



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA
Presbytery of Tasmania

Charting Our Way Together

**A Charter for
lutruwita / Tasmania**

2027-2032





Our shared vision

A community of faith following Christ in this island place - *"walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation."*

About this Charter

This is a local document, written with and for the people of the Uniting Church in lutruwita/Tasmania, to support Presbytery and congregational leaders. It is here to guide us as we navigate our future - including the reality that we are running out of people with energy faster than we are running out of funds. While the Basis of Union still guides the journey we take together, our Charter identifies our practical next steps together: our shared priorities for mission and discipleship, the ways we want to serve our local communities, and how we want to face our challenges together in concert with Faithful Futures and Act2. For information on how this Charter was developed visit <https://ucatas.org.au/about/charter/>

Why we exist

We are saying Yes to God's love and care for all of creation through following Jesus in our worship, witness and service in community.





Charting Our Way Together

Our focus areas

**Focus areas are numbered for ease of communication and do not indicate priority or ranking.*

01



Cultivate relationships

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Congregations are getting smaller and fewer people are carrying the work - isolation is a real risk. Strong relationships mean communities can lean on each other rather than each trying to sustain everything alone.

02



Grow missional communities

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Fewer people are engaged with church in the traditional sense, even as interest in spirituality is rising across Australia - we want to meet people's spiritual needs in diverse, inclusive ways, and stay open to different people and expressions of spirituality alongside our own tradition.

03



Weave together learnings of First Peoples stories, knowledge & wisdom

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

The Covenant is a binding commitment, not a gesture - and it's acknowledged as unfinished work. Honouring it properly means ongoing relationship and structural change, not a single event.

04



Partner with congregations in governance

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

More governance responsibility is falling on fewer people, raising the risk of burnout. The Presbytery needs to facilitate more active partnering and support, including to encourage congregations to support each other, so everyone is better positioned to fulfil local responsibilities.

05



Matching properties to suit the mission

WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?

Roughly 80 properties are carried by around 500 people - care and compliance costs are outpacing what the community can sustain. A building only serves mission when it's being used well; once it costs more than it enables, it's a liability, not an asset.



Charting Our Way Together

Our focus areas

**Focus areas are numbered for ease of communication and do not indicate priority or ranking.*

01



Cultivate relationships

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS FOCUS AREA?

- Meet people where they are, not necessarily in church buildings or church groups.
- Strengthen relationships between congregations and Presbytery, and amongst congregations.
- Encourage links between congregations and Uniting Church agencies.

02



Grow missional communities

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS FOCUS AREA?

- Explore the limits of our boundaries - following where the Spirit leads, open to radical and provocative forms of missional communities, alongside our patterns and traditions, not replacing them.
- Grow courageous intentional communities - considering our varied settings and needs, or finding new areas / locations / situations.

03



Weave together learnings of First Peoples stories, knowledge & wisdom

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS FOCUS AREA?

- Honour the Covenant by embedding Aboriginal wisdom, spirituality and leadership into the life of the Church.
- Listen and walk together with Leprena UAICC Tasmania and the wider Aboriginal community - building relationships that shape our worship, learning, and decision-making.
- Explore and include Dreaming stories, indigenous theology & spirituality.

04



Partner with congregations in governance

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS FOCUS AREA?

- Partner with congregations to govern well, and model that same standard at Presbytery level.
- Build local leadership - expertise, confidence, and sustainable processes.
- Encourage sharing of tasks and resources where it makes sense.

05



Matching properties to suit the mission

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY THIS FOCUS AREA?

- Right-size our property footprint to match the size of our worshipping community.
- Identify property better suited to missional needs and resource the transition.
- The Presbytery will work with congregations to divest property that is surplus to mission, or not fit for purpose.
- Ensure financial sustainability is considered in our ministry and mission strategy.



Example priority actions

01 Cultivate relationships			
	Build listening skills across congregations, through training or workshops.	Increase congregation attendance and involvement at Presbytery events / meetings.	Encourage intentional visits between congregations, and with other local churches.



Example priority actions

02 Grow missional communities			
	Pilot new gatherings in non-traditional settings or with new groups.	Survey congregations for ideas and connect with "like-minded spiritual seekers".	Share findings and emerging ideas back to Presbytery.



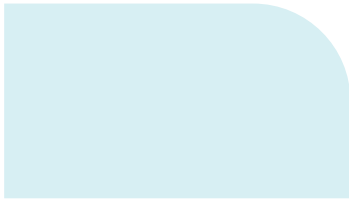
Example priority actions

03

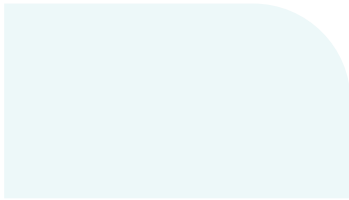
*Weave together
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wisdom*



Increase engagement in Leprena UAICC activities and joint events.



Create opportunities for congregations to learn about local Country, history and culture.



Identify practical actions each congregation can take to live out the Covenant.



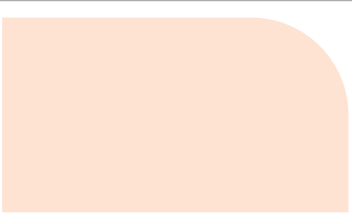
Example priority actions

04

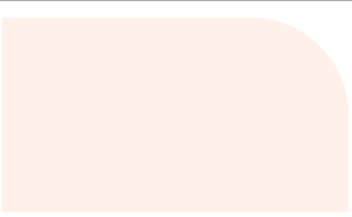
Partner with congregations in governance



Run governance check-ins with congregations to identify support needs.



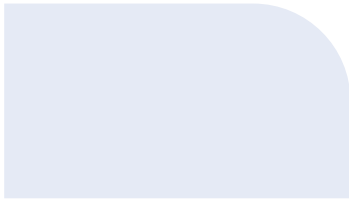
Provide relevant training and development for local leaders.



Share tasks and resources between congregations and Presbytery where it makes sense.



Example priority actions

05 <i>Matching properties to suit the mission</i> 			
	PMs visit congregations to assess current property use and cost, and support completion of Community Life and Financial Returns.	Complete a stocktake of every property against fit-for-mission, cost, and compliance burden.	Apply the Charter's decision-making criteria to identify which properties to divest or resource for their next stage.



Guiding principles for hard decisions

When we are faced with difficult decisions, we will be guided by the following.

How we decide



1. Discerned in prayer: Have we genuinely prayed and listened for the Spirit's leading? Is there a sense that God is in this? Have we left room for the unexpected – in the process, in the outcome, and in what God might be doing that hasn't been planned for?

2. All voices heard: Have those affected : congregation, community, rural neighbours, those who quietly hold the place had a real chance to speak and be heard?

3. Carrying everyone along: Have we communicated thoroughly? Is the congregation on the journey with us, not just informed at the end?

4. Right timing: Is the timing right - long enough to discern, not so long that the moment is lost?

5. Due diligence: Have we gathered the information, mapped the pros and cons, named the trade-offs honestly?

Checking the option



1. Mission, not survival: How well does this option serve mission, or is it driven by survival? Does it align with our primary call?

2. Who benefits? Who gains from this option? Does it honour our commitments - including to First Nations and Leprena?

3. People before convenience: Does this put people's needs ahead of administrative or financial convenience? Does it make room for the grief and the relief it could produce?

4. Honours the past, opens the future: How well does this option honour our history while opening the faithful next steps?

5. Practically and legally viable: Does it meet our financial, regulatory* and heritage obligations? *e.g. WHS (Work Health and Safety), ACNC (Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission), and UCA (Uniting Church) policies.