



Rising to the Challenge

Caring for Country People



Uniting Country SA
Annual Report
2019 – 2020



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Mission & Values

Uniting Country SA is a not-for-profit social and community services organisation operating in country South Australia.

UCSA provides services to families, single adults and children, who are experiencing difficulties such as domestic violence, disability and mental health issues, financial distress, homelessness, and family matters in country SA.

With more than 55 services provided from 27 sites, UCSA strives to improve the lives of local country people and local communities.



Uniting Country SA is guided by the values of

- 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

To achieve their vision of: Compassionate, respectful and strong country communities where all people flourish.

Headquartered in Port Pirie, UCSA is fully committed to servicing the needs of country people. UCSA are the local experts making a difference in your community. With over 100 years of experience servicing regional communities, Uniting Country SA is dedicated to *Caring for Country People*.



"UCSA continued during 2019/20 to advocate for fairness and justice in our communities."



Chairperson & Chief Executive Report

It is with a great deal of pleasure that we present the 2019-20 Annual Report for Uniting Country SA (UCSA). As we write this report and reflect on the year that has been we can only describe the challenges and achievements as unprecedented.

If you had told us this time last year when we were writing the previous report, that this time this year we would all be talking about something called COVID-19 and that the world had essentially been shut down, we would probably have said that you have been watching or reading too much science fiction ... and yet here we are. What a hugely challenging year for everyone and UCSA has certainly not been immune from those challenges, however, we also have to say how incredibly proud and inspired we have been by every member of the UCSA team for the way in which they have risen to those challenges.



Sue Park
Chairperson



Anthea Pavy
Chief Executive

During November 2019 fires erupted on the Yorke Peninsula which set the scene for a summer of devastating fires across South Australia and Australia. UCSA has an agreement with the South Australian Housing Authority to support them in their role as part of the State Emergency Plan by providing staff at Relief Centres to support people displaced by disasters. From November through to March around 45 UCSA staff made themselves available to provide support to people affected by fires in Edithburgh, Stansbury, Lobethal, Mount Barker and Kangaroo Island - some staff putting their Christmas celebrations and holidays on hold to help out. Thank you to each and everyone of those staff for their selfless efforts.

As the bushfires subsided, COVID-19 made its presence felt across Australia and UCSA, like many other agencies and businesses, had to reassess the way it operated and how services could be delivered in a safe way to the many people who sought help. At no point through COVID-19 has UCSA shut its doors or ceased any services, but rather where possible staff modified the way services were delivered. Counselling via Zoom, footpath play, foster care support visits completed via technology and material support delivered to the door all became the norm. The staff of UCSA were outstanding, continually thinking outside of the square and going above and beyond to ensure clients' needs were met.

Many things did proceed as usual during 2019-20 with UCSA continuing to strengthen our evidence-based practice through our partnership with the Australian Alliance for Social Enterprise at the University of South Australia. Although we were restricted this year in the amount of research able to be conducted we did launch the paper 'Young Country Women's Perceptions of Intimate Partner Violence' which recognised the lack of research

into domestic violence having been conducted amongst regionally based women. Another piece of research was completed 'to do this job you have to have the heart for it' but, due to COVID-19, hasn't been launched at this point. This research considered what would optimise current practice to support the best outcomes for country people living with multiple and complex needs.

As part of UCSA's commitment to best practice and continuous improvement the organisation undertook a co-design process to develop a locally embedded and owned model of intervention that integrated our local wisdom with best-practice evidence, the 'interACT framework'. 'InterACT' provides a robust method to consistently deliver high impact therapeutic services to all our clients as well as responding to the specific needs of our communities. We look forward to seeing this framework embedded further in the agency going forward resulting in even more positive and sustained outcomes for clients.

UCSA continued during 2019-20 to advocate for fairness and justice in our communities. This was achieved through partnering with other agencies both government and non-government to lobby for change, participating in research and public campaigns, contributing to national activities through UnitingCare Australia and sharing our knowledge and expertise at conferences, public forums and inquiries.

UCSA would like to acknowledge and thank the many corporate, business, organisation and individual donors who have generously supported the organisation during 2019-20 to continue to provide essential services throughout a large area of regional and remote South Australia. Of note once again was a huge donation from the Stansbury Community Church group of well over one thousand items which were

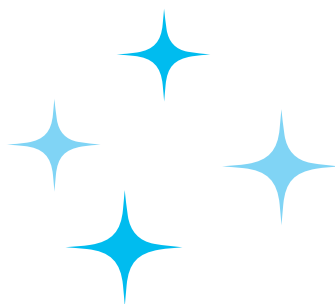
distributed amongst the many clients who sought our support across our geographical footprint.

