

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

15 – 17 MARCH 2013

PRESENT Andrew Dutney (President), Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Stu Cameron, Michelle Cook, Terence Corkin, Geoffrey Grinton, Ronang Gurrawurra, Andrew Johnson, Jason Kioa, Jon Lotu, Alistair Macrae, Stuart McMillan, Craig Mitchell, Deidre Palmer, Ian Price, Isabel Thomas-Dobson, Ian Tozer, Jenny Tymms.

In attendance: Peter Andrews, Jenny Bertalan, Glenda Blakefield, Shirley Coulson, Peter Jones, Mark Lawrence, Matt Pulford, Chris Walker, Andrew Williams.

WORSHIP On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, the President preached and presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion. On the Saturday Stu Cameron led morning worship and Jenny Tymms led evening prayers. On the Sunday Alison Atkinson-Phillips led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Ian Price.

WELCOMES

The President welcomed all participants of the Standing Committee meeting, especially Jon Lotu who attended the meeting for the first time. Also welcomed as visitors were Mark Neasey for matters related to the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, Rick Morrell for matters related to the Christian Education Research report, Peter Bicknell and Lin Hatfield Dodds for matters related to UnitingCare and Les Stahl as a resource person for the session on priority setting for the ministry of the Assembly.

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

13.01 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Bethany Broadstock, Emma Davison, Zac Hatfield Dodds, Kate Fraser, Graham Humphris, Cheryl Lawson and Jan Trengove for the whole meeting, Peter Jones for Saturday morning and Andrew Williams for Friday and Saturday nights.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The participants were advised that James Haire's mother and Ronang Garrawurra's nephew passed away. John Hirt's ill health was also reported as well as the death of Douglas Miller.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. A paper from the Christian Unity Working Group on NCCA nominations was distributed on the Friday night.

13.02 **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

- 13.03** **It was resolved** to confirm the minutes of the meeting held November 15 - 17 2012 with the addition of Jon Lotu's name to the Apologies.

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 Sunday morning the President reported to the Standing Committee on his recent activities. There have been several highlights in his experience since the last ASC meeting. They include:

- Visiting the Presbytery of South Moreton
- Taking the Assembly resolution on West Papua (12.38) to the Indonesian Ambassador
- Participating in the second National Young Adult Leaders' Conference (NYALC 2013)
- Teaching an intensive course on the Heritage, Theology and Polity of the UCA to a class from WA, SA, Victoria, NSW and Qld
- Presiding at the presentation of the World Methodist Council 2012 Peace Award to Joy Balazo by Bishop Ivan Abrahams, the WMC General Secretary
- Participating in the first Songwrite Conference
- Participating in the national heads of churches meeting, including a significant meeting with the Foreign Affairs Minister, Senator Bob Carr
- Participating in the NCCA Executive Committee meeting

He also shared that, after consultation with a range of ministers, the National Directors involved, and the Synod Secretaries, he has decided that the 2014 National Ministers' Conference will be held in Charleville, Sydney and Jerusalem.

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

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee Charter (ASC Minute 11.58.03)

Peter Andrews and Mark Neasey introduced Documents 9, 9A, 9B and 9C, consisting of a report, the Committee's existing charter, the proposed charter and the risk registers for UnitingWorld Church Connections, UnitingWorld Relief and Development and Frontier Services, respectively.

- 13.05** **It was resolved to:**

13.05.01 receive the report;

13.05.02 approve the revised Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee Charter subject to editorial changes approved by the Assembly Officers (Attachment A);

13.05.03 request the Standing Committee Governance Review Task Group to give further consideration as to the most appropriate processes that should apply to the oversight of Assembly wide risks;

- 13.05.04 a) note the resignation from the Committee of Mr Keith Fagg and record its appreciation for his contribution to the work of the Committee; and
b) appoint Rev Peter McDonald to the Committee.

2. Assembly Sustainability Policy (ASC Minutes 07.68.02 and 09.29.02)

The General Secretary presented Document 11, consisting of a report on the difficulties and challenges faced in relation to the development of an Assembly Sustainability Policy.

13.06 It was resolved to:

13.06.01 receive the report;

- 13.06.02 a) request the General Secretary, in consultation with UnitingJustice, to give further consideration to the development of an Assembly Sustainability Policy (ASC minute 07.68.02); and
b) develop Sustainability Guidelines for the Assembly or, alternatively, the production an 'Economy of Life' decision-making guide.

