

MINUTES OF THE TWELFTH ASSEMBLY

The Twelfth Assembly was formally constituted with a welcome to country led by Uncle Max Ulo on behalf of the Indigenous Elders and worship led by the President, Gregor Henderson at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday, 15 July 2009.

OPENING ACTIONS

The Assembly resolved:

- 09.01 ROLL OF THE ASSEMBLY (See Appendix A)**
to adopt the roll of members.
- 09.02 ELECTION OF PRESIDENT**
to elect Alistair James Macrae as President of the Assembly, to hold office until the installation of his successor at the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly.
- 09.03 ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES**
- 09.03.01 Membership of Business Committee**
to appoint the following persons as members of the Business Committee for the Twelfth Assembly: Terence Corkin (Chairperson), Geoffrey Grinton (Business Manager), Glenda Blakefield, Karyn Burchell – Thomas, Cynthia Coghill, Anne Hogan, Andrew Johnson, Alistair Macrae, David Peters, Swee-Ann Koh, Paul Swadling and Grant Finlay.
- 09.03.02 Appointment of Minute Secretaries**
to appoint the following persons as Minute Secretaries: Jenny Bertalan and Lynda Stanford.
- 09.03.03 Order of Business**
to approve the order of business and the timetable submitted by the Business Committee, noting that decisions to vary the order of business and timetable can be taken by the Assembly at any time.
- 09.03.04 Confirmation of the Minutes**
to authorise the following persons to confirm the minutes of the Twelfth Assembly: Terence Corkin, Alistair Macrae, Geoffrey Grinton, Paul Swadling and Jenny Bertalan.
- 09.03.05 Ballot Process for Standing Committee Membership**
to amend the balloting procedures so that while the provision that at least two persons recognised by Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry as being among the multi-culturally and linguistically diverse members of the Assembly shall be elected, at least one of whom shall be a lay person; the requirement that one person shall be from the Pacific and that the other person shall be from Asia be removed.
- 09.03.06 Ballots and Nominating Procedures**
- a) to appoint Warwick van Ede as Returning Officer and Malcolm Gledhill as Assistant Returning Officer;
 - b) to appoint a Ballot Committee with responsibility for advising the Assembly on any questions relating to nominations and elections;
 - c) to appoint the following persons as members of the Ballot Committee: Warwick van Ede (Convener), Bruce Cornish, Malcolm Gledhill and Jackie Watts
 - d) to appoint the following persons as scrutineers: Arto Arvakian, John Case, Russ Clark, Sharonne Price and Joan McRae; and
 - e) to determine that the closing time for nominations and the submission of proposals on new matters is 6.00pm Friday July 17.
- 09.03.07 Business Procedures Involving Congress**
to amend its standing orders to the extent necessary to enable the following process in respect of the UAICC:

- allowing a representative of Congress to present the UAICC perspective on a proposal immediately after any movers and seconders, provided that they have indicated this intention ahead of time to either the General Secretary or the Business Manager;
- there will be no specific time limit applied to the Congress speaker(s) in this situation;
- in the deliberative phase Congress members will not be expected to show cards or to join a queue at the microphones to explain why they are not able to support a proposal. The President will not interpret this lack of showing cards as support for, or opposition to, any proposal;
- Congress shall be provided with a briefing from the Facilitation Group upon request to the General Secretary;
- Congress members will not be allocated to the Community Working Groups;
- Congress, as a group, may request the President that a discussion cease for a time and opportunity will be provided for Congress members to meet together in order to discuss their position. Such business will return to the agenda at the discretion of the President and Congress will have the opportunity to speak at that time.

09.03.08

Association of Persons with the Assembly

to associate the following persons with the Assembly for the business as listed, with the right to speak but not to vote:

- a) ecumenical guests
- (i) from other Australian churches and the National Council of Churches in Australia for the whole Assembly:
 - Sr Elizabeth Delaney, Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
 - Bishop Albert Chiew, Chinese Methodist Church in Australia
 - Fr Shenouda Mansour, Coptic Orthodox Diocese of Sydney
 - Major Paul Kinder, Salvation Army

 - (ii) from overseas churches and from international ecumenical bodies for the whole of the Assembly:
 - Rev David Bush, Methodist Church of New Zealand
 - Rev Richard Mortimer, United Reformed Church
 - Rev Dr Mark Wakelin, Methodist Church, UK
 - Rev Samson Lowa, Council for World Mission
 - Mr Iveta Short, Cook Islands Christian Church
 - Rev Jovili Meo, Methodist Church in Fiji
 - Pastor Philippe Capoa, Eglise Evangelique en Nouvelle – Caledonie
 - Rev Hawea Jackson, Ekalesia Kerisiano Niue
 - Rev Laka Renagi, United Church in Papua New Guinea
 - Rev Dr Finau Ahio, Free Wesleyan Church of Tongas
 - Rev Kitiona Tausi, Tuvalu Congregational Church
 - Pastor George Aki, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
 - The Most Revd. Dr.J.W. Gladstone, The Church of South India
 - Rev E. F. Lyngdoh, The Presbyterian Church of India
 - The Rt. Revd. Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy, The Church of North India
 - Rev Robert Stevanus Litelnoni, Protestant Evangelical Church in Timor
 - Rev I Made Priana, Protestant Church in Bali
 - Rev Dr Albert Obednedju Supit, The Christian Evangelical Church in Minahasa
 - Rev Kuntadi Sumadikarya, Indonesian Christian Church
 - Rev YeanWon Chung, Korean Christian Church in Japan

- Rev Dr Cho Seong Gi, Presbyterian Church of Korea
 - Rev Seo Jae-II, Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
 - Ms Helen Grace Paris, United Church of Christ in the Philippines
 - Rev Sayam Muangsak, The Church of Christ in Thailand
 - Rev Moises da Silva, Protestant Church in East Timor
 - Rev Simbarashe Sithole, The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- b) persons who will assist in resourcing the Assembly:
- (i) for the whole of the Assembly:
- Rev Mark Hillis, Christian Education
 - Mrs Rosemary Young, Frontier Services
 - Mr Warwick van Ede, Legal Reference Committee
 - Rev Dr Tony Floyd, Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry
 - Mrs Lin Hatfield Dodds, UnitingCare Australia
 - Rev Elenie Poulos, UnitingJustice Australia
 - Rev Prof James Haire
 - Rev John Mavor
 - Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood
- (ii) for specific business of the Assembly:
- Mr Bruce Binnie, Assembly Finance and Audit Committee
 - Rev Dr Sandy Yule, Christian Unity Working Group
 - Dr Marelle Harrisun and Rev Dr Lee Levett Olson, Coolamon College
 - Rev Gale Hall, Defence Force Chaplaincy
 - Mrs Christine Gordon, Historical Reference Committee
 - Rev Dr Douglas Miller, Reception of Ministers Committee
 - Rev Sef Carroll, Relations with Other Faiths
 - Rev Dr Lorraine Parkinson, Task Group on Christian-Jewish Relations
 - Rev Carolyn Thornley, Theology and Discipleship
 - Mrs Alyson Madsen, UC Adult Fellowship
 - Rev Sandy Boyce, Uniting Faith and Discipleship
 - Ms Helen Hodgson, UnitingJustice Australia
 - Rev John Barr, UnitingWorld
 - Rev Dr Kerry Enright, UnitingWorld
 - Mr Rob Floyd, UnitingWorld,
 - Mr Bruce Mullan, UnitingWorld
 - Mr Gavin Pretorius, Proposal 41 – Delegation of Authority to Consent to Property Transactions
 - Mr John Langmore, Proposal 43 – An Economy of Life: Re-imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World
 - Rev John Rickard, UAICC, and the Proposal from the Task Group on the Preamble to the Constitution

09.04 MINISTERIAL MATTERS (See Appendix B)

The General Secretary tabled the names of Deacons, Ministers of the Word, Youth Workers, Lay Pastors and Community Ministers who have been received by the Uniting Church since the Eleventh Assembly, of Ministers of the Word, Deaconesses and Youth Workers who have died since the Eleventh Assembly, and of Ministers of the Word, Deaconesses and Lay Pastors whose recognition has been withdrawn.

