

2021 Report

Sustainable Development Goals.



Uniting





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Executive welcome

Welcome to the second United Nations Sustainable Development Goals report for Uniting NSW.ACT. As the largest non-government provider of community services in NSW and the ACT, Uniting continues to take real steps to make our world a better place.

This report builds on our inaugural report of 2018 and demonstrates that we're constantly evolving to make a positive difference for the vulnerable and disadvantaged, and to champion social justice for all Australians through our advocacy work.

In delivering aged care, early learning, disability, family and community services, Uniting works across all **3 pillars of sustainability - economic, social and environmental** - to improve the lives of the people we serve, and the communities they live in.

In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic strengthened Uniting's purpose to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice, and we continue to prioritise the health and wellbeing of our clients and team members, making COVID-safety a part of everyday life. By aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) initiative, Uniting's work in the NSW and the ACT is playing a part in supporting the protection of the world's poor and vulnerable, and the safeguarding of our planet's future.

These international SDGs are driving to end extreme poverty, address inequality, and take action on climate change by 2030.

We've been on our own sustainability journey since 2009. Along the way, Uniting has partnered with the NSW Sustainability Advantage program to understand the United Nations SDGs and their application to our work.

In 2019, we launched the Uniting Future Horizons social innovation initiatives, an integrated approach to guide our organisation over the next decade. These initiatives reflect the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and its core objective to leave no-one behind. We have mapped our Uniting Future Horizons development to the SDGs and identified key areas where we believe we can make the biggest difference.

This report draws on our service delivery in NSW and ACT over the past year, with the aim of highlighting how we're helping to reach the SDGs. I hope it offers insight into our activities and the contribution Uniting is making towards achieving these global goals.



Tracey Burton
Executive Director, Uniting NSW.ACT

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Who we are

Uniting NSW.ACT is responsible for the social justice, community services and chaplaincy work of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT. We provide care and support for people people through all ages and stages of life, with a focus on people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability. We value diversity and always welcome everyone, exactly as they are.

At every stage of life, from early learning centres through to residential aged care, our dedicated team of employees and volunteers stands alongside the people we serve. Every year, our mission to serve our communities grows stronger as we work with imagination and collaboration, harnessing the strength that comes from embracing diversity and inclusion.

Uniting employs more than 9,000 people, of which around 300 are Aboriginal and 2,200 have a culturally and linguistically diverse background and speak a language other than English. We are supported by more than 1,300 volunteers and have more than 50 pastoral practitioners.

During FY21, Uniting supported 119,363 people:

4,629

children enrolled in early learning services

46,659

people with children, youth and family services

1,498

Uniting Medically Supervised Injecting Centre clients

7,200

people living in our residential aged care

3,024

independent living residents in our retirement villages

987

disability services participants

9,638

home and community care clients

4,045

Uniting War Memorial Hospital patients

41,683

Local Area Coordination clients

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Our mission, values and principles

As part of the Uniting Church in Australia, our foundation is Christ’s invitation to serve humanity by creating an inclusive, connected and just world. Formed in 1977, as a union of Presbyterian, Congregational and Methodist denominations, the Church’s inaugural [Statement to the Nation](#) is just as relevant now as it was more than 40 years ago.

From the outset, the Uniting Church sought to be a loud voice for a world that’s fair and equitable, to always welcome everyone exactly as they are, and to protect God’s creation and the planet we all live on.

Mission is in our DNA

In the Uniting Church founding document, Basis of Union, our mission is described as ‘reconciliation and renewal ... for the whole creation’. In God’s eyes we are all equal. By respecting and valuing everyone exactly as they are, by listening to them, by recognising that the adversity people face doesn’t define them, and by seeking to serve them and involve them, we are upholding people’s dignity.

Our mission is reflected in our values and our ethical principles, in our person-centred care, and in our social justice and advocacy campaigns. We are mission-driven, rather than profit-driven. Mission is in our DNA.

Our missional principles

Enliven communities so that everyone contributes.

Community wellbeing

We will actively seek conditions that contribute to communal wellbeing. We recognise that people need to be valued as part of a community and engage in healthy relationships, to thrive.

Unity

We inhabit one planet and affirm the mutuality and interdependence between all people, our fellow creatures and the earth.

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Confront injustice so that everyone is included.