3. National Engagement and Response Task Group re the Royal Commission (ASC Minute 12.65)

The General Secretary presented Documents 5, 5A and 5B, consisting of a report on the work of the Task Group, the Terms of Reference and the Values Statement.

13.07 It was resolved to:

13.07.01 receive the report;

13.07.02 approve the Terms of Reference for the Royal Commission Engagement and Response Task Group (Attachment B);

13.07.03 adopt the Uniting Church Values Statement in relation to the Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse and related commentary as the basis of the Uniting Church's response to the Royal Commission and related matters (Attachment C);

13.07.04 commit the Assembly and its Agencies to applying the National Response Framework (Attachment D); and

13.07.05 request the General Secretary to bring progress reports on the preparedness of the Assembly to respond to the Royal Commission in areas where it has, or has had, ministries with children and any other issues that arise.

4. Priority Setting for the Ministry of the Assembly (ASC Minute 12.62.02)

On the Saturday morning Les Stahl from Facilitation Plus Australia led the Standing Committee in a time of discussion on the ministry priorities and resource considerations for the Assembly over the next triennium.

Through the use of table groups, plenary work and the help of the external facilitator the participants shared together in a process of discernment. The presenting questions had primarily a shorter term horizon (the rest of this triennium) but some of necessity had a longer term horizon which may lead to some work only commencing in the current term of this Standing Committee.

This session commenced with some discernment on what could be the key focus areas for the Assembly and then the process moved to consider strategies that will help the Standing Committee to achieve them.

The General Secretary will report on the priorities identified at the next meeting and report from time to time on how they are shaping decisions within the Assembly operations.

5. Proposal 51: Discipline of Church Councillors (ASC Minute 12.30)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 12, consisting of a report on proposed amendments to the Manual for Meetings to deal with unacceptable behaviour.

13.08 It was resolved to:

13.08.01 express support for the amendment to the *Manual for Meetings* to say: (1.6) Assertion skills: refer to verbal and non-verbal behaviour enabling us to maintain respect, satisfy our own needs and defend our rights and point of view without becoming dominating, manipulative, abusive, aggressive, intimidating, bullying, or controlling of others. This includes whether verbally or in any written form including cyber bullying;

13.08.02 refer the proposed amendments to Regulations 5.2.1 and 3.3.3(b)(iii) to the Legal Reference Committee and request advice before making a final decision on the proposed changes:

- a) Regulation 5.2.1 (a) to say: In cases where, in the opinion of the Church Council, any member of the Church appears to disregard the privileges and obligation of membership or to disregard the discipline of the Church, or should a formal complaint have been received by a member of the Church Council, the Council shall endeavour by visitation and pastoral counsel to restore the relationship of the member to the life of the Church;
- b) 5.2.1 by the addition of a new paragraph (c): Should that member be a member of Church Council, and refuse to restore his or her relationship to the life of the Church subsequent to visitation and pastoral counsel (5.2.1 (a)), that person may be requested by Church Council to resign his or her position to that body and cease all responsibilities associated with that position prior to a possibility that the name of that member may be removed from the membership roll.
- c) 3.3.3 (b) (iii) carrying out the responsibilities of the particular office, the Church Council may recommend to a meeting of the ~~Congregation~~ that shall have the authority to refer the matter for resolution to Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee to remove an the Elder or Councillor be removed from office and the Elder or Church Councillor shall be removed from office if the recommendation is supported by a determination of the Congregation if a majority of its members agree the behaviour of the individual has frequently evidenced being dominating, manipulative, abusive, aggressive, intimidating, bullying - whether in person or through cyber bullying (Manual for Meetings (1.6)) and if the recommendation is supported by a determination of that meeting; and

6. Proposal 67: Membership of Assembly Bodies (ASC Minute 12.32.01)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 8, consisting of a report on the current practices of Assembly Working Groups, Committees and Commission when recruiting nominees for their Groups, Committees and Commission.

13.09 It was resolved to:

13.09.01 receive the report; and

13.09.02 request the General Secretary to bring a proposal on a framework that addresses the way applicants for Assembly Working Groups, Committees and Commission are identified taking into account a preference for an open expression of interest process and other considerations, such as Regulations and Mandates.

