

Lutheran Services

Report to the 2019 Convention of Synod

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Chair's Foreword

It is a pleasure to provide this report to the 2019 Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District Synod. As Council for Lutheran Services Chairperson for the past ten years, it is always an honour to represent Lutheran Services at Synod.

Synod is a coming together of our congregations from across Queensland, joined to discuss, debate and plan how we can best witness Christ's love in the communities we are part of – the communities we serve. Lutheran Services shares this witness with our colleagues in all departments and Church bodies, and ultimately with all congregants. In writing this report, we have reflected on a year of rewarding ministry, and provided some insights into where these achievements lead us in planning for the future.

In this report to the 2019 Convention of Synod, we document the highlights of the past 12 months for Lutheran Services, while outlining our vision for the future. The information presented reflects the priorities identified in our Strategic Plan:

1. A good life for the people and communities we serve
2. Growth and outreach: delivering faithful service and lasting social value
3. Reaching out together to minister to human need
4. Capable of delivering on mission
5. Sustainability

In the following pages, we demonstrate how we have responded to these strategic priorities across the various parts of our organisation, alongside our colleagues in the Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District.

In 2018, continued reform in the aged care and disability support sectors, alongside changing demographics, continued to alter the dynamic in which we operate. This presents new challenges and opportunities. In this environment, Lutheran Services is ideally positioned to extend our community ministry reach and to nurture vibrant and flourishing communities. This report chronicles how we ensure that we meet these challenges, whilst continuing to make a real difference to the lives of those we serve.

I invite you to read our report and to reflect upon it, and ultimately to question us and contribute your ideas to ours. Synod is a moment in time every year for reflection on the ministry we are called to.

I look forward to continuing on the Lutheran Services journey with all of you, growing together in the mission of God in the Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District, achieving ever better ways of serving those in need of care and support.

Acknowledgements

In achieving this work, we have been supported by countless members of our Lutheran community. I would like to thank several of my colleagues personally for their enormous support of the work of Lutheran Services.

I would like to thank my fellow Council members: Stuart Jaeschke, Leena Vuorinen, Simon LaBlack, Jennifer Danslow, Andrew Stanke, Bobby Rolison and Pastor Mark Gierus.

We are thankful for the engagement of Bishop Paul Smith and the District Church Council and their support in our ministry. Their time and wisdom have deepened organisational knowledge and understanding of Lutheranism in all areas of our work.

Thank you to everyone who supported Lutheran Services this year – through our combined Lenten Appeal with LCAQD, benefitting Mary and Martha’s Refuge and Hospital Chaplaincy, and in countless other ways.

We are grateful for the support we receive, whether it is in the form of money, goods, services, time or prayers.

Finally, I would like to pay tribute to our staff who play a key role in nourishing and nurturing a community of hope for the people we serve.

Thank you.

**Dr Clare Seligmann
Chairperson**

About Lutheran Services

Faith in action

Lutheran Services aims to provide quality and contemporary care, support and accommodation for older people, youth and their families, people living with disability or mental illness, and families experiencing domestic violence and hardship. We offer ministry across a range of urban, regional and rural communities.

As a diaconal ministry of the Lutheran Church, Lutheran Services exists to serve. It is how we bring our Christian faith to life. We walk together with congregations, individuals and communities to tend to human need in the spirit of Christian love and service.

The care and support we provide encourage all we serve to pursue the life they hope for, and the communities we are part of to thrive.

We are of the Church

Lutheran Services cares for thousands of Queenslanders, builds ministry and mission in the communities we operate, and is a compassionate voice for the vulnerable. We remain true to the work of the Lutheran congregations that founded us and we strive to work in ministry within the Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District.

Governance has continued to be a major focus of the LCAQD this year, and while some changes may be on the way, we are and will always be a Lutheran organisation established to witness faithfully for Christ in the communities we serve together as Church.

Working in fellowship with the District Church Council is vital for us to fulfil our mission. We can only fulfil our mission through their support, their trust and their faith in working with us towards our common goals.

Lutheran Services is also privileged to regularly join with the Lutheran Church of Australia's Committee for Ministry with the Ageing. This gives us the opportunity to share knowledge and experience with colleagues from around Australia, and to provide our church with advice and support to improve ministry with the aged at a congregational level and in Australian policy.

