



Saturday 4 October

8.30 am Registration

8.45 am Gathering Devotional: Margaret Reeson

9.00 am Session One: Biblical Voices

9.00 am Judith Raftery: *Bearing Prophetic Witness: possibilities and pitfalls*

9.30 am Glen O'Brien: *Being a Uniting/United Church in the World Methodist Communion*

10.00 am Dean Eland: *What happens here today happens in Australia Tomorrow*".

10.30 am Morning Tea

11.00 am Session Two: National Voices

11.00 am Glen Powell: *Uniting for the Common Good – UCA Prophetic Voice in the Sydney Alliance*

11.30 am **Panel Discussion:** Gordon Ramsay, Lin Hatfield Dodds, John Williams. Moderator: Judith Raftery.

12.30 pm **Lunch**

1.30 pm **Session Three: Inclusive of all Voices**

1.30 pm Warren Talbot: *LGBTIQA+ communities and the Uniting Church's prophetic voice*

2.00 pm Leanne Davis: *Voice of the Women*

2.30 pm Patricia Curthoys: *More than a 'drop in the bucket'? The Church and the Town Housing Programme.*

3.00 pm **Afternoon Tea**

3.30 pm **Session Four: Indigenous Voices**

3.30 pm William Emilsen: *The Legacy of Charles Harris*

4.00 pm Jonathan Barker: *The vexed Relationship between the Prophetic Voice and the Institutional Church – the Story of Edgar Wells*

4.30 pm Andrew Clarke: *Rev Bernard Clarke*

5.00 pm **Annual General Meeting of UCNHS**

Sunday 5 October

10.00 am Worship with Canberra City Uniting Church

11.30 am Morning Tea

12.15 pm Session Five: International Voices

12.15 pm Christine Weir: *The Disarmament Debates of the 1970s and 80s*

12.45 pm Presentation by Dean Eland: *The Biographical Index of the first Assembly of UCA*

1.15 pm Lunch

2.15 pm Session Six: Founding fathers and mothers – early voices

2.15 pm Clive Jackson: *Did the voices of the churches influence the forming of Australia's 1901 Federation?*

2.45 pm Margaret Reeson: *Seeking opportunity: church women and representation in 1890s Australia*

3.15 pm Appreciations and Closing: Dr Judith Raftery

CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

Rev Dr Jonathan Barker has served in four Synods as: parish minister; educator at Parkin-Wesley and Nungalinga Colleges; advocate for First Nations people in the Kimberleys and with Congress as co-convenor for the Reconciliation Council in S.A.; community development practitioner in Chicago, Mumbai and with the S.A. Department For Community Welfare. Retired in Adelaide he is a member of the S.A. Synod Covenanting committee and is actively involved with the Unley Allies with First Nations Peoples.

Andrew Clarke

Dr Patricia Curthoys works as a professional historian, primarily on Australian history projects. She has mainly published in the area of Australian religious history, most recently co-editing with William Emilsen, *Things That Matter* (2025), to mark the 50th anniversary of United Theological College. She is currently a member of the Uniting Church National History Society Board.

Leanne Davis is a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church. Her interest in Church History (particularly Uniting Church/Methodist) history has grown out of her interest in her family history (there has been a lot of overlap). She has a particular interest in writing the women of the church back into the history - her Masters' thesis being on the role of colonial women in South Australia in the Methodist Church

Rev Dr Dean Eland for sixty plus years has served local congregations and state and national councils of the Uniting Church. His commitment to local mission practices developed from his ministry in Australian industrial and inner urban areas

including Redfern, Whyalla, Port Adelaide, and Melbourne's western suburbs.

Rev Dr William W. Emilsen taught Church History and World Religions at United Theological College for 22 years and was an Associate Professor in the School of Theology at Charles Sturt University until his retirement in 2014. His recent publications include the biography *Charles Harris: A Struggle for Justice* (2019), and edited collections *Sacred Ways and Places in the Blue Mountains* (2019), *Growing Up Uniting* (2021), *Eugene Stockton: Blue Mountains Hermit* (2023), and *Things That Matter: Essays on Theological Education for the Fiftieth Anniversary of United Theological College* (2025). His research interests include Aboriginal history, the life and thought of Mahatma Gandhi, Blue Mountains history and culture, and the history of the Uniting Church in Australia. William is an ordained minister of the Uniting Church and is a member of the Leura Uniting Church in the Blue Mountains.

Lyn Hatfield Dodds, most recently Chief Executive Officer of the Benevolent Society, previously the Deputy Secretary for Social Policy in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, and former National Director of UnitingCare Australia

Clive Jackson is a board member of the UCNHS and a member of the Planning Team for this conference. He is also a long-serving committee member of the Vic/Tas Uniting Church Historical Society and is committed to promoting church heritage and communicating its value for the church's identity and its future. Clive is a registered urban planner in the Planning Institute of Australia where he is a Fellow of the Victorian Division.

(Revd) Professor Glen O'Brien is Professor of Christian Thought and History in the University of Divinity and Research Coordinator at Eva Burrows College. He is a Member of the World Methodist Council and the Methodist Roman Catholic International Commission. He has published widely in Wesleyan and Methodist studies.

Dr Glen Powell has been involved in Uniting Church congregations since a teenager and has held key mission leadership roles across all Councils of the Church. In 2007 he became the first church representative in Australia's first community organising network – the Sydney Alliance.

Dr Judith Raftery is a retired academic historian, with a PhD in history and a Master of Theological Studies. Her research and publications include a focus on the impact of colonial and post-colonial history on the well-being of Indigenous Australians, the history of mission activity among Indigenous Australians, the involvement of South Australian churches in social issues in the twentieth century, and the links between hymnody and theology.

Judith is a member of the Uniting Church and was a founding board member of the Uniting Church National History Society and its chair since 2023. Prior to that she completed a lengthy term as President of the Uniting Church South Australia Historical Society. With William Emilsen, and under the auspices of the UCNHS, she is co-editing a new history to be published in 2027 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the UCA.

Rev Gordon Ramsay is a UCA Minister in extensive placement before being elected to the ACT Legislative Assembly and serving as Attorney-General, Minister for the Arts and a range of other portfolios. He is currently the CEO at the Cultural

Facilities Corporation, which oversees the Canberra Theatre Centre, Canberra Museum & Gallery and a range of historic sites. Gordon has a background in law, and extensive work in advocacy for justice, social equality, inclusion and poverty. He is a former Chair of the Board of Uniting, and is currently a member of the NSW-ACT Synod Board.

Margaret Reeson is a writer of Australian women's and church history. She has a special interest in Papua New Guinea where she served from 1961-78 and is currently building a website of history of PNG Highlands Region of United Church of PNG. Margaret is a former Moderator of Synod of NSW&ACT (2000-2002) and served on several UCA Assembly and Synod committees between 1979-2015.

Warren Talbot is a former Executive Director of LGBTIQ+ Health Australia, and has most recently been Secretary of the Assembly Apology to LGBTIQ+ Australians Task Group, and a member of the Assembly Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts Task Group.

Dr Christine Weir is a retired Pacific historian who has taught in New Zealand and at the University of the South Pacific in Suva, Fiji. She has written on Christianity in the Pacific in colonial times and in more contemporary settings. She now lives in Canberra and is a member of North Belconnen Uniting Church.

Dr John Williams, Fellow of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering, has worked in CSIRO, Universities and Government Commissions as a research scientist studying ways to make agriculture more sustainable and how society can care for the living environment, its rivers, landscapes, estuaries, and wetlands.

Should you require any information or assistance during the Conference please contact Ivan on **0422 648 191**