Although this report has spoken of the outstanding efforts of staff during 2019-20, particularly throughout the bushfires and COVID-19, we would also like to acknowledge, thank and commend all staff and volunteers at UCSA for their dedication and commitment on a daily basis to advancing the organisation's mission. This year has seen a number of our long-term employees decide it is time to retire and you can read more in this publication about those people. Between this group there is well in excess of 100 years of service to UCSA with one member having been with the organisation for 35 years - on behalf of the organisation we would like to sincerely thank these people for their wonderful years of service and wish them all the best for the future.

Thank you also to the dedicated and highly skilled Board Members for their generosity, exemplary stewardship and commitment to advancing UCSA's mission and its strategic direction. 2019-20 saw the retirement of one Board member, Lynne Walden and we thank her for her significant contribution to the Board over the last 6 years. We also had a new Board member commence with the organisation and we welcome Jo Court who brings with her a wealth of experience and knowledge in a range of areas relevant to UCSA's business, particularly finance. The Board's leadership and support through this very challenging time has been outstanding and has been appreciated by UCSA's leadership and staff.

UCSA looks forward to meeting the changes and challenges of the future and to continuing to develop an organisation that is responsive, innovative and a leader in the delivery of community services in country South Australia.

Board Members



Sue Park
Chairperson
BA, Ass. Dip. Social Work,
GAICD



Anthea Pavy
Chief Executive
and Board Member
B.Soc Work, Ass. Dip.
Social Work, GAICD



Peter Hollister
Deputy Chair
GAICD, B.Sc (Hons I) Maths, MBA



Jo Court
Chair of Audit Risk
and Compliance
Committee
BA Commerce, Adv Dip
Financial Services, CPA



Jo Curkpatrick
Board Member
SCMP, GAICD, MPRIA,
BA (Journalism), DipAg



Bill Othams
Board Member
LL B



Rev. Ted White
Board Member
Bachelor of Theology



Chez Curnow
Board Member
Bachelor of Nursing



Fiona Duffield
Board Member
Diploma of Teaching
(Early Childhood Education)



Lynne Walden
Uniting Country
Housing
Board Member
MBA, B Business, CPA



SANAA Port Augusta artwork.

Working With the Community

Uniting Country SA works with individuals and community groups across our service region to support the lives of country South Australians.



24 by 24 HR Movement Challenge

UCSA supported Nick Donnellan, Port Pirie local personal trainer, plan and run his 24 by 24 movement challenge. A 24-hour movement event raising mental health awareness in young people in Port Pirie. Nick walked 128km and was joined by teams and individuals from the community throughout the day.

Copper Coast Youth Network

UCSA's Copper Coast Youth Service's program works with twenty youth focused organisations as part of the "Copper Coast Youth Network". The newly formed network works together to improve outcomes for young people across their region.

HOPE Collective

UCSA is a member of the Whyalla based "HOPE Collective". A collaboration of multiple partners across the Whyalla community, HOPE is an acronym for the aim "that every member of the community lives every day with a sense of HOPE (Healthy, Optimistic, community Pride and Empowered). The Collective have held a variety of community events such as change labs to problem solve complex issues in the community, family days in the park, online Lantern parties during COVID-19 and the opening of a Community Hub where people are able to be linked with Community Connectors to assist with their needs.

KIDtober

KIDtober is an annual children's festival supported by UCSA, the Port Pirie Regional Council and organisations that work with families and children to improve outcomes for young people. In 2019, the KIDtober Calendar of Events had 100 listings of no cost or low-cost events and activities for children and young people to get out and about in the Port Pirie region.



Port Augusta Artwork

The Communities for Children program funded SANAA, Swahili for art, to hold a series of children's workshops in Port Augusta through annual Engaging Motivating and Uniting (EMU) grants. Seeking to achieve a better world through creativity, they asked children what was important to them. The multi-platform artists then used that information to produce a vibrant piece of street art located in the CBD of Port Augusta. Input for the Elders face was gathered from the local Aboriginal Community.

Port Pirie Drug Action Team

UCSA facilitates the Port Pirie Local Drug Action Team by bringing together community members, agency leaders and drug and alcohol support service providers. The shared aim is to prevent the mis-use of drugs and alcohol in our community and address the negative impact on our children and young people. This issue is addressed through research, listening to young peoples needs and providing creative pursuits for young people.

NAIDOC Week

UCSA supports communities across our footprint celebrate NAIDOC Week where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's culture, history and achievements are celebrated by all Australians. In Port Pirie, UCSA assisted Aboriginal community members, the Tapari Health team, Aboriginal educators and other government and non-government organisations with the planning of NAIDOC week celebrations.





"Being able to provide assistance during this crisis, and others like it, are an important responsibility for the organisation."

