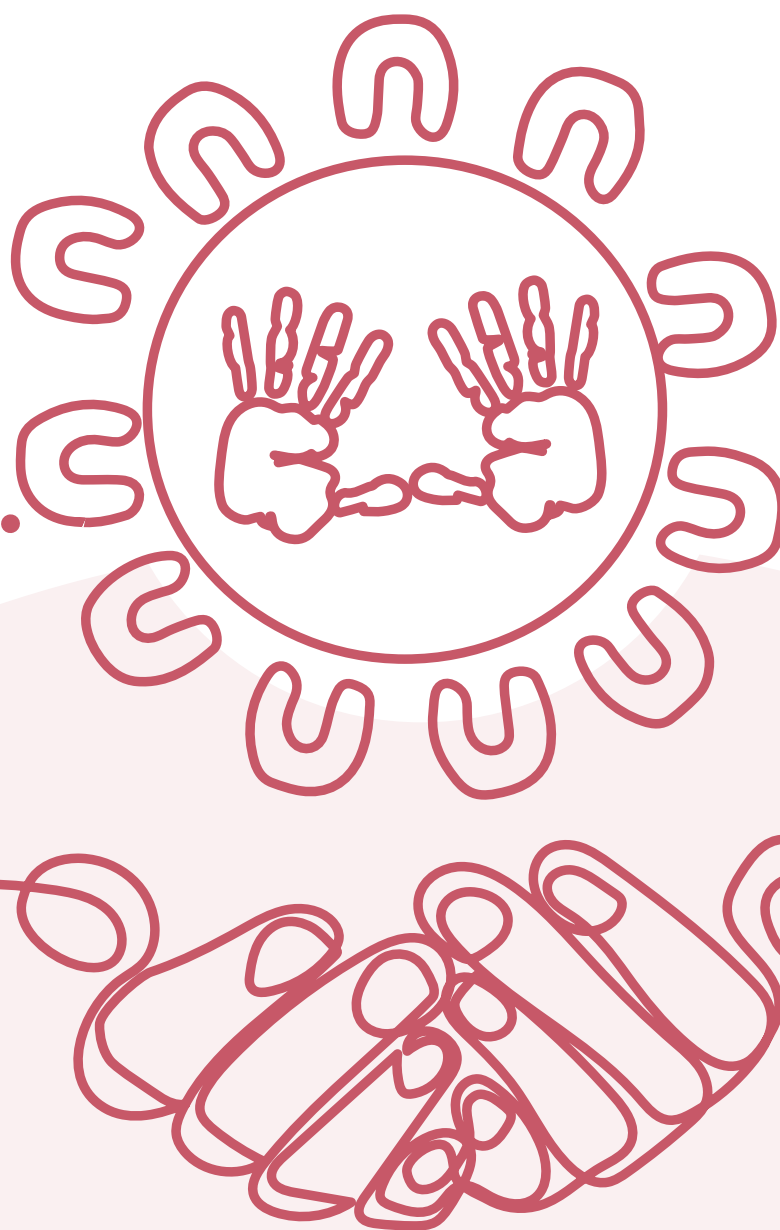


Local Walking Together

Action Plan Template



Background

There are several good theological reasons why we should seek to support First Peoples through building relationships and helping to address the disadvantage impacting Aboriginal families and communities.

We know we should not steal or murder, that we should love our neighbour, and that ultimately, we will be judged on how we have treated the least in our community. We also know that reconciliation requires acknowledgment, repentance, just reparations, and forgiveness. See for example:



Biblical References

- † Exodus 20:1-17 (*The Ten Commandments*)
- † Luke 10:25-37 (*The Good Samaritan*)
- † Matthew 25:31-46 (*The Sheep and Goats*)
- † Luke 19:1-10 (*Zaccheus the Tax Collector meets Jesus*)

The Uniting Church in Australia has also issued a number of public statements about its relationship with First Peoples, for example:

- » [1988 UCA Statement to the Nation](#)
- » [1994 Covenanting Statement](#)
- » [2009 Preamble to UCA Constitution](#)

The Synod of NSW and the ACT has endorsed the Walking Together Action Plan 2024-2027, encouraging members of the Synod to take positive actions in relation to First Peoples:

- » [Walking Together Action Plan 2024-2027](#)

This template is designed to assist Congregations and other groups in the Uniting Church to develop “local” versions of the Walking Together Action Plan.

