



The Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) met via zoom, 11-13 March 2022.

The meeting was chaired by the President, Rev Sharon Hollis, and began with worship, which also began each day, with the days ending with the practice of the Examen. The ASC also acknowledged the First Peoples of all the lands we were meeting on, and the significance of the Covenant between the Uniting Church and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC).

The ASC continued its commitment to develop the governance skills of members throughout the triennium. Governance training led by Heather Watson focussed on the ASC's role as the national council of the UCA, and its broader governance role. Jason Bryan, outgoing Chair of the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee provided a session on investment, ethical investing and ESG (ethical, social, and governance) criteria.

The ASC also continued its discussion of the book, "In His Own Strange Way" A Post-Christendom Sort-of Commentary on the Basis of Union by Rev Dr Geoff Thompson.

### **President's Report**

The President reported on her work since the last ASC meeting, including giving spiritual leadership and encouragement, representing the Church in meetings with ecumenical and overseas partners and responding to the Religious Discrimination Bill 2021 and related bills.

### **Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Report**

Mark Kickett (UAICC National Interim Chair) spoke of the COVID and flood crises and their impact on First Nations communities, as well as an update of UAICC work in the regions around the country with a focus on the work in Tasmania.

### **General Secretary Report**

The General Secretary reported on the operations of the Assembly and its Agencies, including progress against the Assembly Strategic Plan. The Covenant is central to the work of the Assembly. A section of the report set out how the Covenant is lived out in the Assembly organisationally, in its governance, communication, workplaces, in resources developed and in advocacy on issues for First Peoples in partnership with UAICC.

### **Finance and Risk Report**

The Assembly Finance Audit and Risk Committee reported to the ASC as it does each time it meets. The report included a session on financial sustainability. The ASC considered the Assembly Risk Register and Risk Appetite Statement, and whether there needed to be any changes when considering the issues before the ASC.

### **UnitingCare Australia report**

UnitingCare Australia provided its annual report. Geoff Batkin (Chair, UnitingCare Australia Board) and Claerwen Little (National Director) presented on the work of the Agency and its strategic priorities (Justice for First Peoples, Addressing Economic Inequality, Ageing to our Full Potential and responding to the Disability Royal Commission); as well as the governance and compliance, risk, financial status and public profile of the Agency. Advocacy in the lead up to the federal election was also discussed.



**Uniting Church in Australia  
ASSEMBLY**

**Assembly Standing Committee**

## **ASC Update March 2022**

### **16th Assembly reconvened meeting**

Preparations for the 16th Assembly Reconvened meeting in May to be held on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland were discussed. The work of the ASC and its Task Groups that will be considered at the meeting was finalised for presentation in reports and recommendations to Assembly members.

### **Online gathering for Holy Communion**

The ASC recognised the ways in which the UCA has received the gift of Holy Communion in online settings, and the insights gained from abstaining from Holy Communion while worshipping online; and encouraged the Church to continue this period of creative, contextual theological exploration and celebration. It resolved to allow the continuation of online gatherings for Holy Communion, in accordance with the guidelines approved by the ASC, until the 17th Assembly when a report on the practice will be brought.

### **Apology to LGBTIQ Australians Task Group**

The Task Group brought a progress report on its work to the ASC including its plan for consultation in the coming year.

### **Appointments**

Siosiana Joyce Tangi to the UCA – Executive Council of Australian Jewry Dialogue.

Raul Sugunananthan to the Working for Justice Circle Panel.

Graeme Rough as Chair of the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee.

Amanda Wood as member of the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee.