

NEWSLETTER

ST GEORGE COMMUNITY HOUSING LTD



MARCH 2009

WINNER OF 2008 NSW AWARDS IN COMMUNITY HOUSING FOR OVERALL EXCELLENCE

Thank you SGCH

My circumstances were such that at 23, I was a single mother pregnant with my third child and living in a refuge. My pleas with Department of Housing fell on deaf ears and the closer my due date neared, the more disheartened I became, until one day I received a most welcome call from St George Community Housing, offering me a house. I accepted and 2 days later I gave birth.

That was 8 years ago.

It meant so much more to me than just affordable housing. It gave me and my children a sense of security that we had never known before. St George and its staff have always handled any issues that I raise, with respect and the treatment and service has always been professional and friendly.



Ms Renee Tata-Mulholland and her family

“I still feel a sense of security that most families have not known.”

I am now married and expecting our 6th child. SGCH allows me to be a “stay at home mum” whilst my husband works, and though we struggle at

times, like most families trying to cope with the rental crisis, I still feel a sense of security that most families have not known.

Minister's Visit

The Hon. David Lawrence BORGES, Minister for Housing, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Member for Granville, Minister for Western Sydney recently visited one of our new properties at Georges River Rd Jannalli. During the visit the tenants had the opportunity to share some morning tea and show the minister around their new homes. Thank you to all the tenants who attended it was an enjoyable morning.



Tenants from Georges River Rd, Jannalli

Highlights



From the CEO

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From the Chair

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Eco Wise

Pg4

**St George
Community Housing**

Suite 1, Level 3, 8 Crofts Ave
Hurstville NSW 2220

Phone: 02 9585 1499

Fax: 02 9585 1564

Email: [email@](mailto:email@stgeorgecommunityhousing.org.au)

stgeorgecommunityhousing.org.au

Website: www.sgch.com.au

ABN: 32565549842

White Goods Loans Scheme

The White Goods No-Interest Loans that were offered to tenants have now been paid off! Congratulations to those tenants for their prompt payments.

Funds are now available so if you are interested in applying or would like further information please contact our office.

Closing date 1st April 2009

Mutual Exchange

The mutual exchange list is available in the SGCH office, web page or by phoning our office and requesting one to be mailed to your home. This list provides information regarding properties that are available for mutual exchange.

For details on how to list your property on the mutual exchange list please call our office on 9585 1499.

Australasian Housing Award for Excellence in HM Practice 2008.

Congratulations to the team at St George Community Housing, Housing NSW and Office of Community Housing for their fantastic efforts and hard work to achieve the Australasian Housing Award for Excellence in Housing Management Practice 2008.

Interim Common Access Strategy which is a partnership between St George Community Housing, the Office of Community Housing and Housing NSW.

Exciting announcement about new funding for more new homes!

Over the past few months, both the Commonwealth and State Governments have agreed to work together to provide much needed funds to improve the Social Housing sector.

Both Public and Community Housing providers have been identified as important partners in the growth, with governments also wanting to improve housing for Indigenous people and for those members of our community who are at risk of becoming homeless. This is in addition to recent programs aimed at increasing Affordable Housing for key workers in the local community. This is great news for SGCH and our clients

as it presents an opportunity to expand our services to an even greater number of people whose housing needs are not being met by the private market.

On 3 February 2009, the Commonwealth Government further announced that \$6.388 billion has been allocated over the next four years to fund the construction of 20,000 new dwellings, which are scheduled to be completed by 2010. This is part of both governments' policies to help stimulate the economy.

We will let you know in future newsletters about SGCH's responses in these important areas.

Student Education BURSARY

Commonwealth Bank



Commonwealth Bank Hurstville Branch Awards SGCH with \$10,000 towards the Student Education Bursary.

Late last year, St George Community Housing was awarded \$10,000 for support towards the student education bursary.

Each year the demand for extra funds is increasing with families needing extra financial support towards education. This year SGCH received 174 applications which is a record number of applications received.

The Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA) Staff Community Fund provides a tax-effective way for employees of CBA to financially support community groups that aim to improve the health and wellbeing of Australian children. The Fund was established in 1917 to provide cot's for infants after World War 1. It has since developed to provide funding for a whole range of children's charities.

SGCH was successful in receiving \$10,000 towards the 2009 Education Bursary Award. The Bursary assists tenants by easing the financial burden of educating their children and/or continuing education themselves and as a way of building community capacity.

Applications for Bursary Scheme closed and the winners were announced at the ceremony in February 2009.

Colour In and WIN!

Enter our colouring in competition for children aged up to 12 years and you could win Easter Show Tickets for you and your family. So Hop to it!

Simply colour in the picture, fill in your details and send it back to SGCH by 20/3/2009.

There are 5 prizes to be won!
If you require more colouring templates please contact SGCH for more to be mailed to you.



SGCH FREE BIG DAY OUT

Sydney Aquarium- Darling Harbour

April 2009- SGCH would like to invite all our tenants to join us at Sydney Aquarium for a free fun family day out.

Please contact Rowa Omari on 9585 1499 to register and book NOW.



FREE
SYDNEY
AQUARIUM

Green Christmas Celebrations



Members from the Chinese Tenant Group and the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) joined together for a Green Christmas Celebration.

Representatives from Holroyd City Council facilitated an "Eco WISE" session for the tenants to get a better understanding of sustainable living. The theme for the picnic day was Green Christmas and the tenants participated in games and activities to learn how to become more environmentally aware.

Tenants participated by bringing along something from their homes that they no longer wanted, or had never used something that someone else might like.

These gifts were put under a tree and every tenant received a small gift to take home.

We also held nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice Chair on the Tenancy Advisory Group (TAG). Kim Sowter has been appointed Chairperson of TAG & she will take over the position from Hanie Ayyad. We would like to thank Hanie for her work and involvement as Chairperson with TAG over the past three years.

Leslie Fuller was re elected as Vice Chair. We wish both tenants the best of luck in making TAG a success in the years to come.

The day was a great success and thanks to everyone who attended.

From the Chair



I'm proud and honoured to be your new Chairman, and look forward to working with you and your families throughout 2009. 2009 will be a difficult year,

as the world comes to grip with recession and economic downturn.

To our tenants and their families, I will do whatever I can, together with my colleagues, to ensure that St George continues looking after you in the best possible way during this period.

To our loyal and dedicated staff, your efforts in ensuring that St George delivers good outcomes for our tenants are appreciated and valued. I've every confidence in you continuing to deliver these outcomes under Nazha's leadership.

As you are probably aware, your former Chairman Tony Ho resigned after 6 years to pursue other interests. I extend my thanks and appreciation to Tony for his honourable leadership and substantial contribution to the organisation over the years, and wish him and his family well.

I also thank Bill Chant and Sam Lawrence for their substantial contributions as directors over the last 4 to 5 years. They leave with our best wishes and appreciation.

At the recent Annual General Meeting, Karen Walsh and Beryl Truong were elected as new directors while Geoff Turnbull was elected after being appointed on a casual vacancy basis. Together they bring a wealth of experience in housing, social justice, human resources and finance. I welcome them to our board, and am confident they will serve you well.

Steve Kouris, Chairman

From the CEO



Firstly, I'd like to welcome our new Chairperson Steve Kouris, who has been on the Board for the past three years and has a strong social justice and legal background and also to Natasha Bernabei who is the new Deputy Chair. As well, a special welcome to the new board members Karen Walsh, Beryl Truong and Geoff Turnbull.

The Senior Management team, staff and I are looking forward to working with the new Board under Steve's leadership.

Late last year SGCH won an Australasian Housing Award for Excellence in Practice for the Interim Common Access Strategy partnership with Housing NSW Central Sydney Division and the Office of Community Housing. This award recognizes the hard work of the team in developing a more streamlined approach to assessing and allocating applicants and ensuring people are best matched to homes. To our new tenants who have come to us through this process a very warm welcome from us at SGCH.

