



# Resources Board and Property Trust Report

## 1. Executive Summary

The role of the Resources Board is “To serve the church by maximising financial and property resources available to the Synod for mission and to assist the Synod in allocating such resources efficiently in accordance with the mission priorities of the church whilst managing the risk associated with these decisions”.

This report outlines how the Resources Board and Resources Ministry Centre team have implemented the Resources Board’s mandate since it reported to the 2019 Synod annual meeting. It covers key strategic areas of focus including financial accountability obligations and resource governance matters.

Reports are included from operational areas of responsibility within the Resources Ministry Centre (Financial Services, Human Resources, Information Technology and Telecommunications (IT&T), Insurance Services, Investment Services, Property Services, Uniting Venues SA, Work Health Safety). The report recognises the significant contribution of Resources Board and Property Trust members, sub-committee members and Resources staff. It commends the significant contribution of Mr Tom Adams, past Chair of Resources Board, Member of the Uniting Church Investment Committee Director of Uniting Church Investment Fund SA and Governor of Parkin Mission and Parkin Trust. It also commends the significant contribution of the Thuruna Campsite Local Venue Management Committee. The report concludes with key areas for forward thinking.

Members of Presbytery and Synod are invited to seek clarification from authors on matters covered in the report prior to the meeting so that any research can be undertaken if required. Please forward your queries to [resources@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:resources@sa.uca.org.au) or call the Synod office on 8236 4200.

**CONTENTS**

1.	Executive Summary.....	1
2.	Summary of key activities and outcomes since November 2019.....	3
2.1	Key Strategic Areas of Focus .....	3
2.1.1	Financial Accountability Obligations.....	3
2.1.2	Resource Governance.....	4
2.1.3	Ethical Investment Working Group.....	10
2.1.4	Risk Management Committee.....	11
2.1.5	Other Strategic Matters.....	11
2.2	Key areas and outcomes with an operational focus .....	14
2.2.1	Financial Services (Andrew Fechner, Manager Financial Services).....	15
2.2.2	Human Resources (Karen Granger, Manager Human Resources) .....	16
2.2.3	Recruitment and Appointments of Key Lay Positions.....	17
2.2.4	Communication Initiatives .....	17
2.2.5	Professional, Education & Development.....	18
2.2.6	Challenges .....	18
2.2.7	Information Technology and Telecommunications (Marc Fumage, Manager IT&T) .....	18
2.2.8	Insurance Services (Tony Philips, Manager Insurance Services).....	20
2.2.9	Investment Services (Paul Barnett, Manager Investment Services).....	21
2.2.10	Property Services (Matt Wilson, Manager Property and Projects).....	22
2.2.11	Uniting Venues SA (Mark Lee, General Manager Uniting Venues SA) .....	23
2.2.12	Work Health Safety (Wayne Booth, WHS Coordinator).....	23
3.	Recognition of Service.....	25
3.1	Recognition of Resources Board members.....	25
3.2	Recognition of Resources Team.....	26
3.3	Acknowledgements .....	26
3.3.1	Recognition of Tom Adams.....	26
3.3.2	Recognition of the Thuruna Local Venues Management Committee.....	27
4.	Forward Thinking.....	27
5.	Proposals .....	28

## 2. Summary of key activities and outcomes since November 2019

### 2.1 Key Strategic Areas of Focus

Since the 2019 annual Synod meeting, the Resources Board and its Executive have met on 12 occasions. The following matters outline strategic items for which the Board has exercised its oversight.

#### 2.1.1 Financial Accountability Obligations

##### 2.1.1.1 Presentation of Additional 2019 Financial Statements

In total, 32 financial statements for various entities within the Uniting Church have been prepared for the financial year ending 31 December 2019. Due to contraction to one Synod meeting and the deferral of this meeting to February 2021, the June Synod Standing Committee meeting adopted financial statements for 27 of the 32 entities within the church, with the remaining 5 adopted at its November meeting. All of the financial statements have been endorsed by the Resources Board and are available on the website (<https://sa.uca.org.au/documents/resources-board/annual-synod-report-documents/2019-Financial-Statements.pdf>).

A schedule of the 2019 financial statements index listing each entity with the 2019 operating result and equity position is attached for reference (Attachment 1)

##### 2.1.1.2 Accountability for Separately Incorporated Bodies

###### ***The Parkin Mission of SA Inc. and Parkin Trust Inc.***

The Resources Board by-law requires that the Parkin Mission of SA Inc. and Parkin Trust Inc. shall report their financial performance to the Synod through the Resources Board. Each year the governors advise of the anticipated annual grant to the Mission and Service Fund (MSF) and Uniting College. During 2021, Parkin Mission and Parkin Trust will provide an annual grant of \$1,125,000 and \$330,000 respectively. This contribution, promised in the midst of a global pandemic, demonstrates the Governors' strong commitment to mission of the Church. The grants are distributed as per the terms of the Mission and Trust through the Synod's MSF budget process and have been approved by the Synod Standing Committee. An annual certificate (refer Attachment 2) is provided to the Governors certifying that the funds have been expended in accordance with the deeds of the Mission. Grants from the Trust are directed for the use of Uniting College. The annual summaries produced by the Parkin Mission and Parkin Trust Governors are attached (refer Attachment 3 and Attachment 4).

###### ***Uniting Church Arts and Cultural Development Group Inc.***

The Uniting Church Arts and Cultural Development Group Inc. (UCACDG) was established in 2007 and provides a mechanism for Deductible Gift Recipient funds to be directed to the Wesley Church Kent Town Organ Fund and the Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts Fund. The UCACDG is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC) and as such is required to provide financial

statements as part of the Annual Information Statement. Previously these funds were prepared separately for the approval of their respective Boards. (Financial reports are available on the Synod annual meeting webpage). The financial statements for the UCACDG, which includes a summary of the activities of the Wesley Church Kent Town Organ Fund and the Centre for Music Liturgy and the Arts Fund, were presented and approved at the June meeting.

### ***Uniting Church SA Investment Fund Ltd***

The Uniting Church SA Investment Fund Ltd (UCSAIF) was established in June 2017. UCSAIF (trading as UC Invest) was created in response to substantial changes made to the regulatory framework by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC) and Australian Prudential Regulatory Authority (APRA) and allows the Church's investment structure to meet their requirements. The Church acquired an Australian Financial Service Licence (AFSL) in order that UC Invest could continue to offer a similar range of products and services as it has previously, and in doing so, protect future annual grants to the MSF.

The governance structure of UCSAIF identifies the Synod (or the Synod Standing Committee) as the appointing and approving authority. UCSAIF and the Uniting Church Investment Committee share members in common. The UCSAIF convened its AGM on 21 May 2020 and the annual report is available on the website (<https://sa.uca.org.au/documents/resources-board/annual-synod-report-documents/2019-Financial-Statement-Report.pdf>).

The continued support of UC Invest's customers is greatly valued and has enabled the Synod to operate strongly over many years. UC Invest is expected to contribute \$2,315,000 during 2021. This support is commendable given the financial impact of the global pandemic on the global economy.

## **2.1.2 Resource Governance**

### **2.1.2.1 Coronavirus**

The recent circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have created much uncertainty, change and anxiety within our communities. COVID-19 has had a direct impact on the Synod, presbyteries and congregations in many ways including giving rise to rapid change, operational and relational challenges as well as financial impacts.

The Synod's leadership actively responded to the issues presented by the pandemic. In particular, the Moderator and General Secretary communicated with presbyteries, congregations and staff regarding government directives and provided recommendations on how the church should respond.

The Resources Ministry Centre has been active in responding to issues presented as a result of the pandemic. The Resources Board was provided with a summary of the activities of the Resources Ministry Centre as a result of the pandemic. Please find below a summary of the reports (at the time of writing):

#### Financial Services

The Federal Government announced a series of initiatives to help the Australian community manage the financial implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Financial Services Team has been pivotal in activating two particular initiatives that have had a positive impact on the Uniting Church, being JobKeeper and CashBoost payments. In relation to the JobKeeper payment the SA Synod fulfilled the eligibility criteria, such that lay and ministry agents employed initially from 1 April (and later 1 July) received JobKeeper

payments. The Federal Government announced JobKeeper (2.0), which had similar but different eligibility criteria. The Synod and many employing congregations received CashBoost payments, delivered as credits in the Business Activity Statement (BAS). Noting, for many Congregations who use the Synod's Payroll Bureau Service where their PAYG is reported under the Synod ABN, CashBoost payment was distributed between those congregations and other Synod entities.

In addition, the Synod in collaboration with presbyteries, reduced congregation contributions to the MSF. This relief was activated for April through to June. The Resources Board also agreed to offer a suspension of loan repayments to congregations with an existing loan with the Uniting Church Loan Fund, either principal or principal and interest, for a period of 6 months commencing 1 April 2020. Congregations that accepted the offer were able to catch up the repayments within the agreed term remaining or extend the loan term by a corresponding further 6 months.

### Investment Services

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial effect on investment markets, as world economies have shrunk, with labour being unable to be employed appropriately, supply chains disrupted, and many market places for the sale or consumption of goods being closed.

