

ANNUAL REPORT

2019 – 2020



UCA Redress Ltd
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Acknowledgement

We pay our respects to the First Nations people of the country in which we live and acknowledge elders - past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge that children entrusted to the care of the Church did not always receive the care they deserved and we acknowledge the ongoing impact and trauma of the separation of children from families and communities.



Chair's Message

Now in its second year of operation, UCA Redress Ltd continues to support the Uniting Church in Australia to respond to survivors of abuse, including facilitating the Church's participation in the National Redress Scheme for Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse.

As is the case for all aspects of our lives, COVID-19 has impacted on the work of the Company to some degree. Firstly we acknowledge that some survivors of abuse have been deeply impacted by COVID-19. We note that some survivors have particular health, financial and social disadvantages which make them particularly vulnerable to the impacts of the virus. We acknowledge steps taken by the Scheme to reduce barriers to applying at this time by removing the need for a statutory declaration to be submitted with applications. We are mindful of the implications of COVID-19 on possible face-to-face meetings with survivors of abuse as part of the Direct Personal Response component of the National Redress Scheme. In a small number of matters, we have had to seek extensions to respond to requests for information as some archives have been closed and remote working has impacted access to records. We are very conscious of the need to provide a timely response to RFIs so as not to delay the processing of applications. Our staff have been working from home and our Board and member representatives meetings have been conducted virtually.

As Scheme processes have continued to develop, so too have the operations of UCA Redress Ltd. The focus of the Company's work this year has been streamlining systems and processes for engaging in the National Redress Scheme, understanding decisions made under the Scheme, engaging with internal and external stakeholders and continuing to develop and embed the Company's governance requirements. We have developed a Strategic Plan 2020-2022 and identified our priorities for the coming year. We have undertaken enterprise risk assessment and considered how we ensure our risks are properly managed.

This work has been possible due to the commitment of our staff and Board Directors. I acknowledge the hard work of transitional board members Rev. John Cox and Dion Gooderham, who were instrumental in the complex work of establishing the Company. Their contributions provided invaluable foundations for the work of the Company. As we moved from the Company's start-up phase into our first full year of operations, we welcomed three new board members in 2019-2020 – Peter Roach and Robert Watson, as Synod member representative directors; and Melia Benn as Board appointed director. Together with Colleen Geyer, as continuing Assembly representative director, the Board has a diverse range of valuable skills. Directors' deep commitment is evident in every meeting, where their work in the best interests of the Company is anchored in their commitment to a compassionate response to survivors of abuse.

I thank Stuart McMillan and Allan Gibson who volunteer their time on the Company's Nominations Committee. Their leadership and insights have contributed to the establishment of a highly competent board, which has a diverse range of skills and experience. We thank the Company's members and member representatives as we navigate this novel way of working for the Church. The national collaboration means that the Church is able work towards consistent and equitable responses to people who experienced abuse, and to use our knowledge and resources to the benefit of survivors and the Church as a whole.

On behalf of the Board, I acknowledge survivors of abuse, your families and supporters. If you haven't already, we encourage you to participate in the National Redress Scheme. If you have accepted an offer under the Scheme, we invite you to take up the Direct Personal Response component of the Scheme. We will work with you as you access the process. You will be welcomed and supported.

Anne Cross AM
Chair



About UCA Redress Ltd

UCA Redress Ltd is a company limited by guarantee established by the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Company's purpose is to be the national body for the Uniting Church to respond to, and provide support for, children and vulnerable persons who have suffered abuse at the hands of the Uniting Church or its institutions, including by participation in a nationally consistent equitable redress scheme.

UCA Redress Ltd is staffed with a National Director and Administrator, and has a five member board including member representatives and independent members.

The Uniting Church in Australia commenced participation in the National Redress Scheme in March 2019.

UCA Redress Ltd is committed to working to principles of good redress, including being restorative, survivor focussed, trauma informed and culturally safe and appropriate. We will be respectful, accountable, responsive and inclusive.

The work of UCA Redress Ltd includes:

- Facilitating participation of the Uniting Church in Australia in the National Redress Scheme
- Supporting Synods and institutions in providing Direct Personal Response
- Collating and disseminating data and information
- Examining opportunities for national consistency across the Uniting Church
- Contributing to policy development for reviews of the Scheme and redress related matters
- Evolving to meet the needs of Synods, the Assembly and other institutions of the Church in relation to the provision of redress.