7. Proposal 38: Ministers in Association (ASC Minute 12.29.01)

Isabel Thomas Dobson and Geoffrey Grinton presented Document 7, consisting of a report on the review of the Regulations with a view to determining whether any Regulations need to be amended to better serve the Church in places where there is no likelihood of there being an approved placement in the foreseeable future.

13.10 It was resolved to:

13.10.01 receive the report;

13.10.02 refer the following proposed amendments to the Regulations to the Legal Reference Committee for comment prior to approving the amendments:

Re: Application for Candidature for Minister

Regulation 2.3.2.2 - amend clause (a) as follows:

- 2.3.2.2(a) (i) Any person seeking to become a candidate shall make written application to the Presbytery through the Minister of the Congregation (or through the appropriate member of the ministerial team in the Congregation) in which the applicant holds membership. If there is no Minister of the Congregation in which the applicant holds membership, the application may be made directly to the Presbytery.
- (ii) The applicant shall make available to the Presbytery such additional information and material as is prescribed under these Regulations or as may be required by the Presbytery or by the Ministerial Education Board, including information on the applicant's participation in the period of discernment.

Re: Presbytery responsibilities in selection of candidates for Minister

Regulation 2.3.2.3(a) - amend clause (a) as follows:

- 2.3.2.3(a) As soon as possible following receipt of an application the Presbytery shall request a confidential report from ~~the~~ an appropriate Minister and shall seek comment from the Church Council where the applicant's membership is held and other referees, and shall then consider the application in accordance with the Regulations.

Re: Process for candidature and selection of Lay Preachers

Regulation 2.3.4 - amend of clauses (b), (c) and (d), as follows:

- 2.3.4 (b) Applicants shall make written application to the Presbytery through the Minister of the Congregation (or through the appropriate member of the ministerial team in the Congregation) in which the applicant holds membership. If there is no Minister of the Congregation in which the applicant holds membership, the application may be made directly to the Presbytery.
- (c) The Minister of the Congregations or, if there is no such Minister, the Presbytery, shall notify the Church Council of the

~~application, after which the The Church Council shall interview the applicant and forward the application, with its report and recommendations, to the Presbytery within ninety days after receipt of the application by the Minister of the Congregation.~~

- (d) The Presbytery shall request a confidential report from an appropriate Minister and shall make such other investigations and enquiries as it sees fit and may interview the applicant and shall either accept the applicant as a candidate for training as a Lay Preacher or reject the application providing that a two-thirds majority vote of members present shall be required for acceptance.

Re: Process for the selection of a Pastor

Regulation 2.3.3 amend clauses (b)(i) and (c)(i) , as follows:

- 2.3.3 (b) In considering and determining applications made under Regulation 2.3.3(a)(i) the appointing body shall have reference to:
- (i) confidential testimonials, supplied at the request of the appointing body, from ~~the an appropriate Minister, of the applicant's Congregation~~ and the Church Council of the applicant's Congregation;
- (c) A Synod body designated by the Synod shall have responsibility for considering and determining applications made under Regulation 2.3.3 (a)(ii). The procedures to be followed by the Synod body shall be approved by the Synod and shall include:
- (i) requests for confidential testimonials from ~~the an appropriate Minister, of the applicant's Congregation~~ and the Church Council of the applicant's Congregation;

Re: Responsibilities of the Presbytery

Regulation 3.1.3 - amend clause (m) to provide for reference to congregations without a Minister, as follows:

- 3.1.3 (m) in the exercise of its responsibility for the oversight of congregations during periods during which the congregation has no Minister in placement; supervision of vacancies in pastoral charges,
- (i) appointing one or more Presbytery Liaison Persons who shall have the right to attend and speak at any meeting of the Congregation or its Church Council, and who shall liaise with the Congregation on behalf of the Presbytery, during the vacancy. In most cases When a congregation is seeking to fill a vacancy, this role will normally be given to one or more of the Presbytery-appointed members of the Joint Nominating Committee.
 - (ii) assisting the nurture and care of the Congregation by the appointment, when considered appropriate by the Presbytery, of a Minister not classified under Regulation 2.6.1(e) to become an Associated Minister to fulfil such pastoral, preaching or other responsibilities as may be agreed with the Church Council and the Presbytery. The Church Council shall recommend to the Presbytery any appropriate remuneration for the person to be appointed and shall be responsible for the payment of the agreed sum. The appointment shall be reviewed annually by the Presbytery.

