



CEO MESSAGE

Welcome to another edition of the Southern Cross Housing (SCH) Newsletter.

It certainly has been a challenging start to 2020, with bushfires, floods and now the onset of Coronavirus (CO-VID19), which is creating widespread anxiety. I want to encourage all of our residents to follow the advice from government health experts advising us to stay at home as much as possible. The majority of SCH staff are working remotely from home so we are doing our part to not spread or expose ourselves to this highly contagious virus. It's all our responsibility to avoid unnecessary travel, practice social distancing, and good hygiene.

As previously mentioned, to minimise face-to-face contact and prevent the spread of the virus, work-from-home arrangements are now in place across the organisation. Urgent and emergency maintenance work will continue to be delivered as normal. Obviously some extra precautions have been put in place regarding communication from SCH or contractors prior to home visits and informing people if you have been unwell. All SCH staff will remain contactable through the normal channels. Be sure to keep an eye on our website for any updates. The website address is www.scch.org.au.

A period of isolation can often have detrimental effects on people's health. This can often lead to a feeling of loneliness and depression. Feeling connected to others is important for our mental and physical wellbeing and can protect against anxiety and despair. If you feel alone or socially isolated for a long time, you might experience physical or mental problems which can often lead to negative thoughts. Please keep an eye on your mental wellbeing as well as for your family members and your neighbours.

Some good ideas from Health Direct may help overcome loneliness and isolation and improve your outlook on life by:

- Connecting with family and friends — phone, email or use video technology.
- Connecting with communities online — join a game where you can chat to people.
- Getting out of the house - go shopping for essential items, exercise, or it's a great time to enrol to study online.
- Getting a pet – Easily searched on Gumtree etc, vendors often deliver. Pets can also improve your physical and mental health. (Be sure to check SCH's Pet Policy or simply talk to your Housing Officer)

It's also a good opportunity to make time for activities and hobbies you enjoy, keep as healthy as you can by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep and avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.

Additionally, this is a friendly reminder to ensure people continue to keep up their rent payments during these challenging times. As a not-for-profit Community Housing Provider, SCH relies on the rental income received from tenants to run our business, provide a service to tenants and maintain the properties that we own and manage. If your household income has not changed or been impacted by unemployment or reduced working hours due to the Coronavirus crisis, then your rent will be reviewed as per the normal bi-annual review process in accordance with Centrelink CPI increases. However, if your household income has been reduced or you have suffered unemployment due to the Coronavirus crisis, your rent will be reviewed accordingly. It is important you contact SCH as soon as possible so we don't unknowingly charge you too much.

Proposed changes to Tenancy Laws (Moratorium on Evictions) are for people who are struggling to pay their rent due to a loss of income or unemployment caused by the Coronavirus crisis. Please contact SCH if this is the case so we can assist with some workable solutions. These solutions may include affordable payment plans or deferred payments.

At times like this it is important to act with kindness towards one another. SCH is currently running a Good Neighbour Awards Program. This program aims to recognise and celebrate kindness that is being shown by residents during this difficult period. Please check out the website for more details and a nomination form. Remember, we are only a phone call away. Please stay safe and as healthy as possible.



Alex Pontello - CEO



KEEPING OUR
TENANTS, STAFF AND
CONTRACTORS SAFE IS
OUR HIGHEST PRIORITY

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DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

SCH would like to communicate faster and more efficiently with you. Email is an easy way for you to receive information about about events, activities and opportunities quickly and efficiently. Updating your email address is really easy. Please fill out **Update my Email address** form at www.scch.org.au/community or phone the office on 1300 757 885.

INFORMATION FOR TENANTS REGARDING COVID-19 (CORONAVIRUS)



As you would be aware, there has been a global outbreak of a Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and there are a growing number of cases in Australia. Most people who become sick with COVID-19 experience mild symptoms, similar to a cold or flu, and will quickly recover. However, some people may be more affected than others. This includes elderly people, people with heart, lung, kidney conditions or diabetes.

Please call your local SCH Housing Officer on **1300 757 885** if you are not well, or believe you may have been exposed to COVID-19.

SCH staff and contractors will call you prior to any visit. If you are unwell, recently travelled overseas, or have been exposed or tested for COVID-19, please let them know prior to the visit. In order to prevent the spread of Corona Virus and protect staff and tenants all SCH Offices are now closed to the public and all enquiries should be made by telephone to **1300 757 885**.

