



Assembly PRIDE Circle of Interest Panel – Expression of Interest

Basis of Union:

The Uniting Church recognises that responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them.

Constitution:

The Assembly shall have determining responsibility in matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline, including the promotion of the Church's mission, establishment of standards of theological education and the reception of ministers from other denominations, and is empowered to make final decisions on all matters related to the Constitution of the UCA.

Before going any further, please ensure you've read the Terms of Reference for the Pride Circle Panel at the end of this document.

Expression of interest for (tick one or both)

Panel Member

Panel Advocate *(depending on expressions of interest, this panel may have 2 advocates appointed as co-chairs at least for the first 6-12 months)*

Personal Information:

Name		(photo)
Preferred pronouns		
Contact email		
Contact phone		
Congregation		
Presbytery and Synod		
Why are you interested in nominating to this panel?		
Do you consider yourself a member of the LGBTIQA+ community, or are you an ally?	LGBTIQA+ community <i>(optional to define further)</i>) Ally	
What skills and experience will you bring to the panel?	Queer-trained biblical and theological knowledge Legal Organisational transformation skills Trauma-informed pastoral care UCA governance	
What, if any, relevant qualifications do you have?		
What, if any, resourcing/networking are you able to provide that will support the actioning of		



outcomes – either through employed role, or other voluntary roles within or beyond the UCA?	
What is your age range? (Under 30, 30-45, 45-60, 60+)	
What cultural and linguistic background?	
Experience of disability, neurodiversity?	
Are you affirming of, and committed to, the wellbeing and flourishing of all who identify within the LGBTIQA+ community?	
(For allies only) How do you understand the role of being an ally to the LGBTIQA+ community?	
What level of participation are you able to commit to with regard to actioning the outcomes that this panel will generate?	<p>fully committed with time and energy to offer to panel AND sub-committees as required <i>(initial monthly meetings for first 6 months, and then minimum of 5 times/year for panel + additional smaller sub-committee meetings)</i></p> <p>fully committed to participating in the panel meetings only with my expertise, and championing this work broadly <i>(initial monthly meetings for first 6 months, and then minimum of 5 times/year for panel)</i></p>
If you are not appointed to this body, are you willing for Assembly to retain a copy of this form, and to consider you for appointment to a relevant task group in the future? YES NO	

Referees: *(Please list the names and contact details of two people to act as referees for you in regard to this role, together with a **brief reference** from each as to your character and skills for this panel.)*

1. Reference re 'good standing' with local congregation:	Name:	(Brief reference of applicant's suitability re character and skills)
	Contact:	
2. Reference re 'good standing' within the queer community of the UCA:	Name:	(Brief reference of applicant's suitability re character and skills)
	Contact:	

In signing this expression of interest form, you are committing to be accountable to the Terms of Reference for this Circle Panel listed below, if appointed.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Assembly Pride Circle of Interest Terms of Reference

(Approved ASC 23/03/25)

PRE-AMBLE:

Theological statement¹:

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.

We believe that God's love is never-ending and that in Jesus Christ we see God's will for the reconciliation of all creation, the restoration of God's peace, God's shalom. We are called to conform to the image of Christ through whom we discern that which is truly human.

We are called as Christians to serve that end, to be a sign of the coming of the reign of God by living as faithful disciples of Jesus who came to fulfil the hope of the prophets: to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.

Jesus taught that our faithfulness to God is to be expressed in how we live out this mission: an outworking of the command to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This love is marked by compassion, hospitality and grace, and is not possible without recognising the dignity and worth of every person. The theological basis of Christian support for human rights is grounded in the belief that human beings are created in the image of God. In the context of human rights, being made in the image of God refers to the dignity that is bestowed on us by God through simply being human. As bearers of God's image, we are inherently worthwhile and deserving of dignity and respect.

We also believe that God exists in a community. The one God is a triune God, one in three persons. The very nature of God is social and communal. Humans, being made in this image, are inherently relational, finding life and sustenance in relationship and community. Being called into community with the whole of humankind as we are, when one person is diminished, we are all diminished.

Responding to both our commitment to being a loving, safe and inclusive Church and the long history of struggle and marginalization of LGBTIQ+ members within the UCA, and guided by resolutions from the 15th, 16th and 17th Assemblies², the Assembly Standing Committee has resolved to form an Assembly Circle of Interest for LGBTIQ+ members and allies to work together to help the church live out this call of Christ to love and welcome all with dignity and respect.³

PURPOSE:

1. **Pursue dignity and justice, as an embedded institutional response, for LGBTIQ+ members and adherents of the UCA** as valued, visible and active children of God with significant gifts to share and celebrate.
2. **Hold the space of lament and disappointment** that many LGBTIQ+ members and allies in the UCA feel regarding the Church's long history of struggle and marginalization of LGBTIQ+ members within the UCA.

¹ 'Dignity in Humanity - Recognising Christ in Every Person', A Uniting Church in Australia Statement on Human Rights adopted by the Eleventh Assembly July 2006.

² 15th Assembly resolution 18.30, Apology to LGBTIQ Australians.

16th Assembly resolution 22.11, Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)

17th Assembly resolution 24.21, Affirmation for Transgender, Gender Diverse and Intersex People.

³ ASC resolution 24.09.02.



3. **Endeavour to ensure appropriate and trauma-informed pastoral care support is available and visible** for LGBTIQ+ people across the UCA.
4. **Deepen the Church's understanding of the Queer community**, as a way of helping the Uniting Church in Australia to live up to its aspiration as a safe and welcoming place for all LGBTIQ+ people.
5. **Facilitate creative initiatives for safe connection and relationship-building** between LGBTIQ+ people, allies and the variety of church communities.

