



FAITH FOR A NEW SEASON ▪ SYNOD 37

Report from Wesley Mission Queensland



Summary

Wesley Mission Queensland's (WMQ)'s report to the 37th Synod includes celebrating the stories of our mission **'We walk alongside people in need offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.'**

This collection of short stories is the why we do what we do, the fabric of who we are, is our legacy, our identity, the people we serve and our purpose **'as part of the Uniting Church our purpose is to participate in the mission of God – towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.'**

There is much to celebrate here at Wesley Mission Queensland. Over the past 18 months our people continue to grow as we evolve in response to challenges and opportunities. As we continue our journey of transformation and **renewal**, **Hebrews 3:4** reminds us **'for every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything.'**

Context

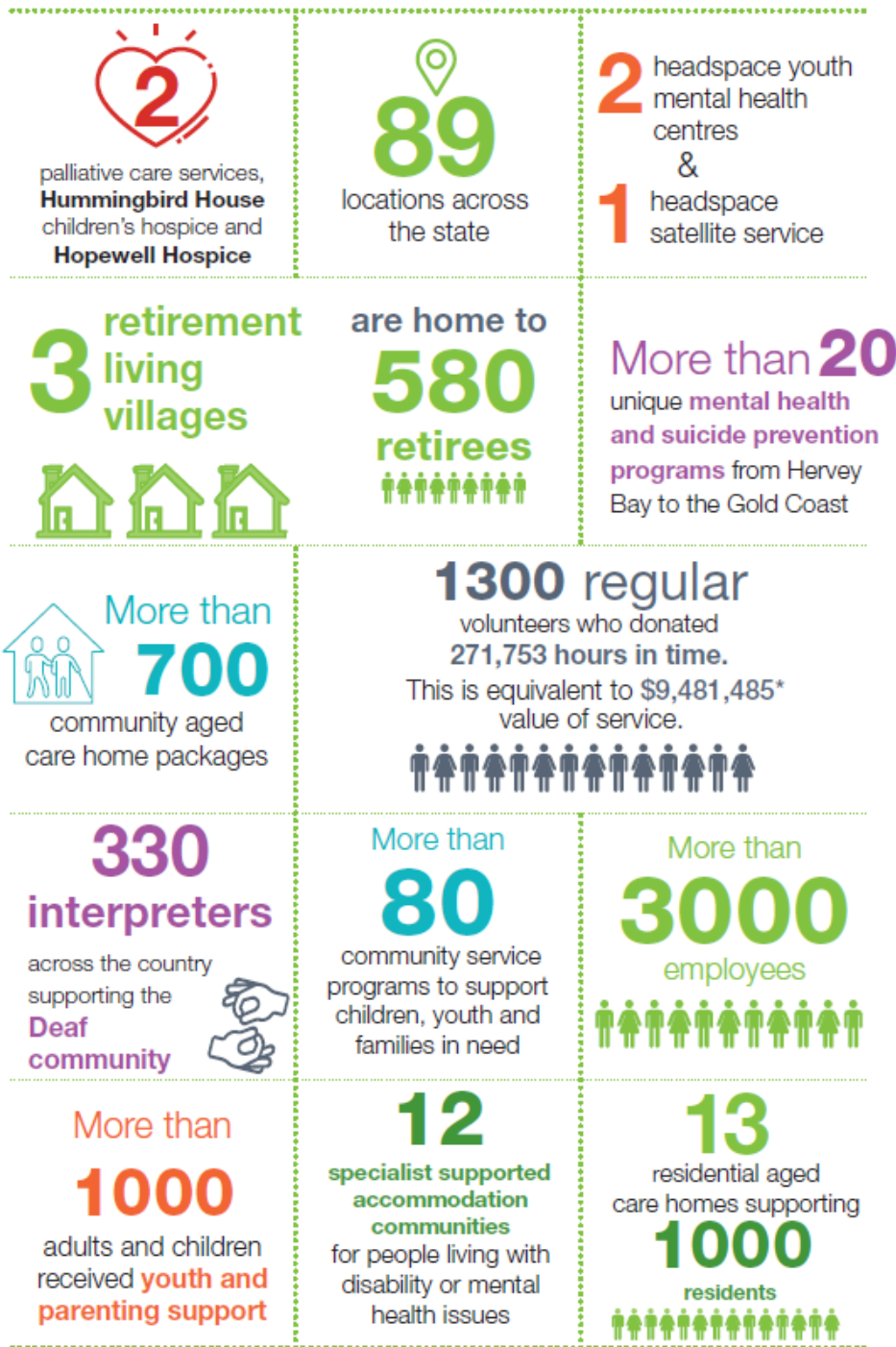
Everyone has a story. This is ours.

Since 1907, Wesley Mission Queensland has been helping people across Queensland build stronger and more inclusive communities. **Micah 6:8** reminds us that we are called to **'act justly, love mercy and walk humbly before God.'** This calling has guided the work of our mission since its inception. As a mission activity born of the Albert Street Uniting Church (ASUC), WMQ is a not-for-profit organisation providing community support; mental health services; aged, disability and palliative care, including specialist palliative care for children with life limiting conditions; and retirement living through our 13 residential aged care homes, three retirement villages, 14 specialist disability accommodation facilities and two hospices. We also deliver state-wide community support and Auslan interpreting services to members of the Deaf community nationally. Our staff engage with people from all walks of life to encourage choice and independence.

