



UnitingCare West

Chairperson	Peter Fitzpatrick AO
CEO/Secretary of the Board	Amanda Hunt
Members elected by Synod	Dr Ron Chalmers Michael Brady (to October 2018) Chris Hunt Deborah Marshall Lisa Fini Mark Webb
Co-opted	Dr Hannah McGlade
Appointed by Synod Standing Committee	Alison McCubbin

Overview

UnitingCare West (UCW) was formed in 2006 as the community services agency of the Uniting Church Western Australia – a multi-functional agency which provides a range of holistic services to support people and communities to belong and thrive.

By adopting a *place-based approach*¹, UCW is able to identify and build on the strengths of local people in local communities. UCW provides targeted supports to address what people need in the immediate and longer-term to help them achieve their best life. In addition, UCW is increasingly focusing on providing individualised supports and services, which is consistent with the policies of State and Commonwealth governments in key service areas such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme.

UCW is highly focussed on demonstrating a bold, imaginative, compassionate and respectful approach to delivering services, retaining strong links to the Uniting Church as its foundation and purpose.

UCW is deeply committed to helping children, individuals, families and communities develop resilience and connection – creating opportunities for people to thrive and enjoy a life of belonging, hope and purpose.

¹ *A place-based approach is a collaborative, long-term way of building thriving communities in a defined location. Through active engagement and partnership with local communities, place-based approaches respond to issues impacting people experiencing disadvantage while ensuring the community is a primary driver of change.*

The approach includes prevention as well as intervention, with a focus on people's strengths and building people's capacity over time. It involves identifying and working on community priorities, valuing local knowledge, and building on and from social and cultural relationships. Place-based approaches share a commitment to strategic learning and to using data and evidence to guide flexible practice.

UCW Board Update

The UCW Board is made up of a committed and passionate group of non-Executive Directors with a variety of skills, expertise and experience who provide support, direction and oversight to UCW as it seeks to fulfil its mission in a complex and changing not-for-profit sector.

Over the past four years, we've been very fortunate to have Peter Fitzpatrick AO chair the Board. Peter's vast experience in industry, on multiple Boards and committees, and as an AICD facilitator has been invaluable in strengthening the UCW Board and leading it through change. We sincerely thank him for his contribution and wish him well as he steps down in August 2019. A search process is currently underway to find a new Chair for the UCW Board.



We would like to recognise the contribution of Deborah Marshall, who joined the UCW Board in September 2013 from the UnitingCare Crossroads Board. In this capacity and as a member of All Saints Floreat Uniting Church, Deborah has brought a unique contribution to the Board, combining her skills as an accountant with her passion for our shared vision of hope, justice and opportunity for all. Deborah has decided to step down after six years on the UCW Board, and we wish her well for the future.

Michael Brady left the UCW Board in October 2018 after seven years, and his attention to detail, curiosity and commitment to the mission, vision and values of UCW were deeply appreciated.

The UCW Board is committed to bringing Indigenous cultural perspectives and wisdom to Board discussions and deliberations. Dr Hannah McGlade joined the UCW Board between November 2018 and June 2019, and we're grateful for her insights and expertise. The Board is currently seeking to engage another strong Aboriginal leader to join the Board.

The move of the head office to the Inner City Hub at 10/5 Aberdeen Street

The relocation of our head office from Victoria Park to the new Inner City Hub (ICH) on Aberdeen Street took place from mid-December 2018 to 15 March 2019.

On 12 April, the Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia, Western Australia, Rev Steve Francis joined us at ICH to bless our people and our new place. Rev Francis said it was a privilege to participate in blessing UCW and that it felt like we were on sacred ground. He said he was personally moved to hear from staff about the great work being done at UCW and to share in the hopes and struggles of a remarkable team of people.

The process of moving to ICH was more than just a new office, it was about exploring and developing new ways of working together in a modern, welcoming environment. It was a purposeful decision to co-locate with our Tranby Engagement Centre and be present in the lives of the people we exist to serve.

ICH is a space where people can do their very best work, bounce ideas off each other, feel like they belong and – most importantly – enjoy a sense of real purpose in their workplace.

Continuing the journey towards being a more soulful and purposeful organisation

Our journey towards being a more soulful and purposeful organisation is guided by our people, our Board and our strong connection to our foundation as part of the Uniting Church network.

This last 12 months has seen UCW continue to mature as we enter a new and exciting phase of realising our vision. We are adapting to the move away from bureaucratic hierarchies of management in favour of a layered approach, seeing the results of having more responsibility and self-organisation within our teams.

As we continue to design our services and adapt to changing environments, we remain committed to having highly engaged, well-equipped people who thrive in a hospitable, creative and dynamic organisation. The combined wisdom, authenticity and passion we share is essential to help us achieve our goal to adopt a radically person-centred approach in supporting the people we exist to serve.

