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# Our

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## About UnitingCare Children's Services

*UnitingCare Children's Services (UCCS) is a Service Group of UnitingCare NSW.ACT. Our services, operated by Uniting Churches across New South Wales and ACT, provide quality early childhood education, care and support to more than 6,000 children during the early stages of their development.*

Services are either 'Locally Managed' (LMS) by a local management committee of the Uniting Church and parent representatives or 'Directly Managed' (DMS) by UnitingCare Children's Services with a local advisory committee.

This approach enables local congregations to maintain an active involvement within the service through advisory and management committees,

and operate under the UnitingCare Children's Services guidelines and principles. 'Directly Managed' Services draw upon UnitingCare Children's Services experience in quality service provision and management operations through a direct line management structure. 'Locally Managed' Services draw upon this expertise through a statutory resource and support structure.

Our goal of nurturing confident and creative learners is the primary focus of all that we do across our Long Day Care, Occasional Care, Family Day Care, Preschool and Outside School Hours Care services.

UnitingCare Children's Services is committed to providing accessible children's services that are affordable and of the highest quality delivered in a not-for-profit, community service approach.

# Mission Our Values

## Our Mission

*To enrich the lives of children through excellent, accessible and viable services.*

## Our Values

*UnitingCare Children's Services is a value-based organisation which embraces the ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia and stands by the UnitingCare NSW.ACT Social Justice Charter. Our core values are:*

- Honesty, transparency and integrity in the way we do business*
- Access and equity in planning and delivery of services and broad allocation of resources*
- Justice and protection of human rights for all*
- Recognising and respecting diversity and difference*
- Recognising and respecting Indigenous peoples and their cultural legacy and traditions*
- Participation and inclusion of families in service planning and decision making*
- Giving expression to the unity of God's love in the world*

# Highli

## Chairperson's Overview

I am pleased to present the inaugural UnitingCare Children's Services Report.

We now have 12 Directly Managed Services and 47 Locally Managed Services in our group. The additional workload and the need to focus on financial and qualitative performance has prompted the formation of three committees of the Board: Finance Audit & Risk; Education, Compliance & Operations, and Communication & Marketing.

We are working in an increasingly regulated environment undergoing much change from within the sector and from government. As we meet the financial and other challenges, it is important that we remain aware of our purpose and mission as a Service Group of UnitingCare NSW.ACT and the Uniting Church.

I thank all members of the UCCS Board, the Director and staff and local management committees and congregations for their dedication and commitment.



Simon Maughan Wright  
Chairperson  
UnitingCare Children's Services



## Director's Report

Our theme, nurturing confident and creative learners, embodies our role at UCCS as educators and carers, whilst maintaining our focus on well being and positive outcomes for all children within our community.

Over the year we have dedicated time to building relationships with staff, families, congregations and communities. By working together we have improved our management of risk and compliance within an increasingly complex legislative environment and developed more streamlined and accessible processes and procedures. We now have a regular (*UCCS express*) communication, a unified payroll system, a comprehensive style guide and many other online resources to support both our Locally and Directly Managed Services.

Our positive dialogue with state and federal governments has increased our presence within the profession and enabled definite progress on issues such as 1:4 adult:child ratios for under two year olds, Preschool funding, Central Licensing, and National Quality Standards. We continue to raise awareness of the importance of universal Early Childhood Education and Care for our children.

I would like to thank all the UCCS staff for their ongoing commitment and dedication to the children and families we serve.



Elizabeth Death  
Director  
UnitingCare Children's Services



# ights Achieve

Highlights and Achievements



*The highlights and achievements here are just some of our initiatives during the past year. Of course, there are many more across UnitingCare Children's Services that demonstrate the growth and development of confident and creative learners encouraged by our dedicated staff, families, congregations and communities.*

# Highlights

During the year, UCCS completed nine Department of Employment, Education and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) Registrations of Interest as part of the State Government's Initiative to create 260 new Early Learning and Care Centres.

Our collaborative work with other UnitingCare Service Groups included working with UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families on the development of an integrated child and family centre model, and with UnitingCare Ageing on the conceptual development of intergenerational centres.

UCCS also participated with UnitingCare Australia in national responses to the Child Protection Framework, the National Quality Framework for early childhood educational care, and on paid parental leave.

## Directly Managed Services (DMS)

What a positive year for UCCS with a growth in the number of Directly Managed Services to 12. Recent services to join us are White Dove Children's Centre Condell Park, Dove Cottage Children's Centre Bankstown and St Luke's Preschool Kindergarten in Belmont North. It is anticipated this number will increase early in 2009.

