

Congregational Community Services Committee

<i>Chairperson</i>	John Talbert
<i>Deputy General Secretary</i>	Rev Dr Ian Tozer
<i>Members</i>	Marie Yuncken Vic Richards Yvonne Robinson Lindsay Wolfe
<i>Community Services Consultant</i>	Ian Passmore

I MEMBERSHIP

Those noted above were appointed to the new Congregational Community Services Committee by Presbytery in November 2016. Rev Mike Fawcett and Neil Starkie who served on the outgoing Congregational Community Services Commission have fully participated in the meetings of the Congregational Community Services Committee since its formation, by invitation. Members of the Committee thanked Susy Thomas for her dedicated service as a member of the outgoing Congregational Community Services Commission.

2 MEETINGS

Since Presbytery in November 2017, the Congregational Community Services Committee met on 5 December 2016 and 6 February 2017 and will next meet on 3 April 2017.

3 RECENT ACTIVITIES

3.1 Review of Rules P 4.1 Congregational Community Services Committee (the "Committee")

The Congregational Community Services Committee is constituted in accordance with the report of the Nominating Committee adopted at the Presbytery November 2016. As requested the

Congregational Community Services Committee reviewed its rules P 4.1 and the membership of the Committee. Members of the Committee were concerned that it would be difficult to provide the necessary breadth, depth and diversity of expertise and understanding within the reduced membership of the Committee as now constituted. It was also noted that there were members of the outgoing Congregational Community Services Commission that were available to serve in the new Committee. The Committee resolved to seek approval for the rules to be amended to increase the number of co-opted members of the Committee to three.

3.2 Constitutions, Governance, Structures and Our Ethos

The Committee is tasked to approve constitutions and governance structures developed to meet legislative requirements, church and community standards through the community services consultant, and provide increased clarity particularly in the various roles and responsibilities in accordance with current requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and the 2015 Uniting Church Regulations.

All new or updated constitutions are now being provided together with additional supporting documents (i) Governance structures and processes, and (ii) Management structures and processes.

Presentations on governance, management and relationship structures and accountability processes in congregationally based community services are provided as part of the implementation process of a new constitution, and as opportunity arises. These presentations cover the ethos and structures of the Uniting Church, and also the legal and accountability requirements of state and national governments at the various levels.

3.2.1 Constitutions Implemented:

- South Perth Uniting Church Childcare Centre (including South Perth Child Care Centre and South Perth Early Childhood Centre) – South Perth Uniting Church

3.2.2 Constitutions Approved and being implemented:

- FinUCAre – Mandurah Uniting Church and South Mandurah Uniting Church
- FinUCAre – Mandurah Uniting Church only (*as an alternative*)

3.2.3 In Consultation – Renew – Kojonup Uniting Church

The consultant provides advice or resourcing that may assist in developing new initiatives or reconfiguring or restructuring existing projects or programs. This may progress to a formal stage where a constitution or other governance process may be required and approved by the Committee.

3.3 Direct Resourcing, Consultancy, Support and Oversight

The community services consultant is in regular contact with approximately 40 congregational community service organisations and outreaches and provides professional advice, pastoral support, coaching, mentoring, ministry support, operational support, attendance and participation in planning, visioning, board and workshop meetings. He works to assist with reporting, accountability and compliance issues relating with the responsible bodies of our church and to external authorities such as Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC), taxation, Worksafe, Department of Commerce or granting bodies and, as time permits, seeks to visit each organisation at least once each year.

Recently, the community services consultant has been providing intensive professional consultation, advice and pastoral and other support in many places at this time, but particularly in Mandurah and Fremantle.

3.4 Professional and Advisory Group

The members of the Professional and Advisory Group of the outgoing Congregational Community Services Commission provided general professional, strategic, operational and pastoral advice to the Congregational Community Services Commission particularly in relation to professional oversight of our work particularly in our resources; strategic and policy advice; oversight and mentoring in accordance with its Terms of Reference. The Professional and Advisory Group has now been transferred as an advisory group to the Congregational Community Services Committee and the Terms of Reference amended accordingly.

Members of the professional and advisory group are John May, lawyer; Dusty Miller, lawyer; Pru Honey, accountant and John Knowles, CEO, Good Samaritan Industries.

3.5 Resources Manuals

The resources manuals provided to all congregational community services include:

- *Running Your Community Service Organisation*
- *Recruiting and Appointing Staff for Your Caring Work*
- *Recruiting, supporting and celebrating volunteers*

Other significant resources that are available include (i) “*Model policies and procedures for community service organisations*” available for local adaptation, and, (ii) a manual on strategic planning entitled “*The Power of Positive Planning – Strategic Planning for even better service delivery*”. Other resources are developed in response to individual needs.

The manuals and associated advice and training all require constant updating in accordance with developments in the law, regulations, community services standards and practice and the Regulations, expectations and polity of the Uniting Church. *All readers are invited to provide corrections, additions, suggestions at any time to Ian.Passmore@wa.uca.org.au.*

3.6 Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission

The community services consultant provides ongoing advice and referral for ACNC, the Australian Taxation Office and other state and national bodies relevant to congregational community services, and also provides this advice, support and assistance for the wider Uniting Church congregations and sub-entities as required. He keeps close contact with those bodies particularly to work with these bodies to reduce red

tape affecting us and to assist our Uniting Church bodies with any issues that may arise.

