

Uniting Faith and Discipleship

Organisational relationships

The Assembly Standing Committee approved the establishment of the staff team Uniting Faith and Justice in September 2004. Thus there were new organisational relationships within some areas of the work of the Assembly at that time. The agencies Uniting Justice, Theology and Discipleship, Christian Education, Relationships with other Faiths, and the work associated with Covenanting and Gospel and Gender, became units, working groups and work areas and sat within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Justice.

After a period of working together this team was strengthened under the development of the new mandate Uniting Faith and Discipleship which was developed with the Team Leader, the staff team, the reference committees and working groups after a period of wide consultation. It was approved by the Assembly Standing committee in March 2009. This team now has Multicultural and Cross -Cultural Ministry included, as well as the work of the National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC).

This committee (NYARC) reports to the Assembly Standing Committee and is guided by its own terms of reference. It has responsibility for the oversight of national events and the interests of senior youth and young adults including the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) and the About F.A.C.E. (Faith and Cultural Exchange) project. This committee has a support worker, the National Faith Development Consultant.

Uniting Faith and Discipleship still maintains various reference committees, working groups, task groups and networks for specialist advisory purposes, to support the work of the staff team members. The reference committees Chairpersons are still appointed by the Assembly. All units of Uniting Faith and Discipleship have operational guidelines for the specific operations of the units. The work of covenanting and the work of gender issues are shared across the team. The Uniting Faith and Discipleship mandate strengthens the collaborative endeavors of the team whilst giving the opportunity to retain specific work as related to the Operational Guidelines of each unit of the team.

The working group on Relations with other Faiths is no longer a part of Theology and Discipleship. It now directly reports to the Associate General Secretary. The Uniting Faith and Discipleship team meets throughout the year for purposes of building team relationships, collaborating on joint projects and the strengthening of individual work that can be resourced by other members of the team.

The operating principle of remaining an internally organised and collaborative team with opportunities for diversity in branding allows each unit to maintain its image in the church and the public space. For

instance, Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry is still known to the church by that name. As is Uniting Justice, who seeks to work with areas of the federal government, not for profit organisations and other advocacy agencies. This model is taken from some secular educational consultancies and smaller not for profit organisations, who seek to brand diversely to support vision, whilst retaining an internal operational identity. The key motifs are the supporting and sharing of vision, collaboration and flexibility.

Work across the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Team

Covenanting and Reconciliation

The work of covenanting and reconciliation has been carried out in the following ways over the last triennium and is reflected in the following Key Directions.

Assembly Key Direction (a)

(iii) to seek ways that enable the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality to be received in the life of the church.

(iv) to encourage individual members of the Uniting Church to develop long term working relationships alongside indigenous people.

- Continuing the establishment of networks within synods and reestablishing links with Synod and Presbytery groups
- Continuing with the About F.A.C. E. (Faith and Cultural Exchange) project in consultation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress under the auspices of the National Activities Youth Reference Committee (NYARC)
- The development of the 'Building Partnerships' resource booklet and web-based resources by the Christian Education and Uniting Justice units. This will be reported on more fully in the Christian education report.

Gender relationships

The work of gender relationships has been carried out in the following way and reflecting Assembly Key Direction (b)

engage in Jesus' ministry of peacemaking within the world and the church by fostering equity and reconciliation within the Australian Community.

- A research project on the status and extent of women and leadership and their contribution to the Uniting Church, its ministry and mission. This is still in the development stage.

Peacemaking

Since November 2008 an education worker has been employed to resource the Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths and peacemaking and discipleship work across the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Team. This appointment aims to provide educational resourcing in order activate the Assembly resolution with particular reference "to call on all members, councils, agencies congregations and groups of the Uniting Church to examine violence in their own lives in order to overcome violence (10th Assembly 2003).

This appointment also reflects the second of the key directions for the last triennium.

Assembly Key direction (b) Peacemaking to engage in Jesus' ministry of peacemaking within the world and the church by working with people of other faiths to promote mutual respect and understanding helping our members learn to live and act as peacemakers, as taught and modeled by Jesus.

The work has been carried out in the following ways:

- The development of an educational resource sheet on peacemaking and theology. (Doc Byte)
- The development of a study book in the area of peacemaking and discipleship in collaboration with Education for Life Ministries (ELM) of the NSW Synod. This is still in the development stage.
- The development of a suite of resources on peacemaking to be launched on the International day of Peace in September 2009.
- The development of a partnership with Pace a Bene; a peacemaking network in Australia and beyond, to create Australian examples for their training resources.

