



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

27-29 August 2021

DOCUMENT: 2 – CA1

Title	Task Groups from the previous triennium
Type of Paper	For information and decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	
Consultation	Conveners of Task Groups
Purpose	To inform ASC members about ongoing Task Groups, their Terms of Reference, membership and reporting responsibilities to ASC.
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	
Recommendations	<p>That the Assembly Standing Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive the Report <p>With regard to the Sovereignty Affirmation Practical Outcomes Task Group:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Requests the Walking Together as First and Second Peoples Panel to continue the resource work in Term of Reference 33. Thank and discharge the Task Group <p>With regard to the Continuing Witness, LGBTIQ Apology, Church in the Digital Age and Chaplaincy Task Groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">4. Note the ongoing work of these task groups and the oversight ASC has over them
Submitted by	Rob Floyd Assembly Associate General Secretary rob@nat.uca.org.au , 0407 944 417

Task Groups from the Previous Triennium

Introduction:

During the last triennium the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) established a number of Task Groups to undertake work on its behalf. ASC approves a Terms of Reference, membership and a convener for each Task Group.

Some of the work assigned through the last triennium was concluded within the triennium. Several Task Groups are carrying work over into this new triennium and so will come under the oversight of the new ASC and report to the new ASC.

These Task Groups are:

- Sovereignty Affirmation Practical Outcomes Task Group (concluding with this report)
- Continuing Witness Task Group (continuing)
- LGBTIQ Apology Task Group (continuing)
- Church in the Digital Age Task Group (continuing)
- Chaplaincy Task Group (continuing)

This report will inform ASC members on:

- Approved Terms of Reference for the Task Group
- Approved Membership of the Task Group including Convener
- A brief summary of work completed in the last triennium
- A brief summary of work to be undertaken this triennium

Sovereignty Affirmation Practical Outcomes Task Group

Membership

Convener: Michelle Cook

Cheryl Lawson
Juliette Maua'i
Mark Kickett
Seung Jae Yeon
Allison Overeem

Work completed in the last triennium

Practical outcomes of the Affirmation of First Peoples' Sovereignty Task Group

In 2018 the Assembly Standing Committee commissioned this task group to address four terms of reference. The current standing of these terms of reference are summarised below

Term of Reference 1

Research the arrangements in place between the Assembly and National UAICC, Synods and Regional Councils with respect to practical implications of the affirmation including concepts of redistributive justice. And as a result, make recommendations for any changes to regulations, policies or guidelines which may be required.

The task group researched financial and staffing arrangements in every synod. The task group found diverse policies particularly in the funding of Congress and the implementation of Reconciliation Action Plans or Covenanting Action plans. At the November 2020 ASC meeting the ASC took oversight of this term of reference through the following resolution:

20.86 It was resolved to:

20.86.02 request Synods and UAICC National Executive to work with the Assembly on developing comparable:

- a) policies regarding allocation of property sale proceeds and bequests;
- b) employment policies for First Peoples including adequate cultural competency training for all Synod and Assembly Staff; and
- c) protocols regarding the accountabilities and responsibilities between Regional Councils and Synods and between UAICC National and the Assembly;

20.86.03 request work outlined in Minute 20.86.02 to be on the agenda for the ongoing meetings between General Secretaries and the UAICC National Executive;

20.86.04 request the General Secretary to report to the in August 2021 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee regarding progress on these matters.

Term of Reference 2

Investigate how this affirmation might shape training for ministry and lay education within the UCA, identifying what is already in place.

The task group found that there is great diversity in how UAICC, Covenanting and Sovereignty and First Peoples voices are integrated into curriculum and formation of ministry leaders. The summary of this research can be found in the task group's report to the 2020 November ASC. At this 2020 November meeting the ASC resolved to:

20.86.05 request the Standards for Ministry Working Group, in conjunction with UAICC National Executive, to develop policies that facilitate consistent orientation to UAICC, Covenant, Sovereignty of First Peoples and Australian First Peoples' Theologies for the formation of specified ministries and lay education.

Both Mark Kickett and Michelle Cook have addressed this meeting.

