

Ngumba-Dal means unity.

This year, Uniting launched an Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan as our commitment to working respectfully and collaboratively with Aboriginal peoples and communities continues.

We acknowledge the importance of listening, to find ways to empower Aboriginal individuals, families and communities, and to support their aspirations of self-determination and self-governance. Our Aboriginal Service Development Unit is an important leadership voice to ensure that our programs are accessible, culturally appropriate and effective.

8,429

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients were supported in 2018/19

270

Aboriginal employees form our Ngumba-Dal Network

Ngumba-Dal means 'unity/union/as one' in the Wiradjuri language

Sending our message

Uncle Ray McMinn, our Uniting Aboriginal Advocate and Elder-in-residence, handed over a traditional message stick to the Uniting Board and Executive team in March 2019, as formal acceptance of our commitment to reconciliation. Handcrafted by Uncle Ray's son, Stuart, the message stick travelled across NSW and the ACT as the Uniting Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan was launched in key service locations.

Endorsed by Reconciliation Australia, and outlining key commitments across 14 action areas, you can download our *Innovate Reconciliation Plan 2019-2021* here:



uniting.org/reconciliation



2019 is the International Year of Indigenous languages

This year, we're continuing our efforts to work more closely with local Aboriginal communities, incorporating local knowledge and language wherever possible. We seek opportunities to use local languages to name our services and sites, and we embrace their resurgence. We understand the importance of appropriate consultation with language owners and obtaining consent prior to use.

Building resilience for independence

Our Aboriginal Aftercare Statewide Service, now in its 5th year, supported 53 Aboriginal young people aged 15-25 during 2018/19. As the only service of its kind in NSW, it aims to close the gap in transitioning from out-of-home care into independent living.

Unconventional care in the heartland

Aboriginal partners Kodi and Gary live on a 50-acre property in Western NSW that they share with 3 dogs, 7 horses and 30 sheep. Through their work in the community services sector, they were keenly aware of the shortage of foster carers in their community. They decided to become foster parents with Uniting despite initial reluctance, "as we didn't want to further disadvantage a child through any stigma associated with having two dads." Their foster son has been living with Kodi and Gary for three years now, in the most stable and secure placement he's experienced in his young life. He sees it as a huge advantage to have two male role models in his life, where previously there were none.

"And between us all, we share 3 different faiths and still manage to live in harmony," Kodi jokes. He's Catholic, Gary is a Jehovah's Witness and, in line with the wishes of his family, their non-Aboriginal foster son is being raised a Seventh Day Adventist.

Thank you to our Aboriginal Ability Linkers in Mariyung



Mariyung, Harry Callaghan, 2017

Our Mariyung team of Aboriginal Ability Linkers across Western and South Western Sydney have worked tirelessly this year to support more than 60 Aboriginal families and carers as they access NDIS services, advocate for themselves, and build inclusive communities.

Aboriginal artist Harry Callaghan is a Dughutti man born in Kempsey, New South Wales, with connections to tribal countries on the Mid North Coast, Dughutti, Guumbaingirr, Biripi and Worimi. After meeting with the Mariyung team of strong and forward-thinking Aboriginal women, Harry created this artwork to communicate their purpose.

Mariyung is the Dharug word for female emu, and like the emu – a bird that is unable to walk backwards – the Mariyung team is focused on moving forwards as they work with Aboriginal people of all abilities, to help them achieve their goals. The family of emus depicted in Harry's painting all have different abilities – some are missing eyes or legs – yet they are united to support each other and to celebrate their differences.



See the President of the Uniting Church in Australia's 2019 Survival Day message at bit.ly/survival-day

Speaking your language.

Uniting embraces our culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) workforce and client communities - from the oldest continuous culture of our First Australians, to the cultures of our newest arrivals from around the world.

We recognise diversity as one of our greatest strengths – it fosters different ways of looking at things, ultimately driving innovation.