Promotion of human rights

We affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every person, which being created in the image of God bestows on them. We are bound to observe and safeguard each person's inalienable human rights.

Reconciliation

We need to listen, seeking to understand people and communities, as we strive towards inclusion of all races, cultures and religions and celebrate multiculturalism as part of our Uniting Church and Australian identity. This includes recognition of the rights and dignity of First Peoples and their unique place in our nation.

Solidarity

We will promote the active participation of those affected by injustice as we seek to influence social policy and confront the causes of inequality and disadvantage.

Inspire people so that everyone is valued.

Dignity of every person

We recognise the essential worth and rights of every person, especially those whose rights are discounted, or who are excluded from full participation in society. They must be at the heart of everything we do.

Needs of the whole person

We recognise that human beings are whole persons with unique physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs and strengths.

Social and economic inclusion

We acknowledge the corrosive effects of inequality and affirm that the poor and marginalised must be our focus.

Our values guide our work every day.

Compassionate

We are nurturing, generous and thoughtful in our words and deeds.

Imaginative

We challenge convention, explore new possibilities and dare to dream for a better future.

Respectful

We act with integrity, and open our hearts to all people without exception.

Bold

We face injustice head on and stand up for what is right and true with confidence and strength.

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Our ethics support our decisions.

Our ethical principles were developed to support decision-making within the context of the Uniting Church’s foundation and Uniting’s organisational purpose, mission and values. We believe that our humanity is reflected in the quality of our relationships with each other and with the planet, and that ethical decisions will always support and enhance these relationships.

Our ethical principles

- Take accountability for making the biggest positive difference for people.
- Give preference to the interests of the most disadvantaged.
- Listen, understand and then act with courage, empowering people through self-determination.
- Adopt and apply the highest professional standards within our constraints.
- Address organisational sustainability so that we can continue our mission.
- Seek transparency in communications with our stakeholders.
- Acknowledge that our decisions seek equity, recognising that equity and equality are not always the same.

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What are the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future*. This includes 17 Sustainable Development Goals (or SDGs) that break down into 169 targets, acting as a framework for members to tangibly track their progress in achieving these goals.

It's a shared roadmap for governments, corporations, and organisations for achieving ambitious and transformational social, environmental, and economic objectives by 2030. As well as a strong focus on inclusive business leadership and multi-stakeholder partnerships, a fundamental guiding principle of the goals is to 'leave no-one behind' and address the most excluded first.

* See more at sdgs.un.org/goals



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Leaving no-one behind

Three dimensions of the 2030 Agenda are especially relevant to Uniting - fighting poverty, injustice and inequality.

The principle of equal opportunity is central to the SDGs, with a standalone goal, SDG 10, dedicated to reducing inequalities within and among countries.

Social justice is also a core theme of other SDGs that address poverty, hunger, health, education, gender, economic growth and justice.

Evidence of fairer, better outcomes - for people of age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, disability, sexual preference, place of residence or economic or other status - will be a key metric for gauging attainment of the SDGs.

Through measurement of our social justice performance, Uniting is committed to supporting the achievement of these goals by 2030.



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Our SDG journey

Uniting has a range of tools to measure our financial and operational performance, though measurement of our social justice performance has been limited.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals are an important universal framework that can help us demonstrate our contribution to peace, justice and prosperity. Over the past few years, Uniting has been working with the NSW Government's Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH) to better understand the SDGs and how we can make the biggest difference.

Through its membership-based [Sustainability Advantage Program](#), the OEH has taken a leading role in building interest among its partners to adopt the UN SDGs as a strategic reporting framework for government and business.

Uniting has been involved in the Sustainability Advantage Program for 11 years and, as a Gold Partner, we are acknowledged as demonstrating outstanding environmental achievement and leadership. Recognising that Uniting services extend well beyond aged care, the SDGs offer an integrated way to demonstrate our contribution to global welfare. At a joint meeting in Newcastle in May 2018, the Board and Executive therefore agreed to adopt the UN Sustainable Development Goals as a strategic tool to report on our activities.

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Future Horizons and the 2030 Agenda

We have a long and proud history of helping the vulnerable in our society. Future Horizons is Uniting's social innovation investment portfolio. Since 2019, we've been designing, piloting and proving new ways of working to address some of our communities' most intractable challenges.

