

# AROUND THE HOUSE

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NEWS

## From the editor's desk



*Good day to you all.  
My name is Anthony Stokes  
and I will be the editor  
of this edition of Around  
the house, Unity's tenant  
newsletter.*

It is such a thrill to be writing  
for Unity and I hope some of my  
excitement will rub off.

I aim to deliver inspirational and  
thought-provoking stories that  
are entertaining and helpful.

So let us begin our journey  
together. If you have any  
requests for topics or would  
like to contribute a story, please  
send it through to me at:  
[aroundthehouseed@gmail.com](mailto:aroundthehouseed@gmail.com)  
or Anna on 8237 8786.

Thanks,  
Anthony

## 87% of Unity tenants read *Around the house*

**This year Unity tested how many  
tenants read *Around the house*.**

- **41% said they read every edition**
- **46% said they read it sometimes**

This is an exceptionally good  
result for a newsletter.

But what does it mean?

A high level of readership  
means that Unity has a reliable  
way of getting messages out  
to tenants, like invitations to  
Unity's annual Christmas party  
and important things like how to  
handle emergency out of hours  
maintenance matters. It also

means that if you contribute to the  
newsletter by writing an article or  
giving an interview, a lot of people  
read it. It gets better – many tenants  
tell me how much they love the  
stories about fellow tenants and  
how interesting they are.

So – if you want to get involved, pick  
up the phone or the keyboard and  
let us know. Our details are in the  
editor's column.

Thanks,  
Anna and Anthony



# Down, but not out

By John O'Connor



G'day folks,

**John here and I've got a limited number of words to tell you a story, so to the chase we will cut.**

I have a friend (funny, I know). I'll call him Sean (that's not his real name). Now Sean had a depressive episode leading up to xmas. Now we've all heard xmas can be a hard time for a lot of people. I also suffer with depression, so I can empathise.

Sean said he was feeling 'low' before xmas, but talking with him I saw it was more than just 'low'. I saw a big red flag, also pain. Huge trigger. Sean got so low that nothing was worth anything. The black dog had him, he was isolated and cursed every moment. It finally got to the point that he tried to kill himself.

Now when he speaks to me of the suicide attempt, he laughs. Sean tells me life is not much better. At the hospital the staff were great and with a bit of medication and counselling, he stabilised. Upon discharge he was given

some meds, told he has a support worker and said, "off you go."

So, now we have a very depressed man trying to find his way. He tells me about going to three different doctors, two of whom lectured him about what they were going to do. Only one doctor actually bothered to ask him how he was.

The back-up worker rang Sean three times. So as you can imagine, he was suitably unimpressed. So, once again, we have a majorly depressed man with nowhere to turn.

Sean tells me he has a defence strategy. Before leaving his house, he puts on a mask and a suit of emotional armour and braves the world.

Now that is Sean's story in a nutshell. What advice can I give you? It's a tough one. Do yourself a favour and read up on mental health strategies and ALWAYS look for and appreciate the small beauties in life.

It's tough, I know, but even if you think people don't care, there is usually someone who does.

## BEYOND BLUE

Anyone can call Beyond Blue for help with depression on **1300 22 4636**

They also recommend that people start with their GP. GPs are the best starting point for someone seeking professional help.

**A good GP can:**

- make a diagnosis
- check for any physical health problem or medication that may be contributing to the depression or anxiety
- discuss available treatments
- work with the person to draw up a Mental Health Treatment Plan so he or she can get a Medicare rebate for psychological treatment
- provide brief counselling, or in some cases, talking therapy

- prescribe medication
- refer a person to a mental health specialist such as a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Before consulting a GP about depression or anxiety, it's important to ask the receptionist to book a longer or double appointment, so there is plenty of time to discuss the situation without feeling rushed. It is also a good idea to raise the issue of depression or anxiety early in the consultation as some GPs are better at dealing with mental health problems than others.

The GP will discuss various treatment options and take the person's treatment preferences into account.

