

## Uniting Church in Australia

### ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

21 – 23 March 2014

**PRESENT** Andrew Dutney (President), Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Bethany Broadstock, Stu Cameron, Michelle Cook, Terence Corkin, Emma Davison, Kate Fraser, Geoffrey Grinton, Ronang Gurrawurra, Zac Hatfield Dodds, Andrew Johnson, Jason Kioa, Stuart McMillan, Ian Price, Isabel Thomas-Dobson, Ian Tozer.

**In attendance:** Peter Andrews, Jenny Bertalan, Glenda Blakefield, John Cox, Kay Dowling, Peter Jones, 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 the President led evening prayers. On the Sunday Isabel Thomas Dobson led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by the President.

**WELCOMES** The President welcomed all participants to the Standing Committee meeting. Also welcomed as visitors were Alan White for matters related to Frontier Services; Jim Mein for matters related to Frontier Services and the Beneficiary Fund; Ian Glenn for the Beneficiary Fund; Elenie Poulos for the paper Ethical Decision Making In the Key of 'An Economy Of Life'; Sureka Goringe and Andrew Glenn for the nomination of UnitingWorld National Director; Andrew Glenn for matters related to Church Connections; Amanda Hickey for the policy for prevention of, and response to, allegations of sexual abuse in congregations; Anne Cross and Heather Watson for matters related to the transmission of aged care services; Rev John Cox the (Interim) Synod Secretary for the Synod of Queensland.

#### 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

**14.01** **It was resolved to** accept the apologies of Denise Champion, Graham Humphris, Alistair Macrae, Mark Lawrence and Deidre Palmer for the whole meeting, Jenny Tymms, Michelle Cook and Ian Tozer for Sunday afternoon, Chris Walker for Saturday, Jason Kioa for Friday night and Andrew Johnson for Saturday night.

#### PASTORAL MATTERS

Since the previous meeting, Rev Ian Tanner, the 4<sup>th</sup> President of the UCA, died. The participants were informed about the death of Peter Tebbutt, former member of the ASC and ALRC. The President also shared that Jenny Tymms's brother in law passed away. It was reported that James Haire was in hospital and Stuart McMillan's father is unwell after surgery. The President reported that the Patriarch of the Syrian Orthodox Church passed away. The participants expressed their joy to hear that Alistair Macrae led the marriage service of his son on Saturday.

## APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1. Documents 6, 10 and 13 were distributed on the Friday night.

- 14.02**            **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

- 14.03**            **It was resolved to:**

14.03.01           confirm the minutes of the meeting held November 15 - 17 2013; and

14.03.02           note that the Standing Committee resolved by electronic ballot to approve the Position Description for the Frontier Services National Director.

## CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

- 14.04**            **It was resolved in relation to the conflicts of interest to:**

- a)            note:
  - (i)    the Associate General Secretary's conflict of interest in relation to her review and the Term of the General Secretary; and
  - (ii)   resolve that she be absent for this business;
- b)            note:
  - (i)    Chis Walker's conflict of interest in relation to Documents 6, 10 and 13 and the term of the General Secretary; and
  - (ii)   resolve that he be absent for this business;
- c)            note:
  - (i)    Terence Corkin's conflict of interest in relation to his term as General Secretary;
  - (ii)   resolve that he be absent for this business;
- d)            note:
  - (i)    John Cox's conflict of interest in matters related to the transfer of aged care services to UnitingCare Queensland; and
  - (ii)   permit him to participate in the discussion of Document 3.