Bushfire Relief Care in Crisis

From November through to February, South Australia experienced devastating bushfires across the state.

Uniting Country SA has an agreement with the South Australian Housing Authority as part of the state's Emergency Plan to provide staff to assist at Emergency Relief Centres during events such as fires and floods. These centres provide a safe haven for people needing to evacuate from their homes. As a result of the number of fires across the state, UCSA was requested to provide staff to assist running the Emergency Relief Centres.

45 UCSA workers volunteered to provide support in places far from home, many missing or delaying Christmas celebrations and holidays to be there. UCSA's workers at these centres provided care and comfort for affected people and assisted those who were unable to return home with finding accommodation and other essential requirements.

Being able to provide assistance during this crisis, and others like it, are an important responsibility for the organisation. By aiding communities in crisis, UCSA demonstrates its commitment to improving lives throughout South Australia and caring for country people.





Aboriginal Nana's Group

In Port Augusta's Aboriginal Communities, some Grandmothers have become sole carers for their grandchildren.

These 'Nana's' were seeking support and friendship from peers as 'times have changed' since they were parents. Uniting Country SA's Advancing Families and Communities (AFC) program commenced a weekly Nana's group in July 2019. This group provides support, guidance and information about programs, agencies, and services available to them.

Participants have had regular guest speakers exploring topics such as family relationships, addictive behaviours and health. The Nana's have provided a great deal of positive feedback and say they have learnt a lot about services they can access which they weren't aware of previously. The women are now informing others in the community of the service and are sharing their knowledge with families and friends.

The Nana's have also begun advocating for a drop-in centre for Port Augusta and are in the process of organising sessions with the AFC after school girls' group, to share their skills and knowledge in bush medicine and traditional arts and crafts.

Connected Beginnings Port Augusta

Uniting Country SA is the lead agency for the Connected Beginnings initiative, a new community response to assist Aboriginal children and their families to engage in learning and development.

Funded jointly by the Australian Department of Education and Department of Health and working alongside Pika Wiya Aboriginal Health Service, Connected Beginnings works to improve the education and health outcomes for Aboriginal children in Port Augusta. This initiative is being led and directed by Aboriginal people.

Commencing in November 2019, UCSA held community workshops

and engaged Aboriginal people in conversation. These workshops and conversations have identified specific things the Aboriginal People are looking for, including having one space for Aboriginal people/ programs, more culture and language used in learning and services, one vision for our children, help for everyday practical needs, less racism everywhere, seeing different cultures grow together, and recognising Aboriginal people as an investment.

UCSA will continue to listen and develop this initiative as part of a three year plan to provide community driven improvements for Aboriginal people.



“I appreciate the volunteers making suggestions to help me feed my family healthier.”

FoodHub Health & Wellbeing

Uniting Country SA is proud to be the inaugural winner of the SA Healthy Towns Challenge Award. The organisations Port Pirie Community FoodHub won the award with its “FoodHub Health and Wellbeing Project”.

Poor nutrition plays a significant role in diabetes, obesity and lead absorption. Increasing the communities understanding about the benefits of healthy eating is critical in empowering people to take control of their own health.

This project facilitated initiatives to improve people's general health and wellbeing by increasing the communities understanding of the relationship between healthy eating and disease management. The project demonstrated how people on any budget can eat healthily, with activities that enabled people to learn how they can manage their own health and wellbeing.

Hon Stephen Wade MLC – Minister for Health and Wellbeing visited the FoodHub on the 11th February 2020 to present the award.

From Minister Wade's press release

“The panel had a difficult job in selecting the winner, however a Port Pirie program, FoodHub Health and Wellbeing project demonstrated how a community can come together to better educate each other on healthy eating, reading food labels, cooking and eating well within a budget. Many risk factors for chronic disease are preventable, so investing in projects that promote a healthy lifestyle will help avoid future health costs and ease pressure on hospitals and the wider health system.”

Customers at the FoodHub tell us they

“Enjoyed the cooking in store with great ideas for hiding vegetables in food.”



Minister Wade congratulates the FoodHub



“Amity, UCSA’s Port Pirie based Youth Homelessness Service developed the pictured artwork on their site to provide some sense of ownership to the residents.”

Youth Homelessness Services

Uniting Country SA’s Youth Homelessness Services assists young people aged 15 to 25 years who are homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless.

The service, located both in Port Pirie and Port Augusta, supports young people to develop independent living skills and transition into the long-term housing options provided by private, public and community housing. UCSA’s workers are trained to support young people from a wide variety of backgrounds, including members of the LGBTIQ+ community, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, people living with a disability, and people who have experienced domestic violence.

Amity, UCSA’s Port Pirie based Youth Homelessness Service developed the pictured artwork on their site to provide some sense of ownership to the residents.

