



Uniting Church in Australia
Northern Synod

Position Description for Northern Synod General Secretary

(Approved at meeting of Synod Standing Committee on Saturday 23rd September 2017)

MINISTRY CONTEXT

The Northern Synod geographically covers the Northern Territory, the Kimberley region of Western Australia and the APY Lands of South Australia. As part of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Northern Synod is the Council of the Church responsible for the general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service in the region.

The Northern Synod has two presbyteries. The Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC) is both a presbytery and a Regional Council of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). It covers the same area as the Synod and has oversight and responsibility for all Indigenous congregations. The Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia (PPNA) also covers the same area as the Synod and has oversight and responsibilities for the non-Indigenous congregations.

As part of the Uniting Church in Australia the mission of the Northern Synod is to proclaim, promote and live out the reign of God revealed in Jesus Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit, transforming people and communities in which God calls us to worship, witness and service.

The Synod exercises pastoral, administrative and discipline responsibilities in relation to the presbyteries within its bounds. In particular, it promotes and encourages the mission of the church, assisting congregations and presbyteries within its bounds in their faithful participation in the mission of God.

The Northern Synod also has responsibilities in relation to Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS), Nungalinga College, Somerville Community Services, Coordinate (CSIS), and St Phillips College in Alice Springs.

The Synod seeks to honour the Church's commitment to a united Australia which respects this land and values Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, language and law, seeking to provide justice and equity for all.

MINISTRY PURPOSE – Ministry Values, Strategic Directions and Missional initiatives

The *General Secretary* works with the Moderator in offering Leadership to the Synod. The Moderator gives general and pastoral leadership to Ministers and people within the bounds of the Synod (as outlined in Reg 3.6.3.2) whilst the *General Secretary* is the executive officer of the Synod, with executive leadership, pastoral and advisory roles (as outlined in Reg 3.6.3.4)

As ex-officio member and resource person for the Synod Standing Committee and the Synod in session, a participant at the Assembly Standing Committee, a member of the Assembly and the national meetings of General Secretaries; the *General Secretary* provides guidance, context and strategic leadership so that all members of the Church are able to fulfil their roles and calling. In the context of the Northern Synod, the *General Secretary* is also an ex-officio member of the Finance and Property Committee, Northern Synod Property Trust, the CBD Plaza Operations Committee, Pastoral Relations and Placements Committee, NRCC and PPNA. The *General Secretary* is also a contact person for ARCCS in Queensland and Juniper Uniting Care West.

In this time of change, as the Church embraces the values outlined in the Vision and Mission Statements (Appendix A), the *General Secretary* will offer visionary leadership, and be pro-active in looking strategically (over the horizon) for new and emerging ministries.

The *General Secretary* will, with an intentional focus on collaboration and strengthening partnerships, accountability and transparency, lead a team of senior Synod staff delivering administrative services and resources that support the Synod's values and strategic directions. Further the *General Secretary* will manage Synod office staff, oversee budget management, and projects identified by Synod committees.

This critical and strategic role serves to ensure the mission of the Northern Synod, to transform people and communities which God calls to worship, witness and service, are nurtured and resourced.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Coordinate the Synods strategic directions and missional initiatives

1. Provide executive leadership to the Church by resourcing and encouraging theological reflection and strategic thinking about the life and direction of the Church.
2. Develop and implement a process to review the Northern Synod's Strategic Plan
3. Develop medium and long term plans to ensure the Synod is effectively resourced to implement strategic directions and missional initiatives.
4. In collaboration with the other councils: Presbyteries; Church Councils; and Congregations, initiate change management processes and practices that enables active participation by all members of the Church.

Work in Collaboration with the Moderator

1. Support the Moderator to develop strong relationships across the life and witness of the Church, modelling theological reflection and strategic thinking.
2. Assist the Moderator where necessary to represent the Church ecumenically and in public contexts.
3. Ensure that administrative support is provided for the Moderator.
4. Resource the Moderator in respect to UCA's Regulations, by-laws, decision making processes, and general business to ensure good ordering and conduct of its committees and councils.
5. Provide pastoral support to the Moderator as needed.

