

Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE
VIA ZOOM

12 – 14 NOVEMBER 2021

PRESENT Sharon Hollis (President), James Aaron, Sandy Boyce, David Busch, Michael Dobson, Linda Driver, David Fotheringham, Philip Gardner, Colleen Geyer, Mark Kickett, Richard La'Brooy, Nicole Mugford, Alison Overeem, Deidre Palmer, Catherine Pepper, Roberta Stanley, Charissa Suli, Lilliani Tahaafe-Williams, Geoff Tompson, Yuko Tonai-Moore, Ayla Williams, Anna Wilson, Kerry Wilson.

In attendance: Felicity Amery, Jenny Bertalan, Heather den Houting, John Dunn, Rob Floyd, Mark Lawrence, Andrew Williams.

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

GOVERNANCE ORIENTATION

On the Friday evening Heather Watson offered a presentation on good governance practice which is founded on good decision-making, which, in turn, comes from good information. The members moved into break out rooms to discuss what areas or issues are likely to give rise to confidentiality being breached and what insights they had gained about managing conflicts of interest in the Assembly Standing Committee context. Then, back in plenary, the members shared their responses from these small group conversations.

WORSHIP On Friday evening and Saturday morning the President led worship and the closing prayer on Saturday was offered using The Examen. The Sunday morning worship was led by Catherine Pepper, Charissa Suli and David Fotheringham.

WELCOMES Ann Cross and Sarah Lim for matters related to UCA Redress Ltd. presentation; Peter Andrews and John Cox for matters related to the National Safe Church Unit presentation, Rob McFarlane for matters related to the Standards for Ministries Committee; Leo Iosifidis, John Graves, Gillian Coutts and Ted Woodley for matters related to the UCA Assembly Limited Annual General Meeting; Lin Hatfield Dodds and Graeme Rendell for matters related to the LGBTIQ Apology Task Group report and Ji Zhang for matters related to the Climate Action Plan.

APOLOGIES

21.52 **It was resolved** to receive apologies from David Busch for Saturday morning; John Dunn for Sunday, Raul Sugunananthan for the whole meeting, Linda Driver for the last session on Sunday afternoon, Richard La'Brooy for Friday night.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The General Secretary spoke to the agenda and timetable as listed in Document 1.

21.54 **It was resolved to** approve the timetable and agenda of the meeting as outlined in Document 1, noting that the committee is free to vary the agenda at any time.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

21.55 It was resolved to confirm:

21.55.01 the minutes of the meeting held 27 – 29 August 2021 with the following amendments:

- a) 21.40 – AFARC: Delete “Table discussion ensued”;
- b) 21.41.02 – AIAC: The narrative should say: “Stuart Woodward introduced Documents 13, 13A and 13B,;”
- c) Page 7 - Date for 2121 should be 2021; and
- d) the minutes of the meeting on 14 October 2021.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

21.56 It was resolved to:

- a) note:
 - (i) Anna Wilson’s conflict of interest in relation to Document 9 - Disability Royal Commission National Task Group ASC Member since she is nominating for this position;
 - (ii) resolve that she be absent for this business and not vote;
- b) note:
 - (i) Yuko Tonai-Moore’s conflict of interest in relation to to Document 9 - Disability Royal Commission National Task Group ASC Member since she is nominating for this position; and
 - (ii) resolve that she that she be absent for this business and not vote;
- c) note:
 - (i) Linda Driver’s conflict of interest in relation Documents 10 and 10A - Standards for Ministries Committee Report and the Report of the Synod of South Australia Ministerial Education Board / Uniting College Consultation Team since she is connected with Uniting College; and
 - (ii) resolve that she be present for this business but not vote;
- d) note:
 - (i) Charissa Suli’s conflict of interest in relation to Document 5 – General Secretary Report since she is a staff member of the Assembly Resourcing Unit; and
 - (ii) resolve that she be absent for this business; and
- e) note:
 - (i) Charissa Suli’s conflict of interest in relation to Document 17 – 16th Assembly Reconvened Meeting Update since she is nominated to be on the Business Committee; and
 - (ii) resolve that she be absent for this business.