PRINCIPLES:

- This Circle will act with the postures of:
 - **'By queer people'**, not 'on behalf of' queer people, in terms of leading discussions, prioritising, and choosing experts.
 - **Listening to and including the diversity of experiences and voices** of the whole LGBTIQ+ alphabet – eg: not assuming that there is ONE queer voice or set of needs and responses
 - **Being forward looking and curious** together to build momentum and movement around a life-giving and joyful present and future for LGBTIQ+ people within the UCA.
 - **Holding the tension of the ongoing disappointment and lament** that many within the LGBTIQ+ communities and allies at the Church's responses, with the acknowledgement that the road to community and personal healing can hold both pain and joy in the fullness of life.
 - **Recognising the differences between the different generations** of LGBTIQ+ people who bring different priorities and experiences to this conversation, and pro-actively respecting and integrating new approaches with the work championed in the past.
 - **Responding with a trauma-informed approach** to conversation and education around understanding the needs and experiences of the Queer community.
 - **Grace, patience and compassion in building relationships**, collaborating and co-creating between LGBTIQ+ people, and with allies and the diversity of the Church.
 - **Gentle accountability** when someone makes a misstep in how they speak about LGBTIQ+ people and issues.
 - **Consider carefully as to when LGBTIQ+ people or allies should speak or liaise** with other parts of the Church on behalf of the Circle, particularly with multi-cultural communities and the UAICC.

RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN ASSEMBLY INITIATIVE:

In carrying out this work, this Pride Circle will be mindful of broader Uniting Church and Assembly priorities in all they undertake including:

- Living out our covenant as First and Second Peoples
- Living out our commitment to being a multicultural church
- Being oriented towards justice, grounded in the Church's relationships of solidarity with those most affected by injustice and concerned with the needs of the whole creation
- Being an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, gender and gender identity, race and sexuality are welcomed



- Ensuring that all activities are grounded in the Gospel, consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, built upon the traditions of the Uniting Church in Australia and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly
- Considering how the work relates to other Circles, Councils, Agencies and groups within the UCA, and working collaboratively wherever possible
- Considering how the work relates to other bodies ecumenically, and with other faiths and civil society organisation and working collaboratively wherever possible
- Conducting the work on the basis of current best practice and with regard to contemporary research
- Contributing positively to Australian civil society, including representing the Uniting Church's position appropriately

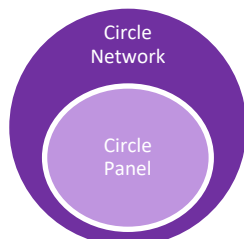
LIMITS:

What will NOT be included in this Circle's work:

- any requests or language that position LGBTIQA+ people as 'problems' to be solved or 'issues' to be dealt with
- participation in deliberate antagonism of queer people or debates about sexuality and identity

PRIDE CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP and SHAPE:

- Pride Circle to be made up of concentric circles of engagement, including:
 - A **smaller Circle Panel**, of between 6 and 12 people, led by an appointed Advocate, offering leadership that endeavours to ensure the priorities and actions identified are delivered. Pride Circle Panel membership will include:
 - Advocate to be LGBTIQA+ person and act as a 'chair' to ensure work is done, and could additionally adopt a 'co-chair' approach to leadership of the circle (eg: 1 queer + 1 ally)
 - A range of skills, including queer trained, queer biblical and theological knowledge, legal, organisational transformation skills, trauma-informed pastoral care, UCA governance etc
 - Representation from a diversity of LGBTIQA+ people and allies, with queer people forming the majority
 - Broad representation from all synods, together with a mix of First Nations, multicultural and disability voices
 - Identified people to liaise with different parts of the church
 - Identified people with training and experience to liaise with agencies and schools/colleges as appropriate
 - People appointed need to be people who are willing to contribute time and energy to tasks
 - People appointed need to demonstrate their good standing within the queer community, and within the UCA
 - A **larger Circle Network of connections** within and between the queer community and allies across the UCA
 - All Circle Network members must be affirming of LGBTIQA+ people and their participation in the Church.
 - Smaller sub-groups or communities of practice will be created around priority areas and areas of special interest, and facilitated by panel members



RHYTHM:

- Schedule
 - monthly over initial 6 months for panel to build momentum, with the view to meeting a minimum of 5 times each year
 - workplan and timeline of actions for review by ASC



- smaller sub-groups established to focus on specific areas including trans and gender-diverse and intersex variations
- Reporting and Updating:
 - Formally to Assembly Standing Committee as per ASC guidelines
 - Intentionally and pro-actively to the queer community within the UCA, including Uniting Network
 - Informally to other Assembly Circles of Interest through Advocate(s), and to other councils and entities through existing channels and mechanisms
- Communication
 - Hub/clearing house for storage of resources (eg: Assembly Resources site)
 - Email list for Pride Circle members
 - Assembly Email address for Pride Circle communication
 - Process created for timely responses from Assembly to community events of national importance
 - Multiple avenues for engagement and feedback, including Queer-only space
 - **NOT** through social media

STAKEHOLDERS AND RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING:

- Pride Circle Panel and Advocate(s)
- Wider Pride Circle Network
- Sub-groups or Communities of Practice identified by Panel to focus on priority areas
- Uniting Network
- Synods and Presbyteries
- The diversity of the Church for education and change
- Engagement with Unitingcare Australia network entities, and interested UCA schools and colleges via the appropriate existing liaison relationships

RESOURCING:

- Resourcing provided by the Assembly Resourcing Unit
- Collaborations with existing UCA resourcing through agencies/schools and colleges liaisons