



# #realunitingchurch

Report from

## UnitingCare Queensland

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### Context

#### **The changing face of health, aged care and community services**

UnitingCare Queensland has undergone a period of significant change since the last Synod in Session. At the heart of this change is our mission — to support people to “live life in all its fullness” (John 10:10).

The changing face of community services impacts every aspect of our business. We are now feeling the effects of and responding to changes relating to:

- consumer-directed care – aged care and disability services
- increased competition from for-profit and not-for-profit providers, including new entrants into health and community services
- tightening of private health funding
- increased contestability in government funding
- changes in the community driven by technology
- demographic shifts and changing needs in the community.

We remain committed to providing services in regional and remote areas where there are few, if any, other providers. We provide services to some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country. We want to ensure our services are structured in such a way that will enable us to continue to do this. We are continually working to refine our service and business models, operating model, structure and business processes to be fit for purpose to ensure we can continue to sustainably support the communities we serve.

# Key achievements

## **Reshaping and transforming UnitingCare Queensland**

As foreshadowed at the 32nd Synod, the changing external environment led us to deeply reflect on our mission and purpose, the services we provide, the people and communities we serve, our business and operating models, our capability, our financial sustainability and our ambitions for the future. This is truly a time for the current board and executive to exercise our roles as intergenerational stewards as we navigate how we deliver mission in these changing times.

UnitingCare Queensland is changing the way it operates to support the delivery of services. During the past year we commenced the major integration of our corporate support functions previously operated by Blue Care, UnitingCare Health and UnitingCare Community. We brought new capability into our organisation as we navigate the world of marketing and customer experience. We are enabling our staff to be more mobile as they deliver Blue Care community services to more than 18,000 people every week. Our mission team has also been re-formed and is well-positioned to provide leadership.

We completed a new three-year strategic plan, aligned business and culture plans.

It has been a period of major change and disruption but also a year of embracing opportunity. Our staff and leaders have worked incredibly hard to sustain services, seize opportunities and build the foundations for the future.

## **Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse**

We have undertaken a review of our Child Safe, Child Friendly Framework and how it has been implemented across our services. We continue to monitor the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to ensure our framework and practice takes into account the learnings of the Royal Commission. We will refresh our framework in the latter half of 2017 and reinvigorate our implementation efforts to ensure that child safety continues to be a high priority for our people.

We have worked with the Queensland Synod and the Uniting Church nationally to support the church in its response to the Royal Commission, including in the preparation for its appearance before the Commission in Case Study 56 in March 2017.

We continue to work with the Uniting Church in Queensland and nationally to support efforts to provide redress to people who were abused as children. We have participated in government consultations and meetings with our agency and ecumenical counterparts to discuss matters of mutual interest. We remain closely involved in this work, ready to consider and respond to proposals put forward by the Commonwealth Government in establishing a National Redress Scheme.

## **Reconciliation Action Plan 2017-2020**

We are nearing finalisation of our third Reconciliation Action Plan, and have set ourselves “stretch” targets, particularly around employment. The RAP will be launched in late 2017.

Our first and second CEO Reconciliation Awards were held in Reconciliation Week 2016 and 2017. There is a wealth of talent amongst our staff and volunteers and we are pleased to be able to recognise the achievements of those who are so committed to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and families we serve. We are proud of their achievements. Our

commitment to the importance of the Indigenous specific services provided through Blue Care, ARRCs and Child and Family Services remains a key focus.

### **Newpin**

UnitingCare Queensland is working with the Queensland Government on the Newpin Social Benefit Bond. It is Queensland's first social impact bond and represents a new model of funding social services in Queensland where investment is made by private investors who get a return on achievement of the particular social outcome. It provides the opportunity for investors to make ethical and social investments, for governments to save taxpayer money as long-term, expensive interventions can be avoided, for providers to refine programs and deliver better services and outcomes for clients and for individuals and communities to benefit from better social outcomes.

