



SYNOD 2023 REPORT

BRIDGING ENTITIES

MEMBERSHIP

Co-ordinator

Bruce Wilson

REPORT

Invitation

The Co-ordinator is open to enlarging the number of organisations that are reported upon in this report, so members of the Uniting Church WA are invited to propose the addition of another organisation within future reports.

Note that each organisation reported involve, or potentially impact/involve members of the Uniting Church in WA – see PURPOSE below.

Background

Bridging Entities sought reports from the entities listed below, and their responses are included.

'During the time of the current co-ordinator, various groups/organisations have been removed from the Bridging Entities report as they are being reported by another group of the Uniting Church WA, with which they have meaningful links. These include some of the organisations listed under PURPOSE in this report.

Purpose

This committee is established to share and maintain contact with a variety of groups in whose work Uniting Church people are involved in ministry. While some groups may not have a direct connection with the church, there is a desire to maintain a channel of communication. This report attempts to bring the work and ministry of these groups before the Synod.

Note that there are groups on which the church is represented and which are reported on elsewhere to the Synod. (This note does not represent the list as complete.)

- YouthCARE - youthcare.org.au - celebrating its 50th Anniversary
- Council of Churches WA - churcheswa.com.au
- Council of Christians and Jews Western Australia Inc. approaching 30 years in WA - ccjwa.org
- Reported under Media is the Australasian Religious Press Association arpa.news

Additionally:

- Bible Society Australia: is primarily a national body (biblesociety.org.au) and for General enquiries email: bibles@biblesociety.org.au Phone:1300 242 537

In the Perth (WA Office) are:

- Church and Community Relations Representative: Rick Pekan 0447 973 273
- Donor Care Representative: Marcus Ngoi 0427 005 456

“Bible Society Australia exists to impact and influence Australia and the World by Opening The Bible to all people everywhere by all means possible.”

Reports from the Organisations

SONSHINE - sonshine.com.au

Bevan Jones continues as CEO of Sonshine and provided the following for this synod meeting:

Sonshine Media update for the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Western Australia 2023.

It's a pleasure to provide an update to the Uniting Church in WA as it seems that every year we have increased partnership with Uniting Churches across our state.

Not only is one of our part time employees, Chris Lock, also working with the Uniting Churches in WA but we have quite a few congregations either supporting us or using our services to help reach out to their local communities.

We are partnering with Uniting WA Homelessness Services for the second year in a row for our Sonshine's Heart for the Homeless appeal through July. Together we are engaging Uniting Schools and Church congregations to show love and compassion to the homeless in our city.

Our Relationships Manager Rodney Olsen has already had the opportunity to serve and share a sermon at two Uniting Church congregations this year.

Like many not-for-profit ministries this year we are seeing a decline in donations support and we have to carefully steward God's provision. But fortunately we are still in a position to not only broadcast the positive message of hope in Jesus Christ 24 hours a day to over 250,000 people per month but we're also engaging a similar number of people online through our website and social media platforms.

We have also upgraded the broadcast equipment in Katanning and our 97.3FM broadcast to the greater Katanning region will re-launch in August this year. We look forward to helping the Churches in Katanning, including the Uniting congregation, engage the local culturally diverse community.

This year we have continued our partnership with Youthcare Chaplaincy to help promote the inaugural 2023 Chaplaincy Conference and awards. The event was so well attended and the awards saw all sectors of politics and community involved including the Police Commissioner, the Governor and his wife. Chaplaincy is a vital service to our community and we are keen to help in any way.

With our society being continually fragmented and hostile we are acutely aware that Christian media is key "air support" to God's Church who are on the ground being Christ to those in their neighbourhoods. We thank the Uniting Church in Western Australia for your partnership and support in growing God's kingdom.

God bless you all,

Bevan Jones

CEO – Sonshine (Good News Broadcasters Inc.)

