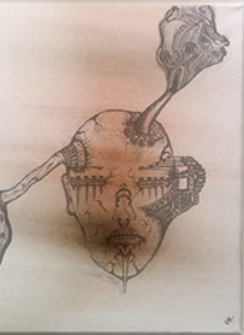


Annual Report FY23

Uniting NSW.ACT



ART
FROM THE HEART OF THE
CROSS

Uniting



Uniting NSW.ACT acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work.

We recognise the continuing sovereignty of First Peoples in NSW and the ACT, and their absolute right to self-determination.

We act on our responsibility to co-create a national dialogue of truth that proudly embraces First Peoples' history, culture, and rights, for present and future generations.

We pay our respects to all Elders – past, present, and emerging – and to all First Peoples and communities.

Commissioned artwork by Charmaine Mumbulla, a proud Kaurna/ Narungga woman from Point Pearce in South Australia, with family ties to the Gumbaynggirr people of the NSW Mid North Coast. It pays tribute to the diversity of Aboriginal lands and languages across NSW and the ACT, where Uniting supports people and communities with the delivery of vital services. The vibrant circle unites us across the 4 landscapes of desert, forest, coast and mountain, centred by a cross symbolising our work through Christ. A lilly pilly fruit blooms in the heart of the circle, representing nourishment and growth.

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Message from our Moderator.



One of the great pleasures of my season as Moderator has been to share in the growing relationship with Uniting, as we share in ministry together.

I am, of course, not only talking about the formal relationship, but the far more critical bond of trust and shared mission, as we seek to serve our community. I acknowledge the considerable leadership of Tracey Burton and Heather Watson, as well as so many of the Uniting team in areas of justice and community care, advocacy and support.

I have had the honour of working alongside Uniting leaders, particularly Emma Maiden and Alice Salomon, as we have considered how best to engage in advocacy – for our First Peoples, in Fair Treatment, care for our climate, affordable housing, gender diversity and our LGBTQI+ community. I have been pleased to see how the Advocacy Team has complemented Wesley Mission, as they take the lead on the gambling crisis facing our community.

“This shared and complementary mission leadership ensures that our impact is multiplied, as we encourage our Church, politicians and our community to consider how to engage in serving those who need support. This is where community engagement has become so critical, with faith communities across our Synod engaging in action which echoes the mission of God.”

We need the leadership offered by Uniting across so many areas in our community. However, it is in the congregations and presbyteries - our diverse communities of faith – that we become so much more effective, articulating the hope of God in Jesus Christ. This is the reason we engage in this comprehensive ministry: hope.

The [Basis of Union](#) speaks of worship, witness and service. At our weakest, we emphasise one of these to the detriment of the others. At our best, each informs the other, where our worship reflects our service in the world around us and our witness speaks of a God who is present in the lives of those we serve, as they seek a safe place to live, or need care in their seasons of frailty, or justice in the face of systems which oppress or deny them.

In the face of issues which can sometimes appear overwhelming, we act in the hope of the Gospel. We believe in justice, healing and reconciliation – for humanity and the whole

creation – because that is how God has acted towards us in Jesus.

It has been an honour to serve alongside Uniting in our Synod for these last 6 years. I give thanks to God for each member of the Uniting team and anticipate great achievements in the days ahead.



Rev. Simon Hansford
Moderator of the Uniting Church
Synod of NSW & ACT

Message from our Chair.



The Uniting NSW.ACT Board acknowledges Australia's First Peoples as the original and ongoing custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. Significantly, **Uniting's First Nations People and Place Strategy** was approved by the Board this year. As one of Australia's largest community services providers, and as an employer and partner, we are determined to walk alongside First Nations communities as our country overcomes systemic barriers and injustices, so that all people can live their best lives. We commit our organisation to building shared understandings and relationships, and to working with First Nations communities towards changes at all levels – within our organisation, within the communities we serve, and in state and national policies.

Our First Nations People and Place Strategy supports Uniting's 10-year strategy, which was approved by the Uniting NSW.ACT Board last year to 'create a better future for more people, communities and regions in need by disrupting

“Together with the Uniting Church, Uniting NSW.ACT is proud to be a catalyst for change, to create a better future for more people and communities.”

entrenched disadvantage’. Together, these strategies acknowledge the responsibility and opportunity Uniting has to disrupt the cycles of disadvantage and intergenerational trauma still experienced by First Nations people today.

A key focus during Year 1 of our 10-year strategy has been laying the important foundations to enable effective strategy execution in Year 2 and beyond. We have achieved clarity on strategy formulation, developed detailed execution plans and performance metrics, and reviewed organisational bandwidth. We are well placed to progress the strategy in FY24. Our 10-year strategy will be brought to life every day by our employees and volunteers, who are at the heart of everything we do.

During the year, the Uniting NSW.ACT Board also endorsed Uniting’s refreshed Statement of Missional Intent, aligned with the commitments in the [Future Directions for the People of God on the Way](#) strategy for the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT. [The 2023-24 Statement of Missional Intent](#) identifies 4 priority areas to further develop the role of Uniting in the mission and ministry of the Uniting Church in Australia, and contribute to the Church’s work through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care - to serve humanity and create an inclusive, connected and just world. We continue to work with other parts of the Church and congregations at local levels to engage with the community in transformative ways and to enliven Future Directions.

A key area of oversight throughout the year has been the ongoing implementation of

significant aged care sector reforms arising from the recommendations in the final report from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. Together with advocating for aged care to be sustainably funded, resourced according to need, and underpinned by fair and equitable pay for workers, we’re committed to ensuring older people have access to integrated support and can live with choice and dignity.

The Uniting NSW.ACT Board continues to be committed to the highest standards of governance, in accordance with the [Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Governance Standards](#), and upholds the Australian Institute of Company Directors Not-for-Profit Governance Principles in its approach. The Board leverages established governance practices and organisational structures to support our effectiveness, responsible stewardship, integrity, accountability and robust risk management on behalf of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT.

I acknowledge and thank my fellow Board members for their commitment and contributions over the last 12 months. And on behalf of the Board, I record our gratitude and thanks to all Uniting leaders, their teams and our volunteers, for their continued commitment in serving individuals, families and communities, often those most vulnerable and disadvantaged.



Heather Watson
Chairperson
Uniting NSW.ACT

Message from our Executive Director.



In FY23 we sought to return to ‘business as usual’ although we faced the continued impact of COVID-19 in our community and the lasting effects from the February 2022 catastrophic floods in Northern NSW. Coupled with workforce shortages impacting the whole organisation’s provision of community services and the introduction of significant reforms in aged care, the year proved to be challenging on many fronts.

However, we end the year with optimism and hope. Our 10-year strategic plan to ‘create a better future for more people, communities and regions in need by disrupting entrenched disadvantage’ is well understood and there is momentum across the organisation to be part of its execution. Our First Nations People and Place Strategy is woven through all aspects of our 10-year strategy, so that First Nations People are strong, thriving and self-determining. Our [Statement of Missional Intent](#), shaped by the Future Directions of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT and the identity and mission of the Uniting Church in Australia, provides opportunities for us to continue working with other parts of the Church to make a difference together.

This year, work got underway in each of the 6 strategic objectives underpinning the 10-year strategic plan. Key achievements include:

- Improving access to early childhood education, with the extension of our [Links 2 Early Learning program](#) supporting families experiencing disadvantage who face barriers to entry.
- Reducing the number of children entering out-of-home care and improving life outcomes for those in care, with the 2023 Federal Budget including a \$100m package for tackling disadvantage through place-based, community-led work, as advocated by the Strengthening Communities Alliance. Uniting founded the Alliance to support organisations like ours that are engaged in place-based innovation work similar to our [Becoming U](#) and Aboriginal Families Together programs.
- Ensuring older people have dignity, choice and access to the care and supports they need, including increased capacity to care for seniors in Uniting communities through Assisted Living services and growing our capacity to care for seniors in their own homes through our Neighbourhood approach to service delivery.
- Bringing services to more places, particularly regional areas, as evidenced by our acquisition of the Autumn Lodge aged care home in Armidale, and expansion of our family and community services across the NSW Mid and Far North Coast.

Our unwavering commitment to quality, safety and service excellence has underpinned all our work this year. As we continue our organisational purpose, drawn from the Uniting Church, to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice, the care and wellbeing of our colleagues and the people we serve remains paramount. We’re striving to be known as the best place to work in our sectors, with a person-centred and innovative culture that values diversity and always welcomes everyone, exactly as they are.

We are also striving even harder to disrupt the systems that lead to entrenched disadvantage.

“We are using our voice, our ideas and our evidence to drive change on the issues that matter the most to us and the Church. We continue to look for opportunities to collaborate to create, prove and scale better solutions for some of the most intractable problems that disadvantaged people and communities face.”

Our public advocacy work is so important; particularly in the areas of action on climate change, First Nations justice, drug law reform and aged care reform.


Our ongoing active participation in the aged care sector’s evolution to a new single peak body, the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA), and our advocacy for reform of the way that older people are cared for and supported in Residential Aged Care and Home Care, has led to real progress. We have seen the establishment of the Aged Care Taskforce to review the funding arrangements for aged care and develop options for a system that is fair and equitable for everyone in Australia. This collaboration contributed to the implementation of funding for the 15% Fair Work Commission wage increases which came into effect from 30 June 2023.

In FY23 we also focused on developing our plans for major capital investments over the next 10 years, to optimise the balance between generating surplus cash and delivering social impact through concessional aged care and low-cost rental housing. We continue to deliver 2 contracts with the Department of Communities and Justice under the Social and Affordable Housing Fund, reflecting our ongoing commitment to people and communities experiencing disadvantage, through the provision of 600 homes. We aim to further increase our contribution to affordable housing by including a proportion of rentals in new developments, incorporating build-to-rent where possible, and dedicating many older villages

as rental-only communities. We also made significant progress on planning approvals for a number of current and future development projects in Sydney metropolitan and NSW regional locations, which will support us to deliver on our strategic objective to invest for social impact and increase investment in areas of need.

I could not be prouder of, or more grateful for, the more than 11,000 people of Uniting – our leaders, our employees and our volunteers. They are at the heart of everything we do. They demonstrate our values of being compassionate, respectful, imaginative and bold. They live out our purpose through their everyday actions, while providing care and support for over 130,000 clients.

I would also like to thank the Uniting NSW.ACT Board for the important role they play in guiding and monitoring management in executing Uniting’s strategic plan and overseeing good governance and practice. The Board is integral to assisting Uniting in progressing the mission of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT and delivering on our promise to our people, those we serve, funding bodies and the wider community.



Tracey Burton
Executive Director
Uniting NSW.ACT



**About
Uniting.**

Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the work of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT, through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care.

We provide services for people through all ages and stages of life, and drive solutions to systemic issues so people experiencing disadvantage can live their best lives.

Our purpose is to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

We value diversity and always welcome everyone exactly as they are.



We are Uniting.

A small act can sometimes be enough. A helping hand can halve a burden. One kind word can calm the nerves. Uniting people act to have an impact. We are the carers, thinkers, doers, darers who strive to make a difference. Driven to be there for others.

In everyday trials and triumphs. For everyone, just as they are. Together, we can do more. We can draw upon a deep voice within us and raise a collective cry that can't be ignored. Because for us, enough is not enough.

We want safer, fairer, brighter, better. For the people we serve. For all humanity. We are Uniting for greater change.



SHARING A SMILE AT UNITING QUONG TART, OUR ASHFIELD HOME
WITH A CANTONESE AND MANDARIN-SPEAKING AGED CARE TEAM

Our values guide our work every day.

Compassionate

We are nurturing, generous and thoughtful in our words and deeds.



Imaginative

We challenge convention, explore new possibilities and dare to dream for a better future.



Respectful

We act with integrity, and open our hearts to all people without exception.



Bold

We face injustice head on and stand up for what is right and true, with confidence and strength.



Our ethics support our decisions.

Take accountability for making the biggest positive difference for people.

Give preference to the interests of the most disadvantaged.

Listen, understand and then act with courage, empowering people through self-determination.

Adopt and apply the highest professional standards within our constraints.

Address organisational sustainability so that we can continue our mission.

Seek transparency in communications with our stakeholders.

Acknowledge that our decisions seek equity, recognising that equity and equality are not always the same.

Who we served in FY23

134,588 total clients

↑13.1% on FY22

52,869

Local Area Coordination and
disability services participants

49,731

family services clients



8,646

home care
clients

7,988

aged care residents



3,905

War Memorial Hospital
patients



6,489

children enrolled in early
learning services

3,711

independent living residents

1,249

Medically Supervised Injecting
Centre clients

Our diverse workforce in FY23

10,442
employees

↑8.7% on FY22

8,406

female* employees (81%)

2,000

male* employees (19%)

1,172
volunteers

↑19.5% on FY22



3,142

CALD** employees (30%)

362

Aboriginal employees (3.5%)



92

chaplains
and pastoral
practitioners

*36 employees identified as neither male nor female (non-binary) – over 30% more than in FY22

**Culturally and linguistically diverse employees who speak a language other than English



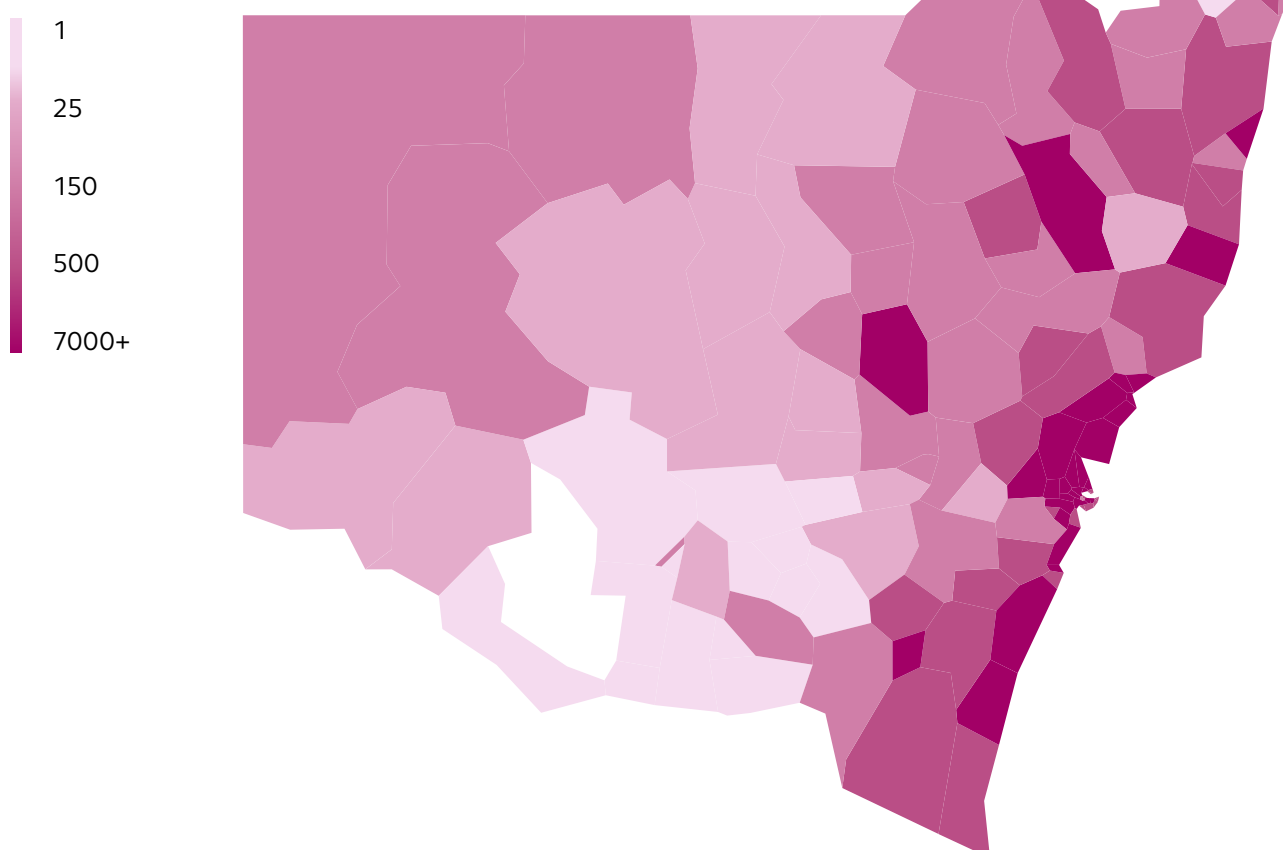
Our 10-year
strategy
to disrupt
entrenched
disadvantage
is in motion.

Uniting NSW.ACT's journey to create a better future for more people and communities began in FY22. This year, we've progressed our 10-year strategy for disrupting entrenched disadvantage by prioritising the people and places of greatest need, and directing our investment and energy to where we can have the most impact.

Uniting has the size and scale to make a real difference

We support more than 130,000 clients with over 450 services across NSW and the ACT - from Tweed Heads in the north, to Eden in the south, and out to Broken Hill in the Central West.

Clients



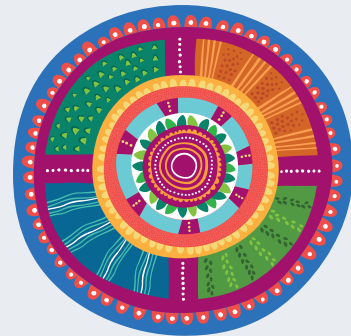
Create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage

10-year strategy 2022-2032

We live our values of being **compassionate, respectful, imaginative, and bold** and have an unwavering commitment to **quality, safety and service excellence**.



Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the work and mission of the Uniting Church through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care to serve humanity and create an **inclusive, connected and just world**.



We will partner with First Nations people and communities to facilitate self-determination and reconciliation through sharing of our knowledge, resources and capability.





Year in review.

22	Mission
28	Communities
42	Seniors Services
56	Social Impact and Advocacy
70	People Experience
80	Property and Housing





Uniting Mission.

Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the Uniting Church in Australia's work through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care – to serve humanity and create an inclusive, connected and just world.

The Mission directorate champions our missional principles throughout the organisation, ensuring they underpin all our work to:

- Inspire people so that everyone is valued
- Enliven communities so that everyone contributes
- Confront injustice so that everyone is included.



Setting directions

In FY23 our Statement of Missional Intent was refreshed in line with Uniting's 10-year strategy and the Synod's Future Directions strategy.

The Statement of Missional Intent connects Uniting's purpose to our relationship and responsibilities to stakeholders and partners, and illustrates our intention and accountability to work in alignment to this purpose. It will guide the work of the Mission directorate as we seek to identify further opportunities for collaboration and missional engagement, in addition to our provision of spiritual and holistic care in prisons, hospitals, mental health services and residential aged care. **Read our Uniting Statement of Missional Intent 2023 [here](#).**



Holistic care for all

Uniting Chaplains and Pastoral Practitioners are committed to caring for the whole person – mind, body and spirit. We offer a compassionate ear and open heart for any client or colleague in need, and each week more than 80 people deliver spiritual care to residents in Uniting aged care homes and retirement villages.

Pastoral care in rural communities is also essential to help address and disrupt entrenched disadvantage, as connections are forged and needs are understood. Some of our people are 'travelling ministers' – visiting and being present to create a better future for more people in remote areas.

This year, 92 Uniting chaplains and pastoral practitioners provided:

36,000

hours of spiritual support

1,798

church services in Uniting facilities

237

memorial services

50

funeral services

Connection with

83

congregations

Soul Care conference

REVEREND GRAEME TUTT



This year's Soul Care conference, run in collaboration with Uniting Mission and Education, inspired all who attended with its spotlight on what makes for transformative spiritual and pastoral care.

The 3-day conference aimed at ordained ministers, church and parachurch leaders, and chaplains, featured keynote speakers including Uniting NSW.ACT's Head of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Practice Rev. Graeme Tutt, Lifeline Australia Patron John Brogden and former Uniting Church President Dr Deirdre Palmer.

Soul Care presented a great opportunity to think about how we can bring people together and how we can care for them. Rev. Tutt noted that many organisations have a healthy focus on wellbeing, recognising the importance of looking after people as whole beings. Yet, he stated, "In our world, loneliness, disconnection and social isolation are more common than ever."

"I explored the connection between wellbeing and pastoral or spiritual care at the conference, and we looked at the similarities and differences. A particular question I asked was whether there are distinctive contributions that the Christian story brings to the care of people."

"It was great seeing people who share a passion for pastoral care as a key part of the Church's calling in the world, get together in the one place."

"Having the space to explore important issues and dimensions of pastoral care, and to connect with people who are working in a similar sphere, was really special."