National Redress Scheme

The National Redress Scheme has been operating since July 2018.

The Scheme:

- acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions
- holds institutions accountable for this abuse, and
- helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response, and a redress payment.

The Scheme will run for 10 years.





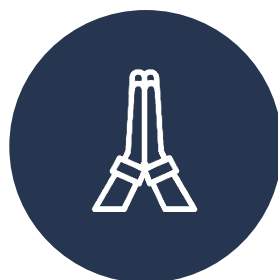
Our commitment

UCA Redress Ltd, as part of The Uniting Church in Australia, commits to responding to and supporting children and vulnerable people who have suffered abuse at the hands of the Church. We are committed to redress as a justice issue, as embedded in our DNA, permeating our practice, and lived out in our actions.

We recognise redress not only as a means to addressing past wrongs, but as taking us forward as a community to a place of reconciliation with those who have suffered, where relationships are rebuilt and trust is restored in our institutions, in our leaders and in our Church.



We will **hear** and **keep**
the stories



We will **apologise**



We will **make change**

We look to redress to take the Church, survivors and communities to a place where all can thrive, where we have learned from – and never forget – the past.





Key achievements

Facilitating Uniting Church in Australia participation in the National Redress Scheme

Data relating to the UCA's participation in the National Redress Scheme is on page 10. UCA Redress Ltd has processes and systems in place to ensure the UCA is responsive to requests for information, working closely with the Scheme Operators to address anomalies and queries, and engaged in the process for the benefit of survivors of abuse.

Over 3500 institutions of the UCA participate in the NRS through UCA Redress Ltd, including congregations, agencies and schools. Some separately incorporated entities of the UCA have had to undergo a separate process of declaration into the Scheme and, following briefings and negotiations, with endorsement from local Synods, UCA Redress Ltd welcomes these entities into the Group.

We continue to update and refine our extensive lists of participating entities to ensure that survivors can search for the UCA's participating institutions.

The Company holds a considerable amount of data that has not been brought together nationally before. This data is disseminated across the Church to help us understand past wrongdoing and to inform current practice.

Stakeholder relations

Stakeholder relations have been an important focus for the year.

UCA Redress Ltd has developed productive and positive relationships with the Departments of Social Services and (previously) Human Services. The National Director and Chair have participated in a meeting of the Non-Government Institutions Committee convened by the Department of Social Services and look forward to these meetings recommencing as COVID-19 restrictions ease.

The UCA Redress Ltd Board Chair and the National Director have sought out opportunities to engage with other non-Government institutions, as well as some state and territory government agency staff who are engaged in redress activities. In developing processes for the Uniting Church, it has been extremely useful to learn from the experience of other institutions and we continue to cultivate relationships and share information.

We have engaged with all Synod and Assembly contacts and staff working in the redress space across the Uniting Church. We have engaged with Standing Committees, schools, agencies, justice staff and other networks. We work closely with the National Safe Church Unit. We continue to invite feedback from our Church and other partners and welcome ongoing engagement with relevant Church leaders and staff.





Direct Personal Response

The Direct Personal Response (DPR) component of the National Redress Scheme is an important engagement between the Church and survivors of abuse. We are deeply committed to trauma-informed, survivor-led, compassionate responses to people who have experienced abuse. Many Church staff have participated in DPR immersion training offered by the Department of Social Services, as well as trauma informed practice training. UCA Redress Ltd has developed a toolkit for DPRs, based on the department's extensive handbook, for use by Synods and institutions in their local contexts. We continue to develop and refine our processes and are committed to continuous improvement.

Numbers of people accessing DPR under the Scheme is low and we look for opportunities to ensure survivors are welcomed into the process.

Anniversary of the Apology to survivors of institutional abuse

The Uniting Church in Australia prepared a Liturgy for the Anniversary of the National Apology to survivors of institutional sexual abuse. We will mark this important anniversary in October each year.

Reviews of the Scheme

We have provided a submission to the Joint Select Committee on the Implementation of the National Redress Scheme (accessible here: https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Joint/National_Redress_Scheme/NationalRedressScheme/Submissions) and look forward to opportunities to engage with the Committee as the inquiry progresses, as well as actively participating in the two year anniversary review of the National Redress Scheme which commences in July 2020.



