

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

10 - 12 November 2017

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

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Chris Budden, David de Kock, Heather den Houting, Jane Fry, Mark Lawrence, Matt Pulford and Nigel Rogers.

WORSHIP On the Friday night, as part of the formation of the community, Chris Budden preached and presided at the Service of Holy Communion. During the Service he acknowledged Cadigal Clan Nation of the Eora people by paying respects for the wisdom of their elders past and present, their care of country and to all descendants of this nation. On Saturday morning the worship was led by Akesa Racava and the evening prayers were led by Catherine Peppers. On the Sunday Ian Price conducted morning worship and the closing prayer in the afternoon was led by Jacki Watts.

WELCOMES The President welcomed all participants, Rob Floyd, in particular, as the new Associate General Secretary, John Cox for matters related to Royal Commission, Sureka Goringe and Andrew Glenn for matters related to UnitingWorld Mandate, Leo Iosifidis for matters related to the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee Report, the UCA Assembly Limited (UCAAL) Annual General Meeting and the National Insurance Conversation, Jonathon Rea and Stephen Capelin for matters related to UCAAL Annual General Meeting, Alistair Macrae for matters related to Marriage Conversation, Lindsay Cullen for matters related to the report on Reimagining Assembly Groups.

APOLOGIES

17.42 **It was resolved** to receive the apologies of Warwick van Ede for Friday night and Saturday morning, Amelia Koh-Butler for Saturday afternoon and evening; Jane Fry for Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and evening and Haloti Kailahi for Sunday.

PASTORAL MATTERS

It was shared that Rronang Garrawurra, former chair of UAICC had a stroke, Beryl Grant, the first female Moderator of the WA Synod and Elizabeth Finnegan, the first woman to become the Moderator of the SA Synod passed away. The participants were pleased to hear that Alison Atkinson-Phillips finished her PhD, Denise Liersch was elected Moderator-elect of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and that Wendie Wilkie will marry next year. The President led the meeting in prayers.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

17.43 **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

17.44 It was resolved to:

- 17.44.01 confirm the minutes of the meeting held 7 – 9 July 2017.
- 17.44.02 confirm that via teleconference held 30 August 2017 the Standing Committee resolved to:
- 17.41.01 receive the report;
- 17.41.02 approve the change to the numbering of Regulation 2.10.3, including the addition of 2.10.3 (b) to read:

WITHDRAWAL OF RECOGNITION OF A MINISTER

- (a) The recognition of a Minister may be withdrawn by the Synod by reason of:
- (i) the acceptance by the Presbytery with which the Minister is enrolled of a resignation from the ministry;
 - (ii) continuing in the designation of awaiting placement, or not available for placement in each case for more than two years unless the Placements Committee and the Presbytery both agree, by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, that there are circumstances which warrant the extension of the term by a further year; or
 - (iii) a determination of the Committee for Discipline pursuant to Regulation 5.7.4(r)(vi), subject to the Regulations relating to appeal.
- (b) The recognition of a Minister shall be automatically withdrawn if the Minister is convicted of a criminal offence of a sexual nature in relation to a minor.;
- 17.41.03 approve the change of Regulation 2.10.3 as at 30 August 2017;
- 17.41.04 note that the requirement for the Church to review its processes following a conviction of a Minister of child sexual abuse is a matter of policy, and should be included into any policy, framework or review of such; and
- 17.41.05 note the importance of Ministers adhering to Section 6 of the Code of Ethics in relation to this matter.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflict of interest was submitted.

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 July 2017 meeting of the Standing Committee.

17.45 **It was resolved** to receive the report (Attachment A).

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. Assembly Legal Reference Committee (ASC Minute 17.13.04)

Warwick van Ede presented Document 7, consisting of the proposed draft amendments to the UCA Constitution for the new membership category of Affirmed Members.

