



# Environmental Sustainability Strategy

2021 – 2025



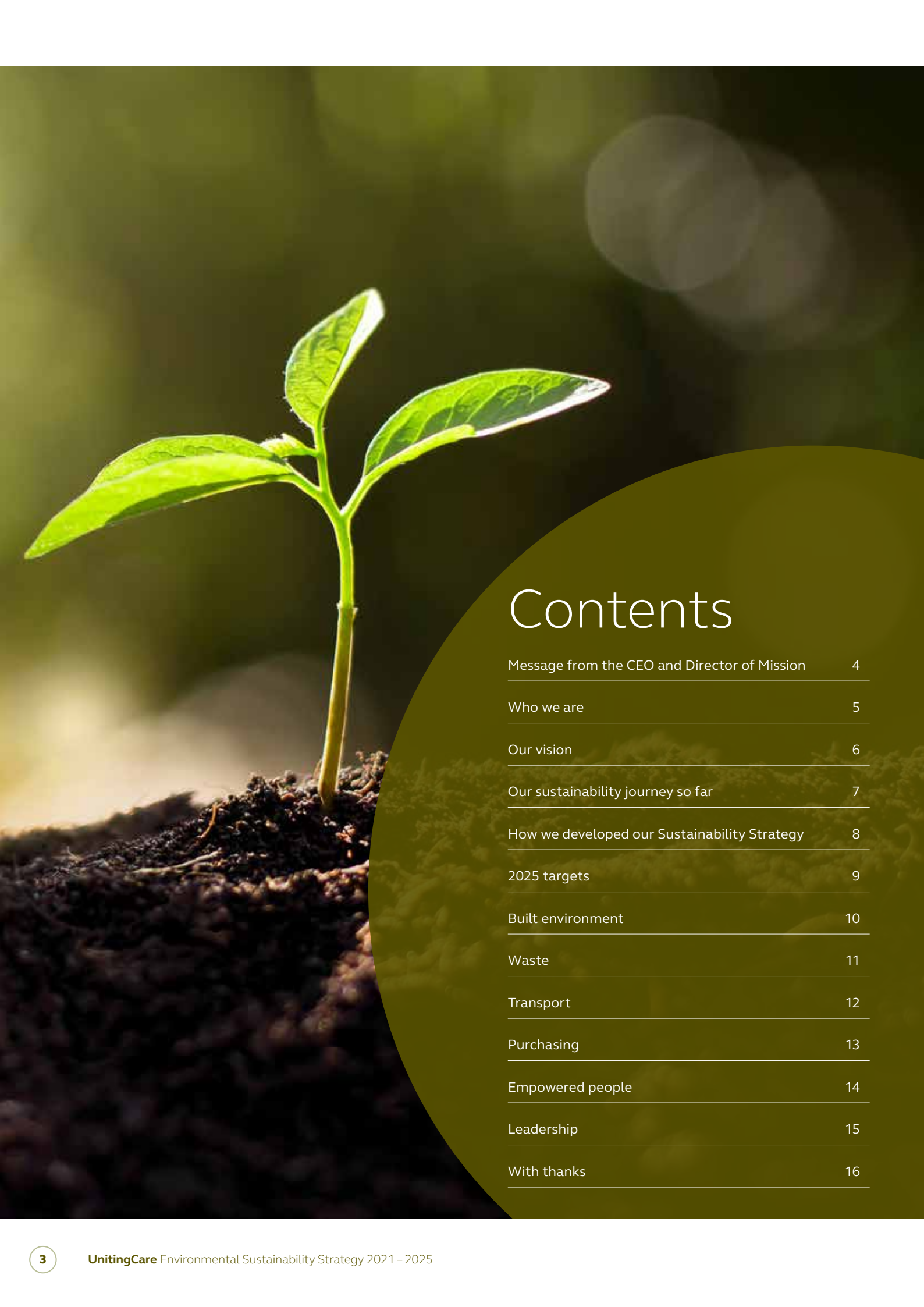


# Acknowledgement of Country

UnitingCare acknowledges that we live and work on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Countries. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

Australia's First Nations Peoples have cared for Country for over 60,000 years, and have long recognised the interdependency of ecological, spiritual and human health. We acknowledge and respect this deep relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their ancestral lands and seas. We recognise this custodianship and the contribution our First Nations Peoples continue to make to conservation, climate action and the management of lands and waters.

