# SCHNEWS

**Southern Cross Housing** 

**Tenant Newsletter** 

Spring 2022







Welcome to our Spring Tenant Newsletter. In this edition you will get to read about what SCH has been up to, what programs and support services you can access, you'll get to know some of our staff, and read about what some of our tenants are up to.

In the coming weeks we will be in contact with you regarding our Tenant Survey. The survey is a great opportunity to have your say about the way we deliver services to you. This information allows us to identify areas we are doing well in and what areas we can improve to ultimately provide you with a better housing service. The survey will be distributed via email and SMS message which will provide a link for you to complete the survey online. A paper version of the survey will also be made available. All participants that complete the survey will enter the prize draw to win one of 3 \$200 shopping vouchers.

With the weather now improving it's a great time to get out in the garden and tackle those lawns and outside jobs we may been putting off during the colder months. SCH Housing Officers are on the lookout for tenants with excellent property care who they will nominate for the monthly Property Care Award. Great property care can do wonders for your neighbourhood, it can build a sense of belonging and pride and build neighbourhood connection.

As we all know the cost of living continues to put a strain on many families and individuals which can put pressure on covering costs such as food, utilities, and rent. It is important that tenants do not fall behind in rental payments as this can have a negative impact on the sustainability of their tenancy. If you are struggling to make your rent, please contact your Housing Officer as soon as possible so that we can assist you where we can. There are a number of programs and services that our staff can refer you to that assist during hard times.

Of course if you have any tenancy or property enquiry you can contact us on 1300 757 885 for assistance.

Kind regards, **Alex Pontello Chief Executive Officer** 



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### **DO WE HAVE YOUR 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 information about to receive events, activities and opportunities quickly and efficiently. Updating your email address contact is easy, please phone the office on 1300 757 885.



# IN THE **NEWS**

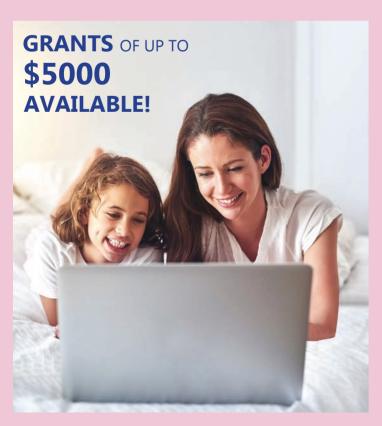
### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF COUNTRY**

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

#### **RETURN TO WORK ASSISTANCE**

Are you unemployed and having trouble finding work? The NSW Government's Return to Work program allows eligible women to access one-off grants of up to \$5000 to purchase items and services that enable them to achieve their employment goals. These items include education and training, clothing, equipment, IT devices, transport costs and childcare services.

All successful applicants will be supported by their own Return to Work Coordinator who will help them develop their Return to Work plan. The Return to Work program is only for women who have been unemployed for one month or more and intend to return to work within six months. If this is something you are interested in, contact the Communities Assist Team today on 1300 757 885 or email communities@scch.org.au to apply.



#### **NAIDOC WEEK**

NAIDOC week was celebrated nationally from July 3 –10 this year. The theme of this years NAIDOC week was Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up!

SCH attended the Narooma NAIDOC day on Thursday 7 July, hosted by Katungal Aboriginal Corporation Regional Health and Community Services. The event included a cooking competition, free haircuts, free lunch and face painting provided by Southern Cross Housing. By the end of the day a large number of children were sporting the Aboriginal flag on their faces. Thank you to Katungal for hosting the day, it was great to meet many local First Nations people of the Yuin Nation.



### **TAC UPDATE**

We value your opinion, and the Tenants Advisory Committee is a great opportunity for SCH tenants to let us know how we are going. We currently have 3 active TAC groups, Nowra, Ulladulla and Bega. The groups meet quarterly to discuss concerns, issues, policies, information, and work on set projects in conjunction with SCH staff. The Nowra TAC is providing feedback about several new Fact Sheets that we are developing to ensure that they are clear and concise.