WMQ has a long and proud history of supporting people in need. Founded in the 1900s to provide meals to children and women in need, from 1 July 2023 we now operate as an Institution of the Uniting Church. We work collaboratively with other Uniting Church congregations, community organisations and government bodies to provide accessible and flexible services to older people, those living with a disability or mental illness, and vulnerable children and families. Through our Reconciliation Action Plan, Wesley Mission Queensland celebrates diversity and stands with First Nations Peoples for an equal and united future.

With more than 3,000 employees and 2,200 volunteers working across approximately 90 services, we are guided by the [Wesley Charter](#) a framework that guides our interactions with the people we serve. Our people strive to make a difference in people's lives by building relationships, showing respect and demonstrating compassion.

Over the past 18 months WMQ continued to be called to provide much needed services to the most vulnerable in our communities.



*based on Australian Government Stronger Guidelines volunteer hourly rates.

Priorities

Governance

In December 2022 WMQ farewelled and thanked long standing Chairperson Paul Newman after 12 years serving on the WMQ Board and 9 years in the Chairperson role. In the last twelve months, we also farewelled and thanked valued Board members, David Edwards, Con Graves, Robert Packer

and Dr Ian Airey. In January 2023 we welcomed six new Board members.; Elizabeth Baker, Dr Daniel Pampuch, Lee Poole, Dr Jessa Rogers, David Rose and Mark Townend. From 1 July 2023 we welcomed the Moderator and General Secretary of the Queensland Synod as ex-officio Board members. We look forward to welcoming Moderator-elect Rev Bruce Moore and the incoming General Secretary from October 2023 and thank Rev Andrew Gunton and Rev Heather den Houting for their contributions.

In January 2023 Mrs Elaine Rae was appointed the Chairperson for the WMQ Board.

The WMQ Board is supported by three committees, the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, the Care and Clinical Governance Committee and the Governance Committee, each of which operates under a Charter approved by the WMQ Board. Our Board's focus over the past 18 months has been one of **'renewal'** and the enhancing of our internal governance structures, with oversight from our committees and an intentional plan of board meeting evaluations and board member ongoing professional development.

In response to increased regulatory compliance and recognising the important contribution members make governing the organisation, we have professionalised the WMQ Board from volunteer status to a remunerated Board. The WMQ Board Governance Committee has now been in operation for nearly two years and continues to strengthen our governance structure. These changes align with recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission and will hold the organisation in good stead for future opportunities and challenges.

In response to a recent regulatory change to the way public benevolent institution charities are allowed to operate, Wesley Mission Queensland explored what, if any, structural change would provide a 'fit for purpose' governance framework into the future. Following extensive discussions with Albert Street Church Council, and Synod personnel, from 1 July 2023 WMQ became an Institution of the Church and is in the process of realigning its relationship with Albert Street Uniting Church. In this way, WMQ can meet this more stringent requirement of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) while allowing us to continue to build our vital church and community work.

The Albert Street Uniting Church congregation is now formally called, UCA Wesley Mission Queensland Albert Street Church, as a parish mission of The Uniting Church in Australia and is registered as a basic religious charity.

Wesley Mission Queensland is an Institution of the Queensland Synod and continues to be registered as a public benevolent institution.

The work to undertake the realignment is being led by the Project Everlast Steering Committee, a committee of the Synod Standing Committee with representation from WMQ, the Albert Street Uniting Church, Moreton Rivers Presbytery, and the Synod.

COVID-19 – continued challenges

While it would have been a welcome relief to be talking about something other than COVID-19, the unavoidable truth is that over the past 18 months COVID-19 continued to impact us as it has for the broader community. But despite the challenges of industry-wide staffing shortages, fatigue and the new normal working in full PPE during outbreak scenarios, WMQ employees went above and beyond

and together we provided an exceptional level of care that ensured the safety and wellbeing of our clients.

Throughout this time, the Executive Leadership Team have remained focused on Wesley Mission Queensland's future. While we know life will never return to pre-COVID times, we have continued to build on our strong foundations to create a vibrant future. The internal launch of WMQ 2032 was the start of an exciting period of transformation for Wesley Mission Queensland which will see us adapt and become more agile to reach more people in need.

Our achievements can be seen in the positive outcomes experienced by the people we serve.

Ageing Well

Despite the continued challenges of COVID-19, staff maintained an exceptional standard of care for residents, ensuring they stayed engaged and connected to family during periods of lockdown and going to great lengths to ensure their safety.

All of our aged care homes received accreditation as a residential service for a further three years. Guided by experienced managers, each of these homes met all standards in an involved process which included feedback from staff and residents. This is wonderful recognition for the teams in these homes.

Community Aged Care grew with around 150 additional Home Care Package consumers during this period and have received full accreditation during this time.

Hopewell Hospice produced a series of videos to educate people on conversations about death and end-of-life care to help assist those going through this difficult experience.

Respite services offered a broad range of arts and crafts, music and social activities at four respite centres, including a four-bed cottage respite service, to more than 300 people.

The relationship between Anam Cara Aged Care Community and Bray Park State High School continued to flourish. 2021's graduating students had worked with Anam Cara since starting high school. This partnership has been mutually beneficial and encourages connection to community.

