



Introduction

As we write this report for the Northern Synod meeting, our chairperson, Rev. Mark Kickett is currently on leave, and will not be at the NRCC and Synod meetings this April. Mark is disappointed about this as he enjoys the time he is able to spend with NRCC members and in the Northern Synod.

Mark is keeping well, and is being supported by spending time by being in a caring Congress community. Please keep Mark in your prayers.

While Mark is on leave, the Congress National Executive have appointed two people as Interim Co – Chairs, Rev. Will Pickett from Victoria and Rev. Ken Sumner from SA for this interim period.

As you know Congress (the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress) is made up of seven (7) regions, which includes Australia's six (6) states plus NRCC, which is now the only Congress region which is a Presbytery.

Highlights for the UAICC over the last 12 months

Since the last Northern Synod meeting in April 2024, highlights and significant events for Congress nationally have included:

- Two Congress National Planning Workshops where we could think about how we worked together and our strategic planning. The result of this is we came up with a new purposes statement, and five (5) key “pillars” or parts of our Congress work being:
 - Partnerships, Self Determination, Youth, Leaders of the Future, plus Congregations and Faith Communities.
- Renewal of our strategic plans and ministry in all our regions. For example:
 - Queensland: A new Regional Council has been formed with Roberta Stanley as Chair, and a new name for the council.



They are now known as Muth arrack, meaning “Fire stick.”
They have retired the old name of Calvary.

- NSW: Nathan Tyson & Tom Sloane are now co- chairs of the NSW Congress. They are planning the growth of Congress in NSW & ACT, and are planning to re-establish the Regional Council.
 - Victoria: Have established a new Regional Council with Rev. Will Pickett as Chair, and are planning to advertise soon for two new Congress positions.
 - Tasmania: They are actively involved in community ministry, and are developing plans for a new Congress centre in Hobart.
 - SA: Have nearly completed building a new worship centre in Oodnadatta.
 - WA: Just received an apology from the WA Church regarding their previous lack of support for the Covenant. They are also developing partnerships for their property at Victoria Park.
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- Developing relationships with the wider church. This has included:
 - Our Chairperson’s involvement with the Pacific Council of Churches, the Pacific Churches Partnership Advisory Network (PCPAN), and a climate change forum in Aotearoa New Zealand.
 - Mark preaching at ordinations at the New Zealand Methodist Conference.
 - Mark preaching at our brother’s ordination at Maningrida, as well as Peter Hobson’s induction at Nungalinga as NRCC Support Worker.
 - Providing support and leadership at the Pacific & Australian Emerging Leader’s Summit (PAELS).
 - Have two members on the Frontier Services Board, being Mark Kickett & Kym Korbe.



- Being involved with the Uniting First People's Network, through UnitingCare.
- Being able to visit the Congress regions including Maningrida, Townsville, Cairns & Cape York and the APY Lands.
- Participation in Synod meetings in WA & SA, and the Assembly meeting in July.
- The 17th Triennial Assembly in Sydney. This meeting coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Covenant, and the 15th anniversary of the Preamble. Highlights included:
 - The Friday evening when members were challenged to recommit to the work of reconciliation and justice in a celebration program which Congress organised. The program included cultural dance, songs, stories, prayer and a challenge for the wider church to do better in our commitments to be in true relationship with the First Peoples.
 - The Congress report, where members heard of the work of the National Executive and the Congress purpose, "For First Peoples to be autonomous and live freely in decision making as we minister with First Peoples and engage all peoples in theological, culturally safe, and holistic ways."
 - The two Congress proposals which became resolutions. These were that the Assembly set up a Covenant Revival Working Group to report back to the 18th Assembly "with stories, ideas, principals and proposals so that the Church "can 'live out' the gospel through a redesign and revival of the Covenant." The resolutions also endorsed and committed to implementing the relevant principles in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

Sorry Business

Naturally Congress has needed to mourn at too many funerals and memorials in the last 12 months. Our chairperson has been privileged to

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be able to attend or be involved with the state memorial for Rev. Dr. Gondarra, the services at Pukatja for Pastor Kulyuru and most recently sister Michelle's funeral, amongst other services. Our prayers and thoughts are with all who mourn.

Ian Dempster
UAICC Resource Worker,
On behalf of the Congress National Executive