

7 November 2025

## A Placement Profile - Synod

- A1 Presbytery** Riverina
- A2 Name of Placement** UCA Wagga Pilgrim Congregation as a Presbytery placement
- A3 Placement city/suburb/town** Wagga Wagga NSW 2650
- A4 Church/Office location(s)** 10 Tanda Place, Glenfield Park
- A5 Congregations and agencies associated with this placement** UCA – Wagga Pilgrim Congregation
- A6 UCA schools and agencies associated with this placement** Nil
- A7 Ministry leadership being sought** Ordained  Ministry of Pastor   
Additional placement  Replacement placement   
*Not exit candidate unless prior work leadership experience*  
Full Time
- A8 Specific details** Earliest Start Date: ASAP  
Long Term  Up to 10 years (see Reg 2.7.3(a))
- A9 Placement term** 10 Years
- A10 To be completed by Presbytery, with reasons given on page 9:**
- Is a Priority Placement recommended?  YES
- A11 Website** <https://www.waggapilgrimunitingchurch.org.au>
- A12 Social Media** [Wagga Pilgrim Uniting Church | Wagga Wagga NSW | Facebook](#)
- A13 Google map link**

<https://maps.app.goo.gl/YEmexmxAuTSnUEHH6>

**A13 Area map**



## A Our Story

Three years ago, we took the courageous step of establishing *Wagga Pilgrim Congregation*, following the dissolution of the UCA Wagga Wagga Congregation and the formation of two congregations. The way has been challenging being post COVID, part of an under-resourced Presbytery, having limited access to a regionally shared Minister and then no Minister at all and having lost members to other churches over the time.



Nevertheless, our lay leaders have willingly and whole-heartedly taken up the responsibilities of worship leading, pastoral care, governance and financial management. Some people in our congregation have been faithful leaders over long periods. Others in our community are new to the Uniting Church and bring international perspectives, including families who've arrived as refugees from South Sudan and Burma and Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) scheme workers.

We strongly believe that God has a purpose for Pilgrim. Our vision is to build a "community of care". An essential ingredient for this community of care is vibrant ministry leadership. Our vision means we want to be welcoming and inclusive of others. Our current mission outreach includes worship services at 2 aged care facilities, craft groups, prayer group, supporting children/youth to attend Pulse camps and welcome packs distributed to a neighbouring new social housing facility.



We are learning that the Biblical mandate calls our church to be outward facing and committed to growing in relationship, discipleship, impact and number. We have the potential to do, and be, so much more. We want to shine Christ's light in areas where other churches don't venture. We need a Community Development Ministry Agent to 'theologically ground' our faith and our mission goals and, help us discern what this 'more' will be with a strong focus on the future.

Wagga Pilgrim worship services aim for inclusive, creative and intergenerational worship. A ministry agent would lead worship twice a month and resource/support our lay worship leaders. Our faithful congregation is willing to explore new ways of being the church.

Wagga Pilgrim is located at a modern, flexible and accessible facility which is across the road from a busy shopping centre and near community facilities. It has great potential to be a hive of activity with strong links to the surrounding community.

We seek a leader who, like us, values all generations and all cultures, and acts with justice, integrity, authenticity and creativity to build and nourish relationships within and outside the Pilgrim community. We are asking for an inspiring leader to both guide and walk beside us in this journey.



We want to be a hub, for the building to be used all week, not just on Sundays, for social interaction, perhaps for support services of some sort and for activities for the first third of life. By establishing relationships with local agencies and stakeholders, a Community Development Ministry Agent can help the congregation discern how and where the church can be most effective in living out the Gospel and building the community of care. We want to have an identity of caring so that people would notice if Pilgrim suddenly disappeared.

## B The Congregation

- B1** What ethnic and language groups are represented in the congregation?  
What proportion of the congregation does each represent?

Congregation largely comprises people of European origin. Also 2 families from South Sudan, 1 (occasionally) from Sudan, individuals more recently from PNG, China, Tonga.

There are also 5 Mizo speaking families, a minority group of Myanmar (which they call Burma) who worship at Pilgrim, mostly in a separate service in their own language or with the morning service with the rest of the congregation.

- B2** What languages are spoken and used in the life of your:

### By Congregation

**Individuals** English, Acholi, Dinka, Arabic, Motu, Mandarin, Mizo

**Groups** English, Mizo

### By Community

**Individuals**

**Groups** Many migrant and refugee communities including from India, China, Burma, Iraq, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Liberia, South Sudan, Pacific Islands

- B3** Describe any involvement your congregation has in covenanting activities.