Regulation 3.4.1- amend by the removal of clauses (c) and (d).

Re: Membership of the Presbytery

Regulation 3.3.4 - amend clause (f) (i) and (ii) and through the addition of a new sub-clause (iii) and the renumbering of the existing sub-clause (iv), as follows:

- 3.3.4 (f) (i) Confirmed lay members as co-opted persons ~~up to a maximum of one for each five lay members of Presbytery,~~ such co-options being made for such reasons as the Presbytery considers appropriate, including to include persons with special gifts not otherwise available to the Presbytery, to ensure that the number of lay members is not less than the members who are Ministers and to establish a better balance in the proportion of younger and older persons who comprise the members of the Presbytery.
- (ii) Ministers who are not otherwise members of the Presbytery as co-opted persons, ~~up to a maximum of one for each five ministerial members of Presbytery (Ministers of the Word, Deacons and Deaconesses)~~ such co-options being made for such reasons as the Presbytery considers appropriate, including to include persons with special gifts not otherwise available to the Presbytery and engaged in a significant ministry within the bounds of the Presbytery.
- (iii) The number of co-opted persons shall not exceed one for each five members of Presbytery.
- (iv) Co-options shall be for a period of one year. A co-opted member is eligible for further co-option. The number of co-opted members from any one Congregation shall not exceed three lay members and three ministerial members.

Re: Oversight of Lay Preachers

Regulation 3.1.3 - amend by the insertion of a new clause (j) as follows to provide for oversight of Lay preachers, and the renumbering of subsequent clauses,

- 3.1.3 (j) the exercise of oversight of Lay Preachers within its bounds;

13.10.03 encourage Synods to review any existing By-Laws relating to the appointment of members of Synods pursuant to Regulation 3.3.7 to ensure that they are adequate to serve the Church in the light of its current experience that whereas it was once the norm that there would be a Minister in placement, in many contexts there is no likelihood of there being an approved placement in the foreseeable future, and in presbyteries where the number of placements may be significantly less than in previous years; and

13.10.04 thank and discharge the Task Group.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Christian Education Research Project Report

Glenda Blakefield, Craig Mitchell and Rick Morrell introduced Document 4, consisting of a report on the outcomes of the national research project conducted by the Research Fellow and the Christian Education Research Project Steering Committee. Extensive discussion followed.

13.11 It was resolved to:

13.11.01 receive the report;

- 13.11.02 note Assembly minute 00.28.03 (9th Assembly) “to name the teaching ministry as a core function of each council of the church” and to affirm that the Assembly has a role in Christian Education;
- 13.11.03 affirm that the role of the Assembly in Christian Education is to provide for the Uniting Church nationally a cohesive vision of Christian education which sees
- a) congregations as lifelong learning communities of discipleship for the sake of the mission of God;
 - b) church leaders as effective educational leaders, capable of guiding a community in forming disciples;
 - c) congregations developing a culture of learning for and from engagement in mission - mission-shaping discipleship;
 - d) promoting Christian education as a distinctive ministry yet also integral to worship, teaching, doctrine, formation, community life and mission;
 - e) developing and promoting Christian education and formation as vital, interrelated contributors to growth in discipleship in Christian community;
 - f) developing Christian identity within the theology and ethos of the Uniting Church;
 - g) developing Christian education and formation for the shaping of Christian identity in our globalised, pluralistic, multi-faith world;
 - h) calling the church to ways of learning together that reflect our ethos as a Uniting Church – our commitments to the first peoples, to being a multicultural church, a priesthood of all believers, a multi-generational community of faith, and a community of women and men.
- 13.11.04 that within this vision, the Assembly will:
- a) provide leadership in identifying and encouraging the development of resources that assist congregations in the critical areas of Christian education highlighted in the Christian Education Research Project Report;
 - b) actively foster collaboration and seeking cooperation across the Councils and sectors of the church to support the development of effective Christian education in congregations;
 - c) research both theory and practice in Christian education in Australia and overseas and communicating findings well and widely;
 - d) provide leadership with other councils of the Church in the development of the Uniting Church as a learning community of disciples – sharing stories, provoking conversation, fostering networks for mutual learning ,learning to resource itself;
 - e) give priority to the development of leaders of lifelong learning communities of discipleship, both in the education and formation of people for specified ministries and in lay leadership development;
 - f) provide a national reference point for religious education in schools, Uniting Church schools ‘policy, state school chaplaincy and tertiary chaplaincy;
- 13.11.05 that within the work of Assembly agencies there is a need for:
- a) a distinct focus and resourcing of Christian Education within Uniting Faith and Discipleship;
 - b) a senior staff appointment and a working group to resource the vision;
 - c) a more intentional approach to the ways in which Assembly programs, projects and resources assist congregations to be life-long learning communities of discipleship, and how these are then communicated;
 - d) greater collaboration within Uniting Faith and Discipleship in particular in terms of (b);

