



## Presbytery Meeting- 16 March 2024

### Proposal 5- CEDAL- Name of WA Theological College

#### That the Presbytery of Western Australia

1. Acknowledge that the education and learning context of the Uniting Church in Western Australia has markedly changed since the establishment of our theological college, Perth Theological Hall (PTH), in 1978.
2. Acknowledge that, over time, the name of our theological college has become outdated, and no longer wholly connects with or complements our current education and learning needs and emerging trends in the Uniting Church in Western Australia, as explored by the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) in its review and set out in its Vision and Strategy (2024-2026).
3. Approve changing the name of our theological college to **The Well: UCA WA Centre for Education and Formation**, in order to restore the identity of our theological college as our education and formation provider, separate from CEDAL as the governing body, and to better encompass and meet the current learning needs and future hopes of the Uniting Church in Western Australia.

#### Rationale

PTH was established by the Synod of Western Australia in 1978, shortly after Union. From 1985 until 2018, PTH was a member of the Perth College of Divinity (PCD) together with the Anglican, Baptist and Roman Catholic churches for periods of time. The PCD was formed in collaboration with Murdoch University to support the theological education of ordinands and others interested in degree level study. Since 2018, after the separation from Murdoch University, there have been significant changes in the structure, leadership, staffing and focus of our theological college.

Today, the scope of education and learning opportunities offered in the Uniting Church in Western Australia is far wider than university level theological education. Preparing ordinands, and education and formation for lay ministries and laity more broadly is the growing edge. However, these opportunities are now seen to be delivered by CEDAL, which is the governing body for our theological college, not our education and formation provider. A clear separation between CEDAL and our theological college needs to be reestablished.

The name 'Perth Theological Hall' has, over time, become outdated and no longer wholly connects with or complements our current education and learning needs and emerging trends. 'Perth' presents a very city-centric approach, whereas our education and formation provider must be connecting with and serving all people in the Uniting Church in Western Australia. Although theology is the work of all people, the word 'Theological' can be seen

to be focused on formal theological education, which does not encompass the breadth of CEDALs Vision and Strategy (2024-2026). The word 'Hall' is simply an outdated word, and does not represent the freshness and vitality CEDAL is hoping for in offering learning and growth experiences to all people in our Church. Our theological college needs a revised, inclusive, accessible name to help build and foster the learning culture in our Church.

**The Well** is a Biblical image, which holds Christ, the living water central to all that we do. It implies depth, movement and freshness. In Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well there are many layers of meaning. **The Well** will meet people wherever they are on their faith journeys, bringing opportunities to take people deeper through the experiences offered. It is also an image that encourages collaboration and trust. In a time when resources are scarce, we do not have to provide all experiences ourselves. **The Well** encourages us to tap into the resources available in other places. As Jeremiah 2:13 states, our thirst cannot be quenched from broken cisterns. Instead, we need to tap into the spring of living water, our God, who is always moving in new and fresh ways.

As in Biblical times points of transformation brought about name changes (for example, Sarai became Sarah, Saul became Paul), CEDAL believes that changing the name of our education and formation provider to **The Well: UCA WA Centre for Education and Formation** will open our Church to a new identity and new opportunities for learning. CEDAL are excited by the potential of this proposal and the fresh possibilities in education and formation that will emerge for all people in the Uniting Church in Western Australia.

**Mover: Dr Karen Flower**

**Seconders: Rev Claire Pickering**