How to Complete Your Local Walking Together Action Plan

You will need:



Computer or laptop



Internet/WiFi access



Printed copies of the Walking Together Action Plan for participants to fill in



Ability to **project the screen onto a larger screen** so people can see the template as it is being completed (*not necessary, but useful*).



About **45-90 minutes** to complete the document (*it may take longer if there are lots of ideas/discussion*)



How to Complete Your Local Walking Together Action Plan

What to do:

1. Gather your congregation and have somebody display the Local WTAP Template on a screen.
2. As a congregation, read through each of the suggested actions below, and add the actions you like to your Local Walking Together Action Plan.
3. Once you have gone through the list below, then have a discussion about any other ideas or actions you might like to add to your Local Walking Together Action Plan, and add those additional goals/actions that you agree upon.
4. Save an online copy for your reference.
5. Email the online copy to Nathan Tyson Head of First Peoples Strategy and Engagement on NathanT@nswact.uca.org.au

Who will help to bring this action plan to life?

Who are 2-3+ people who can form a group (or “Committee” if that language is helpful) who can oversight the life of the plan, help to provide regular updates to the Congregation/group on achievements, and ensure any challenges that may arise are appropriately raised, discussed and resolved?

Note: If the Congregation or group wishes to develop local projects or initiatives, then usual church processes and practices should be followed and risk management policies and procedures should be followed to ensure safety of people and good stewardship of resources.

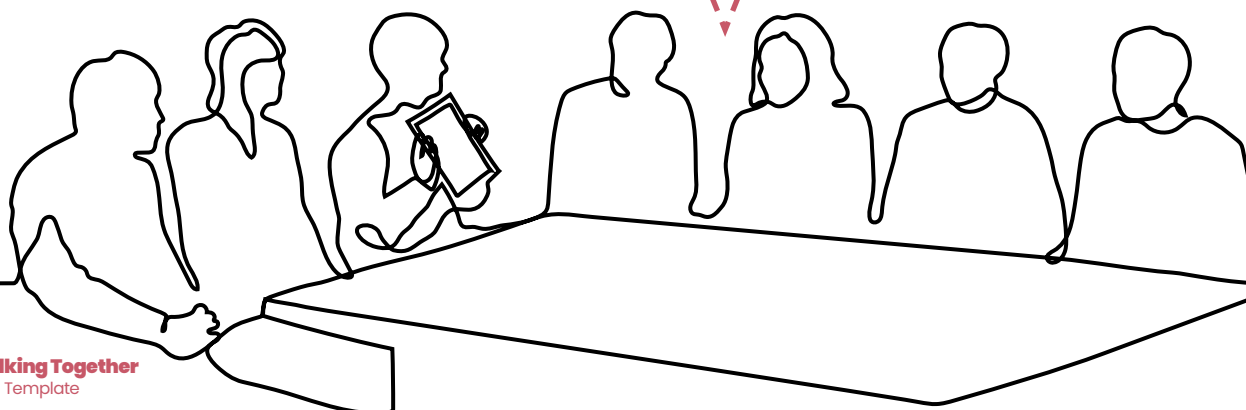
Remember, the actions or goals of your Local Walking Together Action Plan should be realistic and achievable. It is also ok to aspire to do things that may be challenging or may take more time than expected, or that eventually may need to be discontinued down the track if best intentions do not result in planned outcomes. Do not let fear get in the way of doing good!



Remember...

