



Investing in a Brighter Future

Annual Report 2022 – 2023

Contents

Mission & Values	05
Chief Executive Report	06
Chairperson Report	08
Board Members	09
Roof of Hope	10
Guiding Future Generations	12
Workplace Harmony	16
Forward Foundations	20
Together We Thrive	22
Nurturing Country Kids	30
Empowering People with a Disability	32
Community Loans	33
All Staff Day	34
Uniting Country Housing	36
Audited Financials	38







Mission & Values

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

- **Uniting Country SA (UCSA)** is a social and community services organisation.
- **Uniting Country Housing (UCH)** is a community housing organisation.

We assist country people, delivering over 55 services from 32 sites. We provide services focused on domestic and family violence, disability, mental health, financial distress, homelessness and family breakdown. We also deliver a range of out-of-home care services in the region.

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
- » 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, we are committed to caring for country people in line with our vision of compassionate, respectful and strong communities where all people flourish.

Chief Executive Report

We celebrate another year of service delivery to country communities, a year marked by the challenge of rising living expenses and a shortage of housing.

We extend our gratitude to our funding bodies whose invaluable support has enabled us to carry out our essential work. A special acknowledgment goes to our Board for their skilled governance, and a big thank you goes to our dedicated and skilled staff, whose numbers have grown from 300 to 348 over the past financial year.

Housing

UCH has commenced its first residential development project in Moonta, which will add to the supply of affordable housing.

Community Impact

There has been unprecedented demand for financial well-being and related support services. We have seen new cohorts of clients seeking assistance for the first time. We have been able to maintain high levels of client satisfaction, 92% of whom would recommend UCSA to others, and 94% who felt their worker treated them with dignity and respect.

Empowering our Team

We continued to invest in the professional growth of our staff, with a focus on robust supervision practices at the heart of our developmental philosophy. Additionally, we've revamped our Manager and Team Leader forums to concentrate on skill enhancement. Our flexible workplace policy has been enthusiastically embraced, allowing options such as remote work, retirement planning, and split shifts, which have collectively contributed to high employee satisfaction levels.

Performance Highlights

Our efforts continue to attract recognition from our funding bodies. Examples include:

- » The Country Wellness Connect program ranked as the state's highest performer. It aids individuals grappling with chronic mental health challenges in accessing supports.
- » The Financial Wellbeing program exceeded its targets and achieved the state's top position.
- » The Escaping Violence Payment program was also a top state performer, assisting victims of domestic violence through a national consortium of Uniting Organisations.

Our NDIS services have seen organic growth due to positive word-of-mouth, affirming our participant-centred service delivery approach:

- » Support coordination increased by 31%.
- » Plan management grew by 21%.
- » Support work increased by 24%.

Gratitude for Community Support

Lastly, I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the entire community for their ongoing generosity, support and donations throughout the year.



Dr Harry Randhawa, Chief Executive

Key statistics



48

more staff members
than the previous
financial year



92%

of clients would
recommend UCSA to
others



94%

felt their worker treated
them with dignity and
respect



31%

increase in support
coordination



21%

increase in plan
management



24%

increase in support
work

Chairperson's Report

Our work revolves around people and relationships, both within the Board and across our organisations.

Assuming the role of Chairperson for Uniting Country SA (UCSA) and Uniting Country Housing (UCH) is an honour, and I find immense joy in engaging with fellow Board members and senior staff.

I'd like to pay special tribute to Sue Park, our former Chairperson, who dedicated 12 years to the Board, including an influential 5-year tenure as Chairperson. Sue adeptly steered us through a transformative era marked by substantial growth.

We also acknowledge Jo Curkpatrick, a retiring Board member as of October 2022, for her valuable contributions. Additionally, we warmly welcome Libby Craft and Kym Thomas, both seasoned individuals, to the Board this year. Their wealth of experience, skills, and knowledge greatly enhances the strength of our Board.

I'm thrilled to highlight the Australia Day honours bestowed upon Jenny Hughes and Anthea Pavy, who have both demonstrated exceptional commitment. Jenny Hughes served as a dedicated Chairperson, while Anthea Pavy has been an outstanding CEO. Congratulations on these well-deserved awards which underscore their remarkable contributions to our organisations and the wider community.

Key achievements for the Boards this year include:

- » Inaugural development of social housing under UCH in Moonta Bay
- » Successful attainment of Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status for UCH
- » White Ribbon accreditation, as one of the few non-government entities in regional South Australia
- » A productive Board retreat featuring insightful conversations with Helen Connolly, the Commissioner for Children and Young People

As we contemplate the year's milestones, hurdles, and the unwavering dedication of our team, it is evident that our collaborative endeavours are shaping promising futures for us and the communities we serve. I invite you to read our Annual Report, which centres on the theme of "Investing in a Brighter Future."



Peter Hollister, Chairperson

2022/23 Board Members



Peter Hollister
Chair



Fiona Duffield
Deputy Chair



Harry Randhawa
Chief Executive,
Director



Jo Court
Director



Chez Curnow
Director



Paul Thomas
Director



Lachlan McAuliffe
Director



Kym Thomas
Director (new)



Libby Craft
Director (new)



Sue Park
Former Chair (retired)



Jo Curkpatrick
Director (retired)

Roof of Hope

Sheltering Vulnerable Lives



Collaborating for Change

We worked alongside Country North Homelessness Alliance members during Homelessness Week to orchestrate an extensive awareness campaign spanning the entire region. Through media and a fundraising initiative titled 'Walking a Country Mile for Homelessness' during which participants covered a remarkable 914km symbolising the distance between Kadina and Ceduna, our collective effort resulted in the generation of \$2,545 in funds.

Beyond the financial achievement, the campaign also achieved the dual objective of heightening the visibility of service providers and casting a spotlight on the critical issue of homelessness in our communities.

This event was a great example of collaboration across the region.



914km

covered to symbolise
the distance between
Kadina and Ceduna



\$2,545

funds generated

Adam and Matthew's Journey

Adam and Matthew, who had been long-term residents at the St Andrews Men's Shelter, developed a strong friendship during their stay.

As individuals, they encountered various obstacles in securing housing such as financial constraints, a lack of rental history, limited suitable property options, and limited resources in terms of money, confidence and contacts. Nevertheless, by joining forces and securing housing together, they were able to significantly reduce these barriers.

