

UnitingCare West

<i>Chairperson</i>	Peter Fitzpatrick AM
<i>Deputy Chairperson</i>	Dr Glenda Campbell-Evans
<i>CEO</i>	Amanda Hunt
<i>Members elected by Synod</i>	David Thomas
	Dr Chris Ford
	Ian Jackson
	Michael Brady
	Chris Hunt
	Deborah Marshall
	Anton Ferreira
	Lisa Fini
	Mark Webb

UnitingCare West's reason for existence is to connect people experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage with community and service supports that are responsive, accessible and relevant to their needs.

In 2006, UnitingCare West (UCW) was formed in recognition of a need for a 'much stronger voice' in relation to other agencies and government; as a broad Uniting Church multi-functional agency in Western Australia that would provide an increased capacity to advocate on behalf of vulnerable people and a better way to 'manage the risk' (of compromising the quality of programs or services).

Since then, UCW like many organisations, has needed to evolve to respond to the growing needs of people in our community who are labelled as disadvantaged and vulnerable. This year, the newly elected Government have also acknowledged that community services delivery in Western Australia is at a crossroads – and while they confirmed the government's commitment to "working with the community sector to ensure that they maximise every opportunity to deliver quality services to the community", they suggested an urgent need for a reduction in the State budget deficit.

With the external environment changing at a rapid rate, it is essential that UCW builds on our strengths and ensures that we remain

relevant and viable for the people that we serve. This means that UCW must be agile, responsive and resilient, ensure that our work is at a high quality standard, be efficient and performance focused and work in collaboration with other community stakeholders.

To lead the organisation's renewal in 2017, Amanda Hunt became the third CEO of UCW on 4 April after the announcement of Sue Ash's retirement. Sue Ash's contribution to the organisation over six years successfully built on the foundations that the founding Board and Executive established, and she maintained UCW's influence as a significant contributor to the civics of WA and Australia. Sue ensured that the voice of 'those most in need' was heard and regularly considered in a diverse range of forums including CEDA, Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre, Reserve Bank, WACOSS, National Disability Services and UnitingCare Australia.

The influential study paper that was developed by Sue in her final year has supported strategic discussions in the UCW Board and other parts of the not for profit sector.

Incoming CEO Amanda Hunt brings over 20 years experience in the community sector, and participates on several Boards, including the Western Australian Council of Social Services (WACOSS), which ensures that UCW is kept up to date with Social Policy

trends and issues and provides the opportunity for UCW to advocate for stronger and more sustainable community services in Western Australia. Amanda has a great passion for community development and is committed to leading UCW through the next stage of our organisation's development.

UCW has strong strategic pillars, and this year has achieved great progress towards achieving our strategic plan.

I. DELIVERING POSITIVE IMPACT

After being closed for three years for rebuilding and renovation, Wilf Sargent House reopened at the beginning of 2017. Wilf Sargent House has provided support and accommodation for single males who are experiencing homelessness or who were at imminent risk of being homeless since the 1970s. Significant renovations to the 1895 building combine the building's original features with contemporary practicality. Renovation of the historic property was achieved through collaboration between the Housing Authority of WA and local government, with funding provided for program support provided by the Department for Child Protection and Family Support.

The annual golf day, initiated by UCIF, continued with a day on the green at Royal Perth Golf club in October 2016. The two objectives are to raise funds and to strengthen relationships with existing corporate supporters. In 2016 funds raised contributed to building a therapeutic garden in one of our disability houses that support young people living with disabilities and complex needs.

The journey towards significant engagement with Aboriginal people in the work and life of UCW was enhanced by the employment of Josey Hanson, the Aboriginal Engagement Leader, in May 2017. Josey will lead the next stage of UCW's Reconciliation Action Plan and is already making great progress. National Reconciliation Week was celebrated with functions at Fremantle Service Centre, Inner City Service Centre and Central Office. The inaugural "Big Yarn" at Central office created an opportunity for UCW to connect with Aboriginal members from BKI and the Electoral Commission. BKI staff prepared a

feast of traditional food and the ladies group from BKI displayed and sold some of their artwork.

Food Rescue continued to distribute rescued food to 78 agencies across the metropolitan area delivering the equivalent of over 1 million meals in the past year. Food Rescue has been recycling four cubic metres of plastic and packaging a week which is taken from the rescued fresh food from supermarket collections, and has been trialing an aerobic digester 'ORCA' which recycles the food waste that can't be redistributed safely.