Your goals or actions should always be done with **respect to the local Aboriginal Community's right to self-determination.**

Any goals or actions that will directly impact the local Aboriginal community should involve genuine **consultation, collaboration and co-design.**



Select your actions/goals:

► Learning



What	Who	When
1. ☐ The congregation will identify the traditional custodians of the land on which their church sits.	First Last Name	00/00/24
2. ☐ Congregation members encouraged to read the <i>1988 UCA Statement to the Nation</i> .		
3. ☐ Congregation members encouraged to read the <i>1994 Covenanting Statement</i> .		
4. ☐ Congregation members encouraged to read the <i>2009 Preamble to UCA Constitution</i> .		
5. ☐ Congregation members will be encouraged to complete the Aboriginal Cultural Capability modules available via the Synod's online learning system.		
6. ☐ Congregation members will be encouraged to watch the <i>Bringing Them Home</i> video (<i>Allow 30 minutes</i>)		
7. ☐ Start a Book Club, reading books written by Aboriginal people.		
8. ☐ Host a movie night to watch movies made by Aboriginal producers/directors (eg. find via SBS/NITV).		
9. ☐ Invite Synod's Head of First Peoples Strategy and Engagement to speak with the congregation about engagement and building relationships with First Peoples.		

Learning Resources

- » **Whose Country am I on?** (aiatsis.gov.au/whose-country)
- » **1988 UCA Statement to the Nation** (ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/151)
- » **1994 Covenanting Statement** (uniting.church/the-covenanting-statement)
- » **2009 Preamble to UCA Constitution** (ucaassembly.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/137)
- » **Aboriginal Cultural Capability modules** (nswactuca.eventsair.com/mt-acct-lms/registration/Site/Register)
- » **Bringing Them Home video** (www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sl82VMuuKl0)
- » **Books written by Aboriginal people** (www.readings.com.au/collections/australian-first-nations-non-fiction-books#)



Select your actions/goals:

► Engagement



What	Who	When
10. ☐ Fly the Aboriginal Flag during National Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week.	First Last Name	00/00/24
11. ☐ Fly the Aboriginal Flag all year long!		
12. ☐ Read the Covenanting Statement of 1994 in a church service at least once per year (eg. Day of Mourning Service, NAIDOC Week service, or during National Reconciliation Week).		
13. ☐ Display a Covenanting Poster and/or Covenanting Banner in our Church.		
14. ☐ Do an Acknowledgement of Country at the start of all Church Services.		
15. ☐ Do an Acknowledgement of Country at all formal Church meetings.		
16. ☐ All members of Church Council will read the <i>Guide to Aboriginal Community Engagement and Building Trust Relationships</i> .		
17. ☐ Congregation members will be encouraged to read the <i>Guide to Aboriginal Community Engagement and Building Trust Relationships</i> on-line.		
18. ☐ A copy of the <i>Guide to Aboriginal Community Engagement and Building Trust Relationships</i> will be printed and made available for Congregation members to read.		

Engagement Resources

- » **Acknowledge This!** (www.acknowledgethis.com.au)
- » **Guide to Aboriginal Community Engagement and Building Trust Relationships** (<https://www.nswact.uca.org.au/media/jw3lp0ov/a-guide-for-aboriginal-community-engagement-final-091221.pdf>)



Select your actions/goals:

► Mission



What	Who	When
19. ☐ Congregation will invite members of the local Aboriginal Community to speak to the Congregation about issues important to the local Aboriginal community.	First Last Name	00/00/24
20. ☐ Congregation to seek advice from the local Aboriginal community leaders as to how the congregation might support the needs and aspirations of that community.		
21. ☐ Congregation to support advocacy for First Peoples: <i>Write the issue(s) that will be supported below:</i>		
1. 2. 3.		
22. ☐ Congregation will undertake fundraising to support good causes identified by the local Aboriginal community.		
23. ☐ Congregation will undertake fundraising to support the ministry of the UIAICC.		
24. ☐ Congregation will undertake fundraising to support the First Peoples Theological Study Scholarship		
25. ☐ Congregation will invite local Aboriginal Elders group to use the Church hall for meetings (<i>tables/chairs/drinks and snacks provided by the Church</i>).		

Mission Resources

- » **First Peoples Theological Study Scholarship**
www.utc.edu.au/media/1oedslxf/first-peoples-theological-study-scholarship-final.pdf



Select your actions/goals:

► Advocacy



What	Who	When
26. ☐ Keep up to date with First Peoples' advocacy campaigns being run by, or supported by, the Synod (via the First Nations Resources website, <i>Insights</i> Magazine, or the Synod's social media channels)	First Last Name	00/00/24
27. ☐ Support the Raise the Age Campaign		
28. ☐ Advocate for the full and effective implementation of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody.		
29. ☐ Advocate for and/or otherwise support programs and initiatives aimed at "closing the gap".		
30. ☐ Support advocacy for a local issue of importance to the local Aboriginal Community.		



