
Church Law

Convener
General Secretary
Members

Paul Olney
Rev David de Kock
Ian Passmore
Rev Lorraine Stokes
Bruce Wilson

We currently have five members, including no lawyers, three lay people and only one female. We would be grateful for more members, particularly because we need to consider succession planning. It takes a couple of years for people to become familiar with rules, by-laws and their digestion.

Synod Structure Review

We have reviewed all proposed Bylaws to be presented in the Synod Structure Review and to be enacted on 5 November 2016 with associated processes and confirm compliance with Bylaw 1.2: Enactment, Amendment Repeal of Bylaws.

1. PROPOSALS

1.1 General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary

We bring proposal 10 to amend By Law 6.3 General Secretary to allow for the appointment and responsibilities of the Deputy General Secretary.

1.2 We bring proposal 11 to repeal the following By-laws which have become redundant:

- 3.3 Chaplaincy Working Group;
- 3.6 Disaster Relief and Recovery Working Group;
- 4.4 Lay Preachers Association; and
- 6.4 Appointment of church office staff.

The objectives of these historical bodies are now covered by other bodies.

2. PENRHOS COLLEGE CONSTITUTION

Penrhos has requested changes to its constitution. We have reviewed these and commenced discussion.

3. COMMISSION FOR EDUCATION FOR DISCIPLESHIP AND LEADERSHIP (CEDAL)

This is outstanding from 2015. Proposed rule changes for CEDAL are still under discussion with CEDAL.

4. JUNIPER

Juniper's constitution as approved by our 2015 Synod meeting was amended before being approved by Standing Committee in May 2016. The amendment added a clause detailing the

potential disposal of property on dissolution of Juniper, as required by the Australian Taxation Office.



5. RESOURCES COMMISSION

Bring Proposal 12 at the request of the Resources Board to amend Bylaw 2.12.16 to align accounting with current requirements.

6. OTHER WESTERN AUSTRALIAN UNITING CHURCH CHANGES.

As our Synod may want significant changes to our structure, we analysed what our Basis of Union says about our organisation and structure, while wary of the potential for eisegesis. In summary:

- 5.1 The most dominant theme when reading our Basis of Union with a focus on organisational structure is the sovereignty of Christ. Any organisation chart of our Church should have Christ as the pinnacle, all councils under Christ, and communication between our councils.
- 5.2 The existence of a broad powerful committee combining decision making powers of both Synod and Presbytery is antithetical to paragraph 15 of the Basis of Union.
- 5.3 We are: seeking continuing renewal (paragraph 1), “a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal” without a “continuing city but seeking one to come” while fed by Christ with Word and Sacraments and the gift of the Spirit (paragraph 3), only capable of enduring the changes of history with our Lord’s help and renewal (paragraph 4), with our law under constant review (paragraph 17), and enduring God’s constant correction (paragraph 18).

We should expect and plan for continual change. From this:

- Our law should enable flexible structures with minimal delays for initiatives. Luke 12:35: “Be dressed for action and have your lamps lit”.
- We need to organise ourselves so we can maintain both a strong goal focus and sound administration during continual change. From a secular perspective, continual organisation change can be chaos. This can make church administration difficult at all levels. We need to care for all of our administrators, even if they avoid attention, because the tightrope between Mary and Martha is difficult.

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Convener