Essential services will still continue, including the collection of rent payments and urgent maintenance tasks. Unfortunately, The COVID-19 Pandemic will have a serious impact on the Australian economy resulting in more people losing their jobs and homes. This will lead to more homelessness and much more demand on the public housing system. Please make sure you do not place your tenancy at risk during these turbulent times. Make sure you keep up your rent payments without falling behind. If you are struggling financially, please contact Southern Cross Housing to discuss a range of options to assist including payment plans or deferred payments, particularly if your income has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can be confident that Southern Cross Housing is following Government advice, and that our business continuity plan is extremely robust and resilient enough to deal with the potential challenges ahead.

ADVICE ON HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR OWN HEALTH



The NSW Health website <https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19> remains the best place for up to date information. Please listen to advice from doctors and experts.

COVID-19 spreads from one person who has the virus to another person through droplets from a cough or sneeze. It can also spread from objects or surfaces. There are steps you can take to protect yourself and those around you from spreading the virus:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as much as possible;
- Maintain at least 1.5 metre distance between yourself and others;
- If you are feeling unwell, it is best you stay home. Even for a slight cough or cold;
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw soiled tissues in the bin and clean your hands with soap and water or sanitiser. If you do not have a tissue, sneeze or cough into a flexed elbow.

For general advice, call the **National Coronavirus Health** Information Line on **1800 020 080**

If you have a fever, cough or trouble breathing, see a doctor and call them before you visit. You can also call **Healthdirect** on **1800 022 222**.

If you are feeling seriously unwell and it is an emergency, call 000 immediately. If you need to speak to someone about how you are feeling generally please don't hesitate to call one of the numbers below.

Beyond Blue – 1300 22 46 36

Kids Helpline – 1800 551 800

NSW Mental Health Line – 1800 011 511





SOUTHERN CROSS
HOUSING

REWARD YOUR NEIGHBOUR

HOW TO NOMINATE YOUR NEIGHBOUR?

Nominating someone is really easy, simply tell us what the person has done and why you think it is important. Eligibility criteria and a nomination form can be obtained from:

www.scch.org.au/community/

The winning nomination will receive a **\$100 supermarket gift voucher** for food and all nominated individuals will receive a certificate of appreciation and official recognition on the Southern Cross Housing Website.

Nominations close on Friday 15th May 2020

SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING: 2020 NOMINATE A GOOD NEIGHBOUR PROGRAM OPEN FOR NOMINATIONS

Do you know a Southern Cross Housing tenant that is friendly and helpful, has performed a good deed or contributes to their local community? Australia's annual celebration of Neighbour Day is being held on Sunday 29th March. To mark this occasion Southern Cross Housing has launched a new program that aims to encourage and recognise individuals that are being good neighbours.

Our tenants and communities are facing unprecedented times as we are experiencing a worldwide pandemic. The strength we draw from our communities and our friends, families and wider community members has never been more important.

Southern Cross Housing wants to take the opportunity of Neighbour Day 2020 to remind all of our tenants that social connections and support are more important than ever at this time. We are all experiencing extended periods of isolation and have to readjust to new regimes. The Good Neighbour Awards Program provides us with an opportunity to recognise and celebrate kindness that is taking place in our communities.

In all years, Neighbour Day is a catalyst to encourage people across all communities to build and strengthen their social connections. Given the challenges the world is currently facing regarding COVID19, getting together physically at this time is no longer safe and we encourage everyone to find other ways to safely connect and engage with their neighbours and communities.

During these times being a good neighbour may involve online/virtual connections, with one or two people, group chats or small acts of kindness such as leaving calling or connection cards with a kind message and your phone number for those who are isolated, so that they can call you for a chat. It may also involve leaving a cooked meal at someone's doorstep if they are experiencing illness. There is no act of kindness that is too small.

WHAT'S NOT ON

In accordance with Government advice, all community events involving gatherings of people both within Southern Cross Housing and in the broader community, have been cancelled or postponed. It is recommended that people **STAY AT HOME** and minimise contact with others, with the exception to restock necessities such as food and petrol or for health reasons.

Practicing social isolation is the most important thing we all can do to “flatten the curve” and minimise the impact of COVID-19. Luckily, in the age of Netflix, there’s no shortage of things to watch while you’re housebound.

