



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

12-14 November 2021

DOCUMENT 5

Title	General Secretary Report
Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	For information and decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	Not applicable
Consultation	As noted in the report
Purpose	To advise the Assembly Standing Committee on Assembly progress against Strategic Plan, operations and issues relevant to its work.
Rationale & Findings Summary	See the report
Attachments	Attachment A: Correspondence from the Northern Synod Attachment B: Strategic Plan and Business Plan Reporting
Proposal/s	That the Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive the General Secretary Report2. Requests the General Secretary to convene a conversation with the Northern Synod regarding its resolution relating to redress responsibilities, and to report to the March 2022 ASC meeting on the outcomes. The conversation will include the General Secretaries of the Assembly and the Northern Synod, other relevant personnel and the National Director of UCA Redress Ltd.3. Note the Assembly Review Scope and that a further report will be brought to the March 2022 ASC meeting.
Submitted by	Colleen Geyer Assembly General Secretary colleeng@nat.uca.org.au ; 0411 333 167

GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT

Introduction

Lockdowns, restrictions and remote working has again been the context for the work of the Assembly since the ASC met in August. (see information below in **COVID19** section of this report)

The sustainability of the Assembly has continued to be a priority with formal correspondence from the Northern Synod received regarding redress responsibility for Croker Island Mission (see page 7), and the Assembly carries out its operations with decreased revenue (see Review Scope, page 8).

Within this context, the significant and important work of the Act2 Project has continued with the release of the *Act2: Considering Afresh our Life Together* Report, and the Basis of Union studies, *Our Life Together: Reflections on the Basis of Union*. Consultations on the future of the UCA through this project are underway. (see Document 13, Act2 Report)

The Business Plan of the Assembly Strategic Plan Report is available at **Attachment B** of this report.

COVID19

As extensive and long lockdowns are coming to an end and restrictions are lifted across the country, Assembly staff have juggled multiple commitments, as well as delivering on work priorities. Their resilience and perseverance are inspiring. We are also aware that challenges of working remotely in lockdown have impacted staff, and many are weary as we come to the end of 2021.

Staff are being encouraged to continue looking after themselves; including taking regular breaks during work days, trying to limit screen time, looking for ways to stay connected with others, and to seek out assistance from their manager or other avenues including the Assembly's Employee Assistance Provider if required.

Staff have been strongly encouraged to protect themselves and get vaccinated. Currently almost all staff are fully vaccinated.

As restrictions ease, the Assembly will move to re-opening the Sydney Pitt Street office and reconsider the need for staff to travel in 2022. As always, we will follow the health guidelines in each location, prioritising the health and wellbeing of our staff, their families and the wider community. We will continue to work in some form of hybrid mode through until at least the end of this year, with the Sydney office only opening three days a week from 1 November 2021.

These changes and government guidelines will impact staff differently depending on their circumstances. Line managers are the connection points for staff as circumstances change in the coming weeks to discuss changes and understand what will work best for each person and teams overall.

As we come closer to end of the year, we expect to have a clearer position of returning to the office in a more normalised manner for the new year.

National Council of Churches in Australia

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) held its Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 27 October. Bishop Philip Huggins finished his term as NCCA President. Bishop Huggins has been the President since 2016. Rev John Gilmore of the Churches of Christ in Australia was elected as the new NCCA President. Rev Gilmore will serve in this role for the next three years.

Rob Floyd was re-elected to the Board of the NCCA for a further three years.

Following the AGM, a public forum was held on the subject of Spiritual Ecumenism. The forum was presented by Dr Antonia Pizzey.

March 2022 ASC venue

Health restrictions and border closures permitting, we are intending to meet in person for the March 2022 ASC. This meeting is being planned to be held at Mary McKillop Place in North Sydney. This was the venue for ASC meetings until major renovations were undertaken with the venue closed for 2020 and 2021.

ASSEMBLY UNITS AND AGENCIES

Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU)

(Highlights since August 2021 meeting)

Staff

- Staff have continued to work from home through this period.
- We said farewell to Stuart McMillan who retired from the role of Assembly Consultant Covenanting in September
- Rev Dr Ji Zhang moved to 3 days per week, 2 days with ARU.

National Conferences (NC)

- Staff with the President hosted a meeting of NC Chairs to introduce the President, introduce Act2 and to share the current circumstances being faced by our culturally and linguistically diverse communities. There will be further follow up as some Chairs were unable to attend.
- Staff and the President met with members of the Filipino NC to better understand the human rights context in the Philippines and how the UCA can assist and support our Filipino community in its advocacy in this.
- Staff has interacted with members of the Middle East NC, specifically in regard to the situation in Lebanon.
- Staff have engaged with NC Chairs to facilitate feedback for the Church in the Digital Age Task Group.

