

**CREATIVE MINISTRIES NETWORK
DIRECTIONS VISION:
A prayerful plan for strategic action.
2013 – 2014**

Being the Church for transforming the world

The Creative Ministries Network's ministry is called forth by a prophetic and creative vision of a faithful community of people liberated from the gods of the worlds of work and contemporary culture that cause injustice, suffering and division to live in relationships restored by healing, justice and reconciliation.

Introduction

The Board has adapted the Ignatian spiritual exercises to frame a prayerful discernment of CMNs vocation for God's mission of healing, justice and reconciliation.

The framework acknowledges the foundation for our vocation is God's goodness in creation, beyond our dreaming. This mythical/theological time also locates the Indigenous people as First Nations of this land, Australia.

The Board's vision for CMN follows a pattern for each stage of our journey in discerning God's calling. Each stage has a prayer and strategic actions grounded in the exercises of Ignatian spirituality. Texts from Isaiah and St. Paul remind us that our vocation is to a prophetic ministry called to minister healing, justice and reconciliation and the restoration of life embodying God's 'new creation'.

The Board's vision for the agency's direction grows from two core beliefs:

1. Our direction is shaped by our discernment of God's will for creation.
2. As we discern the character of God's will, God calls us to act in that character.

Foundation

We acknowledge the Wurrundjeri people of the Kulin nation, the first inhabitants of the place where CMN is located. We honour them for their custodianship of the land on which we work and pray.

Prayer

L: The Caller is the one who is the depth of Creation.

P: The Caller is recognisable and knowable through the most profound human activity.

L: The Caller is present whenever we allow Love to enter our lives.

P: Our relationship with the Caller is not conditional, cannot be earned; it is a relationship of grace.

Narrative of CMN's calling

V.1 & 2: In time beyond our dreaming, God created humankind to live in relationships of healing, justice and reconciliation.

Voice 1: The Creative Ministries Network began with a group of Uniting Church ministers working in secular employment. Isolated from the institutional church, the group realised they were being the

church in their daily work. The ministers' group celebrated their new identity as the Urban Ministry Network with Communion in Ed Hind's lounge room on 28 February 1984.

Voice 2: In 1991, life in the two small ageing congregations of East St. Kilda Parish was at low ebb. The Church Council agreed to research possible new directions for ministry, and in November established the Centre for Creative Ministries as a ministry to and with the arts.

Voice 1: The Network continued to worship in members' homes, sharing a meal with bread and wine, and reflecting on Scripture and life. A specialised social research and development consultancy program on workplace issues developed.

Voice 2: The Centre developed a core of artists and interested people who began a dialogue around the arts and Christian faith. The Centre initiated programs with artists in drama, music, and dance to serve the needs of older people and primary students, and held innovative worship services and meditation.

Voice 1: The Network initiated the establishment of the Church and Trade Unions Committee, and supported programs for injured workers. The first Workers' Memorial Service was held at Melbourne's Wesley Uniting Church in 1990. A ministry with bereaved people developed, evolving into Work-related Grief Support for those bereaved by work-related deaths.

Voice 2: The Centre involved artists as singers, dancers, musicians, writers, actors, painters in a wide range of programs and performances, and in 2000 established the Aboriginal Women's Art Program.

Voice 1: The Network's social research consultancy struggled in the marketplace as the economic pressure for survival challenged and distorted priorities, and brought the agency to the brink of financial collapse. The Committee renewed their commitment to live as Church, and was raised to new life in Christ. In 1996, the Urban Ministry Network became an agency of the Uniting Church, and in 1998, the Church provided office space to the Network at Cromwell Road in South Yarra.

Voice 2: By 1999, the Centre's focus had shifted to programs engaging people with psychiatric illnesses, homelessness, and drug and alcohol addictions. However, the St. George's Church Council believed the Centre had lost contact with its founding vision, and the resulting restructure led to a painful redundancy and conclusion of these programs. After the ensuing period of reflection, the Church Council initiated a discussion with the Urban Ministry Network about the future of the two agencies, resulting in the establishment in 2004 of the Creative Ministries Network as a new agency.

Voice 1: In 2009, the Network celebrated the 25th anniversary of its beginning with an acknowledgement of the missing stories in CMNs journey.