Our contribution

Over the past year, we have maintained this contribution while responding professionally and proactively to an increasingly competitive marketplace, growing public demand, ever-changing systems and standards, and unprecedented reform in the sectors we service.

In a contemporary world, where physically attending church is no longer the main way people connect, Lutheran Services performs a vital role – as an accessible point of contact and a recognisable public face of the LCAQD.

After more than 80 years of supporting Queensland people and communities, Lutheran Services has proven its ability to manage its financial, human and physical resources – making us a trustworthy choice as a service provider and collaborative partner.

During 2018, our ministry has provided care to thousands of people, including:

- 1265 residents of our aged care services
- 155 people who accessed our home support services
- 372 residents in our retirement villages
- 1259 young people
- 106 people living with disability
- 591 people who accessed our mental health support service
- 205 people who experienced domestic violence
- 1339 people who accessed emergency relief.

Our ministry also extends to our 1500 dedicated staff. We value our staff as professional and compassionate individuals, and for their contribution to our mission. We create meaningful employment and build rewarding careers. We foster growth in the industries in which we work. We support regional and rural communities that are typically underserved.

Our vision for the future is clear. We continue to advance the dreams and hard work of our founding congregations – strengthening our foundation for delivering service excellence; creating new opportunities for our staff; growing the numbers of individuals and communities we serve.

Leadership changes

In the latter months of 2018, the Council for Lutheran Services and the Lutheran Services CEO Jacqueline Kelly mutually agreed that Jacqueline's role as CEO would not be renewed when her contract expired in January 2019.

The Council thanked Jacqueline for her 14 years of faithful service and for building Lutheran Services into the sustainable and purposeful organisation it is today. We recognised her dedication and wished her the best in her future endeavours.

In order to continue our focus on improving our performance, the Council for Lutheran Services appointed John De Angelis as an interim CEO. We believe John was an excellent choice to serve in this interim role and lead the organisation.

At the time of writing, the Council was in the latter stages of a search for a permanent CEO, assisted by a professional recruitment firm.

Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety

The Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety represents a landmark inquiry into Australia's aged care sector. The Royal Commission was established by the Australian Government in October 2018 to investigate and provide recommendations for improvements in how care is provided and how the industry is regulated.

As one of the larger providers in the aged care industry, Lutheran Services was invited to provide an early submission to the Royal Commission in January. We welcomed this opportunity to express our views, and to contribute to shaping the aged care system for Australia's future.

As requested, we provided a detailed report on any complaints or claims of substandard care over the past five years. We also responded to a range of questions exploring key issues in the industry and the provision of aged care services and health care to older Australians. In the process, we made a number of recommendations for improving the quality and safety of aged care services.

Following is a summary of our recommendations to the Royal Commission:

- Funding – a funding system that recognises the additional costs of providing aged care services in rural, regional and remote locations, which is often provided by not-for-profit providers.
- Staffing – addressing the issue of providing the right workforce (recruitment, upskilling and retention) in rural and regional care settings.
- Clinical – better integration between all levels of care; technology-based patient portals; incentives for GPs to work in aged care settings; better access to specialist geriatric and neurological services.
- Quality and compliance – greater emphasis on quality performance measures, rather than a transaction-heavy compliance model.
- Person-centred – a less institutional approach to aged care; providing a person-centred approach; giving individuals more control; a more sensitive funding instrument to support this.
- Home care – faster access to Home Care Packages; greater funding of home care in regional and rural areas; rapid rollout of higher-level Home Care Packages to bridge the gap between home support and full-time residential aged care.
- High care needs – funding for smaller, more highly specialised care environments for residents with high care needs.
- Dementia – a community-wide approach to dementia support with more precise diagnostic services and management plans.
- Special needs – better care environments for people of all ages with special needs.
- Palliative care – greater resources for palliative care training and support across both the healthcare and aged care sectors.
- Mental health – recognition of the complex care needs of older people with mental illness.

