



OUR VISION FOR A JUST AUSTRALIA

2025



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY

INTRODUCTION FROM THE PRESIDENT

As followers of Christ, we are called to be bold in love, relentless in justice, and unwavering in our hope for a better world. The Uniting Church has always stood for a society where all people can flourish—where justice is lived, creation is cherished, and every person is treated with dignity and respect.

In the Pacific, we understand that change begins with talanoa—a space of open, honest, and respectful dialogue. Talanoa is more than conversation; it is a way of building trust, deepening understanding, deep listening, and strengthening relationships. As we approach the election, let us enter into talanoa within our communities, reflecting on the values that shape our society and advocating for policies that uphold human dignity, justice, and peace.

Elections are a crucial moment in the life of our nation, inviting us to consider the wellbeing of all people. As the Uniting Church, we are guided by a vision of God's kingdom—a vision rooted in justice, reconciliation, and peace. This resource is an invitation to engage prayerfully and faithfully with the issues that matter, upholding the values we cherish as a church.

This is not about endorsing political parties but about embodying Christ's love in the political process—asking hard questions, advocating with compassion, and holding leaders accountable to the values of justice, mercy, and love. It is about shaping a society that reflects God's vision for humanity.

The values explored in this resource are drawn from the life and ministry of Jesus Christ. He lifted up the poor, embraced the outcast, and overturned systems of oppression. His faith was not passive— but active, courageous, and committed to the wellbeing of others. His call to love God and neighbour leads us to seek justice in our communities today.

We are called to walk alongside First Peoples in truth and reconciliation, recognising the deep wisdom they offer in caring for creation. We are called to welcome refugees and migrants with dignity and compassion. We are called to protect God's creation as a sacred trust, to build an economy that serves all people, and to foster communities where everyone belongs. We are called to be peacemakers in a divided world.

Each section will provide a vision for change, the biblical foundations that inspire us, and questions for reflection and discussion within your community.

Now is the time to be the Church that Christ calls us to be—the Church the world needs us to be—bold, compassionate, and unafraid to work for justice.

May this resource inspire, challenge, and equip you and your community to weave Christ's love into everyday life, bringing hope, healing, and transformation. And may our talanoa ripple outward, carrying the spirit of love, justice, and peace.

Rev Charissa Suli

President of the Uniting Church in Australia



HOW CAN I USE THIS RESOURCE

This document expresses our Uniting Church vision for a just Australia and why our Christian faith calls us to work towards its fulfilment. It is deliberately broad in scope.

You may connect with the resource as a whole or choose to focus on one or two issues, as our vision...



Calls us to look beyond ourselves, our own needs and concerns, to take a wider view of our country and our world.



Encourages us to think deeply, challenge our assumptions and what we might think we already know.



Invites us to engage in conversations with an openness to listen and learn from each other.



Asks that we take seriously our democratic privilege and citizenship.

START A CONVERSATION

- Use the document as a guide to begin a discussion within your church or community.
- The whole document or one foundation may be useful in a discussion forum with groups of older students, either schools, congregations or other groups.
- Ask people to respond to the vision statement. What stands out? What challenges you?
- Reflect on the Bible references. What other passages might you include?
- Select one or two issues to discuss in more detail. Choose what you care about.
- You might like to choose one topic and research it more deeply. Some links and references have been provided that can assist in this.

- Consider a broader conversation about how this resource is helpful in engaging with our political leaders and elected representatives. What influences our political views? How does our faith call us into action and engagement with the decisions made by our government?
- Host or take part in a public forum. Consider inviting Members of Parliament or community leaders to share their views.
- Decide the topics or key issues that you want to discuss.
- Prepare some of the important questions you might like to ask. Examples are contained in the document.

PRAY

- Consider how the document might be useful for gathered worship.
- Offer a reflection on one of the foundations, including relevant Bible passages, what the Uniting Church has said and some of the key issues.
- Delve more deeply into the Bible passages.
- Use the State of the Nation sections as prayer points.



We see a nation where each person and all creation can flourish and enjoy abundant life.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes the whole world is God's good creation. Each person is made in God's image and is deeply loved by God. In Jesus, God is calling us to be co-workers in the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.

Foundations

This is our vision and hope for a just Australia expressed in seven foundational areas.



A First Peoples Heart

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, nurtured and sustained by God before invasion, are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian.

First Nation's sovereignty is affirmed, First Peoples have a voice in the decision making of our country and are living out their right to self-determination. As First and Second Peoples, we walk together, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another.



Renewal of the Whole of Creation

We seek the flourishing of the whole of God's Creation and all its creatures. We act to renew the earth from the damage done and stand in solidarity with people

most impacted by human-induced climate change. Government, churches, businesses and the wider community work together for a sustainable future.



A Welcoming, Compassionate and Diverse Nation

We are a nation of diverse cultures, languages, faiths, ethnic groups and experiences. We celebrate and value the strength of this diversity. We see this diversity reflected in our leaders, key decision makers, institutions, industry, sports and media. We are a compassionate nation, where every person who seeks refuge here is treated fairly and made to feel welcome and safe – regardless of their country of origin or mode of arrival.



An Economy for Life

Our government makes economic decisions that put people first: decisions that are good for creation, that lift people out of poverty and fairly share our country's wealth. The economy serves the well-being and flourishing of all people.



An Inclusive and Equal Society

We live together in a society where all are equal and free to exercise our rights equally, regardless of faith, cultural background, race, ability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. We defend those rights for all.



Flourishing Communities, Regional, Remote and Urban

We live in communities where we are connected and we care for one another.

In communities all over Australia, from our big cities to remote regions, we seek the well-being of each Australian and uplift those who are on the margins.



Contributing to a Just and Peaceful World

Australia acts with courage and conviction to build a just and peaceful world. We are

a nation that works in partnership with other nations to dismantle the structural and historical causes of violence, injustice and inequality. Our government upholds human rights everywhere, acting in the best interests of all people and the planet.

For each Foundation we have further articulated our hopes, why this is important to the Uniting Church and what we see in the current context in Australia.

We have included some key questions for reflection. You might like to put these questions to your **local Members of Parliament** or **community leaders**.



A FIRST PEOPLES HEART



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OUR VISION:

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, nurtured and sustained by God before invasion, are celebrated at the very heart of what it means to be Australian. First Peoples' sovereignty is affirmed, First Peoples have a voice in the decision making of our country and are living out their right to self-determination.

As First and Second Peoples, we heal together, creating socially just and culturally safe relationships, listening and learning from one another.

OUR HOPES

- That Australia embraces the Uluru Statement from the Heart in full as the preferred pathway towards truth, healing and justice, including:
 - Hearing and understanding a First Peoples' voice in all matters impacting their lives.
 - Agreement-making or treaty-making between governments and First Peoples' communities.
 - Truth-telling about Australia's history, seeking justice and healing.
- Formal Truth-telling occurs, leading to communal acceptance of the ongoing impact of Colonisation, including the story of the Stolen Generations, and the ongoing impacts of trauma on First Peoples' families and communities.
- Self-determination at Federal, state and local levels is informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), giving First Peoples' communities full control over decisions impacting their lives, Country and cultural sites.
- That all Australians would respect, learn from, understand and celebrate First Peoples' cultural approach to living spiritually within a holistic world view.
- Community led, meaningful, effective, culturally-appropriate and research-based policies and programs to significantly reduce incarceration of First Peoples.
- Raising the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age across all Australian jurisdictions.
- Significant and consistent resources for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander controlled community health and wellbeing services, designed to achieve a closing of the gap in health, mental health and social outcomes.
- Adequate resourcing of remote communities.
- High rates of early childhood education, school attendance and completion among First People students supported by sufficient professional resourcing and educational opportunities, no matter where a person lives.
- First People languages to be preserved, taught and incorporated into civic functions.
- True bilingual education to become a reality for First Peoples where English is not a first language.

- Support for First Peoples business and increased local employment opportunities in remote communities.
- Australia embraces allyship. All Second Peoples are allies to First Peoples and their communities, finding opportunities to amplify First Peoples' voices and actively seek truthful information in order to learn from First Peoples. Allies find ways to help without burdening First Peoples' own activists and leaders and are willing to have tough conversations themselves with their own friends and family to challenge discriminatory views.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

- October 2023 saw the failure of a referendum to create a Federal Voice to Parliament with 60 per cent of Australians voting against it. The impact of this is still being felt by communities across the country, with many now rallying for renewed allyship between First and Second Peoples.
- First Peoples have given us the Uluru Statement from the Heart, but we have failed to live up to its call for self-determination, truth and justice.
- Data continues to be collected and used against First Peoples' communities. It is used without their informed consent which takes away the power to tell their own stories in the face of the ongoing impacts of colonisation.
- First Peoples' communities, whether remote, regional or urban, experience heightened levels of disadvantage. First Peoples in Australia have a lower life expectancy and worse health, education and employment outcomes across the board than other people in Australia.
- 2 in 3 (67%) First Peoples aged 15 and over who experienced physical harm between 2017-2018 reported the perpetrator was an intimate partner or family member.
- Over 7 in 10 (72%) assault hospitalisations involving First Peoples were due to family violence.
- Proportionally, Australia's First Peoples are the most incarcerated people on the planet. First Peoples comprise over 30 per cent of the adult prison population¹. Even more distressingly, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander youth constitute 6.6% per cent of the total youth population in Australia but represent sixty percent of youth in detention aged 10 and over across the country².
- Stolen Generations survivors and their families continue to carry trauma and were over-represented as victims in the Royal Commission

into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (2017).

