



Uniting WA

Annual Report

2022-2023

unitingwa.org.au

Uniting

Who we are

At Uniting WA, we exist to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

And we act with impact.

As a community services organisation of the Uniting Church Western Australia, we stand with people in need, walking alongside them every step of the way so they get the understanding and support they need to move forward.

Since 2006, we’ve worked to address the causes of vulnerability and disadvantage, and amplify

the voices of those in the community who aren’t being heard.

But we can’t do it alone.

Backed by supporters, partners and funders, our team of more than 400 staff and 300 volunteers is proud to deliver a range of services that have a lasting impact on thousands of vulnerable Western Australians every year.

Acknowledgement of Country

Uniting WA acknowledges the First Nations People as the Traditional Custodians of this land on which we provide our services. We recognise their unique and spiritual connection to Country and waters. We value the oldest continuing culture in the world and pay our respect to Elders past and present.

Uniting WA would like to sincerely thank braincells for their generous support in developing this Annual Report.

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Message from the Chair and Co-Chief Executive Officers

This year's Annual Report captures the outcomes we've achieved over the last 12 months, and reports on the impact accomplished through the delivery of the 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

The 2020-2023 Strategic Plan was launched in a pre-pandemic environment that was unprepared for the impact of COVID-19 and the flow-on effects it would have on the broader community. While WA was spared some of the more severe consequences of COVID, the people we support were disproportionately impacted by the restrictions and mandates introduced to manage the virus.

Despite the unforeseen external pressures, we rose to the challenge and met the increased demand for services with compassion and respect, acting boldly and using our imagination to ensure that no one was left behind.

Over the past 12 months, we have continued to demonstrate best-practice service delivery and sector leadership in an ever-evolving social and economic landscape. Lack of affordable housing and cost of living pressures have further impacted the most vulnerable people in our community, but we have been able to adjust to rapidly changing circumstances without compromising the quality of service delivery. This has been achieved through extensive collaboration with the sector, government and value-aligned organisations.

A WA-first partnership with Services Australia to co-locate a Community Partnerships Service Officer at our Tranby Engagement Hub for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness has supported hundreds of service users with complex social and health issues to navigate government systems including Centrelink and Medicare.

Throughout the year, our services continued to innovate with new programs and practices, and we demonstrated our commitment to delivering high quality services through a National

Standards in Mental Health Services (NSMHS) accreditation processes.

During the year, we renovated and refurbished several Supported Independent Living and Community Housing properties thanks to Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) grants from the State Government. Further partnerships have ensured innovative approaches to housing. The first, with Housing All Australians and a dedicated consortium of businesses to reimagine Fremantle's historic Wyn Carr House as a haven for vulnerable women experiencing homelessness. The second, with architect Nic Brunsdon to develop new designs for Aspirations Housing – a project that combines best-practice design principles with trauma-informed practice to deliver social housing and step-up, step-down support for people transitioning from homelessness.

As a lead agency in the Financial Wellbeing Collective (previously Financial Counselling Network), we supported a rebrand to increase awareness of the opportunities for people to improve their financial literacy and, thanks to Lotterywest, we partnered on a Digital Inclusion project to empower the people we support to gain independence online.

We also launched a new corporate volunteering and team building opportunity for partners to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness in Perth. The Recipe for Change program has been a resounding success, with a number of organisations already signed on for the experience and a waitlist of those who are yet to enjoy it.

The innovative Co-CEO model has continued to deliver benefits to Uniting WA service users and team members from both an operational and cultural perspective.

With a shared vision, diverse skill sets and the advantage of years of cumulative experience, this bold approach has attracted interest from publications including Business News and HRM (Australian Human Resources Institute magazine).

Our journey is made richer thanks to the unwavering support of our key stakeholders. Be it through volunteering, philanthropic endeavours, partnerships, advocacy or spiritual guidance, their commitment holds immeasurable value to us. We are also deeply grateful for our connections with the Uniting Church congregations, schools and colleges, and ongoing financial support from Uniting Church in the City.

This year, we were privileged to welcome Isabel de Jesus to our Board. Joining us in December 2022, Isabel, with her extensive two-decade experience in finance and leadership, brings an invaluable skill set to Uniting WA.

We extend our deepest gratitude to our entire Board, whose voluntary contributions in expertise, time, and insights ensure that Uniting WA stands resilient and poised for continued success.

As we set our sights on the future and the rollout of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan with a focus on service delivery, partnerships, capacity and sustainability, we remain ready to respond to changing needs within the community and well-positioned to meet the challenges that will inevitably come.

In this Annual Report, we bring to life the voices of the people we support, acknowledge the efforts of our dedicated team and highlight our achievements from the past year. We're delighted to present our 2022-2023 Annual Report and thank our Board, team members, volunteers and stakeholders for their contribution and support.

More about our leadership team



Erica Haddon

Erica Haddon
Chairperson



Jen Park

Jen Park
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Michael Chester

Michael Chester
Co-Chief Executive Officer

Purpose, values and foundation

Our purpose

We work to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

Our foundation

Christ invites us to serve humanity by creating an inclusive, connected and just world.

[More about us](#)

Our values

Compassionate



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

Respectful



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

Imaginative



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

Bold



We boldly face injustice and stand up for what is right and true with confidence and strength.



Uniting WA team at a glance

410
Team members

162
Full-time

182
Part-time

66
Casual



Our team listens without judgment and walks alongside the people we support, amplifying the voices of those in our community who aren't being heard.

8
Identify as First Nations Peoples

9
Board members

4
Executive leaders

18
General and Senior managers

300
Volunteers

6,824
Hours
and more than

\$315,000
in value
contributed by volunteers

The year in review

Reach and impact

We support people experiencing complex challenges brought on by intergenerational trauma or situational crisis. This includes children experiencing vulnerability and families at risk of breakdown, as well as people who may be experiencing domestic violence, financial hardship or homelessness, those with disability or a lived experience of mental illness, and people reintegrating into the community.

