

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

7 – 9 July 2017

PRESENT Stuart McMillan (President), Felicity Amery, Peter Andrews, Dennis Corowa, Lindsay Cullen, Andrew Dutney, Steve Francis, Colleen Geyer, Geoffrey Grinton, Zac Hatfield Dodds, Haloti Kailahi, Amelia Koh-Butler, Deidre Palmer, Ian Price, Elaine Rae, Isabel Thomas-Dobson, Ian Tozer.

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Chris Budden, Heather den Houting, David de Kock, Mark Lawrence, Matt Pulford, Nigel Rogers.

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. He was assisted by the Sutherland Shire youth group 'Soul Purpose' from the Tongan National Conference in leading worship and communion. The participants 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 Chris Budden led morning worship and Amelia Koh-Butler led evening prayers. On the Sunday Steve Francis led morning worship. On Sunday afternoon a Service of Closure was held for Rev Dr Chris Walker.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all participants to the meeting. Also welcomed as visitors were Claerwen Little for matters related to UnitingCare Australia, John Cox for matters related to the Royal Commission, Anne Cross for matters related to ARRCs, Leo Iosifidis for matters related to Budget 2018, Andrew Glenn for matters related to UnitingWorld National Director Nomination, the Minute of Appreciation for Rob Floyd and the UnitingWorld Strategic Plan.

APOLOGIES

17.22 **It was resolved** to receive the apology from Bethany Broadstock, Denise Liersch, Wendie Wilkie, Andrew Dutney, Jane Fry, Alison Atkinson-Philips, Jacki Watts, Hayden Charles, Catherine Pepper, Warwick van Ede and Peter Jones for the whole meeting, Chris Budden for Saturday evening and Sunday, Lindsay Cullen for Saturday afternoon, evening and Sunday.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The President shared that Hayden Charles had eye surgery, Akesa Racava and Catherine Pepper were sick at the time of the meeting. The participants were informed that Garry Dronfield's granddaughter was taken to hospital with suspected appendicitis. It was also reported that Rae, John Mavor's wife started cancer treatment.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

17.23 **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

- 17.24** **It was resolved to** confirm the minutes of the meeting held March 3 – 5 2017 with the following corrections:
- a) i) replace ‘approve’ with ‘consider in Minute 17.09.04 to read:
 - 17.09.04 agree to consider the appointment of the Associate General Secretary, Assembly Resourcing via teleconference on the recommendation of the Interview Panel.
 - ii) replace ‘agree’ with ‘determine’ in Minute 17.16.02 to read:
 - 17.16.02 determine that the Annual General Meeting for UCA Assembly Limited be held annually at the November meeting of the Standing Committee.
 - iii) replace ‘note’ with ‘adopt’ in Minute 17.18 to read:
 - 17.18 With acclamation, it was resolved to adopt the Minute of Appreciation for Rev. Elenie Poulos with thanks.
- b) note that via teleconference held Friday, 21 April 2017 the Standing Committee resolved to approve the appointment of Mr Rob Floyd as the Associate General Secretary, Assembly Resourcing Unit.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 17.25** **It was resolved to:**
- a) note:
 - (i) Isabel Thomas Dobson’s conflict of interest in relation to Document 6, Reimagining Assembly Committees and Groups since she is a member of the Admission of Ministers Committee;
 - (ii) resolve that she be in attendance and participate in the discussion of all committees.

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 March 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee.

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

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. Marriage Conversation Update (ASC Minutes 16.66.02-03)

Lindsay Cullen introduced Document 3, consisting of a report regarding the process and outcomes of the two National Conversations on Marriage. Table group discussion followed.

17.27 It was resolved to:

17.27.01 receive the report;

17.27.02 request the General Secretary to write to all Synod General Secretaries by 1 August 2017 requesting them to set aside some time in the 2017 Synod meetings to discuss marriage in preparation for the 15th Assembly; and to provide information to resource these discussions as follows:

- i) A narration of steps indicating the work and conversations relating to this issue that has already occurred in the Uniting Church;
- ii) Links to key papers and resources available on the Assembly website, including resources outlining the Space for Grace process;
- iii) The following three questions for consideration by the Synod –
 - Share your hopes and concerns about our conversation around marriage
 - In what mutually respectful ways could we move together as a Church that reflects the breadth of who we are as the UCA?
 - What matters would you like the ASC to consider as it prepares for a discussion on this matter at the 15th Assembly?

