



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA ASSEMBLY

Ministry Description

Assembly General

Secretary

Reporting to:	Assembly and its Standing Committee
Appointed by:	Assembly
Location:	Flexible.
Full time/part time/casual:	Full time
Commencement Date:	1 st January 2025
Term of office:	Determined by Assembly (Regulation 3.6.4.4(a))
Date created/amended:	July 2023

Overview

This Ministry Description includes the following sections:

- **Ministry Context** – a description of the current context.
- **Ministry Purpose** – an overview of the role.
- **Key responsibilities** core list of things the General Secretary is responsible for doing and achieving.
- **Special Requirements and Selection Criteria**

- **Appendix 1:** Assembly Strategic Plan
- **Appendix 2:** Act2 Project Plan on a Page and Resolutions of the 16th Assembly.
- **Appendix 3:** List of Regulations relevant to the General Secretary role.
- **Appendix 4:** List of committees the General Secretary is ex-officio on or participant in.
- **Appendix 5:** Staff reporting to the General Secretary
- **Appendix 6:** Workplace Ethos and Values

Ministry Context

The Church seeks to hear God's Word and order its life through a series of inter-related Councils to enable its members to live out effectively the good news of the Gospel in both word and deed.

The Assembly is the Council that has determining responsibility in matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline, including the promotion of the Church's mission, the establishment of standards for theological education and the reception of Ministers from other denominations, and the taking of further measures towards the wider union of the Church. It is empowered to make final decisions on all matters committed to it by its Constitution.

The General Secretary serves with the President in offering leadership for the Assembly.

The General Secretary, as executive officer of the Assembly, has a specific role in facilitating the work of Assembly meetings and the Standing Committee, and has a clear understanding of life within the Synods to ensure effective strategic planning and the best stewardship of resources for the effective mission of the Church.

The Assembly's current strategic plan runs until 2024 and will need to be reviewed in light of decisions at the 17th Assembly.

The Assembly is currently leading a whole of Church strategic renewal and planning project called Act2. This project will bring recommendations to the 17th Assembly in July 2024 about the future shape of the Uniting Church including proposals about National Identity and the Governance of the Uniting Church. The recommendations that the Assembly meeting passes will likely have a significant impact on the life and work of the Assembly. It may result in an Assembly with a smaller set of responsibilities and staff or a larger set of responsibilities and Assembly staff. The incoming General Secretary will need to be willing to work with whatever change emerges from the 17th Assembly and lead the Assembly and

Commented [CG1]: I wonder about including this sentence - it could be seen as foreshadowing what we think will happen. I think the previous sentence and the next one are sufficient.

Church through this period of change. You can find more about Act 2 here:
<https://www.act2uca.com>.

Ministry Purpose

The General Secretary works with the President to offer leadership across the Assembly. The President gives spiritual leadership and encouragement to the Church generally (Reg 3.6.4.2) whilst the General Secretary is the executive officer of the Assembly. As executive officer of the Assembly the General Secretary will provide vision and leadership to the Church, especially in the Church's national life, mission and commitment to Christian unity: ensure execution of Assembly policy; co-ordinate Assembly activities; and oversee the management of Assembly staff. (See Regulation 3.6.4.4)

This is a time of change and uncertainty for the life of the Assembly. The General Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the key recommendations of the 17th Assembly, particularly in relation to Act2 are implemented and that they form the foundation of the strategic work of the Assembly over the next triennium.

As an ex-officio member of the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) and the Assembly meeting, as well as each Synod meeting the General Secretary provides guidance, context and strategic leadership so that Assembly and its agencies, committees, working groups and circles are able to fulfil their roles and resource the Church.

The General Secretary will lead a small team of senior staff, who report directly to the General Secretary. This team will oversee the preparation and management of the budget, the implementation of Assembly resolutions and the Assembly strategic plan and the health and vitality of the Assembly agencies.

The General Secretary needs to be able to work with First Nations people. In particular the General Secretary needs to be able to work with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) supporting and encouraging them in their quest for self-determination in relation to ministry with First Nations people and maintaining respectful relationships with UAICC leadership, particular the National Chair and Executive.

The General Secretary needs to be able to develop and maintain relationships across the Councils of the Church, most particularly with the Synods who provide key funding for the Assembly. The Assembly General Secretary meets regularly with Synod General Secretaries to encourage national collaboration, shared mission and mutual encouragement.

