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- FOR THE WHOLE CREATION
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<tr>
<td>1. June 1977 <em>Sydney</em></td>
<td>J Davis McCaughey</td>
<td>Winston O’Reilly</td>
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<td>4. May 1985 <em>Sydney</em></td>
<td>Ian Tanner</td>
<td>David Gill</td>
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<td>7. July 1994 <em>Sydney</em></td>
<td>Jill Tabart</td>
<td>Gregor Henderson</td>
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<td>11. July 2006 <em>Brisbane</em></td>
<td>Gregor Henderson</td>
<td>Terence Corkin</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. July 2009 <em>Sydney</em></td>
<td>Alistair Macrae</td>
<td>Terence Corkin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. July 2012 <em>Adelaide</em></td>
<td>Andrew Dutney</td>
<td>Terence Corkin</td>
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The Fifteenth Assembly began on 8 July 2018 when voting members from across the country and guests from overseas and Australia, representing churches and ecumenical bodies, met at the Box Hill Town Hall in Melbourne. We were welcomed to the country of the Wurundjeri people by Aunty Georgina Nicholson. Opening prayers and business were led by outgoing President Stuart McMillan, including the important business of electing Dr Deidre Palmer as the 15th President of the Uniting Church.

Members and guests gathered at St Michaels Uniting Church in the city for the Opening Worship of the Assembly and the Installation of the President. Also present were additional representatives from other churches, faith communities and the wider membership of the Uniting Church. The richness of the worship was a prelude to the rhythm that worship would provide to the Assembly meeting, weaving prayer and praise through the business, and calling the Assembly to focus on the presence of God in all that was considered, discussed and agreed. The theme for the Assembly and the coming triennium - Abundant Grace, Liberating Hope – was introduced and explored in the sermon preached by Dr Palmer on John 4:1-42 Jesus and the Woman of Samaria.

Throughout the Assembly, in addition to the contribution of the voting members and various guests, the Assembly was most helpfully resourced by the many people who led the community working groups, Chaplains, people associated for particular business and the wonderful volunteers who supported us most impressively with transport, guidance and, in everything, encouraging us with a welcome smile. We were also kept warm by the many scarves and hats knitted lovingly for Assembly members and visitors by members of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. Behind the scenes Mr Geoffrey Grinton, the Business Manager, ensured that we stayed on track with the agenda and that we were always aware of what had been decided and what remained to be done. Once again the Facilitation Group greatly assisted the Assembly and made a significant contribution in the journey towards consensus.

Every Assembly is more than a business meeting. Meetings of the Assembly are gatherings of Christians called and equipped by God for the task of discernment and leadership within a specific area of the life of the Uniting Church that is our national Council. This life of Christian community and openness to the leading of the Spirit was resourced by early morning Holy Communion, three full services of worship including the installation of the President and the closing service with the Eucharist as well as worship interwoven throughout the days and Bible study. The Bible studies were led by Rev Dr Sef Carroll from UnitingWorld and Rev James Bhagwan from the Methodist Church in Fiji.

Rev Dr Ken Carter, Presiding Bishop of the United Methodist Church in the US state of Florida, brought the Cato Lecture to the Assembly. Interacting with the theme of the Assembly, Bishop Carter reminded us that God is still speaking, to the church and to the world, and invited us to take a stance of convicted humility as we are present with each other, seeking to be a servant church in the public space. The Assembly is particularly appreciative of the support of the Cato Trustees in making this internationally renowned speaker available to the Assembly.

One of the very memorable features of the Fifteenth Assembly was the significant engagement with our overseas visitors and the Australian ecumenical guests who journeyed with us for the whole meeting. Their presence, conversations and encouragement assisted us to locate our very specific work within the context of the worldwide and ecumenical life of the one holy, catholic and apostolic church.

Youthful members of the Assembly were also very prominent in their leadership and were a great encouragement to the other members of the Assembly, bringing wisdom and hope.

The Assembly addressed itself to many issues that will have ongoing significance for the life and witness of the Church. These included a significant decision that the Uniting Church in honouring our diversity would recognise two statements of belief on marriage; an affirmation that First Peoples are sovereign in this land, understanding sovereignty as a spiritual notion, as well as traditional ownership and custodianship of the land; a commitment to stand with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in a Day of Mourning on the Sunday prior to Australia Day; to adopt a statement on Domestic and Family Violence and to develop educational and theological materials; to adopt a Statement of Access and Welcome and develop disability access guidelines for use in Uniting Church
events and meetings; to work with First Peoples in Australia and our Church partners to understand the impacts of climate change on traditional, spiritual and contemporary ways of life, as well as actions to address it; to explore the reception and endorsement of specific statements and documents of ‘continuing witnesses’ to which the Uniting Church would turn and listen; to support in prayers and partnership work towards a peaceful Korean peninsula; and to pray for God’s wisdom and openness for the Australian Roman Catholic 2020 Plenary Council.

Rev Sharon Hollis was elected as the President-elect. Rev Hollis is the first ordained woman to be elected to this position by the Uniting Church.

In the pages that follow you will find the record of the formal resolutions and actions of the Assembly. Present among these words are the prayers and the discussions that undergird them as a witness to a community that was seeking to faithfully fulfil its calling as the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Grace and Peace

Colleen Geyer
Assembly General Secretary
MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH ASSEMBLY

The Fifteenth Assembly, meeting in Box Hill, Victoria, at the Box Hill Town Hall, was formally opened at 2.00pm on 8th July 2018 by prayer led by the President, Mr Stuart McMillan. A welcome to country was given by Aunty Georgina Nicholson who greeted the Assembly members, guests and visitors on behalf of the Wurundjeri people.

OPENING ACTIONS

INSTALLATION OF THE PRESIDENT

The Assembly convened at St Michael's Uniting Church, Melbourne, at 7:00pm on 8th July 2018 in a public worship service to formally install its President, Dr Deidre Palmer.

The Assembly resolved:

18.01 ROLL OF THE ASSEMBLY (See Appendix A) to adopt the roll of members.

18.02 ELECTION OF PRESIDENT to elect Deidre Edith Palmer as President of the Assembly, to hold office until the installation of her successor at the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly.

18.03 ASSEMBLY PROCEDURES

18.03.01 Appointment of Minute Secretaries to appoint the following persons as Minute Secretaries: Jenny Bertalan and Kathryn D’Alessandro.

18.03.02 Order of Business to approve the order of business and the timetable submitted by the Business Committee, noting that decisions to vary the order of business and timetable can be taken by the Assembly at any time.

18.03.03 Confirmation of the Minutes to authorise the following persons to confirm the minutes of the Fifteenth Assembly: Colleen Geyer, Deidre Palmer, Geoffrey Grinton and Mark Lawrence.

18.03.04 Ballots and Nominating Procedures

(a) to appoint Robert Johnson as Returning Officer and Rod Mummery as Assistant Returning Officer;

(b) to appoint a Ballot Committee with responsibility for advising the Assembly on any questions relating to nominations and elections;

(c) to appoint the following persons as members of the Ballot Committee: Robert Johnson (Convenor), Rod Mummery (Assistant Returning Officer), Rohan Pryor and Zac Hatfield Dodds;

(d) to appoint the following persons as scrutineers: Alan Chuck, Daniel Jackson, Clare Ligtermoet, Scott McDonald, Graham Perry, Jenny Preston and Elaine Rae; and

(e) to determine that the closing time for nominations is 9.00am Tuesday 10 July 2018.

18.03.05 Association of Persons with the Assembly to associate the following persons with the Assembly for the business as listed, with the right to speak but not to vote:

(a) Ecumenical guests, from other Australian churches and the National Council of Churches in Australia for the whole Assembly:
Mr Peter Schirmer, Lutheran Church of Australia
Fr George El-Khoury, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Arch of Australia

(b) from overseas churches and from international ecumenical bodies for the whole of the Assembly:

Rev Ming Liang, China Christian Council
Rev Mata Makara, Cook Islands Christian Church
Rev Petesa Sionetuato, Congregation Christian Church of Niue
Rev Lorenzo Dos Santos, Protestant Church in Timor Leste
Rev James Bhagwan, Methodist Church in Fiji
Bishop Solomon Zwana, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
Rev Ki Hak Choi, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Mrs Cindy Vanuaroro, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
Rev Hray Cholakian, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East
Rev David Garunu, United Church in Solomon Islands
Rev Nyoman Agustinus, Protestant Christian Church in Indonesia
Rev Elifas Tomix Maspaitella, Protestant Church in Maluku
Rev Utux Lbak, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
Rev Elder Tautiaga Senara, Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
Mr Makoto Kato, The United Church of Christ in Japan
Rev Richard Dawson, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
Rev Prince Devanandan, Methodist Church of New Zealand
Rev Vinod Victor, Church of South India

(c) persons who will assist in resourcing the Assembly for the whole of the Assembly:

Ms Claerwen Little for UnitingCare Australia
Dr Sureka Goringe for UnitingWorld
Ms Jannine Jackson for Frontier Services
Mr Leo Iosifidis for Strategic Finance and Administration
Rev Lindsay Cullen for Assembly Resourcing Unit
Rev Dr Apwee Ting for Assembly Resourcing Unit
Rev Charissa Suli for Assembly Resourcing Unit
Rev John Cox for National Task Group Task Group on Engagement with and Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse

(d) persons who will assist in resourcing the Assembly for specific business of the Assembly:

Ms Margaret Pedler for UC Adult Fellowship
Rev Dr Murray Earl for Defence Force Chaplaincy
Mr Bruce Binnie for Mercer Superannuation Trust
Rev Robert Elkhuizen for Mercer Superannuation Trust
Mr Jim Mein for Frontier Services
Ms Susan Stork-Finlay for matters related to Disability Access Guidelines
Rev (Deacon) Andy Calder for matters related to Disability Access Guidelines

18.04 MINISTERIAL MATTERS (See Appendix B)
The General Secretary tabled the names of Deacons and Ministers of the Word who have been ordained or admitted by the Uniting Church since the Fourteenth Assembly, of Ministers of the Word, Deaconesses who have died since the Fourteenth Assembly, and of Ministers of the Word whose recognition has been withdrawn since the Fourteenth Assembly.
The Assembly resolved:

**18.05 RETIRING PRESIDENT**

(a) to receive the report of the retiring President, Stuart McMillan;

(b) to record its deep thankfulness to God for the ministry of Stuart McMillan during his term as 14th President of the Uniting Church in Australia (2015-2018), and its deep thankfulness to Stuart for his gifted, faithful, and wise leadership of the Church.

For the past three years the Uniting Church has been extremely well served, well loved, and well represented by the passionate, joyful, wise and faithful national leadership of Stuart McMillan. As President, Stuart was called to give spiritual guidance and encouragement to the whole Church and to be its representative, tasks which are deep and wide, and ask for the capacity to hold the whole of the church on the horizon. For some, this might mean that one sees and lives primarily at the high level, but in Stuart’s ministry we have seen something quite different – a deeply relational, personal, and pastoral way with people. To meet him is to be seen and known. This has been the great gift of Stuart’s character and leadership style that has encompassed so much of his ministry, so many of the tasks of his Presidency, and all that follows.

The call of God upon the Church to be a community of reconciliation has in no small way been embodied in Stuart’s genuine heart for Australia’s First Peoples, and commitment to the ministry of the UAICC. Few will forget his installation in Perth in 2015, shared with First Peoples in North East Arnhem Land, a deeply symbolic moment which many of us felt we were privileged to witness. Yet it would prove to be more than just a moment. Rather it was a sign of what would continue to be an enduring priority of the triennium and Stuart himself, to remind the Uniting Church that to be an authentically Australian movement is to place First Peoples at the heart of its being.

He himself embodied this. He has walked alongside Congress, from its leadership and elders to its emerging young people, expressed his own deep appreciation for country and culture, and allowed space and time that the wisdom of First Peoples might be heard in meaningful ways. His leadership has been especially significant as the Church has entered more intentionally into grappling with sovereignty and treaty, entailing both pain and hope. All the time he has persisted in calling us to a fuller living out of the Covenant in real terms – rooted always first in relationship and embedded into life.

Stuart has also continually nurtured and rejoiced in our broader cultural diversity, seeking for us priorities and leadership to reflect the make-up of the Church itself and the nation. He has raised the voice and profile of multi- and cross-cultural ministries and communities as a rich, joyful, and growing edge which may challenge complacency and even fear of the future. In Stuart’s ministry we have been pointed again towards the unity and wholeness we know is ours in Christ, who brings back together ‘all the broken and dislocated pieces of the universe’ (Col. 1:18-20). In his own words to the Assembly Standing Committee, “The Spirit I believe is drawing us into a deeper, richer relationship, transforming us into a truly intercultural community. Thanks be to God.”

Stuart has been a voice in the public sphere in which the Uniting Church could feel confident and proud. He has faithfully represented us many times over in the media, in the halls of government, and to our brothers, sisters, and friends, in other churches and in other faiths. He
has spoken on our behalf with clarity and grace, addressing in both word and deed the moment in which we live, from justice for First Peoples to justice for refugees, climate change and care for creation, violence, inequality, conflict in places like Korea, Syria, and South Sudan, and the creeping edges of racism and fear wherever these have emerged in the discourse of the nation.

The UCA was extremely well-served by the open and humble way Stuart engaged on its behalf with the work of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, a deeply fraught moment, yet welcomed as an essential correction to unresolved injustice and pain. Never shying away from this or any other issue with the potential to hurt or divide, he has walked at our pace, inviting us into difficult conversations, calling us to prayer, and navigating our diversity with what one Moderator has called, a 'courageous fairness'. There have been none to whom he has been closed.

At a time when the energy around our Church feels like ferment, a discerning anew of the shape of the future into which it might move with integrity and in faith, Stuart spoke into our life with gentle reflection, humour, and truth. It was always born of genuinely investing himself in people and communities of faith in every place where he has listened for our heartbeat and the state of our spirit. He has companioned our regional and national leaders, shared with people at the grassroots, supported, encouraged and gathered with young people, and encountered us all personally as individuals who are worthy of his time, attention and care.

