

## **Statement of Commitment to Trauma Informed Aged Care: Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers**

UnitingCare Australia is the national body for the Uniting Church's community services Network and an agency of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia. The UnitingCare Network is the largest not-for-profit aged care provider nationally supporting over 97,000 older people through residential and home care services.

UnitingCare Australia recognises that the Uniting Church in Australia and its predecessor Churches operated a number of institutions, group homes and missions across the country for those who were in out of home care and therefore played a role in the harm that was experienced by Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers when they were in care as children. Children were not always cared for as they should have been and many experienced physical and sexual abuse, neglect, harsh physical punishments, rigid rules, cruelty and humiliation. They did not always receive good medical and dental care, nutrition, education, nurturing and support. This was wrong.

UnitingCare Australia draws on the invaluable work led by [Helping Hand Aged Care Positioning Statement](#) – co-designed with Forgotten Australians – to affirm its commitment to increasing its capacity and capability in providing trauma informed aged care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.<sup>1</sup>

The UnitingCare Network is committed to making its services more welcoming, safe and trauma informed for those people who experienced harm as children in out of home or institutional care. We are committed to observing and honouring the rights of Forgotten Australians and care leavers to aged care that is safe, where they are treated with dignity and respect, where they have choice and control and where they are valued.

UnitingCare Australia commits to supporting the UnitingCare Australia network to build its capacity to deliver trauma informed care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers. We understand that trauma informed care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers includes:

- Embracing identity – recognising each person's uniqueness and that this uniqueness is central to caring for them
- Offering care based on choice, transparency and understanding
- Support to realise the expression of an individual's rights

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<sup>1</sup> UnitingCare Australia recognises that people who were in care as children refer to themselves in different ways and using different terms.

To demonstrate this commitment we:

- have established a Community of Practice for Trauma Informed Aged Care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers
- will support trial sites within our network which will move to embed trauma informed aged care for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers throughout 2023-2024
- disseminate information about trauma informed aged care throughout the UnitingCare network
- look for opportunities to advocate for change that will make it easier for service providers to adopt trauma informed practice across the sector
- look for opportunities to create partnerships with Forgotten Australians and care leavers on delivering trauma informed aged care
- look for opportunities to participate in or support research that can assist in the development or provision of trauma informed care for Forgotten Australians and care leavers
- use our connections in the aged care sector to be sharing information and advocating for other providers and stakeholders to learn about and adopt trauma informed practice for Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers.

Endorsed by the UnitingCare Australia Board

August 2023