If we’re going to be stuck inside for a while we’re going to need more than just TV to get us through this. If you need some help thinking of ways to entertain yourself and your loved ones during social isolation, here are a few ideas.

1. Journal - This is unlike any other time in modern history, and while you think you could never forget what’s happening, you should still consider keeping a journal. Years from now when the memories fade it will be interesting to read back on just exactly what was going on and how you felt as it was happening. It will be especially interesting if you have young children who are living through this but will likely have very limited memories of it later on. Plus, journaling is proven to be a major stress reliever. Everyone could surely benefit from that right now.

2. Take a Class - Have you been meaning to brush up on your Spanish? Want to learn Adobe Photoshop? There’s no better time than right now to take an hour a day to take a class online. Lots of websites are offering sales on their classes.

3. Plan a Date Night - Social isolation means you now have the opportunity to spend a lot of quality time with your family. But hanging around in your trackie dacks all day or homeschooling your kids will take the romance out of any relationship. Many couples make it a point to have a date night every week to stay connected. Just because you can’t leave the house, doesn’t mean you can’t have a special night in once in a while.

4. Take it Easy - You might be feeling pressure to be productive during this time or to keep life as close to normal as possible. Just remember, this is unlike anything we’ve ever experienced before. You might be worried about an elderly or immunocompromised relative. If you’re in the house with kids, you’re probably feeling overwhelmed. Your job might be hanging in the balance. It is a scary time for everyone and you’re completely warranted in feeling anxious, scared, or upset. Be kind to yourself and allow yourself some down time. Watch TV and eat some ice cream if you need to, practice some yoga or self- meditation, run laps around the yard. Do whatever helps you to cope.

Remember, stress is one of the biggest culprits for a low immune system! Do what you can to keep calm and stay safe.

RENT IT, KEEP IT

SCH is looking at providing free workshops though out the year that are aimed at helping people to maintain their tenancy. These workshops may begin using an online platform like Zoom. The proposed program will provide participants with information, tips and advice that will cover almost everything you need to know about being a tenant. As a SCH tenant, we would like you to be provided with as much information as possible to help sustain a long lasting, successful tenancy and invite you to submit an expression of interest to register for the workshops. It is likely that the courses will initially take place online using Zoom.

Topics that will be covered include:

- Gambling & Effects
- Managing Expenses
- Legal Briefing on Fines
- Setting up a house
- Repairs and cleaning
- Relationships with neighbours & visitors

If you would like to submit an expression of interest please download a registration form from www.scch.org.au/community/. Questions regarding the program can be forwarded to the Communities Assist Team on 02 4413 1102 or email communities@scch.org.au.

IDENTIFYING SOLUTIONS TO HOMELESSNESS: ROUGH SLEEPER STREET COUNT

On 26 June 2019, reducing homelessness was announced as one of the NSW Premier’s 14 Premier’s Priority Actions. For this Priority the Government has set an ambitious target of reducing street homelessness by 50 per cent across NSW by 2025.

SCH has committed to working with the NSW Department of Communities & Justice to conduct a count within the Shoalhaven area of people who are sleeping rough. The Count was originally set to take place in early February but unfortunately due to the extreme bush fires it was postponed.

The count has been rescheduled to be completed in early April but it is likely that this will also be postponed due to the current safety concerns and the important need to practise social distancing.

When the count takes place, the data collected will be used to inform localised strategies and responses to homelessness. It will also be used to advocate for the resources necessary to create sustainable solutions to homelessness and to increase the amount of Assertive Outreach services to people experiencing street homelessness.

TENANT TIPS

PETS

Southern Cross Housing leases require tenants to seek permission before getting any new pet. We will not normally withhold permission for you to have a pet unless you live in a leasehold property where the owner has refused permission or in a unit that is not suitable, or you have difficulty keeping your property clean or meeting financial commitments without a pet. These restrictions are put in place to protect the health and welfare of both you and the animal.

Each household is normally given permission to keep one pet. Companion animals (dogs and cats) must be registered with the local Council and must be desexed and microchipped. The Shoalhaven Animal Shelter is able to provide microchipping for \$20. The Shoalhaven Animal Shelter will be able to provide advice about discounted desexing that is available via the Animal Welfare League. Contact numbers are provided below.

