

Presbytery of Southern SA Report

This report contains an overview of the life and work of the Presbytery of Southern SA since our last report, presented in October 2024. The Presbytery currently comprises 51 congregations and faith communities, 40 Ministers of the Word and Deacons and 13 Ministry of Pastors, providing ministry and mission across the southern portion of South Australia. The Presbytery's primary role is to "stimulate and encourage the Congregations within the bounds, providing them with opportunities for counsel in the strengthening and assistance of one another and in their participation in wider aspects of the work of the Church." (Uniting Church in Australia Constitution, 26). The Presbytery leadership and structures aim to do this by strengthening connections with and between congregations, ministry agents, their communities and organisations. The Presbytery office is at Ascot Community Uniting Church, 24 Fifth Ave Ascot Park. We thank the Ascot congregation for their generous gift of hosting the Presbytery.

1. Presbytery Meetings and Workshops

Presbytery members value the opportunity to meet together, both for formal business and to learn from each other. Since the last Synod meeting we have met on six occasions in a variety of formats.

1.1 November 2024 Annual General Meeting

Along with the usual formalities of receiving various reports and presentations, this meeting elected Mr Bronte Wilson as Chairperson-Elect, to take office in November 2025. A proposal to fix a maximum term for PRC members was deferred pending a review of the PRC Rule. Those present also had the opportunity to join in discussions around gatekeepers, congregational vitality, superannuation and multicultural ministry.

1.2 February 2025 Workshop

A workshop session was held on the evening of Friday 28th February. We engaged with Rev Sunil (Sunny) Kadaparambil on the work of Frontier Services and the Oodnadatta worship centre, Rev Steph Tai on a snapshot of the ministry agent landscape in SA and Rev Andrew Robertson gave us a Safe Church update.

1.3 May 2025 Meeting

At the meeting held on Saturday 24th May, members were informed that the new Presbytery website was now live and retiring PRC members Beth Hancock and Anne Butler were thanked for their generous service. An update was given emphasising the importance of Safe Church and police checks. Beth Seaman and Craig Schultz were elected to the Presbytery Standing Committee. Jenny Hughes, Paul Goh and Scott Litchfield gave a practical resourcing session about Pentecost

Sunday and the future of the Church. It included time for small groups and a presentation on being a multicultural church.

1.4 November 2025 Annual General Meeting

The Annual Meeting was held on 1st November at The Corner Uniting Church. Dr Liz Boase gave significant input on loss and hope: naming the reality and moving into the future. This prompted considerable table group discussion and interaction with Liz.

Anna Wilson also gave an interesting presentation as Synod Disability Advocate, emphasising some of the less obvious disabilities and how churches can be a place of welcome.

Retiring members of PSC and PRC were thanked and members of the two committees were appointed until 31st August, pending the upcoming Presbytery Review.

1.5 April 2026 Workshop

The workshop held on 11th April centred on good governance in the church, with particular emphasis on Church Councils. Rev Sue Page and Rev Lawrie Linggood led sessions around the Healthy Church Council booklet prepared by Rev Sue Page and the sharing of issues, concerns and questions including expectations on Church Councils by the wider Church.

1.6 May 2026 Meeting

At the time of writing this report, the May meeting has not been held. At this meeting Rev Dr Rob McFarlane will be presenting his report and recommendations as a result of the Presbytery Review. More information will be provided at the Synod meeting.

2. Committees

The Presbytery is blessed to have hard working volunteers who sit on the various committees of the Presbytery, ably supported by Presbytery staff. Highlights of the work of the Presbytery Committees is detailed below.

2.1 Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC)

The Presbytery Standing Committee currently comprises Bronte Wilson (Chair), Jenny Esots (Secretary), Marian Floyd (Treasurer), Craig Schultz, Des White, Jeff Wright and Julie Clark. The Presbytery Minister resources the meeting. Since the last Synod meeting it has met in person on 16 occasions at Ascot Community Uniting Church and made several urgent decisions by email. Significant decisions of the Standing Committee relate to

- the establishment of the Pool Ministry Strategy
- the decision to close two congregations
- the proceeds of the sale of congregation properties
- the encouragement of new leaders by the means of leadership grants
- the acceptance of the early retirement of Rev Peter McDonald as Chair and the subsequent early installation of Bronte Wilson into the role
- the appointment of the new Presbytery Minister, Rev Lawrie Linggood

- the designation of strategic congregations, sites and localities in the Presbytery
- the conduct of a review of the Presbytery

On several occasions the PSC has invited Synod staff to discuss matters of joint interest.

