

Uniting Vic.Tas

Annual report

2018-2019



Uniting

Uniting is the community services organisation
of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.



Who we are

Uniting Vic.Tas is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. We have worked alongside local communities across both states for over 100 years. We deliver a broad range of services in the areas of aged and carer, alcohol and other drugs, child, youth and families, crisis and homelessness, disability, early learning, employment and mental health.

As an organisation of the Uniting Church, we celebrate our diversity and welcome all people regardless of ethnicity, faith, age, disability, culture, language, gender identity or sexual orientation. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

The services we provide and the way we work strive to be human-centred and rights-based, as recognised and articulated in international declarations, treaties and covenants that aim to ensure peace and equality among all peoples.



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Chair's report

The Uniting Church is deeply committed to providing care and support to vulnerable people and communities and has done so in a variety of forms for over 100 years.

Uniting Vic.Tas was established in 2017, through the merger of more than twenty Uniting Church entities, to sustain these services in the face of growing community need and sector reforms. As the dust settles on the merger, it's now time to start looking beyond the present to future horizons.

We have a clear vision for the next three years as outlined in our inaugural strategic plan. This vision embeds our commitment to local integrated solutions that build on family and community strengths to tackle inequality and bring about long term sustainable change.

The housing crisis confronts our services every week. In both Tasmania and Victoria, there is a desperate shortage of safe and affordable housing for vulnerable and disadvantaged people. A key pillar of our strategic plan is to make housing a priority for the Uniting Church, an ambition we share with our sister agency, Uniting Housing Australia (UHA). After careful work over the last year, our approach was endorsed by the Synod Standing Committee and their Property & Operations Committee. Together UHA and Uniting now aim to double the number of tenancies supported over the next 10 years.

We were pleased to make our second report to Synod in July 2019, where we highlighted the contention that people are important, change is possible, and being part of the Uniting Church is fundamental to who we are as an organisation.

Paul Linossier took on the role of CEO of Uniting in August 2016. Having successfully navigated us through the merger and establishing a strong and stable organisation, Paul has decided that this is the right time to step aside. The Board is enormously grateful to Paul for the energy and expertise he has dedicated to steering Uniting through its early years. He has laid a solid foundation that will serve Uniting well in the next phase of its development.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank our employees, volunteers, partners, congregation supporters and fellow directors. Together, we work with courage and conviction to provide the best outcomes for the people and communities that count on us.



Bronwyn Pike
Board Chair



CEO's report

An early ambition for Uniting was a stronger voice to advocate for change and a greater capacity to act with impact.

This year we celebrated some big wins.

With governments and sector partners, we worked to improve public policy and increase investment that creates real change. Our combined efforts led to significant announcements in 2018/19, which you can read about in this report. Some highlights include: funding for universal three-year old kindergarten, positive changes to residential tenancies laws and additional funding for community mental health in Victoria. Tasmania and Victoria both committed to providing support for young people in out-of-home care until the age of 21.

In May, the Victorian Government announced \$1.5 million in funding for our services in Ballarat and Wimmera for the Delivery of Early Intervention Psychosocial Support Response (DEIPSR).

With a grant from the Federal Government, we opened the Shepparton Settlement Hub in February, a service that supports newly arrived people to build a life in the region. It is a great example of our purpose to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

In March of this year the Uniting Church was accepted into the federal Redress Scheme for people who as children experienced sexual abuse in institutional and community settings. The only major denomination to enter as a single body, it represents a broad concern across the Uniting Church to effect justice and healing. This same concern drives the work of our Heritage Service as it increases its reach and engagement. Important also, is our work with ChildWise, to ensure our policies and practices meet the highest standards of safety and transparency.

The launch of our first Reconciliation Action Plan is very important in guiding our work with and alongside First Peoples in the years ahead and has been widely embraced by our staff. Similarly, we have received news of the expansion of our drug and alcohol work in the LaTrobe Valley and significant expansion of our support for carers across eastern Victoria.

These are some of the successes that highlight the breadth of our expertise and our potential to innovate and bring new approaches to long standing and challenging issues. I am so very optimistic about the future for Uniting.



Paul Linossier
**Chief Executive
Officer**



Director of Mission's report

Life in all its fullness.

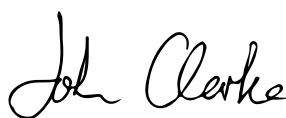
Every day we strive to make a difference for the people and communities we work alongside by empowering them to live “life in all its fullness” - John 10:10. Our partnerships with over 80 congregations allow us to deliver more services and reach more people in need.

It was a pleasure to attend the 2019 Victorian and Tasmanian Synod meeting to hear about the wonderful activities that congregations carry out in response to the needs of their communities. There are many day-to-day connections between the congregations and our services, Graham Sturdy, featured on the opposite page, is just one of these. So many of our passionate supporters and volunteers have been with us for decades, before Uniting was even conceived, and we have more than 100 services co-located on Church property.

During the Synod meeting we held important conversations about the Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation proposal, our work with people seeking asylum, and the formation of Local Engagement Groups (LEGS) across Victoria and Tasmania to strengthen and grow relationships in local communities. These groups have been working closely with our Mission and Ethos team, Rev Gavin Blakemore and Rev Lisa Stewart.


We have now established LEGS in Albury/Wodonga, Ballarat, Barwon, Bendigo and in North West Tasmania. In Ballarat, the group has been looking at youth issues. In Barwon, the group is working to support some of the region's most disadvantaged residents. While the groups each have a localised focus, they share one important vision - working towards an inclusive, connected and just world.

We continue to offer spiritual and pastoral care to residents in our youth and disability homes, neurological support and mental health services. Creating a listening space where people feel safe to share and find their own way remains at the heart of our mission.



Rev John Clarke
Director of Mission



A photograph of Rev Sturdy, a man in a light blue shirt and dark trousers, kneeling on a wooden floor. He is surrounded by several young children. A blue cloth is spread out on the floor, and a cardboard box labeled 'Story Box' is visible. The scene is set in a room with wooden floors and white walls.

“When I arrive with the story box, there’s always a sense of excitement from the children as they guess what is in the box.”

– Rev Sturdy, Scots Memorial
Uniting Church Minister.

Working with congregations

Spellbinding stories at Scots Early Learning Centre

Armed with his trusty box of props, Scots Memorial Uniting Church Minister Graham Sturdy brings stories to life at Scots Early Learning Centre in Hobart.

With a view to engaging the participants of Scots Early Learning Centre through story time, Rev Sturdy has become a favourite guest with the staff and children since moving from the UK to Hobart just three years ago.

Centre Co-ordinator Meegan Hodgson said story time is a highlight for the children. “Even the most restless

children are engaged and enjoy the story. Graham sparks the children’s imagination and stimulates their curiosity,” Meegan said.

“The children start to learn the value of books and stories while developing early literacy skills, language, words and sounds.”

The fondness goes both ways, with Rev Sturdy – a former teacher – delighting in the joy his puppets, figurines and images bring to the children. “I look forward to story time as much as the children do,” he said.

“When I arrive with the story box, there’s always a sense of excitement from the children as they guess what is in the box.”

“It’s wonderful to see how engaged the children are during story time.”

Our purpose

Working to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

Our values

Imaginative

We challenge convention, explore new possibilities and dare to dream for a better future.

Compassionate

We are nurturing, generous and thoughtful in our words and deeds.

Respectful

We act with honesty and integrity, and open our hearts to all people without exception.

Bold

We face injustice head on and stand up for what is right and true with confidence and strength.



Our foundation

Christ invites us to serve humanity by creating an inclusive, connected and just world.

Strategic Plan 2018-2025

In 2018 we launched our inaugural strategic plan, which paves the way forward for our organisation. Through these measures, we can build capability to ensure we are innovative, responsive and able to deliver on our purpose.

Our ambition is framed by two overriding objectives, ‘Changing lives and communities’ and ‘Changing how we work.’

This plan has emerged from a deep engagement with our consumers, staff, volunteers and stakeholders – it is our collective voice. It drives our vision and creates momentum to achieve our long-term goals.

Over the next few pages you can explore some highlights of the first year of activity.

Our ambitions

Rights and participation

Prioritising disadvantage

Best start in life

Safe families

Reducing harm from alcohol and other drugs

Changing disability and mental health provision

Working in partnership

Reconciliation and redress

Evidence and advocacy

Our goals

Safe, comprehensive and effective consumer-directed services that are valued by consumers

Place-based, integrated solutions that build on family and community strengths to tackle inequality

Organisational culture and practices that ensure we are just, effective, efficient and accountable

Building our capacity



Changing lives and communities



Changing how we work

Outcomes for the future

1 Life outcomes maximised

2 Inclusive, just, thriving and connected communities enabled

3 Injustice confronted and public policy influenced

4 Impactful and mutually beneficial partnerships supported

5 Sustainable organisation known for its strong identity, culture, capability and systems

Strategic Plan 2018/19 Highlights

1. Life outcomes maximised



Nearly 230 people with disability supported to access **meaningful employment**.



Over 32,600 **meals and food vouchers** accessed by over 11,600 people in crisis.



Over 2,700 **children nurtured** in our early learning services.



Nearly 2,500 older people supported to **live independently**.



Over 69,000 **crisis calls answered** at our Lifeline services in Melbourne and Ballarat.



Over 2,800 interactions with people at risk of homelessness to help **find stable accommodation**.



Nearly 199,000 hours of support to vulnerable children and their families to **create stability and healthy development**.



Over 3,000 **episodes of treatment** to support people experiencing the effects of alcohol and other drugs.

Strategic Plan 2018/19 Highlights

2. Inclusive, just, thriving and connected communities enabled



\$1.9M from the Victorian Government for the 101 St Kilda Engagement Hub to continue supporting people experiencing mental illness, homelessness or social isolation **feel connected to their community.**



Launched our Reflect **Reconciliation Action Plan** in March and held over 30 sessions to implement it in local communities.



Held our **Winter Breakfast event** to highlight the links between financial vulnerability, poor mental health and social isolation and how to address this.



Over 400 requests fulfilled through our Heritage Service to support former out-of-home care residents to **understand their past.**



Five Local Engagement Groups established with presbyteries and congregations to **build positive relationships** across Church and community.

Strategic Plan 2018/19 Highlights

3. Injustice confronted and public policy influenced

We worked with governments, communities and our sector partners to improve public policy and increase investment in public services to create real change for the people and communities we work alongside.



Changes to the Residential Tenancies Act to support **fairer, safer and more affordable housing.**



Both the Victorian and Tasmanian governments announced they will support young people in out-of-home care until 21 years of age. This is a significant breakthrough in **reducing young people's vulnerability** to homelessness, unemployment and interaction with the justice system.



Research carried out by Uniting highlighting the importance of **three-year-old kindergarten provision** as an election issue was provided to government to influence their decision.



Following lobbying from us and a number of partners across the community services sector, the Victorian Government announced **additional funding for community mental health** services and a Royal Commission into Victoria's mental health system.

Strategic Plan 2018/19 Highlights

4. Impactful and mutually beneficial partnerships supported



43 Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with congregations in place, providing **support for local communities**, making best use of Uniting and local congregational resources.



Partnered with community agencies, government, utilities, and financial service providers through our CareRing program to **support people experiencing financial difficulties**.



Endorsed partnership approach for Uniting Housing Australia and Uniting Vic.Tas to create more **social and affordable housing** in Victoria and Tasmania.



Commenced our partnership with Swinburne University to **strengthen community services and deliver better outcomes** for vulnerable people by engaging researchers to look at new ways to address poverty, deprivation and substance dependency.