John Wesley Gardens held Laughter Yoga classes, a 30-minute adapted seated session that has physical, psychological and social benefits not to mention fun. Research has found measurable benefits for blood pressure, pulse and mood, during a pilot study.

In October 2022 WMQ celebrated Queensland Seniors Month by sharing a compilation of [videos](#) with seniors sharing their stories.



Fay's story

John Wesley Gardens Aged Care Community resident Fay loved family outings at the beach for fish and chips, but in early 2020 Fay had a stroke and as a result she requires a high level of support.

With beach trips seemingly no longer possible, it had been years since Fay was able to share this experience with her family.

The John Wesley Gardens Manager met with Fay's daughter Debbie and set a goal to make it happen again.

After working with the occupational therapists, physiotherapists and trialling different types of wheelchairs, Fay finally got there!

The John Wesley Gardens Manager joined Faye's family to give them the support they needed to enjoy the experience with their mum. When asked about the experience the Manager shared, *'To see the excitement on Fay's face during the taxi ride, arriving at the beach, and of course, eating the fish and chips was absolutely priceless and the reason I get out of bed every day in this role.'*

'To listen to the family and see how emotionally affected they were by this simple trip out with their mum - is truly the Eden Philosophy of supporting elders in action.'



Living with disability

WMQ continues to be a preferred provider in the **specialist disability accommodation (SDA)** space. This is due to our reputation as a provider of supports to residents who have high and complex clinical and care needs. WMQ has moved from being an 'investor' in the SDA space to working with reputable investors/builders and being the Supported Independent Living (SIL) provider. These collaborations have seen WMQ establish support services at Murarrie (six apartments), Sibley Road – Wynnum (3 x 3 bedroom houses) and Hope Island on the Gold Coast (six apartments).

WMQ is also working collaboratively with Ipswich Hospital (West Moreton Health Service) to transition long-term NDIS eligible patients into their forever SDA/SIL homes. Some of these patients have been in hospital for up to two years and have very limited family/support networks, so when they transition to WMQ not much is known about them, including their aspirations, likes, needs, etc. WMQ is changing that, in order to ensure these individuals get to live a life full of joy, hope and enjoyment.

The **ORCA Project (Opportunities, Readiness, Community and Abilities)** had 91 participants and the Mansfield site held its first graduation. This program empowers school leavers with the confidence to set and achieve goals as they embark on a journey of transformation leading them to work readiness.

Corporate partners are challenged to change their thinking and allow for the opportunities offered by employing people living with a disability.

ORCA have created a short film entry for the **Focus on Ability Film Festival** this year. We have been notified that our film has been shortlisted. It is a five-minute clip that challenges many myths that we have heard surrounding people with disability in the workplace. Please find the link to our clip [here](#).

Dylan's story

Dylan Kokiri was the first ORCA participant to commence work experience at Wesley Mission Queensland's Corporate Office back in July 2019. During his short time there, he made such an impression on staff with his dedication to learn and attention to detail, that in March 2021 Dylan was offered a permanent role and has quickly become a valued member of the corporate office team.

"I liked to learn new things at ORCA and one of the carers at ORCA helped me achieve this job that I love here at corporate office. This job is so good and I'm always busy with all the stuff that comes in. I also like working with Eddie as well, and all the other staff members. I want to do a good job for Maria and make her proud because I have a very big responsibility at reception and for Maria".

When asked what his favourite part of the day was, Dylan said "starting my day with a great cup of vanilla coffee or milkshake with Eddie from the leisure centre, they know our order by heart now".

Eddie Solien, Manager Reconciliation and Diversity & Inclusion and Dylan Kokiri, Administration Assistant Corporate Office Reception



Wesley Industries (providing supported employment through social enterprise) is somewhat of an unsung hero of WMQ in the disability employment space. Currently this service provides employment and support to 60 people with disability, who would find it difficult to work in an open employment setting. This service provides meaningful work, but also equally important, provides support to build confidence, competence and, in some cases, life-long friendships and social connections, that otherwise would not have occurred. Wesley Industries prides itself on 'breaking down barriers' for people with disability and supporting people to be successful in employment. We also applaud and support those who gain the confidence to move to open employment and achieve success, due to the support they have received at Wesley Industries.

Wesley Industries expanded service delivery to NAK, assembling approximately 380,000 packs of hair product for the business. This was an increase of about 90,000 packs (or 24%) from the previous year. Wesley Industries aims to grow its supported workforce by 25 per cent in the next 12 – 24 months.

Over the past 18 months, **National Auslan Booking Service (NABS)** booked Auslan interpreters for almost 8200 appointments for NDIS participants nationally. This included face-to-face and virtual appointments. NABS also provided interpreters for Queensland Health vaccination clinics.

Over the past 18 months, **Wesley Arts** has delivered more than 1900 creative art workshop sessions and held a number of major exhibitions and performance days. More than 8000 participants attended Wesley Arts workshops through weekly group and one-on-one sessions across nine venues in Southeast Queensland.

Housing and Homelessness

WMQ plays a pivotal role in supporting over 3000 of those at risk of homelessness and keeping them in tenancies and transitioning them to safe, affordable housing options, particularly in the Logan/Beenleigh, Gold Coast and Ipswich regions. The Department of Housing has consistently reached out to WMQ to seek additional supports from us, as we have a strong and proven track record in producing results for this most vulnerable group.

