



Featured Resident: Susan

Thrive

Community Newsletter | Winter 2021

Welcome to the Winter Community Newsletter!

A warm welcome to our Winter edition. In this edition we share an update from the Tenants Advisory Group, a message from Unison CEO, James King and energy saving and TV reception tips.

Enjoy!

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

Achieving their dreams

You can't help but admire Susan's strength, resilience and positive outlook on life.

After leaving a violent relationship, Susan found herself homeless with her three children. With the support of friends and family and her positive attitude, Susan didn't let anything knock her down.

No matter what, Susan kept going, providing "love and TLC" for her children. "Every day I woke up, I was here with my children. We were together and that's all that mattered to me."

"We'd take it day by day. Blow up the mattress, have sleepover parties and movie nights. Just make it fun, you know?"

"This type of situation can take you down very different paths. If I hadn't had that support from Unison and social worker J., it could have been a totally different outcome."

Susan and her children moved into transitional housing with Unison, before being offered a permanent home.

"It was Christmas all over at once. It was a dream for me to have a place for all of us to be together without domestic violence – that was amazing!"

With a safe and secure place to call home, Susan is back studying and is now in her last year of nursing. Keen to help others in need, Susan plans to work in trauma wards.

"The stability of having our own home has made a huge difference in our lives. My children can do what they want to do and achieve their dreams."

Susan's face lights up with pride when she talks about her children.

"My eldest is up in the Northern Territory mustering. She's a fantastic horse rider! My two youngest kids have special needs and have the most beautiful personalities. I love them so much!"

"I am very proud yet teary of what I have achieved. I made it through after a huge whirlwind of emotions and homelessness."



A message from the Tenant Advisory Group Convenor, Frank Otis

Dear fellow tenants,

2021 is looking a little better than last year, but as we know COVID has not gone away. It is tough and unpredictable, and we all need to take care.

TAG has been meeting face-to-face again and we hope to start visiting different properties as soon as it is safe to. We are discussing supporting and helping new tenants settle in, and how we can all be good neighbours.

We are looking for new TAG members. TAG is a forum for tenants to provide advice to Unison on how to best meet the needs of tenants and help improve

services. If you are interested, get in contact with your Place Manager or go to the Unison website for TAG details, unison.org.au/tenant-resources/tenant-advisory-group.

With the COVID vaccine rate picking up, hopefully we'll see more restrictions lifted for the rest of the year. Stay healthy and safe.

Frank Otis, Convenor

Place Managers – how they can support you

At Unison, we do things a bit differently. Each of our tenancies is managed by a dedicated Place Manager.

Our Place Management team is at the heart of the delivery of our housing services.

Whether you are experiencing difficulties with rent arrears, need help booking hard rubbish collection with council or want some guidance on maintenance issues, the team is here to help you.

Your Place Manager is your dedicated contact person and first point of call at Unison. Get in touch with your Place Manager if you have any questions about your tenancy or your property or need help to connect with support services and your community.



Being a good neighbour

Being a considerate and respectful neighbour is important. As a good neighbour, please:



- Keep noise to a minimum (including from visitors). Try wearing headphones when listening to music.
- Park in your allocated car space only (if you have one) or in the street.
- Don't accumulate rubbish and unwanted furniture in your front yard or nature strip.

If you think you or your visitors have done something that has disturbed your neighbours, please contact your Place Manager for assistance.



Message from the CEO, James King

Hi there,

What a busy start to 2021 we've had! Our team has been working on bringing back community activities, connecting people who need it with support services, as well as building new social and affordable housing properties.

In April, we were proud to win the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) National Award for Excellence in Affordable Development for our Napier Street development in Footscray, where we converted an aging block of 17 small units into a first-class building with 54 modern, secure and affordable self-contained apartments. The judges were highly impressed by the quality of the build, and particularly commented on how it fits seamlessly into the neighbourhood.

In May, we opened the doors to our latest development in Fairfield. In part funded by the Victorian State Government, this major project saw a heritage 22-bedroom rooming house entirely revamped and a new apartment complex built on site to provide a total of 38-self-contained homes for single women. Women who used to live in the property have been offered priority access and are now settling in their new, self-contained home.

As you know, we've also been in touch with you to ask you to share your thoughts about Unison in our Tenant Satisfaction Survey. I'd like to thank all the tenants who completed the survey and shared their feedback. The responses will help determine how we can best improve our services to you. We'll be sharing the results of the survey on our website and social media channels soon.

As always, I encourage you to contact your Place Manager at any time with any other thoughts, questions or issues you wish to raise.

James



Mark the date: Census night is on Tuesday 10 August 2021

Every five years, the Australian Bureau of Statistics counts every person and home in Australia. This is called the Census of Population and Housing.

Participation is compulsory and everyone staying in your household on census night must be included. You will receive information on how to take part early August, and you will be able to fill in the survey online or using a paper form.

For more information, visit census.gov.au

Rent review – how it will work

Unison is implementing our new rent policy which includes a yearly review of incomes to assist people with paying the right amount of rent.

Residents will be receiving letters from their Place Managers in due course, requesting details of household members, and their income details. This will be used to calculate the correct amount of rent you will be paying.

It is very important that you complete the form/s sent to you and return them by the date specified in the letter, or you may risk the rental subsidy being removed which would increase your rent to the market rate.

If you have any questions, please call your Place Manager on 03 9349 0250 or email us at info@unison.org.au. We are here to help.

Winter energy saving tips

Here are a few tips to stay warm and save energy and money this Winter:

- Close window coverings at night to keep the warm air inside.
- Use draught stoppers so warm air doesn't escape under doors.
- Dress for the colder weather. You can turn your heater down and still stay comfortable.
- Stay cosy in the rooms you are using. Close doors to areas of your home that you don't need to heat.
- Regularly clean the vents and filters of your plug-in heater to keep them working efficiently.



Trouble with your TV reception?

Follow this troubleshooting checklist to fix your TV reception problem:

1. Check the antenna cable which goes from your TV to the wall. Is it in good condition and not tangled or touching power cables?
2. Is there any visible damage to the TV port or cables?
3. Try re-tuning the TV (refer to your user manual).
4. No luck with steps 1-3? It might be time to buy a new antenna cable.

Ask for a "quad-shield coaxial cable". This is the type of cable recommended. It is the renter's responsibility to purchase their own cable as it is not provided by Unison.

5. Still no luck? Contact the Maintenance Helpdesk and tell us exactly what the issue is. For example, the TV port is damaged or there is no signal after re-tuning the TV.



Feedback

If you have stories you'd like to see in future newsletters, or any feedback on the current edition please contact Pam via email at communications@unison.org.au.