Continued our partnership with Gandel Philanthropy to run the **Mother and Baby Residential Withdrawal Service**, which received the Excellence in Women's Health Award at the 2018 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.

Strategic Plan 2018/19 Highlights

5. Sustainable organisation known for its strong identity, culture, capability and systems



Over 3,500 **consumers had their say** in how they want Uniting to engage with them.



100 sites migrated into a best-practice, Uniting ICT environment to provide **greater efficiency and improved collaboration** across the organisation.



Our commitment to best practice, quality, high performing systems and processes was recognised through the achievement of **accreditation in National Standards for Disability Services and Lifeline.**



Over 4,600 individual donors financially **supported unfunded or under-funded programs.**



Paul, Uniting consumer.

Paul's battle of strength against stigma

"Everyone has a place and deserves to feel like they belong." – Paul

Everyone has a role to play in ensuring a happy, healthy and welcoming community, but unfortunately, mental health conditions such as bipolar disorder are still commonly stigmatised. It creates feelings of isolation and frustration for those diagnosed, as well as their families and close friends. It's a battle that's all too common.

Diagnosed in 2001, Paul has dealt with mental health stigma for most of his life, "I've always felt a bit different than other people," he said.

"I was bullied a lot at school. And I was the outcast in my family growing up."

"After my diagnosis, people stopped reaching out. I used to walk my dog just to interact with others," he added.

At his lowest, Paul was living in a friend's shed when he had nowhere else to go. Compounding his situation, poor financial decisions and a workplace injury left him with little savings and income.

Paul sought support and was placed in transitional housing. Slowly but surely, life improved. He found a public housing property and leveraged Uniting services

to reconnect with his community.

Now 54 years old, Paul is thriving and has recently completed a course in public speaking. "I'm the best I've been ever," he said.

"I've developed a new-found confidence and I've realised I have a voice, and if I speak up, hopefully I can help others."

When Paul was approached to speak at the Uniting Vic.Tas Winter Breakfast in May 2019, he didn't hesitate.

"I'd like to be a stigma warrior and break down some of the barriers people face because of mental illness or disability," he said.

Our vision for reconciliation

All people standing together to create socially just and culturally safe relationships with, and opportunities for, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This is our vision for reconciliation.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work.

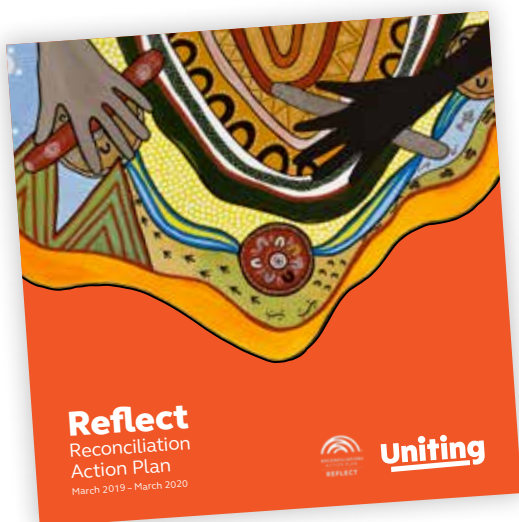
We recognise the continuing sovereignty of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over those lands and their inalienable right to self-determination. We pay respect to all Elders: past, present and emerging.

Our first Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was launched in March 2019. It creates opportunities for our staff to help us realise our vision for reconciliation.

Thank you to our RAP Working Group members, especially Working Group Elder Aunty Georgina Lovett-Williams and Senior Cultural Advisor Ron Briggs for their guidance and support while we developed our RAP. We also acknowledge Reconciliation Australia's guidance at crucial stages.

Our RAP sets us on a journey of discovery, listening and learning to understand how we can embed the five dimensions of reconciliation across our organisation:

1. Positive two-way relationships between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and non-Indigenous Australians.
2. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples participating equally in life opportunities while the unique rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are recognised and upheld.
3. Political, business and community institutions actively supporting reconciliation.
4. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories, cultures and rights valued and recognised as part of a shared national identity leading to national unity.
5. Truth-telling, justice, healing and historical acceptance leading to understanding of the impact of these wrongs by all Australians and widespread agreement that these wrongs will never be repeated.



The journey to reconciliation

Much work has been done towards improving our service quality and safety outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

- Our RAP Working Group meets regularly to oversee Reflect RAP progress, to plan for our Innovate RAP and to inform staff of our reconciliation work.
- Information sessions have been integral to the Reflect RAP roll-out. Over 30 sessions have been provided as part of local RAP action plan development workshops. The workshops focus on identifying practical actions needed to embed the RAP in our day-to-day work at the local level.
- By June 2019, 15 local RAP action plans had been developed to meet the needs of various metropolitan, regional and rural services.
- Introducing staff to cultural safety auditing to build our capability to address gaps to improve cultural safety.
- Increasing understanding about the meaning of dates significant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. This knowledge is important to the truth-telling needed for a deeper understanding of Australia's reconciliation journey.

In the past year our staff marked the following dates:

- 8 to 15 July 2018 – NAIDOC Week
- 4 August 2018 – National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day
- 13 February 2019 – National Apology Day
- 21 March 2019 – National Close the Gap Day and Harmony Day
- 26 May 2019 – National Sorry Day
- 27 May to 3 June 2019 – National Reconciliation Week.

We are committed to our RAP journey and to supporting self-determination of and Treaty with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

By improving our ability to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in culturally safe ways consistently across our organisation, our Reflect RAP is the first step in this journey.

The journey to reconciliation

Supporting the national reconciliation movement.

“People have good intentions to create change, but without an action plan, change is hard to achieve.” – Ben

A proud Wemba-Wemba/Wiradjuri man, Ben has dedicated most of his career to better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Before joining the Uniting team in Ballarat as a Tenancy Worker in mid-2018, Ben worked as a Senior Housing Officer with Aboriginal Housing Victoria and prior to that, spent a number of years coordinating employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at a multi-sector University.

“It’s been very rewarding to help create opportunities for our local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people,” Ben said.

Now, Ben plays an instrumental role in the Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Working Group, harnessing all the insight and experience from his previous roles to support the development of the program.

“People have good intentions to create change, but without an action plan, change is hard to achieve,” Ben said.

“This action plan will help Uniting take positive steps towards reconciliation, together.”

The team in Ballarat marked 2019 National Reconciliation Week by unveiling their Acknowledgement of Country Garden, located at the front of the Dana Street office.

Staff worked closely with the community to ensure a fitting acknowledgement of the Traditional Owners of the land they provide services on. Deanne Gilson – emerging Elder of the Wadawurrung clan – welcomed attendees to Country with a traditional smoking ceremony.

“The rocks (in the garden) were donated by a local staff member and have been positioned to face Mount Warrenheip,” Ben said.

“The sheoaks and rocks represent our connection to Country and other significant elements of our culture and the native grasses represent all Aboriginal communities.”



Ben, Uniting Tenancy Worker and RAP Working Group member.



'Over Waters' by artist Cassie Leatham

'Over Waters'

'Over Waters' is an artwork that represents a healing journey of recovery and reconciliation. The artist is Cassie Leatham of the Taungurung/Wurundjeri people from the Kulin Nation.

The pointed mountains represent those one climbs numerous times to overcome obstacles in life, guided by the stars above, being the ancestors. Whether it's daylight or darkness they are always there. Tasmania and Victoria are represented by the waters, and the hands holding message sticks are the way the 'old people' communicated many years ago to other tribes. The waters are cleansing and currents take one on a journey of self-cleansing, washing away any past hurt.

The pebbles and stones lead to stepping stones that are shared by many non-Indigenous and Indigenous people, walking step by step to reconciliation, side by side. The curved mountains have roads, these roads symbolise the roads to recovery and moving forward. Tasmania is represented by the women collecting shells, the ancestor symbol represents all of Uniting's work to accomplish a better outcome for all including the workers that unite together to help families and individuals.

Curved lines are women, straight lines are men, fine details represent country, the plants

representing new growth, the child's hand representing the future and how we need to nurture them, and the animals and flora and fauna to survive the future.

'Over Waters' represents the path that all should be taking, the path of reconciliation to make our future a better one.

About Cassie

An Indigenous artist, master weaver, traditional dancer, bushtukka woman and educator, Cassie is extremely passionate about teaching her skills to First Nations and non-Indigenous people of all ages.

Cassie's aim is to give participants the opportunity to learn about and better understand Aboriginal culture and history and our shared history of colonisation.

In November 2018, Cassie presented her 'Over Waters' artwork to Uniting.

We thank Cassie for this insightful piece of artwork, which is now proudly displayed in our services across Victoria and Tasmania.

Partnering with consumers

By drawing together the lived experience of our consumers with the expertise of our staff, we can create greater change for the people and communities we support.

Consumer partnerships drive a culture of valuing others, of shared power and an environment of trust where new ideas are welcomed. To help us build a consumer-led organisation we developed our Consumer Partnership Framework, launched in September 2018, to bring together consumers, their carers, families and our staff to best design and deliver our services.

Deeply involved within our organisation, our consumers are supported to help create more innovative, effective and accessible services to achieve greater social impact. To oversee the implementation of this work, our Consumer Partnerships Steering Group was formed in December 2018.

One of the first tasks of the steering group was developing a three-year plan for consumer partnerships. This plan defines projects that will enable consumers to partner with our staff to shape decisions, priorities and most importantly, culture over the next three years.

Some of the activities our consumers have worked on include:

- The first phase of a redevelopment plan for two Broadmeadows sites, focusing on the needs of everyone using the site.
- Presenting to Uniting senior leaders on the benefits and outcomes of consumer participation practice.
- Leading and participating in focus groups to ensure the consumer voice is embedded in our submissions to the mental health royal commission and informed our advocacy in the federal and state elections.

- Co-delivering consumer participation training to staff and consumers.
- Presenting at the Uniting Annual Public Meeting in November 2018.

Thank you to our Consumer Consultants Toni Paynter, Richard Gornall, Con Hatz, Narelle Seirlis, Harriet Dance, Phoebe Watson, Mitch Rhook and Amirah Ali for their vision, guidance and commitment as they help us build authentic and effective consumer participation. They are stalwart advocates for the rights of consumers.

We acknowledge the extraordinary contribution of Uniting ReGen Consumer Participation Facilitator, the late Regina Brindle, who championed the rights of consumers for many years. Regina sadly passed away at the end of 2018. Her work will guide our consumer partnerships for years to come.



The late Regina Brindle, Uniting ReGen Consumer Participation Facilitator.

Deeply involved within our organisation, our consumers are supported to help create more innovative, effective and accessible services to achieve greater social impact.



Zainab, who attended the opening of our new Settlement Hub in Shepparton.

Confronting injustice

Sharing our expertise

Drawing on our strong sector knowledge and the lived experience of our consumers, Uniting made 15 submissions to Royal Commissions, inquiries and government consultations in 2018-19, on issues including the NDIS, Child Safe Standards, youth unemployment, precarious work, energy efficiency and financial protections for people experiencing disadvantage.

Early in 2019, Uniting made a submission to the Senate Community Affairs References Committee to advocate for changes to the ParentsNext program, and the Targeted Compliance Framework. On the basis of this submission we were called to give evidence to a hearing with Senators.

Our submissions to the Royal Commission into Victoria's Mental Health System and the Productivity Commission Inquiry into Mental Health were both informed by consumer focus groups. This experience provides a model for future submissions to ensure we privilege the voice of Uniting consumers.

Shaping future policy

Uniting took the elections held in Victoria and federally as an opportunity to bring attention to the policy issues that consumers tell us have greatest impact on them.

During the Victorian election, Uniting focused on community mental health, housing, early learning and out-of-home care:

- Uniting research on barriers to access of early learning contributed to the election commitment to provide universal three-year-old kinder.
- Uniting advocated for the continuation of community mental health funding and was successful in gaining another four years of funding for the St Kilda 101 Engagement Hub.

- Through our partnership with Make Renting Fair, Uniting worked successfully to support changes to the Residential Tenancies Act, giving more choice and security to the 30% of Victorians who rent their homes.
- In partnership with the HomeStretch campaign, Uniting advocated for out-of-home care to be made available to young people up to the age of 21. This marks a significant breakthrough in reducing young people's vulnerability to homelessness, unemployment and interaction with the justice system.

During the Federal election, Uniting called on all parties to:

- Address gender inequality and its effects on our community, including family violence.
- Improve quality of life for people experiencing mental health issues.
- Develop and fund a plan to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness.
- Adequately fund the NDIS and ensure culturally sensitive, accessible services.

Partnering for impact

We work with like-minded organisations to put important issues into the spotlight and advocate for a better society. In 2018-19, Uniting participated in a number of sector and community campaigns including Make Renting Fair, Raise the Rate, One Million Homes, Kids Off Nauru, Home Stretch, Family Matters, the Australian Gun Safety Alliance and Choose Humane.



Michelle, who sent her children to three-year-old kindergarten.

Giving children the best start

“We all want to do what we can to see our kids succeed, and I think this funding will give our children the best start possible.” – Michelle

In 2018, Uniting worked with NewFocus to undertake a survey of 1000 Victorian adults, aged 18 years and over, regarding their perceptions and experiences of early learning.

Research showed that 93% of Victorians believe early learning is crucial to a child’s development, and Michelle – a dedicated mother of four children – is one of them.

Last year, Michelle received 15 hours per week of subsidised early learning for her four-year-old daughter, Indiana. But she didn’t receive support

for her youngest child Abbey to attend three-year-old early learning for five hours a week.

Sending Abbey to early learning had a significant impact on the family’s finances. “We spent \$3,600 on fees last year for Indiana and Abbey. It definitely put a strain on our budget,” Michelle said.

Michelle was committed to giving Abbey the best start, knowing children who start early learning before they go to school experience improved social, learning and developmental outcomes.

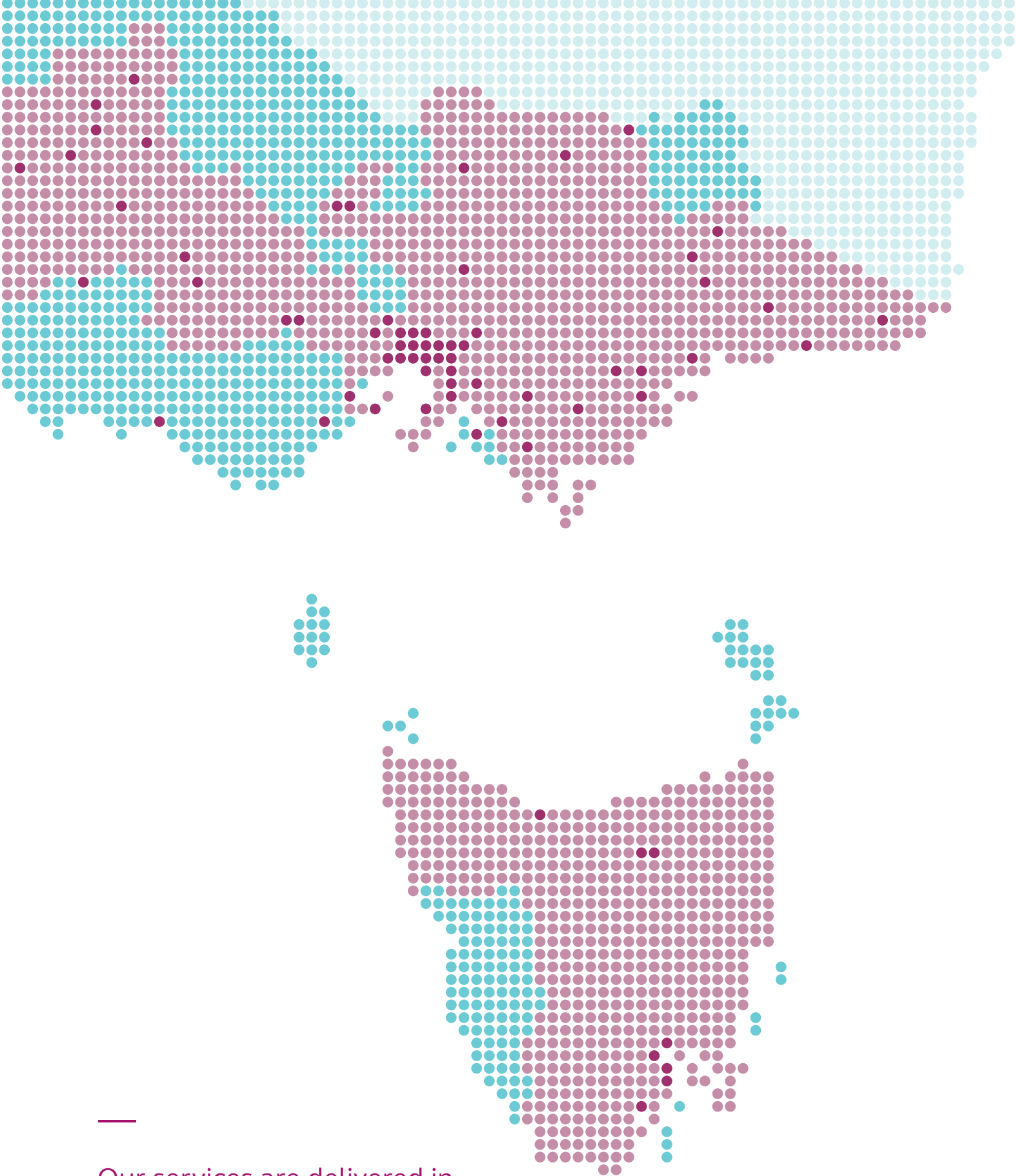
The Victorian Government has now announced Early Start Kindergarten funding, where eligible three-year-olds have access to up to 15 hours

of kindergarten per week, for free or at minimal cost.

Research from around the world shows that children who experience quality early learning before they begin primary education are more likely to complete high school and pursue further studies. As adults, they are more likely to be employed, they will have higher earning potential and they are less likely to have a criminal record.

“I’m glad that all families will have better access to three-year-old early learning now,” Michelle said.

“We all want to do what we can to see our kids succeed and I think this funding will give our children the best possible start.”



Our services are delivered in Tasmania, Melbourne, and across Victoria, from Albury-Wodonga in the north, Mallacoota in East Gippsland, to the Wimmera in the west.

What we do

The right support empowers people with the information, tools, resources and skills they need – when they need it most. People experiencing disadvantage, social isolation or marginalisation need reassurance and tangible support.

We work in partnership with consumers to build capability and confidence, so they can journey towards a brighter, healthier and happier future. It's about giving people the support they need to thrive.

We walk alongside people:

- Experiencing homelessness, who are looking for understanding and practical support.
- Experiencing mental health issues, who want to connect with people and feel part of the community.
- Recovering from the effects of drug and alcohol use.
- With disability, who want to engage with their community and make their own choices in employment and in the support they receive at home.
- Growing older who want to stay active, maintain their independence and enjoy life.
- Caring for someone who need expert advice and additional supports to better care for themselves.
- Looking for meaningful employment, by providing access to training and support and connecting them with opportunities.
- Newly arrived in our community and who need a warm welcome and safety.
- Ready to take the next step in their child's early education in a safe and nurturing environment.
- Needing tailored support to keep their family safe, together and thriving.



Aged and Carer Services



Alcohol and Other Drugs



Business and Social Enterprises



Child, Youth and Families



Disability



Early Learning



Employment Services



Mental Health



Resilient Communities



Aged and Carer Services

Living an enriching life in and out of home is empowering for older people – connection to community and access to a social network is vital for wellbeing and confidence. We offer support to older people and carers through the following services:

Aged Care

The right support at home has the power to boost independence, increase confidence and provide peace-of-mind.

- Home Care Packages: older people can receive support to remain living in their home that is suited to their level of care needs.
- Homeshare Program: we match older people or people with a disability looking for help and companionship with a suitable person in return for affordable accommodation.
- Quick Response Service: access to in-home support after a 'trigger event' such as a fall or accident that resulted in a stay in hospital or a rehabilitation centre.
- Planned Activity Groups: we support older people to make new connections in their community and enjoy time together. Planned activity groups promote independence and wellbeing, and provide multicultural connections in the community. Activities are flexible and based on the needs of participants.

Carer Services

Support is available to a wide range of carers of people who are elderly or living with disability and/or mental illness. This includes:

- access to respite care
- information, links to other services, and help to navigate the system
- peer support and networking opportunities
- social connectedness and capacity building
- retreats, camps and other opportunities for wellbeing and self-care
- education and workshops to help in their caring role.

John Macrae Centre

The John Macrae Centre offers friendly and flexible programs for older people living in the Stonnington area, helping people stay active, independent and involved in the community.

In 2018, the centre's garden received a makeover to create a safer and more interactive space for the community to enjoy. The changes encourage people to find sanctuary in nature, focusing on the sensory delights of breathing in fresh air, feeling the sunshine and interacting with plants and soil.

The improvement also offers great benefits for people living with dementia, with studies suggesting that gardening provides effective intervention in reducing symptoms and improving quality of life.



(left to right) Jennifer, Kathleen, Marge and Betty enjoying the Rye Carers Retreat.

Rye Carers Retreat

An opportunity for the carers of our community to reflect and recharge.

While incredibly rewarding, caring for someone can leave very little personal time for breaks that support wellbeing.

In February, carers from North East Victoria attended a three-night retreat in the seaside town of Rye. Their loved ones received respite or were cared for by another family member while they recharged.

Organised by our Aged and Carer Services team in Wangaratta, the retreat was designed to give back to the

carer community who work tirelessly to support loved ones. The first stop on the retreat was Arthurs Seat for lunch and a gondola ride overlooking Port Phillip Bay. The days that followed were filled with a rejuvenating visit to the Peninsula Hot Springs, a scenic cruise on Port Phillip Bay, and a mindfulness session to arm carers with tips and strategies for their own self-care.

“It was such a wonderful experience; I enjoyed every minute of the trip. It was just what I needed,” a carer wrote.

Another commented that it was helpful to speak with other carers throughout the retreat.

“This was my first carers retreat and I’m so grateful for the opportunity. It was helpful to speak with people who are living through difficult situations.”

“I loved the spirit of sharing and helpfulness, plus the compassion for both the carer and the care recipient.”



Alcohol and Other Drugs

For people experiencing the effects of Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD), access to support is vital to their journey of wellness and recovery. Fueled by passion and backed by research, we adapt and strengthen our services each year to respond to the emerging needs of the community.

Wellness and Recovery Services

We provide:

- residential, community and justice system withdrawal programs
- confidential counselling and guidance
- services for people with current or previous contact with the justice system
- long-term treatment plans
- group support and therapeutic programs
- Hepatitis C Outreach Clinic.