## 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's report highlighted his participation in a range of activities since the last ASC meeting. These included:

- The State Ecumenical Service in Support of the Philippines Appeal, St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Adelaide
- The Commissioning of Rev Dr Murray Earl as Convenor of the National Assembly Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee, in the Duntroon Chapel, Canberra
- The launch of the "Jesus was a refugee" campaign by Uniting Communities, Clayton-Wesley UC and the SA Synod

- The SA Frontier Services Supporters' Christmas Celebration, Adelaide
- NCYC, Sydney
- Preaching at the National Memorial service for Rev Ian Tanner, Canberra
- Preaching at the SA Synod memorial Service for Rev Ian Tanner, Adelaide
- Teaching a five day intensive, "Introduction to Christian Thought", Uniting College for Leadership & Theology, Adelaide
- The funeral of the President of the Methodist Church of Fiji and Rotuma, Rev Dr Tuikilakila Waqairatu, Suva, Fiji
- National Heads of Churches, Sydney
- NCCA Executive, Sydney
- Public Prayer Vigil for Justice for Indigenous Australians, Canberra
- Celebration of Chaplaincy, Melbourne
- Intensive course for Fijian and Tongan Lay Preachers, Sydney

He had been pleased by the many opportunities he had been given to promote and explain "A Destiny Together: A Week of Prayer and Fasting for Justice for Indigenous Australians" to small groups, congregations and in response to individual and media enquiries.

Under another agenda item, the President was able to present the final report of the national census of UCA congregations and ministers. He expressed the hope that it would facilitate a searching conversation throughout the church, on the question: How can a church like us – a church like the one described in the census report – engage most authentically and effectively in mission?

The President reported that planning for the three national Ministers' conferences is well advanced and registrations are continuing to come in. The Jerusalem conference has been opened up for a few more participants. He hopes that there will be more registrations for the conferences in Charleville and Sydney as Ministers recognise the opportunity they provide for refreshment and encouragement in their ministries.

The President expressed concern about the amount of conflict experienced in different parts of the life of the church. He identified three particular concerns: First, that many Ministers feel that they are regarded as "risks" more than "assets" by the Presbytery and/or Synod officers who have oversight of them. Secondly, that Ministers frequently refuse to hear feedback if it does not confirm their own evaluation of their ministries. Thirdly, that both Ministers and Synods quickly turn to the Regulations, and even lawyers and the courts, to use against each other.

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

## **BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE**

### **1. Appointment of National Director of UnitingWorld (ASC Minute 13.78.14)**

**14.06**            **It was resolved to:**

14.06.01        receive the report; and

14.06.02        appoint Mr Rob Floyd as National Director of UnitingWorld effective 1 May 2014.

**2. Conflict of Interest re Staff on Boards / Councils (ASC Minutes 13.41.04 and 13.60.02)**

**14.07** It was resolved to defer the discussion on Document 12 to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee.

**3. Education for Ministry Working Group (ASC Minute 13.62.01)**

The President-elect chaired the meeting while Andrew Dutney presented Document 21, consisting of a report from the Education for Ministry Working Group.

**14.08** It was resolved to:

14.08.01 receive the report;

14.08.02 determine that the process for issuing a Statement that the Requirements of Phase 2 have been fulfilled shall be: (a) the Principal advises the Education for Ministry Working Group of a candidate's satisfactory completion of Phase 2, (b) the chairperson of the Education for Ministry Working Group reports that to the Assembly General Secretary, and (c) the parchment is signed by the President and General Secretary of the Assembly and forwarded to the candidate's college;

14.08.03 encourage the Education for Ministry Working Group to give priority to reviewing the standards, procedures and rules contained in the MEC Information Booklet, with a progress report to ASC in July 2014 and a final report in November 2014;

14.08.04 determine that the standards, procedures and rules contained in the MEC Information Booklet shall be those of the Assembly until such time as they have been replaced by equivalent Assembly rules promulgated by ASC on the recommendation of Education for Ministry Working Group;

14.08.05 note that the following Principles will be applied by the Education for Ministry Working Group in its review of the Regulations concerning MEC and the oversight of ministerial education and recommendations;

- a) all references to the Ministerial Education Commission need to be amended: either removed, or replaced with a reference to the Assembly (understanding that, in practice, the Assembly Standing Committee would fulfil those responsibilities on the advice of the Education for Ministry Working Group);
- b) references in the Regulations to theological colleges and faculty should be minimised or eliminated;
- c) oversight of standards of ministerial education is the responsibility of the Assembly;
- d) oversight of the delivery of ministerial education is the responsibility of Synods and the UAICC; and
- e) the Regulations must allow for a range of circumstances and missional priorities across the Synods and the UAICC, together with the need for broad consistency in governance nationally. The MEB has been the mechanism for this.