3.7 Synod Royal Commission Task Group

The community services consultant and Chair and members of the Committee have assisted in sourcing and providing relevant information and assistance as required and will respond to any future recommendations as appropriate.

4 FUTURE PLANS AND IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

4.1 Strategic Plan

The first strategic plan for the then Congregational Community Services Commission was approved in 2012 for 2012-15. This included key objectives and measures and progress for each has been monitored on a continuing basis over the past five years.

This strategic plan was last amended in August 2016 and will be reviewed for the new Congregational Community Services Committee as soon as possible.

4.2 Directory of Congregational Community Services

The first ever Directory of Community Services for the Uniting Church in Western Australia was compiled in 2015. This included the details of 39 congregational based community services and outreach services and groups across Western Australia. The directory includes a description of the services or assistance offered and contact details for each. This directory is currently being updated.

4.3 Annual Reports 2017

The Annual Reports 2017 will be compiled for publication as they are received from April 2017. In 2015 the then Congregational Community Services Commission received 31 annual reports from congregational community services

organisations. Not only has the number of reports increased greatly since our work began but the reports are becoming ever more detailed each year. The then Commission was impressed by the enormous amount of work and the range of activities that are being undertaken and the new Committee sees the compilation of the Annual Reports as being a way to share this good news with others in our wider church.

4.4 Ongoing Priorities

- Continue to provide intensive professional consultation, advice and pastoral and other support in many places at this time, but particularly in Mandurah, Fremantle, Kojonup, Beldon-Iluka among many others.
- Provide ongoing professional, governance, pastoral, organisational and operational advice, support and assistance to individuals and groups developing new community services programs or running existing congregational community service activities, through on-ground consultation and by electronic means. Particular current areas of focus include governance and accountability, protection of children and vulnerable people, staff and volunteers, risk management, occupational health and safety, planning and visioning, operational policies and procedures and the ethos of the Uniting Church in community services.
- Provide workshops and one on one coaching on the structure and ethos of the Uniting Church, and on other topics as needed including governance, management oversight, risk management, human resources, operational policies and plans, volunteers, visioning and planning among other many other areas.
- Continue to progressively implement the updated 2017 model constitution in all congregational community services, first those already with their own board or committee of management, and then more broadly. This model constitution meets the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission, the Australian Taxation Office and the 2015 Uniting Church Regulations, as amended.
- Continue to work in providing and assisting in implementation of governance and management guidelines to accompany updated constitutions in accordance with the polity of the Uniting Church and providing similar advice to smaller congregational community services outreaches and groups.
- Providing resources, advice and on-ground support for restructuring processes or new developments in several places requiring meetings, negotiations, constitutions and working documents.
- Providing ongoing follow up on staff contracts for compliance with Fair Work awards, particularly in respect of Awards, industrial law and practice.
- Continue to provide support, advice and assistance to congregations and sub-entities of the Uniting Church across Western Australia working to comply with the requirements of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission and, also as required, on behalf of congregations, entities and sub-

- entities of the Uniting Church, Western Australia.
- Update, expand and develop resource manuals, policies and procedures - as an ongoing process covering all areas relevant to congregational community services ranging from its linkages to worship, witness and service in a thriving congregation to visioning, planning, governance, operational standards, accountability, service standards to people in need and the ethos of the Uniting Church in community services. Progressively develop new resources as needs arise and in response to changes in the law, Regulation, standards or expectations. 2017 versions are being developed of the resource manuals/resources entitled: *Running Your Community Organisation; Recruiting and Appointing Staff; Selection of Policies and Procedures for Congregational Community Services; Governance and Management Structures; The Power of Positive Planning; the Theological Underpinnings of our Commitment to Mission.*
 - Review and update the strategic plan and key objectives and provide regular reports against the key performance indicators.
 - Plan the Community Services Conference and Celebration planned for May 2017.
 - Update, web-enable and distribute the second complete edition of the Congregational Community Services Directory.
 - Produce, web-enable and distribute the advance edition of the Annual Reports Congregational Community Services.
 - Continuing engagement with the Uniting Church community services at the national level and in other states; engagement with peak bodies such as West Australian Council of Social Services, West Australian Association of Mental Health, Volunteering WA, Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WA); engagement with professional and government bodies such as CPA Australia, Department of Social Services, Department for Child Protection and Family Support, and Department(s) of Health.

Other activities include building networks, information resources, policies and procedures, mentoring, consulting, working with other Synod officers and bodies such as in property services and pastoral relations and care is ongoing. There is a firm commitment to provide timely advice and support by telephone, email or through web resources, visit each program regularly and provide on-ground support as required and as advisable.

New resources are often required as each program is in many ways unique. Also we are experiencing rapid change in the regulations, structures, processes, standards, and even the language used, in respect of each of the multiplicity of community service activities possible that may be linked to a local congregation and the need for development, updating and training of staff and key volunteers at all levels requires attention. This program of work is a large task for the community services consultant. Time and resources does not allow ongoing support, resourcing and consultancy to be done as first envisioned as more urgent priorities very often intervene.

5 CONCLUSION

The primary task of the Committee is to resource, support and exercise oversight of all congregational community service activities with immediate priorities reflecting the urgency of the various needs. Flexibility and being relevant to the stage of development of the congregational community service organisation, its context and its mission are key elements in this approach.

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