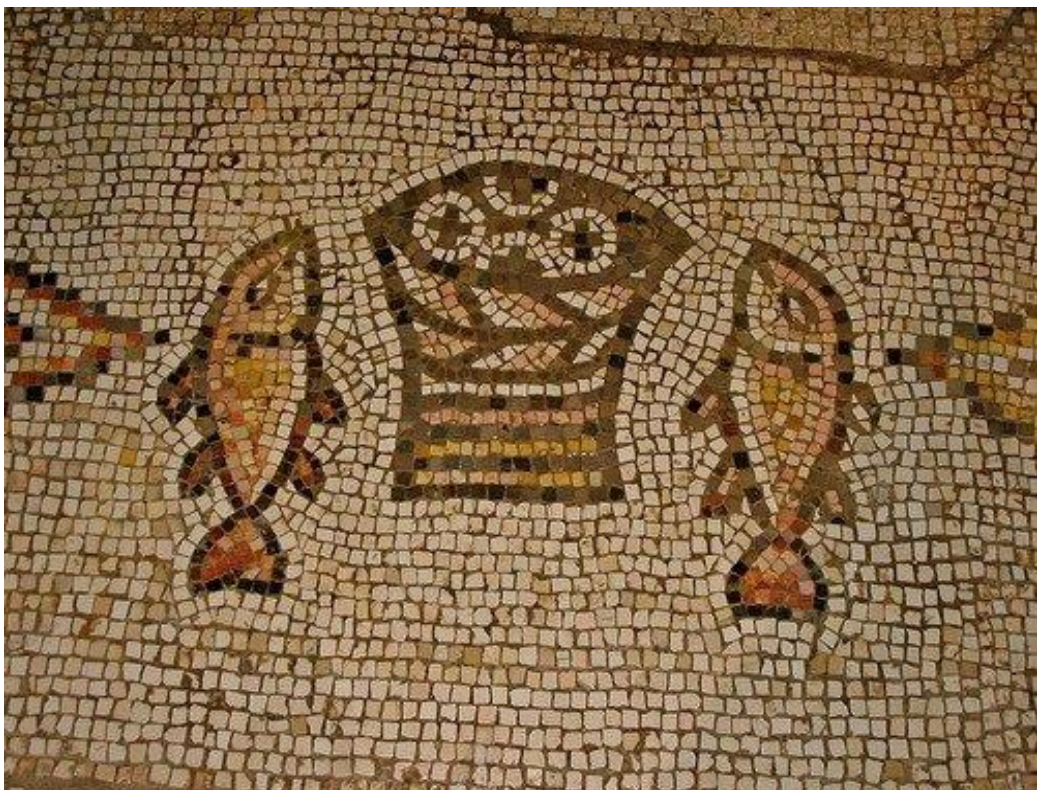




Report from

The Moderator



Report

I encourage the UCA in Qld to have confidence in the gospel; for all of us to bring our gifts of heart, mind, and strength to the work of being a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the coming promised kingdom of God, in all our broad and diverse opportunities of witnessing to the goodness of God in Christ. The Covid crisis has demonstrated how deeply committed our people are to the mission of God, and how adaptive and innovative leadership can be. Project Plenty is a tremendously encouraging message from our members that should give our leaders and councils in the church the courage to bring transformational change.

The Moderator's role has been summed up as giving pastoral and spiritual oversight to the life of the Synod, bearing witness in the public space, and leading the uniting church's engagement with other churches and the wider community. It involves several regulatory responsibilities, along with chairing the Synod Standing Committee, the body charged with giving general oversight to the life of the church between Synods in Session.

Focus since the last Synod

Ecumenical Relations.

- A highlight for me was my second trip to the Church of North India, with the Dostana group. The trip was organised by Andrew Solomon. Again, I saw a church that was active in ministry in so many places, ready to help and support poor and marginalised families; the diocese does manage to integrate worship, witness and service in a very holistic way. UnitingWorld supports some projects, but the prime purpose of our visits – hosting people from the Church of North India here, and visiting ourselves, is that we can build a friendship that sustains us, encourages us, and gives us joy in our Christian walk.
- The Synod Ecumenical Relations Committee has had changes in participation and leadership, and some renewed interest from younger leaders in the Synod. It is a valuable resource in keeping our ecumenical relationships across the life of the church supported.
- Heads of Churches gather once every two months, pray and worship together, and collaborate on a range of matters – responses to government inquiries, engagement with other faiths, and have supported the Religious Instruction in State School initiatives. It is a broad group, including the General Secretary of Qld Churches Together, Pentecostal, reformed, evangelical, and mainline denominational leaders. The UCA and Lutheran churches will be hosting a Heads of Churches gathering in September this year.
- Queensland churches Together (QCT) continues to be the main organisational venue for ecumenical relations. It has produced some excellent resources for informing churches on Domestic and Family violence, and supported an energetic group of eco-theologians. It also supports local ecumenical endeavours across the state.

- World Council of Churches. I participated in the formulation of the WCC's submission to the UN Human Rights Council's 3rd Universal Periodic Review of Australia's commitment to Universal Human Rights.
- Ecumenical partnerships in chaplaincy in institutions are facing renewed questions of relevance and worth. I have instigated with the chaplaincy commission, work on a refreshed rationale for our work and investment in this space.
- Denominational conferences. I was guest at the Qld conference of the Australian Christian Churches. It was an impressive time; 27 women and men were ordained into leadership roles. Also represented the church at the Lutheran District conference.
- Religious Instruction in State Schools (RI). The Christian Religious Instruction Alliance (Qld) was formed with 14 denominations signed up as members. I serve as Chair of the governing committee. The body has an annual budget of about \$350 000. It works to engage professionally with key stakeholders – political leaders, Education Qld, teacher and principal groups and other faith providers to support curriculum reviews and support regional RI coordinators.

Communal and Interfaith engagement.

- Presented papers and participated in several workshops with the Islamic traditions
- Worked with other faith leaders in representations to government during the Covid pandemic
- Co-chair of the Multi-Faiths RI network, and made representations to the political parties regarding RI in state schools.
- The Synod Interfaith Relations Committee also provides an avenue for the UCA to demonstrate our faith and our commitment to understanding and tolerance. The Group hosted and attended Iftar dinners during Ramadan.
- Qld Community Alliance. The Synod still supports this community based social justice initiative. It provides a wonderful means to strengthen our life and witness to the gospel in practical ways. Training in community organising is being offered; it gives great insight and strategies for communities seeking to address issues in their context.

Issues in the life of Qld

- Representations to government on:
 - treatment of asylum seekers
 - voluntary assisted dying inquiry
 - restrains on community-based organisations speaking regarding electoral issues
 - calling for better vilification and hate speech laws
- seminar on religious freedom legislation
- seminar and submission on state human rights legislation
- supporting the state government's response to communal issues at Aurukun

- churches' representative on the State Government's "Truth, Healing, and Reconciliation Task Force" – set up to advise Government on their response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- Collaborated with Vic/Tas Synod on guest worker visa issues.

In the life of the church

UnitingCare

Gave support and encouragement to the board, executives and directors of mission in the important and challenging space of community services. I believe that there is strong confidence and support between the UnitingCare Board and the Synod Standing Committee (SSC). This has been developed through a range of engagement strategies – membership of the board by myself and the General Secretary, Presbytery/Synod Interface meetings including the Director of Mission, regular meetings between myself and the chair and CEO, as well as through a yearly meeting of the SSC and the Board. Rev Peter Armstrong and I toured parts of North Queensland and Western Queensland, helping congregational and agency leadership engage and collaborate. The board's vision and commitment to its 2030 vision is to be commended.

Schools and Residential Colleges

Represented the church and supported boards and executive. Note that there are significant opportunities here for the UCA's engagement with young people and their families. Rev Graham Cole finished a long and exceptional service to Brisbane Boy's College this year.

Congregations and Presbyteries

It is always an encouragement to be a part of congregational and presbytery life. While our communal life faces great challenges, it is proven to be resilient and innovative during this Covid pandemic. I am heartened that communities are exploring how the wider engagement that has occurred during this time can be translated into meaningful relationships.

Presbyteries face particular challenges around oversight and management. I have been keen to resource Presbytery Chairs in their role and Presbytery Ministers in ongoing development and formation. The Presbytery is the prime oversight body for congregations and ministers. The meme running through parts of our life that we are a non-hierarchical organisation has eroded many presbyteries' confidence in their important role of being a key keeper of the trust that our members place in us. That confidence needs to be strengthened so that we can live productively and harmoniously. I believe the presbytery leadership in place in Queensland is ready and able to give significant leadership to life of the church through the transitions ahead of us.

Synod Standing Committee and Synod Office

The Synod Office has gone through significant change and transition. This has been to make a more effective and efficient office for the whole church; so that it is a good steward of the resources it has allocated to it. It has been costly, but necessary change. Some of these changes have meant valued,

long term staff have left us. I am thankful for their service and have helped some of them find other employment.

The Synod Standing Committee has been very well served by the Synod Office; we have received high quality, timely advice, and have been well informed on the opportunities, issues and challenges under our remit. The current SSC model is recent and could well do with a review as to if it is the best model for such a diverse and complex galaxy as the UCA Qld Synod. Also, I would hope that in the new term, greater opportunities for training and development of SSC members may be initiated.

Our Covenant Relationship

Since the launch of the Covenant Action Plan (CAP), we have seen an increased interest in engaging with the First Peoples. A task group from across the life of the church has been operationalising the plan. The Synod Office has strongly supported this venture. The task group has identified several spaces in which the covenant can be lived out. There have been a number of “walk on country” activities, plus supporting congregations engaging with their local Indigenous leadership. *Please find the CAP plan attached.*

The formation of the Carpentaria presbytery has seen a closer relationship form between congregations in North Queensland and new initiatives in leadership formation. The church has also been strongly supporting Wontulp-Bi-Buya, the ecumenical college in Cairns and that support is bearing fruit.

Social Action and Justice Advocacy

The Synod Standing Committee approved the formation of the Moderator’s Social Action and Justice Advocacy Reference Group (SAJA). The group is representative of each part of the life of the church and is convened by Rev Dr Adam McIntosh. The purpose of this reference group is to resource, encourage and equip the Synod’s collaborative response to, and engagement in, issues of social justice and responsibility. This includes a focus on resourcing the Moderator’s responsibility to speak into the public space and advocate for the truths the gospel brings to our life together, as well as exploring local practical collaborative responses across the Synod, to identified priority issues, as an expression of the mission of the church.

SAJA provides a significant capability in broadening the capacity to hear what is happening across the life of Queensland and also bringing to bear resources to respond with a depth of understanding. SAJA is continuing to refine its collective prioritisation work on issues emerging out of the Project Plenty process, and issues impacting synod entities, with the view to outlining opportunities for collaborative, synod-wide and local implementation in 2021. *Please find the SAJA terms of reference attached.*

Lessons learned

What we have to keep an eye on is that we don’t let koinonia (our gathered life), kerygma (our proclamation of the gospel), and diakonia (our ministry of practical service to human need) – or in



the words of the Basis of Union, worship, witness and service - become detached from each other; each expression of the Kingdom will be the poorer if we do.

Project Plenty

I have encouraged Project Plenty to be framed in terms of what blessing we might bring to the life of Queensland, rather than a focus on ourselves, our needs. My experience is that when the people of God set out to make the world a better place, to bear witness to the Kingdom of God in concrete ways, while there's always resistance, there's also much that comes our way as encouraging surprises and blessings. I'm very impressed that our membership has spoken so clearly to the councils of the church about what they see needs to happen for us to be a fruitful church.

Challenges/risks as we progress

Greater change is required than what we are probably prepared for!

We will need to articulate a compelling purpose and develop quality accountability to be able to be good stewards of what Christ has called us to and good stewards of the trust our members and people we serve in mission place in us. We are building some accountability mechanisms – the Combined Presbyteries Mission Fund, better data collection, but we must use them well.

For consideration

Thank you for the opportunity to serve in this role. It has been a privilege to serve with people across the life of the church who have caught the vision of the gospel and bring their best to that vision. Our calling and life is based on the faithfulness of God in Jesus Christ.

“never fear, little flock, it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom” Luke 12:32.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Synod Standing Committee

Report

The Synod Standing Committee strives to hold the vision and mission of the church in its sight as it deals with the significant risks and incidents that arise between general Synod meetings.

It has been buoyed by the Church's response to the Project Plenty process, which indicates that the church is inspired and responsive to the constant call of God on our life together.

This report highlights the important decisions made to give effect to the vision and direction of the whole of the church.

About our Committee

The Synod Standing Committee (SSC) acts on behalf of the general Synod between its ordinary meetings. In exercising its powers and fulfilling its responsibilities, the SSC has regard to the following guiding principles:

- (a) focussing on the strategic and policy issues of the church
- (b) engaging in competence-building activities for its members
- (c) efficiency and timeliness in approvals and decision-making.

Significant oversight exercised by the SSC

The work of the SSC which has impacted most significantly on the Synod includes:

- **Board for Christian Formation (BCF) and Trinity College Queensland (TCQ) matters:** The SSC has overseen the work of the BCF and has noted and approved the developments in TCQ. The SSC has approved the appointment of the Principal, Dr Paul Jones, and the appointment of the Old Testament lecturer Dr Rachel Krohn. We also reviewed and updated policies around the Fee Help scheme. Our Fee Help scheme is no longer active and is only applicable for a limited cohort of past students. However, the SSC changed the rules regarding accessibility to allow past students to access the financial assistance in a pro rata way.
- **Project Plenty:** The SSC has monitored and approved the Project Plenty work during the Synod term. The material being presented at the 35th Synod meeting has constantly been reviewed by the SSC to ensure it remains a consultative and engaged program of work.
- **Newlife:** A proposal that Newlife Congregation become a Parish Mission was presented to the SSC. The SSC referred the work to a task group who considered that more substantive work was required before the proposal was bought. The task group considered that such work should wait until a new lead minister was appointed to Newlife church.
- **Christian Religious Instruction Alliance in Queensland:** A significant ecumenical venture has been participation in the formation and resourcing of the RI Alliance in Queensland. The

Moderator was appointed as the Synod's representative to that Alliance. The purpose of the Alliance can be found in their governing rules.

“Religious Instruction (under its various names) has been a part of the life of Queensland state school communities since the early 1900s in Queensland. The members of this body seek to establish Christian Religious Instruction in State Schools (CRI) on a firm foundation that ensures that Christian Religious Instruction remains in curriculum time, is a quality program for children and young people in state schools, and one that enjoys the respect of the Education Department, government, opposition, and the wider community.”

- **Schools:**

Schools Strategy: The SSC approved the 2020-2025 Schools Strategy which can be found [here](#). The strategy arose from a consultative process with our school leaders (both governance and executive). It formalised a shared vision and articulates strategic opportunities to enable our ministry within The Uniting Church Australia Queensland Synod (UCAQ) schools over the next five years. UCAQ school leaders have repeatedly expressed a desire to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and to leverage the data, research capabilities, skills and opportunities across the UCAQ school's network to enhance their long-term sustainability. The financial ambition of the strategy is to achieve a sustainable funding position and provide for an increased value proposition for students and staff.

Calvary Christian College: In the second half of 2019, the College indicated the need for substantial financial assistance from the Synod. As a condition of that assistance the SSC directed the General Secretary undertake a governance review of the College. At the time of writing of this report, that review is in its late stages. The SSC is confident that the College has a firm mission and vision and their level of cooperation and engagement with the Synod is appropriate. The process to review the Constitution of the School is ongoing.

Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA): The SSC has maintained a watching brief on the PMSA and is regularly updated on the implications of the Presbyterian's current organisational position. We maintain a good working relationship with the Presbyterians in relation to all our joint activities.

Wontulp Bi-Buya: The Synod remains an active ecumenical partner to support Wontulp, an Indigenous Theological Training College in Cairns. Revs Dennis Corowa and Heather den Houting and Rev Dr Richard Wallace are the Synod's appointees on the Board.

- **Significant Appointments.** During this Synod term:

- Mr Nigel Alexander was reappointed as chairperson of UCQ.
- Ms Natalie Smith was appointed as chairperson of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RNC), following the resignation of Mr John Lister.
- Mr Ralph Collins was appointed as chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), following the resignation of Mr Allan Hanson.

The SSC thanks John and Allan for their valued contribution during their time as chairs of the RNC and ARC respectively.

- **Safe Ministry:** The SSC continues to monitor the activities of the Synod in relation to ensuring that our training and compliance in safe ministry is acceptable. Where concerns are raised, these are addressed through the Synod’s Safe Ministry framework.
- **Chaplaincy Commission Review:** At our February 2020 meeting, it was resolved that an external review of the Synod Chaplaincy Commission be undertaken. The Commission members had requested an independent assessment of their performance, believing that they have not been as effective as they would like to have been and were seeking recommendations for the best structure and governance model moving forward. Progress was delayed ensuring that any review was integrated with directions around this ministry from Project Plenty. The unique circumstances of COVID have also highlighted the need for community pastoral care. The review proper commenced in August 2020 and any direction will be closely integrated with strategies emerging from Project Plenty.
- **Carpentaria Presbytery:** The SSC approved the dissolution of the Calvary and North Queensland Presbyteries and the creation of Carpentaria Presbytery. It is anticipated this collation of resources will provide additional capacity to help implement missional initiatives and has the potential to increase engagement between First and Second Peoples across the whole state. The new Carpentaria Presbytery was formed effective 29 February 2020.
- **Presidential Ruling:** The SSC responded to a request for a Presidential ruling around the formation of Carpentaria presbytery. The President declined to rule on this matter.
- **COVID-19:** Like many sectors and throughout the community, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact upon the Uniting Church in Queensland. The approach taken to managing COVID-19 was to respond to the situation, stabilise and plan for the recovery. As COVID surges continue, the SSC is confident that the church responds rapidly and appropriately to ensure our people and those we serve are safe and compliant with Public Health directions. We must not become complacent in our approach, as we have seen that COVID-19 is highly transmissible, and communities are being confronted with outbreaks. SSC is satisfied that the processes and systems are in place to remain vigilant in our safety measures against COVID-19 transmission.
- **Approval of Synod Office Budget:** The annual Synod office budget was approved and can be found [here](#). While the SSC had requested and anticipated that this budget would be based on a three-year forecast and trend, the impact of COVID has meant that only a one year budget has been approved with the expectation this will be reviewed in December 2020.
- **Future resourcing of the Church:** The SSC has considered the current resourcing and financial sustainability of the church. It has flagged that the primary reliance on congregational giving and stewardship fees is not a sustainable model. To counter this, it noted the creation of a Business development Unit on the Synod Office and have encouraged all entities in the church to collaborate to find alternate revenue sources or cost savings together.
- **Business Development Unit:** The Business Development Unit (BDU) is a cross Synod office collaboration tasked with identifying and evaluating activities that may lead to additional surplus.

As part of this process the BDU has developed criteria to nominate and assess surplus opportunities. At the time of writing the key achievements from this Unit have been:

1. The due diligence and launch of Uniting Education – Early Learning
 2. Solar and renewable energy resourcing across the whole of the church. This includes exploring financing options for a whole of church approach that benefits all entities.
 3. One Church Connect – A tool which integrates planning and reporting obligations for congregations.
 4. A suite of foundational tools for congregations to explore and use in launching/running reuse and recycle (op) shops. These consist of business plans, a manual for running an op shop and guide to navigate the tools. This material is available for download on the UCAQ website.
 5. Locating and assisting the church to access appropriate grants and funding opportunities. This became especially salient at the time of COVID emergency funding.
 6. Joint procurement strategies – has meant developing the capacity to obtain Not For Profit process on commonly purchased goods. Once this has been established, cost saving opportunities will be rolled out across the Synod.
 7. Workcover Self Insurance – we are currently embarking on due diligence around the impacts and efficiencies that might be gained if we move to self-insurance around Workcover.
- **Uniting Education – Early learning:** The SSC commissioned external specialist consultants to investigate potential new ways of operating the Child Care ministries of the Church, to ensure safe ministry; legal responsibilities are met and to maximise each services’ return on ministry and resources. The SSC approved an “Approved Provider” function within the Synod Office, funded from operational levies charged to local childcare services. The report also provided detailed plans to re-invigorate the local child-care services to achieve their potential within the spirit of Project Plenty.
 - **Annual review of the General Secretary against her KPIs:** The SSC has diligently assessed the General Secretary against her [Position Description](#) and agreed KPIs over the last term. Each review has been positive and a recommendation around the General Secretary’s term is being brought to the 35th Synod.
 - **Leadership:** Uniting Leadership is a joint initiative with the South Australian Synod and had overseen executive leadership training, teams training and coaching programs. We also approved the establishment of a Women in Leadership program. However, due to the impact of COVID, we approved that this be changed to a general peer to peer mentoring program renamed Plentiful Leadership.
 - **Royal Commissions:** The SSC has overseen the Synod wide response to the Royal Commissions. It has noted the agency specific responses to the Aged Care Royal Commission and has endorsed a Synod wide approach to the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. While COVID has delayed some of the activity, these Commissions will both continue through 2021.

- **UCA Redress Ltd:** As part of the national church's response to the National Redress Scheme, the Synod has become a member of UCA Redress Ltd. The General Secretary is the member representative on this company. UCA Redress Limited will provide their own report to this Synod which can be found [here](#).
- **Legal Matters with significant impact for the church:** The church is regularly involved in litigation matters. These relate primarily to claims against it for historical sexual abuse. The Synod also defending a claim by the Frederick Marsden Youth Centre (FMYC), for a declaration regarding an interest in the land which it inhabits. This matter was resolved a mediation with the outcome that the church owns the land and FMYC have a licence to occupy. A question was raised by Uniting Care about the nature and implications of assets held by the church with the overlay of public benevolent institution (PBI) status. Questions relating the nature of the assets of the Property Trust, the meaning of responsible body and compliance with ACNC reporting obligations have been referred to a Queen's Counsel (QC) for opinion. Once the opinion is settled, a program of work to properly inform and advise Synod entities on the status of church assets will be required.

Project Plenty

The SSC has supported, encouraged and approved the resourcing for the Project Plenty process. The material before the Synod at this meeting is as a result of 18 months of continued and dedicated oversight by the SSC.

Challenges/risks as we progress

- **Risk Appetite:** The SSC approved the Synod Risk Appetite Statement (RAS) in July 2020 and provides direction for the level of risk that is acceptable across the Synod. The statement can be found [here](#). The key risks identified for the Synod in this statement are:
 1. Financial Risk: Finance (including Liquidity & Funding, Credit and Market)
 2. Person / Child Harm
 3. Work, Health and Safety (Employees, Third parties, Public etc.)
 4. Facilities and Assets (Fit for purpose, Availability, Reliability and condition)
 5. Information and Communication (Loss, Integrity, Availability of information)
 6. Cyber risk (Loss of data integrity)
 7. ICT - Fit for purpose, Availability, Integrity of ICT
 8. Regulatory and Legal
 9. Our People (Quantity, Quality, Culture and Conduct)
 10. Business Disruption
 11. Fraud - Internal and External
 12. Governance failure - Inter-conciliar structure of church
 13. Strategic and Project Risk (Conflict between objectives, Misalignment of objectives, Decision risk, Execution Risk)

The RAS will be used to set the boundaries and thresholds of acceptable levels of risk against these criteria. The RAS will provide a base line for how risks are reported and will be used to ensure a consistent approach to risk management and controls across the wider Synod. The statement documents the reporting and information requirements when risks fall inside or outside the required thresholds and when the Synod’s mission is not being met.

For consideration

- **Dostana as an Institution:** Dostana was established as an institution of the Synod in May 2020. Dostana, which means deep and abiding friendship in Hindi/Urdu, is a group of UCA members in the Qld Synod who have since 2004 established a mutually supportive relationship with the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India. Institutionalising Dostana will support the group so that it can better serve the relationship between the Synod and the Diocese. The establishment of this body fits under the “discipleship” and “life together” priorities identified by Project Plenty. It provides a unique vehicle and a rich opportunity for exploring both these dimensions, in that it gives insight to the way another church lives out the mission of God in its context, so giving the UCA in Qld a fresh look at its own life and mission.
- **Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) work:** The ARC contributed to important work in the risk space including:
 - participating in a risk appetite workshop held by SSC
 - providing feedback on the draft risk appetite statement
 - maintaining focus on congregational extreme risks, overall key risk trends and commencing risk deep dives
 - endorsing insurance premium cost allocations
 - maintaining focus on safe ministry with children compliance and audit results.
- **Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RNC) work:** The RNC oversaw significant pieces of work including approving:
 - the ministry agent long service leave scheme
 - remoteness allowance process and rates
 - a performance review process of Synod governing bodies
 - a recruitment and selection policy, procedure and tools for Synod governing bodies
 - foundational work on training plans for Synod governing body members as part of an ongoing program of work to improve governance.
- **Synod wide policies:** The following Synod wide policies were approved:
 - [Critical Incident and Issues Escalation Policy](#)
 - [Whistleblower Policy](#)
 - [Synod Wide Church Enterprises Policy Statement](#)
 - [Synod Wide People and Culture Policy Statement](#)
 - [National Child Safe Policy Framework](#)
 - [Media Issues Policy](#)
 - [Media Issues Process](#)

- [Media Relations Policy](#)
- [Media Relations Process](#)
- [Safe Ministry with Children: Providing Safe Ministry Policy](#)
- [Ministry Agent Leave Policy](#)

Attachment A contains a list of SSC meeting attendance.

Attachment B contains an update on the general proposals from the 33rd Synod.

Attachment C contains the decision register for the SSC for this Synod term, as required by Regulation 3.7.4.1(g).

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Attachment A

SSC member meeting attendance

The SSC met 19 times during this Synod term. The numbers of meetings held during this Synod term and the numbers of meetings attended by each member are outlined below. The attendance numbers are based on 17 meetings and exclude the 3 September 2020 and 1 October 2020 meetings, as this report was distributed prior to those meetings being held.

Member	Originating appointment capacity	Meetings eligible to attend	Fully attended	Partially attended	Not attended
Rev David Baker	Ex officio (Moderator)	17	15	0	2
Rev Andrew Gunton	Ex officio (Moderator-elect)	17	15	0	2
Rev Kaye Ronalds ¹	Ex officio (ex-Moderator)	2	0	0	2
Rev Heather den Houting	Ex officio (General Secretary)	17	16	0	1
Mr Nigel Alexander	Ex officio (UCQ chair)	17	17	0	0
Rev Dennis Corowa	Ex officio (Congress nominee)	17	11	0	6
Mr Paul Newman	Ex officio (WMQ chair)	16	16	0	0
Rev Peter Armstrong ²	Ex officio (BCF chair)	1	1	0	0
Mr Ralph Collins ²	Ex officio (FIPB chair)	1	1	0	0
Mr John Lister ²	Ex officio (RNC chair)	1	1	0	0
Dr Gewa Au	Elected – lay	17	13	0	4
Mr Neil Ballment	Elected – lay	17	15	0	2
Mr Greg Braithwaite	Elected – lay	17	14	0	3
Rev Garry Hardingham	Elected – ministerial	17	15	0	2
Dr Marilyn Healy	Elected – lay	17	16	0	1
Mr Scott McDonald	Elected – lay	17	16	0	1
Rev Bruce Moore	Elected – ministerial	17	15	0	2
Dr Daniel Pampuch ³	Elected – lay	1	0	0	1
Rev Catherine Solomon	Elected – ministerial	17	14	0	3

¹ In July 2019 the Assembly Standing Committee excused the Ex-Moderator from her role the on SSC for duration of 34th Synod term

² Ceased as ex-officio members on adoption of updated Synod by-laws implementing decisions of 34th Synod.

³ Resigned effective 2 July 2019

Attachment B

34th Synod general proposals update

An update on the 34th Synod general proposals progress is outlined below:

Resolution #	Resolution	Action
19.15	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod authorises the General Secretary to convey greetings on behalf of the Synod to other Synods within The Uniting Church in Australia.	COMPLETED
19.16	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod: (a) Authorises the Moderator to convey a greeting to the State and Federal Governments (b) Approves that the following matters considered by the Synod be incorporated into the greeting to the appropriate government: i. Palliative Care ii. Voluntary Assisted Dying iii. Stronger Communities iv. Listen v. Respect and Tolerance vi. Funding for Aged Care and Disability Services	COMPLETED Letter sent by Moderator to Queensland Premier on 1 July 2019.
19.65	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod: (a) Reduce the ex-officio members on the Synod Standing Committee to 7 members: 1. Moderator 2. General Secretary 3. ex-Moderator (for 12 months after the term of their office expires) 4. Moderator-elect 5. Nominee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for Queensland 6. UnitingCare chairperson 7. Wesley Mission Queensland chairperson. (b) Allow the Moderator to nominate up to 2 co-opted voting members to be approved by the Synod Standing Committee, based on specialist skills / circumstances, such appointment to be effective until the commencement of the next Synod. (c) Increase the term of elected members to the Synod Standing Committee to 3 years. (d) Request the Assembly Standing Committee to grant an exemption, as per Regulation 3.10.1, from Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(iii) and to make an alternative Regulation to allow members of the Queensland Synod elected to the	COMPLETED Synod by-laws updated effective 7 June 2019 and 12 June 2020 to effect these changes. Assembly Standing Committee exemptions sought and granted.

Resolution #	Resolution	Action
	Synod Standing Committee to serve for a period of two consecutive ordinary Synod meetings, provided that such persons are members of the two consecutive ordinary Synod meetings.	
19.66	It was RESOLVED by Formal Majority that the Synod reduce Synod elected members to the Synod Standing Committee from 10 to 8.	COMPLETED Synod by-laws updated effective 7 June 2019 to effect these changes
19.68	It was RESOLVED by Formal Majority that the Synod: (a) amend by-law Q2.3.3 to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow for a Moderator to be nominated for a single contiguous 3 year term (to a maximum 6 year continuous total service) • allow the Moderator-elect and ex-Moderator to serve on Synod Standing Committee for 1 year before and after their moderatorial term respectively. (b) as transitional provisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow the 34th Synod Moderator-elect to serve an 18 month term as Moderator-elect • direct the Synod Standing Committee to seek exemptions from Regulations from the Assembly Standing Committee as required to give effect to this decision. 	COMPLETED Synod by-laws updated effective 12 June 2020 to effect these changes Assembly Standing Committee exemptions sought and granted until 16th Assembly.
19.69	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod: (a) requests an updated policy be prepared, after detailed consultation with congregations, presbyteries and faith communities, covering the operation of the Mission Development Fund (MDF) and the policy be developed in accordance with these principles: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The MDF will be a fund that will support the contemporary mission strategy and priorities across all Presbyteries in the Queensland Synod. As such we acknowledge: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) According to our Constitution, we are all stewards of the property and funds held by a congregation or presbytery; (b) The property and funds of the church are for the benefit of the mission of the whole church; (c) Beneficial use of funds in the MDF may be required to be forgone by an individual congregation or presbytery to achieve the objective of this principle. 2. The MDF will be a sustainable resource for long term church growth and development: 	This policy is being presented to the 35 th Synod.

Resolution #	Resolution	Action
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) It will be used for capital and/or development opportunities that produce a return benefit to the church; (b) It will not be used for operational (including general maintenance) expenses or sensitive matters' expenses. 3. It is a requirement of MDF funding allocation that projects need to meet good governance practices including prudent and sustainable decision making, and accountable and transparent processes and reporting. (b) notes that when developed, the policy on the operation of the MDF will be circulated to presbyteries and congregations for consultation and then submitted to the 35th Synod for approval. 	
19.70	<p>It was RESOLVED by Formal Majority that the Synod:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) receives the Final Report: Voluntary Assisted Dying Queensland Synod 2019. (b) affirms the following position: <i>[refer 34th Synod minutes]</i> (c) That in the case of the legalisation of voluntary assisted dying in Queensland, to request Wesley Mission Queensland and UnitingCare to develop a policy and practice approach in light of the Synod's position and any legislative requirements. (d) Affirms the critical importance of high quality, well-resourced and accessible palliative and end-of-life care that responds to the physical, psycho-social and spiritual needs of people at the end-of-life. The Church undertakes the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. advocate for a well-resourced and flexible system that consistently meets people's needs and preferences for care; 2. continue to provide high quality and accessible palliative care, responsive to the pastoral and spiritual needs of the people we serve, as central to our mission as the Church. (e) That in advocating to government regarding the Church's position, the Church strongly recommends provisions for conscientious objection, for both individuals and organisations, be included in any proposed legislation. (f) Encourage congregations to engage in conversations around end-of-life and to encourage members to consider completing Advance Health Directive. (g) Thank the Consultation Group for their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) COMPLETED (b) NOTED (c) PENDING (d) COMPLETED (e) COMPLETED (f) COMPLETED Letter sent by Moderator 19 June 2019. (g) NOTED

Resolution #	Resolution	Action
19.72	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod requests the Synod Standing Committee to provide an understanding of the roles, responsibilities and decision-making delegations of Synod in Session, the Synod Standing Committee and the relationship between them. This is to be provided to Presbyteries for their discussion, engagement and feedback prior to the 35th Synod.	A consultation paper was developed and distributed to the presbyteries in May 2020. The SSC have considered the responses to the consultation paper and have brought a proposal to the 35 th Synod to clarify the expectations of the Synod.