REVEREND GRAEME TUTT, HEAD OF CHAPLAINCY AND PASTORAL PRACTICE

Lifeline Australia Patron John Brogden made an impactful contribution with his moving keynote speech about his depression and suicide attempt in 2005. He highlighted that "no matter how successful you are, mental illness does not discriminate".

Soul Care featured a great mix of inspiration from hearing others' stories, theory and concepts for pastoral care, plus opportunities for practical skills and space for restful contemplation. It was also the first time the Uniting Chaplaincy and Pastoral Practice team had gathered in person since 2019.

Volunteering for intergenerational connection

UNITING BOWDEN BRAE GARDENS RESIDENTS ENJOY VISITS BY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS FROM NEARBY PYMBLE LADIES COLLEGE JUNIOR SCHOOL.



This year we've been working closely with Uniting Church schools MLC and PLC to give students opportunities to volunteer for, and together with, our aged care homes. Many of our residents are active volunteers themselves, helping to prepare meals or knit clothing for local people and communities in need. Driven by a collective goal to carry out the mission of the Uniting Church, we're working to establish sustainable programs that support whole-of-school engagement.

In May 2023, a group of 10 PLC students started visiting our Bowden Brae Gardens aged care home in Normanhurst, providing conversation and participating in social activities. The enthusiastic Year 6 girls are enjoying the experience as much as the residents and have continued to visit them every fortnight since.

Another community-based initiative, called The Intergenerational Project, is between Kinross Wolaroi independent co-educational high school and Uniting Wontama in Orange. The aim is to foster connections between the seniors and the Year 11 students, with the hope of reducing social isolation and loneliness among aged care residents.

“By connecting with the younger generation, the seniors feel more engaged and valued, which can lead to improved mental and physical health outcomes. For the students, it provides an opportunity to learn from the experiences and wisdom of their seniors. They can gain a better understanding of history and culture, and develop empathy and respect for people of different generations.”

CORRINA COATES, UNITING CHURCH AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT LEADER

Uniting Volunteer Lead Gail Yap shared that projects like these are an exciting opportunity to invest in the next generation: “Volunteers are so important in our communities – they help to bridge generations and cultures, and in many ways they complement and extend the formal programs and services Uniting provides. Our country has been experiencing a decline in volunteering over the last decade, and working with young people is just one of the ways we can invest in the next generation of volunteers”.

Hats for Homeless



The Hats for Homeless initiative has been bringing warmth to the lives of those sleeping rough and doing it tough every winter for the past 5 years, thanks to the Uniting Church and Uniting NSW.ACT.

This project sees volunteers, schools, charities and congregations knit beanies for people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity over the coldest months in Sydney and regional NSW.

The first knit-a-thon ran in June 2019 and was hosted by Leichhardt Uniting Church. It brought together around 40 knitters from local churches, Tertiary Ministry, Uniting Residential Aged Care and Uniting Chaplaincy.

The plan was to launch the Hats for Homeless as an annual winter appeal and have many communities hosting knit-a-thons across NSW. Train the Trainer learning modules have also been created so communities can learn how to knit quality beanies and then go on to teach their communities. Uniting Chaplaincy has also introduced the project in their prison ministries.

Hats for Homeless has now grown to include 690 members within a supportive social media community led by Pastor Susan Russell, Chaplaincy Convenor Sydney Southeast and co-founder of the initiative.

“Since we began in 2019, over 10,500 beanies have been knitted and distributed. This winter, 1,800 beanies have been organised for those sleeping and living rough in Sydney and broader NSW.”

PASTOR SUSAN RUSSELL, CHAPLAINCY CONVENOR
SYDNEY SOUTHEAST

“This year South Sydney Rabbitohs beanies have proven very popular. We even had the Prime Minister purchase one. The Uniting Ngumbadal Aboriginal Employee Network has also volunteered their time to knit beanies for Aboriginal children, and they’ve been distributed to Uniting playgrounds and early learning centres.”



PASTOR SUSAN RUSSELL (RIGHT) AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COACH MEL HOLMES (LEFT) DELIVERED BEANIES TO A STREET KITCHEN IN WOOLLOOMOOLOO AS PART OF THE HATS FOR HOMELESS INITIATIVE.



UNITING EARLY LEARNING EDUCATORS
MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT.

Uniting Communities.

We're supporting people and communities to thrive, through delivering more services to more places.

Uniting Communities served more than 110,000 clients this year, many in rural and remote areas at a geographical and socio-economic disadvantage. To fulfil our 10-year strategy to create better futures: we're delivering early intervention programs that strengthen children and families, and support life transition points for young people and adults; we're developing effective place-based solutions and innovations for hard-to-reach communities; we're growing our partnerships to scale up for sector-wide

change; and we're investing in new capabilities to improve outcomes.

Applying a culturally sensitive and inclusive approach in our program delivery is paramount for all the people we serve, particularly our First Nations clients, our clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, our LGBTQI+ clients, and for participants living with a disability.

Throughout FY23 we began to establish the foundations that will enable our 10-year strategy to succeed, and laid building blocks that will support and inform new program development from theory into practice. We've seen encouraging results this year, as we continue to nurture trust and respect within our community partnerships and relationships.

110,338

Communities clients served in FY23

↑ 17.6% since FY22

51,888

in Local Area Coordination

We link people with significant and permanent disability to supports and services in their local areas, so they can be more independent and engaged with their communities.

25,317

in Early Intervention

Our programs assist families with emerging needs to address risk factors that may otherwise become more serious safety and wellbeing concerns.

7,272

in Recovery services

We support children, adolescents, parents, adults, and people who care for a loved one, with clinical and psychosocial services for mental health and wellbeing.

6,572

in Counselling and Mediation

We support families who are experiencing or at risk of separation, by guiding them to maintain effective communication and make important decisions.

6,489

in Early Learning

Our long day care, preschool, and out-of-school-hours care programs nurture children's curiosity and creativity to inspire a lifelong love of learning.

5,300

in Intensive Family Support

Our programs target families with complex needs and focus on increasing the safety of children and young people who have been identified as being at risk of serious harm.

4,442

in Homelessness services

Our Specialised Homelessness Services are for young people and families who are couch surfing, living on the street, or at risk of losing their accommodation.

1,249

in MSIC

Our Medically Supervised Injecting Centre is a harm reduction service providing unwavering wraparound support beyond safe supervision of drug use.

981

in Disability services

We focus on understanding what people living with disability want to achieve, so we can design personalised support services that build capacity and independence.

499

in Youth Transitions programs

We support young people as they transition into adulthood, with programs that build skills for wellbeing, parenting, and life after out-of-home care (including Foyer Central).

329

in Permanency Support

We help children and young people who have been removed from their families, by providing safe and permanent homes that nurture their growth and development.

We're delivering early intervention programs.

Uniting Early Intervention seeks to address key factors that will potentially support and strengthen parents, children and young people who are experiencing disadvantage, to shift trajectories towards overall wellbeing. The goal is to prevent or reduce potential negative impacts as early as possible, for the best long-term outcomes in education, social and emotional development, and physical health.

Our services for families include:

- Parenting programs
- Supported playgroups
- Home visits
- Relationship support
- Access to early learning
- Preparation for primary school
- Alcohol and other drug education for young people.

Scaling up Links to Early Learning

In FY23, our [Links to Early Learning](#) program was granted additional funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, to replicate our work in South Western Sydney on the Mid North Coast of NSW. Uniting linkers support families to address the barriers preventing them from accessing early childhood education, so their children can have the best start in life. We are most grateful for the philanthropic partnership which allows us to expand this important program, based on our learnings and outcomes, so we can provide the service to more families in need, in line with our 10-year strategic plan to disrupt entrenched disadvantage.

In a 4-year evaluation, our linkers successfully supported:

898

parents from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

414

children enrolled in early childhood education

19

average weekly hours of early learning per child per week



Culturally appropriate care for better outcomes

Over the past 2 years we've been working with Goodradigbee in Western Sydney, to help prepare this Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation for accreditation to provide foster care for children and young people that connects them with kin, culture and country.

A significant milestone was achieved this financial year, with Goodradigbee's submission of all the required accreditation documents to the Office of the Children's Guardian. While a lengthy evaluation and decision process now lays ahead, our ongoing commitment to the needs of First Nations communities is stronger than ever.

First Steps Count Centre opens



Taree's First Steps Count Child and Community Centre opened in February 2023. The centre is a collaborative hub for children from birth to 12 and their families, offering a safe and welcoming place to access the supports they need, when they need it. It brings a range of child and family health and wellbeing services under one roof, to ensure that all children in the Manning Valley are ready to learn and ready for school.

It's taken 14 years for the project to be fully realised, demonstrating what determined local advocacy and engagement can achieve at a grassroots level. Several community service providers, including Uniting, are working together here, to provide an integrated model of service delivery that's fully embedded in the culture of the local area.

Uniting runs playgroups and offers parenting and domestic violence support, youth services and therapeutic interventions. Hub services from other on-site providers include NDIS support, health and wellbeing support, reading and homework support, and inclusive activities like cooking groups, all delivered within a culturally safe space where Elders can mentor local children.

The hub's design embraced the Living Building Challenge, a philosophy, education and advocacy

tool for projects to be regenerative, reflecting a healthy interrelationship with nature. The centre is filled with art from the local Gathang-speaking Biripi children and families, and the internal and external spaces encourage contact and connection with the surrounding natural environment. A new purpose-built playgroup room will also be completed by early 2024.

The official opening was attended by Uniting Director of Communities, Sue Shilbury, state and local government dignitaries, the Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation - who contributed significant financial and other support - and the research team from the University of New South Wales who will be involved in ongoing outcomes research on site.

"This centre is the space our community and families have always wanted, and you can't help but feel how special it is as soon as you walk through the doors. People love it and tell us they feel so welcome and safe."

MARIE ATKINSON, UNITING OLD BAR AND TAREE COMMUNITIES LEAD

Aunty Jo's Aboriginal lens

AUNTY JO GILKISON IN ACTION,
SECOND FROM THE RIGHT



When it comes to making sure a First Nations lens is applied to support children in out-of-home care, you can't go past the expertise Aunty Jo Gilkison shares as the only Aboriginal Cultural Advisor in Uniting's [Permanency Support Program](#) (PSP).

A proud Worimi woman, mother of 4 and grandmother of 7, Jo and her husband Malcolm have been a foster family for many children on the Mid North Coast over the years. Aunty Jo has been with Uniting for 8 years, starting out as community development officer, then a domestic violence support officer, followed by a project officer for our Aboriginal Service Development Unit, before making her way into the PSP team and using her invaluable Aboriginal cultural perspective to help support children, young people, families and staff.

Aunty Jo supports the PSP team when putting Aboriginal cultural plans in place for children to stay connected to their culture, community and country: "I work mostly on the Mid North Coast as we're in the process of transitioning our Aboriginal children and young people over to Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations," she explained.

Her community connections and cultural networks extend to others who are sourcing

information about birth families in different regions:

"Ideally, we prefer to get information from the family first, but sometimes that's not possible, especially for the Stolen Generation. Families carry that grief and loss of not knowing where they belong, and this can bring shame because they can't pass knowledge on."

AUNTY JO GILKISON, ABORIGINAL CULTURAL ADVISOR IN UNITING'S PERMANENCY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Jo believes children have the right to know who their mob is, where they're from, and about the special protocols and lore that's relevant for their mob: "I feel humbled and honoured that I've been given the chance to make a difference for our children and young people, to make sure that their culture is not lost to them."

"We're listening to birth families and most importantly, we're listening to the children and young people in care, because this is about them. This is their journey - we are the record keepers and the holder of their stories until they, in time, are ready."

We're developing effective place-based solutions.

FY23 saw active growth and evolution in our community services, through delivery of more joined-up, innovative and place-based solutions, especially for regional communities. Alongside traditional service delivery, we've been investing in a new way of working that involves meeting local people where they live, listening to them and learning what their issues really are, and supporting them to design and create solutions they think will work best for their community.

We've responded to young people living on the Mid North Coast of NSW, in the Bay and Basin region on the NSW South Coast, and in Nambucca Heads, who are experiencing community challenges including youth unemployment, drug addiction, increasing mental health problems and youth suicide. They've told us that if we want to help, we need to hear them and give them agency in the programs being put in place to support them.

Uniting community connectors facilitate links to leaders and resources in each local area, but it's the energy and ideas of the young people that continue to shape and drive the initiatives. Getting input and direction from local young people is our starting point, and critical to finding the best solution to the issues they're facing. This way of working together is about responding to the community's specific issues, rather than trying to superimpose a solution we've seen work somewhere else.

We're also discovering that place-based collaboration is crucial when we're working with First Nations communities, as a positive way to enable self-determination. Aboriginal Families Together, an initiative led by Uniting's First Nations teams in Dubbo and Nambucca to improve outcomes for Aboriginal children and families, is benefiting from forging closer ties with Local Aboriginal Land Councils in FY23. We're now working closely with local Elders to develop culturally safe places and connections for parents and kinship carers. In both locations we're also seeing the natural growth of other community-based projects, thanks to the First Nations-led approach of valuing relationships and listening.

PLACE-BASED WORK EMPOWERS LOCALS TO SHAPE AND DRIVE SOLUTIONS TO SPECIFIC CHALLENGES IN THEIR REGIONAL COMMUNITIES.



Strong ties for a stronger community



This year a new partnership was forged between Uniting NSW.ACT and 3 Local Aboriginal Land Councils (LALCs) to significantly boost the supports already in place for children and families in the Nambucca Valley region.

In a first for the area, our Communities team signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Bowraville LALC, Nambucca Heads LALC and Unkya LALC. Uniting's Head of Communities for Northern NSW and ACT, Charlie Chubb, said the formal agreement marked an important step forward in strengthening and building cultural connections.

"We're really excited to partner with the Local Aboriginal Land Councils, and working collaboratively will help to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and families in the Valley."

CHARLIE CHUBB, HEAD OF COMMUNITIES
FOR NORTHERN NSW AND ACT

"The agreement will see Uniting work with these LALCs to share knowledge, skills and advice as joint mentors and partners. It will also allow us to build on the great work already being achieved in Nambucca Heads by Uniting through our Aboriginal Families Together program," explained Charlie.

Without this program, now running for 3 years, many Aboriginal families wouldn't have support and access to the wraparound services they need. The signing of this ground-breaking MOU builds on Aboriginal Families Together and facilitates exploration of other opportunities with our community partners to deliver new services and even better outcomes for local children and families.

We're growing our partner ecosystem.

This year has seen the expansion of some important partnerships and provider relationships, to create change at individual, community and systemic levels. Growth of our partner ecosystem is critical for our 10-year strategy's success, measured in the delivery of more services to more people and places in need.

Collaborating with Karitane

In September 2022, we began to develop a pilot program in South Western Sydney - between Uniting, parenting not-for-profit Karitane, wellbeing technology group Sonder, and the Department of Communities and Justice – to identify and work with young pregnant women who may be facing challenges in providing a safe and stable environment for their newborn children.

Family violence, poor mental health, drug and alcohol issues, and housing instability may be factors negatively impacting a person's ability to parent. Karitane specialises in supporting parents through the first 2,000 days of a child's life – a mission that closely aligns with our strategic objective to disrupt entrenched disadvantage. After Karitane identifies women in hospital ante-natal clinics who are 25 or younger and who may benefit from extra support, Uniting listens to their needs and provides wraparound assistance.

Sonder acts as a digital hub for the program, giving women 24/7 access to health professionals via text chat, phone, or in person, for non-judgemental and culturally appropriate support.

This pilot is a time-intensive yet rewarding process for all involved, with each partner bringing unique strengths to the table that are helping to execute, evaluate and better refine our support service.

Growing headspace in the Hawkesbury

In April 2023, Wentworth Healthcare - provider of the Nepean Blue Mountains Primary Health Network - announced that Uniting NSW.ACT

was successful in our tender to establish and operate a new headspace service in the Hawkesbury.

The full-service centre will support young people aged 12-25 with information, advice, resources and counselling for their mental, physical and sexual health, alcohol and/or other drug concerns, and will also offer vocational and educational services.

Uniting has more than 40 years' experience in developing and implementing mental health and community service programs, and currently operates 3 other headspace services in Katoomba, Mount Druitt and Penrith.

Wentworth Healthcare is the regional funding body responsible for delivering headspace in the Hawkesbury, and is excited to be partnering with Uniting after a rigorous open tender process. The tender assessment panel included local health professionals, a young person living in the Hawkesbury, industry experts, and representatives from the Nepean Blue Mountains Local Health District and headspace National.

"Recent multiple natural disasters on top of the pandemic, have had a profound impact on young people and their families in the Hawkesbury. It was important that we find the most suitable provider to deliver this much-needed service, and that they understood the unique challenges that young people in the Hawkesbury face."

"We believe that with Uniting's experience operating headspace Katoomba and Penrith in our region, and recent outreach services in the Hawkesbury, that they are well placed to deliver this new headspace centre."

LIZZ REAY, WENTWORTH HEALTHCARE CEO

Acting headspace CEO, Julia Smith, added, "With 2 in 5 young people experiencing mental ill health, it has never been more important for headspace to provide culturally safe, youth-friendly mental health support – when and where young people need it most. Young people are resilient and, with support, they can and do weather tough times to get back on track."



We're investing in new capabilities.

In recent years, the pandemic, natural disasters and cost of living pressures have propelled us to seek out ways of working differently and investing innovatively to deliver on our 10-year strategy to create a better future.

Problem-solving with pod villages

Our Uniting Recovery Support Service (RSS) stood up in the immediate aftermath of the 2022 floods in Northern NSW. After an initial contract for 10 caseworkers based at 7 emergency accommodation sites housing more than 1,000 flood-affected people, this year the RSS has grown to a team of 22 working in all facets of community recovery. The devastation caused by the floods continues to profoundly impact the region and we're utilising trauma-informed practice for all aspects of our ongoing work.

In FY23, reinforcing the deep and mutually respectful relationship our RSS team has developed with Aboriginal communities in the Northern Rivers region, we were invited by the Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council to help establish an interim housing solution when the homes of people living on Cabbage Tree Island were washed away.

Uniting subsequently partnered with the NSW Reconstruction Authority, formerly Resilience NSW, to build the Wardell Community Village, housing 160 Cabbage Tree Island residents, complete with an Aboriginal medical service, school, and an activities program that runs every day of the week to keep young people engaged. Two more pod villages were set up in [Brunswick Heads](#) to house over 150 people, many with complex needs. Each village is a community of demountable homes ranging in size to accommodate individuals and families, complete with a washing machine, stove, fridge, bed/s, lounge/s, TV, air conditioner and a small deck.

So much more than just a roof over displaced heads, Uniting specialist support is available on these sites, including programs and events based on community consultation, as well as daily access to case managers for additional services, information and assistance. It's these wraparound services that have proven crucial for village residents and the surrounding community to address consequent mental health, drug and alcohol issues and to focus on re-entering the workforce after the trauma of natural disaster.

Uniting RSS worked with the NSW Construction Authority to support flood-impacted residents on the Far North Coast:

3

pod villages

136

temporary homes

311

residents, including 150 children and teenagers

1,000+

people in the local area given wraparound assistance

“I would like to express my thanks and recognition of my caseworker, Csilla. She has been a shining light at a time in my life that is so complicated and painful as result of being homeless. Csilla always manages to make me feel better and even laugh. She is my guardian angel.

Her professionalism and her commitment to helping me get things sorted has been amazing. To say I am grateful is an understatement. Thank you Uniting, for all the work you do and for allocating Csilla to me, despite her no doubt busy case load. She constantly keeps me in the loop, and when she visits she’s always on time and is a great listener – understanding and empathetic. Everything you want in a caseworker.”

UNITING RECOVERY SUPPORT SERVICE CLIENT



Meeting the growing need

Given that 1 in 6 people now identify as having a disability in Australia, it's not surprising that [Uniting Local Area Coordination](#) (or LAC) expanded its participant base by 14% this year.

Uniting Local Area Coordination in FY23:

49.5%

of NDIS participants with a disability in NSW, supported across 28 locations

↑ 14%

growth since FY22

15% of our **450**

team members live with a disability

10%

are First Nations team members

21%

come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

We're the largest provider of LAC services under the Partners in Community program in NSW, representing almost half of all National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) participants in the state, and 11.6% Australia-wide. Our team members are local people delivering support to participants in their own communities, across urban, regional and remote locations.

For our many team members with lived experience, we value their unique insights into the challenges and opportunities of being both a participant and employee within an NDIS partner organisation. Having staff with disability really resonates with other participants, and empowers them to voice their needs and be truly understood.

