



Report from UnitingCare Queensland

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Context

As an expression of the mission of the Uniting Church, UnitingCare Queensland (UCQ) provides health and community services to thousands of people every day through its service groups – UnitingCare Health, UnitingCare Community, Blue Care, and ARRCS (Australian Regional and Remote Community Services).

UnitingCare Queensland's chaplains, 16,000 staff and 9000 volunteers compassionately care for and support people from all walks of life including older people, people with a disability, children, families and Indigenous people.

As part of the Uniting Church, the mission of UnitingCare Queensland is to improve the health and wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

As has been highlighted in previous Synod in Session reports, the health and community care sectors are undergoing significant changes which commenced some years ago. Increasing competition from for profit providers, rising cost pressure in health, contestability of government contracts, the National Disability Insurance Scheme and the transfer of government funding from organisations to consumers has turned the non-profit sector on its head.

This means the traditional way of delivering community services is being challenged, and UnitingCare Queensland has some work to do to maintain its leadership role as a trusted and high quality provider of health and community services.

This report outlines UCQ's key achievements and service highlights in the reporting period, then provides an overview of how changes in the sector will affect us and how we have determined our priorities for the next reporting period in light of these changes.

Key achievements

Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS)

The Uniting Church in Australia has a long history of providing support to people living in regional and remote Australia. ARRCS is proud to be an expression of this commitment.

Established in July 2014, ARRCS operates residential care facilities and community care programs in the Northern Territory, with these services previously managed by Frontier Services.

ARRCS operates nine residential aged care facilities and 11 community care programs in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Mutitjulu and Docker River. Many of the services are specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The services are tailored to meet the needs of older people, people with a disability or mental health issues, Indigenous children attending schools and child care, people requiring transition care and respite services, carer support services and memory support services in acute and non-acute service settings.

ARRCS supports people in their homes, community, community care centres and residential aged care facilities. ARRCS also provides hundreds of school children with nourishing meals and has recently assumed responsibility for a childcare centre adjacent to the aged care services at Mutitjulu.

In the first year of ARRCS, the focus was on ensuring the consistent provision of high quality services to all clients and residents, improving financial performance, upgrading buildings and fleet, and strengthening processes and systems. An enormous amount was achieved through the hard work of many people within ARRCS and Blue Care and through the financial support of the Australian Government and UnitingCare Queensland agencies across Australia. We were delighted that staff made the transition from Frontier Services to ARRCS.

Significant capital programs have been completed. We've repaired and upgraded existing facilities and constructed a new residential aged care facility in Mutitjulu. At this centre, and others like it, we are doing what we can to ensure Indigenous elders receive the quality services, comfort and care all Australians need and deserve.

Through a process of consultation with community members, Uniting Church representatives, clients and staff, ARRCS has completed its first strategic plan. The plan highlights our commitment to develop a workforce strategy that will result in ARRCS being an employer of choice in the region. As part of this, equitable and fair staff conditions have been a priority and a new three year Enterprise Agreement is now complete.

We are pleased with what has been achieved in this first year, and much remains to be done to realise our ambition to be a leading provider of culturally responsive, quality aged care and community services in regional and remote Australia. We are now well-positioned to continue to grow and support those who need our help.

The Northern Synod has supported and welcomed ARRCS.

St Stephen's Hospital Hervey Bay

In October 2014, Australia's first fully integrated digital hospital – the \$96 million St Stephen's Hospital in Hervey Bay opened. The 100-bed facility is the first Australian hospital to completely digitise and integrate all equipment and processes, allowing for a superior level of patient care.

Using mobile devices throughout the hospital, medical staff can access a patient's electronic medical record, which displays real-time health alerts, medications, vital signs, test results and patient history. There are approximately 1000 devices which connect and communicate data via the hospital network. This saves time for staff as they can access the information they need about their patient on hand at any time and in the one place. The potential for human error in transcribing and interpreting doctors' handwriting is also greatly reduced.

At St Stephen's, we have also implemented an electronic medication management system. This system enables a nurse to scan the barcode on a patient's medical wristband followed by the barcoded medication prior to administering a dose to patients. This ensures patients receive the correct dosage of the correct medication and has been shown to significantly reduce medication errors.

Through all the efficiencies this technology allows us to realise, patients can enjoy a higher quality of care, more face-to-face time with medical and nursing staff, and improved health outcomes.

The hospital is a significant piece of infrastructure for the broader Fraser Coast community and staff have worked hard to connect with the local congregation, other health services, social services providers and the broader community.

