



Assembly Resourcing Unit

40 Appreciation: Michael Barnes

That the Assembly resolve:

To record its appreciation for the contribution of Michael Barnes as Convenor of the Relations with Other Faiths Working Group from 2015–2018.

Michael has been a passionate leader of this group and a champion of interfaith friendship as core value and activity in the life of the Uniting Church. His leadership has been grounded in a deep commitment to the building of relationships with people of other faiths, particularly at a time when difference has been used to create division in the wider community. In this context, Michael has reminded us of our call in Christ to live in peace and love with all people and to engage in genuine dialogue with people of other faiths.

During his time as convenor, Michael has been active in maintaining the Uniting Church's relationships with other faiths. In particular, he has been instrumental in building a firm friendship between the Uniting Church and the (now former) Grand Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed. The relationship has made possible joint statements between the President and the Grand Mufti, for example after the bombing of a mosque in Egypt in December 2017.

Further, Michael has supported the official dialogue between the Uniting Church Assembly and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Having been a member of the dialogue for 10 years until 2010, Michael has continued to be a support and advisor for this long-standing relationship with the Jewish community.

Michael actively promoted the development of the Interfaith September resource especially in 2015 and 2016. He has overseen the development of a Study Guide for the Assembly document *Friendship in the Presence of Difference* and supported and contributed to the sharing of interfaith stories across the church nationally via newsletters and social media.

Michael has been a professional and thoughtful convenor and has always encouraged Working Group members in their own interfaith work. Furthermore, he has been a source of wisdom, counsel and leadership for the Assembly in its relationships with other faiths. We thank him for his exceptional contribution to Church and for his dedication to friendship and understanding between people of faith.

Proposer: Rob Floyd

Seconder: Colleen Geyer