

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

SYNOD
MEETING
2014

MINUTES
26-30 SEPTEMBER 2014



uniting
church
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

SYNOD OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE ACT

MINUTES of the thirty fifth Meeting of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT of the Uniting Church in Australia held 26 - 30 September 2014 at Knox Grammar School. The theme of the Synod was *“Uniting for the Common Good”*

CANDLE The Moderator lit the candle at the commencement of the Synod Meeting to signify the Synod was a Safe Place

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LAND Aboriginal Elders led the procession and participated in the acknowledgement of land at the commencement of Worship each day

BIBLE STUDY Bible Studies were led by: Rev Dr Jione Havea, Mr Henry Onzem, Ms Mariana Waqa, Ms Leitū Letitia Havea, Ms Tau’alofa Angaaelang, Ms Hee Wan Chang

BIBLE STUDY ONE

Saturday, 27 September 2014
‘Uncommon Voices’
Bible Reading: 1 Kings 19:9-18

BIBLE STUDY TWO

Sunday, 28 September 2014
‘Uncommon Boundaries’
Bible Reading: Numbers 20:14-21

BIBLE STUDY THREE

Monday, 29 September 2014
‘Uncommon Locations’
Bible Reading: Psalm 137

BIBLE STUDY FOUR

Tuesday, 30 September 2014
‘Uncommon Responsibilities’
Bible Reading: Genesis 2:4a-15

WORSHIP

The business of the Synod was conducted in the context of worship planned and led by a team commissioned by the Moderator, mostly based in the Canberra Region Presbytery, and a Synod music team based at the Centre for Ministry. The Synod opened in worship at Turrumurra Uniting Church with the installation of the new Moderator, musical contributions from the Korean Presbytery choir and the Synod band. Prayers were written on ribbons and presented to the Moderator as an expression of ongoing support. Morning worship each day provided a variety of approaches to gathering around the Psalms. Creative Bible studies in the middle of each day were led by five young adults accompanied by Rev Dr Jione Havea, UTC Lecturer in Hebrew Scripture, focusing on the themes of Uncommon Voices,

Uncommon Boundaries, Uncommon Locations and Uncommon Responsibilities. Each day's business closed with theological reflection and prayer led by Dr Ben Myers, UTC Lecturer in Systematic Theology.

DECISIONS

Decisions recorded in these Minutes were reached by consensus unless otherwise indicated

MEMBERS OF SYNOD

139/14S

Resolved

That the Synod determine

- (a) that the membership of Synod shall comprise ex officio and board members, together with those persons nominated by presbyteries or co-opted, being listed on pages of these papers
- (b) that any alterations to the list of members be advised in writing to the Synod General Secretary by the Presbytery Chairperson no later than the close of Synod on Tuesday 30 September 2014

(The list of members is attached as Appendix A to the Minutes)

AGENDA, TIMETABLE AND SHAPING OF THE SYNOD 2014 AGENDA

140/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- i) adopt the timetable of Synod as printed and amended, subject to review by the Business Committee;
- ii) on the recommendation of Synod Business Committee, when considering the Agenda and business priorities at the 2014 Synod, to arrange the Synod's work so that priority is given to those items which best assist the Synod to support the missional vocation of the Church within New South Wales and the ACT and the goals of the Synod;
- iii) note the table conversations regarding agenda priorities and the priorities suggested in those conversations;
- iv) shape the agenda according to the feedback compiled and presented by the Facilitation Team

SAFE PLACE

141/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) determine the "Respectful Communication Guidelines" on page A4.1 of the Synod Working Papers will be the basis for the Synod to be a safe place for all who participate
- (ii) note the Policy on the Prevention of Vilification and Harassment within the Uniting Church in Australia as documented on Pages A4.2 and A4.3 of the Synod Working Papers

SYNOD BUSINESS COMMITTEE

142/143S

Resolved

That the Synod

on the recommendation of the Synod Standing Committee, appoint the following persons to the Business Committee for Synod 2014

Rev Dr Chris Budden (chair)
Rev Dr Andrew Williams
Mr Ian Lawrence
Rev Myung Hwa Park
Rev Suzanne Stanton
Rev Kevin Dilks
Mr Peter Kidd
Mrs Karyn Warner

ASSOCIATED MEMBERS

143/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

associate the following people

	Session
Mrs Karyn Warner	All
Mr Jon O'Brien	5
Mr Brian Mowbray	7
Rev Geoff Smith	8
Rev Dr William Emilson	8
Mr Ian Moore	8
Mr Jim Mein	8
Rev Terrence Corkin	8
Rev Gary Derkene	11
Dr Miriam Pepper	11

RETURNING OFFICER

144/14S

Resolved

That the Synod note that the Synod Standing Committee has appointed Mr Ian Lawrence as Returning Officer and Mr David Hay as Assistant Returning Officer respectively

