

# MILPARA CATHOLIC CENTRE

Union Christian Church

Place No. 228

<b>ADDRESS</b>	280 Yarra Road (former 9086) Wonga Park	<b>Last Update</b>
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Large timber former church comprising a central section (gabled to the street frontage, hipped to the rear) with an enclosed porch and extensions to either side.  Three Kemp & Sheehan ventilators are set into ridge of the corrugated iron roof.  There are large pines on the road and rear boundaries.  <b>Condition</b> Excellent <b>Integrity</b> Minor modifications <b>Threats</b> None apparent <b>Key elements</b> <b>Designer</b>	

**HISTORY** This former Union Full Gospel Church opened as the Union Christian Church in 1928. It was an independent non-denominational church built for the Wonga Park Protestant community. Pastor Eric Kenyon, who was associated with the building from 1980 until its sale in 1995 to the Roman Catholic Church, says that the church consisted originally of two rooms. The front room was used as a hall and there was a smaller back room. The 1928 rules stipulated that the church management should always retain its independence, no particular denomination assuming control. The church was built on land owned by the Knees, a well-known district orcharding family.[1]

Lands Department records confirm the long association of the Knee family with Crown Allotment 14B, Parish of Warrandyte, the site of the building.[2] Thomas Knee, gardener and fruitgrower, was rated for the property at the turn of the century. Thomas Samuel Knee, orchardist, became the owner of the property from the First World War period.[3] The Knee property at Yarra Road, now known as The Hedge, contains a house that dates from the first decades of this century.[4]

Muriel McGivern's history of Croydon tells how in 1929, following the opening of the former Union Church, Mrs T.S. Knee was "presented with a gold-mounted bag in appreciation of her efforts to establish this 'Upper Croydon Union Church' as reported in the Mail of that year".[5] By the 1960s, according to McGivern, the 1920 St. Marks Church of England in Yarra Road was "the only one with an individual building in Wonga Park, although a Christian Union Church stands half-way to Croydon...".[5]

In about 1980, when Pastor Kenyon was associated with the church, he renamed it the Union Full Gospel Church, although the 1928 rules were maintained. Additions made to the building in 1982 included shortening the room at the back and extending the front room by 15 feet to form a meeting hall for about 80 people. Later, two side wings were added. Pastor Kenyon claims that today the only remaining part of the original 1928 structure is the iron roof over the centre of the building and a timber ceiling in the central section.

After the old church was sold in 1995, a new Pentecostal Church was opened in St. John's Road, Wonga Park. This new building met the needs of a growing congregation with its complex of buildings including a Sunday School.[6] The former Union Church is known now as the Milpara Catholic Centre.

<b>Creation Date</b> 1928	<b>Change Dates</b>
<b>Associations</b>	<b>Local Themes</b>
Tom Knee, Union Church "movement"	6.02 - Churches

**STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** Of local significance as one of the two remaining churches built for the Wonga Park community in the 1920s. It is an example of a number of non-denominational (Union) Protestant churches opened in small rural areas of Victoria in the early decades of this century. It has important associations with the Knees, a district orcharding family, who donated the land. (RNE criteria A4, B2, H1)

## LEVEL

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## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Heritage Register Listings

Register	Reference	Zoning	Status
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None Specified

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### Extent

### Heritage Schedule

External Paint Controls:

On VHR:

VHR Ref No:

Internal Alteration Controls:

Prohibited Uses:

Tree Controls:

Aboriginal Heritage Place:

Outbuildings or Fences:

Incorporated Plan:

Incorporated Plan Details

Description:

### Conservation Management

### Extra Research

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- BIBLIOGRAPHY** [1] Pers. comm. Pastor Eric Kenyon; Workshop Place 23.  
[2] Land File 1752/49.  
[3] Shire of Lillydale RB. SW Riding 1909-10. No. 1739; 1913-14 Nov. 2196.  
[4] Place No. 20.16.04.  
[5] Muriel McGivern, A History of Croydon, Vol. 2, pp.133-134.  
[6] Pers. comm. Pastor Eric Kenyon.