



GOD'S STORY | OUR STORY ▪ **SYNOD 38**

General Proposal 1: Renewal and Growth: Shared Ambition and Strategic Foundations

That the Synod

1. Reaffirm the Shared Ambition, first outlined in Project Plenty and adopted at the 35th Synod, until 2028, at the 40th Synod:
"One church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community."
2. Adopt the following five strategic foundations to align the Synod with the "Renewal and Growth" Strategy of the Synod Office:
 - Mission Renewal and Growth
 - Flourishing Presbyteries
 - Forming Leaders
 - Fit For Purpose Governance
 - Stewarding Resources
3. Note that an annual report to the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) and a report to each Synod in Session shall be received on the progress of the Renewal & Growth Strategy until 2028.
4. Note the final Plenty Report included as background to this Shared Ambition and Strategy proposal.

Scope

Recommendation 1 seeks the Synod's affirmation of the Shared Ambition of Project Plenty as a worthy and continued vision for us as a Synod until 2028, at the 40th Synod meeting.

Recommendation 2, noting the scheduled end of Project Plenty (and the associated four priority areas of Discipleship, Transforming Communities, Fit For Purpose and Life Together), seeks to transition the Priority Areas to align with the Strategic Foundations of the new Renewal & Growth Strategy.

Recommendation 3 is intended to set reporting requirements to the relevant Synod governing bodies for the delivery of the Renewal & Growth strategy. The General Secretary will be responsible for the development of reporting as per their accountabilities.

Recommendation 4 notes the final report of Project Plenty as the project comes to the timetabled end (as per 35th Synod GP5).

Rationale

Renewal & Growth Strategy

At the 38th Synod, Project Plenty draws to a close as the 2020-25 strategic focus. Plenty has been a large and transformative piece of work for the Queensland Synod, yielding significant fruit in the areas of discipleship, church innovation, governance reform, and closer relationships within the church and its institutions. Building on the strong foundations and initiatives of the Plenty strategy, we are now well positioned to adopt an aligned and broader Renewal & Growth Strategy for 2025-28.

Shared Ambition

The Shared Ambition was developed after a long and in-depth consultation program at the beginning of Project Plenty and has served a guiding vision for the Queensland Synod. It remains as relevant now as it was when it was adopted and currently serves as the Vision Statement for the Synod office to help guide the work we do.

Strategic Foundations

The Synod Office has already adopted these as part of the Strategic Plan since 2024, approved by the Synod Standing Committee and has been working to this end. These strategic foundations encapsulate the key focus areas of Plenty and important continuing work, while working to resource and equip the church to grow sustainably into the future. Further detail of these five strategic priorities is available in the appendix under the Synod Office Strategic Plan.

A consultation process has been underway since November 2024 to socialise these ideas, gauge support and seek feedback. This consultation included video and in-person presentations at Synod Standing Committee, Presbytery Synod Interface and Mission Collaboration & Coordination Committees and Presbytery meetings, circulation through Uniting News and a detailed feedback survey with over 110 participants from across the Synod. The Presbytery meeting presentation and details of the consultation feedback are also contained in the appendix.

Regular reporting

In line with the Synod office – and proposed Synod - strategic foundations of Fit for Purpose Governance and Stewarding Resources, it is proposed that an annual report on the progress of the Renewal & Growth Strategy be given to the Synod Standing Committee and to each Synod in Session until 2028. SSC will also receive regular updates throughout the year as part of the General Secretary's reports.

Project Plenty report

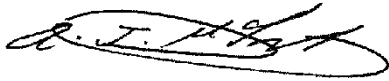
The final Project Plenty report is attached as an appendix to this proposal, outlining the progress, final status and operational transition of the project initiatives and actions, as well as a number of the stories of the transformative work done in Plenty.

renewal

Proposers

Name: Adam McIntosh
Email: adam.mcintosh@ucaqld.com.au
Phone: 07 3377 9777

Signature:



Name: Catherine Solomon
Email: catherine.solomon@ucaqld.com.au
Phone: 0438 557 677

Signature:



Queensland Synod Strategy

OUR SHARED AMBITION

We are **ONE CHURCH** active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness.

Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for Church and community.

OUR STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

MISSION RENEWAL AND GROWTH

We will accompany the Church, supporting renewed discipleship, new growth and missional development. We will deepen our covenant with the UAICC and advocate and act for Social Justice for all.

FLOURISHING PRESBYTERIES

We will co-create plans to support Presbyteries, developing new approaches to shared and delegated responsibilities.

FORMING LEADERS

We will embed, build, and optimise the Synod's leadership principles and pathways, and develop emerging leaders across Queensland.

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE GOVERNANCE

We will improve whole-of-church governance processes and structures, implement governance review outcomes for institutions, and develop the capability of governing bodies and councils of the Church.

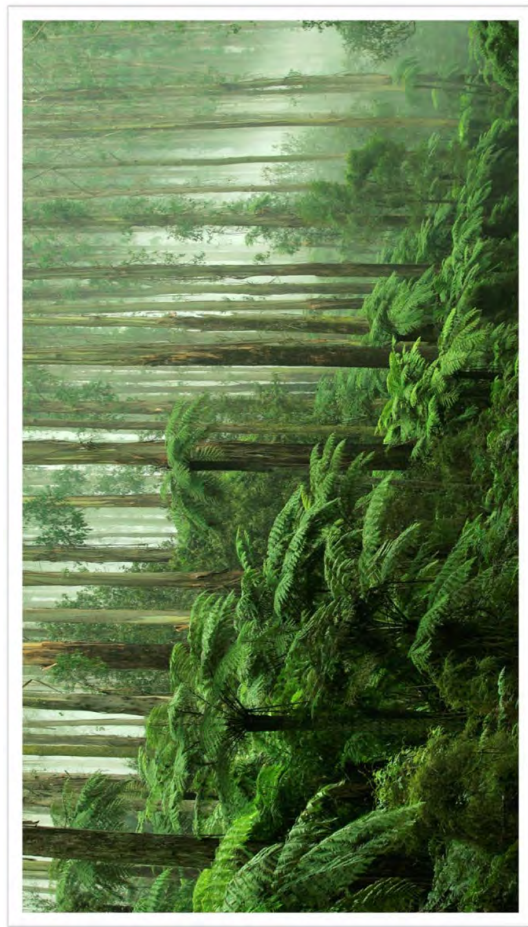
STEWARDING RESOURCES

We will steward our resources and innovate and diversify funding sources to improve financial sustainability for the Office of the Synod and the wider Church in Queensland.

renewal



Synod Office Strategic Plan



We grow together...

FAITH FOR A NEW SEASON

renewal

Synod Office

OUR FOUNDATIONS FOR RENEWAL AND GROWTH

Strategy on a Page FY 25-27



SYNOD VISION

We are ONE CHURCH active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for Church and community.

SYNOD OFFICE PURPOSE

The purpose of the Synod Office is to **ENABLE, EQUIP and ENCOURAGE** a renewing and growing Church across Queensland.

WHO WE ARE

MISSION-DRIVEN

Entering more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church in Australia (Basis of Union para 2)

SERVICE-ORIENTED

Practicing servant leadership, driven by a clear vision and purpose

RELATIONALLY-FOCUSED

Effective collaboration and support for the wider Church in pursuit of our shared Vision

STRATEGIC FOUNDATION

MISSION RENEWAL AND GROWTH

We will accompany the Church, supporting renewed discipleship, new growth and missional development. We will deepen our covenant with the UAICC and advocate and act for Social Justice for all.

FLOURISHING PRESBYTERIES

We will co-create plans to support Presbyteries, developing new approaches to shared services and delegated responsibilities.

FORMING LEADERS

We will embed, build, and optimise the Synod's leadership principles and pathways, and develop emerging leaders across Queensland.

FIT-FOR-PURPOSE GOVERNANCE

We will improve whole-of church governance processes and structures, implement governance review outcomes for institutions, and develop the capability of governing bodies and councils of the Church.

STEWARDED RESOURCES

We will steward our resources and innovate and diversify funding sources to improve financial sustainability for the Office of the Synod and the wider Church in Queensland.

renewal



The United Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Page 2

Strategic Priorities

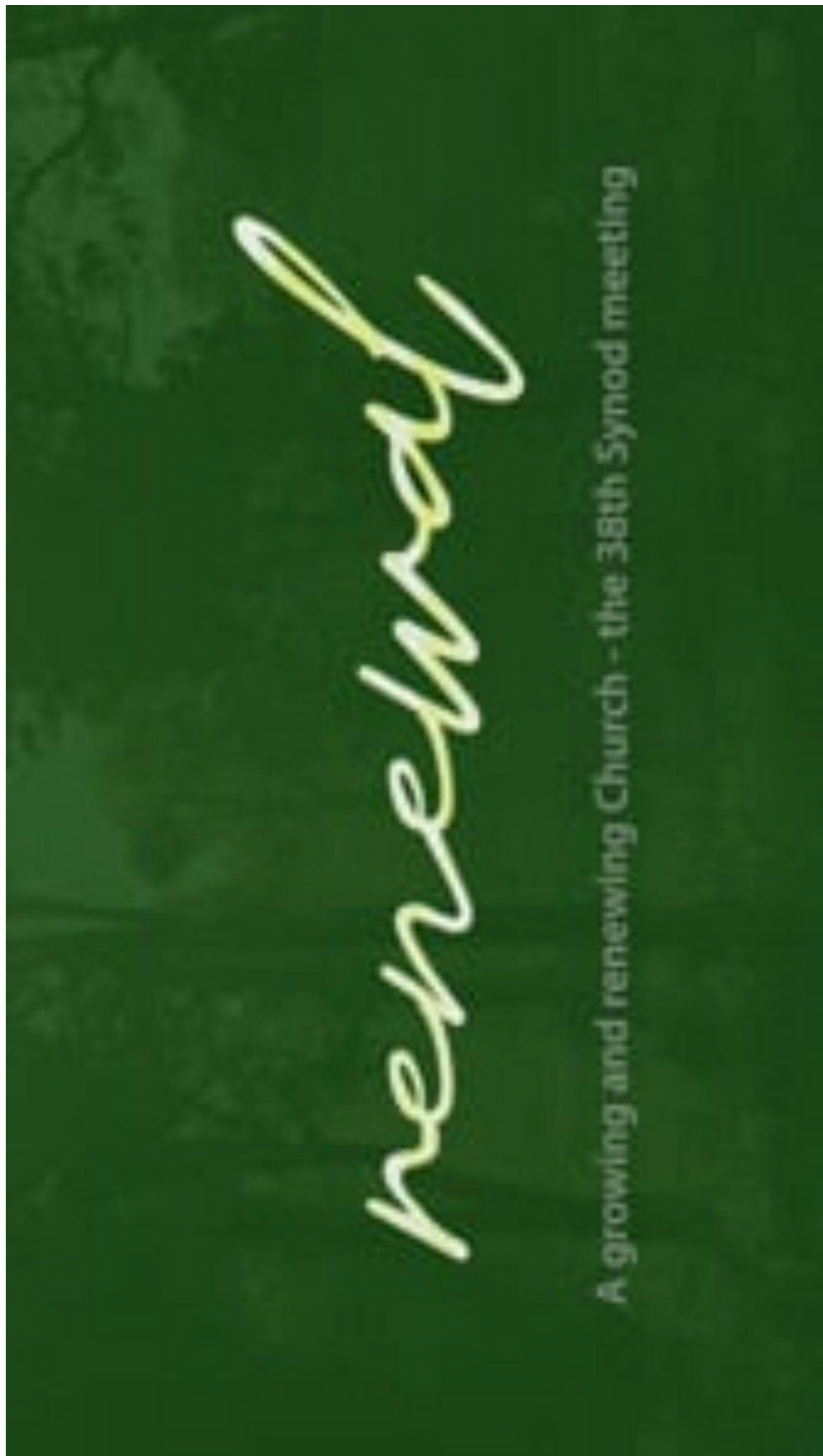
Each of the five Strategic Foundations is supported by several Strategic Priorities. Alongside ongoing business-as-usual tasks, these Strategic Priorities will form the basis of ongoing operational planning and activity for each Synod Office team.

MISSION RENEWAL AND GROWTH	FLOURISHING PRESBYTERIES	FORMING LEADERS	FIT-FOR-PURPOSE GOVERNANCE	STEWARDING RESOURCES
1.1 Support renewed discipleship culture across generations 1.2 Accompany the church, building missional capacity to enable new growth including new expressions of church and church planting 1.3 Support and equip congregation revitalisation 1.4 Encourage missional development in CALD communities 1.5 Support deepening of covenant relationship with UAICC 1.6 Resource the church for advocacy and action in social justice, and promote the public voice of the church 1.7 Resource the church for advocacy and action in environmental sustainability 1.8 Lead planning for Plenty 2.0 - for Post 2025 1.9 Build alignment across the Church for a new season of renewal and growth	2.1 Co-create with each Presbytery a plan for sustainable and effective Synod Support Services located within each Presbytery and enhance the effective delivery of services in areas of administration, compliance and governance 2.2 Together with Presbyteries, develop new approaches to shared services and the delivery of delegated responsibilities 2.3 Facilitate a review of Presbytery financial sustainability and operations	3.1 Build or optimise leadership pathways across the Synod 3.2 Embed the Synod Office's Leadership Framework 3.3 Attract and intentionally develop emerging leaders for the Synod Office and the wider church 3.4 Expand access to theological education and leadership development across the State	4.1 Develop the capability of Synod governing bodies and councils of their church and their officers and members 4.2 Co-create with Uniting Education and our Property Trust Schools, an optimised governance structure and develop a strategy for implementation. 4.3 Implement governance review outcomes for agencies 4.4 Improve whole-of-Church governance processes and structures 4.5 Further develop Synod Office Culture Roadmap	5.1 Steward capital to achieve missional and commercial priorities 5.2 Optimise the functioning of the Synod Office 5.3 Improve financial sustainability for the Synod Office 5.4 Improve financial sustainability for the wider Church by diversifying funding sources

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



Please watch the introduction video below:
<https://vimeo.com/1025346720>

We want your feedback!

Scan the QR code or visit
surveymonkey.com/r/8F6YD9S
and tell us what you think.





Shared ambition from the 35th Synod October 2020 to May 2025

We are one church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.



Discipleship



**Transforming
communities**



Fit for purpose



Life together

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Developments since the 37th Synod

The original timeline for Project Plenty is completed in 2025. The initiatives and actions will be included in a final report to the 38th Synod.

The theme for the 37th Synod is Renewal: Faith for a new season. A Mission Accompany Team is developed and a Church Planting Strategy is presented to the 38th Synod. ***What is needed to support a renewing and growing Church in Queensland?***

New Synod leadership with the appointment of a new General Secretary and Moderator in 2023.

MC3 establishes Synod Mission priorities - these are approved by the Synod Standing Committee. These are: 1. Deliver new growth.

2. Support challenged areas. 3. Build missional capacity. ***How do these align to Plenty & inform the priorities for the Synod from 2025?***

Synod Resource Review first report is completed and outlines the importance to rethink resourcing model for Presbyteries and how to resource a renewing and growing Church. A suite of resource related proposals developed for the 38th Synod meeting.

Moderator and General Secretary engage in Presbytery leadership consultations and Synod committees engagement throughout 2023 and 2024 with emerging themes shaping a Synod Office Strategy.

Synod Office Strategy approved by Synod Standing Committee with a focus on the Plenty Shared Ambition, Growing and Renewing Church and five new strategic foundations to align with Plenty Priorities.

How do we continue to progress the work of Plenty, align our focus across the Synod and take meaningful action towards a renewing and growing Church in Queensland until 2028?

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

New Priorities for 2025-2028

2020-2025

Discipleship

- Refreshed discipleship culture
- Engaging young people
- Church innovation

Transforming Communities

- Wellbeing and mental health support
- Covenant with first peoples
- Environment and sustainability

Fit for Purpose

- Governance reform
- Mission presence, health and vitality
- Operational efficiencies
- Leadership development

Life Together

- Mission partnerships



2025-2028

Mission Renewal and Growth

- Refreshed discipleship culture
- Wellbeing and mental health support
- Engaging young people

Flourishing Presbyteries

- Mission partnerships
- Church innovation

Forming Leaders

- Leadership development

Fit for Purpose Governance

- Governance reform

Stewarding Resources

- Operational efficiencies
- Environment and sustainability
- Mission presence, health and vitality

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

2025-2028: Our Foundations for Renewal and Growth

We are one church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.

