

# UCA Redress Limited

Annual report: 2021 – 2022



## UCA Redress Limited is part of The Uniting Church in Australia.

We support victims and survivors of child sexual abuse suffered through the Church or its institutions.

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### Trigger warning

Please be aware this document contains reference to accounts of child sexual abuse which may be distressing for some people. We recognise the significance of survivor stories and acknowledge the strength and resilience shown by survivors to bravely share their stories.

For support, please contact 000 (for emergencies), Lifeline 13 11 14 or Blue Knot Foundation 1300 657 380.

The quotes from survivors shared in this document are from narratives told to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

### Acknowledgements

We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples of this nation.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which our company is located and where we conduct our business in locations across the country. We pay our respects to ancestors and Elders, past and present.

We are committed to honouring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique cultural and spiritual relationships to the land, waters and seas and their rich contribution to society.

We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children entrusted to the care of the Church did not always receive the care they deserved, and we acknowledge the enduring impact of those traumas that were experienced.

We acknowledge the ongoing trauma caused by the separation of children from families and communities.

We acknowledge the terrible breaches of trust which were experienced by individuals and communities and commit to learning from past mistakes to create a culture of safety in all settings of our organisation.

### Contact us

[ucaredress.org.au](http://ucaredress.org.au)

[info@redress.uca.org.au](mailto:info@redress.uca.org.au)

ABN 31 628 672 597



# Our commitment



We will hear and keep  
the **stories**



We will **apologise**



We will make **change**

**Through redress, we acknowledge and address past wrongs and bring change for our future through truth, justice and healing.**

Redress takes us forward to...

- » a place of reconciliation with those who have suffered
- » a place where relationships are rebuilt and trust is restored in our Church, its leaders and agencies
- » a place where all can thrive as we learn from – and never forget – the past.

**Magda** was abused by who she believes was a church minister. She told her mother, but her mother disbelieved her and called her dirty. Magda had suicidal thoughts in her late 20s, and later suffered from intense flashbacks. It has taken her several years to come to terms with the abuse, and to deal with the guilt and shame she carried.

# Who we are

**UCA Redress Limited responds to and supports survivors of child sexual abuse suffered through the Uniting Church or its institutions, including by participation in the National Redress Scheme.**

We are a national body and a company limited by guarantee established by the Uniting Church in Australia.

Our team comprises a National Director and Administrator. The Board comprises five members, including Church and independent representatives.

We work to principles of good redress - being restorative, survivor focussed, trauma-informed and culturally safe and appropriate.

Justice is part of our DNA, permeating our practice and lived out through our actions.

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

The Scheme acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions. It 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.

# What we do

Our work includes:

- Facilitating the Church's participation in the National Redress Scheme
- Supporting Synods and institutions in providing direct personal response to survivors
- Contributing to awareness and understanding about redress, abuse and child safety
- Informing policy and decision making through data and learnings
- Evolving to meet the needs of Synods, the Assembly and other institutions of the Church, including national consistent practice.

When Cy was ten, a teacher made him and the other children play 'sexual games' with each other at an afterschool care program run by the Uniting Church. Throughout his life Cy has had trouble communicating and concentrating as a result of the sexual abuse. He has flashbacks to upsetting scenes from his childhood and is on medication for depression.

# A message from our board



With the National Redress Scheme now well established, this year has been a year of refinement of the operations of UCA Redress Ltd. We continue to serve across the life of the Uniting Church and strive to meet the needs of the survivors of abuse that we work with.

UCA Redress Ltd has reviewed its operations to ensure we are meeting the expectations of the Uniting Church and the survivors of abuse that we work with. The number of new Requests for Information (RFIs) has fluctuated throughout the year, particularly as impacted by Covid. We continue to monitor numbers of new RFIs closely, in readiness to respond as quickly as possible to meet statutory timeframes and to ensure we are not adding unnecessarily to the length of time taken to process redress applications.

