



Creating a community of care.

As demand for our services continues to rise, so does the impact of your support. Take a moment to read about why your compassion matters.

Spring 2026
Supporter Newsletter

Uniting

Strength in numbers.



In my first year at Uniting, I've witnessed the power of building relationships and partnering with community to deliver support to vulnerable people across Victoria and Tasmania.

I've spent time visiting the breadth of Uniting's services across the two states, and it's been heartening to witness the incredible work your generosity and support makes possible.

As evident by the support we received for our Share the Warmth Winter Appeal, tangible impact can only be achieved when we band together. Our staff, volunteers and supporters all united this winter to provide warmth and care for those doing it tough.

Thanks to your unwavering support, we were able to help more people experiencing homelessness into temporary or permanent housing, deliver emergency food relief to those having to choose between food or heating their homes, and provide mental health and financial counselling support to those in crisis.

Your generous donations allowed us to provide emergency relief to families struggling due to the economic fallout caused by offshore conflicts, ensuring they didn't have to make the difficult choices between petrol and groceries.

I'm also grateful to you, our donors and supporters, for banding together to work towards reducing the impact of poverty, trauma, and disadvantage.

Your generosity is a partnership that strengthens our ability to create meaningful, lasting change, and be present for people when they need it most.

As we approach the warmer months, I look forward to putting that generosity into action.

Carol Jeffs
Chief Executive Officer





“Rather than making me feel like a recipient of charity, they have helped me feel part of a community.”

– Rudi

Food insecurity is about far more than hunger.

In the past year, more than 900 individuals and families have turned to Uniting’s emergency relief service in Prahran for help. 350 of them seeking support for the first time.

For Rudi, food insecurity meant skipping meals, and sometimes entire days of eating, just to get by.

At 57, Rudi was forced to give up work due to several complex health issues. Now 66, her government pension is barely enough to cover her needs, and finding food is a daily worry.

“Food insecurity is about far more than hunger. It affects health, relationships, confidence and family memories,” says Rudi.

“It creates stress, shame and exhaustion. It changes how people shop, cook, eat and think. Some of its effects are visible, but many remain hidden.

“It is the constant worry of whether what you have will last until the next payment. The mental arithmetic that never stops, and the quiet decisions that nobody else sees.”

Rudi was skeptical when her disability support worker suggested she visit Uniting in Prahran for support.

“Asking for help is hard,” she shares. “[In the past] when I needed help it wasn’t there. I was treated as an inconvenience, a non-entity.”

Still, Rudi decided to give Uniting a chance.

“I had an interview, and they took me through the food pantry, and it was a totally different experience,” she says.

A year on, Uniting has supported Rudi through community meals, access to groceries and help to gain subsidies for energy bills, support that has made a meaningful difference in her life.

“Since coming to Uniting, I have never felt judged,” she says. “Not once. That may sound like a small thing, but when you have struggled financially there can be a great deal of embarrassment attached to asking for help.

“Rather than making me feel like a recipient of charity, they have helped me feel part of a community. They have provided not only food, but also connection, respect and a sense that I matter.

“That has made a difference far beyond the value of the meal or the groceries themselves.”



To learn more about our Food For Families program, scan the QR code or visit **foodforfamilies.org.au**



130 people housed in Bendigo.

As rental availability falls to historic lows in regional communities, Uniting's Bendigo Housing Development offers some relief to the area's most vulnerable people.

The recently opened \$44 million housing project, made up of 73 one-and-two-bedroom units, has provided homes for 130 people on the priority housing waitlist.

This includes individuals and families experiencing homelessness, living with a disability, victim-survivors of family violence, women over 55, and people living in unsafe or unsuitable housing.

Among them is 71-year-old tenant, Trish, who has rented all her life and moved house over 40 times.

She's raised two children as a single mum, worked countless jobs, and now cares for her husband Phil, 67, who lives with a disability after a series of strokes.

"I've never owned a place," shares Trish. "I raised my kids in commission houses. Always lived week to week." Originally from Bendigo, Trish convinced Phil to move back there from Melbourne 15 years ago, although they soon found the regional rental market offered little improvement.

“Our last place, they put the price up again and we just couldn’t afford it,” says Trish.

After spotting the Myers Street community housing on Uniting’s website, Trish submitted an application and was thrilled when they were offered a place.