As Frederic Laloux wrote: "We are at our most productive and joyful when *all* of who we are is energised by a broader purpose that nourishes our calling and our soul."

The changes to the structure of Individualised Services in response to the NDIS

Since being first announced in 2012, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) has required disability service organisations to develop new ways of working, including UCW.

With the full roll-out of NDIS in WA from July 2020, it is critical for UCW to ensure that the individual needs of the people we serve continue to be met in this changing environment. Indeed, responding to the economic imperative created by the NDIS has been a central pillar of our ongoing journey of organisational change.

To better match the operation of the NDIS, UCW needed to adjust the way we structure and operate our individualised services to remain sustainable and viable while delivering quality person-centred supports to people with disability.

This involved the creation of new roles and opportunities for people; some roles changing slightly; and others being made redundant. All UCW team members were given the opportunity to apply for advertised positions, which were filled via merit-based selection by May 2019.

Participants were kept abreast of the process throughout and invited to raise any concerns. Importantly, none of the changes directly affected workers who support people on a day-to-day basis.

Changes to the operations services at Willetton and Girrawheen associated with changes to the structure of Individualised Services

The NDIS funding model also means that UCW must move away from centre-based programs towards a more inclusive model where people are connected to groups within their communities.

Mindful of this new direction, UCW ceased running programs from our Willetton centre in June 2019, following the lease on the building with the Willetton Uniting Church coming to an end.

The transition at Willetton went smoothly after some initial concerns were addressed when UCW team members and Chaplain Sophia Lizares engaged with participants, their families and the Willetton Uniting Church.

UCW adopted a 'co-design' process to help participants and their families through this transition. This included identifying goals and planning how to achieve these, supporting people to join new programs and activities to assist community inclusion.

The opportunity to play a greater role in choosing which activities best suit their needs was greatly appreciated by participants and their families. It has helped build confidence and self-esteem among participants, along with a deeper understanding of themselves, their strengths and their potential.

UCW is also moving toward a community inclusive model for participants at our Girrawheen centre. Currently, it is expected that the move from centre-based activities to community inclusive groups will be complete by the end of 2019.

The closure of Women's Domestic Violence services at Wyn Carr House

After careful consideration over many years, the difficult decision was made to discontinue women's domestic violence services at Wyn Carr House (WCH) from 1 July 2019.

It is important that UCW acknowledge the deep historical and spiritual significance of WCH for the Fremantle Wesley Uniting Church, having originally been built in 1923 as a manse. The building was re-purposed and opened by Fremantle Wesley Mission in May 1978, then transferred to UCW on 1 July 2006.

UCW has proudly provided crisis accommodation service for women escaping family or domestic violence at WCH. We acknowledge the amazing people who have worked there and commend their exceptional dedication and commitment.

The decision to cease these services was not taken lightly. Over the preceding years, we thoroughly reviewed the viability of WCH within our service pathways, finding that the service model at WCH had diverged from our overall strategic direction. The poor condition of the building and the significant expense required to make it respectful and suitable to continue services was also a consideration.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the congregation of Fremantle Wesley Uniting Church for their ongoing and generous support of the Fremantle community and of the important work that we do at UCW. We share a vision of justice, hope and opportunity for all. We look forward to us finding new ways to collaborate in the delivery of outstanding services to people who are experiencing vulnerability and disadvantage.

Despite the closure of WCH, we remain active in supporting women escaping family or domestic violence. In June, UCW was successful in gaining funding to continue our Indigenous Family Violence (IFV) program to allow the great work and successes we've had in this space to continue.

Adoption of the Uniting Brand

A brand means much more than a logo. A brand is the expression of the essential truth or value of an organisation. It communicates our characteristics, values, and our attributes that clarify who we are and who we are not.

Over the past year, UCW has been exploring the opportunity to align our visual brand with that of *Uniting NSW* and *Uniting Vic-Tas*. Our sister agencies have redeveloped the brand over the past year to ensure that it aligns with the values and meets the ongoing needs of Uniting agencies across the country. The rebrand is specifically designed to be adapted to each jurisdiction to ensure legacy and historical connection is maintained, while also sharing a common foundational and spiritual underpinning.

Adopting the *Uniting* brand will allow UCW to benefit from efficiencies and leverage across multiple states. It provides an ideal opportunity to reflect and signal a new stage in our journey towards a more soulful and purposeful organisation. The rebrand will help deliver a renewed sense of purpose and energy to UCW, signaling the progression and maturity of our organisation and services.

The new *Uniting* brand is in the final stages of refinement before being rolled-out in WA in late 2019.

Partnerships which make a difference in our community

UCW engages closely with a number of partner agencies to make a collective difference in the lives of those most vulnerable in our community. This includes fellow members of the WA Alliance to End Homelessness, 100 Families Project and the Financial Counselling Network.

