

2025: A YEAR IN REVIEW

Queensland Synod Office

renewal + growth



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

Welcome,

It gives me great pride to bring you our first Synod Office yearly review. 2025 has been a year full of progress and achievement as we lay the foundations for renewal and growth in the Uniting Church in Queensland.

These foundations have included the establishment of new teams to support congregations and presbyteries in their mission, lightening the administrative and compliance burden and accompanying them in their local contexts to help them prioritise missional and discipleship work.

Our 38th Synod was a wonderful time together, with many people describing it as their best Synod ever. As a church we passed significant proposals to focus our work strategically and to help address the sustainability of our mission in Queensland. Our strategic priorities are now well defined – Mission Renewal and Growth, Flourishing Presbyteries, Forming Leaders, Fit-for-purpose Governance and Stewarding Resources. As a church we also engaged in a new format - Renewal Conversations – deepening our understanding and opening up to wider input on key issues that affect the future of the church.

In all of our work our focus remains crystal clear as the Synod Office – we are here to enable, equip and encourage a renewing and growing church in Queensland.

We invite you to explore the achievements from every corner of our Synod Office: each one a testament to a church boldly embracing renewal and stepping into a future alive with possibility, hope, and promise.

God bless,

Rev Dr Adam McIntosh
General Secretary

Synod Vision

One church active in every Queensland community,
bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness

Synod Office Strategic Plan

Foundations for a Growing and Renewing Church

Our commitment is to strengthen the base upon which a flourishing, mission-driven church can thrive - equipping communities, deepening discipleship, and fostering renewal.

Strategic Journey 2025–2028

FY25: Lay the Foundations

Establish the essential structures, resources, and partnerships that will enable sustainable growth and renewal in the years ahead.



Key milestones

- 🌱 Our Mission Accompanying Team partnered with 50 congregations to strengthen and grow vibrant missional initiatives across Queensland.
- 🌱 Other teams drove the development of a new Synod Operating Model and PSU framework, laying the foundation for a stronger, more vibrant future.
- 🌱 We turned vision into reality with affordable housing projects opening in Thursday Island, Warwick, and Killarney, and celebrated the green light for the Kooya Road, Mitchelton development, bringing hope and opportunity to communities across Queensland.
- 🌱 The 38th Synod in May was a true celebration of renewal and inclusivity! With 341 participants - including 77 new members and 22 youth - the gathering overflowed with vibrant worship, cultural diversity, and deep conversations.
- 🌱 Raymont continued its exciting growth journey, surging toward new horizons.
- 🌱 From the Moderator's Principals and Chairs' Luncheon to our joyful Multicultural Pentecost Service with 150 participants, and MCCRG's proud 40th Anniversary, every event reflected unity and diversity. The inaugural Uniting Early Learning Gala topped it all off: bringing our community together in style.
- 🌱 Our Better Together Awards shone brightly, with 157 nominations and 27 individuals recognised multiple times for living our values.
- 🌱 The Queensland Synod won the AHRI Awards 2025 for "Best Attraction, Recruitment and Retention Strategy" for a small organisation - a testament to our people-first approach.
- 🌱 Strategic projects like Presbytery Capacity and Disaster Management Frameworks strengthened our foundations for resilience and readiness.
- 🌱 The launch of the Walking Together in Covenant Toolkit reaffirmed our deep commitment to relationships and shared mission - walking forward together in faith and hope.
- 🌱 Established a congregational community of practice focused on environmental sustainability.
- 🌱 Trinity College doubled its students for 2026, growing from 10 FTE this year to 20 FTE next year – a bold step towards expanding theological education and leadership formation.

At a glance



173

Congregations
10 Faith Communities

renewal

38th SYNOD

290

Registered Members

79 New Members
22 Youth Members



+300

People in Ministry

+180 Ministers in Placement

+50 Pastors in Placement

+70 Chaplains across Defence,



168

Employees across
Synod Office, Alex Park,
Raymont & UEL
Leadership

+230 UEL front line and operational staff



Two new funds established – supporting Covenant & Church Renewal



430

Buildings on 380 sites across QLD

Value - more than \$500 million



+2580

Students across three Property Trust Schools

+1900 Families

+380 Staff

+150 Year 12 students graduating

uniting early learning 

+2500

Children in our care around QLD

13 Day Care services

3 Outside School Hours Care services

+500 In Home Care places serviced

+65 Family Day Care providers

All less than five years after launch



+ 18K

Guests over 193 bookings

+125,000 meals

Record revenue & profit



125

of 130 places enrolled for 2026

More than 1/4 of 2025 students active in Christian community



100%

Increase in enrolments for 2026 under new 6-term learning model

#1 college in Australia in National Student Experience Survey

38th Synod in Session



The 38th Synod in Session was convened in May under the theme 'Renewal – God's Story. Our Story.' The gathering aimed to foster inclusivity and engagement, particularly among youth and new members. This year's event welcomed 341 participants, including 77 new members and 22 youth, reflecting significant progress toward these goals.