Mission Renewal and Growth	Flourishing Presbyteries	Forming Leaders	Fit for Purpose Governance	Stewarding Resources
We will accompany the Church, supporting renewed discipleship, new growth and missional development. We will deepen our covenant with the UAICC and advocate and act for Social Justice for all	We will co-create plans to support Presbyteries, developing new approaches to shared and delegated responsibilities	We will embed, build, and optimise the Synod's leadership principles and pathways, and develop emerging leaders across Queensland	We will improve whole of church governance processes and structures, implement governance review outcomes for institutions, and develop the capability of governing bodies and councils of the Church	We will steward our resources and innovate and diversify funding sources to improve financial sustainability for the Office of the Synod and the wider Church in Queensland

The way ahead with Plenty 2.0 for Approval at the 38th Synod



Do we set our gaze on the foundations for renewal and growth?
Is our shared ambition still just as relevant?
Should this be adopted until the 40th Synod in 2028?



Are the five new strategic foundations the right focus areas
for the next three years?



That if the shared ambition and strategic foundations are adopted,
an annual review of actions and initiatives will be reported to
Synod Standing Committee.
That a progress report is presented to the 39th Synod.

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Renewal and Growth Strategy – Proposal Consultation

Phase 2 - Survey Monkey Summary

- **Shared Ambition**

Q2: Support for the continuation of the Shared Ambition (115 answered, 7 skipped)

- **Support:** 97.39% (112 respondents)
- **Do not support:** 2.61% (3 respondents)

- **Strategic Foundations**

Q3: Which of the 5 strategic foundations do you support for priority focus for the Synod until 2028? (120 answered, 2 skipped)

- **Mission Renewal and Growth:** 80.83% (97 respondents)
- **Flourishing Presbyteries:** 58.33% (70 respondents)
- **Forming Leaders:** 70.83% (85 respondents)
- **Fit-for-Purpose Governance:** 52.50% (63 respondents)
- **Stewarding Resources:** 51.67% (62 respondents)

Comments:

- Children, youth and young adults; mission (local, national and global)
- I didn't tick 'flourishing presbyteries' not because I don't want presbyteries to flourish, but because I think we need to do some reviewing of the equity and balance or capacity and resourcing across all the presbyteries in order to potentially revise the presbyteries to be more equitable across rural, regional and urban locations. I also believe we need to do the basic social demographic mapping across the whole state in order to identify how the needs of Queensland have changed, where the growth is, where the desperate need for the church's presence is, where we 'should' be present despite what it may cost us, and where we need to move away from given doubling up of local congregation presence. This is a collective piece of work requiring all of us to carry the load and enjoy the benefits of the diverse contexts in our synod. This is the only way we can all be more aware of each other's needs and challenges and therefore steward our collective resources well. I also believe this reviewing must include schools and agencies within the Qld synod, and not only focus on 'congregation' presence in the traditional sense. We need to be focusing on 'communities of faith' whether they look like a traditional 'congregation' with a building, or whether they look like the gathered people of God in the midst of a service or educational facility.
- MORE FOCUS ON LOCAL CONGREGATION INSTEAD OF REGIONAL CHURCHES DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ISOLATE CHURCH AND COMMUNITY
- I look at the growth of presbytery staffing, and I have a great concern that this is not money best spent. I'm not confident that Presbyteries are working efficiently or

effectively; it seems that we're spending more and more on management, but that this is not as effective as it could be.

- With understanding that Ministry with Children & Families, Youth, Young Adults and InterGen is connected with each of the strategic foundations.
- Strategic Planning for Land Banking & Church Planting
- Engaging with other Christian denominations and other faiths
- Healthy communities
- Also need to lol at why the uniting church is losing people as well as becoming an aging population. Need to ask 20 to 30 year olds why the church is not holding them. Don't think any of the above foundations really look at this problem. Also need to keep politics out of the church. We are one people in Australia who don't need to be told what to believe on climate change, renewables and First Nations voice issues. Need to get back to the bible teaching.
- Worship reform
- Calling and training of new Ministers of the Word
- If need to know more of what mission renewal and growth
- Support to the multicultural church leaders
- Forming Communités
- Flourishing congregations. This needs to be an on-the-ground initiative
- Technology upgrades across presbyteries and congregations - renewing / innovative resources not just stewarding resources
- Having resources encourages unknown challenges
- Developing CALD Ministry Strategically
- Supports ministry agents & congregation

Shared life, flourishing communities

FINAL REPORT



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

New horizons
May 2025

Contents

From the General Secretary	3
Introduction	5
Steps Taken	6
Affirm common ground	6
Realign responsibilities and resources	7
Create cross-Synod networks	8
Build the capacity of our people	9
Develop and deliver enablers	10
Share resources and information	11
Reimagining Discipleship	12
Changing the shape of the future	14
Plentiful journeys at The Lakes College	16

Moving Forward	20
Discipleship	20
Transforming Communities	21
Fit for Purpose	22
Life Together	23
Voices of our Covenant	24
Plenty actions - status report	26
Acronym guide	26
Actions complete	27
Actions active	28



We are *one* church

We are one church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.



To the Uniting Church in Queensland,

When we as a Synod began the first stage of Project Plenty in 2019 it was impossible to imagine what lay ahead of us as a church and as a society. The level of disruption in the past five years has been unprecedented – COVID-19 and the associated social upheaval, geopolitical unrest and economic headwinds, and the new technological world of AI – these are just a few examples of our vastly different world.

Despite these challenges the work of Plenty has persevered, with the encouragement and promise of Proverbs 3 coming to mind - *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.* We have trusted that God would lead us through, and by His grace He has.

The Uniting Church in Queensland has undergone significant change as a result of Plenty. Navigating such a broad scope of areas – governance, education, theology, covenanting, sustainability, mental health – while also deepening our understanding of our 'core business' of discipleship and mission, has been a complex undertaking requiring skill and perseverance. It has not been the work of any single individual, but the concerted effort of many.

On behalf of the Synod, I would like to thank the many people involved – the working group members, volunteers and staff who have led and contributed to initiatives. Your time and care in this work is valued and appreciated.

And to the whole Queensland Synod – thank you for having the courage to embark on such a journey.

Plenty has laid a valuable foundation for a new strategic direction for 2025 to 2028. At the 37th Synod we discerned the Spirit's call to lean into a season of renewal as a church. Since that meeting, our focus has been on developing the strategy to support a renewing and growing church while continuing the work of Plenty and being informed by the valuable lessons learned along the way.

As we close Project Plenty, we do so with thanksgiving, and with the prayerful hope that God still has much to accomplish through the Uniting Church in Queensland.



Grace and peace,

Rev Dr Adam McIntosh
General Secretary



35th Synod in Session, October 2020

General Proposal 5: Project Plenty proposal

20.60 It was **RESOLVED by Consensus** that the Synod:

- (a) accept the Project Plenty report Shared life. Flourishing communities. and thank the Synod Standing Committee and Project Plenty team for their work
- (b) adopt the 2025 ambition, four mission priorities and the commitments contained within the report as a set of mission priorities and directions that will guide its work for the period 2020-2025
- (c) continues the conversation with congregations, presbyteries, agencies, schools and other bodies of the church to commit to the ambition, mission priorities and commitments of Project Plenty in their own context.
- (d) partner with congregations, presbyteries, agencies, schools and other bodies of the church in a further period of co-creation to develop and agree the specific deliverables of commitments contained in the report by 30 June 2021.

Introduction

Project Plenty began, in many ways, as a defiant hope; a counter to the narrative of a church in decline. The name "Plenty" was intentionally chosen: a reminder that as a church we are richly blessed, holders of all we need to be who God calls us to be.

A people of Plenty.

Our Shared Ambition was bold when we committed to it and continues to be relevant today - the ambition to be....

"One church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community."

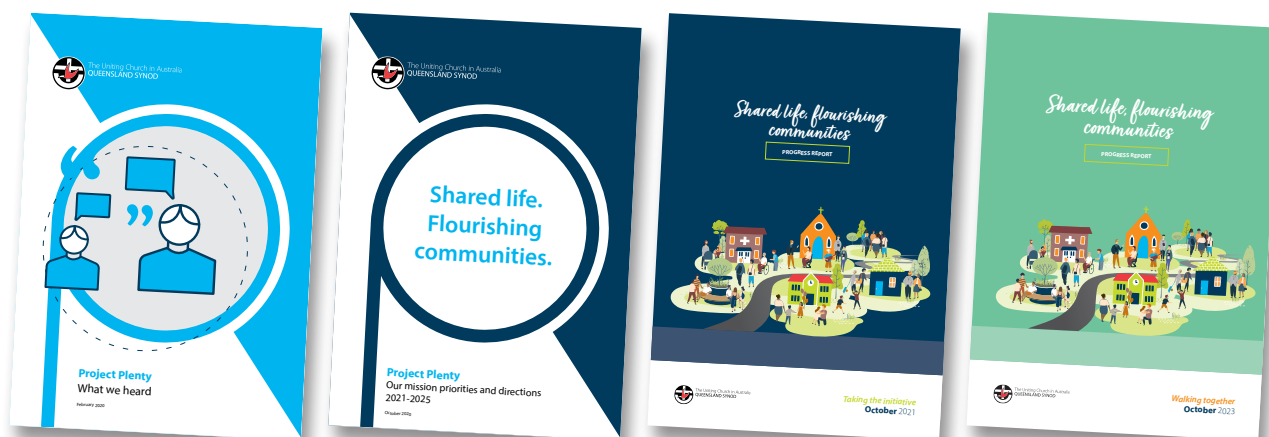
Through Plenty, we were able to work hard to unlock the resources with which God has blessed us. Finance, property and assets, certainly, but more importantly people, skills, relationships, history and presence. If enabled to flourish and express our gifts, we collectively have so much to offer in God's mission.

Critically, the Spirit, through Plenty, called us back to centre on what it means to be the people of God in the world: discipleship. This recentring of discipleship has not been unique to us. The church across Australia, and indeed the western world, has in recent years been reawakened to the centrality of the call to be and make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In other ways too, we as the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church are not alone. The questions asked in the Project Plenty process are those with which other Synods have been wrestling. And, at Assembly level, the Act2 process has also sought what it means to be the Uniting Church, a *'pilgrim people always on the way'*.

Since the 35th Synod, significant work has been done, helping to resource and transform us as a church. At the 36th and 37th Synods, *Plenty Progress Reports* provided updates on the work being done and the status of individual initiatives and actions. As we come to the 38th Synod the Project Plenty journey technically comes to a close, but the work continues within the new strategic framework.

The following report contains stories from both the historic and ongoing work of Plenty and its impact, while also reporting the project status of the actions from Plenty and outlining the way forward.



Steps Taken



Since the 37th Synod...

The 37th Synod, with its theme of “Renewal: Faith for a New Season” saw a significant change in leadership for the Queensland Synod. For the first time in many years, both Moderator and General Secretary roles transitioned at the same Synod. As is natural in any organisation undergoing a period of change, several key roles also transitioned over the following months.

For Project Plenty this has meant both a sharpening of focus and a measure of disruption. The Mission Engagement Team, where many of the Plenty initiatives (and some of the project management resources) were held, transitioned

with many of the team moving into new areas and roles, and many of the working groups moved into new phases of the Plenty life-cycle.

While there has been some disruption, there has also been significant opportunity - the Synod office reshaped to better support the “**Renewal and Growth Strategy**”, endorsed by the Synod Standing Committee in April 2024. This Renewal and Growth Strategy has enabled many of the ongoing initiatives and commitments of Plenty to move from project form and be ‘*transferred to operations.*’



The work of Plenty is now more than just a collection of project initiatives, but important everyday and ongoing commitments, supported for the long term by appropriate resourcing. It is a measure of great success that project-based initiatives of Plenty are now integral to the roles and core business of the Synod office.

The reshaping of the Synod office to deliver the new Renewal and Growth Strategy is not separate from Plenty, but a fulfilment and extension of it. Careful work has been done to ensure that the Plenty initiatives that are now operational find an ongoing place within the

strategy. Much improved Presbytery resourcing via the Presbytery Support Unit is just one example of the new structure designed to fulfil and expand on Plenty initiatives in the Renewal & Growth Strategy (D3).

Under the four priorities of **Discipleship, Transforming Communities, Fit for Purpose** and **Life Together**, the significant and transformational work of Plenty has laid the foundation for the Renewal and Growth Strategy. The message? God is not finished with us, and we can be a renewing and growing church in Queensland.

The future

renewal
+ growth

Renewal & Growth Strategy

Following the 37th Synod, and a process of listening to the church across the life of the Synod, the new leadership prayerfully discerned the strategic direction for the Synod office. The resulting Renewal and Growth Strategy affirmed the Plenty Shared Ambition as a vision statement, and defined five Strategic Foundations for the Synod office moving forward:

- Mission renewal and growth
- Flourishing presbyteries
- Forming leaders
- Fit-for-purpose governance
- Stewarding resources

These are the five foundations allowing the Synod office to focus on the new challenge of equipping, encouraging and enabling a renewing and growing church. Actions in the Renewal and Growth Strategy have been carefully developed to integrate and facilitate the relevant ongoing work identified and commenced by Plenty. While the Plenty is coming to a close as a unique project, these actions are still central to the work we do.

The opportunity for us is that, in this season of renewal, the Plenty priority areas can be reframed. The whole Synod can adopt the strategic foundations of the Synod office strategy as we seek to fulfil God's call for us as a church.

Plenty achievements

Working Groups - 70 working group members from presbyteries, agencies, schools and colleges

Intergenerational Worship Resources (Lent and Advent) – over 100 congregations involved, over 500 downloads. Now in our third year of development and distribution of these resources.

Plentiful Mentoring Leadership Program – 42 new leaders engaged in the program which now makes over 100 leaders involved across two cohorts. PMLP was a catalyst for the WMQ leadership program now in operation.

UAICC Regional Council Queensland - the Queensland Regional Council of the UAICC - now called Muth Arrak (meaning fire stick) - has been reformed and met several times since 2022.

Voices of our Covenant – captured over 20 video stories of First Peoples from all over Queensland. From the northern lands of the Bindal and Wulgurukaba peoples to clans across our Western Cape. From the Southwest regions of Wakka Wakka to the coastal Kabi Kabi and Butchulla lands. We heard from Yuggera, Turbal and Yugumbeh peoples and from those who descend from Guwa Koa.

Mission and Discipleship events – over 150 engaged from all Presbyteries.

'Here 2 Stay' training – 25 people from 10 congregations engaged in-person and online. Samford, Aitkenvale, Enoggera +

Life Together Narrative workshop – 25 contributors from Cairns, Redlands, Southport, Townsville, Ipswich +

Mental Health Pilot – trained 30 volunteers for Friendly Doors program and made over 80 contacts specifically in the areas of Mental Health and Domestic and Family Violence.

Emissions Reporting Scheme – emissions reporting across the Property Trust has been overhauled with more accurate methodology implemented and applied retrospectively to track trends.

Property Trust 101 – a regular workshop conducted by members of the Finance, Property and Enterprise teams to outline the structure and operation of the Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.) and the entities that make up the full expression of the Church in Queensland.

Prayer Meetings – fortnightly 'Renewal' prayer meetings.

Discipleship Book Clubs - discipleship books reviewed by various people across the church with regular online discussion groups with the authors – six books and counting.

Friendly Faces, Friendly Spaces Pilot Program– Mental Health First Aid and Domestic Violence support for church-based volunteers.

Discipleship Primer - piloted the first comprehensive discipleship primer for congregations.

Governance Review - a comprehensive review of the governance systems of the Queensland Synod.



Covenant with First Peoples

Plenty as a transformational experience - Kym Korbe

Project Plenty has been a transformational experience for First Peoples of the Uniting Church in Queensland. The commitment to covenant with First Peoples, through Plenty helped provide a framework for understanding who we are as people in a contemporary church context and how we might begin a new way of relating to each other. In doing so it gave permission for us to re-find our peoples and build community in a space where there was brokenness and distrust.

Plenty was supported opportunity that we as First Peoples took with both hands to reshape our place in the Uniting Church. We were able to create a network of both First and Second Peoples who were committed to walking together in covenant. Working with the Transforming Communities Reference Group was beneficial to us as it included us in the discipline and depth of the work they were doing across the broader church and how that interconnected with the covenant walk.

Without Plenty, the Queensland Regional Council of the UAICC – now called Muth Arrak (fire stick) -

would not have reformed. It is easy to talk about covenant and reconciliation, but the substance and commitment behind Plenty in these areas gave us the confidence to move forward and rebuild a framework of what had been broken. That connection now extends to the institutions of the church – UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland. The community that now exists between agency and church First Peoples continues to be enriching and life-giving, with a leadership and mentorship program for First Peoples now firmly part of annual UCQ professional development calendar.

This community has seen its practical outworking in places like the UAICC congregation at Zillmere and Napranum. Through relationships and the safety net of community that was built through Plenty. Pastor Sono was able to take her place as the pastoral leader of the UAICC community of Zillmere and the UAICC community of Napranum continues to grow youth, young adults and older peoples of faith, developing their own programs to support abundant living.

