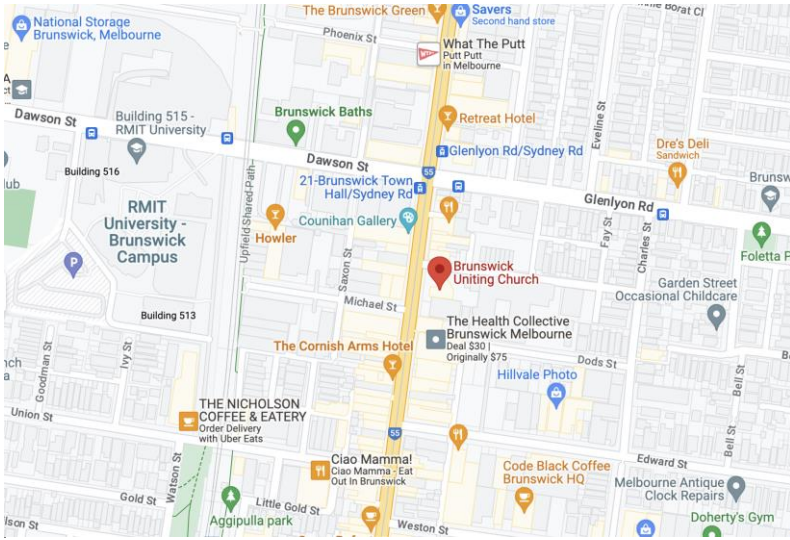




A Placement Profile

A1	Presbytery	Port Philip West Presbytery	
A2	Name of Placement	Brunswick	
A3	Placement city/suburb/town	Brunswick	
A4	Church/Office location(s)	212-214 Sydney Road, Brunswick, Vic 3056	
A5	Congregations and agencies associated with this placement	Brunswick	
A6	Ministry leadership being sought	Specific ministry role:	Minister of the Word
		Minister of the Word <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Deacon <input type="checkbox"/> Ministry of Pastor <input type="checkbox"/>
A7	Specific details	Additional placement <input type="checkbox"/>	Replacement placement <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
		Full Time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Part Time <input type="checkbox"/>	Time fraction <input type="text"/>
		Earliest Start Date:	1/01/2024
A8	Placement term	Undefined <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))
		Fixed Term <input type="checkbox"/>	Required for non-congregational placements (see Reg 2.7.3(b)) Years <input type="text"/>
A9	To be completed by Presbytery, with reasons given on page 8:		
	Is permission sought to advertise?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Is a Priority Placement recommended?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
A10	Contact Person	Bruce Missen	
A11	Email address	Bruce.missen@ppw.victas.uca.org.au	
A12	Website	Brunswick Uniting Church – An outward-looking Christian community in the heart of Melbourne's Inner North	
A13	Social Media	https://www.facebook.com/groups/122662799375	
A14	Google map link	https://www.google.com/maps/place/Brunswick+Uniting+Church/@-37.7726096,144.9588973	
A15	Area map (paste image)		



B The Congregation

B1 Tell a potential minister about this placement and yourselves, in your own words and pictures, in no more than one page. Share something of your congregation's values, beliefs and ways in which you live out and share the gospel message.

Include comment about why you need a new minister. How will this placement be exciting, challenging, and attractive to a minister? How can God be served in new ways here? What do you want the Minister to do with you and for you?

This is your chance to 'be creative' and catch the attention of someone who is thinking of sharing their call, their gifts, their life with you.

Brunswick Uniting Church is a Christ-centred, justice-oriented church, committed to living out God's mission in our local community. We are Trinitarian and catholic, both inhabiting our own tradition and cultivating an openness to learning from and walking with our siblings in other denominations and the wider world. We honour and are guided by the witness, testimony, and instruction of the Bible, while also remaining critically alert to the context, history, and intertextuality of scripture. We aim to follow Christ's example of self-giving love as the Holy Spirit empowers us to grow and serve.

