

# Perspective

Volume 19 Issue 90 | Spring 2013

*Looking to new horizons and  
reflecting on a year just gone*

In this issue: Presbytery Reports 2012-13



uniting  
church  
in Australia  
Canberra Region



# A basis for the future

## Presbytery Chairperson reports

**In preparing this report I was reminded of a simple prayer written by Dag Hammarskjold (former Gen-Sec of United Nations): *For all that has been, Thanks. To all that shall be, Yes.***

Hammarskjold has captured what it means to be thankful. We acknowledge God has been with us in the journey thus far and allow those experiences to shape our 'yes' to the future.

Such is the purpose of annual reports, whether for Presbytery or our congregations. Reports both review the year past and serve as a basis for our response to the future. What follows are things for which we can be thankful.

### **Pastoral and Administration**

We give thanks for **Kevin Dilks**, our Presbytery Minister (Pastoral & Administration), who brings a pastoral dimension to administrative matters. Overseeing daily operations, Kevin has strengthened a spirit of collegiality between people in ministry placements and quiet confidence in congregation office bearers performing their duties, knowing there is back-up when needed. This bodes well for the future.

### **Mission and Education**

We give thanks for the special gifts **Duncan Macleod** has brought to his role as Presbytery Minister (Mission & Education). His ministry clearly reflects the nexus between 'thanks' and 'yes'. By that I mean, 'thanks' for the many educational programs he initiated and co-led in association with Kevin and other members of presbytery.

These courses have helped equip lay and ordained members for their ministry responsibilities with a strong 'yes' to the future. The new ministry initiatives in Goulburn, planning for the Molonglo and the Riverview

housing developments also cast our minds forward to the future.

One of the most visible and encouraging illustrations of the link between 'education' and 'mission' has been our regular presbytery meetings. Rather than simply being business meetings they have become opportunities for equipping members for mission and ministry.



Image by Duncan Macleod

### **Communication**

Good communication is essential for our geographically and culturally diverse presbytery. Thanks to **Carolyn McAllister** and the 'Communications Think Tank' team who, through *Perspective*, keep us informed on presbytery initiatives and also provide perspective on issues confronting us as we bear witness to the Gospel.

### **Property**

We give thanks for property resources at our disposal. Judicious property decisions in the past, including Pilgrim House, have made current mission objectives possible.

Generous redirection of property sale funds from the **Alpine Congregation** to the **Canberra Korean Congregation** indicates what is possible when our imaginative Property & Finance

Committee thinks outside the square' It is an encouragement for all of us to share our resources into the future.

### **Resource ministry model**

Also encouraging is the agreement by the Sapphire Coast and Monaro parishes for the appointment of a Presbytery Resource Minister (Far South Region) to assist in the transition from a resident minister dependent ministry to one where ministry is shared by members in collaboration with a presbytery resource person. Other congregations may choose to embrace this model in the future.

### **Community Development**

We are thankful for **Bri Griffiths**, our UnitingCare Community Development Worker who has helped to raise the profile of the Uniting Church in the wider community and assisted congregations explore future partnerships in service delivery with UnitingCare. This developing partnership relationship is evidenced by UnitingCare agreeing to provide a full-time hospital chaplaincy placement in the ACT, with Presbytery providing pastoral supervision and accommodation.

### **New Ministry Candidates**

Looking to the future, we are thankful for two new ministry candidates. **Jean Shannon**, who has brought a new dimension to hospital chaplaincy, has been accepted as a candidate for the ministry of Deacon. **Daniel Mossfield**, working with UnitingCare Australia, is a candidate to Ministry of the Word.

Yes, there is much to give thanks for in the life of the presbytery and the groundwork laid for the future. Let us then pray with Dag Hammarskjold: "For all that has been, Thanks. To all that shall be, Yes"

**Ivan Roberts**  
**Chairperson**  
**Canberra Region Presbytery**

# Communication

## Build identity, develop capacity

### Last year Canberra Region's magazine, *Presbytery News*, took a leap forward.

The editor, Brian Rope, introduced colour, a new layout, a new name - *Perspective* - and at the 2013 Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) Conference, received the bronze award for most improved publication.

