



Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of Western Australia



# **THE MINUTES OF THE 49TH ANNUAL MEETING OF SYNOD OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA**

**13-14 September 2025**



# **Being with Jesus** *in Ministry*

These minutes record events and business of those Commissions and Bodies which relate to the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Western Australia.

# CONSTITUTION OF THE MEETING OF SYNOD

## WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND OPENING WORSHIP

The Moderator, Rev Dr Ian Tozer welcomed the Synod to country on behalf of the Wadjak people of the Nyungar nation. We continue to learn of their heritage and custodianship, we honour this place and God's gift to all of us, and we pray that living a life of honouree respect will also allow us to see the ways in which the spirit of Christ always goes ahead of us.

Ross Barron, Head of Wesley College gave an overview of Wesley College and thanked Rev Manie Strydom for the chaplain services. Rev Mark Illingworth was acknowledged for the community work at South Perth Parish in close proximity to Wesley College and together they provide a community of approximately 2,000 people a week to gather together in worship. Ross wished everyone a wonderful weekend of fellowship and robust deep conversations.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer opened the Synod meeting in prayer, lighting the Synod candle to remind us of the light of Christ. An opening worship service followed with music provided by Greg Ross.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer led a charge for the Synod.

"Members of Synod" – those words name our distinctive identity at this time. In this meeting, we are not delegates of a Congregation or other group, even if such a body proposed that we be members of Synod.

We gather to discern **together** – we are called, certainly, both individually and as a whole. However, our life as a Synod takes a specific form because we are a council of the Church. The word Synod essentially means a group on the way: our identity is manifested in our gathering and our travelling together.

It's appropriate, as we begin, to remember the original vision for the Uniting Church.

Paragraph one of the Basis of Union describes how those who united sought to bear witness to the unity which is both Christ's gift and will – a unity which requires God to work among and within us, as well as something which Christ wants us to strive for always.

The Basis of Union says the Uniting Church is a community of members who seek the glory of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Like the original uniters, we thank and praise God for so many gifts in the past.

In common with them, we acknowledge that none of us has responded to God's love with full obedience and look for continual renewal of our worship, witness and service.

With the original uniters, we are called to declare our readiness to go forward together in sole loyalty to Jesus Christ.

Of course, there's so much more; however, may we keep these things before us as we meet, even when we are challenged, even when we disagree with one another, even when we are unsure about what the future will mean – indeed, especially when any of those things happen!

We are called to commit ourselves, under God, to be on the way together. May we meet in the Spirit of Christ!

See the last page for opening worship references.

Rev Dr Andrew Williams provided guidance to the structure of the meeting and opened the 49th Annual Meeting of Synod business sessions that commenced on Saturday 13 September 2025 and concluded on Sunday 14 September 2025. The following was presented and discussed.

## **PROPOSALS**

The proposals presented were received and approved over Saturday 13 September 2025 and Sunday 14 September 2025.

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS PROPOSED BY THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

The Order of Business Proposal details the procedures and processes for Synod 2025. It was highlighted that members are required to attend the whole Synod meeting over the two days. It was reiterated that a consensus vote requires 50% plus one of voting members in attendance.

It was raised that the allocated time on the agenda was not adequate for some sessions. If it occurred that there was not enough time for deliberation and it became an information session, the Business Committee would arrange a facilitation process or a deliberative session to be held on Sunday 14 September 2025.

#### **Resolution 1/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Order of Business Proposal was received and approved by consensus.**

That the Synod adopt the meeting procedures as outlined.

##### **a) Order of Business**

That the Synod approve the Order of Business submitted by the Business Committee, noting that the decision to vary the Order of Business and scheduled times can be taken by the Synod at any time.

##### **b) Confirmation of Minutes**

That the Synod authorise the Synod Standing Committee to confirm the minutes of this meeting, the 49th meeting of the Annual Synod of Western Australia.

**c) Roll of Synod**

That the Synod adopt the roll of members, subject to any alterations advised to the General Secretary no later than 2pm on Thursday 11 September 2025.

**d) Ballots and Nominating Procedures**

That the Synod appoint Assistant Returning Officers and a Ballot Committee with responsibility for advising the Synod on any questions relating to the nominations and elections consisting of the following people:

- Heather Hamblin (Convenor)
- Annette Bryant
- Bev Fabb
- John Berger
- Marg Garrett

**e) Nominations**

That the Synod endorse the decision by the Business Committee to close all nominations for the Synod Board and Committee Chairs on 10 September 2025.

**f) Appointment of Chaplains**

That the Synod note the Moderator's Chaplain

- Rev Lorraine Stokes

and appoint the following

- Rev Simone Smalley as the Pastoral Support Chaplain
- Rev Dr Manuel Rajamoney as Pastoral Support Chaplain

**g) Appointment of Others**

That the Synod appoint the following:

- Amanda Rigby, Minutes Manager
- Wesley College, Screen Manager
- Margaret Johnston, Assistant Screen Manager
- Rev Simone Smalley, First Aid Officer
- Rev Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, First Aid Officer

**h) Chairing of sessions**

Should the Moderator be unavailable to chair any sessions of the Synod, the Synod appoint the Ex-Moderator, or another person, to chair that session. (Reg 3.6.3.1 (c), and 3.6.3.2 (d)).

## **i) Reception of Reports**

That the Synod receive the following reports:

- Assembly Report
- General Secretary Report
- Moderator Report
- Synod Commissions and Committees
- Schools & Colleges and Agencies

For many of us Synod included the presence of Bruce Wilson, and he was remembered with great love, and acknowledged the sadness that he is no longer with us.

## **PROPERTY TRUST GIBBS BEQUEST PROPOSED BY THE PROPERTY TRUST**

The Property Trust requested to move that this relates not only to the residents of Sister Kate's but also the descendants of those former residents. Research undertaken has shown that people were hurt badly during their time, and this has been handed down to their children. The highlight for this year has come with the development of Treasure Road with Congress and BKI working with Yokai.

Rev Robert Jetta spoke of his endorsement of the proposal.

### **Resolution 23/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Property Trust Gibbs Bequest Proposal was received and approved by consensus.**

The Uniting Church in Australia (WA) Property Trust propose that the Synod resolve pursuant to s26 of the Uniting Church in Australia (WA) Act 1976 that

- a) powers of the Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (WA) as trustee of the Gibbs Bequest be extended from applying only to residents of Sister Kate's to include the descendants of former Sister Kate's residents.
- b) That the Gibbs Bequest (cash and investments) be distributed upon application to the Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (WA) Trust for projects relating to infrastructure for the proposed Healing Centre at the original Sister Kate's site which will give benefit to the healing and hope of former residents and their descendants.

## **PROPERTY TRUST DURHAM BEQUEST PROPOSED BY THE PROPERTY TRUST**

### **Resolution 24/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Durham Bequest Proposal was received and approved by consensus.**

The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (WA) propose that the Synod resolve pursuant to s25 of the Uniting Church in Australia (WA) Act 1976 the transfer of real property of the Durham Bequest situated at 2 Tuckett Street, Carlisle, WA 6101 to Uniting WA.

## UAICC PROPERTY FUND PROPOSED BY UAICC

Rev Bev Fabb on behalf of the Covenanting Commission joined Rev Robert Jetta in presenting the proposal.

