

renewal

SYNOD 39

INTERCULTURAL MINISTRY

A Strategy Paper for the
Queensland Synod Office

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0: Executive Summary

This Strategy Paper outlines a focused and sustainable approach to strengthening Intercultural and CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) ministry across the Queensland Synod. This strategy is grounded in the findings of the *CALD State Report: Interculturalism – a Pathway to Renewal*, which identified four key strategic insights: that intercultural ministry is essential in today's context; that leadership development, particularly locally and intergenerationally, is critical; that systems must become more culturally responsive; and that cultural diversity represents a significant opportunity for renewal in the life and mission of the Church.

The Strategy is intended to guide the work of the Synod Office in general, and the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team in particular. It is commended to congregations, presbyteries, and other agencies and organisations within the Church for consideration, discernment, and response within their local contexts.

The strategy prioritises long-term cultural change rather than short-term activity. It focuses on leadership development, especially through Presbytery-based leaders strengthening existing systems, embedding intercultural language, and fostering relational networks. It also addresses the growing challenge of intergenerational leadership, equipping leaders to mentor younger generations while navigating the tension between cultural expectations and Western societal and church frameworks.

Informed by Talanoa-style listening across the church, the strategy positions intercultural life as central rather than peripheral to the mission of the church.

Over a phased timeframe (0–36 months and ongoing), the strategy seeks to embed intercultural practice within the core identity, structures, and mission of the Synod, supporting a more inclusive, resilient, and missionally faithful church.

1: Introduction

The Uniting Church within the Queensland Synod has long recognised cultural diversity as central to its identity and mission. In 1985, the Fourth Assembly made the landmark declaration, “*We are a multicultural church*,” placing the reality of cultural diversity at the heart of who we are as a Body of Christ. This commitment has been reaffirmed and deepened over successive Assemblies, calling the Church not only to recognise diversity, but to live “faith and life cross-culturally” and to grow toward a more fully intercultural way of being.

The Assembly's vision of an intercultural church builds on this foundation, inviting communities to move beyond coexistence toward relationships of mutuality, shared leadership, and genuine participation across cultures. This reflects an ongoing journey, one that is both faithful and unfinished, toward embodying unity in diversity as a gift of God's Spirit.

Within this wider national story, the Uniting Church in the Queensland Synod is increasingly shaped by cultural, linguistic, and generational diversity. This diversity presents significant missional opportunity, while also requiring clarity and intentionality to avoid fragmented or reactive responses.

This strategy builds on the findings of the *CALD State Report: Interculturalism – a Pathway to Renewal*, which identified several key dynamics shaping the future of the Church. Together, these findings point to the need for

a more intentional, coordinated, and theologically grounded approach to intercultural ministry across the life of the Synod.

This paper represents a deliberate next step in that journey. It provides a strategic framework to strengthen intercultural ministry across Synod life, moving beyond program-based responses toward embedding intercultural identity within leadership, systems, and mission.

2: Background

This strategy is grounded in the 2025 CALD State Report *Interculturalism – a Pathway to Renewal* and in ongoing consultation across congregations, Presbyteries, and ministry leaders. The report draws on Talanoa-style listening, lived experience, and engagement with CALD leaders across the Synod to surface both the strengths and the systemic gaps shaping intercultural ministry.

The report highlights that, while the Queensland Synod is increasingly diverse and enriched by a wide range of cultural expressions, this diversity is not yet consistently reflected in leadership, decision-making, or core structures. It identifies key themes including cultural and linguistic barriers within governance processes, uneven access to leadership pathways, and the complexity of navigating differing expectations of ministry, authority, and community across cultures. It also points to the relational strengths within CALD communities, particularly their commitment to faith, family, and intergenerational continuity, as vital gifts that are not yet fully integrated into the wider life of the Church.

While multicultural diversity is growing, many CALD leaders continue to face systemic challenges navigating church structures, leadership expectations, and cultural differences.

3: Priorities

Implementation Timeframes

The strategic priorities outlined below are categorised into three broad timeframes, or horizons, each reflecting a different stage of development and maturity:

Foundation (0–6 months): Establishing shared understanding, building relationships, and putting in place the essential structures, language, and leadership alignment required to support intercultural ministry.

Embedding (6–18 months): Integrating intercultural practices into existing systems, leadership pathways, and ministry expressions, with a focus on consistency, capability-building, and local application.

Sustaining (18–36 months & ongoing): Strengthening and normalising intercultural identity across the Synod, supporting long-term cultural change, leadership succession, and ongoing innovation in mission and ministry.

Strategic Intent (Framing the Approach)

This strategy adopts a deliberate **“less is more” approach**. Rather than attempting to engage every congregation directly, the focus is on depth, leadership multiplication, and strengthening existing structures. Working through Presbyteries and key leaders enables sustainable, contextually informed growth rather than reactive, short-term activity.

Each of the eight priorities is **interconnected**, forming an integrated framework (language, systems, leadership, networks, training, mission, storytelling, and theological grounding). Progress in one area strengthens the others.

