

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

19 – 21 November 2010

PRESENT Alistair Macrae (President), Kim Anderson, Jenny Brecknell, Michelle Cook, Terence Corkin, Lesley de Grussa-Macaulay, Andrew Dutney, Andrew Glenn, Geoffrey Grinton, Gregor Henderson, Kisoo Jang, Andrew Johnson, Jason Kioa, Peter McDonald, Stuart McMillan, Ken Sumner, Fatai Tapuelulu, Isabel Thomas Dobson, Kendall Trudgen, Jenny Tymms, Adrian White, Wendie Wilkie.

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Glenda Blakefield, Rob Brown, Kay Dowling, Graham Humphris, Douglas Jones, Peter Jones, Gabrielle Lloyde, Chris Walker and Andrew Williams.

WORSHIP The first session of the Standing Committee meeting was held at the new Assembly Office at Level 10, 222 Pitt Street and the President led the evening prayers. On the Saturday morning Douglas Jones preached and the President presided at the Service of Holy Communion, then Kim Anderson led evening prayers. On the Sunday Gregor Henderson led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Kendall Trudgen.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all Assembly Standing Committee participants to the meeting. Also welcomed as visitors were Anita Monro and Alan Robinson as theological listeners, Bruce Binnie and Robert Hoskin for matters related to the Beneficiary Fund, Robert Gribben for matters related to the Christian Unity Working Group, John Evans for matters related to the Review of the Reception of Ministers, Gabrielle Lloyde as the newly appointed Communications Manager, Elizabeth Raine and John Squires for matters related to Israel – Palestine.

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

10.49 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Shayne Blackman, Ki-soo Jang and Robert Watson for the whole meeting, Alistair Macrae for Saturday afternoon and evening; Adrian White for Friday night and Saturday morning, Andrew Johnson for Friday night and Fatai Tapuelulu for Friday and Saturday night.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The General Secretary informed the Standing Committee that Lurleen Blackman and Shelley Sumner have been in hospital with major health issues. Rae Mavor is continuing treatment, Lurleen Blackman's mother died, Sandy Yule has had surgery on October 19. Gregor Henderson reported that Reginald Walker passed away.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. Documents 23A, 26 and 27 were distributed on the Friday night.

- 10.50** **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

- 10.51** **It was resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held 16 – 18 July 2010.

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 Friday evening the President reported to the Standing Committee on his various activities since the last meeting of the Standing Committee. He reported on the completion of consideration, and widespread endorsement, of the Preamble in Synods and Presbyteries and gave a progress report on plans for Pilgrimages to Living Water, Easter-Pentecost 2011. He attended and led Bible studies at the National Presbytery Minister’s Conference in Gympie. He also reported on ecumenical matters including the deferred covenant with the Anglicans, the Lutheran Agreement and the tensions arising with the Jewish community following the NCCA resolution re: Israel/Palestine. He informed the Standing Committee about the preparations for the National Minister’s Conferences in 2011. He also offered a brief report on the latest Presidential Ruling. He attended various youth related activities and shared plans for a President’s Young Leaders Conference in 2012. A specially produced icon was displayed throughout the meeting.

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

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. CHAPLAINCY IN SCHOOLS AND AGENCIES (12TH ASSEMBLY PROPOSAL 53 ON CHURCH SCHOOLS AND ASC MINUTE 09.44.01)

Chris Walker spoke to Document 14, consisting of a discussion paper on the role and responsibilities of Ministers serving as chaplains.

- 10.53** **It was resolved to:**

10.53.01 receive the discussion paper on Chaplaincy in Schools and Agencies; and

10.53.02 request Chris Walker, in consultation with Michelle Cook, Wendie Wilkie, Rob Brown and the Church Polity Reference Committee, to rework the paper in the light of the discussion and bring it back to a later meeting of the Standing Committee.

2. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP (ASC MINUTES 06.86.02 AND .03; 10.06.02 AND 10.26.10)

Chris Walker presented Document 10, consisting of a paper on the questions of church membership, baptism and confirmation. Table group discussion followed.

10.54 It was resolved to:

- 10.54.01 receive the revised paper on Church Membership;
- 10.54.02 issue the paper to all Presbyteries with a request for a response by 31 August 2011, with a view to Standing Committee considering the Presbytery responses in November 2011 and possible changes to the Regulations for consideration by the 13th Assembly (by agreement); and
- 10.54.03 request Gregor Henderson, Chris Walker and the General Secretary to prepare a response form for use by Presbyteries.

3. ISRAEL PALESTINE (MINUTE 10.43.03)

Gregor Henderson, Elizabeth Raine and John Squires spoke to Document 12, consisting of a paper to assist the consideration of a boycott of goods from illegal Israeli settlements. Much discussion followed.

10.55 It was resolved to:

- 10.55.01 receive the paper;
- 10.55.02 request Gregor Henderson and Glenda Blakefield to:
- a) coordinate development of a kit that will resource the church as it considers the likely ASC request in March 2011 to consider a boycott of goods produced by Israeli settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; and
 - b) develop the kit in consultation with
 - the National working group on Relations with Other Faiths
 - the National UCA Jewish Christian Dialogue
 - the UCA Justice Network, and
 - other appropriate bodies

with a view to determining in March 2011 whether to call on UCA members and congregations to consider joining the boycott; and

- 10.55.03 include in their report to the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee any additional actions that might be taken in response to the NCCA resolutions.

4. REVIEW OF THE ASSEMBLY RECEPTION OF MINISTERS PROCEDURES (ASC MINUTE 09.36)

John Evans spoke to Document 3, consisting of an interim report on the work undertaken so far by the Task Group to review the reception of Ministers process.

10.56 It was resolved to:

- 10.56.01 receive the interim report of the Task Group;
- 10.56.02 affirm the general direction for reform; and

- 10.56.03 request that the Task Group, noting the comments of the Assembly Standing Committee, and after further consultation with the current Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee, to bring a final report to the March 2011 Standing Committee meeting including any proposed changes to the Regulations for consideration by the 13th Assembly.

5. REVISION OF THE REGULATIONS (ASC MINUTE 10.30.02)

The General Secretary presented Documents 13 and 13A, consisting of a report on the work which was undertaken by the Task Group appointed to review the Regulations.

10.57 It was resolved to:

- 10.57.01 receive the report;
- 10.57.02 request the Task Group to continue its work in the light of the discussion at this meeting;
- 10.57.03 request that a “rough cut” of the proposed revision to the Regulations be brought to the March meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- 10.57.04 refer the issues in paragraph 8 of the report to the Church Polity Reference Committee seeking comment on the ecclesial issues that are present and what options might be available for addressing the matters raised.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. ASSEMBLY AUDIT, FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE

Peter Andrews and Jim Fraser presented Document 4, consisting of a report on the work of the Committee.

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

2. BENEFICIARY FUND

Robert Hoskin and Bruce Binnie introduced Documents 18 and 19, consisting of information on the issues facing the Beneficiary Fund and UC Super, as well as options for future strategies. The Beneficiary Fund report also included information on the VBI and other matters.

10.59 It was resolved to:

- 10.59.01 receive the report in Document 18;
- 10.59.02 note the ongoing consultation between the Trustee Boards of the Beneficiary Fund and UC Super;
- 10.59.03 acknowledge the legislative responsibility of each Trustee Board to act in the best interests of its members;
- 10.59.04 note that the Assembly (as the Principal Employer) has an ongoing responsibility for unfunded liabilities of the defined benefit pensions in the Beneficiary Fund;
- 10.59.05 refer the issues raised about the consistency of the Regulations in the areas of superannuation to the Task Group reviewing the Regulations;
- 10.59.06 receive the report in Document 19;