- Infrastructure – incentives for not-for-profits (as significant providers of care to concessional residents) to improve care infrastructure.
- Technology – technological aids for sharing resident history, maintaining mobility, monitoring falls and connecting residents with the wider world.
- Innovation – incentives for exploring innovative care environments, multifaceted supported living communities, creative engagement, supported recreation and travel opportunities.

As a longstanding and leading provider of aged care services to the people and communities of Queensland, and as a major employer of aged care workers, Lutheran Services welcomes this review of the industry – to ultimately deliver better outcomes for older Australians. We share the Commissioners’ and Government’s commitment to the welfare of the 1.3 million Australians residing in Australian aged care services.

Lutheran Services has provided care to older Queenslanders for more than 80 years. Our services include residential aged care, residential respite, independent retirement living, home care and allied health services. We support more than 2000 residents and clients, and employ more than 1500 staff. We aim to provide holistic, industry-leading care and support – from creative engagement and spiritual expression to dementia support and palliative care.

Responding to and working with the Commission has been a key focus of Lutheran Services’ work this year and will continue to be an important aspect of our work throughout the remainder of the inquiry. Recommendations for sector improvement made by the Royal Commission will be treated seriously by our executive and contribute to our future plans appropriately.

In responding to the Royal Commission, we are working closely in mission with the Lutheran Church of Australia, Queensland District, and are grateful for the support of our colleagues, the Lutheran Church of Australia Committee on Ministry with the Ageing.

Lutheran Services is committed to the development of a highly responsive, respected and sustainable aged care system. Our aim is to continue to evolve and improve our services – to deliver better outcomes for older Australians.

Aged Care

Aged care for Lutheran Services comprises a variety of business streams, including residential care, home care and retirement living. In 2018, these areas together represented a total of 2151 residents and clients – a moderate increase on the previous year. The sector is experiencing considerable growth in demand and complexity of client needs, combined with changing government regulation.

Embracing the new single quality framework

Over the past 12 months, we have been preparing our aged care services for the introduction of the new Aged Care Quality Standards that will take effect from 1 July 2019. These new standards provide a single quality framework and place greater emphasis on clients exercising their own choice and control of the care they receive, whether through residential care or care in their own homes.

There are eight standards, each reflecting one aspect of care that contributes to an individual's safety, health and wellbeing. Specifically they address:

1. Consumer dignity and choice
2. Ongoing assessment and planning with consumers
3. Personal care and clinical care
4. Services and supports for daily living
5. Organisation's service environment
6. Feedback and complaints
7. Human resources
8. Organisational governance.

Lutheran Services welcomes the introduction of the new Aged Care Quality Standards. They reflect our long-held values and vision for aged care. These new standards will further encourage us to tailor our care to the individual's expressed needs, hopes, leisure interests, and cultural and spiritual preferences. We have long endeavoured to support this individual approach – providing extensive lifestyle options along with exceptional care and comprehensive clinical services.

We trust through the robust implementation of these standards, and with the increased focus on holistic, person-centred care and wellbeing, we will enhance the quality and public perception of aged care services, particularly those delivered by Lutheran Services.

Sustainable improvements

The 2018 calendar year was focused on ensuring sustainability ahead of transformational industry change – increasing our system strength regarding feedback handling and enhancing dexterity in aligning funding to client need. Significant improvements in operational performance resulted in financial upturn with improved government income of 7 per cent – an improvement of more than \$3 million (April 2018 – March 2019). This represents the largest increase of government funding achieved over five years.

Compliance

Accreditation was achieved at all services, which saw positive feedback from the majority of clients and their representatives. Continuous improvement activities have resulted in increased engagement and systemic improvements.

A successful Aged Care Approvals Round (ACAR) has seen Lutheran Services gain an opportunity to provide further beds in the Toowoomba (35 beds) and Sunshine Coast hinterland (52 beds) planning areas. ACAR is a competitive application process that enables prospective and existing approved providers of aged care to apply for a range of new Australian Government-funded aged care places and financial assistance in the form of a capital grant. This growth opportunity provides us with the potential to expand our ministry and service offerings.

Integrated Ministry Plan for Toowoomba

Lutheran Services in collaboration with LCAQD Ministry and Mission have commenced a consultation process to develop an integrated Ministry Plan for Toowoomba as Salem Aged Care in South Toowoomba requires significant upgrades to meet contemporary aged care practice standards.

