



## Synod Standing Committee

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background

The role of the Synod Standing Committee is to ensure that the work of the Synod and the oversight that the Synod offers with regard to the Church's worship, witness and service continues between ordinary meetings of the Synod itself.

#### 1.2 Responsibilities

Regulation 3.7.4.1(d) reads: 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.

#### 1.3 The style and nature of this report

This report documents decisions of Standing Committee (except some confidential resolutions) since the last ordinary Synod meeting in April 2016, and therefore indicates the scope of the Standing Committee's work during that period.

Regulation 3.7.4.1(g) requires the Standing Committee to report its decisions to the Synod meeting. This report details decisions that have been made by the Standing Committee.

#### 1.4 Meetings

The Standing Committee has met face to face on nine occasions between April 2016 and 2017. Meetings were held at the Centre for Ministry commencing on Friday at 2pm to 9pm and continuing Saturday 9am to 12.30pm.

#### 1.5 Membership

The composition of the Standing Committee was last varied by the 2011 Synod to provide, inter alia, for each presbytery to have the opportunity to nominate one member as a consequence the membership of the comprises:

<b>Group A</b> refer Regulation 3.7.4.1 (a) (i) <b>(total 4)</b>	Moderator Ex Moderator Moderator Elect (where such a position exists) General Secretary
<b>Group B (total 4)</b>	Chair (or nominee) of each Synod Board
<b>Group C (total 16)</b>	One person from each Presbytery One person nominated by UAICC One person nominated by the Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group
<b>Group D (total 15)</b>	Persons elected based upon the requirements of the Regulations to achieve the necessary balance between Lay and Ordained members and also gender balance
<b>Total 39 (not including co-options)</b>	



## 1.6 Regular reporting

Standing Committee received regular reports from;

- Governance, Nomination Remuneration Committee (GNRC)
- Synod Risk Oversight Committee (SROC)
- Boards
- Social Justice Forum
- Royal Commission Task Group
- Moderator
- General Secretary/ Acting General Secretary//Acting Associate Secretary
- Mission and Property Review

## 1.7 Confidential matters

Over the period covered by this report, several confidential matters were dealt with and are recorded in the Minutes Apart held by the General Secretary.

## 1.8 Early Release of the General Secretary

Rev. Dr Andrew Williams concluded his role as General Secretary on 31 October 2016. The Standing Committee appointed Rev. Jane Fry as Acting General Secretary from 1 November, 2016 up to and including Synod 2017.

## 2. MATTERS REFERRED BY SYNOD 2016 TO STANDING COMMITTEE

The 2016 Synod meeting referred the following to the Standing Committee:

### 2.1 Approval of Synod 2016 minutes (Synod resolution 31/16S)

Standing Committee approved the Synod 2016 minutes and appendices in the June 2016 meeting (79/16SC)

### 2.2 Synod Meeting Date 2017 (Synod resolution 39/16S)

Standing Committee resolved the date for Synod 2017 in the October 2016 meeting (152/16SC)

### 2.3 Rural Ministry Unit – Saltbush (Synod resolution 41/16S)

Standing Committee resolved (146/16SC)

- receive the report;
- acknowledge that the funding of the Director for Rural and Remote Ministry position for only 1 year is not practical;
- revisit this issue and identify a way to sustainably fund the Saltbush Project as resolved by the Synod meeting of 2016;
- prioritise the commitment to the position of Director of Rural and Remote Ministry;
- authorise the release of up to \$250,000 toward the project over the next 5 years supplemental to NREMA and Price Trust Funds (\$350,000) currently identified by the future Growth fund;
- authorise Uniting Mission and Education to proceed to appoint the Director of Rural and Remote Ministry

## **2.4 The Call to Privatisise Prisons (Synod resolution 45/16S)**

Standing Committee resolved 28/17SC

- i. commends this revised and updated "Opposing private management of NSW prisons" to the NSW.ACT Synod Standing Committee, and,
- ii. requests the NSW Synod ask the Social Justice Forum to write to the Premier of NSW and the NSW Corrections Minister:
  - a. urging that the NSW Government halt any plans for further privatisation of prisons or prison services until:
    - i. Clearer and more compelling evidence is available regarding the claims that private prisons can deliver custodial services of the same or higher quality as public prisons but at a reduced cost and without other unintended negative consequences
    - ii. Mechanisms have been set in place to enable greater transparency of arrangements with private prison providers and greater accountability of those providers to the NSW Parliament.
  - b. seeking a meeting with the Premier's Office to discuss the underlying causes for the increased prison population and what strategies are needed to prevent and reduce crime and reduce recidivism. The Social Justice Forum will undertake to establish a suitable group of Church and expert representatives to participate in the meeting.