SYNOD MINUTES

145/14S

Resolved

That the Synod request the Synod Standing Committee approve the Minutes of the 2014 Synod Meeting

MINISTERIAL REPORTS

The General Secretary tabled the names of Deacons, Ministers of the Word and Youth Workers who have resigned, transferred to another Synod, or had their recognition as Ministers withdrawn, and the names and details of service of Deacons, Ministers and Youth Workers and their spouse/widow and those lay leaders who have died since the 2013 Synod

146/14S

Resolved

That the Synod receive the names tabled and attach them as Appendix C and D to the Minutes

MINISTERIAL MATTERS – RECOGNITION SERVICE

The General Secretary tabled the names of Deacons, Ministers of the Word, Youth Workers and Lay Pastors who have been received by the Uniting Church within the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT by ordination, commissioning, reception from another denomination or by transfer from another Synod since the 2013 Synod; of Deacons, Ministers of the Word and Lay Pastors who have retired since the 2013 Synod; and Ministers of the Word and Deacons who have celebrated major anniversaries of their ordination since the 2013 Synod. Appropriate details are in the Order of Service of the Recognition Booklet (Appendix B)

ADOPTION OF REPORTS

147/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) note the recommendation of the Synod Business Committee that the following reports be adopted en bloc

Proposal No	Title of Proposal
31	Presbytery Reports
32	Congregations
35	Uniting Church Property Utilised by UnitingCare
38	Committee on Relations with Other Faiths
39	Historical Society
40	Stamp Committee
41	Faith and Unity Committee
42	Constitutions Committee
46	Uniting Church Property Utilised by Church Schools

- (ii) determine that the proposals listed in Clause (i) be received *en bloc* in Session 15 unless a request is received by the Chairperson of the Business Committee or General Secretary for other consideration by no later than lunchtime Monday, 29 September 2014

REPORTS

148/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

receive reports either oral or written from

UAICC
Social Justice Forum
UnitingCare NSW.ACT
Rural Ministry Unit
Pilgrim Property
Uniting Resources
Uniting Mission and Education
Beneficiary Fund
Assembly
Community Development
Uniting Earth Ministry
Community Organising
Education Formation and Discipleship
Treasury and Investment Services

PRESBYTERY REPORTS

149/14S

Resolved

That the Synod
receive the reports from the Presbyteries of –
Canberra Region
Macquarie Darling
Far North Coast
Georges River
Illawarra
Ku-ring-gai
Mid North Coast
New England North West
Parramatta-Nepean
Riverina
Sydney
Sydney North
The Hunter
Korean

SCRUTINEERS

150/14S

Resolved

That the Synod
appoint the following persons as Scrutineers
RETURNING OFFICER Mr Ian Lawrence
ASSISTANT RETURNING OFFICER Mr David Hay

RED TEAM (A)

Mr Scott Stanton (Leader)
Mrs Bridget Ocean
Mr Don Durie
Mrs Carolyn Sharp
Mr Noel Watts
Mr John Cutts
Mr David Powell
Rev Lorna Martin
Mr Semisi Kailah

YELLOW TEAM (B)

Mrs Margaret Gregory (Leader)
Mr John Algar
Mr Bruce Pyke
Mr Noel Harrison
Mrs Valerie Moase
Mr John K Martin
Mr Paul Creek
Rev Graeme Watkins
Mr Scott Mudd
Ms Tammy Hollands

FACILITATION GROUP

151/14S

Resolved

That the Synod
appoint the following persons to the Facilitation Group
Rev Christine Bayliss Kelly
Rev Lorna Martin
Rev Rachel Kronberger
Pastor David Freeman
Rev Graham Perry
Rev Susan Phalen
Mr Stephen White

CONGREGATIONS

152/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- i. note that Canberra Region Presbytery has advised that Goldsmith St, Big Hill, Gunning, Maulan, Merrilla-Parkesbourne and a newly formed Faith Community known as Grace Faith Community will now be known as Goulburn District Parish.
- ii. note the closure of the Brocklesby Faith Community as reported by the Riverina Presbytery.
- iii. note that Sydney Presbytery recognise the new congregation of Sydney Rotuman Uniting Church effective 1 July 2014. In doing so it ceases to recognise Drummoyne Rotuman and Wesley Rotuman Congregations and transfers all existing pastoral rolls and other ministry responsibilities of those congregations to the new Sydney Rotuman Congregation.
- iv. note that the Standing Committee of the Presbytery of North East Victoria approve the request of Howlong Congregation to transfer from the care of the Riverina Presbytery to the care of the Presbytery of North East Victoria.
- v. note that the Ku-ring-gai Presbytery has amalgamated the Lindfield (Tyron Road) Congregation and the Lindfield (St David's) Congregation to form the Lindfield Uniting Church.
- vi. note the decision of the Fiji Leaders Group to close the Ermington Fiji congregation effective 17th February 2013.
- vii. note that Sydney Presbytery formally recognise Strathfield Homebush as a Congregation.
- viii. note that the following congregations are formally recognized as part of the Korean Presbytery: Canberra Salrim Church, Sydney Light and Salt Church, Canberra Happy Church, and Ye Eun Church.