Glen Gearing, the artist who created the mural, worked with the young people residing at Amity. He explored what Amity means to the residents and created a design from the themes they identified. The lion was designed by one young person and incorporated as the centrepiece of the artwork.

Eliza’s Story
(Name has been changed for confidentiality purposes)

Eliza presented to the Port Augusta Youth Homelessness Service at the age of 16 after experiencing family breakdown. While residing in crisis accommodation, Port Augusta Youth Homelessness Services supported Eliza to learn further independent living skills, including cooking, budgeting, and cleaning. Eliza was also supported in attending a local youth focused mental health service, helping her improve her anxiety levels and ultimately assisting her in securing part time work. At age 18 Eliza was successful in obtaining private rental accommodation that suited her needs.



Artwork on display at Amity in Port Pirie.

Port Augusta

153 young people presented to the service

16%

Were between the ages 15-17

72%

Were between the ages 18-24

72%

Were homeless

28%

Were at the risk of becoming homeless

Amity

51 young people presented to the service

74%

Were between the ages 15-17

25%

Were between the ages 18-24

31%

Were homeless

68%

Were at the risk of becoming homeless



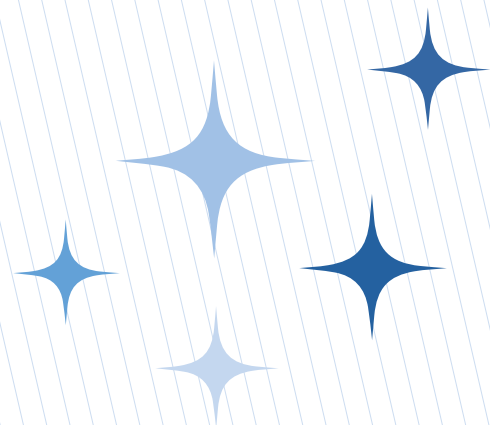


Youth Service Copper Coast

Uniting Country SA's Youth Service Copper Coast intervenes early when young people are at risk of or are disengaging from their families and communities in the Copper Coast region.

This program launched in 2019, assists young people with education support, advocacy, housing, social connections, personal and family support.

The Youth Services program came about after identifying a gap in services being provided for young people in the Copper Coast. There were existing educational support services available, however no services allowing for more general support. UCSA supports young people with their mental health through youth focused activities; improve their schooling activities by working with schools; strengthen their connections between family members by exploring the wants and needs of the young person; and provide a network of support provided by the newly formed 'Copper Coast Youth Network.' These new services, all provided in the first 12 months, will assist young people in facing the challenges in their lives. Improving outcomes and connection to their community.



“To be trusted by these kids who have every reason to not trust is a fantastic feeling.”

Foster Care Services

Uniting Country SA's Foster Care Services support foster carers through education, guidance, recruitment, community, and general support. This enables the foster carers to provide a safe and stable environment for children while providing the children's parents an opportunity to seek assistance and support. During 2019-2020 UCSA had 92 registered foster care households and facilitated a total of 566 placements across the foster care services.

One of UCSA's carers, Kelly, has cared for twenty children over the past five years, across emergency, respite, short term, and long-term care. Kelly became a foster carer after recognising the growing need in the community for safe and nurturing environments for at-risk children and young people.

“To be trusted by these kids who have every reason to not trust is a fantastic feeling.”

Kelly experienced many rewards and challenges as a foster carer and has risen to these tests. When some of the children in her care wanted to see their birth families but were unable to due to coronavirus restrictions, Kelly, with the support of UCSA, sought permission from the Department of Child Protection for the children to have contact with their families via teleconferencing services. This provided the children with the opportunity to speak with their biological families regularly throughout the lockdown.

Kelly says providing foster care to children is a very rewarding experience.

“Knowing that you have made a difference in a child's life, even if they are only with you for one night, the fact that they have been able to have a warm bath, been able to put on clean pyjamas, had a nice warm meal and slept in a nice warm safe bed can be a huge thing for a child that doesn't have that at home.”



566

Placements
across the
foster care
services



NDIS Disability Services

Uniting Country SA's Disability Services provide NDIS participants with access to plan management, support coordination and support workers.

These services assist participants to access non-managed support, navigate complex service delivery models, link with providers, resolve conflicts, and provide one-on-one support to access communities and complete daily tasks.

Many participants often find themselves in a position where they cannot access all the opportunities available to them.

