



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

10-12 March 2023

DOCUMENT 5

Title	General Secretary Report
Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	For information and decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	Not applicable
Consultation	Associate General Secretary, National Directors for UnitingCare Australia, Frontier Services and UnitingWorld
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 and Attachments.
Attachments	Attachment A: Communications Statistics – January 2023 Attachment B: Strategic Plan and Business Plan Attachment C: Redress Matters
Proposal/s	That the Assembly Standing Committee: 1. Receive the report 2. Note the revised Strategic Plan and Business Plan <i>Proposals relating to Redress Matters are included in Attachment C which will be provided in Tranche 2 of ASC March 2023 papers.</i>
Submitted by	Colleen Geyer Assembly General Secretary colleeng@nat.uca.org.au ; 0411 333 167

GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT

Introduction

The Standing Committee of the 16th Assembly is now in the second half of its life, with the second half of the triennium underway. It's been a packed agenda so far, as it has also been for the different parts of the Assembly, the Secretariat, UnitingCare Australia, Frontier Services and UnitingWorld.

The program of work under the Assembly Strategic Plan and the Strategic Plans of the Agencies has delivered on projects and initiatives, as well as changes and reviews that have required staff to be flexible and adaptable.

At the first Assembly staff meeting for 2023, we considered the massive year ahead of us –

- every Synod will meet this year
- UAICC will have its National Conference
- two global ecumenical groups will meet – the Christian Conference of Asia and the Pacific Conference of Churches
- UnitingWorld is undertaking reaccreditation with DFAT
- ... and travelling to meet partners again
- Frontier Services are planning to expand their footprint in rural and remote Australia by consolidating and growing both the Bush Chaplain network and the Outback Links volunteer network
- Bush Chaplains will continue to provide support in communities effected by natural disasters
- we will work together to support and resource the UCA as the country moves to a referendum for an Indigenous voice to parliament, recognised in the Constitution
- submissions will be made to government inquiries, including religious discrimination, economic inequality, a new model for in-home aged care, and others
- the Ministry and Mission team will be rebuilding important connections with new staff across the UCA
- our comms teams will continue to tell the stories that inspire and encourage others to make a difference
- we'll be implementing a higher level of Environmental and Social Governance reporting in our financial reporting (and continue to bed down and get the benefits from Business Central)
- the Act2 Project unit will complete one of the most comprehensive consultations across the UCA that has ever been undertaken about the future of our Church and work to develop options that will be considered by meetings of Councils in the second half of the year

And that's not everything...

In online groups, we spoke about how we would support each other, connect with each other and check in with each other as staff, colleagues and friends. I'm looking forward to implementing some of the ideas that were suggested and was encouraged by the commitment to do this not just in work teams but across the whole Assembly.

This connection and support is an important part of a strong foundation for a team, or a team of teams. Challenges faced, projects delivered, changes made, initiatives reviewed or adapted are work of the collective. A resilient and robust staff is built on such a foundation.

Once again, as it has been for the past seven years, it is my great honour to look forward to another year with the amazing Assembly staff.

Referendum on the Voice to the Parliament

In order to continue the conversation with Assembly staff regarding the referendum, and acknowledging the importance of providing information so staff can be educated about the issues, it is intended to hold a forum for Senior Leaders and provide information to staff in the coming weeks and months.

This is also in keeping with advice offered on a recent AICD webinar – *Why the Uluru Statement is a National Governance Issue* – which highlighted the importance of educating staff with factual information as part of an organisation’s responsibility to being involved in this important national action.

Staff updates

Assembly Resourcing Unit – the new streamlined Assembly Resourcing Unit is working well under the shared leadership of Lindsay Cullen and Leo Iosifidis. Each work area in the unit operates with its own Manager as well – Lindsay Cullen for Ministry and Mission, Leo Iosifidis for Strategic Finance and Administration, and Bec Beisler for Media and Communications. The Assembly Archivist also sits within the ARU, as well as taking projects as required by the General Secretary.

Frontier Services – a nomination for the National Director of Frontier Services will be brought to the ASC at its March meeting by the Chair of the Frontier Services Board, Lisa Sampson. Documentation will be provided to ASC members at the meeting.

