



## CEO MESSAGE

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### DO WE HAVE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS?

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

#### Welcome to the autumn edition of our Tenant Newsletter.

Welcome to our Autumn Newsletter. This year has been flying by. It is clear that it may be sometime until life, for most, returns to normal (whatever that will look like). It is important during these times that we take time to look after ourselves and those around us, particularly our mental health. It is easy to not notice how these changes affect us, sometimes we have to be deliberate about doing things that are going to be good for our overall wellness.

The end of March also signaled the end of Job Keeper and the Job Seeker Coronavirus Supplement. SCH understands that this will be hard for those affected. It is important to know that the Job Seeker Supplement was not considered for rent assessment purposes by SCH during this period. If you need assistance or you are having trouble paying your rent, an SCH Housing Officer can assist with referrals to Financial counselling.

SCH is continually looking for opportunities to better meet the need of our communities. It is our commitment to deliver the best possible housing outcomes for those most in need. Recently SCH was successful in securing funding from the "Safe Places" Commonwealth Government initiative to build two Emergency Accommodation facilities in the Shoalhaven and Snowy Monaro areas. These facilities will provide emergency accommodation to women and their children who are fleeing domestic violence. We are hopeful for commence work on these facilities later in the year.

Let me close by saying that the SCH team are committed to assisting all our tenants with your tenancy/neighbourhood needs. If there is anything we can do to assist you please contact our office or your Housing Officer if you know their extension.

Kind regards,



Alex Pontello  
CEO



## WHAT'S ON



### FINANCIAL COUNSELLING

Financial difficulties can leave you and your family feeling overwhelmed, anxious and isolated. Worrying about money is not uncommon, however if it is affecting your physical or emotional health and relationships it is important to seek help.

Financial Counselling is a free, non-judgemental and confidential service provided by many different services and organisations across our areas on the South Coast and Snowy Monaro. Qualified Financial Counsellors are separate to Southern Cross Housing and can work with you to assess your overall financial situation and explain the options available to you. They can also advocate and negotiate with other relevant services to support you.

Financial Counsellors assist people with a wide range of financial problems, including:

- Assessing your overall financial situation
- Budgeting and money management strategies
- Explaining options and the potential consequences
- Establishing debt repayment plans
- Unaffordable loans
- Utility bills
- Pay day lending
- Credit Card debt
- Arrears
- Taxation bills
- Repossession
- Unpaid Fines
- Early release of superannuation
- Credit reports
- Insurance issues
- Entitlements and forms of assistance you may be eligible for

### DINE & DISCOVER NSW VOUCHER PROGRAM

The NSW Government has launched Dine & Discover NSW to encourage the community to get out and about and support dining, arts and tourism. NSW residents aged 18 and over can apply for 4 x \$25 vouchers, worth \$100 in total.

- 2 x \$25 Dine NSW Vouchers to be used for dining in at restaurants, cafés, bars, wineries, pubs or clubs. These can be used from Monday to Thursday.
- 2 x \$25 Discover NSW Vouchers to be used for entertainment and recreation, including cultural institutions, live music, and arts venues. These can be used 7 days a week.

The vouchers:

- Can be used at participating NSW businesses that are registered as COVID Safe. Participating businesses can be found through Service NSW and at this link: <https://www.service.nsw.gov.au/transaction/find-dine-discover-nsw-business>
- Cannot be used on public holidays
- Valid to 30 June 2021.

If you would like to speak to a Financial Counsellor, you can ask your Housing Officer or the Communities Assist team to help you book an appointment, or contact one of the following services in your area:

#### NOWRA/ULLADULLA

- Moneycare Salvation Army – over the phone only - Bookings Phone 1800 722 363
- Lifeline South Coast – In person available - Bookings Phone 02 4421 5365

#### BATEMAN'S BAY/MORUYA

- The Family Place - Bookings Phone 02 4474 2907 or Email [admin@familyplace.org.au](mailto:admin@familyplace.org.au)
- Moneycare Salvation Army – In person available - Bookings Phone 1800 722 363