We are currently assessing the viability of completing a significant refurbishment at the existing site, while exploring alternative options to continue the ministry of providing residential aged care for Toowoomba. At a consultation with local congregation leaders in October 2018, an integrated approach was proposed to consider:

- the needs, vision and local expertise of the Toowoomba pastors and congregation members
- the community, social and demographic profile
- the existing and emerging needs of the wider Toowoomba community
- how we could use this opportunity to develop an integrated Lutheran ministry and mission approach for the wider Toowoomba community.

Lutheran Services has progressed this idea by hosting discussions with Lutheran Education Queensland, Queensland Lutheran Early Childhood Services and the Department of Ministry and Mission to explore the creation of a shared ministry and mission planning approach for all departments of the LCAQD for this region.

Award for Wahroonga's Chaplain George and "PrayerConnect"

Chaplain George Rankin from Wahroonga Aged Care at Biloela has received the Rising Star Award at the 2019 LASA Excellence in Age Services Awards. The award recognises an individual with less than five years industry experience who has made an outstanding contribution to age services.

See the Chaplaincy section for more details.

Community Services

National Disability Insurance Scheme

Disability support services provided by Lutheran Services are now funded and administered under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). Our services providing disability support have been progressively changing over to the NDIS as the system was rolled out across Queensland.

Somerset Community Services has been delivering support under the NDIS for more than 12 months. Keystone Centre and Trinity Disability Service completed the changeover in July 2018. Intercept Youth and Family Support Program and Graceville Centre commenced NDIS rollout in January 2019. All will have completed the changeover by June 2019.

The NDIS aims to provide people living with a disability with more flexibility and choice in the support services they receive and how these services are provided. We have been working closely with our clients, their families and carers to ensure a smooth transition for all involved. A working group was established and tasked with preparing for the rollout of the scheme, making a significant contribution to our NDIS readiness, and that of our clients.

Service reviews

Implementing the NDIS has provided a catalyst for our Community Services operations to conduct a reappraisal of the programs and supports we provide and how they are delivered to the people and communities we serve. These service reviews will ensure we remain efficient, effective and competitive in responding to individual and community needs, while continuing to support the Lutheran Services Strategic Plan into the future.

The service reviews will assess our ability to meet future challenges facing our clients and regions. They will provide opportunities to build our networks and enhance our service delivery by improving relationships with local agencies, community groups and other service providers. Such a review is currently underway at Trinity Disability Service on the Gold Coast, with all other sites to follow.

Broadening our programs and communities

Community Services has been sourcing opportunities to grow the programs we provide and the people we reach. We have been tendering for a range of new programs both within and beyond our current regional boundaries, enabling us to expand and build upon our service support models. Tenders have been submitted for programs addressing homelessness, individual recovery and group peer support, Sunshine Coast Primary Health Network Mental Health Programs, Queensland Community Support Scheme, and Youth Support Coordination and Chaplaincy. We await the outcome of these tenders.

Working together for the Caboolture community

The Caboolture region has a strong local ministry that is driven and led by the local Lutheran Pastor. The Lutheran Community Ministry Caboolture includes the local Lutheran Kindergarten, Lutheran Primary and Secondary Schools, the Lutheran Church, St Paul's Aged Care and Intercept Youth and Family Support Program. This group is missioned with identifying ways to work together to support, not only each other, but the wider community as a whole. The promotion of each entity in their respective areas of work is an important focus of the ministry group, with local collaborative projects making up the core activities.

Intercept continues to develop plans for a purpose-built youth space and office – on a site recently acquired by Lutheran Services opposite the current rented premises in Caboolture. Young people and staff are involved in the design and planning. Intercept aims to complete the planning and approval process over the next 12 months, with construction slated for 2020–21. Intercept has developed a strong reputation and relationships with the local community and the community services sector. A dedicated, purpose-built space will enable Intercept to further strengthen and broaden its program and activities for this rapidly developing region.

Mental health services accreditation

Lutheran Services is currently seeking accreditation for National Standards for Mental Health Services. This accreditation will enable us to improve the work we do by focusing on mental health service delivery, policy direction compliance, communication and consent, client safety and privacy, and monitoring and governance procedures. The inclusion of these standards will support a best practice approach, and ensure we are well placed to offer professional mental health support services to the community into the future.

