



**Southern Cross
Housing**

BUILDING COMMUNITY FUTURES

2025

Autumn

EDITION

SCH NEWS



East Nowra Neighbourhood Party 2025!

On Wednesday, January 22, Southern Cross Housing (SCH) and the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee (SAPC) partnered once again to host the vibrant and engaging East Nowra Neighbourhood Party.

The day began with an inspiring opening speech by SCH Community Development Officer Mitch and a heartfelt Acknowledgement of Country delivered by the members of the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee, setting a warm and inclusive tone for the event.

The East Nowra community came alive with a variety of activities, entertainment and informative stalls for everyone to explore and enjoy. Once again, we were supported by the Bomaderry Lions Club who tirelessly volunteer their time every year to provide a free BBQ lunch.

The festive atmosphere was amplified by live performances from the Shoalhaven Community Choir and the talented Raven, ensuring there was no shortage of great music.

A highlight for the kids was the special back-to-school gift giveaway, thoughtfully organised by the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee. Children eagerly lined up to receive their gifts, adding an extra layer of joy to the day. The event featured an impressive 30 stalls, showcasing services and organisations from across the community services sector who offered valuable resources and support to the community.

The East Nowra Neighbourhood Party was a true celebration of community spirit, bringing people together for a day filled with connection, entertainment, and support.

In this Issue

CEO Message	2
Ask SCH a Question	3
SCH Policy Focus: Neighbour Disputes	4
Property Services Update	5
Koori Corner	6
Koori Corner	7
A&D Update - Affordable Housing	8
Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)	9
How To: Be Sun Safe this Autumn	10
Collaborative Partnerships: Industry Tours	11
SCH Tenant Advisory Committees	12
Inspiration Spotlight	13
SCH Team Feature: Communities Assist	14
Accessing Support: Youth Employment	15
Accessing Support: Disability Employment	16
Health & Wellbeing	17
SCH Trivia - Cooma	18
What's On: SCH North	19
What's On: SCH South	20
In the Garden - Tomatoes	21
In the Kitchen - Greek Salad	22

Acknowledgment of Country



Southern Cross Housing acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of this land. In particular, we pay our respects to the Yuin People (Shoalhaven & Eurobodalla), the Ngarigo People (Snowy Monaro), the Dharawal People (Illawarra) and the Gundungurra People (Southern Highlands) on whose lands our Southern Cross communities are located.

We pay our respects to the Elders past, present and emerging, for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of all First Nations Peoples across the nation.

Do We Have Your Email?

SCH would like to communicate faster and more efficiently with you, and to do so, we need to ensure that we have your current email address.

Updating your email address is easy, just phone us on 1300 757 885, or send an email to info@scch.org.au.



CEO Message

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter, our first for 2025!

You may notice that this edition of the newsletter has seen something of an editorial overhaul. While things may look a little different, we've kept all the features you've come to know & love and we've introduced new and exciting content.

The all new 'Koori Corner' on pages 6 and 7, SCH's dedicated double feature on all things First Nations. Get to know the SCH Communities Assist Team a little better on page 14 and our 'Inspiration Spotlight' on page 13 is full of positive and inspiring stories about people doing great things in our SCH community.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank & congratulate the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee, our tenant community in East Nowra, Nowra Police, NSW Fire & Rescue, the Bomaderry Lions Club and all of the community service providers who contributed to making the SCH East Nowra Neighbourhood Party 2025 such a resounding success.

For the last five years, Southern Cross Housing in partnership with the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee have delivered this popular event to support the SCH tenant community in East Nowra. It's always a joy to see so many smiling faces and this year was extra special with live performances from the Shoalhaven Community Choir & local band Raven, a jumping castle and a strongman challenge generously put on by the Nowra Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

The Communities Assist Team will be going on the road and delivering several more Community Connection events in Bega Valley & Cooma in the coming months and I look forward to sharing updates in our next edition.

Ask SCH a Question



Thank you to Darren from Bomaderry who asks, **“My neighbours keep putting their rubbish in my bins, what can I do?”**

At SCH, while we aim to promote neighbourhood respect, understanding & reconciliation within our tenant communities, we understand that sometimes problems can arise between neighbours.

In the first instance, whenever a problem arises with a neighbour we encourage our tenants to refer to the **“T38 – Neighbour Disputes Policy”** and the SCH **“Neighbour Disputes Fact Sheet”** which can both be found on the SCH website. These documents contain step-by-step options on how best to resolve a wide range of different neighbour disputes.

It is important to remember that bins are provided to properties by local Council’s and in-line with your tenancy, your bins are your responsibility.

Resolving the issue may take a combination of several different measures including:

- Approaching your neighbour and having a friendly chat about the bins getting contaminated and how to resolve the problem amicably.
- Making note of the times & dates the contamination’s are occurring.
- If you live in a complex, marking your unit number on your bins.
- Being mindful about the length of time your bin is placed on the kerb.

When to Contact your Local Council

If the neighbour issue relates to dumped and/or contaminated rubbish or noisy pets and you haven’t been able to resolve the issue with SCH’s Neighbour Dispute process.

- **Shoalhaven City Council:** 1300 293 111
- **Eurobodalla Shire Council:** (02) 4474 1000
- **Bega Valley Shire Council :** (02) 6499 2222
- **Snowy Monaro Council:** 1300 345 345



When to Contact Southern Cross Housing

If you have attempted to resolve the problem and are still experiencing ongoing issues with your neighbours, you can report this to your local Housing Officer in writing and we will keep records if further action is required.

SCH Phone: 1300 757 885

SCH Email: info@scch.org.au

If your issue hasn’t been resolved after your initial dispute, don’t hesitate to follow up with Southern Cross Housing and keep us informed about the ongoing situation and ask for updates on the steps being taken to address the problem.