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- We begin from the starting point that all humans are made in the image of God and are thus to be equally respected, included and supported in society (Genesis 1: 26-27).
- The New Testament Epistles describe a community without distinctions (Galatians 3: 28) and call Christians to the “ministry of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5: 18) and of pursuing peace with everyone (Hebrews 12: 14).
- In John 10:10 Jesus spoke of his coming to bring abundant life for all.
- In Roman chapter 8 there is a vision that includes the whole of creation as being indistinguishable from humanity, which can help Christians understand how First Peoples see a holistic connection between the land and ourselves. All of creation also suffers alongside humanity because humanity itself has been the cause of great suffering in the natural world, which is God’s creation (Romans 18-21). Together, all of creation longs for redemption because it is interconnected (Romans 22-25). God has given us the strength to be active participants in our redemption by seeking reconciliation within creation, which means choosing to alleviate suffering within the material world by caring for God’s creation (Romans 26-27).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

The Uniting Church Covenant between First and Second Peoples (1994)³

At its 7th Assembly in 1994, the Uniting Church formally entered into a binding Covenant relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and its members, recognising and repenting for the Church’s complicity in the injustices perpetrated on Australia’s First Peoples, and pledging to move forward with a shared future. UAICC’s generous response to this statement, among other messages, called upon the broader Church to take up the mission of truth, justice and biblically informed reconciliation.

The Uniting Church Covenant between First and Second Peoples is informed by:

Preamble to the UCA Constitution (2009)⁴

The 12th Assembly affirmed a new preamble to the Uniting Church Constitution which recognises the unjust and brutal history of dispossession against the First Peoples, together with how the Church was complicit in this. Importantly, it recognises that God was in this land from the very beginning, in creation, and this Creator God was known by First Peoples long before the colonisers arrived. The Word was in Creation and is revealed in human form as Jesus Christ.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart (2017)^{5,6}

In August 2017, responding to the Uluru Statement from the Heart, the National Executive of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) affirmed the work that supports the Uluru Statement from the Heart, in which First Peoples’ leaders asked for a voice to advise Parliament, and the creation of a commission to oversee Makarrata or treaty making.

Uniting for the Voice (2023)⁷

In March 2023, the Assembly Standing Committee resolved to “declare the support of the Uniting Church in Australia for the proposed change in the Australian Constitution to recognise an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament, as a step toward the invitation of the Uluru Statement to voice, truth telling, and treaty; and noting the significance of this moment in our nation’s history and relationship with its First Peoples, to call on church, community and political leaders to engage the referendum issues, modelling respectful and constructive dialogue”.

Recognising First Peoples as Sovereign, the 15th Assembly (2018)⁸

The Assembly resolved “to affirm the First Peoples of Australia, the Aboriginal and Islander Peoples, are sovereign peoples in this land”. In recognising this fundamental truth, the UCA offered moral leadership to the nation. The UCA affirms sovereignty as it is described in the Uluru Statement from the Heart as ‘a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land’, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be untied with our ancestors. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.”

United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2024)^{9,10}

The Uniting Church Assembly resolved to endorse the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), and to implement its principles, including self-determination, throughout the Uniting

Church's policies, procedures and practices. It further encouraged other councils and parts of the Church to endorse UNDRIP and implement it.

OUR ASKS:

1. Recognise the Uluru Statement from the Heart as a living document, and seek to embody Voice, Treaty and Truth at Federal and State levels.
2. Establish community led bodies for treaty making at Federal and State levels.
3. Establish community led bodies for truth-telling across all jurisdictions.
4. Provide sufficient funding to achieve the Closing the Gap targets, prioritising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations to deliver services wherever possible.
5. Raise the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years of age across all jurisdictions.
6. That all Governments redouble their efforts to address Target 13 in the National Agreement on Closing the Gap, which is to reduce the rate of all forms of family violence against First Nations women and children by at least 50% by 2031.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You might like to put one or two of these questions to MP's and local leaders:

1. Does your party or organisation have a Reconciliation Action Plan, and what are the key points?
2. Have you read the Uluru Statement from the Heart? How do you feel about Treaty or Treaties with First Peoples, and truth-telling Across Australia?
3. What is your position regarding understanding First Peoples as sovereign in this land, and the implications of that?
4. What do you think should be done to address First Peoples' disadvantage in terms of life expectancy, health and education?
5. What do you think should be done to address First Peoples incarceration rates in Australia? What is your position on raising the age of criminal responsibility across all jurisdictions to 14 years?

6. What are you doing, or what might you do to further justice for First Peoples in your own community?

References:

1. <https://theconversation.com/first-nations-impersonment-is-already-at-a-record-high-unless-government-policy-changes-it-will-only-get-worse-226612>
2. <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/youth-justice/youth-detention-population-in-australia-2024/contents/summary/first-nations-young-people-in-detention>
3. <https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/310>
4. <https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/128>
5. <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/view-the-statement/>
6. Minutes of the National Congress Executive held Tuesday 15 August 2017
7. ASC Resolution 23.22.02 Uniting for the Voice
8. <https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/647>
9. https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf
10. 17th Assembly: <https://uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/C-Prop-11-Uniting-Aboriginal-and-Islander-Christian-Congress-Proposals-1.pdf>



RENEWAL OF THE WHOLE CREATION

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OUR VISION:

We seek the flourishing of the whole of God's creation and all its creatures. We act to renew the earth from the damage done and stand in solidarity with people most impacted by human-induced climate change. Government, churches, businesses and the wider community work together for a sustainable future.



OUR HOPES

- That we affirm and seek the guiding wisdom of First Peoples and cultures who have lived as part of this place for countless generations.
- That First Peoples have direct involvement in the management of land and waters, and in all environmental practices. That we recognise connection to Country is of central importance to First Peoples and that the recognition of Indigenous rights in land and sea and sky is fundamental to a healthy and sustainable environment.
- That all people in Australia are given - and will embrace - the opportunity to feel deeply connected to our natural environment. That all will recognise the gift of living amongst all this unique diversity and seek to protect it — thinking deeply about our place in the world and our responsibilities to the web of life.
- That we will see the whole of creation as interdependent, and learn to live in harmony with the whole created order. That we recognize old definitions of sentience and non-sentience are being theologically challenged. That we become open to the growing scientific edges which understand that all biology is ecology and that we are part of an interconnected community.
- That we believe in the good news that enables all people to understand themselves as inter-related participants in an evolving journey of the Universe. On this journey every being has the opportunity to contribute their unique gifts.
- That we create a culture where the desire to protect, sustain and restore our environment overrides the desire to consume and our “throw-away” society. That we take a new approach to design and waste management where products are built to last and to re-enter the environment.
- That all levels of government would implement laws, regulations and system-level approaches to minimising environmental waste, improving waste management systems, and promoting sustainability across production and consumption processes.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

- Global temperatures are rising as human activity pollutes the atmosphere with greenhouse gases.
- Australia faces significant climate change impacts: rising sea levels, extreme heat and storms, longer droughts and bushfire seasons and the loss of World Heritage coral reefs and forests.
- First Nations leaders from remote islands are facing rising sea levels threatening to displace their communities. There will be more and more legal cases against the Australian government over climate inaction.
- Our neighbours in the Pacific and elsewhere are suffering with the impacts of climate and while Australia is providing migration pathways for people from Tuvalu facing the existential threat of climate change-which is the world’s first bilateral agreement on climate mobility-at the same time our Government is failing to reduce the export of fossil fuels and the is continuing to allow new coal and gas projects across Australia.
- Regional and remote Aboriginal housing is not able to withstand climate change and will be unsuitable for future living, forcing people to consider migrating away from their traditional lands if nothing is done. But even the best-kept housing will not be enough to protect people from the worst impacts of climate change, according to the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI).¹
- Currently a majority of Australia’s energy relies on traditional sources—non-renewable fossil fuels. Coal and gas account for about 63% of electricity generation² however, the chair of the government’s Energy Security Board has pointed out that coal-fired power stations will close, as they can no longer compete with renewable energy generation.
- Unless the Commonwealth Government adopts more ambitious and rapid transition policies, Australia will not meet our international commitments and will undermine collective efforts to prevent a rapid and dangerous escalation of climate change. Our 2030 emissions reduction target will not enable us to contribute our fair

share toward the Paris target of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (a 45-60% reduction is recommended).

- Commonwealth Government policies are failing to support the necessary transition to renewables, especially for communities who are currently reliant on coal and other carbon intensive industries and sources of employment.
- We have an opportunity to decarbonise transport and support Australia's goal of reaching net zero by 2050. The deployment of existing technologies will need to accelerate and developing technologies will need to be taken up quickly as they mature. There will need to be changes in the vehicles Australians purchase and the way Australians travel, electrification of other transport types where possible and new liquid fuels or hydrogen where it is not, and new supporting infrastructure. Technologies are available now to reduce emissions, from light vehicles in the form of battery electric vehicles and active and public transport options. These technologies must be made more affordable and accessible to all not just the wealthy
- There is a growing fossil fuel divestment movement and significant private investment in solar panels, renewable energy and electric vehicles.
- There is a strong public appetite for, and uptake of renewables. Over 2 million Australian households have now installed solar panels but there is a need for more equitable access for all people.
- Climate change, and policy responses to it, often affect low-income and vulnerable people more than others, exacerbating existing inequalities and vulnerabilities. People experiencing poverty often live in areas more susceptible to climate change and in housing that is less resistant; lose more when affected by climate disasters; have fewer resources to mitigate the effects; and have less assets and financial resources to rebuild and recover from the impacts.
- The Australian Energy Market Operator has outlined a 20-year transition plan³ towards renewable energy generation. They have assessed that the lowest cost and least regret future is a transition to renewable energy and the closure of coal-fired power stations. While there will be both costs and benefits as we transition to a clean economy, the burden on low-income and vulnerable households will be greatest without a carefully planned and managed approach.

