

# NEWS LETTER

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD



JUNE 2011

BETTER LIVES, STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HOUSING

ABN: 32565549842

## SGCH Big Day Out 2011 – Raising funds for Queensland

On Wednesday 20 April 2011, St George Community Housing (SGCH) tenants enjoyed our annual tenant 'Big Day Out' at Sydney Wildlife World, Darling Harbour.

This event was a free, fun, family day out available to all SGCH tenants.

Following the recent devastation to flood ravaged Queensland and areas affected by Cyclone Yasi, the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) expressed their desire to fund raise through this event, on behalf of those affected.

Over 360 tenants attended the day and raised funds for the cause. A total of \$200 was received on the day. Additionally, every dollar was matched by SGCH, resulting in a total donation of \$400.

This is the first time SGCH tenants have run such a fundraiser and it was powerful to see members of the TAG pulling together to support other Australians who are going through a hard time.

A great day was had by all, and it was encouraging to see so many smiling faces and happy children enjoying this fun holiday activity.



## Australia's Biggest Morning Tea

On Wednesday 25 May, SGCH's Tenant Advisory Group held a sausage sizzle in support of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea.

This event was held in central Hurstville and was designed to raise much needed funds for cancer research, prevention and support services provided by the Cancer Council of Australia.

A special thanks go to Hurstville Council, Fit For a King Catering Services and Padstow Food Services for their support of this fundraising event. A total of \$547.60 was raised.



If you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please go to: [www.biggestmorningtea.com.au](http://www.biggestmorningtea.com.au)

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For more information about anything you have read in this edition of our newsletter, please contact your Housing Manager [firstname.surname@sgch.com.au](mailto:firstname.surname@sgch.com.au) or Rowa Omari, SGCH Community Development Officer [rowa.omari@sgch.com.au](mailto:rowa.omari@sgch.com.au) or Ph: 9585 1499 (ext 178)

## Essential Loans Scheme and Digital Connect

'Digital Connect' and our 'Essentials Loan Scheme' were recently launched to expand our Housing Plus product and services portfolio. To date 30 tenants now have access to computers and household goods they otherwise wouldn't have. A number of these loans are expected to be repaid by November 2011. At this time tenants will be invited to apply for these Housing Plus products. Special thanks to TAG members Hanie, Kim and Kay for being part of the selection panel.

## Better IT

SGCH moved across to a new software system on Tuesday 14 June. We will endeavour to minimise any adverse impacts on service that may result as we adjust to this new system. We are excited about the introduction of this new software, but do ask for your patience during this transitional period.

## Rent Review

**Every year SGCH reviews all rent values, tenant income and household details in order to ensure that tenants are assessed at the correct rental amount.**

All tenants should have received a letter from SGCH in the first week of June advising of this rent review process. Included with the letter was a Rent Review Booklet.

Please ensure that you complete and return this booklet with the income documentation requested by 12 August 2011. This will enable your eligibility for rebated rent to be assessed in a timely manner. Late returns may affect rental subsidies and could result in you being placed on market rent.

If you have any questions or require further assistance, please contact your Housing Manager on 9585 1499 at the Hurstville office or 9521 8950 at the Sutherland office.



## Congratulations Luke Sowter

**St George Community Housing would like to congratulate Luke Sowter from Hurstville Grove.**

Luke was recently awarded the University Visionstream prize at the University of Wollongong. He was chosen for this award based on his outstanding seminar presentation on Thesis writing.

Luke was highly commended for his work and was awarded first prize of \$1000.

Well done Luke!  
Keep up the great work.  
We are proud of you!



## SAVE Projects



Sustainable Action Values Everyone (SAVE) aims to provide tenants with the knowledge and skills required to make greener choices through low or no cost, easy actions.

This initiative is part of the SAVE Program - a partnership between Housing NSW and the Canterbury, Sydney, Marrickville and Randwick local Councils. It is supported by the NSW Government's Environmental Trust.

SGCH will be participating in this project by working with tenants from Sydney City, Namatjira and Marrickville.

Over the next 12 months we will be building community gardens and working alongside tenants to help them reduce their food, electricity and water bills.

## Tenant Survey

Thank you to those who have already participated in SGCH's Tenant Satisfaction Survey. This was one opportunity for you to provide feedback to us about our service and let us know how we can improve.

Given the size of our tenant population, and the importance of objective data collection and rigorous analysis, our 2011 tenant survey will be managed by Sweeney Research. **We expect to receive survey results at the end of July.**

## Kids Easter Show competition winners

Congratulations to the lucky winners of our kids Easter Show competition: Victoria of Canterbury, Jia of Peakhurst, Mariam of Kingsgrove and Ayah of Berala.

Thanks to everyone else who entered the competition. We received some fantastic work – it made it very hard to choose a winner!



## Free help to save power

SGCH tenants are invited to save power and money by taking up the offer of a free home power assessment and Power Savings Kit.

The NSW Government's Home Power Savings Program is available to 220,000 eligible households across the state and provides a home assessment from a trained energy expert and a Power Savings Kit to kick-start savings.

