



# 34th Synod Reports Summary

**The following are highlights drawn from each report as presented to Synod. This summary is provided for your reference.**

## Moderator's Report

Moderator: Rev David Baker

The life of the Uniting Church in Queensland since last Synod has been anything but dull. As I look back on our time together, we've set our face to deal with what is emerging directly, openly, and honestly. We do this because the God revealed in Jesus Christ gives us confidence and hope that no matter how things may look, God is faithful; that God is working things together for the new, promised creation, revealed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and by a mystery of grace, we are caught up in that work. We have been richly blessed; those who handed the baton on to us have gifted us tremendously, and when we have stepped out in faith to new endeavours of the kingdom, others have come to help. It was ever thus, "the resources for the mission are found as we do the mission".

The Moderator touches on themes and activities that have encouraged and challenged us:

- Our life together
- Our life in the wider church
- Our life in the Queensland community

## R1 Board for Christian Formation

Chair: Rev Gwen Fisher

### National Education for Ministry Working Group review

In March 2018 the Assembly's Education for Ministry Working Group conducted a review of the activities of Trinity College Queensland to ensure its practices met with Uniting Church accreditation standards. The review found an enthusiastic cohort of staff and students but noted that the review had been undertaken in a transformational time. They requested that they return in 12 months to update and finalise their report. The BCF is currently negotiating a return date which is likely to occur in the second half of 2019.

### Transfer of accredited provider

In October 2018 the BCF advised the Adelaide College of Divinity that it would be seeking a new TEQSA accredited provider. The Board for Christian Formation has been in conversation with a preferred provider, however no formal decision has yet been made.

### Improve student enrolments

In early 2019 the enrolment data for Trinity was 44 students enrolled for Semester 1, including four students in the Activate program. There are 12 students who are candidates for ordination. We achieved a total enrolment in lay education courses of around 158 people during 2018, which is an exponential increase from 40 people in 2016.

### Trinity Unplugged

Trinity Unplugged continues to attract record crowds including live streaming participants from across the state. Participation in these seminars does not require enrolment at Trinity.

### Trinity on Tap

Previously, Trinity unaccredited short courses have been taught face-to-face. In 2019 these one-day intensives will be replaced by free audio and visual resources. Each Trinity on Tap resource will include 21 podcasts (downloadable from iTunes) and a supplementary guide book. Old Testament on Tap will be available in May 2019.

## Delivery of quality online accredited courses by 2021

A working group has been established to ensure that online accredited learning is accessible to distance students by 2021.

## R2 Finance, Investment and Property Board

Chair: Ralph Collins

- Following the revision of the Synod-wide Treasury Policy to allow investment into more growth-oriented assets that comply with the Synod Ethical Investment Policy, \$30m was invested into three managed funds. This policy will also allow the acceptance of shares in specie and property as a direct investment (generally from deceased estates).
- Entered into a debt-for-asset swap agreement with The Lakes College (TLC).
- Registered Powers of Attorney issued to the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Director, Governance at UnitingCare under the provisions of the Synod Documents Execution Policy.
- Based on cash flow forecasts, renewed the external debt facility with ANZ of \$5m (with the ability to increase the limit quickly, if needed) for a further three years from December 2017. This facility has been maintained as a source of liquidity for potential opportunities.
- Continued the rebuild of the Synod Reserve Fund. Following the decision to exit from Shalom Christian College, the Synod Reserve Fund has been used and the rebuild strategy will take this into account.
- Established a scholarship fund with Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) status.
- Completed phase one of the Property Strategy. A review was conducted of the development potential of all non-agency property across the Synod which will assist with future analysis and decisions.
- Following considerable consultation across the church and the obtaining of a Development Approval for the Alexandra Park Conference Centre site, the FIP Board finalised a review to determine the best future use to benefit the Synod. The recommendation to the Synod Standing Committee was to continue existing operations and enhance them as opportunities arise.
- Synod Audit Risk and Oversight Committee (SAROC), a sub-committee of the FIP Board was replaced by the Audit and Risk Committee (ARC), a sub-committee of Synod Standing Committee.

## R3 General Secretary

General Secretary: Rev Heather den Houting

The impact of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety and the forthcoming Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability has meant that the way we have and will operate as a church in the world has foundationally changed. Our own sense of ourselves and our capacity to allow people to grow to a life in Christ is challenged.