Professional services, education and training

We provide information and advice to other health and welfare agencies who work with clients experiencing AOD issues.

We are also a leading provider of education and training services for the AOD, mental health, allied health and community services sectors as a Registered Training Organisation.

Family Reunification Program

Individuals with AOD conditions receive prioritised support to access treatment as part of their Family Reunification Order. Although a complex and challenging dynamic, the program works to ensure parents have the best possible chance of being reunited with their children.

Launching Handy Stuff

In January we celebrated the launch of Handy Stuff, a resource booklet developed by people who have used our AOD services to support others.

Handy Stuff provides a wealth of service information and practical tips to help people maintain positive changes, support recovery and improve wellbeing.

Receiving feedback and input from people who use our services is one of the most important things we can do to ensure we keep up to date with people's changing needs.



This photo represents our services. It is not a photo of a Uniting consumer.

Keeping families together

The Mother and Baby Residential Withdrawal Service empowers mothers to get the help they need to support their children's future.

Since its launch in 2016, new mothers have been receiving full withdrawal services and developing strategies to overcome Alcohol and Other Drugs (AOD) issues through our innovative Mother and Baby Residential Withdrawal Service.

The first of its kind in Victoria, the unit enables mothers to stay with their babies while they get the treatment they need. This means they remain together during the most important time of their baby's emotional development.

While the mothers are spending time in counselling, support and education, their children are cared for by accredited child-care workers, through the innovative program.

According to Laurence Alvis, Executive Officer of Uniting's ReGen specialist Alcohol and Other Drugs service, the service addresses a major deterrent for women seeking help.

"Separating mothers from their babies elevates stress levels and leaves women feeling isolated and fearful

of engaging with health services," Laurence said.

"They fear losing their children as a result of making contact with services or being stigmatised as a drug-user."

The statewide service, made possible through funding from the Victorian Government and a grant from Gandel Philanthropy, was named the winner of Excellence in Women's Health at the 2018 Victorian Public Healthcare Awards.



Business and Social Enterprise

Empowerment through access to programs that enable success and help people lead fulfilling lives is at the heart of what we do. Through social enterprises and Op Shops within our communities, people are supported to work, socialise and achieve personal milestones in a range of different roles. They also provide opportunities for the community to engage directly with and support our work. Our social enterprises are commercial businesses with social purpose, designed to generate income for our unfunded or underfunded services.

Uniting Op Shops

Each day, hundreds of volunteers help us operate our Op Shops. With 23 in Victoria and one in Tasmania, our shops offer people the chance to give back to their local communities and gain valuable work experience, all while raising much-needed funds for vital programs and services.

The Mission Caters

The Mission Caters provides catering for corporate and private events across Melbourne, with profits supporting Uniting services. In 2019, The Mission Caters team were invited to run the café at Our Community House (OC House) in North Melbourne. Noble Blend Café is now open and raising vital funds for our services.

Wood to Work

The Department of Justice and Corrections partnered with Uniting to establish Wood to Work in Ballarat. Wood to Work is a program that sees local participants trained to create furniture from donated wood and pallets. These are then donated to sell in the Ballarat Op Shops.



Noelene, Bendigo Op Shop Volunteer.

Helping families celebrate the big occasions

“It’s a small thing we can do to remove one less worry for local families doing it tough.” – Mary-Anne

For families under financial strain, shopping for special occasions like a school formal can bring about stress. It’s a big event that often comes with a big price tag. Enter Bendigo Op Shop Store Manager, Mary-Anne.

In November 2018, Mary-Anne began a formal-wear hire initiative to help ease the burden on parents when it comes to accessing formal attire for their children.

“My son had his school formal and I heard that a lot of girls couldn’t attend

because their parents couldn’t afford to buy them outfits,” Mary-Anne said.

“It can be an expensive exercise buying clothing and accessories for a school formal or debutante ball.”

“We often have dresses and suits donated to the shop, so we thought we would put them to good use.”

Families can book an appointment in-store to browse the range of dresses, suits, shoes and accessories available for hire at no cost.

Once they choose their look, the Op Shop volunteers arrange to dry clean the clothes. The clothing is then collected by the family before the event and returned within seven days.

“It’s a small thing we can do to remove one less worry for local families doing it tough,” Mary-Anne said.

“We’ve got a great range of dresses, suits, shoes, handbags and jewellery, but we’re always in need of more to provide a bigger range of sizes and colours.”



Child, Youth and Families

Some families need support services to help them navigate through complex issues that impact the stability and safety of their home. We work alongside children, young people and families in vulnerable situations, to provide case management, advice and counselling so that they can overcome these issues and live happy, healthy lives.

Parents and guardians

We empower parents and guardians to provide safe and nurturing environments and strengthen their relationships by supporting them with the right information and advice to develop their parenting skills and build their confidence.

Young people

Young people experiencing personal or family challenges can access counselling, mentoring and life skills development, helping them work towards their goals for the future.

Out-of-home care

Out-of-home care is a service offered to children and young people who can no longer live with their parents due to inadequate care provision and safety concerns. These children require a home environment to thrive and this can be a temporary or long-term care arrangement. These care arrangements can include home-based kinship and foster care, adoption and permanent care, and residential care for young people.

The Heritage Service

The Heritage Service supports past residents who received out-of-home care from the former Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, and the Uniting Church in Victoria, as well as their families.

We help people access information about their time in care to support their journey to understand the past.

In the last year, requests and enquires for information have doubled, increasing from an average of 20 per month to 40 per month. Some highlights of our Heritage Service work in 2018/19 include:

- Completed scoping and understanding the records held by Uniting – these records came from nine founding agencies, dating from 1881 to today.
- Helped connect people through a series of reunions.
- Former mothercraft nurses from the Methodist Babies Home in South Yarra gathered together to help add over 1000 photographs of babies and young children to our archive, for past residents to access.



Scott, Uniting Project Worker showcases the We Are Wimmera book.

We Are Wimmera

Strengthening community ties with stories written by children, for children.

In 2018, We Are Wimmera, a picture book featuring art and words by local children was launched as part of our celebrations for National Children's Week.

The book was a year-long project that celebrated the strengths and successes of the region through stories. Enthusiasm to get involved was obvious, with Project Worker, Scott admitting there were so many illustrations they couldn't fit them all in one book.

"What they came up with was amazing," Scott said.

"We worked with children from three to 12 years of age from various locations throughout the Wimmera, collecting artwork that represents their view of life and what makes them smile."

The book was launched in schools in Kaniva, Horsham, Stawell, Rupanyup and Dimboola, with 100 more presented to the Wimmera Regional Library for the public to enjoy.

The book is part of our commitment to bringing the voices of the children and families we support into our services.

Books created by children for children strengthen their sense of culture and language as well as their literacy skills. "We hope that **We Are Wimmera** will create a sense of belonging for everyone who reads it," Scott said.



Disability

Disabilities are as unique as the people living with them. Accessing the right supports is about being empowered through choice. As a registered provider of disability services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), we take a personal approach with everyone we work with to help them live independently, get involved in their local community and achieve their goals.

Supported Independent Living

People living with disability can access Supported Independent Living programs to assist with daily tasks. Our services include the Neurological Support Service (NSS), a residential support initiative that offers holistic care for people with Huntington's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, spinal or acquired brain injuries.

Live-Work-Recreation

Live-Work-Recreation programs are group-based services designed to increase independence in daily life, build skills to prepare for employment, develop relationships and have fun.

Support Co-ordination

Support Co-ordination helps build people's ability to live independently. This includes helping people to access the support and assistance they need to participate more in their community.

Responding to the NDIS

To ensure we can meet the needs of our consumers who access the NDIS, in 2018 we brought together all our Victorian metropolitan disability and mental health work into one division.

The focus for this year has been moving consumers from traditional block funded programs across to personalised NDIS plans, supporting them to exercise their choice and control in deciding which services to access.

Australian Disability Enterprises

Australian Disability Enterprises (ADE) provide employment opportunities for people with disability. Fire & Clay is an ADE that employs more than 30 people who produce an array of unique handcrafted pottery and ceramic products for the home and garden. For the second year running, the Fire & Clay team hosted a stall at the Melbourne International Flower and Garden Show in March 2019, displaying and selling their glazed works of art to thousands of show visitors. The opportunity offered supported employees a chance to showcase their craftsmanship.



(left) Kelly, Neurological Support Service resident with her sister, Lizzy and cat, Charlie.

Resilience in the face of hardship

Huntington's Disease – an inherited and progressive condition – usually strikes people in middle age. But for Kelly, this was not the case. She was diagnosed with a rare, juvenile form of the condition at just 15 years old.

Huntington's Disease has played a devastating role in Kelly's life. Both her mother and brother passed away from the condition, on either side of her own diagnosis. Placed in foster care after the death of her mother, Kelly lived with significant psychiatric symptoms, behavioral disturbances and involuntary movements.

In 2010 it became clear that her condition required a more in-depth level of care and she was admitted to the Uniting Neurological Support Services (NSS). Since then, she has received health and neurological support through NSS and associated support services

and built a strong rapport with her Disability Support Workers. This, combined with a great deal of hard work by Kelly, has reduced her high-risk behaviours and hospital admissions.

For a long time, Kelly dreamed of travelling to Europe to visit the Netherlands, the homeland of her grandmother, who cared for her when she was a child. Kelly and her boyfriend Lachlan saved up for the trip of a lifetime, and in June 2013, departed for Amsterdam alongside support workers Carolyn and Donna.

The trip was everything she hoped it would be. On the

third day, they visited Kelly's grandmother's hometown – Veendam – two hours north of Amsterdam. After a week in Amsterdam, they flew to Paris. On Kelly's birthday, they visited the Eiffel Tower, where Lachlan proposed, and Kelly said yes.

In November 2018, Kelly and Lachlan married in a beautiful ceremony at Avalon Castle in Cockatoo surrounded by family, friends, NSS co-residents and staff.

Donna and Carolyn were pivotal in organising their special day and supporting the couple's honeymoon, a driving tour in the North Island of New Zealand.



Early Learning

Quality early learning gives children the best start in life.

Through imaginative, caring and playful learning experiences, children can grow the confidence and skills they need to develop meaningful relationships and thrive.

We are proud to be one of the largest providers of early learning services across Victoria and Tasmania, providing the following options for families:

- Kindergarten
- Family day care
- Occasional care
- Out-of-school care.

We also partner with the Department of Education and Training to deliver support services for children with additional needs or complex medical conditions.

Kindergarten Inclusion Support

Kindergarten Inclusion Support programs are run in various parts of metropolitan Melbourne and across Victoria. This program supports kindergartens to care for and educate children with additional needs.

Pre-School Field Officers

Pre-School Field Officers support government-funded kindergarten staff to work with children with additional needs.

Think Equal

Four Uniting Early Learning services are currently part of the International Early Years “Think Equal” Social and Emotional Learning Pilot Program.

The Australian-first program teaches children the core values of empathy, compassion and respect as well as key competencies and skills such as critical thinking, self-regulation and peaceful conflict resolution.

Research for the pilot is overseen globally by the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence, while Federation University oversees the pilot and its evaluation in Victoria.

Nurturing confident and creative learners is at the heart of our services, and we know that children demonstrate and develop an increased use of language and self-regulation, through feedback from our research programs. The promising results have also contributed to rising interest from families to get involved in the initiative.



Children from Enid Rogers Jubilee Kindergarten and the Yea and District Children's Centre are thriving thanks to early learning facility upgrades.

Doing it for the kids

A good start with quality childcare can set a child up for life.