- 10.59.07 request the Beneficiary Fund to work with the Standing Committee to provide reversionary benefits to same gender and defacto couples;
- 10.59.08 note that in so doing, the Fund will need to widen its definitions of “Spouse” and “Child” in the Trust Deed to include same gender partners, and children of same gender couples;
- 10.59.09 receive the advice from the Beneficiary Fund
- a) that it wishes to relinquish the role of administrator for the HEF with effect from 31 December 2010; and that it
 - b) has negotiated with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania for it to accept the role from 1 January 2011;
- 10.59.10 approve the transfer of administration as proposed and advise participating Synods accordingly; and
- 10.59.11 enter into a service agreement with the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania to ensure continuity of operation of the HEF under the same terms and conditions as administered by the Beneficiary Fund except as agreed otherwise.

3. BUDGET 2011

Jim Fraser introduced Documents 5 and 5A, consisting of the proposed budget for 2011 for the Assembly agencies and the year end accounts for Frontier Services at 30 June 2010.

10.60 It was resolved to:

- 10.60.01 note with gratitude the contributions from Synods to the Assembly budget for 2011;
- 10.60.02 approve the 2011 budgets for
- Assembly Fund
 - UnitingWorld
 - UnitingWorld Relief & Development
 - Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
 - Uniting Care; and
- 10.60.03 receive the year end accounts (30 June 2010) for Frontier Service.

4. CHRISTIAN UNITY WORKING GROUP

1. Roman Catholic – Uniting Church Dialogue, The Mission of the Church

Robert Gribben presented Document 7, consisting of a paper on matters arising from the RC – Uniting Church Dialogue.

10.61 It was resolved to:

- 10.61.01 receive the report of the recent round of the Roman Catholic - Uniting Church Dialogue, entitled ‘The Mission of the Church’;
- 10.61.02. offer its congratulations and thanks to those who prepared it;
- 10.61.03 note the high level of agreement reached on many aspects of mission;

10.61.04 welcome the suggestion that a study guide be prepared by the dialogue group, so that local congregations and groups may study and discuss the report; and

10.61.05 request the Christian Unity Working Group to facilitate the development of this guide with the suggestion that in this guide, the question of following through on the agreement in its ecumenical and ethical outcomes be addressed.

2. Declaration of Mutual Recognition between the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia

10.62 It was resolved to:

10.62.01 receive the report;

10.62.02 note the *Dialogue Documents of the Lutheran Church of Australia and the Uniting Church in Australia*, and in particular receives the present Covering Letter and Explanatory Note;

10.62.03 resolve that the Uniting Church will take into account these protocols in choosing a suitable candidate for shared ministries and eucharistic hospitality between our two churches; and

10.62.04 request the Christian Unity Working Group to suggest guidelines for shared oversight of such ministries.

4. GENERAL REPORT

The General Secretary spoke to Document 25, consisting of a report on various matters.

10.63 It was resolved to:

10.63.01 receive the report;

10.63.02 defer the discussion on the letter from Peter Jones, General Secretary of the Northern Synod regarding Assembly staff performance appraisals at the Standing Committee to the March 2011 meeting; and

10.63.03 receive the correspondence from Uniting Network and defer discussion to the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee.

5. LEGAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

The General Secretary introduced Document 15, consisting of a report on the matters the Legal Reference Committee dealt with since the July 2010 Standing Committee.

10.64 It was resolved to:

10.64.01 receive the report;

10.64.02 a) amend Regulation 3.6.25 to read as follows;

3.6.25 (a) ~~The Standing Committee shall consist of the President, President elect, ex-President and General Secretary of the Assembly, the Chairperson and the National Administrator of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (all ex officio) and 18 members of the Assembly elected by the Assembly.~~

- (a) The Standing Committee shall consist of
 - the President, President-elect, ex-President and General Secretary of the Assembly (~~ex-officio~~);
 - the Chairperson and the National Administrator of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (~~ex-officio~~);
 - 18 members of the Assembly elected by the Assembly; and
 - no more than four persons co-opted by the Standing Committee.
- (g) Only members of the Assembly are eligible for membership of the Standing Committee.
- b) that the effective date be 20 November 2010.