UCA Redress Ltd notes the commitment by the Scheme operator to continue to improve processes and we always appreciate engagement from the Department of Social Services. We note the continuation of the Joint Parliamentary Committee into the National Redress Scheme, now a Standing rather than a Select committee, and look forward to participating in the committee's processes as appropriate.

I thank my fellow board members, the Members and Member Representatives of UCA Redress Ltd and our staff for their ongoing commitment to the work of UCA Redress Ltd. During the year, Nominations Committee Chair, Stuart McMillan, and Member, Allan Gibson, finished their terms on the committee. We thank Stuart and Allan for their significant contributions to the work and good governance of the Company.

As we approach the five year anniversary of the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, we continue to advocate so that the voices of survivors are not lost by the passage of time. Each new story we hear from survivors is important and valued and continues to impact on the work we do. We encourage survivors to come forward with applications for redress – and for those who have accepted an offer of redress – we warmly invite your contact to undertake the Direct Personal Response Process. You will find us ready, willing and able to engage with you in a compassionate, trauma-informed way that may help you in your life's journey.



**Anne Cross AM, Chair**

Melia Benn, Board appointed director

Colleen Geyer, Assembly General Secretary

Peter Roach, Synod member director

Robert Watson, Synod member director

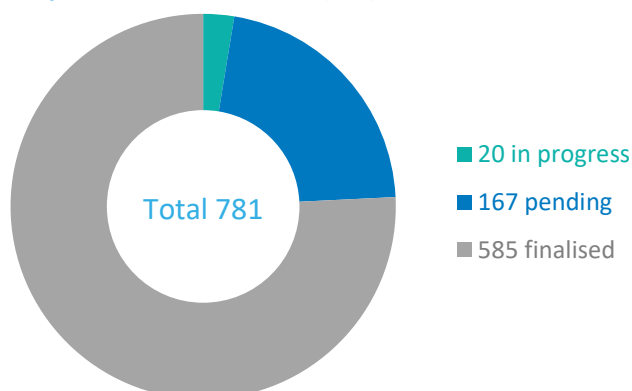
Clayton grew up in Tasmania in the 1940's and 1950's. Between the ages 10 and 12 Clayton was sexually abused by a minister from the church his family attended. Clayton told no one.  
*'Who's going to believe a 10 or 11 year old?'*

# The people we support

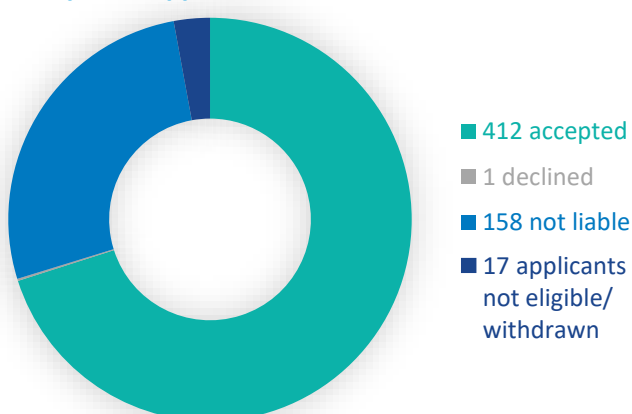
UCA Redress Limited Status Report as at 30 June 2022



## Requests for Information (RFI)



## Completed applications for redress



Data above is cumulative since commencement in National Redress Scheme in March 2019.

*'I've internalised all the hurt and the trauma, it's impacted me very much, like my mental condition, from all of that. I've used a lot of drugs to get over being abused ...Your inner soul is hurt, so you try and use everything to numb yourself I guess.'*

**Brodie** said that through the process of reporting to the Royal Commission, *'I've been able to talk about it a lot more, and actually come to an understanding with myself as well, about the abuse and trauma that I've suffered... It's been very therapeutic to go back through it'.*

