



The Uniting Church in Australia  
**Synod of South Australia**  
11-13 February 2021

## Training Aboriginal Christian Leaders (TACL)

### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Training Aboriginal Christian Leaders (TACL)* continues as the major inter-denominational Church body seeking to foster shared initiatives fulfilling our purpose - as expressed in the organisation's title. TACL meetings gather people of the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Salvation Army and Uniting churches, together with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and the Bible Society. It is pleasing that the Uniting Church more than fulfils its stated commitment to First Nations people with involvement in TACL, including Pastor Nelson Varcoe serving as TACL Project Officer, Rev Phil Hoffmann [TACL Secretary], the remarkably faithful Rev Gowan Armstrong, Rev Mark Kickett, UAICC State Development and Outreach Officer, Rev Dean Whittaker, UAICC Minister and Ian Dempster, State UAICC Resourcing Officer. Since her appointment in the role we have also been appreciative of the energy and contribution of Uniting Church Covenanting and International Missions Officer, Tarlee Leondaris.

TACL continues to manage four (4) separate investment accounts, including the former Smith of Dunesk (Church of Scotland) Trust fund. Annual interest income on these managed accounts is made available to support initiatives enabling training and leadership of Aboriginal people in Christian Ministry, including the (part-time; five hours/week) employment of Nelson Varcoe as TACL 'Project Officer'.

#### 1.1 2020 Activity

As for many organizations 2020 has proved a challenging year with the limitations imposed by Corona Virus safety. This has severely restricted our activities. However, a successful meeting in September gathered seven (7) members of the Management Team at Uniting College, and a further four (4) by Zoom. That 'dispersed' meeting agreed to hold a TACL Morning Tea during the delayed NAIDOC week (Friday November 13), to gather the wider TACL community of supporters and interested people. Together we acknowledged NAIDOC, TACL Chairperson Donald shared a little about TACL's ministry, and we heard songs from Pastor Nelson Varcoe's published a book of songs entitled "Gift of Music". Further, Rev Gowan described TACL's recent history of service and support.

At that meeting, TACL was delighted to have a number of new folk attend! These included people from the Lutheran Church, Aboriginal Berean Community Church, Catholic Church, Bible Society, Salvation Army, Seventh Day Adventists, Uniting Church, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, and Anglican Church. We were also pleased to have Yanyi Baker from the Northern Regional Council of Congress and Pastor Jack Harradine who ministers in Broken Hill with us too.

We continue to seek to support Aboriginal Christian leaders in prayer and in their continuing development as leaders.

During the past year TACL has also contributed funds for Lonny Bendessi and Pastor Don Hayward, for subject costs, at the Bible College SA. Since undertaking that course, Lonny has moved to Melbourne and is following steps to become a Pastor. With Don Hayward also participating in the (audited) course, there is a

hope to, in conjunction with the Aboriginal Berean Christian Church, develop a Course of Study, within the context of the Aboriginal Church.

## **1.2 2021 Hopes and Plans**

Following the November morning tea gathering, it is hoped to hold a December meeting and elect a new Management Team for 2021. We are currently seeking both a new Chairperson and Treasurer as Pastor Don Hayward of the Aboriginal Berean Church and Jeff Roberts from the Lutheran Church have each indicated their intention to step down from these duties of service.

We remain grateful of the wider Uniting Church's continued recognition and support of this significant ecumenical ministry.

**Phil Hoffmann**  
(TACL Secretary)  
November 2020