Through him we have heard again the prophetic call to be a Church living out from its centre, serving the other and the world; one that resists self-preservation; one that entrusts the future to God. All of this clearly stems from his own deep love for our Church and capacity to envision a future of hope and renewal, which finds its raw material in the community we are now.

Whether speaking within or without, Stuart professed the faith of the church with theological insight which never dealt in abstractions. It dealt always in the living Christ discerned among us, known in our experience, and confessed in the way we live with each other and in the world. In his ministry we along with others have heard and seen a gospel for the wholeness of life, drawing people from the margins; the gentle healing of the Spirit for the broken places, and the kind of hope which always sees first in the light of who God is. These are clearly a reflection of his own deep faith and spiritual life, marked by a desire for restorative justice, compassion, and peace.

Stuart has spoken on several occasions of the immense privilege it has been to be invited into people’s lives as a minister, and then as President. The Uniting Church has been immensely privileged too, as he has led us without ever holding leadership too tightly, and under this leadership we have been empowered to live more fully and faithfully into what we are and ought to be: embodying the fullness of God’s image poured out in creation. Truly intergenerational, truly intercultural, finding our common ground in the Love which holds all things together.

As always, all of this comes at a cost. The Presidency is a sacrificial calling, demanding much of Stuart but also those close to him. We give thanks also for the love, support, generosity and understanding of Ros, and of James and Christine, Liana and Gav, and their children. We also know that the ministry of the people of God in church and world
has no conclusion, and we wait in hope with them all for what is next in store.

For all that Stuart is, all he has been during the period of his Presidency, and all he will continue to be beyond, we can only express our deep gratitude. We thank him for his energy, his passion, his friendship, for genuinely rejoicing in who we are, and for all those things which have gone unthanked and unseen. We commend him now into the love of his family, the ongoing love of this Church, and the loving embrace of God which encircles and holds him now and forever.

BUSINESS FROM THE ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

The Assembly resolved:

18.06 Domestic and Family Violence
18.06.01 to adopt the Statement on Domestic and Family Violence (See Appendix C);
18.06.02 to acknowledge and lament the presence of Domestic and Family Violence within the church including in the Uniting Church; the role some theologies have played in its legitimation and that Christian communities have sometimes failed to acknowledge the presence of such violence in their midst and respond appropriately;
18.06.03 to affirm the work being done by:
   (a) Agencies of the Uniting Church in addressing Domestic and Family Violence;
   (b) Congregations, ministry agents and members of the Uniting Church who are compassionately responding to people affected by Domestic and Family Violence; and
   (c) Uniting Church theological colleges in their formation of people for ministry which supports and encourages mutually respectful relationships between women and men; and
18.06.04 to request the Assembly Standing Committee, liaising with other parts of the Church, to:
   (a) create educational, theological and liturgical materials for distribution to the wider church within the current triennium to resource the Church to meet these commitments; and
   (b) encourage Uniting Church members, synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies, theological colleges and schools to carry out the commitments found in the Statement.

18.07 Marriage and Same-gender Relationships
18.07.01 to acknowledge:
   (a) that within the Uniting Church there is a diversity of religious beliefs and ethical understandings, developed through continuing faithful discernment and held with integrity on matters relating to sexuality and marriage; and
   (b) that marriage is a gift God has given to humankind for the well-being of the whole human family;
18.07.02 to determine that the Church is able to accept this diversity within its life and make the decisions necessary to enable its ministry and members to act with integrity in accordance with their beliefs;
to vary its policy on marriage by recognising two statements of belief:

(a) the belief expressed in the 1997 statement on marriage as follows:

“Marriage for Christians is the freely given consent and commitment in public and before God of a man and a woman to live together for life. It is intended to be the faithful lifelong union of a woman and a man expressed in every part of their life together. In marriage, the man and the woman seek to encourage and enrich each other through love and companionship.

In the marriage service:
- The woman and man make a public covenant with each other and with God, in the company of family and friends;
- The couple affirm their trust in each other and in God;
- The Church affirms the sanctity of marriage and nurtures those who pledge themselves to each other in marriage and calls upon all people to support, uphold and nurture those who pledge themselves to each other in marriage.

Where sexual union takes place the partners seek to express mutual delight, pleasure and tenderness, thus strengthening the union of their lives together.

In marriage, children may be born and are to be brought up in love and security thus providing a firm foundation for society”.

(b) the belief expressed in the following statement on marriage:

“Marriage for Christians is the freely given consent and commitment in public and before God of two people to live together for life. It is intended to be the faithful lifelong union of two people expressed in every part of their life together. In marriage, the two people seek to encourage and enrich each other through love and companionship.

In the marriage service:
- The two people make a public covenant with each other and with God, in the company of family and friends;
- The couple affirm their trust in each other and in God;
- The Church affirms the sanctity of marriage and nurtures those who pledge themselves to each other in marriage and calls upon all people to support, uphold and nurture those who pledge themselves to each other in marriage.

Where sexual union takes place the partners seek to express mutual delight, pleasure and tenderness, thus strengthening the union of their lives together.

In marriage, children may be born and are to be brought up in love and security thus providing a firm foundation for society”.

18.07.04 to affirm that Ministers and celebrants authorised by the Uniting Church in Australia may exercise freedom to decide whether the minister’s or celebrant’s religious beliefs allow the minister or celebrant to accept requests to celebrate marriages, as authorised under the Marriage Act and according to the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia;

18.07.05 to request the Assembly Officers to arrange for the preparation of an additional authorised marriage liturgy which reflects the understanding of marriage as outlined in the marriage statement contained in Assembly Minute
18.07.03(b) for approval by the Standing Committee at its August 2018 meeting, for use according to the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia;

18.07.06 to note that Church Councils:
(a) have the authority under Regulation 4.4.1 to permit or refuse the use of any property held for the use of the Congregation for the celebration of marriages, as authorised under the Marriage Act and according to the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia; and
(b) do not have the authority to require a Minister in placement in their Congregation or to prevent a Minister in their Congregation from celebrating marriages as authorised under the Marriage Act and according to the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia; and

18.07.08 to request the Standing Committee, taking account of advice from the Assembly Legal Reference Committee, to consider and take such action as it considers appropriate, including (if necessary) the making of additional Regulations, to enable Church Councils acting under Regulation 4.4.1 to make decisions regarding use of property for celebrating marriages, in conformity with one of the statements of belief recognised in Assembly Minute 18.07.03(a) and (b).

18.08 Royal Commission into Institutional Response to Child Sexual Abuse National Task Group

18.08.01 to reaffirm the Values Statement (https://assembly.uca.org.au/rcvalues) made at the commencement of the Royal Commission’s work as a guiding values statement for the Uniting Church’s ongoing response;

18.08.02 to note
(a) the work done to ensure the Uniting Church participates in providing consistent just and equitable Redress;
(b) the work towards the creation of a Safe Church Unit in the Uniting Church; and
(c) the progress report on the Professional Standards Project.

18.08.03 to delegate responsibility for the oversight and final approval of the National Professional Standards to the Standing Committee; and

18.08.04 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.

18.09 Recognition of First Peoples as Sovereign
In the light of:
(a) the Preamble to the Constitution of the Uniting Church which defines sovereignty to be the way in which First Peoples understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians; and
(b) the Statement from the Heart’s acknowledgment that sovereignty is a spiritual notion, reflecting the ancestral tie between the land and First Peoples;

to affirm that the First Peoples of Australia, the Aboriginal and Islander Peoples, are sovereign peoples in this land.
MINUTES OF APPRECIATION

18.10.01 to place on record its deep appreciation for the contribution the following people have made to the life of the Uniting Church (See Appendix D):

- Mr Craig Mitchell, National Director, Formation, Education and Discipleship
- Rev Dr Chris Walker, National Consultant, Worship, Doctrine and Christian Unity
- Rev Elenie Poulos, National Director, UnitingJustice Australia
- Rev Tom Kerr, National Faith Development Consultant – Youth and Young Adults
- Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director, UnitingCare Australia
- Mr Peter Bicknell, Chairperson, UnitingCare Australia
- Mr Rob Floyd, National Director, UnitingWorld
- Rev John Ruhle, Chairperson, UnitingWorld, Relief and Development National Committee
- Mr Peter Andrews, Chairperson, Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
- Rev Dr John Evans, Chairperson, Admission of Ministers Committee
- Rev Dr Kaye Roberts-Thomson, Chairperson, Education for Ministry Working Group
- Rev Alistair Macrae, Convenor, National Working Group on Doctrine
- Rev Michael Barnes, Convenor, Relations with Other Faiths Working Group
- Rev Dr Morag Logan, Convenor, Christian Unity Working Group
- Rev Dr Graham Vawser, Convenor, National Working Group on Worship
- Rev Dr Ian Price, Convenor, Formation, Education and Discipleship Reference Committee
- Rev Ki Soo Jang, Chairperson, Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry Reference Committee

18.10.02 to thank and record its appreciation for the work of members of Assembly Working Groups as they have provided reflection, leadership and advice to the Standing Committee, Synods, Presbyteries and Congregations. Often unseen by the vast majority of the members of our Church, these dedicated people have given their time and energy, often in unmeasured amounts, to provide guidance in many different areas. As the Assembly moves to a new way of working, we now thank those who have been members of:

- Working Group on Doctrine
- Working Group on Worship
- Formation, Education and Discipleship Reference Committee
- Relations with Other Faiths Working Group
- Christian Unity Working Group
- Education for Ministry Working Group
- Assembly Admission of Ministers Committee
- Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Ministry National Reference Committee
- Uniting Justice Australia Reference Committee

BUSINESS FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

Members engaged with Assembly agencies through a number of small-group presentations. Agency representatives addressed the more frequent and wider ranging questions in two plenary sessions.

The Assembly resolved:

18.11 RECEPTION OF REPORTS

to receive the following reports of Agencies and Working Groups:

B05: Admission of Ministers
B07: Church Polity Reference Committee
B08: Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee  
B09: Education for Ministry Working Group  
B10: Frontier Services  
B11: Uniting Church National History Society  
B13: UC Adult Fellowship  
B14: UnitingCare Australia  
B15: UnitingWorld  
B16: Assembly Resourcing Unit  
B16A: UnitingJustice Australia  
B17: Working Group on Worship  
B18: Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry National Reference Committee  
B19: Christian Unity Working Group  
B20: Formation, Education and Discipleship  
B21: Relations with Other Faiths Working Group  
B22: National Disaster Recovery

18.12 ASSEMBLY RESOURCING UNIT

The Assembly resolved:

18.12.01 For the Whole Creation
18.12.01.01 to acknowledge the Church’s past and continuing commitment to addressing climate change (Appendix E);
18.12.01.02 to request the Assembly Resourcing Unit to develop the contents of proposal 19 as brought to the 15th Assembly as a discussion paper that contributes to this ongoing commitment;
18.12.01.03 to acknowledge with thanks the long history of advocacy and practical action on climate change carried out by the Uniting Church, including its synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies, schools and members;
18.12.01.04 to work with First Peoples in Australia and our church partners in the Pacific, Africa and Asia and other faiths to together understand the impacts of climate change on traditional, spiritual and contemporary ways of life;
18.12.01.05 to encourage Uniting Church members, synods, presbyteries, congregations, agencies and schools to:
(a) continue to inform themselves and their communities about the causes and consequences of climate change and appropriate responses;
(b) advocate for government policies and political action to address climate change;
(c) listen to and learn from the voices of vulnerable people across the world who are experiencing firsthand the impact of climate change;
(d) consider ways we can reduce our contribution to climate change, individually and in our communities, set meaningful targets and be transparent with our efforts and outcomes; and
(e) tell stories of best practice across remote, rural and urban areas;
18.12.01.06 to request the Standing Committee to consider specific actions, resourcing and ways of connecting practically with other councils to address issues related to climate change.
MULTICULTURAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL REFERENCE COMMITTEE

18.13 The Assembly resolved:

18.13.01 Peace Treaty between Republic of Korea and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

- to welcome the peaceful communications between Government leaders of Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), and the Panmunjom Declaration 2018, and to pray for the continued peaceful communication, development of a Peace Treaty and the normalisation of relations between ROK and DPRK;

- to support the engagement of the Korean Christian Federation (KCF) in DPRK through World Council of Churches Ecumenical Forum for Korea (EFK) and National Council of Churches in Korea (NCCK), and to encourage Uniting World to represent the UCA’s interests in this as they are able;

- to support the World Council of Churches in their ongoing involvement in work towards a Peace Treaty between the two Koreas;

- to encourage the Australian Government in their work towards a peaceful Korean Peninsula; and

- to write to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to inform them of this resolution.

18.14 National Conference Conversations with UAICC

- to refer Proposal 45 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

  That the Assembly resolve:

  (a) To request the General Secretary, within the next triennium, to establish a process by which facilitated conversations can be held with National Conferences about Sovereignty and Treaty and what it means to be Second Peoples.

  (b) To request the Assembly Resourcing Unit, working with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), to create opportunities and processes to encourage and develop covenant relationships between UAICC and National Conferences, noting that these covenants could include:
      - opportunity for National Cross-Cultural workshops;
      - the development of Reconciliation Action Plans; and
      - opportunities to be part of ‘Walking on Country’ experiences with Congress members.

18.15 Recognition of UCA languages

- to refer Proposal 36 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

  That the Assembly resolve:

  To request the Standing Committee:

  (a) To develop a process to recognise languages other than English (including languages of First Peoples) in order to:
      (i) As a first priority, normalise their use in requirements related to the Placement of Ministers and the Admission of Ministers from other denominations and overseas;
      (ii) As a second priority, normalise their use in requirements related to recognition of Pastors; and
      (iii) Normalise their use in all phases of Ministry Formation.
(b) To ensure that details of the process are communicated to all Theological Colleges, National Conferences, Placement Committees and Presbyteries; and

(c) To bring proposals to the 16th Assembly for any changes to Regulations which may be required as a result of these resolutions.