## **2.5 South Australia Synod Mission Networks Study & Recommendations (47/16S)**

Standing Committee resolved that no further action was required (109/16SC)

## **2.5 Open Space Technology (46/16S)**

Standing Committee received updates on projects and noted the success of the projects Walking on Bundjalung Country and Mobilising Ministry in the Bush

## **3. REPORT ON ACTIVITIES**

### **3.1 Auditors Report and Annual Reports**

Standing Committee received the 2016 Audited accounts for Uniting, UCTAL, Synod Operations (Secretariat, Uniting Mission and Education, Uniting Resources) and the Ministers Support Fund in December 2016 (177/16SC).

### **3.2 Appointment of the Synod Auditor**

The Standing Committee resolved (192/16SC) to accept the recommendation of the Synod Risk Oversight Committee to:

- i. authorise UR, UCTAL and Uniting to commence negotiations with KPMG for the purpose of extending the existing audit engagement for an additional three years and
- ii. authorise engagement letters to be signed on behalf of the Synod by Uniting Resources should a satisfactory arrangement be agreed by the three entities subject to final review by the Chair of the Synod Risk Oversight Committee

### **3.3 Synod Budget**

The Synod Budget remained an important and ongoing agenda item. The Standing Committee resolved

- i. approve the budgeted deficit of \$1.57M for the Synod in FY2018
- ii. request the Budget Steering Committee to continue its work and give immediate and careful attention to the matters identified in the review of the 2017-2018 budget and

- iii. bring a budget update to the March 2018 meeting of Synod Standing Committee that reflects the review in ii (above) as well as any proposed changes resulting from the Stepping Stones Project

Please refer to section 4.3 for further information on the Synod Budget Steering Committee.

### **3.4 Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (GNRC)**

GNRC reported at 8 of the 9 Standing Committee meetings. A summary of work undertaken includes:

#### **Governance**

- Recommended and implemented a reporting cycle and proforma questions for Board reporting (108/16SC)
- Oversighted the review of the General Secretary's Position Description (149/16SC and 13/17SC)
- Co-ordinated the Nominating Committee for the General Secretary
- Developed the proposed new structure of the Standing Committee (refer section 4).
- Oversight of revision of all By-Laws (on-going)
- Oversight of review of all existing Synod committees (ongoing)
- Oversight the commissioning of a Board Effectiveness Review for Uniting and Uniting Mission and Educations boards (90/17SC)

#### **Remuneration**

- Stipends 2016/17 (84/16SC) and 2017/18 (66/17SC)
- Recommended the changes to the structure of the housing allowance with effect from 1 July 2018 (66/17SC)

#### **Nominations**

- Provided oversight to all Synod Boards and key Committees appointments

### **3.5 Synod Risk and Oversight Committee (SROC)**

SROC reported at 5 out of 9 Standing Committee meetings. A summary of work undertaken includes:

- Review of SROC Charter with recommendation to be presented to SSC at its first full meeting after Synod 2017
- Completion of a peer review on SROC's performance and recommendations for improvement (which is to be presented to the first full SSC meeting after Synod 2017)
- Review of a Synod wide Risk Management Framework (RMF) and the commencement on developing a model with Uniting Resources (UR)
- Review of Uniting's Risk Management and Mitigation Policies, Procedures and Protocols as well as Uniting Financial Services (UFS) RMF. Also a review of UR's insurance coverage and capital asset management.
- Review of the risk management relationship between UFS and Uniting in the management of Uniting's liquid (cash) and equity investments; under management with UFS.
- Synod Preparation for Royal Commission and a review of the Uniting Church's Redress Scheme as applying to the NSW & ACT Synod..
- Review of Out of Home Care relating to both Uniting and Wesley Community Services (WCS).
- Review of WCS's Risk Management and Mitigation Policies, Procedures and Protocols with ongoing assessment of improvements to its RMF.

- Review of Uniting Mission and Education's (UME) Risk Management and Mitigation Policies, Procedures and Protocols; with particular emphasis on its oversight of Schools (e.g. outcomes of the Royal Commission)
- Review of Uniting's risk management and mitigation work and outcomes relating specifically to Uniting's restructure of relationships with Lifeline and Children Services (Locally Managed Child Care services).
- Review of UME's risk management over Schools and Colleges.
- Review of draft Incorporation policy relating to Schools under oversight of UME.
- Review of fraud policy and risk management by UFS.
- Review and oversight of the external audit process of the Synod and its boards and liaison with Board's Audit Committees and external auditor (KPMG). Includes the presentation of audited accounts to SSC.

In all the above SROC has provide advice and recommendations on how to improve risk management and mitigation as well as opportunities to assist Synod Boards and Councils to work in a productive and proficient manner with respect to risk management and mitigation. SROC would like to thank all stakeholders it has engaged with in the last 18 months for their diligence, professionalism and collaborative working approach when dealing and responding to SROC.

### **3.6 Royal Commission Task Group**

The Synod Royal Commission Task Group has responsibility to assist the Synod, its Councils, Ministers, Agencies and Schools to respond to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse within the framework established by the Assembly, and to provide leadership in enabling the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of NSW and the ACT, to be a safe place for children.

The Standing Committee received regular updates from the Task Group and approved a number of policies arising out of the work of the Task Group. These included resolved 186/16SC

- The Child Safe Church Policy for NSW.ACT congregations
- The Synod Guiding Principles for Responding to Civil Claims for Institutional Child Abuse;
- The Synod Persons of Concern – Creating a Safe Environment for Children and Vulnerable Adults in our Church Policy

### **3.7 Supply Ministry Policy**

Standing Committee on the recommendation of Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements endorsed the Supply Ministry Policy (156/16SC)

### **3.8 Legal Actions**

Standing Committee formally gives approval when the Moderator grants permission for legal actions this occurred in October 2016 and February 2017

### **3.9 Uniting – Future of Locally Managed Children Services**

Standing Committee resolved 148/16SC

- i. note the consultation and development work done by Uniting and representatives of the Locally Managed Children's Service network in the development of the Shared Governance and Management framework;
- ii. note the key features of the Shared Governance and Management framework including the tabled:
  - a. Joint Responsibility between Uniting and Local Governance Committee
  - b. Uniting Responsibility
  - c. Local Governance Committee Responsibility:
  - d. Escalation Process

- iii. approve the adoption of the outcomes of this work outlined in the Shared Governance and Management Framework as it applies to all 'Locally Managed Regulated Children Services' of the Uniting Church NSW & ACT. That this model be adopted in principle by each local management committee and their congregation by March 2017 (by agreement)
- iv. approve the transition of all current and future child-related work employees (as defined in Working With Children Check legislation) of Locally Managed Services to Uniting no later than October 2018
- v. the Standing Committee further approved the inclusion in the minutes of the below explanatory note

*The Standing Committee noted the advice of Uniting's board, that increasingly, their capacity to give continued assurance to the Synod about the robustness of the oversight of the systems governance in our current distributed risk governance and oversight model is challenging.*

*The proposal to move to a shared governance model as outlined in the report of participants is aimed at achieving an improved systems risk governance framework and one that Uniting's board proposes to continue to accept the delegated regulated responsibility as the Approved Provider including during the proposed transition period.*

*The model achieves this improvement by:*

- *direct line management and employment responsibility by Uniting for the key regulated employees in the services*
- *joint responsibility between Uniting and local management committee for establishing the Quality Plan*
- *continued role for local management committees to oversight and report on key risk indicators regarding quality and compliance*

*During the proposed transition period, increased risk oversight measures will be achieved through the further refinement of the model and through the collaborative engagement process that is contemplated.*

## 4. REVIEWS, TASK GROUPS AND PROPOSALS

### 4.1 Structure of Synod Standing Committee

In April 2017 the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) agreed, by consensus, to propose changes to the composition of the Synod Standing Committee (40/17SC).

#### Background

The composition of the SSC was last varied by the 2011 Synod to provide, among other factors, for each presbytery to have the opportunity to nominate one member of the SSC. In its present form the Standing Committee has 39 members (not including co-options).

The last two SSC elections have been characterised by significant difficulty in filling some quotas. In each instance it was necessary to issue multiple exhortations to the members of the Synod to consider nominating for the SSC.

