



# #realunitingchurch

## Report from



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## Context

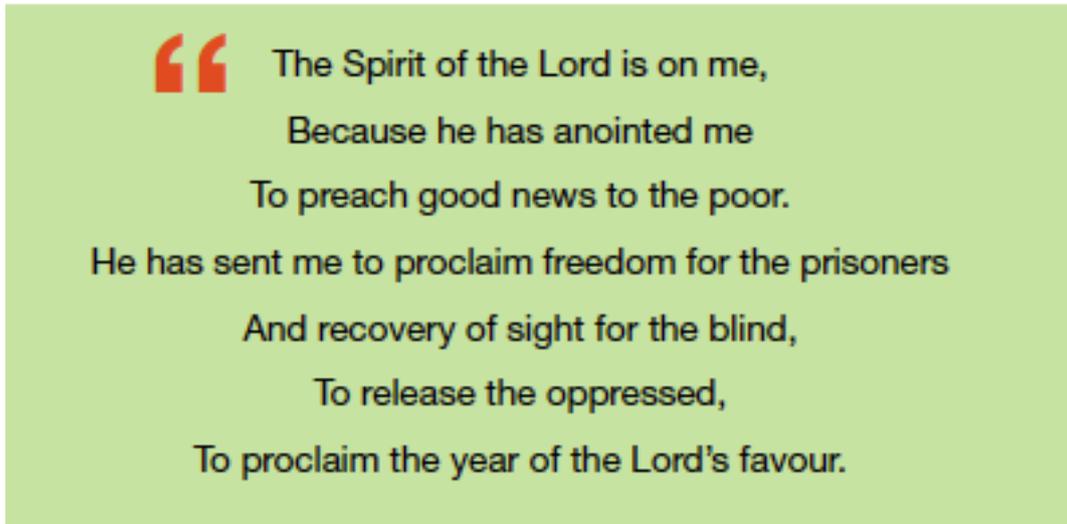
Wesley Mission Queensland (WMQ) is an integral part of the Uniting Church in Queensland and operates as a mission activity of the Albert Street Uniting Church. Since its inception in 1907 WMQ's **purpose has been to participate in the mission of God towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.** In and through this mission and ministry we are actively committed to 'Uniting in Christ, acting with love, witnessing in faith and working for justice'. Each year WMQ's services touch the lives of more than 100,000 people in Queensland and Australia-wide as we support members of the deaf community and their families through our Auslan interpreting services.

Since the 32nd Synod we have transitioned our name from Wesley Mission Brisbane to Wesley Mission Queensland. With more than 60 locations across South East Queensland, our name change better reflects our geographical reach and provides greater clarity for people connecting with our organisation. This is a change in name only. There has been no change to the delivery of our services and the support we currently provide or our day-to-day operations.

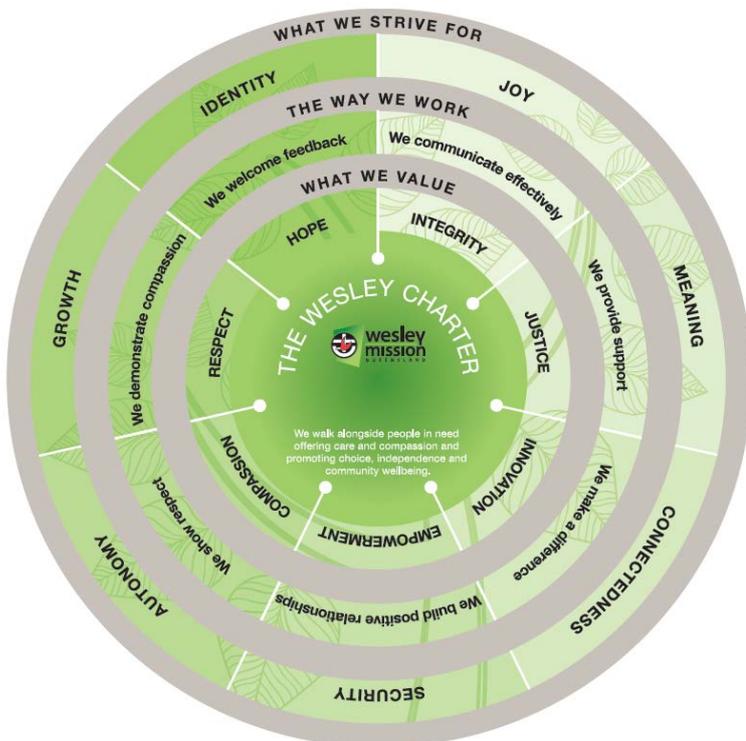
# What we are called to do

Our mission remains ***to walk alongside people in need, offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.*** WMQ is built on the values of hope, justice, integrity, compassion, empowerment, innovation and respect.

