



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
**ASSEMBLY**  
Assembly Standing Committee

11-13 March 2022

**DOCUMENT 6**

<b>Title</b>	<b>General Secretary Report</b>
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: The Covenant and the Assembly Attachment B: Strategic Plan and Business Plan Reporting Attachment C: Review Attachment D: Redress Matters
Proposal/s	That the Assembly Standing Committee: 1. Receive the General Secretary Report  <b>Review</b> 2. Note the actions in the Review of Assembly Secretariat and Strategy for Current Triennium and advise the General Secretary on any further actions required  <b>Redress Matters</b> (see Attachment D for proposals relating to this report)
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# GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT

## Introduction

The ASC is meeting online once again for this meeting. While we had hoped it would be in person, it has been prudent once more to be flexible and safe following the Omicron outbreak over the summer. This flexibility has also been required in the planning for the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly reconvened meeting in May as we hope to meet in person while planning for a number of scenarios.

This is the first meeting of the ASC for 2022. Many staff and Executive team members were able to take a well-deserved break over the holiday period. This was important as many were weary after two years of uncertainty and having to adapt to new ways of working and technologies, sometimes with very short notice.

Important work on matters of significance for the Assembly has occurred since we met in November. The Review of Assembly Secretariat and Strategy for Current Triennium has been undertaken and is available at **Attachment C**. Assembly staff and the National Director from UCA Redress Ltd met with the General Secretary and staff from the Northern Synod to discuss responsibility for redress and civil claims relating to the Croker Island Mission. The report of this meeting and associated proposals is at **Attachment D**.

Following the release of the Assembly Covenant Action Plan in 2021, an overview of how the Assembly lives out the Covenant in its life and work was developed and is at **Attachment A**.

This meeting of the ASC will consider work that will be taken to the 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly reconvened meeting by the ASC. These reports and proposed recommendations will be discussed throughout the weekend.

The Business Plan of the Assembly Strategic Plan Report has been amended following suggestions from the ASC at its November 2021 meeting and is available at **Attachment B** of this report.

## COVID19

Moving towards the end of 2021, there was a sense of optimism and the possibility of eased restrictions to do with the pandemic. However, the Omicron outbreak, with soaring cases and high number of people in hospital brought the uncertainty back to cities and rural and remote communities across the country. Assembly offices reviewed their opening for 2022, guidelines for staff for return to workplaces were reviewed as were the Assembly Travel Guidelines.

2022 will once more require vigilance and flexibility, as well as attention to the safety and wellbeing of staff.

## Religious Discrimination Bill 2021 – working together for advocacy

On 22 November 2017, following the Federal Government legislation into same gender marriage, then Prime Minister, the Hon Malcolm Turnbull, announced a review into religious freedom in Australia. The review was conducted by an Expert Panel, chaired by the Hon Philip Ruddock. The review was announced in response to proposals for legislative reform to protect freedom of religion during the debate on marriage equality, recognising that any legislative reforms to protect freedom of religion should be undertaken carefully to avoid the risk of unintended consequences. The terms of reference for the review required the Expert Panel to examine and report on whether Australian law (Commonwealth, state, territory) adequately protects the human right to freedom of religion. In doing so, the Expert Panel was required to consider the intersections between the enjoyment of the right to freedom of religion and other human rights.

The Assembly made a submission to the Inquiry in January 2018. We advocated largely on the basis of previous Assembly decisions, that our preference was for a comprehensive Human Rights Act and that our concern was not for ourselves but for people from minority religions.

The Expert Panel's final report was provided to the Prime Minister on 18 May 2018. Whilst noting that religious discrimination is not a major issue in Australia, the Religious Freedom Review concluded that there is an opportunity to further protect, and better promote, the right to freedom of religion under Australian law and in the public sphere.

The first draft, Religious Discrimination Bill 2019, came out in 2019 and the Assembly made a submission to it in October 2019. We reiterated our position from the previous review and expressed our concerns with the Bill. In identifying these concerns the Assembly consulted with Uniting Network and UnitingCare Australia. Synod-based UCA-Schools liaison staff were also consulted.

The Ex-President was invited to a number of church leader and faith leader conversations about the legislation with both the government and opposition. Dr Palmer also consulted with the Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

Subsequently the government released a second draft in late 2019. The Assembly made a submission that was substantially similar to our first in January 2020, addressing the changes made, but again underlining our dissatisfaction with the Bill. Consultation with the same groups was undertaken. Some media picked up the UCA position but otherwise there was little government response.

In November 2021 the government introduced the third and final draft, Religious Discrimination Bill 2021. The government rushed the Bill through the lower house and then sent it to two separate inquiries, both of which invited submissions.

President Sharon Hollis and staff again consulted with UnitingCare Australia, Uniting Network and with Public Interest Advocacy Centre.

The Assembly made a submission to both inquiries and the President and the National Director of UnitingCare Australia appeared before both of them during the public hearings.

