



SYNOD 2023 REPORT

UNITING WA

MEMBERSHIP

Chair	Erica Haddon
Ex-Officio	Jen Park (Co-CEO/Secretary) Michael Chester (Co-CEO)
Members	Ron Chalmers Chris Hunt Lisa Fini Alison McCubbin Jane Barker David Kyle Alison Xamon Isabel de Jesus

REPORT

Executive Summary

Board Update: The Uniting WA Board acknowledges Chris Hunt who is stepping down after ten years serving on the Board as well as chairing the Finance, Property and Audit Committee. Chris has made significant contributions to Uniting WA, drawing on his extensive experience in accounting, finance, taxation, commercial, risk management compliance and internal controls in the commercial sector.

After six years' service, Dr Ron Chalmers has resigned from the Uniting WA Board. Ron has served as both the Deputy Chair of the Board and Chair of the Service Quality and Safeguarding Committee. Ron's thoughtful, informed and meaningful contributions will be missed, particularly with respect to disability services and government relations.

In 2022, the Board welcomed a new Board member, Isabel de Jesus, who has over 20 years' multinational experience in various finance leadership roles.

Co-CEOs: Uniting WA Co-Chief Executive Officers (Co-CEOs), Jen Park and Michael Chester, continue to effectively lead the organisation, with one of the key achievements in 2022-23 being the development of Uniting WA's fifth Strategic Plan (see below under Highlights).

Jen and Michael have been out and about visiting Uniting Church congregations across WA, including Noranda, Wagin, Kalamunda, Foothills St Martins, Fremantle Wesley, Bay Life Busselton, St Stephen's Applecross and Northway. Our Co-CEOs and other team members value opportunities to meet with Uniting Church communities to share inspiring stories about the work we do to support those most vulnerable in the WA community.

For the third year running, Sonshine FM is supporting Uniting WA's homeless services via its Heart for the Homeless Collection Appeal. You can find out more about this appeal [here](#). During last year's appeal, Michael Chester was asked the following questions during a radio interview by Sonshine FM's DJ Lockie:

1. What does the title Co-CEO mean?
2. Tell us a bit about Uniting WA and its connection to the Uniting Church.
3. What are some of the other services you provide?
4. Why is homelessness such a key focus?

If you're interested in the answers to these questions, you can listen to the short interview [here](#).

Uniting Church in the City (UCIC): An MOU was finalised in October 2022 which sets out the scope of pastoral engagement between UCIC and Uniting WA. The ongoing and generous support of UCIC towards the delivery of services at Uniting is gratefully acknowledged, with donations totalling \$500,000 in 2022-23.

Highlights:

Launch of Uniting WA's Strategic Plan 2023-26: Uniting's fifth Strategic Plan was launched to coincide with our 17th anniversary on 1 July 2023. This is a significant milestone

for Uniting and sets out our roadmap for the next three years. The 'plan on a page' (attached and via link [here](#)) provides a snapshot of the four guiding objectives of the Strategic Plan and how they're underpinned by our values, purpose and foundation statement. You can watch our Strategic Plan launch video [here](#).

Act2 Project: The UCA Assembly's Act2 Project has been seeking input from Uniting Church members and communities to discern together where God is calling the Church into the future. Uniting WA's Co-CEOs engaged with the Act2 Project Team during a visit to WA in April 2023 as part of their Australia-wide consultation and listening process. In addition, Uniting WA participated in the Act2 National Prayer Chain, with an online prayer meeting being hosted by Wesley Uniting Church for Uniting staff. The opportunity to pray together for NSW Wesley Mission and Presbyterian Ladies' College was valued by all who attended. In addition, Uniting WA has contributed to submissions to Act2 by UnitingCare Australia and the UnitingCare WA Forum.