Highlights

- Our photo library expanded to better reflect the diversity of our employees and clients.
- We continued our strong partnerships with community-based organisations and cultural associations including the Affinity Intercultural Foundation and Sydney Alliance, as part of our pledge to end racism and promote social cohesion.
- We celebrated cultural days of significance, such as Harmony Day, Refugee Week, Diwali, Eid and Lunar New Year. Deng Adut was our special guest speaker for Harmony Day 2019. See his interview with us here:



bit.ly/uniting-harmony



Cultural safety matters

Psychological safety of cultural groups is just as important as physical safety.

The Uniting pledge to end racism is one of our most important inclusion commitments.

Our culture fosters access and inclusion

- CALD Advisory Forums give our employees opportunities to find solutions to important issues impacting our CALD communities.
- We're building capabilities from Uniting leaders to volunteers, by designing resources to support capacity and understanding of cultural diversity, where it matters.



1,705

CALD employees

↑17%

on 2017/2018

85

cultural backgrounds

1,388

CALD employees in our aged care team mainly from Nepal, the Philippines, India and Sri Lanka

12,977

CALD clients from 130 cultural backgrounds

↑21%

on 2017/18

Key service information translated into

16

languages



Our HIPPY program unites 3 mums from 3 countries

The 2-year Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) prepares preschoolers and parents for primary school. HIPPY tutors make fortnightly visits to the family home showing parents various educational activities. Parent and child then spend 10 to 15 minutes each day, five days a week, doing the activities together.

This year, 3 mothers from 3 different cultures became HIPPY instructors themselves after benefitting from the program. Read their story of mutual support and understanding here:



uniting.org/hippy-mums

Journeying over the rainbow.

Uniting estimates* that around 5,500 of our service users and 900 of our team members identify as LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or intersex).

We want everyone to feel safe and welcome in our workplaces and services, so we are constantly looking across the whole of Uniting for unique ways to celebrate inclusion and provide resources for specific service-user needs.

Highlights

- We gained Rainbow Tick accreditation in October 2018 for Uniting Local Area Coordination of NDIS supports, our Ageing services, Independent Living, the Uniting War Memorial Hospital and corporate services.
- Uniting was once again the only faith-based organisation to be recognised as an Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Gold Employer by Pride in Diversity.
- We became the 2019 inaugural Service Provider of the Year for the Pride in Health + Wellbeing Index (HWEI).
- The Rainbow of Difference project, incorporating the MOSAIC app, was launched. MOSAIC won a prestigious Good Design Award this year.
- All Uniting sites were listed with ACON as safe and inclusive places, as part of the Welcome Here Project.
- Uniting clients from as far afield as Port Macquarie, Shellharbour and Newcastle, marched with us in the 2019 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade to actively celebrate our commitment to LGBTI inclusion.

* The Australian Human Rights Commission estimates that up to 11 in 100 Australians may have a diverse sexual orientation, sex or gender identity.



“Uniting excels in developing conceptual frameworks which reflect the current leading LGBTI practice... strengths include its strong faith-based values, supportive culture, innovation, and commitment to developing a safe place for members of the LGBTI community and staff. The organisation has moved from acceptance to affirmation and celebration, and is working to reduce discrimination against members of the LGBTI community.”

– From our 2019 Rainbow Tick accreditation report



What is MOSAIC?

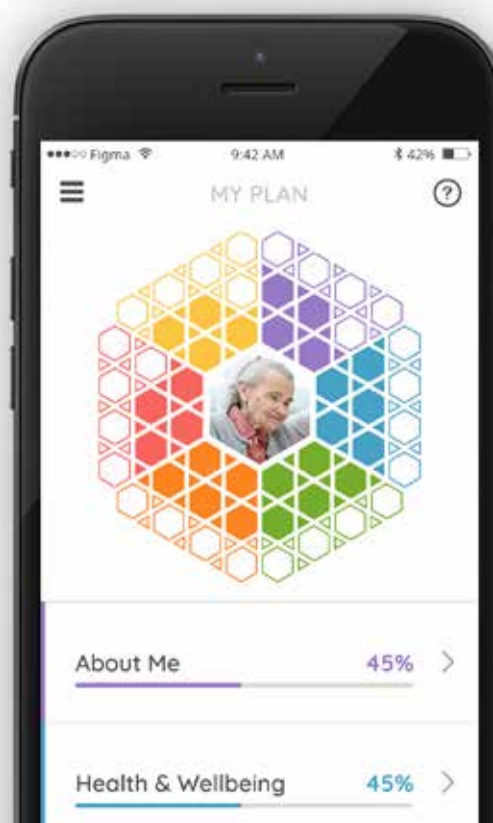
Through our Rainbow of Difference project, in partnership with the University of Technology Sydney and funded by the Australian Government, Uniting is engaging innovative technology to improve health outcomes for LGBTI clients as they grow older.