- Shoalhaven Animal Shelter - 44293410
- Shoalhaven - 0403 071 497
- Eurobodalla - 0410 016 612
- Far South Coast - 0400 372 609



If you have been given permission to keep a pet at your property, you must make sure the animal does not cause any annoyance or nuisance to other people, especially neighbours. Your pet must be kept under control at all times, be securely contained and not allowed to roam. Barking dogs can cause distress to neighbours and must be controlled. You also accept responsibility if your pet attacks or harms anyone.

SCH asks tenants to keep pets outside. This is to help avoid property damage such as scratched floor boards and doors, ripped flyscreens, stains on carpet or flea infestation. If you allow your pet inside, you will be required to pay for any damage that your pet causes as well as a pest treatment at the end of your lease. You will also be asked to pay for any external damage your pet causes during the lease, including fences, gates, top soil and reseeding of lawns and the refill of garden beds if needed.

If you get a pet without permission, or if your animal causes a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, causes damage or is not registered and desexed, we may ask you to remove your pet, so please contact your Housing Officer first if you are thinking of getting a pet.



HASSLE FREE WAYS TO PAY YOUR RENT!

In keeping with Government guidelines on social distancing and disease prevention, Southern Cross Housing are encouraging tenants to make rental payments through Centrepay or internet banking, rather than paying by cash or EFTPOS at a SCH Office.

There are two ways to pay your rent without having to come into the office. The first is by direct deposit from your bank account. Details for direct deposits are:

Account Name: Southern Cross Community Housing Limited

BSB: 062585

Account Number: 00801207

Please ensure that you enter your tenant code as the reference for your transaction. If you do not know your tenant code please contact your Housing Officer.

The second way is via Centrepay. Centre Pay is a free bill paying service that can be used to arrange regular deductions from your Centrelink payment, including paying your rent and non-rent (water and other charges) to Southern Cross Housing.

In order to do this you will need to provide SCH with permission to deduct these payments. An approval form can be provided by your Housing Officer and is submitted to Centrelink. If there are any changes to your rent we can also adjust your Centrepay amount. This is a hassle and worry-free way to pay your rent as it is done automatically every fortnight, ensuring your rent (and any additional agreed payments) are paid on time!

If you need help in setting up a Centrepay deduction please contact your Housing Officer for assistance, or your bank can help you set up a recurring internet payment.

Our goal at Southern Cross Housing is to help you sustain your tenancy for years to come by working together to solve any problems that may arise. As a tenant the worst possible thing you could do is stop paying rent and water charges.

If you are late with your rent or water payments your account will be in arrears and you will be in breach of your tenancy agreement. This could lead to you having to move out of your home. If you are finding that it is hard to make ends meet and that you are falling behind with rent and water payments there are easy ways to address the issue. Be proactive and speak to your Housing Officer.

REPAIRS & MAINTENANCE



EMERGENCY

If you have an emergency that happens outside of normal working hours (Monday – Friday 9am – 5pm) please call one of the following emergency maintenance numbers:

Southern Cross Housing Tenants – 1300 757 885

FACS Housing Transfer Tenants – 1800 422 322

If you are in a leasehold property please refer to the emergency contact number numbers that are listed on your lease. It's important to note that the after-hours contact number is for emergencies **ONLY**.

If your repair is NOT urgent then please wait until the next working day and report the issue by calling **1300 757 885**. Alternatively you can complete a request online at www.scch.org.au.

REPORTING A REPAIR

If you need something repaired in your home, there are a few different ways to get in touch with your local Southern Cross Housing office. Please refer below to see what these are.

- Call the SCH maintenance line on 1300 757 885
- Write to SCH at PO Box 2351 Bomaderry NSW 2541
- Online by completing the Maintenance Request form that is available at www.scch.org.au/social-housing

REPAIR TIMEFRAMES

Southern Cross Housing Tenants

- Emergency 4 Hour
- Urgent 24 Hour
- Priority 14 Days
- Priority 28 Days

Housing Transfer Tenants

- Emergency 4 Hours
- Urgent 8 Hours



WHAT IS AN EMERGENCY?

- Burst Water Service
- Blocked or broken toilet system
- Serious roof leak
- Gas leak
- Dangerous electrical fault or serious storm/flood damage
- Fire damage
- A failure of the electricity
- Failure of any essential service for hot water, cooking, heating or laundering
- Any fault or damage that causes the premises to be unsafe or not secure



DON'T FLUSH WIPES

FLUSHING DISPOSABLE WIPES DOWN THE TOILET COULD COST YOU \$10,000 IN PLUMBING REPAIRS

Manufacturers of disposable wipes will often indicate on the packaging that the product is “flushable.” Plumbing experts say there's no such thing as a flushable wipe.