6. TASK GROUP ON THE FUTURE OF ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Geoffrey Grinton presented Document 21, consisting of a report from the Task Group.

10.65 It was resolved to:

- 10.65.01 receive the report;
- 10.65.02 request the Legal Reference Committee to provide a form of words that will amend
 - a) Regulation 3.6.2(a) to include the Moderator and Secretary of each Synod, and any required consequent changes to reduce the number of elected representatives from each Synod by two;
 - b) Regulation 3.6.2(c)(iii) to allow the Assembly to determine who could reasonably be regarded as of youthful age;
 - c) Regulation 3.6.2(c)(iii) to remove the reference to lay members;
 - d) Regulation 3.6.2(d) to allow the ASC to determine the total number of members to be appointed, up to 5% of the number of members appointed under Regulations 3.6.2(a)–(c), as well as the bodies to make appointments; and
 - e) Regulation 3.6.2(e) to specify that the ASC may appoint additional members up to 8% of the number of members appointed under Regulations 3.6.2(a)–(c); and
 - f) any consequential Regulations affected by these changes, e.g.3.5.25.
- 10.65.03 request the Legal Reference Committee to bring draft amendments to these Regulations to the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- 10.65.04 thank and discharge the Task Group.

7. TASK GROUP ON THE REVIEW PROCESS OF THE MINISTERIAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

Andrew Dutney spoke to Document 22, containing a report on the role of the Ministerial Education Commission in the life of the Church.

10.66 It was resolved to:

- 10.66.01 receive the report;
- 10.66.02 a) request Andrew Dutney to review the paper and present it in a way that is appropriate for distribution to the MEC;
- b) request the General Secretary to
- (i) distribute it to the MEC Executive indicating that the Standing Committee will discuss the issues in the paper in March 2011, invite input for that meeting; and
 - (ii) advise them that it will be asked for further comment after March; and
- c) request the Task Group to prepare a discussion process for the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee to help it consider the issues and options in this paper.

8. UNITINGWORLD

Bruce Mullan introduced Document 2, consisting of a proposal to apply for membership of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

10.67 It was resolved to:

- 10.67.01 receive the report;
- 10.67.02 apply for membership of the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC);
- 10.67.03 manage the relationship between the PCC and UCA through UnitingWorld in association with the General Secretary, the Christian Unity Working Group and in consultation with the National Director of Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Pacific communities within the Uniting Church; and
- 10.67.04 support the principle that in its delegation to the PCC Assembly the UCA delegation includes at least one member of the UAICC and one member from the Pacific communities of the Church.

9. 13th ASSEMBLY DESIGN TEAM

The General Secretary spoke to Document 9, consisting of a report on the preparations for the 13th Assembly.

10.68 It was resolved to:

- 10.68.01 receive the report;
- 10.68.02 approve "Life Overflowing" as the theme for the 13th Assembly;
- 10.68.03 endorse the decision to seek a co-contribution of \$400 from appointing bodies towards the cost of holding the 13th Assembly; and
- 10.68.04 confirm that the meeting of the 13th Assembly will be held from 2.30pm July 15 to 1.00pm July 21 2012.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. ALTERNATIVE MISSIONAL USE OF PROPERTY

The General Secretary introduced Document 16, consisting of a report of the drafting of a regulation that allows for the designation of property as available for alternative missional use. Table discussion ensued.

10.69 It was resolved to:

10.69.01 receive the report; and

10.69.02 request the Legal Reference Committee to continue with its work on the regulation in the light of the discussion at the meeting and bring a further draft to the March 2011 meeting.