Their idea was discussed with the Country North Homelessness Alliance, and eventually, Matthew was offered a 2-bedroom property where the two friends received the green light to move in together. It has now been nearly a year since they began their shared living arrangement, prompting us to inquire about their experiences with moving out, moving in, and moving on:

How has the past year in your shared house been for you?

Adam: "It has been good. We had no issues adapting to the property from the shelter. At the start, I was working, so I had no money issues. When the work stopped, it was good to be living with someone as the financial pressure wasn't as bad. I have gone from Youth Allowance to Job Seeker now, so that has helped."

What has been the biggest challenge in settling into your new home?

Adam: "Filling the space that we had. There was a lot more room."



What has been the most rewarding aspect of this experience?

Adam: "Having your own space and learning from each other."

Matthew: "Living with someone that you already lived with because you know each other already."

What advice would you give to someone experiencing homelessness and staying in the shelter?

Adam: "Support each other."

Matthew: "Persist."

Do you have a favorite quote or saying?

Adam: "Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get."

Guiding Future Generations

Youth Expo

In collaboration with Planet Youth and the Local Drug Action Team, the Port Pirie Youth Expo took place in October, 2022. Attracting over 200 children, it featured exciting skateboarding workshops, art classes, and gaming stalls. This event served as a platform to share information about primary prevention strategies against drug use, including the dynamic “Musso Magic” initiative. Support from Wellbeing SA, Alcohol Drug Foundation, Port Pirie Regional Council, Woolworths Port Pirie, and Golden North ensured success.



Children’s Wellbeing in Community

The Communities for Children program in Port Augusta champions children’s involvement through various community engagement initiatives.

Some highlights of the year included:

- » Creating four enormous Can Do Emu posters encouraging communication. These were installed on the side of the Woolworths building. Can Do Emu is a Paint the Town REaD mascot
- » Sponsoring community events like the Indian and South Asia Festival, local murals and kids’ workshops
- » Collaborating with Port Augusta Special School to design 10 stobie poles with UN rights themes that were installed across the town
- » Supporting the NAIDOC Mini Ball that was enjoyed by over 300 families
- » Distributing over 1,075 free books
- » Aiding local playgroup activities through funding Playgroup SA
- » The Cardboard Box Rally at Flinders View Primary School, an event that combined creativity with recycling that brought more than 150 children to the final parade
- » Launching Fun-tober events to encourage children to engage in their local community during school holidays.

Through these diverse activities we celebrated the importance of having children at the heart of the community.



Strong Foundations

The Home Interaction Program for Parents and Youngsters (HIPPY) encourages parents to be their children's first educator, engaging families in developing early literacy and numeracy skills. 2023 marks the last year for 5-year-olds in the program; a new model for three and four-year-olds will be launched in 2024. The program prioritises socially disadvantaged families. There have been 303 graduates to date. HIPPY aims to instill a lifelong love of learning.



Broadening Horizons

A young expectant mother approached our service seeking help to reintegrate her older child into school. The child's attendance had declined, and she felt isolated due to her partner's recent passing and her own impending childbirth. The Advancing Families and Communities team established a cultural connection, swiftly arranging mental health support and grief counseling for the older child. They addressed the school attendance issue, facilitated a new enrolment, secured an education scholarship, helped establish routines, and aided funding applications for necessities like an air conditioner. The mother's well-being has improved, her older children attend school regularly, and she is now engaged in a supportive playgroup.



Mark's Journey Through Support Services

Mark joined the Service to Aboriginal Youth (STAY) program in October 2020, while living in residential care under the State's guardianship. He faced complex trauma after being removed from his maternal grandparents' care. Struggling with emotional dysregulation, withdrawal, and speech difficulties, he resorted to aggression due to his inability to express himself verbally. Mark's interactions with staff revealed his disconnection from culture and community. He was referred to the STAY program to address these issues.

Gradually, his behaviour improved, with better emotional expression and enhanced school attendance. He participated in STAY group activities, engaging with his culture, peers, and services. NAIDOC week involvement and case management supported his progress. Mark has since reunited with family and resides happily with his nana, maintaining connections, and attending school. We were able to conclude formal support in April, 2023.



Photo credit: ABC News

APY Lands to Spain - A Success Story

Anangu hip-hop group "Dem Mob" hosted a workshop at the Indulkana Youth Shed during Term 1 school holidays. Founding members Elisha Umuhuri and Jontae Lawrie, both APY Lands natives, are the first to record hip-hop in the Pitjantjatjara language.

Elisha, an early Indulkana Youth Program participant, transitioned through education programs and eventually formed "Dem Mob" with Jontae. The duo's move to Adelaide in 2022 led to recognition, including a performance at WOMAD. Their journey inspired the Department of Education to support workshops aiming to replicate their success.

"Dem Mob" have since received an invitation to perform at the prestigious Primavera Sound music festival in Barcelona, Spain.

Different Experiences of Wellbeing Support Officers

Our National Student Wellbeing Program (formally National School Chaplaincy Program) has Wellbeing Support Officers across 16 schools, spanning from Andamooka to Streaky Bay and across to Saddleworth. These officers collaborate in their schools to deliver tailored student resilience and wellbeing services. Their approaches vary considerably according to the unique needs of each school and community.



**Mika, John Pirie
Secondary School,
serving 720 students**

"My approach involves attentive listening and delving deep into the challenges students may encounter. Additionally, I organise initiatives such as volunteering opportunities and a breakfast club. It warms my heart to see individuals reaching out in various ways. One of my guiding principles is to always celebrate the small victories".



**Rachel, Mid North
Education Centre (Special
Education Centre), with a
student body of 10**

"I focus on providing vital individual support during transitions, promoting emotional regulation, and nurturing friendship skills. I'm working with two girls, assisting them in building and strengthening their friendship. I've also initiated a cooking program and the joy radiating from their faces is just profound".



**Katie, Roxby Downs Area
School, catering to 530
students**

"I oversee the Slack-Line initiative, a dynamic recess and lunchtime activity that involves setting up a tightrope webbing system to engage students. Additionally, I lead the Queer-Straight Alliance, where I'm focused on cultivating young leaders. I have also worked with students to develop Gender Affirmation Plans, empowering them to assert control over their identity at school, thereby enhancing their safety and overall well-being".



