



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

Embargo until: 3 October 2016

### **Uniting established as new community service agency in Victoria and Tasmania**

Uniting is the new community services organisation to be formed from 21 UnitingCare agencies and Wesley Mission Victoria.

Uniting (Victoria and Tasmania) Limited was established and governance for all 22 agencies was unified under a single Board on 3 October 2016.

This is an exciting first step in moving from a network of separate agencies to a single organisation.

An experienced, skills based team will lead the design and build of the emerging organisation. The Uniting Board will be chaired by former Victorian Health Minister Bronwyn Pike. Paul Linossier, previously the CEO of Wesley Mission Victoria, is the inaugural Chief Executive Officer. Mr Linossier has more than three decades experience in leading organisational change and systems reform while maintaining a strong commitment to marginalised and vulnerable people.

"The founding agencies to Uniting have a rich history of care, support and community partnerships." Mr Linossier said. "Together we can do more. We will have a stronger advocacy voice and we will have access to broader resources and skills to meet clients' needs. This change provides the best opportunity for us to continue our important work in the community for many years to come."

The move to the single organisation has just started. Each agency will continue the same quality services, with the same dedicated staff and commitment to care while work to shape the new organisation progresses. The merger is expected to be complete by mid-2017.

Uniting will be one of the largest community service providers operating in Victoria and Tasmania.

"Uniting is all about working together to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice." Mr Linossier said. "We are Uniting to have greater impact."

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## Editor's note

Currently the network of UnitingCare agencies and Wesley Mission Victoria operate across metropolitan, regional and remote parts of Victoria and Tasmania offering a broad range of services and advocacy to support thousands of vulnerable people.

With a combined annual budget of about \$250 million, over 3,500 staff and 3,500 volunteers, the services of the new organisation will include emergency relief, financial counselling, housing and homelessness services, employment services, early childhood services, child, youth and family services, disability services, mental health services, non-residential aged care, alcohol and other drugs services and Lifeline.

The 22 agencies merging to form Uniting are:

Connections UnitingCare	UnitingCare Gippsland
Creative Ministries Network	UnitingCare Goulburn North East
John Macrae Centre	UnitingCare Harrison
Kildonan UnitingCare	UnitingCare lifeAssist
Lentara UnitingCare	UnitingCare ReGen
Prahran Mission UnitingCare	UnitingCare Tasmania
South Port UnitingCare	UnitingCare Werribee Support and Housing
UnitingCare Ballarat Parish Mission	UnitingCare Wodonga
UnitingCare Bendigo	Wesley Centre for Life Enrichment
UnitingCare East Burwood Centre	Wesley Mission Victoria
UnitingCare Geelong	Wimmera UnitingCare