

## FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

**Context:**

The FAPS Department is responsible for facilitating the effective stewardship of the Synod's resources. The focus for the last 18 months has been on gaining productivity and better reporting through process and system enhancements.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web migration - All websites hosted through the Synod have been standardised, hosted on one server, and contracted out.</li> <li>• Stabilised/standardised hardware and operating systems.</li> <li>• Selected web database and electronic content management systems for Synod, SugarCRM and Alfresco, respectively.</li> <li>• Conducted process reviews for Property Services and Finance Services</li> <li>• Developed Property Trust By-laws.</li> <li>• Developed first cut FIP Board By-laws.</li> <li>• Reviewed Uniting Church Foundation structure and refocused purpose to fundraising.</li> <li>• Developed financial reporting to Synod Standing Committee and the Finance Investment and Property Board.</li> <li>• Consolidated special purpose funds to enable better monitoring, distribution and reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select and implement a new treasury system.</li> <li>• Decommission the old banking platform - Ultracs.</li> <li>• Implement SugarCRM and Alfresco.</li> <li>• Decommission property database - Proclaim.</li> <li>• Resolve new funding model for Synod.</li> <li>• Establish standard practice for governance and financial reporting to Australian Not-for-profit and Charities Commission (ACNC).</li> <li>• Provide ready access to Synod property and finance policies.</li> <li>• Finalise FIP Board By-laws.</li> <li>• Finalise property delegations and authorisations.</li> <li>• Establish process for FIP Board recruitment and succession planning.</li> <li>• Revise reporting for specific purpose funds.</li> </ul>

**Key achievements/initiatives:**

Web migration - 223 domains were hosted by Information Technology Services on three different servers and multiple web software platforms. Domains hosted were for congregations, presbyteries, synods and related entities. All domains are now hosted on remote servers, have been standardised to using wordpress, or have been cancelled. Information Services still supports these sites, and workload has been reduced by an average of 8 hours per week and cost savings of over \$20,000 per annum (including infrastructure) are expected.

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

As we strive to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of our systems there are a number risks that need to be addressed: Compliance and reporting risks associated with Increasing national legislation (e.g. ACNC); operational risks because data is input manually into a number of different (non-integrated) systems and is generally incomplete and/or inaccurate; and resourcing risks because multiple system revisions/upgrades/installations will put a heavy burden on existing staff resources.

**Recommendations/issues to be addressed:**

Even though the church is made up of a number of different bodies, there is an overlap in information requirements, and hence a scoping study is required to establish the necessary data to be maintained in web-based systems that permit sharing across relevant church bodies.

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## PASTOR APPLICATION COMMITTEE

### Context:

The Pastor Application Committee (previously the Pastor Candidature Committee) is the group of the Synod tasked with fulfilling Regulation 2.3.3 (c): "A Synod body designated by the Synod shall have responsibility for considering and determining applications made under Regulation 2.3.3 (a)(ii) (ie. Ministry of Pastor who wish to serve in approved placements of the Church" As such, the Pastor Application Committee (PAC) seeks to resource the church by providing a further opportunity for discernment of a persons call and appropriateness for this ministry, alongside the person, and the Presbytery. After an initial take up period immediately following the advent of the ministry of Pastor as a specified ministry of the church (2008), with a large number of applications to serve in this way being processed, the period between the last Synod and this has seen only three applications. The committee believes that this represents both a settling after the initial take up, together with a greater clarity over the particular place of this stream of the ministry of Pastor in the life of the Church.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared call and vision</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In the PAC process, applicants are not required to explore the <i>Together on the way, enriching community</i> process or reflect against the priority directions, however the Priority directions of the church are integral to the way the mission of the Church in Queensland is understood and expressed and therefore is engaged as such in questions regarding the applicants understanding of mission and ministry within the life of the Uniting Church</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of the committee's discernment processes to ensure that we are adequately and accurately exploring and discerning the issues as appropriate to the brief of the Regulations and expectations of the Synod.</li> </ul>
<i>Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Following the request for clarification over process issues from a presbytery, the Standing Committee asked the Synod Ministries Coordinator to convene a review into the then Pastor Candidature Committee process. The outcome of this review was a change in name, more accurately representing the function of the committee; some enhanced processes of discernment; and suggestions for further review of the ministry of Pastor within the Synod.</li> <li>The above further exploration has been put on hold until the Assembly review of the Ministry of Pastor is completed and recommendations are taken on board.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outcomes of the review of the Ministry of Pastor by the Assembly will be engaged and changes required will be adopted.</li> <li>Following above process, a review of the previously identified further exploration will be done, and work initiated.</li> <li>The outcomes of this work will be reported to the Synod Standing Committee, and changes adopted based on their recommendation</li> </ul>

*Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church*

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In seeking to apply the work of this committee to the life of the Church, the committee exercises one element of a wider process of exploration of call, gift and skill discovery and affirmation, and ministry engagement.</li><li>• Whilst not the work of the committee, there is engagement by the committee through the person of the chair with Synod training bodies to explore and enhance ongoing training and development opportunities for Pastors in the life of the church.</li><li>• The Committee also seeks to engage a feedback loop with Presbyteries regarding candidates for the Ministry of Pastor that come to the PAC, and with the Placements Committee in terms of productive ministry engagement.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Committee will continue to engage in its work as a function of the larger work of discernment and active ministry engagement by people within the ministry of Pastor.</li><li>• The Committee will pay attention to and promote any development opportunities that present themselves, either as an outcome of the review processes, or as a result of the engagement with training bodies.</li></ul> |
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**Key achievements/initiatives:**

The review of the Pastor Candidature Committee and the outcomes of that review process enabling more effective engagement in the discernment processes of the church.

The engagement of two members of the Synod review team with the Assembly review team.

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

The processes become unwieldy, such that people shy away from engagement in the ministry, and the ministry therefore ceases to offer the flexibility, and appropriate oversight of ministry for which it was designed.

That the Ministry of Pastor becomes a short circuit for ordained ministry in the life of the Uniting Church.

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## PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE

### Context:

The Placements Committee of the Synod is the body which, under regulations (3.7.4.2) oversees the list of placements within the Synod, and works together with Presbyteries, and other bodies within the life of the Synod to ensure that ministry agents are deployed in placements which match their skills and gifts, and which meet particular needs of the ministry agent, where those apply. As such, the Placements Committee exercises an overview of placements with a commitment to the well-being of the whole church.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared call and vision</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercising an overview of placements with a commitment to the wellbeing of the whole church entails that the Placements Committee also have a view to the call and vision of the Synod.</li> <li>• The call and vision remain before us (physically) as we meet.</li> <li>• We have exercised oversight of Placements, and of changes in placements that are directly a response to our call and vision through the work identified by the Priority Directions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The work we are currently doing will remain a priority for the placements committee.</li> </ul>
<i>Promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee engages actively in scripture, reflection and prayer at each meeting, also seeking to regularly commit particular situations to prayer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again, this is a high priority for the committee as it gathers and will remain so.</li> </ul>
<i>Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Placements Committee constantly seeks to review its processes in order to ensure streamlined and effective processes that are transparent.</li> <li>• We have sought to bring clarity to issues associated with Placements within the church such as: extensions beyond the tenth year for non-congregational placements; definition of Placement against active service; the significant re-structure of placements within BlueCare Chaplaincy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Placements Committee has recognised that further work needs to be done in understanding and planning for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the changing face of ministry across the church;</li> <li>• the increase in the number of fractional placements across the Synod;</li> <li>• the resultant changes in the gift and skill mix required from ministry agents;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reviewing the role of the Secretary of Placements to again ensure clarity and transparency.</li> <li>• Interviews with candidates moving toward completion of their formation who will be available for Placement (subject to completion and approval for ordination).</li> <li>• Interviews with ministry agents from other denominations who are seeking to explore offering ministry within the Uniting Church.</li> <li>• Agreements with the other Synods regarding processes of making profiles available, and having conversations with ministers from other Synods who wish to work in Qld and vice-versa.</li> <li>• Established and monitored JNC processes for Synod office based placements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the need to intentionalise development plans for ministry agents to ensure ongoing skill development into the life of the church.</li> <li>• The above will likely require policy revision as it unfolds</li> </ul>
<p><i>Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Placements committee regularly seeks to identify, as it understands the nature of placement needs across the Synod, what particular skill sets are necessary for any given placement. These core exploration resources the Presbyteries and other bodies represented on Placements Committee as they seek to encourage CEM across ministry agents.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One of the pieces of work identified above with regard to an ongoing development plan will utilise the work of the Mission engagement and Discipleship Project Officers in understanding leadership priorities and needs within the church.</li> <li>• A research project envisaged by the collective of Presbytery Ministers will also engage this area of work.</li> <li>• These two pieces of work will engage with the placements process, and may indeed be cause for review of aspects of our processes to ensure good process for encouraging and discerning God's call to ministry and to ongoing development for ministry as people serve the church in an ever changing world.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Key Partnerships the Placements Committee has are internal to the church, however, there are some placements that operate within Government and in other organisations, for which the Placements Committee bears responsibility and seeks to support placement processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Committee will continue to see this as a priority piece of work as the need arises.</li> </ul>

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

Priority placements - The placements committee recognises the difficulty in identifying suitably gifted and skilled ministry agents who are available to explore the call.

The changing face of ministry in the Uniting Church requires ministry agents who engage intentional development programs

The recognition and interaction of differing views of the way in which call to ministry operates across the Synod, within congregations, and with ministers.

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## PROJECT OFFICER - CHRISTIAN FORMATION

### Context:

This role started in December 2012 and was initially focused on running Summer Madness 2013 which was a great success in terms of encouraging and inspiring young people in their discipleship - of particular mention was the TAG afternoon where young people enthusiastically set out to do Timely Acts of Generosity for people in the Alexandra Headlands area.