- Such careful planning is being undermined by a renewed discussion around impractical, costly nuclear solutions which Australia's Climate Change Authority has demonstrated will further delay Australia's reduction of emissions.
- At least 90 species have become extinct in Australia over the past two centuries. Australia now has the most mammalian extinctions in the world, including the first mammal declared extinct from anthropogenic climate change — the Bramble Cay melomys.
- Our natural environment is in a state of radical decline - Australia is a land of amazing biodiversity however we are failing to protect it. According to the last State of the Environment Report, the main pressures facing the Australian environment are: climate change, land-use change, habitat fragmentation and degradation, invasive species and multiple overlapping pressures on the same ecosystems.

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- **We call** upon people to recognise that, fundamentally, creation is God's outpouring of incarnational love in which we are invited to participate. That inter-relationship of creator and creation is seen in passages such as in the Gospel of John (John 15:1 – 7), where Jesus tells us that "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."
- **We name** that the earth is God's (Psalm 24: 1 – 2; 89: 11) and while humanity has been entrusted with care of God's creation (Genesis 1: 26 – 31), we are only stewards. The earth itself suffers "in bondage to decay" and "groans in labour pains", awaiting the freedom promised by the first fruits of the Spirit. (Romans 8: 19 – 23)

This suffering of the creation is regularly linked with human sin and culpability. (Jeremiah 2: 7; Hosea 4: 1 – 3) The exploitation of the earth, which often sees the poorest disproportionately suffering the results of damage and climate change is a manifestation of the sin of greed against which the biblical witnesses strongly warn. (Job 20: 12 – 29; Proverbs 1: 10 – 19; Matthew 23: 25 – 26; Luke 12: 15 – 21)

The destruction of our environment is the greatest theological, spiritual and moral problem of our time and it is our urgent work to call ourselves to account and action. To put it bluntly, the ecological crises we face are grounded in the centuries-long spread of colonisation. Exploitation of the earth has been justified by conquest theologies and conquest spiritualities. This must be recognized, and this must be stopped.

- **We confess** that our Second Peoples have heard the wisdom of the First Peoples, the call of our Partner Churches, and the stories of communities already affected by climate change, but we have not listened. We have failed to act as a whole Church with the level of urgency needed, and have not made the fundamental behavioural changes needed to care for creation.
- **We confess** that while effort has been made to change from ways that destroy the Creator's good creation, carbon pollution continues as a direct result of our activities individually and as a Church, and global carbon pollution is now causing irreversible harm.
- **We recognise** that younger people know that as a species and as a planet, we are in trouble. They know it in their hearts, their minds, and in their nervous systems. There are alarmingly high rates of "eco-anxiety" among our young people, and the countries with the highest proportion of people who are suffering from this worry are those most hard hit by catastrophic climate change fuelled natural disasters.

The most common emotions named by young people are sadness, anxiousness, anger, powerlessness, and a prevailing sense that their urgent environmental concerns are being ignored by older generations. In the scriptures (Matthew 18:6), Jesus tells us that if we cause our little ones to sin (to break, fall apart, lose hope) it would be better for us to have a great millstone fastened around our necks and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Jesus calls for us to care for the most vulnerable amongst us and right now the 'most vulnerable' is our natural world and those who will inherit it. We rejoice that the earth itself is a witness to the glory of God (Psalm 19:1 – 4) and the Leadership of Christ (Luke 19: 38 – 40) and it is important for Christians to ensure that this witness is enhanced and not destroyed by our actions and approaches.

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

Basis of Union (1992 edition, Paragraph 3)

"God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end."

Statement to the Nation (1977)

"We are concerned with the basic human rights of future generations and will urge the wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources for their use and enjoyment."

The Rights of Nature and the Rights of Future Generations (1991)

"We express the conviction that those who live today share responsibility for the ability of future generations to live in dignity, we support the attribution of rights not only to humans but also to nature, God's creation, and we reject the view that animate and inanimate nature are mere objects which stand at the arbitrary disposal of the human."

For the Sake of the Planet and All its People (2006)

"We renew our commitment to move towards sustainable non-exploitative living, believing that God's creation—the earth itself and all the life that it supports—is precious and the earth's resources exist for the good of all now as well as future generations."

"The Uniting Church regards climate change as a serious threat to the future and integrity of life on earth... therefore challenges the way we live in a fundamental way."

Resolution 36 from the 16th Assembly (2022)⁴

Among a list of resolutions, the Assembly resolved:

- d) To work with First Peoples in Australia and our church partners in the Pacific, Africa and Asia and other faiths to together understand the impacts of climate change

on traditional, spiritual and contemporary ways of life;

e) To encourage Uniting Church members, synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies and schools to:

- i. Continue to inform themselves and their communities about the causes and consequences of climate change and appropriate responses;
- ii. Advocate for government policies and political action to address the climate catastrophe.
- iii. Listen to and learn from the voices of vulnerable people across the world who are experiencing firsthand the impact of the climate catastrophe
- iv. Consider ways we can reduce our contribution to climate change, individually and in our communities, set meaningful targets and be transparent with our efforts and outcomes;

Resolution from the 17th Assembly

The UCA recognised Laudato Si as a document of continuing witness.⁵ This document written by Pope Francis calls for climate justice, care for all beings, and action on climate to protect the most vulnerable of Earth's community.

OUR ASKS:

1. A national climate policy and plan for a just, equitable and rapid transition to a low-carbon economy, that drives down greenhouse gas pollution, including no new coal or gas mining in Australia and investment in renewable energy.
2. Just and sustainable transition for communities currently dependent on carbon intensive industries for employment, towards more environmentally sustainable sources of income.
3. Equitable access to renewables and energy efficient upgrades for all people in Australia.
4. Policies which support people, nations and ecosystems that are most vulnerable to climate change, including measures to strengthen the resilience of communities and support people and the services they rely on to adapt to the effects of climate change.

5. Increased natural and marine protection zones, better land care and water management and radically improved environmental laws.
6. On-going support for a Climate Trigger to assess all future projects (such as new mines or high emission industrial plants) on the climate harms they'd potentially cause.
7. Policies which support farmers who have already or want to transition to more sustainable agricultural techniques.
8. Strong environmental laws with independent assessment processes and strict enforcement of both protections and rehabilitation requirements.
9. Protection of old-growth forests from logging. These forests are some of the most important habitats on Earth and are vital for climate change mitigation and biodiversity.
10. Greater funding to control invasive species.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or more of these questions to put to MPs or community leaders.

1. What emissions targets should Australia have in place?
2. How will you support and invest in the transition to renewable energy?
3. How will you support just transitions and retraining for people moving into more environmentally sustainable industries?
4. How will you help Australia contribute to international efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change?
5. What provision should Australia make for people displaced by climate change?
6. What policies do you have to protect Australia's natural environment, water bodies and plant and animal life?
7. How will you help people in Australia move away from a throw-away culture?
8. What household and local community approaches are being/could be considered in your church and wider community?

9. Climate change is a complex area for people to engage in. How can you help inform and motivate your community for action?

References:

1. <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/brief/Climate-change-and-low-income-housing>
2. <https://www.energy.gov.au/energy-data/australian-energy-statistics/data-charts/australian-electricity-generation-fuel-mix>
3. <https://aemo.com.au/energy-systems/major-publications/integrated-system-plan-isp>
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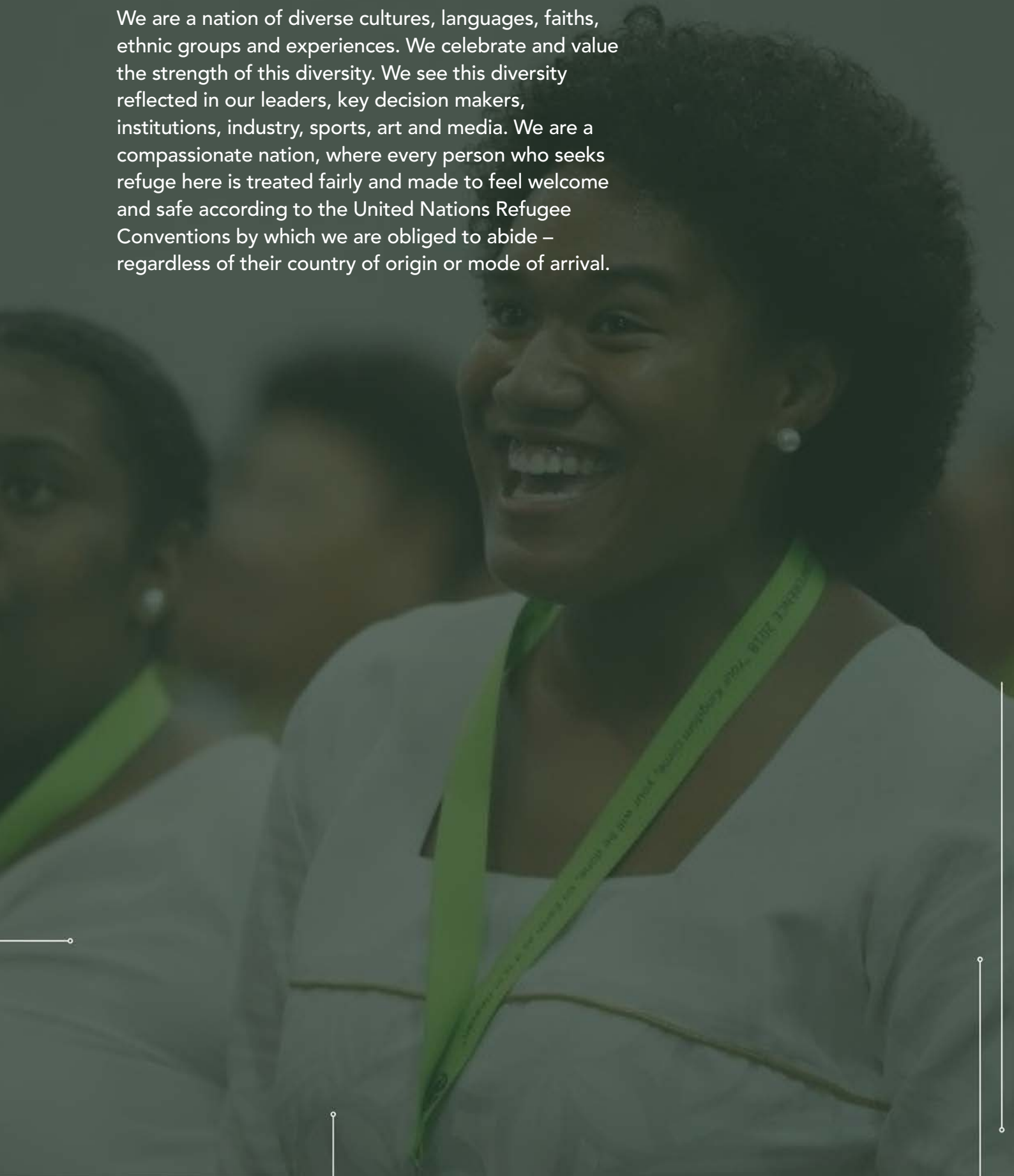