18.16 Pastoral Support for Seasonal Workers

to refer Proposal 58 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

That the Assembly resolve:

(a) To publicly express concern about the conditions seasonal workers are experiencing in Australia.

(b) To advocate for the compassionate treatment of people trapped in situations of exploitation so that they can regularise their status in Australia.

(c) To write to the Federal Minister responsible for the Seasonal Workers Program to express our support for the requests made by Pacific Island members at the Strathfield-Homebush Service of Lament on 14th April 2018.

(d) To request the Assembly Resourcing Unit, together with appropriate Synod personnel, to:
   (i) establish networks that acknowledge and support the pastoral work of those in the UCA ministering to these vulnerable people;
   (ii) raise awareness across the Uniting Church of conditions for seasonal workers, particularly in vulnerable communities; and
   (iii) work ecumenically and with civil society partners in Australia and the Pacific to improve pastoral support for seasonal workers coming to Australia.

18.17 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS

The Assembly resolved:

18.17.01 Day of Mourning

to request members of the Uniting Church to support a Day of Mourning to occur on the Sunday prior to 26th January each year, and to engage during worship services in activities such as reflection and discussion of the profound effect of invasion and colonisation on First Peoples.

18.17.02 Memoranda of Understanding between UAICC and Synods

to encourage Synods to enter into conversations with Congress that will lead to Memoranda of Understanding that spell out the mutual rights, obligations and responsibilities in those relationships.

BUSINESS FROM SYNODS

The Assembly resolved:

18.18 DISABILITY ACCESS GUIDELINES

18.18.01 to adopt the following ‘Statement of Access and Welcome’ as a starting point for further conversation and action regarding justice and equality for people with disability as it provides a basis for the Assembly and Synods to develop their particular response to this matter.
Statement of Access and Welcome

In accordance with the Uniting Church *Basis of Union*, the Church is a fellowship of reconciliation, “a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work, and bear witness to himself” (Paragraph 3).

In light of this, the Uniting Church affirms that:

(a) Christ is most fully present when all people in the Body are unconditionally accepted as people of worth. All people are created in the image of God, including people with disability;

(b) along with all members, the faith, gifts, hopes and dreams of people with disability are to be valued and honoured; and

(c) God is a God of justice and peace, who seeks reconciliation amongst all people.

In seeking to be a community of reconciliation, the Uniting Church acknowledges that for many people with disability its life and faith has not always borne witness to this vision. The Uniting Church seeks:

(a) to embody a community life that in its theology and practice is accessible to all people;

(b) to ensure that within its own life people with disability are treated justly and have their hopes and rights realised; and

(c) to advocate for justice and equality for people with disability in the wider community.

18.18.02 to request the Standing Committee to develop disability access guidelines for use at all events and activities overseen by the Assembly, and to encourage each Synod to develop similar disability access guidelines for use at Synod events and meetings;

18.18.03 to encourage each Synod to develop Disability Action Plans in accordance with the federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992, with the aim of eliminating access barriers pertaining to:

(i) Attitude/Theology and access and welcome;

(ii) Communication; and

(iii) Physical Environment.

18.18.04 to request the appropriate Standing Committee to arrange for the development of an appropriate liturgical response which acknowledges the historical exclusion experienced by many people with disability.

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND REGULATIONS AND RELATED MATTERS**

The Assembly resolved:

18.19 **REGULATION 3.6.3.1 – MODERATOR TERM OF OFFICE**

to authorise the Standing Committee, on advice from the Legal Reference Committee to:

(a) delete Regulation 3.6.3.1(c); and
(b) make further changes to Regulation 3.6.3.1 and any other regulations that might be required as a consequence of Presidential Ruling #33.

18.20 REGULATION 3.7.5.1(i)(i) – MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING COMMITTEE
to authorise the Standing Committee, on advice from the Legal Reference Committee to amend Regulation 3.7.5.1(i)(i) by substituting “Assembly Theologian in Residence” for “National Director, Theology and Discipleship”.

18.21 REGULATIONS – POWERS OF A PRESBYTERY STANDING COMMITTEE
to refer Proposal 26 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

*That the Assembly resolve:

To authorise the Standing Committee, on advice from the Legal Reference Committee, to add to the current Regulation 3.7 a description of the powers of a Presbytery Standing Committee giving it on-going authority to act for the Presbytery on urgent matters.

18.22 REGULATIONS – MEMBERSHIP OF UAICC
to refer Proposal 48 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

*That the Assembly resolve:

To request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 3.2.1(a) so that it reads:

All Aboriginal and Islander members of the Church have a right to be members of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (“the Congress”).

18.23 REGULATIONS – MEMBERSHIP OF ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE
to refer Proposal 49 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

*That the Assembly resolve:

To request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend Regulation 3.7.5.1(a)(ii) so that it reads

(ii) the President of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and a member of the National Executive appointed by the Executive.

18.24 REGULATIONS – CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY
to refer Proposal 50 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

*That the Assembly resolve:

To request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend the following Regulations relating to candidates for ministry:

(a) Amend Regulations 2.3.2.1, 2.3.2.2 and 2.3.2.3 so that when they reference the presbytery the following words are added, ‘or, in the case of Congress members, the Congress MEB’.

(b) Amend Regulation 2.3.2.3(b) to read

(b) A two-thirds majority of members present shall be required to commend the applicant to the Synod selection panel or, in the case of Congress members the National Executive, as suitable for candidature.

(c) Amend Regulation 2.3.2.4 by the addition of a new paragraph (a), and renumber all subsequent paragraphs.
(a) Where the applicants for candidature are members of Congress the duties in clauses (b) and (c) shall be carried out by the Congress MEB, and a representative of the applicant’s regional committee. The MEB will make a recommendation to the National Executive which shall determine the application.

(d) Amend the start of Regulation 2.3.2.4(d) to read
   (d) The selection panel or in the case of members of Congress, the National Executive shall determine the application by:"

(e) Amend the start of Regulation 2.3.2.4(e) to read
   (e) The resolution of the selection panel or in the case of members of Congress, the National Executive accepting an applicant shall:"

(f) Amend the heading above Regulation 2.3.2.5 to read: “RIGHT OF APPEAL AGAINST A DECISION OF THE PRESBYTERY, OR THE SELECTION PANEL, CONGRESS MEB OR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE OF CONGRESS.”

(g) Amend the start of Regulation 2.3.2.5(c) so that it reads “Except in the case of Congress members, the Synod Standing Committee…”

(h) Add an additional paragraph (d) to Regulation 2.3.2.5:
   (d) In the case of Congress members the Assembly Standing Committee shall appoint an appeal committee of three persons to determine the matter. The appeal committee shall consult with the applicant and the National Executive of Congress and, when appropriate, the Congress MEB. The appeal committee shall then either dismiss the appeal or require the National Executive to reconsider the application. A decision of the appeal committee shall be final.

(i) Amend Regulation 2.3.2.6(a) and (b) by the addition of the words ‘or in the case of members of Congress, the Congress MEB’ after ‘Presbytery’.

(j) Amend Regulation 2.3.2.7 to read:

The Presbytery which shall have pastoral care and oversight of the candidate or in the case of members of Congress the Congress MEB acting on a recommendation of the candidate’s regional committee or its own assessment may terminate the candidature on any of the following grounds that:

(a) <AS IS>

(b) <AS IS WITH ADDITIONAL SENTENCE> In the case of members of Congress, following consultation with the faculty, in the judgement of the MEB the candidate is not considered suitable for the work of the specified ministry;

and amend the paragraph following (c) to read:
Consideration of termination of candidature may be initiated by the presbytery or, in the case of members of Congress the candidate’s regional committee, the faculty or the Ministerial Education Board.

(k) Noting that Regulation 2.4.1(b) refers to Regulation 3.7.4.3(ii) but that there is no obvious cross-reference, to amend Regulation 3.7.4.3(ii) by the addition of a 5th clause:

(5) determining requests for leave of absence or deferral of studies (See Reg 2.4.1(b)).

18.25 REGULATIONS – PASTORS

to refer Proposal 51 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

That the Assembly resolve:

To request the Standing Committee, on the advice of the Legal Reference Committee, to amend the following Regulations relating to pastors:

(l) Amend the start of Regulations 2.3.3(c) to read ‘A Synod body designation by the Synod, or the National Executive of Congress in the case of members of Congress, shall have responsibility…’

(m) Amend the start of Regulation 2.4.3(b) to read ‘The Presbytery, (or the Congress MEB in the case of members of Congress, or the Synod…’

(n) Amend the start of Regulation 2.4.3(c) to read ‘The Presbytery that has oversight of the Pastor, (or the Congress MEB together with the regional committee in the case of Congress members, or the Synod…’

ELECTIONS:

18.26 The Returning Officer, Robert Johnson, declared the following results of elections:

President-Elect

Sharon Hollis

Standing Committee

Felicity Amery
Rob Brown
Steve Francis
Andrew Johnson
Elaine Ledgerwood
Fie Marino
Nicole Mugford
Elaine Rae
Yuko Tonai-Moore

David Baker
Hayden Charles
Geoffrey Grinton
Jason Kioa
Clare Littermoet
Kath Merrifield
Catherine Pepper
Geoff Thompson
Ian Tozer

GENERAL BUSINESS

18.27 GREETINGS FROM ECUMENICAL GUESTS

On behalf of the overseas guests Rev. Elder Tautiaga Senara from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Rev Joshua Lian from the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and Rev Chang-Bae Byun from the Presbyterian Church of Korea brought greetings to the members of the 15th Assembly
BIBLE STUDY
During the Assembly the Bible Studies were conducted by Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll, UnitingWorld’s Australian/International Partnership Manager (Pacific) and Rev James Bhagwan, Secretary for Communication and Overseas Mission, Methodist Church in Fiji.

CATO LECTURE
During the Assembly the Cato lecture was delivered by Rev Dr Kenneth Carter, Bishop of the Florida Conference of the United Methodist Church.

BUSINESS FROM ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

The Assembly resolved:

18.30 APOLOGY TO LGBTIQ AUSTRALIANS
to refer Proposal 24 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

That the Assembly resolve:
To request the Standing Committee to:

(a) appoint a task group to consult widely with LGBTIQ and other members of the Church in order to develop the wording of an official apology from the Uniting Church in Australia to LGBTIQ Australians for the Church’s role in the silence, rejection, discrimination and stereotyping of LGBTIQ people; and

(b) bring a proposal regarding an apology to the 16th Assembly.

18.31 CONTINUING WITNESS
18.31.01 to again express its gratitude to God for the “continuing witness of evangelist, of scholar, of prophet and of martyr” (Basis #11);

18.31.02 to encourage members of the Uniting Church to continue to pray that “it may be ready when occasion demands to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds” (Basis #11);

18.31.03 to call upon members of the Uniting Church to listen anew for words of continuing witnesses from recent and contemporary contexts by which our own witness might be challenged, renewed and strengthened; and

18.31.04 to request the Standing Committee to establish a Task Group to:

(a) explore the reception and endorsement by the Uniting Church of specific statements and documents of ‘continuing witnesses’ (as understood in the Basis of Union) to which the Uniting Church would turn and listen as it “sharpen[s] its understanding of the will and purpose of God” (Basis #11) being cognisant of our diversity within our unity; and

(b) bring relevant proposals to the 16th Assembly after consultation with Presbyteries.

18.32 MAJOR STRATEGIC REVIEW
to refer Proposal 56 to the Standing Committee with the power to act:

That the Assembly resolve:
To request that the Assembly Standing Committee establish a Task Group to undertake a Major Strategic Review of all areas constituted and regulated as responsibilities of the Assembly with the primary intent of exploring new ways for the UCA to flourish and thrive.

18.33 SUPPORT FOR THE AUSTRALIAN ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH 2020 PLENARY COUNCIL

18.33.01 to stand in prayerful solidarity with the Australian Roman Catholic Church as its people enter into a formal period of preparation for the 2020 Plenary Council, the first such gathering for about 80 years, and the first local Catholic Church in the world to heed the encouragement of Pope Francis for a more synodal approach to church decision-making;

18.33.02 to call on God’s Spirit to accompany them during this period, as they listen to the promptings of the Spirit and seek to discern what God is calling them to, as a Church for the future; and

18.33.03 to ask congregations to join in this time of prayer for God’s wisdom and openness to be with us all and especially with the bishops and lay leaders of the Roman Catholic Church, and encourage them to exchange a symbolic gift of prayerful ecumenical solidarity (for example, a candle to be lit in worship services to focus prayer for their fellow Christians) with a Roman Catholic Congregation in their neighbourhood during their period of preparation.

BUSINESS FROM THE BUSINESS COMMITTEE

18.34 Venue for the 16th Assembly
18.34.01 to receive with thanks the invitation of the Synod of Queensland to hold the Sixteenth Assembly within the bounds of the synod; and

18.34.02 to authorise the Standing Committee to determine the exact date and to negotiate with the Synod of Queensland as to the particular location and venues for the various Assembly functions.

CLOSING ACTIONS

The Assembly resolved:

18.35 APPRECIATION
to give thanks to all people who contributed to the smooth facilitation of the 15th Assembly, to the host Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, worship leaders, facilitators and particularly the many volunteers, and to the General Secretary and President who have led us with wisdom and grace.

CLOSE

The Fifteenth Assembly concluded at 12pm on Saturday 14 July 2018 following worship led by the President.
APPENDIX A – ROLL OF ASSEMBLY

A. VOTING MEMBERS

Ex-officio members [Reg. 3.3.8(a)(i)]
Rev Dr Andrew Dutney, past-President
Mr Stuart McMillan, President
Dr Deidre Palmer, President-elect
Ms Colleen Geyer, Assembly General Secretary
Rev Garry Dronfield, President, UAICC
Ms Megan O’Connell, National Coordinator, UAICC

Appointed by the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress [Reg 3.3.8(a)(ii)]
Ministers: Rev (Deacon) Denise Champion
Lay: Mr Hayden Charles, Ms Shaliece Farmer, Mr Djawut Gondarra, Mr Robert Jetta, Mr Mark Kickett, Ms Cheryl Lawson, Ms Queenie Speeding, Ms Dianne Torrens.