14.08.06 request the Assembly General Secretary to:

- a) call a meeting as soon as possible to discuss national cooperation on theological education and the possibility of moving towards one college for the UCA and that the participants be:
  - the General Secretary from each Synod or their nominee;
  - a person with relevant responsibilities and/or experience from each Synod chosen by the Synod Secretary;
  - two representatives chosen by UAICC National Committee;

- the former MEC Chairperson (Dr Deidre Palmer) or her nominee to represent the proposals on models of national cooperation developed by the final MEC meeting (July 2013); and
  - the Chairperson of the Education for Ministry Working Group;
- b) ensure that NRCC experience and needs in relation to theological education are represented by either the person chosen by the Northern Synod Secretary or by one of the UAICC representatives; and
- c) request that a report be brought to the next Standing Committee meeting.

**4. Ethical Decision Making in the Key of an Economy of Life (ASC Minute 13.06.02)**

Elenie Poulos presented Document 17, consisting of a draft guide from UnitingJustice Australia for Assembly and its agencies, units, boards, committees and working groups in terms of ethical decision making.

**14.09 It was resolved to:**

- 14.09.01 receive the report;
- 14.09.02 thank UnitingJustice Australia for the work done on the document; and
- 14.09.03 request the National Director of UnitingJustice to:
- a) revise the guide in the light of the discussion at the Standing Committee meeting; and
  - b) bring it to a later meeting of the Standing Committee.

**5. Investment in Fossil Fuels (ASC Minute 13.78.11)**

**14.10 It was resolved to** defer the discussion on Document 18 to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee.

**6. Review of the Associate General Secretary (ASC Minutes 13.53.01 and 13.78.06)**

Andrew Johnson spoke to Documents 13 and 13A, consisting of the report of the Review Task Group and the draft revised Position Description.

**14.11 It was resolved to:**

- 14.11.01 receive the report;
- 14.11.02 strongly affirm the ministry of Rev Glenda Blakefield in the position of Associate General Secretary;
- 14.11.03 offer an extension to Rev Glenda Blakefield of the current placement of Associate General Secretary to 30 June 2017;
- 14.11.04 adopt the revised Position Description for the position of Associate General Secretary (Attachment A);
- 14.11.05 appoint Bethany Broadstock (Convenor), Terence Corkin and Kate Fraser, (in consultation with the Associate General Secretary) to bring a proposal to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee that will address the following issues:
- stronger accountability for the role;
  - an external point of reference for the role;
  - strengthen the role's leadership of Uniting Faith and Discipleship as a mandated area of work in the Assembly;

- strengthen the leadership shared with the General Secretary.

**7. Skills Matrix for Assembly Committees (ASC Minutes 13.40.03 and 13.65.02)**

The document will be available at the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee.

**8. Task Group on the Prevention of, and Response to, Complaints of Sexual Abuse within Congregations**

Kay Dowling and Amanda Hickey presented Documents 7 and 7A, consisting of a report from the Task Group and a draft policy.

**14.12 It was resolved to:**

14.12.01 receive the report;

14.12.02 request the General Secretary to:

- a) arrange for the Prevention of, and Response to, Complaints of Sexual Abuse within Congregations and Faith Communities and the Sexual Misconduct Policy (omitting the Annexure) to be edited;
- b) send the edited Policy to Synod Secretaries with the request that they forward it to appropriate persons or a group that can provide feedback on the following questions:
  - Does the policy reflect the values of the Uniting Church?
  - Are there gaps in the policy that need to be addressed?
  - Are there any specific suggestions that will strengthen the policy and its usefulness to the Church?
- c) upon receipt of responses consult with the Chair of the Task Group on the next steps in the process;
- d) implement the agreed process; and
- e) bring a revised Policy to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee.

