



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence
General Secretary
130 Little Collins Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

T +61 3 9251 5215
F +61 3 9650 7019

mark.lawrence@victas.uca.org.au

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To: All Church Council Secretaries and Ministers in Placements

RE: Synod Standing Committee resolution regarding UnitingCare 'agency board'

Dear friends,

I am writing to advise you that the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania's Standing Committee has recently approved a new strategic direction for the UnitingCare agency network. This decision affirms the Church's ongoing role in the delivery of community services as an expression of God's mission in the world.

This news was briefly mentioned in the Synod E-news Secretariat Update, 9 July 2015. I also wanted to share this news with you in more detail as I know many individuals and congregations have strong connections with a local UnitingCare agency. Please feel free to share this information with your Church Councils and congregations.

Church members and congregations are involved in and support in many ways the great work of UnitingCare agencies in addressing disadvantage, marginalisation and crisis affecting individuals within the community. There are also others that hope to better connect with the work of our agencies.

At the June 24 2015 meeting, arising from recommendations of the Major Strategic Review, the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) resolved to move the overall governance of community services provided within the UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania network from the Commission for Mission Board to a new single governance body ('agency board'). The new 'agency board' will be skills-based and responsible for overseeing delivery and support functions for Uniting Church community services in Victoria and Tasmania.

This strategic decision is intended to build and enhance the care already provided by 25 UnitingCare agencies (please refer to final page for detail). It will strengthen the governance environment of the network to better address the increasing complexity of delivering community services and client care. It provides significant opportunities to share best practice and expertise across a range of agencies; to champion the capacity and skills of the whole network; and, allow a more considered collaborative response to areas experiencing population growth and increasing service requirements.

The Standing Committee's resolution outlines the specific intent of nurturing a clear ethos and culture of practice for Uniting Church community services as part of this change. The proposed changes provide opportunities to enhance connections of the network with the whole Church. The new 'agency board' will be required to develop a model of support for congregations and presbyteries currently providing, or seeking to provide, community services in their local community or region.

A Project Control Group (PCG) will be formed as soon as possible to begin the process of refining the detail of the strategic direction and move to implement any changes. We anticipate it will be implemented progressively over the next 12 to 18 months.

Further information is available on the Synod's website at www.victas.uca.org.au/unitingcareupdate or queries can be sent to msr@victas.uca.org.au until the PCG is formed.





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The great services being delivered by UnitingCare agencies will continue as usual during this transition period. Please continue your support of our agencies so they can continue to care for vulnerable and disadvantaged people.

The Church views its role in the delivery of community services as an expression of God's mission in the world. With this new strategic direction we hope to strengthen the uniquely Uniting Church expression of Christian care and compassion existing within the UnitingCare network.

Grace and peace

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence
General Secretary





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The UnitingCare Victoria & Tasmania network

- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania assists vulnerable people – providing a wide range of services including emergency food, clothing and housing relief, child and family support services, drug and alcohol services, mental health services, aged care and disability support, early childhood and education services, training and employment support and asylum seeker and refugee support services.
- UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania is represented by 25 agencies across Victoria and Tasmania covering both metropolitan and rural regions, collectively governed by the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, through the Commission for Mission. The network employs around 2,800 people, and is supported by over 2,800 active and enthusiastic volunteers. Annual revenues for 2014 were in excess of \$170m.
- The new ‘agency board’ will provide governance oversight of the following 25 UnitingCare agencies within Victoria and Tasmania:

Church of All Nations	Connections UnitingCare
Creative Ministries Network	Endeavour Hills UnitingCare Neighbourhood Centre
Heatherlie Homes	John Macrae Centre
Kildonan UnitingCare	Lentara UnitingCare
Prahran Mission	South Port UnitingCare
UnitingCare Ballarat	UnitingCare Bendigo
UnitingCare East Burwood Centre	UnitingCare Geelong
UnitingCare Gippsland	UnitingCare Goulburn North East
UnitingCare Harrison	UnitingCare Hotham Mission
UnitingCare lifeAssist	UnitingCare ReGen
UnitingCare Tasmania	UnitingCare Werribee Support & Housing
UnitingCare Wodonga	Wesley Centre for Life Enrichment
Wimmera UnitingCare	

- Uniting AgeWell, Wesley Mission Victoria and Uniting Housing are community service agencies governed by the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. They are important partners in the network but remain outside the scope of the new ‘agency board’ as they have different governance structures that already report directly to the Synod and its Standing Committee.

