



# Connections

child, youth and family services

## MEDIA RELEASE

Attention: COS, news, social affairs, youth, health & community

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# MODERATOR GIVES BLESSING TO NEW UNITINGCARE OFFICE

## OFFICE BLESSING AND ANTI-POVERTY AWARDS ANNOUNCED

Connections UnitingCare, one of Victoria's largest welfare agencies and the largest UnitingCare agency in Victoria has moved to a new office in Mount Waverley. The Uniting Church Moderator for Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Rev. Jason Kioa will offer a blessing for the new establishment.

'This location takes us to the heart of where our work is and also sees us focus on where we see the growing demand for our services,' says Connections Chief Executive Officer, Angela Forbes. 'We already do significant work in the south-eastern growth corridor and Mount Waverley positions us perfectly to be servicing the needs of people within this area,' said Ms Forbes.

The new office is head office and also houses the Connections homelessness service SHIFT (Supporting Homeless Individuals & Families in Transition). The SHIFT program and other Connections sites have strong links to the Chinese community and these will be recognised on the day.

Rev. Kioa will offer his blessing at the official opening of the new Connections office. The function will also see Connections announce Anti-Poverty Awards, with recipients including a refugee from Somalia with a fascinating and incredible story.

Following this multicultural thread, Rev. Kioa, the son of a Tongan Free Church of Tonga minister, came to Australia in 1981 and after a period of alienation from the church which ended in his being arrested and incarcerated as an illegal immigrant at the Maribyrnong Detention Centre in 1983, he returned to the faith of his parents through a spiritual experience that literally turned his life around.

'The story of Connections is a powerful and up-lifting one,' says Ms Forbes. 'The stories we will hear at the official opening continue that trend – individuals and communities working together, making a difference in the lives of disadvantaged people.'

**PHOTO OPPORTUNITY – 11am, Friday 12 December, 31 Hardner Road, Mount Waverley.**

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Connections is a community welfare agency of the Uniting Church's UnitingCare network in Australia providing a range of innovative and early intervention programs that support vulnerable children, young people and their families giving them a better chance in life now and in the future.

More information at [www.connections.org.au](http://www.connections.org.au)