The past year has seen much-needed enhancements to early learning centres in Ballarat and Murrindindi Shire, spurred by the Victorian Government's commitment to invest more funds into early learning facility upgrades.

With a 60-year-old building and increasing enrolments, the makeover came at the perfect time for the Enid Rogers Jubilee Kindergarten, which holds a proud history of nurturing young minds within the community. With over \$500,000 spent on the work during the second half of 2018, renovations included upgraded kindergarten room, kitchen, administration space and toilet facilities.

In January, the builders collected up their tools and handed the renovated building back to an excited Jubilee Kindergarten community. With a fresh environment ready to go, it was all hands-on deck to prepare for the year ahead.

In June 2019, the Department of Education and Training (DET) undertook an Assessment and Rating visit of the Jubilee Kindergarten under the National Quality Standards (NQS). The early learning service has been notified by the DET of a positive outcome of exceeding the NQS. A well-deserved result for the team.

The Yea and District Children's Centre also received some TLC, with extension and refurbishment work completed in 2019. Murrindindi Shire Council partially funded and managed the renovations, while Uniting contributed \$50,000 to the works.

With research revealing the positive impact of early learning on the social, financial and educational development of children, we are grateful for the investment from the Victorian Government in these facilities.



Employment Services

It can be difficult for people living with disability, injury, a mental health condition and other special needs to find sustained employment. That is why support services that match job seekers with fair, meaningful employment solutions are important.

People of all ages and abilities are linked to highly tailored employment pathways, training and vocational opportunities across Victoria and Tasmania by our dedicated employment services team.

We were awarded a Disability Employment Services (DES) tender in the previous financial year to expand our services in partnership with PeoplePlus. These services commenced on 1 July 2018 in Box Hill, Collingwood, Hobart, Lilydale, Ringwood and Wantirna South, boosting our employment service locations from 15 to 21.

In the 2018/19 financial year, we worked alongside 1730 jobseekers, with 608 jobseekers successfully placed in roles that matched their interests and abilities through our Disability Employment Services, JobActive and Pathways to Employment Program.

School Leaver Employment Support Program

Our School Leaver Employment Support Program (SLES) supports school leavers with an intellectual disability. This program includes pre-employment training, driver education, along with group and individual work experience in a variety of workplace settings. In 2019 we extended this program to Cranbourne. This program is now delivered in Broadmeadows, Footscray, Hoppers Crossing, Melton and Cranbourne and will continue to expand across Melbourne in the coming year.

Launch into Work

We received funding to run the Launch into Work initiative. This program works with employers to identify recruitment challenges and opportunities, and address these through pre-employment projects tailored to industry and employer needs. Our Employment and Disability service teams come together to deliver this program and address the industry growth challenges presented by the NDIS. Fifteen participants went through the program in 2019, most of whom are now working in our disability services.



Dennis, Employment Services consumer.

Working on Wesley Place

Creating meaningful and long-term employment opportunities enables people like Dennis to realise their potential.

A transformative project is underway in Melbourne's buzzing CBD. The Wesley Place development is restoring and uplifting the site on Lonsdale Street, providing one of only five green spaces in the CBD.

The project includes the conservation and restoration of the historically significant Wesley Church and other related buildings.

As part of its successful tender, one of the development partners, Lendlease, committed to creating five apprenticeships.

36-year-old Dennis secured one of those apprenticeships with Heritage Stone Restorations (HSR), a contractor hired by Lendlease to work on the construction.

This opportunity is allowing him to pursue his dream of a career in stonemasonry, having previously worked as a dispatcher at the airport and in customer service.

"It was good, but I wanted something more fulfilling," Dennis said.

"I enjoy working outdoors and being on my feet, so

I'd always thought about a career in construction."

"It's been challenging at times, but there are lots of opportunities to use my initiative, and everyone has been really helpful and willing to teach me."

Our employment services work to connect people of all backgrounds and abilities to employers who value and invest in people.



Mental Health

Mental health conditions are wide and varied. We work with people to develop a recovery plan, build confidence and help achieve their goals. Our mental health services have deep community connections in rural, regional and metropolitan areas. We have teams of experts in psychology, social work, nursing, clinical services and Support Co-ordination to equip people with the information and skills they need for better mental health.

Lifeline

We provide 24-hour crisis and suicide prevention support to people experiencing personal crisis through Lifeline. We run two centres, in Melbourne and Ballarat. Our dedicated staff and volunteers answer calls from around Australia.

101 St Kilda Engagement Hub

This year the Victorian Government announced that the 101 St Kilda Engagement Hub will receive up to \$1.9 million in funding to remain open for the next four years.

The Hub is a unique community service for adults with severe and enduring mental ill health. The Hub operates as a 'drop in' centre and delivers a welcoming and safe environment - a place where people feel a sense of connection and community. The service connects people to mental health support services.

Voices Vic


Led by people with a lived experience, Voices Vic is an award-winning and research-supported specialist program that seeks to improve the lives of people who hear voices.

Voices Vic is also part of a wider, international community called the Hearing Voices Network, which aims to bring people who hear voices together so they can access support and information. Voices Vic facilitate the movement across Victoria.

The team is testament to the empowerment that can be gained by learning how to work and live with hearing voices, with most members having undergone their own healing journey.

Janet Karagounis, Voices Vic Group Network Coordinator, received the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award from the Victorian Mental Illness Awareness Council in October 2018.

Voices Vic's Central Trainer, Inge Remmits received a Commendation for the Mental Health Consumer Ally Award.



This photo represents our services. It is not a photo of a Uniting consumer.

A journey to recovery

People living with severe mental health conditions or experiencing psychosocial disability in the Grampian region now have access to additional support.

In May 2019, the Victorian Government announced \$1.5 million in funding for our services in Ballarat and the Wimmera for Delivery of Early Intervention Psychosocial Support Response (DEIPSR) – the initiative will run in partnership with Ballarat Health Service, who will refer clients into the program.

Early intervention psychosocial support is delivered through a recovery model. A strong focus is wraparound support, which incorporates people who are close to the individual and

invested in their wellbeing with the support they need to empower their friend or loved one with their recovery.

“Our family psychoeducation sessions will impart knowledge, social and personal skills that enable families and consumers to work more effectively with the challenges of living with psychosocial disability,” said Ivan, Uniting’s Senior Manager of Wellbeing Services in Ballarat.

“We’re in a unique position where we can link our clients and their families or

carers into our established community programs to address the areas of need in all aspects of their life.”

“This includes services such as tenancy and housing support, financial counselling and daily living programs.”

Staff will work with clients to identify recovery goals and implement plans to achieve them.

“We know that having clients actively involved in their own assessment leads to better outcomes in the long-term,” Ivan said.



Resilient Communities

People experiencing crisis often need support while they work towards a brighter future. We provide housing support for people at risk of, or experiencing homelessness and newly-arrived in our community. We offer social and affordable housing options for a wide range of people. We help people build their financial capability, and provide access to community meals and food parcels to sustain health and wellbeing.

Financial Wellbeing

Crisis Support: We provide access to food parcels to ensure families and individuals have nutritious food to sustain their health and wellbeing. We also provide material aid and some assistance with medical, travel and back to school costs for people in immediate crisis.

Financial Capability: Building financial capacity can help create stability in the long-term. We work with people to develop their financial capability through financial counselling, and gambling counselling for people experiencing harm to themselves or the people around them when they gamble.

Financial Support: We offer programs that provide information, options and advocacy for people experiencing financial difficulties. We co-ordinate financial support by assisting people to apply for affordable, no-interest and low interest loans. We help people increase their energy efficiency and save money on utility bills.

Housing

Accommodation: We assist people who are experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness to access a range of crisis, transitional and longer-term accommodation.

Social and Affordable Housing: We offer long-term housing solutions for people on low incomes or living with disability, and provide welcoming communities in independent living residences for people over 55.

Tenancy Support: We assist with free and confidential information and advice about changes, difficulties and disputes with private and public rental arrangements.

Asylum Seeker Services

We provide support for people who are seeking asylum through the provision of housing and intensive case management as a part of the Asylum Seeker Project. We offer a safe and supportive space for individuals to learn, socialise and participate in their community by offering programs and activities at our Welcome Centre.

Thanks to a Federal Government grant, people arriving in the Shepparton region now have access to a new Settlement Hub. The hub acts as the first access point for people building a new life in the region to access a wide range of programs to enhance their self-reliance, English proficiency and improve job readiness.



Felicity, who shared her story for our 2019 Winter Appeal.

Felicity* had nothing left and nowhere to go

Emergency help after a shock fire supported Felicity during a devastating time of need.

After a fire destroyed her family's home, Felicity* was left devastated. With her possessions and memories burnt to the ground, she was left with nothing but the fear and anxiety of being homeless and vulnerable with three children to care for.

Within a few hours of the fire that had destroyed her home, she and her family had found emergency accommodation.

"I don't even remember who called Uniting, but I know they were a godsend," she recalls.

Felicity's local Uniting team supported her to access transitional housing, food parcels, vouchers and essential personal items for the family.

When the crisis took a toll on her mental health, our support team were there to help.

Felicity's support worker linked her with a local GP to develop a mental health plan and supported her through the complexities of Centrelink when her mental health meant she needed to stop working.

"Having someone to sit and listen to what I was going through made such a big difference," she said.

"Thanks to the support of Uniting, I'm feeling happier and more confident in myself."

Felicity shared her story for our 2019 Winter Appeal, which raised over \$810,000.

**This is a true story about a real person. Some details such as names and locations have been changed to respect the wishes of the person whose story and image are featured.*

Our people

Our people are our greatest strength. Together we deliver programs and services across Victoria and Tasmania with one sole purpose - to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

Our Board, employees and volunteers work with courage and conviction to provide the best outcomes for the people and communities that count on us.

We build on our legacy, foster engagement, and create opportunities for our people to thrive.

Organisational Development Plan (2018-21)

Our three-year Organisation Development Plan has guided our work since its endorsement in March 2018. The plan is a roadmap to attract, develop, engage and retain our talented people; building workforce capability and enhancing an organisational culture that realises our purpose. In the first year, new initiatives have been introduced, which are now embedded into day-to-day practices across our organisation.

Employee Orientation and Induction

In August 2018, a new comprehensive employee orientation and induction model was rolled out to ensure new starters are well supported. The program is coupled with performance and development planning in the first three months of employment. Over 760 new employees have benefited from the approach, which also includes:

- online orientation
- local induction checklist
- partnership with a buddy
- compliance training.

Employee Engagement

In May 2019, we partnered with survey provider, Best Practice Australia (BPA) to introduce our inaugural Employee Engagement Survey. We received a good response rate through employee participation. The feedback will enable us to build on our desired culture of a safe, inclusive, collaborative organisation.

National Volunteer Week

Each day, our wonderful volunteers offer their time, skills and resources to support our programs and services. During National Volunteer Week in May, events were held across our organisation to recognise and celebrate the contribution of our volunteers.



Executive team



Paul Linossier
Chief Executive Officer



Catherine Easton
Executive General Manager, Performance and Integration



Aimee Suchard-Lowe
Executive General Manager, Strategy and Engagement



Silvia Alberti
General Manager, Western Victoria and Tasmania, and Employment Services



Angela Forbes
General Manager, Eastern Victoria, and Aged and Carer Services



Tracey Gibson
General Manager, Disability and Mental Health, and Early Learning



Rev John Clarke
Director of Mission

As at 30 June 2019

Our employees

Our employees strive to make a difference. We are a talented network of people who work to create a safer, fairer and brighter future for all.

