

AROUND THE HOUSE

AUTUMN 2017



Welcome to our new tenants from the Bedford community

Unity Housing is pleased and excited to welcome more than 150 tenants from Bedford into our organisation.

Bedford is the largest, most recognised and trusted disability organisation in South Australia. Bedford and Unity have recently established a partnership which will significantly improve housing options and build a brighter future for the Bedford tenant community.

Bedford has chosen Unity to deliver housing services currently managed by Bedford, such as rent, leases and maintenance.

By providing the best housing service possible, the partnership will help build a stronger sense of community and improve the wellbeing of tenants.

Unity is working closely with tenants and their families, guardians and caregivers to provide them with all of the information they need for a smooth transition.

Unity looks forward to delivering accommodation services to our new tenants.

Bedford tenants look forward to joining Unity

We spoke with two Bedford tenants and employees, Kimberly Tutty and Tony Harris (pictured), about their time with Bedford and what the changes mean to them.

Kimberly has worked at Bedford for 28 years, originally as a receptionist and now four days a week as an assistant. "I love it," she says. "I've had a few different jobs and done work experience and all that has helped me get to where I am now."

Tony works at Bedford one day a week in human resources, assisting with letter applications, filing and various other tasks, and also works two days a week at Uniting Communities in the Adelaide CBD doing clerical work. Tony is the second oldest tenant in his Bedford housing co-op, having lived there for almost 20 years. "Where I live is good because of the security," Tony says. "Bedford has given me a secure roof over my head."



Bedford's new partnership with Unity means that the Bedford Housing Association – a group run by Bedford tenants that exists to support other tenants – is no longer required. Both Kimberly and Tony were part of this association and say they are looking forward to the new opportunities that being part of Unity will give them.

"Unity is a secure organisation so we have the backing behind us, which is the main thing," Tony says. "Unity have a high standard of expertise and their maintenance standards will be very efficient. It's very important for tenants to have ongoing improved maintenance."

"I am looking forward to attending meetings and keeping our fellow residents informed about what's going on," Kimberly says.



FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

One of the best things about Australia is its education. The government is very generous with this serious and important subject. The simple reason is that all life depends on education. If you prepare successfully for, and develop your education, you will be successful. If you get a good education, you will have a good economy and then have a good society.

For me, Adeeb, I think education is not only to get a good job but to become an open-minded person, so I completed a Bachelor of Economics and also a Bachelor in English Literature. When I reached Australia in 2003 I enrolled in TAFESA to do a Diploma of Interpreting Arabic-English. I have always encouraged my daughters and son to study and get the benefit of a great education in Australia.

Education has helped me in my career progression as a poet. I prepared myself for coming to Australia by studying English in Iraq. This helped me to mix with Australian life quickly and to also publish two poetry books in English.

- Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen

Read about Adeeb's life and achievements on this page and his poetry on page 8.

If you have a story idea for the next edition, please send your contributions to editor@unityhousing.org.au.

Esteemed poet reflects on work and achievements

Award-winning poet, journalist and translator, Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen lives and breathes poetry.

Born in Babylon in 1953, Adeeb fell in love with poetry as a young child. "In my house there was a big library and I enjoyed reading," he says. "The first book I read was *The Arabian Nights*, which is an imaginary story that has had an effect on many writers.

"One teacher who was semi blind wrote my poems on the blackboard and said, 'We have a poet here'. He was clever and a big inspiration to me. From there I started going to poetry festivals at university. I then began to publish my poems in the newspaper and magazines. After two years I started to work as a journalist and this really opened doors for me as I was able to connect with a number of editors."

With 18 books to his name to date (16 in Arabic and two in English), Adeeb's inspiration is endless and comes from "everything and nothing". "Sometimes from memories, music, movies, songs, a beautiful face, difficult words when someone has been rude or mean to me, sometimes sad situations, the rain, everything," he says. "The sea has also become an icon for me as I am now face to face with it in Australia."