Youth Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS)

This young person* graduated Year 12 last year and received 10 certificates at the ceremony. To some, this may not look like a big deal but for this young person it means the world.

When they first came to the team at the Youth Housing and Reintegration Service (YHARS) in March 2022, they were struggling with mental health issues and had an unstable home life. The YHARS team provided support through their strengths-based case management approach and helped this young person make incredible progress towards their goals.

They have improved their family relationships, stabilised their housing, started regular part-time work and are now actively seeking an opportunity to start an apprenticeship in the automotive industry.

**Identity protected to ensure privacy.*

WMQ continues to support the Queensland Council of Social Services (QCOSS), Queensland's peak body for the community services sector as a partner on its [Town of Nowhere campaign](#) calling for a national housing strategy and 5000 new social homes each year so that those in need have a safe roof over their head.

Community and Crisis Relief

Over the past 18 months growing our mental health services has been a focus for WMQ.

The Way Back Support Services in Brisbane South and the Gold Coast were the two busiest nationally, providing support to people following a suicide attempt.

headspace Hervey Bay and Maryborough launched the Take a Step campaign, an initiative that empowers Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop resilience and help them feel positive and confident in who they are. It provides early intervention mental health services to 12–25-year-olds and helps locals learn about, recognise and celebrate their stories and way of life, connect with Elders and community and explore what culture means to them.

Wesley Kids ran four ArtBEAT groups in partnership with Wesley Arts and local primary schools. ArtBEAT is a creative therapies-based mental health group where children can participate in a fun, creative activity, while learning strategies to support their own mental wellbeing. This program was generously funded by the Commonwealth Bank.

Crossing Paths, a support program for carers of people in suicidal crisis, supported 105 carers on the Gold Coast. This model was co-designed with carers, and the team is made up of peer workers, providing connection to others with shared experience.

Emergency Relief (ER) services continued to be offered despite major disruptions caused by COVID-19, supply chain issues and staff and volunteer shortages. The service responded by modifying opening hours, changing purchasing processes and pivoting to takeaway meals to ensure the community need could still be met. ER increased food rescue operations with local catering companies and increased its connection with Foodbank and other sources of large-scale food rescue.

Emergency Relief Hub's existing partnership with Sunny Street evolved in 2022 to include onsite medical services every Tuesday morning. A new clinic was developed for COVID-19 vaccinations for anyone without the need for a Medicare card – this also commenced in 2022.

Melissa's story

Melissa* is a registered midwife and, like many healthcare professionals, the last few years have been tough physically and mentally.

Melissa and her family were living in temporary accommodation due to an ongoing insurance claim on their home and she was recovering from a workplace injury which added to her stress. She experienced feelings of depression, hopelessness and isolation.

Melissa engaged help from the WMQ COVID Recovery (Border Communities) Service, who provide responsive well-being support for small business owners, their families and staff living within the Queensland border communities.

Melissa's recovery worker was able to link her with ongoing support from mental health services as well as assist with the administration of her insurance claim, enabling her and her family to move back into their family home sooner.

'My family and I are so very thankful to Wesley Mission Queensland for the support and care they have provided to us.

'I wasn't sent a support worker; I was sent an "Earth Angel". As I sit here writing, I have tears streaming down my face. Happy tears as I think of all the times and situations, they have been an advocate for me to help improve my life.'

Albert Street Uniting Church Building discipleship

Albert Street Uniting Church is in its second year of building discipleship pathways into the life of our church. These are invitations: An Introduction to the Christian Faith (pathway to baptism), Oikos: Becoming the Body of Christ at Albert Street Uniting Church (pathway to membership) and Followship: Being Formed as Disciples of Jesus. The church has grown and deepened its followship of Jesus adding 18 new members, participating in 3 affirmations of baptism and 2 adult baptisms as well as affirming the faith of families with young children through the baptism of 40 children across 2022/2023.

Albert Street Church has developed an ever-growing online ministry that includes live-streaming worship services, baptisms, weddings and funerals, online prayer groups and life groups, providing access to recorded services, bible studies and other resources, and online church meetings for staff, leaders and congregation members. We have active members of our church community who live in different states within Australia, and internationally. We are currently trialling a new platform that will help increase connection and community with a view to launching this in the new year. We are also exploring how we can support local congregations with their online discipleship communities.

Young Adults at Albert Street (YAAS) meet in-person and on-line and offer opportunities for young adults to engage in meaningful conversations about faith and life, and to explore the Christian faith in their contemporary context. Much faith filled conversation happens around a board game or two! Alongside this, our YAAS community is engaged in leadership through the Lay Preachers Course, Sunday Worship and hosting an Annual Trivia Night which is enjoyed by the whole congregation.

Albert Street Uniting Church is looking forward to launching Godly Play for children in 2024 and welcoming children to come and play at Albert Street.