We've been building our capacity this year, with a dedicated First Nations team who work with Aboriginal communities to raise awareness of the NDIS. Access to support is then facilitated by the team, especially in regional and remote locations.

A key focus throughout FY23 has been the development of innovative community capability programs to support people with disability who aren't necessarily eligible for the NDIS. Uniting is currently piloting an early intervention program for young people, called Ignite, Empower, Achieve. It's connecting counselling post-graduate students with local high schools, creating access to additional mental health support on school grounds. It's a win-win in terms of giving the uni students an opportunity to build up their practice hours in the field, while delivering wellbeing support that promotes better educational outcomes.

**“I’m autistic
and love it
very much!”**



Lockdown proved a rich time of discovery for Tim, a participant in our Western Sydney service area. For the 21-year-old, it fired up his creativity – and the cooker! In 2020 he launched his YouTube channel, Timmy’s Vegan Kitchen, where he shares plant-based recipes, gardening tips, singalongs and updates about his bunnies, Twinkle and Teenie.

Being a vlogger offers the opportunity “to inspire people, make them happy and teach them many things that they never knew that I could do,” says Tim, who creates and edits all his videos for his hundreds of subscribers from all over the world, from Thailand to Ukraine.

“The NDIS has made a significant impact on Tim’s life and our family,” say his mum, Stella. Prior to Tim joining the Scheme in 2015, Stella pursued respite care that allowed her to carve out some time for herself, but “there were no definite goals placed for the progress and development of Tim’s growth,” she explains.

“We appreciated funding to set up definite goals to work with various therapists and service providers to guide and support Tim to improve his daily living and relationships, expand his skills and abilities, and access the community,” she adds.

Stella values the reliability and responsiveness of Tim’s Uniting Local Area Coordinator, Dragana, whenever she’s needed.

Being connected to appropriate supports means Tim can pursue his many and varied passions, including gardening. Tim discovered his green thumb while admiring the flowers in his 80-year-old neighbour’s garden. Stella says, “Timmy wanted to get to know her and she invited us over.”

Their friendship blossomed and today Timmy has a flourishing indoor-plant garden, as well as silverbeet and pumpkins thriving outside. When his family members were unwell with COVID, he whipped up a special healing brew with peppermint and other herbs from his garden.

With the right supports in place, Tim has discovered the autism pride community and now embraces his uniqueness.

“Tim is more independent in communicating, cooking, public transport, speaking and problem-solving. He can produce his YouTube videos, dance and sing confidently, do gardening, care responsibly for his pet rabbits, and live happily and meaningfully each day.”

TIM’S MOTHER STELLA SUMS UP THE BENEFITS OF HIS UNITING LAC SUPPORT

NOWRA, TRADITIONAL COUNTRY OF THE YUIN PEOPLE, HOSTED MORE THAN 30,000 PLAYERS AND SPECTATORS FOR THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOORI KNOCKOUT, AUSTRALIA'S BIGGEST FIRST NATIONS SPORTING EVENT. DURING THE 4-DAY TOURNAMENT, UNITING'S LAC TEAM DISTRIBUTED 500 INFORMATION PACKS ON HOW TO ACCESS THE NDIS.



KICKIN IT AT THE KOORI KNOCKOUT!

#KKO

@nitv_au

NITV

SBS

Wellbeing4Kids wins innovation award



Set up in October 2022, our specialist child mental health team, [Wellbeing4Kids](#), has won this year's Technology in Health category for the Hunter New England and Central Coast Primary Care Quality and Innovation Awards, with its Telehealth4Kids service.

Uniting's Head of Mental Health Services, Chantal Nagib, is delighted that the Wellbeing4Kids professionals have already been recognised for their leadership in providing quality online supports for their clients across the Hunter New England and Central Coast regions.

Telehealth4Kids was developed to support children and families who are unable to access face-to-face therapy due to physical or financial constraints. This evidence-based therapeutic program provides free emotional, social and behavioural support online. Available in 5 key locations – Mid Coast, Mehi, Peel, Tablelands and on the Central Coast – our aim is to help families raise happier, healthier children.

Good mental health is important for every child's development – it helps them cope with changes, build healthy relationships, feel positive about themselves and enjoy life. The team explores options for mental health supports together with the child's family and works collaboratively with everyone in the child's

life including carers, GP, school and their wider support network, in ways that are culturally sensitive.

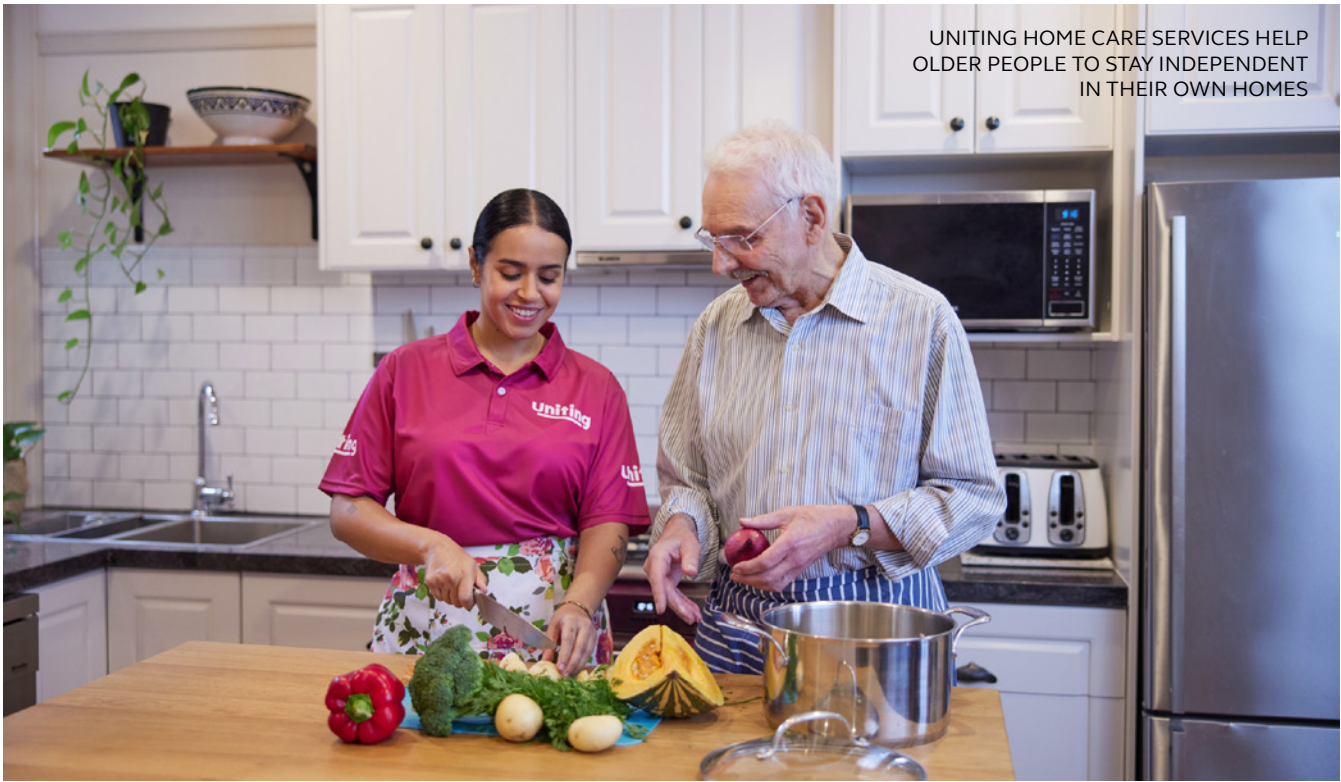
"This service is vital for children and families who live remotely and in regional areas, and for children who are experiencing school refusal, post-COVID anxiety, and mental health difficulties."

SUSAN BUXTON, WELLBEING4KIDS SERVICE MANAGER

Susan explains, "Our clinicians give clarity and security to parents from the onset of referral, by providing them with technical supports such as test runs and troubleshooting digital access, along with tips to make each telehealth session a successful interaction." Yet, it's not just about efficient and effective telepractice – the program also leverages electronic tools to help children engage in a way that's relevant to them.

Telehealth4Kids is a great example of how we're flexing to deliver more services to more places, by investing in new technologies and capabilities so that people and communities can be supported to thrive.

UNITING HOME CARE SERVICES HELP
OLDER PEOPLE TO STAY INDEPENDENT
IN THEIR OWN HOMES



Uniting Seniors Services.

We're ensuring older people have access to integrated support and can live with choice and dignity.

Uniting Seniors Services is evolving our support for older Australians, especially those experiencing social and economic exclusion, in line with our 10-year strategy. In FY23 we: grew our presence in regional NSW; increased our capacity to care for seniors in Uniting communities through Assisted Living services, food technology, and specialist dementia care; introduced our Family Portal app to give home care clients more flexibility, transparency and control when arranging their services; and implemented the initial wave of sector-wide aged care reforms.



RESIDENT GARDENER AT THE
MARION IN LEICHHARDT



24,250

seniors served in FY23

8,646

home care clients

7,988

aged care residents

3,905

War Memorial Hospital patients

3,711

independent living residents

This year brought COVID-exacerbated workforce challenges, pushing care costs beyond the available funding, particularly in regional communities. Some of our staffing pressure was eased with targeted initiatives including a university graduate partnership, our own Homemaker Program, and participation in the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme.

Graduate partnership with the University of Wollongong

We joined forces with the University of Wollongong in FY23, providing specialist training for their recently graduated Registered Nurses seeking to explore a career in the aged care sector.

The Aged Care Transition to Practice Program attracted 35 graduates during the year, equipping participants with the knowledge, skills and experience to deliver person-centred gerontological nursing practices.

Amy Lebedew, a Registered Nurse at Uniting Irwin Hall Mayfield, our aged care home near Newcastle, said the program supported her career development in many ways:

“This course helped grow my confidence after obtaining a Registered Nurse position in aged care. The mentor I had was very supportive as I transitioned from Assistant in Nursing to becoming a Registered Nurse. I would really recommend this program to any new nursing graduate within Uniting.”

AMY LEBEDEW, UNITING IRWIN HALL
REGISTERED NURSE



AMY ENJOYS NURSING WITH UNITING.

Household Living supports each resident's preferences, routines and rituals.

Uniting believes that every older Australian deserves to be treated with dignity, to express their identity, and to exercise choice, wherever and however they live. We're committed to ensuring these rights are front and centre in our aged care homes with an approach we've been evolving since 2015, called [Household Living](#).



Most Uniting aged care homes have a community of several smaller households.



Each household functions like a family home.



Every household has access to its own kitchen.



Every household has shared dining and living spaces.



A homemaker supports each household in making decisions about living their day, their way.

Nationally recognised Homemaker Program

Our Homemaker Program was introduced in 2020 to support the design and functioning of Uniting residential aged care services as household-style environments that feel like home, empowering all residents with agency and dignity.

More than 50 employees have undertaken the program to date, with 11 completing the course this year to gain a nationally recognised training statement of attainment.

The program skills Uniting Homemakers to encourage the self-determination of residents, by supporting their choices and decisions, as individuals and as a household.

Chiyono Tomori, a Homemaker at Uniting Wesley Heights in Manly, said the program helped her to communicate more effectively with co-workers, residents and their families, and to build her leadership skills.



Age is no barrier to adventure

Uniting aged care residents from The Marion in Leichhardt and Wesley Gardens in Belrose, take on the Sydney Tower Eye SKYWALK adventure, 268m above the ground. Household Living is about responding to how older people choose to lead their lives with meaning and purpose.



Mullauna mural celebrates First Nations residents and staff

Uniting Mullauna in Blacktown has 5 residents and 2 members of the care team who identify as Aboriginal. Every Tuesday since 2021, the First Nations residents have been attending a local cultural group called Wolkara Elders.

When the home decided to create a mural, the Wolkara Elders helped us with concepts. All residents and staff were invited to participate in the painting process, and the striking result reflects 65,000 years of First Nations culture and history, with each layer representing time. Watch the mural come to life in this [video](#).

PALM scheme eases workforce shortages



BEIA TIBRIANO CHATS WITH A RESIDENT OF UNITING MIRINJANI IN CANBERRA

In responding to the aged care worker supply shortage, Uniting employed 124 aged care staff this year, under the Pacific Australia Labour Mobility Scheme (PALM).

PALM is an Australian Government-backed initiative that helps fill labour gaps, particularly in rural and regional locations, by offering employers access to a pool of workers from the Pacific Islands for a period of 4 years.

Through a third-party organisation called HealthX, Uniting continues to employ and train aged care workers from the Pacific Islands in our homes across NSW and the ACT. We support any unqualified workers to complete their Certificate III in Individual Support.

Our practical induction program assigns a mentor or 'buddy' to help each PALM worker settle into their new job and community. We make sure people have accommodation close to their workplace, and show them how to catch public transport.

Beia Tibriano, from Nonouti Island, joined Uniting Mirinjani in September 2022 under the PALM scheme, after graduating with an Aged Care Certificate III through the Australia Pacific Technical College in Fiji.

From the moment he arrived at Mirinjani, Beia said he felt welcome and supported in his passion for aged care as a profession. Working at Uniting has also provided Beia with the ability to earn a better income and have access to more benefits than he had previously, allowing him to better support his family, both here and in Fiji.

"I have no doubt that Uniting is the perfect employer for me. Working here also provides me with the opportunity to encourage others who are interested in working with older people to apply through the PALM scheme."

BEIA TIBRIANO, PALM AGED CARE WORKER AT UNITING MIRINJANI

We're establishing or acquiring aged care homes and retirement villages in communities of need.

Uniting is committed to ensuring older people in regional areas have continued access to support, so they can stay close to their family and community. When an aged care home closes in a regional community, seniors are dislocated from familiar surroundings, families need to travel greater distances and local hospitals face more pressure. Many smaller providers in rural areas are struggling under the weight of increasing regulation and new funding structures, so in NSW this year we've acquired 3 more residential aged care homes – in the Northern Tablelands town of Armidale, and in the Southern Tablelands towns of Crookwell and Taralga.

Welcoming CTAC to Uniting

Crookwell Taralga Aged Care (CTAC), a well-established and community-operated aged care provider serving the Upper Lachlan Shire just north of Goulburn, merged with Uniting at the start of FY23.

CTAC's residential aged care homes - Viewhaven Lodge and Sunset Lodge - are now Uniting Crookwell and Uniting Taralga, retaining key staff for continuity and familiarity. CTAC's home care service - Upper Lachlan Community Care - was included in the merger as part of our commitment to ensuring quality care for seniors where choice is often limited.

We're continuing the values-based care that CTAC is known for, and working with the community to build on their legacy.

"I am very pleased to welcome Uniting NSW.ACT as they expand to incorporate Sunset Lodge, Viewhaven Lodge and Upper Lachlan Community Care. This merger will ensure that high-quality aged care services continue to be provided in the Upper Lachlan Shire for the foreseeable future."

GARY KADWELL, CTAC BOARD CHAIR

The right values, track record and vision

Autumn Lodge Aged Care, a standalone provider serving the Armidale community since 1896 - and operating in its current form since 1956 - selected Uniting NSW.ACT as "the best fit and strongest applicant" to continue their legacy, based on having the right values, experience, track record and vision.

"Uniting has a strong fit with the values of Autumn Lodge, experience in regional service delivery, capacity to add value to the existing operations, and experience in major capital works programs that can extend and/or upgrade the existing facilities."

DAVID STELLER, AUTUMN LODGE AGED CARE BOARD CHAIR

Mr Steller said the key factors in selecting Uniting included our commitment to:

- Build on the existing service and create a regional hub
- Redevelop the site in the medium term
- Continue procurement from local businesses where possible
- Retain existing care teams.

Uniting Executive Director Tracey Burton added, "We are optimistic about the future of care and services in the broader New England region and welcome Autumn Lodge to the Uniting family as we continue to expand our services in the region."

Autumn Lodge resident, Lawrence, reflected: "The move to Uniting has been smooth and the staff are all very supportive."



We're creating communities where support and accommodation are flexible, to meet the changing needs of seniors as they age.

Expansion of Assisted Living

This year, Assisted Living at Uniting Westmead and Uniting Bowden Brae grew to serve more than 50% of all village residents. In the second half of FY23, the service expanded to 3 additional villages – at Hamlyn Terrace, Yamba and Leichhardt.

Assisted Living services such as meals, transport, and personal care, support people to keep living in their homes and to 'age-in-place' in the community they know and love. We're hearing that the social connections forged between our care teams and residents are appreciated alongside the services, and Assisted Living is also providing reassurance and relief for couples who can continue living together, even if they have very different care needs.



UNITING ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES ARE TAILORED TO INDIVIDUAL NEEDS.



UNITING ASSISTED LIVING SERVICES ARE DELIVERED WITH A SMILE.

Shaun loves life with Assisted Living

Before moving into retirement living, Shaun Scammel spent her life looking after others. Her ageing mum, her daughter, her grandkids. Life was busy and there wasn't much 'me' time.

When her health went downhill and Shaun ended up in a wheelchair, everything became harder to manage. So she opted for a ground floor apartment with Assisted Living services at Park Meadows, our independent living complex at Uniting Westmead.

With the help she now receives to coordinate her daily life, Shaun is able to maintain her independence. For her, Assisted Living includes a car service to take her to appointments, regular home cleaning visits, and even a personal shopper for Shaun's groceries.

The on-site seniors' gym at Uniting Westmead has also helped Shaun with her physical and mental health:

"The residents I bump into at the gym all seem to be very positive. I like to be active and I like having a good laugh and enjoying life, you know? Living here has really taught me to prioritise self-care and to look after myself."

SHAUN, PARK MEADOWS RESIDENT AT UNITING WESTMEAD

Uniting Quong Tart celebrates 15 years of service

MEI QUONG TART



The Cantonese and Mandarin-speaking team at Uniting Quong Tart, in Sydney's Inner West suburb of Ashfield, ensure every aged care resident feels valued as part of a respected Chinese community, and supported with culturally-informed meals and activities. In Chinese tradition, older people are seen as social treasures, and they're consulted for the wisdom they've gained over many years of life experience.

This year, Quong Tart marked its 15th anniversary with a special performance of Cantonese opera and dancing. As part of the celebrations, a Blue Plaque was issued to commemorate the life and legacy of the home's namesake, 19th-century philanthropist, businessman and Chinese-Australian pioneer, Mei Quong Tart. He was an enlightened employer who gave his employees paid sick leave and proper holidays long before they were mandated, and Sydney's poor and destitute were the focus of his charity work.

The Blue Plaque was unveiled by Minister Penny Sharpe at a special ceremony for residents, families and the care team.

"The Blue Plaque program celebrates diversity and shares the stories of the extraordinary people and events that have shaped NSW."

PENNY SHARPE, NSW ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE MINISTER

Purchased in 2002, Gallop House - as it was then known - underwent extensive renovations to maintain the heritage features of the original homestead. Opening in 2008, Quong Tart is now a state-of-the-art aged care home for its 63 Chinese-Australian residents.



A century of caring



In April 2023, the [Uniting War Memorial Hospital](#) marked more than 100 years of service to the community, with a special celebration at the historic Edina estate in Waverley. We're proud to be part of the continuing legacy of service to the community that began on ANZAC Day in 1919, when the Vickery family gifted their home to the Methodist Church to be used as a much-needed hospital and as a memorial to Australians who died fighting in the Great War.

“On Armistice Day in 1925, the hospital’s first 13 nurses graduated. In 1941, the third highest birth rate in a New South Wales hospital was recorded here.”

GERARD HYDE, UNITING HEAD OF SENIORS – SYDNEY WEST, SHARES SOME SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES OVER THE PAST CENTURY.