Develop respectful, strong, collaborative and effective communication

1. Actively and respectfully listen to the diversity of understandings and perspectives in the Synod.
2. Share information in clear and interesting ways to ensure all members of the Synod receive information and are able to participate in discussion.
3. Encourage the use of plain English in all Synod papers, reports and communications.
4. Mentor those reporting to the Synod to support and align their work towards strategic and missional outcomes.
5. Provide space and time for transparent, inclusive and effective decision making.

Leadership and Oversight of the Synod Activities

1. Work within the policies and procedures of the Uniting Church in Australia and the provisions of Workplace Health and Safety legislation.
2. Exercise operational oversight and executive leadership of the Synod office staff and all those responsible and accountable for its activity.
3. Appoint staff within the Synod support services, (unless directed otherwise by the Synod Standing Committee) to ensure high quality services, performance, review and supervision.
4. Be responsible for maintaining accurate records for all ministry agents of the Church, as well as the activities of its councils and committees.

5. In consultation with the Moderator, ensure appropriate disciplinary procedures are established, documented, and maintained.
6. As an ex-officio member or active member of the governing body of agencies and schools (listed in Appendix D), the General Secretary will provide a whole of Church perspective to these bodies, encouraging partnerships and active interest by the Synod in their ministry and missional activities.

Management and Accountability

1. Ensure Synod funds and other resources are used to support the strategic directions and missional priorities of the Synod.
2. Resource the provision of accessible financial accountability and reporting.
3. Manage the budget of the Northern Synod and work with the Synod Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and the Synod Property Officer to ensure there is focus on viability, efficiency, effectiveness, and management of risk.
4. Report to the Synod Standing Committee and the Synod in session any matters which will enable the members of the Synod, its committees, and other councils of the Church within the Synod, to be equipped for their roles.
5. Encourage all members of the Synod to have a working understanding of the Church's foundational documents, including the Basis of Union; the Preamble to the UCA Constitution; UCA Regulations; Code of Ethics for Ministerial Practice; Lay Leaders Code of Conduct.

Special requirements

The successful applicant will be;

- an active and committed member of the Uniting Church in Australia, with the commitment to comply with the UCA's Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice;
- able to articulate a sense of God's call to the role of General Secretary
- provide a satisfactory National Criminal History Check;
- committed to keeping children safe, and a current Working with Children's Check is required;
- willing to work with remote Indigenous people and communities;
- willing to travel between the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia - most of these visits will also require the General Secretary to be away over night as the distances are great;
- willing to travel interstate to participate in Assembly Standing Committee, General Secretaries meetings, and other meetings/gatherings relevant to the role of the General Secretary;
- eligible to hold a current Northern Territory (or other state of Australia) driver's licence;
- willing to commit to not taking annual leave immediately prior to or during a Synod meetings or Assembly meetings;
- able to exercise flexibility of work hours - generally this means availability to engage with various Church entities over weekend days or evenings.

KEY SELECTION CRITERIA

Call, Qualifications & Education

- Personal faith in Jesus Christ and a sense of call to the office and work of the General Secretary.
- Active membership of a congregation in the Uniting Church in Australia.
- Tertiary qualifications relevant to the position - in areas such as theology/missiology, Indigenous knowledge, management, business administration, human resources, accounting/financial management, leadership and/or related fields at graduate level.