There are a number of other bonds underway around the world, realising some excellent social benefits and competitive returns for investors. Some common outcomes sought in bonds around the world are reduction in reoffending rates, reduction in homelessness rates and reunification of families involved in child protection systems.

The Newpin Queensland Social Benefit Bond has investors funding the establishment and operation of the Newpin program in three regions across Queensland. Uniting (NSW) have operated the New South Wales Newpin Social Benefit Bond since 2013 and are achieving good results. In Queensland, the program will focus primarily on working with Indigenous families. It is an 18-month centre-based program that has been designed to strengthen family engagement, and has an established track record in successfully ensuring that more children are able to live safely with their families.

It is estimated that around two and half times more children will be reunited with their families than would occur in the absence of the Newpin program.

Payments will be made to UnitingCare Queensland by the Queensland Government based on the incremental number of children successfully reunited with their families. The level of these payments will be reflected in the investment returns generated by the Newpin Queensland Social Benefit Bond.

It is exciting to work with Indigenous families, the Queensland Government and Social Ventures Australia under this innovative model.

### **Disability services**

In 2016-17 we provided support to 1,220 people with disabilities. Some of these clients are covered by the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) which continues to roll out around Australia.

It is 12 months since the commencement of the NDIS in Townsville, with roll-out occurring progressively in the Toowoomba, Mackay and Ipswich regions. The NDIS roll-out continues to challenge both clients and service providers. In UnitingCare Queensland, we remain firmly focussed on providing the best support we can to help people live life in all its fullness. We offer support and advice to people with a disability as the NDIS rolls out across Queensland and continue to shape our service models and business processes to support the changing system requirements and to meet the needs of our clients.

There are many stories about the difficulty people have in accessing the supports they need and we continue to advocate for system improvements and for individual clients. There have been some incredible results with the creative thinking that the NDIS enables. For example, a

child with a disability was distressed and would not attend her regular therapy sessions. Working with her family, it was established that she has a passion for horses and a horse owner was found who was happy for the girl to come to know her horse. The therapist supported the child to undertake all of her therapy on the horse where the child gained the necessary benefit of the therapy, participated in an activity of great interest and excitement to her and was brought into contact and relationship with a person from the community to share an interest in horses.

‘Mission Possible’ — our disability marketing campaign — captures our hope that people with disabilities get to discover and live their own dreams and ambitions.

The NDIS will continue to be a major focus for UnitingCare Queensland.

### **Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS)**

After three years of operation, ARRCS continues to provide quality care to people in some of the most remote parts of Australia. In 2016-17 we operated 292 residential aged care beds, 59 flexi-care beds, 50 retirement living units, community care for around 2,500 clients and disability services for around 27 people.

We continue to meet accreditation requirements and develop productive relationships with the people and communities we serve. There continues to be growth in our service footprint, capital improvements and new facilities, including:

- Mutitjulu Residential Aged Care built
- Terrace Gardens, Darwin (\$15.1m) works commenced February 2017 and will continue to late 2018, including a dementia specific unit
- Hetti Perkins, Alice Springs (\$6m) Development Approval received in January 2017 with commencement for construction works anticipated for late 2017
- East Arnhem (Nhulunbuy) Flexible Aged Care Service — planning underway
- Staff accommodation projects completed at Yulara, Docker River and Tennant Creek.

We continue to take a strategic, long-term approach to tackling the issues of remote service delivery including workforce, leadership, funding pressures and ongoing regulatory compliance. We have worked hard to develop relationships with the communities we serve and continue our efforts to build our Indigenous workforce. We enjoy ongoing support from the Northern Synod.

### **Environmental sustainability**

UnitingCare Queensland has achieved good outcomes in its environmental sustainability measures in recent years with significant reductions in energy consumption and carbon emissions.

We have refreshed our commitment to environmental sustainability with the recent establishment of an Environmental Sustainability Committee, chaired by our Director of Mission and with representation from across UCQ. This committee is tasked with developing our Environmental Sustainability Strategy, overseeing and monitoring sustainability initiatives and engaging our staff and volunteers in a sustainability culture.