The Warehouse Café now operates six days a week and has expanded opportunities for people with disability by creating an art space for people who may not have had the opportunity to exhibit their art before. Several exhibitions throughout the year have provided a wonderful environment for the artists and customers of the café.

2. BEING INNOVATIVE AND ADAPTABLE

During 2016/17, UnitingCare West participated in equipping congregations with training and development opportunities. Luke 14 training focusses on inclusion of people with disabilities in congregational life and became a vehicle to enter into conversations with congregations to find a mutual way of responding to the needs for inclusion of people with physical and mental disabilities. It also gave an opportunity for consistent training for volunteers involved with the Uniting Church and UCW services.

The Safe Church forum, "Challenges and dilemmas, creating safety in the church: an open discussion" was held at the Warehouse Café on the 23 March 2017 in partnership with the WA Uniting Church Synod and Anglicare. Representatives of various faith denominations and agencies attended the forum. Further events like this are planned in the future, building further on the relationships and commitment to a collaborative approach.

Upon the invitation of Rev David de Kock (General Secretary, Synod of WA) the CEO, Amanda Hunt was pleased to be invited to participate in the Strategic Advisory Group's

Planning Day for the Uniting Church. The aim of the day was to build on the work done to date on the strategic framework of the Uniting Church in Western Australia. It was interesting and exciting to note the parallel thinking in future approaches to ensure sustainability, and synergies between our agency, the schools and the Synod.

3. BEING SEEN AND HEARD

Winter Appeal 2016 – Space for a pop-up store in the CBD was donated by JLL and this proved to be a very effective way of raising awareness in the community of the growing number of women at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

The Western Australian community showed their generosity and willingness to help people doing it tough at Christmas time during the Target UnitingCare Christmas Appeal in 2016. Uniting Church congregations distributed toys and hampers to families in need in their local communities. Additionally, the funds raised were also used to provide financial counselling and emergency relief, material assistance and back to school packs for families experiencing hardship.

The Student Forum, held on 25 May 2017, was well received by 70 students from all seven Uniting Church Schools and the accompanying Chaplains, Service Learning Directors and Teachers from each school. These events are held twice a year and provide a very positive opportunity for UnitingCare West to lead a conversation in Uniting Church schools about social justice.

UCW as a lead partner launched the Financial Counselling Network at Tranby earlier this year. The launch provided opportunities to extend networks and to create entry points for advocacy and lobbying to increase the service more broadly. The work achieved by the Financial Counselling Network which is co-lead with Anglicare WA has resulted in the Network being short listed for two Institute of Public Administration Australia (IPAA) WA Achievement Awards, Best Practice in Collaboration Between Government and Non-Government Organisations and the Business News Innovation in the Not For Profit Sector.

4. BEING EFFICIENT AND PERFORMANCE FOCUSED

UnitingCare West continues to participate in the Synod Task Group which was formed by the Uniting Church to respond to the outcomes and recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. UCW continues to work alongside the Uniting Church Synod to ensure alignment in policies and procedures guiding the appropriate response to allegations of past abuse and requests for information.

5. THE COMING YEAR

Over the last few years the shape of the community sector has changed significantly, and in order to adapt, UCW must 'streamline' and strengthen our leadership structure. The three current pillars of program areas – Strengthening Communities, Community Inclusion and Community Living will be combined to support the organisation to meet its strategic aims and to also respond to community service delivery styles and approaches.

To ensure that UCW has the capacity, capability and also the viability to meet current and future demands, a new way of working and leading/managing the organisation is required. UCW needs to adopt a philosophical and practical framework that complements the organisation's purpose and its strategic aims, and will support an individual and integrated approach.

As we are now embarking on the most significant alteration to how services are funded and delivered to individuals and community, it is important that we continue to develop the Connecting Communities initiative. This will connect vulnerable individuals and families with natural supports in our community, including the Uniting Church congregations and schools.

The challenges of maintaining a Not for Profit Mission Based organisation and the need to find resources to ensure mission can be maintained will be a continued priority for UnitingCare West, and this will enable us to

focus on UnitingCare West's vision of justice,
hope and opportunity for all.

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