

Engaging with other parts of the Uniting Church in Australia



Uniting

Our engaging with other parts of the Church:

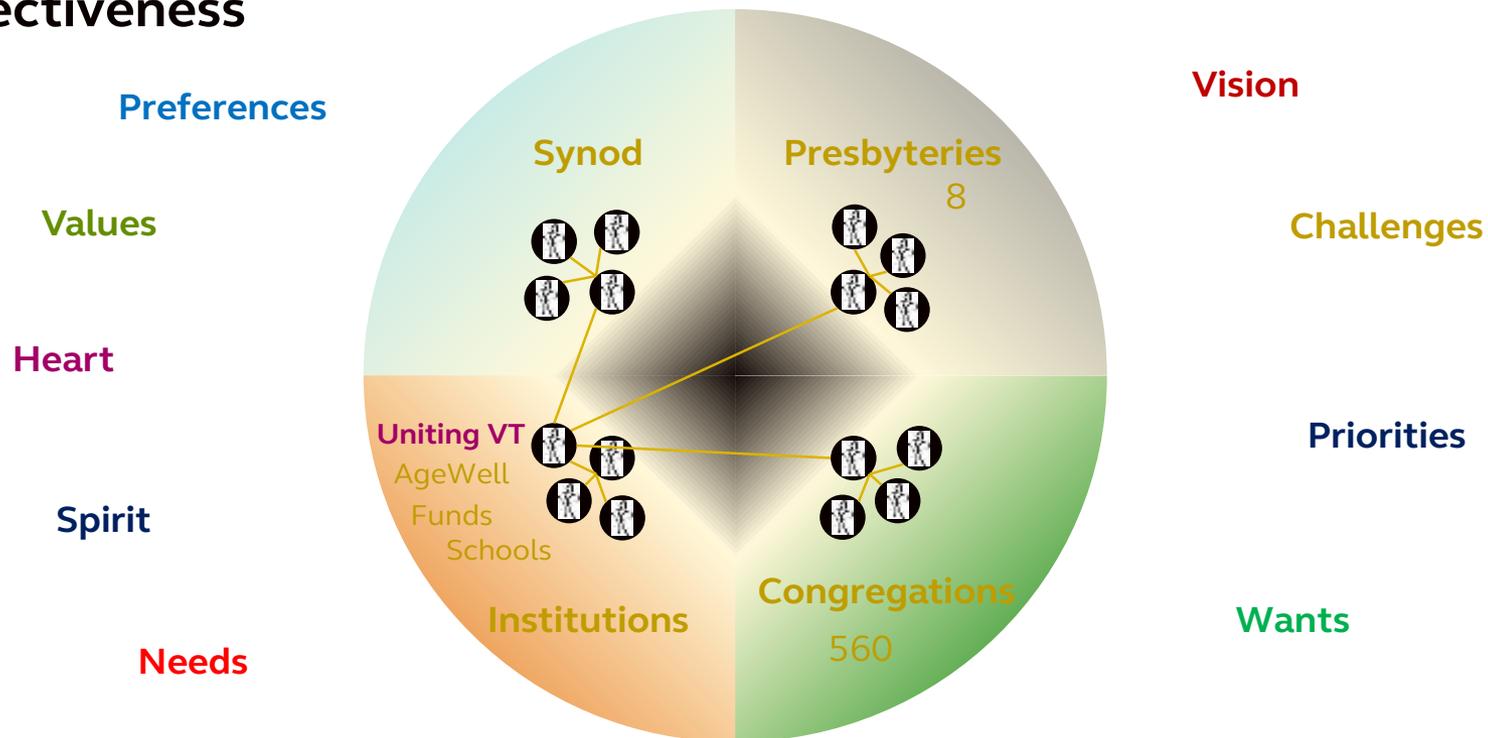
- Develops our existing partnerships
- Promotes service delivery collaboration
- Enables the exchange of expertise
- Encourages support
- Facilitates the sharing of resources
- Drives efficiencies and effectiveness
- Reinforces our vision, values & identity

Outline

1. Engaging fulfils our purpose
2. Who are your key UCA contacts?
3. Approaches to engaging
4. How the UCA operates
5. Potential relationship partners
6. UCA culture and preferences
7. What inhibits or grows engagement
8. You personal UCA engagement plan

Key UCA relationships

- Success hinges on how well we work with others
- We need to listen for their needs, wants, vision, heart, spirit, preferences, priorities and challenges
- Identifying and developing our key relationships increases our effectiveness