Townsville Central City Mission

Using Plenty priorities for congregational Mission - Ps Lorne Anderson



I would preface our Plenty journey by saying it's a humble story that is still being worked out. It also happens to be an unconventional story. My family and I came into Townsville Central in 2021, not too long after the Project Plenty priorities had already been released and therefore, I had missed the story that had guided the requirements for such a program. As I was looking over the resource in retrospect, however, I really liked the four pillars that it was advocating - Discipleship, Life Together, Fit For Purpose and Community Transformation.

I felt they were brilliant ways to scaffold what a congregation is for and how a church community could organise themselves to fulfil their mission. But rather than start from the ground up, I wanted to think about how these pillars were already structured at Townsville Central City Mission. It had also been on my heart to review our vision statement - "to walk and work with Jesus Christ to build the Kingdom of Heaven in Townsville and beyond" and the project plenty became a great tool to put practical direction to this statement.

Practically, we were able to operationalise our vision statement within the Plenty framework



by thinking about how we walk with Jesus (Discipleship and Life Together) and how we work with Jesus (Fit for Purpose and Community Transformation). I designed a survey to gain a sense from the congregation about how they felt like we were doing in each category and then we defined the actions we already did in each of the four pillars. This gave us a new way of seeing who we are, what we do, and from there imagining what we can, and should, be.

I spent some time preaching about our vision statement within the context of each pillar. This helped those in the church to celebrate what we are doing but then also had the benefit of encouraging new members to know how they might fit.

Ultimately it wasn't a matter of developing a new vision or mission statement. Rather it was about reorganising our thinking and what we were already doing, and then activating people in those four priority areas.

This has really been a fresh thing for us, so we're only in the early stages. But it's been great to think through where our energy is being spent and the growth priorities are for us into the future.

New Synod Website and Hub

For a number of years the Queensland Synod website was a wide-spread and well well-acknowledged source of frustration. It was difficult to navigate, poorly structured, and frequently contained out of date information. While a number of options were discussed, it quickly became clear that it was time to start again from scratch.

After much discussion it was determined that we actually needed two sites:

- **Queensland Synod website** – the public facing online presence to tell the story of the Uniting Church in Queensland
- **The Hub** (initially referred to as the 'Extranet') – a publicly accessible online resource for congregations and presbyteries to 'do business' of some kind with Synod Office.

A new website was a key opportunity to shape the story of the church in Queensland. This benefited greatly from work done in the Life Together priority area, work that helped define our unique story as the Uniting Church.

While the website was relatively straightforward, the Hub required careful work across the Synod Office. The opportunity to start afresh and resource congregations and presbyteries with a user-centred solution was one taken very seriously. The guiding principles of the Hub design were *ownership*, *efficiency*, and *automation*. Each Synod Office department now has the responsibility to maintain their Hub content and how it is organised. Whereas the old website required manual updating, the Hub is now updated through a secure automated process which uploads the most recent versions of these resources each night.



Staff and volunteers at presbytery and congregation level were involved across the research, consultation and testing phases to help ensure the Hub is a solution that works for everyone. But the Hub is not just a static resource. It is designed to evolve based on the changing needs of users, and to grow and be pruned as we work to discover new ways we can serve and resource congregations and presbyteries. We have already had several departments restructure their content to make files easier to find, while also making enhancements to our search function to improve the user experience.

Commitment Status Summary

Priority Area – Discipleship

- D1 - Heart Reset – Lent
- D2 - Model Culture
- D3 - Reshape Presbytery Resourcing

These initiatives are complete. While D3 is marked as 'transferred to operations', the formation of the PSU and their ongoing work is regarded as the fulfilment of this commitment.

Refreshed discipleship culture

- D4 - Networking and Coaching
- D5 - Formation and Training
- D6 - Develop Foundational Tool
- D7 - Review Health & Vitality
- D8 - Online Resources

These initiatives now feed into the work of the newly formed Mission Accompanying Team (building on the previous work of the Mission Engagement Team) and their development of resources and support for the church.

Church innovation

- D9 - Planting & Regeneration Strategy
- D10 - Funding Streams

The continuation of both initiatives are subject to General Proposals being brought to the 38th Synod - the "Church Planting & Revitalisation Strategy" and the "Property Proceeds of Sale and New Specified Funds Proposal".

Engaging young people

- D11 - CYYAF Primer and Pilot
- D12 - Network of CYYAF Practitioners
- D13 - Central Resourcing for CYYAF
- D14 - CYYAF Policy
- D15 - CYYAF Mission Partnerships

These initiatives are either complete or have been transferred to operations and are underway, with a focus on piloting the Children, Youth, Young Adults and Families and Discipleship Primers in the next season. The new Synod website and Hub have successfully provided a centralised space for resourcing CYYAF practitioners, with content managed by the Mission Accompanying Team.

Priority Area – Transforming Communities

- T1 - Unified Position Statements
- T2 - Advocacy Governance Process
- T3 - Advocacy Infrastructure
- T4 - Build Capacity for Advocacy

The Moderator's Advocacy and Social Justice Team has put significant time into developing unified position statements on key environmental and social issues, including nuclear power, domestic and family violence, and antisemitism, with more to follow. The Renewal and Growth Strategy continues and expands this work, with a communications strategy currently under development to elevate the voice of the Uniting Church in Queensland in the public space.

Moving forward, there will be a focus on developing the capacity for advocacy at the local level and networking existing experts across the Synod.

Wellbeing and mental health support

- T5 - Pilot Wellbeing & Mental Health Service
- T6 - Wellbeing & Mental Health Advocacy

The 'Friendly Faces, Friendly Spaces' mental health pilot has been developed and completed, with data under review. The preference from the program leaders is that the initiative be congregation led, with further capacity development needed.

Wellbeing and Mental Health was recognised as a challenging area for congregation capacity-building. While the desire to help people with Mental Health challenges exists, the skillset needed to engage meaningfully beyond social support and friendship is the realm of professionals. Agencies such as UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland offer well-regarded services to the broader community. Thus, the focus for congregations moving forward will be capacity building in Mental Health first aid, and triaging within the social and relational context of the congregation.

Covenant with First Peoples

- T8 - First Peoples Story
- T9 - Develop First Peoples Leaders
- T10 - Reinvigorate Covenant with UAICC
- T11 - Contribute to First Peoples Flourishing

Within the covenanting context, the reforming of the UAICC Queensland Regional Council (QRC), known as Muth Arrak, has been of vital importance. Regular gatherings have taken place, building and strengthening the relationships both within the UAICC and between the UAICC and the broader Synod. Muth Arrak also hosted the Assembly Day of Mourning event in Brisbane in January 2025.

There is now a First Nations Emerging Leaders Program – Dreamline – being delivered through UnitingCare Queensland, aiming to improve First Nations leadership representation through mentoring and formal education. The mentoring element of the program connects participants with leaders in both UCQ and the broader church, while the tertiary training element provides recognised qualifications.

Environment and sustainability

- T12 - Care for Creation Plan
- T13 - E & S Community of Practice
- T14 - E & S Online Resources

The Flourishing Creation Plan was adopted at the 36th Synod and its implementation since has been ongoing since that time. This work has now transferred to operations with the creation of an Environmental Sustainability Specialist role. The role oversees the implementation of the Flourishing Creation Plan, works with MAST and the Social Justice & Advocacy Specialist on advocacy and supports the networking and development of sustainability initiatives throughout the Synod and agencies.

Priority Area – Fit-for-Purpose

Governance reform

- F1 - Upgrade Governance Framework

Governance reform in the Uniting Church resulted in significant changes through the Plenty process, including incorporations of UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland. Governance reform is an ongoing process in a continually evolving environment, with the Synod Office ensuring its prioritisation as a strategic foundation in the Renewal and Growth Strategy.

Operational efficiencies

- F2 - Improve Procurement Collaboration
- F3 - Culture of Continuous Improvement

The previously named 'extranet' has now been delivered in the form of the publicly-accessible Queensland Synod Hub. The Hub enables subject matter experts within the relevant departments to manage the documents and forms relevant to their area, with automation built in to ensure only the most up to date documents are available. Procurement actions and initiatives were rescoped following viability challenges.

Mission presence, health and vitality

- F4 - Missional Presence Advisory Group
- F5 - Asset Database & Property Module

The commitment to develop an education module around the Property Trust has been fulfilled, with the Property Trust 101 session regularly delivered by the Synod Office Finance, Property and Enterprises team. The Missional Presence Advisory Group was rescoped, with Synod office capacity expanded to facilitate this function.

Leadership development

- F6 - Consistent Leadership Culture
- F7 - Leadership Pathways
- F8 - Clarify BCF in Forming Leaders

The Plentiful Leadership and Mentoring Program has completed two full cycles, with cohorts drawing from all levels of the Synod Office, agencies, congregations and the Uniting Education portfolio. Future leadership programs across the Synod are scheduled for development, while the realignment of Synod Office priorities to include Forming Leaders has put this to the forefront of the Renewal and Growth Strategy.

Priority Area – Life Together

Mission partnerships

- L1 - Realignment of UC story
- L2 - Opportunities for Interrelationship

Work has begun on the Life Together commitments, however there has been disruption with the changes to the Synod office. A strategy for telling the "One Church" story is in development, with preliminary engagement workshops completed.

Plenty actions - status report

Acronyms in this report:

TTO	Transitioned to Operations	MET	Mission Engagement Team
BCF	Board for Christian Formation	SME	Subject Matter Experts
FIP	Finance, Investment & Property	CYYAF	Children, Youth, Young Adults & Families
MPAG	Missional Presence Advisory Group	WG	Working Group
TCRG	Transforming Communities Reference Group	CPR	Church Planting & Regeneration
UAICC	Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress	BDU	Business Development Unit

MISSION PRIORITY	COMMITMENTS	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	STATUS
 Discipleship	Discipleship	D1 - Heart Reset - Lent	D1a - Invitation to prayer & fasting	Complete
		D2 - Model Culture	D2d - Share discipleship stories in gatherings	Complete
		D3 - Reshape Presbytery Resourcing	D3a - Employ support staff to free up Pres Mins to champion discipleship	Complete
	Refreshed Discipleship Culture	D4 - Networking and Coaching	D4b - Pres Mins and other key leaders will facilitate the creation of discipleship communities of practice	Complete
		D5 - Formation and Training	D5e - BCF oversees the development and delivery of a Discipleship Primer	Complete
			D5f - Offer the Discipleship Primer to all to help them understand what discipleship means in their unique context	Complete
		D6 - Develop Foundational Tool	D6a - MET & DWG will consolidate and deliver a simple Foundational Discipleship Strategy tool	TTO - In progress
			D6b - Develop and provide options of coaching and mentoring networks to develop capacity with the tool	TTO - In progress
			D6c - Pilot this tool with both an urban and rural congregation to ensure its efficacy	Complete
			D6d - Make the tool available, with the Discipleship Primer above, to help congregations with their strategy	TTO - In progress
		D7 - Review Health & Vitality	D7a - MET will work with pres mins to integrate a simple process for using the tool, to support health and vitality	TTO - On Hold
		D8 - Online Resources	D8a - Create and curate discipleship content for use across the church, accessed from a resourced web space	TTO - On Hold
	Church Innovation	D9 - Planting & Regeneration Strategy	D9a - Create framework to clarify Church Planting & Regeneration processes	TTO - Started
			D9b - Develop CPR capacity in presbyteries	TTO - Started
			D9c - Develop CPR capacity for everyone (churches, schools etc...)	TTO - Started
			D9d - Presbyteries to identify people have a the heart and capacity to undertake a CPR	TTO - Not Started
			D9e - Presbyteries to review systems and processes to ensure adequate support is offered for CPR projects	TTO - Not Started
		D10 - Funding Streams	D10a - Representatives DWG, FIPB & BDU will consider new income streams and establish grants for CPR	TTO - Started
	Engaging Young People	D11 - CYYAF Primer and Pilot	D11a - Mission Leaders across all entities will collaborate to adopt a framework for working with CYYAF	Complete
			D11b - BCF & chaplains, practitioners and TCQ will create and deliver a CYYAF Primer for congregations	Complete
			D11c - Pilot this CYYAF Primer in two presbyteries	TTO - On Hold
		D12 - Network of CYYAF Practitioners	D12a - DWG, MET & Mission leadership identify existing networks of CYYAF practitioners across the Synod	Complete
			D12b - The Synod Office will invest in coaching and mentoring of these leaders through relevant networks	TTO - Planning
		D13 - Central Resourcing for CYYAF	D13a - The Synod Office will develop a resourcing website/hub to make resources available	Complete
			D13b - Moreton Rivers Presbytery will take the lead in developing an annual gathering for YYA	Complete
		D14 - CYYAF Policy	D14a - The Synod Office will create policy to facilitate participation of those under the age of 35 in church roles	TTO - On Hold
		D15 - CYYAF Mission Partnerships	D15a - Congregations and schools/educational facilities will work together to nurture faith & discipleship for CYYAF	TTO - Started
			D15b - Invite congregations currently connected to these facilities to undertake the Discipleship Primer	TTO - On Hold
			D15c - CYYAF Practitioners will facilitate opportunities for CYYAF to serve in Shared Life, Flourishing Communities	TTO - Started
 Transforming Communities	Transforming Communities	T2 - Advocacy Governance Process	T2a - TCRG will be a sustainable and strategic presence within the Synod's governance structure	Complete
		T3 - Advocacy Infrastructure	T3a - Review existing structures to form streamlined, integrated advocacy infrastructure	Complete
			T3b - Develop an Advocacy Framework which will provides opportunities to maximise influence	Complete
			T3d - Explore, determine and use good practice mechanisms for measuring the impacts of advocacy efforts	TTO - On Hold
		T4 - Build Capacity for Advocacy	T4a - TCRG will explore and resource local networks to build capacity on-the-ground for engagement	On Hold
			T4b - TCRG will consolidate, curate and share resources and tools to support advocacy	TTO - On Hold

Plenty actions - status report

MISSION PRIORITY	COMMITMENTS	INITIATIVE	ACTIONS	STATUS
 Transforming Communities	Wellbeing and Mental Health Support	T5 - Pilot W & MH Service	T5a - Develop a “One front door, No wrong door” pilot to improve mental health services and wellbeing	Complete
		T6 - W & MH Advocacy	T6a - Develop and conduct an advocacy campaign that breaks down the stigma with Mental Health	On Hold
			T6b - Resources will be collated and shared across all parts of church via an online platform	On Hold
		T7 - W & MH Network	T7a - Build networks and communities of practice to come together to share knowledge and resources	On Hold
	Covenant with First Peoples	T8 - First Peoples Story	T8a - Revisit the Short Book initiative to facilitate conversations with Indigenous people on faith & truth	Complete
			T8c - Collate existing Uniting Church RAP modules and for cultural appreciation, to be offered across the Synod	Complete
			T8d - Liaise with TCQ to review ministry learning materials to for culturally relevance for First Nations	TTO - In progress
			T8e - Resource Local Indigenous Uniting Church communities to host local Walk on Country experiences	Complete
			T8f - Use Narrative Practice and mobile technology to capture oral history and story, from local First Nations	Complete
		T9 - Develop First Peoples Leaders	T9a - Develop a leadership development approach for First Nations people which acknowledges local Eldership	Complete
			T9d - The Chaplaincy Commission will recruit and resource and First Nations chaplains	TTO - On Hold
			T9e - Explore pathways for 12 interns per year, using the CareerTrackers program	Complete
			T9g - Explore a learning and delivery for theological and ministry training, similar to the Shalom Certificate 4	Complete
			T9h - Build stronger connections with Nungalinga College, to support and invest in future tertiary level educators	TTO - On Hold
		T10 - Reininvigorate Covenant with UAICC	T10a - Host gatherings with UAICC network in QLD to shape its voice, story, hopes and participation.	Complete
			T10b - BizCom will collaborate with First Peoples to build yarning circle practice into the process for 36th SIS	Complete
			T10c - Review the existing Covenant relationship between UAICC and the church in order to inform and align	Complete
	T10e - The SO will map a shared resource to provide visibility of all UC services and supports available to First Peoples		Complete	
T11 - Contribute to First Peoples Flourishing	T11b - Collaborate with the Environmental Sustainability WG to include First Peoples’ unique perspective	Complete		
Environment and Sustainability	T12 - Care for Creation Plan	T12a - Collaborating with SME's to develop a Care for Creation Position Statement	Complete	
		T12b - Collaborate with SME's to develop the Care for Creation Action Plan 2030 for consideration at the 36th SIS	Complete	
		T12c - Implementation of the Flourishing Creation Plan (new)	TTO - In Progress	
	T13 - E & S Community of Practice	T13a - WG to reach out to their networks to continue to share experience to enable advocacy and change creation	Complete	
	T14 - E & S Online Resources	T14a - The WG and others involved with the community of practice will collate and curate resources locally	Complete	
 Fit for Purpose	Governance Reform	F1 - Upgrade Governance Framework	F1a - Review governance models and develop working criteria for good governance	Complete
	Operational Efficiencies	F3 - Culture of Continuous Improvement	F1b - Roundtable event to explore other governance models relevant to the UC	Complete
			F1c - Develop a research brief, based on the outcomes of the above & collate an overview	Complete
	Mission Presence, Health & Vitality	F5 - Asset Database & Property Module	F5b - Develop an education module around property held by the Property trust	Complete
	Leadership Development	F6 - Consistent Leadership Culture	F6a - Review the <i>Basis of Union</i> and other UC guidelines to align leadership with mission	Complete
			F6b - Review existing leadership frameworks and create leadership practices to support culture	Complete
		F7 - Leadership Pathways	F7a - Identify training, education and leadership programs that contribute to shaping leaders	Complete
			F7b - Address identified gaps and recruitment into a leadership pathway	TTO - Started
F8 - Clarify BCF in Forming Leaders	F7c - Identify and promote new and existing opportunities for mentoring and peer learning	TTO - In Progress		
	F8a - BCF will adopt the leadership Framework and provide accountability, governance and strategy	TTO - In Progress		
 Life Together	Mission Partnerships	L1 - Realignment of UC story	L1a - Develop narrative of roles, relationships to Property Trust	Complete
			L1b - Collaborate to develop an integrated story of the UC including new ways of telling the old story	Complete
			L1c - Develop and deliver written and visual resources showcasing this story	Complete
			L1d - Develop and deliver an engagement plan that will embed story	TTO - On Hold
			L1e - Inclusion of the One Church history, ethos and calling, in onboarding processes	On Hold
		L2 - Opportunities for Interrelationship	L2a - Explore opportunities for gatherings to focus on connection and celebration	Complete
			L2b - Design and deliver the next iteration of the Plentiful Leadership Program	Complete
			L2d - Facilitate opportunities to learn about the different parts of the church ie. open days	TTO - On Hold