## R4 Synod Standing Committee

Chair: Rev David Baker

- Anticipating a strategic missional purpose
- Project Plenty
- Governance decisions

## R5 Synod Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements

Secretary: Rev John Ruhle

- Implementation of the optional dual track process.
- The option to use the delegated process has shifted the locus of the operation of the placements process from the Placements Committee to the relevant presbytery, congregation or appointing body.
- We are in the midst of the initial three-year trial and the statistics indicate a slow take-up rate.

## R6 Presbytery of Bremer Brisbane

Presbytery Minister: Rev Brian Hoole

- An increasing number of youth and young adults engaged in activities at both local and presbytery level.
- The major consultation work being undertaken to re-imagine a new future in Ipswich.
- The work done by various task groups that seek to offer leadership into new areas and new ways of being the church.

## R7 Presbytery of Calvary

Presbytery Minister: Rev Dennis Corowa

- **Settlement of Pastor Dr Gewa Au:** Dr Gewa Au accepted a call to ministry as pastor to the Mornington Island Uniting Church congregation, beginning on 1 January 2018. His settlement has seen recommencement of community engagement, youth and children's activities as well as the regular worship services.
- **Mornington Island dedication of refurbished church building:** On 12 August 2018, Moderator Rev David Baker and the Calvary Presbytery Chairman Rev Dennis Corowa dedicated the newly refurbished church building at Mornington Island to the glory of God.
- **Leadership formation:** David Paasi concluded his Period of Discernment and Diploma of Theology at Trinity College. He is enrolled in the BTh program and comes to the May Presbytery meeting as a prospective MOW candidate. Namila Davui is an applicant for the POD, and Patricia Mann, a candidate with NSW Congress, has relocated to Queensland.

## R8 Presbytery of Central Queensland

Presbytery Minister: Rev Kerry Pierce

- The Presbytery of Central Queensland welcomed Rev Dr Kerry Piece as the new Presbytery Minister.
- Ministerial candidate Moira Dodsworth was ordained at the Northside Mackay Uniting Church on 12 January 2018.
- The CQ Connect streaming project has gone live in small and growing ways. This is an ideal resource where we can share in worship and facilitate meetings, workshops and training opportunities across vast distances.

## R9 Presbytery of Mary Burnett

Presbytery Minister: Rev Chris Crause

Highlights include a successful retreat that scored a 96 per cent approval rating, building collegiality, acknowledging ministry agents for their hard work and supporting members and offering support to those in need.

## R10 Presbytery of Moreton Rivers

Presbytery Minister: Revs John Ruhle and Yvonne McRostie

- The beginning of the Mission Development Officer (Inner Ring) role in partnership with Ashgrove West Uniting Church.
- The opening of the new building and the strengthening of the church plant at North Lakes Uniting Church.
- A partnership between Saint Andrew's Uniting Church and Albany Creek Uniting Church to work together for the development of the Hold Fast Saint Andrew's faith community.
- A partnership with Wesley Mission Queensland Albert St congregation, Newlife Robina, South Moreton Presbytery and our presbytery to launch the Newlife Brisbane church plant on 3 March 2019.
- Growing our POD involvement (currently 21 people) and number of candidates (currently six) at Trinity.
- Trinity Grove Wilston Uniting Church partnering with Highfields congregation in their church plant property purchase.
- Faith Works Community Uniting Church congregation assisting in the completion of the building refurbishment with Calvary Presbytery at Mornington Island Uniting Church.
- Growing our day camp ministry to a second campus at Pine Rivers.

## R11 Presbytery of North Queensland

Presbytery Minister: Rev Garry Hardingham

- We are proud of the fact that the actions of the Presbytery have managed to halt a large exodus from the church following the Assembly decision on same gender marriage. A number of church councils threatened to resign en masse, and many high-profile leaders made decisions to leave the Uniting Church. The developed relationships across the Presbytery enabled effective intervention and a trust that the Presbytery had the congregations and church councils' backs.
- The response to the flooding crisis in Townsville and northwest Queensland was well coordinated by the ministry agents in these areas and ongoing support has been timely and effective. Strong local church interaction and relationships have enabled effective pastoral care for the ministry agents involved and many are reporting that this support was both crucial and life-giving.

## R12 Presbytery of South Moreton

Presbytery Minister: Pastor David Busch

### **From Yarrabilba to Greater Flagstone**

Our report to the 33rd Synod indicated a proposed church plant to be underway at Yarrabilba by December 2018. Further research identified a more strategic and missional opportunity lay in the much larger development emerging at Greater Flagstone and Bromelton, just west and south of Yarrabilba. Partnering with UnitingCare, Wesley Mission Queensland, Real Life Christian Church and Calvary Christian College, South Moreton Presbytery is taking the lead in appointing a Community Development Officer.

### **Imagining a Destiny Together**

Six congregations (one of them in Moreton Rivers Presbytery) in Brisbane's southern suburbs are pursuing the possibility of amalgamating to become one congregation on multiple campuses. The proposed final shape and implementation steps are being developed for final decision by each congregation in October 2019. Rev David Fender began 1 January 2019 as the Destiny Together lead ministry agent (a three-year Presbytery placement). A similar collaborative discernment journey has begun among the five remaining congregations in Redland City (Thorneside Uniting Church closed in December 2018).

### **New and revitalised churches**

On 6 May 2018 a Presbytery service marked the inauguration of Uniting North Coomera congregation. Coomera Uniting Church had been established in 1874; Uniting North Gold Coast began as a church plant of Newlife Robina at Pacific Pines in 2012, graduating to be recognised as a congregation in 2017. Burleigh Village Church, established from Newlife Robina in 2017, continues as a faith community based at the Burleigh Heads Uniting Church site.

The launch of Newlife Brisbane at Albert St Uniting Church in March 2019 has been jointly supported by South Moreton and Moreton Rivers Presbyteries. Newlife is in discussion with another congregation in South Moreton about a different model of church plant and revitalisation to commence January 2020.

### **New multicultural support**

The appointment of Pastor Levon Kardashian as Project Officer Multicultural has brought fresh skills, capacity and direction to this role. Starting a weekly Sunday morning English-language service has been a significant missional step and adjustment for Brisbane Taiwanese Uniting Church. A language support program has begun to assist Period of Discernment participants and ordination candidates.

## **R13 Presbytery of The Downs**

Presbytery Minister: Rev John Case

- The filling of the Cunnamulla Burke and Wills Patrol placement.
- The appointment of a pastor into the Maranoa Congregations after 18 months of being vacant.
- Celebration of the life of Pastor Pauline Denning and the influence she had as hospital chaplain for 11 years.
- The Camino Stanthorpe Retreat Walk weekend in the Granite Belt.
- Visitors from Amritsar Diocese, Church of North India.

## **R14 Synod Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group**

Chair: Akesa Racava

- Next Gen Arise (NGA) has provided a platform for young emerging leaders. The regular worship gatherings attract 150-200 people and are held in different locations.
- The current (0.2) funding for the NGA project worker concludes in June. Discussions took place with Trinity College Queensland to continue and increase NGA's engagement. Further funding has also been sought for two separate positions available at Trinity through a bequest.
- Two community meetings are organised each year, with a different congregation hosting. A multicultural community worship gathering was held at Logan Central Multicultural on 23 June 2018.
- A special community meeting was hosted at the Uniting Church Centre on 15 June 2018 to discuss matters of common interest (proposals related to same gender marriage to the 15th Assembly), around 80 people attended.
- An alternative to a Synod-run post-Assembly gathering (which was proposed at the community gathering in June) was that a focus group made up of members of the reference group contact and meet with different CALD communities.
- We have encouraged attendance by CALD representatives at the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women (South Pacific) Conference in July 2018. The chairperson of the

reference group and ten women from CALD and multicultural congregations in Brisbane made up a total number of 45 from the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF) attending the conference.

- The Uniting Women National Conference in Brisbane in September 2018 was an important opportunity to engage our multicultural communities in a national Uniting Church event as leaders and participants.
- The group will work closely with Sue Hutchinson, Research and Policy Officer, ahead of Multicultural Month in August 2019 to generate resources.

## R15 Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

Chair: Mr Peter Campbell

- Undertaking the role as the Board of Shalom Christian College from January 2018 to February 2019 and using the college constitution to lead, oversee and be accountable for the educational delivery, financial performance and both human and physical resources on the site.
- Collaborative development of a Schools Risk Framework and Risk Register by Property Trust school principals and business managers in May 2018. Following feedback, the final framework was endorsed by the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee in October 2018.
- Assuring Synod Standing Committee in April and October of 2018 and April of 2019 that Property Trust schools are meeting educational and legislative compliance standards detailed in the appropriate acts and regulations of both state and federal legislation. This included the finalisation of the National Child Safe Framework: Implementation Audit in July 2018 and will include a schools workshop in May 2019 to assist the implementation of the recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse at Uniting Church schools.

## R16 Synod Chaplaincy Commission

Chair: Rev Brian Hoole

- Consolidation of the restructure of the Commission including the creation and implementation of the Chaplains Oversight Committee.
- Collaborative work between the Commission, UnitingCare Queensland and Wesley Mission Queensland for the professional development of health and aged-care chaplains across various contexts.
- Development of a guiding coalition initially involving the Queensland Synod and UnitingCare Mission teams in support of a whole-of-church approach to strategic mission and ministry practice.
- Chaplaincy Affirmation Days for 2018 were incorporated into the week-long Inspired Disciples event, a new initiative of the Synod Strategic Mission group.
- The creation and launch of a Diploma in Ministry Chaplaincy Pathway in Semester 1 2019. The Chaplaincy Commission Scholarship Program Project Initiative.
- The funding and appointment of a new full-time chaplain with the Sunshine Coast University Hospital which opened in April 2017.

## R17 Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee

Chair: Rev Dr Clive W Ayre

- An ecumenical youth summit which enabled a new generation to engage with the issues.
- A retreat early in 2018.

## R18 Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee

Chair: Rev Heather Griffin

- 21 March 2018 saw the Queensland launch of the study guide to the Assembly document *Friendship in the Presence of Difference* at a lunch attended by Presbytery Ministers, members of the Queensland Faith Communities Council, the Queensland Police Service, Brisbane City Council and others.
- On 3 June 2018 during Ramadan the Synod partnered with the Islamic Council of Queensland (ICQ) and hosted an Iftar Dinner at the Uniting Church Centre.

## R19 UnitingCare Queensland

Chair: Mr Nigel Alexander

- We have developed an affordable housing strategy and implementation plan, implemented CARE Phase II targeting foster and kinship carers and continued our work to support clients and employees transitioning to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).
- We have established effective partnerships across our services with the Sleep-Well Service Pilot and the Project Search initiative. Effective partnerships have been forged with external organisations to deliver the Newpin program and the Brisbane Recovery Centre for Out-of-Home Care Reform Pilot.
- We have redesigned the customer experience in consumer-directed sectors in aged care and disability and partnered with other health professionals on the Blue Care Live Well Centre initiative.
- We have initiated our **2030 program**.

## R20 Wesley Mission Queensland

Chair: Geoff Batkin

In June 2018 we farewelled Superintendent Minister Rev Lyn Burden. Rev Dr Peter Hobson has been in the role for almost 12 months.

We have continued on a path of:

- redevelopment and/or significant renovation of older aged care homes.
- growing service responses for people living with disability.
- growing our range of services for people living with mental illness.
- growing support services for children, young people and families including our palliative and end-of-life care services (Hummingbird House and Hopewell Hospice and Paradise Kids).
- expanding retirement living offerings (Rosemount at Sinnamon Park).

Our new Strategic Plan 2019–2022 strongly reflects our mission, to walk alongside people in need offering care and compassion and promoting choice, independence and community well-being.

Dovetree Residential Aged Care Community of 144 aged care suites (including day/overnight respite, therapy centre and 150 car parks) opened in July 2018. We have allocated one level (36 suites and community spaces) to provide transitional support for adults living with a disability with high and complex care needs.

Stage 1 development of Rosemount Retirement Community consisting of 70 mainly two and three-bedroom apartments commenced in February 2018 and will welcome new residents in June 2019. Stage 2 development consisting of 65 one, two and three-bedroom apartments will commence before the end of 2019 and should be completed at the end of 2020.

The two eight-bed Anam Cara cottages development was completed in February 2019 with the first eight-bed cottage “Clear Mountain” now occupied. The cottages are attached to the 105-bed Anam Cara Residential Aged Care Community at Bray Park.

Our mental health services continue to grow and reach more people predominantly in South East Queensland and on the Fraser Coast. One example has been the establishment of Marcus Mission suicide prevention (supporting young men) in 2018.

WMQ is collaborating with the family of Pastor Don Brady (Kawanji), a prominent Aboriginal leader in Queensland through the 1960s and 1970s, to help tell his story.

The ORCA Project, a post-school option for young people with disability based at the Albany Creek Uniting Church, follows a four-stage progressive pathway known as WORK (Welcome, Organised, Ready, Keen) to successful employment. In April 2019 the ORCA team held a celebration to showcase their work and learnings.

In September 2018 Hopewell Hospice and Paradise Kids joined Wesley Mission Queensland at the request of the Hopewell Board, following a comprehensive process of review and planning.

The WMQ Council and Albert Street Uniting Church, with significant encouragement and financial support from Moreton Rivers Presbytery, have entered into a missional partnership with Newlife Robina (South Moreton Presbytery) in establishing a contemporary worshipping and witnessing church plant in the Brisbane CBD.

WMQ is committed to establishing a hub for promoting public theology and social justice located at Albert Street Uniting Church in the Brisbane CBD.