For information on how we handle neighbour disputes, please refer to SCH’s, **“T38 – Neighbour Disputes Policy”** available on the SCH website: www.scch.org.au or by contacting SCH 1300 757 885.

SCH Policy Focus: Neighbour Disputes

Neighbour Disputes Explained

At Southern Cross Housing, we recognise that neighbour disputes can arise from various issues, such as noise, pets, shared spaces, property care and parking. More serious disputes may involve concerns like drug use, intimidation, harassment, or anti-social behaviour.

It is important that all tenants take responsibility for ensuring their households, and visitors are respectful of those around them. Being a good neighbour means being considerate of how your actions impact others.



Tenant Responsibilities:

- **Respectful Communication:** If a neighbour raises a concern, listen to them respectfully. Should a neighbour request you to reduce noise, cooperate and be considerate of their needs.
- **Tolerance:** Show understanding if a neighbour has different lifestyles or habits than your own. Mutual respect is key.
- **Harassment-Free Environment:** Harassment of any kind is not tolerated. Treat all neighbours with respect and use appropriate language that is not threatening or abusive.

- **Shared Areas:** Be mindful of shared public spaces, including shared gardens and parking areas. Ensure that these spaces are used appropriately and considerately.

Steps for Resolving Neighbour Disputes:

- **Independent Assistance:** If you are unable to resolve the issue directly, you can seek independent support from the Community Justice Centre (free-call on 1800 990 777) for mediation or dispute resolution.
- **Council Support:** For issues such as dumped rubbish, aggressive or noisy pets, or local disturbances, contact your local Council for assistance.
- **Police Involvement:** If you suspect or witness criminal activity, experience violence, or feel threatened, contact the Police immediately. Police should also be notified about noise complaints that cannot be resolved directly. Remember you can report your knowledge of criminal activity online, or by calling Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.
- **SCH Support:** If you have attempted to resolve the dispute but continue to experience issues with your neighbour, you can contact your Housing Officer at SCH. We encourage you to report neighbour disputes in writing, as this helps us maintain accurate records and may serve as evidence if further action is needed.

Need further information?

For more details on how we handle neighbour disputes, please refer to our T38 - Neighbour Disputes Policy on the SCH website at www.scch.org.au or contact SCH's Tenancy Team on 1300 757 885.

Property Services Update

Exciting New Housing Development in St Georges Basin!

Southern Cross Housing is thrilled to announce a proposed project that will bring around 88 new homes to St Georges Basin. This proposed development will seamlessly blend market, social, and affordable housing, creating a vibrant and inclusive community on a 1.43-hectare site.

Located next to the St Georges Basin village centre, this project will expand the village eastward, aligning with Shoalhaven Council's vision. It will feature a variety of housing types, from studio apartments to three-bedroom homes, along with commercial and community spaces. The design transitions smoothly into the surrounding bushland, enhancing the area's natural beauty.

SCH's goal is to offer diverse housing options that cater to different needs, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. By prioritising social good over profit, we aim to set a new standard for community-focused housing in regional NSW and Australia. The success of this development will be measured by the number of affordable and social housing units delivered, ensuring it serves as a benchmark for future projects.

Stay tuned for more updates on this exciting development!

SCH Call Centre: Ensuring Smooth Communication and Support for SCH Tenants

SCH understands that after the holiday season there can be some added stress for some tenants as kids are back to school, budgets can be stretched after Christmas and we adjust back to the day-to-day grind. Please note that while our call centre staff are here to assist, aggressive or inappropriate language and unreasonable behaviour will not be tolerated and may result in call disconnection.

Our staff may not always have immediate answers to specialised inquiries, but your Housing Officer can provide further support. SCH aims to return calls within 24 hours. If you experience delays, please let us know to help us improve our processes.

If your call is in regard to a new maintenance request, did you know that you can quickly & easily log your request online? Head to www.scch.org.au/repairs and simply fill-in the, "Maintenance Request Form" or email the Property Services Team at assets@scch.org.au



Koori Corner

Community News: Birthing on Country



Development of Australia's first Aboriginal owned and midwifery-led free standing birth centre underway in Shoalhaven NSW.

On October 1, 2024, Minister for Regional Health Ryan Park visited the future site of Australia's first Aboriginal-owned, midwifery-led birth centre. The Minns Labor Government has committed \$45.5 million over seven years to Waminda's Gudjaga Gunyahlamai Birth Centre and Community Hub in Nowra, providing culturally safe, holistic maternity care for Aboriginal women and families on the South Coast.

The Birthing on Country initiative ensures culturally safe midwifery care, improving maternal and perinatal outcomes, including more antenatal visits, reduced premature births, and increased breastfeeding rates.

Waminda, supported by the Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District (ISLHD), launched the Minga Gudjaga Midwifery Practice in May 2024. This marks the first phase of offering Aboriginal-led maternity care at Shoalhaven Memorial District Hospital.

Waminda's Melanie Briggs emphasized the initiative's role in reducing health disparities, honoring culture, and fulfilling ancestral dreams of sacred, woman-centered birthing practices.

Living Language: Learn a Dhurga Greeting!



"Walawaani!"

Walawaani means "We hope you've had a safe journey here", or "We hope you have a safe journey home".

Dhurga is the language traditionally spoken by the Yuin people – including local Walbanja and Brindja Yuin – from south of Nowra to Narooma and west to Braidwood.

Bush Medicine: Pig Face



Aboriginal Name: Kupburril (Dharawal)

Botanical Name: *Carpobrotus glaucescens*

Plant Description: Pig Face is a spreading plant with fleshy, thick, three angled leaves. From October to early January, pigface produces fuschia coloured daisy-like flowers which turn into a fleshy fruit with the texture of lychee and taste like a salty sweet cross between strawberry and lychee. Pigface's habitat is coastal sand dunes near the sea. It is common throughout the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla & coastal areas of Bega Valley.