In late 2016 UnitingCare Queensland was announced as a finalist in the Premier’s Sustainability Awards; the Queensland Government’s highest acknowledgement of leaders in sustainability, innovation and eco-efficiency. We were finalists in the Brisbane City Council Lord Mayor’s Business Awards for Sustainability in Business.

In line with our mission, we continue our commitment to responsible environmental stewardship.

### **New services and closure of services**

In accordance with our commitment to provide quality services to our communities, we monitor our property portfolio and make decisions about the need to refurbish, close or build new facilities to provide services with consideration given to community need, other providers and services in the region and our broader service footprint.

Since the last Synod in Session, in addition to the ARRCs developments above, we have made the following service decisions:

- Redevelopment of Star of the Sea Elders Village on Thursday Island commenced in December 2016.
- Redevelopment of Mackay Homefields Residential Aged Care commenced in June 2017.
- Blue Care acquired Argyle Gardens and Carlyle Gardens Retirement Villages in Townsville, Mackay and Bundaberg.
- Blue Care acquired Fraser Shores Retirement Village in Hervey Bay.
- The new Mt Louisa Residential Aged Care Service opened in Townsville in August 2016 following the decommissioning of Pallarenda Residential Aged Care.
- Blue Care's Winston House in Gympie closed in August 2016.
- Bayhaven in Hervey Bay also closed in August 2016.
- Amaroo Aged Care Service in Tweed Heads closed in September 2016 and the land transferred to Uniting NSW and ACT.
- The Kingscliff Aged Care Service transferred to Uniting (NSW) in October 2016.
- Downsizing of Millbank Residential Aged Care Facility in Bundaberg was completed in March 2017.
- Decommissioning of the Kingswood building at the Toowoomba Residential Aged Care Facility announced in March 2017 is underway.
- A rolling program of refurbishment of residential aged care facilities has continued.
- An Emergency Department is being added to The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital.

### **Policy and advocacy**

UnitingCare Queensland remains active in the development of policy in our fields and in advocating for our clients and client groups. We have contributed to a range of government and parliamentary inquiries, including in relation to competition and productivity in our sectors, disability services, foster care, working with children checks, affordable housing, retirement village regulation, aged care funding changes especially for people with complex needs and those in rural and remote areas. We work closely with our partners, including UnitingCare Australia and the Community Services Industry Alliance, as well as in our own name, to contribute to important policy debate.

We have engaged with government agencies, Members of Parliament, ecumenical counterparts, other not-for-profit providers, including across the UnitingCare network and potential partners from the business world. Advocacy and contribution to policy debate is an important part of our business as an industry leader.

### **Cross-synod collaboration**

Recognising the common issues facing the church's community services in Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria, the synods represented through the boards of UCQ, Uniting in NSW and ACT, and Uniting in Victoria and Tasmania have agreed to an ongoing conversation

between chairs and CEOs in order to explore common challenges and directions and to share learnings and capabilities to support our navigation through the changing external environment we are facing and what is fast becoming a single market (especially in aged care and disability) across the eastern states.

UCQ and Uniting NSW and ACT have agreed to work together in a Joint Venture focussed on people with disabilities and the NDIS. UCQ is also leading work across agencies in Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia to develop a procurement hub which is predicted to improve purchasing outcomes for participants. Other opportunities for working and learning together have been identified and it is hoped that further work will be progressed into the future.

### **Helena Goldie partnership**

Since 2010, UnitingCare Health nurses and allied health professionals have conducted biannual visits to the Helena Goldie Hospital and the College of Nursing at Munda in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands. At the hospital, we assist with medical and surgical resources and in-service training, while at the college we provide educational support and sponsorship of nursing students. This work is further supported by some visiting medical practitioners who generously give one or two weeks a year undertaking clinical work in the hospital. Our continued partnership is only made possible by the generous dedication of time and expertise as well as financial contributions from staff and clinicians.

