

Uniting Heritage



For past residents
and their families

Uniting

Founding agencies

The founding agencies of Uniting provided out-of-home care in Victoria. Below under each agency are the names of orphanages, children's homes, family group homes and foster care providers that were run by the former denominations of the Uniting Church – Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational. Uniting Vic.Tas continues to provide some of these services today.

Connections: Methodist Babies Home (1929-1974), Presbyterian Babies Home (1928-1977), Canterbury Family Centre (1977-2000).

UnitingCare Gippsland: Kilmany Park Farm Home for Boys, Sale (1923-1978), Kilmany Family Care (family group homes), East Gippsland (1978-2002), Kilmany UnitingCare (2001-2010).

UnitingCare Harrison: Arthur Harrison Boys' Home, Hawthorn (1960-1977), Harrison House Youth Services (also known as Harrison Youth Hostel), Melbourne eastern suburbs (1982-1994).

UnitingCare Kildonan: Kildonan, North Melbourne (1890-1937), Kildonan, Elgar Road, Burwood (1937-1961), Kildonan Homes for Children, Melbourne's eastern and inner suburbs (1961-1993), Kildonan Child and Family Services, office in Whittlesea/Epping (1993-2007).

UnitingCare Lentara: Methodist Homes for Children, Cheltenham (1891-1953), Orana, the Peace Memorial Homes for Children, Burwood (1953-1988).

Wesley Mission Victoria: South Yarra Home (1900-1936), Tally Ho Boys Training Farm, Burwood (1903-1986), Tally Ho Youth Services, Melbourne eastern suburbs (1986-1990s), Memorial Girls Home, Fairfield (1922-1984), Moreland Hall, Brunswick (1936-1969), Lincoln House, Central Mission Hostel for Boys, King Street, Melbourne (c1939-1950), Wesley Youth Services, Melbourne eastern suburbs (1986-2017).

UnitingCare Wimmera: Wimmera Family Homes/Wimmera Community Care, Horsham/Stawell (1979-2000), Wimmera UnitingCare (2000-2017).

UnitingCare Wyndham: Werribee Support and Housing (also known as Bridges Foster Care Inner West), Werribee and Melbourne (1982-2017).

UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania: Dhurringile Rural Training Farm, Tatura (1951-1964), Regent House Hostel for Girls, Elsternwick (1966-1977).

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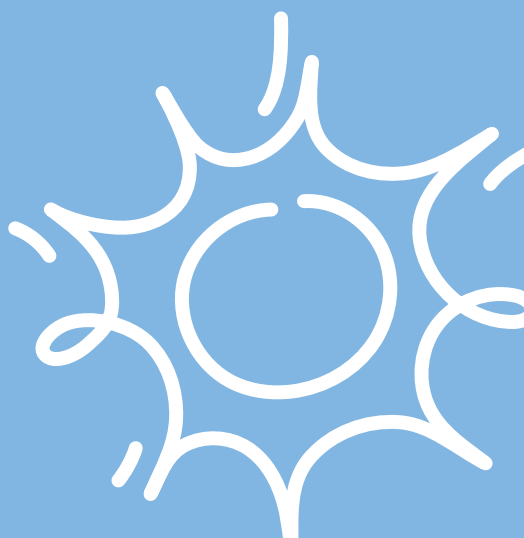
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Message from the CEO

Welcome to Uniting Heritage.

I'd like to start by saluting Paul Linossier, our former CEO for his immense contribution to setting up the Heritage Service.

Paul spoke passionately about the importance of righting past wrongs and was deeply committed to listening to the voices of people who have felt silenced and misunderstood. I look forward to continuing Paul's vision for the Heritage Service.

It was a busy 2019, with the number of enquiries and requests for information doubling in the last year. Our dedicated team continues to gather, index and preserve records held by Uniting. These records have come from nine founding agencies, which used 27 different

systems of record keeping, dating from 1881 to the present day.

The next stage is to create a purpose built archival system for these records so we can more efficiently retrieve information for people who contact us.

I hope you continue to enjoy reading about the work taking place at Heritage Service.

Bronwyn Pike
Chief Executive Officer

Thank you, Paul

Paul's vision led to the creation of the Heritage Service.

Paul and the Uniting Vic.Tas Board committed to providing a service that many other organisations do not offer.