The SDGs are a universal agenda that represent 'the world we want to live in' by 2030. All sectors of society have their role to play in achieving these goals - government, business, academia and not-for-profit organisations like Uniting.

Uniting is strongly committed to the 2030 Agenda and doing our bit to drive progress on the SDGs. As well as reporting on our efforts, we will use our Future Horizons strategy as a platform for partnership and innovation to tackle disadvantage and increase our social impact in line with the goals.

Over the next decade, it will guide our priorities for investment, innovation and action to ensure we positively impact those people and communities with the greatest needs.



In a rapidly changing social services landscape, Future Horizons aims to increase our social impact while strengthening our financial and environmental sustainability.

With a focus on areas with the greatest disadvantage, our aim is to find innovative ways to improve the wellbeing and resilience of the people and communities we serve.

Uniting continues its commitment to the 2030 Agenda and to progressing the SDGs through our Future Horizons initiative. Since launching in 2018, Future Horizons has supported social innovation programs at Uniting that reflect the equality objectives of **SDG 10 – Reduced Inequalities**. Future Horizons involves all sectors of society, from government and business to non-profits and academic institutions, in pursuit of fulfilling the SDGs and increasing social impact in Australia.

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The 8 impact principles guiding Future Horizons development:



The 9 initiatives we've developed to align with the impact principles:

Links to Early Learning (L2EL)

Access to education for vulnerable preschool-aged children and their families

Connect Promote Protect Program (CP3)

A preventative approach to mental health for primary school children

Aboriginal Families Together

Keeping children and kin connected

Extended Care (EXCP)

Support for young people leaving foster care beyond 18 and up to the age of 21

Firefly

Building stronger communities where children can thrive

Feasibility of Opioid Injecting Treatment

Finding effective solutions to drug dependency

120 Countdown

Mentoring and practice hours to get a driver's licence and independence

Becoming U

Building belief and capacity in young people in hard-to-reach communities

Foyer Central

Giving vulnerable young people the tools, space and time to build a brighter future

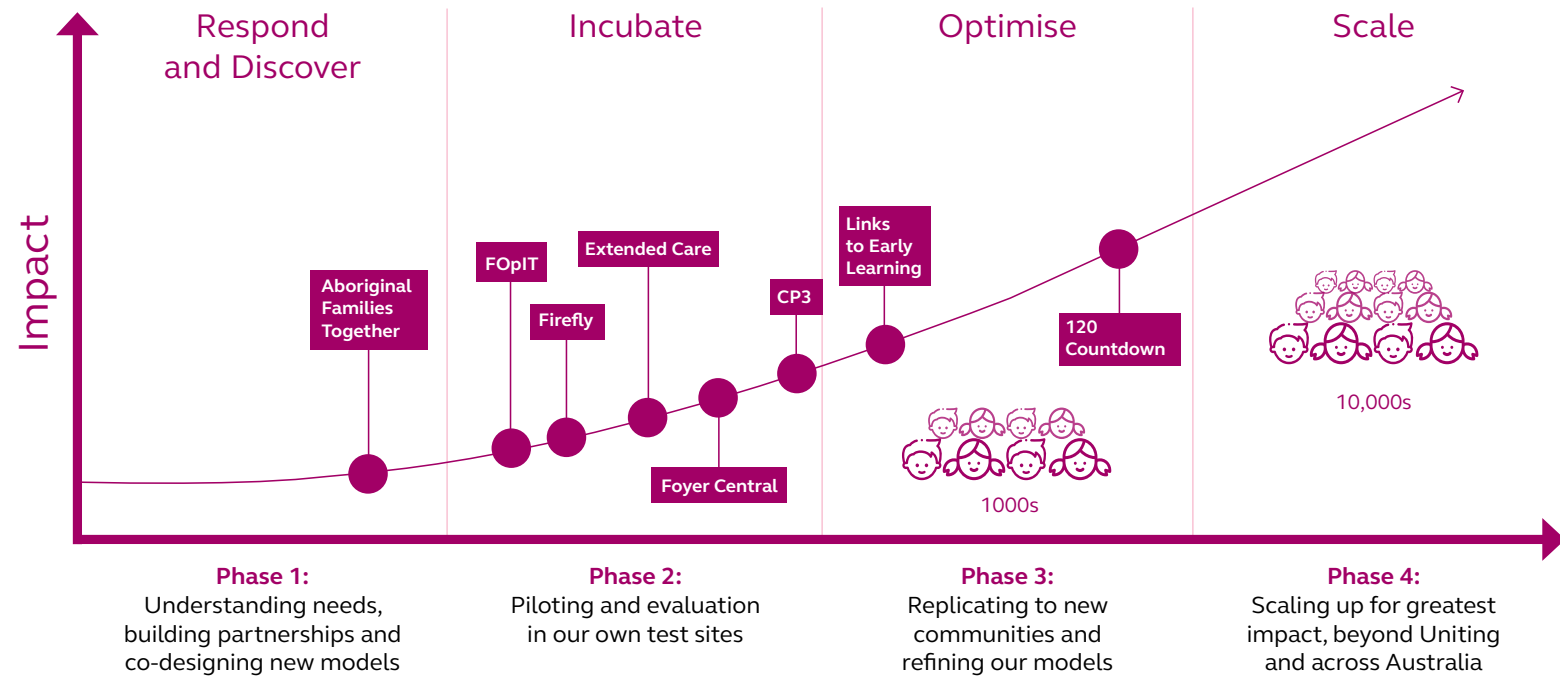
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Our pathway to scale innovations for maximum impact

