Hi and Happy New Year – although by the time you read this article it might be not that relevant: still I mean it, so I hope it’s a great year for you.

We have the best group of tenants and I’m not just saying that.

Last year we had over 500 of our tenants do volunteer work for charitable organisations, including a few for Compass itself and one that stood out – in Broken Hill, who organised and raised money for the Philippines Cyclone disaster in 2013.

We had some fantastic and inspiring things occur under the Compass Connect and that is still going, many more tenant’s achieve GOLD status and there is still many more in the process of becoming GOLD or even SILVER under the Tenancy Incentive Scheme (TIS). Fantastic!!

We have the best also because, by and large our tenants pay their rent, look after their properties and treat their neighbours respectfully. You are not ‘Houso’s’ like the TV show tries to depict and portray. You are responsible and diligent citizens and I am proud to be associated with this company and its people.

In saying that, I do trust that Compass is fulfilling its obligations towards you as a diligent and caring tenancy and property manager.

If that is not the case, you have the complaints mechanism to bring any areas of tardiness to the attention of Senior Executive Management via our customer service hotline: 02 4920 2638 (alternative contact: 02 4920 2600) or check out what to do from our website: www.compasshousing.org.

Speaking of Senior Executive Managers, I would like to introduce you to our new Chief Operations Officer: Lisa Tierney. Lisa now supervises all tenancy and maintenance management staff and processes – which we call Operations. Lisa is based at the Hamilton office but is represented by other Executive Staff over various regions and departments. I would like to welcome Lisa and commend her to you as a strong, diligence and caring manager. She is very keen to gain her own perspective and areas for improvement.

If you can also make one of the tenant community forums that are being scheduled in your area for 2014, I would enjoy meeting with you there and discussing your perspective on being part of the Compass community.

Once again, Happy New Year. 

Greg Budworth, CEO
Super Tribunal to start on 1 January 2014

Issued: Tuesday 31 December
Acting Minister for Justice Michael Gallacher today announced that the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal (NCAT) will start on 1 January 2014.

"The NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal is a one-stop shop for almost all state tribunals making it easier for people in NSW to access the services they need," Mr Gallacher said.

"NCAT enables these services to exist as a network, rather than in isolation, which will improve their quality, consistency and transparency. People will also have access to an internal appeals panel, which will provide quick and accessible reviews of most tribunal decisions."

The government has integrated 22 of the State’s tribunals and bodies into a new overarching tribunal that will provide a simple, quick and effective process for resolving disputes, supervising occupations and reviewing executive action.

Harnessing the expertise of the State’s existing tribunals, NCAT operates four specialist divisions:

- Consumer and Commercial
- Guardianship
- Administrative and Equal Opportunity and
- Occupational

Across all types of matters, NCAT is committed to: timely, fair, high-quality decision-making; maintaining current levels of service including retaining specialist expertise and services; and continuous improvement in service delivery.

In October last year the government announced the appointment of the Hon Justice Robertson Wright as a Supreme Court judge and as the inaugural President of NCAT. Justice Wright was sworn in as a Supreme Court judge on 25 October 2013. On the same date, he began a five-year term as NCAT President.

"If you have lodged an application with an existing tribunal before 1 January 2014 and it has not yet been heard, the application does not have to be re-lodged at NCAT," Mr Gallacher said.

"If you are making an application after 1 January 2014 you will be making an application to NCAT.

"Tribunal services will continue to be delivered in multiple locations with registries located across metropolitan and regional NSW," Mr Gallacher said.

Further information can be found at: http://www.ncat.nsw.gov.au. NCAT can be contacted by phone on: 1300 006 228.

Chocolate Crunch Slice - makes approx 12

Ingredients

- 60 grams butter
- 200 grams dark cooking chocolate, roughly chopped
- 1/4 cup golden syrup
- 200 grams plain tea biscuits, broken into pieces
- 1 tablespoon icing sugar (optional)

To keep slice fresh, store in air tight container.

Method

1. Place butter, chocolate and golden syrup in a heat proof bowl. Stir over simmering water until the butter and chocolate melt and the mixture is smooth.
2. Remove from heat and stir in broken biscuits, mix well.
3. Pour into a greased and lined 18cm square tin.
4. Chill until firm.
5. To serve, cut into finger length pieces
6. Optional - sprinkle lightly with sifted icing sugar.
Tenants are invited to participate in the Sparke Helmore & NBN Triathlon - Sunday 16th March 2014!!

Last year was a great success with Compass entering two teams. The teams consisted of a combination of tenants Gary & Dave and staff Lucy & Sheralee. See the teams pictured below right.

Compass will be looking at entering 4 teams so call Shane on 02 4920 2600 to express your interest in either the run, bike or swim leg BY 12pm MONDAY 4th March 2014! BE QUICK!

Participating team members may receive a race date shirt as well as a team singlet to compete in.

“GREEN TENANT INCENTIVE SCHEME”!!!!
Next Round finishes on 15th April 2014!!
Want to know how to win a prize as a reward for being environmentally sustainable in your home or community?
Contact your Community Development Officer or Branch to enquire how you can enter this fantastic incentive!

Ways to participate:
1. Recycling eg bins, compost, worm farm;
2. Courtyard gardens/membership of community gardens;
3. Participate in your local council tree planting day;
4. Energy saving eg routine water or energy saving methods;

REWARDS - Quarterly prizes to winners will be awarded from each Branch who enter along with an ANNUAL DRAW awarded to eligible tenants who have entered through the calendar year.