The Bega TAC has produced a thoughtful and caring bereavement fact sheet that will be available to all tenants when they require support and guidance in the event of losing a loved one or a close friend

We are currently seeking more members to join our TAC groups. SCH is also looking to start up TACs in the Snowy Monaro and the Eurobodalla region. To submit an application to join the TAC, please email the Communities Assist Team at communities@scch.org.au or visit our website for more information www.scch.org.au/community/nowra-tenant-advisory-committee/

# IN THE **NEWS**

### **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS**

Do you have a plan in case a disaster strikes? If not then the EMBER program might be of assistance! Having a plan and preparing before an emergency or disaster is important to ensure you know how to keep yourself safe if an emergency occures. Flagstaff's EMBER program teaches individuals living with disability to prepare for bushfires and other natural disasters. Using simple language, formats and resources the program aims to support people with a disability to gain confidence in what to do when there is an emergency and to ensure they:

**PLAN** – Have an easy plan ready to guide them on what to do in case there is a natural emergency; and

**ACT** – If there is a bushfire, flood or other emergency – Take action and leave early.

**Download the EMBER APP!** The App allows individuals to store important information on phones or devices in case of evacuation. It includes what to bring, how to go, where to stay and who to contact. These items are important for individuals living with mobility and anxiety issues along with individuals who require medical appliances and life-sustaining medications. Download the EMBER App on your device or check out www.emberapp.com.au.

#### **RECYCLING**

Southern Cross Housing is working proactively with Shoalhaven City Council in a joint initiative to address incorrect recycling practices that are occurring in some SCH properties. The initiative will see Housing Officers working with tenants who have been identified by Council as contaminating recycling bins. This project involves an educational process and monitoring of recycling practices. Where improvements are not made, the recycling bin may be removed. You can find a guide to what goes in your yellow bin here www. shoalhaven.nsw.gov.au/For-Residents/Recycling-Waste/Reducing-Waste#section-1.

Additional educational programs will be implemented by SCH in partnership with Council throughout the year. These programs include:

- An opportunity for SCH tenants to tour Shoalhaven City Council recycling facilities.
- Provision of regular articles in the SCH Tenant Newsletter about the importance of recycling correctly.
- Distribution of information packs.

For more information, follow Council's Facebook page for a regular weekly Wednesday post on waste reduction and recycling www.facebook.com/shoalhavencitycouncil/

# SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE



This year's Scholarship program has closed with many deserving applicants receiving support to assist them with their educational pursuits. Lisa from the Shoalhaven High School and Teegan from the Communities Assist Team recently presented 11 students ranging from Year 7 to 12 with laptops, tablets and school uniforms. These items will enable the students to overcome barriers that are preventing them from achieving their educational goals.

On the 28th of July, the SCH's Chief Operational Officer Eric Coulter joined Teegan and Lisa to deliver laptops to the High School students and congratulate them personally for being approved for the Scholarship.

Keep an eye out in your emails later this year for when the next Scholarship round is open.



Pictured are Teegan (SCH) and Lisa (Shoalhaven High School)

### PROPERTY CARE PROGRAM PROMOTION

Lawn care can be more than just mowing and weeding, maintaining a lawn and landscaping takes dedication and hard work and allows you to be creative. Landscaping around your yard can give you a sense of pride and accomplishment, as well as bring added beauty to your lawn. SCH has launched a Property Care Recognition Program to recognise residents that have good property care in their front yards.

Over the next 12 months, your Housing Officer will be distributing 'Thank you' cards to residents that have been putting in the hard yards in the garden. Their names will then instantly go into a prize draw to win a \$50 Bunnings voucher! A winner will be announced each month and feature in our Tenant Newsletter. If you would like more information about this program, please contact your Housing Officer on 1300 757 885.

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# IN THE **NEWS**



# THRIVE TOGETHER EVENT (W)



The Shoalhaven City Council hosted the Thrive Together Fair on Wednesday 2 August 2022. The Fair was a great opportunity for people to connect with financial, housing, legal, government, physical and mental health and wellbeing support all in the one location.

The event included free food, performances from local musicians, access to health services, access to showers and washing facilities and plenty of giveaways.

SCH staff attended on the day and this to say:

"I found it a nice way to connect with other local community organisations and put a face to a name as we have interactions often but over the phone. Through networking I was able to find out more about what services organisations offer and how we can work together more efficiently".