Our community includes people with diverse commitments and identities in Christ. Many have high theological literacy, others are new to the Christian faith. Together, we value intellectually rich preaching that is biblical and informed, engaging with culture, history, and current events. We aim to be outward-looking, reflective of God's call to justice, and prophetic in our response to the urgent questions of inequality, climate and environmental protection, compassion and protection for asylum seekers, and social inclusion. We lament the historic harm that has been done in our name to Indigenous and LGBTQIA+ peoples, and commit ourselves to affirming, including, and empowering the rainbow of God's people.



Our worship balances a liturgy of written prayers, responses, and a traditional Order of Service, with aspects of 'low' church, such as lay leadership and participation in worship, communal singing, children's ministry, and art and creativity. We are a congregation rich in creative gifts, we often sing songs written by our members. We closely follow the liturgical calendar, with Lent, Advent, and the Season of Creation occupying a significant place in our worshipping life.



We understand ourselves to be a community of communities, at the heart of which is our Sunday morning worship, and around which is an overlapping network of other communities that interact with, journey with, and nurture each other. We run the Olive Way, a drop-in centre for the local community, offering food, friendship, and shelter. We support a thriving food co-op with significant buy-in from locals beyond our church community. Our members are engaged in a wide array of pastoral, fellowship, and activist activities, including a Climate Change Action group, an Arts Collective, Love Makes a Way, a Book Club, and Children Youth and Young Adult ministries.

The Minister in this placement will be part of a Ministry Team that includes our Children, Youth and Young Adults Minister and our Olive Way Pastor, and will sit at the centre of a busy, multifaceted, and interconnected congregation. Rather than direction, the placement calls for facilitation, empowerment, oversight, support, and coordination. The Minister will take an important role in leading worship in partnership with lay leaders, guiding the theological, devotional, and discipleship life of the congregation, and participating in the governance and pastoral oversight of the church.

B2 List and explain any particular priorities which the congregation has identified and which it will address in the next two to five years?

Major Commitments of our Current Strategic Plan:

- A. **Maintain Sunday morning worship as the “central branch” of our life together**, something that we invite and (as far as possible) enable everyone to participate in fully, and that should bear much “fruit”. To switch metaphors, it is a community that embraces or overlaps as many other BUC communities as possible, in the sense that all are invited in – and then sent out to engage with the world through other BUC communities and in our daily lives.
- B. **Continue the missional programs and activities (“branches”) that are underway**, so long as they continue to bear good “fruit” and other more pressing needs are not identified. These include the Olive Way, Student House, Children, Youth and Young Adults ministry, and Pastoral Care **programs** as well as planning/hosting/promoting/attending **activities & events** relating to Discipleship & (Christian) Education and to Justice & Mission.
- C. **Continue reflecting on the 5 Themes** of the Mission Planning Report (Deepening Relationships, Mission-shaped Church, Growth, Deepening Faith and Spirituality, Celebration).
- D. **Pilot, and then embed, cycles of goal-setting and reflection** (including both “celebration” and learning) in each of our major missional programs/groups.
- E. **Manage “growth” intentionally, focusing on sustainability and celebration of growth over raw numbers**. Allow new “shoots” to grow – and see how vital they are, what fruits they might bear – but ensure that current members don’t get burnt out by “too much to do”.
- F. **Maintain a sustainable pattern of income and expenditure** and continue to manage our properties (including any improvements as well as maintenance) in response to BUC’s missional priorities.

Other emerging goals include:

- Consolidating the Sunday-morning worship community following COVID and reassessing its relationship with a new online community that has grown from our livestreaming.
- Resourcing and refocusing on our Children, Youth and Young Adult ministries.
- Exploring the potential of some of our rental properties for redevelopment.
- Looking for opportunities to engage the wider community in spirituality and creativity.

B3 Does this placement relate to more than one congregation?

