

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Impact at a glance

*Towards a courageous,
contemporary and growing church*



Watch the Future
Directions Video
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Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Reimagining ministry in and with rural and regional Areas



We will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

Ephesians 4:15-16

Towards a courageous, contemporary and growing church



Scan QR code to watch the full story

In the Central Tablelands of NSW, Orange was once home to three separate Uniting Church congregations, each with unique mission and outreach priorities. Now, coming together as a united, strengthened, renewed congregation; **Orange Uniting** is thriving with innovative missional outreaches, a fresh expression of church, and a growing community to walk alongside - but change brings hardship and sacrifice.



ACTIVATING GROWTH

Growth funding approved for new regional and rural ministries in:

- Port Macquarie
- Ballina
- Dubbo
- Coffs Harbour
- Macquarie Darling
- Adamstown

Saltbush working across our scattered communities to strengthen connections, grow discipleship and face the challenge of the new.

➔ Vist the Saltbush Website: saltbushcommunity.uca.org.au

Synod Strategic Property & Mission teams partnering with **Mid North Coast Presbytery** in the design and redevelopment of a multi-purpose worship centre in Coffs Harbour.

500+ people now connected to the Saltbush ministry

\$2.3M+ from the growth fund to rural and regional projects

6 new and encouraging placements in the Far North Coast Presbytery

AMPLIFYING MINISTRY

United Theological College (UTC) courses and support programs are now available on-line meaning that geography is no longer a barrier to theological study or structured ministry formation.

Synod Mission and Education teams continue to:

- Expand and deliver education, leadership development and formation pathways for both lay and ordained in more accessible ways.
- Provide support for mission planning, life and witness, vitality of call, coaching, retreats and lay leader supervision.

Memorandums of Understanding formed with 3 UAICC ministry centres:

- Wellington
- Broken Hill
- Condobolin

\$600,000+ in funding support for UAICC ministry centres

16 Ministers in Placement
5 Ministry of Pastor and
1 Candidate

25+ lay leaders in active ministry supervision

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY

Coordination of 300+ **disaster relief chaplains** working across flood, fire and drought affected communities.

- Frontier Services
- Macquarie Darling Flying Patrol
- Moderator's Disaster Relief Fund

Uniting

- 5 co-location memorandums of understanding
- Uniting Advocacy's Drug Law Reform initiative in Dubbo

Initiation of the **Regional Partnership** - an experimental model of collaborative oversight with 2 rural Presbyteries (FNC and Riverina) in response to resourcing challenges.

Submission of **Placements for a Just Church Proposal** by members of ACOMP.

\$630,000+ distributed from the Moderator's disaster relief fund since July 2021

43% of UC congregations are in a rural or regional setting

23% of those who worship in this Synod do so in a rural congregation

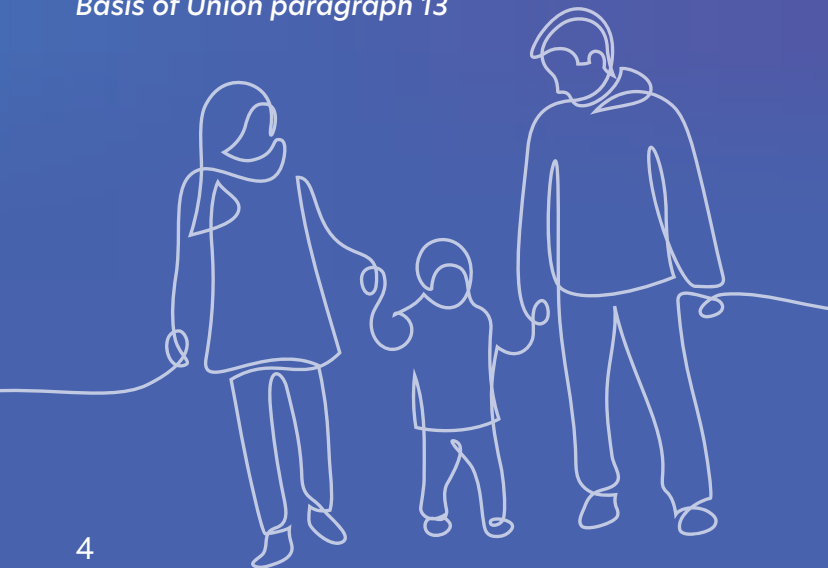
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Reaching and empowering people in the first third of their lives



The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant.