During Homelessness Week 2019, 4-10 August, our Tranby Centre opens 24/7 for people experiencing homelessness and who would otherwise be sleeping rough. This collaboration with Ruah Community Services is a demonstration of 'Safe Nights' - a UCW-led new approach to tackling the rough sleeping crisis in Perth.

Rainbow Lunch groups

Hosted by Uniting Churches across Perth and in Mandurah, Rainbow Lunch groups bring people together to share a meal and connect with others in the community. Everyone is equal; people walk through the doors and they feel welcome, they don't feel any judgement.

UCW's Rainbow Lunch groups have been making a difference in the lives of people experiencing mental health issues, loneliness and social isolation for 20 years.

Rainbow Lunch groups celebrated the 20 year milestone in June this year, with around 100 past and present volunteers and friends gathering at Maylands - Mt Lawley Uniting Church to mark the occasion.

The program has evolved over two decades, beginning with a focus on befriending people living with mental illness, before expanding to include people such as those at risk of homelessness, those who have exited prison, or people battling physical illness.

Share Affair

UCW, the Uniting Church WA and Victoria Park & Districts Star Street Uniting Church, joined forces to launch another initiative this year called 'Share Affair', which aims to build stronger community connections. The very first gathering took place in August this year at Victoria Park Uniting Church and was a resounding success. More than 20 people gathered to share a meal, a conversation and enjoy the opportunity to meet new people.

Uniting Church Schools

In 2019 the Uniting Church Schools continued to be enthusiastic participants in UCW programs, providing a vast amount of material donations for our UCW Hubs in Perth, Fremantle and Merriwa, along with proceeds from school collections totaling more than \$20,000.

During our Winter Warmers campaign which began in June, students at Scotch College, PLC and Tranby College collected backpacks and filled them with items to help provide comfort to people experiencing homelessness during the cold winter months.

The St Stephen's School community pitched-in to collect much needed school supplies for families doing it tough and material donations of blankets, beanies, food and clothing were also received from corporates, community groups and people in the community.

In total, fundraising from direct mail, end of financial year and the UCW Newsletter over the winter period generated \$73,000 in financial donations.

In August, St Stephen's School commences a Food Rescue program at Lakeside Joondalup in conjunction with Rotary, collecting unsold fresh food from cafes and restaurants that will be distributed through Our Outer North Hub in Merriwa.

Support from congregations

In addition to the support received from the Uniting Church Western Australia, UCW is grateful for the donations received from 43 congregations totaling \$23,000.

Many congregations and individual members of the Uniting Church community support us regularly with material assistance, financial donations and many hours of volunteer time. Knitted blankets, food and the genuine care offered by our community is deeply generous and greatly appreciated.

This community are also the heart of our Rainbow Lunch groups, our Christmas Appeal, Share Affair, United Corner Hub and many other joint initiatives. Fremantle Wesley Uniting Church continues to be a vital supporter of our South West Metro Hub's emergency relief fund.

We particularly acknowledge, the generous support of the Uniting Church in the City, which donated \$500,000 to the work of UCW.

Donations are integral to our mission and represent a deep connection with our community and Uniting family. Donations enable UCW to provide the supports and services which lie beyond the scope of government funding as well as enhancing established programs.

Funds from our donors allow us to be aspirational in our vision to tackle injustice. Donations have allowed us to open our Tranby Centre six days a week and, for the duration of Homelessness Week, 24/7.

Farewell Rev Sophia Lizares

Our team has been privileged to work alongside Rev Sophia Lizares as our UCW Chaplain over the past year, with her role coming to an end in August.

The absence of a dedicated Chaplain role will not impact on the spiritual care for the UCW team or the people we serve, as UCW is committed to continuing to develop closer ties with the Uniting Church.

Through the development of our next Strategic Plan, we will be building on the connection between UCW and local congregations. This will include exploring ways that we can work together to provide opportunities for supporting people in the community who are experiencing hardship and disadvantage.

Sophia's contribution to UCW's team and people that we serve over the last year is valuable, and she will return soon as a volunteer at Tranby.

Improving community engagement through volunteering and social enterprise.

UCW could not deliver our services without the significant support from our volunteers. In 2019, our 177 volunteers across our three Hubs have contributed 26,000 hours towards UCW's services, supporting people most vulnerable in our community.

In addition to this, our Food Rescue Carts are operated by a force of 77 volunteers. The 66 cafes within the Perth CBD contribute around 3.5 tonnes of food each month, the equivalent of 9,000 meals distributed to people experiencing homelessness and crisis from UCW's Tranby Centre and the Salvation Army facilities on William Street and at The Beacon.

As mentioned, Food Rescue will be expanding to Joondalup in a joint venture between St Stephen's School and Rotary.

These actions will help guide us to a future with a thriving community, with ALL people having a life of hope, belonging and purpose.

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