Gary Watkins, Executive Manager, Property Services at Southern Cross Housing said “Because disposable wipes don't break down in water, they can clog up plumbing systems in a home, and damage pipes and machinery at wastewater treatment plants. Even if the packaging on disposable wipes says ‘flushable’ that doesn't mean it's safe to put down a toilet”

The issue is that disposable wipes don't break down in water the same way toilet paper does. That makes them more likely to get stuck somewhere in the pipes and accumulate until water and waste cannot pass through. This becomes much more than a matter of personal inconvenience in cases where a backup can cause raw sewage to flow back into your home. Disposable wipes don't break down and can cause major clogs, where sewage flows back into the home.

Please only flush toilet paper down your toilet.

TENANT OPPORTUNITIES

ASSISTANCE FOR TENANTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS



The Illawarra/Shoalhaven Homelessness Mental Health Program assists people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness and have a mental health condition. Funding can be used to support people that have mental health issues to pay their rent, better manage their mental health condition and improve their wellbeing and health.

To be eligible you must be over 18 years of age and be at risk of homelessness or being homeless, and have a formally diagnosed mental health condition.

Recently the Ulladulla Team referred Sharon Gilson, a tenant in Ulladulla to the program. As a result Sharon received assistance to purchase a whipper snipper, water pressure cleaner and washing machine. These items have made a big difference to Sharon's wellbeing. Sharon is very grateful for the assistance that has been provided.

For more information please phone the Southern Cross Housing Communities Assist Team on 02 4413 1102 or visit www.scch.org.au

NOMINATIONS OPEN, NOWRA TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (NTAC)

The Nowra Tenant Advisory Committee (NTAC) is a great way for you to influence the way that Southern Cross Housing delivers its services and programs. Members of the NTAC will develop an in depth understanding of the range of services and activities that are provided and supported by Southern Cross Housing. Participation will also enable you to gain skills in advocacy, support and event management. To date we have received six nominations but need more!!

One nomination that we have received is from Christine Kent. Christine has nominated because she passionately believes that tenants need more engagement with the management of properties in which they are living, particularly in relation to the physical and emotional safety of women.



Having been homeless herself, Christine knows firsthand how devastating the impact of this can be. She has established a Facebook group for homeless women and has written and published a number of articles about women and homelessness.

TAC's will be established in other regional areas following the establishment of the NTAC. The first meeting will focus on the role of the NTAC. Together we will determine future meeting times and locations. We will also learn about the range of services and programs that are delivered by Southern Cross Housing.

If you are interested in joining the NTAC please read the Terms of Reference for the Committee which are available from <https://www.scch.org.au/community/> and complete a nomination form. Nomination forms can be sent to Communities@scch.org.au. If you would like more information about the NTAC or need a hard copy of the application form please contact Cathy Campbell (Community Engagement Coordinator) on 02 441 3102.



OPPORTUNITY PATHWAYS

Opportunity Pathways is an exciting program that supports people that are over the age of 17 to make changes that lead to better employment and housing outcomes. The program is targeted at people that live in social housing and provides flexible support and access to learning, training and work opportunities.

Opportunity Pathways is free program and provides assistance over a 12 month period. To be eligible you must meet all of the following criteria:

- Be over the age of 17
- Living in public, community or Aboriginal housing
- Receiving a Rent Choice Subsidy; or
- Be an approved Social Housing applicant on the NSW Housing Register.

If you are accepted into the program, staff at Wesley Mission will work with you to create a plan based on your situation, needs and goals. Throughout the 12-month program, you will have access to one-on-one support, coaching and mentoring, training, workshops, work experience placements, volunteering opportunities, and work retention support. To help achieve your goals, you may also receive some practical and financial assistance that may include childcare, help to obtain a driver's licence as well as fuel vouchers and Opal cards.

Opportunity Pathways will also provide you with help to write that perfect resume, interview skills and ongoing, long term support. If you are interested in joining this great program please call the Communities Assist Team on 02 44131102 or email Communities@scch.org.au

19-20 SCH TENANT SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS



During September and October of 2019 approximately 700 tenants participated in a survey that was conducted to provide information about your experiences as tenants with SCH.