Despite his busy schedule, Paul attended most of our reunions. At the recent Kildonan reunion, he spoke with a past resident from interstate who had also spent time in another nearby home but did not know where it was located. Paul took him there to see the building.

The Heritage Service team feel privileged and grateful to be able to continue this work under Bronwyn's leadership.

Catriona Milne
Uniting Heritage Service Manager



Rekindled memories of Dhurringile

Catriona Milne

While searching for information about Dhurringile, a former Presbyterian training farm for boys from Scotland, I contacted the Historical Society in Shepparton and spoke with volunteer historian, Geoff.

He put me in touch with Thomas, a former resident of the farm. I was privileged to accompany Thomas, his wife Karin, and Geoff on a recent visit to Dhurringile.

Thomas' reflections from the visit.

On 11 April 2019, my wife Karin and I visited Dhurringile, which was my childhood home from the age of ten. Catriona and Geoff Allemand, a historian from Shepparton, arranged and videoed our visit.

It had been 55 years since I was last there, having left on 28 July 1964. While driving up the only hill in the area to this old mansion, I began to feel anxious.

I remembered the enormous building I had called a castle, that had been my home for several years. I reflected on the good and bad experiences. Fortunately for me, there were more good than bad.

As a young boy I arrived on 4 February 1960, a very warm 104°F sunny day, having left Scotland when it was 4°F.

My impression of this enormous, 56 room mansion was overwhelming. On that first day we were greeted by the superintendent and other staff members who gave us a brief history of the surrounds. There was a 120 acre farm with a dairy, fruit, pigs and chickens. We were informed that, when required, all eleven boys would have to assist with the running of the farm. This was daunting.

Going through the mansion rekindled old memories of meal times, regimented daily routines, discipline and the structured life we lived.

I recalled the periodic fights with other boys, of being locked in the dungeon on occasion and my fear of snakes.



Visit to Dhurringile, 2019

As we entered the billiard room, I was hoping to see the charcoal paintings created by the German prisoners of war. Much to my disappointment, they were no longer there.

We continued our tour and I noticed the polished floor boards. One of our jobs each Saturday morning was to polish them and the beautiful, curved timber stairway leading to the second floor and tower. The views from the tower, four floors up, were magnificent as we looked over the irrigated farmland and surrounding countryside.

I don't know what my childhood would have been like if I hadn't been sent to the other side of the world. This was a character-building experience.

Names of the past

Victoria Lavery

Records written in an aged marbled journal hold the names of children who have come through Livingstone Home and the Methodist Homes for Children.

Livingstone Home opened in Carlton in 1888 and moved to Cheltenham in 1891. It later became known as the Methodist Homes for Children.

Many of the children were placed in what was known as 'boarding out' arrangements. They were often placed with families in country Victoria.

While looking through one particular register, it struck me that many of the names listed are now popular again. Floral female names like Lily, Violet, Rose, Daisy, Daphne, Ivy and Iris are listed. Many are timeless classics such as Emily, Isobel, Annie, Mary and Alice.

The Victorian era saw many grand names appear, and often baby boys were named after royalty. Royal names from the registers include George, Edmund and Albert. For girls, names of royalty

like Victoria, Sophia, Elizabeth and Alexandra were popular.

Some of the most common names for girls in these old records include Ethel, Amelia, Annie, Nellie, Amy, Blanche, Millie, Agnes, Bella, Lily, Elsie, Eveline, Dorothy, Florence, Grace, Winifred, Ivy, Clara and Elsie.

Common boys' names were Harold, Andrew, Douglas, Frank, Jack and Will.

Uncommon names such as Horrie, Florrie, Beula, Ellia, Athol, Roma, Albertia, Pearl, Verena and Gertie appear in one particular journal.

After the World Wars, last names like Ellabrock, Ballingale, Caddy, Diedrick, Sibbald and Greyson were no longer common.

Meet our team



The team that keeps the Heritage Service running.

From left to right:
Ann McCarthy,
Victoria Lavery,
Blanche DeGuzman,
Catriona Milne.

Heritage Service update

Catch up on the latest projects and news from the Heritage Service

Advisory Group/Consumer Consultants

You may recall in the first edition of Uniting Heritage, we asked for expressions of interest to join our Advisory Group. Four of you expressed a willingness to offer advice and ideas.

These people have lived in different Homes or have been in foster care, vary in age and come from different parts of Australia.