First Nations Medicinal Use: The juice of the leaves was applied to insect bites (i.e., sandfly bites) among other traditional uses.

Koori Corner

RAP Update 2025

Last edition, we shared the incredible news that SCH had completed our 2023/2024 Reflect RAP. The SCH team are now hard at work developing the draft for the 2025/2027 Innovate RAP! This is an important next step in SCH's vision for reconciliation as we work towards creating homes, places and spaces that are welcoming, safe and appropriate for First Nations People and their families.

An Innovate RAP is about implementing meaningful change to achieve SCH's reconciliation vision.

An Innovate RAP will allow SCH to gain a deeper understanding of our sphere of influence (housing & homelessness) and establish the best approaches to advance reconciliation.

An Innovate RAP focuses on strengthening relationships with First Nations People and piloting strategies for further reconciliation commitments and to empower First Nations People. The Innovate RAP is typically implemented over two years. SCH is currently seeking First Nations People to sit on the Aboriginal Tenant Advisory Committee (ATAC).

If this is something you think you would be suited for, please email communities@scch.org.au.



Ask the ATAC



Is there something you've always wanted to know about Aboriginal culture and life, but have never felt like you could ask? For the first time, SCH's Aboriginal Tenant Advisory Committee (ATAC) will be answering your questions and we hope by sharing these questions and answers, we can learn together, and create a kinder, more inclusive SCH community.

Our first question is from Tara S. who asks, ***"what is the significance of the word, "Elder" for First Nations People and is it appropriate for me to use that word if I'm non-Indigenous?"***

Answer: Elders are highly respected Aboriginal people held in esteem by their communities for their wisdom, cultural knowledge and community service. They have gained recognition as a custodian of knowledge and lore. Age alone does not determine whether someone is recognised as an Elder in their community.

Aboriginal people refer to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle'. However, it is recommended that non-Aboriginal people check the appropriateness of their use of these terms as referring to an Elder or leader as Aunty or Uncle may not be appropriate for an outsider unless a strong relationship has been established.

If you've got a question you'd like to submit to the ATAC, please email the CA Team at communities@scch.org.au

Access & Demand Update – Affordable Housing



What is “Affordable Housing”?

Affordable housing provides people on low to moderate incomes with an opportunity to rent homes at 20% below what you would pay if you were renting in the private market. This helps to ensure that you can still afford basic living costs such as food, clothing, medical care and education.

Affordable housing is open to a broader range of household incomes than social housing. What that means in practice is that you earn more income and still be eligible.

Southern Cross Housing is thrilled to offer Affordable Housing options designed to help you take the next step towards independent living. This program is perfect for those who are working and looking to transition out of Social Housing.

Eligibility Made Easy: to qualify, you'll need to pass an income eligibility test, in line with the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial guideline limits.

How to Apply: applying is simple! Just complete an application form available on our website www.scch.org.au or visit your local office to pick one up.

Affordable Rent: unlike social housing, Affordable Housing rent is set at 80% of the market rate, making it a budget-friendly option for many.

Locations: our Affordable Housing properties are conveniently located in Nowra and Batemans Bay. Interested? Speak to your Housing Officer today to learn more and start your application!

Take this opportunity to step up and secure your future with Southern Cross Housing!

The Housing Continuum



Applications for Affordable Housing can be submitted anytime at your local SCH Office. For more information, please call 1300 757 885, email access@scch.org.au or review the 'Affordable Housing' factsheet at scch.org.au

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)

Are you receiving your CRA?

Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) is a non-taxable income support payment provided to those who qualify under certain conditions. It is designed to help eligible Australians afford private rental housing or accommodation. This includes those renting in the private market, living in community housing, or paying for other forms of accommodation, such as boarding.

Who is Eligible?

To receive Commonwealth Rent Assistance, you must meet specific criteria:

- 1. Receive a Centrelink Payment or Family Tax Benefit:** CRA is typically added to your existing payments, such as the Age Pension, Disability Support Pension, Parenting Payment, JobSeeker Payment, or Family Tax Benefit Part A.
- 2. Pay Rent Above a Minimum Threshold:** Your rent must exceed a set minimum amount, which varies depending on your circumstances (e.g., whether you're single, partnered, or have dependents).
- 3. Live in Eligible Accommodation:** CRA applies to private rental properties, community housing, retirement villages, and boarding houses but not to public housing, as these rates are already subsidised.
- 4. Provide Proof of Rent Payments:** To qualify, you'll need to supply documentation like a lease agreement or rent receipts.



How Much Can You Receive?

The amount of CRA depends on:

- The amount of rent you pay.
- Your family situation, such as whether you are single, partnered, or have dependent children.

CRA payments are calculated as a percentage of your rent above the minimum threshold, up to a maximum cap. The exact rates and thresholds are reviewed periodically and can vary.

It is important that you register with Centrelink Rent Assistance as SCH will still take 100% of the eligible amount, even if you are not receiving it.

How to Apply?

If you're already receiving a qualifying Centrelink payment or Family Tax Benefit, applying for CRA is straightforward:

- Log in to your myGov account linked to Centrelink.
- Navigate to the Rent Assistance section and complete the required forms.
- Upload any requested documents, such as your lease agreement or rent receipts.

Alternatively, you can visit a local Centrelink office for in-person assistance.

Key Considerations

- **Changes in Rent or Circumstances:** It's essential to update Centrelink about any changes in your rent amount or living situation to avoid overpayments or underpayments.
- **Payment Adjustments:** CRA is not a fixed amount and can fluctuate based on your rent and income.
- **Impact on Other Benefits:** While CRA is non-taxable, it may be factored into income assessments for other benefits.



