



Uniting Church in Australia ASSEMBLY

Issues, Challenges and Opportunities for the Uniting Church

This information is provided by the Assembly Standing Committee to nominees for the role of President-Elect at the 18th Assembly.

- 1 This document represents the key emphases to be kept in mind by any nominee for President-elect and those nominating someone for the role of President-elect.
- 2 At the time of writing the outcomes of Act2 are unknown. What is decided at the 18th Assembly is likely to lead to significant change.
- 3 The key challenges were adopted by the ASC in 2025.

Living out the Covenant

- 4 The Covenant between the UAICC and the Uniting Church is a central aspiration of the Church. At the time of writing a Renewing the Covenant Task Group is working on how best the Uniting Church might live out the Covenant in the future. The outcomes of this work will present opportunity and challenge for the Uniting Church to be more faithful in keeping the Covenant.

Being the Uniting Church

- 5 We are a Pilgrim People, recognising that change and renewal is part of our life as we seek the will of God and look for the guidance of the Spirit (BoU para 3).
- 6 We encourage ecumenical imagination and relationships within Australia and with the global church and seek interfaith friendship and collaboration.
- 7 We are inclusive, welcoming the presence and gifts of all people, are willing to work with diversity and seek ways to honour what unites as a Church.
- 8 We are an inter-conciliar Church that heeds wisdom and insight across the Councils of the Church while honouring the tasks and responsibilities of each council. We seek to work in partnership with our agencies, supporting and promoting their work.
- 9 We undertake our discernment through consensus in formal meetings and in how we seek to live together.

Flourishing Faith

- 10 We will support flourishing faith by:
 - Promoting a theological culture that focuses on growing people's faith and equips them to share their faith.
 - Resourcing the whole church for faithful discipleship, mission and evangelism.

- Being transformed by the faith and spirituality of First Nations Peoples.
- Investing in the faith development and leadership of young people.
- Being open to insights from people from non-dominant communities.

Thriving Communities

11 We will encourage thriving communities by:

- Supporting, encouraging and celebrating diverse expressions of Christian community and working to ensure communities are resourced.
- Supporting the leadership and full participation of people and communities from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Navigating the diverse realities in the Church where some communities and ministries are growing, some are declining, and others are remaining stable.
- Supporting communities of faith with fit for purpose governance.

Liberating Justice.

12 We will grow our commitment to justice by:

- Following the lead of Congress, advocating for First Nations justice.
- Continuing to develop the Church's public voice, guided by the Assembly's Principles Based Approach to Advocacy.
- Working to become an anti-racism Church and supporting efforts to eliminate racism and discrimination in the wider Australian community.
- Supporting overseas partners in their advocacy for climate justice and being an advocate in Australia for climate justice.
- national efforts for non-violence and nuclear disarmament, and working for an end to gender based violence.



CHALLENGES OF THE TIME

The Church faces both internal and external challenges which are complex. Meaningful impact in any one of these areas requires us to continue to be God's people that are **mission oriented, open to change, and committed to justice and inclusivity.**

1. Declining Attendance and Membership

There are fewer people engaging in worship and discipleship, limiting the Church's ability to share the love of Jesus and grow followers who live out faith in daily life.

2. Called to Serve Diverse Communities

There is no 'one size fits all' model and the church must listen, learn and respond to be inclusive of culture, traditions, languages, age and life experience.

3. Theological Identity and Liturgy Renewal

We have not focused resources on our collective teaching and worship for some time and this has put more pressure on regional structures.

4. Reconciliation and Social Justice Focus

We have relied on one or two agencies to be our voice, but this is not as effective as working together on priority areas.

5. Financial Pressures and Resource Constraints

Mission and ministry needs exceed our available resources and we need to do better at identifying shared solutions.

6. Council Resource Disparities

Some of our councils are under resourced leaving some gaps in service to communities.

7. Lack of Trust and Unity Across Councils

Our conciliar in structure relies upon trust, strong relationships and collective seeking of God's direction. Without this culture, there is a risk that the church could become divided.

8. Digital Transformation and Communication

Less face-to-face engagement and missed opportunities to connect with younger people and wider communities, challenges responding to emerging technology like AI.

9. Aging Congregations and Workforce

Communities struggling to grow in their love for God and engage meaningfully in scripture and worship.

10. Complex Rules and Processes

Complex rules and processes can slow decision-making and reduce agility, making it harder for ministry to respond quickly to community needs and opportunities to share the love of God.