One participant, Troy, had no capacity to leave his home and access his community for over twelve months. With little or no assistance to explore the boundaries of his plan, Troy was lacking the assistance needed to reach his true potential. UCSA assisted Troy in utilising his NDIS funding, ensuring that he had choice and control regarding his life direction and that his NDIS plan was actioned appropriately. UCSA's team created a relationship built on trust and respect by conversation deep listening and education. Because of this relationship, Troy is now accessing the correct assistive equipment to ensure mobility into the community is safe and appropriate. An external NGO was sourced to provide seven days per week personal care allowing Troy's mother, an 80-year-old care giver, to have more time to enjoy her relationship with her son. Support Coordinators have arranged an electric bed and further functional assessments to make sure all home modifications can be actioned, ensuring a higher quality of life is reached for Troy and his family.

"Along with providing an opportunity to view children to ensure they are safe and thriving, it is also a time to interact with them and their parents."

Footpath Play Project

The Footpath Play project commenced at the start of the COVID-19 crisis as a strategy to sight vulnerable children that were not attending school, becoming isolated and out of their teachers, educators, or case managers sight. Initially starting as the chance to drop off activity packs to children in the Advancing Families and Communities (AFC) program, it quickly became obvious that there were a high number of children isolated with parents feeling the strain of having bored children home for an extended period. It was apparent that some parents were not confident in their ability to deliver new and interactive activities on an ongoing basis.

Staff from child focused programs traveled throughout Port Augusta and the Davenport Aboriginal community, delivering learning and play activities from the footpath in front of each family home, while adhering to physical distancing restrictions. Along with providing an opportunity to view children to ensure they are safe and thriving, it is also a time to interact with them and their parents. This service has been an opportunity to demonstrate play activities to parents, role model parent/child interaction and identify age appropriate play.



65 Families

Since this project was initiated, upwards of 65 families are now engaged in this program and schools continue to refer children.

"In some cases, the organisation provided clients and families with the technology and data to access these services."

COVID-19 Response

COVID-19 has been an unprecedented crisis across our nation. Uniting Country SA developed unique strategies across regional South Australia and applied extra effort to support rural and remote communities dealing with the strain of isolation and quarantine.

The organisation endeavoured to provide the same level and quality of services offered pre-pandemic. Throughout its footprint, UCSA utilised online resources to remain in contact with clients and provide unique teleservices, such as 'virtual home visits' through video conferencing technology. In some cases, the organisation provided clients and families with the technology and data to access these services.

In Port Pirie, UCSA partnered with Nystar to develop and distribute Food and Fun Goodie Bags to families living in the area. These bags contained a nutritious breakfast and lunch snacks as well as fun activities for young people. They allowed the organisation to reach out and support families

in the town while also providing an opportunity to sight vulnerable children at a time when they were otherwise out of view of teachers, educators, or case managers.

In Coober Pedy, UCSA supported Aboriginal people who were unable to return to their lands due to the lockdown of remote Aboriginal communities. Coober Pedy experienced an influx of Aboriginal people in the leadup to winter. The organisation provided camping equipment, food supplies, wood and warm clothing to ensure people were kept warm, sheltered and well-fed.

UCSA's Indulkana Youth Shed Coordinator Shaun Vukic elected to remain in the APY lands throughout the lockdown of remote Aboriginal communities. Shaun reconfigured the office to create a safe 'shopfront', so community members could still seek assistance in a safe, socially distanced, manner. With school closed during the initial stages of the pandemic, Shaun focussed on assisting young people to access online education. He provided support with non-urgent requests, and any concerns children may have regarding the uncertainty and impact of the coronavirus. During his free time, Shaun volunteered in the local community, supporting aged care services, assisting with cooking and delivering free meals, and supporting the community and Elders over the Easter weekend.



"All Staff Day is an opportunity for UCSA's people to strengthen their connections with each other outside of their regular programs and sites."

All Staff Day November 2019

As an organisation with over 260 staff and 100+ volunteers, it can be easy for staff to become disconnected from each other. To overcome this, Uniting Country SA organises an annual celebration of the organisations people known as All Staff Day.

All Staff Day is an opportunity for UCSA's people to strengthen their connections with each other outside of their regular programs and sites. Staff leave the event having met new people and learned about new programs. This knowledge is a vital resource, allowing people to work together across programs and sites, helping UCSA to rise to the many challenges presented throughout the year.

This year, UCSA welcomed Dr Elizabeth Shoesmith and her husband Scott who presented on the importance of inclusion and diversity. The event's theme was music, with workers encouraged to dress according to their favourite genera of music, movies, or favourite artists. Attendees also took part in a team building exercise hosted by the musicians of Rock and Roll Team Building, where they worked together to write a company song.



"Services like the Port Pirie Community FoodHub rely on volunteers to operate the storefront."

Volunteering During a Crisis

Volunteering helps people feel they are doing something during times of crisis.