HOPE Community Services Ltd - hopecommunityservices.org.au

“Supporting communities in Western Australia facing the toughest challenges.” The following is an overview of HCS extracted from the 2021-2022 Annual Report on the Hope website]

Acknowledgements included:

Diversity and Inclusion: HOPE acknowledges and welcomes diversity in all its forms amongst staff and clients, including culture, language, race, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, intersex variations, religion and socio-economic and relationship status.

Lived Experience: HOPE acknowledges the individual and collective experiences of those with a living or lived experience. We recognise their wise contribution at all levels of our organisation and value their courage in sharing experiences for the purpose of creating safe spaces that improve health and wellbeing outcomes for all.

Despite the disruptions, primarily initiated by the COVID pandemic, HOPE continued to grow and evolve. Importantly, securing new contracts for service expansion, specifically Community Alcohol and Drug Services in the Pilbara, headspace services in Esperance and youth justice services at Banksia Hill Detention Centre in Canning Vale. The past year (2021-2022) has also seen Hope Springs Therapeutic Community in Geraldton secure full accreditation from the Australian Therapeutic Communities Association.

The Board and management established a significant growth and development agenda, encompassing the following strategic objectives:

- Deliver services that exceed expectations.
- Put clients and communities back in control.
- Have passionate people up for the challenge.
- Build a reputation for innovation.
- Sustain Hope’s impact.

HOPE is committed to the journey of reconciliation, walking together with our First Nations people and during the past year has continued to nurture and build on its established partnerships with Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations and sought the wisdom of Traditional Owners and Elders.

The farewell of outgoing directors Robert (Bob) Campbell and Ian Passmore, who retired from the Board November 2021 was noted. Thanks for their valuable and significant contributions and their dedication to HOPE during their 17 years on the Board was acknowledged.

Many people contribute through their ongoing support and commitment to making HOPE the organisation it is today: the Board of Directors; the leadership team; all team members; volunteers; and supporters of HOPE. This year is HOPE's birthday.

HOPE programs, services and interventions are delivered in collaboration with local providers to help individuals, families and communities break free from negative cycles and take the first steps towards being back in control of their lives.

We create safe spaces for positive change.

Earthwise Community

Overview:

Earthwise has continued success in its activities due to on-going commitment of over 50 volunteers in all areas. We have a part time paid coordinator in Jen Korab to keep us all under control (no mean achievement).

The buildings and grounds require continual maintenance and this is possible from takings in the op shop and use of the hall space for community groups, and with the assistance of our volunteers.

Activities at Earthwise:

Op Shop: Donations are plentiful, however as with every donating charity we spend much time sorting good from useless. This can be a cost in disposal fees or finding an alternative location for the goods. A big component of op shop activity is developing skills in volunteers. They learn about social interaction, handling money and an EFTpos machine, and displaying and pricing goods.

Food Centre: Food is comes from Oz Harvest, 2nd Bite, Foodbank, local Nandos, supermarkets, a bread shop and residents with extras. This all available at no charge on Thursdays. 30 to 50 families benefit from the service with over 36 volunteer hours to sort, serve and pack the food, plus the further cost of food pick-ups.

Thursday Lunch: A group of about 10 volunteers help buy, prep, cook, serve and clean up for the weekly community meal. This is a community lunch open to anyone- not a soup kitchen! (We don't like a charity model)

Garden helpers: The grounds and garden are maintained both during the week and with a Friday morning working bee. We make all our own garden 'soil' with discarded materials sourced locally. The garden is also a learning centre for participants to use the knowledge in their own backyards. Plus we have 15 individual plot for those with no space at home to have a garden space. The sale of worms and plants are a useful income source to the venue.

General helpers: Volunteers come during the week to work in the garden, do general grounds and building maintenance, look after the chickens and, in summer, water the grounds by hand. Eggs laid by the chickens are used on Thursdays to make the Thursday lunch and are also shared with the Day Care Centre.

Outback Music: Outback Music nights and afternoons (which were unfortunately suspended by the Covid pandemic, but is now back in full swing) allow volunteers and the wider community to gather to listen to, sing, and play their musical instruments in the hall.