NOTE CONSTITUTION CLAUSE 39

The Standing Committee members were reminded of the Constitution clause 39, as per ASC minute 00.71:

“On matters which, by a two thirds majority vote, the Assembly deems to be vital to the life of the Church, the Assembly shall seek the concurrence of the Synods and/or Presbyteries and/or Congregations as the Assembly may determine.”

UAICC REPORT

Mark Kickett presented Document 3, consisting of a report on the conversations UAICC had and the actions they took.

21.57 **It was resolved** to receive the report. (Attachment B)

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The ex-President took the chair while the President spoke to Document 4, consisting of a report on her activities since her installation by the 16th Assembly on 17 July 2021.

21.58 **It was resolved** to receive the report (Attachment A).

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. **Assembly Standing Committee Governance Committee Review (ASC Minute 21.48.05)**

The General Secretary presented Document 8, consisting of a report on the review undertaken, and associated decisions regarding revised Terms of Reference.

21.59 **It was resolved to:**

21.59.01 receive the report;

21.59.02 approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Assembly Standing Committee Governance Advisory Committee as amended at the meeting (Attachment C); and

21.59.03 appoint Linda Driver, Richard La'Brooy and Nicole Mugford, elected in the online ballot, to the Committee.

2. **Climate Action Plan Annual Report (ASC Minute 18.38)**

Rob Floyd and Ji Zhang presented Document 16, consisting of the annual report against the Climate Action Plan.

21.60 **It was resolved to:**

21.60.01 receive the report;

21.60.02 affirm the direction of the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Accountability report;

21.60.03 acknowledge the work of Assembly Secretariat, Agency staff and the climate champions in gathering carbon footprint data to develop an Emissions Inventory; and

21.60.04 encourage all Assembly personnel to continue to work towards the 2040 Zero Emissions target.

3. **LGBTIQ Apology Task Group Report (ASC Minute 21.19.02)**

Lin Hatfield Dodds and Graeme Rendell spoke to Document 14, consisting of a report on the work undertaken to date while seeking guidance from the

Assembly Standing Committee in regard to the proposed project plan and resources required to implement it.

21.61 It was resolved to:

21.61.01 receive the report; and

21.61.02 request the Task Group to provide an update report to the March and November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

4. Online Gathering for Worship with Holy Communion Report (ASC Minute 21.10.02)

The General Secretary presented Document 15, consisting of a report to guide the Assembly Standing Committee members in their consideration of an extension of the approval of permission for online gathering for worship with Holy Communion until the matter can be considered at the 16th Assembly reconvened meeting.

21.62 It was resolved to:

21.62.01 receive the report;

21.62.02 approve the extension of permission for UC Congregations to hold online gathering for worship with Holy Communion in accordance with the guidelines approved by the Assembly Standing Committee until the reconvened meeting of the 16th Assembly; and

21.62.03 request the General Secretary, in consultation with Advocates and Panels of relevant Circles of Interest and the Church in the Digital Age TG, to bring a report about the permanent approval of online gathering for worship with Holy Communion, including reflections on what has been learnt about Communion both through practicing online communion and abstaining from it, to the March 2022 ASC. If relevant it should also include proposals and rationale for the consideration of the 16th Assembly at its reconvened meeting in 2022.

5. Standards for Ministries Committee Report (ASC Minute 21.22)

Rob McFarlane introduced Document 10, consisting of a report on issues related to Phase 4 and Supervision, and provide information and a recommendation regarding the Synod of South Australia Ministerial Education Board, and Uniting College.