“I’ve never lived in brand new ever before – it’s beautiful – it’s the thing I’m most excited about,” she shares.

“As long as we pay our rent, which we can do no problem, we’ll be here until they take me to the cemetery.”

Single mother Sherree is another new tenant at the Myers Street complex. The young mother of two energetic boys had worried about where her family would sleep each night when she was referred to Uniting Housing through support services.

Sherree and her boys were living in motels and camping cabins after leaving Echuca where she’d struggled to meet private rent for two years.

“I’ve been in fighting, survival mode for a long time,” she shares. “I feel like I’m coming out of a hell hole. I feel like a new phase is beginning.”

Within two months of moving to Bendigo, Sherree has enjoyed the safety and calm her new community has to offer.

“There was a time when I withdrew from the world, but here I’m much better,” she says. “I’ve been to the fun parks and the pool with the boys. It’s better on my mental health.

“Living here has been a real eye-opener. There are some lovely people here. It’s something better, something fresh, something safe.”

The land itself was contributed by Uniting’s Bendigo and Axedale Congregation, and a donation from local couple, Carol and Bill Holsworth, was instrumental to the project’s inception. Uniting provided \$10 million as part of our commitment to affordable housing, with the remainder funded through Homes Victoria as part of the Big Housing Build.

The model has been a great success, and Uniting is currently developing more social and affordable housing in Ringwood, Coburg and Ivanhoe.

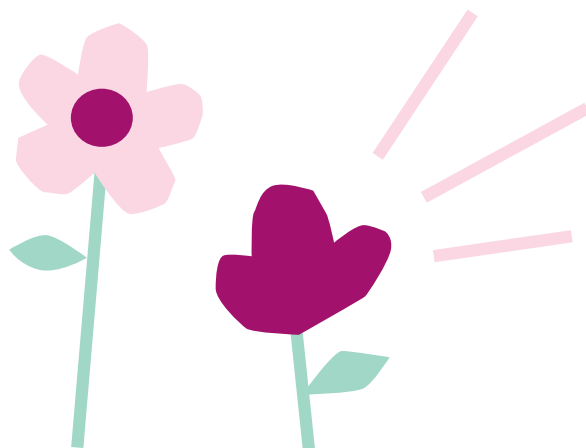
Generous gifts from supporters and donors will significantly impact the success of these projects and help create a future where everyone has access to safe and affordable housing.



“I feel like a new phase is beginning” says single mum Sherree.



The new development, alongside the historic St Andrews Church.



Fundraising with a side of maple syrup.



As part of Uniting's annual Pancake Day, several Uniting Early Learning centres hosted Pancake Day fundraising events to raise money for the most vulnerable and marginalised people in our communities.

St Luke's Uniting Kindergarten in Mount Waverley made delicious banana pancakes with their students, raising \$130 across two kindergarten classes. Service Coordinator and teacher at St Luke's for 20 years, Debra Parslow says the children were all too keen to cook them, and all too keen to eat them!

"The children just love the experience of cooking, pouring, mixing, measuring and smashing the

bananas until we get the batter ready, and then one at a time, they add their pancake and flip it under close supervision."

Debra says their Pancake Day event is more than just raising funds. It allows the students to build their understanding of philanthropy and giving back, while developing mathematical and social skills.

"Not just having fun making pancakes, but that we're raising money for people that aren't as lucky as we are," Debra says.

"It's great to plant that seed of compassion and awareness at this really early age."





Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre reopens.

Thanks to the support of several Uniting Church congregations, the Asylum Seeker Welcome Centre in Brunswick has reopened its doors after a devastating electrical fire in 2024 forced the Centre to relocate temporarily to Coburg.

Asylum seeker Ramta is glad to see the Centre reopen to provide a safe and welcoming community space for people who have emigrated to Australia.

Arriving in 2014, Ramta struggled to adjust to a new culture, lifestyle and language. The working limitations on her temporary visa also caused great financial strain, preventing her from acquiring stable housing.

After suddenly finding herself homeless in 2019, Ramta was referred to the Centre where she received housing support, financial counselling, emotional support and connection with other asylum seekers through the Centre's social and cultural events.

"I feel so blessed to have [Uniting] in my life," Ramta says.