Chaplaincy

2018–19 has been a period of continuous development for the Lutheran Services chaplaincy ministry. While chaplaincy at our services was once delivered by local pastors visiting their members, today we have dedicated chaplains at each site. Our chaplains, both ordained and lay church workers, offer a dedicated ministry of pastoral and spiritual care that meets the spiritual needs of Lutheran and non-Lutheran residents. As one of our residents observed, “Thank God for our chaplains.”

One of the joys of chaplaincy is that it is a longer period of ministry that enables chaplains to develop and skill themselves to attend to the greater pastoral care needs of our residents. The development of chaplaincy teams at our larger sites has been a major highlight in recent years. This team ministry has enabled Salem’s previously part-time chaplain to develop a full-time role to cover the interim period while recruiting the new Pastor Team Leader Chaplain.

Lutheran Chaplaincy – a ministry for women

A growing number of our full-time and part-time chaplains are women who come from various occupations to offer their expertise and theological learning to provide pastoral care as part of their church ministry. Lutheran Services is blessed to have such gifted women. We are pleased to offer them various training opportunities to further develop their theological understanding and pastoral care.

As opportunities to join our team occur, we are always happy to hear from Lutheran women who feel called to serve their Lord in ministry. Chaplaincy offers each person the privilege to be a missionary, evangelist and apologist in this specialised caring ministry in aged care.

Chaplaincy in a complex world of beliefs

Lutheran chaplaincy ministry in today’s world, which deals with sin and salvation, is not simple. We are living in a spiritual maelstrom of differing beliefs and individualism. What this means is that Lutheran chaplaincy ministry is daily answering the cry of “How does God see me?” This question applies to both our staff and our residents.

We live in a world where all that we believe is equal, and what was once black and white is no longer as clearly defined. For many of our ageing residents, this may present a future that is less certain than ever before. The constant and faithful witness of our Lutheran chaplains in this complex and changing environment provides our residents with a haven of peace and hope.

In the time of life when our residents need to hear the clear message of God’s love in Jesus’ death and resurrection, our chaplains rise above the daily challenges of aged care to maintain the clarity, peace and Christ-like presence at the bedside of our residents.

The need for chaplain pastors

Lutheran Services' aged care services are blessed with pastors who faithfully and generously give of themselves and their spiritual gifts to the pastoral and spiritual care of the residents they serve on behalf of our church. Lutheran Services chaplaincy is a specialised ministry of the church – and yet a ministry that is offered and delivered in a place that is vastly different from the church building and parish setting. Chaplaincy provides its caring message amid the day-to-day operations and clinical functions of our aged care services.

The LCA's limited supply of pastors is a challenge we will continue to face into the future. The increase in women chaplains has certainly been an asset and blessing in growing our chaplaincy ministry. We need Lutheran members to pray for more women and men alike to hear the call within our church, and heed the opportunity to grow in theological understanding and pastoral care ministry.

We ask you to please make this one of your prayer petitions each day. And thank the Lord for our chaplains who serve those needing to know – even in this late stage of their life – that Christ's love will see them home.

Award for Wahroonga's Chaplain George and "PrayerConnect"

Chaplain George Rankin from Wahroonga Aged Care at Biloela has received the Rising Star Award at the 2019 LASA Excellence in Age Services Awards. The award recognises an individual with less than five years industry experience who has made an outstanding contribution to age services.

With residents' needs and interests in mind, Chaplain George created the "PrayerConnect" podcast. Male and female radio announcers were recruited to volunteer their voices and resources to record prayers. These were then uploaded to the Podomatic podcast hosting site.

Residents can now easily access a wide range of prayers at any time using their smartphone, tablet or PC. They can choose from a variety of topics, join a community of listeners and share in faith and love while continuing to engage in the ministry of prayer.

The PrayerConnect podcast has numerous applications as a resource for individuals or groups, for private prayer time or as part of a larger worship experience. PrayerConnect also allows Chaplains and Pastoral Care workers to access prayers and integrate them into programs and activities specifically designed for the aged.