*In the 1988 covenanting statement 'we recognise as was declared in the Assembly's 1988 statement to the nation that the Australian people and this Church continue to benefit from the injustices done to your people over the last two centuries. We believe it is right for the Uniting Church to make reparations to you for the land taken from your people and used by the Churches which became part of this Church. The Church has already made transfers of property to Aboriginal people in recognition of our history. At this meeting of the Synod, we will determine if it's response to the furthest specific requests of the Congress for the transfer of a portion of the Church's assets to the Congress as reparation and as a means of supporting the Congress in its mission and services programs.'*

It was confirmed that Western Australia has not reviewed the portion of property sales proceeds to give to Congress, and it remains at 1%. As a result, Western Australia has the lowest level of giving of property sales to Congress of all Synods despite the proportion of Aboriginal people in Western Australia being higher than other Synods.

It was noted that the proposal is connected to the WA strategic priorities to strengthen the Covenant, to consult with Congress to develop a sustainable model for their future mission and ministry.

The task group appointed by the Covenanting Commission met with Congress and produced a report that has been accepted by both the Synod Standing Committee and the Presbytery Standing Committee. The report found that Congress does not have the capacity to fund the basic property costs of which it is the responsible body.

It was confirmed that Congress as a body of the Church can also apply to the Mission Resourcing Committee for the Future Mission Fund.

### **Resolution 27/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the UAICC proposal was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod agree to

1. Increase the percentage of the net proceeds of sale of property allocated to UAICC from 1% to 5% from 1 January 2026.
2. Amend Synod By-Law S2.9.21 as follows

From the net proceeds of any sale of real property, 51% shall be contributed to the UAICC Property ~~Development~~ Fund. Use of this Fund will be determined by the WA Regional Committee of UAICC Synod Property Board and may be used to meet any costs relating to properties for which UAICC is the "responsible body", including

~~ongoing property costs, property development for the maintenance and refurbishment of property for which the UAICC is responsible or for the acquisition of new property for the use of the UAICC.~~

### **S3.4 COVENANTING COMMISSION PROPOSED BY COVENANTING COMMISSION**

Rev Bev Fabb presented the proposal, suggesting that the changes to the by-law are for the changes to the membership to ensure it is more relevant, that there are no members of the Church Office with responsibilities and to increase the number of first and second peoples on the Commission.

#### **Resolution 29/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the proposal to change By-Law S3.4 Covenanting Commission was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod, on the recommendation of the Covenanting Commission and following advice and approval from the Church Law Committee, amend the By-Law as follows:

#### **NAME**

- S3.4.1 The name of the Commission is the “Covenanting Commission”, a commission appointed by and responsible to the Synod of Western Australia, hereinafter referred to as “the Commission”.

#### **MEMBERSHIP**

- S3.4.2 The Commission is appointed by the Synod and consists of:

~~(a) one or two members of the Church Office staff with responsibilities relating to the work of the Commission, selected by the General Secretary;~~

~~(b)(a) the Moderator and the Moderator Elect;~~

~~(c)(b) the Chairperson of the WA Regional Committee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;~~

~~(d)(c) up to five persons appointed ~~elected~~ by the WA Regional Committee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (“the Congress”); and~~

~~(e)(d) up to five persons ~~elected annually by the Synod~~ up to ten persons endorsed by the Chair of WA Regional Congress and elected by the Synod for a two year term.~~

## **S9.9 TRINITY RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE CONSTITUTION PROPOSED BY TRINITY RESIDENTIAL COLLEGE**

In order to proceed with the replacement of David Gee at Trinity Residential College, changes to the by-law constitution were requested.

### **Resolution 48/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the proposal to changes to By-Law S9.9 Trinity Residential College Constitution were approved by consensus. The section changes were section 3.1e, section 4, section 11 and section 14**

**Any further changes require will be referred to the next meeting of the Church Law Committee.**

## **CLIMATE CARE AND NET ZERO EMISSIONS PROPOSED BY REV KENNETH DEVEREUX**

It was acknowledged that it is not a new topic. The 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year of St Francis celebration nature, that the issue is not just an economical, industrial or financial issue and spiritual awareness and recognition is included.

Andrew Johnson sought to understand what engagement WA has been involved with and suggested a coordinated approach with Assembly and other Synods to lobby federal government. Resourcing and government timetabling contributes to the ability to respond.

### **Resolution 51/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Climate Care and net zero emissions proposal was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod:

- a) Affirms our ongoing commitment to being faithful stewards of our God-given planet Earth, home to all human beings and to the wider web of life that sustains our fragile, resilient, unique and sacred eco-system;
- b) Confesses that we have lacked the courage and commitment to live up to some of our previous policies and targets for better caring for the Earth and transitioning to a net zero greenhouse emissions organisation;
- c) Recognizes that threats from human induced climate change are increasing rapidly and we therefore commit to renewed efforts to promote environmentally sustainable lifestyles within our homes, our Church life, our State and Nation;
- d) Calls upon the Synod Standing Committee in consultation with the General-Secretary to review the previous recommendations of the Net Zero Emissions Working Group in light of material noted in the Rationale to this Proposal, and to freshly resource the Synod and the wider Uniting Church in Western Australia to fast track efforts to reach net zero greenhouse emissions within the next 10 years;

- e) Calls on the State Government to take faster steps to legislate a Climate Change Act that establishes a pathway to net zero greenhouse emissions on a timetable that is consistent with mainstream science targets for holding global warming below 2<sup>0</sup>C.
- f) Calls on the Federal Government to take notice of research and recommendations from the Climate Council and the Australian Conservation Foundation in setting an ambitious science aligned target to achieve net zero emissions by 2035.

## NON-VIOLENT ANTI-GENOCIDE ACTION PROPOSED BY REV SOPHIA LIZARES

For many people 7 October 2023 was a watershed day and a time that changed the world and the foundations of safety. The world of the Palestinian people was brought into the spotlight and created a new appreciation.

### **Resolution 52/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Non-Violent Anti-Genocide Action proposal was approved by consensus.**

Noting that a growing number of international experts have all described Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide, including: the International Association of Genocide Scholars (IAGS), the world's largest professional association of genocide scholars including a number of Holocaust experts; B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories; Amnesty International; Defence for Children International; International Federation for Human Rights, Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention; Médecins Sans Frontières; and Physicians for Human Rights Israel.

Noting also the World Council of Churches statement on Palestine and Israel of June 2025, which was endorsed by the July 2025 Assembly Standing Committee the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Synod resolves:

- a) To reaffirm its long-standing commitment to ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and co-operation.
- b) To condemn the increasing racist and anti-immigrant violence in our communities, including antisemitic acts against the Jewish community and islamophobic acts against the Muslim community in Australia.
- c) To condemn the mis-characterisation of non-violent anti-genocide action in support of the Palestinian people as antisemitic.
- d) To encourage Uniting Church members in Western Australia to engage in continuing non-violent anti-genocide action, including on the International Day of Peace, Sunday 21st September during the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel (20-26 September).
- e) To encourage Uniting Church members in Western Australia to educate themselves about the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign and to review Congregational spending in line with this; and,
- f) To write to the Prime Minister, the federal Leader of the Opposition, and the Premier and Leader of the Opposition in Western Australia, informing them of this resolution.

It was announced that a ritual and a prayer of peace would be held at 7pm.

## MINISTRY FUNDING FROM THE FUTURE MISSIONS FUND PROPOSED BY DAVID BEARDS

David Beards informed that the Mission Resourcing Committee oversees the Future Mission Fund and that the current challenge was that the by-law drafted in 2023 does not set out defined criteria on where grants can be approved.