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



GOD'S STORY | OUR STORY ▪ **SYNOD 38**

General Proposal 2: Church Planting, Re-Planting & Revitalisation

That the Synod

1. Adopt the Church Planting, Re-planting and Revitalisation strategy outlined at Appendix 1.
2. Request its boards, committees, and commissions to prioritise and consider resourcing and actions in support of the Strategy.
3. Request the General Secretary to prioritise operational planning and resourcing of the Synod office in support of the strategy; and
4. Request the General Secretary to collaborate with presbyteries to provide a joint update regarding this strategy to the 39th Synod.

Scope

The proposal invites the Synod, in response to the call of the Spirit, to commit its own efforts alongside congregations, faith communities, presbyteries and other entities in seeking and supporting a flourishing church planting, re-planting and revitalisation culture over a 10-year period from 2025 to 2035. Together we will nurture an eco-system in which the church collectively and locally responds to God's call for renewal by forming new and renewed communities of faith. Implementation of the strategy will be tasked to the Synod office, together with Synod boards, committees, and commissions in a posture of collaboration and cooperation.

Rationale

The Rationale for the Proposal is outlined in the attached explanatory notes (Appendix 2).

renewal

Proposers

Name: Rev Linda Hanson

Email: linda.hanson@ucaqld.com.au

Phone: 0438 728 641

Signature: Submitted electronically

Name: Rev Ralph Mayhew

Email: ralph.mayhew@ucaqld.com.au

Phone: 0407 728 502

Signature: Submitted electronically

Church Planting, Re-Planting & Revitalisation Strategy

2025 – 2035

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Queensland Synod Church Planting, Re-Planting and Revitalisation Strategy (2025 – 2035)

Vision

An eco-system that encourages discipleship-focussed church planting, re-planting and revitalisation across the Uniting Church in Queensland.

Purpose

In response to the call of the Spirit to our church, the Synod will accompany congregations and presbyteries in seeking and supporting a flourishing church planting, re-planting and revitalisation culture over a 10-year period from 2025 to 2035. Together we will nurture an eco-system in which the church collectively and locally responds to God's call for renewal by forming new and renewed congregations/faith communities.

Alongside Congregations and Presbyteries

The Synod's task is to join presbyteries, congregations and other entities *already at work* in embedding a discipleship-driven church planting, re-planting and revitalisation culture. The Synod, its boards, committees, commissions, task groups and office will work collaboratively to prioritise the tasks and goals of this strategy by identifying and offering their skills, resources and work in support of the strategy.

Definitions

- Church planting:** Establishing new congregations/faith communities, as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. They will proclaim the good news, grow disciples, serve, and transform their wider communities in love, justice and hope, as an outflow of gathering and sending disciples.
- Re-planting:** Re-planting congregations/faith communities in place of existing communities, as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.
- Revitalisation:** Renewing and refreshing existing congregations/faith communities, as a foretaste of the Kingdom of God.
- Discipleship:** Knowing and living Jesus' way, in community, for the restoration of all things.

Dependencies

There are four dependencies, required for implementation of the Strategy:

- **Grounded in Prayer** A growing prayer culture, focusing us as transformative agents of God's love and grace.
- **Localised Discipleship** A localised approach to discipleship in each presbytery, community of faith, and other context.
- **Contextualisation** Responds to geographic, cultural, generational, and contextual diversity of church and wider community.
- **Resourcing Support** Supported by commitments to stewarding resources (including the proposed Church Renewal Fund).

Queensland Synod Church Planting, Re-Planting and Revitalisation Strategy (2025 – 2035)

Foundations and Priorities for Church Planting and Revitalisation

To facilitate church planting, replanting and revitalisation, the following strategic foundations and priorities will be pursued by the Synod office:

Strategic Foundations	Effective Collaboration	Passionate Commitment	Healthy teams & leaders	Encouraging Innovation
Strategic Priorities	Collaborate with Presbyteries and congregations to: • Support Presbytery church planting & revitalisation plans and initiatives. • Identify congregations, faith communities or other contexts ready for planting, replanting or revitalisation. • Develop congregational capacity. • Identify and deliver coaching, training, and development pathways. • Identify and implement best-practice measures of congregational and discipleship health. • Streamline and implement approval and governance pathways. Collaborate with and learn from UAICC Qld Regional Council (Muth arrak) and presbyteries to plant new churches among First Nations communities.	A communication plan that informs and inspires the church, sharing the broad vision, local stories, and progress of the strategy. Initiatives to invite, inspire and excite, generating a pipeline of leaders, supporters, team members, congregations, and faith communities. Identify and promote a range of suitable models for church planting, replanting and revitalisation, determined by local context. Encourage and support an active prayer culture. Encourage and support a growing discipleship culture, expressed contextually.	Facilitate training and formation for leading church planting and revitalisation, from Synod office, other UCA bodies, and external partners. Quality, effective coaching and support available to teams and leaders, including from Synod office teams, other UCA bodies, and external partners. Facilitate networks and communities of practice for peer support and peer learning for leaders and teams. Assessment and development of leaders for planting and revitalisation.	Identify or develop exemplar church plants or revitalisations, resourced to function as models and training hubs. Active learning from church planting and/or revitalisation projects. Promote and encourage appropriate risk taking and innovative leadership to reach groups in our community disconnected from the church. Expect, teach, prepare for, and embrace failure, providing support and future pathways to those who experience it. Prioritise resourcing and decision-making within Synod boards, committees and commissions to support innovation for church planting, re-planting and revitalisation.

Queensland Synod Church Planting, Re-Planting and Revitalisation Strategy (2025 – 2035)

Goals and Targets

By 2035, the Uniting Church in Queensland will see:

1. A 20% increase in the total number of congregations/faith communities across the state compared to a 2025 baseline, including new congregations/faith communities in a range of cultural, demographic and geographic contexts.
2. Every community of faith understands and is actively developing a contextual discipleship culture, engaging people in God's work of restoration.

Strategic Horizons

The strategy will be enacted over a ten-year period, with three strategic horizons. Synod Standing Committee will approve final elements of each horizon.

Horizon 1: Tilling the Soil: June 2027 (2 years)

- By 31 December 2025, establish measures and baseline data for discipleship and missional health, and numbers of congregations/faith communities.
- Coaching, development, peer learning communities established, with statewide access for leaders and teams.
- Each presbytery supported to develop and implement contextual church planting and revitalisation strategies.
- Church planting and revitalisation training and education approaches for Synod training/education providers implemented.
- Church planting and revitalisation training and support partnerships established with internal UC bodies (congregations, presbyteries) and external bodies (e.g. specialist church planting networks).

Horizon 2: Seedlings: June 2030 (5 years)

- 5% increase in the number of congregations/faith communities compared to 2025 baseline.
- 30% of congregations/faith communities have discerned and are achieving their own target measures for discipleship flowing into mission.

Horizon 3: Growing Strong: (Here comes the forest?) June 2035 (10 years)

- 20% increase in the number of congregations/faith communities compared to 2025, with increased presence in rural, regional & urban areas.
- 100% of congregations/faith communities have discerned and achieving their own target measures for discipleship flowing into mission.

Reporting and Operational Planning

Reporting against the strategy will be to Synod in session, Synod Standing Committee, MC3, and Presbytery/Synod Interface. Operational planning in support of the strategy will be undertaken by the Synod office on an annual basis.

Church Planting, Re-Planting & Revitalisation Background Notes

Ministry and Mission Team – March 2025

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

"There is no doubt we all want multiplication.
But to get there we need a church culture whose

*primary foundation
is discipleship.*

In a culture like this, once disciples begin to make disciples consistently, then we will not need to wonder too much about church planting. Those disciples who faithfully follow Jesus have a way of sensing that new churches are needed – everywhere."

The Genius in the Kingdom – Colin Stoodley

Table of Contents

1.	Background	2
2.	Why Church Planting & Revitalisation for the Uniting Church?.....	3
3.	Synod Office Strategy	4
4.	Proposals for 38th Synod.....	5
5.	The Synod’s Role Alongside Other Councils	5
6.	Role of Synod Bodies.....	6
7.	Definitions.....	6
8.	Availability of Expertise	7
9.	Goals and Targets.....	8

1. Background

Over the last two decades, the topic of church planting, replanting and revitalisation has been repeatedly raised in conversations throughout the Synod of Queensland.

As far back as 2005 the Synod adopted and resourced its **Vision for Mission**, outlining a desire for “*the establishment, development and nurture of new ventures in ministry and mission.*”

In 2014, at the 31st Synod, the Moderator convened an open space gathering centred on the question “If the church is on life support, what’s our call now?” Church Planting was named as one priority response, with a self-organised network formed after the Synod meeting, sharing ideas, and encouraging action in the period following.

In 2016, the 32nd Synod discerned its priority directions for 2016-2020 to be Christ-centred, at prayer, and listening, discipleship, leadership, connecting with communities and youth, children and families as the church grows, transitions, and innovates.

In 2017, at the 33rd Synod, a series of future directions were agreed for the church in Queensland. One asked the Synod to develop of resources assisting Presbyteries to identify strategic locations for ongoing and future development and resourcing.

In 2018, the Synod office began extensive consultation across the church under the banner of **Plenty**. In a process that led to the adoption of the Plenty priorities in 2020, a core focus was identified as discipleship. This call was interpreted as refocusing on the challenge of becoming a disciple-making church. The Synod committed to pursuing innovation in church and mission models to suit a constantly changing world, and refreshing discipleship culture across the life of the church.

In 2023, the Synod focussed on the theme of **Renewal**, and began to explore both the opportunities and challenges that renewal can bring, including the key lesson that sometimes renewal is preceded by loss. That focus on renewal continues in 2025 with the 38th Synod.

Over that same extended period, congregations, faith communities, and Presbyteries across the State have identified and acted upon the same sense of call to church planting, replanting and revitalisation based on a commitment to discipleship. Newlife, for example, in partnership with South Moreton and Moreton Rivers Presbyteries have completed five church plants over the last 10 years (Pacific Pines, Burleigh, Brisbane, Coolangatta and Moreton). This experience has led to the maturing of approaches to training, preparation, and planting within Newlife. Elsewhere, new congregations/faith communities have begun in Toowoomba (Highfields Community Church), Caloundra (BELLS), Bargara (Surf Church) and Mareeba, among other locations.

New CALD faith communities have also sprung up – a Fijian community in Biloela for example. New church plant projects are underway in new growth areas such as Ripley and Flagstone, and in urban and suburban areas undergoing cultural shift and infill development (Clayfield, for example).

Other congregations/faith communities have undergone significant revitalisation and renewal (Toowong, St Lucia, Nerang and Townsville Central to name a few).

New missional activities within existing congregations/faith communities (such as Messy Church at Caloundra or Pittsworth) provide other avenues to revitalisation or planting new congregations/faith communities.

Presbyteries and congregations/faith communities have incorporated church planting, replanting and revitalisation into their own planning and activities, recognising that God is calling the Uniting Church within Queensland to a new sense of movement.

Training offered in the past by Presbyteries or congregations/faith communities (at times in partnership with the Synod office) in areas such as pioneering and fresh expressions, has in recent times been joined by training and formation for church planters in the broader sense, particularly through congregations such as Newlife, and Presbytery initiatives such as the Moreton Rivers Presbytery Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

Other Synods, particularly South Australia and NSW/ACT, have also committed to the intentional development of leaders for church planting and revitalisation and are implementing related plans. The national Propel network, a collective of evangelical Uniting Church congregations and leaders, is encouraging and training congregations/faith communities and church planters for church planting and revitalisation.

2. Why Church Planting & Revitalisation for the Uniting Church?

The Uniting Church exists thanks to the missional endeavours of our forebears following the Spirit of God to imagine and plant new congregations/faith communities throughout Australia. It is a missional impulse, a call to faith and to being disciples that lies at the heart of our Church and each one of our existing congregations/faith communities. The church exists because people have found good news and responded to Jesus' instruction in Matthew 28: *"Go into all the world and make disciples"*.

That call still stands for the Church today.

In the Basis of Union, we recognise that Christ is constantly at work, drawing people to faith, leading the Church, and continually reshaping it:

Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith; he calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renews them as his Church.

(Basis of Union, Paragraph 4)

The Queensland context is one in which there is significant growth and change in communities, culturally, demographically, and geographically. To ensure the Church's presence in both rapidly growing urban areas across the state and changing regional and rural locations, a strong, intentional effort to establish new faith communities in a range of contexts is essential.

Within existing communities, population groups move and shift – including increased density of population, or new cultural groups. For the Church to be present in such changing context, it can be argued that a concentrated, intentional, effort to establish a diversity of new congregations/faith communities is vital. Alongside this, an intentional revitalisation pathway is required, assisting existing congregations/faith communities to adapt and respond effectively to change within their neighbourhoods or communities. There is ample evidence to suggest we have not effectively made these transitions within many of our congregations/faith communities.

Additionally, evidence from within Australia and beyond suggests that new congregations/faith communities are an effective context in which people are brought to faith and formed as disciples of Jesus. If the Uniting Church in Queensland is to be true to our commitment to prioritising discipleship, as articulated through the Plenty initiative, then a concerted, intentional church planting effort is a critical aspect alongside revitalisation and other discipleship initiatives. From all of this can come the renewed flourishing of the church.

Any church planting or revitalisation effort should take this emphasis on discipleship to heart. Planting churches for the sake of planting churches, or numerical growth in congregations/faith communities for the sake of statistics pales next to the call on our Church to be and to make disciples and to witness to and participate in God's mission. This church planting or revitalisation framework or strategy emerges from our understanding that we are called to a broader discipleship focus.

Should the Uniting Church Plant New Churches?

This is an important question to consider and respond to. Some reasons to respond positively to it include:

- At our best, the Uniting Church offers something significant alongside other Christian churches. Some of our commitments are an important part of the call on the broader Christian community in witnessing to and serving both our wider society and each local community. Examples include:
 - a covenantal relationship with First Nations Peoples,
 - being a multi-cultural church,
 - the full participation of women in leadership,
 - openness to grappling with modern social, scientific, and ethical understandings and values.
- We are blessed with extraordinary people, history, relationships, footprint, and connections. We have the capacity, capability, and resources to both plant new churches, and revitalise existing congregations/faith communities, and to unite with others on this task (we may explore ecumenical approaches, for example).
- One of the primary foci of any Christian church is responding to the Great Commission (Matt 28) to make disciples. Planting churches among new groups of people is a natural extension for any church – and the Uniting Church is no different. It might be argued that Jesus' vision was of a church that would plant churches as part of its response to proclaiming the gospel. Historically the Uniting Church has embodied this, and this call simply takes us back to our roots.
- To serve the diverse needs of the entire Australian population, we need many more churches that are thoughtfully adapted to the unique contexts of the communities they are planted in.