Priority 1: Embed Intercultural Language and Vision

Desired Outcome: Intercultural ministry seen as a central identity

This priority recognizes that **language shapes culture and outcomes**. Current language across Synod life has often unintentionally framed multicultural ministry as an “add-on.” A deliberate shift in language is required to reposition intercultural life as mainstream and a non-negotiable reality in the modern Australian context. This shift is consistent with the long journey of the Uniting Church since its origins in 1977.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
1.1	Encourage and support review of Synod and Synod Office language, documents, and communications to assess alignment with intercultural commitments	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod Office.	Offer an audit framework and tools for reviewing language and documents Support a working group to identify key areas for alignment and change Provide examples of interculturally aligned language and practice	Foundation phase (0–6 months)
1.2	Advocate for reframing of messaging so intercultural ministry is consistently presented as central to the Church's mission	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod Communications and leadership bodies	Engage with communications teams to encourage consistent messaging shifts Offer guidance and examples for communicating intercultural theology and practice Support incorporation of intercultural themes into Synod-wide communications	Foundation → Embedding (0–12 months), working towards sustaining
1.3	Encourage and support integration of intercultural theology into preaching, formation, and leadership development pathways	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbyteries, formation providers, and ministry leaders	Provide theological resources and reflection materials Offer input into leadership development and formation programs Equip leaders to interpret Scripture and ministry through intercultural lenses	Embedding phase (6–18 months), Sustaining

#	Action	Who	How	When
1.4	Advocate for communications that clearly articulate the theological “why” underpinning intercultural practice	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod Office and leadership bodies	Develop and share clear theological framing for intercultural ministry Encourage its integration into teaching, storytelling, and communication Model its use within MAT practice and engagement	Foundation (0–6 months articulation), Embedding → Sustaining (ongoing use)

Priority 2: Strengthen Support Systems

Desired Outcome: Systems are accessible and culturally informed

CALD leaders often experience challenges not because systems are incorrect, but because **pathways are unclear or not culturally aligned**. This priority focuses on making existing systems more navigable and supportive.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
2.1	Assist in identifying barriers in governance, administration, and relational systems	Mission Accompanying Team (lead) working alongside Synod Office, Presbytery.	Targeted review, consultation (including CALD leaders), and system mapping	Foundation phase (0–6 months)
2.2	Equip leaders and committees to build cultural competency among leaders and committees	Mission Accompanying Team (Lead), working alongside Presbytery.	Training modules, facilitated workshops, and ongoing formation processes	Embedding phase (6–18 months), working towards sustaining and ongoing refresh.
2.3	Support clarification of communication pathways and points of support	Mission Accompanying Team (Lead), working alongside Synod Office (communications)	Develop clear communication frameworks, resource hubs, and contact pathways	Foundation → Embedding (0–12 months)

#	Action	Who	How	When
2.4	Foster and support relational trust between CALD leaders and governance structures	Mission Accompanying Team (Lead), working alongside Synod leadership, Presbyteries	Regular relational gatherings, Talanoa-style conversations, intentional listening processes	Across all phases (begin in Foundation, continue sustaining)

Priority 3: Equip Presbytery-Based Leaders

Desired Outcome: Strong local leadership and succession

Sustainable change happens through **local leadership**. This priority focuses on equipping key multicultural leaders within Presbyteries to lead, connect, and influence mission planning.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
3.1	Assist Presbyteries to identify CALD leaders across each Presbytery	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbyteries.	Mapping exercise through relational networks, congregations, and leadership lists	Foundation phase (0–6 months)
3.2	Support and facilitate establishment of leadership cohorts for encouragement, reflection, and shared learning	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbyteries	Formation of cohort groups (regional or thematic), regular gatherings (in-person/online)	Foundation → Embedding (3–12 months), then sustaining
3.3	Encourage and support intentional intergenerational mentoring	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbytery leaders, experienced CALD leaders, emerging leaders.	Formation of cohort groups (regional or thematic), regular gatherings (in-person/online)	Embedding phase (6–18 months), sustaining thereafter
3.4	Equip leaders to navigate the tension between cultural and Western expectations	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), with external or internal facilitators	Workshops, reflective practice sessions, contextual case studies	Foundation → Embedding (3–12 months), then sustaining

#	Action	Who	How	When
3.5	Encourage the use of the 8 Diagnostic Cultural Questions (see below) to understand context and guide decision-making	Mission Accompanying Team lead, working alongside Presbytery leaders and leadership cohorts	Integrate questions into planning processes, cohort discussions, and leadership reflection tools	Embedding phase (6–18 months), normalised in sustaining phase
3.6	Offer and support a training loop program to support understanding and application of the diagnostic questions	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working together with Presbytery, Synod learning and development functions and Agencies	Develop and deliver a repeatable training cycle (intro → practice → reflection → revisit), with adaptable resources	Foundation (design in 0–6 months), Embedding (rollout 6–18 months), Sustaining (ongoing cycles)

8 Diagnostic Cultural Questions

This set of 8 Diagnostic Cultural Questions can act as a **core leadership tool**, helping leaders interpret their cultural context rather than react to issues. They are designed for use in Presbytery reviews, congregational planning, and leadership development processes. The 8 questions are presented here, with a full process further detailed in Appendix B, pairing each question with practical actions to guide implementation.