Today, the War Memorial Hospital is part of the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, operating as a specialist aged rehabilitation service for almost 4,000 patients recovering from injury or illness each year. Services include: 24-hour inpatient care; outpatient clinics for Parkinson’s disease, aphasia, hydrotherapy, group therapy, and continence; specialist

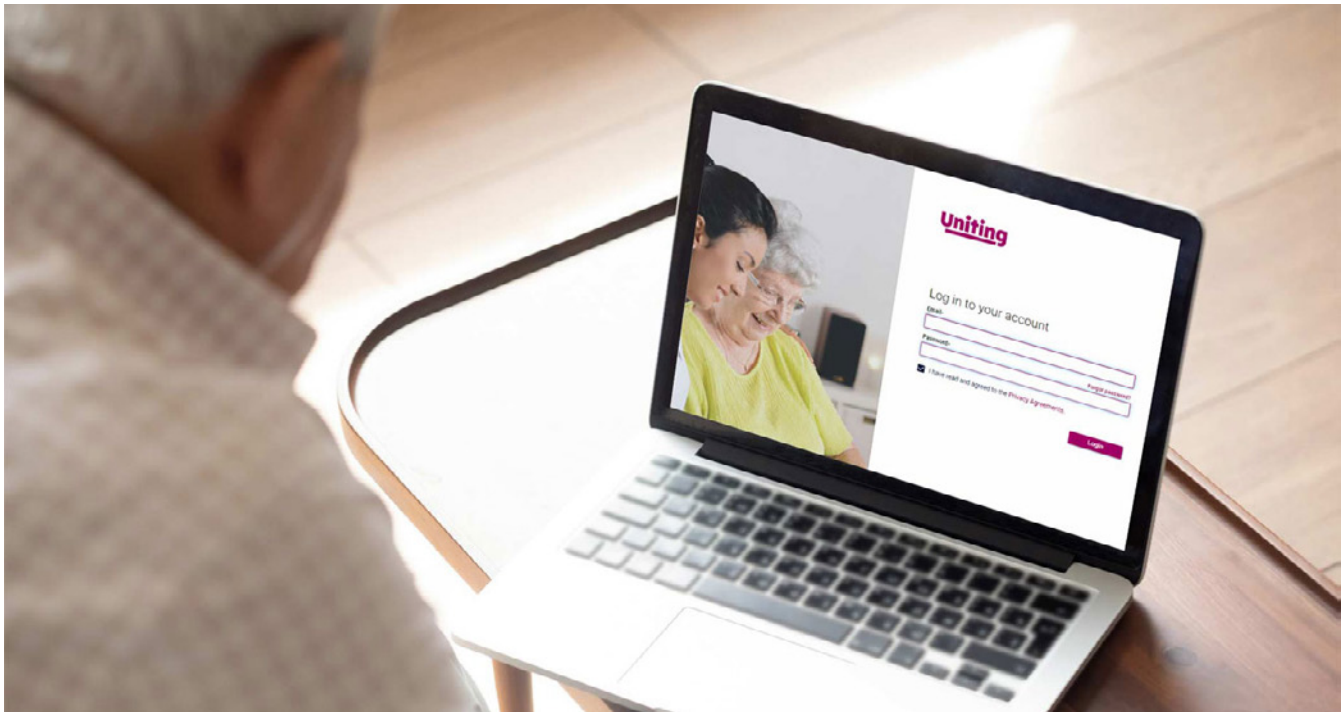
teams for Transitional Aged Care, Aged Care Assessments, and Younger Onset Dementia; plus an accommodation service for regional patients and families.

“This is also the home of our award-winning Geriatric Flying Squad, launched in 2010, which sends rapid response teams to review older clients with the aim of keeping them healthy at home, and minimising emergency department presentations and hospital admissions.”

JANE MCGUIRE, UNITING WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL EXECUTIVE MANAGER AND DIRECTOR OF NURSING

Staff and services at the hospital have changed the lives of thousands of people over the last 100 years, and Uniting is passionate about preserving and continuing the history of the site, and working with NSW Health to provide high-quality services into the future.

ABOVE: GOVERNOR OF NSW - MARGARET BEAZLEY, UNITING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - TRACEY BURTON, AND EXECUTIVE MANAGER OF THE UNITING WAR MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - GERARD HYDE, CUT THE CAKE TO CELEBRATE 100 YEARS OF SERVICE.



We're growing our capacity to care for seniors in their own homes.

This year, Uniting Home and Community Care continued rolling out our 'neighbourhood' approach to service delivery. It's about gaining holistic understanding of each person's unique needs and existing wellbeing network, so the right home care services can be provided for clients when and where it's needed.

Family Portal is launched

In FY23 we introduced an online platform called [Family Portal](#), giving clients and their families quick and easy access to information about their Uniting in-home services, visit schedules and care team.

Clients can visit Family Portal via the phone app or on their PC, to see the services they're receiving and who will be visiting their home to provide the care. Changes can also be made in advance of scheduled visits, ensuring that customised home care services adapt to meet each client's needs and plans.

The on-the-go convenience of Family Portal gives clients greater transparency, flexibility and control, and detailed real-time information about their bookings and the people visiting their homes to deliver care services.

Peace of mind with Family Portal

"Family Portal access was recently set up for my Nan Dulcie in Tamworth, so that 2 of her daughters, Cheryl and my Mum Dianne, could see her home care service appointments and who would be visiting her."

"Mum uses the Family Portal app on her iPad and smartphone (both work well) and Nan rings her every few nights to confirm her service details for the following day. Nan was previously experiencing some anxiety over not being sure who would turn up at her place and when, whereas now Mum can simply check for her and let her know."

"Living in Port Macquarie, my Mum really appreciates the app as it helps her feel more included and involved with Nan's daily routine. Mum can easily see Nan's services in a live environment at her fingertips, whenever needed."

GRANDDAUGHTER OF DULCIE,
UNITING HOME CARE CLIENT

We're implementing Royal Commission recommendations to deliver greater choice and dignity to people as they age.

This year we've implemented the initial wave of sector reforms arising from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety recommendations, including mandatory care minutes and 24/7 nursing requirements, and having Star Ratings for all our homes to support older Australians in making comparisons and choices about their care. Uniting welcomes the sector-wide transparency and accountability ensuing as a result of these reforms.

Spotlight on Margaret White

Uniting values each and every aged care worker, and acknowledges the crucial role our nurses play in ensuring the physical wellbeing of all residents. In FY23, 6th-generation nurse Margaret White celebrated 45 years of service as a Registered Nurse at Uniting Wontama in Orange.

"I like caring for the residents and their families, welcoming new staff and helping to train them. Uniting has given me many opportunities to progress over the years."

MARGARET WHITE, RECENTLY RETIRED
REGISTERED NURSE AT UNITING WONTAMA

MARGARET AT THE START OF HER NURSING CAREER



MARGARET, JUST BEFORE RETIRING FROM HER 45 YEARS OF NURSING WITH UNITING



Plating to please palates



Food and mealtimes in Uniting aged care homes are an integral aspect of Household Living, as both nourishment and enjoyment. We listen to residents and collaborate with dietitians to design menus that are not only nutritious and tasty, but that also look appealing to encourage food intake and socialisation.

This year, cooks and caterers in our Sydney South East residential aged care team experimented with different ways to plate food for an enhanced dining experience. Some residents have chewing and swallowing difficulties that necessitate pureed food, yet that doesn't mean we don't take the same care when plating up.

We also partnered with the University of Technology Sydney in FY23, for an innovative trial with 3D-printed food. Uniting is interested in the contribution of food technologies in aged care settings so that people can continue to enjoy eating, even if they're experiencing a decline in health. The visual appeal of food – along with textures, aromas and flavours – is one of life's great pleasures, and important in every society and culture.

We used a 3D printer to shape pureed food so that it looks like actual meats, fruits and vegetables. The added benefit is that one small meal can be packed with protein, vitamins and

minerals while also reducing food wastage. For example, the ingredients of a spinach frittata – eggs, spinach, ricotta, onions and garlic – can be pureed together into a single compact shape that resembles a real slice. Fresh produce can be chopped, freeze-dried, pureed, then transferred to cylinders for the 3D printer, retaining its nutritional value.

Uniting Aldersgate in Lilyfield and The Marion in Leichhardt are two of our aged care homes currently trialling the 3D-printed food in their on-site cafés. Until now, it's been a challenge to stimulate appetites with pureed food, however the introduction of this technology to our residents, families and staff is changing perceptions and creating food options that look familiar and keep people connected to the social rituals and routines around enjoying meals together.

"I was really interested to watch what the machine would produce. It looks appealing to eat, rather than just sloppy, mashed food. Cakes and sweets are really good, and they taste and look just like what they are."

LINDSAY, UNITING THE MARION RESIDENT

Meet Luke, Australian Chef of the Year finalist



In April 2023, Uniting's Luke Stephens was one of only two chefs working in the aged care sector to be selected as a finalist in the Food Service Australian Chef of the Year competition - one of the country's most prestigious professional food events. The top 32 finalists were chosen from more than 30,000 entrants across the nation.

When he's not in competition mode, Luke is the Executive Chef at Uniting Farmborough in Unanderra, committed to making sure that the residents and staff are well catered for.

Luke became a chef at 21 and eventually opened his own restaurant on the main street of Albury. When the pandemic essentially shut down the hospitality industry, he decided to pack up the business, move his family to Wollongong and 'dip his toes' in aged care catering. He hasn't regretted his decision.

"It's the most rewarding job I've had and I strive to produce good food, not hospital food. I get a lot of flexibility around what I put on the menu and I can change it up whenever I want in response to feedback from our residents. I really enjoy cooking high-quality meals and we often eat lunch together."

LUKE STEPHENS, EXECUTIVE CHEF AT UNITING FARMBOROUGH UNANDERRA

Executive Director Tracey Burton, said Luke's representation in the competition helps to highlight our commitment to the wellbeing of all Uniting aged care residents: "We are so proud of Luke and his incredible achievement as a finalist. His dedication is testament to the importance Uniting places on providing the best possible quality food, nutrition and service to our residents."

Extending our specialist dementia care

In April 2023 we opened a second unit at Uniting Eabrai, our specialist dementia care home in the ACT suburb of Weston, to further address the Royal Commission finding that more high-quality dementia care is needed to serve our ageing population.

Recognising our reputation for compassionate, best-practice dementia care, Uniting Eabrai has been funded by the Australian Government since 2020 to deliver its [Specialist Dementia Care Program](#), or SDCP. There are currently just 12 operational SDCP units across Australia, and our 2 Eabrai units are the only such homes in the ACT. The new unit expands our support from 9 to 18 specialist places.

Greg's story

While every one of Uniting's 6,500 aged care workers make a real difference in the lives of the older Australians they serve, one employee in particular is recognised for his remarkable achievement in overcoming extreme adversity to excel in his job as Clinical Dementia Specialist at Uniting Eabrai.

Greg Buckley is the survivor of a traumatic brain and spinal injury that almost claimed his life 35 years ago. As a young man, he seemed destined for a promising career playing professional rugby league. Then, during a tackle while playing for the Canterbury Under 21s, he was knocked unconscious and remained in a coma for 40 days. His doctors didn't hold out much hope for a meaningful recovery. His family were told to prepare for the worst.

Defying the odds, Greg woke up 6 weeks later - on Grand Final day - and watched his beloved Bulldogs go on to win the match.

That's when the hard work really began. Greg underwent a gruelling fight to recover and had to learn to do the simplest things all over again - how to hold a cup, feed himself, tie his shoelaces, talk, walk and eventually drive.

In 1991, just 2½ years after his traumatic injury, Greg graduated from the University of Western Sydney as a Registered Nurse. "As I developed my nursing skills, I was able to do so

with compassion and empathy. I was inclusive and respectful in my practice without really being aware of it," Greg explained.

Greg eventually became interested in the field of specialist dementia care, and joined Uniting after moving to Canberra in 2011. "From the minute I began working at Uniting, I felt I was home. The support was astounding and I hadn't experienced anything as secure in the previous 20 or so years working in nursing."

"Uniting has given me the opportunity to care for those who don't remember who they are (and who were once a vital part of our community) and to do so in a supported, inclusive and respectful environment."

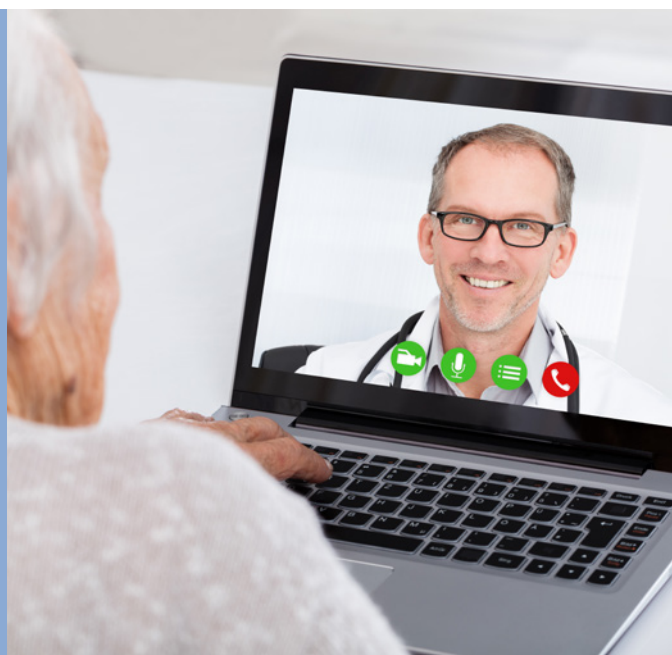
GREG BUCKLEY, CLINICAL DEMENTIA SPECIALIST
AT UNITING EABRAI IN CANBERRA

Manager Sharon Kickett, speaking of Greg's determination and dedication to his job and to the high-care residents he looks after, added: "I think Greg embodies all the great attributes that make a wonderful aged care worker and the fact he has had to overcome extreme trauma and adversity to even be able to walk and talk, let alone become a specialist nurse, is just incredible."



UNITING CLINICAL DEMENTIA SPECIALIST,
GREG BUCKLEY

Avoiding hospital with video care



Aged care residents across Western Sydney now have access to faster care and can avoid unnecessary trips to hospital, thanks to a significant expansion of the successful inTouch Urgent Care Service.

Deepa Prasad, Service Manager at Uniting Lilian Wells, joined NSW Health Minister Ryan Park and Member for Parramatta and Mayor Donna Davis at Westmead Hospital in May 2023 to announce continued funding for inTouch.

Created by the Western Sydney Local Health District and piloted by 6 Uniting aged care homes during the pandemic, inTouch enables a comprehensive assessment of residents needing treatment, using video conferencing.

Patients can speak with their GP, family, aged care staff and specialists to work through a care plan instead of being admitted to an emergency department. The virtual service has helped address health concerns such as urinary tract infections, complex wounds, catheter management, and the delivery of intravenous antibiotics and therapies, at no cost to the patient.

“One of the great benefits of inTouch, is that our residents with dementia can receive treatment from health professionals in the familiar comfort of their aged care home, rather than being traumatised by being taken to a busy public hospital. This gives family members an enormous sense of relief as well.”

DEEPA PRASAD, SERVICE MANAGER AT UNITING LILIAN WELLS IN NORTH PARRAMATTA

The continued funding enables all 65 aged care homes in Western Sydney to access the inTouch Urgent Care Service, easing pressure on local emergency departments and supporting around 100 residents a month to avoid a trip to hospital.



UNITING'S ADVOCACY TEAM CAMPAIGNS
TIRELESSLY FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Uniting Social Impact and Advocacy.

We're driving solutions to systemic issues that prevent people and communities from reaching their full potential.

Uniting's Social Impact and Advocacy directorate continues our dedicated focus on key aspirations to disrupt entrenched disadvantage: participation of every child in early learning; reducing the number of children entering out-of-home care; improving outcomes for care-leavers; access to care and support for older people; ensuring First Nations people and communities are strong, thriving and self-determining; reducing our impact on the climate; and drug laws informed by best practice and evidence, with treatment available for all who seek it.

RIGHT: THE HON. JASON CLARE MP, MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, VISITED UNITING DOVE COTTAGE - OUR EARLY LEARNING CENTRE IN BANKSTOWN.



We're proactively pursuing and applying our 4 specific levers to achieve social and systems changes - innovation, thought leadership, advocacy and partnership. In FY23 we've been growing our team, building our capabilities, gathering and sharing evidence, expanding proven pilots, and testing new program models to address our aspirations. Another significant highlight for the year has been the development and endorsement of Uniting's First Nations People and Place Strategy, progressing our commitment to reconciliation and self-determination for all First Australians.

Our 4 levers to create change:

1. SOCIAL INNOVATION

+

2. THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

+

3. ADVOCACY

+

4. PARTNERSHIP

=

Disruption of disadvantage

We're using our voice, ideas, partnerships and evidence to drive change on the issues that matter most.

In FY23:

121

meetings with MPs and Councillors, 51 of those at Uniting sites

400

Uniting Church participants in 12 awareness raising events

125

Uniting Church congregations engaged in advocacy actions

900

Sydney Alliance Assembly, Uniting Church and Uniting attendees in support of the common good

17

articles on advocacy campaigns, actions and events published in the Synod of NSW & ACT's weekly e-newsletter, Insights

UNITING SOCIAL JUSTICE ADVOCATE, DEEPTHI, AT THIS YEAR'S SCHOOL STRIKE 4 CLIMATE MARCH



More than Money white paper

In February 2023, a week ahead of the [Federal Government's National Early Years Summit](#) at Parliament House, Uniting's Research and Social Policy team published a discussion paper called [More than Money: Why some children are still left behind by early learning](#). The paper focused on the need to remove non-financial barriers to early learning and presented our position, evidence, analysis and insights around ensuring every child has access to quality early learning for the best start in life.

The children who benefit most from quality early learning are less likely to have access to it, or to engage long term.

Launched at a webinar hosted by Uniting Executive Director Tracey Burton, a summary of the paper was followed by a panel discussion with: Goodstart's National Lead for Social Inclusion - Penny Markham; CEO of the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth - Penny Dakin; and Senior Manager at public policy consulting firm Dandolo Partners - Stacey Fox.

The event was attended by over 100 participants including the peak body Early Learning and Care Council of Australia, other early learning providers, the Department of Education, For Purpose Investment Partners, university academics, the Paul Ramsay Foundation and members of the Uniting network.

Since launch, the paper has been widely distributed to MPs and referenced in multiple submissions to government. We will continue to present this important piece of thought leadership while current policy fails to sufficiently recognise the wider social benefits of quality early learning and its crucial role in addressing disadvantage and inequality in Australia.

Care is finally extended!

Since 2010, Uniting has been on a relentless journey to nudge the system towards greater equity and better outcomes for young people exiting the foster care system. So when, in November 2022, the NSW Government finally announced its decision to extend state support for young people in out-of-home care from 18 to 21 years of age, we felt hopeful that our voice had been heard.

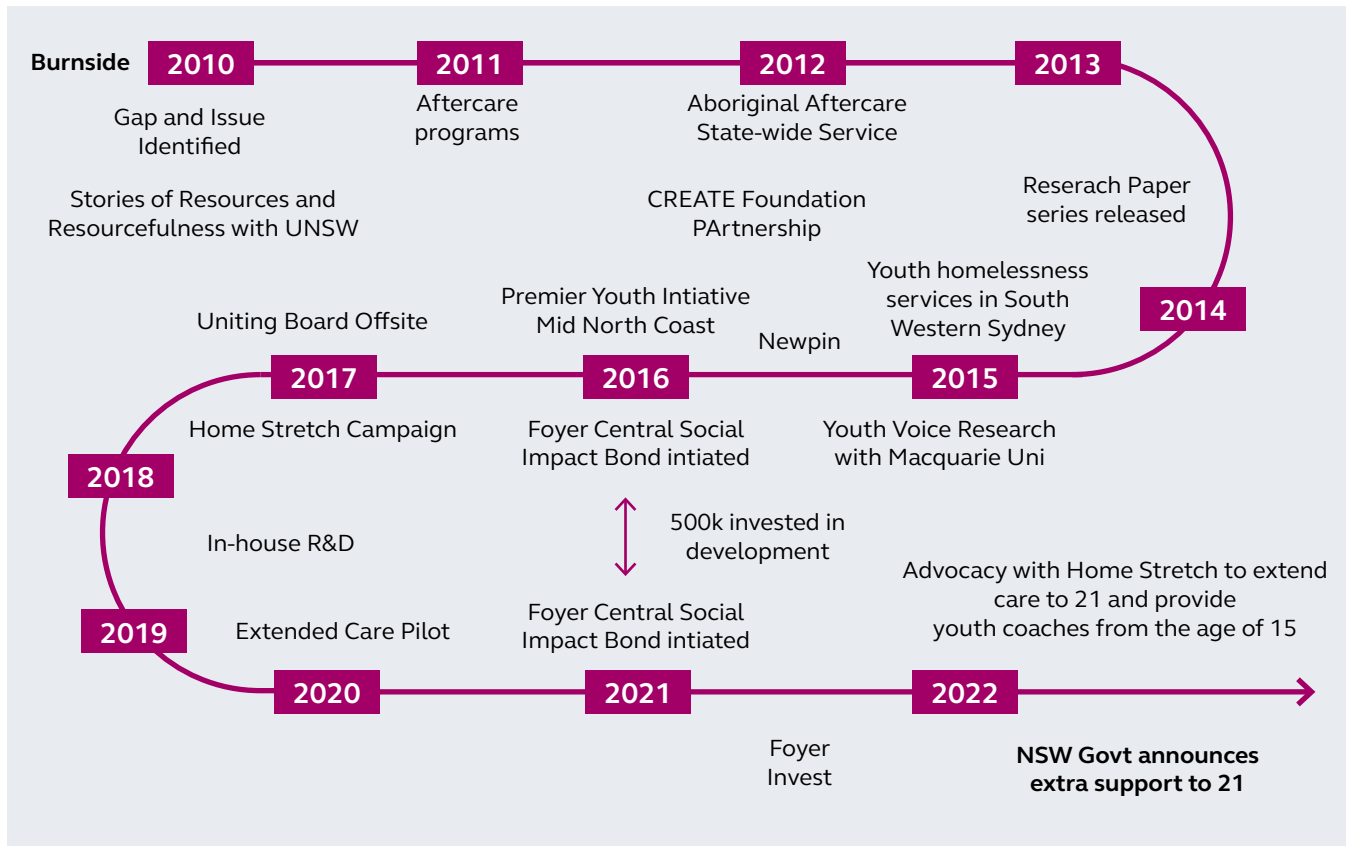
We subsequently provided comprehensive feedback on the government's plans for this extension – called the Your Choice Your Future program - which enhances aftercare and caseworker support. Our critical review and alternative strengths-based suggestions were submitted, and we'll continue to engage with the Department of Communities and Justice to advocate for our feedback to be acted on.