The work of the National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC)

The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) sits within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship and it collaborates with other work areas and units. It met for the first time in February 2007 for a face to face meeting, and has since met for two subsequent face to face meetings, and several teleconferences. The National Faith Development Consultant the Reverend Sandy Boyce supports the work of this committee and reports to the Team Leader of Uniting Faith and Discipleship. The committee reports directly to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) and has as its terms of reference the following.

Terms of Reference

- Provide advice to the designated Assembly staff person with responsibility for oversight of national events: National Christian Youth Convention, About FACE (Faith and Cultural Exchange) and the Order of St Stephen (OOSS);
- Provide a context in which the church may reflect upon and develop policy and supervision and accountability mechanisms, that are appropriate for the current national youth events and experiences;
- Think strategically and theologically about ways in which the Assembly, through current opportunities along with links to overseas partners and international ecumenical groups can co-operate with synods in the faith formation of young adults;
- To have responsibility to recommend to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) policies, requirements and guidelines for national youth events so that those

proposing to operate a national event e.g. the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) can reasonably cost and prepare the event proposal for consideration by the Committee;

- Publish these decisions as Requirements and Guidelines;
- Consider proposals submitted to operate or provide lead synod support for a national event and /or experience focused on faith formation of young adults. After due consideration, including a due diligence financial process, appoint the host operator of a national event;
- Monitor the preparation and delivery of the national events in accordance with the Requirements and Guidelines established;
- Have responsibility to review in consultation with Synod wardens, coordinators and committees, and recommend to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) policies, guidelines and conditions of service for the Order of St Stephen (OOSS); and to maintain the national register of members of the Order of St Stephen(OOSS) and ensure the distribution of certificates and badges of service as required;
- Provide a forum in which Synods and the Assembly can discuss and create together initiatives that will provide significant faith education and discipleship opportunities for young people aged 15 years and older;
- Explore possible sources of funding for its areas of responsibility and bring recommendations as required to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC);
- Report to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) once per year.

Membership of the Reference Committee

Drew Hanna; Mark Hillis (Christian Education National Director); Michael Jeffrey; Rick Morrell (Chairperson, National Youth Activities Reference Committee); Caitlin O'Reilly; Chris Shaw; Lauren Sheen; Ernest Sorensen; Robin Yang; Sandy Boyce (National Consultant); Glenda Blakefield (ex-officio)

The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) has particular responsibility for oversight of national events for senior youth and young adults including About FACE (Faith and Culture Exchange), National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC), Order of St Stephen (OOSS) and the National Children's Youth and Family Workers' In-Service education. The Order of St Stephen (OOSS) is for adults of all ages, but the majority of participants are young adults.

- **About FACE, (Faith and Culture Exchange)** (www.aboutface.org.au)

The next program is planned for June/July 2009, and will be offered through the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, with placements in indigenous communities in cooperation with Uniting World.

- **National Christian Youth Convention, (NCYC)** (www.ncyc.org.au)

The National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) was held in Melbourne, from the 3rd to the 9th January, 2009 and was hosted by the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) who auspices the event also has responsibility for managing the process for approving Bible Study leaders and other areas of the program including new initiatives such as live streaming over the internet and day registrations. Guidelines have been updated along with associated best practice benchmarks that have been approved by the Assembly Standing committee in November 2008.

- **Order of St Stephen,(OOSS)** (<http://ctm.uca.edu.au/ctm/order-of-st-stephen>)

The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) is working closely with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania in updating guidelines and producing a brochure for distribution to Synods. The National Consultant has attended two meetings of the Order of St. Stephen committee in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania which has been acting informally as the lead synod in this work.

National In-Service

- 'Nationals' was previously a function of the Ministerial Education working group for the specified ministry of Youth Worker, and now is a responsibility of National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC). It is open to workers with children, young people and young adults, and/or families, including Ministers. The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) is working closely with the South Australian Synod and Presbytery which is the lead Synod for the next 'Nationals' in August, 2009. The current Guidelines will be revised to reflect changes in terms of participants and the National Youth Activities Reference Committee's (NYARC) role.