09.05 RETIRING PRESIDENT

09.05.01 to receive the report of the retiring President, Gregor Henderson;

09.05.02 to record its thanks to God and its deep appreciation for the service of Gregor Henderson as the eleventh President of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia in this resolution:

It was clear at the 11th Assembly that one of Gregor's great gifts to the Church was his deep understanding of Uniting Church's consensus decision making processes. This cannot be underestimated. Having worked for many years as the General Secretary of the Assembly Gregor moved seamlessly into the role of President. His wise, energetic chairing meant that the 11th Assembly and the subsequent Assembly Standing Committee was in very capable hands. The 11th Assembly also agreed to pay particular attention to the needs of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in its business procedures. Gregor is one of the few chairpersons who can smoothly craft proposals from the floor ensuring the mind of a meeting is gathered in decisions made.

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches was also ably led by Gregor in introducing the consensus decision making processes into its meeting procedures. There are many wonderful photographic images of Gregor, head bowed, in serious discussion with our brothers and sisters within the WCC. Gregor has a breadth of knowledge of the church ecumenically and within our partner Churches which has been a great gift for the Church. He loves people. He finds great joy in his love of God and this is infectious.

But what has been most obvious in this triennium is that Gregor absolutely loves the Uniting Church...passionately. It is in his DNA. He has travelled far and wide in his three year term, not just within the national Church but globally, taking with him his personality of infectious enthusiasm and love of God and God's church.

Across the Assembly congregations were always left in good heart after a visit from the President. Gregor embraced the role of President and constantly remarked that it was a great privilege. He was prepared to roll his sleeves up and be there! Many young people will remember Gregor walking with the same spring in his step around Methodist Ladies College talking warmly to everyone he met during NCYC 2009.

But undoubtedly it was the three ministers Conferences that Gregor initiated that have been a major triumph in this triennium. Hosted in Bali, the Northern Territory and the Gold Coast these gatherings were acclaimed a resounding success. Led by Gregor, Andrew Dutney and Jenny Byrnes they explored the Basis of Union and who we are as Uniting Church. It was an inspiring event for the Ministers who participated. Comments from these events have been overwhelmingly positive with strong hopes of this initiative continuing.

Personally for Gregor this was a difficult three years with the loss of his wife Alison to cancer in 2007. Gregor understandably 'downed tools' during this time to be with her and his family. Gregor was quite overwhelmed by the outpouring of love and prayers during this time, and after, for him and his family.

Gregor declares he is first and foremost a congregational minister and he has been most appreciative of the support offered by his Canberra congregation over the three years and looks forward to continuing ministry there.

The Uniting Church is indebted to Gregor Henderson for giving so much of himself as our eleventh President, and we commend him in his future life and ministry to the love of the triune God.

BUSINESS FROM THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

The Assembly resolved:

09.06 Assembly Key Directions

Believing that God is calling us to fresh obedience to be the people of God in Australia at this time, in the coming triennium to:

- a) continue working with the UAICC:

- (i) towards finding new and effective expressions of the covenant between the UAICC and other parts of the Uniting Church;
 - (ii) in seeking reconciliation between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians;
 - (iii) to seek ways that enable the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spirituality to be received in the life of the church;
 - (iv) to encourage individual members of the Uniting Church to develop long term working relationships alongside indigenous people; and
 - (v) in community services as an act of practical reconciliation;
- b) engage in Jesus' ministry of peacemaking within the world and the church by:
- developing resources that will assist our members and councils to develop skills and strategies to live together in peace in a multicultural, cross-cultural and diverse UCA;
 - seeking closer unity with other churches;
 - deepening relationships with churches in Asia, the Pacific, Southern Africa and Councils of Churches;
 - working with people of other faiths to promote mutual respect and understanding;
 - helping our members learn to live and act as peacemakers, as taught and modelled by Jesus;
 - protecting and promoting human rights;
 - fostering respect for God's creation and the goal of living in harmony with the environment; and
 - fostering equity and reconciliation within the Australian community;
- c) in consultation with other Councils of the Church:
- (i) support and nurture a passion for evangelism, discipleship formation and leadership development;
 - (ii) emphasise spiritual development and faith-sharing, providing young people with opportunities to lead; and
 - (iii) explore new expressions of mission and Christian community and the renewal of existing forms.
- d) commit to:
- (i) the articulation of our doctrine in a way that communicates clearly to our members;
 - (ii) articulate and celebrate our identity as the Uniting Church in Australia;
 - (iii) the education of our members to better know, own and share their faith; and
 - (iv) encourage a conversation as to what we need to be as a church;
- e) critically evaluate the polity and governance of the church with a view to reducing the level of prescription, particularly for young people, increasing the level of active encouragement and enhancing the capability of Councils of the church to hear and respond to current missional imperatives.

09.07

Designation of Property as Being for Missional Use

to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend the Regulations to:

- a) create a classification of congregational property to be called 'Available for Alternative Missional Use', which may apply to all or part of property that is held for the use of a congregation;
- b) and provide a description of what constitutes 'Alternative Missional Use', that includes use by or for:

- new congregations, faith communities or new worship gatherings within existing church buildings;
 - future new congregations or faith communities, perhaps in a similar context, as stipulated by synod upon recommendation from the presbytery;
 - growing or migrant congregations with inadequate property resources or any other congregation which in the opinion of the presbytery has significant engagement in mission;
 - synod or presbytery approved strategic mission initiatives such as leadership;
 - such other missional priorities as the synod determines.
- d) establish the process through which a congregation and Church Council (*and insert as appropriate*) may resolve to make part or all of its property available for 'Alternative Missional Use'; and also how a Presbytery, after appropriate consultation with a congregation and in a duly constituted meeting of the presbytery, may make recommendations to the synod to classify a property held for the use of a congregation as 'Available for Alternative Missional Use';
- e) require that in any consultation
- the Presbytery shall take proper account of the purpose, functions, responsibilities and rights of the Congregation as described in the Regulations;
 - the Presbytery and the Congregation(s) have a responsibility to listen faithfully to one another;
 - the Presbytery shall take into account any effect on an existing placement;
- f) provide that if after three years of a designation by the Synod as 'Available for Alternative Missional Use' the property use has not been changed then the designation lapses;
- g) establish the process whereby once a congregational property has been designated as 'Available for Alternative Missional Use' a Presbytery may transfer responsibility for the management of a property or benefit of use or income from a property to another body recognised by the Presbytery and / or Synod;
- h) ensure that appropriate arrangements for the care of the congregation, its members and life and mission are attended to, and provide for the possibility that the affected congregation may participate in the process of investing the resources for which they were previously responsible into a new mission;
- i) ensure that any appeals body and/or process be fairly constituted in the various arrangements within the bounds of each Synod; and
- k) invite Presbyteries and Synods to bring reports to the Fourteenth Assembly that detail their experiences and any concerns arising from the application of Alternative Missional Use provisions.

09.08 Preamble to the Constitution

09.08.01 to receive the report;

09.08.02 to note that:

- a) the purpose of a preamble may be to rehearse those historical facts, features of the community (including beliefs and values), and other issues which better enable the community to understand what is enacted in the constitution;
- b) a preamble can give expression to what a community considers important and formative for its life, and can be educative and have a significant symbolic value; and

- c) a preamble is not legally binding in terms of interpretation of the constitution, or for any understanding of regulations which flow from that constitution;

09.08.03 to amend the Preamble to the Constitution by deleting the existing Preamble and replacing it with:

PREAMBLE TO CONSTITUTION

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on 22 June, 1977 by the union of the Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australasia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia after the approval of "The Basis of Union" by the Councils and Courts of those three churches, guided by the belief that they had been called by God into this union.

The Church in accordance with the Basis of Union accepts that the responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them and so organises its life that locally, regionally and nationally, government is entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing gifts and graces, with which God has endowed them for the building up of God's Church and that therefore the Church shall be governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation to the Church and the world.

The Church in accordance with the Basis of Union acknowledges that the demand of the Gospel, the response of the Church to the Gospel and the discipline which it requires are partly expressed in the formulation by the Church of its law, the aim of which is to confess God's will for the life of Christ's Church.

As the Church believes God guided it into union so it believes that God is calling it to continually seek a renewal of its life as a community of First Peoples and of Second Peoples from many lands, and as part of that to

RECOGNISE THAT

1. When the churches that formed the Uniting Church arrived in Australia as part of the process of colonisation they entered a land that had been created and sustained by the Triune God they knew in Jesus Christ.
2. Through this land God had nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, who continue to understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians (meaning 'sovereign' in the languages of the First Peoples) of these lands and waters since time immemorial.
3. The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.
4. Some members of the uniting churches approached the First Peoples with good intentions, standing with them in the name of justice; considering their well being, culture and language as the churches proclaimed the reconciling purpose of the Triune God found in the good news about Jesus Christ.
5. Many in the uniting churches, however, shared the values and relationships of the emerging colonial society including paternalism and racism towards the First Peoples. They were complicit in the injustice that resulted in many of the First Peoples being dispossessed from

their land, their language, their culture and spirituality, becoming strangers in their own land.

6. The uniting churches were largely silent as the dominant culture of Australia constructed and propagated a distorted version of history that denied this land was occupied, utilised, cultivated and harvested by these First Peoples who also had complex systems of trade and inter-relationships. As a result of this denial, relationships were broken and the very integrity of the Gospel proclaimed by the churches was diminished.
7. From the beginning of colonisation the First Peoples challenged their dispossession and the denial of their proper place in this land. In time this was taken up in the community, in the courts, in the parliaments, in the way history was recorded and told, and in the Uniting Church in Australia.
8. In 1985 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members of the Uniting Church in Australia formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.
9. In 1988 the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress invited the other members of the Church to join in a solemn act of covenanting before God.
10. After much struggle and debate, in 1994 the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia discovered God's call, accepted this invitation and entered into an ever deepening covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This was so that all may see a destiny together, praying and working together for a fuller expression of our reconciliation in Jesus Christ.

AND THUS the Church celebrates this Covenantal relationship as a foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation.

- 09.08.04 to note that Regulation 3.6.34 provides that the
“... Standing Committee (if in that Committee's opinion special circumstances exist or it is necessary or convenient in order to give effect to any resolution of the Assembly) by resolution:
(a) may grant exemption from compliance with all or any of the Regulations of the Assembly; and
(b) may make alternative Regulations in respect of all or any such matters;
in either case to have application either generally or only to such persons, congregations, councils and other bodies and in such circumstances and subject to such conditions as may be specified by resolution”;
- 09.08.05 to advise the Standing Committee that where the Regulations of the Church limit the capacity of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to exercise oversight in its ministry in the Church and the community, the Standing Committee may, having regard to the covenantal relationship and in consultation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, consider that there are special circumstances warranting the Standing Committee exercising its authority under Regulation 3.6.34 in a manner that facilitates the ministry of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Church;
- 09.08.06 to request the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Standing Committee to note that actions taken under Regulation 3.6.34 may

- be of a temporary nature until such time as the Assembly has the opportunity to consider a permanent change to the Regulations;
- 09.08.07 to request the Assembly Standing Committee, at the beginning of each of its meetings through this triennium, to note its authority as set out in Regulation 3.6.34 and the resolutions of this Assembly on this subject;
- 09.08.08 to amend Division 4 of the Constitution to read

DIVISION 4

COVENANTAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS

- 49.** Noting the Preamble and the Church's desire to build on its covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, and in order to serve more effectively the purposes of God in the land of Australia, the Church shall remain open to the ways in which the covenantal relationship may find fuller expression in its life.
- 49A.** (a) A Synod may, at the request of a Regional Committee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, prescribe that the Regional Committee or the National Executive of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress may have and exercise all or specific rights, powers, duties and responsibilities of a Synod or Presbytery under this Constitution and the Regulations (including ordination and other rights, powers and responsibilities relating to Ministers) for the purpose of fulfilling any responsibility of the Regional Committee or of the National Executive of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for Uniting Church work with Aboriginal and Islander people within the bounds of the Synod.
- (b) Any such prescription may be
- (i) made subject to such limitations as may arise from the nature of the Congress or the Regional Committee and such limitations or conditions as may be required by the Synod and
- (ii) withdrawn or varied from time to time by the Synod, after negotiation with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.
- (c) If a Synod declines a request from a Regional Committee made under (a) above the Assembly shall at the request of the Regional Committee seek to negotiate a resolution of the dispute in the spirit of the Covenantal relationship;
- (d) and if the Regional Committee remains unsatisfied the Assembly may direct the Synod to make the transfer of some or all of the specific rights, powers, duties and responsibilities of a Synod or Presbytery as requested by the Regional Committee.;
- 09.08.09 to authorise the Standing Committee on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee to produce Regulations that give effect to the amendment to Clause 49A of the Constitution;
- 09.08.10 to amend the Constitution by adding the following definitions to Clause 3

Covenantal relationship is the relationship which exists between the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Assembly, which began in the invitation of 1988 and response of 1994, in which both groups commit themselves to developing more just, inclusive and equal relationships in the

Church that recognise the place of First Peoples, the difficult history of this nation since invasion, and the particular responsibility of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for ministry with and among Aboriginal and Islander peoples.

First Peoples are the Aboriginal and Islander peoples of Australia who are the indigenous peoples of this land. These peoples are a diverse group with many languages and communal identities.

Second Peoples are all those peoples who have come after the First Peoples and who are beneficiaries in some way of the invasion and dispossession of the lands of the First Peoples. Among Second Peoples within the Church are many whose racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, experiences and expression of Christian faith are not those originating in Western forms of thought and theological expression; and

09.08.11 to amend Clause 71 to read: All rulings as to the interpretation of this Constitution or any of the Regulations made by the Assembly shall be made by the President after taking appropriate advice, and noting the Preamble, provided however that any such ruling may be confirmed, varied, modified, rescinded or over-ruled by the Assembly or by the Standing Committee on its behalf.

09.09 Property Policy for the Uniting Church in Australia

09.09.01 to receive the report;

09.09.02 to call on congregations, schools and agencies to look proactively for opportunities to encourage and resource new and emerging congregations and faith communities within all cultures and cultural groupings;

09.09.03 to authorise the Standing Committee, on advice from the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to make Regulations relating to property sharing arrangements between two or more Uniting Church congregations or faith communities including provisions that:

- (i) where two or more Uniting Church congregations or faith communities function or will function from one property base, a culturally sensitive and appropriate form of memorandum of understanding or covenant [not a tenancy agreement] will apply to that relationship, according access and usage rights and stewardship responsibilities, and an appropriate sharing of costs, and taking into account the ministry and mission needs of both congregations or faith communities, on the basis of joint custodial stewardship;
- (ii) such agreements are to be negotiated by the congregations or faith communities involved and the relevant presbytery/ies and approved by the synod concerned;
- (iii) the transfer and responsibility for the stewardship and use of the premises will normally be made by the presbytery/ies having oversight of the congregation(s) or faith community/ies concerned, in consultation with the relevant church council/s and the synod, and that the synods may provide policies and processes to assist presbytery/ies and church council/s in this process;
- (iv) where more than one UCA congregation or faith community have or request access to UCA congregational property and there is a dispute or conflict over property issues:
 - (a) a resolution will be sought between the congregations through the relevant church councils;
 - (b) if there is no agreement, a decision can be made by the presbytery/s having oversight of the congregations; and
 - (c) if any party is dissatisfied with the decision of the presbytery/s an appeal may be made to a meeting of the Synod Standing Committee for a decision;

- (v) there is an expectation of compliance with a “National Property Policy” that has been approved by the Assembly Standing Committee;

- 09.09.04 to request Assembly Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry to resource the Assembly Standing Committee in the development and adoption of a “National Property Policy” by bringing a draft Policy document to the ASC in November 2010, which is based on any changes to the Regulations and ensuring that the following considerations are taken up in it:
- (i) a register to be kept by synods of all Uniting Church congregations or faith communities seeking a place of worship;
 - (ii) any Uniting Church congregation considering making property available to a non-UCA congregation, be required through their presbytery/presbyteries to first check if any UCA congregations or faith communities are listed on the register seeking accommodation in their area;
 - (iii) whilst taking account of ministry and mission needs, priority shall normally be given to UCA congregations or faith communities listed on the register;
 - (iv) any congregations currently sharing property with a non-UCA congregation or Fellowship Group to have a regular review by the presbytery/presbyteries included in the ‘tenancy’ arrangements;
 - (v) preference to be given to UCA congregations/fellowship groups seeking a property when the term of an existing contract with the non-UCA congregation concludes, except if in the opinion of the presbytery the non-UCA congregation/fellowship group is actively exploring membership of the UCA, or if particular circumstances exist, to continue the relationship; and
 - (vi) where more than one UCA congregation or faith community are sharing property, irrespective of racial, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, that they undertake appropriate workshops together e.g. property sharing and Cross-cultural relationships.

09.10 Provision for Co-options to the Standing Committee

- 09.10.01 to amend the Constitution to read:

CONSTITUTION

36. The Synod shall appoint from among its members a Standing Committee which shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Synod except such as the Synod may determine. The Standing Committee may co-opt additional members of the Synod to act on the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall consist of no fewer lay members than ministerial members.

47. Each Assembly shall appoint from among its members a Standing Committee which shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Assembly between meetings of the Assembly in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Assembly except such as the Assembly may determine. The Standing Committee may co-opt additional members of the Assembly to act on the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall consist of no fewer lay members than ministerial members.

- 09.10.02 subject to the amendments to the Constitution being approved by the Church, to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 3.6.25(a) to read:

3.6.25 (a) ~~The Standing Committee shall consist of the President, President-elect, ex-President and General Secretary of the Assembly, the Chairperson and the National Administrator of~~

~~the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (all ex officio) and 18 members of the Assembly elected by the Assembly.~~

- (a) The Standing Committee shall consist of
- the President, President-elect, ex-President and General Secretary of the Assembly (ex-officio);
 - the Chairperson and the National Administrator of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (ex officio);
 - 18 members of the Assembly elected by the Assembly; and
 - no more than four persons co-opted by the Standing Committee.

Only members of the Assembly are eligible for membership of the Standing Committee.

09.11 Reappointment of the General Secretary

to reappoint the Reverend Terence Corkin as General Secretary of the Assembly for a further 3 year term from 1/1/2010 until 31/12/2012.

09.12 Refocusing on the Constitution:

- a) to encourage members and council of the Uniting Church to engage actively in a conversation about what sort of church God is calling us to be in the light of the Basis of Union read in the current Australian context and how this might be reflected in the Constitution of the church and the needs of local congregations, faith communities and agencies;
- b) to request the Assembly Standing Committee to facilitate a conversation across the Church with appropriate resources addressing the questions:
- What are the core and essential marks of the UCA, and what can be changed to meet the new situation in which we live?
 - What are the principles and core values and beliefs which need to be enshrined in the Constitution?
- c) to request the Assembly Standing Committee to prepare proposals for the 13th Assembly that gather up the conversations which have occurred, and to make suggestions (after consultation with the Legal Reference Committee) – if appropriate – about ways in which the Constitution and Regulations might be changed to enable the Uniting Church to share more faithfully in God's mission in this time.

09.13 Revision of the Regulations

- a) to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend the Regulations to achieve the following outcomes:
- a) removing redundant provisions;
 - b) standardising of language and style;
 - c) addressing the numbering of sections;
 - d) simplifying the Regulations so that they are prescriptive only where it is deemed to be essential, and simplified to enhance the capacity of Councils to be adaptive and missional in their particular contexts; and
 - e) consistently reflects the theology and polity of the Uniting Church;
- b) to request the Standing Committee to:

- (i) include in its deliberations consideration of providing for the establishment of binding policies and / or by laws that can be established and amended by the Assembly Standing Committee; and
- (ii) consult with synods, presbyteries, Congress, multicultural networks and the UnitingCare network as it undertakes its review and development of new Regulations;

BUSINESS FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

The Agency reports were received en bloc in plenary session and dealt with in working groups. Questions were put to the National Directors and answers were provided in a plenary session.

The Assembly resolved:

09.14 BENEFICIARY FUND

The report was presented by Mr Robert Runco (Executive Director) and Rev Dr Robert Hoskin (Chairperson).

09.14.01 to receive the report.

09.15 COOLAMON COLLEGE

09.15.01 Appreciation to Rev Dr Lee Levett-Olson

to place on record its appreciation for the work of Rev Dr Lee Levett-Olson, during his term as Principal of Coolamon College (2003-2008).

Rev Dr Lee Levett-Olson was the third principal of Coolamon College in its 15 years of existence. He began his appointment at a time when the College was still located in Brisbane and associated with the Brisbane College of Divinity for undergraduate study, and Sydney College of Divinity for postgraduate study, with a certificate needing to be nationally accredited in the VET Sector. However the Assembly had already approved the move to Adelaide with the links to Flinders University.

To this complex web of relationships and new tasks Lee brought a commitment to establish sound working relationships and to ensuring that programs were put in place that would enable students to study the whole range of courses from certificates, nationally accredited, through to doctoral level in distance mode. This was a time of major change, with a completely new staff to be appointed, 40 topics to be approved at the Certificate level, so that all campus-based topics could also be available by distance mode.

During Lee's time as Principal, administrative changes demanded by the VET and Higher Education sectors placed increasing demands on staff time. Assessment methods were changed completely in the certificate courses, and staff had to undertake training in assessment at Certificate IV level. New relationships were developed with academic staff of the Adelaide College of Divinity who undertook the task of writing new topics for the Bachelor and Masters level topics with some working as assessors. Financial and other arrangements with Flinders University staff of the school and with the Flexible Learning Centre were developed to improve resourcing.

Throughout his term as Principal, Lee exhibited a significant commitment to his own continuing education and professional development, including Masters level studies at Deakin University in Distance Education approaches.

During Lee's term as Principal all the Synods reviewed the way they delivered leadership and theological education to lay people and those candidating for the ordained ministry, as well as in continuing education for ministers. This meant that new ways of relating to the synod lay education centres had to be developed. They moved from being agencies of the college for enrolling and assessing those studying at certificate level to users of Coolamon College topic materials through licensing agreements, for non-

assessed learning, with consequent administrative demands upon Coolamon College.

