



Dollars & Sense

March 2015 Newsletter from the UCSA Resources Team

What can the sower tell us?

It seems like a long time ago since we took down our Christmas tree and packed away the tinsel for another year. Within the Synod office we've packed away 2014 and opened up 2015 and already the New Year is in full swing. As I write this, it is half way through February and the Resources teams and committees have met to begin implementing their goals and plans for the year.

At the recent February Resources Board meeting, our new Executive Officer Mission Resourcing, Amelia Koh-Butler, reminded us of the parable of the sower. Many of you will be familiar with this story. "A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. Some fell on rocky places,

where the soil was shallow. It sprang up quickly but soon withered in the sun. Other seed fell among thorns which choked the plants. Still other seed fell on good soil where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."

Amelia invited the Board members to consider some questions about this parable. Rather than focussing on the seed or soil, we were invited to wonder how the birds might have felt as they were fed on the seeds? To wonder how the sower felt when the seeds died? Or how the sower felt about a 100 fold harvest? We were asked to consider what would we do as a Church with the 30 fold, 60 fold and 100 fold yield? Different people within the church will give different answers to this, depending on their experiences, passions and their call. Should we put more

into feeding, or more into sowing or more into selling the harvest? Amelia invited the Board to ask "I wonder what would happen if..." questions when considering its role and plans for the year.

As leaders within Congregations, Presbytery and Synod, we pray that throughout this year we will know of God's leading as we make resourcing decisions that will benefit the Kingdom of Heaven. We trust that you will find the information provided in this edition helpful and that you will utilise the support the Resources team offers as you make decisions serving in your Congregation.

Peter Battersby
Executive Officer, Resources

Adare Hosts Schoolies

For the past five years, Adare Camp and Caravan Park has provided pastoral and accommodation services to year 12 'schoolies' graduates as well as members of the host organisation 'Green Team' and St John's ambulance staff. The schoolies festival is held over three nights in November of each year and provides year 12 students the opportunity to celebrate the completion of their secondary school years.

Adare's reputation for providing a safe, caring and supportive environment has grown over the years due to the tireless work of staff and volunteers. Each year a number of schoolies comment on the level of care provided to them which reinforces Adare as the preferred choice for many who attend the schoolies festival.

In 2014, pastoral support was provided by staff from Beyond Limits Outdoor Education. Beyond Limits is a relatively new service of Uniting Church SA and provides activities and programs to schools attending Adare, Nunyara and Tarooki. The Beyond Limits staff are a group of young Christian men and women who aim to connect and positively influence the behaviour of the schoolies.

Adare also hosts a number of Uniting Church youth groups who help make up the Green Team. The Green Team organise the schoolies event and do everything from setting up tents, providing bus marshals, engaging with schoolies as they wait in line, running recovery tents in all the caravan parks and so much more.



Finance

2015 Mission and Service Fund contributions – response forms

Thank you for submitting your response forms for 2015 Mission and Service Fund contributions.

To date, just under 60% of response forms from congregations have been received.

If you haven't yet submitted this please download, print and fill in a form from [Uniting Church SA - Mission and Service Fund](#)

Should you require assistance or a hard copy of the form please call Peter Harbison on 08 8236 4270 or for country callers 1300 766 956

2013 Financial Statements - auditing regulations & lodgement

Audited copies of Congregational and Parish 2013 financial statements were due to be lodged with the Financial Services Team by the 30th June 2014.

Church Councils should refer to Section 3.8.7 of the 2012 UCA regulations for more information. These can be viewed at <http://assembly.uca.org.au/resources/regulations>

Once your 2014 financial statements have been reviewed and audited please also forward these to the Financial Services team at the Synod office by 30 June 2015.

Ministers' Stipend & Allowances Sheet 2015

The Ministers' Stipend, Allowances and Charges Sheet for 2015 rates is now available on the Uniting Church website:

<http://sa.uca.org.au/stipends>

Beneficiary Fund and Home Endowment Fund information have now been updated and are included on this sheet.

