

# Uniting AgeWell Identity Statement



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## Who We Are

Uniting AgeWell works with older people to help them stay as well as possible, and live full and rich lives. We are part of the Uniting Church and our work is infused with the Christian faith tradition. Everyone is equal, united by our common humanity and capacity for love and care. Everyone is welcome, regardless of age, race, nationality, religion, sexuality, gender, or social status. In particular, we welcome people who have had to live on the margins of society at some time in their lives because of poverty, prejudice, disability or illness.

At the heart of our work in Uniting AgeWell is our desire to honour the unique spirit of love, life and aliveness in every person. This way of seeing the world drives the way we plan, resource and provide the services we offer.

As a church organisation, we are not driven by market forces to make money for shareholders. We reinvest any surpluses into improved facilities and services. We are grateful for substantial additional resources available through bequests, and the

We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work, and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and future.

many volunteer hours given by congregation members and others.

We are committed to safety and high quality care. We do this because we know it is the right thing to do, not because it is required by regulations.

## What We Do

Our reason for being is to create caring communities where every older person feels welcome and is supported in the ways that matter to them. Our work takes place in four settings where older people live and meet:

- > their own homes
- > independent living centres
- > residential homes
- > community service centres.

We are also working – along with many other people – to help create a world where older people are:

- > visible in society
- > treated with dignity and respect

***The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.***

***Galatians 5: 22–23 NRSV***

- › appreciated for the many gifts and talents they have to offer
- › able to enrich the lives of others, especially children and young people.

In this, we are inspired by Australia's First Peoples, and the great respect they hold for their Elders.

*Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation.*

*Vision and Mission Principles, Victorian and Tasmanian Synod, 2016*

## How We Work

At Uniting Agewell, two beliefs-in-action arising from our Christian faith come together to create a unique program of services.

### Support for each person in their uniqueness

Our approach is holistic. We see each individual person as having needs related not only to their physical health, but also to their emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Every older person is also part of the lives of their family members, friends and communities, and we acknowledge them as companions, carers and loved ones.

As people grow older, they are more vulnerable to injury and illness. To stay as well as possible, we know older people benefit from:

- › remaining independent in mind and spirit, as well as physically
- › being well informed about what support is available
- › having someone who listens carefully as they work out what they need
- › being offered a clear pathway through the sometimes confusing range of services
- › retaining control over decisions about their support and care.

We also know that often it is the little things that make a big difference to the day-to-day lives of older people. A friendly smile, genuine interest in their lives – we encourage our staff to give time and emphasis to this. Older people also thrive when they can continue doing the things they enjoy, whether that be reading, walking, playing music, making art, watching sport, and much more. We encourage our staff to help keep this part of people's lives strong too.

*Do not cast me off in the time of old age; do not forsake me when my strength is spent. Psalm 71:9 NRSV*

## **Abundance and sharing**

Our Uniting AgeWell community is made up of many people. Together we create a strongly woven network of support and care for older people, and for each other. We have an abundance of gifts, talents and skills to share, among them:

- › stories, life experience, wisdom and time from older people themselves
- › love, companionship and support from family members and friends
- › kindness, empathy and professional skills from staff
- › generosity and care from chaplains and congregation members
- › compassion and business skills from managers and board members
- › funds and other resources from government and donors

The contribution made by our congregation members is a unique part of Uniting AgeWell and a powerful force behind what we do. Many of our facilities grew out of members' efforts, and their commitment continues. Many spend time with older people in our programs, offering companionship and sharing in their daily lives. Many are involved in local advisory groups and management committees, bringing skills from their work and life experiences. Many work to advance social justice.

*Jesus doesn't talk about people who are most often excluded as if they were charity cases, but shares their meals, enjoys their hospitality, and insists on giving them priority in his life. <sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Rev Dr Chris Budden, Uniting Church minister and theologian, in *Following Jesus in Invaded Space*, Wipf and Stock, 2009.

*Uniting AgeWell is an organisation of the Uniting Church in Australia*



**1300 783 435**



**unitingagewell.org**



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