# The work we have done



## Work of the Company in FY22 has included:

- **Establishing a rolling program of training** for the UCA for those involved in redress processes including: Overview of the National Redress Scheme, Overview of Trauma Informed Practice, Managing Vicarious Trauma and Direct Personal Response in the UCA
- **Development of toolkits** for Direct Personal Response and Managing Vicarious Trauma – with Trauma Informed Practice anticipated in late 2022
- **Continuous improvement in processes** for Direct Personal Response and coordinating reporting
- Supporting the UCA in **acknowledging the Anniversary of Apology** to Survivors of Institutional Child Sexual Abuse with a Liturgy (October each year)
- Undertaking a **three year review of the operations** of the Company (see below)
- **Analysis of redress applications from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander applicants**, highlighting the need for culturally safe engagements with survivors
- **Nominal defendant role** in some Victorian matters
- Collaborating with the National Safe Church Unit in **providing data and information to shape contemporary safety practice**
- **Engagement with internal and external stakeholders** and continuing to learn from survivors and their supporters and from other institutions to ensure best practice.

**We acknowledge childhood sexual abuse can impact physical and mental health, relationships, education, social connection, sexuality, spirituality, identity, culture – every aspect of a person's life.**

**Erin** was first sexually abused when she was four. She would go on to face sexual abuse from teachers, a school cleaner, and a minister as a young girl and teenager. *'I feel really strongly about working with children and young people, and them having safe and creative opportunities to grow ... I haven't grown up to become an adult who's part of the problem. But I feel like I'm becoming a part of the solution ... And I think I get strength from that.'*

**Anna** came to the Royal Commission because she wants to help put an end to the cycle of abuse and state intervention that affects Aboriginal families. Anna experienced this cycle firsthand. Anna was taken from her mother in the late 1970's and sent to a Uniting Church children's home in Western Australia. At the home she was sexually and emotionally abused by staff. She does not want the same to happen to her own children.

# Three year review of UCA Redress Ltd



## Background

From November 2021 to February 2022, the Board of UCA Redress Ltd undertook an internal review of operational efficiency, governance documents, and assessment of stakeholder satisfaction and scope of activity of the Company, including:

- A desktop review of governance documents
- A desktop review of operational processes
- Stakeholder satisfaction survey
- Mapping of issues of relevance to the future operations of the Company.

## Summary of findings

Overall, the Company is providing a high level of service, operating within budget and delivering to a “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory” standard. The governance of the Company is sound, with governing documents fit for purpose. Key issues for the Company over the coming period will be monitoring the flow of work from the National Redress Scheme, connecting with underrepresented cohorts in the National Redress Scheme process, and engaging with internal and external stakeholders in an ongoing Covid environment.

## Stakeholder survey

All internal stakeholders gave positive feedback and gave a “satisfactory” or “highly satisfactory” response to questions relating to the activity of the Company. Positive feedback was also received from the National Redress Scheme.

## Activities of UCA Redress Ltd

The review noted:

- Processing requests for information continues to be time intensive, equating to approximately 1 day of work from receipt of each RFI to the notification of acceptance.
- Direct Personal Response take-up continues to be low (across all institutions) – the NRS is working to remove barriers.
- All operational processes of the Company are documented
- The Company meets compliance requirements
- Tools, resources and training on redress related topics have been developed by the Company with good take up and good feedback.
- Engagement with internal and external stakeholders, advocacy for survivors and institutions in redress, and dissemination of data continue to be important work of the Company, with face to face engagements to be considered as Covid restrictions ease.
- Ensuring awareness of the Scheme in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, among people with disabilities and people and regional and remote areas is important and should be a priority for institutions.
- The Company’s role as Nominal Defendant in Victoria is working well for survivors in that jurisdiction
- The Company will continue activity to collect data in relation to civil litigation across the country





- While there are some aspects of the suite of Governing documents that could be clarified, overall the issues are relatively minor and the documents are fit for purpose.
- Policies and procedures appropriate to the size and scope of the Company are in place and systematically reviewed
- It is difficult to anticipate the number of new applications that will come to the Scheme or to the UCA. The Company will closely monitor and be prepared to scale operations as workload demands, noting the need to ensure appropriate leave for staff who have repeated exposure to traumatic material.