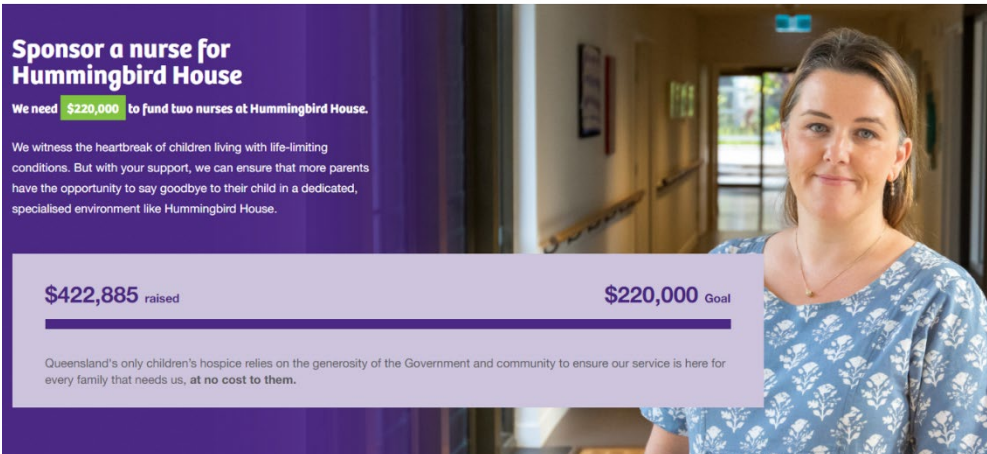

Hospices

Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice, celebrated its fifth birthday.

Hummingbird House is a nine bed 24-hour service providing short break stays, family support services and end-of-life and after death care for children with life-limiting conditions. An innovative program offering recently bereaved families intensive support over six months was co-designed with four bereaved parents. Participants were paired with bereaved parent support/mentors who received training and ongoing support from Hummingbird House staff. This was an internationally unique program for a children's hospice context.

Hummingbird House ran a pilot program called HELD for bereaved mothers whose baby died before they were twelve months old. They could make dolls representing their baby and include a loving message inside.

We celebrate the recent success of our Sponsor a nurse for Hummingbird House campaign and acknowledge the generosity of our supporters.



Hopewell Hospice is a dedicated palliative care facility servicing the Gold Coast and surrounding regions. The eight-room service provides 24-hour on-site nursing, ancillary services and accommodation for anyone with life-limiting illnesses at the end stage of life. The service also offers grief and loss support counselling to all our clients, as well as their family and loved ones. [Listen to Pam tell her story.](#)

Currently we are reviewing our capacity/opportunity to refurbish Hopewell Hospice to ensure we can continue to provide sought after palliative care services in appropriate up to date surroundings. (Hopewell Hospice is the only adult palliative care hospice on the Gold Coast). We work collaboratively with the Gold Coast University Hospital in terms of General Practitioner medical oversight. WMQ is also working on how we can identify and collaborate with First Nations individuals

and organisations to ensure this group are aware of Hopewell Hospice and our capacity to provide culturally safe and appropriate palliative care, when dying at home is not an option, or support networks are not in place. Current data has identified around 2,200 First Nations persons who are in the aged/frail aged cohort located on the Gold Coast.

Pastoral and Spiritual Care

The WMQ Pastoral and Spiritual Care (PSC) Team (consisting of 9 full time equivalent), continues to provide daily support across Residential Aged Care (RAC) and Palliative Care services, particularly in circumstances involving acute spiritual distress such as end-of-life, serious illness, grief and loss. Over the last 18 months the PSC Team has seen three retirements of long-term team members, including the PSC Team Leader, and other changes in personnel. This has required the relatively 'young' team to be agile and responsive to a wide variety of organisational, pastoral and spiritual needs across a changing WMQ landscape. Close attention is therefore being paid to mutually supportive working relationships and shared team values and purposes, aligning these in every situation to the ethos and mission of WMQ as expressed in the Wesley Charter and the [Eden Philosophy](#).

The PSC team continue to occupy and explore the 'space' within the WMQ holistic health and social care model where 'the importance of such things as meaning, purpose, value, dignity, love and the Divine are intentionally brought to the fore within the lives of WMQ residents, customers and families and also in the lives of our people who provide care'.

Despite the continued impact of rolling RAC lockdowns, face-to-face worship services led by RAC Chaplains have resumed across RAC communities to complement the ongoing provision of on-line services, including the long-awaited re-opening of The Sanctuary at Wheller Gardens, where Sunday services are now also offered on a fortnightly basis. Multi-court ecumenical worship, hymn-singing and fellowship gatherings have been added to the variety of services offered by the PSC team. The Palliative Care Chaplain has become an integral and valued member of the Care Teams within Hummingbird House and Hopewell Hospice.

PSC education is being developed to reflect and promote current research and national best practice in spiritual care provision, supporting the professional development of the PSC Team but also focusing on wider staff engagement to promote holistic spiritual care literacy, linking closely with WMQ wellness and mental health support processes.

All members of the PSC team reach out to staff, and to families, aware that pastoral and spiritual care is a dynamic, responsive practice which carries emotional, psychological, wellbeing and cultural significance. Slow but sure progress is being made, with the support of WMQ Volunteer Relations, to re-establish (post-pandemic) a secure, dedicated spiritual care volunteer base and to work effectively in partnership with denominational volunteers. WMQ is blessed to be supported by this group of dedicated professionals sharing their gift of spiritual comfort – their time, companionship, love and understanding.