Over the years, our campaigns, programs and partnerships supporting the extension of care have continually demonstrated that when we work together with a systemic lens, our sector can effectively tackle some of the nation's most pressing challenges.

Our long journey to extending care for young people

In 2012, Uniting proposed and developed Aboriginal Aftercare, the first culturally specific service for care-leavers funded by government. It was born out of a collaborative design initiative with our First Nations practitioners and communities. In 2016, we partnered with government to pilot the Premier's Youth Initiative across the Mid North Coast and set up coaching as an alternative approach to case management. In 2019, we launched Extended Care, a self-funded pilot which combines coaching and extending support to 21 for better outcomes. In 2021, we launched Foyer Central, the only Foyer offering accommodation, community and support exclusively for care-leavers in Australia, funded through an impact bond with the NSW Government, Social Ventures Australia and St George Community Housing. At the end of 2022, the NSW Government officially extended support from 18 to 21 for all care-leavers.

Our goal is for no care-leaver to fear their 18th birthday



FY23 was our 4th year of providing Extended Care, our 5-year pilot program supporting young people to successfully transition to independence from out-of-home care.

Participants can either continue living with their existing carers or access alternative accommodation until the age of 21, with the support of a personal Youth Development Coach who works with them to identify and pursue education, employment and other longer-term goals.

Independent evaluation at the 4-year mark continues to confirm positive outcomes for participants:

56

young people participated in FY23

62%

of participants are now employed

63%

of participants are also studying, with 19% enrolled in a Bachelor degree

0

participants experienced homelessness during the reporting period

FAIR TREATMENT

Continued campaigning for drug law reform

Formed together with the Uniting Church in 2018, our Fair Treatment campaign calls for government to decriminalise possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use and advocates for greater investment in treatment programs, particularly in regional and rural communities.

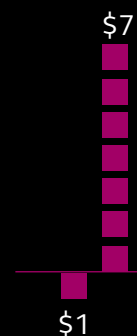
In March 2023, we were buoyed by the newly-elected NSW Labor Party and their commitment to a Drug Summit during their first term in government:

“The Drug Summit would bring together health and medical experts, police, Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) organisations, people with lived experience, and their families and other stakeholders. The last drug summit, held in 1999, resulted in the opening of Uniting’s Medically Supervised Injecting Centre in Kings Cross and other major reforms.”

EMMA MAIDEN, GENERAL MANAGER OF ADVOCACY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS AT UNITING

Meanwhile, we’ve continued to mobilise keyboard warriors throughout the year – both within Uniting and members of the public – to change the narrative in online spaces about drugs and the people who use them. Our ongoing work towards more effective and compassionate drug policy also includes training people to attend meetings with their local Members of Parliament (MPs) to discuss reforms, share lived experiences, and encourage decision-makers to enact fair and sensible laws based on evidence, not stigmatising attitudes.

For every \$1 spent
on treatment,
society saves \$7.



78% of Australians support a non-criminal response to heroin use, rising to 88% for cannabis.

Our **Fair Treatment Reference Group** also grew this year, increasing the number of people with lived experience who meet regularly to give their insights and help guide the campaign’s work.

In June 2023, Kevin Street, lived experience advocate and member of the Fair Treatment Reference Group, joined Alice Salomon - Uniting’s Head of Advocacy and Media, and Dr Marianne Jauncey - Medical Director of the [Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre](#) (MSIC), to appear before the Sydney public hearing of the Federal Parliamentary Joint Committee on Law Enforcement’s inquiry into ***Australia’s illicit drug problem: Challenges and opportunities for law enforcement.***

The Committee for this ongoing inquiry is considering issues such as the strengths and weaknesses of decriminalisation, including its impact on illicit drug markets and the experiences of other jurisdictions. The Fair Treatment team discussed the success of destigmatised services such as MSIC to provide self-empowerment and support for people who use drugs, and advocated for significant drug law reform to reduce stigma and provide a health-based response to drug dependency.



KEVIN STREET, ALICE SALOMON
AND DR MARIANNE JAUNCEY IN
SUPPORT OF FAIR TREATMENT

In 22 years of MSIC:

1.26 million

injections supervised

11,205

overdoses reversed

18,265

clients supported

21,928

referrals to housing, treatment and other
community services

"Without this place, I
would be dead. Put simply,
the Uniting Medically
Supervised Injecting
Centre saves lives."

MSIC CLIENT



EVERY OLDER AUSTRALIAN HAS THE RIGHT TO
RECEIVE QUALITY CARE AND SUPPORT.

Access to aged care is a human right

Uniting's aged care advocacy continued with determination this year. Our call for widespread reform of the national aged care sector is to ensure that every older Australian receives the right mix of care and support, as and when it's needed, and to acknowledge aged care workers with pay that recognises their valuable contribution to our ageing population and to society.

We were very pleased to see the formation of the Aged & Community Care Providers Association (ACCPA) this year, replacing multiple sector peaks. The hope is that this move towards a unified voice for providers, which Uniting played a lead role in establishing, will improve advocacy outcomes in Canberra.

Uniting participated in several Parliament House meetings with the Minister for Health and the Assistant Minister for Health and Aged Care in FY23, about aged care reform and the implementation of the 15% pay increase for aged care workers. This was an incredibly welcome recognition of the value of the work our people do in aged care. We will continue to fight for its extension to non-frontline aged care roles. The Australian Government also announced the new visa for care workers this year, following advocacy on the workforce crisis.

In April 2023, the government announced the creation of an Aged Care Taskforce to review funding arrangements for aged care, including greater co-contributions by older Australians. Our submission to the taskforce outlined:

- A set of principles to guide policy about provision of care services for older Australians
- A recommended mixed financing model including a taxpayer levy for those on higher incomes, government funding from general taxation revenue, and consumer contributions based on ability to pay
- Recommendations supporting equity of access for those experiencing economic or geographic exclusion, high-quality services, and protection for people against financial risk.

The Sydney Morning Herald interviewed Uniting Executive Director Tracey Burton, regarding our aged care funding submission and the changes we're proposing to help create a world-class system now and in the future, sparking a companion opinion article supporting our position and generating a positive public response. You can read the article [here](#).

Uniting also made a submission to the draft National Strategy for the Care and Support Economy this year, and advocated for access to quality aged care as a human rights issue in a submission to the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry into Australia's Human Rights Framework.

We're collaborating to create, prove and scale better solutions for some of the most intractable problems faced by disadvantaged people.

Our Research and Social Policy team drives the evolution and expansion of Uniting's social impact innovations via evidence-based research and collaborative partnerships with universities, government bodies and philanthropic organisations.

36

research projects led by academics in FY23, mostly in aged care and early learning

10

research projects undertaken jointly with academics, including commissioned reports and PhD scholarships, half of which were funded by the Australian Research Council

5

major evaluations of our social impact innovations

17

submissions to government inquiries and consultations, including a Pre-Budget Submission to the NSW Government and a major white paper on early learning policy

This year we were successful in submitting a joint bid to the Australian Research Council (ARC) to further fund the development and scaled testing of our Social Isolation and Loneliness measurement tool in Uniting aged care homes. This work is in partnership with Salvation Army Aged Care and the Social Innovation Research Institute at Swinburne University of Technology.

Our partnership in an ARC-funded Collaborative Research Centre, led by Deakin University, continued in FY23 with an injection of grant funding. Since 2020, the centre has been trialling technologies to improve residential and community aged care, and the current focus is on evolving its machine-learning model to identify home care clients who are at risk of an unplanned entry to a hospital, aged care home, or death.

More Foyers for less disadvantage

Uniting shares the Foyer Foundation's vision that all young Australians experiencing disadvantage have a pathway to education, training and employment founded on access to stable and secure housing. With our own [Foyer Central](#) leading the way, we worked closely with the FoyerInvest consortium during FY23, to support their goal to realise 50 Foyers by 2030.

Emma Maiden, Uniting's General Manager of Advocacy and External Relations, joined the Foyer Foundation in Canberra to support their Pre-Budget Submission and for meetings with the Ministers for Education, Youth, Housing, and Skills and Training, along with various MPs and Senators.

The Foyer Foundation launched their Cost-Benefit Analysis in April 2023, to make the case for more Foyers, guided by work from Uniting's Social Impact team. The report, titled *Under One Roof*, shows the benefits of a young person supported through a Foyer are **\$172,417** in reduced lifetime costs, compared with supporting a young person in specialist homelessness services.

Amba's story



Youth Development Coaches like Amba Freestone, are the real game changers in the Foyer Central set-up.

Amba sees her support role as starting from the moment young people arrive to live at Foyer Central, a communal complex of 53 studio apartments in Sydney's inner-city suburb of Chippendale. She's the one who takes the time to get to know each resident, learning about their dreams and aspirations for the future, and guiding them gently towards setting some personal goals which they can achieve during the 2 years they live here.

The most rewarding part of her work is being able to observe the progress and growth each Foyer Central resident makes. "Knowing you were a part of that, and helping them achieve their goals, is what motivates me as a coach," Amba shared.

"My hopes are that they can see the bright, successful future ahead of them and that we've provided all the tools they need to achieve their aspirations."

"What I'm most proud of, is being able to see where these young people have come from, and watching them develop into independent human beings who are very capable of going out and living a successful life."

"For young people leaving out-of-home care, Foyer Central provides a safe, secure and predictable environment for them to heal from any of their past traumas and build a better life for themselves."

AMBA FREESTONE, FOYER CENTRAL YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COACH

"When I was 18, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life. Foyer Central is a place which allows the young people who stay here the opportunity to take that bit more time, with that extra support, to work that out."

"Foyer Central accommodation is affordable, and comes with the support to teach young people how to look after themselves and also to feel comfortable and confident about reaching their goals."

ABOVE: AMBA HAS BEEN SUPPORTING FOYER CENTRAL RESIDENTS AS A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COACH SINCE 2021.



The Possibility Partnership

This year, Uniting played a founding role in The Possibility Partnership, a sector-led, multi-partner and growing collaboration between community services organisations, government, philanthropy and business.

Its ambition is to change the purpose and practice of Australia's human services system so everyone, especially people and communities experiencing complex and entrenched disadvantage, can live the lives they value.

Too often our human services systems fail to support people and communities, despite investing a lot of money, goodwill and hard work. Many factors contribute to this situation, but a key driver is the lack of a way to connect the expertise and wisdom of people on the ground with the insights and experience of people setting the rules (policies, resources

and operations). These two parts of the system are disconnected and unable to learn from and with each other to generate better outcomes, innovation, and deep and lasting reform.

Over the year, the partnership was co-funded by the Paul Ramsay Foundation and the founding partners to explore this idea and develop a 'minimum viable system' reform and prototype. A series of workshops drew from global practice and current realities to identify key opportunities to 'hack' the system. Unlocking the power and potential of the 'connecting middle' was the simple but powerful idea developed, which now sits at the heart of The Possibility Partnership.

With a Theory of Change and concept developed, the challenge and the opportunity now is to move from theory to action. Together with our partner organisations we will seek to convene communities, government and other system actors, and create a platform to turn the disconnected improvements into systematic and agreed reforms that can scale up, out, and deep, to change the system itself.





We want First Nations people and communities at Uniting and beyond to be strong, thriving and self-determining.

This year Uniting developed and launched our First Nations People and Place Strategy to enable a deeper commitment to First Nations self-determination across all our organisational strategic objectives and over the long term.

A dedicated First Nations team developed this strategy through wide consultation and

dreaming. First Nations leaders and subject-matter experts beyond our organisation provided input for our ambitions and tactics, alongside Uniting executives, our Ngumbadal Network of Aboriginal employees, and each of our directorates.

To deliver on this, we're investing in growing our First Nations Strategy and Outcomes Unit, including a First Nations leader for our executive team. We're also focusing on establishing governance which privileges the voices of our Ngumbadal Employee Network and establishes strong accountability measures across Uniting.

Uniting's First Nations People and Place Strategy



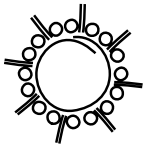
Our People

We will consciously grow our First Nations workforce and ensure our First Nations people are empowered to enrich their career experiences and capabilities.



Our Capability

We will invest in enhancing our cultural capabilities to be a culturally safe, responsive and empowering employer, partner and service provider.



Our Partners

We will purposefully invest in genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal communities to promote and grow place-based and First Nations led responses.



Our Leadership

We are committed to strong governance including leadership practices to uphold our integrity and accountability to First Nations people and communities.



Our Impact

We will elevate the First Nations agenda and impact systems empowering First Nations people and communities through innovation, advocacy and research.

Our Ambition:





TRACEY BURTON, REV. JANE FRY AND ALICE SALOMON PRESENTED NSW PREMIER CHRIS MINNS WITH A 'YES' T-SHIRT, AFTER BRIEFING HIM ON OUR POLICY PRIORITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK TOGETHER ON DISRUPTING DISADVANTAGE.

Uniting for YES!

Self-determination is an essential foundation for better life outcomes, and it's a key pillar of our 10-year organisational strategy and First Nations People and Place Strategy. That's why Uniting wholeheartedly supports the YES campaign for a First Nations Voice to Parliament in 2023.

A Voice to Parliament will give First Nations people greater say in the policies and decisions that directly affect them. Uniting believes this is a fundamental human right and critical in disrupting entrenched disadvantage for First Nations people and communities.

Our Aboriginal Cultural Governance Circle members supported Uniting's public position on the YES campaign, and throughout the year we committed to doing everything possible to share information and encourage learning, so our employees and clients could make an informed vote. Our employee hub shared resources to support a deeper understanding of what the First Nations Voice to Parliament is, the history of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and why the Referendum is needed.

By the end of the financial year, we'd engaged more than 700 employees in explainer sessions

and training in how to have meaningful conversations about the Referendum with other colleagues, communities, families and friends. The work continued right up until Referendum Day.

“The upcoming Referendum is a uniting moment for our country and as an organisation, we respectfully know and believe it's important to take a clear position. We acknowledge there are different views on these issues, including among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander colleagues. As we approach the Referendum, our focus is on ensuring there are supports in place for our people and clients during a time where there will be challenging and emotive conversations.”

TRACEY BURTON, UNITING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Whatever the outcome, our work supporting the Referendum will establish a strong foundation for the work ahead, as we implement Uniting's First Nations People and Place Strategy.

We're ensuring we leave as light a footprint on the environment as possible, so we can meet our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2040.

3,000

School Strike 4 Climate participants

30

Move Beyond Coal campaign actions

75

Uniting Climate Action Network (UCAN) members engaged in discussion of priorities

Ongoing climate change activism

Since the Inaugural Assembly of the Uniting Church in 1977, we've been concerned "with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment."

This year, the [Uniting Climate Action Network](#), or UCAN, continued our heritage of grassroots environmental care by hosting workshops, sharing resources, training for effective action, and drawing from the wisdom of First Nations and Pasifika peoples' understanding of care for country. Many congregation members attended this year's School Strike 4 Climate and Move Beyond Coal events, and met in an online forum in May to plan future actions. The second Pasifika-led UC climate forum with the Federal Minister for Climate Change, Chris Bowen, will take place in October 2023. Planning to engage grassroots Uniting Church and UCAN members to form climate action groups in federal electorates during the lead-up to the next election, is well underway.

In February 2023, a Sydney Alliance Assembly successfully engaged with 937 people from member organisations, including Uniting and the Church, to discuss housing crisis issues such as the introduction of minimum mandatory energy efficiency standards in rental homes, to reduce energy consumption and energy bills. The Sydney Alliance is a diverse coalition working to build a fairer, more sustainable Sydney, and is just one of several like-minded groups we're collaborating with for a greener future.



MARCHING RAIN, HAIL OR SHINE FOR SCHOOL STRIKE 4 CLIMATE



Uniting People Experience.

We want to be the best place to work in our sectors, where employees thrive and feel safe and confident to be themselves.

Uniting's People Experience team focused on addressing immediate workforce shortages in FY23, while also supporting significant operational and industrial relations initiatives, creating new recruitment and retention processes, and developing an industry-leading approach to managing injuries and workers compensation that's improving safety and our bottom line.



10,442

employees live our everyday values of being compassionate, respectful, imaginative and bold

75%

of our employees hold full-time or permanent part-time positions

6,705

employees support older people with aged care services

2,716

employees support children, young people and families – including people with disability – with community services

225

employees support older people at the Uniting War Memorial Hospital

796

corporate services employees and maintenance workers support our teams to do their best work

We're striving to attract and retain the best people to serve our residents, clients and communities.

As aged care workforce shortages continued, we increased our crisis response efforts in February 2023 to achieve significant progress:

600

new aged care employees recruited

4%

of total productive hours in overtime, falling from 5% in FY22 and easing workload pressures

A record 107 new employees were recruited in a single month for our Communities directorate in June 2023 – eclipsing the previous month's record of 74. Role vacancies were reduced in our Permanency Support Program (typically the hardest to fill) and in Early Learning.

Changes to simplify and automate our recruitment systems this year have improved our candidate experience, data collection, and governance. Uniting frontline teams can also now easily access a range of benefits through our new online hub for Seniors Services.

78%

overall engagement score in our FY23 Your Voice employee survey

(up from 70% in FY22, with the highest-ever participation rate this year)

82

existing employees have new Uniting careers as part of an internal transfer program

Transferring roles, retaining talent

With more than 500 services delivered to over 130,000 clients across NSW and the ACT each year, many different roles are required to support Uniting's work.

Enabling employees to transition between roles internally is one of the ways we've been supporting meaningful career development this year. In 2022, 207 people resigned because they were relocating, so the ability to transfer within Uniting is also an important retention initiative to ensure we keep our great people.

Whether it's the same role in a different location or a new role altogether, internal transfers give employees the opportunity to learn and develop new capabilities, to reach their full potential and deliver great outcomes for the people and communities we serve. Time needed for onboarding and induction within a new team is also minimised, as people bring their existing knowledge and experience with them.

After the recent mortgage rate hikes, a cleaner who'd been working for more than a decade at Uniting Mullauna in Blacktown, advised her manager that she and her husband could no longer afford to live in Sydney and were moving to the Central Coast. We found her a job as an Aged Care Certificate III worker at another Uniting aged care home in her new area, and her induction was fast-tracked.

"I have enjoyed working at Uniting for 17 years - so I'm happy I was able to transfer to Starrett Lodge at Hamlyn Terrace, which is close to where I now live."

NADIRA, LONG-TERM EMPLOYEE WHO TRANSFERRED TO A NEW ROLE IN HER NEW NEIGHBOURHOOD

In FY23 we retained a total of 82 Seniors Services employees through internal transfers, representing around 1% of our vital aged care workforce.

ABOVE: FAMILY WORKER SHARNA KELLY AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES WORKER DILLON LORROWAY SUPPORT PEOPLE DISPLACED BY NORTHERN NSW FLOODING AT THE WARDELL COMMUNITY VILLAGE.



We're ensuring our workforce reflects the diversity of the people we serve.

NEST Aboriginal employment initiative

In line with the establishment of our First Nations People and Place Strategy this year, our Ngumbadal NEST program was officially launched in November 2022. NEST stands for New Employee Support Team and functions as peer support for new Aboriginal employees during their first 3 months with Uniting, setting them up for success.

