



Dovetales

September 2026

News and Stories from the Uniting Church WA



Uniting Church WA Moderator Rev David Jackson leading the opening worship service for the 50th Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia

We Are a Pilgrim People 50th Synod of WA

Wendy Hendry

The 50th Annual Meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia began with a joyful opening worship service on Friday 11 September 2026 at All Saints Floreat Uniting Church led by the Uniting Church WA Moderator, Rev David Jackson CSM.

Lay and ordained members elected from congregations and faith communities of the Presbytery of WA, schools, colleges, agencies and reporting bodies came together for fellowship, to discern, and to discuss issues of importance in the life of the Uniting Church WA, and the wider community.

They gathered for the 50th Annual Meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia - for the Opening Worship and Celebration of Ministry service on Friday 11 September at All

Saints Floreat Uniting Church, and for two days of listening, discussion and prayerful discernment as a community of faith on Saturday 12, and Sunday 13 September 2026 at The Hub, Bentley Technology Park.

Our 50th Synod Begins in Worship

The Moderator's theme for his triennium is 'We are a Pilgrim People' and the opening service, which constitutes the Synod meeting, continued to expand on this theme and mark our 50th milestone.

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Dr Ali Robinson preaching at the opening worship service at All Saints Floreat UC

"We are called to commit ourselves, under God, to be on the way together. May we meet in the Spirit of Christ. This landmark meeting marks a profound moment of transition for the church as members engage in deep discernment, prayer and governance."

"As you step into this sacred space of deep change and holy listening, remember that you do not walk the pilgrim path alone... for the same Spirit leading you into this new chapter is already there waiting to guide you."

50th Synod Highlights

"We are called together by God, and look forward together in hope."

After an Acknowledgement of Country by Rev Mervyn Anderson, and welcome greetings, the business session was underway at Bentley Technology Park for the 50th Annual Meeting of the Synod of WA. The meeting began with a range of reports:

In the Moderator's report Rev David Jackson spoke of his time as Moderator so far, reflecting on his theme 'We are a Pilgrim People' and asking "where is the spirit leading us now?"

David Beards presented the General Secretary's report, acknowledging a year of transition and noting there has been significant change across the life of the Church. He shared that he was encouraged by the energy, resilience and generosity across the church.

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly President Rev Charissa Suli and General Secretary Andrew Johnson presented an engaging Assembly report. Andrew Johnson then followed with a presentation on the developments with Act2, working toward the 18th Assembly in Adelaide next year. (cont. pg 4)

The service began with an Acknowledgement of Country by Rev Reuben Edmonds, Minister at All Saints Floreat UC, acknowledging the Wadjuk Nyungar people as the original custodians, and affirming our Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

In recognition of the special milestone, five representatives from across Uniting Church WA were invited to light a candle each to represent the five decades in the life of our church leading up to our 50th Synod.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."
2 Timothy 4:7

This year the opening worship included a Celebration of Ministry. Early in the service the Moderator led a time to pause and remember the names of the ordained ministers who had died since we last met as a Synod. Rev Jackson reflected on 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith."

Later in the service Rev Ken Devereux, in his role as Chairperson of the Presbytery of WA, gave recognition and thanks to recently retired ministers, and followed with a celebration of

ordained ministry milestones, with recognition spanning from 10 years, through to an impressive 70 years for Rev Harry Lucas. Congratulations to all the ministers who reached ministry milestones this year.

Following scripture readings from Jude 17-25 and Micah 6:6-8, we welcomed Dr Alexandra (Ali) Robinson, Lecturer in New Testament at United Theological College, Sydney, who was a guest for the Synod weekend.

In her sermon, Ali reflected on the selected passages from Jude, expanding on the text in light of our Synod theme, and what it means to be 'pilgrim people on the way', encouraging the church to remain faithful as it journeys towards God's promised future as a people of faith, and a community of grace.

The service concluded with the Constitution of the 2026 Synod by the Moderator and the General Secretary, David Beards.

"We are called to commit ourselves, under God, to be on the way together. May we meet in the Spirit of Christ."

In the Moderator's Charge that followed, to the members of the 50th Synod Rev David Jackson said,



Taking the next steps towards Net Zero

Across the Uniting Church, we are taking practical and hopeful steps towards our commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions by 2040.