- 1: Who is here?** – Identifying cultural, linguistic, generational, and migration-background groups and how they interact
- 2: How does culture shape leadership?** – Understanding expectations around authority, decision-making, and conflict
- 3: How do people communicate across cultures?** – Recognising communication differences and relational dynamics
- 4: What helps or hinders belonging?** – Identifying inclusion and exclusion within community life
- 5: What barriers exist in navigating church systems?** – Highlighting structural and cultural challenges
- 6: What gifts are present but under-recognised?** – Recognising strengths and assets within CALD communities
- 7: What tensions or misunderstandings are emerging?** – Identifying intercultural friction points
- 8: How clearly is the theological ‘Why’ understood and lived?** – Ensuring theological clarity and practice

Priority 4: Foster Networks

Desired Outcome: Peer support and shared learning

Networks strengthen identity, belonging, and shared learning. Rather than broad engagement, this priority emphasizes **depth and relational strength**.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
4.1	Support and facilitate CALD congregational networks	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside MCCRG, Presbytery representatives	Regular network gatherings, supported by coordination and shared agendas.	Foundation → Embedding (establish within 0–6 months, continue ongoing)
4.2	Encourage and assist development of peer mentoring relationships between congregations	Mission Accompanying Team lead, working alongside Presbyteries and congregational leaders.	Identify and match congregations for mutual learning, supported by simple mentoring frameworks	Embedding phase (6–18 months), sustaining thereafter
4.3	Create spaces for collaborative problem-solving and shared experience	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside MCCRG, Presbytery leaders	Facilitated forums, workshops, and Talanoa-style conversations focused on real ministry challenges	Across all phases (begin in Foundation, deepen through Embedding and Sustaining)
4.4	Support strengthening of connection to the wider church identity	Mission Accompanying Team (lead) working alongside Presbyteries and Synod leadership.	Intentional integration into Synod gatherings, storytelling, shared worship, and communication channels	Embedding → Sustaining (6–36 months and ongoing)

Priority 5: Deliver Training (CHAT)

Desired Outcome: Leaders skilled in intercultural engagement

Intercultural ministry requires practical skills, not just awareness. As part of the early work with Presbyteries to identify and equip key leaders and to build leadership networks, CHAT (Cultural Hearing, Asking, Telling)—a Scripture Union Qld training course—will be introduced as a shared framework for communication and engagement across cultures.

CHAT provides a practical tool to support leaders as they navigate cultural difference, build relationships, and engage more effectively in diverse ministry contexts. Used consistently, it will also contribute to developing a common language and approach across the Synod, strengthening both local leadership and wider connection.

Alongside this, intentional spaces will be created for **intercultural and collaborative problem-solving and shared learning**, where leaders can reflect on real ministry contexts, deepen mutual understanding, and discern responses together across cultural perspectives.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
5.1	Lead and coordinate evaluation of CHAT pilot programs	Mission Accompanying Team (lead),	Structured evaluation (feedback surveys, interviews, outcomes review) and refinement of content	Foundation phase (0–6 months)
5.2	Support and assist rollout training across Synod where appropriate	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbyteries, Synod Office	Phased rollout prioritising key leadership groups, using a scalable delivery model (in-person and online)	Embedding phase (6–18 months)
5.3	Advocate for embedding CHAT within leadership formation and ongoing education	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Trinity college, Scripture Union and Synod learning and development.	Integrate CHAT into existing leadership pathways, induction processes, and continuing education frameworks	Embedding → Sustaining (6–36 months and ongoing)
5.4	Encourage use of training to strengthen shared language and understanding	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod, Presbyteries, congregations	Consistent use of CHAT frameworks across training, meetings, and planning processes	Across all phases (introduced in Foundation, reinforced through Embedding, normalised in Sustaining)

Priority 6: Focus Mission Planning

Desired Outcome: Deep impact in key multicultural areas

This strategy intentionally focuses on key regions and congregations where cultural diversity is significant, enabling depth rather than superficial breadth. This work will be undertaken in active partnership with Presbyteries, recognising their central role in discerning local mission priorities and shaping contextually appropriate responses.

Mission planning will be strengthened through closer collaboration between the Mission Accompanying Team (MAT) and Presbyteries, ensuring that intercultural understanding is embedded within local and regional mission strategies, rather than treated as an adjunct or specialist concern.