In 2016/17 we provided sponsorship and support to five students plus contributed to the purchase of nursing manuals for every student at the college. Through the dedication of regular payroll contributions by staff and other in-kind support from some of our suppliers we were able to set up a training simulation lab in the College of Nursing and purchased textbooks, uniforms and other educational resources. We donated an ultrasound machine which is much needed to support the limited equipment in the hospital. The culmination of the deep appreciation of our partnership was witnessed and acknowledged in the 2017 college graduation ceremony of the student cohort.

### **Other service highlights**

#### UnitingCare Health

- Private hospitals across Australia are experiencing a prolonged period of softness in demand, attributed to a range of factors. In response, UCH has been focussed on driving performance and managing costs. We have focussed relationships with our doctors and our communities as well as developing relationships to support productive negotiations with private health fund providers as contracts come up for renewal.
- We provided 364,214 bed days in 2016-17, with almost 84,000 operations and 33,145 emergency department presentations.
- We trained 400 medical students and 856 nursing students and were supported in our work by 77,000 volunteer hours.
- We have announced that we will open an Emergency Department at the Sunshine Coast Private Hospital in early 2018, further adding to the services we provide to the Sunshine Coast community.
- We have had a number of changes in senior hospital leadership and have managed through this by supporting existing capability and recruiting new personnel with deep experience in the health sector.
- We celebrated 40 years of the Wesley Hospital in March 2017. Patients were transferred from St Helen's Hospital at South Brisbane on 1 March 1977 to the Auchenflower site.

## Aged care

- Each week, Blue Care assists around 18,765 people in the community and has 4,055 bed licences in residential aged care facilities.
- We increased our retirement living portfolio to provide people with a greater range of options for living as they age, now with a portfolio of 2,635 seniors' housing units. This strategy has helped to build our regional presence and strength, as we look for opportunities to integrate to provide a larger suite of services to the people we serve.
- Understanding and responding to the impacts of aged care reforms has been a key focus of our activity since last Synod in Session. The marketisation of community aged care means that we have had to work hard to understand what our customers want and how to meet those needs. At the front-face, we have revamped our website, undertaken extensive marketing activity, and engaged with our existing clients to help them navigate the changes. We have been successful in retaining clients and have also been successful at increasing the number of people we support. Behind the scenes, we continue to look at systems refinements as we navigate this new way of working.
- There recently has been negative publicity in some locations (especially Bundaberg) about reductions in hours of nursing staff. These changes are linked to both significant reductions in aged care funding and to the introduction of new models of care. Our goal is that all our services operate at industry benchmarks and hours are only being reduced where services are significantly over benchmarks. We continue to work hard to engage our staff, residents and families about changes to staffing models and of course to ensure the quality of care is not compromised.

## Child and Family Services

- Child and Family Services continue to deliver a range of high-quality services to support children, families and communities across Queensland.
- In 2016-17 we answered 158,000 calls to Lifeline, up from 120,000.
- We supported 541 children in out-of-home care.
- Lifeline Bookfest sales across Queensland reached \$2.65m.
- We are a key provider of community recovery and crisis support services. We were able to mobilise quickly to respond to Cyclone Debbie, the closure of Queensland Nickel, the death of bus driver Manmeet Sharma at Moorooka.
- The former Blair Athol Homelessness Services are now fully integrated into UCQ Child and Family Services.
- The child and family services previously operated by Frontier Services in Queensland are now integrated into UCQ's Child and Family Outback Services.

# Board and governance

## Board membership

Since the last Synod in Session, we welcomed General Secretary Heather den Houting as an ex officio member of the Board. Heather's background and experience, including her history as Director of Mission for Blue Care, has meant that she has been able to make a valuable contribution to the work of the Board.

We farewelled Jude Munro in December 2016 after almost seven years of service. Jude brought a wealth of experience to the Board and chaired the Quality Committee for five years.

We farewelled Rev Dr David Pitman who finished his term as board member in March 2017 after six years' service on the Board. We thank David for his contribution.

