

WINTER 2024

Thrive

community newsletter

Welcome to your winter edition of Thrive.

In this edition we meet Unison renter Andrew, talk pest prevention and urgent maintenance, learn more about the Renter Satisfaction Action Plan and read our regular messages from Unison CEO, James King, and Frank Otis, TAG Convenor.

Message from James King, Unison CEO

Hi everyone,

At Unison, we truly value your feedback and are committed to continuously improving your experience. Hopefully, you've read all about our Renter Satisfaction Action Plan, which we developed based on your valuable feedback. We're working on several new initiatives to keep you informed and engaged within our community.

Your involvement is key to building a strong and supportive community. Keep an eye out for local events and activities you can join.

By the time our end of year newsletter arrives, we will have completed the transformative Make Room project in partnership with the City of Melbourne and the Victorian Government. This initiative has repurposed an old council building into 50 self-contained units to provide housing for rough sleepers in Melbourne.

We are offering safe, supportive, and flexible housing with 24/7 services to help residents transition into stable, long-term homes within a year. This is a project I am particularly proud of.

Whether it is improving our service for our existing renters or developing new buildings to house new residents, Unison is committed to building communities that thrive. Thanks to everyone for contributing to our shared vision.

Warm regards,
James





Improving your renter experience

Recently you would have received the Renter Satisfaction Action Plan. Unison is committed to improving your renting experience based on your feedback from the 2023 Renter Satisfaction Survey.

Here's what we're doing:

Improved Notifications for Place Manager Changes:

You'll receive timely updates whenever there's a change in your Place Manager. Look out for posters in your building with the details.

Building Better Relationships with Place Managers:

Place Managers will check in with new renters within the first six weeks of tenancy and conduct a property inspection within 3 months to help you understand your rights and build a stronger relationship.

More Ways for You to Share Your Ideas:

We're reviewing the Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) role and exploring new ways to gather your feedback beyond regular surveys.

Helping You Understand Your Rights:

We're providing clear and accessible information about your rights as a renter, from sign-up kits to property inspections, to keep you informed every step of the way.

Making Complaints Easier for You:

If you have a concern, we're here to listen. Our staff is being trained to handle complaints effectively, and we're reviewing our processes to ensure your concerns are addressed promptly.

Getting You Involved in Your Community:

Connect with your neighbours and feel more at home! Look out for notices in your building about community activities or speak to your Place Manager.

Message from the Tenant Advisory Group Convenor, Frank Otis



Dear fellow renters,

Winter is well and truly here! I hope you are staying warm. I'd like to share we are reviewing TAG's role into the future. This review includes ways to further increase renter feedback into how Unison can continue to improve their services and improve your renting experience.

Unison's Renter Satisfaction Action Plan has been developed based on our feedback to the Satisfaction Survey last year. You will see posters up around our communities, and you can read more about the Action Plan in this newsletter.

I have no doubt we are all looking forward to working together with Unison to create great communities to call home.

All the best.

Frank

Meet Andrew



Andrew is a Unison renter who enjoys giving back to his community. From helping to keep the apartment complex where he lives tidy and being on call to help elderly neighbours, to organising fun surprises for the youngest residents.

"I enjoy putting others first and doing stuff for others. Some people say, oh you're too busy! You always put others first! It's just the way I've been brought up."

Last Christmas, Andrew decided to play Santa Claus for his building, buying gifts for the kids in his apartment complex. In December, the presents were put under the Christmas tree in the foyer

"I wrote a little sign: Help yourself, Merry Christmas. They were all gone by 11 o'clock in the morning!"

Before moving into his Unison property, Andrew had been living in the same private rental for 15 years when the owner gave a notice to vacate due to upcoming renovations.

"It was a scary thought when you're over 50. I was referred to Unison, and then it all just fell into place."

Andrew says he enjoys the social aspect of living in a Unison building and that it's given him a new lease on life.

Read Andrew's full story here:

<https://unison.org.au/news/unison-s-very-own-santa-claus>

Urgent Maintenance

If something is broken or not working in your unit and requires urgent attention, it is important that you report it straight away so that we can assist as soon as possible.

Please call the **Unison Maintenance Team** on **(03) 9349 0261 (24/7)**

If you are a Kensington public housing renter:

Please call the Housing Call Centre on 13 11 72 (24/7) or via the email address tenant.maintenance@dffh.vic.gov.au If you have any difficulties after you have lodged your request, please get in contact with the Kensington Place Management team.

If you are a Transitional Housing renter:

Please call your Place Manager on (03) 9688 8300 during office hours, and 131 172 after hours.



Pest Prevention Tips

Here are some tips to help prevent pests:

- Keep your place clean. Regular cleaning helps deter pests effectively
- Avoid leaving food out on benches and keep floors clear of scraps
- Regularly remove rubbish from your unit
- Be cautious about bringing in furniture or items of unknown origin

If you notice pests in your unit, please report it to your Place Manager or call the Maintenance Help Desk on (03) 9349 0261.

Unison takes your health and safety seriously, so please don't hesitate to reach out if you need assistance or have concerns.



Actions to help reduce mould in your home

Prevent mould in your home by minimising moisture.

- Use exhaust fans, or open windows when showering or cooking or using the clothes dryer
- Remove water on windows caused by condensation
- Open doors and windows on warmer days
- Clean clothes dryer lint filters each time you use the dryer
- Use the dehumidifier setting on your air conditioner
- Avoid placing mattresses on the floor
- Move furniture away from walls to increase air circulation



Are you in financial hardship? Have a chat to your Place Manager

We encourage renters to discuss any cost-of-living pressures with your Place Manager as soon as possible, including challenges you have with rent payments. We can discuss options and work with you to help with your rent payments and link you in with other services to help with your finances.

Free financial hardship assistance is available including from:

- Anglicare Victoria Financial Counselling: Phone 1800 809 722
- National Debt Helpline: 1800 007 007
- Uniting Vic Tas Financial Counselling: 03 9192 8100
- Gambler's Help (24/7): 1800 858 858
- Salvation Army Financial Counselling Team: 1800 722 363

Ask Izzy- Askizzy.org.au

Ask Izzy is an easy-to-use website that connects people with a wide range of support services including a meal, money help, family violence support, housing and counselling. It is free and anonymous. Those on Telstra and Vodafone mobile networks can access Ask Izzy via your phone even if you don't have credit or Wi-Fi access.

Feedback

Unison is committed to providing quality services to our clients, renters and community. To help us do this, we welcome your feedback and ideas for your Thrive newsletter. Please email us at communications@unison.org.au to contribute.