Through this approach, mission planning becomes both locally grounded and Synod-connected, enabling deeper engagement with multicultural communities and supporting sustainable, contextually responsive ministry shaped by strong local leadership.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
6.1	Support development of a hub-and-leader model and assist Presbyteries to implement where agreed	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbyteries, identified hub leaders, leaders	Discern key multicultural hubs with Presbyteries; appoint or affirm local leaders; provide coaching, resourcing, and connection into wider networks	Foundation (discernment 0–6 months), Embedding (implementation 6–18 months), Sustaining (ongoing refinement)
6.2	Integrate consideration of Intercultural elements within MAT mission planning practice and encourage incorporation across Presbytery mission planning processes	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbytery.	Integrate intercultural analysis into planning frameworks, mission reviews, and prioritisation processes; include cultural context in all planning conversations	Foundation (framework adjustment 0–6 months), Embedding (consistent use 6–18 months), Sustaining (normalised practice)

#	Action	Who	How	When
6.3	Integrate intercultural elements within MAT coaching and learning processes and equip leaders to apply	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod learning and development, Presbytery leaders	Integrate intercultural reflection tools (e.g. cultural lenses, diagnostic questions) into coaching, mentoring, and leadership formation; model this in accompaniment practice	Embedding (6–18 months), Sustaining (ongoing integration and maturity)

Priority 7: Tell Shared Stories

Outcome: CALD identity visible and celebrated

Stories shape identity, belonging, and perception by revealing whose voices are heard and what is valued within the life of the Church. Increasing the visibility of CALD communities affirms that they are not peripheral, but central to the Church's faith, leadership, and mission.

Shared storytelling is therefore not simply about communication, but about formation—shaping how the Church understands itself as an intercultural community where diversity is recognised as a gift and intercultural leadership is both normal and valued.

This priority focuses on intentionally amplifying the stories of CALD congregations, leaders, and communities across the Synod. These stories build connection, foster mutual understanding, and provide real examples of intercultural ministry in practice, strengthening both identity and belonging. Over time, consistent storytelling will help bridge gaps across the Church, challenge assumptions, and contribute to a broader cultural shift in which CALD presence and leadership are visible, integrated, and influential in the shared life and mission of the Synod.

Stories shape identity, belonging, and perception. Increasing visibility of CALD communities affirms that they are **central to the life of the church**.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
7.1	Encourage and support consistent storytelling across Synod platforms to amplify CALD voices and experiences	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod Communications, Presbyteries, and congregations	Partner with Communications to establish regular storytelling rhythms; Encourage sharing of CALD leadership, faith, and intergenerational stories; Offer frameworks and guidance for capturing and sharing local stories; Support use of stories to strengthen identity, confidence, and shared ownership	Foundation (establish approach), Embedding (regular rhythm), Sustaining (ongoing culture)

Priority 8: Anchor the 'Why'

Desired Outcome: Theological clarity guide's action

A strong theological 'Why' prevents drift into reactive or program-driven ministry. It provides a shared foundation for decision-making, enabling clarity, consistency, and resilience as the Church navigates cultural diversity and change

This priority ensures that all other strategic actions are grounded not simply in good practice, but in a coherent theological vision that shapes the identity and mission of the Church.

A strong theological 'Why' prevents drift into reactive ministry. It ensures clarity, consistency, and resilience when challenges arise.

Actions:

#	Action	Who	How	When
8.1	Encourage and support integration into teaching a clear theological rationale for intercultural ministry across Synod life	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod Office, key Synod leadership bodies	Support development and communicate clear theological framing for intercultural ministry grounded in Scripture, UCA theology, and Assembly commitments; Integrate this “Why” into teaching, preaching, leadership formation, and Synod-wide communications; Model its use within MAT mission planning, accompaniment, and decision-making processes	Foundation (articulation 0–6 months), Embedding (integration 6–18 months), Sustaining (ongoing reinforcement)

4: Other Actions

Intergenerational Leadership and Cultural Tensions

One matter not explored deeply within the *Interculturalism – A Pathway to Renewal* report is the complexity of intergenerational leadership. Across many CALD and intercultural communities, leadership is shaped not only by culture but also by generational dynamics. First-generation leaders often carry responsibility for preserving language, tradition, and communal identity, while younger generations are forming faith and identity within western Australian cultural and social contexts.

Leaders are increasingly required to mentor across both generational and cultural boundaries—creating space for younger leaders to contribute while honouring cultural inheritance. Without intentional pathways, younger leaders may disengage, and older leaders may carry unsustainable expectations. At the same time, leaders hold a costly tension between cultural expectations and Western church systems, navigating differences in leadership style, authority, communication, and governance. This interpretive work is often unseen and can lead to fatigue if unsupported. Addressing these realities is essential for long-term leadership sustainability and faithful intercultural ministry.

While this strategy commits the Synod Office, particularly the Mission Accompanying Team (MAT), to a range of focused actions, it is not intended to prescribe uniform responses across the whole Church. Rather, it recognises the distinct roles of Presbyteries, congregations, and formation providers, and seeks to encourage and support each to discern and implement contextually appropriate responses. The following areas are offered as guiding directions, inviting shared participation in this work across the life of the Church:

- **Presbyteries:** Encourage and support Presbyteries to embed intercultural leadership and mentoring in planning
- **Congregations:** Encourage and equip congregations to engage diagnostic questions
- **Formation providers:** Advocate with and partner with formation providers to integrate intercultural training

#	Action	Who	How	When
9.1	Encourage and support Presbyteries to embed intercultural and intergenerational leadership development and mentoring in planning	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), work alongside Presbyteries.	Integrate intergenerational leadership priorities into mission planning and leadership structures; Establish mentoring pathways linking experienced and emerging leaders across cultures; Use leadership cohorts and networks to support shared reflection and practice	Foundation (0–6 months: identify leaders and priorities), Embedding (6–18 months: implement mentoring and planning integration), Sustaining (ongoing development and refinement)

