



Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY

Assembly Standing Committee

11-13 November 2022

DOCUMENT 12

Title	Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)
Type of Paper	For information and decision
Assembly or ASC Minute	ASC 22.46
Consultation	ASC Members
Purpose	To adopt a Terms of Reference and appoint a task group to develop resources for the Church in regard to Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	
Recommendations	That the Assembly Standing Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Receive the Report2. Adopt the Terms of Reference for the Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE) Task group3. Note that recruitment for the Task Group continues and will be reported to the March 2023 ASC
Submitted by	Colleen Geyer General Secretary

Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)

The Reconvened Assembly resolved:

1. To affirm the Uniting Church Statement, Dignity in Humanity, which states that 'every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God's children'.
2. To affirm that prayer and pastoral care are long-held Christian practices that will continue to be offered to support and uphold people, including LGBTIQ+ people, and agree that these Christian practices should not be used to harm or condemn any people including LGBTIQ+ people.
3. To recognise that sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts (SOGICE), often referred to as 'conversion therapy' are harmful to people's mental health and wellbeing.
4. To request the Assembly Standing Committee to develop a process to provide a national resource for congregations, agencies, and individuals to learn how they can help prevent harm from SOGICE ideology and practice.

Subsequently the Assembly Standing Committee at its July 2022 meeting resolved to"

Request the Associate General Secretary to develop Terms of Reference for a Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts Resource Development Task Group, including nominations for the Task Group, for approval at the November 2022 ASC Meeting.

The draft Terms of Reference for the Task Group have been developed and are attached below.

Recruitment for the Task Group has proved challenging. A wide range of people have been approached, but currently there are only two confirmed nominations and one further person still considering their possible involvement. The ARU will continue to approach relevant people with the aim of bringing a list of nominations to the Mach 2023 ASC. The ASC is invited to suggest any appropriate potential Task Group members.

PREVENTING HARM FROM SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITY CHANGE EFFORTS TASK GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE

[Date of approval]

- Purpose:** To provide a national resource for congregations, agencies, and individuals to learn how they can help prevent harm from Sexual Orientation And Gender Identity Change Efforts SOGICE ideology and practice.
- Reporting Arrangements:** Reporting to the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC)
- Period:** This Terms of Reference is for the period from November 2022 until July 2023
- Membership:** As determined by the ASC on the recommendation of the Assembly General Secretary, Assembly Associate General Secretary and members of the Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU)

Background:

The 16th Assembly reconvened resolved:

1. To affirm the Uniting Church Statement, Dignity in Humanity, which states that 'every person is precious and entitled to live with dignity because they are God's children'.
2. To affirm that prayer and pastoral care are long-held Christian practices that will continue to be offered to support and uphold people, including LGBTIQ+ people, and agree that these Christian practices should not be used to harm or condemn any people including LGBTIQ+ people.
3. To recognise that sexual orientation and gender identity change efforts (SOGICE), often referred to as 'conversion therapy' are harmful to people's mental health and wellbeing.
4. To request the Assembly Standing Committee to develop a process to provide a national resource for congregations, agencies, and individuals to learn how they can help prevent harm from SOGICE ideology and practice.

Task Required:

The Task group will:

1. Consult with groups both within and outside the UCA representing people impacted by the SOGICE practices.
2. Investigate relevant research, resources already available from other religious bodies and human rights groups, and the legislation in place in various jurisdictions, regarding the practices and impacts of SOGICE.
3. Based on the above, develop a resource for congregations, agencies, and individuals to learn how they can help prevent harm from SOGICE ideology and practice.

Expected Outcomes:

At the conclusion of its work the Task Group will:

1. Present a Resource Document to the Assembly Standing Committee for approval to be distributed across the life of the Church.
2. Present a brief report to the Assembly Standing Committee covering the work undertaken and any significant findings or recommendations.

How the task group will work:

1. Be grounded in the gospel and build upon the tradition of the Uniting Church in Australia.
2. Live out our covenant as First and Second Peoples.
3. Live out our commitment to being a multicultural church, oriented towards justice.
4. Embody an inclusive church where those of differing ability, age, race, sexual orientation and gender identity are welcomed
5. Ensure that the activities of the Task Group are consistent with the Basis of Union of the UCA, the Constitution and Regulations, and align with the current strategic priorities of the Assembly.
6. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other councils, agencies and groups within the UCA, and work collaboratively wherever possible.
7. Consider how the work of the Task Group relates to other bodies ecumenically and with other civil society organisation and work collaboratively wherever possible.
8. Where appropriate, conduct its work on the basis of rigorous, contemporary research and analysis

Membership:

The Convenor will be appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee, guided by input from the Assembly, General secretary, Assembly Associate General Secretary and members of the Assembly Resourcing Unit(ARU).

The appropriate number of members and the composition of the membership of the Task Group will be determined by the Assembly Standing Committee guided by input from the same group.

Casual vacancies will be filled as required by the Assembly General Secretary and communicated to ASC.

The selection process will consider the skills and expertise required to undertake the work of the Task Group.

The Task Group will be dismissed at the conclusion of the work it has been given. In the event that the period given to a Task Group has elapsed and the work of the group is not yet completed the Assembly General Secretary may choose to:

1. Extend the period of the Task Group and communicate this to ASC
2. Dismiss the Task Group and request that ASC appoint a new Task Group.