



**Southern Cross
Housing**

2023

SCHNEWS

SUMMER
EDITION



Victor's Garden is a gift to himself and others

Born in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1936, Victor has 3 sisters and 2 daughters. He emigrated to Australia in 1976 for a better life. A Rigger by trade, Victor worked in Newcastle and for Bluescope at Port Kembla.

Victor has lived in Ulladulla for five years and prior to this, he lived in Griffith for 25 years. Apart from gardening, Victor loves Rugby League, supports St George Illawarra Dragons, and enjoys carpentry as a hobby.

Victor finds joy in gardening, seeing his creations come to life. Gardening has kept him active and brings Victor a sense of fulfillment because he is using his hands to create something. He believes gardens enhance the environment. Victor spreads positivity by delivering flowers to local businesses and maintaining gardens around the Church & Vinnies in Ulladulla.

Having secure housing gives Victor confidence for a happy future. It enables him to undertake gardening & carpentry projects and make long-term plans. His experiences with SCH help to make him feel supported and thankful, allowing him to give back to the community through his gardening, live somewhere so nice, but just as importantly, give back to the local community through his gardening.

We would love 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 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

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Acknowledgment of Country



Southern Cross Housing acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land in which we operate, including the Yuin Country, Dharawal Country and Ngarigo Country, and recognise their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respect to them, their culture and to Elders past, present and emerging in the spirit of reconciliation.



CEO Message

As the year comes to an end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for being part of our community and to wish you a merry and safe Christmas.

I am always amazed by the wonderful and talented range of tenants that we have at Southern Cross Housing. It is really interesting to read about your stories and achievements in this newsletter. I am inspired by Victor in Ulladulla, who has been delivering flowers to people in the community. I was also impressed by Max in Bega, who has been volunteering and raising money for the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

I recently had the pleasure of attending a lunch with some of our SCH tenants who received a scholarship through the 2023 June Stevens Scholarship Program. I learnt first-hand how these scholarships are making a real difference to their lives, by enabling them to pursue their education and career goals. I congratulate them on their success and encourage them to keep up the good work.

I would also like to acknowledge our Tenant Advisory Committees (TACs) and our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group, who have been working hard to advise us on how to improve our services and policies for the benefit of all tenants.

As detailed in the TAC Action Plan, members will be involved in a range of projects, such as preparing for natural disasters, providing advice about our current inspections fact sheet, promoting the SCH feedback process, and more. I appreciate their dedication and contribution and look forward to working with them on these projects and more in the future.

With the bushfire season in full swing, please take the time to be prepared. This issue contains some great information on how to prepare for a bushfire or flood, including contact numbers for key combat agencies and links to official websites. Please also remember to notify us if your contact details change, so that we can keep in touch with you in case of an emergency.

Once again, thank you for being part of Southern Cross Housing. I hope you enjoy this newsletter and have a wonderful holiday season.

Yours sincerely,
Alex Pontello

Do We Have Your Email?

SCH would like to communicate faster and more efficiently with you, and we want 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.

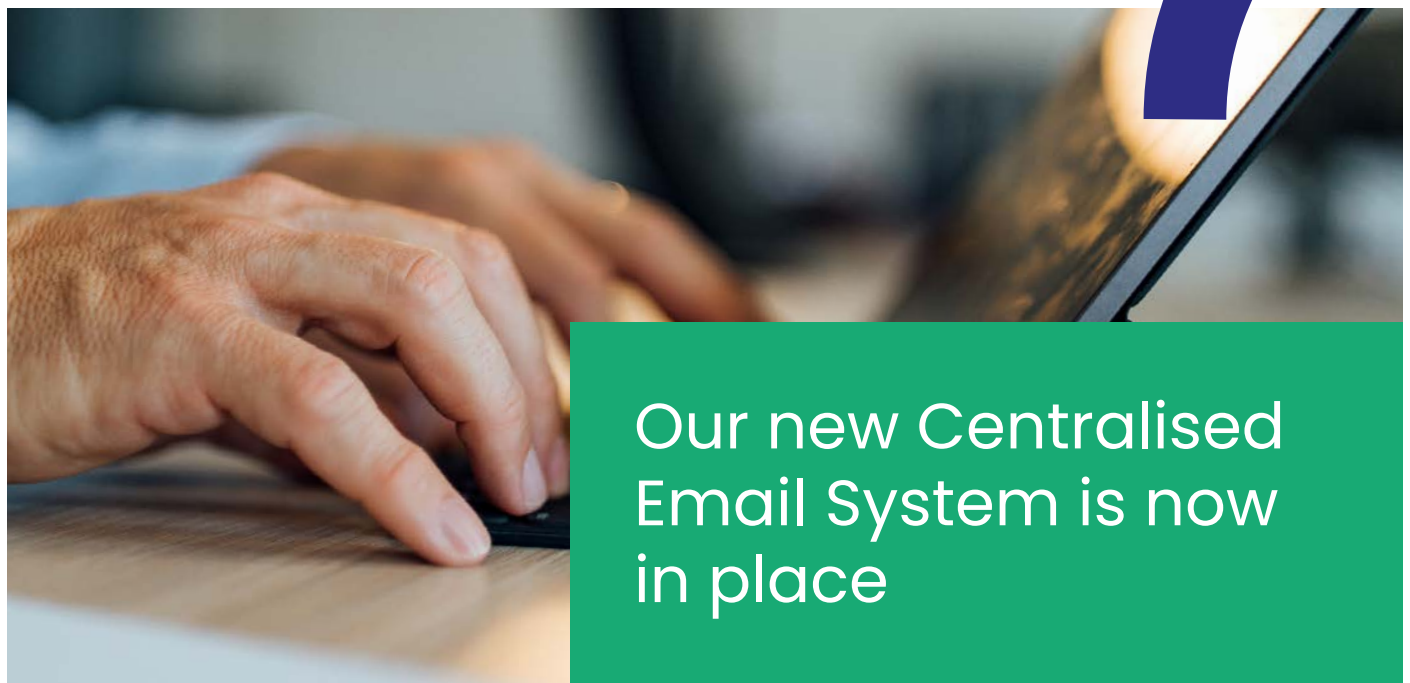
Right Here, Right Now in Merimbula & Eden

On 27 September 2023, an outreach event was held at unit complexes in Kowara Cres, Merimbula and Wykes Lane in Eden. The cold and wet conditions meant there were fewer participants than expected, but those who did brave the elements expressed their appreciation for the staff coming out.