Congregations across Western Australia have an important part to play, and every positive action helps us care for creation, reduce costs and strengthen ministry for the future.

To support this journey, the Uniting Church WA Synod and Presbytery have launched the Missional Property Fund Net Zero Grant. This new grant provides practical financial assistance for projects that reduce carbon emissions, improve energy efficiency and help lower operating costs.

The grant is designed to make it easier for congregations to take manageable, meaningful steps that benefit both the environment and their long-term sustainability. Eligible projects include:

- Solar PV systems
- Battery storage
- LED lighting upgrades
- Insulation & draught reduction
- Transitioning from gas to electric

- Energy audits

Funding is available for up to 80% of project costs for places of worship (up to \$12,000 ex gst) and up to 50% of project costs for manses occupied by ministers (up to \$6,000 ex gst).

Alongside the environmental benefits, many congregations are likely to see real savings through lower electricity costs and eliminating gas costs. These savings can help release more resources for worship, ministry, mission and community engagement.

The Synod and Presbytery are also putting this commitment into action, with a new solar and battery system now installed at the Uniting Church Centre, Edward St office and a commitment to electric vehicles for future fleet cars. Our first electric vehicle is already on the road – helping us drive change, one charge at a time.

Net Zero is about more than property. It's a hopeful expression of our faith: caring for God's creation, supporting

future generations and using the resources entrusted to us wisely.

Every congregation can contribute in ways that suit its own context, capacity and buildings.

Whether your congregation is considering solar panels, replacing gas appliances, improving building efficiency, adding battery storage or starting with an energy audit, this grant can help turn faithful intentions into practical action.

We warmly encourage congregations to explore what is possible and begin planning their next step towards a more sustainable future.



EV chargers installed at the Uniting Church Centre

Find Out More

Applications are now open, and we are here to help. Information about the fund, eligibility requirements and the application form can be found on our website.

Missional Property Fund: Net Zero Grant -
<https://bit.ly/3TtDZOV>



UCA President Rev Charissa Suli preaching at the Sunday worship service.

50th Synod Highlights

(continued from pg 2)

General Secretary Announced

On Saturday morning, following the report by the General Secretary Selection Committee and the required formal processes, the Moderator announced that David Beards has been appointed as General Secretary of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia. David has been serving in this role since February 2026 as appointed by the Synod Standing Committee. This appointment by the Synod is for an initial period of two years.

Bible Studies

Our guest Bible study presenter this year was Dr Ali Robinson. Ali, having also preached at our opening worship service, led two engaging Bible studies over the weekend - the first on the topic 'We are God's Church' focusing on the Bible passage from Ephesians 2: 19-22, and the second on the topic 'Called for a Ministry of Reconciliation', reflecting on the Bible passage from 2 Corinthians 5:17-20. Thanks to Dr Ali Robinson for these thoughtful and engaging

Bible studies.

Strategic Priorities

On Sunday, David Beards introduced a session focusing on our current joint Synod and Presbytery Strategic Priorities - strengthening congregations, strategic properties, increasing financial stability and sustainability, and strengthening the Covenant. He shared that "although we describe them as four separate priorities, they are deeply connected."

David gave an overview of the current work being undertaken in the four areas. Rev Claire Pickering, Presbytery Officer: Strategic Priorities, provided further insights on the area of Strengthening Congregations and Rev Luke Williams shared and facilitated a session focused on new and renewed forms of ministry.

Later in the day Rev David Jackson led a time of reflection on the role of volunteers in our church communities. In response to one of the key priorities of the Synod, 'Strengthening Congregations', He shared some of insights

from the year as he and other staff have been travelling into the regions, bringing clusters of congregations together, thanking volunteers for their service, and listening to their experiences of mission and ministry. David shared that the gatherings have "reminded us that the strength of our Church does not ultimately lie in its buildings, committees or structures. It lies in people."

Members of Synod were invited to take part in an activity to recognise and thank volunteers in their own communities.

