



SYNOD 2023 REPORT

TRINITY RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE

MEMBERSHIP

Chair	Di Browning
Moderator	Susy Thomas
Head of College	David Gee
Elected by UWA Senate	Prof Anna Nowak
Member	Alexandra Lyons
Member	James Nicholson
Member	Jaimy Wisse
Member	Verity Burges
Member	Penny Knight
Member	Pip Rundle
Member	tbc Michael Douglas

REPORT

Contribution toUCAWA vision and highlights of the last twelve months

Kaya, namaste, ciao, xin chao, salamat pagi, hei norge, gruezi, saloo, ni hao, bonjour, assalam u alaikum, konichiwa, swardi, marhabaan, chesch, ayubowan, hej, sat sri akahl, namaskar, hallo. Greetings to the Uniting Church in just some of the languages of our residents.

Trinity Residential College is currently home to four hundred and nine students (numbers have almost doubled since I commenced at the start of 2021 some two and a half years ago). Trinity lives theUCAWA vision by trying to remain egalitarian and

focused on creating a safe, welcoming, culturally diverse and inclusive, family-like environment. Residents are treated as adults and so it is more through the environment and an attitude of care and respect, free of judgement, that we are trying to live the Church's vision.

The notion of **RESPECT** – of self, of others, of property sits at the heart of our resident policies and expectations. Inclusivity and a genuine appreciation of cultural diversity underpin this. Service is also an important element of the College's offering. Around half of our domestic first year cohort join us from government regional high schools (and another quarter are from low fee schools). There are several scholarships and bursaries that support students who otherwise could not afford to live in a residential college or who have complex family backgrounds, including specific support provided for children of UC Ministers on a stipend.

The challenges of the Perth rental market and the opening of the borders, combined with a process of staff and cultural renewal have certainly been important factors in Trinity's revival. Cost of living pressures weigh heavily on us, and we continue to work hard to keep the College as affordable as possible (we are currently the most affordable fully inclusive residential college at UWA). It appears we have weathered the storm of some extremely tough financial challenges through prudent and careful management, and we are now in the position where we can undertake some overdue infrastructure improvement projects.

The College is comprised of roughly 50% domestic and 50% international students. I am proud to say we now have **thirty-eight nationalities represented** at the College. We have an internationally themed dinner every couple of weeks where a resident(s) will speak informally about their culture. The growth in our international student numbers since the borders opened (without compromising our domestic enrolment market share) has been one of the highlights of this year.

We have also focused on growing our indigenous enrolments as part of this culturally rich community and currently have eight students currently enrolled (up from two last year). At the time of writing this report we are commencing our own version of NAIDOC Week with a range of activities designed to improve residents understanding of our first nations culture. Our European and North American exchange students have significant interest in this.

Last year the College was very successful in the inter-College competitions. We placed first in the Sports Cup and second in the Culture Cup. We were also awarded the Community Cup. This was in recognition of the spirit and camaraderie of the students and as a result of our involvement in Relay for Life where once again we were the highest fundraising college. During this year's Orientation Week there was much excitement when we won the "Fresher Dance Fest" having placed runner up for the last three years.

A process of staff renewal has largely been undertaken over the last two years, and morale and culture are very positive at the moment.

A decision was also made at the start of this year to manage the College's catering service in-house. While this has its challenges in terms of staffing in a tight employment market, it has enabled us to improve the food offerings in an increasingly complex aspect of College life. We remain one of only two residential colleges where all students are on a 21-meal plan. I am thrilled to say we are also one of only two finalists recognised in our category for the upcoming WA Catering Association Awards evening (and the only in-house service provider).

Mental health in young adults continues to be a significant concern and we place a lot of emphasis on this area. We remain the only residential college with its own counsellor and have implemented several preventative activities as well as continuing to train key staff and students in the best ways to respond to such challenges. All Resident Services staff and Resident Advisors are trained in mental health first aid and staff meetings regularly focus on upskilling in this facet of residential life.

Our strategic priorities are continuing to evolve and are centered around several key themes:

- Business continuity and growth
- The development of a central online customer portal to improve efficiency and communication with prospective and current residents
- Value added programs in academics, wellbeing, and life skills
- The resident experience / culture, including global cultural awareness and indigenous cultural awareness
- Infrastructure – the site is ageing(ed) and has long had a reactive maintenance and repair program in place rather than a planned preventative one
- Staff culture

- Alumni connections and mentoring opportunities
- Policy and compliance.

Regarding the resident experience, which is of course the central tenet to all that we do, we are developing four key frameworks focused on:

1. The resident leadership model
2. The student transition experience, from school to Uni, country to city, country to country, etc
3. A holistic wellbeing and academic support model
4. The second (and subsequent) year experience in terms of preparation for life and work beyond educational institutions.

I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of Adam Ebell to life at Trinity Residential College. Adam stepped down from the role of Chair of Council at the most recent meeting. Adam has an extremely busy professional life but has been involved on Council for more than ten years. The last few years have been very challenging from a governance perspective and Adam's contribution cannot be overstated. He was also the Resident Club President while at the College in the early 2000's. In recognition of this contribution Council made the decision to rename the board room the Ebell Room at its most recent meeting.

Di Browning, a foundation alumnus of St Columba College was appointed Chair of Council at the same meeting.

David Gee, Head of College
Email dgee@trc.uwa.edu.au
Telephone Number 08 9423 9423