Together we bring a personalised, experienced and hands-on approach to enliven communities and effect real change. We do this with a grassroots understanding of the issues people face.

This year, the commitment and passion of our people was again highlighted through the many employees and teams who received external recognition for their work. Most notably, we had several nominations in the Residential Care Awards, demonstrating the strength of our team working in youth residential care.

- Sam Dachs and Holly Sangster both won scholarships to further their education.
- Rachelle MacPherson was a finalist in the Residential Care Leadership Award.
- Lydon Palamo and Cruise MacDonald were finalists in the Residential Worker Award.
- Four nominations were received in the Residential House Awards for Warrigal Road, Furlonger, Ohana and Teddington.

Uniting in Wimmera won the Victoria Employer of the Year award for the not for profit sector at the Defence Reserves Support Council Awards.

Aged and Carer Services

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Alcohol and Other Drugs

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Business and Social Enterprise

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Child, Youth and Families

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Disability and Mental Health

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Early Learning

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Resilient Communities

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Support Staff

334



Maidie, Manager of Uniting Crisis and Homelessness Services in Ringwood and Footscray.

Over 20 years of service

For two decades, Maidie has been a pillar of strength and support for people facing crisis and homelessness.

Maidie has always been passionate about helping people in need. She began her career as a locum crisis worker in 1996 and continued on to work in disability services before moving into crisis and homelessness services. Today, Maidie is the Manager of Uniting Crisis and Homelessness Services in Ringwood and Footscray.

Despite the challenging nature of the work, she is committed to supporting people in their darkest times and guiding them toward brighter days.

"We're here to talk to people about their options and how we can support them

to follow through on those options to work towards a better future," Maidie said.

"We give people a lot of information about what the reality of their situation is. It's really important to give people an accurate picture of how things are, but also empathise with the situation they are in."

Maidie is quick to point out that a lack of affordable housing is leaving more and more individuals and families on the brink of homelessness. The biggest change she's seen in her career is the increased cost of renting.

"Property values have gone up significantly, which is great if you own property, but it's not if you're renting. A lot of people are paying a large proportion of their income in rent, which makes it really hard to survive," she said.

Maidie speaks to the passion and commitment of her colleagues as the reason why she enjoys working at Uniting.

"We're lucky to have a really good team here, with a broad range of skills and experience. We work well together to provide the best outcomes for our consumers."

Our volunteers

Over 2,400 volunteers and carers generously give their time to help our organisation bring about change for the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in our community.

Without them, we would not be able to maintain the breadth of service and assistance we provide today.

Over the last year, our volunteers dedicated over 1.2 million hours of their time, equating to more than \$44 million in resources. In reality though, their contribution is immeasurable.

Our volunteers support people experiencing crisis in emergency relief centres, they help in our Op Shops, give one-on-one support to older people and people living with disability, and so much more. The impact they have on people's lives is considerable.



Over **1.2 million** hours of service



Over **300 programs** and services



Nearly 380 volunteers with over **10 years** of service




Over **70 languages** spoken



Average of **6.5** years of service



Over **1,000 regional** volunteers



“I just hope that in some small way, I can help them unload some of their concerns and help them see there are people in the community who are always here to help them.”

– Maria

Maria, Uniting Volunteer.

Compassion in Melbourne's west

Maria hopes to teach her children about the importance of helping others through her volunteer work with Uniting.

A mum of three with a part-time job, Maria sought to bring more meaning to her days off. Inspired to make a difference and give back to her local community, she began volunteering with Uniting.

Generously donating her time each Tuesday, Maria helps provide food relief for people in crisis in Melbourne's west. Maria often feels overwhelmed when she sees the sense of relief on someone's face when they leave with food to feed their family

“People who come to us for help are often tired and emotionally drained. They've had to deal with some tough things in their lives. So if we

can provide food, it's one less thing for them to worry about. No-one should go without food,” she said.

“I just hope that in some small way, I can help them unload some of their concerns and help them see there are people in the community who are always here to help them.”

Perhaps unknowingly, Maria's selfless service and eagerness to assist the community's most vulnerable is a trait she has passed on to her son, expressed through her fondest memory of working as a volunteer.

A young boy reached out for help one day because his parents were unable to find work.

“I remember talking to the youngest child, a little boy around the same age as my middle child. He told me that he loved playing soccer, but he didn't have a soccer ball or boots,” Maria said.

“When I told my son about the little boy I had met that day, he raced into his room and started packing his spare soccer boots and jerseys.”

Maria then arranged to meet the boy and his father to give them her son's soccer gear.

“They were so grateful... it's something I will never forget, and I hope my son never forgets,” she said.

Meet the Board

Bronwyn Pike (Chair)

Bronwyn is the Chair of Western Heath, the South Australian Urban Renewal Authority, and a Board member of the Australian Health Policy Collaboration, a Board member of Leap In! and the Chair of Uniting Care Australia.

Bronwyn serves on the Board of Uniting NSW.ACT and provides strategic planning advice, executive mentoring and support to non-government organisations.

Prior to these roles, Bronwyn was the State Member for Melbourne and Victorian Minister for Housing, Aged Care, Community Services, Health, Education and Skills.

Before entering parliament in 1999, she was the Director of Justice and Social Responsibility in the Synod of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. Bronwyn is a lifelong member of the Uniting Church.

Robyn Batten

Robyn has held leadership positions in some of the largest community and aged care agencies, including Executive Director of Uniting Aged Care Vic.Tas, Executive Director of Blue Care and Executive Director of Australian Regional and Remote Community Services.

Robyn commenced her career as a registered nurse and holds both Bachelor and Masters' degrees in Social Work and a Masters of Business Administration.

Robyn is the co-founder and Executive Chair of Leap In! Australia, a non-executive Director of the Australian Psychological Society, a non-executive Director of East Melbourne Primary Health Network and Director of Western Health.

Robyn is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Luke Bo'sher

Luke is experienced in working with government and not for profit organisations in housing, homeless and disability policy, and service delivery. He is the CEO of the Summer Foundation.

Luke helped develop the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in his roles as a Director at the National Disability Insurance Agency and Advisor to the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Luke's disability sector experiences include working in residential disability services, in both government and non-government supported accommodation.

Luke recently completed a Fulbright Scholarship at New York University's Centre for Urban Policy focusing on affordable housing and social finance, where he earned a Master of Public Administration.



Mark Heintz

Mark is CEO of Hazeldene's Chickens, a fully owned subsidiary of Australian agri-food company Hazeldene Chicken Farm Group. He is a former Vice President of Cycling Victoria and Chair and Board member of Lentara UnitingCare.

A crisis intervention counsellor, Mark has leadership experience in large-scale change management, strategic planning and conflict resolution.

Mark received the Williamson Community Leadership Program and was awarded the St James Ethics Centre Fairfax Fellowship and the University of Melbourne Asia-Link Business Leaders Scholarship.

Mark is Chair of the Board subcommittee for Finance, Investment and Property, and a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Linda McCrorey

Linda is Principal Consultant with Enhancing Quality Services Consulting and was a Chair and Board member of UnitingCare Gippsland. Linda is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Linda works within the not for profit health and community services sector, partnering with organisations with a focus in the areas of community health, disability, women's health, aged care, sexual assault, Aboriginal, and alcohol and drug services.

Linda has worked as an accreditation assessor and is committed to assisting organisations ensure the services they provide are accessible, safe, strive for best practice and meet the diverse needs of their community.

Linda chairs the Quality and Clinical Governance Committee.

Grant Mitchell

Grant is a social anthropologist with experience as Director and Manager of community organisations, including at the Australian Red Cross and the International Detention Coalition. He has worked with diverse communities, including people seeking refuge and asylum on a range of community and welfare issues. Grant has Board experience, including on the Refugee Council of Australia.

Grant has a strong connection to the work of the Uniting Church and Uniting Vic.Tas. His experience includes Manager at Uniting Care (Hotham Mission's Asylum Seeker Project), which won the Australian Human Rights Award in developing community support and housing programs for families in detention seeking asylum.

Grant is a member of the Audit and Risk Committee.



Peter Prasser

Peter is General Manager Group Balance Sheet and Liquidity Management with the National Australia Bank.

Peter has more than 20 years' experience reporting to boards, executive management committees and regulators on business strategies, funding, risk management issues and policies, and financial performance in an environment of corporate governance. He has a focus on ensuring businesses understand the dimensions of governance and risk within their operations.

Peter was a former Chair and Board member of Prahran Mission and a former member of the Council of Elders at the Toorak Uniting Church.

Peter chairs the Audit and Risk Committee.

John Preston

John is the Director and Chair of Uniting Housing Australia Ltd.

He is a foundation member and Director of the Australian Charity, Kondanani Zambia Inc. John was a former Director of the Asian Development Foundation and the Australian Human Rights Foundation.

John has held seven executive positions with the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. The positions held include Synod Administration, Resource Allocation and Fundraising, Executive Director Resources Commission and Associate Synod Secretary.

John was Director of Property and Insurance Services, Synod Property Officer and Secretary of the Property Trusts of Victoria and Tasmania. He has been a member of the UCA Assembly Finance Committee, and former member of the Fundraising Institute of Australia, and the Australian Institute of Management.

Rev Allan Thompson

Rev Thompson previously ministered in rural and suburban congregations. He has been Moderator, a presbytery minister and Associate General Secretary of the Synod, with special responsibility for the Uniting Church in Tasmania. Allan had a role overseeing the Uniting Church's response to and engagement with the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Allan was Chair and later Executive Director of Wimmera UnitingCare. He was the inaugural Chair of Connections UnitingCare and UnitingCare Tasmania. He has served on hospital and Uniting Church school boards and was a member of the Tasmanian Heritage Council.

Allan is a former Chair and Board member of Uniting AgeWell Vic.Tas.



Heather Watson

Heather is a legal and governance consultant with specialist charity law expertise and broad commercial and governance experience across the charitable and government sectors.

Current board directorships include:

Uniting in NSW.ACT – Chair; Australian Regional and Remote Community Services Ltd – Director; Queensland Rail – Director; Children’s Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service – Board Member; National Affordable Housing Consortium Ltd – Director; Epic Good Foundation – Chair.

Other advisory roles include: Advisory Council – Queensland Family and Child Commission; Advisory Board – Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission; Chair, Reform Council – Community Services Industry Alliance Ltd

Heather has had lifelong involvement with the Uniting Church in Presbytery, Synod and Assembly contexts.

Heather chairs the Governance Committee.

Paul Linossier

Paul is the inaugural CEO of Uniting Vic.Tas. He has held leadership roles with Harrison Youth Services, Kildonan Child and Family Services, Moreland Hall and Orana Family Services, and was the founding CEO of MacKillop Family Services and Our Watch.

In 2009 he was appointed Executive Director, Early Childhood Development with the Victorian Government and later co- led the team responsible for the development of the Vulnerable Children’s Strategy.

In 2015 Paul commenced as the CEO of Wesley Mission Victoria and led that organisation into Uniting. Paul is a member of the Board of UnitingCare Australia, VCOSS and a member of the DHHS Roadmap Implementation Ministerial Advisory Group.



Financial report

Overview

The financial information presented in this report has been extracted from the audited financial report of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited for the year ended 30 June 2019. A copy of the full financial report and the auditor's report is available on request.

Employees

Uniting employed 3,701 people as at 30 June 2019 (2018: 3,835).