**Krystal, Saddleworth
Primary School, serving
25 students**

"I've extended my support to children participating in swimming activities. Recently, I have also worked with teachers through a period of change. I coordinate lunchtime activities and a weekly breakfast club program, where, at times, even parents join us for a meal".



**Sheriden, Airdale Primary
School, attending to 135
students**

"I run both group sessions and one-on-one interactions with younger students, where I help them develop coping strategies and smoothly integrate into the school environment. Engaging in craft activities, board games, or simply having a conversation is often part of my routine. Encouraging children to connect with nature, away from technology, is a vital aspect of my work. Sometimes, due to challenges at home, the school becomes their primary safe haven".

Workplace Harmony: Ensuring Happiness and Safety

Fostering Employee Wellbeing

This year, we strengthened our commitment to workplace mental health needs. The 2020 Productivity Commission (PC) Report on Mental Health emphasised the crucial role of workplaces as the primary support for mental health, necessitating a culture that offers both assistance and prevention for people experiencing mental health issues. Uniting Country SA introduced a Wellbeing Program to foster a mentally healthy and supportive workplace.

The wellbeing program has five core pillars: Health, Finance, Community and Connectedness, Values and Beliefs, and Work. By considering these five aspects as inter-connected and crucial, we aim for a holistic approach to employee wellbeing.

Our Wellbeing Ambassadors play a pivotal role in ensuring the program's success. Staff members who exemplify qualities such as genuine interest, empathy, compassion, and reliability were encouraged to become Wellbeing Ambassadors. These ambassadors are not counsellors but serve as empathetic listeners and refer colleagues to appropriate professional help if necessary.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to everyone who contributed to our Wellbeing Program. Your dedication to lifting one another up and fostering a safe and supportive workplace, is commendable.

Listening to Client Voices

The 2023 Customer Satisfaction Survey provided an opportunity for our clients to share their feedback, perspectives, experiences, and impressions of our services.

The feedback was positive, with 86% satisfied and 92% willing to recommend us. 94% reported that they believed their support worker was courteous, while 91% felt welcomed, supported and safe.

As we move forward, our commitment to the wellbeing of our people remains, ensuring **“a workplace where everyone feels good.”**



"From reception to the support workers, they provide excellent help and support. Without them I do not know where I would be".

"The team at UCSA are very professional and well trained, from staff to the volunteers".

"Uniting Country SA is a vital service in my regional area. Keep up the good work, you have supported me through some tough times".

"Extremely happy and cannot express my satisfaction with the service I have received".



Gaining Insight into Employee Diversity

This year we pioneered the Uniting Country Group inaugural Diversity Survey, shedding light on the composition of our workforce, our attitudes and beliefs, and identifying potential training requirements. Moreover, the Diversity Survey established baseline data essential for the Agency to work toward the Rainbow Tick standards, which is an accredited quality framework for service organisations that provide safe and inclusive working conditions for the LGBTIQ+ community.

The survey demonstrated our dedication to diversity and inclusivity, and to fostering a culturally safe work environment that reinforces our reputation as an employer of choice.

A total of 122 staff members and 5 volunteers took part in the survey: 19.7% were born outside of Australia, 9.5% identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 10.2% identified as having a disability, and 5.5% identified as part of the LGBTIQ+ community.



Karen, our General Manager of People, Communication & Assurance, reports “This survey distinctly highlights the positive indicators of an inclusive and safe space where individuals can authentically engage in their work”.

Supporting Employee Innovation

Healthy Workers/Healthy Futures & Wellbeing Ambassadors Committee

We organised a staff walking challenge to encourage healthier exercise routines. Participants in teams completed 10,000 steps, equivalent to the length of the Rabbit Proof Fence. Many staff members used their lunch breaks to contribute steps towards their team's total.

LGBTIQA+ Committee

We introduced the Rainbow Shoelace Project started by 12-year-old Abbie Kelly, co-founder of "Prideful Broken Hill." Participants attached pride coloured beads to shoelaces to show support for the LGBTIQA+ community. 84 UCSA staff members participated. A pronoun awareness campaign was also launched.

Aboriginal Advisory Committee

We introduced a uniform line inspired by Aboriginal culture and consulted about cultural matters.



Christmas Assistance Team

The team received 28 bikes and scooters for our Port Pirie Christmas Packages from the late Greg Nestor's family. Greg was passionate about bikes and had a shed full of them. His love for giving back to the community lives on through these donations.

Our Commitment to a Safer Environment

In February 2023, we celebrated our White Ribbon Workplace accreditation reflecting our dedication to fostering a workplace that champions respectful, safe, and inclusive practices. The White Ribbon program, an internationally recognised movement against gendered violence, aligns perfectly with our belief that we all have a pivotal role in driving cultural change to combat violence, both within and beyond our workplace.

Our Senior Leadership Team has demonstrated its commitment by endorsing our White Ribbon Business Plan. Our Chief Executive, serving as the Chairperson of our White Ribbon Committee, was invited by White Ribbon Australia to contribute to a 4-part video resource series.

We take immense pride in being one of the few organisations in regional Australia to achieve white ribbon accreditation. Our commitment to the prevention of all forms of domestic and family violence is absolute and unwavering.



Forward Foundations: Investing in Infrastructure for Tomorrow



Expanding Services and Facilities

This year the Children's Contact Service (CCS) expanded its operations at the Port Pirie Community Centre in the Yorke/Mid North region. Extensive upgrades were made to ensure compliance with CCS standards and to create a welcoming environment for children. Improvements included planting the outdoor area with soft fall grass, paving, security enhancements, and signage. These changes seamlessly integrated CCS activities with the Community Centre's existing users. The outdoor space, particularly valued by children spending time with parents they don't usually see, has been widely enjoyed.

Harnessing Connections with Social Media

We found social media an effective tool in understanding needs, connecting with our communities, and increasing our reach. The casual and conversational approach adopted drove greater engagement and interest in our services.

Throughout this year, we have used Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram. Additionally, we have launched dedicated Facebook pages for Connected Beginnings, Haven – Port Pirie, Good@Gertrude, FoodHub and the Port Pirie Community Centre.