Since then the focus has been particularly on two projects - revamping the Period of Discernment (POD) and developing the Grow Faith digital discipleship strategy. Both these projects are about developing our discipleship/leadership pathways for the Uniting Church in Queensland, an area that came out of Priority Direction D of *Together on the way, enriching community*. Both these projects open up exciting ways to encourage intentional discipleship and leadership formation in our congregations, and especially with young people. The revamped POD will be an accessible and useful tool for congregations to identify and encourage leadership and faith development of people within their congregations - not just those seeking to candidate for ordained ministry. The revamped POD will be available from January 2014. The Grow Faith digital discipleship strategy is very much in its planning stages, but it is hoped it too will be available from January 2014. Grow Faith will be a quality discipleship resource and process that congregations can use with their young people whether they have 50 young people or 1, and whether they live in Brisbane or Barcardine. Grow Faith will use web based material, deliverable at a PC, tablet or phone to engage and connect young people into an exciting discipleship journey.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1(a) By 2013, in the councils of the Qld UCA, there will be a clear, widely-owned intention to ground the development of Christian leadership in the practices of discipleship formation, and to explore an understanding of what God seeks to bring to the church through the gift of leadership.</li> <li>• This ethos is underpinning the work done in all projects. Central to this is the idea of a discipleship/leadership pathway. That is, that the church provides resources which create a 'path' from exploring discipleship into leadership.</li> <li>• 2(a) By 2013 people of every generation in congregations, councils and community services will be participating in discipleship formation through relevant and focused training programs in leadership for the mission of the Church.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow Faith and the POD are resources that lie on the discipleship/leadership pathway but there needs to be other resources more focused on leadership development and taking discipleship more deeply. Also there needs to be training for congregations on what a 'pathway' is and how that might be developed in their congregation.</li> <li>• The Grow Faith platform has the capacity to be used to deliver existing discipleship resources and processes that local congregations have developed (for adults) and make them accessible across the state.</li> <li>• Resources for leadership and discipleship development beyond the POD need to be considered.</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grow Faith is a discipleship resource and process for young people that will be available and accessible to every congregation, school and faith community across the state (and beyond!).</li> <li>• 2(b) By 2013 every congregation would be offering resources for members to be engaged in a Period of Discernment (POD) as a way of fostering active discipleship.</li> <li>• The renewed POD will be a resource for all members of congregations wishing to develop their faith, direction and leadership.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Key achievements/initiatives:</b></p> <p>Summer Madness 2013 (see above)</p> <p>POD (see above)</p> <p>Grow Faith (see above)</p>	
<p><b>Challenges/risks as we progress:</b></p> <p>One potential risk is that the initiatives described above will be seen as ad hoc initiatives and used as such without a clear intention/strategy behind them. This will limit the usefulness of the initiatives.</p>	
<p><b>Recommendations/issues to be addressed:</b></p> <p>The need for training in discipleship/leadership strategies and pathways to help congregations be intentional about what they do</p>	

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## PROJECT OFFICER - MISSION ENGAGEMENT

### Context:

The Mission Engagement Project Officer was appointed commencing January 2013 for two years. The role of the Mission Engagement Project officer is focussed in Together on the Way Enriching Community Priority Direction C: Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the church in Queensland.

In particular it is oriented toward encouraging mission engagement across the church through recognising and describing a mission engagement framework, as outlined in the fourth objective:

Objective 4: By 2013 we will have an articulated and evidence mission engagement framework for congregations and presbyteries which emphasises growth and development through discipleship and disciple making (demonstrable, includes benchmarking, shared, integrates with other parts of the church).

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Developing sustainable mission oriented organisation for the Church in Queensland</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 (a) Develop a mission engagement framework</li> <li>• A mission engagement framework will outline underlying theology of mission, range of approaches to mission, priorities for local and regional action, resourcing needs and capabilities including coaching, learning and partnerships</li> <li>• The development of this framework will enable congregations, faith communities and presbyteries to share common language and approaches to mission, to access appropriate support and training and to maximise capacity for mission engagement in their own context.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and identify key components of a mission engagement framework, and its impact on the church in areas such as training and learning, leadership development, theology of &amp; approaches to mission, and models for review and action learning</li> <li>• Facilitate review of church planting &amp; fresh expressions experiences of the church in Queensland over the last 10 years to ensure lessons learned from those experiences can be captured and passed on into new contexts</li> <li>• Identify and review (for learning) other approaches to mission engagement</li> <li>• Explore strategic mission partnerships such as those between congregations, agencies and/or schools</li> <li>• Explore approaches to training and leadership development for lay and ordained missional leaders including the potential for a pilot missional leadership training project</li> <li>• Share learning &amp; planning conversations with ecumenical partners and other UCA Synods</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 (b) Explore ways of being Christian community that are responsive to their particular context</li> <li>• The project will identify a range of contexts in which particular approaches to Christian community may be helpful based both on our own experiences and those explored in other Synods and by ecumenical partners. We will identify core skills, approaches and philosophies underpinning this range of context-drive christian faith community types</li> <li>• This will enable local action groups, planning and leadership teams to access a range of context-sensitive resources to support emerging ways of being Christian community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and/or encourage networks of congregations &amp; faith communities operating in similar contexts to provide encouragement, idea and resource sharing, creativity and innovation. Examples of context-based networks include city/inner-urban churches, rural/remote mission engagement, urban growth corridors, church planting/fresh expressions. There are already a number of networks operating for which encouragement and support will be important - including the LCD network, and Lay Forum for example.</li> <li>• Regularly meet with presbytery and congregational leaders to identify issues of regional and local interest, and cooperatively develop approaches to resource and support mission engagement</li> <li>• Participate in a range of learning opportunities to bring the benefit of other's experiences into the UCA Qld context</li> </ul>
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**Key achievements/initiatives:**

In January 2013, Scott Guyatt began work as Mission Engagement Project Officer. The initial phase of this work has concentrated on listening intentionally to congregations, presbyteries, synod bodies and agencies in order to understand clearly both the priorities and possibilities for mission engagement that lie before us. Careful listening to identify resourcing requirements is a key component of this initial research phase. A close and cooperative partnership with Presbyteries is emerging.

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

Identifying shared theology of mission, and underlying approaches to mission in a culturally and theologically diverse church.  
 Identifying emerging missional leaders, and making available resources for appropriate and timely leadership development.  
 Developing agreed priorities for allocation of limited resources in support of mission engagement

**Recommendations/issues to be addressed:**

Future actions outlined above  
 Reactivate the [www.seedsofhope.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.seedsofhope.unitingchurch.org.au) website/blog as a collecting point of stories, lessons and observations

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## UNITING COMMUNICATIONS

### Context:

Since the 29th Synod we have experienced the formation of Uniting Communications (the joining and strengthening of Synod office marketing, fundraising and communications teams). This formation was a direct result of Synod office activities working to be better organised to support the mission of the Church (Priority Direction C). Uniting Communications' focus has been on optimising staffing and revising/consolidating key Synod communications tools and how we use them. Mardi Lumsden was appointed Director, Uniting Communications, in March 2012. The staff is now made up of: Marketing and Fundraising Manager Marion Ganga (started March 2013), Web Manager Osker Lau, Graphic Designer / Project Manager Holly Jewell (part-time), Cross-platform editor/producer Rohan Salmond (started April/May 2013), Communications Officer / Advertising Manager Tara Burton, Research Officer (job share) Katie Lewis and Sue Hutchinson (started September 2012), and Writer (and acting editor for four edition of Journey) Dianne Jensen (part-time) (started May 2012). Many of our new staff replace staff who have left. In some cases positions have been vacant for a number of months with staff picking up a large amount of extra work and responsibility in the meantime. The team is now tasked with all the communications, marketing, and fundraising activities of Synod Support Services (including Alexandra Park and Raymont Lodge Residential College) as well as providing support for strategic projects (e.g. Grow Faith).

<b>Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod</b>	<b>Working towards our Priority Directions in the future</b>
<i>Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared call and vision</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new-look Journey magazine was launched in February 2013 as a response to a readership survey in 2012 and cutting edge print media trends. Journey is meant as a tool for Uniting Church members to not only read, enjoy and discuss, but also as an evangelism tool for people to give to friends. The aim is that Journey is a magazine of influence and addresses topics in different ways to the mainstream media. It is also a key place to explore the diversity of the Uniting Church in Queensland. The focus was moved to fewer overall stories, allowing stories to have more depth. Regular columns including a congregational profile and theological reflection on discipleship during this, the Year of Discipleship, continues to remind readers of our shared Call and Vision.</li> <li>• A key avenue for young people to engage in the shared Call and Vision is the Synod calendar and calendar art competition. Entries doubled in the competition's second year with young people from all over the state exploring what discipleship means to them to celebrate 2013 being the Year of Discipleship. Judges - Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, artist, Rev Geraldine Wheeler, and Wesley Mission Brisbane's Art From the Margins coordinator, Tony Anderton - were very impressed with the quality and thoughtfulness of the works. 2013 Calendar Art winners were: Joshua</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There will be continued review and reflection of Journey as the key printed communications tool that speaks to who the Uniting Church is and what it believes. The revision of the role of editor to cross-platform editor / producer gives greater scope for Journey to move into an ever increasingly multimedia news world. Rohan Salmond began in this role on 29 April 2013. Future focus will be on repurposing Journey content in different ways (e.g. video and via social media). The electronic version of Journey will be a key focus for this change.</li> <li>• A continued commitment to run the Synod calendar art competition with the focus of engaging young people in the Uniting Church with the Call and Vision. The calendar will continue to have key Uniting Church dates (e.g. presbytery meetings known at time of print) and, where possible, Lectionary readings as a reminder of the scope and purpose of The Uniting Church in Australia.</li> <li>• Future needs for Christmas and Easter postcards will be assessed to determine if this is still the best way to assist local congregations in their work to raise</li> </ul>

Bornman, Cloe Yu Garmin, Shae Godfrey, Alister Gomersall, Hamish Gomersall, Emma Hill, Jacob Hill, Finn Jewell, Ho-Se Kim, Adrian Leonard, Brielle Powell, Alexander Simpson, and Julia von Berky.