This particularly applied to women; to "youthful" members; and non-Anglo members. In addition filling the role assigned to the Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group has also been problematic.

These challenges were magnified by the requirements of the By-Law which permits each presbytery to nominate an individual to the SSC. The mix of those nominated has had a disproportionate influence on the election process - primarily because Presbytery nominations have, in the main, comprised Anglo males and most typically ordained.

In addition younger members of Synod have been reluctant to offer themselves for election because of, variously, time pressures; lack of familiarity or comfort with the SSC processes.

Further, non-Anglo representation has been steadily falling at Synod. As a result GNRC has initiated a research project in an endeavour to better understand the reasons for that trend and to hopefully remedy the situation.

## Rationale

In presenting a case for change to SSC, the Governance, Nominations and Remuneration Committee suggested that the current size of the SSC was unwieldy from an operational perspective. GNRC also observed that the election process suffers because of the absence of a Skills matrix that reflects the mix of gifts, graces, skills and experience that would facilitate the SSC undertaking its increasingly complex role.

GNRC compared the current model to that followed in other Synods – details of which are shown below. Overall the NSW & ACT model is at variance to our sister Synods in matters such as absolute size, utilisation of a pro-forma representation model and the requirement for age and ethnic quotas.

Synod	Membership
Synod Victoria and Tasmania  <b>Total membership 22</b>	Moderator, Past Moderator, Moderator Elect and General Secretary  Congress        2 Elected        16
Synod Queensland  <b>Total membership 19</b>	Moderator, Past Moderator, Moderator Elect and General Secretary  Congress        1 Board Chairs    4 Elected        10
Synod South Australia  <b>Total membership 19</b>	Moderator, Past Moderator, Moderator Elect and General Secretary Property Officer Congress        1 Elected        13
Synod Western Australia  <b>Total membership 10</b>	Moderator, Past Moderator, Moderator Elect and General Secretary  Congress        2 Elected        4

Interestingly, the SSC is the only Standing Committee that ‘guarantees’ nominated members of another Council a position on the Standing Committee. This protocol does not apply for the Assembly Standing Committee (albeit each Synod must be represented) and does not apply to Presbytery Standing Committees. The necessity for each Presbytery to have a ‘nominee representative’ on SSC is not readily apparent – especially given the increasing effectiveness of the periodic meetings of Presbytery Chairs with the Associate Secretary which serves to provide a conduit between the Synod and the Presbyteries.

While there is no ‘absolute science’ attaching to the composition of SSC, it was concluded that there would be benefit in recommending to the Synod that the structure and size of the SSC be varied along the following lines

Moderator	1
Past Moderator	1
Moderator Elect (if position current)	1
General Secretary	1
Chairs of Synod Boards	4
Nominee of UAICC	1
Elected by the Synod	12 persons with no categorisation or qualification beyond the necessity to meet the requirements of the Regulations

**In total the SSC would comprise 20 or 21 persons.**

The By-Laws would specify that no Presbytery may have more than 3 elected members.

Each person elected would ideally be required to receive no less than 50% of the votes cast - as measured by the number of Synod members who actually voted.

Careful attention to the published details of each applicant should allow Synod members to apply considered discernment of the prospective SSC members without the necessity to rely upon quotas for individual categories of membership.

Refer to Proposal 17

#### **4.2 Korean Presbytery Task Group**

Synod 2011 resolved to review the Korean Presbytery no later than 2017 (154/11S). The Standing Committee appointed the Review Team in August 2016 (111/16SC) and approved the Terms of Reference in October 2016 (155/16SC). The Review team presented to the Standing Committee in June and August 2017 with the matter being referred to the Synod Business Committee.

Refer to Proposal 11

#### **4.3 Synod Budget Steering Committee**

Standing Committee established a Synod Budget Steering Committee in August 2016 (104/16SC). This Committee was tasked with providing whole of church oversight for the Budget process and coordinating a number of tasks associated with the Synod budget.