Creative Programs

“A good life for the people and communities we serve” is at the heart of the large variety of activities and projects delivered by the Lutheran Services Creative Programs team. Following is a selection of projects delivered at our services throughout the year.

If Only I Could was a celebration of the role of music and dancing in the lives of residents from Zion, Tabeel, Immanuel Gardens and St Andrews Aged Care. Over a two-month period, more than 120 residents of various abilities were paired up with professional dancers to recreate and relive much-loved dance routines from the past. With funding from Arts Queensland, *If Only I Could* was professionally directed and choreographed. A public performance was staged at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in November 2018 – to the thunderous applause of some 200 people. This groundbreaking, high-profile initiative is a wonderful example of the Lutheran Services commitment to aged care and vision for creative engagement.

Hip Hop Inclusion facilitated an exciting creative collaboration between 46 mixed ability performers from Keystone Disability Centre, Endeavour Kingston Learning and Lifestyle, and Loganlea State High School. The project enabled all who participated to extend their social experiences and networks. Funding from Logan City Council enabled professional dancers to be engaged to assist with the planning and performance. Public performances were held at the Logan Youth Festival and Trinder Park Recreation Hall in April 2019. This inclusive project showcased the abilities of all participants and developed new understandings of disability. Participants had fun, made new friendships, developed new skills and built self-confidence.

Pastime Memoirs at St Paul’s Aged Care saw more than 20 residents working together over several months to explore the significance of the activities, events and memories that define us as individuals and bind us as friends, family and community. The St Paul’s residents portrayed their past through storytelling, reminiscence, humour, performance and music – many for the first time. *Pastime Memoirs* was shared with family and friends through a performance at St Paul’s in October 2018. St Paul’s staff commented on the positive impact of the project – an engaging activity that encouraged residents to express themselves while promoting social participation.

The Sound of Symbols saw residents of Immanuel Gardens Aged Care staging a celebration of personal stories, passions and histories. Over three months, 42 residents of all abilities collaborated to creatively explore topics important to them – through music, dance, costume, script and humour. *The Sound of Symbols* was presented to an audience of more than 130 people – family and friends plus representatives from community groups, Sunshine Coast Council and the University of the Sunshine Coast. The vibrant event was covered by local television, which showcased the Immanuel Gardens residents and their creative lifestyle opportunities.

With *Alice in Trinderland*, residents of Trinder Park are drawing on the Lewis Carroll classic to stage an inclusive and accessible cultural event as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations in 2019. The performance is being staged in the gardens at Trinder Park as promenade theatre, where audience members come to the performers – enabling people with mobility issues to be fully involved in the production. Workshops are currently underway with Trinder Park residents as well as clients from the Keystone Centre. *Alice in Trinderland* aims to promote social connection, self-confidence and independence for all who participate.

Building skills and opportunities

Creative engagement programs – and the creative approach to care and support – are enthusiastically embraced by the many residents, clients, families, staff and volunteers our service communities represent. Developing creative engagement skills and confidence in our workforce promotes staff performance and satisfaction, and further enriches the services and care we provide.

Over the past year, some 70 Lutheran Services employees from 11 services have participated in creative engagement professional development opportunities. The Creative Programs Advisory Team at the Support Centre has delivered eight formal training workshops to Creative Lifestyle staff from all nine aged care services.

The team also provides frontline staff with knowledge and skills in dance and movement, storytelling, sensory reminiscing and accessible art making programs. Over the past year, such programs were delivered across all aged care services, as well as the Keystone Centre and Trinity Disability Service.

Team building activities were conducted for the Creative Lifestyle teams at Salem, Trinder Park and St Andrews Aged Care, while mentorship and peer support programs were provided to the Creative Lifestyle Coordinators from all aged care services.

Marketing, Communication and Sales

Priority 1: Build an authentic and highly valued brand

Like all aged care and community service providers, Lutheran Services has much to do to respond to the current Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety, government policy transformation, industry deregulation and unprecedented growth in our ageing population. Providers by necessity are becoming increasingly professionalised. As we respond to this, it is important that we are always guided in our decisions and operations of our core purpose – to minister to human need in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

In 2017, with the assistance of Queensland Bishop Paul Smith, a Diaconal Witness statement was developed. This provides the guidance to ensure all our work is defined and grounded in a framework of Lutheran faith and ministry. During 2018 we have worked hard to ensure that all internal and external communication – written and verbal – reflect our diaconal ministry and commitment to our core purpose to serve.