Skills and Abilities

- A thorough working knowledge of the Church and the polity of the Church, including the Basis of Union, Constitution & Regulations;
- Maintaining an active membership of a congregation,
- An ability to reflect on issues theologically within the broad theological framework of the Basis of Union of the UCA.
- Demonstrated ability to lead organizations through change and growth processes with the use of a listening and consultative leadership style.
- Proven capacity to develop effective working relationships and to engage in collaborative processes for decision making, and problem solving with a broad range of stakeholders, some of whom have competing interests.
- Demonstrated capacity to think strategically and provide strategic leadership
- When working with agencies and other councils of the Church, can identify issues in common and build mutually beneficial partnerships.
- Demonstrated capacity to engage, influence and motivate individuals and groups in a culturally diverse context.
- Excellent interpersonal communication skills - capable of making rational, sound and tough decisions based on good consultation and evidence.
- A demonstrated high level of written communication skills.
- Proven skill set in managing and coordinating financial and human resources to achieve positive operational outcomes.

Personal Competencies and Experience

- Commitment to working with remote Indigenous people.
- Experience in leading and managing multifaceted organisations where influence and respect are key leadership attribute.
- Experience in corporate Governance and HR with recent experience in board membership.
- Highly organised with a strong work ethic.
- Ability to make decisions that reflect organisational values.
- Ability to stay calm and perform to a high level under pressure.
- Honesty, loyalty, initiative, maturity, flexibility, and common sense.

Mission Statement

As part of the Uniting Church in Australia the mission of the Northern Synod is to proclaim, promote and live out the reign of God revealed in Jesus Christ under the direction of the Holy Spirit, transforming people and communities in which God calls us to worship, witness and serve.

Vision Statement

To achieve our mission, we commit to following Jesus, living together and going forward together in the love of Christ.

Our Values

We hold these values in common:

1. We respect the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds from which we come.
2. We recognise the importance and value the scriptures being translated in the languages of the people in our Synod.
3. We listen to and seek to understand the diverse perspectives on the Good News of Jesus Christ and its meaning for us.
4. We recognise that all lands within the bounds of the Synod were traditionally owned by indigenous people.
5. As Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, we live together in a Covenant relationship.
6. Any person in contact with any aspect of our worship, witness and service is entitled to feel and to be physically and emotionally safe.
7. We relate to other churches in our communities and neighbouring regions as partners in the worship, witness and service of Christ and seek ways to work together with them.
8. Although people of other faiths differ in their understanding of God's work in human history, we respect their beliefs and seek to be in dialogue with them as to our understandings of God and God's work in the world.
9. We recognize that all people have God-given gifts and we encourage them to use them.

Our Beliefs

God is the creator of all things seen and unseen.

God is revealed in some way through all cultures.

God is fully and uniquely revealed in the person of Jesus the Christ.

Jesus came that all people might have life in all its fullness.

All people have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

The Holy Spirit is God's agent of creation, conviction of sin and renewal into new life.

No person is excluded from the love of God.

The church is the community of all who look to Jesus Christ for meaning and purpose in their lives.

The church is called (see Basis of Union) to witness to and work towards the transformation of all people into the likeness of Christ.

God has equally created and called women and men to participate fully in the life of the church and the community according to the gifts and abilities that God gives to each.

Terms and Conditions

As authorised by the 2017 Synod, the Synod Standing Committee has endorsed the recommendations of the Joint Nominating Committee to appoint _____ to the position of General Secretary of the Northern Synod.

The conditions of employment are as follows;

Commencement Date: _____ (provision to negotiate transition).

Term of Appointment: initially for a period of 5 years, reviewed during the fourth year, with the possibility of extension up to five years.

Stipend: The specified rate for a minister in the Northern Synod plus 20%

Annual Leave: six (6) Weeks

Long Service Leave: in accordance with legislative provisions or Synod By-Laws

Sick Leave: 10 days per annum - cumulative

Study Leave: be negotiation with the Synod Standing Committee

Superannuation: in accordance with the superannuation scheme of choice

Motor Vehicle: provision of a motor vehicle plus running costs

Housing: house provided as per the standard of the Northern Synod By-Laws or a housing allowance, as per the Synod determination will be paid if a house is not required

Telephone: mobile phone supplied, fixed phone in residence with private STD and international calls reimbursed by the incumbent

Relocation and Repatriation Costs:

These costs are shared 50/50 with the Synod from which the minister came and the Synod of the minister's future placement.