**A WELCOMING,
COMPASSIONATE
AND DIVERSE
NATION**

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OUR VISION:

We are a nation of diverse cultures, languages, faiths, ethnic groups and experiences. We celebrate and value the strength of this diversity. We see this diversity reflected in our leaders, key decision makers, institutions, industry, sports, art and media. We are a compassionate nation, where every person who seeks refuge here is treated fairly and made to feel welcome and safe according to the United Nations Refugee Conventions by which we are obliged to abide – regardless of their country of origin or mode of arrival.



OUR HOPES

- All people experience the same rights, free from preconceptions, stereotypes and discrimination.
- A person's race, religion, ability or cultural background is no barrier to them living, working and participating as an equal member of society.
- Our society's diversity is celebrated. Racial discrimination and fear are no longer used to win political favour and Anti-Racism strategies are adopted to counter the experience of increasing racism by many Australians.
- People who come to Australia – either as migrants, refugees or people seeking asylum – are treated equally and fairly, and their contributions to Australia appreciated and celebrated.
- Safe resettlement pathways exist in our region for people who seek asylum.
- People who come to Australia seeking asylum are given the opportunity to apply for protection in a safe and timely manner and are provided with appropriate support. Detention is a last resort and length of detention is capped to not more than 90 days for those that do not pose a serious risk to public health or safety.
- People found to be refugees are granted permanent visas with access to Government support and family reunion without delay.
- Our humanitarian intake is generous and responsive to global needs.
- Our leaders set an example by showing fairness and compassion and enacting policy that is humane.
- Migrants, refugees and people seeking asylum are given access to basic government services and supports like Medicare, Centrelink and other public services without restriction or waiting periods.
- Disability is not used as the basis for excluding people from resettlement.

RACISM IN CONTEMPORARY AUSTRALIA

- The UCA strongly supports the principles which the Race Relations Commissioner suggests could guide a National Framework. A national framework should build on shared values of equality, freedom, fairness and a 'fair go'.
- It should recognise and acknowledge Australia's:
 - Ancient Indigenous heritage and the unique place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia.
 - Historical British heritage, brought to the colonies by the early settlers.
 - Diverse multicultural heritage, with increasing waves of migrants from different parts of the world.
- A national framework should also acknowledge Australia's geo-political location in the Asia-Pacific region in the 'Asian century' as well as being capable of embracing the history and circumstances of Australia's diverse diaspora communities.
- We also believe that the Framework should be informed by Australia's human rights obligations, which are often ignored by our Federal government, despite Australia being a signatory.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

People seeking asylum are detained indefinitely in offshore detention

- Despite the release of children from detention, there remain over 200 refugees who were transferred offshore to PNG and Nauru. The current dispute between Australia and PNG about responsibility for the welfare of these people has resulted in homelessness and destitution for stateless refugees who are not permitted to work or receive income support.

No fair process and permanent protection for people seeking safety in Australia

- The current 'fast-track' process for assessing

people's claims for protection has created a complex system that is difficult for people in the community to navigate. Delays of years in assessing their claims leaves these people totally dependent on charities for financial support. We appreciate the abolition of fast-track policy and Immigration Assessment Authority, and introducing the Administrative Review Tribunal.

- Those found to be refugees are currently placed on Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) for three years or Safe Haven Enterprise Visas (SHEV) for five years. They must reapply for their visas every three or five years, potentially for the rest of their lives. We appreciate the introduction to Resolution of Status (RoS) Visa to 19,000 applicants.
- Those on a TPV or any other similar visas given to the recent arrivals from countries like Palestine, Ukraine and Afghanistan live in a state of limbo – they do not have the same access to family reunion, services, support, education and employment as those with a Permanent Protection Visa.

Migration Amendment Bill 2024

- The Uniting Church in Australia believes that the recent Migration Amendment Bill 2024 passed by the Australian Parliament on 28 November 2024 fails to meet the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Parliament passed three controversial migration bills, increasing powers to deport non-citizens, reverse refugee protection, enact travel bans and enforce strict detention measures, including confiscating phones.
- The UCA endorses the views in the submission on the Bill from the Australian Human Rights Commission¹.

People seeking asylum in the Asia-Pacific region are not provided with adequate pathways to protection

- The UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported that in 2020 there were over 4 million refugees in the Asia-Pacific region, which does not include people internally displaced in their own country. Including both refugees and people seeking asylum the two largest sources in our region were 2.6

million people from Afghanistan and 1.1 million from Myanmar.

- Australia's annual refugee intake has been reduced since the pandemic, with the reduction in numbers continuing, as a result of the recent decisions regarding all migrant intakes from 2024 onwards.
- People are vilified, abused and discriminated against for being different.
- 18 percent of people in Australia say they have experienced discrimination because of skin colour, ethnic origin or religion (2023)².
- Around one in three (33%) of recent migrants said they faced hurdles in finding their first job (2019)³.
- Australian Muslim women who ventured out on their own were almost three times more likely to face harassment of an Islamophobic nature.
- The Government's recent appointment of Special Envoys to counter Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia has been a response to the rise of obvious discrimination against two groups, but many other minorities have provided evidence of discrimination yet to be acknowledged and addressed. See AHRC campaign Racism: It Stops with Me.

Waiting periods for migrants to access services

- There is an increasing trend toward excluding migrants (including expanded and extended waiting periods for new permanent residents) from social security and basic social protections afforded to other residents and citizens. This includes access to social security and family payments, childcare subsidies, paid parental leave, subsidised education, etc. This discrimination risks creating a two-tier society, in which one class of residents are denied the basic supports and protections that citizens and other residents take for granted.

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- The laws of the covenant regularly require Israel to make room for those who come from outside Israel, to provide for their welfare, and to enable them to join the community and be subject to the same covenant—see for example Exodus 12: 48 – 49;

Leviticus 18: 26; 19: 9 – 10, 33 – 34.

- The prophets pointed toward a future where those of other nations came to Israel, joining in harmony and worship of God (Isaiah 14:1; Micah 4: 1 – 3).
- They also taught the vital importance of acting with mercy and compassion toward those within Israel who were in need (Isaiah 1: 16 – 17; 3: 13 – 15; 58: 6 – 7), and that God answers the cries of the poor (Isaiah 41: 17; Ezekiel 22: 29 – 31; see also Luke 1: 46 – 55).
- This call to compassion is echoed and indeed strengthened in Jesus' life and teaching (Matthew 25: 31 – 46; Luke 6: 20 – 25, & Matthew 25:31-46).
- The early church and the writers of the New Testament strongly picked up this theme of care for people in need in the lives of their community and in their own teaching (Acts 2: 44 – 45; 4: 32 – 35; Hebrews 13: 1 – 3; James 1: 27; 1 John 4: 19 – 21).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

Statement to the Nation (1977)

"We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, the need for integrity in public life, the proclamation of truth and justice, the rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race."

Asylum seeker and refugee policy (2002).

"We approach the issue of asylum seekers and refugees in the context of the words of Jesus. He spoke of a new community established on righteousness and love, and based on a fellowship of reconciliation — a community in which all members work together for the good of the whole. In essence, working for this kind of society is our contribution to civil society. When we work for freedom, human rights and the common good of the community we are expressing our faith. It is an outworking of the community of God."

This policy arises from the Uniting Church in Australia's belief in the inherent dignity of all people. The principles it expresses reflect the Church's commitment to work for justice and to oppose all forms of discrimination. These principles should underpin Australia's policies, legislation and practices toward asylum seekers, refugees and humanitarian entrants."

Dignity in Humanity (2006)

"In Jesus Christ we discern that which is truly human. As we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger and care for the thirsty, the sick and the imprisoned, there is the mysterious possibility that we will discover the life of Christ among us (Matthew 25: 31-46), and share the love of God."

Shelter from the Storm (2015)

This major statement describes Principles for Good Policy for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees:

- All people should be treated with respect and accorded the dignity they deserve as human beings.
- As one of the wealthiest, safest and most secure countries in the world, Australia should do its fair share to ease people's sufferings in the context of what is a global problem. We must not shift our responsibilities to poor and developing countries.
- Australia's policies relating to asylum seekers should be driven by bipartisan commitments to a humanitarian response focussed on protection needs and to upholding our obligations under international law.
- The Australian Government must be transparent in the implementation of its policies, open to scrutiny by the courts and the media and to critique and advocacy from civil society.
- The media should not demonise or inflame prejudice against asylum seekers and refugees by deliberately promoting misunderstanding.