- e) clearer attention to the educational approaches used in Assembly resources designed to assist congregations;
 - f) the review of the relationship between Christian education for adults and education for lay specified ministries;
 - g) direct collaboration between the work of Christian education and youth and young adults faith development;
 - h) evaluation of the profile of matters of faith, belief, spirituality and discipleship among the Assembly's Key communications media, including the Assembly website;
- 13.11.06 request the General Secretary to bring a position description for a senior staff appointment in the areas of Christian Education within the Uniting Faith and Discipleship (UF &D) mandate to the July Assembly Standing Committee;
- 13.11.07 request the General Secretary to consult with the Task Group for the Education for Ministries Working Group regarding ASC Minutes 13.121.03 and 13.11.05 and bring a report to the July Assembly Standing Committee;
- 13.11.08 request the General Secretary to bring names forward for a joint nominating committee for the appointment of a senior staff person in the area of Christian education to the July Assembly Standing Committee;
- 13.11.09 request the General Secretary to bring a report on the implications for Assembly Agencies and Secretariat Communications functions outlined in ASC Minute 13.11.04 b);
- 13.11.10 request the Associate General Secretary to review the operations of Uniting Faith Discipleship (UF&D) within the mandate, with reference to ASC Minute 13.11.05 a), b), c), d) and f) including the drafting of operational guidelines for a-Working Group in the area of Christian education and bring a report to the July Assembly Standing Committee;
- 13.11.11 establish a Working Group in the area of Christian education within the mandate of Uniting Faith and Discipleship from July 2013;
- 13.11.12 request the Associate General Secretary to bring nominations for a Working Group in the area of Christian education to the July Assembly Standing Committee;
- 13.11.13 thank and give strong affirmation and recognition for the work of the Assembly Research Fellow, Craig Mitchell;
- 13.11.14 thank and discharge the Christian Education Research Project Steering Committee; and
- 13.11.15 authorize the General Secretary to take such action as is necessary to maintain the momentum established during the research project, including as necessary, engagement of interim resources pending implementation of these decisions.

2. Christian Unity Working Group re Lutheran – UCA Shared Eucharistic Liturgy

The General Secretary spoke to Document 15, consisting of a report from the Christian Unity Working Group

13.12 It was resolved to:

- 13.12.01 receive the report;
- 13.12.02 adopt the paper 'A Great Prayer of Thanksgiving, with Commentary'; and

- 13.12.03 request the Christian Unity Working Group to make it available to UCA congregations in whatever ways are appropriate.

3. General Report

The General Secretary spoke to Document 18, consisting of various matters.

13.13 It was resolved to:

- 13.13.01 receive the report; and
- 13.13.02 co-opt Denise Champion to the Assembly Standing Committee until such time the UAICC appoints a National Consultant.

4. Legal Reference Committee

The General Secretary presented Document 13, consisting of a report on the work the Committee had done since the last Standing Committee meeting.

13.14 It was resolved to:

- 13.14.01 receive the report;
- a) note that in the production of the 2012 edition of the Regulations there was a transcription error in that the regulation quoted in Regulation 3.7.2 (c) was incorrectly written as “Regulation 3.7.2 (a) (iv)”; and
- b) amend Regulation 3.7.2 (c) to read
“Any committees established pursuant to Regulation 3.7.2(a)(iv) shall have such powers and responsibilities as may be prescribed or as the Presbytery may determine, including the powers and responsibilities of the Presbytery as it may delegate.”;
- 13.14.02 a) delete Regulation 2.5.2 and replace it with the following:

ADMISSION OF A FORMER MINISTER

- 2.5.3.1 (a) Any former Minister of the Church may apply for readmission as a Minister.
- (b) Any person who was a minister or deaconess in one of the uniting churches at any time prior to the date of union may apply for admission as a Minister of the Word or Deacon and the application shall be dealt with in the same manner as an application from a former minister of the Church seeking readmission as a Minister. If there is no Minister of the Congregation in which the applicant holds membership, the application may be made directly to the Presbytery.