The hospital has attracted national and international attention and has brought many visitors to Hervey Bay.

Domestic and family violence

The CEO was a member of the premier's Special Taskforce on Domestic and Family Violence, chaired by Dame Quentin Bryce OA, which reported to the premier in February 2015. UnitingCare Community also contributed to this work, making a general submission while providing a special report on elder abuse at the request of the taskforce. The *Not Now, Not Ever* report contained 140 recommendations for community action, service system improvements and enhanced law and justice responses to domestic and family violence. The government is in the process of implementing the recommendations including legislative reforms, system improvements and increased funding.

At UCQ we have implemented a Domestic Violence Workplace Response Policy, ensuring we can support staff who are experiencing domestic violence. We allow employees to access special leave to deal with practical issues like court attendance and housing needs or to attend medical appointments. We support flexible working arrangements which can contribute to safety as a woman travels to and from work, or ensure her work station is suitably located. We can help to put safety plans in place; for example, if an employee unexpectedly does not come to work, there is a plan for checking her safety. We provide access to counselling if she desires it. Overall, we will do what we can to support the victim to keep their job. We do not tolerate the perpetration of violence.

The CEO continues to advocate in a range of forums for other workplaces to adopt an appropriate response to people experiencing domestic violence.

UnitingCare Queensland continues to deliver services to victims of domestic violence and also runs programs aimed at holding perpetrators accountable.

Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

UnitingCare Queensland continues to closely monitor the work of the Royal Commission and participate in work undertaken by the Queensland Synod and the Uniting Church nationally.

Within UnitingCare Queensland, we have implemented the Child Safe, Child Friendly (CSCF) framework and conducted risk assessments across all services. Underpinning this framework is the following commitment:

UnitingCare Queensland is committed to being a CSCF organisation and will, for all children who come into contact with its services:

- provide welcoming, safe and nurturing services
- prevent child abuse and neglect within its services
- appropriately and immediately address child abuse and neglect if it does occur.

The interests of any child being harmed, or at risk of harm, are to be placed above the interests of any other individual or the organisation.

The framework has been widely acknowledged as representing good policy and practice and providing a comprehensive basis for managing risk to children in institutional settings. In accordance with good practice and legislative obligations we are commencing a review of the framework and how successfully it has been implemented.

We have worked with the Uniting Church National Task Group and the Queensland Synod Royal Commission Task Group on a number of issues, including the development of the Uniting Church in Australia National Framework for Interim Redress Measures. The Synod Standing Committee

have approved this framework ready for implementation and we continue to work with the Queensland Synod to ensure the Queensland redress scheme meets the needs of former residents and, as much as possible, is consistent with Royal Commission recommendations.

Reconciliation Action Plan

Work has continued throughout the reporting period on the implementation of UnitingCare Queensland's second Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). The RAP builds on the foundational work of our first action plan and introduces new approaches to building relationships, showing respect and improving opportunities. As we reach the mid-point of the 2014–2017 RAP, we are taking the opportunity to refresh the work. We believe we have embedded awareness and respect across our service groups and are looking to develop some more aspirational goals as we move into the next phase.

The previous Synod in Session approved a proposal which commits UnitingCare Queensland as an official campaign partner of the Recognise Campaign. Awareness of Recognise is included as part of all official reconciliation events and we continue to work with Reconciliation Australia and Recognise nationally to keep the goals of Recognise front of mind for all staff.

Community Services Industry Alliance (CSIA)

Our responsibility to local communities extends to the development of the sector we work in and this was realised during the last 18 months with the establishment of the Community Services Industry Alliance. UnitingCare Queensland was instrumental in facilitating the foundational partners from across the sector and initial investment for getting the alliance off the ground. This body has the focus of supporting the "business of the community services business" and government has already acknowledged the "cut through" the alliance has had on critical social justice issues.

The community services sector collectively faces a range of changes and challenges and having an entity to advocate on behalf of the sector allows us to maintain focus on our clients.

Blue Care – Hall of Fame

In 2015, Blue Care was inducted into the Queensland Business Leaders' Hall of Fame. This honour recognised the contribution of the Uniting Church to Queensland communities, celebrating the vision of the founders and the many people who have worked for, volunteered for and led Blue Care for more than 60 years. It is a story of many hearts and hands, of compassion and commitment; a great story of inspired and diligent stewardship over generations.

Partnerships in the Pacific

Helena Goldie

Since 2010, UnitingCare Health nurses and allied health staff have conducted biannual visits to the Helena Goldie Hospital and Nurse Training College in 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 is made possible by the dedication of time and expertise as well as regular financial contributions from staff and clinicians.

