COMMUNITY LIFE RETURN ANNUAL SURVEY

Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions 2024

Uniting Church in Australia
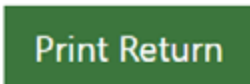SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

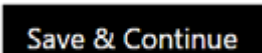# GENERAL INFORMATION

Printing

You can print using the green print box.

Print Return

This printed form includes your completed answers and is helpful after completing the return. You can print at any time, before completing, part way through, before submitting and after submitting.

Saving

Each section of the return needs to be saved.

To save a section **Save & Continue** click at the end of each section.

You can go back to any section, reopen and update.

Remember to click the "Save & Continue" button to save your changes.

Note: You can also have multiple sections open, however if you click "Save & Continue" it will only update that section and will close all other sections without saving

Survey Quick Navigation

From any section you will see the blue plus sign to the right side of the screen.
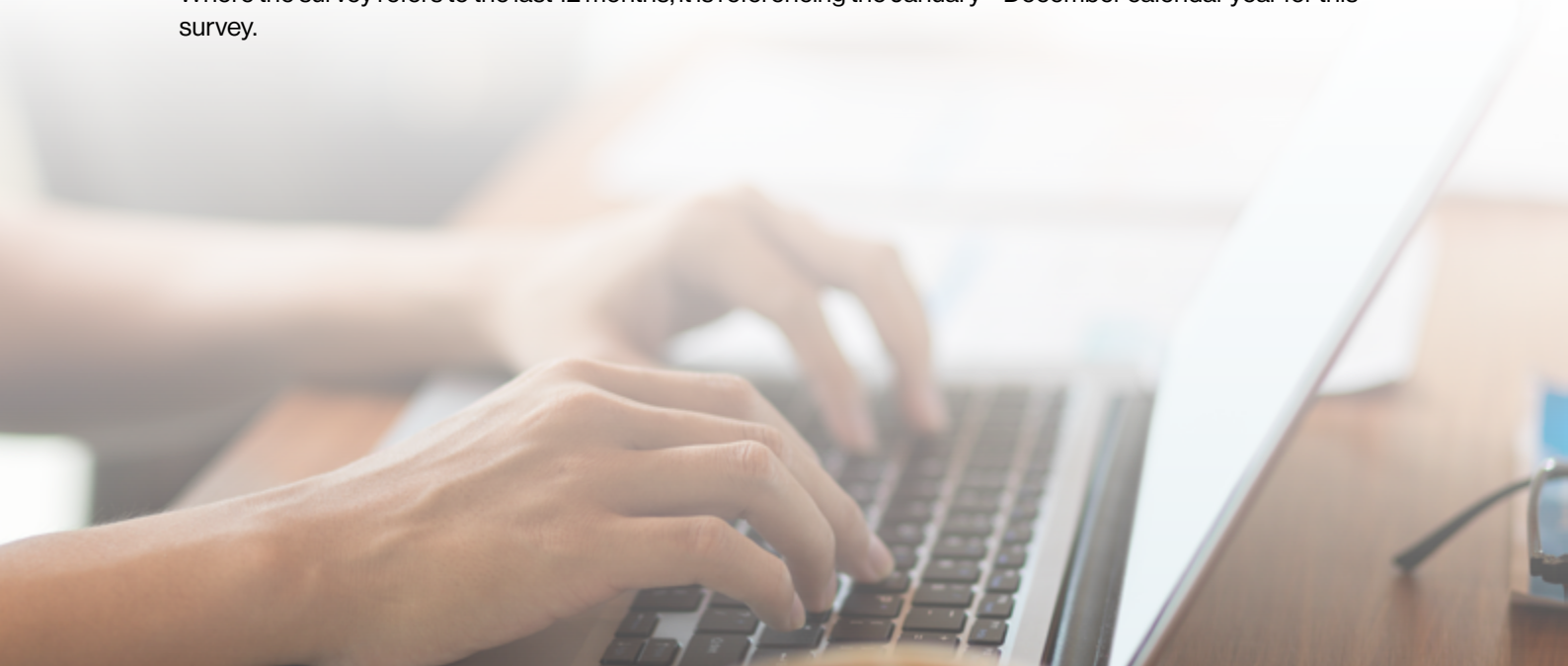
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By clicking on this a Quick Navigation screen will pop up allowing you to jump to another section of the survey.