Snapshot of our workforce

- over 3100 employees, representing a diverse workforce hailing from 85 different countries. This diversity is one of our strengths. Approximately 80% of our workforce identify as female. 33% of our employees have English as a second language. These figures underscore our commitment to diversity and inclusion.
- 72 employees have worked with WMQ for more than 20 years.
- 30 staff have over 30 years of service and 617 people have worked with us for 10 years or more.
- our longest-serving team member boasts over 35 years of service.
- 2200+ volunteers supporting 53 services. 4351 total hours donated in a typical week. Equivalent of 114 people working full time hours per week.

Collectively, we live out the values of WMQ while supporting our vision and mission.

Reconciliation and Diversity & Inclusion

**Everyone is welcome here,
Everyone is celebrated here.**

Wesley Mission Queensland brings together people who want to make a difference in the lives of others. We value diversity, strive for inclusion and justice for all.



Our key focus for diversity and inclusion initiatives is to create an environment where everyone, regardless of their background, feels valued, respected, and has equal opportunities to succeed. This involves supporting our diverse and inclusive workforce, ensuring our policies and practices reflect our commitment to diversity and embedding inclusion into every aspect of our work. We aim to not only increase diversity in recruitment, but also ensure representation at all levels, especially in decision-making roles. Through our initiatives, we aim to foster a culture where diversity and inclusion are seen as strengths that drive innovation, community engagement, and organizational success. We are devoted to transforming the communities we serve through inclusive, innovative, and compassionate service delivery.

- There has been significant progress in our people's awareness, understanding, and respect for diverse cultural backgrounds, with 17.69% of our workforce self-selecting to complete Diversity and Inclusion online training, a 234.88% increase from 2022 to 2023.
- We have rolled out new LGBTIQ+ Inclusivity Initiatives, including LGBTIQ+ Community of Practice, Ally Inclusion Badge Initiative and the LGBTIQ+ Identities Initiative.
- We have commenced a program of delivering in-house 2-hour face-to-face cultural and inclusivity sessions across all WMQ services and aim to have delivered this training to all our people by the end of 2024.

- Our focus remains on sustaining the momentum, continually improving our strategies and fostering an environment where every voice is heard and valued, and a place our people can be their authentic selves.

WMQ continues our Reconciliation journey. Reconciliation is led by our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Committee, Deadly Connections Employee Reference Group and our RAP Events Committee. These diverse group of individuals have a deep commitment to the process of Reconciliation and have volunteered to be involved and drive the delivery of our commitments.

WMQ acknowledge and respect First Nations peoples, cultures, and heritage. Central to our approach is actively listening to and engaging with First Nations WMQ employees and external communities.

Three key areas of focus for WMQ over the next two years are:

1. We are committed to creating a culturally safe and respectful environment where First Nations voices are heard, valued, and lead to significant and lasting change. Ensuring we understand the cultural safety temperature of WMQ is imperative to growing and retaining WMQ's First Nations employees. We have included online First Nations Cultural Appreciation training in our suite of mandated education modules for all staff and have commenced delivery of face-to-face cultural and inclusivity sessions. We will measure our cultural safety as we work through delivering these imperative educational initiatives.
2. Increase the number of First Nations employees at WMQ and retain these people. As of this report the representation of First Nations employees sits at 0.86% or 28. We have set a target to employ over 120 First Nations employees by 2025. This is a significant stretch target for WMQ, however one that we will strive to achieve.
3. Seek to partner with another grass roots First Nations owned and run community service provider. We have been journeying in relationship with [Strong Women Talking](#) for over five years. Strong Women Talking operate their domestic and family violence prevention and healing programs from our Wheller Gardens site at Chermside.

In August 2023 Aunty Rose Mosby-Fauid has commenced in the part time role of Cultural Appreciation Officer. Aunty Rose will be hosting Cultural Appreciation and Safety Yarning Circles with our teams. We recognise the importance of an all-encompassing approach to cultural engagement and learning. Our Cultural Appreciation and Safety Yarning Circle initiative seamlessly integrates traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander conversational practices with our contemporary organisational needs, underpinning both cultural appreciation and safety.

Cultural Acknowledgement: Every session begins by honouring the traditional custodians of the land on which WMQ stands, recognising their deep histories, traditions, and continuous connections. This gesture sets a foundation of mutual respect and understanding for all subsequent discussions.

Cultural Safety Training for All Employees: At the heart of our initiative is our dedication to ensuring that every WMQ team member undergoes comprehensive cultural safety training. This training focuses on enhancing understanding, dispelling biases, and nurturing environments where every employee feels valued, acknowledged, and safe, irrespective of their cultural background.

renewal

Inclusivity: Our circles champion the principle of inclusivity. Whether one wishes to share personal narratives, pose questions, or offer insights, each voice enriches our shared understanding and strengthens the fabric of our community.

Storytelling: Drawing from deep-seated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander traditions, storytelling remains an essential element of our Yarning Circles. Through the act of sharing and listening, we establish deeper connections, fostering a richer understanding of diverse experiences and perspectives.

Reflection & Ongoing Learning: Following each circle, participants are prompted to reflect on their experiences and offer feedback. This iterative feedback loop ensures our approach remains adaptive, relevant, and in tune with our evolving needs. By intertwining cultural appreciation with safety, WMQ's Yarning Circles are envisioned as more than mere educational gatherings. They are pivotal in connecting diverse voices, deepening understanding, and crafting a workplace where every individual feels recognised and integral. We invite all WMQ employees to be part of this transformative journey, as together we shape a more inclusive, empathetic, and culturally vibrant WMQ.