Strengthening Families

355 parents supported with their children
1737 cases supported Escaping Violence Payment



Children and Young People

42 children supported Out of Home Care

313 children, young people and adults supported

Children and Family Therapeutic Services and Children's Counselling



Transitioning from Homelessness

1,489 people supported Outreach Services

70,860 individual presentations Tranby Engagement Hub (Crisis support)

44 people accommodated Supported Crisis Accommodation

49 people accommodated Supported Transitional Accommodation

Reintegration

203

people supported



Your Say: Disability Advocacy

40 formal clients
334 informal clients



Individualised Services

165 Participants NDIS services
71 Participants Recovery Options
22 Participants Positive Behaviour Support

Community Housing

515 tenancies
229 people across **221** properties
Independent Living Program

313 properties managed Housing and Tenancy Management

Financial Wellbeing

Emergency Relief
2,772 clients supported
\$549,224 relief funding

1243 clients Financial Counselling
184 clients Financial Coaching
289 community workshops

Advocacy in action

Earning the trust of individuals, families and communities is vital to our mission of addressing systemic and social inequality. We actively engage in consortiums, events, groups and projects, and serve on committees and Boards to advocate for those we support.

Commitments and conversations

- We participate in the Reserve Bank of Australia Liaison Program looking into the microeconomic impact of macroeconomic policy on the people we support. Co-CEOs Jen Park and Michael Chester shared their expertise and insight to support policymakers in making decisions that affect the lives of vulnerable people.
- Co-CEO Michael Chester was appointed to the Housing First Homelessness Advisory Group. The group provides regular and practical advice to the Minister for Homelessness, John Carey MLA, and Department of Communities to progress strategy implementation and Housing First solutions.
- Michael Chester also joined the Shelter WA Board, which advocates for social and affordable housing and ending homelessness.
- Co-CEO Jen Park was a guest speaker at the NDIS Transformation Summit WA, where she discussed the cultural transformation of the NDIS workforce.
- Michael Chester was appointed to the Disability Assembly WA Council, enabling him to elevate challenges and opportunities to contribute to a stronger and more inclusive communities for people with disability.
- As a member of Social Reinvestment Western Australia (SRWA), we supported their Raise the Age WA campaign and advocacy efforts concerning Banksia Hill Detention Centre. SRWA also informed Department of Communities about developing a Justice Reinvestment site, supported the Olabud Doogethu site in Halls Creek, and held their inaugural WA Justice Reinvestment Forum.
- We invited members of the Standing Committee on Estimates and Financial Operations – which was conducting an inquiry into the funding of homelessness services in Western Australia – to Tranby Engagement Hub to increase their understanding of crisis support in Perth.
- We're a community partner of the Emerging Leaders in Governance Program (ELGP), which develops young professionals for Board leadership in the aged and community sector, with Co-CEO Michael Chester acting as both a mentor and a panel member in this program.
- We partnered with the WA Digital Inclusion Project, led by WACOSS, to bolster digital inclusion and accessibility. Our Community Housing and Reintegration teams have engaged on the project to empower the people they support to gain independence online. Lotterywest is a major supporter of this project.



Michael Chester at the Disability Assembly WA Summit on living a good life in our community.

More about the WA Digital Inclusion Project

Sonshine partnership brings warmth to Winter

We partnered with Sonshine for their annual Heart for the Homeless Appeal. The appeal invited Sonshine listeners and supporters to donate essential items at various collection points in Perth.

Equally important was the opportunity to talk to listeners about the issues affecting the most vulnerable members of our community and the work we do to support people experiencing homelessness. Our partnership with Sonshine has been truly impactful and we deeply appreciated the support from Sonshine, their listeners and the community.



- We're a partner of the Financial Wellbeing Collective (FWC), supporting their rebrand from the Financial Counselling Network to their new brand, FWC. As a lead agency in the FWC, we also embarked on a project in partnership with Synergy to help households become more energy efficient and save on their power bills.

More about the FWC

- We're a member of the North Metro District Leadership Group which collaborates with Local, State and Commonwealth Governments as well as community organisations. Our discussions focus on local issues such as domestic violence, homelessness, and youth mental health. As part of the South West District Leadership Group, we also actively contribute to Imagined Futures, delivering the Keeping Kids Engaged initiative.

More about Keeping Kids Engaged



North Metro District Leadership Group

- Anette Boyle, Senior Manager – Community Engagement and Education and Digital Marketing Coordinator, Grace Annear, consulted on the RightByYou project with Neami National. RightByYou launched a website that offers practical resources and information to help young people support a friend they think may be suicidal.



RightByYou participants

Housing projects

Aspirations Housing

Our Aspirations Housing project aligns with Housing First principles, with an approach focused on innovative social housing and support models.

We collaborated with Nic Brunsdon Architects to develop concept designs for housing projects in Bentley, Carlisle, and Girrawheen, which will provide long-term housing and person-centred support close to local amenities and public transport.

Featuring trauma-informed design, these properties will include a mix of one and two-bedroom self-contained living units – along with areas designed to enhance residents’ wellbeing – for up to 24 people at a time.

Supported Independent Living

We worked with Lanigan Architects to design a new Supported Independent Living (SIL) home in Spearwood, thanks to a grant from the State Government’s Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP).

An existing property in Riverton is also being re-designed by Lanigan Architects to replace an existing dwelling on the property with two purpose-built SIL homes.

Each new SIL home will feature three ensuite bedrooms, a carer’s room, indoor and outdoor living spaces, accessible parking and eco-friendly landscaping.

Both projects cater to Band A Social Housing, which supports people with disability who receive NDIS funding for SIL.

Reimagining Wyn Carr House

Partnering with Housing All Australians, Uniting WA has secured significant pro bono support including consultancy services and construction materials for the transformative Wyn Carr House project. Along with State Government funding totalling more than \$3m, construction is expected to begin during the 2023-2024 financial year.

Once completed, Wyn Carr House will provide much needed transitional accommodation and support services to women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

More about the Wyn Carr House project

Architects vision for Wyn Carr House



Success through sustainability

In the face of a challenging employment landscape, our investment in and commitment to our workforce stands as a testament to our resilience and adaptability. Guided by our digital roadmap and risk management framework and informed by a number of housing projects, we're achieving cost savings, greater efficiency, and better outcomes.

Digital transformation drives efficiency and innovation

Our focus on innovation and collaboration continues to propel our digital roadmap.

The Organisation Solutions team led a number of digital initiatives throughout the year, partnering with the Finance, Information Communication Technology (ICT), People Services and service delivery teams to achieve cost savings, more efficient ways of working and clearer outcomes.

We implemented new finance, invoicing, and cyber security systems, launched the Lone Worker Safety App, and fully integrated Microsoft 365.

We also introduced Brevity to manage NDIS invoices and rosters and secured a new platform for the Community Housing team.