How to: Be Sun Safe this Autumn



Skin cancer is the most common cancer diagnosed in Australia. The sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation is the major cause of skin cancer; just because we are entering Autumn doesn't mean the UV risk is any less. UV damage also causes sunburn, tanning, premature ageing and eye damage. The good news is you can prevent damage – and skin cancer – by being Sun Smart.

Sun protection is recommended whenever UV levels reach 3 or higher. Below 3, sun protection isn't recommended unless you are outdoors for extended periods or near reflective surfaces, like snow or pools.

The 5 Sun Smart Steps

1. Slip on covering clothing

Choose clothing that covers as much skin as possible, for example, collared shirts with long sleeves. Some clothing may carry an ultraviolet protection factor (UPF), which is a guarantee of how much UV protection a fabric provides.

2. Slop on SPF 50 or SPF50+, broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen

Apply a generous amount of sunscreen to clean, dry skin at least 20 minutes before you go outside. An average adult will need a teaspoon of sunscreen for their head and neck, each limb and the front and back of the body. That's about seven teaspoons (35mL) for a full body application. Reapply sunscreen every two hours.



3. Slap on a hat

Choose, a broad-brimmed, legionnaire or bucket style hat which shades your face, nose, neck and ears, which are common sites for skin cancers. Caps and visors do not provide enough protection.

4. Seek shade

Use trees, built shade structures, or bring your own (such as a sunshade tent)! Shade reduces UV radiation, but it can still reach you via reflection, so make sure you use shade in combination with other sun protection measures.

5. Slide on some sunglasses

Sunglasses and a broad-brimmed hat worn together can reduce UV radiation exposure to the eyes by up to 98%. Sunglasses should be worn outside during daylight hours.

Protect yourself in **five ways** from skin cancer



SLIP



SLOP



SLAP



SEEK



SLIDE

SCH's Collaborative Partnerships: Industry Tours

Southern Cross Housing, Illawarra South Coast Local Jobs Program, and Get A Job South Coast have joined forces to launch a series of industry tours in the Shoalhaven, providing valuable employment opportunities and insights for participants.

This groundbreaking initiative aims to open doors for SCH tenants, including First Nations tenants, by introducing them to a variety of career opportunities in high-demand sectors such as hospitality, childcare, emergency services, disability services, aged care, environmental, community services and construction.



Shane Meijer, GM Housing Services said ‘Many SCH tenants face significant barriers to employment, including limited access to information about career opportunities and training programs. This innovative project is designed to bridge that gap, providing targeted exposure to various sectors and enhancing employment prospects. By specifically including First Nations tenants, the project acknowledges and addresses unique barriers, promoting inclusivity and equity’.

The chosen sectors—hospitality, childcare, disability, aged care, environmental community services, and construction—are areas with growing demand for skilled workers. By focusing on these sectors, the project aligns with market needs, increasing the likelihood of successful employment outcomes for participants.

Partnering with the Illawarra South Coast Local Jobs Program and Get a Job South Cost leverages their expertise, resources, and networks, ensuring the project is well-supported and has a higher chance of success. This collaboration also facilitates a more comprehensive approach to addressing employment barriers.

The first tour saw tenants visiting the Jerry Bailey Preschool & Early Learning Centre and the Bomaderry Bowling Club. We got to see first-hand what it would be like to work in childcare and hospitality and we’re pleased to report that several SCH tenants took the plunge and applied for jobs on the spot with others signing up to complete a Certificate IV in Early Childhood Education and Care.

If you’re interested in joining us on our next tour, please email communities@scch.org.au or call the Communities Assist Team on 1300757885.



SCH's Tenant Advisory Committee's

ATAC Update



SCH's Aboriginal Tenant Advisory Committee wrapped up its final meeting of 2024 with some Committee member changes. In exciting news, and the first major shake-up for the Committee since it began in early 2023, the ATAC have welcomed 8 new members from across the Southern Cross footprint. This is an important development for the Committee as we now have representatives from every major SCH region; the Shoalhaven, Eurobodalla, Bega Valley & Snowy Monaro.

We're also pleased to report that 5 of our founding members have returned to continue the important work of the ATAC in 2025.

Sadly, all good things come to an end and this year, we've had to say goodbye to one of our founding members, Melissa B. Melissa was a fierce champion for First Nations People living with disabilities and brought a unique perspective to the ATAC Committee. She was also instrumental in providing cultural consultation on two major SCH First Nations-focused projects during her tenure on the ATAC Committee (SCH's first Reconciliation Action Plan and our research study into Closing the Gap on Aboriginal Housing Outcomes).

Mel will be missed, and the ATAC wishes her well with her future endeavours.



TAC Update

We are thrilled to introduce Debbie Leatham from Ulladulla, one of Southern Cross Housing's newest Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) members. Debbie is a dedicated advocate for human rights and dignity, bringing a wealth of life experience and passion to our community.

A proud grandmother of four, Debbie has a wide range of interests beyond her family, including photography, nature, NRL, soccer, and collecting

stamps and coins. Before settling in Ulladulla, she lived on Bribie Island in Queensland. Debbie says she describes herself as spiritual person and passionate about change.

When asked what inspired her to join the TAC, Debbie shared, *"I care deeply about human rights and dignity. Living in community housing, I believe it's crucial for those who use these services to have a voice in decisions that affect them. Decisions should come from people with lived experience, and I'm grateful for the opportunity to help make things better and fairer for everyone, including staff."*

In 2025, Debbie's main goal is to help identify areas where Southern Cross Housing could improve its practices & processes when managing tenancies and supporting the SCH community. She believes her unique perspective will help identify areas where change is needed most. We are excited to work with Debbie in the coming year and benefit from her strong drive and invaluable insights. Welcome, Debbie! We look forward to a fantastic year ahead with you on our team.