With Brian's retirement as editor at the end of 2012, the Presbytery office took on the editorship, retaining the magazine's link with each Presbytery meeting through a common theme and continuing to build on what Brian had begun last year. The Communication Think Tank team (formerly Communication Committee) continued to review each issue of *Perspective* and suggest improvements and ideas for the next issue as part of its overview of communication. Most articles and reports were specifically requested by Duncan Macleod, Presbytery Minister (Mission & Education) to help "build identity and

### The nuts and bolts

Facebook, Twitter and the website are useful for fast networking, with the website able to provide more detail. The *Presbytery Directory* received a major overhaul in early 2013 as did our *White Pages* listing and more recently our weekly *Notices*.

### A Workshop suggested

We now use free online emailing software for our *Notices* which has improved clarity and allows us to link with flyers and websites and avoid large attachments. Bill Lang from Tuggeranong UC who helped us get going, has suggested a workshop for congregations who would like to do their notices this way. **Please let us know if you are interested!**

Email us at office[at]canberraregion.unitingchurch.org.au

develop capacity" in a presbytery which is part of a Uniting Church movement, not an institution.

As a movement we are fluid and adaptable; a network of relationships and activity with a communication hub to help maintain focus and connection as a living, growing body of ministry and service.

Given the ever-present tendency for a living body to become a machine, what focus must *Perspective* have to help us continue to be a network of Holy Spirit empowered ministry and relationships, whose identity and capacity as a Christian movement and part of the emerging body of Christ can be clearly seen?

### The Forgotten Ways

The Presbytery library has a book called *The Forgotten Ways* by Alan Hirsch, published in 2006.

Alan Hirsch looks at Christian movements throughout history and, from a *functional* perspective (not status), focuses on the significance of the apostolic ministry as "the foundational gift that provides both the environment and the reference point for all the other ministries mentioned in scripture". (cf Basis of Union 14(a) para 1).

Reading further, the apostolic gift throughout the church is providing the necessary focus (reference point) which builds our identity as a Christ-centred movement and develops our capacity to serve as a body of ministry true to

the gospel and its ethos; celebrating the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, while we cannot guarantee inclusion, we welcome stories of God's activity from this perspective. They encourage, inspire and allow us to coordinate and manage ourselves in relation to this foundational ministry, as well as discover networking opportunities where we might fit and be able to contribute and grow.



Brian Rope receives the Bronze Award for Most Improved Publication. Image by Jeanette Severs

Articles might also include:

- teaching, testimony and vision which encourage us to remain true to the gospel and its ethos.
- the prophetic edge that unsettles us - keeps us moving towards God, drawn by the purity and passion of Christ and His covenant of grace - the source of our unity.

Articles should be no more than 500 words, if possible with a photo - at least 300dpi (about a megabyte).

Thank you for all the articles and photos contributed over the past year. They have given us much cause to celebrate God's faithfulness and love.

**Carolyn McAllister**  
*Perspective* Editor

# Vision for Presbytery

## Pastoral Care & Administration

**When I arrived in this Presbytery in 2007 four different reports were being considered, each with its own suite of recommendations concerning the future of our Presbytery.**

As one of the new members of Presbytery, with no baggage with respect to past decisions, I was able to contribute to the synthesising of the reports; bringing together a cohesive set of recommendations, which became the Presbytery Mission Statement.

**The main thrusts of the new Mission Plan were:**

- staffing to achieve a more missional focus;
- resourcing congregations for their mission;
- developing communication channels to promote mission-thinking;
- shaping an administrative structure that served mission.

Five years on I can report that virtually all goals from 2008 have been achieved.

### **In the pipeline**

Having set a good foundation it is now time for us to think further about the mission we are all called to participate in over the coming five years and the place that Presbytery has in the unfolding of that mission.

Therefore, at the next Presbytery Standing Committee we will be considering the first draft of a new Presbytery Mission Plan. I hope that we will then be able to bring it to the first Presbytery meeting in February 2014.

