

Community in Mission

Poorneet – Ordinary | Season of Creation



This edition of Community in Mission comes during the Wurundjeri season of poorneet (tadpoles). Around this time, the Eastern Orthodox Church marks the mystery of creation; and there are discussions underway exploring a feast of creation for the Western calendar too. Many churches have already begun celebrating a ‘season of creation’ in recent years. These rhythms of nature and calendars point us to new things, new life and new beginnings.

In this edition we share an introduction to our new CEO, Carol Jeffs. Carol began in July and has been busy on her ‘Listening Tour’, getting out and about meeting teams across Victoria and Tasmania, and connecting with local church leaders along the way.

Carol’s arrival marks new beginnings for Uniting, and new beginnings in her own life. I encourage you to scan the QR code to look at the video from Carol as she began her role.

Last month we launched our Stretch Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP). Within the Uniting Church reconciliation is a key part of what we do, living out the covenant between the Church and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. Our Stretch RAP includes goals such as increasing the number of Aboriginal employees at Uniting, creating leadership pathways for Aboriginal staff, and purchasing more of our essential goods and services from Aboriginal-owned businesses.

Everywhere we look new beginnings are emerging, and the invitation is to play our part in the new birth.

Peace,

Matt Julius, Church Engagement Worker

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While in Lutruwita/Tasmania recently I stopped in at the Devonport Uniting Church – a welcoming community who support Uniting’s work.



Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

Uniting

Meet our new CEO Carol Jeffs.

Pictured: Carol (centre) with some of our team members at Ballarat.



When Carol commenced as Uniting's new CEO on 1 July, she shared a welcome message with staff and volunteers in which she acknowledged the breadth of the locations and the diversity of what we do at Uniting.

Carol also announced her Listening Tour, where, during her first 3-6 months at Uniting she would get out and about visiting as many people and services across Victoria and Tasmania as possible.

And so, in July Carol headed west to visit staff, volunteers, consumers, some congregations and local councillors in the Central Highlands and the Wimmera districts. And last month she, along with members of our Board and Leadership Team, toured many of our services and congregational partnership sites in Tasmania ahead of a networking event in Hobart, hosted by our Board.

This networking event brought together community members, Uniting Church leaders, organisations, government partners, peak bodies across Tasmania. It was a valuable opportunity to share our 2030 Strategy, particularly its emphasis on deepening and strengthening our partnerships and services Tasmania which sparked some inspiring conversations about future opportunities for collaboration across the state.

Carol said it's been wonderful getting to know people at Uniting and seeing our services first-hand.

"I'm absolutely blown away by the passion, the quality, the service and care that everyone here provides to the people in those communities. One thing everyone I've met has in common is how incredibly professional and purpose-driven you are."

To watch Carol's welcome video visit
youtube.com/watch?v=j_Lj4zH6Xlk

Walking together as First and Second Peoples.

On 14 August we launched our 'Stretch' Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), in an event which brought together staff from across Uniting, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), the Synod and other Uniting Church agencies.

Speakers included Uniting CEO Carol Jeffs and Board Chair Jude Munro, who officially launched the RAP, as well as guest speakers Potaruwutj Padthaway man Sean Armistead, Deputy Chief Officer of Indigenous Business Australia and Owner Director of Padthaway GAVS Integrated Services, and Helena Plazzer from Reconciliation Australia.

Our Stretch RAP follows on from the work of our 'Reflect' and 'Innovate' RAPs. Reconciliation is a deep commitment of the Uniting Church through the covenant with the UAICC, and this resonates deeply with our reconciliation work.

Our Stretch RAP sets clear goals for Uniting:

- Increased representation of First Nations people in our workforce and leadership
- Cultural safety for First Nations people in our people processes
- Culturally responsive mentoring which helps First Nations people thrive.

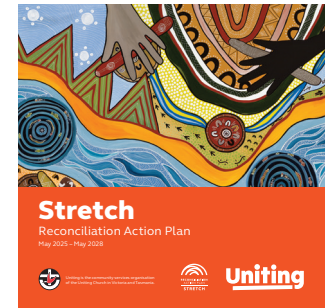
In her speech, Carol said that while the commitment to reconciliation begins with senior leadership, the key decisions shaped by this RAP relate to people and procurement.

"Reconciliation cannot live only in statements or strategies, it must live in the decisions we make every day."

Speaking on behalf of the Board, Jude spoke to the role of the RAP.

"To place reconciliation at the heart of Uniting's identity and actions ... it is a long-term, organisation-wide commitment to truth-telling, justice and equity for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples."

The work of reconciliation is a journey of shared work and shared responsibility; as Carol said at the launch, "... it is exactly that, a journey that we are all on." Walking together as First and Second Peoples.



To view our Stretch RAP visit
unitingvictas.org.au/wp-content/uploads/BRA-RAP2025-Booklet-v4-1.pdf

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Winter Blanket Appeal.

As the cold months begin to ease, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you to everyone who supported this year's Winter Blanket Appeal.

Your donations have made a significant impact, offering not just physical warmth, but also hope and compassion to those facing hardship during the harsh winter. Thanks to your kindness, many individuals had access to warm blankets and winter clothing, bringing comfort during the coldest nights.

Your support has truly made a difference in the lives of many. Thank you for being part of a caring community that continues to respond with love and generosity.

Coffee Cup Challenge.



Each year Uniting Church congregations across Victoria and Tasmania come together to host Pancake Day events which raise vital funds to support Uniting's work with people experiencing crisis, vulnerability and disadvantage.

Complementing this fundraising effort is the Coffee Cup Challenge. An initiative of members of St Leonard's Brighton Beach Uniting Church, this challenge asks participants to set aside the cost of one cup of coffee each week to support Uniting's vital community work.

Since the challenge commenced in 2017, 35 congregations – along with many individuals and groups – have collectively raised more than \$200,000.

This year's challenge kicks off on International Coffee Day (Wednesday 1 October) and concludes on Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday, 17 February 2026).

Join the Coffee Cup Challenge to help make a difference – one cup at a time.

To register today visit
unitingvictas.org.au/coffee