Ramta holds particularly fond memories of the Diwali festival the Centre hosted which encouraged her to take pride in and showcase her home country's culture, food, and music.

"That was really close to my heart," Ramta says of the Centre embracing asylum seeker's cultures and traditions. "Look how much they respect you."

Six years on, Ramta is still involved with the Centre as a volunteer and member of their advisory group.

Honouring a lifetime of service.

We are deeply grateful to the legacy of Marjorie Roberts, a lifelong Uniting Church member whose bequest reflects the values she lived by every day.



Marjorie and her husband Ken were born during the Depression and grew up in hardworking families that instilled in them resilience, faith and compassion.

After meeting at university, they married and spent more than six decades serving the Heathmont community through the Heathmont Uniting Church.

Ken volunteered as church treasurer for more than 30 years and was a devoted member of the church council, working bees, fetes and youth activities. Marjorie's contributions were equally remarkable, teaching Sunday School, offering pastoral care as an Elder, supporting funeral hospitality, welcoming newcomers each week, and volunteering in the church office for more than a decade.

Despite living simply, raising four children in the same family home and holidaying in caravans around Victoria, Marjorie and Ken gave generously to causes close to their hearts, including international developments, children's charities and local community services.

"Mum and Dad never considered themselves wealthy, yet they lived lives overflowing with generosity, faith and love", says their daughter, Helen.

In leaving a significant bequest to Uniting, Marjorie ensures her lifetime of generosity will continue to provide support for people in need. Her children share this story with immense pride, knowing their parents never sought recognition, only the chance to help others, just as they had done throughout their lives.

"They believed deeply in giving back, not for recognition, but because helping others was simply who they were," says Helen.

Marjorie and Ken's legacy lives on not only through the programs supported by Marjorie's bequest, but through the countless people they welcomed, taught, encouraged, prayed for, and walked beside along the way.

Uniting is honoured to celebrate their story and give thanks for the compassion, faith and love that shaped their extraordinary lives.

If you would like to learn more about leaving your own legacy or like to receive our free Gift in Will guide, please contact:

Sharon Wangman
Program Lead, Gift in Wills

T 0435 035 442

E bequests@vt.uniting.org

Write your will for free.

Uniting is offering free online wills through Safewill from 7-21 September.

Protect your loved ones and consider leaving a gift to Uniting to make a lasting community impact.



Scan the code or visit
safewill.com/uniting



Content warning: This story includes mentions of suicide. If it raises concerns for you, please contact Lifeline on **13 11 14**.

Becoming the mentor her teenage self always wanted.

When Uniting Youth Mentor Emma was 10 years old, her life changed overnight.

Emma's father died by suicide, throwing her life and the lives of her mother and three siblings into disarray.

After struggling with mental ill-health in high school, she realised how much she would have benefitted from having a mentor help guide her through those challenging teen years. She decided then, that when she was older, she would pursue mentorship.

"I want to make an impact on a young person's life," Emma says.

For the past six months, Emma has been mentoring a young person by "offering guidance, a friendly face, and not putting too much pressure" on them.

Over time, she has built a strong relationship with her mentee through shopping trips, chats about life's challenges, and consistent communication over text.

Emma has found mentoring is mostly about being a consistent and supportive presence in a young person's life, rather than trying to answer life's biggest questions.

"There are a lot of young people that go through a lot of change and a lot of difficult situations and having that consistency just makes them feel more important, more valued," Emma says.

Drawing from her own challenges as a teenager, Emma can relate to the everyday struggles and uncertainties of being a young person.

"Having gone through everything in my life, I wouldn't be where I am today without the support of other people. Being able to provide that support to a young person, it makes such a big difference in my life, because I know I'm helping someone when they're going through a lot in their life," Emma says.

Speaking of her experience volunteering with Uniting, Emma says she finds it fulfilling.

"It's become a really important part of my life."



Find your volunteer opportunity today. Scan the code or visit, unitingvictas.org.au/volunteer

A winter of care and kindness.

This winter, older women like Edith* have been kept safe and supported during some of our coldest months, thanks to the generosity of people like you.



Originally living in a campervan in isolated bushlands with no electricity or running water, Edith now enjoys life in her new home surrounded by a supportive, caring community.

“I’m extremely appreciative of the help I received,” shares Edith. “It has not only given me a home, furniture, and the goods to start my life again, but peace of mind and happiness. Every dollar counts towards helping the homeless.”