The UCA viewpoint received significant media attention through social media in particular but also mainstream media. (See Media Release at **Attachment B1**)

Prior to the vote we emailed all Members of Parliament reiterating our position against the Bill. We have received around 8 replies from Parliamentarians, two before the vote and others subsequent to the vote that was taken.

On several occasions, most recently just before the vote in Parliament, the President issued a pastoral statement in support of LGBTIQ people, noting the pain and concern the ongoing political and media debates were causing them.

The government's decision to shelve the Bill is a positive outcome. The Assembly believes any future attempt at such a Bill needs to start afresh and particularly to consult widely with community groups who are vulnerable.

Ideally, a comprehensive Human Rights Act will be considered instead. The Assembly continues to advocate for that outcome.

## **ASSEMBLY UNITS AND AGENCIES**

*(UnitingCare Australia is reporting to the ASC. See Document*

### **Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU)**

(Highlights since November 2021 meeting)

#### **Staff**

- Staff have continued to work from home through this period.

#### **National Conferences (NC)**

- Provided ongoing pastoral support to NC leaders through COVID.
- Participated in signing of Partnership Agreement with the United Methodist Church in the Philippines and assisting connection with Filipino NC.

#### **Advocacy**

- Submissions were made to two government Inquiries into the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021. Supporting the President and Claerwen Little in their appearances before the Inquiries. Ongoing statements and communication with MPs have been made on this issue.
- Advocacy has been undertaken in regard to the Australian Government's proposed intake of refugees from Afghanistan.
- Additional advocacy aimed at ending mandatory detention (aligned with and the subsequent to the Australian Open tennis)
- A brief Federal Election Resource will be finalised, incorporating input from UAICC, UnitingCare Australia, UnitingWorld and Synod staff.

#### **Climate Change**

- Additional educational and theological resources are being developed.
- Carbon footprint calculations from the Assembly Secretariat and Agencies continue to be collated quarterly.

#### **Intercultural / Intergenerational**

- Staff have spent time adapting resources to be available in the online learning platform UnitingLearning. This continues.

#### **National Young Adults Leaders Conference (NYALC)**

- Staff have begun conversations with the President about running a NYALC, now likely in 2023.
- Involvement and conversation with Children and Family, Youth and Young Adult leaders and workers, along with DNG Circle is planned to continue to work towards our Strategic Plan (SD4)

#### **Circles**

- Staff have facilitated meetings of Advocates and all the Panels. These continue the focus on key calendar events through 2022, the Assembly Strategic Plan, Act2 and the communications strategies of Circles.

#### **Ecumenical and Interfaith**

- Staff continue plans for a Iftar Dinner with Muslim leaders and the Muslim community in 2022.
- Staff continue to support the Executive Council of Australian Jewry – UCA Dialogue and involving UCA members in the Dialogue conversations.

#### **Act2**

- Staff have participated in leading Act2 Studies on the Basis of Union.
- Staff participated and facilitated sessions in a Basis of Union Conference relating to translation and reading the Basis in other languages.

## **UnitingWorld**

Updates from UnitingWorld:

- Most staff managed to get a break over the summer, but the break itself was disrupted by COVID so not quite as refreshing as it should have been
- We had great support from the UCA for the Everything in Common campaign over Christmas
- We've launched an appeal for Tonga (volcano/tsunami) and are in the middle of supporting their response.
- After two years of being COVID free - the Pacific is now struggling with cases in Tonga, Solomon Islands and Kiribati.
- Our annual staff retreat had to go online because of COVID – we've just finished the first week – really good time of reconnecting and looking at the big picture – but staff are tired.
- Warren Tapp has resigned from the Board for health reasons.

## **Frontier Services**

### **Redress Matters**

Currently we have no outstanding Redress matters with two matters settled recently, one through the National Redress Scheme. The last one was a civil matter which we were covered for under the insurance policy which we understand will be the last matter covered under this insurance for Frontier Services. The civil matter was quite unique as the restoration session was held face to face prior to settlement negotiations. The positive outcome of this matter was that all parties were happy with the final outcome.

### **Human Resources**

We have had a number of changes in the Frontier Services team which means we had issues getting people to work on our day-to-day operations. There was a significant amount of time being spent training new staff, whilst also working remotely due to COVID19. There were also challenges hiring staff which can be attributed to a nationwide skills shortage. However, we are hopeful that the new recruitments will fulfill the needs we have currently.

Montarna Coen started as our Volunteer Program Coordinator and has settled into her new role extremely well. Miriam Brown was hired into the new role of Operations Manager.

We have recently hired a National Marketing Manager, Justin Ackland who starts with Frontier Services on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. Justin has experience working in the NFP space and comes to us with a sound background and thirst to learn.

Currently we have one open role, Events Coordinator that is in the process of being recruited for.

We have had people move into internal promotions this quarter; Michelle McLeod the National Programs Manager moved into the National Fundraising Managers role, which she will be really suited to due to her program management experience. Josh also shifted from being our Event Coordinator into the National Programs Manager role, which with his experience in tour coordination should be something he learns and thrives in. Farooq Umar moved from temporary contractor to full time Database Administrator.