#	Action	Who	How	When
9.2	Encourage and support Congregations: Engage diagnostic tools and practices that surface intergenerational and cultural dynamics	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Presbytery Leaders, Congregational leaders, church councils, ministry teams	Use the 8 Diagnostic Cultural Questions (or similar tools) to reflect on generational and cultural dynamics in local contexts; Create intentional spaces for intergenerational conversation, listening, and shared discernment; Encourage younger leaders to participate meaningfully in leadership and decision-making	Embedding (6–18 months: introduce and practice tools), Sustaining (ongoing integration into congregational life)
9.3	Advocate with and partner with formation providers to integrate intercultural and intergenerational leadership into training and development	Mission Accompanying Team (lead), working alongside Synod learning and development, Trinity College, training providers	Include content on intercultural leadership, generational dynamics, and cultural navigation in training programs Equip leaders with practical skills for mentoring, conflict navigation, and intercultural interpretation Partner with MAT to align formation with lived ministry realities	Foundation (0–6 months: curriculum review), Embedding (6–18 months: integration into programs), Sustaining (ongoing delivery and adaptation)

5: Review and Oversight

Implementation and Accountability

Implementation of this strategy will be overseen by the Associate General Secretary (Ministry and Mission), ensuring alignment with the broader mission priorities of the Synod and coordination across the Synod Office, particularly the Mission Accompanying Team.

Progress against the strategy will be reported to the Synod Standing Committee via the General Secretary, providing regular oversight, accountability, and opportunity for strategic refinement.

Engagement with Presbyteries will be a critical component of implementation. Twice-yearly progress updates will be offered through the Presbytery–Synod Interface, creating space for shared reflection, feedback, and alignment of priorities. These forums will support mutual learning and ensure that the strategy remains grounded in the realities of local ministry contexts.

Progress will also be informed by ongoing feedback from CALD leaders and communities. This feedback will be intentionally gathered through relational networks, leadership cohorts, and consultation processes, ensuring that lived experience continues to shape the direction of the work.

The strategy is intended to be adaptive rather than static. As learning emerges through implementation, reflection, and engagement across the Church, the strategy will be refined to remain responsive, relevant, and effective over time.

Progress will be reviewed through Synod–Presbytery interfaces. Feedback from CALD leaders will inform continuous improvement. The strategy will adapt as learning emerges.

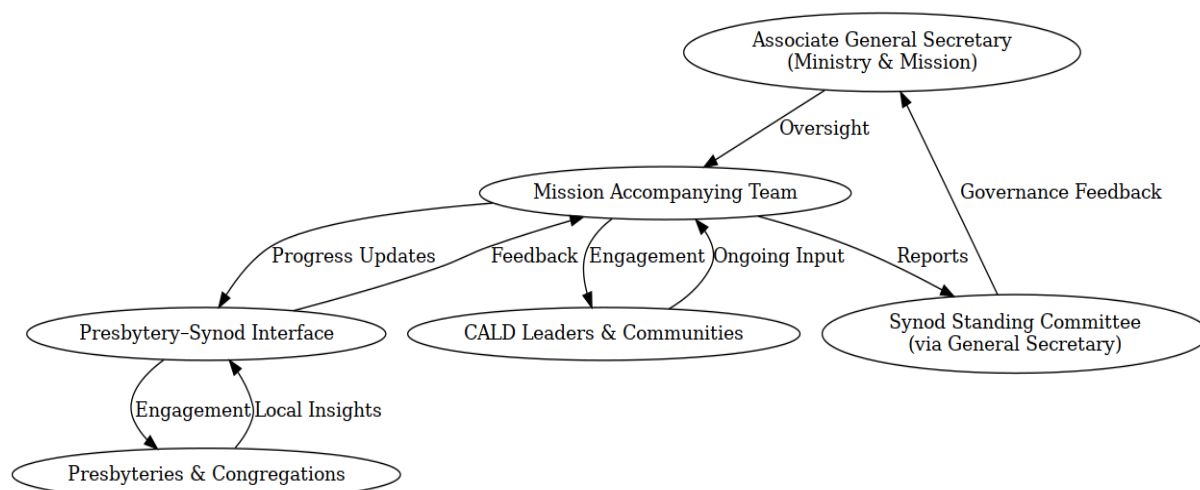


Figure 1: Governance and feedback framework illustrating oversight, implementation, and relational learning loops across the Synod, Presbyteries, and CALD communities. Source: Developed by the Mission Accompanying Team for the Queensland Synod Intercultural Strategy (2026).