Attachment C

SSC decision register

A register has been maintained of the decisions the SSC made during this Synod term, which is available upon request. As required by Regulation 3.7.4.1(g), the substantive decisions of the SSC are outlined below. In addition to these substantive decisions, administrative decisions were made regarding:

- associating meeting participants
- accepting the report on disclosure of potential conflicts of interests by members
- adopting minutes of the SSC
- receiving the reports of the General Secretary and Moderator
- noting action item reports
- appointments to Synod governing bodies which are made on the recommendation of the relevant appointing bodies, with input from RNC where appropriate. These appointments and other changes to governing body membership have been reported separately in the Synod papers (refer Appendix 2 of the Reports and Proposals)
- other administrative matters.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.058	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee support the General Secretary in pursuing the nomination of Ms Amanda Hickey as member and chairperson of the Legal Reference Committee.
SSC 19.059	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Agreement that the 34th Synod proposal on “Best way for the SSC to meet” be approved for submission to the 34th Synod with Mr Batkin and Dr Pampuch as proposers.
SSC 19.060	04/04/2019	Subject to the changes noted at the meeting, it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the 34th Synod proposal on “Best way for the Synod in Session to meet” be approved for submission to the 34th Synod with Mr Ballment and Mr Collins as proposers.
SSC 19.061	04/04/2019	Subject to the changes noted at the meeting, it was RESOLVED by Agreement that the 34th Synod proposal on “Term of the Moderator” be approved for submission to the 34th Synod with Dr Healy and Mr Lister as proposers.
SSC 19.062	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the SSC report to the 34th Synod be approved for submission to the 34th Synod.
SSC 19.063	04/04/2019	The Synod Standing Committee NOTED the UnitingCare Queensland December 2018 quarter report against their Annual Statement of Missional Intent, as presented by Mr Alexander, Rev Moore and Mr Barke.
SSC 19.064	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Submission to the Queensland Parliamentary Inquiry into Aged Care, End-of-Life and Palliative Care, and Voluntary Assisted Dying for release.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.065	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Chaplaincy Commission Six-Monthly Report be received.
SSC 19.068	04/04/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Report be received.
SSC 19.078	02/05/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that, upon the recommendation of the Board for Christian Formation, the Synod Standing Committee approve amendment of the FEE-HELP Repayment policy (POL-TCQ-01) to allow for early payment of financial obligations to those eligible on a pro rata basis.
SSC 19.079	02/05/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that going forward the Synod Standing Committee be the approving body for the remuneration package of the General Secretary, not the Remuneration and Nomination Committee.
SSC 19.080	02/05/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve an exemption from Queensland Synod By-law Q2.7.8(f) to enable Ms Amanda Hickey to stand for membership of the Legal Reference Committee despite not being a member of the Uniting Church.
SSC 19.082	02/05/2019	Subject to Legal Reference Committee consideration of the additional clause noted below, it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Queensland Synod By-Laws as included at Attachment A to the report, effective 10 May 2019 and replacing all by-laws in existence at that date: <i>“Q2.7.1(3) Each of the Synod governing bodies constituted by charters under this section shall have the necessary authority and power to conduct its operations in accordance with the Purpose and Responsibilities set out in its charter.”</i>
SSC 19.083	02/05/2019	It was RESOLVED by Agreement that, effective 10 May 2019, the Synod Standing Committee approve the charters as included at Attachment B for: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board for Christian Formation 2. Finance, Investment and Property Board 3. Legal Reference Committee 4. Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group 5. Schools and Residential Colleges Commission 6. Synod Chaplaincy Commission 7. Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee 8. Synod Inter-Faith Relationships Committee 9. Synod Reception of Ministers Committee
SSC 19.084	02/05/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee authorises the 34th Synod Business Committee to co-opt an additional 7 members to attend the 34th Synod, in accordance with Regulation 3.3.7(c).
SSC 19.091	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 28 March 2019.
SSC 19.092	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Remuneration and Nomination Charter effective immediately.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.098	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee, upon the recommendation of the Calvary Presbytery, appoint Rev Dr Richard Wallace as a Uniting Church appointed director of Wontulp Bi-Buya College Limited.
SSC 19.099	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee appoint Rev David Baker as The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod delegate to the Christian Religious Instruction Alliance.
SSC 19.102	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the transition plan to reduce ex-officio members on the Synod Standing Committee.
SSC 19.103	06/06/2019	Subject to the change as noted at the meeting, it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the submission to the Assembly Standing Committee for an exemption from Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(iii).
SSC 19.104	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse the transition plan to move to 3 year terms for Synod Standing Committee elected members.
SSC 19.105	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the submission to the Assembly Standing Committee for an exemption from Regulation 3.6.3.1(c) and (d), and 3.7.4.1(a)(i).
SSC 19.106	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Queensland Synod By-Laws, as per the amendments included at Attachment A, effective 7 June 2019 and replacing all by-laws in existence at that date.
SSC 19.107	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee request the Assembly Standing Committee to grant an exemption, as per Regulation 3.10.1, from Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i) to excuse the current ex-Moderator of the Queensland Synod from being a member of the Synod Standing Committee for the duration of the 34th Synodial term.
SSC 19.108	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the proposed actions to be taken by the General Secretary with respect to Calvary Christian College, in consultation with the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission.
SSC 19.109	06/06/2019	Subject to the feedback as provided at the meeting, it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Critical Incident and Issues Escalation policy.
SSC 19.110	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the presentation from the PMSA be received.
SSC 19.111	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the proposals from the 34th Synod in Session and the early feedback.
SSC 19.114	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the following people be nominated to the National Standing Appeal Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rev Gwen Fisher 2. Rev Peter Lockhart 3. Mr Ian Park.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.115	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the FEE-HELP Repayment policy (POL-TCQ-01) be amended such that students who fail to claim within a 12 month window are automatically repaid.
SSC 19.116	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the FEE-HELP Repayment policy (POL-TCQ-01) be amended such that, in the event a person who has been paid a pro-rata claim is subsequently able to complete seven years in full time placement, they are able to complete their claim at the end of that period.
SSC 19.117	06/06/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Remuneration and Nomination Committee Report be received.
SSC 19.121	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 20 June 2019.
SSC 19.122	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Audit and Risk Charter effective 5 July 2019.
SSC 19.130	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod office budget for 2019/2020.
SSC 19.131	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee appoint Dr Paul Hedley Jones as the Director of Education for Ministry and Principal of Trinity Theological College in accordance with the currently approved terms of placement, effective 5 July 2019.
SSC 19.132	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod office to establish a project that will investigate options and propose future directions for the church in the Child Care space.
SSC 19.133	04/07/2019	It was AGREED that a quality assurance review be undertaken of the Safe Ministry with Children audit data gathering and data management, to provide confidence that the data has been offered and collected appropriately.
SSC 19.134	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Audit and Risk Committee report be received.
SSC 19.135	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the 34th Synod post event report.
SSC 19.136	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Key Change Initiative report be received.
SSC 19.137	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Placements Committee report be received.
SSC 19.140	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Synod office Financial Report for May 2019.
SSC 19.141	04/07/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Collaboration Committee – Report to Commissioning Synods be received.
SSC 19.145	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 11 July 2019.
SSC 19.154	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the presentation briefing on Religious Instruction in State Schools.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.155	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the FIP Board quarterly report – 4th quarter 2019 be received.
SSC 19.156	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Committee approve the appointment of Belinda Bones as Property Officer during the period 2 September 2019 – 8 October 2019.
SSC 19.158	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Strategic Mission Team Report be received.
SSC 19.159	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Project Plenty engagement workshop be noted.
SSC 19.160	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the UnitingCare Queensland June 2019 quarter report against their Annual Statement of Missional Intent, as presented by Mr Alexander, Mr Barke and Rev Armstrong.
SSC 19.161	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the UnitingCare Queensland Annual Statement of Missional Intent for 2019/20.
SSC 19.163	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee thank Ms Maree Blake for her leadership, contribution and commitment to UnitingCare Queensland.
SSC 19.164	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee notes the process and approach to recruitment and reappointment of the Chair and Board Members to the UnitingCare Queensland Board in accordance with the UnitingCare Queensland Constitution.
SSC 19.165	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee confirms the membership of the UnitingCare Queensland Chair Reappointment Panel for the reappointment of Mr Nigel Alexander as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Rev David Baker (Moderator) (Chair) b. Dr Marilyn Healy, Synod Standing Committee Nominee c. Ms Bronwyn Clarkson, Remuneration and Nomination Committee nominee; d. A UnitingCare Queensland Board Member Representative.
SSC 19.166	01/08/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves the appointment of the UnitingCare Queensland Recruitment and Reappointment Panel for the FY20 recruitment and reappointment of Board Members as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. UnitingCare Queensland Board Chair (Chair) b. Rev David Baker (Moderator) c. Ms Bronwyn Clarkson, to be confirmed as the Remuneration and Nomination Committee nominee; d. A UnitingCare Queensland Board Member Representative for the appointment of up to two (2) Board members and the reappointment process for Mr Chris Townend whose term expires 31 March 2020.
SSC 19.171	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 20 August 2019.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.173	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Synod Inter-Faith Relationships Committee Charter effective 6 September 2019.
SSC 19.174	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee Charter effective 6 September 2019.
SSC 19.180	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the report on Future Resourcing for the Church.
SSC 19.183	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the UnitingCare Queensland Annual Statement of Missional Intent 2019-2020 (including financial summary and forecast information).
SSC 19.184	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the following Policy Statements: 1. Synod Wide Church Enterprises 2. Synod Wide People and Culture.
SSC 19.185	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee withdraws the recognition of Rev John Gill as a Minister of the Word within the Uniting Church forthwith in accordance with Regulation 2.10.3(a)(ii).
SSC 19.188	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee consent to the SCOTS PGC College constitution amendments being considered by electronic decision.
SSC 19.189	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the appointment of Mr Jim Demack and Ms Jodi Palmer to the Assembly Standing Appeals Panel.
SSC 19.190	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Committee note the Presbytery Report from Bremer Brisbane.
SSC 19.191	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Committee note the Presbytery Report from Bremer Brisbane.
SSC 19.192	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Board for Christian Formation Report be received.
SSC 19.193	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the SharePoint Transition report be received.
SSC 19.194	05/09/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Safe Ministry with Children 2018 Audit Report v2 be received.
SSC 19.197	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Mission Impact Report and Synod office Business Performance Data FY15-FY19.
SSC 19.202	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Report.
SSC 19.203	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee authorise: 1. the General Secretary to convene a meeting with the Chair of the Calvary Christian College School Council, the Chair of the Real Life Christian Church Council and the Minister of Real Life Christian

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
		Church, with further steps to be notified to the Synod Standing Committee 2. the Moderator or his delegate to exercise the visitor power of the Calvary Christian College constitution in the event that the approach in 1 above does not yield results.
SSC 19.204	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme, as outlined in Attachment A to the report, with the scheme commencing on 1 July 2020.
SSC 19.205	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee authorise the General Secretary to provide instructions to Synod office teams to implement the Ministry Agent Long Service Leave Scheme, as outlined in Attachment A to the report.
SSC 19.206	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee nominate Mr Braithwaite and Dr Healy as SSC representatives to the General Secretary performance review process.
SSC 19.207	03/10/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the General Secretary performance review process.
SSC 19.215	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 26 September 2019.
SSC 19.216	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 24 October 2019.
SSC 19.218	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod office Delegations.
SSC 19.221	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the presentation on UCA Redress Ltd.
SSC 19.222	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Finance, Investment and Property Board Report.
SSC 19.223	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the audited financial statements for the Synod office for the year ended 30 June 2019.
SSC 19.224	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee appoint Rev David Baker and Rev Heather den Houting to sign the audited financial statements for the Synod office for the year ended 30 June 2019.
SSC 19.225	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Risk and Assurance team presentation.
SSC 19.228	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee, whilst satisfied that the Real Life Christian Church Council have responded appropriately in the short term, the Synod office respond to Real Life Christian Church Council advising that a governance review will be undertaken in early 2020 to design an appropriate governing vehicle for Calvary Christian College, a result of which may be a change to the foundational documents of Calvary Christian College.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 19.231	07/11/2019	It was AGREED that a formal vote of thanks be provided to Mr Lister for his work and leadership of the General Secretary Performance and Remuneration Review for 2019.
SSC 19.235	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee that the outcomes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee self-evaluation be noted.
SSC 19.236	07/11/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee that the outcomes of the Audit and Risk Committee self-evaluation be noted.
SSC 19.250	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod-wide Whistleblower Policy.
SSC 19.251	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee notes the Collaboration Committee – Report to Commissioning Synods, providing an overview of the work of the Collaboration Committee since the adoption of the Terms of Reference by the Commissioning Synods in 2018.
SSC 19.252	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the UnitingCare Queensland September 2019 quarter report against their Annual Statement of Missional Intent.
SSC 19.255	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Committee note the Presbytery Report from The Downs.
SSC 19.256	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Synod Perceptions Survey report.
SSC 19.257	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Covenant Action Plan Update.
SSC 19.258	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Project Plenty – December update.
SSC 19.259	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Wesley Mission Queensland “Our faith in action” 2019-2022 report and presentation, as presented by Mr Batkin.
SSC 19.260	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Agreement that the SSC disband the Legal Reference Committee by revoking its charter and removing by-law Q2.7.1(2)(h).
SSC 19.261	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED Unanimously (with one abstention) that the Synod Standing Committee, pursuant to Regulation 3.4.7, dissolve both Calvary and North Queensland Presbyteries effective 28 February 2020.
SSC 19.262	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED Unanimously (with one abstention) that the Synod Standing Committee, pursuant to Regulation 3.4.6, form a new Presbytery effective 29 February 2020 and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) that this Presbytery include all congregations and ministries within the current geographical bounds of the North Queensland Presbytery, and the Zillmere congregation (Regulation 3.4.6(a)) (b) that this Presbytery be named the Carpentaria Presbytery (Regulation 3.4.6(a)) (c) that the first meeting of the Presbytery be held in Cairns on the 29 February 2020 (Regulation 3.4.6(d))

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
		(d) appoint the Moderator to convene, constitute and preside over the first meeting of the Presbytery until such time as the Presbytery elects a chairperson (Regulation 3.4.6(d)).
SSC 19.263	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the two upcoming UnitingCare Queensland Board appointments be considered by the SSC via electronic decision.
SSC 19.265	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee affirm the work of the Synod office and ask the General Secretary to pass on our appreciation of the ministry they provide to the moderator and wider church.
SSC 19.266	05/12/2019	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Terms of Reference for the Moderator’s Social Justice and Responsibility Reference Group.
SSC 20.001	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Committee note the Risk Appetite Workshop.
SSC 20.005	06/02/2020	The Committee NOTED its Electronic Decision of 28 January 2020 regarding PIPA Settlement – Claim 000812-SL-03. <i>It is RESOLVED by electronic decision that the Synod Standing Committee approve payment of \$572,000 to the Plaintiff in relation to Claim 000812-SL-03.1.</i>
SSC 20.006	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 12 December 2019.
SSC 20.008	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee establish the 35th Synod Business Committee comprised of the following members: (a) Moderator (b) Moderator-Elect; (c) General Secretary; (d) Associate General Secretary; (e) Executive Officer Corporate; (f) Rev Brian Kickbusch; and (g) Any additional members as agreed and appointed by the Moderator and General Secretary.
SSC 20.009	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee authorises the 35th Synod Business Committee to elect from within its membership a convenor of the 35th Synod Business Committee.
SSC 20.010	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse the National Child Safe Policy Framework.
SSC 20.019	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Synod Chaplaincy Commission Six-Monthly Report.
SSC 20.020	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee conduct an external review of the Synod Chaplaincy Commission.
SSC 20.021	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group Report.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.023	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that pursuant to Regulation 2.10.3 the Synod Standing Committee withdraw the recognition of Benjamin Paul Webb as a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia.
SSC 20.024	06/02/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that pursuant to Regulation 3.4.7 the bounds of the Carpentaria Presbytery and the Moreton Rivers Presbytery be altered effective 29 February 2020 such that the Zillmere congregation be included within the Moreton Rivers Presbytery.
SSC 20.028	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 25 February 2020.
SSC 20.030	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the updated Audit and Risk Committee Charter effective 6 March 2020.
SSC 20.032	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the outcomes of the Board for Christian Formation self-evaluation.
SSC 20.033	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the outcomes of the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission self-evaluation.
SSC 20.034	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Media Issues Policy (POL-COM-05), Media Issues Process (PRO-COM-05), Media Relations Policy (POL-COM-06) and Media Relations Process (PRO-COM-06).
SSC 20.036	05/03/2020	Mr Lister addressed a question in relation to the fringe benefits process for ministerial agents, and it was AGREED that the Remuneration and Nomination Committee oversee a review of the process including consideration of a debit card system as used by the Synod of NSW & ACT.
SSC 20.037	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Remuneration and Nomination Committee report.
SSC 20.038	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the 2020 Key Performance Indicator's for the General Secretary as tabled at the meeting, subject to the changes as agreed.
SSC 20.039	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee appoints a General Secretary Reappointment Panel comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Mr John Lister – Remuneration and Nomination Committee chairperson b. Mr Nigel Alexander – UnitingCare Queensland Board chairperson and Synod Standing Committee member c. Rev David Busch – South Moreton Presbytery Minister d. Dr Marilyn Healy – Synod Standing Committee and Audit and Risk Committee member.
SSC 20.040	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the matter be recorded as a "minute apart"
SSC 20.041	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Audit and Risk Committee Report.
SSC 20.042	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Project Plenty Update.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.043	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Shared Services Team Report.
SSC 20.044	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note report on the Women in Leadership program.
SSC 20.045	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Report.
SSC 20.046	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the 2020-2025 Schools Strategy document.
SSC 20.047	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Report of the Joint Nominating Committee.
SSC 20.048	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that, pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.5(b), the Synod Standing Committee appoint Rachel Krohn to the faculty of Trinity College Queensland as the Lecturer in Old Testament and Homiletics.
SSC 20.049	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Board for Christian Formation Report.
SSC 20.050	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that, subject to any Business Development Initiatives net contributions resulting in a corresponding decrease to the UCQ stewardship fee, the Synod Standing Committee approve the parameters and assumptions in which the 2021 budget and further 2-year forecasts will be prepared.
SSC 20.051	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee ratify the defence of the litigation by Frederick Marsden Youth Centre.
SSC 20.052	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve changes to the Synod delegations such that they be expanded to provide the General Secretary with delegation to defend proceedings, coupled with continued quarterly reporting to the SSC.
SSC 20.053	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the following changes to the SCOTS PGC constitution: 1. clause 8.5.1 – reduction from ten to eight meetings per year 2. clause 8.8 – changes as marked-up in Attachment A to the paper.
SSC 20.054	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the correspondence from South Moreton Presbytery.
SSC 20.055	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee refer the letter from South Moreton Presbytery dated 12 February 2020 to the following bodies for consideration and a collaborative response: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Project Plenty team to assess the issue in light of overall calls for sustainable change; The FIP Board for some strategic solutions to the immediate presenting issue.
SSC 20.056	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the response to the letter from South Moreton Presbytery dated 12 February 2020 include an invitation for the Presbytery to collaborate on solutions to the issues raised.
SSC 20.057	05/03/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that pursuant to Regulation 2.10.3 the Synod Standing Committee withdraw the recognition of Derek John Schiller as a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.062	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee meet every 2 weeks until further advised.
SSC 20.063	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the State of the Queensland Synod, April 2020 report.
SSC 20.064	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Project Plenty Update and approve the acceleration of the Project Plenty work into producing a Strategy to Action plan and reverting to the Synod Standing Committee with a draft in May 2020.
SSC 20.065	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the report titled Child Care – Recommendations and Observations on Future Directions for the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (February 2020).
SSC 20.066	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee accept and approve the Option 4 recommendation within the report titled: Child Care – Recommendations and Observations on Future Directions for the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (February 2020): <i>“Uniting Education – Early Learning” incorporating a Co-operative (shared/central) Operating Model</i>
SSC 20.067	02/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the UnitingCare Queensland update.
SSC 20.076	16/04/2020	The Committee NOTED its Electronic Decision of 23 March 2020 regarding various matters. <i>It is RESOLVED by electronic decision that the updated Safe Ministry with Children: Providing Safe Ministry Policy be approved.</i>
SSC 20.077	16/04/2020	The Committee NOTED its Electronic Decision of 23 March 2020 regarding various matters. <i>It is RESOLVED by electronic decision that the Queensland Synod Disability Royal Commission Project Scope be approved.</i>
SSC 20.078	16/04/2020	The Committee NOTED its Electronic Decision of 23 March 2020 regarding various matters. <i>It is RESOLVED by electronic decision that the First Annual Stakeholder report from the National Safe Church Unit be noted.</i>
SSC 20.086	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the State of the Queensland Synod, mid-April 2020 report.
SSC 20.087	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee notes that the UnitingCare Queensland COVID-19 Board Contingency Plan has been enacted.
SSC 20.088	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves suspension of the quorum requirements as defined by clauses 10.6 and 10.7 of the UnitingCare Queensland Constitution where: (a) all reasonable steps to achieve a quorum and been made and where one Member present is the Chair or Deputy Chair for the period of the Government declared COVID-19 pandemic response.
SSC 20.090	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Business Development Unit report.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.091	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorses and supports collaboration across church entities to ensure more significant whole-of-church outcomes.
SSC 20.092	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse the General Secretary to seek from across all church entities a “high level champions” to expediently access information and resources necessary to support this collaborative body of work.
SSC 20.093	16/04/2020	It was AGREED that whilst the resolution as proposed in the Governing Body Chair Remuneration did not have Synod Standing Committee support, the Moderator could bring an amended proposal on governing body remuneration to a future Synod Standing Committee meeting.
SSC 20.096	16/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Funding & Liquidity report be received.
SSC 20.101	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 21 April 2020, along with the key risk and emerging risks and issues information.
SSC 20.103	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Synod Inter-Faith Relationships Committee Charter effective 1 May 2020.
SSC 20.107	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the State of the Queensland Synod, end-April 2020 report.
SSC 20.108	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Response and Recovery Update.
SSC 20.109	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the briefing on the UCQ PBI Status and the Synod Treasury Function.
SSC 20.110	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the draft discussion paper titled “Relationship between the Synod in Session and the Synod Standing Committee”.
SSC 20.111	30/04/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the 35th Synod in Session to meet in a virtual (online) space commencing Thursday 22nd October 2020 with the induction of the Moderator and the number of days, sessions and further possible meetings to be determined after further consultation across the church.
SSC 20.117	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 29 April 2020.
SSC 20.118	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the updated Remuneration and Nomination Committee Charter effective 15 May 2020.
SSC 20.121	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Queensland Synod submit a statement that the UCA President decline to rule on the Presidential Ruling request on the dissolution of Calvary Presbytery on the basis that it is not in the interests of the church to do so, and there is a genuine dispute as to the material facts.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.122	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the State of the Queensland Synod, mid-May 2020 report.
SSC 20.124	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Finance, Investment and Property Board Report.
SSC 20.125	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Project Plenty update.
SSC 20.126	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Business Development Unit Report.
SSC 20.128	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee performance evaluation results be received.
SSC 20.129	14/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the UnitingCare Queensland Constitution Update and note that a detailed review of the transition to a single ABN will be undertaken and a report provided to the Synod by December 2020.
SSC 20.134	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Charter effective 29 May 2020.
SSC 20.135	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve for consultation the Project Plenty Plan: Mission Priorities and Direction 2021 –2025.
SSC 20.136	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve Dostana to be established as an institution of the Queensland Synod, according to the constitution as presented.
SSC 20.137	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves the Synod office budget for 20/21 to consist of a 1 year budget with a reforecast conducted to 30 June 2021 based on 31 October 2020 results.
SSC 20.138	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves that JobKeeper funds received by the Synod office will include funds applicable to employees/ministry agents paid for by different church entities. These funds should be distributed to the church entity that ultimately paid the salary/stipend amount. This includes the CPMP which ultimately incurs the cost of some salaries/stipends.
SSC 20.139	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves that JobKeeper funds received by the Synod office will be distributed on a 'net of offset' basis with the net amount either collected from or paid to the applicable church entity.
SSC 20.140	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves that the PSI consider whether 'ineligible for JobKeeper' ministry agents are financially supported. If so, recommendation to be put to the Presbyteries.
SSC 20.141	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves that JobKeeper funding received after 30 June 2020 relating to Synod office employees and ministry agents accounted for by the Synod office is pooled (after repaying top up amounts) and the use of the funds

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
		determined through the proposed Reforecast process following the distribution of 31 October 2020 financial reports.
SSC 20.142	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approves that JobKeeper payments are used, where applicable, to retain the hours of staff and ministry agents.
SSC 20.144	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the 35th General Synod start on Thursday 22 October with the Moderator's induction and undertake sessions from Friday 23 October through to Sunday 25 October (the initial meeting). That the business sessions over this period be no longer than 4 to 5 hours per day. That additional sessions of the Synod be scheduled to occur after that weekend as required and at the direction and priority of the General Synod. That all remaining business thereafter to be dealt with by the Synod Standing Committee.
SSC 20.145	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the numbers of people eligible to attend the 35th Synod not be altered.
SSC 20.146	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the following bodies only provide a live online presentation at the 35th Synod initial meeting: Synod Standing Committee, Finance, Investment and Property Board, Moderator, General Secretary, Assembly General Secretary and President.
SSC 20.147	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that all reporting bodies be asked to prepare a pre-recorded presentation to be available prior to the 35th Synod initial meeting. Guidelines to be developed and distributed shortly.
SSC 20.148	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that questions on notice be received for all reporting bodies one week prior to the 35th Synod initial meeting.
SSC 20.149	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that all reporting bodies be available for live Q and A during the 35th Synod initial meeting.
SSC 20.150	28/05/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that Synod Standing Committee meetings revert to monthly from July 2020.
SSC 20.158	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the formation of a task group with members from Newlife, South Moreton Presbytery, Presbytery Synod Interface and Synod Standing Committee to further the governance structure for Newlife, particularly looking at Oversight, Review and Reporting. (b) the Newlife task group to bring a report with any recommendations to the Synod Standing Committee by the September meeting of the Synod Standing Committee. (c) Rev Andrew Gunton to be appointed as Synod Standing Committee representative to the Newlife task group.
SSC 20.159	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Business Development Unit report.
SSC 20.160	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod office budget for 2020/2021.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.161	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the changes to Queensland Synod By-Law Q5.3 (Long Service Leave).
SSC 20.162	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised E/8.6 Ministry Agent Leave policy.
SSC 20.163	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised E/8.6.1 Ministry Agent Leave procedure.
SSC 20.164	11/06/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Queensland Synod By-Laws, as per the amendments included at Attachment C, effective 12 June 2020 and replace all by-laws in existence as at that date.
SSC 20.171	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Audit and Risk Committee meeting of 16 June 2020, along with the emerging risks and issues information.
SSC 20.173	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the revised Synod Chaplaincy Commission Charter effective 3 July 2020.
SSC 20.177	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Report.
SSC 20.178	02/07/2020	Subject to the changes to the risk tolerances for material risk 5 and 9, it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod Risk Appetite Statement.
SSC 20.179	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Report from Mary Burnett Presbytery.
SSC 20.180	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Report from South Moreton Presbytery.
SSC 20.181	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Litigation Guidelines and Policy.
SSC 20.182	02/07/2020	It was AGREED that a further review of the Finance, Investment and Property Board charter be undertaken to clarify FIPB vs SSC responsibilities and retain the Synod in Session as the appointing body for the Finance, Investment and Property Board chairperson.
SSC 20.183	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Uniting Church in Queensland Child Care Review Implementation Plan, as requested at the SSC meeting 2 April 2020.
SSC 20.184	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee refer the oversight of the child care reforms project board and project implementation to the Finance, Investment and Property Board.
SSC 20.187	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the General Secretary – report from Renomination Review Task Force report.
SSC 20.188	02/07/2020	It was RESOLVED by formal majority (9 for; 1 against, 1 abstention) that the Synod Standing Committee recommend to the 35th Synod in Session that the term of the Rev Heather den Houting as General Secretary be extended until 31 December 2023.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.189	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Report from Bremer Brisbane Presbytery.
SSC 20.193	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the minutes of the Remuneration and Nomination Committee meeting of 25 June 2020.
SSC 20.197	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee resolve to enter into a deed of indemnity with the directors and officers of UCA Redress Ltd in the terms of the attached deed and that the General Secretary be authorised to sign such deeds on behalf of the Synod Standing Committee.
SSC 20.198	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Business Development Unit report.
SSC 20.199	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee receive the Finance, Investment and Property Board Report.
SSC 20.200	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee request the UnitingCare Queensland Board/Management to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. provide a financial update component (including key measures and commentary) via FIPB each quarter when it reports to SSC 2. engage with the SSC when the mission return work can be clearly articulated per major service delivery area 3. engage with the Synod office/FIPB/SSC early in the development of the 10 year strategic capital plan as this is likely to have all of church impacts.
SSC 20.201	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Finance, Investment and Property Board Charter effective 7 August 2020.
SSC 20.202	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse the following approach to Project Plenty at and after the 35th Synod: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accept the Project Plenty report <i>Shared life. Flourishing communities</i> and thank the project team for its work 2. Adopt the 2025 ambition, and four mission priorities contained within the report as guiding its work for the period 2020-2025 3. Invite congregations, presbyteries, agencies, schools and other bodies of the church to commit to the 2025 ambition and four mission priorities in their own context 4. Put the commitments contained within the report to the 35th Synod for discernment around process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discern now at the 35th Synod • undertake further work together into 2021.
SSC 20.203	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee endorse Rev Andrew Gunton and one other person, who may represent the diversity of the church, as discerned by the Moderator-elect in consultation with the Project Plenty task group to present the Project Plenty proposals to the 35th Synod on behalf of the Synod Standing Committee.
SSC 20.204	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the 35th Synod in Session program.

Resolution #	Meeting date	Resolution
SSC 20.205	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the Calvary Christian College reports from the General Secretary's governance review task group and the independent investigator.
SSC 20.206	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note that the Calvary Christian College governance review has not yet concluded.
SSC 20.207	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee note the next steps regarding the Calvary Christian College governance review material, that is, that a stakeholder workshop is scheduled for 26 August 2020.
SSC 20.208	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the UnitingCare Queensland Annual Statement of Missional Intent 2020-2021 (including financial summary and forecast information).
SSC 20.209	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve the Synod Standing Committee report to the 35th Synod, with the General Secretary delegated to make any final changes based on SSC feedback.
SSC 20.210	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee bring a recommendation to the 35th Synod to embed the principles upon which it makes decisions for the duration of the 35th Synod term.
SSC 20.211	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod Standing Committee approve for regular communication of non-sensitive matters discussed by the SSC to be included in the Synod's stakeholder engagement plan immediately.
SSC 20.212	06/08/2020	It was RESOLVED by Agreement that the Synod Standing Committee approve remuneration of \$15,000 per annum for Remuneration and Nomination Committee chairperson and \$5,000 for Remuneration and Nomination Committee members, effective from 1 January 2021.



Report from the General Secretary



This report has been updated as at 14 October 2020

Report

Luke 10:41

But the Lord answered her, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about many things...”

I’ve always struggled with the teaching of this passage. As one who is always distracted and worried about many things, I find any interpretation which involves a rebuke to Martha and sympathetic reading toward Mary a frustrating experience. There are always so many things that present before us in our lives and getting as much done as possible to make life easier and equitable for all just seems to make sense to me.

Sometimes it feels as though the role of General Secretary is essentially the service ministry of Martha. Is the house safe and secure for guests? Has the food been sourced to prepare for the feast? Is the bedding laundered and the guests adequately accommodated? Do people know where to find us? Is information about how and where to gather appropriately circulated? Is the communal kitchen compliant with all work health and safety requirements? ... You get the drift.

This passage makes more sense to me if we do not read it as an either/or approach.

What if we stood gently in the space and understood that God loves the builder as much as the architect, loves the cleaner as much as the visionary, loves the reader as much as the author. This approach encourages us to reflect and understand that in all that we do, we are asked by Jesus to reflect the question, “who am I and who are we” as part of God’s good creation? Why are we here? What are we called to do? How do we return to the practice of sitting at the feet of Jesus? This doesn’t mean you have to put down activity. But it does mean you have to get the balance right.

The last eighteen months of Project Plenty has been such a heartening experience and delight to see unfold. This has been the church practicing this very skill. It has taken the time to ask itself the question about its nature and purpose and is a testament to the hope and inspiration we find through Christ.

It is only in the light of this glorifying and illuminating purpose, as followers of Christ, that the ministry of service can continue in a balanced way. This report will let you know of the activities of the General Secretary and the Synod office in overseeing, maintaining and operating this service ministry of the church, informed by discipleship to Christ.

The Synod Office

The Executive Leadership Team (ELT)

As General Secretary, I have constituted a team of people to assist me in delivering against the role and responsibilities of this position. This team meets weekly for reflection and support and to ensure we collaborate well around activities. Currently, this team consists of myself, the Moderator, our Executive Officer Corporate (Ms Kellie Broderick), the Executive Director of Shared Services (Ms

Janelle van de Velde), the Executive Director of Strategic Resources and Assurance (Mr Peter Cranna) and the Associate General Secretary (Rev John Ruhle). I am deeply grateful for their capacity and support as we have worked together over this last period.

Mission Impact report

Every year the General Secretary publishes a Mission Impact report. This is done after the close of the financial year and is a way of communicating with the broader church about the activities of the Synod office and Synod supported services. This report contains photos of the ELT and information about the structure of the Synod Office. You can find the report from the years 18/19 [here](#) and 19/20 [here](#).

Projects

We manage the things we do within the Synod office as either “business as usual” or “projects”. Projects help us investigate and test ideas to see whether they will work to improve our internal processes or will benefit the wider church. If the projects succeed at improving the function, then they become integrated into our “business as usual”.

Our projects over the last 18 months have been:

- Covenant Action Plan
- Records Management
- SharePoint Implementation and Migration
- Project Plenty
- Subdivision and Reconveyance of the Shalom Elders Village
- Child Care Development
- Finance System Implementation
- Plentiful Leadership Program
- Business Development Unit
- Volunteers CARE Initiative
- Chaplaincy Review
- Payroll System Review
- Congregation Accounting and Bookkeeping Services
- Queensland Synod Office Service Level Agreement
- Synod Office Culture Change Program
- Uniting Church in Australia Schools Strategy
- Disposal of the Shalom Christian College site
- Expense Management System
- Learning Management System
- Policy Framework
- Alignment of Placements and People and Culture administrative functions
- Safe Ministry with Children Training Modules
- Shalom Christian College (SCC) Staff and Student Transition

- SugarCRM Update and Enhancements
- Safety Management System Framework
- Cross divisional activities consolidation
- Uniting Leadership
- Enterprise website(s) redevelopment
- Net Gen Arise and Activate Co-ordination
- Digital Futures/Uniting Media
- Disability Royal Commission

The General Secretary herself

The Synod Standing Committee (SSC) asks the General Secretary to work toward a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and reviews her performance annually against these expectations. I am grateful for the guidance, encouragement and support the SSC provides in this process.

The current KPIs are:

- Build vision and strategy
- Communications and marketing
- Board and governance oversight
- Relationship management
- Contribute to Uniting Church in Australia national activities
- Strategic resource management
- Strategic people management
- Synod office operations
- Risk management

I also meet regularly with other General Secretaries for national collaboration and am a resource for the Assembly Standing Committee.

I am appointed to the Frontier Services Board, Wontulp-Bi-Buya College Limited Board, member representative to Uniting Church in Australia redress Ltd. and I am the convenor of the national Regulation Review Task Group

I find resource and sustenance from prayer, journaling, attendance at my local church, painting, my business coach and my spiritual advisor.

Sometimes things don't work well ...

Sometimes Synod office activities don't quite hit the mark. When this happens, we acknowledge this can cause distress and extra work for others. For example, we know that the APP for congregational returns, introduced early in 2020 did not work well. In 2019 our communications around transition to the National Insurance Program were not timely. We also know that our online learning platform has had a few bumps and bruises along the way.

In these and other matters, we appreciate feedback on the services we develop and are committed to working with people across the church to improve how we do things together.

