



Welcome to the **October** edition of **National Update** with latest news from the Assembly.

- From the President
- Outback care and community services
- Relations with Other Faiths
- Worship, theology and discipleship
- Cross cultural and international ministry, relief and development
- Justice and advocacy
- UnitingCare Australia
- Other Assembly news
- Synod news

### Just a Thought



#### **Rev. Terence Corkin, General Secretary**

Yesterday I was on a teleconference and as sometimes happens there was a very intrusive background noise that just cannot be ignored. Usually it reaches the point where the person whose phone is conveying this auditory inconvenience feels obliged to explain. And so it was yesterday when one of the participants said “please excuse the noise but there is an almighty storm blowing outside.” You know it is a big wind storm when the noise disrupts a phone call.

It has been a week or so for storms across the country and there have been various reports of their negative effects. Actually I have a friend who would really like to have a gale go through his area because he has a tree that he would like to see blow over so that he can get on and do something else with that location in his paddock.

Have you ever noticed in the news reports how the windy day stories are nearly always bad news and incidents of narrow escapes? There are not many stories about how new possibilities are created by even destructive forces, or how people experience new capacities and exhilaration as they find that they can cope with whatever the storm throws up at them. Even though there is a tendency to look on such storms and their destructive outcomes and fear them; there remains truth in the old saying “It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.”

We often talk of the Holy Spirit being like the wind in that it will blow where it wills and even though we cannot see it we will feel it and see where it has been. My hunch is that Christians tend to prefer the Holy Spirit that is a cooling zephyr on a summer afternoon; a helpful breeze to move along the sail boat or to dry the

washing. We may even stretch as far as welcoming the “Fremantle Doctor” on a summer afternoon in WA. But I don’t hear too many people who are keen on a raging gale that even the people we are talking too over a great distance cannot help but notice.

I rather suspect that the Uniting Church could do with a good raging gale of the Holy Spirit in a few places. But perhaps it is already here – breaking down what we know, threatening us, exhilarating and encouraging us that we can move with this gale force wind. I wonder what you may be able to recognize as the gale of the Holy Spirit in your place? I am wondering about the significant presence of people from other cultures and faith traditions within the UCA; the collapsing rate of participation in the Sunday cycle of congregational life but the continuing expansion of other relationships; the way that God leads the world and us through voices from the edges of society and from outside the church; the struggle to maintain the labour intensive structures of the UCA and having enough people of capacity to run them; the challenge to be more just and inclusive in the way we speak and live as a Christian community; .... I invite you to complete the sentence for yourself.

## From the President

### **Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney, President**



It was an honour and a pleasure to meet Bishop Munib Younan, the President of the Lutheran World Federation on his recent visit to Australia. In addition to being a senior leader in the global church, he is the Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. In a wide ranging conversation, we discussed the situation of the Palestinian Christian community and the challenges of peacemaking in the Middle East.

Bishop Younan was particularly pleased to hear about my National UCA Ministers’ Conference in Jerusalem next year and offered a very warm welcome to those of us who will take part. He explained that the Lutheran church in Palestine is in full communion with the Reformed churches and, as far as he was concerned, that includes us. He welcomes our visit next year as an opportunity to deepen friendship and solidarity between Australian and Palestinian Christians. We expect to meet again in Busan at the WCC Assembly in October/November.

So it is a good time to remind you of the three National UCA Ministers’ Conferences scheduled for 2014. Information about the conferences can be found here:

<http://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/1418-fresh-words-and-deeds>

If you plan to take attend one of the conferences it is now also time to register your intention. That will help us work out numbers and costs. You will find registration details at the link above.

Speaking of conversations, another one that has stuck with me was one I had on a recent visit to China for an historic joint conference between a delegation from the Uniting Church and leaders and scholars from the China Christian Council. The church in China has baptised 2.4 million new Christians in the last five years. So I thought they might have something to share with the UCA about evangelism.

I asked Dr Lin Manhong - Dean of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, and recently elected Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council - if she could say something about evangelism in China.

