



# Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Directions Paper post 35<sup>th</sup> Synod

## The Commission

The current By-Laws of The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod establishes the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission as the link between the church and affiliated schools and colleges

*Project Plenty*, a whole-of-Synod strategic planning and discernment journey was launched at the 34<sup>th</sup> Synod. *Project Plenty* will involve consultation with presbyteries and congregations and collaboration and alignment with agencies, schools and all other activities of the church in Queensland. Through this process the church will turn its collective attention to a question we should never stop asking: *How can we, as one church contribute most effectively to God's mission in Queensland and the world?* Lessons learned from the earlier *Together on the Way: Enriching Community* process will be applied to develop a simplified framework to enable the best engagement and contribution from across all parts of the church – including schools and residential colleges.

Leading into the 36<sup>th</sup> Synod, the following *Key Missional Imperatives* will be used as foundational and overarching statements for the Commission's participation in schools and residential colleges.

- Strategic locations for intentional church communities
- Development of a multi-cultural church
- Whole of church first-peoples' engagement
- One church

## Our Guiding Principles

The Uniting Church, in bearing witness to the love of God revealed in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, will engage in the ministry of delivering education of children and young people. The purposes of our participation in this ministry are:

- To provide safe environments where children and young people can explore and discover their God-given dignity and progress their individual potential.

- To support the growth and development of children and young people who are discerning the meaning, identity, belonging and purpose of their lives such that they can participate in a just society and lead creative and compassionate lives.
- To achieve excellent outcomes for students by ensuring effective teaching and school leadership is ever-present, understood, valued and prioritised.
- To share its faith in respectful and engaging ways by providing venues for the development of children and young people in the light of the Christian story guided by the Basis of Union.

The quality of this ministry will be enabled by applying ethical governance systems

- To monitor the outcomes, procedures and practices of schools and colleges to ensure alignment with the above purposes.
- To secure safe and inclusive institutions with a capacity to affirm all people.

The Uniting Church recognises it lives and ministers in a pluralist society. This diversity can find common ground in a set of shared values. UCA schools will respect that set of shared values and engage with it in the light of the Christian story. Our schools and colleges will be places where their worship, witness and service will bear witness to Jesus Christ, and the fullness of life that Christ offers.

## Our Values and Alignment

In response to God's grace we are called to live out, and nurture in our affiliates, the gospel values of Faithfulness, Compassion, Humility, Truthfulness, and Justice.

Furthermore, we continually seek to align our focus to the Project Plenty Mission Priorities and Direction 2021-2025, clearly acknowledging we are one church by:

- Fostering a renewed discipleship culture within schools and colleges through modelling, educating, training and equipping.
- Being an active partner in transforming communities.

- Ensuring our governance and service delivery in schools and residential colleges is shaped to support missional priorities.
- Seeking closer collaboration with schools, colleges and affiliated agencies to bring God's gifts to the world.

## Our Role

From the 2017 revision of the By-Laws, the Commission's role is:

- To foster the relationship and connection between Uniting Church schools and colleges and the wider church;
- To engage with schools and colleges for the purpose of understanding the strategic directions and challenges facing Uniting Church schools and colleges;
- To provide advice to the Synod about the Synod's strategic directions with respect to schools and colleges;
- Review and assess the risks facing Uniting Church schools and colleges and ensure that techniques, procedures and controls are put in place to eliminate or mitigate any adverse effects on the church or its schools and colleges;
- To provide advice to the Synod about the risks facing Uniting Church schools and colleges, including their potential impact on the Synod;
- Ensure schools and colleges have effective procedures in place to achieve compliance with educational, legislative and community requirements
- Oversee the operational and financial performance of Uniting Church schools and colleges;
- Oversight and report to the SSC upon matters which may affect the reputation and culture of Uniting Church schools and colleges;
- To strengthen the profile and participation of the Uniting Church in appropriate educational and government forums and networks;
- To make recommendations to Synod with respect to appointments to school and college boards/councils and constitutions; and
- To provide relevant advice to the FIP Board in relation to school and college property matters.

## Priority Actions 2021-2022

- Liaise with the Project Plenty team in the development of a Synod-wide Strategic Plan
- In consultation with UCAQ schools, develop a UCAQ Schools Strategy
- Address and operationalise the By-Law roles defined in the 2017 revision with a focus on:
  - Compliance: Updating the current Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod Schools & Residential Colleges Commission Governance Manual to achieve compliance requirements
  - Performance: Collaboratively developing and populating an operational and performance profile for each Property Trust School
  - Advice: Providing a regular Briefing Paper to Synod Standing Committee
- Create strategic opportunities and directions for Uniting Church organisations in terms of the provision of resources, services and support by the Executive Officer.
- Establish biannual events and networking opportunities for UCA Board appointees, School and College Principals and Business Managers.
- Monitor the implementation of the RE Framework across schools.
- Maintain rigorous recruitment, selection and appointment processes for vacancies on affiliated Boards and Councils.
- Review and approve resources, policy and governance documents to support the work of UCA Boards, Councils and Executive teams.





### Executive Officer:

- Grow the capacity of School and College Boards through individual Board member education and training and Chair engagement.
- Maintain rigorous recruitment, selection and appointment processes on affiliated Boards and Councils.
- Strengthen relationships and engagement with School and College Board Chairs and Principals.
- Ensure consistent implementation of a Risk Management Framework across the portfolio including ongoing compliance with NSSAB and appropriate Government Authorities.
- Roll out a Reporting Framework for Property Trust Schools.
- Develop tangible links with the Chaplaincy Commission in terms of the placement, support and review of school chaplains.
- Carry out any other activities aligned to the By-Laws as directed by the Commission.

## Resourcing

### Workforce

The Commission comprises: General Secretary (or her appointee), an Executive Officer, Chairperson, six members and up to two co-opted members.

Short term task groups to assist the Commission on specific issues.

### Financial Sustainability

Allocations from Uniting Church budget, sponsorship and School and Residential College contributions.

Construct budgets and necessary compliance reports for internal and external bodies.

### Governance

Align policy and practices with the requirements of the UCA By-laws set out for the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission.

### Professional Development

Ensure all Commission members have the necessary professional and theological skills to fulfil their roles and duties.

Signed

---

Noela Lister  
**Chairperson**

8.2.21