CMN acknowledges with sorrow our inadequate understanding of Indigenous voices.

Voice 2: There are also a number of our forebears in faith whose contribution to the Network has been a lasting legacy, either with the CCM or UMN Committee. Ed Hind, Pat Brennan, Don Saltmarsh, Bob Stenton, Margaret Petherick and Barry Pearce have all died. While their deaths have taken their voices from us, their spirits still animate the life and purpose of the Network through what they gave of themselves to shape its ministry.

Voice 1: The other voices missing in our story are the voices of those for whom a relationship with the Network's journey has been broken. The absence of their voices is also a silence that needs to be acknowledged with sorrow. Today we acknowledge CMN is the recipient of a mixed inheritance, and while it rejoices in the healing, justice and reconciliation that has come to fruition, it laments the harm done to a number of people along the way through fear, anxiety and lack of grace on the part of staff and/or Committee/Council/Board members. For silences caused by injustice or lack of care for the needs of these people, we pray for forgiveness.

Voice 2: The Creative Ministries Network received the gift of the arts from the former Centre and the gift of ministry in working life from the former Network.

Voice 1: The Creative Ministries Network inherited a rich faith for its calling as Church in a world too often fragmented by injustice, violence and war. The dying of traditional forms of congregational life bequeathed CMN responsibility for the Hotham Street, St. Kilda church property, and its sale has provided CMN with new financial resources. Our journey strengthens our belief that Christ calls CMN to be a community that trusts God's character is to love humankind and the whole creation to fullness of life. We rejoice in the congregation that has formed around this call and promise.

V 1 & 2: This call and promise continues to sustain our hope – unity that transcends our divisions, new life that renews us in the midst of death and despair.

The foundation for the journey: the well-spring of God's created order.

The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion

and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them. ... They will not hurt or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Isaiah 11: 6,9)

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! ¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. ²⁰So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

(2 Corinthians 5: 17-20)

Strategic actions

CMN will work towards strengthening our relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, including the possibility of a combined ANZAC Eve remembrance service with the Indigenous community and veterans.

Aboriginal Women’s Access Art Studio

Overhaul the practice of how the studio works in 2013, with a more structured set up. Strengthen relationship with Winja Ulupna (residential service).

Financial plan

Secure funding for 2014.

Occupational health and safety

The CMN Board is committed to foster and provide a safe working environment and work practices for its staff, volunteers, contractors, clients, visitors and Board members.

Aims of the policy

The policy of the Board is to adopt and review annually a plan that will ensure the health and safety of CMN Board members, staff, volunteers, clients, visitors and clients.

The plan

The Board authorises the Director to implement its OHS policy, and to report annually to the Board on the implementation of this policy. The key features of the plan are:

Safety Committee and Safety Officer

The Director will establish a Safety Committee to develop operational OHS policies. The Safety Committee will appoint a Safety Officer, who will be responsible for the agenda at the Safety Committee meetings, and have management responsibility for the expenditure of the OHS budget.

Induction

Upon commencement, all new staff members will be given a set of the CMN’s OHS policies.

Approvals

The Safety Committee will approve all CMN OHS policies and policy updates.

Reporting

- All OHS issues or incidents will be reported to the Board no later than the next scheduled board meeting after the incident or concern has arisen.
- The Director will report annually on the operation of this plan. The report will include the number of meetings of the Safety Committee, a summary of the matters discussed, a report on actions taken and a summary of any outstanding matters.

Financial plan

The Board will establish an annual budget for implementing and improving OHS at the CMN.

Stage One: our journey begins

Prayer

L: Through love we have been shown that compassion, empathy not sympathy and honesty can confront the demons that can keep us in a powerless state.

L: Most importantly the Caller loves and forgives us for our humanness and understands our failings. This is most important.

Therefore the Board acknowledges the following powers in contemporary Australia, and their capacity for inducing powerlessness and justifying violence in individuals and organisations:

- Captivity to the science myth and its transcendent claims to 'truth'.
- Participation in the construction and distortion of reality as public objective facts and private, subjective emotions and values.
- Retreat from encountering the personal pain of injustice by turning it into the suffering of others that becomes a problem to be solved

The Board will reflect further on how to embody this confession of the spiritual and material reality of the world in which CMN lives and works.