2. FOSTERING UCA IDENTITY AND COMMITMENT

The General Secretary presented Document 20, consisting of a report on how the Uniting Church might develop ways to call people to celebrate and participate in the mission of God through the Uniting Church.

10.70 It was resolved to:

10.70.01 receive the report; and

10.70.02 encourage the General Secretary to further develop and implement the proposal to foster UCA identity and commitment in light of the discussion and bring a report on progress to the March meeting of the Standing Committee.

3. FUTURE OF ASSEMBLY FINANCES

The General Secretary introduced Document 6, consisting of a report on the ongoing deterioration of the income to the Assembly fund.

10.71 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

The General Secretary presented the business in Documents 23 and 23A, consisting of various matters.

10.72 It was resolved to:

10.72.01 appoint Rev Dr Stephen Burns as a member of the Working Group on Worship;

10.72.02 a) receive the correspondence from Malcolm Gledhill, Chairperson of the National Committee of Uniting World - Relief and Development; and

b) defer the discussion of the issues raised to the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee;

10.72.03 note that

a) Parkin Wesley College has been incorporated into the new Uniting College for Leadership and Theology;

b) Parkin Wesley was a recognised College under Regulation 2.2.18(a); and

- c) Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, as the successor organisation, is recognised as an approved College under Regulation 2.2.18(a);
- 10.72.04
- a) note that the required number of presbyteries and synods have approved the amendments to the Preamble and Clauses 39, 71 and the Definitions of the Constitution and advise the Church that the proposed changes to the Constitution have been adopted;
 - b) note that the proposed amendments to Clause 49 were not approved by the required number of presbyteries or synods;
 - c) receive the correspondence from presbyteries and synods that encourage ongoing work on the structural relationship between Congress and the rest of the Church and note that this issue is part of the ongoing work of the ASC – Congress working group in support of the Covenant and note that the Working Group on Doctrine is looking at the referrals that raise theological issues in relation to the Preamble;
 - d) refer the correspondence from the Queensland Synod to the Working Group on Doctrine and the National UAICC with a request to report on any work done to the Standing Committee by November 2011; and
 - e) give thanks to God for reaching the point of endorsing the revised Preamble and commit to continue exploring and living out its Covenant commitment with Congress; and
- 10.72.05 authorise the General Secretary to sign a new lease for office accommodation for UnitingCare Australia; and
- 10.72.06 noting Regulation 4.10.3 authorize the General Secretary to sign leases for office accommodation within approved budgets and for manses for Ministers in Assembly placements.

5. NATIONAL PROPERTY POLICY FOR THE UCA

The General Secretary spoke to Document 26, consisting of draft property policy for the Church.

10.73 It was resolved to:

- 10.73.01 receive the report; and
- 10.73.02 adopt the “National Property Policy for the UCA” (Attachment A).

6. NCYC11 REPORT

The General Secretary spoke to Document 27, consisting of a brief report on the preparations for NCYC 2011.

10.74 It was resolved to receive the report.

7. PRESIDENTIAL RULING

Alistair Macrae introduced Document 11, consisting of Presidential Ruling No. 27. Gregor Henderson chaired the meeting during this presentation.

10.75 It was resolved to confirm Presidential Ruling No. 27 (Attachment B).

8. REFLECTIONS ON THE QUEENSLAND SITUATION

10.76 **It was resolved to** defer the matter to the March 2011 meeting of the Standing Committee.

9. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

10.77 **It was resolved to:**

10.77.01 request the General Secretary to make space on the agenda of the Standing Committee to:

- a) review the contribution of the Theological Listener; and
- b) review whether the UCA should be involved in providing superannuation services beyond the Defined Benefit Scheme within the Beneficiary Fund.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with prayer led by Kendall Trudgen.

<p style="text-align: center;">2011 MEETING DATES 18 – 20 March 2011 15 – 17 July 2011 18– 20 November 2011</p>