Cyber Security and Ransomware Risk

The Assembly, through the work of an AFARC Cyber Subcommittee, continues its work to strengthen its Cyber Security environment. Over the last quarter this work has included:

- Developing of an overarching Cyber Security Framework and associated documents
- Completion of a specific Cyber Security Risk Register
- Working to ensure all staff and volunteers have completed a Cyber Security awareness training course
- Working on developing and finalizing Critical Cyber Security Policies including
 - Assembly Ransomware Policy
 - Assembly Ransomware Decision Making Framework
 - Assembly Cyber Security Response Plan
 - Other key policies including Cyber Critical Incident Response Policy, Vendor and Third-Party Management policy and BYOD policy.

In terms of the key policy re Ransomware including the event of a potential Ransomware incident, the key principles the committee has been working to firm up include;

- Follow the Australian Cyber Security Centre advice and recommendations
- Although there will be a decision tree process, the overarching principle is that “we would not engage” with any threat actor under any circumstances
- Immediately report any incidents to the relevant authorities
- Immediately enact the Assembly’s Cyber Incidence response plan

Work continues in this area and further updates will be provided in due course.

Communications

The Assembly Media and Communications team continue to broaden the reach of Assembly communications and leverage social media to tell stories from around our Church. Led by Bec Beisler, supported by Communications Officers Bethany Broadstock and Michael Zewdie, the quality, relevance and reach of our weekly newsletter, National Update, and social media posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram have grown. The skills in the team have seen some changes that contribute to the effectiveness of Assembly communications. These include the film and video skills of Michael which has meant all videos, including Christmas and Easter messages of the President, are now made in house rather than outsourcing their production; and the social media expertise and experience of Bethany has increased the Assembly’s coverage and maximised engagement on social media platforms.

The National Manager also connects comms staff from across the Assembly and also between the Assembly and the Synods.

Strategically the comms team aims to articulate our national identity and faith and ensure a diversity of voices are present in our communications, as well as grow awareness of and reinforce the Assembly Strategic Plan.

(Data from January 2023 is at Attachment A)

Updates from Assembly Agencies

(The ARU Ministry and Mission and Circles will present their reports to the ASC at this meeting. See Documents 9 and 10)

Frontier Services

Frontier Services has undergone a period of stabilisation and consolidation in the period since the last ASC meeting.

Governance:

The Frontier Services Board continues to function well and is planning an extended meeting in March to consider strategic planning for the year ahead. There have been two resignations from the Board, both for reasons of time commitment. Frontier Services has developed a Governance Skills Matrix and has identified the skills and experience needed in the recruitment process that will enhance the Board. Recruitment for new members is underway.

Human Resources:

Staffing has been stable through the period, and staff are working well both on individual work areas and also as a team. Management has planned a process of performance review for all staff to take place in the April-June Quarter.

Program Areas:

Bush Chaplaincy

Frontier Services is pleased to participate in the induction of Rev Dona Spencer into the Bottle Tree Remote Area Ministry (based from Roma Qld).

We are also finalising the appointment of a Bush Chaplain in the Presbytery of Tasmania, Synod of VicTas, planned to be placed on the West Coast of Tasmania. This will conclude an application and approval process undertaken by the Board several years ago. The placement will be for an initial 3 years.

Management has also had positive conversations with UAICC both in regard to the existing placement of Pastor Julia Lennon, and also the Bush Chaplaincy application process in Frontier Services.

Outback Links Volunteers

The recruitment and placement of volunteers is picking up momentum as the COVID context has changed.

Finances:

Frontier Services has a deficit budget for the current FY, and at present, is on track to meet that budget. As ASC approved in 2022, the deficit will draw on the Agency's significant reserves to enable some deliberate fundraising growth strategies which are bearing some fruit. The finances of the Agency have been impacted positively by significant bequests in recent years. This remains the one area of budget that is difficult to predict at present. Pleasingly, the organisation is managing its expenditure well within budget.

Risks:

The Board has approved a new Risk Register, which follows the same format as the Assembly Register. Current and emerging risks primarily relate to fundraising in light of the global economic downturn and cost of living pressures broadly.

UnitingCare Australia

The UnitingCare Australia Board has approved the organisation's Strategy 2023-2026. Priority areas are: Justice for First Peoples, Ageing to our full potential and Economic Equality and Inclusion with four objectives being: Impact, Identity, Relationships and Resources/Capability.