Adeeb's poetry has been published in *The Best Australian Poems 2007* and *The Best Australian Poems 2012*, on many Australian websites, and in magazines and books. In May 2016, Adeeb received an award – a Certificate of Distinguished Achievement in Poetry and Journalism – where he travelled to New South Wales Parliament to receive it. "This was a great honor," he says.

A resident of The Terrace Boarding House, Adeeb cannot speak highly enough of his home. "It is a very safe place and also very quiet," he says. "The staff are very good and some of them have even bought my books and have come to one of my lectures at the SA Writers' Centre. I was very proud about this.

"I want to say thank you to Australia for accepting me and giving me citizenship and helping me and my family, for so many things. I am proud because I have become part of the Australian writer's community, and when they choose my poems I become part of Australian poetry history."

You can read more about Adeeb and his poetry on his website <http://www.adeebk.com/english2/English/adeeb.htm>



Adeeb, right, accepting his Certificate of Distinguished Achievement, from Shaoquett Moselmane MLC in May 2016.

Thank you for having your say

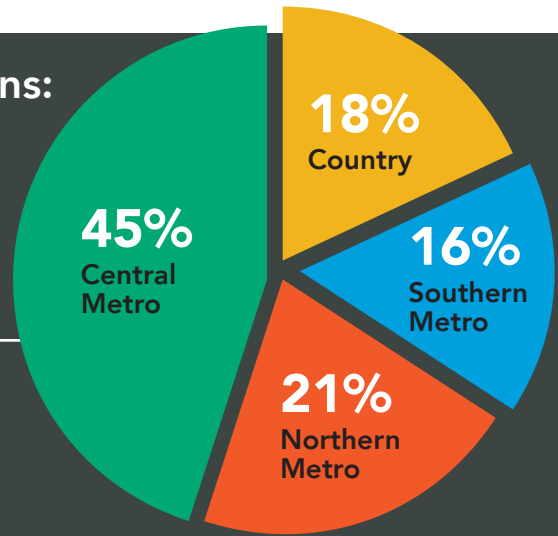
Late last year we asked you to have your say to help shape the future of our community programs for the emerging Community Connect Program. Community Connect is being redesigned to better meet tenants' expectations. Telling us your views via the survey has helped achieve this. We extend our thanks to the tenants who participated in and completed the survey.

Who responded?

95 responses were received:



Regions:



Of those who responded:

60%

are satisfied with having their say at Unity.

66%

want Unity to ask tenants what they think more often.

51%

said they feel well-connected to their local community, while

49%

said they do not feel connected.

63%

want to get to know their neighbours better.

94%

believe feeling safe in their local neighbourhood is very important.

81%

know about Unity's tenant newsletter Around the House, although the majority do not think or are unsure if changes should be made to it.

59%

believe Unity should provide community programs such as art groups, life skills training and social events.

61%

have never used the Unity website, while

41%

believe Unity should use social media (Facebook, Twitter) more to communicate with tenants.

When asked what type of activities you would like to see in your local area that are not currently available, the following responses were given:

walking groups, free activities for children, a singles' night or get together, a bigger playground for children and barbecue area, fitness events, yoga and meditation, affordable after-school sports, community garden, closed-fence pet park, drop-in centre, Tai Chi.

Congratulations!

There were five \$20 shopping vouchers up for grabs for completing the survey.

The winning tenants, who were selected at random, are Dallas-Anne from Windsor Gardens; David from Saddleworth; Jane from Kurralta Park; Shejerina from Richmond; and Dianne from Mitchell Park.

It's never too late to study

We interviewed four Unity tenants to learn about the short courses they have been undertaking and why they believe studying as an adult is important.