### **Resolution 54/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Ministry funding from the future mission fund proposal was approved by consensus.**

Request the Synod Standing Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Standing Committee, to define the criteria by which Future Mission Fund grants can be provided to fund or partially fund ministry placements which are considered to be missionally strategic and authorise the Synod Standing Committee to approve updates to the relevant By Laws to enable these grants.

## SYNOD BUDGET 2026 PROPOSED BY THE BOARD OF FINANCE & INVESTMENT

David Beards confirmed the Synod Standing Committee, in consultation with the Presbytery Standing Committee and the Board of Finance & Investment, held Budget Conference meetings. The budget was presented to the Joint Standing Committee and was approved by the Synod Standing Committee in August 2025.

The highlights were:

- Grant from UC Investment Fund provided at a “sustainable” level of \$1.1M.
- Uniting Church in the City (UCIC) grant reduced from \$800k to \$500k due to challenges with office space tenancy.
- Healthy interest on funds, however under pressure due to falling interest rates.
- Board of Finance and Investment is working on optimising future returns.
- Service, Audit & Governance Fees increased.
- Frontier Services income has associated Stipends and expenses.

Further comments were:

- Synod is running on “minimum viable” staffing - has reduced expenses by 21% since 2022, despite inflation.
- Inflation – Wage, Stipend & Cost increases in all areas.
- Social Justice part time position included (job description underway).
- Small grant for BKI to assist with BKI operational expenses.
- Contribution towards Act2 expenses.
- Full time stipend for Moderator.

- Presbytery SC has agreed to temporarily reduce grant request from \$300k to \$100k to assist (will likely revert for 2027).
- Grant for CEDAL remains the same.
- We need to resource the Synod/Presbytery/Congregation work to drive the Strategic Priorities – we encourage applications to the Future Mission Fund.

The aim is for a balanced budget (excluding Redress costs e.g. staff, legal, contribution to national Redress operating expenses and compensation payments) has been achieved. Obtaining a sustainable balanced budget is getting harder each year, factors include return from commercial property (e.g. UCIC office space), financial markets and interest rates, inflation and finding new income streams (strategic priorities).

Andrew Johnson, Assembly General Secretary and the National Redress Board added that the advice from government is that we should expect a long tail for processing applications through to 2029.

A question on the proposal was raised regarding the breakdown of Other Revenues. It consists of a collection of fund amounts, and it was noted that further information would like to be provided.

#### **Resolution 55/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the 2026 budget as presented was received and accepted by consensus.**

The Synod receives and approves the Synod Budget for 2026.

#### **CHANGES TO THE BY-LAW S5.2 STANDING COMMITTEE PROPOSED BY REV DR ANDREW WILLIAMS**

When presented, it was unable to reach a decision, and it was agreed to revisit this proposal at another time during the meeting.

Alison McCubbin from the Church Law Committee later presented a solution to the proposed changes to By-Law S5.2 Synod Standing Committee. The changes represented amending the membership to ensure continuity of service.

#### **Resolution 56/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the proposal to changes to By-Law S5.2 Synod Standing Committee was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod, on the advice of the Church Law committee, agree to amend By-Law S5.2.3 concerning the membership of the Synod Standing Committee as follows:

- S5.2.3 (a) The membership of the Standing Committee consists of:
- i. the Moderator, Ex-Moderator, Moderator-Elect and General Secretary as ex-officio members;

- ii. six members of the Synod elected by the Synod (the SSC elected members), subject to the following provisos and subject to the procedures set out in these by-laws and such further procedures as may be determined by the Synod:
  - i. SSC elected members will be elected at each ordinary meeting of the Synod for the period of two ordinary meetings of Synod, subject to by-law S5.2.3 (a) (ii) (iii);
  - ii. The SSC elected members shall be eligible to continue as member of the Synod Standing Committee subject to them continuing to be ordinary members of the ordinary meeting of the Synod for the duration of their term as members of the Synod Standing Committee;
  - iii. In the case of the first Synod for which these by-laws apply (2025), six members of Synod will be elected and at its next meeting, Synod Standing Committee will determine which three SSC elected members will serve a one year term and which will serve a two year term;
  - iv. two members of Congress;
  - v. Chair of Presbytery or Nominee determined by the Presbytery Standing Committee;
  - vi. one member representing the UnitingCare Forum;
  - vii. one member representing the Schools Forum; and
  - viii. not more than two other persons, or the number of persons which is closest to 10% of the total number of members under subparagraphs (i) to (vii) inclusive.
- (b) Only members of Synod are eligible for membership of the Synod Standing Committee.
- (c) The lay members shall not be fewer in number than the Ministerial members.
- (d) ~~Members shall serve until the next Ordinary Meeting of Synod.~~

## PROCEEDS OF SALE POLICY PROPOSED BY FIONA BENTLEY

With spare time in the schedule, it was agreed to hold an initial discussion on the Proceeds of Sale Policy.

Fiona Bentley gave an introduction of the proposed changes to address inequity and assist Congregations to develop a central property fund for missional purposes and to improve the application process.

The process requires a missional plan (sets out the project), health and vitality toolkit (capacity to deliver the project).

The floor was opened for questions and to discuss any amendments required.

- It was confirmed that if a Congregation has a manse, it does not require the same process, that it is an existing need that requires an identical or very similar replacement taking into account any existing debt.
- It was confirmed that maintenance is the responsibility of Congregations and should be budgeted from the Congregation account. The purpose of the new fund is to improve, purchase, lease or redevelop.
- The number of Congregations with embargoed funds was correct at the time of writing and the number changes as applications are made.
- It was requested to advise the number of embargoed funds held by regional Congregations vs metropolitan Congregations.
- It was confirmed that non-property related expressions of interest should be applied through the Mission Resourcing Committee, through their various funds.
- It was confirmed that the health and vitality toolkit is a starting point for Congregations to firstly self-assess and then enter into conversations with the Presbytery Property Committee and Thrive. It was noted that this is a Presbytery document and the suggestion to add ranges to questions, for example, how often do you worship and what is considered to be strong, will be referred to Presbytery.
- It was raised that there was a belief that Wellington Regional Mission had not been sufficiently consulted and that a one size fits all approach does not address needs. Comments were taken onboard, and it was reiterated that this is an information and not a deliberation stage.
- In order to access funds from the existing policy, Congregations need to have a current mission plan and to set out how work is to be undertaken to support that plan. Often applications are incomplete or not missional, and some do not have a long term view.
- It was confirmed that implementation documents are currently being drafted by the appointed consultant, that the final documents were not presented at this stage as they are dependent on conversations at the Synod meeting.
- Congregations should consider partnerships with other agencies or community organisations.
- It was noted that in the past the process to make heritage buildings safe and compliant has been difficult.

The Proceeds of Sale Policy discussion continued from the morning session and a revised proposal was presented considering the concerns heard. Further questions were raised regarding the lack of consultation with Congregations, and it was requested to know which Congregations were using the current embargoed policy funds. There was concern that the process of the past has been difficult and to agree to changes comes with unease for the future and being able to access the funds.

It was confirmed that a consultative process took place and at the June 2025 meeting of the Presbytery Standing Committee where all Congregations were informed of what had been proposed and were encouraged to give feedback.

Andrew Johnson, Assembly General Secretary, encouraged everyone to come together, to pool our resources and to take the principles from Act2 of sharing on a basis of need to ensure there is a future for the Uniting Church in Australia.