Remember to Save & Continue your responses prior to moving to another section.

Time Period

Where the survey refers to the last 12 months, it is referencing the January – December calendar year for this survey.

SECTION A - ABOUT YOU

Please complete these introductory details as correct at the time of completing the survey. If there are changes for your congregation structure underway please note these are at the time of filling in the survey.

SECTION B – MINISTRY AND LEADERSHIP

Questions 1 – 2

Ministry - Question 1

If you have had a person in Placement during the January to December period and can answer yes to this question, you are required to create a person in placement.

Please add a line for each person by clicking

Create Person in Placement

How to I calculate Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) proportion?

Assume full time hours are 38 hours per week. If an employee is working 20 hours, then the FTE is 20 hours divided by 38 hours = 0.53. Enter 0.53 for FTE.

- For full-time people the Full-time equivalent equals 1.
- For part-time person enter as decimal i.e. .50 for 50%.
- If you do not have a Minister click "Create Person in Placement" and select "No Minister".

Ministry – Question 2

A ministry role would normally refer to people with a Position Description and commissioned in their role by the congregation.

- Please add line for type of ministry role by clicking

Create Ministry Role

- If you have both paid and volunteers for the same roles - Enter these twice.

Click the "Create" button and continue to complete for the paid people. Repeat for volunteer roles. This would also apply where the Period is different for the same types of roles.

How do I record retired ministers and chaplains?

Record these under question 2.

Where do I record lay preachers?

Record under question 2 – this can include paid or unpaid lay preachers.

SECTION C – MISSION

Questions 4 - 9

A Mission or Vision Statement

Mission and vision statements serve different purposes in an organization. Either of these is applicable in this section. Here are some commonly used explanations for Mission and Vision statements:

- Mission Statement: Describes what the organisation is doing currently, its objectives, and its approach to reaching those objectives.
- Vision Statement: Outlines the desired future state of the organisation, inspiring the members and showing them how success will look and feel.

Question 4

What is an expression of mission?

Mission Activity includes those activities that seek to express and bear witness to the love of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ in word and action with the world.

Please note the list provided is not exhaustive and there will be other expressions of mission that are not included. Please enter these as Other (Mission activities not included above) and provide details.

Types of Mission Activities might include:

- Advent/Easter workshops
- Art/Craft Groups
- Chaplaincy (please specify type)
- Children's programs
- Community Gardens
- Community Op shop
- Engagement with people with disabilities
- Evangelism
- Family camps
- Home country of origin support
- Indigenous engagement
- International engagement
- International Student engagement
- Kids Hope
- Mainly Music
- Meals (soup kitchens, food delivery etc.)
- Men's groups
- Migrant engagement
- Music Other (Community Choir, instrumental music etc.)
- Music Together
- Parenting programs
- Playgroups
- Prayer and meditation group
- Refugee assistance
- School programs (including Breakfasts)
- Senior programs (Include Aged Care home visitation and worship, Meals on wheels)
- Social Justice
- Social programs (Cafe, Coffee, and Chat groups)
- UCAF
- Volunteering Uniting
- Winter shelter program
- Women's groups
- Youth programs.
- Other (Mission activities not included above)

How do I record adhoc Mission activities?

To record adhoc activities select 'Other' under frequency and then add details in 'Comments box.

Note: Faith formation is any activity intended to grow people's belief and trust in God. Please record these at question 26.

Question 9a

What are the ACNC External Conduct Standards?

The ACNC External Conduct Standards are a set of standards that govern how a registered charity must manage its activities and resources outside Australia.

The standards require charities to take reasonable steps to ensure appropriate standards of behaviour, governance and oversight when undertaking activities or providing funding overseas.

For more information about these standards you can visit:

www.acnc.gov.au/for-charities/manage-your-charity/governance-hub/acnc-external-conduct-standards

SECTION D – GOVERNANCE AND MEMBERS

Questions 10 – 24

Question 15

Does your governing body identify itself as diverse

This question is about discerning whether your governing body consider that group as being diverse in age, gender and ethnicity. If yes is selected, a breakdown of those factors is requested. This question is trying to understand your level of diversity. This will vary depending on location and community.