Kyle

After being told he would never be able to read well, Kyle was determined to prove to himself and others that he was more than capable so he enrolled in a Certificate I & II in Education and Skills Development at Tauondi Aboriginal College. Kyle is also studying Film and Photography at Tauondi Aboriginal College, and a Photography Workshop at Hutt St Centre. "I wanted to learn more," he says. "I'm learning how to read, write and do math better. I like photography and am interested in making short films and I thought the course would be a good way to teach me how to do this." Learning and meeting other students is giving Kyle the confidence to achieve his goals. "New information is coming out all the time," he says. "If you don't learn about it you won't know about it. Learning and meeting new people helps me to feel happy. I made a photo animation short film that was good fun. There are other types of short films that we're going to be learning about that I'm really looking forward to. I'd like to hold an exhibition of my films and photos one day."

Learning and meeting new people helps me to feel happy."



Gary

With a couple of courses already under his belt, including a writing course and a computer course, Gary is currently undertaking a short story writing course at WEA Adult Learning. "I've always been interested in writing and I've had plenty of time on my hands since recovering from a heart operation," he says. "I went through a bad year of depression and the writing course really helped with this. It took my mind off a lot of stuff. I have never used a computer so learning how to do that gave me a lot of confidence, which I was lacking." Through his current course, Gary has enjoyed learning about the English language and in particular how to write about characters and in first and third person. "You have to keep the mind busy," he says. "This has really improved my confidence and got me out of depression."

I went through a bad year of depression and the writing course really helped with this."



Helen

When Helen discovered she could enrol in a five-week Introduction to Auslan course (Australian sign language) at WEA Adult Learning at no cost to her, she was thrilled. "This is something I've always wanted to do but it's either been too expensive or somewhere I couldn't get to," she says. "I read somewhere that the government made it more affordable and I was offered a free application through Unity. A friend and I decided we would definitely like to do it, and so far we love it." Over the years, Helen had met and interacted with people with a hearing impairment and would like to have been able to communicate with them better. "I'm aware of minority groups and how isolated they are," she says. "If more people can communicate with them it might make them feel more included. People are interested in knowing and hearing what they have to say." Helen is already interested in studying another course. "I hope to make more friends, be able to communicate better and keep practicing the language so I don't lose it. One day it might be useful in a bigger sense. Learning keeps your mind active. Sometimes when you're stuck in life in emotional problems or whatever is going on, it makes you feel like you're achieving something positive."

"A friend and I decided we would definitely like to do it, and so far we love it."



Kingsley

Kingsley's love of blues music goes back many years, so learning how to play the harmonica through WEA Adult Learning will bring him one step closer to being able to play the music himself. "I have always loved blues and wanted to learn the harmonica for a long time so I thought, 'Why not? It's time I did it'," Kingsley says. "I knew there was a grant for the course so I asked if Unity could help me out. I paid for the harmonica and the CDs to practice with. Out of nine of us in the course, there are three women and they're happy and they keep the lesson really cheery." Kingsley's goal after completing the course is "just to be able to play a bit of music". "I was watching Rio Bravo the other day and I got my harmonica and played along as best I could," he says. "I don't want to be a famous music star or anything but just to learn an instrument and play along would be great. I worked in aged care for 15 years and learnt that if you keep your brain active by doing word puzzles or playing music, it can help to keep things like dementia at bay."

"Keep your brain active by doing word puzzles or playing music."



