

## **Assembly Standing Committee Meeting Brief - March 2002**

The first ASC meeting for 2002 was held over the weekend of 15-17 March. A new style was trialed, one in the style planned for the 10th Assembly, which focused on discussion rather than decision making in the first part of the meeting. The following gives a brief overview of decisions made by the committee. For further information on any of these decisions please contact the Assembly office.

### **Curtin Detention Centre to get chaplain.**

Curtin Detention Centre will get a much-needed part-time chaplain, following ASC's decision to partly fund the position. Curtin Detention Centre is one of a number of remote places where centres have been set up by the Federal Government to detain asylum seekers while their refugee status is determined.

ASC supported a proposal to fund the half time position to the value of \$5000, from Wesley Uniting Employment money. The Assembly will also underwrite up to a further \$5000 to ensure the temporary placement. It is hoped future donations will guarantee the placement past the initial six-month period. The President and General Secretary have written to the synods inviting their support, and stressing the importance of this work. In addition there will be an appeal to members of the Church. See future editions of Assembly Update for more details.

### **Adelaide calling Coolamon College**

Coolamon College will move to Adelaide next year. Coolamon, an Assembly agency specialising in theological studies through distance learning, will relocate from their Brisbane based office to the joint church site of the Adelaide Theological Colleges Campuses Inc. in Adelaide sometime next year. The move will provide Coolamon with links to Adelaide College of Divinity.

Students were surveyed last year and most were satisfied that the move would not negatively affect them. ASC gave the initial support last November, subject to a number of conditions based on financial forecasts, which were worked out by a team including Acting Principal, Anita Monro.

Anita presented a 20-page report outlining the advantages the move would have for Coolamon. The report indicates students will have better access to resources including the ATCC library and the staff will get revamped office space courtesy of a generous offer by SA Synod following a property sale.

Coolamon currently offers students courses through the Brisbane College of Theology and the Sydney College of Divinity. Under the new arrangement Coolamon will become a constituted member of ACD with local costs divided by ACD, Coolamon and Parkin-Wesley.

Details are still being finalised, with the move proposed for sometime in 2003. For more detail on what the changes will mean for students, please contact Coolamon College directly.

### **10th Assembly planning**

Plans are in full swing for the 10th Assembly. The gathering, to be held from 12-19 July 2003, in Melbourne, will take on a slightly different approach to previous meetings with an emphasis on sharing rather than decision making. The design team gave an informative presentation, following two meetings earlier this year. Notable planned changes for this Assembly are:

- Community groups, formerly known as working groups, will meet more often than twice, including once on the first afternoon
- Sunday morning will see the Assembly worship together with holy communion instead of dispersing to other congregations
- Written reports will be received on block and eight minute speeches by agencies will be removed
- Conversations are taking place with ChYNC (Children and Youth Network) to discuss the involvement of young people and children in the life of the Assembly
- The supper following the installation of Rev Dr Dean Drayton as President will be open to the whole Assembly rather than being limited to few people.

New T&D National Director looking to the web site and work of G&G  
The new Theology and Discipleship National Director, Rev Dr Rob Bos, gave

his first report to ASC, since his induction earlier this year. In the report Rob mentioned several items of interest.

- Earlier this year Rob met with Colleen Geyer, from Gospel and Gender to discuss the ways in which T&D could resource this important work of the church without a paid staff person.
- Following a year without a National Director, Rob is putting more emphasis on the web site. It is to be revamped this year to offer a wider range of resources, including a better archive section, a more uniform feel and specialised areas such as the emerging church.
- A brief report about each of the working groups was given. Rob acknowledged the large workload the working groups are able to get through, particularly the Worship Working Group, using their seven advisory groups across the country. The Worship Working Group is currently working on resources for this year's 25th Anniversary and next year's 10th Assembly.

The report also included a big thankyou to Elizabeth Walker for her great work as Chairperson in the absence of a National Director and appreciation to staff for a smooth transition into his new office space (Rob works from home in Brisbane with administrative support in Sydney).

#### Partnership agreement with the Presbyterian Church of India

The Uniting Church in Australia will enter into a partnership agreement with the Presbyterian Church of India. National Director of Unity and International Mission, Rev Bill Fischer, put forward a proposal for an agreement to be signed at the Presbyterian Church of India's April Assembly. The UCA has a significant number of partnership relationships and the ASC recognises the need to continue thinking about how they can best be developed.

#### National Education Charter

John Emmett, National Director of Assembly agency Uniting Education, presented the draft education charter in anticipation of its approval at July Standing Committee. The charter, the result of widespread consultation with synods and UCA schools, education commissions, 300 random UCA congregations, synod secretaries and others is meant to "provide broad

principles and guidelines to members of the Uniting Church in Australia, regarding education in Australian society." ASC members were invited to submit written comments by 19 March. For further information on the charter contact Uniting Education.

#### World Methodist Council (WMC) meeting 2006

ASC has indicated they will welcome the WMC in 2006, if Australia is the chosen destination, but have stressed strongly that they do not want it clashing with the 11th Assembly. Ex-President, Rev John Mavor, presented information regarding the conference to ASC. The information put forward indicates that the Uniting Church would not have to provide funding for the event but would be requested to assist with some non-financial aspects such as manning information booths. One of the major benefits of having the conference here, indicated in the proposal, was that more Uniting Church people would be able to attend the conference, due to reduced costs. WMC is yet to decide and is also strongly considering Korea.

#### In Brief

##### Changes in reference committees (RC's):

- Gregor Henderson is new chair of Frontier Services RC. Anne Amos, former Chair, has resigned and will fill the vacant position left by Gregor.
- Co-option of Lurleen Blackman, Wayne Koivu and Mandy Leveratt to the UnitingCare RC.
- Jane Aagaard has resigned from National Social Responsibility and Justice RC following other commitments. Andrew Watts will take her place.
- Due to a new placement, Myung Hwa Park is no longer able to be part of the Deacon Review Group. The convenor has indicated that it is too late in the process to replace Myung and so the group will operate with five members.

John Rowland, General Secretary of the Northern Synod has been appointed as ASC representative on the Joint Nominating Committee to find a

replacement for Associate National Director of Frontier Services, jon Watson.  
jon will retire in September this year.

The synod boundaries of QLD and NSW are to be adjusted to allow the  
Kingscliff Congregation to be part of the NSW Synod.