I want to be clear about one thing – I believe mission is primarily the work of the congregation. Presbytery exists to facilitate the ministry and mission of the congregation. Therefore what will be produced will not be a document telling each congregation

what it should do over the next five years. Rather it will focus on the ways Presbytery can help support and encourage what is being done in our congregations.



Image by Brian Rope

### **Pastoral**

In my first report last year I wrote, *“By placing the word ‘Pastoral’ ahead of ‘Administration’ Presbytery affirmed the priority of health of ministers and congregations over administration.”*

Over the last year I have done my best to organise my work around this priority.

While I have continued to meet with ministers in small groups on a regular basis as well as one-on-one meetings, I have found that the greater part of my pastoral work has arisen out of administrative issues.

This convinces me of the wisdom of placing Pastoral Care and Administration together.

We are well-served by our congregation ministers – a very diverse bunch but all sharing a solid commitment to enabling our congregations to live out their calling as the people of God.

Throughout the year the majority of our ministers are meeting in small support groups. Our resourcing weekends and Ministers’ Retreats were both well attended and all our ministers take seriously their continued education and accountability. All of this contributes to a positive collegiality that is good for the congregations they lead.

### **Administration - getting it right**

*“administration must serve the mission and ministry of our church rather than the other way around” (from last year’s report)*

In seeking feedback on the administrative function I perform, the best question I can ask is, “Is there anything I am *unhelpfully* neglecting?” The reality is there is so much admin work that I must leave some things not done. Mostly I think I have been able to pick what things can be neglected.

I have made it a priority to respond as effectively as I can to issues arising from our congregations because I believe admin must first and foremost serve the mission and ministry of our congregations.

Over the last year I have learnt more about immigration, workers compensation, property insurance, volunteer engagement and employment contracts than I have ever wanted to know. But they are all part of being a church that wants to do the right thing by congregations, employees, volunteers and wider community.

So we all, Congregational treasurers, secretaries, etc, do our best to patiently work through the increasingly complex world of compliance knowing that even the intricacies of modern legislation cannot prevent God’s Spirit from moving us forward with grace and imagination.

*continued on the next page*

# In the room together

## Mission &

### One of the most fulfilling parts of my role as Presbytery Minister (Mission/Education) is seeing people working together to form learning communities.

It's a pleasure to be part of inspiring groups as they form new insights, hatch new plans and achieve new outcomes.

The Presbytery's year began with events associated with the 10th anniversary of the Canberra bush fires. The ACT bush fire memorial service on the slopes of Mt Stromlo had input from emergency service chaplains, Phil Marshall and Kerry Bartlett, and inspiring music from Weston Creek creative arts team, *Chain Reaction*.

Greenhills Conference Centre held a service of memory and thanksgiving the next day. Our Presbytery meeting in February, held at the ACT Emergency Services Training Centre, gave us the challenge of being prepared to support our communities when they face disaster.

### Old Testament classes

Anne Ryan and I held Old Testament evening classes over the first of the

year for a group of Uniting Church members. Members at O'Connor Uniting Church were joined by others from Murrumbateman, Yarralumla, Wattle Park and Tuggeranong to form a supportive community in which people had freedom to explore hard questions and find new inspiration from the Scriptures. We'll be running a similar course on the New Testament in 2014.

### Disability Network

Two years ago Neil Johnston from Weston Creek sat in my office wondering with me about how we might build the Presbytery's capacity to engage with the challenges associated with disability. On behalf of the Presbytery, Neil has pulled together a network of people motivated to learn and work together. The group hosted a dinner featuring National Disability Insurance Scheme advocate Dougie Herd and resourced an inspiring Presbytery meeting held at Tuggeranong in May.

### Sacraments Course

Anne Ryan and I teamed up again to run "Understanding the Sacraments", a

weekend course at Braidwood attended by members from Bateman's Bay, Parkesbourne and Kippax.

### Strength Deployment

Noel Williams, an army chaplain and sheep farmer based in Cooma, led a two day resourcing retreat on the Strength Deployment Inventory for our ministers in May. I was particularly pleased with the connection made between our chaplains and congregational leaders.

