

# NEWS LETTER

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD



MARCH 2011

BETTER LIVES, STRONGER COMMUNITIES THROUGH AFFORDABLE, QUALITY HOUSING

ABN: 32565549842

## 2011 SGCH Educational Bursary Awards Ceremony

2011 has been the biggest year for the Student Education Bursary Scheme, thanks to the St George Foundation and Kip McGrath Education Centres St George.

The SGCH Education Bursary Scheme commenced in 2005 and was designed to assist tenants by easing the financial burden of educating their children and/or themselves. SGCH encourages education as a way of building community capacity, leading to future social and economic engagement in society. To date, 360 tenants have received bursaries, and a total value of \$236,000 has been awarded.

This year, SGCH was fortunate enough to be in a position where we could offer additional bursaries to our tenants, thanks to \$30,000 of funds raised by the St George Foundation at the Kogarah Mayoral Ball. Every year, the St George Foundation helps Australian children and young people by raising funds to support programs which improve the lives of disadvantaged communities throughout Australia.

SGCH also received a generous donation of \$52,000 from Kip McGrath Educational Centres for tutoring packages in several locations.



Kip McGrath Education Centres provide tuition to both primary and high school students in all areas and levels of Maths and English. SGCH was proud to award 20 tutoring scholarships to tenants across the Sydney metropolitan area. These grants, together with our own contribution, were used to fund the 2011 Student Education

Bursary scheme. As a result, this year, the total value of bursary awards exceeded a massive \$65,000!

Tutoring packages and bursary awards were presented to students at a ceremony held on 17 February 2011 at Hurstville Civic Theatre.

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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 via Ph: 9585 1499 (ext 178) or email: [rowa.omari@sgch.com.au](mailto:rowa.omari@sgch.com.au)

## Digital Connect

SGCH is working with Work Ventures to provide 30 lucky tenants the opportunity to purchase a home computer for less than half price (i.e. \$300).

Tenants will have the opportunity to pay this off via 24 repayments of \$12.50 per fortnight.

This package will include:

- A fully refurbished home computer (inclusive of Microsoft XP software)
- Introduction to computer training
- A minimum 12 months worth of wireless broadband internet usage
- 12 months warranty
- 12 months of free telephone support

Applications close Friday 8 April 2011. To apply, please contact SGCH and ask for Rowa (who will supply you with an application form).

## From the CEO



It has been a rapid three months since we last contacted you. In the past period we have:

- Housed our 1,000th tenant since Nation Building dwellings began to be handed over to us in April 2010
- Accepted over 300 dwellings as a result of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Program
- Awarded 75 student education bursaries and 20 tutorial packages to our tenants
- Watched our tenants proudly support the St George Illawarra Dragons as Guards of Honour
- Commenced training on the "Better IT" software that we intend to implement across the organisation from 9 May 2011
- Trained our staff in the new Residential Tenancy Act

Each of these events is significant in its own right, but to know all these events have occurred in just one quarter makes me feel that time has passed by at a rapid pace!

The rest of the year will see us complete the remaining Nation Building dwellings and acquire a further 300 properties. We certainly have our work ahead of us, and much to look forward to.

Likewise, we have much to celebrate! I recently had the pleasure of attending our 2011 Bursary Award Ceremony and left feeling greatly humbled by both the impact of our work, and the spirit of our tenants. Speeches by tenants, Byron Geddes and Stefanie Allen were heart warming and reinforced the passion that we at SGCH have to see SGCH flourish and grow. Whilst rapid expansion has meant numerous challenges for our business, it has also meant incredible opportunities for us to support our tenants further in their educational and life pursuits.

We are extremely proud of our Bursary Scheme and we look forward to continually expanding our Housing Plus services to support you further.

Following the Bursary Ceremony our General Manager – Property Services, John Engeler said, "It is times like these when you wish you could bottle up the emotion in the room, and keep it with you as a reminder of just how important our service is to so many people".

We are truly proud of tenants, and we thank those of you who attended our Ceremony for being such a remarkable inspiration to us. Your determination, resilience and passion inspires us to work harder to serve you better! We look forward to being of service to you in the year ahead.

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



## SGCH Essentials No Interest Loan Scheme

SGCH believes that tenants should have access to essential household goods (not just white goods). The Essentials No Interest Loan Scheme seeks to provide eligible SGCH tenants with a loan of up to \$1,000 (on fair and reasonable terms) so they can purchase essential household goods including: washing machines, dryers, fridges, freezers, televisions, microwaves, heaters, vacuum cleaners, computers, DVD players, video players and furniture.

**Applications close Friday 8 April 2011.**

For more information or for an application form, please contact our office on 9585 1499.

## Sutherland office now open

SGCH has now opened an office at Stapleton Avenue, Sutherland. Sutherland Shire tenants can visit the office Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9am – 4.30pm and Wednesday 1pm – 4.30pm. Please make sure you make an appointment if you wish to see your Housing Manager.

## 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 the following winners from last year:

Kim of Homebush, Jodi of Gynea, John of Hurstville, Yasmin & Enid of Riverwood.

## Celebration of a milestone 1,000 new tenants since April 2010

SGCH would like to celebrate our fantastic progress with the Nation Building Economic Stimulus projects.

As of February, we can proudly say that we have housed our 1,000th tenant since Nation Building dwellings began to be handed over to us in April 2010!

Congratulations to our 1,000th tenant, Regine from Kirrawee.

To celebrate this milestone Regine received a \$200 Myer gift voucher and lovely bunch of flowers from SGCH.