The General Secretary has the authority to approve all expenditure within the annual budget as determined by the Assembly meeting or its Standing Committee and the authority to appoint and terminate the employment of Assembly staff, with the exception of National Directors and the Associate General Secretary.

Commented [CG2]: Does this refer to the Executive team? In which case they don't oversee the Strat Plan as that is the responsibility of the secretariat team.. Maybe this is just splitting hairs - happy to leave it as it is...

Key Responsibilities.

Note: The scope of the General Secretary's responsibilities is contained in the UCA regulations (see Appendix 3 for an extract of the relevant regulations).

	Tasks	Outcomes
8.1	Assembly	
	(a) Be responsible for arrangement of and for the proper conduct of meetings of the Assembly and its Standing Committee	The meetings of the Assembly and Standing Committee are effective in promoting the mission of the Church
	(b) Exercise general leadership in the Church and promote its pastoral and missional well-being;	Effective strategic leadership is provided to the Assembly.
	(c) Ensure the effective operation of the National Secretariat by providing leadership to senior staff reporting directly to the General Secretary, enabling them to share in responsibility for implementing the Assembly vision and strategic priorities.	The leadership team functions as a cohesive source of advice and support to the General Secretary
	(d) Ensure the policies and programs of the Assembly are implemented	Approved policies and plans are implemented in a timely manner.
	(e) Encourage co-ordination of the work of the Assembly, including the agencies to ensure alignment with and achievement of relevant and approved plans	The Assembly is seen to operate as a cohesive whole.
	(f) Participate constructively and at an appropriate level in the life and activities of bodies of which the General Secretary is a member or participant	Assembly bodies maintain a good connection to and work of the whole Assembly and are able to resource this work appropriately.

Commented [SH3]: Not sure we need this

Commented [CG4R4]: We do need this. It is my responsibility to ensure policies are up to date, signed off and implemented. Programs could be seen as the work of the Assembly which I am responsible for, so I'd leave it in.

Commented [SH5]: Is this the best way to talk about the work of the General Secretary with agencies

Commented [CG6R6]: I think it's ok as it says 'encourage'. If it went further, you could possibly say 'including working with the Agency Boards to ensure ...

th	<p>(g) Ensure that the Assembly budget is managed and maintained in accordance with internal and external legislative requirements.</p> <p>(h) Oversee the efficient operation and well-being of Assembly staff by working with senior staff to ensure that Assembly staff are provided with a working environment that fosters a culture of respect and care as well as of focused vision, and in which the ethos and values of the UCA are upheld</p>	<p>The financial operations of the Assembly are managed efficiently and within budget.</p> <p>Assembly staff are able to operate in a supportive environment which complies with all applicable standards</p>
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	Tasks	Outcomes
	(i) Ensure all key Human Resources processes are completed including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the conduct of annual performance appraisals for all directly reporting managers against agreed goals, • ensuring that effective annual performance appraisals are conducted for all staff, • ensuring all staff have training/development plans. (j) Ensure that the Assembly complies with all legislative requirements relating to Occupational Health and Safety	Staff are well supported and encourage and are able to achieve their best in their role. A safe working place is provided and maintained for all staff
8.2	President	
	(a) Liaise with the President in guiding and encouraging the Church	The President is supported through appropriate advice and infrastructure
	(b) In consultation with the President serve as a spokesperson for the Assembly when appropriate.	Effective public representation is provided
8.3	Other bodies and groups	
	(a) Maintain and foster ecumenical relationships	Strong ecumenical relationships are maintained.
	(b) Participate in meetings of the National Council of Churches (NCCA) Executive, and the National Heads of Churches as the alternate to the President when required.	Effective representation within the NCCA Executive as required
8.4	Other duties	
	(a) Do such other things as the Assembly or its Standing Committee may require	Other duties are effectively discharged

Special Requirements

1. Is an active member of the UCA, with a demonstrated appreciation of the breadth of the Uniting Church's worship, witness and service.
2. Has the capacity and willingness to actively promote the theology, ethos and vision of the UCA.
3. A commitment to comply with the UCA Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice.
4. As a demonstration of the Uniting Church's commitment to being a safe community will hold a current Working With Children Check and Federal Police Check.
5. Has the availability and willingness to work flexible hours, including some evenings and weekends.
6. Annual leave is not able to be taken immediately prior to or during the Assembly meeting.
7. Can travel within Australia, and more widely, as **required**.