Tours and workshops: Earthwise has formalised tours and activities for schools and the wider community. These are all promoting responsible use of resources and practical ways of living more lightly.

The workshops included - using leftover foods in different cultures (Harmony Day), preserving food, composting and worms etc, and having a lighter living footprint.

Relationships with wider community:

- Earthwise has maintained itself in the local community by establishing a partnership with the **City of Subiaco**. This was started as a trial last year and the City is continuing the partnership this year. Earthwise was able to purchase new furniture and equipment and run 6 community education workshops, helpfully promoted by the City. The staff and Councillors all attended a Thursday lunch and hopefully will do so again this year.
- worked with **Headspace** (a social support group) to give up to 10 young people with mental health issues a space to learn to cook, participate in art projects and general gardening activities. The feedback from young people was they felt needed and had another safe place where they can come outside of Headspace activities. Some of the young people have not left their house for over two years. It's extremely rewarding to see these young people grow.

- **Subi Care** is an early-learning centre right next door. They come and visit the chickens, worms and garden and we use their food scraps for worm food. We offer workshops on worms and recycling for staff and children as needed.

Earthwise continues to maintain a good relationship with the Uniting Church. The lease is up for renewal again and we hope to continue at the location.

Emmaus, Australia

The purpose of Emmaus is the renewal of the church as the body of the risen Christ in the world through the renewal of church members as faithful and committed disciples of Jesus Christ.

Emmaus expands participants' spiritual lives, deepens their discipleship, and rekindles their gifts as Christian leaders in their churches and communities. These aims are accomplished not only during the three-day Emmaus Walk, but also through participation in Group Reunions and community Gatherings, sponsorship and support of Walks, and service on teams. Persons whose spiritual lives are renewed and strengthened through Emmaus are called to share the grace they receive in their community and to be leavening influences in their local churches. The purpose of Emmaus is not fully realised during the three days of the event itself, but, rather, in the fourth day (the days after the Walk).

Attendance is open to all Christians in local churches who are recommended (or 'sponsored') by someone who has already attended a Walk. Ministers, pastors and church leaders are especially invited to attend so that they may have confidence in recommending the program to other Ministers, pastors and Church leaders.

During the time of Covid we found it hard to get teams and so were unable to have any Walks in 2020. And this break seems to have made it harder to get Ministers and Pastors willing to take part on Team, and each Team needs 5 Spiritual Directors.

Perth Emmaus has been going since 1996 with over 1000 Christians experiencing the Walk. This year we are holding 2 Walks, the Men's Walk 71# will be from the 14th September until the 17th September, and will be led by Neal Leggo, The Ladies Walk 72# will be held over the Long weekend starting on Friday the 22nd September until Monday the 25th September, And will be led by Sonia McNicol.

The Spiritual Director role for the Men's Walk 71# will be Rev Ross Patterson and the Ladies Walk 72# will Be Wendy Pederick .

The biggest challenge for Perth Emmaus is having enough pilgrims (guests) to attend the Walks and clergy to serve on the Walks.

Emmaus Ministries have started a few other programs which Perth Emmaus have not tried, we were asked to have a Virtual Walk as well as our normal Walks, and we decided that it was probably too much.

The Emmaus community in the Great Southern has had to fold due to being unable to get enough people to make up the Team.

This year Kairos [Prison Ministry - helping those impacted by incarceration, through the love, hope and faith found in Jesus Christ] once again had an event, which was wonderful to see, and they have already started planning two for next year. This is great news.

It seems that every year is getting harder and harder to find people interested in both being on team, or wanting to come to a Walk. May God show us direction for the coming years.

For further information on involvement or sponsorship, please go to the Perth Emmaus Community website or contact Community Lay Director,

Heather Haggerty - cld@perth.emmaus.org.au

Bruce Wilson – Co-Ordinator

Email: bruce.m.wilson@bigpond.com