In response, asset prices in equities markets had a correction in March with other asset classes following since. As commercial rents decline and interest rates have dropped to all-time lows, there is overall uncertainty in the investment world. Much of the initial 'correction' has steadied and the volatility has subsided (at the time of writing).

Initially the Australian Stock Exchange reached the trigger points the UCIC has previously agreed on, so the UCIC met several times to review asset classes, investment class vehicle performance, investment entities' individual performance and current equity and any corpus conditions. After careful analysis, the UCIC agreed to continue to invest as per its agreed asset allocations determined in late 2019, in line with its long term plan. The UCIC did not sell down any asset classes substantially in any investment entities. The UCIC remains alert to further market corrections and as alternative information comes to hand, may change its position.

### Property Services

The Property Services Team spent a significant amount of time responding to matters arising due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many enquiries were received regarding existing lease arrangements; as the Property Trust acts as both landlord and tenant across multiple sites. The team undertook negotiation of rent relief and rent deferrals, and communicated with congregations about the COVID-19 response. The Church has opted to take a compassionate approach as it is able, but has also been faced with some more challenging situations requiring more complex and time consuming negotiations. In these few instances, legal counsel was sought to assist with negotiations.

It is acknowledged that Athelstone UC made a portion of its property available to a medical provider (who is contracted to the Federal Government) to provide a clinical testing facility at their property. This has been arranged through a license arrangement as per normal processes.

With regard to the Property Review Project (see separate report) due to COVID-19, the Synod's Buildings Officer ceased inspections on congregational buildings for a period of time. This left approximately 30 properties to be visited. Fortunately, the remaining inspections were able to be completed in early September after COVID-19 restrictions eased, and the remainder of the buildings safety reports were able to be distributed to congregations in October.

### Work Health Safety Report

The impact on Work Health Safety (WHS) since the end of February 2020 through to the end of July has been significant. Whilst most emergencies eventuate in an increased workload on WHS, this particular situation has been unprecedented in its impact and the resources required to manage it. During this time Government directives have changed often and formulating the most appropriate response for the church each time has been complex, taking into account the potential for serious health and safety implications. The WHS Coordinator has been a key member of the Crisis Management Team, present at all meetings to update and provide specific advice and guidance on WHS implications.

WHS has worked closely with Human Resources (HR) to set up personnel tracking systems incorporating continually updating travel, contact and self-isolation restrictions and directives. As well, personnel who have been directly affected by the restrictions have been contacted and guidance has been offered, and in some cases further information has been requested. WHS has also assisted HR with pay and leave implications and developing complex and continually changing scenario matrices to provide clarity when dealing with personnel circumstances.

WHS has been involved in developing policy and procedures for Synod staff during a period of daily update and change, facilitating the majority of staff across the sites (Office/Campus/Venues) to be able to safely work from home for an indefinite period, including an assessment of the suitability of staff workspaces such that statutory safety obligations could be met. Formulating a safe and manageable road map out required significant WHS resources due to the phased nature in which restrictions were lifted, the differences and priorities across sites and the cautious approach taken.

### Information Technology & Telecommunications

The IT&T team was able to leverage off existing work undertaken with the Risk Management Team to enable all staff to work remotely without needing to purchase any new equipment. Existing (very old) laptops were repurposed as 'thin clients' for staff who didn't have suitable equipment of their own. The IT&T team moved rapidly through a Microsoft Teams rollout which included developing and delivering training and How-To guides, all over the course of one week. Once staff were working from home, the IT&T team provided support to individuals with 'teething problems' and have continued to support staff in the use of MS Teams as well as other working from home intricacies and nuances.

### Human Resources

The Human Resources team directed much of its attention to communicating with congregations, Church Councils, General Secretary/Moderator and Executive Officers as they reviewed the working arrangements for lay staff. The main objective of this communication was to ensure church leaders, in working with their staff, observed legislative requirements, thereby avoiding difficult industrial conflicts later. Human Resources has worked closely with WHS, supporting a number of initiatives to ensure staff are working in safe conditions. The team has provided ongoing support in the context of COVID-19 responses, and in particular, has encouraged management in their connectedness strategies for staff and teams working from home, encouraging well-being initiatives and sustainable work practices.

### Uniting Venues SA

Uniting Venues SA (UVSA) faced significant challenges in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government-imposed restrictions meant that the venues were effectively placed into hibernation from late March to early June. In early June, Tarooki and Thuruna reopened to small groups (less than 20 guests) and on 29 June, Adare, Nunyara and Beyond Limits effectively reopened. Adare and Nunyara hosted their first groups in late July whilst Beyond Limits re-commence hosting programs from late August.

The period of closure caused significant issues in relation to staffing and the immediate viability of the sites. At the beginning of the hibernation period, all casual staff were 'stood down' and permanent staff worked from home. A combination of leave and the JobKeeper subsidy, provided by the Federal Government, essentially preserved permanent staff contract hours. As the COVID-19 situation improved, permanent staff progressively returned to work back at the sites and completed tasks such as deep cleaning, painting and general maintenance.

Upon reopening in June 2020, UVSA had to operate with some restrictions; most notably the 2sqm per person rule. Indoor spaces such as bedrooms, dining rooms and meeting rooms are currently limited to a capacity of 2sqm per person. The 2sqm per person rule has had little impact on accommodation capacity, however it has impacted groups meeting together in meeting and eating spaces. .

Bookings for the period August to December 2020 were solid due to existing bookings and bookings postponed from earlier in the year. Some regional South Australian schools elected to postpone their camps until 2021 and all but one Victorian school had either cancelled or postponed their camp to 2021. A number of new bookings were received for the period September to December 2020 from schools who normally travel to Victoria (mainly the Grampians National Park) to conduct their camps. This resulted in an increase in expedition style camps.

The UVSA Committee met several times (more regularly than normal) during the period of closure to discuss both the initial response and financial impact, sharing its wisdom and giving guidance during this period.

#### 2.1.2.2 Finance

##### ***Mission and Service Fund***

The Mission and Service Fund (MSF) accumulated deficits of \$4.3m following the global financial crisis, and had anticipated a further deficit of \$621,000 in 2015, eroding much of the Church's reserves available for future years' ministry and mission. These deficits prompted the Synod to request that the then CEO/General

Secretary work with Synod Standing Committee to identify practices and structures to achieve a balanced budget and bring options to the June 2015 meeting.

During 2015 the Presbytery and Synod meeting agreed measures to work towards establishing a sustainable financial future for the MSF, such that the Resources Board was able to present a balanced budget for 2016. Since 2016 MSF has achieved small surpluses.

The 2020 MSF budget was adopted at the 2019 annual Synod meeting anticipating a break even result. During May a review of the Fund's performance was undertaken in light of the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic predominantly impacted many of the Fund's income sources, particularly investment earnings. Fortunately, the Synod was eligible to receive JobKeeper payments from the Federal Government. These payments together with measures to contain expenditure have sustained the Fund, to the extent that despite the reductions in budgeted income, it was anticipated that a breakeven result was still achievable. However, in the third quarter, the Synod received an unexpected refund from its bank and the Fund is now forecast to produce a surplus result.

It should be noted however that the 2020 budget does not take into account any financial implications of the following items:

- Any payments under the proposed complaints resolution (Redress) in accordance with the national Redress scheme.
- Premiums paid in excess of deceased member contributions made to their Protect and Provide Funeral accounts.

As per past practice, the proposed 2021 MSF Budget has been endorsed by the Resources Board. Given the timing of this meeting, the Synod Standing Committee has approved the 2021 budget and it is to be noted by the Synod meeting. The 2021 budget is presented in a separate paper.

### ***Specific Entities/Funds***

The Resources Board has financial governance and oversight responsibilities on behalf of the Synod. Specific entities/funds where the Board has exercised responsibility during this year include:

#### RH White Settlement

Managed by the Resources Board, the RH White Settlement consists of two parts which have the primary purpose of promoting Bible studies and for such other religious or educational purposes as the Synod directs. Funding is directed towards the activities of the UCLT. During 2019 the RH White Settlement provided funding of approximately \$610,000.

#### Uniting Church Loan Fund

Managed by the Uniting Church Investment Committee, the Uniting Church Loan Fund is held to provide loans for eligible congregations, faith communities and other Uniting Church entities within the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia for the purpose of funding approved projects. The Uniting Church Loan Fund had equity of \$10.0 million at 31 December 2019.

#### Cockrell Bequest



The Cockrell Bequest comprises funds gifted to the church by Bessie Cockrell in 1982. The Property Trust agreed to use the income from the bequest for the benefit of chaplaincy work funded through the MSF. The annual bequest equates to approximately \$37,000.

#### Uniting Foundation

The Uniting Foundation accepts bequests, donations and grants from individuals, congregations and organisations. These gifts are invested and the income received is used to make grants to further the work of the Uniting Church in SA. The Resources Board is responsible for the financial management, governance and oversight of Uniting Foundation. The Uniting Foundation had equity of \$6.2 million at 31 December 2019. The Resources Board approved a maximum 2020 distribution from the Uniting Foundation of \$395,000, compared with \$320,000 in 2019. This increase in the distribution is primarily attributable to a recovery in the valuation of financial assets as at 31 December 2019, following a drop in the market value of funds invested in late 2018.