She said that, obviously, they couldn't hold evangelistic rallies or use the sort of methods western Christians might be used to. In any case, she said, that would be culturally inappropriate in China. But clearly many, many people are becoming Christians in China today. How does that happen?

She said that the primary form of evangelism in China is personal witness - in particular, the witness of a transformed life and of loving the neighbour.

She said, "Chinese people are pragmatic". They aren't drawn to Christ by doctrine or intellectual argument but by seeing a transformation in a neighbour's life.

"Why are you different ?" They might ask.

"I've become a Christian".

"What's that?" (Even though there are, conservatively, 24 million Christians in the church for which the CCC is responsible they are a tiny minority in China.)

"Come and see. Come with me to my church."

And, Dr Lin said, the Holy Spirit who has transformed one person and is working in the life of the other person may open her heart to the Gospel and transform her life too.

The Chinese are pragmatic people. So are Australians. We're not terribly interested in clever arguments or slick marketing on the whole. But seeing a neighbour's life transformed by Christ would be well worth looking into further.

## **Outback care and community services**



**Rev. Alan White, Interim National Director, Frontier Services**

### **Snapshot of Frontier Services history preserved**

One of the most iconic photos of Rev John Flynn, who founded the work of Frontier Services, will be safely preserved for future generations after the original negative was donated to the National Library of Australia.

The famous photo, taken of John Flynn sitting on a fence and

speaking to a bushman, was in the safe-keeping of the family of Rev Fred McKay, who succeeded Flynn as Superintendent of the Australian Inland Mission (AIM).

The photo was taken by Fred in 1937 on his personal box brownie, while John Flynn was accompanying him on his patrol work in North Queensland.

Last month, Fred McKay's family, Bruce McKay, Liz McKay, Ruth Cook and Margaret Wheatley, presented the negative to the Pictures and Manuscript Section of the National Library in Canberra, into the hands of the curator Nicola Mackay-Sim. The photo will be kept in the official AIM collection held by the Library.

Fred's daughter, Margaret Wheatley, said the family felt it was the appropriate place for such a valuable item, and it would be stored in the optimum conditions.

Mrs Wheatley, who recalls seeing the image as a child, said the words written on the envelope which contained the negative read: "Rev John Flynn in discussion with Mr J. D. Chidley, manager Dunbar cattle station, Cape York Peninsula 1937."

Last year, Frontier Services, as the successor to the AIM in the Uniting Church, celebrated 100 years of support for the people of remote Australia.

Many photos gathered from the history of the AIM and Frontier Services were featured in *At the Very Heart*, written by Storry Walton and released in 2012. The beautiful book, featuring stories and memories of the outback from across the century, is still available to purchase. Phone 1300 787 247 to place your order or go to <http://www.frontierservices.org/frontier-shop/books>

### **Frontier Services at the Royal Adelaide Show**

Frontier Services once again showed its support for the axemen and women competing at the Royal Adelaide Show as a sponsor for the iconic Wood Cutting championships.

"The Royal Adelaide show is one of the few genuine agricultural shows still running in the country which affords the real opportunity for city and country to come together," Frontier Services National Development Manager Grahame Ryan said.

"We were very pleased to be at the Show for another year and to again give our support to the Wood Cutting events which attract some of the most talented wood cutters from across the country."

Frontier Services' support makes it possible for young wood cutters to attend the show and develop their skills.

Frontier Services Sturt Patrol Minister Rev Jenny Swanbury, Interim National Director Rev Alan White and Mr Ryan attended the Show to personally congratulate the winners and present the awards.

Based out of Orroroo, Jenny offers practical and pastoral support to families living in outback South Australia. The Australian Inland Mission (AIM) originally began in this region of South Australia with the appointment of Rev John Flynn to the Smith of

Dunesk Mission at Beltana in 1911. Soon after Flynn's appointment, AIM hospitals were built at Birdsville, Innamincka, Beltana and Leigh Creek. Frontier Services is the successor to the AIM in the Uniting Church.

### **Flying Patrol Minister joins outback kids in the city**

Centralian Patrol Minister Colin Gordon was on hand to give his expert advice for first time fliers when he accompanied the Alice Springs School of the Air on their annual trip to Sydney and Canberra.