These strides reflect the Organisation Solutions team's commitment to superior service and operational excellence.

“What an exciting year it's been at Uniting WA for digital projects! We've been able to implement multiple new systems, worked with our service delivery teams to simplify and improve processes and we're on track for all staff to have access to fit for purpose, secure and contemporary systems to support them in their day-to-day work.”

Ross Bentong, General Manager - Organisation Solutions and ICT

“I'm proud of our commitment to implementing effective systems to manage and mitigate risk, with a clear focus on continuous improvement.”

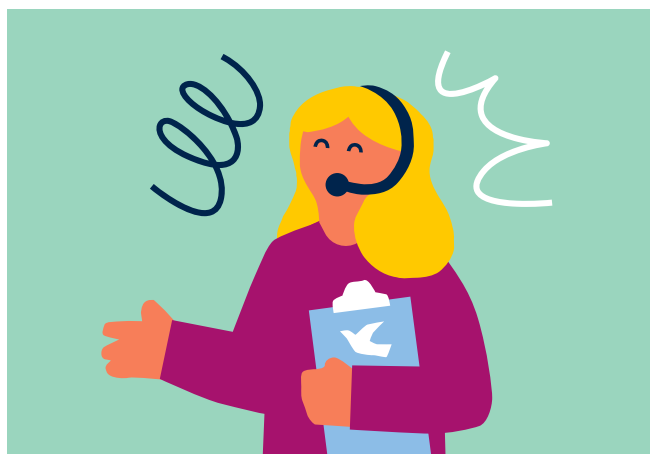
Sue Thomas,
Chief Administrative Officer

Streamlining risk management and operational improvement

This year, we intensified our focus on risk management in the workplace and empowered teams to better address these risks.

We established an internal audit process to measure our performance, celebrate progress, and identify improvement opportunities.

Team members across all levels contributed to risk management, with a revamped responsibility matrix to pinpoint preventive actions. We also updated the incident rating matrix to clearly identify those overseeing corrective measures and began to explore risk and incident management systems that integrate with our existing infrastructure.



Creating a recipe for change

We launched a new Recipe for Change corporate and community partner advocacy and team building activity in May 2023.

Hosted at our Tranby Engagement Hub, this interactive experience focuses on the issues surrounding homelessness in Western Australia, and explores ways that individuals and organisations can contribute to the solutions we need to make a lasting impact.

TOKN Technology, a leader in app and enterprise software development, was the first organisation we welcomed for this experience, which included a:

- Briefing on the issues contributing to homelessness in WA
- Presentation from a person with lived experience of homelessness

- Team-building cooking challenge which saw TOKN break up into teams and roll their sleeves up to prepare meals for Tranby service users.

Amidst the friendly competition and countless laughs, the most significant takeaway was the awareness and sense of empowerment the TOKN team felt toward addressing homelessness.

“It was a great afternoon – enlightening, informative and eye opening. Thank you to all involved.”

Mija



Our 2023 Employee Engagement Survey



90%

satisfaction with the employee experience at Uniting WA



92%

alignment with organisational mission and goals

Celebrating excellence, engagement and diversity

We continued our tradition of recognising outstanding contributions with the Willy Wagtail Award to celebrate the efforts of Uniting WA team members. Award winners from across several service and support areas were provided with funding to pursue a career development opportunity of their choosing.



Dressed up and ready for the Pride Parade

Our LGBTQIA+ Diversity (BOLD) Collective engaged in a national workshop with UnitingCare Australia and joined monthly meetings with other UnitingCare Australia agencies.

The BOLD Collective also hosted our annual Rainbow Bake-off and celebrated the Pride Parade, as well as Wear It Purple Day.

To foster community involvement, we launched our Employee Volunteer Leave policy, which provides team members with two days' leave to volunteer in the not-for-profit sector.

In November 2022, our People Services team were nominated for the Gerard Daniels Human Resource Management Excellence Award at the Australian Institute of Management (AIM) Pinnacle Awards for the foundational work they've undertaken to create an inspiring, inclusive and dynamic workplace.



People Services team at the Gerard Daniels HRM Excellence Award at the AIM Pinnacle Awards.

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The vital role of volunteers

Our volunteers remain pivotal to delivering our purpose. Uniting WA volunteer, Kate Hilder, was recognised on International Volunteer Day for her dedication and commitment to providing essential services at our Tranby Engagement Hub.



International Volunteer Day 2022

During National Volunteer Week, we offered volunteers a MasterChef-style cooking lesson with chef Sophie Budd and ended the celebration with a Willy Wagtail Award for the Food Rescue volunteer team.



Food Rescue volunteers and Uniting WA team during National Volunteer Week.

More about volunteering at Uniting WA



**Vanessa’s story
of dedication
and growth.**

“To anyone who is thinking of volunteering at Uniting, I say just go for it – you won’t regret it! You’ll have fun, and it’s so rewarding - there’s something truly special about Tranby and the time you’ll spend there.”

Vanessa Cobbs, Tranby Support Worker and former volunteer.

Last year, a friend decided to sign up as a volunteer at Tranby Engagement Hub and asked if I’d be interested in joining them. I jumped at the opportunity!

I’ll never forget how wonderful and welcoming the Tranby team was.

As a volunteer, you get to know the service users and some of them open up to you about what they’re going through and how they came to experience homelessness. It’s important to remember that everyone has a story as to how they came to be where they are.

After volunteering for a while, I was asked if I’d be interested in applying for a Support Worker position.

I joined Tranby as a Support Worker in March 2023.

Working at Tranby is go-go-go from the moment we open the doors. But we start off the day with a team meeting to make sure we are all on the same page.

There’s lots of running around happening and it can be very intense, but we all love it at Tranby. We all work our hardest to make sure each person that walks through the doors feels supported.

I feel like starting out as a volunteer at Tranby really set me up to hit the ground running as a Support Worker.

Most days we see over 300 service users at Tranby and we have extraordinary volunteers, but we could always use more.

More about working at Uniting WA

Uniting in purpose

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Uniting Church Western Australia and its congregations and schools for their unwavering support throughout the year.

Walking together with the Uniting Church and congregations

We finalised a Memorandum of Understanding with Uniting Church in the City (UCIC) in October 2022. UCIC's generous support, with donations amounting to \$500,000 in 2022-2023, is deeply appreciated by Uniting WA.

We also recognise Fremantle Wesley Uniting Church for their ongoing support of the Fremantle-based Emergency Relief Fund and the Keeping Kids Engaged program.