- Easter and Christmas postcard campaigns have continued to be popular. Since the 29th Synod there has been a focus on collaborating with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania's communications team. The messages on the cards link back to the Synod's Call and Vision. The addition of video resources focussed on providing a Call to Worship for congregations to use during services has been well received.
- The creation of the Side by Side study resources to celebrate the 35th anniversary of The Uniting Church in Australia was a great experience in collaboration. Coordinated by Lyndelle Gunton, Neil Thorpe and Mardi Lumsden, the resource included a series of four short videos exploring how different parts of the Uniting Church work side by side. The filming of these was in collaboration with Assembly communications. Many thanks to all who were involved.
- Uniting Communications, in collaboration with Synod Support (administration) run "congregation visits". Essentially this is a tour of the Synod facilities at 60 Bayliss St, Auchenflower, where members of a congregation can worship with staff or Trinity students (depending on the day of the tour), chat with the Moderator and/or General Secretary (depending on availability), hear from and chat with Synod Support Service staff. In April 2013 a special version of this tour was developed for visiting Blue Care staff and internal staff induction.
- The Uniting Communications team, with direction from the research officers, have identified a small number of key events (e.g. Fair Trade fortnight and NAIDOC week) where small events have been held for staff and visitors of the Synod office. These events remind people of the Church's Vision 2020 and the core values of the Uniting Church. Synod staff also ran a linen drive during Lent to provide linen packs to UnitingCare Community to give to refugee families settling in the community.
- Regular worship services with Synod staff have proven popular. Uniting Communications developed a template for staff to use when organising a services as well as running a service of their own.
- Uniting Communications has been working with the Grow Faith, digital discipleship project, on a number of levels.

their own profile in their local community in key religious seasons.

- There is potential for a communications road show to engage with people in congregations and assist them explore the communications tools on offer and how to use communications to their advantage. There is also potential for this road show to include other aspects of Synod Support Services depending on people's needs.
- In the coming year there will be a particular focus on multi-media resources with a particular focus on exploring what the Uniting Church believes. There is potential here to link in with the Grow Faith digital discipleship project. The planning and building phases of Grow Faith are major works for Uniting Communications, Synod IT, and Project Officer for Christian Formation.
- Within the Synod office, Uniting Communications is working with Synod Support Services to provide opportunities for staff to engage with the Vision 2020 and the Gospel Values and Call of the Uniting Church. We will be doing this through supporting staff induction processes, regular all staff meetings and the redevelopment of the Synod office intranet.
- Moving forward with the Grow Faith digital discipleship project, Uniting Communications will have input from a digital and graphic design perspective, to assist in sourcing and delivery of content, as well as marketing and any possible fundraising opportunities that may arise from the project.