### **Media PR**

Frontier Services has been featured significantly in the media this quarter with the help of Soda Communications and several spots on Sky News by the National Director.

We have been featured in more than a dozen publications which include television, print, radio and podcasts Australia wide. These features have been centered on our core purpose but have also highlighted the Great Outback BBQ campaign to try and raise funds through physical and virtual events.

### **Bush Chaplains**

We are continuing to grow the number of Frontier Services Bush Chaplains. We had in the Strategic Plan and budget for this year to place 22 Bush Chaplains. We are however dependent on the Synods and Presbyteries to complete the placements based on what they have asked for funding to do. Currently at the time of writing we have agreed to fund 7 vacant roles.

Recently we have added a number of new Bush Chaplains, Veronica Wangaratta, Prom Country Remote Area VIC, Peter Harvey, Gippsland Remote Area VIC, and Marian Bissett, High Country Remote Area VIC, John Tompkins, Gascoyne Remote Area WA.

Recruitment is unsure for some of the other placements in NT and WA. Tasmania has been placed on hold for now. NSW has a vacant position as well.

We have been advised of the retirement of Rowena Harris, High Country VIC and David Ellis, McKay QLD. David's closure of ministry was celebrated on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January 2022 and we farewelled Rowena virtually due to the travel restrictions in place in December 2021. Recruitment for a replacement for David Ellis was quite quick and we will be welcoming Pastor Michael Chapman on board on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February in Cloncurry which I will be attending in person.

### COVID19

COVID still continues to provide challenges as we navigate different states and territories regarding borders and vaccination requirements. As we work alongside the various Synods and Presbyteries around the country we are trying to be sensitive and aware as they navigate this space too and what it means for Frontier Services Bush Chaplains. As each Synod looks at the vaccination policies so too is Frontier Services. We currently have a draft policy for vaccination as a condition of employment for staff and volunteers as agreed in the December Board meeting. This is in line with Australian Health Regulations, as we have a team of staff who travel to rural and remote communities. We know we have a very vulnerable client group so feel that we need to take responsible steps to ensure their safety. There could be exceptions applied for that would be reviewed by a panel. This will be finalized at our March Board meeting.

We have had one Bush Chaplain stood down due to being unvaccinated and believe that there will be some more to come. We have had news that there could be other Bush Chaplains that could follow a similar path.

### Finance Update

At the end of December we are currently sitting at an income of \$2.85 million against an income budget of \$2.56 million so approximately \$300K ahead of budget. We also have an underspend of \$1.91 million against a budget of \$2.30million, all of our variances are favorable. So financially we are performing well. These savings are coming about because we haven't had the staffing levels required and our regular giving program hasn't been performing at the previous levels. So the short term financial wins will come at a cost in terms of growth in revenue.

	Actual (million)	Budget (million)	Variance
Income	\$2.852	\$2.557	\$295,300
Expense	\$1.911	\$2.994	\$388,400
Net	\$941,400	\$257,700	\$683,700

### Assembly Communications Unit

From September 2021, the Assembly Communications team adopted a Communications Strategic Framework to guide its work in alignment with the priorities and current strategic plan of the Assembly.

Five strategic priorities were identified:

- Every UCA member has an Assembly connection, engages with and values 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
- Greater brand awareness

Some insights found in the process of developing the framework:

- Our largest audience is on Facebook. We have 12k people/congregations on Facebook who have liked our page. This is largely an internal audience (people within the UCA). We believe there is potential to grow more active engagement on both Facebook and to grow our presence on Instagram. One example of how we have sought to do this is with our International Women's Day campaign, promoted on all our social channels. We asked people to provide names of inspiring women in the UCA. We received a fantastic response with over 70 names submitted representing women with a wide diversity of ages, ministries and locations.  
<https://www.facebook.com/UnitingChurchAu/posts/6901301649944111>
- There is an opportunity to be more strategic in how we engage with Twitter. Twitter provides an opportunity to enhance the UCA voice in public conversations, to lead and respond to key issues. Our tweets on the Religious Discrimination Bill were a good example of this. In February, we had 326K impressions, 444 mentions and 261 new followers.  
<https://twitter.com/UnitingChurchAu/status/1490969573616926720>
- The Assembly Circles of Interest provide an opportunity for members of the UCA to connect with the work of the Assembly, and to provide input into our communications. We have worked with the Circles to produce the Assembly Circles Advent Calendar <https://uniting.church/days-of-advent-2021/> and are currently working on a Circles Lenten Bible Study called Go Deeper.
- We are working on building our subscriber list to our weekly email National Update which is steadily growing. However, we also recognise the need to diversify the platforms where people can engage with the Assembly. One opportunity to do this has been through the President's Podcast: *Dwelling*. After crowdsourcing a name for the podcast (via our Facebook page), the audience is growing (229 total listens). Three episodes have been released with an Act2 theme. <https://anchor.fm/dwelling>
- We recognise there is an untapped audience within the UCA who do not connect with the Assembly. There is potential to build greater links with Presbyteries and Congregations, as well as other parts of the Church as part of our communications. We are looking for opportunities to invite Congregations and Presbyteries to share their stories.

