



The Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) met in person in Sydney, 15-17 July 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).

UAICC Report

Mark Kickett (UAICC National Interim Chair) reported on the celebrations of the ordination of Mitchell Garlett in Perth; and the commissioning of Perry Yunkaporta as pastor to the Aurukun community on Cape York, and Yanima (Darrien) Bryant of Kalka as pastor, Jill Doolan of Finke (Aputula) as pastor, and support workers Ben and Emily Howland in the APY lands on Pentecost weekend. UAICC participation and contribution to the 16th Assembly and Synod meetings was also discussed, as well as other important meetings. Mark Kickett and Alison Overeem will also participate in the Pacific Church Partnership Advisory Network, including sharing in a panel on self-determination with Pat Anderson, co-chair of The Uluru Statement organisation.

President's Report

The President reported on her work since the last ASC meeting, including giving spiritual leadership and encouragement, celebrating the UCA 45th Anniversary, supporting a multi-faith statement in support of the Uluru Statement and presenting an Albert St lecture which reflected on the key issues of the Uniting Church: Act2, consensus decision making and the Preamble and Constitution. The President also reported on the 16th Assembly reconvened meeting, and the observations of three Catholic observers (online) of the Assembly meeting as part of a large piece of work the Catholic Church is doing on synodality at the request of Pope Francis.

General Secretary Report

The General Secretary reported on the operations of the Assembly and its Agencies, including progress against the Assembly Strategic Plan. The ASC decided to extend the life of the current Assembly Strategic Plan to July 2024 so that future Strategic Plans aligned with the triennium of the Assembly. Staff changes were also noted, including the resignation of Rob Floyd as Associate General Secretary who will finish in early October 2022.

Assembly Investment Policy

Following advice from the ASC in 2021, the ASC approved an updated Assembly Investment Advisory Policy, which among other things, reinforced that investments are to be held, in the first instance, in UCA related institutions, and reference to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals supporting the endorsed Ethical and ESG Investment principles.

16th Assembly reconvened meeting

ASC members reflected on the 16th Assembly, both online (2021) and reconvened meetings (2022). Discussions focussed on the learnings from these meetings and how these can inform planning for the 17th Assembly to be held in July 2024 in the Synod of NSW.ACT. For the first time, an Emissions Report was provided for an Assembly Triennial meeting.



16th Assembly Resolutions and Associated Actions

Considerable time was spent on the resolutions made at the 16th Assembly reconvened meeting, and what was required by the Assembly to action these resolutions. Many of these will be communicated over the coming months as the work is begun. With respect to the Act2 Project, the ASC agreed to establish the Act2 Steering Committee with membership identified by the ASC and Synods and UAICC, as well as the Act2 Project Unit to undertake the work required to bring a report to the 17th Assembly on this important national initiative.

Frontier Services report

Frontier Services provided its report to the ASC. Lisa Sampson (Chair, Frontier Services Board) and Jannine Jackson (National Director) presented on the work of Frontier Services and the work of Bush Chaplains across the country. Two volunteer groups from the NRMA have provided assistance in Parkes/Trundle and Condobolin; as well as volunteer projects in Oodnadatta, Cockburn, William Creek and Hawker. ASC also heard about a new Strategic Plan for Frontier Services (2022-2025) which includes a goal of funding 30 Bush Chaplains.

UnitingWorld report

UnitingWorld provided its report to the ASC. Lin Hatfield Dodds (Chair, UnitingWorld Board) and Sureka Goringe (National Director) presented on the work of the Agency and its important connections with Church partners, including the completion of 13 partner consultations to begin a co-design activity to map programming for the next 3-5 years. After the COVID years, UnitingWorld is looking forward to reconnecting with partners, meeting leaders who have begun their roles in the past two years and future collaboration that will make a difference not only to the partnerships the UCA holds with these churches, but also in areas of need through UnitingWorld programs.

Standards for Ministries

Following the Standards for Ministries Committee consultation in WA, the ASC determined that the programmes of study offered under the oversight of the WA MEB 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 of the Uniting Church.

Appointments

Rev Louisa Yanhua Yu to the Being a Multicultural Church Panel
Andrew Fong to the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee
Thomas Hodson to the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee
Rev Vinnie Ravetali to the UnitingWorld Board
Rev Thresi Mauboy to the UnitingWorld Board
John Berger to the UnitingCare Australia Board
Bronte Wilson to the UnitingCare Australia Board
Catherine Pepper, Richard La'Brooy, Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, Kevin Griffiths, Jessica Hately-Browne, Paul Goh and Mark Brisbane to the Act2 Steering Committee. UAICC appointment of Mark Kickett was also noted.