OUR ASKS

1. Australia should work proactively with nations in Asia-Pacific and with agencies working on the ground to ensure that refugees and people seeking asylum moving through the region are safe, have access to services, have their claims assessed and can begin to rebuild their lives.
2. Increase Australia's humanitarian intake of refugees.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or two of these questions to put to MPs or community leaders

3. An end to the policy of indefinite, mandatory detention for people seeking asylum, starting with an end to offshore processing with all asylum seekers brought onshore.
 4. Introduction of a revised, and affordable Refugee Sponsorship Program that would enable individuals and community groups to more easily sponsor refugees to settle in Australia, in addition to the existing humanitarian intake.
 5. A fair, robust and timely process for assessing the protection claims of people seeking asylum.
 6. Those found to be refugees are granted permanent protection so they can begin to rebuild their lives and contribute to Australian society.
 7. Legislative safeguards are enacted to protect against arbitrary and indefinite detention in Australia, including for refugees whose visas are cancelled but cannot return to their country of origin due to the risk of persecution or refusal of states to readmit them.
 8. A review of the Migration Amendment Bill 2024 must be initiated early in 2025 to allow adequate submissions regarding the impact this reaction to the recent High Court decisions on immigration.
 9. In addition, the UCA calls on the Australian Government to develop and promote human rights education, in order to “foster mutual understanding, healthy and harmonious communities, and justice and peace.”
 10. Explore and implement strategies which address racial and religious discrimination in Australia and build harmony among diverse communities.
 11. New permanent residents should be eligible for social security and other basic protections immediately upon having their permanency granted.
 12. All asylum seekers awaiting determination of their applications for refugee status should be entitled to basic support while their cases are considered.
1. What are your policies to support the fair treatment and processing of people seeking asylum?
 2. What will you do to create a more responsive humanitarian intake program?
 3. What leadership can Australia take in the Asia-Pacific region to respond to the unprecedented movement of people in our region and globally?
 4. What will your party or organisation do to combat racial and religious discrimination and promote social cohesion and harmony in the community?
 5. What initiatives are currently in place or could be used within your local community to make it a place of welcome and support for refugees?
 6. What is your policy regarding extended waiting periods for new permanent residents from social security and basic social protections afforded to other residents and citizens?
 7. Will you support the request to the Government to review the Migration Amendment Act 2024?
 8. Will you support the Anti-Racism Framework developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission which is informed by Australia’s human rights obligations?

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AN ECONOMY FOR LIFE



“ OUR VISION:

Our government makes economic decisions that put people first: decisions that are good for creation, that lift people out of poverty and fairly share our country's wealth. The economy serves the well-being and flourishing of all people.

OUR HOPES

- Everyone has an affordable roof over their heads and food on their table.
 - People and families living in financial poverty are not belittled, diminished or demonised. We support each other through our relationships and our economic and social support infrastructure.
 - All people who are willing and able to participate in economic activity have the opportunity to do so (full employment), and those in paid work receive remuneration and conditions of employment which allow them and their families to thrive.
 - We have a fair distribution of wealth supported by a fair tax system. Everyone contributes taxes on an equitable basis so we can have the country we want.
 - We have a social security system and universal services that support people to live well, including access to income support for those who need it.
 - Those that have more wealth contribute more and there are no loopholes in the tax system. Corporations give back to our common wealth too. We all play by the same set of rules, contributing according to our means.
 - Taxes collected by governments deliver the things ordinary people care most about, including:
 - » All children have access to quality early childhood education and receive a quality education through early childhood education and care services, as well as through primary and secondary schooling.
 - » Universities and TAFEs are accessible and deliver quality higher education to all.
 - » Health, transport, disability and mental health services, aged care and other essential services are sustainably funded to meet demand and diverse community needs.
- collected 29.4% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in tax in 2022, compared to the average of wealthy (OECD) countries of 34.0%. Amongst OECD countries, only the governments of the USA, Türkiye, Ireland, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Switzerland, and Mexico collect less tax as a proportion of GDP¹.
- The lack of government revenue inhibits the ability of government to deliver the services that many people need.
 - Many features of our tax system favour people who are already wealthy and add to growing inequality. These include negative gearing on rental properties, the Capital Gains Tax discount that taxes profits on investments at half the rate of income generated by work and the superannuation system with its flat tax rate of 15%.
 - These tax arrangements encourage speculative investment in assets such as housing, leading to growing wealth inequalities and undermining economic resilience. Capital Gains Tax concessions and negative gearing benefits people who can afford to invest, increasing wealth inequalities, driving up house prices and household debt, and leaving people living on low incomes languishing in an expensive rental market. Removing these unfair tax breaks will not only help grow the revenue base to fund services but will redirect money away from tax sheltered locations into productive areas that support a stronger economy and more equitable wealth distribution.
 - Current tax and superannuation arrangements compound gender-based inequalities in income and wealth, and this contributes to the wealth inequalities that women experience over their lifetime². Future cuts to personal income tax will further deepen these gender-based inequalities
 - Billions in tax credits and subsidies support fossil fuel industries each year, including the fuel tax credit scheme and direct subsidies to specific industries³.

Poverty and inequality continue to grow in Australia

- The World Inequality Database (<https://wid.world/country/australia/>) shows that income distribution in Australia has matched the global trend for wealthy countries. Between the First World War and 1980, the share of income for the bottom 50% of Australians increased from 15.3% to 18.7%. The income share of the top 10% decreased from 36.6% to 24.9%. After 1980, the trend reversed with the rise of neoliberal economics favouring the wealthy.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

Our Tax System favours the wealthy

- Australia is a low-taxing country by comparison to other wealthy countries. Australian Governments

By 2022, the neoliberal economic policies pursued by Australian governments saw the income share of the bottom 50% of Australians drop to 16.4%, while the top 10% had their share increase to 32.9%. As French professor of economics Thomas Piketty has argued, "History shows that inequality is essentially ideological and political, not economic or technological."

- The group of people experiencing poverty the most are those relying on Government allowance payments⁴.
- Age Pensioners who rent are also at greater risk of poverty⁵.
- In the 2021 Census, over 122,000 people were homeless in Australia⁶.
- Renters are almost twice as likely to live in poverty as home-owners, with public housing tenants at greatest risk. The number of people in the private rental market is increasing. Among low-income households in the private rental market, 50% are facing rental stress and are therefore at risk of homelessness⁷.
- The rate of poverty for First Peoples remains higher than the broader community⁸.
- In 2021 the Federal Government increased JobSeeker and related payments by \$50 a fortnight, lifting the base rate to \$44 a day, still leaving people in poverty⁹.

The Cost-of-living crisis is also hitting the paid workforce and contributing to in-work poverty. Wage growth is struggling to keep ahead of inflation.

- The Senate Inquiry into Job Security stated: - "Job insecurity is at a crisis point in Australia. It is damaging the physical and mental health of Australian workers, and it is holding back Australian wages and the Australian economy"¹⁰.
- The variety of insecure work arrangements is expanding, but the psychological impact on workers remains consistent. Job insecurity has been associated with an increased likelihood of psychological distress and psychiatric morbidity.
- Through the use of labour hire intermediaries, gig platforms and dependent contracting, many

workers experiencing job insecurity cannot access their workplace rights, and do not have protection or bargaining power.¹¹

- Relief Centres across the Uniting Church in Australia are seeing waged people lining up for food support and emergency relief as their rents steepen and the latest bill shock hits. Whether it is power bills or the ability to fill the tank with petrol or unexpected medical bills, the reality is that more Australians are finding it harder to make ends meet.
- Women are more likely to be underemployed or in insecure employment, with ramifications for the gender pay gap and superannuation inequity.
- Women are also concentrated in industries with lower overall rates of pay, such as the care workforce.¹²
- Whilst there have been advances for aged and child care workers wages in the past year, there is still much work to do to address this disparity.
- Ten years of stagnant wages have started to turn but with inflation high and relative wage increases still lower, it is hard for people on low incomes to catch up.¹³

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- Israel's Covenant law clearly enshrines principles which ensure that all members of society are able to benefit from the economy and the means of production. This includes such provisions as the remission of debts after 7 years (Deuteronomy 15: 1 – 2), the return of property in the Jubilee year (Leviticus 25: 13 – 17), or rules prohibiting taking a millstone (the means of food production) as a surety (Deuteronomy 24: 6). There are also numerous provisions for those in need, such as leaving a proportion of crops in the field (Leviticus 19: 9 – 10, Deuteronomy 24:22), or laws against withholding the wages of the poor or taking their clothes as surety (Deuteronomy 24: 14 – 15, 17).
- Similarly Jesus regularly taught that financial gain was by far secondary to the obedience to God (Luke 12: 13 – 31), one significant part of which was the obligation to care for those in need (Matthew 25: 31 – 46; Mark 10: 17 – 22; Luke 6:30; 12:33 – 34; 14: 12 – 14).

- The early followers of Jesus made a clear priority of sharing their resources so that none should be in need (Acts 2: 44 – 45; 4: 32 – 35).
- Paul and other writers of the New Testament epistles regularly highlight the importance of sharing wealth and the blessing that this creates. See for example 2 Corinthians 9: 6 – 12; 1 Timothy 6: 17 – 19; James 2: 14 – 17. Even Paul’s injunctions regarding the Lord’s Supper are informed by his concern that differing levels of resource are creating divisions in the Corinthian church (1 Corinthians 11: 20 – 34).
- Possession of wealth leads to political power. Jesus challenges the model of seeking power over other people. In the Beatitudes, he states, “Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth” (Matthew 5:5). “Meek” here means “afflicted, poor, bowed down”. God’s reign will allow such people to “inherit the earth”.¹⁴

WHAT THE UCA SAID

The Statement to the Nation (1977) “We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We will challenge values which emphasise acquisitiveness and greed in disregard of the needs of others and which encourage a higher standard of living for the privileged in the face of the daily widening gap between the rich and poor.”