- Pilgrim is not in a formal covenanting relationship with local Aboriginal people (Wiradjuri)
- Specific Aboriginal services take place during the year e.g. Aboriginal Sunday with Elders invited to speak
- Acknowledgement of Country is made at each English worship service and has been placed on the Pilgrim website.
- Reference to NAIDOC Week is made at July worship service and the prayer and/or video resource from Common Grace or UCA are played.
- Walking on Country tours have been supported with participation by individual members of congregation
- A reconciliation action plan is under development.

- B4** What roles do members of the congregation have in leadership of worship, study, action and prayer groups and missional activities?

- All these leadership roles are filled by lay members of the congregation, in the absence of a ministry agent. We have one accredited lay presider cum authorized lay preacher cum funeral celebrant
- Worship – a team of five lay members lead services according to their availability and capacity, worship leading at Pilgrim, Wagga Wagga Community Aged Care and Riverina Gums Retirement Village
- Prayer group – led by a lay member. Study and action groups may be initiated by members e.g. support for YES vote in referendum was endorsed by Church Council, and members made own decision whether to participate in marches etc.
- Missional activities are led by lay members.
- Pastoral visits to Wagga Base and Riverina Calvary Hospitals are carried out by one lay member from Pilgrim (coordinator) and two lay members from Wagga Wesley working together as a team.
- Court support by Pilgrim members in partnership with Wagga Wesley.
- Boomerang Bags with Pilgrim coordinator and Wagga Wesley members attending.

## C Mission

### C1 List three of your missional activities that your congregation most values?

- Boomerang Bags – monthly group gathering to cut and sew donated fabric into reusable shopping bags for distribution free of charge around the community e.g. at supermarkets. One member specializes in making quilts from this fabric, twelve of which have already been donated to Pinaroo Village.
- Pinaroo Village Welcome Packs – “starter” groceries and toiletries in boomerang bag donated to residents of this affordable rental housing project for seniors (88 units) and people with disabilities (15 units), operated by the Opening Doors Foundation and immediately neighbouring Pilgrim. Final of three stages of building development planned to take residents in Feb 2026.
- Pulse Kids Camp Out for children and Pulse Teenage Camps for young people - financial, transport and chaperoning assistance are provided. March 2025 attendance undertaken in association with Kippax UCA and similarly envisaged for Sept 2025.

### C2 What are three missional activities your congregation would like to develop?

- Explore and develop programs for first third of life as a priority area of Church Council and congregation in partnership with UCA and like-minded local community service providers.
- Extend outreach programs to Pinaroo Village residents in partnership with Opening Doors Foundation.
- Develop outreach program in partnership with Uniting Home Care Riverina to their clients

Pilgrim is already actively striving to meet all six of the Synod Future Directions priorities (please refer to attached successful Strategic Growth Fund Grant proposal for more detail).

### C3 How has the congregation changed in the past two years?

- Wagga Pilgrim started operating as a recognised congregation on 1 Jan 2023 following the dissolution of UCA Wagga Wagga Congregation and the formation of UCA Wagga Wesley and UCA Wagga Pilgrim at the recommendation of both Presbytery and Synod.
- Starting from scratch, the Church Council and congregation have set up structures and policies in compliance with UCA policies and procedures. It is continuing to expand the Pilgrim Congregational Handbook, and continues to adopt relevant policies in the areas of Compliance Governance and Finance.
- Numbers of members attending have decreased, with some moving to other denominations, others falling away for reasons unknown (despite follow-up) resulting in some loss of vitality.
- Intercultural ministry has changed as some PALM workers attending, numbers from African background fluctuating, particularly as their children grow into secondary school, and are reluctant to come to services.
- Leaders have become overstretched in taking up the responsibility of worship and governance without the support of a fulltime minister in congregational placement for the past 6 years.

### C4 What changes and developments are anticipated in the next three to five years?

- Employ a Community Development ministry agent (this profile), who will support and guide us in the implementation of our mission goals (Phase 1 Year 1 – please refer to 10 year plan attached which explains the phases in a one page diagram).
- Working with the new Minister/Pastor and relevant stakeholders, employ an additional 0.5 team member (during of Phase 2 Years 3-4)
- Strengthen our relationship with the Mizo Community and walk beside them (Phase 1 and ongoing).
- Establish Pilgrim as a hub for community outreach in partnership with other agencies in Wagga (Phase 3: Years 5-6-7).
- Establish partnerships with other UCA Missions and community service organisations, and/or a mentoring relationship with other congregations considering or already engaging in mission outreach (Phase 3).
- Develop the vacant land for future income stream to provide sustainability and financial funding for future staff. Developed land may also provide ministry opportunities. (Phase 4 Years 8-10)