### **Resolution 53/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Proceeds of Sale policy discussion was referred to the Sunday business of the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of Western Australia with approval by consensus.**

The Proceeds of Sale Policy was revisited on the morning of Sunday 14 September 2025, and the Synod was thanked for sharing their thoughts and issues. At that point in the meeting the Synod raised questions regarding further consultation and that procedures and policies were unclear. Fiona Bentley agreed to meet with those people to discuss their concerns to find a way forward. Changes to the wording of the proposal was also received.

The proposal was tested with options a) the proposal as presented, b) refer for further work and discuss at the Synod meeting, c) refer for further work and to the Synod Standing Committee for decision. Consensus could not be achieved. It was agreed to adjourn the proposal until the afternoon.

In the Sunday afternoon session Rev Dr Ian Tozer recognised that there have been past hurts associated with the way decisions have been made and the way various Embargoed Fund policies have been administered. Ian thanked everyone for their comments made during the Synod sessions. The Synod sought to find a way through, that there was a genuine desire and willingness to make things better, however it also meant that we need to seek a perspective that seeks to meet the needs and the opportunities of all Congregations.

There are gifts that we have inherited and sometimes these are divided and spread unevenly across the Church. There are many people who have continued faithfully the work of the Church and are resolved to keep doing so. We also need to bear in mind those who are yet unborn, those who will in the future be a part of the continuing effect of what we have inherited and what we hand on.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer asked the Synod to do this thoughtfully, and to prayerfully consider the proposal and led in prayer.

### **Resolution 57/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the proposal to amend the Proceeds of Sale policy was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod:

1. Rescind the Proceeds of Sale Policy 15/2022/4 adopted by Synod in 2022.
2. Adopt the new Proceeds of Sale Policy, amended as a result of feedback from Synod, for implementation from 1 January 2026.
3. Approve transitional arrangements, for a period of up to two years from the date of approval of the policy, for Congregations that rely on the income from embargoed funds.

4. Request the Synod Standing Committee undertake consultation with Congregations identified in 3 above and identification of other sources of funds to ensure that current financial commitments can be met including consideration of a grant from the Future Mission Fund.
5. Authorise the Synod Standing Committee to
  - (a) approve the amendment of necessary by laws to ensure consistency with the content and processes of the new policy.
  - (b) add further definitions to assist in understanding and implementing the policy.
6. Request Synod Standing Committee to expedite the development and distribution of forms and guidelines for the new policy.

In addition, after discussion the policy was revised (attached).

## **SYNOD REPORTS**

The reports presented to Synod 2025 were received and approved over Saturday 13 September 2025 and Sunday 14 September 2025.

### **MODERATOR REPORT**

In addition to the written report, Rev Dr Ian Tozer acknowledged the significant work that is undertaken by volunteers in every dimension of the life of the Church, and, in particular, its committees.

The strategic directions document identified the need for a service to acknowledge volunteers in beginning to plan for such an event, responses included versions of “So you want me to help with an event to thank people like me by having me do even more to prepare and attend such an event to thank myself for all I do.” Responses suggested that another event to attend was itself an unhelpful thing.

The Moderator had reported this to the Synod Standing Committee and reported that he would not go ahead with this item in the plan. A personal thank you was offered to all those working on committees and members of the Synod who have worked on difficult issues this year and have been subject to abuse and aggressive behaviour. He acknowledged David Beards and Fiona Bentley in particular in this respect.

There were no questions on the report.

### **Resolution 2/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Moderator Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT

Rev Dr Andrew Williams informed that a project management has been engaged. Michael Barr will also be joining the Synod meeting on Sunday for the strategic priorities' session.

A special thank you was given to all Synod staff who have done an amazing job over the last few years when the size of Synod staff has reduced by 30%.

The pause in Revive was raised and Rev Dr Andrew Williams advised this was due to the poll results and recognising with only one person in Communications there are limited resources. Revive stories will appear on the website and the News & Notes email communication rather than a printed copy.

The disappointment from Rev Bev Fabb was noted, that for elderly people or those on low incomes the only means of receiving the information was in printed form.

Alison Atkinson-Phillips suggested in the absence of Revive that there was an opportunity for volunteers to re-start a publication similar to Western Impact, which was a previous publication produced by Ministers.

It was requested that Rev Dr Andrew Williams provide an explanation for the location of the Bridging Entities report this year and going forward. The Synod Standing Committee approved the Bridging Entities report was required for those entities in which the Church has a material interest (either through a direct financial contribution or an in-kind contribution), or a particular interest and that it would be included in the General Secretary's report. This year this included Earthwise and YouthCARE.

It was raised that the WA Council of Churches/Ecumenical Affairs Committee is not well represented. Rev Dr Andrew Williams advised that there are people who are elected to be on the WA Council of Churches and there are people who are part of the Ecumenical Affairs Committee. It was agreed to form one group.

There were no further questions on the report.

### **Resolution 4/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the General Secretary Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## ASSEMBLY REPORT

Rev Charissa Suli reflected on her term so far in the President's Office and has seen the spirit at work in our Church and Western Australia. Everyone was thanked for their faithful witness and how everyone has been working hard across the nation, for your advocacy, for your justice and for the richness of your intercultural life.

South Perth Uniting Church was acknowledged for their 185<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the first methodism service.

Since the beginning of Rev Charissa Suli's presidency, she has carried the conviction that threads will bound us in moments of difference and hold us together. The theme threads of love, weaving Christ's love across cultures and boundaries is a prophetic call to us as a Church. We must return to Christ and let the spirit reweave us again and be open to change that God is calling us to for the environmental concepts that we live in.

The highlights of the work of the National Assembly included:

- 40 years of UAICC and declaring ourselves a multicultural Church.
- The first Congress Church building in 20 years, Oodnadatta Aboriginal Uniting Church.
- Port Hedland Uniting Church.
- The National Presbytery Minister's gathering, stories of faith and fatigue and a longing for leadership that is sustainable, intercultural and grounded in discipleship.
- The global partner churches and UCA national conferences across the life of the church.
- The Fiji National Conference to be held in Perth next year.
- The World Council of Churches Central Committee.
- Affirm we are responding to the loss unfolding in Gaza.

Andrew Johnson acknowledged the key leaders of Assembly and highlighted our agencies:

- Frontier Services <https://frontierservices.org/>.
- UnitingCare Australia <https://unitingcare.org.au/> strengthening and supporting our work particularly in Canberra.
- UnitingWorld <https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/sunday> and the acknowledgement of Rev Dr Cliff Bird.
- Our vision for a just as a platform for our ongoing advocacy on national and internal work.
- Act2 report <https://act2uca.com/> and the decisions of the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly.
  - Stream A – life-giving Communities of Discipleship and Mission
  - Stream B – A network of Flourishing Theological Culture
  - Stream C – Sharing our Life and Commonwealth
- Stay in touch with the work of the National Assembly <https://uniting.church/#subscribe>.

*What the status was of the more formal ecumenical dialogues?*

It was confirmed that a Lutheran church dialogue on the ordination of women has been a fruitful dialogue. We are thoughtful of statements for example Gaza, and we often step into controversial spaces, and we ensure that we are grounded in strong theology and strong research as we seek to proclaim gospel in a public way.

*How do we continue to grow the next generation of ecumenical leaders?*

By strengthening relationships and opportunities to meet e.g. leaders retreat, in 2026 we will be calling on all denominations to call on young people to walk along side and respond to the gap in generations.

Another fruitful pathway is increasing our profile with churches worldwide.