Through the discernment of our councils and our leadership communities, and as outlined above, our church has repeatedly heard the Spirit calling us to this task of planting and revitalising, expressing it in our vision: to be active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. As in the beginning, so we continue to hear the voice of the Spirit to make disciples, and to grow healthy congregations/faith communities.

3. Synod Office Strategy

In early 2024, the Synod office reviewed and renewed its own planning considering this emerging activity across the church, and the 37th Synod's focus on Renewal. Its 2025–2027 strategic plan, **Our Foundations for Renewal and Growth**, identifies the following strategic actions for the Synod office:

- 1.2.1: Co-create Presbytery-specific approaches to support congregational revitalisation
- 1.2.4: Develop a draft church planting strategy, including statewide targets, for the Queensland Synod to be presented to the 38th Synod in May 2025
- 5.2.1: Establish a church renewal specified fund
- 5.2.2: Development of a funding strategy for a mission/church renewal fund

Subsequently, the Synod office has been reorganised to support its delivery of this new strategy. A new Mission Accompanying Team has been established, for example, with the task of supporting leaders, congregations/faith communities and Presbyteries in a range of areas – including church planting and revitalisation.

4. Proposals for 38th Synod

To accomplish this, proposals for a church planting, replanting and revitalisation strategy, and for a funding strategy supporting renewal have been developed for consideration by the 38th Synod. This suite of proposals, together with the commitment of the Synod office in its own strategy and operational planning, represents the most comprehensive and considered response to this task. It creates the best opportunity yet for the Synod to work alongside presbyteries, congregations, and faith communities to develop an ecosystem that nurtures and embeds a culture of planting, replanting and revitalisation.

The Synod has not initiated and is not proposing or leading a new church planting movement. Rather, it is responding to and supporting a growing sense of call that has been steadily crystalising within the Synod and in congregations and presbyteries for more than a decade.

The Synod and Synod office through a focus on renewal is committed to supporting and strengthening Presbyteries and congregations/faith communities that carry this sense of call. The Synod is invited to take up its own responsibilities and commitments alongside these other councils of the church.

5. The Synod's Role Alongside Other Councils

"The Uniting Church is governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation both to the Church and to the world... It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey God's will in the matters allocated to its oversight. Each council will recognise the limits of its own authority and give heed to other councils of the Church, so that the whole body of believers may be united by mutual submission in the service of the Gospel."

(Basis of Union, Paragraph 15)

Each council of the Uniting Church holds distinct but inter-related responsibilities. With respect to planting, replanting or revitalising congregations/faith communities, or training and equipping leaders for involvement, regulated responsibilities for each council include:

Congregation and Church Council Responsibilities:

- Reg 3.1.1a includes embodiment of church in one place for worship, witness, service.
- Reg 3.1.2a includes leading congregation to fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.

Presbytery Responsibilities:

- Reg 3.1.3a includes pastoral and administrative oversight of ministers.
- Reg 3.1.3d (1) includes formation of congregations and other pastoral charges within the bounds of the Presbytery.
- Reg 3.1.3l & 3.1.3m includes designation and placement of lay pastors, youth workers, ministers.
- Reg 3.1.3o (i) includes administrative functions related to property.
- Reg 3.4.1 includes recognising the establishment of a new congregation.
- Reg 3.9.2 includes recognition and support of Faith Communities as an alternative local church structure.
- Reg 3.9.3 includes recognition and support of Small Congregations as an alternative local church structure.

Synod Responsibilities:

The Synod itself holds a range of regulated responsibilities either directly or indirectly related to the work of planting, replanting and revitalisation:

- Reg 3.1.5 (a) includes assisting Congregations and Presbyteries in their missionary responsibilities.
- Reg 3.1.5 (i) includes providing for effective supervision of theological and ministerial education.
- Reg 3.1.5 (k) includes providing for effective supervision of property matters.
- Reg 3.1.5 (a) (vi) includes undertaking such other things as, in the opinion of the Synod, will promote and encourage the mission of the Church.
- Reg 4.2.1 includes providing for effective oversight of property matters.

Considering these inter-related responsibilities is therefore vital to develop and enact an effective framework or strategy for encouraging church planting, replanting and revitalisation. Any consideration of the Synod to take its own actions must give heed to the responsibilities and actions of the other councils of the Church, as the Basis of Union invites us to do, uniting in mutual submission.

6. Role of Synod Bodies

Within the Synod there are both regulated and non-regulated bodies that are invested in supporting the new and revitalised congregations/faith communities and those leaders and ministry agents involved. These include the Synod Standing Committee (SSC), Finance, Investment & Property Board (FIP), Board for Christian Formation (BCF), Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (Placements), Presbytery/Synod Interface (PSI) and the Mission Consultation & Collaboration Committee (MC3) and the Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group (MCCRG).

The Synod, through its office, has already appointed or called staff or ministry agents to support this work including the Mission Accompanying Team (MAT), the Presbytery Support Unit (PSU), Trinity College Queensland, a Covenanting Executive Officer, and the Finance, Property and Enterprises Team.

This proposed strategy calls for each body within the Synod to consider church planting, re-planting, and revitalisation in the course of undertaking its work, adopting a collaborative approach to working with congregations/faith communities, presbyteries and other bodies.

The Synod's relationship with Muth arrak is also important in supporting work to plant, replant and revitalise congregations in First Nations communities.

7: Definitions

This document, together with the proposed strategy uses key terms as follows:

Church planting: A term used broadly to mean the process of beginning new congregations/faith communities within the context of the Uniting Church. They may take many different forms and shapes but aim to bear the marks of the Church as worship, witness and service as expressed in the Basis of Union. The process of 'planting' itself may also take many different forms and shapes.

Re-planting: A term used broadly to mean the process of beginning new congregations/faith communities either in place of, or alongside existing Uniting Church congregations. This may involve closing an existing congregation and developing and enacting a new vision and leadership team within the context. New and contextual approaches to worship, witness and service are vital.

Revitalisation: A term used broadly to mean the process of helping an existing congregations/faith community find new life and energy in its worship, witness, and service. This may encompass new generations, new cultures, new commitment to faith sharing, fresh approaches to worship, new missional endeavours. There is a focus on forming and growing disciples, particularly people who do not currently belong to any community of faith.

Congregation: A congregation/faith community able to meet all the requirements of a congregation as articulated in the Uniting Church's Basis of Union, Constitution, Regulations and By-laws. Where the term congregation is used in this paper, it is used with this specific definition in mind.

Church planters: An inclusive term used broadly to describe individual leaders and teams of leaders involved in preparing and leading the establishment of new congregations/faith communities. Such people may be lay or ordained, paid, or unpaid as appointed by the relevant body.

Leaders: An inclusive term used broadly to describe people, both lay and ordained, paid, and unpaid, Church council and ministry team, who offer significant leadership within the life of the Uniting Church.

Discipleship: the lifelong journey of learning, knowing, and living Jesus' way, in community for the restoration of all things.

8. Availability of Expertise

There is a growing body of expertise and experience to support this work, both within the Uniting Church in Queensland, and within other bodies.

Presbyteries including South Moreton, Moreton Rivers and Bremer Brisbane have developed and begun implementing plans related to church planting, replanting and revitalisation. There is developing collaboration between these and other presbyteries with respect to training, models, and implementation. That expertise is available to other presbyteries, including through bodies such as the Centre for Ministry and Leadership.

Newlife has matured in its approaches to planting and replanting through experience over more than a decade. It has an intentional and well-established approach to training church planters, and to pursuing opportunities to plant and/or replant. Newlife has collaborated effectively with multiple presbyteries and congregations to plant and replant.

Other congregations and faith communities, and their leadership teams, within the Synod – such as Highfields, BELLS, Toowong, and St Lucia – have developed and matured approaches through experience which is readily available to other groups.

The Synod office has established its Mission Accompanying Team, a group that includes experienced practitioners across a range of planting, replanting and revitalisation models and approaches. The team exists to accompany presbyteries and congregations/faith communities with coaching, planning, and research.

More broadly, the Propel network, as noted earlier, has sought to gather expertise and experience in church planting, evangelism, and discipleship, and make it available across the Uniting Church.

There are a range of external or independent church planting and discipleship networks that we can partner with for training, support and development of leaders and teams. Examples include Exponential Australia, M4 Australia, ConneXa and V3.

9. Goals and Targets

Many church planting and revitalisation strategies around Australia and beyond include goals or targets. A decade ago, the London Anglican Diocese committed to plant 100 new churches (of many models) by 2020, reaching 87 by the end of its strategy period. It has since re-set its strategy and now aims at 400 new churches by 2030. The Baptist Union of NSW in its Gen1K initiative set an astonishing goal of becoming a network of 1000 healthy churches by 2050 (a tripling in the number of churches in the network).

Within the Uniting Church, the South Australia Synod/Presbyteries have a goal of planting 10 churches and regenerating 15 congregations over a five-year period. The NSW/ACT Synod has committed to five new church plants as part of a mixed ecology approach. Bremer Brisbane Presbytery has set a goal of three new church plants within five years, and Moreton Rivers Presbytery 40 by 2040. Downs Presbytery aims to ensure it supports four healthy “pillar” congregations in the Toowoomba region, to support the wider Presbytery.

Goals or targets can help motivate an entire system and provide a metric by which to assess progress. They can also provide a long-term target within which shorter-term plans can be implemented. Within its long-term Gen1K strategy for example, the Baptist Union of NSW currently has a three-year plan identifying short-term work contributing to the longer-term goals.

On the other hand, identifying and committing to firm targets such as these can be challenging for an inter-conciliar church like the Uniting Church. Which of our councils can commit to such targets on behalf of others, for example? Can the Synod rightly commit to a certain number of church plants or revitalisations across the whole state, when so much of the activity of church planting and revitalisation lies with congregations/faith communities and Presbyteries? Can we meaningfully agree state-wide targets when Presbyteries are at such distinct stages in their own consideration of church planting and revitalisation? Do we want to delay progress while we consult and negotiate to establish state-wide targets?

With all of this in mind, the proposed strategy includes two goals for the Uniting Church Synod of Queensland, set across a ten-year timeline.

- First that the **total number of congregations/faith communities will increase, rather than decrease** – and that this increase will include consideration of the whole state. Such a goal, if agreed by the Synod, is ambitious, no doubt. There are existing congregations and faith communities whose future is far from assured. We will likely find ourselves going backwards (numerically) for some time yet before we are able to move forward. Nonetheless, this goal is offered out of the conviction that if we are to be active in every Queensland community, then that activity necessarily includes the gathering of disciples in congregations/faith communities, and more of them than we do presently. Reflecting the nature of Queensland, some of these new congregations/faith communities should be in First Nations contexts, developed in partnership with Muth arrak, and others in culturally diverse contexts.
- The second goal included in the proposal relates to **congregations/faith communities actively developing a discipleship culture** that relates to the cultural, geographic, and demographic context in which it lives and serves. This goal both follows on from and is consistent with Plenty and responds to evidence that suggests discipleship is the key driver for church planting, re-planting, and revitalisation.

There remains before us the challenge of Synod adopting goals for which it is not solely responsible. Adopting such goals calls the Synod to a deep posture of humble collaboration with presbyteries, congregations, faith communities and other entities – a posture that is, in any case, essential for any meaningful progress toward renewal.



GOD'S STORY | OUR STORY ▪ SYNOD 38

General Proposal 3: Resourcing Renewal and Growth

That the Synod

1. Instructs the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) to do all things necessary to establish, in alignment with the guiding principles, a:
 - Property Proceeds of Sale Policy,
 - Church Renewal Fund, and
 - Covenant Ministry Fund.
2. Amends clauses 2 and 4 of the Mission Development Fund:

Clause 2 Current Reading:

2. Application of this policy

2.1 This policy shall come into effect as at 15 May 2022 determined by the Synod.

2.2 This policy shall apply to all major sales of property (Reg. 4.1) held in the name of the Property Trust, where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod.

2.3 Subject to the Regulations (Reg 4.8), the sum of the net proceeds from a property sale where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, shall be deposited into the MDF.

2.4 The sum of the net proceeds from a property sale shall be held in the MDF on behalf of the responsible body for a period of up to seven (7) years.

2.5 Interest may be paid and credited to the proceeds at an agreed rate not exceeding the maximum set by the Synod Property Board.

Clause 2 Proposed Reading:

2. Application of this policy

2.1 This policy shall come into effect as at **19 May 2025** as determined by the Synod.

2.2 This policy shall apply to all major sales of property (Reg. 4.8) held in the name of the Property Trust, where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod office.

2.3 Subject to the Regulations (Reg 4.8), the law and the terms of any special trust, the sum of the net proceeds from a property sale where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod office, shall be deposited into the MDF.

2.4 In relation to property held by the Property Trust on a charitable trust for the Church's general charitable purposes, the 38th Synod (May 2025) discerned that 10% of the net proceeds of property sales is to be credited to the capital balance of the Church Renewal Fund (specified fund) and 5% of the net proceeds of property sales is to be credited to the capital balance of the Covenant Ministry Fund (specified fund).

2.5 The 15% allocation to the two specified funds will not be charged if the 'sale' is a transfer of the status of Responsible Body from one Church entity to another Church entity, as legal title remains in the Property Trust.

2.6 The Synod Property Board has discretion to NOT charge the 15% allocation to the specified funds upon consideration of a timely application (which would normally be expected in the submission to sell the property)

2.7 The decision of the Synod Property Board is final regarding any application for not charging the allocation to the specified funds

2.8 If the Responsible Body chooses – a higher percentage of net proceeds can be allocated to either or both specified funds mentioned in clause 2.4 – noting that any further contribution will be credited to the capital balance of the funds. The Responsible Body must advise the FIP Board in writing of their decision to vary the standard 10%/5% allocation

2.9 The sum of the net proceeds from a property sale shall be held in the MDF on behalf of the responsible body for a period of up to seven (7) years.

2.10 Interest may be paid and credited to the proceeds at an agreed rate not exceeding the maximum set by the Synod Property Board.

Clause 4 Current Reading:

4. Applying to use funds held in the MDF

Any Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, may seek access to the fund for projects which are aligned with the missional priorities of the responsible body and all other relevant entity and:

a. Support or fund capital development and/or strategic innovation opportunities for the church; and/or b. Produce a financial return on investment and/or strategic mission benefit to the church.
Clause 4 Proposed Reading: 4. Applying to use funds held in the MDF Any Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod office, may seek access to the fund for projects which are aligned with the missional priorities of the responsible body and all other relevant entity and: a. Support or fund capital development and/or strategic innovation opportunities for the church; and/or b. Produce a financial return on investment and/or strategic mission benefit to the church. c. Responsible Bodies can choose to transfer any or all of their MDF balance to either of the specified funds (Church Renewal Fund / Covenant Ministry Fund) upon providing a minute to the FIP Board. Responsible Bodies with existing MDF balances can do so noting that any balance transferred to a different specified fund is no longer tagged to that Responsible Body – it is available for distribution to any entity in the Queensland Synod that meets the criteria set out for distribution.

Scope

To create a Property Proceeds of Sale Policy, that will support the funding of two new endowment funds, the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund, to be used to support Church Renewal and Covenant Ministry for generations now and to come.

The Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Funds have clear guiding principles and a funding strategy to support their growth.

Amendments to the Mission Development Fund Policy are required to facilitate the new policy and funds.

Rationale

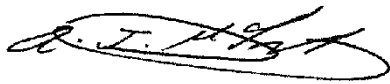
The rationale behind this proposal is to ensure sustainable funding for Church Renewal and Covenant Ministry by creating two new funds: the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund. By allocating a portion of property sale proceeds and implementing a funding strategy, the aim is to pool resources across the whole synod, ensuring financial support for missional initiatives discerned to be a priority. This approach is underpinned by Theology in Property and Stewardship, ensuring that all actions align with the church's values and long-term goals. The proposal also includes clear guidelines and accountability measures to protect and grow these funds, ensuring they can support the church's mission for years to come.

The Guiding Principles, and Principles in Practice are detailed in the attached paper.

Proposers

Name: Adam McIntosh
Email: adam.mcintosh@ucaqlld.com.au
Phone: 07 3377 9777

Signature: _____



Name: Scott Ballment
Email: cqpresmin@centralqldpresbytery.org.au
Phone: 0429 390 057

Signature: Submitted electronically

Property Proceeds of Sale and New Specified Funds Proposal

renewal



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Then the people rejoiced
because they had

given willingly,

for with a whole heart they
had offered freely to the Lord.

1 Chronicles 8:9 (ESV)

Executive Summary

As we journey through the current season, the question of how we pay for ongoing church renewal and our commitment to covenant has been asked. Through prayerful discernment, the Synod Office recognised the strategic foundations of Mission Renewal and Growth, and Stewarding Resources, and looked to design a pathway for future Church Renewal and Covenant Ministry funding.