Our progress in community engagement via social media underscores our commitment to connectivity through adapting to the digital landscape, and nurturing unity within our diverse communities.



Research with Vision

In October, we launched our latest research paper titled “You Have to Love It - What does it take to work in remote community services?” This paper is our 13th successful research partnership with the Centre for Social Impact at Flinders University. During the launch we were honoured to have Elder George Cooley from the Aboriginal Community Yankunytjatjara deliver a Welcome to Country, sharing insights into the history of Coober Pedy, and shedding light on the unique challenges that the local Aboriginal communities encounter.

The research paper represents an ongoing commitment by Uniting Country SA to deliver evidence-based programs.



Uniting through New Spaces

Following nearly 13 years at the Old North Road shopping complex in Clare, both clients and staff are now enjoying the upgraded facilities at our new UCSA office. Situated conveniently close to Clare's main street, this office is well designed for our diverse range of services. It offers expanded interview/meeting spaces and an adaptable open-plan workstation area for our staff, complete with a dedicated reception and waiting area.



In July of this year, the Port Augusta team, previously located in two separate sites, successfully transitioned to a consolidated office. This modern site accommodates up to 50 staff members representing various programs. The facility includes a training room, multiple interview spaces, an activity area, and an outdoor play zone designed for Children's Contact Services and HIPPO activities.

These enhancements create a comfortable and functional environment that benefits clients and staff alike.



Together We Thrive: Community Building for a Stronger Future

Transforming Lives through Empowerment

Since October 2021, the Financial Wellbeing Team have created 274 custom Escape Violence Payment (EVP) assistance packages. We have distributed \$1.3M in funds including immediate assistance (\$14K), material aid (\$958K), accommodation (\$125K), and transport assistance (\$83K).



274

custom Escape Violence
Payment (EVP)
assistance packages



\$1.3M

total in funds
distributed since
October 2021



\$14K

in immediate
assistance



\$958K

in material aid



\$125K

in accommodation



\$14K

in transport assistance

Jennifer's Journey: A Tale of Triumph

After two decades trapped in financial abuse and violence, Jennifer's freedom began when she found a house to rent. With the support of a dedicated case worker and the Escaping Violence Program (EVP), Jennifer was supported to find part-time work, access to legal aid, and funding to furnish her new home. EVP aided Jennifer's relocation and supported her through her whole transition to a new life.

Jennifer's story highlights how compassionate support and initiatives like EVP can break cycles of abuse and transform lives.



A Day of Reflection and Unity

Kadina hosted a moving Sorry Day event that brought communities together. Sorry Day serves as an acknowledgement of, and an opportunity to, extend an apology to Aboriginal people who were, and still are, impacted by Government policies that led to the Stolen Generation.

The Kadina event was initiated by Foster Care, with the valuable contribution of John Buckskin, a Narungga man, resulting in a successful and well-attended gathering. Aunty Claudia, a respected Narungga Elder shared her experiences with passion and candour, reflecting on both painful and powerful moments. The event enjoyed Peter Turner's Welcome to Country in the local language, and a Smoking Ceremony. The musical talents of Daniel Karpany who played the guitar and sang, further added to the atmosphere.



Increased Community Impact

With the financial support of BHP, our Port Augusta Male Perpetrator program has been boosted to extend its vital aid to both those responsible for violence, and men facing domestic and family violence. Our outreach service now encompasses Roxby Downs.



Empowering Women through The Safety Hub

The Haven - Port Pirie was designed through collaboration with the Office of Women to support people in situations of domestic or sexual violence. This space serves as an initial point of contact.

Located at the Port Pirie Community Centre, the service has delivered essential aid and referrals to 284 women within its inaugural year.

The art and craft group has flourished, with high numbers of participants. One client commented that, since leaving her home after an extended period of social isolation, the Haven has become her sanctuary – a place where she feels “utmost safety and comfort.”

Volunteers of the Future

We established a partnership with Mid North Christian College that allows students to volunteer weekly at the FoodHub.

This experience has proved invaluable for students, teaching them skills that will serve them well beyond their school years, and extending their understanding beyond traditional academic learning.

One such student, Rachel, currently in Year 12, shared her experience:

“During my time at the FoodHub, I’ve engaged in various tasks like portioning food for sale, arranging products on shelves, and ensuring fridge cleanliness for food safety. The most rewarding aspect has been the enriching conversations I’ve had with our customers.”





A Journey from Employee to Dedicated Volunteer

With 17 years of dedicated service, Bev Argent's announcement of retirement left us curious about her next steps. Little did we know, Bev's choice was to transition into a volunteer role within our organisation, to serve in a new way.

In response, we introduced a new volunteer role as a pastoral care worker. Bev's involvement has been pivotal in offering emotional support to enhance the well-being of our people. She has engaged particularly with new employees, involving them directly in her work as a Pastoral Care Worker/Wellbeing Ambassador.

Bev, our heartfelt gratitude goes out to you for your unwavering commitment as a volunteer.

Soaring High at Goods@Gertrude

Goods@Gertrude made significant strides this year. We have a dedicated Coordinator overseeing approximately 50 volunteers operating five days a week. Our retail area boasts an expansive 350 sqms of floor space, providing ample room to display and sell a diverse range of merchandise. Donations were collected from Port Pirie and six regional locations, with drivers covering a total of 650 kms each month. Last year, Goods@Gertrude sent out an impressive 49,000 kgs of clothing, along with 1,700 kgs of shoes and 350 kgs of handbags, for distribution overseas through Lifeline. Currently, our weekly efforts include baling over 1,000 kgs of clothing for export.



Community-Focused and Affordable Meals

For many years, the Port Pirie Community Centre has been hosting the Tasty Tucker program, a well-loved initiative managed by volunteers. Tasty Tucker offers a varied weekly menu and meticulously prepares and serves take-away meals every Friday. The primary goal is to offer a scrumptious two-course meal at an affordable price point.

Over the year, Tasty Tucker prepared 2,310 meals earning nearly \$13,000 in sales. Among the assortment of offerings, the roast emerged as the crowd favourite, with a staggering 123 meals ordered in one particular week!



