



GCHC Newsletter

ISSUE 4

DECEMBER 2008



**GOLD COAST
HOUSING
COMPANY WISHES
ALL OF OUR
TENANTS A VERY
HAPPY CHRISTMAS
& NEW YEAR**



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Inside this issue:

Tenant Survey	1
NRAS	1
Tenant Profile	2
Development Update	2
Median Rent Update	3
Maintenance & Complaints	3
Steve's Corner	4
Useful Numbers	4

Tenant Survey

Thank you to all of our tenants who took the time to complete and return the Tenant Survey Questionnaire that we recently sent out. We really appreciate your honesty and value any comments that you have about the way you have been treated and the standard of your accommodation.

From the 217 questionnaires we issued, 99 responses were received. A total of 86% of these responses provided positive feedback on the service received by Gold Coast Housing Company.

We are now taking time the time to analyze the responses and evaluate some of the

suggestions and comments provided by our tenants, to see what improvements we can make and which ideas can be implemented. Whilst we are pleased with the overall result of the survey we want to make sure that we are always improving!

Some of the ideas that were suggested that we are looking at implementing are:

- Information boards at the Singles Accommodation at larger complexes showing important phone numbers
- Unit location maps at the larger complexes
- Bike racks at large com-

plexes

- More information on the funding awarded and development (included in this issue).

These are just a few of your suggestions and we will take the time to review and consider all of your comments and suggestions.



We plan to send out a questionnaire every year to make sure that we are providing a quality service and to get more ideas from you, our clients, that could improve our service.

Median Rent Update

Despite falling median house prices and reducing property sales, this trend has not carried over to median rent prices, with Residential Tenancies Authorities (RTA) figures for the quarter July to September 2008 showing median rents are still rising.

Gold Coast City has higher

median rents than Brisbane City, making the Gold Coast the most expensive renters market in Queensland.

With RTA figures showing increasing numbers of rental bonds lodged, the demand for rental accommodation will continue to put pressure on rental prices and rents are

likely to continue to increase.

These rising rents reinforce the need for companies such as GCHC, helping people by providing rental properties at subsidized rates for those on low incomes who simply cannot afford rising market rents.

	1 Bed Units		2 Bed Units		3 Bed Houses		4 Bed Houses	
	Sept 08	Sept 07	Sept 08	Sept 07	Sept 08	Sept 07	Sept 08	Sept 07
Gold Coast City (average)	290	255	340	310	390	360	430	400
Brisbane City (average)	250	235	345	305	360	325	420	380

Data obtained from Residential Tenancies Authority Median Weekly Rents Sept 2008

Tenant Profile

Christmas 2008 will see Gold Coast Housing Company tenant "Candice" and family of four enjoying their home on the Gold Coast. Recently moving into a property under the Rent Start Program, "Candice" was delighted to have been offered a house that she could make "home" for her family.

Viewing the property with "Candice" and one of the children was very humbling to witness, the excitement and laughter that this family would

have, bedrooms with wardrobes "big enough to sleep in", a bathroom, grass in the yard with sea breezes drifting in the air, which are sometimes taken for granted.

Studying and working part time while raising a family is no easy feat, yet "Candice" continues to strive towards creating a better future for her loved ones, in a land that offers hope for those who have survived situations of much diversity, emerging with dignity, humility and a strength

to enable the ability to smile again at life.

"Candice's" journey in life reminds one at this time of year to pause and remember care and compassion for others. Christmas in the Gold Coast is a far cry from the shores of Liberia.

"Name changed".

Michelle – Housing Coordinator

Development Update

The Gold Coast Housing Company has 4 development projects in various stages, with construction about to commence on the first project.

Waterford

This land is located in relatively new subdivision with the land being of sufficient size to allow the construction of three two bedroom units.

All design work has now been completed with the Contractor starting construction work early in the new-year. Construction is anticipated to be completed by May 2009.

This project is self funded by Gold Coast Housing Company.

Ashmore

This project originally consisted of only one site on which three two bedroom units and one/one bedroom unit was to be constructed. After an approach from an adjoining owner an additional site was purchased.

These two combined sites are now being developed as one with the construction of seven two bed units and one/one bed unit. Preliminary designs have been completed with documentation lodged with Council for approval.



Once Council approval has been received and further detailed documentation completed, construction will commence as soon as possible.

This project is being funded from funds provided by the Gold Coast City Council.

Palm Beach

A number of design options were considered for this site which included a six storey, thirty three unit development, however due to a number of considerations, the project was scaled down to twenty four single bedroom units over three stories.

Design work on the three storey development is proceeding well with preliminary documentation sched-

uled for completion by late January for submission to Council.

It is anticipated that construction work will commence on site around June 2009.

This project is funded by the State Government.

Southport

This site was purchased in November this year and will be developed as a three storey, nine unit development consisting of six two bedroom units and three one bedroom units. Design work has commenced and as the site was purchased with all necessary Council development approvals, it is estimated that construction work could commence as early as March/April 2009.

Asset Condition Audit

During late January early February arrangements are being made for formal condition audits to be completed of all GCHC owned properties. Prior to these audits commencing, all affected tenants will be contacted by the GCHC so a mutually convenient time can be made for the audit to be completed.

National Rental Affordability Scheme

This Scheme is a key component of the Rudd Government's \$3.7 billion housing package, which will boost rental stocks, help people save for their first home and lower housing infrastructure costs for some entry level housing.

The National Rental Affordability Scheme will help build up to 50,000 new rental properties across Australia by 2012, which will then be rented out at 20 per cent below market rate.

The Australian Government is of-

fering incentives to build up to 4,000 new affordable rental properties across the country in the first round of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).

Up to 1.5 million households will be eligible to be tenants under the Scheme. If market demand remains strong, another 50,000 incentives for a further 50,000 affordable rental dwellings will be made available over five years from July 2012.

We're pleased to announce that we were successful in our first round

application to the National Rental Affordability Scheme. GCHC lodged two applications for the Federal Scheme and was successful in both, which means we should add over 200 dwellings to our portfolio at a discounted rent for ten years.

We will keep you updated about the projects in later newsletters. If you want to know more about NRAS, please contact us.



GCHC Complaint & Maintenance Procedures

During our annual survey, we noticed that a lot of our tenants are not aware of our complaints and grievance policy. If you;

- Have a problem with a neighbour;
- Have a complaint about a decision made by the GCHC;
- Think you have been treated unfairly by a GCHC staff member;

You can contact us to deal with your complaint. We will deal with the matter confidentially and fairly, and you will never be punished for making a complaint. If you still disagree with our response to your complaint, you can;

- For a complaint with a neighbour/ other tenant: request mediation, where a panel including three staff

members, and the two parties to the complaint will discuss the matter.

- For a complaint with a staff member: request mediation, where a panel of three staff members unrelated to the issue and the parties to the complaint will discuss the matter.
- For a complaint with a decision made by the GCHC: contact the Tenancy Advice and Advocacy Service of the RTA.

Never be afraid to contact us if you have a problem or there is something which you are unsure about it.

If you have an emergency maintenance problem, you should contact us by phone immediately. If it is dur-

ing office hours (8.30 to 4.30 Monday to Friday) call the office on **5597 6300**. If it is outside office hours, call the emergency number on **0413 732 807**.

If you have an emergency problem and for some reason we cannot be contacted, you are allowed to arrange for repairs up to the value of two weeks rent, and we will reimburse the cost. Remember, this is only for emergency repairs, and only if we are not contactable.

Under property law, you must notify us if you damage the property.

The table below outlines who you should contact, and how fast you should expect a response, when there is a maintenance problem with your property.

Class	Emergency	Response Time	Contact (in order)
Emergency	Gas leak, bare electrical wire, building damage, burst water pipe, fire or impact damage, imminent building collapse.	1 hour	Emergency Services/Utility Provider/ Property Coordinator (or emergency no.)
Urgent	Broken toilet; roof leak; flooding damage; storm damage; breakdown of essential service or appliance; unsafe or insecure fault.	24 hours	Property Coordinator (or emergency no.)
Non Urgent	Broken windows; broken lights; broken air conditioning or fans.	3 days	Property Coordinator (phone)
Routine	Minor damage; broken internal door handles; stained carpet.	14 days	Property Coordinator (phone or mail)

Steve's Corner

Welcome to the first edition of Steve's tips on maintenance.

Tip 1

We receive lots of calls reporting issues requiring attention. One such call involved the 'tripping' of the safety switch. The tenant reported that the switch continually kept tripping off. This indicates that there is an earth leakage in the wiring scheme. I advised the tenant to disconnect all appliances from the power sockets and individually reconnect each one, the one that tripped the switch would be the faulty appliance! This is the same method that an electrician would use

Tip 2

We also get a lot of calls regarding hot water or rather lack of it!! One tenant rang to advise us that she had no hot water, and advice she had received indicated that it could be a faulty thermostat. After a chat with me, the tenant made a few checks and discovered that someone had

switched off the electricity to the heater in the box located at the front of the house. As the home was connected to the 'off peak' tariff the system would not start to reheat until later that evening –luckily it was during the



summer and a cool shower was just about bearable! The moral of here is always check the obvious before calling for professional help which could save you a hefty call out charge!

Tip 3

If your house does lose power during a storm, take a quick look at your neighbours to see if they still have power, if everyone is in the dark then there is not much you can do. Make sure you have some fresh batteries for your torch whilst you are waiting for power to be restored. It's also a

good idea to have a battery powered radio to keep you informed of any localized storm news or updates.

If you happen to have storm damage and water is coming in through your roof, SES are the people to call (132 500). They should be able to stretch a tarpaulin over the roof as temporary measure until your roof can be properly repaired.

One last thing-make sure that you have contents insurance to cover any damage to your possessions, we all know how difficult it is and it's hard to find the money for it, but losing all your possessions is even harder and even more expensive if it happens to you! Make sure you update current policy details to include any recent expensive purchases.

Hope you all have a happy and safe Christmas!

Steve – Property Coordinator

Useful Numbers

AMBULANCE FIRE & POLICE

In a life threatening or time critical emergency : **000**

QUEENSLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE

Gold Coast/Hinterland non-urgent transport : **131-233**

FIRE SERVICE -Community Safety Enquiries: **5583-7578**

GOLD COAST HOSPITAL: **5519-8211**

FIRE SERVICE COMMUNITY SAFETY ENQUIRIES: **5583-7578**

STATE EMERGENCY SERVICES:

For Storm or Flood: 132 500

CRIME STOPPERS FREECALL:

1800-333-000

ENERGEX ELECTRICITY EMERGENCIES: **13-19-62**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

ENERGEX LOSS OF POWER SUPPLY: **13-62-62**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

ORIGIN Electricity Enquiries:**13-24-61**

WEATHER – BUREAU OF METEOROL-
OGY:

Thunderstorms, flood warnings, severe weather **1300-659-219**

DOMESTIC & FAMILY VIOLENCE -
FREECALL: **1800-811-811**

LIFELINE: **131 -114**

PARENTLINE: **1300-301-300**

KIDS HELPLINE: **1800-551-800**

SPER: **1300-365-635**

TENANTS UNION: **1800-177-761**

RESIDENTIAL TENANCIES AUTHORITY: **1300-366-311**

TENANCY ADVICE AND ADVOCACY:

Gold Coast North: **5591 1102**

Gold Coast South: **5598 3230**

INCOME SUPPORT CENTRELINK: **1800-050-000**

E: gchc@gchousingco.com.au

T: 07 5597 6300

F: 07 5597 6355



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