COVID-19 and Business Recovery

COVID-19 has challenged all of our concepts as to how the church should operate. We have had to quickly adapt and then recognise that we are in this for the long run. To assist the church, the Synod office has undertaken the following activities:

- COVID-19 specific email address to manage all enquiries – covid19@ucagld.com.au
- Weekly COVID-19 Warden Catchups via Teams meetings
- General Secretary's fortnightly update open to the SSC, Presbytery Ministers and Chairs of Committees Commissions and Boards
- Weekly, and then as needed, Situation Reports across all agencies, schools and activities to share information
- Facilitated the FIP Board watching the liquidity of the Church and the implications of JobKeeper
- Facilitated redundancies for some Synod office staff when income dropped dramatically at the outset of COVID-19
- Instituted a Synod Office pandemic plan
- Facilitated access to resources to counter burnout and increased stress in members and ministry agents
- Transitioned Synod Office activities to work remotely as far as practicable
- Counselling and advised regarding cancellation, postponement or transition to online meetings of various Synod activities such as the National Lay Preachers conference, Easter Madness, Chaplaincy Affirmation Days, Project Plenty consultation, Synod in session, etc.
- Reduced travel and capital expenditure to reduce costs.

Supporting Congregations and Presbyteries in their Ministry focus

The Synod office has resourced many different activities, which make sense to be managed with a central focus. This has meant the continued focus and resourcing around:

- Hosting the Presbytery Synod Interface (PSI)—a monthly gathering of Presbytery Ministers and Synod Office staff established for information exchange and identification of pinch points between the business activities of the Synod office and Presbyteries
- Safe Ministry training and accreditation, resources for this can be found [here](#)
- Supported the disaster recovery work, especially with a focus on Trauma Informed Community Ministry
- Facilitated the Chaplaincy Commission Review
- Monitored and advised on Visas and obtained a Labour Agreement from the Federal Government
- Facilitated and improved and updated administrative system for Placements
- Hosted the Safe Church Network
- Facilitated appropriate information sharing and record keeping regarding Blue Cards

- Monitored International mission links to ensure they were compliant with the Federal Government’s anti-money laundering and anti-slavery legislation, and
- Provided administrative support and resourcing to the Easter Madness and Unite events.

Leadership development

As a key focus of the Synod, the development of leadership programs has continued. In particular:

- We concluded the last cohort of Queensland’s Graduate leadership program
- Nominated people to the Uniting Church in Australia’s Executive Leadership program
- Worked with the South Australian Synod to resources and facilitate the Uniting Leadership project which included a National Leadership Symposium and sponsored people to attend coaching and team development programs
- Developed and instituted a Women in Leadership program. Unfortunately, this was due to launch just as COVID-19 hit and as a result, the Women in Leadership program has been suspended for the time being.
- As a result of that, we concentrated resources on quickly instituting a Plentiful Leadership program, the aim of which was to provide peer to peer support and mentoring in the online space. It was determined this was a necessity in the COVID-19 environment to support and encourage leadership from across all activities of the church.

Business Development Unit (BDU)

The purpose of the Business Development Unit (BDU) is to identify and developing new sources of revenue with the potential to generate significant annual surplus for the whole-of-Synod. This is done in a way that demonstrates a capacity to be agile, sustainable and transformative across all Synod activities. Parts of the church have been asked to identify business development champions to collaborate on areas that require a whole of church approach. More information about the BDU can be found [here](#).

Some early success has been achieved with:

- the development of Uniting Education—early Learning which will consolidate, monitor and resources childcare activities across the State
- combined purchasing to identify savings in solar and renewable energy, UCare and other procurement opportunities
- Developed and provided information relevant centralised information on op shops
- Monitoring and assisting the church to access Grants
- Developing resources and then hosting a series of Bequest breakfasts (now suspended due to COVID-19).

Project Plenty Implementation team

The Synod office has been preparing for the implementation of any activity that requires project management and oversight in relation to the Project Plenty outcomes. To do this, we have created a small implementation team whose job it is to ensure that any activity that requires resourcing and coordination will have access to the implementation team. The purpose is to ensure that no proposal that eventuates from the Synod will “get lost” in the system. The Synod office staff are excited and

prepared to respond to any direction the church may give as to its future needs.

Royal Commissions

The church is currently subject to the activities of two Royal Commissions. UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland are both actively involved and managing the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

The Synod is managing the whole of church response to the Royal Commission on Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. As the church has been highly engaged in these activities, a holistic response from the Synod is required. Information about our current activities in this space can be found [here](#).

Legal matters and complaints

Current Legal Matters

The Synod Office manages most legal claims against the church. An outline of the legal matters that the church has dealt with over the last 18 months is attached [here](#). Of greatest note are the claims against the church from historical sexual abuse. The Queensland Synod, because of its activity in family group homes and community services has a significant case load of claims against us. People are still entitled to sue the church through the civil system, and these are noted as PIPA (Personal Injury) claims.

National Redress Scheme

We are also members and financially contribute to the nationally constituted body UCARL (Uniting Church in Australia Redress Limited). This is the body established to deal with claims against us arising through the National Redress Scheme. A report on the work of UCARL and the statistics in relation to claims against Queensland can be found [here](#). Of note is the fact that the national scheme has operated with a significant backlog of cases in the first half of this year. This meant that several claims are only being paid out in this financial year.

Redress Recovery Levy

All parts of the church should recognise that the operation of the Synod's Redress Recovery Levy will operate for at least the next ten years and continue to make provisions in their accounts. It is anticipated that we may begin to predict likely recovery amounts for future years as this scheme matures.

Frederick Marsden Youth Centre (FMYC)

Synod should note that a Supreme Court claim was made against the church by FMYC for an interest in the land occupied by it. Unfortunately, this activity, which is separately constituted to the Uniting Church in Australia, has a substantial number of legal and redress claims for historical abuse against it which puts their finances under strain. They were seeking to recover assets which might assist them to pay these claims. The matter was settled at mediation, with FMYC acknowledging it has a licence to occupy the land, but no legal interest in the land. We continue to work with FMYC as we navigate joint claims of historical abuse against us.

Complaints

The Synod office, through its Legal Counsel and the Associate General Secretary, advise and manage the complaints and discipline processes of the church.

Relationships across the life of the church

- The Synod office supports the Covenanting Action Plan and the covenanting group to maintain and develop our commitment to the covenant with First Peoples. We have also facilitated property developments in Aurukun and Mapoon.
- The Moderator chairs a Social Action and Justice Advocacy reference group. The Synod office resources this group in identifying and resourcing information, research and communication.
- The Synod office is the key point for Assembly activities including national collaboration activities such as safe church, national procurement strategies, leadership, etc.
- Ecumenical relationships are supported through grants, and appointments to ecumenical activities such as the Ecumenical Tertiary Chaplaincy Committee, Queensland Churches Together and Wontulp-By-Buya.
- We have maintained a close working relationship with the Presbyterians. This has been, specifically in relation to joint claims for historical abuse, the exit of the Presbyterians from Grace and Emmanuel Colleges and the joint relationship in the PMSA schools.

Governance matters

Supporting Committees, Commissions and Boards

We have attempted to improve the role and function of the Synod office in assisting committees, commissions and boards to do their work well. We undertake regular reviews of member needs and facilitate the charter reviews of all these groups. The charters of all the groups we support can be found [here](#).

Notable changes to By Laws

In the last term the Standing Committee decided to dissolve the Synod Legal Reference Committee. This was done after it became apparent that members of the Committee could not easily exercise their legal skill in a voluntary capacity without significant professional risk. When the type of advice that could be given was reduced to governance advice only, then the voluntary legal team did not have expertise in this area. It was determined that the Governance Secretary and the Synod's In-House Legal Counsel were very skilled at undertaking the activities required. The Assembly still has a regulated Legal Reference Group which can provide specialised advice on our regulations.

Risk framework development

In mid-2020 the SSC approved a Synod wide risk appetite framework that can be found [here](#). This helps the church decide whether it is running a sustainable and safe environment for mission activities. These key risks are the areas that will be monitored, managed and reported to the SSC and the Synod in Session. The key risks for the church identified in the framework are:

Key Risk	Risk Description
1. Financial Risk: Finance (including Liquidity & Funding, Credit and Market)	The risk of financial loss or disruption of business from a shortage of liquidity and funding, credit losses and movements in market rates (interest rates, FX rates, etc.)
2. Person/Child Harm	The risk of harm to children, youth and vulnerable persons due to inappropriate conduct by Church related staff, volunteers and third parties.
3. Work, Health and Safety (Employees, Third parties, Public, etc.)	The risk of physical and mental injury to all persons in relation to the Church.
4. Facilities and Assets (Fit for purpose, Availability, Reliability and condition)	The risk that facilities and other physical assets are not fit for purpose, are not available, are not reliable and of poor condition.
5. Information and Communication (Loss, Integrity, Availability of information)	The risk of loss, unavailability, erroneous data and/or communications, including digital and physical information but not including cyber risk
6. Cyber	The risk of loss, damage, exposure of data and/or the damage to systems and operations from cyber attack
7. ICT – Fit for purpose, Availability, Integrity of ICT	The risk of not having fit for purpose, available and high integrity ICT systems and resources.
8. Regulatory and Legal	The risk of not complying with regulatory and contractual obligations.
9. Our People (Quantity, Quality, Culture and Conduct).	The risk of not having sufficient quantity and quality of people resources including ministry agents, leaders, employees, members and volunteers. It also includes the culture and conduct of our people, development, growth and support of leaders and leadership to ensure appropriate governance across the Synod.
10. Business Disruption	The risk of major disruption to operations that would require invoking of the Disaster Recovery Plan.
11. Fraud – Internal and External	The risk of fraud (any wilful act in order to gain unfair advantage or cause damage) from both internal and external perspectives.
12. Inter-conciliar structure of church	The risk of failure in relationships and partnerships across the church and the contagion effect of those relationships.
13. Strategic and Project Risk (Conflict between objectives, Misalignment of objectives, Decision risk, Execution Risk)	The risk of not managing any conflict / trade-off between strategic objectives, the risk of misalignment of objectives across the church, the risk of making an erroneous / sub-optimal decision in relation to strategy and the risk of poor execution of strategic projects affecting time, cost and quality of execution.

Supporting Others

Grants to support people or activities

The General Secretary approves annual or one-off financial grants to the following people or activities according in accordance with Synod policy or formal agreements:

- Theological Students in need of financial support
- Retired Ministers in need through benevolent fund grants
- Ecumenical Tertiary Chaplaincy Coordinator
- Queensland Community Alliance
- RI Alliance
- Luminous Parade
- Mosaic Festival
- Refugee Council of Aust
- Assembly Disaster Recovery
- James Cook Multifaith Chaplaincy
- Chaplain Committee Scholarship program
- Wontulp-Bi-Buya Theological College

Essential Infrastructure

We have developed strategic pathways and implemented business improvements regarding:

- Information Technology and Cyber Security
- Workplace Health and Safety and information around obligations as of Councils who are recognised as “Persons Conducting a Business Undertaking” (PCBU)
- A timetable of regular property inspections including identification of property risks across the congregation and presbytery portfolio of property
- Our national insurance program and the negotiation of a comprehensive and high value portfolio of insurance cover
- A long overdue and improved internal finance review, resulting in updated finance software,
- An improvement in our People and Culture processes including a consistent expectation around staff wellbeing and management
- The introduction of online training programs
- Advice and adaption around the eligibility around Fringe Benefit Tax based on an ATO tax ruling
- The transition of Long Service Leave provisions to ensure there is portability of Long Service Leave
- A consistent approach to standard and accessible policy documentation
- A coordinated budgeting process, that has seen strategic oversight and direction, drive the appropriate direction of resources. Each annual budget has been met and is subject to a continual improvement process.

Synod enterprises

Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference Centre were both impacted by the COVID-19 crisis but are emerging strongly. The crisis has driven exciting new business approaches to

continually improve their services to our communities. The staff and capacity of these services are an outstanding testament to missional activities of the church.

You can find out more about these activities – [Alexandra Park Conference Centre](#) and [Raymont Residential College](#).

Resourcing and the face of the church in the future

We are constantly reviewing the way we can support and continue with essential services to the church.

- The MDF proposal is an example of the Synod office attempting to open significant resources to allow for the funding of new missional enterprises.
- We made the decision to cease the printing publication of Journey. Unfortunately, the cost of physically printing has become extraordinarily expensive as small publishing companies go out of business as a result of COVID-19. We will review this decision in the event the market for print product softens.
- We have reduced costs by minimising travel and face to face meetings. These changes are likely to be around for some time and as a result we will be reviewing our need and use of office space.
- It is important that the whole of the church operates with a shared understanding of how the church owns and holds property. In particular, the role of activities which hold Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) status and the law relating to specific trusts raises the question about how the church holds and manages property for the future. We are seeking legal opinion in this regard and will work across the church when that advice is received.
- The implications of COVID-19 mean that we must imagine a future where contact is restricted and constrained for some time. In addition, the reach of Uniting Church in Australia ministries through our online presence can resource people well beyond our imagining. A shared vision in this regard is essential.
- The role and expectations of those who are elected or appointed to our Councils, Commissions and Boards are increasing. This will require a consistent and reassuring governance induction for people who hold responsibility in our church.
- Our world is living and will continue to live in a state of ongoing trauma. The church is exceptionally well placed in our communities to continue to provide messages of hope and liberation. We have understood and should consistently approach our activities with a trauma informed approach. Some clues around this are the support of micro communities and the development of peer to peer support networks. If you think we are already doing this, you are correct. The question is how we can do this better for the sake of the world.
- The church, unlimited by political and time boundaries can offer ourselves as a deep and respectful gift to our community. Thanks be to God.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report

The Placement Committee has sought to do the following since the 34th Synod:

- Support the “call” process within the life of the church;
- Streamline and make this process more transparent and efficient;
- Update our data base and documentation supporting the placements process.

About our Committee

The Placements Committee (Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements) is responsible for the oversight of the processes that enable the placement of ministers, ministers from other denominations and lay people in particular specified ministries.

Membership includes the moderator (chairperson), associate general secretary (secretary), each presbytery minister, delegate of the CEO of UnitingCare Queensland, the executive officer of the Queensland Synod Chaplaincy Commission, and the Director of Christian Formation or delegate. This diverse membership brings together a collective story about what is happening across the life of the church and what resources are best able to meet the needs of particular ministry contexts.

Please see below the current statistics for Placements within the Qld Synod:

Statistics @ 01/03/2020 for the period 01/01/2019 - 01/03/2020	
Total number of approved placements including vacancies	292
Synod/Chaplaincy	77
Bremer Brisbane	30
Carpentaria	31
Central Queensland	15
Mary Burnett	26
Moreton Rivers	57
South Moreton	39
The Downs	17
Number of approved placements less than 1.0 FTE	132
Number of ministry agents in approved placements	270
Ordained	194
Lay	76
Male	175
Female	95

Focus since the last Synod

Placements Administration Review Project

The purpose of this project was to align the administrative functions relating to the placement of ministry agents, with the administrative functions of the People and Culture Team. A key deliverable for this project was to reduce the average time to fill a placement vacancy and to provide consistent and accessible templates to support the placement processes.

An analysis of placement processes identified in 2018 that:

- 50 new vacancies were received and 35 were fulfilled
- Existing vacancies increased from 16 in 2017, to 32 in 2018
- 11 calls and appointments were issued out of 25 Placement Committee recommendations
- On average, it takes 2.8 months to issue a call/appointment
- There are multiple sources of data on ministry agents
- Inconsistency in recording
- Some documentation is missing or not captured in the current process

Two improvement strategies have been implemented to improve the administration functions of placement processes:

- The customer relationship database of the Queensland Synod (SugarCRM) is now the single source of truth for ministry agents, with links to the records management solution Sharepoint. The placement process is captured in SugarCRM and the Placement Committee has real time access to data and reports that contain all required information for the Committee considerations. This has been complimented by an associated SugarCRM project to maintain accurate Blue Card records for Ministry Agents.
- Letters and templates have been extensively reviewed. New forms have been developed where a gap was identified and the data contained in the templates is designed to maintain ministry agent records in SugarCRM. Form completion has been simplified wherever possible using PDF pick lists, embedded calendars and formulas.
- Placement processes are now being updated to include references and links to the letters and templates. It is expected that the letters and templates will be available on the Queensland Synod website for ease of access.

It is our expectation that the project will deliver at least a 20% improvement in placement processes.

Project Plenty

The Placements Committee has engaged with the Project Plenty indirectly through being aware of the Mission priority outcomes that are coming from that work and looking to shape how the Placement Process is *fit for purpose* in being able to best serve the needs of the church.

Challenges/risks as we progress

- The impact of Covid-19 on the gathered life of our congregations and what this continues to mean for the skillset required of ministers in placement.
- Our ability to resource the church's witness in locations of missional importance geographically, organisationally, and demographically with suitably skilled ministry agents.
- The continued rise in the number of part-time placements demands the need to rethink the nature of ministry in the placement. When placements reduce from full time, history shows that without significant, purposeful intervention, the fraction of the placement continues to decrease.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name **Rev John Ruhle**
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Report from

Finance Investment and Property Board



Mr Ralph Collins – Chair
Mr Justin Greenway – Member
Dr Geoff Ericksson – Member
Ms Natalie Smith – Member
Mr Peter Cranna – Synod Property Officer/ED Strategic Resources & Assurance (ex-officio)

Rev Heather den Houting - General Secretary (ex-officio)
Mr Geoff Batkin AM – Member
Mr John Lister – Member
Mr Hayden Gaffel – Member

Report

Good stewardship of Church assets and funds is a primary focus of the Finance, Investment and Property Board and is demonstrated by:

- Working with congregations, presbyteries, schools and agencies to ensure Church assets are used to achieve the best long-term outcomes.
- Seeking investments that balance the risk/return equation and increase revenue into the Church.
- Making available (within its power and responsibilities) funds that are used to grow the mission of the Church.

About our Board

The Finance, Investment and Property Board (the FIPB) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) in fulfilling its financial responsibilities to exercise due care, diligence and skill in:

- (a) performing functions of the Synod Property Board under Regulation 4.2.1
- (b) exercising oversight of activities conducted under Regulation 3.7.4.6 (Financial Transactions and Investments Body)
- (c) perform such other functions delegated by Synod.

Its responsibilities are summarised clearly in its Charter which can be found at:

<https://ucaqld.com.au/download/19149/>

Members during the last term were:

- Ralph Collins - St Andrews (Moreton Rivers) (Chair)
- Dr Geoff Ericksson - Coopers Plains Uniting Church (UC) (South Moreton)
- Hayden Gaffel - Wynnum Baptist
- Justin Greenaway - Newlife Brisbane (Moreton Rivers)
- Rev Linda Hamill - St Stephens Toowoomba (The Downs) (resigned 9 August 2019)
- John Lister - Mudgeeraba UC (South Moreton)
- Howard Morrison - Karana Downs UC (Bremer Brisbane) (resigned 22 July 2020)
- Natalie Smith - Newlife (South Moreton)
- Geoff Batkin - The Gap UC (Moreton Rivers) (appointed from 1 July 2020)
- Rev David Baker - Moderator (ex Officio) (ceased to be ex Officio on 10 May 2019) Karana Downs UC (Bremer Brisbane)
- Rev Heather den Houting - General Secretary (ex Officio) - Chapel Hill UC (Bremer Brisbane)
- Peter Cranna - Synod Property Officer (ex Officio) - Emmanuel Enoggera UC (Moreton Rivers)

At the 35th Synod, the term of the Chair, Ralph Collins, comes to an end. Ralph has served on the FIPB over 3 terms as a member and over 2 further terms as Chair. In recognition of this meritorious service a minute of appreciation will be expressed at Synod.

Focus since the last Synod

The FIPB usually meets monthly and covers a standard agenda of property, investment and finance matters. The FIPB has deliberately established a strategy of inviting presentations from presbyteries, schools and agencies, so it can be aware of potential issues and opportunities.

Highlights:

The key achievements over the last term included:

Oversight

1. The FIPB is required to consider all property transactions, though it has well established delegations to allow business functions to proceed smoothly. Once the FIPB has deliberated, instructions can be passed to The Property Trust (the legal entity of the whole church) for approval and action.

2. Presentations / briefing were provided to the FIPB to enable the Board members to understand the context that they are operating in. These included:
 - From the Property Trust schools, to communicate development and financing plans.
 - From Uniting Care Queensland – strategic briefing on their 2030 directions, Annual Statement of Missional Intent (ASMI) detailing their priorities for the following twelve months, investment strategy for assets, property disposal plan for properties that no longer fit the strategy, and a number of business cases to develop / refurbish sites to expand / improve service delivery.
 - Wesley Mission who briefed us on Specialist Disability Housing – an area in which Wesley Mission has started developing a presence.
 - Some Presbyteries have presented – highlighting current and proposed Mission projects and church plants / church mergers.
 - Technical presentations have been received from Property specialists, Savills, on the current state and possible future trajectory of property markets.
 - Warrakiri Funds Management presented on the state of the equities market and addressed specifically our investment with them.
 - We have been kept up to date on the operations of Raymont Residential College and Alexandra Park Conference centre – Mission Support Enterprises operated by the Synod office. COVID-19 significantly impacted Alex Park, which was required to cease direct service delivery for a period and operate using a skeleton staff, focussing on maintenance and developing marketing strategies when operations were allowed to commence. It is pleasing to report demand for the services that Alex Park provides is still high. Raymont has retained occupancy at over 80% of capacity, which is a remarkable achievement in these times.
 - As the approving body for significant Synod office capital spend, the FIPB received regular reports on the progress of the Sugar CRM (Customer Relationship Management) software improvement project which was successfully delivered.

Good News / Matters that have provided encouragement to the Board

1. The willingness of different church congregations to work together and come together to share resources and skills. Southside Uniting Church is an example of this.
2. The Newlife Brisbane Church plant shows cooperation between different congregations and Presbyteries in better utilising existing properties to achieve remarkable missional objectives
3. Presbyteries and congregations are willing to expand into new locations and into new ventures to try and connect with people in different ways. The Flagstone project (South Moreton), Redcliffe Hub (Moreton Rivers) and the appointment of a part time 'all of Presbytery' Mission Engagement Officer across the Mary Burnett Presbytery are examples of this.
4. The number of meetings that were held outside of the Synod office was curtailed by the COVID-19 restrictions. The FIPB did enjoy the hospitality of the Redcliffe UC and received a presentation on the proposed HUB mission project.
5. The FIPB (and many others) have been working with the management and board of Calvary Christian College, to support them through some liquidity issues. The willingness of the College to engage collaboratively to develop a Business Recovery Plan and implement strategies to follow the Plan, has been appreciated.

Process

Several principles were developed to assist the FIPB's assessment of significant property proposals. These will form the basis of revising the templates for property proposals so the information that comes to the FIPB is streamlined and addresses the key issues that need to be addressed for the FIPB to make a decision. The principles include:

- What is the risk to the Property Trust?
- What are the strategic elements? / Where does it sit? / Look at context.
- Does the strategic intent of the proposal align with the Synod wide agreed strategic intent?
- Has the church entity gone through the proper processes? Evidence?
- What options have been considered?
- How much background does FIPB need?
- Does the proposal need a specific presentation at FIPB?

Other Significant Property Transactions

The FIPB assesses many property proposals. A sample of significant proposals approved / endorsed are included below to give an appreciation of the diversity of service provision that our Church is involved in:

- Sale of UnitingCare's 50% stake in UnitingCare Medical Imaging
- Endorsement of UnitingCare's development of The Lakes at Bundaberg – Purchase of land + 96 Residential aged care facility (RAC) co located with Lend Lease's retirement village.
- Endorsement of UnitingCare's development of Sunrise Beach integrated Aged Care development – 96 bed Residential Aged Care facility and 122 unit retirement village (RV) on land already owned. This endorsement also included partnering with Lend Lease to develop the RV component.
- Endorsement of the purchase of land at Kenmore adjacent to UnitingCare's Iona development. This will allow Uniting Care to redevelop this site more as a greenfields site

- Numerous Mission Development Fund (MDF) proposals from Presbyteries and congregations were considered and approved.
- Merythr Road UC (New Farm) continued to progress its property master plan which included the sale of some property to finance the refurbishment of other property.
- Newlife finalised a deal with an external childcare provider to lease the Isle of Capri site to that provider and sell them the licences to operate the childcare centre for the next 15 years.
- The Lakes College was approved to infill various areas to create more classroom space for the expected increase in enrolments in 2021 and beyond.

Financial Reports and Matters

1. The FIPB is the Property Board under the Regulations. It also acts as the Finance sub-committee to the Synod Standing Committee (SSC).
2. It reviews the Synod office annual budget and Synod office annual audited financial statements before these documents are approved by SSC.
3. The Uniting Church is structured such that other Boards / Committees in the church prepare and approve budgets and annual audited financial statements.
4. The FIPB, in conjunction with SSC, oversight the financial statements, but do not approve these documents for other church bodies (e.g. UnitingCare Queensland, Wesley Mission Queensland, Property Trust schools, Presbyteries, congregations).
5. The FIPB oversees the operations of The Uniting Church Investment Service (UCIS), which operates the centralised treasury services of the Synod.
6. During the COVID-19 period, the levels of cash liquidity in the church was more closely monitored.
7. The annual audited financial statements for the Synod office will not have been signed off as at the Synod meeting. However, it is planned that an information session will be held during Synod for people that are interested in being 'walked through' the draft financial statements. This information session will be facilitated by the Executive Director Strategic Resources and Assurance, Peter Cranna.

Project Plenty

The FIPB received a number of presentations across the consultation period from the Project Plenty Team and provided feedback collectively as a Board and individually from some members. The FIPB is keen to remain close the Project Plenty process to ensure appropriate decisions, especially around resourcing, can be made to help deliver on outcomes that further the mission of the church.

Challenges/risks as we progress

The FIPB makes the following observations for consideration:

- The FIPB is seeing an increase the disposal/transfer to local community groups of non-strategic rural/remote church sites – as the Presbyteries consider holding/maintenance costs v potential land value increase over time. Examples over 2019 include Kapaldo (Mary Burnett), Glenmorgan (The Downs) and Woodleigh College Herberton (Calvary/Carpentaria).

- This trend is expected to continue. Therefore, the FIPB encourages Presbyteries to engage with the Synod office and develop a strategic disposal plan, as part of the Strategic Presence / overall Property Strategy work across the Synod.

Matters that are anticipated to require attention during the next period include:

- Financing / debt for capital expansion.
- Liquidity as the economy is expected to remain flat for some years.
- Innovative ways to encourage church bodies to better utilise, maintain and steward their property assets.

For consideration

Covered above and in the presentation to Synod.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Board for Christian Formation



Report

The Board for Christian Formation serves the formation and educational needs of the mission of the church through offering governance and strategic leadership that is responsive, innovative, and diligent. The Board is maturing in its capacity and functions to be more able to serve the church. Trinity College Queensland continues to revitalise its educational philosophy, its formation program, and its course offerings, increasing its reach and engagement across the church.

These are exciting times with significant challenges before us. It has been pleasing to see the development of both Trinity College Queensland as well as the offerings that the Board is developing in service of the wider church and councils.

The future is encouraging with developing partnerships across the Synod with congregations, presbyteries, agencies and schools.

I wish to take this opportunity to give thanks to God's faithfulness and provision of people with the gifts and graces to serve on the Board, Committees and through our College. Thank you to all who have served the purpose of the Board for Christian Formation in the Queensland Synod.

About the Board for Christian Formation

From the Charter of the Board for Christian Formation:

Section 1.1 Purpose

The Board for Christian Formation (the BCF) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) in fulfilling its responsibilities to provide for the effective supervision of theological and ministerial education and Christian formation for lay and ordained within the bounds of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church (the church).

For Regulation 3.1.5(i)(vi), the BCF is designated as the appropriate body to exercise the Ministerial Education Board's responsibilities.

The **Responsibilities** of the Board of Christian Formation are as follows:

The BCF performs an advisory role and acts with delegated authority of the SSC as detailed in this Charter in carrying out its functions, authorities and powers.

The BCF must fulfil its responsibilities, as stated in Regulation 3.7.4.3(c).

The BCF is the body for the purposes of Regulation 2.4.4(a).

The BCF shall have responsibility to:

- (a) make recommendations to the SSC regarding the appointment, or termination of appointment, of the candidate educators of Trinity College Queensland (the College)
- (b) ensure annual performance reviews of the College's academic staff members are conducted
- (c) support the College in the fulfilment of its responsibilities under Regulation 3.7.4.3(c)

- (d) promote the College as a resource for:
 - theological teaching and scholarship
 - continuing education for ministry
 - lay education and education in biblical studies
- (e) oversee the relationship of the College with any universities, colleges and other educational institutions affiliated with the College
- (f) create and resource a network of learning in theology and ministry for the Church and community within the bounds of Synod
- (g) develop strategies for theological, ministerial and lay education within the bounds of Synod;
- (h) ensure adequate staff, facilities and other resources for education and formation for the lay and ordained ministries of the Church, including continuing education for ministry
- (i) maintain a roll of candidates, and as required by the Assembly, provide information contained in the roll to the Assembly
- (j) consult with presbyteries on the ongoing needs for continuing education for ministry of persons involved in the lay and ordained ministries of the Church
- (k) ensure the theological, ministerial and lay education provided by the College meets any standards prescribed by, or requirements of, the Assembly
- (l) approve a policy about the granting of study leave to staff members of the College designated by the SSC to provide theological education to candidates
- (m) at each ordinary meeting of Synod, provide a report on how it is fulfilling its responsibilities;
- (n) provide reports about any aspect of its responsibilities as required by the SSC.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the BCF shall:

- (a) oversee, and be responsible to the SSC for, the College's finances
- (b) ensure an annual budget is prepared for the College in accordance with Synod budget processes
- (c) comply with Synod's financial and accounting policies and requirements.

Focus since the last Synod

The BCF has been focusing on the following key areas of service:

1. Strategic Priority development in the two key domains of
 - a. Lifelong formation for the Christian Life (Discipleship)
 - b. Leadership Formation and ongoing Professional Development for Christian Mission
2. Best practice and fit for purpose Formation for Specified Ministries within the Uniting Church in Australia
3. Enhancing Trinity College Queensland by
 - a. offering best practice in Tertiary Education

- b. improving financial sustainability
 - c. having vital engagement with stakeholders
 - d. extending non-accredited education and formation offerings in service of the mission of the church
 - e. adapting to the Covid 19 environment and mixed-mode service delivery
 - f. developing a Business Plan for Trinity College Queensland
4. Board development through practice improvement

Highlights:

1. Strategic Priority development – The Board has identified the Education and Formation areas of:

- Missional Communities – missional leadership, church revitalisation, church planting, new expressions
- Specified Ministry – Minister of Word; Minister of Deacon; Pastor; Lay Preacher
- Christian Service – Boards, Market Place, Committees and Councils, Vocational Leadership
- Generational Discipleship – Children, Youth, Families, Adults, Seniors and Intergenerational ministry
- Faith Sharing
- Engaging Contextual Worship
- Spiritual Discipline
- Pastoral Care

In each of these we have identified our growth settings

Pastoral Care maintain and optimise	Spiritual Disciplines maintain and optimise	Engaging Contextual Worship grow slowly	Faith Sharing grow slowly
Generational discipleship grow slowly	Christian Service grow slowly	Specified Ministry Education and Formation grow slowly	Missional Communities grow quickly

In giving these areas priorities and growth settings we have been able to oversee and shape content for delivery, give priority to the needs of the Synod, Presbyteries and Congregations in regard to 'Specified Ministries' formation, identify where we have gaps and opportunities.

2. Best practice and fit for purpose Formation for Specified Ministries within the Uniting Church in Australia

The Board, through the work of the Specified Ministries Education and Formation Committee (SMEF) has been consulting with stakeholders (Synod Placements Committee, Presbytery leadership, Congregational Leadership, Agencies and Candidates) to improve the understanding, content and processes for each of the four phases of specified ministry (as outlined in Assembly Standards and Guidelines).

The Board has engaged in consultation across the Synod, Presbyteries, Agencies and Congregations to identify areas for improved practice in supporting and resourcing people through the process. This has included consulting with members of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) to improve cultural understandings in these processes.

The Board has identified the need to review the selection process for candidates and to include in the scope of this work the ministry of Pastor and the resourcing of Ministers, Church Councils, Presbyteries and the Synod Selection Secretariat in this process.

Regarding Phase Two of Formation for Ordination, the flexibility of the Assembly Standards means that a range of accredited and non-accredited studies may be configured to fulfill these Standards. The work of the Formation Panels, once a person has been selected for candidature, allows for a customised and contextual pathway for the candidate. Trinity College Queensland with the Board of Christian Formation have matured Phase Two into two stages – (i) Foundational Stage; and (ii) Transitional Stage. Progression to the Transition stage occurs once a decision is made¹ to move the Candidate into a process whereby they commence the exiting of Phase 2.

A Phase Three resource has been developed for Presbyteries to support their oversight of Ministers in this phase of their formation. Phase Three formation is a vital aspect of the newly ordained ministers first three years of placement and is overseen by the ongoing Formation Panel from Phase Two (albeit with different people depending on the Presbytery the person is placed within), reporting to the relevant Presbytery.

The Board, through the Specified Ministry Education and Formation Committee (SMEF), has developed specific resources for (i) the Period of Discernment with attention to those preparing for candidating; (ii) the formation requirements of the ministry of Pastor in either the ‘Placement’ context OR the ‘Ministry Location’ context, which will support the Presbytery in their oversight responsibilities.

¹ The decision is made by the Specified Ministry Education and Formation Committee upon receiving a recommendation from the Candidates Formation Panel

SMEF also is working on the specified ministry of Lay Preacher to re-imagine the way Lay Preachers can be encouraged and resourced within the Synod. This work is being done in consultation with Presbyteries and is still in its early stages.

3. Enhancing Trinity College Queensland by:

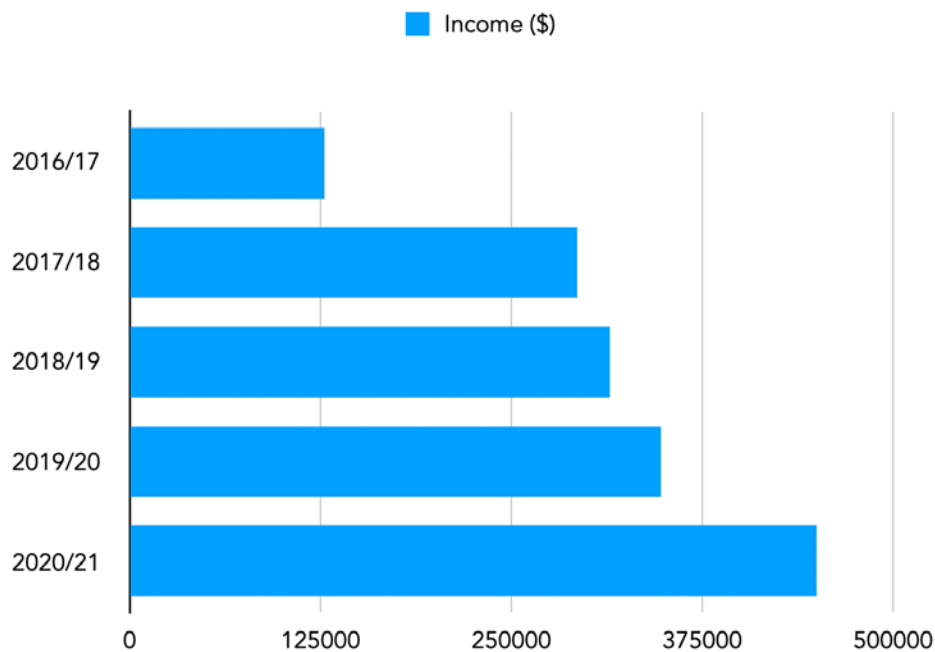
- a. offering best practice in Tertiary Education:** Since the last Synod Trinity College Qld has changed its Higher Education Provider and is now operating within a service agreement with the Australian College of Theology. This arrangement is providing wider administrative and quality assurance for support; it is providing a broader suite of accredited program offerings; a better financial arrangement beneficial to the College; a wider cohort of Colleges and Academic staff engagement; a greater degree of oversight of student applicants. This partnership is allowing the College to shape its strategic direction as a college educating and forming mission-ready graduates.