The remuneration package is based on the ministerial stipend and allowances, which are normally reviewed annually. If the General Secretary is not a Minister, an appropriate remuneration package & associated costs will be negotiated by the Synod.

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA REGULATIONS

SECRETARY OF SYNOD

APPOINTMENT OF THE SECRETARY OF SYNOD

3.6.3.3 (a) The Synod shall appoint a Secretary of the Synod.

(b) The initial term of office shall normally be five years. The appointment shall be reviewed during the initial appointment and during any extension of appointment. Any extension may be for a period of up to five years.

(c) Should a vacancy occur in the office of Secretary between ordinary meetings of the Synod, the Standing Committee of the Synod shall make an appointment to fill the vacancy until the next ordinary meeting of the Synod.

DUTIES OF SECRETARY

3.6.3.4 The Secretary of the Synod shall have a pastoral and advisory role and be responsible for:

(a) preparing all material for presentation in the agenda of the Synod, attending to the proper conduct of the business of the Synod and keeping copies of reports and other documents furnished to the Synod by the committees, councils and boards;

(b) ensuring the accuracy and arranging for the distribution of the minutes of the Synod;

(c) maintaining complete and accurate records as are required by the Synod;

(d) attending to other correspondence of the Synod, including to convey the resolutions of the Synod as may be required to those concerned;

(e) acting as the liaison officer of the Synod with the Presbyteries and other bodies within the bounds;

(f) providing all necessary reports and information as may be required by the Assembly;

(g) acting as secretary of the Standing Committee;

(h) discharging such other duties as the Synod may prescribe.

Relationship Agreements with Agencies and Schools

Aboriginal Resource and Development Services (ARDS) in Darwin and Nhulunbuy

- ARDS is an Indigenous Corporation
- NRCC nominates the Indigenous member directors for the ARDS Board
- The General Secretary (GS) (or the GS nominee) is the Uniting Church Corporate Member on the ARDS Board
- The role of the GS is to advocate links between the Northern Synod and ARDS to the benefit of both organisations
- There is no formal oversight by the Northern Synod, however the GS would be on the review team for the annual review of the ARDS CEO

Nungalinya College in Darwin

- Nungalinya is an Indigenous Corporation
- NRCC nominates the Indigenous member directors for the College Board
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- The Corporate Member of the board is appointed by the Synod
- The relevant Corporate Member is The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NT). The GS is usually the Uniting Church Corporate Member on the College Board.
- The Corporate Member is a full voting member of the Board which meets 4 times a year for $\frac{1}{2}$ to a full day. Corporate Members can appoint a proxy to attend meetings or to vote for them.
- The Corporate Member is a member of the Executive Committee which meets monthly to review any matters between Director's Meetings and to provide advice to the Principal.

Somerville Community Services in Darwin

- Somerville is incorporated under the NT Associations Act
- The Synod has two positions of the Board
- The GS is not currently a member of the Board (it is perceived that at this time there is no need, no specific issues requiring the GS skills)

Coordinate (Coordinating Support for Indigenous Scriptures CSIS)

- Coordinate is not separately incorporated, it is an activity of the Synod and funded by the Synod and outside donations
- GS is the Chair of the Coordinate Reference Committee as the work of CSIS is considered a high priority for the Synod
- CSIS has important partnership relationships with Ausil, Bible Society, MAF and Nungalinya and a part time paid Resource Worker.

St Phillips College in Alice Springs

- St Philip's is an entity of the Northern Synod, not separately incorporated,
- it operates under its own constitution as approved by the Synod
- GS is a member of the St Philips Board
- Northern Synod appoints 5 people to the board (the Board appoints a further 5 people)
- St Philips has requested its legal status be changed to be a company limited by guarantee