### First Third of Life

Hannah Dungan, in her first year as Congregational Development Minister at Kippax, hosted a one-day training event focusing on ministry with children.

Judyth Roberts, from the NSW/ACT Synod's Uniting Mission & Education resourcing team, walked us through the Godly Play concept, and helped us think through ways the church works with children. This "First Third of Life" event will be one of many over the next few years.

In 2014 we'll be running an event focused on "Teens and Tweens", looking at how we as communities develop the assets needed for growth to resilient adulthood.

### Theology of Marriage

The August meeting of Presbytery included a three hour facilitated discussion on our theology of marriage, part of a nationwide conversation being run by the Uniting Church in Australia.

I was part of the team that designed the conversation resource, and had the privilege of travelling to Melbourne to take the Confessing Congregations taskgroup on marriage through the same process.

The Assembly Doctrine Working Group, which includes Rachel Kronberger from South Woden, will be putting out a discussion paper for



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The Presbytery office seeks to nurture openness to the initiative of the Spirit amongst

us through reporting on issues and projects that we hope are stimulating and encouraging. My commitment to en-Spirited administration includes a commitment to en-Spirited resourcing of our Ministers and our congregations.

### Thankfulness

It is easy to bemoan the plight of our world and at times our church, particularly when you are the hub

for communications from Synod and Congregations.

I can genuinely say, however, that I am thankful for the people who give their time and wisdom to serve the workings of the church so that congregations can get about their core business.

Thank you to all you office-bearers in Congregations and in the Presbytery for the ways you continue to remind me that we are all here for the sake of the Gospel of Christ and the calling to be bearers of that Gospel.

**Kevin Dilks**

**Presbytery Minister**

**Pastoral/Administration**

# with Duncan Macleod

## Education

Presbyteries and congregations to use in 2014.

### **Living Our Values Course**

Kevin Dilks and I worked together to host *Living Our Values*, a weekend-long course introducing ministers and members to the Uniting Church's formation, Basis of Union, ethos and approach to decision making.

**Bronwyn Murphy**, from the Uniting Education & Mission Resourcing Team, walked us through the course at **St James' Curtin** in 2012.

We hope to see the course becoming a regular event in the Presbytery, providing UCA members with a deeper insight into what it means

to be part of the Uniting Church movement.

### **Ministry with tertiary students**

My work with **City Church** in 2013 focused on experimental work in ministry with tertiary students, particularly at **Australian National University**.

**City Church** employed two "mission workers", **Moses and JC**, to support the work being done by **Myung Hwa Park**. **City Church** members are strengthening the hospitality they offer, particularly to international students.

My work as convenor of the **Synod's**

**Tertiary Ministry Committee** in 2013 has focused on helping Presbyteries and congregations like us across the NSW and ACT to learn from one another.

### **Resource Seminar USA**

I spent three weeks of July in the United States, mostly to take part in a Doctor of Ministry resource seminar at **San Francisco Theological Seminary**. The course, **Cultural Milieu of Mission**, was attended by clergy from a wide range of denominational backgrounds.

### **Long leave**

I have taken nine weeks of long leave in October, November

and December to focus on writing my doctoral dissertation. The D.Min project is titled "A Uniting Church ministry training program focusing on changes in generational culture in Australia".

In 2014 I'll be trialling models of theological reflection and intergenerational conversation with congregations, ministers and students for ministry.

While I'm on leave, **Terry Ayling**, a Uniting Church minister living on the Gold Coast, is providing consultancy work with **Weston Creek** (Molonglo Valley), **Kippax** (Riverview housing development), **Goulburn** (New Faith Communities Evaluation) and **Bateman's Bay** (Life and Witness Consultation).

### **Uniting Learning Network**

This year I've been on a Synod working group on theological education, tasked with bringing into being the vision of a Synod-wide resourcing network.

Kevin and I were part of a gathering of Presbytery ministers and resource ministers in **Bonny Hills** in May, sharing resources and committing to being part of the new network.

In July I met with staff from **UTC** (United Theological College) and the **Uniting Mission & Education Resourcing Team**, as they prepared to form the hub of the **Uniting Learning Network**.