The survey results are being used by SCH to identify areas for improvement. The survey was previously undertaken every two years, but will now be conducted annually.

Tenants who transferred to us under the Social Housing Management Transfer (SHMT), were able to provide us with their feedback and we were happy that 44% of those tenants chose to do so. This has helped us to gain an insight into their view of our service delivery as relatively new tenants.

The survey has enabled us to identify that the majority of tenants are extremely satisfied with the services they receive. It also assisted us to identify areas that require some improvement.

THE COMPLAINTS & APPEALS PROCESS

SCH will be working to increase your awareness and understanding of our complaints and appeals processes. In order to do this we will be updating our promotional material, the SCH Tenant Handbook and our website.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

We will be working to ensure that tenants are satisfied with the quality of work that is carried out at their home. We will be improving our promotional material to clearly outline expected wait times from maintenance and we will be developing a policy on the quality of work to assist in addressing contractor performance.

Unfortunately SCH contractors are unable to provide a service to our SHMT tenants until June 2021. Until this time there is very little control that SCH has over the quality of work and timeframes for this maintenance.

TENANT INVOLVEMENT & ABILITY TO INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING

SCH are in the process of establishing a Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) in the Nowra area which will provide tenants with a platform to provide direct feedback and advice on SCH service delivery. Once the first TAC has been established, we will work to establish them in all areas.

We greatly appreciate and would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the Tenant Satisfaction Survey last year. You will receive another Tenant Satisfaction Survey throughout the year. We would appreciate it if you would complete the survey to provide us with your valued feedback.

PEOPLE LEAVING CUSTODY PILOT PROGRAM



The Communities Assist team have been working hard to develop a new program call the People Leaving Custody Program. This has involved working collaboratively with DCJ, Community Corrections, ITS - Aribis, Illawarra Shoalhaven Men's Homelessness Service, RoCC and Waminda.

The project was developed in response to a research report that was prepared for CHIA NSW and Homelessness NSW that identified the lack of housing pathways for people leaving prison. The report identified a clear opportunity for community housing providers to take the lead on implementing a more collaborative approach to the provision of housing and support in their local area.

The aim of this pilot is to develop a coordinated response to increase the number of people being sustainably housed in the Shoalhaven area after leaving custody; inclusive of tailored support to strengthen their social, emotional and economic wellbeing.

SCH have committed to providing a 'housing first' model to eligible participants, with eight properties being allocated each year, over the two year project.

The program is about to be broadcast through DCJ – Community Corrections, who will then begin referring clients.

To be eligible clients must:

- Meet the eligibility criteria for social housing.
- Demonstrate a close connection and ties to the Shoalhaven area.
- Be released with a supervised Parole Order for a minimum of 3 months.
- Meet the eligibility criteria and agree to participate in the Initial Transition Service (ITS) for a minimum of 3 months.
- Agree for their information to be shared with participating PLC agencies to enable referral for appropriate case management and ongoing support.
- Demonstrate a commitment to actively work towards strengthening their own wellbeing.

For more information about the People Leaving Custody Pilot Program please talk to the Communities Assist Team, phone 02 4413 1102

A PHONE CALL EACH DAY TO CHECK YOU ARE OK RED CROSS – TELECROSS PROGRAM

The Red Cross Telecross Program provides vulnerable people with a daily telephone call to check on their wellbeing. The service is available to people that are aged over 65. In order to register with the program please phone My Aged Care on 1800 200 4202. The friendly team at My Aged Care will undertake an assessment and provide a referral to the program.

Once registered with the program a friendly volunteer will make a call to the person who is at home and if the call is not answered Red Cross will take action to ensure that the person is ok.

If you or someone you know may benefit from this service who is aged over 65 years please call 1300 885 698 or send a message to the Red Cross via their website at <https://www.redcross.org.au/get-help/community-services/telecross>



START WORK BONUS – A BIG BONUS IF YOU ARE STARTING WORK!

We know that starting work can sometimes mean needing to spend money on new clothes and travel costs. If a person in your household over the age of 18 commences employment and is approved for the Start Work Bonus, the extra money earned when starting the new job will not be included in your rent payments for up to 26 weeks.

The Communities Assist Team has been developing a range of new material to help promote the Start Work Bonus Program. The new promotional material includes a link on our website to information about the program and a fact sheet.