Related Networks

- **Ecumenical**

The National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) works closely with the Christian Unity Working Group, especially in promoting opportunities and identifying potential applicants for programs. Tammy Pararajasingh was accepted into the Word Council of Churches' Steward's program. Matthew Oliver was accepted into the first Ecumenical Water Network Summer School on Water in Bossey in mid 2008, with about 20 young adults from all over the world. The Ecumenical Water Network had a focus on the global water crisis from the perspectives of faith and ethics, and a search for possible ecumenical responses. Matthew's story is in the 2009 Mission Prayer Handbook.

- **Second Generation Work (2nd Gen)**

Robin Yang, a member of the 2nd Generation Working Group of the Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry Reference Committee (MCCM)

assists National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) to be aware of what is happening with 2nd Generation initiatives in the multicultural and cross cultural ministry area. This collaboration means that cross-cultural perspectives in youth and young adult's ministry can be taken seriously.

- **Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress (UAICC)**

The National Consultant maintains contact with Uniting Aboriginal and Christian Islander Congress (UAICC) through Mr. Vince Ross, the national chairperson and the young indigenous leader's network through Ian Dempster from the Synod of South Australia.

Other

- A website, <http://www.nyyam.org> (National Youth and Young Adults Ministries) has been established in 2008, maintained and updated regularly by the National Consultant. This website supports the work of the National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC).
- The National Consultant has met with the Honorable Kate Ellis MP to discuss the national work of the Uniting Church with youth and young adults, and to learn about new government initiatives. In particular, the newly launched Australian Youth Forum <http://www.youth.gov.au/ayf> as well as a funded national youth affairs peak body for youth affairs the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC). <http://www.ayac.org.au>. It aims to engage young Australians in discussions with the Australian Government about important issues, and places significant value on the voices and views of young Australians, their creativity, unique perspectives and capacity to contribute to public debate. The role of this body will be to undertake policy development and advocacy on youth affairs' issues and also enhance the ability of the youth sector to deliver services to young people.

Future Plans

National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC)

- National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) will convene a national gathering in the first half of 2009 to discuss the future of National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC), including consideration of new models to enable the event to achieve the best outcomes for the host Synod while still meeting the strategic goal of nurturing faith and Christian discipleship in young people.
- It is anticipated that benchmarks will be developed for each section of the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) manual to enable continuity for a national event. An accompanying manual is being developed with templates, processes and forms for each aspect of the program to assist with organisational logistics which will be updated as required.

- National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) members were present at National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) '09 in Melbourne and used the time strategically to evaluate the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) program and organisation. Rick Morrell and Michael Jeffrey will develop evaluation tools for this process. This will enable informed forward planning.
- Discussions are presently taking place regarding the host operator for the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) for 2011.

About FACE (Faith and Cultural Exchange)

Discussions are taking place in order for the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania to be the lead Synod for About FACE (Faith and Cultural Change) for 2009-2011, with a program offered each year. Whereas previously it has been run every second year and prior to that every four years. Guidelines have been prepared which are currently in draft form, to be submitted to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) in 2009, with an accompanying resources manual to assist with the logistics, and for the pre-placement and post-placement gatherings.

Order of St Stephen (OOSS)

Potential placements are being discussed with agencies, networks as well as through Frontier Services and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress (UAICC).

Shared projects within Uniting Faith and Discipleship

- It is anticipated that shared projects within the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Team will arise which will involve the National Youth Activities Reference Committee (NYARC) and/or, the National Faith Development Consultant. This will include the youth spirituality project and a creation of a young leaders' justice project with Uniting Justice. There continues to be collaborative work done with other units of Uniting Faith and Discipleship including the next generations' project in cooperation with Christian Education and Multicultural and Cross -Cultural Ministry. A part of this work has also included research and resources developed in cooperation with the West Australian Synod, the Synod and Presbytery of South Australia, and the Queensland Synod .

The Uniting Faith and Discipleship team continues to work collaboratively and creatively across a wide range of work. The inclusion of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry and the National Youth Activities Committee (NYARC) has meant that important cross- cultural learning and valuable information from youth and young adults' networks are more fully integrated into the life of the team as it seeks to serve the church. More importantly, it has given the Assembly an opportunity to imbed its identity of being a multicultural church more fully

into the life of the church as well as in the public space.

Rev Glenda Blakefield
Team leader
Uniting Faith and Discipleship
Associate General Secretary

UNITING FAITH AND DISCIPLESHIP MANDATE

An Assembly Team	Uniting Faith and Discipleship
Nature of Team	Permanent
Responsible To	Assembly
Reporting Arrangements	To the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee To the Associate General Secretary, the Team Leader.
Mission Statement	Uniting Faith and Discipleship will strive to witness to the wholeness of the gospel and the Christian life by affirming and modelling the inter-relationship of scripture, mission, justice, education and theology. It will work in a way that helps the church to celebrate and express the theological, biblical and liturgical richness that arises from the Uniting church's racial, cultural and linguistic diversity within contemporary multifaith Australia It will foster discipleship in the Uniting Church for people of all ages. It will share the Church's vision of hope and transformation in the public forum.
Mandate	Uniting Faith and Discipleship will: (a) Provide innovative national leadership and vision in the areas of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> theology Christian education discipleship and faith formation worship evangelism mission inter-faith relationships multicultural and cross-cultural life social justice, peace and environment covenanting and reconciliation (b) Educate, inform, resource, guide and respond to congregations, presbyteries, synods and schools, in the areas listed in (a) above, as they seek to live out life as a gospel community in contemporary Australia. (c) Develop Church proposals (for the consideration and decision-making of the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee), positions and programs in the areas listed in (a) above. (d) Provide advice and support to the President and General Secretary in the areas listed in (a) above. (e) Advocate and participate in public debate in the areas listed in (a) above where it is appropriate that the Church, in the light of the Gospel, should declare its view. (f) Articulate the Assembly's vision and policies, as appropriate, to Uniting Church in Australia membership, other churches, ecumenical bodies, government and/or the community.
Contribution to the Life of the	Uniting Faith and Discipleship enables and resources the

Assembly

Assembly to:

- reflect, comment and act faithfully across a number of critical areas of its life;
- have its understanding in a number of primary and culturally diverse perspectives of scripture, mission, justice, education and theology.
- plan and set priorities, including taking up new work and responding to emerging needs and opportunities, whilst noting the Assembly's key directions.

Operational style

Uniting Faith and Discipleship:

- engages with and contributes to the whole work of the Assembly;
- considers its work through five broad lenses – scripture, mission, justice, education and theology;
- exercises leadership and ministry as a collegial team and in accordance with particular specialisations;
- is flexible as it responds to the changing circumstances within which its ministry is exercised and the decisions of the Assembly;
- is supported by specialist reference committees and working groups as determined by the Assembly Standing Committee;
- establishes and provides oversight for task groups and networks to assist with the fulfilment of the mandate
- develops intentional sharing between reference committees and groups to enhance its understanding of priorities and collaboration in the Assembly's work

Relation with Assembly agencies

Uniting Faith and Discipleship will maintain regular contact and seek to collaborate where possible with Assembly agencies and working groups.

Organisational Structure

Uniting Faith and Discipleship is a collegial team with expertise and responsibility for particular work areas, working collaboratively under the leadership of the Associate General Secretary.

Reference Committees and Working Groups

Specialist reference committees and working groups to support the work of Uniting Faith and Discipleship, will be determined and appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee.

- **Role and Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities of reference committees and working groups in identified work areas are to:

- provide expert advice to staff members of Uniting Faith and Discipleship.
- provide support to staff members of Uniting Faith and Discipleship in the implementation of key priorities

- **Chairperson**

- The Chairperson of the reference committee or working group is appointed by the Assembly
- Tenure is for the Assembly triennium

- **Membership**

Membership will normally consist of Uniting Church members, and comprise:

- the staff member of Uniting Faith and Discipleship with responsibility for the work area within which the committee or working group operates
- the Associate General Secretary

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chairperson • normally up to seven additional persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee, with expertise in the work area within which the committee operates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frequency of Meetings 	<p>Tenure of membership is for the Assembly triennium.</p> <p>Reference committees or working groups may determine the frequency and style with which they meet, in keeping with work priorities and within the budget parameters established annually by the Assembly Standing Committee.</p>
<p>Task Groups and Networks</p>	<p>Uniting Faith and Discipleship may establish or endorse such task groups and networks as required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role 	<p>The role of task groups and networks is to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work on specific tasks as identified by Uniting Faith and Discipleship staff members or reference or advisory committees; • operate for as long as is required, with regular reviews of their tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership 	<p>The membership of task groups and networks will normally consist of Uniting Church in Australia members with relevant expertise.</p>

Approved by the Assembly Standing Committee March 2009

ASSEMBLY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Assembly Christian Education (ACE) is a unit for national work in education through the Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly. It sits within the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Mandate and works collaboratively with other units of the team. The purposes of Assembly Christian Education are:

The encouragement of inspired and competent educational leadership through the Uniting Church in Australia;

Research and development of creative and inclusive approaches in Christian religious education, for the deepening of authentic spirituality;

Encouraging Christian religious education options beyond church precincts, including chaplaincies in school and tertiary education contexts; and

Fostering faith nurture and practices that are freeing, healing and life-giving, in the Spirit of Christ.

What we do

- Work collaboratively with other Assembly Agencies, Synods and Presbyteries to support and/or equip leaders and teachers who can minister with skill in Christian religious educational theory and methods.
- Promote a vision of life-long learning across the Church and wider community.
- Facilitate intergenerational dialogue and mutual learning that values Scripture and faith practices as integral aspects of a living tradition, open to newness and transformation in the Spirit of God.
- Value and interpret the great teaching documents and faith practices of the Christian Church, as declared in the 'Basis of Union.'
- Bring specialist knowledge and leadership to the Assembly in the theory and practice of Christian Education.
- Advise the Uniting Church Assembly President and General Secretary on educational issues of national significance.

How we work

Assembly Christian Education will:

- embrace its grounding in the Gospel;
- build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia;
- pursue Christian religious education in the spirit of the Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), respecting Indigenous cultures, wisdom and theology.
- recognise and celebrate the reality of the Uniting Church's and Australia's racial and ethnic diversity in all educational tasks and consultations.
- encourage ecumenical cooperation in Christian educational work and research.
- build relationships with Uniting Church schools in partnership with Synods.
- from a national perspective, support the work of councils and congregations that relate to government and non-government schooling sectors.
- collaborate with national and international and ecumenical bodies in the creation and/or promotion of quality curriculum resources for teaching and learning.
- participate in interfaith dialogue and engagement from a Christian theological perspective.
- nurture partnership and collaboration across congregations, faith communities, councils, agencies and schools that share a similar passion for discipleship and faith formation suffused with wisdom, grace and generosity.
- publish quality examples of Christian religious education theory and practice.
- facilitate national networks and consultative groups that promote, enhance and add value to the educational ministries of the UCA.

Our Reference Committee

The Reference Committee supports the national work of Christian Education through the Uniting Church Assembly

The Reference Committee Chairperson is appointed by the Assembly at its triennial meeting.

Members of the Reference Committee usually include one person from each of at least four synods who have connection with the educational work of those synods. Other persons may be nominated, having appropriate gifts, knowledge and competencies in the fields of Christian Religious Education relating to the life of the Church and wider community, reflecting diverse spheres and contexts of education.

Members of the Reference Committee are appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee . They include:

the Chairperson (appointed by Assembly);
the National Director, Christian Education;
the Associate General Secretary (ex-officio);
the National Consultant, Faith Development (Youth & Young Adults – ex-officio); and up to eight other persons (appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee).

The role of Assembly Christian Education Reference Committee

1. Advice and support to the National Director on matters of significance or policy in Christian education for the Assembly.
2. Together with the National Director, provide advice to the President and General Secretary on educational issues of national significance.
3. Seeking to develop national perspectives and strategic planning in Christian Religious Education.
4. Participation in approximately three teleconferences and at least one face-to-face meeting each year.
5. Optional participation in relevant projects, consultations and tasks between meetings where there is a resonance between the committee's work and the gifts, skills and wisdom of members.
6. Sharing ideas, passions and concerns that relate to and influence the work, goals and policies of the Assembly.

MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL MINISTRY OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

In 1985 the Uniting Church proclaimed itself a multicultural church, acknowledging the changed context of ministry in Australia and the presence of people from racial, cultural and linguistically diverse background in its membership.

Key challenges in such a proclamation include: nurturing this gift and vision and developing models of ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that celebrate and express the theological, biblical and liturgical richness that arises from the Uniting Church in Australia's racial, cultural and linguistic diversity within a multicultural and multi faith environment

Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry is a unit of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia and sits within the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship. It works collaboratively with other units of the team. It is our mission to assist the Church in learning to live as people from diverse cultures in worship, witness and service and to foster models of cross-cultural ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that reflect the hospitality of God. In so doing it is committed to continue developing respectful and reconciling relationships with indigenous people and across the life of the church.

What we do

- Promoting cross-cultural learning and sharing across the life of the Church
- Supporting the ministry of migrant congregations and ministry to new and emerging groups
- Working collaboratively with Synods and other Assembly Agencies to support [and resource] leaders who can minister across cultures and foster the development of multicultural congregations
- Assisting the national networking and co-ordination of the work of Synods in exploring ways of discipleship formation and leadership training of second generation [nXtgen] members; and identifying emerging leadership with gifts for multicultural and cross-cultural ministry
- Assisting the Church to fully utilise the gifts of members from culturally diverse backgrounds and develop policies and cultural sensitivities that respond to their needs

Priorities are set and identified through resolutions of the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee, the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry Reference Committee, the Uniting Faith and Discipleship team, long-term strategic planning, issues arising out of ecumenical co-operation, and urgent political and social issues.

With Uniting Faith and Discipleship, Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry is committed to using the most appropriate strategies to nurture this gift and vision and to developing models of ministry and mission, outreach and evangelism that celebrate and express the theological, biblical and liturgical richness arising from the Uniting Church in Australia's racial, cultural and linguistic diversity and expressions of faith.

In a multicultural and multi faith environment such a faithful corporate life makes a positive difference in the world.

Our ministry makes use of a range of strategies

- Facilitating the development of policies that will enhance the multicultural life of the Uniting Church in Australia, in consultation with the relevant culturally and linguistically diverse communities (For example, policies on the just and equitable use of Uniting Church in Australia property, 'in language' resource and foundational documents and other resources)
- Encouraging the networking of Uniting Church in Australia communities representative of the racial, cultural and linguistic diversity of the Uniting Church in Australia, particularly through National Conferences
- Translating key documents and providing other appropriate resources in community languages
- Ensuring consultation occurs with Uniting Church in Australia migrant communities when relationships with partner churches may impact on the life of their congregations
- Monitoring and educating on matters relating to the just and equal sharing and use of property and other resources for mission

- Nurturing the participation of migrant members and ministers in the whole life of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Advising and assisting on matters relating to the orientation of ministers coming from overseas, and the settlement and reception of ministers and congregations from culturally diverse backgrounds.
- Sharing creative models of cross cultural worship, mission and multicultural ministry with the Uniting Church in Australia
- Organising appropriate national network opportunities that nurture the Uniting Church in Australia's emerging witness and mission, outreach and evangelism in cross-cultural and multi faith contexts, and provide opportunities to review multicultural policies and practice and the implications of ethnic diversity for the ordering of the Uniting Church in Australia's life.

How we do it

Within the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship, the work of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry will:

- be grounded in the gospel of Jesus Christ
- build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia
- use insights from theological, biblical and mission studies, worship and spirituality that are gifts to the Uniting Church in Australia from our racial, cultural and linguistic diversity to reflect on the shape of witness and mission, outreach and evangelism in cross-cultural and multi faith contexts
- respect and seek understanding and insight from Indigenous people in endeavouring to further develop faith language, images and metaphors appropriate to this land and its environment
- work to advance the witness to Christ in 21st century multicultural and multi-faith Australia
- reflect the racial, cultural and linguistically diverse life, faith experience and expressions of Christian life of those who share a common faith in Christ and that are consistent with the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia
- be undertaken in co-operation with synods and other Assembly agencies, ecumenically and in consultation with 'home' churches
- be conducted on the basis of the best research available

Our Reference Committee

A National Reference Committee supports the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry staff team.

Membership of the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry National Reference Committee

Membership of the National Reference Committee will normally consist of Uniting Church members appointed in accordance with the Mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship with the following additions for this specific work area:

- The staff member of Uniting Faith and Discipleship with responsibility for the work area within which the committee operates – National Director Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry;
- The Associate General Secretary;
- The Chairperson appointed by the triennial Assembly;
- Additional persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee at the first meeting after the Triennial Assembly, with expertise in the work area and up to a total of sixteen persons.

Membership is for the Assembly triennium.

Care shall be taken to ensure that the list of nominations includes:

- racial, cultural and linguistic diversity, gender balance and emerging 2ndgen/nXtgen leadership;
- one person from each of the Working Groups that are established from time to time (in 2009 there are four Working Groups);
- at least one person from five of the six Synods to assist with national networking;
- a nominee of the UAICC;
- the immediate past Chairperson.

