

UNITINGJUSTICE AUSTRALIA - TERMS OF REFERENCE

UnitingJustice Australia is the justice policy and advocacy unit of the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia, pursuing national matters of social and economic justice, human rights, peace and the environment. It sits within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship and works collaboratively with other units of the team.

It engages in advocacy and education and works collaboratively to communicate the Church's vision for a reconciled world. It provides resources for the Church as it considers its position on issues of national and international importance and public policy.

UnitingJustice Australia exists as an expression of the Uniting Church's commitment to working toward a just and peaceful world. This commitment arises from the Christian belief that liberation from oppression and injustice is central to the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ.

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- identify systems and structures in society which cause and perpetuate injustice, violence and oppression
- identify critical issues of national and international significance
- conduct analysis and develop considered responses on these issues
- actively participate and advocate in public discussion
- strengthen the Church's prophetic voice and action in the world
- provide advice to Assembly, Assembly Standing Committee, the President and the General Secretary on justice issues of national and international significance
- educate, inform and resource the Church, so that members, groups, councils and agencies can effectively engage in actions for justice and peace
- support the Uniting Church justice staff network across the synods, encouraging collaboration on issues of national significance
- identify issues of (systemic/institutional) injustice within the Church and seek remedies

Priorities are set and identified through resolutions of the Assembly and the Assembly Standing Committee, the advice of the UnitingJustice Reference Committee, long-term strategic planning and analysis, urgent political and social issues and issues arising out of ecumenical co-operation.

On matters where there are no Assembly resolutions to guide the work, and no precedent in the work of the unit or the wider Church, UnitingJustice will seek the advice of the President, the General Secretary, the Associate General Secretary and the consensus of the UnitingJustice Australia Reference Committee before articulating a position in the public forum. Final approval for this will be given by the General Secretary.

WAYS OF WORKING

UnitingJustice Australia will

- ground its work in the gospel
- build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia
- ground its work in the Church's relationships of solidarity with those most affected by injustice
- be concerned with the needs of the whole creation
- conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis
- work in co-operation with synods and other Assembly agencies, ecumenically and in partnership with other civil society organisations
- contribute positively to Australian civil society including by representing the Uniting Church Assembly as appropriate

REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The UnitingJustice Australia Reference Committee is appointed every three years by the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) at its first meeting after the Triennial Assembly. Nominations are submitted to the ASC by the National Director after a public call for expressions of interest. A team which usually includes the Chair of Reference Committee, the National Director and the Uniting Faith and Discipleship Team Leader assess the expressions of interest and prepare a list of nominees for the consideration of the ASC.

The Chairperson of the Reference Committee is elected by the Triennial Assembly on submission of a nomination from UnitingJustice Australia.

The Reference Committee consists of a Chairperson, the National Director, a representative of the Synod justice staff, and five members and can co-opt up to two additional members. The Assembly Associate General Secretary is an ex officio member.

ROLE

Duties of Reference Committee members include:

- providing support and advice to the National Director and staff on such matters as strategic planning, priority setting, and the development of policy positions;
- receiving and considering matters referred by the National Director;
- together with the National Director, assisting and advising the President and General Secretary on urgent political and social issues; and
- communicating and promoting the work of UnitingJustice Australia in their local contexts and spheres of influence.

Approved by the Assembly Standing Committee, November 2012