

Synod Standing Committee

<i>Moderator</i>	Rev Steve Francis
<i>Acting Ex-Moderator</i>	Rev Ken Williams
<i>General Secretary</i>	Rev David de Kock
<i>Members elected by Synod</i>	Rev Bev Fabb
	Rev Craig Collas
	Rev Lorraine Stokes
	Ms Alison Xamon
<i>Congress</i>	Mr Des Lawson
	Rev Robert Jetta
<i>Co-opted</i>	Ms Margaret Martin
	Ms Julie Ridden
<i>By Invitation</i>	Rev Dr Ian Tozer (Deputy General Secretary)
	Mr Robert Locke (GM Resources)

I. MEMBERSHIP OF SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

I.1 Membership

The Synod and Presbytery were restructured in 2016 in order provide a clearer distinction between the Synod and Presbytery(ies) and to provide a closer compliance with the Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia.

The consequence was that at the rising of the Presbytery in November 2016, the General Council (a body consisting of nominated members of both the Synod and the Presbytery of WA) was dissolved, and a Synod Standing Committee and Presbytery Standing Committee came into being.

At the Synod meeting held in September 2016 the following persons were elected:

Rev Bev Fabb

Rev Craig Collas

Rev Lorraine Stokes

Ms Alison Xamon

Mr Des Lawson (Congress)

Rev Robert Jetta (Congress)

It was further agreed (November 2016) that Rev Ken Williams join the Synod Standing Committee as Acting Ex-Moderator, and Ms Margaret Martin was co-opted as Convener of the Nominating Committee. In February 2017,

Ms Julie Ridden was co-opted as a member of the Standing Committee.

Change to membership By Law: In February 2017, it was agreed by consensus that members of the Synod Standing Committee serve until the next Ordinary Meeting of Synod and By Law S5.2 was amended accordingly.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer (Deputy General Secretary) and Mr Robert Locke (General Manager (Resources) attend meetings of the Standing Committee by invitation.

I.2 Meetings

The last meeting of General Council took place on 3 October 2016.

Ordinary meetings of Synod Standing Committee took place on 29 November 2016, 13 February 2017, 10 April 2017, 12 June 2017 and 14 August 2017.

A special joint meeting of the Standing Committees of Synod and Presbytery met on 7 March 2017 to discuss the future of the Perth College of Divinity/Murdoch University partnership and the appointment of the Systematic Theologian position. Responsibility for further action was taken by the Presbytery Standing Committee.

A special joint meeting of the Standing Committees of Synod and Presbytery met on 4 July 2017 to review the roles of the General

Secretary and Deputy General Secretary and to see how these relate to the position of Secretary of Presbytery. After consideration, it was decided to invite the services of Rev Terence Corkin, the former Assembly General Secretary.

2. MATTERS ADDRESSED

2.1 Review of General Secretary

As required, the General Council appointed the Moderator, Robert Seinor (Consultant), Margaret Martin and Robert Watson to conduct a review for the General Secretary. The Committee reported at the 29 November 2016 meeting. The Standing Committee thanked the General Secretary for his hard work and dedication and noted that the future process for reviews be determined by the Synod Standing Committee.

2.2 Legal Advisory Group

At the February 2017 meeting, the Synod Standing Committee approved by consensus to adopt the "Seeking Legal Assistance Policy" and to establish a Legal Advisory Group as a sub-committee of the Standing Committee to provide guidance on legal matters before professional advice is sought. The General Secretary, Ms Alison Xamon, Luke Edmonds and Rev Dr Ian Tozer were appointed to the group.

2.3 Future Synod Meetings

In February 2017, the Standing Committee agreed by consensus to propose to the September 2017 Synod meeting that future Synod meetings be held at roughly 18 month intervals.

2.4 Property Review

In April 2017, the Standing Committee agreed by consensus to establish a Working Group to advise on guidelines for dealing with all properties. The Working Group comprised the General Secretary, Rev Bev Fabb, Rev Lorraine Stokes, Rev Greg Ross, Rev Dr Ian Tozer, Rev Stephen Larkin and Neil Starkie (UCIC).

At the June 2017 meeting it was agreed that a Senior Property Manager be appointed to enable strategic management approaches to be developed with regard to property. (Note: This position was previously approved in the

restructure of the Resources Board (now Commission)). It was further agreed that the focus of the management of the Property Services Unit is to apply the policy of both the Resources Commission and the Presbytery Property Committee and to offer professional guidance to Church Councils, Presbytery(ies) and Synod, on property matters.

It was agreed that the Property Services Committee be dissolved (on the basis that this committee fulfilled the purpose of the Presbytery Property Committee which had now been re-constituted).

It was agreed that the Chair of the Presbytery Property Committee be a member of the Resources Commission and that the focus of the Presbytery Property Committee is to determine policy within the guidelines of the Synod Strategic Plan and to give directions to Church Councils with regard to the oversight and management of property in accordance with the Regulations.