Inspiration Spotlight

Celebrating a local hero: June Stevens Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM).

June Stevens, a former and long-standing Board member of Southern Cross Housing, was awarded the prestigious Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) as part of the 2024 King's Birthday Honours List.

June has dedicated much of her life to enhancing welfare services in Nowra and the broader community.



Arriving in Nowra in 1974 with her late husband Peter, June recognised the need for more welfare services in the region. Through her roles with Lifeline and Southern Cross Community Housing, she played a pivotal role in addressing these needs.

June was recognised for her extensive service to the community through various social welfare organisations. A former psychologist and family therapist, June has an impressive list of involvements with community welfare organisations, including Southern Cross Housing and Family Services Australia. June also served as Chair of the national Board of Lifeline Australia. A huge congratulations and well done to Mrs. June Stevens OAM for her unwavering dedication and remarkable contributions to our community!



Good Neighbour Awards 2025!

The Southern Cross Housing Good Neighbour Award Program aims to recognise and celebrate tenants who reach out, support, and help care for the people in their neighbourhoods.

Anyone can nominate a Southern Cross Housing resident for an award. You may be a neighbour, support worker, Housing Officer or community resident. Nominating someone is easy, simply tell us who you are nominating, which category you are nominating the person for and why you think it is important that they are recognised.

SCH has been celebrating Good Neighbours since 2021. This year, SCH is recognising outstanding neighbours across four categories: Senior Neighbour, Young Neighbour, Gardening & Property Care and the overall Good Neighbour Award 2025. To nominate your neighbour, please head to the Southern Cross Housing website and fill out the nomination form <https://scch.org.au/good-neighbour/> or get in-touch via email communities@scch.org.au.

SCH Team Feature: Communities Assist

Meet the Communities Assist Team: Empowering and Enriching Our SCH Community!

At SCH, our Communities Assist Team plays a pivotal role in fostering Community Development and strengthening the bond within our tenant community. We believe that by working together with our residents, we can create a supportive environment that promotes empowerment, education, and independence. Through various community development programs, activities, and initiatives, we strive to meet the unique needs of our residents and help them achieve their goals.

Our approach is strongly focused on collaboration, where we work closely with tenants to identify their needs and develop strategies for improvement. By focusing on early intervention and prevention, we ensure that the right support is in place to match the diverse requirements of our residents. The Community Assist Team is committed to making a positive difference by providing resources and services that empower our tenants.

Recent Initiatives and Projects

The Communities Assist Team has been involved in several exciting initiatives aimed at enriching the lives of our residents. A recent collaboration with the Shoalhaven Community Drug Action Team (CDAT) and Blooms Chemist Nowra resulted in the delivery of an Alcohol and Drug First Aid course. This course was a resounding success, with all attendees leaving equipped with valuable knowledge and skills to support their communities.

In the spirit of supporting tenants during challenging times, SCH has also created and delivered a special Christmas Edition Mini Newsletter.



Additionally, the Community Assist Team recently teamed up with the Disability Trust and Illawarra South Coast Local Jobs Network to host an Employment Industry Tour, designed to introduce tenants to various career opportunities. This collaboration, also discussed in this newsletter, is one of many efforts made to equip tenants with the tools they need to succeed in their careers.

Get In-Touch

SCH's CA Team regularly deliver a broad range of programs & services designed to increase tenant wellbeing and help to achieve life goals.

For more information or to learn how to get involved in any of these programs, please contact the CA Team Team by:

- Calling: 1300 757 885
- Emailing: communities@scch.org.au
- Heading to: www.scch.org/communities-assist/

“Community is the foundation to success”

Kristen Jones

Accessing Support: Youth Employment

Workforce Australia – Transition to Work (TtW)

The Transition to Work (TtW) program supports young people aged 15 to 24, helping them move into employment (including apprenticeships and training) or further education. Through this program, participants receive practical assistance to build the skills and confidence needed to pursue their goals, whether continuing education or starting a new job.

How the Program Can Help You

A Transition to Work provider will tailor a plan to suit your needs, offering activities and services such as:

- Skill Development: Build essential life skills and capabilities.
- Career Guidance: Explore career pathways and opportunities.
- Training & Experience: Gain access to job-specific training, work experience, and internships.
- Job Search Support: Prepare for job applications and interviews.
- Employer Connections: Network with local employers and businesses.
- On-the-Job Support: Assistance for both you and your employer to ensure job success.
- Access to Services: Connect with local support services, such as housing or mental health support.

Participants are expected to commit to 25 hours of activities each week for up to 18 months. If you face complex challenges, this timeframe may be extended to 24 months.