Notwithstanding the significant administrative and operational demands upon him, Lee sustained the normal wide range of involvements expected of a leading academic, including writing and teaching courses as well as supervising masters and doctoral students doing research in theology.

For the latter part of his placement, Lee Levett-Olson was the President of the Centre for Theology, Science and Culture, a joint centre of Adelaide College of Divinity and Flinders University, and gave outstanding leadership in the centre's activities. His wisdom, creative and critical thinking abilities identified numerous ways in which the operation of the college and of ACD needed to change. He initiated the establishment of accredited study in the Masters of Ministry award, available by distance as reading topics, to equip people as resource ministers, because of his awareness of this increasing trend across the whole church.

Lee's conviction that lay people deserve the highest quality resourcing for their learning meant that he consistently advocated for the needs of distance students however "distant" they found themselves to be from conventional centres of learning. During his time at Coolamon College Lee exhibited a deep commitment to equity for all and to the role of the college in "equipping the whole people of God for ministry" and mission, never losing sight of that vision in carrying out his role as Principal.

In moving to Nungalinga College as its Principal, Lee has fulfilled a long-held dream of working with Aboriginal people and found a new expression for his commitment to justice and ecumenism.

We thank God for Lee and his commitment, creativity and costly service during his term as Principal of Coolamon College and pray God's blessing on his new ministry in the Northern Synod.

09.15.02

Appreciation to Dr Marelle Harisun

to place on record its appreciation for the service of Dr Marelle Harisun over 16 years, including as Chairperson of the Coolamon College Council.

Dr Marelle Harisun has the unique distinction of being the only person involved in the National Network for Distance Theological Education (NNDTE), which became Coolamon College, for its whole existence. Marelle attended her first meeting by teleconference in February 1993 and served as Chairperson of the College Council at the time of its closure in December 2008.

Assembly's concern for equity of access to quality theological learning by rural and remote church leaders was matched by Marelle's passion for justice. Distance education helped lay people discover gifts and talents that had long gone untested. In particular, the ministry of Lay Preachers – one of the treasures of the Uniting Church – was made accessible to women and men who had neither the free time nor the money to study in big cities.

As the Network evolved into Coolamon College, Dr Harisun's ecumenical approach helped establish formal partnerships with Anglican dioceses, with the Sydney College of Divinity, and with overseas partner churches. Under the stewardship of Rev Dr Bos and Dr Harisun, new students began to take up the challenge of life-changing learning: prisoners in custody seeking new beginnings, pensioners learning in a safe setting that valued their experience, people with little English joining the church.

At the 1997 Assembly in Perth, Marelle was elected Chairperson of the Coolamon College Board, and remained in that role for the next eleven years, apart from a brief period when she served as Acting Principal. Dr Harisun enjoyed strong working relationships with a succession of Principals,

providing wise guidance, expert advice, and connections to a wide network of colleagues across Australia. A period as General Secretary of the South Australian Synod, followed by a year as Acting General Secretary in the Synod of Western Australia, simply enhanced Marelle's contribution to the promotion and professionalism of Coolamon as it expanded its courses to cater for new needs.

Working closely with several key partners, Dr Harisun played a central role in the complex negotiations that led to a shift of Coolamon's headquarters from Brisbane to Adelaide in 2003. The College became a member of the Adelaide College of Divinity, providing access to awards in the private and university higher education sector, and to Certificates II through Diploma in the VET Sector.

Throughout difficult changes in education and regulation, Marelle was instrumental in helping keep Coolamon on track and effective. College staff remain enormously grateful for her unflagging commitment and support. Dr Harisun's active involvement with Congress and Covenanting initiatives, her key role in developing Ministerial Misconduct and sexual abuse provisions for the church, and her broad ecumenical and international partnerships, all contributed to the quality of Coolamon's programmes.

In countless ways the church has been enriched by the work of Dr Marelle Harisun. Through her gifts, hundreds of lay people have discovered God's call to leadership and the capacity to answer that call, and congregations across Australia are well served by confident disciples, trained in ministry by distance education, working together to transform the world in Jesus Christ.

For her incalculable contribution to that discipleship through Coolamon College, the church owes Dr Marelle Harisun its deep respect and profound gratitude.

09.16 CHRISTIAN UNITY WORKING GROUP

World Council of Churches Living Letters Delegation

- a) to note our support for the recommendation brought to our attention by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) that the World Council of Churches send a 'Living Letters' delegation to the Northern Territory;
- b) to advise the National Council of Churches in Australia of our support and our willingness to participate in this visit, urging that the delegation visit not only Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory but also visit the Prime Minister, the Minister for Indigenous Affairs and other Members of Parliament; and
- c) to request the Assembly Standing Committee to explore ways in which this visit can be supported financially.

09.17 MINISTERIAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

to record its appreciation of the Rev Chris Udy for his work as Chairperson of the Ministerial Education Commission, 2003–2009.

Rev Chris Udy has led the Ministerial Education Commission (EMC) during a period of great challenge and change. During the last two triennia each synod has been struggling to respond to changing circumstances and opportunities for ministry seeking the best way to provide education, training and formation for Christian ministry – lay and ordained. In three synods – Victoria-Tasmania, Queensland, and South Australia – this has involved significant innovation in the organization of educational institutions and networks. The UAICC has also been proactive in addressing the need to equip Indigenous Christian leaders and ministers, requiring fresh thinking from the responsible colleges – Nungalinya and Yalga-Binbi. This period also

saw Coolamon College conclude its important national ministry and the challenges of distance education and training shifting to synod-based agencies. It saw the church concluding entry into the specified ministries of Youth Worker, Lay Pastor and Community Minister and the introduction of a new specified ministry of Pastor.

It has been the task of the MEC to oversee all this change and innovation, and to enable synods, the UAICC, and their educational agencies to maintain a national perspective – being accountable to the wider Uniting Church without any loss of passion or courage for faithful and effective responses to local needs. Rev Chris Udy has led the MEC and its Executive through this eventful period

Chris has given consistently clear-sighted leadership to the Commission, skilfully guiding it through complex issues, picking up all points of the conversation and enabling the members to think nationally about local concerns. He has shown a great capacity for drawing members beyond their synod borders into discussions for the benefit of the whole church while still recognizing matters which need to be addressed locally. He has shown himself to be a clear, thoughtful communicator with the ability to draw together the disparate threads of a debate in order to move it forward.

Between each annual meetings of the Commission Chris has chaired the MEC Executive, ensuring continuing attention to the responsibilities of the Commission in addressing work referred to it and in responding to the need of the colleges and other agencies for advice or decision. Chris supported the MEC's administrative officers with clear directions and sensitivity to the way they carried out their duties in the context of wider responsibilities. His handover of responsibilities to the incoming MEC Executive, to be based within the Queensland synod, has been as meticulous as his work over the preceding six years – ensuring that the Assembly's care and oversight of ministerial education proceeds without interruption.

We thank God for the leadership and exemplary service of Rev Chris Udy.

09.18

TASK GROUP ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

09.18.01

to receive the report.

09.18.02

to adopt the Statement "Jews and Judaism; A Statement by the Uniting Church in Australia" as the Uniting Church's position on Christian Jewish relations (See Appendix C).

09.19

TASK GROUP ON THE CODE OF ETHICS

09.19.01

to receive the report.

09.19.02

to adopt the revised *Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice* (See Appendix D).