The Start Work Bonus helps tenants make the transition from unemployment to work more manageable by enabling tenants to effectively freeze their increased rent payments for 26 weeks.

To be eligible for the subsidy the person starting work must be an approved SCH occupant and be aged 18 or over. The new job starter must also have been in receipt of a Government pension, benefit or allowance as the primary source of income for the last 12 months.

Applications must be received on the approved form which is available at www.scch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/Start-Work-Bonus-1.pdf

For more information about the Start Work Bonus Program please contact the Communities Assist Team on 4413 1102

THINKING ABOUT STUDY?

TAFE NSW will temporarily pause the face-to-face delivery of courses from Monday 30 March until Monday 27 April. TAFE NSW campuses including Nowra will remain open so communities and students can access a range of support services. Despite this temporary suspension now is an ideal time to register your interest in studying by completing a registration form. Once you have done this TAFE will contact you to advise you if there are changes to start dates or learning platforms. Some of the great courses that are on offer include:

BUSHFIRE RECOVERY COURSES

These are fully subsidised short courses to assist bushfire affected communities with the recovery effort. A list of short courses can be found at www.tafensw.edu.au/bushfire-relief.

In our region the courses are being delivered in Bega, Moruya, Cooma, Nowra and Ulladulla. Most of the courses are “call now” so it is important to register now because if there is not enough interest they may not run.

THE TAFE MATURE AGE WORKERS SCHOLARSHIPS

Don't forget the TAFE Mature Age Workers Scholarships Fee-free for Smart and Skilled (Certificate II, Certificate III) and Targeted Priorities (Certificate IV) courses. For more information including eligibility please go to www.tafensw.edu.au/mature-age-workers Job Active clients wishing to apply for the scholarship should contact the Student Services team at TAFE NSW Nowra on 02 44 219 888 when applying.

SENIORS FUEL CARD

Did you know that there is a new \$250 Travel Card to Assist Regional Seniors with Fuel Costs!

Eligible NSW seniors are paying for fuel with a new travel card available from the NSW Government. The prepaid Visa card provides seniors with \$250 to ease the burden of travel costs and assist them in getting to and from essential services. The card is making it easier and more affordable for seniors to remain connected with family and friends. Seniors are using their regional seniors travel card to pay for fuel, taxis and pre booked NSW TrainLink train and coach services.

To be eligible seniors must be:

- An aged pensioner with a valid Pensioner Concession Card issued by the Department of Human Services or Department of Veterans' Affairs; or
- A Commonwealth Seniors Health Card holder – card issued by the Department of Human Services Affairs or Department of Veterans' Affairs; and
- Living in regional NSW outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong.

Seniors can apply at Service NSW:

- Online at service.nsw.gov.au
- Call 13 77 88
- Visit a Service NSW Service Centre.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Many people may find themselves out of work due to the current situation caused by COVID-19. Below is a list of websites people may find helpful when job seeking. Please check our articles about our Opportunity Pathways and Safe Work Bonus Programs (in this newsletter). Both of these programs provide great support if you are looking for a job or start one.

SUPERMARKETS:

- Woolworths - www.wowcareers.com.au/jobs
- Coles - www.colescareers.com.au
- Aldi Careers - www.aldicareers.com.au/Home
- Harris Farm www.harrisfarm.com.au/pages/careers-page
- IGA Careers - www.iga.com.au/careers

All IGA stores are independently and privately owned and operated, as such, they handle their own recruiting. To enquire about positions in-store, it is best that you contact your local IGA store directly in regards to employment.

FOOD DELIVERS:

- Uber Eats Deliver - www.uber.com/au/en/drive/delivery
- Menulog delivers - couriers.menulog.com.au/application
- Dominos - jobs.dominos.com.au/
- Pizza Hut - www.pizzahut.com.au/careers/drivers/

CLEANING:

- ISS Cleaners - www.au.issworld.com/our-people/career
Including school and commercial cleaners

SERVICE/PETROL STATION:

- BP - jobs.bpretail.com.au/caw/en/listing/
- Shell - www.shell.com.au/careers.html
- Caltex - jobs.caltex.com.au/

COMMUNITY SERVICES:

- Ethical jobs - www.ethicaljobs.com.au/ethical-jobs-in-sydney-nsw
- Gov. Services NSW - www.service.nsw.gov.au/register-your-interest-service-nsw-customer-service-roles
- Work for NSW - <https://iworkfor.nsw.gov.au/>