Appointed by Assembly bodies, by decision of Assembly Standing Committee [Reg. 3.3.8(a)(iv)]
Church Polity
Rev Jenny Tymms
Christian Unity Working Group
Rev Associate Professor Glen O’Brien
Education for Ministry Working Group
Dr Kaye Roberts-Thomson
Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee
Mr Stuart Woodward
Assembly Legal Reference Committee
Mr Malcolm Gledhill
Secretariat
Mr Rob Floyd

Appointed by Assembly Standing Committee [Reg. 3.3.8(a)(v)]
Emerging Leaders
Rev Tammy Hollands, Mr Noah Kim, Ms Virginia Lavaki, Rev John McKane, Rev Cameron McAdam, Rev Alexandra Sangster.

Migrant-ethnic congregations
Ms Ira Budiono, Rev Ki Soo Jang, Rev Tawk Kap, Mr Michael Kharrat, Mr Moses Leth, Rev Amel Manyon, Rev (Deacon) Beatriz Skippen, Ms Leviana Tuiloma.

Business Support
Mr Andrew Johnson, Rev Haloti Kailahi

SYNOD OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE ACT
Rev Simon Hansford (Moderator)
Rev Jane Fry (General Secretary)
Lay: Ms Tessa Bradbury, Mr Zac Hatfield Dodds, Ms Olivia Freeman, Mrs Amanda Hay, Mr David Hay, Ms Trish Mann, Mr Jason Masters, Miss Hannah Reeve, Mr Shane Slade, Ms Katelyn Stevenson, Mr Subramaniam Sukumar, Mr Nathan Tyson, Ms Heather Watson, Mrs Meredith Yabsley.

Presbyteries
Canberra Region
Rev (Deacon) Karyl Davison, Rev Robert Griffith
Mr Geoff Wellington, Mrs Mary Birch
Far North Coast
Rev Graeme Watkins, Rev Michael Earl
Mrs Christine Gordon, Mrs Sharon Hoogland
Georges River
Rev Sang Duk Choi, Rev Matt Trounge
Mr Kap Yong Lee, Mr Kevin Barrington
Illawarra
Rev (Deacon) Jason John
Mr Geoff Battle
Korean
Rev Jo-anne Smallbil
Ms Suzanne Holloway
Macquarie Darling
Rev Ullisone Mafaufau
Ms Sally Yabsley-Bell
Mid North Coast
Rev Keunil Ko
Mrs Dorothy Creek
New England North West
Rev Benjamim Gilmour
Ms Emma Parr
Parramatta-Nepean
Rev Tara Curlewys
Mr Richard LaBrooy
Riverina
Rev Jerry Duncan
Ms Catherine Pepper
Sydney
Sydney Central Coast
The Hunter

NORTHERN SYNOD
Rev Thresi Mauboy Wohangara (Moderator)
Mr Peter Jones (General Secretary)
Ministers: Rev (Deacon) Felicity Amery, Rev Helen Paine
Lay: Mr Liusem Mauboy
Presbyteries
Pilgrim Presbytery Mr Richard Telfer Ms Jemma Whittaker
of Northern Australia
Nthn Regional Council Rev Maratja Dhamarrandji
of Congress

SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND
Rev David Baker (Moderator)
Rev (Deacon) Heather den Houting (General Secretary)
 Lay: Ms Jenny Brecknell, Mr David Busch, Mr Scott Guyatt, Ms Elaine Rae, Mr Neil Thorpe, Mr Ben Tupou, Ms Emele Feao, Mr Timothy Alexander Holmes, Ms Vaolaa George Panoa, Ms Ana Tuilovoni.

Presbyteries
Bremer Brisbane Rev Andrew Gunton Mr Joshua Harbort
Calvary Rev Dennis Corowa Ms Natalie Lewis
Central Queensland Rev Dr Kerry Pierce Ms Donna Muston
Mary Burnett Rev Chris Crause Mrs Susan Mortimer
Moreton Rivers Rev Yvonne McRostie Mr Scott McDonald
North Queensland Rev Christy Allen Dr David Pohlmann
South Moreton Rev Andrew Ross
The Downs Rev Tim Griggs Mr John Agnew

SYNOD AND PRESBYTERY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA
Rev Sue Ellis (Moderator)
Rev Rob Brown (Acting General Secretary)
 Lay: Ms Lauren Andris, Dr Pam Bartholomeus, Ms Susan Burt, Mr Scott Davis, Ms Louise Davis, Mr Ian Dempster, Mr Bruce Ind, Mr Darian Jones, Mr Jack Harrington, Mr Troy Kammerman, Ms Nicole Mugford, Mrs Christine Secombe, Ms Steph Teh, Mr Jeff Telfer, Mr Sean Weetra, Ms Kerry Wilson.

Presbyteries
Gippsland Rev Caro Field Mr Lindsay Oates Mrs Helen Day
Loddon-Mallee Rev David Thompson Rev Siotame Paletu’a Mr Lupe Taumoefolau
North East Victoria Rev Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt Rev (Deacon) Jeanne Beale Mr Cameron Shields
Port Phillip East Rev Jay Robinson Rev Robin Yang Ms Hannah Dungan
Port Phillip West Rev Peter Weeks Rev Juliette Tautala’aso Mr Peter Mitchell
Tasmania Rev Rod Peppiatt Miss Shirley Bowers Rev Ann Perrin
Western Victoria Rev Tupe Ioelu Miss Lydia Rogers Mrs Carol Sykes
Yarra Yarra Rev Lauteli Tu’inauvai Mr Geoffrey Grinton Mr Matthew Julius

SYNOD AND PRESBYTERY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Rev Steve Francis (Moderator)
Rev David de Kock (General Secretary)
 Lay: Mr Reuben Edmonds, Ms Merenaita Aiafi, Mr Funaki Fotu, Ms Naomi Haslam, Mr Cameron Harries, Mrs Kay Dowling, Ms Maggie Johns, Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, Ms Clare Ligtermoet, Ms Yuko Tonai-Moore.
B. NON-VOTING PARTICIPANTS

1. Guests from overseas churches
   - Rev Ming Liang, China Christian Council
   - Rev Mata Makara, Cook Islands Christian Church
   - Rev Petesa Sionetuato, Congregation Christian Church of Niue
   - Rev Lorenzo Dos Santos, Protestant Church in Timor Leste
   - Rev James Bhagwan, Methodist Church in Fiji
   - Bishop Solomon Zwana, Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
   - Rev Ki Hak Choi, Presbyterian Church of Korea
   - Mrs Cindy Vanuaroro, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu
   - Rev Hrayr Cholakian, Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East
   - Rev David Garunu, United Church in Solomon Islands
   - Rev Nyoman Agustinus, Protestant Christian Church in Indonesia
   - Rev Elifas Tomix Maspaitella, Protestant Church in Maluku
   - Rev Utux Lbak, Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
   - Rev Elder Tautiaga Senara, Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
   - Mr Makoto Kato, The United Church of Christ in Japan
   - Rev Richard Dawson, Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
   - Rev Prince Devanandanan, Methodist Church of New Zealand
   - Rev Vinod Victor, Church of South India

2. Guests from Australian churches and church bodies
   - Mr Peter Schirmer, Lutheran Church of Australia
   - Fr George El-Khoury, Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of Australia

3. Additional guests from Australian churches attending the Opening Service
   - Rev John Wilson, Presbyterian Church of Australia
   - Rev Rachel McDougall, Anglican Church of Australia
   - Bishop Philip Huggins, National Council of Churches in Australia
   - Rev Father Khacher Haroutyouynyan, Armenian Church of Australia and New Zealand
   - Ms Jennifer Huppert, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

4. Associated with Assembly:
   Persons who will assist in resourcing the Assembly:
   (a) for the whole of the Assembly:
      - Ms Claerwen Little for UnitingCare Australia
      - Dr Sureka Goringe for UnitingWorld
      - Ms Jannine Jackson for Frontier Services
      - Mr Leo Iosifidis, for Strategic Finance and Administration
      - Rev Lindsay Cullen for Assembly Resourcing Unit
      - Rev Dr Apwee Ting for Assembly Resourcing Unit
      - Rev Charissa Suli for Assembly Resourcing Unit
      - Rev John Cox for National Task Group on Engagement with and Response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse
   (b) for specific business of the Assembly:
      - Ms Margaret Pedler for UC Adult Fellowship
      - Rev Dr Murray Earl for Defence Force Chaplaincy
      - Mr Bruce Binnie for Mercer Superannuation Trust
      - Rev Robert Elkhuizen for Mercer Superannuation Trust
      - Mr Jim Mein for Frontier Services
      - Ms Susan Stork-Finlay for matters related to Disability Access Guidelines
      - Rev (Deacon) Andy Calder for matters related to Disability Access Guidelines
1. **DEACONS**

**SYNOD OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE ACT**

- **Received by ordination**
  - Karen Paull
  - Michele Shumack
  - Vanessa Williams-Henke

**NORTHERN SYNOD**

- **Received by ordination**
  - Maratja Dhamarrandji

**SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND**

- **Received by ordination**
  - Wendy McHugh
  - David Nix

**SYNOD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA**

- **Received by ordination**
  - Denise Champion
  - Susan Doughty
  - Priscilla Hein
  - Jesse Size

- **Deaths**
  - Jean Claire Stirling

**SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA**

- **Received by ordination**
  - Wendy Elson

- **Deaths**
  - Rosemary Edwards

2. **MINISTERS OF THE WORD**

**SYNOD OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE ACT**

- **Received by ordination**
  - James Aaron
  - Mark Beaton
  - Fiona Blair
  - Greer Dokmanovic
  - Simote Finau
  - Danielle Hemsworth Smith
  - Tammy Hollands
  - David Kim
  - Rick Morrell
  - Kodjo Nkrumah
  - Christine Palmer
  - Jean Shannon
  - Paul Simpson
  - Cherie Strudwick
  - Adrian Sukumar-White
  - Radhika Sukumar-White
  - Claire Wright
  - Kathryn Wyndham

- **Received by admission or readmission**
  - Sang Heon Ahn
  - Clare Brockett
  - John Gandy
  - Hyo Jin Choi
  - Andrew Cunningham
  - Benjamin Gilmour
  - Robert Griffith
  - Dr Hawea Jackson
  - Margaret Mayman
  - Jang Won Seo
  - Young Min Suh
  - Peter Walker
  - Suk Huyin (Deborah) Yun

- **Recognition has been withdrawn**
  - (i) **Resignation**
    - Colin Batt
    - Bernard Hughes
    - R.G (Bob) McLeod
    - Neville Naden

- **Deaths**
  - Bruce Ball
  - Charles Bathgate
  - Ronald Blackwood
  - Robert Bruce
  - John Butson
  - William Clarke
  - Roy Cosier
  - Lynette Collins
  - Colville Crowe
  - Graham Debus
  - Dr Clyde Dominish
  - Adrienne Dempster
  - Robert Duffy
  - Lockhart Finlay
  - John Ford
  - John Graham
  - Edmund Laurence Gray
  - Viliami Halafaifonua
  - Jack Hely
  - Geoffrey Hunter
  - Robert Jackson
  - Margaret Joyce
  - Robert MacArthur
  - Dr Ramsay McDonald
  - Dr Aubrey McNaught
  - William McLeod
  - Charles Maish
  - John O’Reilly
  - Christopher Paine
  - Dr Geoffrey Peterson
  - Ted Pickard
  - Dr Stephen Reid
  - Barry Ridge
  - Henry (Harry) Roberts
  - David Sackett
  - Ronald Sparks
  - Perry Smith
  - Bernard Stevens
  - Bruce Westbrook
  - Alan Wilson
  - Marjorie Jean Winter
  - Noel Gallagher – advised 12/06
NORTHERN SYNOD

Received by admission or readmission

Tapera Teubiti

Deaths

Gawirrin Gumana AO
Peter Nyuaningu
Chris Paine

SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND

Received by ordination

Nathan Barton
Michelle Cullen
Moira Dodsworth
Sharene Fechner
Matthew Hogg
Aaron Moad
Leanne Osborn
Jennifer Potter
Glen Schweitzer
Beatriz Skippen
Janet Staines
Tevita Unga Takai
Adam Tipple

Received by admission or readmission

Colin Batt
Helen Dick
Marius Kruger
Bruce Moore
Pierre van Blommestein

Deaths

Alan Anderson
Aubrey Baker
Wilfred Blake
Judith Dalton
Adrianne Dempster
Richard Diffin
Ian Florence
Jack Frewan-Lord
Arnold Gates
John Gillanders
Ray Hunt
Douglas Kirkup
Frank Le Bherz
Owen Marks
Douglas McKenzie
Margaret Mills
Robert Morgan
John O’Reilly
Albert (Trevor) Quant
Phillip Ramsay
Gordon Robinson
Graham Ross
Ed Smith
Ronald Smith
Norma Spear
Hendrik (Hans) Spykerboer
Nevin (Nev) Stoddart
Leslie (Les) Tilse
Bruce Upham
Maxwell Vines
Brian Wells
David Wiltshire
Silas Wolmby

Recognition has been withdrawn

(i) Resignation

Terry Ayling
Melanie Perkins

(ii) Withdrawal of Recognition

Andrew Fox
Barry Dangerfield

SYNOD OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Received by ordination

Linda Driver
William Hall
Nick Patselis
Mark Schultz
Josh Scherer
Peter Sorenson
Katalina Tahaafe-Williams
Mike Wardrop

Received by admission or readmission

Yongsoo Song

Deaths

John Edward Akehurst
Glenn John Barnett
Claude Robbins Cotton
William (Bill) Howell Edwards
Donald George Haydon
Clarence Frederick Hore
Robert Allan Drummond
Maurice Allan Lind
George Stanley Martin
Frank Marlow Measday
Janet Isla Murchland
Mervyn Vivian Norman
Gerald (Gerry) Warner Hodges
Albert Patrizi
Rosslyn Clayton Read
Brian Glenn Robins
Craig Scott
Allan Edwin Shephard
Keith Smith
Colin Thomas White