Basis of Union paragraph 13



Towards a courageous, contemporary and growing church



Leichhardt Uniting Church, situated in a historic inner suburb of Sydney, sheltered within an antiquated facade, is a vibrant, youthful, affirming faith community. After many years of stagnation, Sydney Presbytery and Leichhardt Uniting Church embarked on an experiment that has transformed the ministry and the congregation. And today, it is a congregation with a strong identity, helping its members to find their own identity and nurturing each individuals' discipleship journey.

ACTIVATING GROWTH

Exploring **Growing Young** with 2 Presbyteries and 7 congregations - a collaborative culture change process between Pulse, Mission Engagement, Presbyteries and Congregations.

300+ discipleship building connections with young people through various **Pulse ministries**, including;

- Kids' Camp Out
- Uniting Youth Camp
- Retreat Yourself
- Young Adult Gatherings (YAG)
- PULSEcast (series 1)

Christian Students Uniting - young disciples connected and committed to sharing God's Word across several University and tertiary campuses.

7 Uniting Church schools: Newington, MLC, Ravenswood, Pymble Ladies College, Knox, Kinross Walaroi and Margaret Jurd College.

6% of church attenders are First Third adults (between 15-30)	75 congregations have 10 or more youth or young adults	12 school chaplains reaching 10,000+ students in 7 UC schools
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AMPLIFYING MINISTRY

New children and youth ministry training and education pathways have been developed by Pulse in partnership with the United Theological College (UTC).

More than **\$2.1M approved from the growth fund** over the next 5 years for First Third ministries and related projects.

Supporting and blueprinting **innovation** in ministry through:

- School of Discipleship
- Georges River Kids Fest
- Hunter Mission Fest
- School holiday programs

Access to a variety of **discipleship, mission and ministry resources** via the new Synod, Synod Mission Resourcing and Synod Mission Support team sites.

6% of church attenders are involved in children's ministry in their church	2% of church attenders are involved in youth ministry in their church	33% of attenders support sharing leadership with young people
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TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY

Margaret Jurd College opening a new satellite campus, catering for up to 30 students in Tuncurry, from 2024.

A series of **forums with student leaders across UC Schools** were initiated and facilitated by the Moderator and Director of Mission (Schools).

Uniting continues to deliver - Early Learning, Newpin, Foyer and 120 Countdown services for children and youth in disadvantaged, vulnerable & marginalised communities and settings.

... and many **more opportunities for young people to serve & connect with the wider church & social justice efforts** through strengthening of relationships between Schools, Congregations, UCAN, Wayside Mission, Wesley Mission, Bill Crews Foundation & Uniting World, amongst other agencies and church councils.

50+ Indigenous student scholarships across UC schools	10+ Chaplains in University and tertiary campuses	200+ Uniting Church SRE teachers in public schools
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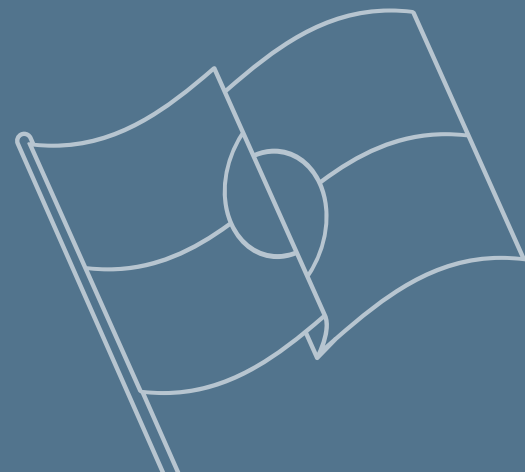
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Walking Together with First Peoples



We commit ourselves to build understanding between your people and ours in every locality, and to build relationships which respect the right of your people to self-determination in the church and in the wider society.

Uniting Church Covenant Statement 1994



Towards a courageous, contemporary and growing church



Scan QR code to watch the full story

Two hours south-west of Dubbo, Condobolin is a small country town home to a wonderful community run by Pastor Beth. Watch how from humble beginnings, **Condobolin Uniting** encourages the local kids to get involved in faith and exploration.



