

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

11 – 13 March 2005

PRESENT Dean Drayton (President), Bruce Binnie, Shayne Blackman, Elizabeth Burns, Dennis Chapman, Samantha Charlesworth, Sue Clarkson, Terence Corkin, Tony Davies, Bev Fabb, Sealin Garlett, Susan Gormann, Gregor Henderson, Geoffrey Grinton, Matthew Grudnoff, Jason Kioa, Isabel Thomas Dobson, Allan Thompson, Myffie Trudinger, Liva Tukutama, Julie Watts.

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Glenda Blakefield, Rob Bos, Kevin Davis, Stu Cameron, John Evans, Graham Humphris, Robert Johnson, Jim Mein, Gemmel Sherwood, Paul Swadling, Jenny Tymms,

WORSHIP The Induction Service for Glenda Blakefield on the Friday evening was led by the President and Glenda was inducted into her Assembly placement as Associate General Secretary. The Induction Service included Holy Communion led by Terence Corkin. On the Saturday Julie Watts led morning worship, and Tony Davies led evening prayers. On Sunday morning Bruce Binnie led the worship. The closing prayer was led by Jason Kioa.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all Assembly Standing Committee participants to the meeting and extended a special welcome to the visiting Moderators, Glenda Blakefield, Paul Swadling and Kevin Davis new Synod General Secretaries for NSW and the Northern Synod. Also welcomed as visitor was Lin Hatfield Dodds for business related to UnitingCare Australia.

RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

On behalf of Standing Committee, the President acknowledged the local Oreo and Dharug people and their role as custodians of the land on which the meeting took place.

APOLOGIES

05.01 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Wesley Gleeson, James Haire and Try Hamilton for absence for the whole of the meeting; from Jason Kioa for Friday night, from Liva Tukutama for Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The President introduced a time of sharing on pastoral matters. The General Secretary advised the Standing Committee that Gregor Henderson had a new granddaughter. He also reported that Rev Dr Geoff Barnes, former chair of the Assembly Historical Reference Committee and member of the Relations with Other Faiths Committee has passed away. Jim Mein advised the participants that Dave Edwards, the Riverina Presbytery Youth Worker died in a car accident. Elizabeth Burns reported on the death of Rev Terry Tero. The President led the meeting in prayer.

APPROVAL OF TIMETABLE AND AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. Documents 8, 14, 11 (Continued), 15 (Continued) and 19 were distributed on the Friday evening and Saturday morning.

- 05.02** **It was resolved** to approve the timetable and agenda of the meeting as outlined in Document 1, noting that the committee is free to vary the agenda at any time.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- 05.03** **It was resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held 12 –14 November 2004, subject to amending 04.05.07 under resolution 04.103 to read “04.103.02” and amending the Regulation cited in 04.105 to read “Regulation 7.7.2 a.

NOTE CONSTITUTION CLAUSE 39

Standing Committee members were reminded of the Constitution clause 39, as per ASC minute 00.71:

“On matters which, by a two thirds majority vote, the Assembly deems to be vital to the life of the Church, the Assembly shall seek the concurrence of the Synods and/or Presbyteries and/or Congregations as the Assembly may determine.”

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

The President first affirmed the Missional Identity of the Uniting Church as it is expressed in the Basis of Union. This document celebrates the reconciling power of Jesus Christ to bring all finally together in Jesus Christ. It goes beyond the confessional documents of the past, to prepare for our future life together in Christ. He is encouraged by the way most in the Church have realized that this reconciling mission is both a sign of the cross and provides hope to a fragmented world.

He was greatly encouraged by the leadership of the January NCYC and the programme they had prepared. He indicated that he would lead a Journey to the Centre in late August. He shared how after four people had been deported in early January, he had had a further interview with the Minister for the Department of Immigration and Indigenous Affairs. Since then there had been no further deportations of people on the Assembly Register of Baptised Uniting Church Members in Detention. A means of contacting the minister when the UCA had further concerns had been opened.

Finally Dean shared the experience of standing where the suburbs of Banda Aceh had been obliterated by the Tsunami. He described how a huge barge, swept four kilometers from the coastline through suburban housing had brought home to him the horror of the destruction, and some sense of the terrible death of 200,000 people here. Further mention was made of destruction further East of Banda Aceh, and projects that had been recommended to UIM for the UCOA appeals. A report was given of his attendance at the 400th anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Church in Asia at Ambon.