The faculty and staff of the College are working well together in service of the church. Trinity continues to offer a number of courses, ranging from undergraduate Certificates, Diplomas through to postgraduate Master's degrees. Regarding best practice, the college is in the process of transitioning towards a 'flipped classroom' teaching model in accordance with developments over the past decade in tech-related pedagogy and enquiry-based learning. In 2021, the college intends to begin offering many of its core units online, making educational offerings available to all of Queensland — and beyond.

- b. extending non-accredited education and formation offerings in service of the mission of the church:** In addition to its accredited course offerings, the College continues to provide resources to the whole church in numerous ways, including (i) public events such as Trinity Unplugged; (ii) short courses and workshops related to church identity and reinvigoration, and (iii) through multiple series of 'Trinity on Tap' (podcasts and eBooks). Through these non-accredited offerings, the College seeks as much as possible to respond directly to the expressed needs of church leaders, and to prioritise the missional priorities of the Synod and the BCF (as expressed above).

The forming of missional leaders for lay and ordained ministry remains a primary focus of the College in resourcing the various phases of specified ministry and the lay ministries of Pastor and Lay Preacher. To this end, a more integrated pathway has been created for the development of leaders who can be educated and formed to meet the current and future needs of the church in a post-Christendom world. This includes forming people for planting new faith communities and Congregations as well as regenerating existing Congregations in strategic locations. Therefore, as the College resources the missional leaders that Presbyteries oversee, there is an enhancement of the visible unity evident across the life of the UCA.

- c. improving financial sustainability:** The financial position of the College obviously has a direct correlation with student numbers. The projected income for this financial year (below) is based on increased enrolment numbers in semester 2, 2020, due to Covid 19 and to new course offerings, as well as to anticipated online enrolments for semester 1, 2021.



- d. having vital engagement with stakeholders:** the College Principal continues to engage regularly with Presbytery Ministers and church leaders, Synod’s Senior Leadership Team, the BCF, and key stakeholders from other organisations (e.g. Uniting Care; Scripture Union) to ensure that collaborative partnerships are pursued where possible, and that the College units and courses are well-suited to the needs of partner organisations.

In recent months, the College faculty have also welcomed the opportunity to engage in conversation with local leaders about new initiatives to invigorate and refresh the practices and missional goals of some local congregations. It is our hope that more opportunities like these will arise, as the college continues to seek out meaningful engagement with its stakeholders.

- e. adapting to the Covid 19 environment and mixed-mode service delivery:** In late March, with the announcement of travel restrictions due to Covid 19, Paul Jones and his family returned to Brisbane from study leave in the UK. Within the space of a week, the College staff and faculty adapted all student services and teaching to online environments (zoom), and a comprehensive covid-safe plan was written up and implemented.

Events at the College, such as the Unplugged event featuring Melinda Tankard Reist and addressing pornification, had to be cancelled. Short courses were also temporarily postponed, and the Activate program, which depends largely on social interaction and engagement, has been postponed and is now under review.

Currently (semester 2, 2020), classes are being offered in a blended mode, so that some students are attending classes at the Auchenflower campus while others continue to access class lectures and additional resources from home. The Australian College of Theology (Higher Education Provider) has graciously made several temporary concessions to give

students leeway during this difficult time. In some ways, Covid 19 has posed numerous challenges for college life, but in other ways it has forced the College staff and faculty to make certain adjustments faster, such as the move to online teaching.

- f. **developing a Business Plan for Trinity College Queensland:** In conjunction with the Synod’s Business Development Unit (BDU), the College’s Principal has been working with representatives from the BCF, from marketing and communications, and other senior leaders within the Synod to establish a business strategy for 2020-2025. The working document outlines educational and financial plans and projections for the next five years.

4. Board development through practice improvement

As part of our Board practice improvement a review-feedback process has been instigated into every meeting. We are also reflecting on our own Committee structure to determine a fit for purpose model.

Project Plenty

The Board of Christian Formation and the staff of Trinity College Queensland have engaged with Project Plenty staff in plenary and workshop sessions at each stage of the process. The work of Project Plenty, as it has been communicated, has been integrated into the work of the College as well as the conversations and planning by the BCF.

There has been positive alignment between the emerging themes of Project Plenty (1. Discipleship 2. Transforming communities 3. Fit for purpose and 4. Life together) and the work of the BCF and the College. After the outcomes of this current Synod in Session the BCF will be utilising the content to shape our next strategic directions into 2021-2022.

The BCF and the College will be identifying specific strategies that build into these themes.

Challenges/risks as we progress

Risk/Challenge	Ways to address
1. Financial status of Synod to continue to co-resource the College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an effective Business Plan for the College Improve student numbers Improve income levels Work closely with the Synod to monitor financial status

2. Changing nature of Ministry workforce and placements/roles (economic, cultural, social diversity)	Working on flexible pathways of formation and education that meet the diverse needs of people and placements/roles Work collaboratively with Presbyteries, Agencies and Congregations on their needs regarding formation and education of ministry agents and leaders
3. To broaden the reach of the College beyond the Uniting Church to access a wider 'market' of potential students	Developing a positive reputation of the College beyond the Uniting Church Provide increasing educational products (accredited and non-accredited) that meet the needs of a wider sector of churches and community.

For consideration

The BCF is undertaking a review of the selection process for candidates for ordained ministries with a view to improved processes and developing the capacities of Congregations, Presbyteries and the Synod in this process.

With decreasing full-time placement options in congregations and increasing Ministry Location and Non-Congregational options, the ministry environment is changing and the BCF and the College are working to adapt to the needs of the church. The reality for anyone candidating, is that there is no guarantee of a full-time placement in a congregation after completing Phase Two formation. With pastor placements, part-time and supply placements increasing, people are serving in these roles either while in Phase Two formation or prior to being in the formal formation process. This brings greater responsibility on the Presbyteries to serve (through oversight), the Formation needs/requirements of people in the variety of ministry roles. The BCF and the College are committed to resourcing and serving the Presbyteries in this work. (See Table following for changes in Ministry Agents Workforce)

Congregational & Non-Congregational Positions	July 2016	August 2019	Difference
Congregational Full Time Permanent	114	100	-14
Congregational Part Time Permanent	68	68	0
Congregational Full Time Supply	4	8	+4
Congregational Part Time Supply	34	32	-2
Non-Congregational/Agency FT Permanent	41	45	+4
Non-Congregational/Agency PT Permanent	42	28	-14
Non-Congregational/Agency FT Supply	4	6	+2
Non-Congregational/Agency PT Supply	13	14	+1



While there has been a decline in full-time placements there is also an increasing need in ministry agents with increasing leadership capacities. The BCF and the College are committed to serving this need and in Semester Two 2020 the Master of Missional Leadership commenced with a good take up for this program.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name **Rev Peter Armstrong**
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35th SYNOD

Report from

Schools and Residential Colleges Commission



This report has been updated as at 14 October 2020

Mrs Noela Lister – Chair
Mr Kristian Wale OAM – Member

Ms Jessica Lipsett – Member
Mr Nigel Fairbairn – Member

Mr Neil Ballment – Member
Mr Stuart Christ – Ex-officio

Report

Our schools and colleges continue to provide an amazing opportunity for the Church to engage in the lives of thousands of families across the state, bringing the love of Christ into their lives. In schools alone (excluding ecumenical schools) we have approximately 8500 students and approximately another 1300 in residential colleges. The Schools and Residential Colleges Commission is working with the Synod Office and our schools and colleges to bring greater accountability and alignment of the schools to the church. The school's strategy implementation will be the key piece of work in the 2020–2022 synodal term.

About the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

The Schools and Residential Colleges Commission (the Commission) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod (the Synod) in fulfilling its obligations relating to the oversight of schools and residential colleges in which the Synod has an interest by way of ownership, or power of appointment to relevant boards or by way of ecumenical collaboration (the schools and colleges).

The Synod participates directly in schools and residential colleges to:

- ensure safe environments where children and young people can explore and discover their God-given dignity and progress their individual potential.
- support the growth and development of children and young people who are discerning the meaning, identity, belonging and purpose of their lives such that they can participate in a just society and lead creative and compassionate lives.
- achieve excellent outcomes for students by ensuring effective teaching and learning with appropriate mentoring and coaching.
- encourage leadership by students, staff and governing bodies that is engaged, developed, valued and demonstrated with humility and integrity.
- allow exploration of faith in respectful and engaging ways by providing venues for the development of children and young people in the light of the Christian story guided by the Uniting Church in Australia *Basis of Union* (1992).

Focus since the last Synod

- **Schools Strategy.** The Schools Strategy was the key piece of work in 2019–2020. Guided by and linked to Project Plenty, it sets a direction for schools for the future.
- Providing regular **networking** opportunities for Board Chairs, Principals, Chaplains, and Business Managers through face to face meetings and Teams Meetings.
- Facilitating **information sessions** for all board members to enhance their governance knowledge.

- Maintaining rigorous **recruitment, selection and appointment** processes for all affiliated Boards and Councils to ensure they are skills based and fit for purpose.
- Improved visibility and clarity of **financial performance**. We have implemented standardised reports and metrics within our schools to allow the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission to properly advise both the Finance Investment and Property Board and the Synod Standing Committee of the financial performance of the schools. Where needed, we have worked with the school to implement improved business understanding and recovery plans.
- Developed sample **template constitutions** for schools. Changes in constitutions over time has meant an inconsistent view on the relationship with the broader Uniting Church in Queensland. The template constitution is a starting point in any constitutional change discussion to ensure that the interests of the church, particularly with regard to risk and mission, are preserved and strengthened.

Achievements

- Collaborated with schools and residential colleges during the COVID-19 crisis to ensure they were compliant and responding to developing situations appropriately.
- Watched the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by all staff at the schools as they responded to changing teaching requirements. They have shown to be adaptable and resilient under stress.
- Ensured the same Financial Reporting Framework is used across Property Trust Schools and thus facilitated the financial oversight by SRCC of these schools.
- Worked collaboratively with Finance Investment and Property Board to review and support development strategies by the schools and colleges.
- Developed a Delegations Matrix for Property Trust Schools to clarify the structure under which they operate.

Project Plenty

Schools Strategy

School leaders have expressed a desire to develop mutually beneficial partnerships and to leverage the data, research capabilities, skills and opportunities across the school's network to enhance long term sustainability. The Commission, with the guidance of Liz Henderson, has worked with school communities to better understand the strategic context in which schools operate as a first step to identifying those strategic opportunities (See Attachment A).

Challenges/risks

- Schools and residential colleges will need to return to a “new norm” when the COVID-19 pandemic subsides. They will need to respond proactively to any potential financial impact. The Commission will continue to support them through this process.
- Continuing to source more than fifty quality Board members with the appropriate skills to fit each board for all of the affiliated Boards and Councils is an ongoing concern. Having visibility to the skills within the church and from across the wider church is a challenge we face.
- The potential contribution from our schools to the mission of the church in Queensland is much more significant that is currently being realised. While as a total, the schools and colleges employ thousands of people and turn over approximately \$250 million, the Commission is currently supported by a single Executive Officer.
- The Commission has worked with schools and the Project Plenty team to develop the Schools Strategy which when implemented will strengthen the schools and also between the schools and the broader mission of the church.

For consideration

Mark Bensley, the Executive Officer for the Commission has left to take on the challenge of head of Gideons Australia in Canberra. The search for a new Executive Officer is progressing and should be finalised soon.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name **Noela Lister**
Position Chair of SRCC
Email Noela.lister@jonel.com.au
Phone 0419331177

Table 1 - Board Composition and enrolments of portfolio Schools and Colleges as at July 2020

Entity	Board Members		Student Enrolments						Entity	Board Members		Student Enrolments					
	Maximum (Current)	Synod Appointed Current	Mar-18	Aug-18	Mar-19	Aug-19	Mar-20	Jul-20		Maximum (Current)	Synod Appointed Current	Mar-18	Aug-18	Mar-19	Aug-19	Mar-20	Jul-20
Calvary Christian College	14 (8)	0	946	934	842	840	867	867	Emmaus College	N/A	N/A	1390	1383	1415	1400	1485	1463
Scots PGC College	10 (8)	8	392	394	406	398	395	396	Jubilee Primary	N/A	N/A	623	626	640	629	660	660
The Lakes College	9 (7)	7	831	831	811	881	951	945	Unity College	N/A	N/A	1435	1403	1465	1434	1474	1459
Trust School Sub-totals	33 (23)	15	2169	2159	2059	2119	2213	2208	Ecumenical Sub-totals			3448	3412	3520	3463	3619	3582
Moreton Bay College	11 (10)	6	1109	1119	1136	1137	1153	1161	Cromwell College	24 (14)	5	249	247	263	260	249	225
Moreton Bay Boys College	11 (10)	6	475	475	484	487	498	495	Emmanuel College	16 (9)	1	337	337	342	344	344	344
PMSA Board	13 (7)	4															
Clayfield College	9* (7)	0	586	586	510	515	490	441	Grace College	15 (10)	4	125	125	117	112	96	54
Brisbane Boys College	9* (6)	0	1502	1502	1485	1483	1439	1443	John Flynn College	13 (11)	6	250	249	253	252	251	245
Somerville House	9* (6)	2*	1414	1414	1277	1242	1308	1309	Kings College	15 (15)	2	298	265	286	285	320	302
Sunshine Coast Grammar School	9* (8)	0	1299	1299	1245	1271	1316	1301	Raymont College	N/A	N/A	99	99	112	110	122	108
Letters Patent School Sub-totals	35 (27)	16	6385	6395	6137	6135	6204	6150	Residential Colleges Sub-totals	83 (59)	18	1358	1322	1373	1353	1382	1278
TOTALS	68 (50)	31	8554	8554	8196	8254	8417	8358									

Table 2 - Membership of the Commission as at August 2020

Participant	Role	Commencement date	Term expires
Mrs Noela Lister	Chair	25.11.2013	25.11.2022
Mr Neil Ballment	Member	1.5.2015	1.5.2021
Mr Kristian Wale OAM	Member	15.8.2018	15.8.2021
Ms Jessica Lipsett	Member	7.5.2019	7.5.2022
Mr Nigel Fairbairn	Member	6.7.2020	6.7.2023
<i>Vacant position</i>			
Mr Stuart Christ	Director, Church Enterprises	N/A	
<i>Vacant – currently recruiting</i>	Executive Officer	N/A	
Ms Melissa Hulbert	Minute Secretary	N/A	



Attachment A - Schools Strategy

Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod Schools Strategy 2025

Commissioned by the Schools & Residential Colleges Commission

COMMERCIAL IN CONFIDENCE

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References

The opportunity to work together is presenting schools with an ability to address the increasingly resource constrained and competitive market conditions

The Opportunity

- The education sector in Australia is experiencing change. The UCAQ Property Trust and Letters Patent school leaders have recognised the opportunity to create and formalise a shared UCAQ Schools vision and articulate strategic opportunities in a collective “Schools Strategy; eg: what we can do together” to navigate and thrive over the next five years.
- This document outlines the vision, goals and strategic initiatives as developed over the series of workshops held between June and October 2019 with school leaders (both executive and governance) and the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission. These workshops were part of Project Plenty- a synod-wide strategy and vision consultation process. This strategy emanates from and is aligned to Project Plenty.

Internal Operating Environment

- Within the UCAQ schools, long term financial viability remains a priority with the spectre (and in some locales, the reality) of economic downturn shifting parents away from independent schools to the state sector.
- The need for revenue diversification while managing increasing investment and ongoing costs in a “fee sensitive climate” remains a critical challenge, as does managing legacy support systems. Leadership succession planning is also a strategic challenge facing schools.

External Operating Environment

There are a number of key external national trends shaping the future of education more broadly and the UCAQ Property Trust and Letters Patent schools specifically.

These include:

- Aging teacher cohorts
- Flat lining student enrolment numbers
- Increasing compliance; and
- Growing parental expectations to co-parent their children

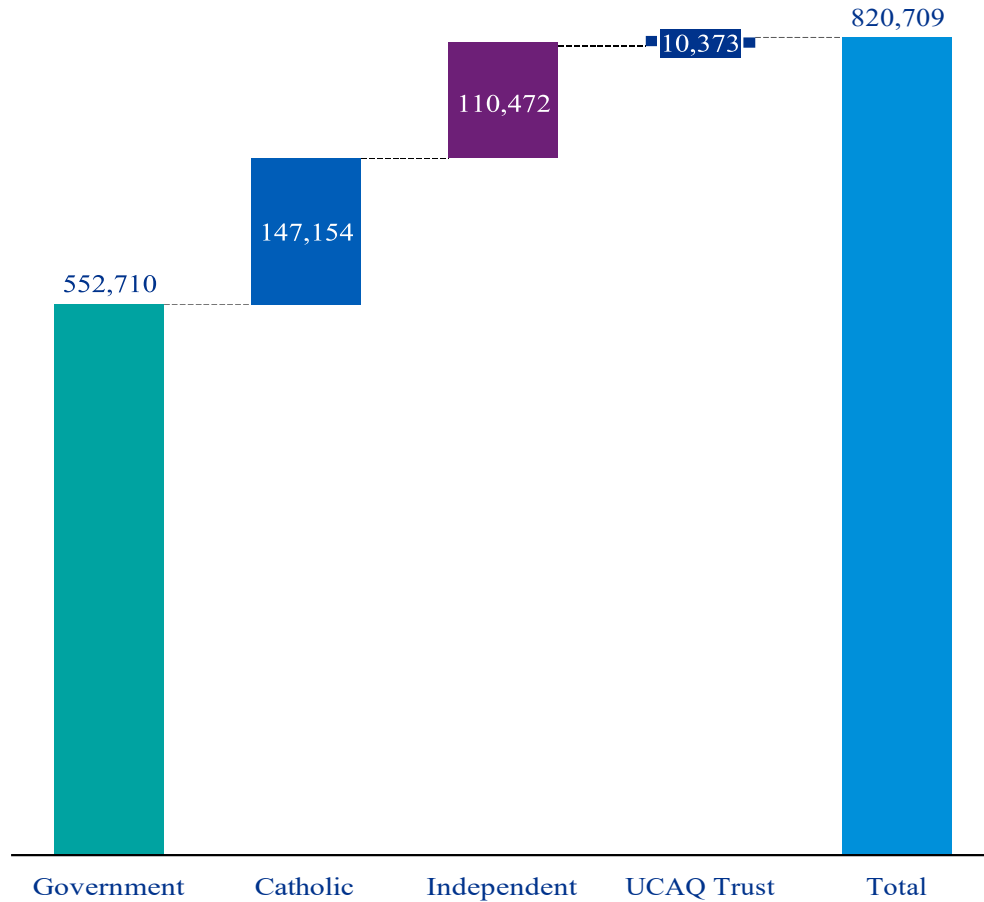
Young adults cite mental health and stress as two key concerns, prompting schools to provide resilience and soft skills training to support their students’ formal learning. This has an enormous impact on teacher workloads as they are expected to provide for a student’s individualised wellbeing journey. Teacher retention is a noted issue and the time spent on administration and documentation over and above the time spent teaching in the classroom is a key driver behind teacher departures.

Summary

School leaders have repeatedly expressed a desire to develop mutually beneficial partnerships, and to leverage the data, research capabilities, skills and opportunities across the schools network to enhance long term sustainability. Understanding the strategic context in which schools operate is the first step to identifying those strategic opportunities. These opportunities have been defined in the subsequent pages.

The Queensland education sector is growing, but the market share of the SRCC schools is not

Total Enrolled Students Queensland by School Type
2017- 2018



Key observations

- Government schools account for 67% of total enrolments in Queensland. Government school numbers have grown n year on nationally and this growth trend has been mirrored in Queensland.
- Independent schools accounts for ~14% of the overall market share. UCAQ Trust, Ecumenical and Letters Patent Schools holistically comprise ~8.5% of total enrolments in Queensland.






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year on year

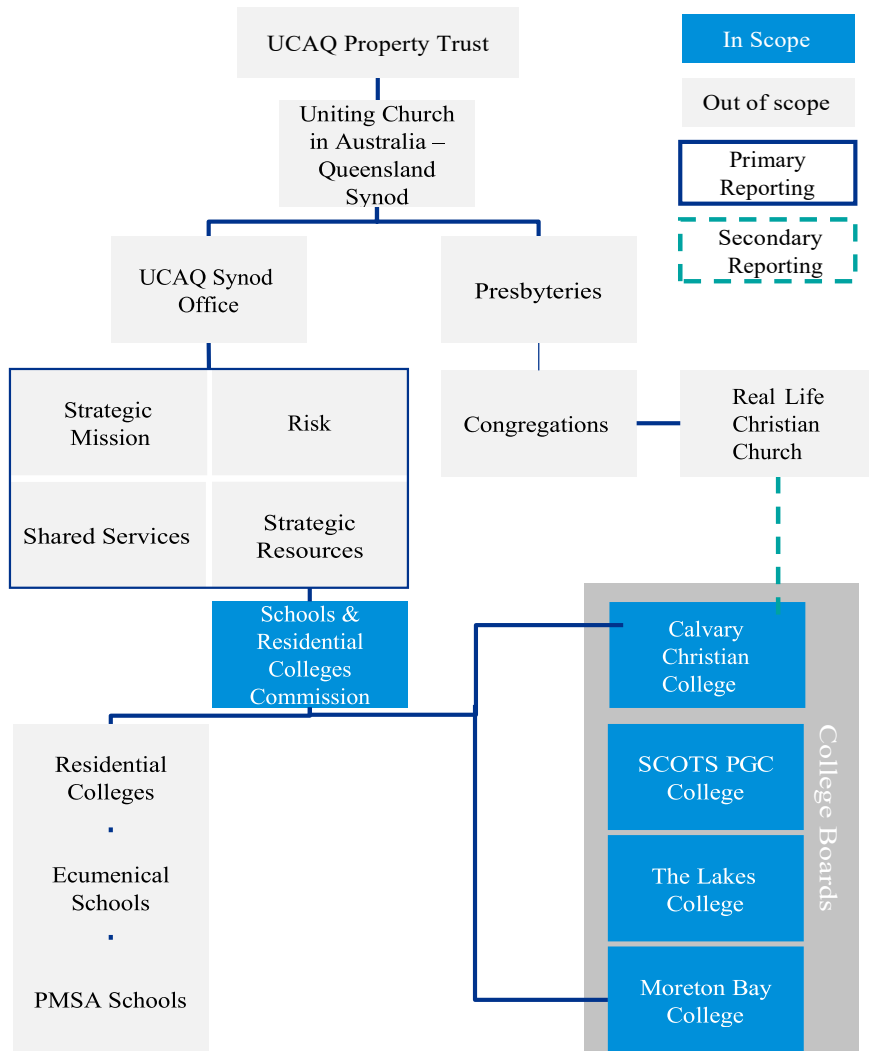
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account

A number of market trends are impacting the education sector and UCAQ schools

Market Trends	Description	Challenge	Key observations
 <p>Competition for Talent</p>	<p>Attracting and retaining quality teaching staff is intensifying. The existing teaching cohort is ageing with declining replacement rate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Popular rise of flexible working environments □ Governance and reporting burdens □ Growing future leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The challenges identified the by the schools during the Principals Gathering 2019 and Project Plenty consultations are also occurring more broadly in the education sector nationally. □ Student centricity is placing increased burden on the existing resources of schools. □ Mental health and general wellbeing of both staff and students is increasing the emphasis on values based education and employment.
 <p>Wellbeing</p>	<p>Schools are increasingly expected to provide for a students individualised wellbeing journey including pathways to clinical support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Incidence of mental health events amongst staff and students □ Providing appropriate intervention and treatment services □ Increased requirement for resilience and soft skills training 	
 <p>Individualised Learning</p>	<p>Uncertainty in the future of employment is placing increased focus on schools to prepare students for life long learning focused on meeting the attributes of the individual student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Increased pressure on resources □ Providing credentialed pathways 	
 <p>Technology</p>	<p>Technology is disrupting traditional teaching models where the physical presence of the student or teacher is substituted through digital solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Social isolation □ Maintaining the quality of student outcomes □ Cost barriers to accessing technology 	
 <p>Funding Models</p>	<p>Tuition centric revenue models alone do not provide the resources to provide for the increased complexity and breadth of services in the school community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Local socio-economic factors impact on the ability to increase tuition fees □ Prioritising individual vs. collective educational experience 	

The SRCC functions as a linkage between the Synod and the Schools, though the schools are subject to additional layers of governance through boards and councils.



Schools and Residential College Commission (SRCC)

Purpose

- As the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission our purpose is to serve Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges and our wider Church through sharing information, providing well researched advice and advocating externally
- To strengthen governance across our portfolio, relationships among affiliates, and the emphasis on mission

Who we are

- The commission is comprised of 8 members, 1 of which is accounted as a FTE of the Synod Office
- Other commission members are appointed and act on a voluntary basis
- All members of the commission are selected for the specific competencies that they bring to their role

What we do

- Acting as a conduit between the Synod and schools and residential colleges for matters of governance, fi
 - Providing well researched advice
 - Seeking opportunities for collaboration portfolio; and
 - Advocating at state and federal level fi
- Our role is also to oversee the Mission of the Christian schools and Uniting

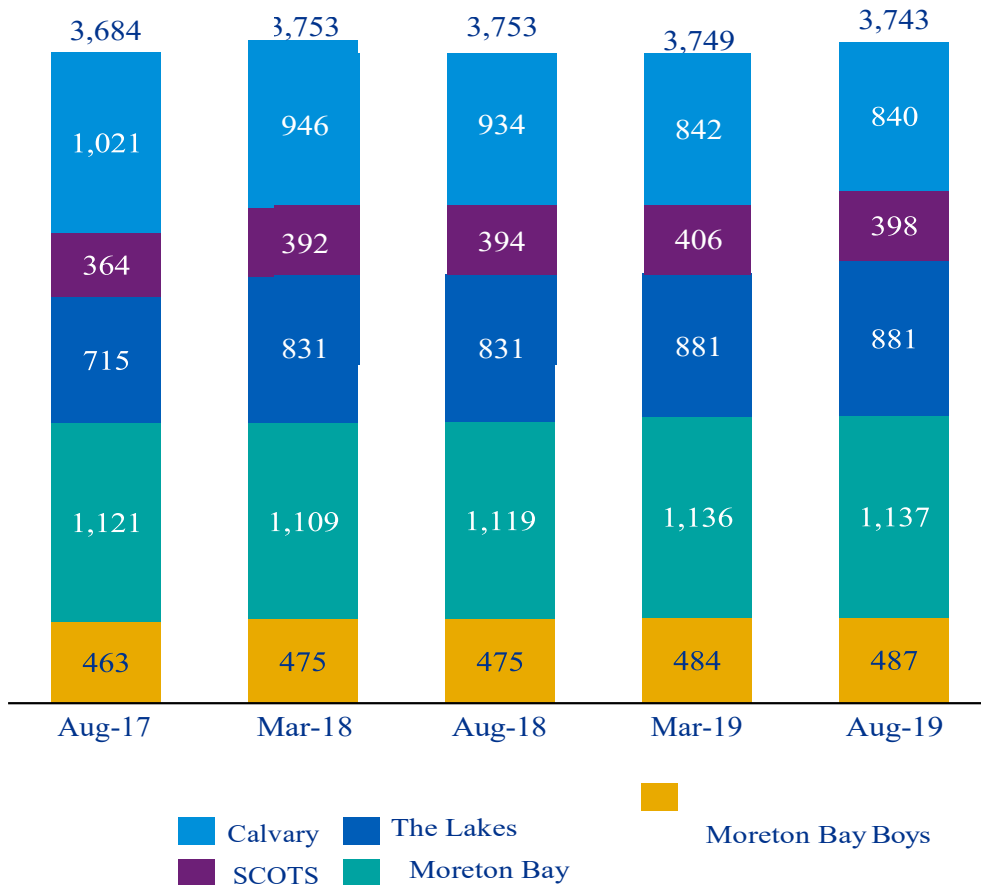
How we're funded

- The Schools Commission is centrally funded as a direct oversight function of the Synod Office
- The Commission relies on the support of the Synod Office to deliver its core accountabilities

Source: Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Charter

Collectively growth of total student enrolments has slowed*

Total Enrolled Students for UCAQ Schools 2017-2019



UCAQ Trust and Letters Patent Schools

Purpose

- Collectively the schools are the delivery mechanism of the Uniting church’s mission to provide education in a faith-based context.

Who we are

- The Calvary Christian College is a ‘planted’ school with two campuses- one primary and one Prep to Year 12; owing its roots to the missional aspirations of the Real Life Christian Church.
- SCOTS PGC is a co-educational day and boarding school established where country values inspire excellence.
- The Moreton Bay Colleges comprise two single gender campuses which seek to develop students in an inclusive Christian learning environment.
- The Lakes College is a co-educational school based on the Christian traditions of the Uniting Church.

What we do

- In local context each school provides both a primary and secondary schooling pathways, focused on delivering exceptional student outcomes.

How we’re funded

- The primary funding source for each of the schools is through government recurring grants and supported through *noela* fees though funding through government contributions is v2020-01-19 22:41:00 under review.

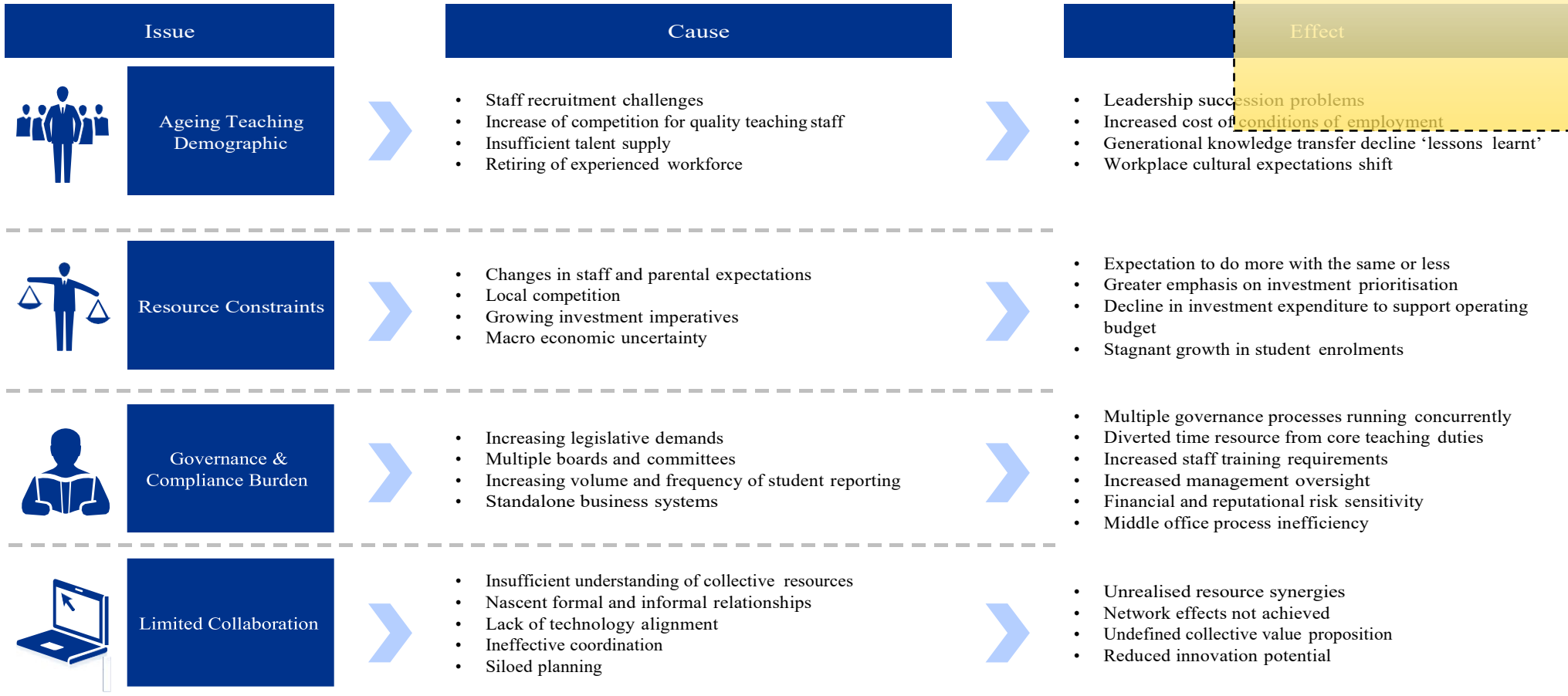
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Schools Strategy | Inside-Out Analysis – Commission & Schools

Source: UCAQ Schools and Residential Colleges Commission – School Enrolment Data

* The Lakes College has seen steady increases.

The core issues identified by schools have a cause and effect relationship which provide the foundation for strategic initiative development.



Long term sustainability

- Achieving long term sustainability is at the core of delivering on the staff and student value proposition that the UCAQ Schools take to market.
- Each UCAQ School has experienced the impact of education trends and market changes to varying degrees.
- Responding to the challenges raised by these issues presents strategic opportunities for UCAQ Schools to achieve collective long term sustainability.