#### Epworth SA Fund

Managed by the Uniting Church Investment Committee, this distinct fund is held with its purposes remaining consistent with the Constitution of Epworth SA Inc. As at 30 September 2020, Epworth SA Fund had granted the MSF \$515,466. The approximate equity in the Fund at 30 September was \$10.67m, noting the corpus was \$10.8m at 31 December 2019. The global pandemic had a significant impact on the value of the Fund's financial investments. Given this, it was agreed that the Epworth SA Fund make no further grant to the MSF in 2020.

#### Uniting Church Investment Committee

The Uniting Church Investment Committee (UCIC), a sub-committee of the Resources Board, is accountable for the policy, strategy and financial sustainability of investments within the Synod.

The UCIC meets monthly to assess the performance of the investments for which it has oversight, to review policy documents and to identify and manage risks. The Committee recognises its responsibility to protect investor funds and make regular consistent contributions to the MSF.

UCIC continues to manage the investments of the Church under the name Uniting Fund SA together with the investments of other entities within the Church's Property Trust and other organisations associated with the Church. A report regarding the investment operations is provided below at 2.2.5.

The members of the committee are Michael McClaren (Chairperson), Kevin Bengler (Deputy Chairperson) Allison Ashby, Karen Eley, Wayne Matters and Peter Battersby. Ryan Dick was appointed to the UCIC by the Resources Board at its July meeting. Ryan brings expertise in accounting, finance and governance; and has shared his wisdom and insight generously and diligently. Paul Barnett (Manager Investment Services) resources the UCIC and leads the Investment Services team.

Kevin Bengler will conclude his service on the UCIC at the rise of this meeting. Kevin has generously served the committee for 7 years. His deep knowledge of the financial markets together with his gracious, humble and thoughtful approach has assisted the UCIC and the church adapt its governance structure and give greater rigor to the oversight of its financial assets. The Resources Board noted thanks to Kevin at its meeting in November.

### 2.1.3 Ethical Investment Working Group

The Ethical Investment Working Group (EIWG), established in 2013, meets regularly to review the ethical issues relating to the investments of the Uniting Church in South Australia. The membership of the EIWG has changed during 2020. Rowan Steele, a foundation member of the group, concluded his service at the end of 2019. Rowan made a significant contribution to the EIWG over many years. In March, Barry Atwell was appointed by the Resources Board as its representative. Barry joins Tom Adams as the Resources Board representatives. Heather Hill (appointed UCSA non-employee members) continues to serve on the group. The generous contribution of these volunteers is greatly appreciated. The Executive Officer Resources together with the Mission Resourcing Team Leader co-convene the meetings. Paul Goh (Justice & CALD Multicultural & Cross Cultural Officer) and Paul Barnett (Manager, Investment Services) attend to resource the meeting. Expressions of interest from suitably qualified and interested persons, with a good understanding of the investment landscape, research skills and capacity to understand corporate annual reports would be welcomed by the EIWG.

Through its Ethical Investment Policy and Procedures (EIP&P), approved in June 2015, the Uniting Church SA seeks to avoid investing in enterprises whose products or practices are known to cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe on human rights; or cause unacceptable levels of damage to the environment. Industries unsuitable for investment include thermal coal extraction and exploration, armaments, uranium, gambling, alcohol, tobacco and pornography.

The Ethical Investment Policy applies to all Synod entities which have investment assets and report directly to the Resources Board and/or Synod. Congregations, whilst covered by the Ethical Investment Policy, are not monitored by the Synod of SA for compliance with the policy but instead are asked to be diligent and attentive in their selection of investments.

As advised last year, the EIWG has established and monitors an Exclusion List which lists companies, products, activities and/or industries to avoid. This list is largely based on the Uniting Church Investment Committee's investment activities and as such it is not an exhaustive list of companies to be avoided and nor is it possible to create a static, exhaustive list of all listed companies as their offerings continually change. For that reason it is possible that Uniting Church SA entities may inadvertently invest in companies which have not been considered by the EIWG which, if the policy were applied, may be excluded. Uniting Church SA entities which have investment assets, to ensure alignment with the EIP, are asked to include a statement in their annual audited financial statements acknowledging that, to their best of their knowledge, they have complied with Uniting Church SA's Ethical Investment Policy. Furthermore, Uniting Church SA entities should avoid investing in managed funds where the breakdown of the investible organisations within the managed fund cannot be identified. This also avoids inadvertently investing in organisations which would otherwise be excluded if the Ethical investment Policy were applied.

At the time of writing, the EIWG has a meeting scheduled for December. This meeting will review the church's investment in AMP, following the resignation of its chair and its handling of a sexual harassment complaint. At its last meeting the EIWG agreed to add AMP to the Watchlist. Furthermore, members of the EIWG expressed concern regarding Rio Tinto's destruction of caves in Juukan Gorge in the Pilbara Region in Western Australia which have significant cultural value. The EIWG will continue to monitor the activities of Rio Tinto.

## 2.1.4 Risk Management Committee

The Risk Management Committee (RMC) was established in 2015 to oversee risk management on behalf of Standing Committee, and in particular, to establish and maintain a co-ordinated and systematic process to provide direction to, and controls for, the organisation in regard to Synod-wide risk management. The RMC contributes to the UCSA's capacity to steward its resources responsibly, thereby enabling future missional activity. The work of the RMC has included the establishment of a Crisis Management Action Plan (CMAP), Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP) for the Synod.

The RMC has conducted two mock crises in previous years to 'road test' risk management documentation and provide CMT members with the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the processes involved in responding to and managing a crisis. A third mock crisis was scheduled for March 2020. However the COVID-19 pandemic (treated as a 'Code Orange' crisis in the first weeks) arose in early March, effectively superseding the planned mock crisis. The Crisis Management Team (CMT), acting on behalf of the Synod, convened its first meeting at this time and continued to meet over the course of the year as the pandemic unfolded. The prior planning and documentation undertaken by the RMC placed the Synod in an excellent position to respond to, and manage the impacts of the pandemic, as it provided a framework for managing the challenges presented.

At the time of writing the report the RMC had recently met (noting the CMT has met 30 times this year). This meeting received a briefing report from the CMT and commenced planning next year's activities. It is hoped that circumstances will allow the RMC to commence its risk identification mitigation and control project which was scheduled to be undertaken in 2020.

## 2.1.5 Other Strategic Matters

### 2.1.5.1 Property Review Project

In 2017 the Resources Board, in consultation with the Property Committee, agreed to initiate a Property Review Project. This project included the inspection of each of the church's properties and buildings thereon. Over 500 properties are vested in The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.) with the vast majority held for the beneficial use of congregations within the Uniting Church in SA. For a number of reasons, prior to the project being undertaken, the Property Trust did not have a clear understanding of the condition of all the properties vested in it. In addition, there was no mechanism in place to receive regular property review reports (required by UCA regulations) from congregations.

Through the Synod Buildings Officer, the Property Review Project included an assessment of each property, with particular focus on statutory requirements such as asbestos registers, safety (electrical) matters, and access arrangements, as well general building condition. Through the assistance and support of each congregation, all inspections have now been completed. A Buildings Safety Report has been provided to each congregation which summarises key findings. For many congregations there are no surprises in their report and for others it feels quite daunting and perhaps overwhelming to understand the full extent of the building's condition. Knowing that the health and safety of our church community is paramount, it is our hope that each congregation will work with their presbytery and the Synod as they explore the content of the report. Congregations may have some questions and concerns arising from the report and are encouraged to undertake further conversations to address these. If the concerns relate to the practical content within the

report e.g. any items considered to be confusing or incorrect, congregations should contact the Property Services Team at [propertyreview@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:propertyreview@sa.uca.org.au). However if the concerns are pastoral or missional, congregations are encouraged to reach out to talk this through with their Presbytery.

It is hoped that the reports issued will assist each congregation to:

1. Develop a Property Management Plan, based on a predetermined template which will satisfy the requirements of an Annual Property Review as per regulations
2. Implement the Property Management Plan including the resolution of critical issues identified in consultation with the Property Services Team
3. Provide annual reports to the Presbytery/Synod

The Property Review Project is a work in progress. It is designed to assist the whole church ensure that each property is safe and to provide a planning tool into the future. The next stage of the Property Review Project involves the consideration of a discussion paper (*God's Church and its Buildings - Are they Fit for Mission?* - see separate report) at this Synod meeting. The discussion paper does not include the specific details of any building(s) but will provide the Synod with a collated overview of the safety of the Church's buildings throughout the state.

#### 2.1.5.2 Synod and Presbytery Restructure

The structural separation of Presbytery and Synod and the establishment of multiple presbyteries has required changes to the funding arrangements. This includes changes to congregation contributions to support the work of presbyteries as well as changes to the financial administrative functions of Synod and presbyteries. The Resources team has been instrumental in the design of the new financial structures.