The MOSAIC app supports people to better manage their ageing services, and assists care teams to better know their clients and build safe inclusive practices. This was a truly collaborative co-design. Members of our LGBTI communities were consulted and contributed at every stage of program development.

Watch this video to find out more:



bit.ly/rainbow-of-difference



Key challenges in 2018/19

- Connecting with our LGBTI communities without them having to disclose.
- Perceptions that our work is over, now that same-sex marriage is legal. There is so much still to be done, and we're looking forward to a brighter rainbow future.

Strengthening spirits and resolve.

To help achieve our purpose, we strive to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice by working collaboratively with our colleagues in the Uniting Church of Australia.

Our chaplains and pastoral practitioners walk alongside without judgement, giving the gift of time and active listening. Our approach is not about religious dogma or pushing an agenda. We simply engage with our local communities and offer practical and emotional support, when and where it's needed.

51,969 hours of spiritual support in 2018/19

6,180
hours supporting
Uniting team
members

4,752
hours supporting
residents in Uniting
independent
living villages

4,069
hours supporting
families

2,988
church services

142
congregation
engagements
across NSW
and the ACT

Highlights

- The *Spirituality in Untrusting Waters* conference was held to discuss ways of giving pastoral support post-Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, post-Stolen Generations, and post-Marriage Equality. Designed to upskill Uniting practitioners, as well as other faith groups, the conference focused on ways to be present and supportive for people previously wounded by government and churches.
- We celebrated Spiritual Care Week with Uniting team members, residents and families, using the communication materials in forums and training programs throughout the year. The theme, *Hospitality: The Gift of Time*, reminded us all of the value in stopping to genuinely connect with each other.
- Dr Michael Barbato, a renowned palliative care specialist, toured NSW to train our chaplains and pastoral practitioners in end-of-life support.



Engaging communities

Our Church Engagement team is a group of capable community development and missional leaders working across each of the Uniting Church Presbyteries in NSW and the ACT. These leaders work with congregations, presbyteries, local Uniting services, local governments and other community-based groups and organisations to enhance our combined impact through:

- Building and maintaining relationships that grow our collective social capital
- Resourcing community-focused missional activities
- Facilitating meaningful engagement with local communities
- Actively building capacity for, and advocating on, social justice issues.

This year, the team ran more than 40 Collaborative Leadership Groups, and held expos and forums to break down organisational barriers to developing joint initiatives and multilateral innovations in mission.

Small gesture, big impact.

As part of Spiritual Care Week, our chaplains and pastoral practitioners honour and celebrate the Uniting team members who work in residential aged care. In previous years, activities have taken place during business hours only, so this year we decided to deliver care baskets to say thanks to some of our overnight employees. It was heart-warming to see the impact that just a few chocolates, some tea bags and a thank-you note had on a group of people who often feel invisible. One night-staffer related, “This is the first time we have ever been thanked.”



Watch our **foundation video** here:



uniting.org/church

Access **ability.**

From drop-in services that promote community interaction, to 24/7 support for people with complex needs, we respect personal choices and decisions as we work together with people living with disability to build their capacity and independence.

Our 4 service areas:

Uniting Disability Services

Uniting Community Support Service (CSS)

Uniting Ability Links

Uniting Local Area Coordination (LAC)

Uniting Disability

This year, our person-centred approach to co-designing support services has continued to enable our participants, and their families and carers, to feel confident and in control of their lives and their decisions. The ever-increasing challenge of competition from other registered National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers during 2018/19 has only strengthened our commitment to being provider of choice for our current and future participants.