Intercultural Strategy Governance & Feedback Loop

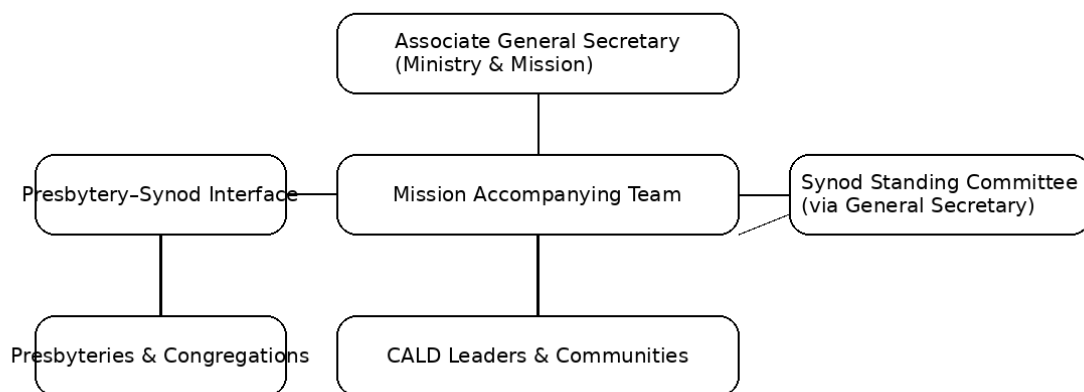


Figure 2: Governance and feedback framework showing oversight, implementation, and relational learning loops across the Synod, Presbyteries, and CALD communities.

Appendix A: Tuvalu: Diaspora and Relocation

Recognizing the increasing likelihood of climate-related relocation from Tuvalu under the Falepili Union treaty, the Synod acknowledges both the pastoral responsibility and missional opportunity to accompany these communities with care, dignity, and mutual learning.

Key Realities

- Anticipated relocation will involve not only movement of people, but **disruption to culture, identity, and community structures**
- Existing Tuvaluan diaspora communities already present within Queensland provide a foundation for **relational continuity and leadership**
- Churches will play a critical role in **settlement, belonging, and spiritual support**

Strategic Action Areas and Implementation

1. Accompaniment and Relationship Building

Actions:

- Develop intentional relationships with Tuvaluan leaders and communities
- Engage in Talanoa-style listening processes
- Map existing diaspora connections across Presbyteries

Implementation:

- Foundation (0–6 months): Identify key leaders and communities
- Embedding (6–18 months): Establish regular relational gatherings and listening forums
- Sustaining (18–36 months): Maintain ongoing accompaniment relationships

Measures of Success:

- Established relationships with key community leaders
- Increased engagement between Synod and diaspora communities

2. Leadership Support and Development

Actions:

- Identify emerging leaders within Tuvaluan and Pacific communities
- Provide leadership pathways within Presbytery and Synod structures
- Encourage **intergenerational mentoring** within diaspora communities
- Support leaders navigating cultural and Western expectations

Implementation:

- Foundation: Identify leaders and mentoring opportunities
- Embedding: Establish mentoring relationships and leadership cohorts
- Sustaining: Ongoing leadership development and succession planning

Measures of Success:

- Number of emerging leaders identified and supported
- Active mentoring relationships across generations

3. Cultural Continuity and Belonging

Actions:

- Support worship expressions reflecting Tuvaluan language and culture
- Encourage shared intercultural worship experiences
- Ensure cultural identity is honoured within wider church life

Implementation:

- Embedding: Support cultural worship practices and shared gatherings
- Sustaining: Regular intercultural worship opportunities

Measures of Success:

- Increased participation in intercultural worship
- Positive feedback on belonging and inclusion

4. Systems Navigation and Advocacy

Actions:

- Assist communities to navigate Synod and Presbytery systems
- Advocate for culturally informed governance practices
- Partner with external organisations involved in relocation and settlement

Implementation:

- Foundation: Identify barriers within systems
- Embedding: Provide guidance and training for leaders
- Sustaining: Improve system accessibility over time

Measures of Success:

- Reduced barriers reported by CALD leaders
- Clearer pathways for engagement with church structures

5. Storytelling and Visibility

Actions:

- Share stories of Tuvaluan communities and leaders
- Highlight resilience, theology, and cultural richness
- Integrate these stories into Synod communications

Implementation:

- Foundation: Establish storytelling channels with Communications Team
- Sustaining: Ongoing storytelling rhythm and publication

Measures of Success:

- Regular publication of CALD stories
- Increased visibility of Pacific communities across Synod platforms

Integration with Strategy Priorities

These actions align with and reinforce the broader strategy:

- **Priority 3 (Leadership):** Leadership development and mentoring
- **Priority 4 (Networks):** Building community connections
- **Priority 6 (Mission Planning):** Informing regional engagement
- **Priority 7 (Storytelling):** Strengthening identity and visibility

Reflection

How might the church move beyond service provision toward genuine accompaniment, learning from the faith, resilience, and communal depth of Tuvaluan people?

Appendix B: Statistical Context and Demographic Analysis

Eight Diagnostic Cultural Questions

These questions act as a **core leadership tool**, helping leaders interpret their cultural context rather than react to issues. They are designed for use in presbytery reviews, congregational planning, and leadership development processes.

Each question is paired with **practical actions** to guide implementation.