#### ***Funding Assumptions***

An early step in the development of a presbytery funding model was the agreement of key assumptions which underpinned the presbytery funding model later agreed. The key assumptions agreed and outlined previously include:

- That presbyteries will undertake the same responsibilities as per UCA Regulations 3.1.3, and any delegation of responsibilities to other councils will be done unilaterally
- Allocation of funds to resource presbyteries will follow the allocation of responsibilities
- That any new structure is sustainable into the future (noting there is a review period)
- The decision of Synod/Presbytery to maintain a MSF balanced budget is an imperative
- Allocation of funds to resource presbyteries should also be based on good stewardship practices, including minimising or avoiding duplication of effort, avoiding the creation of structural inefficiencies and avoiding changes where no value-add can be demonstrated

#### ***Presbytery Funding Model***

The creation of multiple presbyteries meant that consideration be given to how resourcing is shared between presbyteries into the future. The funding model selected ('Blended Pool & Flow funding Model') relies on funds shared from a pool, based on the number of congregations in each presbytery, and a direct contribution from affiliated congregations. This model was designed to allow for the ease of movement of

congregations between presbyteries, so should any presbytery later divide into smaller presbyteries, the principles and calculations underpinning the model would remain constant.

Funding of Synod and the presbyteries has been impacted by the financial challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Both Synod and the presbyteries have reduced their ask on congregation contributions during 2020. Given the variation in financial flows during 2020 and the MSF congregation contribution calculation formula, it has been agreed to base Congregation Contributions to the Synod and presbyteries on 2019 actual income. It is also worthy of note that each presbytery's share of the pool funding is based on affiliated congregations making contributions. Given the upsets of 2020, the date to receive contributions was extended to 31 October 2020 (normally 30 September).

Throughout 2020 leaders of presbyteries have been meeting at least monthly. Similarly, Presbytery Treasurers have been meeting together to work collaboratively; establish relationships and commence practices using agreed policies and systems. These meetings have been helpful to assist Presbytery Treasurers undertake their work such that presbyteries can achieve their mission and Synod fulfil its functions. It is appropriate to commend the Presbytery Treasurers for their commitment, generosity and collaborative spirit.

#### 2.1.5.3 Uniting Venues SA 2021 -2024 Business Plan

The Uniting Venues SA (UVSA) Mission and Business Plan 2021 – 2024 (refer Attachment 5) was constructed by the General Manager UVSA in collaboration with the UVSA Mission and Business Plan Steering Group (a sub-group of the UVSA Committee), chaired by the General Manager, Resources. The process included a broad consultation with members of the UVSA and Emmaus Local Venue Management Committees, managers and staff of Adare, Nunyara, Tarooki, Thuruna and Beyond Limits, Executive Officer Resources, local councils and other stakeholders.

The Mission and Business Plan 2021 – 2024 builds on the previous plan, although it takes a more conservative approach in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. A supporting four-year financial projection has been developed taking into consideration recent trends, CPI increases, additional staffing requirements and planned growth opportunities.

The Mission and Business Plan aims to build capacity, drive business growth through improved physical condition of current assets as well as the promotion of off-site programs (such as incursions and expeditions).

The key goal for the overall group reflects the focus on occupancy growth and making connections in the community. UVSA's goal is to increase occupancy, year on year, so that at least 31,000 guests are hosted and connected with in 2024 (in 2019 UVSA served 27,121 guests).

The UVSA Business Plan 2021-2024, accompanied by supporting venue / service business plans, reflect the progress of programs and activities provided by Beyond Limits as well as the recent focus on the use of social media and follow-up visits (whilst noting the cautious approach to 2021 due to COVID-19). Adare and Nunyara's Business Plans have been designed to enhance and maintain existing facilities whilst capitalising on improvements made during the previous four-year period, most notably the restructuring of the caravan park trading hours at Adare and the construction on the Wayirriti Room at Nunyara. Likewise, Tarooki's and Thuruna's plans have been designed, in conjunction with Beyond Limits, to increase patronage from schools.

Adare's growth will continue to be driven by the recent transition of the caravan park to a holiday park (essentially for use during school and public holidays) thus allowing greater occupancy by school groups during the school terms. Nunyara's growth will be boosted by the recent appointment of a Program Coordinator and the addition of new activities. Tarooki's and Thuruna's growth is expected to come from an increase in school / program camps. Thuruna is expected to continue along the path, similar to that of Tarooki's, from a self-catered volunteer-operated site to one which sits midway between the large site and small site models. Emmaus' aims to continue to operate sustainably by maintaining facilities in a fit-for-purpose condition. Beyond Limits is expected to continue to grow due to an increase in off-site programs and expeditions.

The period 2021 - 2024 presents as an exciting and potentially prosperous time for UVSA should the COVID-19 pandemic not cause any further interruptions to normal business operations. Further stability and understanding of the business has been achieved during the past four years and the platform is set for consolidation and growth in the next period.

The plan was endorsed by the UVSA Committee at its meeting on 22 October 2020 and approved by the Resources Board at its meeting on 12 November 2020.

#### 2.1.5.4 Uniting Venues SA Rules Amendment

Uniting Venues SA oversees the activities of the Adare Camp and Caravan Park, Emmaus Campsite, Nunyara Conference Centre, Tarooki Campsite, Thuruna Campsite and Beyond Limits Outdoor Education. The Emmaus and Thuruna Campsites have been managed and operated by Local Venue Management Committees. In June 2020, the Thuruna Campsite Local Venue Management Committee (LVMC) agreed to wind-up with effect from 31 December 2020. This decision has been endorsed by the UVSA Committee.

The Thuruna Campsite LVMC has managed the site for many years with enthusiasm, passion and much time and energy. Its contribution to the wider Uniting Church and to Christian camping has been invaluable. Thuruna's LVMC's decision to wind-up was made in response to the increasing responsibility for governance and compliance as well as declining membership of the committee. A part-time manager was appointed in early 2020 who will carry-on the day to day responsibilities of managing Thuruna.

On 1 January 2021, the Uniting Venues SA (UVSA) Committee will assume responsibility for Thuruna in the same manner that it is currently responsible for Adare Camp and Caravan Park, Nunyara Conference Centre, Tarooki Campsite and Beyond Limits Outdoor Education. A proposal to recognise the significant contribution of the Thuruna LVMC over many years is included at the end of this report.

## 2.2 Key areas and outcomes with an operational focus

Below is a summary of the Resources Team activities as it seeks to resource congregations, presbyteries and the Synod since the November 2019 report was written. These reports are intended to provide an overview of the nature and breadth of the work the team is responsible for and have been prepared by each of the team managers.

The Resources team understands its purpose is "*to provide exceptional service built on trust, integrity and clear communication*". The Resources team members recognise the challenges volunteers, ministers and officers of the Church face as they execute their responsibilities within their congregations and therefore

concentrate on providing services and information to enable people to carry out their responsibilities as easily, safely and as effectively as possible.

### 2.2.1 Financial Services (Andrew Fechner, Manager Financial Services)

The Financial Services Team is responsible for accounting and finance functions of the Synod while also encompassing Payroll Services, the Congregational Bookkeeping Unit and the Screening Services Unit.

#### 2.2.1.1 Payroll Bureau Service

The Payroll Bureau Service serves the payroll processing needs of congregations and organisations associated with the Church as well as Synod Ministry Centres (*including UCLT and UAICC*). There are currently over 370 ministers and lay employees across 144 congregations and organisations who are paid via Synod Payroll Services.

It has been a difficult year for the team, particularly during the initial rollout of the Federal Government JobKeeper program in response to COVID-19. The uncertainty created by this extraordinary event tested the capacity of the Bureau with unprecedented requests for support from employing congregations, employees and ministry agents.

The Bureau was able to provide assistance to congregations navigating the requirements of the JobKeeper program. As a result over 330 people across the state were successfully registered for JobKeeper payments.

The payroll landscape is becoming increasingly complex and all employing congregations are requested to use the services of the Synod Payroll Bureau Service to ensure legislative compliance is maintained.

#### 2.2.1.2 Congregational Bookkeeping Unit (CBU)

The Congregational Bookkeeping Unit (CBU) continues to provide regular bookkeeping services to 31 congregations, faith communities and other Uniting Church entities.

Over the past 12 months CBU has assisted a number of congregations work through specific issues on concern. These consultations relate to GST, Payroll, BAS and PAYG queries and corrections. Accounting software continues to be available via the CBU. Costs associated with licencing continues to be funded through the support of the David Williams Memorial Fund.

In addition to general consultations during the year the CBU team also provided free assistance to a number of congregations in relation to JobKeeper eligibility calculations and monthly ATO lodgements.

Support to congregations regarding their *Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission (ACNC)* reporting obligations continues to be provided. This includes assistance with the submission of the Annual Information Statement (AIS), in order that a congregation does not forfeit its charitable status.

Through the CBU, 34 congregations have been able to access valuable auditing services from the panel of congregational auditors (*this is in addition to those congregations which are CBU bookkeeping clients*). The auditing task this year proved to be somewhat difficult as a result of the COVID-19 shutdowns.

On behalf of the wider church, the Synod Auditing Panel, which includes Peter Whiting, Stephen Bray and Barry Atwell, is recognised with great appreciation. These auditing services, which includes auditing of 67 congregations' accounts, are invaluable to the church.