Uniting’s approach is based, built and modified on the successes of our many existing innovations. Future Horizons is designed to communicate and guide a clear pathway to achieving scale, and incorporates gateways for accessing and supporting the progress of individual initiatives.



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How have we improved since last report?

Uniting has maintained our commitment to achieving the SDGs by 2030 through our continued dedication to intersectional social justice and addressing poverty, hunger, health, education, gender equality, economic growth, and legal justice in Australia.

Since our SDG report in 2018, we have been committed to gathering high-quality, reliable data that is essential to measuring the progress on sustainable development outlined in the 2030 Agenda.

To improve Uniting's capability to understand the difference our services make in people's lives, we continue to implement a rigorous and holistic outcomes measurement framework across all our services, including 4 new service types that have commenced since the last report.

Outcomes measurement provides a coherent and meaningful way to conceptualise and articulate our social impact, aligned with our vision and strategy. It provides a systematic and scalable way for all Uniting services to collect, store, analyse, report and use outcomes data for decision making.



Uniting continues to be an acknowledged sustainability leader in the aged care industry, through its ongoing involvement as a Silver Partner in the Sustainability Advantage program.

We've broadened our approach to addressing the SDGs by **focusing on people, business, and the environment** to encompass a wider range of goals and targets.

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Extended Care

Uniting is part of the Home Stretch campaign advocating for governments to increase foster care until the age of 21, instead of the current age, which is only 18.

A 2018 survey found that 35% of NSW care leavers experienced homelessness within a year of leaving care. In 2019, Uniting became the first foster carer to extend care to 21 in NSW, and has committed to spending \$8M on this program, over 5 years. Funded by Future Horizons, Extended Care aims to reduce the proportion of young people that become homeless after turning 18.

Extended Care is a transitional program that supports young people leaving foster care by providing housing, social connection, and an assigned Youth Development Coach who works with them to achieve their education and employment objectives. There were 57 young people in Extended Care during FY21.

“Before I came into this program I was thinking ‘I don’t want to turn 18.’ I was scared of that ... but now I think I could live alone.”

Extended Care participant

A 2020 evaluation by NOUS research consultants found that of all the young people in Extended Care:

78%

were studying, from Year 10 up to university undergraduate degrees

76%

were employed on a full-time, part-time, or casual basis

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Extended Care is meeting these SDGs

By providing young people with opportunities that assist their journey towards becoming independent adults regardless of their socio-economic background, we're contributing to SDGs 8, 10 and 11.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

SDG Indicator 8.6 – By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDG Indicator 10.2 – By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG Indicator 11.1 – By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.



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Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF)

More than just a home.

Uniting's Social and Affordable Housing Fund (SAHF) offers our communities' most vulnerable seniors so much more than just bricks and mortar. In partnership with NSW Government, our SAHF program provides a safe and affordable place to live, combined with personalised support to move forward.

Our Home and Community Care team meets with our SAHF clients when they move in, to assess their needs and assist them in developing a support plan with strategies designed to help them meet their goals. Jack and Iris recently moved into their SAHF home.