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Received by ordination

Nathaniel Atem
Veronica Bradley
Sue Clarkson
Bruce Crowle
Paul Dau
Elizabeth (Beth) Donnelly
Julie Hall
Tawk Kap
Nigel McBrien
Ray McClusky
Jinseon Park
Barbara Strickland (2012)
Kharis Susilowati
Semisi Tauaili
Ian Turumidge

Received by admission or readmission
Sylvia Akaouola-Tongotongo
John Flett
Fiona Hill
Young Chul Lee
Kee Yoon (Kevin) Kim
Jong Soo Park
William John (John) Rigby
Judith Anne (Judy) Rigby
Christine Sorensen

Recognition has been withdrawn
(i) Resignation
Peter Davey
Garry Deverell
Andrew Gall
James Godfrey
Helen Johnson
Christiaan Mostert
Martin Wright

(ii) Committee for Discipline
Samasoni Nafatali

Deaths
Ken Blackwell
Steve Box
Ronald Bright
Robert Catford
Ruth Collett
Sally Craven
Alan Crawford
Kenneth (Ken) Dempsey
Andrew Donnelly
George Durinck
J Weston Elvins
Joseph Fraser
Geoff Giddings
Joan Gilchrist
Rowan Gill
Joseph (John) Goff
Eric Gowers
Peter Grimmet
Robert Hazeldine
John Holden
Thomas Howells
Arnold James
William (Bill) Johnston
Charles (Dick) Kenyon
Colin Knox
Malcolm Lamont
Myrle Lancaster
Ronald (Ron) Manley
Douglas Mathews
Frank W Morris

Received by ordination
Kim Francis
Sophie Lizares
Rick Morrell
Claire Pickering
Judy Sanderson
Justine Wall

Received by admission or readmission
David de Kock
Hannes Halgryn
Karama Ioapo
David Kriel
John McKane
Herman Nienaber
Gary van Heerden

Recognition has been withdrawn
(i) Resignation
Ciptamartalu Sapangi

Deaths
Jessie Allen-Williams
Barry Angus
Mona Banks
Val Bock
Dr Les Brockway
Lindsay Cartwright
Brian Heath
Jack Hutchinson
Cedric Jacobs
Mervyn Jay
Bryan King
Dr John McCarthy
Nicol Milne
Bill Pickering
Les Renshaw
James Reid
3. **DEACONESSES**

**SYNOD OF NEW SOUTH WALES AND THE ACT**

*Deaths*

Christine Anderson
Rosemary Doust
Alma Weir

**NORTHERN SYNOD**

*Deaths*

Margaret Bain

**SYNOD OF QUEENSLAND**

*Deaths*

Margaret Ruben (Kumar)

**SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA**

*Deaths*

Shirley Renshaw

4. **LAY PASTORS**

**SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA**

*No longer recognised*

Margaret Cousens

*Information supplied by Synods June 2018*
APPENDIX C - STATEMENT ON DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE

1. Introduction

1.1 Broad community concern has brought Domestic and Family Violence into sharp focus in recent years. It is a global issue affecting people in Australia and across the world. The Uniting Church acknowledges that we as a community are not immune to incidents of Domestic and Family Violence and their consequences. We further acknowledge that Christian teachings have been used inappropriately to justify unhealthy relationships that can lead to Domestic and Family Violence.

1.2 It is important for the Church at this time:
- to be clear in repudiating all forms of Domestic and Family Violence;
- to express God’s desire for life-giving mutually respectful relationships, homes and communities, where all people can flourish;
- to educate our members about the reality of the situation and how they can respond to point people to support, resources and care;
- to develop safe practices and safe spaces within all our congregations, agencies, schools, groups and communities consistent with the commitments made in the Uniting Church’s National Child Safe Policy Framework; and
- to acknowledge the work of
  - our agencies (within the UnitingCare network as it connects to UnitingCare Australia that includes all agencies and Uniting World) in addressing this issue;
  - congregations, ministry agents and members of the Uniting Church who are compassionately responding to people affected by Domestic and Family Violence; and
  - Uniting Church theological colleges in their formation of people for ministry which supports and encourages mutually respectful relationships between women and men.

1.3 For the purposes of this document, Domestic and Family Violence refers to a situation where someone who has a close personal relationship to another person physically injures them or makes them feel afraid, powerless or unsafe. Domestic and Family Violence can take the form of physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, social, financial or spiritual abuse.

2. UCA Theology and Belief

2.1 In making this statement, the Uniting Church affirms the following biblical and theological understandings:
- All people are created in the image of God and are known and loved by God.
- Every person is of infinite worth and entitled to live with dignity and each person’s life and humanity needs to be protected or the human community and its reflection of God are diminished.
- As Christians we base our values on Jesus, who in his life and ministry loved and respected women and men, girls and boys, and people of all ages.
- We recognise Jesus’ specific care for people who were powerless and those who were vulnerable.
- Our commitment to the equality of men and women and respect for all humans underlies our rejection of any form of violence.
- People grow into their fullest humanity when they are nurtured in situations of love, trust and safety – people should not have to live in fear.

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1 Uniting Church in Australia National Child Safety Policy Framework
2 The Uniting Church, through its agency UnitingWorld, is working with our Church Partners to address Domestic and Family Violence and gender inequality. They do this through projects that challenge theological understandings, empower women and encourage male advocates.
3 Based on the definition used by Lifeline
Liberation from oppression and injustice is central to the incarnation of God through Jesus Christ. God desires us to be free to make choices about our lives and to be responsible in that freedom to each other.

The Basis of Union (Par 11) calls us to engage with literary, historical and scientific enquiry and to stand in relationship with contemporary society in ways that will help us understand our own nature and mission. Therefore, we must listen to the voices that inform us about Domestic and Family Violence and be willing to join others working to overcome this violence.

The Basis of Union (Par 18) notes the Uniting Church prays that, through the gift of the Spirit, God will constantly correct that which is erroneous in our life.

2.2 We acknowledge that:
- We live in a world where women are often treated as less than equal;
- Some violent men who are members and adherents of Christian churches have used phrases in the Bible to reinforce their power in intimate relationships;
- Theologies and teachings which support a power imbalance in family relationship can nurture an environment in which violence and other forms of abuse are present; and
- The lifelong commitment of marriage does not mean that people should stay in violent relationships. There are times when “divorce may be the only creative and life-giving direction to take”.

2.3 We give thanks for:
- The courage and witness of those who have come forward to share their stories of Domestic and Family Violence within the church and the wider community; and
- The ways in which light has been shed on the serious issue of family violence including through the work of public figures, journalists and government commissions.

3. The current context

3.1 Domestic and Family Violence is now recognised as a serious and widespread problem in Australia with huge impacts on individuals, families and communities.

3.2 The incidence of Domestic and Family Violence in Australia is not only restricted to women, but also includes abuse directed at men, children and increasingly towards older family members.
- Approximately one in four women (23%) has experienced violence by an intimate partner.
- On average, one woman a week is murdered by her current or former partner, according to the most recent analysis of homicide statistics in Australia.
- One in 5 women has experienced sexual violence.
- One in two women and one in four men have experienced sexual harassment.
- The majority of women (nine out of 10) did not contact police about the most recent incident of sexual assault by a male.
- Intimate partner violence contributes to more death, disability and illness in women aged 15 to 44 than any other preventable risk factor.
- Domestic or family violence against women is the single largest driver of homelessness for women.

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5 Dr Lynne Baker’s 2010 book, “Counselling Christian Women on How to Deal with Domestic Violence” and Julia Baird with Hayley Gleeson, “Submit to your husbands”: Women told to endure domestic violence in the name of God”, ABC News, last updated 23 January 2018
6 Statement on Marriage, Eighth Assembly 1997, Resolution 97.31.12, Uniting Church in Australia
7 Australian Bureau of Statistics’ (ABS) 2016 Personal Safety Survey (PSS)
8 Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC) 2017, The 2017 National Homicide Monitoring Program report
• Rates of domestic and family violence are higher in regional, rural and remote areas\textsuperscript{11}.
• People who, as children, witnessed partner violence against their parents were 2–4 times as likely to experience partner violence themselves (as adults)\textsuperscript{12}.
• 55,600 children were placed in out-of-home care as a result of abuse (2015-16)\textsuperscript{12}.
• 1 in 16 (0.5 million) men have experienced physical and/or sexual violence by a cohabiting partner since age 15\textsuperscript{12}.

3.3 When children are exposed to violence in their homes it can cause profound harm to their social development.\textsuperscript{13}

3.4 Domestic and Family Violence is a global issue. Global estimates published by the World Health Organisation (WHO) indicate that about 1 in 3 (35%) women worldwide have experienced either physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence in their lifetime\textsuperscript{14}. In some of our neighbouring countries research shows that more than 70% will experience some form of domestic violence in their lifetime\textsuperscript{15}.

3.5 Risk factors identified by WHO that increase the likelihood of a person to perpetrate intimate partner or sexual violence include, a history of child maltreatment, witnessing family violence, unequal gender norms including attitudes accepting of violence, and a sense of entitlement over women.

4 Commitment

4.1 In the light of our Theology and Beliefs and in the Current Context, the Uniting Church commits itself to:
• Speak out strongly against Domestic and Family Violence of all types;
• Acknowledge this is an issue in all cultural, economic and social contexts including among our own church members and leaders;
• Reject any abuse of theology to legitimate Domestic and Family Violence, recognising that theologies which affirm gender equality and human dignity play an essential role in bringing to light and preventing Domestic and Family Violence;
• Develop sound policies and practices that:
  o Promote the equality of men and women, girls and boys and people of all ages;
  o Create safe and inclusive communities, where people experience mutually respectful relationships and all can flourish;
  o Listen to the voices of children, young people and vulnerable people; and
  o Receive and take seriously reports or complaints of Domestic and Family Violence;
  o Provide support and referral to appropriate support services;
• Educate ministry agents, lay leaders and church members on Domestic and Family Violence and how to respond appropriately;
• Resource the church in how to respond to this issue, recognising and engaging with the diversity of cultures and languages that make up our communities; and
• Work constructively with people of other Christian denominations and other faiths, and with other organisations and groups across Australia in order to achieve these commitments.

\textsuperscript{11} Monica Campo and Sarah Tayton, \textit{Domestic and family violence in regional, rural and remote communities}, CFCA Practitioner Resource—December 2015
\textsuperscript{12} Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2018) \textit{Family, Domestic and Sexual Violence in Australia, 2018}
\textsuperscript{13} Our Watch, \textit{Facts and Figures} \url{https://www.ourwatch.org.au/Understanding-Violence/Facts-and-figures}
\textsuperscript{14} World Health Organisation, \textit{Violence Against Women}, \url{http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/}
\textsuperscript{15} Pacific Women, Shaping Pacific Development, \textit{Ending Violence Against Women}, \url{https://pacificwomen.org/our-work/focus-areas/ending-violence-against-women/}
18.10.01 The Assembly resolved:

18.10.01.01 Mr Craig Mitchell, National Director, Formation, Education and Discipleship
to thank Craig Mitchell for his faithful service to Christ in encouraging people of all
ages to grow in faith and actively live out their discipleship.

Craig worked with the Assembly as National Director for Formation, Education and
Discipleship, from January 2014 to June 2017. This new role was established by the
Assembly Standing Committee in 2013 to provide a fresh focus on a significant
priority of the Assembly – forming lifelong disciples within learning communities of
faith.

Craig undertook a national research project for the Assembly in 2011 and 2012 which
led to the emphasis on how congregations form and educate people in faith, ministry
and mission. Craig’s research offered the church a vision for congregations as
learning communities for the 21st century. It encouraged a collaboration between the
Assembly and other sectors of the church to resource this.

Craig conducted training events and workshops across Australia, in synods and
presbyteries. He resourced the Formation, Education and Discipleship Working
Group (FED), the national lay & leadership educators’ networks, the national
presbytery ministers gathering, and other ecumenical contexts.

Craig experimented with online and digital communication methods, particularly
in building communities of shared interest around forming disciples. He conducted FED
Stories events, a kind of “TED Talks”, in Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane, where
congregational leaders told stories about how they form faith across generations.

Craig has initiated national events including a national colloquium on Forming
Disciples in Mission with a broad focus including multiculturalism, evangelism,
spiritual practices, formation, and lay education; and a national conference and
learning intensive on 21st century faith formation in partnership with the NSW-.ACT
Synod.

A key part of Craig’s role was about collaboration. Craig contributed to and helped co-
ordinate the gatherings of the National Lay & Leadership Educators Network, the
Assembly Mission and Evangelism Network, the National Schools Consultative
Group, and the National Youth & Children’s Ministry Coalition meetings.

Craig was an advisor to the Education for Ministry Working Group, particularly about
the ministry of Lay Preacher and the ministry of Pastor – and has coordinated
development of the new national training and assessment frameworks and standards
for Lay Preachers. Craig has been a Member of the Assembly Worship Working
Group. He has been part of the Planning Team for the national Songwrite gathering in
2015, and the SA Synod Songwrite event in 2016. He co-facilitated the national
Worship Colloquium in 2014 and was a member of the planning team for the national
Transforming Worship Conference 2017.

Along with his colleague Tom Kerr, Craig provided support and oversight for national
youth events including NCYC, NYALC and About FACE. He worked with Tom on
running FED Events consultations and improving policies for national youth events.

Craig developed the series of short videos “We are the Uniting Church”, exploring
who we are as a church and what we believe. He oversaw the development of the
“Walking Together” multimedia education resource on the revised Preamble to the
Uniting Church Constitution.

Craig has been working with the FED Working Group on new resources for baptism
and confirmation in the Uniting Church, and provided the initial development for
UnitingLearning, a national initiative for an online portal & virtual learning. Craig’s
passionate commitment to Christian formation, education and discipleship has
shaped his ministry and contributions to the Uniting Church.
18.10.01.02 Rev Dr Chris Walker, National Consultant, Worship, Doctrine and Christian Unity to thank Chris Walker for his faithful service, and ask that God grants him happiness and fulfilment as he continues to journey as one of God’s pilgrim people on the way to the promised end.