Food Access for Everyone

At the FoodHub, our coordinator collaborated with volunteers, collectively amassing an impressive 6,000 hours over the year. During this time, we successfully distributed 15,624 kg of pantry items, 7,767 kg of frozen items, 17,850 kg of bread, and 12,325 kg of fresh fruits and vegetables. These numbers exemplify our commitment to providing a diverse range of nutritious options.

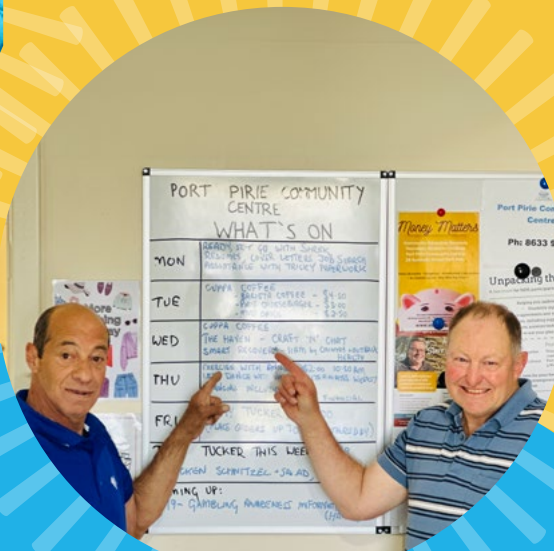


Thank you to Foodbank SA,
Woolworths and
SecondBite for their
valuable involvement.

Celebrating the Incredible Contributions of Volunteers

Our volunteer workforce reached an impressive count of 171 individuals located in 12 of our locations. Their collective commitment translated into a remarkable 96,258 hours during the 2022-2023 financial year.

Thank you so much for all
that you do!