The program supports people with culturally appropriate information and resources, and connections with other new First Nations employees.

The NEST also introduces new recruits to the Uniting Ngumbadal Aboriginal Employee Network, giving them the opportunity to participate in yarning circles, receive regular newsletters, and attend the Ngumbadal Gathering, helping to build strong relationships with their peers across Uniting.

"The priority is to ensure that Aboriginal employees and their managers are aware of the networks and resources available to help them settle in at Uniting. We want them to feel like they belong from day one, and confident to start in their new position."

LIZ DUNSTONE, UNITING ABORIGINAL EMPLOYMENT MANAGER



Ngumbadal Gathering and Deadly Excellence Awards 2023

Our Ngumbadal Gathering is an opportunity for First Nations employees, Ngumbadal Network members, and the Uniting Executive and Board to make cultural connections, exchange knowledge and recognise achievements.

This year's gathering also hosted Uniting's inaugural Ngumbadal Deadly Excellence Awards – a new recognition program highlighting network members who've achieved an academic qualification during the year, and acknowledging and celebrating excellence across 4 award categories.

Congratulations to our Award winners:



The Champion

Jaymie Richards

*Aboriginal Support Worker for
Uniting Recovery in Charlestown*

Jaymie is a great advocate for our First Nations clients, creating a safe space for them to explore their heritage and overcome societal barriers. She will often challenge people's beliefs and awareness levels, and she's been an integral part of the cultural change in her office, setting the standard for new team members.



The Collaborator

Marie Lansdowne-Beck

*Hotel Services Manager for Uniting
War Memorial Hospital in Waverley*

Marie's passion for meaningful First Nations representation has seen her take the reins of the hospital's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander working group, and seen her build a robust agenda for knowledge and change with committee members from the hospital, Uniting Head Office, and the South Eastern Sydney Local Health District.



The Trailblazer

Robyn Pemberton

*Project Officer, Aboriginal
Stakeholder Engagement, for
Uniting Local Area Coordination
in Western Sydney*

Robyn's full of ideas when it comes to connecting with and supporting our participants. She considers alternative options and pathways for people to achieve their objectives, and she stands up for what is right and true for people living with disability.



The Hidden Gem

Jessie Robinson

*Coordinator for Aboriginal Families
Together in Dubbo*

Jessie is a quiet achiever – stepping up and just getting the job done, no matter the challenge or the ask. He's a trusted and proactive collaborator in our Western NSW region, leading initiatives including food and equipment relief for clients during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, and supporting a remote Aboriginal community to evacuate safely and secure temporary housing when flooding placed them at risk.

From resident to recruit



Meet Alex Lipman, Foyer Central resident turned Uniting IT Admin Officer

Living at [Foyer Central](#) has given Alex Lipman much more than a stable roof over his head. His new home hosts a supportive community of other young people transitioning from out-of-home care, and it's even led to a job with Uniting.

The 19-year-old, who'd been in the foster care system since he was 10 years old, started working in Uniting's Information Technology department in May 2023, just 9 months after moving into Foyer Central.

"My foster father was an engineer and we used to work on robotics projects when I was a kid. So when my Youth Development Coaches at Foyer Central recommended me for the IT Administration Officer role, I thought this is something I'd like to give a go," shares Alex.

Although Alex felt he wasn't prepared for his interview, he made a great impression and was offered the job. He then hit the ground running as part of a fix-it team who travelled to many of Uniting's metropolitan and regional services to upgrade the phone systems. Alex has already been to Canberra, Newcastle and Shellharbour as part of the upgrade project, despite not yet having his driver's licence. Alex's next project will see him visiting Uniting's early learning centres to upgrade all their iPads.

"Most Uniting sites are located within a 20-minute walk from public transport. I enjoy the independence I get with my role, and being able to interact with other staff members to help them with any IT queries they may have," explains Alex.

["I am grateful for the opportunity to work for Uniting and for living in the city at Foyer Central. Having this job gives me a stable income and allows me to be more independent because I'm able to pay my rent."](#)

ALEX LIPMAN, FOYER CENTRAL RESIDENT AND UNITING EMPLOYEE

Alex was one of the first to meet with government ministers and help advocate for an extension of care to young people in the out-of-home-care system, from 18 until they are 21. The NSW Government agreed to extend aftercare and some casework support to 21 late last year, although further reforms are still needed.

Hopeful for his future, Alex says, "I would really like this job to be a long-term one. I see lots of opportunities to grow in the role, and I'm excited to see where this leads me."



Volunteers bring their generous hearts to Uniting.

1,175

volunteers supporting 120 services

↑20%

since FY22

99,500+

total service hours donated

Volunteer drive to support our aged care homes

In September 2022, we set an ambitious goal to double our volunteer workforce supporting Uniting residential aged care homes. To set this mammoth goal in motion, we invited key community groups to support their local Uniting aged care home.

We hosted 13 morning teas across 13 communities, welcoming more than 120 people including residents from Uniting independent living villages and Uniting Church congregation members. Retirees are often looking for ways to contribute to their communities, and they have a lifetime of accumulated knowledge and experience to share. Similarly, Church congregation members can feel united by a common sense of purpose, and being able to directly support people in their own neighbourhoods and local communities. Teaming up to provide companionship and support for aged care residents who may be dealing with loss or loneliness was a logical and practical synergy.

This initiative will continue to support Uniting's Statement of Missional Intent for FY24, where 1 of 4 priorities is growing the opportunities for congregations to volunteer with Uniting services.

"Residents have a positive outlook to their day, just knowing our volunteers are coming to visit. Every Thursday, the vols run a mobile kiosk trolley. It's not just about the shopping, but the social connection. And our volunteers radiate positive self-esteem from these interactions too."

NANETTE COOPER, LEISURE AND WELLNESS COORDINATOR AT UNITING HAWKESBURY

From the morning tea drive:

32%

signed up and are now volunteering, with another 11% in progress

By the end of FY23:

977

volunteers are supporting Uniting aged care residents. Our net increase of 201 volunteers in aged care takes us 26.1% of the way towards our ambitious growth goal.



THIS VOLUNTEER MORNING TEA, WITH RICHMOND UNITING CHURCH AND LOCAL CATHOLIC CONGREGATIONS, INSPIRED OUR CO-LOCATED AGED CARE AND VILLAGE RESIDENTS LIVING AT UNITING HAWKESBURY TO CONSIDER THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING THEMSELVES.

We're investing in the development and career growth of our people.

Uniting continues to encourage our people to grow and thrive, through online and in-person learning and development opportunities that enable our teams to deliver best-practice support for clients and colleagues.

Learning and development in FY23:

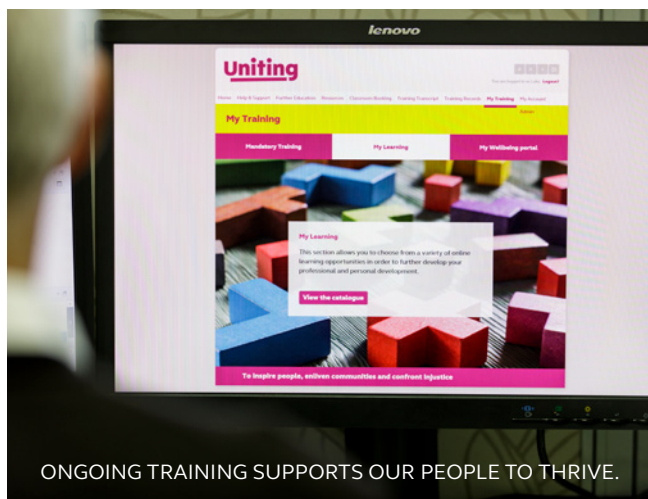
208,198

online courses completed

952

technical training sessions with
10,951 attendees

Since 2010, the Uniting Institute of Education has been supporting our employees to gain the qualifications needed to provide high-quality care for the people we serve.



Removing barriers to entry

In Uniting Seniors Services, we've worked to ensure consistent delivery of induction programs for all new starters throughout FY23, and provided the opportunity to hire and upskill unqualified employees through our QuickStart program.

QuickStart enables aged care recruits to access basic accreditation within 3 days, and subsequent enrolment in a Certificate III Individual Support qualification.

Inspire and Grow mentoring program

To help fulfil Uniting's 10-year strategy, we're committed to increasing diverse representation in our leadership, and ensuring that our workplaces are welcoming and inclusive - by attracting, retaining, and developing employees from diverse backgrounds.

This year, a special mentoring program called Inspire and Grow, saw 21 Uniting senior leaders partnering with 21 emerging leaders across our 4 employee Diversity and Inclusion networks, to guide and share their career experience, wisdom and learnings. The aim of the program is to encourage and support our future leaders to develop goals and an action plan for professional and personal growth, and to build confidence to seize new career opportunities.

Inspire and Grow kicked off in May 2023 and will initially run for 6 months, with a view to test and iterate the model for future scaling to other Uniting cohorts.



With Heart Awards



Uniting

SOME WINNERS
OF FY23
WITH HEART AWARDS

We're investing in leadership capability to foster a culture that is person-centred, innovative, safe and inclusive.

Throughout FY23 Uniting continued to invest in leadership and management capability via our onboarding and induction programs, Leadership Hub forums, our Leading with Heart workshops, and the design and introduction of a new Management Fundamentals program.

This year we also received a record number of nominations for our annual With Heart Awards for Excellence, which continues to recognise and profile the Uniting employees and leaders who live our values and embody our culture.

In FY23:

2,052

excellence award nominees recognised by their colleagues

1,247

people celebrated milestones of between 5 and 45 years of service

Meet Prayanka

With Heart Awards Compassionate winner

Working as a Registered Nurse at Uniting Amala in Canberra, Prayanka believes in compassionate nursing for every aged care resident. For her, showing compassion means feeling deeply for another human being as they experience the ups and downs of life.

This year Prayanka spent many hours of quality time with a resident receiving end-of-life care, who had no family in Australia. She arranged frequent calls with the resident's family overseas, so they could all talk together as much as possible. This supported the resident to pass away peacefully and for the family to be a part of it, even though they couldn't physically be there.

Older people experiencing illness, injury, or disease - and their loved ones - often feel anxious and afraid. Prayanka practises compassion with all residents in her daily care, providing great comfort. This strengthens bonds - between Prayanka, residents, and the whole care team - and gives families peace of mind, which can help improve wellbeing.

Thank you Prayanka, for living the Uniting value of being compassionate, alongside our other values of being respectful, imaginative and bold, every day.

We're continuously improving our work practices to support the safety and wellbeing of our people.

We're always working to create a safer and healthier workplace at Uniting, through our Enabling Safety program and our wellbeing initiatives.

FY23 highlights:

- Every Uniting site now has a robust safety action plan in place.
- 150 WHS walk-through inspections were conducted in the second half of the year.
- Higher hazard reporting has activated more preventative measures to minimise injuries in the workplace.
- Improvements in injury management have led to a higher Return to Work (RTW) rate. We've overhauled our workers compensation experience, with a new premium model and change of claims agent.

Our 89% Return to Work rate at 13 weeks is 5% higher than the industry average.

Year-on-year results for FY23:

27x

more hazard reporting to prevent workplace injuries

↓ 16%

reduction in 'hitting objects' injuries

↓ 5%

reduction in body-stressing injuries

Results over the past 5 years:

↓ 28%

less time off work, compared with rest of industry

↓ 30%

lower average gross cost of claim for physical injury

↓ 5%

lower average gross cost of claim for psychological injury

Self-care first

Personal wellbeing - physical, mental and social - impacts our ability to serve our clients, colleagues and communities. Most importantly, loved ones rely on us. People are at the heart of everything we do, and that's why Uniting strives to support the ongoing wellness of all our employees and volunteers.

Extensive information and resources are available for all our people via our online employee hub and through Benestar, our Employee Assistance Program.

63

wellbeing support sessions held with 726 attendees

2,834

completions of wellbeing courses

In FY23, subjects of Uniting wellbeing webinars included building mental fitness, dealing with compassion fatigue, recognising and managing burnout, and taking care of personal wellbeing. We also have a suite of mental health resources for our people leaders, understanding the vital role they play in creating and sustaining a mentally healthy workplace.

UNITING HOME CARE SERVICES HELP SENIORS TO
LIVE INDEPENDENTLY, AND OUR CARERS OFTEN
FORM CLOSE BONDS WITH THEIR CLIENTS.





Uniting Property and Housing.

We're investing for social impact from sustainable funding sources.

In FY23, Uniting Property and Housing focused on developing plans for major capital investments over the next decade, to generate financial returns that can deliver social impact through concessional aged care and low-cost rental housing, and subsidise various social impact projects across the organisation.

Throughout the year, inflationary pressures continued to worsen across the economy, impacting the cost of living in general and the cost of construction in particular. A staggering 20%-30% increase in the prices of some building materials was experienced throughout the construction industry. Supply chain and workforce shortages added further uncertainty to the cost and timing of our projects, and interest rates rose several times.

Alongside these challenges, we're leveraging our property asset portfolio to best support Uniting's 10-year strategy, including commercial investment opportunities for new income streams in order to fund expenditure on social impact programs, innovation and research, and advocacy to support the policy and future direction of social services systems.



We're using our assets and investments to improve lives and communities.

Ageing in liveable cities

Uniting is responding to consumer demand for vertical retirement living options in higher-density developments that create community connections. Simon Furness, Uniting's Director of Property and Housing explains, "Not all retirees are seeking a 'sea change' or 'tree change'. Many want to remain in familiar suburban communities, and some choose to move into more urbanised areas. Age-friendly, liveable cities encourage social engagement and overcome accessibility risks and impediments."

"We know from good design practices, reinforced by evidence-based research of 'blue zones', that people who live in vibrant, intimate and connected communities live longer."

SIMON FURNESS, UNITING DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY AND HOUSING

Our design principles focus on improving quality of life and community integration for older people. Uniting Westmead is a shining example, combining an early learning centre, retirement village and aged care home at a shared location, supported by communal amenities including a café and senior's gym, and an intergenerational program of activities.

As we age and become less mobile, our zone of physical activity and interaction can diminish. Yet our psychological wellbeing depends on maintaining connections with others. Simon shares, "Many of Uniting's future developments will be in areas where older Australians can age in vibrant, densely populated areas, where they can stay connected and active."

With \$4 billion of new developments in the planning pipeline across the next 10 years, our aim is to ensure that older residents can stay living where they are, and 'age in place' – in the community they know and love.

Simon explains, "Ageing in place means that retirement living is integrated with, or adjacent

to, residential aged care, with assisted living services to support the individual needs of each resident, and with appropriate facilities such as a seniors' gym or men's shed on site."

Honouring Rev. Dorothy McRae-McMahon

McRae-McMahon Place by Uniting is a new 65-apartment complex on Marion Street in Leichhardt. This sister village to Hawkins Place on Norton Street, offers the benefits of privacy, security and independence, plus the support of a caring community and shared amenities across both sites.

Our latest retirement village is named for pioneering Uniting Church Minister Dorothy McRae-McMahon, a social justice activist who was the first woman to be a Moderator of the World Council of Churches.

Dorothy was an outspoken campaigner against the Vietnam War and Apartheid, and also advocated for the rights of women, Aboriginal people and LGBTQI+ people. As someone who lives the Uniting values of being compassionate, respectful, imaginative and bold, she is an inspiration to us all.

"The legacy I would like to leave, is hope for change. When I was Minister at Pitt Street Uniting Church, we stood for social change to end racism, and anti-gay and lesbian sentiment. I encouraged people to take a stand – even if others punished us – but it was well worth it."

DOROTHY MCRAE-MCMAHON, FORMER UNITING CHURCH MINISTER AND TIRELESS HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGNER





Design excellence for quality of life

Uniting's Edinglassie Emu Plains aged care home was recognised in the 2022 Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) NSW Awards for Excellence. We won the Aged Care category, for Edinglassie's purpose-built design for the wellbeing of older people.

Judges praised the building's striking angles and large balconies, enabling residents to experience the vibrant community around them. They also noted the careful consideration of common areas and the 'K-shaped' design of each floor, helping to improve both the functionality and the homely feel of each household within the home.

"I love the large lounge area where I can sit and talk to my friends. It really feels like home."

JOAN, UNITING EDINGLASSIE RESIDENT



We're actively balancing our property portfolio to reinvest for social impact.

More affordable housing

Uniting's long-term capital strategy is also focusing on ways to create more affordable housing for seniors, by increasing the number of Uniting apartments available for low-cost rental.

3 ways we're tackling this growing social need:

- Including a proportion of low-cost rentals as part of most new Uniting retirement village developments
- Transitioning some of our existing retirement villages so that, over time, they become low-cost rental villages
- Assessing existing sites in our capital strategy, where we have the potential to offer dedicated low-cost rental units.

Developments in FY23

This year we made significant progress on several current and future development projects, including gaining planning approvals for some of the largest sites in our capital strategy. This groundwork will enable the submission of development approval applications in FY24 for our sites in Waverley, Gordon, Belrose, Shellharbour, Kingscliff and Gerringong. We also expect to receive development approvals for our sites in Emu Plains and Charlestown in the coming year.

\$15.7m

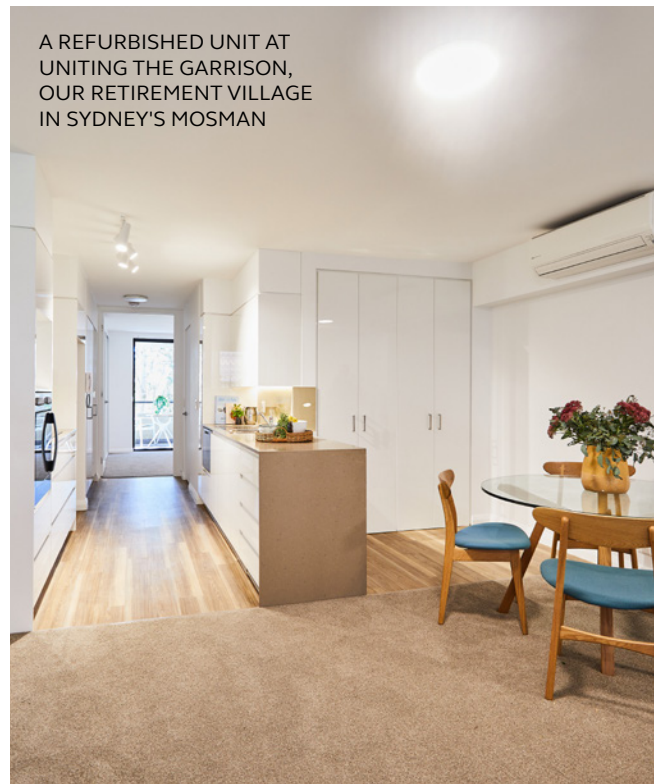
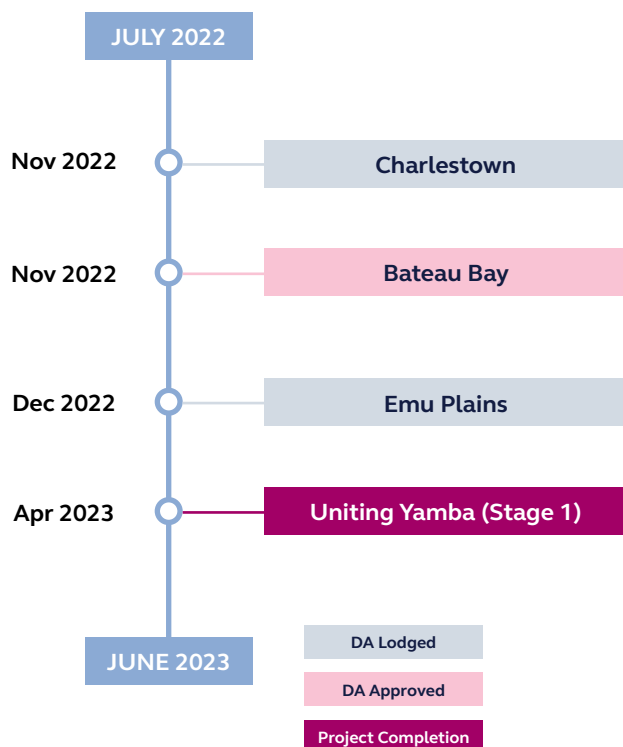
to complete 1 major capital project this year

34

new independent living units built

12

new units allocated to the Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF)



A REFURBISHED UNIT AT UNITING THE GARRISON, OUR RETIREMENT VILLAGE IN SYDNEY'S MOSMAN

Under construction in FY23:

65

independent living units, including 12 SAHF units, at [McRae-McMahon Place by Uniting, on Marion St in Leichhardt](#)

50

independent living units, including 10 SAHF units, at [Uniting Yamba Stage 2 \(apartments\)](#)

Refurbishments in FY23:

137

residential aged care rooms at \$7.7m total value

124

independent living units at \$5.5m total value

Access to safe, adequate and affordable housing is a fundamental human right.