**9. UCA Assembly Ltd. (ASC Minutes 12.68.01 and 13.78.05)**

The General Secretary spoke to Documents 15 and 15A, consisting of the report from the Task Group on UCA Assembly Ltd. and an opinion from Russell Kennedy Lawyers.

**14.13 It was resolved to:**

14.13.01 receive the report;

- 14.13.02 (a) resolve that the members of the Assembly Standing Committee, from time to time, be the members of UCA Assembly Ltd;
- (b) require that documentation be provided to all Assembly members nominating for election as members of the Assembly Standing Committee making clear this requirement and the responsibilities of UCA Assembly Ltd;

14.13.03 resolve in relation to the Board of UCA Assembly Ltd that:

- a) the Board will be appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee;
- b) there shall be two (2) staff Directors; and five (5) non-executive independent Directors the latter of whom shall be UCA members;
- c) the Board has the power to appoint delegates to act in a Director's absence;
- d) the Chairperson of the Board of UCA Assembly Ltd will be appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee from the independent Directors;
- e) it shall be required to meet at least quarterly; and

- f) report in writing annually to Assembly Standing Committee with respect to the fulfilment of its obligations;
- 14.13.04 request the Assembly Legal Reference Committee to propose Regulations to the Standing Committee that will recognise UCA Assembly Ltd as the Assembly's legal entity;
- 14.13.05 direct Assembly agencies to propose amendments to their constitution/terms of reference and relevant documentation to the Standing Committee that will recognise UCA Assembly Ltd, where required, as the Assembly's and the agency's legal representative;
- 14.13.06 determine that the operations of UCA Assembly Ltd and Assembly agencies include, but not be restricted to:
- a) the development and maintaining of registers which record existing and future contracts/licences, liabilities, etc where the use of UCA Assembly Ltd has been required. Assembly agency registers will be for agency-specific operations and UCA Assembly Ltd for all contracts/licences, and related activities in operation across the Assembly;
  - b) the preparation of a template(s) as a mechanism through which an agency makes application to the Directors for a contract to be signed in the name of UCA Assembly Ltd; such templates to include a statement about the structure and role of UCA Assembly Ltd within the Assembly;
  - c) the preparation of letters of appointment for Directors including elements such as comment on UCA polity and ethos, Directors' duties and responsibilities, indemnity and insurance cover;
  - d) the preparation of a shareholder 'transfer out' form, signed when a shareholder (Assembly Standing Committee member) is elected, to be held by the Company Secretary;
  - e) the identification of UCA Assembly Ltd as the Assembly's legal entity in insurance policies held by the Assembly; and
  - f) contracts are to be signed by no more than one staff Director;
- 14.13.07 require that the Board of UCA Assembly Ltd establish a regular schedule, and special reporting arrangements where needed, for reporting from Assembly agencies in order that they can provide an account of agency compliance with contractual/legal obligations (or failure of compliance), and Assembly agencies be required to provide reports accordingly;
- 14.13.08 determine that the capital of UCA Assembly Ltd be increased to \$100,000 and this value be identified in the Assembly's accounts in an appropriate manner;
- 14.13.09 request the General Secretary to
- a) arrange for the development of a new UCA Assembly Ltd Constitution which reflects the above resolutions and the findings of the UCA Assembly Ltd Task Group outlined in its report to the March 2014 Assembly Standing Committee meeting; and
  - b) oversee the implementation of the above resolutions and report on progress to the July 2014 and November 2014 meetings of the Standing Committee;
- 14.13.10 thank and discharge the Task Group.

## FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

### 1. Appointment of National Director of Frontier Services

Stuart McMillan spoke to Document 6, consisting of a nomination for the Position of National Director, Frontier Services.

#### 14.14 It was agreed to:

14.14.01 receive the report; and

14.14.02 appoint Rev Scott Kelly as National Director of Frontier Services effective 1 May 2014 for an initial term of three years.