Currently, paying for these critical aspects of building disciples is limited by what the congregation and presbytery can afford. We are looking to create a new way for the future, to share finances, pooled for the whole Synod, with relational oversight, and accountability.

This looks like the creation of two new specified funds - the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund - with a funding strategy in place to build up these funds including, but not limited to, allocating a portion of property sale proceeds to each of the new funds, and a fundraising plan. The strategies will be underpinned by a Theology of Property and Stewardship.

PROPERTY SALE PROCEEDS POLICY (PSPP)

Mission Development Fund (MDF)

- Capital use
- Specified criteria
- Linked to responsible body for 7 yrs then transferred to Presbytery if not used
- Governed by FIPB

Some amendments required

Church Renewal Fund (CRF)

- Capital Endowment Fund overseen by FIPB
- Annual budget set by FIPB, administered by MC3
- Specified criteria
- Pooled for Synod-wide use
- Relational oversight by MC3

CRF Funding Strategy

Covenant Ministry Fund (CMF)

- Capital Endowment Fund overseen by FIPB
- Annual budget set by FIPB, administered by UAICC RCQ
- Specified criteria
- Pooled for Synod-wide use
- Relational oversight by UAICC RCQ

CMF Funding Strategy

Underpinned by a well-developed Theology of Property & Stewardship

*Acronyms:

FIPB - Finance, Investment and Property Board

MC3 - Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee

UAICC RCQ - Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Regional Council Queensland

Property Sale Proceeds Policy

The Queensland Synod is blessed to be one of the largest property owners in Queensland. This brings us an opportunity to consider the real estate we own and look to apply good stewardship. This is not something to be taken lightly and there must be very clear guidelines and guardrails to protect the church and its assets. In alignment with the Regulations, the Property Sale Proceeds Policy moves to direct a portion of the proceeds of the sale of property to support two new specified funds, The Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund.

A minimum of 10% of the net proceeds of a sale of property is allocated to the Church Renewal Fund and a minimum 5% is allocated to the Covenant Ministry Fund. The responsible body will have the option, after prayerful discernment, to allocate more proceeds to the new funds and to transfer any portion of their existing MDF holdings to the new funds.

These minimum 10% and 5% portions were considered through looking at models of the past, models other synods have adopted, and the impact we are looking to achieve. Some exclusions would apply,

such as selling a manse for the purpose of purchasing a replacement manse, or where legal requirements are in place as bequest instructions, or other special trusts that may be in place for schools and other entities.

The Mission Development Fund

The Mission Development Fund will continue to operate as it already does with only small alterations to enable the transfer of the agreed portions to the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund.

Management of the Endowment

The new specified funds are designed to support missional initiatives with renewal, revitalisation and disciple building outcomes and deepening our covenant with first peoples.

In practice, they are endowment funds, where capital money is invested, then an annual allocation of a portion of proceeds from these endowments is made available to be distributed for initiatives across the church, with accountability being enacted through relational oversight. The FIPB will be responsible for managing the investment strategy of the endowment funds and determining the portion of the proceeds to be allocated for distribution. They are accountable for the investment growth of the endowment funds so they can serve the church for many years to come.

Missional outcomes are the priority for the use of these funds.

The Theology of Property and Theology of Stewardship underpins the thinking and discernment of these emerging funds.

A further explanation of Endowment Funds can be read in Appendix Three.

The Church Renewal Fund

MC3 will hold responsibility and accountability for the distribution of funds for the Church Renewal Fund and with the support of the Synod Office Mission and Ministry team will have relational oversight of the initiatives funded providing a two-way stream of discernment and learning from each other's experience. MC3 will make decisions about distribution of the funds through prayerful discernment and a criteria prioritising missional impact.

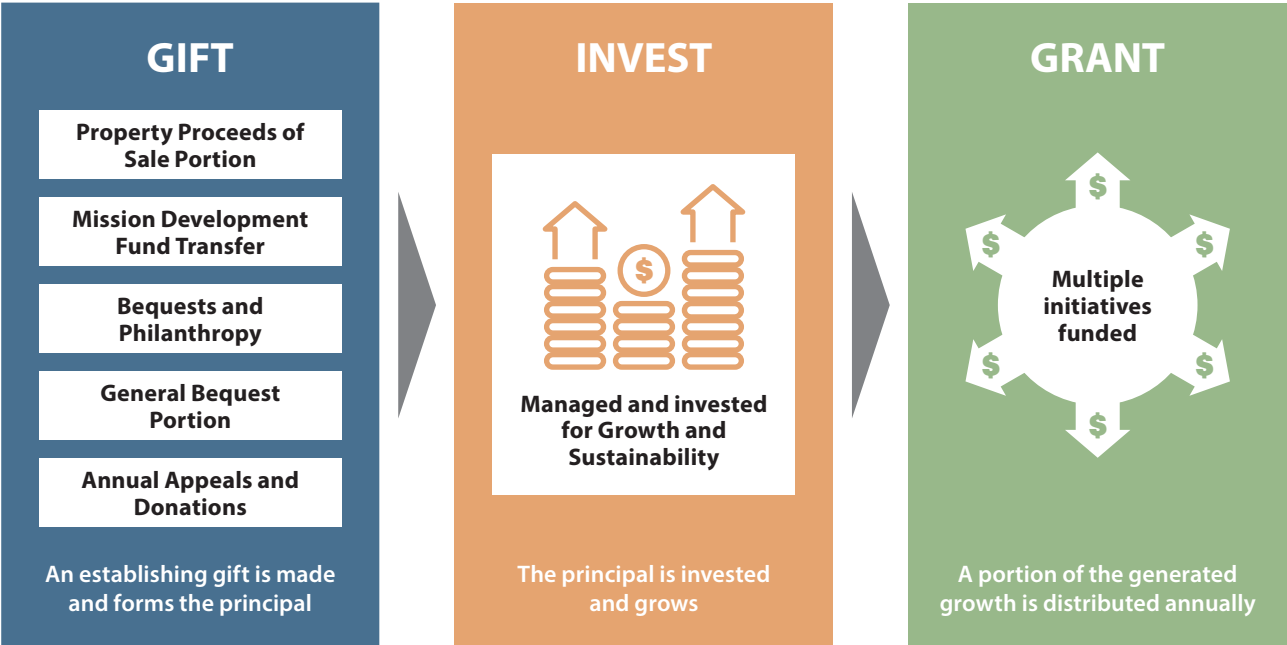
The Covenant Ministry Fund

The UAICC Regional Council Queensland (UAICC RCQ) will hold responsibility and accountability for the distribution of funds for the Covenant Ministry Fund. With the support of the Synod Office, the Covenant Ministry Team will have relational oversight of the initiatives funded, providing a First Peoples self-determined two-way stream of discernment and mutual development and learning. The appointed UAICC RCQ members will make decisions about distribution of the funds through prayerful discernment, and a criterion which places priority on meeting ministry and discipleship impact in the unique context of First Peoples.

Funding Strategy

It is one thing to create the vehicle to hold specified funds, it is another to have money available to spend. It will take time for these funds to build, and it will require a concerted and prayerful effort across the church to make this happen. The Synod Office is establishing a solid fundraising plan to bring additional money into these two funds so more money can be distributed.

Sustainable funding model:





Summary of the Theology of Property and Theology of Stewardship

The Theology of Property emphasises the church as a community of people, the use of property to support the vulnerable, and the importance of transparency and accountability. Meanwhile, the Theology of Stewardship highlights the church's role as a steward of God's creation, reflecting God's generosity, and maintaining rigorous financial accountability. Together these theologies guide the church to manage its resources responsibly, prioritise its mission, and reflect its theological commitments, ensuring that both property and resources serve as tools for ministry and human flourishing.

Theology of Property

There are three key principles in the Theology of Property:

1. The Church as People, not Place:

The church's essence is in its people, not its buildings. Property is secondary and should support missional activities. Decisions should be guided by kingdom values, not secular business models.

2. Property as Provision for the Vulnerable:

The church must prioritise the needs of the poor and vulnerable, reflecting God's compassion. Property usage should consider its impact on these groups and serve as a witness to Christian values.

3. Transparency & Accountability:

The church is accountable to God for its property management. Decisions should be made with due diligence, foresight, prayerful discernment, and transparency to enhance God's reputation.

These principles aim to ensure that property decisions support the church's mission and reflect its theological commitments. A deeper explanation can be read in Appendix One.

Theology of Stewardship

There are three key principles in the Theology of Stewardship:

1. The Church as Steward, not Owner:

All creation belongs to God, and the church is called to manage and care for resources to facilitate human flourishing. This includes environmental responsibility and sustainable practices.

2. The Generosity of God:

The church should reflect God's generosity by using resources to meet the needs of others, emphasising that stewardship does not involve accumulating wealth for the purpose of being rich but our resources should be used for the purpose of giving back.

3. Management & Accountability:

Financial accountability is crucial, with rigorous reporting and due diligence required to ensure responsible use of funds. Decision-making processes should include protections against bias.

These principles aim to ensure that property decisions support the church's mission and reflect its theological commitments. A deeper explanation can be read in Appendix Two.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	i
Summary of the Theology of Property and Theology of Stewardship	v

1. Property Sale Proceeds Policy	1
1.1 Proceeds of Property Sales Guidelines	1
1.1.1 The Responsible Body	1
1.1.2 The Finance Investment and Property Board.....	1
1.1.3 Allocation of funds	1
1.1.4 Exemptions	1
1.1.5 Financial Impact.....	1
2. Church Renewal Fund	3
2.1 Purpose	4
2.2 Church Renewal Fund Guiding Principles	4
2.2.1 Mission and Christ-Centeredness.....	4
2.2.2 Mission Impact	4
2.2.3 Inclusivity and Diversity.....	4
2.2.4 Innovation and Adaptability	4
2.2.5 Leadership and Mentorship.....	4
2.2.6 Sustainability and Stewardship	4
2.2.7 Transparency and Accountability.....	4
2.3 Examples of Initiatives	5
2.3.1 Examples of initiatives that may be funded	5
2.3.2 Examples of initiatives that would not be funded	5
2.4 Church Renewal Fund Principles in Practice	5
2.4.1 Management of the Endowment Fund	5
2.4.2 Distribution of Funding	5
2.4.3 Relational Oversight of Church Renewal Initiatives	6
3. Covenant Ministry Fund	7
3.1 Purpose	8
3.2 Covenant Ministry Fund Guiding Principles	8
3.2.1 Vision and Gospel-Centeredness	8
3.2.2 Mission Impact	8
3.2.3 Self-determination	8
3.2.4 Innovation and Adaptability	8
3.2.5 Sustainability and Stewardship	8
3.2.6 Transparency and accountability	8
3.2.7 Leadership and Mentorship	8

3.3	Examples of Initiatives	9
3.3.1	Examples of initiatives that may be funded	9
3.3.2	Examples of initiatives that would not be funded	9
3.4	Covenant Ministry Fund Principles in Practice	9
3.4.1	Management of the Endowment Fund	9
3.4.2	Distribution of Funding	9
3.4.3	Relational Oversight of Covenant Ministry Initiatives	10
3.4.4	Growing the Endowment Fund	10
4.	Changes to Mission Development Fund	11
4.1	Change for future property sales	11
4.2	Change for existing MDF Funds	11
5.	Funding Strategy	12
5.1	Proceeds of Property Sales	12
5.2	MDF Transfers	12
5.3	Fundraising Strategy	12
5.3.1	Fundraising for the Endowment Fund	12
5.3.2	Fundraising for immediate availability	12
5.4	Bequests received for general purposes	12
	Appendix One – Theology of Property	14
	Appendix Two – Theology of Stewardship	16
	How an Endowment Fund Works	19

1. Property Sale Proceeds Policy

1.1 Proceeds of Property Sales Guidelines

The following guidelines outline the procedures and responsibilities for the sale of property within the church. These include the roles of the Responsible Body and the Finance Investment and Property Board in managing and approving property sales, as well as the allocation of net proceeds from such sales. Specifically, a portion of the proceeds will be directed towards the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund, with the remaining funds allocated to the Mission Development Fund. Exemptions to this policy apply in limited circumstance. These measures ensure a focus on supporting the church's missional impact and growth.

1.1.1 The Responsible Body

The Responsible Body is defined as the body responsible for the management and administration of the property to be sold and shall make an application to the Finance Investment and Property Board, with the approval of all relevant entities for the sale of property.

1.1.2 The Finance Investment and Property Board

The Finance, Investment and Property Board shall assess and determine all proposals involving the sale of property and shall give due advice in writing to the responsible body and any other relevant entity.

1.1.3 Allocation of funds

A minimum 10% of the net proceeds of sale will be allocated to the Church Renewal Fund endowment. The Responsible Body can discern an allocation over 10%.

A minimum 5% of the net proceeds of sale will be allocated to the Covenant Ministry Fund endowment. The Responsible Body can discern an allocation over 5%.

The remaining portion will be allocated to the Mission Development Fund of the Responsible Body.

1.1.4 Exemptions

The Responsible Body may apply to the Finance Investment and Property Board for an exemption to the allocation of funds under special circumstances, for example:

- the property is part of a special trust, or,
- has special legal requirements or,
- the sale is to facilitate a direct purchase of a similar property, like selling a manse to fund a new manse within a 6-month period.

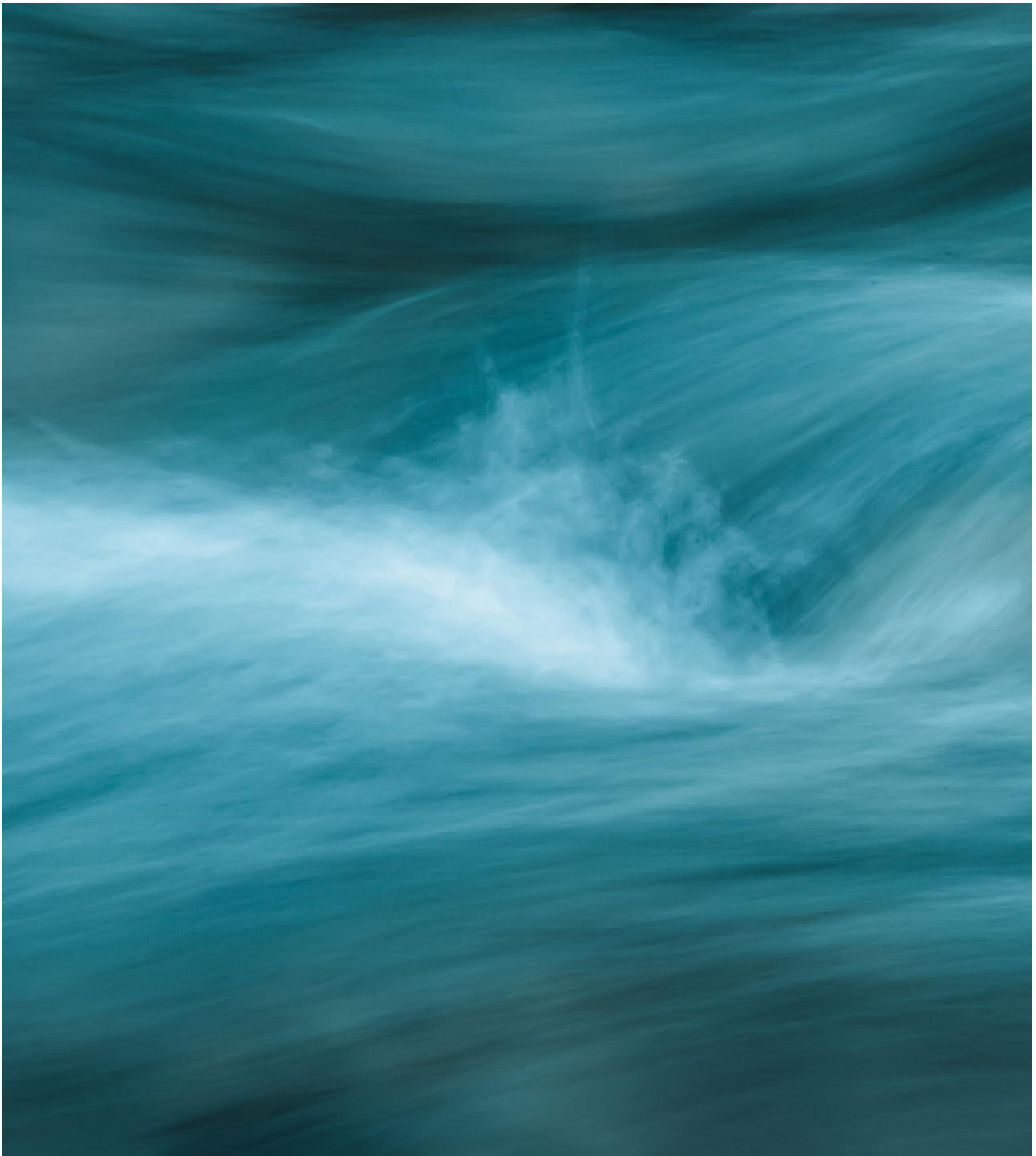
1.1.5 Financial Impact

As an example, if this model had been in place in 2019, the following would have been held in the endowment funds.

