

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

15 – 17 JULY 2016

PRESENT Stuart McMillan (President), Felicity Amery, Peter Andrews, Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Bethany Broadstock, Hayden Charles, Dennis Corowa, Lindsay Cullen, Garry Dronfield, Steve Francis, Colleen Geyer, Geoffrey Grinton, Haloti Kailahi, Amelia Koh-Butler, Denise Liersch, Deidre Palmer, Ian Price, Akesa Racava, Elaine Rae, Isabel Thomas-Dobson, Ian Tozer, Warwick van Ede, Wendie Wilkie.

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Chris Budden, Heather den Houting, Jane Fry, David de Kock, Peter Jones, Mark Lawrence.

WORSHIP On the Friday evening, as part of the formation of the community, Colleen Geyer preached, Amelia Koh-Butler presided at the opening Service of Holy Communion and the President acknowledged Cadigal Clan Nation of the Eora people by paying respects for the wisdom of their elders past and their care of country and to all descendants of this nation. On the Saturday Bethany Broadstock led morning worship and Ian Price led evening prayers. On the Sunday Dennis Corowa led morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Deidre Palmer.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all participants, with special regard to Warwick van Ede as the new coopted member of the Standing Committee, Heather den Houting as the new Synod General Secretary of the Queensland Synod, to the Standing Committee meeting. Also welcomed as visitors were Rob Floyd for matters related to UnitingWorld, Grahame Ryan for matters related to Frontier Services, John Cox for matters related to the Royal Commission, Leo Iosifidis for matters related to the Assembly Budget and Delegations.

APOLOGIES

16.24 **It was resolved** to receive the apology from Andrew Dutney, Jacki Watts, Andrew Williams, Nigel Rogers, Zac Hatfield Dodds for the whole meeting; Isabel Thomas-Dobson for Friday night; Warwick van Ede for Saturday during the day, Jane Fry for Friday night and Hayden Charles for Saturday and Sunday.

PASTORAL MATTERS

The pastoral matters also formed part of the worship led by Colleen Geyer and Amelia Koh-Butler on Friday night. The participants were informed that Gregor Henderson had a heart attack but is doing well now. It was also shared that Terry, husband of Amelia Koh-Butler has another tumour. The President invited everyone to pray themselves for those on their hearts and he closed the prayers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

16.25 **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

16.26 **It was resolved to** confirm the minutes of the meeting held 11 – 13 March 2015 with the following amendments:

Attachment C – Frontier Services Constitution
Section 4 Miscellaneous - Delete “a” before 4.3 so it follows the previous
format
10.8 should be ‘this person’ not ‘these persons’
10.12 ‘according’ not ‘accordingly’

The amended Frontier Services Constitution is Attachment A.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

16.27 It was resolved to:

- a) note:
 - (i) Steve Francis’ conflict of interest in relation to Document 16E, a request from the Western Australia Synod for an exemption to the operation of Regulations 3.6.3.1 (d);and
 - (ii) resolve that he be absent for this business.

NOTE CONSTITUTION CLAUSE 39

Standing Committee members were reminded of the Constitution clause 39, as per ASC minute 00.71:

“On matters which, by a two thirds majority vote, the Assembly deems to be vital to the life of the Church, the Assembly shall seek the concurrence of the Synods and/or Presbyteries and/or Congregations as the Assembly may determine.”

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

On the Saturday evening the President reported to the Standing Committee on his various activities since the March 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

16.28 It was resolved to receive the report (Attachment B).

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. Assembly Delegations (ASC Minute 15.85.02)

Leo Iosifidis spoke to Documents 8 and 8A, consisting of a summary paper on the consultation process aimed at developing consistent approach to delegations across the Assembly and all its Agencies, and a Delegations Matrix table and initial context.

16.29 It was resolved to:

16.29.01 approve the Assembly Delegations Matrix;

16.29.02 request the General Secretary and the General Manager, Finance & Administration to:

- a) develop a framework for implementing matrix into Assembly operations;
and
- b) present this to the Assembly Finance, Audit and Risk Committee for approval.

2. Funding the Assembly (ASC Minute 15.22.04)

The General Secretary presented Document 9, consisting of a report on the development of a sustainable funding model for the Assembly and the process to explore national cooperation and the elements of working nationally across the UCA.

16.30 It was resolved to:

- 16.30.01 receive the report;
- 16.30.02 note the direction being explored by the General Secretaries; and
- 16.30.03 request the General Secretaries to develop the direction and bring a proposal regarding a model to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee, with a view to it being implemented from 1 July 2017.

3. Ministry of Pastor (ASC Minute 15.45.03)

Amelia Koh-Butler and Geoffrey Grinton introduced Document 13, consisting of a report from the Task Group appointed to scope out the task after the 14th Assembly had referred Proposal 50 on the membership requirements of pastors to the Standing Committee for inclusion in its ongoing work on the Ministry of Pastor. Table discussion followed.

16.31 It was resolved to:

- 16.31.01 receive the report;
- 16.31.02 request the Education for Ministry to bring a proposal re membership to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 16.31.03. amend Regulation 2.4.6 to read:
 - 2.4.6 An applicant under Regulation 2.3.3 (a) A person shall be recognised as a Pastor when ~~after having applied:~~
 - (a) the applicant person is ~~has been~~ a confirmed member or member in association of the Church ~~for a period of twelve months prior to being recognised as a Pastor;~~ and
 - (b) the Presbytery, (or the Synod in the case of a Synod appointment, or the Assembly in the case of an Assembly appointment) is satisfied that the applicant can demonstrate the core competencies (See Reg.2.4.3); and
 - (c) the applicant person is appointed to a ministry location designated as appropriate for the Ministry of Pastor (See Reg 2.6.9); and
- 16.31.04. refer the amendment to Regulation 2.4.6 to the Assembly Legal Reference Committee for comment and advice to the Standing Committee.

4. New Way of Working for the Assembly (ASC Minutes 15.22.03 and 15.22.04)

The General Secretary introduced Document 11, consisting of a proposed new way of working for the Assembly in keeping with previous resolutions and current realities in order to fulfil the responsibilities of the Assembly, and projects as defined by the Assembly and the Standing Committee.

16.32 It was resolved to:

- 16.32.01 receive the report;
- 16.32.02 endorse the move toward a collaborative, project based framework for the Assembly's work, informed by the work in document 11, the feedback from the Standing Committee discussion on 15 July 2016, and the foundational affirmations of our identity as the Uniting Church, and priorities affirmed by the Assembly;
- 16.32.03 request the General Secretary to form a Working Group which will bring back logistics for implementing the proposed model to the November meeting of the ASC;
- 16.32.04 request the Working Group to work towards a timeline of implementing the preferred model by no later than 1 July 2017;
- 16.32.05 request the General Secretary to work with the staff, the Standing Committee and other stakeholders to develop a three year Strategic Plan for the Assembly, to be approved at the March 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee; and
- 16.32.06 agree to the confidentiality of Document 11 until the Assembly Officers advise the Standing Committee.

5. Remote Area Ministry Mechanism (ASC Minutes 15.92.03 and 15.45.04)

Peter Jones spoke to Document 12, consisting of a report from the group established to undertake the tasks identified in ASC Minute 15.45.04. a) and b).

16.33 It was resolved to:

- 16.33.01 receive the report;
- 16.33.02 approve establishment of the Remote Area Ministry Working Group;
- 16.33.03 approve the Terms of Reference for the Working Group; and
- 16.33.04 authorise the Assembly Officers to approve membership of the Working Group.

6. Sovereignty and Treaty (ASC Minutes 15.08 and 15.78.01)

Chris Budden presented Document 3, consisting of a paper aimed at starting a discussion on the issues of sovereignty and treaty which might be part of the conversation between the Standing Committee and the National Committee of Congress in November 2016.

16.34 It was resolved to:

- 16.34.01 receive the report;
- 16.34.02 take note of the issues identified at the Standing Committee meeting to be explored in the conversation between the Standing Committee and the National Committee of Congress in November 2016 regarding sovereignty and treaty;
- 16.34.03 request the President, Dennis Corowa, Chris Budden and the General Secretary to finalise arrangements for the conversation; and
- 16.34.04 invite the Moderators, some members of the Multicultural and Cross-cultural Reference Committee and others identified by the group in Minute 16.34.03 and

the UAICC National Executive as important to participate in the conversation to attend.