It was agreed that the focus of the Resources Commission (with regard to property) is to determine policy within the guidelines of the Synod Strategic Plan and to provide support, resources and encouragement with regard to the development and management of property. The Resources Commission shall, in consultation with presbyteries, have authority to make decisions relating to property management (including purchase, sale and leasing) and the benefit of use.

Amendments to the various By Laws and Rules are currently in process.

2.5 Foundation Fund Review

The Synod Standing Committee agreed by consensus at the April 2017 meeting to request the General Secretary to establish a Task Group to review the Foundation Fund and to prepare a proposal to be presented to the annual Synod meeting in September 2017.

The Task Group included the General Secretary, Robert Locke (GM Resources), Rev Bev Fabb, Rev Craig Collas, Rev Raymond Clee (Property Trust), Mr Bruce Murdoch (UCIC) and Mr Neil Starkie (UCIC).

The Standing Committee agreed to the following recommendations to be developed into a proposal to be put before the Synod.

- The present Trust Deed be settled and a new Trust Deed be drawn up
- That the Resources Commission be requested to transfer \$5 million from the equity of the Investment Fund into the new Foundation Fund
- That the Resources Commission be requested, through the Investment Fund, to grant an annual performance bonus based on the actual return on the Foundation Fund's investment holdings with the Investment Fund
- That the new Foundation Fund be an enduring Trust and that the annual income be specifically allocated for new church plants and/or supporting strategic places with new initiatives/developments, and for education and training for ministry leadership
- That distribution of this income be determined by a Council for Mission (a project-based sub-committee of the Standing Committee) consisting of representatives of the Standing Committees of Synod and Presbytery(ies), plus the Chair of the Presbytery Property Committee, Chair of the Resources Commission, and representatives of schools and agencies. Consideration for disbursement of funds to take into account various strategic focal points identified from time to time in the Synod Strategic Plan.
- That members of the Uniting Church be encouraged to make bequests to the Foundation Fund.

2.6 Admission of Ministers

The Standing Committee approved by consensus to recommend to the Assembly that the following ministers from other denominations be admitted as ministers of the Uniting Church in Australia:

Rev Johannes Abraham (Hannes) Halgryn

Rev Herman Charl Nienaber

Rev John Allan McKane

Rev David Kriel

Rev Karama Ioapa

2.7 Church Law

A number of changes to By Laws and Constitutions were approved during the past year

- By Law S5.4 Nominating Committee
- By Law S5.5 Church Law Committee
- By Law S3.4 Covenanting Commission
- Constitution Penrhos College
- Constitution Tranby College
- Standing Committee (inclusion of sub-committees: Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Committee and Legal Advisory Group)

It was further agreed that Church Law Committee adapt existing committee rules to provide that membership of a committee could be terminated if a member is absent for a determined number of meetings without notification.

Robert Seinor has been engaged to undertake a complete review of current By Laws and Rules with a view to ensuring consistency, compliance with UCA Regulations and the particular requirements of the Synod and Presbytery(ies) in Western Australia.

2.8 Policy Matters

In November 2016, the WA Synod Safe Church Policy was adopted, together with the package of resources which will support its practical implementation in the life of the Uniting Church in WA.

In February 2017, the Standing Committee approved the Seeking Legal Assistance Policy.

In April 2017, the Standing Committee agreed by consensus to adopt the National Child Safe Policy Framework, and to request that the Synod Royal Commission Task Group review the Policy for Responding to Complaints of Past Abuse. It was further agreed that members of Synod Standing Committee should attend the Code of Ethics training.

In June 2017, the Standing Committee approved the Delegations of Authority for the General Secretary, and approved the WA Synod Privacy Policy.

2.9 Assembly Funding

The Assembly 3-year Funding Model was accepted in April 2017. The model provides that the WA Synod make the following contributions to the funding of Assembly.

2017 - \$ 218,000

2018 - \$ 225,000

2019 - \$ 231,000

2.10 Remote Area Ministry

Following the restructuring of Frontier Services, with responsibility now passed to Synods, the Standing Committee agreed at the June 2017 meeting to establish five Synod placements identified as Remote Area Ministry (RAM) at Carnarvon, Tom Price, and Kalgoorlie with a four year horizon. Hedland and Meekatharra to have a 2 year horizon. (Four of these are presently fully funded. Kalgoorlie would be partly funded by the congregation, partly by Frontier Services). Negotiations with Frontier Services relating to further funding, property and training is ongoing.

2.11 Synod Strategic Plan

The General Secretary has reported regularly to the Standing Committee on the development of the Synod Strategic Plan and approval to aspects of the plan have been made through the year – most notable of these relate to the Property Policy, Foundation Fund, Remote Area Ministry, Council for Mission and the Centres for Mission concept. These will be reported more fully in the presentation of the Strategic Plan.

Rev David de Kock

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