The event was planned to ensure residents that live some distance from a SCH Office have an opportunity to engage face-to-face with SCH staff. Staff members from the Tenancy, Community Assist and Asset teams attended, with several residents pleased to be able to speak directly with an Assets Officer who was able to give timely advice about maintenance issues, even doing running repairs on some security doors in Eden.

The Right Here, Right Now event enabled residents to get information and support from SCH staff, as well as give their feedback to the organisation. In line with SCH's Operational Plan for 2023-2024, the Right Here Right Now outreach events will provide an opportunity for residents to raise issues and offer solutions if they have them.

These events are planned for other areas in the months ahead so stay tuned for more information by SMS or email about when they are happening in your area.



Our new Centralised
Email System is now
in place

As part of our commitment to delivering high-quality customer service, SCH has recently changed the way we process email enquiries.

We will now acknowledge your email within 4 hours. Your email will be registered in our records system and sent to the appropriate staff member who will provide a timely response.

This new process will help to ensure that all emails from you are dealt with by the right department in a quick & efficient manner.

For **maintenance** or repairs, email:

assets@scch.org.au

For **feedback** you might have, email:

feedback@scch.org.au

For **anything** else you wish to email us about:

info@scch.org.au

Max is Volunteering to Keep the Flying Doctor Service Soaring Sky High

At 13 years of age, Max, an SCH householder from the Bega Valley, describes himself as “an aviation nerd.” He knows the stats and capabilities of most planes; flies model planes and plans to make flying a major part of his life one day.

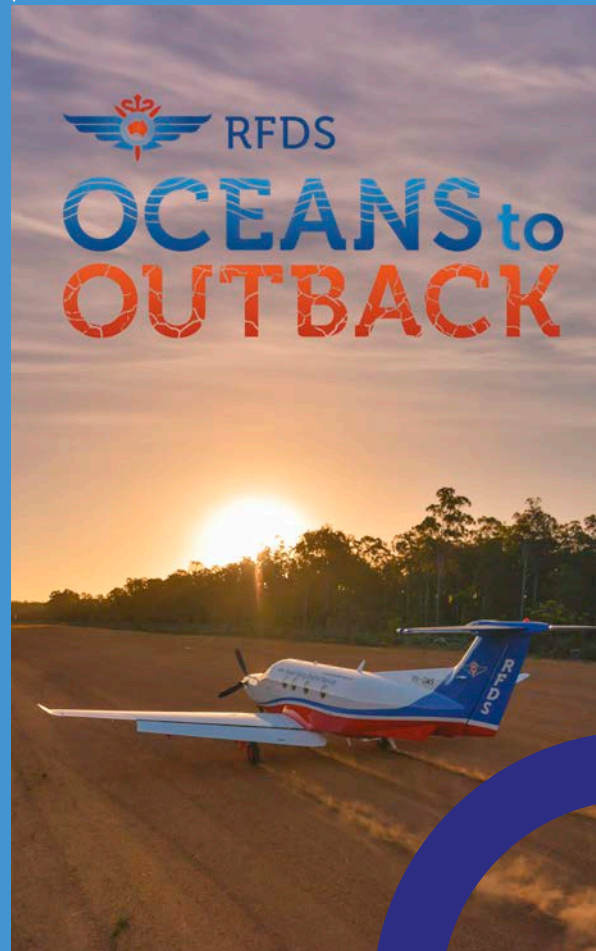
He’s grown up with a fascination for everything related to the Royal Flying Doctor Service (RFDS). Max lives with some complex health conditions. Max and his Mum Karen have a particular reason to feel grateful to the RFDS. Some years back, Max’s Pop (who lives in Bourke in the far western corner of NSW) required assistance from the RFDS and was airlifted to Dubbo Hospital when the bonnet of a tractor flipped and broke both his legs.

Along with his personal experience, Max has loved the Australian TV drama “RFDS” since it began airing this year. One night in September, Max and Karen were relaxing in their lounge-room watching the show, when an ad popped up for the 2023 Oceans to Outback Challenge, an ultimate month-long fitness challenge. Max decided to take up the challenge himself, choosing to walk 43 kms, or 1.4 kms every day for the month of October. His goal was to increase his fitness and support the RFDS at the same time. When asked why he decided to take on this new challenge he said, “I don’t have many other challenges in my life.” Some might say Max faces challenges every day, living as he does with complex health conditions, but Max sees things differently.

Even bad weather did not deter him, as he measured out how far it was to walk a kilometer around his backyard to stay on track when he couldn’t walk around the neighborhood. Max felt happy both with his increased fitness level and the knowledge that he had helped the RFDS continue their essential work. He was surprised to find that through his participation in the Oceans to Outback Challenge, he was gaining supporters of his own, people cheering him on and donating online to support him.

Max said his school was right behind him with three of his teachers donating to his cause. Max attends Year 7 at a School of Distance Education, which means he can fit in an education around his ongoing medical and therapy appointments.