Following an unannounced visit from WorkSafe ACT UnitingCare Australia has received two improvement notices which are being addressed in collaboration with the Assembly. These notices relate to the identification of two power cords requiring testing an identified gap in the staff induction process relating to volunteer policies. It should be noted that the result of the inspection was quite positive with the more usual outcome being that multiple improvement are issued.

The UnitingCare Australia Board will be considering the 2023/24 Budget in coming months in light of a projected 25% decrease in levy income. Levies comprise almost 100% of the income for UnitingCare Australia and therefore this will pose a challenge for us to deliver against Mandate and our Strategy 2023-26.

The Board will be undertaking a risk appetite workshop in April.

The 2022 Leaders Forum was an excellent example of UnitingCare Australia being a high impact, leading advocate. Feedback was that it was a highly successful, engaging and influential event in the life of the Uniting Church. It cannot be overstated how energising, inspiring and important it was for leaders from across our church and network to come together in common mission and spirit, bringing the lived experience of the people we serve to the very heart of power in Canberra.

We achieved outstanding external and internal engagement, as well as platforming of our key advocacy priorities. The exclusive location of the Parliamentary Private Dining Rooms allowed for maximum access to politicians and private presentations and discussions.

The 2022 Leaders Forum was an event we should all be proud of, and we thank the Board, our team, the network and everyone who contributed to make it a success.

Key highlights of the Leaders Forum were:

1. **External political engagement.** We secured keynote addresses from six major political leaders:

- a) Special Envoy for the Implementation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, Senator Pat Dodson
- b) Finance Minister, Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
- c) Charities Minister, Hon Dr Andrew Leigh MP
- d) Leader of the Opposition, Hon Peter Dutton MP
- e) Shadow Minister for Aged Care, Senator the Hon Anne Ruston
- f) ACT Independent, Senator David Pocock
- g) Greens Spokesperson for Community Affairs and Aged Care, Senator Janet Rice

and three national thought leaders:

- a) Eddie Synot, Uluru Dialogue, constitutional expert
- b) Professor Peter Yu, Referendum Working Group
- c) Shaun Christie-David, Plateitforward

2. **Internal network and church engagement.** We had senior representation from all UnitingCare network agencies, Uniting Church Assembly and Synods, plus the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

The Board has established an Act2 Working Group to guide a second submission and UnitingCare Australia's broader engagement with Act2 as one of its priority activity for 2023.

Ageing to our Full Potential

Our 2023 [Pre -Budget Submission – Funding What Matters](#) was lodged on 27 January asking for payment of the Fair Work Commission wage increase in full on 1 July 2023 with on costs, including

existing leave, an additional \$4 billion per annum for aged care, on top of indexation), and sufficient time to implement reforms.

Regular fortnightly meetings with the Aged Care CEOs have continued during the reporting period and have directly informed advocacy on a number of issues. Submissions were lodged to: [Building, Training and Supporting the Aged Care Workforce \(Round Table Follow-up\)](#) and the [Aged Care Quality Standards](#). We lodged a submission on the [A New Program for In-Home Aged Care](#) in November which was informed by the experience and knowledge of the Home Care Working Group. Additionally, we worked collaboratively with other peak bodies on the short timeframe for the implementation of the new Home Care Price Capping Arrangements.

An Industrial Relations (IR) Community of Practice was set up given this Government's focus on IR legislation and is meeting monthly. MinterEllison provided a briefing to the network on the new *Secure Job, Better Pay* legislation which has now been passed.

Justice for First Peoples

The First Peoples Network has continued to meet with an agreed focus on educating people across the Church and its agencies on the 2023 referendum for a constitutionally enshrined Voice to Parliament and why it is important to First Nations People and the wider community. However, we recognise that an education campaign of this nature would need to be led by the Church (UCA). As a result, we are working with the UCA and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). A First Peoples Community of Practice has now been formed comprising both First and Second Peoples from across the network, Church and UAICC. The purpose of this group is to foster the sharing of practice, information and resources with the aim of ensuring a culturally safe and inclusive service network and informing the development of advocacy and policy positions drawing on the knowledge and experience of the network.

