



# NORTHERN SYNOD NEWS

AUGUST 2024

## STATE MEMORIAL FOR REV DR GONDARRA OAM

A state memorial service will be held at Nungalinga College on Thursday 29th August 2024 beginning at 11:30am. The event will be held on the lawns with marquees, but also streamed into one of the classrooms. Nungalinga College has spiritual and historical significance for Yolŋu, and they are delighted with this. Rev Steve Orme will conduct the Memorial Service. All are welcome to attend.



## OUR NEW PRESIDENT - REV CHARISSA SULI

On 11th July 2024, Rev Charissa Suli was installed as the 17th President of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Born in Australia to Tongan immigrants she understands the importance of community. As the first person of colour to serve as President, and the youngest, Rev Charissa hopes to promote inclusivity within the church.

She understands working with migrant and Indigenous church communities can be both painful and joyful, but the result is an enriched church, and advocates listening to voices that might have been silent in the past, to inspire and encourage the church.

We look forward to seeing how God will grow the Uniting Church as Rev Charissa seeks to serve Christ in her role as President.



# THE 17TH ASSEMBLY MEETING



## Ross Coburn's work with the Northern Synod



Ross Coburn with General Secretary, Rev Janet Staines

Ross Coburn, Executive Officer, explains:

*"I was approached in May 2023 to assist with the rebuilding of the Northern Synod after Synod Standing Committee had determined that assistance was required and UCA Queensland had offered to provide such support. My role was to be on the ground and be the conduit between the two Synods. It was evident early that the team was lacking, and certainly looking for, guidance and leadership to assist them through some very difficult times. Cashflow was terrible, the accounts were in a mess with no apparent solution in site, there was poor communication between all areas of the Synod and certainly a lack of trust by some with the decision makers.*

*"We worked through it, got the people re-engaged, defined roles, identified areas of lack of*

*knowledge and set about to come up with a good structure and plan to return Northern Synod to a body that could concentrate on what was their core (Ministry and the faith) by removing the other barriers. The first 3 months flew (the period of my contract) but it was evident that more was required and I agreed to return post my leave to continue the task.*

*"Upon my return addition expert staffing was in place and I was asked to change focus and concentrate on removing the Synod's debt through the assessment of what was the best use of the property assets and to dispose of any excess assets. Fortunately, with the support of the Synod decision makers, supporting difficult decisions at times, we have been able to achieve this goal. By the end of September 2024, the Northern Synod will be debt free and working hard on operating within a balanced budget and positive cashflow.*

*"We have come a long way on this difficult-at-times journey, but I say with much confidence,*

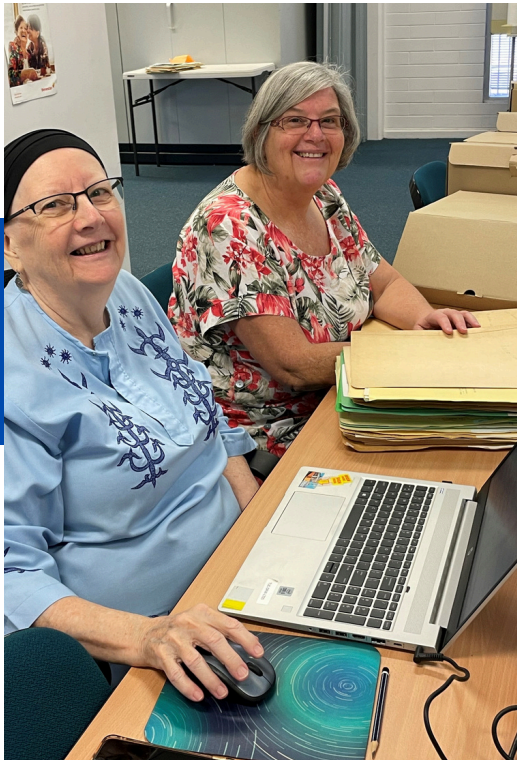
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THE NORTHERN SYNOD WOULD LIKE TO THANK ROSS FOR ALL HIS DILIGENCE AND COMMITMENT, ASSISTING US TO WORK THROUGH SOME CHALLENGING TIMES. AS HIS CONTRACT COMES TO AN END, WE WISH ROSS ALL THE BEST FOR THE FUTURE.

Continued...

