

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

15 – 17 July 2011

PRESENT Alistair Macrae (President), Kim Anderson, Jenny Brecknell, Michelle Cook, Terence Corkin, Lesley De Grussa-Macaulay, Andrew Dutney, Andrew Glenn, Geoffrey Grinton, Gregor Henderson, Kisoo Jang, Andrew Johnson, Jason Kioa, Peter McDonald, Stuart McMillan, Ken Sumner, Isabel Thomas Dobson, Fatai Tapuelulu, Jenny Tymms, Robert Watson, Adrian White, Wendie Wilkie.

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Kay Dowling, Graham Humphris, Shirley Coulson, Peter Jones, Gabrielle Lloyde, Chris Walker and Andrew Williams.

WORSHIP On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, the President preached and presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion. On the Saturday Chris Walker led morning worship and the President led evening prayers. On the Sunday Geoffrey Grinton led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Jenny Tymms.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all Assembly Standing Committee participants to the meeting. Robert Hoskin for matters related to the Beneficiary Fund, Clive Pearson for a proposal from the Doctrine Working Group re the ministry of Pastor, Tom Kerr and Nicole Fleming for matters related to NYARC and NCYC 2011 and Kerry Enright for matters relating to UnitingWorld.

RECOGNITION OF TRADITIONAL OWNERS OF THE LAND

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

APOLOGIES

11.23 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Shayne Blackman, Glenda Blakefield, Rob Brown and Kendall Trudgen for the whole meeting, Gregor Henderson for Saturday morning and afternoon, Fatai Tapuelulu for Friday evening.

PASTORAL MATTERS

1. The General Secretary informed the Standing Committee that Maureen Postma's husband passed away. Other matters of general interest and concern were also reported.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. Documents 11 and 12 were distributed on the Friday night.

11.24 **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

11.25 It was resolved to confirm the minutes of the meeting held March 18 – 20 2011 with the addition of Kim Anderson as an apology for Sunday.

NOTE

Standing Committee members were reminded of:

1. Constitution Clause 39(a) “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 Synods and/or Presbyteries and/or Congregations as the Assembly may determine.”; and
2. the authority of the Standing Committee as set out in Regulation 3.6.34 and the resolutions of this Assembly on this subject (Assembly minute 09.08.07).

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

On the Saturday evening the President reported briefly on the following:

Youth:

- Update on planning for Presidents Young Leaders Conference, February 2012
- School of Discipleship
- Tongan National Conference and influence of 2nd Gen in planning and leadership

First Peoples

- Visit to Amata and Bible studies
- Ministers Conference in Alice Springs with indigenous ministry focus

National events

- Ministers Conferences in Vanuatu and Alice completed successfully, Adelaide to come
- Tongan National Conference

Overseas partners

- Visit to Church of Scotland – report on major issues including sexuality and leadership
- Visit to Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga Conference
- Attended Methodist Pacific Leaders Conference in Solomons
- Planned visit with Christian Conference of Asia delegation to Jeju Island, Korea

National issues

- Northern Territory Intervention
- Formation of Australian Churches Gambling Task Force (UnitingCare initiative)

Communications

- Videos
- Blog
- Planned regular direct e-post to UCA Ministers

11.26 It was resolved to receive the report.

SYNOD SHARING – SYNOD OF NSW AND THE ACT

Gregor Henderson, Kisoo Jang, Andrew Williams and Adrian White from the Synod of NSW and the ACT shared something of the life of the synod as an expression of our inter-councilar sharing.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. ADVICE TO THE CHURCH RE PRESIDENT-ELECT – REGULATION 3.6.26(b) (ASC MINUTE 11.22.17)

Discussion in table groups took place in relation to item 21 on the Agenda and a list of issues considered important for the life of the Church over the next 7 years was developed as required under Regulation 3.6.26(b). The list was referred to the Assembly Officers for final editing before distribution to the Church. This version is included in the minutes.

11.27 **It was resolved to** approve a list of “challenges and issues which may be faced by the President and the Assembly” in the next seven years [Regulation 3.6.26(b)]

11.27.01 Discerning God’s Spirit at work in the world:

- discerning God’s word to the church;
- articulating and promoting the calling, identity and vision of the Uniting Church;
- confirming the place of the UAICC in the UCA;
- welcoming diversity.

11.27.02 Providing leadership in a time of change:

- encouraging new and diverse forms of church in a secular society;
- assisting the church to respond to contemporary social issues;
- relating to government on issues of welfare, environment, justice and peace.;
- promoting and encouraging the increasingly multicultural nature of the church.

11.27.03 Promoting evangelism and discipleship:

- addressing the challenges and opportunities of being an Australian church;
- encouraging new approaches to worship, witness and service appropriate to the progressive marginalization of the Christian church in Australian culture and society;
- leading a national conversation about evangelism, conversion and discipling.

11.27.04 Enhancing wider relationships and co-operation:

- maintaining ecumenical relationships, in Australia and overseas;
- leading a national conversation about the nature of ecumenism today;
- maintaining existing and developing new inter-faith relationships;
- leading a national conversation on witnessing to Christ among people of other faiths.

2. APPOINTMENTS TO THE 13TH ASSEMBLY UNDER REGULATION 3.6.2(d) (ASC MINUTE 11.22.15)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 15, consisting of correspondence from the Board of Frontier Services in which it made representations that it should be one of the bodies referred to in Regulation 3.6.2(d) which would allow it to make an appointment to the membership of the triennial Assembly.

11.28 **It was resolved to:**

11.28.01 receive the report;

11.28.02 determine that the bodies that will appoint members to the 13th Assembly under Regulation 3.6.2 (d) shall be:

Assembly Secretariat
Christian Unity Working Group
Church Polity Reference Committee
Ministerial Education Commission
National Working Group Worship
National Working Group on Doctrine
Theology and Discipleship (mission expertise); and
UnitingWorld; and

11.28.03 apply this decision on the operation of Regulation 3.6.2(d) shall apply until amended by the Assembly Standing Committee.

3. ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS ON AFGHANISTAN (ASC MINUTE 09.47.01)

Chris Walker introduced Document 17, consisting of a rationale and proposals that would further develop the previous Assembly resolutions on Afghanistan.

11.29 It was resolved to:

11.29.01 note Assembly resolution 09.47.01 on Afghanistan and express the Uniting Church's continuing grief at the continued loss of life in Afghanistan, for those killed and for those bereft of their loved ones;

11.29.02 encourage the Australian government to

- a) convert the cost of the Australian military presence in Afghanistan into humanitarian support for Afghanistan; and
- b) increase, wherever possible, Australian diplomatic negotiation with the International community to assist in the future rebuilding of Afghanistan;

11.29.03 urge the Australian Government to expedite the withdrawal of Australian troops; and

11.29.04 request the General Secretary to write seeking the support of the NCCA and other churches for these decisions.

4. BENEFICIARY FUND (ASC MINUTES 11.06.04 and 11.06.05)

Robert Hoskin presented a PowerPoint on various matters including the defined benefit structure, accumulation section, the Fund's membership profile and asset allocation as well as recent and future developments. He also spoke to Document 2, consisting of a report on the changes to the Fund since March 2011.

11.30 It was resolved to receive the report.

5. DOCTRINE WORKING GROUP AND MINISTRY OF PASTOR (ASC MINUTE 10.42.05)

Clive Pearson presented Document 4, consisting of a rationale and proposals from the Working Group on Doctrine in relation to the Ministry of Pastor.

11.31 It was resolved to:

11.31.01 request the General Secretary to convene a conversation around how the implementation of the ministry of Pastor is being experienced;

- 11.31.02 invite Synods and National Congress to identify up to two persons who can contribute to the conversation, at least one of whom shall have Presbytery experience of the ministry; and
- 11.31.03 request a report to a future meeting of the Standing Committee on what has been learned about what is working well, where the challenges are and what may need to be done in the future.

