

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

16 – 18 March 2012

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

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Glenda Blakefield, Peter Blackwood, Shirley Coulson, Kay Dowling, Chris Walker and Andrew Williams.

WORSHIP On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, Robert Watson preached and the President presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion. On the Saturday Ken Sumner led morning worship and Andrew Glenn led evening prayers. On the Sunday morning Kisoo Jang led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by the President.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all Assembly Standing Committee participants to the meeting, and Mark Neasey and Peter Andrews for the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee.

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

12.01 It was resolved to accept the apology of Fatai Tapuelulu, Lesley de Grussa-Macaulay, Kim Anderson, Graham Humphris, Peter Jones and Shayne Blackman for the whole meeting, Jason Kioa for Friday night and Saturday, Kisoo Jang for Saturday afternoon, Gregor Henderson for Friday night, Saturday morning and afternoon as well as Sunday

PASTORAL MATTERS

The General Secretary informed the Standing Committee that Gregor Henderson and Kaisa Thomson were married the previous week. It was also reported that Shayne Blackman's mother passed away.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. The participants reviewed the agenda in Table Groups and offered feedback on which items should have priority in the Agenda.

12.02 **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

12.03 **It was resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held November 18 - 20 2011.

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 on his various activities since the last meeting of the Standing Committee. His report focused on the following matters:

- National Young Adult Leaders Conference
- UCA delegation to the China Christian Council
- Uniting Church DNA in agencies and schools
- Report on Church Leaders delegation to Israel-Palestine

12.04 **It was resolved** to receive the report.

SYNOD SHARING

The participants from the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania shared something of the life of their synod as an expression of our inter-counciliar sharing.

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. ELECTRONIC DECISION MAKING (ASC MINUTE 11.37)

Andrew Johnson spoke to Document 10, consisting of a report on the issue of electronic balloting across the Church.

12.05 **It was resolved to:**

12.05.01 receive the report; and

- 12.05.02 Propose to the 13th Assembly that the Assembly authorise the Standing Committee on advice from the Legal Reference Committee to:
- a) remove current references in the Regulations to electronic ballots or decision making; and
 - b) amend the "Conduct of Business" Regulations to provide for electronic decision making consistent with the Manual for Meetings

2. REPORT FROM THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE AGENDA GROUP (ASC MINUTE 11.56.02)

The President presented Document 7, consisting of a report on the work undertaken by the Standing Committee Agenda Group. The Standing Committee was invited to comment on the understanding that had been developed about the future role for this group. Andrew Dutney chaired the meeting during this presentation.

- 12.06 It was resolved to:**
- 12.06.01 receive the report; and
- 12.06.02 request the General Secretary to prepare terms of reference for the group in the light of the discussion and submit them to the August meeting of the Standing Committee for adoption.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. ASSEMBLY AUDIT, FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

Peter Andrews and Mark Neasey presented Documents 2 and 2A, consisting of a report on the various aspects of the work of the Committee including material on the role of the Standing Committee in developing a risk register for the Assembly; and the Frontier Services annual financial accounts for the year ended 30 June 2011, respectively. Table groups were used to identify possible risks to the Assembly and this material was provided to the Committee as a resource for its ongoing work.

12.07 It was resolved to:

- 12.07.01 receive the report; and
- 12.07.02 receive the year end accounts (30 June 2011) for Frontier Services.

2. EDUCATION FOR MINISTRY TASK GROUP

Andrew Dutney presented Document 5, consisting of a report from the Task Group on the future direction for the Ministerial Education Commission.

12.08 It was resolved to receive the report.

3. GENERAL REPORT

The General Secretary spoke to Document 17, consisting of a report on various matters.

12.09 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. HISTORICAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE RE HERITAGE BUILDINGS

The General Secretary presented Document 15, consisting of a report on Church properties and heritage issues.