In 2015, we provided sponsorship and support to five students, partial support to another eight students, and support to purchase Nursing Manuals for every student at the college. USB sticks, text books and other stationery were provided to students with money raised by staff. Staff contributions have also allowed the purchase of hospital equipment.

With the financial support of their hospitals, key medical staff have visited the facilities, providing hands-on support from UCH clinicians and nurses six times a year.

Lifeline Fiji

Over the past two years UnitingCare Community has worked with the Fijian community to assist in the establishment of Lifeline Fiji. UnitingCare Community has assisted to implement governance structures, obtain registration and provide training to volunteers and leaders, with the aim of building capacity to self-sufficiency.

With the recent devastating Cyclone Winston, UnitingCare Community staff have been providing intensive support to Lifeline Fiji, training teams and the leadership for deployment in community recovery, working with Fijian and other governments to advocate for aid funding, and up-skilling staff and volunteers to deal with the extraordinary circumstances.

Other service highlights

The most important achievement during the reporting period is the ongoing presence our staff play in the lives of the tens of thousands of people who use our services every day of the year. Some of our other service highlights include:

UnitingCare Health

- UnitingCare Health hospitals admitted just under 130,000 patients and performed more than 81,000 surgical procedures during the 2015/16 financial year.
- St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital celebrated 20 years since it opened its Emergency Centre and the centre now treats more than 12,000 patients each year.
- The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital opened the first comprehensive purpose-built breast clinic on the Sunshine Coast, with same-day results for both screening and diagnostic appointments.
- The new Clinical School at St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital opened with 400 medical students now trained by UnitingCare Health hospitals each year.
- The Wesley Hospital officially opened the Russell Stitz \$20 million operating theatre complex expansion – the largest theatre complex of any private hospital in Queensland, able to meet the needs of patients from all over the state.
- The innovative recycling project at the Sunshine Coast Private Hospital turns theatre waste into hospital gowns for sick children in Southeast Asia. More than 850 gowns made from a recyclable product used to wrap sterilised surgical equipment are sent annually to a hospital in the Philippines. This helps children who often arrive at hospital for treatment and surgery in clothing that does not meet infection control standards.

UnitingCare Community

- UnitingCare Community's Lifeline Crisis Line answered an additional 40,000 calls, increasing the total number of calls to 170,000 – a 30 per cent rise.
- UnitingCare Community developed a Disability Service Model, a truly person-centred approach to delivering disability services, and commenced transformation of many existing services ready for the launch of Queensland's National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) in 2016.
- A new service model for child and family services is also complete, focussed on providing the best possible outcomes for vulnerable families and families in crisis.
- A record-breaking \$1.3 million worth of books were sold at the Lifeline Bookfest at the Brisbane Convention Centre in January.

- UnitingCare Community opened a Children’s Contact Centre in Logan which supports children from separated families to spend time with their parents in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Community support was provided to more than 36,000 people in four community crisis events: Cyclone Marcia, the East Coast Low, the family tragedy in Cairns, and the Ravenshoe café explosion.
- Volunteer numbers grew by an additional 641 people, resulting in a total of 6841 volunteers supporting 2454 staff.

Blue Care

- Each week Blue Care touches the lives of more than 17,000 people and more than 5500 people live in a Blue Care facility.
- Blue Care rolled out 1300BlueCare across all its services – a single enquiry point to the Customer Service Centre – and established this number as the contact point for the government’s MyAgedCare Gateway and the Regional Assessment Service.
- Construction of a state-of-the-art residential aged care facility at Mt Louisa, Townsville has commenced and is expected to open in late 2016. We have “turned the sod” for the redevelopment of Homefield in Mackay.
- Blue Care undertook its first formal evaluation of its Tailor Made service performance model, establishing a baseline for future progress.
- A humanitarian award from international workforce learning management organisation SABA was also presented to Blue Care for its humanitarian services, social projects, community programs and initiatives.
- An enhanced Blue Care Tailor Made Palliative Care Program was launched to provide a consistent approach to offering peace and dignity to people during the final stages of life.
- An ongoing refurbishment program for 36 of 51 aged care facilities is underway, offering improved high-quality living spaces across the board.
- A partnership was formed with Brisbane Housing Company to redevelop low-cost housing at Bowen Court Retirement Living, New Farm.
- Following an approach from the Department of Health, Blue Care agreed to assume responsibility for the services at Ny-Ku Byun, an aged care facility in Cherbourg. Ny-Ku Byun is home to 24 residents and employs 25 staff.

Australian Regional and Remote Community Services

- More than 600 staff have been transferred onto new payroll and contracts.
- Establishment of ARRCs as an Approved Provider under legislation.
- Major refurbishments at Terrace Gardens, Old Timers and the completion of a 20-bed extension at Flynn Lodge.
- Built and opened the 18-bed, flexible care service/facility at Mutitjulu.
- Improved overall financial performance with increased success in funding submissions.
- All sites fully compliant.
- Prepared for aged care industry restructure with a review of systems and home care packages across the board.
- Developed a strategic plan, risk management and reporting framework.
- Implemented shared values.

Closure of services

Our capital management program includes building and refurbishing to ensure our facilities are modern and fit-for-purpose. The program includes making decisions about buildings which cease to be a safe residence or no longer support the delivery of quality services. The interests of the safety and care of our residents and staff means that sometimes we have to make difficult decisions; however we will always work with staff, residents and their families to assist with any necessary transitions.

This was the case throughout the last 18 months with the decision the board took to close Winston House Residential Aged Care Facility in Gympie, (63 operational beds) and the Gympie Community Care Centre. At the time of writing, Blue Care continues to work with the affected residents and their families to transition into new facilities. In Gympie, Blue Care's residential aged care services and community care services will all be delivered from Grevillia Gardens.

Hibiscus Gardens aged care facility in Gladstone was also closed. The decision to close Hibiscus Gardens was due to the age of the building, the low occupancy rate and the fact the near-by Edenvale integrated site was undergoing development and refurbishment. Our ongoing commitment to delivering aged care services in the Gladstone area will be through the more modern and purpose-built Edenvale facility.

St Stephen's Hospital in Maryborough closed in late 2014 when St Stephen's Hospital Hervey Bay was opened. The sale of St Stephen's Maryborough was finalised in late 2015, when an agreement was reached with The Friendlies Discount Pharmacy Group who hope to be able to use the property for health care or aged care services.

In consolidating properties and service offerings in Cairns, the Blue Care Redlynch Glenmead Village Aged Care Facility was sold to Regis Aged Care in April 2015. Blue Care was active in supporting residents in the transition to maintain quality of care and to support staff to remain where possible so that continuity of care was provided.

Governance

The UnitingCare Queensland Board is committed to the highest standards of governance and has established governance practices and organisational structures which are designed to focus on fulfilling God's mission in health and community services, responsible stewardship, integrity, accountability and effective risk management, on behalf of the Uniting Church in Queensland. The role of the board is to approve the strategic direction of UnitingCare Queensland, guide and monitor the management of UnitingCare Queensland and its service groups in achieving its strategic plans, and oversee good governance practice. The board aims to protect and enhance the interests of the church, while taking into account the interests of other stakeholders, including clients and patients, employees, volunteers and the wider community.

The board as a whole meets at least ten times per year. It has established committees to assist it in fulfilling its responsibilities, including: the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee; Governance Committee; Quality Committee; and the Health Strategy Working Group.

The ARRCs board reports to the UCQ board on matters reserved to the UCQ board.

During the reporting period:

- the new moderator (Rev David Baker) and general secretary (Gary Doyle) commenced as ex-officio members of the board, with Mr Doyle concluding in December 2015
- Susan Forrester commenced as a board member in April 2015

- Andrea Staines has been appointed to commence in April 2016.

The current priorities for the board are:

- finalisation of the governing documents for UCQ (see below)
- finalisation of the Delegations and Authorisations from the FIP/Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Queensland)
- refresh UCQ's risk management framework
- long-term sustainability of the church's health and community services.

Governing documents

Considerable work has been undertaken by key personnel in UCQ and the Synod office to review and redevelop the suite of governing documents applying to UCQ. This is a complex process that not only affects the relationship between UCQ and the church, but also has legal, taxation and operating implications.

At the time of writing, the work is nearing completion with a new constitution, by-laws, delegations and reporting framework soon to be presented to the Synod Standing Committee. The work has included engagement with the Synod Standing Committee, the Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee and the FIP. As part of new requirements, UCQ will provide an Annual Statement of Missional Intent to the Synod Standing Committee, and provide an annual report on it. The first statement will be submitted to the Synod Standing Committee for approval in mid-2016.