**SYNOD 2016
MEETING
DATE**

153/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

request that the Synod Standing Committee determine the date and venue for the next Synod meeting in 2016

**SYNOD
STANDING
COMMITTEE
REPORT**

154/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) receive the report
- (ii) on the recommendation of the Synod Standing Committee endorse
 - (a) Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee Charter
 - (b) Synod Risk Oversight Committee Charter
 - (c) Synod Standing Committee Charter

**PROPERTY FOR
A PILGRIM
PEOPLE**

155/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) receive the report
- (ii) direct the facilitation team to coordinate table group discussions and manage feedback

156/14S

Resolved

A That the Synod

- (i) affirm the value of a Sales Proceeds Policy, which releases funds for God's Mission for the sake of the world both in the local context and beyond
- (ii) direct Synod Standing Committee to appoint a task group to undertake a review of the current policy to:
 - (a) take into account the proposals arising out of the Property Workshops held in June and July 2014
 - (b) articulate the purpose of the Sales Proceeds Policy
 - (c) addressing the appropriate use of sales proceeds
 - (d) recommending what body should have oversight of the distribution of sales proceeds
 - (e) advising as to the role the council or agency with beneficial stewardship over the property sold has in determining the use of the proceeds of sale
 - (f) bringing a report and recommendations to the Synod Standing Committee for determination by the end of June 2015

157/14S

Resolved

B That the Synod

- (i) seek the Common Good with regard to residential properties across the Synod

- (ii) note
 - (a) the strong commitment of the synod meeting to honour the custodianship of the first peoples as expressed by the UAICC
 - (b) Minister's different residential requirements
 - (c) the variation in costs for providing minister's residences across the Synod
 - (d) the inequality of a blanket housing allowance for ministers or congregations in different areas to the detriment of ministers or congregation
 - (e) the current or planned missional use of some residences
 - (f) the essential use of rent at market value to supplement costs of mission in some congregations

- (iii) instruct the Synod Standing Committee to
 - (a) review the housing allowance to consider the realistic costs in different areas for provision of housing to ministers living in their own homes or for congregations renting appropriate accommodation
 - (b) develop a plan how congregations can equitably contribute to the co-ordinated costs of provision of a residence without being put at significant disadvantage or risk of viability
 - (c) enact the above proposals as a matter of priority

- (iv) encourage Presbyteries to share with each other what they are doing at present about these matters

Resolved

That the Synod

C. UAICC Regional Committee

direct Synod Standing Committee to enter a conversation around the suggestions of the UAICC Regional Committee outlined below:

- (i) as a symbolic acknowledgement that our churches are built on stolen land, and as a 'jubilee-like' action, the suggestion is that all congregations and agencies of the church (including schools) be required to **pay rent**. Congress members believe that the fairest way for this to happen is not with a set amount but a set percentage – 1% - of the annual income of all bodies in the church. This money would go into a special trust account or capital fund for ministry and not for administration costs (i.e. synod could not simply stop its support because other funds had become available for ministry expansion). [NB: It was suggested that consideration be given to alternative language to 'pay rent'.]
- (ii) that the Synod suggest to all presbyteries that they implement a policy similar to that of Macquarie-Darling Presbytery, viz: that if there is a property which is surplus to the needs of the congregations in the presbytery that the property be first of all offered to Congress for ministry (not simply to have and sell). If Congress does not want the property for its ministry that the property can be sold, and the proceeds subject to the tithe mentioned below
- (iii) that Synod explore the most appropriate way in which a tithe can be made to Congress from property sales, maybe something like 5% of all sales
- (iv) that there be an exploration of the possibility of Congress having its own property trust.

and bring proposals to the 2016 Synod

(by agreement)

EXTENSION OF TERM OF GENERAL SECRETARY

159/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) receive the report from the Review Committee
- (ii) on the recommendation of the Synod Standing Committee, approve the extension of the Rev. Dr Andrew Williams in the position of General Secretary of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT for a further period of 5 years commencing 1 August 2015 to 31 July 2020

DEVELOPING A RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN

160/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

request that the Synod Standing Committee review Developing a Reconciliation Action Plan