An Economy of Life: Re-Imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World

“An economy of life is marked by regard for the common good. Individualism, competition and greed deny human flourishing because the fullness of our humanity is not found in wealth but in relationship with each other and the world around us...”

In God’s household people are safe, secure, cared for and valued. The household shares all it has with concern for those most in need...

As we seek to address the failings of the current global economic system, the values of an economy of life would find their expression in an economic system which places the needs of people and the planet before profit.”

OUR ASKS

1. A fairer tax and superannuation system to address growing financial inequality including the introduction of laws which target tax evasion and avoidance.
2. Address growing inequality in access to decent and affordable housing.
3. Phase out fossil fuel subsidies and ensure tax arrangements support the transition to a clean economy.
4. Government policy must aim to not only reduce unemployment and underemployment, but also to improve the quality and stability of new jobs.
5. Labour standards should be maintained, or strengthened where necessary, to ensure the quality of work: ensuring employment is safe, sustainable and fair. Workers should have jobs they and their families can rely on, with fair and predictable pay and hours of work, and access to important protections and conditions.
6. Investment in the care workforce should not only increase employment opportunities but should be sufficient to increase pay and improve conditions.
7. Better support for people to re-enter the workforce, particularly for vulnerable groups exposed to compounding risks for long term unemployment.
8. Raising, and appropriately indexing, rates of income support and related payments including Jobseeker, Youth Allowance, Parenting Payments and rental assistance, to ensure they keep pace with the cost of living.
9. Remove taxation and other subsidies that add to inflationary pressures in the housing market and commit to a significant boost in funding to build and maintain more social housing.
10. Continue to review and address inequities in superannuation arrangements so that every worker benefits from an increase in financial security on retirement.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to ask one or more of the following questions in a small group discussion or select one or more to put to MPs or community leaders.

1. What priorities will your party or organisation focus on to direct government revenue back into the community?
2. What will your party do to stem growing income and wealth inequality in Australia, given it erodes social cohesion?
3. What can and should be done to address homelessness and housing affordability in Australia?
4. How can we increase support for people who experience barriers to gaining paid work, given that our economic philosophy requires that some people are locked out of paid employment?

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INCLUSIVE AND EQUAL SOCIETY



“
OUR VISION:

We live together in a society where all are equal, safe and free to exercise our rights equally, regardless of faith, cultural background, race, ability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity. We defend those rights for all.

OUR HOPES

- That all people are free to participate in society and exercise their right to be treated equally and without discrimination or prejudice, regardless of age, race, ability, income level, educational attainment, sexual orientation, or gender identity.
- That older people and people with disability are treated with respect and dignity and able to live their life to the full. Where they require supports to live independently, they have voice, choice and control around those supports.
- That every child can live their best life and realise their potential in later life.
- That every person is safe in their own home and community.
- That disability and age are not barriers to participating as an equal member of society.
- That people in Australia of all backgrounds and beliefs feel safe and able to challenge destructive and demeaning language and behaviour.
- That we have robust and responsive structures that ensure everyone can access the support they need, when and where they need it.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

Disadvantage is determined early in life

- 1 in 6 Australian children aged 0-14 years lived in poverty in 2019-2020.
- More than 1.3 million children live in a household where all or some go hungry and single parent households are hit the worst.¹
- More than 1 in 3 children living in the most disadvantaged locations have higher rates of developmental vulnerability when they start school, more than twice that of children in the least disadvantaged areas (14.9%).²
- Children from areas of greatest socioeconomic disadvantage are 10 times more likely to be under justice supervision.³

Many others face barriers to social and economic participation due to their faith, cultural background, race, ability, age, sexual orientation or gender identity

- The greatest determinant of where a person will end up in terms of wealth and income in our society is the wealth, income and education level of their parents.
- Abuse is most prevalent among physically, financially or emotionally vulnerable people.⁴
- Homelessness is a pervasive and growing issue across society. One in seven people experiencing homelessness are children under 12 years, one in four are young people aged between 12 and 24, and one in five are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.⁵
- 3.3 million people (13.4%) in Australia live below the poverty line, including one in six children.⁶
- Gender-based inequalities and discrimination disproportionately affect women and girls with disability. They face greater risk of violence, especially sexual violence, abuse and harassment.⁷
- People with high support needs, people living in rural and remote areas, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, members of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and members of LGBTIQ communities can face even greater difficulties accessing appropriate services and support, particularly when they belong to more than one of these groupings.⁸
- The need for combatting racism has been recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission as it released its 2024 "An Anti-Racism Framework". This is particularly pertinent at this time as Australia experiences rises in anti-semitism, islamophobia and racial slurs towards First Nations peoples.
- In 2022, 60% of First Nations people had experienced at least one form of racial prejudice, compared to 52% in 2020 and 43% in 2018.⁹
- One in six (18 per cent) people reported having experienced discrimination in the last 12 months prior to the survey due to their 'skin colour, ethnic origin or religion.'¹⁰
- Only 48% of people in Australia with disability are employed, compared to 80% of all working-age people,¹¹ with lower employment rates contributing to high rates of poverty.¹²

- A disproportionate number of LGBTIQ+ Australians experience poorer mental health outcomes and have higher risk of suicidal behaviours than their peers. These health outcomes are directly related to experiences of stigma, prejudice, discrimination and abuse on the basis of being LGBTIQ+.¹³

People with disability need better choice and control

- An estimated 1.4 million people with disability needed formal assistance from a service provider for at least one everyday living activity.¹⁴ Many people with disability face barriers in accessing services to support them or experience some form of discrimination.¹⁵
- The roll-out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) requires adequate resourcing by the Commonwealth, states and territories.
- The transition to the NDIS is having a significant impact on the support workforce, with some providers struggling to recruit and maintain a suitably skilled workforce.¹⁶
- Access to support staff and contracted services outside of the metropolitan area, especially in rural and remote communities, is another significant barrier for people with disabilities being able to negotiate adequate assistance.

High levels of family violence

- 104,000 people sought homelessness services in 2022–2023 due to domestic/family violence; this included 37,000 children, with women making up the majority (90%) of adults seeking support.¹⁷
- Approximately one in four women (23%) and one in 14 men have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner since the age of 15.¹⁸
- Domestic or family violence against women is a leading cause of homelessness for women.¹⁹

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- All people have been made in the image of God (Gen 1: 26 – 27).
- The prophet Isaiah’s vision of a servant of God, which Jesus later claimed for himself, was of someone who lightens the burden of workers, breaks chains and brings freedom to the oppressed, brings good news to the poor and comforts the broken hearted (Isaiah 58: 6; 61: 1; cf. Luke 4: 18).
- Jesus is described as coming to enable a rich and full life (John 10:10). During his ministry he regularly crossed social boundaries, including within his ministry many who were otherwise dismissed or avoided by his society including “sinners and tax collectors” (Matthew 9:10 – 11; 11: 19), Samaritans and other non-Israelites (Luke 17: 11 – 19; John 4: 7 – 30), lepers (Matthew 8: 1 – 4; 11: 4 – 6) and women, including those seen as unclean or undesirable (Matthew 9: 18 – 26; Luke 7 36 – 50; 8: 1 – 3). Jesus even taught that enemies should be treated with love and care (Matthew 5: 43 – 48).
- The New Testament epistles look toward a community for all with no distinctions or favouritism (Galatians 3: 28, James 2: 1 – 9) and a final gathering in of all nations and peoples (Revelation 7: 9 – 10; 22: 22 – 26, Colossians 1:20).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

The Basis of Union (1971, 1992 Edition)

“God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church’s call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation...”

The Statement to the Nation (1977)

“We affirm our eagerness to uphold basic Christian values and principles, such as the importance of every human being, ... rights for each citizen to participate in decision-making in the community, religious liberty and personal dignity, and a concern for the welfare of the whole human race.

We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate healthcare, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.”

Australian Bicentennial Year Statement (1988)

“We give thanks for those times when the Australian society has established justice, equality, and mutual respect among people; has placed care for the people who have least above sectional interests; has welcomed new migrants and refugees; has exercised solidarity and friendship in times of crisis in Australia across divisions of race and culture...

We deplore the divisions of humanity along racial, cultural, political, economic, sexual and religious lines. In obedience to God, we struggle against all systems and attitudes which set person against person, group against group, or nation against nation.”

Reconciliation People: A Statement from the National Young Adult Leaders’ Conference (2010)

“We believe that we were all created equal and are one people in the eyes of God. We encourage our country to embrace and celebrate our diversity. We challenge our government to welcome, with empathy, those who seek refuge in our land. There is no supremacy of any culture or gender; rather, when we work together as a united people, in recognition of, but regardless of difference, we will bring about change.”

Pastoral Statement - Dr Deidre Palmer - Racism and Police Brutality UCA Assembly 3rd June 2020

“... We need to focus on the racism which blights our land, the racism, which leads to Aboriginal deaths in custody, which has First Peoples experiencing discrimination, poverty, ill health and disadvantage. We began this National Reconciliation week by saying we need to strengthen our actions for justice, healing and reconciliation. This is not an abstract call – it is seen expressed daily in our relationships with one another in this country. It is seen when we:

1. Call out racism
2. Tell the truth about the history of colonisation, dispossession and the undermining of First People’s culture, language and spirituality
3. Advocate for First People’s voice to be heard in determining their future
4. Respect and appreciate the culture and stories of First Peoples, and work together to deepen our relationships based on reconciliation that arises from justice, and leads to healing, and
5. Live in harmony with the sacred land that we share.

