

Members of the Tenant Coordination
Panel visit Gibbons Street



A message from our CEO Scott Langford

Like many Sydneysiders, I'm very relieved that vaccination rates are exceeding expectations and we are starting to see restrictions eased. It's been a long lockdown and I know many people have been doing it tough.

While feeling like we've turned a corner is a relief, navigating a new normal to live with COVID brings its challenges and some opportunities to consider how we best serve our customers and the community in a new normal.

During this transition phase as we emerge from lockdowns we will continue to focus on the health and safety of our customers, staff and contractors.

We are letting customers know about any changes to our operations which include re-opening our Bonnyrigg office and continuing to request visits to our four main offices at Hurstville, St Leonards, Redfern and Bonnyrigg are by appointment only. Satellite offices in Sutherland, Fairfield, Riverwood and Greenway remain closed. While we look forward to being able to recommence our customer events and activities in person, we continue to offer online engagement options to stay connected through our CPP Studio and new Facebook Group page.

We've supported our team members with a range of programs to support their health and wellbeing through our Recharge program which remains a fixture of our offering. We are taking a deliberate pause to assess not just a return to the office plan, but how we can reimagine the future of work in a way that provides flexibility for our team and optimal customer service outcomes.

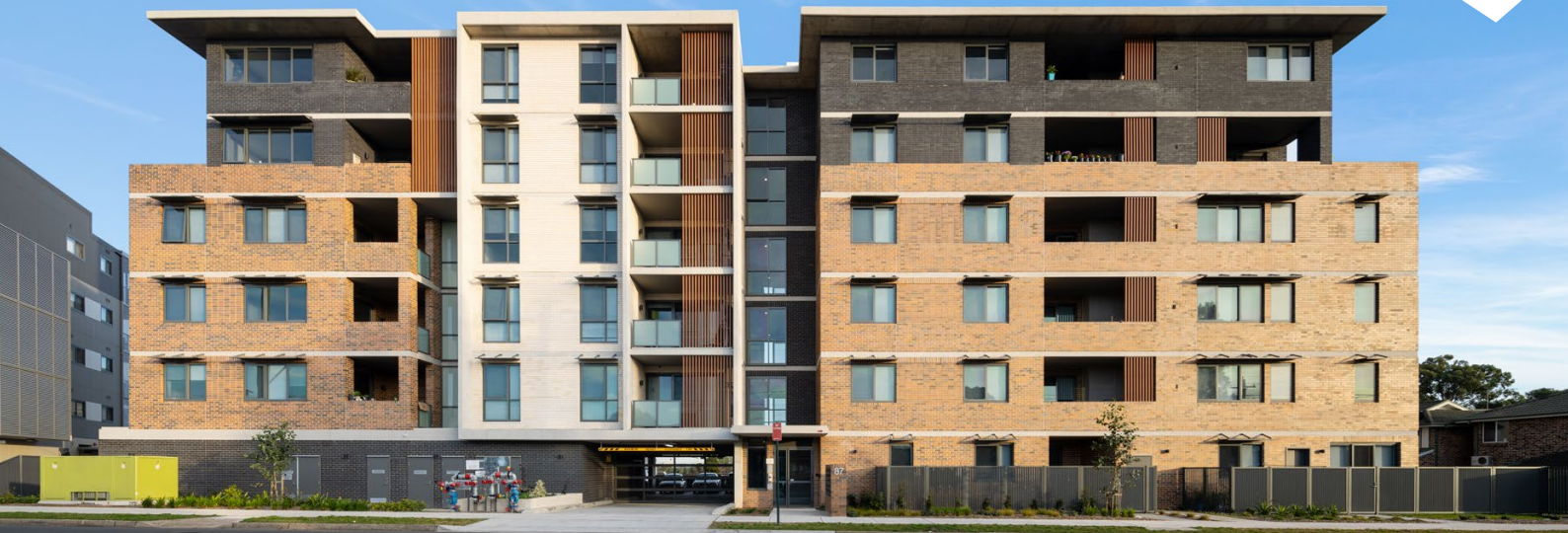
I thank our multi-trade contractors SR Construction and Assett Group who carried out urgent repair and maintenance services throughout the lockdown restrictions in a professional and safe way. I am also very grateful to our customers for their patience and understanding while we had to pause non-urgent works in adherence with public health orders.



SGCH has been well served by an amazing group of people throughout its history

We are also conscious of ensuring we continue to evolve as an organisation to best serve our purpose. Throughout the pressures of an extended lockdown, there has continued to be progress as we implemented a new structure which went live at the start of the month. This followed the planned retirement of General Manager Customers and Communities, Barb McKenna who, handed the reins to our new Group Executive, Customers Renee Wirth. I thank Barb for her enormous contribution, please read more about her achievements in this newsletter. Under Renee's leadership, our Customers team has moved to a two-region structure to provide localised support for customers, centralised services including our customer care hub, and elevated a focus on service outcomes and improvements.

