

Assembly Standing Committee Meeting Brief - November 2001

Tasmania and Victoria Synods to amalgamate

The Synods of Victoria and Tasmania will amalgamate next year, in time for the Church's 25th Anniversary. From the 22nd of June 2002, the Synod will be known as the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. Tasmania will be a single presbytery. ASC also passed the proposal to 'note the intention that the Chairperson of the Presbytery of Tasmania be permitted to be known within Tasmania as "moderator", and be permitted to speak on behalf of the Uniting Church in Tasmania'.

Several other proposals relating to the assured membership of Tasmanian members in ASC over the next 6 years and the next two Assemblies have been referred to the Legal Reference Committee.

Gospel and Gender to be de-established

Gospel and Gender will finish as an Assembly agency from mid-next year. Earlier this year it was decided that the part time staff position, currently held by Colleen Geyer would conclude at the end of 2001. The national Gospel and Gender Forum decided at its meeting earlier this month that without this staff person they were unable to effectively exercise their mandate.

After much debate the ASC agreed at the request of Chairperson for Gospel and Gender, Glenda Blakefield, to de-establish the forum. The ASC also regretted 'that although the Gospel and Gender mandate has a prophetic theological vision that makes concrete aspects of the Basis of union of the Uniting Church, it recognises that at this time the mandate cannot be fulfilled because of a decision about priorities.'

A resolution outlining the significant contribution the agency has made in the area of ethics, inclusive language, sexual misconduct, procedures etc. was

endorsed. The work of Gospel and Gender has been referred to Theology and Discipleship.

Colleen Geyer will finish at the end of this year and the Forum will continue to work on part-finished projects until 30 June 2002

New National Directors

The Assembly Standing Committee appointed three new National Directors

National Director for Theology and Discipleship - Rev Dr Robert Bos.
Rob will be based in Brisbane but details of an office contact have not yet been worked out. Continue to contact Ruth Crispin, at the Sydney office. Rob will commence in the first part of 2002 - date not yet finalised.

National Director Social Justice and Responsibility - Rev Elene Poulos.
Elene will be based in Sydney and will commence on 1 February.

National Director, UnitingCare Australia - Lin Hatfield Dodds.
Lin commences on 1 January 2002 and will continue to live in Canberra.

Early in the new year there will be inductions and commissionings for these people. More information will follow later in the year.

In brief

- Coolamon College has raised the possibility of relocating and aligning themselves with another college. However ASC agreed that there were a number of issues that needed to be looked at further before any changes could be seen as beneficial to the work of Coolamon College.
- The Strategic Planning Unit gave a presentation on the work they have been doing on Scenario Planning and the future of the Church. SPU has been invited back to the March 2002 meeting to assist ASC further the work on future directions and priorities.

- ASC approved the budget for 2002, presented in the National Finance Committee report. Recognition was given to Edmund Walker for his 21 years of service, 12 of which have been as chairperson. Bruce Binnie has replaced Edmund as Chairperson of the NFC.
- ASC endorsed the use and distribution of the National Web Guidelines, created in October 2001. These guidelines will be distributed and modified freely to suit all councils of the church. Contact [Imran Shehzad Bhatti](#) at (enquiries@nat.uca.org.au) for a copy of these Guidelines.