### 2.2.1.3 Mission and Service Fund Financial Services Team (including Screening Services)

In recognition of contributions made in 2019 to the Mission & Service Fund (MSF) by congregations and faith communities, certificates of acknowledgement have been distributed. The 2019 response rate for contribution requests reached 88%.

The collection of MSF contributions in 2020 has been somewhat constrained by the uncertainty created by COVID-19. The Synod and each Presbytery provided automatic relief from MSF contributions and direct Presbytery contributions during the shutdown period. The Finance Team has been making adjustments and providing assistance to congregations in this space as the fund continues to support the ministry of the wider church.

Accounts Payable processed 3,673 payments to suppliers in the 12 month period and reimbursed approximately 2,700 payments back to fringe benefit account holders (*these payments represent some 25k-30k individual transaction items*). There are currently 168 active fringe benefits accounts which are serviced, 74 of which also utilise a linked MasterCard facility.

The Screening Services Unit has also experienced significant demand in the past 12 months. This was largely due to the legislative requirement for all volunteers and employees, who have contact with children, to hold a valid *Working With Children Check*. In the three month window to the 30 June 2020 deadline the screening unit processed nearly 2,500 screening items.

## 2.2.2 Human Resources (Karen Granger, Manager Human Resources)

The Human Resources team contributes to the stewardship of people and a positive workplace culture of growth, health and community. This enables Uniting Church SA to provide opportunities for leaders, staff and management to grow, feel valued and meaningfully contribute to the work of the Church.

The Synod Human Resources team encourages continuous improvement in human resources best practices, achieved through the provision of high-level leadership, resourcing, organisational systems and support.

Presbyteries and Church Councils, on behalf of their congregations, receive the support of advice, resources and facilitation to assist in the fostering of good practices and management of human resource compliance. The work of the Human Resources team encompasses the management of employment and industrial risk within the context of our mission and ministry environment.

### 2.2.2.1 COVID-19: Work place implications

February 2020 saw the first level of workplace restrictions due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Human Resources has supported the various change management processes, impacted by the ongoing changes in government requirements, including staff working from home arrangements. This has been a



particularly challenging time for leaders and staff across all the Synod ministry centres, presbyteries and congregations.

#### 2.2.2.2 Workplace Compliance and Policy Development

Workplace policy review and development is an ongoing requirement to ensure legislative compliance and good management practices are adapted and maintained. Congregations can access policies and other information via the Uniting Church Synod of SA website, pertaining to work place practices as they relate to the congregational work environment. There are opportunities for congregations, presbyteries and Synod ministry centres to make comment in relation to approved-drafts of new policies, prior to policy finalisation.

#### 2.2.3 Recruitment and Appointments of Key Lay Positions

The second half of 2019 and 2020 saw the recruitment and appointments of a number of positions. This was primarily due to staff natural attrition.

*Synod Pirie Street Office, Uniting College-Brooklyn Park Campus, UAICC (Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress)*

The positions included: the Academic Dean & Biblical Lecturer; Executive Officer Engagement; Acting Business Manager (UCLT); Personal Assistant to the Moderator; Intern Year Coordinator (MLD); and a Congregational Website Project Officer (temporary 7-month)

The recruitment for: the Finance & Administration Manager (UCLT), Assistant Manager Investment Services, Finance & Administration Officer (UAICC) and an Engagement Coordinator are a work-in-progress at the time of writing, anticipated to be appointed by end of 2020.

*Uniting Venues SA*

The positions included: Program Coordinator (Nunyara), Residential Customer Service Officer (Adare).

The ongoing recruitment of the transient turnover of a casual staff pool was undertaken as group bookings at Uniting Venues returned following some of the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions. The casual positions are generally in the occupational groups of catering, housekeeping and Beyond Limits program facilitators.

*Congregations*

Synod Human Resources continues to provide advice and resources to Church Councils in their recruitment activities across the state.

#### 2.2.4 Communication Initiatives

The ongoing review and development of web-based resources aims to increase the service levels for Congregational Church Councils, presbyteries and the Councils of Synod. Councils of Synod refers to Uniting Church Synod of SA, Pirie Street Synod Office, Uniting College for Leadership & Theology – Brooklyn Park Campus, Uniting Venues SA, and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Opportunities to create greater awareness of Human Resource practices are constantly sought. Whilst these opportunities have been limited this year due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is anticipated that more intentional ways of connecting through with, presbyteries and Church Council officers' will be sought. Human Resources also contributes to the Dollars & Sense electronic newsletter.

The release of the Synod Staff Climate Survey 2020 in March this year has provided a platform and supports ongoing discussions with staff and executives in the areas for development and maintaining those areas identified with significant positive responses. With a pleasing response rate of 68%, the survey was developed in consultation with an external provider.

### **2.2.5 Professional, Education & Development**

Professional education and development of staff, management and leaders continues to be a focus, although again limited this year by COVID-19. Leadership skills, management skills, coaching, training in specific areas of expertise, succession planning, up-skilling, on-the-job training, benchmarking industry standards and compliance will all continue to form part of the professional education and development.

Recent education and development opportunities have been based on live streaming of events and video conferences. Specific attention has been given to staff as they returned to their respective workplaces following a period of working from home, which included a 'Transitioning Safely Workshop'. Other online education and development opportunities will continue to be explored whilst the COVID-19 pandemic remains. The diverse range of occupational/industry body conferences and workshops usually attended by staff have not been attended this year due to delivery and travel restrictions.

### **2.2.6 Challenges**

The challenges generally experienced in the context of Human Resource activities primarily relate to managing the implications of employee relations, employment law, volunteer engagement and work place health and safety, which are all constant within the complex and unique governance structures of the Church. 2020 has seen these challenges made more complicated by the need to respond to COVID-19 restrictions from a health and financial perspective. We recognise the work of the volunteer Church Council members, ministry teams and other officers of the Church, as together we navigate this increasingly complex landscape.

### **2.2.7 Information Technology and Telecommunications (Marc Furrage, Manager IT&T)**

IT&T continues to provide high quality IT services to the Synod office, presbyteries, Uniting College Campus (UCLT), Uniting Venues SA (UVSA), Adelaide College of Divinity (ACD) and the Adelaide Theological Library (ATL). The last 12 months have been both challenging and rewarding with a significant amount being achieved, which is outlined below.

#### **2.2.7.1 Completed Projects**

In January 2020 IT&T migrated all production servers to a new storage array and moved the old storage to our disaster recovery site. This project was completed without any issues or downtime and the new storage has both the capacity and speed to service the needs of the Synod for many years to come.

2020 proved to be an interesting year to resource from an IT perspective. Thankfully, previous investments in systems and infrastructure improvements meant that when COVID-19 caused the shutdown of the College Campus, Synod Office and UVSA venues, all staff could work from home relatively quickly and most importantly securely without the need to purchase additional equipment.

COVID-19 also hastened a roll-out of a video call / collaboration solution (Microsoft Teams) that enabled staff to work together and also stay personally connected during this time. Whilst the rollout was not as seamless as desired (with several lessons learnt along the way), it did support the overall needs of the staff. The Synod is committed to the ongoing use of this platform with further improvements and additional training to be delivered in 2021.

As a result of the Synod staff team (Campus, Office and Venues) working remotely and the continuing increase in online meetings, it became apparent that our existing main internet service was reaching capacity. The most cost effective method to replace this was to move to a new provider, which required a significant redesign of our network architecture. This task was planned and implemented in September 2020 and has resulted in 5 times the available internet bandwidth with increased network resiliency at a similar price.

Also completed this year were the final changes to CRM to give presbyteries ownership (i.e. read / write) to their own records within this database. In addition to this, various predefined lists were added to our existing bulk email platform integration to enable easy dissemination of information directly to the right people.

Finally the Presbytery Mapping solution was updated to display presbytery membership information as planned.

#### 2.2.7.2 In Progress

Unfortunately due to COVID-19 tasks taking priority, some tasks that were scheduled to be completed earlier in 2020 were not finalised. One such project is the payment gateway which is currently in its final stages of testing and will be delivered later this year.

IT&T has also been supporting the Finance, Human Resources and Pastoral Relations teams to implement the new HR system, ConnX, however due to COVID-19 this also has not progressed as much as desired.

IT&T is currently working with UVSA to upgrade the guest WiFi network at Nunyara to match the existing improvements at other UVSA sites. This upgrade should see all group spaces well covered with WiFi signal for the benefit of visitors and staff alike.

The 2019 IT Audit concluded as expected with the auditors only finding minor issues for IT&T to address. IT&T are currently preparing for the 2020 audit and will provide more information once outcomes from this are known.

Finally IT&T successfully rolled out a new service desk solution to better manage internal workload / tasks and retired some internal spreadsheets. IT&T is continuing to expand the functions within this software as time permits.

### 2.2.7.3 Futures

Due to the current challenging financial climate, IT&T is currently seeking quotes to extend warranties on some of our servers and storage. These devices are reaching the end of their existing warranty, yet are still running well. Extending the warranty will give several more years usage at a relatively low cost.

