



We celebrate

successes every day.

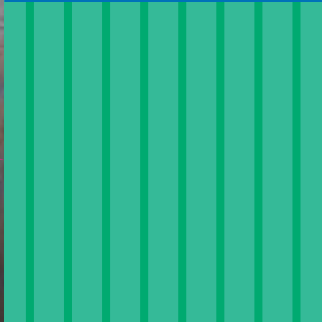
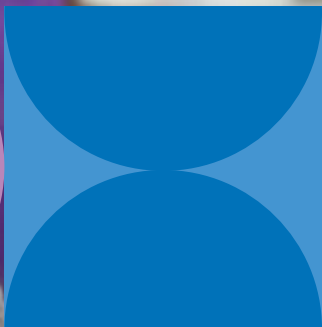
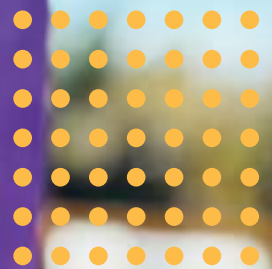
Annual Report
2021/2022



Uniting
Country SA



Uniting
Country Housing



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Mission & Values

The Uniting Country Group (UCG) comprises two not-for-profit organisations which operate in regional South Australia

Uniting Country SA (UCSA)

A social and community services organisation

Uniting Country Housing (UCH)

A community housing organisation



The UCG deliver over 55 services from 32 sites, empowering communities to manage domestic violence, disability, mental health, financial distress, homelessness and family breakdown, out of home care and foster care.

The UCG are guided by the following values:

Respect and compassion for all people

Belief in the innate worth of all people

Justice for all, particularly for those less advantaged in our society

Being of service to others

Restlessness for what could be

Non-violence and peace

With over 100 years of experience delivering services to regional communities the UCG are committed to meeting the needs of country people in line with the vision of compassionate, respectful and strong communities where all people flourish.

Chairperson's Report

This has been another stellar year for Uniting Country SA (UCSA) and Uniting Country Housing (UCH) - a year of change, challenge and new directions.



Sue Park
Board Chairperson



Harry Randhawa
Chief Executive

We have been very fortunate in appointing our new Chief Executive, Dr Harry Randhawa. Harry has brought a wealth of experience in leading organisations working with country communities, particularly Aboriginal communities.

His commitment and dedication have been apparent from the start. He has embraced the warm, inclusive culture of this organisation, and it is hard to believe he has been with us for only 12 months.

He has been very ably backed up by the Executive team, and by our newly appointed General Manager, Service Delivery, Mr. Chris Kennett.

There has been change at the Board level as well. We farewelled two long-standing Board Directors, the Reverend Ted White, from Jamestown, and Mr. Bill Othams, a retired Port Pirie lawyer. Both these Directors have provided many years of outstanding service, and we wish them well in their retirement. We have filled these vacancies with two other outstanding candidates, Mr Lachlan McAuliffe and Mr Paul Thomas. Lachlan and Paul are also residents of our community, Lachlan in Port Pirie and Paul in Kadina. In addition to their local knowledge and connections, they bring their skills and passion to the Board: Lachlan in Law and in supporting young people, and Paul in Governance and Housing. Paul is a former mayor of the Copper Coast Council, and a member of the Kadina Uniting Church.

The Board has not rested on its laurels this year. We have looked closely at our responsibilities within an organisation which works with some very vulnerable people, particularly young people in out of home care. Our awareness and skills were honed in a workshop delivered by Ms. Rosina Hislop, an expert in this field. We also engaged Mr Kym Thomas who is a Nukunu elder to provide us with Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training to ensure that we are providing the best leadership we can in an organisation that aims to work in respectful cooperation with Aboriginal communities in our region.

This year has marked the beginning of a new Strategic Plan, developed with involvement of staff throughout the organisation. As we monitor the implementation of this plan, the Board is already aware of its impact on the choices we make. Notably, we look forward to a period of expansion in UCH, to address the dire shortage of affordable housing in the regions. With this in mind, the Board has prioritised the successful formalisation of the Charitable Status of UCH, to ensure that we maximise the use of our resources.

Of course, the challenge that has run through all of this is dealing with the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. On behalf of the Board I extend my thanks to all staff, who have behaved with the utmost responsibility in protecting their clients and colleagues, without ever sacrificing their commitment to keeping our services open. We have been blown away by the goodwill and ingenuity you have demonstrated.

This is not only Harry's first Annual Report, but it is also my last. I will retire from the Board in October after eleven years as a Director, seven as Chair. It has been my absolute privilege to be involved with this organisation since my retirement from paid employment. I will have very mixed emotions at leaving such a wonderful organisation, but am secure in the knowledge that there is very able leadership in place for the future. I have loved my time here, and will continue to watch from afar as UCSA and UCH continue to excel.

Sue Park,
Board Chairperson

Chief Executive's Report

On behalf of the Uniting Country Group (UCG)
I express my sincere gratitude to:

Our Board of Directors with a special mention for our Chair, Sue Park, from whom I have learned so much. Sue's leadership and exemplary governance have been pivotal to the organisation's growth. Over the last 7 years the number of staff has grown from 231 to over 300, which in turn has improved access to services for countless country communities. As Sue looks to her retirement in October, I thank her for the impact that she has had on rural and regional South Australian communities and wish her the best for her future.