6. EMMAUS - UCA MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (ASC MINUTE 11.21.02)

The General Secretary presented Document 18, consisting of a revised Memorandum of Understanding.

11.32 By agreement it was resolved to:

- 11.32.01 receive the report; and
- 11.32.02 approve the Memorandum of Understanding between the Emmaus Australia National Secretariat and the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia as amended by the Standing Committee (Attachment A).

7. ISRAEL – PALESTINE AND THE NCCA PROPOSAL (ASC MINUTES 10.43.03 AND 10.55.02 AND 11.22.07)

Gregor Henderson introduced Documents 9 and 9A, consisting of a report on the work done on this issue since the last meeting of the Standing Committee and proposals for a possible response to the NCCA request to consider a boycott of goods produced by Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories and a minute from the 7th NCCA Forum concerning the Middle East, respectively.

11.33 It was resolved to:

- 11.33.01 receive the report;
- 11.33.02 in response to the resolutions of the National Council of Churches in Australia and the requests for action made by the Palestinian Christian community in the Kairos Palestine document, by the Jerusalem Heads of Churches and by the World Council of Churches, invite church members and congregations to consider taking actions with the purposes of:
- encouraging the governments of Israel and Palestine to move more seriously and effectively towards a peaceful resolution of the conflict between them, and
 - encouraging the Australian Government to use its influence more seriously and effectively towards a resumption of peace talks between Israel and Palestine, towards an end of the occupation of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and of the blockade of Gaza, and towards a two-state solution with secure internationally-recognised borders, in accordance with United Nations resolutions;
- 11.33.03 reaffirm the Uniting Church's commitment to the existence, in peace and security, of the State of Israel (*Jews and Judaism*, 2009 Assembly, point 15);
- 11.33.04 reaffirm the Uniting Church's conviction that "anti-Semitism in all its expressions is an affront to the gospel of Jesus Christ" (*Jews and Judaism*, 2009 Assembly, point 8);
- 11.33.05 endorse the NCCA Executive resolutions of November 2010 *Supporting a vision for the future beyond current realities for the Palestinian and Jewish peoples* (NCCA 10.11.06);

- 11.33.06 on behalf of the Assembly, the national council of the Uniting Church in Australia, resolve to join the boycott of goods produced in the illegal Israeli settlements;
- 11.33.07 authorise Glenda Blakefield and Gregor Henderson to prepare a kit of resources to assist the church as it considers the Assembly's invitation to consider taking action, in accordance with the outline of contents in this report to Standing Committee, and authorise the President and General Secretary to give final approval for release of the kit to the church;
- 11.33.08 request the President and General Secretary to meet as soon as possible with leaders of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry to convey to them in person the decisions of the Standing Committee and the reasons for the decisions;
- 11.33.09 express support for the 2012 visit of Australian Church Leaders to Palestine and Israel, noting that the Executive Council of Australian Jewry will be invited to contribute to the itinerary of the visit; and express support for the World Council of Churches program Ecumenical Accompaniers for Peace in Palestine-Israel;
- 11.33.10 request the General Secretary to inform as soon as possible the Working Group on Relations with Other Faiths, the National Uniting Church Jewish-Christian Dialogue, the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Jewish-Christian Task Group, and the UnitingJustice network of these resolutions; and
- 11.33.11 request the General Secretary to convey these resolutions in writing to the National Council of Churches in Australia, the World Council of Churches, the Jerusalem Heads of Churches, the Australian Government and Opposition, the Israeli Ambassador and Palestinian Representative, the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, and Muslims Australia, as soon as possible after the meeting with the leaders of Executive Council of Australian Jewry.

8. REFLECTIONS ON THE IMPLICATIONS OF OUR POLITY IN A CRISIS (ASC MINUTES 10.76 AND 11.10.02)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 13 from the March 2011 Standing Committee meeting, consisting of a report on the polity and governance issues raised by the recent challenges facing the Queensland Synod. Table group discussion followed.