21.63 It was resolved to:

21.63.01 receive the report; and

21.63.02 determine that the courses offered under the Synod of South Australia Ministerial Education Board, through Uniting College of Leadership and Theology, be recognised as fulfilling the Regulations of the Uniting Church for the ministries concerned, and the Standards of formation, education and training for the specified ministries.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Act2 Task Group Report

The General Secretary presented Documents 13 and 13A, consisting of an update on the work and process of the Act2 project and the 'Act2: *Considering Afresh our Life Together*' report. The General Secretary invited the Assembly

Standing Committee members to provide feedback on the questions posed in *Act2: Considering Afresh our Life Together* report. Discussion in small groups followed.

21.64 **It was resolved to** receive the report.

2. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

Stuart Woodward and Leo Iosifidis spoke to Document 6, consisting of a report on the management of finance, audit and risk issues across the Assembly.

21.65 **It was resolved to:**

21.65.01 receive the report; and

21.65.02 note the satisfactory finalisation of the June 2021 Audit of Annual Financial Statements.

3. Assembly Risk Management Report

Leo Iosifidis presented Documents 7, 7A and 7B, consisting of a report on the Risk Management System and Framework of the Assembly, the Risk Appetite Statement, the Dashboard/Heatmap Reporting of Risks and the November 2021 ASC Risk Register. Group discussion followed.

21.66 **It was resolved to** receive the report.

4. Disability Royal Commission National Task Group ASC Member

The General Secretary spoke to Document 9, consisting of the Terms of Reference of the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group and the Expressions of Interest submitted by Assembly Standing Committee members.

21.67 **It was resolved to** elect Anna Wilson as the ASC member of the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group.

5. General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary introduced Documents 5, 5A and 5B, consisting of a report on the Assembly's achievement against the Strategic Plan, the operations and issues relevant to its work as well as the correspondence from the Northern Synod and the Assembly Strategic and Business Plan Reporting. Group discussion followed.

21.68 **It was resolved to:**

21.68.01 receive the report;

21.68.02 request the General Secretary to convene a conversation with the Northern Synod regarding its resolution relating to redress responsibilities, and to report to the March 2022 ASC meeting on the outcomes. The conversation will include the General Secretaries of the Assembly and the Northern Synod, other relevant personnel and the National Director of UCA Redress Ltd.; and

21.68.03 note the Assembly Review Scope and that a further report will be brought to the March 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee receive the report.

6. National Safe Church Unit Report

Peter Andrews and John Cox introduced Document 11, consisting of a report on the strategy and operation of the National Safe Church Unit.

21.69 It was resolved to receive the report.

7. UCA Redress Ltd. Report

Ann Cross and Sarah Lim presented Document 12, consisting of the annual 2020-2021 report of UCA Redress Ltd.

21.70 It was resolved to receive the report.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Consent Agenda

The General Secretary presented the various documents which constituted Document 2, Consent Agenda.

21.71 It was resolved to:

- 21.71.01 receive the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group Report;
- 21.71.02 a) receive the Executive Council of the Jewry – UCA Dialogue Report; and
b) appoint Robyn Whitaker to the Executive Council of the Jewry – UCA Dialogue for the triennium;
- 21.71.03 receive the Church in the Digital Age Task Group report;
- 21.71.04 receive the Chaplaincy Task Group report;
- 21.71.05 receive the Regulations Review Task Group report;
- 21.71.06 appoint Sean Winter to the Standards for Ministries Committee;
- 21.71.07 appoint the following Panel Members for Assembly Circles of Interest:
- Milise Ofa Foiakau to the Being a Multicultural Church Circle of Interest
 - Matthew Julius to the Growing in Faith Circle of Interest
 - Abi Benham-Bannon to the Working for Justice Circle of Interest

2. 16th Assembly Reconvened Meeting 2022 Update

The General Secretary spoke to Document 17, consisting of a report on matters relating to the reconvened meeting of the 16th Assembly and the proposed appointment of Charissa Suli as member of the Business Committee.

21.72 It was resolved to:

- 21.72.01 receive the report; and
- 21.72.02 appoint Charissa Suli (President-elect) to the 16th Assembly Business Committee.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 5pm.

**DATES FOR 2022: 11 – 13 March 2022
15 – 17 July 2022
11 – 13 November 2022**