Nigel Alexander joined the Board in May 2017. He brings a wide range of experience as an executive board chair and director.

We farewelled Kerry Batchler and Professor Harry McConnell as external members of the Quality Committee. We are grateful for their contribution.

### **Governing documents**

We have implemented changes to our Constitution and by-laws that took effect on 1 July 2017. This has included development of an Annual Statement of Missional Intent, on which we report annually to the Synod Standing Committee.

### **CEO recruitment and transition**

At the time of writing, the Board is in the process of recruiting a new chief executive officer. More detail is likely to be known about this at the time of Synod in Session. Planning is underway to ensure a smooth transition to a new CEO.

### **Board and governance priorities**

For 2017-18, priorities include:

- CEO recruitment
- Review the Board committee structure to ensure support of UCQ to achieve its strategic goals
- Independent Board evaluation in accordance with the Board's biennial external evaluation policy.

### **Executive leadership team**

Our realignment and restructure has seen considerable changes in our executive team with recruitment of new internal and external capability onto the executive team. The Chief Executive Officer is supported by an executive leadership team which includes a Group Executive for Child and Family Services, Health, Regional and Remote Services, Integrated Services South East Queensland, Commercial Services, Customer Services, Human Resources and Digital and Technology; an Executive Director Transformation, Governance and Policy; a Director of Mission and a Chief Financial Officer who provide leadership, strategic and operational direction, and oversight of performance.

### **Strategic Plan 2017-2020**

A key piece of work for us this year has been development of our Strategic Plan 2017-2020. This work has renewed and refreshed our commitment to our mission and brought into focus what we must prioritise in the next three years as responsible stewards of the mission, as follows:

- creating compelling value for people and communities
- having a sustainable portfolio of services
- one UCQ
- new foundations
- enabling partnerships.

By the time of the Synod in Session, the strategic plan will be available to members of Synod in Session and we will speak to it in our verbal presentation.

Flowing on from realignment of our structure, review of our service and business models, identification of process improvements and development of the strategic plan, we have developed a budget for FY18 and the out years which is focussed on our priorities. There are many financial pressures impacting on financial viability for all agencies operating in our sector

and we too feel the pressure. However, we believe we have the right capability, financial focus and business strategy to sustain the mission of the Uniting Church into the future.

## Mission and chaplaincy

As intergenerational stewards of all that has been entrusted to us it is imperative that the mission of Christ underpins all our work and is at the heart of our service delivery. We continue to look to the life and witness of Jesus who said “I have come that they may life, and life in all its fullness” (John 10:10). Our mission team, including the Director of Mission, Associate Directors of Mission and chaplains help UnitingCare Queensland to remain true to our mission and values as an integral part of the mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Our team is actively engaged in identifying and interpreting the theological, missional, cultural and spiritual issues that arise within the varied contexts of our services. We are intentional about staff and volunteers being orientated and inducted with an understanding around the historical and theological nature of the Uniting Church in Australia and have developed a mission framework that is reflective of our unique place and position as a church.

Our team also gives oversight to the pastoral care and chaplaincy services that operate across a variety of our services. Chaplains have provided spiritual and pastoral support to staff, volunteers, patients, clients and their families. They have conducted services, fellowship, support groups, funerals, provided grief and loss training, prison ministry, visited clients and patients, and supported families through illness and death of loved ones. We currently have 49 chaplains, supported by nearly 200 volunteer lay chaplains or pastoral care volunteers.

Our mission team has been proactively engaged in working with Synod, presbyteries, local congregations and other agencies fostering strong relationships with the view to identify opportunities in partnership together as “one church”. The role of our directors of mission, chaplains and volunteers continues to be critical to our staff, our clients and our communities. They keep us anchored in the mission of the church and help ensure the spiritual heart of the organisation beats strong amongst the rapidly changing environment we seek to be responsive to as a church.

## Proposal

It is proposed that the 33rd Synod receive this report.

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