As a flying patrol minister, Colin visits families on isolated properties across the red centre in his plane. This time, he left the Patrol plane in Alice Springs and flew back seat with the excited school students.

School of the Air teacher Michele Turk said the annual trip was a special opportunity for the children to get together with their peers and get a taste for city life.

“Lots of our students live in isolated places. The students come from all over the Centre, up to 1000km from Alice Springs, so some of the students travelled quite a distance before we even left Alice,” she said.

The 16 students on the trip had the opportunity to take a look at Parliament House, Questacon, Taronga Zoo and to ski at the snow.

Michele said the students really enjoyed the sense of good fun that Colin brought to the trip.

“Colin visits many of the School of the Air families on their properties and so he already has a connection with those children. Coming on the trip was an opportunity to strengthen those bonds and build new connections with the children he didn't already know.”

### **Great Outback BBQ sizzling success**

The **2013 Great Outback BBQ** has been a roaring success with what is expected to be a record number of people getting involved all over the country.

By the end of September, more than 120 supporters and volunteers, churches and fellowship groups had registered BBQ events and more than \$16,000 had been raised, with the bulk of the money still to come in.

In Sydney on 14 September, the Frontier Services National Team championed the outback spirit at the NSW Launch of the Great Outback BBQ held at Bunnings in Ashfield. It was a sizzling success with the team working hard on the grill all day as more than a thousand people came to buy a sausage. The total profit made was \$2666.50. This would not have been possible without the support of Vic's Meats Market Day, CMS IT, Wholefoods House and Parker's Organic Juices.

A big thank you to everyone who came along on the day to show their support!

It is not too late to host a BBQ before Christmas! Go to [www.greatoutbackbbq.com](http://www.greatoutbackbbq.com) to register or find out more.

## Relations with Other Faiths



### **Rev. Glenda Blakefield, Associate General Secretary**

Relations with Other Faiths would like to hear what you did during Interfaith September. Share with us your Interfaith September experiences. Did you try a new dish from another culture? Befriended someone of a different faith?

Perhaps you may have a new idea for next year's Interfaith September? How successful did you find the program and its resources?

We warmly invite you to offer any feedback you may have about Interfaith September to Education Projects Officer, [dominiquek@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:dominiquek@nat.uca.org.au).

We thank you for taking part in this annual event and look forward to hearing from you!

## Worship, theology and discipleship



### **Rev. Dr Chris Walker, National Consultant, Theology, Discipleship and Christian Unity**

The Doctrine and worship working groups will be meeting in October. So too will the Mission and Evangelism network which will gather in Canberra shortly.

Chris Walker has been on leave in China for a short period of time and you can read about his trip on his blog [here](#). You'll also find recent posts on the Trinity and the Rural Muster there.

## **Advent – Christmas 2013 resources**

MediaCom has released its annual Advent and Christmas calendar with books, resources and media for the 2013 Christmas period. Be sure to plan and order early to be ready for Advent on December 1. You can view their catalogue online at [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au) or order by calling 1800 811 311.



**Rev. Dr. Kerry Enright, National Director, UnitingWorld**

**UnitingWorld raises awareness about the need for disability inclusive development**



“They did not see me as a disabled person”

*Mr Matto is an energetic man in his mid-fifties from the Indonesian Island of Sumba. And having just sold a large fish for 350,000 rupiah (around \$30), he is especially happy today. From the stall where he sold his fresh catch, his smile is wide as he shares his story with local field officers from UnitingWorld’s partner TLM.*

“Just over one year ago I was struggling to make ends meet”, he says. “I was unable to sell enough fish to grow my business and plan for my family’s future.

“Then I borrowed 750,000 rupiah from TLM. They provide loans to small traders like me and their service is good.”

Mr Matto’s story is just one example of how microfinance is changing the lives of families in this remote part of Indonesia.

It’s also a beautiful illustration of the importance of disability inclusive development.