In 2017 the foundational statements of WMQ (Purpose, Vision and Mission) are derived from an understanding of the message of the Gospels that reveals the person of Jesus Christ inviting God’s people into a spirit-inspired movement of transformation, reconciliation and hope for all people. Jesus takes up Isaiah 61:1-2 as his mission statement (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1-2).



## WMQ culture - The Wesley Charter



The Wesley Charter sits at the core of all we do. The charter exemplifies that our Christian mission, vision and values indeed have “life” and are lived well throughout our organisation. The charter describes “who we are”, “whose we are” and “what we do” and how we provide care with ***compassion, respect, hope, integrity, justice, innovation and empowerment*** to those entrusted to our care. The value of the charter is also in its capacity to create conversations throughout the organisation that focus on our Purpose, Mission and Values — these conversations enhance the organisational culture at the heart of who we are and why we exist.

WMQ and the services we provide are diverse and special. As a faith-based organisation we believe everyone is important and God’s love is for everyone. Each day we interact with thousands of people, all of whom have different goals, views, beliefs, backgrounds, abilities and, most importantly, are in need of our help.

# Organisational snapshot – our services

## Aged Care

- Residential Aged Care • Retirement Living • In-home Care
- Centre and Community-based Transport • Allied Health • Respite and Wellness

## Disability and Mental Health

- Art from the Margins • Disability Support • Supported Accommodation • Respite and Wellness
- Mental Health Support and Accommodation • Supported Employment • Sign Language Services

## Hardship Relief

- NILS • Counselling and Personal Support • Housing Support • Community Meal

## Child Care, Youth and Families

- Centre-based Care • In-home Care • Family Day Care • Hummingbird House • Youth Housing
- Family Support

## Education and Employment

- MailpaQ • Career Keys

What began in **1907**  
in the heart of Brisbane at the Albert Street Methodist church has grown into one of Queensland's largest community service organisations supporting **more than 100,000** Queenslanders every year

**We have 5** supported accommodation communities that offer age-appropriate housing to **44** adults living with a disability

**14** ADULTS living with mental health concerns live at the Clear Breeze Apartments

**Albert Street Uniting Church is our spiritual home** We run weekly worship services **4** interpreters working across the country supporting the Deaf community

**600** people in need receive a free meal, sandwich or food parcel each week  
**WE HAVE 3** partnerships with the Youngcare charity

**We have 13** residential aged care homes that are home to **1,000** residents

**1,338** children attend our **4** child care centres, In Home Child Care and Family Day Care services  
**WE SUPPORT** youth, families, the unemployed and people doing it tough through our **80** community service programs

**We have 2** retirement living communities that are home to **530** retirees

**60** people living with a disability have a **secure job** at our Australian Government enterprise **MailpaQ**

This would not be possible without our **2,500** dedicated staff and our **1,500** volunteers, and our supporters and donors  
*you are the reason we can make a difference in the community.*

# Our focus over the past 18 months

## 1.1 WMQ continues to grow in response to people in need

WMQ has an annual operating budget of \$170m+ and each year we invest on average an additional \$30m+ in our capital redevelopment program.

In addition to seeking to grow our core services in supporting our elders in the community we also seek to focus on 'unmet need' in the community. Hummingbird House (supporting children with life-limiting conditions and their families through respite and end-of-life care in a home-like environment) is an example of this.

### **Support for older Australians**

We have a clear path of growing our support services through renewing some of our older residential aged care buildings. Our emphasis is on creating and enhancing integrated and inter-generational communities. The value and potential of these communities is clearly demonstrated at our largest campus at Wheller Gardens Chermside where we have 500 retirees living at Wheller on the Park (many of whom access our in-home care and allied health services); 360 elders in residential aged care; Hummingbird House supporting children and families; a childcare centre for staff and members of the community (the children visit and spend time with elders in residential aged care); and Auslan interpreting services (offered Australia-wide). It is wonderful to see how the members of the Wheller Gardens community seek to support each other!

In the 40th year since the establishment of the Uniting Church we are also celebrating the 40th year since the opening of our second largest campus (Sinnamon Village at Sinnamon Park). Sinnamon Village comprises residential aged care for 360 elders, Youngcare apartments for young to middle-aged adults with high and complex care needs, and a therapy centre and hydrotherapy pool supporting people to live active healthy lifestyles.

We have master-planned a staged redevelopment process for this site and commenced the development of a new 144-place residential aged care home called Dovetree, respite centre and allied health precinct. We are shortly to commence the development of the new Rosemount Retirement Community comprising 135 high-quality apartments.

### **Partnership with the Chinese Christian Council (CCC) Three-Self Patriotic Movement**

WMQ has been participating in the Uniting Church in Australia and UnitingWorld partnership with the CCC for four years. This is part of our commitment to support God's mission both in Australia and overseas.

The CCC represents and supports the protestant Christian church in its mission and ministry development across China including more than 24 million people actively involved in their local congregations and communities. The partnership between the CCC and the Uniting Church has been formed around seeking to collaborate and grow connection around three main areas: theological dialogue and exchange, cultural exchange and supporting teaching and learning in aged care and social services in both countries.

In May 2017 WMQ's third visit to China took place. Six staff from our residential aged care services and our chief executive officer Geoff Batkin travelled to China to lead two further cultural exchange and training opportunities with a particular focus on supporting aged care service development. The partnership is highly regarded by the CCC and the many churches and Chinese aged care staff who attend the training and development sessions. WMQ staff benefit greatly as we learn about a new and different cultural context and witness the love and compassion that are demonstrated by the staff and leaders of the CCC towards the elders in their care. It is amazing to be part of the worship services of the CCC where upwards of 5,000 people participate on a Sunday morning in one of the many local congregations.

In August 2017 a group of church leaders and aged care home managers from the CCC visited UnitingCare aged care services in NSW and WMQ and Blue Care services in Queensland. It is expected the relationship between the CCC and the Uniting Church will be further developed in the coming years.

## 1.2 Partnerships and collaborations with Uniting Church congregations

**Wherever we can, we seek to work in collaborative partnerships with congregations where there is a shared mission call.**

As part of our ongoing focus to work together with congregations and presbyteries, the placement of the Rev Alison Cox to the position of Project Officer Disability Inclusion Innovation has commenced within WMQ. The focus of this ministry is on developing viable social enterprises for young people with disabilities leaving high school education and seeking meaningful work opportunities. As much as possible we are seeking to collaborate with Uniting Church congregations to explore these opportunities as part of their ministry in their community.

WMQ's intent is to respond to those in need and collaborate with Uniting Church congregations and presbyteries to engage in mission in a local context. One of the ways we are doing this is to explore partnerships where congregations might have under-utilised church land that could be developed for supported accommodation for people living with disabilities or as an office for our child and family support programs.

Examples of this shared mission partnership approach include:

### **Maroochydore Uniting Church partnership**

We are committed to the development of supported accommodation for adults with high care needs living in two five-bedroom houses to be constructed next door to the Maroochydore Uniting Church. This will enhance the mission and ministry of the congregation as well as the welcome and hospitality that can be offered to people living in supported accommodation.

### **Lifeworks Uniting Church Toowoomba partnership**

We are exploring a partnership with Lifeworks Uniting Church at Toowoomba to look at opportunities to provide both supported accommodation to younger people requiring high and complex care as well as the potential for developing affordable housing.

WMQ is also exploring potential for collaborative mission approaches with a number of other Uniting Church congregations including Beenleigh Uniting Church and Harrisville Uniting Church.

### **Newlife Uniting Church Robina**

The WMQ council has been involved in the Moreton Rivers Presbytery conversation with NewLife Uniting Church Robina about establishing a contemporary worshipping and witnessing church plant in the inner city.

## 1.3 Our commitment to reconciliation

WMQ provides a wide range of care and support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in many of our services. During 2016 and 2017 we engaged in a collaborative and planned approach and commenced the journey to express our commitment to reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP is currently in its final stages of approval with Reconciliation Australia.