Economic Equality and Inclusion

The Government's focus on wellbeing, including their wellbeing budget, has provided a strong opportunity for advocacy for UnitingCare Australia. We have continued to consult extensively with the network to identify issues affecting the people that we support across the network to inform the development of a number of submissions: [2023 Pre-Budget Submission – Funding What Matters](#), [The Value of Care – Submission to the Employment White Paper](#), [Buy Now Pay Later Options Paper Consultation](#), [Measuring What Matters, Extent and Nature of Poverty](#), [Parents Next - Workforce Australia Committee](#) and [Jobs and Skills Australia Discussion Paper Response](#).

Our Pre-Budget Submission proposed a permanent Jobs and Skills Australia Deputy Commission for the Care Sector, an analysis of social service needs including increasing income support payments, a review of the tax system with a view to growing revenue, scrapping the Stage 3 tax cuts and the appointment of an Evaluator General to oversee the effectiveness of government programs.

Stronger Community Services Network

Our Networks, Working Groups and Communities of Practice (CoP) are continuing to flourish with strong membership. Networks and Working Groups provide valuable network knowledge and experience to inform our advocacy activities. The CoPs provide the opportunity to share practice, information and resources with the aim of strengthening service provision and also have the opportunity to feed into advocacy activities. Groups are established either to specifically inform our advocacy or in response to requests from the network for collaboration and sharing opportunities. We currently have 15 groups facilitated by us and 3 groups which are facilitated by one of our network organisations or the Assembly, but to which we contribute or attend.

UnitingWorld Governance:

New Chair appointed by the ASC at the November meeting has now been inducted. Steve Bevis attended his first Board meeting in December and is settling well into his role. He has recently relocated from Melbourne to Sydney, which helps with greater connection to UnitingWorld.

Lin Hatfield Dodds has stepped down from the UnitingWorld Board, having handed over the Chair role to Steve Bevis. The UnitingWorld Board passed a resolution of thanks and appreciation to Lin's time on the Board, and her year as Chair. (Colleen – the ASC as the appointing body may need to note Lin's stepping down in some way, and might also wish to pass a resolution of thanks to Lin?)

In December the Board had their annual Development day, engaging in workshops on 'Board Culture and Performance' and 'How to be a multicultural Board.' We are grateful to the ARU for presenting the latter.

Programs

The summer has been a quiet season with most of our partners on Christmas holidays. We are grateful that the cyclone season has been quiet so far, and no humanitarian emergencies have impacted our regional partners. The work to refresh our project designs to address contextual change mentioned in our last report is continuing well.

Staff

Our new Head of Programs Peter Keegan started on the 30th of Jan. Jane Kennedy stays on staff until end of March to complete handover. We have also had two new part time staff join the Donor Relations/Congregational Engagement team to be out and about connecting with the wider church. We have been recruiting for the vital International Partnerships Manager role, and are very close to announcing the appointment of an excellent candidate. (Colleen, we may have gone public by the time the meeting happens)

We held our annual Team Retreat in early February. Highlights included Professor Anne Pattel-Grey leading a workshop on 'Decolonising Ourselves – Tackling Racism and our Colonial History' and Ms Jenny Steadman leading us on 'Supporting your Inner Game – Harnessing your Potential for Wellbeing and Effectiveness.' It was brilliant having the whole team together after 3 years from across the states and also Bali. The new Chair, Steve Bevis also attended for a day, led devotions and spent time connecting with staff.

UCA/Partnerships

In November, the National Director attended the Pacific Church Leaders Development Conference in Sydney and gave the opening key-note address. This was an event proposed by the Pacific Church Partnership Advisory Network (PCPAN), which DFAT agreed to fund, and was organised by the PCC in partnership with the NCCA. The conference was aimed at promoting dialog and building a consensus amongst Pacific churches regarding their vision for development in the Pacific. President Hollis was unable to join due to a prior commitment, so the National Director attended both as a member of PCPAN, and also as the UCA representative.

