



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

12-14 November 2021

DOCUMENT 4

Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	Information
Title	President's Report
Assembly or ASC Minute	<i>Regulation 3.6.4.2 Duties of the President: "The duties of the President shall be to give spiritual leadership and encouragement to the Church generally, to represent the Church as appropriate, to give counsel as occasion requires and to do such other things as may be requested or advised by the Assembly"</i>
Consultation	
Purpose	To report on key activities of the President.
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	
Recommendations	That the Standing Committee 1. receive the report
Submitted by	Sharon Hollis, President

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President’s Report

Give Spiritual leadership and encouragement

Thursdays in Black ambassador

The General Secretary and I have been appointed joint Thursdays in Black Ambassadors. Thursdays in Black is program of the World Council of Churches that aims to raise awareness of and take action to prevent and respond to gender- based violence. Ambassadors have a responsible to promote the program and work My hope is that becoming an ambassador will provide a further platform to promote the work the Assembly is doing to take action on gender-based violence and to encourage ecumenical conversations about action we can take in Australia. The General Secretary and I are currently the only Ambassadors in the Pacific so we also hope to connect t6he Thursdays in Black leaders with Pacific leaders who would make excellent ambassadors in their country.

You can find more information about Thursday in Black here: [Thursdays in Black | World Council of Churches \(oikoumene.org\)](https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/publications/thursdays-in-black)

Represent the Church

Letter to the Prime Minister re COP26 and Climate Change.

Along with Mark Kickett, Uniting and Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress National Interim Chair and other Christian leaders in Australia and Pacific I co-signed an open letter to Prime Minister organized by the National Council of Churches in Australia ahead of COP26. The letter urged the Australian Government to scale up Australia’s 2030 emissions reduction target to at least 50% and ambitiously aim for higher to help limit global temperature rise to less than 1.5 C

You can find the full letter here [Churches' combined letter to PM re: COP26 \(uniting.church\)](https://www.uniting.church/press-releases/combined-letter-to-pm-re-cop26)

Ecumenical and Overseas partners

I attended an Australian Church leaders meeting convened by National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) where each leader shared key updates. The key issue discussed was the possibility of vaccine ‘passports’ affecting who can attend worship. It was particularly helpful to hear a reflection from the Salvation Army 2 years after significant structural change. The General Secretary and I have arranged a discussion with the Commissions as part of the Act2 project. I joined the Pacific Conference of Churches (PCC) leaders meeting via Zoom. The impact of Covid continues to be a key topic of conversation. I sent a video greeting to the Aotearoa New Zealand Methodist Church Conference, which is meeting online.

Interfaith prayer breakfast

I wrote a prayer for the Australian Catholic University’s Parliamentary Interfaith Breakfast, an event which brings together parliamentarians, faith leaders and community leaders from across Australia. Because of the limitations of COVID-19 the breakfast is being replaced by a publication of prayers and reflections

from different faith traditions and a Zoom gathering to launch the publication. The publication will be sent to parliamentarians and community leaders.

Other things as requested or advised by the Assembly

Reconvened Assembly meeting

I have advised the General Secretary and the chair of the business committee that I determined that the reconvened meeting of the 16th Assembly will take place from the evening of Friday 6 May 2022 until 1.00pm Monday 9 May 2022. The Assembly will begin with worship on Friday evening.

While I hope that the meeting can be in person this will be dependent on health orders. Planning has begun for both in person and online meetings.

The Local Arrangements Committee have indicated that if the meeting is in person it will be held at on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland.

I made this decision in line with the proposal passed at the 16th Assembly:

- a) adjourn the meeting of the 16th Assembly at the conclusion of the Closing Worship; and
- b) reconvene at a time and place and in a manner determined by the President.

(Unconfirmed minute)

Other matters

Meeting with the Filipino National Conference Leaders

Rob Floyd, Apwee Ting, and I met with some of the leaders of the Filipino National Conference to receive a briefing on the human rights situation in the Philippines. Covid infection is widespread, and many people have died, often because of inadequate healthcare and the vaccine rollout is slow. Alongside this are serious concerns about human rights abuses. An election will be held in May next year and there is concern that the election will not be fully free and without violence and intimidation.

Reflection on community building discussion at the last ASC

I was grateful for the feedback about what supports safe and full participation in ASC. Each group had good reminders that as a community we need to exercise grace towards each other and be willing to have respectful but rigorous conversations with each other. This also shapes how I approach chairing the ASC. I have tried to note some of the comments in the way I am planning worship on Saturday as well. I will continue to work with the General Secretary to help shape a community of grace and courage as we do the business of being the ASC.

Sharon Hollis

President@nat.uca.org.au

0439 396 577

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