The following people were acknowledged for their work on Assembly Committees:

- Rev Dr Andrew Williams - Lutheran Dialogue
- Jen Park – UnitingCare Australia Board
- Alison Xamon and John Berger – Assembly Standing Committee
- Alison Xamon – Commission of Governance and Resource Administration
- Rev Cathie Lambert and Rev Andrew Broadbent – Theological Commission
- Rev Reuben Edmonds – Communities of Faith
- Rev David Jackson – National Disaster Fund

Andrew Johnson acknowledged the work of Barry Honey for his work with the National Assembly, we are grateful for his leadership and send best wishes to Barry and his family.

There were no further questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 5/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Assembly Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **SYNOD COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION REPORTS**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams confirmed that there have been no advance questions received on the reports and there were no further questions at the meeting.

#### **Resolution 6/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Board of Finance & Investment Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 7/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Church Law Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 8/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Committee for Counselling Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 9/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Committee for Discipline Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 10/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Mission Resourcing Committee Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 11/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Placements Commission Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 12/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 13/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod Property Board Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 14/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod Standing Committee Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 15/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the UnitingCare WA Forum Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 16/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **PROPERTY TRUST REPORT**

Rev Lorraine Stokes presented the Property Trust report and acknowledged Lindsay Wolfe who recently resigned due to personal reasons.

There were no questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 22/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Property Trust Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **PRESBYTERY REPORT**

Rev Steven Francis presented the Presbytery report. The Presbytery has a compelling vision for the Church as the body that oversees Congregations. It has the vision to encourage and strengthen the faith in the presbytery.

*Paragraph 15 (c) to bare one another's burdens*

*Paragraph 15 (c) to exhort members to fulfill their high calling in Christ Jesus*

There are six committees and three members that provide a vital support role, resourcing, encouraging, enhancing and developing the ministry and the mission of Congregations.

Rev Steven Francis acknowledged Alison Xamon, Rev Lorraine Stokes and Rev Reuben Edmonds for their leadership.

There were no questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 25/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Presbytery Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **UNITING ABORIGINAL & ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (UAICC) REPORT**

Rev Robert Jetta and Rev Mitchell Garlett presented the UAICC report. They spoke about the opportunity to work with the prison system and the work to be with prisoners, during death in custody and during suicide events. Ministry in the prison system is ad hoc and every day and not just on a Sunday. Feedback from the community is that a Minister is required.

There were no further questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 26/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **COVENANTING COMMISSION REPORT**

Rev Robert Jetta and Rev Dr Ian Tozer presented the Covenanting Commission report. Meetings have been held in Waroona and Coolbellup, and the commission has worked to enable the Church to be more aware and be like brothers and sisters.

There were no questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 28/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Covenanting Commission Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## BEANANGING KWUURT INSTITUTE REPORT

Rev Robert Jetta and Rev Mitchell Garlett presented the report. It has been a busy year, and everything is moving forward. A special thanks was given to Alison Xamon for her contributions.

There were no questions on the report.

### **Resolution 32/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, The Beananging Kwuurt Institute Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIP & DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REPORT

Over the past 10 years Kerry Povey has worked with IPDC and has experienced the realities of injustice and inequality in the world and has been deeply moved and inspired by what has been learned from friends in Papua. The three partnerships:

- East Timor

Fundação Lafaek Diak (FLD) has treated 4,124 patients in the last 12 months through its Mobile Medical Clinic (MMC) bringing healthcare and education. Fundraisers such as the Trek 4 Timor Southwest and the Trek 4 Timor Perth have brought extra strength to the project. An MOU and Letter of Agreement with FLD provides regular reporting, the work of FLD patient services total 57,252 patients across the sectors.
- West Timor

Universitas Kristen Artha Wacana (UKAW) in partnership with Nedlands Uniting Church, the Christmas Challenge, the Indonesian Congregation (GKI) and the Freeman family. Now it is 13<sup>th</sup> year the program has supported 55 students in a scholarship program.
- The Papuan Provinces: The Black Pearl Network
  - The Black Pearl English Course

Opening the doors to higher education, international scholarships and better job prospects with 15 centres across the Papuan provinces.
  - Black Pearl English Academy (BPEA)

The latest program set to become a flagship educational hub offering high-level English tuition to help Papuan students access international scholarships and employment opportunities.
  - The Clean Water program

This has been paused whilst staff were involved in building the BPEA, building clean water as part of the building.
  - The Australian Papuan Cultural Exchange Program (APCEP)

Running for over 15 years, APCEP offers Papuan students aged 18–25 a life-changing opportunity to live and learn in Perth for three months. Milner International College of English was thanked for their ongoing support of the APCEP program even in uncertain times for colleges offering courses for overseas students.

Midi Morin, a former APCEP participant, has put his English skills to powerful use and is now working as a Diplomat at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jakarta.

Jerry, a former APCEP student and BPPF staff member, was running his own English classes in Papua since returning to Papua from Perth and is inspiring students with a strong message about environmental care.

It was noted that the governance of Australian Charities and Not for profits Commission (ACNC) standards have been transferred to Synod staff to oversee.

It was further noted that Lee-Anne Burnett has nominated for Chairperson of IPDC and Kerry Povey will remain as a member. Regina Lau was acknowledged for her work and will be leaving IPDC.

Many Congregations were thanked for their support and being involved with the IPDC.

There were no questions of the report.

#### **Resolution 49/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the International Partnership & Development Commission Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **SOCIAL JUSTICE REPORT**

Alison Atkinson-Phillips and Rev Dr Elaine Ledgerwood as Co-Chairpersons presented the report.

Six members of the Social Justice Commission focus on issues that people are passionate about and assist to resource Congregations. The Social Justice Update restarted and also created material for the WA state election. In November 2024 a relationship was built with the Palestinian Christians in Perth and a day of prayer for the holy land was held.

The work included connecting with people who are already active with Social Justice issues including environmental issues (Woodside) and receiving support from other Synods and Assembly in leading national work in Justice. The communications result in opportunities and Alison was asked to speak at the Christians for a free Palestine rally.

The Justice Hive was launched last year, and everyone was thanked for their part on the journey and helping social justice to be visible in our community. The Synod was encouraged to get involved, the next meeting will be held on 18 October 2025.

It was raised if focus had been given to the Jewish cause and Social Justice is guided by our Jewish brothers and sisters. It was acknowledged that Jewish people have been impacted. The work of the Social Justice Commission is to focus on preventing genocide.

There were no further questions.

#### **Resolution 50/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Social Justice Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE**

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE BALLOTS REPORT 10 (A)**

Heather Hamblin, on behalf of the Nominating Committee presented the nomination list in the room and highlighted those committees that still need members, and everyone was invited in thought and prayer.

It was highlighted, that as part of the review of committees that the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship will continue its work but not as a group required to report or be elected at a Synod meeting.

There were no questions on the report.

#### **Resolution 20/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Nominating Committee Report (a) was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE BALLOTS REPORT 10 (B)**

Heather Hamblin, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee presented the ballot report for the Standing Committee. There were seven nominees received for six positions and the ballot forms were distributed and collected. It was then closed and referred to the Nominating Committee.

### **NOMINATING COMMITTEE BALLOTS RESULTS REPORT 10 (C)**

The results of the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of Western Australia ballot results were presented by Heather Hamblin, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

The term for the elected people of the Standing Committee will be confirmed at the next meeting of the Standing Committee in line with the changes to By-Law S5.2 Standing Committee approved earlier in the meeting.