Our staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to empower and assist our clients across a huge area which spans over 900,000 square kilometres.

Our funding bodies who support a vast array of social and community services.

In reflecting over the year just passed, I highlight a few of our achievements below.

Ranking #7 in the "WorkPlus Top 40 Best Places to Work" awards which formally recognised the organisational culture created by the retiring CE, Anthea Pavy, who spent 18 years at the helm and a total of 30+ years with us altogether.

The creation of the Aboriginal Community Hub in Port Augusta which was the culmination of working in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal community under a two-way governance model. We were able to learn from each other during the process which resulted in the establishment of a place where Aboriginal children can optimise their early years learning to support improved educational outcomes at school.

Establishing two new supported residential care facilities (Kadina and Port Pirie) providing more access and opportunity for children in care to be close to family.

Expanding our NDIS services to include specialised support coordination.

Harry Randhawa
Chief Executive

2021/22 Board Members



Harry Randhawa
Chief Executive



Sue Park
Chairperson



Lachlan McAuliffe
Director (new)



Peter Hollister
Director



Paul Thomas
Director (new)



Fiona Duffield
Director



Jo Court
Director



Rev Ted White
Director (retired)



Jo Curkpatrick
Director



Chez Curnow
Director



Bill Othams
Director (retired)



Strategic Plan

2022/2025

The Board, Senior Leadership Team, and management staff worked together over a period of five months to create a 2022 – 2025 Strategic Plan that will shape the future direction of the Uniting Country Group (UCG).

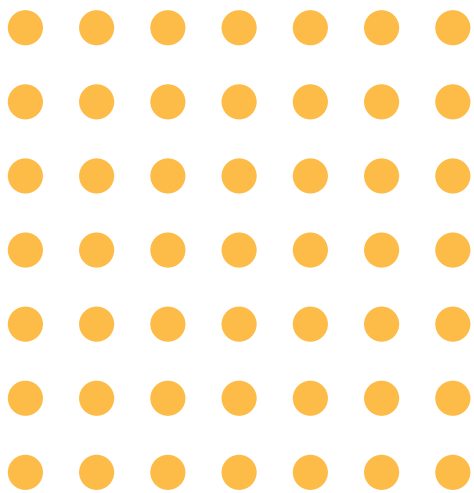
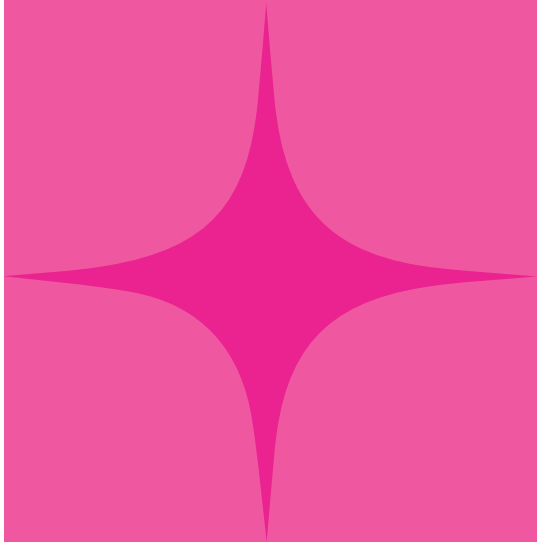
The extensive consultation with staff across all levels of the organisation reflected the importance that our leadership places on our staff and their input into the strategic plan. It is our staff who are our greatest asset.

Once finalised, the strategic plan became the foundation document against which departmental business plans were formulated.

The strategic plan will guide the UCG over the next three years focusing on client services and engagement, staff development, organisational growth and social housing.



I love my volunteers, I love the organisation, so it's nice to be recognised for the work that you do. Each new volunteer brings a unique skillset, with a different take on volunteering. Kylie Crouch said.



Volunteering Award

Like many not-for-profit organisations, Uniting Country SA relies on their valuable volunteer workforce. Leading a group of 160 volunteers takes a special kind of person and Kylie Crouch, our Volunteer Coordinator, was recognised for her commitment to volunteering as a finalist in the category of 'Excellence in Volunteer Management' for the 2022 South Australian Volunteer Awards. Kylie was one of 17 people in South Australia nominated for the award.

The category recognises a volunteer leader for their dedication to supporting and facilitating the engagement of volunteers.

A celebration was held at the Adelaide Convention Centre in June which saw nominees celebrate their success and provided an opportunity to meet with, and explore the strategies used by others working with volunteers.

The awards were presented by the SA Minister for Human Services, the Hon. Nat Cook MP and Volunteering SA&NT.

Uniting Country SA has over 160 volunteers across 5 sites.

Deb Devlin Retirement



Deb Devlin recently retired after two decades as an employee of Uniting Country SA. She maintained her commitment and energetic approach to the end and will be missed. Here are her reflections on her years with the organisation and her plans for the future.

"I have been inspired by many wonderful people, including Rita Blieschke who was a dynamic educator. Rita went on to Council and was a firebrand – no one argued with Rita! Rita encouraged me to become a Councillor and I started that role in 2003, the same year I started at Uniting Country SA, working as the Manager of the Bright Start Parenting Project. Bright Start was all about community development and supporting and empowering parents; it is a great model and I really enjoyed bringing parents together.