FAIR TRADE

161/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) note that an IBISWorld report estimated that \$191 million was spent in 2014 on the purchase of chocolate Easter eggs and Easter bunnies (see summary at <http://www.ibisworld.com.au/media/2014/04/03/easter-spending-sweets-seafood-great-australian-road-trip>)
- (ii) note that Fair Trade Easter chocolates are available from *Chocolatier Australia*, *Heart of Chocolate*, *Lindsay and Edmunds*, *Oxfam*, *Tribes and Nations*, *Cadburys Fairtrade certified*, and *Coles Fairtrade Cocoa* (see the full list at <http://fairtrade.com.au/news/do-good-while-eating-chocolate-easter>)
- (iii) encourage congregations to undertake a special marketing effort to encourage members to purchase only Fair Trade Easter chocolates each year, as a further expression of our commitment to the 2013 resolution to become a Fair Trade Synod
- (iv) notes that each Presbytery that wishes to order wholesale Fair Trade Easter chocolates, can refer to Rev. Elizabeth Raine who has experience in negotiating purchases from the *Chocolatier Australia* group

**BEQUESTS
(KU-RING-GAI
PRESBYTERY)**

162/14S Resolved
That the Synod
refer proposal 30 (attached as Appendix F) to the Synod Standing
Committee for consideration

**UNITING CHURCH
PROPERTY UTILISED
BY UNITINGCARE**

163/14S Resolved
That the Synod
refer the issues of land and financial contributions from UnitingCare to
the Church (raised in proposal 28 attached as Appendix F) to the
Synod Standing Committee as part of an ongoing conversation
previously initiated by UnitingCare

**UNITING CHURCH
PROPERTY
UTILISED BY
CHURCH SCHOOLS**

164/14 Resolved
That the Synod
request Uniting Mission and Education and Uniting Resources to
engage Uniting Church Schools in a consultation about how the
schools can contribute to the resourcing of the resourcing of the
Church with the aim of achieving an agreed outcome, and in light of
the consultation, formulate proposals for resolution by the Synod
Standing Committee

**NOMINATION OF
ASSEMBLY
PRESIDENT ELECT**

165/14S Resolved
That the Synod
nominate Rev Karyn Burchell-Thomas to the 14th Assembly for the
role of President Elect

SYNOD MISSION PLAN (2015-2017)

166/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) after accepting the changes recommended from table group discussion and incorporated by Facilitation Team
- (ii) approve the Synod Mission Plan (2015 -2017) attached as Appendix E

CLIMATE CHANGE

167/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) continue to implement the 2008 resolutions (249/08SC)
- (ii) in order to assess its progress a full review on the actions of boards, agencies and schools is to be completed with findings tabled to the Synod Standing Committee

COMMUNITY RESPONSES TO ISLAMIC PEOPLE

168/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) issue a press release in consultation with the Assembly Associate Secretary:
 - (a) expressing our strong concern about recent threats and harassment towards Muslim people in the Australian community following the brutal uprising of ISIL in Syria and North Iraq
 - (b) urging Federal MPs, other community leaders and the media to exercise restraint from utterances likely to inflame hostility towards Islamic people
 - (c) assuring the Australian Islamic Community of our determination to maintain and promote strong interfaith relationships with them
- (ii) write to key MPs and Islamic leaders with the text of the press release
- (iii) communicate the press release to Presbyteries and Congregations, encouraging them to also write to MPs and other community leaders about this situation
- (iv) encourage all members of the UCA in the NSW.ACT Synod, and all Australians, to intentionally make friends with a Muslim, through such ways as:
 - (a) engage with a local mosque
 - (b) hold interfaith prayers for peace on any occasion but particularly on 21 September each year- United Nations Day of Peace (Rev Dr Manas Ghosh and Rev Keith Hamilton have resources for this if required)

- (c) speak out through local media on the need for not tolerance but curiosity with our neighbours
- (d) engage with Muslims during Ramadan, holding meals etc

SYNOD BUDGET

169/14S

Resolved

That the Synod refer the table feedback received at Synod to the Synod Standing Committee for evaluation

Budget Priorities

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Leadership | 19 |
| 2. Growth | 12 |
| 3. Discipleship/Evangelism | 12 |
| 1. Financial & Physical responsibilities | 9 |
| 2. Governance | 8 |
| 3. Witness & Service | 9 |

APPOINTMENTS

170/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

- (i) appoint the persons nominated to membership of the Synod Standing Committee
- (ii) elect the following persons to the membership of boards, councils and committees of the synod as listed below
- (iii) authorise the Synod Standing Committee to approve the additional appointments indicated (*) when nominations are received

1. SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

(a) EX OFFICIO MEMBERS

Moderator	Rev. Myung Hwa Park
Ex Moderator	Rev. Dr Brian Brown
Synod General Secretary	Rev. Dr Andrew Williams
UnitingCare	Mr Peter Worland
Executive Director	
UnitingCare	Rev. Gordon Ramsay
Chairperson	
Uniting Mission and Education	Rev. Kath Merrifield
Executive Director	
Uniting Mission and Education	Rev. Dr John Squires
Chairperson	
Uniting Resources	Mr John Kitchener
Executive Director	
Uniting Resources	Mr David Benn
Chairperson	
Treasury and Investment Services	Mr Neil King
Executive Director	
Treasury and Investment Services	Mr Michael Anderson
Chairperson	