12.10 It was resolved to:

- 12.10.01 receive the report;
- 12.10.02 recommend that Synods
- a) create and maintain an on-line and photographic register of heritage listed (ie national, state and local heritage listings) properties, including movable property, e.g. organs, stained glass windows, which exist within their synod;
 - b) include a section on heritage issues in their Property Manual and / or as a separate brochure available to presbyteries and congregations;
 - c) include the following information in the section on heritage issues in their Property Manual and / or separately published brochure made available to presbyteries and congregations:

- * Presbyteries and congregations have a responsibility to inform themselves about the heritage listings of the properties for which they are responsible
 - * Presbyteries and congregations can do this by accessing [insert web address of Synod heritage listed property register] or state or territory government heritage databases
 - * The title of a contact person in each Synod who can explain to presbyteries and congregations the implications of being responsible for a heritage listed property; including being able to direct presbyteries and congregations to relevant State or Territory government heritage publications
 - * If a Synod, Presbytery or Congregation is responsible for a property or part of a property which isn't heritage-listed but which the responsible body thinks should be listed, advice that they must consult the relevant contact person in each Synod for advice; and
- d) give consideration to offering other resources on heritage issues such as seminars in rural and urban contexts.

5. LEGAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced Document 11, consisting of a report on the matters the Legal Reference Committee has dealt with since the November 2011 Standing Committee.

12.11 It was resolved to:

- 12.11.01 receive the report;
- 12.11.02 a) request Jenny Tymms, Jenny Brecknell, Isabel Thomas Dobson and Geoffrey Grinton to liaise with the General Secretary to address some paragraphs in the draft regulations for the admission of a minister from another denomination where the need for further clarity was identified; and
- b) authorise them to finalise the draft Regulations re the admission of a minister from another denomination to submit to the 13th Assembly; and
- 12.11.03 submit the following proposal to the 13th Assembly:
- amend Regulation 2.7.9A to read
- (ii) ~~by a Synod or a body responsible to a Synod pursuant to Regulation 2.7.8(c) or 2.7.9(a) or to a by-law of a Synod shall be directed to the General Secretary of the Assembly and shall be dealt with in accordance Regulation 8.6; and~~
- (ii) by a Synod or a body responsible to a Synod pursuant to Regulation 2.7.8 (c) or 2.7.9(a) or to a by-law of a Synod shall be
- directed to the Synod Secretary of the Synod in which the appeal arises;
 - referred by the Synod Secretary, on the advice of the Convenor of the Standing Appeal Panel, to another Synod; and
 - dealt with by that Synod in accordance with Part 8 of these Regulations; and
- 12.11.04 a) request the Legal Reference Committee to prepare a draft regulation to make explicit the capacity of the Assembly Standing Committee to amend Regulations; and

- b) authorise the General Secretary to submit the draft regulation to the 13th Assembly in the name of the Assembly Standing Committee; and
- 12.11.05 request the Assembly to authorize the Standing Committee, on advice from the Legal Reference Committee, to amend the regulations on the re-admission of former ministers (Regulation 2.5.2) to parallel the candidature process rather than the process for the admission of ministers from other denominations; and
- 12.11.06 note the conclusion of Mr Malcolm Gledhill's term as Chairperson of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee and that a Minute of Appreciation is being prepared for submission to the 13th Assembly.

6. UNITINGWORLD - CHURCH CONNECTIONS NATIONAL COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced Document 18, consisting of nominations for a new National Committee.

12.12 It was resolved to:

- 12.12.01 receive the report;
- 12.12.02
 - a) amend the UnitingWorld Relief and Development Unit National Committee Mandate by deleting the words 'of its members' after the words 'Annual General Meeting' and by adding the following sentence at the end of section 9: 'Members of the Assembly Standing Committee and members of the National Committee will be entitled to attend and fully participate in the Annual General Meeting,' as well as members of the UnitingWorld Church Connections National Committee; and
 - b) request the National Director to provide a paper and present it to the August meeting of the Standing Committee in response to the issues raised in the document and the Standing Committee discussion with the possibility that a review of the Mandate might follow; and
- 12.12.03 appoint Stu Cameron, Joan Beaumont, Ji Zhang, Apelu Tiely, Tina Rendell, Andrew Glenn, Colin Milner and Elaine Ledgerwood as members of the UnitingWorld, Church Connections national Committee.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. ASC PROPOSALS FOR THE 13TH ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary introduced Document 9, consisting of a list of proposals the Assembly Standing Committee intends to take to the 13th Assembly. Members of the Standing Committee who will be in attendance at the Assembly were allocated to move and second proposals.

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

2. DRAFT ASC REPORT TO THE 13TH ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary introduced Document 3, consisting of the draft Assembly Standing Committee report to the 13th Assembly.

12.14 It was resolved to:

- 12.14.01 receive the report; and
- 12.14.02 approve it for distribution with the papers of the 13th Assembly.

3. GENERAL BUSINESS

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 16, consisting of various matters.