Co-CEO Jen Park and Michael Chester engaged in a national dialogue about the Church's future during a WA visit by the Uniting Church's Act2 Project Team.

Our commitment to combatting social injustice has been bolstered by our association with the Uniting Church Social Justice Commission. The opportunity for our Senior Manager for Community Engagement and Education to actively engage in these discussions has encouraged ongoing collaboration and better outcomes for the people we support.

Co-CEOs on the road

Co-CEOs Michael Chester and Jen Park have thoroughly enjoyed their visits to Uniting Church congregations in both metro and regional WA.

Their visits have provided a platform to share the impact of the work Uniting WA does to support the most vulnerable members of our community.

We're deeply thankful for the generous material donations from Uniting Church congregations and their support for our Christmas and Winter Appeals.



Throughout the year, Uniting Church congregations have kindly donated

\$23,000

Congregational volunteers maximise impact

Twelve congregational members from Northway Uniting Church volunteered at Tranby Engagement Hub this year.

One Northway volunteer shared the story of Tranby with his work colleagues, which resulted in food donations totalling more than \$1,000.

Thank you to Northway Uniting Church for making a real difference to the lives of Tranby service users, and engaging your peers to raise awareness of the issues surrounding homelessness in our community.

Empowering tomorrow's leaders

We've had the pleasure of collaborating with Uniting Church schools and colleges throughout the year.

Together, we've opened doors for students to immerse themselves in activities that build an understanding of the issues affecting our community, fostering compassion and social responsibility in the leaders of the future.

Throughout the year, students have contributed donations valued at

\$19,474

We're immensely grateful for the support of our Cozy Toes Winter Sock Appeal, Cards that Count and our Christmas Appeal.

Cards that Count saw students from Uniting Church schools design Christmas-themed cards to be used as a fundraiser. Selected pieces were featured in greeting card packs which raised more than \$4,000 for Uniting WA programs.



Jen Park with Cards that Count artwork.



We're honoured to play an ongoing pivotal role in the Wesley College Katitjin program. A standout moment in the program is the student visit to Tranby Engagement Hub, where they engage with the Transitioning from Homelessness team and people with lived experienced of homelessness.

The Katitjin program culminated in the Social Justice Art Exhibition and Fundraiser, with proceeds raised donated to Uniting WA.

Through these shared experiences, students are encouraged to become lifelong contributors to social justice in their communities.



Artist and Lived Experience Speaker, Damien Watt, with Emma White (Senior Manager – Transitioning from Homelessness) and Annette Boyle (Senior Manager – Community Engagement and Education) at the Social Justice Art Exhibition.

The difference we make

Shannon's* journey to adulthood.

Family turmoil stemming from domestic violence and parental substance misuse resulted in Shannon and her siblings entering out of home care when she was 13 months old.

After more than 10 years in foster care, behavioural issues led Shannon to be placed in a Uniting WA Family Group Home (FGH), which provides therapeutic care and support to children and young people who aren't able to remain with their biological family.

At first, Shannon was reserved and would often abscond on weekends. Uniting WA carers prioritised building trust and worked on helping Shannon integrate into the local high school.

Once she was settled at school, Shannon flourished. She excelled in lots of subjects, particularly in drama where she took the

lead role in a school play. She also went on to secure a part-time job, started driving lessons and applied for Centrelink support. This period also saw Shannon reconnect with her father.

Shannon expressed that being in a Uniting FGH was the first place she had ever considered home. Despite her anxiety about leaving the FGH at age 18, Shannon actively participated in the transition process and was supported to apply for a placement with a youth housing service. The Uniting WA team assisted her to transition in January this year.

Shannon is settling well into her new home.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy

Children and Young People

Uniting WA Children's Counselling Service helps children, young people and their families navigate the challenges of daily life. For those affected by child sexual abuse, our Child and Family Therapeutic Services team provides trauma-informed therapeutic support. And when children and young people aren't able to remain in family settings, we connect them with foster carers and support them through Out of Home Care services.

External stressors – ranging from financial pressures and unstable housing to the difficulties of navigating the Court system and family domestic violence – have further intensified the experiences of children and young people coming into care.

Quarterly Therapeutic Crisis Intervention training sessions and regular refreshers provided by our in-house Therapeutic Coach have helped ensure ongoing best-practice service delivery, despite the increasing complexity of needs.

Volunteer Youth Mentoring

We were awarded a Youth Affairs Council WA grant to support the Uniting WA Volunteer Mentoring Program this year.

The program was developed to address the mentoring gap for young people in our care.

Young people are engaging with their mentors weekly and joining in activities to increase their social skills and self-esteem. Individual goals of young people which mentors have supported include obtaining a Skipper's Ticket (recreational boating licence), fitness and sporting achievements, planning and attending camping trips, securing first jobs and family reunification.

Transitioning to independence

We are acutely aware of the extra support that young people require when they turn 18 and transition out of Family Group Home placements into independent living arrangements.

Uniting takes an active role in supporting the Department of Communities with this process by helping young people build their independent

living skills and fostering their connection with community networks while they're still in our care.

We have developed an independent living skills assessment which covers the various areas in which a young person can be supported to build life skills, including financial management, housing, safety, mental health and wellbeing.

Empowerment through education

Our Children's Counselling team was invited to deliver a presentation on 'Child-centred Conversations – Online Safety' to parents at Jolimont Primary School.

The team shared their experience and insights to help parents ensure that children and young people in their care can navigate the digital world safely and with confidence.

More about Children and Young People

2 young people were reunified with their families.

3 young people transferred into independence

2 young people transitioned from a Family Group Home into Supported Independent Living with the NDIS

A family of **3 siblings** were supported to visit family on Country

Strengthening Families

The Strengthening Families team support families who are involved with the child protection system, parents who are facing challenges that impact on their parenting and people experiencing family and domestic violence.

Recognising the impact of external stressors, the Strengthening Families team has a number of programs to enhance outcomes for families who engage with us.

Responding to family and domestic violence

We partnered with Warrawee Women’s Refuge (Lucy Saw Centre Association) to deliver a specialised parenting program, in response to the high number of children exhibiting aggressive behaviour due to experiences of violence and trauma.

The program, which was designed to meet the specific needs of women and children who have escaped family and domestic violence (FDV), has initially supported 24 families over a six-month period.