IT&T will be implementing guidelines and creating further training materials for Microsoft Teams to help ensure this is used in a consistent and effective manner across the organisation.

IT&T will be required to assist with the ConnX project once this gains momentum again in 2021.

Apart from finalising the multi-presbytery support in CRM, no other major development work was undertaken during 2020 due to COVID-19 and other priorities. Currently IT&T is preparing an idea generation document to seek input from various stakeholders (including presbyteries) to plan development tasks for 2021.

### 2.2.8 Insurance Services (Tony Philips, Manager Insurance Services)

Insurance Services provides insurance protection to the Uniting Church including cover for public liability, property, travel and personal accident, cyber and other risks at an affordable premium. This is achievable in part due to the significant purchasing and negotiating power of the Uniting Church Insurance Group which includes organisations associated with the church, such as schools, community groups, aged care and St Andrew's Hospital.

Insurance Services continues to focus on reviewing the terms and conditions of our policies ensuring the best possible protection and premiums are being provided by our brokers and insurers. The goal is to achieve greater efficiency in cost control while at the same time, improving the services to congregations.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected travel cover, as well as liability and business interruption cover. Other premiums have increased due to world-wide conditions and Insurance Services has been working with our brokers and insurers to obtain the best possible premiums for all entities in the Uniting Church Insurance Group.

This year Insurance Services has:

- added new loss adjusters and service providers, to assist congregations in controlling claims costs
- highlighted the value of good risk management to many congregations
- reintroduced the ability to pay premiums by 12 monthly instalments for 2021 to assist congregations
- has updated its webpage to provide more information on various insurance matters.

During 2021 the focus will remain on finding ways to minimise the risk of claims in conjunction with Property Services and with a view to encouraging congregations to maintain properties and improve security. Introducing proactive measures to reduce claims costs will assist in keeping premiums to a minimum whilst not affecting cover.

#### 2.2.8.1 Claims

The number of property claims reported in 2020 did not increase significantly compared with 2019, however there has been an increase in liability claims. Some of these are due to a lack of understanding of the types

of activities covered by our insurances. All congregations are encouraged to continue to check with Insurance Services prior to agreeing to hold events or entering into licence agreements. A lack of attention to building maintenance issues remains the cause of a number of insurance claims and where this is the case, they are not covered by insurance. Attention to property maintenance is paramount to ensure our insurance coverage is valid.

### **2.2.9 Investment Services (Paul Barnett, Manager Investment Services)**

The Uniting Church Investment Committee (UCIC) manages the investments of the Synod, including Uniting Fund SA (prior to 31 March 2018 this fund was known as UC Invest), Uniting Foundation and Mission and Service Fund. UCIC also provides oversight to other fund entities which report via the Resources Board. The UCIC considers a number of factors in developing annual investment plans for these investment entities including investment goals, market conditions, predicted investment returns of particular investments and diversification of investment portfolios.

All financial reports for the year ended December 2018 were tabled at the June 2019 Presbytery and Synod meeting. The signed and audited financial statements for all Investment Services managed entities (including their investment portfolios) can be viewed on the website at <https://ucinvest.com.au>.

#### **2.2.9.1 Asset Allocation**

Each year the UCIC considers the appropriate mix of financial assets in which each Property Trust investment entity should invest. This process takes into account the purpose of each entity, corpus requirements and the current investment climate. The performance of each entity is reviewed regularly throughout the year (against agreed benchmarks) to monitor and rectify any matters which may arise during the 12 month period. The UCIC considers both the short and medium term outcomes when determining the appropriate asset allocations.

#### **2.2.9.2 Ethical Investing**

With regard to ethical investing, the UCIC complies with the requirement of the Synod's Ethical Investment Policy. The Synod's investments managed by the Synod Investment Service Team and reported to the Ethical Investment Working Group for review at each of its meetings. Paul Barnett (Manager, Investment Services) attend and resources the Ethical Investment Working Group.

#### **2.2.9.3 Capital Adequacy**

Uniting Fund SA has continued to strengthen its financial position in 2019 maintaining an investment portfolio with a focus on quality investments which are paying strong levels of income. The Australian Stock Exchange indices are recording positive returns in 2019 while interest rate based investment returns continue to be at historical lows. The funds with a diversified investment portfolio should have a positive year assuming the Stock Market does not decrease substantially from here. Investors with a conservative investment portfolio weighted towards fixed interest will have a flat year, as interest income continues to remain low.

## 2.2.10 Property Services (Matt Wilson, Manager Property and Projects)

The Property Committee, a sub-committee of the Resources Board, has a defined charter as follows:

*“To make property decisions under delegation from the Resources Board and to assist Congregations and the Resources Board to make strategic property-related decisions which optimise the contribution of property towards the achievement of pre-determined missional goals.”*

The Property Committee aims to meet bi-monthly to make decisions and provide advice regarding:

- i. Sale and purchase of real property and all related property transactions
- ii. Leasing of property
- iii. Property management
- iv. The use of property including risk management
- v. Property development and improvement

The Property Committee has met 5 times during 2020 (in person and via MS Teams) and its membership has remained constant. Presbytery representatives (from each of the three presbyteries) have joined the meetings and we are thankful for their insight and input.

The significant matters considered by the Property Committee, together with the Property Services Team, in 2020 include:

- Various sales and purchases of real estate, and building works projects
- Ongoing oversight of the Property Review project
- Assistance to Uniting Venues with a building project at Nunyara
- Review of the Manse Guidelines
- Assistance to the Noarlunga Uniting Church and Journey Uniting Church with strategic property matters.

The Property Services team has continued to oversee the property assets of the Church including property sales, land purchase and the alteration and upgrade of existing properties and has actively responded to property matters within the presbyteries and the Synod. This year has seen a reduction in the number of ‘large-scale’ projects, but an increase in maintenance and smaller projects. Significant and challenging heritage works such as the completion of spire repairs at Mt Barker UC and proposed spire repairs at Mt Gambier UC have also featured this year. The Property Services team has continued to manage transaction and leasing matters, particularly in relation to dealing with commercial leasing negotiations arising from COVID-19. A full review of the property records management systems has been conducted together with an audit of hardcopy files, many of which date back multiple decades. The following property transactions have been completed during the period September 2019 - November 2020. The Category of Sale (in relation to the Property Sales Proceeds Policy) is also identified.

### Purchases (1)

- Ottoway (Semaphore UC) - Manse

### Sale of churches (2)

- Port Neill – Congregation Closed
- Penneshaw – Surplus

#### Sale of manses (2)

- Salisbury Heights (UAICC) – Surplus
- Semaphore (Semaphore UC) – Manse for manse

#### Sale of vacant land (1)

- Saddleworth - Surplus

### **2.2.11 Uniting Venues SA (Mark Lee, General Manager Uniting Venues SA)**

2020 started very positively for Uniting Venues SA (UVSA) with one of the busiest Februarys UVSA has encountered. However, as mentioned earlier in the report, from late March to early August, the situation was significantly different and all venues were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Venues were able to reopen from July. From that time bookings were solid, comprising existing bookings and bookings postponed from earlier in the year. Some regional South Australian schools elected to postpone their camps until 2021 and all but one Victorian school had either cancelled or postponed their camp to 2021. A number of new bookings were received for the period September to December 2020 from schools eager to recommence camps for their students. There has also been an increase in expedition style camps.

At the time of writing this report, venues have returned to 'business as usual', however restrictions such as physical distancing and density requirements apply. Uniting Venues SA seeks to provide exceptional Christian hospitality to all our guests and we have a wonderful team who all work hard to ensure this is achieved.

UVSA is very grateful for the support of Synod and the various Uniting Church groups that attend our venues. Hosting UCA groups such as KCO, KCO EP, UAICC, National Young Adults Leaders Conference and other UCA events are considered to be the pinnacle moments of our ministry. If you haven't visited for a while and are considering a Church or youth camp in 2021, current information about our venues and Beyond Limits is available on our website – [www.uvsa.org.au](http://www.uvsa.org.au) or look us up on Facebook or Instagram.

### **2.2.12 Work Health Safety (Wayne Booth, WHS Coordinator)**

2020 has clearly been a difficult and challenging year in health and safety terms for the whole of the Uniting Church in South Australia. The WHS Coordinator would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have supported the church during this time and have contributed to managing the additional risk and compliance matters brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The role of the WHS Coordinator continues to provide additional specialist support and guidance to the Human Resources, Property Services and Insurance Services teams. Along with the extensive response to the pandemic, the previous twelve months have again seen a significant WHS input into property related safety and compliance matters in support of the Property Review Project.

## Incidents

Accident and incident rates across the Councils of Synod continue to follow the pattern from previous years with the total number of incidents reported in the 2019/20 period dropping slightly from 121 incidents to 119. A slight increase in minor incidents was expected due to the increased patronage at the venues however the coronavirus reduced the number of school camp bookings during the year. Two SafeWork SA notifiable incidents did occur to students attending Uniting Venues SA during this period, however neither of these were the result of venues operations and no enforcement actions were taken.