A healthy work-life balance at The Globe

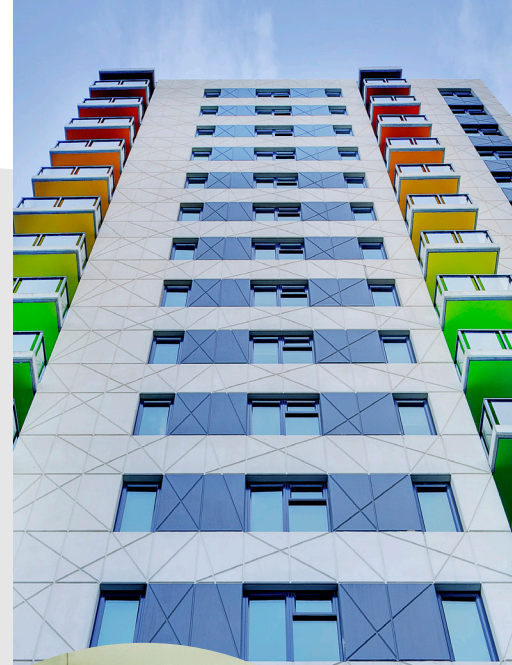
As both a tenant and an employee of Unity Housing, Adel Mosavi is very active within our organisation. Adel has lived at The Globe apartments in the Adelaide CBD with his wife Muatear and their baby Ayan since 2013 and has also worked for Unity as a building coordinator since 2015.

With both Adel and Muatear studying Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) at Adelaide University, the convenience of living at The Globe means they can be close to the university.

"It could not get any better than living here," Adel says.

"This building, with all its great features, provides students with a quiet, clean and comfortable environment to study and entertain, and relax when they feel tired. There are so many good features of this building such as the study rooms, media room, common kitchen, bike parking and more importantly the safety of this building. It is so satisfying."

Living and working at The Globe is enabling Adel to achieve his goals. "My career aspirations are to work as a Structural Engineer in Australia, probably in Adelaide, so I can apply engineering knowledge with design skills to engage in all aspects of a building project," Adel says. "Muatear's aspirations are to work as a reservoir engineer, drilling engineer or production engineer within Australia for the oil and gas companies such as Santos. Working for Unity has been a great experience for me and I feel so lucky to be able to work with this friendly team. The staff are more than just colleagues, they are real friends that have been giving me all the support I have needed and I cannot thank them enough. I would like to especially thank my colleagues Jo, Kirilee and Cindy for all their help and support inside and outside of work."



All welcome at Neighbour Day movie night

All Unity tenants, friends and family are invited to attend a movie night on **Friday, March 24** to celebrate Neighbour Day 2017, in partnership with local council and services. The movie, *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, is a New Zealand adventure comedy/drama starring Sam Neill.

The event will be held in the parklands directly opposite The Terrace Boarding House (260 South Terrace) next to the Himeji Gardens. Arrive early to set up your spot and enjoy a sausage sizzle at 7pm followed by the movie at sundown.



This is a free event, however a gold coin donation is required for the sausage sizzle.

Michael's journey from nomad to tenant

Unity Housing tenant Michael Mazur recently made contact with his Housing Officer, Rachel, to express his gratitude to her and Unity for providing him with accommodation that he has been able to make his home. Michael showed his appreciation by taking Rachel and former Regional Manager, Celia, out to lunch.

It was during this thank you lunch that Michael told his story. Rachel and Celia thought it would make a great article for Around the House, and so with Michael's permission they are honoured to have the pleasure of sharing his happiness with you all.

Michael has lived in his current property for six years. Before that, he was a tenant of MACHA (which became Unity Housing in 2008), living in Carrington Street, Adelaide in the early 1990s.

Michael had lived in this property for around six months when he decided to leave South Australia to find work. He initially moved to Mildura and got a job picking fruit then moved around until he eventually returned to South Australia. Once Michael returned, he was transient, residing in boarding houses and shared accommodation. Michael found this time in his life unsettling as he felt no sense of real security or belonging, and feels this state of insecurity was a direct result of not having a permanent place to live.

Eventually, Michael decided he would make enquiries with an agency he knew, an agency he had previous experience with and confidence in. That agency was Unity Housing.

Michael found accommodation with Unity in one of the city boarding houses and made the decision to do what was required to make sure long-term accommodation could be offered to him. This meant ensuring he was a suitable boarding house tenant and remained in this accommodation for stability. Michael was determined to remain a Unity tenant.

In 2008, Michael was offered a Unity property in North Adelaide. He jumped at the opportunity to reside in community housing, which brought him security and safety and provided him with the stability that long-term housing offers.