Directly Managed Services include Preschool, Long Day Care, Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) and Vacation Care. We provide 90 Preschool and 221 Long Day Care licensed places per day. We also offer 90 OSHC places daily before school in three locations and 170 OSHC places daily after school in four locations. Vacation care is provided with maximum numbers of 85 places per day across two locations.

UnitingCare Janis Children's Centre in Penrith, UnitingCare Susanna Children's Centre\* and UnitingCare Curran's Hill OSHC achieved accreditation during the year which reflects our continued commitment to providing high quality education and care.

\* In St Marys

A positive joint initiative is the UnitingCare Child and Family Network St Mary's with services on site now including UnitingCare Susanna Children's Centre, UnitingCare Burnside Newpin, Growing Together Playgroup, Young Parents Playgroup, and a Community Connector.

## Locally Managed Services (LMS)

There are 47 LMS in UnitingCare Children's Services and the past year has featured the creation of regular network meetings for specific children's service types: Preschool; Long Day Care, and Outside School Hours Care. These meetings have provided a wonderful opportunity for Directors and Coordinators to network with other professionals.

A Connections meeting was also introduced in 2008 with further meetings planned for 2009. The aim of these meetings is to provide management committee members and Directors/Coordinators the opportunity to discuss the strategic direction of UnitingCare Children's Services and the early childhood profession.

# 10 Years

Our Library has changed focus over the past six months with a greater emphasis on professional development for all staff members. This will assist staff to keep up to date with current research and provide assistance for those who are continuing with post graduate and further education.

Service visits across New South Wales during the year provided a valuable opportunity to meet with Directors and staff to assist with resourcing, advice on service management and to discuss community involvement at the service level.

## Human Resources

The appointment of a Human Resources Manager during the year has enabled the progress of a number of important initiatives for our 600 plus staff.

Eleven DMS and one LMS have transitioned to the UnitingCare Payroll Services Centre. This provides a full payroll and information service to staff and contributes to our goal of becoming an Employer of Choice. Twelve more LMS are expected to transition to the Centre and go live as at February 2009.

A Training Needs Analysis was completed during the year to provide a comprehensive snapshot of learning and

development requirements for all DMS and LMS staff. This will enable targeted training opportunities to be developed in the coming year.

The signing of an Indigenous Employment Strategy with DEEWR and the appointment of an Indigenous Employment Officer will assist and support the employment and development of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across our services.

UCCS continues to work to achieve greater consistency in its systems, processes and procedures, to enable our time and resourcing to be focused on the education and care of our children.





## A place like home

*Sophie\* and Thomas\* play together on the family room floor, surrounded by colourful building blocks and puzzles. It doesn't take long to realise that they have a special bond.*

“Their connection is just so strong as it is with all twins. Thomas understands exactly what Sophie wants or says even when I sometimes don't”, says Helen of her four year olds.

Sophie was born with Down Syndrome and when the time came for Helen to return to work, she and her husband were adamant that Sophie and Thomas would be together in mainstream childcare.

“Sophie and Thomas are surrounded by a large extended family and it was important to find somewhere that had a home-like environment where they could play and learn together. The UnitingCare Children's Centre was just the place as it had a lovely home family feel to it, while being very attuned to Sophie's additional needs.”

When Sophie and Thomas first came to the Centre, they were in the babies room together however Sophie didn't walk until she was two, so it was especially important that her more mobile brother could still run and explore as he liked. This was encouraged and supported by the Centre. The common play area for all the children at the Centre also meant that Sophie and Thomas could always be together or close by.

“Everyone at the Centre is very friendly and they go out of their way to assist and support Sophie to be her own person and lead the way while still ensuring she has the structure she needs. Someone from UnitingCare Children's Services central office regularly visits Sophie and the staff to help structure her time there with specific goals to

achieve and work towards. This was particularly helpful for her gross motor skills”, says Helen.