#### BEGA VALLEY

- The Family Place - Bookings Phone 02 4474 2907 or Email [gabby@familyplace.org.au](mailto:gabby@familyplace.org.au)
- Moneycare Salvation Army – In person available - Bookings Phone 1800 722 363

#### COOMA/BOMBALA

- The Family Place - Bookings Phone 02 4474 2907 or Email [gabby@familyplace.org.au](mailto:gabby@familyplace.org.au)
- Moneycare Salvation Army – In person available - Bookings Phone 1800 722 363
- Monaro Community Access Service - Bookings Phone 02 6452 6174

### MONEYSMART

Moneysmart is a free, online resource funded by the Commonwealth Government as an interactive way to learn about and manage your finances. Moneysmart's resources include:

- Financial counselling
- Planning for the future
- Money management advice
- Budgeting
- Links to urgent help in case of financial crisis.

Moneysmart can be accessed by phoning 1300 300 630 or online via the following link: [www.moneysmart.gov.au](http://www.moneysmart.gov.au)

### FREE SCHOOL – ONLINE TUTORIALS

Free School is a not-for-profit organisation that helps all children and young people be their best by delivering quality education to all. It provides an online library of teacher-led, curriculum-based video tutorials that students can access anywhere at any time, for free. The library has tutorials for years 7 – 12 English, Maths, Science, and Humanities subjects with 7400+ lessons available.

A short video with further information on Free School can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECr9JIOqohc>

To access Free School tutorials follow this link: [www.freeschool.org.au](http://www.freeschool.org.au)

## SHOALHAVEN NAIDOC WEEK EVENT

In 2021 NAIDOC Week will be held between 4th – 11th July.

Save the date – on 7th July 2021 Community Organisations in the Shoalhaven are hosting a Family Fun Day to celebrate NAIDOC Week 2021's theme is Heal Country! This year's theme calls for all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage. SCH will be participating in the Community Celebration. Come on down to the Showground in Nowra and say hello to the team.

Follow the Shoalhaven Council Facebook page at [facebook.com/shoalhavencitycouncil](https://facebook.com/shoalhavencitycouncil) for further event updates.

For other national NAIDOC Events keep an eye on their website: <https://www.naidoc.org.au/get-involved/naidoc-week-events>

## SHOALHAVEN QUIT SMOKING SERVICE

The Illawarra Shoalhaven Local Health District's (ISLHD) Quit Smoking Service is for anyone, whether you are thinking about quitting, ready to quit or would like some more information. The service offers:

- Free individualised advice and support on addressing smoking
- Free sample of Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- Accurate, up-to-date information about using Nicotine Replacement products (patch, gum, inhaler, mist) to help manage smoking.
- An initial consultation to determine level of support. For example, follow up phone calls, text messages or ongoing appointments
- Free carbon monoxide testing

For more information see your local health practitioner or contact Janet Jackson on 0459 898 302

More information is available via the ISLHD website: <https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/health-promotion/smoking>

## DAUGHTER & DAD'S PROGRAM COOMA

Monaro Family Support Service are running the free Daughter & Dad's Program in Cooma for primary school aged girls and their dads.

- The program is designed to encourage:
- Quality one-on-one time together
- Confidence and skills in a range of shared activities and sports
- Self-esteem and resilience in girls

When: Tuesday evenings, commencing 27th April at 5pm

Where: Monaro High School Innovation Hub

For more information or to book your place. Phone: 02 6452 3450  
Email: [cooma@mfss.org.au](mailto:cooma@mfss.org.au)

## TUNING INTO TEENS COURSE IN BEGA VALLEY

Headspace and Far South Coast Family Support Service are running a free 6 week course designed for parents and carers of young people aged 10 – 18 years old. The course will include support for parents and carers to feel more confident talking to their teen, understanding teenagers better, help their teenagers learn to manage their emotions, prevent behavioural problems, and help teens deal with conflict.

Tuning in to Teens shows parents and carers how to help teens in their life to develop emotional intelligence. Adolescents with higher emotional intelligence:

- Are more aware, assertive and strong in situations of peer pressure
- Have greater success with making friends and are more able to manage conflict with peers
- Are more able to cope when upset or angry
- Have fewer mental health and substance abuse difficulties
- Have more stable and satisfying relationships as adults

Details: Wednesday 5th May – Wednesday 9th June 2021

10am – 12:30pm at Headspace Eden. For more information contact headspace on 02 6494 8844.