As Jack is sight-impaired and Iris is his primary care giver, the couple have experienced financial hardship. Through the SAHF program they've been linked with support services within the community and have been able to thrive once again.

"We're no longer living in isolation worrying about things. The village we live in is caring, people look out for one another. If we need help, our new community is here for us."

Jack and Iris have made friendships based on common interests and they're enjoying being social again. They've both indicated that their mental, physical, and emotional health and wellbeing have significantly improved since joining the SAHF program.

At the end of FY21, Uniting has delivered 400 senior social housing units of the 600 we're committed to supplying by FY 2023.

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SAHF is meeting these SDGs

By providing vulnerable and disadvantaged seniors with safe and affordable housing, in an environment that also supports their social and emotional health, we're contributing to SDGs 10 and 11.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDG Indicator 10.2 – By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG Indicator 11.1 – By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe, and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.



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Early Intervention

Our Early Intervention programs are developed to strengthen families and communities while focusing on prevention strategies. Our programs provide information, referrals, home visits, support groups and education to keep families together, and children out of the child protection system.

30,086

Early Intervention clients in FY21 including:

7,530

clients from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

4,721

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clients

Early Intervention is striving to support these SDGs

Breaking cycles of violence and poverty in families through education and support is key to ensuring that children and parents are kept together in a safe environment.

SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

SDG Indicator 1.3 – Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDG Indicator 10.3 – Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG Indicator 16.2 – End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.



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Social Benefit Bonds

A Social Benefit Bond (SBB) is a financial instrument for private investors to provide upfront financing for service providers to deliver improved social outcomes. Since launching Australia's 1st SBB in 2013 through the Newpin program, Uniting has recently launched our 2nd SBB, Foyer Central. Combining the achievement of social outcomes and the potential of financial return for investors is becoming an increasingly popular and effective way of achieving the SDGs and reducing the public sector's need to pay for acute services over the long term.

Newpin

Newpin – the New Parent and Infant Network – was developed to reunite children and their parents through an intensive child protection and parent education program. Often the parents who participate in this program have experienced trauma and abuse in their own childhoods. Newpin aims to provide these parents with opportunities to address their own emotional issues, understand and improve attachment with their children, and develop positive parenting skills.

In its 6th year of operation, the Newpin SBB saw a restoration rate of 64.52% for investors and in 2020, successfully renegotiated the Uniting Newpin contract in partnership with the Department of Communities and Justice to secure ongoing funding.

Foyer Central

Foyer Central was launched in early 2021, in partnership with St George Community Housing and Social Ventures Australia, to combat inner-city youth homelessness for young people leaving the foster care system. Purpose-built accommodation provided near universities enables young people to have safe and stable accommodation while engaging in education and employment opportunities for a 2-year period. Foyer Central has had 70 referrals as at 20 June 2021, and 20 enrolments.

SBB program	Total participants	CALD	Aboriginal	Disability	Male	Female	Non-binary
Newpin	435	81	131	3	180	255	-
Foyer Central	70	6	21	3	33	36	1

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Social Benefit Bonds are meeting these SDGs

Partnerships between non-profits like Uniting and the private and public sector are essential to fulfilling the social outcomes outlined in the SDGs. The outcomes from Uniting's SBBs have contributed to the health and safety of children, young people, and families.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

SDG Indicator 8.5 – By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

SDG Indicator 16.2 – End abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

SDG Indicator 17.6 – Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries.



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120 Countdown

Since our 2018 report, 120 Countdown has expanded into Wyong and Nambucca Heads and helped several young people attain their licences. The process of getting a driver’s licence in Australia can be time-consuming and inconvenient when there’s no available support. This Uniting program helps young people to attain independence through accessing transport options that help open doors to employment opportunities and community interaction.



Jacob had no night-time driving experience when he began his journey with Uniting. He has an autism spectrum disorder and was desperate for independence but was having a great deal of difficulty feeling confident on the road. After working closely with his volunteer mentor, he built his night-time driving confidence and passed his driving test on the first attempt.

“120 Countdown has really helped me to create big goals and be more engaged in the community, giving me opportunities I wouldn’t have dreamed of in a small community. I would recommend this service for anyone in the same circumstances as me.”