SGCH has been well served by an amazing group of people throughout its history, and I have every confidence that our new operating structure will enable the talents of our people to continue to grow our impact in partnership with our stakeholders.



Structural reform, not sugar hits: Why our housing system needs more than just stimulus

For the first time Infrastructure Australia's newly released 2021 *Australian Infrastructure Plan* incorporated social infrastructure, including social housing. This inclusion points to the value of social infrastructure in enhancing quality of life. It also recognises that governments can't do this alone.

With a projected need of almost 730,000 new social housing properties over the next 15 years, solving the challenges of our housing system requires both public and private participation, and requires innovation and ideas from different industries.



READ MORE:

www.thefifthstate.com.au/housing-2/structural-reform-not-sugar-hits-why-our-housing-system-needs-more-than-just-stimulus/

More rough sleepers into secure homes

SGCH has supported 35 people who were previously sleeping rough, one year on from the establishment of the NSW Government's landmark Together Home program. SGCH has received \$3.6 million for up to 40 places to help deliver the program which is supporting some of the most vulnerable people in the community. Minister for Families, Communities and Disability Services, Alister Henskens said the program has already had a profound impact for the hundreds of people housed.

"The past 12 months have been incredibly challenging, but the success of this program demonstrates that we can support people to break the cycle of homelessness," Mr Henskens said.

"Together Home is not just about putting a roof over their head, but instead addressing the complex needs of individuals, to ensure they get the support they need to improve their health and wellbeing."



READ MORE:

www.sgch.com.au/together-home/

Group CEO Scott Langford speaks with Ministers Pavey and Henskens in June



New Board appointments strengthen aspirations for impact

SGCH Group is pleased to announce the appointment of Rajiv Viswanathan and Philip Fagan-Schmidt to its Board. The appointment of Mr Viswanathan and Mr Fagan-Schmidt strengthens our focus on governance and strategic focus on growth.

Mr Viswanathan is the former Chief Executive Officer of Indigenous Business Australia. He brings extensive experience across the public, private and community sectors and international expertise, gained through former roles in business development and risk management with Macquarie Group in New York and Sydney, and as a corporate lawyer working in London and Sydney.

With an illustrious career in social housing, Mr Fagan-Schmidt held the position of Executive Director of Housing SA for almost a decade with responsibility for 40,000 social housing properties. Since leaving the South Australian public service in 2018, he has worked as a consultant and independent director and advisor. He was recognised in 2015 with a Queens Birthday Public Service Medal for outstanding service in social housing policy and practice.

The appointments are part of a planned succession process including the retirement of Philip Manidis, after an eight-year tenure as a Director of the Board.

SGCH Chair Annette Gallard said, "We thank Philip for his enormous contribution. As the founder of Manidis Roberts, the board benefitted from Philip's expertise in urban planning, environment and communication services and infrastructure projects. Philip has an inherent interest in people that speaks volumes of his passion and commitment to creating positive change. He will be missed."



Rajiv Viswanathan

Philip Fagan-Schmidt



READ MORE:

www.sgch.com.au/sgch-group-board-appointments/



Director Philip Manidis, Group Chair Annette Gallard and Vice Chair Victoria Weekes at a Strive Scholarships event

Aboriginal Place Names

In November 2020 Australia Post updated the addressing guidelines to include Aboriginal Place Names. SGCH operates all over Sydney, and across many traditional lands. As part of our commitment towards working with Aboriginal people, 194 suburbs and their traditional

names have been added to our internal systems. Going forward, SGCH will include Aboriginal Place Names in all our correspondence to customers and stakeholders as an acknowledgement of the traditional owners and their connection to country.



Thank You Barb McKenna

A lasting impact on the housing industry

On the 1st October 2021, we farewelled our retiring General Manager Customers and Communities, Barb McKenna, after 9 years' service with SGCH and a 35-year commitment to the development and provision of housing services that have had a significant and lasting impact on our sector, our people and the customers we serve.

As a 21-year-old, Barb started working in a youth accommodation service before progressing to management of small community housing organisations through the early 2000s. Seconded into the NSW Government (Housing NSW), she worked in the early days of the accreditation unit and progressed to lead several transformational programs including the Social Housing Initiative of the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan, the Housing Pathways reform and Platform 70.