Uniting Country SA have a very strong and committed group of volunteers, however our volunteering numbers declined from ninety-nine (99) down to nineteen (19) in a week due to the effects and restrictions of COVID-19. With only a small number of volunteers it was a chance for UCSA's employees to step up and lend a helping hand. Services like the Port Pirie Community FoodHub rely on volunteers to operate the storefront. UCSA's people took on the duties of the volunteers, taking time from their ordinary day-to-day work to stack shelves, clean surfaces, and operate the sales register. This support allowed the FoodHub to continue operating without interruption, ensuring food security for clients during the height of COVID-19 restrictions.

UCSA's Volunteer Coordinator supported the volunteers throughout the lockdown. They were supported through regular personal communications from the Volunteer Coordinator, thank you messages written on UCSA volunteer sites, and each volunteer received a gift card with a personalised message to mark National Volunteers Week. UCSA had a small group of volunteers who were still able to volunteer, so they attended Goods at Gertrude every Monday and Wednesday.

They say, 'when life gives you lemons, make lemonade', this is exactly what 2 members of the community did.

A local hospitality TAFE lecturer contacted UCSA to see if there was any way she could support our organization during such tough times. Discussions took place, and a site visit made Brooke-Tia decide she would contribute as a corporate volunteer every Wednesday to help out at our FoodHub.

In April, Coober Pedy required transportation of linen, crockery and cutlery, this is when Craig Shearer, supported by his employer EPIC Grain Brokers contacted us saying he was able to help. Craig drove to Coober Pedy with a trailer to get the important supplies to UCSA workers in the region.



Farewell

After many years of service to Uniting Country SA and the Not for Profit sector four staff members have made the decision to retire. The recent challenges of socialising in a pandemic have rained on the parade of any official farewell so we take this opportunity to celebrate their contributions.

A collective 144 years of wisdom and compassion. We will forever be grateful for their contribution to our mission "Caring for Country People"



Marlene Andrewartha

The bubbly laughter and comforting smile of Marlene Andrewartha has greeted our clients from the reception counter for the past 35 years. Marlene began her career with UCSA as a volunteer before becoming a worker in our Domestic Violence program and finishing her career as Receptionist. In 2001 the title on her Role Description read "Front Desk Superstar Receptionist". This is indicative of the passion and commitment that Marlene demonstrated. During that time, her friendly smile and engaging personality has firmly cemented herself as a favourite amongst our clients.



Gaynor Ilicic

Gaynor Ilicic commenced her career with UCSA in 1997. At that point she provided the Alternative Cares services in their entirety across the York Peninsula. Services included Foster Care recruitment, assessment, training, placement and support as well as Family Preservation and Reunification. Later, Gaynor's passionate approach saw her thrive in her role as Placement Coordinator ensuring that the best possible placement match and outcomes were achieved for children and young people. Gaynor's reputation for mentoring and guidance of fellow staff members will live long past her retirement.



Maxine Wilson

Payroll number 25. With payroll identification numbers now exceeding 1230, Maxine Wilson falls into an elite category of employees whose careers with Uniting Country SA have spanned across 30 years. Maxine was an inaugural member of the Family Support Services team and became instrumental in developing Personal Growth Groups. Maxine's compassionate and caring nature didn't just extend to families. In 2009 she accepted a role with our Participation, Training and Employment team assisting people to build pre-employment and work readiness skills in the retail sector. Maxine ended her career as she began it, working with families and strengthening their capabilities toward building resilient family units.



Lyn Petagna

Lyn Petagna commenced with UCSA as the Foster Care Admin Officer in 1995. She remained in this role for some years and her skills in this area saw her successful in gaining the role of Executive Assistant to the CE in 2005. Lyn's persistent and steadfast approach to her role was always complimented with her quick wit and passion for ensuring things were done correctly and according to process. There seemed nothing that Lyn didn't know and during this time she firmly established herself as the "all agency go-to person". Lyn's reputation for high standards ensured UCSA's systems and processes were adhered to and continually improved.



Peter O'Callaghan

UCSA accommodation services were the first programs to make use of Peter O'Callaghan's counselling skills. Since 1989, in a female dominated environment, Peter's skills and experience enabled UCSA to provide much needed support and assistance to males, sometimes as perpetrators of violence and importantly strengthening the significance of the male role model in families.

“UCSA’s research partnership ensures that the organisation is taking an evidence-based approach in the development and delivery of services.”

Research Partnership

Uniting Country SA values research to provide an evidence base to underpin best practice for community services in country South Australia. The objective of UCSA’s Hearing Country Voices research agenda is to provide a voice to country people through its rural research agenda. The agenda aims to ensure the voices of country people are heard in a way that can be quantified by data and supported by evidence not anecdote.