Mission and chaplaincy

While the mission of the Uniting Church underpins all of our work, our directors of mission are a direct link with the church in our day-to-day work. The directors of mission are charged with, among other responsibilities, overseeing the theological underpinnings of the work we do, as well supporting the chaplaincy services that operate across UnitingCare Queensland. Chaplains have provided spiritual and pastoral support to staff, volunteers, patients, clients and their families. They have conducted services, fellowship, support groups, funerals, provide grief and loss training, prison ministry, visited clients and patients, and supported families through illness and deaths of loved ones. We have 60 chaplains, supported by nearly 200 volunteer lay chaplains, across our services. Our directors of mission, chaplains and volunteers are 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.

Our directors of mission will play an important role in the transform work outlined below to ensure we hold true to our values and mission.

Our challenges and performance drivers for 2016–17

We are facing significant changes and challenges in the health and community services sector during the next ten years. We must understand these challenges so we can position ourselves to respond, not only to be sustainable, but to continue to be an industry leader. Following is a snapshot of the key issues for our sectors:

Key trends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageing population • Increase in chronic disease and dementia • Increasingly complex family dynamics and needs of children coming into care • Increasingly severe family violence • Innovations in technologies • Continuing gap in health and well-being indicators between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the broader population • Impact of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse on Church providers and other community services agencies
Industry reform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued outsourcing of services traditionally provided by governments • Increased contestability of services traditionally provided by the not-for-profit sector • Increasing marketisation of human services
Market forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing competition from commercial enterprises in services traditionally provided by the not-for-profit sector
Funding policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to funding models in particular moves to consumer-directed care • Move to funding for outcomes • Expectations of collaboration and partnerships across sectors • Reforms to private health funding and contracts.

To talk of ‘market’ and being ‘competitive’ may not necessarily align with an organisation driven by the love of God to develop human dignity and potential and the relief of human need. However, as a responsible and professional board, and stewards of the investment and trust of the church and public funds, we must reconcile the concept.

Performance priorities for 2016–17

While the following sections outline our strategic response to these challenges and performance drivers, our immediate priorities in 2016–17 include:

- implementing reforms in the aged care sector which focus on consumer-directed care and supporting our clients through the changes.
- preparing ourselves and our clients for the National Disability Insurance Scheme roll out.
- responding to learnings from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to enhance the safety of children in contact with our services and better respond to people who have experienced abuse in the past.
- exploring how to respond to challenges in the hospital sector resulting from more stringent health fund requirements.

- acknowledging the challenges require a fundamental shift in the way we do business, as set out below.

Transform – why and what does it mean?

The changing external environment has led us to reflect on all aspects of our operation – our mission and purpose, the services we provide, the communities we serve, our business models and systems, our people, our financial sustainability, and where we want to be in the coming decades.

Consistent with the mission and commitments of the church, we have confirmed our aspirations to:

- be a leading provider of aged care and community services in regional and remote areas including the provision of Indigenous services.
- further strengthen and grow our aged care services across the state and to provide integrated service models that increase our relevance and value to our current and future clients.
- grow our health services and create partnerships with public and private health providers that enhance our delivery of health services as a not-for-profit provider.
- increase our service capability and reach across the state in the provision of disability services that clearly improves the quality of people’s lives.
- enhance our capacity to be the leader and innovator of services focussed on children and families.
- continue our commitment to the provision of services to people in crisis, including Lifeline Counselling Services.

We also want to continue to be influential in social policy and broader government and community agendas that will support people at the heart of our mission to have opportunities to thrive and participate in all aspects of community life.

Based on these ambitions we are currently undertaking a huge change process to ensure our service structure, business systems and service models are aligned. We are increasing our capability to respond to market dynamics and to be agile and responsive to the needs of our clients and the communities we serve.

To achieve these ambitions and meet the challenges and drivers set out above, we are undertaking a “Transform” process in 2015–16 – a whole of group review and restructure which positions us to achieve the ambitions above, while maintaining our culture and identity at our core, and staying true to the mission of the Uniting Church.

We have recently announced some changes to the structure of service delivery and by the time of the Synod in Session will be in a position to provide a further briefing on what the future organisational structure will look like. The building blocks will be in place by 1 July 2016, with implementation to follow in 2016–17.

UnitingCare Queensland remains focussed on being a leader in person-centred care and on improving the lives of those we serve. Our strong foundation in the church, our mission and values position us well to meet the service reform challenges with courage and thoughtful leadership. We are confident in the skills, experience and capacity of the organisation to continue to reach out, speak out and care for Queensland and the Northern Territory communities.

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