1: Who is here? – Identifying cultural, linguistic, generational, and migration-background groups and how they interact

Actions:

- Map congregational and community demographics (age, culture, language, migration story)
- Identify grouping patterns (segregated vs integrated participation)
- Develop strategies to intentionally connect groups (shared worship, events, leadership spaces)

2: How does culture shape leadership? – Understanding expectations around authority, decision-making, and conflict

Actions:

- Facilitate structured conversations on leadership expectations across cultures
- Adapt leadership models to accommodate both relational and procedural approaches
- Provide leadership formation that addresses cultural assumptions and styles

3: How do people communicate across cultures? – Recognising communication differences and relational dynamics

Actions:

- Introduce CHAT (Cultural Hearing, Asking, Telling) practices in leadership settings
- Train leaders to recognise direct vs indirect communication styles
- Establish shared communication norms for meetings and decision-making

4: What helps or hinders belonging? – Identifying inclusion and exclusion within community life

Actions:

- Review worship, hospitality, and decision-making practices for inclusivity
- Invite feedback from CALD members regarding belonging
- Adjust practices (language use, participation opportunities, leadership visibility)

5: What barriers exist in navigating church systems? – Highlighting structural and cultural challenges**Actions:**

- Audit Synod and Presbytery processes for accessibility (language, complexity, relationships)
- Provide clear guides and relational support pathways for CALD leaders
- Simplify or adapt processes where barriers are identified

6: What gifts are present but under-recognised? – Recognising strengths and assets within CALD communities**Actions:**

- Identify leadership gifts, cultural strengths, and community networks
- Create opportunities for CALD leaders to lead beyond their own congregations
- Integrate these gifts into wider mission and ministry priorities

7: What tensions or misunderstandings are emerging? – Identifying intercultural friction points**Actions:**

- Surface tensions early through facilitated conversations
- Apply theological reflection to cultural conflict situations
- Develop conflict-resolution approaches sensitive to cultural dynamics

8: How clearly is the theological ‘Why’ understood and lived? – Ensuring theological clarity and practice**Actions:**

- Teach and articulate a clear theological basis for intercultural ministry
- Integrate this ‘Why’ into preaching, teaching, and leadership development
- Regularly review decisions and practices against this theological grounding

These actions ensure the diagnostic questions move beyond reflection to **intentional leadership practice**, enabling stronger intercultural understanding, clearer decision-making, and more sustainable ministry outcomes.

Timeframes: Foundation → Embedding → Sustaining

Appendix C: Cultural Diversity Data

1. National Cultural Diversity (Australia)

Australia continues to experience significant cultural and linguistic diversification. According to the 2021 Australian Census and national research:

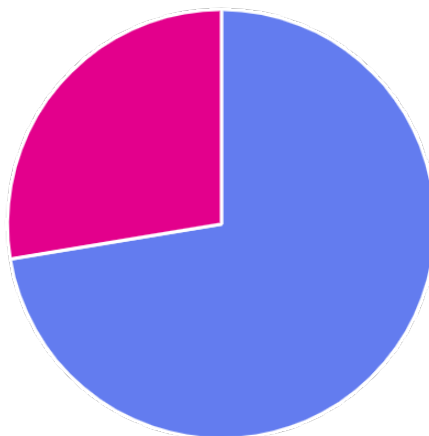
- 27.6% of Australians were born overseas
- Approximately 23% speak a language other than English at home
- More than 300 languages are spoken across Australian households
- 51.5% of Australians are first- or second-generation migrants

These figures highlight that cultural diversity is a present and defining reality shaping communities across Queensland and the mission context of the church.

Figure 1: Australian Population – Country of Birth (2021 Census)

(See generated chart: Overseas born 27.6%; Australian born 72.4%. Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2021)

Figure 1: Australian Population – Country of Birth (2021 Census)



Interpretation:

- More than one in four Australians are overseas born
- Congregational mission contexts are inherently multicultural and increasingly diverse

Future Trend

- Recent population growth driven by high migration levels suggests the overseas-born proportion is now **approaching 30% and continuing to increase**
- Cultural diversity is expected to deepen across metropolitan and regional areas, reshaping local mission contexts
- Churches will increasingly engage communities where cultural diversity is the norm, not the exception

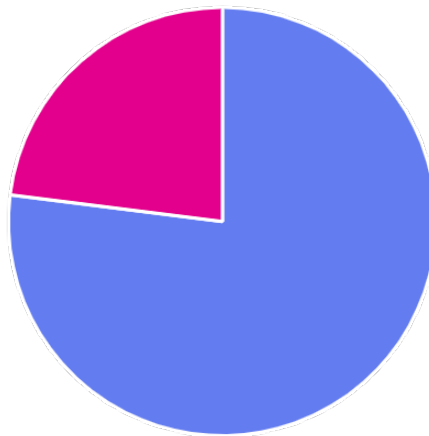
2. Language Diversity

Language diversity is a key indicator of intercultural complexity and opportunity within ministry:

Figure 2: Language Diversity in Australia / Language Spoken at Home (2021 Census)

(See generated chart file: language.png — English only 77% | Other languages 23%)

Language Diversity in Australia (2021 Census)



- **23% of Australians speak a language other than English at home**

Interpretation:

- Approximately one in four households operates in a multilingual context
- Communication, leadership, discipleship, and worship approaches must increasingly engage multilingual and intercultural realities

Future Trend

- Migration patterns indicate continued growth in multilingual households, particularly in urban and growth corridors
- Second-generation communities will further shape bilingual and intercultural identities
- Churches will increasingly need to operate across **multiple languages, cultural frames, and communication styles simultaneously**

3. Uniting Church Context (National and Queensland Comparison)

The Uniting Church reflects both the opportunity and challenge of cultural diversity across its national and Queensland contexts.