In 2013, Michael's mum moved from Brisbane to South Australia to be closer to him, by which time, Michael had transferred to his current Unity property and she was able to move in with him for a year. They remain close and she even joined Michael at the thank you lunch with Rachel and Celia.

Michael explained over lunch how Unity has given him stability by providing long-term housing, which in turn has given him the confidence and ability to study in his chosen field of Computer Assembly and Repair. Michael intends to continue training in this area and pursue a career in Information Technology.

Michael concluded his story by saying:

"I feel safe now. When I go to bed at night and cover myself with the doona...I feel safe."



Tenant Spring Party survey winners

Thank you to those who completed the Tenant Spring Party survey in the previous edition of Around the House. The winning tenants, who were randomly selected, are **Nicholas from Taperoo; Van-Huon from Pennington; and Margaret from Pooraka.**

Congratulations – you have each won a \$20 shopping voucher.

Poet's corner



By Adeeb Kamal Ad-Deen, Tenant

Depths

In my depths
There is a white bird
That drops slaughterous in the depths of the theater.
In the depths of the theater
There are screams, moans and torn clothes.
In the depths of the torn clothes there is a dream.
In the depths of the dream there is a river.
In the depths of the river there is a boy.
In the depths of the boy there is a heart.
In the depths of the heart there is a poem.
In the depths of the poem there is a letter.
In the depths of the letter there is a dot.
In the depths of the dot there is a Sufi.
In the depths of the Sufi, there is God:
God who looks at my slaughterous bird
With weeping eyes.

My friend Tolstoy

You do not have the right,
My friend, O great Tolstoy,
To throw Anna Karenina-
Heroine of your novel-
Under the train's wheels!
How could you allow the train's wheels
To cut off Anna's luxurious fingers,
Her face that lights up with sweetness, tenderness and
beauty,
Her glamorous hair
And her body which was loved by everyone who saw?
It is not your right, my dear friend,
To kill Anna
In front of my eyes that are full of tears,
My heart that sinks in sorrow
And my body which dies quietly
At the end of the world
To make me a speechless witness
Who cannot do anything
But to apologize to Anna Karenina
Every night
With meaningless and shapeless words
For a crime he did not commit at all!

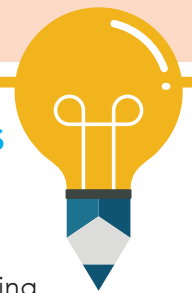
In preparation for
**Unity's Autumn
Quiz Night**,

we are seeking
donations that can
be given out on
the night for prizes
and hampers. Items
for the donations include
cosmetics and bath products, kitchen items,
non-perishable items, admission tickets
to events or entertainment venues, new
books and stationery and are welcome from
now. If you are interested in donating and/
or would like to attend the event, please
contact Mel Allsop by phoning **8232 5459**
or **0417 291 389** or emailing
m.allsop@unityhousing.org.au.

The venue for the event is the Box Factory
Community Centre at 59 Regent Street
South, Adelaide. This is a free community
event. More information will be available in
the next edition of Around the
House.

**Donations
wanted for
quiz night**

**Got what it takes
to be editor?
Get in touch!**



Unity is committed to increasing
opportunities for tenants and encouraging
participation in many ways, especially
through Around the House. If you would
like to contribute your ideas and skills and
make a difference as editor of Around the
House we would love to hear from you.
Please email **editor@unityhousing.org.
au** or phone Alexandra on **8237 8750** to
discuss this role in further detail and find
out how you can get on board. Whether it's
just for one edition or on a regular basis, all
tenants are welcome to contribute.

Key dates for the next edition

The deadline for content submission
for the next Around the House is

Friday, May 5.

Please email your ideas, articles and
photos to **editor@unityhousing.org.au**
or phone **8237 8750**.

**Please note – We are aware the last edition
was distributed later than expected and
apologise for this inconvenience.*