



# Statement of Missional Intent 2024-2025

**Intent (n):** what one is determined to do or bring about



**Uniting Church**  
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

**Uniting**

## Introduction

This Statement of Missional Intent has been created to articulate Uniting's central purpose, strategy and values to its collaborators, partners and stakeholders, including:

- The people we serve
- The Uniting Church in NSW and ACT – the Synod and the members, congregations and Presbyteries within the Synod
- Our people – Uniting employees and volunteers
- Government and the wider community.

Uniting is a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) – a charitable institution recognised in charity law and tax law to have as its main purpose the relief of poverty or distress for the benefit of vulnerable persons.

**People are at the heart of everything we do, beginning with the people we serve, and including our employees, volunteers and the wider community. As we serve, we seek to disrupt the systems that create entrenched disadvantage.**

## Strategy and purpose

**Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the Uniting Church in Australia's work and mission through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care to serve humanity and create an inclusive, connected and just world.**

The Uniting Church in Australia understands that social justice is our shared responsibility - as individuals, congregations, councils and all the Church together. Uniting seeks to encourage and support the Church to engage in this aspect of discipleship, while also working directly on some issues on the Church's behalf, as decided by the Synod.

We provide care and support for people through all ages and stages of life, with a focus on people experiencing disadvantage and vulnerability.

In 2022, Uniting refreshed its 10-year strategy in response to the Synod's **Future Directions**. Uniting's purpose and mission, articulated in that strategy, is to:

**“Create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage.”**

# Create a better future for more people and communities by disrupting entrenched disadvantage.

10-year strategy  
2022-2032



Uniting NSW.ACT contributes to the work and mission of the Uniting Church through social justice advocacy, community services and spiritual care to serve humanity and create an **inclusive, connected and just world**.



We live our values of **compassionate, respectful, imaginative, and bold** and have an unwavering commitment to **quality, safety and service excellence**.



We will partner with First Nations people and communities to facilitate self-determination and reconciliation through sharing of our knowledge, resources and capability.

# Uniting

The Future Directions for the People of God on the Way.

The Future Directions reaffirm the Synod’s direction-setting commitments to: <sup>1</sup>	
A commitment to rural and regional ministry	
A commitment to ministry with people in the first third of their lives	
A commitment to walking together with First Peoples and to the covenant with Congress	
A commitment to living cross-culturally as a multicultural, intercultural Church	
An ongoing and active commitment to the stewardship of the earth	
An ongoing commitment to working with presbyteries to organise ourselves to promote growth within and through our congregations	



<sup>1</sup>From Synod website 9 April 2024.

# Foundations

Uniting's Christian foundations ensure clarity of purpose and a commitment to the values and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia. Proudly created over many decades through the faith, witness, foresight and generosity of many congregations and individual members within the Uniting Church and its founding denominations, today Uniting celebrates the diversity of both its people and the people we serve. Uniting's diversity and inclusion - welcoming to people of all faiths, and none - ensures ongoing renewal of its purpose through connection to the needs of the world today.

Uniting is implementing a focused formation program to equip its leaders to integrate the values, ethos and practices of the Uniting Church in Australia with the values, practices and behaviours expected through our Uniting culture.

Uniting NSW.ACT is governed by a Board constituted by the by-laws of the Synod. It has oversight of the purpose and goals of the organisation. The Mission Governance and Collaboration Committee (MGCC), a sub-committee of the Uniting Board, assists the Uniting Board to discharge its oversight and monitoring responsibilities in relation to Uniting's mission and missional culture, and its alignment and relationship with the Synod. The MGCC also promotes and supports collaboration with other parts of the Uniting Church in Australia. It provides oversight of the work in advancing Aboriginal self-determination, justice, reconciliation, inclusion, and engagement, and of Uniting's innovation, research, and advocacy priorities.

The Mission Directorate works to bring these purposes and goals to life throughout the organisation.

The provision of spiritual care that respects and supports all people is central to Uniting's purpose. The Chaplaincy and Pastoral Practice team, as part of the Mission Directorate, provides spiritual care and Christian religious care for residents, clients and employees within Uniting's services. There are also Civil Chaplains, supported by both Uniting and government funding, present in NSW hospitals, mental health services and prisons.

As part of the continuing witness of the Uniting Church, Uniting works to challenge injustice and the systems that impose and perpetuate disadvantage on those who are vulnerable in our communities. Through the work of its advocacy, research, media and government relations teams, it seeks to influence positive change for a more just society.

The courageous action of Uniting Church people in generations past now inspires Uniting's continuing work and the values that Uniting people are committed to today, leading us to be **compassionate, respectful, imaginative, and bold.**

In Luke 6:20-22, Jesus delivers four 'Beatitudes', which outline a series of blessings for the poor, hungry, and marginalised in society. By declaring that the poor, hungry, and sorrowful are blessed, Jesus is turning the world's understanding of power and wealth upside down. He is highlighting the inherent value and dignity of every human being, regardless of their social status or material wealth. In doing so, he challenges the societal norms that maintain and perpetuate inequality and calls for a radical transformation of our values and priorities. Jesus' approach to upending this inequity is one of love, compassion, and justice, calling us to stand in solidarity with the marginalised and to work towards creating a more just and equitable society.

# Foundations in practice

## Our values guide our work every day.

### Compassionate

We are nurturing, generous and thoughtful in our words and deeds.

### Imaginative

We challenge convention, explore new possibilities and dare to dream for a better future.

### Respectful

We act with integrity, and open our hearts to all people without exception.

### Bold

We face injustice head on and stand up for what is right and true with confidence and strength.

We strive to live Uniting's values every day and have an unwavering commitment to quality, safety and service excellence. We partner with First Nations peoples and communities to facilitate self-determination and reconciliation.

Our decision making is supported by our ethical framework:

## Our ethics support our decisions.

Take **accountability** for making the biggest positive difference for people.

Give preference to the interests of the most **disadvantaged**.

Listen, understand and then act with courage, empowering people through **self-determination**.

Adopt and apply the highest professional **standards** within our constraints.

Address organisational **sustainability** so that we can continue our mission.

Seek **transparency** in communications with our stakeholders.

Acknowledge that our decisions seek **equity**, recognising that equity and equality are not always the same.

# Our Mission Principles guide our work at Uniting:

**Inspire People** so that everyone is valued, particularly those most excluded.

## **The dignity of the human person**

We recognise the essential worth and rights of every person, especially those whose rights are discounted or who are excluded from full participation in society. We affirm that people and their flourishing must be at the heart of all we do.

## **Needs of the whole person**

We recognise that human beings are whole persons with their unique physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs and strengths.

## **Social and economic inclusion**

We acknowledge the corrosive effects of inequality and affirm that the poor and the marginalised must be the focus of our particular concern.

**Enliven Communities** so that all people contribute and have life-giving relationships.

## **Community wellbeing**

We will actively seek conditions that enhance the good of all and which contribute to communal wellbeing; we recognise that to flourish people need to be a valued part of a community and engage in healthy and mutually life-giving relationships.

## **Unity**

We inhabit one planet and affirm the mutuality and interdependence between all people, our fellow creatures and the earth.

**Confront Injustice** to ensure all people are included as they are and have “life to the full”.

## **Promotion of human rights**

We affirm the inherent dignity and worth of every human person, which being created in the image of God bestows on them. Each person, therefore, has inalienable human rights, which we are bound to observe and safeguard.

## **Reconciliation**

We need to listen, seeking to understand people and communities, as we strive towards inclusion of all races, cultures and religions and celebrate multiculturalism as part of our Uniting Church and Australian identity.

This must include recognition of the rights and dignity of First Peoples and their unique place in our nation.

## **Solidarity**

We will promote the active participation of those affected by injustice as we seek to influence social policy and confront the causes of inequality and disadvantage.

# The work we will do

Our Executive Director, Tracey Burton writes:

“We will use our voice, our ideas and our evidence to drive change on the issues that impact vulnerable people, collaborating to create, prove and scale better solutions for some of the most intractable problems that disadvantaged and excluded people and communities face. We aspire to ensure we leave as light a footprint on the environment as possible and meet our commitment to be carbon neutral before 2040.”

“Our unwavering commitment to quality, safety and service excellence underpins all our work. As we continue our organisational purpose, drawn from the Uniting Church, to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice, the care and wellbeing of our colleagues and the people we serve remains paramount. We’re striving to be known as the best place to work in our sectors, with a person-centred and innovative culture that values diversity and always welcomes everyone, exactly as they are.”

## Who we served in 2023:



<sup>1</sup> Uniting Annual Report 2023

## Uniting's services deliver:

The provision of care and support services to over 100,000 people every year.

100 Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care practitioners, who together provide 36,000 hours of care every year for people in residential aged care, hospitals, prisons and the wider community.

Social justice advocacy and campaigning on issues including climate change, drug law reform, aged care, First Nations peoples and young people in foster care and residential care.



## Some tangible examples of our priorities reflected in our service provision include:

Retirement villages which include affordable dwellings, with one third of independent living units completed in 2023 being Social and Affordable Housing.

Growing our presence in under-served areas such as Western and South Western Sydney and regional and rural communities, requiring a consolidation of services in Central and Northern Sydney.

Addressing locational disadvantage.

Supporting young people transitioning out of foster care.

Improving access to early learning in disadvantaged communities.

Providing driver support for socially and economically excluded young people.

Supporting Aboriginal families.

Providing alternative options for people transitioning from substance addiction.

## Areas of focus

The design and delivery of our services will be determined by individual and community needs, and we will prioritise investment in areas of greatest disadvantage. Our agenda will also continue to be shaped by the strategic priorities of the Synod and the identity and mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.

As a result, the Uniting Board, through the MGCC, has endorsed a number of priorities that relate specifically to the Church and which will receive particular focus in the coming 12 months. These are:

### Uniting Leaders Formation

Uniting is committed to the formation of its leaders and employees. Formation describes the intentional process which affects a person holistically (mind, body and spirit) to form their skills, relationships and the perspective they bring to their work.

Uniting's Formation Framework seeks to integrate the values, ethos and practices of the Uniting Church in Australia (the Church) with the values, practices and behaviours expected through our Uniting culture.

### Volunteer Engagement

For congregations and members seeking ways to express their call to local mission, Uniting will develop volunteering opportunities in Uniting facilities and activities as an option for congregations. These will build connection and relationship between Uniting Churches and the work of Uniting.

## Advocacy

The NSW.ACT Synod of the Uniting Church has resolved that Uniting undertake public advocacy on its behalf, with focus on the following areas:

- Climate Action
- First Nations Justice
- Fair Treatment.

In addition, Uniting also undertakes advocacy in relation to the community services Uniting delivers and the aspirations for systems change that are included in Uniting's Social Impact Strategic Objective. This includes advocacy with respect to Early Learning and Intervention, Youth Transitions, and care and support for Seniors through Uniting's comprehensive aged care services and housing for seniors.

Uniting will provide advice to the Synod and opportunities for congregations and members to participate in this advocacy work, as well as resources to support advocacy work in local contexts.



## The Synod of NSW & ACT's Walking Together Action Plan and Uniting's First Nations People and Place Strategy

We are committed to the process of reconciliation with First Nations peoples and will continue to implement Uniting's First Nations People & Place Strategy that acknowledges historical injustices and works towards creating a more equitable future.

These commitments are consistent with the Uniting Church in Australia's statements on reconciliation, and with the Synod of NSW & ACT's commitment to walking together with Australia's First Peoples, and to the Uniting Church Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

### Our Ambition:



### Our Strategy:



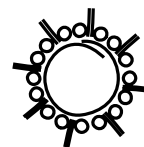
#### Our People

We will consciously grow our First Nations workforce and ensure our First Nations people are empowered to enrich their career experiences and capabilities.



#### Our Capability

We will invest in enhancing our cultural capabilities to be a culturally safe, responsive and empowering employer, partner and service provider.



#### Our Partners

We will purposefully invest in genuine and respectful partnerships with Aboriginal communities to promote and grow place-based and First-Nations-led responses.



#### Our Leadership

We are committed to strong governance including leadership practices to uphold our integrity and accountability to First Nations people and communities.



#### Our Impact

We will elevate the First Nations agenda and impact systems empowering First Nations people and communities through innovation, advocacy and research.

Reporting on Uniting's ongoing progress in these areas will be undertaken annually to the Uniting Board and the Synod Standing Committee.

From the immediate past Moderator of the Uniting Church in NSW.ACT, Rev. Simon Hansford:

**“This shared and complementary mission leadership ensures that our impact is multiplied, as we encourage our Church, politicians and our community to consider how to engage in serving those who need support. This is where community engagement has become so critical, with faith communities across our Synod engaging in action which echoes the mission of God.”<sup>2</sup>**





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