Volunteers and donations in kind

Uniting had 2,400 volunteers who made an invaluable contribution to our work. During the financial year under review, it is estimated that the volunteers provided approximately 1,236,698 hours of service which would equate to approximately \$44.1 million. Uniting also received donations in kind valued at \$3.244 million.

Results for the year

Uniting reported an operating loss for the year of \$9.4 million. The total revenue for the year was \$294.4 million (2018: \$280.6 million).

Review of financial condition

The total equity of Uniting at 30 June 2019 was \$286.2 million (2018: \$289.2 million).

The net cash inflow from operating activities during the financial year was \$1.3 million (2018: \$15.4 million).



State Government contributions.....	65%
Federal Government contributions.....	14%
Service fees.....	13%
Philanthropic, bequests and donations ...	3%
Sale of goods.....	1%
Rental income.....	2%
Investment income.....	1%
Other.....	1%



Aged and Carer Services.....	9%
Alcohol and Other Drugs.....	7%
Business and Social Enterprise.....	4%
Child, Youth and Families.....	34%
Disability and Mental Health.....	20%
Early Learning.....	14%
Employment Services.....	2%
Resilient Communities.....	10%

Director's declaration

In accordance with a resolution of the Directors of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited, we state that in the opinion of the Directors:

- (a) the financial statements and the notes of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2019 are in accordance with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012, including:
 - (1) Giving a true and fair view of the company and its consolidated entities' financial position as at 30 June 2019 and of their performance for the year ended on that date; and
 - (2) Complying with Australian Accounting Standards and Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Regulation 2013; and
- (b) there are reasonable grounds to believe that Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited and its consolidated entities will be able to pay their debts as and when they become due and payable.

On behalf of the Board



Rev Allan Thompson

Interim Chair of the Board of Directors

Melbourne, 2 October 2019

Director's report

Corporate Structure

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited (Ltd) is a company limited by guarantee under the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth) and domiciled in Australia.

Nature of operations and principal activities

The principal activities during the year were to advance social welfare by providing support to people in need.

Employees

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited employed 3,701 employees as at 30 June 2019 (2018: 3,835 employees).

Volunteers and donations in kind

The Agency has 2,400 active volunteers who make an invaluable contribution to the work of Uniting. During the financial year under review, the volunteers provided approximately 1,236,698 hours of service which would equate to approximately \$44.088 million. Uniting also received donations in kind valued at approximately \$3.244 million, which have not been recognised in the financial statements.

Review of results of operations

Entity overview

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited is the principal community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

Social welfare activities provided

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd delivers 759 (2018: 834) programs and services that enrich communities in Victoria and Tasmania.

These programs support and counsel people in crisis and include homelessness services, youth and children's services, accommodation, disability services and emergency relief and deliver such services in ways which promote human dignity. Uniting also promotes research into community needs and advocates attitudes and actions which aim to lessen disadvantage, poverty and exclusion in the community.

Operating results for the period

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd reported a loss for the year of \$9.4 million (2018: loss \$0.9 million). The total revenue of Uniting for the year was \$294.4 million (2018: \$280.6 million).

Dividends

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd is a not for profit charitable company operating under a constitution which prohibits the payment of dividends or distribution of profits.

Review of Financial Condition

Capital Structure

The total equity of Uniting at 30 June 2019 was \$286.2 million (2018: \$289.2 million), a decrease of \$3 million compared to the prior year.

Cash from operations

Uniting's net cash outflow/inflow from operating activities during the financial year was an Inflow \$1.3 million (2018: Inflow \$15.4 million).

Liquidity and funding

Uniting has sufficient liquid resources to fund its operating activities with \$74.7 million of cash and cash equivalents (2018: \$79.0 million).

Non-Audit Services Provided By Ernst & Young

During the financial year Ernst & Young provided additional accounting advisory services to Uniting management. The Directors are satisfied that the provision of non-audit services is compatible with the general standard of independence for auditors imposed by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission Act 2012. The nature and scope of the non-audit service provided means that auditor independence was not compromised.

Events After Reporting Date

There were no significant events reported by Uniting after balance date.

Environmental Regulations

There have been no significant known breaches by Uniting of the environmental regulations to which it is subject.

Likely Developments and Expected Results

Uniting's future operating results are expected to be consistent with its past performance.

Indemnification and Insurance of Directors and Officers

During the financial year Uniting provided insurance cover to directors and officers. This insurance policy provided indemnity to directors and officers against liability at law for damages or claims made against them by reason of wrongful acts committed by them in their capacity as directors or officers of the entity. The policy also provides provisions to reimburse the entity for payments of legal costs and damages incurred by directors or officers of the entity where permitted by law. The amount of annual premium paid for the insurance cover was \$71,053.

Directors and Other Officers Remuneration

The Uniting constitution provides for Directors to be paid reasonable remuneration for undertaking the ordinary duties of a Director.

The Board examines and assesses the remuneration of the Executive Team by referring to the relevant employment market.

Directors' Meetings and Board Committees held 1 July 2018 - 30 June 2019

Meetings	Board Meetings	Audit & Risk	Governance & Key Relationships	Finance Investment & Property	Quality & Clinical Governance	Disability & Mental Health	Church & Community Engagement*(d)
Meetings held:	8	5	4	11	5	2	3
Meetings attended:							
Bronwyn Pike (Chair)	8	–	4	8	–	–	–
Sue Norman (Deputy Chair)	3	–	–	4	–	–	–
Robyn Batten	8	5	–	–	–	2	–
Heather Watson	7	–	4	–	–	–	–
Mark Heintz	6	2	–	9	–	–	–
Linda McCrorey	8	–	–	–	5	–	–
Allan Thompson	7	–	4	–	3	–	3
Philip Morris (b)	2	–	–	–	1	–	2
Peter Prasser	7	5	–	6	–	–	–
John Preston (a)	5	–	–	5	–	–	–
Grant Mitchell (a)	5	2	–	–	–	–	–
Luke Bo'sher (a)	5	–	–	–	–	1	–
Paul Linossier (c)	8	4	4	10	3	2	2

(a) Appointed December 2018

(b) Ceased Board Appointment at AGM - 14 November 2018

(c) Executive Director

(d) Church & community Engagement ceased in September 2018

Corporate Governance Statement

Background

In mid-2016 the Synod Standing Committee approved the joining together of 21 existing UnitingCare agencies in Victoria and Tasmania, Wesley Mission Victoria, Synod led Early Childhood Services (ECS) and the Share Team to create Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited.

On 3 October 2016 the constitution of the former Wesley Mission Victoria was amended to establish Uniting and the new Uniting Board was formally appointed. At the same time the Boards of the 21 UnitingCare agencies concluded their appointment and the directors of Uniting were each appointed as the directors of each of the 21 unincorporated UnitingCare boards.

During the 2016/17 year when the Board of Directors met it did so as the Board of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd and as the Board of each of the 21 unincorporated entities. The first set of consolidated annual financial statements were prepared for the 2016/17 financial year.

On 1 July 2017, following both external and internal legal advice, the operations and assets and liabilities of the 21 UnitingCare agencies were transferred to Uniting, enabling the new organisation to have a formal and legal basis in which to act in accordance with legislative requirements, related Church entities and legal frameworks, ASIC and ACNC requirements. This approach also followed for a bona fide structure for government and non government funding arrangements to be transferred to the Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd entity.

Preparations for the cancellation of the 21 unincorporated UnitingCare agency ABN's is progressing. This will coincide with the dissolution of the 21 unincorporated entity Boards.

Board Composition

Members of the Uniting Board are appointed by the Synod Standing Committee in accordance with the requirements of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod, Uniting Constitution and By-Laws. The Board is currently made up of eleven members including the Chair, Deputy Chair and Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

The following Directors were appointed during the reporting period in accordance with the Constitution:

John Preston – appointed for a one-year term, concluding no later than the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

Grant Mitchell – appointed for a three-year term, concluding no later than the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

Luke Bo'sher – appointed for a three-year term, concluding no later than the 2021 Annual General Meeting.

Sue Norman – Deputy Chair – ceased board appointment at the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

Philip Morris – ceased board appointment at the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

The above appointments were approved by the Uniting Church of Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Standing Committee in accordance with Section 7 of the Uniting Constitution.

There were no other changes to Directors during the reporting period.

Board Procedures and Policies

The Board's Governance Charter was developed in accordance with the ACNC Governance Standards. The Charter outlines the roles, responsibilities and terms of reference of the Board and each of its Committees. It also includes Uniting's Code of Conduct; which all new Board members are required to sign. The Charter requires that the performance of the Board and CEO be reviewed on an annual basis.

The CEO is a voting member of the Board. Uniting maintains a register of Director's interests and any potential conflicts of interest are recorded annually and reviewed monthly as part of normal Board meeting procedures.

The Board receives regular reports and presentations from senior executives on strategic, financial and operational performance, enterprise risk management, key policy decisions, social justice, research activities and Church policy and relations.

Board Sub-Committees

The Board has established committees to assist the Board in fulfilling its responsibilities. Each committee has its own terms of reference or Charter, which set out the authority delegated to it by the Board and details the manner in which the committee is to operate. Each of the Board committees review and monitor relevant performance data against established key performance indicators.

During 2018/19 the Board approved committees were:

- Audit and Risk Committee
- Church and Community Engagement Committee
- Finance, Investment and Property Committee
- Governance Committee and Key Relationships
- Quality and Clinical Governance Committee
- Disability and Mental Health Committee

Audit and Risk Committee

The purpose of the Audit and Risk Committee is to assist the Board in fulfilling its statutory, fiduciary and regulatory responsibilities relating to enterprise risk management and compliance as well as fostering ethical practice and risk-informed decision making. The Committee oversees the development and maintenance of risk management systems, internal control systems, compliance with applicable laws and the appointment of the external auditor. The Committee also reviews the Annual Financial Statements jointly with the Finance, Investment and Property Committee.

Church and Community Engagement Committee (ceased September 2018)

The purpose of the Church and Community Engagement Committee is to ensure that adequate policies, plans and processes are effective in maintaining constructive and mutually beneficial relationships across the Church at congregational, Presbytery, Synod and Assembly levels; provide appropriate opportunities for community input to programs and foster strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with a broad range of groups, networks and organisations. This committee ceased in September 2018 and its role absorbed by the Governance and Key Relationships Committee.

Finance, Investment and Property Committee

The purpose of the Finance, Investment and Property Committee is to assist the Board in ensuring that adequate policies and procedures, systems and processes are in place and that they adequately support the organisation to i) meet its financial and accounting obligations, ii) manage and monitor financial performance of its investments and iii) meet its obligations in relation to the development, ownership, maintenance and use of property. This Committee also annually reviews the Uniting Budget Policy.

Governance and Key Relationships Committee

The Governance and Key Relationships Committee assists the Board to discharge its governance responsibilities under the constitution for Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd including reviewing periodically the Governance Charter and related policies to be adopted by the Board and oversees the Board's reporting and accountability framework. This includes facilitating the Board's consideration of the CEO annual performance plan and review of performance against that plan and monitors the processes for setting Board and Executive remuneration. From September 2018, this Committee also ensures that policies, plans and processes are effective in maintaining constructive and mutually beneficial relationships across the Church at congregational, Presbytery, Synod and Assembly levels; as well as appropriate opportunities for community input to programs and mutually beneficial partnerships with a broad range of groups, networks and organisations.

Quality and Clinical Governance Committee

The purpose of the Quality and Clinical Governance Committee is to ensure that appropriate and effective clinical governance systems are in place across the organisation specifically in relation to clinical safety, clinical risk, quality and scope of practice. The Committee promotes forward planning that minimises risk and identifies opportunities and alternate ways to achieve better results for our community.