Term of Reference 3

Consider what might be required for Congregations, Presbyteries, Agencies, and Schools to respond to this affirmation in their contexts.

The task group has gathered relevant resources that can be used across a variety of contexts. The convener of the task group is gathering blurbs for each resource to be added to the home page of the Walking Together Circle. **We recommend that the Walking Together as First and Second Peoples Panel continues this work. At least two members of the task group (including the convener) are members of this panel.**

Term of Reference 4

Consider what foci, in response to the affirmation, the UCA should have in respect to advocacy with Federal and State Governments.

The ASC approved an advocacy protocol document at the March 2021 ASC meeting. This document outlines previous justice and advocacy foci. It also recommends that all advocacy on First Peoples' issues is done in partnership with UAICC and the Uniting First Peoples Network.

The task group thanks the ASC for asking it to address these terms of reference. We give thanks for our time together and the *malaga* (journey) that we have been on. We hope to continue this covenanting journey in our ministries into the future:

Members: Garry Dronfield (2019), Mark Kickett (2019-2021), Fie Marino (2019), Juliette Taut'oloso (2019-2021), SeungJae Yeon (2019-2021), Cheryl Lawson (2019-2021), Alison Overeem (2020-2021) and supported by resource staff Stuart McMillan and Ji Zhang.

Work to be undertaken this triennium

As indicated above, the work is being addressed by other groups.

Recommendations

1. That the ASC requests the Walking Together as First and Second Peoples Panel to continue the resource work in term of reference 3.
2. That the ASC thank and discharge the Sovereignty Affirmation Practical Outcomes Task Group

Sovereignty Affirmation – Practical Outcomes

Terms of Reference

Date of Approval: November 2018

Purpose: The 15th Assembly 2018 resolved that:

In the light of:

(a) the Preamble to the Constitution of Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) which defines sovereignty to be the way in which First Peoples understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians, and

(b) the Statement from the Heart's acknowledgement that sovereignty is a spiritual notion, reflecting the ancestral tie between the land and First Peoples,

affirms that the First Peoples of Australia, the Aboriginal and Islander Peoples, are sovereign peoples in this land. [Resolution 65]

Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) in August 2018 resolved:

To establish a Task Group to consider the practical outcomes for the Church arising from the "affirmation" above.

Reporting Arrangements: ASC November 2018 and periodically.

Period: This Terms of Reference is for this triennium (2018-2021).

Membership: As determined by the ASC on the recommendation of the Assembly Consultant Covenanted in conjunction with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

Task Required:

1. Research the arrangements in place between the Assembly and National UAICC, Synods and Regional Councils with respect to practical implications of the affirmation including concepts of redistributive justice

And as a result, make recommendations for any changes to regulations, policies or guidelines which may be required.

2. Investigate how this affirmation might shape training for ministry and lay education within the UCA, identifying what is already in place.

3. Consider what might be required for Congregations, Presbyteries, Agencies and Schools to respond to this affirmation in their contexts.

4. Consider what foci, in response to the affirmation, the UCA should have in respect to advocacy with Federal and State Governments.

Expected Outcomes:

The Task Group will:

1. Present regularly updates with recommendations to the ASC and the UAICC National Executive (at least twice per annum) during this triennium.
2. It is anticipated that some recommendations from the Task Group's work will be implemented by the Assembly during the triennium and some recommendations will be passed through the ASC to Synods for their consideration.
3. A final report with any further recommendations will be developed in conjunction with the UAICC's National Conference in January 2021 and provided to the March 2021 ASC meeting in preparation for the 16th Assembly 2021.

How the task group will work:

1. Be grounded in the gospel and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
2. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples.
3. Live out our commitment to being a multicultural church, oriented towards justice.
4. Embody an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, gender, race and sexuality are welcomed.
5. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
6. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
7. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible.
8. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis.

Membership:

The Convenor will be appointed by the ASC, on the recommendation of the Assembly Consultant Covenanting after consultation with UAICC.

The appropriate number of members and the composition of the membership of the Task Group will be determined by the ASC guided by input from the Assembly Consultant Covenanting in conjunction with the UAICC. Casual vacancies will be filled as required by the Assembly Associate General Secretary (AAGS) and communicated to ASC.

