



Church Council 2023 Annual Report

Preamble

2023 has been a year of change for Morialta Uniting Church. In October we farewelled Rev. Bob Hutchinson and Mandy, who have left us to continue their ministries at the Corner Uniting Church. Along with their departure we have said goodbye to a number of our church family.

As always, this report should be read with reference to the many forms of information available to our community throughout the year.

From time to time, information is shared via email and envelope. Of course, the regular publication of our *Vision* magazine also provides a wealth of news about our community and the wider church as well as topical items of interest.

We continue to hold the families and friends of those who have died during this time in our love.

As well as the supportive funerals, celebrations of life and memorial services there has been much other life and activity. Morialta UC has celebrated Baptism and Marriage as further positive affirmations of the Christian presence we represent to the community.

As part of the regular placement cycle, the congregation elected a Joint Nominating Committee (JNC), which is engaged in the process of conversation and discernment which forms the procedure of Call. As developments occur the congregation will be informed.

During the placement process Morialta UC is being supported by Rev. Leanne Davis, who is providing ministerial assistance during this Period of Supply.

Inter-Faith Activity

One of the defining characteristics of Morialta UC is its commitment to justice and inclusion. Among the expressions of this is Morialta UC's support of ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue.

During the year, in particular during Ramadan, we have hosted the Dawoodi Bohra group who have made Morialta UC home for their

religious and cultural observances in recent years. Their presence provides significant financial support for our Mission.

When two groups are using common areas, there are always minor annoyances; regular meetings between Dawoodi Bohra and Morialta UC representatives generally resolve any difficulties. However, the reasonably constant contact, on Morialta UC's behalf, assists in the relationship.

We are fortunate to have an excellent Audio-Visual Team that is able to rectify matters within their remit as they occur and ensure our equipment meets the needs of each group.

Regular Activities Around Morialta UC

Worship

Morialta UC has long provided worship opportunities for the gathered community and those further afield.

Each week our Sunday Services are streamed so that members of the congregation who are indisposed, and others from wider afield, are able to join with us as we celebrate our faith.

It is timely to acknowledge the commitment of the many who make it possible for the congregation to participate in meaningful, thoughtful worship.

The rosters that are printed each week give a significant understanding of the number of congregation members who set aside time so that we may all attend worship together.

Many individuals should be congratulated for their ongoing commitment and service: those who lead worship, support congregational singing, create an artful expression of floral beauty, work to provide the displayed projection of words, and manage the amplification of sound make it possible for us to hear and see the service, alongside those who work to support the technology that makes it possible to stream our services.

During the Week

As well as our worship life, there are other activities that define our presence in this community.

Morialta UC Friendship Club

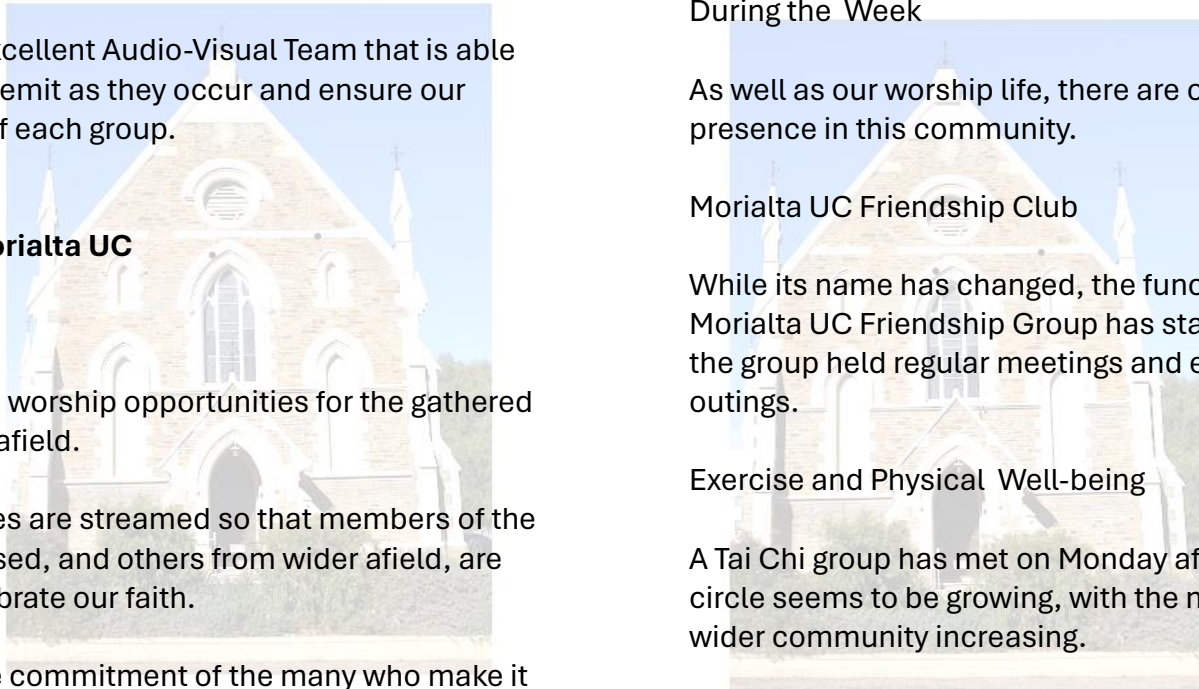
While its name has changed, the function and purpose of the Morialta UC Friendship Group has stayed the same. During the year the group held regular meetings and enjoyed a number of excellent outings.

Exercise and Physical Well-being

A Tai Chi group has met on Monday afternoon for many years. The circle seems to be growing, with the number of participants from the wider community increasing.

