



Featured Residents: Maria and Paolo

Thrive

Community Newsletter | Summer 2021

Welcome to your Summer Community Newsletter!

In this edition, meet Maria and Paolo from our Kensington community, read about our COVIDSafe measures, hear from our Place Managers, find important contact numbers for support during this difficult time, and more.

Take good care.

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If you need support
from an interpreter
please let us know.

Achieving their dreams

Maria and Paolo are active members of Unison's Kensington community. Before the pandemic put a hold on community activities, Maria and Paolo were regular attendees at community lunches, the Seniors Group outings and the Healthy Living and Learning Program. "Of course, it is much better to see people face to face," explains Maria. "It will be nice to have the activities again."

Maria is a master at crochet and is a participant (when restrictions allow) in the *Threading Stories* project; a space to create, craft and make new connections. Maria, for whom English is her second language, can practice her English and share her culture with her neighbours. Her beautifully crocheted squares, made with repurposed yarn, will be made into gorgeous blankets and donated to an organisation in need.

Maria reminisces; "My grandmother taught me to knit and embroider and my mother taught me to crochet. When I was young, my mother, grandmother and I would sit and do our crafts together."

This year, Maria and Paolo have been able to continue to tend their garden bed in the Kensington Community Food Forest. "I gardened with my grandparents when I was a little girl in Uruguay. I hadn't gardened in such a long time," smiles Maria.

The garden has given Maria and Paolo a wonderful opportunity to grow fresh produce and have some gentle outdoor exercise during lockdowns.



The Joys of Summer

Welcome Summer!

It's important to stay cool and hydrated during the very hot days. It is also time to enjoy the warm weather and long days. Here are a few summer joys after our long 2021 lockdown. Which ones will you pick?

- Enjoy delicious Summer fruits like watermelon, berries, peaches and nectarines
- Sit outside on warm evenings
- Get together with friends for ice cream and barbecues
- Wear loose fitting light clothes to stay cool
- Open your windows in the evening and let the fresh air in

COVID Safety

We've put in place a number of measures to keep everyone safe when attending your property.

What we do:

- QR code check in to the building to record our attendance
- Ask a number of questions before entering to ensure everyone in the household is well and has not been in contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case
- Use hand sanitiser before and after entering your property
- Maintain a distance of at least 1.5 metres
- Follow Victorian Government directions in relation to the use of Personal Protective Equipment such as face masks

What you can do:

- Maintain a distance of 1.5 metres
- Wear a mask over both your nose and mouth
- Follow Victorian Government directions in relation to the use of Personal Protective Equipment such as face masks
- Let us know if you or anyone at home has cold-like symptoms, is isolating or has been to a COVID exposure site

Getting vaccinated is the most effective way to protect you and the whole community from COVID-19 and control the spread of the virus. For more information on how to stay COVIDSafe and get vaccinated, head to: coronavirus.vic.gov.au



Annual Report

The 2021 Unison Annual Report is now available.

You can find the Report online at unison.org.au/publications





A message from the Tenant Advisory Group Convenor, Frank Otis

Dear fellow tenants,

COVID has affected a lot of people and is at the front of everybody's mind which is understandable. Now that restrictions have eased, life is starting to get back to normal.

TAG hasn't been able to meet face-to-face recently, however we have met online with discussions including about tenancy disputes and resolutions, what we want to achieve in the next 12 months and our TAG Terms of Reference, which have been updated and approved. We are currently developing our Statement of Intent, a plan that outlines where TAG wants to be in a year's time.

We hope to resume meeting in person in 2022 and are calling for new members. Please contact your Place Manager if you are interested in joining TAG or go to Unison's website for all the details unison.org.au/tenant-resources/tenant-advisory-group

If you haven't already, please get the COVID vaccination. It will protect you and the whole community. Stay healthy and safe.

Frank



Message from the CEO, James King

Hi everyone,

As we welcome the warmer weather, it's been uplifting to see restrictions ease around the state. Being able to get out and see friends and family has certainly been a great relief and source of joy for many.

This year, we've seen the importance of being flexible and adaptable both as an organisation and as a community. The health, safety and wellbeing of all our renters, staff, contractors and the community remain our priority. I would like to thank you all for playing a role in keeping everyone safe.

Throughout this time, we've been working hard to support our community - whether it be with regular phone check-ins and SMS, the distribution of food hampers and vouchers for those most in need, or organising pop-up vaccination clinics.

Our team is still here to support you. I encourage you to visit our website (unison.org.au/tenant-resources/support-during-covid-19) and to reach out to your Place Manager for any support you might need.

Meanwhile, we continue our efforts to tackling the housing affordability crisis in Victoria by increasing the supply of good quality affordable housing around Melbourne. We are committed to building and managing housing that is well designed, affordable, accessible and secure.

With COVIDSafe measures in place, we're currently building two new apartment complexes in Werribee and Heidelberg Heights that will deliver 116 contemporary, self-contained apartments for people on the Victorian Housing Register.

Both projects are in part funded by the Victorian Government, with the balance funded by Unison. As a not-for-profit organisation, Unison reinvests operating surplus back into our services, our properties and our communities.

As 2021 comes to a close and the holiday period approaches, I wish you all the very best for the festive season.

Stay safe and stay well.

James

We are here to support you

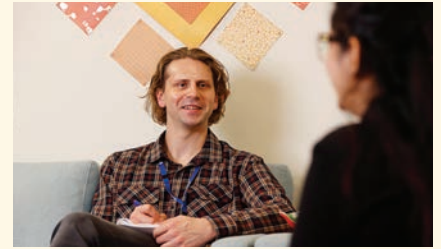
Although our offices have been closed through the year due to the pandemic and Victorian Government restrictions, rest assured we are still here to support you.

Your Place Manager is here for you and can provide information and connection to the services you need.

“As a Place Manager I feel connection is the key. I am glad to have developed trustworthy relationships with our renters and helped link them to activities to cope with isolation during lockdown or encourage them to take care of their physical and mental health,” explained one of our Place Managers, Akansha.

“Place Managers are here to help. I was recently happy to coordinate the delivery of food parcels in a COVID safe manner, ensuring our renters had food for that evening and the coming week. If you are worried, give your Place Manager a call and they will go the extra mile for you,” added Alex, another Unison Place Manager.

If you or if you have a neighbour who you think may need assistance, please let us know. Your Place Manager is just a phone call away.



Assistance if you need it

It is a challenging time for everyone. If you feel you are in need of support and someone to talk to, help is a phone call away 24 hours a day / 7 days a week.

- Beyond Blue 1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14
lifeline.org.au
- Our website also has a comprehensive list of support available: unison.org.au/tenant-resources/support-during-covid-19

Season's Greetings from all of us at Unison and we wish you all the best in 2022

The Unison team will be working throughout the summer holiday period, except for the following public holidays:

Monday December 27, 2021
Tuesday December 28, 2021
Monday January 3, 2022



Feedback

Are you (or do you know someone who is) an artist, a cook, a gardener, a knitter or simply a fabulous neighbour? We'd love to write a story about you.

Please contact Pam at communications@unison.org.au to share your story and feedback.