(b) PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVES

Presbytery	Members	Alternate
Canberra Region	Rev. Kevin Dilks	Ms Rosemary Everett
Macquarie Darling	Mr Kevin Barrington	*
Far North Coast	Rev. John Thornton	Rev. Peter Overton
Georges River	Rev. Grant Bilbey	*
Illawarra	Rev. Glenys Biddle	Mr Ross Johnson
Ku-Ring-Gai	Rev. Tara Curlewis	Rev. Dr Chris Goringe
Mid North Coast	Rev. Lindsay Cullen	Pastor David Freeman
New England North West	Mr Graeme Tolson	Mr Tom Campanelli
Parramatta-Nepean	Mr John K Martin	Mr Trevor Knight
Riverina	Mr Paul Creek	Mr Darren Wright
Sydney	Rev. Suzanne Stanton	*
Sydney North	Rev. Graham Perry	Robyn Harvey
The Hunter	Rev. Haloti Kailahi	Rev. Dr Chris Budden
Korean Presbytery	Rev. Shin Goo Lee	Ju Min Hyung

(c)

Multi-Cultural Ministry Advisory Group	Rev. Viniana Ravetali	*
UAICC	Ms Dianne Torrens	Rev. Dorothy Harris-Gordon

* Synod Standing Committee to confirm appointments

(d) MEMBERS TO BE APPOINTED

(15 persons elected)

Ms Tualofa Angaaelangi
Rev. Christine Bayliss-Kelly
Rev. Karyn Burchell-Thomas
Mr Craig Corby
Rev. Kent Crawford
Mr John Cutts
Mrs Sue Graves
Mr Semisi Kailahi
Mr Ian Lawrence
Rev. Patty Lawrence
Mrs Lena Logan
Ms Joan Moss
Ms Malia Puna
Mrs Jacki Watts
Mr Ted Woodley

2. BOARDS

(a) Uniting Resources

(5 people to be elected for 3 years and 1 person to be elected for 18 months)

Mr David Benn
Mr Andrew Frith
Mr Ross Johnson (18 months)
Mr John Martin
Mrs Paula Reid
Ms Meredith Yabsley

(b) Uniting Mission and Education

(4 people to be elected - 3 persons elected for 3 years and 1 person elected for 18 months)

Rev. Haloti Kailahi
Rev. Graham Perry
Mr David Scott (18 months)
Rev. Dr John Squires

3. CHAIRPERSONS

Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements

Rev. Chris Udy

4. THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA PROPERTY TRUST (NSW) AND UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA (ACT) PROPERTY TRUST

(5 persons elected)

Mr Bryce Bridges
Mr John Graves
Mr Tim L'Orange
Mrs Paula Reid
Mr David Turner

5. ASSEMBLY REPRESENTATIVES

(a) MEMBERSHIP OF ASSEMBLY Ex Officio

Rev. Dr Andrew Williams	General Secretary of Synod
Rev. Myung Hwa Park	Moderator
Rev. Karyn Burchell-Thomas	Nominee President-Elect

(b) PRESBYTERY REPRESENTATIVES TO THE 14TH ASSEMBLY

Presbytery	Ordained	Lay
Canberra Region	Rev. Anne Ryan	LayPastor Geoff Wellington
Macquarie Darling	Rev. Gareth Thomas-Burchell	Mr Kevin Barrington
Far North Coast	Rev. Ken Day	Mrs Sue Duncan
Georges River	Rev. Grant Bilbey	Mr James Brenna
Illawarra	Rev. Peter Chapman	Mrs Sharon Hoogland
Ku-Ring-Gai	Rev. Ann Hogan	Mr Clive McCormack
Mid North Coast	Rev. Jason John	Mrs Penny Archer
New England North West	Rev. Bill Fischer	Mr Bob Minton
Parramatta-Nepean	Rev. Sharon Cutts	Mr John Cutts
Riverina	Rev. Jerry Duncan	Mrs Dorothy Creek
Sydney	Rev. Nicole Fleming	Mr David Hay
Sydney North	Rev. Graham Perry	Ms Carol Mason
The Hunter	Rev. Warwick Cadenhead	Mr Scott Mudd
Korean Presbytery	Rev. Ju Min Hyung	Mr Jung Eun Noh