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- After months of work, in April 2013 a new-look Queensland Synod website was launched. Part of the Web Migration Project, the new ucaqld.com.au brings together multiple Synod Services websites under one banner. While the Synod website is the external face of the Uniting Church in Queensland, it also needs to be a place for Uniting Church members to easily find all the information they need. The "Administration" section will be particularly used by those who previously accessed forms and information from the FAPS or UC Insurance websites.
- The creation of Uniting News is another example of our team working to limit duplication of information. Uniting News is the combination of UC Information (the General Secretary's weekly enews) and AdMinistry (the enewsletter from Finance and Property Services targeted at ministerial agents and church council treasurers). The hope is that by having one source of this information that it will be presented in a clear and concise manner and be accessible to as many people as needed.
- In collaboration with Synod IT, Uniting News and the revised Find a Church section of ucaqld.com.au now pull content from the Synod's main database, Proclaim, to eliminate duplication of contact databases and multiple places for people to update their information. The accuracy of this database will improve over time and with clear communication to users about how to update details and the importance of Synod Support Services having accurate data.
- The Synod's Facebook page has been an ever increasing place to connect with Uniting Church members from across Queensland and Australia. Until this year it was set up as a "profile". As this was breaking Facebook 's rules about organisations 'posing' as individuals, we turned it the into an organisation page. This limits the interaction we can have with people through our Facebook page (Facebook was a great source of photo searching for Journey during the floods) but has other benefits. I urge congregations to ensure their Facebook presence is a page, not a profile. This upgrade has also led to refining our social media policy for staff using the Uniting Church Facebook page.
- Uniting Communications assists many parts of Synod Support Services in researching information and getting information to the right people in the best, most professional way. To date we have assisted in the production of a number of surveys for parts of Synod Support to address the needs of people using their services.
- We will continue to work on limiting duplication of information, particularly online. Work will continue on making ucaqld.com.au as functional and easy to use as possible.
- We are working on an online submission form for both Uniting News and Journey story submissions. Required form fields mean there will be less chasing people to confirm information.
- Work will continue, in consultation with IT, to eliminate separate databases of information. Looking forward, the Journey subscribers database needs to be refreshed.
- All social media platforms used by Uniting Communications will be rebranded as Queensland Synod, rather than Journey (YouTube and Twitter) to consolidate the Uniting Church in Queensland's social media presence.
- We will continue to provide communications support and advice for all parts of Synod Support Services. This will include targeted information sharing. Uniting News now takes the place of AdMinistry so we will be monitoring if that remains the best way to distribute important information that people need to run their congregation/faith community / service.
- Staff will be assessing the sponsorship opportunities for future Synod meetings and other Synod-wide events as well as strategic projects and looking at how the UC Foundation moves in the ever-changing world of fundraising.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sponsorship and support for the 30th Synod meeting was developed through Uniting Communications' marketing and fundraising manager, Marion Ganga. This enabled the creation of key 30th Synod material including USBs, lanyards, and other products.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Members of the 29th Synod requested the General Secretary and the Synod Standing Committee, in implementing the <i>Together on the way, enriching community</i> priorities, to consider the role of one Synod office staff person being directed towards resourcing and supporting the Moderator, General Secretary, and the wider church, in fulfilling the commitment to the pursuit of justice, peace and a sustainable environment. To this end a Research Officer position was created within Uniting Communications. Sue Hutchinson and Katie Lewis were appointed to the position in a job-share situation and began in September 2012. It is important to note that this is not an advocacy role. Katie now also assists Uniting Green one-day-per-week. The research officers are involved in many aspects of the Synod's work including assisting the chaplaincy department by researching the effects of the resources boom on communities and identifying collaboration points with larger research projects; support for asylum seekers and refugees; and child safety – mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect. They have also set up the social justice section of the new Synod website and are paying particular attention to finding resources for congregations to engage in specific social justice issues.</li> <li>• Our active involvement in the national Uniting Church communicators group was demonstrated once again when two Uniting Communications staff members attended the 12th Assembly meeting in Adelaide in July 2012 as part of the reporting team. Key communications staff from across the country meet at least once per year to enable shared knowledge, support, and opportunities for collaboration. We now have a regular collaboration with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania in relation to the Christmas and Easter postcard campaigns. Research and social justice staff from around The Uniting Church in Australia also met for the first time in 2012 to identify points of collaboration and key areas of work.</li> <li>• Uniting Communications Director, Mardi Lumsden, remains the Queensland Chapter coordinator for the Australasian Religious Press Association. This group is made up of communications professionals from Christian churches across Queensland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The national Uniting Church communicators meeting will be held in Melbourne in September, prior to the Australasian Religious Press Association annual conference. With three new editors of synod publications nationally and significant changes in the NSW/ACT Synod communications, this meeting will be essential to identify collaboration opportunities, provide support, and plan a course of action for the difficult communications times that lie ahead in the next 18 months.</li> <li>• The Australasian Religious Press Association, Queensland Chapter, have agreed to organise a series of networking events for Christian communications people in Brisbane.</li> <li>• Members of Uniting Communications regularly meet with counterparts from Uniting Church agencies and community services. This is an important relational network that will continue to strengthen. We have seen the importance of having good working relationships with these people on a number of occasions, as well as to provide support for each other.</li> </ul>

*Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church*

- Uniting Communications has been involved in the planning of Stretching Faith young adult theology camps and events from the beginning. Our staff also assist in various ways in Summer Madness including graphic design and planning. The research officers also presented a workshop on unleashing myths around asylum seekers at the January camp.

- Uniting Communications will be exploring its involvement and support of the initiative, Uniting Arts. The purpose of Uniting Arts is to form a collective of creative artists within and on the fringes of the Uniting Church in Queensland that helps grow and inspire the use and quality of art in worship as well as support Uniting Church artists working in the mainstream world. “Art” may include: visual art, music, drama, dance, textile, film, puppetry, creative story-telling, creative writing, etc. This project connects with Priority Direction D and in particular helps form theologically informed, creative and visionary leaders within the Uniting Church in Queensland. We are working with Dona Spencer to develop a Uniting Arts Festival in conjunction with her event Flourish, on the Gold Coast in October 2013.

*Promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality*

- Continual promotion of the Monday Midday Prayer initiative through Journey, social media channels, and internal staff emails.
- Since the last Synod there have been intentional Journey stories on different aspects of prayer and spirituality.

