



## The Compounding Good Stories

### A Community Thriving with Purpose at Hampton Park Uniting Church

**U Ethical Investors is a not-for-profit, B-Corp-certified funds management business with a long-standing history of ethical investing. We operate as an autonomous organisation and proudly manage funds for a range of values-driven clients, including those with a Uniting Church heritage in Victoria and Tasmania, reflecting our commitment to ethical investment practices.**

Our business generates financial support in two ways: through the investment returns we earn for our clients and through the operating surplus we contribute to the Uniting Church at the end of each financial year. Uniting is one of the largest non-government providers of community services in Australia. Our contribution supports a wide range of impactful initiatives and programs within the community in Victoria and Tasmania.

While the surplus we generate is not specifically allocated to individual projects, we take immense pride in knowing that our efforts support vital community services. These services span areas such as social justice, outreach programs, and community support, amplifying the positive impact of our cornerstone clients' work across the region.

*Compounding good – the better we do, the more we give.*

**When you arrive at Hampton Park Uniting Church, the first thing you notice is its vibrancy. A thriving vegetable garden flourishes in one corner of the property, while late-summer flowers explode in a riot of colour. On the forecourt in front of the church, at least three separate services provide visitors with information and guidance. The grounds are alive with people of all ages and backgrounds, filling every corner with a hum of purpose and activity.**

Like other congregations across Victoria, Hampton Park is seeing increasing demand for its services.

"It's grown into a multicultural community," says Lyn McBain, a longtime congregation member and dedicated volunteer. "All our programs have grown. The English class has grown. We are able to pay Irene, our English teacher. We have a playgroup on Fridays as well and about 30 kids come to that."

While the congregation itself consists of 35 to 50 active members, the church welcomes hundreds of people through its doors each week. They come for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, art therapy, children's playgroups, and access to essential services such as the food pantry and packed meal distribution.





At the same time, there are a flow of volunteers, both from within the congregation and the broader community, who play a crucial role in keeping these programs running.

"We run a Christmas Day lunch every year," Lyn says. "This past Christmas, we had 130 guests. Two professional chefs—a husband and wife—prepare the meal each year, and this time, a new member of our congregation volunteered. When I asked her what she was interested in, she said, 'Oh, I'm a chef.' And I said, 'Well, you've got no choice now!' So, we were so blessed to have three chefs. We offer a traditional Christmas lunch but also include curries, rice, vegetarian, and gluten-free options to cater to everyone."

## A Church Built Around Its Kitchen

At the heart of Hampton Park Uniting Church is its kitchen—both symbolically and physically. Its deep red feature wall in the foyer, a deliberate design choice when the church was built in 2008, represents the warmth and hospitality that define this space.

Lyn and her husband Bruce, the church treasurer, became central volunteers after moving in next door in 2012. A friend who worshipped at Hampton Park encouraged them to visit, and they soon found themselves involved—starting with the Christmas lunch committee.

On a warm Thursday morning in February, the atmosphere at the church is one of generosity, hospitality, and action. The community and kitchen garden, with its 48 plots, bursts with life—including a prize-winning pumpkin. The kitchen hums with activity as volunteers prepare meals, and freshly harvested vegetables are neatly packed for people to take home.

The garden itself is a testament to the resourcefulness of the congregation. Volunteers repurposed a dismantled wooden playground into raised garden beds, embodying the "make do and turn hands" spirit of the church.

"The gardeners are here on Tuesdays and Thursdays from around 7:30 AM until 2 PM," Lyn explains. "The garden is a crucial part of our work. We use its produce in the kitchen, and we also pack it into food parcels for those in need."





## Hospitality Endures, Funding Remains a Challenge

Many of the programs at Hampton Park Uniting Church began with initial grant funding, but they now rely on the dedication of volunteers to continue. Lyn and others have kept an art therapy program running even after its funding ended.

More than 30 volunteers work in the garden throughout the week, with some initially joining through Work for the Dole and choosing to stay long after finding permanent employment. Their commitment reflects the deep sense of community that permeates Hampton Park.

However, securing long-term funding remains a concern. Rev. Robert Elkhuisen highlights the challenge:

*"Our model goes beyond emergency relief—we offer ongoing support services and work to build relationships with those who come through our doors. Volunteers are always a challenge, but our congregation has a way of finding resources despite being small. Still, we need stable funding to hire specialised staff and community support workers. Secure funding enables us to expand and sustain these vital programs."*

Despite financial uncertainties, one thing remains unwavering: Hampton Park's commitment to hospitality.

*"What we offer is a welcoming space for people in a fractured community to come together," Robert says. "We are open, inclusive, and here to serve."*

## How You Can Help

Hampton Park Uniting Church welcomes volunteers and donations to support its programs. They are especially seeking help from individuals with grant-writing experience to secure future funding.

**For more information or to offer support,** please contact: David Leak 0408 057 211 or [davidleak@bigpond.com](mailto:davidleak@bigpond.com)