Joining SGCH in 2012, during Barb's tenure our operational services have almost doubled from 4,000 to now close to 7,000 social and affordable homes. Barb has overseen the successful transition of Bonnyrigg Public Private Partnership (PPP) – Australia's first social housing PPP – managed by a developer/private sector/CHP consortium to an integrated model of service delivery managed solely

by SGCH. More recently Barb was the project sponsor for SGCH's response to the Social Housing Management Transfer, transferring 1,400 households from Department of Communities and Justice to SGCH in 2019.

Barb has been instrumental in delivering SGCH's Gibbons Street, Redfern project. This 162-unit building is our flagship development because of its size, the scale of the partnerships behind it and the city location. Barb has worked tirelessly to design and deliver a targeted approach to attract and support local Aboriginal people to access affordable housing. This includes a leading pilot partnership with three inner city providers: Bridge, City West and SGCH to employ a dedicated resource to support this initiative and provide greater access to affordable housing for Aboriginal people.

Best known for her pragmatic approach, Barb prefers to be out of the limelight. However, the impact of Barb's career-long investment in social housing will be long-lasting. We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank one of our sector's true stalwarts for her professionalism, commitment, leadership and energy that has created significant and enduring change for so many.

"I'm lucky, I've been so lucky to have a career I remain passionate about where I can advocate for customers and work with brilliant people. I've had the opportunity to shape up our largest team and work on some transformational projects, highlights have definitely been Nation Building, Bonnyrigg and overseeing the various tranches of management transfers - the small ones matter to me just as much as the large projects because every person counts, every home counts.

"It's a sector that has been a huge part of my life and I've enjoyed collaborating with other housing providers and government,

sharing ideas and common goals is always inspiring. I'm really pleased that a couple of my long term goals have been achieved this year, firstly establishing the Customer Care Hub, I believe this is essential to our customer-centric approach and I've loved creating and implementing this service. Also, seeing the idea to improve access to affordable housing for Aboriginal people supported by City of Sydney and two other housing organisations in Bridge Housing and City West Housing come to fruition. The difference this has made for Aboriginal people as we brought the new Gibbons Street office and housing online is a great note to finish on."



Inner city social and affordable homes for Newtown

SGCH has completed another stage under the NSW Government's Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) Phase 2, delivering 21 residential apartments in Newtown.

SGCH Group CEO Scott Langford says "I am delighted that SGCH and our partners are delivering more homes in this high demand area that is centrally located to transport, education and employment."

Located at 2-2a Gladstone Street, the modern and secure building features a mix of studios, one, two and three bedroom units. The brand new building will be available for people from the social housing waiting list and local key workers. Tenants pay affordable rents based on income and the area's market rent.

In line with our commitment to environmental sustainability, the building has a 7-star rating under the Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NatHERS). It uses a range of energy efficient measures to

provide a more sustainable building and whilst reducing household running costs for tenants.

As part of the NSW Governments SAHF program, all our customers in this new building will have access to wrap around support, with linkages to services, partner organisations and opportunities. Scott Langford said,

"We have made a commitment to build more homes and focus on our customer needs. These homes in Newtown will provide safe and secure housing, with access to additional support as needed for all who live there.

"This focus on linking our customers to tailored support coordination services will deliver long and short-term benefits for individuals, families and ultimately our communities."

Dixie's story

Dixie is a Gooreng Gooreng, Kabi Kabi woman, born in Brisbane. Dixie moved to family in Redfern at the age of 18 and made her family life here. A mum of six, Dixie has 30 grandchildren and recently became a great-grandmother. She still lives and works in Redfern, recently moving in to SGCH's building in Gibbons Street.

She is proud of her new home and has worked with other Elders in the building to help the younger generation understand lockdown and the importance of staying put and getting vaccinated: "Our young people are very respectful, they also want to get back to their jobs and education so I've got no problems pulling them up and reminding them – just stay home for now, please, we need to keep safe, many Elders won't survive this virus."

During lockdown, Dixie noticed the number of Elders looking after children and stepped in to help. Working with the City of Sydney, Dixie is working on a program to support these people and use technology to stay connected: "There are so many grandmothers struggling at the moment to keep their grandkids safe and going to school. The kids' parents have their own struggles and it's leaving older women with the tough job of raising their grandchildren. Whatever I can do to help them I will."

Celebrated by her community, and more widely, Dixie has been the recipient of many awards over the years. Most recently, nominated for an International Womens' Day award in 2021 and was also nominated for NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year the same year, for her services to women and her community. "I will always be an advocate for safer communities, free from domestic and family violence. Safe and secure housing is the basis for this and something we all need and are entitled to. I will never shy away from asking for that for other women, and also asking others to both enjoy and respect their housing.



"Thanks to SGCH, I have a safe house in a beautiful community. Redfern is my home and a place I want to keep working for a long time."