"Of the residents that I had the pleasure to interact with, they were visibly delighted with the amount of information, freebies and services they were able to access on the day."

The Thrive Together Fair also marked the launch of SCH's and the Council's Path2Home resource which is known as 'Doing It Tough'. This is a directory containing information about welfare and support services in the Shoalhaven area. A digital version is available on the SCH website at scch.org.au.



Pictured is Daniel (SCH) at the SCH Stand at the Thrive Together Event

# **GLEBE SAFETY REPORT**



In July, as part of its Feeling Safe program, SCH undertook a safety audit of The Glebe, a residential area in Bega that is home to a number of SCH tenants. The safety audit involved a physical survey of the neighbourhood with tenants and local Police.

A number of safety concerns were identified in the area, most prominent was the poor street lighting in the neighbourhood.

The safety audit concludes a 6-month program which involved tenant consultation and community outreach to collect information that will guide strategies to improve safety. These strategies have been submitted for review with the view of being implemented in the coming 6 months.

Thank you to all those involved in this process, your input was vital and greatly appreciated.

#### SPOTLIGHT ON OUR ACCESS AND DEMAND TEAM

The Southern Cross Housing Access and Demand Team, as featured on the front cover, are responsible for reviewing and processing applications for Social and Affordable Housing as well as assisting people who are at risk of or who or are experiencing homelessness. The hard working team do this by delivering multiple support programs. Some of these programs include:

**Temporary Accommodation –** Short Term temporary crisis/ emergency accommodation to people that are experiencing homelessness or crisis/emergency situations.

Rent Choice Youth - Assists young people who are at risk of homelessness to access accommodation in the private rental

**Assertive Outreach -** Assists people who may not reach out to services for support while experiencing homelessness. Under this program our staff meet with people in community locations to help people applying for housing and temporary accommodation. Last month our team assisted approximately 32 people to access Temporary Accomodation.

**Together Home Program –** This program helps people that are experiencing long term homelessness and who are rough sleeping. Under the program rough sleepers are provided with permanent accommodation and wrap around support services.

**Start Safely –** This important program assists people who are at risk or experiencing homelessness due to Domestic/Family Violence. The program provides eligible applicants with the ability to access subsidised rent in the private rental market for a maximum of 3 years.

# **Policy** News

### **PET POLICY**

This newsletter's spotlight is on our pet policy, advising residents of the process for obtaining approval to have a pet, as well as residents obligations once approval has been granted.

SCH appreciates the value and health benefits of owning a pet. These benefits include increased opportunity for exercise and a reduction in loneliness and depression.

Before approval for a pet can be approved, the following must

- Residents must apply in writing to their local SCH office for permission to keep a pet, including signing a Terms of Conditions for Permission to Allow Pets at the Property Form. (This usually occurs prior to signing a lease).
- SCH will assess the property to ensure that it will be suitable/ appropriate for the pet.
- Evidence that the pet has been micro-chipped, vaccinated and desexed will be required.
- SCH will also consider a residents capacity to care for the pet and maintain their tenancy.
- Council requirements must be met, noting that the pet must not be a dangerous, menacing or a restricted dog.

Residents must ensure that their pet is restrained when staff or contractors attend a property to conduct an inspection or maintenance works.

Keeping a pet inside is allowed, however only if it is appropriate and does not adversely affect the property. Should any damage occur that is caused by a pet, the resident will be asked to pay for the costs incurred, including the need to arrange professional cleaning and pest control.

It is important that your neighbours are afforded peace, comfort, and privacy, therefore a pet must not be a nuisance or annoyance to neighbours, including excessive noise. It is important to note that should a breach occur, SCH will ask the tenant to remove the pet within 48 hours. Failure to abide will result in a breach of the tenancy agreement.