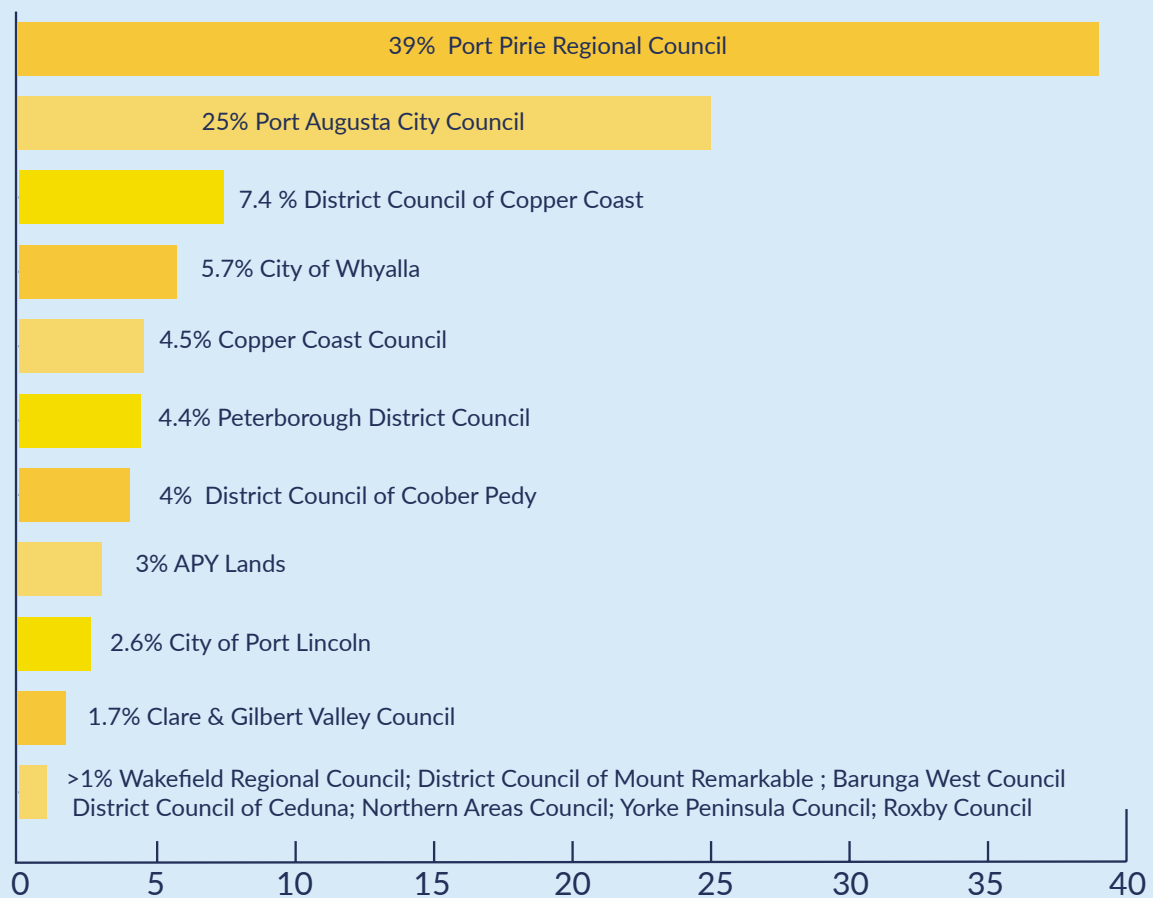


2022 - 2023 Statistics

Clients by location

6,979 total clients

Total clients by %



1,509

people received
emergency relief



348

total staff



171

total volunteers



55

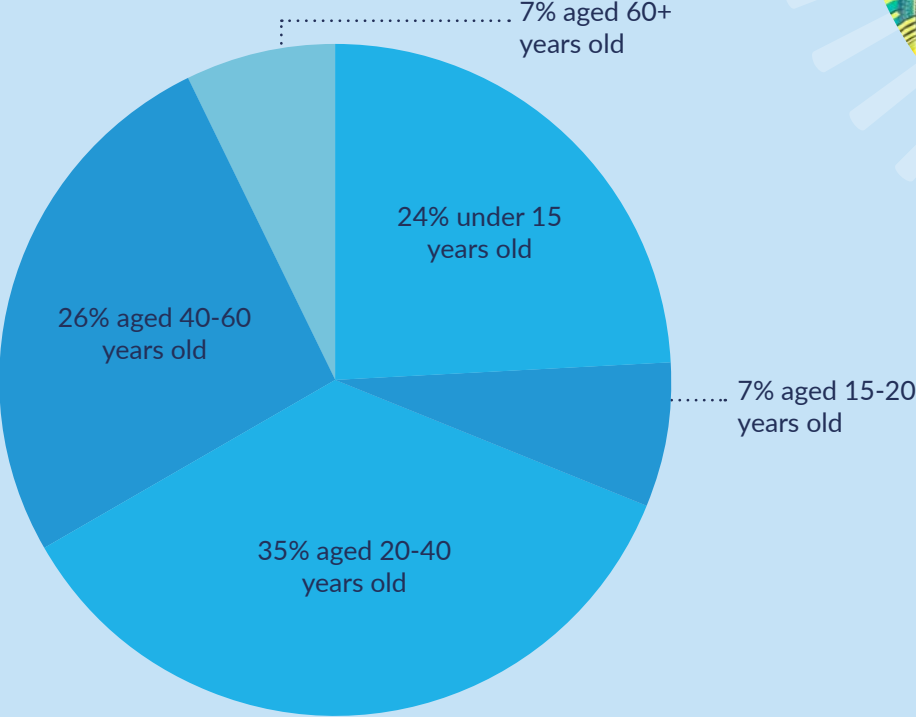
total services



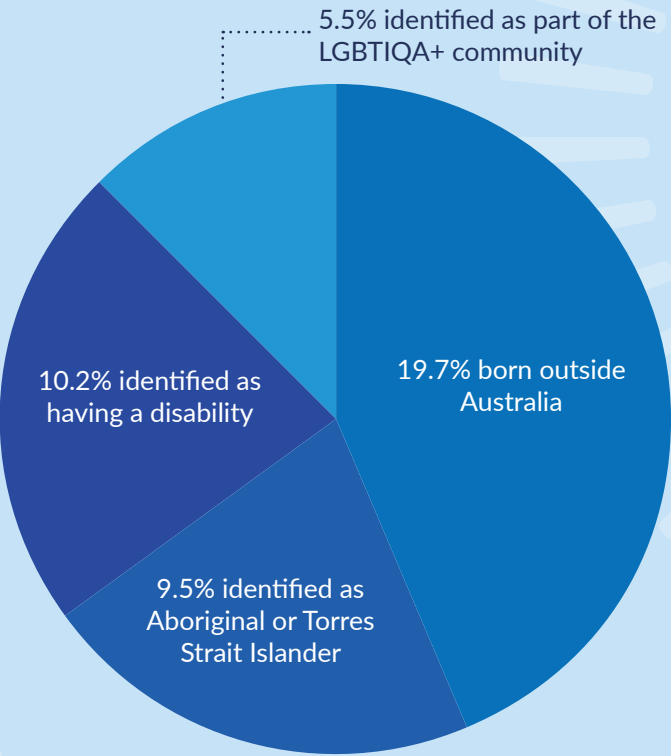
26

offices in the Yorke
and Mid North, Far North
and Eyre & Western Regions

Our clients by age



Our staff



Nurturing Country Kids with Compassion

Gaining recognition in Child Protection

We proudly accepted the 2022 Outstanding Service Award for Regional South Australia from the Department of Child Protection. This award recognised our commitment to delivering the Child Aware Approach (CAA), which fosters a culture of awareness around those factors that influence childhood development.

CAA awareness became a core competency for all staff, volunteers and foster carers dealing with cycles of disadvantage and their impact on baby brain development.

The award was presented by the Department for Child Protection (DCP) and the National Association for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (NAPCAN).



Spotlight on Reunification

In the year ending June 30, 2023, our Reunification program had engaged with 20 families and involved 48 children. These included 14 Aboriginal families with 27 children and six non-Aboriginal families with 21 children. Among these, two Aboriginal families successfully reunited, six achieved permanency outcomes (Kinship Care or Long-Term Foster Care), three are actively working towards reunification, and one ended unsuccessfully. For non-Aboriginal families, four achieved permanency outcomes, and two are working towards reunification.



A Journey of Reunification

We offered support and assistance to a mother and father navigating the difficult circumstances of their five children being removed by DCP due to inadequate living conditions and alleged neglect.

We connected the family with specialised services encompassing drug and alcohol support, relationship counselling, mental health aid, structured routines, and parenting programs. This approach paved the way for a successful reunification process.

Transformation - A 14-Year-Old's Journey

We started working with Izak a 14-year-old young person through the Intensive Family Services program. Izak was not attending school and lacked purpose, motivation and drive.

During this period, there was an incident involving his bike that resulted in his arrest due to unintentional damage. Working collaboratively with his parents, IFS provided crucial support throughout the court process, ultimately achieving a favourable outcome.

Following IFS engagement, Izak began attending school regularly and even undertook an additional school subject. As we approached case closure, we witnessed a comprehensive transformation in Izak, with a newfound sense of hope and direction. With his parents' support, Izak is actively seeking after-school employment, with an eye to a future traineeship.

Embracing Recruitment Innovation

In order to attract the most enthusiastic and suitable candidates to the Supported Residential Care program, we introduced some innovative approaches. We firstly provided additional information about the roles so that applicants could really understand the job prior to applying. We used a dedicated landing page (website) featuring staff talking about the roles. Secondly, we launched an inspiring 30-second advert "HOPE" that showed the positive impact staff can make in these roles.

Showcasing Supported Residential Care

Over the past year, the Supported Residential Care Program has cared for 38 children. These children have made significant achievements including participation in a soccer academy, securing part-time employment, a house captainship, and active involvement in sports like AFL in line with the Department of Child Protection's (DCP) emphasis on youth engagement. During this time, our staff numbers also expanded from 57 to 65.