## EUROBODALLA SHIRE COUNCIL YOUTH ART PRIZE

Eurobodalla Shire Council is encouraging budding artists aged between 5 – 18 years old to enter their Little Sellers Art Prize 2021. This year's theme is Hands, Head, Heart. Participants are encouraged to interpret the theme creatively in a way that is meaningful to them.

There are four age categories:

- ages 5-8
- ages 9-12
- ages 13-15
- ages 16-18

A winner and a runner up will be chosen from each age category. Winners of each category will receive a \$50 voucher and runners up a \$30 voucher to spend on art supplies at Amanda's of Mogo. The overall winner of the Little Sellers Art Prize will receive \$200 from art collector, patron of the arts and philanthropist, Mr. Basil Sellers. In addition, finalists will be in the running to win:

- The Eurobodalla Children's Award (5-12 years) of \$75 judged by Coordinator Children's Services, Louise Hatton
- The Eurobodalla Youth Award (13-18 years) of \$75 judged by Community Development and Youth Coordinator, Zoe Morga

The competition is now open, with entries closing on Friday 25th June 2021 at 4:30pm. More information can be obtained from Eurobodalla Shire Council on 02 4474 1061 or through this link: <https://www.esc.nsw.gov.au/news-and-events/whats-on/little-sellers>

## VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

### JUSTICE VOLUNTEER MENTORING SERVICE - NOWRA

Australian Red Cross are seeking volunteers over 18 years old to work with South Coast Corrections to support and mentor prisoners during their release process and back into the community.

The Volunteer Mentor role is to provide valuable support to adult men and women who are preparing for their release from prison, assisting them to complete activities which target their goals, reconnect with the community, and pursue positive lifestyles that minimise future risk of re-offending. This might involve taking them to appointments, sharing skills or introducing them to services, as well as social activities such as sharing a meal or spending time outdoors.

For more information on this opportunity please contact Red Cross Nowra on 02 4428 4900 or follow this link: <https://volunteering.redcross.org.au/cw/en/job/496973/justice-volunteer-mentoring-service-volunteer-mentor-nowra>

### GARDENING VOLUNTEER – NOWRA

Anglicare Nowra are seeking volunteers who enjoy working outside, taking care of plants and pottering around the garden. Volunteers will be based at Jean Ross House. Basic Skills in gardens and/or horticulture is needed and tools will be provided.

For more information on this opportunity please contact Anglicare Nowra on 1300 111 278 or follow this link to their website: <https://www.anglicare.org.au/get-involved/volunteer-with-us/>

## COMMUNITIES ASSIST NEWS

### ADULTING 101 WORKSHOP – BEGA VALLEY

Ingrid, Sarah and Emma from our Bega Valley team recently joined local service provider South East Women's and Children's Service (SEWACS) to facilitate a Housing workshop for young people aged 16 – 25. The workshop was part of a 5 session series facilitated by Headspace Bega to share tools and information with young people on topics including Mental Health & Wellbeing, Politics, General Tips and Tricks, and Finance. The workshop had a great turn out of enthusiastic young people and the evening included quizzes, prizes, dinner and new friendships.

Our Communities Assist team can run a Housing workshop called Keys 2 Renting in any of our areas for young people. If you are interested please contact Communities Assist on 1300 757 885 or at [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au).

### SAPPHIRE COMMUNITY PANTRY VOLUNTEERS – BEGA

The Pantry is a non-denominational, not for profit charity whose purpose is to nourish the community and divert good food and groceries from landfill. Food is sourced from national charity - Foodbank, as well as OzHarvest, Coles Second Bite, and donations from local businesses such as Millingandi Greens, F&J Orchards, community gardens and local people with an excess of fruit and vegetables. The pantry is open to all and sells groceries, fresh fruit and vegetables, bread and also offers a space to sit down, have a chat and a cuppa.

The volunteer role assists with pantry operations and broader community support.