***“WMQ’s vision for reconciliation is for all people to stand unified in an equal and inclusive future. We commit to enhancing opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and celebrating diversity”.***



**Beauty in Diversity**, digital print on canvas by Luke Mallie, was commissioned for WMQ's Reconciliation Action Plan. Luke provides the following:

*We are all connected.*

*We can look to diversity of nature where the dragonfly lives in balance with the butterfly, in which we can learn how to live in balance with each other.*

*As the honey bee collects pollen from the flower for further expansion, we can learn that every one choice we make can affect others around us and teach us to make better choices to live in harmony together.*

*Nature does not dwell on the past but lives strong today to create more growth for tomorrow, therefore if we remember the past but work together today toward an all-inclusive future we can then respect and recognise the beauty of our diversity.*

*The gold pattern in the background represents the rich Indigenous history that weaves throughout this great land.*

*The intense colours of the insects and flowers represent the bright outlook of today, while the fluoro blue outlines represent the vibrancy of future prospects by working together.*

# Highlights over the past 18 months

## 2.1 Opening of John Wesley Gardens Geebung

A new 144-place residential aged care community (replacing a 90-bed facility). Features include a community café, training rooms for our Registered Training Organisation (Career Keys), spacious single, double and superior suites complete with ensuite. JWG was opened in October 2016.



## 2.2 Youngcare Coomera – additional four apartments

Additional four apartments providing supported accommodation for younger people living with high and complex care needs was completed in April 2017. Youngcare Coomera apartments are an example of another WMQ facility built on land purchased internally through the Uniting Church Living Rivers Congregation. We are looking forward to developing a shared mission approach with the intended Robina Newlife church plant and also the Blue Care Respite Centre all co-located on this site.



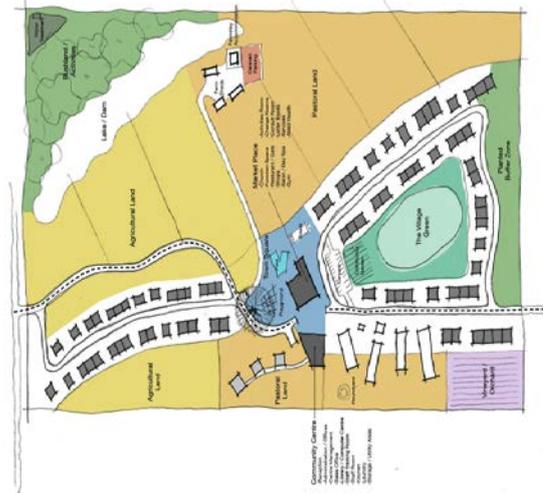
## 2.3 Commenced development of Dovetree new residential aged care community at Sinnamon Village

Dovetree – a new 144-bed residential aged care home including day/overnight respite, therapy centre and 150 car parks (due for completion in April 2018). This development is integral to the master planning of Sinnamon Village that will include the development of a new retirement village commencing in October 2017.



## 2.4 Harrisville rural community

WMQ was approached by the Harrisville Uniting Church to look at a concept of developing a rural retirement community including aged care, supported accommodation for younger people requiring high and complex care and possible farm stay holiday accommodation for families from Hummingbird House. Sixty acres of land in Harrisville was purchased by WMQ in January 2017. We are now actively exploring the development options for this property over 2017 and 2018. We hope the vision will become a reality as we navigate complex planning approval processes and business approvals through the WMQ Board and the Synod.



## 2.5 Hummingbird House

Hummingbird House (HH) at Wheller Gardens officially opened in October 2016. Since operations commenced, 56 guests have accessed services at Hummingbird House with a total of 222 admissions. Hummingbird House is Queensland's only children's hospice supporting children with life-limiting conditions and their families through respite care and also end-of-life care. HH has been approved as an eight-bed private health facility and includes three fully self-contained family suites. Hummingbird House is all about enhancing precious family moments and celebrating life but also supporting families as they say goodbye to their much-loved child.

The following is just one of many inspiring stories coming out of Hummingbird House.