Advocacy

- Significant advocacy has been undertaken in regard to the situation in Afghanistan and the context for the Afghani refugees in Australia. This has involved sector participation (lead by Micah and also Refugee Council of Australia), letter writing and a social media campaign. This campaign has seen some positive responses from the Federal Government regarding intake of refugees (although much higher intake is needed) and funding. The campaign continues.
- Significant focus on the Season of Creation and advocacy leading up to COP 26. This has involved developing resources around climate action and drawing together resources from other groups that will be of use to UCA members and congregations. Advocacy has involved an ecumenical Church-leader letter to the Prime Minister re the importance of attending COP 26, setting a net zero 2050 target and setting much more ambitious 2030 targets. The Federal Government is showing signs of moving on these and the Prime Minister will attend COP 26 in Glasgow.
- Staff represented the UCA in the Australia Palestine Advocacy Network (APAN) and we have promoted several awareness raising initiatives organised by APAN and the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network, to which we also belong.
- Staff attended the Kaldor Centre Conference - ***Whose move? Addressing migration and displacement in the face of climate change***

Committees, Task Groups and Dialogues

- As reported to the August 2021 ASC, a number of Task Groups have carried forwards into this new triennium. ARU staff continue to provide support across these groups as required.

- Standards for Ministries Committee has a new convenor and is carrying work forward into the triennium. Staff have worked to ensure the transition is effective. Plans are underway to host a Heads of Colleges online meeting.
- The UCA Lutheran Church of Australia Dialogue and the UCA Executive Council of Australian Jewry (ECAJ) Dialogue have both carried forward in to the new triennium. Staff have worked closely with the ECAJ Dialogue due to significant changes in the UCA membership to build new relationships and facilitate the first Dialogue meeting.

Climate Change

Being reported to November 2021 ASC.

- Advocacy leading up to COP 26 has been a focus as discussed above.
- Educational and theological resources have been collated and shared in the Season of Creation (above) and this continues.
- Carbon footprint calculations from the Assembly Secretariat and Agencies have been collated and presented to this meeting.
- Progress Report against the Climate Action Plan is reported.

Domestic and Family Violence

- The resource was finalized last triennium. A training of trainer session is planned for WA Synod in November.

Intercultural / Intergenerational

- Staff have spent time adapting resources to be available in the online learning platform UnitingLearning. This continues.
- Some tutorials for online learners, and also training of trainers sessions are being planned.

National Young Adults Leaders Conference (NYALC)

- Staff have begun conversations with the President about running a NYALC in 2022.

Uniting Learning

- Staff continue to support the development of the platform and resources, particularly with National Safe Church Unit.

Circles

- The Circles have been re-established for the new triennium. There have been changes to a number of the Advocates and a significant turnover of Panel Members.
- Staff have facilitated a meeting of Advocates and all the Panels. These focused on the role of Circles, the Assembly Strategic Plan, Act2 and the communications strategies of Circles. Circles have set some work goals for the first 9-12 months.

Ecumenical and Interfaith

- Staff have participated in the Australian National Dialogue of Christians Muslims and Jews, facilitated by the NCCA. The theme was Care of our Common Home and Creation.
- Staff continue plans for an Iftar Dinner with Muslim leaders and the Muslim community in 2021.
- Staff have attended a number of significant ecumenical webinars hosted by:
- Christian Conference of Asia - **Freedom of Religion in Asia**
- World Council of Churches – **Remembering Past Massacres in the Pacific**

Act2

- Staff have participated in leading online Act2 studies in the Basis of Union
- Lindsay Cullen contributed significantly to the development of the *Act2: Considering Afresh our Life Together* report

UnitingCare Australia

UnitingCare Australia has continued to focus on its strategic priorities during the reporting period as detailed below, despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice for First Peoples – the First Peoples Working Group have continued to meet regularly online to progress advocacy activities and plan for a second First Peoples Gathering. Due to the various lockdowns across the country, the Gathering was held online on 21 September and was well attended by representatives from across the life of the Church. There was strong recognition of the progress that has been made to date and much enthusiasm to continue the journey together, build relationships and advocate for change. UnitingCare Australia has appointed Sam Gledhill in the role of Senior Policy Advisor, to focus on the Justice for First Peoples portfolio. Sam is a proud Murri woman from north Queensland.