The selection process will consider the skills and expertise required to undertake the work of the Task Group.

The Task Group will be dismissed at the conclusion of the work it has been given. In the event that the period given to a Task Group has elapsed and the work of the group is not yet completed the Assembly Standing Committee may choose to:

1. Extend the period of the Task Group
2. Dismiss the Task Group and appoint a new Task Group.

Continuing Witness Task Group

Membership

Convener: Rachel Kronberger

Emily Evans
Dev Anandarajan
Geoff Thompson
Glen O'Brien

Work completed in the last triennium

During the previous triennium, the Continuing Witness Task Group completed a number of tasks. Firstly, the Task group further explored the rationale presented to the 15th Assembly for the engagement with this work, including describing a vision for the use of any documents which might be identified by the Task Group and subsequently received and endorsed by the Assembly. This vision is one which anticipates that through beginning what could be an ongoing and regular process of wrestling with the claims and witness to the gospel in voices from beyond our context, the Uniting Church will be enriched, illuminated, challenged and even disturbed in constructive ways which may take us beyond internal theological controversies or the need to make doctrinal decisions. Instead, the Task Group rejoices in the possibility that the people of God may be guided to engage with matters of theological substance, deliberately listening to the words of other Christians and asking them what they have heard and experienced of the gospel that we might not have heard.

Secondly, in reflecting on this vision and the practicalities involved, the Task Group came to the view that the timeline originally envisaged by the Assembly resolution was neither realistic, nor helpful. As a result, the Task Group brought back to the ASC, a modified timeline which foresaw that proposals would be brought to the 16th Assembly which would commit the Church, in all of its Councils but with particular focus on Presbyteries, to a process of wrestling with some documents approved by the Assembly, over the following Triennium, with the hope that those documents would then be officially received and endorsed by the 17th Assembly. The Task Group's vision and rationale spelled out in detail what such 'endorsement' would entail, in particular noting that this was not a blanket endorsement of the document as definitive statements of the Uniting Church's doctrine, but rather as enlivening statements which through use in liturgy, church discussions, and use in theological colleges, might help the Church to be intentional about listening to contemporary witness and opening itself to *fresh words and deeds* as envisioned in the Basis of Union.

Thirdly, the Task Group discussed and determined a methodology for evaluating possible documents for selection, and created a template for this task of evaluation. The Task Group undertook a process of exploring potential documents, and after extensive consideration of a number of different documents, selected three documents which the Task Group believed would be appropriate for presentation to the ASC, and following ASC approval, to the 16th Assembly. These documents were: **The Confession of Belhar, Laudato si'**, and **The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification**.

Each of the tasks above were reported in detail to the ASC through reports to the March 2020, November 2020 and March 2021 ASC Meetings.

Work to be undertaken this triennium

In looking at the work to be undertaken this Triennium, there are two phases to consider. Firstly, it is of course the case that the work of the Task Group was not, in the end presented to the 16th Assembly meeting in July, but it is the hope of the Task Group that there is the possibility of a report to the 16th Assembly (Reconvened) in 2022.

In preparation for that presentation and discussion, the Task Group will produce for ASC's approval, a draft of the specific proposals which may be brought to the 16th Assembly (Reconvened), which will include specific details of the way in which, following the Reconvened Assembly and assuming approval by that meeting, the documents may be presented to and engaged with by the wider Church in the time leading up to the 17th Assembly. An integral part of the work of preparation for the 16th Assembly (Reconvened) will include preparing material to be presented to the Assembly (Reconvened) as the rationale and resourcing for decision-making regarding the proposals. It is also the hope of the Task Group that much of the educational material required to enable the engagement of the wider Church will be at hand by the time of the Assembly (Reconvened), in order to capitalise on that event as a way to raise awareness and enthusiasm for the process.