Reflections on the National Redress Scheme and the occurrence of institutional sexual abuse

- Around 80% of applications to the UCA are from people who have not previously approached the Church in relation to the abuse. This is indicative that the Scheme is operating in a way that gives people an avenue they have not previously felt able to access before. Perhaps the ‘arms length’ from the institution means people feel safer in disclosing their experiences.
- We note that around 23% of people accessing the Scheme are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This overrepresentation is of course disappointing, however, it does suggest that there is significant take up of the Scheme by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. We have advocated for more to be done by the Scheme operator to make sure that eligible people are aware of the Scheme.
- Around half of the people who have accepted an offer relating to abuse in the Uniting Church have advised that they would like a “direct personal response” from the institution – that is, a direct engagement with the institution. We have to wait for these people to let us know when they are ready to commence the direct personal response process – but we ensure our institution representatives and contact people have the appropriate training and skills for survivors to safely tell their story.
- Unsurprisingly, the majority of applications relate to allegations of abuse in out of home care settings, particularly in the 1950s-1970s. As the Royal Commission demonstrated, children in out of home care are particularly vulnerable to abuse.
- In addition to out of home care settings, a small number of applications relate to allegations of abuse in schools and congregational settings.
- The occurrence of abuse is part of our history. We do not hide from it but commit to continuing to learn from it.
- We welcome opportunities to engage with survivors and our Church communities on redress and trauma informed practice.
- Trauma informed practice means that we are aware of, and sensitive to, the fact there are people in our congregations, staff, leadership, services, in fact, across every context of the Church, who may have experienced abuse in a range of settings. Being mindful of this fact we consider our approach, our words, our deeds, our symbols and imagery and the way we give and receive information, to take into account the impact of abuse on people’s lives.



National Redress Scheme Data UCA Redress Ltd Status Report as at 30 June 2020

Status of Requests for Information (RFI)

31 In progress

203 Pending

120 Finalised

354 Total Requests for Information



Offers of Redress

85

Total offers of redress accepted

0

Total offers of redress declined

43

Total offers of redress pending

47

Total offers of DPR accepted

1

Number of DPR held



RFI requests per Synod

55 NSW & ACT Synod

95 Qld Synod

15 SA Synod

87 Vic/Tas Synod

76 WA Synod

0 Northern Synod

26 Assembly

354 Total





Our Board



Anne Cross AM, Chair

- Bachelor of Social Work, Masters of Social Work, FAICD
- Appointed 29 November 2018 - Term ends 29 November 2020

Anne is an independent company director having concluded her executive career as Chief Executive of UnitingCare Queensland. In addition to her role as Chair of UCA Redress Ltd, Anne currently serves on the boards of St Vincent's Health Australia and Opera Queensland, and is a member of the University of Queensland Senate. She is a fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, President of the Institute's Queensland Council and a member of the AICD National Board. Anne was appointed as an Adjunct Professor in the University of Queensland Faculty of Health and Behavioural Sciences in 2008. She received recognition in the Queen's Birthday 2018 Honours List for significant service to the community.



Colleen Geyer, Assembly Director

- BTh, Grad Cert Executive Leadership, Dip Teach, Cert IV WTA
- Appointed 7 September 2018 - Term ends 7 September 2021

General Secretary (CEO) of the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly. Worked in executive leadership positions across the community services work of the Uniting Church for over ten years; and in leadership roles with the Uniting Church, at both state and national levels for twenty years, including serving on the Councils of the Uniting Church and numerous governance groups. Extensive experience in organisational strategy, leadership development, innovation, ethics and environmental sustainability; and building programs for culture change and engagement. Served on local and national boards.





Peter Roach
Property Trust member director

- Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business Administration, Master of Letters
- Appointed 23 October 2019 - Term ends 23 October 2022

Peter is a Non-Executive Director of several Trustee companies, Not-for-Profit Foundations and various private family groups. He was previously Chief Executive Officer of the Fairfax Family Office, Cambooya Pty Limited. Peter is a Chartered Accountant and holds a Bachelor of Commerce (UNSW), Master of Business Administration (SCU) and a Master of Letters (CQU). He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Peter served as a Board Member of the Knox Grammar School Council and was Chair from 2013 to 2018. He is also currently a Board Member of Ravenswood School for Girls.