Disability and Mental Health Committee

The purpose of the Disability and Mental Health Committee is to assist the Board in achieving its strategic priorities for Uniting's disability and mental health services, including implementation of the Uniting NDIS service offerings. The Committee recommends to the Board the business plan, including the NDIS operating model, policies and practices, compliance with applicable laws, regulations, standards and best practice guidelines and assists in fostering a culture of consumer directed care with a view to ensure Uniting is a relevant and significant service provider of NDIS programs and services. The Committee similarly fosters the development of Community Mental Health Services.

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd engaged independent firm, Ernst and Young, as external auditor for the reporting period to June 2019.

The Board of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Ltd is proud to present the organisation's third set of Annual Financial Statements.

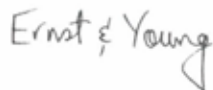
Signed in accordance with a resolution of the Directors.



Rev Allan Thompson
Interim Chair of the Board of Directors

Auditor's Independence Declaration to the Directors of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited

In relation to our audit of the financial report of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2019, and in accordance with the requirements of Subdivision 60-C of the *Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission Act 2012*, to the best of my knowledge and belief, there have been no contraventions of the auditor independence requirements of any applicable code of professional conduct.



Ernst & Young



Paul Gower
Partner
2 October 2019

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited

Report on the Financial Report

Opinion

We have audited the financial report of Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited (the Company), which comprises the statement of financial position as at 30 June 2019, the statement of comprehensive income, statement of changes in equity and statement of cash flows for the year then ended, notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies, and the directors' declaration.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial report of the Company is in accordance with the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012*, including:

- a) giving a true and fair view of the financial position of the Company as at 30 June 2019 and of its financial performance for the year ended on that date; and
- b) complying with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Regulation 2013*.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the *Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report* section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements of the Accounting Professional and Ethical Standards Board's APES 110 *Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants* (the Code) that are relevant to our audit of the financial report in Australia. We have also fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the Code.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Responsibilities of the Directors for the Financial Report

The directors of the Company are responsible for the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view in accordance with Australian Accounting Standards and the *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profits Commission Act 2012* and for such internal control as the directors determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial report that gives a true and fair view and is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial report, the directors are responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters relating to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the directors either intend to liquidate the Company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

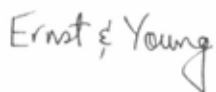
Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Report

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial report as a whole is free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of this financial report.

As part of an audit in accordance with the Australian Auditing Standards, we exercise professional judgement and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial report, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by the directors.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of the directors' use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial report or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial report, including the disclosures, and whether the financial report represents the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.

We communicate with the directors regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.



Ernst & Young



Paul Gower
Partner
Melbourne
2 October 2019

Statement of income

	2019	2018
	\$,000	\$,000
Government contributions	232,869	224,033
Fees for service	38,452	32,783
Donations, bequests and other philanthropic income	9,327	8,680
Sale of goods	3,864	4,116
Other income	9,871	10,951
Total revenue	294,383	280,563

Employee expenses	213,881	203,447
Client expenses	39,229	29,703
Occupancy expenses	18,398	18,555
Administration expenses	19,355	20,040
Depreciation and amortisation	6,059	5,608
Other expenses	6,862	4,123
Total expenditure	303,784	281,476

Net surplus / (deficit) for the year from continuing operations	(9,401)	(913)
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Other comprehensive income

Net gain on equity instruments designated at fair value through other comprehensive income	2,147	2,928
Revaluation of Property, Plant and Equipment for Disposed Properties	(747)	(315)
Transfer of Beneficial Right of Use of Property to Uniting	4,253	–

Total comprehensive income for the year	(3,748)	1,700
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This Statement should be read in conjunction with the accompanying notes.

Financial statement

	2019 \$,000	2018 \$,000
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	74,663	79,007
Receivables	11,096	6,958
Other current assets	3,288	2,230
Assets held for sale	8,335	2,982
Total current assets	97,382	91,177
Non-current assets		
Property, plant and equipment	218,016	220,958
Intangible assets	10,968	10,968
Financial assets	37,647	34,932
Other non-current assets	25	10
Total non-current assets	266,656	266,868
Total assets	364,038	358,045
Current liabilities		
Payables	42,485	37,544
Provisions	17,978	17,337
Total current liabilities	60,463	54,881
Non-current liabilities		
Payables	4,102	4,440
Provisions	13,236	9,486
Total non-current liabilities	17,338	13,926
Total liabilities	77,801	68,807
Net assets	286,237	289,238
Equity		
Contributed equity	12,623	12,623
Reserves	288,592	285,154
Accumulated surplus / (deficit)	(14,978)	(8,539)
Total equity	286,237	289,238

Fundraising wrap

With the support of our employees, volunteers and generous donors, we can respond to the ever-increasing number of people experiencing crisis in our community. We thank you for your selflessness, compassion and ongoing commitment to supporting these important initiatives, and take great pleasure in reviewing the incredible feats you helped us achieve this year.

2019 Winter Share Appeal

The Winter Share Appeal drive aims to raise funds to provide emergency relief for families in crisis. This year saw an overwhelming response, with over \$810,000 raised by 30 June.

2018 Christmas Appeals

Just one sudden accident, illness or event can change an entire family's circumstance, making it impossible to make ends meet. Our Christmas Appeals aim to help these struggling families. This year, your donations contributed:

- Close to 50 tonnes of non-perishable food and essentials to Food for Families.
- Over \$350,000 to the Christmas Share Appeal.
- 2,500 gifts across Victoria and Tasmania through the Target UnitingCare Christmas Appeal.

2018 Firefighter Stair Climb

The Melbourne Firefighter Stair Climb sees career and volunteer firefighters race up 28 floors in full gear to raise funds and awareness of depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and suicide. In 2018, nearly \$550,000 was raised, with over \$272,000 donated to Lifeline Melbourne – operated by Uniting Vic.Tas – which helps employ more trainers and supervisors for our volunteer workforce who answer calls from around Australia. A special thank you goes out to the team of organisations behind the event.

2019 Pancake Day

Each year, people come together on Pancake Day – or Shrove Tuesday – to have some fun, flip pancakes and raise funds for an important cause. During March and April, close to \$70,000 was raised through events held across Victoria and Tasmania to help some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities.



Keeping families together

Sandra is one of many people who access our emergency relief services to provide food for her family.

To help spread awareness and encourage donations to our Christmas fundraising activities, Sandra – a 65-year-old grandmother of two – fearlessly shared her experience of homelessness and struggle.

With her son and his partner battling ongoing drug use, Sandra eventually found herself as the sole caregiver for her two young grandchildren, Sasha* and Lainey*, when she was in her late 50s. In a seven-year-long struggle, she experienced grief, separation, eviction and financial strain as she sacrificed full-time work to keep her family together.

In her time of need, Sandra turned to Uniting. She was placed in crisis accommodation and has used our services ever since. She says not having to choose between putting food on the table and the girls' education means the world to her.

"If I'm running low on money, I know I can still provide the girls with food, which is a big relief," Sandra said.

"It means we don't go hungry, and most importantly, the girls are happy and healthy."

Sandra's story resonated with the community. Our 2018 Christmas Appeals saw close to 50 tonnes of non-perishable food and essentials donated to help families in need, and over \$350,000 raised to assist people in crisis.

"I can't thank people enough for their support," she said.

"The help I received at Christmas meant I could put food on the table and buy some small gifts for the girls. To everyone who donated, thank you. You are so kind, and it means a lot to us."

**This is a true story about real people. Some details such as names and locations have been changed to respect the wishes of the people featured.*



"The help I received at Christmas meant I could put food on the table and buy some small gifts for the girls. To everyone who donated, thank you. You are so kind, and it means a lot to us."

– Sandra, who shared her story for our 2018 Christmas Appeals.

Help for BreezeWay

Vital community service BreezeWay operates 365 days a year in Ballarat's CBD.

For over 20 years, people in crisis across Ballarat have looked to BreezeWay for a hot meal, warm welcome and place of belonging. With close to 75 people accessing the space every day, the program has outgrown its current location.

Through the Victorian Government's Pick My Project initiative in late 2018, Uniting, in partnership with the Alfredton Rotary Club, received a \$180,000 grant to access a new, fit-for-purpose site to continue the work of BreezeWay.

However, the scale of our ambition for what the new facility could provide for local people meant additional funding needed to be found. This is when the Oliver Foundation, who have generously supported the Ballarat community for over a decade, stepped in to bridge the funding gap.

"Helping the region's growing homeless population is something our Rotary Club has been passionate about for a long time." Oliver Foundation member and Alfredton Rotary Club member, Jillian said.

"After meeting with the local Ballarat team at Uniting, we were given some practical ideas on how we could assist, with the relocation of BreezeWay at the top of the list."

"This is something the Oliver Foundation also feels strongly about. We'd like to see more people off the street and into safe and secure housing."



"We'd like to see more people off the street and into safe and secure housing."

– Jillian, Oliver Foundation member and Uniting supporter.

Thank you to our supporters

Thank you to the thousands of donors, volunteers, businesses, community groups, schools and church congregations who donate funds, in-kind goods and their time to support people in their community. We appreciate the generosity of the following donors, trusts and governments, just some of those whose support makes a tangible difference in people's lives.

Community, businesses, trusts and foundations

A&H John's Bequest
Allport Bequest
Australia Post Community Grants
Bagot Gjergja Foundation
Ballarat Foundation
Barings
Bendix Family Charitable Endowment
Border Trust
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The William Angliss (Vic) Charitable Fund
UCAF Stamp Fund
Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Wellcom Group Ltd
Whitehorse Community Chest
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Bequests

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STAF - Alfred John Hutton
The Ian Berry Foundation

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Commonwealth Government

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Department of Human Services
Department of Social Services

Victorian Government

Department of Education and Training
Department of Health and Human Services
Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions
Department of Justice and Community Safety
Department of Premier and Cabinet
Department of Transport

Tasmanian Government

Communities Tasmania
Department of Premier and Cabinet

We thank all **Local Governments** who partner with us and enable us to deliver meaningful services in local communities.

Get involved

Even the smallest **acts of kindness** can brighten someone's day.

Make a donation

Your generosity has the power to save lives, and every little bit helps.

Donations – big or small – help us to provide essential services to the most vulnerable and at-risk people in our community.

A gift today or a bequest for the future can help us make an immediate difference in someone's life.

Volunteer with us

There is no shortage of ways to get involved. Help us sort donated goods at our emergency relief centres or Op Shops. Bring a smile to an older person's face with a visit to their home. Put your green thumb to use in one of our blossoming community gardens or use your creative passion to mentor artists with a disability.

If you have a skill to share and a vision to create a safer, fairer, and better future for all, volunteer with us.

Become a foster carer

For children and young people unable to live with their birth families, a safe and supportive home environment can be life changing.

We offer foster care and permanent care opportunities. You can be single or married, with or without children, of any sexual orientation and any religion.

If you have a spare room and a big heart, we'd love to hear from you.

Contact us at hello@vt.uniting.org



The future is bright.



When we respect our history, unite toward achieving a common purpose and share common values, a collective spirit is born.

This gives us the foundation to dare to reach further than ever before and be informed by the voice of our consumers and communities to drive real, positive social change.

Learn more
vt.uniting.org

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited
ABN 81 098 317 125



Cover photo: St Mark's Planned Activity Group participant, Jenny and team leader, Ethan.