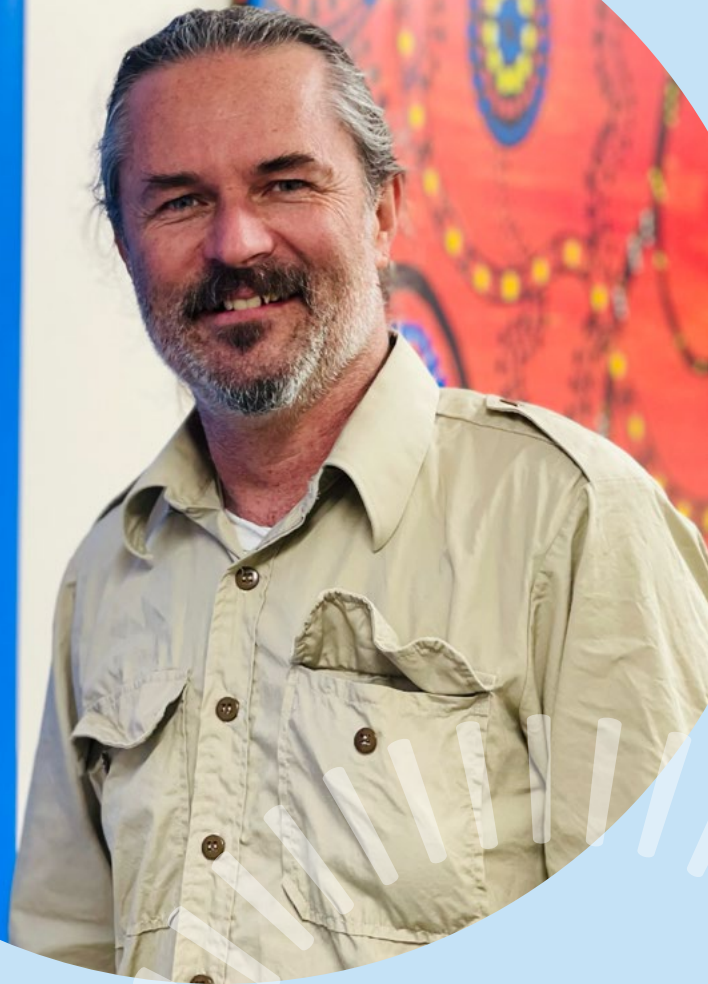
Empowering People with a Disability

Broadening NDIS Outreach

The Disability Services Team expanded our outreach efforts to more isolated communities than ever before. In Port Lincoln, our first Support Coordinator is already achieving remarkable outcomes for participants.

We have started providing Support Coordination in Roxby Downs through outreach services based in Port Augusta.





Transforming Lives and Communities

Plan Management: Our plan management team handled close to 39,000 invoices on behalf of 546 participants, resulting in support provision costing approximately \$21 million. The majority of this support was directed toward local providers, delivering direct benefits to our communities.

Support Coordination: Our support coordinators dedicated approximately 9,200 hours to providing essential assistance to participants, surpassing the achievements of the preceding year.

Support Workers: Our support workforce invested nearly 15,000 hours in aiding individuals within the community. Their roles led them on journeys spanning over 100,000 kilometres.

Community Loans

Fostering Growth and Opportunity

Pursuing Equitable Economic Inclusion

Our Financial Inclusion Team have delivered many positive outcomes for clients facing financial challenges.

The example of Joan, a 72-year-old grandmother, highlights how interventions by our financial workers can transform personal circumstances. After a Total Permanent Disability payout, and during a non-payment phase with Centrelink, Joan had a mere \$260 per fortnight from the Family Tax Benefit. Our workers' dedication brought emergency food aid, advocacy for bill payments, and the removal of the non-payment period. Their holistic approach covered job network connections, utility and council rate hardship arrangements, access to grants and even support service referrals for her granddaughter. Their professionalism and empathy secured lasting positive results.

Yang, a 60-year-old man, arrived in Port Pirie without income and thought himself ineligible for a Government allowance due to unfiled tax returns. Guided by our Financial Counsellor, he contacted Centrelink for an allowance and sought tax department support to address outstanding returns, making him eligible for an allowance. Facing credit card debt, Yang contemplated bankruptcy, but his support worker secured a significant debt waiver after assessing his situation.



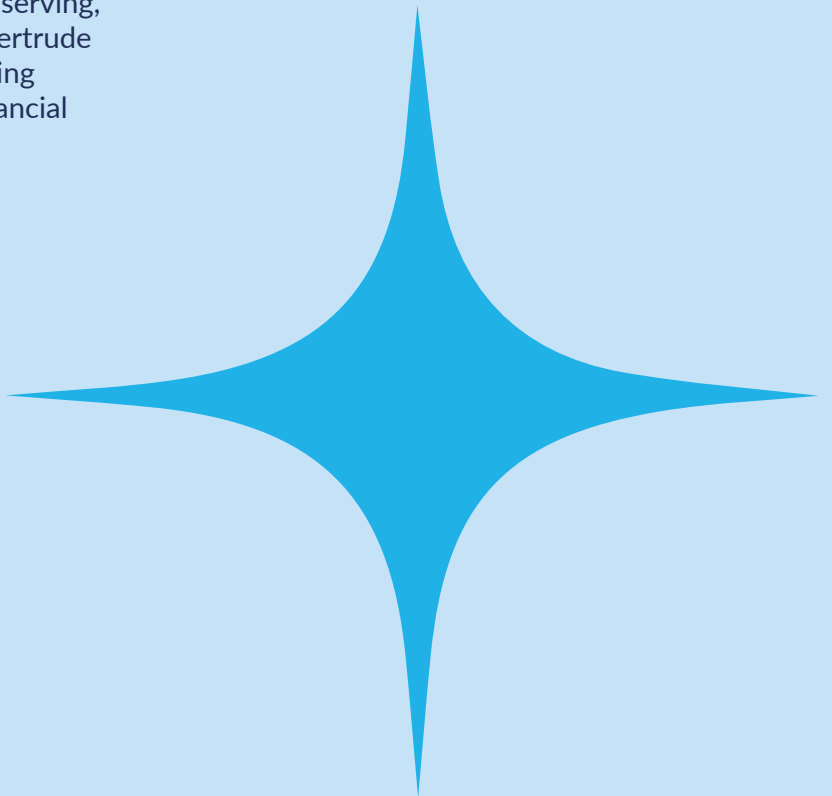
Achieving New Heights in NILS Loans

Congratulations to our No Interest Loans (NILs) team for achieving a new milestone — a remarkable 70% growth in loans compared to the same period last year! The NILs provided individuals and families on low incomes with access to safe, fair and affordable credit.