ACTIVATING GROWTH

A commitment to allocate **3% of sales proceeds** to First People Ministries.

A **procurement partnership with Supply Nation** to play our small part in enabling self-determination for First People in the wider community.

First People scholarships available for theological training at United Theological College and trainee internships in the Synod Media and Communications team.

A **Memorandum of Understanding and funding** provided to **3 UAICC ministry centres** in the Macquarie Darling Presbytery.

\$600,000+ distributed from sales proceeds to First People ministries

3 UAICC ministry centres in Macquarie Darling Presbytery

2% of UC churches have a First People's outreach ministry

AMPLIFYING MINISTRY

More than **2500 visits to the First Nations Resources webpage** since April 2023 - providing all Councils and those who worship, witness and serve in the Uniting Church with access to a wide range of resources which support our commitment to recognise, respect and reconcile with First Peoples.

➤ Visit the First Nations Resources page: <https://tinyurl.com/ucafirstnationsresources>

The inaugural **Walking Together theological conference**, in October 2022, amplified the perspective of First People theology.

➤ Watch Prof Anne Pattel-Gray speaking about the Walking Together theological conference: <https://vimeo.com/861090139>

Synod Walking Together Action plans

- 2021-2023 (Inaugural)
- 2024-2027 (First draft)

100+ people gathered for the inaugural Walking Together theological conference

20% of churches have a direct relationship with First people

60% of churches offer a spoken Acknowledgement of Country

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY

Continuation of **public support and advocacy** for:

- Uluru Statement from the Heart
- Closing the Gap
- Cultural awareness
- Vote Yes for Voice to Parliament

Numerous speaking and preaching invitations to Nathan Tyson (Director First Peoples Strategy) from Congregations, Presbyteries, Schools, Synod and the Assembly raising greater awareness of Vote Yes for Voice to Parliament.

Reconciliation Action Plans and strategies in place or in development across our Synod, agencies and schools to promote reconciliation with First Peoples.

88% of UC church leaders agree we should promote reconciliation

2000+ people across the Synod better informed through speaking invitations

67% of UC church leaders want to do more to build or strengthen First People relationships

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Working with Presbyteries to grow healthy congregations



The Congregation is the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit of Christ.

Basis of Union 15. (a)

Towards a courageous, contemporary and growing church



Scan QR code to watch the full story

Lane Cove Uniting Church was presented with a once in a generation opportunity when their historic building and regular Sunday worship space was rezoned by the local council. Navigating the difficult decision to leave their building, finding a new space, and grasping the opportunity presented by the sales proceeds, the church council decided upon a new missional direction in the shape of community chaplaincy. Watch how the congregation and the community come together to form new communities of faith.



ACTIVATING GROWTH

A **\$30M+ growth fund** established to seed fresh expressions of mission and ministry:

➤ Visit the Growth Fund page:
<https://tinyurl.com/ucagrowthfund>

3 inter-conciliar task groups formed to vision, explore, innovate and initiate a blended ecology of community building, including:

- Faith Communities
- Strategic church planting
- Parish Missions

A series of **3 face-to-face Stewardship Summits** involving more than 30 Synod and Presbytery leaders exploring, discerning and responding to our resourcing challenges.

3000+ views of the **Our Story** video series.

➤ Visit the Our Story series page:
<https://tinyurl.com/ucanswactourstory>

\$2.7M+ allocated from the growth fund to **12** grass roots projects

9% of local leaders say their church is growing and **25%** rate their overall vitality as strong

\$2M+ gifted by Sydney Basin Presbyteries to rural and regional ministries in FY22/23

AMPLIFYING MINISTRY

The Synod Mission and Education teams continue to develop and flexibly deliver qualifications and short courses for the **life-long formation** of both lay & ordained ministry agents.

1500+ people have engaged in conferences, retreats and various communities of practice to inspire, develop and/or refresh their ministry practice, including:

- Preachfest
- Soulcare
- The Hunter Mission Fest
- Missional Leadership Hubs
- Walking Together Theological Conference
- Cross cultural blessing and training day
- UTC Climate Conference

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY

Initiation of the **Presbytery Project** toward strengthening the capacity of this critical council in the context of a healthy Church community.