17.27.03 request the Synod General Secretaries to provide responses to the Assembly General Secretary from these conversations no later than 31 January 2018, for consideration at the March 2018 meeting of the Standing Committee;

17.27.04 request the General Secretary to forward the report from the two National Marriage Conversations to the Working Group on Doctrine for their consideration in preparing their report for the Assembly Standing Committee; and

17.27.05 encourage Moderators and General Secretaries to consider the Space for Grace process when preparing Assembly members in their Synods for the work of the 15th Assembly concerning marriage.

2. Sovereignty and Treaty Conversation (Assembly Minute 15.08 and ASC Minutes 15.78.01 and 16.34)

Chris Budden spoke to Documents 2 and 2A, consisting of a brief report and a Discussion Guide on how to progress the conversation on sovereignty and treaty for First Peoples in Australia and to consider steps to be taken prior to 15th Assembly. Table group discussion followed.

17.28 It was resolved to:

17.28.01 receive the report;

17.28.02 note the Discussion Guide prepared for Uniting Church members; and

17.28.03 request the General Secretary to provide the support needed for actions identified by the Standing Committee to progress this conversation prior to the meeting of the 15th Assembly.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

Peter Andrews and Leo Iosifidis introduced Document 10, consisting of a report on the work of the Committee, including a current financial result update, a statement of net available funds, the Assembly Budget for 2018, proposed amendments to the Home Endowment Fund Rules and the nomination for the new Chair of the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee.

17.29 It was resolved to

- 17.29.01 receive the report;
- 17.29.02 approve the budgets for 2017-2018;
- 17.29.03 approve the modifications to the Rules of the Ministers' Home Endowment Fund (Attachment B);
- 17.29.04 approve the dissolution of the Benevolent Fund and the distribution of the balance of the Fund to Synods in a manner consistent with the Rules of the Fund;
- 17.29.05 appoint Stuart Woodward as the Chair of the Assembly Finance, Audit and Risk Committee; and
- 17.29.06 with acclamation, it was resolved to adopt the Minute of Appreciation for Mr Peter Andrews, with thanks.

2. Assembly Legal Reference Committee

The General Secretary introduced Document 13, consisting of a report on the various matters the Committee had dealt with over the past quarter with special regard to Incorporation.

17.30 It was resolved to:

- 17.30.01 receive the report; and
- 17.30.02 request that a report be brought to the November 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee on the changes to the Constitution and Regulations in relation to Affirmed Members; and
- 17.30.03 request that the Regulations changes regarding the withdrawal of status of ministers convicted of child sexual abuse be brought to a teleconference meeting of the Standing Committee prior to 31 August 2017.

3. Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship

Chris Walker presented Document 15, consisting of a report on the work of the three Working Groups and the current National Consultant as part of a regular schedule of reporting from Assembly Agencies and areas of work which report to the Standing Committee as the oversight body

17.31 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary spoke to Document 11, consisting of various matters including Assembly appointments announcement and the Positions Description for the Assembly Theologian in Residence position.

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

5. National Royal Commission Task Group

John Cox spoke to Documents 7, 7A, 7B1-4, 7C, 7D, 7E and 7F, consisting of a report from the Task Group, the National Task Group Risk Register, the Implementation Plan and Supporting Documents, Case Study 56 Learnings, the National Task Group Project Plan, a letter dated May 2017 from the World Council of Churches.

17.33 **It was resolved to:**

17.33.01 receive the report; and

17.33.02 note the National Child Safe Framework implementation plan and resources as amended at the meeting.

6. UnitingCare Australia

Claerwen Little introduced Document 4, consisting of a Minute of Appreciation for Peter Bicknell, a nomination for the new Chair of UnitingCare Australia and the Agency's Strategic Plan.

17.34 **It was resolved to:**

17.34.01 receive the report;

17.34.02 adopt the Minute of Appreciation for Peter Bicknell;

17.34.03 appoint Bronwyn Pike as the new Chair of UnitingCare Australia until the 15th Assembly; and

17.34.04 support the new strategic directions of UnitingCare Australia, noting that a final document will come to the November 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee for endorsement.

7. UnitingWorld

Andrew Glenn presented Documents 14, 14A, 14B and 14C, consisting of a draft partnership agreement between Ekalesisa Kerisiano Niue and the UCA, a Minute of Appreciation for Rob Floyd, the UnitingWorld National Director nomination and the UnitingWorld Strategic Plan.