### Future issues

The report noted the following issues as impacting on the future activity of the Company:

- Number and frequency of new RFIs as yet unknown, including the impacts of community awareness raising; targeting missing cohorts; Scheme improvements which build trust and participation.
- Impact of increased accessibility and positive outcomes of civil litigation
- Take up of Direct Personal Responses and need for ongoing support across UCA
- Changes to institutions' legal structures over time (ownership, incorporation status etc), and the impact on participation in the NRS through the Company.
- Ongoing scope of the work of the National Safe Church Unit and realisation of collaboration
- Eight year anniversary review of the NRS (2025-26)
- Last NRS applications by 30 June 2027, Scheme end 30 June 2028
- Impact of Disability Royal Commission examination of redress options for people with disabilities who are survivors of institutional abuse
- Ongoing impact of Covid on NRS operation, the Company operation and cohort of applicants/potential applicants.
- Impact of legislative amendments, change of government policy, institutional participation on numbers of applicants, NRS operation, costs to institutions, costs of operations of the Company.

### UCA Redress Ltd priorities

The Company will work to continue to streamline practices where possible and continue its focus on meeting the needs of survivors while maintaining sustainable redress participation for the Church. The Company's 2022-2025 Strategic Plan has been endorsed by member representatives, reflecting only minor changes from earlier plans, based on the three year review.

A key issue will be monitoring and adjusting resourcing requirements for the Company for the remainder of the life of the Scheme, taking into account any new responsibilities or activities the Company is tasked with.

### Thanks

The Board of UCA Redress Ltd thanks all of those who participated in the stakeholder survey and provided feedback for this review.

# Governance



## Our board

### **Anne Cross AM** **Board Chair**

*Bachelor of Social Work, Masters of Social Work, FAICD*

Anne is an independent company director having concluded her executive career as Chief Executive of UnitingCare Queensland, late in 2017. In addition to her role as Chair of UCA Redress Limited, 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 and a member of the AICD National Board (from October 2019). She received recognition in the Queen's Birthday 2018 Honours List for significant service to the community through social welfare organisations, and to women. She was named Telstra's National Business Woman of the Year in 2014 and awarded the University of Queensland's Alumni Excellence Award in 2016.

*Appointed 29 November 2018. Term ends 30 November 2023*

### **Melia Benn** **Board appointed director**

*Bachelor of Laws, Graduate Diploma of Legal Practice, Bar Practice Course*

Melia is a descendent of the Mamu and Gunggandji people. She was called to the Bar in 2018 and has a dual practice in Endeavour Chambers, Cairns and Griffith Chambers, Brisbane. She has 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 Nations parties and other minority groups.

*Appointed 7 April 2020. Term ends 7 April 2023*

### **Colleen Geyer** **Assembly Director**

*Bachelor of Theology, Graduate Certificate Executive Leadership, Diploma in Teaching, Cert IV WTA*

Colleen is the General Secretary (CEO) of the Uniting Church in Australia. She has worked in executive leadership roles across the community services of the Uniting Church for more than 10 years; and in leadership within the Uniting Church at state and national levels for 20 years, including on the Councils of the Church and numerous governance groups. Colleen has served on local and national boards. She has extensive experience in organisational strategy, leadership development, innovation, ethics and environmental sustainability, building programs for culture change and engagement.

*Appointed 7 September 2018. Term ends 6 September 2024*

### **Peter Roach** **Synod member director**

*Bachelor of Commerce, Master of Business Administration, Master of Letters, FAICD*

Peter is a non-executive director of several trustee companies, not-for-profit foundations and private family groups. He was previously Chief Executive Officer of the Fairfax Family Office, Cambooya Pty Limited. He is a chartered accountant and fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. Peter has served as a board member of the Knox Grammar School Council and was Chair from 2013 to 2018. He is currently a board member of Ravenswood School for Girls. He is a board member of the Southern Highlands Foundation.

