



Synod Standing Committee Charter

Context

The purpose of this Charter is to communicate the role and scope of the Committee established by the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT (Synod).

Owner

Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT (Synod).

Meaning of the term “Synod”

Throughout this Charter when the word “Synod” is used it refers to the meeting of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT. Management and staff employed to carry out the day-to-day administrative functions of the “Synod” are referred to as “Synod Management and Staff”.

Mandate

The Constitution of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) provides for the creation of a Standing Committee – vide Constitution Clause 36 – see Appendix A.

36. The Synod shall appoint from among its members a Standing Committee which shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Synod except such as the Synod may determine.

In addition, the Regulations of the UCA include (inter alia) specific requirements relating to the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) – vide Regulations 3.7.4.1 – see Appendix A.

Within the Synod, By-Laws exist which provide more guidance as to the Membership, Powers and Responsibilities; Quorum and Manual for Meetings – vide By-Law 2.3 – see Appendix A.

The SSC shall do all things as are necessary for the effective and efficient functioning of the Synod and the fulfilment of the obligations of Synod as set out in the Regulations.

Powers and Responsibilities

The Powers and Responsibilities of the SSC are contained in Section 2.3.5 of the Synod By-Laws – see Appendix A.

In summary, the responsibilities of the SSC are to:

- act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod, and report to the subsequent meeting of Synod on its own activities and decisions;
- provide general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service within its bounds;
- provide guidance and recommendations to the Synod with regard to policy matters and its life mission and witness;
- ensure the effective planning, prioritisation, implementation and monitoring of the Synod's mission and activities;
- ensure the proficient administration of the Synod through oversight of measurable accountabilities for Synod management and staff;
- encourage and facilitate collaboration and provide oversight of and support to Presbyteries, Boards, Agencies including Schools and Committees;
- support the Moderator and the General Secretary in the faithful execution of their roles including regular reviews of the performance of both the Moderator and the General Secretary;
- assist with/adjudicating/deciding upon disputes relating to the life and witness of the Synod;
- establish such Committees and/or Reference Groups that may assist the SSC in its function; and
- support one another in the exercising of these powers and responsibilities

Delegations

The SSC receives its delegated authority from the meeting of the Synod to enable the SSC to do all things necessary for the effective and efficient operation of the Synod, subject to the directions of the Synod and the delegations [limits to authority] as articulated in the Regulations and By-Laws. The Synod meeting has the right and capacity to reserve some matters to itself i.e. not to delegate certain matters or decisions to SSC.

Membership

Membership of the SSC is determined by the provisions of Regulation 3.7.4, in particular 3.7.4.1. In addition, the Synod By-Law 3.3 details the specific requirements for such membership.

In summary, the SSC is comprised of:

The ex officio members of the SSC shall be:

- (a) the Moderator, ex-Moderator, Moderator-elect and the General Secretary [pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i)];
- (b) Chair of each Board (or nominee).

Other members of the SSC shall include

- (a) The sixteen (16) nominated members of the SSC shall be:
 - one person from each of the 14 Presbyteries;
 - one person from the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC); and
 - one person from the Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group.
- (b) The elected members (fifteen elected by Synod) of the SSC shall be:
 - 15 persons based on the criteria required to achieve the necessary balances and in keeping with existing by-laws and Regulations for the SSC as a whole.
- (c) The co-opted members (up to 2) of the SSC shall be:
 - up to two co-opted members, to bring any necessary skill balances that are needed once the elected membership is known
- (d) The overall membership of the SSC shall comprise;
 - not less than one third (1/3) women;
 - not less than five (5) persons under the age of 35 years; and
 - no fewer lay members than ministerial members.
- (e) No Presbytery is permitted to have more than three (3) members on the SSC (excluding ex-officio, Standing invitation and Multicultural Advisory Group members).
- (f) The Executive Director of each Board, the Chairpersons of the Synod Risk Oversight Committee (SROC) and the Synod Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee (GNRC) shall have a standing invitation to attend the SSC on a speak but not vote basis.

Induction

New Committee members will be provided with a copy of this Charter, and a package of information about UCA, the Synod Bodies and relevant details.

Meetings

Synod By-Law 2.3.7 provides that the SSC shall meet at least eight (8) times between the eighteen (18) monthly Synod meeting outside of normal business hours or as convened by the General Secretary if required.

Conflicts of Interest

Where a matter arises in which a member of the SSC has or may have a material personal interest in an issue affecting the Committee's business or functions, the member will, at the first possible opportunity, advise the Moderator (or in the case of the Moderator, the General Secretary) and declare the interest at any meeting of the SSC at which the matter may be discussed. Permanent conflicts will be recorded in a Committee Register. All conflicts (permanent and occasional) will be recorded in meeting minutes as declared.

Review

This Charter is to be reviewed annually by the SSC with any changes, after reference to the Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee (GNRC), to be recommended to the next scheduled meeting of the Synod.

References to the Synod Standing Committee in UCA “Law”

1. Constitution of the Uniting Church

STANDING COMMITTEE

36. The Synod shall appoint from among its members a Standing Committee which shall be empowered to act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Synod except such as the Synod may determine. The Standing Committee may co-opt additional members of the Synod to act on the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall consist of no fewer lay members than ministerial members.

2. Regulations

3.7.4 SYNOD COMMITTEES, BOARDS AND OTHER BODIES SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (See Para 36, Constitution)

3.7.4.1 Membership

- (a) The membership of the Synod Standing Committee shall consist of:
- (i) the Moderator, the ex-Moderator, the Moderator- Elect and the Secretary of the Synod as ex-officio members;
 - (ii) such other ex-officio members as the Synod may determine;
 - (iii) other members of the Synod elected by it to serve until the next ordinary meeting of the Synod;
 - (iv) no more than two persons co-opted by the Standing Committee. Only members of the Synod are eligible for membership of the Standing Committee.
- (b) The lay members shall be not fewer in number than the Ministerial members.