For more information on this opportunity please contact Sapphire Community Pantry at 0490 843 518, [spantry@gmail.com](mailto:spantry@gmail.com) or visit their Facebook page at [www.facebook/sapphirecommunitypantry](http://www.facebook/sapphirecommunitypantry)

### ADULT LEADER FOR JOEYS/CUBS/SCOUTS – ROLES AVAILABLE IN BATEMAN'S BAY, COOMA AND ULLADULLA

Scout Leaders come from all walks of life, from parents of Scouts, to childhood Scouts, to people with no Scouting experience at all. Scout Leaders provide activities and adventure programs for their Scout Group. Scouts Australia helps Leaders by providing training and support in all aspects of Scouting, youth leadership, programming and safety. Leader training is provided through the Scouts Australia Institute of Training, which is accredited to award nationally-recognised VET qualifications in Leadership and Management.

For more information on this opportunity please contact Scouts NSW on 02 9735 9000 or follow this link to their website: <https://joinscouts.com.au/get-involved/>

## POLICY UPDATE

### NEIGHBOUR DISPUTES POLICY T38



A new Neighbour Disputes policy is now available on the SCH Website. This policy has been developed to promote respect, understanding and reconciliation.

As stated in the Residential Tenancies Act 2010, all tenants and their neighbours have the right to the peaceful enjoyment of their property but are also responsible for not interfering with the peace, comfort, or privacy of neighbours.

SCH will take all reasonable steps as a social housing landlord, to ensure these rights and responsibilities are maintained. SCH encourages tenants and neighbours to resolve any issues through discussion between themselves in the first instance. Where issues cannot be resolved through discussion, the Tenancy Housing Officers will proceed to manage the dispute and provide opportunities to promote a positive relationship between neighbours and facilitate resolutions when they arise. 4

## RURAL FIRE SERVICE HOME FIRE SAFETY PROGRAM (HFSP)

One of the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS)'s core responsibilities is fire prevention. The HFSP provides Home Safety Checks as a way for fire services to support the community to reduce the number and severity of fires. This is a proven way to save lives and avoid property damage.

The main aim of the Home Fire Safety Checks Program are to:

- Protect people's lives and property from fire
- Ensure no preventable fire deaths occur
- Educate the community to prevent and prepare for fires

Having an RFS member attend your home to carry out a HFSC can:

- Show or explain to you how quickly a fire could start in your home

Explain what happens when you report a fire to RFS and what the response would look like in your area

- Assist you to create a Home Fire Escape Plan specific to your property
- Answer any questions on common hazards in your home

If you would like to arrange a Home Fire Safety Check with RFS, please contact the Communities Assist team on 1300 757 885 or email [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au).



## TENANT OPPORTUNITIES



### NOW IS YOUR CHANCE TO JOIN A TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC) IN NOWRA OR BEGA VALLEY

Our Tenant Advisory Committees (TAC) provide an opportunity for tenants to discuss issues, exchange ideas and provide feedback about services and programs that are delivered by Southern Cross Housing.

We are inviting nominations for the Bega Valley and Nowra TACS.

Our TACS will meet every three months. The meetings will be run by tenants and focus on themes, issues, or concerns for people in the area who live in Southern Cross Housing properties. Each year we run a Tenant Survey. This annual survey is a great opportunity for you to give your feedback about your satisfaction as a Southern Cross Housing Tenant. As a member of the TAC in your area you can help us to analyse the results of our survey, develop a plan to improve our services and monitor the implementation of improvements.

An important aspect of our TAC meetings is to provide opportunities for tenant representatives to raise issues or identify concerns about various Southern Cross Housing processes. TAC members review the issues or concerns, help to identify solutions and provide these ideas to Southern Cross Housing.

If you would like to nominate for a TAC in either Shoalhaven or Bega Valley, please email [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au) with your contact details, a bit about you, and why you would like to join a Southern Cross Housing TAC.

The Nowra TAC will be meeting on 5th May 2021 10:30am - 12:30pm, Address: 54 Bolong rd, Bomaderry. Please RSVP by May 3rd.

### WHAT IS THE NOWRA TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Tenant Advisory Committee (TAC) is a forum for tenants to discuss issues, exchange ideas and give feedback to Southern Cross Housing so that we can continue to provide further supports and programs to our Tenants.