For further information on our Pet policy, it is available on our website at www.scch.org.au









# **Team** Update

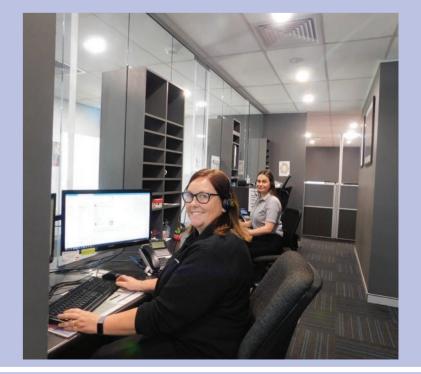
### **CENTRALISED PHONE TEAM**

Tenants who have called Southern Cross Housing on 1300 757 885 will have noticed a change in who is answering incoming calls. A new team has been formed to take calls and to assist with customer enquiries.

When calling SCH, please note that the new call team may pass your call through to a staff member's extension and request that you leave a voicemail if the call is not answered by the staff member you have asked for.

Many SCH staff have ongoing appointments throughout the day. They will always check their messages when they are back in the

If you have a number for SCH stored in your phone that isn't 1300 757 885, please go ahead and update the number now. All other numbers will soon be phased out.



# SCH Staff - Hot Seat 🔎



In this edition of our Newsletter, we sat down with two Southern Cross Housing staff members to ask some questions to get to know them a little better! Welcome to, the SCH Staff Hot Seat!

Name: Kylie

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

Two years. My role in Access and Demand varies between allocations, temporary accommodation and assisting with the Start Safely program.

### What is your favourite thing about SCH?

Definitely the people I work with...I love working with all of them.

### What is on your bucket list?

Travel through Europe, see Antarctica, see the Northern Lights, travel on the Hogwarts train through Scotland and go to Hobitton in New Zealand.





Name: Crystal

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

I have been working with Southern Cross Housing for almost four years now. My role is a Housing Officer which involves managing a portfolio of around 300 tenants, conducting routine inspections, checking rent arrears, referring tenants for support, talking with tenants about any issues they have, taking and acting on neighbour complaints and much more!

### What is the best piece of advice you have received?

Enjoy your time with your children while they are little. Embrace the mess and noise because one day the house will be clean and quiet and your heart will be empty!

# **Jobs & Training** News



### EAST NOWRA EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

Are you living in East Nowra or Bega Valley and struggling to find a job? SCH is calling for interest from residents that reside in East Nowra and Bega that are looking for casual, part-time or full time

Intensive case management services are available to twelve social housing residents in East Nowra and three in Bega Valley to help you gain long term sustainable employment. Southern Cross Housing will work intensively with you to understand and track your current work experience, goals and barriers to progress in your employment journey.

Each resident that volunteers for this free service will have access to funding for employment related expenses such as education, transport, medical expenses, clothing, tools and much more!

The pilot program will run for a period of 12 months with a goal of securing employment within 6 months depending on your circumstances. If you are interested in looking for work, please contact Communities Assist on 1300 757 885 or email communities@scch.org.au to book your initial consultation today.



# STATEMENT OF ATTAINMENT IN ESPRESSO COFFEE

Get yourself job ready for a career in hospitality with this awesome short course that will teach you how to prepare and serve an espresso coffee. The course will run on Mondays over three dates, 5, 12 and 19 September from 1pm to 7:30pm at Nowra TAFE, 140-160 Princes Highway, Bomaderry. It is government subsidised so you won't have to pay anything to complete the course. To enrol online follow this link https://online-enrolments.oneebs.tafensw.edu.au/Enrol/Process/ GetStarted/165/10905630 or contact TAFE NSW on 131 601.



# AGED CARE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



Are you considering a career in the Aged Care sector but have no idea where to begin? As Australia's population grows, so does the need for aged care workers. Lend an ear to some of the individuals in your care and you'll be amazed to hear a bit about their lives. Working with older Australians can offer you a whole new perspective on life too! If you want a career with excellent job prospects, look no further than Aged Care!

TAFE NSW is currently offering a number of amazing courses that will provide you with skills to confidently enter Aged Care services and begin a fulfilling career caring for members of society.

The following courses are fully subsidised meaning they are free

- High Support and Complex Skill Set
- Statement of Attainment in Introduction to Aged Care

Classes are delivered online and in person. Contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 or communities@sch.org.au to find out more about courses available to you.

# Supporting **YOU**



## LITERACY, HOMEWORK AND EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMS

The Smith Family helps children to get the most out of their education so they can create better futures for themselves.