Schools Strategy | Issues Mapping

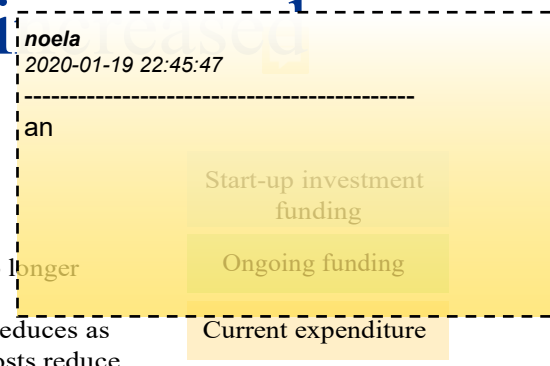
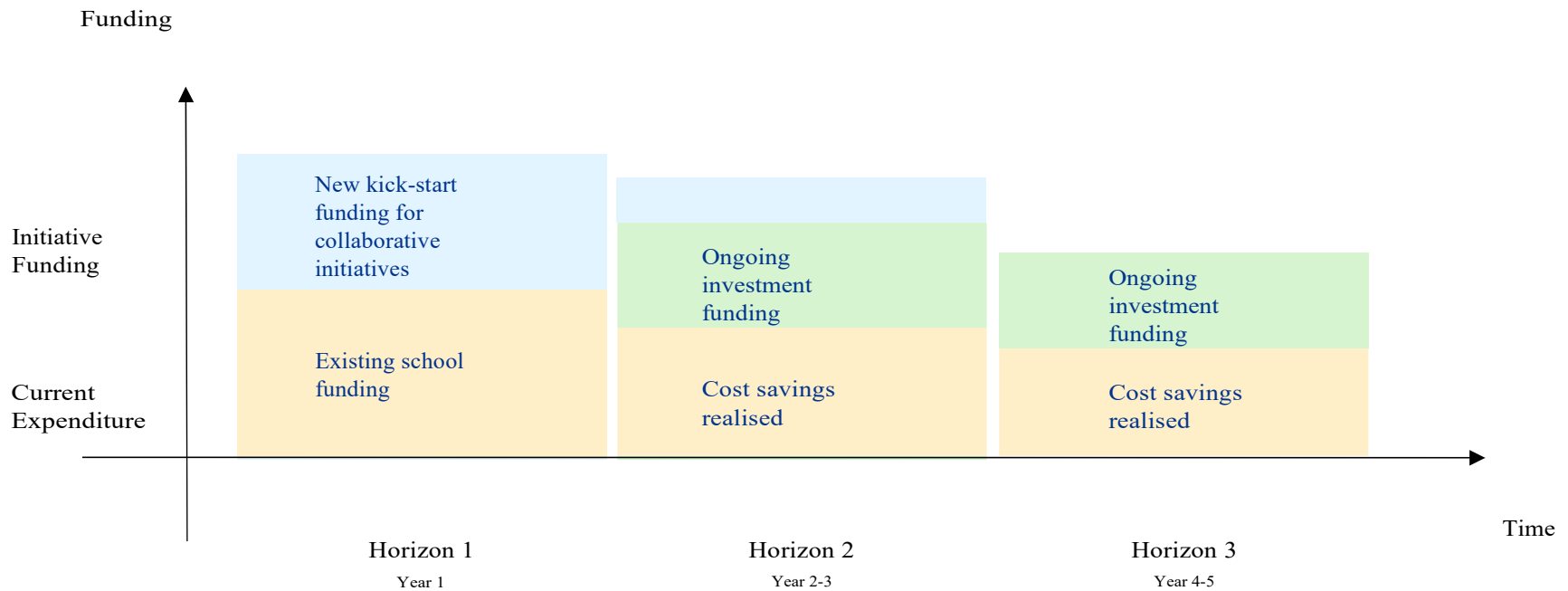
Source: Principals Gathering 2019

Project Plenty – Schools and School Board Workshops







The financial ambition of the School Strategy is to achieve a sustainable funding position and provide for a value proposition for students and staff

Illustrative Financial Ambition for Schools Strategy
2020-2025

- Start-up funding sources will be identified in a funding strategy eg: grants and school contributions
- Start-up funding is a separate consideration to achieving current expenditure cost synergies
- Start-up funding profile will decline as ongoing funding sources scale in line with initiative maturity
- Current expenditure decreases as cost synergies are realised
- Start-up funding no longer required
- Ongoing funding reduces as per student/staff costs reduce
- Current expenditure remains unchanged









Together, the schools have identified a set of design principles on which to develop a collective strategy that delivers on the strategic ambition

Principles		
	Vision	The strategy must align with the Uniting Church's vision and give effect to the values and priorities of the Church.
	Ability to leverage resources	We are enabling schools to leverage one another's resources.
	Knowledge sharing	There is a spirit of generosity in sharing knowledge and resources to support schools individually and collectively.
	Flexible and open to change	Our goals are flexible, organic and open to change.
	Reinvestment	We aim to keep financial resources within the Uniting Church ecosystem.
	Resource allocation	School resources are allocated to enable the delivery of services

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strategies are agile

This strategy is a statement of how we intend to address our challenges and grow together

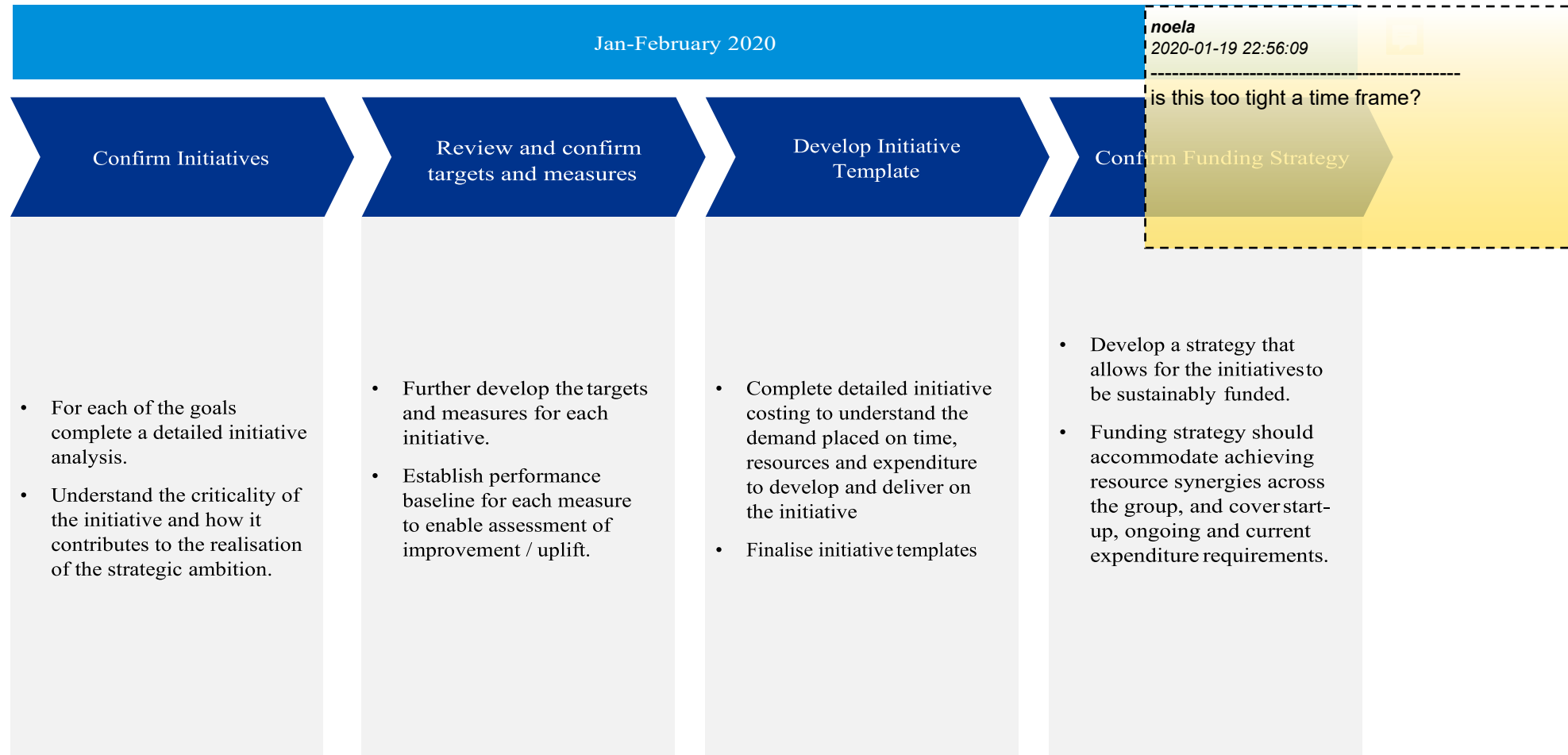
2025 Vision	We have enhanced our long term sustainability by harnessing our collective resources to provide exceptional student and staff experience		Purpose	Working together to achieve resource and process synergies whilst respecting and preserving local expression		
Strategic Goals	1 Leadership Excellence	2 Student Experience	3 Sustainable Growth	4 Strong Partnerships	5 Agile Governance	
	We will develop and enhance leadership across all schools	We will deliver enhanced student outcomes and experiences	We will enhance financial growth & sustainability	We will build strong, mutually beneficial partnerships	We have developed a fit-for purpose governance framework to guide our collective decision-making	
Strategic Initiatives Measures Targets	<p>1.1 Establish leadership programs for staff and students building on the faith foundations of the Uniting Church</p> <p>Measure: No. of graduates from leadership programs</p> <p>Target: 1. All qualified staff across all schools have participated in distributed leadership development program 2. Top 10% of students across all schools have participated in student leadership program</p>		<p>2.1 Develop pathways for credentialed and experience-based learning 2.2. Shared coaching 2.3. Student internships</p> <p>Measure: Student experience satisfaction</p> <p>Target: Student experience satisfaction NPS score of 7</p>	<p>3.1. Optimise facility usage including enterprise diversification. 3.2. Leverage back office business support services of the Synod</p> <p>Measure: Budget surplus, positive ROI, Student & FTE number growth</p> <p>Target: budget surplus of 10%, ROI greater than WACC, Student FTE growth of 5% over 5 years</p>	<p>4.1. Establish a unified UCAQ Schools value proposition 4.2. Establish and grow informal and formal networks at various levels of faculty and support staff</p> <p>Measure: No. of active inter-school communities of practice in operation</p> <p>Target: active practice communities operating within every teaching and non-teaching discipline</p>	<p>5.1. Review and align current governance structures to support decision-making</p> <p>5.2 Develop operating model to deliver strategy eg: “Uniting Education QLD” model</p> <p>Measure: Reduction in the no. of committees and boards Target: Streamlined governance (number of boards and committees TBA)</p>
Values	 Growing stronger together		 Collective generosity		 Supporting our boards & councils	
	 Policy alignment		 Strong & deep relationships		 Trusted Partnerships	

Source: Schools Strategic Options Workshop

Proposed strategic initiatives to be implemented over five years

	Horizon 1 Jan 2020 – Jan 2021 0-12 Months	Horizon 2 Jan 2021 – Jan 2023 1-3 years	Horizon 3 Jan 2023 – Jan 2025 3-5 years	
Goals	We will develop and enhance leadership across all schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish student leadership program Establish inter-school leadership camp Develop & pilot distributed teacher leadership development program Deliver shared coach programs (existing) Share Mental Health and Resilience programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership success plans at every school Grow and extend teacher leadership development program Deliver shared coaching programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review leadership success plans at every school Review teacher leadership development program Deliver shared coach programs
	We will deliver enhanced student outcomes and experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiate joint student exchange / experience programs Seeking alternate funding sources to support the delivery of student outcomes Work with Synod to access UCQ and WMQ for student internships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refine joint student exchange programs Develop and pilot credentialed pathways including RTO accreditation Develop business cases for alternative funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and refine credentialed pathways Implement business cases for alternative funding Review and refine student internships
	We will enhance financial growth & sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fully cost out all Strategic Initiatives and develop funding strategy Investigate digital transformation opportunities Implement data collection, analysis and insights processes Develop business case options for shared functions (eg: a shared grant writer) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out shared functions/middle office processes Implement selected business cases Initiate facility optimisation Explore shared branding and marketing support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement facility optimisation
	We will build strong, mutually beneficial partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Synod to develop values framework based on the faith tenets of the Church Develop an employee directory Develop inter-school moderation and teacher exchanges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot development of inter-school communities of practice Continue to build informal networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grow inter-school communities of practice Continue to build informal networks
	We have developed a fit-for purpose governance framework to guide our collective decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review existing governance structures, roles and accountabilities Develop operating model/business case for “Uniting Education QLD” model Leverage compliance & regulatory expertise in Synod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement an agile governance structure Leverage compliance & reg expertise in Synod 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous improvement of governance roles and accountabilities Leverage compliance & reg expertise in Synod

To proceed to the execution of the Schools Strategy the following immediate next steps are required



Appendix

Example for Strategic Goal 1: We will develop and enhance leadership across all schools

1.1 Establish leadership programs for staff and students

Rationale

- Schools identified that there is an opportunity to provide leadership pathways for staff and students.
- Within the UCAQ there are existing resources to leverage and a collective willingness to provide staff and students the opportunity to develop as part of their experience with their respective school.

Key benefits sought

- Leveraging the existing resources within in schools to enhance collective value proposition
- Developing student attributes to prepare them to thrive in uncertain situations
- Providing organic leadership succession within existing faculty
- Increasing organisational capacity
- Reducing severity of risk associated with staff retention
- Inculcating values framework consistent with school and church ethos




Key delivery risks

- Lack of defined funding strategy
- Time prioritisation for continuity of training for staff and students
- Non-alignment scope, content and delivery purpose

Initiative Development and Delivery Costs

- Cost to develop and deliver initiative: \$X over X period
- <Insert reference to initiative cost structure>

Key capabilities required

Funding Strategy 	Curriculum 	Resource Allocation 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost per participant \$XXXX • Contribution from school \$XXXX • Year 1 Contribution from Synod \$XXXX • Subsequent year funding model – user pays 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defined progression pathway • Delivery platforms • Core or non-core education • Credentialing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal delivery • Outsourced delivery • Collaborative resource sharing

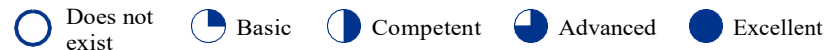
Targets

- All schools participation
- Resource efficiency
- Grow student leadership pathways
- Improve staff succession pathways

Measures

- Year 1 pilot audience of X students and X Staff
- % staff and student completion
- NPS > XXX
- School board and council endorsement for subsequent phase implementation

Current capability maturity



References and resources used to inform content

Resources

- Principal feedback.
- Independent School Council of Australia, The Changing Face of Australian Schooling 2018, ISCA, accessed 7 October 2019, <<https://isca.edu.au/>>.
- Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018, Schools, Australia, Cat. no. 4221.0, Australian Bureau of Statistics, Canberra.
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- PeopleBench, 2018-2019 State of the Sector Report, www.peoplebench.com.au.

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- Independent School Council of Australia, “Trends in Key Economic Parameters 2019” accessed 7 October 2019, <<https://isca.edu.au/>>.



Report from

Synod Chaplaincy Commission

pastoral
living faith in every space
apostolic
guest
relational
incarnational
chaplaincy
community
transformative

Report

The Chaplaincy Commission is reimagining its future and how it might best serve the church through a strategy development process to produce a strategic plan that aligns with Project Plenty and gives direction and purpose as an integral ministry within the Queensland Synod.

Chaplaincy remains a significant expression of the mission and ministry of the whole church as it engages with people and communities across Queensland. The community-centric nature of the ministry of chaplaincy continues to have much to offer to the church's exploration of future directions and expressions of Christian community.

The Chaplaincy Commission seeks to fulfil its mandate and responsibility for the oversight and development of chaplaincy within the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church.

Focus since the last Synod

- Engaged across the Synod promoting the positive and necessary role of chaplaincy in informing the ministry of the whole church, in particular within the Project Plenty conversation and Transforming Communities, the Strategic Presence conversation and Missional Presence: Health and Vitality, and the Business Development Unit and Trauma Informed Ministry.
- Built on the collaboration between the Chaplaincy Commission, UnitingCare and Wesley Mission Queensland and relationships with presbytery leadership strengthening our life together.
- Provided oversight and management of chaplaincy placements and processes.
- Explored new expressions of chaplaincy.
- Continued exploration around potential new income streams
- Reimagined the future of the Chaplaincy Commission through a strategy development process to produce a strategic plan that aligns with Project Plenty and gives direction and purpose as an integral ministry within the Queensland Synod.
- Responded to the COVID-19 pandemic in supporting and reimagining new ways of providing chaplaincy, resourcing and professional development opportunities

Highlights

- In partnership with UnitingCare, initiated development of entry-level pastoral and spiritual care training opportunities to build volunteer base and capacity fostering a renewed discipleship culture (Volunteers C.A.R.E).

- Contributed to the revision of the Framework for Integration of Spiritual Care in Queensland Health Facilities
- Created resources for Chaplaincy Sunday.
- Organised online Chaplaincy Affirmation Forums.
- We have amazing chaplains who are continuing to respond to the changing expectations and responsibilities of their ministry contexts.
- The increasing complexity of different contexts of chaplaincy and rising community expectations and the impact on training, resourcing, and professional development needs.
- The importance of a One Church approach and the strength and wisdom of diverse voices contributing to the health and vitality of the whole church.

Project Plenty

Provided input into the Project Plenty consultation process and received feedback from consultations held.

Challenges/risks as we progress

Reimagining of the future of the Chaplaincy Commission intentionally to align with Project Plenty.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name Rev Brian Hoole
Position Chair, Synod Chaplaincy Commission
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Phone 0435 242 000



Report from

Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group



This report has been updated as at 16 October 2020

Report

The Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group (MCCRG) has gone through some major changes in membership and leadership. As a result, one key focus of the MCCRG is to expand its membership and to maintain stable and sustainable leadership. It is currently in a stabilising stage and is actively looking for members who are passionate and able to contribute to the vision of 'being a multicultural church'.

The MCCRG is focusing more on connecting with presbyteries, congregations and faith communities, to intentionally build relationships and bridges. Particularly with those who are not connected with Next Gen Arise (NGA) or MCCRG initiatives or are still navigating through the impact of the Assembly resolutions on Same Gender Marriage and of the COVID-19 pandemic.

About our Reference Group

Cultural diversity is a rapidly growing feature of the church's life and the Australian community in which we witness and serve.

The MCCRG is a governing body of the Queensland Synod that seeks to encourage, inform and guide congregations, presbyteries and Synod agencies as they incorporate into their life and mission. The Uniting Church in Australia's commitment to 'being a multicultural church' (The 4th Assembly, the 11th Assembly and the 13th Assembly, 1989–2012).

Focus since the last Synod

The three key focuses of the MCCRG are:

- 1. Enabling**
 - Help develop stronger links between culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) faith communities, congregations and the Uniting Church (primarily through presbyteries and the MCCRG), to enhance the mission of the church.
 - Foster awareness of biblical, theological and ministry resources from different cultural perspectives, and encourage greater reflection of cultural diversity in congregational worship and study.
- 2. Equipping**
 - Build on the established Synod-wide next generation CALD leaders' network and development program—Next Gen Arise (NGA).
- 3. Connecting**
 - Create cross-cultural experiences of worship and fellowship, which among other things, foster and showcase the leadership and gifts of young people and women in our CALD communities.
 - Establish effective platforms of communication to connect people across cultural groups and encourage wider Uniting Church cross-cultural engagement.

Highlights:

The key focus of the MCCRГ included:

1. Focus group 1

Help develop stronger links between CALD faith communities/congregations and the Uniting Church to enhance the mission of the church.

- The main action plan is:
 - Establishing data on CALD churches and leaders in Queensland including national conferences (combine effort with focus group 3 as they started working on such data for effective communication and promotion of events).
 - Gathering Uniting Church in Australia worship and sacrament related resources in languages other than English e.g. baptism, holy communion, weddings, funerals, *Basis of Union*, Uniting Church in Australia constitutions, regulations and other Uniting Church comments on current issues.
 - Building an online based community amongst CALD leaders by possibly building up a mobile app for easier communication.
- Tentative solutions being explored include:
 - Offer a MCCRГ delegate to participate in each presbytery's consultation team for CALD congregations.
 - Explore the possibility of developing a mobile phone-based application for CALD leaders and congregations which can create an easier platform for people to share their thoughts, concerns and prayers.

2. Focus group 2

Build on the established Synod-wide next generation CALD leadership network and development program—Next Gen Arise (NGA).

- Va Tuilovoni was formally employed as the Project Worker of NGA (0.2 FTE) in June 2019. Va worked closely with and under the supervision of Simon Gomersall, Lecturer in Historical and Contemporary Mission and Director of Activate (Gap Year Program) at Trinity College Queensland. Funding for the position ceased from 30 June 2020 as budget became unavailable. Va and the core team of NGA are committed to continuing the ministry of NGA on a voluntary basis.
- NGA mission: The mission is to develop disciple makers who can inspire a movement of young people from all nations to passionately follow Jesus, selflessly build each other up, faithfully take places of leadership in the church and beyond, and fearlessly change the world.
- NGA vision: NGA exists to see the next generation from all nations empowered to be disciple makers.
- Other information: The NGA team is seeking ways to strengthen the connection with local congregations and reflect the perspectives and voices of their younger leaders in the life of the NGA.
- Many events and worship gatherings were shifted to online platforms during COVID-19.
- MCCRГ delegates will continue to meet with Va and Simon for networking and strategic planning purposes. The MCCRГ hope for the NGA space to continue as somewhere

young people can build networks with each other; are resourced for leadership in their own communities; encouraged to find their passion; test and practice their leadership skills; and discover their God-given callings.

3. Focus group 3

Create cross-cultural experiences of worship and fellowship, which among other things, foster and showcase the leadership and gifts of young people and women in our CALD communities. Establish effective platforms of communication to connect people across cultural groups and encourage wider Uniting Church cross-cultural engagement.

- The MCCRГ organised a Multicultural Pentecost Service in June 2019 and an online service in May 2020. The services included worship in different languages, fellowship and feasting (the last two aspects were absent in May 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions).
- The MCCRГ connected with various bodies on National Assembly levels including national conferences and the Assembly Resourcing Unit when they came to Queensland for visits.
- The MCCRГ participated at local multicultural community events e.g. the annual Luminous Lantern Parade and Mosaic Festival.
- The MCCRГ engaged with The Ethnic Communities Council of Queensland (ECCQ) in planning how church communities can participate and benefit from their My Health for Life Program.
- The MCCRГ responded to the request from the Synod to participate in the Queensland Government's Multicultural Month Initiative by generating inspirational stories featuring eight members in the Queensland Synod who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The stories explored what it means to be one Church and how multicultural church enriches our faith, our worship and our witness in Queensland.
- The MCCRГ supported the Queensland Synod in responding to the COVID-19 restrictions on physical gatherings by producing an online MCCRГ Pentecost Sunday Service. Segments of the liturgy in multiple languages were produced by various Uniting Church CALD community groups for the wider church community to use in their Pentecost Service on 31 May 2020.
- The MCCRГ Facebook page was maintained as a platform of communication to connect people across cultural groups and to encourage wider cross-cultural engagement in the Uniting Church. The number of followers and editors continue to increase and the MCCRГ is happy to continue to promote MCCRГ and Synod related news and multicultural events on this platform.

Please see the [attached](#) presentation for further supporting information and highlights.

Project Plenty

MCCRГ members participated in the multicultural Project Plenty consultation in 2019 which facilitated wider engagement with existing and emerging leaders from CALD communities. Other participants included leaders from Pacific Islander, Zimbabwean, Ibero-Latino, Taiwanese and South Sudanese communities.

MCCRG members later heard the Project Plenty: What We Heard report during the regular bi-monthly meeting in April 2020 and contributed feedback to the Project Plenty team. MCCRG members and the wider CALD community network were also invited to a virtual MCCRG Project Plenty workshop, co-hosted by the MCCRG and the Project Plenty Team on 10 July 2020. The workshop included a presentation of the draft *Shared life. Flourishing Communities.* report, and feedback from MCCRG members and CALD church community leaders.

Challenges/risks as we progress

The MCCRG has gone through some major changes in membership and leadership. A key focus is to expand its membership and to maintain stable and sustainable leadership. The MCCRG is in a stabilising stage and is actively looking for members who are passionate and able to contribute to the vision of being a multicultural church.

Being time poor (as most of the MCCRG members are in full-time placements) and having only seven elected members on the team has been a challenge that has limited the service and contribution to the Synod priority direction of being a multicultural church. The approach for the MCCRG in 2020 was to “do less but do it well” and to put the best effort in supporting the Queensland Synod in responding to the challenges and impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

For consideration

The MCCRG would like to invite the various presbyteries to nominate at least one multicultural ministry representative from the presbytery to join the network.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name	Rev Louisa Yu
Position	Chairperson – Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group
Email	lyu@wmq.org.au
Phone	0417 740 972



Report from

Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group



Report

The Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group (MCCRG) has gone through some major changes in membership and leadership. As a result, one key focus of the MCCRG is to expand its membership and to maintain stable and sustainable leadership. It is currently in a stabilising stage and is actively looking for members who are passionate and able to contribute to the vision of 'being a multicultural church'.

The MCCRG is focusing more on connecting with presbyteries, congregations and faith communities, to intentionally build relationships and bridges, especially with those which are not connected with Next Gen Arise (NGA) or MCCRG initiatives, or, are still navigating through the impact of the Assembly resolutions on Same Gender Marriage and of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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The MCCRG is a governing body of the Queensland Synod which seeks to encourage, inform and guide congregations, presbyteries and Synod agencies, as they incorporate into their life and mission The Uniting Church in Australia's commitment to 'being a multicultural church' (The 4th Assembly, the 11th Assembly and the 13th Assembly, 1989-2012).

Focus since the last Synod

The three key focuses of the MCCRG are:

1. **UCA Enabling**
 - Help develop stronger links between culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) faith communities / congregations and the Uniting Church (primarily through presbyteries and the MCCRG), to enhance the mission of the church.
 - Foster awareness of biblical, theological and ministry resources from different cultural perspectives, and encourage greater reflection of cultural diversity in congregational worship and study.
2. **UCA Equipping**
 - Build on the established Synod-wide next generation CALD leaders' network and development program – Next Gen Arise (NGA).
3. **UCA Connecting**
 - Create cross-cultural experiences of worship and fellowship which, among other things, foster and showcase the leadership and gifts of young people and women in our CALD communities
 - Establish effective platforms of communication to connect people across cultural groups and encourage wider Uniting Church cross-cultural engagement.

Highlights:

The key focus of the MCCRГ included:

1. Focus Group 1

Help develop stronger links between CALD faith communities / congregations and the Uniting Church to enhance the mission of the church.

- The main action plan is:
 - Establishing data of CALD group church/leaders in QLD, including national conferences (combine effort with Focus Group 3 as they started working on such data for effective communications and promotion of events)
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- MCCRГ delegates will continue to meet with Va and Simon for networking and strategic planning purposes. The MCCRГ hope for the NGA space to continue to be somewhere young people build networks with each other; are resourced for leadership in their own

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MCCRG members later heard the *Project Plenty What We Heard* report in our regular bi-monthly meeting in April 2020 and contributed our feedback to the Project Plenty team. MCCRG members and the wider CALD community network were also invited to a virtual MCCRG Project Plenty Workshop co-hosted by MCCRG and Project Plenty Team on 10 July 2020. The workshop included a presentation of the draft report '*Shared life. Flourishing Community*' and listening to feedback from MCCRG members and CALD church community leaders.

Challenges/risks as we progress

The MCCRG has gone through some major changes in membership and leadership and a key focus is to expand its membership and to maintain stable and sustainable leadership. The MCCRG is in a stabilising stage and is actively looking for members who are passionate and able to contribute to the vision of being a multicultural church.

Being time poor (as most of the MCCRG members are in full-time placements) and having only 7 elected members on the team has been a challenge and limits our service and contribution to the Synod Priority Directions of being a Multicultural Church. The approach for the MCCRG in 2020 was to “do less but do it well” and to put our best effort in supporting the Queensland Synod in responding to the challenges and impact due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For consideration

The MCCRG would like to invite the various presbyteries to nominate at least one multicultural ministry representative from your Presbytery to join our network.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

Name	Rev Louisa Yu
Position	Chairperson – Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group
Email	lyu@wmq.org.au
Phone	0417 740 972



Report from

Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee

Report

The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee (SERC) has undergone a process of regeneration with some new members and discovered some new opportunities for ecumenical engagement while continuing to nurture existing relationships through Queensland Churches Together and other groups.

About our Committee

The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee (SERC) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee in fulfilling its commitment to encourage a culture of ecumenism throughout the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church. It consists of the Moderator and up to ten (10) members appointed by the Synod Standing Committee.

Some tasks are essentially functional, for example processing nominations to other groups including Queensland Churches Together and the Ecumenical Tertiary Chaplaincy Committee and maintaining links with the Assembly and other Synods.

It also has a wider brief to act as a catalyst for the Biblical, theological and practical consideration of ecumenical matters within Synod, its Presbyteries and Congregations.

Focus since the last Synod

Functional activities

The committee has maintained an active interest in our relationships with other churches through Queensland Churches Together, and the involvement of the Moderator in the Heads of Churches Group and Religious Instruction network.

The Committee also interacts with the Synod Interfaith Relations Committee in an annual get together and through our joint involvement with similar committees associated with the Catholic and Anglican Archdioceses.

Ongoing activities

The committee continues to participate in the annual Ecumenical Dinner arranged in cooperation with the Anglican and Roman Catholic Ecumenical Committees and the annual Bishop Michael Putney Memorial Lecture.

Activities as Catalyst

- Working towards a website offering resources and helpful information
- Workshop with presbytery ministers and other key leaders held in October last year
- Conversation with the principal of Trinity College Queensland

Highlights:

Achievements:

- Workshop with key leaders, October 2019.
- Initiated a positive conversation with Trinity College Queensland through its principal, Paul Jones around a paper “Forming the Ecumenical Mind: Being Church in a Polarised World” (Bp Michael Putney Memorial Lecture delivered by Rev Dr Ray Williamson in 2015)
- Regeneration of the committee through addition of new members
- Transition to a new committee secretary
- Participation in online conversations hosted by the Assembly to re-establish links with Ecumenical Relationships Committees in other Synods.

Learnings:

- Religious Education is an important arena for ecumenical co-operation.
- A statewide conversation of church leaders (Heads of Churches) representing Queensland’s regional diversity as well as a wide diversity in theological thinking has resumed this year.
- Reception of ministers from other denominations is an important ecumenical interface.
- The appointment of a new General Secretary for Queensland Churches Together represents a strategic opportunity for renewal.
- The Assembly’s Seeking Common Ground Circle provides information relevant to ecumenical activism but is less successful in overseeing the bilateral and multilateral dialogues which challenge existing assumptions, provoke thoughtfulness, and offer accountability within the universal church.

Project Plenty

Members have participated through the Project Plenty engagement. The committee per se has not engaged but offers relationships with other denominations as a means of supporting mission action groups, progressing relationships with the First Peoples, and the discipleship priority.

Challenges/risks as we progress

1. To retain and renew the *Basis of Union* vision to be a Uniting Church at mission in a polarised world.
2. To rediscover the missional basis of the ecumenical vision in a church as a foundation for continuing to wrestle with a diversity of doctrinal understandings which impede that mission.
3. To renew the traditional ecumenical structures and develop new expressions of ecumenical engagement.

For consideration

The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee recognises the valuable contribution of Rev David Baker as our Chairperson during his term as Moderator. We affirm the decision of Queensland Churches Together to appoint David as its General Secretary commencing January 2020 and look forward to a renewed association with him in that new role.

Rev. Dr Clive Ayre concludes his term of service to the Ecumenical Relationships Committee at the end of this year. Clive has been steadfast in his commitment to the ecumenical vision and a very loyal contributor to the Committee. The achievements of the committee are in no small way attributable to his insightfulness and diligence.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee



Iftar Dinner 2019

Report

Summary

The committee is functioning well, appreciative of the work of Rev. Heather Griffin and Rev. Garth Read. We will keep up with promoting interfaith understanding, as we believe it broadens our horizons, promotes respect and tolerance and challenges us to be better followers of Christ!

Members of the Committee attend different interfaith forums and events which enables the church to be visible in these spaces.

The Committee has valued the wisdom and expertise of Rev Garth Read, Rev Bryan Gilmour and Mrs Lesley Bryant who have retired from the Committee.

About our Committee

The Purpose of the Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee (SIRC), as defined in its Charter, is that it:

“assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee in fulfilling its commitment to encourage throughout the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church an understanding of other religious faiths and to promote relationships with members of other religious faiths.”

The Committee meets every second month and we have members from the southern Presbyteries, but none, as yet, from the north.

At time of writing (6 August 2020), members of the Committee are:

Chairperson: David Baker, Moderator - Ex Officio (transitioning to Andrew Gunton)

Secretary: Heather Griffin (transitioning to Lyn Burden)

Other members:

John Agnew

Heather Allison

Lyn Burden

Philipa Core

Levon Kardashian

Several other members resigned during the year for either health reasons or other commitments. A special mention needs to be made of the long-term commitment of Rev Garth Read, both to this Committee and for many years before that to interfaith work in general. Garth was well ahead of his time, seeing the need for building positive relationships with people of other faiths, well before the events of 9/11 propelled many of us to engage in this sphere.

Rev Bryan Gilmour was the initial driving force behind the formation of the Multifaitth Advisory and Action Group on the Gold Coast and joined SIRC in that capacity.

Rev Heather Griffin has made a significant contribution as Secretary to the Committee, particularly in maintaining connections with many of the faith communities with which the Synod engages.

Focus since the last Synod

Since the 34th Synod, SIRC made the following recommendations to the Synod Standing Committee re appointments:

Queensland Faith Communities Council Qld Synod representatives:

Heather Griffin (also nominated for the Executive), Heather Allison, Fa Matangi

Queensland Forum for Jews, Christians and Muslims:

Sue Zaphir

SIRC's relationship with the Assembly of the UCA is through the Seeking Common Ground Circle, with Heather Griffin as a Panel member and other SIRC members being members joining the Circle.

The Committee has understood it is in a time of transition. We have therefore seen it as very important that longer term and newer members spend time considering and reviewing SIRC's purpose and responsibilities as outlined in its Charter.

On 2 June 2019, during Ramadan, the Synod partnered with the Islamic Council of Queensland (ICQ) to host a "Friends in Faith Iftar Dinner" at the Uniting Church Centre. Equal representation from those of Islamic faith and members of the Uniting Church ensured lively conversations and deepening friendships. Part of the purpose of these gatherings has been to inspire other congregations to host dinners also, this is achieving success gradually. During Ramadan in 2019 two additional Iftar dinners were held in locations other than the Synod office, one at Grace College (UQ) and the other at Wesley House sponsored by Wesley Mission Queensland. The opportunity to share stories over the sharing of food is an excellent way to break down barriers and hear about other people's life experiences and beliefs. Unfortunately, in 2020 these dinners had to be cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some member of the committee also attended the Queensland Police Multifaith Dinner.

An important connection for SIRC occurs as members engage with the Queensland Faith Communities Council, which was established in 2017, with the UCA as one of the fifteen founding faith communities. The establishment of the Council recognizes the diversity of religious and faith beliefs and traditions in the state of Queensland and it seeks to advance interfaith understanding and collaboration. It does this through gathering people, usually over a meal, to provide opportunities for participants to converse together and so develop respect for the diversities and shared values across the different faiths. As well as meetings and dinners, one of the key activities of QFCC is developing a faith food guide to assist communities hosting inter faith dinners.

Networking with like-minded organizations and supporting their activities are very important. At meetings, in addition to reports concerning the above organizations, SIRC receives verbal reports from members who are involved in:

Multi Faiths Religious Instruction Peak Body Network
North Brisbane Interfaith Group
Multifaith Advisory and Action group (Gold Coast)
Toowoomba Interfaith Group
Believing Women for a Culture of Peace
Together for Humanity

Members have promoted and attended multi-faith prayer meetings for Bushfire victims, Peace Conferences in Toowoomba, Together for Humanity Workshop, On G-D many voices concert, in addition to working with certain people of different faith backgrounds in seeking refugee status.