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

### WHAT IS THE NOWRA TENANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE?

Joining the Tenant Advisory Committee can help you to:

- Meet other like-minded people and get involved in your community
- Have your idea's heard and discussed
- Develop new skills and confidence
- Have a real say in the way housing services are delivered
- Share the ownership of services we deliver
- Ensure housing services are delivered efficiently and effectively to meet your community's needs

For more information regarding our tenant advisory committee please visit our website at [www.scch.org.au/community/nowra-tenant-advisory-committee/](http://www.scch.org.au/community/nowra-tenant-advisory-committee/)



## SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING MAINTENANCE PROGRAM CHANGES FOR SHMT TENANTS FACT SHEET

### PROPERTY MAINTENANCE

From 1st July 2021 Southern Cross Housing will take over the delivery of property maintenance from Land and Housing Corporation's Maintenance Contractor, Lake Maintenance. This change will affect tenants that are currently living in properties that were part of the Social Housing Management Transfer (SHMT) from the NSW Department Communities and Justice to Southern Cross Housing.

This means that from 1st July 2021 Southern Cross Housing tenants will not have to call a separate number for their maintenance needs. Instead the process will be much simpler. All maintenance requests and enquiries should be made through Southern Cross Housing's central intake number, 1300 757 885 Option 2.

As part of the transfer, Southern Cross Housing's Property Management Team have developed a program of planned maintenance activities. This program will be rolled out sequentially in different geographic areas.

If you would like to find out more about the planned maintenance activities Southern Cross Housing will be providing and how they will impact on your property, Southern Cross Housing are providing a series of information sessions. The information sessions will provide an opportunity for you to find out about the proposed maintenance schedule and ask questions.

### INFORMATION SESSION TIMES AND LOCATIONS

- Bomaderry – Southern Cross Housing Office – 54 Bolong Rd, Bomaderry – Tuesday the 4th May, 10am – 12pm
- Nowra – Parramatta Park – Thursday the 6th of May, 11pm – 1pm
- Nowra – Worrigee Sports Club – Tuesday the 11th of May, 10am – 12pm
- Bomaderry – Sampson Crescent Park – Thursday 13th of May, 11am – 1pm

### MORE INFORMATION

For more information or to RSVP for one of the Information sessions please contact the Southern Cross Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 or email [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au).

### ONLINE INFORMATION

Southern Cross Housing will provide further information about the change of maintenance arrangements online at [www.scch.org.au](http://www.scch.org.au).

## SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING

# MAINTENANCE PROGRAM CHANGES FOR SOCIAL HOUSING MANAGEMENT TRANSFER TENANTS

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2021, WHO SHOULD I CALL FOR MY MAINTENANCE REQUESTS?

Until 1st July continue to call the usual number, from 1st July please call Southern Cross Housing on 1300 757 885 (Option 2) for all Maintenance Requests.

### I HAVE REPORTED MY MAINTENANCE NEEDS TO SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING. WILL THERE BE A SPECIFIC DATE WHEN MY MAINTENANCE WILL TAKE PLACE?

All maintenance needs that are reported will be prioritised, depending on the nature of the issue. If your request is considered an emergency you can expect a response within 4 hours, non urgent repairs are usually undertaken within 28 days.

### MY PROPERTY HAS SIGNIFICANT MAINTENANCE NEEDS THAT HAVE NOT PREVIOUSLY BEEN ADDRESSED. WHO DO I SPEAK TO REGARDING THIS?

As part of the maintenance transfer program, Southern Cross Housing may undertake a Property Assessment Survey of your property. These surveys enable us to determine what works need to be undertaken and will be conducted in different geographic areas between the 1st July 2021 and 1st July 2022. You will be contacted by Southern Cross Housing to advise you of the time and date that the survey will be undertaken, the survey times are likely to coincide with your tenancy inspection date.

### I HAVE ALREADY REPORTED MY MAINTENANCE NEEDS TO LAKES MAINTENANCE. DO I NEED TO REPORT IT AGAIN?

Lake Maintenance are required to complete all works outstanding. If maintenance organised prior to 1st July 2021, is not attended to in a timely manner, please notify SCH so we can address this.