Throughout the event, participants engaged deeply in worship, yarning circles, and renewal conversations, and heard the stories of green shoots of renewal emerging from around the state. Cultural diversity was celebrated, with strong appreciation for CALD and First Nations representation. The Alex Park team provided over 350 meals daily, accommodating more than 100 dietary requirements, and venue facilities were rated highly by attendees.

Mission Accompanying Team (MAT)



2025 marks the first full year of operation for the Synod's Mission Accompanying Team (MAT). The team is set up to provide support to congregations and presbyteries in four key areas: congregational revitalisation and development, church planting, ministry with younger generations, and cross/intercultural mission.

During 2025 MAT worked alongside more than 30 congregations and presbyteries throughout the state. Exploratory conversations are ongoing with many more. A highlight has been the strengthening of relationships with presbyteries throughout the Synod.

The team has also undertaken a number of major projects, including the release of the current state report into intercultural ministry (CALD Report), the Synod's Church Planting & Revitalisation strategy, research into the current state of ministry with younger generations, support of the Synod's Mission Consultation and Collaboration Committee (MC3) and a significant contribution to the Presbytery Capacity project.

Ministry Matters

At Synod in Session, Ministry & Mission led three Renewal Conversations, exploring the Future of Formation, CALD Ministry, and Presbytery Capacity - creating space for dialogue and innovation.

To meet emerging needs, a new position for a Frontier Services Bush Chaplain was created. Serving the Bottle Tree region and based in Roma, this brings pastoral care to remote communities. In July, we welcomed a Wellbeing Chaplain to provide holistic support for staff, complementing our Employee Assistance Program and leading spiritual ordinances, including the much-loved Christmas Service.

We also deepened our global partnerships by welcoming the General Secretary of the EKT Church from Tuvalu and committing to work together with this Pacific Island nation as it faces the urgent challenge of rising sea levels.

Disaster Recovery

A Disaster Recovery Officer continued to work two days a week to develop coordinated and sustainable Disaster Resilience and recovery capabilities for Presbyteries and congregations. Our Disaster Resilience & Recovery Framework has been ratified and is now being implemented across the church, helping us to support both congregations and the communities they serve in times of disaster.

Environmental Sustainability

Our Environmental Sustainability Specialist delivered significant initiatives this year, hosting the second *Ways to Care for Country* event - a World Environment Day livestreamed panel in partnership with WMQ and UCQ - fostering dialogue on creation care.

The team also compiled the annual *National Greenhouse and Energy Emissions Report* for the Clean Energy Regulator, ensuring compliance and transparency. In addition, a *Congregational Flourishing Creation Community of Practice* was created, as a collaborative space for congregations to share ideas and drive sustainable action.

Presbytery Support Unit (PSU)



Our first year of operation saw the team continue to build a presence and relational strength with presbyteries and congregations.

We began socialising a bold two-level Synod Operating Model across the Synod Office and Presbyteries, laying the foundation for collaboration and clarity.

We responded to 629

inquiries from 150 congregations, with the PSU resolving nearly half—helping communities thrive with confidence. We have begun a project to refresh The Hub, further

Seven Safe Church training modules were revised and relocated to The Hub, delivering incredible results: 1,262 completions in just 3 months compared to 1,531 over 15 months on the previous platform! We also commenced a refresh of the content on The Hub, ensuring users are accessing the most relevant and up to date content.

Brand, Communications & External Relations



Our communications team delivered strong, strategic engagement across media, digital platforms, and stakeholder networks. Media reach extended to a wide audience, with 885 mentions, and a cumulative coverage exceeding 14.2 million, from January to November..

Digital engagement remained robust, posts across Meta and LinkedIn driving growth in impressions and follower engagement. Website traffic increased steadily, and *Uniting News* maintained industry-leading open rates of 42–45%, reinforcing its role as a trusted channel.

Major initiatives included supporting stakeholder engagement with videos and reports for the Presbytery Capacity Project, advancement of the Renewal & Growth Strategy, and delivery of high-impact content and media engagement for affordable housing projects in Warwick and Killarney. The lead up to the 38th Synod, as well as the Synod meeting itself, was an especially busy time, supporting the event with video, design, photography and daily summaries. We also finalised the Crisis Communications Plan and supported reputation management through sensitive messaging and risk monitoring.

