



Media Release

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More help to keep people connected to utilities and telecommunications

Keeping people connected to energy, water and telecommunications is more important than ever with rising energy prices posing a challenge for many Australian households, according to UnitingCare Wesley Bowden (UCWB).

UCWB, Uniting Communities and Uniting Country SA have formed a consortium to deliver this valuable program in Adelaide and regional SA.

UCWB is leading the consortium which will expand its program of training to community workers and volunteers helping vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community and providing information sessions to the general public.

The statewide Utilities Literacy program has been re-funded by the SA Government and began on 1 September 2017 under the new name **ConnectEd**.

Minister for Communities and Social Inclusion, the Hon. Zoe Bettison MP, whose department funds ConnectEd, launched the expanded program at UCWB in Gibson Street, Bowden today.

ConnectEd will deliver information sessions and training on telecommunications in addition to electricity, gas and water, as well as offering individual financial counselling and home energy visits by qualified assessors.

UCWB Chief Executive, Fiona Kelly, says the essential nature of the program and its success in educating community workers and volunteers over the past few years has been recognised by the SA Government.

“It’s vitally important that vulnerable and disadvantaged people are given the opportunity to keep their power, gas, water and telecommunications from being disconnected if they are unable to pay their bills,” Ms Kelly says.

“ConnectEd provides information on how to understand your bills, how to choose the best deal from your provider and what to do if you can’t pay your bill.”

“The goal is to keep people connected.”

Simon Schrapel, Chief Executive of Uniting Communities, said, “We have long advocated for affordable utilities prices for people who are disadvantaged, and also provided a number of services to support low income earners. We’re proud to be part of this consortium delivering such an important program to vulnerable people in our community.”

ConnectEd will also launch its own website early in 2018 which will become an information “clearing house” offering resources for community workers and the general public.

“The ConnectEd website will also have a public access area which will be a valuable tool for members of the community who want to find the latest information on energy, water and communications information,” Ms Kelly says.

The site will also have a secure area for educators to gain access to the latest information relevant to the energy, water and communications sectors.

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