Following the Assembly (Reconvened), the Task Group believes that there are two further pieces of ongoing work to which it might attend in the phase leading up to the 17th Assembly. One is the process of continuing to resource the Church's discussion of the identified documents, perhaps producing further supporting material for Councils of the Church engaging in this discussion. The second is the task of inviting and receiving feedback from the wider Church and guiding the process of shaping proposals to the 17th Assembly, which would hopefully enable that meeting to officially receive and endorse the documents of Continuing Witness.

The second piece of work that the Task Group envisages for itself in this phase leading up to the 17th Assembly was suggested to the ASC in its March 2021 report. That is, to continue the work of identifying continuing witnesses, with a special focus on the variety of witnesses from Asia and the Pacific, with a view to bringing a report from this work and proposals for the ongoing work of listening to voices from beyond our own UCA context into the future.

“CONTINUING WITNESS” TASK GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Date of approval: November 2018

- Purpose:** To scope the task of exploring the reception and endorsement by the Assembly of specific statements of “Continuing Witness”; to oversee research concerning which documents might be included for such reception and endorsement; and to undertake appropriate consultation with the wider Church, prior to bringing proposals to the ASC for the 16th Assembly.
- Reporting Arrangements:** Two interim reports and a final report to Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) as detailed below. First report by August 2019; second report by August 2020; final report by March 2021.
- Period:** November 2018 to March 2021
- Membership:** As determined by the ASC on the recommendation of the Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU).

Background:

The 15th Assembly passed the following Resolution.

Continuing Witness

That the Assembly resolve:

(a) To again express its gratitude to God for the “continuing witness of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr” (Basis #11);

(b) To encourage members of the Uniting Church to continue to pray that “it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds” (Basis #11);

(c) To call upon members of the Uniting Church to listen anew for words of continuing witnesses from recent and contemporary contexts by which our own witness might be challenged, renewed and strengthened; and

(d) To request the Standing Committee to establish a Task Group to (i) explore the reception and endorsement by the Uniting Church of specific statements and documents of ‘continuing witnesses’ (as understood in the Basis of Union) to which the Uniting Church would turn and listen as it “sharpens its understanding of the will and purpose of God” (Basis #11) being cognisant of our diversity within our unity; and (ii) bring relevant proposals to the 16th Assembly after consultation with Presbyteries.

As a result, the ASC has determined to create a Task Group with these Terms of Reference.

Task Required with Expected Outcomes:

1. Bring an initial report to the ASC by August 2019 detailing:
 - a. The proposed nature of the reception and endorsement of documents of continuing witness including a theological rationale and a vision for the possible use of such a collection of documents;
 - b. Particulars as to the sources and styles of documents which might be considered;

- c. A proposed methodology for researching and evaluating possible candidate documents, including the particular values which might underlie such evaluation;
 - d. A process for appropriate consultation with the wider Church;
 - e. The anticipated form of proposals which might be taken to the 16th Assembly.
2. Subject to the ASC's approval of the initial report, to oversee the process of researching and evaluating possible candidate documents and to bring a second report to the ASC by August 2020 which includes the draft list of documents for reception and endorsement, as well as any modifications to the process of consultation, or to the anticipated proposals for the 16th Assembly which have arisen as the Task Group has done its research work.
 3. Subject to the ASC's approval of the second report, to undertake the process of consultation with the wider Church. Following this consultation, to bring a final report to the ASC which, taking into account the feedback received, proposes a final list of documents to be considered by the 16th Assembly, along with a final form of proposals to be brought to the Assembly to enact reception and endorsement of the collection of documents.

How the task group will work:

1. Be grounded in the gospel and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
2. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples. Discern the gift of the Spirit that informs the UCA and renews its mission in our relationship with the Land and the First Peoples.
3. Live out our commitment to being a multicultural church, oriented towards justice.
4. Embody an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, gender, race and sexuality are welcomed
5. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
6. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
7. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible, paying particular attention to the continuing witness of UCA partners and of culturally diverse Christian traditions, and listening anew for words of continuing witness within the ecumenical contexts of the World Council of Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia, the Pacific Conference of Churches, the World Methodist Council and the World Communion of Reformed Churches.
8. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis

Membership:

The Convenor will be appointed by the ASC, guided by input from the ARU.

