



Presbytery Restructure Information Circular No. 2 for congregations, faith communities and ministers

Purpose of Circular No.2

This circular has been prepared to update members of the Uniting Church SA on the work of the Restructuring Task Group (RTG).

Circular No.1, was distributed by email to Uniting Church SA members on 12 February, 2019. The document provided a general overview on the background and history of Presbyteries and why the restructure is occurring. The restructure was a result of decisions made at the November 2018 Presbytery and Synod meeting. At that meeting, voting members agreed that the existing structure of one Synod and one Presbytery in South Australia (existing since 2006) be modified to allow for more than one Presbytery. The meeting further agreed to the following:

- A non-geographical Presbytery (NGP) would be created to operate by 1 July, 2019 and additional Presbytery(ies) would be formed
- Congregations would be given the opportunity to nominate which Presbytery they wish to be part of

A copy of Circular No. 1 is available [here](#).

Circular No. 2 provides more specific information about the steps undertaken to progress the restructure process by the Restructuring Task Group (RTG). The Non Geographic Presbytery (NGP) Task Group was also established at the November 2018 Presbytery and Synod meeting and are providing regular updates on the Presbytery restructure web page [here](#)).

Restructuring Task Group (RTG) Vision

The RTG has a vision to re-create multi Presbytery systems in a form that will move the Church forward, in a manner that is consistent with the aspirations documented in the Uniting Church Constitution.

To further paint the vision picture described above, the RTG believes that a well-functioning Presbytery will comprise the following characteristics (at least);

1. encouraging the interchange of ideas,
2. resourcing events within and across Presbyteries,
3. cross-congregational support
4. fellowship opportunities

5. leadership development
6. mission planning and action that is relevant to the congregational or faith community context
7. enhancing the quality of congregational life and witness and members' discipleship journeys
8. providing pastoral support
9. providing a support role in the placements process
10. supporting the implementation of innovative ideas and programs.

The RTG is working on how the regulations that govern the life of the church can be implemented in a new Presbytery structure in a way that enables the mission and ministry of congregations to flourish. The RTG is looking at a new way forward, not a return to the old Presbytery structure that some people experienced as getting bogged down in 'business' rather than sharing, connecting, and equipping one another for the life of worship, witness and service that is the main purpose of the church.

Some of the work of Presbyteries will remain delegated to Synod, for example, where privacy, and/or legal compliance are involved. Much of the pastoral work of oversight of ministers, and encouraging the life and witness of congregations will become the work of the Presbyteries.

Mission Networks

Consultations have been undertaken with Mission Networks, and the observation has been made that Mission Networks will most likely not continue in their current form in the new Presbytery structure. There will still be a place for networks that reach across Presbyteries or operate within Presbyteries. The RTG would like to hear from congregations as to what they would like to see continue from Mission Networks in the new Presbytery structure.

How many Presbyteries and when will they be formed?

On the 1 July, The Synod of South Australia will continue, and two Presbyteries will be formed:

1. A non-geographic Presbytery (as agreed at the November 2018 Presbytery & Synod meeting) – and a task group is currently working on setting up that Presbytery.
2. An interim Presbytery that will operate from July to November 2019. During that period, the RTG will work with congregations and faith communities in the interim Presbytery to explore and create further Presbyteries that meet the needs of these congregations. It is likely that there will be two geographic Presbyteries. We are excited about the possibilities that may arise during this period for where

God may be leading us in how we connect and relate to one another as Presbyteries.

At the November 2019 meeting of the Synod of SA, the interim Presbytery will be dissolved. As a result it is likely that there will be the NGP and two geographic Presbyteries.

What do you need to do?

1. Call a Congregational meeting to be held between now and the end of May to discuss and decide which Presbytery your congregation will join. At this point, there are two choices:
 1. The non –geographic Presbytery, or
 2. The interim Presbytery.

If you do not make a decision at this time, your congregation will become part of the interim Presbytery. Your decision may be revised later and your congregation or faith community may move from one Presbytery to another.

2. We recognise that you may feel you need more information at this time to make this decision. Some information nights are being held to provide more information about the NGP and to outline the possibilities of the interim Presbytery. The details for the sessions are:

North at Playford UC	South at Seeds UC	Skype
19th March @7:30-9:00pm	25th March @ 7:30-9:00pm	22nd March @10:00am
		28th March @7:30pm

RSVP for catering and Skype details to leadershipteam@3dnet.org.au

The RTG will be providing further opportunities for information sessions in early May. In the meantime, if you have any queries, please contact me at gensec@sa.uca.org.au or 08 8236 4232.

3. In April, a form will be sent out to your Congregation to indicate your decision at this time. We would like this form returned to the Secretariat by Friday 7 June 2019.

Some Key dates of the RTG and NGP Task Groups

Task	Deadline
The RTG and the NGP Task Groups to meet regularly to ensure consistency of approach with regulatory processes.	Ongoing
Form requesting decision about which Presbytery congregations will join to be sent out	8 April
Form with decision about which Presbytery congregations will join to be returned to Secretariat	7 June

Proposals prepared for the June Presbytery and Synod meeting which reflects progress to date on restructure implementation.	June
First meetings of NGP & interim Presbyteries	By 1 July
RTG works with congregations in interim Presbytery to develop future Presbyteries	July – October
Proposals prepared for the November Synod meeting to implement future structure of multiple Presbyteries.	November
Synod dissolves interim Presbytery and new Presbyteries established	14-16 November
First meetings of future Presbyteries	By 1 December

There is much work to be done to complete the work of the restructure. We appreciate your input and your prayers for the work of the RTG and the NGP.

If there are any issues covered in this circular that raise questions for you, please feel free to contact me at gensec@sa.uca.org.au or 08 8236 4232

Rev Rob Brown,
Interim General Secretary
13 March 2019