Congregational incidents reported through to Synod have again been lower than expected with 12 being reported during this period, none of which were notifiable to SafeWork SA. The majority of these incidents (67%) were related to slips, trips and falls of congregation members or other regular users of church property. Having reviewed the majority of inspections undertaken as part of the Property Review, it is clear there are many potential areas for similar types of incidents. All congregations are encouraged to remove or reduce slip, trip and fall risks wherever possible.

To date there has only been one congregational incident relating to COVID-19 in which a member attended the church who then subsequently tested positive to COVID-19. The Church Council had all of the required COVID-Safe measures in place and was able to respond very efficiently and effectively to the situation. All congregations are encouraged to ensure that they are providing and maintaining COVID-Safe church sites and activities in accordance with the latest Government of SA directions and guidance.

WHS has worked closely this year with the General Manager UVSA on the development of an online incident reporting system utilizing the 'Tickit on Demand' risk management system used by UC Invest. This new system was successfully trialled with Beyond Limits Outdoor Education staff during Term 1 in 2020, which led to developing the system for site use by all Councils of Synod. Further development with a view to providing online incident reporting for congregations is planned for early 2021.

## Response to COVID-19

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a substantially increased workload on many within the church. The quantity and speed with which both guidance and legal directives were being provided (and revised) by Government(s) had increasingly serious health and safety implications which few would have predicted prior to the pandemic. The size, complexity and varied activity of the church made navigating this time particularly challenging. In managing the emerging 'crisis', WHS also worked a significant number of additional hours with almost complete focus on COVID-19.

As a brief overview, this additional workload included:

- Resourcing the Synod Crisis Management Team at all meetings and providing specific WHS updates, advice and guidance on the emergency legislation, directives and health advice.
- Developing and updating policy and procedures for all Councils of Synod staff.
- Providing responses, information and specific government documents to congregations and staff - working closely with the General Secretary, Associate General Secretary and Engagement (formerly Communications) team.
- Working closely with Human Resources and setting up personnel tracking systems incorporating travel, contact and self-isolation restrictions and directives. Developing pay and leave matrices to



assist with responding to individual personnel circumstances. Contacting personnel members directly affected by the restrictions to request further information and to provide further support and guidance.

- Supporting the facilitation of the majority of staff across Council of Synod sites safely working from home at short notice and for an indefinite period. Devising, forwarding and collating an online Working from Home Risk Assessment for all staff.
- Working to support the General Manager, Resources and Associate General Secretary in developing site roadmaps to a COVID-Safe return.

Thankfully South Australia is currently in a strong position and the Uniting Church response as a whole to the impacts of COVID-19 has been exemplary. It is expected however that our state will remain impacted by the directives under the Emergency Management Act for some time to come.

### 3. Recognition of Service

#### 3.1 Recognition of Resources Board members

It is appropriate to thank the Resources Board and Property Trust members and the members of sub-committees, who have generously shared their experience, skills and expertise across the wide range of Resources Board responsibilities. The Church is served most capably by these people, who dedicate many hours during the year to fulfil their roles with professionalism and a keen sense of stewardship. Thank you to those people who have faithfully served the Church in the following committees and associated task groups.

- Property Trust
- Resources Board
- Property Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Uniting Church Investment Committee and Uniting Church Investment Fund Ltd Committee
- Uniting Venues SA Committee
- Ethical Investment Working Group

The table below indicates the range of skills offered to the Church by the Resources Board members over the past year:

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Area of Specialisation</b>
Rev Rob Stoner (Chairperson)	Mission Resourcing, Uniting Church Ethos & Polity
General Secretary Rev Felicity Amery	Uniting Church Ethos & Polity
Moderator Bronte Wilson	Mission Resourcing, Uniting Church Ethos & Polity, Financial Management, Property
Executive Officer, Resources Peter Battersby	Financial Management, Human Resources, Corporate Governance, Uniting Church Ethos & Polity

<b>Board Member</b>	<b>Area of Specialisation</b>
Executive Officer, Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning Rev Philip Gardner	Mission Planning, Uniting Church Ethos & Polity
Rev Ross Honey	Mission Resourcing, Uniting Church Ethos & Polity, Financial Management
Michael McClaren	Investment, Finance, Corporate Governance
Dr Alice McCleary	Financial Management, Corporate Governance
Michael O'Connell	Property
Steve Roder	Law, Corporate Governance, Property, Financial Management
Danica Patselis (Co-opted)	Mission Resourcing, Uniting Church Ethos and Polity, Small Business Management (resigned December 2019)
<b>Observer (non-voting)</b>	
General Manager, Resources – Sue Raw	
Manager Investment Services - Paul Barnett	
Secretary (non-voting) - Leah Hopton	

## 3.2 Recognition of Resources Team

The Resources team is commended for its exceptional service to the Church. This team, based in the Synod office and at the Uniting Venues sites, (and sometimes at home during COVID-19 lockdowns) strives to provide exceptional service built on trust, integrity and clear communication. Whilst covering a wide range of activities within the life of the church, each team member is dedicated to serving the Church. As you know, it has been a difficult year, disrupted by the pandemic. The contribution of each team member is recognised, as is the way in which each of these people has approached their work throughout the year.

The contribution of each team leader (as named against each operational sub-report) is greatly appreciated. Furthermore, the contributions of Sue Raw, General Manager Resources and Leah Hopton, Executive Assistant are noted with thanks

The Resources team is mindful and appreciative of the many others who willingly serve throughout the Synod, presbyteries and congregations. We hope that together we can make the Church stronger.

## 3.3 Acknowledgements

### 3.3.1 Recognition of Tom Adams

Together with the Governors of The Parkin Mission of SA Inc. and The Parkin Trust Inc., the Resources Board wishes to acknowledge and thank Mr Tom Adams for his long and dedicated service to the Uniting Church in South Australia. Tom, has faithfully served as a Governor of the The Parkin Mission of SA Inc and The Parkin Trust Inc. for 25 years (from March 1995 to November 2020).

Tom has served in many other capacities within the Synod of SA. Tom was Chair of the Resources Board from 2009 to 2012 and continued to serve as a member of the Board until March 2019. Tom had also served on the Property Trust. Tom was previously the Chairperson of the UC Invest Board for many years and continued to serve as a member of the Uniting Church Investment Committee and Board member of the Uniting Church SA Investment Fund Ltd until December 2019. Tom has served on review committees, recruitment panels, parish missions and internal financial statement review panels. In each of these roles Tom has served out of a great passion for the church. Tom possesses a unique capacity to ask the difficult questions in a positive and engaging manner, which has served the church well. Tom continues to serve on the Ethical Investment Working Group.

Tom has chosen to step aside from these roles to enjoy a well-earned retirement. Tom's contribution has been significant, and his presence in these capacities will be missed. The Synod is invited to thank Tom for his contribution to the Synod over many years, for his generous service and his willingness to share his experience and knowledge.

### **3.3.2 Recognition of the Thuruna Local Venues Management Committee**

Thuruna Campsite was officially opened on 27 October 1962. Located on the land of the Barngarla people, Thuruna is an indigenous word meaning 'together by the sea'. The concept for Thuruna arose following the popularity of Easter youth camps on Eyre Peninsula during the 1950s, with live-in camps regularly held at Arno Bay and Yallunda Flat show grounds with billeting at Tumby Bay and Cummins. In 1961 a letter from the Tumby Bay Youth Fellowship to the Tumby Bay Church Council requested the matter of a permanent campsite be investigated, with Hamilton's Beach, south of Tumby Bay, the most favoured spot. The foundations for a cement block building with a jarrah floor were poured on March 19, 1962 with the completed building opened on 27 October. On-going building work since then, including the installation of a redundant school building from the Tumby Bay Area School, has resulted in facilities that include a meeting hall, games area, dormitories, a commercial kitchen, retreat rooms, toilet and bathroom facilities.

Throughout the 58 years since opening, local volunteers have generously given themselves to the oversight, management, construction and maintenance of the campsite. This significant gift to the church is an expression of their love for God, their love of the Church, and their desire to build God's kingdom. Of particular note is the recent contribution of Graham and Jeanette Pugsley, Jasmine Shultz and Peter Prime. The Church is indebted to the commitment of the Thuruna Campsite Management Committee members for their work, both seen and unseen over many years. It is with deep gratitude that the Thuruna Campsite Management Committee is acknowledged for its significant contribution and dedicated service to the Uniting Church, through oversight of the Thuruna Campsite and its commitment to seeing the campsite develop as a place of Christian discipleship, learning and fellowship.

## **4. Forward Thinking**

During 2021, the Resources Board and Resources Ministry Centre will focus on:

1. Responding to opportunities to best grow the Church into the future
2. Implement and/or participate in activities that fulfil the objectives of the Strategic Plan

3. Facilitate Presbytery Property Review discussions, identifying strategies for enhanced property stewardship
4. Building relationships and supporting the work of the presbyteries
5. Constructing a Synod-wide risk register
6. Overseeing the implementation and monitoring of the 2021 Mission and Service Fund budget
7. Review and refresh the Synod Human Resources policies
8. Providing oversight to the implementation and monitoring of the 2021-2014 Uniting Venues SA Business Plan.