The Assembly, its staff and its operations, hold the Covenant to be central to everything it does. The Covenanting Statement, the amended Preamble to the Constitution and the significant resolutions made by triennial Assemblies come together to give a foundation to the identity of the Uniting Church, and therefore the Assembly.

This report sets out how the Covenant is lived out in the Assembly.

### Organisational

Assembly Covenant Action Plan 2021-2024 was developed by the Assembly Consultant Covenanting, Stuart McMillan as a priority of his time in the role. It serves to guide our commitments and operations. (see <https://tinyurl.com/y8fw2lpf>)

- The Assembly Secretariat makes an annual contribution out of its budget of \$300 000 to UAICC National Executive and its national work.
- As there is no recognised overarching structure for UAICC (like a Council of the Uniting Church), UAICC National staff are Assembly employees/placements.
- The Assembly Services Unit undertakes all financial, HR and IT management and services for UAICC National as part of the SLA
- Other support is provided to UAICC National as required
- When developing the Assembly Strategic Plan 2020-2023, key initiatives with UAICC were included
- An Acknowledgement of Country is given at all meetings in accordance with the Assembly Acknowledgement of Country resource
- An introduction to the Covenant has recently been included as part of staff induction
- Assembly Resourcing Unit staff are connecting National Conferences to Congress through an ongoing process, building relationships and understanding

### Governance

- UAICC has two ex-officio members on the Assembly Standing Committee. This does not preclude the election of other UAICC members to the Standing Committee. The current Standing Committee also has two elected UAICC members.
- Assembly Agency Boards seek to have UAICC members or First Peoples as members

### Communications

- UAICC National Executive through the UAICC National Chairperson and UCA President provide a voice for major internal UCA announcements
- The Assembly Comms team provide comms and website support to UAICC
- Services of worship are supported and livestreamed by the Assembly Comms Team – eg a livestreamed worship service during COVID-19 and Day of Mourning services

### Workplaces

- Acknowledgement of Country is visible on walls/banners at the entrance to all Assembly workplaces
- The Board Room in the Assembly's Sydney office is named the Charles Harris Room
- The Covenant painting hangs in the Assembly Sydney office
- The Gadigal Mudung Banarang painting by Gadigal artist Kate Konstantine hangs in the Charles Harris Room. This painting was commissioned for the Assembly office to recognise the connection of the office to Gadigal land.

### Resources developed by/supported by the Assembly for Uniting Church

- *Walking Together as First and Second Peoples* Assembly Circle of Interest
- Acknowledgement of Country resource including in multiple languages
- Day of Mourning annual liturgies and resources



- Covenant banner developed and artwork made available to the UCA congregations, synods, presbyteries, agencies and groups
- Covenant page as part of Assembly website, <https://uniting.church/covenanting/>

### **Advocacy on issues of concern for First Nations Australians**

- The President and the Interim Chair, UAICC, provide joint statements on matters of justice
- Assembly Resourcing Unit staff and members of UAICC have worked together on submissions to government
- Uniting First Nations Network (see below) have also initiated advocacy to government drawing together UAICC and UnitingCare Australia and its member agencies.

### **Assembly Agencies**

#### ***UnitingCare Australia***

UnitingCare Australia is committed to the Church's Covenant with the UAICC which articulates "desire to work in solidarity with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress" to work towards "national policy changes" and "build relationships which respect self-determination". The UnitingCare Australia Board has demonstrated this commitment by setting Justice for First Peoples as one of the organisations four Strategic Priority areas. Progressing this priority, UnitingCare Australia has held two Gatherings of First Peoples from across the Church and its service network to build relationships and focus on advocacy priorities. From this an active First Peoples Working group was formed to project the work and UnitingCare Australia have appointed Sam Gledhill, a proud Murri woman from North Queensland as its Senior Advisor on this priority area. The First Peoples Working Group is actively contributing to the advocacy activities of UnitingCare Australia, ensuring a First Peoples lens across our work and giving life to our Commitment to the Covenant.

#### ***UnitingWorld***

Our objective is to bring UAICC members into relationships with our partners as much as we can. This has occurred in the following ways:

- In the past, when partners have come out for triennial Assemblies, we've ensured that they have time and space to meet with UAICC leaders and have dialogue, and organised exposure visits to local indigenous sites etc.
- UAICC members participating in Pacific Council of Churches leadership events and other partner regional events. We've recently worked hard to get UAICC representation on the Pacific Church Partnership Advisory Network set up by DFAT. We've brought them into Micah events.
- We will continue to try and get UAICC members to connect with our partners whenever we can.
- In the last round of Board recruitment, we tried very hard to find an indigenous person to go on the Board but didn't succeed. We'll be trying again next time.