JOB SEARCH WEBSITES

- Indeed - au.indeed.com/
- Seek - www.seek.com.au/
- Jora - au.jora.com/
- Careerone - careerone.com.au/

ULLADULLA COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE: A WEALTH OF INFORMATION

The Community Resources Centre, located at 78 Vincent Street Ulladulla offers a number of wonderful free or very low cost services and programs to the community. For more information on any of the programs of services please phone the Centre on (02) 4454 0477

Here is a small sample of the many programs that are provided:

- Information & Referrals - Connecting individuals, families and young people to information and service providers
- Community JP Desk 9am – 12 daily- Justice of the Peace available for witnessing a statutory declaration
- Computer/Internet Access - Apple and Windows Computers with printing facilities
- Tuition for computer, tablets, phones
- Food Store Low cost foods, free bread, fruit & vegies, \$5 lifelong membership.
- Community volunteering opportunities



2020 INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS

Did you know that more than half of the 75 people that are employed at SCH are women? To be exact, we have 53 female staff members and 20 males. Another interesting fact is that 72% of management roles in our organisation are held by females!

International Women's Day is held throughout the world on 8th March and aims to celebrate the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. Throughout Australia organisations and groups use the day to highlight the great progress that community members and organisations have made towards achieving gender equality.

SCH celebrated International Women's Day on March 9th with a morning tea with some of our leading women (Kimberley, Chris, Judith, Hannah, and Adrianna) and June Stevens (SCH Board Member). They spoke proudly, openly and honestly about their life experiences and viewpoints on gender equality. Following the presentations, staff that were present participated in a discussion around gender equality, covering both professional and personal perspectives.

GOOD NEWS STORIES

2020 SCH COMMUNITY ALLIANCE ACTION PLAN



The Shoalhaven Community Southern Cross Housing Alliance is a collaboration of leading support agencies who provide a range of support services to low income social housing clients and tenants that live in the Shoalhaven Local Government Area.

The Alliance is led by Southern Cross Housing and is made up of representatives from Southern Cross Housing, CareSouth, The Disability Trust, Southern Youth and Family Services, Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra, Illawarra Shoalhaven Men's Homelessness Service, Uniting and Waminda. The group meet every two months and have recently been working to identify priority projects for 2020. The following projects have been identified as priorities and will form the basis of the Alliance Groups work during the remainder of 2020.

1. Increase capacity of local providers to provide support for people that are experiencing Hoarding & Squalor

Within the Shoalhaven LGA there is a lack of capacity for local providers to deliver services that support people to overcome Hoarding and Squalor. To rectify this issue members will work collaboratively to develop a local training program that can be used to upskill professional support workers that work in this area. The training will initially be delivered to staff within Alliance organisations.



2. Social Enterprise Models

Members agreed that there are few integrated social enterprise models that focus on achieving employment and training outcomes for vulnerable sections of our community. In order to improve this situation Alliance members will work collaboratively to undertake a thorough literature review of Community Needs Assessment projects that have been undertaken by Government and not for profit organisations in the East Nowra and Bomaderry areas. This information will be used to identify gaps in community needs and facilitate planning to design and implement social enterprise projects to fill gaps.

3. Lack of social cohesion and civic pride within some SCH communities (geographic)

Alliance members will work collaboratively and deliver at least three projects that aim to improve tenant relationships, social cohesion and civic pride within SCH communities.

Your thoughts regarding the above projects are most welcome. Please contact the Communities Assist Team at Communities@scch.org.au or 4413 1102 if you would like to speak to someone about the projects!

CLEAN UP CREW

Congratulations again to our wonderful Clean Up Crew, comprising of Frank Vella, Chris Hoogendoorn, Ryan Wallace, Marlou Brown and Tim Scarcella. Stacey Howarth, a tenant in Ulladulla recently received a clean up service from the crew and was very impressed with their work.

'Dear Chris,

Just wanted to email and tell you guys that was amazing how the Clean Up Crew came and picked up everything they were lovely quick and we were able to de clutter so much!! I think this is such a great idea for a regular basis! Thanks heaps.

Stacey H.'



Clean up Crew Photo. Left to right: Marlou, Tim, Ryan, Chris and Frank



HOUSING

building real community futures