Commented [P7]: Do you think the Gen Sec needs a drivers licence. It's required in the Synod one but I think a national role is a bit different, not so much driving required.

Commented [CG8R8]: I don't think it needs to be specifically stated

Key Selection criteria

Qualifications and Experience

- Tertiary qualifications in Theology/Missiology and a familiarity with the theological foundations and commitments of the UCA, particularly as articulated in the Basis of Union, The Covenanting Statement, We are a Multicultural Church, and the Revised Preamble to the Constitution.
- Additional qualifications related to leadership, strategic planning, change management, business administration, accounting/financial management, and/or related fields at graduate level will be highly regarded.
- Proven experience and achievements in executive leadership and/or senior management roles.
- Proven experience and achievement in leading through significant change in an organisation.
- Sound knowledge and understanding of the polity, policies and systems of the UCA as these are variously set out in the Basis of Union, Constitution, Regulations and Manual for Meetings.
- Ability to work within the workplace ethos and values of the Assembly.

Skills and abilities

Leadership: Able to clearly and compellingly articulate the mission of the Church and a willingness to promote the Assembly's strategic direction with integrity. Keeps the vision and values of the Assembly at the forefront of decision making and action. Effectively leads change and remains flexible. Is able to work with diverse groups and people.

Strategic thinking and abilities: Thinks at the 'big picture level. Has recognized strategic, analytical and planning skills. Establishes and commits to a course of action, taking into consideration opportunities, resources, constraints, context, business strategy and mission. Creates an environment which encourages fresh new approaches and strategies. Is able to translate strategic direction into the ongoing work of the Assembly.

Team Building: Uses a flexible interpersonal style to coach people to maximise the Assembly leadership performance. Successfully attracts talented people to work within the Assembly team and evaluates their performance. Has the courage to address and improve below expectation performance.

Building Partnerships: Identifies opportunities and takes actions to build productive and strategic relationships with key stakeholders, including UAICC, Councils of the Church, Boards, ecumenical bodies and interdenominational groups.

Administration: Has proven administration skills, understands key business matters and uses information to evaluate Assembly performance, opportunities and challenges. Is able to develop and efficiently manage plans for mission activities which have been prioritised, in a manner that maintains accountability for outcomes and budgets.

Change Management: Proven ability to lead and manage change effectively. Aligns people, resources, processes and systems to ensure effective implementation and delivery. Consistently strives for continuous improvement of management processes.

Issues Management: Capacity to effectively manage competing priorities in a complex and dynamic environment, and to discern appropriate Assembly responses to identified risks and periods of crisis.

Interpersonal: Has excellent interpersonal, influencing, negotiation and conflict resolution skills. Has the capacity to discern the necessity for, and to maintain strict confidentiality.

Communication skills: Applies an appropriate range of strategies in managing both informal and formal communication as well as excellent written and verbal communication skills.

Personal Qualities

The General Secretary has the following personal qualities.

- An ability to reflect on issues theologically in ways that shape and inform their work.
- An understanding of and commitment to the covenanting relationship between the UAICC and the rest of the Church.
- An understanding of and commitment to the multi-cultural nature of the UCA.
- A capacity to work with people across a diversity of theology, gender, sexuality, culture, age and people with disability.
- A commitment to working ecumenically.
- An ability to exercise appropriate self-care and nurture.
- A desire to be a life-long learner and a willing to engage in appropriate further education.

Appendix 2 Act2 Resolutions

The Assembly resolved:

22. ACT2: ON THE WAY

In consideration of the Act2 report and Para 17 of the Basis of Union

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the demand of the Gospel, the response of the Church to the Gospel, and the discipline which it requires are partly expressed in the formulation by the Church of its law. The aim of such law is to confess God's will for the life of the Church; but since law is received by human beings and framed by them, it is always subject to revision in order that it may better serve the Gospel. The Uniting Church will keep its law under constant review so that its life may increasingly be directed to the service of God and humanity, and its worship to a true and faithful setting forth of, and response to, the Gospel of Christ. The law of the Church will speak of the free obedience of the children of God and will look to the final reconciliation of humanity under God's sovereign grace.

