



NORTHERN SYNOD NEWS

JULY 2024

THE INDUCTION OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Induction of the General Secretary Rev Janet Staines was held at Casuarina UC on Friday 14th June, led by the NS Moderator Rev Tony Goodluck. The Moderator preached on being faithful to God's call and the Moderator and the new General Secretary presided at Communion. The Induction service was attended by the Qld Synod Moderator Rev Bruce Moore, Qld General Secretary, Rev Adam McIntosh, the newly appointed Qld Synod Associate General Secretary Rev Linda Hanson,

Church Council Chair of Chermside Kedron Uniting Church Dr Sue Fairley, and CLP Candidate for Wanguri, Oly Carlson, with a Welcome to Country by Dr Richard Fejo. It was a beautiful night of celebration.



REV DR PETER HOBSON, REV THRESI
MAUBOY, REV JANET STAINES



THANK YOU REVS. COLIN AND CAROL

The Pilgrim Presbytery would like to thank Rev Carol Bennett and Rev Colin Gurteen for their support, training, work, listening, wisdom and care expressed during their 9 weeks supply. In that time, they achieved so much! They managed to visit Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Nhulunbuy, Broome and congregations in Darwin. They ran 2 Code of Ethics Training sessions, multiple workshops on a range of topics including navigating change and budgeting for mission, completed vitality of calls and consultations, sacraments training, future planning and undertook many

many pastoral conversations – all with good humour and grace. We thank them for their time and effort, the depth of care and understanding shown, their encouragement, and
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most of all - their ongoing commitment to help in the Northern Synod whenever possible, even from the depths of the north of the south, Launceston! May God bless you both as you return home.

Lauren Merritt, Pilgrim Presbytery Chair



THE 17TH ASSEMBLY MEETING



threads of love

A number of our Northern Synod members will be attending the 17th Assembly in July. The 17th Assembly is the triennial decision-making meeting of the national council of the Uniting Church in Australia. Members worship together, form community, and discern where God's spirit is calling the Church.

The meeting will take place from 11-16 July 2024 at Novotel Paramatta on Burramattagal land in Western Sydney. It will feature the Installation of Rev Charissa Suli as President of the Uniting Church in Australia.

You'll be able to watch the livestream on this page: [17th Assembly – Uniting Church Australia](#) as the meeting happens. You can keep up to date with news from the meeting via the news grid at the bottom of the page, on the [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and by [signing up to our newsletter](#) which will put a wrap of each day directly into your inbox.

There will be some important decisions made for the future governance of the Uniting Church at this meeting and we will communicate these after the meeting.

THE NORTHERN SYNOD AND THE NORTHERN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF CONGRESS (NRCC) MOURN THE PASSING OF THE HIGHLY RESPECTED AND MUCH LOVED LEADER AND ELDER REV. DR. GONDARRA OAM.



With deep sadness, we mourn the passing of Rev Dr Gondarra OAM, a giant in the life of the Uniting Church and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and a revered Yolŋu leader. We give thanks for his incredible contribution to our journey of reconciliation, his unwavering compassion for his people and his deep insights into the God who walks with us all.

See below a shared statement from National Congress Chair Rev Mark Kickett and President of the Uniting Church Assembly Rev Sharon Hollis.

Rev. Mark Kickett, UAICC National Chair:

"The loss of the Reverend Doctor has seen the curtain close on one of the most extraordinary men of our time.

When the book of Hebrews talks about the heroes of faith in Chapter 11, so too the Reverend Doctor can be numbered amongst them as a hero of faith and a giant in the journey and life of the UAICC (Congress) and the Uniting Church in Australia.

It is with deep sorrow that we have received this news and on behalf of the UAICC, I send our heartfelt love and condolences to his family, community, the NRCC and the Northern Synod.

Our prayer is that the God whom we love and serve, will sustain you through this sad time and that you may know the peace of God that surpasses all understanding."

Rev. Sharon Hollis, UCA President:

"Rev. Dr. Gondarra OAM was instrumental in the founding of the Uniting Aboriginal Islander Christian Congress and provided visionary leadership to Congress, the Uniting Church and the global church for over four decades. He was the first and only Indigenous Moderator in the Uniting Church. He served on the World Council of Churches Central Committee and was a pioneer of Indigenous theology both in Australia and around the world.