Congregational Bookkeeping Unit

ACNC Update – important information

The due date for the **2013 Annual Information Statement** (AIS) was:

- **31 March 2014** for charities with a 30 June reporting year end
- **30 June 2014** for charities with a 31 December reporting year end.

For all other reporting year end dates, charities are given a six month period between the end of their financial year (reporting period) and the date when their 2013 Annual Information Statement was due.

The ACNC have published an 'overdue' report.

Charities that have failed to submit their 2013 AIS may have their charitable status revoked and lose entitlement to Commonwealth charity tax concessions.

If your congregation has not yet lodged its 2013 AIS, please do so immediately by logging on to <https://charity.acnc.gov.au> and following the Uniting Church 2013 AIS Response guide which you can find at <http://sa.uca.org.au/documents/finance/acnc/2013-AIS-RESPONSE-GUIDE.pdf>

Finance are arranging to contact by phone those Congregations reported on the overdue report to try to avoid revocation of their charitable status.

2015 Free Workshops for Treasurers -

The first free workshop of 2015 is to be held on Tuesday 17th March and the topic of **Finance Administration** will be covered.

Some of the areas to be covered include:

- "handover" - from one treasurer to the next
- the importance of updating contact details
- payroll and employment requirements
- Ministers' Fringe Benefits Accounts

Future workshops are planned for May, August and November to cover GST, MYOB and Financial Reporting & Year End. Check out the CBU web page for more details as these become available [Uniting Church SA - Congregational Bookkeeping Unit](#)

Payroll

Time sheets and leave forms – earlier April cut-off request

For those congregations whose payroll is processed by the Synod Payroll Bureau we ask that all timesheets relating to March and any leave forms be sent to the Payroll Bureau by **THURSDAY 2nd APRIL**.

This will greatly assist as the first 2 weeks in April are shorter working weeks.

Please note - any leave that is reflected on a timesheet must be accompanied by an authorised leave form.

Should you have any queries please don't hesitate to contact Payroll at payroll@sa.uca.org.au or call 08 8236 4241.

Superannuation Changes – "Super Stream"

New Government legislation for Super Reform means that from 1st July 2015, small employers (with 19 or fewer employees) will start making contributions using Super Stream and will have up to 12 months to make the change.

Congregations that are processing their own payroll may have the opportunity to use the small business superannuation clearing house.

This clearing house is a free online service that simplifies the Super Guarantee payment process for businesses with 19 or fewer employees.

For more information, including how the service operates, who can use it, its key features and employer eligibility please check the ATO website below:

<https://www.ato.gov.au/super/superstream/in-detail/contributions/superstream--simplifying-employer-contributions/>

Administration

Keeping your police check up-to-date or applying for a new check

Whilst the majority of police check applications are processed (and a result received) within 24 to 48 hours, some applications can take longer where there is a name match.

Please bear this potential for delay in mind when applying for a check related to attending a specific event (e.g. KCO). Applying well in advance assists the event co-ordinators, and helps to even out the amount of applications received close to an event.

Information relating to the requirement for a current police check and application forms can be found on the Uniting Church SA Called to Care webpages [Uniting Church SA - Called to Care](#)

Keeping your Congregation's contact information up-to-date

If you have recently made changes in your Congregation's office-holders, please let the Presbytery & Synod office know so that these can be updated on the Contact Database. Forms to communicate this important information about outgoing & incoming persons can be downloaded at [Uniting Church SA - Online Directory services](#)

Human Resources - It's all about people...

Uniting Church SA values people and is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive work environment. Human Resource management practices can influence behaviour, attitudes and performance within the workplace.

Uniting Church SA Human Resources (UCSAHR) can provide Congregations and Church Councils with advice, resources, assistance and expertise from a first-tier enquiry basis through to more complex and specific human resource and work health safety issues. This edition focuses on the **Policies & Procedures HR** circle.



Uniting Church SA has developed a number of workplace policies and procedures covering a range of human resource and work health and safety topics. The current policies can be accessed on the following link <http://sa.uca.org.au/human-resources/workplace-policies/>. The *Foreword* document outlines the scope of policy application in relation to people and locations (work sites). Many of the policies underpin legislation, regulations and code of practices within the jurisdictions of the Fair Work Act and the Work Health & Safety Act. Church Councils are encouraged to adopt and adapt policies for use within the Congregation.

For further information please contact Presbytery & Synod Human Resources on: 82364234 or email humanresources@sa.uca.org.au



Property Services - Renting out manses

Previously in Dollars & Sense we covered managing manses for the Minister and family in placement and introduced the new *Manse Occupancy Letter of Understanding* (see September issue). This month we look at renting out manses.

The Uniting Church has a reasonable number of manses rented out for a variety of reasons – the Minister lives in their own home, the manse is not required between placements, no Minister in placement etc. When a manse is rented out, the rental can be used to provide the Accommodation Allowance for the Minister in placement or, if there is no Minister in placement, it can be used for any purpose as directed by the Church Council.

General information:

- **Approvals** - renting out a manse requires the approval of both your Church Council and Uniting Church SA via Property Services. For Property Services approval, contact Lynne Aird by email or phone with the Church Council request to rent the manse or simply provide the Church Council meeting minutes. Property Services will contact Pastoral Relations for comment before approval.
- **Agent** – manse leases should be managed by an agent. Managing a rental property takes a significant amount of time and knowledge and is not the 'core business' of the church. Normally higher rentals are achieved when leasing through an agent and this offsets the costs of professional fees. Agents will seek tenants (agents have access to the Residential Tenancy Database for past history of prospective tenants), arrange inspections at commencement and termination of tenancies, ensure regular inspections, process security bond payments and refunds, collect rental payments, pay invoices relating to the property as requested, arrange tenancy renewals, ensure all appropriate paperwork is in place (agreements, inspection sheets, provide information brochure etc) and advise regarding landlord obligations, tenant obligations, renewals, rental increases, tenant issues etc.
- **Agent selection** – we suggest asking a couple of agents for their fees and what those fees cover. The fees should include their professional fee, re-letting fee, renewal fee and administration charges (if any). Compare the fees overall (eg if the professional fee is higher, the re-letting fee should be lower and no administration fee; if the professional fee is lower, it is reasonable to have a higher re-letting fee and possibly a small administration charge). Property Services can provide further advice regarding fee negotiation and the selection process.
- **Landlord name** – all leases must be in the name of **The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.)**, the legal entity for all Uniting Church property.
- **Agreements** – these require signing by the Uniting Church SA office on behalf of the Property Trust. *Property Management Agreements, Residential Management Agreements and Residential Tenancy Agreements* can be emailed, faxed or sent to Property Services and will be signed and returned to the agent as soon as practicable.
- **Tenancy types** – there are two tenancy types with different agreements:-
 - **Fixed Term** - a specific time is agreed at the beginning of the tenancy, eg 6 or 12 months
 - **Periodic** - the lease is for an indefinite period. A Periodic lease allows the tenants to give 3 weeks notice at any time and the landlord 3 months notice at any time.
- **Rental funds** – the net rental funds can be deposited directly into your Congregation's bank account as per the bank details provided in the *Property Management Agreement or the Residential Management Agreement*.
- **Manuals** – manuals or written instructions for the operation of domestic appliances (eg oven, air conditioner, heating etc) must be provided to the tenant by law. An agent can advise what to do if manuals are not to hand.
- **Congregation obligations:-**
 - Pay rates and supply charges including council rates, sewerage charges, any levies and charges for water usage and supply as agreed between landlord and tenant (the agent can be requested to pay these if you prefer).
 - Maintain and repair the premises (having regard to their age, character and prospective life) – the agent can advise on any matters regarding maintenance and repairs.
 - Allow "the tenant peace, comfort and privacy".
 - Provide and maintain locks to ensure premises are reasonably secure.
 - Provide smoke alarms - [click here](#).

For further information, please contact Lynne Aird, Property Administrator, on 8236 4210 or laird@sa.uca.org.au

Safe-Tea Break

Welcome to 'Safe-Tea Break' - hopefully an opportunity to take 5 minutes to consider all matters WHS (unless I get enough complaints that is!). What is becoming ever clearer during my short tenure in WHS for the Uniting Church, is that although most of us would profess to being 'on-board' with the ideal of trying to keep people safe, we are all at different stages in how we are to achieve this. This is perfectly normal, and whatever your experience of WHS is, you come to realise very quickly that there is no final destination whereupon reaching we can sit back and say we have achieved safety perfection. As with many areas of life and work it is a fluid, dynamic and constantly changing thing that requires ongoing input and development.

Great, I can almost here you cry! But rest assured, I am here to try and help.

Over this year's four editions of Dollars and Sense, I'd like to get back to basics by providing some simple guidance to those looking at where to start. At the same time, I hope it will encourage those who are further on to use it as a focus to review their current systems.

Step 1: Implement a WHS Policy

- The first part of a policy is a statement that makes clear what your ideals and goals are. You could spend hours debating this at your next Church Council meeting, but we have already done much of this work for you, and a template into which you can add your Congregation details is available on our website.
- Next, your policy should make clear who are the current duty holders and responsible persons who will have specific duties in implementing your policy. Ultimately, we all have a legal and clear moral duty to 'not adversely affect the health & safety of other persons', and delegating WHS matters to a number of people is the best way forward. It's also important to remember that specific office holders within your congregation may already be classed as 'Officers' under the WHS Act 2012, and guidance on this is also available on our website.
- The final part of your policy should outline what your local WHS management arrangements are. This often ends up in people writing

numerous pages of procedure and information. More in this case is often not better and you should focus on keeping it simple and straightforward as much as possible. The main purpose of this section is to make clear how you are going to meet your regulatory requirements i.e. our extinguishers will be inspected every... etc.

If this is your Congregation's first WHS Policy, focus on what you are already doing rather than worrying about what you may be missing. Your policy will develop over time and will be influenced by the next steps in the process; the key is to start small and keep it relevant to your congregation

If you would like to discuss this or any other WHS related matters, I work Tuesday – Thursday at the Synod office and can be contacted on wbooth@sa.uca.org.au or by phone on 8236 4214.

Wayne Booth
WHS Coordinator

Insurance Services

Well we are into the New Year and I trust many of you had a break of some kind to recharge for the coming year's events.

I would like to thank everyone with the renewal process that went through in Nov/Dec and it was great to hear from those of you who made enquiries on insurance matters.

Just a couple of updates for you. As I mentioned in the last issue, Clarkson's have come on board and have offered all the Uniting Church Congregations a 24/7 service to repair or replace all glass anywhere in South Australia. For some more good news, Clarkson's are giving us a **30%** discount off retail prices. You will need to contact Insurance Services to get our unique account number; after that you just have to ring the dedicated **phone number 1800 057 239** and quote our account name "**Uniting Church in SA**". As Clarkson's is an authorised Vero Insurance service provider this will also make insurance claims easier.

The second matter I would like to bring to your attention is the reporting of claims. We have noticed recently some claims have been reported to us well after the loss has occurred, in some cases months. It is very important to let us know of any losses as soon as possible after they occur or are discovered. We can assist in arranging repairs quickly which can help reduce further loss and keep costs down.

Insurance Services have set up a panel of repairers and service providers who can assist you with getting on with the job very quickly and economically. We have contacts available 24/7 for carpet, vinyl and flooring repairers or replacement, who also specialise in cleaning up damage caused by water, fire, smoke, or stain removal. Most carpets can be dried and cleaned if they are lifted immediately, but if left, it won't take long for mould to set in. We also have general builders who work to stringent standards for the insurance industry, and can tackle small or large repair work. For very large jobs, we have loss adjusters who

can call out and review the damage and advise the best way to address a problem. If damage is left unattended and as a result, more damage occurs, the insurers may not pay for the additional work due to this extra loss, so it is very important you let us know.

At the end of the day we want to make sure that church members and property are safe from any losses; this will also keep our insurance premiums low.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about insurance matters don't hesitate to contact the Insurance Services Department on 08 8236 4222 or via email at insurance@sa.uca.org.au

Tony Phillips and Susanne Alley
Insurance Services