The challenge for 2014 will be bringing all these people together as a learning community that resources the whole church in discipleship, leadership and mission.

**Duncan Macleod**  
**Presbytery Minister**  
**Mission/Education**



Image by Sharon Hollis

# Laying foundations

## In partnership with

**Briony Griffiths, Community Development Worker - ACT, reflects on her first 12 months in the job and shares some of the highlights.**

It has been a busy and very enjoyable year! I have tried to meet many people across Canberra congregations and in the surrounding region. I have also been fortunate to travel to Dubbo and Wagga, and to Sydney on a number of occasions in order to better understand the enormity of both the Uniting Church and UnitingCare NSW.ACT.



Image by Duncan Macleod

The new Community Development role within the Canberra Region Presbytery was created in partnership with UnitingCare NSW.ACT with a key focus on better utilisation of combined resources in order to strengthen our local communities.

### **Objectives include:**

- building capacity within the Church and UnitingCare,
- identifying and improving service delivery,
- strengthening partnerships both internally and with other organisations
- enhancing social justice advocacy.

**Here are a few highlights from the year:**

### **Increasing our profile**

Early in 2013, Ivan Roberts, John Goss and I met with several of the newly elected ACT Ministers to introduce Ivan as the new Presbytery Chairperson, and to outline the extensive work of the Uniting Church and UnitingCare in Canberra.

These meetings proved very positive – increasing our profile as an active, professional Church delivering much needed services and advocating for local social justice issues.

### **Safe Shelter Pilot Project**

The Safe Shelter commenced at St Columba's Uniting Church on 15 May and ran each Wednesday night throughout winter until 26 September. Over the 20 weeks a total of 12 male guests stayed at the Shelter – with two guests returning two and three times respectively.

Whilst the number of guests was lower than some anticipated, there were significant community building aspects that exceeded expectations. Over 30 active volunteers completed training; the vast majority coming from the public via extensive media coverage, with only two active volunteers coming through the Uniting Church network (thank you South Woden!). As a result, the project also built community awareness of homelessness issues, and several volunteers commenced with other homelessness services, including the Early Morning Centre.

Support from referring agencies was another key success. Samaritan House regularly drove guests down to the Shelter on nights they were full. Relationships with the ACT Government, particularly Housing ACT and the Legislative Assembly, were also strengthened.

The Safe Shelter is now completing a review of the pilot project and will make recommendations for 2014 in a report available by early December 2013. *Interested churches should get in touch!*

### **Canberra Community Development Forum**

On 15 June, 62 congregation members and staff of the Uniting Church/UnitingCare gathered at Weston Creek for the inaugural Canberra Community Development Forum.

The focus of the day was Canberra in the next Centenary – the Uniting Church's role in shaping Canberra's community.

Throughout the day participants highlighted their aspirations for the future and reflected on what inspires us now. Five areas in which the Uniting Church could shape the Canberra community into the future were highlighted..

These were: *Ecumenical/Spiritual Voice, Youth, Mental Health and Disability, Increased Equity, and a Truly Civil Society – Kindness and Respect.*

In 2014 we will explore the themes further, putting more emphasis on the questions of 'How?' and 'With Whom?' The feedback from the day overwhelmingly supported the idea of an annual Community Development Forum.

*If this is something your church would like to host and have influence in, please start the conversation with me soon.*

### **St James' partnership with My Home in Canberra**

The vision for *My Home in Canberra* was recently launched by the Queanbeyan HOME Board. HOME is a community-driven initiative that provides 24/7 supported

# to build community

## UnitingCare NSW.ACT

accommodation for people with enduring mental illness who cannot live independently, are at risk of being homeless, or may be homeless. The vision is to build a similar home in Canberra by 2015.

In recent months, St James' congregation have partnered with the project and given in-principle agreement for *My Home in Canberra* to be built on their adjacent block of land in Curtin. This is an exciting opportunity for ecumenical partnership, community building and addressing a very real community need. The *My Home* board will need a lot of assistance to make the vision a

reality – professional services, financial commitments and dedicated time.

