

Mission Conversations

Objectives of the Mission Conversations resources

'Mission Conversations' is the title of a collection of resources that encourage fruitful mission conversations across the Church. This objective seeks to support gathered communities to live out the Church's 'high calling in Jesus Christ' and to order life across the Church 'in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission'. Mission conversations are an integral part of the life of our gathered communities. They are also important to our presbyteries, institutions and Synod (both governance and operations) as they strive together to strengthen the Church's worship, witness and service.

The Mission Conversations series:

- **What are MISSION CONVERSATIONS? Six starting questions**
- **Background to MISSION CONVERSATIONS (the one you're reading now)**
- **Vital threads for MISSION CONVERSATIONS**
- **MISSION CONVERSATIONS and the Synod's Strategic Framework**
- **A resource toolbox for MISSION CONVERSATIONS**

Background to these resources

These resources were a consequence of discussions initiated by a group of presbytery and Synod ministry leaders who sought cooperative ways to resource and support gathered communities in their 'mission planning'. These group discussions broadened to consider the various ways we talk about mission in our gathered communities. The language of 'mission planning' was later replaced by the language of *Mission Conversations*. This change allowed for a definition of terms that is more invitational, intentional and generative.

Presbyteries commonly develop local resources, processes and facilitation support. While there is some sharing between presbyteries, there is also an appropriate diversity of practice which reflects the diversity of our contexts. However, there are riches to be gained in strengthening our shared learning.

Among other things, the group discussions agreed that there is need for:

- **definitions of the language and terms that we use when speaking about our participation in God's mission;**
- **an outline of the important elements to consider in our discussions;**
- **facilitators in every presbytery, and therefore the availability of training in facilitation; and**
- **a shared depository of helpful resources that can be readily accessed by all.**

Initial *Mission Conversations* resources address some of these concerns.

A partnership of inter-related councils

The *Mission Conversations* resources assume and rely upon an effective partnership between local gathered communities and their presbytery. The resources also assume that the Synod, through the work of the 'equipping Leadership for Mission' (eLM) unit, is an active supporter and partner in the missional relationship.

Presbyteries have the responsibility of oversight of the Church's life and mission in their regions. They are there to support gathered communities in mission conversations including assisting with facilitation and providing resources. The eLM unit is also chartered with responding to leadership and educational needs across the Synod that help facilitate and strengthen effective mission conversations.



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The Synod's Strategic Framework and Mission Conversations

The *Mission Conversations* resources sit in particular relationship with the Synod's Strategic Framework. The Synod's Framework is adopted to be 'a primary aid for spiritual discernment and focus for the Synod'². It helps establish an environment for focusing upon God's mission and discerning mission participation. The first Framework booklet states that: 'The Vision and Mission Principles seek to invite discussion, provoke questions and provide focus for discerning the renewing work of the Spirit'³.

Consequently, the Framework invites mission conversations by gathered communities, presbyteries and institutions across the Church. The Framework has been adopted as essential to the mission conversations of the Synod – both its governance and operations. While other frameworks and resources will also help enhance mission conversations, the Synod Framework is important because it articulates the intentional effort of the whole Synod to give focus and direction to the Church's participation in God's mission in our day.

It represents the collective effort of the whole Synod to guide our conversations.

Elements of the Strategic Framework are described in a series of booklets that include:

- ***Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles: Information and exercises to help focus on God's Mission*** (March 2017)
- ***Supporting information on the Statements of Intent*** (July 2017)
- ***Understanding the Strategic Priorities (2016-2022)*** (November 2017)
- ***Engaging the Areas of Focus: Informing a Whole of Church conversation*** (November 2017)

'These and other resources are available from the Synod's website at:

ucavictas.org.au/visionandmission/

Background to **MISSION CONVERSATIONS**



¹ Basis of Union – refer paragraphs 15(c) and 13

² Synod 2016 resolution 16.6.20 C

³ Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, *Introducing the Vision and Mission Principles: information and exercises to help focus on God's mission* (March 2017)