17.35 **It was resolved to:**

17.35.01 receive the report;

17.35.02 give approval to the President to sign Partnership Agreements where:
a) the National Director of UnitingWorld requests the Assembly General Secretary and President that an agreement be signed;

b) The new Partnership Agreement is with a Partner Church with whom existing documented partnership arrangements have been in place previously; and

c) the Partnership Agreement follows the standard format as the attached Partnership Agreement between EKN and UCA (Attachment B);

17.35.03 request that UnitingWorld present a list of Church Partners with whom documented partnerships exist in their reporting to the Standing Committee and the triennial Assembly or as requested by the Standing Committee;

- 17.35.04 request UnitingWorld to consult with the National Conferences or Executives before signing partnership agreements;
- 17.35.05 approve the signing of the Partnership Agreement between Ekalesisa Kerisiano Niue and the UCA by the President of the UCA;
- 17.35.06 adopt the Minute of Appreciation for Rob Floyd; and
- 17.35.07 approve the appointment of Dr Sureka Goringe as National Director of UnitingWorld effective from 10 July 2017.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS) Update

Anne Cross spoke to Document 5, consisting of a report on the implementation of the Standing Committee's resolutions in March 2014 with the aim to provide the Standing Committee with an update of current performance of the services and the ongoing challenges and risks.

17.36 It was resolved to:

- 17.36.01 receive the report;
- 17.36.02
 - a) note with gratitude the progress made and sustainability achieved with aged and community services in the Northern Territory and Northern Western Australia, previously under the management of Frontier Services; and
 - b) record, in particular, its thanks to the Members of the Frontier Services Interim Board, Members of the Aged Care Transition Board, Peter Andrews, Wal Edgell, UnitingCare Qld, Anne Cross, Robyn Batten, Juniper, Vaughan Harding, the Northern Synod, Peter Jones, Members of the ARRCS Board.

2. Consent Agenda

The General Secretary presented the various documents which constituted Document 9, Consent Agenda.

17.37 It was resolved to:

- 17.37.01 receive the Governance Reference Committee report;
- 17.37.02 note the Assembly Strategic Plan - Communications and Engagement Strategy; and
- 17.37.03
 - a) receive the report from the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee regarding requirements for placement as a Uniting Church Chaplain in the Australian Defence Force; and
 - b) note that the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee re-affirms ordination as a requirement for placement as a Uniting Church Chaplain in the Australian Defence Force.

3. Reimagining Assembly Committees and Groups

The General Secretary introduced Document 6, consisting of a report on the work that has been done regarding reimagining Assembly committees and groups, also seeking guidance from members about certain matters. Table group discussion followed.

17.38 It was resolved to:

17.38.01 receives the report; and

17.38.02 request the General Secretary to take into account comments made about Assembly Committees and groups; and bring firm proposals regarding Assembly Committees and groups for the next Assembly triennium to the November 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Request

Mark Lawrence spoke to Document 16, consisting of a request from the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

17.39 It was resolved to:

17.39.01 receive the report;

17.39.02 grant to the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania an exemption from Regulation 3.7.4.1 (a) (iii) and (iv), and for the provision of an alternative regulation in place of Regulation 3.7.4.1 (a) (iii) and (iv) for the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Standing Committee.

5. 15th Assembly

Deidre Palmer and the General Secretary presented Document 8, consisting of an update on the preparations for the 15th Assembly including a mapping of all the resolutions made at 14th Assembly that required action by the Standing Committee, the President-elect nominations and initial information letters sent out to Synods and Presbyteries. Table discussion ensued re the work outstanding from resolutions made at the 14th Assembly and the issues and challenges for the UCA to be addressed by those nominating as President-elect. The participants provided feedback, identifying actions to be taken.

17.40 It was resolved to receive the report.

UCA ASSEMBLY LIMITED MEETING

1. Change of Assembly Auditors

At 10.05am on Sunday the meeting of the Standing Committee was adjourned and the meeting of the Members of the UCA Assembly Ltd started. The meeting of the Standing Committee resumed at 10.15pm.

The UCA Assembly Ltd resolved to note the change of Auditor from Deloitte to KPMG.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 2.45pm and

3.00 pm Closure of Ministry Service for Rev Dr Chris Walker as National Consultant, Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship.

DATE FOR 2017: 10 – 12 November 2017 (at Mary Mackillop Place, North Sydney)

DATES FOR 2018: **22 – 24 March 2018**
 24 – 26 August 2018
 8 – 10 November 2018