



Strategic Plan

July 2009 - June 2012

Justice, hope and opportunity for all

Introduction

We are pleased to present the second Strategic Plan for UnitingCare West covering the period July 2009 to June 2012.

The plan builds on the significant achievements of the organisation's first strategic plan which primarily focused on the merger and the first three years of the formation of UnitingCare West as a new community service organisation of the Uniting Church in Western Australia seeking to give expression to the Church's ministry and mission.

It retains a focus on our far-reaching vision of achieving "justice, hope and opportunity for all" and on continuing to position us to deliver our mission "to support, serve and empower people most in need".

The plan is not prescriptive, rather a way of working together to shape the work of our organisation.

In November 2007, UnitingCare West staff came together to describe our working ethos, an expression of the shared character and guiding beliefs and values of the organisation, the way in which we act together and towards each other as an organisation and with our clients. Our working ethos is the lens through which we assess all we do. It is in this context that this strategic plan has been developed.

The plan represents a culmination of many months of reflection, discernment and discussion by members of the Board, staff and volunteers of UnitingCare West, together with significant input from some of our key external stakeholders.

The plan's overall purpose is to set out a shared understanding of what we want to achieve in guiding the further growth and development of UnitingCare West in its next period of development, together with strategies to help us achieve these goals. It will enable UnitingCare West to better predict, adapt and respond to a changing environment and to community needs.

This plan has a stronger emphasis on our advocacy and social justice role. Among many other important things, it commits us to "be recognised as a leading advocate and provider, empowering those most in need, and partnering with others to create justice, hope and opportunities for all". It also significantly focuses the organisation on its external environment.

The plan is the basis upon which a comprehensive and integrated performance management system for UnitingCare West will be further developed. This encompasses regular performance management planning and reporting at all operational levels across the organisation as they relate to specific strategies and operational directions.

We thank all members of the Board, staff and volunteers who have worked closely together to develop the plan and we look forward to working closely with you to implement it. We have great pleasure in commending this strategic plan to you.



Wendie Wilkie

Chair of Board

July 2009



Chris Hall

Chief Executive Officer



Our Vision

Justice, hope and opportunity for all.



Our Mission

To support, serve and empower people most in need.



Our Values

As part of the life and mission of the Uniting Church in Australia in pursuit of justice, hope and opportunity for all, we at UnitingCare West will act with:

- **Empathy**
Showing understanding for the feelings and circumstances of others
- **Respect**
Valuing people, property and the environment
- **Inclusiveness**
Accepting and celebrating diversity
- **Integrity**
Being ethical and trustworthy and upholding principles and beliefs
- **Commitment**
Working together towards agreed outcomes with steadfastness and resilience

Our Working Ethos

Our Working Ethos was developed by staff and approved by the Board of UnitingCare West as an expression of the shared character and guiding beliefs and values of the organisation, the ways in which we act together and towards each other, as an organisation, and with our clients. Our working ethos is the lens through which we assess all we do.

Empathy

Showing understanding for the feelings and circumstances of others

We act with empathy by:

- Putting aside our personal judgments and listening to other people's perspectives.
- Providing a working environment and delivering programs that are flexible and responsive to the individual situations of staff, volunteers and clients.
- Supporting staff and volunteers through high quality supervision and training.
- Taking the concerns of staff, volunteers and clients seriously.

Respect

Valuing people, property and the environment

We act with respect by:

- Being courteous and using appropriate language in our communications with others.
- Honouring the rights, dignity and decisions of other people at all times.
- Ensuring that all resources (human, material and financial) are used effectively and efficiently to achieve the best outcomes for clients, the community and the environment.

Inclusiveness

Accepting and celebrating diversity

We act with inclusiveness by:

- Acknowledging and welcoming the diverse backgrounds, opinions and beliefs of all staff, volunteers and clients.
- Maintaining an organisational culture where clients, staff, volunteers and the community are given the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to decision making processes.
- Providing a workplace that is safe for all people and free from any form of discrimination or harassment.