17.46 **It was resolved to:**

17.46.01 receive the report;

17.46.02 approve the draft amendments to the UCA Constitution regarding Affirmed Members to be included in the agenda for the 15th Assembly;

- a) insert definition of 'Affirmed member' in clause 3 after the definition of 'Adherent'
Affirmed member of a Congregation is a member of the Church or a member in association who has accepted the Church Council's invitation to become an affirmed member and who the Congregation recognises as an affirmed member because of his or her active participation in the Congregation's life.;
- b) Insert the following clause 7(a) after clause 7:
7(a) The Assembly shall prescribe the manner in which members of the Church become affirmed members of the Congregation and their rights and responsibilities as affirmed members.;
- c) insert a new paragraph (e) in clause 9 with previous paragraph (e) becoming paragraph (f):
9. ...
(e) inviting members of the Church to become affirmed members of the Congregation and satisfying requirements relating to affirmed members that are prescribed by the Assembly;
- d) amend clause 19(a) by deleting the words 'confirmed members or members in association' and inserting 'affirmed members' instead.

2. Mercer Fund Policy Committee (ASC Minute 17.13.04)

This matter formed part of the Consent Agenda.

3. Reimagining Assembly Groups (ASC Minute 17.38.02)

Lindsay Cullen and Rob Floyd introduced Document 5, consisting of a report on the options for the Standing Committee in finalising recommendations concerning Assembly Committees and Groups to be taken to the 15th Assembly. Much discussion followed in table groups. Based on the feedback from the participants, Rob Floyd offered a presentation later in the day.

17.47 **It was resolved to:**

17.47.01 receive the report;

17.47.02 approve in principle Model One for the reshaping of Assembly Groups and Committees for the next Triennium; and

- 17.47.03 request the General Secretary to:
- a) convey the decision and its implications to existing Working Groups;
 - b) develop the necessary documentation for the implementation of this model; and
 - c) consult with identified Standing Committee members Wendie Wilkie, Elaine Rae and Deidre Palmer throughout the process; and
 - d) report to the March 2018 meeting of the Standing Committee.

4. Uniting Church National History Society Constitution (ASC Minute 15.89.03)

This matter formed part of the Consent Agenda.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

Peter Andrews spoke to Documents 10, 10A and 10B, consisting of a finance report, the statement of net available funds as at 30 September 2017 and the draft National Insurance Program.

17.48 It was resolved to receive the report.

2. Assembly Resourcing Unit

Rob Floyd presented Documents 9, 9A and 9B, consisting of a report from the newly formed Assembly Resourcing Unit and the Education for Ministry Working Group as well as a draft theological and policy position statement for the Uniting Church on climate change.

17.49 It was resolved to:

17.49.01 receive the reports; and

17.49.02 request the Education for Ministry Working Group to review and clarify the meaning of point 5 of the new Standards ("Those appointed by the Church to teach, supervise and mentor candidates shall embody the same attributes") and advise any changes required to ensure that non-ordained people are not excluded from involvement in formation and bring a report back to the March 2018 meeting of the Standing Committee.

3. General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary introduced Document 8, consisting of a report on Assembly operations and issues relevant to its work.

17.50 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. National Royal Commission Task Group

John Cox spoke to Documents 13, 13A, 13B, 13C and 13D, consisting of a report on the work being done with respect to engaging with and responding to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the summary of the Redress Submission, the UCA Child Safety Strategic Framework and Strategic Directions, the list of unassigned actions from Case Study 56 and the business case for establishing a national Safe Church Unit.

17.51 It was resolved to:

17.51.01 receive the report; and

17.51.02 endorse the continuing conversations across the Uniting Church regarding the development and establishment of a national Child Safe Unit.

5. UnitingWorld Mandate

Sureka Goringe and Andrew Glenn spoke to Documents 12, 12A, 12B and 12C, consisting of the rationale for a revised single mandate for Unitingworld to replace separate mandates for the Relief and Development and Church Connections Committees, the proposed revised UnitingWorld Mandate and the current mandates of these two Committees.

17.52 It was resolved to:

17.52.01 approve the revised Mandate of UnitingWorld as amended at the meeting (Attachment B); and

17.52.02 determine that the new Mandate come into effect after the 15th Assembly.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Consent Agenda

The General Secretary presented the various documents which constituted Document 2, Consent Agenda.