Yes No

If so, provide details on page 5.

B4 What ethnic and language groups are represented in the congregation? What proportion of the congregation does each represent?

The congregation is majority-White and predominantly English speakers. There is a significant group of Persian speakers in the congregation who are from mostly Iranian backgrounds, and there are other members with English as their second language who come from other countries.

B5 What languages are spoken in the life of your:

Congregation, by		Community, by	
Individuals	Predominantly English	Individuals	Predominantly English.
Groups	We have a group of Persian speakers in the congregation.	Groups	Around 30% of residents speak a language other than English at home, with Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Arabic and Spanish the most common of these.

B6 What languages are spoken by the congregation in worship?

Predominantly English, though songs are regularly sung in other languages.



B7 Describe any involvement your congregation has in covenanting activities.

We connect with First and Second peoples through our 'First Nations Focus' Committee which meets monthly. We have reached out to the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation to start conversations about a Memorandum of Agreement or Treaty.

We are actively supporting a Yes vote in the referendum on the Voice to Parliament, and are advocating for this in our local community, including by hanging banners on our building.

B8 List any UCA Schools and/or agencies (Uniting VicTas, Uniting AgeWell) with which the congregation has an existing relationship.

The Asylum Seeker Resource Centre is a Uniting Church agency which has exclusive use of a building at our complex, and uses our hall, toilets and kitchen.

The Brunswick Indonesian Uniting Church also uses our worship space on a weekly basis, and our minister regularly visits that congregation, particularly at important celebrations. Although this has not always been the case, at present there is little engagement between the two congregations; this could be an area for growth.



G Mission

G1 List three of your missional activities that your congregations does best?

Reconciliation and connection with God and self: Teaching, challenging and supporting all people, including those who feel excluded and face discrimination, people who have been hurt in other churches who may be grappling with shame or confusion.

Reconciliation and justice across society:

- Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples through respect, learning, and advocacy.
- Mission of hospitality in particular in the Olive Way and the Olive Arts.
- Mission of inclusion with LGBTQIA+ people, neurodivergent people, Asylum Seekers.

Reconciliation and justice in relationships with the Earth through climate action, weekly teaching, ecotheology, and practical action.

G2 What are three missional activities your congregation would like to develop?

We want to continue with these areas of reconciliation, and develop our understanding and action. The Children, Youth and Young Adults Minister will also support this work. Some potential areas of focus are:

- Connect with online participants
- More (practical) discipleship training
- Learning from contemplative traditions
- Responding to generational needs
- Visioning in a secular world.

G3 How has the congregation changed in the past two years?

Our online church presence has increased; we have continued broadcasting since COVID and a portion of the congregation maintains connection through this both on a weekly and occasional basis.

In person attendance has decreased. This includes reduced numbers of youth, children, and young families.

The age profile of the congregation overall has increased as members have grown older. We have also continued to become more culturally diverse.

G4 What changes and developments are anticipated in the next three to five years?

We think the trend lines will continue.



J The Community

J1 Describe the wider community in which your ministry is located.

BUC is located in the suburb of Brunswick (Bulleke-Bek) in the recently renamed City of Merri-bek (Woiwurrung language for 'rock country') on the land of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin nations.

The 2021 census reported 24,896 people live in Brunswick. It is multicultural with a strong Italian heritage (10% of the population reports Italian ancestry). Around 30% of residents speak a language other than English at home, with Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Arabic and Spanish the most common of these. Less than 1% of residents of Brunswick are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

The proportion of people with Bachelor or higher level of education is nearly twice the state and national average. Many residents are studying at tertiary institutions. An unusually high proportion of residents are employed in professional roles, with higher education and hospitals being the most common industries. Median weekly incomes are well above Victorian and Australian averages.

Nearly half the people living in Brunswick live in rented accommodation (well above state and national averages). The proportion of families formed of a couple without children is relatively high in Brunswick. 61% of residents of Brunswick report they have no religion.

J2 What makes this an enjoyable place to live?

Brunswick is a fabulous place to live. Sydney Road is the vibrant heart, with many family-owned restaurants and shops that bring food from every nation to our doorstep. Brunswick is well provided with childcare, primary and secondary schools (e.g., Sydney Road Community School, Brunswick North Primary, Brunswick South Primary, and Brunswick East Primary, Brunswick Secondary College), a campus of RMIT, many sporting clubs and facilities and abundant green space. The Merri and Moonee Ponds Creeks provide natural corridors to the east and west of Brunswick, and beautiful places to walk or cycle or play.

Brunswick is wonderfully connected with the CBD of Melbourne, by multiple trams and trains – you can even walk there if you like. Off-road shared paths along the train line, and creeks connect you to active travel and exploration routes around Melbourne.

People often consider Brunswick a bit gritty, a bit down at heel. It's common to see graffiti, dumped rubbish and long-closed shops. But this is actually part of its appeal for many residents. The messy parts sit alongside the creative spaces, the lively bars, the boutiques, and odd mix of family and hipster restaurants and cafes. It's a place where we can be ourselves rather than 'keep up appearances'; where everyone brings something to making the rich texture of Brunswick.

J3 What are the points of stress and pain in the wider community?

A 2022 electorate profile reported that there are 425 people without a home in Brunswick. About a quarter of these are young people. The level of homeless is relatively high: Brunswick rank 16th out of 88 Victorian electorates on homelessness.

While Brunswick is on average a relatively well-off area, many people are impacted by financial pressures relating to rental and property prices and increasing mortgage rates and costs of living.

These contrasts point to the inequities that can be experienced in Brunswick, with wealthy homeowners and public housing residents living on the same street. The Gini coefficient is an indicator of income equality – and estimated coefficient of 0.432 for Brunswick (ABS 2022) is consistent with high income disparity.

Mental health issues are a significant area of stress in our community. The 2021 census showed that 15% of Brunswick residents have a long-term mental health condition (including depression and anxiety). This is well above the Australian average of 8.8%.

There are high levels of environmental concern among Brunswick residents, as evidenced by the election of The Greens Party's Tim Read to represent the electorate in State Parliament. This concern brings with it a level of anxiety regarding the future of humanity and our planet.



J4 How closely does your congregation reflect the demographics of your local area?

Our congregational data does not allow a comprehensive comparison, but it's fair to say we are a bit older, whiter, more educated, and wealthier than the community of Brunswick.

Congregational data (Community Life Survey 2022) shows that 20% of the congregation are under 25 years of age, compared with 22% of the residents of Brunswick. 24.6% of the congregation are over 60 years of age, compared with 15.3% of the Brunswick population.

Merri-bek census data shows Australian-born residents 62.9% and overseas born residents 32.9% (with 4.2% not stated). This data is not recorded for BUC but anecdotally we probably have more Australian-born people in the congregation.

It's important to note that 52.3% of the BUC congregation live in Merri-bek postcodes, a foundational way that we differ from our local area.

J5 What community facilities are present in the local area?

There are so many community facilities in the local area. Some facilities and programs we are excited to work with include:

- Stewart Lodge, which provides accommodation and support for people who are unable to live independently, often because of mental capacities. Our congregation has annual events to connect with Stewart Lodge residents, and welcomes residents to our services and programs.
- Uniting Asylum Seekers Welcome Centre, which provides support for people seeking asylum in Melbourne. We have a strong partnership with the centre.
- Salvation Army Brunswick Community Program provides a range of support for people. Our Olive Way programs are coordinated with this program to extend the support available in Brunswick.

It is 3 kilometres to Pilgrim Theological College and The University of Melbourne.

Please also see section J2, which outlines local schools, entertainment, and public transport options, or just look up Brunswick on Google ([?](#)).