Thanks to your incredible generosity, you helped raise more than \$500,000 to support people experiencing homelessness this winter. This support has helped provide hundreds of winter essentials packages, including warm bedding, nourishing food, cooking supplies and clothing, while also helping people access emergency accommodation and ongoing support.

**Edith has generously shared her story. Her name and image have been changed to respect her wishes and protect her safety.*

Your generosity is equivalent to providing:



1,000

nights of
emergency
accommodation



10,000

emergency
food supplies



750

essential
clothing packs



1,000

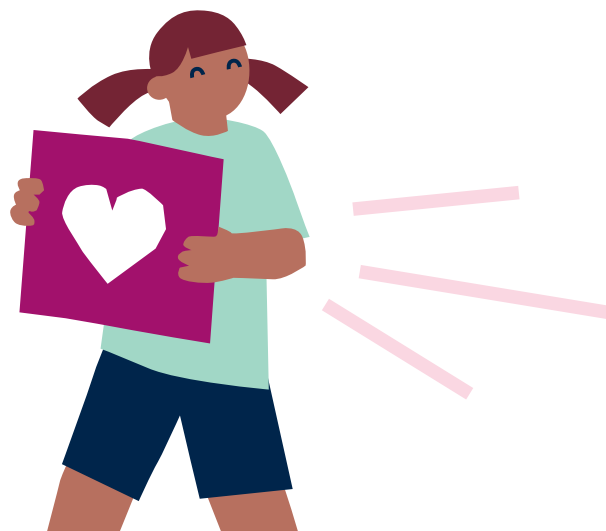
sleeping
bags



350

cooking
supply packs

Thank you again for responding so passionately and urgently to our Winter Appeal. Your support is truly changing lives.



Join in on the fun of fundraising.

25 years of flipping for good.

Each year, hundreds celebrate Pancake Day by hosting events in their homes, schools, churches, businesses, and communities.

Since 2002, this annual fundraiser has brought people together through a shared love of pancakes and a commitment to support those in need.

Join us on Tuesday, 9 February 2027 to celebrate this very special milestone.



Scan to register your event or visit unitingvictas.org.au/pancake

Give the gift of joy.

The holidays look different for families doing it tough.

As we approach Christmas, your donation of a toy or gift can ensure everyone who turns to us for support will have something special to unwrap.



Scan to find your local Uniting service or visit fundraise.unitingvictas.org.au/giftsforfamilies

Small shop, big impact.

You don't need to spend a lot to make a real difference.

By adding just a few extra items to your weekly shop, or inviting friends and family to help, your donation of non-perishable food, personal hygiene products, or cleaning supplies can ease the pressure for families doing it tough.



Scan to register or visit foodforfamilies.org.au/register

Turn your next celebration into something bigger.

Whether you're hosting an event or marking a milestone, our Community Fundraising Hub gives you everything you need to fundraise for Uniting.

Register today and help make a difference in your local community.



Scan to discover how to get involved or visit fundraise.unitingvictas.org.au/community-fundraising-hub

Entertainment membership.

Enjoy exclusive discounts on travel, dining, shopping and more with an Entertainment Membership, and support Uniting at the same time.

20% of every membership purchase goes directly to supporting Uniting's vital services.



Scan to buy or renew your membership, or visit subscribe.entertainment.com.au/fundraiser/18438m3

Cheques are phasing out.

Cheques are getting phased out by 30 June 2028.

Other payment options already available to use are BPAY, Credit Card via phone or online, or returning one of our donation coupons.

If you'd like support figuring out the best payment method for you, please don't hesitate to call us on 1800 668 426, option 1.

Want to learn more about getting involved? Our team would love to hear from you.

T 1800 668 426

E community@unitingvictas.org.au

Your donations are building a brighter future.

Call us
1800 668 426

Visit
[unitingvictas.org.au](https://unitingvictas.org.au/newsletter)
/newsletter



Our foundation flows from people of faith in the late 1800's, seeing a need and responding with generosity. Our heritage unites us in a common purpose and with common values, a collective spirit was born.

Today, we dare to reach further than ever before, informed by the voice of the people we serve and the communities with which we partner, to drive real, positive social change.



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

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited
ABN 81 098 317 125

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