Mums reported that the techniques they learned for relaxation and grounding helped them create space for their own self-reflection, and allowed them to better manage their children’s big emotions.

Escaping Violence Payment

Since October 2021, Uniting WA has been delivering the Federal Government’s Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) trial within a UnitingCare Australia consortium led by Uniting Vic.Tas.

We’ve delivered over \$10m to help Western Australians leave violent intimate partner relationships, and our EVP team has delivered information sessions to WA Police, hospitals, and many other sector organisations.

More about Escaping Violence Payment

Fostering strength through shared experience

In partnership with Department of Communities, Communicare and Fremantle Women’s Health Centre, we launched the Sunflower Group pilot to support mums going through reunification processes, who were themselves involved in child protection as a child.

It was identified that these mums were often reluctant to access mainstream play groups, so we created a safe space whereby mums could feel comfortable to learn new parenting skills and understand the stages of development for their children, alongside other mums who have a similar lived experience.



Our Intensive Family Support team held activities for children during Children Protection Week.

Building confidence and capability

100% client satisfaction rate
Parenting Under Pressure Program

9/10 average satisfaction rating
Intensive Family Services

99% clients reporting an increase in skills and confidence
Attach Program

More about Strengthening Families

Louise’s* journey of empowerment.

Facing family domestic violence (FDV) and the challenges of shared custody, Louise sought support from Uniting WA. She was also grappling with financial issues, mental health concerns and limited social connections.

We provided Louise with multi-faceted support including counselling to address trauma and relationship concerns, and a referral to the Family Inclusion Network WA. We also supported Louise to access a GP for her health needs and join a local gym for wellbeing.

Louise was also supported to engage a lawyer for assistance with her daughter’s custody arrangements, and a Uniting WA Financial Counsellor helped address her financial challenges. We also assisted Louise with food parcels and supported her growth by helping her complete an application for a Noongar language course, for which she was awarded a scholarship.

Resources and knowledge-sharing helped Louise become more informed about patterns of FDV and the importance of setting boundaries. She built positive relationships with police and lawyers, which made her more willing to reach out for help during and after incidents of FDV.

Louise has reported notable improvements in her life. She’s regained full-time custody of her daughter and improved her relationship with her partner. Her confidence and self-esteem have improved so much that she regularly hosts Noongar language workshops in the community, and looks forward to teaching the language to children in the school where she works as an Education Assistant.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy.



Rebuilding Danielle’s* life.

Danielle relocated to Perth after fleeing domestic violence in her hometown. Upon her arrival in the city, she faced challenges in securing crisis accommodation and ended up on the streets.

We first connected with Danielle at our Tranby Engagement Hub. Initially hesitant, Danielle declined all but the most essential assistance from the crisis support team.

During a follow-up phone call, the team learned of Danielle’s distressing situation—she hadn’t eaten for days and was sleeping rough, exposed to the rain. With swift coordination, the team located Danielle and supplied immediate relief in the form of food, water and warm clothing.

Following a health assessment from community partners, Homeless Healthcare, and a subsequent brief stay in hospital, Danielle was discharged but her situation remained grim. She was facing potential homelessness yet again.

The Transitioning from Homelessness (TFH) team sprang into action and worked with Tom Fisher House (TFH) to secure temporary accommodation for Danielle. A significant breakthrough came when the TFH team were able to fast-track Danielle for a housing assessment with Foundation Housing.

Shortly after, Danielle was presented with two housing options. In less than three weeks from her initial contact with our team, she was settling into her new home.

This success story underscores the transformative power of collective effort. Thanks to sector collaboration and a well-connected team, Danielle now has a new lease on life.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy

Transitioning from Homelessness

We support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness with assertive and rapid response outreach services, intensive crisis support and pathways out of homelessness through supported crisis and transitional accommodation programs.

At our Tranby Engagement Hub – the only crisis support centre in Perth that’s open 365 days a year – demand for support has more than doubled and those accessing the service are presenting with more complex needs and trauma than ever before.

Limited housing supply in WA also restricts opportunities to transition people out of crisis and transitional accommodation into long-term housing.

Despite the challenges, the Transitioning from Homelessness team has remained focused on delivering safe spaces and high-quality services to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

Overcoming barriers in a WA-first partnership

We became the first organisation in WA to partner with Services Australia in a pilot program to co-locate a Community Partnerships Service Officer (CPSO) at the Tranby Engagement Hub.

The dedicated CPSO has collaborated with our team to support service users with complex social and health issues, helping them navigate the systems required to apply for and obtain JobSeeker payments, the Disability Support Pension and other benefits.



Minister for Government Services, the Hon. Bill Shorten MP, visited Tranby to see the Services Australia Community Partnership Pilot Program in action.

“I wouldn’t still be here if it wasn’t for Tranby”

Tranby Service User

Building skills for life

The team at Koort Boodja (supported crisis accommodation) facilitated a number of workshops and activities throughout the year to help service users build the independent living skills and capacity they need to sustain long-term, independent housing.

Learning to prepare and cook a meal also led to the development of budget management and nutrition skills, while art workshops enabled the team to build rapport with service users and encouraged cultural learning and discussions at the same time.

We also facilitated a number of beach days, BBQs and bowling sessions that encouraged service users to break old habits and try new activities to build social connection and empowerment.

Pets are welcome

Recognising the critical role that pets play in mental health and wellbeing, we removed the barriers that prohibited people from accessing crisis and accommodation services with their animal companions.

A policy that allows one pet per Uniting property has enabled us to support marginalised people who would have otherwise had no other options, and also created a more harmonious living environment for residents.





Transitioning from Homelessness impact snapshot



Crisis support

(Tranby Engagement Hub)

More than **70,860**
individual presentations

104,744 meals served

15,476 referrals to
counselling, advocacy,
accommodation and
other services

Crisis and
transitional
accommodation

104 people supported

5 pets accommodated with
their owners

30 people transitioned to
longer term accommodation or
housing

5 referrals to other transitional
accommodation for further
support

23 referrals to mental health
services

Outreach

1,489
People supported

More than **2,500** referrals to
support services

46 people supported to transition
to stable accommodation

73 people supported to Return
to Country



A story of understanding and insight.

Jenny* is mostly non-verbal and lives at home with her mum. Jenny would often kick, hit, spit, and swear and her mum was worried about her safety in the home.

Jenny was referred to our Positive Behaviour Support program. It was identified that Jenny's actions stemmed from either being rushed or not being given options to complete a task.