Social Justice & International Partnerships

The International Partnerships and Development Commission (IPDC) report was presented by Lee-Anne Burnett, Chairperson. Lee-Anne outlined developments in our unique Synod international partnerships with Lafaek Diak in East Timor, Christian University in Kupang, West Timor and through the Black Pearl Network in the Papuan Provinces.

Following the Social Justice Commission report presented by Rev Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, Chairperson, and Timothy

Snobar, Social Justice Officer, a proposal was passed by consensus regarding Voluntary Assisted Dying, "acknowledging that Voluntary Assisted Dying has become a recognised and widely accepted option for the end of life under certain specific guidelines within Western Australian law, calls upon the federal Attorney General and Parliament to amend legislation to the effect that Telehealth can be used as part of the medical consultation process for eligibility and provision of Voluntary Assisted Dying care at the close of life."

A second proposal was passed focusing on climate action and care for creation, building on the Climate Care decisions of the 49th Synod and other commitments by the Synod and Assembly, strengthening positions of the church, and calling on State and Federal governments to take stronger actions in regards to climate action.

On Sunday the Social Justice Commission, led by Timothy Snobar, held a thought-provoking panel discussion on the topic of 'Faith and Artificial Intelligence'. Guest panelists were Dr Jacob Martin, Dunja Lewis, along with Rev Sophia

Lizares from the Social Justice Commission. Synod members were invited to submit questions to the panel before the session. Panelists shared a range of perspectives to consider.

Congress & Covenanting

On Saturday evening the Covenanting Commission report was presented by the Moderator in his role as, Co-Chair of the Commission. Rev Bev Fabb as Secretary of the Commission also shared, challenging all congregations to go deeper in their covenanting journey.

A panel discussion followed, sharing perspectives from members of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in WA. Thanks to Marilyn Garlett and Len Yarran for giving their time to share so generously, and to Rev Bev Fabb for facilitating alongside Covenanting Commission members Rev Mervyn Anderson and Alison Xamon.

Schools, Colleges & Agencies

The annual Synod meeting is a great opportunity to hear from Uniting Church WA schools, colleges and agencies. The program this year included a panel discussion involving

students from four Uniting Church schools, facilitated by Rebecca Clarke, Principal of MLC and Ross Barron, Head of Wesley College. The students answered a series of questions from the facilitators, giving some insight into their experiences and perspectives on life and faith. There was also a presentation from Ian Smith, Head of Trinity Residential College.

Uniting Church WA Agencies, represented by Good Sammy CEO Kane Blackman, Juniper CEO Russell Bricknell, and Uniting WA co-CEO's Jen Park and Michael Chester, each gave an update on the work and direction of the their agency since we last met as a Synod.

Sunday Worship and Holy Communion

Sunday morning worship and Holy Communion was led by Rev David Jackson. Bible readings were read from Genesis 50:15-21 and Romans 4:1-12. Pastor Lindsay Ginn provided the music accompaniment.

UCA President Rev Charissa Suli shared an inspiring sermon, reflecting on the readings and asking "What kind of Pilgrim People are we?"

(cont. pg 6)





50th Synod Highlights

(continued from pg 6)

Nominations & 18th Assembly Delegates

Over the course of the weekend various ballots took place regarding nominations to Synod Commissions, Committees and Boards as led by Heather Hamblin, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

Fiona Bentley was appointed to the position of Chairperson of the Uniting Church Property Trust (WA) and Deborah Marshall to the position of Chairperson of the Board of Finance and Investment, both for a term of two years. Thank you Fiona and Deborah, and to all who have volunteered to serve, or continue to serve, on our Synod commissions, committees and boards.

Elections took place for membership to the 18th Assembly in Adelaide next year, with eight ordained, and eight lay people elected. A further two people will be elected from the Presbytery of WA at their next meeting in November.

UCA Fijian National Conference

The UCA Fijian National Conference is taking part in Fremantle from 1 to 4 October 2026. With more than 800 delegates from across Australia to attend this significant gathering of worship, fellowship, learning and celebration, this will be one of the biggest Uniting Church events hosted in WA in more than 15 years!



On the Saturday of our meeting, Laitia Vuniwaqa on behalf of the WA organising committee presented an update on the progress of the conference. He spoke about the conference theme 'Winds of change and hope in the wilderness' and shared that faith, culture and unity will be celebrated and strengthened.