### 2. ASC Governance Task Group

The General Secretary presented Document 14, consisting of a report from the Task Group.

#### 14.15 It was resolved to receive the report.

### 3. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

Peter Andrews spoke to Documents 5, 5A, 5B and 5C, consisting of a report on the work the Committee has done since the last Standing Committee meeting. Documents 5A, 5B and 5C included a report on the Assembly's consolidated finances, a statement of net available funds, the Assembly loan to Frontier Services and the draft ASC risk register, respectively.

#### 14.16 It was resolved to:

14.16.01 receive the report;

14.16.02 endorse the appointment of Deloitte as the External Auditor of Frontier Services;

14.16.03 request the John Flynn Foundation to make the maximum possible grant to Frontier Services; and

14.16.04 record its deep appreciation for the 25 years of service which David Greenall has given to the Assembly through bringing his significant professional skills, with diligence and love of the church, to the work of the Assembly's Audit, Finance and Risk Committee and its predecessor.

### 4. Beneficiary Fund

Ian Glenny and Jim Mein introduced Document 8 with a PowerPoint presentation on the issues faced by Beneficiary Fund and a possible future strategy.

#### 14.17 It was resolved to:

14.17.01 receive the report;

14.17.02 note that

- a) the Trustee has the capacity to determine outsourcing arrangements with regard to administration and investment matters; and
- b) a decision of the Standing Committee is required in order to change the Trustee of the Fund;

14.17.03 a) support in principle the changing of the Trustee of the Fund to an external Trustee, and

- b) support further investigation into outsourcing the Trusteeship of the Fund provided confirmation is gained for the continuance of self-insurance of present and future members, with a view to bringing a recommendation to the Standing Committee on outsourcing the Trusteeship of the Fund.

## **5. Frontier Services Interim Board**

The General Secretary introduced Documents 4, 4A and 4B, consisting of a report from the Board, the draft revised Frontier Services Mandate and the draft revised Terms of Reference for the Board.

### **14.18 It was resolved to:**

- 14.18.01 receive the report;
- 14.18.02 thank Rev Alan White for his superb service to the people of remote Australia and to Frontier Services and the Uniting Church as Interim National Director of Frontier Services from 1 August 2013 to 31 March 2014;
- 14.18.03 direct Frontier Services Interim Board not to engage in any new contractual arrangements for the delivery of community services until the Community Services review has been completed, implemented and reported upon to the Standing Committee;
- 14.18.04 request the President and the General Secretary to communicate to the Frontier Services Interim Board the Standing Committee's deep disappointment that the progress of direction specified in Minute 13.25.03 has been slow and express strong preference for the relocation of the Frontier Services staff to 222 Pitt Street; and
- 14.18.05 refer the revised Frontier Services Mandate and Terms of Reference to the Frontier Services Interim Board for revision in light of the discussion at the Standing Committee.

## **6. General Report**

- 14.19 It was resolved** to refer Document 25 to the Assembly Officers and the report was received.

## **7. Legal Reference Committee**

- 14.20 It was resolved to** refer Document 22 to the Assembly Officers and **it was resolved to:**

- 14.20.01 receive the report; and
- 14.20.02
  - a) note the resignation of Bryce Bridges from the Legal Reference Committee; and
  - b) appoint Peter Butt and Fiona Hanlon as members of the Committee.

## **8. National Task Group re the Royal Commission**

- 14.21 It was resolved to** refer Documents 19, 19A, 19B and 19C to the Assembly Officers and **it was resolved to:**
- 14.21.01 receive the report;
- 14.21.02 approve the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for the National Task Group (Attachment B);

- 14.21.03 endorse the proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference for Synod Task Groups and commend them to the Synods for adoption as Terms of Reference for their Task Groups (Attachment C); and
- 14.21.04 endorse the paper “Structure of the Uniting Church in Australia” and issue it in the name of the Assembly for use by interested parties (Attachment D).