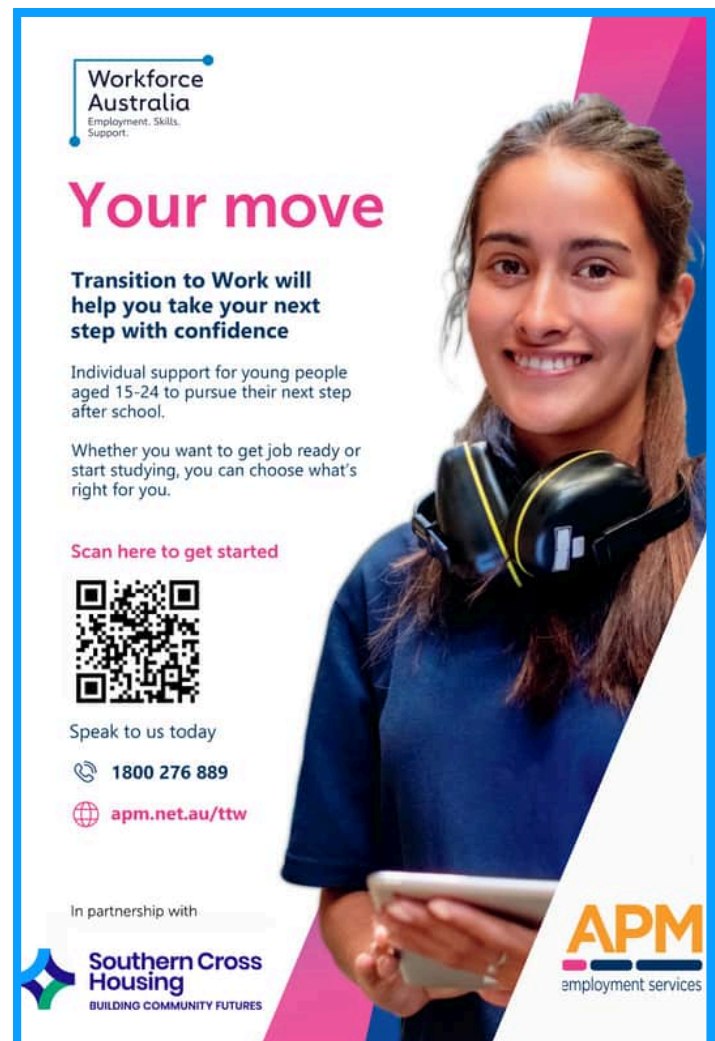
Eligibility Criteria

To join the program, you'll need to meet certain eligibility requirements. Your eligibility will depend on whether you:

- Have been employed for more than six months.
- Have a Year 12 Certificate or Certificate III qualification.
- Receiving income support payments (e.g., Youth Allowance).
- Enrolled in another employment service (such as Workforce Australia Services).

This is an incredibly unique opportunity to take the next step in your career or educational goals and one not to be missed.

If this sounds like you and you feel like taking the next step, call our Communities Assist Team at 1300 757 885 to discuss a referral to the program.



Workforce Australia
Employment. Skills. Support.


Your move

Transition to Work will help you take your next step with confidence

Individual support for young people aged 15-24 to pursue their next step after school.

Whether you want to get job ready or start studying, you can choose what's right for you.

Scan here to get started



Speak to us today

1800 276 889

apm.net.au/ttw

In partnership with

Southern Cross Housing
BUILDING COMMUNITY FUTURES

APM
employment services

Accessing Support: Disability Employment

Empowering Pathways: A Recap of Our Disability Trust Employment Workshop in Ulladulla



Southern Cross Housing and The Disability Trust recently held the second of five planned employment workshops in Ulladulla at the Community District Resource Centre. The first was held in Nowra a few months ago and has resulted in three SCH tenants gaining employment.

The session provided a comprehensive overview of the Disability Support Pension (DSP) eligibility criteria, income guidelines, and how employment impacts DSP benefits. For many attendees, it was an enlightening experience, revealing how balancing work with DSP support can provide numerous positive outcomes.

The Ulladulla workshop included inspiring guest speakers, Rowan and Andrew, who both shared their personal journeys, highlighting the challenges they faced in securing stable employment. Both found success through the Disability Trust's WorkAbility program, which provided them with essential support and resources. Their stories resonated deeply with attendees, demonstrating that with the right assistance, achieving employment goals is possible for those on DSP.

The event wrapped up with a lively Q&A session and a complimentary lunch which was enjoyed by everyone. Attendees felt that by attending the workshops they were more confident to pursue employment, knowing that the Disability Trust and the WorkAbility program are there to support them every step of the way.

The next SCH & Disability Trust Information workshop will be held in Batemans Bay on the 6th of February at that Bay Pavilions at 11:00am.

To register to attend please head to, <https://scch.org.au/empowering-employment/> or email communities@scch.org.au.

2025 June Stevens Scholarship Program

Applications for the 2025 June Stevens Scholarship Program officially closed on November 30th, marking the end of another exciting round for this initiative. The scholarship aims to empower our tenants by helping them pursue their educational aspirations and dreams.

Designed to be flexible, the scholarship can be used to cover a variety of educational expenses, including electronic devices, textbooks, uniforms, course fees, and more.

This year, the program is providing support for over 25 SCH residents to further their education & employment goals. At SCH, we are thrilled to support these tenants on their educational journeys—whether they are starting their first year at school or advancing to the next semester at university. We take great pride in being part of their success stories and look forward to seeing their progress.

Health & Wellbeing

Empowering Communities: SCH Tenants Gain Life-Saving Skills at Drug and Alcohol First Aid Training.

Southern Cross Housing recently hosted a Drug and Alcohol First Aid Training session. The session was

tailored to the needs of its tenants. The session focused on overdose management and essential first aid skills, reflecting SCH's commitment to community health and safety. The 2024 SCH Tenant Satisfaction Survey had highlighted a strong demand for education on drug and alcohol-related issues, prompting SCH to offer this specialised training.

A total of 39 tenants expressed interest, but space limitations allowed only 20 participants. The event provided hands-on training, teaching basic first aid techniques and how to respond to opioid overdoses, including administering naloxone, a critical medication for reversing overdoses.

The day was both educational and social, with attendees enjoying a morning tea and lunch generously provided by the Shoalhaven Community Drug Action Team (CDAT). The event fostered a sense of community while equipping participants with life-saving skills.

SCH remains dedicated to offering similar opportunities in the future to enhance the health and safety of our tenants and their communities.



Stepping into Wellness with SCH's Batemans Bay Walking Group



Southern Cross Housing, in partnership with NSW Health and the Heart Foundation, invites you to join a new walking group initiative in Batemans Bay. Meet every Wednesday at 9:30am for a relaxed 2-kilometre walk starting at the Clyde Street foreshore, heading to Rotary Park, and back.