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

9. REVISION OF THE REGULATIONS (ASC MINUTE 10.57.03)

The General Secretary and Andrew Johnson presented Documents 10 and 10A, consisting of a report on the work that has been done to redraft the Regulations and the draft of Part 3 of the Regulations.

- 11.35** **It was resolved to:**

- 11.35.01 receive the report;
- 11.35.02 approve the draft Part 3 of the Regulations as amended by the Standing Committee; and
- 11.35.03 request the General Secretary to bring the draft of the remaining Regulations to the November meeting of the Standing Committee.

10. WORKING GROUP ON GOVERNANCE (ASC MINUTE 11.19)

Andrew Glenn introduced Document 14, consisting of an interim report from the Working Group. Discussion followed.

11.36 It was resolved to:

11.36.01 receive the report;

11.36.02 approve the general direction of the initial report of the Working Group on Assembly Governance; and

11.36.03 request the Working Group to report to the next meeting of the Standing Committee.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. GENERAL REPORT

The General Secretary spoke to Document 21, consisting of a report on various matters.

11.37 It was resolved to:

11.37.01 receive the report; and

11.37.02 receive the report on electronic decision making and accept Andrew Johnson's offer to do further work on the matter.

2. LEGAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced Document 16, consisting of a report on the matters the Legal Reference Committee has dealt with since the March 2011 Standing Committee.

11.38 It was resolved to receive the report.

3. NATIONAL CHRISTIAN YOUTH CONVENTION (NCYC)

4. NATIONAL YOUTH ACTIVITIES REFERENCE COMMITTEE

Tom Kerr and Nicole Fleming presented Documents 7 and 8, consisting of a report on NCYC 11 feedback and the various projects in which the National Youth Activities Committee is involved. They also shared a PowerPoint presentation.

11.39 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. UNITINGWORLD RE GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Kerry Enright spoke to Document 5, consisting of a paper to elicit suggestions, questions and ideas from the Standing Committee on the structure, processes and policies of a new National Committee so that a proposal can be brought to the November meeting.

11.40 It was resolved to:

11.40.01 receive the report; and

11.40.02 request the National Director of UnitingWorld to bring to the November meeting of the Standing Committee a proposal for revised governance arrangements for the Church Solidarity work of the Agency.

6. 13TH ASSEMBLY DESIGN TEAM

The General Secretary presented Document 6, consisting of a report on the preparations which are underway for the 13th Assembly.

11.41 It was resolved to receive the report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. A NATIONAL DIALOGUE FOR THE UCA

The General Secretary spoke to Document 3, consisting of a proposal for a national dialogue including the context for it, the opportunities it creates, the specific challenges it poses and its proposed format. Extensive discussion followed.

11.42 It was resolved to:

11.42.01 receive the report;

11.42.02 a) request the General Secretary to consult with the National Director of UnitingCare to provide feedback on the Standing Committee's opinion and the general conversation; and

b) in the light of that feedback decide whether it is helpful to hold further discussion at the Standing Committee.

2. GENERAL BUSINESS

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 20, consisting of various matters.

11.43 It was resolved to:

11.43.01 appoint Mr Peter Shepherd as a Director of AHB Pty Ltd;

11.43.02 appoint Rev Dr Geoffrey Thompson to the National Working Group on Doctrine;

11.43.03 appoint Mr Craig Mitchell to the National Working Group on Worship;

11.43.04 note the tabled Appendix to the Position Description of the Associate General Secretary, provided in response to ASC minute 10.29.05 (Attachment B);

11.43.05 a) note that subsequent to the March meeting of the Standing Committee the General Secretary became aware that the meeting did not notice the need to amend Regulation 3.6.2 (c) (iv) by deletion, at the time it was amending the regulation on membership of the Assembly;

b) note that in the advice given to the church on this matter the General Secretary deleted Regulation 3.6.2 (c) (iv) on the basis that it was consequential to another decision taken by the Standing Committee;

c) endorse the action of the General Secretary to make this consequential amendment in the advice provided to the church; and

d) amend Regulation 3.6.2 (c) by the deletion of clause (iv)
(iv) in its appointments the Synod shall take account of Regulation 3.5.25;