Addressing Economic Inequality – UnitingCare Australia contributed to the consultation process for the Government's new National Plan to Prevent Violence against Women and their Children through attendance at the National Women's Summit, a workshop with Monash University who are leading the consultation, and a submission to the Department of Social Services. UnitingCare Australia facilitated a successful consortium bid for the Government's Escaping Violence Payment trial which commenced on 19 October. The UnitingCare Consortium is led by Uniting Vic.Tas and comprises a number of UnitingCare network organisations from across all states and territories. UnitingCare Australia lodged a submission in response to legislation to extend the waiting periods for new migrants to receive social supports and presented to the Senate Committee hearing. Additionally, UnitingCare Australia have been significant contributors to Government consultation processes around access to vaccinations for the most vulnerable. A number of media releases, letters and joint statements have been issued on various topics relevant to the portfolio. Target have now ceased the annual Target Christmas Appeal due to changing priorities.

Ageing to our Full Potential – UnitingCare Australia was a key stakeholder in the Aged Care Campaign "It's time to care for aged care" leading up to the Federal Budget when the Government allocated \$18B to aged care initiatives. UnitingCare Australia has been a key player in the creation of the Australian Aged Care Collaboration Ltd (AACC) comprising representatives from the two industry peak bodies (ACSA and LASA) and four Church national bodies (Catholic Health, Anglicare Australia, Baptist Care Australia and UnitingCare Australia) with Claerwen Little chairing the organisation. The AACC has been undertaking a number of projects focused on ensuring the Government's response to the recommendations from Aged Care Royal Commission Final Report is robust and achieves the Royal Commissions vision for transformation of the system. UnitingCare Australia has undertaken significant aged care advocacy during the pandemic including around vaccinations, and is continuing to work with the UnitingCare Aged Care Network to identify priority areas to ensure older Australians receive the care they need when they need it.

Disability Royal Commission – A separate report has been provided to ASC on the activities being undertaken in relation to the Disability Royal Commission and the National Task Group.

UnitingWorld

Please note that Jone Lotu has withdrawn his UnitingWorld board membership. The UnitingWorld board has started seeking new nominations.

The new UnitingWorld Strategic Plan has been launched, including a week-long workshop with the staff team, to map out how it may be operationalised. We are conducting an operations review to adjust our organisation to best pursue our strategy.

In October, the structure and composition of UnitingWorld teams have been reviewed. The findings were that we had a skilled and committed team, but there were some inefficiencies and pain points in the structure. We have instigated a re-organisation that will put the Agency on good footing for the future.

This is currently being implemented. There is one role redundancy, with all the other changes being alterations to reporting lines and adjustment to Position Descriptions.

The operations review will continue over the summer to review systems and processes.

Frontier Services

HR: We have had a number of changes in the Frontier Services team which means we are having issues getting people to work on our day-to-day operations. There is currently a significant amount of time being spent training new staff, whilst also working remotely due to COVID19. There have also been challenges hiring staff that can be attributed to a nationwide skills shortage. However, we are hopeful that the new recruitments will fulfil the needs we have currently. COVID is obviously still having an impact on our ability to function at our full potential and we are working on a staged return to work plan in the first week of November.

Strategic Plan: We have recently achieved the goals for the five-year strategic plan ahead of the planned timeline of 2022. We are in the process of working on the next strategic plan to consider what is next for Frontier Services. We have substantially moved from survival to thriving, but this now requires a different mindset and brave thinking from our leadership and board once again.

Financial Results: We finished the last financial year (June 21) with \$7.2 mill income against a budget of \$4.2 mill and spent \$3.5 mill against a budget of \$3.8mill. Given a significant surplus of \$3.7mill, an additional \$1.0 million provision was made for future redress scheme claims. This will sit as a provision on our balance sheet. Over \$100k was paid this year for redress.

Audit requirements and new staff have impacted our financial and business reporting. However, we are working with the Assembly finance team regarding this.

Media: Frontier Services has been featured heavily in the media this quarter. We have been featured in more than a dozen publications, including television, print, radio and podcasts Australia wide. These features have been centered around our core purpose but have also highlighted the Great Outback BBQ campaign to try and raise funds through physical and virtual events.

Bush Chaplaincy: In October we held a virtual Bush Chaplains Retreat which saw Frontier Services Bush Chaplains, existing and incoming, come together over two days. The retreat was well received by all and included pastoral and practical components. The theme of the retreat was "Jesus was a storyteller" which allowed space for guests like the President of the Uniting Church, Rev. Sharon Hollis, Frontier Services Board Chair, Lisa Sampson, Rev. Mark Kickett from Congress and Rev. Dr Stephen Robinson, Synod Disaster Recovery Coordinator and National Disaster Recovery Officer to not only tell stories but also provide space for learning and growth of our Bush Chaplains.

We are continuing to grow the number of Frontier Services Bush Chaplains. The following new Chaplains have begun:

In Victoria – Veronica Bradley (out of Wangaratta), Prom Country Remote Area; Peter Harvey, Gippsland Remote Area; and Marian Bissett, High Country Remote Area.