### WILL THE MAINTENANCE IMPACT ON MY DAY TO DAY LIVING?

Example. If your kitchen is being replaced, it should be out of action for no longer than 3 days. The trades may still need to return for tiling and minor works, but the kitchen and appliances will function. Note: this time may vary depending on individual circumstances. SCH will discuss any proposed works with you to ensure that there is minimum disruption.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO PRIOR TO MY MAINTENANCE TAKING PLACE?

It is important that areas are prepared prior to trades arriving. This may involve having to move personal affects and items, so trades can easily access areas, for example painting etc. This will be explained prior to trades arriving. We will endeavour to provide assistance and support for tenants who are physically unable to empty cupboards and move personal affects.

## 2021 ROUGH SLEEPER COUNT

On Wednesday 17th February 2021 13 awesome SCH staff, along with a volunteer from Salt Care and two Rangers from Shoalhaven City Council got out of bed at 3am to count the number of people that were sleeping rough in the Shoalhaven and Snowy Monaro Local Government Areas.

The Nowra based team met at our Bolong office at 4am, collected their kits (torches, vests, and maps) and listened to one last reminder about safety. With that they headed off into the darkness to several rough sleeping hotspots that had been previously identified by service providers and organisations. Sarah and Susan from Cooma and Natalie and Eric (Ulladulla) were also up and about, checking in and advising that they were ready to go.

During February 2021 street counts of rough sleepers are being run across all DCJ Districts in NSW. The street counts vary in methodology across regions, but all are consistent in their focus of maintaining a baseline of people sleeping rough in the designated counting areas. Data collected will be used to inform strategies and responses to homelessness and advocate for the resources necessary to create sustainable solutions to homelessness. The counts form part of the NSW State Governments commitment to halving street sleeping across NSW by 2025. The first count was undertaken by staff from the Department of Communities and Justice in 2019. At this time 6 rough sleepers were identified in the Shoalhaven LGA.

The final tally for the 2021 Shoalhaven Rough Sleeper Count was 20. 1 Rough Sleeper was counted in Cooma.

A significant number of rough sleepers were identified by Natalie and Eric at the Milton Showground. The rough sleepers have been followed up, two have been offered alternative accommodation (including a family with kids). Another 70-year-old rough sleeper was persuaded to apply for housing. The showgrounds in Milton will be a part of our ongoing assertive outreach. Rough Sleepers that were identified in all other areas are also being followed up and provided with support where possible.



Nowra Based Rough Sleeper Count Team – From Left to Right, Emma, Olivia, Leah, Jason, Judith, Blake, Maddison, Aaron, and Gary. Photo taken at 4am!



### A HOME TO SUIT YOU – ULLADULLA GOOD NEWS STORY

Jo-Anne and Gordon are residents of Shoalhaven who have been working with the team in Ulladulla to find a property to suit their ongoing health needs. Working with Jo-Anne and Gordon, the Ulladulla team organised documentation and were able to offer the couple a more suitable property in February 2021. Jo-Anne and Gordon were so happy with the support provided by the Ulladulla team that they stopped by to give them some lovely flowers. Pictured above is Michele and Fiona receiving the flowers from Gordon and Jo-Anne.

### WORK DEVELOPMENT ORDERS

If you're having difficulty paying a penalty notice, court fine or a victim's restitution order, and you meet the eligibility criteria, Work and Development Orders (WDOs) are a way to help people who can't pay their fines.

A WDO enables you to reduce any Revenue NSW fines by up to \$1000 a month, by allowing you to participate in activities such as unpaid work, courses, counselling or treatment programs.

Southern Cross Housing are an approved sponsor organisation who may be able to support your WDO activity and apply for your fine to be reduced on your behalf.

### ELIGIBILITY

You're eligible if you're:

- Receiving a Centrelink or DVA benefit
- Have a mental illness, intellectual disability or cognitive impairment
- Have a serious addiction to drugs, alcohol or volatile substances
- Experiencing serious financial hardship, or homelessness.

If you don't meet the eligibility criteria, you may still be able to request a WDO under exceptional circumstances.