Max is an inspiring young man in many ways, not least because of his motivated mindset. He already understands the importance of challenging himself to try new things, despite the barriers. Plus, he cares about others – his heart is as big as the blue skies he hopes to fly one day. Who knows? The RFDS may be lucky enough someday to have a pilot named Max!



Congratulations Max on achieving a personal fitness goal and doing an awesome thing for the community along the way.

Opening Hours for Christmas & New Years

As the festive season approaches, we wanted to share with you when our teams will be taking a well-earned break. During this time, we will be operating with a reduced capacity across our offices, and we ask for your patience & understanding if you need anything from us.

SCH offices will shut down from Friday 22nd December and our teams will be returning to work Wednesday 3rd January. SCH's regional offices will be closed during this period however the Nowra Office will be available to respond to your housing needs.

Our team in Kinghorne St, Nowra will still be on hand to:

Field phone calls on our 1300 757 885 number and face-to-face enquiries

Provide Temporary Accommodation for people experiencing crisis

Process Housing Applications and evidence submissions

Maintenance can be reported as normal via 1300 757 885.



Staying up to date with your rent during the holidays

The holiday season can be hard on your finances. You may spend more on gifts, travel, or parties, and earn less due to holidays or closures. Paying your rent on time is still an important condition of your lease.

If you have financial problems that may affect your rent, please let us know as soon as you can. We are here to help you and we

can talk about your situation and options. We may be able to set up a payment plan, suggest financial counselling services, or offer other support and advice.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us, as we value your tenancy and we want to work with you to maintain a positive relationship.



Improving Educational Outcomes for SCH residents

Southern Cross Housing is committed to building the capacity of our tenants by providing opportunities to access further education and improving employment opportunities.

We want our tenants to achieve their goals and reach their full potential. Our June Stevens Scholarship Program is available to tenants who are considering or currently undertaking study. Funding of up to \$2,000 per scholarship was provided to tenants as part of the 2023 program.

A big thankyou to everyone that attended our 2023 scholarship recipient lunch in October. The lunch was a great opportunity for recipients of the 2023 June Stevens Scholarship to tell SCH staff how much the June Stevens scholarship has helped them to achieve educational and employment goals.

Congratulations to everyone, it was heart-warming to hear all of your stories and we are glad that we could be of assistance.



June Stevens Scholarship

The June Stevens Scholarship Program provides financial support for our tenants by assisting with the cost of education, sports activities or special interests like cultural learning and arts that help them to achieve their full potential.

To register your interest, to receive more info, please call the CA Team on 1300 757 885 or email communities@scch.org.au

Reconciliation Action Plan Outcomes

October 2023 marked the end of SCH's busy first quarter of delivering actions that are contained in our 2023-2024 SCH Reconciliation Action Plan. We're pleased to announce that after a lot of hard work from both our Communities Assist and People & Culture Teams, we have achieved all of the Actions that we set out to complete by the end of October.

Projects that have been completed include the development of a First Nations Event Calendar, a directory of services and programs to better support our tenants in a culturally safe, appropriate & responsive way, continuing to work closely with members of our First Nations community through the Aboriginal Tenant Advisory Committee and liaising with local Elders to develop educational and training material around cultural protocols that we'll be providing to all SCH staff in the coming months.

Our Reconciliation journey is a really exciting time for us as an organisation and we're already seeing the benefits; not just from a business perspective but also for our First Nations tenant community and amongst SCH staff.

By the time you read this, SCH will be well underway working toward completing our goals for the second quarter of 2023 and we look forward to providing an update in our next edition.



Projects that have been completed include:

- A directory of services and programs to better support our tenants in a culturally safe, appropriate & responsive way;
- Continuing to work closely with members of our First Nations community through the Aboriginal Tenant Advisory Committee;
- Liaising with local Elders to develop educational and training material around cultural protocols that we'll be providing to all SCH staff in the coming months.

Supporting our Community



Southern Cross Housing has partnered with Supported Accommodation and Homelessness Services Shoalhaven Illawarra Ltd (SAHSSI) to open a new housing development in The Shoalhaven. The development is aimed at providing transitional housing and wrap-around case management support for women escaping domestic violence.

SAHSSI is a specialist homeless service that supports single women and women with children who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. The new housing development will provide much-needed support to women who are escaping domestic violence. It will offer them a safe and secure place to stay while they get back on their feet.

The opening of this new housing development is an important step in addressing the issue of domestic violence in the community. It is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Southern Cross Housing and SAHSSI in supporting vulnerable members of our community.

Tenant Feedback Process

At SCH, we value and welcome all types of feedback. We strive to deliver high quality housing, services & support and your feedback is an essential tool that lets us know about what we're doing well, and the areas you think we can improve on.

We broadly categorise feedback into 4 key groups:

1. **Compliments:** Positive feedback about what we're doing well.
2. **Complaints:** Constructive feedback about an aspect of SCH you're dissatisfied with.
3. **Tenant Disputes:** Feedback that relates to when there is an issue, conflict or disagreement with a neighbour.
4. **Appeals:** Feedback for when you are unsatisfied with the outcome of a complaint, a decision that affects you or for when you want a decision reassessed.



At SCH, we handle all feedback with confidentiality, integrity and respect. If you've got any feedback, whether it's about a contractor who performed maintenance at your property, a noisy neighbour, or a great example of customer service you may have received from us, we'd love to hear from you.

How to Provide Feedback

Providing feedback to SCH is fast and simple and there's a few different ways you can do it.

- Online by completing the feedback form. This can be found at www.scch.org.au/compliments-complaints-appeals/
- By emailing feedback@scch.org.au
- By writing to us at P.O Box 2351, Bomaderry, NSW 2541
- By visiting us in person at one of our offices. Our offices are located in Nowra, Bomaderry, Ulladulla, Batemans Bay, Bega & Cooma.



