

**National Church Life
Survey Coming Soon**

The *Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020* task group has looked carefully at data available from churches who participated in the 2006 National Church Life Survey.

While the data is useful, and gives interesting insights into our identity, we are convinced that updating the data to reflect our strengths, and concerns as they stand in 2009 will be vitally important as we plan toward the future.

The task group has engaged NCLS to conduct a city-wide local church survey of Uniting Church congregations during September and October.

Each congregation will be asked to complete the survey (taking about 20 minutes) to help us clearly understand who we are, as we begin to describe who we might become.

We invite your participation in the survey process, as a vital tool in helping us understand our nature, and our calling.

Time of Listening Outcomes

Thank you to the nearly 100 Uniting Church members who participated in twelve *Time of Listening* gatherings across Hobart in late July and early August.

It was an exciting fortnight for the Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 task force members as they had the opportunity to meet so many, and listen to stories of hope, hear concerns for our wider community, and share dreams for the Uniting Church in greater Hobart.

This month's Uniting Alive Update brings the key themes from the *Time of Listening*.



Our vision for the Uniting Church in greater Hobart in 2020 includes:

1. Diverse but collaborating congregations and Uniting Church agencies forming a well-informed network across greater Hobart
2. Christian communities of shared interests, set in different cultural contexts, with diverse purpose, worship styles and gatherings. These groups are resourced and led by ministry teams of lay and ordained people with multiple skills.
3. Emphasis on faith exploration and growth in small group fellowships, supported by ordained ministry but also expressing ministry of all believers
4. Partnerships of common purpose on social justice and social welfare
5. Partnerships for redefinition of uses, and for modifications, of city properties based on Christian presence, celebration, hospitality and safety in the city centre recognizing a distinctive Uniting Church role in a multicultural and multi-faith society
6. Emphasis on multipurpose uses of buildings, multiple worship times and styles in 'outer' suburbs
7. Nurturing of fellowships, mission, etc in suburban growth areas, including possible partnering with other community groups
8. "Taking church to where people are": emphasizing the importance of chaplaincies in schools, hospitals, aged care facilities etc and the provision of appropriate 'quiet places' for chaplaincy work



Future Church

Seven key themes and areas of interest emerged during the *Time of Listening*.

These will be explored in more detail by the task group in their draft report:

- **Buildings:** *as both gift and burden. How do we use them more effectively?*
- **Incarnation & Innovation:** *flexibility and hospitality vitally important*
- **Service & Presence:** *particularly with aged and young people*
- **Leadership & Initiative:** *crucial to develop leaders and re-think the way ordained that ministers are used*
- **Flexibility & Mobility:** *being in the right place, at the right time, in appropriate ways, with available resources*
- **Spirituality:** *there is a hunger evident in the community, how do we participate in conversation?*
- **Communication & Inclusion:** *multicultural community, emerging technologies, understanding each other*

We value a distinctive UCA presence in Hobart which retains the characteristics of:

1. Acceptance, diversity, openness, inquiry in a pilgrim, journeying church
2. Engagement in social justice and social welfare, including environmental issues
3. Biblical and theological scholarship in contemporary context
4. Our heritage, including both our *Basis of Union* as an ongoing vision, and our buildings as gifts and assets to adapt to emerging opportunities

We are concerned about current characteristics and wish to improve:

1. Ineffective practice and limited opportunities to engage with young people in exploring the Christian story and experience
2. Insufficient mission from older established congregations to growth suburbs, including support for families
3. Lack of confidence in structures and environments for Christian faith expression and leadership in a secular, multicultural society
4. Loss of spiritual dimension in 'good works' (Uniting Care, Uniting Aged Care) in face of economic and regulatory constraints and distancing of congregations from Uniting Care and Uniting Aged Care establishments
5. Lack of diversity in worship times and character
6. Inappropriate buildings relative to changing behaviours, but a continuing need to explore and express faith and spirituality

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What Lies Ahead?

- **September 2009:** National Church Life Survey conduct research on behalf of Uniting Alive Task Group
- **October 2009:** Demographic study, 'purpose' conversations and analysis of data gathered during August, September and October
- **November 2009:** Draft report of the Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 Task Group delivered to Presbytery & greater Hobart congregations & agencies for feedback

UNITING ALiVe HoBaRT 2020

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Stop Press: All congregations and agencies in greater Hobart will shortly receive an invitation to unite in worship gather together on Sunday morning, 29th November, as part of the Uniting Alive: Hobart 2020 process. We will celebrate together the beginning of Advent, a season alive with anticipation, hope, and new beginnings! Please put this date in your diary now, further information soon .