



# UC Information

## Suicide: IT'S NO SECRET.

Registered by Australia Post PF530028/00079

*Rob Williams*  
Moderator, Uniting Church SA

Every year, approximately 2000 Australians die by suicide.

Sadly, in my 31 years as a Minister I've buried 15 young men, aged between 18 and 25 who found that suicide was the only way to deal with the pressures in their lives.

With every one of these funerals, I am reminded that, despite the emotional turmoil left in their wake, conversation about suicide in our community is often as silent as death.

Our hearts break for our bereaved friends and family, yet many fear saying the wrong thing and deepening their grief.

It's time to break the silence.

I believe that healthy and responsible discussion about suicide in the media and within our community is a key to bringing healing and hope and breaking down the stigma and shame associated with these losses.

In the past, decisions to avoid reporting suicide deaths in the media for fear of encouraging copycat incidents have been made with understandable sincerity and regard for the public. Unfortunately, this has contributed to the silence surrounding suicide in our community.

I applaud the Australian Press Council's newly released standards to encourage more open, yet responsible and sensitive, reporting of suicide by the print media. I hope the new standards will encourage journalists when reporting on suicide deaths, to do so with due considerations and care.

With more open and responsible discussion, we give permission to people experiencing suicidal thoughts to reach out and seek assistance. Without this permission, people will likely remain trapped in feelings of uncertainty, seeing no other option available to them.

Our silence on this issue breeds a heavy stigma which extends to those affected by the loss of a loved one to suicide. It's a discomfort that would not necessarily be present if the deceased had died by other more 'acceptable' causes. Perhaps this is because there can be a lot of blame associated with suicide. Parents who've lost a child or wives who've lost a husband sometimes think they "could have saved them" or "should have done more".

I've seen the strain of this secrecy on families. Parents, unable to discuss the suicide of their child, have separated and divorced because the silent pain was unspeakably loud. Members of the community, though often brimming with good intentions, find it hard to know what to say to grieving families and friends, or how to appropriately support them. So they too, say nothing.

I've experienced many who have lost a loved one to suicide as 'survivors'. In the wake of their loss, they continue to face constant inner questions such as 'Why?' and 'How could I have prevented this?' They long to lay their loved one to rest in peace, but the burden of guilt and the torment of inadequacy threatens to overwhelm them.

Perhaps with a more open attitude to discussing suicide, we can grow an understanding of how to 'be there' for survivors so that they aren't left grappling alone with how to move on with their lives.

We must never forget that suicide may be prevented. It's a tragedy that so many Australians are choosing to end their lives. If we are to have any hope of changing the secrecy around suicide, we've got to start listening, start helping and start talking.

I don't want to bury any more people who have committed suicide. I want to see them live – in a society with an awareness of how to help when help is needed, where silence is no longer a barrier.

[nosecret.org.au](http://nosecret.org.au)



Uniting Church. **Uniting People.**

## PLACEMENTS NEWS

Placements finalised since the last edition of UC Information:

- Rev Dean Whittaker to Adelaide Congress from 1 September 2011
- Rev Marty Rosenberg to Sunset Rock from 1 October 2011

The following is the current list of vacant (or soon to be vacant) approved placements:

### Profiles available

- Adelaide West
- Bordertown, Buckingham and Mundulla from 1.01.12
- Seaton (0.3)
- South West Fleurieu (*Delamere, Inman Valley, Myponga, Range Road, Yankalilla*)
- Spicer from 1.09.11

### Advertised Positions/Placements

<http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant.html>

- Coordinating Chaplain for Resthaven

### Profiles not yet available

- Southern Yorke Peninsula from 1.10.11 (*Brentwood, Corny Point Faith Community, Curramulka, Edithburgh, Koolywurtie, Minlaton, Port Vincent, Warooka, Yorketown*)

If you wish to express an interest in any of these placements, or would like to have a look at the profile, please advise Rev Philip Gardner, [pgardner@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:pgardner@sa.uca.org.au), by **Tuesday 20 September 2011**. You should also inform your **Mission Network's representative on Placements Committee of your interest**. The next meeting of the Placements Committee will be held on **Monday, 26 September 2011** when names of Ministers will be considered to fill a number of these placements

### Nominations for Assembly 2012 are open now

Assembly is coming to Adelaide  
15 to 21 July 2012

Elections for 34 people to attend Assembly (ordained, lay, women and men, and rural people with at least three under 25 years of age) will be held at the October Presbytery & Synod Meeting. The Nominating Committee are considering early expressions of interest by mid September. Nominations can still be made now or at the October meeting. For a nomination form contact Gwenda Kerley, 8236 4283 or [gkerley@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:gkerley@sa.uca.org.au) or look on line.

Please join us as we celebrate with the following Congregations and people over the next few months.



### INDUCTIONS

#### **Rev Mark Hewitt**

Crossways  
13 September 2011 7.30 pm

#### **Rev Beatrice Panne IIM**

Wesley Uniting Kent Town  
16 September 2011 7.00 pm

#### **Rev Richard Banham**

Tea Tree Gully  
27 September 2011 7.30 pm

### CONGRESS AND PRESBYTERY INDUCTIONS AND COMMISSIONINGS

Wednesday 21 September 2011  
Level 2/212 Pirie Street at 10.00am

<b>Denise Champion</b>	State Development and Outreach Officer Covenanting Officer
<b>Melissa Cellier</b>	State Children and Family Ministry Coordinator
<b>Rev Beth Seaman</b>	Mission Officer - Urban
<b>Rev Adam Tretheway</b>	International Mission Officer
<b>Malcolm Wilson</b>	Associate General Secretary

RSVP for catering purposes 82364200

### **Presbytery and Synod Meeting**

#### **Pre-sessional Seminars**

#### **Child Safe Environments**

**26 October 2011**

Uniting College, 34 Lipsett Avenue, Brooklyn Park

**Full day** 9.00am - 5.00pm

Cost \$33

Lunch available at \$14 a person

**Refresher:** 1.30pm to 4.30pm Cost \$16

Book on line  
[resources.sa.uca.org.au/duty-of-care/cse-training.html](http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/duty-of-care/cse-training.html)

Have you visited

*The Quiet Space*

*Pray, reflect and meditate today*  
[prayer.sa.uca.org.au/](http://prayer.sa.uca.org.au/)