**Resolution 58/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Jane Barker as a Member of the Uniting WA Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 59/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Isabel de Jesus as a Member of the Uniting WA Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 60/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of David Kyle as a Member of the Uniting WA Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 61/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Michael Lester as a Member of the Tranby College Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 62/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the appointment of Kynan Johnston as a Member of the Tranby College Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 63/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Verity Burges as a Member of the Trinity Residential College Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 64/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Alexander Lyons as a Member of the Trinity Residential College Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 65/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the appointment of Rohan Mishra as a Member of the Wesley College Board for a 3 year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 66/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Rev Robert Jetta as Chairperson of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 67/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Alison Overeem as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 68/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Cheryl Lawson as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 69/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Daphne Bennell as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 70/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Jennifer Turner as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 71/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Lenny Yarran as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 72/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Marilyn Garlett as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 73/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Rev Mitchell Garlett as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

**Resolution 74/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod confirmed the re-appointment of Shonae Garlett as a Member of the Beananging Kwuurt Institute Board for a one year term.**

**Approved by consensus**

### **Resolution 75/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the proposal to appoint the members as presented the Nominating Committee report was approved by consensus.**

That the Synod

- g) appoint the members to the Synod Boards, Commissions and Committees for 2025-2026 as presented on the final Nominating Committee Report;
- h) acknowledge and thank those members who have served on the Synod Boards, Commissions and Committees who are retiring from the rising of the 2025 Synod.

Rev Dr Ian Toze led in prayer.

It was raised that we are close to capacity in operating as a Synod as we are and members sit on multiple committees.

## **THE ELECTION OF THE MODERATOR-ELECT**

### **MODERATOR ELECT CANDIDATE INTRODUCTION**

Susy Thomas Ex-Moderator on behalf of the Moderatorial Nominating Committee confirmed that there were three candidates and all names were put forward. Recently two candidates withdrew from the election.

After careful consultation with the General Secretary, the Moderator and examples from other Synods the following was proposed:

### **Resolution 19/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the election of the Moderator at Synod 2025 was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod:

- a) Notwithstanding By-Law S6.5.4 (f) (2) permit the Moderatorial Nominating Committee to present one name for the Moderator ballot in 2025.
- b) Such a nomination shall require an affirmative vote of 66% to be nominated.

The single candidate for the election of the Moderator for the term from 2025-2028 was announced as Rev David Jackson.

Rev David Jackson was ordained as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church in 1978. He served in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, in the Tasmanian Parishes of Georgetown and the West Coast Patrol. He then had placements in the Western Australian Synod, serving in Karratha where he was working alongside the local Congregation as well as supporting a number of Frontier Services staff in the town, and then later in the Maylands-Mount Lawley Congregation.

In 1992 David began military service as a military chaplain, first in the Army Reserve, and then in 1999 in full-time service. In 1996 he assisted in response and recovery following the Blackhawk disaster, a tragic accident that claimed the lives of 18 soldiers. He went on to serve in roles including Senior Chaplain for Special Operations Command and Senior Chaplain for the 2nd Division. During this time, he earned two commendations and a Conspicuous Service Medal for his service. He also provided spiritual oversight and pastoral care of other chaplains and their families. During his military career David was deployed to Timor-Leste, Bougainville, Iraq and Afghanistan.

After retiring from the Army in 2019, David went on to serve in the Synod of Western Australia as the Convenor of the Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Working Group. David also helped establish the WA Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network in partnership with the Council of Churches WA and the WA Synod. He is currently the senior chaplain to this network.

In 2022 David came out of retirement and returned to a ministry role as a Disaster Recovery Chaplain for Frontier Services based in the Mid-West, assisting in supporting local communities recovering from the impacts of tropical cyclone Seroja. After 18 months in that role, he then moved further North to serve as Frontier Services Bush Chaplain in the Pilbara Patrol, a role he is currently active in. During his time in the Pilbara, he has enjoyed working with First Nations communities and has walked alongside the Fijian community in Port Hedland as they established the Hedland Fijian Uniting Church, and most recently supporting an emerging worshipping community in the remote town of Marble Bar.

In the national Uniting Church, David is currently on the National Disaster Fund and has been a member of two Assemblies including the most recent 17th Assembly.

David shares life with his wife of 49 years, Diane, who travels and volunteers alongside him in the Pilbara sharing her expertise in hospitality and teaching with the communities they connect with. David and Diane have three children and six grandchildren.

David described his passion for the Uniting Church as being rooted in its commitment to addressing poverty, racism, and advocating for the inclusion of all people in decision-making. David hopes to advance these values to make for a society that allows everyone to flourish and to thrive, free from discrimination and bias. David would endeavour to help agencies, Congregations, Schools, Colleges, Congress and the councils of the Church to honour an inspired agenda in their spheres of influence.

In the first 90 days, David would meet with ministry agents and lay pastors to lay out a plan for the next three years, gathering together other representatives to provide input into the plan and to reimagine the Church. In the term from 2025-2028 David plans to listen, to guide, to care and to provide pastoral and spiritual leadership.

As a Church we are invited to love the world the way that Christ loved the world, connected and engaged, loving and forgiving. As a Church we are invited to take responsibility for our past, supporting those who have been neglected and harmed by the Church by being a

responsible corporate citizen. We need to be aware of the existential threats to the Church's future but to never let either of these things become excuses for retreating from the world. As a Church we are invited to be mindful learners, open to new lessons learnt but never shying away from challenging those things in our society that diminish our humanity, compassion or hope.

We are a pilgrim people, conjuring up the notion that we on a journey of faith seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We are a pilgrim people, always on the way towards the promised goal, on the way Christ speeds us with word and sacrament, and we have the gift of the Spirit in order that we may not lose the way.

The ballot was conducted in the evening.

### **MODERATOR ELECT BALLOT**

It was confirmed that there was no further report from the Moderatorial Nominating Committee and Rev David Jackson and Synod guests were requested to leave the room for the ballot process.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer declared the ballot for Moderator open and to be distributed to voting members of the Synod, they were then collected, it was then closed and referred to the Nominating Committee. The Synod was thanked for their attention and willingness to participate.

### **MODERATOR-ELECT ANNOUNCEMENT**

Rev David Jackson was announced as the new Moderator-Elect.

Rev David Jackson said he was thankful for the trust the Synod has shown and was excited for the next three years and being part of the leadership team.

Rev Steven Francis led in a prayer.

## **SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & AGENCIES**

John Berger presented the Agencies report for 2024-2025 as part of the Schools, Colleges and Agencies report. Historically, each of the agencies came from a church based missional outreach response to address a need in the community. Each agency has enrolled and grown over the years. A short video of each of the agencies was presented. A question and answer session followed with the CEOs of agencies:

- Good Sammy
  - Recycled over 67 million containers over the last year.
  - Improved working conditions for 850 staff, 450 of which have a disability.
  - Introduced improved training opportunities and a new facility.

- The challenge facing the coming year will be responding to the demand for services with over 100,000 West Australians with a disability and of working age who are not in the workforce.
- Juniper
  - 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Juniper.
  - The challenges facing the coming year are the new aged care act and executing the changes and addressing the increasing need for aged care services.
  - Two new buildings planned in the next five years.
- Uniting WA
  - \$83,000 worth of food raised for distribution as part of the ‘Breakfast Blitz’ campaign.
  - Addressing the complex needs of people falling through the gaps. A transitional facility has been established with up to 12 beds for up to 12 months to help break the cycle of homelessness.
  - The challenges facing the coming year are the increasing need for the homeless and finding permanent housing for people. Increasing funding from state and government contracts to ensure UnitingWA are able to continue their work.