The particular perspectives and insights of Synod Multicultural and Cross-cultural staff are highly valued. Whilst they are not members of the National Reference Committee, they are invited to attend the meetings and costs relating to their attendance are negotiated.

Role of the National Reference Committee

- Focus the activities of the agency on the vision of the Assembly as a whole;
- Assist in working to fulfil the Operational Guidelines by providing support and advice to the National Director and staff on such matters as strategic planning, priority setting and the development of policy positions;
- Receive and consider matters referred by the National Director;
- Assist the National Director and any other agency staff in the implementation of policies determined by the Assembly and/or the Assembly Standing Committee;
- Together with the National Director, assist and provide advice to the President and General Secretary, the Assembly and/or the Assembly Standing Committee on policy matters within their area of responsibility;
- With the National Director, make policy decisions where the Assembly or the Assembly Standing Committee has delegated authority for certain policy areas, either through the Operational Guidelines or by resolution;
- Ensure that appropriate pastoral support is offered to staff members;
- Participate in cross-agency projects and teams established by the Assembly;
- Establish working groups for special tasks related specifically to the Operational Guidelines;
- Make recommendations to the Assembly Standing Committee to establish other working groups for special tasks related to but not part of the mandate.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER FAITHS WORKING GROUP OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Relations with Other Faiths will promote knowledge and understanding of other living world faiths and their communities in a multicultural and multifaith Australia. It will seek to develop wherever possible a commitment to promote respect and tolerance for the integrity for the beliefs of other faiths, cultures and traditions. This desire not only arises from our common humanity but also a desire to live in peace and goodwill as neighbours in our communities and the world. The working group sits within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship and works collaboratively with other units of the team.

What we do

- Provide information, policy and resources on appropriate positive relationships with other faiths to the Assembly.
- Raise awareness within the church of the presence of other faiths in the community, and of their particular needs and place in Australian society.
- Develop resources that may be appropriate for congregations and other bodies to use in multi-faith discussions and occasions of worship.
- Maintain contact with people of other living world faiths.
- Provide advice and assistance to all councils of the church as requested.
- Collaborate where possible with other agencies and groups interested in multi-faith relationships.
- Reflect on the theological basis on which inter-faith dialogue should occur and develop statements and resources for use by the church when working with people of other faiths.

How we work

- Focus the activities on the vision of the Assembly as a whole;
- Advice to the Assembly and/or the Standing Committee, President and the General Secretary on policy matters within their area of responsibility;
- Make policy decisions where the Assembly or the Standing Committee has delegated authority for certain policy areas, either through the operational guidelines or by Assembly or standing committee resolution;
- Participate in collaborative projects with other units, agencies and groups established from time to time by the Assembly or the Standing Committee
- Establish task groups for special tasks related specifically to the operational guidelines
- Make recommendations to the Standing Committee to establish other working groups for special tasks related to but not part of the mandate.
- Regularly receive reports from the Uniting Church Assembly's Christian-Jewish Dialogue Group

Membership of the Working Group

- Chairperson appointed by the Assembly
- Associate General Secretary (ex- officio)
- Up to seven additional persons appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee
- Synod representation as appropriate
- Power to co-opt up to three additional persons to ensure appropriate competencies, representation and development of new leadership.

THEOLOGY AND DISCIPLESHIP OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Theology and Discipleship provides theological leadership and fosters discipleship in the Uniting Church. The work of Theology and Discipleship goes beyond that of the working groups with which it relates. Relationships with other agencies are fostered, particularly with Christian Unity. Also included is Uniting World in view of its ecumenical relationships with partner churches. Theology and Discipleship seeks to work with other councils of the Church in its intent to theologically articulate and reflect upon the Christian faith. Theology and Discipleship sits within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship and works collaboratively with other units of the team.

Working Groups

Theology and Discipleship supports the National Working Groups on Doctrine and Worship in particular and also has a connection with the Mission and Evangelism Network as it has become. There is a convener of this network who is present at the Theology and Discipleship convener's meeting. The Doctrine and Worship working groups relate directly to the Assembly as the Basis of Union says the Assembly has "determining responsibility for matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline" (B0U par 15 e). The Chairperson of Theology and Discipleship and the Convenors for the working groups on Doctrine and Worship are appointed by the Assembly at its triennial meeting. Members from across the Uniting Church are appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee. The working groups and the network meet two to three times per year. A Theology and Discipleship convenors' meeting is normally held twice a year.

