

Strategic plan with a difference

Clare Boyd-Macrae

The Uniting Church has a strong commitment to councils, consultation and grass roots involvement. The latest strategic plan process fits right in with this tradition while also looking for a clear sense of identity and direction.

The method used is consultation through conversation, explains mission catalyst John Emmett who is facilitating the process over 18 months, to comply with the request at Synod '07 for a new strategic plan.

The process is called *On the way together – spirited conversations towards future directions*. A series of guided conversations in a booklet can be used by agencies, councils, congregations and other groups to look at our assets, look to the future and look at the values we hold in common.

General secretary Rev Rob Brown says, “Often our conversations about future directions have been framed in terms of corporate strategic planning. *On the Way Together* will provide direction but the process will use language and experiences that arise out of our identity as the Uniting Church.”

John Emmett points out that this is timely, as our whole nation is in a process of examining its identity, values and future.

“This is an invitation to pilgrimage,” he says, “as we take time to discern who we are and what we are called to,” and points out that the metaphor of pilgrimage is not only Biblical but is also central to the Basis of Union.

“Our recent restructuring gives us an opportunity for fresh answers and perspectives. Everyone is welcome to contribute to these conversations.

“Through this process we will gain a broad sense of where the church is headed, raise a sense of passion and energy about the sense of direction and gain a sense of wholeness and ownership through the system.”

“I am please to endorse and support this process of shared discernment,” says Rob Brown.

“As we move through the year, the breadth of the Church in Victoria and Tasmania will be given an opportunity to share stories of how the Uniting Church is at work in our various communities. We will then try to imagine the future that God is leading us into before shaping some possible directions that the various presbyteries, agencies, boards, commissions and congregations might choose to follow. In this way, we will be able to acknowledge the diversity of all these groups but still find common directions in which we believe God is leading us.”

For more information contact John Emmett on otwt@victas.uca.org.au or at (03) 9251 5404 or visit <http://victas.uca.org.au/onthewaytogether>