CHRISTINE AND MAUREEN



According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics's 2021 Census, 1 in 7 people experiencing homelessness was aged 55 or older. Research gathered by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) indicates that major setbacks late in life - such as marriage breakdown, job loss, death of a partner, or development of an illness - can contribute to older people being at risk of homelessness. And with a lifetime of lower earnings, due to taking time out of the workforce for family caregiving duties, women are now even more at risk than men.

The Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) is the NSW government's initiative to help people in need gain independence, by providing housing and access to tailored support programs.

Uniting has been a SAHF delivery partner since 2017 and has so far provided 565 homes for 666 people living in our retirement villages. Women make up 62% of SAHF residents, with recent research showing significant improvements to wellbeing as a result of secure housing within a welcoming community.

The Uniting SAHF program isn't just about bricks and mortar. It's an entire support system for our clients. While housing is essential and critical to improve someone's wellbeing, just providing a home isn't going to guarantee success.

Our support team actively works with SAHF clients to enhance their everyday lives and provide opportunities to engage more fully with the community around them.

Haissam, a SAHF tenant since 2017, was previously sleeping rough for over 3 years. He now has a home which has changed his life's path, helping him obtain employment and commence his studies in aged care. "I used to live with uncertainty, but now I have the security of my own home and it feels wonderful," shares Haissam.

Christine and Maureen became friends when they both moved to new SAHF housing in Yamba, and they're relieved to be staying in the area they've been living in for many years, maintaining their social circles and lifestyle. They enjoy the relaxed vibe and communal amenities in the Uniting village, and often share a cuppa on one of the outdoor benches. Christine enthuses that the best part of being in her new home is that she can keep her companion dog, Buddy.

[Watch their video.](#)

Managing our assets in FY23

Uniting's Asset Management Team maintains all of our facilities in NSW and the ACT, to ensure they remain safe, compliant and fit-for-purpose. Activity was up by more than 8% this year, with the completion of over 112,000 work orders helping Uniting to stay safe and functional while serving our clients and communities.

Asset Management highlights in FY23

↑8.4%

work orders completed (112,172 total)

921

operational buildings maintained
(Gross Building Area of 773,645m²)

210

operational leases maintained
(Net Lettable Area of 43,681m²)

5,709

Residential Aged Care beds maintained
across 111 buildings
(Gross Building Area of 405,730m²)

3,124

Independent Living Units maintained across
739 buildings





THESE ELECTRIC VEHICLES COST 70% LESS TO RUN PER KM COMPARED WITH AN EQUIVALENT PETROL-RUN VEHICLE. OUR FIRST EVS ALONE WILL HELP US REDUCE 71 TONNES OF CO2 EMISSIONS OVER THE NEXT 5 YEARS.

We're ensuring our activities, services and buildings leave as light a footprint on the environment as possible, and supporting our communities to be carbon neutral by 2040.

Commitment to carbon neutrality continues

Uniting's ultimate green goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040, which means that we need to reduce all our greenhouse gas emissions through measures such as renewable energy, energy efficiency and carbon offset programs.

We're continuing to evaluate our operations and supply chains to identify opportunities for reducing emissions and improving sustainability. We're also engaging with stakeholders including customers, suppliers and employees to promote a culture of sustainability and share best practices in reducing carbon emissions.

In FY23:

798

solar panels added this year

16,000+

solar panels in total

3,857

total kilowatts generated

4

electric vehicles (EVs) introduced to our Uniting fleet

28

EV chargers installed in preparation for transition of whole fleet

60%

Uniting office-based employees work in buildings with NABERS ratings of 5+ stars

Being better NABERS

The National Australian Built Environment Rating System (or NABERS) provides simple, reliable and comparable sustainability measurement across buildings such as apartments, offices, hotels, shops and data centres. A NABERS rating helps Uniting to accurately measure and understand the environmental performance of our buildings, so that we can identify areas for cost savings and improvement. This year we introduced the NABERS rating system for Uniting residential aged care homes and retirement villages.

On the NABERS rating scale, 5 stars is 'excellent' and 6 stars is 'market leading', so the majority of our office employees are currently working in environmentally friendly buildings that are better for the planet. Over the next 2 years, we plan to complete NABERS energy and water assessments of all Uniting corporate offices, retirement villages and aged care homes, with a target of at least 5-star ratings. The assessment process will highlight further opportunities for improvement and investment.

Sustainable design standards

We're also evolving our design guide - for new buildings, refurbishment, and leasehold fit-out - to incorporate sustainable design standards. All new developments are aiming to achieve 5-star NABERS ratings and operate in ways that are close to carbon neutral.

New Uniting independent living apartments will have embedded electricity networks where possible, to reduce energy costs for village residents and to support solar power generation. We're also continuing to roll out other sustainable initiatives including solar panels, LED lighting, heating and cooling system upgrades, and efficient water conservation measures.

Across Uniting's property portfolio, we're also actively monitoring and managing sites for resilience to climate changes, to protect the people living and working in our buildings and communities - and the biodiversity of flora and fauna - against extreme weather events such as destructive fire, flood and drought.

Investing in solar farming

To help propel Uniting's path to carbon neutrality, we're exploring potential solar farm investment as another way to reduce the impact of electricity consumption, which currently makes up 80% of our carbon emissions.

NSW Government has identified Renewable Energy Zones and is encouraging investment in renewables within these zones, to drive down carbon emissions and reliance on coal-fired power stations. Uniting, through land acquisition opportunities, is capable of developing renewable energy farms in partnership with renewable energy firms, to replace some of our electricity consumption with power generated from the sun and wind.

With more than 16,000 photovoltaic solar panels on the roofs of our services across NSW and the ACT, Uniting is already one of the largest renewable energy generators in the aged care sector. The solar energy we collect this way is used for laundry, meal preparation and air conditioning.

There's a compelling financial and environmental case to build and operate solar farms that can supply Uniting with renewable energy into the future. Harnessing the sun's energy this way can support us with stable energy prices and help us accelerate our goal of reaching carbon neutrality by 2040.





UNITING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TRACEY BURTON ACCEPTED OUR GOLD PARTNER SUSTAINABILITY ADVANTAGE AWARD FROM THE HON. PENNY SHARPE, MLC.

Gold Partnership Recognition Award

This year we received the Gold Partnership Recognition Award with the NSW Government's Sustainability Advantage program. Uniting is one of only 10 Gold Partners in the 800-membership program.

The award recognises Uniting as an organisation that demonstrates outstanding environmental achievement and leadership, based on:

- Being an ambitious participant in both Sustainability Advantage's Net Zero Emissions Pathway and Net Zero Emissions Leadership Accelerator
- A commitment to achieving net zero by 2040
- Our success in reducing carbon emissions by 25% since FY10, through a combination of many elements including adding renewable energy to 32 aged care sites and a commitment to employee education
- Achieving 32% less water use and implementing energy-efficient technologies to reduce our reliance on the electricity grid by 45%.

The award also recognises that sustainability is embedded into our systems and processes, such as procurement, waste management and better building design.

For Uniting, this achievement acknowledges the Church's commitment to the planet, our collective advocacy and everyone's ongoing efforts to be responsible stewards while protecting vulnerable people and communities.

In FY23:

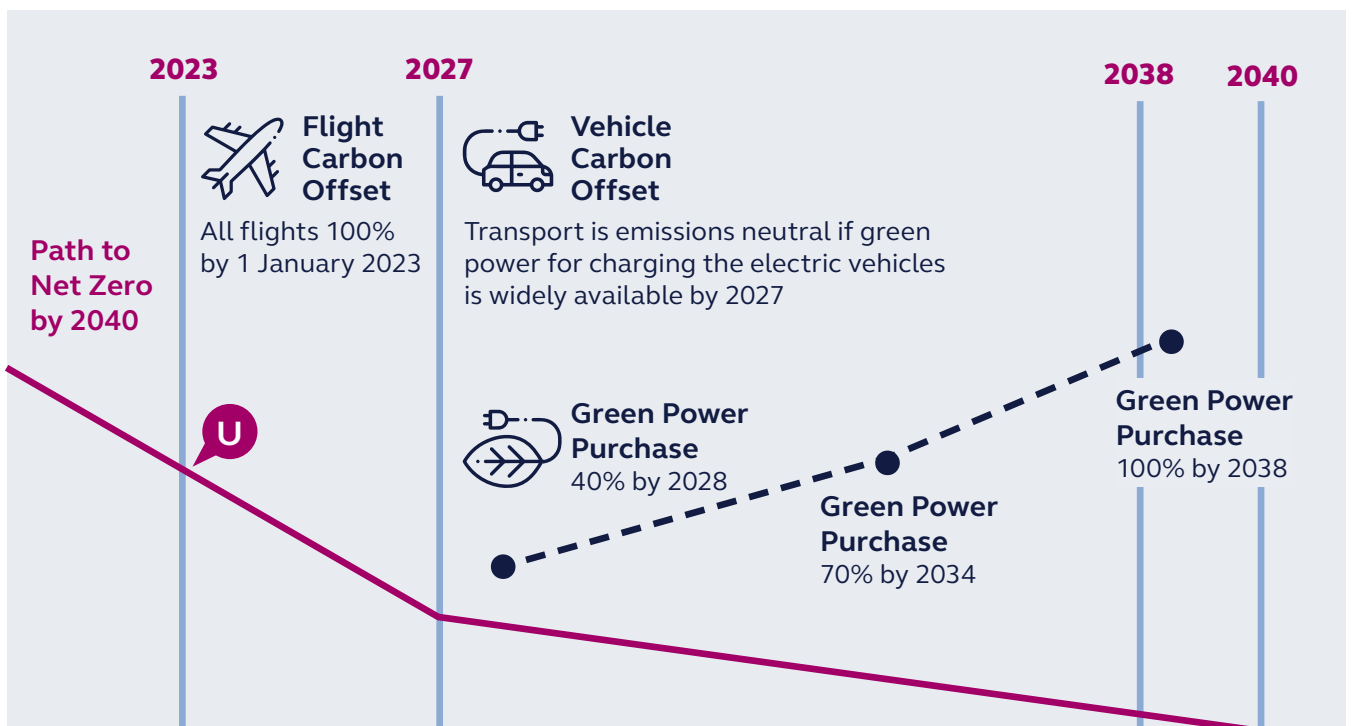
↓ 9,424 TCO₂ = 25.1%
carbon emissions reduction since FY10

Our commitment to carbon neutrality is a long-term journey that requires dedication, innovation and collaboration. Uniting recognises that the challenges ahead are significant, yet we're confident that by working together, we can create a more sustainable future for generations to come.

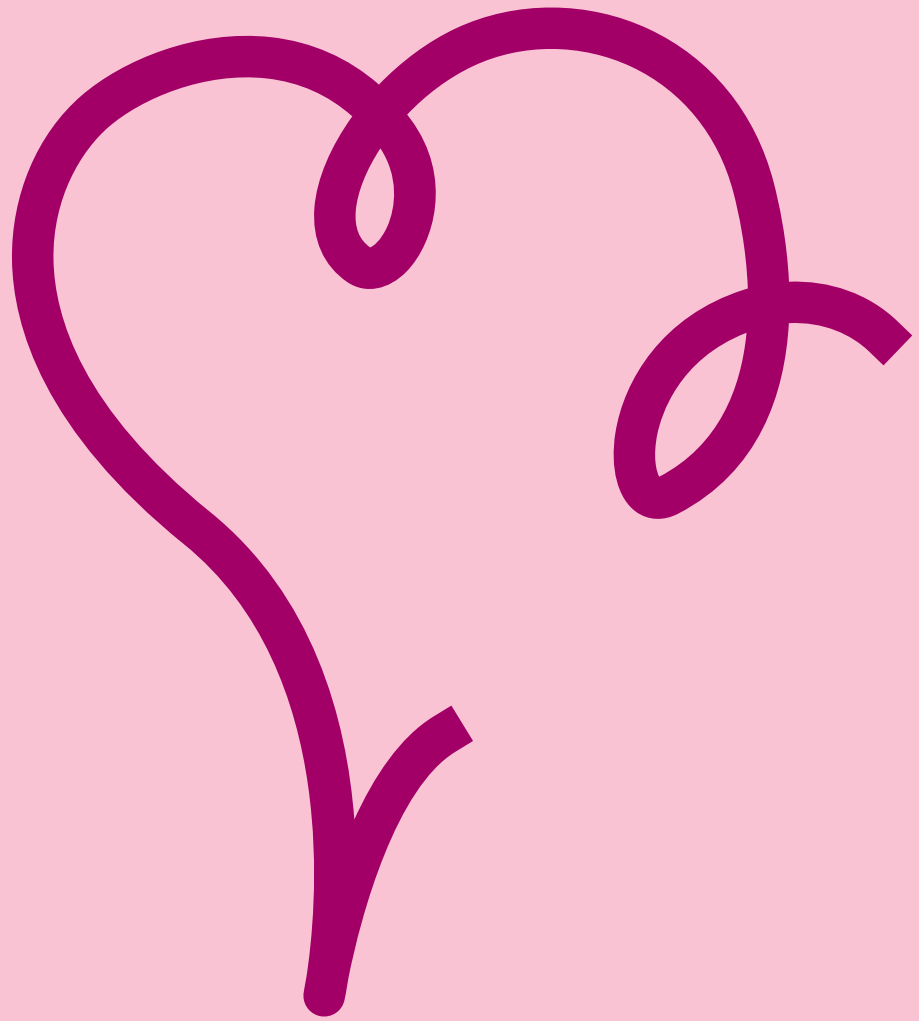




Uniting's Road to Net Carbon Neutrality by 2040



The Synod of NSW & ACT's carbon emission reduction policies are driving Uniting's strides on the road to carbon neutrality. While implementing the above targets, we're continuing to increase the solar power of our buildings and purchasing green power. We're increasing energy efficiencies through benchmarking sustainable performance with NABERS, which will also reduce the amount of power purchased from the grid.



Thank you to all our givers.

Thousands of volunteers, donors, businesses, community groups, schools and congregations support the important work of Uniting every year. Thank you for giving your time, energy, skills, goods and services, and funds to the communities we serve. We appreciate your generosity and the genuine difference you're making in people's lives.

Together we are making a difference.



Volunteer with us

If you're interested in sharing your skills and giving back to your community, we'd love to hear from you. Your spare time is valuable and we're flexible – so you'll be able to do what works for you.

[Uniting.org/volunteer](https://uniting.org/volunteer)

Make a donation

Any amount, big or small, helps us to provide much-needed services to Australians experiencing disadvantage, and to champion social equality for everyone.

[Uniting.org/donate](https://uniting.org/donate)

Leave a Gift in your Will

If you, like us, believe in inspiring people, enlivening communities and confronting injustice, we'd appreciate you thinking about leaving Uniting a Gift in your Will.

[Uniting.org/gifts](https://uniting.org/gifts)

Become a foster carer

For children and young people unable to live with their birth families, a safe and supportive home environment can be life-changing. We arrange short-term and long-term foster care opportunities, and welcome all enquiries.

[Uniting.org/foster-care](https://uniting.org/foster-care)

Partner with us

Uniting's social impact initiatives create opportunities to address the social challenges Australia is facing today. It's no small undertaking, and it demands a collaborative effort for the greater good. If you share our values and purpose, and your organisation can help us scale these vital projects, we want to hear from you.

[Call 1800 864 846](tel:1800864846)



**Guiding the
organisation.**



FY23 ART FROM THE HEART EXHIBITION
AT 107 PROJECTS IN REDFERN

Governance.

Uniting is established under By-law 4.1.2(a) of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW and the ACT, as an institution for the Ministry Area of Social Responsibility, which includes social justice, community services and related chaplaincy work of the Church. It has the regulatory responsibilities of a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI), which reflects its main purpose to provide benevolent relief for people suffering from poverty, sickness, distress, misfortune, destitution or helplessness, operating within the mission and ethos of the Church.

For details on how the Uniting NSW.ACT Board governs our organisation, visit uniting.org/governance.

Uniting Board.



Heather Watson

CHAIRPERSON

Heather is a specialist charity lawyer and non-executive director with more than 30 years of commercial, governance and legal experience spanning aged care, health and community services, transport, affordable housing and First Nations communities.

She holds directorships with Queensland Rail (and is Chair of its Audit and Risk Committee); Queensland Children's Hospital and Health Service (and is Chair of its Research Committee); Australian Regional and Remote Community Services Ltd (and is Chair of its Audit and Risk Committee); and Epic Good Foundation (as Chairperson). Heather is also a member of the Advisory Board for the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, and of the Advisory Council to the Queensland Family and Child Commission.

Heather joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in July 2015 and was appointed Chairperson in October 2016. She is also a Board Member of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT and is a lifelong member of the Uniting Church.



Dr Andrew Young

BOARD MEMBER

Andrew is dedicated to improving the effectiveness of social impact across sectors. He brings a systems approach and is passionate about having a strong outcomes focus, evidence and measurement, collaboration and leadership development.

Andrew is an engineer with a background in business strategy with Andersen Consulting. His first not-for-profit role was head of marketing for The Smith Family from 2000; he then served as CanTeen Australia's CEO for 8 years, winning Equity Trustees' Not-for-profit CEO First Year Achiever Award in 2005. He was the CEO of the multi-university partnership, the Centre for Social Impact, from 2012 until 2016, CEO of mental health charity Stride from 2017 until 2021, and CEO of NDIS provider My Supports since January 2022. He is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Andrew joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in July 2015 and is also a Board Member of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT.



Rev. Dr Elenie Poulos

BOARD MEMBER

Elenie is an Adjunct Fellow at Macquarie University and past Visiting Fellow at Harris Manchester College, University of Oxford, specialising in religion and politics. She is a well-known public commentator on religion and society, social justice, and human rights in Australia.

Ordained in the Uniting Church in Australia, Elenie has more than 25 years' experience in the not-for-profit sector, working in public policy, advocacy and government relations, including 15 years as the Director of the Uniting Church's national justice policy and advocacy unit. She also consults for not-for-profits and civil society groups.

Elenie is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has served on committees and boards for the World Council of Churches, the National Council of Churches in Australia, and the Australian Council of Social Service (ACOSS).

Elenie joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in July 2019 and is Chairperson of the Board's Mission Governance and Collaboration Committee.



Rev. Jane Fry

BOARD MEMBER

Reverend Jane Fry commenced as General Secretary of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT on 1 September 2017, following 5 years as Associate Secretary.

Jane was ordained as a Minister of the Word in 1995, and has worked in congregational ministry, police chaplaincy and presbytery leadership. Her ministry experience has given her a broad perspective on the opportunities and realities facing the Uniting Church today.

Jane believes that the Uniting Church's vision remains as compelling now as it was in 1977. Bringing together disciples with a passionate imagination, creativity and commitment to changing the world in God's image is core business for the Church today.

Jane has served on the Uniting NSW.ACT Board since 2017, as an ex officio member.



Kristal Kinsela

BOARD MEMBER

Kristal is a proud Aboriginal woman, a descendant of both the Jawoyn and Wiradjuri nations. She has more than 16 years' experience in education and training, organisational and workforce development, and supplier diversity across government, corporate and not-for-profit sectors. Kristal is passionate about creating lasting pathways and growing the capabilities of First Nations businesses and individuals.

Kristal is recognised as a national expert in supplier diversity and is the author of the only Australian book on First Nations business procurement.

Kristal is a Director of Many Rivers, a member of the Woolworths Group First Nations Advisory Board, a Reference Group Member of the Women's Entrepreneurship Industry group and an Independent Advisor to the Family Friendly Workplaces Advisory Group.

Kristal joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in November 2020 and is Chairperson of the Board's Communities Committee.



Dr Leanne Morton

BOARD MEMBER

Leanne is a leading health professional whose career highlights encompass both clinical and professional achievements. She has worked in the private and not-for-profit sectors, in senior management and at the director level.

Leanne has worked in the aged care, primary health and acute healthcare sectors, and she has extensive nursing qualifications and experience. Leanne has a doctorate in health services management, looking at public policy and change.

She is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and Associate of the Governance Institute of Australia. Leanne's governance experience spans committee and non-executive roles including Chair. She has maintained a consultancy in change management since 2011, providing advice on changing ways of working and adapting to new infrastructure.

