

## Church Law

*Convener*  
*General Secretary*  
*Secretary of Presbytery of Western Australia*  
*Members elected by Synod*

Paul Olney  
Rev David de Kock  
Rev Dr Ian Tozer  
David Foster  
Ian Passmore  
Bruce Wilson

Rev Lorraine Stokes resigned from Church Law leaving us with no female members. We thank her for her years of service to this Committee.

Most of our work this year has focused on Presbytery business, but we have also considered Synod Matters.

### **1. NUMBERING OF SYNOD BYLAWS**

It was agreed that all numberings of Synod bylaws should start with the letter S, with no space between the S and the first number. For example, Synod Bylaw 1.2.5 is now S1.2.5. This enables easier automated searching within documents. This was given interim effect by Synod Standing Committee (SSC) under Bylaw S1.2.5.

### **2. JOINT BODIES**

We reviewed Bylaws S5.4 Nominating Committee and S5.5 Church Law to add the Secretary of each Presbytery in the Synod, or nominees, to the membership of each of these bodies, and introduce reporting requirements to Presbyteries. This was given interim effect by SSC under Bylaw S1.2.5.

Placements Commission

We reviewed By-Law S 3.1 Placements Commission for presentation to the Synod Standing Committee. The main changes are that no Church Office staff, other than the General Secretary, may vote and the Commission is to act in conjunction of Strategic and Mission Planning Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee. This was given interim effect by SSC under Bylaw S1.2.5.

### **3. RESOURCES COMMISSION**

Resources Commission requested the removal of clause (d) from Bylaw 2.8.46 on the basis the insurance service was no longer offered to ministers, church centre staff and full time workers. This was given interim effect by SSC under Bylaw S1.2.5.

### **4. SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (SSC)**

We reviewed and drafted the new Bylaw for the Legal Advisory Group, a new permanent subcommittee of S5.2 Standing Committee in S5.2.10. This was given interim effect by SSC under Bylaw S1.2.5.

Since Church Law last met, SSC agreed to ask Church Law that SSC's Bylaw should also be changed to:

Increase its ordinary membership from four members of Synod plus to members of Congress, to four members of Synod plus to members of Congress.

Enable Presbytery Standing Committee to appoint one person to Synod Standing Committee.

### **5. CHANGES APPROVED FROM LAST SYNOD**

As approved at last Synod, SSC authorised amendment to S3.4 Covenanting Commission to enable the Co-chairpersonship of the Commission by the Moderator and the Chair of the WA Regional Committee of Congress.

### **6. SCHOOLS**

We finalised proposed changes to Penrhos's constitution, with interim effect given by SSC under Bylaw S1.2.5.

We have had discussions with other schools regarding further changes to their

constitutions. There is nothing presented to this Synod as we have supported the General Secretary's view that schools should operate according to some Church requirements. For example, we have supported not permitting directed proxy voting on school boards, in accordance with the Manual for Meetings, even though directed proxy voting is standard in commercial settings.

## **7. FUTURE WORK**

The Synod has engaged an external consultant to conduct a broader review of Bylaws. We have deferred work on some Synod matters pending this review. Deferred matters include:

- Creating a standard procedures Bylaw applicable to all Synod bodies.
- Inclusion of the Presbytery Property Chair on the Resources Commission and possible related changes.
- Enabling bodies to terminate memberships of unapologetic inactive members.
- Possible Bylaws for the Committees for Counselling and Discipline, Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee and Synod Standing Appeal Panel.

I thank all members of the Committee for their work and humour during a busy year, looking forward to calm and stability in 2018.

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