- 12.15 It was resolved to:**
- 12.15.01 receive the report;
- 12.15.02 extend the placement of the Associate General Secretary, Rev Glenda Blakefield, to 30 June 2014;
- 12.15.03
- a) appoint Paul Bartlett, Philip Bickerstaff, Cynthia Coghill and John Hayes as members of the Committee of Management of the National Disaster Relief Fund until the August 2012 meeting of the Standing Committee;
 - b) amend Clause 4.2 of the Constitution of the National Disaster Relief Fund to read:
4.2 Six members of the Committee of Management shall be appointed by the Standing Committee of the Assembly of the UCA at the first meeting of the Standing Committee after each triennial Assembly. Each appointed member shall serve a 3 year term. ~~2 members shall retire in each calendar year. The first to retire shall be determined by agreement among the members of the Committee of Management or, by failing agreement, by lot;~~ and
 - c) amend Clause 6.3 of the Constitution of the National Disaster Relief Fund to read:
6.3 The Committee of Management shall comply with the provisions of Regulation ~~5.5.10 (a), (b) and (e)~~ 3.8.7(a), (b) and (c) in respect of books of account, banking arrangements and Audit.;
- 12.15.04 note that the final report of the Christian Education Research Project will be presented at the March 2013 meeting of the Standing Committee instead of the November 2012 meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 12.15.05
- a) appoint Stuart McMillan (Convenor), Janeen Barker, Chairperson Uniting Justice Reference Committee, and Glenda Blakefield, the Associate General Secretary to the Review Group for Rev Elenie Poulos, National Director Uniting Justice Australia; and
 - b) request that a report be brought to the August 2012 meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 12.15.06
- a) appoint Kisoo Jang (Convenor), Gregor Henderson and 2 nominees from the Korean National Conference to the Task Group to review the Alternative Regulations for Korean Congregations; and
 - b) request that a report be brought to the November meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 12.15.07 determine that the membership of the Church Polity Reference Committee not be limited to the bounds of any particular synod;
- 12.15.08
- a) appoint Ms Jen Davies (Synod of Victoria and Tasmania), Mr Zac Hatfield Dodds (Synod of NSW and the ACT), Miss Bethany Hewitt (Synod of South Australia), Rev Monique Mawbey (Queensland Synod) and nominees under 25 years of age of the Synod of Western Australia and the Northern Synod as members of the 13th Assembly under the provisions of Regulation 3.6.2(e); and
 - (b) appoint Rev Eseta Meneilly, Rev Rodel Palma, Rev Kiduk Hwang, Rev Dr Apwee Ting, Rev Dr Emanuel Audisho, Mrs. Kalo Fotu, Ms Virginia Lavaki, Ms. Fa Ngaluafe and Dr Tangi Moimoi-Steen as

members of the 13th Assembly under the provisions of Regulation 3.6.2(e);

- 12.15.09 appoint Sharon Kirk and Josie Nottle to the Working Group on Worship;
- 12.15.10 a) receive the correspondence from the Synod of Queensland in relation to the suggested improvements to the discipline Regulations; and
b) refer the documents to the National Consultation on the Church's discipline processes that meets in March 2012;
- 12.15.11 a) note that the Assembly General Secretary has been in discussions with the Officers of the Synod of NSW / ACT in relation to the non-payment of costs incurred by the Assembly in facilitating an appeal under Regulation 2.7.9A;
b) express the view that it is appropriate for a Synod to cover any legitimate costs incurred in relation to appeals that arise under Regulation 2.7.9A; and
c) request the General Secretary to write to the Synod of NSW / ACT requesting that it take such steps as necessary to facilitate the payment of the costs incurred by the Assembly as a natural outworking of the interconciliar polity of the Uniting Church;
- 12.15.12 a) rescind ASC Minute 11.18.02; and
b) replace it with the following:
(i) if more than two nominations are received for President - Elect, a first-round preferential ballot be used to identify the two candidates with the highest number of preferences;
(ii) if a candidate in the preferential ballot receives more than 50% of the first preferences of those participating in the ballot, that candidate be declared elected;
(iii) if there are only two nominations, or following a prior preferential ballot, in which no candidate received more than 50% of first preferences, the names of the two candidates who, after the distribution of preferences, received the most votes shall be submitted and members shall indicate their preference for one candidate; and
(iv) to be declared elected, a candidate must receive the support of more than 50% of those participating in the ballot.