Also some general FB stats for the month of Jan:

Total page reach: 25,201 (up 49%)
Total post reach: 35,401
Posts across the month: 19 (+ 3 stories)
Median post reactions: 102 (up 43%)
Total reactions for the month: 9K
Visits to our page: 1167 (down 5%)
New page likes: 55 (down 20%)
New page followers: 87 (up 8%)
Paid impressions (from ads): 7827

Also,

new Instagram followers: 66 (up 26%)
Instagram reach: 1668 (down 17%)
Instagram profile visits: 431 (up 22%)

Top posts by reach			Top posts by engagement		Top posts by shares	
	Post	Reach	Post	Reactions	Post	Shares
1	Day of Mourning photo wrap	5827	Prayer for new school year	386	Prayer for new school year	74
2	Prayer for new school year	5377	UCA ordinations	297	Survival Day message	57
3	UCA ordinations	5356	Day of Mourning photo wrap	291	Day of Mourning graphic	40
4	UCA baptisms/confirmations	4754	Day of Mourning graphic	258	Happy Epiphany	32
5	Christmas photo wrap	4315	Christmas photo wrap	219	Day of Mourning photo wrap	24
6	Survival Day message	3941	Survival Day message	206	Day of Mourning Mailchimp post	19
7	Day of Mourning Mailchimp post	3934	Happy Epiphany	186	Survival Day graphic <i>on Instagram</i>	15
8	Day of Mourning graphic	3532	UCA baptisms/confirmations	161	Lunar New Year	15
9	Happy Epiphany	3036	Day of Mourning Mailchimp post	150	Day of Mourning cover photo	15
10	Survival Day share from gathering outside Pitt St	2601	Survival Day graphic <i>on Instagram</i>	100	Act2 prayers	14
Top posts by link clicks						
	Post	Clicks				
1	Day of Mourning Mailchimp post	57				
2	First Nat Update for the year Mailchimp post	26				
3	WA/NT floods	23				
4	Day of Mourning graphic	22				
5	SA Gen Sec role	13				
6	Survival Day message	12				
7	Lunar New Year (link is President's NY prayer)	8				
8	Act2 prayers	7				
9	NYALC post	6				
10	NYALC post	6				

Assembly Business Plan July 2020 – June 2024*
Updated as at February 2023 (all updates in RED)

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 2022	July 2022- June 2023	July 2023- June 2024
ABCD Task Group			
<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

* It was agreed this plan would extend for one year to align with the Assembly triennium

For noting:

- If an initiative has been completed, it will be removed from the Business Plan, so that only current and future initiatives are included
- Only the status of initiatives in the current year of operation (ie July 2022-June 2023) is shown in the plan
- If the delivery of an initiative is up achievable due to capacity of Assembly staff or Task Groups or Working Groups, this will be noted

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD1.S2 Assembly Decisions					
SD1.S2.1 Continuing Witness Task Group					
<p><i>Expected Outcomes</i></p> <p>Following the decision of the Reconvened 16th Assembly, the ASC resolved to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Request members of the Continuing Witness Task Group to continue their work as agreed to in the resolution of the 16th Assembly, and to bring a report and any related proposals to the 17th Assembly. Request the Assembly Communications Unit to work with the Task Group in the preparation of resources for consultation with Presbyteries. 	On Track	On Track	On Track	Planned	Planned

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Task Group are moving to Consultation Phase - Reporting and final proposals to 17th Assembly 					
SD1.S2.2 Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group					
<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <p>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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Task Group will report to March 2023 for clarification of ToR and membership 	Some Delay	Some Delay	Some Delay		Planned
<p style="text-align: center;">Activities</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">July 2020- June 2022</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">July 2022-June 2023</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">July 2023- June 2024</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Jul-Oct</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Nov-Feb</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Mar-Jun</p>	
SD1.S2.3 Climate Action Plan					
SD1.S2.3a A call to action for climate justice: listening to First Peoples wisdom					
<p>Expected Outcomes</p> <p>That the Assembly Standing Committee</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request the General Secretary to write to Synods informing them of the A Call to action on climate justice: listening to First Peoples Wisdom resolution 2. Request the Standards for Ministries Committee to identify the most appropriate way to embed learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for 		Some Delay	Some Delay		