(c) SYNOD ELECTED

Ordained	Lay
<i>(10 persons elected)</i>	<i>(13 persons elected)</i>
Rev. Christine Bayliss Kelly	Ms Rebekah-Lee Allcroft
Rev. Lindsay Cullen	Mr Bradon French
Rev. Dr Chris Goringe	Mr Zac Hatfield-Dodds
Rev. Haloti Kailahi	Mr Seimisi Kailahi
Rev. Aimee Kent	Ms Emma Parr
Rev. Duncan MacLeod	Ms Catherine Pepper
Rev. Kath Merrifield	Ms Malia Puna
Rev. Dr John Squires	Ms Hannah Reeve
Rev. Suzanne Stanton	Mrs Radhika Sukumar-White
Rev. Gordon Ramsay	Mr Adrian Sukumar-White
	Dr. Katalina Tahaafe-Williams
	Ms Amanda Thomson
	Mrs Jacki Watts

**APPRECIATION –
REV DR BRIAN
BROWN**

171/14S

Resolved
That the Synod

receive the minute of appreciation for Rev Dr Brian Brown

The Synod of NSW and the ACT of the Uniting Church in Australia expresses its sincere appreciation to Rev Dr. Brian Brown for his leadership to the Church as the Moderator from October 2011 until September 2014.

During his time as Moderator Brian has offered genuine and sincere leadership of the Synod during a particularly difficult time of change. In 2011 Brian set before the Synod the theme ‘On new and risky paths.’ Brian has led us on this path both within our internal structures as well as within the public arena. His leadership of the Synod in response to the crisis surrounding Asylum Seekers and to important environmental issues, has been significant.

Throughout his time as Moderator Brian has offered pastoral and prophetic leadership that has helped us work for the Common Good in word and in action.

Brian has reminded the Synod of the continued vision for us, namely that we be the Church we are called to be: inclusive, generous and courageous. It is a vision that takes the Synod on risky paths and leads us further into our call to be ‘Uniting for the Common Good.’

As Moderator, Brian has offered profound leadership around ecological matters including that of the Murray-Darling Basin water crisis. Along with the Murray Darling Basin Group, Brian assisted the synod to take serious steps toward building a sustainable future, more resilient communities and a healthier Basin river system.

Brian’s public leadership around the church’s response to Asylum Seekers has been of particular significance. Through Brian’s public action on this matter we have witnessed leadership willing to be present to the dire situation of children in detention and that of all who seek asylum in this country.

We have been encouraged by this Moderator to bring closer together our call to spirituality with our call to justice. Brian has reminded the Synod throughout the past 3 years of our call through Christ to welcome the stranger and to care for God’s creation. In the leadership Brian has offered, we recognise the bringing together of justice and spirituality; we experience leadership that models for us that vision which seeks the sacred within and that leads us outward to seek the flourishing of all, both humanity and creation. A vision that challenges us to offer the ultimate in hospitality and inclusive love. The Synod of NSW and the ACT expresses its gratitude to Rev. Dr. Brian Brown for holding before us a vision that calls us to be the people of God seeking the flourishing of all creation. We offer our thanks for Brian’s leadership as Moderator, and for modelling for us

hospitality and inclusive love as he has walked a new and risky path in order to seek the common good.

**APPRECIATION –
MR GEOFF NAYLOR**

172/14S

Resolved
That the Synod

receive the minute of appreciation for Mr Geoff Naylor

Geoff Naylor became a member of the Board of Finance and Property in October 1984, served as a member of the Synod Property Board Sub-Committee, and was appointed Chairperson of the Board of Finance and Property in 2004 and after a short break was reappointed as Chairperson of the Board, now known as Uniting Resources (UR), in 2010.

During his tenure as Chairperson, Geoff has been tireless in his pursuit of what he saw as being required of UR to properly discharge its role in the Synod. He has constantly emphasised the responsibility of the UR Board to ensure that the blessings bestowed upon the Church are used wisely for God's mission. Members of the Board have been encouraged to look beyond the money and to see the mission.

Using his financial and administrative skills he has challenged inefficient practices and systems that resulted in scarce resources not being best used for the mission of the Church.

Geoff not only has a wealth of knowledge about UR and how it operates, but has an unrivalled understanding on how it got to where it is today. He knows when, how and why events happened and has a comprehensive background to issues facing the UR Board.

With his quiet and unassuming manner Geoff has given excellent service and leadership to the Board of Uniting Resources, both as a Board member and as Chairperson of the Board. As Chairperson, he maintained a genuine and gentle hand on the tiller, such that all members felt they were able to speak their will as appropriate.

The Board has appreciated his professionalism, detailed mind, analytical commentary, prodigious corporate memory, his breadth of knowledge of UR and Synod matters, considered and wise leadership, and his godly approach. Geoff has led the Board through some testing times, and the Board has appreciated Geoff's leadership and his openness and commitment in working to find solutions to difficult issues.

His time investment in the work of the Church has very few parallels. He has devoted a considerable amount of time and effort to Synod affairs, not just UR's, and has made a substantial contribution to the life and work of the Church.