Rev. Dr. Gondarra OAM was a tireless advocate for his people and their right to sovereignty and self-determination. He showed us how Indigenous culture and spirituality can inform and enliven theology.

His writing and teaching was my first introduction to Indigenous theology and I give thanks for this gift.

My spirit is grieved at this profound loss. I pray for his family, his community and all who grieve his loss. May his life's work continue to inspire us to learn from Indigenous people and work for the recognition of the sovereignty of First Peoples."

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The immediate past Moderator Rev. Thresi Mauboy Wohangara said:

"Like Moses, Rev. Dr. Gondarra has been a guiding hand, leading the Northern Synod and NRCC through a journey of joy and sorrow. His aura has reached from Galiwin'ku to even my homeland of Indonesia. I still remember him visiting my hometown. Though he appeared as just a man, his presence was felt through the room and inspired many who were there. He has become a significant role model for the churches in Indonesia, especially within GMIT in Kupang.

During my first meeting as the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Gondarra said to me: "In order to bloom, you must start from the bottom. If you want to be close with your brothers and sisters, you must touch the land. Come! Eat and drink with us. You will become part of us, and we will become part of you!"

All your words Nathi will stay in my heart forever."

The NRCC will prayerfully support NRCC Chairperson Rev. Djawanydjawany Gondarra and the extended families in their time of grief.

Rev. Dr. Gondarra was a pillar of the Uniting Church and instrumental in the founding of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. His leadership embodied the spirit of 'The Covenant' challenging First and Second Peoples to walk together. He made a lasting impact in the struggle for equality far beyond the borders of his home in Arnhem Land.

Rev. Dr. Gondarra's legacy is far reaching and challenges us to work toward a brighter future with justice for all, including First Nations Sovereignty and full recognition of Yolju Rom (law).

For now we respectfully observe this time for grief, honouring Yolju protocol. In time we will come together and celebrate the life of our beloved Elder.

We pray that God Wajarr, with his love never-ending, watches over Rev. Dr. Gondarra's extended family, together with the members of Northern Synod and the NRCC during this time of mourning.



COMMITTEE MEETINGS



The Synod Standing Committee (pictured) met on 14th-15th June 2024. The Finance and Property Services Committee, a sub-committee of Synod Standing Committee, met on Wednesday 19th June 2024.

Synod Standing Committee:

The Synod Standing Committee spent time reflecting and clarifying the role of the Standing Committee within the governance structure of the Uniting Church and how the councils of the church function responsibly and with accountability. Individuals identified the parts of the church they were engaged in, identifying potential conflicts of interest. This was a helpful exercising in developing a shared understanding of church governance and clarifying what we are called to do as a committee. The Moderator's report highlighted the work of the NT Council of Churches and discussed the vacancies of the Partnerships and Fundraising and the Position of Principal of Nungalinga College. The General Secretary's report included the governance work to be developed for Coordinate and the planning of the next Synod meeting approved for 3-6th April 2025. Feedback received from the 2024 Synod meeting will contribute to the General Secretary Strategic planning and the General Secretary was appointed the Synod Property Officer. Discussion was had about the ways the Northern Synod ministry could be highlighted at the upcoming Assembly meeting.

Finance and Property Meeting:

Financial reports were received and discussed. Ms Fiona McManus, Director of Finance, was present to answer any questions. Ongoing conversations about the relocation of Uniting House led to the inspection of a property and further clarifying conversations. The sale of First Street Katherine and Gsell Street have contributed to the reduction of debt. Conversations were had about Anne Street Broome and future development. The sale of Loch Street Derby will be discussed with WA Synod as to supporting Congress ministry. Conversations are being pursued with Alice Springs Town Council over the use of property. Louise MacDonald and James Hughes presented an update on the Maningrida Translation Centre and Coordinate project.

UCA HEADS OF COLLEGE CONFERENCE



On 25th - 27th June, Nungalinga College hosted the UCA Heads of College Conference with the coming together of six Uniting Church theological colleges from around Australia. There was opportunity to hear from Nungalinga College principal, Dr Ben van Gelderen and our Moderator-Elect, Rev Dr Michelle Cook, about Nungalinga's teaching practice of *garma* - bothways learning and teaching - and, as educators, reflected on culture and practice of teaching.



NORTHERN SYNOD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Discipleship
- Serving our communities
- Fit for purpose
- Working together