Meetings

- (c) The Standing Committee shall:
- (i) meet at such times and places as are determined by the Committee or as called by the Moderator; and
 - (ii) appoint a chairperson of the meeting if neither the Moderator nor the ex-Moderator is available.

Responsibilities

- (d) The Standing Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Synod except such as the Synod may determine.
- (e) The Standing Committee shall deal with matters referred to it by the Synod.
- (f) In dealing with matters which have not been referred, unless otherwise prescribed by the Synod:
 - (i) the quorum shall be two-thirds the number of members of the Standing Committee; and
 - (ii) if a decision on a matter cannot be made by the consensus procedures and in order to carry the relevant motion, a majority of three-fourths of those present shall be required.
- (g) The Standing Committee shall report its decisions to the next ordinary meeting of the Synod, which shall give directions as to the publishing thereof and as to any further action that may be required.

3. By-Laws

2.3. SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

Name

- 2.3.1 The Standing Committee referred to in paragraph 36 of the Constitution and in Regulation 3.7.4.1 shall be known as the "Synod Standing Committee" ('SSC').

Membership of Synod Standing Committee

- 2.3.2 The SSC shall be constituted by each ordinary meeting of the Synod and shall comprise the ex officio members as specified in By-Law 2.3.3, and other members appointed in the manner specified in By-Law 2.3.4.
- 2.3.3 The ex officio members of the SSC shall be:
 - (a) the Moderator, ex-Moderator, Moderator-elect and the General Secretary [pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i)];
 - (b) the Executive Director of each Board [pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(ii)] unless unable to attend in which case a person will be nominated by the respective Board; and
 - (c) the Principal of the United Theological College unless unable to attend in which case a person will be nominated by the Uniting Mission and Education Board.

2.3.4 The other members of the SSC shall include the following PROVIDED THAT each such person is a member of the Synod:

- (a)
 - (i) fourteen (14) people from nominations made by the Presbyteries with the names known to the Synod meeting in advance of the ballot for SSC;
 - (ii) one (1) member nominated to the Synod by the NSW Committee of the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC); and
 - (iii) one (1) member nominated to the Synod by the Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group.
- (b) Presbyteries, UAICC and Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group may also name an alternate who must also be a Synod member.
- (c) The Synod then elects the further 15 people based on the criteria required to achieve the necessary balances and in keeping with existing by-laws and Regulations as described in (i) – (iii) below:
 - (i) not less than one third (1/3) will be women;
 - (ii) not less than five (5) persons will be under the age of 35 years at the date of the ballot; and
 - (iii) not less than the minimum number of lay persons required to comply with paragraph 36 of the Constitution and Regulation 3.7.4.1(b).
- (d) No Presbytery shall be permitted to have more than three (3) members on the SSC (excluding ex-officio, UAICC and Multicultural Advisory Group members).
- (e) Up to two (2) co-opted members [Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(iv)] to bring any necessary skill balances that are needed once the elected membership is known.

Powers and Responsibilities

2.3.5 Pursuant to paragraph 36 of the Constitution and to Regulation 3.7.4.1(d) the SSC shall act on behalf of the Synod whenever the SSC deems it appropriate so to do between meetings of the Synod in respect of all matters which are the responsibility of the Synod except insofar as any meeting of the Synod from time to time specifically reserves any such matters for a meeting of the Synod.

2.3.6 Without limiting the generality of the powers or responsibilities of the SSC pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1 and By-Law 2.3.5, the SSC shall, subject to any determination of the Synod from time to time:

- (a) make recommendations to the Synod on policy matters;
- (b) ensure that the policies and decisions of the Synod are implemented and adhered to by Boards and other bodies responsible to the Synod;

- (c) be a forum in which members shall:
 - (i) meet for corporate concern and encouragement;
 - (ii) motivate and assist Presbyteries and Boards in their development of mission programmes;
 - (iii) evaluate the ongoing work of mission and assess priorities in relation to resources, making recommendations to Synod accordingly;
- (d) through consultation and planning, facilitate the work of Presbyteries and Boards;
- (e) appoint such members of the working groups or committees or boards as require appointment by the Synod or SSC;
- (f) receive reports from such committees and working groups as may be required so to report by Synod;
- (g) report to the Synod on committees and working groups appointed by Synod or the SSC except such as the Synod may require to report to itself either directly or through one of the Boards;
- (h) report to the next ordinary meeting of the Synod on its own activities and decisions;
- (i) nominate to the Synod persons for appointment to The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW); and
- (j) deal with any other matters specifically referred to it by the Synod.

2.3.7 The SSC shall normally meet at least eight (8) times between the eighteen (18) monthly Synod meeting outside of normal business hours or as convened by the General Secretary if required.

Quorum

2.3.8 The number next above one-half the number of members of the SSC shall be a quorum.

Manual for Meetings

2.3.9 Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with “A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church”.

2.3.10 Any matter coming before the SSC for determination may be dealt with by email or postal vote, provided that no such matter shall be deemed to be resolved in the affirmative unless at least four-fifths (4/5) of the members of the SSC vote for the affirmative, and provided further that if within seven (7) days after the referral of such matters to the members of the SSC any three (3) or more members give written notice that they require the matter to be referred to a duly convened meeting of the SSC, the postal vote shall be of no effect.