In WA – John Tompkins, Gascoyne Remote Area.

Recruitment is still ongoing for other placements in NT and WA.

We also celebrated the retirement of Rev. Phill Matthews, Barwon Remote Area, and the Retirement of Rowena Harris, High Country Remote Area.

Return to workplace plan: With COVID restrictions easing in NSW, we are currently working on our return to workplace plan with staff. This will be a staggered approach, but staff are looking forward to returning to the office.

Governance & Compliance: The Frontier Services Board is seeking a new Vice Chair. Recruitment is currently underway.

Assembly Communications Unit

In order to continue the increased effectiveness of Assembly communications, Bec Beisler (National Manager, Media and Communications) has led the Communications Unit to develop a Communications Strategy with the following priorities:

- Every UCA member has an Assembly connection or engages with Assembly content on a regular basis
- We have a voice in the public conversation on issues that are key to our identity
- We provide a platform for a diverse range of voices that represent the UCA, with a specific focus on First Peoples, CALD communities and younger generations
- Our communications articulate our national identity, key Assembly Strategic areas and create opportunities for people to engage in the Act2 conversation about the future shape of the UCA
- Greater brand awareness

Bethany Broadstock has been recruited as a permanent member of the communications team, and in response to the strategy. While the team has only three members, they provide targeted, effective and innovative communications for the Assembly.

REDRESS MATTERS IN THE NORTHERN SYNOD (See Attachment A)

Following informal conversations between the General Secretaries of the Assembly and the Northern Synod regarding redress matters in the Northern Synod, and which were reported to the ASC at its August 2021 meeting, the issue was considered at the Northern Synod meeting in October.

At that meeting of the Northern Synod, the Synod resolved to undertake intentional conversations with the Assembly and UCA Redress Ltd with respect to redress claims sent to the Synod relating to the Croker Island Mission which was a mission of the Methodist Overseas Mission; and whether the Synod does have responsibility for these claims.

Formal correspondence was received from the Northern Synod on 26 October 2021. Proposals are included in this report regarding this resolution.

REVIEW OF ASSEMBLY OPERATIONS – SCOPE

In the August 2021 General Secretary Report, the following was noted:

The future sustainability of the Assembly, particularly the Secretariat, is becoming increasingly challenging and uncertain. In order to enable the Assembly to continue in a healthy and viable way over the coming triennium, particularly as we undertake the significant work of the Act2 Project, I am intending to review the Assembly operations to consider options for this to occur.

The details of the review will be brought to March 2022 ASC meeting, with implementation to commence by no later than the end of this current financial year.

The scope for the review is the operations of the Assembly Secretariat, for the current triennium.

The following context, principles and risks provide the foundational understandings for the review.

Context

The context for this review involves the following:

- To align the work of the Assembly Secretariat to our developing understanding of future needs through the Act2 Project
- Reduced revenue for the Assembly, including Synod grants
- Potential external financial liabilities, eg Northern Synod redress conversation
- Sustainability challenges for other Councils/parts of the UCA
- The review is initially in relation to the Assembly Secretariat

Principles

The following principles will inform the review:

- Adequate resourcing is required for the Assembly to fulfil its responsibilities as the national council of the UCA
- Our national commitment to the Covenant remains
- We will fulfil all redress obligations
- The Act2 project will be delivered and guide our thinking
- The Assembly will work collaboratively wherever possible
- Our staff are key to delivering Assembly responsibilities, the Assembly Strategic Plan and the Act2 Project
- The Assembly needs to be realistic about future revenue and how that influences how we work
- Any staffing changes will be carried out with respect and care

Risks

The following risks will be considered as the review is undertaken:

- The Assembly is not able to provide national leadership due to inadequate funding and staffing
- Synods don't see the value of the Assembly or the national council of the UCA
- More Synods reduce funding grants to the Assembly
- National collaboration initiatives (for example NSCU and UCA Redress Ltd) are funded by Synods at the expense of funding for the Assembly
- Staff morale is low when they hear about the review. This may lead to them feeling uncertain about employment stability and so look for other employment
- Redress responsibilities are not able to be funded by the Assembly

The review will include the following:

- Detailed financial overview and projections
- Overview of deliverables for the current triennium
- Staffing and operational plans to provide resourcing for delivering on agreed priorities
- Risk register for the review

Timeline:

- Review plan will be presented to the March 2022 ASC meeting
- Implementation of the plan to commence by 30 June 2022

Assembly Business Plan July 2020 – June 2023

Updated as at November 2021

Reporting the Business Plan

The Intention will be that the Business Plan will outline the areas of work for the Assembly, the expected outcomes of that work and the key activities involved in achieving the work.