09.20

TASK GROUP ON NATIONAL CONFERENCES

09.20.01

to receive the report;

09.20.02

to note the actions already underway or in the process of being taken up by Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry in particular to:

- a) restructure the membership of the Working Group: Uniting National Conferences in March 2008 as set out in the Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry report; and
- b) rewrite the guidelines for National Conferences taking account of matters discussed and clarified at that Uniting National Conferences meeting;

09.20.03

to request Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry, through its Working Group on Uniting National Conferences, and in consultation with the National Chairperson or nominee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, to continue with plans for the 2009 Working Group: Uniting

National Conferences meeting to take place at “Narana” as indicated in the report; and

- 09.20.04 to request Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry to report progress to the Standing Committee with a comprehensive report to the 13th Assembly in 2012 in all areas mentioned in this report and particularly with the Revised National Conference Guidelines and the planned Working Group on Uniting National Conferences meeting.

09.21 UNITING JUSTICE AUSTRALIA

- 09.21.01 to adopt the Statement, “An Economy of Life: Re-imagining human progress for a flourishing world” (Appendix E);

- 09.21.02 a) to commit itself and call on members, councils and agencies of the Uniting Church to:
- (i) examine their lives as Christian disciples and communities that they may first of all serve God in the world through the love, compassion and generosity extended to all our neighbours;
 - (ii) examine their lives in order to identify where and when they behave in ways that deny human and ecological wholeness;
 - (iii) examine their lives in order to identify where and when monetary interests are placed ahead of human and ecological wellbeing;
 - (iv) identify, develop and implement alternative systems, structures and processes within the church that promote the practice of the economy of God and model a way of being in the world which promotes human wholeness, equity and ecological sustainability;
 - (v) challenge rampant consumerism and materialism as antithetical to what is necessary for a healthy and sustainable world and engage in public conversation about notions of sufficiency, abundance and the fullness of life;
 - (vi) challenge the commodification of people, the exercise of the profit-motive when it denies people without wealth access to essential services such as water and electricity, decent healthcare, education and other essential social services, and the recasting of education as merely a tool for producing productive human beings; and
 - (vii) advocate social and economic policies which
 - are based on relational rather than mechanistic models
 - support the growth of vibrant, safe and inclusive communities
 - overcome poverty and injustice, addressing, as first priority, the needs of people who are most vulnerable
 - dramatically and urgently reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption
 - support the research, development and implementation of clean and renewable energy, and
 - prioritise peacemaking and seek to end militarism;
- b) to call on Australian governments to develop economic systems and structures which recognise that human and ecological flourishing require much more than the creation of wealth by ensuring that public policy seeks to address first and foremost the wellbeing of all people, especially those most vulnerable, and the environment, including
- (i) regulatory reform of financial markets including systems of greater accountability;
 - (ii) the reduction of military spending and redirection of human and financial resources towards peacemaking;
 - (iii) the reform of the Australian tax and transfer system to make it a progressive tool for the equitable distribution of wealth, including taxing the most wealthy at an appropriate level and

- providing adequate income support for those people who are most vulnerable and disadvantaged;
 - (iv) the provision of universally accessible and affordable essential services such as water and electricity;
 - (v) workplace relations policies which ensure just working conditions – fair and sustainable wages and conditions, with adequate protections especially for low-skilled low-paid workers, job security and predictability of hours;
 - (vi) the recognition of the importance of shared (community) leisure time, reasonably priced and readily available childcare, and paid parental leave;
 - (vii) the increase and prioritisation of support for renewable energy over support for climate polluting industries; and
 - (viii) urban planning which is marked by a commitment to enhancing and protecting ‘the commons’ (public space including parks, art galleries, performance spaces and community centres), ensuring that people have access to workplaces close to home, public transport, schools, healthcare and social services, and an understanding of people’s inherent need of spaces and places of beauty and quiet;
- c) to call on the Australian Government to work with other national governments and multilateral institutions to redevelop a global economic system that is regulated, transparent and accountable, for the wellbeing of people and the planet, and includes action that
 - (i) renews and strengthens global action to achieve the Millennium Development Goals;
 - (ii) immediately and dramatically reduces greenhouse gas emissions through the development and use of renewable sources of energy, the reduction of our dependence on fossil fuels, and the saving of the world’s oceans and forests;
 - (iii) commits to ending the stranglehold of the military-industrial complex on the global economic system;
 - (iv) develops a practice of ethics and social justice that can guide financial markets in the world;
 - (v) regulates ‘the market’ and holds it accountable for unjust and exploitative practices, environmental damage, excesses of greed, the fostering of rampant and damaging consumerism;
 - (vi) creates a new international financial architecture developed under the aegis of the United Nations where broad participation of all countries and civil society can take place and which creates a process for the democratisation of all global finance and trade institutions;
 - (vii) encourages the development and sustainability of local economies through localised and sustainable systems of food production and consumption, fair trade, microfinance and incentives for investment in rural, regional and Indigenous communities; and
 - (viii) recognises the intrinsic value of cultural heritage (including sites, language and customs) as an expression of the wholeness of humanity and ensures its conservation, and
- d) to call on the Australian Government to shift its rhetoric from the focus on continual and unlimited growth and redefine how Australia measures its progress as a nation in terms of wellbeing rather than monetary indices such as GDP, doing so in such a way that these measures eventually become primary and directive.

09.22

UNITINGWORLD

09.22.01

“Trade Justice – A Uniting Church View”

to adopt the document “Trade Justice – A Uniting Church View” as the basis for its education, representation, advocacy and action with relevant bodies and people (Appendix F).

- 09.22.02 **Federal Government Aid Budget**
to commend the Australian Federal Government for its commitment to increasing the aid budget to 0.5% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015 and encourage it to extend that commitment to 0.7% by 2015 in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
- 09.22.03 **Zimbabwe**
to affirm its solidarity with, and prayer for, its partner churches in Zimbabwe, the Methodist Church of Zimbabwe and the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.
- 09.22.04 **West Papua**
to urge the Australian Federal Government, as it increases its engagement with the Indonesian Government, to continue to encourage the Indonesian Government to implement more thoroughly and respectfully the Special Autonomy status of West Papua and to uphold the human rights of West Papua citizens.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS AND RELATED MATTERS

The Assembly resolved:

- 09.23** **CLAUSE 39 OF THE CONSTITUTION**
- 09.23.01 to amend the Constitution by the addition of the following sub-clause to clause 39:
- (b) (i) If within six months of a decision of the Assembly, or its Standing Committee, at least half the Presbyteries within the bounds of each of at least half the Synods, or at least half the Synods, notify the President that they have determined that in their opinion
- a decision includes a matter vital to the life of the Church; and
 - there was inadequate consultation prior to the decision the President shall notify the Church that the decision is suspended until the Assembly has undertaken further consultation;
- (ii) Following this consultation, the Assembly shall determine whether to affirm, vary or revoke the original decision and report its decision and reasons to the Church;
- (iii) No action taken in reliance on a the original decision of the Assembly prior to the President's notification to the Church under clause 39(b)(i) shall be invalid by virtue of that notification;
- (iv) This sub-clause can only be used a second or subsequent time on the same matter if the Assembly determines to vary the original decision.
- 09.23.02 to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to approve any regulations that are necessary to give effect to the Constitutional change once it is approved by the Church; and
- 09.23.03 to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to approve any regulations or guidelines outlining the process for the use of the clause 39 (a).
- 09.24** **REGULATION 2.2.15 – MEMBERSHIP OF THE MINISTERIAL EDUCATION COMMISSION**
- to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 2.2.15 to read
- (c) one two persons appointed by each Synod, one of whom shall have expertise in education for lay specified ministries;