### **Frontier Services**

#### **Bush Chaplaincy**

We have a high level of engagement with our Bush Chaplains in working towards reconciliation and connecting with our First Nations people. All Frontier Services Bush Chaplains, no matter what their location around our vast Country, interact and strive to bridge the gap between First and Second Nation people. Whether it's Bush Chaplain Peter Wait conducting pastoral visits to isolated people in Tennant Creek, or Bush Chaplain Mitch Fiwolski in Meekatharra organizing meetings between indigenous elders and local authorities to try and strategize ways to best handle issues at hand in his community, they are united in the Covenant's goal of reconciliation.

Frontier Services currently has an indigenous Bush Chaplain, Julia Lennon working in Oodnadatta in South Australia. Growing up in and around the Oodnadatta community, Julia is our first ever female Aboriginal Bush Chaplain. She is in her second year of placement and has been working tirelessly to bring First and Second Peoples together. Julia ministry area includes the APY Lands (Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara) that are home to over 2,300 First Nation People, the Traditional Owners of this land. This region faces some of the highest levels of intergenerational disadvantage in Australia including extremely high rates of unemployment, domestic violence, and complex trauma resulting from The Stolen Generation, in addition to family breakdown, poverty and chronic health problems. Frontier

Services placed a Bush Chaplain there to help aid in reconciliation, provide healing and to be a voice for those in Oodnadatta.

Based at Jabiru, in the heart of the Kakadu National Park, Bush Chaplain, Lindsay Parkhill and his wife Louise, minister to the First Peoples of Arnhem Land providing advocacy to Government agencies on their behalf. Lindsay has a love of languages and has taught himself nine of the local indigenous languages allowing him to walk alongside First Nations people helping them to translate documents and navigate the complex applications for support services.

Bush Chaplain, Lindsay Ginn has been supporting people across Kalgoorlie, Laverton, Coolgardie, Menzies and Esperance in the Goldfields Remote Area. He is a welcome presence, providing practical and pastoral care as well as spiritual guidance. Lindsay has worked closely with the local schools that have a high population of indigenous students. In his time in his role he has turned attendance around with the power of music.

### **Board Members & Staff**

It is Frontier Services' desire to work in solidarity with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and for that reason we have inducted two members of Congress onto our board.

- Aunty Dianne Torrens, has been on the Frontier Services board for close to three terms.
- Rev. Mark Kickett was appointed as a full Board Member after some time as Aunty Dianne's support person.

### **Education**

To continue the journey towards reconciliation Frontier Services continually participates in various means of education. Examples of this are:

- Attending talks with First Nations UCA members. Rev. Mark Kickett attended the Bush Chaplains conference in 2021 to speak to all our Chaplains on how to connect with First Nations people in their remote areas.
- Marking significant days, NAIDOC Week, Reconciliation Day with staff and Frontier Services supporters.
- Participating in Walking on Country and providing the opportunity for staff, Board members and volunteers to attend.

### **Programs**

Our Parkin-Sturt Remote Area Bush Chaplain, Sunny led a group of 17 volunteers on a group trip to Copley in South Australia to assist with breaking barriers and building bridges. The trip was a result of Sunny's work with a local Aboriginal family and community. In connecting with the community who live in a remote region more than 600km from Adelaide, he discovered that they had a vision to restore and save Adnyamathanha local country. In recent years, the traditional lands have been mismanaged and the local community was looking for a way to restore it and generate a sustainable income while respecting the cultural significance of the place. Sunny not only coordinated this trip of volunteers but provided an experience and connection all won't forget.

Later in 2022, there is another group trip planned for volunteers to make the trip to Oodnadatta to work with the people in Bush Chaplain, Julia Lennon's Remote Area and provide much needed practical support.

Individually, we have many volunteers who roll up their sleeves and volunteer with Outback Links. Recently we have had one gentleman spend over 300 hours assisting an indigenous community in far North Queensland, the Wujal Wujal community. He has single handedly helped build trust and rapport between community leaders, justice groups, medical staff and the general community by prioritizing and addressing the needs of all involved.

## Assembly Business Plan July 2020 – June 2023

## ATTACHMENT B

Updated as at March 2022

## 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	Planned
Completed Activity	Completed
On Track	On Track
Some delay / concern	Some Delay
Major delay/concern	Major Delay

## An example:

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

## Strategic Direction 1: Respond to the Church

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

#### SD1.S1: 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.

#### SD1 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD1.S2 Assembly Decisions</b>					
<b>SD1.S2.1 Continuing Witness Task Group</b>					
<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b> 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.</p> <p>- The Task Group will bring a report to March 2022 to go to the Reconvened Assembly</p>	On Track	On Track	On Track	Planned	Planned
<b>SD1.S2.2 Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group</b>					
<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b> 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.</p> <p>- The Task Group will report to March 2022 leading to a process of consultation across the UCA</p>	Some Delay	On Track	On Track	Planned	Planned