*Madelyn is a very cheeky four-year-old little girl with the best personality. She's basically nonverbal with a few words and some key signs, but has a talent for getting her message across in her own way. All with the most infectious smile and giggle. Madelyn has numerous diagnoses and has very complex care needs. Although she was not born with them, her main conditions are spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy and epilepsy with a suspected autoimmune encephalitis. Spastic quadriplegia cerebral palsy means that she has limited use of her limbs and trunk. "Although her left arm is a weapon!" laughs her mum.*

*"Over the past four years, the more we got to know Madelyn the more we realised how little about life we actually knew. Maddy has taught us patience, unconditional love, forgiveness, joy, sorrow and acceptance. Maddy is filled with a kind of wisdom that cannot be gathered from text books or fancy degrees, but which can be found in a child who looks at the world through unfiltered lenses, whose spirit is not diluted by materialistic matters or ego – she is an inspiration."*

*For Maddy's mum, coming to Hummingbird House means an opportunity to disconnect from being a carer, and just be mum.*

*"When you have a sick child at home, it is really difficult to try to find a good family balance, especially as you try to limit the impact of your child's conditions on the rest of the family. However, coming to Hummingbird House is like a home-away-from-home where we are able to reconnect as a family without Madelyn's conditions being the main focus. We can be a family without feeling like we are constantly in a hospital setting."*

*"Hummingbird House gives us the opportunity to interact with her as her mummy and daddy which we don't get in any other environment because we are carers 24/7 and that's so time-consuming that we often miss out on the fun stuff that parents of 'typical' children would do on a regular basis."*

*Hummingbird House also offers Maddy's mum and dad a chance to rediscover small things that may be taken for granted.*

*"Every single moment we have shared at Hummingbird House has been special. For the first time in years, Maddy was able to have a bath with her little brother and not in just a regular bath but this fancy bath with spa jets, lights and music. The look on their faces as they splashed in the water with the colour changing lights, giggling and moving to the beat of Michael Jackson, is a memory that will stay with us forever. For the first time in a very long time, Madelyn and her brother were able to enjoy something that most young siblings do together but had been impossible for us up until that moment. Sometimes it's the small things that end up being the big things!"*



## **2.6 Rosemount Retirement Community (Sinnamon Village)**

To be built in two stages (total of 135 retirement living apartments) with an expected start date in October 2017 and completion date in 2019.



## 2.7 Art from the Margins (AFTM) – celebrating 10 years

Art from the Margins is a creative mission activity of the WMQ Albert Street Church. It began with a conversation ... an idea ... a need: finding a way to recognise and support artists living with homelessness and experiencing social isolation. The idea: to create an opportunity to show their art to the community. The Art from the Margins journey began.

The artistic director of the Brisbane Festival invited the fledgling and totally unknown AFTM to be part of the official 2008 Brisbane Festival program. The first AFTM art exhibition was held in the Albert Street Uniting Church. AFTM has remained a part of the Brisbane Festival program every year since and in September 2017 the tenth consecutive exhibition was held in Brisbane City Hall. Since 2008 more than 1,000 artists and 50 community and arts organisations have participated in the AFTM Brisbane Festival exhibition from Brisbane, regional Queensland, and interstate.

Ten years on, AFTM is embarking on the next exciting stage in its journey moving to its new home in the recently renovated heritage-listed former Wesleyan Church at 136 Brunswick Street Fortitude Valley.

Fundamental to AFTM's vision is using art and creative activity to enhance individual wellbeing, foster social engagement, build community, and to help break down the social isolation experienced by so many.

## 2.8 Wheller Gardens celebrates 80-year anniversary

On 23 November 2016 the Wheller Gardens site at Chermshire celebrated its 80th anniversary. The Governor of Queensland, His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC, attended the re-enactment of the original opening day ceremony of The Garden Settlement for the aged in Chermshire on 23 November 1936, and unveiled a plaque to commemorate the opening of The Betty Smith Heritage Precinct.

Four of the original Marchant Lodges from 1936 (now renovated) have become a 'living history' of The Garden Settlement (now known as Wheller Gardens) and contain information panels, photos and old household items.

'Betty' Smith MBE (Miss Ann Elizabeth Smith) was a dedicated member of the Albert Street Uniting Church. She left a significant bequest to Wesley Mission Queensland. The heritage precinct has been named to honour her charitable work and generous contribution.

The re-enactment of the original settlement day ceremony also honoured two men vital to the establishment of The Garden Settlement: the Rev Harold Manuel Wheller OBE, who at that time was the

superintendent minister of the Albert Street Methodist Church and George Marchant, a generous Brisbane philanthropist.