Priority 2: Be visible, accessible and sales ready

Over the past year, Lutheran Services has continued the implementation of our new brand across the organisation. This has included signage and displays for our offices and many services, staff uniforms, motor vehicle livery and marketing and communication collateral. New signage has been designed and installed at St Paul's, Immanuel Gardens, Trinder Park, Orana, Tabeel and Teviot. It is planned that by October 2019 all remaining aged care and community services sites will be completed.

Since rebranding in 2017, our focus has been to build robust and effective systems, channels, capacity and infrastructure. As part of this, we are building a local area marketing and sales system to ensure all aged care and retirement living services have the resources to maintain occupancy while building the Lutheran Services brand and strengthening connections with the communities we serve, including congregations. This includes centrally managed but locally focused advertising, marketing and public relations, in traditional, digital and social media.

We have established an interim Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and back office contact solution to ensure all leads generated are captured, nurtured and tracked.

Lutheran Services now has an active social media presence on LinkedIn and almost 600 Facebook followers. Our website is performing at or above industry engagement benchmarks with a 62 per cent increase in traffic in the last year.

Priority 3: Be part of the communities we serve

A Client Service Advisor role is gradually being established at each aged care site. The purpose of this role is to provide dedicated sales and community marketing expertise and to ensure that Lutheran Services is known, respected and valued as a service provider of choice in the local community we are serving.

The Client Service Advisors will do this by providing all clients, prospective clients and their families with a welcoming, informative and supportive experience. They will build strong relationships with the local community, referral agencies, local Lutheran congregations, existing clients and prospects.

The Client Service Advisor role is in place at Trinder Park, Immanuel Gardens and St Paul's, and will gradually be introduced to the remaining sites over the next 12 months.

Priority 4: Build Lutheran Services' brand awareness, relationships and reputation across a broad range of stakeholders

Over the past year, we have strengthened our corporate communication capability, including internal communication, stakeholder engagement, media management and crisis management. This year we are very pleased to have collaborated closely with the LCAQD Ministry and Mission to deliver a combined Lenten Appeal.

Our Support Centre staff collaborated to provide a lengthy and detailed report to the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety in early January. In the time since this submission was made and public hearings commenced, we have worked hard to ensure all staff and stakeholders remain well informed and up to date on the Royal Commission and Lutheran Services' support for the reform process.

Priority 5: Support new business and service developments

This year the focus has been on developing the plans and capability to market and sell our new 52 apartment vertical retirement village – *Alondra Residences*. Although the building is still under construction, we have opened a display apartment on the ground floor, which greatly assists our prospects to visualise life at the beautifully appointed development.

With completion due mid-2019 and recent regulatory changes to the sale process now finalised, marketing is now well underway. This includes a mix of traditional media, outdoor, community and digital marketing. Given the highly competitive market, it is expected that most sales will occur after the building is complete – when prospects are able to experience first-hand the wonderful environment, community and lifestyle that Alondra offers.

Human Resources

The end of 2018 saw Lutheran Services halfway through its three-year Human Resources Strategic Plan. This plan is aimed at fulfilling the Lutheran Services vision and promise – of working with our congregations, individuals and communities to tend to human need in the spirit of Christian love and service.

Our staff are essential in assisting all we serve on their path to a good life. The quality of our staff and leaders is critical to how effective we are as an organisation in achieving our vision and mission. Therefore the priorities of the Human Resources Strategic Plan are:

- highest quality staff in all locations
- empowered and capable leaders and managers
- new and better ways of doing business
- a high performing, diverse and inclusive workplace.

This year we set about achieving these priorities by concentrating on structure, resourcing, and an improved focus on clarity of roles and responsibilities, with clear delineation of accountabilities. This will continue into 2019 when a permanent CEO is appointed and the leadership team structure can be finalised. Structure below the leadership team continues also to be a real focus on the necessary roles and functional reporting lines required to execute the Lutheran Services vision and mission.

