

## Uniting Church in Australia

### ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

11 - 13 MARCH 2016

**PRESENT** Stuart McMillan (President), Felicity Amery, Peter Andrews, Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Bethany Broadstock, Hayden Charles, Dennis Corowa, John Cox, Lindsay Cullen, Garry Dronfield, Andrew Dutney, Steve Francis, Colleen Geyer, Geoffrey Grinton, Zac Hatfield Dodds, Haloti Kailahi, Denise Liersch, Amelia Koh-Butler, Deidre Palmer, Ian Price, Akesa Racava, Elaine Rae, Isabel Thomas-Dobson, Ian Tozer, Jacki Watts, Wendie Wilkie.

**In attendance:** Jenny Bertalan, Chris Budden, David de Kock, Peter Jones, Mark Lawrence, Robert Packer, Matt Pulford, Nigel Rogers, Chris Walker, Andrew Williams.

**WORSHIP** On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, Haloti Kailahi preached and presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion and the President acknowledged Cadigal Clan Nation of the Eora people by paying respects for the wisdom of their elders past and their care of country and to all descendants of this nation. On the Saturday Nigel Rogers led morning worship and Akesa Racava led evening prayers. On the Sunday Isabel Thomas Dobson led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Wendie Wilkie.

**WELCOMES** The President welcomed all participants, with special regard to Steve Francis, the new member replacing John Cox, David de Kock and Robert Packer as new Synod General Secretaries, to the Standing Committee meeting. Also welcomed as visitors were Rob Floyd and Andrew Glenn for matters related to UnitingWorld, Grahame Ryan and Jim Mein for matters related to Frontier Services

#### APOLOGIES

**16.01** **It was resolved** to receive the apology from Hayden Charles for Friday night, Jacki Watts for Saturday night, Steve Francis and David de Kock for Sunday.

#### PASTORAL MATTERS

The pastoral matters also formed part of the worship led by Haloti Kailahi on Friday night. The participants were informed that Rev Bill Clarke passed away. It was also shared that Jonathan, the son of Rev Ruthmary Bond and husband Matthew passed away, Luka, the son of Rev Basil Schild and wife was born in November with very serious health issues; the husband of Rev Dr Amelia Koh-Butler is undergoing cancer treatment; Rev Felicity Amery's sister Penny is recovering from a stroke. The participants were glad to hear that Bethany Broadstock was recovering from heart issues and could be with them again. The President led the meeting in prayers.

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1.

**16.02** **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

- 16.03**            **It was resolved to** confirm the minutes of the meeting held 12 – 14 November 2015 with the following amendments:  
15.77.02 Code of Conduct, Attachment B – delete the Values Statement  
15.78.01 insert '2016' after March  
15.78.05 a) amend the word 'appoint' to 'establish'  
15.82.01 amend it to : 'receive the report as amended in the light of the discussion at the meeting by the removal of the last sentence in paragraph 20 and paragraph 24 with a renumbering of subsequent paragraphs'  
15.88.03 paragraph under 3.7.4.1, the 2<sup>nd</sup> line to read 'closest to 10% of the TOTAL number of members'  
15.88.05 Regulation 3.1.6 (j)(iv) delete the words 'the faculty of each recognised theological college'  
15.90.03 add 'as amended' at the end of the line  
15.94.03 add that the report is to be back to the March 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 16.04**            **It was resolved to:**
- a)        note:
    - (i)      Ian Price's conflict of interest in relation to Document 19, report of the Task Group on the Review of Songs That Unite;
    - (ii)     resolve that he be in attendance for this business but not participate.

## 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

On the Saturday evening the President reported to the Standing Committee on his various activities since the November 2015 meeting of the Standing Committee.

- 16.05**            **It was resolved to** receive the report (Attachment A).

## BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

- 1. Church Polity Reference Committee re "Uniting" Brand (ASC Minutes 15.66.15(d) and 15.76.03)**

Andrew Dutney spoke to Document 8, consisting of a report on the theological and polity considerations embedded in the possibility of "Uniting" becoming a national brand for the Church's community services.

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

## **2. Frontier Services (ASC Minute 15.79.02)**

Jim Mein and Grahame Ryan presented Documents 18, 18A, 18B, 18C, 18D and 24, consisting of a report from the Interim Board, the profiles of the recommended Board members, the revised Constitution, the Frontier Services Mandate, P&L and balance sheet and a request concerning the Assembly fund loan to Frontier Services.