### **9. Transition Board – Frontier Services Aged Care**

Isabel Thomas Dobson presented Documents 3, 3A, 3B and 3C, consisting of a report of the Transition Board, the UCQ cover letter and resolutions and the correspondence from Juniper. Anne Cross and Heather Watson from UCQ also spoke to the matter. Discussion ensued.

#### **14.22 It was resolved to:**

- 14.22.01 receive the report;
- 14.22.02 receive the correspondence from the Synod of Queensland;
- 14.22.03 receive the correspondence from UnitingCare Queensland (UCQ);
- 14.22.04 receive the correspondence from Juniper, Western Australia;
- 14.22.05 express the gratitude of the Assembly to the Board of UCQ, the Synod of Queensland and particularly to the Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Queensland and the Executive Director of Blue Care for the enormous effort and significant financial resources that they have put into developing this proposal to this stage; and to the Northern Synod for the support it has offered in the Assembly’s relationships with the Northern Territory Government;
- 14.22.06 express gratitude to the Board of UCQ and the Executive Management of Blue Care for their management of the Aged Care Services since 1 December 2013;
- 14.22.07 express the gratitude of the Assembly to the Board of Juniper and particularly its CEO for the significant amount of work that has been undertaken to develop the proposal to this point;
- 14.22.08 express the gratitude of the Assembly to the Board of UnitingCare Ageing NSW/ACT, Resthaven SA, Wesley Mission Brisbane, UnitingCare Wesley Port Adelaide SA, Helping Hand SA, Clayton Homes SA and Wesley Mission NSW for their generous offer of assistance to the Assembly expressed through their offer of financial support to the new providers that may take over responsibility for the Assembly’s aged care services;
- 14.22.09 determine that
- a) the Assembly will transfer the Assembly’s aged care services to a new entity to be established by UCQ (Australian Regional and Remote Community Services / ARRCs) and to Juniper;
  - b) the effective date will be 1 July 2014; and
  - c) the basis of the agreement will be recorded in minutes apart;
- 14.22.10 authorize the sale of 87 Woods St Darwin;
- 14.22.11 that all properties that are used for the delivery of aged care services be transferred;
- a) in the Northern Territory to ARRCs excluding 87 Woods Street Darwin, McNair House in Alice Springs, the Hetti Perkins site and the Juninga property, over which the Assembly does not have control, noting that

- with respect to Old Timers and PulkaPulkaKari, that these will need to be approved by the Northern Synod Property Trust; and
- b) in Western Australia to Juniper for those properties within the bounds of the Northern Synod;
- 14.22.12 with respect to McNair House, a lease will be established between UCQ and Frontier Services to have a combination of fixed rent years and CPI indexed years prior to a future date to be established at which time a rent review and an option to extend the lease will be included;
- 14.22.13 with respect to Hetti Perkins that the Assembly:
- a) acknowledge the Hetti Perkins contingent liability of \$5 million in favour of Aboriginal Hostels Ltd (AHL) and separately a grant of \$2.25 million paid to Frontier Services by AHL;
- b) accepts the UCQ offer to manage Hetti Perkins from 1 July 2014, subject to negotiating terms acceptable to UCQ and the Assembly; and
- c) manage its risk related to the contingent liability, which could include seeking support from the Synods;
- 14.22.14 seek confirmation from the Northern Synod that it is willing to allow the Synod of Queensland, through UCQ, and the Synod of WA through Juniper to operate aged care services within the bounds of the Northern Synod.
- 14.22.15 confirm that the Assembly (including Frontier Services):
- a) will relinquish its endorsement as an Approved Provider immediately upon resolution of the contingent liability issue with Aboriginal Hostels Limited re Hetti Perkins, through a contract which is acceptable to UCQ; and undertake not to utilize its Approved Provider status for any services other than Hetti Perkins from 1 July 2014;
- b) will not seek in the future to be an Approved Provider for Aged Care Services; and
- c) will not seek other funding outside of the Aged Care Act to deliver aged care and related services including HACC services in the Northern Synod, without the agreement of ARRCs or Juniper; and
- 14.22.16 delegate authority to the Transition Board to oversee the implementation of these resolutions, noting that in the event that ARRCs and Juniper are unable to reach agreement about the allocation of funds under this agreement, they will seek assistance from this body.

