

# Winter 2024 Community in Mission

## Refurbished Shepparton Hub reopens

On 20 March Uniting Vic.Tas reopened its refurbished Maude Street office in Shepparton.

The space has been designed to make the site more welcoming, inclusive and culturally safe for people accessing our services.



The office houses key services for the area, including youth, multicultural, employment, new arrival support and family violence services.

“We embarked on the refurbishment of this wonderful facility because we wanted to do more. We wanted to give our team and community the opportunity to grow and develop,” said Uniting Vic.Tas CEO Bronwyn Pike.

During the refurbishment, services were temporarily relocated to Fryers Street, a nearby Uniting Church site.

“I wanted to thank the Shepparton Uniting Church because being able to relocate round the corner to Fryers Street near the church made it all possible,” said Ms Pike.

“Your patience, compassion and courtesy, particularly to our consumers and staff, has been enormously appreciated.”

Congregation member, Lorraine Threlfall, says it was wonderful sharing the complex with Uniting.

“It was beautiful to see those of different faiths coming together under the church, serving the community together,” she said.

“We had one church family donate toys to a Syrian family who had recently arrived in Australia. To see the joy on both their children’s faces was so lovely.”



Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

# Uniting



Wesley Central Mission's first charity shop in Lonsdale Street

## The 100-year history of op shops

It's almost been 100 years since the name 'Op Shop' was coined by Melbourne show girl Lady Millie Tallis. Hoping to give second hand or charity shops a more dignified name, Millie created the term 'opportunity shop' in 1925. The idea came from the streets of Paris, where bargain shops were known as *magasins d'occasion* or stores of opportunity.

Today, Uniting operate 20 op shops around Victoria. While primarily a social enterprise, they are much more than just a shop front. They are living homes of the circular economy, access to affordable goods, and modern troves filled with treasure. They are enlivened communities making the world a better place through daily action, creativity, and connection.

Uniting, through its founding agency, Wesley Central Mission, opened its first charity shop in Lonsdale Street (Melbourne) in 1933. By 1939 'Goodwill Industries' had six shops, eight trucks, a warehouse, and 150 employees however this all ended with World War II.

Uniting Op Shops have mostly been established by working with Uniting Church congregations. Our oldest continuing shops are Albert Park which opened in 1964 and Glenroy which opened in 1973.

## Your donation bins keep us going

This past financial year, Uniting has been able to sell 526,901 items through our op shops.

Nearly all these items have been donated through our op shops or donation bins — over 40 of which reside on congregation sites.

Your bins and the missional work of your congregation are crucial to the success of our op shops and the funding of Uniting programs.



## Transitioning op shops

In July last year, Grace Community (Melton Uniting Church) decided to hand over operational management of their op shop to Uniting.

For 45 years this shop has been a special place for the Melton community. Uniting is proud to continue this legacy with the ongoing presence and support of the op shop's staff and volunteers.

As part of this continued partnership with Grace Community, free op shop vouchers are provided to Combined Churches Caring Melton to offer to those in the local community who are in need.

Uniting would also like to take this opportunity to thank those congregations who continue to donate proceeds from their own op shops to support Uniting programs.

## Our current locations

Uniting currently operate 20 op shops and 48 donation bins across Victoria. To find your nearest location scan the QR code or visit [unitingvictas.org.au/op-shops](http://unitingvictas.org.au/op-shops)



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## Food For Friends

Over the past 25 years, Mount Waverley Chadstone Interchurch Council, an ecumenical group of 13 Christian churches in the Mount Waverley area, have generously donated to Uniting's Food For Families program. Or 'Food For Friends' as they call it.

Last year alone, the compassionate volunteers collected close to 140 boxes of food and \$1,000 in cash donations which they distributed to Uniting and eight other organisations.

"Of all our programs, Food For Friends is the one which brings together all our churches to remember Christ's teachings about helping others," says Convenor Mount Waverley Uniting Church Social Justice and Mission in Society Committee, Margery Kennett.

Food For Families has recently launched a new website.

If you would like to learn how you or your congregation can support those struggling to put food on the table, visit [foodforfamilies.org.au](http://foodforfamilies.org.au) or scan the QR code.



## Winter local appeal

With the winter months upon us, we need your help bringing comfort to those who need it most in the cold weather.

Visit our website to find out where you can drop off blankets and winter woollies or make a donation to help ensure people in crisis will keep warm this winter. Visit [unitingvictas.org.au/local-winter](http://unitingvictas.org.au/local-winter)