*If this is something you would like to support in 2014, please show your interest.*

### **Molonglo Valley - making Community Connections**

As residents move into the new suburbs of the Molonglo Valley, the Weston Creek Uniting Church is enthusiastic about serving this emerging community.

Over the coming months, a taskgroup will work with Presbytery resources to identify opportunities for building community connections and map out a

work program for 2014.

### **A Baby on the way**

If you haven't seen me in a few months, you may not have noticed my growing baby bump. Daryn, Delia and I will welcome a little boy into our family in early February 2014. Plans are underway to identify a suitable person to cover my maternity leave.

2013 has indeed been a big year! Many foundations have been laid on which the Uniting Church will continue to build a stronger Canberra community. I look forward to your support in 2014 and the journey ahead.

**Briony Griffiths**  
*Community Development Worker*



62 congregation members and staff of the Uniting Church/UnitingCare gathered at Weston Creek for the inaugural Canberra Community Development Forum to focus on Canberra in the next Centenary - the Uniting Church's role in shaping Canberra's community.

Image by Duncan Macleod

# Aimee's journey

## Moving forward with Grace

### **A report from Aimee Kent, Minister of New Faith Community, Goulburn.**

Goulburn Faith Community Project has begun to make a transition from networking and community engagement into community gathering and development of worship.



*Bronte finding love  
in God's creation*

In an experimental move, we have decided to gather for worship in a number of smaller communities each framed around common interest, mission or participant demographic. This is partly from a theological belief that God is everywhere and in all things and thus we can worship God in many different ways, times and places; and partly from a belief that one of the things the Uniting Church as a whole does well, is gathering and nurturing people in small groups. It is hoped that each of these developing communities will find their own identity, style and mission, whilst also feeling a strong

[www.goulburn.unitingchurch.org.au](http://www.goulburn.unitingchurch.org.au)  
or follow us on Facebook:  
Grace Uniting Church

connection to the Faith Community as a whole.

So far we have five communities gathering regularly for worship while a couple of others are exploring what their community life might look like. Each community has commonalities within their Christian practices but for the most part they meet with their own style, rhythms and culture. I will share snippets of each of their stories below.

**Outdoor Adventure Church** has explored ideas of light and darkness, our fears and comfort as members caved underneath Bungonia National Park. They have explored the story of creation as they kayaked through Sydney Harbour and supported local land care efforts on Goat Island. They've panned for gold and hiked to waterfalls, prayed for loved ones and marvelled at God's blessings, young and old together creating and experiencing worship within the great outdoors.

**Messy Church** has indeed been messy as members have had the chance to mosaic crosses, paint their feet and share about Easter. They've shared the story of the Good Shepherd whilst eating jacket potatoes, and making fleece blankets for those sleeping rough, and have recreated the story of Joseph in paint and playdough. It is a fun community of mostly young families incorporating exploration and creativity into every worship gathering.

**Christian Meditation** is an ecumenical community with leadership being offered both by the Anglican and the Uniting Church Communities. Unlike our more physically active communities, members of this community enjoy finding space and peace within their lives to be still and listen to God. Through Lent and Advent the community meets weekly, whilst in the colder months they have enjoyed the opportunity to participate in quiet days and labyrinth walks.

About once a month **The Den** can be found huddled together playing board games, challenging each other on the Xbox or Wii, praying and discussing issues of faith. This lively community has a broad mixture of ages from young teens to grandparents all enjoying the mix of challenge, community and reflection The Den has to offer.

**Dinner Church**, has grown and changed in many ways over the year. Meeting every Monday night, the community began as a place for younger adults to worship together over a meal, gathering in people's homes. Throughout the middle of the year the community was joined by a large number of children and most recently, has moved from a Dinner Church to a supper church, once again comprising mostly young adults.

### **A new name**

This coming weekend marks a significant milestone for the project as, for the first time, each of these smaller faith communities has been invited to join together for a whole community celebration under the new name: **Grace Uniting Church** (often referred to as the Grace Community or just Grace).

