

Thrive

community newsletter

Welcome to your winter edition of Thrive

In this edition, meet renter Janie, find out where the coffee van is stopping this winter, discover our McIntyre Drive community, learn about cost of living and support services, and more.

Message from CEO

Hi everyone,

It's been a big few months at Unison.

Our Marshall Street development in Newtown, Geelong is nearly complete. We've transformed 22 older apartments into 77 new, modern homes. The project is ahead of schedule, and we look forward to welcoming renters in late 2026. With new government funding, we hope to continue delivering more homes for Victorians who need them.

In other positive news, the recent Federal Budget included increased support for young people experiencing housing insecurity. This addresses a longstanding gap in the system and reflects the impact of advocacy through the Home Time campaign, which Unison proudly supported, having recently attended a parliamentary delegation in Canberra. The changes will help community housing providers better support young people and are a positive step towards a fairer housing system.

We also continue working to improve how we support our communities. After a successful 12-month partnership, Unison will be assuming governance responsibility for Wombat Housing Support Services (Wombat). Wombat will continue to operate as its own organisation, and this change won't affect the supports renters currently have in place. By working more closely together, we can make it easier for people to get the help they need to stay housed.

As the weather gets colder, please take care and keep in touch.

James
Unison CEO



Winter coffee van stops

The coffee van is a great way to meet the Unison team. You can chat to people you see day-to-day - like your Place Management Team - as well as team members who usually work behind the scenes at Unison, such as our Assets and Finance Team or even your gardener. As renter Lily said:

"I look forward to the van coming, I always have a cappuccino. It's good to see everyone, come together and have a good chat."

Good news - the coffee van is back this winter! It will be visiting these locations and serving free coffee and hot drinks to renters and the Unison team:

- 43 Station St, Fairfield
- 52 Napier St, Footscray
- 100-102 Marshall St, Ivanhoe
- 2 McIntyre Drive, Altona
- Park Place, Fitzroy

Look out for posters at your building or have a chat with your Place Manager to confirm dates and times.

Don't see your building on the list? That's okay. Unison plans to visit more Unison communities once we have our permanent coffee van up and running.



If you'd like the coffee van to stop into your community, fill out our form:



Your quarterly TAG update

The Tenant Advisory Group (TAG) met in early May to agree on future planning on key topics that the group would focus on over the next 12 months. The topics, chosen from feedback in the renter survey, will be discussed in future meetings included exploring how renters understand the complaints handling process; how we could improve

communication if there was a delay to a repair; what could be improved to increase renters' sense of community and safety and what support services renters would find helpful to assist their tenancy and wellbeing. The group also provided positive feedback on the reintroduction of the coffee van and the changes to rent letters so that they were clearer.

Meet Unison renter Janie



Janie, a nanny and musician, is a connector in her building at Unison's Marshall St property in Ivanhoe and an active member of our Tenant Advisory Group. Her bright one-bedroom apartment has all the features she dreamed of, and she's made it her own. "Knowing that there's no end on the lease, it's given me security with my mental health in every way. It's been fantastic," Janie says. Her journey to secure housing wasn't always easy, but with the support of her community and loved ones, she's found stability and a place to call home.

Scan the QR code to read more of Janie's story:



Maintenance tip: preventing mould

Mould can damage your home and may affect your health, especially if you have asthma or other health conditions.

The good news is that mould is often easy to prevent and remove.

Try these simple mould cleaning steps:

1. Mix equal parts white vinegar and water
2. Spray it on the mould
3. Leave it for one hour
4. Wear gloves to protect your skin
5. Wipe it off with a disposable cloth.

To keep mould from coming back, keep your home dry and let fresh air in when you can.

Community spotlight: McIntyre Drive, Altona

McIntyre Drive in Altona is an over 55s community managed by Unison, with the building owned by the Victorian Department of Families, Fairness & Housing. Supported by cohealth renters have access to wrap around supports, nearby health services and natural spaces like Cherry Lake and the Altona foreshore.

McIntyre Drive, Altona is an ongoing stop for Unison & VMCH's coffee van this winter, serving up free coffee and bringing Unison renters together over a fortnightly cup of coffee.

Thanks to MGS Architects for the images, with photography by Rhiannon Slater and Trevor Mein.



Scan the QR code to find out more:



Savings on transport

The cost of living has gone up recently. If money is already tight, everyday costs like petrol and transport being more expensive can make things even harder.

To help with costs, there are some new transport savings available across Victoria. Public transport fares in Victoria will stay half-price until the end of 2026. Drivers may also be able to get a 20% rebate on car registration for light vehicles. That could mean savings of up to \$186 for one car, or \$372 for two cars. Applications open from 1 June to 31 July 2026 through Consumer Affairs Victoria - so put a reminder in your diary to apply!



Scan the QR code to find out more:



Finding support

Winter can be a hard time. Energy bills often go up, homes can be harder to keep warm, and you're more likely to get sick.

If you need help, Ask Izzy (askizzy.org.au) is a free website that can connect you with support services near you, including:

- Meals and food
- Counselling and mental health support
- Money help
- Family violence support.

If you can't find the support you need online, have a chat to your Place Manager. They can help connect you to the right services and supports.

Caring for pets

Paws and Provisions is a volunteer-run service that helps people to care for their pets during tough times.

The Paws and Provisions van travels across Melbourne, providing:

- Free pet food
- Parasite treatment
- Pet supplies like collars, leads, beds and toys.

Want to stay up-to-date with the van's movements?

Scan the QR code to sign up to their mailing list:



If you're struggling, help is available:

- Beyond Blue (24/7): 1300 224 636
- Lifeline (24/7): 13 11 14
- Suicide Call Back Service (24/7): 1300 659 467
- 1800 RESPECT: 1800 737 732

Share your thoughts

At Unison we're committed to providing quality services. We welcome your feedback and ideas on Thrive newsletter. Please email us at communications@unison.org.au to contribute.