Status	Colour Code
Planned activity	
Complete/In Progress	
Some delay / concern	
Major delay/concern	

An example:

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
ABCD Task Group			
<i>Expected outcomes</i> This Task Group will ...			
- Activity 1 – This activity is progressing well			
- Activity 2 – This activity is delayed slightly because....			
- Activity 3 – This activity has experienced a major obstacle because ...			

Strategic Direction 1: Respond to the Church

Respond to the ongoing needs of the whole Church and other Councils

Strategy 1: Respond to the specific issues within areas of mandated responsibility

Respond to issues arising in determining doctrine and worship, ecumenical and international relationships, government and discipline including guiding decisions on the tasks and authority to be exercised by other Councils, and the general oversight and promotion of the life and mission of the Church

Activities:

Generally, this is undertaken on an ad-hoc basis, responding to inquiries and requests from across the Church. These will be added to this section or another more relevant section and reported accordingly.

Strategy 2: Enact Decisions of the Assembly

Support Task Groups arising from Assembly/ASC: Sovereignty, Continuing Witness, Disability Access; Enact decisions on Domestic and Family Violence, Climate Change.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Assembly Decisions			
Continuing Witness Task Group			
Expected Outcomes 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.			
- Preparation of potential documents			
- Update Report to March 2021 ASC			
- Interim report to 16 th Assembly (via ASC Report) The report was made – will report to Reconvened Assembly			
- Wide UCA Consultation			
Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group			
Expected Outcomes 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.			
- Consultation with LGBTIQ community – Planned for FY 2022			
- Update Report to November 2021			
- Final / Interim Report to 16 th Assembly (Reconvened) – this will push out to later in the triennium			
Climate Action Plan			
Expected Outcomes Taking into account Resolution 18.12.01.01 of the 15th Assembly, request the Assembly Resourcing Unit, liaising with UAICC, and Synod and Agency personnel to prepare a National Climate Action Plan and Reporting Framework, and supporting educational and theological materials, to resource the wider church to take action on climate change, and report back to the July 2019 meeting of the ASC;			
- Continue to deliver on Climate Action Plan			
- Advocacy based on Our Vision for a Just Australia July 2021			
- Promote Climate Action across Church – extensive through Seasons of Creation			
- Support Climate Actions as they arise – schools climate strike and COP26 advocacy			
- Finalise Baseline Carbon Footprint – as per report			

- Measure carbon footprint for upcoming FY			
- Set additional goals towards carbon footprint reduction			
- Annual Reporting to ASC – to Nov 2021			

ASC Decisions			
Act 2			
Expected outcomes Resource the Assembly to address the significant challenges and opportunities facing the Uniting Church into the future including identity, sustainability and structure			
- Ongoing work			
- Updates to each ASC meeting			
- Report to 16th Assembly (via ASC Report and to Reconvened Assembly)			
Church in the Digital Age			
Expected outcomes To consider the theological implications of the Church in the digital age.			
- Ongoing work			
- Report to ASC (Interim Nov 2021 / Final Nov 2022)			
Chaplaincy			
Expected outcomes 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. 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. To consider the need for and provide frameworks for national guidelines and standards applicable to such positions.			
- Ongoing work			
- Report to Nov 2021 ASC meeting			

Strategy 3: Standards for Ministries (Education for all specified ministries and admission of ordained

Committee conducts consultations with MEBs and Colleges, revise Ministry of Pastor competencies and related Lay Preacher competencies, revise Admission processes, revise Phase 3 and Phase 4 standards including guidelines for supervision

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Standards for Ministries			
Expected Outcomes To advise the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee on the standards required for Specified Ministries within the Uniting Church and to ensure that the Assembly's responsibilities in relation to training for Specified Ministries and admission of ministers from other denominations are met			
Consultations			
- South Australia – Report coming to this meeting			
- Western Australia – Team and plans in place – COVID has slowed initial plans			
- NSW/ACT – Planning for 2022 consultation has commenced			
- Northern Synod			
- Qld			
- Vic/Tas			
Other areas of focus			
- Admission procedures – Completed			
- Revision of Phase 4 standards – Work is being undertaken			
- Revision of Ministry of Pastor – Work is being undertaken			

Strategy 4: Maintain and extend the work of Circles of Interest

Support the work of Advocates, publicise Circles in the wider Church, further develop the mechanisms by which the Circles and Panels can support and extend the work of ASC and Assembly Staff