- 11.43.06 note that the issue raised in ASC minute 11.22.09, re how ASC handles staff performance appraisals, can be taken up in the Governance Task Group and determine that no further action be taken on this resolution;
- 11.43.07 advise Presbyteries, Synods, National Congress and members of the triennial Assembly that proposals submitted for consideration at the triennial Assembly need to be lodged with the Assembly General Secretary no later than 90 days before to commencement date of the Assembly for Constitutional matters and 30 days for any other matters unless arising from proposals provided in reports or otherwise;
- 11.43.08 a) receive the correspondence from the Cato Trust; and
b) request the General Secretary to progress the matter;
- 11.43.09 a) receive the correspondence from Kendall Trudgen;
b) advise Kendall that the location of Standing Committee meetings will be on the Agenda of the Standing Committee in November ; and
c) encourage him to consult with the Synod of South Australia and the Yalga-Binbi Institute regarding the apprenticeship model for Ministerial formation and education;
- 11.43.10 a) receive the advice of the General Secretaries' group that it is timely to review the operation of the new Part 8 Appeals Regulations; and
b) request the General Secretaries, with Peter Jones as Convenor, to bring a report on this matter to a future meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 11.43.11 a) receive the advice of the General Secretary that the Presbyterian Inland Mission officers have advised that the Presbyterian Church will no longer be able to participate in a combined event with the UCA to mark the centenary of the commencement of the Australian Inland Mission; and
b) request the General Secretary to convey the UCA's disappointment to the Presbyterian General Assembly and express the hope that there may be opportunities for our churches to collaborate in the future;
- 11.43.12 a) express its serious concern to the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee that the material on risk management has not been provided after the issue was raised in November 2009 and therefore it cannot currently fulfil its responsibilities in relation to oversight of risk management;
b) request the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee that as a matter of urgency this material be brought to the November 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee; and
c) request the Audit, Finance and Risk Committee to report to each meeting of the Standing Committee.

3. REVIEW OF THE ASSEMBLY GENERAL SECRETARY

The President introduced Document 12, consisting of a report on the review of the Assembly General Secretary. Gregor Henderson took the chair for the duration of the discussion.

11.44 It was resolved to:

- 11.44.01 receive the report;
- 11.44.02 thank Rev Terence Corkin for the ministry he has offered as General Secretary and the commitment, clarity and faithfulness that he brings to the role;
- 11.44.03 note the strong affirmation of, and confidence in, his character, call and performance in this role and recommend to the 13th Assembly that it reappoint Rev Terence Corkin as General Secretary until December 31 2015;
- 11.44.04 request the General Secretary and the President to identify and engage an appropriate professional executive coach; and
- 11.44.05 encourage the General Secretary to pursue the areas identified in the Report as strategic priorities in the next triennium.

4. REVIEW OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR, UNITINGWORLD

Wendie Wilkie spoke to Document 11, consisting of a report on the review of the National Director, UnitingWorld.

11.45 It was resolved to:

- 11.45.01 receive the report;
- 11.45.02 offer Rev Kerry Enright a five year extension to his current term as National Director, UnitingWorld until January 31 2017;
- 11.45.03 express the Standing Committee's appreciation to Rev Dr Kerry Enright for the ministry and leadership he has exercised as National Director, UnitingWorld; and
- 11.45.04 thank the UnitingWorld Reference Committee and staff team for the contribution they are making to strengthening the international mission contribution of the UCA.

5. UCA LOGO

The General Secretary presented Document 19, consisting of a report on a proposed change to the secondary logo for the UCA.

11.46 It was resolved to:

- 11.46.01 receive the report; and
- 11.46.02 approve and endorse the change to the secondary logo for the UCA (Attachment C).

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 3.20pm with prayer led by Jenny Tymms.

2011 MEETING DATE

18– 20 November 2011