812 NDIS participants



“Our support worker is amazing, so we don’t have any issues and things run incredibly smoothly.”

– Uniting NDIS participant

Highlights

- Canterbury Council awarded a grant to continue our Secret Agent Society, a social skills program supporting children living with autism, ADHD or anxiety.
- The management of Hurley House was transferred from Uniting Church Campbelltown to Uniting Disability. This home makes it possible for adults living with intellectual disabilities in the Macarthur region, south-west of Sydney, to live independently in a supported accommodation program.
- We developed an ongoing partnership with Central Coast Local Health District to provide Transitional Accommodation Services (TAS) for mental health patients returning to independent living after long stays in hospital.

We're listening. And making changes that work best for the people we support.

The voices of our participants are fundamental to the way we work. That's why we commission independent surveys each quarter. This year, in response to feedback, we've been:

- Trialling an improved tool to match our support team with participants
- Using a new service summary tool that gives us a snapshot before meeting participants for the first time
- Liaising with participants when we need to make rostering changes, to ensure they have a say in who is best suited to work with them.

We're there in times of crisis.

Sometimes an unforeseen or unavoidable change in circumstances can lead to a need for interim supports outside existing plans. In 2018, our reputation as a high-quality provider of disability supports led to the National Disability Insurance Agency asking us to pilot an After Hours Crisis Support program in New South Wales and South Australia.



“She’s always got the biggest smile.”

Watch this video to understand why Bec loves living in our supported accommodation for adults with disability:



bit.ly/bec-story



Our team members are passionate about supporting people living with a disability.

Meet **Ping** and **Nicole** here:



uniting.org/ping-nicole



Find out more: uniting.org/disability-services

Uniting Ability Links

In 2018/19, our Ability Links team continued to develop networks and build relationships in their local communities, giving people life-changing opportunities outside the traditional disability service system.



35 Ability Linkers including **6** Aboriginal Linkers
1,485 outcomes for **386** participants
499 community projects partnering with **142** organisations

Highlights

- We published *With Open Hearts*, a collection of stories and ideas from our Ability Linkers about what they've learnt, and been inspired by, in their communities.



Read it here: bit.ly/with-open-hearts

- Our mudbrick cubby at Moruya Public School won the 2018 Kidsafe National Playspace Design Award for Special Recognition in Innovative Design. Ability Linker Ann Murphy used a Funding of Community Ideas grant to get the local community involved in building and celebrating this inclusive play area, where everyone is welcome.
- The More2Life Linker project was nominated for the 2019 ZEST Awards for Exceptional Community Partnerships in Western Sydney. With the collaboration of Juvenile Justice, this workshop program is run in a youth detention centre to help empower young people to make positive decisions moving forward.

Lower your fences, lengthen your tables.

Our Ability Linkers connect with their local communities to make things happen. What started in the garden of the Uniting Church in Eden, as a simple community gathering open to everyone to share ideas and food, and to imagine possibilities together, has turned into the 'lower your fences, lengthen your tables' philosophy. It's a simple and meaningful way to promote diversity and inclusion and we will continue to replicate this initiative to keep the conversation going and the understanding growing.

"We want more than inclusion. We want meaningful belonging... for people to feel like they're not just included, but embraced."

