



Report from

UnitingCare Queensland

Report

This report to the 35th Synod in Session demonstrates UnitingCare Queensland's (UnitingCare) commitment to reaching and serving the people and communities of Queensland in ways that have the greatest positive impact on their health and quality of life.

In the past year, we have embodied the biblical theme of the 35th Synod—grow—as we continued our transformation journey. We have demonstrated measurable progress in stabilising our financial situation and strengthening the organisational capability so we can successfully achieve our aspiration of becoming a leader in health, aged care, and community services by 2030.

Through UnitingCare's ongoing response to the COVID-19 crisis, our people have demonstrated the heart of service that differentiates us from other providers. They have gone above and beyond to keep delivering the services for those who need us most. Our people have achieved this while meeting increased demand for some services, the suspension of others, all against a backdrop of ongoing sector review and reform.

During the coming year, we are turning our attention to embedding increased strategic thinking across all areas of UnitingCare, with a strong focus on delivery and outcomes that achieve our mission.

About UnitingCare

UnitingCare's mission is to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities so they can live the best life possible. This remains the core purpose of UnitingCare, which arises from the words of Jesus Christ to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

We are called to be an agent of God's healing power to the whole person, thereby enabling each individual to play his or her important role in God's plan for all humanity.

As an expression of our mission, UnitingCare provides health and community services to thousands of people every day of the year through its hospitals, aged care, disability and community services.

At the heart of our services is this mission of Christ. This is demonstrated through the commitment of our people to being responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the Uniting Church, donors, and taxpayers.

Focus since the last Synod

During the past year, we have strengthened our position to continue furthering the mission of the Uniting Church and providing care and support to the people we serve.

Specifically, we focussed on:

Focus area	Achievements
Rapidly addressed our financial situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving a surplus in FY2020 for the first time in several years. Generating more than \$43.2m in net recurring benefits through our 2030 initiatives. Negotiating the Federal Government’s JobKeeper Payment Scheme eligibility for employees of our individual organisations; additional funding to increase access to Lifeline crisis support services throughout COVID-19 outbreak; and signed an agreement with the Queensland Government that ensures our UnitingCare Private Hospitals will remain sustainable and that all our hospitals staff have certainty of employment through the COVID-19 crisis.
Improved our safety profile across the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pandemic plans are in place for each UnitingCare service area, scenario testing is ongoing. Collaborative initiatives to standardise approaches for the prevention and treatment of pressure injuries, outbreak management, manual handling, falls management, holistic risk assessment and other quality improvement measures. Keeping our people (and those we serve) safe during COVID-19 wave 1.
Improved organisational health and employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall organisational health improved by four points from 2018, and reflecting our strong values-driven culture. 2019 People Survey results revealed we have highly engaged teams in all of our key areas from aged care and community services to hospitals, family and disabilities, and corporate services.

Highlights:

To continue to thrive and expand our mission:

Lessons learned	UnitingCare’s response
We must generate a surplus so we can extend our core capabilities and increase the impact of our mission to those that we serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Driving this focus through delivery of our 2030 program strategic initiatives to the bottom line. Building capability across the business to make good business decisions and have introduced a new commercial framework to embed understanding about how to maximise and protect revenue and minimise expenses. Addressing the fact that our assets and facilities have ‘run down’ over the last 20 years in order to meet minimum service requirements in some areas.

Lessons learned	UnitingCare's response
We must meet increasing demand for our services in the context of sector review and reform and higher customer expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing focus on listening to our clients, patients and customers to strengthen our reputation for delivering value. Implementing our first enterprise strategic business planning process that will lay a strong foundation for the next decade. Transitioning from a 'survival mindset' to a 'sustainable growth mindset' where people flourish; and improving our ability to adapt, function and perform through targeted leadership and organisational development programs.
We must remain vigilant in ensuring ongoing COVID-19 preparedness and risk-mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business service areas, customers and employees through the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (CMT) and Operations Team (OPS Team).

Project Plenty

UnitingCare has been active in all the stages of the development of Project Plenty.

Our Director of Mission participated in the Project Plenty design workshops and importantly, has ensured the mission priorities and commitments are reflective of the church's wider mission and ministry through its agencies.

The current draft mission priorities and direction 2021–2025 that will come before the Synod has been workshoped with members of our Executive and Senior Leadership Teams. UnitingCare is committed to working together as the whole church as we embrace the challenges and realise the vision of *Shared life. Flourishing communities.*

Challenges/risks as we progress

We commenced the 2030 Program in 2018 to:

- articulate what UnitingCare wants to be known for in 2030 within the sectors we deliver services to;
- determine how to achieve this vision while maintaining focus on our mission, increasing our social impact and becoming financially sustainable; and
- drive improvements in financial position, quality of service and our culture that will put us on a clear path to realising our 2030 vision.

In the process, we identified a number of challenges which are broadly described below:

- Growing and ageing population with increasing life expectancy.

- Clinical and carer skills shortages due to increasing demand for workers in our sectors – now the largest workforce in Australia.
- Increasing prevalence of chronic diseases/lifestyle illnesses.
- Changing customer expectations – driven by increased adoption of technology and a preference for home care.
- Deregulation and changes to funding models resulting in more consumer-oriented markets.
- Intensifying competition across all our sectors.

UnitingCare is responding with a long-term plan called *Taking Care Further*—to build on our strengths, respond to what we foresee impacting the markets we operate in, and above all, stay true to our mission to ensure the people we serve and the people who work with us experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

To achieve this, we made some deliberate choices to safeguard the sustainability and future of UnitingCare. These are explained below:

Service	Strategic setting
Community aged care	With people increasingly wanting to age in place, this is a key growth area for the organisation. We will focus our innovation mindshare and capital on community aged care, rationalise existing services and fully explore new service offerings to drive growth.
Disability	We will optimise and hold our offering in this sector while services are transitioned to the NDIS. We will define the services that we will be known for but we won't pursue growth opportunities in the increasingly competitive disability services sector.
Residential aged care	We will optimise and maintain a watching brief on a 'grow slowly' setting as we respond to our customers' needs and to the sector-wide challenges.
Retirement living	We will review our retirement living services and divest under-performing assets in this sector.
Hospitals	We will continue to focus on excellences in the services we deliver through The Wesley Hospital, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, Buderim Private Hospital and St Stephen's Hospital, and holding our strong, well-regarded position in this sector.
Child and family services	We will optimise and grow our services slowly to respond to community need.

We believe this is a sound plan to use our extensive and firmly established geographical presence, core offerings, trusted brands, which deploys our resources where they can have the largest positive impact on people and communities in need—now and in the future.



Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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