Activities	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021-June 2022			July 2022- June 2023
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD1.S2.3 Climate Action Plan</b>					
<p><b>Expected Outcomes</b> 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;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The Climate Action Plan is in place and being implemented. Management will report against the Plan annually.</b></li> </ul>	Completed  (Action Plan in place)	On Track	On Track		

	July 2020- June 2021	July 2021-June 2022			July 2022- June 2023
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD1.S2 ASC Decisions</b>					
<b>SD1.S2.4 Act 2</b>					
<p><b>Expected outcomes</b> Resource the Assembly to address the significant challenges and opportunities facing the Uniting Church into the future including identity, sustainability and structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Report to March 2022 leading into Reconvened Assembly</b></li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
<b>SD1.S2.5 Church in the Digital Age</b>					
<p><b>Expected outcomes</b> To consider the theological implications of the Church in the digital age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Task Group will report to Nov 2022</b></li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
<b>SD1.S2.6 Chaplaincy</b>					
<p><b>Expected outcomes</b> 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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Final report to July 2022</b></li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

**SD1 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD1.S3 Standards for Ministries</b>					
<b>Expected Outcomes</b> 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					
Conduct Consultations in accordance with schedule - <b>Western Australia Report coming to July 2022</b>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
Other areas of focus - <b>As per Mandate, reporting to ASC as required. Currently revisiting Phase 4 Standards</b>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

#### SD1 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD1.S4 Circles of Interest</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b> 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. - <b>Advocates and Panels appointed and orientated</b> - <b>Identification of some areas of focus has taken place</b>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

## 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

### SD2 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD2.S1 Telling the UCA Story</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All Assembly communications contributing to a wider awareness of the identity, values, context and make-up of the UCA.</li> <li>UCA communities are encouraged to understand our foundational values and commitments.</li> <li>UCA communities know the UAICC UCA journey and the significant markers in this journey</li> <li>All members are able to participate in the Act 2 Conversation from a position of understanding</li> </ul>					
Basis of Union is more widely known and understood <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Translated into key languages completed</li> <li>- Translated into Plain English has been considered</li> <li>- Act2 Study series available, have been offered and undertaken</li> </ul>	Completed				
UCA Commitments are widely available <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible translation awaiting meetings of National Conferences</li> <li>- An online course introducing the UCA</li> </ul>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay	Planned
UAICC and Covenant Journey developed into online course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Delayed</li> </ul>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay	Planned
Regular communications regarding Ecumenical and Other Faith relationships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seeking Common Ground Circle and Assembly Comms have a calendar in place</li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track	On Track	

**SD2 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD2.S2 Covenant</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and deepen Covenant relationships</li> <li>• The Covenant is central to the life of UCA, and the journey involves the whole Church.</li> <li>• Covenant conversations in the Church involve First Peoples.</li> <li>• All UCA communities are included and feel included as part of the UCA journey of Reconciliation</li> <li>• First Nations theological writing is being championed</li> </ul>					
Elevate First Nations voices in conversations and submissions – - Election Resources being prepared	On Track	On Track	On Track		
Assembly has a Covenant Action Plan in place - Completed – report the Covenant and the Assembly to March ASC 2022	Completed				
Key Covenant resources are available and being used across the UCA - Planning for Preamble to be translated into key languages for National Conferences - Planning for leaders including National Conference leaders participate in Walking on Country delayed					Planned



### SD2 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD2.S3 Justice and Advocacy</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembly has regularly reviewed and updated its “Vision for a Just Australia”</li> <li>• Assembly has advocated to in the public space on key themes within the Vision.</li> <li>• Assembly has identified, communicated and worked towards the Uniting Church’s commitments within these areas.</li> </ul>					
Our Vision for a Just Australia Document created, updated and used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Annual review of Vision document and reporting progress</li> <li>- Resources for members are provided and promoted – Continuing development of Climate resources, Election resources being developed</li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
Assembly advocacy in the public space in line with Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- COP26, Religious Discrimination, Refugees in detention and Afghan Refugee intake recently</li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

### SD2 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD2.S4 Safe Church</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembly actively engaged in implementing the Safe Church Framework</li> <li>• Assembly participating in the development, distribution and participation in appropriate training               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Staff engaged in appropriate training and practices (annual orientation at staff briefings)</li> <li>- Resource the UnitingLearning platform as a vehicle for national training</li> <li>- Communications reinforce our commitment to being a safe church</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

## Strategic Direction 3: Innovation

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

### SD3 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD3.S1 Emerging expressions of church</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Intentional connections with international groups offering leadership in this, including from non-European</li> <li>• Innovation is seen as part of our DNA / core-business in our thinking</li> <li>• We have a culture of scanning the horizon and permission-giving</li> </ul>					
Support and communicate examples of emerging expressions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good engagement with and encouragement of Mission shaped ministry and Pioneering networks</li> <li>- Circles are sharing and resourcing, connecting and caring for people in ministries</li> <li>- Ongoing communication of good news stories</li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
Church in the Digital Age Task Group work - <i>Final report to ASC Nov 2022</i>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