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Circles of Interest			
Expected outcomes Involve people in the national life of the church, providing a mechanism for sharing and learning, seeking broad input, disseminating information widely, encouraging growth and deepening discipleship and discerning together God's will.			
- Circles operating effectively			
- Report to ASC			
- Preparation for nominations of Advocates and Panel members - Completed			
- Report to 16th Assembly (at Assembly) - Completed			
- Appointment of Advocates (at Assembly) - Completed			
- Appointment of Panels (ASC August 2021) - Completed			
- Training and orientation - Completed			

Strategic Direction 2: Identity

Communicate a clear and concise message — who are we as the UCA and what is our distinct role in working toward the coming of the Kingdom of God in Australia

Strategy 1: Find ways of telling the UCA Story

Remind the Church of our foundational values and commitments; sharpen ways of describing the vision and purpose of the Uniting Church in our context

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Telling the UCA Story			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Assembly communications contributing to a wider awareness of the identity, values, context and make-up of the UCA. UCA communities are encouraged to understand our foundational values and commitments. UCA communities know the UAICC UCA journey and the significant markers in this journey All members are able to participate in the Act 2 Conversation from a position of understanding 			
- Basis of Union is translated into key languages including a simple English version - underway			
- UCA Commitments are widely available in multiple languages – Awaiting meetings of National Conferences			
- An online course introduces the UCA and these Commitments			
- Commitments are clearly communicated through our resources			
- Online conversations are used to enable people to participate and share their perspectives			
- Assembly is clear about how it demonstrates and embodies these Commitments			
- Act 2 Study series on Basis of union – studies available and underway			
- UAICC and Covenant Journey developed into online course – Delayed due to COVID travel bans. Will take place			
- Regular reporting on Act 2 to ASC - underway			
- Regular communications regarding Ecumenical and Other Faith relationships – SCG Circle progressing this work			
- Seeking Common Ground Circle operating effectively – New Advocate and Panel now appointed			

Strategy 2: Continue working on the practical implications of the Covenant

Remind the Church of the Covenant, encourage exploration of the practical consequences of the Covenant, stimulate further thinking regarding the practical and theological implications of the Preamble to the Constitution.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Covenant			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and deepen Covenant relationships • The Covenant is central to the life of UCA, and the journey involves the whole Church. • Covenant conversations in the Church involve First Peoples. • All UCA communities are included and feel included as part of the UCA journey of Reconciliation • First Nations theological writing is being championed 			
- Elevate First Nations voices in conversations and submissions – submissions to Govt inquiries continue			
- Assembly has a Covenant Action Plan in place			
- Key Covenant resources are available and being used -Acknowledgement complete, Covenant journey in progress			
- Preamble is translated into key languages including a simple English version – awaiting meeting of National Conferences Investigating a software option			
- Church engages in theology of the Preamble			
- Leaders including National Conference leaders participate in Walking on Country – delays due to pandemic			
- Local communities have connected with local First Nations Groups – Day of Mourning Resources and Worship Limited contact because of Pandemic			
- Invest in young people to engage in, learn and share in Covenant relationships			

Strategy 3: Address National issues in the public space for the Gospel

Respond to calls for submissions; facilitate regular review of “Our Vision for a Just Australia” and evaluate how Australia and the Uniting Church are performing against the benchmarks set

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Justice and Advocacy			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly has regularly reviewed and updated its “Vision for a Just Australia” • Assembly has advocated to in the public space on key themes within the Vision. • Assembly has identified, communicated and worked towards the Uniting Church’s commitments within these areas. 			
- Annual review of Vision document, reporting progress and recalibrating against benchmarks			
- Annual Review and progress report to ASC and communicated to Synods and wider stakeholders Revised Our Vision for a Just Australia July 2021 released			
- Assembly commitments from the Vision Document are explicitly identified and communicated			
- Climate Action Plan in place and being measured – report to Nov 2021 meeting			
- Assembly collaborates with Synods and Agencies, collates and reports shared work – strong collaboration in development of Revised Vision document, growing collaboration on Climate Change			
- Resources for engagement of members will be provided and promoted to enable their participation in advocacy and practical response – Climate resources, theological and practical now available			

Strategy 4: With Synods, implement the Safe Church Framework

Work collaboratively with Synods to implement the National Safe Church Framework, contribute to a National Curriculum using the UnitingLearning platform

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Safe Church			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly actively engaged in reviewing and implementing the Safe Church Framework • Assembly participating in the development, distribution and participation in appropriate training 			
- Staff engaged in appropriate training and practices (at March staff briefing)			
- Communications reinforce our commitment to being a safe church			
- Resource the UnitingLearning platform as a vehicle for national training – Online modules now available			

Strategic Direction 3: Innovation

Take risks, experiment and shape our church to respond to the needs of today and those of the future.