Tom is a local church minister who had been volunteering for Uniting as a bus driver and he’s now a dedicated volunteer for the 120 Countdown program in Nambucca Valley. A large proportion of the students experience Tom’s mentorship – he’s responsible for 4 of the 6 graduates of the program and is currently supervising 5 students. Tom recently managed to get one of his students through to passing her driving test in record time so that she had her licence before starting university in February. He’s become a significant figure in his student’s lives and was nominated for a Uniting ‘With Heart’ award in 2020.

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120 Countdown is meeting these SDGs

Giving young people the knowledge and skills to drive safely supports their mobility and independence so that they may pursue opportunities in employment and education.

SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

SDG Indicator 8.6 – By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education, or training.

SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.

SDG Indicator 11.2 – By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.



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Other Uniting services addressing SDGs

Service	Total clients	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD)	Aboriginal	Disability
Early Intervention	30,086	3,563	2,519	1,147
Counselling and Mediation	7,396	1,461	372	72
Intensive Family Services	6,598	946	2,089	70
Early Learning	4,629	551	109	58
Homelessness	1,717	172	192	76
Disability	987	297	71	701
Youth Transitions	525	102	178	88
Permanency Support Program	337	42	146	140
Home and Community Care	9,638	2,363	278	852
Residential Aged Care	7,200	1,300	78	-
Independent Living	3,024	-	-	-
War Memorial Hospital	4,045	2,079	36	-
Medically Supervised Injecting Centre	1,498	59	267	-
Local Area Coordination	41,683	3,739	2,437	41,683

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SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

Financial Counselling Helpline: Based in Dubbo, a federally funded program that assists client with financial difficulties over the phone. 7,801 clients from across NSW in 2020-21.

SDG 4.2: Quality Early Childhood Development, care and pre-primary education.

Early Learning: 4,629 children enrolled during 2020-21 including 1,831 in Preschool, 1,169 Outside School Hours Care and 1,629 Long Day Care.

SDG 5.2: Eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls 16.2 End all forms of violence against children.

In the 2 years to 30 June 2021, 352 families participated in the Domestic Violence Framework in the Brighter Futures child protection program. Two thirds or 66% of those families who completed at least one module of the Framework had an improved Domestic Violence score on their subsequent assessment.

SDG 8.6: Reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

Specialised Homelessness Service (SHS): During 2020-21 there was a 34% increase in employment (from entry in the program to exit) in the clients of our Doorways Youth Homelessness programs.

SDG 11.1: Ensure equal access for all to adequate safe, affordable housing.

Specialised Homelessness Service (SHS): During 2020-21 1,717 clients were supported in our Doorways Homelessness programs. From entry into the program to exit, there was a 26% reduction in rough sleeping and a 33% increase in stable tenure. 60% of clients had a diagnosed mental health issue.



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Our ethical investments

Uniting Financial Services (UFS) has made an extensive effort to align Uniting's investments with the SDGs. In December 2019, UFS was successful in issuing the first Sustainable Development Goals Bond (SDGB) by a not-for-profit in Australia. This project involved aligning the 14 Ethical and ESG Investment Principles to the SDGs, across all asset classes. This included establishing a questionnaire that would adequately assess the Commercial and Church Lending Portfolios. This led to the SDG Bond Framework that outlines the process for delivery of the project and how UFS intends to issue and manage SDGBs on an ongoing basis. This framework covers 4 key components: Use of Proceeds, Process for Project Evaluation and Selection, Management of Proceeds, and Reporting.

The Framework and Eligible Assets are consistent with the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) Sustainability Bond Guidelines (SBG) that encompass the Green Bond Principles (GBP) and Social Bond Principles (SBP). These guidelines make up what is accepted by capital market globally for the issuance of Sustainability Bonds.

The alignment of the 14 Ethical and ESG Investment Principles to the SDGs also covers the Ethical Diversified Fund (EDF) that Uniting invests in. The EDF Portfolio exceeds all but one of the benchmarks determined for the Ethical and ESG Score and EDF-SDG Exposure per Asset Group.

These scores were based on a scoring system developed by external consultants ISS CAER and their ratings system that could be directly applied or applied via a scoring system created by UFS that closely aligned with the ISS CAER scoring style.

The SDG Bond project has been a great success for UFS being the first of its kind in Australia and UFS's first step into capital markets.