– Beck Minear, Ability Linker

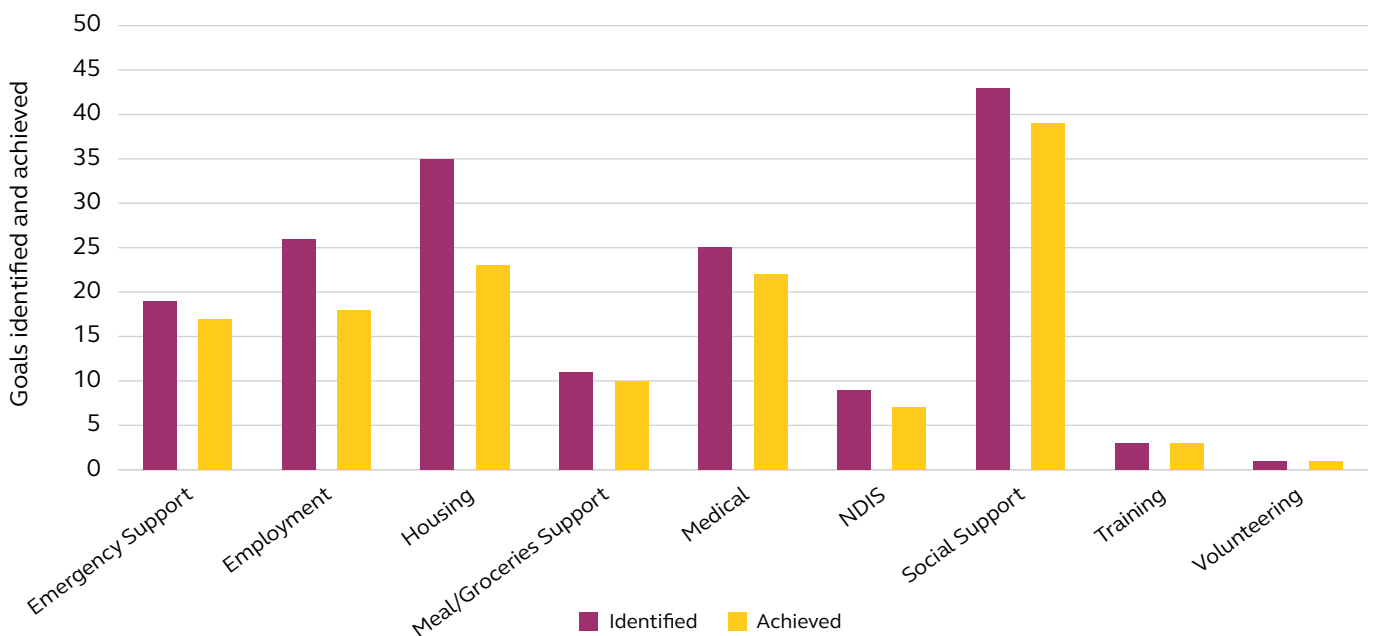
Uniting Community Support Service

In late 2018, Uniting was awarded the exclusive Community Support Service (CSS) contract across NSW. Developed in partnership with iCare (formerly WorkCover), CSS is an innovative program assisting people who are moving off workers compensation benefits, to connect with community supports and plan ahead. In response to what is now a high-quality, timely and cost-effective support model, iCare is expanding referrals to Uniting.

297 participants in 2018/19 **2x** more participants than in 2017/18

63% of participants identified and actioned goals within 6 months

81% of identified goals were achieved by the time injured workers left the CSS



Keys to the success of CSS:

- Participant-led planning with a focus on building skills and autonomy, a first in the insurance industry
- Meeting with participants in their local communities across NSW and the ACT, a welcome experience for injured workers
- Strong stakeholder engagement and co-design of an innovative support model
- Adaptive reporting to make participant success clear to funders
- Effective storytelling around risk of harm, Uniting supports, and participant progress.

Uniting Local Area Coordination

Local Area Coordination (LAC) is our delivery channel for connecting people with the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) across five districts. We cover the Illawarra-Shoalhaven and Nepean-Blue Mountains regions, as well as Southern NSW, Northern Sydney and Western Sydney.

Supporting **19,741** NDIS participants as at 30 June 2019

Welcomed **3,222** new participants with their first NDIS plans

77 employees live with a disability, representing **20%** of the Uniting LAC team

20
locations

33
Local
Government
Areas

>90%
of surveyed participants expressed that
their first NDIS plan meeting with Uniting
either met or exceeded expectations

