



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **UNITING CHURCH UNVEILS NEW THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE**

The new face in theological education, the Pilgrim Theological College, has been launched at the current gathering of the Uniting Church in Australia's Victoria and Tasmania Synod.

It follows a decision to close the United Faculty of Theology at the end of this year.

The UFT was formed in 1969 as an ecumenical partnership between the precursor Theological Colleges of the Uniting Church, the Jesuit Theological College (Catholic) and Trinity College Theological School (Anglican).

The Jesuit Theological College has decided not to seek to be a college of the University of Divinity and, from the end of the current academic year, the partnership will cease.

The Uniting Church's expanded theological college, Pilgrim, and Trinity will begin separate operations at the start of the 2015 academic year.

Pilgrim Theological College Principal Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes said the tradition of ecumenical theology and formation witnessed in the UFT would be continued through Pilgrim Theological College.

Dr Byrnes said the launch of Pilgrim is an exciting time for theological education.

She said Pilgrim would have a redesigned curriculum, expanded teaching faculty and refreshed approach to ministry, discipleship and leadership formation to meet the needs of future leaders.

"There is excitement about new ways of being church, about new forms of ministry and about the new realities of a cross-cultural and intercultural church," Dr Byrnes said.

"In framing the new curriculum we have been more flexible and responsive to the current church experience of discipleship. There are now renewed conversations within and beyond the church about God, Jesus Christ, the gospel and the interface between belief, beliefs and unbelief."

Dr Byrnes said the college would form graduates who were committed to reflective self-awareness, were engaged in the social, political and ecclesia issues of the day and articulated their Christian faith through fresh words and deeds.

The Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Dan Wootton, said the Synod - through the Centre for Theology and Ministry and its Board - would have oversight of Pilgrim and was committed to preserving the broad, ecumenical vision for theological education that was characteristic of the UFT.

## **END RELEASE**

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