Uniting’s Missional Framework

# **Our Foundation**

# The Gospels reveal Christ as one who invites people into a Spirit inspired movement to transform the world into a place of justice and reconciliation for all. Jesus takes up Isaiah 61:1-2 as his understanding of the mission of God, *missio Dei*, –

# “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,

# Because he has anointed me

# To preach good news to the poor.

# He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners

# And recovery of sight for the blind,

# To release the oppressed,

# To proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.” (Luke 4:18-19; Isaiah 61:1,2)

# As reflected in our foundation statement: “Christ invites us to serve humanity by creating an inclusive, connected and just world.”

# **The basis of Uniting’s Missional Framework**

The Uniting Church bases its mission in God, whose being is made known in the fullness of community. The *Basis of Union* describes this breathtaking goal of God’s mission as “reconciliation and renewal…for the whole creation” 1 from which Uniting derives its missional framework.

The never ending love of God and God’s desire for peace and reconciliation is embodied, Christians believe, in the life and mission of Jesus. 2 Jesus taught that our response to God is expressed as we respond to the command to love our neighbour as we love ourselves.3 In short it’s a commitment that all people might have ‘life in all its fullness (John 10:10). Jesus’ call to the church is to continue that mission. (John 20:21-22) The church is to be a sign of that ultimate reconciliation and renewal by its actions now, to feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, care for the sick and imprisoned, let the oppressed go free and stand in solidarity with the poor and oppressed (Matthew 25:31-46; Luke 4:18-19). 1,2

# **Our Missional Principles**

These eight principles, drawn from our church’s foundational beliefs,1-7 form the basis of our response to Christ’s invitation to serve humanity:

**Inspiring people so that everyone is valued, particularly those most excluded**

* The dignity of the human person:

The essential worth and dignity which is bestowed on human beings as created in the image of God. (Genesis 1:27) We will uphold the rights of every person. In Australia today this must include a particular focus on recognising the rights and dignity of First Peoples and their unique place in the history and identity of this land.

* The needs of the whole person:

We recognise that human beings are whole persons with their unique physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs and strengths.4

* Social and economic inclusion:

We acknowledge the corrosive effects of inequality and affirm that the poor and the marginalised must be the focus of our particular concern. (Isaiah 1:16-17; Isaiah 58:6-7; Matthew 25:31-46)

**Enliven communities so that all people contribute and have life giving relationships**

* Community wellbeing:

 We will actively seek conditions that enhance the good of all and which contribute to communal wellbeing; we recognise that to flourish people need to be a valued part of a community and engage in healthy and mutually life giving relationships. (Jeremiah 29:4-7) 4

* Unity:

We inhabit one planet and affirm the mutuality and interdependence between all people, our fellow creatures and the earth. (Psalm 24:1)

**Confront injustice to ensure all people are included as they are and have ‘life to the full’**

* The promotion of human rights:

We affirm that each person has inalienable human rights which we are bound to observe and safeguard. (Job 31:13-15) 2

* Reconciliation:

We need to listen, seeking to understand people and communities as we strive towards inclusion of all races, cultures and religions and celebrate multiculturalism as part of our Uniting Church and Australian identity. 3,7 (Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 2:14-18)

* Solidarity:

We promote the active participation of those affected by injustice, as we seek to influence social policy and confront the causes of inequality and disadvantage.7

**References**

1 Uniting Church in Australia, Basis of Union, Uniting Church Assembly, 2012

2 Uniting Church in Australia. Dignity in Humanity: Recognising Christ in every person, Resolution 06.20.01, UCA Assembly; Sydney: 2006.

3 Rev Dr Ji Zhang. Theological Reflection: Mission and Service of Uniting Care, Uniting Care Australia, 2018

4 Uniting Church in Australia. An Economy of Life: Re-imagining human progress for a flourishing world. Twelfth Assembly. UCA Assembly; Sydney: 2010

5 Uniting Church in Australia. Towards a Theology Relating to Mission, UCA Assembly; Sydney: 2010

6 The Uniting Church Statement to the Nation, Inaugural Assembly, June 1977

7 Advocacy - Determining what to advocate. Paper delivered by Rev Dr Ann Wansbrough at the UCSA Conference, August 1998