One person will be reviewing and providing feedback on policies related to the Heritage Service, another (who was on the committee for the Tally-Ho project) is helping with the interview and selection process of new staff. The third person is interested in increasing awareness about the Heritage Service and other related services for people who have been in out-of-home care. And our fourth person is keen to be involved in a memorial project for past residents of Kilmany Park.

To facilitate the interests of our four participants, we've also invited them to be consumer consultants at Uniting.

Records Project

As part of our Records Project, we employed a consultant to survey our records and help develop a system to document and manage them. We have since employed an archivist to the team to work on the next stage of this project.

This will involve:

- Developing the archival skills of our Heritage Service team members
- Developing a purpose-built archival system for records
- Mapping our records to have a better understanding of where they come from, what they are and how to find the information in them.

Creating Records from Memory

The Heritage Service received funding from FIND and CONNECT for a project called Creating Records from Memory. This project has increased our records for Tally-Ho, a home where many records have been lost or destroyed.

Former staff and seven past residents were interviewed by our Project Partner RMIT University in Melbourne. We now have nine transcripts with a wealth of stories and memories from the 1940s to the late 1970s.

The loss of records is distressing to many and we will continue to work on ways to find records from other sources.

If you wish to be involved in the Kilmany Park memorial, please contact Catriona Milne.



Digitising our records

We have now digitised most of the Kildonan records, making it easier to access them when requested.

We now have quality copies of:

- Nearly 1,300 pages from the register of children's bank accounts
- Over 7,000 pages of minutes from Committee meetings
- 4,125 pages from admission registers
- 3,175 pages of forms signed by families giving Kildonan legal guardianship of children between 1888 – 1940.

Mothercraft Nurses Photographic Project



Mothercraft Photographic Project, 2019

We continue to hold gatherings for former mothercraft nurses who have generously shared their old photos. It was an exciting moment in March when we made our first match of photographs donated by former mothercraft nurses from the Methodist Babies Home.

We received a request from someone who had been adopted and found three baby photos of her in one of the albums given to us. Since then we have received more photos and have made several more matches.

Sadly, the adopted woman in the photos has since died but her daughter continued with the request for information about her mother.

Below is an email from the person who assisted the daughter with her mother's request.

We are now collecting photographs from former nurses at the Presbyterian Babies Home and held our first gathering in October 2019.

“As you may recall, my client – the adoptee – sadly passed away. Unfortunately, she never got to see her records.”



Following her passing, her daughter took over her application to continue on with her mother's wishes and desire to understand her beginnings, her story prior to being adopted.

Given her mother's passing, this need for understanding became just as significant for her daughter. I met with the adoptee's daughter to release her records and help her make sense of her mother's beginnings... Then came the wonderfully surprising contact from you – the beautiful, never-seen-before photos of the adoptee, held lovingly by her carers in the nursery.

A small glimpse of her life before her adoption, a glimpse of what she looked like. I contacted my client, the adoptee's daughter, to share with her your incredible findings. She was beyond thrilled, emotional and grateful to be able to receive these precious images and to view a snapshot of her mother's life prior to her adoption. This was incredibly meaningful for my client.

From my perspective to see the commitment and dedication to this project is truly impressive, and so very much appreciated by our team. It certainly enriches the experience for our clients.”

Reunions and gatherings

Orana Reunion

On 25 April 2019, the annual Methodist Homes for Children and Orana Reunion was held at Rentoul Hall.



Methodist Homes for Children and Orana Reunion, 2019

Harrison House



Staff at Harrison House

Harrison House was opened in 1960 by Arthur Harrison, in West Hawthorn. We regret that we've been unable to locate many records from this home. The Heritage Service organised a gathering of former staff in July 2019 to share and capture their memories.

Songs from Kildonan

At the Kildonan reunion in October 2018, we received a great treat from two women who sang to us, Bev and Nancy.

Bev had been at Kildonan just after the Second World War and Nancy several years later. They both remembered songs created and sung by the children at Kildonan.



Bev and her brother Lawrence at Kildonan.

Bev recounts

“My brother, Lawrence and I left Kildonan in 1948.

I have happy memories, sitting on the edge of the creek with three other girls, eating nut grass.