A choir (pictured below) from the combined Fijian UCWA congregations then performed for the gathered meeting in glorious song, followed by a cultural dance from the young people.



Some of the elected 18th Assembly members (L-R) - Rev Craig Bosman, Rev David Jackson, Rev Sophia Lizares, Rev Reuben Edmonds, Alison Xamon, Jen Park, Heather Hamblin, Ps Lindsay Ginn, Manasa Nawanawa, Rev Judy Sanderson, Rev Sione Lea'aetoo, Rev Luke Williams, Yvonne Robinson, Rev Ana Lea'aetoo and David Beards.

Photos from the 50th Synod of WA



Rev Sophia Lizares and Tim Snobar - Faith and AI panel discussion



Panel discussion with members of UAICC WA



Rev Ken Devereux, Chairperson of the Presbytery of WA



David Beards, Uniting Church WA General Secretary



Rev Charissa Suli, UCA Assembly President

You can find more photos and news from our 50th Synod, plus other news and stories from the Uniting Church WA, on our website - <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/news/>

UCWA highlights



IPDC Quiz Night Success!

The third annual International Partnerships and Development Commission (IPDC) Quiz Night was held on Saturday 15 August at All Saints Floreat Uniting Church, where laughter, friendly competition, and community spirit were on full display.

The night was a great opportunity for people from many Uniting Church WA congregations and their friends and families to gather for fun and fellowship under the watchful eye of Deborah Marshall, the tough referee, with her red and yellow cards at the ready. Deborah's soccer game discipline was a fantastic strategy to keep all those outspoken quiz fans in line and gave us plenty of laughs throughout the night.

First prize was won by the 'Starry Nights' team from Star Street Uniting Church, but only after a nail-biting tie-breaker. Third and fourth places also demanded a tie-breaker as the competing teams were so close.

The night featured a huge array of prizes, many donated or procured by members of the Floreat and Trinity North congregations. After table games, individual games and a raffle they were all claimed and our customers went home happy.

Thanks to all participants and contributors for your support in so many different ways. Without it, our IPDC Quiz Night could not

have been such a great success.

The night raised \$5582 for the work of the Black Pearl Network, and Black Pearl Papua Foundation (BPPF) staff in Nabire have sent their thanks for your support.

Shared by Lee-Anne Burnett



Good Sammy Uniting Church WA Open Day

Thanks to the team at Good Sammy Enterprises for a great open day for our Uniting Church WA community on Tuesday 18 August.

It was encouraging to see people from a variety of congregations come along to learn more about the agency.

CEO Kane Blackman gave a presentation on recent developments and shared about the many ways Good Sammy strives to live out their mission to provide meaningful employment opportunities for people with disability in WA. We also heard from Good Sammy Board Chair Fiona Payne, and from lived experience advocate Sally Oliver giving the Statement of Lived Experience of Disability.

Following the talk attendees were given a personalised tour behind the scenes of the Canning Vale facilities, gaining an insight into the many ways Good Sammy are contributing to the circular economy and reaching their net zero targets through sustainability practices and initiatives.

Threads of Love in Northam Uniting Church

On Sunday 21 June, at our monthly Café Fellowship service, the Northam Uniting Church celebrated the 49th Anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Our theme for the service was the President of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev Charissa Suli's chosen theme for her term as President, "Threads of Love: Weaving Christ's love across cultures and boundaries"

We also shared prayers from the 'Uniting in Prayer 2026' season of national prayer, throughout the service.

During our time together, each table shared over a cuppa, their thoughts on "What does it mean to be woven together in Christ's love across cultures and boundaries?"

As we talked with each other, everyone was invited to choose from our basket of colourful ribbons and threads and weave it across our simple frame made from an old picture frame.

And here (pictured below) is the wonderful result of our combined effort at weaving together, symbolising "Threads of Love: Weaving Christ's love across cultures and boundaries" and now on display alongside the Christ candle reminding us each time we meet of these words.

Shared by Ann Barnes



A Bucket Full of Love



Holly Mason, St Stephen's School

Sometimes care can look simpler than you might expect.