We commit to learn from, work with and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge of caring for Country, to build a brighter, greener future together.



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# Message from the CEO and Director of Mission

Over the next five years UnitingCare is again renewing its commitment to protect and preserve a healthy environment for the communities we serve. We are proud of our sustainability progress to date and we recognise there is much more to be done on our journey of continuous improvement.

UnitingCare's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025 outlines six focus areas, which support our vision to create a healthier, fairer, and greener world. It also aligns with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which call for global collaboration to advance planetary health for intergenerational equity and wellbeing.

At UnitingCare, we recognise that the health and wellbeing of our clients, residents, patients and staff is inextricably linked to the health of our planet. The coronavirus pandemic and recent extreme weather events—such as the 2019 North Queensland floods and Southeast Queensland bushfires, and severe drought and water scarcity in places like Stanthorpe and Warwick—are reminders of the delicate relationship between people and planet.

UnitingCare is part of the frontline response to these crises, and our staff have stepped up to meet the challenges and resulting increased demand for our health and wellbeing services.

We recognise that our mission to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities must extend beyond frontline services. We must also promote and preserve a healthy environment, by reducing our carbon footprint, improving

resource efficiency, enabling climate resilience, and greening our built environments.

This principle of environmental stewardship is embedded in UnitingCare's history and mission, through the values and resolutions of the Uniting Church. The Statement to the Nation in 1977 urged "the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources". More recently, in 2019, the Uniting Church's Vision for a Just Australia advocated for urgent and significant action to address climate change. And we have called out being "faithful stewards of the resources entrusted to us" as one of the

Mission Practices in UnitingCare's Mission Framework.

UnitingCare has already achieved many milestones towards this. In the last three years alone we have invested more than \$4 million in energy efficiency upgrades and solar PV, decarbonised our passenger fleet, introduced innovative recycling streams into our hospitals, and collaborated to foster best sustainability practice across our industry.

Ultimately, this Strategy is both an invitation and call to action for all our staff to help lessen UnitingCare's impact on the environment so that all people may "live life in all its fullness" (John 10:10).



**Craig Barke**

Chief Executive  
UnitingCare Queensland



**Rev Bruce Moore**

Director of Mission  
UnitingCare Queensland

# Who we are

Since the early 1900s, we've been helping people across Queensland live life in all its fullness.

Today, we're a courageous and creative health and community services provider and one of the largest charities in Australia, connecting with people in every corner of our community, from the Gold Coast to the Northern Territory.

Through our accessible services we're committed to empowering older people, those living with a disability, people requiring health care in hospital or at home, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, children and families.



Proudly representing



**17,000 employees**



**9,600 volunteers**



**460 locations supporting more than 600,000\* people**



**1.5 million volunteer hours**



**Four private hospitals**



**10 Lifeline Crisis Line contact centres**



**127 Lifeline retail stores**



**56 residential aged care facilities**

\* The number of people supported by our Aged Care and Community Services, Family and Disability Services, plus the number of people admitted to our hospitals



A smiling woman with short grey hair, wearing a wide-brimmed straw hat, a brown jacket over a grey tank top, and blue floral gloves, is holding a plant in a garden. In the background, there is a green mesh fence and lush green foliage.

## Our Vision

To help shape a future that is green, healthy, just and resilient—one that restores health to people and planet—by maximising every opportunity to reduce our environmental impact, empowering our workforce, advocating and modelling the way.

# Our sustainability journey so far

We recognise that being good stewards of the planet's resources is not a destination, but an ongoing journey of continuous improvement. We are proud of the progress we have made to date, and the achievements and positive impact we have made to ensure we live in a world where all people can live life in all its fullness.





# How we developed our Sustainability Strategy

UnitingCare's Environmental Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025 was developed over six months with input from more than 50 senior leaders, service delivery and support staff, Green Champions, external partners and service providers. This co-development approach has delivered a practical roadmap of sustainability initiatives that have widespread support and will add value to our services, staff and the people we serve.



***“I think the aim is not to ‘reduce our environmental impact’; but to in fact have a positive environmental impact. We aim to leave people better than we found them when they engage with us... How about the same goal for the environment—to leave it better off than what it was before we arrived?”***

*John Kelly, Regional Manager  
(UnitingCare Family & Disability Services)*



# 2025 Targets

## Built environment



**Reduce our carbon footprint by 70%** (Scope 1, Scope 2 and partial Scope 3) against our FY19 baseline of 93,020 tCO<sub>2</sub>e

**Source 100% of our electricity from renewable energy** compared to 0.5% in FY19

## Waste



**Divert from landfill 30% of the non-clinical waste we generate** compared to 21.3% in FY19

**Reduce waste generation by 5% at hospitals and aged care facilities**

against FY19 intensity baseline for each facility (kg per total bed day for hospitals; kg per bed for ACFs)

## Transport



**Reduce passenger fleet fuel usage to 4.5 litres per 100 km** compared to 6.7 litres per 100 km in FY19

**Transition to 100% hybrid and electric passenger fleet** compared to 42% in FY19

## Purchasing



**Ensure 100% of strategic procurement tenders include environmental sustainability criteria**

## Empowered people



**Upskill 20% of employees through sustainability training** compared to 2.8% in FY19

**Increase the number of Green Champions by 100%** against our FY20 baseline of 54 Green Champions

## Leadership



**Achieve our sustainability goals**

**Have our sustainability leadership recognised through awards**

We will measure progress against our 2025 targets at the end of each financial year, using FY18/19 as our baseline. The results and milestones will be communicated on the UnitingCare website in an annual Sustainability Report.



# Built environment

## Objective

Transition to greener, healthier buildings that reduce our demand for energy, water and resources.

## Targets

Reduce our carbon footprint by 70% (Scope 1, Scope 2 and partial Scope 3)

Source 100% of our electricity from renewable energy



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Implementation of energy efficiency projects	No. of new energy efficiency projects implemented	Ongoing	Property Development, Sustainability
Develop standardisation of environmental sustainability principles into new building designs and major refurbishments across the UnitingCare portfolio	Environmental sustainability specifications included in standard design briefs	2021	Property Development
Transition to 100% renewable energy across UnitingCare's portfolio	Approval of a 100% renewable energy contract	2022	Sustainability
Pilot the implementation of green infrastructure recommendations	No. of green infrastructure recommendations piloted	2022	Sustainability, Property & Maintenance
Develop a system for measuring and monitoring water usage	Benchmarks identified for UnitingCare's water consumption	2023	Sustainability
Set a target to reduce water consumption by 2025	Water reduction target established	2023	Sustainability
Identify best practice opportunities to reduce water usage	No. of cost effective water efficiency opportunities	2023	Sustainability
Investigate green building ratings (e.g. Green Star, NABERS) to demonstrate the sustainability of property assets	Sustainability ratings recognised in property assets	2024	Property Development







# Waste

## Objective

Implement waste management practices that reduce waste generation, increase recycling and support the transition to a circular economy.

## Targets

Divert from landfill 30% of the non-clinical waste we generate

Reduce waste intensity by 5% at our large sites



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Develop and implement a Waste Management Policy	Waste Management Policy implemented	2021	Sustainability
Implement room service at The Wesley Hospital	Food supply cost % reduction	2021	Wesley Hospitality, Digital & Technology
Implement food management system in aged care facilities	Food supply cost % reduction	2021	Blue Care Hospitality
Introduce reusable microfibre cleaning program into aged care facilities	Amount of avoided single use cloths and wipes	2021	Blue Care Hospitality
Identify impacts and responses to QLD Government single use plastics ban	Impacts & opportunities assessment completed	2021	Sustainability
E-waste campaign to promote responsible hardware disposal channel	No. of hardware disposal Service Desk requests	2021	Sustainability, Digital & Technology
Reduce bottled water usage in hospitals and aged care facilities	No. of purchased bottled water	2022	UC Hospitals, Blue Care Hospitality
Introduce organics separation into hospital and aged care commercial kitchens	Onsite composting or FOGO collection implemented	2022	Blue Care Hospitality, UCH Waste Committee
Implement recycling solution for single use steel instruments	Tonnes of recycled single use steel instruments	2022	UCH Waste Committee
Implement circular economy platform to facilitate asset rehoming between facilities and donation to third parties	Tonnes of rehomed product	2022	Sustainability
Explore opportunities to boost community upcycling, recycling and waste reduction	No. of community waste reduction initiatives implemented	2022	Sustainability
Consolidate waste service providers	No. of sites utilising primary waste vendor for core waste services	2022	Procurement
Implement eSignature solution across all services and business units	No. of documents signed and processed through DocuSign	2022	Procurement, Digital & Technology
Improve document management, sharing and collaboration tools	Document management platform implemented	2023	Digital & Technology





# Transport

## Objective

Reduce our contribution to air pollution and emissions through improved fuel efficiency and reduced travel.

## Targets

Reduce passenger fleet fuel usage to 4.5 litres per 100 km  
Transition to 100% hybrid and electric passenger fleet



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Increase acceptance of and access to flexible working opportunities for employees	Revitalised UnitingCare Flexibility Strategy	2021	People & Culture
	Updated UnitingCare Working Arrangements Policy	2021	People & Culture
	Leader Support Tools and Resources for leading flexible teams	2021	People & Culture
Promote virtual meetings	Kilometres travelled	2021	Fleet
Reduce the number of tool-of-trade and benefit vehicles	No. of tool-of-trade and benefit vehicles	2022	Fleet
Pilot vehicle innovations such as electric or fuel-cell vehicles	No. of vehicles piloted	2023	Fleet
IT enablement to allow staff to work and connect efficiently away from corporate offices	Office365 implemented	2023	Digital & Technology
Passenger fleet conversion to 100% hybrid and electric	Hybrid and electric % of passenger fleet	2025	Fleet

Note: With Australia's rapidly changing technology landscape, the transition to alternative fuel or electric vehicles may require changes to this strategy and required funding that could produce an even better environmental and financial outcome.







# Purchasing

## Objective

Reduce environmental harm arising from the products and services we procure.

## Targets

Ensure 100% of strategic procurement tenders include environmental sustainability criteria



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Environmental sustainability criteria weighted into tender process	% of strategic tender briefs featuring environmental sustainability criteria	2021	Procurement
Identify new sustainability opportunities and solutions that vendors can offer through contract management and existing partnerships	No. of sustainability solutions identified through vendor partnerships	2022	Procurement
Educate staff on product lifecycle and green supply chains (Procurement & purchasers)	No. of guides with key messages embedded	2022	Procurement





# Empowered people

## Objective

Embed environmental sustainability within our work culture and practices, and support our staff and clients to contribute to UnitingCare's sustainability goals.

## Targets

Upskill 20% of employees through environmental sustainability training

Increase the number of Green Champions by 100%



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Identify key dates within the cultural calendar for partnerships with the RAP team, e.g. National Tree Day	No. of cultural calendar joint initiatives undertaken	Ongoing	Reconciliation, Sustainability
Publish 'Green spotlight' profiles of staff champions	No. of profile stories published through internal comms channels	Ongoing	Sustainability
Sustainability presentations by Sustainability Team and Green Champions at team meetings throughout the organisation	No. of sustainability training presentations delivered	Ongoing	Sustainability
Develop eLearning modules for individual training	No. of employees completed sustainability eLearning modules	2021	Sustainability
Include sustainability goals, context and responsibilities in staff orientation	Sustainability package included in orientation slides and handbook	2021	Sustainability
Develop facility-level waste, energy & emissions KPIs	Establishment of sustainability site reports	2023	Sustainability
Learn from existing harvest and native garden projects in our sites, to replicate across our residential portfolio	No. of new harvest and/or native gardens	2023	Sustainability Reconciliation







# Leadership

## Objective

Accelerate societal progress towards climate resilience and environmental sustainability through advocacy, collaboration and modelling the way.