PROCESS FOR ADMISSION OF A FORMER MINISTER

- 2.5.3.2(a) Any former Minister seeking readmission shall make written application to the Presbytery through the Minister of the Congregation (or through the appropriate member of the ministerial team in the Congregation) in which the applicant holds membership and shall make available to the Presbytery such additional information and material as is prescribed under these Regulations or as may be required by the Presbytery or by the Synod.
- (b) As soon as possible following receipt of an application the Presbytery shall request a confidential report from the appropriate Minister and shall seek comment from the Church

Council where the applicant's membership is held and other referees, and shall then consider the application in accordance with the Regulations.

- (c) The Presbytery or a designated committee of the Presbytery shall:
 - (i) receive the application together with the confidential report of the Minister and the comments of the Church Council;
 - (ii) consider the references submitted by the nominated referees and by other persons as it sees fit;
 - (iii) appoint a support person for the applicant who shall assist the applicant in understanding and complying the requirements of the process.
 - (iv) The support person may attend any Presbytery or Synod meetings where the applicant is in attendance but may not speak in those meetings;
 - (v) interview the applicant;
 - (vi) conduct such other tests or call for such other information as it may require; and
 - (vii) prepare a report and recommendation to the Synod panel.
- (d) An applicant shall satisfy the Presbytery or the designated committee of the Presbytery that
 - (i) the applicant is, and for the period of twelve months prior to making an application, has been a confirmed member of the Church, unless the Presbytery waives this requirement;
 - (ii) the reasons for the applicant having recognition as a Minister of the Church or as a Minister or Deaconess of one of the uniting churches withdrawn; and the reasons offered by the applicant for why those reasons no longer apply; and
 - (iii) the applicant is suitable in character, personality and spiritual maturity and has the capacity to exercise the responsibilities of the specific ministry for which application is made.
- (e) A two-thirds majority of members present at the meeting of the Presbytery or the designated committee of the Presbytery shall be required to commend the applicant to the Synod panel as suitable for readmission. Alternatively, the Presbytery may defer such commendation or may reject the application.
- (f) Where the Presbytery or the designated committee of the Presbytery resolves to commend the applicant to the Synod panel, the Presbytery shall forward to the Synod panel its report and any resolutions together with other reports, references and information conveyed to it in accordance with Regulation x.x.2 (a), (b) and (c).

SYNOD PANEL

- 2.5.3.3(a) Each application for readmission shall be considered by a panel comprising members appointed by the Synod Standing

Committee and a representative appointed by the applicant's Presbytery.

Duties

- (b) The Synod panel shall have before it all relevant documents and:
 - (i) arrange for medical, psychological and other assessments that it considers to be necessary;
 - (ii) seek further information as it considers necessary;
 - (iii) meet with the applicant; and
 - (iv) determine the outcome of application forwarded by the Presbytery.
- (c) In considering the application before it, the Synod panel shall have regard, among other things, to the issues considered by the Presbytery in Regulation 2.5.3.2 (d).
- (d) The Synod panel shall determine the application by:
 - (i) acceptance of the application for readmission, with or without any conditions attached to that acceptance, or
 - (ii) deferral of the application, with or without any conditions which must be satisfied before further consideration of the application; or
 - (iii) rejection of the application for readmission

and shall inform the applicant and the Presbytery of its decision.

RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OF THE PRESBYTERY OR THE SYNOD PANEL

2.5.3.4(a) An applicant may appeal against a decision made pursuant to Regulation 2.5.3.2 (e) or 2.5.3.3 (d) only on the ground that correct procedures have not been followed in accordance with the Regulations.