2.1.1 Mission and Property Committee

The Mission and Property Committee is a sub-committee of PSC and currently comprises Lawrie Linggood, Scott Litchfield, Jenny Esots, Jeff Wright and Bronte Wilson. The main purpose of this committee is to support the work of the Presbytery Mission and Property Officer and bring recommendations to the PSC and PRC around supporting congregations in the mission and ministry.

2.1.2 Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is a sub-committee of the PSC and its main responsibilities are to develop the Presbytery budget and monitor expenditure during the year. It also makes recommendations to the PSC on financial management matters. The Committee currently comprises Marian Floyd (Treasurer), Jeff Wright and Bronte Wilson.

2.2 Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)

The Pastoral Relations Committee meets each month. An Executive also meets once a month to work through an Action List and in the preparation of an Agenda.

Rev Lawrie Linggood concluded as Chairperson of PRC in June 2025 and Rev Beth Seaman was appointed as Chairperson 0.4FTE as an Intentional Interim Minister from 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026. The IIM role included a responsibility to review the function of the PRC. In mid 2025 a decision of Standing Committee agreed to extend this to a review of the Presbytery of Southern SA by an external consultant and a report was presented to the May 2026 Presbytery Meeting.

In August 2025 the Pastoral Relations Committee included Rev Beth Seaman (Chair), Max Howland, Dave Williamson, John Hughes, Allan Barnes, Bronte Wilson, Lawrie Linggood, Jenny Esots and as a committee we welcomed Rev's Nola Gibbons, Gary Stuckey and Bob Hutchinson to serve to August 2026. The current committee represents decades of experience in the life of the Uniting Church and each person brings their expertise, gifts and wisdom to the work of the committee.

The PRC Chairperson represents the Presbytery on the Synod Placements Committee, Safe Church Committee, the Synod Selection Panel and Formation Panels for Transition interviews.

The PRC has oversight of congregations and those in ministry placements and in the organisation of Joint Nominating Committees and Life and Witness Consultations. The PRC has also been significantly involved in congregations where there have been concerns about the exercise of the governance responsibilities of Church Councils and Congregations.

The PRC has encouraged congregations in their responsibilities to a Safe Church and those in ministry to attend annual Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice training.

The Presbytery anticipates offering a day for retired ministers in late 2026 as the number of retired ministers continues to increase. Rev John Hughes on behalf of the PRC reached out at both

Christmas 2025 and Easter 2026 to retired ministers in the Presbytery. The PRC recognises a continuing desire for pastoral care to retired ministers.

2.2.1 Leadership Development Committee

The Leadership Development Committee is a sub-committee of the PRC and in many areas of its responsibilities works in conjunction with Wimala Presbytery. It walks alongside people undertaking a Period of Discernment, processes Applications to Candidate, provides ongoing care for Candidates and support people in Ministry of Pastor roles.

2.2.2 Pool Ministry Committee

The Pool Ministry Committee works with congregations and ministry agents who are part of the Pool Ministry Project. Co-ordinating and making the best use of the available resources to meet the identified needs in the pool forms a major part of the role of the Pool Ministry Committee. It is also a forum for the sharing of ideas and prioritising the work of the ministry agents.

3. Presbytery People

The Presbytery is all about people and their connections with each other, their communities and God. The work of the Presbytery is performed by a range of people, both paid and volunteer. Without them nothing would happen.

3.1 A time of change

Since the last Synod meeting there have been several changes of people undertaking various roles in the Presbytery.

- Marian Floyd replaced Tim Lee as Treasurer
- Lawrie Linggood replaced Ian Dow as Presbytery Minister
- Beth Seaman replaced Lawrie Linggood as PRC Chair
- Bronte Wilson replaced Peter McDonald as Presbytery Chair

3.2 Elected Officers

3.2.1 Presbytery Chair

Mr Bronte Wilson

3.2.2 Presbytery Secretary

Mrs Jenny Esots

3.2.3 Presbytery Treasurer

Miss Marian Floyd

3.3 Presbytery Staff

The staff of the Presbytery form a strong link between the committees, individuals and congregations of the Presbytery.

3.3.1 Presbytery Minister

Lawrie Linggood has been in the role as Presbytery Minister since June 2025. Over this period, the focus has been getting to know congregations and congregational leaders. He has been steadily getting around to congregations and joining them in their worship, helping congregations work through various issues that they have been facing, particularly those who do not have a minister in placement. He has also met with people in ministry and offered them the support of the Presbytery in their ministry roles.

The Presbytery has been working on how we can develop leaders for the future. Five grants were given to lay people to help them develop further in ministry. We conducted seminars on Church Renewal with Rev Dr Tim Hein. In the Southeast we explored how we can be more effective in our worship and more recently a seminar for church councillors on Effective Church Councils and Leaders with Rev Sue Page. Looking at the whole area of good governance, more are planned in the future.

The Presbytery, with the help of Synod from the Disaster Relief Fund has worked with rural congregations to help our communities suffering from the impact of drought conditions holding “You are not alone” barbecues for farmers and those effected in rural areas to instil hope in people during the tough period.

3.3.2 Mission and Property Officer

The Mission and Property Officer is Bronte Wilson who works 2 days per week in this role, funded by a generous grant from UC Invest. The focus of the role is to instigate conversations with all congregations and faith communities within the life of the Presbytery to enable them to discern along with the Presbytery their future and the most appropriate way forward on their journey. The aim is to have all congregations and faith communities to be missionally vibrant, in safe buildings that are fit for purpose. The Presbytery has determined to close some congregations and joins in their grief at concluding, while celebrating their worship, witness and service over the years. Possibilities for engaging in new ministries and missional initiatives are being canvassed with others in the Presbytery.

4. Events and Celebrations

Since the last Synod meeting there have been many celebrations through worship and other events in the life of the Presbytery.

4.1 Inductions and Commissionings

Nola Gibbons	South-west Fleurieu
Anne Hewitt	Blackwood
Beth Seaman	PRC Chair
Lawrie Linggood	Presbytery Minister

Bronte Wilson	Presbytery Chair
Peter McDonald	Rosefield
Chelsea Size	Bridgewater
Darren Lovell	Pool Ministry
Scott Cadman	Seacliff
Emelia Haskey	Unley
Vicki Aitken	Pilgrim
Craig Schultz	Brighton
Sonia Armani	Pool Ministry
Trevor Phillips	IIM Lower Murray

4.2 Conclusions of Placement

Casey Lau	Yilki
Anne Butler	Newland & Seaford
Dieter Engler	Mitcham Village
Lawrie Linggood	Colonel Light Gardens & PRC Chair
Peter McDonald	Presbytery Chair & Uniting Communities
Malcolm Rawlings	Brighton
Darren Lovell	Lower Murray
Craig Schultz	Adelaide West
Leanne Osborn	Glengowrie

4.3 Candidates

Susy Plein
Nina Luscombe
Max Kowalik

4.4 You are Not Alone Events

The drought over the last several years affecting many parts of rural South Australia (and beyond) prompted the Presbytery to work with a number of congregations to look towards holding events in rural communities to remind people that they are not alone and that there are people to talk to. They were not primarily evangelistic events but provided a space for conversation over a free barbeque, hosted by the congregation and financially supported by local businesses and the Synod Disaster Relief Fund.

4.5 Social Gatherings

For a number of years the Presbytery has hosted various social gatherings. We are currently considering the best ways for people in the Presbytery to engage with each other in supportive and meaningful ways.

5. Presbytery Review

In October 2025, the Presbytery Standing Committee agreed to engage Rev Dr Rob McFarlane, Presbytery Relations Minister with the NSW/ACT Synod to conduct a review into the operations, management, capacities, effectiveness and limitations of the Presbytery in carrying out its regulated functions and make recommendations as to how the Presbytery can work better to support congregations and ministry agents.

At the time of writing this report, a draft report has been received and will be discussed at the May Presbytery Meeting.

Bronte Wilson

Presbytery Chairperson

27 April 2026



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia