



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

11-13 March 2022

DOCUMENT 14

Title	Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group
Type of Paper	For Information, Discussion and Decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	
Consultation	
Purpose	
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	Attachment A Draft Program Plan 2021-2024 Attachment B - Together in Humanity, A Discussion Paper from the Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group
Proposal/s	That the Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receives the report.2. Approve funding one or two members of the Task Group (TG) to attend a Congress gathering in 2022 up to a maximum budget of \$2000, and advise whether it is culturally appropriate to participate in such a gathering via Zoom.3. That the ASC provide any feedback to the TG on the best ways to seek input from younger members of the Uniting Church in a range of diverse contexts.4. Notes that the TG is developing a Discussion Paper on a range of theological, biblical and other considerations pertinent to the formulation of an apology to LGBTIQ Australians to guide its consultations.5. That the ASC note that the Project Plan of the TG involves bringing specific wording of an apology to the ASC in early 2024, with a view to the apology being offered during the seventeenth Assembly in July 2024.6. That the Revd Elizabeth Raine be appointed as a member of the Task Group.
Submitted by	Lin Hatfield Dodds

Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group

Background information

1. A proposal for the Uniting Church to develop and issue an apology to LGBTIQ Australians was presented to the sixteenth Assembly meeting. Time did not permit discussion of the proposal. The Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) decided in August 2020 to establish a TG. Due to a change in convenorship, the TG commenced meeting in October 2020. The TG has met 16 times on Zoom since then.
2. These meetings have facilitated:
 - (a) A careful consideration of our Terms of Reference, including consultation with the wider church.
 - (b) Meetings with UCA leaders including from UAICC and CALD congregations;
 - (c) Appointment of new members;
 - (d) Meeting with theological discussants; and
 - (e) Development of a Discussion Paper for consideration by the wider Uniting Church.
3. The Convenor, Lin Hatfield Dodds, and TG member Graeme Randall, met with the ASC and Synod General Secretaries in November 2021. At the suggestion of the General Secretaries, two members of the TG (the Revd Gordon Ramsay and Warren Talbot) met with the President and Synod Moderators in February 2022.

Rationale for the six Proposals

1. Receive the report
2. The TG met with the (now) Revd Mark Kickett, interim chairperson of the UAICC, in September 2021. It was a moving meeting in that Mark indicated his support for the work and aims of the TG. Shared concerns were discussed. Mark highlighted areas which might be of concern. Mark indicated the value in members of the TG attending a meeting of the Congress, tentatively scheduled for mid-2022. TG members believe these discussions would be best held in person, but we are open to advice from the ASC about the cultural appropriateness of such discussions taking place on Zoom. We are happy to be guided by the Revd Kickett in these matters. We are proposing that ASC approve a budget up to a maximum of \$2000 for TG members to attend this meeting if that is required.
3. The TG membership broadly reflects the demographics of our Uniting Church. We are very open to advice as to the best ways to relate to and have conversations with younger people in the church. Some ASC members may have thoughts about that. We are aware that for some younger people, there is much more of awareness of LGBTIQ people than in previous generations. One detail in this we are aware of relates to trans and other gender diverse young people.
4. In order to provide a framework for our consultations, the TG is finalising a Discussion Paper. We see there is value in carefully setting out the issues to be considered. The title page and contents for the paper are attached. The overall length will be no more than 20,000 words. The Discussion Paper will assist in contributing to the consultation requirements in our Terms of Reference.

5. The fourth proposal is included in our Project Plan which was provided to the November 2021 ASC meeting (attached). We are highlighting this now to stress that we are working backwards from July 2024. We do not plan to commence drafting the apology until late 2023, after we have listened carefully to the full range of opinion in the church.
6. The Revd Elizabeth Raine has been an observer at recent meetings of the TG. Elizabeth brings extensive experience in local congregational ministry in addition to teaching biblical studies at the United Theological College. In her current placement, at the Tuggeranong Uniting Church, ACT, Elizabeth ministers to a mainly LGBTIQ faith community which meets on a Sunday evening at Tuggeranong Uniting. Elizabeth, and the Revd Dr John Squires, are co-authors of the leading section of the discussion paper on biblical and theological issues. This brings our membership to the manageable number of seven. We meet via Zoom, so there are no additional costs. With Elizabeth's addition the TG membership consists of three queer members and four allies of our Uniting Church queer communities.

*

It is a privilege for me to be serving the church in this important endeavour to ensure that we do not forget our policies and practices of excluding LGBTIQ people. My hope is that we offer an appropriate apology, and that we can move forward together seeking reconciliation and renewal.

Lin Hatfield Dodds

CONVENOR

Attachment A



Uniting Church in Australia

Assembly

Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group

DRAFT Project Plan, 2021 - 2024

2021 – PLANNING and PREPARATION

July

- Discussion with consultant theologians (focus: input to background paper; advice on biblical & theological rationale)
- Assembly is 17-18 July, then adjourned to mid July 2022.

August

- Graeme's thesis: 45 min discussion on the psychology of apology. May be followed up at later meetings.
- ASC: to consider new members. Lin and Graeme may attend part and will seek to meet with General Secretaries to discuss actions to support people impacted by our work by the wider UCA.

September

- Pastoral principles: Graeme's document.
- Apwee Ting invited to discuss diversity & inclusion and how we might work with the President to engage UCA National Conferences

October

- UAICC Chairperson, Mark Kickett, invited to discuss how we might engage the UAICC
- Finalise plans re President, and national conferences.

November

- Discussion with theologians again, aim is to finalise background paper
- ASC: Lin and Graeme will seek to meet with General Secretaries again to update the and pursue UCA support for people impacted by our work

December

- Consultation Plan for 2022-23
- Review first year of work

2022 CONSULTATIONS

March/April 2022

- Submit final draft of Background paper to ASC then wider church

June 2022

- Uniting Network national conference in Adelaide.

MAY 2022

- ENGAGE at re-convened Assembly meeting

2023 CONSULTATIONS CONCLUDE. REPORT DRAFTED

Nov. 2023 – ASC meeting

2024 REPORT FINALISED

March 2024 – ASC

July 2024 – Seventeenth Assembly

Attachment B

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Uniting Church in Australia

Together in Humanity

**A Discussion Paper from the
Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group**

DRAFT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction and context

1.1 Purpose and work of the LGBTIQ Apology Task Group

1.2 Purpose of the Information Paper

1.3 The Uniting Church and LGBTIQ people

1.4 A note on terminology

2. Biblical and theological perspectives

2.1 Being human in the image of God

2.2 Being human in community

2.3 Being human and understanding Scriptural texts

3. LGBTIQ communities

3.1 LGBTIQ people in Australian society

3.2 LGBTIQ people in the life of the Uniting church

4. "Saying sorry"

4.1 Understanding an apology

4.2 South Africa – Truth and Reconciliation Commission

4.3 Australia – National Sorry Day

4.4 Uniting Church apologies: indigenous Australians, child sexual abuse

5. LGBTIQ apologies

5.1 Australian society

5.2 Churches

4.2.1 Churches beyond Australia

4.2.2 Churches in Australia

5.3 LGBTIQ experience in the Uniting Church

5.4 Specific questions for the Task Group to consider

6. Next steps and directions for a LGBTIQ apology in the Uniting Church

6.1 Principles to guide an apology process

References

Contact information