### SD3 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD3.S2 Uniting Learning</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uniting Learning platform is being used by the majority of ministers and lay leaders for their core safe church awareness training.</li> <li>The platform is providing reminders and activity reports to relevant internal and external stakeholders regarding safe church</li> <li>The platform is being used for onboarding of staff and upskilling of staff</li> <li>The platform has a wide and growing range of discipleship modules</li> </ul>					
- Development of modules and communications (NSCU – modules available, plans for Covenant and Intercultural)	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- 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. <b>There is growing uptake by several Synods</b>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
- Drawing on expertise across the Church including Circles, Panels and Advocates as developers, deliverers and participants	On Track	On Track	On Track		

### SD3 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD3.S3 Regulatory Framework</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16<sup>th</sup> Assembly sets clear pathway for Act 2</li> <li>• UCA members are engaged in Act 2</li> <li>• Project is meeting its schedule and deliverables                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>The Regulation Review project has been included into Act2 for the remainder of this triennium</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>					

### SD3 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD3.S4 Future Assembly Sustainability</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembly has a consistent, sustainable income stream</li> <li>• Reserves are accumulating to enable financial resilience                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>AFARC Future Sustainability Project</b></li> <li>- <b>Technology is being used well to engage with people and invite participation</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	On Track	On Track	On Track		

## Strategic Direction 4: Intergenerational

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

### SD4 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD4.S1 Growing faith and leadership</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are strong examples of, and sharing of experiences and learnings regarding               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Different generations are supporting each other rather than separate silos</li> <li>➤ Key Church conversations and discussion/decision happen intergenerationally</li> <li>➤ Children and younger people are involved in Church processes, for example calling a minister.</li> <li>➤ All generations learn together - Church is a reflection of the community</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All Circle Panels contain a proportion of members who are from younger generations</li> <li>• Discipling the Next Generations Circle operating effectively</li> <li>• Intentional mentoring programs in place for mutual learning between younger and older generations for leadership in the Church and wider community</li> <li>• Assembly activities would be in different spaces, not just inside offices</li> </ul>					
- Gathering and sharing stories of success	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Internship model in place – COVID and it impacts continue to delay	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
- 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 and Church leaders in this area continues	On Track	On Track	On Track		

## SD4 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD4.S2 Intergenerational Ministry Framework</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergenerational relationships are intentionally modelled across the life of the Church (Assembly leading with examples)</li> <li>• Clear and clearly understood definition(s) of intergenerational church and intergenerational ministry</li> <li>• Intergenerational church focus has a missional edge</li> <li>• Intentional connections with Schools have begun to develop</li> </ul>					
- Collaboratively develop a framework with Circles and other Synod and Presbytery stakeholders <i>Conversations with a range of stakeholders including DNG Circle have begun</i>	Some Delay	Some Delay	On Track		
- Framework is launched at the 16th Assembly (Reconvened) <i>This has been deferred to later time to allow for broader discussion and potential alignment with Act2 – likely 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly</i>			Some Delay		Planned
- Different generations are consulted about “Our Vision for a Just Australia”, about our justice commitments This happened to some extent through the drawing together of people across the Church	Completed				
- Mentoring (and reverse mentoring) is developed – <i>delayed through COVID, available Assembly resourcing may also restrict</i>		Some Delay	Some Delay		

### SD4 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD4.S3 National Youth Events</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assembly runs one bi-annual youth event</li> <li>• Assembly facilitates interactions between Synods to encourage other youth events                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Events planned and implemented - <b>NYALC in planning for 2023</b></li> <li>- Support and participate in gatherings of Synod and Presbytery staff, including Panel members of DNG Circle</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					

### SD4 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD4 S4 Partner with Congress in emerging generations work</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in National Youth Events</li> <li>• Assembly facilitates interactions between Synods to encourage other youth events                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engagement in events (as in SD4.S3)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Connect Congress National Youth Committee into gatherings of Synod and Presbytery staff and DNG Circle</li> <li>- <b>DNG and WTFSP Circles have new Advocates who have begun meeting together and with staff to further this</b></li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Congress included in Internship Program – <b>The Internship Program has been delayed</b></li> </ul>					