*“the light at the end of the tunnel is certainly shining brighter. The Northern Synod is working better as one, with much trust restored, and communication much clearer and forthcoming. Leadership is in place, and plans are still being worked through, to ensure the correct operating model is in place that provides the expertise to deliver reliable reports, cashflow management and a return to a balanced or positive budget in 2025.”*

*Ross*



## Judy and Christine take up the challenge

This week we welcome Christine Gordon, the Assembly Archivist, who has travelled to Darwin to help Judy Orme with sorting our archives. Together they are working on moving our records to the NT Archives Centre. We appreciate Christine sharing her skills with us and supporting Judy in this important, but somewhat overwhelming task.

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## *Join us for devotions*

We share fortnightly devotions at Uniting House every second Tuesday at 10am. We would love you to come and join us.

**UPCOMING DATES: 20TH AUGUST,  
3RD SEPTEMBER, 17TH SEPTEMBER**





# SAVE THE DATE!

## SERVICE OF INSTALLATION

FOR REV DR MICHELLE COOK  
AS MODERATOR OF THE NORTHERN  
SYNOD

THURSDAY 3RD APRIL 2025



## FULL SYNOD GATHERING

FRIDAY 4TH APRIL - SUNDAY 6TH APRIL 2025

*I want you woven into a tapestry of love*



COLOSSIANS 2:2-3 THE MESSAGE

## PPNA PRESBYTERY MEETING AND RETREAT

The Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia is meeting 4th – 5th October and holding a Ministers and Pastors Retreat 7th – 9th October in Darwin. Sunday 6th is 'off' so Ministers/Pastors/Participants can either lead their regular service, or visit a local congregation, or just take a breath.

Unfortunately, John Squires and Elizabeth Raine are no longer able to make it up North to lead our Living With the Scriptures sessions and we are working to create a suitable and worthwhile alternative. We will keep you updated.

*Lauren Merritt*  
PPNA Chairperson



Did you know that Nungalinya College has a shop where you can buy artworks by past and present students, with 50% of the proceeds going to the artist? They sell greeting cards, linoprints and screen-printed cloth bags, as well as prints of original paintings.

You can find some beautiful gifts with a Christian story while supporting the artists and the college. They are happy to post purchases around Australia and even internationally. Check out their online shop [here](#).

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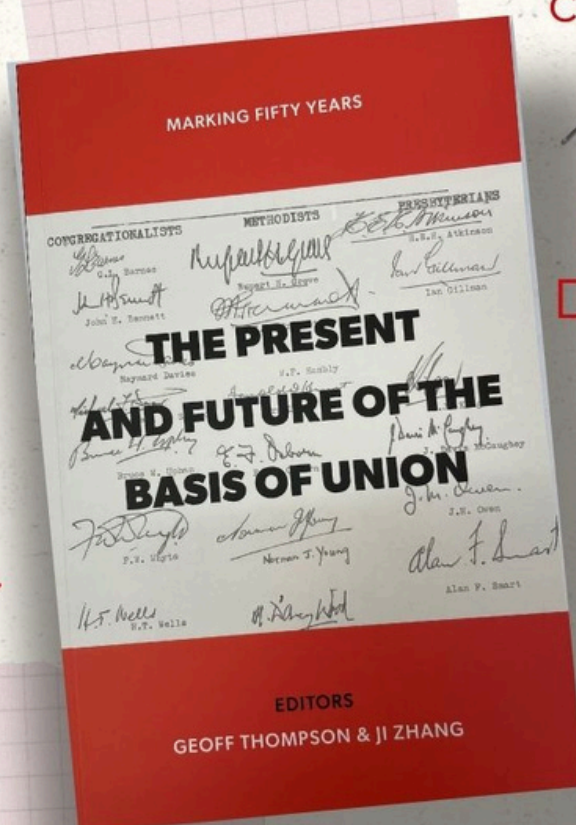


with  
contributions  
from

Rev Maratja  
Dhamarrandji

&

Rev Dr  
Michelle  
Cook



**THE ESSAYS IN THE BOOK REFLECT THE EXTRAORDINARY  
CHANGES IN CHURCH AND SOCIETY OVER THE FIFTY  
YEAR PERIOD AND HOW THE BASIS ITSELF MUST BE  
CONSIDERED AND INTERPRETED IN WAYS THAT REFLECT  
THE EXPERIENCES OF BELONGING WITHIN A  
CONTEMPORARY COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS.**

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