A small group of Year 9 students from St Stephen's School recently discovered how a collection of everyday items can offer practical support to someone going through a difficult time.

As part of the School's Year 9 Rite Journey program, students are encouraged to consider who they are becoming and the contribution they can make to their community. This year students chose to support Uniting WA's Buckets of Love initiative.

This initiative involves filling buckets with household cleaning essentials, including dishwashing liquid, sponges, scourers and toilet cleaner. Mr Stephen Meagher, Service Learning Coordinator at St Stephen's School, said the practical nature of the initiative directly supports Uniting WA's services. "The buckets will help Uniting supply their Group Homes, Refuges and Homeless Transition Homes with much needed cleaning products."

The students started their journey by researching what

think beyond their own lived experiences and put care for others into action.

Rite Journey Coordinator Mrs Sian Freeman said "The girls were inspired by the idea that something as simple as a bucket of practical items could help bring a little comfort, dignity and hope to someone experiencing a difficult time."

Each year the School is inspired by the thoughtful organisation of the students charitable efforts, with this year feeling particularly poignant with the selection of a fellow Uniting Church organisation.

was needed and calculating the cost of filling each bucket, then organising a fundraiser to raise enough money to purchase the supplies themselves.

Once everything had been collected, the students worked together to assemble the buckets, adding one final item that couldn't be bought in a shop; a handwritten note to each recipient.

For the students, the project offered a tangible way to



Justice Hive



WA Has No Place For Poverty

Timothy Snobar, Social Justice Officer

The Uniting Church WA Social Justice Commission held a Justice Hive workshop on Saturday 8 August 2026. Taking place during homelessness week (3 – 9 August), the focus topic was 'WA has no place for poverty'.

The Hive workshop focused on the growing issue of homelessness and poverty throughout the state, bringing together people from across the Uniting Church WA, its agencies, and the wider community to reflect on the issue and share what their congregations and organisations have done to help tackle it.

Rev Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, Chairperson of the Social Justice Commission, opened the session with devotion, calling on attendees to reflect on how, as followers of Christ, we are called to help the needy;

"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and

you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." (Matthew 25:35–36)

We reflected on how we care for those less fortunate; as Christians, it is not simply about ticking a box, but about being able to see the face of Christ in all those who suffer injustice.

Participants had the chance to hear from James, who shared his experience of homelessness and how, through the support of Uniting WA, he was able to rebuild his life and get off the streets.

Participants also heard from the Co-CEO of Uniting WA, Michael Chester. Uniting WA provides a vital lifeline for homeless individuals around Perth, especially through Tranby Engagement Hub. He outlined the growing crisis and the unprecedented rise of homelessness throughout Perth.

Uniting Aid, a caring agency of the Uniting Church based in Nollamara serving people in the City of Stirling, outlined what they are doing to help alleviate the crisis, including support with bills, food delivery, and other important work. It was emphasised that many homeless people seek not only physical shelter, but spiritual comfort in God.

Uniting Church congregations such as St Martin's Foothills, and Mandurah also shared how they are working to ease the growing financial pressure on community members. Congregations play an important part in providing vital amenities and resources across the community and have successfully drawn on volunteer networks to help.

The next Justice Hive gathering will be on Saturday 10 October 2026 and will focus on the growing issue of climate change.



What makes older West Australians smile?

Juniper

What makes you smile? That's the question Juniper asked more than 100 attendees at the Juniper stand at this year's Ageing Well Expo, and they certainly came up with some great answers.

The activity invited visitors to write a word or two on a board, capturing one thing that brought them joy. What came back was a lovely list of everyday pleasures, tea, gardening, dancing, bowls and time with friends.

The question proved to be a great conversation starter, offering Juniper staff a glimpse into the lives of the older West Australians who attended the expo, and what makes them light up.

Juniper Transition Care Program Navigator John Sillah said it's the simplest way to connect with people, and as Juniper works to provide person-centred care across all its services, it's often the best way to start getting to know someone.

"My favourite answer so far has been a good cup of coffee, a good cake and a good book," said John. "That alone tells you that the simplest things make people smile, and that's really important to know."