Strategy 1: Support networks and councils of the church exploring emerging expressions of the church

Support and communicate the work of networks exploring emerging expressions of the Church, and encourage sharing of models, resources and approaches between Synods and Presbyteries

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Emerging expressions of church			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly communications channels including Circles are actively sharing ideas and resources and stories about innovative mission and new ways to be the church. Circles are seen as an important place for people to participate. • Intentional connections with international groups offering leadership in this, including from non-European • Innovation is seen as part of our DNA / core-business in our thinking • We have a culture of scanning the horizon and permission-giving 			
- Encourage a culture of scanning the horizon and permission-giving			
- Engagement with and encouragement of Mission shaped ministry and Pioneering networks			
- Online platforms are sharing and resourcing, connecting and caring for people in ministries			
- Exchange learnings across different areas of the Church including our culturally diverse communities			
- Communicating good news stories across the Church			
- Church in the Digital Age Task Group work (Interim report to ASC Nov 2021 , Final report to ASC Nov 2022) Task Group formed and now meeting			

Strategy 2: Enable collaboration on Uniting Learning platform

Work with Synod Lay Educators, Safe Church stakeholders and other Synod and Agency groups to enable generous sharing of educational resources and develop creative online learning material.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Uniting Learning			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uniting Learning platform is being used by the majority of ministers and lay leaders for their core safe church awareness training. The platform is providing reminders and activity reports to relevant internal and external stakeholders regarding safe church The platform is being used for onboarding of staff and upskilling of staff The platform has a wide and growing range of discipleship modules 			
- Development of modules and communications (NSCU – modules available, plans for Covenant and Intercultural)			
- Intentional engagement with diverse stakeholders in development of modules and use of platform This has been slow as different stakeholders continue to discuss how best to use a shared platform			
- Drawing on expertise across the Church including Circles, Panels and Advocates as developers, deliverers and participants			

Strategy 3: Address the structures and regulatory framework of the whole church

Address the issue of whether the current structures and regulations of the Church are ‘fit for purpose’ in our context; specifically review how regulations have encouraged or have caused barriers to exploring and forming new forms of Church.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Regulatory Framework			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16th Assembly sets clear pathway for Act 2 UCA members are engaged in Act 2 Project is meeting its schedule and deliverables 			
- Regulation review project is underway – this has been included into Act2			
- Act 2 is underway (Consultations have taken place, some additional ones being planned)			

Strategy 4: Develop ways for future sustainability of Assembly

Identify alternative funding models and sources to enable the work of the Assembly to be supported in a sustainable manner

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Future Assembly Sustainability			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly has a consistent, sustainable income stream • Reserves are accumulating to enable financial resilience 			
- AFARC Future Sustainability Project and work of Assembly Investment Advisory Committee			
- Engaging with and encouraging people to invest in our projects (insurance, SLA engagement)			
- Technology is being used well - communication, promotion, using our platforms to engage with people and invite participation			
- Clear focus on our purpose - transforming communities			

Strategic Direction 4: Intergenerational

Welcome, equip and hold together the different generations, in the life, ministry, decision making and leadership of the church.

Strategy 1: Growing emerging generation faith/leadership

Contribute to the development of models and opportunities for growing the faith and leadership of members of emerging generations, with focus on the unique experiences of different generations

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Growing faith and leadership			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are strong examples of, and sharing of experiences and learnings regarding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different generations are supporting each other rather than separate silos • Key Church conversations and discussion/decision happen intergenerationally • Children and younger people are involved in Church processes, for example calling a minister. • All generations learn together - Church is a reflection of the community • All Circle Panels contain a proportion of members who are from younger generations • Discipling the Next Generations Circle operating effectively • Intentional mentoring programs in place for mutual learning between younger and older generations for leadership in the Church and wider community • Assembly activities would be in different spaces, not just inside offices 			
- Gathering and sharing stories of success			
- Internship model in place – COVID and it impacts have delayed this			
- Resources to facilitate the outcomes are in place and being used (several workshops undertaken, supporting President’s Roundtables / NYALC Online, Let’s Talanoa webinars) Connection with young adults continues			

Strategy 2: Develop an Intergenerational ministry framework

Develop a framework for intergenerational ministry, including a rationale for how and why different aspects of this work should be carried by particular Councils of the Church

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Intergenerational Ministry Framework			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intergenerational relationships are intentionally modelled across the life of the Church (Assembly leading with examples) • Clear and clearly understood definition(s) of intergenerational church and intergenerational ministry • Intergenerational church focus has a missional edge • Intentional connections with Schools have begun to develop 			
- Collaboratively develop a framework with Circles and other Synod and Presbytery stakeholders			
- Framework is launched at the 16th Assembly (Reconvened)			
- Different generations are consulted about “Our Vision for a Just Australia”, about our justice commitments <i>This happened to some extent through the drawing together of people across the Church</i>			
- Mentoring (and reverse mentoring) is developed – <i>delayed through COVID, resourcing may also restrict</i>			