What we do

Theology and Discipleship will:

- provide theological leadership by assisting the Church to reflect on, articulate and apply the Christian faith, to engage the culture, and to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and the reign of God;
- support the working groups on Doctrine and Worship in their tasks of advising and contributing resources to the life of the Assembly;
- provide national leadership to the church in the areas of ecclesiology, missiology and evangelism;
- integrate and focus the above tasks and the role of the National Consultant, theology and discipleship, around the Assembly's stated goals.

The work

Theology and Discipleship's responsibilities include:

- focusing its activities on assisting the vision of the Assembly as a whole;
- advising the Assembly and/or Standing Committee on policy matters within its areas of responsibility;
- implementing policies determined by the Assembly and/or Standing Committee;
- offering theological leadership to the whole church, in accord with the Reformed-Evangelical traditions of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
- assisting the President, General Secretary and Assembly agencies and other relevant bodies in the areas of theology and ecclesiology;
- sharing in representing the overall life and mission of the church to all sectors of the church.

How we do it

The work of Theology and Discipleship will:

- be grounded in the gospel;
- build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia;
- reflect theologically, biblically and missiologically on issues facing the Uniting Church and mission in the Australian context;
- be carried out drawing on expertise across the Uniting Church and beyond;
- have appreciation for the post Christendom, multicultural, multi-faith and secular nature of contemporary Australia;
- be cognisant of what is being written and practised in other places;
- include engaging in theological reading, reflection and writing.

UNITING JUSTICE AUSTRALIA OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Uniting Justice Australia is the justice unit of the National Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, pursuing national matters of social and economic justice, human rights, peace and the environment. It sits within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship and works collaboratively with other units of the team.

It engages in advocacy and education and works collaboratively to communicate the Church's vision for a reconciled world. It provides resources for the Church as it considers its position on issues of national and international importance and public policy.

Uniting Justice Australia exists as an expression of the Uniting Church's commitment to working toward a just and peaceful world. This commitment arises from the Christian belief that liberation from oppression and injustice is central to the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ.

What we do

- identify systems and structures in society which cause and perpetuate injustice, violence and oppression
- identify critical issues of national and international significance
- conduct analysis and develop considered responses on these issues
- actively participate and advocate in public discussion
- strengthen the Church's prophetic voice and action in the world
- provide advice to Assembly, Assembly Standing Committee, the President and the General Secretary on justice issues of national and international significance
- educate, inform and resource the Church, so that members, groups, councils and agencies can effectively engage in actions for justice and peace
- support the Uniting Church justice staff network across the synods, encouraging collaboration on issues of national significance
- identify issues of (systemic/institutional) injustice within the Church and seek remedies

Priorities are set and identified through resolutions of the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee, the advice of the Uniting Justice Reference Committee, long-term strategic planning and analysis, urgent political and social issues and issues arising out of ecumenical co-operation.

How we work

Uniting Justice Australia will:

- ground its work in the gospel
- build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia
- ground its work in the Church's relationships of solidarity with those most affected by injustice
- be concerned with the needs of the whole creation
- conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis
- work in co-operation with synods and other Assembly agencies, ecumenically and in partnership with other civil society organisations
- contribute positively to Australian civil society including by representing the Uniting Church National Assembly as appropriate

Reference Committee

The Uniting Justice Australia Reference Committee is appointed every three years by the Assembly Standing Committee (Assembly Standing Committee) at its first meeting after the Triennial Assembly. Nominations are submitted to the Assembly Standing Committee by the National Director after a public call for expressions of interest. A team which usually includes the Chair of Reference Committee for the coming triennium, the National Director, the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Team Leader, and a representative of the synods national justice staff network.

The Chairperson of the Reference Committee is elected by the Triennial Assembly on submission of a nomination from Uniting Justice Australia.

The Reference Committee consists of a Chairperson, the National Director, a representative of the Synod justice staff, and five members and can co-opt up to two additional members. The Assembly Associate General Secretary is an ex officio member.

Role

Duties of Reference Committee members include:

- providing support and advice to the National Director and staff on such matters as strategic planning, priority setting, and the development of policy positions;
- receiving and considering matters referred by the National Director;
- together with the National Director, assisting and advising the President and General Secretary on urgent political and social issues; and
- Communicating and promoting the work of Uniting Justice Australia in their local contexts and spheres of influence.