

Thrive

Community Newsletter

Winter 2020



Featured Resident:
Dorothy Woolcock

Welcome to the Winter Community Newsletter!

In this edition, we bring you a message from Unison's Acting CEO James King, suggestions on how to stay safe, healthy and warm, and we meet one of our residents, Dorothy.

Joy through craft, connection and creativity.

Walking into Dorothy's home, it is very easy to see she is creative. Her lovely welcoming apartment has a gorgeous display of plants, stylish decorations and artwork, and her fridge is something special. It houses an amazing collection of fridge magnets given to Dorothy by her widely travelled niece.

Dorothy lives in one of Unison's apartment complexes for people aged 55 and over. Living with a group of people her own age suits Dorothy to a tee.

Volunteering is an important part of Dorothy's life. Pre COVID-19, Dorothy ran a school holiday craft program at the local community centre

with her twin sister. A lot of newly arrived migrant children attended. "They absolutely loved it!" enthuses Dorothy. They have also set up craft tables at local festivals and community events.

Dorothy has also knitted around 50 beanies and mittens each year for people who are homeless, she has offered free crochet and knitting lessons and has encouraged her neighbours to get together for a cuppa, a chat and to join the community knitting circle. "I am always interested in what I can do to help," says Dorothy.

Dorothy has brought joy to many people through her connection with her community and generous spirit.

Message from the Acting CEO, James King

I'm James, and I'm Acting CEO as Ed Holmes has left the organisation. I'll take this opportunity to thank him for his leadership over the last 4 years; he will be missed.

I hope you, your loved ones and your neighbours are keeping well and safe. We know it is a challenging time for everybody.

Although the way we deliver our services temporarily changed, we continue to be here for you, and your Place Manager remains your key Unison contact.

As you know, Unison moved primarily to a phone service in March. This move was on advice from the Government, and with the health and safety of our residents and our staff our top priority. We thank you very much for your patience and understanding during this time.

Some of our offices have re-opened. However, we all need to continue to stay alert to the virus, so the following changes will apply:

- We ask you to respect minimum 1.5m social distance from Unison staff and contractors at all times
- Staff and contractors who visit homes are asked to wear gloves and may wear masks. This is to protect the whole community.
- Only one household will be allowed in a Unison place management office at a time.

We have prepared up-to-date coronavirus information with the specific needs of our tenants in mind. Please head to our website www.unison.org.au/coronavirus for this important information.

If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to contact your Place Manager who will be able to connect you to local services and resources that are available to assist you.

Take care of yourself, your family and your community, and stay well.



A message from the Tenant Advisory Group Convenor, Frank Otis

Dear fellow tenants,

I think that the most important thing to remember about this coronavirus emergency is this: you are not alone. We are all in this together and together we can beat it.

If the loneliness is getting to you, remember there is a lot of help out there – I encourage you to reach out if you need extra support, don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for it.

So please stay safe and stay as positive as you can. Follow the Government's rules regarding the virus. They won't be forever and it is for your own good.



You are not alone

Remember, if you need someone to talk to, help is just a phone call away.

Here are a few contact numbers and website addresses that can offer you support if needed.

- Beyond Blue: 1300 224 636, www.beyondblue.org.au
- Lifeline: 13 11 14, www.lifeline.org.au
- Headspace: 1800 650 890 for 12-25 year olds, family and friends, www.headspace.org.au
- Mensline: 1300 78 99 78, www.mensline.org.au
- Safe Steps: 1800 015 188 or 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732 for support to people impacted by domestic and family violence
- The Department of Health and Human Services Coronavirus page has a lot of helpful information including a section dedicated to mental health www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus
- Care packages of food and essential supplies are available for people most in need and who are required to self-isolate due to COVID-19. To register, call the Victorian Government COVID-19 Hotline on 1800 675 398



Your rent explained

As a non-profit organisation, we rely on rental income for the provision of cleaning, maintenance and other services. This is why Unison continues to collect and closely monitor rent payments.

If there is a change in your financial circumstances, please contact your Place Manager as soon as possible so that we can assist you to find a solution.

If you are on Centrelink, Unison has decided to exclude the Centrelink COVID-19 supplement from rent calculations as we recognise the additional stress experienced by people on low incomes.

Those of you in long-term housing (excluding public housing), would have received a letter from us at the end of last year regarding implementation of Unison's new Rent Policy. Due to the current pandemic, this process has been put on hold for the moment.

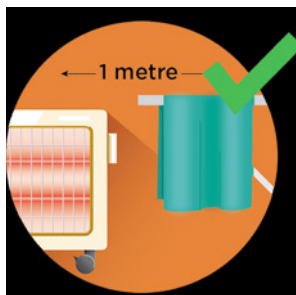
You can find more information on our website: unison.org.au/tenant-resources/rent-faq

As always, feel free to reach out to your Place Manager if you have any questions.

Keep your home warm and stay safe this winter

Winter is here and our heaters are cranking up to warm our living spaces. Here are some tips to keep warm and safe:

1. Do not dry clothing on, or place anything on your heater as this can be a safety hazard



2. Rearrange your furniture to allow circulation of heat throughout your living area. A couch placed directly in front of a heat source will block the flow and can be a safety hazard.

3. Rug up and dress for warmer weather and you will be able to turn your heater thermostat down and stay comfortable
4. Close curtains and blinds at night to keep warm air in the room and stop it from escaping through windows
5. Hot water bottles are great, but be careful when filling them and never use them with an electric blanket
6. When using electric blankets, follow the manufacturer's instructions. Don't leave them on for more than 30 minutes and turn them off when you go to bed.

Look after yourself

It is always a good thing to take care of yourself, particularly in challenging times like now. Focus on a few simple things to help stay in good health.

Stay connected: Check in and chat with friends and family. It can be at a safe social distance, over the phone or using the various video chat options. Staying connected is very good for your health.

Manage your stress levels: Tips for staying calm include listening to relaxing music, reading a book, watching your favourite TV shows and trying meditation. It is important to maintain a daily routine and get a good night's sleep. Try going to sleep, waking up and eating at regular times.

Stay active: A walk in the fresh air, regular simple exercises, stretching, taking the stairs or even doing housework are ways to keep moving and staying active.

Maintain a healthy diet: Good nutrition is always important, but during stressful times there's nothing better than a tasty, healthy meal. Keep it simple, fresh and homemade if you can.



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

If you would prefer to receive the newsletter by email please let your Place Manager know.