I don't know exactly how many tender applications I've written over the years, but I do know that I have had a very high success rate. If you've got a good product and it's one you believe in, it isn't difficult to write a good tender. I'm interested in finding out what best practice

looks like, not just in Australia but internationally. It's important to always be realistic about what you can deliver. It's also important to embrace change, because if you do the same things all the time then nothing will improve and you will get left behind.

I'm not worried about being bored in retirement. I have commitments as State Treasurer of Soroptimist International SA and for our local Port Pirie Club. I'm also Treasurer of the Koolunga Bowls Club. I'm a Life Member of Gladstone Golf Club and currently the Secretary.

Most importantly I'm planning retirement to make me more available to my family and friends. I have two beautiful daughters and I love my trips to Flinders Island, where I do some fishing while my son-in-law dives for crayfish and abalone. The old farmhouse and my Crystal Brook house still have renovations to do. I'll be on the golf course more often too. Right now my handicap is in the low twenties and I'm hoping with more time on the course I'll get it down to 18!

Investing in Research

Uniting Country SA (UCSA) released three research reports during the year in partnership with the Centre for Social Impact, Flinders University.

This body of work is aptly called "Hearing Country Voices" and is an ongoing commitment to evidence-informed practice, aligning with UCSA's vision of "Strong Communities Where All People Flourish".

The research informs continuous improvement in our practice and is used to advocate for country communities. Challenges in the country are unique and distinguished from those experienced in metropolitan communities.

The three reports were:

'To do this job you have to have the heart for it' whose findings highlight the importance of relationships with clients and other professionals when delivering integrated, person centred care. Staff satisfaction and retention were also central to delivering positive client outcomes.

'Country Children in Care'. What are the experiences of children in care in the country and what would help them flourish? Our findings, in line with the literature, suggest that if decisions about children in care were child-centred and coupled with a good relationship between the carer and the child, this would result in improved experiences in care as well as improved outcomes.

'The Effects of Pastoral Care Workers on Student Wellbeing in Regional and Metropolitan Schools.' The findings suggest positive outcomes for student wellbeing will occur where the pastoral care worker: is flexible and works across the school, with individuals and groups, is available when required, functions as part of a wellbeing team, complementing the skills of others, is authentic and uses their own interests and passions as a 'hook', is community-minded and is part of, or familiar with, the school's community and/or region and is kind, friendly and honest.

These reports have been published to the UCSA website.



Donations

Uniting Country SA have been delighted by, and extremely grateful for, the huge number of donations that have been received this year. Donations have included quilts, blankets, money, fresh and non-perishable food as well as clothing, from local businesses, community groups and individuals.

"It is donations such as these that make an immense difference in the lives of so many people and families who were already doing it tough prior to the increased cost of living.

Such donations ensure that vulnerable members of our communities are fed and clothed.

We are truly touched by the generosity shown by our regional communities; it is central to our mission of caring for country people" says CE Dr Harry Randhawa, "as well as our vision of compassionate, respectful; and strong country communities where all people flourish."

It is donations such as these that make an immense difference in the lives of so many people and families who were already doing it tough prior to the increased cost of living.



Young People in Care

Siblings aged five and eight were referred to us in 2021 for short term-care, to provide a stable care environment whilst developing plans for longer term placement. This followed their lengthy stay in a commercial care environment after their removal from their birth family a few years earlier.

The UCSA care team worked with the young people to:

Develop a clear and predictable daily routine

Promote feelings of safety and trust

Provide certainty and consistency in all interactions

Build awareness of “big feelings” and develop skills in regulating behaviour

Following this short-term placement, a longer-term arrangement became available.

To prepare for the transition, our staff consulted with the young people on many key issues such as their room set up, the design of routines, meals in addition to activity planning.

The young people particularly enjoyed the use of the house sensory room as a safe space to calm “big feelings” as well as enjoying activities like reading or playing outside on the trampoline and swing.

This transition has enabled the young people to settle in well and will provide a solid platform from which they can deepen relationships and connections at school, within the community and with other siblings also in care.

Quotes from the young people from virtual meetings with Office of the Guardian for Children and Young People:

“I feel safe”

“I like the backyard and can do cart wheels”

“The toy and sensory room is a place to go by ourselves and somewhere to calm down. We also have Netflix in the room so we can watch movies”

Quotes from other young people in residential care facilities include:

“I like not feeling sad anymore and not living in an environment where I feel constantly sad”

“staff listen(ed) and support(ed) us”

“We have our own space, and it has a big backyard with a trampoline, and I like the carers, they are nice”

“I like not feeling sad anymore and not living in an environment where I feel constantly sad.”





Community

Impact

Woodward Park

As part of a unique collaboration with Port Pirie Community Kindergarten, Port Pirie Regional Council and Wellbeing SA (through their SA Healthy Towns Challenge), Uniting Country SA secured funding to the value of \$340,000 to upgrade Woodward Park in Port Pirie.

The proposed upgrades that will take place over 24 months aim to encourage young children to enjoy outdoor physical activity through the development of activity spaces co-designed with local children, parents, and carers.

These new facilities will include a nature play space, a half-court basketball facility, a bike track and upgraded toilet facilities, all of which have been developed by a Co-design Committee that sought direct feedback from the community.