Meeting the SDGs



SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. **SDG Indicator 17.6** - Enhance the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilise and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources to support the achievement of the SDGs in all countries.

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Diversity and equality in our workplaces

Uniting has won many awards that demonstrate our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and equality in our workplaces.

2019

Health and Wellbeing Equality Index (HWEI) Service Provider of the Year

Australian Workplace Equality Index (AWEI) Gold Employer of the Year

2020

AWEI Bronze Employer

10-year AWEI Achievement Award

Highest ranking AWEI non-profit or charity

HWEI Gold Service Provider Award from Pride in Diversity

Meeting the SDGs

Uniting’s commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality extends to our clients and their families, as well as our employees and volunteers.

SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.

SDG Indicator 10.2 – By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic, and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

SDG Indicator 10.3 – Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies, and action in this regard.



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Our environmental solutions

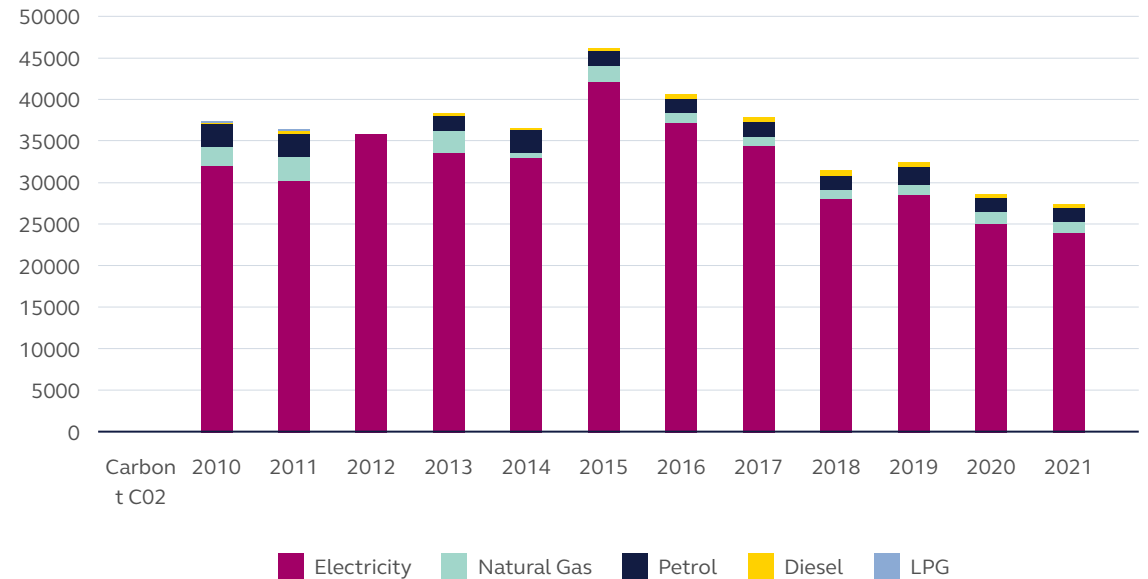
The start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 provided an opportunity for the world to take a fresh look at our global environment as, for a brief period, there was a significant decrease in the world’s energy usage and emissions. Uniting experienced a drop in emissions from 2019 to 2020 due to lockdown, although there’s been a downward trend in our emissions since 2015. Climate action is an integral part of the SDGs and aligns with Uniting’s journey towards carbon neutrality by 2040 and continuing to provide sustainable community living spaces.

Uniting’s carbon emissions

Uniting NSW.ACT, together with the Uniting Church of Australia Property Trust (NSW), has been reporting its carbon emissions to the Australian Government through the National Greenhouse and Energy Reporting Scheme (NGERS) since 2010.

In the period 2010 -2021, Uniting has reduced its annual carbon emissions by 26.7%. The reduction began in mid-2015, when Uniting started to install solar photovoltaic panels on our aged care homes. The carbon emissions reductions have also been achieved through the upgrading to energy-efficient LED lighting.

Uniting NSW.ACT carbon emissions 2010-2021



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Lowering Uniting’s carbon emissions is integral to the 2030 Agenda’s aim to reduce global carbon emissions and limit global warming to 1.5C.

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

SDG Indicator 12.6 - Encourage companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

SDG Indicator 13.2 – Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.