Aunty Rose is more than just a name; she is an institution in and of herself.

Aunty Rose is a respected elder in the Torres Strait Islander community with a strong connection to the Poruma Islands. Many people have had the opportunity to witness Aunty Rose's unique ability to encompass everyone around her in warmth, acceptance, and understanding. Her approach to engaging with people, which is based on an open heart, inclusiveness, and warmth, creates an unrivalled safe space in which individuals can find the courage to embrace and understand even the most uncomfortable aspects of our shared histories and cultures.



Rosemount Retirement Living Stage 2

Construction on the Rosemount Stage 2 is near completion, adding an additional 50 two and three-bedroom apartments to the 70 already existing. This new community addresses demand for larger-sized retirement housing and is scheduled for completion late December 2023.

Earlier this year a 'meet the neighbours' event was held at Rosemount for existing residents to meet new incoming residents. We are thrilled with the development of this vibrant community.



Launching a refreshed Strategic Plan for Wesley Mission Queensland 2023 – 2025

In September 2023 WMQ launched its 'refreshed' Strategic Plan 2023 – 2025. Our customer remains at the **'heart of everything we do'**. The refreshed plan outlines WMQ's intentional mission to **'walk alongside people in need offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.'**



Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025



Key focus areas



Our Purpose

As part of the Uniting Church our purpose is to participate in the mission of God – towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.

Our Vision

A compassionate, just and inclusive society for all.

Our Mission

We walk alongside people in need offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.

Our Values

Integrity
Respect
Empowerment
Hope
Justice
Compassion
Innovation

The cooperative, centre for public theology Albert Street Uniting Church

The cooperative is a centre for public theology that runs a series of educational classes and public events to promote theological reflection on the current issues of our day. Over the past 18 months the cooperative has attracted participants from across Qld, Australia, and multiple countries as it explores what it means to engage public issues from a theological lens. Some of the exciting programs that have been run in the last 18 months include:

- **First annual conference, Uncommon Goods**, in September 2022. More than 25 people from across the globe presented papers on the topic of public theology and the challenge of postcolonialism. Attendees reported this event to be a highlight in Australian theology.
- **The Albert Street Lecture Series.** The Albert Street Lecture series offers quarterly lectures to serve the Queensland community of the Uniting Church in Australia and allow space for public theological reflection as we think together about the past and future of the UCA and critical issues of our time. Lectures in 2022 were delivered by Rev Janet Staines, Rev Sharon Hollis, Rev Esteban Liévano, and Rev Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams. In 2023 we held lectures off site including an August lecture from Kym Korbe at Indooroopilly Uniting Church and will finish the year with a lecture from Moderator Rev Bruce Moore at Albert Street Church in November.
- **Summer and Winter School** courses have been a tremendous success with participants from across Australia undertaking courses in Public Theology, Theology and Disability, and Pop Culture and Theology.

Along with the provision of digital articles, occasional Town Hall Meetings, podcasts, online forums, and a series of publications and research collaborations, the cooperative has revealed a strong desire across Australia for a theologically engaged public space from the Uniting Church tradition.

Plentiful focus

Wesley Mission Queensland continues to engage and participate in 'plenty activities' of the church. We share the vision of 'one church active in every Queensland community, bearer of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community'.

WMQ participated in the Project Plenty **Fit for-Purpose Governance working group** and continues to participate in the **Covenanting with First Peoples working group**.

WMQ and ASUC have continued to participate in the **Plenty Mental Health and Well-being working group of the Transformation Communities** priority. A training pilot program has begun on the Gold Coast with five congregations participating and 30 people being trained in Domestic Violence Awareness. This is a great outcome for its first training event. There is hope that there will be a city-based pilot in the near future.

Through the Synod led **Plentiful Leadership** course, six WMQ employees graduated from the program earlier this year. The program has provided much opportunity for embedding leadership theories and practical application back into the workplace. The program has also provided WMQ participants with the unique opportunity to network with peers within the wider church family.

Leveraging from the Plentiful Leadership program approach, WMQ developed the Emerging Leaders Program. The WMQ Emerging Leaders Program has been specifically designed for WMQ employees to equip identified emerging leaders with the skills and capabilities to lead a team. The program seeks to provide the participants with the skills and knowledge to become effective leaders: authentic, trustworthy, and empowered to lead their teams to deliver results. 44 participants have graduated from this program. The program consists of a blended learning approach with additional opportunities for social and peer learning such as participation in work shadowing and mentoring activities across the organisation. WMQ has also incorporated a formal mentoring program, with 21 mentees participating in the formal mentoring program across the two years of running the formal mentoring program. Outcomes achieved from both programs saw internal promotions to more senior leadership roles, expanded networking and collaboration opportunities within the organisation and across the broader church.

Feedback from our emerging leaders

"The Emerging Leaders program came at a perfect time for me, when I was at the beginning of my leadership journey trying to navigate my way through a new role. I am very grateful to have been part of this program, which I have loved so much. I took the opportunity to immerse myself in everything on offer including the job shadow opportunity & the mentoring program. The face-to-face sessions were so valuable in the group setting, especially when it can be quite lonely in the world of leadership. I have made some wonderful connections with other parts of WMQ which is so important when our organisation is so widespread. The take home resources were also very helpful, to reflect on and put my knowledge into practice with my team."