Developing key relationships

Key relationship
to be one of

Suggested approach



Church Structure



- The UCA is a series of inter-related councils — local congregations, regional presbyteries, state synods and the national Assembly
- Each council has its distinct tasks and responsibilities in relation to other councils
- Agencies (like **Uniting**) operate within synods
- Each council of the church involves a mix of ministers, staff and volunteers in various roles
- Non-hierarchical, widely dispersed decision making

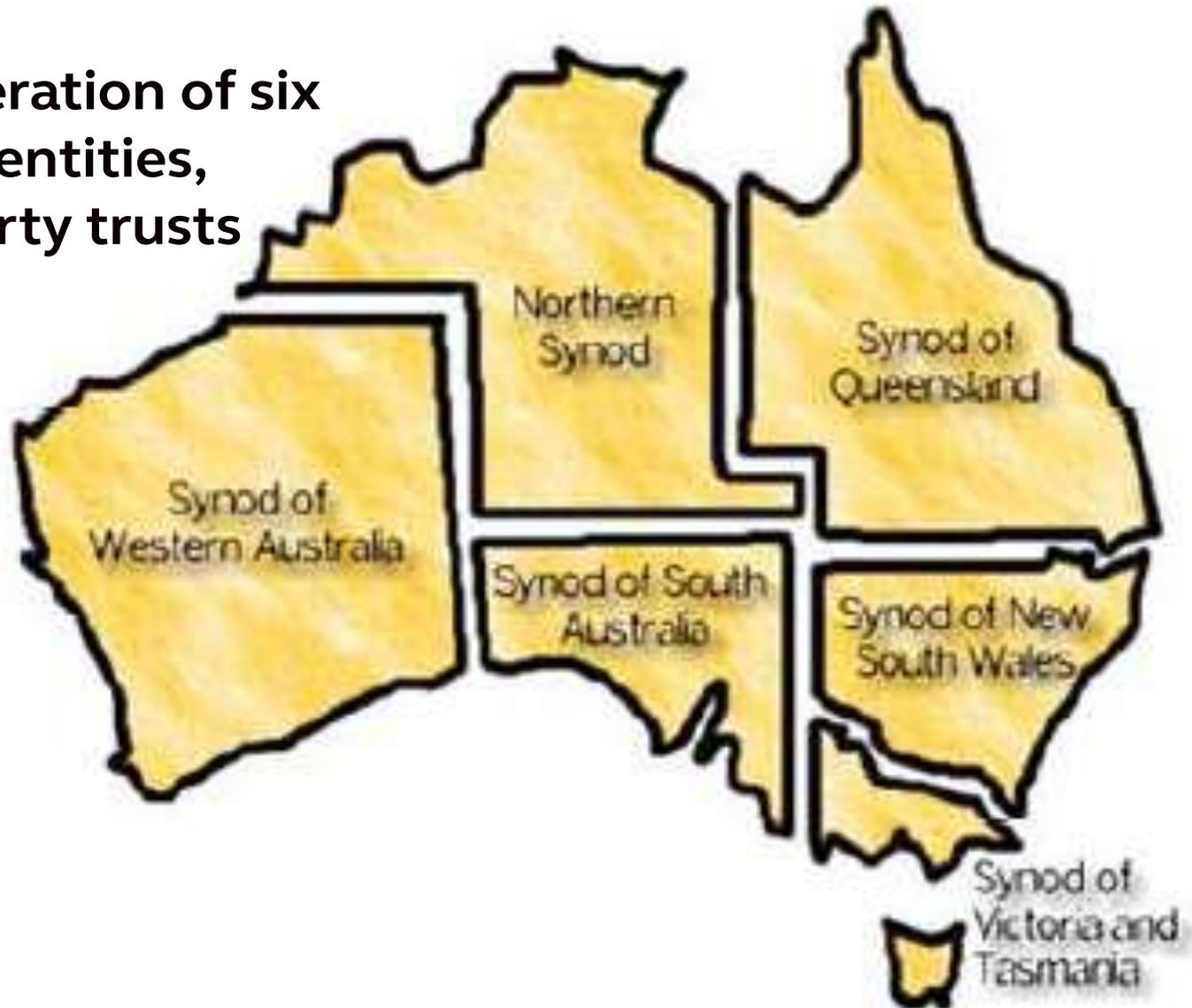
UCA Structure - Assembly



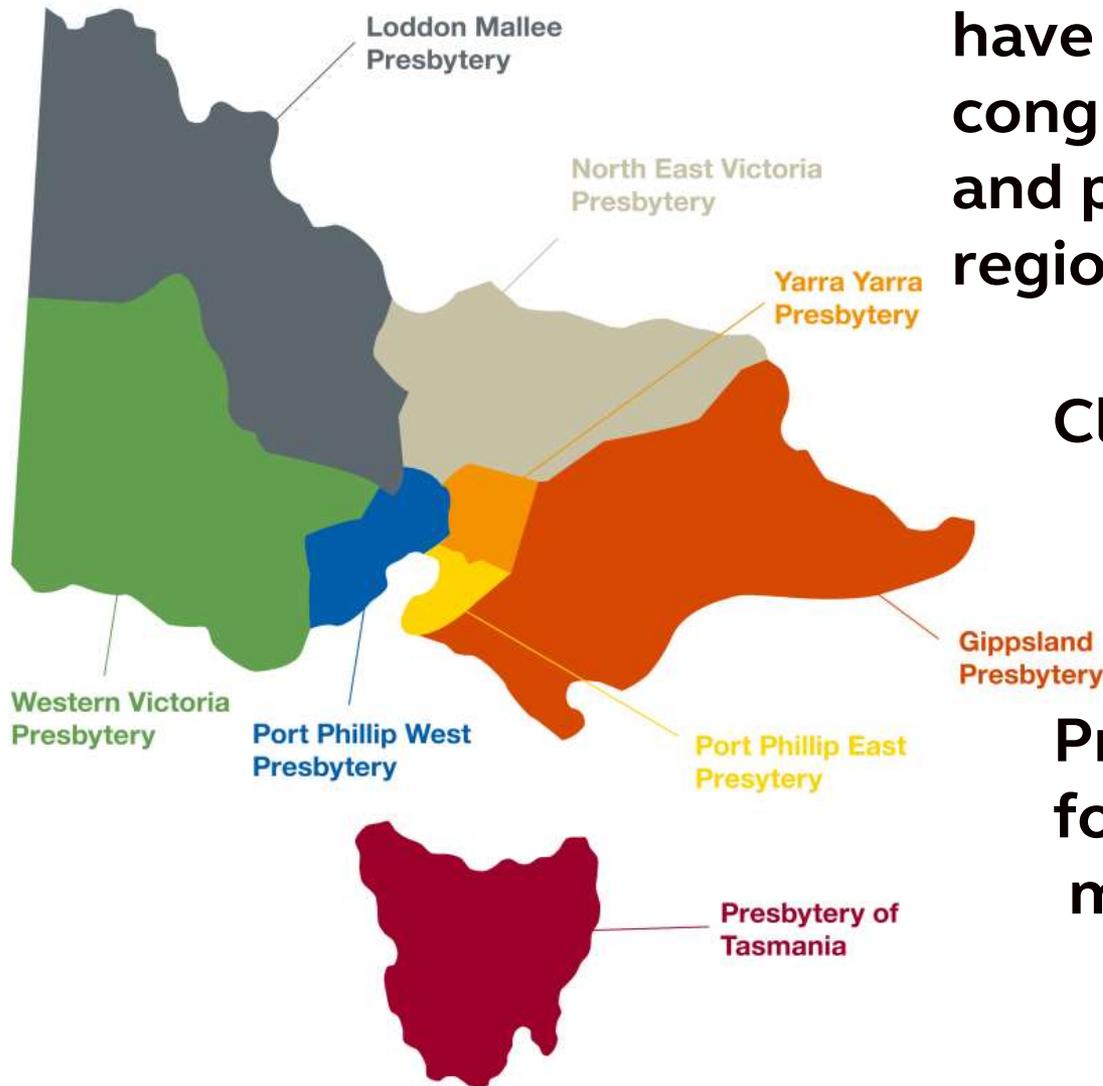
- The Assembly is the national council of the Uniting Church in Australia
- Responsibility in matters of doctrine, worship, government and discipline, eg. marriage
- National policy
- Promotes the Church's mission in the world
- Establishes standards of theological training
- Pursues the goal of the worldwide union of all Christ's church