*Appointed 23 October 2019. Term ends 23 October 2025*



**Robert Watson**  
**Synod member director**

Bachelor of Social Work, units in Business (Economics, Management and Accounting), Divinity, AICD Company Directors Course

Robert has held leadership roles in the Uniting Church, its agencies and other community services agencies for over 40 years. 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 a former Moderator of the Synod of Western Australia and a lay preacher, Robert has a deep connection to the Church and his local community. He 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 Limited.

*Appointed 23 October 2019. Term ends 23 October 2025*

**Leadership**

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**Sarah Lim**  
**National Director**



Bachelor of Arts/Laws (Hons), Graduate Diploma Legal Practice, Master of Laws, Graduate of Australian Institute of Company Directors, Graduate Certificate Leadership

Following a career in social policy and legislation review and development in the Queensland Government, Sarah commenced with UnitingCare Queensland in 2013. Her role included monitoring and understanding the lessons coming out of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and their impact across the breadth of UnitingCare Queensland services. During this time, Sarah worked with many survivors of abuse seeking to engage with UnitingCare Queensland. Sarah is Chair of the Forde Foundation Board of Advice, a charitable trust established by the Queensland Government to provide micro-grants to Forgotten Australians and care leavers to assist them with 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.

**Annette Fuller**  
**Administrator**

Bachelor of Arts, Master of Human Services, Certificate in Governance Practice

Annette has worked extensively in the human services sector in both service delivery and strategic policy roles. Annette provided direct services in the disability and domestic and family violence sectors and her work in strategic policy was undertaken in State government and with UnitingCare Queensland. Her role with UnitingCare Queensland involved contributing to UnitingCare Queensland's analysis and responses to the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and she was also responsible for locating records and responding to former out-of-home care residents seeking access to information about their time in care. Annette commenced her role with UCA Redress Limited in April 2019 and is committed to supporting survivor focused outcomes by ensuring efficient and effective processing of applications for redress from the National Redress Scheme related to Uniting Church in Australia institutions.

# Governance statement

## Board composition

The UCA Redress Limited constitution requires the company to have five directors, comprising:

- Chair appointed by members
- One director appointed by the Assembly Member
- Two directors elected collectively by the Synod members
- One person appointed by the Board.

## Board operations

The Board is committed to delivering excellence in governance and prioritises high standards of accountability, transparency and integrity. They guide and monitor the management of the company and are responsible for approving the company's strategic direction and governance.

The National Director provides the Board with updates in relation to:

- the strategic plan and financial reports
- progress against the strategic and operational plans
- participation of the Uniting Church in Australia in the National Redress Scheme.

The Board meets regularly in scheduled meetings, with strategic planning and continuing education sessions undertaken at additional sessions.

## Nominations Committee

The Board established this committee as required by the UCA Redress Limited constitution. This committee has terms of reference which set out the authority delegated to it by the Board and its operations.

The Committee comprises of three people; two, including the Chair, must be independent of the company. Members of the Committee, including the Chair, are appointed and removed by the Board.

During FY22, Stuart McMillan (Chair) and Allan Gibson finished their term on the Nominations Committee. The board thanks Stuart and Allan for their service. Anne Cross AM continues as the Board's nominee to the Nominations Committee, with Paul Linossier (Chair) and David de Kock appointed from August 2022.

## National Director

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

## Board appraisal and remuneration

	Eligible to attend	Attended	Fees
Anne Cross	6	6	\$30,000
Melia Benn	6	6	\$15,000
Colleen Geyer	6	5 *	0
Peter Roach	6	6	\$15,000
Robert Watson	6	6	\$15,000

\*unable to attend one meeting due to leave

Fees paid are inclusive of superannuation.

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

## Funding arrangements and financial statement

UCA Redress Limited is funded for its operations by contributions from its members. Participating institutions within a member's geographical or corporate area of responsibility contribute to this cost.

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

UCA Redress Limited audited accounts are available on the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission website: [www.acnc.gov.au](http://www.acnc.gov.au)