2018 saw more investment in coaching and support, to assist our services managers to own their portfolios in terms of managing their own people and creating the right culture in which to work. This also saw a renewed focus on how we structure the People, Culture and Change team, with an emphasis on four key streams:

- organisational development
- talent acquisition and management
- employer/industrial relationships
- workplace health, safety and wellness.

We also kicked off management and development programs late in 2017, with a focus on continuing to improve leadership accountability led from the top three tiers of the organisation.

An organisation-wide staff engagement survey was distributed in April 2018. We were delighted with the response and feedback from around 750 employees who completed the survey. We have used the feedback to continue to develop initiatives and focuses that will further develop our People and Culture practices within Lutheran Services.

An e-learning portal – *Akademie* – was launched and rolled out across Lutheran Services in 2018. Akademie extends online learning to all of our staff, assisting us to better deliver, manage and monitor staff training and development across the organisation. The benefits of Akademie include:

- a user-friendly interface
- enhanced accessibility
- ease of delivering training to rural and regional operations
- access to an existing library of more than 800 courses
- a platform for delivering Lutheran Services' own programs.

The three-year Human Resources Strategic Plan continues to be rolled out in 2019, ensuring Lutheran Services' workplaces reflect high expectations and achievements in policy, practice and performance to sustain improved care services, and strong partnerships with the communities in which we operate. The end result will be responsive, accountable and inclusive site-managed operations.

Working for Lutheran Services will be a competitive career choice, and our staff and leaders will be fully empowered to achieve our vision and mission.

Renewal and Redevelopment

Lutheran Services committed approximately \$50 million over the past 12 months in improving the built environment of our services and preparing for growth.

We have taken the opportunity to develop masterplans for many of our campuses. This will provide the blueprint to transform these sites from the traditional homes of care into precincts of health, wellbeing and vibrancy. This will include co-locating community services where possible and providing amenity that will benefit the local communities in which we operate.

We are in discussion with other Lutheran ministries to explore how collectively we might deliver inter-ministry and intergenerational campuses. Development approvals have been granted for new infrastructure projects at Nundah and Trinder Park. We will now work through a process to deliver a contemporary and innovative built environment that encourages the people we serve to age well and flourish.

Renewing and reinvesting in our existing assets is essential. We continue to serve our people while planning for the future. The places where we deliver service are our people's homes. Ensuring these homes remain comfortable and safe, maintaining their aesthetic appeal and quality appointment, has been a focus over the past three years.

This year alone, more than \$6 million was invested in renewing these existing assets. A further \$1.5 million was invested in upgrading our retirement living villas to contemporary standards.

Alondra Residences – our new 52 apartment vertical retirement village – draws closer to completion. We hope to be serving our new residents by August this year. Alondra is the first major construction project Lutheran Services has undertaken for many years, and will be a flagship product for the Church.

LCA Reconciliation Action Plan

In April 2016, Bishop John Henderson initiated the LCA Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) project. A project team was established to progress the RAP. Tricia Davis, Lutheran Services' Lead Executive for Marketing and Communication, has been a member of this team since its inception.

The project team developed a master plan for the development of an LCA RAP. This plan was approved by General Church Council in December 2017 when it was resolved:

That the General Convention of Synod requests General Church Council to develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan that will:

- *assist ongoing relationship building through listening to Aboriginal people in the LCA;*
- *support non-Aboriginal people in the LCA to gain insight into what is important to Aboriginal people;*
- *provide a culturally appropriate mechanism by which our Church together with (inclusive of) Aboriginal people and communities within the LCA can address questions of recognition and representation; and*
- *develop appropriate ways to encourage and enable Aboriginal people to serve and lead in all aspects of Church life in the LCA.*

The General Convention of Synod authorises General Church Council to commit resources to facilitate the work required to prepare and deliver the plan.

The General Convention of Synod requests General Church Council to provide a report on the implementation of the plan to the 2021 Convention of Synod.

As a result of this endorsement of the RAP resolution, the project team has begun work on developing a "Reflect RAP" – scoping reconciliation initiatives and building relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander stakeholders. The LCA Reflect RAP is scheduled for completion in February 2020.