- 05.04** **It was resolved** to receive the report.

SYNOD SHARING – SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND

Participants from the Queensland Synod shared something of the life of their Synod as an expression of our inter conciliar sharing. The participants could get a glimpse of the Queensland Synod’s guiding values which include:

- the Uniting Church risks living the way of Jesus;

- commitment to God's transformation of the Church.
- Jenny and Bruce also provided an outline of the Synod's eight Presbyteries, describing the challenges they face. Special mention was made of UnitingCare Queensland being the largest non-profit provider of health and community services in the state.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. PREPARING FOR THE 11TH ASSEMBLY - TASK GROUP ON PROCESSES GOING TO THE ASSEMBLY (ASC MINUTE 04.103.01)

Sue Gormann introduced Document 4, containing a report on the proposed processes for considering proposals related to people in committed same gender relationships being in leadership roles.

05.05 It was resolved to:

- 05.05.01 receive the report;
- 05.05.02 determine that the ASC believes it can best facilitate effective decision making by the 11th Assembly on issues of leadership and committed same-gender relationships by the following process:
- that proposals regarding people in committed same-gender relationships being in leadership roles, and related matters, must be received by the Assembly General Secretary no later than December 31st 2005;
 - the Business Committee (or its Proposals sub committee) undertake preliminary discussions with proposers about the competence of proposals; offering guidance on the wording to assist the proposers to be as clear as possible; and encouraging any opportunities to collaborate with persons bringing similar proposals no later than February 28 2006;
 - the Business Committee complete this aspect of its work in time to report to the March meeting of the Standing Committee on the full list of proposals that will be coming to the Assembly meeting in this area;
 - both the original proposals and the proposals finally submitted to the Assembly be made available to the church immediately after the March 2006 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee;
- 05.05.03 instruct the General Secretary to produce, by the July 2005 meeting of the ASC,
- in one document a report that will satisfy the requirements of ASC minute 03.87.03 c.;
 - a detailed timeline explaining all the steps that are involved in bringing a proposal on this matter to the 11th Assembly;
 - a document that explains the role of the Business Committee in handling proposals – from the time of receipt through to the placing of them in the agenda of the Assembly meeting;
 - to include a recommendation within one of the process documents that all persons preparing proposals read the document *Sexuality and Leadership in the Uniting Church* before doing so;
- 05.05.04 make these documents available to the church after the July meeting of the ASC;
- 05.05.05 determine that the Assembly Standing Committee does not intend to bring any proposals to the 11th Assembly on the substantive matter regarding people in committed same-gender relationships being in leadership roles;

- 05.05.06 determine that the ASC will not bring a recommendation to the Assembly to associate any persons with the 11th Assembly when it considers proposals regarding people in committed same-gender relationships being in leadership roles;
- 05.05.07 recommend to the Business Committee that the media external to the life of the Church not be permitted to record, either sound or pictures, any business conducted during sessions of the 11th Assembly and that the Business Committee bring a recommendation to this effect to an early session of the 11th Assembly;
- 05.05.08 request the Moderators to continue to be aware of the pastoral and other needs of members of the church and to develop their own processes for listening and communicating the diversity of opinion on these issues as the Church prepares for the 11th Assembly;
- 05.05.09 thank and discharge the Task Group.

2. PREPARING FOR THE 11TH ASSEMBLY – ASSEMBLY APPOINTMENTS TO THE 11TH ASSEMBLY (ASSEMBLY MINUTE 03.10.03 “ ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP IN A CULTURALLY DIVERSE CHURCH” AND ASC MINUTE 03.48.01)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 6, consisting of a report on the past criteria used by the ASC when making appointments to the Assembly under Regulation 3.6.2(e); suggestions about criteria going forward and suggestions on how to progress Assembly resolution 03.10.03.

05.06 It was resolved to:

- 04.06.01 receive the report;
- 05.06.02 request a further report be brought the July 2005 ASC meeting on the criteria for selection of persons to be appointed to the Assembly under Regulation 3.6.2(e) taking into account the core functions of the Assembly.

3. REPORT ON CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN UAICC AND GENERAL SECRETARIES (ASC MINUTE 02.72)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 9, consisting of a report on the conversations that took place between the UAICC National Executive and the General Secretaries.