22.1 Further to the Act2 Report, to authorise the following work:

- (a) to identify ways to strengthen and develop the local expressions of worship, witness, service, and the making and forming of disciples, in the various forms of communities of faith;
- (b) to discern, clarify and strengthen our national identity as a church, informing our structure and culture; and
- (c) to review governance structures and practices that reflect our contemporary context, in particular:
 - (i) to identify ways to strengthen and develop the local expressions of worship, witness, service, and the making and forming of disciples, in the various forms of communities of faith;
 - (ii) In keeping *our law under constant review* to address the need for an evolving interconcelliar process that is responsive and agile;
 - (iii) to further develop theological culture of the Uniting Church in Australia, and the framework and provision for theological education;
 - (iv) being informed by our Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;
 - (v) recognising we are a multicultural Church; and
 - (vi) to continue to fulfill of our ethical, legal and social obligations;
- (d) to develop a resourcing framework that takes into account whole of Church resourcing arrangements.

22.2 As the Assembly progresses this work, to invite each of the Synods and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to join with the Assembly, recognising the importance of consultation to be undertaken across the whole of the Church;

22.3 to delegate to the Assembly Standing Committee to progress the work on behalf of the Assembly and report to the 17th Assembly;

22.4 to affirm the importance and urgency of this work and that it should be adequately resourced; and

22.5 to request each of the Synods in consultation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress to join with the Assembly to consider and contribute to resourcing the work.

Appendix 3 Regulations relating to the General Secretary of the Assembly

A. Appointment and Duties of the General Secretary

- 3.6.4.4 (a) The Assembly shall appoint a General Secretary to hold office for such term, to receive such stipend and allowances and to be installed in such manner as the Assembly shall determine.
- (b) The duties of the General Secretary, as executive officer of the Assembly, shall be to give general leadership to the Church, to ensure execution of Assembly policy, to coordinate Assembly activities, to oversee the management of Assembly staff, and to do such other things as the Assembly may require. The General Secretary shall be a member ex-officio of all Assembly bodies.
- (c) Should the position of General Secretary become vacant between ordinary meetings of the Assembly, the President, on advice from the Standing Committee, shall make a temporary appointment or otherwise arrange for the responsibilities of the General Secretary to be carried out pending the making of a new appointment by the Assembly.

B. Membership of Assembly

- 3.3.8 (a) The membership of the Assembly shall consist of:
- (i) ex-officio members:
- the General Secretary of the Assembly;

C. Membership of Assembly Standing Committee

- 3.7.5.1 Membership
- (a) The Assembly Standing Committee shall consist of
- (i) the President, President-elect, ex-President and General Secretary of the Assembly;

D. Membership of Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

- 3.7.5.2 Membership
- (a) (a) The Assembly shall establish an Audit, Finance and Risk Committee which shall consist of:
- (iii) the General Secretary and the senior financial officer of the Assembly who shall be ex officio non-voting members.

Commented [CG9]: My new laptop is going crazy! Sorry about this formatting but I can't fix it!

E. Membership of Synods

- 3.3.7 (a) The membership of the Synod shall consist of such number as the Synod shall determine up to a maximum of 500 persons, or such other maximum number as the Assembly may approve in respect of a particular Synod, and shall include:
- (i) the President and General Secretary of the Assembly;
 - ...

Appendix 4 Committee Involvement of Assembly General Secretary.

The General Secretary is a member of:

Assembly (Regulation 3.3.8(a)(i))

- Assembly Standing Committee (Regulation 3.7.5.1(a)(i))
- Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee (Regulation 3.7.5.2(a)(iii))
- Synods (Regulation 3.3.7(a)(i))
- Frontier Services Board
- UnitingWorld Board
- UnitingCare Board
- Assembly Investment Committee UCA
- Assembly Ltd Directors

The General Secretary is eligible to participate in all Assembly bodies (Reference Groups, Committees) (Regulation 3.6.4.4(b))

The General Secretary is a participant in meetings of the following bodies:

- Legal Reference Committee
- National Disaster Relief Fund
- National Council of Churches Executive

Other bodies:

The General Secretary participates in the work of other Church and ecumenical bodies as determined by the Standing Committee.

Appendix 5 Staff reporting directly to the General Secretary.

Associate General Secretary
Chief Financial Officer
National Director, Frontier Services
National Director, UnitingWorld
National Director, UnitingCare Australia
Project Lead Act2
Executive Assistant to the General Secretary