The Moderator, Rev David Baker, has been very active in the interfaith space throughout his term. On 30 July 2020, the Moderator, in conjunction with heads of other Churches and with the President of the Islamic Council of Queensland, Habib Jamal, made a *Joint statement by religious leaders regarding Kangaroo Point asylum seekers*, calling on the Australian Government to *ensure that its contractors give due regard to the human rights and basic needs of the men at Kangaroo Point*.

Rev Baker was instrumental in establishing a Religious Instruction Peak Body liaising with the State Government to bring a united faith communities' Religious Instruction perspective in Schools.

The Moderator has also joined with the Qld Human Rights Commission and representatives of community organizations calling for a review of vilification and hate speech laws in Qld.

As a Committee we are very grateful for the pro-active leadership of the Moderator during his term as Chair of the Committee.

Highlights:

At SIRC meetings there has been much interest in *encouraging throughout the Synod an understanding of other faiths and promoting relationships with people of other faiths*.

There has been much discussion about visiting Presbyteries to share the material presented at a lunchtime session at the last Synod. As Presbyteries have been meeting online it has not been possible to pursue this plan, but the Committee plans to find opportunities in the future.

The Committee has also discussed the possibility of working with Trinity Theological College to develop a series of workshops which would engage students with the beliefs, rituals and practices of other faiths. The Committee believes that assisting ministers early in their ministry to understand how to make inter faith connections within their communities, will assist congregations in engaging with people of other faiths.

The promotion by SIRC of a course offered via Zoom by Southside Uniting Church on the history of religions in Brisbane drew two extra participants. It is hoped that these may become a 'prototype' to offer to other groups.

Levan Kardashian has been working on updating the SIRC website. The resource presented at the 34th Synod is available for congregations to use locally.

Rev Heather Allison is working with the Education Subcommittee of the Qld Faith Communities Council in creating resources to guide health care and aged care workers to provide appropriate and helpful care for people of different faiths, especially at the end of life.

In general, it would appear that the focus for many congregations and agencies is, particularly in this extraordinary time, elsewhere.

Project Plenty

SIRC, through the work it undertakes, aligns with Mission Priority 2 (p16 Project Plenty | Shared life. Flourishing communities) and we look forward to be a partner in meeting existing and emerging needs and building upon the strengths of the complex and multifaith communities and world in which we live.

Challenges/risks as we progress

Our main challenge is finding the opportunities for people in the life of our church to see the value in quality inter-faith engagement. As a Synod we need to keep addressing the challenges of the world becoming more religious, not less. Quality inter-faith relations build respect and understanding in our communities. Being engaged with people of other faiths broadens our perspective on the life of the world and encourages us to be more deeply Christian.

For consideration

The SIRC wishes the Synod to record an appreciation of Rev Garth Read for his contribution to interfaith work, which has included making the Synod aware of the issues involved in working with and understanding people of other faiths. He has been a member of SIRC since its formation (2008), and previously was a member of the Synod Ecumenical Committee, helping that Committee to see the difference between ecumenical and interfaith.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report



Contact for report questions

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Report from

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery



Report

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery says its purpose is *'creating healthy Christian communities, living God's mission'*. God has begun work in Bremer Brisbane in reorganising and regenerating congregations and this will be a focus in coming years. In Christ the best is yet to come!

About our Presbytery

The Presbytery of Bremer Brisbane is one of seven Presbyteries within the Synod of Queensland. The Basis of Union states the function of a Presbytery is to *'perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life of the church in the area for which it is responsible...in particular oversight of the congregations in its bounds'*. Bremer Brisbane Presbytery says its purpose is *'building healthy Christian communities, living God's mission'*.

The Presbytery includes the West Moreton District of South East Queensland, the regional city of Ipswich and the western suburbs of Brisbane. It is bounded by the Great Dividing Range in the west, the Brisbane to Sydney railway line in the East and the Queensland New South Wales border to the South. The Presbytery also includes the Brisbane, Bremer, Lockyer, and Teviot Valleys.

The Presbytery is the home of many important public and private facilities within the state. Within Bremer Brisbane we have Wesley, Ipswich and St Andrews Ipswich hospitals, the Police academy at Darra, the Amberley Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) base, as well we have seven correctional facilities in Bremer, additionally there are 5 residential colleges in the University district. At just over 8,000km² Bremer Brisbane is only 5% of Queensland's area but contains just over 500,000 people which is just over 10% of Queensland's population. The growth areas of Ripley, Springfield Lakes and Bellbird Park are maintaining a population growth of 10% annually.

The average age of Uniting Church Congregations in the area is approximately 62 years, however the median age of the general population is approximately 34 years, and there are only 12.4% of the population aged 65 and over. The government projection is the population in Bremer will double in the next 30 years primarily in the areas around Ipswich.

Bremer Brisbane comprises 31 congregations and 3 faith communities, 23 are suburban congregations/faith communities, and 11 rural congregations/faith communities.

The Presbytery has the diversity of inner city, suburban, regional city of Ipswich, new developing areas such as Ripley and areas west of Ipswich, and rural communities.

In 2017, the Presbytery discerned to focus on four mission priorities: Discipleship (Youth and Children and Evangelism), Community Engagement (with other UCA agencies, engaging with first peoples and community groups). Leadership (encouraging networks, resources and finances for growing leaders) and Sustainability (Identifying Church models and mission and strategic locations).

While each of these areas have been engaged with, it would be appropriate to say that more energy has been put into Discipleship, Leadership and Sustainability; Discipleship largely due to the work of the Discipleship facilitator, Leadership with the organising of courses and events, and Sustainability due to the declining nature of a number of congregations.

Perhaps the greatest work of the Presbytery in the next 5 years will be about sustainability and strategic locations. In 2019 a paper was adopted that forms a basis for reorganising the presbytery. You can find that paper here: <https://bremerbrisbane.org.au/wp-content/uploads/8-Sustainability-and-Strategic-Locations.pdf> We would appreciate the broader church's prayers for this. At the time of writing this report, the Holy Spirit has already begun to reorganise and regenerate a number of congregations...so stay tuned, because in Christ the best is yet to come!

Project Plenty

The work of project plenty across the Queensland Synod is important to its life and future. During 2019, there was a sense of expectation as a Presbytery engagement session took place. Initial input and feedback was good. However, due to Covid-19, 2020 has shown almost no ministry agents or congregations across the Presbytery genuinely engaging with the Project Plenty process. It is concerning that as we head into our Synod meeting that congregations have not had the opportunity, time and energy to engage with the second half of the process. More time is needed to understand the implications and strategies being suggested.

Challenges/risks as we progress

This SWOT analysis was presented to Synod Standing Committee in August.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of growing congregations willing to resource the Presbytery. • Multicultural/CALD Ministry. • A growing Young Adult presence. • Community Programs. • Since Covid-19, a renewed collegiality and sharing of resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UC Ministry Agents trained in Church Planting/Regeneration. • Unwillingness/inability to make decisions about declining and dying congregations. • Consultations that do not lead strongly toward changed outcomes. • Allowing Supply Ministry to last too long. • 'Silo' ministry. • No genuine Strategic Plan

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expanding Communities (eg, Ripley). • Prison Ministry. • Multicultural-Intercultural. • Sustainability and Strategic Locations work. • Entrepreneurial enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwillingness of congregations to share assets for future ministry. • Declining finances. • A misunderstanding of the responsibilities of the councils of the church. • Assembly making further movement on SGM. • A culture of non-performance driven review of Ministry Agents.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Presbytery of Carpentaria



Report

The Presbytery of Carpentaria is committed to mission and growing disciples in every context and every community within its bounds. We continue to seek God's plan for our new Presbytery and build relationships between ministry agents, lay persons and the communities in which we are present.

About our Presbytery

On 1 March 2020, the Presbytery of Carpentaria came into being. Members of the Presbyteries of Calvary and North Queensland joined in a time of worship, commitment and prayer. It was a great time of celebration and the beginning of a new journey together.

With membership from all of the indigenous communities of the Calvary congregations, except the congregation of Zillmere who chose to transfer to Moreton Rivers Presbytery with which it had been developing a relationship over some time, and those from North Queensland, the presbytery of Carpentaria has begun a bold new adventure, with God leading us forward together.

Our Presbytery now extends from Thursday Island in the north, west to the Northern Territory border, south to Bowen on the coast, and further south to the western communities such as Boulia serviced by the McKay Patrol based in Cloncurry.

Focus since the last Synod

Throughout the last 18 months there has been a particular focus on the following areas:

Education and lay training have been a major focus as the ministry of our congregations grows. This includes opportunity for formal training in ministry and leadership as well as safe ministry with children, code of ethics and compliance.

Building a firm foundation of relationship and support as discussion began with the leaders of Calvary and North Queensland Presbytery around how we might work more closely together. After months of conversations and sitting together, a decision to move towards a new Presbytery was made.

Commitment to supporting congregations through Covid19 has been a significant focus over the last six months with many being able to offer online worship services. Due to ongoing technical issues, the Presbytery moved to a new meeting platform which has proven to be more easily accessible most of the time!

Technology continues to plague the regional, rural and remote parts of our Presbytery with most communities struggling to hold meetings and worship on a regular basis. Almost all our Indigenous communities on the Cape have found this impossible and have often had no service when they have needed it the most. Some have been able to gather outside in small groups under trees, but all normal gatherings have been cancelled making community life challenging to say the least.

Highlights:

After many years without ministry in placement, there is now a pastor in Aurukun. Pastor Leonard Paul began in April and has been a welcomed member of community life. Later this year a new manse will be ready for occupancy which brings to fruition a plan years in the making.

The times we have been able to gather at Presbytery in February and retreat in August have strengthened our connection to each other. This has fostered commitment to continue to be connected during the long months when no connection is possible. It was great to be able to share with our Cape brothers and sisters who could travel to Cairns.

These last few months have reminded us that our strength is in God who provides. Doors have been opened into local community life that were not opened before and in some communities, it was the Uniting Church that was able to help those in need when many other organisations left.

Project Plenty

We have sought to connect with the Project Plenty as best as we were able but have found this year to be very difficult. Engagement was high before Covid19 but with the focus of people being on the local setting and taking care of the people, there has been little connection this year.

Challenges/risks as we progress

The challenges for the whole of the North remain constant. Distance is a key factor in how people can connect with others, receive care and support, and be appropriately resourced for the challenges of ministry in the local community.

The reliance on digital technology has become prevalent but most communities have not received any upgrades to their systems. This means that internet is unreliable and patchy and often means that people cannot connect with others or participate in meetings or information sessions.

This has made many feel more disconnected than ever before and has put enormous strain on those in ministry. It must be said that this is also not the way indigenous people meet. The practice of being about to sit with one another and decide together has been severely hampered and has put tremendous strain on the communities that were in lock down for many months.

Having said that, it needs to be said that those in ministry and their local leaders have made an incredible effort to work around these challenges to support, care for and share the gospel with the people.



Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

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Report from

Presbytery of Central Queensland



Longreach – April 2020

Report

This report reflects the collaboration, communication, and care within our Presbytery and has been compiled by a group of voices from across the Presbytery.

The challenge before the Presbytery of Central Queensland, is to see and hear how the Spirit is calling us to use our expensive building assets in a different way and to efficiently deploy our ministerial agents to support the many congregations who are finding it difficult to financially support them.

About our Presbytery

This report includes contributions from churches in the cities, and churches in small rural communities; all have a regional and ecumenical ministry, that range from formal worship and preaching to those who seek a service with its country atmosphere.

We are a portion of God's people living within very diverse situations; from the coast with all its resources and infrastructure to the very remote who must use their finite resources very wisely.

The mental and physical efforts of people, the wise use of buildings, vehicles, equipment, and the varying environment in which we live, requires a certain innovation and opportunism. This does not mean scarcity; it means an abundance of hope and expectation that produces inspiration and innovation.

"As the family of Christ, we acknowledge the wisdom and spiritual undergirding of the Basis of Union that is a standard for the life of the Uniting Church in Australia."¹

"We honour the individual members of the Presbytery, who are called to treat their occupation as their Christian vocation and demonstrating how to live a life worthy of Jesus by introducing others to Him. The Churches within the Presbytery are called to go into the world and preach the gospel, to encourage the faithful and build them up in their faith and mission and lead them in worship."²

"To help members to meet with the presence of the Triune God (worship) and, by that, they grow in faith (witness) to be involved in the church and town community (service)."³

¹ Rick Thomson, Armitage UCA, Mackay

² Laurel Hunt, Capricorn Coast UCA, Yeppoon

³ Heather James, Clermont/Capella UCA

Focus since the last Synod

Following on from previous reports, natural disasters are part of the life in Central Queensland. 2019 was dry and warm with an annual rainfall 20% below average. This led to drought conditions throughout the Presbytery. Bushfires swept through areas of the Capricorn Coast in November 2019, offers of help came in from across the wider church. Then in January many parts of Central Queensland experienced flooding rains and in April a freak hailstorm caused extensive damage. All these conditions and events focus the Presbytery on reaching out to the people affected.

Since the time of Covid-19 lockdown, the Presbytery has been operating with a Supply Presbytery Minister, Rev Suzy Sitton. The work of the JNC and the Presbytery during this time has been fruitful in selecting the incoming Presbytery Minister, Rev Scott Ballment.

CQ Connect had gone live in a small way before Covid-19 hit which accelerated the uptake. Northside Mackay and Rockhampton South led the way initiating streaming services. A Presbytery-wide Alpha series online, assisted many as they took up the challenge of Zoom.

“Others within the Presbytery have concentrated on maintaining connection, particularly with those without digital resources by providing and delivering paper-based resources and phone calls as required.”⁴

“The joy of the 140th anniversary celebrations in Emerald, and continuing Walk to/through Bethlehem, is a significant and broadly-based outreach into the community. The work of Chaplains in Aged Care.”⁵

Some churches have become faith communities, and some have closed which has meant dealing with a lot of property matters. There have been finance issues for treasurers, and compliance issues for church councils and ministry agents; the need to deal with insurance claims, WH&S, Covid-19, financial recording, Safe Ministry with Children and care for the vulnerable have added to the workload. There was also the cancellation of the Presbytery annual youth event, Country Madness, for the year because of Covid-19.

We have been busy *“Promoting a healthy appreciation of theological concepts that engage with the social justice aspects of the Gospel at work in a post-Christian world.”⁶*

“Grappling with Covid-19 directives and restrictions for worship and church activities has taken a lot of time and energy as well as stress trying to “get it right”. The guidance and help provided by the Presbytery has been appreciated.”⁷

⁴ Laurel Hunt, Capricorn Coast UCA, Yeppoon.

⁵ Rev Jim Pearson, Emerald Uniting Church, Emerald

⁶ Rick Thomson, Armitage UCA, Mackay

⁷ Heather James, Clermont/Capella UCA

Remote Mission Ministry - As a mission project funded by the Presbytery, the Remote Mission Ministry has successfully enabled the resourcing and pastoral care of small rural communities within the Presbytery to connect and support each other. Finding an ongoing funding source to continue this mission is a priority.

Highlights:

We have achieved Presbytery meetings and other meetings by electronic means. Keeping communication and pastoral care open using electronic means; a heightened awareness of our vulnerable people in our congregations; identifying and overcoming, where possible the limitations within our buildings. The strengthening of collaborative work between the leadership in the Presbytery and an awakening to new possibilities.

We have learnt how far the church is behind the expectations of the wider community i.e. the expectations of young people, the use of technology, our non-acceptance of change and how stagnant we have become. We have learnt that our buildings are a financial drain not matched by the limited advancement of the Kingdom.

CQ Connect has proved to be invaluable during Covid-19 and demonstrated the value of using technology to reach out to remote communities as well as those close by but isolated. The plan had been to stream services and meetings for youth, young mothers, Bible studies or whatever people needed. People have learned not to fear technology and to use it to make connections, friends meet people from other parts of the Presbytery and indeed other parts of the church.

“From the outset of Covid-19, we maintained worship and connection as strongly as we could during lockdown and the principal learning experiences have been the use of technology.”⁸

“Radio Church has provided a high-quality production to a wide audience – including to elderly and immobile parishioners who may not have access to the internet. This ministry has recovered and reshaped an important outreach of the church from the golden days of radio. Radio station websites allow the ministry to reach an international audience and copyright is covered under the broadcasting licences of the radio stations.”⁹

“Pastoral Relations Committee, Church Council, and prayer meetings have been held via Zoom. Many technological “bugs” have been worked through and presentation improvements made along the way. We have learned that it is possible to make good connections with people using technology. We have learned that even people who are scared of and reluctant to use technology can learn to do so. We learned yet again that in times of crisis people turn to the church and we have to learn how to engage with them long enough to really connect with God.”¹⁰

⁸ Rev Jim Pearson, Emerald UCA, Emerald

⁹ Rev Dr Julia Pitman St Pauls/Armitage UCA, Mackay

¹⁰ Laurel Hunt, Capricorn Coast UCA, Yeppoon

“The Uniting Church offers the middle ground in our communities and this encourages us to persevere, be patient, be faithful and trust that God still has plans for our congregations.”¹¹

Project Plenty

Our presbytery was one of the first to have conversations with the Project Plenty team; we have continued to engage and are waiting in expectation for the outworking of the conversations and possibilities that will assist and inform us as we continue to be the people of God in this vast region.

“Some members have been involved on the Project Plenty advisory committee (through Zoom) to share some of the issues facing our small congregations in a rural setting.”¹²

Challenges/risks as we progress

Central Queensland lives with the challenges of climate, natural disasters, resource fluctuations and diversity of people. There is the need to continually review and adjust to the varying finances, resources of ministry, building maintenance and purpose, and the impact of heritage listing.

We wait on God to guide and lead us along the path that it is before us, which causes us to be very flexible in the use of our resources.

“To put resources into proclaiming Christ in word and deed. It might be schools, church plants, chaplaincy, hospitals, etc but it must be mission and kingdom building.”¹³

“To express the Gospel in the relevant power of the inherent truth which changes lives.”¹⁴

“To discern God’s vision – the new thing God is doing - and how we are to continue to partner with the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Most of our churches consist of older people, with the desire to reach young people and families and to keep our churches meeting in some form. In a world where many non-Christian people regard the church meeting as boring, irrelevant and strange because of the language used, we struggle with the challenge to overcome these views. We are meeting the challenge of carry out our mission on-line and endeavouring to connect with those who don’t know God’s saving grace. To find new ways that challenge and fire up God’s people to carry out the mission Jesus has given us, that reminds us that this is our main purpose and motivation in life.”¹⁵

¹¹ Heather James, Clermont/Capella UCA

¹² Heather James, Clermont/Capella UCA

¹³ Rev Jim Pearson, Emerald UCA, Emerald

¹⁴ Rick Thomson, Armitage UCA, Mackay

¹⁵ Laurel Hunt, Capricorn Coast UCA, Yeppoon

Following are two similar comments received, one from small rural and one from a larger coastal community:

- Compliance issues and “one size fits all” is very challenging and the risk is that it will get all too hard.
- The ever-increasing government regulation presence affects our churches and poses both a challenge and a risk.

We intend to address these challenges/risks

By planning a mighty prayer fest throughout the Presbytery to discern God’s vision for us, so that we can claim our shared purpose and participate in the work designed for each location in the Presbytery.

“To be faithful and determined and do what we can while we can.”¹⁶

To provide training in technology, helping churches set up helpful websites, Facebook and other communication methods. To find ways of complying with Government regulations that do not drain life from the church.

“With God’s help, to proclaim the gospel in all its dimensions.”¹⁷

The challenge before the Presbytery of Central Queensland, is to see and hear how the Spirit is calling us to use our expensive building assets in a different way and to efficiently deploy our ministerial agents, to support the many congregations who are finding it difficult to financially support them.

For consideration

There is a great desire for a transforming church, gathering together to be a time of joy and love, interesting, challenging, relevant and always about Jesus and what he has done for us. We are yet to reach this goal.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed the 35th Synod receive this Report.

Contact for report questions

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¹⁶ Heather James, Clermont/Capella UCA

¹⁷ Rev Jim Pearson, Emerald UCA, Emerald



Report from

Mary Burnett Presbytery



Report

Inspired by the imperative to “be My witnesses” call from Acts 1:8, Mary Burnett presbytery will be making and growing disciples; serving others in mission; and working collaboratively for intentional mission and ministry. We have created a Strategic Missional Alliance Resource Team (SMART) and appointed a part-time (0.5) Mission Engagement Officer. We are moving from a mostly reactive mode to one of being more proactive.

About our Presbytery

Extending from the Glasshouse Mountains, to Eidsvold and Burnett Heads, Mary Burnett Presbytery is a combination of urban centres and small rural communities. Inspired by the imperative to “be My witnesses” call from Acts 1:8...

By 2025 Mary Burnett Presbytery:



...will be **disciples, making and growing disciples;**



...congregations and ministry agents will be equipped and released to declare the transforming presence and power of Jesus and **serve others in mission;**



...congregations will be working **collaboratively** for intentional mission and ministry with schools/communities/agencies and other congregations.

Focus since the last Synod

We have created SMART (our Strategic Missional Alliance Resource Team) and appointed a part-time (0.5) Mission Engagement Officer (MEO) role and filled it (Pastor Phil Smith). This has enabled us to move from a mostly reactive mode to one of being more proactive. The MEO’s key focus will be determined by three areas of potential (in line with our key identified priority areas) - the inland corridor, the Sunshine Coast, and the relationship between congregational life and our agencies.

The arrival of the pandemic has caused a similar level of disruption as would be the case for the whole UC. This was exacerbated by the number of vacancies (with supply and JNC processes underway) current when lockdowns happened. SC and PRC have been very supportive to those asking for help and even taking the initiative where needed. Live-streaming and recorded services have forged closer links and even created new relationships between smaller worshipping communities and larger centres. Whilst some congregations have experienced a real crisis, others have been blessed with growth on a spiritual, numerical and offerings level.

Several congregations have resumed face-to-face worship, some are still doing everything online, and others are doing both.

Highlights:

- Very strong building of collegiality during the crisis. Weekly TEAMS meetings, pastoral support and sharing at a variety of levels.
- Strong engagement of our chaplains with the wider Presbytery life and congregational and lay leaders engaging with chaplains at new levels.
- The “coming of age” of Coral Coast congregation as separate from Bundaberg UC with almost unanimous support.
- Growth in SurfChurch since the last Synod meeting.
- A church plant is taking shape in the Sunshine Coast's new 'Digital CBD'. Approximately 30 people, past UC members and those outside the church, from seven households, are praying and planning with the aim to launch a Faith Community in February.
- Communities and individuals are truly diverse and needed to be dealt with accordingly. There is no “single recipe” to deal with the extra pressure and challenges we face due to Covid-19.
- Nothing replaces real relationship building and true pastoral care and love.

Project Plenty

- 2 special sessions in different geographic areas (very well attended).
- Engagement at Presbytery Meeting.
- General enthusiasm with the “from the roots up” process.

Challenges/risks as we progress

- Struggling with aging, vulnerable congregations/ worshipping communities. Elderly leadership in COVID-19 era poses real difficulties.
- Closure/pain. Decline. Vacancies.
- Survival vs thriving. e.g. the reality when it is a challenge to even pay for Sensitive Matters.
- Inability to attract “disciple-making” ministry agents.
- Old style worship... is not attracting “new people”
- Division over the SGM issues have not gone away.
- We are building real bridges with our agencies.
- Congregations where everyone is retired presents a different challenge (majority in “vulnerable people space”).

- “Re-start” of the Strategy and Mission Committee in SMART.
- We have some Ministry agents disengaged from Presbytery work.
- Our first live-in Presbytery meeting in years was a huge success.
- We have reinvented our consultation process (with the help of North Qld and Bremer Brisbane).
- The last retreat focus was on being and growing disciples.
- There are new initiatives in the “church plant” area.
- Adopting the “Be my witnesses document.”
- Creation of a Mission Engagement Position.
- Serious rethink about “reboot”. Continuing live-streaming services/remote connections?

For consideration

There are some things that worry us more than others:

- The lack of ministry agents with a “disciple-making” ability of ministry.
- The struggle to attract ministry agents willing to leave the greater-Brisbane area.
- The rapidly aging profile of our Presbytery (15% more over 65 than the Synod average).
- The refreshing of the "Inland Corridor" from Nanango to Childers. We are trying to develop a two-person team placement for a patrol-style work in those once prosperous rural towns. This area is also a key focus for our Mission Engagement Officer.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Moreton Rivers Presbytery



Report

Moreton Rivers Presbytery has responded well to the challenges of COVID-19 and many congregations have used the opportunity to develop an online presence as a new way of connecting with people. Congregations in Moreton Rivers Presbytery have many positive stories and opportunities for mission however, congregations and the presbytery do also face challenges for the future related to workloads and sustainability which COVID has intensified.

About our Presbytery

Moreton Rivers Presbytery (MRP) covers the geographic area from just south of the Brisbane River to just north of the Caboolture River, west to Kilcoy and east to Bribie Island. This area includes 40 rural, semi-rural, urban and CBD congregations and faith communities. There are approximately 70 placements within the Presbytery covering a range of ministries placed within congregations, Wesley Mission Queensland, UnitingCare, the Synod office, hospitals, schools, Police, Army and presbytery roles. Our mission statement says that we are called to be a presbytery made up of congregations, agencies, mission, and schools who are: Encouraging and equipping God's people for God's mission.

To guide our decision making, our values are:

1. Strength Based
2. Permission Giving
3. Outward Focused
4. Generously Collaborative

Since the 34th Synod the Presbytery's focus has centred around living out the *2021 Let it Flow* missional priorities: While continuing to work within the regulations and policies of the Uniting Church in Australia, as a Presbytery we are committed to the following mission priorities for the period 2017 to 2021.

1. be a lighthouse for Youth and Children's Ministry
2. congregations and ministry agents will be equipped and active in mission
3. congregations will be working collaboratively for mission and ministry with schools/communities/agencies and other congregations.

Focus since the last Synod

In December 2019 MRP updated its strategic objectives of its 'Let it Flow' Strategic Plan to the end of 2021. The key focuses were about developing health (Ministers, Church Councils, Congregations) and expanding capacity (Developing Leaders with a focus on young people and young adults and strategic mission and property development).

The updated strategic objectives are:

HEALTHY CONGREGATIONS & MISSION

growth flows from healthy people & relationships

Ministers

- Building Resilience
- Healthy Expectations - self, workload, ministry
- Healthy Relationships - conflict & change management
- Presbytery Pastoral Contacts
- Pastoral Support BEFORE burnout

Church Councils

- Training roles and expectations
- Behaviour Covenanting
- Further Training - Chairing meetings, setting agendas, finances

GROWING MISSIONAL CAPACITY & VISION

going beyond where we are now

Ministers

- Local and relevant CEM opportunities
- Networking (ecumenical & internal)

Congregational & Church Council leadership

- Sharing Stories
- 'Curating' Resources
- Leadership Development (e.g. worship leader and lay preacher training)
- Mission and Formation workshops (e.g. MSM day seminars)

Agencies

- Networking and building relationships

Property

- Looking at development/redevelopment opportunities for mission and/or income

Young People

- Developing Congregational Mission and Ministry Capacity through resourcing congregational youth and children's leaders
- Developing Young Adult Leaders to lead in both church and their vocation
- Working with Congregations to develop missional connections with emerging Fusion youth leaders

As part of the strategic update, the MRP Office/staff also reviewed how best to use staff to resource MRP's objectives. As part of this review, it was identified that a key part of MRP's youth and children ministry is based around young adult leaders who are part of the Gap's regional Night Church Service. Night Church had suffered from lack of stability in leadership, with consequent dropping in young adult engagement. MRP saw an opportunity to support Night Church through contracting part of the MRP's youth worker to the Gap on a short-term basis. To develop and strengthen Night Church and therefore also meet MRP's key need of developing young adult leaders who are engaged

in MRP mission activities. This is an example of how MRP is seeking to creatively use its resources to leverage the best ministry outcomes for congregations and the Presbytery.

In March, along with the rest of the world, our plans were disrupted by COVID. However, we have found that all our key strategic objectives are as relevant as ever. COVID changed how we prioritised the objectives and how we had to start implementing them. At this time the priority has been in resourcing congregations through the shut down and opening up (web resources, answering OH&S questions etc), engaging ministers and church council chairs in small zoom groups so that they can learn from each other, putting in place regular pastoral care contacts and resources for Ministers. The focus till the end of 2020 is developing and rolling out Church Council training which is seen as more vital than ever.

Highlights:

1. Newlife Brisbane going well at end of first year
2. Launch of The Cooperative at WMQ
3. DA Approval for Redcliffe Uniting HUB project
4. First Daycamp @ Home successfully run with opportunity to resource other presbyteries using this model
5. ORCA continues to grow and develop
6. New youth ministry started at Faithworks UC
7. A number of MRP congregations supporting community through community meals and/or grocery boxes

MRP Congregations did an amazing job in responding to COVID lockdown with almost all our congregations moving online within 2 weeks of shut down. Ministers and congregations have shown capacity to innovate, adapt and iterate their online worship. It has been interesting to see how many congregations have adapted their liturgy to fit the medium of online.

Early on we engaged MRP congregation treasurers in projecting cash flows till the end of 2020. Almost all congregations were projecting to be okay until the end of 2020 and JobKeeper has improved the finances of all congregations. We will do the same process again at the end of 2020 for the first half of 2021.

While almost all congregations were similar in their initial response to COVID by moving to online worship within 2 weeks, the 'opening up' of congregations has followed a very different pattern. Some congregations moved back to physical worship almost immediately, even if it meant only 20 people attending. Many congregations planned for an August opening and have started face to face worship as well as continuing an online worship – though in many different ways. Some congregations have still not gone back face to face and are not sure when they will.

Many congregations have realised that online worship opens up many opportunities for engaging people who would not otherwise come to church. But how best to do online + physical + engage online, only people into community with limited tech and people resources is an issue which everyone is grappling with in different ways.

Project Plenty

MRP has connected with the Project Plenty process through:

1. Presbytery Consultations (face to face before COVID and then online after final report)
2. Some Congregations have done their own engaging with the process
3. Presbytery Standing Committee has engaged with the Project Plenty Process
4. Presbytery Chair and Ministers have had significant involvement with Project Plenty

Challenges/risks as we progress

Before COVID MRP had both significant opportunities and challenges, COVID hasn't changed the nature of our opportunities and challenges but intensified them.

Opportunities

1. COVID has opened up new ways of engaging people in the life of Christian Community, through online worship and communication tools. Many congregations are exploring the opportunities to extend their mission using these tools.
2. There are several opportunities in MRP (incl 22 Ashgrove) for significant property development/redevelopment for either mission or resourcing mission.
3. COVID has presented an opportunity to re-think how MRP staff and committees better leverage current resources for ministry and mission.

Threats

1. The unpredictable and constantly changing nature of the COVID situation is a significant threat to stability and the capacity of congregations, agencies and presbytery to continually adapt.
2. The increased strain and workload from COVID, is a significant threat to church staff and volunteers through fatigue, mental health issues and burnout
3. The current funding arrangements for MRP and the pressure on the CPMP budget are not sustainable.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Presbytery of South Moreton



Report

COVID19 has been a game-changer for Congregations in their operations and their missional thinking. Each context has its own opportunities, capacities and limitations in responding to these challenges. In each place, the question we face is not, 'When will this end?' but rather, 'Where might this lead?' and 'What does faithfulness to the gospel require of us?' We celebrate significant mission initiatives at Flagstone, Southside UC, NewLife Coolangatta and emerging in Redland City, and face big challenges in having a strong missional presence, in the burgeoning northern Gold Coast corridor and through Congregation revitalisation in other places.

We lost three multicultural church communities since the 34th Synod over same-gender marriage. In the wake of budget cuts which have seen the equivalent of one ministry position lost, Presbytery is reviewing its life and strategic priorities which will also inform decisions about future resourcing needs.

COVID

The coronavirus pandemic has become the defining overlay of the context of Christian mission and presence throughout the world over the past 10 months. The economic, political and social impacts, though not yet fully revealed, are profound and doubtless long-lasting. Every household and community is feeling the impact of pervasive public health restrictions, economic turmoil, workplace disruption, social unrest, personal vulnerabilities, and tides of loss and grief.

This is the new context for our worship, mission and care. And while we have had to address huge operational shifts, the biggest challenges lie in the deeper questions – not the how, but the what and the why of 'being church.' In needing to do things differently, we've had to ask why we do them at all and consider in what new ways might our communities need to experience the compassion and hope of the gospel. This is a context of disruption, learning, reviewing and refocusing.

About our Presbytery

South Moreton encompasses 33 Congregations and four Faith Communities across 1750 sq.km, serving some two million people from Brisbane's southern suburbs through Redland and Logan, Gold Coast and west to Beaudesert. Three UCA schools, the significant presence of UnitingCare and Wesley Mission Queensland services, and a range of chaplaincies contribute to our missional footprint. We have oversight of 60 active ministry agents (ordained and pastors), serving in Congregations, schools, hospitals, UnitingCare and other contexts.

Diversity is a hallmark, including the size of our Congregations, their demographic and geographic contexts, and their cultural background. At least seven of our Congregations and Faith Communities are migrant/refugee based or significantly multicultural. Broader demographic trends of population growth and urban sprawl and renewal constitute a significant challenge in maintaining inherited

patterns of church life and resourcing new mission in new spaces. Consistent with the UCA national demographic profile, most Congregations in the Presbytery comprise mainly middle to upper age groups. NewLife Church Robina (Gold Coast) remains Australia's largest UCA Congregation with up to 1900 attending worship each week.

Focus since the last Synod

COVID CHALLENGES

This period has been incredibly disruptive and intense, but also galvanising, creative and relationship-building.

We celebrate the resilience, energy, creativity and commitment with which ministry agents and lay leaders in our Congregations have engaged the steep learning curve of adaptive change. Especially, but not only, in shifting worship and other parts of church life to online platforms. The journeys and possibilities have been different for each context. But in every place, the resourcefulness, skills, opportunities and innovations may be one of the Spirit's enduring gifts to the church through this traumatic time.

We have discovered a capacity and willingness to change. Resilience, patience and generosity of spirit have been well displayed across our Congregations as people have adapted to worship and church life in new ways. Theological and missional challenges face us as we consider how our church life may be transformed beyond the pandemic. Rather than wait for a 'return to normal,' we are challenged to discern the new life to which God is drawing us through this suspension of our previous patterns and assumptions. As disciples of Jesus, the question we face is not, 'When will this end?' but rather, 'Where might this lead?' and 'What does faithfulness to the gospel require of us?'

COVID has also profoundly disrupted Presbytery's life and plans. A slew of Presbytery events and training programs (including Lab 1, Church Councils and Mission Shaped Ministry) have been deferred or radically changed. The urgency and intensity of local adaptation has, for the time being, reduced the time and heart of ministry agents and lay leaders for engaging with Presbytery matters.