How we Process Feedback

The way we process your feedback is a little different depending on which of the 4 groups it falls into.

- Compliments are passed onto the relevant department and don't usually have any further action.
- When a complaint is submitted, SCH will provide you with an acknowledgement within 2 business days of receiving the feedback. Complaints are provided to a relevant manager who will usually investigate the complaint and work with you to try and resolve the issue. An outcome will be presented to you no later than 21 business days after you submitted your feedback. If you feel your complaint has not been resolved or handled appropriately, SCH encourages you to appeal the decision or outcome.
- Tenant disputes are handled by an SCH Team Member, who will investigate whether the dispute constitutes a breach of tenancy. Both parties may be referred to mediation (if there is mutual agreement) to try and resolve the dispute. If it's found that a breach of tenancy has occurred, SCH will provide that tenant with an opportunity to change their anti-social behaviour before any further action is taken.
- Appeals are assessed by an independent SCH staff member who was not involved in the initial outcome or decision. An acknowledgement will be provided to you within 2 business days of SCH receiving your appeal request.

How to Keep Your Home in Tip-Top Shape with SCH

Your home is your sanctuary, your comfort zone, and your personal space. You want it to be cozy, functional, and beautiful. But sometimes, things can go wrong. A leaky faucet, a broken window, or a blocked toilet can ruin your day and disrupt your peace of mind.

That's why SCH is here to help. We are committed to providing you with the best maintenance service possible, so you can enjoy your home without any hassle. Whether your repair is a minor fix or a major overhaul, we have the skills, the tools, and the experience to get the job done.

When you report a repair you will be provided with a Reference Number. This number is important as it provides you with assurance that your request has been lodged. You should quote this number in all subsequent communications with SCH about the issue.

How to Report a Repair

If you notice something in your home that needs attention, don't hesitate to let us know. We have three easy ways for you to report a repair:

- Call us at 1300 757 885 and speak to one of our friendly staff members. They will ask you some questions about the issue and book a suitable time for someone to visit your home.
- Email us at assets@scch.org.au and provide us with your name, address, contact number, and a brief description of the problem. We will get back to you as soon as possible and arrange a convenient appointment for you.
- Fill out an online form at www.scch.org.au/repairs/ and submit it with your details and a photo of the issue if possible.

We will review your request and contact you to confirm the next steps.



How Fast We Will Respond

We understand that some repairs are more urgent than others, and we prioritize them accordingly. Our response times for repairs are based on the nature of the issue and the impact it has on your safety or the safety of others.

We have four categories of repairs:

- **Urgent repairs:** These are repairs that pose an immediate threat to your health or safety, such as gas leaks, electrical faults, or fire damage. We will respond to these within 4 hours of receiving your request and aim to fix them as soon as possible.
- **Priority repairs:** These are repairs that affect the essential services or facilities in your home, such as water supply, heating, or security. We will respond to these within 24 hours of receiving your request.
- **Standard repairs:** These are non-urgent repairs that affect infrastructure within your home such as glazing, minor heating/cooling problems, minor electrical issues or minor plumbing issues. We will respond to these within 14 working days of receiving your request.
- **Routine repairs:** These are repairs that do not affect the liveability or functionality of your home, such as cosmetic issues, minor fittings, or general wear and tear. We will respond to these within 28 working days of receiving your request.



SCH Tenants Work Together to Improve Services and Safety

SCH is committed to working together with residents. One way that we are doing this is via Tenant Advisory Committees (TACs). The TACs are groups of tenants who volunteer their time and skills to advise SCH on how to improve its services and policies for the benefit of all tenants.

The TACs have been working hard to identify a range of projects that they can work on with the Communities Assist Team, which is responsible for delivering programs and activities that enhance the well-being and social inclusion of tenants.

TAC 2023–2024 Action Plan Projects

- Increasing SCH's role in assisting tenants to prepare for natural disasters, such as bushfires and floods. This includes distributing fire safety fact sheets, assisting vulnerable tenants with referrals to the NSW Rural Fire Service Aider program, and developing a flyer that provides contact numbers for key combat agencies and links to official websites that provide clear instructions on how to prepare for a bushfire or flood.
- Updating the Inspections Fact Sheet to include information about the taking and storage of photographs during inspections, to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Ensuring that there are options for SCH tenants to continue to receive information from SCH.
- Including a promotional article in the Tenant Newsletter about how and when to use the SCH feedback process, highlighting that information about the quality of both work and customer service provided by SCH contractors is very welcome.
- Promoting existing Council clean up days to tenants in regional areas, to encourage them to take advantage of this service and keep their properties clean and tidy.
- Including promotional material in the Tenant Newsletter about the use of the new centralised Assets email, which allows tenants to send their maintenance requests directly to the Assets Team and receive a status report on their request.
- Working with TAC members to develop a list of functions that they would like to see incorporated improve SCH/tenant communication, such as online rent payments, maintenance requests, feedback forms, etc. The resulting report and recommendations will be forwarded to the SCH Executive Team for their consideration.

Join a Tenant Advisory Committee Today

The above projects are examples of how SCH tenants are actively involved in shaping and improving the services that affect them. The TACs are always looking for new members who are interested in making a positive difference in their communities.

SCH would like to thank all the TAC members for their dedication and contribution. We look forward to working with them on these projects and more in the future. Together, we can make SCH a better place for everyone.

**If you are a
SCH tenant who would like to join
a TAC or learn more about them,
please contact us on 1300 757 885
or email
communities@scch.org.au**

Call centre wait times reduced

If you have ever called SCH, you may have noticed how fast and friendly the service is. You may have also wondered how we manage to handle so many calls with such a small team. The secret behind our success is a new online, cloud-based phone system that has transformed the way we communicate with our tenants and the public providing a more seamless experience for everyone who gets in touch with us.