<p>a zero emissions church into formation, education and training for the specified ministries of the Uniting Church and report back to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.</p> <p>3. Request the Assembly Circles, Advocates and Panels to include learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into their work for the remainder of this triennium.</p> <p>4. Request the Associate General Secretary to work with interested ASC members to develop Terms of Reference for a Net Zero Emissions Working Group and to bring these and nominations to the November 2022 ASC Meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Draft Terms of Reference were agreed by the Nov 2022 ASC- After feedback from the ASC suggested membership coming to ASC in March 2023					
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	July 2020- June 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD1.S2 ASC Decisions					
SD1.S2.4 Act 2					
<p>Expected outcomes 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"> - Reported to Reconvened Assembly. Act2 Project unit in place and will report to each ASC meeting. 	On Track	On Track			
SD1.S2.5 Church in the Digital Age					
<p>Expected outcomes To consider the theological implications of the Church in the digital age.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Task Group will report to March 2023 	On Track	On Track			
SD1.S2.6 Chaplaincy					
<p>SD1.S2.7 Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)</p> <p>Expected outcomes To develop a process to provide a national resource for congregations, agencies, and individuals to learn how they can help prevent harm from SOGICE ideology and practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft Terms of Reference approved by Nov 2022 ASC - After feedback from ASC suggested membership coming to ASC in Mar 2023 		Some Delay	Some Delay		

<p>SD1.S2.8 Deacons in the UCA</p> <p>Expected outcomes</p> <p>To emphasise that the current 'Standards for Education and Formation of Candidates for Ordination - Phase 2' requires that "due attention be given to the different perspectives of Ministry of Deacon and Ministry of the Word" (Clause 15) and strongly remind the UCA theological colleges to the need to provide specific courses, formation and field placements for Deacon candidates to prepare them for diaconal ministry.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Secretary to write to Uniting Church Theological Colleges, emphasising that the current 'Standards for Education and Formation of Candidates for Ordination - Phase 2' requires that 'due attention be given to the different perspectives of Ministry of Deacon and Ministry of the Word' - Standards for Ministries Committee to include a question regarding courses, formation and field placements for Deacon in the consultations carried out with MEBs (See SD1.S3) 	<p>Will be reported in SD1.S3 (SFM)</p>				
<p>SD1.S2.9 Moving Forward in Being a Multicultural Church</p> <p>Expected Outcomes</p> <p>Develop resources for Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday (See SD5.S2 Intercultural Church)</p> <p>General Secretary to consider an approach to move towards simpler, friendlier, and more equitable church structures, processes, and ways of working that foster CALD participation and intercultural partnership, and report to future ASC meetings; and for this work to be included in the Act2 Project. (See Act2)</p> <p>General Secretary to write to Synod General Secretaries encouraging Synod Placement Committees and Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees to review and revise the Minister Leadership Profile Form and Congregation Placement Profile and other key reporting and review documents to reflect the ethos and characteristics expressed in Living with the Neighbour Who is Different (9th Assembly, 2000) and One Body Many Members: Living faith and life cross culturally (13th Assembly, 2012).</p> <p>Review of the National Property Policy for the UCA and a Review of Regulations relation to Faith Communities will be included in the ongoing ActCT2 project. (See Act2)</p>					

SD1.S2.11 Review of the Regulations – Delegation of Authority to Amend Part 5 of the Regulations

Expected Outcomes

Make Regulations under Part 5 of the Regulations (Church Discipline), subject to:

- a. those Regulations being generally in accordance with the amended Framework of Principles and subject to appropriate consultation on the draft regulations; and
- b. the approval of those Regulations by the Assembly Standing Committee on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee. (See S3.SD3)

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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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD1.S3 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					
Conduct Consultations in accordance with schedule - Plans for NSWACT underway	On Track	On Track			
Other areas of focus - As per Mandate, reporting to ASC as required.	On Track	On Track			
Expected Outcomes (following the August 2022 ASC) That the Assembly Standing Committee: Direct Standards for Ministries to create a specialised Chaplaincy sub-committee with appropriate skilled and experienced people to collate and coordinate the delivery of the attached Recommendations for Further Work, consulting with synods and colleges and advising presbyteries with respect to best practice. - A number of prospective members have been approached and the membership will be approved and a date for a first meeting set by the February 2023 SFM Standards for Ministries Committee to include a question regarding courses, formation and field placements for Deacon in the consultations carried out with MEBs and report to ASC (from Reconvened Assembly). - Will be reported to ASC as part of the next SFM reports.					