Presbytery instead has focused its energies on providing pastoral and prayer support, creating space for conversation and sharing, responding to enquiries and needs, maintaining regular communication including weekly emails and Zoom Room chats for ministry agents, facilitating collaborations, offering resources, and building people in faith and hope. We held two online Presbytery meetings in May and August. Our messages have focused on solidarity, encouragement, being intentional, self-care and hope. We have sought to affirm and support the work of our chaplains in health, aged care, schools and prisons, who are on their unique COVID 'front line'. The sustained diligence and care of our Presbytery staff team – Rev. Beth Nicholls, Ps Levon Kardashian, Michele Cochrane and Greg Seymour – are deeply appreciated.

Some of what South Moreton has done has resourced the wider UCA, including producing Code of Ethics refresher for ministry agents by Sue Crittall as an online course, a video and booklet self-guided retreat for ministry agents, a service for Pentecost Sunday with segments available for use in

local services, use-at-home Messy Church and online day camp resources, and hosting several Zoom forums on COVID operational and missional themes.

STRATEGIC MISSION

Flagstone: This is a whole-of-church initiative, led and coordinated by the Presbytery, to embed a meaningful church presence in this nascent urban development near Jimboomba, planned to become one of the largest regional centres in Qld. Working with UnitingCare, Wesley Mission Qld, and Real Life Christian Church (Calvary Christian College), Presbytery funded a professional consultancy and based on its findings, in 2019 appointed a Community Development Officer, Susan Hawke. Susan has engaged this role with great passion, skill, vision and commitment. In May 2020, we launched the Flagstone Community Centre in leased premises. It is rapidly becoming an active hub for community services, groups and food bank. Expansion plans are already being considered.

Destiny Together / Southside Uniting Church: A two-year guided discernment journey by six Congregations in Brisbane's southern suburbs, called Destiny Together bore fruit when four of the Congregations voted in October 2018 to amalgamate from 1 January 2020 to become Southside UC. A vision for new mission opportunities and capacities propelled this journey. Presbytery funded Bruce Mullan as Destiny Together coordinator for 18 months and is funding the placement of Rev. David Fender as ministry team leader until end-2021. One of the team ministry placements has a focus on developing new mission initiatives.

Visioning the Redlands: The closure of Thorneside UC in October 2018 underlined the urgency of the remaining five Congregations in Redland City to review their viability and mission effectiveness in serving the region. Presbytery is supporting a Visioning the Redlands process, including funding a part-time leader. An elected steering committee is actively pursuing a regional UCA model bringing together placements, Church Councils and resources to generate cohesion and capacity for mission and service. COVID has delayed decision-making and implementation, but threshold decisions are intended to be made by end-2020.

NewLife Coolangatta: The closure of Twin Towns UC Congregation and inauguration of NewLife Coolangatta Faith Community, on the same site in February 2020, concluded a 14-month journey of prayer, conversation and discernment to offer a revitalised missional presence at the bottom of the Gold Coast. The grace, generosity and vision of the declining, older Congregation, and the grace, respect and care of the NewLife church plant team led by Ps Scott Wrigley, have laid the foundation for a new, vibrant, all-age Christian community – a regional anchor for NewLife's evangelism, disciple-formation and community services.

CONGREGATIONS LEAVING

Three of our culturally diverse communities, Gold Coast Korean UC at Robina, Southport Korean Faith Community and the Matu UC (Chin, from Myanmar) each closed after most of their members chose to leave the UCA because of its openness to same gender marriage. Other local factors were also present in each case, and some members have maintained a link with the UCA Leaders expressed their deep appreciation to the UCA and the Presbytery for years of good relationships and support. Presbytery leaders attended closing services for each group in 2019, thanking and blessing them.

STAFF AND STAFF REDUCTIONS

As Project Officer Mission, Rev. Beth Nicholls' wide-ranging ministry has continued to resource the Presbytery in Congregation mission planning and implementation, Fresh Expressions (including Messy Church, Mainly Music and Pioneering), children's and inter-generational ministries, Mission Shaped Ministry and other training. Key events such as Kids Camp Out, Discoveries Camp, day camps and Easter Madness, Safe Ministry with Children training for Presbytery and Congregations, and leading the Flagstone project.

Ps Levon Kardashian, the Project Officer Multicultural, has offered valuable ministry in building relationships with the various multicultural Congregations and Faith Communities and their leaders. Supporting these churches through the many issues of governance, UCA understanding and practice which inevitably arise, exploring new initiatives (e.g., a revitalised Korean ministry on the Gold Coast), training and capacity building for Church Councils, and engaging with the wider range of Congregations in cross-cultural awareness and ministry. Levon has also made a significant contribution to the Synod's Multi Cross Cultural Reference Group, Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention project, and the Synod's interfaith involvements.

Due to a significant budget crisis facing the Combined Presbyteries Mission Pool (CPMP) for 2020-21, South Moreton lost the funding equivalent of one of these two ministry positions. Both have been retained but reduced to part-time while Presbytery reviews its life and identifies priorities for the next few years. This will inform new decisions about future resourcing priorities, including staff positions. A Presbytery strategic review was timely and anticipated, but the urgency brought on by the funding cut and the limitations under COVID of engaging in consultation has made this a more challenging process. Project Plenty provides a helpful wider-church context for these considerations.

Beth and Levon have contributed substantially to the life and work of the Presbytery – and the wider church – in their ministry roles since 2013 and 2018 respectively. We pray their gifts and experience will continue to bless the church in whatever form their future ministries take, in Presbytery or other roles.

Highlights:

ACHIEVEMENTS INCLUDE:

- Flagstone Community Development Officer, Community Centre, expanding community profile, networks and partnerships.
- Support for journeys of local mission collaboration among Congregations (Destiny Together/Southside; Visioning the Redlands; coming together of Twins Towns UC and NewLife church plant to form NewLife Coolangatta).
- Navigating through the COVID context as a Presbytery and in supporting Congregations and ministry agents.
- Continuing to foster a culture of peer support among ministry colleagues (e.g., Healthy Ministry Breakfasts, ministers' convocation, weekly Zoom Room chats, Pastors in the Park, retreat resources).

- Support for 5 Candidates for ordination, 6 new applicants and 11 Period of Discernment participants.

LEARNINGS INCLUDE:

- External partners have a lot to offer – expertise, goodwill, networks. *We may not know what we don't know – but other people will!*
- Things aren't fully formed at the start. At some point you need to commit, get in, start the work, and allow the work to grow the vision and the resources. Be prepared for the Holy Spirit to take us on a journey that we could not have imagined while planning.
- We are resilient, creative, capable and adaptive. We also get tired and need to take care of ourselves and each other.
- Good governance is our friend, reminding us of hard realities and harder consequences.
- The church's survival depends on the church not being preoccupied with its survival.

Project Plenty

South Moreton has hosted face to face and online sessions as part of the Project Plenty consultations phases, and Scott Guyatt has visited Presbytery meetings to bring updates and run workshop sessions. Presbytery's review of its life and priorities welcomes the guidance and insights of the Project Plenty journey.

Challenges/risks as we progress

STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

By mid-2030s, Gold Coast will have one million residents and Logan City half a million. The northern Gold Coast corridor through Helensvale, Oxenford, Ormeau, Coomera and Pimpama is one of Australia's fastest-developing areas, with a predicted 220,000 residents by 2030. The growing challenges of evangelism, discipleship, pastoral care and community service in this region are before us, needing much more than our current UCA presence and assets.

There are other places where Congregations are revitalising their purpose by applying energy, imagination and capacity for new missional purposes. Congregations are recognising that the best way to move into an unknown future is to build a pathway into it. But in many cases, the window of opportunity for strategic choices and action is limited. In a few places, Presbytery has been a catalyst for Church Council discussions about a reimagined future, but this can be too difficult a mind-shift or journey for some Congregations to undertake alone. Collaboration in clusters or regions, new models of training and mentoring, strategic capacity-building, Intentional Interim Ministries, and embedded support from Presbytery will assist.

CHURCH COUNCIL TRAINING

Building capacity for effective Church Council governance and leadership is a priority need, to equip them in conflict management, dealing with difference, good governance practices, good communication and healthy cultures of leadership. This concern is shared across Presbyteries, and

we look to working with them in developing materials and models of training and support to invest in effective leadership teams.

FINANCIAL AND MISSIONAL CHALLENGES

COVID has amplified and accelerated challenges that were more latent for our Congregations, not least in financial and missional capacity. Income losses from offerings, property rentals and Op Shops have impacted Congregations to varying extents. JobKeeper subsidies for placements or staff is mitigating this impact for a time. After an initial dip, offerings in many Congregations have remained quite steady or returned to pre-COVID levels, it is heartening to experience the faithfulness of our people in their sustained giving through such disruption. However, the capacity for Congregations to meet their core placement, property and operating costs, let alone consider possible new ventures, will be tested.

More important than financial survival will be how Congregations reset their life and mission. How might our identity and purpose in each place need to be reviewed and embodied in new ways in a society being permanently reshaped by COVID? How do we incorporate both digital (online) and analogue (physical) channels to engage people in worship, discipleship, pastoral care and community care? Who are our pastoral and missional communities these days? What assumptions or complacencies in our previous settled patterns have been exposed and need deeper interrogation? Similar questions arise for Presbytery as well.

The risk in both these areas is that we travel alone, become discouraged or overwhelmed, or live in denial. Project Plenty has much to offer here in inspiring and guiding our life together around key priorities for a flourishing future. May we face these challenges without panic but with purpose and perseverance, allowing ourselves to be drawn towards God's future in God's power and faithfulness.

For consideration

We want to honour and appreciate the incredible work done by COVID wardens in each place and those who have picked up extraordinary new burdens of responsibility and learning during the pandemic. We owe a particular debt of gratitude to the Synod's COVID response team, especially Val King, Peter Rose and Mike Huxley.

We identify more work needs to be done in relation to the CPMP and its funding, oversight and operating principles as the basis for financing Presbyteries. We note that these conversations are beginning.

Rev. Dr Marian Zaunbrecher stepped down in July 2020 after two years as Presbytery Chairperson. We thank her for her service to the Presbytery in this role. Elaine Rae has been appointed Acting Chairperson, September-December 2020, to allow time for a new election.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Presbytery of The Downs



Report

- Gratitude to God for the support from across the whole Synod as we face many natural disasters.
- BlueCare Grief and Loss Program continues to grow and benefit many within the presbytery and beyond.
- People and healthy living systems are our greatest resource for growing the mission of the church.
- Project Plenty highlighted the community needs surrounding issues of mental health and wellbeing.
- Ecumenical engagement across the presbytery is vital to future ministry.

About our presbytery

Presbytery of The Downs is located on the traditional lands of the Giabal, Jarowair, Gooragooby, Kambuwal, Banrungam, Kooma, Bigambul, Mandandanji, Gunggari, Kenja and Bidgari people.

The broad area for congregational and agency mission within the bounds of the presbytery include large regional towns Toowoomba (approx. pop. 170,000), Warwick (approx. pop. 21,000), Stanthorpe (approx. pop. 5400), Chinchilla (approx. pop. 6600), Dalby (approx. pop. 12,700), Oakey (approx. pop. 4500), Roma (approx. pop. 6800), Goondiwindi (approx. pop. 6300) and St George (approx. pop. 3000).

There are 28 Uniting Church congregations supported by seven lay lead ministry teams and 14 ministry agents. Surrounding these centres are many smaller towns and rural communities, these more lightly populated areas are supported by two patrol ministries: the Leichhardt Patrol and the Cunnamulla Burke and Wills Patrol. The Leichhardt Patrol is based out of Chinchilla and runs north and south along the Leichhardt Highway. This patrol is funded by a combination of support from congregations both within and beyond the presbytery. The Cunnamulla Burke and Wills Patrol based out of Charleville covering most of the south west with funding support from Frontier Services. The presbytery also supports the ministry of three chaplains—one each at Scots PGC College in Warwick, Darling Downs Health Services and UnitingCare BlueCare in Toowoomba.

This presbytery has a passion and calling to be present with the community to see God amongst the many challenges faced. We have strong, healthy and growing ecumenical connections across the presbytery. Alongside this we are engaged in a vibrant Interfaith Network in Toowoomba which works well together to support the needs of the community.

Focus since the last Synod

In a word, what has taken up most of our time since the last Synod in Session is disasters! The shires covered by this presbytery are still all fully drought declared, despite the recent welcome rainfall. Alongside the drought the presbytery has faced bushfires in Warwick, Ravensbourne, Pechey, Crows Nest and Millmerran; flooding rains in Dalby and surrounding areas; and like us all a global pandemic.

While this has been very confronting and a testing time, there have been many blessings and the clear movement of the Holy Spirit which gives hope to us all. We have an amazing team of ministry agents and lay lead ministry teams (LLMT) effectively ministering within their local communities to offer light in the midst of darkness. We are also extremely grateful to God for the support from beyond this presbytery from individual members of the church, congregations across the Synod, and the Synod Disaster Recovery Fund (DRF). People have reached out to congregations within our presbytery to offer their prayers and practical support. This was able to bring much appreciated bottled water, even tanks of water, and other support to people in Stanthorpe and surrounding areas. A growing relationship between members from Chermside Kedron Community Church who travelled out to Goondiwindi Uniting Church to offer financial support to locals and encouragement to the congregation; and the people of Dalby received financial support from the DRF to support community members to rebuild after the floods.

Churches, communities and local regions are working together to support communities through the ongoing effects of the pandemic—offering peer pastoral and prayer support. We also acknowledge the extra pressures to adapt quickly to the online format—people sharing their skills in technology and others learning new skills in 2020. For some people the frustration of slow or no internet is a daily reality. Yet they patiently continue to spend time ‘giving it a go’, getting connected, experiencing frozen screens, no audio, being disconnected and then linking into the meeting via phone, and sharing a laugh about it.

Highlights:

- Strategic locations – As we reported at the 34th Synod, four congregations within Toowoomba were identified as pillar congregations of the presbytery (St Stephen's Uniting Church, Middle Ridge Uniting Church, Highfields Community Church and Lifeworks Uniting Church) and strategically building up of these congregations was hoped to support and maintain congregations in more remote regional centres. This work has been significantly affected by the financial uncertainty of all congregations due to COVID-19. The presbytery is currently re-evaluating and developing, in consultation with congregations and with the support of the Synod, a Property Strategic Plan focusing on being more deliberate in our missional presence within communities.
- Highfields Community Church with support from the Combined Presbytery Mission Pool (CPMP) appointed a full-time ministry agent in January 2020 and is working towards being fully self-sufficient by the end of 2022.
- Organisational structures – A focus on developing healthy living systems within the presbytery focusing on people being our primary and most precious resource. This includes wanting the best for each person and supporting people to build healthy relationships with God, with each other and with their communities. We are continuing to learn what a healthy and effective team looks like and are intentionally spending time in each of our teams (Pastoral Relations Committee and Standing Committee) learning and growing together.
- The presbytery has joined the UCare platform as a way of being more effective in our organising of events, meetings, collecting helpful data, and keeping key leaders and congregations up to date with information across the presbytery.
- BlueCare Grief and Loss Program – The presbytery provides financial and administrative support for BlueCare to run this program. We believe that the program is providing a

beneficial service to our community by showing care and understanding while supporting and enabling healing. Since the last Synod, 63 participants have attended 11 programs in Warwick, Stanthorpe, Kingaroy, Toowoomba including the first program to be held in Roma. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 this program and the training of facilitators has been suspended.

- Lay lead ministry teams (LLMT) – The presbytery has identified that future ministry in regional and remote communities will be increasingly led by lay leaders in the community. lay lead ministry teams were resourced up to the 2019/2020 financial year with the support from the CPMP by a Presbytery Resource Minister. From 2020/2021 this position is no longer being funded by the CPMP and the presbytery is looking at ways to further resource and develop new LLMT by using our newly learnt technological skills, sharing resources and online learning opportunities through Trinity College Queensland.
- The appointment as working alongside the local council to bring meaning and hope as people remember and reflect.
- Signing of the Pastoral Care Oversight Committee Covenant and Memorandum of Understanding between Toowoomba Heads of Churches (Catholic, Anglican, Uniting Church and Lutheran) and the Darling Downs Health Services to employ a Pastoral Care Coordinator to support the ongoing pastoral care within the Toowoomba Base Hospital. The appointment of the coordinator has been delayed due to COVID-19 and funding restraints in Queensland Health.
- Decision of the Assembly regarding Same Gender Marriage – The presbytery has been intentionally working with congregations to keep the focus on mission and unity; however, despite much prayer and discernment two congregations had significant loss of membership (one included the resignation of the minister). This resulted in a request for financial support to one congregation from the CPMP and for the other the Presbytery continues to provide financial and operational support to the remaining members so that their focus can be on rebuilding and refocusing on the mission of the church in their local area.

Project Plenty

The presbytery has engaged well in the Project Plenty process. In July 2019, we held the initial workshop with the Project Plenty team at our presbytery meeting in Roma and identified mental health issues across the presbytery as a significant community need. In subsequent presbytery meetings we have had updates from the Project Plenty team and in June 2020, we had a positive response to the consultation and look forward to engaging further to implement the outcomes of the report into the life of the presbytery.

Challenges/risks as we progress

- How best to provide continuing and effective ministry in the changing demographics, in small communities spread over a vast area and growing regional towns.
- Growing our financial capacity to maintain and grow ministry in places that have limited financial capacity.



- Equipping leaders and raising up new leaders to effectively lead communities in worship, witness and service in a COVID-19 and post-COVID world.
- Developing a culture of wellbeing and promoting healthy lifestyles amongst leaders.
- Being a church that offers a creative response to the growing mental health concerns within the community.
- Do our governance structures provide adequately for a church to think outside the box, take risks, reflect honestly, have difficult conversation and be courageously bold to bring the hope of the gospel to the most vulnerable in the community.
- Identifying people who are called and have the capacity to contribute their time and talents to roles within church councils and the presbytery.
- Transforming online connections with people to becoming life-long committed disciples of Jesus.
- Constantly re-evaluating our systems so that we are healthy, transparent and effective in the way we live out our call to discipleship.
- Doing more rather than being present and trusting that God is here in our communities.

For consideration

The presbytery continues to be grateful for the resources provided to the presbytery and congregations by the Synod Support Team. It has been a challenge for small, remote and rural congregations to keep up with the increasing expectations of compliance; however, having staff willing to listen and to offer advice and support is vital to the work of the presbytery.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

UnitingCare Queensland

Report

This report to the 35th Synod in Session demonstrates UnitingCare Queensland's (UnitingCare) commitment to reaching and serving the people and communities of Queensland in ways that have the greatest positive impact on their health and quality of life.

In the past year, we have embodied the biblical theme of the 35th Synod—grow—as we continued our transformation journey. We have demonstrated measurable progress in stabilising our financial situation and strengthening the organisational capability so we can successfully achieve our aspiration of becoming a leader in health, aged care, and community services by 2030.

Through UnitingCare's ongoing response to the COVID-19 crisis, our people have demonstrated the heart of service that differentiates us from other providers. They have gone above and beyond to keep delivering the services for those who need us most. Our people have achieved this while meeting increased demand for some services, the suspension of others, all against a backdrop of ongoing sector review and reform.

During the coming year, we are turning our attention to embedding increased strategic thinking across all areas of UnitingCare, with a strong focus on delivery and outcomes that achieve our mission.

About UnitingCare

UnitingCare's mission is to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities so they can live the best life possible. This remains the core purpose of UnitingCare, which arises from the words of Jesus Christ to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

We are called to be an agent of God's healing power to the whole person, thereby enabling each individual to play his or her important role in God's plan for all humanity.

As an expression of our mission, UnitingCare provides health and community services to thousands of people every day of the year through its hospitals, aged care, disability and community services.

At the heart of our services is this mission of Christ. This is demonstrated through the commitment of our people to being responsible stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the Uniting Church, donors, and taxpayers.

Focus since the last Synod

During the past year, we have strengthened our position to continue furthering the mission of the Uniting Church and providing care and support to the people we serve.

Specifically, we focussed on:

Focus area	Achievements
Rapidly addressed our financial situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving a surplus in FY2020 for the first time in several years. • Generating more than \$43.2m in net recurring benefits through our 2030 initiatives. • Negotiating the Federal Government’s JobKeeper Payment Scheme eligibility for employees of our individual organisations; additional funding to increase access to Lifeline crisis support services throughout COVID-19 outbreak; and signed an agreement with the Queensland Government that ensures our UnitingCare Private Hospitals will remain sustainable and that all our hospitals staff have certainty of employment through the COVID-19 crisis.
Improved our safety profile across the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pandemic plans are in place for each UnitingCare service area, scenario testing is ongoing. • Collaborative initiatives to standardise approaches for the prevention and treatment of pressure injuries, outbreak management, manual handling, falls management, holistic risk assessment and other quality improvement measures. • Keeping our people (and those we serve) safe during COVID-19 wave 1.
Improved organisational health and employee engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall organisational health improved by four points from 2018, and reflecting our strong values-driven culture. • 2019 People Survey results revealed we have highly engaged teams in all of our key areas from aged care and community services to hospitals, family and disabilities, and corporate services.

Highlights:

To continue to thrive and expand our mission:

Lessons learned	UnitingCare’s response
We must generate a surplus so we can extend our core capabilities and increase the impact of our mission to those that we serve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving this focus through delivery of our 2030 program strategic initiatives to the bottom line. • Building capability across the business to make good business decisions and have introduced a new commercial framework to embed understanding about how to maximise and protect revenue and minimise expenses. • Addressing the fact that our assets and facilities have ‘run down’ over the last 20 years in order to meet minimum service requirements in some areas.

Lessons learned	UnitingCare's response
We must meet increasing demand for our services in the context of sector review and reform and higher customer expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increasing focus on listening to our clients, patients and customers to strengthen our reputation for delivering value. Implementing our first enterprise strategic business planning process that will lay a strong foundation for the next decade. Transitioning from a 'survival mindset' to a 'sustainable growth mindset' where people flourish; and improving our ability to adapt, function and perform through targeted leadership and organisational development programs.
We must remain vigilant in ensuring ongoing COVID-19 preparedness and risk-mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on our business service areas, customers and employees through the COVID-19 Crisis Management Team (CMT) and Operations Team (OPS Team).

Project Plenty

UnitingCare has been active in all the stages of the development of Project Plenty.

Our Director of Mission participated in the Project Plenty design workshops and importantly, has ensured the mission priorities and commitments are reflective of the church's wider mission and ministry through its agencies.

The current draft mission priorities and direction 2021–2025 that will come before the Synod has been workshoped with members of our Executive and Senior Leadership Teams. UnitingCare is committed to working together as the whole church as we embrace the challenges and realise the vision of *Shared life. Flourishing communities.*

Challenges/risks as we progress

We commenced the 2030 Program in 2018 to:

- articulate what UnitingCare wants to be known for in 2030 within the sectors we deliver services to;
- determine how to achieve this vision while maintaining focus on our mission, increasing our social impact and becoming financially sustainable; and
- drive improvements in financial position, quality of service and our culture that will put us on a clear path to realising our 2030 vision.

In the process, we identified a number of challenges which are broadly described below:

- Growing and ageing population with increasing life expectancy.

- Clinical and carer skills shortages due to increasing demand for workers in our sectors – now the largest workforce in Australia.
- Increasing prevalence of chronic diseases/lifestyle illnesses.
- Changing customer expectations – driven by increased adoption of technology and a preference for home care.
- Deregulation and changes to funding models resulting in more consumer-oriented markets.
- Intensifying competition across all our sectors.

UnitingCare is responding with a long-term plan called *Taking Care Further*—to build on our strengths, respond to what we foresee impacting the markets we operate in, and above all, stay true to our mission to ensure the people we serve and the people who work with us experience life in all its fullness (John 10:10).

To achieve this, we made some deliberate choices to safeguard the sustainability and future of UnitingCare. These are explained below:

Service	Strategic setting
Community aged care	With people increasingly wanting to age in place, this is a key growth area for the organisation. We will focus our innovation mindshare and capital on community aged care, rationalise existing services and fully explore new service offerings to drive growth.
Disability	We will optimise and hold our offering in this sector while services are transitioned to the NDIS. We will define the services that we will be known for but we won't pursue growth opportunities in the increasingly competitive disability services sector.
Residential aged care	We will optimise and maintain a watching brief on a 'grow slowly' setting as we respond to our customers' needs and to the sector-wide challenges.
Retirement living	We will review our retirement living services and divest under-performing assets in this sector.
Hospitals	We will continue to focus on excellences in the services we deliver through The Wesley Hospital, St Andrew's War Memorial Hospital, Buderim Private Hospital and St Stephen's Hospital, and holding our strong, well-regarded position in this sector.
Child and family services	We will optimise and grow our services slowly to respond to community need.

We believe this is a sound plan to use our extensive and firmly established geographical presence, core offerings, trusted brands, which deploys our resources where they can have the largest positive impact on people and communities in need—now and in the future.



Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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Report from

Wesley Mission Queensland



Report

We acknowledge as a church that the resources with which God has entrusted us are a gift to be used for mission and ministry in our community. We are small, but we are big—the people of Wesley Mission Queensland seek to have a very big heart. As part of the Uniting Church we are people who love God and want to make a difference; we are congregations—God's people gathering in worship, witness and service; we offer service programs supporting thousands of people in need at all ages and stages of life; we are thousands of staff and volunteers from all different backgrounds, faith and cultures united in the mission of God—towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.

As the Uniting Church we are one and we are many, seeking to express God's love for the world.

The Albert Street Congregation is the birthplace and spiritual home of Wesley Mission Queensland (WMQ). Since its first acts of compassion and kindness in the late 1800s, this thriving faith community has had a vital presence in the Brisbane central business district (CBD). Worship, witness and service have been core to the mission and ministry of Albert Street since the formation of the Central Methodist Mission (now known as Wesley Mission Queensland) in 1907. It started with the employment of three community nurses in 1907 reaching out to homeless people in the streets of Brisbane and later became the first age care community in Queensland at Wheller Gardens in 1936. While there has been further developments and expansion of the mission and service activities of WMQ, over many years the worshipping community of the Albert Street Uniting Church remains the spiritual home of WMQ.

With restrictions in place relating to public worship, the weekly Albert Street Uniting Church services quickly moved to an online platform. From 22 March 2020 through to 5 July 2020 we averaged over 330 online devices participating each week. From 12 July 2020 Albert Street Uniting Church returned to public worship each Sunday morning at 9am, with the service recorded and uploaded to YouTube during the week for those who were unable to attend in person. The new online community continues to average over 100 devices participating each week with people from Victoria, Western Australia, North Queensland and overseas joining us for worship. Some people are gathering in lounge rooms to worship and share fellowship together, while others are self-isolating and are using this opportunity to experience an online worshipping community. It has been a steep learning curve for us all, and we are learning new skills and strategies to bring good news to the world through the internet.

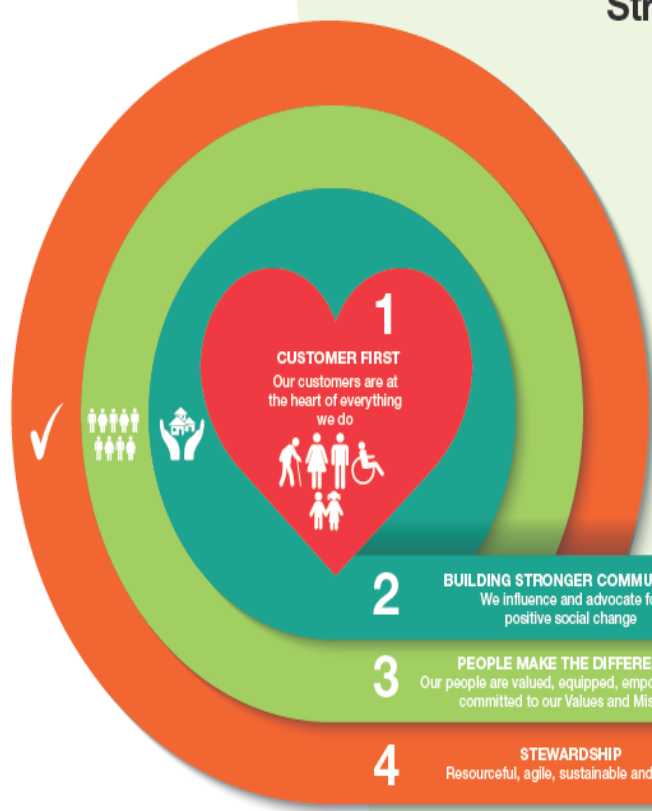
Philippians 4:4-7

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Since the 34th Synod as we celebrated the theme of “sow”, none of us could ever have imagined the world we now currently live and breathe. A world of much change, uncertainty, sadness, despair and anxiety. Yet we have hope ... “Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Hebrews 11:1).

Our heart: Strategic priorities 2019–2022

Wesley Mission Queensland Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022




Our Purpose
As part of the Uniting Church our purpose is to participate in the mission of God – towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.

Our Vision
A compassionate, just and inclusive society for all.

Our Mission
We walk alongside people in need offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community wellbeing.

Our Values
Integrity
Respect
Empowerment
Hope
Justice
Compassion
Innovation

wmq.org.au



Key focus areas

**Wesley Mission Queensland
Strategic Plan 2019 - 2022**



1 CUSTOMER FIRST 

Our customers are at the heart of everything we do

- 1.1 Our customers are seen, heard, valued and empowered to be active partners in the services we provide.
- 1.2 Our customers know about us, understand why they choose us and why they want to stay with us.
- 1.3 We focus on the whole person – body mind and spirit – within the family and community context.
- 1.4 We respond to emerging community needs as we grow our core services and implement innovative pilot programs.

3 PEOPLE MAKE THE DIFFERENCE 

Our people are valued, equipped, empowered and committed to our Values and Mission

- 3.1 Our workforce is well trained, capable, committed and motivated to embrace the Wesley Charter and deliver customer service excellence.
- 3.2 We provide a safe, inclusive and supportive workplace culture
- 3.3 Our people are valued, by ensuring our wages, employee benefits and working conditions are competitive, relative to the sectors in which we work.

2 BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES 

We influence and advocate for positive social change

- 2.1 Our communities are welcoming and inclusive, providing opportunities to celebrate life in all its fullness.
- 2.2 Wesley Mission Queensland respectfully journeys with Australia's First Peoples.
- 2.3 We are influencers of positive social change and reform grounded in the experience of our customers, services and ethical framework.

4 STEWARDSHIP 

Resourceful, agile, sustainable and ethical

- 4.1 We are financially and environmentally sustainable.
- 4.2 Wesley Mission Queensland is responsive and agile in a changing and competitive market.
- 4.3 Our key supporters and stakeholders are active contributors to our mission and to the people we serve.
- 4.4 We implement progressive governance practices to enhance customer service and proactively embrace and manage opportunities and risks.
- 4.5 Our customer experience is enhanced through our investment in research, innovation and new technologies.

wmq.org.au



Over the past 18 months we have continued to focus on delivering our strategic priorities, ensuring our “customer is at the heart of everything we do”, as we “build stronger communities” with our “people making a difference”, seeking to be “good stewards of the resources entrusted to us for mission”.

However, even though the impact of COVID-19 in 2020 has slowed some of the newest initiatives that we had planned for 2020, we have maintained the extensive range of programs and support services that touch the lives of more than 100,000 people each year.

About Wesley Mission Queensland

The aged care and community services sectors are living through one of the most profound periods of change in recent decades. With the challenges of two Royal Commissions (aged care and disability); increasing expectations of service users; increased government regulation and oversight;

increased public scrutiny including in some sectors a loss of public trust; and a global pandemic there are significant pressures on boards, senior leadership, leaders and staff throughout the organisation.

The interim report from the Aged Care Royal Commission is a call to the aged care sector, the Australian community and particularly the Australian Government to lead a process of conversation and renewal including adequate funding to provide access to quality care and support services. WMQ is committed to contribute and actively participate in the process of reform following the recommendations from the Aged Care Royal Commission due in February 2021.

The UnitingCare Australia vision: **“Imagine an Australian community where older people are valued and included in community life, enabled to maintain health and independence, are able to contribute their talents and wisdom, pursue their interests, nurture relationships, maintain their culture and spirituality, and be in control of their future”.**

WMQ are working with UnitingCare Australia and the UnitingCare agencies across Australia to be active participants in the change process and to strongly advocate for access to quality services for the people we serve and the funding that is required. Approximately 60 per cent of aged care homes in Australia are currently operating at a loss. Some aged care providers are choosing to exit the sector. More than 100,000 elderly Australians are waiting for long periods to access a home care package for which they have an assessed need—sometimes up to two years—the tragedy is that some people have passed away whilst waiting for this home care package.

There are hopes across Australia for improved access to a wide range of ‘promised’ support services for people living with a disability—some of these services and housing will take years to deliver. WMQ are seeking to further grow our specialist disability accommodation as a primary focus over the next few years.

In this context we require disciplined governance and leadership to innovate, grow and respond to changing needs, the environment and manage risk. Collectively we have a wealth of experience, creativity and passionate staff and volunteers, as well as one of the widest service networks in Australia.

COVID-19

The threat of COVID-19 has created an opportunity for our people to shine and to celebrate life in the midst of the great uncertainty that a global pandemic brings. Since February 2020 our energy and focus has been on adapting and building new ways of supporting people in need whilst having an intense focus on doing all we can to keep our people safe from COVID-19. This has not been easy; this has and remains a significant challenge for us all.

Most importantly for residents, family members and friends of residents there has been a sense of grief and loss when government legislation has required us to restrict access for visits from family and friends of residents in care (except in special circumstances such as end of life care). It has been tragic for some residents and families to not be able to visit in person, comfort, share stories with and touch their loved ones as they had been doing for months or years before COVID-19. For many

families this has been exacerbated by not being able to celebrate the life of a loved one who has died in the ways that we have taken for granted prior to COVID-19. This has brought great sadness and despair for some people, even though there has been a recognition from families that keeping COVID-19 out of our aged care homes is of the highest priority.

During this time, we have seen our staff live with compassion, innovation and flexibility in response to the pandemic. We are extremely proud of our people and teams that have shown resilience and commitment to those in their care, as we have responded to multiple State and Federal requirements that have impacted: working arrangements; visitor restrictions; infection control requirements; supporting families who can't see their loved one as often as they would like and many more. The additional workload and anxiety operating in this environment cannot be underestimated.

Technology has played a significant role in supporting our connectedness to our residents and their families and staff—people have learnt new systems, connected with friends and families overseas, enjoyed live streaming concerts and entertainment, and more recently enjoyed and were fascinated by our new 'robot' residents! Virtual activities and entertainment have been received well and our residents have expressed their gratitude to us for “keeping them safe” with restricted visitors. In spite of all these wonderful initiatives COVID-19 has and continues to create uncertainty, loss and great challenge to residents, families and loved ones, as well as our staff and volunteers—as we all do our best to adapt to a COVID-19 environment.