Numerous catalysts for fresh expressions of contemporary and courageous worship, witness and service including:

- Mission Shaped Ministry
- Uniting Creative worship project
- Growing Young
- Uniting Advocacy and UCAN
- Walking Together Action Plans
- Out of the Box mission conferences

'Conversations that Matter' – a monthly Zoom gathering between Synod & Presbytery leaders to grow in relationship and impact.

500+ places of worship
250+ Ordained
20,000+ worshipping every week

6% of congregations have more than 100 people attending worship on a Sunday

41 people in a Period of Discernment
16 in Phase 2 and **19** in Phase 3 of formation

48% of congregations are involved in regular social justice activities & community services

67% of church attenders say they feel confident (at ease) to share their faith with others

10,000+ students in UC schools
15,000+ employees in UC NSW/ACT agencies
5,000,000+ people not affiliated with UC

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Acting and advocating for climate justice



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.

Uniting Church Statement to the Nation 1977

Towards a courageous, contemporary and growing church



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In the bustling multicultural melting pot of Auburn in Sydney's Western Suburbs, **Auburn Parish Uniting Church** is home to a CALD congregation full of life and movement, with too many services and activities to count. The congregation is driven by a cause close to their hearts: Climate Action. With congregation members being directly impacted both in Auburn and in the Pacific islands, Auburn Uniting Church is passionate and proudly stands up for those in need by taking action on Climate Change as active stewards of the earth.



ACTIVATING GROWTH

The Uniting Climate Action Network (UCAN) is a way for church members to be connected, resourced and encouraged to take action on environmental and climate issues. Being a part of the network offers opportunities for leadership development and aims to grow the organising and campaigning capacity of people in the church.

Join this growing network today!

➤ UCAN website:
<http://www.unitingclimate.org>

We continue to seek out, collaborate and form partnerships with like-minded organisations to amplify our impact such as:

- Sydney Alliance
- Australian Religious Response to Climate Change
- Climate Action Network of Australia and Regen Australia

99%
of church leaders think that climate change is happening

60 %
of UC church attenders agree that climate action is a witness opportunity

1000+
people have connected as part of a growing UC climate action network

AMPLIFYING MINISTRY

Many UC members have taken part in public actions and advocacy for climate as part of the broader **climate action strategy**, including:

- School Strike 4 Climate
- Beyond Coal campaigning, including NAB branch action
- Pasifika climate forums
- Climate conversations with MPs
- Numerous 'Living the change' web forums and workshops

United Theological College climate change conference: Pilgrims with the Planet.

A range of **ecological discipleship and worship resources** have been developed and accessible via the Uniting Earth website:

➤ www.unitingearthweb.org.au

84%
of UC church attenders affirm that climate action is an essential part of our mission

80%
of UC church leaders believe the Government's response is inadequate

60%
of churches are engaging in some form of climate action on site

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY

We are leading by example and with integrity across our church to **reduce our own carbon emissions**, including:

- Uniting's gold tier Sustainability Award
- SCC Presbytery Green Power pilot
- UFS flagship ethical investment fund
- Synod emissions reduction policies & targets
- Investment in green infrastructure including solar panels, electric vehicles and charging stations

... and so many more stories of concerned and faithful congregations, agencies and individuals witnessing and serving to promote and demonstrate care for the earth:

➤ **Watch the UCAN video:**
<https://tinyurl.com/UCANClimate>

By 2027
The Synod of NSW/ACT has committed to be carbon neutral for transport

By 2040
National Assembly has committed the Uniting Church to net-zero emissions

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

A renewed commitment

Future Directions for the People of God on the Way renews our commitment to share our hope in the Gospel with the communities of NSW and the ACT through worship, witness and service.

Future Directions is designed to enable the growth of the Church's witness to Jesus Christ by providing greater resources and renewed commitments to:

- Reimagining ministry in and with rural and regional areas,
- Reaching and empowering people in the first third of their lives,
- Walking Together with First Peoples
- Acting and advocating for climate justice;
- Working with Presbyteries to grow healthy congregations.

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Find out more information on our website:
www.nswact.uca.org.au/about-us/mission-strategy



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT