



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

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**To all Church Council secretaries within the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
cc. Presbytery Secretaries**

Dear Church Council,

Donations or Work Overseas

I am writing to remind you of important information regarding international projects that may be supported by your congregation.

The overseas activities and donations that the Church provides are a key pillar of how we respond in compassion to human need and seek justice for all, with international neighbours and globally.

The Australian Government has requirements through the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) known as the ACNC External Conduct Standards (Standards) for charities that work or send donations of goods, funds or services overseas. All overseas congregation support is understood by the ACNC as the charitable work. Therefore, the following information is essential for any congregations that financially support any overseas project(s).

The attached document provides an explanation of the Four Standards and suggested ways of meeting each of these. These Standards apply to all Churches and not-for-profit Charities in Australia. Therefore, these standards apply to any international activity and donation services that UCA congregations undertake.

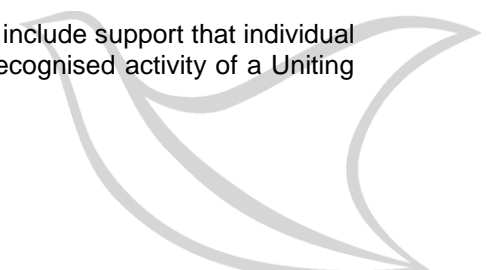
The Australian Government provides tax exemptions and concessions to the Uniting Church through the ACNC. To maintain these concessions, the Church has an obligation comply with the new standards to ensure that any international work we support as any part of the Church is able to identify and manage risks, handle money safely, and protect staff and beneficiaries.

More importantly, meeting these requirements relate to our understanding of just and effective stewardship. Meeting the Standards will help us to ensure that the good work of the Church reaches the intended recipients, is used for legitimate charitable purposes, and has as much positive impact within the intended communities as possible. The Standards also seek to protect vulnerable people overseas, which is of course a priority for us all.

The Uniting Church in Australia, through the Assembly, UnitingWorld, and this Synod, is committed to working with our international Partner Churches to achieve the best outcomes possible and follow the most appropriate international development principles and procedures – including the Standards set by the ACNC. We are currently working with UnitingWorld to develop resources for congregations to assist with these standards for international development support.

We are aware that many congregations may support international programs, churches or organisations. This may be in the form of once off donations of goods or funds, ongoing contributions, or more practical support such as volunteering arrangements.

The information provided in this letter and attached documents *does not* include support that individual Church members may provide, it *only refers* to support provided as a recognised activity of a Uniting Church congregation.



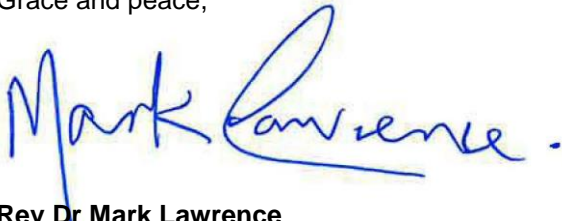
The Synod also asks treasurers through the annual Financial Returns to report any overseas donations or activities overseas, supported by your congregation. This reporting provides an initial step to avoid any risks and improve our understanding of the international reach of congregations within the Synod. It is important that we have a clear picture of the current international support that all congregations in the Synod may be providing.

Information and resources regarding the Standards and the Church's response to these will be reviewed by the Synod periodically, and further advice will be provided to your congregation if needed.

Please feel free to contact Kate Flahavin, Team Leader, Accounting (by phone – 03 6116 1929 or email Kate.Flahavin@victas.uca.org.au) or me if you have any questions or comments regarding these arrangements.

Thank you for your cooperation in this important matter, as we participate in God's mission in the world.

Grace and peace,



Rev Dr Mark Lawrence
General Secretary