## **10. UnitingCare Australia**

The General Secretary presented the briefing paper from the National Director of UnitingCare Australia re “Potential National Vehicle for Working Together”. Zac Hatfield Dodds stood aside from the discussion of the UnitingCare Australia correspondence.

- 14.23 It was resolved to:**
- 14.23.01 note the UnitingCare Australia briefing paper “Potential National Vehicle for Working Together” prepared by Lin Hatfield Dodds in March 2014;
- 14.23.02 advise UnitingCare Australia that the Standing Committee is of the view that the policy considerations expressed in the correspondence are of such a magnitude that no further decisions should be taken without the involvement of the Standing Committee and the Synods; and
- 14.23.03 request the General Secretary and the President to:
- a) meet with the Chair and National Director of UnitingCare Australia to seek a briefing from them and to convey the view of the Standing Committee on the developing proposal for a potential incorporated vehicle for shared work in community services; and

- b) allocate space in the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee for a further consideration of this matter.

## **11. UnitingWorld**

### **11.1 Church Connections**

Andrew Glenn and Kerry Enright spoke to Documents 9, 9A and 9B, consisting of a report on governance, the Church Connections Mandate and the revised Church Connections Risk Register.

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

### **11.2 Partnership Agreement with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan**

Terence Corkin introduced Document 11, consisting of a report on the partnership agreement with the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.

**14.25** It was resolved to:

14.25.01 receive the report; and

14.25.02 endorse the partnership agreement negotiated between the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan and the Uniting Church in Australia.

## **12. Working Group on Doctrine**

Chris Walker presented Document 26, consisting of a discussion paper on marriage.

**14.26** It was resolved to:

14.26.01 receive the report, and

14.26.02 authorise the distribution of the paper as amended in light of the discussion with the report from Rob Bos.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

### **1. Census of Ministers**

The President presented Document 20, consisting of a report on the 2013 Census of UCA Congregations and Ministers.

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

### **2. Elders Revisited**

The General Secretary introduced Document 16, consisting of a report on the possible options for strengthening the ministry of Elder. Table group discussion followed.

**14.28** It was resolved to:

14.28.01 receive the report;

14.28.02 a) affirm the importance of eldership; and  
b) approve the process outlined in the report;

14.28.03 appoint Allan Thompson (Convenor), Robert Johnson, Robert Bos, Geoffrey Grinton and Jason Kioa as members of the Elders Task Group; and

- 14.28.04 request a report, including proposals for the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly, be brought to the March 2015 meeting of the Standing Committee.

### **3. General Business**

The General Secretary presented various items in Document 23. Michelle Cook and Stuart McMillan spoke to Item 5, consisting of correspondence re the covenanting audit.

#### **14.29 It was resolved to:**

- 14.29.01 receive the resignation of Craig Mitchell as a member of the Assembly Standing Committee;
- 14.29.02 a) receive the resignation of Rev Dr D’Arcy Wood as a Director of the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd; and  
b) appoint Megan McLaughlin as a Director of the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd;
- 14.29.03 a) receive the correspondence from the Perth Theological Hall; and  
b) request the General Secretary to reply in the light of the discussion at the Standing Committee meeting;
- 14.29.04 request the current General Secretary Review Group to monitor the General Secretary’s progress towards the agreed goals of the annual appraisals three times a year, and to offer pastoral support;
- 14.29.05 issue an invitation to the National Executive of Congress to have a jointly located meeting at the time of the November ASC and identify agreed times for sharing;
- 14.29.06 a) note the resignation of Kerry Enright as Director of UCA Assembly Ltd.; and  
b) request the General Secretary of the NSW / ACT Synod to bring at least 2 recommendations of persons for appointment as Directors of UCA Assembly Ltd; and authorize the Assembly Officers to appoint them;
- 14.29.07 determine that the date for the 14<sup>th</sup> Assembly will be from Sunday 12 July to Saturday 18 July 2015;
- 14.29.08 the remaining items in Document 23 were referred to the Assembly Officers and **it was resolved to:**
- a) recommend to the Standing Committee that the process for introducing the candidates for President – Elect be the same as in 2012; i.e. 4 questions, interview style, one video, 5 minutes for responses;  
b) (i) relocate the Assembly Working Group on Worship to South Australia following the 2015 Assembly; and  
(ii) give permission for a process to be undertaken, including advertising for expressions of interest, to prepare a list of suitable people for appointment to the Working Group; and  
c) receive the correspondence from the Synod of Queensland in relation to issues arising from the Assembly’s experience with its Aged Care Services;

