



Featured Resident: Gary

# Thrive

Community Newsletter | Winter 2022

## Welcome to your Winter Community Newsletter!

This edition we meet one of our residents, Gary, hear from your Tenant Advisory Group Convenor Frank Otis, learn about the affordable housing we are building and are treated to a winter warming soup recipe. And more!

Happy reading.

### Unison

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

### A jack of all trades

Gary likes helping out and keeping busy. Whether it be helping his mates, playing for the cohealth Kangas or cooking meals in his apartment, Gary is always on the move.

Gary's impressive work resume includes selling newspapers at Flinders St Station as a young lad (selling 300 papers in one afternoon!), a Big Top rouseabout and clown at a travelling circus, donkey breaker and farm hand/fencer.

"I am a jack of all trades," laughs Gary.

"I always loved sport," Gary smiles. "I'd play anything when I was young, but mainly swimming, footy and cricket." He had a few health issues as a child, and Gary likes to stay active and healthy.

He still loves his footy and cricket. Although he started his junior footy career as a nippy little rover, he now plays all over the ground for the cohealth Kangas in the ReLink League. "I started with the Western Storm and then joined the Kangas. I have played senior footy for about 14 years and have won a couple of trophies."

Gary has lived in Melbourne's western suburbs most of his life. He now calls a new Unison apartment building in Melbourne's West, home. "My health is important to me. Living near the Footscray Market I am able to buy fresh and healthy food to cook meals such as stews, pasta and roast dinners."

## What vegies are in season?

Fruit and vegies are usually the cheapest and most delicious when they are in season. Buying them at this time is great for your hip pocket and your taste buds. So what's in season this Winter?

**FRUIT:** Apples, Citrus (like grapefruit, lemon, oranges, mandarin), Kiwifruit, Passionfruit, Pears and Rhubarb.

**VEGIES:** Beetroot, Broccoli, Brussel Sprouts, Carrots, Cauliflower, Celery, Leeks, Lettuce, Onions, Potatoes, Pumpkin and Silverbeet.



## Winter warmer recipe: Creamy Potato, Carrot and Leek Soup

Not much beats a bowl of hearty soup on a cold day. Here is a favourite recipe using in-season vegies.

**Ingredients:** 2 leeks chopped; 2 celery stalks chopped; 2 cups chicken stock; 2 cups vegetable stock; 3 large potatoes sliced; 3 carrots chopped; 2 teaspoons salt; 1 cup cream; and 1 tablespoon butter.

**Step 1:** Melt butter in a pot over medium-high heat. Add the leeks and celery and stir in the butter until soft, about 3 to 5 minutes. Pour chicken and vegie stock into the pot; add potatoes, carrots and salt.

**Step 2:** Cook on medium heat until the potatoes and carrots are soft, about 20 minutes.

**Step 3:** Blend soup with a blender or potato masher until smooth. Stir cream into the soup, turn the heat down and simmer for about 20 minutes until it's thick. Enjoy!



### A message from the Tenant Advisory Group Convenor, Frank Otis

Dear fellow tenants,

TAG has resumed meeting face to face in 2022 and it's good to see people in person again. TAG is recruiting!

You will have received a TAG email or seen posters around our communities asking for new members. TAG is the voice of the tenants and provides advice to Unison on how to best meet the needs of renters and improve how Unison operates. Being a member of TAG isn't a lot of work. You come along to meetings and give your opinion.

If you are interested, get in contact with your Place Manager or go to the Unison website [unison.org.au/tenant-resources/tenant-advisory-group](https://unison.org.au/tenant-resources/tenant-advisory-group).

Stay healthy and safe.  
Frank Otis, Convenor

## Message from the CEO, James King

Hi everyone,

It's been a pleasure for everyone at Unison to be able to meet with our renters face to face again, now that our main offices have reopened. While we've reopened our doors, rest assured that your safety, health and wellbeing remain our focus and we are following strict COVIDSafe guidelines to keep everyone safe.

I'm delighted to share that for the second year in a row, Unison has won a UDIA Award for Excellence. Our Fairfield apartment complex, which opened last year, received the prestigious award, showcasing our goal to build a place where residents can be comfortable, live safely, make memories and connect with the community.

Behind the scenes, we're working hard to ensure Unison continues to meet the housing needs of our renters while remaining financially sustainable. We have refreshed our Business Model which is bringing some changes to the way we do things, while continuing to pursue our vision of Communities that Thrive.

We are opening up access to our social and affordable housing to a wider range of people in need and are aiming to develop new housing to match the needs of these people with building design to include 1, 2- and 3-bedroom apartments and/or townhouses.

In line with other community housing providers in Victoria, we are also increasing the percentage of income we charge in rent to 30% of income for most of our social housing renters. The revenue generated by this change is essential to ensure Unison continues to operate sustainably and will be reinvested to provide more quality, affordable housing.

As always, if you have any questions, please talk to your Place Manager.

Stay well,  
James



CEO James King with Sheri Johnston (L), Unison Director Finance and Danni Nash (R), Unison Director Asset Management



Unison's 74-apartment building in Werribee nearing completion

## New properties update

As you know, Unison is committed to addressing the critical shortage of affordable housing by building more homes. So, what are we working on?

We're on track to finish the construction of a 74-apartment building in Werribee later this year. In part funded by the Victorian Government, this \$30 million project is particularly significant for the City of Wyndham given its growing housing affordability crisis and lack of social housing.

Forty-two new homes for vulnerable families are being built in the City of Banyule, just north of Melbourne, also in partnership with the State Government.

Another project we're excited about is *Make Room*. We are working with the City of Melbourne, the Victorian Government, philanthropic organisations (including Lord Mayor's Charitable Fund and The Ian Potter Foundation) on this project targeting people sleeping rough in the CBD. *Make Room* will provide short-term supported homes for up to 12 months to assist people transition into longer-term housing.

## **Be a recycling champ!**

- **Don't bag recyclable waste:** Use a container to take your recyclables such as glass bottles, cardboard and milk cartons to your yellow recycling bin. Please don't bag your recyclables in plastic. If you do, the yellow bin contents will all go to landfill.
- **Flatten your cardboard boxes:** You will get more in your yellow recycling bin before it is collected!
- **Leftover food waste:** Food waste goes into the red general waste bin (unless you have a compost bin!). Before recyclables go into your yellow mixed recycling bin, all food waste needs to be rinsed from the container. If it cannot be rinsed it needs to go into the red general waste bin.
- **If in doubt, put it in the general waste bin!** If you don't know which bin to place waste into, put it into the red general waste bin.



## **Let's continue to stay COVIDSafe**

Vaccination is the most effective way to protect ourselves from COVID-19. We encourage you to check your COVID-19 vaccinations are up to date – this means you have received two primary doses, as well as a booster. The Australian Government recommends a fourth COVID-19 winter dose, for people most at risk of severe illness. Please visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au) or call 1800 675 398 to find out more.

Our teams continue to follow COVIDSafe protocols to keep our communities safe. All Unison staff have received at least two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, except those with a medical exemption. For more information on how to stay well and protected, visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au)



## **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](mailto:communications@unison.org.au) to share your story and feedback.