Born with a disability that restricted the use of his hands, Mr Matto has faced his fair share of challenges. Even today he finds it hard to lift heavy objects and appreciates the help of friends in the market.

*“TLM did not see me as a disabled person. They saw me as a business owner looking to improve the life of my family. And now I am doing just that.”*

For many of the 600 million people with disabilities living below the poverty line, the future does not look so bright. People who live in poverty face a higher risk of acquiring a disability. And people with a disability have a higher chance of experiencing poverty.



It’s a cycle that’s hard to break.

UnitingWorld believes that *all* human beings are created in the image of God and that every person is entitled to live with dignity.

And we also recognise that we can never see an end to extreme poverty without taking the rights and needs of people with disabilities into consideration.

For people like Mr Matto, community development initiatives which seek to empower people with disabilities are just the beginning.

“A lot has happened since I joined the loan program”, Mr Matto says. “My profit has increased and I sell a lot of fish every day at the market.”

“I am going to apply for a new loan through TLM soon”, he says. “I would like to hire more people to help me with my business. Another loan will help me do that.”

*This month we are raising awareness of the cycle between disability and the need for disability inclusive development. [Click here](#) to read more about how UnitingWorld works to ensure people with disabilities benefit from development and [make a tax deductible donation](#) to support this vital work.*

### **Australian and Chinese Churches connect**

Last month Uniting Church President Andrew Dutney, UnitingWorld’s Kerry Enright and Ji Zhang and a number of other prominent Uniting Church members met with the China Church Council in a historical joint conference in Nanjing.

Said Ji Zhang: “The conversation was warm and filled with grace and respect for one another. We exchanged views about social services, theological education and church to church connection.”

The conference was the third time the Australian and Chinese churches have met face to face to speak about the crucial issue of maintaining unity in a post denominational context. Baptising some 2.4 million new Christians over the last five years, the Chinese delegates shared ideas about evangelism and provided many inspirational stories about lives changed.

### **New Chair for UnitingWorld’s Church Connections National Committee**

UnitingWorld welcomes Dr Andrew Glenn, the new Chairperson of UnitingWorld Church Connections National Committee. Andrew was a member of the last Assembly Standing Committee. He has been involved in leadership in the councils of the Church since the time of Union, including chairperson of the Presbytery of Tasmania. His professional background is in Science and he has held a number of senior administrative roles in Universities, most recently before retirement as Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research) and Vice President (Research) at Murdoch University and the University of Tasmania. He is a Fellow of the Australian Institute of Company Directors. We warmly welcome Andrew and look forward to sharing in the global mission of the Uniting Church in Australia through UnitingWorld.

## Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry



### **Rev. Dr Tony Floyd, National Director, Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry**

I have just returned from 10 days in China with a team sponsored by Uniting World. This was the third visit of Uniting Church in Australia leaders building important relationships with leaders and ministers in the China Christian Conference/Three-Self Patriotic Movement (CCC&TSPM).

The team travelled as invited guests of the China Christian Council and the visit included a two day seminar at the Union Theological Seminary, Nanjing. There I shared in presenting in a session focussed on witnessing as a uniting church in society, specifically Multicultural Ministry in a multicultural and multi-faith Australia.

The sheer size of China is beyond preconception. The unimaginably large population and growth go beyond anything that is within our experience and understanding. The similarities but also huge differences in our journeys as post-denominational churches on a journey towards unity all require processing.

No one matter stands out for the UCA and that is the urgency of the work we are just beginning towards a theological understanding of cross-cultural ministry and biblical hermeneutics of why this is a calling of God. The CCC&TSPM are working on his very early in their life. Starting from a position of post-denominationalism helps that, as do the factors surrounding growing theological understandings out of their own cultural contexts, philosophies and world views.

This is a journey we are just beginning, but it seems to flow well from the openness of the Basis of Union to new truth and understanding emerging on the journey towards God's promised end. Journeying with the CCC&TSPM in this theological and biblical adventure may well be the most significant step yet on becoming a truly Australian church.

Watch this (and other spaces) for this unfolding, emerging gift from God.