RECOMMENDED CONTRIBUTION	Balance if implemented in 2019	
Church Renewal Fund - 10%	\$	1,442,366.41
Covenant Ministry Fund - 5%	\$	721,183.21
TOTAL	\$	2,163,549.62

Property Sales Proceeds:

Minimum 10% to Church Renewal Fund	Minimum 5% to Covenant Ministry Fund
Remainder to MDF	



2. Church Renewal Fund

*God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. **The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself.** The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring; **the Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way** towards a promised goal.*
(Basis of Union, Paragraph 3)

2.1 Purpose

The Church Renewal Fund is designed to support initiatives that are deeply rooted in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and reconciling all people to God. It prioritises projects that reflect the diversity of the communities served by the church, embracing innovation and adaptability to respond to changing societal needs. This includes but is not limited to church revitalisation projects, church planting, new missional initiatives, growth and missional development, fresh ways of being Christian community and growing and forming new disciples.

The fund emphasises leadership development, sustainability, responsible stewardship, and transparent financial management for the benefit of the future of the church. By focusing on inclusivity, diversity, and mission impact, the Church Renewal Fund aims to connect with people outside the Church, grow new disciples, and ensure the long-term vitality and effectiveness of missional activities of the church as a whole.

2.2 Church Renewal Fund Guiding Principles

The Overarching Guiding Principles for the Church Renewal Fund are established to guide initiative development and decision making about the allocation of money to selected projects. These guiding principles may be amended from time to time by Synod in Session.

2.2.1 Mission and Christ-Centeredness

All initiatives supported by the Church Renewal Fund must be firmly bathed in prayer, rooted in the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ and reconciling all people to God.

2.2.2 Mission Impact

Church Renewal projects will prioritise funding for initiatives that focus on connecting with people who do not currently belong to any Church, growing new disciples of Jesus and serving groups of people outside of the Church.

2.2.3 Inclusivity and Diversity

Church Renewal Projects should reflect the diversity of the communities served by the Uniting Church in Queensland. This includes geographic diversity (regional, remote, suburban etc.), diversity of expressions of mission and church, demographic diversity.

2.2.4 Innovation and Adaptability

Church Renewal Projects will prioritise creative and adaptable approaches to mission and ministry in response to changing societal needs and contexts as we seek to share in God's mission.

2.2.5 Leadership and Mentorship

Church Renewal Projects demonstrate a commitment to leadership development and mentorship to ensure sustainable, long-term missional impact and leadership.

2.2.6 Sustainability and Stewardship

Church Renewal projects should demonstrate a commitment to sustainability. This means that there is an objective to create longer terms self-funding and resourcing for projects and initiatives.

2.2.7 Transparency and Accountability

All members of the church have a right to understand where, who to and why funds have been allocated as part of our responsible stewardship.

Annual reporting to Synod Standing Committee and to the Synod in Session meeting about the distribution of money and the impact of the missional activities is required to ensure the best use of resources.

2.3 Examples of Initiatives

2.3.1 Examples of initiatives that may be funded (but not limited to)

- Funding of a ministry agent in an area where a new Faith Community can be established.
- Community research and associated costs.
- Seed funding for ministry agent.
- An intergenerational Ministry Project.
- Costs associated with the establishment of a Church plant such as ministry agent and set up costs.
- Finance a mission trip to underserved areas of Queensland to provide spiritual support and humanitarian aid.
- Support a digital ministry initiative that shares the message of Christ through online sermons and interactive faith discussions.

2.3.2 Examples of initiatives that would not be funded

- Repairs and maintenance of an existing church building. For example replacing carpet to brighten up an existing church, replacing an old roof or upgrading a kitchen.
- Topping up a ministry agent's stipend.
- Any initiative that does not demonstrate clear, responsible stewardship and transparent financial management.
- Events that do not incorporate elements of Christian teaching or outreach, such as purely social gatherings without a spiritual component.
- Businesses or profit-driven projects that do not have a clear missional purpose or benefit to the church community.
- Initiatives that do not embrace the diversity of the communities served by the church or that exclude certain groups of people.

2.4 Church Renewal Fund Principles in Practice

2.4.1 Management of the Endowment Fund

- Any decisions made must be in line with UCA Regulations, Federal and State Laws, and the general law.
- An endowment fund will be established for the priority purpose of Church Renewal and the agreed Guiding Principles.
- The FIPB are accountable for the strategic investment of the endowment fund.
- The endowment fund is a capital fund.
- The FIPB are accountable for determining the appropriate total amount of monies to be drawn annually, achieving good stewardship in the immediate term and in the future.

2.4.2 Distribution of Funding

- Distributions from the Fund may be utilised for both capital and operational expenses.
- Any responsible body, within the Queensland Synod may submit proposals for funding from the Church Renewal Fund.
- MC3 will evaluate all proposals based on their alignment with the Church Renewal Funds guiding principles.
- An annual grant funding process will be run to allow proposals to be considered fairly across the Synod weighed against criteria determined by MC3.

- Remnant funds after the grant rounds can be applied for on an ad hoc basis. Any unspent money for that financial year will return to the Church Renewal Fund.
- Proposals submitted by a congregation must be supported by the relevant Presbytery with confirmation that the activity aligns with the Presbyteries discerned strategic direction.
- Successful applicants will be notified of the approval and provided with the necessary funding to implement their projects as agreed on a case-by-case basis, subject to periodic progress reviews and reporting requirements.
- A register of the approved funding will be maintained by the designated review committee and a report will be reported to the Synod Standing Committee and the Synod in Session meeting.
- MC3 may allocate funding for all, part or none of an application at their discernment.

2.4.3 Relational Oversight of Church Renewal Initiatives

- The Synod Mission Accompanying Team will offer on ground support for the projects, providing regular reports to MC3 monitoring progress. Recipients of funding from the Church Renewal Fund are required to provide regular progress updates and financial reports to ensure accountability and transparency.
- MC3 will conduct periodic evaluations of funded projects to assess their effectiveness, impact, and alignment with the fund's objectives with the support of the Mission Accompanying Team.
- Adjustments or reallocation of funds may be made based on the outcomes of project evaluations and changing priorities within the Uniting Church in Queensland.
- If a distribution from the Fund is used to purchase a residential property and sold within seven years, the sale proceeds of that property is to be returned to the Church Renewal Fund for future renewal activities.



3. Covenant Ministry Fund

"As the Church believes God guided it into union so it believes that God is calling it to continually seek a renewal of its life as a community of First Peoples and of Second Peoples from many lands"

From the Uniting Churches in Australia, Preamble to the Constitution,
as revised at the 12th Assembly 2009

3.1 Purpose

The Covenant Ministry Fund is dedicated to supporting initiatives that advance the Gospel message and foster a covenantal relationship between First and Second Peoples. It emphasises self-determination, reflecting the richness of First Peoples' culture in ministry and spirituality, and prioritizes the development of First Peoples' leadership. The fund encourages innovative and adaptable approaches to ministry, ensuring long-term sustainability and responsible stewardship of resources. Transparency and accountability are key, with annual reports detailing fund allocations. By focusing on leadership, mentorship, and mission impact, the Covenant Ministry Fund aims to connect with those outside the Church, grow new disciples, and support the aspirations of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Regional Council Queensland (UAICC RCQ).

3.2 Covenant Ministry Fund Guiding Principles

The Overarching Guiding Principles for Covenant Ministry Fund are established to guide initiative development and decision making about the allocation of money to selected projects. These Guiding Principles may be amended from time to time by Synod in Session.

3.2.1 Vision and Gospel-Centeredness

All initiatives supported by the Covenant Ministry Fund must be firmly rooted in the church vision of growing disciples of Jesus Christ and advancing the Gospel message. Each initiative should also clearly demonstrate a commitment to Walking Together in Covenantal relationship as First and Second Peoples.

3.2.2 Missional Impact

Covenant Ministry projects will prioritise funding for initiatives that focus on connecting with people who do not currently belong to any Church, growing new disciples of Jesus and serving groups of people outside of the Church.

3.2.3 Self-determination

Projects supported by the Covenant Ministry Fund should reflect the richness of expression of First Peoples' culture in ministry and spirituality and set as a priority an alignment to furthering the development of First Peoples leadership across the Church.

3.2.4 Innovation and Adaptability

Whilst First Peoples will always be informed by cultural protocols and the knowledge of Eldership both past and present, the fund does encourage creative and adaptable approaches to ministry, embracing innovation to effectively respond to changing societal needs and contexts of First Peoples across the synod.

3.2.5 Sustainability and Stewardship

Projects funded by the Covenant Ministry Fund should demonstrate a commitment to long-term sustainability; in that they should aim to responsibly care for creation, invest in youth and young adults, respect resources, adhere to good governance principles and contribute to a shared story and life of the church.

3.2.6 Transparency and accountability

Annual reporting to Synod Standing Committee and to the Synod in Session meeting about the distribution of money and the impact of the missional activities is required to ensure the best use of resources.

3.2.7 Leadership and Mentorship

Projects funded by the Covenant Ministry Fund should demonstrate a commitment to supporting UAICC RCQ leadership aspirations, as well as culturally informed mentorship ensuring sustainable, long-term missional impact.

3.3 Examples of Initiatives

3.3.1 Examples of initiatives that may be funded (but not limited to)

- Ongoing or preliminary seed funding or partially funding a ministry agent within an established or new UAICC faith community or congregation.
- A First and Second Peoples Covenanting project with clearly outlined ministry outcomes.
- A joint Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund church plant .
- First Nations formation and leadership development initiatives.
- Joint Covenanting / Reconciliation projects with institutions of the wider Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod.
- Joint Covenanting projects within the national UAICC network.
- First Peoples ecumenical initiatives.

3.3.2 Examples of initiatives that would not be funded

- Business support or operational expenses.
- Minor property maintenance expenses.
- Projects that do not specifically address at least four of the seven Covenant Ministry Fund guiding principles.
- Any initiative that does not demonstrate clear, responsible stewardship and transparent financial management.
- Events that do not incorporate elements of Christian teaching or outreach, such as purely social gatherings without a spiritual component.
- Businesses or profit-driven projects that do not have a clear and demonstrable missional purpose or benefit to the church community.
- Funding for individual personal needs or luxuries that do not contribute to the broader mission of the church.

3.4 Covenant Ministry Fund Principles in Practice

3.4.1 Management of the Endowment Fund

- Any decisions made must be in line with UCA Regulations, Federal and State Laws, and the general law.
- An endowment fund will be established for the priority purpose of Covenant Ministry and the agreed Guiding Principles.
- The FIPB are accountable for the strategic investment of the endowment fund.
- The endowment fund is a capital fund.
- The FIPB are accountable for determining the appropriate total pool of annual monies to be drawn annually, achieving good stewardship in the immediate term and the future.

3.4.2 Distribution of Funding

- Distributions from the Fund may be utilized for both capital and operational expenses.
- Any responsible body, within the Queensland Synod may submit proposals for funding from the Covenant Ministry Fund.
- UAICC RCQ will evaluate all proposals based on their alignment with the Covenant Ministry Funds guiding principles, and potential for impact.
- An annual grant funding process will be run to allow proposals to be considered fairly across the Synod weighed against criteria determined by UAICC RCQ.

- Successful applicants will be notified of the approval and provided with the necessary funding to implement their projects as agreed on a case-by-case basis, subject to periodic progress reviews and reporting requirements.
- A register of the approved funding will be maintained by the designated review committee with support from the Synod Office Covenant Ministry team and a report will be communicated to the whole of church at least once a year.
- UAICC RCQ may allocate funding for all, part or none of an application at their discernment.

3.4.3 Relational Oversight of Covenant Ministry Initiatives

- The Synod Covenant Ministry Team will offer on ground support for the projects, providing regular reports to UAICC QRC monitoring progress. Recipients of funding from the Covenant Ministry Fund are required to provide regular progress updates and financial reports to ensure accountability and transparency.
- UAICC RCQ will conduct periodic evaluations of funded projects to assess their effectiveness, impact, and alignment with the fund's objectives.
- Adjustments or reallocation of funds may be made based on the outcomes of project evaluations and changing priorities within the Uniting Church in Queensland.
- If a distribution from the Fund is used to purchase a residential property and sold within 7 years, the sale proceeds of that property is to be returned to the Covenant Ministry Fund for future initiatives.

3.4.4 Growing the Endowment Fund

- The growth of the endowment fund relies on the generosity of The Uniting Churches In Australia, Queensland Synod members, congregations, faith communities, presbyteries and those outside the church who align with The Uniting Churches In Australia, Queensland Synod values.
- The Synod Office is responsible for creating and implementing a fundraising plan to support the Church Renewal Fund. The fundraising plan includes, but it not limited to, appeals, bequest programs and philanthropic donations.
- A portion of the proceeds of sale when selling property will be allocated to the Covenant Ministry Fund.
- Responsible Bodies may choose to transfer MDF into the Covenant Ministry Fund.

4. Changes to Mission Development Fund

The Mission Development Fund is an established resource where proceeds from property sales are retained for use by the Responsible Body, following specific criteria for mission development. While the core purpose and structure of the Mission Development Fund will remain unchanged, two minor adjustments will be made to facilitate the transfer of a portion of the sale proceeds to the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund. These changes allow the distribution to the new funds and the option for responsible bodies to transfer existing MDF funds to the new specified funds. This ensures that the funds are allocated effectively to support broader mission initiatives while maintaining the integrity of the Mission Development Fund.

4.1 Change for future property sales

The Mission Development Fund will be amended to allow for distribution to the new specified funds.

4.2 Change for existing MDF Funds

- Amending the policy to allow a release of existing MDF funds to the new specified funds as discerned by the responsible body.
- As a guide, if Responsible Bodies discerned to transfer their MDF, the impact would be like this, based on a conservative 5% compound growth over 20 years.

MDF value projections over 20 years:

Transfer of MDF %		5%		15%		25%		50%	
Transfer of MDF \$	\$	1,474,950.00	\$	4,424,850.00	\$	7,374,750.00	\$	14,749,500.00	
20 yr compound 5%	\$	3,913,491.45	\$	11,740,444.35	\$	19,567,407.25	\$	39,134,814.50	

Transfer of MDF %		60%		70%		80%		95%	
Transfer of MDF \$	\$	17,699,400.00	\$	20,649,300.00	\$	23,599,200.00	\$	28,024,050.00	
20 yr compound 5%	\$	46,961,777.40	\$	54,768,740.30	\$	62,615,703.20	\$	74,356,147.55	

5. Funding Strategy

The Funding Strategy outlines the comprehensive approach for managing and allocating proceeds from property sales, as well as implementing effective fundraising initiatives to support the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund. This strategy ensures that financial resources are directed towards initiatives that align with the church's mission and long-term sustainability.

5.1 Proceeds of Property Sales

The Property Proceeds of Sale Policy will enable the following portions of sale of property to be directed to the specified funds:

- Minimum 10% Church Renewal Fund
- Minimum 5% Covenant Ministry Fund

Additional amounts can be directed to either fund at the discernment and request of the responsible body.

5.2 MDF Transfers

The Responsible Body may discern and transfer any amount of their MDF Funds to either specified fund.

5.3 Fundraising Strategy

To ensure the long-term sustainability and growth of our mission, we have established several fundraising initiatives aimed at bolstering the funds for both the Church Renewal Fund and the Covenant Ministry Fund.

These initiatives include:

5.3.1 Fundraising for the Endowment Fund

- Bequests program, encouraging bequests for the endowment fund for either fund.
- Philanthropic donations, encouraging donations for the endowment fund of either fund.
- Annual Appeals, encouraging donations into the endowment fund of either fund.

5.3.2 Fundraising for immediate availability

- Bequests program, encouraging bequests for the immediate availability for either fund.
- Philanthropic donations, encouraging donations for the immediate availability of either fund.
- Annual Appeals, encouraging donations for the immediate availability of either fund.

5.4 Bequests received for general purposes

A portion of any bequest left to the Property Trust for general purposes will be allocated to each endowment fund.