The appropriate number of members and the composition of the membership of the Task Group will be determined by the Assembly Standing Committee guided by input from the ARU. Casual vacancies will be filled as required by the Assembly General Secretary and communicated to ASC.

The selection process will consider the skills and expertise required to undertake the work of the Task Group. Membership should represent the diversity of UCA theological perspectives and the lived experience of First Peoples and Second Peoples in multicultural Australia.

The Task Group will be dismissed at the conclusion of the work it has been given. In the event that the period given to a Task Group has elapsed and the work of the group is not yet completed the Assembly Standing Committee may choose to:

1. Extend the period of the Task Group
2. Dismiss the Task Group and appoint a new Task Group.

LGBTIQ Apology Task Group

Membership

Convener: Lin Hatfield Dodds

Warren Talbot
Graeme Randall
Sani Vaeluaga

The Task Group has had several changes in membership and intends to bring several additional Expressions of Interest for new members to the November 2021 ASC.

Work completed in the last triennium

The Task Group was formed by ASC in July 2019 to develop the wording of an official apology from the Uniting Church in Australia to LGBTIQ Australians for the Church's role in the silence, rejection, discrimination and stereotyping of LGBTIQ people, couples and families.

The Task Group was charged with consulting widely with LGBTIQ and other members of the Church. The Terms of Reference (attached) state that the apology might draw on, but not go beyond, existing statements, decisions and theological work that has been approved by either the Assembly or ASC.

It was envisaged that the Task Group would bring a proposal regarding an apology to the 16th Assembly however changes in membership and especially the convener role has delayed the work. The Task Group now intends to bring a proposal regarding an apology to the 17th Assembly.

The task group has met a number of times, compiling an online library of UCA documents and statements related to sexuality, and has agreed four interim principles to guide its work:

Work has commenced on developing a background paper looking at comparable apology initiatives for LGBTIQ people taken by our partner churches in Australia and overseas.

Communication across the UCA has also been considered by the Task Group, and it is working with the Assembly executive to determine the most appropriate time and platforms to announce the establishment and aims of the Task Group.

Careful consideration of how to go about 'consulting widely' continues. The Task Group has identified that wide consultation will almost certainly give rise to a need for the Councils of the UCA to engage in a timely and pastoral way with people whose pain is surfaced through the processes of developing the apology. This is a key matter that the Task Group believes needs resolution before consultations begin.

Work to be undertaken this triennium

The Task Group is developing a project plan and preparation leading into 18 months of consultation and engagement across and beyond the UCA from early 2022 to mid-2023, culminating in the development of an apology, the liturgy/ritual through which it will be delivered, and a report to the 17th Assembly over the period mid to end-2023.

APOLOGY TO LGBTIQ AUSTRALIANS TASK GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

[July 2019 – noting subsequent change of Convenor in Sep 2020]

Purpose: To develop the wording of an official apology from the Uniting Church in Australia to LGBTIQ Australians for the Church's role in the silence, rejection, discrimination and stereotyping of LGBTIQ people, couples and families.

Reporting Arrangements: Assembly Standing Committee (ASC)

Period: This Terms of Reference is for the period of achieving the purpose of the task group

Membership: As determined by the ASC on the recommendation of the Assembly / Assembly General Secretary / Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU)

Task Required:

1. Consult widely with LGBTIQ and other members of the Church in order to develop the wording of an official apology from the Uniting Church in Australia to LGBTIQ Australians for the Church's role in the silence, rejection, discrimination and stereotyping of LGBTIQ people, couples and families. When considering this, the task group will engage in a respectful process in developing an apology, which will involve listening to all, honestly naming the past and respecting differences. An apology will hopefully contribute to healing and reconciliation within the Uniting Church, with the Australian LGBTIQ communities and the wider society.
2. If timing is appropriate, bring a proposal regarding an apology to the 16th Assembly. The best apology might be a "living apology" though this does not preclude a formal statement by the Assembly.
3. The apology might draw on, but not go beyond, existing statements, decisions and theological work that has been approved by either the Assembly or ASC in the past.

Expected Outcomes:

At the conclusion of its work the Task Group will:

1. Present a Draft Report to the Assembly General Secretary outlining the directions the group is taking to the ASC by March 2020.
2. Present a Final Report including an executive summary and any proposals / recommendations for consideration at the 16th Assembly to the ASC by November 2020

Note: Should additional time be required to complete this process and it is evident that this will not be ready for consideration at the 16th Assembly, then future expected outcomes and a revised timeframe should be determined at the November 2020 ASC meeting.

How the task group will work:

1. Be grounded in the gospel and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
2. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples.
3. Live out our commitment to being a multicultural church, oriented towards justice.
4. Embody an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, gender, race and sexuality are welcomed
5. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
6. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
7. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible.
8. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis

Membership: (appointed by ASC in July 2019)

Ian Tozer (Convenor) – withdrew from this role in late 2019

Lin Hatfield Dodds (Convenor) – appointed by ASC in Sep 2020

Warren Talbot

Leanne Jensi

Graeme Randall

Rev Sani Vaeluaga

Church in the Digital Age Task Group

Membership

Convener: Ann Perrin

Amelia Koh Butler

Duncan Mcleod

Jenny Hughes

Josh Wyatt

Liam Miller

Rod Pattenden

Seung Jae Yeon

Tim Jensen

Work completed in the last triennium

This Task Group was appointed in March 2021 and have begun meeting.

Their work will be as per the Terms of Reference that follows.

CHURCH IN THE DIGITAL AGE TASK GROUP

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved by Assembly Standing Committee – March 2021

Purpose:	To identify the critical theological, pastoral and practical issues related to the worship, witness and service of the Uniting Church in Australia raised by the challenges and opportunities of the digital age.
Reporting Arrangements:	Progress report to the November 2021 Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) and final report to November 2022 ASC.
Period:	This Terms of Reference is for the period March 2021 – November 2022
Membership:	The Convenor and members will be appointed by the ASC, on the recommendation of a small group established by the ASC at its November 2020 meeting.

Task Required:

In their considerations on the implications of the digital age for the Uniting Church's worship witness and service, the Task Group should address:

1. The UCA's confession that the Church is an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself.
2. Christian convictions about the work of the Holy Spirit in the gathering and sending of the church.
3. Christian convictions about the embodied, communal and holistic nature of human existence.
4. The ethics of digital engagement which ensure the safety and flourishing of all people.
5. The theology and practice of the sacraments.
6. Implications for any existing UCA doctrinal positions.
7. Implications for liturgical practices, regulations and guidelines that order our worship, witness and service.
8. Ecumenical learnings, opportunities and implications that arise.
9. How digital technology enhances, enables, encourages and prompts new missional engagement and new ways of discipling.

The Task Group should also consider the ways in which digital technologies are currently being used across the life of the Church.

Expected Outcomes:

The Task Group will bring:

1. An interim report to the November 2021 ASC on its work so far, indicating the major areas of focus of the Task Group and proposed process for the remainder of its work.
2. A final report to the November 2022 ASC including an executive summary and any proposals / recommendations.

How the task group will work:

9. Be grounded in the gospel of Christ and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
10. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples.
11. Live out our commitment to being a multicultural church, oriented towards justice.
12. Embody an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, gender, race and sexuality are welcomed
13. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
14. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
15. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible.
16. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis

Membership:

The Convenor and members will be appointed by the ASC, on the recommendation of a small group established by the ASC at its November 2020 meeting.

Casual vacancies will be filled as required by the Assembly General Secretary and communicated to ASC.

The selection process will consider the skills and expertise required to undertake the work of the Task Group.

The Task Group will be dismissed at the conclusion of the work it has been given. In the event that the period given to a Task Group has elapsed and the work of the group is not yet completed the Assembly Standing Committee may choose to:

3. Extend the period of the Task Group and communicate this to ASC
4. Dismiss the Task Group and request that ASC appoint a new Task Group.