## Relief and Disaster Recovery



### **Rev. Dr Stephen Robinson**

On the evening of Friday 27th September, Rev. Dr. Stephen Robinson was inducted to his new role in the Assembly as National Disaster Recovery Officer.

The service took place at Pitt Street Uniting Church, conducted by Rev. Terence Corkin with Rev. Niall Reid (Presbytery of Sydney Chair and past Moderator) preaching.

This was a celebration of a new role which brings some years of

disaster recovery and trauma ministry experience to bear, assisting the church to better prepare, network and respond to disaster across Australia.

Stephen has already been working across the Assembly in this capacity since the beginning of August.

Most recently Stephen has met with representatives the ACT Churches Council to bring a new disaster recovery chaplaincy training resource to the territory's disaster response.

On October 8 and 9 Stephen will be in Adelaide running a pilot disaster chaplaincy training course for the disaster and recovery ministry (previously known as post-disaster ministries). This involves a number of denominations across South Australia and coordinated by the Uniting Church SA with assistance from the State Government of South Australia.

## Justice and advocacy



### **Rev. Elenie Poulos, National Director, UnitingJustice**

If you'd like to hear more from us, you can also sign up to our newsletter here: <http://www.unitingjustice.org.au/subscribe-to-justice-news>

Remember you can follow UnitingJustice on Twitter [@UnitingJustice](https://twitter.com/UnitingJustice) to stay in touch with us and our work between newsletters.

## UnitingCare Australia



### **Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director, UnitingCare**

#### **Position Available: Project Officer (Communications)**

UnitingCare Australia is looking for a Project Officer (Communications) to join the National Office in Canberra on a 12 month contract. Their core role will be to implement UnitingCare Australia's online initiative *Uniting for Change* by building congregational, UnitingCare network and public engagement via [\*Uniting for Change\*](#) and [\*The Conference Room\*](#).

A full position description is available from the [website](#).

Please send your expression of interest, addressing the selection criteria to Marion Rae, Director of Communications and Government Relations ([marion@nat.unitingcare.org.au](mailto:marion@nat.unitingcare.org.au)), by Monday 7th October 2013.

## **UnitingCare Australia has begun working with the new Government**

Prime Minister Tony Abbott and his new cabinet were sworn in on 18 September 2013. UnitingCare Australia has contacted the new ministers, and is well positioned to work effectively with the new Government. Key ministerial appointments for the work of the UnitingCare Network include:

### **Cabinet**

- the Hon Kevin Andrews MP, Minister for Social Services (please note the new terminology);
- the Hon Peter Dutton MP, Minister for Health (including mental health);
- Senator the Hon Eric Abetz, Minister for Employment and Minister Assisting the Prime Minister on the Public Service;
- the Hon Joe Hockey MP, Treasurer;
- Senator the Hon Mathias Cormann, Minister for Finance;
- the Hon Chris Pyne MP, Minister for Education; and,
- Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, Minister for Indigenous Affairs.

### **Outer Ministry**

Senator the Hon Mitch Fifield will have responsibility for disability and ageing as part of his role as Assistant Minister for Social Services;  
Senator the Hon Arthur Sinodinos, Assistant Treasurer;  
Senator the Hon Marise Payne, Minister for Human Services;  
the Hon Sussan Ley MP, Assistant Minister for Education (responsible for Early Childhood Education); and,  
the Hon Luke Hartsuyker MP, Assistant Minister for Employment.

### **Parliamentary Secretaries**

- Senator the Hon Concetta Fieravanti-Wells, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Social Services.

The full ministry list is available [here](#).

## **Other Assembly news**

### **Songs that Unite**

[Songs that Unite](#) has re-launched the new Assembly's Worship Resource Website to include *Mp3 voice tracks and inspirational Royalty Images*.

Take a few minutes to head over to the [Songs that Unite](#) website and listen to the new music tracks. Meet the gifted photographers and view their beautiful

work. Royalty and free images are available to use on your big screen as backgrounds for music lyrics, sermon power points, in newsletters, promo advertising or on your Church website and much more.