*'Riches and power are sacred trusts. We have nothing that is our own; everything is God's put into our hands for his service. It is nothing to have gained wealth; I have known many men who have worked as hard as I, but who are now poor. Poverty in itself is no disgrace, but riches are no cause for credit. I am only a grain of sand in the immensity of things.'*

Mr Marchant at the opening of The Garden Settlement in 1936

## 3. Synod Priority Directions

### Christ-centred, at prayer, and listening

In all our residential communities people gather to celebrate the goodness and generosity of God. Worship services reflect the diverse traditions and needs of our residents, and enable them to find joy, hope and meaning in their everyday situations. Our pastoral and spiritual care team find many opportunities to prayerfully listen as they walk alongside residents.

Albert Street Uniting Church sits at the heart of WMQ and is the central place of worship. Through worship, witness and service, the congregation continues its 170-year legacy of expressing the 'Good News' that God continues to transform the world, bringing healing and justice for all people. The church has the opportunity to receive visitors from all over the world, to share with them in worship and to embrace their difference.

The church is committed to being a welcoming community of Christ — proclaiming the Good News of Jesus the Christ, building faith and compassionately serving in mission with faithfulness, integrity and openness.

### Discipleship

In looking forward to the next 10 years, the WMQ Albert Street congregation has identified a number of strategic priorities which will continue to link the congregation with the wider community and provide opportunities for members to exercise their discipleship as they offer compassion and hope to others. As well as serving people who have been disadvantaged by life, the congregation is looking for other opportunities to connect with young adults, people from overseas, and those who work in the city.

The Albert Street congregation continues to be actively involved in three distinct programs established under the WMQ Servant Network banner:

**Art from the Margins (AFTM)** began to enable artists experiencing disadvantage to exhibit their art. A simple concept has grown into a ministry which empowers artists to become self-confident and worthwhile contributors to society. AFTM has been instrumental in bringing artists together and bridging the gap between artists living in isolation and the wider public community.

**The community meal** has expanded from providing one meal a week to offering services three times a week, (one in conjunction with St Andrew's congregation) plus providing meals for families in Ronald McDonald House. Over 150 volunteers a week, from all walks of life, offer themselves in service through this ministry.

**English Corner** provides the opportunity for non-English speakers to come together with English teachers and enjoy conversation using the gospel message as the medium. Many friendships are made across cultural groups as well as having the opportunity to explore Australian culture in a safe environment.

Many WMQ community services arise from an unaddressed need in the community, and many of these services are mission-focussed and not entirely funded through government funding.

## Connecting with communities

One of WMQ's strategic priorities is "Responding to people in need and strengthening the communities in which we operate".

In addition to the wide range of services for children, young people and families we support and sponsor a range of community development activities to enhance the resilience of people in their own communities.

### **Logan Housing and Homelessness Symposium 2017**

The Logan Housing and Homelessness Network (LHHN) held the Housing and Homelessness Symposium in May with a focus on collaboration, community and inclusion; showcasing innovative housing models and collaborative models of practice. The aim of the symposium was to connect the dots; providing opportunities to engage with new initiatives and support current initiatives for the region which could potentially enhance options for people across all ages experiencing housing stress, at risk of homelessness or homeless.

On the day we had over 140 attendees from government and non-government organisations and the community. There were presentations from an exciting range of speakers including talks on 'Tiny houses', supporting people living with mental illness from WMQ's Clear Breeze Apartments, representatives from University of Queensland discussing research on tenants choosing to 'down size' to purpose-built social housing, and representatives from QCOSS and QShelter presenting around broader issues for people who are marginalised in our community.

During the morning we greatly appreciated Uncle Noel's welcome to country and the Aboriginal cultural dancers who assisted in opening the event.



### **Youth Week 2017**

The few weeks leading up to the Easter break were hectic and just prior to the break we saw flooding in the Logan area that broke records and saw families and the community devastated. WMQ were the lead agency to hold a family event in Eagleby for Youth Week 2017 which saw 15 non-government and government services work together to put on a fantastic event.

Over 500 people attended and we saw some smiles on faces who hadn't smiled in a little while. Although the theme of the event was to bring the community together to celebrate Youth Week and show the youth of the area what a great community they belong to and how many services they can access, it became

much more than this. We were able to have one of our young people from our program offer his time to volunteer for the day and throughout the day he recruited other friends from the area to help. This was a huge achievement for this young man as he struggles with concentration, impulse control and following directions. We had a range of families who provided great feedback about the day and comments such as “this is such a great event, we wish our community came together more often like this, it is fabulous to see”. We were also approached to support some families who were hit hard in the floods and so once the ‘party’ was over our staff piled into the van and delivered much-needed food and resources.