Many of our staff roles that are appropriate to work from home were mobilised and at times during June to September 2020, we have had approximately 60 per cent of this workforce successfully and productively working from home. In many ways the impetus of COVID-19 on our Information Technology and Communications platform has brought forward our horizons for change by more than three years.

We are now getting acquainted with the continued “scale up and scale down” of COVID-19 restrictions as we plan and respond to this challenge which we expect is likely to continue for many more months to come.

We encourage Synod members to view our videos available on the WMQ Trade Display space on the Synod portal, that tell our story of mission throughout our programs and services—we hope you will enjoy.

Galatians 6:2

Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

Organisational snapshot

As part of the Uniting Church, we seek to live out our purpose to participate in the mission of God towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.

We operate from more than 70 program locations in Queensland with services that touch the lives of more than 100,000 people each year. We celebrate the diversity and richness of the experience of our staff team who come from 60 different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Our annual operating revenue is more than \$250M with over 3000 staff and more than 3000 volunteers.

What we do:

- Albert Street Uniting Church including Art from the Margins, English Corner, Community Meal and “the cooperative”
- Residential aged care
- In home aged care services and support
- Community aged care services
- Retirement living
- A wide range of disability services
- Specialist disability housing and support
- Mental health services
- Health and well-being services
- Child care, youth and family services
- Food, housing and emergency support
- Supported youth housing
- Palliative and end-of-life care for children and adults
- National Auslan Interpreter Booking Service for the deaf community



Focus since the last Synod

Addressing the need for specialist disability accommodation:

We continue the journey to support one of our most vulnerable groups of people in our community. People living with disability deserve to live a life of “choice and freedom”. WMQ has a targeted growth strategy to address the need of appropriate accommodation and service provision for this client group.

WMQ now operates seven specialised disability accommodation communities: WesleyCare Tewartin; WesleyCare Apartments Sinnamon Village, WesleyCare Jindalee, WesleyCare Apartments Coomera; Youngcare Woolloowin, Asher House at Wynnum and new additions WesleyCare Wynnum Apartments adjacent to Asher House and soon to be opened in late September our eighth service WesleyCare Apartments Maroochydore. All of these (except Youngcare Woolloowin) are located on or next door to Uniting Church land. In addition to developing further specialist disability

accommodation options in the future we will also be partnering with other developers who will construct the buildings with WMQ providing the on-going care and support.

Following recent WMQ Board approval (supported by approval from the Finance, Investment and Property Board) and subject to a successful development application, WMQ will be purchasing land from the Queensland Synod/South Moreton Presbytery at Thorneside for the purpose of developing further specialised disability accommodation.

Enjoy reading this moving letter from Todd, one of our original WesleyCare residents.

Dear Staff,

Given the current circumstances, I realise that I may not get the opportunity to thank all of you individually for your part in helping me during my 7.5 year journey at Sinnamon Park before Kat and I leave on Monday morning, so I want to take this opportunity to do so.

Though I was 29 when I moved here on 27 December 2012, living at Sinnamon Park gave me the opportunity to experience the many rites of passage that others go through in their late teens and early twenties, even in small ways. I remember thinking during my first week it was a thrill to eat ice cream at 1.30pm while watching the Boxing Day Test uninterrupted. That was the day that I knew that the move became real.

Living here has taught me so much, but most of all it helped me discover what I was truly capable of. Believe it or not I entered number 14 incredibly scared and with a bundle of nerves. Though on a subconscious level, I knew I wanted to live independently for a long time, I didn't act on that feeling until two years before I arrived here, because I was terrified that I would fail and would have to go back to live with my parents.

I shouldn't have worried though because it has been a privilege living here. I've done my best to recognise this luck each and every day. Sometimes I have failed. There have been bumps in my road to freedom but living here also taught me how to safely make mistakes.

Over my time here I think there have been over 100 staff that have walked through the doors, each of whom have brought something unique to my life. It's not easy having someone come into your home every day. However, what most people fail to recognise is that it's hard for you guys too. Each day you've been asked to enter fourteen sacred spaces, to try and meet the needs of up to seventeen different people, often at the same time. The sacrifices that each of you have made don't often get recognised, particularly by the residents, so I thank you. It's not an easy job that we ask you to do.

Obviously, the highlight of my time here has been my relationship and marriage to Kat. Growing up, I never thought I would meet someone I could fall in love with, much less to marry her. We both agree that living here made our relationship happen. Kat and I thank all of you, for your part in making it work. Wesley could have made the process hard and could have put many obstacles in front of our partnership. Thanks to your help, we've blazed a trail here, and now the NDIS has changed the rules so that interabled couples and families can live together in privacy and comfort. We're proud to be a part of the journey that made it happen. You should be too.

Moving away closes the most pivotal chapter in my life thus far. Though we're moving to a bigger place, my first step of independence will always occupy an important place in my heart. It is the place where I found myself, where I grew up, where I began to fulfil my potential, where I made life changing decisions, and where I found freedom.

As Thomas Jefferson, the third President of the United States, once said: Our greatest happiness does not depend on the condition of life in which chance has placed us, but is always the result of a good conscience, good health, occupation, and freedom in all just pursuits.

*Yours, in Freedom,
Todd*

Supporting people living with mental illness:

Over the last few years WMQ has been expanding and diversifying our range of support services in mental health and suicide prevention. There are currently over 17 unique programs from Hervey Bay to the Gold Coast. We remain committed to responding to gaps in service delivery and meeting the needs of local communities. Our services include support for people across the lifespan—from youth specific services such as headspace centres in Capalaba, Hervey Bay and Maryborough, through to specific support for isolated older people on the Gold Coast.

We have a large team on the Gold Coast working for people with severe and enduring mental illness for up to 12 months—focussing on improving skills to live independently, find work, improve relationships and learn how to manage their own mental health and well-being. We are also funded by the Department of Health to deliver over 1500 sessions of psychology and coaching per month to the residents in south Brisbane—including to children under 12 at risk of developing mental illness, women experiencing domestic and family violence, and those at risk of suicide or self-harm.

We also have a number of dedicated suicide prevention services—walking alongside people for three months following a suicide attempt and dedicated peer support for people who have been caring for someone who is suicidal. One of these services specifically focusses on supporting young men—Marcus Mission—named after a young man who passed away.

Our teams work closely with a number of health and hospital regions—often providing the community care component for people also receiving clinical mental health services.

In addition to supporting people in local communities there has been a focus on supporting the mental health and well-being of our staff. One of many practical initiatives within the WMQ staff team is we have trained 150 staff in mental health first aid and this has been of immense assistance in supporting our staff's well-being.

For some people these services can be both life giving but also life saving. One comment from a client:

“You are outstanding both professionally and very personable. That you went above and beyond and were very passionate about your vocation which is rare. That there was genuine compassion and the willingness to help me mentally and provide every option available to help me move forward. I appreciate this service was available to me as a potential life saving option as the refuge did not offer support, only caused further abuse and frowned on support outside of their refuge.”

Residential aged care:

WMQ was the first provider of residential aged care in Queensland with the opening of Wheller Gardens at Chermside in 1936. Today we operate 13 aged care facilities that provide a home, care and support for over 1000 residents. Over the last two years, we have opened our newest aged care home Dovetree at Sinnamon Village (home for 144 residents) and expanded an existing aged care home at Bray Park (Anam Cara) with two cottage style homes each with eight residents. The Anam

Cara cottages provide specialised care and support for people living with dementia—it focusses on involving residents in all aspects of daily living.

While we have placed great emphasis on rebuilding or renovating our aged care homes over the last few years (60 per cent of our homes are high quality and modern design)—the thing that makes the most difference for the people living in care is the passion, commitment, creativity and culture within the staff teams. We regularly receive positive feedback from residents and families celebrating the care and warmth of our staff and volunteers—this is what makes the difference. As much as possible we have tried to find ways to recognise and express the gratitude of the organisation for the contribution and hard work of our more than 1000 care staff in our aged care homes

Unfortunately, WMQ as for most aged care providers in Australia have had to cease further capital development due to the inadequate funding to sustain the quality of services that our elders deserve! The residential aged care system requires major reform and we eagerly await the findings of the Royal Commission in February 2021.

Recognition of commitment to creating happy, healthy aged care communities:

In July 2020, WMQ celebrated Annie Gibney, Director of Residential Aged Care for receiving the Inspired Influencer Award from The Eden Alternative—a global non-profit organisation founded in 1991.

The Eden Alternative Philosophy of Care is about providing residents with homes that are filled with laughter, children, beautiful gardens, animals, music and most importantly strong and warm relationships between residents, staff, volunteers and families.



Our vision for reconciliation:

Over the past 18 months WMQ has worked towards further embedding our connections and building on our relationships with local community, as we continue our journey of reconciliation.

David Paasi (known as Paasi) joined WMQ initially as a volunteer in the office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) providing guidance and assistance around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural sensitivities and providing support operationalising the WMQ reconciliation action plan (RAP).

Paasi is a prominent leader in the Zillmere Uniting Church in the process of candidating to be a Minister of the Word. From 1 July 2019 Paasi was appointed to the position of WMQ Indigenous Liaison Officer. This role is instrumental in building foundational relationships with both our Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander staff and externally within local community.

Voice Treaty Truth – NAIDOC Week 2019:

WMQ celebrated NAIDOC Week in 2019 with a celebration held at Wheller on the Park in partnership with Strong Women Talking (SWT). Over 160 people attended including Wheller on the Park residents, WMQ staff, many members from the local Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander communities and some external indigenous organisations. Newly elected member Anika Wells, local federal member for Lilley attended and participated, along with Councillor Fiona Hammond. Beautiful cultural dance was shared and performed by two amazing dance groups: the Torres Strait Islander Mabyug Dance Group and the Aboriginal Parents of the Holy Rosary School and children from the Little Tiddas and Little Buddas Dance Troupe.

Sono Leone, Founder and CEO of Strong Women Talking—Marigurim Mubi Yangu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation founded with a vision and passion to deliver culturally appropriate prevention focused workshops and programs to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children in communities—delivered a powerful speech of sharing her “truth”.

The event was a tremendous success. Following a barbecue lunch including kangaroo sausages and Warrigal greens, our Wheller on the Park residents spent quality time participating in yarning circles with local Elders from the community, stories were shared, and some very special relationships were made.



Photo: Sono Leone and Elders yarning circle with Wheller on the Park residents.

Join Sono Leone and Danielle Sullivan at the virtual WMQ Exhibition Stand via the Synod portal at one of WMQ's live Q&As to hear how Wesley Mission Queensland and Strong Women Talking journey together.

Launch of the WMQ Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan:

During National Reconciliation Week from 27 May 2020–3 June 2020, WMQ further cemented its reconciliation journey intention by formally launching its Reconciliation Australia endorsed Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). We are committed to journeying with our First Nation brothers and sisters on a path to reconciliation as we commit to specific deliverables over the period of the life of the Innovate RAP.

During National Reconciliation Week, our plans of bringing our people together with our friends from community to officially launch the WMQ Innovate RAP document were impacted by COVID-19 restrictions. Instead WMQ launched the first RAP virtually by video. We are extremely excited to be

on this pathway of reconciliation and look forward to our action as an organisation making a significant contribution leading to change.

We invite Synod members to read Our Vision for Reconciliation, which can be found in the WMQ Exhibition space on the Synod portal.

Watch our launch video here:

<https://youtu.be/ZBTuhD0js5c>

Celebrating diversity should be fundamental to our DNA as a Christian organisation and as part of the Uniting Church. Celebrating diversity is about how we as individuals come together in respectful relationships where each and every person is valued equally and has the right to have their voice heard. *Geoff Batkin*

The Cooperative:

Isaiah 43:18-19

Do not remember the former things or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

the cooperative

We were delighted to launch our new centre for collaboration, The Cooperative, in August. The Cooperative is a project in public collaboration in the spirit of public theology. Existing to make space for dialogue from all and any members of the public and for sake of the public good. The Cooperative is bringing unexpected conversation partners together and working toward real social outcomes—across faiths, across community groups and services, and across professional and academic disciplines.

We have launched a dedicated website that is hosting conversation and dialogue from contributors across the nation. Each week at least three new articles are posted including opinion pieces, reflections on art and beauty, and monthly forum discussions on texts that reflect and interpret society. We are also hosting regular town hall meetings, book clubs, and public lectures that can be viewed on YouTube. In 2021 we will announce our inaugural biennial theology series which will include annual conferences, lectures and workshops, and will culminate in a book on public theology.

Numerous other projects are in the works and in 2021 we will be sharing exciting news about further collaborative work in the city of Brisbane and across the country.

Having commenced this new missional activity, we look forward to growing partnership and networks, and finding new ways to host otherwise impossible conversations—for the common good and because of the Gospel.

Join Dr McRandal at the virtual WMQ Exhibition stand via the Synod portal at one of WMQ's live Q&As to hear about The Cooperative.

For more information on The Cooperative, visit:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUIV3tc9aNDpC1URD3Y1TXw>

<https://thecooperativehub.com/>

NewLife Brisbane:

The NewLife Brisbane church plant launched on 3 March 2019. Over the last year NewLife have seen seven people baptised, over 30 people respond to the gospel for the first time, ten small groups start and grow, the start of a vibrant Kidzlife ministry, and overall growth from a core of 50 people to 150 regular attendees. NewLife is passionate about reaching out to the Brisbane community of young professionals, families, university students and youth to see lives changed by the power of the gospel. NewLife have a special outreach to Raymont College and a number of students have begun attending and finding faith. NewLife Brisbane has grown into a thriving worshipping community.

The covenant relationship between NewLife Brisbane and Albert Street Uniting Church is very important to both our communities. Albert Street Uniting Church provides worship facilities, logistical support, and office and meeting spaces for the NewLife leadership team and community activities. We have worked together on several ministry initiatives including Alpha courses and combined worship services. We are very excited to see our partnership grow and flourish, and look forward to seeing what God has in store for us all into the future.

Pastoral care and chaplaincy team:

Our Pastoral and Spiritual Care (PSC) Team normally consists of five full-time ordained ministers, three part-time lay PSC workers, two part-time retired ministers, and a team of dedicated volunteers. The PSC Team is primarily located at two different sites: Area North (AN) at Chermside and Area West (AW) at Oxley. The PSC Team has been restructured to streamline service provision and care. It is currently developing a PSC framework and strategic plan in order to meet the increasing demands of ministry within the aged care and community service sectors of our organisation. The PSC framework is based upon a model of care that promotes a proactive development of pastoral relationships in keeping with the holistic and multidisciplinary team approaches of the Eden Alternative™ and The Wesley Charter.

Our PSC Team has participated in a variety of training opportunities with UnitingCare and Meaningful Ageing and is committed to ongoing professional development and best practice pastoral and

spiritual care. Each week more than 1500 residents, staff and families from across our aged care homes and retirement living communities are invited to take part in worship services, Bible studies, and other activities that promote spiritual care and well-being. Our PSC chaplains, workers and volunteers visit with residents, clients, families and staff each day to offer pastoral care, prayerful compassion and spiritual blessing.

Providing pastoral and spiritual support during a global pandemic has certainly been very challenging for our team, but with creativity and commitment we have worked with our aged care homes to bring comfort and care to our residents, families and staff in these difficult times.

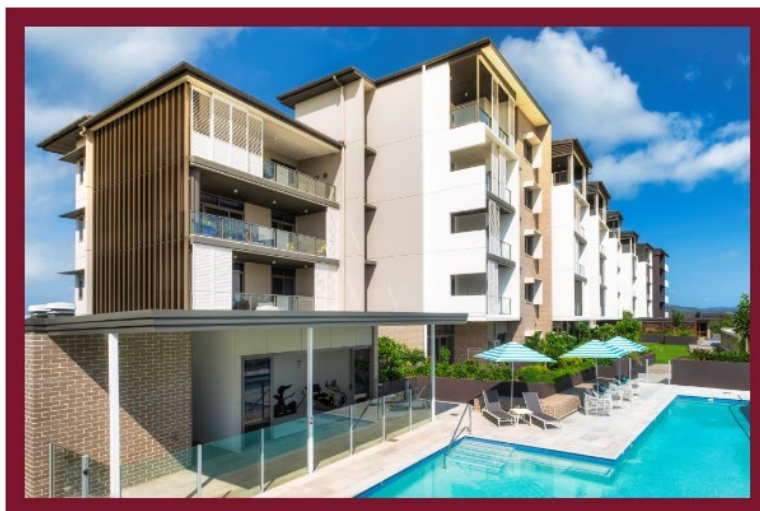
From 1 November 2020, WMQ is excited to announce the appointment of a new PSC Team Leader to give oversight to this important ministry and to develop opportunities to expand pastoral and spiritual care into our community services directorate.

Highlights:

The most profound achievement during 2020 has been how our staff have responded with creativity, resilience and innovation during the unprecedented challenges of COVID across our service network. Despite these challenges there has been continuing growth and diversification in the services offered by WMQ and also our service footprint.

Rosemount Retirement Living Community:

For many years we have been deliberately developing the concept of integrated inter-generational communities supporting people from all ages, backgrounds, abilities and those living with special needs. In June 2019 Rosemount Retirement Community (stage 1 with 70 apartments) was completed and this adds a new dimension of community living and connectedness at Sinnamon Village. We expect to start stage 2 (the final stage) in 2022.



 **ROSEMOUNT Retirement Community**
SINNAMON PARK

ORCA:

At both the 33rd and 34th Synods, WMQ reported on the ORCA project and are pleased again to share with Synod the growth of this significant program changing the lives of young people and their families.

An acronym for 'Opportunities, Readiness, Community and Abilities', The ORCA Project is a post-school option for young people with disability that includes training, work experience and ultimately employment. It is an opportunity for participants to build capacity, enhance their lives and find meaningful connections in the community.

Originally based at Albany Creek Uniting Church the program now also runs out of a space at Wesley Mission Queensland Chermside. At the beginning of 2020 The ORCA Project opened at a new location at Broadwater Road Uniting Church (Mansfield) in response to the requests for a program in the area.

The ORCA program has grown to have the capacity to run three programs. In total across the last two and a half years, we have had over 75 young people enrolled in the program at different stages. Some of these young people have graduated, some have moved to a new house, and others have found other programs or activities that suit their needs more at this point in time.

We have had a lot of interest from families on the Gold Coast, Ipswich, Sunshine Coast, Caboolture, Toowoomba and more regional areas of the state. While we commenced some initial conversations with Uniting Churches in both Ipswich and Toowoomba, the COVID-19 challenges of 2020 have encouraged us to slow down, consolidate and strengthen the current programs while we wait for things to settle.

The flexible model of The ORCA Project could mean that it can be adapted for other congregations that are in a welcoming community, with young people living with different abilities who are keen to get ready for work.

Rev Alison Cox who oversees the program will be available during the 35th Synod via the virtual WMQ Exhibition Stand on the Synod portal for members to have the opportunity to connect with Alison and hear firsthand the significant difference this missional program makes in the lives of young people with disability.

Project Plenty

WMQ's journey with Project Plenty. "How can we as one church contribute most effectively to God's mission in Queensland and the world?"

We consulted extensively with the Project Plenty team and found the strategy and intent aligned with our own organisational strategic planning. Workshops were held with the WMQ Executive Leadership Team, WMQ Board, WMQ Council and Albert Street Uniting Church congregation.

Over 300 of our people had the privilege to hear from the Moderator and the General Secretary of the Queensland Synod, and to learn about Project Plenty at our annual Charter Day in October 2019.

Wherever we can we seek to develop collaborative mission responses involving WMQ, congregations and presbyteries engaging with people in need in a local context.

Plentiful Leadership Program

WMQ welcomed the Synod wide leadership development initiative: the Plentiful Leadership Program. Eight of our emerging leaders are involved in the first cohort. The program is an investment in leadership for the sake of a flourishing church and aims to enable courageous, strategic and adaptive leaders now and into the future. The program is designed to embed best practice leadership principles, with a focus on the well-being of the leader in order to flourish as an individual and lead a team and organisation to its full potential.

The program is structured around skill and capacity building, deep practical application, and individual challenge and support to enhance each individual's gifts. The course is run through leadership development workshops (remotely delivered), group coaching sessions and a peer to peer mentoring program. Each participant has the opportunity to be both mentor and mentee.

There is enormous value for our staff to participate in this program as it enables and fosters collaboration, relationship and network building opportunities across all areas of the church. It further enables WMQ to ensure alignment between our own Leadership Development Program and that of the broader church.

Challenges/risks as we progress

As mentioned earlier, the aged care and community services sector is facing unprecedented challenges with: two Royal Commissions (aged care and disability); the impact of COVID-19; negative media and consequent community perception arising from the Royal Commissions; unprecedented financial sustainability challenges (with 60 per cent of aged care homes in Australia operating at a loss); difficulty in recruiting the staff we need in many of the service areas in which we operate. WMQ will need to continue to find operational efficiencies and additional service areas where we can generate a surplus, in order to deficit fund a number of missional programs which receive no or little government funding.

Whilst these challenges are significant, we are also responding to the growing service and support needs of an ageing population, as well as growing service responses for people living with disability and mental health issues (with increased government funding available to support people in need).

WMQ continues to maintain its reputation as an innovative and quality service provider within the broader community through government accreditation and regulatory requirements. Over time we have developed a diverse property portfolio that is suited for our mission and ministry, well located and has potential for further capital investment when the time is right. This question of timing will be revisited after the release of the final report of the Aged Care Royal Commission in February 2021.

Our challenge is to keep asking the question: why? Coming back to our core mission as part of the Uniting Church. Is WMQ well placed to respond to this community need at this time and in this place? Is this initiative consistent with our purpose as part of the Uniting Church to participate in the mission of God—towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people. This is the question that our board and executive leadership team keep coming back to. Why?

Preparing to farewell the WMQ CEO and welcome a new CEO

This year marks a significant milestone for WMQ, with our beloved CEO Geoff Batkin AM retiring at the end of December. Geoff began as the inaugural CEO of WMQ in 1997 with an annual budget of \$24 million and 90 per cent of our mission profile focussed on residential aged care. Over the last 23 years, Geoff has increased our annual budget ten-fold (\$240 million) and has grown and diversified our community services sector to now comprise more than half of our business.

During this time Geoff oversaw the construction of Wheller On the Park, Rosemount Retirement Living and a number of state-of-the-art residential aged care homes (Anam Cara, John Wesley Gardens, Parkview and Dovetree). WMQ now has 1000 aged care places and 600 people forming community in retirement living locations around Brisbane. Geoff was also fundamental in the redevelopment of the Ann Street site which enabled construction of the nine story Wesley House building, home to the Albert Street Uniting Church offices and a variety of commercial tenancies.

Geoff has transformed the missional focus of our organisation to now include more than 80 community service programmes, employing over 3000 staff with more than 1500 volunteers. WMQ has partnered with local congregations, business entrepreneurs and national service providers to provide multi-generational services such as Hummingbird House (Queensland's only children's hospice), Youth Foyer (housing and support for young people), Youngcare, headspace, Supported Disability Accommodation, and a variety of individual programmes reaching out to more than 100,000 people each year.

WMQ's mission encourages us to walk alongside people in need, offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community well-being. Geoff Batkin AM is a living example of this mission and has been an inspiration to us all. He will be sorely missed.

Rev Dr Peter Hobson

Conclusion

Micah 6:8

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

Our prayer is that God continues to bless the mission and ministry of WMQ as part of the Uniting Church.

Proposals to the 35th Synod

It is proposed that the 35th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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35th Synod Reports Summary



The following are highlights drawn from each report as presented to Synod. This summary is provided for your reference.

This report has been updated as at 19 October 2020.

R00 Moderator's Report

Moderator: Rev David Baker

I encourage the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod to have confidence in the gospel; for all of us to bring our gifts of heart, mind, and strength to the work of being a sign, instrument, and foretaste of the coming promised kingdom of God, in all our broad and diverse opportunities of witnessing to the goodness of God in Christ. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated how deeply committed our people are to the mission of God, and how adaptive and innovative leadership can be. Project Plenty is a tremendously encouraging message from our members that should give our leaders and councils in the church the courage to bring transformational change.

The Moderator's role has been summed up as giving pastoral and spiritual oversight to the life of the Synod, bearing witness in the public space, and leading the Uniting Church's engagement with other churches and the wider community. It involves several regulatory responsibilities, along with chairing the Synod Standing Committee—the body charged with giving general oversight to the life of the church between Synods in Session.

R01 Synod Standing Committee

General Secretary: Rev Heather den Houting

The Synod Standing Committee strives to hold the vision and mission of the church in its sight as it deals with the significant risks and incidents that arise between general Synod meetings.

It has been buoyed by the Uniting Church's response to the Project Plenty process, which indicates that the church is inspired and responsive to the constant call of God on our life together.

This report highlights the important decisions made to give effect to the vision and direction of the whole of the church.

R02 General Secretary

General Secretary: Rev Heather den Houting

But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted about many things..." (Luke 10:41)

I've always struggled with the teaching on this passage. As one who is always distracted and worried about many things, I find any interpretation which involves a rebuke to Martha and sympathetic reading toward Mary a frustrating experience. There are always so many things that present before us in our lives and getting as much done as possible to make life easier and equitable for all just seems to make sense to me.

Sometimes it feels as though the role of General Secretary is essentially the service ministry of Martha. Is the house safe and secure for guests? Has the food been sourced to prepare for the feast? Is the bedding laundered and the guests adequately accommodated? Do people know where to find us? Is information about how and where to gather appropriately circulated? Is the communal kitchen compliant with all work health and safety requirements? ... You get the drift.

This passage makes more sense to me if we do not read it as an either/or approach.

What if we stood gently in the space and understood that God loves the builder as much as the architect, loves the cleaner as much as the visionary, loves the reader as much as the author. This approach encourages us to reflect and understand that in all that we do, we are asked by Jesus to reflect the question, “who am I and who are we” as part of God’s good creation? Why are we here? What are we called to do? How do we return to the practice of sitting at the feet of Jesus? This doesn’t mean you have to put down activity. But it does mean you have to get the balance right.

In the last 18 months, Project Plenty has been such a heartening experience and delight to see unfold. This has been the church practicing this very skill. It has taken the time to ask itself the question about its nature and purpose, and is a testament to the hope and inspiration we find through Christ.

It is only in the light of this glorifying and illuminating purpose, as followers of Christ, that the ministry of service can continue in a balanced way. This report will let you know of the activities of the General Secretary and the Synod office in overseeing, maintaining and operating this service ministry of the church, informed by discipleship to Christ.

R03 Synod Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements

Secretary of the Placements Committee: Rev John Ruhle

The Placement Committee has sought to do the following since the 34th Synod:

- Support the “call” process within the life of the church.
- Streamline and make this process more transparent and efficient.
- Update our data base and documentation supporting the placements process.

R04 Finance, Investment and Property Board

Chair: Ralph Collins

Good stewardship of Uniting Church assets and funds is a primary focus of the Finance, Investment and Property Board (FIP Board). The FIP Board demonstrates this by:

- Working with congregations, presbyteries, schools and agencies to ensure church assets are used to achieve the best long-term outcomes.
- Seeking investments that balance the risk/return equation and increase revenue into the church.
- Making available (within its power and responsibilities) funds that are used to grow the mission of the church.

R05 Board for Christian Formation

Chair: Rev Peter Armstrong

The Board for Christian Formation (BCF) serves the formation and educational needs of the mission of the church through offering governance and strategic leadership that is responsive, innovative, and diligent. The BCF is maturing in its capacity and functions to be more able to serve the church. Trinity College Queensland continues to revitalise its educational philosophy, its formation program, and its course offerings to increase its reach and engagement across the church.

These are exciting times with significant challenges before us. It has been pleasing to see the development of both Trinity College Queensland, as well as the offerings that the BCF is developing in service of the wider church and councils.

The future is encouraging with developing partnerships across the Synod with congregations, presbyteries, agencies and schools.

I wish to take this opportunity to give thanks to God's faithfulness and provision of people with the gifts and graces to serve on the board, committees and through our college. Thank you to all who have served the purpose of the Board for Christian Formation in the Queensland Synod.

R06 Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

Chair: Noela Lister

Our schools and colleges continue to provide an amazing opportunity for the Uniting Church to engage in the lives of thousands of families across the state, bringing the love of Christ into their lives. In schools alone (excluding ecumenical schools) we have approximately 8500 students and approximately another 1300 in residential colleges. The Schools and Residential Colleges Commission is working with the Synod office and our schools and colleges to bring greater accountability and alignment of the schools to the church. The school's strategy implementation will be the key piece of work in the 2020–2022 synodal term.

R07 Synod Chaplaincy Commission

Chair: Rev Brian Hoole

The Synod Chaplaincy Commission is reimagining its future and how it might best serve the church through a strategy development process to produce a strategic plan that aligns with Project Plenty and gives direction and purpose as an integral ministry within the Queensland Synod.

Chaplaincy remains a significant expression of the mission and ministry of the whole church as it engages with people and communities across Queensland. The community-centric nature of the ministry of chaplaincy continues to have much to offer to the church's exploration of future directions and expressions of Christian community.

The Synod Chaplaincy Commission seeks to fulfil its mandate and responsibility for the oversight and development of chaplaincy within the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church.

R08 Synod Multi-Cross Culture Reference Group

Chair: Rev Louisa Yu

The Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group (MCCRG) has gone through some major changes in membership and leadership. As a result, one key focus of the MCCRG is to expand its membership and to maintain stable and sustainable leadership. It is currently in a stabilising stage and is actively looking for members who are passionate and able to contribute to the vision of being a multicultural church.

The MCCRG is focusing more on connecting with presbyteries, congregations and faith communities to intentionally build relationships and bridges, especially with those which are not connected with Next Gen Arise (NGA), MCCRG initiatives or are still navigating through the impact of the Assembly resolutions on same gender marriage and the COVID-19 pandemic.

R09 Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee

Secretary: Rev Russell Morris

The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee (SERC) has undergone a process of regeneration with some new members and discovered some new opportunities for ecumenical engagement, while continuing to nurture existing relationships through Queensland Churches Together and other groups.

R10 Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee

Chair: Rev Lyn Burden

The committee is functioning well, appreciative of the work of Rev Heather Griffin and Rev Garth Read. We will keep up with promoting interfaith understanding, as we believe it broadens our horizons, promotes respect and tolerance, and challenges us to be better followers of Christ! Members of the Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee attend different interfaith forums and events that enable the church to be visible in these spaces.

The Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee has valued the wisdom and expertise of Rev Garth Read, Rev Bryan Gilmour and Lesley Bryant who have retired from the committee.

R11 Presbytery of Bremer Brisbane

Presbytery Minister: Rev Glen Schweitzer

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery says its purpose is “creating healthy Christian communities, living God’s mission”. God has begun a work in Bremer Brisbane in reorganising and regenerating congregations which will be a focus in coming years. In Christ the best is yet to come!

R12 Presbytery of Carpentaria

Presbytery Minister: Rev Christy Allen

The Presbytery of Carpentaria is committed to mission and growing disciples in every context and every community within its bounds. We continue to seek God’s plan for our new Presbytery and build relationships between ministry agents, lay persons and the communities in which we are present.

R13 Presbytery of Central Queensland

Supply Presbytery Minister: Rev Suzy Sitton

This report reflects the collaboration, communication, and care within our presbytery and has been compiled by a group of voices from across the presbytery.

The challenge before the Presbytery of Central Queensland is to see and hear how the Spirit is calling us to use our expensive building assets in a different way, and to efficiently deploy our ministerial agents to support the many congregations who are finding it difficult to financially support them.

R14 Presbytery of Mary Burnett

Presbytery Minister: Rev Chris Crause

Inspired by the imperative to “be my witnesses” call from Acts 1:8, Mary Burnett Presbytery will be making and growing disciples; serve others in mission; and working collaboratively for intentional mission and ministry. We’ve created a Strategic Missional Alliance Resource Team (SMART) and appointed a part-time (0.5) Mission Engagement Officer. We are moving from a mostly reactive mode to one of being proactive.

R15 Presbytery of Moreton Rivers

Presbytery Minister: Rev Mark Cornford

Moreton Rivers Presbytery has responded well to the challenges of COVID-19 and many congregations have used the opportunity to develop an online presence as a new way of connecting with people. Congregations in the Moreton Rivers Presbytery have many positive stories and opportunities for mission; however, congregations and the presbytery do also face challenges for the future related to workloads and sustainability which COVID-19 has intensified.

R16 Presbytery of South Moreton

Presbytery Minister: Rev David Busch

COVID-19 has been a game-changer for congregations in their operations and their missional thinking. Each context has its own opportunities, capacities and limitations in responding to these challenges. In each place, the question we face is not, “When will this end?” but rather, “Where might this lead?” and “What does faithfulness to the gospel require of us?” We celebrate significant mission initiatives at Flagstone Community Centre, Southside Uniting Church, NewLife Coolangatta and emerging in Redland City. We face big challenges in having a strong missional presence in the burgeoning northern Gold Coast corridor and through congregation revitalisation in other places.

The presbytery has lost three multi-cultural church communities since the 34th Synod over same-gender marriage. In the wake of budget cuts that have seen the equivalent of one ministry position lost, the presbytery is reviewing its life and strategic priorities which will also inform decisions about future resourcing needs.

R17 Presbytery of The Downs

Presbytery Minister: Rev Yvonne McRostie

- Gratitude to God for the support from across the whole Synod as we face many natural disasters.
- BlueCare Grief and Loss Program continues to grow and benefit many within the presbytery and beyond.
- People and healthy living systems are our greatest resource for growing the mission of the church.
- Project Plenty highlighted the community needs surrounding issues of mental health and well-being.
- Ecumenical engagement across the presbytery is vital to future ministry.

R18 UnitingCare Queensland

Chair: Nigel Alexander

This report to the 35th Synod in Session demonstrates UnitingCare Queensland's (UnitingCare) commitment to reaching and serving the people and communities of Queensland in ways that have the greatest positive impact on their health and quality of life.

In the past year, we have embodied the biblical theme of the 35th Synod—grow—as we continued our transformation journey. We have demonstrated measurable progress in stabilising our financial situation, and strengthening the organisational capability so we can successfully achieve our aspiration of becoming a leader in health, aged care and community services by 2030.

Through UnitingCare's ongoing response to the COVID-19 crisis, our people have demonstrated the heart of service that differentiates us from other providers. They have gone above and beyond to keep delivering the services for those who need us most. Our people have achieved this while meeting increased demand for some services, the suspension of others, all against a backdrop of ongoing sector review and reform.

During the coming year, we are turning our attention to embedding increased strategic thinking across all areas of UnitingCare, with a strong focus on delivery and outcomes that achieve our mission.

R19 Wesley Mission Queensland

Chair: Geoff Batkin

We acknowledge as a church that the resources with which God has entrusted us are a gift to be used for mission and ministry in our community. We are small, but we are big—the people of Wesley Mission Queensland seek to have a very big heart. As part of the Uniting Church we are people who love God and want to make a difference; we are congregations—God's people gathering in worship, witness and service; we offer service programs supporting thousands of people in need at all ages and stages of life; we are thousands of staff and volunteers from all different backgrounds, faith and cultures united in the mission of God—towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.