Highlights

- We won the coveted Australian Human Resources Institute’s Graeme Innes Disability Employment Award in November 2018, recognising our achievement of 20% disability employment via our ‘Walk the Talk’ strategy.
- We became the first NDIA LAC Partner to achieve ISO9001:2015 Quality Management System accreditation, demonstrating our commitment to quality management processes and business systems.
- We compiled the winners of our Strength in Disability competition into the *Be You, Be Strong* book, celebrating International Day of People with Disability and raising inclusion awareness amongst primary schoolers. Find out about our annual inclusion competition here:



bit.ly/strength-in-disability

Emotional safety matters

Safety isn't just about physical wellbeing. It's also about emotional and mental wellbeing. Uniting LAC provides Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training and optional MHFA accreditation to our teams. **We are creating a culture where mental health is not only destigmatised, but can also be confidently supported in the workplace, and with our participants.**

We've achieved the Gold Standard in MHFA accreditation with:

53 accredited Mental Health First Aiders in Uniting LAC

Walking the talk

This year, Uniting LAC established a program enabling people living with disability to successfully apply for, maintain, and grow in flexible employment opportunities. We've now onboarded, supported and developed 77 employees with disability. Observation of our 'Walk the Talk' 20% employment target strategy, and the culture it's created, has also led existing employees to feel safe and included to disclose disabilities.

Watch our *Walk the Talk* video here:



bit.ly/inclusive-employment



Our Made Possible podcast series tells 5 stories of Australians living with disabilities and creating opportunities. Meet a Special Olympics silver medallist, a musician, a guerrilla tree planter, a comic book writer, and a first-class honours sociology and gender studies graduate. Hosted by comedian Tim Ferguson, who's lived with MS for 30 years, listen to these inspiring stories here:



bit.ly/made-possible-podcast



Delivering the right dose of compassion.

The Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) has been providing holistic lifesaving support, with dignity and respect, since it opened in the heart of Sydney's Kings Cross in 2001.

Our registered nurses and health education officers supervise drug injecting that would otherwise happen elsewhere – often in public and under more dangerous conditions. We connect with our clients and offer them referrals to practical health services, including specialist addiction treatment.

Highlights

- We helped establish our sister service, only the second in Australia, the Melbourne Medically Supervised Injecting Room.
- Made submissions to multiple government inquiries, including the coronial inquest into NSW music festival deaths, as part of a wider effort to prevent unnecessary drug deaths.
- Our Consumer Action Group supported Uniting's Fair Treatment campaign and the making of the Half a Million Steps documentary, to urge the government to adopt a public health-based approach to drug use.
- We launched our annual public exhibition, Art from the Heart of the Cross, at the Wayside Chapel, recognising our clients as creators and contributors.

“Without this place, I would be dead. Put simply, Uniting MSIC saves lives.”

– Uniting MSIC client

Launching the Fair Treatment campaign

More than 2,000 people braved a cold and rainy Friday in October to support our Fair Treatment campaign launch at Sydney Town Hall. Members of Uniting Church congregations were joined by media and politicians, while a further 5,000 people watched online.

Fair Treatment seeks to create a world where no-one dies or is harmed from drug use, and people are not penalised for being unwell. This initiative aims to bring together people and advocacy groups who want fairer drug policy.



Sir Richard Branson, Uniting MSIC Medical Director Dr Marianne Jauncey, and Executive Secretary of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, Dr Khalid Tinasti, at Sydney Town Hall last October.



Uniting Executive Director, Tracey Burton, with Sir Richard Branson and Rev. Simon Hansford, Moderator of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT.

“The war on drugs has been an abject failure for 60 years. As an entrepreneur and businessman, if something has failed so abysmally, we would have closed it down 59 years ago.”

– Sir Richard Branson

Did you know?

Uniting MSIC is part of a State-wide project working to increase approved distribution of naxolone, a safe treatment for opiate overdose.

Sign up for campaign news and action alerts:



fairtreatment.org



@fairtreatmentau

Since 2001:

16,500

clients supported

0

fatalities

In 2018/19:

509

new registered clients

1,180

overdoses successfully managed

1,606

referrals into treatment and care

600

people including politicians and health professionals toured our facility

27

workshops to train external healthcare workers in harm reduction and educate NSW Police on substance use and mental health

Standing up and speaking out.

Every year, Uniting works alongside thousands of people experiencing poverty and disadvantage, advocating for the changes to our society that are needed to improve their lives.