Geoff leaves at a time when many of the issues that he has pursued for a long time are being appreciated more widely across the Synod. There is much to be addressed, not only financially.

The Board will miss Geoff and all that he has brought to the Board as both a member and as Chairperson. We thank him for his service to UR and the wider Synod and wish him well for the future.

**APPRECIATION –
REV DR WILLIAM
EMILSEN**

173/14S

Resolved

That the Synod

receive the minute of appreciation for Mr William Emilsen

What would a future historian say of William Emilsen's work as lecturer in church history and world religions at United Theological College? How will this significant ministry be interpreted within the passage of time which lies ahead of us? These are questions well worth posing. The professional vocation of the historian is not merely to record events and dates. It is more one of a story teller and a bearer of unfolding traditions with a critical interpretive edge. William has embodied that vocation in terms of his own self-understanding; for him history is not about studying the past for the past's own sake: it has to do with 're-membering' how things came to be - and who we are – for the sake of a future which is consistent with the claims we make about ourselves. On more than one occasion he has put down markers to chart the progress of the Uniting Church and the informed faith it professes after a set interval of time.

William has been both well-placed and well-timed. His career as an historian has coincided with the emergence of the Uniting Church and he has seized that opportunity. There has been no other historian in this church who has been so committed to exploring and writing up its short history. That passion has been exemplified through a series of anthologies, *Marking Twenty Years: The Uniting Church in Australia 1977-1997*, *The Uniting Church in Australia: The First Twenty Five Years* and, most recently, *An Informed Faith: The Uniting Church At The Beginning of the Twenty-First Century*. William has seen himself as both a researching and a teaching historian of the Uniting Church. He has also shown an interest in what he has called the church's 'hidden histories' - that is, those things which it has not necessarily wanted to talk about or enter the public sphere. The future will consider well the legacy of the published materials and the oral histories he has organised: our record of who we are would have been all the poorer without these initiatives and, with the passage of time, in some instances more difficult to record. At the time of his retirement William is the only Uniting Church member who is in a placement as a church historian in any of this church's colleges. Ensuring space for the research and study of church history is a great challenge for the Uniting Church.

William was appointed to the College in 1993; initially, he shared the position with Susan. They worked closely together in teaching, writing the histories of O'Connor Uniting Church and the Pitt Street Congregation, *Pride of Place*, an account of *Cannibal Jack*, as well as being editors of several texts. The latter task included the oversight of the *Festschrift* for Ian Breward, *Mapping the Landscape*, where they gathered together contributors from both sides of the Tasman.

Their abiding achievement, however, must be the founding of *Uniting Church Studies* in 1995. William has been sole editor since 2002; it is no small achievement to have maintained this journal at two issues per year through to the present. There have been articles to be refused, those to be refined, and those to be accepted. There has been much detailed work ensuring footnotes are consistent, commas rightfully placed and any hint of a split infinitive banished. There have been timelines to meet and a change of format to oversee in 2002 and again in 2008. William possesses a specialized expertise in the field of editing and overseeing anthologies. In the case of *Uniting Church Studies* William has provided the church with a gift. This has been the only place where members of the Uniting Church have been able to publish scholarly articles and sometimes engage in rights of reply on matters emerging out of this church and pertinent to its ongoing life.

William has also dedicated himself to the writing up of the relationship of the indigenous communities and the Uniting Church. He has done so in a disciplined way which will stand the test of time for he has been both careful and respectful. The Northern Synod has supported his work.

In the course of time William added 'world religions' to his responsibilities. That was in keeping with the advice he had received when he first sought to do doctoral studies on Mahatma Gandhi: in order to better understand your own faith tradition it is wise to study a different faith. The benefits were most visibly present in his *Gandhi's Bible*, several articles on Gandhi, and his supervision of a D Min thesis on the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore. In more recent times William has worked in a manner which has been most trusted by the Islamic Sciences and Research Academy of Australia (ISRA). He is currently supervising two Muslim postgraduate students in the areas of Muslim identity and developing a best practice to combat extremism in Australia. William's capacity to explore religious traditions along the discipline of history led him to present an article on 'Teenage Suicide Missions: The Role of Religion in the Recruitment of Young Suicide Bombers' at the prestigious Oxford forum on public policy. That year two presentations were done by faculty of UTC and led the Oxford host to comment to the full gathering that 'there is some very fine work going on in Sydney'. William has written and spoken on Calvin and Islam as well as on jihads and crusades.

That reference to fine work should not be taken lightly. William has continued to pursue a commitment to academic excellence. The underlying intention was to raise standards for the sake of the credibility of the church and the profession of the gospel in an increasingly more highly educated society. One part of that concern played itself out in the construction of subjects and a course on public theology more than a decade before the Synod became a member of

the Sydney Alliance. It was recognized that in a time of a stress the institution of the church can easily become introverted and more concerned for its own well-being and structure. William was alive to the need for faith and theology to engage with other disciplines.