There is no doubt that many of us will find 2009 financially tougher. There's no escaping it, if you listen to the radio, read the paper or watch TV its all about economic doom and gloom. So we start a new year, some of us with real hope and optimism and others of us with fear and concerns about our welfare and that of our family and friends. It is important to be realistic and to make the best plans we can so that we are prepared for the many challenges in the year ahead.

The Housing Management team is available to work with you if you find yourselves under pressure. I encourage you to talk to your Housing Manager so that together we can look back on 2009 and say – it wasn't as bad as they said it would be.

On a positive note, SGCH will continue to provide you and your families with community activities including the Sydney Aquarium, opportunities to win Family Easter Show tickets, and a picnic day in April.

Warmest wishes

Nazha Saad, Chief Executive Officer



Congratulations - Competition Winners

Congratulations to Rim Droubi aged 11 & Adeline Jin aged 10 winners of the SGCH children's writing competition.

The children entered a competition that was published in our September 2008 Newsletter.

The competition involved writing a brief story about the things young people liked most about home and family life.



Rim Droubi, aged 11

Adeline Jin, aged 10

Eco Wise

On the 12 January 2009 the children of Walpole Street Merrylands participated in a "Propagating Plants workshop".



The workshop was run by Elizabeth Docking of the Royal Botanic Gardens and mainly focused on succulents and a few other hardy varieties that could eventually be planted in the garden. The children learnt plenty of new information on propagating plants.

Share your talent

Do you have a skill or talent you would be willing to share with other tenants and staff members at SGCH?

We are looking for people who have a talent to share.

Perhaps you love to paint? Or sing or dance?. Maybe you can play an instrument, do some creative arts, write or draw?

Do what you love to do and make a valuable contribution of your time.

Bring a talent and make a difference to our Harmony Day Celebrations in March 2009.

Please contact Rowa Omari on 9585 1499 for more information.

Admin Intro



Kimi Poutapu

Team Leader Administration- Commenced working at SGCH in 2001 in Administration

covering all aspects from Repairs & Maintenance, Applications & Customer Service and then moving into Finance/Accounts. Although Kimi has now taken on her new role as Team Leader she is still involved in all Finance & Administration matters. Prior to working for SGCH, Kimi worked in North Sydney as an IT Recruitment Consultant.



Jacky Randall

Commenced working at SGCH in 2002 in Administration covering all aspects

from Repairs & Maintenance, Applications & Customer Service and worked temporarily in Housing Management. Now Jacky is currently responsible for processing tenant rents and new applications. Prior to working for SGCH Jacky worked for a Mortgage Financial Group in Customer Service.



Mehtab Butt (Moon)

Commenced working at SGCH in 2003 in Administration at reception.

She then moved into the Repairs & Maintenance area. Prior to working for SGCH Moon worked in Mission Australia as an Administration Assistant.



Yasmin Kamel

Began working at SGCH in January 2007 in Administration and reception. She then moved

into the Repairs & Maintenance unit. Prior to working at SGCH she worked in the Real Estate sector

as a Property Manager for 10 years and also did some short term work with Australian Customs and the NSW Fire Brigade.



Cathy Witty

Began working at SGCH in February 2007 in Administration and reception.

She then moved to the Finance Team. Prior to working for SGCH Cathy worked in the banking sector for numerous years.



Rebecca Batten

Began working at SGCH in July 2008 in Administration as a receptionist.

Prior to working for SGCH Rebecca had worked with Centrelink as a Customer Service representative. She has experience with community work and customer service.



Colleen Lyons

Commenced working with SGCH in Administration as a receptionist

in April 2008. She recently joined the Repairs & Maintenance team. Before starting work with SGCH Colleen worked in the Police Department and the Australian Electoral Office as a Customer Service Representative.



Corinna Peters

Commenced working at SGCH in July 2003. Corinna has worked as administration

assistant on a part time basis. In 2008 she started her new position in Repairs and Maintenance. She has been studying the Certificate IV in Social Housing and is very close to completing it. Corinna is currently going on maternity leave and will return August 2009.