SCH has a dedicated Call Centre team that works hard every day to field enquiries and direct them to the right person or department. The team has between 2 and 4 people on every day, who ensure that every call is answered, and queries resolved quickly and efficiently.

Thanks to the new phone system, SCH has been able to reduce its average call centre wait times down to 1 minute and 22 seconds with no calls going unanswered. This is a great improvement from the previous average of 3 minutes and 45 seconds with some calls being missed.



If you want to contact SCH for any reason, you can call us on 1300 757 885 or email at info@scch.org.au You can also visit our website at scch.org.au for more info.

Assertive Outreach in Ulladulla



For past 10 years, SCH has been a part of the Primary Homelessness Response Team. This team is a coalition of services led by Shoalhaven City Council to identify and combat rough sleeping in our region by providing outreach support at local Showgrounds and public spaces such as parks, beaches, the Shoalhaven River and other locations where people may be rough sleeping.

Over the last few months, Tiegan from SCH's Access & Demand Team has visited locations across our region from Berry all the way down to Ulladulla to offer help and support in the community and showcase the assistance available from SCH. Through this initiative, the Access & Demand Team have been able to direct many people sleeping rough to our SCH assistance programs including Temporary Accommodation, Start Safely, Together Home & Rent Choice Youth.

We've provided referral pathways to link people in with specialised community services and been able to transition many of these people into sustainable housing provided by SCH.

With 200 people estimated to be sleeping rough in the Shoalhaven at any given time, the Primary Homelessness Response Team is an extremely important initiative, and one Southern Cross Housing is proud to be a part of.

If you or someone you know is experiencing primary homelessness (sleeping rough), please contact SCH on 1300 757 885 or head to our website to access the Doin' it Tough Guide. This is an important resource with many options, supports and services for people in crisis.



Be Bush Fire Ready with SCH

Bush fires are a part of life in New South Wales, so you need to live bush fire ready. Southern Cross Housing is calling on our tenants to help us prepare together for the bush fire season, as warm and dry conditions create a heightened fire risk. You and your family can work on having a bush fire prepared mindset, so you feel ready and will know what to do in the event of a bush fire in your area.

The NSW Rural Fire Service has been preparing for the upcoming fire season with hazard reduction burns, equipment maintenance, and training of personnel. SCH residents are urged to take six simple steps to reduce their bush fire risk:

- **Trim overhanging trees and shrubs.**
- **Mow grass and remove the cuttings.**
- **Have a cleared area around your home.**
- **Remove material that can burn around your home, such as door mats, wood piles and mulch.**
- **Clear and remove all the debris and leaves from the gutters surrounding your home.**
- **Prepare a sturdy hose or hoses that will reach all around your home.**

RFS AIDER Program

If you are elderly or have a disability, you may be able to access assistance to help you prepare your home through the RFS AIDER (Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents) program. This program is a free, one-off service which supports some of our most at-risk community members. The program helps people live more safely and confidently in their home in areas where bush fires may start.

The AIDER program is designed for people who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends or other services. This could include older people, people living with a disability, and people who are already receiving community assistance and services. Their property must also be on bush fire prone land (land that can support a bush fire or be subject to bush fire attack).

AIDER services can include:

- Clearing gutters
- Thinning vegetation around the home
- Removing leaf and tree debris
- Trimming branches from close to the home
- Mowing or slashing long grass

If you would like to know more about the free, one-off AIDER service, call 02 8741 4955 or email aider@rfs.nsw.gov.au or [Google AIDER Factsheet PDF](#).

If you are not able to clean your gutters for medical reasons and cannot access support via the Aider program, please call the SCH Maintenance Team on 1300 757 885.

Creating a Fire Plan



As well as the above practical tasks, all SCH residents are urged to review and understand the Bush Fire Risk symbols, Fire Danger Ratings System and make a plan for what they are going to do if there is a bush fire. You can make your plan online in as little as five minutes at myfireplan.com.au.

Step 1 – Discuss



Discuss what to do if a bush fire threatens your home. Many households find that having a discussion over dinner works best as everybody is together and focused.

Step 2 – Prepare



Prepare your home and get it ready for bush fire season. There are simple things you can do around your home to prepare it for a bush fire, like keeping the grass low and having a cleared area around your home.

One of the most important parts of preparing is knowing where you will go if you are told that you need to evacuate from your home. Although evacuation centres will be set up (locations will be broadcast on your local ABC radio), it is a good idea to (if you can) have a relative or friend that you can go and stay with. Staying with relatives or friends is a much nicer experience than staying in an overcrowded evacuation centre.

Step 3 – Know



You need to understand what the alert levels mean so you know what you should do. The alert levels are:

- **Advice:** A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.
- **Watch and Act:** There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.
- **Emergency Warning:** You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.

You also need to understand the fire danger rating symbols, which indicate how dangerous a fire would be if one started. The fire danger ratings are:

- **Moderate:** Plan and prepare. Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire.
- **High:** Be ready to act. Be alert for fires in your area. Decide what to do if a fire starts.
- **Extreme:** Fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. There is a very high likelihood of significant loss of life and property damage.
- **Catastrophic:** Fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. The safest place to be is away from bush fire prone areas.

Step 4 – Keep



In a bush fire, it's important that you stay up to date on conditions in your area. You can access information about bush fires by downloading the 'Hazards Near Me' app onto your phone. This app will show you current incidents and warnings in your area, as well as provide advice on what to do.