Advocacy Resources

» Synod resources

First Nations Resources: (www.nswact.uca.org.au/resources/first-nations-resources)

Insights Magazine: (www.insights.uca.org.au)

Synod Facebook: (www.facebook.com/unitingchurchnswact)

Synod Instagram: (www.instagram.com/ucanswact)

» **Support the Raise the Age Campaign** (raisetheagensw.org.au)

Select your actions/goals:

► National Reconciliation Week

What	Who	When
31. ☐ Local National Reconciliation Week activities will be identified, and mentioned in the worship service "Announcements" in the weeks leading up to National Reconciliation Week.	First Last Name	00/00/24
32. ☐ Congregation will organise an event to celebrate National Reconciliation Week (eg. a morning tea with a guest speaker, a movie night, a fundraiser BBQ, etc).		

Select your actions/goals:

► NAIDOC Week (First week in July)

What	Who	When
33. ☐ Local NAIDOC Week activities will be identified and mentioned in the worship service "Announcements" in the weeks leading up to NAIDOC Week.	First Last Name	00/00/24
34. ☐ Church will display a NAIDOC Week Banner and/or poster (available via Synod website: www.nswact.uca.org.au)		

Resources

» **Reconciliation Australia**
(www.reconciliation.org.au)

» **NAIDOC**
(www.naidoc.org.au)



Other Initiatives

Have a discussion with your congregation – are there any other ways your congregation may be able to engage with, build relationships with, or otherwise support your local Aboriginal community? Think outside the box.

More writing space provided on page 11

What are the unique skills, expertise and resources that are available to your congregation? How might these things be used in positive ways to support your local Aboriginal Community (or Communities)?

For example, a lawyer in the congregation may be able to offer free legal advice, an accountant may be able to offer a local Aboriginal organisation a free annual financial audit (often required by funding bodies), or somebody may have expertise in writing funding submissions that could assist a local Aboriginal organisation to apply for program funding or similar.



Remember...

The best approach when offering assistance is always to “**under-promise and over-deliver**” – it is always better to exceed people’s expectations than to fail to meet them. Never make a promise that you aren’t 100% sure you can keep.

Congratulations!

Well done, you have completed your Local Walking Together Action Plan.

Next Steps:

1. Save



Please keep **both a printed copy and an online copy** of your local Walking Together Action Plan for your own reference.

2. Email



Please **email the saved online version** of your plan to Nathan Tyson, Head of First Peoples Strategy and Engagement on NathanT@nswact.uca.org.au. This is for the purpose of keeping a record of congregations that have local Walking Together Action Plans in place.

3. Approve publication

The Synod may publish a list of congregations who have developed a Local Walking Together Action Plan (to celebrate this achievement), but the details of your plan will not be shared or publicised by the Synod without the approval of your Church Council.

If you are happy for the Synod to publish details about your Local Walking Together Action Plan you can also tick this box: ☐



Notes



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Recognising | Respecting | Reconciling

The Uniting Church hopes for a nation that acknowledges the rights of Australia's First Peoples, respects the unceded sovereignty of our First Nations, and recognises the right of First Peoples to self-determination.

A key component of our justice work is to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians together and to support the self-determined aspirations of Aboriginal communities. We do this in collaboration with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

We also recognise the pain and damage caused to our country's First Peoples as a result of colonisation, racism and discrimination. In 1997 we made a formal apology to the Stolen Generation and participate each year in National Sorry Day.

We also acknowledge that there is still significant work to be done to address issues of socio-economic disparity, and to "close the gap". We will continue to advocate for Governments and Service providers to listen to the voices of Aboriginal communities, Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations, and Aboriginal subject matter experts, to ensure services and programs are culturally informed, genuinely co-designed, and effective.

Find out more here:

www.nswact.uca.org.au/resources/first-nations-resources