Easter

WIN

Kids, do you want to win tickets to the Easter Show for you and your family?



Draw us a picture about what Easter means to you, or write us a letter explaining why you want tickets to this year's Easter Show. It's that simple!

Send your letters or artwork by Friday 1 April 2011 to:



St George Community Housing  
Attention: Rowa Omari  
PO Box 348, Hurstville BC NSW 1481.

All entries must include your Name, Address and Age.



The Easter Show runs from 14 – 27 April 2011.

## SGCH's Byron Geddes awarded Hurstville City Council's Young Sportsman of the Year for 2011

St George Community Housing is very proud of our tenant Byron Geddes. At just 15 years of age Byron has been awarded the Hurstville City Council Young Sportsman of the Year award for 2011.

Byron is a student at Endeavour Sports High School and since year 7 has been an active member of the Student Representative Council.

He has a love for sports and leadership, especially when it has anything to do with Basketball. Byron is a regular referee for the St George Basketball Association and has spent up to 4 nights per week refereeing at the Basketball stadium over the last 4 years.

On numerous occasions parents, coaches and visitors have expressed their appreciation of Byron's commitment to the game to various members of the Basketball Association.

In 2009 and 2010 Byron committed to refereeing the St George Basketball Association's Sydney Junior Championship. Last year Byron also decided to try Rugby League refereeing, as this was his initial ambition.

He was unable to referee Rugby League because he was under 14 years of age. However, as a testament to Byron's determination, as soon as he turned 14 he enrolled himself in a short course at St George Leagues Club which gave him the necessary training and qualifications to referee the sport. He has since done this for a season, and looks forward to refereeing once more when the Rugby League season commences.

Through dedication, training and encouragement, Byron makes a positive impact in the lives and attitudes of children in the basketball community.



Byron Geddes with mother Corinna Peters, and Councillor Philip Sansom, Mayor Hurstville City Council

He is passionate about leadership and determined to encourage other young people to pursue their dreams – especially, other children living in community housing. Byron is renowned for his approachable attitude and willingness to assist others.

SGCH is extremely proud of Byron's achievements and we wish him all the best in his future endeavours! Well done Byron!

## SGCH Big Day Out to Sydney Wildlife Park

This year, SGCH's Big Day Out (BDO) will be located at Sydney Wildlife World, Darling Harbour on 20 April 2011.

This is a free, fun family day out for 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 fundraise on behalf of those affected.

Every dollar that is raised/donated on this day will be matched by SGCH, and used to support those who are suffering.

Please come along to this event and support this worthy cause! This event is free, but any donations will be greatly appreciated! To register, please contact Rowa Omari on 9585 1499 (ext 178) or email rowa.omari@sgch.com.au no later than 4 April 2011.

Raising money for QLD floods

## Rent payments

Please ensure you identify yourself when paying rent via the internet, through the post or at the bank.

When paying rent at the bank, it is essential that you use your bank deposit book which includes your pre-encoded, four digit bank agent number.

When paying rent via the internet, please ensure you insert your name and bank agent number in the 'Reference' field.

If you are paying rent via money order or cheque you need to include your name, address and bank agent number on the back of the documentation.

## Need to call SGCH?

We have made our phone system even easier to use. Please call (02) 9585 1499, press 1 for repairs and maintenance, press 2 for housing applications, or dial the extension number of the person whom you wish to speak to.

Our office is open from 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday.

If you need to contact us for urgent matters outside of these times, please call 0419 406 126.

## A security reminder

Please ensure you always check identity documents before letting anyone into your home.

SGCH was recently made aware of the theft of hot water systems from a number of new Nation Building properties. If you're ever unsure about a contractor arriving at your residence, contact us so we can advise whether the contractor's visit has been arranged by us.

## SGCH tenants selected as

# Guards of Honour at Charity Shield game

On Sunday 13 February 2011, the St George Dragons played the traditional Charity Shield match against the South Sydney Rabbitohs at ANZ stadium.

At this event 11 children from SGCH had the honour of being selected as Guards of Honour for St George Illawarra Dragons as they made their way onto the field.

Our Guards of Honour did a fantastic job of proudly representing SGCH. Each child was pleased to be part of the traditional rivalry between the clubs, and proud to stand alongside the mighty Dragons!

The Charity Shield commenced in 1982 and so too did the tradition of supporting local charities and causes. In 2011, all proceeds



from the Charity Shield will support re-building communities impacted by the Queensland floods and Cyclone Yasi.

Many thanks to the St George Foundation for giving our kids this unforgettable experience!

## 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 call 1300 662 416 to ascertain if you are eligible for a home power assessment, or visit [savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp](http://savepower.nsw.gov.au/freehelp) for more information.



## Better IT

For some years now we have been aware of the need to improve our internal Information Technology systems. In July 2010 we signed a contract with the Australian company *Technology One Limited* for the supply and implementation of software that is designed especially to meet SGCH's needs.

Since July 2010 we have been designing, refining and configuring this software to

ensure it gives us the capabilities we need to efficiently manage our assets and tenant data. SGCH staff are currently being trained in the new system and we anticipate our software will be ready to 'Go Live' from 9 May 2011.

SGCH endeavours to minimise the impact on service which may result as we transition onto a new system. We will be sure to advise you, should we expect any disruptions to our service.

We are greatly excited about the introduction of this new system. We anticipate it will rapidly enhance the efficiency and sophistication of our service, meaning we can better respond to your needs!