Chaplaincy Task Group

Membership

Convener: Jean Shannon

David Baker
Nicole Mugford
Anne Wright
Jay Robinson
Adam Macintosh
Lita Mendigorin
Deb Sorenson

Work completed in the last triennium

This Task Group was appointed by the Assembly Officers as a result of delegation by the ASC, in April 2021 and has met once so far in June 2021. That meeting enabled members of the group to meet one another (virtually) and to begin scoping the task, setting out some next steps mainly involved with data collection.

Work to be undertaken this triennium

Other than the introductory scoping mentioned above, the bulk of the work of this Task Group, as described in the Terms of Reference below will take place in this triennium.

CHAPLAINCY TASK GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved by Assembly Standing Committee - 8 November 2020

Purpose:

1. To review the exercise of pastoral and spiritual care positions, including those named as “chaplaincy ministries” across the life of the Church, exclusive of congregational life.
2. To provide recommendations as to how such positions can fit within specified ministries of the Church, including changes to the regulations around those specified ministries
3. To consider the need for and provide frameworks for national guidelines and standards applicable to such positions.

Reporting Arrangements: Progress report March 2021 ASC and thereafter as determined by that ASC meeting.

Period: This Terms of Reference is for the period from November 2020 for an initial period to be determined by the March 2021 ASC Meeting.

Membership: As determined by the Assembly Officers including at least two members of the Standards for Ministries Committee, at least two members of ASC and other such members drawn from Synods and Agencies as are considered helpful.

Task Required:

4. To survey current practices within UCA Synods, Ministry Education Boards (MEBs), Agencies and institutions as regards the preparation for chaplaincy roles, and standards related to such preparation or standards related to the exercise of chaplaincy roles.
5. To consult widely with relevant stakeholders, including but not limited to: MEBs, Synod Placement Committees, Synod Service Agencies, Uniting Care Australia, Diakonia UCA; as well as groups representing particular forms of Chaplaincy including Defence Force, Schools (both within UCA Schools, and within non-UCA private and public schools), Aged Care, Hospital, Prison and Juvenile Detention, Tertiary Institutions and Industry Chaplaincy.
6. To determine whether there is a need for the articulation of national standards related to preparation for or exercise of the ministry of chaplaincy.
7. To make such recommendations as deemed helpful regarding changes to the regulations on specified ministries.
8. If such standards are deemed necessary, the development of national standards, incorporating developing understandings of best practice in chaplaincy. These standards should specifically address:
 - a. Any issues related to the exercise of a ministry of chaplaincy by people within the two ordained ministries of the UCA, including necessary transitional formation for Deacons or Ministers of the Word moving into a chaplaincy role;
 - b. The possibility, or otherwise, for lay people to be engaged in chaplaincy roles, and whether such roles fall under the specified Ministry of Pastor;

- c. Any standards which are applicable to all chaplaincy roles, as well as the need for particular requirements related to specific chaplaincy roles or specific chaplaincy contexts.

Expected Outcomes:

The Task Group will bring to the March 2021 ASC either:

1. A report of its conclusions, including a draft of any proposals needing to be brought to the 2021 Assembly meeting; or
2. An interim report detailing a timeline for how the tasks above will be undertaken throughout the next Triennium.

How the task group will work:

17. Be grounded in the gospel and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
18. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples.
19. Live out our commitment to be an inter-cultural and inter-generational Church, oriented towards justice and valuing scholarly enquiry and an informed faith.
20. Embody an inclusive church where the mutuality and equality of women and men in ministry is demonstrated and the participation and ministry of all the people of God including those of differing ability, age, gender, race and sexuality is welcomed.
21. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
22. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
23. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible.
24. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis

Membership:

- The Convenor will be appointed by the ASC.
- The Task Group will be appointed by the Assembly Officers on the advice of the Assembly General Secretary and will comprise a maximum of 8 people along with the Convenor. At least two members of the Task Group will be current members of the Standards for Ministry Committee and at least two of the members of the Task Group will be current members of the ASC.
- Should the Task Group's work extend beyond the life of the current ASC and Standards for Ministry Committee, then the new ASC will consider whether any variation to the Task Group membership is required.
- The selection process will specifically consider the skills and expertise which may be able to be contributed by Synod bodies and Church Agencies who regularly employ or place people within chaplaincy roles.