- 16.07 It was resolved to:**
- 16.07.01 receive the reports;
- 16.07.02 acknowledge that Frontier Services has:
- a) completed the withdrawal of Frontier Services from all remaining community services as per Standing Committee instructions;
  - b) completed the transition of Patrol Ministry oversight from 1 January 2016, ensuring that the transition to oversight and management of same was accomplished in an effective, efficient and pastorally-sensitive manner with all relevant Synods and Presbyteries; and
  - c) continued with the provision of fundraising and promotions for Patrol Ministry, as well as both fundraising for and development/delivery of community support/volunteer programs for regional and remote Australia;
- 16.07.03 authorise the Assembly Officers to approve the final version of the revised Constitution;
- 16.07.04 a) approve that the following nominated individuals be granted the opportunity to serve on the Frontier Services board until the next Triennial meeting of the Uniting Church in Australia General Assembly:
- Mr Jim Mein
  - Mrs Dianne Torrens
  - Mr Gary Williamson
  - Mr John Baxter
  - Mrs Lisa Sampson
- And as strategic advisor to the Board and in particular Mrs Dianne Torrens:
- Rev Chris Budden; and
- b) authorise the Assembly Officers to approve the nomination of the two remaining persons to the Board;
- 16.07.05 approve the removal of the word “interim” from the future description of the Frontier Services board (wherein “interim” denotes the term applied during the period of transitional change only) at such time the full Board is appointed; and
- 16.07.06 agree that Assembly Fund loan to Frontier Services of \$4,999,994 be on the following terms:
- a) interest payable on a monthly basis at 4.4% per annum;
  - b) agree to the Frontier Services commitments to first repay Uniting Financial Services loan, the working account with the Assembly Fund and the John Flynn Foundation loan; and
  - c) no principal repayments before 1 July 2021 unless circumstances in Frontier Services enable an earlier start to loan repayments to the Assembly Fund.

### **3. Membership in the Uniting Church (ASC Minute 15.69.02)**

Ian Price introduced Documents 9, 9A and 9B, consisting of a report from the Task Group on Membership in the Uniting Church, a summary of the responses of working groups at the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly and Document 31, the report to the August 2015 Standing Committee meeting..

#### **16.08 It was resolved to:**

16.08.01 receive the report in principle;

16.08.02 refer the matter to the Assembly Legal Reference Committee in the light of the conversation at the meeting regarding the implications for the Constitution and Regulations if a new category of membership as suggested were introduced;

16.08.03 request the Working Group on Worship to prepare a draft liturgy; and

16.08.04 request the Task Group to bring a report to the November meeting of the Standing Committee.

### **4. National Remote Area Ministry Mechanism (ASC Minutes 15.45.04 and 15.92.03)**

Peter Jones presented Document 5, consisting of an update report from the Remote Area Ministry Working Group and the draft Terms of Reference for the Group. Discussion ensued.

#### **16.09 It was resolved to:**

16.09.01 receive the report; and

16.09.02 add the General Secretary, Chris Budden, a member appointed by UAICC and a member appointed by the Standing Committee to the membership of the Working Group.

### **5. Palestine Working Group (AC Minute 15.45.05)**

Andrew Dutney spoke to Document 15, consisting of a progress report from the Working Group.

#### **16.10 It was resolved to:**

16.10.01 receive the report;

16.10.02 approve the direction of the proposed text in an initial information leaflet; and

16.10.03 authorise the Assembly Officers to approve further resources produced by the Working Group for use throughout the Uniting Church.

### **6. Review of, and Setting the Priorities of the Assembly (ASC Minutes 15.22.03 and 15.22.04)**

The General Secretary introduced Documents 6 and 6A, consisting of a paper on the process, guidelines and suggested ways to reach the outcomes set out in ASC minutes 15.22.03 and 15.22.04 and an information sheet provided questions for the members to consider before the priority setting process was undertaken. Table group discussions ensued. The model for the way the Assembly should work will be developed based on the directions set by the table groups.

## **7. Review of 'Songs That Unite' (ASC Minute 15.92.06)**

Amelia Koh-Butler spoke to Document 19, consisting of a report from the Review Group.

### **16.11 It was resolved to:**

16.11.01 receive the report;

16.11.02 request the General Secretary to conclude current funding arrangements of Songs That Unite in a pastoral and timely manner and inform key stakeholders (artists, users and staff)

16.11.03 request the General Secretary to explore alternative arrangements for the hosting of endorsed or recommended worship resources, beyond what is currently available on the Assembly website, noting the particular need for Australian-generated music and creative arts resources for a mission-oriented church; and

16.11.04 request the General Secretary to bring a report to the July 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

## **8. Sovereignty – What Do We Mean When We Talk About Sovereignty? (ASC Minute 15.08)**

Chris Budden presented Document 11, consisting of a paper what it actually means to recognise and affirm that First People are sovereign Peoples. Table group discussion followed.

### **16.12 It was resolved to:**

16.12.01 receive the report; and

16.12.02 request the General Secretary, Chris Budden, a member appointed by UAICC and a member appointed by the Standing Committee to work towards a full day conversation between the UAICC and the Standing Committee regarding sovereignty.

## **9. Task Group on Eldership (ASC Minute 15.45.02)**

Wendie Wilkie spoke to Document 12, consisting of a report from the Task Group on the issues and situations that the Standing Committee needed to take into consideration to further this matter.

### **16.13 It was resolved to:**

16.13.01 receive the report and the supplementary report;

16.13.02 refer the matter back to the Task Group that has been established; and

16.13.03 request the Task Group to bring a report to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

## **FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES**

### **1. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee**

Peter Andrews spoke to Documents 10, 10A and 10B, consisting of a finance report, the statement of net available funds and a supplementary report.