The partnership between Uniting Country SA and the Port Pirie community has resulted in creating strong country communities where all people have access to safe, quality facilities and social connections.



Country Wellness Connections

Joseph sought financial management support from Uniting Country SA. His assessment revealed a history of major depression, anxiety, incidents of self-harm and excessive alcohol use.

Joseph is single, lives independently and had recently moved to the country to escape a circle of peers who fueled his alcohol use. Joseph had no local supports and had lost his driver's licence. His strongest emotional bond was with his pet.

Joseph was referred to Country Wellness Connections (CWC) who found that Joseph was attempting to access seven services from differing agencies and often struggled to manage the resulting complexity of appointments. The CWC team worked with all service providers to create an achievable schedule so that Joseph remained engaged but not overwhelmed.

This approach allowed a tailored intervention which resulted in Joseph's entry into a rehabilitation program. As it turns out, the major barrier to attending rehabilitation was his concern about what would happen to his pet in his absence.

The CWC team helped Joseph to arrange pet care, allowing him to attend and complete his rehabilitation. This resulted in a sustained reduction in his alcohol use.

Joseph now frequents, with his case manager, the local Community Centre where he has developed a network of peers who provide additional support.

Joseph attributes his successful rehabilitation to the UCSA team who helped him to make the necessary changes for an inclusive and fulfilling life within a regional community.



Demand for UCSA's disability services continued to grow during the financial year due to the dedicated support provided by our team.

NDIS Services

We are delighted to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the achievements for our NDIS participants, including:

Supporting a budding graphics designer to enrol in and purchase equipment for a TAFE course to begin his career.

Ensuring continued essential supports whilst participants recover from COVID.

Renovating kitchens and bathrooms to keep people in their home and community.

Expanded service delivery into remote regions of SA.

Helping sole traders, small businesses and independent workers to enter the NDIS space, providing local services and reducing reliance on the metropolitan focused NDIS providers.

Working alongside a participant who experienced 12 months of reviews and applications in order to find a suitable bed which met their needs.

Supporting relocations to Adelaide, Perth and Darwin in order to be closer to family.

Ending a long stint in hospital by sourcing a beautiful and supportive housing option close to a loving family.

Starting driving lessons for modified, hand-controlled cars.

Welcoming a passionate footy fan to the community, including getting him out fishing on a boat for the first time.

Succeeding in being registered to provide specialist support coordination.

The year in stats

8,800

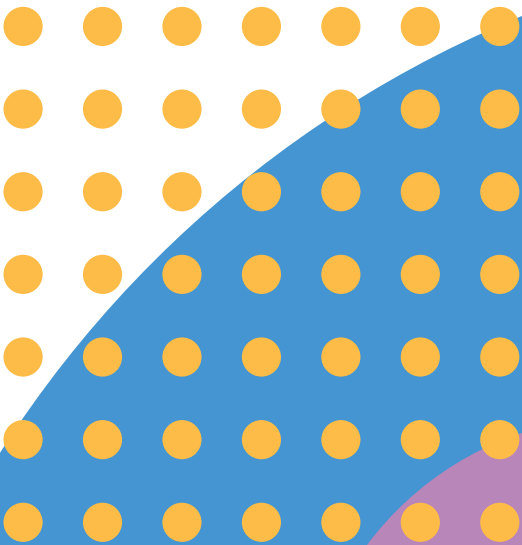
Our support coordinators provided 8,800 hours of support to 280 participants.

11,000

Our support workers provided 11,000 hours of support to 60 participants.

24,000 invoices

Our plan management team processed 24,000 invoices for 461 participants.



All Staff Day

All Staff Day was an important event to recognise, acknowledge and celebrate the tireless work that all our staff undertake everyday in supporting, assisting, empowering and advocating for vulnerable members of our regional communities.

The covid environment meant that we celebrated all staff day on November 4th 2021 with a mix of virtual and local team gatherings across all UCSA sites.

The theme “Think Outside the Box” was embraced by staff who dressed up for the occasion, choosing anything from cultural outfits to recycling madness, blue hair and much, much more!

The theme was chosen to encourage fresh thinking beyond customary boundaries. In line with this, our special guest, Mick Collis, treated us to an Aussie yarn which demonstrated that you can achieve great things, even be a world champion at sudoku, by thinking outside the box.

UCSA’s All Staff Days bring everyone together for the purpose of rewarding their great work and celebrating their success in making a positive difference to the lives of so many people in regional SA.



Celebrating our team who work very hard to support, empower and advocate for vulnerable members of our communities each and every day.



Without
UCSA I
would not
be where
I am now.



Homelessness Success Story

“Asha” moved in with her brother in Port Pirie after fleeing domestic violence. After six months Asha’s brother asked her to leave the property as he hadn’t disclosed to the landlord that she was living at the property. Asha was homeless again.

Asha then moved into a lady’s house however the lady became verbally abusive and Asha had to leave. Asha then moved in with another lady who asked her to move out as she had people coming for Christmas.

Asha began living on the streets. Although she was working she couldn’t afford accommodation. Asha spoke of finding places where she could shower and wash her uniform so she could maintain her job. Her leg became swollen due to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary disease and she became physically unwell and lost her job. Asha also experienced depression.

Asha contacted the UCSA After Hours number and spoke with a wonderful worker who helped her to get motel accommodation. She lived in the motel for 85 days during which time her Port Pirie case manager linked her with Housing SA who offered her a one-bedroom unit in Clare.

Asha shared that from the time she left the domestic violence relationship until she moved into her Housing SA unit in Clare was about two

years: two years of housing instability, struggling to work and manage her health issues.

‘What was it that made your experience with Uniting Country SA a successful outcome?’

Asha stated it was the compassion shown by UCSA and their understanding of her need to find housing, as without housing she felt very vulnerable.

Asha said she moved to her Clare unit on February 2022 and the Clare case worker organised home delivery services from the local library and chemist as the client was unable to walk far.

Asha was also supported by her Port Pirie case manager to access a new free washing machine.

UCSA liaised with the Lions second hand shop who gifted Asha some basic furniture items which were delivered at no cost to her.

Asha engaged with a new doctor and was diagnosed with Diabetes. After three months of treatment, and accessing a UCSA Micro Credit Loan for her glasses, she was ready for work and in May she began a new job.

Interview with former client of Uniting Country SA – Yorke and Mid North Homelessness Services

Country North Homelessness Alliance

1,685

people received
assistance

58%

female

49%

Aboriginal and/
or Torres Strait
Islander

40%

unemployed



Tasty Tucker

The Tasty Tucker program has been delivering delicious and nutritious low-cost meals to the community via the Port Pirie Community Centre for over 15 years.

The program has experienced an increase in demand, growing from 20 meals per week in its early days to over 100 meals per week.

The program is run by volunteers with a special mention for Trevor Edwards who has been volunteering since the program's inception.

Despite temporary setbacks due to Covid, which saw dine-in options replaced by take-aways, over 2200 meals have been served helping over 750 Port Pirie residents to get access to high quality, tasty meals during the year.

The weekly menus are communicated via email, radio and recently through the creation of a dedicated social media platform. The feedback from the community includes:

"The meal was fantastic"

"I love Tasty Tucker, as I can freeze extra meals for another day"

"The Volunteers do a great job and the food is great value"

Foodhub Social Supermarket

UCSA partnered with Wellbeing SA and the Department of Human Services to examine the potential of the Social Supermarket Model (SSM) developed by researchers from the Centre of Social Impact at Flinders University (CSI Flinders) in partnership with the food relief sector.

Social Supermarkets work on a food assistance model that aims to fill the gap between reliance on relief and self-sufficiency. SSMs are different from emergency food relief outlets in that they offer a choice of food and groceries at low cost in a retail environment that is closely linked to other social services. They are focused on inclusion and connecting people to opportunities, rather than just food and material relief.

UCSA referred to the SSM model to assess the work of the Port Pirie-based Community Foodhub, with a special interest in its potential to blend food relief with social services, social enterprise and employment possibilities. Several clients have even found roles through volunteering at the Community Foodhub.

UCSA found that the Community Foodhub provided excellent services with room for growth. The Community FoodHub can build further on its strengths of linking clients with a range of services while contributing to immediate food security. The site has been evaluated by CSI Flinders on behalf of Wellbeing SA as part of an ongoing tranche of work to reform the food relief sector.

5,013
clients

476

new members

15,654 kg
of pantry items

7,757 kg

frozen items

17,850 kg
bread

12,325 kg

fresh fruit and
vegetables

439
meal packs



Aboriginal Community Hub

The Connected Beginnings initiative aims to provide Aboriginal children with opportunities which support their early years learning, and in turn, maximises their primary and subsequent school-based learning.



The aim was to establish an Aboriginal Community Hub in Port Augusta which opened in NAIDOC week 2022. After working with community for over two and a half years we reached a documented agreement with a two way governance model.

The two-way governance agreement led to the use of the former Willsden special school in Port Augusta. This site was transformed into the Aboriginal Community Hub and offers a culturally safe space to deliver Aboriginal educational and wellbeing services.

The two-way governance model has allowed UCSA to learn from Aboriginal community members about Aboriginal ways of doing things.

One example was a change to our recruitment process for Aboriginal staff meaning that we have Elders on the interview panels with a more conversational style. The Aboriginal community members also learned about non-Aboriginal ways of working such as the importance of signing confidentiality agreements for committee members.

The Leadership Group, comprising Aboriginal local Elders and senior UCSA staff, continue to meet regularly to make decisions together in genuine partnership, allowing us to learn from one another and walk the path to reconciliation whilst doing so.

NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week 2022 celebrated with the theme of “Get Up! Stand Up! Show Up” and saw Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal community members collectively celebrate Aboriginal culture in the mid-north region of South Australia.

There were two major Port Augusta events – the mini ball and the opening of the Aboriginal Community Hub.

The NAIDOC mini-ball was attended by 250 excited children who enjoyed getting dressed up to have some dinner and take part in activities and dancing. The week also saw the Aboriginal Community Hub have an open day so that local community members could see its transformation, talk to staff and stakeholders and enjoy a BBQ, coffee and yarn.

Port Pirie also hosted a number of events including the Basketball SA Aboriginal basketball team meeting with the Aboriginal youth in our Service to Aboriginal Youth (STAY) program to shoot some hoops and then shoot the breeze with the basketball stars about what life is like as sports professionals.

