



Act2: The Gift of the Spirit

Plain English (First Nations)

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The Act2 Project has asked many questions of our Church. We know that we are not the same Church that came together in 1977. God has been really good to us. There are many things we are thankful for. But there are also some ways that our Church does things together that are broken. Sometimes these things stop us from doing everything that we believe God wants us to do.

This is the story of what we have heard, who we are now, and what we think we could do differently in the future as the Uniting Church in Australia. We will decide about the things we want to do differently at the 17th Assembly meeting, on Darug Country, in Burramatta (Parramatta) in July 2024.

The artwork tells this story and describes this vision in pictures. *What do you see?*

We have wanted to listen to every part of our Church

This has been very important to us from the beginning. This is why we have contacted every part of our Church. The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (“UAICC” or “Congress”) and all Uniting Church National Conferences and other groups of people that speak many different languages have also been talking to us.

We have thought about who we are as the Uniting Church

We have thought about who we are and what we believe is important. People have agreed on many things. Our Covenant with Congress is important to us. We want to be a Church with many cultures and languages. Both men and women can be leaders in our Church. We love justice. Everyone, not just the leaders, can be involved and have a say in the Uniting Church. All these things are like deep wells that we can draw water from and learn from. At the same time, other things have been hard for us. Our disagreements over sexuality have been painful for some. We love the Covenant with our First Peoples, but we have sometimes struggled to live it out. We have struggled to be the Church that we want to be for different cultures and languages

We want to do some things for all of us, for the whole Uniting Church

We have heard that there were some important things that we should do for all of us, together. Then we can be stronger, quicker, and better at sharing. We want our Church to have a voice and speak out about things that are important. We care about our Church partners and friends outside of Australia too. The Assembly, the national council of our Church, can help us talk about things we disagree on, and help us learn from each other and from our history. The Assembly can help connect people across our whole Church, but it needs more people and money to do some of these important jobs.

We want our local churches to be the beating heart of our Church

We want to focus on growing and making disciples of Jesus and living God's mission. We want to make it easier for people to be Uniting churches with the right amount of freedom and support. This needs to be different for different places and different times. We want more churches to start. We want more parts of our Church to work together as teams. We understand that some need support to change or end. We also want to do more thinking about 'discipleship', 'mission' and 'evangelism' together. We think this will help us.

Our culture and our theological education need help

Our Church celebrates difference. We don't always agree on everything. We are not all the same. We think and do things differently from each other, too. This is not bad. But sometimes we have not been good at listening to each other. We want to be better at learning from First Nations theology and spirituality. We need open spaces to talk together about theology. We need help to get this right. We need to better support people everywhere in our churches. We need to help people who want to be ministry leaders. We believe we need a strong theological college to help us. We also believe we need to connect and bring parts of our Church together so we can do this better.

We need to change to be the Church we want to be

Again and again, people have said they want us to be courageous. We need to change to be the Church we want to be. We want to be true to who we know that we are. But we know we need to dare to change to be the Church we want to be.

How can we do this?

At the 17th Assembly meeting, will decide about:

- Helping our local churches be the heart of the Church and focus on discipleship and mission. To do this, we need to work on church membership and changing some of the Regulations (rules) and the Constitution (law) for the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Helping our culture and theological education. To do this, we need a Commission to form a Network for Theology and a new national College.
- Helping us share our life, our people and our money. To do this, we need a Commission to help us work together to be the Church we want to become and better share all that we already have.

We want all of us to talk about and think about these things together.

What do you think? What do you see?