Chris Walker began his ministry at the Assembly in November 2008 as National Consultant, Theology and Discipleship. In October 2013, he became the National Consultant, Christian Unity, Doctrine and Worship.

To both these roles, Chris brought a depth of experience and wisdom from academic achievements (degrees from the University of Sydney, Garrett Theological Seminary in Illinois and a PhD in theology from Claremont University near Los Angeles), congregational ministry (Chapel by the Sea at Bondi Beach, Moree and Jannali), mission roles and consultancies for presbyteries and synods (Queensland Synod and the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery), and in ministerial and lay education (lecturer at United Theological College, Trinity College Queensland and as principal of Parkin-Wesley College in South Australia).

In his significant work at the Assembly, Chris resourced the work of the Working Groups on Doctrine, Worship and Christian Unity, and the Assembly Mission and Evangelism Network. With Chris support, these groups have developed significant documents and publications for the life of the Uniting Church, including editing and contributing to Building on the Basis, and Being and Doing Church: a Uniting Church Perspective; and Doc.bytes and Belief Matters papers, as well as the Calendar of Commemorations which included brief biographies of notable people. Chris also resourced national conferences such as ‘Basis of Union – Catalyst for Renewal’, ‘Preaching for Transformation’, ‘Transforming Worship’, and Christian Unity National Conferences.

As an author in his own right, Chris also wrote Peace Like A Diamond (2009) and Thinking the Faith, Living the Faith: an introduction to Christian theology (2017) during the time he worked for the Assembly.

Chris demonstrated his commitment to ecumenism as he represented the Uniting Church at NCCA meetings, the World Council of Churches Assembly in Busan, South Korea, the Christian Conference of Asia in Jakarta, the World Methodist Conference and Council (Durban and Houston), and a WCC Ecumenical Officers gathering in Geneva. He also was involved in the Uniting Church’s responses to significant ecumenical documents, such as The Church Towards a Common Vision, An Ecumenical Call to Just Peace, Christian Witness in a Multi-Religious World and Weaving a New Cloth.

Chris has faithfully spoken to candidates in each of the theological colleges, sharing with them the work of the Assembly; and presented Bible studies for various Synods. Chris has a history of service to the Church in his family. Chris’s grandfather Rev A. E. Walker was President of the NSW Methodist Conference, his father Rev Dr Sir Alan Walker was internationally known as the outspoken superintendent of The Central Methodist Mission, Sydney (now Wesley Mission), the founder of Lifeline, the Director of World Methodist Evangelism and the founder of the Alan Walker College of Evangelism (now the Alan Walker lecturer in Mission, Evangelism and Leadership at the United Theological College). Chris is the chairperson of the Alan Walker College board.

Chris has had a long involvement in non-violent action going back to protests against the Vietnam War, Apartheid, anti-nuclear and anti-war marches, for refugees and asylum seekers, and in solidarity with First Peoples. Faithful church leadership that spans generations, even centuries, is inspiring as we contemplate ministry and mission, and particularly as we consider mission from the margins in an increasingly antagonistic public square.
Rev Elenie Poulos, National Director, UnitingJustice Australia
to record its thanks to God and its deep appreciation for the ministry of Elenie Poulos,
and to acknowledge the support and love of her partner Nicole. We pray that God will
guide Elenie in her doctoral studies at Macquarie University and in discerning her
future ministry paths.

Rev. Elenie Poulos has been contributing to the justice mission of the Assembly since
2002 when she was appointed National Director, National Social Responsibility and
Justice. She relaunched that ministry as UnitingJustice Australia in 2003, serving as
National Director until her closure of ministry on 17 February 2017.

During this time, Elenie provided leadership and vision to the Church in matters of
social and economic justice, peace and the environment, identified critical issues of
national importance, developed resolutions, positions and programs on these issues,
advocated and participated in public debate, and represented the Church in civil
society.

In 2003, Elenie renamed, restructured and repositioned UnitingJustice Australia (UJA)
within the UCA, raising confidence in the agency’s capacity to lead the development
of Church policy, lobby government and speak into the public space on behalf of the
Church.

She positioned UJA as a key national UCA agency for collaboration and co-operation
within Australian national NGO and civil society networks, especially representing the
UCA and the NCCA in collaborative programs and campaigns with various networks
and agencies including Refugee Council of Australia, Amnesty International Australia,
Human Rights Law Centre, UNHCR Regional Office (Canberra), Asylum Seeker
Resource Centre (ASRC), Refugee Advice and Casework Service (RACS), ACF,
ACOSS, ACTU, Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales,
GetUp!, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), Greenpeace,
Climate Action Network Australia and the ANDI project.

Elenie’s work enabling bringing faith and NGO collaboration extended internationally,
through her Elenie’s participation in UNHCR-NGO consultations in Geneva, lobbying
at UNHCR Executive Committee meetings, ‘stereo-advocacy’ with WCC on climate
change and nuclear disarmament though UN processes and platforms, attendance at
three WCC International Advocacy Weeks at the UN in New York, and attendance at
the 2012 High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Faith and Protection which resulted in the
development and publication of UNHCR Partnership Note on Faith-based
Organizations, Local Faith Communities and Faith Leaders.

Elenie directed consultation and drafting processes (across national and state and
agency boundaries) to develop key national policy positions for the Church on
refugees and asylum seekers, human rights, economic justice and sustainability,
climate change and peacemaking.

Elenie also directed the preparation of written submissions to Commonwealth
parliamentary and public inquiries across a broad range of public policy areas
including Indigenous issues (working with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander
Christian Congress), human rights, climate change, welfare reform, taxation reform,
work justice, immigration especially asylum seekers and refugees, anti-discrimination
law, same-sex entitlements and anti-terrorism legislation; also presenting evidence at
parliamentary and other public inquiries when required.

Elenie provided outstanding national ecumenical leadership, contributing to the work
of the NCCA through various committees, commissions and networks. She was the
Chair of Act for Peace from 2009-13, the Founding Chair of the Australian Churches
Refugee Taskforce from 2012-3.

As with her work across the NGO sectors, Elenie’s ecumenical leadership also
extended internationally. After being a delegate to the Ninth WCC Assembly in Porto
Alegre in Brazil in February 2006, Elenie was elected to her first seven-year term as a
member of the WCC’s Commission of the Churches on International Affairs in 2007. She was elected to second term in 2014.

Elenie’s work also saw her:

(a) engage in lobbying of federal parliamentarians on issues of importance for the Uniting Church in Australia, particularly on issues of social justice, human rights and the environment;

(b) initiate and support Assembly media statements on issues of social and economic justice, peace and environment and support the President and other Church leaders in their public statements;

(c) appear on television and radio and in newspaper and magazine articles to explain the justice work of the Assembly and the wider Uniting Church;

(d) produce resources for UCA members to coincide with events in the liturgical and secular calendar such as World Environment Day, Social Justice Sunday, Human Rights Day, to inform them of the Church’s national policy positions and activities, and encourage them to engage in local advocacy and action on issues of justice, peace and environment;

(e) manage the production (including the writing and editing) of the last five Uniting Church election resources which are distributed to every congregation prior to a federal election;

(f) preach in UCA (and other) congregations around the country and offer church-based workshops and seminars on issues of Christian faith and justice, peace, political engagement and advocacy; and

(g) deliver lectures and seminars as a guest lecturer at United Theological College.

The UnitingJustice Australia Reference Committee has expressed profound regret at Elenie’s retirement as National Director. During the last 15 years the Committee said that Elenie’s dedicated work led the Church to make a major contribution to the national debate about justice issues; and led and strengthened campaigns for evolution of strategy in many areas of public policy. Because of Elenie’s leadership, the Reference Committee said that that the UCA had led advocacy for humane welcoming of refugees seeking asylum in Australia from brutality, discrimination and threats to their lives in their countries of origin. The Committee noted Elenie’s contribution to many other areas of the constant struggle for equity and justice, and observed that she had led this struggle with strong commitment, with grace and with great effectiveness.

UnitingJustice Australia Reference Committee Chair Professor John Langmore also presented Elenie with a modern icon of the prophet Isaiah giving a blessing of peace painted by the Russian artist Olga Shalamova, passing on the Reference Committee’s hope that this icon will contribute to sustaining her knowledge of the great admiration for her work, and assist her in receiving the blessing of peace which Isaiah is shown as giving.

18.10.01.04  

Rev Tom Kerr, National Faith Development Consultant – Youth and Young Adults to thank Tom Kerr for his faithful service with the Assembly as National Faith Development Consultant with Youth and Young Adults from 2010-2017. Bringing significant experience in ministry with youth, young adults and children in a range of congregational roles, a regional role and then with the Synod of Queensland, Tom is one of the longest serving and most experienced youth workers in the Uniting Church.

A key part of Tom’s role was to resource national events for youth and young adults. He provided support and encouragement to the organisers of National Christian Youth Conventions in 2011, 2014 and 2017, helping the key staff and teams reflect on what they were doing, to be aware of the national nature of the event and what that entails, and in debriefing the experience with organising teams. Tom was active in helping promote NCYCs, including being part of thinking through where they might be heading. When NCYC is on, Tom is pretty much everywhere as an encouraging
presence, whether that is with leaders or Congress people or with young people themselves.

Tom also provided support and a degree of oversight to the organisers of About FACE in 2012, 2015 and in the lead-up to 2017. This is a completely different kind of event and required a broader set of skills. During this time there was a national discussion on the future of About FACE which Tom facilitated.

One of the most important leadership development activities that we sponsor as a Church is the National Young Adult Leaders’ Conferences. When Alistair Macrae was keen to revive what had been the President’s Young Leaders’ Conference, Tom played a key role in designing and leading these events in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2016. Along with others, Tom was central in helping this become the deeply transformative event that it is, not only for individuals but for our Church. He was protective of the need for young adults to create their own sense of community and express their own gifts. When you go to an Assembly meeting now, the energy from the young adults has in no small part been engendered at NYALC.

With Drew Hanna, Tom worked on linking the Uniting Church into the ecumenical National Youth Ministry Conferences on the Gold Coast in 2013 and 2015 and also in seeing this as an opportunity to network Uniting Church workers and leaders. Tom was also a member of the National Youth Activities Reference Committee, the Formation, Education & Discipleship (FED) Working Group, the FED Events Task Group, Uniting Faith & Discipleship and the National Children, Families, Youth and Young Adult Ministry Coalition (now NYCC). He also engaged with the Multicultural and Cross-Cultural National Reference Committee.

Part of Tom's role was to help resource the church more broadly in ministry with young people, and he has done that in a whole range of ways. He helped NYCC think about a whole range of issues, including how we train and equip people for leadership and ministry. He also made some important contributions in his home synod in encouraging the synod to develop discipleship in digital environments.

Tom networked nationally with people both one-to-one, online and at key events within synods including the School of Discipleship, Summer Madness, Easter Madness, with the First Third Unit in WA, as well as multicultural gatherings of leaders.

As well as taking on the Assembly role half-time, he has also served in the training department of Scripture Union in Queensland, and as a result he has brought a wider focus to his work with the Assembly.

Tom is a people person. He puts people's well-being and their personal and spiritual development first. People know him as someone who in the first instance cares for them, and who wants them to grow in Christ and to discover all that God has in store for them.

Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds, National Director, UnitingCare Australia
to place on record its appreciation and thank Lin Hatfield Dodds for her faithful contribution to the Uniting Church, particularly, through her role as UnitingCare Australia National Director, a position which she held from December 2001 to July 2016.

Lin’s depth of Christian faith, largely expressed through her commitment to the Uniting Church and her local congregation, was the basis of her work with UnitingCare Australia and Uniting Church agencies. Lin believed Uniting Church services were a fundamental expression of the love of God and, as such, she strove to maintain the integration and identification between the church and its services.

As National Director UnitingCare Australia Lin was the principal agent representing Uniting Church services on the national level to the community and Federal Government. She was well respected by church agencies and bureaucrats and governments of all political persuasions as being an honest broker and a wise advisor.
especially since her advocacy was always values-based and tested by the experience of our services.

In her role Lin had many achievements including being a recognised expert on social policy and community services, and her service on a wide range of boards and government advisory bodies, including Chair of the Australian Social Inclusion Board and President of the Australian Council of Social Service.

Lin was awarded a Chief Minister’s International Women’s Day Award in 2002, received a Churchill Fellowship to study anti-poverty strategies in 2003, and named ACT Australian of the Year in 2008.

The success of her work was based on her embedded values, energy, enthusiasm and collegiate approach. She has well-developed skills in policy development and advocacy.

The Assembly also acknowledges the contribution of her husband, Steve and their sons, all of whom have been an integral part of her ministry and continue to make a faithful contribution to her work and that of the Uniting Church.

We wish Lin well in her ongoing expression of God’s love within the context of her role in the Public Service.

18.10.06 Mr Peter Bicknell, Chairperson, UnitingCare Australia

to place on record its deep appreciation for the contribution Peter Bicknell has made to the life of the Uniting Church in his role as Chair of UnitingCare Australia.

Peter was appointed to the role of Chair of UnitingCare Australia in 2006 and retired in July 2017. Over the almost eleven years of his leadership the network actually developed into a network in more than a name with UnitingCare Australia becoming a significant contributor and advocate in the national policy and political scene.

In the early days of Peter’s leadership, concurrently he chaired the Uniting Missions Network (UMN) prior to its merger with UnitingCare Australia. In 2008 after much consultation and engagement across the UCA’s social services, and wider church, the UMN formally became part of the national UnitingCare network through the work known as Resourcing the Future. Peter’s leadership was instrumental in this foundational moment in the life of UnitingCare Australia and the wider Church.

He was – and is – trusted across the diversity of the Uniting Church and its caring services.

Peter’s political expertise and deep understanding of the internal and external environments, and his integrity and empathy across groups of people and organisations which deliver for the common good has been profound in assisting UnitingCare Australia in achieving its goals.