National (Uniting Church in Australia):

- Worship occurs in **30–36 languages**
- More than **200 culturally and linguistically diverse congregations** exist nationally
- Approximately **37% of church attenders were born overseas**, with **28% from non-English speaking countries** (NCLS 2021 data interpretation)
- However, the overall membership remains:
 - **86% Australian-born**
 - Only **~8–9% born in non-English speaking countries**

Queensland Synod (Indicative Insights from CALD Report):

- Cultural diversity is described as a **“rapidly growing feature” of church life across the Synod**
- CALD congregations and faith communities are increasingly present across metropolitan, regional, and growth corridors (e.g. Logan, Cairns, Townsville)
- Growth patterns show increasing **second-generation and emerging multicultural leadership contexts**

However, CALD leadership remains:

- Concentrated in specific congregations rather than across governance structures
- Under-represented in broader Synod leadership systems

Figure 3: Uniting Church Composition (National vs Context)

(See generated chart file: *uca.png* — Australian born ~91% | non-English speaking background ~9%)

Figure 3: Uniting Church Composition (Indicative)

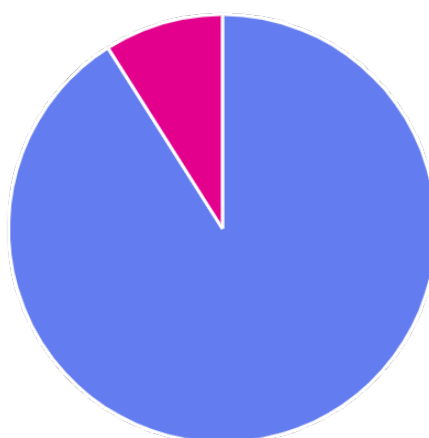


Figure 3: Uniting Church Composition (Indicative Comparison)

Approximate composition suggests a predominantly Australian-born membership (~91%), with a smaller proportion from non-English speaking backgrounds (~9%). Source: UCA internal estimates / CALD State Report 2025.

Note: This figure is indicative and based on internal church data and estimates. It highlights the contrast between the broader Australian population and current church composition

Interpretation:

- There is a **significant gap between community diversity and church composition**
- CALD communities are present, but not yet proportionally reflected in **leadership, systems, or identity**

Interpretation (National vs Queensland):

- Nationally, CALD participation is present but does not yet fully shape the **core identity or leadership structures** of the church
- In Queensland, CALD communities are **growing in number and influence**, but this growth has not yet translated consistently into leadership, governance, or system-level representation
- This creates a clear gap between:
 - **Community diversity (high and increasing)**
 - **Church representation and leadership diversity (still emerging)**

Future Trend

- Without intentional change, this gap is likely to widen as Australia becomes more culturally diverse
- With intentional intercultural engagement, leadership development, and system adaptation, there is strong potential for:
 - Growth in CALD leadership and participation
 - Renewal of congregational life and mission
 - Greater alignment between the Church and its surrounding communities

4. Strategic Implications

These data points reinforce the strategic rationale of this paper:

1. Intercultural ministry is essential

- Cultural diversity defines the mission context in which the church now operates

2. Leadership development is critical

- Growth will occur through locally embedded leaders able to interpret cultural realities
- Intergenerational mentoring is essential to sustaining leadership pathways across cultures

3. System adaptation is required

- Existing systems must become more accessible, relational, and culturally responsive

4. Opportunity for renewal

- Cultural diversity presents significant opportunities for mission, theological reflection, innovation, and leadership renewal

Appendix D: Terms used in this document

Throughout this document we have opted to use the broadest meaning of several terms. For clarity and convenience, the terms and the meaning ascribed to them within this document are:

ACT2: National Assembly project assessing the future shape and priorities of the Uniting Church in Australia.

CALD: Culturally and Linguistically Diverse communities.

Congregation: A local church, whether constituted as a congregation or faith community under the regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia

MCCRG: Multicultural and CALD Reference Group – a body of the Queensland Synod.

MAT: Mission Accompanying Team – a group within the Queensland Synod office with interest in intercultural ministry, mission development, church planting, and ministry with younger generations

PRC / PSC / PSI: Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC), Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC) and Presbytery-Synod Interface (PSI) are governance structures of Presbyteries and the Queensland Synod.

Talanoa - a Pacific concept, widely used in Fijian, Tongan, and other Oceanic cultures, that refers to a way of **engaging in open, respectful, and inclusive dialogue**. Talanoa is a process of relational, story-based conversation that builds understanding and trust through listening, sharing, and mutual respect.

UAICC / Muth arrak: Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, Queensland Regional Council.