Strategy 3: Support and take part in national youth events as negotiated with synods

Together with the President and emerging generation workers in Synods, plan, organise and deliver a National Young Adult Leaders Conference for 2021 and take part in any other Youth Events as Negotiated with Synods

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
National Youth Events			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly runs one bi-annual youth event • Assembly facilitates interactions between Synods to encourage other youth events 			
- Events planned and implemented – <i>NYALC in planning for 2022</i>			
- Support and participate in gatherings of Synod and Presbytery staff, including Panel members of DNG Circle			

Strategy 4: Partner with Congress in enabling work with emerging generations

Goals and outcomes for this area of work will be developed in consultation with Congress.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Partner with Congress in emerging generations work			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in National Youth Events • Assembly facilitates interactions between Synods to encourage other youth events 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events planned and implemented – <i>NYALC 2022 creates an opportunity</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connect Congress National Youth Committee into gatherings of Synod and Presbytery staff and DNG Circle <i>DNG and WTFSP Circles have new Advocates who have begun meeting together and with staff to further this</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Congress included in Internship Program – <i>COVID has delayed this program</i> 			

Strategic Direction 5: Intercultural

Learn from and enable diverse cultural groups within the church to flourish together

Strategy 1: Engage National Conferences

Attend and support National Conferences representing the wider UCA; enable two-way communication between the National Conferences and the Assembly.

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Engage National Conferences			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Conferences working closely together and with the Assembly • NCs are a resource for the wider Church • Assembly has a database of intercultural congregation and key leaders • Being a Multicultural Church Circle operating effectively 			
- Creating links between National Conferences, encouraging other sharing experiences and exchanges			
- Raise awareness of National Conferences as a resource for issues like Admission of Ministers or Conflict within Congregations – Has been incorporated into Guidance Document			
- Invite National Conferences to consider the particular part they play in enabling the future of the UCA as an intercultural church (Webinars) – Webinars are underway, NC invited into Act2 conversations			
- Support other ethnic groups in their understanding and participation in the UCA			
- Encourage National Conference members participation in Circles and the life of the Assembly			

Strategy 2: Develop a vision for intercultural ministry

Develop, test and deliver training and resources across the Church, establish training of trainers, share best practice, enable online components to be delivered by UnitingLearning

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Intercultural ministry			
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear understanding of what we mean by intercultural and being an intercultural Church. • Move from a multicultural to an intercultural Church • Church has theological resources that includes culturally diverse voices and perspectives • Resources and training in place to support all UCA groups to move to a more intercultural understanding and practice (meeting practice, worship, fellowship, community engagement) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Develop, test and deliver training and resources across the Church, establish training of trainers, share best practice, enable online components to be delivered by UnitingLearning – COVID has shifted focus to online materials which are being developed and implemented in this FY 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage and support diverse theological thinking and writing 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage theological education that truly reflects the contextual diversity of our people in the UCA Standards for Ministries are pursuing this in all MEB and College interactions – an ongoing conversation 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitate Basis of Union language conversations 			

Strategy 3: Collate and publicise language resources

Ensure that language resources are collected and easily available, develop new language resources, increase the accessibility of the Assembly website to CALD communities

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Language resources			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Major documents are available in multiple languages, in written, audio and video formats A process is in place to identify appropriate documents We have a pool of professional (paid) as well as volunteer translators Church meetings take into account diverse languages Assembly website and social media platforms reflect diverse languages 			
- Key languages are identified			
- Key documents identified and translated – we need to do more work on document priorities			
- A pool of translators in place and being resourced – we have a pool of volunteers but need to widen it			
- Meetings reflect sensitivity to language needs			
- Website and platforms reflect diverse languages – Implementing web site translator software – this is hoped to relieve the burden on translators to some extent			

Strategy 4: Support engagement of Congress with National Conferences

Work with Congress to support the ongoing engagement of National Conferences with First Peoples and the broader intercultural conversation within the UCA

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021- June 2022	July 2022- June 2023
Engagement with UAICC			
Expected outcomes			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CALD communities within the UCA have a strong understanding of the Covenant and the UAICC 			
- Resources in place (including Acknowledgement, Day of Mourning, Covenant Banners, Covenant Course)			
- Opportunities for engagement between UAICC and National Conferences are in place – COVID has delayed this			
- Walking on Country opportunities for diverse CALD communities – unlikely until late in this FY or next FY			
- Preamble is translated in different languages with accompanying resources to enable reflection Awaiting meeting with National Conferences – possible use of translation software.			