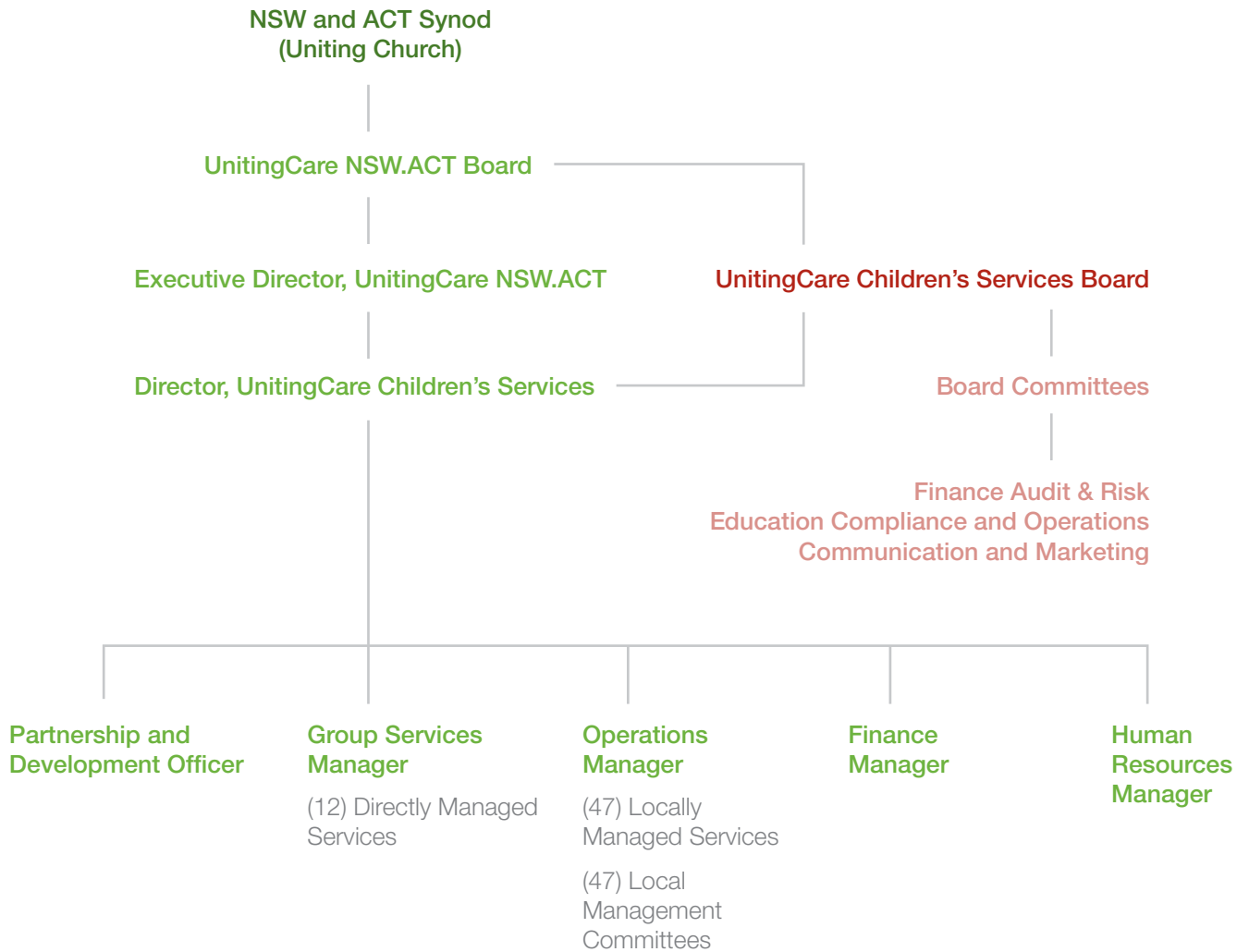
This year the Centre has been helping Sophie with her colours and to improve her verbal skills by encouraging her to use words when communicating.

“This has been the best experience Sophie has had integrating into mainstream services”, says Helen.

\* Names changed to protect privacy



## Organisational Structure



# Board Members



**Simon Maughan Wright, Chairperson**

Simon is the owner and director of Australian Business Sales & Acquisitions, a boutique mergers and acquisitions business and several other businesses. He was previously employed as a director of ANZ Business Sales & Acquisitions, ANZ Investment Bank, Westpac Business Sales & Acquisitions and Manager and Director of a \$60mpa private group of companies. He has been a Director of several other private and public companies and trustee and Rector's Warden of St Mark's Church Darling Point. Simon is a qualified lawyer with a post graduate qualification from Sydney University.



**Elizabeth Death**

Elizabeth has a B. ED (EC) with Distinction and has worked within the early childhood profession for more than 25 years. Her experience crosses rural and urban settings and includes directing and teaching in Preschool and Long Day Care settings, early intervention, lecturing at universities, teaching at TAFE, consultancy and service group management. Elizabeth is a passionate advocate for affordable, accessible and excellent community-based children's services. She is co-author of 'Programming and Planning in Early Childhood Settings', 4th edition, a current Australian and NZ academic text and professional resource.



