

Section 1: Exploration Phase: What have we done?

Throughout the Exploration Phase the Act2 Project has sought to build on the previous work of the Project² by broadening and deepening our engagement across the life of the Church. This has involved an intensive period of engagement throughout the first half of 2023, including:

Direct communication with 2,113 local contacts across 1,672 local communities of faith.

- Online Focus groups with 10 groups of leaders in our diverse communities of faith.
- Direct engagement with all 33 Presbyteries including online meetings or face-to-face visits with 22 Presbyteries.
- Engagement with Synods, agencies and theological college leaders through visits to every Synod including over 45 meetings with over 100 people.
- Observing and sharing with the National Conference of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Congress).
- Regular fortnightly drop-ins since last November.

We have received the following written contributions:

- 187 Church Council Conversations representing over 254 communities of faith.
- 46 written submissions from individuals, councils and agencies.

We have also worked to consolidate data from across the Church including:

- National Church Life Survey from 2021 (representing 15,606 attenders, 684 churches).
- Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census data from 1976 to 2021.
- Data from the Australian Charities and Not for Profits Commission (ACNC).
- Previous papers, research and papers available from the Assembly archives.
- Strategic planning and change projects from across the Synods.
- Academic research on the theology, identity, ordering and history of the Church.
- Engagement with leaders and material from other Christian traditions including the United Church of Canada, Equmeniakyrkan (Uniting Church in Sweden), Methodist Church in Great Britain, Church of England, Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma and The Salvation Army Australia.

Consistent with the findings prior to the 16th Assembly, this Exploration Phase has deepened our understanding of the shape of our Church, the challenges we are facing, the things that matter to people across the Church and the imperative for change. Below is a detailed synthesis of the findings of the Exploration Phase organised by the four Workstreams and the Core Commitments³.