17.53 It was resolved to:

17.53.01 approve the Minutes of Appreciation Chris Walker, Tom Kerr and Craig Mitchell;

17.53.02 approve the Uniting Church National History Society Constitution as amended at the meeting;

17.53.03 receive the Governance Reference Committee report;

17.53.04 a) receive the report on the status of the UCA Beneficiary Fund and current activities of the Employer and Policy Committees; and

b) endorse the proposal from the Employer Committee to assess the impacts of closure of the defined benefit section to new members and provide further advice to the Standing Committee;

17.53.05 a) receive the report on the UCA Beneficiary Fund Policy Committee appointment procedures;

b) determine that prior service as a director of Benefund Ltd not be counted as service for the purposes of appointment to the Policy Committee; and

17.53.06 c) approve amendment of the "Procedures for the Appointment of Members of the Policy Committee (Procedures)" by amending the words "Four Committee Representatives from 1 July 2018" to read "Four Committee Representatives from 1 July 2020".

2. Marriage Conversation Update

Alistair Macrae introduced Document 6, consisting of a draft report from the Working Group on Doctrine on marriage and same gender relationships to assist the 15th Assembly to consider the matter of same-gender marriage. The General Secretary presented Document 6A, consisting of a process timeline to enable the Standing Committee to discuss the process leading up to the 15th Assembly in relation to the marriage conversation. Much discussion followed and the participants provided feedback.

17.54 It was resolved to

17.54.01 receive the report; and

17.54.02 request the Working Group on Doctrine to bring a final report and recommendations to the March 2018 meeting of the Standing Committee.

3. Presidential Ruling No.33

The President spoke to Documents 14 and 14A, consisting of Presidential Ruling No.33. Andrew Dutney chaired the meeting.

17.55 It was resolved to confirm Presidential Ruling No.33 (Attachment C).

4. Reports from Ecumenical Bodies

Bethany Broadstock, Denise Liersch and Amelia Koh-Butler presented Document 4, consisting of a report on the UCA representation on international ecumenical bodies and outcomes and learnings for future ecumenical endeavours. Bethany and Denise attended the WCRC General Council in Germany and Amelia participated in a meeting of the World Methodist Council Steering Committee in Rome.

17.56 It was resolved to receive the reports.

5. 15th Assembly Update

The General Secretary introduced Documents 3 and 3A, consisting of a report on the preparations and planning underway for the 15th Assembly and the draft budget for the 15th Assembly. Table groups were invited to work through the questions posed in the report and to assist in undertaking any outstanding actions from resolutions made at the 14th Assembly

17.57 It was resolved to:

17.57.01 receive the report;

17.57.02 acting under the authority of Regulation 3.3.8(a)(iv), determine that the bodies directly responsible to the Assembly who shall appoint a person to the membership of the triennial Assembly will be:
Working Group on Doctrine
Polity Working Group
Education for Ministry Working Group
Assembly Finance Audit and Risk Committee
Assembly Legal Reference Committee
Secretariat – Associate General Secretary
Christian Unity Working Group

17.57.03 acting under the authority of Regulation 3.3.8 (a)(v), determine that having regard to the gifts, skills and experience required by the Assembly shall (in consultation with Synods) appoint 10 members from across the cultural diversity of the Uniting Church who are identified as emerging leaders; and (in

consultation with the Multi Cross Cultural National Reference Committee and Synods) appoint 8 members representing CALD communities who are not represented in members elected by Synods; and

- 17.57.04 determine that the following Assembly staff will attend the 15th Assembly to act as a resource to the Assembly, but not be members of the Assembly:
- Clærwen Little (National Director, UnitingCare Australia)
 - Sureka Goringe (National Director, UnitingWorld)
 - Jannine Jackson (National Director, Frontier Services)
 - Leo Iosifidis (National Director, Strategic Finance and Administration)
 - Lindsay Cullen (National Consultant)
 - Apwee Ting (National Consultant)
 - Charissa Suli (National Consultant)

UCA ASSEMBLY LIMITED

1. Annual General Meeting

At 10.05am on Sunday the meeting of the Standing Committee was adjourned and the meeting of the Annual General Meeting of the UCA Assembly Ltd started. The meeting of the Standing Committee resumed at 10.15pm.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 3.00pm with prayer led by Jacki Watts.

DATES FOR 2018: **22 – 25 March 2018**
 24 – 26 August 2018
 9 – 11 November 2018