This 6-week program offers free blood pressure checks and take-home resources, including water bottles, brochures, and healthy recipes. The aim is to build social connections, foster belonging, and improve physical and mental well-being for tenants in Batemans Bay and the Eurobodalla region, while promoting healthy routines and reducing isolation.

Regular participant Warren says, "I enjoy these weekly walks and taking in the waterfront views." January Dates: 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st. Register at scch.org.au/batemans-bay-walking-group-program/ or contact Ricky on 1300 757 885.

"An early morning walk is a blessing for the whole day".

– Henry David Thoreau

SCH TRIVIA – Cooma

1. What is Cooma known as the gateway to?
2. What major engineering project is associated with Cooma?
3. What is the name of the local museum dedicated to the history of the Snowy Mountains?
4. What unique feature can you find at Centennial Park in Cooma?
5. What is the First Nations Ngarigo meaning of the word, "Cooma"?



6. What is the name of the SCH Housing Officer who is based in Cooma?
7. True or false, the population of Cooma is approximately 7000?
8. How many high schools are there in Cooma?
9. What is the name of the Cooma rugby league team?
10. Cooma's oldest heritage listed building, the Cooma railway station was first opened to the public in what year?

See bottom of page for quiz answers.

Property Care Winner: Autumn 2025

Meet Marc, an outstanding SCH tenant from Ulladulla, recognised in December for his dedication to maintaining his property. Marc's passion for gardening has transformed his apartment complex into a greener, more vibrant space.

Marc's love for nature began in childhood, inspired by his family of avid gardeners. For him, gardening is more than a hobby—it enhances apartment living, brings purpose to daily life, and celebrates nature's beauty.

When asked about being an SCH tenant, Marc expressed heartfelt gratitude, noting that secure housing provides him with stability and peace.

To thank Marc for his efforts, SCH awarded him a \$50 Bunnings voucher. We're proud to celebrate tenants like Marc, who create welcoming environments for all.



- Quiz Answers**
1. The Snowy Mountains 2. Snowy Mountains Hydro Electric Scheme 3. Snowy Hydro Discovery Centre 4. The Avenue of Flags 5. Big Lake or Open Country 6. Brooklyn
 7. True 8. Three 9. The Stallions 10. 1889

What's On in SCH North

Milton Show



About: A fantastic community event, run by the community, for the community. Two large pavilions displaying local produce, historical memorabilia, art, timber, photography, community and school group creations, floral displays and country cooking.

Show activities include wood chopping, cattle displays, Young Farmers Challenge, and exciting equestrian events along with loads of entertainment with something for everyone! – Racing Pigs, Reptile Displays, Animal Nursery, Stunt Bike Trial Shows, and the Rodeo on Friday night.

Where & When: Friday 7th March - Sunday 9th March, 8am to 10pm at Milton Showground (107 Croobyar Rd, Milton NSW)

Cost: Adults = \$16, Seniors = \$11, Kids = \$6 with free entry Sunday

More Info: <https://www.shoalhaven.com/event/milton-show-2025/>

National Sorry Day Nowra Bridge Walk



About: Since its establishment in 2001, the National Sorry Day Bridge Walk has drawn thousands of participants to Nowra, and in recent years, this event has seen over 900 participants. Local Aboriginal Communities, non-Indigenous communities, school children from nearby schools, government, and non-government organisations, and groups from up and down the South Coast, all unite for the three-kilometre walk across the Nowra Bridge to the Bomaderry Homes. Each year on Sorry Day, we gather and reflect on the past suffering and continued strength of the Stolen Generations. It is important to acknowledge the trauma they felt and connect as a community.

Where & When: Monday 26th May with the walk commencing at 10am. Walkers to gather at Harry Sawkins Park leading over the Nowra Bridge to the Bomaderry Homes located at 59 Beinda St, Bomaderry.

Cost: Free

More Info: <https://www.southcoastams.org.au/>

Harvest Fair – Sassafras Nuts



About: Sassafras Nuts is a commercial chestnut and walnut farm located at Sassafras in the Budawang Ranges, 50km south west of Nowra NSW. We have been growing premium quality nuts for more than 25 years and the Harvest Fair at Sassafras Nuts offers a day of unforgettable fun for the whole family.

Visitors can pick their own chestnuts and walnuts right from the trees, enjoy delicious local food from various vendors, and shop unique market stalls.

The fair also features live music, creating a lively atmosphere, while children can get creative with art projects and enjoy exciting games. It's a perfect celebration of autumnal produce, nature, and community—one not to be missed!

Where & When: Saturday 5th April, 4281 Braidwood Rd, Sassafras from 10am till 3pm.

Cost: \$5 entry fee.

More Info: megan.d@salt.org.au or call 02 4480 5028



What's On in SCH South

Cooma Multicultural Festival



About: The Multicultural Community Festival is held in Cooma each March to celebrate Harmony Day and celebrates the cultural diversity of the region.

Experience a celebration of diversity like never before at the Multicultural Festival in Cooma! Immerse yourself in a vibrant showcase of music, dance and food from around the world. Join in for a day of unity, cultural exchange, and unforgettable memories.

Where & When: Sunday 16th March, from 10am to 4pm at Centennial Park Cooma.

Cost: Free.

More Info: <https://mhub.org.au/event/cooma-multicultural-festival/>

Mitre 10 Tradies Race Day



About: It's time for Mitre 10 Tradies Race Day at Sapphire Coast Turf Club with a rematch for the human wheelbarrow races.

The Sapphire Coast Turf Club is a picturesque 300-acre site on Sapphire Coast Drive at Kalaru, between Merimbula, Bega and Tathra. The course offers visitors and members a variety of services, including TAB, local and interstate bookmakers, food and beverage services, free buses to and from the course from major local centres, and picnic and family-friendly areas.

