



mylathina takila-ti Le:wun tunk-ungai tuldangk tunk-ungai
Ola ma tumau i le alofa' 사랑 안에서 살기 Tinggal di dalam Kasih
Nofoma'u i he Ofa 愛中合居



D3 CHAIRPERSONS OF COMMITTEES AND ADVOCATES OF CIRCLES OF INTEREST NOMINATIONS

Nominee – UnitingCare Australia Chairperson

Mr Geoff Batkin AM

Geoff Batkin has an active commitment to his Christian faith and a 40-year commitment to leading and managing Christian organisations engaged in a ministry of community services, thirty four of which has been within the Uniting Church and its services - he is recently retired from twenty two years as CEO of Wesley Mission Queensland.

In his professional roles he has placed great emphasis on connecting the organisations of the Church with local Congregations – giving each 'face' of the Church opportunity to engage with the community through community services. Since his initial appointment to Burnside in NSW in 1987 he has sort to be part of the wider Uniting Church national leadership structures with a passion for building collaborative and cooperative networks and sharing expertise and resources to enhance missional outcomes.

Geoff has been a proud member of the Uniting Church since 1987, his current church being the Gap Uniting Church in Brisbane, Queensland, and in addition to his substantive leadership roles within the community services of the Church he has been involved in governance roles in multiple Synod Boards, as either a member, Treasurer or Chair (Qld, NSW and Victoria).

Geoff brings significant skills in all aspects of leadership, strategic, operational and financial management, terrific communications, relational and networking skills and a capacity to think at a systems level. He holds a Bachelor of Economics, Diploma in Corporate Financial Management and is a member of the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Nominee – UnitingWorld Chairperson

Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds

Lin is a member of the Uniting Church including 15 years as National Director of UnitingCare Australia. In her congregational life she chaired the Elders Council and the board of UnitingCare Kippax. She's held senior leadership positions including Deputy Secretary in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, Associate Dean in the Australian and New Zealand School of Government, Chair of the Australian Social Inclusion Board, Chair of The Australia Institute, and President of the Australian Council of Social Service. Lin holds a Masters in Applied Psychology, is a member of the Australia Institute of Company Directors, was ACT Australian of the Year in 2008, received a Churchill Fellowship in 2004, and was awarded a Chief Minister's International Women's Day Award in 2002. Lin also serves on the board of Better Evaluation and Anglicare NSW.ACT and mentors emerging women leaders. Lin has been on the Board of UnitingWorld since September 2019.

Nominee – Frontier Services Chairperson

Ms Lisa Sampson

Lisa has served on the Frontier Services board since 2016 and during that time has also been the Chair of the Development Committee as well as a trustee for the John Flynn Foundation. She is actively committed to helping those in rural and remote Australia both pastorally and practically through her expertise in marketing, fundraising, and media relations.

In Lisa's professional roles she is a marketing, media relations, and fundraising consultant. She has held senior executive roles in the UCA NSW/ACT Synod and with several other well-known charities, as well as a non-executive directorship within the education sector. She brings operational and strategic knowledge of the not-for-profit sector with more than 10 years of experience in business development fundraising and media relations.

We look forward to Lisa's continuing valuable contributions to the Frontier Services Board.

Nominee – Defence Force Chaplaincy Chairperson

Rev Charles Vesely

Charles was born in, Prague, what was then Czechoslovakia. He and his family came to Australia in 1968 as refugees post the Soviet invasion. Charles grew up in north-western Sydney.

Charles served prior to entry into ministry as a police officer in NSW. In 1998 Charles entered theological college (UTC Syd); Charles was Ordained as a Minister of the Word in 2002. He has served in NSW congregations at Windsor, and Grenfell. Charles entered the Army a part-time chaplaincy role in 2006, leading to a fulltime chaplaincy placement in the Army from 2007. Charles' postings include Townsville Albury/Wodonga and Brisbane. Charles has deployed to Timor-Leste (2007), Afghanistan (2009) and Greater Middle East Region (2017/18). Charles has been posted to the position of Chief Instructor / CO of the Defence Chaplains College (DFCC), located in Canberra. Charles has responsibility for the ab initio, continuing training and development of ADF Chaplains of all faiths. Charles has throughout his military service regularly supported local UCA congregations in his posted area where required leading worship, preaching, and presiding at sacraments.

Charles is married to Yvonne; they have four adult children. Charles' interests include classical music, history and photography. Charles has maintained his native Czech language skills with which he likes to converse and read. Presently, Charles is active in the Congregation of St Ninian's UC in Lyneham ACT, and the wider church in the Canberra Area. Charles maintains his links with Bremer Brisbane Presbytery in the QLD Synod, as Yvonne and their children remain in residence there whilst Charles is on posting to the ACT.

Nominee – Assembly Legal Reference Committee Chairperson

Mr Warwick van Ede

Warwick has been a member of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee for over 20 years, is a previous member of the NSW.ACT Property Trust, was formerly the legal adviser to the NSW.ACT Committee for Discipline, and was the founding Convenor of Appeal Panels for the NSW.ACT Synod. He was also previously the National Convenor of Appeal Panels. He is a lawyer of over 30 years' experience, currently practising with JS Mueller & Co, a specialist Strata Law firm.