Property: The WA Presbytery's 25 Year Mission and Property Strategy seeks to engage with all congregations and agencies in planning for at least the next 25 years and has been received by Uniting WA with interest. Uniting WA's Strategic Objective 2 seeks to purposefully increase housing and accommodation assets and infrastructure options that are linked to people who require support. In line with this objective, exploratory discussions are underway with a view to developing Tabitha Trust properties to provide additional accommodation for people exiting prison under the Aspirations Housing model. It's hoped that our respective strategies will result in further opportunities for Uniting WA and the Uniting Church to work together to deliver on our shared mission.

Reimagining Wyn Carr House: Through its partnership with Housing All Australians, Uniting WA has secured significant pro bono donations of consultancy services and construction materials for the Wyn Carr House project. Along with State Government funding totalling more than \$3m, construction is expected to begin during the 2023-24 financial year. Once completed, Wyn Carr House will provide much needed transitional accommodation and support services to women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. Further information can be found [here](#).

1000 Days Together: Pregnant women experiencing homelessness often face significant barriers in accessing safe and stable housing, leading to adverse outcomes for both the mother and the baby. By addressing their specific needs, we can make a meaningful difference in their lives and empower them to build a brighter future for themselves and their children. This innovative project has received provisional approval for grant funding from the

Sisters of St John of God, and will be delivered by Uniting WA in partnership with Homeless Healthcare over the next three years. A key component leading to successful outcomes for this project will be housing for the women and children accessing this service.

EVP Trial: Since October 2021, Uniting WA has been part of a national consortium led by Uniting Vic.Tas for UnitingCare agencies to deliver the Federal Government's Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) trial nationally. Uniting WA has delivered more than \$10m of support to vulnerable Western Australians to assist them to leave a violent relationship as part of the Federal Government's commitment to help end violence against women and children. Feedback from an EVP client: *"Your time, patience and care has been beyond appreciated. There are no words to describe how grateful I am."*

Community Engagement:

Improving community engagement through volunteering: Volunteers bring immeasurable value to our programs and the communities we serve. Their passion, dedication, and shared sense of purpose create a powerful force for positive change. We're deeply grateful for the commitment and partnership of our volunteers, as together, we build a more compassionate and inclusive world.

Congregational Volunteer Spotlight: A group of 12 congregational members from Northway UC enthusiastically joined the Tranby homeless team of volunteers. This led to one of the volunteers, Andrew, reaching out to his work colleagues who then generously donated \$1000 worth of food to Tranby. The collective effort of this diverse and compassionate group has strengthened our volunteer force and also underscored the power of community engagement in making a positive impact.

Support from Uniting Church Schools and Colleges: At Uniting WA, our goal is to inspire and nurture a generation of students who possess a strong sense of community and leadership. We provide avenues for students to actively engage in activities that promote compassion and social responsibility. Initiatives include Wesley College's Katitjin Program, the Cozy Toes Winter Sock Appeal, virtual events during Homelessness Week, Cards That Count, and the Uniting WA School Christmas Hamper Appeal. Through these experiences, students are encouraged to become lifelong contributors to the welfare of their communities, displaying care, connectivity, and active social engagement.

During 2022-23, Uniting Church schools remained enthusiastic participants in our Uniting programs. Their support translated into significant material donations and contributions from school collections, amounting to almost \$20,000. This impressive involvement underscores

the dedication of Uniting Church schools to our shared vision of creating a positive impact on society.

Support from Uniting Church WA and Congregations: Donations serve as a vital link between Uniting WA and the broader community as well as the Uniting Church family. Donations empower Uniting to deliver essential services beyond the scope of government funding, enriching established initiatives. Contributions to the Uniting Christmas Appeal and Winter Appeal are a valued way that members of the Uniting Church community partner with Uniting to make a real difference to the people we support.

Numerous congregations and individual members of the Uniting Church community offer material assistance and dedicate extensive volunteer hours. The thoughtful contributions of knitted blankets, sustenance, and genuine care from our Uniting Church community exemplify remarkable generosity that is deeply appreciated.

Further information about Uniting WA's work and impact will be shared in our 2022-23 Annual Report which will be published later this year.

Erica Haddon FCPA FAICD, Chairperson/Convenor of Uniting WA

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