

# Profile Form for Nominees for President-elect

Regulation 3.6.26 (b) requires that the Assembly Standing Committee provide advice to the Church on the challenges and issues which may be faced by the President and the Assembly in the next seven years. This is to assist the discernment process as the Church nominates and elects the President – elect.

In July 2008 the ASC addressed itself to this responsibility and offers this guidance to the Church.

- ❖ Continuing significant relationships with wide sections of the Australian community through avenues beyond our congregations.
- ❖ The multicultural and inter-faith reality of Australia.
- ❖ The quantity and quality of our Ministers and matters relating to call and training of Ministers and lay leaders.
- ❖ The UCA has a willingness to experiment in new Christian communities and ways of being the church.
- ❖ The aging demographic within the UCA and the sense of disconnect with the church by younger generations.
- ❖ Ongoing need for discernment between the things that are of God and culturally supported ways of being an organisation.
- ❖ Need to relate with initiative across a wide range of constituencies including the diversity of the UCA, the media, inter faith and ecumenical leaders and internationally with other churches.
- ❖ Capacity to assist the UCA develop forms of evangelism appropriate to the theology and traditions of the UCA

**Name:**

**Rev Dr Robert Bos**

**Nominated by:**

Queensland Synod

**Synod of residence:**

Queensland

**Contact Details:**

c/o Pilgrim Learning Community, Queensland Synod,  
GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001, rob.bos@ucaqld.com.au

**Age range:**

(under 30, 30-39, 40-49,  
50-59, 60-69)

60 - 69

**Personal interests:**

Supporting lay persons in deepening their spiritual lives, and equipping people for ministry in the wider community and in the church;

Children and grandchildren, walking beaches, writing poetry.

**Relevant church experience:**

Congregational ministry in Weipa, Aurukun and Ipswich;  
Chaired two Presbyteries;

Worked in Aboriginal Christian leadership development for 22 years in the Northern and Queensland Synods (Nungalinia College, Wontulp-Bi-Buya College, Education officer of Calvary Presbytery/Director of Yalga-binbi Institute – all in the establishment stages);

Founding Director of Coolamon College 1993-2001;

National Consultant, Theology and Discipleship, Assembly, 2002-2008, attended all Assembly Standing Committee meetings during this time;

Member of six Assemblies;

Director, Pilgrim Learning Community (lay education), Queensland Synod, 2008+;

Co-editor with Norman Habel of *Rainbow Spirit Theology*. Co-editor with Geoff Thompson of *Theology for Pilgrims*. Published a number of articles in *Uniting Church Studies*;

Bible Study leader in five Synods (Northern, Tas, WA, Vic/Tas, Qld)

**Passions:**

Encouraging and empowering lay persons by deepening their spiritual lives and equipping them for ministry in the wider community and in the church;

Supporting people from other countries as they find their rightful place in the church and exercise leadership;

Having the unique place of Indigenous people in Australian society recognised.

**Vision for the UCA:**

I would want the Uniting Church to fulfil its calling as an Australian church, called to worship, witness and serve the triune God in the various contexts of contemporary society. This means remaining faithful to the witness of the Bible and taking seriously the rich spiritual and theological tradition of the past 2000 years. At the same time the faith must be expressed in the language and structures appropriate to today, so that it resonates deeply with people's experience and empowers us all for a better future. This entails listening to the voices of the various generations, and people of various cultural backgrounds, rural and urban.

As a migrant person myself, I have some understanding of the struggles of people coming from other countries. From my experience, Christians coming from overseas have much to teach us about faith and discipleship and I would want their voices to be heard and understood.

My twenty years of living and working with Aboriginal people provided me with opportunities to travel widely throughout the northern half of the continent, giving me many insights into the life and cultures of Indigenous people. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have a unique place in Australian society and have much to teach us about the care of our fragile country, the value of relationships and the place of the sacred in social life.

With some notable exceptions, the Uniting Church is not good at faith sharing. We need to develop a language which communicates the ever-relevant Good News of Jesus Christ for today, and to nurture the skills and courage to do that. (This does not mean we ignore the also-important areas of worship, justice and service.)

**The next 6 years:**

While the President has little or no *authority* (as institutional power) the President can exercise *leadership* by holding before people the vision, ethos and values of the church. The President has a wide range of contacts and opportunities to represent the church in the public arena and is therefore in a position to encourage and persuade, while proposing priorities and action.

In light of the advice provided by the ASC on the challenges and issues likely to be faced by the President and the Assembly in the next seven years, I can:

- help the church to build on its wide network of contacts with Australian society by helping to foster the language and skills

of faith-sharing in a way that respects people's personal journeys and integrity;

- support the enhancement of our mission in Australian society through the actions of thousands of committed disciples, through our schools, community service agencies, Frontier Services and our contacts with partner churches;
- support the deepening of relationships with people of culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and help such people to enrich the life of The Uniting Church through the sharing of their insights and experiences;
- foster interfaith dialogue as an expression of peacemaking in way that the convictions of no people are compromised, including the Christian participants, while always being open to new light that God may bring;
- help both lay and ordained persons to see their roles in the life of the church more clearly, and to encourage the continuous development of their God-given gifts;
- encourage the sharing of stories of new ways of incarnating Christian community;
- helping the stories of lively, growing churches to inspire and teach the whole church;
- listening to the voices, criticisms and frustrations of younger members of the church and helping those voices to be expressed in the councils of the church and other forums;
- articulating the things which are essential to being church and distinguishing these from expressions of faith which may, or may not, be helpful in particular contexts, so that we can decide what needs to be retained and what can be adapted or changed;
- take initiatives, in consultation with others, in deepening friendships and dialogue with people across the church, in partner churches, in government and in other community and religious groups. Real dialogue can only occur within established and trusting relationships.