The young people were thrilled to be able to rub shoulders with these stars and to have the opportunity to speak with them about their journey.



Having cared for more 300 children over almost four decades, there is rarely a weekend that goes by where Wendy doesn't have someone sitting at her kitchen table having a chat, coffee in hand.

Caring for Children

Mid-North foster carer, 72, and her husband Tony, have opened their home to children and young people, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal, for short, long term and respite care.

They currently have a 16-year-old girl in their care, who has been with them for nine years.

"A lot of the kids come back to see us for Mother's Day, Christmas and birthdays – it's very rewarding because you always try to build a positive relationship with the children and make them feel wanted and appreciated," Wendy said.

"I feel like I've been rewarded all my life in being able to look after other people's children. I've seen the highs and the lows, I've seen kids pick themselves up from the most awful situations and go onto lead wonderful lives. I'm so grateful for it all."

The couple who have three biological children, have been carers in the Mid North since 1997. They previously provided care in Queensland and New South Wales.

Despite so many children passing through their doors over the years, there is one that remains etched in their mind.

"I had a little boy come into my care about 20 years ago, he was 11, and came from a very harsh home," she said.

"I took him backwards and forwards to his mother. One night there had been a fire at his home, and he turned up at my house covered in soot after he'd jumped on a bus to come to me.

"I got him some clothes and cleaned him up. After that, he was placed with another foster family and I heard he had run away. I looked for him but didn't find him.

"About 18 years later I was on Facebook and I saw his name pop up, so I sent him a message saying I'd looked for him and wondered what had happened to him over the years.

"To my surprise, he replied and said he had wondered about me too. He told me he was married, had a job as a manager in Port Pirie and had a daughter.

"He ended up coming to visit and we sat around the kitchen table talking and reminiscing. On his way out he handed me an envelope and told us to open it once he had left.



"Inside was a thank you card and \$200, with a message that said this is only a small portion of what you spent on me, please go out and enjoy a nice dinner together."

Wendy said being a foster care had brought much joy and fulfilment to her life and she wanted to continue caring for children and young people as long as she could.

"I really love these kids – if you put the energy and the care into them you'll see the rewards," she said.

"Some kids will want to go home, regardless of what home looks like, you just always have to be on their level, and think about what they are feeling.

"You can't be half-hearted about it, you have to be all in for them to know they are safe and valued.

"Foster care isn't a 9am to 5pm job, it's sometimes during the night when the kids need you the most. When they can't sleep I put a movie on and we just talk – at their speed, at their level.

"For everything that I have given these young people over the years, they have given me just as much."

Foster Care Data

Number of children in care

129 General Foster Care
(32 of which are Aboriginal)

10 Specialist Foster Care
(3 of which are Aboriginal)

Number of respite care nights

339 General Foster Care

34 Specialist Foster Care

Number of foster care households

104 General Foster Care

10 Specialist Foster Care

Escaping Violence Program

The Escaping Violence Payment (EVP) Program commenced in October 2021. UCSA delivers the program across the Yorke and Mid North, Eyre and West and Far North regions and have received 300 enquiries and have case managed 125 clients to date. The service offers financial assistance and confidential support to help people move forward and establish a home free from intimate partner violence.

Jane's Story

"Jane" is a victim of intimate partner domestic violence whose previous attempt at leaving the relationship ended in her being located and threatened by the perpetrator. "Jane" believed it was easier and safer to resume the relationship, but the violence returned.

With the assistance of a neighbour and the local police, "Jane" was taken to a safe house while the partner was at a football match. The police secured SA COVID entry permits and "Jane" escaped safely to her home town South Australia where she had family who provided accommodation in a granny flat. At this time "Jane" applied to EVP to help her re-establish her life. EVP assisted "Jane" with dental repairs required for DV injuries, a new hot water service as well as clothing and bedding.

"I am in a much better, more positive position to deal with my issues resulting from my domestic violence situation I fled from. I am very much on a better life path thanks to the support and I am extremely grateful for their support and assistance."

Jill's Story

"Jill" had suffered physical and emotional control and financial abuse from her ex-partner for years before she left him in 2019. The perpetrator found her and attacked her again and consistently disregarded intervention orders. On advice, Jill moved to a town where she could rely on rapid police attendance, and where she could stay with a sibling.

Jill suffers from PTSD and has low earning ability. EVP assisted Jill with furniture and electrical goods as she established a home for herself and her child. She was referred to mental health care, and assisted with the purchase of essential items such as clothing, manchester, food and basic household items.

"I finally had someone to really help me. I had been promised help by other DV services. My son and I lived in waiting for 3 years living in squalor, with no help, except help lines that automatically section you under the mental health act, I have been sectioned 13 times and still no help.

I have been suicidal for 3 years, my worker organised a visit to a psychologist, where finally I was diagnosed with severe PTSD and dissociative disorder. Now we know what we are dealing with I am able to understand why I feel the way I do"

When Jill met Jane

Jill and Jane recently met for a coffee, to gain further support from EVP with other referrals. They connected easily through shared experiences and are now keeping in touch, supporting each other on their journey.



Angel Flight to the Rescue

Mary was a victim of domestic violence for seven years. She and her two children were referred to Intensive Family Services at Uniting Country SA (UCSA).

Mary had never had control of her own income. With support she was able to set up a new bank account to receive her Centrelink payments directly, and to learn essential skills, like budgeting, to promote her independence.