Everyone was encouraged to engage with the agencies and help to leave a legacy:

- UnitingWA - sock campaign, Invite a CEO to a Church or Council meeting, volunteer in kitchens, invitation to join Congregation Sunday visits
- Juniper - volunteer opportunities, 40% of aged care residents have no family and receive no visitors
- Good Sammy - Containers for Change, volunteers, donations, gardening, and catering services.

A table discussion followed on the reports of Schools, Colleges and Agencies.

## SCHOOLS & COLLEGES

### **Resolution 33/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Methodist Ladies’ College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **Resolution 34/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Penrhos College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **Resolution 35/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Presbyterian Ladies’ College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 36/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Scotch College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 37/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the St Stephen's School Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 38/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Tranby College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 39/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Trinity Residential College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 40/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Wesley College Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **CARING AGENCIES**

#### **Resolution 41/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Good Sammy Enterprises Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 42/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Juniper Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

#### **Resolution 43/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Uniting WA Report was received and accepted by consensus.**

## **PRESENTATIONS**

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES DISCUSSION**

David Beards referred to the key strategic priorities of the Synod and Presbytery created to focus our efforts.

Michael Barr, Strategic Priorities Project Manager attended the Synod meeting who will work alongside Ana Lea'aetoa, Presbytery Minister Strategic Priorities.

Congregations were encouraged to complete the Health and Vitality Toolkit that was completed by 25% of Congregations.

Strengthening Congregations have been either Presbytery initiated conversations or Congregation initiated. Members of Synod were encouraged to discuss the newly simplified process with their Congregations, to plant seeds and ideas and to apply to the Future Mission Fund Grant. The opportunities included a Seed Grant up to \$10,000 and a Feasibility Grant up to \$25,000).

The recent approved grants have included applications from the Piara Waters Church Plant, the Hedland Fijian Faith Community, the South Perth Uniting Church and Billabong Uniting Church.

The Future Mission Fund has been designed to help Congregations thrive.

The session included table discussions on the topics of:

- a) Strengthening Congregations: Intercultural / Intergeneration
- b) Financial Sustainability (Congregations)
- c) Strengthening Congregations: Church Planting
- d) Strengthening Congregations: How we Revitalise / continue to Thrive

The results of the table discussion will be collated and distributed after the meeting.

## **CELEBRATION OF MINISTRY**

The Synod invited everyone to observe together the new format of the celebration of ministry celebrating the admission of ministers, the ordination milestones, ministry candidates and recognition of retired and deceased ministers.

The ordination milestones:

- Phase 1 period of discernment – consider their call
- Phase 2 core phase – preparation for ordination
- Phase 3 newly ordained ministers continuing development
- Phase 4 ministry thereafter

Rev Dr Ian Tozer led us into prayer and speech.

- There are diverse gifts, but it is the same Spirit that gives them.
- There are different ways of serving God, but it is the same Lord who is served.
- God works through people in different ways, but it is the same God whose purpose is achieved through all.
- Each one of us is given a gift by the Spirit, and there is no gift without its corresponding service.
- There is one ministry of Christ, and in this ministry we share.
- Together we are the body of Christ, and individually members of it.

Based on 1 Corinthians 12:4ff and Basis of Union para 13.

The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving, that the one spirit has endowed the members of Christ's church with a diversity of gifts and that there is no gift without its corresponding service. All ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ. Ministry service is an ongratu term and includes all who serve Jesus, who serve the people of God and who in one way or another are offering the ministry that God calls them to offer. In the reformation this was called the priesthood of all believers. Some though, have a specific leadership role including elders of church councillors who serve local Congregations or faith communities. The specified ministry of lay preacher is a ministry which is recognised across the Church and that recognition is across Congregations.

Ordination is a sign that the Church has set apart individuals for the particular ministries of Deacon or Ministry of the Word. While the Church requires particular training and abilities of those who are ordained, no ministry is better than any other. Our highest calling is to confess Jesus Christ as Lord who ministers to us all and calls us to minister and to serve God and people in his name.

The Synod joined in TiS 387 Christ is alive by Brian Wren 1936, music was provided by Greg Ross.

- Ministry Candidates – Kevin Jun Yi Koay, Karl Sullivan
- Admission of Ministers – Rev Craig Bosman, Rev Simone Smalley, Rev Roy Surjanegara
- Newly Ordained Ministers – Rev Susan Lord
- Ordination Milestones
  - 10 Years – Rev Andrew Broadbent, Rev Kim Francis, Rev Robert Jetta, Rev Richard Morrell
  - 20 years – Rev Roy Surjanegara
  - 30 years – Rev Abraham Halgryn, Rev Allan Ward, Rev Dr Anne Wright
  - 40 years – Rev Peter Johnstone, Rev David Kriel, Rev Margaret Tyrer
  - 45 years – Rev Don Dowling, Rev Steve Francis, Rev Dave Hosking
  - 50 years – Rev Margaret Smithson
  - 55 years – Rev George Davies, Rev John Steed
  - 60 years – Rev Desmond Cousins, Rev Alan Pederick
- A special mention was given to Rev Don Pederick who was ordained in 1956 and turns 100 years of age this month.

The Synod joined in TiS 624 Christ be my leader by night as by day by Timothy Dudley-Smith 1926 – 2024, music was provided by Greg Ross.

- Ministers who have died – Rev Ken Melville, Rev John Phillipson, Rev Lorna Atkins, Rev Lawrence Staton, Rev Richard Treloar, Rev John Edwards.

A minute of silence was held. Rev Dr Ian Tozer led a final prayer Doxology by Mary Luti and music was provided by Greg Ross.

## **DEPLOYMENT OF MINISTERS**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams advised of our Ordained Ministers, 36% are aged 65 or over with only a few ministers in the pipeline. The Placements Commission has raised these challenges throughout the year, and the Synod was invited to discuss the topics:

- a) A case for change.
- b) Congregations in a changing context.
- c) Reimagining ministry in a time of scarcity.
- d) Equipping leaders for tomorrow.

The results of the table discussion will be collated and distributed after the meeting.

## **MINUTES OF APPRECIATION**

### **MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – TIM FALLOWS**

Fiona Bentley gave thanks to Tim Fallows for the work as the Property Services Executive Officer and with the Synod Property Board to improve our responses to Presbytery and Congregations. Tim has provided expert guidance and support and left a legacy of improved procedures, and we are grateful for his contribution. Tim Fallows will conclude his services on 23 September 2025.

#### **Resolution 3/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Tim Fallows was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod record its deep appreciation for the service of Tim Fallows as Executive Officer Property and wish him well in his future endeavours.

### **MINUTE OF APPRECIATION FIONA BENTLEY**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams gave thanks to Fiona Bentley for her leadership and the work with the Synod Property Board. Fiona will be pursuing a path of lay preaching and was wished well for the future.

#### **Resolution 17/2025**

**At the 49th annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Fiona Bentley was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod record its deep appreciation to Fiona Bentley for her many years of service on the Resources Commission and the Synod Property Board particularly as chair for the last two years in the restructured Board.

## **MINUTE OF APPRECIATION BRIAN GUESTEIN**

Rev Ken Devereux expressed his appreciation for Brian Gluestein for his contributions over the years including aged care, local church life, community services, as a lawyer and later a magistrate, various committees and most recently with the Committee for Discipline.

### **Resolution 18/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Brian Gluestein was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod record its appreciation of Brian Gluestein.