He always promoted an approach to advocacy that focussed on building long term relationships with policy advisors and decision-makers and using those relationships to advocate long run focussed positions. UnitingCare with Peter’s counsel rarely advocated for itself or in its own interests; rather focussing on the common good, bringing the values and vision of the Uniting Church together with the expertise of UnitingCare service providers and the lived experience of those we exist to serve into a potent policy advice mix.

Peter helped ensure that UnitingCare Australia and the network it serves developed a clear and operationalised identity as an integral part of the Uniting Church, a foundational expression of the Uniting Church’s mission and a contemporary, professional, hope-full and strengths-based network of community services thinking and operating beyond service delivery to activity that empowers individuals, families and communities to thrive, and shifts the public policy dial.
Peter also during this time forged some fruitful relationships with the chairs or equivalents of the major church providers with whom we have worked very well over the years on many hard issues.

And in recent years, he also has contributed his wisdom to our developing relationship with the Protestant church in China – again, a testament to his commitment and dedication to our church and its broader mission in the world. Beyond what he has achieved, we will miss Peter’s persona, his sense of humour, and his passion for those most in need. We look back with thanks on his many achievements and his strong and solid leadership in serving in this role for such a long time and wish him and his family every blessing as he enjoys retirement.

18.10.01.07 Mr Rob Floyd, National Director, UnitingWorld
to express its deep thanks for the long service and very significant contributions that Rob Floyd has made to UnitingWorld. Rob started his links with UnitingWorld along with his wife Jacqui in service in Kupang, West Timor in the late 1990s. Subsequently he worked in various roles, including Program Manager, Associate National Director and finally National Director. This experience gave him a deep understanding of, and sympathy for, the work of the agency.

Rob had a major role in establishing UnitingWorld as an agency with a genuine commitment to partnership, sound governance and fiscal responsibility. He was involved in the initial, and in subsequent, accreditation with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This has been a significant achievement because the process is extremely rigorous. During his time as National Director Rob demonstrated a great capacity to adapt the agency to changing external circumstances.

He sought external advice when that seemed appropriate. Some major and at times challenging changes were accomplished with clarity of direction, engagement of staff and the two National Committees and with trademark good humour and integrity. Throughout his long and distinguished service with UnitingWorld Rob has displayed a very high level of professionalism, sense of purpose and deep commitment to the way of Jesus Christ. Rob’s own faith has helped to anchor the agency in the ethos of the Uniting Church.

Rob gave much to UnitingWorld and the agency is stronger for his valuable contribution. We are deeply grateful for that contribution and wish Rob every success in his new role as Associate General Secretary of the Assembly.

18.10.01.08 Rev John Ruhle, Chairperson, UnitingWorld
to express its thanks to John Ruhle as he marks his retirement from UnitingWorld. John has had a long engagement with the Relief and Development work of the agency. Over the past eleven years, he served with distinction as a member of the Relief and Development National Committee and subsequently as its chair.

He was a wise and engaged chair who encouraged debate, faced issues openly and provided a congenial and safe environment for members to speak freely. He helped to steer the current major change in the governance of the agency. John provided great support and counsel to the National Directors in his weekly phone meetings with them. He will leave a lasting legacy with UnitingWorld.

18.10.01.09 Mr Peter Andrews, Chairperson, Assembly Finance, Audit and Risk Committee
to recognise and thank Peter M Andrews for his significant contribution as Chair for the AFARC Committee for the past 11 years.

The Audit Finance and Risk Committee (AFARC) is a body defined under 3.7.5.2 of the Regulations. AFARC is accountable to the Assembly and its Standing Committee and makes reports and recommendations on financial matters and policies and assists the Standing Committee to discharge its responsibilities in matters related to Finance Audit and Risk for the National Assembly and its agencies.

Peter has served on the committee for 11 years, having been Chair of the committee from August 2009 to May 2017. Peter has provided a significant amount of his time on a pro bono basis to assist this committee to discharge its duties and responsibilities.
Peter has led the committee in a proficient and competent manner ensuring it always carried out its work in an effective and efficient manner to the highest standards of ethics and competency, all within the framework of the values of the church.

Peter always makes himself available to provide guidance and to share his abundant experience and wisdom with those around him. He possesses a great sense of humour which has been needed at times during all-day committee meetings!

Peter’s commitment to the work of AFARC and to that of the Assembly Standing Committee has been greatly valued. His faithfulness to what is asked of him and his mentoring of committee members is a witness to his deep Christian faith.

18.10.01.10 Rev Dr John Evans, Chairperson, Admission of Ministers Committee
to record its appreciation for the contribution of John Evans as Chairperson of the Assembly Admission of Ministers Committee from 2015–2018.

John has been the chairperson of the Committee since its reconstitution as the Admission of Ministers Committee in 2012. Prior to that he served on the former Assembly Reception of Ministers Committee. He led the review of the reception of ministers process that resulted in the formation of the Assembly Admission of Ministers Committee.

John has brought an extensive and wide experience of the Church. He has served in four synods, with congregational and various other appointments, including being the General Secretary of the Western Australian Synod and, most recently, the minister of Church of All Nations in Melbourne. John has led the work of this Committee diligently and faithfully throughout his term. His wisdom and leadership has been appreciated by many across the life of the UCA and in particular, the members of the Committee.

In recent years, the Uniting Church has been blessed by a wide range of ministers who have served in other denominations and partner churches. It also presents some challenges to work with multiple processes both internal and external to the UCA structure, and John’s precise knowledge of the Regulations has been a gift to the Committee, resolving many complex issues.

We are truly blessed by John’s commitment to this important work of the National Assembly. On behalf of many ministers, who have been received into the UCA, we want to express our gratitude to him, and the whole Committee, for such a life-changing ministry that enables them to witness to Christ in and through the life of Uniting Church.

18.10.01.11 Dr Kaye Roberts-Thomson, Chairperson, Education for Ministry Task Group
to record its appreciation for the contribution of Kaye Roberts-Thomson as Chairperson of the Education for Ministry Working Group from 2015–2018.

Kaye is the foundation chairperson of the Education for Ministry Working Group and has not only been responsible for leading the Working Group in fulfilling its responsibilities but has also overseen the establishment of a new Working Group with new responsibilities and with new relationships within the UCA, particularly with Synods and their Ministry Education Boards (MEBs). This has been at a time when major changes have been occurring in organisations and their educational and missional activities across the Church. The work of the Education for Ministry Working Group and its chairperson has thus required a good understanding of the UCA and its vision, culture and processes and the ability to work collaboratively with the diverse priorities and needs across the Synods.

Under Kaye’s leadership the Education for Ministry Working Group has:

- completed very successfully a major review of Phase 2 Formation Standards and is working effectively with MEBs and Colleges to implement these;
- completed a major review of standards and competencies for Pastor and Lay Preacher and established networks to support their implementation;
- revised the annual MEB reporting process to effectively focus on UCA priorities;
• reintroduced the review cycle of MEBs and Colleges and recommenced reviews;
• led a National Collaboration in Theological Education Project; and
• commenced the review of Phase 3 and 4 Standards and processes and supervision standards.

Kaye has proven outstanding in her role and has brought great energy, Christian vision and skill to chairing and leading as well as an openness to the diversity of the Uniting Church.

18.10.01.12 Rev Alistair Macrae, Convenor, National Working Group on Doctrine
to record its appreciation for the contribution of Alistair Macrae AO as Convenor of the Working Group on Doctrine from 2012–2018.

Currently Alistair serves as the Minister at Wesley Uniting Church in Melbourne. He was President of the Uniting Church from 2009–2012, during which he was instrumental in the formation of Preamble, and the UCA partnership with the China Christian Council. Between 2004 and 2009, he served as the Executive Director of the Centre for Theology and Ministry in Melbourne. He was Moderator of the Victoria and Tasmania Synod from 2000–2003. Before that he served in rural, regional and inner-city congregational placements in Bright, Portland, and Brunswick.

Alistair Macrae has been the convenor of the Doctrine Working Group for the past two triennia. He has brought a range of gifts to the role, especially his passion for theology and his skills for collaboration.

Under his leadership the Working Group developed a strong sense of community enabling the members to work together well over a sustained period. Alistair was particularly diligent in ensuring that all members of the Group could make their contribution. He brought a knowledge of and sensitivity to, the diversity of the Church and its multicultural nature and has guided the Group through diverse tasks and challenging work in the life of the Uniting Church. Alistair's deep sense that doctrine matters to faith and that it has a vital role in the life of the church has been important in his leadership. He has shown an unswerving commitment to the work given to the Group despite his own significant health challenges.

In 2017 Alistair's contribution for distinguished service to the Uniting Church in Australia through executive and ministerial roles at state and national levels, and to the promotion of ecumenism, interfaith dialogue and reconciliation was recognised by the Australian Government through the awarding of Officer, in the Order of Australia.

We thank Alistair for his exceptional contribution to the Church through his leadership of the Doctrine Working Group.

18.10.01.13 Rev Michael Barnes, Convenor, Relations with Other Faiths
to record its appreciation for the contribution of Michael Barnes as Convenor of the Relations with Other Faiths Working Group from 2015–2018.

Michael has been a passionate leader of this group and a champion of interfaith friendship as core value and activity in the life of the Uniting Church. His leadership has been grounded in a deep commitment to the building of relationships with people of other faiths, particularly at a time when difference has been used to create division in the wider community. In this context, Michael has reminded us of our call in Christ to live in peace and love with all people and to engage in genuine dialogue with people of other faiths.

During his time as convenor, Michael has been active in maintaining the Uniting Church's relationships with other faiths. In particular, he has been instrumental in building a firm friendship between the Uniting Church and the (now former) Grand Mufti of Australia Dr Ibrahim Abu Mohammed. The relationship has made possible joint statements between the President and the Grand Mufti, for example after the bombing of a mosque in Egypt in December 2017.
Further, Michael has supported the official dialogue between the Uniting Church Assembly and the Executive Council of Australian Jewry. Having been a member of the dialogue for 10 years until 2010, Michael has continued to be a support and advisor for this long-standing relationship with the Jewish community.

Michael actively promoted the development of the Interfaith September resource especially in 2015 and 2016. He has overseen the development of a Study Guide for the Assembly document *Friendship in the Presence of Difference* and supported and contributed to the sharing of interfaith stories across the church nationally via newsletters and social media.

Michael has been a professional and thoughtful convenor and has always encouraged Working Group members in their own interfaith work. Furthermore, he has been a source of wisdom, counsel and leadership for the Assembly in its relationships with other faiths. We thank him for his exceptional contribution to Church and for his dedication to friendship and understanding between people of faith.


Morag took the role of Convenor at the 2015 Assembly, having been a longstanding member of the Working Group. She is a Vice-Moderator of the World Council of Church's Faith and Order Commission and has also participated in the regional Victorian Council of Churches' Faith and Order Commission.

Morag brought to the role her passion for ecumenical and biblical theology and is a passionate teacher and student. As a member of the Christian Unity Working Group she was the primary author of the Uniting Church's response to the WCC's convergence document *The Church – Towards a Common Vision*.

Morag was unable to serve the full three years as Convenor due to ill-health. However, her leadership and commitment to ecumenism was greatly appreciated by all members of the Working Group.

18.10.01.15 Rev Dr Graham Vawser, Convenor, National Working Group on Worship to record its gratitude for the faithful work of Graham Vawser, who has served as Convenor of the National Assembly Working Group on Worship for the past triennium. This term as Convenor of the Working Group caps a long connection and commitment with the liturgical life of the Uniting Church. As well as earning numerous academic awards focussed on liturgy and preaching, Graham has faithfully used his learning to serve the Church in the practical resourcing of worship across the Church. Graham was a member of the Assembly Commission on Liturgy from 1984 until 1991, and part of the team who prepared the original *Uniting in Worship* book. Graham also convened the Working Group on the Marriage Service. With the relocation of the current Working Group on Worship from Queensland to South Australia, Graham took on the role of Convenor and has served the Working Group well for what has turned out to be its final period of establishment.

During the past triennium, Graham has led the Working Group on Worship in a focus on resourcing the worship of the Uniting Church more broadly, with a particular focus on web-based resources and a recognition of the wide variety of worship styles used across the Church. Graham’s leadership has always been one which encouraged and enabled members of the Working Group to contribute their specific gifts and their personal energy to the work of the group, and as a result the group has given birth to a number of helpful resources including an expanding resource of short biographies of the Christian women and men included in the UCA Calendar of Commemorations, a collection of liturgical resources in languages other than English, a number of helpful guidelines for worship and a variety of video resources.

In the development of the variety of written resources which have come from the Working Group, as well as in the planning and execution of significant events such as the *Transforming Worship* Conference and local and national *Songwrite* gatherings, Graham’s deep knowledge of liturgy, and his careful editorial eye have been
invaluable assets for the Working Group. His warm enthusiasm and wide experience related to the worship life of the Church have been a gift to the Church over many years, and most especially as Convenor of the Working Group on Worship, and we wish to record our gratefulness and thanks.

18.10.01.16 **Rev Dr Ian Price, Convenor, Formation, Education and Discipleship**

To record its gratefulness for the faithful work of Ian Price, who has served as Convenor and Chairperson of the Assembly Formation, Education and Discipleship Working Group (FED) since its inception in late 2013. Ian’s tenure with FED continues his long–standing commitment to the task of providing formation and educational resources and training and leadership development for the Church, which has been seen in his roles with the NSW-ACT Synod Board of Education, the Mission Resourcing Network in the UCA in SA, and MediaCom Education Inc.

Ian played a significant role in implementing the national priorities for lifelong Christian education established by the Standing Committee in 2013. He has been an excellent Chairperson, enabling the business of the Working Group to proceed smoothly, yet continually focussing the Group on the big picture of resourcing the life of discipleship within the Church. Ian’s passion for the unique charism of the Uniting Church and his commitment to the foundational principles of the Church have shaped the ways in which the Working Group has approached its brief.