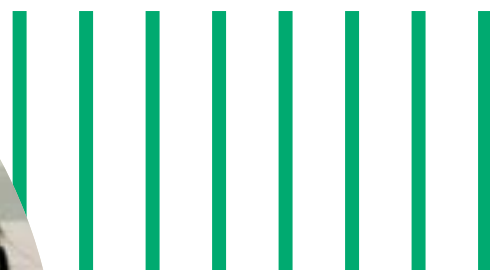
With the perpetrator due for release, Mary decided to seek safety by relocating to New South Wales, closer to family. Her support worker applied for an Escaping Violence Payment (EVP)

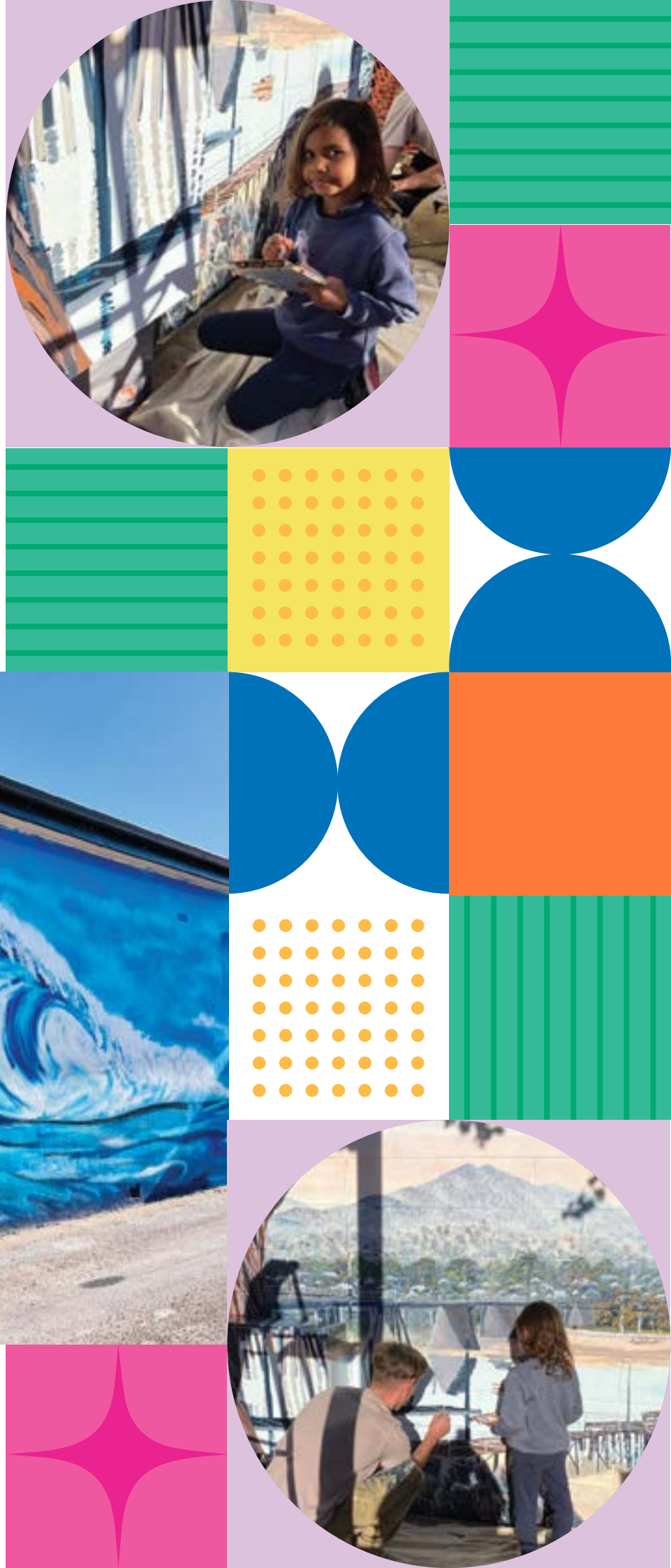
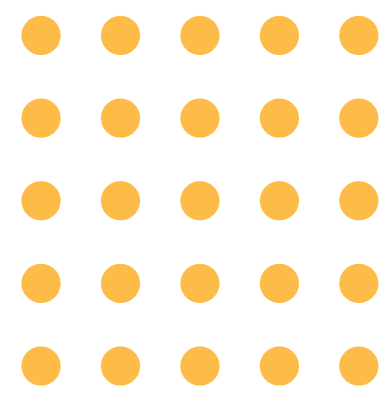
and contacted Angel Flights who generously offered to fly Mary and her two children to New South Wales at no cost.

With the assistance of her support worker, Mary applied for housing, and gained a private rental. The real estate agent was aware of Mary's situation and arranged bond and two weeks of rent along with a house full of furniture.

Mary and her children have successfully relocated. They have been referred to a local Domestic Violence service for ongoing support.

They take with them our best wishes for their future and hopes for their happiness.





Creating Vibrant Inclusive Communities

Uniting Country SA have been instrumental in transforming community spaces in Port Augusta and Kadina through working with local aspiring artists, children and young people to design and paint wall murals in each location.

