



Royal Commission National Task Group

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That the Assembly resolve:

- (a) To reaffirm the Values Statement made at the commencement of the Royal Commission's work as a guiding values statement for the Uniting Church's ongoing response.
- (b) To note
 - i. the work done to ensure the Uniting Church participates in providing consistent just and equitable Redress;
 - ii. the work towards the creation of a Safe Church Unit in the Uniting Church; and
 - iii. the progress report on the Professional Standards Project.
- (c) To delegate responsibility for the oversight and final approval of the National Professional Standards to the Standing Committee.
- (d) To request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to make changes which it deems necessary to the Regulations to implement policies and practices in response to any recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

Proposer: Colleen Geyer

Seconder: Peter Jones

Rationale:

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (the Commission) completed its work, delivering its final report on 15 December 2017. From the establishment of the Commission the Uniting Church – as a major provider of care for children in institutions (past and present) and through its congregational life - sought to constructively respond to and engage with the Commission. This included participation in Public Hearings, making written submissions to Issues Papers and responding to major reports from the Commission.

Part of the Commission's mandate was to consider and recommend "what institutions and governments should do better to protect children against child sexual abuse and related matters in institutional contexts in the future". Within the Commission's 17-volume report, a range of recommendations was made in this regard which the Uniting Church is working through. These recommendations, depending upon the way in which the Church seeks to implement them, may require consequential amendments to regulations in order to come into effect.

The Standing Committee is only able to amend Regulations when it has a remit from the triennial Assembly to do so. As was the case in the last triennium, it remains unclear where new Regulations will be required if the Uniting Church is to respond to the work of the Commission. Therefore, as the Fourteenth Assembly resolved to authorise the Standing Committee to make changes to the Regulations, the Uniting Church needs to stand ready to respond to steps which the Commission may recommend and/or which government/s may impose, and not need to wait until the next Assembly to be in a position to respond.