A group of intrepid tennis players have long gathered on the Courts at Morialta UC and elsewhere to enjoy social tennis and company a fine way to spend a Saturday afternoon.

Morialta UC has had a long association with two Keep Fit groups which meet weekly on Monday and Wednesday mornings. The people who attend are regularly exposed to information about our



community through notice boards, printed material from the 'foyer table', and the scrolling screen in the foyer .

As an expression of hospitality, coffee and tea have been offered to participants following their classes.

There has been a resurgence among the Friday Square Dance community recently. It is hoped that the presence of this Friday evening activity will continue well into the future! The number of squares has increased so that this activity is able to provide both exercise and fellowship to an increased cohort.

Creativity

An Art and Craft Circle meets each Friday morning during term time, where people spend time together on their separate endeavours. A cuppa and chat accompany the talented pursuit of a wide range of projects.

On Wednesday afternoons, a decreased number of participants attend the Workshop, where access to expertise and equipment has been appreciated for many years and much work done for the benefit of our community.

Discussion Groups

Twice a month the Gateways group meets for fellowship and discussion in the foyer. Recent books and videos that can extend perspectives and challenge interpretations form the subject material for much discussion and exploration. The group shares a cuppa and afternoon tea before launching into their lively discussion.

Support for Children, Youth and Families

A Japanese Play Group meets each Monday morning in the KOOKA Room. Varying in number, this group of Japanese-speaking families has been gathering at Chapel Street for quite some time.

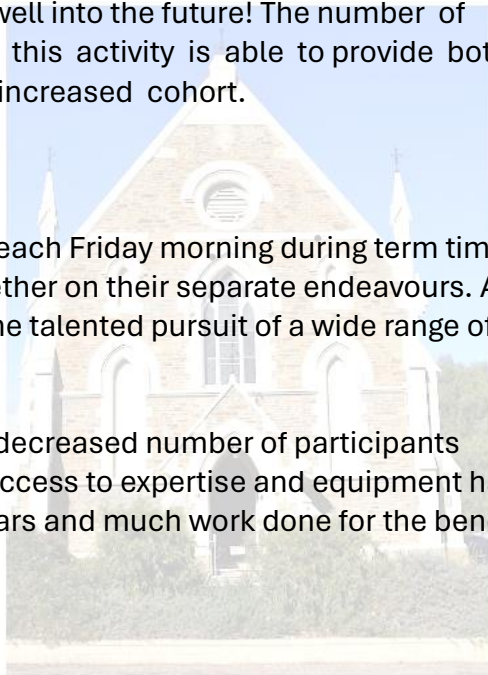
Although the playgroup is not aligned closely with Morialta UC, the congregation has hosted several shared lunches where the families and people from Morialta UC interact and build relationship.

The Morialta Uniting Netball Club has a long association with this church. Starting over 50 years ago as a club associated with Newton UC, it has been part of our fabric since amalgamation. Always a strong presence, the club has increased in recent years with participation in the winter and summer netball competitions. The congregation appreciates the regular support received from the netball club's Mother's Day stall. The funds received are included in the congregation's contribution to International Mission.

While not directly an activity of Morialta UC, Australians Knitting for War Affected Kids (AKWAK) is supported by a number of congregation members, who produce knitted goods, and by the congregation in general as we continue to provide space for the group to store and sort items as they are prepared for distribution overseas.

Our Student Accommodation Program, which provides low-cost housing for country tertiary students, is presently full. Although the courtyard homes are relatively new, they do require constant attention to upkeep maintenance.

From time to time working bees are held to provide upkeep to this important resource, as well as the other facilities available at Chapel Street.



Support for Morialta UC's Activities

In recent times the number of members who have put themselves forward to serve on Church Council has been small. However, the commitment shown and the leadership provided has always been thoughtful and pro-active.

Since before COVID, the Council has been looking at the team structure that has served Morialta UC well over many years, but should be reviewed to take account of the current human resources available to support our worship life and mission.

Following the delivery of findings from the Resourcing Group, the remit of which is explained later in the report, the Council will be better able to propose appropriate changes to the structure that will support Morialta UC's worship life and mission into the future.

Our Future

Morialta UC is facing a future shaped significantly differently to our past. While we are not alone in this, there are serious questions that need to be aired. Following on from the recent 'Spring into Action' and its consultations, Church Council formed a Resourcing Group from within the congregation to consider our next 3 to 5 years.

Over a series of meetings, where its members were encouraged to explore our future as broadly as possible, some possibilities are emerging. One of the most instructive tasks undertaken to date is an attempt to quantify the number of hours of activity generated within and around the congregation to keep its worship life and mission going.

Another area of exploration, which is in its early stages, involves discussion with Kimba UC and Wimala Presbytery to see if there are opportunities to build on the digital relationship between our two congregations.

Such discovery may be useful to other Uniting Church communities as they seek alternative ways of being faithful communities with decreased financial and human resources but a clear commitment to Christian service.

As the Resourcing Group continues its discernment the congregation will be given opportunity to respond, so that we might together form a future for Morialta UC as we respond to the teachings of Jesus.

Commitment to the Wider Church

Over many years members of Morialta UC have offered their skills to the wider church.

In areas of social justice, international relationships, governance, supporting the conduct of wider church gatherings, as well as ecumenism and other spheres of activity, Morialta UC folk have put their considerable skills to use for the benefit of the Uniting Church and the Christian community more broadly. This work continues in 2023, including with World Day of Prayer and environmental action.

In Conclusion

In this short Annual Report it is clear that our worship life and mission are reliant on a large number of people. We give thanks for their commitment and endeavour and hope that we will be able to continue to find such gracious individuals to carry on our activities into the future, whatever that might be!