05.07 It was resolved to:

- 05.07.01 receive the report;
- 05.07.02
 - a. affirm the Church’s commitment to the covenant relationship with the UAICC; and
 - b. commit itself to a process leading to a renewal of the covenant preferably at the 11th Assembly;
- 05.07.03
 - a. support the need for constitutional and regulatory changes that will enable Congress to operate with greater levels of autonomy;
 - b. request the working group to further develop and discuss the following issues that were raised in the paper:
 - i. the right of Congress to prevent matters being decided by the Assembly if Congress is not able to proceed at this time;

- ii. greater clarity about how Congress and other parts of the Church relate when Congress has responsibility for ministry with indigenous people;
- iii. resourcing;
- iv. Congress' role in the implementation of Assembly decisions
- v. what it means for Congress to be a council;
- vi. how co-chairing is understood and how it would work;

05.07.04 request the Assembly and Synod General Secretaries to continue working with the National Executive of Congress on developing the theological foundations document, proposed changes to the Constitution and Regulations and advice on operational arrangements including any memoranda of understanding that might be used with Uniting Care and other bodies;

05.07.05 request the General Secretary to bring a report to the next meeting of the Standing Committee, including proposals that might be taken to the 11th Assembly with a view to referral to the Synods, for their comment by December 31 2005;

05.07.06 request the 11th Assembly Design team to plan for this aspect of the Assembly program.

4. APPOINTMENT OF FRONTIER SERVICE BOARD (ASC MINUTE 04.54)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 16, consisting of the process undertaken to nominate members of the Frontier Services Board and a list of nominees.

05.08 It was resolved to:

05.08.01 receive the report;

05.08.02 confirm the appointment of Rev Gregor Henderson as Chair of the Frontier Services Board until the 11th Assembly;

05.08.03 appoint the following persons to the Board:

- Jan Trengove;
- Bruce Cornish
- Gail Cresswell
- Rev Robert Johnson
- Judy Kay
- Colleen Pearce
- John Rickard
- Richard Stewart

05.08.04 determine that the terms of appointment be

March 2005 to Assembly 2006

Jan Trengove
Bruce Cornish
Gail Cresswell
Robert Johnson

March 2005 to Assembly 2009

Judy Kay
Colleen Pearce
John Rickard
Richard Stewart

5. REVIEW OF THE GENERAL SECRETARY (ASSEMBLY MINUTE 00.23.02 AND REGULATION 3.6.16)

The General Secretary introduced the matter to the Assembly Standing Committee.

05.09 It was resolved to:

- 05.09.01 appoint a Review Group to review the ministry of Rev Terence Corkin as Assembly General Secretary;
- 05.09.02 appoint Dean Drayton (Convenor); Liva Tukutama, Geoffrey Grinton, Isabel Thomas Dobson and Matt Grudhoff to the Review Group.
- 05.09.03 request the Review Group to bring a recommendation to the July 2005 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

6. REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR – MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY

Liva Tukutama spoke to Document 14, consisting of a report by the Review Group.

05.10 It was resolved to:

- 05.10.01 receive the report;
- 05.10.02 affirm the contribution to the life of the Church that has been made through the Agency "Multicultural Ministry";
- 05.10.03
 - a. affirm the continuation of the Agency "Multicultural Ministry";
 - b. request the General Secretary and the Chairperson of the Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee to facilitate a discussion with the Committee, the National Conferences and other parts of the network on how to strengthen the voice of migrant communities in the life of the UCA;
- 05.10.04 adopt the revised Mandate (Attachment A);
- 05.10.05 adopt the revised Position Description of the National Director. (Attachment B);
- 05.10.06 note the view of the Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee that the work of the agency requires that the present staffing arrangement continue, ie a full time Director and 0.4 administrative staff;
- 05.10.07 note the view of the Multicultural Ministry Reference Committee that if the agency is to fulfill all that is required by its mandate then an increase in funding is necessary;

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. AGENCY REPORTS

The General Secretary spoke to Document 11, consisting of brief reports from various Agencies, namely from Frontier Services, Multicultural Ministry, Theology and Discipleship, UnitingCare Australia, UnitingJustice and Uniting International Mission.

05.11 It was resolved to:

- 05.11.01 receive the reports;
- 05.11.02 express thanks to the staff of UCOA and UIM for the work undertaken in responding to the Tsunami crisis.