# Diverse eITY

By Anthony Stokes



**PICTURE ADELAIDE 2040 is an initiative by the City of Adelaide for all the city lovers out there to help shape the future of the city they love. If you're interested in joining in the conversation, visit [www.pictureadelaide.com.au](http://www.pictureadelaide.com.au)**



One of the best things about Adelaide is its cultural diversity, a key theme of Picture Adelaide 2040. Like the flowers in its many beautiful gardens the city is blossoming. On every street a person will be greeted with vibrant colours, melodic sounds and exotic smells. This is evidence of the city's growing diversity. Cultures from all points of the globe are gathering here to make Adelaide their home and Australian society is all the richer for it.

Diversity isn't only having a variety of ethnicities though and Adelaide allows for a society that embraces a broad spectrum of social interaction. Yes there is a cornucopia of gastronomic delights that is the Adelaide Central Market, to the wide variety of fashion stores. From the myriad of Internet cafes to the mysterious Shisha houses on Hindley Street, there is something for everyone. But there are other ways to create difference – the lesbian, gay, bi and transgender Feast Festival in November represents a great deal of difference even within that particular community. People from up and down the socioeconomic ladder also live and work in the city. Nothing demonstrates the range better than having Clipsal 500 folk having a beer alongside Fringe-goers. Chalk and cheese.

There are posters almost everywhere, loudly proclaiming the prominence of difference: advertising cabaret, heavy metal, soul, folk, comedy, local political campaigns, films and Indigenous therapies. Alongside these are the reminders of another type of global village – awareness campaigns about strife in Syria and Papua New Guinea.

Adelaideans celebrate diversity through many means: television, radio and not least of all with festivals. WOMAD, Fringe, Soundwave and the Adelaide Festival all contribute to spreading awareness and encouraging multiculturalism.

Unity has always prided itself on its involvement in the growing diversity in Adelaide – especially through their award-winning Community Connect program. One Unity tenant said she was happy with the city's growing diversity: *"I'm a vegetarian, so having a greater choice in dining is exciting."*

One Adelaide resident told me he thought the city was *"a friendly place, with no animosity between cultures."*

A bus driver I spoke to said that he had seen it all, and as far as he was concerned supporting diversity is a good way to go, *"it's heading in the right direction, just not fast enough."*

Another Unity tenant, Mark, said, *"they're doing a great job fostering diversity."*

Speaking with so many people I was pleasantly surprised at their understanding of diversity and the measures taken by Adelaide City Council to encourage it through social and cultural planning.

I like to think that diversity means *"that all people of all means in the city have an opportunity to contribute."*

# Is that a real maintenance emergency?

There is a massive difference between emergency maintenance and regular maintenance and Unity has been getting a lot of calls for emergency repairs on the out of hours line which are not emergencies.

An emergency is where someone's life is in danger or there is a threat to the structure of the property if the repair is not made immediately.

## What is an emergency?

- **Loss or partial loss of power/lighting to the entire property** – contact your electricity provider first for partial loss of power. If the freezer or medical equipment is not affected, it can wait until the next day. This is not an emergency.
- **Total loss of water to the property** – take a look at your water meter outside – it looks like this below – and make sure the water is turned on. If the handle is in the ON position but you still don't have water, contact SA Water on 1300 883 121 before contacting Unity. Not all properties have a visible water meter – they can be in a roof space in some group properties and are not accessible to tenants.



- **Hot water service** – being without hot water overnight is not classed as an emergency. If you report it on either a Friday night or on a Saturday our plumbers will try to attend as soon as possible. Please note that we may not be able to turn your hot water back on during the first visit if new parts or a whole new service needs to be ordered.
- **Faulty smoke alarm** – please report this as soon as possible to either your housing officer during the day or to the emergency maintenance out of hours phone line.

- **Gas leak** – if the leak is internal, such as a gas stove, turn off the mains if you know the location and contact Unity. The mains looks like this and the handle is usually yellow, as in the picture below. If the leak is outside the house, contact the Gas Emergency and Leak Reporting Service on 1800 427 5325.