The organisation offers a range of programs that support access to education and build financial literacy skills. The following programs are available in the Shoalhaven LGA.

#### **Nowra Neighbourhood Centre Learning Club**

Thursdays 3-5pm

Free homework assistance and support provided for students in Years 5-12. Come along and study in a friendly space with other Primary/High School students and our trained tutors at – 41 Worrigee Street, Nowra NSW 2541. Schools currently participating are Bomaderry High School, North Nowra Primary School, Nowra Primary School and Shoalhaven High School.

### **Certificate 1 in Financial Literacy (Year 10)**

Certificate I in Financial Services supports young people to gain skills that will enable them to successfully manage their money and make more informed financial choices. The program is made up of six units of competency, delivered over 10 hours of training.

Schools currently participating: Bomaderry High School, Nowra High School and Shoalhaven High School.

#### Saver Plus (18+)

Saver Plus is a 10 month financial education and matched savings program that assists people to improve their financial education and develop a savings habit for their own or their children's education costs. At the end of the program participants use their matched savings to purchase an education-related item. Eligibility criteria applies. For more information contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885.

#### NO INTEREST LOAN SCHEME (NILS)

The No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) offers people on low incomes, safe and affordable access to credit. The Scheme provides up to \$1500 for essential goods and services. The loans are interest free, there are no fees, and repayments are arranged over 12 to 18 months. For eligibility criteria please check out their website at goodshep.org.au/services/nils/. NILS cannot be used for cash, rent arrears, holidays, bills or debt consolidation. The loan funds are paid to the store or service provider.

Your local NILS provider is Anglicare at:

- Shoalhaven 74 Osborne Street
- Bega Valley-80 Auckland Street, Bega or 179 Imlay Street,
- Eurobodalla 1B/51 Vulcan Street, Moruya



### **CONCESSIONS AND REBATES FINANCIAL SUPPORT**

Did you know that the NSW Government offers more than 70 rebates and vouchers to help you save on everyday costs.

Savings include regional seniors travel cards, \$100 vouchers for children's activities, rebates to help families with their electricity costs, Stay NSW vouchers and Parents NSW vouchers.

The Service NSW website can help you find savings. To access the service you will need to complete the guestionnaire at the following:

questionnaire.costofliving.service.nsw.gov.au/questionnaire.

Alternatively, you can arrange a Savings Finder Assessment with a specialist. Contact the SCH Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 and they can make a referral for you to complete an assessment in person or over the phone.

# **PAYMENT PLANS WITH ENERGY PROVIDERS**



Are you finding it hard to pay your energy bill? You're not alone and as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, bill payments have become more stressful and challenging for many households.

Under NSW law, all electricity and gas retailers must establish payment plans or offer customers an extension of their payment deadlines. These plans are usually short term for the current bill, so retailers must also offer a customer assistance program for customers needing longer-term help.

If you receive income from Centrelink, you can make payments conveniently through the Centrepay program, a free voluntary payment system that deducts your payment from your income and directs it to your energy bill, so you don't have to worry about making regular repayments.

In addition to an energy payment plan, you might be eligible for other forms of help like Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) vouchers. Find out more at https://www.ewon.com.au/page/customer-resources/help-

# WHAT'S **ON Shoalhaven**



# HAVE YOUR SAY - SOUTHERN CROSS HOUSING **TENANT SURVEY**

At Southern Cross Housing we are committed to providing the best possible services for our residents and to improving our understanding of the service areas where we excel and where there are opportunities to improve.

Southern Cross Housing is working with the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA NSW) to deliver our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey. The survey is very important for Southern Cross Housing as it provides us with key information about the services we are providing to you.

Completing the survey is incredibly quick and easy! In the coming weeks you will be sent a link to the survey on your mobile phone. You may also receive the link via your email address, or for those that don't have email or a mobile phone, you will be sent a hard copy in the mail.

Please return the finished survey by 14th November 2022. By completing the survey we will enter you in to a prize draw where you could win one of three Woolworths Gift Cards each worth \$200.00. If you have any questions about completing the survey please call the Southern Cross Housing Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885.



# GO4FUN



Go4Fun is a fun program for kids that enables them to learn more about healthier living. It is a free program that focuses on making lifestyle changes as a family, encourages healthy eating habits and fitness and improves self-esteem in kids. Go4Fun takes place during school terms, usually after school. It's run by qualified health professionals, including dietitians and exercise physiologists.

Sessions run once a week for two hours, over a ten-week period. In the first hour, children and adults learn about healthy eating for the whole family. In the second hour, children enjoy game-based activities, while the adults discuss how to work on better health at home.

As Go4Fun is a family focused program, a carer must come to every session. Each child receives a Go4Fun welcome pack and at the end of the program you'll receive a report showing all the great changes your child has made to their health. Register your child today via the link https://go4fun.com.au/register/.

# **MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING**



Do you know someone dealing with Mental Health issues or are you interested in learning how to support someone? Having Mental Health First Aid skills means that you can assist someone developing a Mental Health problem or experiencing a Mental Health crisis and make a real difference to your community.

Shoalhaven City Council is funding Mental Health First Aid courses. The courses will teach participants practical skills to enable them to support someone who is feeling suicidal. This is a great opportunity to make a real difference to people in your community.

The course is taking place on Friday, 23 September 2022 at St Georges Basin Community Centre from 9:45am - 2:15pm. Contact the trainer via email suzannefreund@outlook.com or mobile 0421 279 146 to register.

# FREE HEALTH CHECKS FOR CHILDREN



Monday 26th September, CareSouth 5-9 Enterprise Avenue, South

- **Teeth** Comprehensive oral exam and teeth clean including fluoride treatment.
- **Ears** Thorough ear function and hearing assessment
- **Speech** Speech/language screenings to detect communication difficulties.
- **OT** Assessment fine motor coordination, gross motor and self-care skills to determine the need for further evaluation.

Primary Health – Physical, development and phychological health and wellbeing screening offered to those in out-of-home care only. Book online www.bookitlive.net/caresouth or phone 1300 554 260.



# WHAT'S **ON Eurobodulla, Bega & Snowy Monaro**



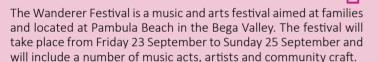
#### **REGROWTH YOUTH THEATRE**

Registrations are now open for Regrowth's free theatre and creative storytelling workshops. Workshops are for young people aged 10-17 that are interested in theatre/performing arts or work experience opportunities in production, film making and community leadership. Workshops will take place at:

- Broulee SLSC 26th September 1st October
- Narooma Bend & Sip 4th October 8th October

All registrations can be completed at the following link: https://linktr.ee/regrowth workshops.

# VOLUNTEER WITH EUROBODALLA LANDCARE



If you have some spare time in the lead up to the festival why not consider volunteering? Wanderer Festival is seeking a fun and diverse mix of people to help bring the festival to life. The opportunities will fall between 12-26 September. Activities will include sewing, making pom poms, painting signs, knitting, and making flags. In exchange for working 12 hours, you will receive a full 3-day admission pass to the festival.

If this is something you are interested in, follow this link to apply https://wanderer.com.au/apply/.

# **BIRD-FRIENDLY GARDENING TALK AND PLANT** SWAP

Celebrate National Bird Week (17 to 23 October) with an informative talk from Eurobodalla Council's Natural Resources Team about bird-friendly gardens. Learn what makes a garden bird-friendly and how you can use native plants and sustainable garden practices at home. As well as attracting native birds, bees and butterflies. Having native plants in your garden provides yearround colour, requires less maintenance and uses less water.

People who attend the gardening talk can also bring environmental weeds from their gardens for identification, get advice on control techniques, and swap the weed for a free native plant. Visit Council's south coast weeds page to learn more about environmental weeds in Eurobodalla. Booking via phone 4474 133 or online https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/bird-friendly-gardening-talkand-plant-swap-moruya-tickets-371934575327.

- Moruya 17 October, 10:30am 11:30am, Moruya Library
- Narooma 17 October, 1:30pm 2:30pm, Narooma Library
- Batemans Bay 18 October, 3pm 4pm, Batemans Bay Library







# TENANT **NEWS**



Aged 97, George London has led a life full of love, music and travel. Now residing in North Nowra in a Southern Cross Housing home, George has a great appreciation for the life he has lived.

Born in London in 1925, George was only 13 years of age when WWII broke out. He was just 16 when he joined the London Supplementary Fire Service which operated during the bombing of London in 1942. At age 18, George decided to join the British

George worked as a chef in the Navy with his service taking him across the globe to Australia. At the end of the war he was awarded a medal for his services in providing special diets for repatriated ex-Australian prisoners of war who had been captured by the Japanese. George was also awarded three medals by the British Royal Navy for his services. But perhaps his greatest achievement throughout the war was meeting the love of his life, Helena.

It was whilst serving in Australia that George took the opportunity on a program for servicemen to spend time with an Australian family. It was during a christmas stay with the family in Ashfield that he met Helena who was boarding with the family. On one special evening he was walking down the street singing christmas carols with friends when he noticed his hands were engulfed in Helena's. The pair went on to get married in 1946 and have three children. This year marks their 76th wedding anniversary.





After the war, George was discharged from the Navy and continued with his culinary skills working in restaurants in Sydney. He then decided to pursue his music ambitions and worked for the Music House of Australia and then went on to open his own music shop. George was able to share his love of music as a teacher and taught up until he was 70.

George is a passionate musician and has mastered the piano, organ, piano accordion and vibraphone. Throughout his music career he has played at the Royal Albert Hall in London, the Sydney Opera House and numerous clubs in Sydney. He has written church hymns that are now used in Indonesia, written sonatas for other musicians and even directed a concert that raised funds for a local charity. Nowadays George prefers to record music with his friends at a studio in his home. George is still active in the community, volunteering for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Bomaderry by writing the newsletter for the club. George also recently performed at the Shoalhaven's Thrive Together Fair.

George has lived in social housing for 14 years and is very grateful for the house he has. When asked what advice he would pass on he said, "Love everybody no matter what". Thank you, George for sharing your amazing life story and for being a great tenant.

If you've lived an amazing life or even have an interesting story that you'd like to share, contact the Communities Assist Team on 1300 757 885 to feature in the next edition of the SCH newsletter.

# YOUR STORIES

#### **CATHERINE - SHOALHAVEN**

Two years ago, \*Catherine\* (actual name withheld to protect privacy) was in the private rental market and most of her income was being spent on paying her rent. As a result, Catherine had little money left to cover her day-to-day expenses and had to rely on charities to assist with food and bills.

Catherine decided to apply for social housing and was approved by Southern Cross Housing for a transitional property (a property which provides temporary housing for a short time whilst a more permanent housing option is found).

Her move into temporary housing was supported by Rosa Coordinated Care. Catherine moved into the temporary housing in 2022 and was recently offered a more permanent social housing home by SCH.

Since acquiring the property with SCH, Catherine has been able to make some positive changes in her life. Catherine has found that as well as being able to afford rent she is also able to have money left over for living expenses. This has meant that Catherine is able to do her food shopping with less stress.

Catherine has found SCH maintenance very helpful and commented that, "SCH maintenance services have always assisted her in a timely manner, even ringing her to see if a handy man can come out to see if anything additional needs to be fixed or replaced". The many improvements that Catherine has been able to make also contributed towards Catherine being able to resume care for her three children.

Catherine and her son have also been approved in the 2022 Scholarship program for laptops to assist with their studies. Catherine has found SCH very supportive saying, "My Housing Officer has been wonderful to deal with and nothing has been too big or too much to ask for". We appreciate the work and commitment Catherine has shown in her tenancy and congratulate her on the positive outcomes she is being rewarded with.

#### JOHN - EUROBODALLA

\*John\* (actual name withheld to protect privacy) is a SCH tenant who was struggling with property maintenance for over two and a half years during which time he was supported by HASI. SCH attempted to assist with lawn maintenance however hazards were identified and all support stopped.

John's Housing Officer worked hard to identify avenues to pursue in completing the maintenance and was able to work with Frank from our grounds crew to check the property for hazards. Frank was able to confirm the area was hazard free and worked hard with the grounds crew in July to do a major clean-up, including mowing and tree removal.

John now has a NDIS package in place which allows for regular maintenance of his yard and cleaning in his home.

This was a great result for John and SCH. Well done to all those involved!