Please contact the Communities Assist team on 1300 757 885 or [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au) for more information about WDOs and potential activities, or if you are unsure about your eligibility.

Further information about WDOs can also be found by visiting the Revenue NSW website at: <https://www.revenue.nsw.gov.au/fines-and-fees/cant-pay-your-debt>

# COMPLAINTS

What is/isn't a complaint, how to complain, what to expect.

## WHAT IS A COMPLAINT

Southern Cross Housing defines a complaint as any expression of dissatisfaction made by, or on behalf of, a tenant/applicant of SCH, a member of the public, or another organisation, where the complainant is unhappy with the standard or type of service received. Complaints, including complaints relating to tenancy management, access and application management and SCH staff, are initially dealt with through the Southern Cross Housing Complaints Policy (M20).

As per this policy, some examples of complaints are:

- Poor quality services provided by SCH staff members.
- Discrimination or harassment.
- Poor behaviour by a contractor (eg, failing to clean up following maintenance).
- Poor administration such as a loss of documents or information.
- Faulty maintenance work (where the failure to undertake maintenance work properly is the issue).

## WHAT IS NOT A COMPLAINT

As per the Southern Cross Housing Complaints Policy (M20) the following are examples of matters that are not a complaint:

- Complaints related to an alleged breach of the Regulatory Code should be referred to the Registrar of Community Housing
- Complaints of alleged fraud or corruption should be referred to the Australian Securities Investment Corporation.
- Complaints involving abuse or neglect are covered by the SCH Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policy
- Complaints about neighbour disputes. Please refer to our neighbour disputes policy.

## HOW TO COMPLAIN

You are encouraged to make a complaint if you are not happy with the quality or standard of service you have received from Southern Cross Housing. Your feedback helps us to improve our services, including our contractors.

Southern Cross Housing has a set process for resolving complaints:

1. It is suggested that you initially raise your concerns with either the staff member that the issue is associated with, or their direct Manager. This contact may be either in person or by telephone.
2. If you are not happy with the response that you receive from the staff member or direct Manager you should lodge the complaint in writing using the Southern Cross Housing Complaints Form located on the Complaints page of our website.

## WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE PROCESS

After you have lodged your complaint with Southern Cross Housing you should expect written acknowledgement that your complaint has been received within 2 business days. The matters that have been raised in your letter of complaint will be investigated by a Manager within Southern Cross Housing and you will then receive a written response that outlines our findings of the investigation and any further action to be taken within 21 days.

If you are unsure about how to lodge a complaint you can ask a trusted person to help you, this person could be a friend or family member, a support worker or a Tenant Advocate. The Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service can provide advice and assistance.

If a tenant or applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome of the complaint, they may be eligible to refer the complaint to an external body, such as a Community Justice Centre, NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal, Registrar of Community Housing or NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission. SCH will also advise tenants of their options when we respond to the complaint.

## APPEALS

If you are not satisfied with a decision made by Southern Cross Housing, you can appeal and ask that we reconsider the matter. If you do this, you will need to give reasons why you think it should be looked at again. A senior staff member will give you a written response to your appeal.

To submit an appeal please follow this link to Southern Cross Housing's website to access the Appeals Form, you can also contact your Housing Officer or the Communities Assist team who can provide you with a copy. 1300 757 885 or [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au)

Appeals information and forms can be found at: <https://www.scch.org.au/affordable-housing/draft-6/>

## SHOALHAVEN HEADS NEIGHBOURHOOD POP-UP SESSION

In February members of our Communities Assist, Tenancy and Property Services team's joined residents in Shoalhaven Heads for a pop-up Neighbourhood Session. The session invited local residents to drop by the Southern Cross Housing Community Bus for a barista-made coffee and to chat about any maintenance or tenancy issues on the spot.

Southern Cross Housing are grateful for those tenants who came out to join us and share with us the things that are important or of concern to them, and we look forward to hosting more events like this in other areas.

If you would like to see a Neighbourhood Session in your area please contact the Communities Assist team and let us know. Phone 1300 757 885 or [communities@scch.org.au](mailto:communities@scch.org.au).