Question 16

how do I record that a retired minister is the chair of church council?

This question is trying to understand if the ordained minister on stipend is also the chair of church council. For any other person acting as chair record as "church council member or elder".

Elders or leaders are those appointed by the congregation to assist the minister in spiritual oversight.

Congregation Membership

How do I record percentages?

Anywhere percentages are requested, report whole numbers only. Do not include % sign.

Questions 16 to 23

what is the definition of members?

Membership of the Uniting Church is defined in the UCA regulations as confirmed members, baptized members (not yet confirmed) and members in association.

However, there are others who attend who are active in the life of the congregation and these can be recorded as Adherents/Active participants.

Membership in the Uniting Church can be taken out in two ways:

- As a "confirmed member" (or just "member") or a "member-in-association".
- A "member" is a baptized person recognized by the Church Council as being within the pastoral responsibility of the church.
- A "member-in-association" is a person who participates in the life of a congregation of the church while maintaining membership in another congregation or denomination and is recognized as having such rights and responsibilities as may be prescribed.
- Both members and members-in-association can hold office within the Uniting Church, such as being an elder or a member of the church council.

Question 16

How many people are in each of these categories?

If baptism/confirmation is unknown, simply note as Adherents/Active participants.

Close estimates are acceptable for this question.

Question 17

Does your congregation identify itself as diverse (in age, gender and / or ethnicity)?

This question is about discerning whether your governing body considers that group as being diverse in age, gender and ethnicity. If yes is selected, a breakdown of those factors is requested. This question is trying to understand your level of diversity. This will vary depending on location and community.

Question 18

How many of the following took place in the last 12 months?

This question refers to the past calendar year, January to December.

Question 19

Number of your people who participate in activities run by your church?

We understand that data may not be kept on the number of people who participate in activities at all events. Rough estimates are adequate for this question.

Perhaps you will consider making a note of these numbers for future events to make this easier next year?

Question 21

Why are percentages required and not actual number?

We are only looking for an indication of the involvement of members in the activities of the church.

SECTION E – COMMUNITY WORSHIP AND FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Questions 25 – 27

Question 25

When and where were worship services held?

You are required to complete the following information for each service style:

- Day
- Time
- Style
- Delivery
- Average Attendance

- Frequency
- Language
- Participants
- Comments

How to decide worship style?

Please select the option that best fits your worship services. You can provide further details in the comments box.
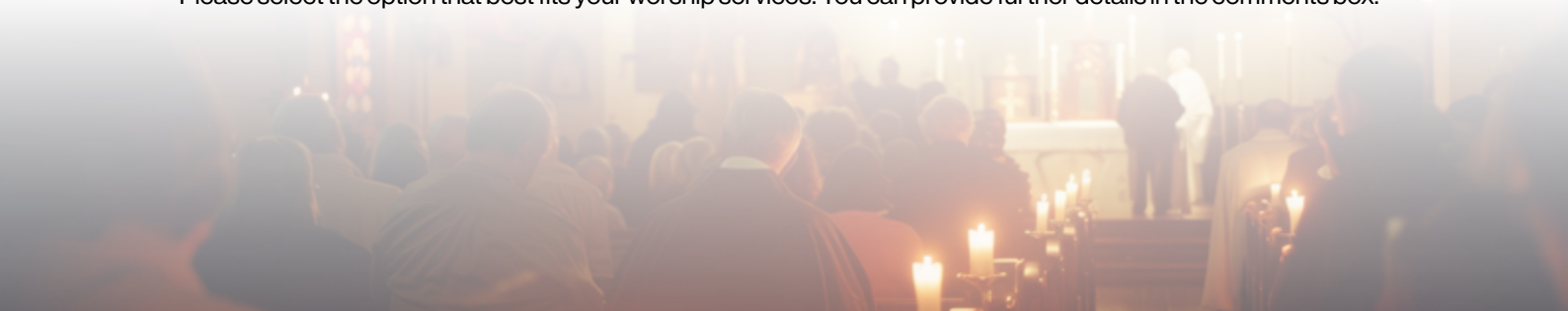
What does 'Delivery' mean?