Leanne joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in November 2020.



Liz Nicol

BOARD MEMBER

Liz is an experienced non-executive director and management consultant with particular expertise in leadership, organisational behaviour and culture change. She is co-founder and former CEO of SafetyWorks Group, working across a wide range of sectors and bringing skills in leadership and collaborative approaches to engage people towards achieving organisational vision, particularly around culture change, risk and assurance.

She is a Fellow of both the Australian Institute of Company Directors and Governance Institute of Australia. She holds several board and advisory board directorships across health, education and governance. She has a Master of Business Administration, as well as qualifications in occupational health and safety, and nursing.

Liz joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in October 2017, and is Chairperson of the Board's Seniors Services Committee and Remuneration and Board Governance Committee.



David Pigott

BOARD MEMBER

David has worked in senior levels across the charity and government sectors. He has been a member of Mission Australia's executive team, private secretary to NSW premiers, and served as an advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Federal Treasurer.

He is a member of the Council of Wesley College within the University of Sydney and has been a member of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Advisory Board, the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing, and was a former board member of ChildFund Australia and Chair of the Ella Centre. David is also an Elder of St David's Uniting Church in Haberfield.

David joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in November 2020.



Michael Talbot

BOARD MEMBER

Michael is an experienced non-executive director and former C-Suite executive responsible for business development and strategy, organisation design, and digital innovation in large and complex organisations. This includes roles as National Group Manager for retail operations of Australia Post, and as Deputy Secretary, Courts and Tribunals in the NSW Department of Justice. He coaches and mentors a number of executives transitioning to higher responsibilities.

Michael holds a Bachelor of Commerce, Majoring in Finance, Accounting and Systems (UNSW), is a Fellow of CPA Australia and a Member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Michael joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in October 2017. He is also a Board Member of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT.



Peter Wells

BOARD MEMBER

Peter has extensive multi-industry experience in service delivery, governance, compliance and regulation, management structures and conducting major reforms. He has over 10 years' experience as a non-executive board director in government, not-for-profit and ASX-listed companies.

Peter has worked as Executive Director at NSW Roads and Maritime Services, and in senior roles at the NSW Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources, and the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Peter has Bachelor and Master degrees, and advanced management qualifications from numerous vocational studies. He has also completed the Australian Institute of Company Directors' graduate course and currently has board and consulting roles.

Peter joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in October 2017.



Sara Watts

BOARD MEMBER

Sara is an experienced non-executive director and audit and risk committee chairperson with more than 20 years of financial and operational experience in a range of sectors including technology, education, government, and mineral resources. Sara is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and a Fellow of CPA Australia.

Sara serves on 3 listed company boards (Syrah Resources Ltd, Trajan Scientific and Medical Ltd, and Nuix Ltd), is a trustee of the Sydney Opera House, and chairs the audit and risk committee of each entity. Sara continues to mentor emerging and transitioning leaders, and teaches ethics at a local primary school.

Sara joined the Uniting NSW.ACT Board in November 2019 and is Chairperson of the Board's Audit, Risk and Treasury Committee.

Uniting leadership team.

Our leadership team listens, understands, and values our organisation and the people and communities we serve.



Tracey Burton

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Tracey joined Uniting in April 2018 and brings more than 30 years' experience in the Australian health and community services sector, including leadership roles in public and private hospitals and within the Catholic healthcare sector across NSW, Queensland and Victoria.

Tracey has a strong reputation for building high performing teams and achieving growth in response to changing community needs, and is uncompromising when it comes to safety.

Tracey's previous roles include Executive Director Eastern Hospitals for St John of God Health Care and CEO St George Private Hospital, Ramsay Health Care.

Her qualifications include a Bachelor of Health Administration (UNSW), Master of Business Administration (AGSM), Graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and an Executive program at Columbia University (NYC). Tracey joined the Board of Uniting Care Australia in 2019 and The Foyer Foundation in October 2022.



Sue Shilbury

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

Sue joined Uniting in January 2020. She has worked in clinical and corporate governance for more than 30 years, and has director and board-level experience.

Most recently, Sue was CEO of Austin Health in Melbourne. Prior to this position, she held several senior roles in NSW Health, helping to design and deliver new adult, women's and children's services. Sue also served as the General Manager of Royal North Shore and Ryde Hospitals and Community Health Services for 6 years, leading significant transformational change.

Sue first entered the workforce as a paediatric physiotherapist and spent time working for a large consulting firm in the health and human services sector.



Mary Ducusin

DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE,
RISK AND QUALITY

Mary joined Uniting in March 2019 and was previously Chief Quality and Risk Officer at Estia Health, an ASX-listed company with 68 residential aged care facilities around Australia.

Prior to joining Estia, Mary worked at Allity Aged Care and Bupa, where she managed a range of risk, compliance, and operational responsibilities, including customer experience and service acquisitions.

Mary has also had experience working with the Department of Health and Ageing as an investigation manager.

Mary started her career as a registered nurse, working in the acute and sub-acute health sector, and has since studied towards a law degree. She is currently undertaking a postgraduate degree course in risk management and corporate governance at the Governance Institute of Australia.



Saviour Buhagiar

DIRECTOR OF SENIORS
SERVICES

Saviour was appointed as Director of Seniors Services in July 2022. He held previous roles at Uniting as Director of Residential and Health Care, and Director of Ageing. He is responsible for residential aged care, home and community care, independent living and the Uniting War Memorial Hospital.

Prior to joining Uniting, Saviour managed services supporting people with intellectual disability living in both group homes and specialist support services with Family and Community Services, and previously worked in various roles with the Home Care Service of NSW.



Simon Furness

DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY
AND HOUSING

Simon joined Uniting in October 2016. He has a proven track record in the delivery and life-cycle management of large property portfolios to meet the strategic and operational objectives of a range of blue-chip corporations and government authorities.

Most of his career has been in large organisations whose success depended heavily on the performance of infrastructure and property assets. Simon has held senior executive and line-management roles in market-leading, service-based companies including CBRE, Vodafone, Telstra and Spotless, as well as 8 years as a senior executive in government.

His early career was as an officer in the Royal Engineers and Royal Australian Engineers. Simon is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors and has a Master of Business Administration and Honours degree in Civil Engineering.



Rev. Suzanne Stanton

DIRECTOR OF MISSION

Suzanne joined Uniting in June 2022. She is an ordained Minister of the Uniting Church and an active member of the Glenbrook congregation.

Most recently, Suzanne has worked in placements and on projects in Parramatta Mission, Uniting Mission and Education, Sydney Presbytery, and as the Minister for the congregation of St Johns at Wahroonga from 2018 to 2020. Suzanne has previously held a number of non-executive board positions with the Uniting Church, including on the NSW & ACT Synod Board and Uniting Financial Services.

Prior to studying her Bachelor of Theology and becoming an ordained Minister, Suzanne held roles in both the public and private sector, working in finance and superannuation. Suzanne has also studied economics and applied finance, and is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.



Dr Anat Hassner

CHIEF PEOPLE OFFICER

Anat joined Uniting in July 2022, following multiple Chief People Officer roles in the private and public sector.

Anat has also had a significant career in change and transformation, including leading organisational transformation for Woolworths Meat Company, and significantly improving their bottom line.

Anat holds a PhD in Change Management from Bond University as well as a Master of Organisational Psychology (UNSW), and Bachelors of Psychology and Social Science (Academic College of Tel Aviv). Anat has authored 2 books on change management and co-authored a book on project management: The Agile Change Methodology (2012); Who is the Change Manager? (2011); and Project Management and Organisational Change 2014.



Iain Keddle

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER –
FINANCE AND PROPERTY

Iain joined Uniting in August 2022 with considerable experience from roles in corporate and community services organisations.

Iain was formerly Chief Financial Officer of Mission Australia, where he was responsible for several corporate functions. Prior to this, Iain held CEO, CFO and executive roles in ASX-listed, public and private companies across a diverse range of industry sectors including banking, property services, retail and technology services.

Iain is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, and has a degree in Maths and Theoretical Physics from the University of St Andrews in Scotland.



Jill Reich

DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER
AND TRANSFORMATION

Jill joined Uniting in 2015, with wide experience as an executive in both the public and private sectors across a number of industries.

Her expertise includes leading transformational change in large, complex organisations, and developing sustainable culture change programs which support and accelerate the implementation of strategic objectives.



Tamara Pararajasingham

GENERAL MANAGER – IMPACT
AND INNOVATION

Tamara joined Uniting in June 2019, as the Head of Social Impact and Communities. She now co-leads the Social Impact and Advocacy directorate, which drives Uniting's contribution to systemic change for disrupting entrenched disadvantage. This includes overseeing our First Nations People and Place Strategy, Diversity and Inclusion, Research and Social Policy, Social Innovation and place-based initiatives.

Tamara's career has spanned commercial finance and international aid and development. She has spent the last 15 years in the Australian not-for-profit sector, with a focus on systems innovation and evidence for impact.

Tamara holds a Bachelor of Accounting, Master of Development Studies, Master of Human Rights Law and Policy and is a graduate of the Centre for Social Impact.



Emma Maiden

GENERAL MANAGER -
ADVOCACY AND EXTERNAL
RELATIONS

Emma joined Uniting in 2019 and co-leads the Social Impact and Advocacy directorate with Tammy Pararajasingham.

Emma was formerly Uniting's Head of Advocacy and Media and previously Assistant Secretary at Unions NSW. Emma is also a Non-Executive Director of HESTA.

Emma is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. She also has a Bachelor of Economics (Hons 1) from the University of Sydney and is admitted as a lawyer in NSW.

Emma's responsibilities include social justice campaigning, government relations, media, social media, thought leadership, philanthropy, and management of Uniting's creative and digital teams.

Financial update.

For the year to 30 June 2023

Revenue for Uniting NSW.ACT in FY23 increased 15% to \$1,152m (up on \$1,004m in FY22) and the net result was resilient, with a surplus of \$28.9m (FY22: net deficit of \$41m). The result reflects changes in aged care funding arrangements which have temporarily improved financial performance, increased investment income from higher interest rates and stronger equity markets, and the impact of one-off adjustments.

However, considerable challenges remained in our operating environment:

- Continuation of workforce shortages made it difficult to recruit and retain employees, impacting the whole organisation's provision of community services and leading to increased agency use, especially in our regional services.
- COVID-19 continued to affect many of our aged care facilities, although the impacts on operations normalised throughout the financial year.
- Considerable reimbursements under the Government's Grant Program are still pending assessment and decision.
- Response to major sector-wide reform in aged care, arising from the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, including a new Australian National Aged Care Classification (AN-ACC) funding guide, Registered Nurse mandatory care minutes, and compliance reporting.
- Higher cost of living and inflationary pressures across all services.
- Increased compliance requirements and costs across the organisation's substantial portfolio of services and activities.

In Seniors Services, the performance in Residential Aged Care services was temporarily

lifted as the AN-ACC increased funding in advance of cost increases to meet higher care minute requirements that become mandatory from 1 October 2023. Grant income was also received in the year, for costs associated with COVID-19 outbreaks that occurred in prior periods. The financial cost of responding to the pandemic has progressively reduced, yet continued to impact services through the year. Seniors Services performance improved in Residential Aged Care services, partly due to the impact of acquisitions in both 2022 and 2023. The addition of services through acquisitions has allowed the organisation to further expand service delivery in regional NSW and to support the local communities in those areas.

Home and Community Care performance improved slightly, although continued to incur losses in response to Government reforms such as the pricing cap introduced from 1 January 2023. Retirement Living and Housing performance continued to contribute positive operating margins.

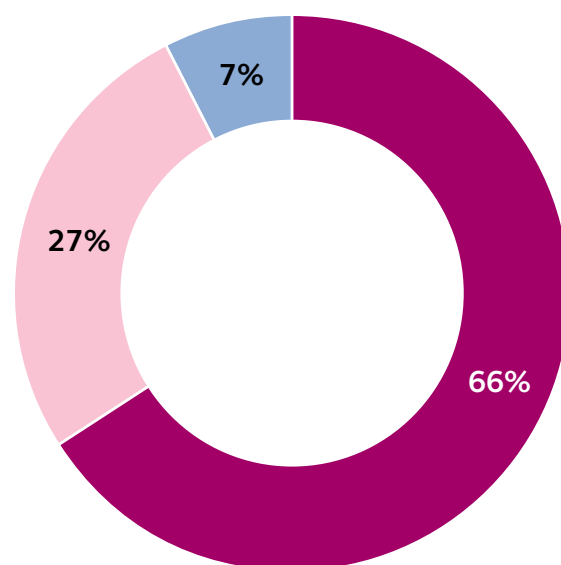
In Communities, growth reflected new contracts for Family Support and Recovery services, and progression in programs such as Foyer Central, which helped to support our continued expansion of programs and initiatives to disrupt entrenched disadvantage. Enrolment across our Early Learning network was strong, though performance was impacted by workforce challenges, with a reliance on agencies to meet staffing ratio regulations.

As we embark on the second year of our 10-year strategy, Uniting NSW.ACT will continue to pursue sustainable funding sources to be able to invest for social impact, with our commitment to create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage.

FY23 revenue sources

Government subsidies, grants, and program funding represented our main sources of revenue in FY23, followed by resident fees, client fees and other revenue.

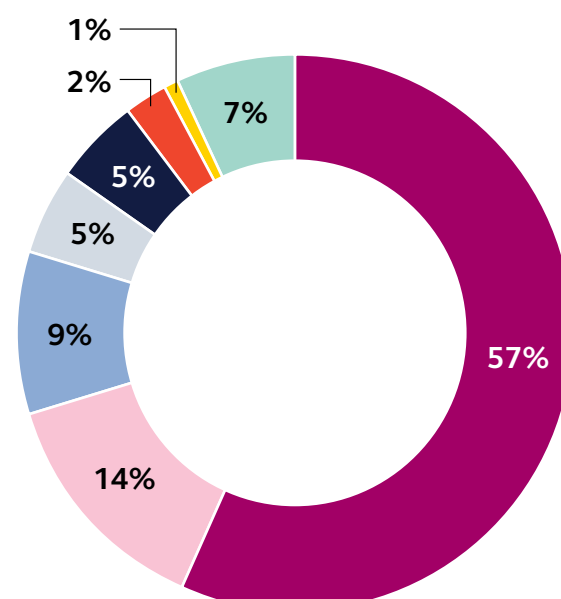
Revenue and non-financial income	(\$m)
Government subsidies, grants and program funding	760
Resident fees, client fees and charges	306
Other revenue	86
Total revenue	1,152



FY23 revenue by service stream

Our revenue* increased by 15% this year, due to Residential Aged Care acquisitions and new Community contracts.

Revenue from operating activities	(\$m)
Residential Aged Care (RAC)	655
Families	157
Home and Community Care (HACC)	106
Local Area Coordination (LAC)	59
Retirement and Independent Living (R&IL)	56
Early Learning (EL)	30
Disability	11
Investment and other income	77
Total revenue	1,152



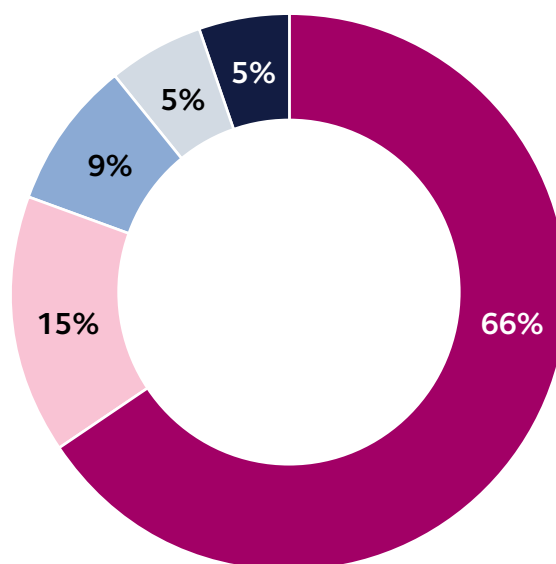
* excludes interest income

FY23 expenses

Our expenses* increased by 11% this year, due to revenue growth and the continuation of workforce shortages, wage increases and inflationary pressures.

Expenses from operating activities	(\$m)
Wages, salaries and related expenses	735
Program costs and consumables	170
Depreciation and amortisation expenses	96
Property costs	62
Other expenses	57
Total expenses	1,120

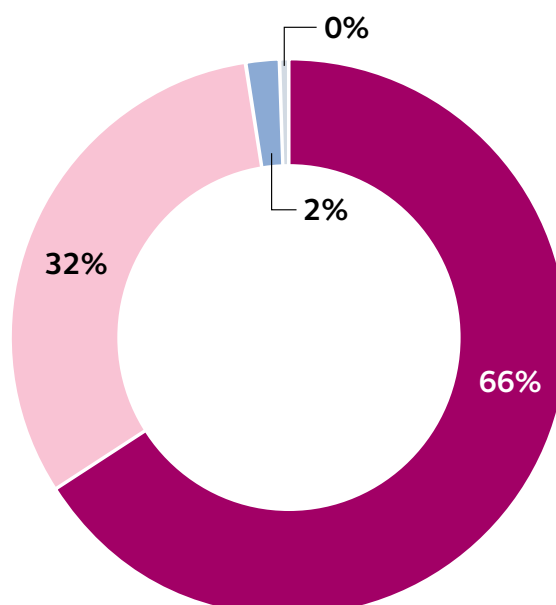
* excludes interest expense



FY23 assets

Our overall assets increased by 6% this year, due mainly to financial assets and investments increasing by 16%.

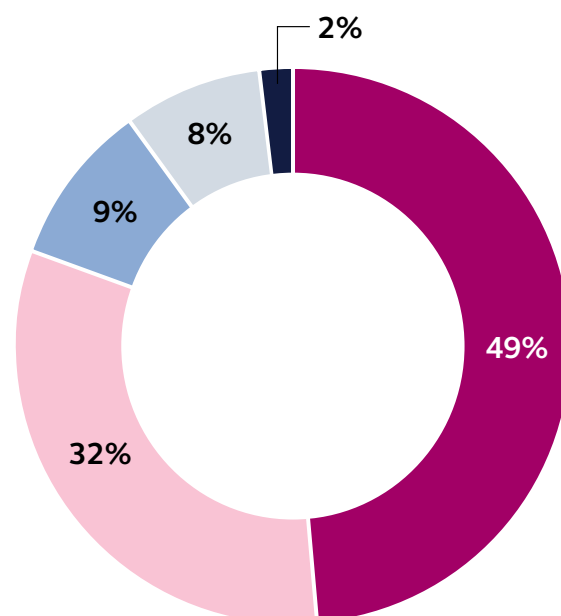
Assets	(\$m)
Property, plant and equipment	1,653
Financial assets and investments	792
Trade and other receivables	49
Intangible assets	8
Total assets	2,502



FY23 liabilities

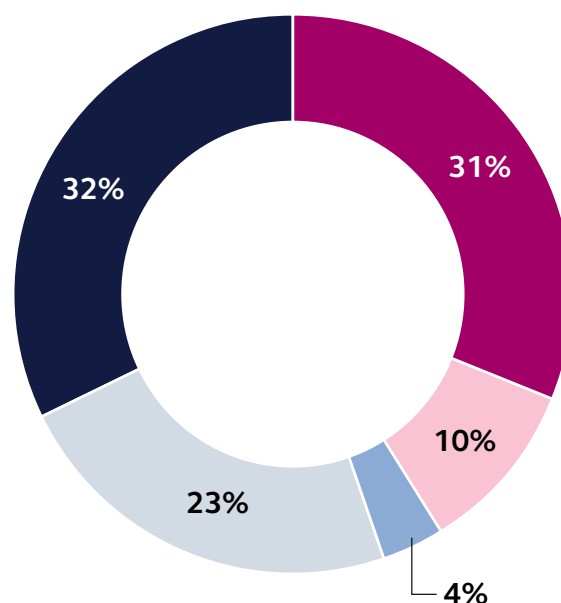
Total liabilities increased by 6% this year. Refundable loans from residents in our aged care homes increased by \$70m, and by \$22m for independent living residents.

Liabilities	(\$m)
Residential Aged Care refundable loans	853
Retirement & Independent Living refundable loans	561
Trade and other payables	164
Employee benefits	138
Other	35
Total liabilities	1,751



FY23 capital expenditure

FY23 capital expenditure	(\$m)
R&IL major expenditure	34
R&IL minor expenditure	11
RAC major expenditure	4
RAC minor expenditure	25
Other	35
Total capital expenditure	109





Uniting



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

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