Our journey begins: Through Jesus healing love we face our disorder and accept our limitations.

And I said: 'Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!' (Isaiah 6:5)

For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength. Consider your own call, brothers and sisters: not many of you were wise by human standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

(1 Corinthians 1: 25 – 27)

Strategic actions

1. Uphold the importance of Board members experience of Spirit in deepening CMNs commitment to healing, justice and reconciliation.
2. Complete Board members' sharing of 'Spirit at Work' at Board meetings, and compile the narratives into a small publication for the Board's further reflection and public distribution.
3. Accept Board members and staff limitations and our personal turmoil while maintaining a safe work and meeting environment for all.
4. Uphold the importance of staff meetings, professional supervision, lunches and morning teas for staff to accept each other in a healing and generous spirit.

Restorative Justice Service

Maintain a Reference Group for the RJ Service

In 2013, research the feasibility of RJ for road accident deaths, and pilot study a small number of work-related and road accident deaths.

Formulate a program and financial development plan to implement the RJ Service Quality Assurance Framework for service delivery in 2014.

Financial plan

To be determined.

Education and training for healing, justice and reconciliation

1. Develop education and training programs for integrating faith/spirituality with working life as an entrepreneurial social enterprise to enhance the quality of people's lives at work.
2. Develop the congregational ministers' collegiate group in the UCA Synod's program on mission and ministry at work.

Financial plan

- Provide fee for service and consultancy programs, including professional supervision, ministers' collegiate groups, short courses and workshops, and curriculum development.
- Provide a theological student placement for suitable students.
- Provide opportunities for the faith development of the Board through reflections on Paul's epistles and faith discussions.

Prayer

How good it is O God that you hate injustice.

How good it is O Christ that you break down the barriers that divide people from each other.

How good it is O Spirit that you welcome into your great love those our world rejects and excludes.

So make us in your image and empower us to live according to your intention for all.

Amen.

Our journey begins: Through Jesus call, we know we are called to all people.

For thus says the Lord: to the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 56:4,5)

As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3: 27-28)

Strategic plans

Ensure CMN's services are open to all people.

Work-related Grief Support

Develop regionally based volunteers to increase access to services for bereaved people in rural and regional Victoria.

Veterans Faith and Wellbeing Support

Ensure programs include representation from Peace-keeping and Peace-making Veterans, the National Service Veterans Association and Vietnam Veterans.

Restorative Justice

Ensure the safety and integrity of all pilot program participants.

Worship

CMN services are to be an inclusive prayer welcoming people of diverse backgrounds, including gender, culture, sexual orientation, race denomination or different faiths. CMN will provide:

- An annual service of thanksgiving for CMN founders, and commitment to the agency's vocation on the last Sunday of February

- A service of lament for the Sri Lanka Partnership Project on the anniversary of the end of the Sri Lankan civil war (18 May)
- An annual Service of Remembrance for work-related deaths (end of Nov).

Support the International day for peace (3rd Sunday in September) service at St. Georges' UC as an annual Board event with the congregation

Website

The website will be upgraded and enhanced in 2013 to improve access to CMN services and information on support activities for those seeking support.

Stage three: surrender

Prayer

Develop a contemporary form of 'the way of the cross' with each station reflecting an agency concern.

Establish 'The Barry Pearce Peace Memorial Lecture' with trustees from CMN and the Pearce family at the annual VFWS Remembrance Eve dinner for veterans and their families.

Surrender: Through Jesus the Crucified, we seek to walk with people who suffer today, and learn how to be companions in healing, justice and reconciliation from our reflection on this journey

Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases; yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed (Isaiah 53:4-5)

For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. (Ephesians 6: 11 – 13)

Strategic actions

Work-related Grief Support (WGS)

Provide an effective service for people bereaved by a work-related death, drawing upon both empirically tested and analysed knowledge and skills for casework and social development as well as consideration of the CMNs key faith questions.

The strategic priorities are:

- Support to people bereaved by the work-related death of a family member.
- Remembrance of the person who died.
- Renewal of occupational health and safety, industry, and corporations.
- Contribute to the development of policy and procedures for institutions and organisations that deal with our clients to improve grief support services.

