

Spring 2020 Congregation Connect



Speaking out to end homelessness

We were recently invited to present to the Victorian Government's Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria.

Uniting Vic.Tas representatives, CEO Bronwyn Pike and Senior Manager of Homelessness Services, Jenny Smith provided evidence to the Inquiry in early July.

During her presentation, Bronwyn noted how people experiencing homelessness in Melbourne were being provided temporary accommodation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

We think this is something that has been a very positive outcome for people who are experiencing homelessness in Melbourne," Bronwyn said.

"We often say that Melbourne is a modern and sophisticated city, as part of a modern and sophisticated state, and that Victorians do not like the idea of people sleeping rough on our streets for a range of reasons — for the safety of those sleeping rough and also for the public's safety and wellbeing.

"There is not much good that has come out of COVID-19, but if this can be an opportunity that we grab hold of to support these people into longer-term and more secure housing, then that is a great outcome."

The key message in our submission is that Victoria's homelessness crisis can only be truly addressed through serious financial investment in new affordable housing. To read our submission, visit: unitingvictas.org.au/community-issues/homelessness-and-housing

Rev Gavin Blakemore

Mission and Ethos Partner (East)

T 03 9051 3063 M 0419 344 044

@ gavin.blakemore@unitingvictas.org.au

Rev Lisa Stewart

Mission and Ethos Partner (West and Tasmania)

T 03 9384 8867 M 0437 011 281

@ lisa.stewart@unitingvictas.org.au



Sharing of property

Our team in Shepparton have co-located to the Uniting Church buildings in Fryers Street to further strengthen our ties with local congregation members.

This move will bring savings of over \$60,000 – a huge benefit for the programs and services run by Uniting across the region.

For the past 8 years, our team has been based at offices in Wyndham Street.

"We have moved to the Fryers Street site to further strengthen our existing collegial relationship with our Uniting Church members in Shepparton," says Uniting Programs Manager, Sara Noori.

"We feel honoured to be given this space to work from and are grateful for all the opportunities that it will continue to present as offshoots of this move."

While our address might have changed, all programs and services remain the same.

"To be seen to be physically together in one place is a fantastic and powerful symbol for the community," says Shepparton Uniting Church Minister, Reverend Loni Vaitohi.

"We hope this will build the profile of both the church and Uniting Vic.Tas and make both even more accessible to the community."

Picture courtesy of Shepparton News. Sara Noori, Uniting and Reverend Loni Vaitohi, Shepparton Uniting Church (left to right).



Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

Uniting



Share Sunday

This year the focus of Share Sunday is Youth Homelessness with the theme 'A place to call home'.

Your congregation should have received a Share Sunday pack that shares the story of Bronte and how Uniting supported her through a challenging time in her life.

This pack provides your congregation with a variety of resources you can use to help us to continue to support people experiencing or at risk of homelessness through our Share Sunday Appeal.

Share Sunday services were held on 30 August but you can still access the resources created by our Mission Team to use at any time.

@deborah.loh@unitingvictas.org.au
unitingvictas.org.au/share-sunday



Face masks update

Thank you to everyone who has registered to make reusable, fabric face masks for Uniting Vic.Tas and Uniting AgeWell services.

We have received more than 100 registrations with over 3200 face masks pledged – an amazing effort by all involved.

Our warehouse has already received and distributed 2150 homemade face masks.

Health authorities have made it mandatory for all Victorian residents to wear a face covering when outside their home.

Due to the significant increase in demand for face masks, many vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities are unable to access them, putting them and others at risk.

If you would like to help, there's still time. For details on how to register and make face masks, visit unitingvictas.org.au/make-face-masks

Contact Uniting

T 1800 668 426

@hello@unitingvictas.org.au

unitingvictas.org.au



Join the Coffee Cup Challenge

The Coffee Cup Challenge is a great way for congregations to add an extra dimension to their Pancake Day fundraising activities.

Initiated by St Leonard's Brighton Beach Uniting Church, the Coffee Cup Challenge encourages participants to put aside the cost of a cup of coffee each week from International Coffee Day on 1 October until Shrove Tuesday (or Pancake Day) in February or March.

Airport West Uniting Church joined the Coffee Cup Challenge for the first time in 2019.

"I was inspired to put the idea to our congregation, who accepted the challenge with open arms," says Airport West congregation member, Valerie Thompson.

On Sunday 23 February, 2 days prior to Pancake Day this year, Coffee Cup Challenge participants attended a special church service and came forward to place their contributions into one large basket.

Over \$4,200 was raised to help some of the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities.

"This was a very humbling and emotional experience for all who took part, knowing that their money would be put to good use," says Valerie

"We were blown away by the generosity of everyone who took part.

"Everyone then enjoyed pancakes, which were served for morning tea to say thank you.

"It was immediately decided that we would take part in the Coffee Cup Challenge again in 2020/21."

For details about getting involved, contact our fundraising team.

T 1800 668 426

@pancakeday.info@unitingvictas.org.au