For all tenants who are thinking of moving out of their property, please be aware that we require you to give Southern Cross Housing a minimum of 21 days notification of your intent to vacate a property – if you are outside of a periodic agreement or in a continuous lease.

As this is a requirement of the Act, please see division 3, section 97.2 of the Residential Tenancy Act - ‘The termination notice must specify a termination date that is not earlier than 21 days after the day on which the notices is given’.

Please also be aware that all notifications must be in writing to Southern Cross Housing and given to your Housing Officer.



HAVE YOU CONSIDERED STUDYING OR TAKING UP SPORT OR MUSIC?



You are never too old to follow your dreams. We have funding available for eligible residents of SCH properties

APPLICATION & ASSESSMENT

- Applicants will be assessed on their individual aspirations, contribution to the community and personal character and commitment
- Households must be eligible for social housing and have a satisfactory rental history
- Parental or guardian consent is required for applicants under 18 years old
- A maximum of 1 scholarship per applicant per year and 2 per family.

Ask us for an application form today or download at www.sccg.org.au



EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP 2018

Scholarship Objectives:

- To encourage SCH tenants and children of tenants to improve their education, health or personal wellbeing

What can the Scholarship be used for:

- School fees or registration fees Educational, music or sporting equipment
- Participation in excursions, exchange programs, study camps, sporting events or performances
- Uniforms
- Other related costs (eg, tutoring, childcare)

Scholarship Funding:

- Up to \$400 one off payment for primary school student
- Up to \$800 one off payment for high school student
- Up to \$1200 one off payment for University, TAFE or college student

Applicants can be any age and studying at a NSW school/ TAFE/college. or enrolled in any organized sporting or music program.



APPLICATIONS CLOSE

31st January 2019 for Summer offers
31st July 2019 for Winter offers

Place Planning in East Nowra

FACS is partnering with Mission Australia to implement a project to strengthen the East Nowra community. The aim of the Place Planning Project is to work directly with community members to provide a platform for residents to share their concerns and issues, while getting more involved within their communities. This project is aiming to give residents opportunities to not only share their voice, but to take part in driving change.

The project will look at opportunities to support new ideas and initiatives drawing from consultation undertaken with the community in 2017. For example community members said that lack of employment opportunities is a major issue for residents. In response we are implementing a project to link residents to employment and training opportunities arising from major infrastructure projects like the Berry to Nowra By-pass.

FACS will continue to lead the project and to collaborate with community leaders, key stakeholders and Mission Australia. We have a focus on sustainable change and want to make sure that when this project finishes, that this change continues to last by working with community leaders and existing services and groups to strengthen supports in the East Nowra community.

Mission Australia's Community Development Officers Melissa Andrews and Shondelle Bolt will engage with tenants in East Nowra to promote opportunities for community participation. If you would like to get involved in driving positive change in your community or are interested in employment opportunities please contact Melissa or Shondelle on (02) 4448 2300.



What is the Tenant Advisory Group?

Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) is a forum for tenants to discuss issues, exchange ideas and give feedback to Southern Cross Housing.

TAG's are being held in the following areas:

Cooma, Batemans Bay, Ulladulla, Nowra, and Bomaderry.

Meetings are tenant led and will focus on a particular theme, issue or concern for tenants. The meetings are held every three months. The more tenants are involved in TAG meetings, the more Southern Cross Housing can ensure it delivers the best possible services to meet tenants' needs.

Why join the Tenant Advisory Group?

Joining the Tenant Advisory Group can help you to:

- Meet other like-minded people and get involved in your community
- Have your ideas heard and discussed
- Develop new skills and confidence
- Have a real say in the way housing services are delivered
- Develop a sense of ownership and responsibility.

If you wish to become part of this group, please contact Sharee, Peter or Jess on 4421 5145.



TALK TO US

SCCH.ORG.AU

OUR LOCATIONS

NOWRA

69 Kinghorne Street,
Nowra NSW 2541
info@scch.org.au
PH: (02) 4421 5145

ULLADULLA

East Side Mall,
118-120 Princes Highway,
Ulladulla NSW 2539
info@scch.org.au
PH: (02) 4455 4543

COOMA

57-59 Massie Street,
Cooma NSW 2630
info@scch.org.au
PH: (02) 6452 1298

BATEMANS BAY

Shop 12, 12-18 Orient Street,
Batemans Bay NSW 2536
info@scch.org.au
PH: (02) 4472 7681

BOMADERRY

1/54 Bolong Road
Bomaderry NSW 2541
info@scch.org.au
PH: (02) 4421 5145

NOWRA EAST WELLBEING HUB

Nowra East Public School
Access via Douglas Street
Tuesday mornings 9am -
11am during school terms.

MAINTENANCE

For maintenance, please call **1300 757 885**.

If you are a previous Housing NSW tenant, please continue to call the Maintenance Line on **1800 422 322**.



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