Six Synods in Australia

A federation of six
State entities,
property trusts



Presbyteries



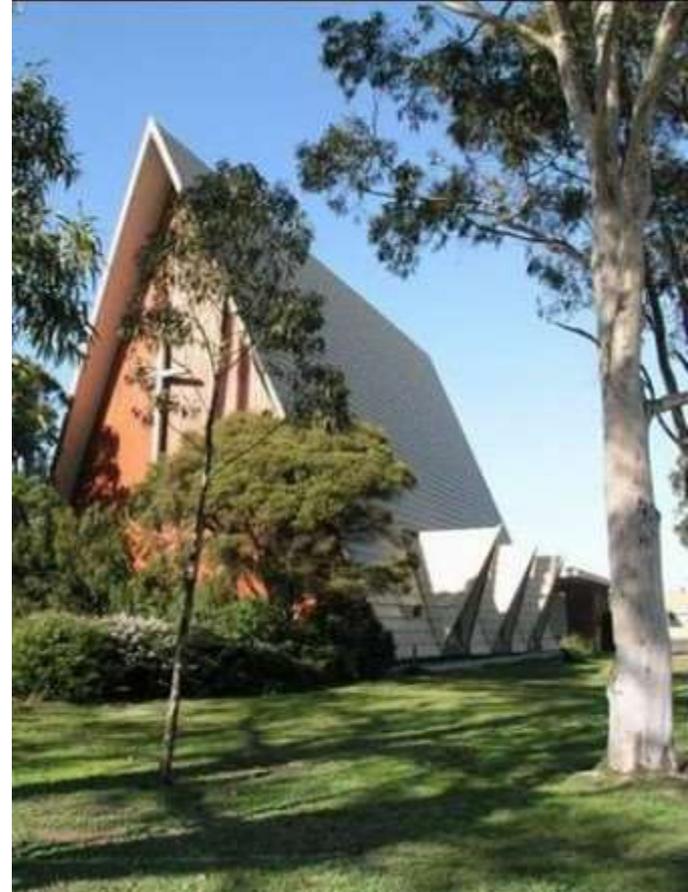
The eight presbyteries are regional councils and have oversight of the congregations, ministry and programs within a region

Clusters relate to one or more presbyteries

Presbyteries meet four times a year, many committees meet monthly

UCA Structure Congregations

- The Congregation is a local group of people who meet regularly to worship and to engage in outreach in their community
- The 560 Vic/Tas congregations are governed by their church council
- Most of Uniting's founding agencies were birthed by a specific congregation or members of congregations
- Congregations continue to carry out community services locally, esp. OP shops, ER, groups and meals



UnitingCare Australia

Uniting is part of the national UnitingCare Network:

- One of the largest providers of community services in Australia
- More than 1,600 social services sites nationally (twice as many sites as McDonald's)
- Present in remote, regional and metropolitan Australia
- Uniting leaders often link with other UnitingCare leaders interstate doing similar work

Potential UCA key relationships

- Church council chair or secretary, minister or lead volunteers of congregations where we partner or co-locate our services
- Presbytery ministers, usually at least two per presbytery and esp. PMs Education and Mission
- Each presbytery has a specific Uniting executive linked for formal communications
- Synod officers, esp Property Services & eLM unit
- All UCA contact details are listed on the Synod's Network Online Directory

Support

- **Colleagues with UCA experience**
- **Mission Division - subject matter experts**
- **Director of Mission, John Clarke**
- **Ask your division's Mission and Ethos Partner, Gavin Blakemore or Lisa Stewart for contacts, introductions and advice**
- **OK to check a letter or discuss an upcoming meeting with the Mission division**

UCA ethos and culture

- Committed to dialogue and cooperation with other churches and to participation in state and national ecumenical bodies and international bodies such as the World Council of Churches
- Takes multi-faith Australia seriously
- Accepts women and men as equals in ministry
- Embraces diversity and open to discuss what it means to be inclusive of all people & to respect differences
- Involves all people in oversight and governance using consensus decision making

UCA people's common styles

- Unrealistic expectations of Uniting staff's theological capacity and commitments
- Christian but from many traditions
- Servanthood – service valued over compliance or risk
- Social justice focus
- Accustomed to operating autonomously
- Consensus valued – decisions made by Council meetings
- Anti business, branding and professionalism
- Networked across multiple local community groups
- Uniting and Synod Office – often conflated negatively

Common interfaces

- We share property, usually via a MOU and/or lease
- We are partnering to deliver services
- We are asked to provide expertise and advice
- We share volunteers or work side by side
- Other parts of the church or its members provide support , including local engagement groups
- We are invited into regional strategy, mission or property conversations
- We share local, state or national social justice issues

Channels

- Face to face
- Phone individuals
- Email or write letters to individuals (co-branded)
- Social media
- Meetings: local engagement groups, presbytery or congregation church council or ad hoc
- Congregation & presbytery newsletters
- Synod eNews – monthly – every minister and secretary
- Crosslight – monthly UCA magazine – every member

Common disconnects

- Past hurts prejudice positive relationship
- Relationship under developed
- Lacking (or unrecognised) shared narrative/theological basis for our unity in mission
- We:
 - Are too assertive
 - Expect a decision immediately
 - Are too focussed on business outcomes
 - Are too risk and compliance centric
 - Dismiss their faith foundation
 - Forget UCA polity and procedures
 - Devalue congregational initiatives

Good engagement

- Listen to understand
- Acknowledge shared history
- Expect historical conflict to surface
- Empathise before moving to our agenda
- Hear their agenda first
- Be clear about your agenda
- Seek consensus to next steps
- Emphasise common vision, values and purposes
- Humility

Thank you

Uniting