



WESLEY PLACE

Q&A - Siobhan Reed

What is your job title and role in the Wesley Place move?

My job title is Project Officer. Essentially, I am a project manager for the relocation of the Uniting Church group to Wesley Place. That also means working closely with project managers coordinating the other groups, Uniting Vic.Tas and Uniting AgeWell as well as working with key U Ethical contacts.

So, with the move looming, this is a pretty busy time for you?

I'm super busy. I went into 130 Little Collins St at 8pm last night to do some stuff because I could not find the time otherwise.

How long have you and the other project managers been working on the move?

The steering committee was formed in July last year. A major step was jointly tendering the one removalist for all the UCA-associated people. We're also sharing a lot of information, which is almost the beginning of the collaboration we want to do in the new space.

When are Synod operations and ministry staff moving and what will be involved?

The move is mainly on Saturday July 4 with preparation from Friday July 3. All our IT equipment is coming across, so it has to be disconnected at 130 Little Collins St, transported and reconnected. That is a huge component of the work that needs to be done.

Everything else that people need to do their work is coming, such as their files. Staff will be packing up their workstations up until 12 noon, July 3. Removalists will provide packers for other work items. We don't want people lifting large crates and all that stuff. Some people are still culling years of clutter. I think working from home has made people realise "I don't need this much paper".

How disruptive will this be to Synod activities?

We do ask people to bear with us over the next few weeks because we will be busy moving, unpacking and orienting ourselves to the new space. People will be juggling working from home and with settling into the new workplace. There's a bit going on.

How disruptive has COVID-19 been to the move?

Exceptionally. At the start, when it was just work from home it wasn't too bad because all our planning could be done remotely. However, as the actual move date has come closer there are significant logistical challenges. At one stage we weren't sure if staff could even pack their own desks. We kept that flexibility in mind when we went through the tender process for the relocation.

As most staff are working from home, how have they even packed up their old workstations?

We've been rostering people to come in and do it – a few at a time. This has been overseen by our volunteer Move Champions, who are our absolute go-getters helping us with the move. Each area of



Pictured: Siobhan working from home – complete with Wesley Place site plans on the wall behind her.





the church has nominated Move Champions and they have been sharing information and coordinating logistics for their teams. They are doing a sterling job and they also feed me back questions that people are thinking about.

How will COVID-19 affect people starting work at Wesley Place?

Everything is subject to government directives. Returning to the workplace will be a staged approach in line with a lot of other organisations. It needs to fit in with the current criteria that if you can work from home, do work from home.

However, we expect there will be staff in the new building from July 6 onwards, because there have been staff needing to work at 130 Little Collins St, those whose work cannot be done from home.

Our number one priority is that the workplace is safe for employees to be in, that we are complying with the one person per 4msq density and 1.5m social distancing. For instance, the density of the meeting rooms has been reduced to cater for this. We are providing hand sanitisers, cordoning off furniture so nothing is communal anymore and there won't be any hotdesking. This means there's a lot of extra planning involved.

Senior leadership and managers will work out how they phase staff back into the office. Managers will determine what works for their team, some will roster different times for staff to come in, some may keep preferring to work from home for health reasons. Naturally, any work from Wesley Place will be done in line with current government directives at all times, which are as we know, changing regularly.

How will you introduce staff to their new workplace?

There have been induction tours between June 22 and July 3. These have been optional because we are still in the work from home directive but because it is a new building every staff member has to be inducted to know all the safety elements, evacuation sites and that sort of information.

All staff will need to attend a two-hour induction before being issued with their security pass.

Will UCA people who aren't staff get a chance to visit the new offices?

We are encouraging virtual meetings for the foreseeable future because of COVID-19 restrictions. However, we cannot wait to bring the wider church through. We're planning an open day but are still currently hampered by COVID, so we will have to wait until that is clear. Definitely, we want the whole church to feel they have ownership of the spaces because they do.

Are you looking forward to completing the move?

I don't think it will be just a sense of relief. There will be a huge sense of achievement, to see it happen and see UCA people all under one roof. We can say we want to be collaborative but because we will be in the same space it becomes a very physical, practical way to be collaborative. So, I am looking forward to that.