Events such as the Moderator's Convocation, Moderator Medal presentations, and community celebrations amplified our presence and strengthened relationships. Looking ahead, opportunities lie in leveraging high-performing content themes - leadership, recognition, and community impact - to sustain engagement and deepen connection across all audiences.

Governance

Together, we worked across all expressions of the Uniting Church to ensure our governance is robust and fit for purpose. We partnered with PSU to deliver a two-day Presbytery Office Bearers Training Workshop in June, welcoming 28 participants from across Queensland. We also delivered Property Trust 101 training four times throughout the year, equipping over 40 participants with essential governance skills.

The Synod Standing Committee (SSC) actively connected with communities by hosting meetings at several congregations and visiting a number of our Uniting Early Learning centres. Additionally, on behalf of the Synod Standing Committee, the Fit-for Purpose Committee Structure Working Group has met regularly to review Synod governance.

We established the Synod Administrative Services Team in partnership with the Executive Support Manager, providing streamlined support to Synod governing bodies. Professional development was a priority, with Minute Taking Training through the Governance Institute of Australia attended by 19 participants from across the broader church. Property Trust members also undertook specialised training in Early Childhood Education and Care, and Child Protection for Schools. We continue to provide governance assistance to 14 Synod bodies, supporting more than 80 unique members.

Fundraising

In 2025, 70% of congregations throughout Queensland received fundraising support. Through successful grant applications, 32 congregations and UEL centres were equipped with defibrillators, enhancing safety across our communities.

We developed fundraising strategies for two new funds - the Church Renewal Fund (CRF) and the Covenant Ministry Fund (CMF) - and introduced innovative pilots, including accessing Google Ads Grants and a Bequest program to strengthen future giving.

Fundraising also launched an inaugural Social Impact Survey, with more than a third of congregation providing metrics on their impact in local communities. Insights from this report will inform future planning and amplify our social mission. We hosted quarterly Community of Practice meetings with UCQ, WMQ, Frontier Services, Assembly, WRI, and UnitingWorld, and monthly environmental collaboration meetings.

UAICC and Covenanting

Walking in Covenant remains central to our shared life with Muth arrak, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Queensland. This growing relationship is built on deep listening, mutual respect, and practical action that honours First Peoples as valued co-contributors to God's story.

Together we are forging pathways toward reconciliation and self-determination, embedding cultural awareness into our ministries, and creating spaces where stories of hope and flourishing can thrive. Our commitment to Covenant is lived out by cultural calendar events, through partnerships, training, and initiatives that strengthen trust and inspire joint participation.

This year began by Muth arrak leading a nationally streamed Day of Mourning ceremony. The Queensland event was attended by over 200 people and over 80 stayed to enjoy a homemade dinner that highlighted the importance of hospitality as an act of shared healing.

The new Covenant Ministry Fund was approved as part of our 38th Synod in Session, giving the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress a vehicle from which Muth arrak can build long term sustainability in financial resourcing. Also launched at the 38th Synod was the Walking in Covenant Toolkit, a tangible expression of our dedication to relationship and shared mission as we affirm, acknowledge and awaken new ways of relating a peoples together in our Christian walk.



In July, Muth arrak leaders met in discernment about identifying our focus for the coming years. Knowing *"the harvest is plentiful – yet the workers are few"*, it was agreed that to respond by committing to:

- *Equip leaders of our future.* Our goal for the next two years, is to have a minimum of five ministerial agents actively investing in their spiritual / theological development and taking their rightful place in ministry leadership.
- *Build upon the fire currently stirring amongst our youth and young adults and co-create learning and gathering opportunities.* This is for youth and young adult leaders to lead place-based communities of faith and worship. Also, for these young members of our church to be strengthened by the church to live out the gospel through their gifts in the broader community.



L to R back row: Rev Paul Clark, Jonah Yunkaporta, Rev Bruce Moore, Rev Richard Cassidy

L to R middle row: Noel Waterman, Ps Scott Downman, Ps Sono Weatherall, Jancie Wilson, Isobel Hall, Patricia Mark, Rev Tevita Niurua, Rev Christy Allen, Kym Korbe

L to R front row: Ps Uncle Arnold Yunkaporta, Aunty Beatrice, Aunty Janice Wilson, Mayor and Uncle Roy Chevathen, Rev Aunty Roberta Stanley

In July UAICC Queensland members attending the five day Queensland Community Alliance, Community Organisation Training as part of the response to equipping members to take up leadership positions in Ministry, Administration, Governance and Advocacy.