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD1.S4 Circles of Interest					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></p> <p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resolution from Reconvened Assembly re Climate Change and likely engagement in First Nations Voice will be key areas of work - Season of Creation – engagement in this series through National Update - Next report to ASC in March 2023 	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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD2.S1 Telling the UCA Story <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Slides developed for members of ARU to share Identity markers (based on Strategic Directions Commitments) at each meeting or service in which they participate - ARU MM and Comms coordinate sharing and articles for National Update and Socials based on telling our story 		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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023-June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD2.S2 Covenant					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></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 					
<p>Elevate First Nations voices in conversations and submissions –</p> <p style="color: red;">Election Resources was circulated</p> <p style="color: red;">Conversations with Congress about First Nations Voice to Parliament have begun</p>	On Track	On Track			

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD2.S3 Justice and Advocacy					
Expected outcomes					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly regularly reviews and updates its “Vision for a Just Australia” • Assembly advocates to in the public space on key themes within the Vision. • Assembly identifies, communicates and works towards the Uniting Church’s commitments within these areas. 					
Our Vision for a Just Australia Document created, updated and used <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Annual review of Vision document and reporting progress - Review to be undertaken early 2023 	On Track	On Track	On Track	Planned	
Assembly advocacy in the public space in line with Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engagement with new Federal Government is being planned. - Plans in place for COP27 have begun 	On Track	On Track	On Track	Planned	

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	

SD2.S4 Safe Church					
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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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD3.S1 Emerging expressions of church					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></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 					
<p>Church in the Digital Age Task Group work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final report to ASC March 2023 	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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD3.S2 Uniting Learning					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></p> <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 • Discussion is now happening with larger stakeholders regarding an ongoing, sustainable governance administration and financial model 		On Track	On Track	Planned	

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD3.S3 Regulatory Framework					
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make Regulations under Part 5 of the Regulations (Church Discipline) (See S1.SD2.11) The remainder of the Regulation Review project has been included into Act2 for the remainder of this triennium 	On Track	On Track			

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD3.S4 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 Continuing focus of Management, AFARC and ASC 					

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD4.S1 Growing faith and leadership					
Expected outcomes					
<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 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gathering and sharing stories of success - Engagement through DNG Circle and National Youth Children and Family Coalition - Intergenerational Framework is capturing key areas of focus 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Internship model in place – NOT POSSIBLE IN THIS TRIENNium 	Deferred				
NYALC 2023 planned	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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD4.S2 Intergenerational Ministry Framework					
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <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 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collaboratively develop a framework with Circles and other Synod and Presbytery stakeholders Framework complete before March 2023 - provided to ASC for information. ASC may suggest further work / actions Framework will address definitions and key areas of focus for intergenerational ministry 	Some Delay	On Track			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mentoring (and reverse mentoring) is developed – NOT POSSIBLE THIS TRIENNium 	Deferred				

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD4.S3 National Youth Events					
<p>Expected outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assembly runs one bi-annual youth event • Assembly facilitates interactions between Synods to encourage other youth events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Events planned and implemented - NYALC in planning for 2023 	Some Delay	On track			

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD4 S4 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"> - Engagement in events (as in SD4.S3) - NYALC Planned for 2023 - Congress included in Internship Program – NOT POSSIBLE IN THIS TRIENNium 	Some Delay	On Track			
	Deferred				

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD5.S1 Engage National Conferences					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></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 		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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD5.S2 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) <p>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</p> <p>Incorporated into Living as an Intercultural Church Webpage</p>		Completed			
- New Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday as per Assembly Resolution		On Track	On Track		

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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD5 S3 Language resources					
<p><i>Expected outcomes</i></p> <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 Assembly website and social media platforms reflect diverse languages 		Complete			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Church meetings take into account diverse languages 		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 2022	July 2022-June 2023			July 2023- June 2024
		Jul-Oct	Nov-Feb	Mar-Jun	
SD5.S4 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 					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opportunities for engagement between UAICC and National Conferences are in place National Conferences not yet meeting. Assembly and UAICC resources limited – NOT LIKELY TO HAPPEN THIS TRIENNIUM 	Deferred				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walking on Country opportunities for diverse CALD communities NOT LIKELY TO HAPPEN THIS TRIENNIUM 	Deferred				