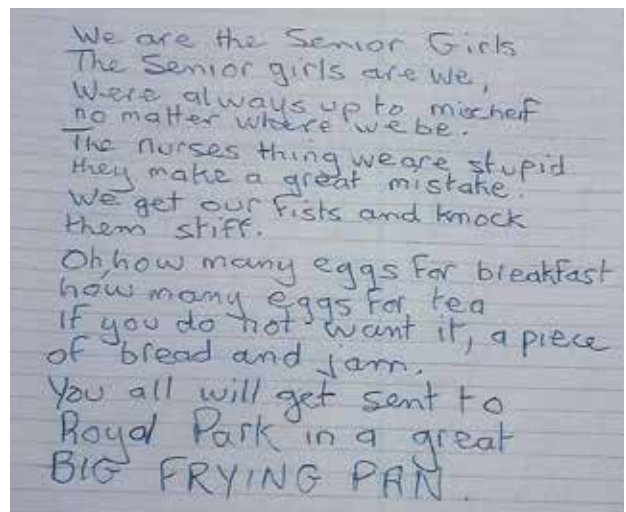
One of the girls taught us to sing this ditty:

**Whistle while you work,
Hitler is a twerp,
He is barmy, so is his army,
Chuck him in the dirt.**

I was asked to sing this at a recent get together of former residents. My daughters couldn't believe how I just jumped up, sang it loudly, and how the words came so easily!”

Nancy recollects

“I was a very happy little girl at Kildonan. It was very strict and we were proud of the song that we wrote. Singing it was like a release valve and we used to sing it on our own and under our breath. One of the girls had been to Royal Park and that was how we knew about it. Singing this song was something we got away with and weren't chastised for.”



The Senior Girls song.



Visiting Tuart Place

Catriona Milne

Tuart Place in Western Australia is the state-funded service for former child migrants and members of the Stolen Generations. I was honoured to visit Tuart Place in June, as I have admired their work for many years.

I spent time talking with participants and staff and gave them an update on the work of the Heritage Service. I sang with the Monday singing group, shared the community lunch and sat in a meeting group that planned and organised social activities.

I have included some information from their newsletter about the British ex-gratia payments for child migrants. Some of the children who lived at the Methodist Homes for Children, Dhurringile and Kilmany Park were brought from the UK to Australia.

Applications to the British Government ex-gratia scheme for former child migrants from the UK will remain open until the end of 2020. Former child migrants from England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland who travelled unaccompanied to Australia under government schemes are eligible for the flat-rate 'common experience' payment of £20,000.



Kevin, Catriona and Rob

For further information visit childmigrantstrust.com or contact Child Migrants Trust on **1800 040 509**.

Goodbye from Matthew

I finished up in my role at the Heritage Service in July and wanted to take this opportunity to say a belated goodbye. It's been a privilege to work in the team and play a part in making sure that former residents searching for their records receive this important information about their early years. I have learnt a lot from my dedicated colleagues at the Heritage Service and its service users and look forward to taking this knowledge with me to my upcoming information management course.



Upcoming events



Methodist Homes for Children and Orana reunion

Date: 25 April 2020

Time: 11.30am until 3pm

Location: Rentoul Hall
16 Livingstone Close, Burwood Vic 3125

If you were in out-of-home care at Methodist Homes for Children or Orana and wish to attend this event, please contact us.

Tributes



We've been asked to share the names of people who have died. Our commiserations go to their family and friends.

Bill Metcalfe
Dorethy Margaret Skey
George Walden
Graeme McLeod
Keith Stone
Lesley Johnson
Michael Knight
Richard McAllister

We need your help

We have many photographs in our collections in which children are not named.

The below photos are from Kildonan, circa 1940s. If you recognise anyone in these photos, we would be grateful if you could let us know. **Please contact Catriona on 03 8644 1531.**



About Uniting

Uniting Vic.Tas is a not-for-profit organisation working alongside local communities delivering a range of services for over 100 years. We believe people are important and all deserve the right to thrive.

The Heritage Service has been established for past residents and their families who received out-of-home care provided by the Presbyterian, Methodist and Uniting Churches. We help people access information about themselves or their family member's time in care and support them in their journey to better understand their past.

As an organisation, 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 Islanders as Australia's First Peoples and as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land on which we work. We welcome lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ+) people. We pledge to provide inclusive and non-discriminatory services.

Learn more

vt.uniting.org

Get in touch

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If you would like to receive event updates and future editions of Uniting Heritage by email, please forward your details to catriona.milne@vt.uniting.org

Uniting

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