- 25% Church Renewal Fund
- 25% Covenant Ministry Fund

Funding strategy - income streams:

Portion of Property Sale Proceeds

A%

- Minimum 10% CRF
- Minimum 5% CMF

MDF Transfers

B%

- As discerned by the Responsible Body

Fundraising for the Endowment

C%

- Specified CRF/CMF endowment bequests
- Specified CRF/CMF endowment philanthropic donations
- Specified CRF/CMF annual appeals

Bequests received for General Purposes

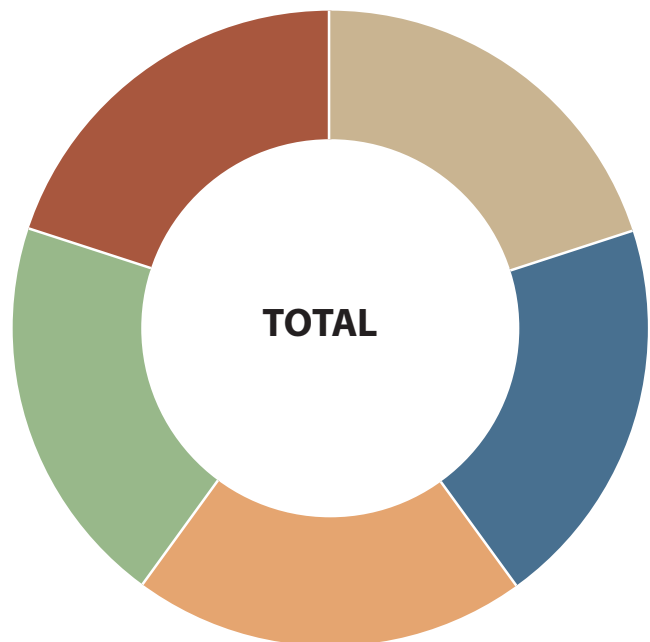
D%

- 25% CRF
- 25% CMF

Fundraising for immediate availability

E%

- Specified CRF/CMF immediate use bequests
- Specified CRF/CMF immediate use annual appeals



Appendix One – Theology of Property

Dr Paul Jones - Trinity College Queensland

Introduction

The strategic priorities of the Queensland Synod Office for 2025-27 cover five focus areas, two of which are Mission Renewal & Growth and Stewarding Resources. The exercise of these two strategic foundations in supporting the whole church calls for a renewed focus on the theological convictions undergirding the Synod's decision-making process with regards to matters of place & property. How might decision regarding ownership, maintenance, acquisition, sales, management and utilisation of properties be made within theological guidelines that are robust, practical, and reliable? In response to such questions, this brief document outlines three guiding principles that are deeply rooted in Scripture, and which have practical implications for the responsible stewardship of property in the life of the Queensland Synod, including in its specified fund for church renewal (5.1.2; oversight by MC3) and property policies (5.4.4). The theological principles below also have implications for Mission Development Funds (governed by FIPB) and Covenant Ministry Funds (UAICC oversight).

The Church as People, not Place

The church is an incarnational reality, an expression of God's desire to live among and within people in creation (Lev 26.12; 1 Kgs 6.13; Zech 2.10-11; Jn 1.14; 2 Cor 6.16; Rev 21.3). Thus, Genesis 1 presents the created order as a cosmic temple with human beings placed in it last, as images of God. God's deepest passion has always been to live among humankind, but this does not mean that the church, as a tangible reality occupying space and time, necessitates possession of physical property. The contrary is true: *'the church is constituted... in the work of the triune God and not on its ownership or non-ownership of property.'*¹

Throughout the biblical story, the pilgrim people of God remain on the move (*BoU para 3*), and God consistently *'tabernacles'* among them, whether they are wandering in the wilderness or established in the Promised Land. This theology of Temple/Presence is developed profoundly in the person of Jesus who *'tabernacles'* among us (Jn 1.14), and in the commissioning of the New Testament church to function as the Body of Christ in the world. Throughout the book of Acts as well, buildings receive very little attention, if any. The New Testament does not contain a timeless mandate to sell all property in order to feed the poor, but the early church does appear to regard the selling possessions and property as a logical precursor to the provision of support for people in need (*Acts 2.45*).

Church buildings, then, are a means of inhabiting particular places and establishing a hospitable sense of presence within local communities, but they are of secondary importance. **The primary function of church property is to support the Christian community's acts of service and missional endeavours.** To this end, principles of church property management will not be drawn from secular business practices, but from the church's countercultural kingdom values and priorities. After all, Jesus' angry turning of the money changers' tables in Mark 11 testifies to his disgust when the Temple is converted from an 'impractical' house of prayer to a 'money-making' den of robbers (Mk 11.15-17). The use of church buildings must consistently be governed by an alternative ethic that is gospel-centred.

Theological Principles

- The Church is a visible expression of God's desire to inhabit space with/among us.
- Physical property is secondary. Personal Presence is primary.
- Property supports missional endeavour.

Actionable Implications

- The needs of people supersede any felt need for property ownership.
- A countercultural kingdom ethic, not secular business models, governs church decisions about property.

Property as Provision for the Vulnerable

The Old Testament emphasises God's particular interest in providing for vulnerable and marginalised groups (see liberation theology) and Jesus was explicit about upholding these same values (Matt 9.13; Luke 10.37). A number of Temple practices in the Old Testament were specifically designated to provide for minority groups; for instance, Deut 14.28-29 speaks of a special tithe that is taken to care for Levites, foreigners, orphans, and widows, and Lev 25.35-37 stipulates that it is wrong to make a profit from (i.e. charge interest to) the disadvantaged and the poor. Worship practices were adapted to ensure that the poor could freely participate (Lev 5.7,11) and gleaning laws included provisions for those less fortunate (Lev 19.9-10). A number of special provisions and protections under the Mosaic Law were thus made for widows, orphans, foreigners, slaves and debtors (Lev 25; Deut 15). In contemporary Australian society, other vulnerable minority groups might also be added to these.

God's covenant people upheld an ethic of property and place that was distinct from the rest of the ancient world. By standing out in this regard — both then and now — **God's covenant people provide a powerful witness to the compassionate and generous nature of God.** Uses of property today can make similar allowances that testify to the counterintuitive gospel and the unexpected graces of God.

Theological Principles

- Special consideration for the poor is not bias or favouritism; rather, it reflects God's own priorities.
- The church's distinctive Christian witness includes provision and special concern for the vulnerable.

Actionable Implications

- Provisions should be made when considering property usage for how the poor and vulnerable will be affected (for better or worse).
- Decisions should be made with an awareness of the ways that property usage is a distinctive and powerful aspect of Christian witness, including the UCA's covenantal commitment to first peoples.

Transparency & Accountability

Colossians 3.23-24 gives expression to the idea that we work for the Lord and that our inheritance (or reward) comes in turn from the Lord. As such, we are accountable — and will be held to account — for wise management and faithful use of what has been entrusted to our care.

The biblical vision for property usage is powerfully intertwined with mission because all things belong to God and are intended to glorify him. Difficult texts in Scripture that speak of harsh judgments for holding back property from God, such as Acts 5 (Ananias and Sapphira) and Josh 7 (Achan), make sense when read within this frame of reference. There is a real danger of God's reputation being harmed where there is a lack of integrity in managing church property.

Responsible management may also be outworked through the exercise of foresight in property planning (Lk 14.28-30), prayerful recognition of God's purposes in building projects (Ps 127.1), and the importance of integrity and transparency in communities of faith (Acts 5.1-11).

Theological Principles

- The church's property usage witnesses to the character of God. As such, the church is answerable for its decisions.
- Mission (enhancing God's reputation in the world) and property usage are closely intertwined.

Actionable Implications

- Due diligence precedes responsible decisions about property.
- Foresight and planning are vital.
- Prayerful discernment of God's will is essential.
- Transparency within the church is non-negotiable.

Appendix Two – Theology of Stewardship

Dr Paul Jones - Trinity College Queensland

Introduction

The strategic priorities of the Queensland Synod Office for 2025-27 cover five focus areas, two of which are **Mission Renewal & Growth** and **Stewarding Resources**. The exercise of these two strategic foundations in supporting the whole church calls for a renewed focus on the theological beliefs undergirding the Synod's decision-making process with regards to matters of place & property. This brief document outlines four guiding principles that are deeply rooted in Scripture, and which have practical implications for the responsible stewardship of property and related funds including, for instance, a specified fund for church renewal (5.1.2) and the development of property policies (5.4.4). The theological principles below have implications for Mission Development Funds (governed by FIPB), Church Renewal Funds (oversight by MC3), and Covenant Ministry Funds (UAICC oversight).

The Church as Steward, not Owner

The most basic biblical foundation for a theology of stewardship is the understanding that all of creation continues to belong to God (Gen 1.1, 26-28; Ps 24.1; Deut 10.14). The mandate in Genesis 2.15 to 'keep' the garden (a verb that is often translated 'preserve' or 'protect') refers not to ownership but faithful care of what God has made in order to facilitate human flourishing (through meaningful work) and growth.

The church, as an exemplar of human flourishing, is called to manage, preserve and care for resources that ultimately belong to God. Tithing (Mal 3.10) and supporting the work of the church (1 Cor 16.2) are both financial expressions of this conviction.

Dominion over creation, as expressed in Gen 1.26-28 and Gen 2.15, is framed in terms of preservation (management) and cultivation (growth) of God's creation. In biblical parlance, human ownership of any part of creation is an illusion, but these two mandates from Eden remain key: management and growth (Matt 25.14-30). Just as a gardener voices creation's praise by tending to plants and weeds, so the church can facilitate worship through the responsible and thoughtful use of buildings, human resources, and finances in numerous creative ways that will glorify God throughout Queensland.

The entire biblical narrative moves from creation to new creation. Care for the environment has been vital from day one (Gen 2.15) and is a theme in John's revelation throughout his apocalyptic vision of the new earth and new heavens (e.g. Rev 22.1-2). Therefore, decisions made by the church to resource missional initiatives must bear in mind this vital mandate to minimise our negative footprint and preserve God's good created order. In practice this translates to environmental responsibility; prioritising educational initiatives that highlight the trajectory of our Story (the Bible) toward the renewal (not abandonment) of all creation; community engagement that empowers and partners with local organisations to establish and strengthen common ground between church and world; sustainable practices (transportation; paper use; eco-friendly products); and so on.

Theological Principles

- Everything belongs to God.
- Good stewardship facilitates human flourishing.

Actionable Implications

- Stewardship as Christian discipline (proactive, not reactionary).
- Environmental sustainable practices.
- Processes that reflect God's commitment to renew, restore and redeem.

The Generosity of God

Divine generosity comes first. As God's image and Christ's body in the world, the church's fundamental commitment to acts of generosity is always an 'imaging' of God, providing tangible reflections of God's already gracious abundance. Everything flows from this and may be expressed as some form of 'giving back' or 'releasing' what has been entrusted to our care. The church has never been entrusted with resources for its own sake nor for personal/congregational accumulation (Luke 12.42-48), but rather so that everyone's needs may be seen and met (consider the early church in Acts 2.44-45). In all of this, **the church's decisions about property should testify to the generous nature and open heart of God**, expressed consistently throughout the biblical narrative in a plethora of ways.

Other theological principles also extend from this: resources in the church are managed in order to provide for those in need (Act 2.45); reaping generously follows directly upon sowing generously (2 Cor 9.6-8); **stewardship extends beyond wealth and property, applying also to time, knowledge and talents**.

Theological Principles

- The church reflects the grace and generosity of God.
- Accumulation is not stewardship. Stewardship is done well with an open hand.

Actionable Implications

- The church must keep its 'ear to the ground', listening and attentive to local needs.
- Stewardship of time, knowledge and talents (human resources) are not add-ons, but critical responsibilities for the church.

Management & Accountability

Scripture strongly enforces (and reinforces) the need for financial accountability. One clear articulation of this principle comes from Paul, when he cautions the Corinthians about carefully managing church funds with these words: 'We want to avoid any criticism of the way we administer this liberal gift. For we are taking pains to do what is right, not only in the eyes of the Lord but also in the eyes of men' (2 Cor 8.20-21; see also 1 Cor 4.2). Paul rightly stresses that accountability is not only to God, but also to the community of believers who share and participate in God's passion for mission — and indeed to the wider community who look on with interest. It is thus irresponsible to provide funding to an agency, charity, church plant, or missional initiative without also measuring and evaluating the use of those funds over time. Good stewardship requires more than just generosity (see 2. above).

In a similar vein, the principle behind the laws in Lev 19.35-36 and Deut 25.13-16 calls for appropriate checks and balances against bias. This applies to church decision-making processes where conflicts of interest and personal preferences are potential risks. Deuteronomy's call for 'accurate and honest weights and measures' applies not only to tangible scales, but also to the criteria and processes used for distributing financial resources for missional and other ecclesial endeavours. As the recipient of much sacrificial giving, **the church is called to manage its resources wisely to ensure that finances are used responsibly to effectively widen the reach of God's mission in local communities** (see Rom 14.12).

Finally, Christians have often noted that Jesus spoke regularly about money, and used money to illustrate many of his teachings. Luke 16.1-15 contains various teachings and warnings about the proper handling of money, touching on themes such as integrity, trust and shrewdness (i.e. good powers of judgment), which is commended. The theological principle Jesus expressed in Luke 12.48 is apt: 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.' A similar principle finds expression in The Parable of the Talents (Matt 25.14-30, and also in the lives of biblical characters whose faithfulness in small things led to greater responsibilities. King David is a good example.

Theological Principles

- Human and divine accountability structures are both vital.
- Expectations are proportional to gifts (Lk 12.48).

Actionable Implications

- Rigorous reporting structures for funding provided (e.g. MC3, FIP board, MDF) are essential, not optional.
- Decision-making processes involving money should include stringent protections against bias.
- Due diligence precedes financial resourcing.

Appendix Three – Endowment Funds Explained

An endowment fund is perpetual financial vehicle set up to retain and grow a financial asset base, where the funds are invested and a portion of the fund is distributed regularly for the priority purposes for which the fund was originally set up for. As the fund grows, the distributions increase and more of the purpose can be achieved.

The Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund would be formed as endowment funds of The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod, and are designed to provide long-term financial support.

It is important to note that the endowment fund we are setting up are not only about accumulating wealth. Instead, they focus on using resources sustainably to support the organisation's mission in the immediate, medium, and long term. By carefully managing the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund, the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod can ensure a stable and enduring financial resource that benefits current and future generations.

By effectively managing the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund, the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod can ensure a sustainable financial resource that supports long-term goals.

How an Endowment Fund Works

- 1. Establishment:** The endowment funds, known as the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund, are created by decision of, and documents approved by the Synod Standing Committee. Initial and ongoing monies into the funds will come from donations from individuals, portions of property proceeds of sale, donated portions of MDF and other fund raising efforts. These are intended to support long-term mission.
- 2. Investment:** The principal amount of the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund is invested in a diversified portfolio, which may include cash, stocks, bonds, real estate, and alternative investments. The goal is to generate income and achieve capital growth over the long term. For the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod, this means ethically investing in a way that aligns with our values and mission.
- 3. Income Usage:** The income generated from the investments is used to fund projects and initiatives aligning with the Guiding Principles of the Church Renewal and Covenant Ministry Funds. Typically, only a small percentage of the endowment fund's assets are spent each year to ensure the fund's longevity.

Role of the FIPB Board

The FIPB Board is responsible for discerning on the investment strategy for the endowment funds. When making these decisions, the Board will consider several key issues such as, but not limited to:

- 1. Purpose:** If the purpose of each fund is discerned to be slightly different, then a different investment strategy may be applied. Clarity of purpose specified in the set up documents is vital to guide the investment strategy
- 2. Risk Tolerance:** Assessing the level of risk the Synod is willing to accept in its investment portfolio to generate income and achieve capital growth, noting that some asset classes can decrease in value in the short term.
- 3. Diversification:** Ensuring the investment portfolio is diversified across various asset classes to mitigate risk and enhance returns.
- 4. Ethical Considerations:** Aligning investments with the values and mission of the Uniting Church, avoiding investments in industries that conflict with the Church's principles.
- 5. Market Conditions:** Evaluating current and projected market conditions to make informed investment decisions that optimise returns.
- 6. Performance Monitoring:** Regularly reviewing the performance of the investment portfolio to ensure it meets the set objectives and making adjustments as necessary.

In conclusion, the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund of The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod are expected to be vital financial resources designed to support the organisation's mission sustainably over the immediate, medium, and long term. These endowment funds are not only about accumulating wealth but rather about using resources wisely to ensure a stable and enduring impact. By carefully managing these funds and adhering to ethical investment principles, the Synod can continue to support its mission and benefit current and future generations. The strategic oversight provided by the FIPB Board ensures that the funds are invested prudently, balancing risk and return, and aligning with the values and goals of the Uniting Church. Through this diligent management, the Church Renewal Fund and Covenant Ministry Fund will remain robust pillars of support for the Synod's ongoing and future initiatives.