- We will continue to develop of the Monday Midday Prayer initiative through Journey, as a key part of the new Synod website, and via other online outlets.

**Key achievements/initiatives:**

Our key achievements since the last Synod in Session have been consolidating our team, the redesign of Journey, the consolidation and redesign of the Synod website and creation of Uniting News. In doing these things we believe we are living up to our mission statement: In serving God, Uniting Communications will inspire, resource and engage in conversations across all parts of the Uniting Church in Queensland, making mission and belonging possible. In 2012 the team won two awards at the Australasian Religious Press Association conference in Wellington. The 2011 'What Are You Hungry For?' Easter video took out the creativity award from a field of professional communications teams from across Australia and New Zealand. Judges praised the high quality and thoughtfulness of the video, which linked with the 2011 Easter postcard campaign. Many thanks to film-maker Phillip Johnson and those who took part. Journey was also awarded a bronze award for its website, particularly for its integration with multimedia resources and social media. These awards were among 14 won by Uniting Church publications nationally.



**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

Key challenges and risks moving forward will be staffing changes and vacant positions as there has been a lot of work on developing our team and all staff continue to be very busy. Larger scope of work provides more opportunities for Uniting Communications to be involved in the mission of the Church but means staff are spread quite thinly just on core business which does not leave a lot of room for strategic initiatives. With the employment of a marketing and fundraising manager a particular challenge will be reimagining how the Synod can best support the UC Foundation and how fundraising could optimise particular aspects of the Church's mission.

A particular communications challenge in the coming 18 months will be around the Royal Commission. Communications around allegations, if they arise, will be difficult. It will also be challenging to obtain media coverage of the good work of churches while an issue so heartbreaking is driving news headlines. This will not only be a challenge for Synod communications but for congregations also.

Other challenges include knowing who is the best point of contact regarding communications in congregations.

Team members having time to get out and about and meet people and listen to their communications needs and challenges.

**Recommendations/issues to be addressed:**

Correctness of contact databases is a massive issue in Synod Support Services. There are many staff involved in working to create the best option of a single database but keeping that information up-to-date will continue to be a challenge. It will be imperative for people to know how and why updating their information is so important. Potentially congregations having and using generic email addresses (e.g. minister@AnywhereUnitingChurch.org.au) may be helpful moving forward.

With the importance of an online presence, There is potential for a person to be identified in each congregation to manage websites/social media. This person should not necessarily be the minister, releasing the minister to do other work.

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# UNTINGWORLD

## Context:

UnitingWorld is an Agency of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia with a charter to stand in solidarity with Church Partners in Africa, Asia, and the Pacific and to facilitate purposeful, effective partnerships between churches and communities worldwide. UnitingWorld has a specific written partnership agreement with the Queensland Synod to support, build and nourish international relationships for schools, agencies, congregations, presbyteries, and other Uniting Church bodies in Queensland.

Responses to our Vision since last Synod	Working towards our Vision in the future
<i>Engaged in authentic community relationship.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 Queensland congregations and two agencies connect with church communities and people worldwide to partner in God’s mission through UnitingWorld's Australian Church Partner program with overseas congregations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support current relationships and fostering new and genuine, deep relationships expressed through long-term engagement.</li> </ul>
<i>Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace for all creation</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>82 congregations are involved through Lent Event in action and reflection around the issues of extreme poverty leading to connection with overseas partner communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An increasing number of congregations committed to seeing justice for our partners and their communities to improve their well being; enabling people who are poor to have their voice heard, giving them honour and respect</li> </ul>
<p><b>Key achievements/initiatives:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A new Pacific initiative supporting women and men in continuing to seek life-giving ways of being and relating – addressing issues like gender-based violence, resourcing Christian education and practical programs relating to gender, climate change, human rights and sustainable livelihoods, enabling reconsideration of traditional roles and encouraging newer generations of leadership, including through using the networks of Pacific Women's Fellowships.</li> <li>Actions fulfilling UnitingWorld's commitment to connect church communities and people worldwide to partner in God’s mission and empowering Australian communities to form effective partnerships with the UCA's Partner Churches.</li> <li>Enabling the UCA more effectively to participate in the mission of God in a context of dramatic global change in Christianity with the centre shifting away from the West with its Enlightenment heritage e.g. in China where our new partner the China Christian Council has approximately 23 million members.</li> <li>UCA granted membership of the Pacific Conference of Churches in March 2013 strengthening connections between the First Peoples and Pacific peoples in the UCA and the Pacific.</li> </ol>	

**Challenges/risks as we progress:**

The challenge is to enable UCA people and faith communities to see global engagement as an intrinsic part of participating in the mission of God rather than an optional extra, and enabling them to experience the preciousness of the UCA's particular set of 35 partnerships, in turn shaping who UCA is. The correlating risk is that UCA congregations will become inwardly focussed on survival, cease to participate in the mission of God and consequently unfaithful and ineffective.