2. GENERAL REPORT

The General Secretary introduced Document 13, consisting of a report on various matters.

- 05.12 It was resolved to** receive the report.

3. LEGAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced Document 10, consisting of a report on the work the Assembly Legal Reference Committee has done since the November 2004 ASC meeting.

- 05.13 It was resolved to:**

- 05.13.01 receive the report;
- 05.13.02 refer the issues and concerns raised by the Assembly Legal Reference Committee to the Assembly Task Group on the review of the SSMCC regulations;
- 05.13.03 request the two groups to engage in a dialogue around these questions and issues;
- 05.13.04 request the Task Group on the SSMCC regulations to provide further advice to the ASC in the light of this referral and discussion.

4. UNITINGCARE AUSTRALIA MANDATE

Lin Hatfield Dodds introduced Document 3, consisting of the proposed revised mandate and a brief rationale.

- 05.14 It was resolved to:**

- 05.14.01 approve the revised mandate of UnitingCare Australia (Attachment C);
- 05.14.02 request UnitingCare Australia and the national UAICC to engage in a process that will identify the most appropriate mechanism through which Congress and UnitingCare Australia can work together to further the national work of the UCA in community services.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. CORRESPONDENCE FROM EMU & REFORMING ALLIANCE

The General Secretary spoke to Document 12, consisting of a report on the correspondence from EMU and Reforming Alliance and the letter the General Secretary sent in response.

- 05.15 It was resolved to:**

- 05.15.01 receive the report;
- 05.15.02 endorse the contents of the letter sent by the General Secretary.

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 15.

05.16 It was resolved to:

- 05.16.01 confirm the appointment of Rev Veitinia Waqabaca to the group reviewing the National Director for Multicultural Ministry;
- 05.16.02 accept the offer of the General Secretaries of the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches in Aotearoa New Zealand to work as corresponding contributors to the task group appointed by ASC minute 04.96.02;
- 05.16.03 receive the letter from the Tongan National Conference;
- 05.16.04 appoint Wesley Gleeson to the Children, Youth and their Families Committee, subject to his agreement;
- 05.16.05 request the General Secretary to facilitate a discussion at the July meeting of the ASC around the implementation of the policy of equitable remuneration for lay and ministerial senior executive appointments in the Assembly;
- 05.16.06 a. note the resignation of Ms Wendie Wilkie as a Director of UCA Assembly Ltd;
- b. appoint Rev Glenda Blakefield as a Director of UCA Assembly Ltd.
- 05.16.07 a. resolve that the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia enter into a partnership agreement with the Protestant Church of East Timor (IPTL);
- b. that the agreement be signed in Dili on July 9 2005;
- 05.16.08 encourage the President, in consultation with the Design Team, to call the church to prayer for the year before the Assembly, and also to hold a specific day of prayer before the 11th Assembly;
- 05.16.09 appoint Ms Lauren Fee to the National Working Group on Doctrine;
- 05.16.10 place on record its appreciation for Rev Dr Chris Budden's service as Convenor, National Working Group on Doctrine in the following terms:

When Chris accepted the responsibility of Convenor of the Working Group on Doctrine at the beginning of 2001, he brought to the position a wealth of experience in the life of the church. Chris sees Doctrine as being an expression of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and therefore integrally connected to contemporary life and issues of justice, to the life of faith and living as a disciple of Jesus and to the very nature and identity of the church. Chris has a clear mind which readily sees connections between any particular area of the Church's belief and other areas; he strives for integrity and consistency. All this is done within a thorough-going trinitarian framework and a commitment to the Basis of Union;

Chris reads widely and can always be relied upon to share his enthusiasm for the latest theological books he is reading. While Chris holds clear positions on most issues, he is still open-minded enough to declare he has changed his position when persuaded by cogent arguments. Fair-mindedness, respect for others, including those with whom he disagrees, and most of all a love for the God he serves, characterise his ministry;

Chris has brought great dedication to a crucial position in the Uniting Church. We are deeply indebted to him for his wise guidance on what have often been complex and controversial issues and thank God for all that he has given;

- 05.16.11 appoint Rev Dr Wes Campbell as Convenor of the National Working Group on Doctrine for the remainder of the triennium;
- 05.16.12 approve the addition of an extra note at the beginning of the Services of the Lord's Day in the following terms: "The Fourth Assembly determined that baptised children may receive Holy Communion (Minute 85.109.2). People not receiving the bread and wine may be invited to come forward for a blessing. Children and adults who wish to receive the bread and wine, but are not yet baptised, should be encouraged to prepare for baptism."

