



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia



Uniting College
for Leadership & Theology



UNIVERSITY
OF DIVINITY



Environmental
Action Group

Position Description and Person Specification

TITLE OF POSITION:	Project Officer (Research)
LOCATION:	Uniting College for Leadership and Theology
APPOINTED BY:	Synod of South Australia
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing through the Mission Activator
TYPE OF APPOINTMENT:	Fixed Term, 6 months, Part-Time 7.5 hours per week (0.2FTE)
INDUSTRIAL INSTRUMENT:	Award-Free, National Employment Standards (NES) of the Fair Work Act 2009

1. Summary of the broad purpose of the position in relation to the Church's goals

The late Rev Dr Brian Phillips was a founding member of the Uniting Church in SA Environmental Action Group ("EAG"). He championed the conviction that caring for the earth is a core responsibility of Christian faith.

To carry on Brian's vision, the EAG, working with Mission Resourcing and the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, seeks to create pathways for young people to pursue environmental study, activism and service, grounded in both science and faith.

This project is also in support of the Uniting Church Assembly's "Vision for a Just Australia", which calls on all Uniting Church people to work towards specific climate, environmental, and justice goals.

The purpose of the Project Officer (Research) is to research the attitudes of young people towards caring for the earth and the environment and report on their potential pathways to express their commitment to the environment as part of their Christian faith.

2. Reporting and working relationships

The Project Officer (Research) is responsible to the Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing, through the Mission Activator for day-to-day operations. The Project Officer (Research) will also report to a committee comprised of members of the EAG of the Uniting Church in South Australia, Mission Resourcing and the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology for support and guidance as the project progresses.

3. Statement of key outcomes and associated activities

- Consult with young people across our churches and local communities to identify the aspirations, concerns, and support needs for faith based environmental action, to inform participation and engagement initiatives.
- Identify, map and document the current environmental programs, projects educational opportunities, and faith-based initiatives within the Uniting Church and the broader community.
- Review, evaluate and report on the current environmental and faith-based activities identifying what is working, where challenges exist, and where further development is needed.
- Identify possible collaborative relationships between religious and environmental groups in SA that effectively engage young people.
- Assess how the Uniting Church can better support young people engaging in environmental action.
- Identify and recommend programs and experiences that will educate, inspire and equip young people for environmental action grounded in Christian faith.
- Other duties within the scope and responsibilities of the role as directed by the Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing and/or Mission Activator.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications

Essential

- Graduate degree in a relevant field related to research, environmental studies, community development, education or equivalent experience in a similar role.

Personal abilities, aptitudes, skills, experience

Essential

- Ability to engage and build relationships with diverse stakeholders, particularly young people.
- Ability to facilitate consultations, workshops, conversations, or community engagement activities to gather insights and inform outcomes.

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Project Officer (Research)

- Strong research, analytical, and reporting skills.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with people from diverse backgrounds.
- Strong organisational and time management skills, including the ability to manage competing priorities and work independently.
- Commitment to and understanding of the mission, values, and ethos of the Uniting Church and its engagement in social and environmental issues.

Desirable

- Commitment to creation care, and an understanding of environmental sustainability, climate action, or environmental stewardship.
- Knowledge of faith-based, environmental, youth, or community sectors.

Conditions

- Employment remuneration, terms and conditions as set by the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC) for the Uniting Church Synod of South Australia will apply, as outlined in the employment contract
- The successful applicant will be required to submit to the appropriate Department of Human Services screening and authority checks prior to commencement of employment. Current satisfactory clearances are required at all times during employment



Appendix 1

RESEARCH POSITION FOR BRIAN PHILLIPS LEGACY PROJECT CONTEXT

Background

The late Rev Dr Brian Phillips was an inspirational leader in the Uniting Church who recognised the looming threat of climate change at a time when powerful political and media forces in Australia fueled skepticism regarding climate change by suppressing reference to it and by denying its existence. Brian was a founding member of the Uniting Church Environmental Action Group (“EAG”) which was formed in 2014 to promote care for the earth as a core responsibility of all Christians, to lobby for truth in reporting on climate change and environmental matters, and to recognise the looming threat of climate change and its man-made causes.

Brian added postgraduate studies in ecology to his expertise in theology, ministry and spirituality, and practiced sustainable living and environmental activism. As a Board member of Uniting Communities, he was the inspiration for a program which enabled Uniting Communities to be internationally recognised for its achievements in emissions reduction.

To carry on the vision exemplified by Brian’s life the Environmental Action Group (EAG) of the Uniting Church in SA in collaboration with the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology wishes to establish a legacy fund which can be used to encourage and financially assist young people to pursue environmental study and activism and develop their passion and spiritual basis for environmental care

The project will be in two phases:

Phase 1

Via a part-time Project Officer (Research) position, conduct research into the aspirations of young people regarding their concerns for the earth and its future and how it may connect to their Christian faith. Then from this base of information put forward a list of specific opportunities which may be offered to young people to develop their knowledge and skills through experiences which expand their passion

for caring for the earth consistent with the values exemplified by Brian: i.e., concern for the environment, which is both science-based and motivated by their Christian faith.

Phase 2

Phase 2 of the project will utilize the information gleaned from Phase 1, establish a public fund to financially assist young people to engage in programs which will enable them to develop their passion, skills and leadership abilities for caring for the earth and addressing the needs of people most affected by climate change and environmental degradation.

Project Officer (Research) position objectives

1. Make contact with youth groups and individuals in churches and the wider society to identify their frustrations and dreams about what needs to be done to enable communities to work towards a more sustainable and just future.
2. Scope environmental projects currently in progress that inspire and engage young people, and investigate their problems, successes and visions which will help build a solid base for advising EAG about the implementation of Phase 2.
3. Identify education and faith development opportunities offered by faith based environmental groups.
4. Make use of the theological foundations for caring for nature and recognise the need to confront the powerful forces which continue to damage our environment.
5. Assist the EAG to utilise the research to establish a basis for launching a Trust Fund

Outputs Required from the research

1. Insights into how young people today regard the deteriorating state of the earth's environment, what they may aspire to do about it and how it may connect to their Christian faith.
2. A list of actionable options which would be attractive to young people whereby they may gain experiences which both educate and inspire them to care for the earth in ways which support or arise from their Christian faith, expand their understanding of how people are impacted by environmental and climate change both at home and abroad, provide them with opportunities to contribute to actions to mitigate damage being done and support their hope for a new and better future.

How the Project Officer (Research) position will operate

The position has been funded for 6 months, part-time 7.5 hours per week (0.2FTE), or by negotiation for 3 months, part-time 15 hours per week (0.4FTE) dependent on the availability of the successful applicant and business needs.

Some additional funding is provided for special needs such as travel and accommodation.

A progress report to the Glenburnie program is required after 6 months, by which time Phase 1 should be completed.

This research position will report to the Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing via the Mission Activator and be guided by a committee of the EAG, Mission Resourcing and the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. The findings and recommendations which the occupant will provide to the committee will contribute to a range of experiences which can be offered to young people applying to participate in the program.