Community for Children Program staff worked with children and young people to develop their artistic skills so they could assist artists to create murals incorporating key themes like mental health, celebrating family, youth and nature. Working creatively together saw new friendships develop, which supported their wellbeing and self-esteem.

The budding artists used the skills learned to work with Joel Plevin, creating two amazing public space murals, one in Port Augusta and the other in Stirling North.

A group of young people in Kadina assisted creative artist Nicky Create to create a public space interactive mural depicting a Copper Coast surf scene.

The artworks celebrate the work of the artist and the young people who assisted them and enhance their connection with the place they call home.



New Inclusive advertising

In May we celebrated the release of our first same sex foster care TV advertisements. We hope the new adverts will further break down barriers and attract more enquiries from the LGBTIQ+ community.

Financials 21/22

Uniting Country SA Ltd and controlled entities
summarised financial statement for the year ended 30 June 2022

Financial Position

	2022	2021
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	16,147,427	13,336,809
Trade and other receivables	480,233	488,065
Other current assets	256,752	134,239
Total Current Assets	16,884,412	13,959,113
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Other financial assets	1,396,300	1,562,481
Rights of use assets	1,391,427	1,357,289
Property, Plant and Equipment	19,140,627	18,097,212
Total Non-Current Assets	21,928,354	21,016,982
Total Assets	38,812,766	34,976,095
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	1,781,681	1,034,452
Government Grants in Advance	-	5,793
Contract Liabilities	4,055,488	2,644,106
Lease Liabilities	648,978	506,086
Provisions	2,547,671	2,382,005
Total Current Liabilities	9,033,818	6,572,442
NON -CURRENT ASSETS		
Lease Liabilities	530,248	789,791
Provisions	351,558	332,708
Liability for Government Assets	19,788	53,730
Total Non-Current Liabilities	901,594	1,176,229
Total Liabilities	9,935,412	7,748,671
NET ASSETS	28,877,354	27,227,424
Reserves	2,525,875	2,525,892
Capital Grants	12,673,437	12,673,437
Retained earnings	13,678,042	12,028,095
TOTAL EQUITY	28,877,354	27,227,424

Profit and Loss

	2022	2021
Revenue	49,545,449	38,931,343
Employee benefits expense	(20,700,449)	(18,191,510)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(756,061)	(696,262)
Amortisation Expense – right of use asset	(468,431)	(397,192)
Other expenses	(25,970,561)	(18,375,058)
Profit for the year	1,649,947	1,271,321

Comprehensive Income

	2022	2021
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1,649,947	1,271,321
Other comprehensive income/ (loss) after income tax		
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Financial Assets	-	-
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Land and Buildings	17	1,054,004
Receipt of Capital Grants	-	2,482,200
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	17	3,536,204
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	1,649,930	4,807,525

he summarised financial statements have been derived from the Association's full financial accounts which are available on our website: www.uksa.org.au



Uniting Country Housing (UCH)

The UCH team collectively manage 252 properties across the region, providing the most vulnerable people with housing. Tenants also benefit from receiving support services via Uniting Country SA who are the lead agency for the Country North Homelessness Alliance.

One of the highlights of the year was working with the Southern Yorke Peninsula Community Housing Association (SYPCA) to transfer their properties to UCH. UCH General Manager - Service Delivery worked with the SYPCA Board extensively during the year. SYPCA chose UCH as the community housing organisation which they would transfer their assets to prior to being wound up.

The two organisations share similar values, operated in the same region with both determined to minimise any disruptions to the existing tenants because of the transition of properties.

Whilst the transfer took effect on 1 July 2022, and whilst this was strictly speaking outside of the financial year, the outcome saw the addition of 34 houses to the UCH portfolio and was one of the major achievements of the year.

The professional development of our staff is an important aspect of the organisation's strategic vision creating multiskilled people who are developed and supported to thrive. In April 2022 the UCH team assembled in Port Augusta for planning and training sessions.

This training enhanced staff skills by focussing on the client experience and their role within that. Staff gained additional communication strategies to assist with their everyday job of providing housing solutions that enhance belonging.

UCH strengthened its existing partnership with Cara by purchasing a disability modified property in Kadina. Uniting Country Housing were approached

Uniting Country Housing (UCH) spans a large part of country South Australia with staff based in Port Lincoln, Whyalla, Port Augusta, Port Pirie and Minlaton.

by Cara who had been renting the property on the private rental market for several years. The property had been placed on the market for sale and Cara were seeking support from UCH to purchase and provide tenancy management to the tenants who reside at the property.

Cara is one of South Australia's largest disability service providers and work with both adults and children living with disability across the state.

This partnership is further strengthened by UCH providing tenancy management to the properties of 17 people with a disability in Port Augusta, Minlaton and Port Lincoln, which are staffed by

Cara staff around the clock and which have had modifications to meet the residents' needs.

UCH staff were excited to be able to expand the services that can be provided as a Community Housing Provider in the Disability Housing Sector with this latest property and service agreement with Cara complimenting the existing service agreements already in place with Centacare, MINDA, Cara and Life Without Barriers. UCH now provide over 20 housing placements to individuals who require support to live independently in a safe and rewarding environment.



Notes



Uniting
Country SA



Uniting
Country Housing

1300 067 777 | unitingcountry@ucsa.org.au
ucsa.org.au

Caring for Country People