It is to his credit that he organised conferences which included a number of leading Christian intellectuals – John Polkinghorne on science and David Fergusson on atheism. William also oversaw and participated within several writing seminars on the condition of children and the relationship of faith and violence. The conferences which William organised along with the assistance of Carolyn Craig Emilsen were always of a high quality and deserved to be more widely known in the church.

William has been one of the College's most discerning members of the Research Centre of Public and Contextual Theology (Charles Sturt University). He has understood what a public theology is and has always been keen to maintain the integrity of the research centre. William has always been willing to ask the question that needed to be asked and rightly hold members to account lest public theology be dissolved into too porous an understanding. William has taken seriously PaCT (and the College's) participation in the Global Network of Public Theology which has helped provide an external yardstick by which to measure what constitutes such study.

That concern for the public audience has been matched by a professional and personal interest in the interior life. William has long had interested in Christian prayer and spirituality. He was keen to affirm 'the reality of God' in a faculty collection entitled *I Believe in God*; his very fine collection of prayers from the early church, *The Sapphire Blue Light*, was extremely popular and is used on a regular basis in a number of congregations. William often draws from these prayers in the reflections which began a meeting. In the leading of worship, in the preaching of the Word, William brings dignity, a sense of the 'otherness' of God, and a connection to the broad traditions of the Church in a time where liturgy is often informed by a kind of chatty approach to faith and prayers revolve around a data projector. William has preached a number of memorable and very timely sermons where he wove the text for the day to what was happening in the life of the church. He has been a regular contributor to the weekly reflections for *With Love to the World*. It was through his initiative that the faculty wrote the resources for the Christmas Bowl appeal several years ago.

One former student spoke of how William was always a 'churchman'. What this has meant is that William has always possessed a keen ecumenical sense and a recognition of how the Uniting Church is not united but a work in progress. He has a fine sense of the Uniting Church and its proper processes.

In the course of his time in the College William has on occasion been the Vice Principal; he has been the Co-ordinator for the Doctor of Ministry program. One of the most pivotal conversations he had during his time in the college was one with a colleague over the photocopier: it led to the College becoming a full partner in the School of Theology, Charles Sturt University. He has always maintained a discerning interest in the process of formation for ministry and what

constitutes ordination. Over the last several years he has demonstrated a concern for what is leadership and how that language needs to be clarified and defined alongside the standard practices and vocations of the church. One of his most recent anthologies was a joint project with Seforosa Carroll and was explicitly dedicated to the theme of *Great Spiritual Leaders: Studies in Leadership for a Pluralist Society*. William also oversaw the publication of an issue of *Uniting Church Studies* which was dedicated to how each President embodied a particular pattern of leadership.

Prof. Ross Chambers (Chair, UTC Council):

Moderator, thank you for the opportunity to say a few words on behalf of the College and College Council in recognition of William's outstanding and sustained contribution. As Christians we live out our relationship with God in time and in particular historical settings. At the same time we are also able to live in a way which transcends time, living in communion with all the faithful (the great cloud of witnesses) who have gone before us, on whose shoulders we stand and with whom we will share eternity with God. Church historians play a vital role in helping us understand our place in time and our great communion.

William has fulfilled the role of a church historian within the UCA and at UTC in an exemplary way. Through his own research; his encouragement of others, including his students, to take up the history of the UCA and its predecessors; and his outstanding editorship of *Uniting Church Studies* he has played a central role in supporting the UCA to tell our story and to develop our understanding of ourselves. He has helped us recognise and honour the faithfulness of those who have gone before us and to reflect on our successes and failings and to recognise God's graciousness towards us. Without William's leadership and scholarship we would be far less able to reflect on our identity and journey.

William's work to me has been particularly characterised by one of the most important scholarly values, magnanimity. Magnanimity involves openness and respect to others and what they have to say, the ability to be a good and thoughtful listener. This is the basis of genuine dialogue and scholarship. William has not only made significant contributions to scholarly and Christian dialogue and been a valued voice in that discourse but has equally importantly created space for others. This is evident in the very rich networks William has established amongst a wide range of scholars and the important colloquia and publications which have resulted through his leadership. These networks have been of great benefit to the College and the church and also to the broader community.

William's work and his contributions to the life of the College are characterised by the highest standards of scholarship, generosity and openness to others and strong commitment to serving the needs of students, colleagues and the broader church and community. William has shown generations of students that faithful study and teaching and reflection, including critical reflection, is integral to faith and that the study of the history of the church helps us understand the richness of God's provision and His mercy.

William, thank you on behalf of the College community and Council and your colleagues, students and former students.

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Chairperson

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Date