To stand by and remain silent is to be complicit in contributing to a system and world that is against God’s intention for us all. ‘What God desires is for us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God’. (Micah 6:8)”

OUR ASKS

1. People with disability and older people have access to appropriate, quality, well-funded services that meets their needs in the location they choose.
2. Safeguards are in place which protect against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation of older people and people with disability in line with the recommendations of relevant Royal Commissions.
3. Ensuring our legal system protects all people from discrimination.
4. The government needs to continue in its efforts to ensure people on the NDIS are not abused or exploited by providers and that fraud by providers continues to be curbed
5. Prioritise promoting inclusion and addressing all forms of discrimination in communities, including through awareness-raising, policies and action plans.
6. A comprehensive approach to preventing gender-based violence and domestic and family violence with targeted strategies for those most at risk. This includes challenging the social norms

7. Sustainable funding for services and housing which support survivors of domestic and family violence.
 8. Implement and adequately resource the National Plans to End Violence Against Women and Children including the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan.
 9. Ensure universal access to quality early learning and care for all children prior to their commencement of school.
 10. Significantly increase investment in prevention and early intervention programs to support vulnerable families.
 11. Ensure disadvantaged and 'at risk' families have access to vital supports, including social housing, early childhood education and care, health and domestic and family violence support services.
 12. Ensure social security and family payments settings provide adequate support to low- income families, including single-parent families.
- a) Offer care and support for older people?
 - b) Promote awareness of domestic and family violence and offer support for people impacted by this violence?
 - c) Offer care and support for people suffering from discrimination on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability?
 - d) Increase accessibility for and inclusion of people with disability and older people in your community?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or two of these questions to put to MPs or community leaders

1. What policies will ensure all children receive the best start in life?
2. How can we ensure older people in Australia are treated with dignity, and where care is needed, that they receive high quality care?
3. What is your commitment to the equality of women across our community and what actions will you take to promote this?
4. How will you tackle the high rates of domestic and family violence, both in terms of prevention and supporting people who are affected?
5. What is your response to discrimination based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability?
6. What initiatives are already happening or could happen in your local community that could:

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FLOURISHING COMMUNITIES, REGIONAL, REMOTE AND URBAN



“

OUR VISION:

We live in communities where we are connected and we care for one another. In communities all over Australia, from our big cities to remote regions, we seek the well-being of each Australian and uplift those who are on the margins.

OUR HOPES

- We are connected. There is a high level of social participation. People feel a strong sense of identity and of belonging. Communities are places of safety and inclusion for all people.
- We create safe spaces in our homes, in the wider community, online and in our places of faith.
- Rural, regional and remote communities thrive. They have access to critical services, including health, education and technology. They experience food and water security and have the connectivity needed for effective communications and for people to be safe.
- Costs of living for essential services including food, housing, education, health care and transport are affordable, particularly for communities in rural and remote Australia.
- There is wide representation in our decision making from different ages, cultures, abilities, religion, gender, sexuality and geography. People are free to express their own ideas.
- Our lifestyle and culture promote good mental health and our governments, workplaces and communities have policies and practices which support this. Appropriate mental health support services are made available across all communities and especially in rural and remote areas.
- All people can access the essential services they need, whether that is protection from violence and abuse, quality care, medical services, or harm reduction services. This includes younger and older generations, people at the end of life, people with disability, First Peoples and people at risk of experiencing violence.

THE STATE OF THE NATION

High rates of mental illness

- In the last 12 months, 1 in 5 people in Australia have experienced a mental illness and around 43% of Australians will experience a mental illness at some point in their lifetime¹.

Lack of Safe Spaces

- In 2022-23 about 1 in 32 children (180,000) came in

contact with the child protection system².

- 1 in 5 Australian young people reported being socially excluded, threatened or abused online³.
- As many as 1 in 3 children report being the target of school bullying on a regular basis⁴.
- Workplace bullying is a significant factor in Australian workplaces, affecting 1 in 10 workers⁵.
- In 2021-22 an estimated 1.7 million Australian adults (8.7 per cent) experienced sexual harassment⁶.

Rural and remote communities are suffering

- Rural areas contribute at least 80% of Australia's exports, valued at almost \$500 billion a year. They also contribute to almost 50% of tourism revenue and produce 90% of the food we consume⁷.
- Large parts of Australia are experiencing more frequent damaging weather events, while many are also continuing to recover and rebuild from previous natural disasters.
- Cost of living pressures are disproportionately impacting people in rural and remote communities. Factors include paying for groceries, fuel and services, rising freight costs, rising costs on repairs to vehicles and dwellings, unavailability or high costs of insurance for homes/contents, limited availability of housing and qualified tradespeople^{8,9}.
- People living in rural and remote areas of Australia tend to have shorter lives, higher levels of disease and injury, and poorer access to and use of health services, including mental health care, compared to people living in metropolitan areas¹⁰.
- Rates of self-harm and suicide increase with geographic remoteness¹¹.

WITNESS FROM THE BIBLE

- The witness of the Old Testament speaks to God's desire for communities of "shalom", a peace that encompasses fruitfulness, justice, wholeness and blessing for all people. See for example Genesis 1: 27 – 28; 12: 1 – 3; Psalms 72, 128; Isaiah 11: 1 – 9;

Jeremiah 29:7, Zechariah 8: 4 – 12.

- Likewise, Jesus spoke of bringing safety, life in abundance and peace (John 10: 7 – 10; 14: 27) and taught the importance of meeting the needs of those who were suffering (Matthew 25: 31 – 46). He identified love of God and of others as the primary obligations for shaping life (Matthew 22: 34 – 40).
- The New Testament epistles give a vision of a community of inclusion and peace (Romans 10: 12; Galatians 3: 28; Ephesians 4: 1 – 3) and highlight the importance of love for all in enabling this vision (Romans 12: 9 – 13; 13: 8 – 10; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5: 13 – 14; 1 John 4: 16 – 21).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

The Statement to the Nation (1977)

“We affirm the rights of all people to equal educational opportunities, adequate healthcare, freedom of speech, employment or dignity in unemployment if work is not available. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.”

Dignity in Humanity: A Uniting Church Statement on Human Rights (2006)

“The image of God that is reflected in human life, the form of life that corresponds to God, is the human community – all people – finding its life and sustenance in relationship.”

Thus, the Uniting Church believes that every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God’s children, and that each person’s life and rights need to be protected, or the human community (and its reflection of God) and all people are diminished.”

An Economy of Life: Reimagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World (2009)

“The Christian faith understands that God’s goal for life is wholeness. The Biblical stories, sacred witnesses to the history of our relationship with God, articulate a vision for human wholeness and wellbeing grounded in the values of the reign of God: love (of God and each other, even our enemy and especially those most vulnerable), justice, peace, grace, mercy and forgiveness, hospitality, inclusion, connectedness and compassion.”

OUR ASKS

1. Community approaches to building resilience, teaching respectful relationships, and identifying abuse and neglect.
2. Governments adequately fund health services, education, housing and support for existing communities and people seeking to settle in rural and remote communities.
3. Investment in rural infrastructure to help build community resilience and prepare for disasters.
4. All people have access to clean water, affordable food and housing, are connected to services and have opportunities to connect with people both physically and through reliable technology.
5. Isolated children are guaranteed access to quality education.
6. Governments address cost of living pressures, recognising and focusing on the particular impacts these pressures have on communities in rural and remote Australia.
7. Appropriate services for people living with mental illness are adequately funded, including initiatives to ensure appropriate services in rural and remote areas.
8. Continuing a whole-of-community approach to overcome stigma and discrimination against mental illness and people who experience mental illness.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or more questions to put to MPs or community leaders:

1. How will you support communities impacted by extreme weather and natural disasters?
2. What policies will you put in place to address mental health, including in rural and remote Australia?
3. How are you addressing / will you address bullying

and harassment in our workplaces and schools?

4. What local initiatives are possible to address important social issues including mental health, illicit drug use and bullying?

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CONTRIBUTING
TO A JUST AND
PEACEFUL
WORLD



“
OUR VISION:

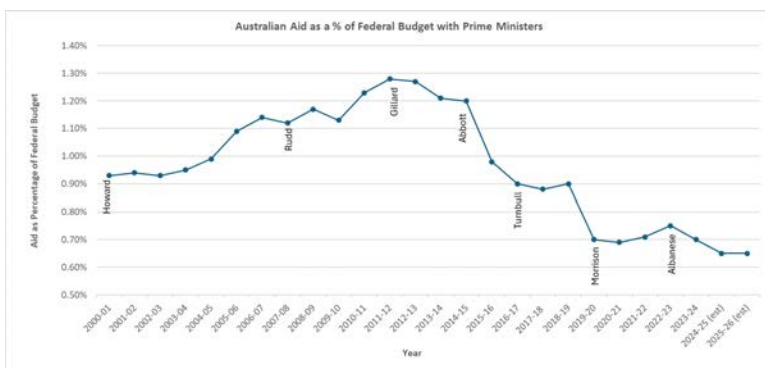
Australia acts with courage and conviction to build a just and peaceful world. We are a nation that works in partnership with other nations to dismantle the structural and historical causes of violence, injustice and inequality. Our government upholds human rights everywhere, acting in the best interests of all people and the planet.

OUR HOPES

- Australia is a good neighbour in our region and beyond, seeking the common good of people and planet alongside national interests.
- Australia upholds its international human rights obligations and uses United Nations mechanisms to strengthen human rights at home and abroad.
- Australia is a generous contributor to ending global poverty and inequality, with a timeline for increasing our international aid contribution to 1% of the Federal budget.
- Australia takes strong climate justice action, reducing emissions and funding loss and damage and climate adaptation in our neighbouring regions.
- Vulnerable people at risk of human trafficking are educated about their rights, have access to better opportunities and are protected by enforced anti-trafficking laws.
- The rights of seasonal workers in Australia are protected and local communities assist in providing pastoral care.
- Nations armed with nuclear weapons agree to destroy their stockpiles in accordance with a legally-binding, time-bound plan.
- A peacefully negotiated resolution for Israel and Palestine affirming the right for both the State of Israel and the State of Palestine to live side by side in peace and security.