"This leadership development was extremely valuable in developing my skills and understanding of leadership."

"I have cherished the opportunity to develop personally through this program and explore how this will develop me further in my career".

Internal Promotion comment – *"It's exciting to be in a place of readiness for the challenge, whereas prior to Emerging Leaders I would not have considered the role at all."*

renewal



Emerging Leaders 2023



Plentiful leaders 2023

Challenges

As we celebrate the good, we acknowledge the complex environment we operate within. Over the past 18 months the organisation has been working through the challenges of how we as a OneWMQ born from the Albert Street Uniting Church realign into an incorporated institution of the Uniting Church. This has been a significant focus for the WMQ Board and our Executive Leadership Team. WMQ remain committed to ensuring our missional connection with the Albert Street Uniting Church is retained and look forward to future opportunities for shared missional 'greener shoots' to emerge as we journey forward together.

Responding to the recommendations made by the Royal Commission into Aged Care, the government continues to roll out much needed aged care reforms. Across the sector there have been a total of 33 reforms implemented since the introduction of the Aged Care reforms began in October 2022. The current reform activity roadmap indicates there is another two years of planned major reform for the Aged Care sector. From August 2023 – July 2025 there will be a further 29 reforms implemented into Residential Aged Care. By July 2025 across the sector there will have been a total of 57 reforms during the entire period. Although these much-needed reforms are welcomed and required and aim to ensure future sustainability for a struggling sector and better care outcomes for our ageing population, the significant impact on the sector to implement these changes can not be underestimated.

The Disability Royal Commission is scheduled to deliver its final report by 29 September 2023. Wesley Mission Queensland will welcome the recommendations that the Royal Commission will make to improve laws, policies, structures and practices to ensure a more inclusive and just society that supports the independence of people with disability and their right to live free from violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. As experienced with the Aged Care Royal Commission, following the report, the government will respond to the recommendations with legislative reform to ensure real positive change for this vulnerable group of people.

Workforce remains the biggest challenge for WMQ as we continue to respond to the nation's ageing population. The fastest growing sector in terms of workforce demand in the Australian community over the next five years is in health, age care and disability services.

The 2023 Intergenerational report gives a timely long term forecast on the economy and the federal budget to 2062-63. Its analysis will help drive the key transformational foci of WMQ as we pursue our WMQ 2032 Transformation Strategy.

The report pinpoints five major forces affecting the coming decades:

- ageing population.
- technological and digital transformation.
- climate change and the net zero transformation.
- rising demand for care and support services.
- geopolitical risk and fragmentation.

Proposals to the 37th Synod

It is proposed that the 37th Synod receive this report.

Greener Shoots - possibilities and opportunities

In September 2022 WMQ commenced on a journey of transformation. Through a series of workshops collectively known as the Envisioning Series, we've laid the groundwork for transformation. The Envisioning process is a unique way of thinking to help us come up with ideas, test them, and plan the how of implementation. This process has been about dreaming big, looking at proof of concepts, how we unlock funding and ultimately how we provide a better service to our customers. As we aspire to change the way we think as we transform, **Romans 12:2 'Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.'** reminds us God is leading us on our journey.

Transformation is the key to remaining competitive, financially viable and to be able to continue to deliver premium services to our customers. WMQ looks forward to the **'greener shoots'** that will emerge as we continue our journey of transformation.

As a socially conscious organization, Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) issues are crucial to us. WMQ's commitment to ESG is being led by our Governance, Performance and Outcomes and Finance and Business Operations Directorates with a Strategic Plan currently being developed. As we assess our business practices, and sustainability and ethical performance, we aim to take practical, local, and meaningful actions across all ESG elements.

A primary focus of all key stakeholders is to ensure continued and enhanced missional alignment of WMQ with the Albert Street Uniting Church, following the realignment from 1 July 2023. To this effect a Deed of Covenant between WMQ, Albert Street Uniting Church and the Synod is soon to be confirmed to establish ongoing covenantal relationships and commitments.

As our two entities realign, the ASUC, WMQ and Synod commit to worship, witness and service. This is a step forward in faith, a reordering of our life in response to God's ongoing call. On one hand, our call and participation in worship will be strengthened through the renewed commitment of ASUC, WMQ and Synod to love God and share the good news of Jesus. And on the other, our love of neighbour will be ensured as we continue to walk alongside people in need, offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.

This is an exciting new chapter in our worship, witness and service - all part of the same history and the one story: God is love. Albert Street Uniting Church and WMQ's combined legacy will continue, with both entities equally committed to maintaining a shared journey of common mission and looking forward to realised shared missional goals into the future.

Conclusion

With anticipation and enthusiasm, we look forward to the next 'season' of 'renewal' for WMQ. We hold onto the words of the **book of Ecclesiastes 8: 'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven'**, with comfort that the Lord is guiding us along our journey through each season. WMQ is currently in the season of Spring, with '**greener shoots**' emerging full of opportunities to continue to further live out our purpose as '**we walk alongside people in need, offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence, and community wellbeing.**'

Contact for report questions

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