Promote CMN's model of grief support in relevant academic, grief and loss, and industry fields.

- Step one: Complete a publishable text in 2013 on the pastoral care model of WGS as a response to contemporary work's economic violence.
- Step two: Develop a research project brief to evaluate the WGS model of grief support for academic, industry and grief support audiences, and seek funding for this research for a project in 2014.

Maintain updated information on work-related grief on our website.

Financial plan

- Provision of WGS will be primarily through funding from WorkSafe, law firms corporate sponsors and individual donors, and philanthropic trusts. A submission to Comcare is waiting on their reply

Veterans Faith and Wellbeing Support (VFWS)

The Veterans' Chaplain strategic actions are to develop VFWS by:

- Facilitating the monthly Contemplative Worship Service for Veterans in Geelong, at the Newtown Anglican Church.
- Establishing and convening the trustees for the Barry Pearce Peace Memorial Lecture.
- Organising the Remembrance Eve Dinner.
- Holding a biennial retreat gathering for ADF veterans and spouses in Feb/March 2013 and 2015
- Consult with the Geelong veterans as the Consultative Group for the development of VFWS.
- Support St. George's East St. Kilda Uniting Church Memorial Service on the Sunday closest to 22 August.
- Provision of individual counselling and support through quiet days, social activities and art-based programs.
- Exploring how the model of VFWS is informed by the literature on 'moral injury'.

Financial plan

- Funds from a grant from St. George's UC, the CMN property sale proceeds and Peace Fund, and submissions to the Share Appeal and veteran, community, and government for funding opportunities.

Sri Lanka Mission Partnership

- Continue the Mission Partnership with St. George's East St. Kilda Uniting Church and the Diocese of Jaffna, Church of South India.

Financial plan

- Contribute \$3,000 from the Peace Fund in 2013-14 for reconstruction ministry of JDCSI.

CMN will establish in 2013 a position of Manager of Workplace Ministry and Research. The Manager will:

- Develop the pilot projects funded by the Synod on mission and ministry at work.
- Supervise and support staff practice-led research.
- Continue supervision of the research consultant study of workers' compensation and mental health.
- Develop CMN's relationship with the Yarra Institute for Social Policy and Religion and the MCD University.

Financial plan

To be determined.

Fairwear project

Sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia and Fairwear Australia Inc. to facilitate and develop a Fairwear project in Victoria.

Financial plan

CMN will work with the project partners to secure funding for a FairWear campaign worker.

STAGE FOUR

Prayer

Hold an annual Board retreat to enrich CMN governance through strengthened friendships and faith.

Joy and love: Friendship with the risen Christ evokes friendship with those we serve, and delight in the present moment.

Thus says the Lord ... 'Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.' (Isaiah 43: 18-19)

Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honour. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers. (Romans 12:9-13)

Strategic actions

Affirmation of gifts

- The Board will recognise members' service to the Board.
- Staff will identify contributions from volunteers, clients and contract staff, and propose appropriate forms of recognition of their gifts of service.

Relations with industry and public corporations

Support the development of relationships with industry and public corporations that provide funding for:

- Arts-based programs.
- Work-related Grief Support.
- Veterans Faith and Wellbeing Support.
- Ministry of JDCSI in Sri Lanka.

Prayer

To be considered.

Joy and love: We are grateful for all that life brings to us, finding God in all things and discovering our incorporation into a movement to wholeness.

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn. (Isaiah 61:1-2)

If God is for us, who is against us? ... ³⁸For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:31b, 38-39)

Strategic actions

The development of CMN's suite of entrepreneurial social enterprises as mission and vocation opportunities will be a priority for the new Director in 2013-14.

Evaluating the spirit and fruitfulness of our work.

- Quarterly client review of WGS clients.
- Equip staff to become practice-led researchers, so research is built into their work practices.
- Publish 'The Voice: a quarterly for artistic and prophetic imagination'.

CMN congregation

Include an annual meeting between the Board and representatives of the CMN congregation.

Financial plan

Discuss with the congregation its financial needs for 2013-14.

Heritage

Complete a review of CMN files and records, and report to the Board on a strategy for archiving documents and enriching the agency's organisational memory.