In addition to these, the Resources team will continue to focus on strengthening its service to congregations and presbyteries and will look forward to working alongside volunteers and Church Officers as together we seek to grow God's Church.

## 5. Proposals

**That the Synod resolve to**

1. **Note the Resources Board Report 2020**
2. **Express its gratitude to Mr Tom Adams for his exceptional contribution to the Synod since 1995, in particular his generous service to The Parkin Mission of SA Inc, The Parkin Trust Inc, the Resources Board and Uniting Church Investment Committee.**
3. **Place on record its appreciation of the Thuruna Campsite Management Committee for its dedicated service to the Uniting Church through oversight of the Thuruna Campsite and commitment to seeing the campsite develop as a place of Christian discipleship, learning and fellowship.**

### **Proposers**

Michael McClaren  
Member and Representative, Resources Board

Peter Battersby  
Executive Officer, Resources

### **Peter Battersby**

Executive Officer, Resources  
4 December 2020

# UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA SYNOD of SOUTH AUSTRALIA

## Financial Statements Index for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	Operating *		Equity	
	Surplus/(Deficit)		2019	2018
	2019	2018	2019	2018
	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)	(\$'000)
1.0 Mission and Service Fund	233	267	19,543	17,758
2.0 Property Sales Proceeds Fund	0	(2)	22	22
3.0 Uniting Venues SA:				
3.1 Uniting Venues Consolidated **	270	197	2,290	1,988
3.2 Thuruna Campsite	5	1	23	18
4.0 Peter Wood Devona Trust	(4)	(2)	550	554
5.0 The Parkin Wesley College Library Fund	0	0	2	2
6.0 The Uniting Church SA Relief Fund	61	25	314	252
7.0 The Uniting Church Building Fund	0	0	0	0
8.0 UC Arts and Cultural Development Group Incorporated	(7)	(12)	39	47
9.0 Disaster Fund	12	(12)	218	178
10.0 Stillpoint Community	(5)	(8)	18	23
11.0 Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress	3	(36)	2,547	2,365
12.0 Mission Networks:				
12.1 Community Outreach Mission Network	(107)	18	0	107
12.2 Grace Connections Mission Network	(11)	2	0	11
12.3 Gulf Mission Network	(16)	(3)	0	16
12.4 Urban Mission Network	(42)	(2)	0	42
12.5 Western Mission Network	(3)	(1)	0	3
12.6 Hope Mission Network	(63)	0	0	63
12.7 3Dnet Mission Network	(135)	7	0	138
12.8 Northern Rural Mission Network	n/a	2	0	52
13.0 Generate Presbytery	47	--	47	--
14.0 Transitional Presbytery of SA	0	--	0	--
15.0 Uniting Foundation	(77)	459	6,198	5,707
16.0 Epworth SA Fund	(59)	38	12,115	10,922
17.0 R H White Settlement	100	97	12,850	11,378
18.0 Uniting Church Loan Fund	127	218	10,034	9,907
19.0 The Historical Society of the Uniting Church in SA	44	51	2,236	2,003
20.0 UC Investment Group				
20.1 Uniting Fund SA (previously UC Invest)	11,180	1,361	57,298	44,840
20.2 UC Invest Share Fund	4,474	5,329	80,379	72,272
20.3 UC Invest Direct Property Fund	2,914	2,864	52,718	51,907
21.0 The Parkin Trust Incorporated	358	436	5,613	4,801
22.0 The Parkin Mission of South Australia Incorporated	144	408	21,708	18,570

Notes: \* Except for Uniting Fund SA, the Operating Surplus (Deficit) excludes non-Operating Items and Unrealised Gains/Losses on Revaluation of Investments as applicable. Uniting Fund SA Operating Surplus includes revaluation of unlisted corporate securities using independent third party price information.

\*\* Uniting Venues SA (Consolidated) represents the financial activities of the Adare Camp and Caravan Park, Nunyara Conference Centre, Beyond Limits Outdoor Education and Tarooki Camp Site.

\*\*\* Uniting Fund SA manages two asset class investment funds of behalf of the Uniting Church SA. All income received by these funds is distributed to their investors (many listed above), and the values of these investments are included in the financial statements of these investors, including those listed above.



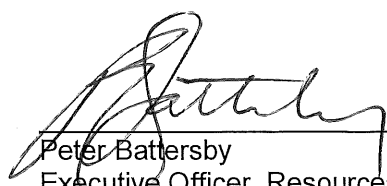
The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

## CERTIFICATE OF EXPENDITURE 2019 Grants from Parkin Mission South Australia Inc.

	Total for 2019
<b>Chaplaincy</b>	<b>\$</b>
Chaplaincy management, oversight & training	241,661
Covenanting	54,860
RAH Chaplaincy	98,840
Mental Health Chaplaincy	102,517
Flinders Medical Chaplaincy	101,796
Disability Ministries	57,238
Tertiary Chaplaincy	52,214
QEH Chaplaincy	56,548
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>765,674</b>
<b>Intergenerational Ministry</b>	<b>191,053</b>
<b>Rural Ministry &amp; Pastoral Relations</b>	<b>280,912</b>
<b>Missiology</b>	<b>28,361</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>1,266,000</b>

Total grants provided from Parkin Mission in 2019 1,266,000

The grants received from Parkin Mission South Australia Inc. have been expended in accordance with the deeds of the Mission.

  
 Peter Battersby  
 Executive Officer, Resources  
 1 April 2020

**we seek to be an innovative, growing church proclaiming Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit to transform God's world**

**STREET ADDRESS** | Level 2, 212 Pirie St, Adelaide    **POSTAL ADDRESS** | Uniting Church SA, GPO Box 2145, Adelaide SA 5001  
**TEL** | 08 8236 4200    **COUNTRY CALLERS** | 1300 766 956    **FAX** | 08 8236 4201    **WEB** | sa.uca.org.au    **ABN** | 25 068 897 781

## The Parkin Mission of South Australia Incorporated

### Report to Synod for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

The Mission was established by the Hon William Parkin in 1882 and incorporated in 1888. The main purposes of the Mission and the functions of its Governors are:

1. The payment of annuities to twenty widows.
2. The payment of grants to Synod for congregations, rural ministry and other ministries including chaplaincies.
3. The management of its funds.

#### **Summary of Finances to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

	Actual		Intended	
	2018 \$000	2019 \$000	2020 \$000	2021 \$000
Grant to Synod*** Additional One-off Grant	1236	1266	1291	1150
Widows Benefactions	24	24	24	24
Operating Income before Grant and Benefactions	1677	1434		
Capital gain/(loss)*	(2620)	2994		
Capital and Reserves** (excluding accumulated income)	17,198	20,242		

\*Under the terms of the Deeds, the realised gains on the sale of investments are not part of the Mission's Operating income and are not available for distribution.

\*\* Value of Funds. The Mission invests for long term gain (in accordance with the UCA's Ethical Investment rules) to increase the value of Funds, but this is affected by market fluctuations.

\*\*\* The Mission aims to increase the annual grant to Synod by the percentage increase in stipends and related allowances for the year of the grant, but this is dependent on accrued income and the income earned on investments during the year. With the decreased level of income for 2020 the Board will be using accrued income to support the grant.

#### **Performance of Funds to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019**

	1 year	3 years	5 years
	%	%pa	%pa
Income return (including imputation credits)	7.7	7.7	7.6
Capital gain/(loss)	16.1	4.7	3.1
ASX200 increase/(decrease)	18.4	6.2	4.6

Paul Frisby  
President

## The Parkin Trust Incorporated

### Report to Synod for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

The Trust was established by the Hon William Parkin in 1872 and incorporated in 1876. The main purposes of the Trust and the functions of its Governors are:

1. The payment of grants to the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology for the education and maintenance of students for the Ministry.
2. The management of its funds.

#### Summary of Finances to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	Actual		Intended	
	2018 \$000	2019 \$000	2020 \$000	2021 \$000
Grant to the Uniting College * For Leadership and Theology**	304	311	317	330
Operating Income before Grant*	438	358		
Capital gain/(loss)*	(686)	765		
Value of Funds** (excluding accumulated income)	4,116	4894		

\*Under the terms of the Deeds, the realised gains of the sale of investments are not part of the Trust's Operating income and are not available for distribution.

\*\* Value of Funds. The Trust invests for long term gain to increase the value of Funds, but this is affected by market fluctuations.

\*\*\* The Trust aims to increase the annual grant to the Uniting College by the percentage increase in stipends and related allowances for the year of the grant, but this is dependent on accrued income at the beginning of the year.

**Following the impact of covid-19, the Board has undertaken to increase the grant for the College to enable continuity of God's work towards the training of future ministers very much as Parkin would have envisaged. The same level of grant will apply to 2022.**

#### Performance of Funds to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019

	1 year	3 years	5 years
	%	%pa	%pa
Income return (including imputation credits)	7.4	7.5	6.2
Capital gain/(loss)	(12.8)	2.7	1.6
ASX200 increase/(decrease)	18.4	6.2	4.6

**Paul Frisby**  
President





**Uniting Venues SA**

**Ministry and Business Plan**

**2021 - 2024**

---

**Full Business Plan available on request**