

Autumn 2021 Congregation Connect



JobSeeker rise not enough

Millions of Australians have been awaiting the Federal Government's announcement that it would make the COVID-19 supplement a permanent increase to several payments supporting our most vulnerable.

The recent announcement of a \$50 a fortnight rise to these payments is extremely disappointing.

"That payment increase just doesn't go far enough – it's a missed opportunity," says Uniting Vic.Tas CEO, Bronwyn Pike.

"It's a long overdue acknowledgment that \$40 a day is nowhere near enough for people to live on, but this token increase will do very little to ease the suffering.

"What the Government has announced is just under a \$3.60 increase per day. How is this supposed to help people put food on the table or with the cost of putting petrol in the car to go to a job interview?

"We joined the Raise the Rate campaign to ensure the JobSeeker COVID-19 supplement of \$150 a fortnight was maintained and we firmly believe this is the minimum level of support people need to help rebuild their lives."

As you may have heard, a Senate Inquiry has been announced to look at the rate of increase.

We are working with UnitingCare Australia to ensure the voice of our consumers reaches the Senate.

Your Mission Team at Uniting Vic.Tas

Rev Gavin Blakemore

Mission and Ethos Partner (East)

T 03 9051 3063 M 0419 344 044

@ gavin.blakemore@unitingvictas.org.au

Rev Lisa Stewart

Mission and Ethos Partner (West and Tasmania)

T 03 9384 8867 M 0437 011 281

@ lisa.stewart@unitingvictas.org.au



Uniting speaks at the Historical Forced Adoptions Inquiry

Uniting Vic.Tas CEO, Bronwyn Pike and Heritage Service Manager, Catriona Milne recently appeared before the Victorian Government's Responses to the Historical Forced Adoptions in Victoria Inquiry.

The Inquiry is hearing submissions on how organisations have responded to historical forced adoptions as well as the support services available to those who have been adopted and to their families.

We highlighted our Heritage Service, which includes the Adoption Information Service. Our service provides support to people, who as children, spent time in out-of-home care, foster care or went through the adoption process run by the former Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting Churches.

This service is also offered to their families and includes access to historical information and records, as well as ongoing support and assistance.

You can read about our Heritage Service at unitingvictas.org.au/services/family-services/heritage-service/



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

Uniting



Celebrating Pancake Day

Thank you to everyone who took part in this year's Pancake Day festivities on or around Tuesday 16 February.

While celebrations were a little different this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, it was great to see so many congregations still supporting the cause.

Your congregation can still take part in Pancake Day until the end of April. To get involved, contact our team.

T 1800 668 426

@ pancakeday.info@unitingvictas.org.au

Funds raised support people in crisis in your local community.

Uniting Vic.Tas CEO, Bronwyn Pike attended St Leonard's Uniting Church in Brighton on Sunday 21 February to take part in their celebrations.

The congregation started the Coffee Cup Challenge in 2017, asking participants to put aside the cost of a cup of coffee each week from International Coffee Day on 1 October until Pancake Day (or Shrove Tuesday) in February.

So far, the congregation has raised over \$45,000 from the initiative.

Bronwyn spoke about the growing issue of homelessness in the communities we support and the work we are doing to advocate for change to ensure everyone has a place to call home.

Uniting has pledged \$20 million to address the affordable housing shortage in Victoria and Tasmania.

"This is an important cause and I think the Coffee Cup Challenge is an effortless way for people to make a significant difference for people experiencing homelessness," says Barry Schofield, the brains behind the Coffee Cup Challenge.

Barry provided each participant with a keep cup to collect their weekly donation. In lieu of serving up pancakes this year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, Barry gave each participant a pre-mixed bottle of pancake mix and a takeaway coffee to enjoy at home.

Contact Uniting

T 1800 668 426

@ hello@unitingvictas.org.au

unitingvictas.org.au



Update to Uniting signage

New signage is being rolled out across our services.

The signage is being implemented to create a consistent look and feel across Victoria and Tasmania, following the merger of the founding agencies in 2017 to create Uniting Vic.Tas.

You can expect to see lots of activity over the next few months as the new signs are installed.

New website

We are excited to announce the launch of our new website.

Our new website makes it easier for you to find out who we are, what we do and why we do it. It has information about our programs and services, along with updates on what's happening across the organisation.

We've worked with consumers to make sure it meets their needs and is as user-friendly as possible.

Take a look at the new website at **unitingvictas.org.au**

The relationships we have with congregations are vital, which is why we have a dedicated section for you at **unitingvictas.org.au/congregations/**