You can also get information from other sources, such as:

- **Local ABC Radio Station:** Listen to your local ABC radio station for regular updates and emergency broadcasts.
- **ABC Television:** Watch ABC television for news and alerts on bush fires.
- **NSW RFS Website:** Visit rfs.nsw.gov.au for current incidents, warnings, fire danger ratings, total fire bans and more.
- **NSW RFS Social Media:** Follow NSW RFS on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram for updates and information on bush fires.
- **NSW RFS Bush Fire Information Line:** Call 1800 679 737 for general information on bush fires.
- **In an emergency:** Call Triple Zero (000) for fire, police or ambulance.

Being bush fire ready is not only about preparing your home and property, but also about preparing yourself and your family. By knowing the alert levels, the fire danger ratings, and where to get information, you can make informed decisions and take appropriate actions in case of a bush fire. This will help you protect yourself, your loved ones and your belongings from the devastating effects of bush fires.

Remember, your safety and your family's safety come first. Never risk your life for your property. Be bush fire ready with Southern Cross Housing. Together, we can make our communities safer and stronger.

Be Safe Swimming Pool Safety

If you own, sell or rent a property with a swimming pool or spa pool in NSW, you need to be aware of the laws that apply to pool safety. These laws were introduced by the NSW Government in 2016 to prevent drowning incidents involving children under the age of five.

The Swimming Pools Act 1992 and the Swimming Pools Regulation 2018 require all pool owners to:

- Register their pools on the NSW Swimming Pool Register
- Ensure their pools have child-proof barriers that meet the Australian Standard requirements.
- Comply with the inspection program and safety standards set by their local Councils
- Obtain a certificate of compliance or a certificate of non-compliance before selling or leasing their properties.

The fine for not registering your swimming pool in NSW is \$220. This is a spot fine that can be issued by the local Council inspectors if they discover that your pool is unregistered. If the matter is referred to court, you may face an additional fine of up to \$2200

You can find more information about pool safety and registration on the NSW Swimming Pool Register website or contact your local Council.

Remember, pool safety is everyone's responsibility. Be safe and enjoy your pool.



A swimming pool or spa pool is any structure that can hold water deeper than 300 millimetres.

This includes:

- Above-ground pools and spas
- Inflatable swimming pools
- Concrete and fibreglass swimming pools
- Temporary or wading pools

Kids Alive Do the Five



Drowning is the greatest cause of accidental death in children under five in Australia. Each week, on average, one child drowns.

In 1988 to combat drowning, Laurie Lawrence created the Kids Alive – Do the Five water safety program. The Kids Alive community service program educates the public on five important steps to reduce the risk of preschool drowning.

- Fence the pool
- Shut the gate
- Teach your kids to swim – it's great
- Supervise – watch your mate
- Learn to resuscitate



Got a new Job? Apply for the SCH Start Work Bonus

SCH's Start Work Bonus Program supports the transition from welfare to work and works to enable you to achieve your career goals by keeping your rent at the same level as it was before you started work for a period of time. Whether you are working casually, part-time, full-time, seasonally or self-employed, you can apply for the Start Work Bonus and get the support you need.

To be eligible for the Start Work Bonus, you must meet the following criteria:

- Not be housed in an Affordable or BlueCHP Property
- You must be over 18 years of age.
- You must have commenced employment on or after 1 November 2023.
- You must be living in a social housing property that is owned or managed by SCH.
- You must have received a government pension, benefits or allowance as the primary source of your income in the 12 months prior to starting work.
- You must be starting work for the first time since starting a tenancy with SCH.
- You must submit an application for the Start Work Bonus within 28 days of starting work.

Applying for the Start Work Bonus is easy and simple. All you need to do is complete an application form and provide some evidence of your income.

You can find the application form on our website at www.sch.org.au or by calling us on 1300 757 885 and speaking to your Housing Officer.

You will also need to provide:

- An income history statement from Centrelink showing all payments that you have received for the last 12 months.
- All payslips that you have received since starting your new job.
- All payslips from Centrelink showing your new pension amount if you are still receiving Centrelink benefits.

Your new payslip must include:

- Your employer's and your name
- Your employer's Australian Business Number
- The pay period and date of payment
- Your gross and net pay
- The ordinary hourly rate and the number of hours worked at that rate

Once we receive your application and evidence, we will assess your eligibility and send you an agreement to sign. By signing the agreement, you agree to:

- Keep any additional income that you receive for a period of 26 weeks out of the household calculation of rent that is payable.
- Notify us if you stop work during the 26-week period.
- Complete a short feedback form to evaluate how the subsidy has helped to make your transition to work easier.

The Start Work Bonus is a wonderful opportunity for you to start your new career with confidence and security. You will not only improve your financial situation, but also your personal and social well-being.

Join SCH for a Merry Christmas Party

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, and SCH want to share it with you. That's why we are inviting all our tenants to join us for a festive Christmas Party at various locations across New South Wales. Whether you live in Nowra, Cooma, Batemans Bay, Bega or Ulladulla, we have a fun-filled event planned for you and your family.

The Christmas parties are FREE events that will feature a variety of informative stalls, activities for the kids, a free BBQ, tea and coffee and gifts for the children. You will also have the opportunity to meet and chat with other tenants, staff and service providers who can answer any questions you might have.



The Christmas Parties are also an opportunity for us to thank you for being part of the SCH community and to celebrate your achievements throughout the year.

Shane Meijer, General Manager of Housing Services at Southern Cross Housing, said: "After the success we had last year, Southern Cross Housing is pleased to have the support of the Shoalhaven Anti-Poverty Committee to help deliver the 2023 Annual Tenant Christmas Party in Nowra and we are excited to be able to deliver this event for our residents".



I am also excited to continue our tradition of delivering the celebrations across the regions.

The Christmas Parties will be held on different dates and locations depending on where you live.