### **Elorac Place Community Centre at Ellen Grove**

Over the past 18 months Elorac Place has provided a range of support programs for the local community including but not limited to food support, young women’s housing program and emergency relief. In partnership with other programs, activities provided and supported have been:

- A multicultural women’s group – Community Women
- Playgroup – Playgroup Queensland
- Afternoon youth activity in the park – PCYC Inala
- Mother’s Day high tea
- Employment workshop – Max Employment, Access Employment
- Disability music therapy
- Zumba – Gold Program – Brisbane City Council.

Joint programs with other services include NAIDOC celebrations in the park, wall mural in the park, Harmony Day activities.

### **Ellen Grove 20/20**

Ellen Grove 20/20 is a program supported by Wesley Mission Queensland in partnership with a range of other community, local and state government service providers to improve the outcomes for people living in this low socio-economic and underprivileged area.

## **Youth, children and families**

At the last Synod WMQ reported on the opening of two special new services; Hummingbird House, Queensland’s only children’s hospice and Asher House, supported accommodation for young people living with a disability or an acquired brain injury (built on Uniting Church land). Both these services are now fully operational. Below are some stories and feedback provided by families:

*Hummingbird House is now a reality. In the past 12 months we have moved in, brought together a team of dedicated experts, and most importantly, welcomed families through our doors.*

*The first year has seen many firsts: families have been given an opportunity to reconnect, precious moments have blossomed into life-long memories and all of our guests have experienced the warm embrace of Hummingbird House.*

*We’ve also been busy since officially opening our doors last October; we’ve had some talented visitors and held a party or two — all whilst delivering care in a home-like environment.*

*Staff, guests and families were entertained by the acrobats and jugglers from Cirque du Soleil “Kooza,” who taught our guests to balance peacock feathers, juggle, and hula hoop. It is very clear that there is a lot of hidden talent at Hummingbird House.*

*Aside from acrobats and circus performers, we also took the time to give a very special little boy a birthday party experience.*

*His parents wanted a beach party, with just a touch of Australian wildlife. We were even able to find some crocodiles in the wilds of Chermside. Hummingbird House opened its doors to this little boy, his family, friends and the team from Lady Cilento Children's Hospital for an afternoon of memories and family time.*

**Asher House:** *"There's a saying, that you can judge a community by how it treats its most vulnerable citizens. The people for whom this accommodation is being provided are some of our most vulnerable citizens, but through this facility we will give them the dignity and the respect they deserve, the opportunity to live the lives they want to live, and the ability to fulfil their own dreams and aspirations."*

*Asher House is defined by its wonderful people — both the staff and volunteers who have committed to serving these residents, and the residents themselves, some of whom have been living together in supported accommodation for 24 years.*

*One of these residents is Matthew. Matthew has 'locked-in syndrome' since his stroke in 2010. "He can't speak and he can't move, but he's fully awake and aware. He's got fully functional capabilities," says his twin sister Maureen, who believes Asher House represents a new lease on life for her brother.*

*"I think once he settles in, it will take a lot of worry off my shoulders. Just knowing that this is a permanent home for him, and that people are here for him, and he has a lot of space ... I hope that with the staff employed here, they can bring that social aspect as well. The staffing options with Wesley Mission Queensland are terrific. There are one or two staff for every four residents, so it's a great model of care.*

*"Knowing that he's got a home now, it means our visits can be more structured. At the moment, I do things for him — I talk to him and I feed him — but we rarely get to sit together and just watch a movie. I'm hoping now that can change."*

*Matthew moved to Asher House on 26 July into one of 12 fantastic apartments purpose-built for sustainability and co-designed by architects, residents and their families. It has been a long journey, and each resident has faced a lifetime of challenge to get there, but Matthew, finally, is home.*

WMQ is one of the largest providers of youth services in the South East Queensland region. We operate a range of youth services out of the following areas; Robina, Logan City, Eagleby, Ellen Grove, Coomera, Pacific Pines, Inala, Woodridge, Beenleigh, Southport, Runaway Bay and Palm Beach.

We operate four childcare centres, in-home care and family day-care programs. Three of our childcare centres are co-located with Uniting Church congregations. A crèche service at Mabel Park High School provides onsite childcare and case management for pregnant or parenting students at Mabel Park High School.