Teaching Life Skills

The team conducted 35 financial education sessions, engaging 378 participants.

In one instance, the team prepared 50 affordable, nutritious meals at \$1.60 per serving, and distributed them during a Goods@Gertrude sale with attendees receiving meal planning resources and recipes to bolster their financial well-being.



All Staff Day 2022

Fostering Connections

In the spirit of togetherness, staff gathered together on 4th November in Port Pirie for the annual UCSA All Staff Day. This year's theme was "A splash of colour" to celebrate our contributions this year.

The All Staff Day Committee took the opportunity to dress the Chief Executive in outfits sourced from the Goods@Gertrude Op Shop, creating a dynamic visual representation of the event's theme.



Throughout the day the entire organisation had the chance to participate in rewarding activities. The day began with a moving Aboriginal dance display by Dusty Feet Mob, then Nukunu Elder Auntie Beth Turner shared a video of her cultural practices as part of her Welcome to Country.

Injecting an artistic touch, entertainer Brad Blaze stole the spotlight with three very entertaining speed paintings enhanced with glitter and fire. After Brad's demonstration, our people separated into teams to create and share their own artworks to represent the values of UCSA.





The positive impact of All Staff Day extended beyond its duration. Auntie Beth Turner, in her feedback, expressed her gratitude for the infectious atmosphere of joy and camaraderie within Uniting Country SA. She praised the organisation for nurturing a supportive and caring environment.

It was so good for people to spend time with staff from different sites, to celebrate long service milestones, enjoy performances, and embrace creative dressing. The photograph booth was also a hit! A great day was had by all.



Uniting Country Housing

Social and Affordable Homes

Portfolio Overview

We take pride in our managed housing portfolio, which includes 258 properties across the region from Coober Pedy to Port Lincoln.

Enabling New Tenancies

Throughout the year we facilitated the establishment of 101 new tenancies, providing individuals and families with safe and secure housing options.

Tenancy Transitions

We oversaw 106 tenancy exits, ensuring a smooth transition process for both departing tenants and incoming occupants.

Supportive Tenancy Management

A total of 129 tenancies were effectively managed by support providers who helped tenants adjust to their new situation. In some cases, individuals faced entirely new challenges when taking up tenancy arrangements. Support workers helped smooth the way.

Nurturing Collaborative Partnerships

We forged strong and productive partnerships with support providers including Offenders Aid and Rehabilitation Services, Centacare, CARA, MINDA, Port Pirie Environmental Health Centre, Community Mental Health Port Augusta, Y&MN, Yarredi, UCSA Domestic Violence Service, Women's Safety Services, The Salvation Army, West Coast Youth Service, UCSA Youth Homelessness Service, and Centacare Catholic Family Services.

Commitment to Maintenance

Our commitment to tenant comfort and safety is evident in the successful completion of 1,127 maintenance work orders.

As we reflect on this year's accomplishments, we at Uniting Country Housing remain steadfast in our mission to provide quality housing solutions, to foster partnerships, and to contribute positively to the communities we serve.

We extend our gratitude to all those involved directly or indirectly in our work.

Building in Moonta Bay

Starting the Journey

The Moonta Bay property project was initiated in early 2020.

Partnering for Excellence

We joined forces with a reputable regional builder known for quality, whose involvement will ensure that our project reaches high standards.

Progress in Motion

Construction started in May 2023 and the finished product is expected in December 2023.

Strategic Impact

Our new houses in Moonta Bay are adjacent to our existing properties and add to our rental offerings. The provision of affordable and sustainable housing options is a crucial part of improving the livability in the Yorke Peninsula community.

A Milestone

The Moonta Bay project, our first UCH rental property development, marks growth and innovation in our program.

Anticipating Impact

We await project completion with excitement. The Moonta Bay project will greatly enhance our housing portfolio with positive effects for the local community.

A Continuing Commitment

The Moonta Bay project will undoubtedly lead to further developments and exciting partnerships in the future.



Audited Financials

Uniting Country SA Ltd and controlled entities
summarised financial statement for the year ended 30 June 2023

Financial Position	2023	2022
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	11,526,803	16,147,427
Trade and other receivables	556,022	480,233
Other current assets	322,286	256,752
Other financial assets	5,000,000	-
Total Current Assets	17,405,111	16,884,412
NON-CURRENT ASSETS		
Other financial assets	1,536,427	1,396,300
Right-of-use assets	2,464,181	1,391,427
Property, plant and equipment	23,787,584	19,140,627
Total Non-Current Assets	27,788,192	21,928,354
Total Assets	45,193,303	38,812,766
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Trade and other payables	741,670	1,781,681
Government Grants in Advance	-	-
Unexpended Government Grants	4,057,080	4,055,488
Lease liabilities	686,575	648,978
Provisions	2,901,791	2,547,671
Total Current Liabilities	8,387,116	9,033,818
NON-CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Provisions	427,416	351,558
Lease Liabilities	1,740,775	530,248
Liability for Government Assets	19,788	19,788
Total Non-Current Liabilities	2,187,979	901,594
Total Liabilities	10,575,095	9,935,412
NET ASSETS	34,618,208	28,877,354
EQUITY		
Reserves	3,062,455	2,525,875
Capital Grants	16,493,124	12,673,437
Retained earnings	15,062,629	13,678,042
TOTAL EQUITY	34,618,208	28,877,354

Profit and Loss

	2023	2022
Revenue	63,770,950	49,545,449
Employee benefits expense	(24,992,645)	(20,700,449)
Depreciation	(664,463)	(756,061)
Amortisation expense – right-of-use assets	(716,799)	(468,431)
Other expenses	(36,012,456)	(25,970,561)
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	1,384,587	1,649,947

Comprehensive Income

	2023	2022
SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	1,384,587	1,649,947
Other comprehensive income after income tax:		
Gain on Revaluation of Land & Building	536,580	(17)
Receipt of SYPCHA Assets (1)	3,819,687	-
Total comprehensive income for the year	4,356,267	(17)
Total comprehensive income attributable to owners of the entity	5,740,854	1,649,930

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

1300 067 777 | unitingcountry@ucsa.org.au

ucsa.org.au

Caring for Country People



Uniting
Country SA



Uniting
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