Our Positive Behaviour Support practitioner provided Jenny's mum with some education and together they identified strategies to support Jenny in the home.

Jenny's mum is now able to identify when Jenny needs some time to herself and will step back if Jenny doesn't want to complete a task.

Her mum has also relaxed her strict schedule and has become more confident in redirecting Jenny when she gets upset.

This has made for a much happier home life for Jenny and her Mum.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy

Individualised Services

We support people with disability and those who identify as living with a severe and persistent mental health issue, offering a range of services under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and a Recovery Options service funded by the WA Primary Health Alliance.

A quality-driven approach

We launched a 15 module NDIS Quality and Safeguarding Learning Path to merge compliance and best practice training across the entire Individualised Services team.

New accessible housing

Two Supported Independent Living properties in Willagee and Ballajura were renovated and refurbished during the year to improve accessibility and functionality for residents. The improvement works, which included modifications to expand shared living spaces and the installation of wheelchair-accessible kitchen bench tops, were made possible thanks to State Government Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) funding. The refurbished properties have fostered a sense of community among residents, who have collaborated to establish two new vegetable gardens.

Amplifying the voices that matter

We launched a new Stakeholder Reference Group to provide Participants and other stakeholders with a direct channel for feedback about the support they receive. Critically, it also gives Participants the opportunity to help shape the future of Individualised Services at Uniting by inviting them to contribute to our Continuous Improvement and Access and Inclusion Plans.

More about services for people with disability

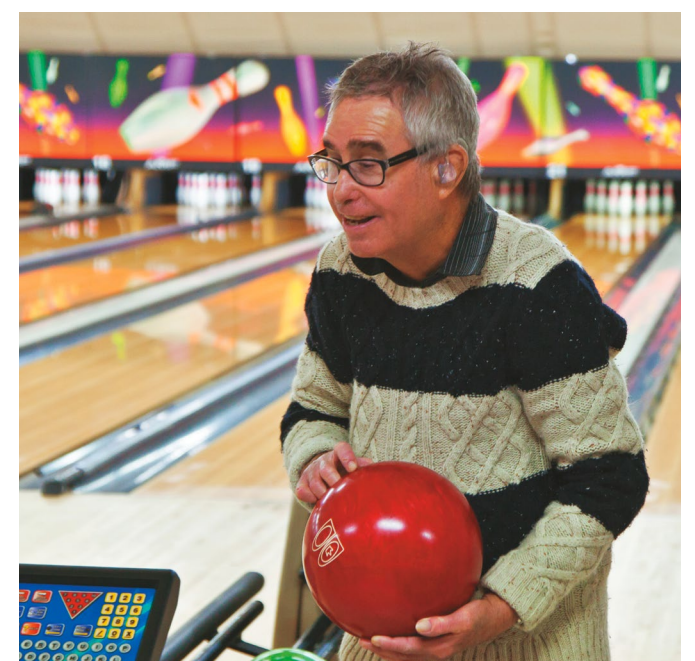
"I'm really grateful for the support the program provides me weekly. It's made such a difference to my life and mental health."

Participant feedback from a Recovery Options survey

More about mental health services



134,000+
hours of NDIS
supports delivered





Advocating for Maddison’s* essential NDIS support.

Maddison faced a challenging period when her NDIS funding was unexpectedly cut by nearly 70 percent and a subsequent request for Legal Aid to challenge the decision was declined. With her mum’s support, Maddison was referred to our Your Say disability advocacy service.

Maddison’s NDIS cuts meant that she lost her behavioural support funding, causing her to lose her long-standing job. She also lost access to her Support Coordinator, who had been instrumental in connecting her with necessary supports and helping her navigate her NDIS plan.

These changes stalled Maddison’s journey towards independent living and posed serious mental health challenges to her and her mum, threatening the stability of their relationship.

Our disability advocate guided Maddison and her mum through the Administrative

Appeals Tribunal process, investing the time to understand everyone’s concerns to ensure they were adequately represented and united in their stance.

The initial unfavourable decision was subsequently overturned and Maddison regained her much-needed NDIS funding. Despite facing the Responding Solicitor at conciliation, Maddison also said she felt confident expressing herself because of the advocacy support she received.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy

Your Say: disability advocacy

We provide a confidential advocacy service that promotes and protects the rights of people with disability and those who identify as living with mental health issues.

In a pattern that has remained steady over the past few years, our Your Say team experienced a significant increase in demand for advocacy services this year.

As always, our foremost priority was to ensure that people with disabilities are heard, no matter the barriers they face.

In addition to supporting people with disability, their families, friends and supporters, we also provided services to community organisations, government departments, and allied health professionals.

Number of informal advice clients			
FY 22/23	FY 21/22	FY 20/21	FY 19/20
334	200	100	50

Responsive Advocacy to meet demand

Despite the surge in demand, a commitment to Responsive Advocacy principles ensured an ongoing excellent standard of service.

Personal conversations with every client and attempts to discuss and resolve issues in the first instance delivered three key benefits:

- Facilitated quicker resolution of issues
- Set clear expectations about the services people could reasonably expect
- Empowered people to self-advocate.

Educating the sector

At the invitation of Legal Aid WA, we shared a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) presentation with a group of nurses and clinicians from Next Step and other alcohol and other drug (AOD) centres. The presentation focused on the barriers that can prevent people from accessing the NDIS.

We also shared our insights and experience regarding NDIS access issues for people serving prison sentences with the Western Australian Association for Mental Health (WAAMH), and continued to support the Evolve Events Advocacy Workforce: Advancing Rights and Equity (AWARE) training course.

Rights promotion excellence

Uniting WA Disability Advocate, Vernon Bates, was honoured as a Finalist in the Excellence in Rights Promotion Award at the 2023 WA Disability Support Awards.

More about Your Say

“Thanks for your calm, intelligent support. It still hasn’t totally sunk in but I do feel the start of a great weight being lifted. I really can’t thank you enough.”

Your Say client



- Satisfaction with our services
- Felt their concerns were understood
- Believed we listened to and understood their issues.



Reintegration

We support adult men to develop the skills and confidence they need to adjust to life outside prison and successfully reintegrate into the community.

Despite the challenges associated with sourcing accommodation for clients in the midst of a housing crisis, the Reintegration team took it all in their stride, successfully supporting more than 200 men to reintegrate into the community during the year.