The term 'Delivery' relates to the way in which participants engaged with the activity (Online / In Person / Hybrid). Activities that were available both online and in person should be recorded as Hybrid.

We recognise that not all events and activities will fit perfectly into these categories, so please select the one that is closest to being appropriate.

Details recorded in Question 4 may assist with some of the information for completing this question fully.

Question 26

What activities are faith formation and discipleship?

Faith formation is any activity intended to grow people's belief and trust in the story of Jesus.

Types of activities include:

1. Bible Study
2. Family small group
3. Lay Training
4. Prayer/Mediation
5. Sunday Schools
6. Women's study groups
7. Youth groups
8. Family camps
9. Family study groups
10. Men's study groups
11. Retreats
12. Theological Book Clubs
13. Young Adult groups
14. Other (If your activity is not listed above classify as other.)

SECTION F – RISK MANAGEMENT, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Questions 28 – 29

For further information and any questions about Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) these should be directed to the Synod office **(03) 9116 1400.**

SECTION G – SAFE CHURCH POLICIES

Questions 30 – 36

For additional information on UCA Safe Church Policies, visit the following website:
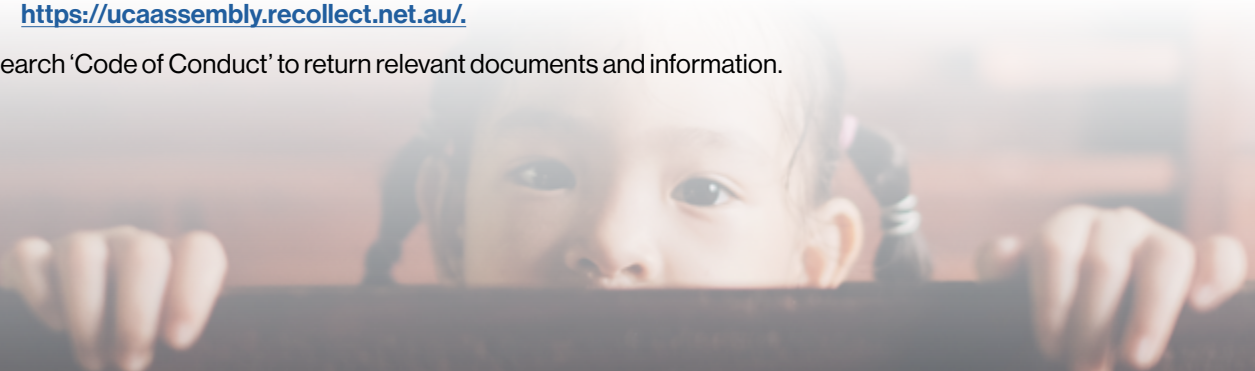
https://safechurch.ucavictas.org.au

Question 30

Is your Church Council/Congregation aware of and adhering to the UCA "Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders"?

For information about the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders, visit the following website:

https://ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/.

Search 'Code of Conduct' to return relevant documents and information.

Question 31

*Does your Church Council/Congregation maintain an up-to-date register of "appointed leaders" (as per Synod's definition) required to hold a Working with Children Check (Vic/NSW) or Working with Vulnerable People Registration (TAS)? ***

Any questions about this should be directed to the Synod office (03) 9116 1400.

Question 32

What does WWCC/R stand for?

Working with Children Check/Registration database. Any questions about this should be directed to the Synod office (03) 9116 1400.

Why do teachers with Police Checks still need a Working With Children Check?

The additional requirement is that the Uniting Church is advised if there is a reportable incident. The teacher's Police Check will only advise the Department of Education.

SECTION H – FEEDBACK

The information you have provided will better inform the Synod and Presbyteries on the wider life of the Church community. Your information is treated with respect and will not be shared with third parties outside of the Synod.

Prior to the release of the Community Life Return survey it is reviewed by a committee for amendments to better reflect the life of the church community. If you have any questions or would like to contribute to this process, please let your Presbytery know.

SECTION I – SUBMIT

Thank you for completing the Community Life return.

Please take a few moments to review the information you have entered. Once you are satisfied that all of the information is correct, please click

Submit Return

What to do if you've submitted the return and it's incorrect?

Once submitted it is not possible to correct the return. Please contact the Synod Office by emailing:

Returns@victas.uca.org.au