***Where there is a mission need, the Lord leads us.***

## 4. Challenges/risks as we progress

### 4.1 Government reform agenda

We are in one of the most profound periods of reform and structural change within the aged care and community services sectors experienced over the last 30 years. As a leading community services organisation, we must understand and prepare for these challenges so that we can position ourselves to respond, mitigate risk, be sustainable and continue to pursue our Purpose, Mission and Vision.

In spite of economic growth and prosperity in Australia over the past decade, there are almost half a million Queenslanders living in poverty and a significant decline in the equity of opportunity and distribution of wealth across our society, particularly the rural areas of our state and amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The ageing of our population will in time mean that there are fewer people in the workforce as a proportion of our overall population. The implication (in the absence of major structural taxation changes) is that there will be a smaller tax revenue to fund support services for older Australians and those living with disability.

These trends are driving the government reform process which is characterised by:

- Government funding restrictions — expectations of service providers doing ‘more with less’. Due to changes in the Age Care Funding Instrument announced and being implemented our funding for residential aged care will be reduced by upwards of \$5m per annum by 2019.
- Consumer-directed care (CDC) — giving more choice and control to the people accessing services to choose what services they utilise and who provides the services. Funding will be made available to ‘consumers’ rather than being given to providers.
- User pays — where people can afford to pay/contribute to the services they use, they should be expected to do so.
- An expectation that market competition (the ‘market’) and to some extent market consolidation (of service providers) will improve efficiency and effectiveness of services.
- Within aged care services consideration is being given to ‘uncapping supply’ of services based on assessed need. In other words, when a person is assessed as needing a high level of in-home care support they can choose a provider rather than having to wait for the next available high level package. Opening up supply in residential aged care is also being considered by government.
- Funding for outcomes rather than funding for services provided.

#### WMQ response

The increasing pace of change is the new ‘norm’. Organisations such as WMQ need to organise and be positioned to both anticipate and be agile and innovative in responding to change. Over the past few years we have been undertaking internal renewal and reform processes that have been evolutionary rather than revolutionary. What is vital is that our staff are supported through the change and maintain trust, confidence and pride in the organisation of which they are a part. This is essential as our staff are the hands, the voice, the heart and front line of all that we do.

### 4.2 Supporting people to live well (active, healthy and engaged) lifestyles

#### WMQ response

So much of the WMQ Service Charter and service offering is focussed on older people living active, healthy and engaged lifestyles where they have opportunities to give and receive and be part of a supportive community.

Our integrated and inter-generational communities at Wheller Gardens and Sinnamon Village are examples of how this approach can make such a difference. At Sinnamon Village we operate a

hydrotherapy pool where many hundreds of people from the community are building fitness, agility and balance through both hydrotherapy and planned gym programs.

At Wheller on the Park Community for Retirement there are more than 40 resident-sponsored community clubs which enhance community building and areas of common interest for the 500 residents.

### 4.3 National Disability Insurance Scheme

There has been a welcome change in government and the wider community approach to supporting people living with disability and their carers. The progressive implementation of the National Disability Insurance Scheme across Queensland (from 2018 onwards) will mean improved access to services and support for people living with disabilities. However, in many aspects of implementation of the access and systems supporting the roll-out there have been significant issues which are frustrating for people with disabilities.

#### WMQ response

WMQ has been planning for the NDIS roll-out for some time and has developed considerable expertise in providing support services and care services for people living with disabilities and mental illness.

We have been seeking to work collaboratively with congregations to identify sites (attached to a congregation) where services for people with disabilities can be part of the congregation's engagement with the local community.

### 4.4 Having the right staff, at the right time with the skills and commitment to provide care and support

One of our biggest challenges over the next five years as we respond to our ageing population and the roll-out of the NDIS is about building, supporting and sustaining our workforce. The fastest growing sector in terms of workforce demand in the Australian community over the next five years is in health, aged care and disability services.

#### WMQ response

Key to responding to this challenge is the reputation of the organisation as a service provider and employer. We have developed a multi-faceted planned approach to this challenge which is being implemented. One part of the strategy is operating and developing our internal Registered Training Organisation. For example, when we open our new aged care community (Dovetree at Sinnamon Village) we will need 150 additional staff. Preparing for our future staffing requirements remains a significant challenge!

## Proposal

It is proposed that the 33rd Synod receive this report

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