- **Broken window or unsecure door** – if you are not able to secure your property, please report this as soon as possible to either your housing officer during the day or to the emergency maintenance out of hours phone line. Please note, if windows or doors are broken or insecure due to tenant damage this will be recharged to the tenant.
- **Blocked toilet** where this is the only toilet in the house. If you have a second toilet that is operational your request will not be treated as an emergency. If a plumber attends and finds a blockage has been caused by tenant misuse you will be recharged the cost of their visit.
- Significant water leaks, where you cannot contain the water by either isolating from the main water source or the tenant cannot contain by capturing it in a bucket.
- If you are locked out of your property, this is considered an emergency, however, the cost will be recharged to you if the locks are not faulty. In other words, if you lose your key, the cost will be charged to you.

## What to do in a real maintenance emergency!

If you have repairs or maintenance to report, please contact your housing officer during office hours  
– Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm – as soon as you can.

**To report emergency maintenance out of hours please phone 8237 8799 :**

- 5pm to 9am weekdays
- 5pm Fridays to 9am Mondays

**Boarding house tenants – please do not use this number. If you have emergency maintenance, please see a tenant services officer.**

*When you contact the emergency maintenance out of hours phone line, please tell the operator:*

- who you are
- the full address of the property
- details of the emergency issue
- what time a tradesperson can access your home

**Our out of hours call – our service is provided for real emergencies only. Please do not call if your repair can wait until the following working day.**

Unity took over  
the caretaking and  
management of The  
Globe Apartments in  
February 2015



## THANKS TO OUR DONORS

Thanks to K-Mart, Rundle Mall, J & R Plumbing, Salisbury and the Adelaide Zoo for generously supporting Unity's 2014 Tenant Christmas Party with your donations.

# thanks

# WONDERING ABOUT WATER PRICES?

Many community housing tenants call us concerned about their water bills. Unity doesn't set water prices. South Australia has the highest water prices in the nation and those prices have increased a lot over the last couple of years.

## *How to reduce your water bill*

- Check for water leaks and report them immediately – even small leaks must be reported
- Cut your showers down to four minutes
- Check to see if you can convert to a water efficient shower head
- Use the same towel for several showers – washing a towel after one use is a waste of water
- Sweep your driveway instead of hosing it
- Reduce the time you water your garden
- Fill the bathtub up only halfway
- Don't let the water run while hand-washing dishes. Fill up the sink basin, then rinse all at once afterwards
- Use your dishwasher and washing machine only when full
- Turn off the water when you're brushing your teeth

**“A report by the ABC in April 2014 said, “South Australians have the most expensive drinking water in the nation, according to a report by the state’s Essential Services Commission (ESCOSA).” The report found SA Water’s “typical residential water bill” jumped by more than 30 per cent to \$873 in 2012/13. ”**



## CENTRAL

Opening hours  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

81 Osmond Terrace,  
Norwood 5067

Phone: (08) 8237 8777

Fax: (08) 8237 8700

admin@unityhousing.org.au

Emergency after hours  
maintenance: 8237 8799

## SOUTH

Opening hours  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

1/506 Brighton Road,  
Brighton 5048

Phone: (08) 8198 1666

Fax: (08) 8296 7705

south@unityhousing.org.au

Emergency after hours  
maintenance: 8237 8799

## NORTH

Opening hours  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

179B Philip Hwy,  
Elizabeth South 5112

PO Box 1195  
Elizabeth Vale 5112

Phone: (08) 8287 8600

Fax: (08) 8287 6155

north@unityhousing.org.au

Emergency after hours  
maintenance: 8237 8799

## PORT AUGUSTA

Opening hours  
Mon and Thurs  
by appointment only

36 Stirling Road,  
Port Augusta SA 5700

PO Box 322,  
Port Augusta SA 5700

Phone: (08) 8642 6412

ledwards@unityhousing.org.au

## THE TERRACE

### BOARDING HOUSE

Opening hours  
Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm

South Terrace,  
Adelaide 5000

Phone: (08) 8232 5459

Fax: (08) 8232 4582

theterrace@unityhousing.org.au