## D The Community

**D1** Describe the wider community of Wagga Wagga in which your ministry is located.

- largest inland city in NSW population of approx. 70,000 and approaching 90,000 in a decade. Located on Murrumbidgee River, major services, manufacturing and retail centre for South West Slopes and Riverina, on Wiradjuri lands, surrounded by multiple rural townships and farming areas.
- Transport linked to Sydney and Melbourne by multiple daily flights, train services and the Hume Highway (latter 30 minutes away); linked to Adelaide via Sturt Highway. Public transport by bus within Wagga is adequate and is available seven days a week
- Multicultural Community 30% of residents in Wagga speak languages other than English at home; 17.1 % were born outside Australia (2021 Census). PALM workers from Pacific Islands, PNG and Timor-Leste live here on working visas.
- Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander communities: 6.6% of population identify with First Nations heritage compared to 3.4% in NSW.
- Employment, Business, Industries in health sector (Wagga Base and Riverina Calvary Hospitals), specialist medical practices, associated health care (disability, NDIS, youth, aged care services); Army and RAAF bases, Charles Sturt University, Teys Abattoir, educational facilities, public administration, and retail. Major building & redevelopment work planned for both defence bases, Inland Rail route from Melbourne to Brisbane via Wagga. Opportunities for family members of ministry agent to work on site or remotely.
- **Education** public and Catholic primary and secondary schools, three independent Christian private schools, schools for students with special needs, TAFE, Charles Sturt University, rural medical schools of Universities of NSW and Notre Dame.
- **Religion**: More people (3.4%) identify as Uniting Church in Wagga City Council area (2021 Census) than for the national average of 2.5%.

**D2** What makes this an enjoyable place to live?

- Quality of Life: ideal mix of city and country, parklands, Botanic Gardens, walking and cycle paths through bushland and along the river, easy to navigate around, peak hour lasts 10 minutes, making it a low stress place to live. Comprehensive health services, recreational activities, choice of quality educational institutions, restaurants from many international cuisines, service clubs, fresh air.
- Sporting Facilities, all ball sports, cycling, gyms, swimming, martial arts, kayaking and more.
- Cultural Facilities Riverina Conservatorium of Music, 3 live theatres, a cinema, National Art Glass collection, Wagga Wagga Art Gallery, dance studios, art & craft groups, choirs.

**D3** What community facilities are present in the local area?

- Closest to Pilgrim: South City Shopping Centre (Coles supermarket, retail stores), ALDI Supermarket, Glenrock Medical Practice, a Council Community Centre, sporting oval, Pinaroo Village, two Early Learning Centres, Riverina Gums Retirement Village. Uniting Home Care Riverina shares Pilgrim site
- Neighbouring suburbs: 3 primary schools, 1 high school, Tolland Community Centre, Tolland Renewal Project (social and affordable housing redevelopment) still in planning stages, housing construction not yet commenced, Ashmont Ngurra Community Hub, Ashmont Community Resource Centre.

**D4** What are the points of stress and pain in the wider community Wagga City Council area?

- Suburbs surrounding Glenfield Park (Tolland, Mt Austin and Ashmont) are most disadvantaged areas in Wagga (2021 Census) with significant number of population living in concentrated areas of social housing.
- Impoverished living conditions, long waiting lists for social housing and homelessness
- Intergenerational unemployment, families under stress, family violence
- Disengaged young people (early school leavers, no employment/educational prospects).
- Loneliness/isolation, mental illness and substance abuse
- Competition for childcare vacancies and affordable rental housing in most price ranges

**D5** How closely does your congregation reflect the demographics of your local area?

- Not closely - majority of 10am attendees are Caucasian, live 3 or more kms away, roughly half of adults aged over 70, significant number have professional backgrounds, no regular attendees identify as Indigenous.
- All adults in Mizo worshipping community were born overseas, most arriving in Australia as refugees, and 30% of their children were born in Australia.

**D6** If you rent or share church property, how do you engage with your tenants/partner?

- Manse (42 Pinaroo Dr Glenfield Park) commercially leased. Neighbourly relationship with current tenants
- Uniting Riverina (Aged Care service) has exclusive lease of part, shared use of most of remainder of site. No engagement by Uniting staff in congregational life. Professional and personal relationships with local staff congenial and co-operative. Financial contribution from rental significant to Pilgrim's functioning
- Presbytery office space provided gratis. Comfortable working relationship with financial officer.
- Occasional hires of facilities to community organisations e.g. Refugee Day activities, other Christian churches, CWA, individuals for family occasions. Hirers' word of mouth recommendations helpful.