Nowra:

Wednesday 20th December 2023 10am-1pm
Parramatta Street Park - East Nowra

Cooma:

Wednesday 6th December 2023 12pm-2:30pm
Cooma Ex-Servicemen's Club - Cooma

Batemans Bay:

Tuesday 12th December 2023 12pm-2:30pm
Corrigan's Beach Playground - Batehaven

Bega:

Wednesday 20th December 2023 12pm-3pm
Salvation Army Hall - Bega

Ulladulla:

Wednesday 13th December 2023 12pm-2:30pm
Boat Harbour Park - Ulladulla.

Christmas Trivia Quiz

- Q1. Which 3 of Santa's reindeer's names begin with the letter 'D'.
- Q2. What is the bestselling Christmas song ever?
- Q3. How do you say "Merry Christmas" in Spanish?
- Q4. What did Frosty the Snowman do when a magic hat was placed on his head?
- Q5. In Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol", what was the first name of Scrooge?

- Q6. What words follow "Silent Night" in the song?
- Q7. Which country started the tradition of putting up a Christmas tree?
- Q8. What is the highest grossing Christmas movie of all time?
- Q9. How many gifts in total were given in "The Twelve Days of Christmas" song?
- Q10. In the Aussie version of 'Jingle Bells', what does Santa ride in?

A1. Dasher, Dancer, Donner; A2. "White Christmas" by Bing Crosby; A3. Feliz Navidad; A4. He began to dance around; A5. Ebenezer; A6. "Holy Night"; A7. Germany; A8. Home Alone; A9. 364; A10. A rusty Holden ute

To find out more about the events or to RSVP, please visit our website at scch.org.au, email communities@scch.org.au or call us on 1300 757 885.

We hope to see you there and wish you a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!



Reindeer Biscuits

20 mini star-shaped pretzels
 10 red M&M's
 20 candy eyes
 10 Tim Tam biscuits
 50g dark chocolate, melted, cooled

Bauble Biscuits

90g dark chocolate, melted, cooled
 3 rainbow sour straps, cut lengthways into thin strips
 10 Venetian biscuits
 M&M's and M&M's minis, to decorate

Pudding Biscuits

90g white chocolate, melted, cooled
 10 milk chocolate digestive biscuits
 20 mini red M&M's
 2 watermelon cloud lollies, thinly sliced

Easy Christmas Biscuit Recipe

1h prep | Makes 30

Allergens: Recipe may contain gluten, peanuts, tree nuts, milk and egg.

Step 1

Make Reindeer Biscuits: Using picture as a guide, attach pretzels, M&M's and candy eyes to Tim Tam biscuits using melted chocolate. Refrigerate until set.

Step 2

Make Bauble Biscuits: Place melted chocolate in a small snap-lock bag. Snip off 1 corner. Using picture as a guide, fold sour strap pieces into small bows, securing with a little chocolate. Pipe chocolate onto biscuits. Attach bows, M&M's and mini M&M's to biscuits. Refrigerate until set.

Step 3

Make Pudding Biscuits: Place melted chocolate into a small snap-lock bag. Snip off 1 corner. Using picture as a guide, pipe chocolate over top of each biscuit to form 'custard'. Decorate with mini M&M's and cloud lollies. Refrigerate until set.

Step 4

To gift, pack biscuits into boxes or cellophane bags and secure with ribbon.

Affordable Food at Christmas

Christmas is a time of joy and celebration, but it can also be a challenge for many people who struggle to afford food and gifts for their loved ones. Fortunately, there are some great local organisations that can help you access affordable groceries in your area.

These organisations are here to support you and make your Christmas a little brighter. Don't hesitate to reach out to them if you need help.



Nowra

Visit the Nowra Community Food Store at 10/158 Princes Highway, South Nowra. They offer inexpensive groceries sourced from various locations. You can contact them on (02) 4402 9126 or email nowrafoodstore@gmail.com

Batemans Bay

Visit Cross Central Community Care's food relief program, The Food Hub, at the Church Hall, 1 Kerang Street. They offer essential groceries at a more affordable price for those facing financial difficulty in the community. You can contact them on 0434104649

Bega

Contact the Bega Sapphire Community Food Pantry at 2 Peden Street in Bega. They are open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, from 11am to 2pm. You can contact them on 0490 843 518.

Cooma

Access affordable groceries at Lifegate Community Foodcare, 5 Yulin Ave, Cooma. Lifegate is open every Thursday from 9.30am to 4.30pm. You can contact them on (02) 6452 1298.

What's On In SCH North

1. Christmas Wonderland 2023



An immersive walk-through, the Christmas Wonderland is a family-friendly, pet-friendly and wheelchair accessible Christmas themed street right in the heart of the Nowra CBD. Expect reindeers, Christmas lights, a giant Santa sleigh, nativity scene, Christmas trees & local entertainment. There are many photo opportunities and kids can even write a letter to Santa.

Cost: Free

Location: Cnr of Junction St & Kinghorne St, Nowra

When: 14th December – 26th December, open 24hrs

More Info: shoalhaven.com/event/christmas-wonderland-2023

2. Ulladulla Christmas Carols



Business Milton Ulladulla presents Community Christmas Carols. Come along to Ulladulla Civic Centre grounds, across from the beautiful harbour and join in this family friendly event. Bring a picnic blanket, fold up chairs and enjoys some Christmas cheer. Santa will be appearing at 7pm.

Cost: Free

Location: Ulladulla Civic Centre, 81B Princess Highway, Ulladulla

When: Saturday 9th December, 6:00pm – 8:30pm

More Info: communityconnectss.com.au/events/christmas-carols

3. NYE Fireworks at the Friendly Inn



There'll be fireworks and food, music, and merriment! Bring in the new year with a bang! Get in early to get a prime position for the annual free community fireworks display at the Friendly Inn's NYE Extravaganza! Kids playground and full bistro and bar service!