Nominee – Church Polity Reference Committee Chairperson

Rev Dr Chris Budden

Chris has been a Synod General Secretary (NSW-ACT, and acting in Northern Synod), Chaired the ASC's working group after 2003 on Constitutional and related matters, Chaired the working group that developed the Preamble to the Constitution, and has been a member of the Standing Appeal Panel under Section 6 of the Regulations. He is at present a member of the Polity Reference Committee. He served as Interim National Co-ordinator for UAICC for four years. He had an extensive and varied ministry across 48 years.

Nominee – Standards for Ministries Working Group Chairperson

Rev Dr Rob McFarlane

Rob McFarlane has served in education roles, including Director of Continuing Education in the NSW/ACT Synod, Mission Education Officer in Morton Rivers Presbytery (Qld), and part-time at UTC (North Parramatta) and the Education for Lay Ministries (ELM) Centre. He currently serves as Presbytery Ministry Leader in Parramatta Nepean Presbytery (NSW/ACT). Rob has served on several Synod and Assembly ministry education related committees, including the Executive of Ministerial Education Commission. Rob has higher degrees in NT, educational leadership and tertiary education.

Nominee – Being A Multi-Cultural Church Circle Advocate

Rev Dr Matagi Jessop Vilitama

Matagi is Mission and Leadership Georges River Presbytery Minister and hailed from Niue Island in the liquid continent. He was a member of the PCC executive committee for many years representing small churches in the Pacific. He served in CALD congregations in the past 11 years. He is a former Chairperson of the Niue National Conference, and Advocate of Being a Multicultural Circle of interest of Assembly. Matagi is passionate about cross cultural ministry and loves all things aesthetic. Art and design was his background before entering ministry and continues to dabble in the creative space.

Nominee – Discipling the Next Generation Circle Advocate

Ms Virginia Lavaki

- currently the youth leader in my local Congregation,
- also the Tongan National Conference 2nd Gen Leader for the Tongan National Conference
- A current panel member of the DNG Circle.
- Her strengths are working with different generations and have cultural competencies that can connect with people from CALD backgrounds as well as Indigenous communities.
- Her passion is to create opportunities for children, family, youth and young adults in the life of our Church listening to them, encouraging and empowering them to take the lead as we be the Church together.
- Virginia also has strong administration and communication skills and a love for Christ!

Nominee – Growing in Faith Circle Advocate

Rev Liam Miller

Ordained as Minister of the Word, and have served in various ministry roles (tertiary chaplain, congregational minister, new growth minister, mission resource worker). Served Assembly Theological Taskforce twice, Contributed articles to Insights and Assembly website, hold MDiv from Pilgrim Theological College, published theology articles in peer reviewed journals, currently serving as Book Review Editor for Uniting Church Studies. I also host Love Rinse Repeat, a theology podcast/YouTube channel. Currently serving as a panel member in the GiF circle.

Nominee - Seeking Common Ground Circle Advocate

Rev Dr Matthew Wilson

Matt Wilson has been a UCA minister since 1995. He has ministered in metropolitan and regional settings in NSW/ACT and Vic/Tas Synods in congregations, university and prison chaplaincy. He has worked ecumenically as a chaplain and through this developed a passion for interfaith relationships. He has a doctorate in New Testament and Interfaith Dialogue from Charles Sturt University. He has co-taught the CSU Interfaith Dialogue subject. He was a member of the Assembly Relations with other Faiths working group from 2008 until it disbanded in 2018. He has been a member of the UCA national dialogue with the Jewish community since 2008 and has been the UCA convenor of that dialogue for 9 years, retiring from that role at the 2021 Assembly. He is passionate about working with other denominations and building relationships and working to build the wider community with people of other faiths.

Nominee - Transforming Worship Circle Advocate

Rev Alexandra Sangster

Over the last 16 years of ordained ministry I have felt called to lead communities into creative responses to the climate crisis, particularly with ARRCC and Friends of the Earth on the Stop Adani campaign.

I have harnessed the power of my vocation to speak truth to power alongside secular and faith filled folk.

I am constantly breaking open the Gospel and preaching from the earth of eco-spirituality, feminism, process and child centred theological schools.

I am constantly encouraging folk to get in contact with their own lived experience of the Cosmic Sophia Christ through embodied practice and connecting with the wild.

I am deeply encouraging of those seeking to work theologically and 'incarnationally' to re awaken our worship and faith using art, storytelling, music and re-wilding.

I am a member of ARRC, JCMA and LMAW. I sit on the Ministry Formation Committee for Yarra Yarra and the Mission and the Climate Change Forum and the Ministry Committee for the Synod. For the last 3 years I have been honoured to work with the Assembly as the Transforming Worship Advocate.

Nominee - Working for Justice Circle Advocate

Rev Loni Vaitohi

Ordained as a UCA Minister of the Word on the 11th December 1994 and passionate about matters of justice for all people.

First Generation migrant served in both urban and rural congregations.

B.Th. (MCD), MA Theology (University of Divinity) Grad. Cert. Research Methodology (University of Divinity).

Have been the Advocate for the Working for Justice Circle.

Nominee - Walking Together as First and Second Peoples Circle Advocate

Ms Alison Overeem

Allison is a proud Palawa woman from Tasmania. She is a current member of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Uniting Care Australia boards both locally and nationally.

Allison is committed to learning through a lens of shared story that brings about change and a continued Justice narrative, one that honours our Preamble, as an all member ministry.

Learning and unlearning through sharing many voices and narratives in an historical and contemporary context is her engagement.