This year, we've formed an even stronger and more determined Uniting advocacy team, combining forces with our Uniting Earth Ministry, Social Justice Forum, and the Fair Treatment campaign.

2,000+ attendees at the Fair Treatment launch at Sydney Town Hall with Sir Richard Branson

100+ people walked from Dubbo to Parliament House in Sydney to highlight the need for more drug treatment in rural and regional areas

1,500+ attendees across **6** Canberra Drug Policy Series events featuring speakers Johann Hari and Dr Khalid Tinasti

1,900+ attendees at the Sydney Alliance Affordable Housing and Power Assembly at Sydney Town Hall, including more than 180 representatives from the Uniting Church and Uniting

800+ supporters receive our monthly social justice e-newsletter



Subscribe at: bit.ly/social-justice-news

Highlights

- We developed and screened the documentary *Half a Million Steps*, to draw attention to the long distances people in remote and regional NSW need to travel to receive drug treatment.
- We collaborated with Sydney Alliance and the City of Canterbury Bankstown Council on a 12-month pilot initiative to make early learning opportunities accessible for the children of people seeking asylum in Canterbury and Bankstown. Endorsed by the Mayor, expansion plans are now underway.
- Our Palm Sunday Rally brought over 50 Uniting Church members and Uniting employees together, to march for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum.
- Our key involvement in Sydney Alliance's Affordable Housing and Power Assembly resulted in the invited politicians making fresh commitments to prioritise affordable housing funding, and to review the minimum standards for rentals.
- We hosted the Uniting Church's first Climate Pastoral Care Conference.
- The Uniting Fair Treatment campaign won the Media Award at the 2019 National Alcohol and Other Drugs Excellence and Innovation Awards.



Half a million steps

Half a Million Steps is a poignant film documenting the Long Walk to Treatment. The 500,000 steps between Dubbo and Sydney were walked by community and church members raising awareness of the need for greater access to drug treatment and funding, especially for women with children, and people living in remote areas. Along the way, we held supporting events at Uniting Churches in Dubbo, Wellington, Orange, Bathurst, Springwood, Parramatta and Sydney.

Find out how to host your own community screening at fairscreening.org

Did you know?

Uniting Earth Ministry is focused on capacity-building for the NSW.ACT Synod on environmental issues and climate change.



Find out more at unitingearth.org.au

Watch ABC TV's Q&A debate on pill testing, with Dr Marianne Jauncey, Medical Director of the Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre:



bit.ly/doctor-qanda

Innovating for social justice.

Uniting invests in social research to drive innovation throughout our service delivery and to influence public policy towards a more inclusive, connected and just society.



27

research partnerships
with universities

21

research partnerships
for aged care projects

6

research partnerships
funded by the Australian
Research Council

Partnering with the University of Technology Sydney

This year, our substantial external research program was underpinned by our ongoing partnership with the University of Technology Sydney (UTS). Together, we have:

- Started formal evaluation of our Household Model of residential aged care, a pioneering person-centred care model that empowers our residents to shape their day, their way
- Continued assessment of the Uniting Annesley Haberfield transformation from a motel-style building into an aged care home for people living with a mental illness
- Further developed our government-funded Rainbow of Difference Project, a joint initiative between Uniting, Altura Learning and UTS to address and improve the experiences of LGBTI people in aged care
- Started to assess the Uniting 120 Countdown program, pairing learner drivers with volunteer instructors to support them to gain their licence and open the road to education and employment opportunities.

Inclusive, connected and just

Uniting released *Inclusive, connected and just*, a paper outlining our public policy vision for NSW, to coincide with the March 2019 election. It draws on our experience and expertise in working with some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in the state, and outlines achievable solutions to ensure no-one misses out on the benefits of a strong economy.



Read our public policy vision at uniting.org/inclusive-connected-just

Did you know?

The Uniting library at our North Parramatta campus supports our commitment to research and evidence-informed practice. The collection of professional journals, research papers, and specialist books and DVDs are available for all employees to access – in person or via our intranet.

456

loans in 2018/19

628

registered borrowers

79

new borrowers

402

article requests