Culturally appropriate support

We were privileged to welcome an Aboriginal mentor into the team this year to offer cultural guidance, advice and support to participants both prior to and following their release from prison.

The mentor has also shared his cultural knowledge with the team, who have all greatly benefitted from his wisdom, passion and determination.

Understanding the pieces of the puzzle

Uniting WA was proud to sponsor The Puzzle Reintegration Conference this year, with a number of presentations from across our Service Quality, Advocacy and Reintegration teams.

Presentations covered topics including support for people with disability in the Justice system, NDIS access in prison and innovative release supports.

More about Reintegration



Senior Manager - Reintegration, Vanessa Gwerder, was recognised with the Reintegration Champion Award at the conference for her “sustained and significant contribution to making it work”.



Social connections help mental health recovery.

Jack* was homeless for more than 20 years – sleeping on couches, in hostels, and sometimes in his sister Lesley’s* garage.

It was a rough lifestyle, especially since Jack was living with lifelong and serious mental health issues. As the years wore on, the ongoing instability worsened both his physical health and his mental wellbeing.

Things started to shift when Jack was recommended for the Uniting WA Independent Living Program (ILP) . He was offered a small 1-bedroom unit, which was ideal for Jack because it meant he could come and go when he wanted.

The unit was also located close to bus routes which enabled him to attend regular ILP

events and easily access other activities in the community.

Since moving in, Jack has become friendly with his neighbours and is known as ‘the muscle’, because he’s the first person who’s called on to lend a hand when things need to be carried, or when people need a hand to shift furniture. In return, his neighbours often drop off meals for Jack to say thank you.

Lesley says that the stability and connection provided by the ILP has had a profoundly positive impact on Jack’s mental health and life.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy



“I was able to get my self-confidence back and be more humorous again. ILP has helped me become more independent and helps me from falling into depression. It has enabled me to cook and clean my own house”.

Independent Living Program tenant

95%
of ILP tenants felt
more settled, secure
and stable

.....
90%
felt more able to
cope with life events

Community Housing

The Uniting WA Independent Living Program (ILP) supports people who identify as living with severe, persistent mental illness to live independently in the community. As a Tier 2 Community Housing Provider, we also provide housing and tenancy services to people being supported within other Uniting service pathways, and those supported by other agencies.

The Community Housing team navigated a busy year supporting more than 500 people with housing and tenancy services, including 229 people in the Independent Living Program.

Sector-leading tenancy support

The award-winning Independent Living Program (ILP) consistently reports strong, positive outcomes for the people it supports, and this year was no different.

Nine out of 10 tenants who completed an annual survey reported that Uniting was inclusive and welcoming, and that they feel safe to be themselves with us.

A new lease on life

Ten Uniting WA properties were successfully renovated thanks to Social Housing Economic Recovery Package (SHERP) grants provided by the Department of Communities. This was a notable achievement by the Community Housing team given the high cost and shortage of materials, increased demand for tradespeople and the requirement to relocate tenants during works.

Partnership delivers mutual benefits

As a peer organisation and part of the UnitingCare Australia network, we were delighted to establish a new partnership with Good Sammy Enterprises (GSE) to manage garden maintenance at a number of Uniting WA properties.



“I really, really appreciate everything you’ve done for me, it’s taken months, but you got there, and I hope you are appreciated at work because I think you’ve given above and beyond.”

Financial Counselling client

Josephine’s* journey to financial stability.

When 45-year-old Josephine made an appointment to see a financial counsellor at Uniting WA, she thought her only option would be to declare bankruptcy.

At the time, Josephine had left her husband and was renting a property with her three children aged 15, 13 and 9 years.

In 2022, her ex-husband took his own life and in that terrible aftermath, Josephine discovered he had left her saddled with an enormous amount of personal debt.

Unbeknown to her, there had been a shortfall from the sale of the family home and a second joint investment property totalling almost \$319,000. She also owed the bank \$68,000 for a personal loan. In total, Josephine found herself liable for debt of approximately \$387,000.

After carefully examining the details of her finances, our Uniting WA financial counsellor

put forward a proposal for a debt waiver of \$182,000 to one of the banks involved, based on compassionate grounds. The bank agreed not to pursue the case, gave Josephine a debt waiver and closed her account.

The financial counsellor also negotiated with the other bank over the remaining debt and persuaded the bank to reduce the \$205,000 debt down to \$6804. For that loan, Josephine now pays \$50 a month in repayments.

Josephine said she was so grateful and relieved that Uniting WA had advocated and negotiated on her behalf, especially at a time when she had been so distressed and vulnerable.

*Names and identifying details have been changed to protect privacy

Financial Wellbeing

We support people through financial crisis with financial counselling and emergency relief material support. We also promote financial wellbeing, capability and resilience through community workshops and coaching.

As the economic landscape continues to shift, more people are seeking financial wellbeing services and material support. To address this, we’ve partnered with organisations including Emergency Relief and Food Access Services (ERFAS) to provide brokerage support to more client-managing agencies. This collaborative effort has helped us meet the growing needs of our community.

Increasing accessibility

Uniting WA was one of four agencies in Western Australia to pilot a new Appointment Booking Project for financial counselling clients referred by the National Debt Hotline.

The project, which was funded by the Department of Social Services, was designed to streamline access to financial counsellors and ensure that people who needed support were able to access services in their local community with reduced wait times.

Education and advocacy

- Our Financial Wellbeing Services team was named as a finalist in the 2022 Richard Fletcher Consumer Protection Awards, in recognition of the significant contribution they made towards raising community awareness of consumer protection issues.
- Several members of the team were also nominated as finalists in various categories at the 2022 Financial Counsellors’ Association of Western Australia conference.
- Financial Counsellor, Paul Jordan, was invited to speak at the National Financial Counselling Conference in Canberra after receiving a scholarship from the Financial Counselling Network to attend.



Guiding the organisation

Meet our 2022/2023 Board members

The Uniting WA Board oversees our direction and governance. The Board is appointed by the Uniting Church Western Australia Synod.