As the centre of Christianity moves from the North Atlantic to Asia-Pacific-Africa, the second challenge is to engage with Partners from these regions so that the UCA participates in the mission of God, especially recognising the opportunities offered through partnerships in Asia. The risk is that the UCA will lose connection with the life of the Spirit and be trapped within Western frameworks, not helping people know the abundant life offered in Jesus Christ.

**Recommendations/issues to be addressed:**

Issues to be addressed are helping congregations see global engagement as integral in being faithful to God, accepting the precious gift of the UCA's 35 partnerships as part of and in turn shaping their being (not an optional item), and then following through on being faithful with practical, life-changing action such as with advocacy on Australian Government policies that affect Partners, offering support for people living on Pacific atolls affected by climate change, facilitating wider community engagement with Partners as part of participating in the mission of God and sharing in particular initiatives such as supporting Pacific women's empowerment.

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## UNITING GREEN

### Context:

Green Church was renamed Uniting Green at the last Synod, marked by environmentally friendly coffee mugs. Rev Dr Clive Ayre and Rev Judith Dalton have continued to work in a voluntary capacity under the oversight of the General Secretary.

Responses to our Vision since last Synod	Working towards our Vision in the future
<i>Theologically informed, creative and visionary in its leadership</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev Dr Clive Ayre has been developing theology beyond a human focus to include the whole creation.</li> <li>• He has presented eco-mission papers at the Australian Association for Mission Studies and the International Conference on "Christian Faith and the Earth".</li> <li>• He has published journal articles and books and has contact with overseas scholars.</li> <li>• He has developed links with Trinity College and given guest lectures.</li> <li>• Links have developed with Pilgrim Learning Community, and both Clive and Judith have given lectures in PLC and Presbytery Lay Preachers Courses..</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-line courses are being prepared with PLC</li> <li>• Seminars and lectures by invitation.</li> </ul>
<i>Working for Christian unity</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rev Dr Clive Ayre contributed to the Queensland Churches Together (QCT) Christians in Dialogue studies on "The Relation between Faith and Caring for the Environment".</li> <li>• He has set up the Queensland Churches Environmental Network (QCEN) including Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Churches and Salvation Army. This has now been acknowledged as a Commission of QCT.</li> <li>• Eco-mission is an easy and natural way to work together with other Christians.</li> <li>• Clive and Judith participated in the QCEN ecumenical forum in</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular meetings of QCEN to be continued. and issues explored.</li> </ul>

<p>Toowoomba on "The Impacts of Coal Seam Gas". This included presentations from people affected by coal seam gas development, and on theology of the role of the church. The development of UCA Mining Chaplaincy in The Downs Presbytery, and the Research Proposal from Uniting Care (Qld) with the University of Queensland on "The Social Impact of Mining" were featured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following on from this, the Toowoomba Churches Environmental Network was formed.</li> <li>• Clive was involved in the formation of the NCCA Eco-Mission Project and is working with ecumenical colleagues on several projects including a National Churches Environmental Network with ecumenical environmental networks in each State. QCEN has become a model.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outworking of issues will continue</li> <li>• Encourage other regional networks</li> <li>• Work with ecumenical partners on a range of issues</li> </ul>
<p><i>Reaching out and speaking out for justice and peace for all creation</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further connections have been made between UCA Synods, and other State and National organisations to be more aware of what others are doing in environmental care.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversations are continuing</li> </ul>
<p><i>Engaged in authentic community relationships</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental care is an easy and natural way to build bridges, and encouraging people to link with activities in their local and wider community helps to build authentic community relationships.</li> <li>• In particular, as we share our concerns with people of different faiths we can become allies rather than strangers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exploration of links with community groups</li> <li>• Exploration of pilot projects</li> </ul>
<p><i>God-centred and life-related in worship</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources for World Environment Day (5 June) have been prepared with Uniting Justice and other States.</li> <li>• Season of Creation (September) has been promoted.</li> <li>• Links to these and other worship resources are on the Uniting Green website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the resource</li> </ul>

<i>Organised for mission</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Judith has produced Uniting Green News quarterly. Sharing stories, and new resources it encourages and enables people to care for creation. It is distributed through a mailing list and also on the website.</li> <li>The website (www.greenchurch.ucaqld.com.au) has many resources for worship, study or action.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniting Green News to be continued</li> <li>Handbook on "greening" the church to be developed.</li> <li>Website needs updating, and other means of communication developed.</li> </ul>
<b>Key achievements/initiatives:</b> Theological leadership in Eco-mission, Ecumenical activity, Uniting Green News	
<b>Challenges/risks as we progress:</b> To establish eco-mission as a core part of church business: for individuals, congregations, presbyteries, and agencies To increase the level of theological awareness of creation care.	
<b>Recommendations/issues to be addressed:</b> To identify and support someone in the Synod office to be a central "Uniting Green" contact, ensuring creation care issues are an integral part of discipleship and mission, property management and pastoral care, worship and leadership training	

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