## Targets

Achieve our sustainability targets

Have our sustainability leadership recognised through awards



Key actions	KPI	Timeframe	Responsibility
Incorporate SDGs into annual sustainability reporting	SDGs included in annual sustainability report	Ongoing	Sustainability
Pursue opportunities for collaboration through partnerships with community organisations, corporates, government, universities, and the Uniting Church	No. of initiatives trialled or implemented with partners	Ongoing	Sustainability
Progress collaboration with Synod on Project Plenty commitment of "Transforming Communities - Environment & Sustainability"	No. of actions/initiatives implemented	Ongoing	Queensland Synod, Sustainability
Communicate UnitingCare's sustainability innovations and milestones to the broader community	No. of sustainability-related external media stories	Ongoing	Trust & Reputation
Advocate through external media invitations (e.g. Climate Council)	No. of advocacy statements in external media	Ongoing	Trust & Reputation
Publish a Climate Change Position Statement	Statement published on website	2021	Sustainability
Heatwave Outreach Project – co-funded pilot project to prevent or reduce the impact of extreme heat on vulnerable older people	No. of heatwave outreach calls	2022	Sustainability
Develop a UnitingCare Climate Risk Framework	Climate Risk Framework implemented	2022	Governance
Develop a social & environmental impact ecosystem to further develop our Environmental and Cultural strategies	Establishment of social & environmental impact ecosystem	2022	Reconciliation, Sustainability



With thanks to the many staff who have supported this Sustainability Strategy with their expertise and vision.

#### Blue Care

Sue-Ellen Smith	General Manager
Craig Haggart	Hospitality Manager
Anne Curson	Manager Executive Services
Kath Patterson	Service Manager
Caren Gibbs	Service Manager
Tracey Mayfield	Diversional Therapist

#### Buderim Private Hospital

Holly Berlin	Director of Finance & Support Services
Sally McKinley	Clinical Nurse

#### St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

Susan Farlow	Hotel Services Manager
Ben Blemings	Facilities Manager
Ian Smith	Senior Advisor

#### Lifeline

Jed Carey	Online Business Development Manager
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#### Procurement

Gaj Bagga	General Manager Procurement Transformation
Deb Wadsworth	Procurement Manager Hospitality
Jodie Stuart	Procurement Policy & Capability Lead

#### 2030

Justin Savaille	2030 Workstream Lead
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#### Treasury

Renee Harvey	Senior Treasury Analyst
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#### Governance & Risk

Andrew Cooke	General Manager Risk & Assurance
Suzanne Marlow	General Manager Legal Services

#### Digital & Technology

Stef Fredes	Portfolio Planning Lead
Jared Gordon	Software Licensing & Asset Management Specialist
Stacey Telford	Product Owner Cyber Risk & Assurance

#### People & Culture

Catarina Rogers	Organisational Development Specialist
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#### Family & Disability Services

Stella Miria-Robinson	Multicultural Partnership and Engagement Advisor
Krystal Beazley	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnership & Engagement Advisor
Abbie Deegan	Administration Officer
Mel McKay	Family Counsellor
Karelle Filmer	Administration Officer
Ros Melrose	Information Support Officer
FaDS Extended Leadership Team	

#### St Stephen's Hospital

Madonna Bowers	Director of Clinical Services
Teresa Skerratt	Clinical Nurse

#### The Wesley Hospital

Jess Powell	Clinical Nurse
Kathy Taylor	Infection Control Manager
Luke Hoskin	Hospitality Manager

#### Hospitals (Corporate)

Roxanne Adams	Executive Assistant to the Group Executive
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#### Property

Simone Dalley	General Manager Strategic Property & Investment
Steve Porteous	General Manager Facilities & Maintenance
Stuart Pickering	General Manager Property Development

#### Fleet

Mark Stephens	Manager Fleet Operations
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#### Mission

Bruce Moore	Director of Mission
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#### Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Partnerships

Gavin Mackey	Manager Strategy & Partnerships
Kim Ezzy	Indigenous Workforce Advisor

#### Corporate Affairs

Greg Bartley	General Manager Business Development
Lis Dingjan	Customer Experience & Innovation Manager
Brett Thear	Voice of Customer Lead
Kim Amos	Trust & Reputation Manager

Thanks also to our partners in the Uniting Church Queensland Synod, Energy Queensland, GEM Energy, Cleanaway, Websters Group, Energetic Communities Association, and the Climate and Health Alliance for their input.





**Proudly representing**

Blue Care | Lifeline | ARRCs | The Wesley Hospital | Buderim Private Hospital  
St Stephen's Hospital | St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital

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