At the beginning of financial year 2019-2020 this research partnership released the projects *“It’s an important part of keeping small towns alive: The social and economic value of country-based community services”* and *“I just want to keep my boyfriend happy: Young country women’s perceptions of intimate partner violence.”* The first paper revealed that every dollar spent locally by the NGO’s return 2.3 times the dollar value into the local economy. Assistant Minister Carolyn Power presented at the launch of the second paper and spoke about it in the South Australian Parliament (26-09-19).

This year, the partnership undertook two new projects. The first, titled *“To do this job you have to have the heart for it”* explored what works when working with people with multiple and complex needs. It found that relationships are central to working with country people. Relationships are central in the practice of providing person-centred care; in the provision of integrated care; and in efforts to retain staff.

The second project explored *“What are the experiences of children in alternative care in the country and what would help them flourish.”* This project found that children’s experiences and outcomes would be enhanced by an ecological approach that focusses on strengthening supportive relationships and environments.

UCSA’s research partnership ensures that the organisation is taking an evidence-based approach in the development and delivery of services.



Child Voice Research

In October 2019, Uniting Country SA’s Whyalla site undertook ‘The Right Place’ research project, funded by UCSA’s Innovations Grant, to improve child participation in organisational decision making.

The primary objective was to listen to, and understand, children’s insights into the facilities and services provided by UCSA in Whyalla. The project was undertaken with a focus on engaging children involved with the Home Interaction Program for Parent and Youngsters (HIPPY) program, however was designed to be replicated within other programs, sites and communities.

‘The Right Place’ project examined children’s perceptions of the Whyalla site, including the facade of the building and entry, interior spaces, exterior spaces, safety concerns and play experiences, to learn what children feel and want when visiting the site. Children aged from 3 to 9 years old participated in the consultation. They took pictures of various areas of the site and discussed with the consultant what they wished to keep, change or improve and why. They took the consultant on a site tour to discuss their thoughts on spaces and freely used the spaces while being observed by the consultant.

Both a project report and child-friendly report incorporating the children’s quotes, artwork and artistic interpretation of the findings was provided by the consultant. The report made 13 recommendations and shared valuable feedback from the participants.

Recommendations referred to future considerations such as the use of signage, artwork and colour on the site, modifications to entry, hallway and play spaces, safety considerations, cultural and policy considerations. Progress has occurred on many of the recommendations such as the use of colour throughout the site, incorporating artwork and plants, child-friendly entrances, upgraded play equipment that considers developmental needs of varying ages and increased safety measures.





interACT Model

This year Uniting Country SA undertook a co-design process to look at the way the organisation works with clients. UCSA wanted a locally embedded and owned model of intervention that integrated the organisations local wisdom with best-practice evidence. The interACT Model was the result.

The 'interACT Model' is a model of intentional therapeutic practice. This model has a focus on:

- 01 Empowering clients for self-determined actions,
- 02 Growth focused approaches,
- 03 Holistic, needs-based and evidence-informed assessment,
- 04 Individually tailored plans or responses and
- 05 All interACTions represent opportunities for growth and learning.

The interACT training package has been developed and is in the process of being rolled out to all staff. Several videos have been created to assist with this process. "Practice Leaders" have been identified throughout the agency and provide regular supervision in line with the interACT framework. While the model has only recently been introduced, it has been well received by staff and is impacting positively on interactions with clients.

The model provides a robust method to consistently deliver high impact therapeutic services that respond to the specific needs of our communities. It includes implementation systems, tools and procedures that consistently deliver tailored and comprehensive interventions across diverse client groups.

"The new system allows UCSA to gather valuable data while providing a consistent, user friendly experience to all staff."

Database Upgrades

Uniting Country SA takes a data driven approach to provide clients with the best possible outcomes. Since 2014 UCSA has used a Cloud-based Client Management System (CMS) to capture 'whole of organisation' client data. This system has allowed UCSA to 'track' clients across internal services, capture demographics, share information to assist in the case management process and report against KPIs.

In May 2018 the UCSA Board endorsed a proposal to replace the current system with a modern, functional and cost-effective client database. The project to implement a new client database known as Service Record System (SRS) was commenced. The UCSA Database Committee worked with the organisations people to identify requirements and test the workgroup modules as they were developed. Over the next two years, UCSA developed and implemented the new system.

The new system allows UCSA to gather valuable data while providing a consistent, user friendly experience to all staff. This process has allowed UCSA to adopt an ongoing, strategic approach to data management, with the ability to acquire reports which will provide evidence for future development of programs.





Uniting Country Housing

Uniting Country Housing (UCH) provide affordable housing to individuals and families who have limited access to housing.

UCH housing packages provide targeted support in the areas of domestic violence, youth homelessness, employment and education for Aboriginal people relocating from remote areas, mental health, homeless families, the Targeted Lead Abatement Program and supported accommodation for individuals who have a disability.