Integrity

Being ethical and trustworthy and upholding principles and beliefs

We act with integrity by:

- Providing services that are characterised by honesty to ourselves, our clients and the community.
- Developing meaningful, fair and productive relationships with our clients and the community based on mutual commitment, trust and openness.
- Behaving in ways that reflect our organisation's values and recognizing the contribution that we all make to our work.
- Operating from a foundation of upholding relevant laws, regulations and standards.

Commitment

Working together towards agreed outcomes with steadfastness and resilience

We act with commitment by:

- Striving for excellence but acknowledging and learning from our mistakes.
- Directing our services towards those most in need and frequently reassessing our direction to ensure that we are responding to changing need.

Approved by the Board of UnitingCare West – February 2008

Our Journey

We are an integral part of the Uniting Church in Australia working for a transformation of humanity and the reconciliation of all creation. As a pilgrim people of vision and hope, we are a learning, growing, challenging, transformative community, open to change and always ready to discern where we can best support, serve and empower people most in need.

Key steps in the journey towards our vision will be to:

- Work together to continue to build UnitingCare West as a leading advocacy and provider organisation in the community services sector.
- Be a leading voice for social justice, influencing social policy and advocating for social change.
- Develop, value and support our staff and volunteers.
- Build a workplace based on shared values and a strong sense of belonging.
- Be a progressive and effective organisation which lives out its values.
- Develop a culture of innovation based on research, assessed need and sound models of practice.
- Direct our resources towards work in areas where other organisations are unable to go.
- Integrate and coordinate our services to meet the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of individuals, families and communities.
- Create collaborative relationships with Uniting Church congregations, agencies and schools, other service providers, government and industry.
- Create new ways of engaging with our service users and program participants, valuing their input, feedback and participation in our services.

Our Identity

UnitingCare West is committed to achieving justice, hope and opportunity for all, and works to support and empower in particular those most in need in the WA community.

It is a not-for-profit community services organisation and part of the mission of the Uniting Church in Australia and UnitingCare national network.

Our organisation is founded on Christian principles and values and the particular Christian ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia.

UnitingCare West was formed on 1 July 2006 as a result of the merger of some or all of the programs and services of eight Uniting Church agencies and parish missions. The merger increased our capacity to work together to deliver a diverse range of interrelated community services, programs and social justice initiatives, focusing on those people most in need. The agencies that formed UnitingCare West have been serving the community of Western Australia since 1830.

As at July 2009, we are delivering in excess of 30 services and programs in 27 locations covering the Synod of Western Australia (the geographic area south of Broome). Our aim is to locate our services where people most in need can easily access them. We support and assist over 30,000 families and individuals each year.

Taking Action

We will deliver the strategic plan through:

- **Service and Program Development**
- **Social Justice Advocacy**
- **People Development**
- **Profile Development**
- **Organisation Development**

Service and Program Development

Our Goal

To be an inspirational and innovative preferred service and program provider empowering those most in need, working in particular where other providers are unable to go.

Our Strategies

Ensure programs and services are:

- Well planned
- Focused on areas of most need
- Integrated
- Based on sound evidence
- Responsive to clients *
- Innovative
- Subject to evaluation and continuous improvement

Apply the commitment, knowledge and experience of our staff, volunteers and clients in the design, implementation and review of services and programs.

Strengthen our research and evaluation capacity and expertise by establishing partnerships with tertiary institutions and other research organisations.

Inform governments and funding providers of service and program gaps and how they could be addressed.

Ensure that our services are culturally appropriate for the clients who use them.

Collaborate with other Uniting Church agencies and other community service organisations in service and program delivery.

Our Performance Assessment

We will use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to assess our performance.

Examples include:

- The extent to which our services and programs are responsive to the unmet needs of the community.
- Feedback from our clients about our effectiveness in understanding and responding to their needs.
- The extent to which our services and programs are increasingly sought by both clients and funders.
- The extent to which our services and programs demonstrate innovation in design and delivery.

**The term "client" includes service users and program participants.*

Social Justice Advocacy

Our Goal

To be a leading voice for social justice, influencing social policy, advocating for social change and speaking out against injustice and oppression.

Our Strategies

Proactively increase the impact of our social justice advocacy role by working with:

- UnitingCare Australia, Uniting Justice Australia and the WA Synod's Social Justice Board
- Faith based and other community service organisations and peak bodies
- Clients to empower them to advocate for themselves

Take a leading role in influencing government and the community by the effective use of qualitative and quantitative evidence.

Communicate to staff the Uniting Church's positions on social justice issues.

Engage staff in social justice advocacy.

Our Performance Assessment

We will use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to assess our performance.

Examples include:

- Extent and nature of our leadership and participation in social justice advocacy.
- Changes achieved in social policy.
- Nature and level of media coverage and other exposure for our advocacy and social justice role.
- Extent of staff engagement and knowledge of social justice issues.

People Development

Our Goal

To be an employer recognised for valuing, developing and supporting staff and volunteers as our greatest resource.

Our Strategies

Provide a rewarding and motivating work environment including:

- Skills and knowledge audit and development
- Career progression
- Staff exchanges
- Securing government and other funding that will improve staff conditions and employment security
- Finalising and implementing the staff and volunteer supervision framework
- Enhancing staff and volunteer management practices
- Providing incentives for staff to commit to their own continuing professional development
- Staff and volunteer recognition and rewards program
- Enhancing wellness programs including balancing work and family responsibilities

Foster leadership and team work at all levels of the organisation.

Engage proactively with staff in the development of a new industrial agreement.

Our Performance Assessment

We will use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to assess our performance.

Examples include:

- The extent to which our staff and volunteers experience personal and professional satisfaction in their work.
- Capacity to attract and retain staff and volunteers.
- The extent to which we are able to maximise staff salaries and conditions within the community services sector.
- The quality and quantity of supervision, support and training for Board, staff and volunteers.

Profile Development

Our Goal

To be recognised as a leading advocate and provider, empowering those most in need, and partnering with others to create justice, hope and opportunities for all.

Our Strategies

Develop and implement a marketing and fundraising strategy paying particular attention to:

- A brand development strategy
- Alliances and partnerships with the business and corporate sector
- Donor development
- Sharing our best practice in the professional community
- The media
- Participating in public debate and serving on public committees
- Partnerships and collaboration with relevant sections of the community
- Networks with congregations, schools and other agencies of the Uniting Church
- Increasing our role in training and education

Take a leadership role in influencing major government policy initiatives that have strategic implications for the future of the community sector in WA and nationally.

Our Performance Assessment

We will use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to assess our performance. Examples include:

- Increased funding, resource and other revenue generation.
- Increased positive recognition and representation in the media and professional and other networks.
- Increase in sponsors, donors, partners, volunteers and people offering to be Board members.

Organisational Development

Our Goal

To be a progressive and highly effective organisation, living our values and continuously improving our capacity to achieve our Vision, Mission and Goals.

Our Strategies

Continue to develop the faith based culture of the organisation through regular reflection on our Vision, Mission and Values.

Develop and continually update an overall Organisational Sustainability and Growth Framework.

Reduce the impact of the whole of the organisation's activities on the natural environment.

Continually improve our information management systems.

Implement the Property Strategy and ensure that it is:

- Informed by service and program planning needs.
- Implemented in a consistent and consultative way to ensure that our new/refurbished service centres are welcoming and client friendly, as well as provide a comfortable and functional work environment for staff.

Increase staff awareness and access to policies and procedures.

Continue to regularly review and enhance our risk assessment and risk management systems.

Promote organisation-wide cultural sensitivity and awareness.

Engage in activities that continuously improve the organisation's quality.

Our Performance Assessment

We will use a variety of qualitative and quantitative information to assess our performance. Examples include:

- Financial and other resource capacity is sufficient to sustain the organisation's operations.
- Staff will access and apply policies, guidelines and procedures appropriately.
- Internal and external reviews and audits are positive.
- Organisational culture and ethical practice are evident in all aspects of the organisation's operations.
- The extent to which the organisation demonstrates continuous improvement in its operations.



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