On Mental Health Day in October, UAICC Executive Officer Kym Korbe led a powerful initiative in collaboration with the Queensland Police Service's State Safe Custody Unit.

Over two days, senior QPS leaders undertook Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Mental Health First Aid and Crisis Support training, gaining vital insights into culturally informed care.

In November, we led a Walk on Country visit to Cherbourg, where more than 20 Synod staff learned the history of the former mission. At the end of the November, we partnered with ecumenical friends to host 'Gathering in the Spirit for Justice,' a free community event that brought together church leaders and young voices.



December saw the culmination of a year of consultation and work with the Muth arrak Terms of Reference for Relationships between The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod and related entities, being endorsed by the Synod Standing Committee.

Social Justice & Advocacy

This year, our voice for justice rang loud and clear, shaping conversations and influencing change across Queensland and beyond. We joined the Australian Federal Police's Australian Centre to Counter Child Exploitation at their end-of-year stakeholder briefing and networking event, building stronger connections for a safer future. Our submission to the Senate's Legal and Constitutional Affairs References Committee on Australia's youth justice and incarceration system has helped our values informed national dialogue.

Protecting vulnerable communities remained a priority as we gave evidence to the Queensland Parliament's inquiry into elder abuse. Our advocacy for housing delivered tangible results, with our submission to the Queensland Parliament's inquiry into supported accommodation helping secure a \$10 million investment in the Queensland Community Support Scheme.

We influenced national policy when our submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's review of justice responses to sexual violence was cited in the final report, and our input into the *Making Queensland Safer (Adult Crime, Adult Time) Amendment Bill 2025* was referenced multiple times during parliamentary debate - proof that our advocacy matters.

We proudly signed the Allies for Uluru joint letter to the Prime Minister, calling for truth-telling and reconciliation, and stood for climate justice by joining key environmental. With Power Together and UnitingCare Queensland, we contributed to submissions on Queensland's energy and emissions policy and the federal Productivity Commission's net zero transformation report. We also partnered with UnitingCare Queensland to shape the draft Spiritual Care Framework for Queensland Health facilities.

We engaged widely, from Raise the Age leadership groups to aged care roundtables, asylum seeker advocacy, and research collaborations, staying at the heart of conversations shaping justice and care. And we stood against extremism and racism, creating resources for International Day of Peace and International Day of People with Disability, and leading letter-writing actions on racism, extremism, and fair labour practices.

People & Culture



We have hosted a full day Global Leadership Summit in Brisbane, as well as five lunch and learn sessions at the UC Centre, further equipping leaders and emerging leaders.

This year we supported seven members of the church with funded scholarships to participate in the Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) Company Directors course and a further three members of our Synod leadership team. We are looking forward to doing this for another cohort in 2026 and strengthening our commitment to good governance.

Celebrating excellence was another highlight. Our Better Together Awards received over 140 nominations, with 27 individuals recognised multiple times for living our values. We're also proud to be awarded the 2025 AHRI Awards for "Best Attraction, Recruitment and Retention Strategy" for a small organisation.

Schools & Colleges

This year we launched the Uniting Education Schools and Colleges Identity Statement, a cornerstone for deepening our missional connection with schools and residential colleges. We livestreamed our inaugural Moderator's Blessing for Education, an initiative we will be building in the years to come. Community celebrations were also a highlight of the year, with the Moderator's Principals and Chairs' Luncheon in November provided a wonderful opportunity to connect and share vision.

Property



In March, the Uniting Church partnered with the Queensland Government to deliver eight new affordable homes on Thursday Island through the Housing Investment Fund. These homes are now occupied, providing safe and sustainable living options for families in one of Queensland's most remote communities. Built by Oly Homes on the Sunshine Coast, the modular dwellings were transported to the Torres Strait and installed on church-owned land. The project won the 2025 Master Builders Queensland Housing & Construction Awards in the Prefabricated and Modular Housing category.

In September, Uniting Place Warwick officially opened, marking another milestone in our commitment to regional housing. This development includes ten new homes on Guy Street - seven one-bedroom and three two-bedroom dwellings - constructed by local builders Active Built. Uniting Place Killarney followed in October adding four more homes, featuring sustainability measures such as solar panels, battery storage, and water tanks to help reduce living costs for residents. Together, these projects deliver 14 affordable homes for the Southern Downs region, with tenancies managed by Regional Housing Limited, Queensland's largest community housing provider in regional areas.

Trinity College Queensland



Trinity College Queensland achieved significant outcomes in 2025 in both innovating theological education and renewing formation.