Alcoholics Anonymous Australia
Having trouble with alcohol?
Does your drinking worry you?
Is it causing you to get into unpleasant or dangerous situations?
Are family members complaining about your drinking?
National AA helpline: 1300 22 22 22

Do you have a good news story? Would you like to contribute a recipe? An energy saving OR safety tip? Or provide details on an event coming up or perhaps give us some feedback on this issue of the Tenant Newsletter? YES!!
Then contact Melissa, by email: cdtteam@compasshousing.org or by post: Compass Housing Services Co Ltd, PO Box 967, Hamilton NSW 2303

I look forward to hearing from you!
My name is Shane and I’m the Coordinator of the Grow a Star program. I have been with Compass for over the three years now and have primarily been working with our Community Development team. I have had experience with the Grow a Star program over my time here and I am very passionate about awarding young people opportunities to participate and be active within their local community.

The Grow A Star program is the first of its kind designed and operated by a Community Housing provider. This program is a youth orientated initiative driven by Compass that focuses on making available to young people, opportunities that they would not normally have access to, for whatever reason. Opportunities may included, but not limited to sports, music, arts, education, training, employment based training etc. the options are vast!

The program is **FREE** and open to all young people who live in Community or Social housing and aged between 5 and 18 years of age. You do not have to have any magical talents to be involved in this program; we are looking to give young people the opportunity to be active and included.

The program also caters for mentors, significant others and coaches to assist us in identifying young people for the program and to assist us with the afternoon activities. So if you have a little time to spare and would like to become involved in the program which is designed to enhance the lives of young people, call me and have a chat on 0429 358 426.

**How to become involved?**

1. Call your local Compass Branch and discuss it with your Housing Manager or Community Development Officer.

2. Attend one of the afternoon activities conducted near your Branch. Call your local Branch or further information.
Are you an artist?
Would you like your work to be advertised for sale on-line as part of a new Compass Artists Collective initiative?
Compass is interested in hearing from you.
For more information, contact Deb Allan, Community Development ph : 02 4920 2600.

Calling for Expression of Interests – Carers

Do you have some extra time you would be willing to assist another with?
Can you help with delivery of meals, driving someone to an appointment, general assistance, shopping?
These will be paid carer positions.
Please register your interest at cdteam@compasshousing.org or telephone your Branch.

Congratulations to Compass tenant Gary who competed in the City2Surf 2013!
Gary put his mind to increasing his physical training and cut junk food to complete the 14km run in 62mins and 49 seconds! Gary placed 2884 out of 69,297 finishers.
Gary said that he would never forget the race and can’t wait for the 2014 City2Surf!
Gary, along with Compass and other social housing tenants participate in the weekly Streetsoccer, held at Newcastle PCYC every Thursday from 3:30 - 5:30pm.
If you would like information on how you can participate in STREETSOCCER email Bill at newcastlestreetsoccer@bigissue.org.au

Call Us: 1300 550 009
amsa@mensshed.net
Being CTEP's first newsletter message for 2014 it gives me, Mark, the opportunity to let all our tenants know what CTEP (Compass Tenant Engagement Panel) do.

Firstly we meet every second month for two hours at Compass’ Corporate office, located in Hamilton. Here CTEP have the use of the video conference equipment to connect to each Branch who have participating tenants. Generally CTEP listen to what our fellow tenants have to say, in sessions called ‘Have your Say’. Tenants have the opportunity to air any concerns they might have, but more importantly CTEP listen to any ideas on how aspects of tenancy might be improved in our homes and communities.

If you would like to connect in with the CTEP members, please contact your Branch Manager, Community Development Officer or CTEP representative via email on ctep@compasshousing.org. CTEP will provide you with a date and time to our next meeting. Our CTEP meeting schedule for 2014 is below.

CTEP review Compass Housing Services (Compass) Policies and Procedures on an as required basis and make recommendations through the Board representative to support that process.

CTEP play a part in Community Development planning with a member of CTEP sitting on the Board’s Operations and Community Development sub committee as well as having been involved in a review of future responsive and planned maintenance to our homes in 2013.

Last year the tenant satisfaction survey (tenant feedback to Compass), carried out by independently from Compass, came in at 88% tenant satisfaction. This outcome is consistent with 2012; given the industry benchmark is 79%. This means the majority of Compass tenants are happy with level of service delivered. All in all, Compass are doing a pretty good job looking after us.

Throughout 2014 CTEP will continue to make sure tenants have the opportunity to be heard. If you would like to assist, be involved in CTEP in some way, either through an existing local tenant group in your complex or area or by participating in one of the events that are organised by the Branches Community Development Officers, from morning teas, great bus trips, get together BBQ’s, or the Community Forums, contact CTEP on the details which will follow.

CTEP - WE WANT YOU: If you have a few hours a month to spare and are looking to be more involved in giving back to your community, CTEP have casual vacancies available in many of Branches. For participating, you may have the opportunity to claim travel expenses to and from meetings and some tenant events as well as applying for funds to assist in your home monthly internet usage.

For further information on casual vacancies contact Mark O’Dwyer, CTEP Chair on 0411 274 882 or by email mark1od@bigpond.com.

Branch and office closures for Compass will be as follows:
- Good Friday, 18 April - closed
- Easter Monday, 21 April - closed
- ANZAC Day, Friday 25 April - closed

From all at Compass Housing Services be safe and keep well

A message from Finance Department - Tenant Reference Number

Tenants, please note, when making payments into our Westpac account, REMEMBER to please use your tenant number as the reference. This will allow our Finance Department to correctly receipt your money to your account and prevent your account going into arrears.

If you need assistance with providing these details, please contact your local Branch.

Thank you for your assistance.