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

## **2. ASC Governance Reference Committee**

The General Secretary presented Document 21, consisting of a report from the Reference Committee.

**16.15**      **It was resolved to** receive the report;

## **3. Education for Ministry Working Group**

Andrew Dutney spoke to Document 16, consisting of the draft standards for formation and education for the specified ministry of lay preacher.

**16.16**      **It was resolved to:**

16.16.01      receive the report; and

16.16.02      adopt the new Standards for Education and Formation of the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher as amended (Attachment B).

## **4. General Report**

The General Secretary spoke to Document 23, consisting of various matters.

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

## **5. National Royal Commission Task Group**

John Cox spoke to Documents 17, 17A, 17B, 17C and 17D, consisting of a report from the National Task Group, a press release from the Hon. George Brandis and the Hon. Christian Porter, a press release from the President, a letter from the Royal Commission re Working With Children Check and an audit summary.

**16.18**      **It was resolved to** note the report.

## **6. UnitingJustice Australia – Sanctuary for Asylum Seekers**

Deidre Palmer presented Document 3, consisting of a report on the sanctuary movement and the UCA participation in it.

## **7. UnitingWorld**

Rob Floyd and Andrew Glenn introduced Document 7, consisting of a report from the Agency. The presentation was part of a regular schedule of reporting. UnitingWorld reported on issues of risk, governance and compliance, finance and the work of the Agency.

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

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **1. ASC Risk Register**

The General Secretary presented Documents 2 and 2A, consisting of a recoded ASC Risk Register and a paper on the process to review the ASC Risk Register. Table Group discussion followed. The area to be reviewed was Legal.

**16.20**      **It was resolved to:**

16.20.01      request the ASC Governance Reference Committee to amend the Risk Register in the light of the comments provided by the Standing Committee during its review; and

16.20.02 bring the amended register to the July 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

## **2. General Business**

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 22 and Robert Packer spoke to Document 25 which constituted part of Document 22 and consisted of a request from the Queensland Synod.

### **16.21 It was resolved to:**

16.21.01 receive the report;

16.21.02 a) note the update re the 'Uniting' trademark; and

b) request the General Secretary to bring a report re progress to the July 2016 meeting of the ASC;

16.21.03 endorse Rev Peter Weeks, Dr Michael Champion and Rev Dr Glen O'Brien as members of the Christian Unity Working Group;

16.21.04 endorse Margaret Mayman as the Uniting Church member of the NCCA Executive;

16.21.05 a) approve the additional question as outlined for inclusion in the Induction services; and

b) affirm the Worship Working Group's intention to work with the Multicultural Ministries Reference Group re additional rubrics which might be helpful for and in CALD communities;

16.21.06 a) receive the report of the General Secretary regarding the Duties of Synod Secretaries regulations; and

b) request the Legal Reference Committee to bring a report regarding the amendment to regulations to July 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee;

16.21.07 a) receive the report of the General Secretary; and

16.21.08 b) request the General Secretaries to bring a report regarding funding to determine an equitable and sustainable funding model for the work of the Assembly and present that model to July 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee;

16.21.09 receive the report of the General Secretary regarding responses to letters sent re recognising the Armenian Genocide;

16.21.10 receive the correspondence from the Yarra Yarra Presbytery; and

16.21.11 noting that the 1997 and 2007 exemptions granted to Queensland Synod no longer apply and acting under the authority granted by Regulation 3.10.1, grant to the Synod of Queensland an exemption to the operation of Regulations 3.6.3.1(c) and 3.6.3.1(d) sufficient to enable the Moderator of Queensland to be renominated for a second consecutive term of three years each for the 32<sup>nd</sup> Queensland Synod in Session (by agreement).

### **3. Skills Matrix / Co-options**

The General Secretary spoke to Document 20, consisting of a report on the skills of the Standing Committee members based on the form they completed and a nomination for cooption.

**16.22 It was resolved to:**

16.22.01 receive the report; and

16.22.02 approve the cooption of Warwick van Ede to the membership of the Standing Committee from its July 2016 meeting.

### **4. National Governance and Leadership Conversation**

Peter Jones and Nigel Rogers introduced Document 14, 14A, 14B, 14C and 14D, consisting of a letter from the General Secretary of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania on legislative incorporation, the final National Governance Conversation Discussion paper, a letter to the National Governance Project Group and National Governance Conversation Paper No.8. Table discussion followed.

## **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 3.45pm with prayer led by Wendie Wilkie.

**DATES FOR 2016:     15 – 17 July 2016**  
                              **18 – 20 March 2016**

## **MATTER REFERRED TO THE ASSEMBLY OFFICERS**

### **1. Frontier Services Constitution and Nomination of the Two Remaining Members to the Board (ASC Minutes 16.07.03 and 16.07.04 (b))**

**16.23 It was resolved to:**

16.23.01 approve the final version of the revised Frontier Services Constitution (Attachment C); and

16.23.02 approve the nomination of Rev Will Pearson and Mrs Dorothy Creek as members of the Frontier Services Board.