Robert Watson
Property Trust member director

- Bachelor of Social Work, units in Business (Economics, Management and Accounting), Divinity, AICD Company Directors Course
- Appointed 23 October 2019 - Term ends 23 October 2022

Robert Watson has held leadership roles in the Uniting Church and its agencies and other community services agencies since the 1980s. With a background in social work and business, he is strongly committed to child protection, social justice, robust governance and the community work of the Church. As former Moderator of the Synod of Western Australia and a lay preacher, he has a deep connection to the Uniting Church and to his local community. Robert was a member of the Uniting Church's National Task Group to respond to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and participated in decisions about the Church's participation in the National Redress Scheme and the establishment of UCA Redress Ltd.



Melia Benn
Board appointed director

- Bachelor of Laws, Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, Bar Practice Course
- Appointed 7 April 2020 - Term ends 7 April 2023

Melia is a descendent of the Mamu and Gunggandji peoples. Melia was called to the Bar in 2018 and has a dual practice in both Endeavour Chambers, Cairns and Griffith Chambers, Brisbane. Prior to joining the private Bar Melia worked as a Prosecutor for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and as the in-house Counsel Assisting the Northern Coroner. Melia has a broad practice in criminal defence, anti-discrimination and class actions representing First Nation parties and other minority groups.





Our National Director



Sarah Lim, National Director, Company Secretary

- BA, LLB (Hons), Grad Dip Leg Prac, LLM, GAICD, Grad Cert Leadership

Following a career in social policy and legislation review and development in the Queensland Government, Sarah began work in UnitingCare Queensland in 2013. A large part of her role was monitoring and understanding the lessons coming out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and how they impacted on UCQ across the breadth of its services. During this time, Sarah worked with many survivors of abuse who were seeking to engage with UCQ. Sarah is a member of the Forde Foundation Board of Advice, a foundation established by the Queensland Government to provide micro-grants to Forgotten Australians and careleavers to assist them in their needs. Sarah is deeply committed to the needs of survivors of institutional abuse and restoration of relationships for survivors, the Church and the broader community.



Governance statement

Board Composition

The Constitution of UCA Redress Ltd requires that the company must have five directors, comprising:

- Chair, appointed by Members
- 1 director appointed by the Assembly Member
- 2 directors elected collectively by the Property Trust Members
- 1 person appointed by the Board

Board operations

The Board meets regularly in scheduled meetings, with strategic planning and continuing education sessions undertaken at additional sessions. The National Director provides the Board with updates in relation to the strategic plan and financial reports, progress against the business plan, and in relation to the participation of the Uniting Church in Australia in the National Redress Scheme. The Board is responsible for approving the Company's strategic direction and suite of governance documents, and for guiding and monitoring the management of the company. The UCA Redress Ltd Board is committed to delivering excellence in governance and prioritises high standards of accountability, transparency and integrity.

Nominations Committee

The Board established a Nominations Committee as required by the Constitution of UCA Redress Ltd. The Nominations Committee has its own terms of reference which set out the authority delegated to it by the Board and the way in which it will operate. The Committee is comprised of three persons, two of whom, including the Chair, must be independent of the Company. Members of the Committee, including the Chair, are appointed and removed by the Board.

National Director

The National Director is appointed by the Board and is subject to an annual performance review by the Board. The National Director leads UCA Redress Ltd, recommends strategic and policy direction for Board approval, and provides business and operational plans to deliver agreed outcomes.

Board appraisal and remuneration

A board evaluation process will commence in mid-2020. Board remuneration is determined by the Members, in accordance with a remuneration policy.





Attendance and fees

	Eligible to attend	Attended	Fees \$
Anne Cross (as Board Chair)	10	10	\$30,000
Colleen Geyer	10	9*	0
Peter Roach (term commenced 23/10/19)	7	7	\$10,558
Robert Watson (term commenced 23/10/19)	7	7	\$10,558
Melia Benn (term commenced 7 April 2020)	1	1	\$3,692
Dion Gooderham (term ended 23/10/19)	3	3	0
John Cox (term ended 23/10/19)	3	3	0

Notes:

Employees of the Uniting Church in Australia are not paid Board fees

The fees paid are inclusive of Superannuation

* CG was unable to attend one meeting due to General Secretaries meeting



Funding arrangements and financial statement

UCA Redress Ltd is funded for its operations by contributions from its Members. Participating Institutions within a Member's geographical or corporate area of responsibility make contributions to this cost.

Payments made under the National Redress Scheme are passed to the Synods/Assembly, with cost recovery arrangements agreed locally.

Full audited accounts of UCA Redress Ltd will be available at the ACNC website: www.acnc.gov.au