## Strategic Direction 5: Intercultural

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

### SD5 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD5.S1 Engage National Conferences</b>					
<b><i>Expected outcomes</i></b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Conferences working closely together and with the Assembly</li> <li>NCs are a resource for the wider Church</li> <li>Assembly has a database of intercultural congregation and key leaders</li> <li>Being a Multicultural Church Circle operating effectively</li> </ul>					
- Creating links between National Conferences, encouraging other sharing experiences and exchanges <i>Ongoing work including through BMC Circle. Additional online events in planning.</i>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Raise awareness of National Conferences as a resource for issues like Admission of Ministers or Conflict within Congregations – Has been incorporated into Guidance Document	Completed				
- Invite National Conferences to consider the particular part they play in enabling the future of the UCA as an intercultural church (Webinars) – <i>Webinars continue, NCs have participated into Act2 conversations and ongoing ACT2</i>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Support minority ethnic groups in their understanding and participation in the UCA <i>Basis of Union conversations, BMC planned webinars on key issues, general support for NCs</i>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Encourage National Conference members participation in Circles and the life of the Assembly <i>Intentional connection into BMC, WTFSP, DNG and SCG Circles has, and continues to happen</i>	On Track	On Track	On Track		



## SD5 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD5.S2 Intercultural ministry</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear understanding of what we mean by intercultural and being an intercultural Church.</li> <li>• Move from a multicultural to an intercultural Church</li> <li>• Church has theological resources that includes culturally diverse voices and perspectives</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>					
- 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 – <b>COVID has shifted focus to online materials which are being developed and implemented in this FY</b>	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Encourage and support diverse theological thinking and writing - <b>Through Circles this is happening to some extent</b>		On Track	On Track		
- Encourage theological education that truly reflects the contextual diversity of our people in the UCA - <b>Standards for Ministries are pursuing this in all MEB and College interactions – an ongoing conversation</b>		On Track	On Track		
- Facilitate Basis of Union language conversations	Completed	Completed			

### SD5 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD5 S3 Language resources</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Major documents are available in multiple languages, in written, audio and video formats</li> <li>• A process is in place to identify appropriate documents</li> <li>• We have a pool of professional (paid) as well as volunteer translators</li> <li>• Church meetings take into account diverse languages</li> <li>• Assembly website and social media platforms reflect diverse languages</li> </ul>					
- Key languages are identified	Completed				
- Key documents identified and translated – this has happened to some extent - National Conferences not meeting and general COVID context means this is delayed Translation software is still being trialled	On Track	Some Delay	Some Delay		
- A pool of translators in place and being resourced – Translation software is being trialled	On Track	On Track	On Track		
- Website and platforms reflect diverse languages – After initial website refresh. - Translation software is hoped to relieve the burden on translators to some extent	On Track	Some Delay	Some Delay		

### SD5 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
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
<b>SD5.S4 Engagement with UAICC</b>					
<b>Expected outcomes</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CALD communities within the UCA have a strong understanding of the Covenant and the UAICC</li> </ul>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resources in place (including Acknowledgement, Day of Mourning, Covenant Banners, Covenant Course)</li> </ul>	Completed				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Opportunities for engagement between UAICC and National Conferences are in place – <b>Several engagements have happened but COVID has delayed this</b></li> </ul>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Walking on Country opportunities for diverse CALD communities – <b>likely in next FY</b></li> </ul>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preamble is translated in different languages with accompanying resources to enable reflection <b>Awaiting meeting with National Conferences – possible use of translation software.</b></li> </ul>	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		

## MEDIA RELEASE

### Don't rush the Religious Discrimination Bill

President of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Sharon Hollis has urged Federal Parliamentarians not to rush the *Religious Discrimination Bill 2021* through the Senate this week.

This comes as two reports from Parliamentary Inquiries on the *Religious Discrimination Bill 2021* were released last Friday, both of which supported the passage of the Bill with the addition of only minor and technical amendments.

Rev Hollis expressed her disappointment at the findings, after a Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) Assembly submission to the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021 expressed concern that the Bill fails to strike the correct balance between people's rights, protections and responsibilities.

"We have appreciated the opportunity to make submissions and to appear before both Inquiries," said Rev Hollis. "However, the reports do not address our concerns that some provisions in the Bill could embolden discrimination in the wider community and give implicit permission for discriminatory or demeaning statements and actions."

"Rather than building harmony and tolerance it could have a corrosive and divisive effect."

"We urge all Federal Members to not react in haste to the short time frame that has been given to this third and final draft's passage through both Houses, but take the time that is needed to fully examine the issues and reach out to community groups who have expressed genuine concerns."

The Uniting Church Assembly has resisted the idea that its members are the subject of discrimination on religious grounds, maintaining that its primary concern is for others who are or may become vulnerable to discrimination under the legislation.

In its submission and appearances, the Assembly expressed particular concern for the safety and wellbeing of LGBTIQ people, people with disabilities, women, and people of minority faith communities should the Bill be passed in its current form.

The Assembly has long advocated that necessary protections from religious discrimination would best be made through the mechanism of a comprehensive Human Rights Act, within which the competing claims and values inherent in this discussion may be grounded in a holistic approach to human rights.

Rev Hollis reiterated previous statements that the Uniting Church does not seek to discriminate as an organisation or an employer, and its firm commitment to diversity and inclusion in community life and employment practices.

"I want to reassure all people that whether or not this Bill passes into law, the Uniting Church in Australia and its wide network of service agencies will continue to be places of welcome and inclusion for all people."

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