UCH staff work in partnership with various stakeholders, including teams based within Uniting Country SA, for Domestic Violence and Youth Homelessness services, SA Housing Authority, Centacare, Community Mental Health, Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Service, the Salvation Army, West Coast Youth Service and Yarredi Services, and the Port Pirie Regional Council. Through established partnerships with these agencies UCH staff are able to ensure a high percentage of successful tenancies with customers securing longer term stable accommodation options.

A tenant was successful in securing a private rental property on the Yorke Peninsula. The lease with Uniting

Country Housing commenced in February 2019 with the tenant being nominated via the Offenders Aid Rehabilitation Service (OARS). The tenant engaged extremely well with both the Tenancy Officer and the OARS Support Worker. Education was provided by both the Tenancy Officer in regards to independent living and the Support Worker in regards to rehabilitation into the community. At the end of the tenancy in May 2020 the customer stated that he was extremely grateful to both agencies and he felt that he could now engage in his new community through the lifestyle changes he had made with the support provided post release from prison.

UCH staff modified practices due to COVID-19, with restrictions imposed by the South Australian Civil Administrative Tribunal (SACAT) regarding customer interactions. Property Inspections were completed via audio-visual methods to ensure that tenants were still receiving contact from Tenancy Officers on a regular basis. The Tenancy Officers also contacted tenants in writing to provide contact telephone numbers and to explain the COVID-19 restrictions, alleviating any uncertainty that tenants may have been facing. Face to face inspections have now recommenced with staff members ensuring they complete a client health check prior to entering any properties.

Snapshot for 2019-2020

Properties are currently located in Port Augusta, Port Pirie, Whyalla, Port Lincoln, Coober Pedy, Crystal Brook, Moonta, Wallaroo, Wirrabara, Booleroo Centre, Bute, Clare, Ardrossan, Balaklava, Owen, Ororoo, Port Vincent and Laura.

343

Total
tenancies
for the
financial
year

152

New
tenancies
established
this financial
year

240

Adults
currently
housed

183

Children
currently
housed

Financials

2019/2020

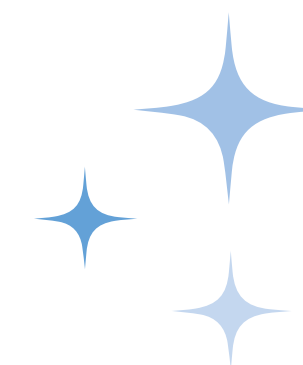
Uniting Country SA Ltd and Controlled Entities
Summarised Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2020

Financial Position	2020	2019
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	11,782,324	10,705,896
Trade and other receivables	477,896	347,516
Other current assets	89,197	54,532
Total Current Assets	12,349,417	11,107,944
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Other financial assets	1,289,240	1,465,573
Rights of use assets	1,458,730	
Total Non-Current Assets	17,527,553	15,733,274
Total Assets	29,876,970	26,841,218
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	1,289,033	1,187,138
Contract Liabilities	1,858,437	1,140,575
Lease Liabilities	353,265	-
Provisions	2,391,534	2,091,676
Total Current Liabilities	5,892,269	4,419,389
NON -CURRENT ASSETS		
Lease Liabilities	1,120,799	-
Provisions	353,320	282,644
Liability for Government Assets	90,683	97,681
Total Non-Current Liabilities	1,564,802	380,325
Total Liabilities	7,457,071	4,799,714
NET ASSETS	22,419,899	22,041,504
Reserves	1,471,888	1,471,888
Capital Grants	10,191,237	10,191,237
Retained earnings	10,756,774	10,378,379
TOTAL EQUITY	22,419,899	22,041,504

Profit and Loss	2020	2019
Revenue	31,091,716	25,993,428
Employee benefits expense	(17,300,970)	(15,233,804)
Depreciation and amortisation expense	(583,910)	(489,345)
Amortisation Expense – right of use asset	(363,569)	-
Other expenses	(12,464,872)	(9,023,822)
Profit for the year	378,395	1,246,457

Comprehensive Income	2020	2019
OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME/ (LOSS) AFTER INCOME TAX		
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Financial Assets	-	-
Net Gain/(Loss) on revaluation of Land and Buildings	-	-
Total other comprehensive income/(loss) for the year	-	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	378,395	1,246,457
Total comprehensive income attributable to members of the entity	378,395	1,246,457

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



UCSA looks forward to meeting the changes and challenges of the future and to continuing to develop an organisation that is responsive, innovative and a leader in the delivery of community services in country South Australia.

If you would like to learn more about how Uniting Country SA is Caring for Country People, visit our website for more information www.ucsau.org.au





Uniting
CountrySA

Caring for Country People

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