- (b) The appeal is to be made within 14 days of receipt of the communication of the decision. The appeal shall be lodged with the Synod Secretary in writing.
- (c) The Synod Standing Committee shall appoint an appeal committee of three persons to determine the matter. The appeal committee shall consult with the applicant and the Presbytery and, when appropriate, the Synod panel. The appeal committee shall then either dismiss the appeal or require the Presbytery or the Synod panel to reconsider the application. A decision of the appeal committee shall be final.

b) the effective date for the new regulation be April 1st 2013;

13.14.03

affirm that the following principles should be present in any processes of electronic decision making in the church and refer the matter back to the Legal Reference Committee for drafting:

- The threshold number of persons eligible to vote who need to participate in the ballot to make it valid;

- The number of persons eligible to vote who need to request a referral to the next meeting before the process changes;
- The timeline for making the decision;
- The person responsible for initiating the ballot;
- Responses should be to all participants in the ballot e.g. use 'Reply to All';
- The decision take electronically shall be recorded in the minutes of the body making the decision;
- Define the percentage of person who must agree for the decision to pass
- Make clear it is a vote and not a consensus process.

5. UnitingCare Australia

Lin Hatfield Dodds and Peter Bicknell presented Documents 3, 3A, 3B and BC, consisting of a report on the governance conversations with UnitingCare Australia, its mandate, its governance arrangements and its strategic directions for 2012-2015. Discussion took place on the exercise of the governance responsibilities that have been delegated to the National Committee of UnitingCare.

6. Worship Working Group

Chris Walker presented Documents 14, 14A and 14B, consisting of a report on the issue of whether to conduct a service to recognise or commission lay persons authorised to preside at the Sacraments, ASC Minute 95.69 re authorising lay persons to preside at the Sacraments and the draft liturgies.

13.15 It was resolved to:

- 13.15.01 receive the report;
- 13.15.02 request the Worship Working Group to:
 - a) prepare a liturgy to mark the recognition by a presbytery of a lay person it has authorised to conduct the sacraments;
 - b) bring a draft liturgy to the July meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee for approval; and
- 13.15.03 request the General Secretary, in the light of this discussion and changes in nomenclature since 1995, to bring a revision of the guidelines taking up these changes

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. A Church for Australia in the 21st Century: A Theological Discussion Paper

Chris Walker introduced Document 6, consisting of a discussion paper on the Uniting Church and its future as it faces the challenges and opportunities before it. Table discussion ensued.

2. General Business

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 17.

13.16 It was resolved to:

- 13.16.01 approve the extension of the reporting date for the Task Group on Conflict in the Church to November 2013;
- 13.16.02 acting under the authority in Regulation 3.10.1, grant the Synod of Queensland an exemption to the operation of Regulation 3.7.4.1 (a) (iii) to the extent necessary to enable some members of the Synod's Standing

Committee to hold office over the period of two synods; ie three years (agreement);

- 13.16.03 a) receive the correspondence from Rev Dr Ian Breward on behalf of the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee;
b) give thanks to God for the ministry of Rev Dr Douglas Miller and in particular his leadership as Chairperson of the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee;
c) appoint Rev Dr John Evans as Chairperson of the Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee until the 14th Assembly in 2015;
- 13.16.04 a) authorise the Christian Unity Working Group, in consultation with the General Secretary and any UCA participants in the relevant ecumenical body, to prepare responses on behalf of the church to requests for comment on changes to the constitution, rules or structures of ecumenical bodies in which the UCA holds membership; and
b) report to the Standing Committee on responses given to such requests;
- 13.16.05 appoint Rev Dr Garry Deverell as a member of the Assembly Working Group on Worship;
- 13.16.06 appoint the persons named in Attachment E as the UCA members of the NCCA Forum and as nominations to the Commissions, Networks and Working Groups of the NCCA (Attachment E); and
- 13.16.07 a) approve the reappointment of Robert Elkhuisen and Mr Graham Dunstan as Assembly Directors of Benefund Ltd for a term of three years from 1 December 2012; and
b) approved the reappointment of Mr Colin Grenfell as an Assembly Director of Benefund Ltd for a term of three years from 1 September 2012.

3. Regulation 2.3.3.4(d)(iv) – Candidate Procedure

The General Secretary presented Document 16, consisting of a report on concern raised by the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania about the wording of Regulation 2.3.3.4(d)(iv).

13.17 It was resolved to:

- 13.17.01 receive the correspondence from the Chairperson of the Synod Selection Conference and Selection Committee for the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania; and
- 13.17.02 refer the issue to the Assembly Legal Reference Committee with a view to allowing a decision which does not preclude a person from serving in all specified ministries.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with prayer led by Ian Price

**DATES FOR 2013: 19 – 21 July 2013
15 – 17 November 2013**