4. BENEVOLENT FUND

The General Secretary spoke to Documents 14 and 14A, consisting of a report on the future options of the Fund and a financial summary, respectively.

12.16 It was resolved to:

- 12.16.01 receive the report;
- 12.16.02 establish a Task Group to undertake a review of the constitution, structure and administration arrangements of the Ministers Benevolent Fund and report to the Standing Committee at the November 2012 meeting; and
- 12.16.03 appoint Bruce Binnie (Convenor), Ian Glenny (Administrator of the Fund), a nominee of the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and the General Secretary.

5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND THE ROLE OF ASSEMBLY

Andrew Johnson and Peter McDonald introduced Document 8, consisting of a report on the current practices of the church regarding discipline and conflict resolution.

12.17 It was resolved to:

12.17.01 receive the report;

12.17.02 submit the following proposal to the 13th Assembly
That the Assembly authorise the Standing Committee to:

- a) Establish a Task Group to review the operation of Part 6 of the Regulations (Appeals) with particular reference to
 - whether the appeal should address the merits of the case or only matters of process
 - whether greater prescription is required on the process to be undertaken in relation to Part 6 Appeals; for example in relation to:
 - the nature of the evidence to be provided
 - the role of support persons
 - allocation of costs
 - the adequacy of current timelines
 - whether there is merit in there being a national Standing Appeals Panel; and if so how it might operate; and
- b) on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, amend Part 6 of the Regulations (Appeals) in the light of the report of the Task Group.

12.17.03 refer the following proposal to the incoming Standing Committee:

- a) establish a working group with the following terms of reference:
 - (i) explore what is working well in resolving conflicts in the life of the church;
 - (ii) scope out and analyse current sources of conflict;
 - (iii) describe the key issues which arise from the analysis; and
 - (iv) identify alternative strategies to those presently being used for resolving conflict including best practice in other organisations; and
- b) request the August 2012 meeting of the Standing Committee to appoint members to the working group.

6. EUTHANASIA

The General Secretary spoke to Document 13, consisting of a report on the views from across the church on the issue of euthanasia and whether further work needs to be done.

12.18 It was resolved to:

12.18.01 receive the report;

12.18.02 affirm that there is merit in the Church continuing to give consideration to the issue of euthanasia;

12.18.03 refer the issue and this paper to the incoming Standing Committee with the recommendation that the Standing Committee give consideration to establishing a Task Group that could address the following matters:

- Developing a list of definitions and terms relevant to euthanasia and end of life issues;
- Undertake further conversations to clarify the issues for our members and communities in relation to euthanasia and end of life issues, with particular reference to members of the UAICC and the culturally and linguistically diverse communities;
- The theological, ethical and ecclesial issues relevant to addressing these issues; and
- Consideration of whether, in the light of the work undertaken, it is helpful to provide resources to the Church to assist members and groups in their consideration of euthanasia and end of life issues, and

12.18.04 express sincere thanks to Colleen Geyer for the work she has done on this issue.

7. MOGUMBER MISSION COMPLAINTS

The General Secretary presented Documents 4 and 4A, consisting of reports on the follow up to the document submitted to the November 2011 Standing Committee regarding the claim from former residents of Mogumber Mission for an ex gratia payment for alleged abuse experienced while resident at Mogumber Mission.

12.19 **It was resolved to** receive the report.

8. NATIONAL YOUNG LEADERS CONFERENCE

Adrian White presented Document 12, consisting of a report on the conference led by the President and the Congress' National Chairperson for young leaders and a statement "Reconciliation People" arising from this conference.

12.20 **It was resolved to:**

12.20.01 receive the report;

12.20.02 submit the statement "Reconciliation People" to the 13th Assembly on behalf of the Conference participants;

12.20.03 commend it to the Assembly for reception as an expression of its support for this group in the life of the Church; and

12.20.04 invite the Communications Unit to produce it in a way that makes it accessible to a wider audience by the time of the 13th Assembly.

9. PREPARATIONS FOR THE 13TH ASSEMBLY

The General Secretary spoke to Document 6, consisting of a report on the preparations which have been made for the 13th Assembly.

12.21 **It was resolved to** receive the report.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 3.45pm with prayer led by the President.

<p style="text-align: center;">2012 MEETING DATES</p>
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<p style="text-align: center;">24 – 26 August 2012 16 – 18 November 2012</p>
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