7. Synod Secretary Draft Regulations (ASC Minute 15.88.02)

The General Secretary introduced Document 10, consisting of a draft Regulation 3.6.3.4 proposed by the Assembly Legal Reference Committee.

16.35 It was resolved to:

16.35.01 amend Regulation 3.6.3.4 to read:

- a) The Secretary of the Synod ~~has an executive leadership, pastoral and advisory role, is the executive officer of the Synod; with executive leadership, pastoral and advisory roles;~~ and is responsible for:
- i. ensuring execution of Synod policy;
 - ii. coordinating Synod activities;
 - iii. overseeing the management of Synod staff;
 - iv. acting as the liaison officer of the Synod with the Presbyteries and other bodies within the bounds;
 - v. providing all necessary reports and information as may be required by the Assembly; and
 - vi. such other things as the Synod may require;
- b) The Secretary of the Synod is a member ex-officio of all Synod bodies; and

16.35.02 determine that the effective date be 17 July 2016

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

1.1 Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee Report

Peter Andrews spoke to Document 6, consisting of a finance report and the statement of net available funds.

16.36 It was resolved to:

16.36.01 receive the report; and

16.36.02 rescind ASC Minute 14.13.08.

1.2 Assembly and its Agencies Budget Plan 2016-17

Peter Andrews and Leo Iosifidis presented Documents 7 and 7A, consisting of a report on the development of the Assembly Budget for 2016-17 and the proposed budgets for the Assembly and its Agencies.

16.37 It was resolved to approve the 2016-17 Budget for the Assembly and its Agencies.

2. ASC Governance Reference Committee

The General Secretary presented Document 15, consisting of a report on the issues considered by the Reference Committee.

16.38 It was resolved to receive the report;

3. Christian Unity Working Group

The General Secretary spoke to Document 19, consisting of a revised text following feedback from 14th Assembly to be submitted to The Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches as the formal UCA response.

16.39 It was resolved to:

16.39.01 receive the report;

16.39.02 a) request the Standing Committee members to provide comments to the General Secretary by 31 July 2016 to be forwarded to the Christian Unity Working Group;

b) then request a subsequent report to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee; and

c) request a member of the Christian Unity Working Group to come to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. General Secretary's Report

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

16.40 It was resolved to receive the report.

5. National Royal Commission Task Group

John Cox spoke to Documents 4 and 4A, consisting of a report on the work being done with respect to engaging with and responding to the Royal Commission; Consultation paper: Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in Out-of-Home Care and Consultation paper: Best practice principles in responding to complaints of child sexual abuse in institutional contexts.

16.41 It was resolved to:

16.41.01 receive the report;

16.41.02 approve the following statement be added to the front page of the interim redress framework:

This document represents our commitment to redress as identified by Royal Commission in its Redress and Civil Litigation report, August 2015. We identify and acknowledge that circumstances are constantly changing and implementation of a redress scheme, in the form it was proposed by the Royal Commission, is looking unlikely. In this changing environment the Uniting Church remains committed to making redress possible within the environment in which we exist. Where that environment requires us to respond differently to this framework, our response will continue to be governed by our commitment to being survivor focussed; open and accessible; individualised; and personal (where that is appropriate).

16.41.03 endorse the Assembly Officers approval of the following resolutions:

a) note that the Assembly currently has no Interim Redress Scheme aligned with the National Framework for Interim Redress Measures, for survivors of abuse in institutions associated with the Assembly;

b) agree that any claims for redress in institutions associated with the Assembly are considered within the Interim Redress Scheme of the

Synod where the institution is/was situated geographically; and

- c) agree that any costs associated with the use of the Interim Redress Scheme of the nominated Synod be borne by the Assembly, in negotiation with the Synod.

6. UnitingWorld

Rob Floyd spoke to Document 17, consisting of two revised partnership agreements, namely the Partnership Agreements with The Methodist Church in Fiji and also The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe.