3. NATIONAL EVENTS BOARD

The General Secretary spoke to Document 7, consisting of a report on the proposal arising from Uniting Education for a National Events Board.

05.17 It was resolved to

- 05.17.01 receive the report;
- 05.17.02 support the establishment of a "National Events Board" with a membership of eight people;
- 05.17.03 refer Document 7 and the suggestion that the "National Events Board" might relate to the Commission for National Co-operation to synods and the Commission for comment;
- 05.17.04 request the General Secretary to bring further proposals to a later meeting of the Standing Committee in the light of the responses received.

4. NATIONAL DISASTER RELIEF FUND CONSTITUTION

The General Secretary spoke to Document 18, consisting of the proposed new constitution of the National Disaster Relief Fund.

- 05.18 **It was resolved to adopt** the amended National Disaster Relief Fund Constitution (Attachment D) subject to any final amendments by the Legal Reference Committee.

5. NOMINATION FOR THE POSITION OF NATIONAL DIRECTOR – CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

The General Secretary introduced Document 8, consisting of a report from the Nomination Committee.

05.19 It was resolved to:

- 05.19.01 receive the report;
- 05.19.02 issue a call to Rev Mark Hillis as the National Director – Christian Education for a term of five years from July 1 2005;
- 05.19.03 authorise the General Secretary to negotiate the terms of call;
- 05.19.04 authorise the General Secretary to purchase or lease a manse for the National Director (Regulation 4.10.3);
- 05.19.05 vest the title for any property purchased in UCA Assembly Ltd (Regulation 4.10.4 a.)

6. PREPARING FOR THE 11TH ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary introduced Document 2, consisting of a report on the “direction setting” for the next triennium. Table group discussions followed.

05.20 It was resolved to

- 05.20.01
- a. request the General Secretary to initiate a process beginning at the July 2005 ASC meeting, to assist the Assembly in setting directions for the Assembly and its Agencies in the next triennium;
 - b. accept the offer of Bruce Binnie and Robert Johnson to provide assistance to the General Secretary with the development of the process.

7. PREPARING FOR THE 11TH ASSEMBLY – REPORT OF THE DESIGN TEAM

The General Secretary spoke to Document 5, consisting of a Report of the Design Team on the preparations for the 11th Assembly.

05.21 It was resolved to receive the report.

8. SA SYNOD RESTRUCTURE

Stu Cameron and Graham Humphris presented a report on the progress so far in moving to one Presbytery in the Synod and the idea of a Presbytery Mission Network.

05.22 It was resolved to:

- 05.22.01
- a. warmly receive the report;
 - b. support the principle that there be 32 persons from the SA Synod area as members of the 11th Assembly;
 - c. request advice from the Assembly Legal Reference Committee on how this may be achieved.

9. RE COMPLAINTS AGAINST PERSONS ADMINISTERING THE SSMCC

The General Secretary introduced Document 17, consisting of a letter from Chris Budden, then General Secretary of the NSW Synod.

05.23 It was resolved to:

- 05.23.01
- a. receive the letter;
 - b. refer the letter to the Assembly Legal Reference Committee requesting it to provide advice on how to deal with this situation;
 - c. refer the letter to the Task Group on Reviewing SSMC Regulations for comment to the Assembly Legal Reference Committee.

10. SELECTION OF PRESIDENT-ELECT

The General Secretary spoke to Document 19, consisting of a letter from Rev Kent Crawford on the selection process of the president-elect.

05.24 It was resolved to:

- 05.24.01 receive the letter;

05.24.02 refer the letter to the Task Group on Remuneration and Role of President.

11. NATIONAL CHRISTIAN YOUTH CONVENTION (2005)

Stu Cameron and Graham Humphris from the SA Synod shared some of their NCYC experience with the Assembly Standing Committee. Discussion ensued and appreciation was expressed to the SA Synod for organising this important event.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 3.00pm with prayer led by Jason Kioa.

<p style="text-align: center;">2005 ASC MEETINGS: 15 – 17 July 2005 11 – 13 November 2005</p>
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President

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Date