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Solar renewable energy

Using the sun's energy to power aged care homes makes great sense to Uniting. The peak of the sun's strength aligns with our highest periods of power demand – it's during the middle of the day that activities including laundry washing, meal preparation, air conditioning and visiting hours take place.

With solar photovoltaic systems already installed on 34 of our services, Uniting is one of the largest renewable energy generators in the aged care sector. Thanks to a contribution from the 9,760 panels on our roofs, generating renewable energy, Uniting has reduced carbon emissions by 26.7% since 2010.



Meeting the SDGs

Managing our environmental footprint responsibly includes making the switch to renewables at Uniting facilities and using energy as efficiently as possible, in line with SDGs 7 and 13.

SDG Indicator 10.2 – Increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix by 2030.

A total of 9,760 solar panels have been installed across 32 aged care facilities since 2017.

SDG Indicator 13.3 – Improve institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

Uniting carbon emissions have reduced by 26.7% since 2010.



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Synod Climate Action Strategy

The 2019 meeting of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT agreed to a Synod Climate Action Strategy that set targets around activism and reductions in emissions by the Church.

The Synod Emissions Task Group has nearly finalised a transition to carbon-neutral vehicles by 2023, and has initiated the development of a plan to be carbon neutral by 2040. The group continues to conduct extensive assessments to reduce emissions across our Church agency services and supply chains.

The Advocacy Task Group actively promoted and campaigned for various climate change events this year, and worked with multiple stakeholders to initiate plans of action by the government to tackle climate change. This included promoting to congregations the Cities Power Partnership (CPP) program, where local councils work with communities, businesses, and other groups to promote renewable energy use and other strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Youth Climate Actions Task Group was also created as a way for Uniting to support young people’s climate activism, particularly through the SchoolStrike4Climate (SS4C) movement.

The focus for this group is on promoting and encouraging the engagement of Uniting Church members and congregations in SS4C events and multiple events as part of the Build Our Future, Not Gas campaign.

The Climate Pastoral Care Conference was held in August 2020, via Zoom due to COVID-19, and focused on growing concern about the mental health impacts of climate change, particularly for young people. This task group created resources that young people can access to build awareness for the emotional and mental health impacts of climate change, including A Climate Conversation Guide, and has been shared with our congregations, the United Theological College, and to chaplains in UC schools.

Meeting the SDGs



SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

SDG Indicator 13.3 – Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning.

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Our Bush Regeneration Project

The aftermath of the 2019 Australian bushfires made Uniting's work in bush regeneration even more integral to nurturing and reviving the environment to protect Australian flora and fauna against future climate-related natural disasters.

Uniting has continued our work at Nareen Terrace, a unique and diverse site that contains over 150 species of native plants and more than 50 species of native fauna. There has been a significant reduction of weed density in all areas we've worked on over the last 7 years, reducing the threat to native flora. Over 2.5Ha of revegetation works was done within core bushland that helped to re-establish plant communities and create native fauna habitats for local birds, mammals, and frogs.

Asset Protection Zone (APZ) works and fuel reduction in these areas helped to reduce fire risks, currently applying a more sensitive approach to preserve species in these areas whilst complying with important fire preventative regulations.

Uniting continues our bush regeneration work in these areas and our commitment to restoring and protecting Australia's wildlife and the environment.

Sustainable Development Goals

Meeting the SDGs

The richness and vastness of Australia's wildlife needs protection as climate change increasingly continues to threaten biodiversity and extinction continues.

SDG 15: Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

SDG Indicator 15.5 – Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

SDG Indicator 15.8 – By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.



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SDG Indicator 12.6 calls on organisations to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

This report captures Uniting's ongoing social justice contributions towards the SDGs and measuring their progress.

Our next steps will be:

Continuing the great work of our Future Horizons social innovation initiatives

Developing a detailed plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040

Creating more liveable and sustainable communities

Including sustainability initiatives in future developments such as our Charlestown and Waverley campuses

About Uniting

Uniting NSW.ACT is responsible for the social justice, community services and chaplaincy work of the Uniting Church in NSW and the ACT.

We provide care and support for people through all ages and stages of life, with a focus on people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability.

Our purpose is to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

We value diversity and always welcome everyone, exactly as they are.

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Uniting