After being called the New Faith Community for almost two years, it is an exciting juncture to be able to find identity in a new name. It speaks of our hope to be a community that welcomes people graciously; that continues to journey, grow and change with elegance and grace, even when things feel hard; and holds a quirky acronym capturing our emerging identity as the place to be part of Goulburn's Regional Alternative Church Experience.

Grace Uniting has grown and changed this year and it is this ongoing change and growth that we are embracing as together we explore how we would like to be the Uniting Church in Goulburn.

**Aimee Kent**  
**Minister, Grace Uniting Church**

# The yearly narrative

## Ideas for annual reporting

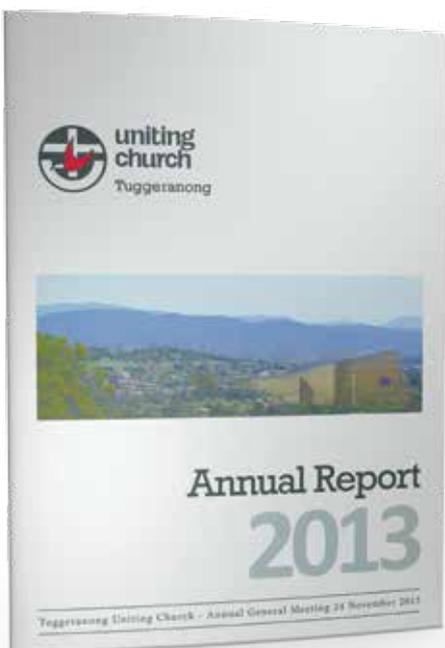
**Thirty or so years ago, armed with the primitive tools of some sheets of Letraset, a typewriter, a book of clipart and a Roneo duplicator, we were emboldened to do all sorts of creative projects for our congregations.**

At the time, I probably paid more attention to presentation than to the depth of the content.

Today, technology has put some excellent creative tools within reach of just about anyone. But the same underlying issue remains – how effective is our content not just to inform, but perhaps excite our members about the life and witness of our congregation.

### Where to start

While there are many different approaches, I would like to suggest some ways to help prepare a narrative that not only informs church members about the life and witness of the congregation or agency, but also helps them engage more fully with that life and possibly inspire them.



The starting point is always the purpose – understand why we are going to all this effort to collate and present the life of the year past. Then decide on an overall approach.

### Overarching narrative

Traditionally the report is a collation of separate reports from all the various leaders. Alternatively, you could develop an overarching narrative covering the various activities and ministries based on the input from the leaders of those activities.

This challenging task requires a close interpretation of the activities in the light of the congregation's mission statements and plan.

- **Group the activities under broad headings relevant to your mission plan.** Ensure that you reference all the activities as everyone's effort needs to be recognised.

- **Give clear instructions about the style.** Focus on accomplishments, not activities. Connect the activities with mission goals. What have been the results and successes; challenges overcome.

Give the readers a forward-looking view as well - what is hoped to be achieved in the coming year/s, with some specific targets and timeframes if possible and relevant.

One of the features attempted in this year's report for my congregation is to include plenty of good news stories – events or experiences that share the good things that happen and thus help members share the experience.

Don't get hooked on administrative minutiae which while important, is not central.

- **Say it in pictures** A good picture is worth a thousand words. Remember to get permission from people who are in the photos.

- **Have a consistent layout.** Style sheets, one of MS Word's features, should help to maintain a consistent look with body text, captions and headings. Try for a balance of text and images and use generous margins to create white space.



Two or three columns make for good balance and may also save you space on the page.

- **Branding.** The Uniting Church has introduced guidelines for the church's branding and if possible, we should try to apply the styles suggested including the use of logos, typography, photographs and language style.

The guidelines are available online at: <http://nsw.uca.org.au/church/Uniting-Church-Guidelines-DD07.pdf> or contact the Presbytery office.

### Have a go

It is a great thing to pull together all the things that make up your congregation's life, things that give it character, that make it an exciting place to be and an energising place to work God's mission.

**Bill Lang**  
**Tuggeranong Uniting Church**

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and your community.

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