Cost: Free

Location: 159 Moss Vale Rd, Kangaroo Valley

When: Sunday 31st December, 4:00pm – 12:00pm

More Info: thefriendlyinn.com.au

4. Huskisson Carnival



Husky Carnival is excellent family fun with lots of great amusement rides for the whole family. Tasty carnival food along with fireworks on NYE and Australia Day (roughly around 9pm). The Market Day with the Jervis Bay Lions Club is set for Sunday, 8th January. Roaming characters will also keep the kiddies entertained nightly.

Cost: 12yrs & under = \$40pp, 13yrs & above = \$50pp for all-ride wristbands

Location: Tomerong St, Huskisson

When: 26th December – 29th January, 6:00pm – 10:pm every night.

More Info: joylands.com.au/husky-carnival

5. Santa Ride



Riders are you ready?

It's time to dig out those Santa suits and pump up your tyres!

By taking place in the iconic Santa Ride you will help raise funds for the Rural Fire Service.

Cost: \$15 And here's the best part – every cent of your entry fee will be donated to the RFS

Location: Holden Street Boat Ramp

When: Saturday 9th December, 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

More Info: huskissonhotel.com.au/santa-ride/

6. Carols in the Park



Come and celebrate the spirit of Christmas at the Nowra Carols in the Park. This family friendly event will have a number of local musical performances, followed by fireworks at 9pm.

Cost: Free

Location: Harry Sawkins Park, Graham Street, Nowra

When: Sunday 17th December 2023, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

More Info: facebook.com/groups/202649976737388/

What's On In SCH South

1. Christmas on Imlay Street in Eden



Christmas on Imlay - Late Night Shopping is an annual event that takes place on Imlay Street in Eden, New South Wales. The event is organized by the Eden Chamber of Commerce and is aimed at providing a fun-filled shopping experience for the whole family. The event features a variety of activities for kids, including face painting.

Cost: Free

Location: Imlay Street, Eden

When: 14th December 5:00-8:00pm

More Info: Call Maree on 0428580921

2. Smart Recovery



Smart Recovery is an evidence-based recovery method grounded in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), that supports people with substance dependencies or problem behaviours to: Build and maintain motivation; Copy with urges and cravings; Manage thoughts, feelings and behaviours; Lead a balanced life

Cost: Free

Location: Unit 4 161 Imlay Street, Eden (Grand Pacific Health Office)

When: Thursdays 3.30pm – 5:00pm

More Info: Phone 0476347542

3. Cooma Carols by Candlelight



Christmas carols in Cooma are a beautiful tradition that brings people together to celebrate the holiday season. The candles and sweet singing create a magical atmosphere that is sure to put anyone in the Christmas spirit.

Cost: Free

Location: Centennial Park, Cooma

When: Sunday 18th December, 7:00pm

4. School Holiday Movie – Batemans Bay



Escape from the heat and enjoy the heart-warming story, stirring performances and breathtaking scenery in the movie Fly Away Home. Staring Anna Paquin & Jeff Daniels

Cost: Free

Location: Batemans Bay Library Hanging Rock Pl, Batemans Bay

When: Fri 12th Jan 2024, 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM

More Info: Booking are required. Ph 44725850

5. Bega Show



The Bega Agricultural, Pastoral & Horticultural Society has been serving the community since 1871 features a wide variety of local produce, including jams, and will be a great opportunity for visitors to sample some of the best produce from the region.

Cost: TBA

Location: Bega Showground

When: 17 – 18 February 2024

More Info: begashow.org.au

6. Carols in the Park



Jindabyne Community Life Inc presents Carols in the Park. Great family fun, bring your chair and blanket. All your favourites with some added extras.

Cost: Free

Location: Jindabyne Community Stage

When: Saturday 16th December 4:00pm - 8:30pm

More Info: fb.com/people/Jindabyne-Carols-in-the-Park/

In the Garden

An Australian summer is notorious for bringing all kinds of weather to our shores – from scorching sun to drenching rains. In this issue, we’ve highlighted some beautiful, hardy and drought resistant Aussie natives to plant, offered some suggestions on what jobs you should focus on for both indoor & outdoor gardens to keep them looking their best and listed the fruits, veggies and herbs that thrive in summer conditions.

We hope our list keeps your green thumbs busy till our next issue.



Flowers to Plant Now

- Grevillea superb or Spider Flower
- Callistemon citrinus or Kings Park Special
- Hymenopsporium flavum or
- Ceratopetalum gummiferum or NSW Christmas Bush

Fruit, Veg & Herbs to Plant Now

- Chilli
- Lemongrass
- Passionfruit
- Thyme
- Capsicum

Jobs to Do Indoors

- Air-conditioning takes moisture out of the air, and the soil in your plants. Make sure to give indoor plants & foliage regular watering when the soil starts to get dry.
- To prevent uneven growth, make sure to quarter-turn pots regularly so that plants are getting enough light.
- Remove brown, dead, or damaged leaves from the base of the plant using slim-bladed plant snips, just take care not to cut away too many at one time.

Jobs to Do Outdoors

- Potted plants are prone to overheating in summer, especially with terracotta pots. Mulch them lightly and keep them out of direct sunshine on hot days.
- Ensure your garden is well-watered, but also that there’s plenty of drainage so that plants don’t get root rot. Keeping moisture in the ground in summer is one of the most important tasks.
- Beware of scalping! Mowing the lawn low may seem like a good idea but in Summer, lawns are likely to turn brown and attract bindi’s if they’re too short.



**Southern Cross
Housing**

**1300 757 885
scch.org.au**

Nowra

69 Kinghorne St
Nowra NSW 2541

Bomaderry

Shop 1, 54 Bolong Road
Bomaderry NSW 2541

Bega Valley

Shop 9, 81-83 Auckland Street
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