- 09.25 REGULATION 3.1.14 – ELECTION OF ELDERS**
to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 3.1.14 (b) to read:
3.1.14 (b) The meeting shall not be obliged to fill any or all positions vacant and shall declare to be elected only such persons as receive the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot, or such higher percentage as the Congregation may have determined prior to the call for nominations;
- 09.26 REGULATION 3.4.5 – CONSULTATION ON LIFE AND WITNESS OF A CONGREGATION**
to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend regulation 3.4.5(e) to read:
3.4.5 (e) Any such consultation shall be conducted with such bodies and persons within the Congregation as is thought fit, and by such persons as the Presbytery appoints, and they shall report to the Presbytery and the Congregation with such recommendations regarding the life and witness of the Congregation (including matters relating to placements and property) as they think fit.;
- 09.27 REGULATION 3.6.14 – PRESIDENTIAL RULINGS**
to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 3.6.14(a)(vi) to read:
3.6.14 (a) The President shall give rulings ... subject to the following provisions:
(vi) that each ruling shall be binding until confirmed, varied, ~~or disallowed~~ modified, rescinded or over-ruled by the Assembly or ~~its Standing Committee~~ by the Standing Committee on its behalf;
- 09.28 REGULATION 3.6.25(e) – MEMBERSHIP OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**
to amend Regulation 3.6.25(e) to read “The elected membership shall include no more than ~~six~~ five persons from any synod”, with immediate effect.;
- 09.29 REGULATION 3.6.31 – CHAIRPERSON OF THE AUDIT AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**
to amend Regulation 3.6.31 to read
3.6.31 (a) The Assembly shall establish a Finance and Audit Committee consisting of:
(i) a Chairperson appointed by the Standing Committee; ~~from the membership of the Standing Committee;~~
- 09.30 REGULATIONS 3.6.2 AND 3.6.3 – MEMBERSHIP OF FUTURE ASSEMBLIES**
09.30.01 to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend regulations 3.6.2 and 3.6.3 to read:
MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY
3.6.2 The membership of the Assembly shall consist of:
(a) ex-officio members:
(i) the President of the Assembly;
(ii) the General Secretary of the Assembly;
(iii) the ex-President of the Assembly;
(iv) the President-elect of the Assembly;
(v) the Chairperson of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;
(vi) the National Administrator of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

~~(b) one Minister and one confirmed lay member appointed by each Presbytery~~

~~(e)-(b)~~ sixteen members appointed by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, of whom no more than eight shall be Ministers;

~~(d) (c)~~ Ministers and confirmed lay members appointed by each synod from within the bounds of each Synod appointed as follows:

(i) number of members to be appointed from within the bounds of each Synod:

Synod	
NSW and ACT	54
Northern	10
Queensland	36
South Australia	34
Victoria and Tasmania	58
Western Australia	20

(i) (ii) equal numbers of Ministers and lay members shall be appointed;

(#)(iii) not fewer than one in every five of the lay members shall be a person who, in the opinion of the Synod, could reasonably be regarded as of youthful age;

~~(iii) the total minimum number of members appointed by each Synod and the Presbyteries within the bounds of the Synod shall be ten and the Synod shall appoint those members who are not appointed by a Presbytery;~~

~~(iv) subject to sub-paragraph (iii), each Synod shall be entitled to appoint the number of members calculated by multiplying the appropriate scale factor mentioned in the second column below by five and where the resulting number is not an even number, by adding one to the resulting number to achieve an even number of members appointed by the Synod as shown in the third column below;~~

~~members within the scale factor number of members to bounds of the synod be appointed by Synod~~

less than 5000	1	6
5,001 – 10,000	2	10
10,001 – 20,000	3	16
20,001 – 40,000	4	20
more than 40,000	5	26

~~(v) for the purpose of sub-paragraph (iv) "number of members" shall mean the number of confirmed members and members in association within the bounds of the Synod last notified to the General Secretary of the Assembly by the Synod no later~~

~~than one year before the date on which the ordinary meeting of the Assembly is due to commence or by such other date as the Assembly Standing Committee may determine;~~

- ~~(iv) the Moderator and the Secretary of each Synod ex-officio; and in its appointments the Synods shall take account of Regulation 3.5.25;~~
- ~~(v) each Presbytery within the bounds of the Synod shall appoint one Minister and one lay person and may appoint such number of additional members as the Synod in session decides;~~
- ~~(vi) the Synod shall appoint the remaining members and shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with sub-paragraph (ii) and (iii) regarding the total number of members appointed from within the bounds of the Synod under this paragraph (c);~~
- ~~(e) (d) such confirmed members appointed by bodies directly responsible to the Assembly as the Standing Committee shall determine, such body appointing its own representative or representatives; each making its own appointments;~~
- ~~(f) (e) up to 20 Ministers and lay Ministers and confirmed members, up to 20 in total, appointed by the outgoing Standing Committee having regard to the gifts, skills and experience needed by the Assembly. such other confirmed members as are appointed by either the Assembly or Standing Committee, provided that the total number of members so appointed and ex-officio members shall not exceed one-tenth of the total membership of the Assembly.~~

~~In respect of any Assembly held within six years of the inception of the Church each Synod shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that one-third of the elected lay representatives are women.~~

3.6.3 ~~The Synods shall appointing council or body may~~ make provision for an alternate to attend the Assembly in the place of any elected member unable to be present.

09.30.02 to request the Standing Committee to undertake a process to consider the appropriate size of, and appointment process for, the membership of the triennial Assembly and bring any recommendations to the 13th Assembly.

09.31 REGULATION 4.2.2 – DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO CONSENT TO PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 4.2.2 to read:

DELEGATIONS BY SYNOD PROPERTY BOARD TO PRESBYTERY

4.2.2 (a) ~~A Synod Property Board may delegate to the Property Committee of any Presbytery any of its powers of consent or approval in relation to property, provided that the financial liability involved, or the value of the property concerned, does not exceed such sum or sums as the Synod may determine from time to time.~~

(a) A Synod Property Board may delegate to:

(i) the Property Committee of any Presbytery, or

- (ii) another body within the Synod, or
- (iii) a church council of a congregation which is designated as a Parish Mission or a subcommittee of that congregation, or
- (iv) the Property Officer and / or specified positions,

any of its powers of consent or approval in relation to property, provided that the financial liability involved, or the value of the property concerned, does not exceed such sum or sums as the Synod may determine from time to time.

- (b) A Synod Property Board may withdraw such delegation, either generally or in a particular case, at any time.
- (c) The delegation shall be made subject to such conditions as the Assembly or the Synod Property Board shall determine from time to time.;

09.32 REGULATION 7.7.2(a) – NUMBER OF MEMBERS ON THE COMMITTEE FOR COUNSELLING

to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 7.7.2(a) to read:

“The Committee shall consist of ~~not more than six~~ persons elected by the Synod”

09.33 REGULATIONS RE MINISTRY INTERN PHASE

a) to authorise the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to amend the relevant Regulations (including 2.1.1, 2.2.18 (c), 2.2.24(g), 2.2.25(d) and 2.2.28) so that with regard to the Third Phase of Ministerial Education (Ministry Intern Phase)

- ordination take place at the end of the Core Phase and upon approval of a call;
- the Third Phase of Ministerial Education be no longer known as the Ministry Intern Phase; and
- the Third Phase of Ministerial Education be a period of mentoring and support for newly ordained ministers during the first three years of their ministry; and

b) to request the Ministerial Education Commission to develop Guidelines to ensure that appropriate continuing education, supervision, collegiality and support arrangements are put in place for Ministers from the beginning of their first placement.