Erica Haddon
Chairperson



Jane Barker
Board Member



Ron Chalmers
Board Member



Isabel de Jesus
Board Member



Lisa Fini
Board Member



Chris Hunt
Board Member



David Kyle
Board Member



Alison McCubbin
Board Member



Alison Xamon
Board Member



Michael Chester
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Jen Park
Co-Chief Executive Officer

[More about our Board](#)

Meet our 2022/2023 Executive and Management team



Michael Chester
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Jen Park
Co-Chief Executive Officer



Justin Bunter
Chief Financial Officer



Sue Thomas
Chief Administrative Officer



Ross Bentong
General Manager –
Organisation Solutions and
ICT



Simon Bibby
General Manager –
Performance and Employee
Relations



Troy Morse
General Manager – Property
and Assets



Jennifer Snell
General Manager – Service
and Quality

Alisha Aitken-Radburn
Senior Manager – Advocacy

Annette Boyle
Senior Manager – Community Engagement and Education

Jess Brodie-Hall
Senior Manager – Communications and Engagement

Fiona Cafferty
Senior Manager – Children and Young People

Katherine Campbell
Senior Manager – Individualised Services

Vanessa Gwerder
Senior Manager – Reintegration

Michelle King
Senior Manager – Individualised Services

Narelle Morgan
Senior Manager – People Services

Gertie Murphy
Senior Manager – Risk and Compliance

Louise Naylor
Senior Manager – Community Housing

Tara Seaward
Senior Manager – Strengthening Families

Balbeer Sidhu
Senior Manager – Financial Wellbeing

Roland Soo
Senior Manager – Finance

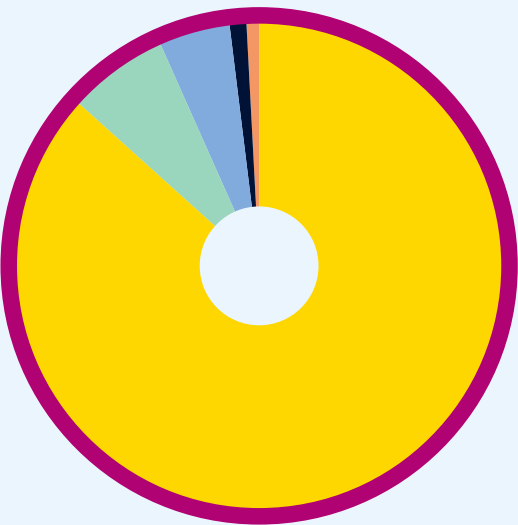
Emma White
Senior Manager – Transitioning from Homelessness

Financial report

2022 - 2023

2022/2023 Income

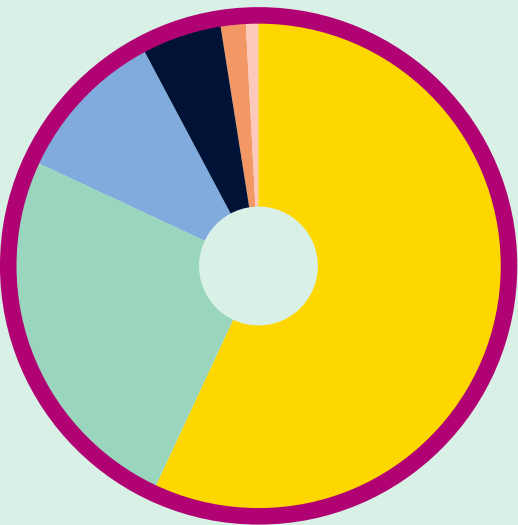
Total
\$53.2 million



- **46.2m** Grants
- **3.5m** Rental income
- **2.5m** Sales and other income
- **0.6m** Donations and fundraising
- **0.4m** Interest and dividends

2022/2023 Expenditure

Total
\$52.8 million



- **30.2m** Employee costs
- **13.1m** Program costs
- **2.8m** Property costs
- **5.5m** Administration costs
- **0.4m** Motor vehicle expenses
- **0.8m** Depreciation and amortisation

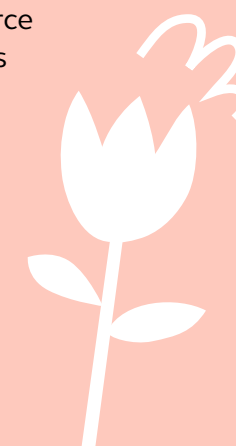
Our **partners** and supporters



We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of the community and corporate partners who have supported our journey over the past year. Together, we have navigated challenges and embraced opportunities that have made a real, lasting impact on the lives of the people we serve.

Your unwavering commitment, generosity and belief in our mission have been the driving force behind our achievements this year.

Thank you.



Major funding bodies

Uniting WA relies on funding support to deliver our programs and services. We acknowledge and thank our major funding bodies:

- City of Stirling
- Department of Communities
- Department of Justice
- Department of Social Services
- Department of Health
- Lotterywest
- Mental Health Commission
- National Disability Insurance Scheme
- WA Primary Health.

The path forward

At Uniting WA, we act with impact.

We're the carers, thinkers, doers and darers who strive to make a difference for the people we serve. We're driven to be there for others, but together, **we can do more.**



Volunteer

We simply couldn't exist without the support of our amazing volunteers. Every day, they make a difference by forging stronger connections with the people we support. Our volunteers are valued advocates and experts who work hard to make people feel valued and respected.

[Volunteer with us](#)



Make a donation

Your donation maximises the impact of the services we provide to the most vulnerable members of our community. Give a gift today and support us in our purpose to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

[Make a donation](#)



Partner with us

Benefit from a tailored partnership that maximises value for your team and your brand, while also delivering on your ESG objectives. Make a measurable impact with the people who matter and the communities you live and work in, together with Uniting.

[Get in touch](#)

Uniting WA 2023-2026 strategic plan

Our new 2023-2026 strategic plan builds on the strong foundations laid by our dedicated current and former team and Board members, marking an exciting new chapter in the evolution of our journey to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

Leveraging collective expertise, experience and insight from our Board, Executive team and leaders across the organisation, the 2023-2026 strategic plan serves as a roadmap for our future success.

A comprehensive planning process and extensive consultation with internal teams ensured that we remain focused on delivering better outcomes for the people we serve.

Develop & deepen partnerships



Develop strategic partnerships to embrace current service delivery and realise new opportunities as a positive influencer in the sector.

Develop growth & extension of services



Purposefully increase housing and accommodation assets and infrastructure options that are linked to services for people who require support.

Our objectives

Drive sustainability, revenue growth & surplus



Demonstrate social impact aligned to its' mission while remaining financially and environmentally sustainable.

Deepen capability, capacity & efficiency



Continue to invest, grow and develop our capability and capacity in relation to people, technology and processes.

Contact Us

If you'd like to find out more about our organisation and work, please contact us at:

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Uniting