Where & When: Friday 4th April, 1695 Sapphire Coast Dr, Sapphire Coast Turf Club, Kalaru, NSW 2550 from 10am.

Cost: Adults = \$15, Pensioners = \$10 & Under 18's free entry.

Narooma Oyster Festival



About: It's Australia's largest shellabration! Join growers chefs and shuckers to celebrate the Rock Oyster on the first weekend in May.

The two-day program begins with a Friday Night Warm-up around the Main Stage, with oyster and liquor bars, food vendors, live music, performances, and a fireworks display over Wagonga Inlet. Saturday, the big day, blends cosmopolitan and Indigenous food experiences with transformative tastings, cooking demonstrations with celebrated local and visiting chefs, live music on two stages and food markets including an impressive selection of celebrated wines, beers and spirits. On Saturday, ticketed coaches will run between Batemans Bay and Bermagui, complemented by a free shuttle bus service throughout the town.

Where & When: Friday 2nd May & Saturday 3rd May, Riverside Dr, Narooma, NSW 2546

More Info: <https://www.naroomaoysterfestival.com/>

Trivia at Bay Soldiers



About: Join Trivia master Aaron in the main lounge at the Batemans Bay Soldiers club, weekly on Tuesday evening for fun multi round Trivia! It's FREE to play, with great voucher prizes for the top 3 finishing teams each week. There's great variety of rounds with general knowledge, music and current events.

Where & When: Every Tuesday, 6pm - 7:30pm at the Batemans Bay Soldiers Club, Beach Road, Batemans Bay NSW.

More Info: <https://www.baysoldiers.com.au/entertainment>



In the Garden - Tomatoes

How to Grow Tomatoes

Nothing beats the taste of fresh, homegrown tomatoes, and growing them is easier than you might think. Not only are they healthy and delicious, but they can also save you money. You can eat them fresh or preserve them for later. Tomatoes come in a variety of colours, shapes, sizes, and types.

Here are some useful tips for growing tomatoes at your home:

When to Grow Tomatoes:

In tropical regions of Australia, like far North Queensland, tomatoes can be grown all year round. In cooler areas, such as New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia, it's best to plant tomatoes from late spring to early summer, with harvests occurring from late summer to early winter.

Where to Grow Tomatoes

Tomato plants need at least six hours of sunlight each day, so choose a sunny spot in your garden. Also, make sure the soil is well-drained and rich in organic matter for the best growth.

Watering and Feeding

Water your tomato plants once or twice a day. To check if they need water, poke your finger or a stick a few inches into the soil. If it feels dry, it's time to water. Water directly at the base of the plant or use a soaker hose to deliver water slowly and evenly to the roots.

Maintenance

Prune any suckers (side shoots) that grow between the main stem and branches. If your plant has many flowers but no fruit, it could be a

lighting or watering issue. Make sure your tomatoes are getting enough light and not being over-watered.

Avoid watering from above or during the afternoon. Instead, water near the soil early in the morning or late afternoon. Harvest your tomatoes when they are fully ripe, usually when they start to turn red or orange.

How to Grow Tomatoes from Seed

Growing tomatoes from seed is a fun and rewarding process that anyone can do with patience and care. Although it takes longer than buying plants from a nursery, starting from seed gives you a wider variety to choose from and lets you get an early start on the growing season. Plus, there's a great sense of accomplishment in watching your plants grow from tiny seeds into healthy, productive tomatoes.

Choose a sunny spot in your garden or patio for your plants. Cherry tomatoes need at least six hours of sunlight each day, so make sure they get enough light. Prepare the soil by adding compost or well-rotted manure. This will help the plants grow strong and produce plenty of fruit.

Sow the seeds in your nursery in late winter or early spring. Plant them about half an inch deep in seed-starting mix and keep them moist until they sprout. Once the seedlings sprout, thin them out, leaving only the strongest ones.

When the seedlings are about eight weeks old, transplant them into your garden or patio pots. Water them well and provide support if needed.

In the Kitchen - Greek Salad

Ingredients

- 3 large ripe tomatoes or 10 cherry tomatoes chopped
- 2 medium cucumbers, peeled and chopped
- 1 small red onion, chopped
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried oregano
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 6 black Greek olives, pitted and sliced



Method

Step 1

Chop & peel the tomatoes, cucumber & onion and then gather all ingredients.

Step 2

Toss tomatoes, cucumbers, and red onion together in a shallow salad bowl.

Step 3

Drizzle oil and lemon juice over top, then sprinkle with oregano, salt, and pepper.

Step 4

Top with the crumbled feta and olives & enjoy!



Greek Salad is very filling thanks to a great balance of good carbs, good fats, and protein. It is rich in vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and iron.

It also contains ingredients full of phytonutrients and antioxidants, such as oil and onion, which reduce the risk of cancer and heart disease.



Southern Cross Housing

Nowra
69 Kinghorne St
Nowra NSW 2541

Bomaderry
Shop 1, 54 Bolong Road
Bomaderry NSW 2541

Bega Valley
Shop 9, 81-83 Auckland St
Bega NSW 2550

Ulladulla
Shop 2, 118-120 Princes Highway
Ulladulla NSW 2539

Batemans Bay
Shop 4/13 Clyde Street
Batemans Bay NSW 2536

Cooma
57-59 Massie Street
Cooma NSW 2630

We love to receive your Feedback!

Southern Cross Housing strives to continuously improve the services that we provide, and we appreciate any feedback that you have for us.

If you have any feedback (good or bad), please head to our website where you will find an online form that you can use to share your thoughts.

1300 757 885 - scch.org.au