## **MINUTE OF APPRECIATION HELEN MCMILLAN**

The minute of appreciation for Helen McMillan was extending to include thanks to all those involved with the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship.

### **Resolution 21/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Helen McMillan was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod record its appreciation to Helen McMillan for all her devoted work on the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship Committee.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer led in prayer acknowledging everyone in our community.

## **MINUTES OF APPRECIATION REV DENNIS DOUST & REV DR ALISON LONGWORTH**

Rev Robert Jetta and Rev Mitchell Garlett expressed appreciation for the work of Rev Dennis Doust and for walking close with our mob for a long time.

### **Resolution 30/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Rev Dennis Doust was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod of WA acknowledges with gratitude the long term support sacrificially given by Rev Dennis Doust to First Peoples especially at Mogumber, Pingelly and Tammin.

Rev Mitchell Garlet expressed appreciation for Rev Dr Alison Longworth and she will be missed when retiring.

### **Resolution 31/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Rev Dr Alison Longworth was received and accepted by consensus.**

That the Synod of WA acknowledges with gratitude the long term commitment to Covenanting made by Rev Dr Alison Longworth and her deep relationships with the First Peoples of this land.

## **MINUTE OF APPRECIATION SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & AGENCIES**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams led a special acknowledgement of Kevin Smout for 16 years of contribution.

### **Resolution 44/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Kevin Smout from St Stephen's School was received and accepted by consensus.**

### **Resolution 45/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Sonja Matthes from Tranby College was received and accepted by consensus.**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams acknowledged the services of Barry Honey on the Juniper Board and across the committees of the Uniting Church.

### **Resolution 46/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for Barry Honey from Juniper was received and accepted by consensus.**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams led a special acknowledgement of David Gees for 20 years of service to the Uniting Church.

### **Resolution 47/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Minute of Appreciation for David Gee from Trinity Residential College was received and accepted by consensus.**

## **BIBLE STUDIES**

Rev Prof Bill Loader presented the bible studies on both Saturday 13 September 2025 sharing reflections of Jesus and John the Baptist and their similarities and differences. and Sunday 14 September 2025 reflecting on the Church and what ministry means then and today.

The Synod were invited to discuss in table groups and how it connects to us today.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer thanked Rev Prof Bill Loader and reflected on the many years of contribution to help our Ministers lead the word in scripture.

## **DEVOTIONS & CLOSING PRAYER**

The devotions and closing prayer for the first day of the Synod business was led by Jun Yi Koay (Kevin). A passage from John 21:4-13 was read and reflected on Jesus meeting his disciples at the beach, performing the same miracle as when he first called Peter. To recall the time when God first called us to ministry and ended with the song "Follow Me to the Sea" by Ray Repp.

## **APPRECIATION OF THE OUTGOING MODERATOR PROPOSED BY REV LORRAINE STOKES**

In saying thank you to our Moderator, Rev Dr Ian Tozer, it brings to mind the many facets of Ian from which the Church in WA and the wider church has benefitted, not only in his time as Moderator, but for many years before that, and we hope for a few to come.

Particularly over the last two years, Ian has given outstanding service to this Synod and the Presbytery of WA. He has brought many gifts and talents to his role as Moderator.

His love of books is pretty well-known. What is astounding is his memory. I have never met anyone else who can quote, very matter-of-factly, the lines from an author and the name of the book when it applies to a particular comment which has been made. His outstanding memory has assisted the Church many times in recalling people, placements, Congregations, situations – the general history of our Church. I can see several phone calls in the future as people try to fill the gaps in the Synod paperwork.

One of Ian's great assets is his ability to express himself in a way that people understand what he is saying. All the knowledge in the world is unhelpful without this gift of expression. Ian is able to look at very complex situations and be able to discern and express his thoughts very clearly. This has been of benefit to many meetings. His wisdom and compassion shines through in many situations.

Ian's sense of humour has shone through lightening the mood of many meetings. It often comes in one humorous line, but it is a gem.

A lot of things that Ian has had to tackle is not known to the majority on the Church due to confidentiality, yet his integrity in these situations is unblemished. He is a person who is very aware of the implications of his actions and the actions of others in response to happenings around the Church. During his term he has been abused, ignored, and disrespected, and while he has not revealed this to many, it has greatly increased the stress load of his position. His self-control in difficult situations has been admirable, but it has also been to the detriment to his health.

We have been very fortunate in the constant support from his wife, Marion, who has been there for him, especially when happenings in the Church have made him very unwell. Ian's friends have been there for him even when the particular details cannot be shared.

For two years Ian has had times of enjoyment in the celebrations of the Church and wider activities. He has seen some major overhauls in the area of the Church which show great promise for the future of the Church in WA. He has exercised great leadership with intelligence and wisdom.

His love for God and the Church is obvious in all he says and does. Thank you for your outstanding service.

### **Resolution 76/2025**

**At the 49<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Synod of WA, the Synod is requested to share their deep appreciation of Rev Dr Ian Tozer and thanks for service as our Moderator.**

Rev Charissa Suli led a prayer for Rev Dr Ian Tozer and Marion who has walked along side in this season.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Rev Dr Andrew Williams gave thanks to people involved in the organising of the Synod meeting.

- To Fiona Bentley and David Beards for their leadership.
- To Rev Prof Bill Loader.
- To Ps Karl Sullivan and Ps Kevin Koay for our devotions and prayers.
- To Heather Hamblin, Chairperson of the Nominating Committee and the scrutineers.
- To everyone who took the time to create displays.
- To the Synod staff including Margaret Johnston as Assistant Screen Manager, Wendy Hendry for Communications and Lora Brown the bell ringer.
- To the Business Committee.
- To the report writers and all who give us the information that we need to share.
- To Wesley College staff including Arna Anderson, Andrew Symons and Cassandra Wild.
- To our Moderator, Rev Dr Ian Tozer.
- To Amanda Rigby for always getting us across the line and organising the Synod meeting.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer thanked the General Secretary for all he has done to prepare us for this meeting.

## **CLOSING PRAYER**

Karl Sullivan led the closing prayer.

The 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia was closed at 3.14pm.

## **Opening Service**

Call to Worship, Hymn Jesus calls us here to meet him TiS 477, Prayer of Invocation and Confession, Doxology by Mary Luti, The Service of the Word, First Testament Reading verses from Isaiah 43, Gospel Reading, selected verses from John 15, ? Brian Wren 1936, The constitution of the 2024 Synod prayer, The Lord's prayer, Hymn Nettleton TiS 392 by Ruth C. Duck 1947-2024 alt.

## **Sunday Service**

Hym Great God, your love has called us here, Brian Wren 1936 -, readings from Romans 12, gospel readings from John 15, Hym The Summons, by John L. Bell 1949 -, Wombats Can't Sing by Katie Stewart, Hymn Feed us now, Robin Mann 1949 -, Prayer of Thanksgiving, Prayer of Dedication, Hymn Let us break bread together, based on an African American Spiritual

## **Devotions**

Saturday - John 21:4-13 and reflected on Jesus meeting his disciples at the beach, performing the same miracle as when he first called Peter. To recall the time when God first called us to ministry, and ended with the song "Follow Me to the Sea" by Ray Repp.

Sunday – words compiled by Karl Sullivan

## **Bible Studies**

Saturday – What are we on about? What was Jesus on about? Reflections of Jesus and John the Baptist Matt 3:1–6; 4:17

Sunday - Ministry as Partnership: Reflections on 1 Corinthians 12 1 Cor 12:12-15, 27

Music was provided by Rev Greg Ross.