**Annette O'Neill**

Annette O'Neill trained in social work and town planning. She is currently a Director (and former Chair) of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre, a Member of the NSW Administrative Decisions Tribunal and a Board member of Shelter NSW. She has worked in health, housing, planning, management, dispute resolution, and for eight years was the Senior Member of the Social Security Appeals Tribunal in NSW. Having also had four children, and now grandchildren, she is committed to community involvement and to access and excellence in children's services.



**Denise Taylor**

Denise is the Chief Executive Officer of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC) responsible for the administration of Child Care Quality Assurance systems throughout Australia. Denise holds a Master of Education, Grad. Dip. in School Librarianship, Dip. in Teaching, Certificate in Teaching. Her background is in education, having spent 20 years teaching in both state and independent schools. She has held school leadership roles including that of Principal. Denise is also a member of the Childcare and Children's Health Editorial Board (Melbourne Children's Hospital).



**Meredith Williams**

Meredith is the Minister with St David's Congregation in Dee Why. Her previous placement was with the Related Congregations of Burwood in Croydon, where she also served on the Burwood Uniting Church Kindergarten management committee helping build a strong relationship between the congregations and the Kindergarten. She has a BA from Sydney University, a Graduate Diploma in Library Science, a Bachelor of Theology, and a Bachelor of Divinity. When Meredith and her family lived on the Mid-North Coast of NSW she taught music at the local St Joseph's Primary School and ran the local Uniting Church after school activity program.

# Board Members



**Reverend Harry Herbert**

Reverend Harry Herbert is Executive Director of UnitingCare NSW.ACT. He serves as ex-officio on the Boards of UnitingCare Ageing, UnitingCare Children's Services and UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families. He is a Minister of the Uniting Church having been ordained as a Congregational Minister in 1972. He is also Co-chair of AGL Customer Council; Member, Legal Aid Commission Board; Chair of the Responsible Gambling Fund; Member NSW Government Boarding House Expert Advisory Group, and Secretary of the Civil Chaplaincies Advisory Committee (CCAC).



**Jim Cox**

Jim Cox serves on the Board of UnitingCare NSW.ACT and as a representative on the UnitingCare Children's Services Board. Jim has an engineering background and prior to retirement was a senior executive with NSW WorkCover Authority. Since his retirement, Jim has worked extensively for United Nations agencies in South Africa and Vietnam in the field of labour inspection. He is a member of Adamstown Uniting Church, and is currently serving as Chairperson of the Adamstown Heights Preschool, a UnitingCare service. Jim is married with four adult children.



**John Martin**

John recently left a large Australian telecommunications company after 25 years in which he held a variety of technical and general management roles. He is currently working as a part-time property and IT consultant for UnitingCare Ageing. John works to assist not-for-profit organisations with their business operations, property and IT strategy to assist them to achieve their organisational goals in a just and socially responsible way. John is a member of Synod Funds Management Committee; Property Manager for Parramatta Nepean Presbytery and Korean Commission; and a Director of Lifeline Macarthur board. John is a member of Quakers Hill Uniting Church.



**Mark Pigot**

Mark is Director, ICT Service Management at the University of Sydney, where he manages all IT infrastructure and client services across the University. His 25 year IT career has spanned senior management roles in AMP, Reckitt & Coleman, EDS, and Commonwealth Bank. Mark holds a Bachelor of Science from the University of Sydney, and is a graduate of the Benevolent Society's "Sydney Leadership" program for cross-sector social leadership. He is a member of, and Music Director at, Castle Hill Community Church.



**Tonia Godhard | AM**

Tonia, a qualified early childhood teacher, has worked in children's services in Australia and England. Prior to retirement she was CEO of SDN Children's Services. Tonia has worked as an academic, training early childhood teachers. Tonia is presently a Board member of NIFTeY and Good Beginnings Australia. She has also held numerous Ministerial appointments to committees and is currently on the Product Safety Committee and the Preschool Investment and Reform Program. She has also served as National President of Early Childhood Australia, inaugural chair of the National Children's Services Forum and a Board member of the National Childcare Accreditation Council (NCAC). She is currently a member of the Accreditation Audit Committee of NCAC.

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Thank you to the children, parents and carers of West Bexley, Penrith and Paddington whose photographs feature in this report.

Photography by Gerrit Fokkema,  
Christopher Shain and Andrew Simpson

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