One aspect of the Working Group’s Terms of Reference has been to serve as a source of advice to the National Director Formation, Education and Discipleship. Ian as Chairperson of the Working Group was often involved in consultation and providing support and encouragement. His practical wisdom and his extensive ministry experience have been a great gift to the Working Group, as well as to the wider Church through Presbytery/Synod involvements as well as membership of the Assembly Standing Committee. The Assembly wishes at this time to record its gratefulness and thanks for Ian’s significant contribution through the FED Working Group, and to wish him well in his continuing ministry within the Church.

18.10.01.17 **Rev Ki Soo Jang, Chairperson, Multicultural and Cross-cultural Ministry National Reference Committees**


Ki Soo, in his leadership of this Assembly Committee, brought to the role graciousness, faithfulness, deep spirituality and a broad experience of and commitment to the life and witness of the national UCA as a multicultural church.

As part of this role, and in his work beyond this committee, Ki Soo has contributed his understanding and insights into both the UCA and Korean culture and spirituality, and the significance of life and church membership within the cultural diversity of multicultural and multifaith Australia. In so doing he has contributed greatly in developing new forms of cross-cultural education and ministry.

In the past three years when the church has been discussing important issues including Treaty and Sovereignty, Marriage Equality, Climate Change and the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Ki Soo was able to listen carefully to diverse viewpoints and lead culturally diverse communities with grace and respect. He has been able to bridge and hold different views as a living and practical example of an inclusive church.

Ki Soo’s leadership and commitment to the life of the Uniting Church has been valued highly by members of the committee and the wider church. His ability to form and hold strong relationships among the members of the committee and stakeholders beyond the committee has led to strong and valuable insights for the Church and collaboration with other councils of the Church.
This Statement was presented to the 15th Assembly in Proposal 19.

1. Introduction

1.1 The Uniting Church in Australia adopts this renewed statement on climate change recognising the growing urgency for significant action on this issue and heeding the clamour of voices across the world from people living with the impacts of climate change and fearing the future.

1.2 This Statement recognises there is a diversity of theological reflection, lived experience, policy positions and actions that draw people across the life of the Uniting Church into a deeper understanding of climate change and continuing responsible care of the earth.

1.3 This statement recognises the imperative for the Uniting Church to embody its prophetic role in the public sphere, acknowledging our relationship and responsibility within and with God’s good creation. In making this statement, the Uniting Church also calls upon its members to stand with vulnerable people affected by climate change.

2. Coming to Our Senses

2.1 The Uniting Church’s commitment to the well-being of the environment arises out of its belief that God is the Creator of the world in which we live and move and have our being. This ‘groaning creation’ is God’s ‘good’ creation. Through its discerning of Scripture, the church acknowledges the gospel of creation: all things were made in, through and for Christ. The Church further confesses with the whole Christian church that the Holy Spirit is the giver and source of life.

2.2 The Uniting Church believes that God calls us into a particular relationship with the rest of creation, a relationship of mutuality and interdependence which seeks the reconciliation of all creation with God.

2.3 The Basis of Union expresses this hope and situates it at the very heart of the church’s mission:

“God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church’s call is to serve that end.”

2.4 The world in which we find ourselves is at great risk. The Earth has been adversely affected by human beings. Across the world, people are already feeling the disastrous impacts of climate change. The climate is changing. Sea levels are rising. Coral reefs are dying. Extreme weather is more frequent and more severe. The case is now being made that we – that is, the Earth and all its life systems - have left behind the age of the Holocene during which our cultures and faiths have flourished; we are now entering the Anthropocene, an epoch for which there is no precedent.

2.5 There is a present imperative to recognise that many of our neighbours in the Pacific, Asia and Africa are suffering the effects of climate change caused by the irresponsible use of our God-given resources. Climate change impacts the world’s most vulnerable people first, those who have contributed the least to the problem.

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1 This phrase finds its basis in the story of the Prodigal Son who after his sojourn away squandering his inheritance “comes to his senses” and returns home. The phrase has close associations with ecological conversion and the notion of “awakening” and “seeing in new ways with new eyes

2 Colossians (1: 15-20)

3 Statement to the Nation, Inaugural Assembly, Uniting Church in Australia, 1977

4 Basis of Union Revised (1992 edition), paragraph 3, Uniting Church in Australia

5 Officially, we are living in the geological epoch called the Holocene, but there is a movement to change the name of our current epoch to the Anthropocene, due to the effect that mankind is having on the planet. After 11,700 years of Holocene living, this is a major change and is not being entered into lightly. The International Commission on Stratigraphy is responsible for deciding and defining the divisions of geological time: https://www.decodedscience.org/anthropocene-global-epoch/888

2.6 The well-being of creation in a time of climate change falls within an overriding concern for the public witness of faith. The apostle Paul advised the Galatians to “do good to all” (6:10). Jesus bade us to love our neighbour as ourselves. Our faith is not just for those who happen to follow Christ. It is expressed in and for the world and all creation in the service of the ‘kingdom’ of God.

2.7 It has become increasingly clear that dominant forms of the Christian tradition have been complicit in the abuse of creation.\(^7\) Often Christianity has held to the belief that the world is given to use as we please. It is here for our use. Its value comes from us for we are made in the image of God: we have been called to go forth and multiply and exercise dominion and authority over the rest of creation.

2.8 And so, “we have lived out a doctrine of the domination of nature by accepting and engaging in practices that have failed to safeguard the integrity of creation”\(^8\). We have supported systems and structures that exploit the natural environment in the service of what we thought was good and sometimes for human greed. Changes have now been made to the created order, the Earth system, that cannot be reversed.\(^9\)

2.9 The Uniting Church does not come to this moment in time without resources. It first proclaimed its concern for the environment in its inaugural Statement to the Nation in 1977. The Statement called for a right use of energy, the protection of the environment, “and the replenishment of the earth’s resources”.\(^10\) We are heirs to its forward-looking concern.

2.10 The Uniting Church further declared in 1991 that “nature has a right to the protection of its eco-systems, species, and populations in their interconnectedness” and that “future generations have a right to sufficient thermal exchange between the earth and space”\(^11\). The Church issued further statements on the environment and climate impact in 2003, 2006, and 2014.\(^12\)

2.11 The Uniting Church affirms the unique place and wisdom of First Peoples in relation to the land. The Preamble to the Constitution of the Uniting Church recognises that: “Through this land God had nurtured and sustained the First Peoples of this country, the Aboriginal and Islander peoples, who continue to understand themselves to be the traditional owners and custodians (meaning ‘sovereign’ in the languages of the First Peoples) of these lands and waters since time immemorial”.\(^13\)

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7 When holding the two creation stories in tension together with the teachings of Christ on servant leadership a more careful reading of Genesis 1 and 2 interprets what is written as stewardship under God rather than self-assertive domination. The tendency of this interpretation lends itself to a more responsible use and care of God’s creation given to humans rather than exploitation. It should be noted, however, that the great majority of theologians working on the care of creation and climate change have now become very wary of the model of stewardship. It has been too easily misused and lends itself to what is called an ‘instrumental’ worth of the rest of creation rather than one that delights in its own ‘intrinsic’ value. In other words, the value of a tree depends upon what use I can put to it rather than it having any value in and of itself through simply being a tree. One of the earliest and most forceful criticisms of the stewardship model is Clare Palmer, ’Stewardship: a Case Study in Environmental Ethics’, originally published in Ian Ball, et al., The Earth Beneath: A Critical Guide to Green Theology (London: SPCK, 1992), pp. 67-86. Reprinted in R.J. Berry (ed.), Environmental Stewardship: Critical Perspectives, Past and Present (London: T&T Clark, 2006), pp. 63-75.

8 For the Sake of the Planet and all its People, Resolution 06.101, Assembly Standing Committee, Uniting Church in Australia


10 Statement to the Nation, Inaugural Assembly, Uniting Church in Australia, 1977


12 The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly has adopted the statements, Tuvalu and the Impact of Global Warming, (2003); For the Sake of the Planet and All its People, (2006); An Economy of Life: Re-Imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World (2009), Investment in Fossil Fuels (2014)

13 Revised Preamble of the Uniting Church Constitution 12th Assembly 2009, Uniting Church in Australia
2.12 For tens of thousands of years Aboriginal people have managed a whole continent in ways that were sustainable long-term and delivered food and resource security. In contrast to Western modes of thinking, Aboriginal thinking starts from relational connectedness. Climate change is understood as a threat to personal identity and responsibility and equally a threat to family, clan and nation. As “land and sea are inextricably linked with indigenous cultural identities, a changing climate threatens ceremony, hunting practices, sacred sites, bush tucker and bush medicine, which in turn affects law, home, health, education, livelihood and purpose”. Underpinning Aboriginal thinking is the sense of earth as mother who cares for us and to whom we are responsible to care. Indigenous knowledges are important in addressing climate change and a rich resource for theology.

3. An Informed Faith

3.1 Through its Basis of Union the Uniting Church is committed to an “informed faith”. Paragraph 11 sets the church’s capacity to act “trustingly in obedience in God’s living Word” and not to turn away from the “scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries”. The church is called to “sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought”.

3.2 We continue to be informed by many working together to address this issue. Global concern has brought together diverse faith-based organisations with inter-governmental and inter-disciplinary bodies seeking to address climate change.

3.3 The spectrum of Christian belief with regard to climate change is currently the subject of extensive international and inter/transdisciplinary exploration. There is a compelling need for the church at large to become more familiar with this emerging discourse.

3.4 The present is a time during which the whole body of Christian thinking needs to be interpreted in the light of climate change. It is time for us to articulate an understanding of faith that calls the church to renew our commitment “to move towards sustainable non-exploitative living, believing that God’s creation is precious and the earth’s resources exist for the good of all, now as well as for future generations” and diverse creatures of the Earth.

3.5 In order to fulfil this calling the Christian faith draws upon the insights of many other disciplines and places them alongside its biblical and theological insights. In the matter of climate change we must listen to voices of “contemporary thought” that come to us through earth and climate sciences, economics, politics and the lived experiences of cultures and other faiths.

4. Wise Practice

4.1 It is also time for the church to examine how we are called to live out the Christian faith in the light of an uncertain future. How may we live in ways which are sustainable, which reduce our “footprint” upon the planet, and how may we agitate for change within government, industry and society as a whole? How may our spiritual and liturgical practices shape these actions? These are crucial questions of discipleship to which all people should attend.

4.2 It is within these practices that our sense of identity and vocation as followers of Jesus are formed and sustained. It is within these practices that we are able to express our concern and yearning, our lament and our hope. It is within these practices that we engage with God and with creation and participate in the realisation of God’s purpose for the world.

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15 This paragraph was co-written with and inspired by Rev Tim Matton-Johnson, a Palawa man, ChairpersonUniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress TAS.
16 Basis of Union Revised (1992 edition), paragraph 11
17 Christian churches, ecumenical bodies, other faiths and interfaith organisations have long called for the integrity of creation and made statements aligned with other bodies calling for action on climate change.
18 For the Sake of the Planet and all its People, Resolution 06.101, Assembly Standing Committee, Uniting Church in Australia
5. **Commitments**

5.1 Arising out of our belief (in 2:1) that God is the Creator of the world in which we live and move and have our being, the Uniting Church believes that God calls us into a particular relationship with the rest of creation – a relationship of mutuality and interdependence which seeks the reconciliation of all creation with God.

5.2 We acknowledge:
- The Earth system has been adversely affected by human beings.
- An indisputable link between the human use of fossil fuels which produce greenhouse gas emissions and climate change.
- Across the world, people and other living species are already feeling the disastrous impacts of climate change.
- Without immediate and significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions these impacts are expected to worsen.

5.3 We confess that the Christian tradition has been complicit in the abuse of creation.
- The whole body of Christian thinking needs to be interpreted in the light of climate change.

5.4 We recognise that some of the world’s most vulnerable people are suffering as a result of climate change. We have heard some of their voices and must continue to listen to their experiences and act in solidarity with them to relieve this suffering.
- We affirm the unique place and wisdom of the First Peoples in relation to the land.
- We affirm that for many of our global neighbours, their connection with the land and oceans is integral to their lives and spirituality. Climate change impacts on identity and culture.
- We must consult and dialogue with Indigenous people in addressing climate change.

5.5 To keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, we need a much stronger Australian emission reductions target. This requires a significant commitment to change.

5.6 We urge the government to implement policies that will support such a commitment.
- No new coal mines or coal-mine expansion in Australia.
- A meaningful threshold for oil and gas extraction.
- Long-term, sustainable and just transition plans for mining communities.
- Strategies for vulnerable Australians to access affordable renewable energy.

5.7 We urge the government and community to accelerate the transition to renewable energy.
- Divestment from fossil fuels.
- Remove subsidies and benefits for fossil fuels.
- Remove barriers and prioritise investment in renewable energy and storage.

5.8 Australia must work with those most impacted by climate change to assess their vulnerability and implement a plan of action.

5.9 We urge the government to implement policies which will:
- Increase Australia’s contribution to international climate finance
- Develop fair and transparent mechanisms for providing compensation for climate-impacted nations and displaced peoples.
- With the United Nations, develop a humanitarian status for climate-induced migration which applies to international law.
- Develop initiatives and policies that support sustainable development and enhance climate resilience among vulnerable communities in Australia and overseas.

5.10 We encourage all Uniting Church members, congregations, groups, agencies and councils to take practical action.
- Advocate for change and provide a strong voice to vulnerable people.
- Show leadership, live sustainably and reduce our impact on the earth.
- Learn from and collaborate with those in climate science, economics, politics, other cultures and other faiths.
6. Conclusion

6.1 Climate change is one of the “signs of the times”. In Luke’s gospel Jesus invited the crowds to “interpret the present time” (Luke 12:56). Here the word for time is kairos rather than chronos. The latter refers to calendar time, clock time. The word kairos refers to the right time, the opportune time – and, in matters of faith, to the God-appointed time. The present is a kairos moment. It is God-given moment wherein we are called to address the threats being posed to creaturely existence through human-induced climate change.\(^{19}\) The present is a time for which an appropriate Christian ethic must be sought out and put into practice. For the whole of Creation, the time for action is now.

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