16.42 It was resolved to:

16.42.01 receive the report;

16.42.02 approve the signing of the Partnership Agreement UCA - The Methodist Church in Zimbabwe 2016 (Attachment C); and

16.42.03 a) approve the signing of the Partnership Agreement UCA – The Methodist Church in Fiji; and

- b) request that all future agreements include paragraph 10 as included in the 2016 Partnership Agreement UCA – The Methodist Church in Fiji (Attachment D).

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. ASC Risk Register

The General Secretary presented Documents 2, 2A, 2B and 2C, consisting of an ASC Risk Register which had been updated as per the discussion at the March 2016 Standing Committee meeting and which now includes risks relating to the Royal Commission, the Royal Commission's own Risk Framework dated May 6 2016, Section 8 - Risk Management Framework and the Review of ASC Risk Register Process. Table Group discussion followed. The area to be reviewed were the risks relating to the Royal Commission.

16.43 It was resolved to:

16.43.01 request the ASC Governance Reference Committee to amend the Risk Register in the light of the comments provided by the Standing Committee during its review; and

16.43.02 bring the amended register to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee.

2. General Business

The General Secretary presented the business in Document 16 and David de Kock spoke to Document 16F which constituted part of Document 16 and consisted of a request from the Synod of Western Australia.

16.44 It was resolved to:

16.44.01 receive the report;

16.44.02 a) note the update re the consultation on the Code of Ethics in plain English; and

- b) request the General Secretary to bring a report re consultation to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee;
- 16.44.03 note the update regarding 'Uniting' brand;
- 16.44.04 note the correspondence from Nigel Rogers, CEO/General Secretary of the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia regarding bilateral arrangement process with 'Uniting', NSW.ACT;
- 16.44.05
- a) note the report re the recruitment of a National Director, UnitingCare Australia;
- b) authorise the Assembly Officers to approve the nomination of the National Director, UnitingCare Australia on the advice of the interview panel if the recruitment process is finalized prior to the November meeting of the Standing Committee; with relevant information brought for noting to the November meeting; and
- c) record its appreciation to Lin Hatfield Dodds for her many years of service and leadership to the Uniting Church in the role of National Director of UnitingCare Australia and table a Minute of Appreciation at the Triennial Assembly in 2018.
- 16.44.06 note the report regarding Songs That Unite;
- 16.44.07
- a) note the report regarding the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd;
- b) request the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd Board to meet and to provide advice through the UCA Board Members to the Standing Committee on the most appropriate way forward with respect to the following three options:
1. that the Assembly Standing Committee support the orderly wind-up of the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd; or
 2. the realisation for fair and reasonable compensation of the The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW)'s interest in the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd; or
 3. the Uniting Church remain as a shareholder of the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd.
- c) request the Assembly General Manager Finance and Administration to provide the Standing Committee with appropriate financial information regarding the current financial situation of the Australian Hymn Book Pty Ltd and the implications of winding up the company; and
- d) should the information supplied pose significant risk, authorize the Assembly Officers to decide regarding the steps to be taken;
- 16.44.08
- a) receive the report from Bruce Binnie on the Centrelink matter;
- b) authorise the General Secretary to continue advocacy with the Australian Government in consultation with the Chair of the Employer Committee; and
- c) authorise the General Secretary to approve appropriate expenses if required.
- 16.44.09
- a) request that appropriate information be provided to the Standing Committee regarding the nomination of Chaplain Murray Lund as a member of the Force Chaplaincy Committee and that of Jenny Hughes as a member of the Worship Working Group; and

- b) request the nominations be brought back to the November 2016 meeting of the Standing Committee or be considered by electronic voting if the vacancies need to be filled in urgently; and

16.44.10 grant to the Synod of Western Australia an exemption to the operation of Regulations 3.6.3.1(c) and 3.6.3.1(d) sufficient to enable the Moderator of Western Australia to be renominated for a second consecutive term of three years each for the 40th Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia in Session.

3. Skills Matrix / Co-options

The General Secretary spoke to Document 14, consisting of a nomination for cooption to the Standing Committee.

16.45 **It was resolved to** approve the cooption of Catherine Pepper to the membership of the Standing Committee from its November 2016 meeting.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 3.45pm with prayer led by Deidre Palmer.

DATES FOR 2016: 17 – 20 November 2016