### **4. Polity, Governance and Changing Times**

The General Secretary introduced Document 2, consisting of a letter from Peter Bicknell, Chair of the UnitingCare Australia Executive on governance and missional challenges and a suggested way forward. Significant discussion took

place on Friday night and throughout the meeting and a response was developed.

**14.30** The draft proposal was referred to the Assembly Officers and **it was resolved to:**

14.30.01 request the Chairperson of the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee to convene a meeting of the Chairpersons of National Committees / Boards with Assembly delegations, the National Consultant Doctrine Worship and Christian Unity and Lin Hatfield Dodds with a view to:

- a) bringing a report to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee that identifies broad systemic issues, best practices and structures to address financial, reputational, missional and pastoral risks for the Assembly and the wider church; and
- b) proposing ways forward to address these issues, noting work that has already been done. In framing the “proposals” consideration needs to be given to:
  - (i) governance review processes occurring in synods;
  - (ii) the risks that may arise for the whole of the church from the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse; and
  - (iii) such report and proposals are to be framed in the overarching context of mission and purposes of the church as expressed in the Basis of Union;

- 14.30.02
- a) recognising that the Basis of Union calls us to be a fellowship of reconciliation under the Lordship of Christ, affirms the importance of reorienting our life as a church towards the needs of the congregation; the ekklesia, “the embodiment on one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church” (Basis of Union), the “primary expression of the corporate life of the Church” (Constitution s.22);
  - b) taking account of the practical and organisational realities within which the Church operates (e.g. census information), affirm that the time has come for sustained theological reflection and discernment on who God is calling the Uniting Church to be in light of our Covenant with the first peoples of this land and in the context of a multicultural and multifaith Australia; and
  - c) appoint Glenda Blakefield, Jenny Byrnes and Duncan Macleod to a task group to provide a process and any relevant terms of reference to enable such reflection to take place and report to the July ASC meeting.  
Such a process may involve:
    - listening across the life of the church
    - learning from the processes of the Joint Commission on Church Union as they designed the current polity and structures of the Church
    - sustained Theological and Missiological reflection on the church
    - a review of our polity
    - the formation of a longer-term task group made up primarily of younger persons (under 35) and reflecting the diversity of the wider church and Australian community (for example, % born overseas)
    - respecting and making use of the wisdom of our elders.

## **5. Term of the General Secretary**

The President spoke to this item of business.

**14.31 It was resolved to:**

14.31.01 establish a Review Group to undertake the review of the Assembly General Secretary with a view to making recommendations re extension of term;

14.31.02 the Terms of Reference for the Task Group to include examination of the General Secretary’s vitality of call, performance in the role and a needs analysis of the church for the role in the future;

- 14.31.03 request that a report be brought to the July 2014 meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- 14.31.04 appoint Andrew Dutney (Convenor), Alistair Macrae, Kate Fraser and Emma Davison as the Review Group.

## **CLOSURE**

The meeting closed at 4.00pm with prayer led by the President.

**DATES FOR 2014**      **18 – 20 July 2014**  
                                 **14 - 16 November 2014**

**DATE FOR 2015**      **20 – 22 March 2015**