

## UnitingCare WA Forum

*Chairperson*  
*Members - Good Samaritan Industries*

*Members - Juniper*

*Members – UnitingCare West*

Robert Watson  
Trent Bartlett – Chairperson  
John Knowles – CEO  
Fred Boshart – Chairperson  
Vaughan Harding – CEO  
Peter Fitzpatrick – Chairperson (from December)  
Amanda Hunt - CEO

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the UnitingCare Network, one of the largest providers of community services in Australia. With over 1,600 sites, the network employs 39,000 staff and is supported by the work of over 28,000 volunteers. We provide services to children, young people and families, Indigenous Australians, people with disabilities, the poor and disadvantaged, people from culturally diverse backgrounds and older Australians in urban, rural and remote communities.

UnitingCare Australia's mission is to express God's love for all people through the Uniting Church's commitment to supporting individuals, families and communities through advocacy and the enhancement of community service provision.

In WA this mission is expressed through our agencies: Good Samaritan Industries, Juniper, and UnitingCare West. (For more comprehensive details please see their individual Synod Reports.)

### **I. UNITINGCARE AUSTRALIA NATIONAL COMMITTEE**

The Chairperson of the Forum sits on the UnitingCare Australia National Committee and attends the meeting of the Synod Directors, which is held in conjunction with the National Meeting.

Each synod is represented by its UnitingCare Director (or equivalent) and a number of Assembly elected members. Currently WA has only one formal seat on the National Committee. I believe this is unfortunate.

The National body is currently considering a significant restructure so that it can meet the changing political landscape, the needs of our

Uniting Church agencies and governance responsibilities.

The current Committee membership will continue until the Assembly meeting in July 2018. A process of consultation to review the Mandate will include the role and function of the National Committee and membership. It is important that the WA Synod retains a significant presence and voice in the new structure.

### **2. POSITION OF NATIONAL DIRECTOR**

After fourteen years with UnitingCare, National Director Lin Hatfield Dodds resigned and finished up on 9 June 2016. At the beginning of 2017, Ms Claerwen Little was appointed to this position. Claerwen came with a wide experience both within the field and the Uniting Church.

### **3. POSITION OF NATIONAL CHAIR**

Assembly Standing Committee has appointed Bronwyn Pike as the new Chair of UnitingCare Australia.

Bronwyn replaces Peter Bicknell who retired in June this year after 11 years of outstanding service.

Bronwyn brings to the role a deep commitment to the mission of the Uniting Church and to social justice along with vast professional expertise, qualities that will be critical at this time of growing inequality in Australia and significant change for our community services agencies.

The Uniting Church has been an enormous part of Bronwyn's life since childhood. She was the inaugural Chair of the new Uniting

Victoria/Tasmania and a board member of Uniting in the NSW/ACT Synod. Over many years Bronwyn has had the opportunity to sit on numerous Parish, Synod and Assembly bodies including the Commission on Women and Men, Sexuality Taskforce and Social Justice and Human Rights committees. In 1989 she began work with Somerville Community Services in the Northern Territory and was later appointed as the Director of Justice and Social Responsibility for the Victorian Synod which provided the opportunity for her to work closely with the community services ministry of the Church and more broadly in the sector as the President of Victorian Council of Social Service (VCOSS).

Importantly, Bronwyn also brings significant professional experience beyond the Church, most notably as a Member of the Victorian State Parliament for 13 years from 1999, including 11 years as a Minister across the portfolios of Health, Housing, Aged Care, Community Services and Education.

#### **4. LEADERS FORUM**

A second Leaders Forum is being planned for early October 2017. It will be held in Sydney at the Wesley Mission Conference Centre.

UnitingCare/Target Christmas Appeal

UnitingCare Australia, along with Target, undertook a review of the UnitingCare Target Christmas Appeal in 2016. Both parties recommitted wholeheartedly to the Appeal and the resultant 2017 outcomes were the best ever.

Planning for the 2017 Christmas Appeal is progressing well and a number of improvements are being introduced.

#### **5. UNITINGCARE (WA) AGENCIES**

Our three UnitingCare Agencies in WA report directly to Synod and, as mentioned earlier, I commend their reports to your reading. This year they will make a contribution to UnitingCare Australia and the Uniting Church in WA totalling approximately \$200,000.

#### **6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS AND WELCOMES**

Welcome to Trent Bartlett as the new Chair of Good Samaritan Industries and Amanda

Hunt as the new CEO of UnitingCare West and we look forward to ongoing contribution to the Forum.

#### **7. CONCLUSION**

In Conclusion the Forum acknowledges the significant work and commitment of our Agencies, Boards, staff and many volunteers. We also acknowledge the many congregations throughout WA who provide facilities, financial and prayerful support for the work of our agencies. In all of this, together, we give expression to God's inclusive love.

**Robert Watson**  
**Executive Chairperson**  
**Mobile: 0447 710 713**