- i. appoint a Steering Committee to oversight and coordinate a number of tasks and projects associated with addressing the current budget position;
- ii. appoint the following members:
  - Executive Sponsor: General Secretary
  - Chair of the GNRC (Chairperson)



- One representative from each Board
- 4 nominees, including one Presbytery member, of the SSC
  - Rev Lindsay Cullen
  - Rev Tara Curlewis
  - Mr David Barrow

iii. request the Steering Committee report at each meeting of the SSC;

This included the development of the Stewardship Contribution (34/17SC) as detailed below:

- i. the introduction of a contribution program consisting of a land based levy on Institutions and Schools and a budgeted contribution program for other entities to be phased in from 1 July 2017 for three years or until the Synod's 10 year plan is completed inclusive of a long term funding approach
- ii. the annualised target for the contribution program in FY18 of \$5M
- iii. subject to legal advice and appropriate communications, the commencement date for the contribution program being:
  - a. Institutions: 1 July 2017
  - b. Schools: 1 January 2018
  - c. Church: 1 July 2018
- iv. the levy for Institutions and Schools in year one (FY18) be set at 0.3% of unimproved land value and there-after indexed annually at the lower of CPI or 3%

and

That Synod Standing Committee:

- i. request Presbyteries to engage with and support the budgeted contribution program, providing guidance to the appropriate request from each Congregation based on the understanding of the life of each Congregation
- ii. authorise the General Secretary to approve the Communications Plan as referred to the General Secretary by the Budget Steering Committee
- iii. request that the Communications Plan be tabled at the June SSC

#### **4.4 The Synod Ministry of Pastor Committee**

This Committee was established to oversee the Ministry of Pastors process within the Synod (Reg 2.3.3 (c))

Standing Committee resolved 161/16SC

- i. receive the report
- ii. approve the Terms of Reference for the Synod Ministry of Pastor Committee;
- iii. appoint the following as members of the Synod Ministry of Pastor Committee:
  - Presbytery representative: Rev. Kevin Dilks
  - Agency representative: Rev. Jorge Rebolledo
  - Current Pastor: Ms Joanna Drayton
- iv. note the nomination of the following UME representatives:

- Rev. Duncan Macleod
- Rev. Bronwyn Murphy

#### 4.5 Presbytery Task Group Report

Standing Committee resolved 86/16SC

- receive this report
- rescind parts (iii) and (iv) of the Synod Standing Committee resolution 146/15SC.
- suspend the work of the Presbytery Task Group at this time and thank and discharge the committee
- request the General Secretary to write to all Presbytery secretaries noting that the Presbytery Task Group has been discharged (by agreement)

### 5. CONSTITUTIONS

The Constitution Committee meets quarterly to review and revise constitutions from the many UCA entities.

Constitutions approved

- UCA Jingi Wala Foundation name change (168/16SC)

### 6. OTHER DECISIONS TO BE REPORTED

#### 6.1 Pathways and Stepping Stones Projects

Standing Committee endorsed both the Pathways and Stepping Projects.  
Refer to 14 and 15 .(LINK)

#### 6.2 Synod Mission Plan 2015 -2017

Synod 2014 approved the Synod Mission Plan (166/14S), updates were received at Standing Committee meetings through 2015 and 2016.

#### 6.3 Lifeline Australia Update

Standing Committee resolved 38/17SC i

- notes the decision of Lifeline Northern Rivers, Lifeline Newcastle & Hunter, and Lifeline Central Coast to Lifeline Direct (supported by the decision of the Uniting board) to each transfer their operations to Lifeline Direct, subject to the following terms;
  - the Transaction can only occur when Lifeline Direct has been established, and endorsed as a Public Benevolent Institution (PBI) in order to be an eligible recipient of assets and operations under the respective and currently operating constitutions, but no later than 1 July 2017;
  - the Transaction be subject to terms and conditions to be incorporated into the required Transaction documents (including, but not limited to, the Lifeline Direct Operational Framework and satisfactory lease terms being entered into for any real property held by the Property Trust);
  - further work is to be undertaken to determine the future arrangements for the real property, including lease arrangements for the continued occupation of Lifeline Direct
- determines that:
- to the extent that the Synod has authority to authorise the transaction in the absence of the relevant board being in a position to do so, then the Standing Committee delegates to Uniting the authority to authorise the transaction for the purpose of executing the agreement to give effect to the transaction;
  - upon completion of the Transaction:

- a. Lifeline Northern Rivers, Lifeline Newcastle & Hunter, and Lifeline Central Coast operations will cease to be recognised as an Institution of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod NSW and the ACT (as contemplated in the Regulations); and
- b. the current constitutions and unincorporated bodies of Lifeline Northern Rivers, Lifeline Newcastle & Hunter, and Lifeline Central Coast will be wound up, contemplating that the role of current Board members will cease