

**Uniting Tenant Advisory
Forum 2021
Tenant Engagement**

Purpose

The Uniting Tenant Advisory Forum (UTAF) was established in 2020 as a platform for ongoing dialogue and feedback between tenants, carers and the Uniting WA Community Housing team.

It aims to assist the Uniting Community Housing team develop continuous improvement goals in order to achieve person centred outcomes for tenants.

Each UTAF will focus on a specific theme derived from the tenant satisfaction survey, tenant feedback and/or external assessment recommendations.

Objective

- Positively engage tenants and carers;
- Create platform to inform tenants of any new changes within the service;
- Discuss and obtain feedback on service delivery;
- Opportunities to voice and raise issues around tenancy matters and customer experience;
- The forum will be held every 12 months at a location central to our tenants.

Summary

This was the second UTAF held by the Community Housing team. The theme this year was based on Tenant Engagement. The Community Housing team continually try to improve tenant engagement through a range of activities and via multiple communication strategies with our tenants.

A total of 17 Uniting tenants attended the UTAF held on 15 September 2021. Each tenant was provided with lunch and a voucher as recognition for their valued contribution and feedback.

To ensure the forum ran smoothly, the 1.5-hour session was organised into 3 segments: Introduction, workshop, and a Q & A session. The Q & A session at the end of the UTAF gave tenants an opportunity to ask questions about the forum, the service and discuss matters personal to them.

To ensure the workshop component of the UTAF was engaging and interactive, attendees were split into 3 groups across the room, each with a Uniting Community Housing team member as facilitator. The 3 groups shared experiences and provided feedback on flip board paper all discussing a different area of focus related to tenant engagement. Attendees had 15 minutes on each area of focus before moving to the next focus of tenant engagement.

The 3 areas we focused on for tenant engagement were:

- What activities you are interested in the most?
- What stops you from attending activities?
- Did you feel supported by Uniting during Covid?

Feedback and action:

The Housing team reviewed and workshopped feedback from the UTAF and incorporated this feedback into the Community Housing annual team planning day, which focuses on service improvement for the next 12 months.

The table below summarises the feedback received at the UTAF from our tenants and details the actions the Community Housing team intend to take because of this feedback. The ‘we will do’ actions have now been incorporated into annual Community Housing Improvement Plan and will be published in the Community Housing Newsletter – Spring Edition.

Incorporating the UTAF feedback into the annual Community Housing Improvement Plan and the Community Housing Newsletter, ensures that views and responses from our tenants have a direct impact on service and closes the loop on feedback.

Below provides a summary of the common themes, comments and feedback provided by the attendees.

You Said	We will do
<p>What activities interest you the most?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13% responses indicated arts & crafts group. • 12% responses indicated tenant BBQ/picnic. • 10% responses indicated swimming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research existing arts & crafts groups in local areas and advertise in the Housing newsletter. • Organise an Easter picnic at a local park for 2022. • Set up a regular swimming group at a local pool.
<p>What stops you attending activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% of responses indicated anxiety on the day. • 11% indicated I don't feel confident catching public transport. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tenants to apply for the NDIS, as additional supports could help alleviate anxiety. • Explore capacity building opportunities for building confidence in the use of public transport.
<p>Did you feel supported during Covid?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% responses indicated Yes. • 30 % responses indicated No. • 27 % responses did not answer. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should lockdown occur again, organise phone check in's, instead of inspections. • Fortnightly group SMS check in.

Evaluation of Forum

Overall, the forum was a success. Many of the tenants said they really enjoyed it and commented that they appreciated Uniting was seeking their feedback to help improve their experience of the service.

Tenants said the location was “perfect, with good parking facilities”. The lunch provided was also positively received by all.

The workshop itself was very energetic with valued input received from all tenants. The Community Housing team took some learnings from the previous year’s UTAF and reduced the overall time of the UTAF from 2 hours to 1.5 hours as a measure to reduce restlessness. This was very effective, with all tenants engaged for the full duration of the workshop.

Several tenants called the Uniting office later that day to say how much they enjoyed the workshop, stating they “got a lot out of it”.

Some tenants exchanged phone numbers and have arranged to travel together for the next walking group. Other tenants knew each other from the past and exchanged numbers to rekindle their friendship.

Conclusion

Overall, the UTAF was a great way to obtain valuable feedback from tenants on service delivery and to ensure that Uniting tenants play a key role in continuous improvement to the services they receive. Furthermore, it as a successful opportunity to connect our tenants with each other, our Uniting Community Housing team, and our services.