It turns out the attendees were a social bunch. Family topped the list, with 32% giving an answer related to loved ones, closely followed by another 32% who pointed to socialising and time with friends. Hobbies and activities they loved accounted for 27% of responses, while 9% said exercise was what made them smile.

"My favourite answer so far has been a good cup of coffee, a good cake and a good book," said John.

The results reflect findings from Juniper's *Voice of Older Western Australians* research, built in partnership with independent market research consultancy CoreData WA, which found that spending time with family, socialising with friends and taking part in meaningful hobbies and activities are what older Western Australians rate as most essential to their happiness.

The activity was as much about the conversation as the answers themselves.

Asking what makes someone smile, and listening to the answer, is often the simplest way to begin understanding what someone's care should look like for them, and it offers a small window into what the older West Australians we support value.

Find Out More

Read more about Juniper's *Voice of Older Western Australians* research here:

Research & Art - Juniper
<https://www.juniper.org.au/research-art>



Season of Creation 2026 Prayer

Living Water

Holy God, whose Spirit hovered over the waters at the beginning, we gather as part of your community of all creation, thirsty for your grace. We give thanks for the gift of water, the veins of our common home, that sustains the cedar and the whale, the pasture and the city. We are grateful for the local waters that nourish our homelands and our fellow creatures. We give thanks that in your well-watered garden, every drop is a sacred testament to your love. Yet, we confess that we have treated this gift as a mere commodity. We have choked the seas with our waste and watched the warming tides rise in judgment.

We lament the cracked earth of the drought-stricken and the salty tears of the climate refugee. Melt our frozen hearts, O God, and let the waters of repentance flow.

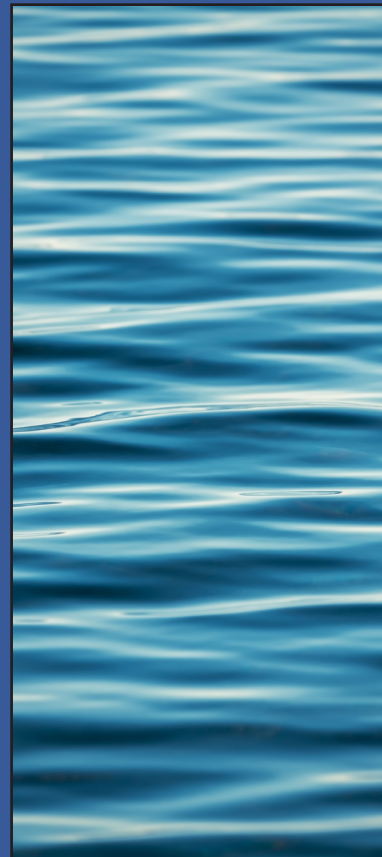
Lord of all Life, you promised that wherever the river flows, everything shall live.

Stir in us a calling to care for the waters — to protect the watershed, defend the rights of water, and honor the dignity of the thirsty. May your Word be a spring within us, gushing forth for the healing of the nations.

May God our Father who brought water from the rock sustain us in the desert. May Christ our Lord who is Living Water refresh us for the work of restoration. And may the Holy Spirit carry us on currents of grace until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. Amen.

Source - Uniting Church in Australia, Season of Creation 2026 Resources - <https://uniting.church/season-of-creation-2026/>

DISCLAIMER: This version of the Season of Creation Prayer Card is a non-official translation by Uniting Church in Australia. The Season of Creation Steering Committee is not responsible for issues with translation.



Dovetales Noticeboard



UNITING CHURCH WA

Busselton Campsite

The Uniting Church WA campsite is located at 140 Caves Rd, Siesta Park, Busselton. With the adjacent dazzling waters of Geographe Bay and surrounding picturesque countryside, our campsite is an ideal location for school groups, youth camps and ministry retreats.

The campsite consists of:

19 x powered and 7 x unpowered sites

Hire bookings are encouraged for Uniting Church community including employees, schools and agencies.

BOOKING RATES

Site bookings have a nightly rate of \$40 per night (powered site) and \$32 per night (unpowered) plus booking fee.

BOOK ONLINE

To find out more and book online go to our website via the QR code or go to - tinyurl.com/UCWACampsite

Group bookings can also be made online.

For enquiries email property@wa.uca.org.au



Uniting Church in Australia
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