The results from the national Student Experience Survey identified Trinity College Queensland as the number one university/college in Australia out of all higher education providers! This includes all public universities and colleges. This is an outstanding achievement and is testament to the teaching expertise and administrative excellence of the entire Trinity team.

Trinity also developed an implementation plan to introduce a world-first model for theological education in 2026 that replaces the two-semester model with six six-week terms. Under the six-week model, students will:

- Study one subject at a time, ensuring focussed study.
- Be exposed to new AI-proof methods of assessment such as interactive oral assessments which will support the learning experience for CALD and First Nations' students.
- Have opportunities to fast-track their study.
- Provide greater accessibility for students in full-time work or with family commitments.

The New Teaching Model has resulted in significant enrolment growth with projections for 2026 identifying a 100-percent growth in FTE (full-time equivalent) students.

During the year, Tuesdays @ Trinity was launched to support the formation of candidates, as well as resource the UCA in Queensland. The program and resources have been commended by the Standards of Ministry Committee through their Consultation of the Board for Christian Formation, Trinity College Queensland and the Queensland Synod.

Trinity launched a partnership with The Lakes College to lead professional development training for the College staff. This initiative involved three professional development sessions, the first with all College staff and the final two focussed on training Faith and Values Educators (FaVE) on Christian Worldview and Adolescent Formation.

All this hard work was capped out with Trinity awarded the Better Together Award by the General Secretary at the Synod's Better Together Awards in November.

Raymont Residential College

This year marks an exceptional retention rate, with 80 students returning next year, underscoring their strong engagement and satisfaction. As of early December, Raymont is has made offers to students for full capacity in 2026, with a waiting list now started.

Leadership development continues to thrive, with 26 students vying for 14 leadership positions for 2026 - a clear reflection of their ambition and commitment. Academic excellence also remains a hallmark of Raymont, with 15 students achieving straight 7s in Semester 1 (Semester 2 results pending).

We capped off the year in style at our Valedictory Dinner, celebrating the outstanding achievements of 12 Valedictorians who exemplify the spirit of excellence.

Alex Park Conference Centre

During one of the busiest short periods in its history, Alex Park hosted 1,761 guests over just 19 days between 16 May and 3 June 2025. Over the whole year the team have welcomed over 18,000 guests through the doors for impactful stays across church, sporting, school and community groups. We also attracted a record number of groups from a single school client, welcoming five new groups during the year.

Across the 2025 financial year, Alex Park served an impressive 117,397 main meals, demonstrating its capacity to deliver exceptional hospitality at scale.

Uniting Early Learning (UEL)



Uniting Early Learning made meaningful progress this year, strengthening the way we care for children and support families. We introduced a complete set of policies and procedures for In Home Care and Family Day Care, ensuring consistency and quality across our services. Our expertise was recognised nationally, with invitations to help shape the National Quality Standards and participate in pilot projects for both these standards and the Operational Guideline Requirements, contributing to improvements that will benefit families everywhere.

Our people remain central to everything we do. A tailored training framework was rolled out for all staff and contractors, and we improved child safety data reporting to keep children safer. Staff turnover dropped to well below the sector average, and early 2025 saw strong engagement in our staff survey. We also refreshed our Employee Value Proposition and introduced a Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity plan to make sure every team member feels valued and supported. This year also saw the implementation of a new remuneration framework. Leadership capability was strengthened through the introduction of formal 2iC roles and intentional succession planning for critical positions such as GM, AM, and CD.

Celebrating excellence was another highlight. The inaugural UEL Gala Awards honoured outstanding contributions, and our leaders took part in sector events and committees, including Early Childhood Australia, to keep learning and sharing. Programs like Building Bridges provided new skills for Family Day Care and In Home Care contractors, supported by grant funding, and a targeted recruitment campaign helped us attract quality educators across Queensland. We also increased visa sponsorship for skilled educators, particularly in regional areas such as Townsville. Reward and recognition continued through our monthly peer-nominated Wellness Award.

We invested in creating welcoming spaces for children and families, with upgrades such as painting, yard improvements, and new flooring. Behind the scenes, we worked on systems like Kronos to improve rostering compliance and profitability and began a procurement review to make sure resources are used wisely. These steps help us stay efficient while keeping quality front and centre.

Community connections grew stronger, with new relationships in Townsville and Rockhampton and the launch of a Prep Transition Program in partnership with Uniting Schools and state schools, helping children move confidently from kindy to primary school.

Together, these efforts reflect a year of care, collaboration, and commitment - building a foundation for children, families, and communities to thrive.