**Youth and Families' Worker** Part Time: 25 hours per week

*Port Macquarie Uniting Church* has an exciting opportunity for an energetic and innovative youth worker to join our ministry team. Over the past 4 years we have renewed our focus on ministry and mission with *children and families* and now wish to extend this to *children, youth and families*. The Youth and Families' Worker will assist us in pioneering the next stage of this ministry.

You will have:

- a commitment to the Christian faith and the role of the church in the community
- experience in working with youth in the church and/or community
- relevant qualifications or a willingness to undertake study/training
- an ability to develop contextual ministries that recognise existing strengths & needs
- skills in leading and working with teams of people of various ages
- an ability to provide pastoral care and to lead creative worship

To have a chat about the position, request a position description or make an application, please phone Rev. Malcolm Hausler on 02 6581 2414 or email [office@portmacquarie.unitingchurch.org.au](mailto:office@portmacquarie.unitingchurch.org.au)

*Applications close on Friday November 8, 2013*

**Children and Family Worker**

Willoughby Uniting Church is a growing church on the North Shore. Our Church is contemporary, progressive and welcoming. We seek an energetic and creative Children's and Family Worker to join our team.

This part-time position (20 hours per week) will require the Children and Family Worker to:

- Co-ordinate our Playgroups and manage them as active Christian ministries
- Engage with children and families in the community
- Teach primary school Scripture
- Develop a new family worship service
- Assist and resource the existing Sunday School program.

The successful applicant must:

Be a person demonstrating active Christian faith with experience in children's ministry gained in either a paid or voluntary capacity.

Hold and continue to hold a working with children check clearance issued by the NSW Commission for Children and Young People before applying for this position.

If you are interested in this position, please request an information pack by contacting Rev. Michael Thomas on 9415 2100 or 0407 281 486, or email [office@willoughbyuniting.org.au](mailto:office@willoughbyuniting.org.au).

*Applications close on 30 October 2013*

### **National Youth Ministry Training 2013**

We're taking a brand new direction with our National Youth Ministry Training. In the past, it was an in-service event for professional youth workers. Now it is much more!

We're inviting volunteer youth leaders, young adult mentors, professional youth workers/young adult workers, MOWs, and pastors to participate. Come on your own or come with your local ministry team members!

The National Youth Ministry Training will attend the 'National Youth Ministry Conference' (NYMC), [www.nymc.org.au](http://www.nymc.org.au), the year's largest youth ministry training ecumenical event. We'll participate together as a Uniting Church cohort alongside other denominations.

NYMC will have over 600 participants from various different youth ministries. There will be many great guest speakers, a ministry expo and some special UCA events. We will be surrounded by practitioners from all over Australia, from many different contexts that we can learn from and share with.

The event will take place from the 23<sup>rd</sup> to the 27<sup>th</sup> of October in Tweed on the Gold Coast. The Uniting Church has booked out the Tweed Central Motel and the cost of accommodation is included in the total cost.

#### **Please note:**

- You must be over 18 to attend
- Costs cover both the conference and the accommodation
- Meals and your transportation to and from the event will be additional costs to consider (there is the option to cook meals at the Tweed Central Motel.)

You will need to register through the Assembly in order to secure your place. Registration forms and further information are available online. See [the Assembly website](#) for more information.

#### **The Transit Lounge**

The Transit Lounge is the youth online publication of the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly. You can find the publication at [www.thetransitlounge.com.au](http://www.thetransitlounge.com.au).

If you know any young communicators or young people with writing skills who would like to contribute, please [contact us](#) via the Transit Lounge website.

[Subscribe to the Transit Lounge!](#) You'll receive monthly newsletters with the latest church, world, faith and other news right to your inbox.

Lastly, head over to Facebook and ['like' our page](#). We post lots of relevant links from blog posts to pictures to events. Come join the conversation.

## Synod News

To find out about what is happening across the country visit the Synod news sites below:

New South Wales and the ACT - [Insights](#)

Northern Synod - [Northern News](#)

Queensland - [Journey](#)

South Australia - [New Times](#)

Victoria and Tasmania - [Crosslight](#)

Western Australia - [Revive](#)



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