THE STATE OF THE STATE & THE WORLD:

- Australia has stepped back its contributions to foreign aid.



- Australia's public spending on overseas aid has decreased to 0.65% of the Federal budget, compared to 1.3% under the Gillard government and 1.05% under the Howard government.
- In 2023, Australia ranked 26th out of the 31 OECD countries in generosity, measuring aid as a fraction of Gross National Income.
- This is in the face of increasing need: One in five children live in a conflict zone, there's been an 80% increase in humanitarian need since 2019, 700 million people live in extreme poverty.
- As of 2023, according to Forbes, Australians ranked second in the world in terms of median wealth and fifth in terms of average wealth. Australian incomes are 87 times higher on average than incomes of people in the poorest countries.
- Globally, there are many conflicts, causing thousands of lives lost and numerous people displaced, for example, the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Israel-Palestine conflict, and internal conflicts within a nation, including but not limited to Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, and Ethiopia.

THE WITNESS FROM THE SCRIPTURE

- God's call and God's blessing is focused toward the sharing of blessing with others (Genesis 12:1–3).
- The prophet Isaiah's vision of a servant of God, which Jesus later claimed for himself, was of someone who lightens the burden of workers, breaks chains and brings freedom to the oppressed, brings good news to the poor and comforts the broken hearted (Isaiah 58: 6, 61: 1; cf. Luke 4: 18).
- Jesus teaching consistently calls for a love of all people, even enemies (Matthew 5: 43–44), and his disciples are called to be "peacemakers" (Matthew 5: 9), to the "ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5: 18) and to pursuing peace with everyone (Hebrews 12: 14).
- The New Testament teaches that when one suffers, all suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:26), and calls us to care for others not just ourselves (Romans 12: 9–13; Philippians 2: 1–4; Galatians 6: 3).

WHAT THE UCA AFFIRMS

While the UCA has not passed specific resolutions regarding all the recent developments in the global context, they are worth noting. In the post-COVID world, we see a number of countries in which the rights and freedoms of civil society are curtailed by rising authoritarian rule. Across the nations, we see an increase in military and security considerations dominate foreign policy. We see a weakening of commitment to international law. Nonetheless, the following lists all the major resolutions passed since the inception of the UCA, which reflects where the Church stands and affirms.

The Statement to the Nation (1977)

“We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur. We will work for the eradication of poverty and racism within our society and beyond. We affirm the rights of all people to equal opportunities. We will oppose all forms of discrimination which infringe basic rights and freedoms.”

Peace and Disarmament (1982)

The Assembly resolved to:

Acknowledge that God came in the crucified and risen Christ to make peace; that he calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to save life, to heal and to love their neighbours. The call of Christ to make peace is the norm, and the onus of proof rests on any who resort to military force as a means of solving international disputes;

Affirm that the Uniting Church is committed to be a peacemaking body, seeking to follow the Lord of the Church by encouraging political authorities to resolve political tensions by peaceful means.

Call on the members of the Uniting Church in Australia to support and engage in peacemaking programs and resist reliance on military solutions to political problems.

Overseas Aid (2015)

The Assembly resolved to:

- a. Affirm that Australian development aid, funded by the government, church and individuals, is an effective and powerful way of combating poverty and injustice throughout the world, thereby

addressing the root causes of conflict, instability, people displacement and disease.

- b. Express profound concern regarding the recent cuts that will reduce Australian government aid to the lowest levels in our history.
- c. Call on the Federal Government to:
 - i. Restore overseas aid funding cut from the 2015-16 budget; and
 - ii. Announce a credible timetable to allocate 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income to Australia's overseas aid program, commensurate with Australian's international Obligations.

Palestine

In 2015, the Assembly resolved to:

- a) Receive the requests from the Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, the Kairos Palestine movement and the World Council of Churches to act in response to the plight of the people of Palestine. The UCA has issued a number of statements in solidarity with our partner churches in response to communal and religious conflict, and political tension in the life of their societies.

In April 2024, the Assembly Standing Committee passed a resolution which:

- Condemned all atrocities and acts of brutality which make peace efforts impossible.
- Called on the Australian Government to do all it can to facilitate a just peace in the Holy Land including supporting the International Court of Justice in its measures to prevent genocide, supporting peace-making organisations and imposing targeted sanctions on Israeli settlers responsible for serious human rights abuses against Palestinians.
- Called on the Israeli Government to end extrajudicial killings and impunity for members of the Israeli security forces and settlers that murder Palestinians and to abolish the practice of detaining Palestinians without charge.

OUR ASKS

Foreign Aid

1. Scale up Australia's aid program to at least 1% of the Federal budget in next term of government.
2. Recommit Australia to the internationally agreed target of contributing 0.7 per cent of GNI to overseas aid by 2030.
3. Deliver aid in ways that strengthen democratic freedom and accountability, strengthening civil society, greater community ownership and deeper impact.
4. Support developing nations to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.
5. Contribute our fair share towards the climate loss and damage fund.

Slavery & Human Trafficking

People across our region are trapped in modern slavery and vulnerable to human trafficking

- An estimated 27.6 million men, women, and children were trapped in forced labour on any given day in 2021.
 - Far too many are being exploited to produce goods and services that people in Australia enjoy.
 - People are vulnerable to trafficking and modern slavery for a number of reasons, including lack of education and employment opportunities, discrimination and social isolation, and lack of protection by adults or social systems⁸⁷.
 - Australia has introduced a Modern Slavery Act and an Australian Anti-Slavery Commissioner, which can assist in the struggle against modern day slavery and human trafficking in the supply chains of businesses.
1. Commit to requiring businesses importing goods with high risk of modern slavery in their production

to thoroughly investigate their suppliers to adequately address the Risk.

2. Introduce a mechanism to hold goods at the border if there is strong evidence they have been produced with the involvement of modern slavery.

Global Conflicts

1. Palestine-Israel

Despite the current cease-fire agreement between Palestine and Israel, we are yet to achieve just peace. Therefore, it is paramount to support international efforts towards a just and lasting peace in Palestine and Israel.

- Ongoing Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 2023 leading to tens of thousands of deaths and potential genocide of the Palestinian people. Palestinians also continue to be held without charge in Israel.
- Violent attacks on the people of Israel by Hamas resulted in over 1,100 deaths on October 7 2023, and Israelis continue to be held in hostage situations and Israelis continue to be killed in attacks by Palestinians.
- Palestinians have suffered decades of injustice in the Occupied Palestinian Territory under Israeli occupation, in what has often been described as an 'open air prison', without proper access to power, water, health services and travel.
- Palestinian and Jewish communities around the world are facing rising discrimination and abuse as a result of this conflict. Growing polarisation has reduced the opportunities for dialogue and understanding, with increasing calls for extreme positions of no sharing of territory by people on both sides.
- Whilst Australia has taken some measures towards supporting a just and lasting peace, as at December 2024 it is yet to commit to:
 - A comprehensive national arms embargo on Israel and all other armed groups in the conflict.
 - Imposing targeted sanctions against Israeli individuals and entities involved in Israel's

illegal occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, and the attempted genocide of the Palestinian people, as per our international obligations.

- While the prospect for a permanent cease-fire is uncertain, but there are organisations of Palestinians and Israelis that work for a just and lasting peace through non-violent means.

2. West Papua-Papua (Indonesia)

Conflict in West Papua and Papua (Indonesia) has not been resolved.

- Indigenous Papuans (from the Indonesian Provinces of Papua and West Papua) are facing violence from Indonesian security forces, racial discrimination, exploitation of natural resources and environment by national and multi-national companies as well as the military.
- Christian churches in the Papuan provinces have regularly called for peace dialogues that address the political causes of the ongoing conflict.
- Due to Australia's proximity and trade ties with Indonesia, we have a responsibility to promote justice, dialogue and stronger human rights protections in our region.

1. Support local and international efforts for peace and justice in the Papuan Provinces.

2. Urge the Australian government to prioritise human rights in the Papuan Provinces in diplomatic relations with Indonesia.

3. Continue to express to the Indonesian government our concerns for Papua and call on them to support initiatives that involve peace, reconciliation and the development of an effective voice for all Papuans regarding their future.

3. Myanmar

Restore democracy and justice in Myanmar.

- In February 2021, Myanmar's military launched a coup to remove the National League for Democracy

party that was elected by popular vote².

- During the brutal ongoing civil war, more than 75,000 people have been killed, 3 million people displaced and 28,000 have been arrested by Myanmar's military.
- There is a widespread humanitarian crisis in the country, made worse by the powerful 7.7 magnitude earthquake that struck in March 2025.

Call on Australia to use all diplomatic and multilateral means available to end the trade of arms to Myanmar and pressure the military to restore democracy.

4. Ukraine

An immediate end to armed hostilities, and peace through dialogue.

- Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, the peoples of Ukraine and Russia have faced immense suffering, with thousands killed, millions displaced, and cities levelled.

Nuclear Weapons

Australia has not signed on to the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

- Nuclear weapons are unique in their destructive power and the threat they pose to the environment and human survival.
- The United Nations Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons has been signed by 86 nations and ratified by 54. It entered into force in January 2021.³ Australia has not signed on to the treaty.

Sign on and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

You may like to select one or two of these questions to put to MPs or community leaders.

1. What is your party's or organisation's commitment to Australia's aid program?

2. What policies do you have to prevent human trafficking and modern slavery?
3. What can you do to support a just and peaceful resolution in Palestine and Israel?
4. Will you support Australia signing the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons?
5. How can we work together to promote democracy and support local civil society groups, including churches, who are resisting authoritarian governments around the world?
6. How does or how can your local community contribute to the world beyond Australia in ways that lead to a more just, safe and peaceful world for all?

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