ELECTIONS:

09.34 The Returning Officer, Warwick van Ede, declared the following results of elections:

President-Elect	Andrew Dutney
Standing Committee	
Kim Anderson	Peter McDonald
Jenny Brecknell	Stuart McMillan
Michelle Cook	Isabel Thomas Dobson
Lesley de Grussa-Macaulay	Fatai Tapuelulu
Andrew Glenn	Kendall Trudgen
Geoffrey Grinton	Jenny Tymms
Kisoo Jang	Robert Watson
Andrew Johnson	Adrian White
Jason Kioa	Wendie Wilkie

Chairpersons of Reference Committees

Christian Education Reference Committee	Elizabeth Nolan
Christian Unity Working Group	Maureen Postma
Church Polity	Andrew Dutney
Defence Force Chaplaincy	A. Gale Hall
Frontier Services	Jan Trengove
Historical Reference Committee	William Emilsen
Legal Reference Committee	Malcolm Gledhill
Ministerial Education Commission	Ron Skilton
Multicultural Ministry	Eseta Meneilly
National Working Group on Doctrine	Wes Campbell
National Working Group on Worship	Paul Walton
Reception of Ministers Committee	Douglas Miller
Relations with Other Faiths	Seforosa Carroll
Theology and Discipleship	Carolyn Thornley
UnitingJustice	Janeen Barker
UC Adult Fellowship National Committee	Alistair Christie
UnitingCare Australia	Peter Bicknell
UnitingWorld	Stuart Cameron

GENERAL BUSINESS

09.35 GREETINGS FROM ECUMENICAL GUESTS

On behalf of the overseas guests, Rev Dr Jovili Meo, Bishop Simbarashe Sithole, Rev E.F. Lyngdoh, Rev Seo Jae-II, Rev Dr Cho Seong Gi, Rev Dr Finau 'Ahio, The Rt. Revd. Pradeep Kumar Samantaroy and Rev I Made Priana participated in bringing greetings and feedback to the Assembly.

09.36 BIBLE STUDY

During the Assembly the Bible Studies were conducted by Rev Dr John Squires and Rev Dr Elizabeth Raine.

The Assembly resolved:

09.37 MATTERS AFFECTING INDIGENOUS PEOPLES – NORTHERN TERRITORY INTERVENTION

09.37.01 to call on all Australian governments (Commonwealth, State and Territory) to use negotiated partnership approaches in regard to Indigenous Australian citizens, which includes the right to negotiate and communicate in their language of choice, and through their specified mechanisms;

09.37.02 to call on the Commonwealth Government to rectify the lack of negotiation to date with regard to the Northern Territory Emergency Response (NTER) by urgently facilitating a “negotiation forum” in the Northern Territory to address government policies and programs, such forum to respect the right of Aboriginal Peoples to control and set the agenda, the purpose of which is to:

- a) bring Aboriginal Peoples together from across the Northern Territory;
- b) allow a diversity of Aboriginal voices to be heard, including those community people who are connected on the ground as well as those who are representing organisations;
- c) develop a position on an appropriate policy response to the issues facing Aboriginal communities in the Northern Territory;
- d) agree to appropriate protocols;
- e) agree to an appropriate methodology that recognises and affirms the diversity of Aboriginal ways of meeting, making decisions and developing processes;
- f) ensure that Governments are negotiating with spokespeople who are true and authentic community voices, elected and endorsed by the communities they are representing and especially include the voices of the Traditional owners;

- 09.37.03 to affirm the joint statement of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC) and the National Aboriginal and Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA), made at the NATSIEC sponsored Forum, concerning the Northern Territory Emergency Response, 10 June 2009;
- 09.37.04 in collaboration with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and the Northern Synod, to identify funding and appropriate resources and make that funding and resources available to the National Aboriginal and Islander Christian Alliance (NATSICA) to bring about a church based forum in negotiation with the churches (see item 1.5 of the NATSIEC/NATSICA statement) to be held in the Northern Territory;
- 09.37.05 to note with strong endorsement, the action of the Australian Commonwealth Government in recognising the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;
- 09.37.06 to convey to the Commonwealth Government our view that it is in contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples while any parts of the Commonwealth Racial Discrimination Act (RDA) are suspended for Northern Territory Indigenous citizens, or if it reinstates this Act with different qualifications for Indigenous people;
- 09.37.07 to convey to the Commonwealth Government our view that the pressures being placed on Northern Territory Indigenous leaders to sign permanent lease agreements in order to receive funding for housing and other infrastructure in their communities, is an abuse of government power and is not an appropriate approach in developing negotiated partnerships with Indigenous peoples;
- 09.37.08 to convey to the Northern Territory Government (NTG) our view that the NTG Working Future policy, that proposes development of twenty service centres (economic hubs) is detrimental to the spiritual, economic and social life of Indigenous peoples who live in homeland centres and call for the policy to be revised to include respectful recognition and support for the continued development and support of homeland centres;
- 09.37.09 to convey to the Northern Territory Government (NTG) our view that the NTG is in contravention of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples concerning their current education policy particularly the compulsory teaching in English for the first four hours of each school day, which limits education choices for Indigenous citizens of the Northern Territory concerning their first language; and
- 09.37.10 to seek the guidance of UnitingJustice, UnitingCare, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Congress and the Northern Synod, in determining how to best represent the above positions of the Assembly.

09.38 METHODIST CHURCH IN FIJI AND ROTUMA

- a) to convey to the Methodist Church in Fiji and Rotuma:
- (i) its prayerful support as the Methodist Church bears witness to Christ in the context of restrictive government regulations; and
 - (ii) its solidarity with the Methodist Church as it seeks to contribute to a just and inclusive Fiji; and
- b) to invite members of the Uniting Church to pray for the Methodist Church, especially at the time of the scheduled Annual Conference.

09.39 MINUTES OF THE 11TH ASSEMBLY

- to note that the names of the members of the 11th Assembly who recorded dissent from the decision minuted as 06.41 have been attached as an Appendix to the official copy of the Minutes of the 11th Assembly.

09.40 VENUE FOR THE 13TH ASSEMBLY

- a) to receive with thanks the invitation of the Synod of South Australia to hold the Thirteenth Assembly within the bounds of the synod; and

- b) to authorise the Standing Committee to determine the exact date, and to negotiate with the Synod of South Australia as to the particular location and venues for the various Assembly functions.

CLOSING ACTIONS

The Assembly resolved:

09.41

REMAINING BUSINESS

to refer the following proposals to the Standing Committee, with power to act:

- Proposals 37 and 62: Theology of Stipends, (Synod of Queensland and Sue Withers and Sharon Hollis)
- Proposal 50: Ministerial Placement Process (Port Phillip East Presbytery)
- Proposal 51: Amendment to Regulation 3.1.16 – Term of Office for Church Councillors (Mid North Coast Presbytery)
- Proposal 53: Church Schools (Ku-ring-gai Presbytery)
- Proposal 54: Children’s Youth and Family Ministry (Rob Hanks and Drew Hanna)
- Proposal 57: Reviewing the Ministry of Lay Preacher (Craig Mitchell and Amelia Koh-Butler)
- Proposal 63: Afghanistan (Wes Campbell and Chris Walker)
- Proposal 65: Funding for Aged Care Providers (Kaye Ronalds and Lindsay Oates)
- Proposal 70: Amendment to Regulations re Vexatious Complainants (Synod of NSW / the A.C.T.)
- Proposal 76: Ministry of Pastor (Amelia Koh-Butler, Peter Mallen)

09.42

APPRECIATION

to give thanks to all people who contributed to the smooth facilitation of the 12th Assembly, to the host Synod of New South Wales and the A.C.T., worship leaders, facilitators and particularly the many volunteers, and to the General Secretary and President who have led us with wisdom and grace.

CLOSE

The Twelfth Assembly concluded at 1pm on Tuesday 21 July 2009 with worship led by the President.