The free Power Savings Kit, worth over \$200, contains a stand-by saver power board, energy efficient light bulbs, a low-flow showerhead, shower timer, tap aerator, draught-proofing strips and door snakes.

These items are fully installed by the energy expert as part of the free assessment.

SGCH is encouraging all tenants to sign up to this free program to beat rising energy prices and cut carbon pollution.

All you need to do to take part is to call **1300 662 416** to ascertain if you are eligible for a home power assessment, or visit [www.savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp](http://www.savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp) for more information.

## From the CEO



It's hard to believe we are already half way through 2011! So much has taken place in our organisation this year and yet, we still have many exciting things ahead of us.

Since our last newsletter our SGCH team has been busy working on so many foundational projects.

We are currently in the process of transitioning across to a new and better software system. This software will rapidly enhance the efficiency and sophistication of our service, meaning we can better respond to your needs. Specifically, by decreasing the time Housing Managers have to spend on administrative tasks, we increase the time we are able to devote to you!

In other news – we are relocating! After experiencing such rapid growth in recent years, we have reached the point where it is essential for us to relocate to a new office where we have more space, and are better able to serve you, our tenants.

As part of our new premises we will have a large meeting room in which TAG can meet and other tenant forums can be held. There's also easier access for those who are less mobile or in wheelchairs. The other good news is - we aren't moving far - only down the road to Humphreys Lane, Hurstville in early September 2011.

Prior to this time, we will keep you well informed about all aspects of the move and how this may affect you. Our intention is to make this relocation as smooth as possible, and to minimise service disruption. We are greatly looking forward to moving into our new offices and we are confident that you too will enjoy our new home.

Finally, I am so encouraged by the effort members of the TAG have made in recent months to give so generously of their time to raise funds for those who need our support. Through our 'Biggest Morning Tea' and Big Day Out events, we were able to provide much needed support to the Cancer Council, and those affected by the Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi. Your compassion for others and determination to help is unwavering, and I am truly touched by the valuable contributions you make throughout the year.

In light of this, we look forward to engaging with you further to get your feedback about how we can improve, and deliver better services to meet your needs. Over the next coming months, members of the SGCH team will be out and about, meeting with you to "hear your voice". Please see this an opportunity to have your say. Keep your eyes open for more information about upcoming meetings in your area over the next coming months.

Warmest wishes  
**Nazha Saad, Chief Executive Officer**



## Good Neighbour Competition

Do you have a great neighbour? Do you want to show them how much you appreciate them?

If so, vote for your neighbour in our "Good Neighbour Competition".

All you need to do is write to us and tell us what it is that makes your neighbour so special and why it is that you appreciate them.

Please address your letter to Rowa Omari or email [Rowa.omari@sgch.com.au](mailto:Rowa.omari@sgch.com.au)

by 1 August 2011.



Win  
a \$100  
grocery  
voucher

## Rent Incentive

If your rent is in advance at the end of each month you will automatically qualify to go into a draw to win a grocery voucher to the value of \$100. Congratulations to our latest winners:

Terryann of Narwee, Karen of Kirrawee, Vlasta of Riverwood, Jian of Narwee

## A reminder about rent payments:

If at any stage you find that you are unable to make upcoming rent payments, please contact your Housing Manager before you fall into arrears. Informing your Housing Manager early and negotiating a plan for getting back on track will prevent SGCH from needing to take legal action to recover arrears or proceed towards other action. SGCH is committed to working with tenants to help them to sustain their tenancy.

## SGCH Computer Training



St George Community Housing tenants have been given the opportunity to develop their computer skills through participation in a specially designed course at St George TAFE.

This course will give tenants a chance to learn more about the internet and how they can use their computer for work or leisure. Prior to this course being designed, TAG members were consulted about what exactly they wanted to learn and achieve through their participation.

Topics addressed will include: basic computer skills, email, Google, Facebook and more.

SGCH endeavours to assist tenants to access programs that will provide valuable life skills and training.

If you would like to make suggestions about a course or program that could assist you, please contact SGCH and ask to speak to Rowa Omari, Community Development Officer.



## Home Winter Fire Safety Tips

Use this simple safety checklist to help keep your home fire safe this winter:

- Have a written fire escape plan and practice it regularly.
- Never leave cooking unattended.
- Check electric blankets for damage or any frayed cords before using.
- Keep curtains, tablecloths, clothing and bedding well away from portable heaters.
- Clean the lint filter of your dryer every time you use it.
- Use only one appliance per power point, and switch off appliances when not in use.
- Extinguish any candles or open flames before going to bed.
- Store matches or lighters in a secure place where children cannot access them.

## Carers Forum

**Do you care for a family member, neighbour or friend?**

**Do you access services for carers on a regular basis?**

**Are you interested in sharing your thoughts about what additional support and services carers really need?**

If you answered **YES** to these questions then please come along to the Carer's Forum.

**When:**

10.00am to 1.00pm,  
Tuesday 28 June 2011

**Venue:**

Hurstville Entertainment Centre,  
16 MacMahon Street, Hurstville 2220

This forum is also open to any tenant who may like to find out more information about carers and the various community support services that are available.