

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

MARY MACKILLOP PLACE, NORTH SYDNEY, NSW

15 – 17 July 2022

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

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Jane Fry, Heather den Houting, Rob Floyd, Mark Lawrence, Stuart McMillan, Lara Regan and Andrew Williams.

AGENDA DISCUSSION

The elected members of the Assembly Standing Committee gathered on Friday afternoon to discuss the Agenda of the meeting. The President led this conversation.

WELCOME AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

The President and the members the President acknowledged the First Peoples of their respective lands. The President welcomed Leo Iosifidis for matters related to the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee report, Risk Management and Investment Policy, Graeme Rough for matters related to the Investment Policy, Jean Shannon for matters related to the Chaplaincy Task Group Final Report; Lin Hatfield Dodds for matters related to the LGBTIQ+ Apology Task Group Report and the UnitingWorld Report; Gordon Ramsay and Warren Talbot for matters related to the LGBTIQ+ Apology Task Group Report, Sureka Goringe for matters related to the UnitingWorld Report, Lisa Sampson and Jannine Jackson for matters related to the Frontier Services Report; Rob McFarlane for matters related to the Standards for Ministries Committee Report.

WORSHIP On the Friday night the President led worship and the closing prayer on Friday and Saturday night were offered through The Examen video, Michael Dobson led the Saturday morning worship, the Sunday morning worship was delivered by Roberta Stanley and the closing prayers were offered by Raul Sugunanathan.

APOLOGIES

22.21 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Linda Driver, Lilliani Tahaafe-Williams and Geoff Thompson for the whole meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

22.22 **It was resolved to:**

22.22.01 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

22.23 It was resolved to confirm the Minutes of the meeting held 11 -13 March 2022.

~~22. approve ASC minute 22.09 to be deemed 'confidential' for a period of 10 years, and not be included in the March 2022 ASC minutes that are published on the Assembly website once they are confirmed. To be deleted from public copy!~~

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

22.24 It was resolved to:

- a) note:
 - (i) Anna Wilson's conflict of interest in relation to Document 14 - UnitingCare Australia Board Appointments since her father is one of the nominees; 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."

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The ex-President took the chair while the President spoke to Document 4, consisting of a report on her activities since the March 2022 meeting of the Standing Committee and the Reconvened 16th Assembly held in May 2022.

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

UAICC REPORT

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

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

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. Assembly Investment Advisory Policy (ASC Minute 21.42)

Graeme Rough, Stuart Woodward and Leo Iosifidis presented Documents 7 and 7A, consisting of a report on the review of the Investment Policy and the draft updated Assembly Investment Advisory Policy.

22.27 It was resolved to:

22.27.01 receive the report; and

22.27.02 approve the updated Assembly Investment Advisory Policy (Attachment C).

2. General Secretary Report Including Redress Matters (ASC Minute 22.09.07)

The General Secretary spoke to Document 5, consisting of a report on various matters. Attachments C, C1 and C2 consisted of reports on redress matters for Croker Island Mission, the responsibility for Croker Island Mission redress and civil matter and the provision for claims – Croker Island Mission.

22.28 It was resolved to receive the report;

Review

22.29 It was resolved to:

22.29.01 approve the extension of the current Assembly Strategic Planning cycle until the 17th Assembly, and align the next Assembly Strategic Plan with the new triennium, following the 17th Assembly;

22.29.02 request the General Secretary to consider the current Assembly Strategic Plan cycle in the light of work from the 16th Assembly reconvened meeting, and bring any proposed changes re priorities and resourcing in a bridging plan for the period from November 2022 until the 17th Assembly, to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee;

22.29.03 request the General Secretary to bring a summary of support offered to Assembly governance committees and task groups, including the adequacy of resourcing this support to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee;

22.29.04 agree to meet online for either its March or July 2023 and November 2024 meetings; and

22.29.05 request the General Secretary to develop a protocol for how Assembly committees and groups meet for the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

Redress Matters

22.30 It was resolved to:

22.30.01 note the report;

22.30.02 request the General Secretary to report to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee regarding ongoing conversations with the Northern Synod regarding the liability for redress and civil matters relating to child sexual abuse at Croker Island Mission from 1969-1972;

22.30.03 note the summary of information regarding the history of the Methodist Overseas Mission with responsibility for Croker Island Mission; and agrees that the provision for redress and civil matters relating to child sexual abuse at Croker Island Mission should be apportioned equally between the Assembly Secretariat (ASM) and UnitingWorld; and

22.30.04 request the General Secretary to inform the UnitingWorld Board of the resolutions of the Standing Committee with respect to Croker Island Mission, seeking their response.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. 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.

22.31 It was resolved to:

22.31.01 receive the report;

22.31.02 approve the 2022/23 Budgets for the Assembly and its Agencies as submitted, excluding UnitingWorld;

Budget for UnitingWorld

22.32 It was resolved to:

22.32.01 approve the 2022/23 budget for UnitingWorld as submitted in the report from the Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee, less the \$200k grant from Assembly;

22.32.02 acknowledge with thanks UnitingWorld's willingness to fund this reduction in income by drawing on available reserves;

22.32.03 note the intention to review the grant allocation to UnitingWorld as part of the 2023/24 budget deliberations; and

22.32.04 request the Assembly General Secretary to communicate this decision to the UnitingWorld Board, noting Assembly Standing Committee's ongoing appreciation of the contribution made by UnitingWorld to the Assembly's broader program.

2. Assembly Risk Management

Leo Iosifidis presented Document 8, consisting of an update to the Risk Management System and Framework of the Assembly. Documents 8A, 8B and 8C contained the risk appetite statement, dashboard/heatmap reporting of risks, risk register from the March 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee and the Assembly Standing Committee's risk governance principles.

22.33 It was resolved to receive the report.

3. Chaplaincy Task Group Final Report

Jean Shannon introduced Documents 15, consisting of a report on a survey of placements and current practices and the need to articulate national standards. Document 15A, 15B, 15C and 15D contained a spreadsheet of the variety of chaplaincy positions, the Chaplaincy Discussion Paper from the March 2011 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee, sample position descriptions and the Matrix Management, respectively.

22.34 It was resolved to:

22.34.01 receive the report,

22.34.02 a) request the General Secretary to consider a way to progress the recommendations for further work; and

b) bring a report back to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

4. Frontier Services Report

Jannine Jackson and Lisa Sampson spoke to Document 13, consisting of a report on the new strategy envisaged for Frontier Services. Documents 13A

and 13B contained the Frontier Services Strategic Plan 2022-2025 and the organisational plan 2022-2025, respectively.

22.35 It was resolved to receive the report.

5. LGBTIQ Apology Task Group Report

Lin Hatfield Dodds, Gordon Ramsey and Warren Talbot presented Document 11, consisting of a report the work of the Task Group, including a Consultation Plan, and a Discussion Paper in Documents 11A, 11B and 11C.

22.36 It was resolved to:

22.36.01 receive the report;

22.36.02 note 15th Assembly resolution 18.30 and subsequent ASC resolutions establishing a Task Group for an Apology to LGBTIQ Australians;

22.36.03 thank the Task Group for the work undertaken to date;

22.36.04 appoint at least two members of the Assembly Standing Committee to the Task Group;

22.36.05 request the Task Group review the current Terms of Reference, informed by the following key issues:

- What are some of the key issues, opportunities and theological context for an apology in this time and place? The response should consider the Australian political context and UCA's ongoing journey with the LGBTIQ community on matters of faith, sexuality and gender identity.
- To whom might we need to apologise and for what? In exploring this question the task group should consider the SOGICE resolution from the 16th Assembly
- How have other faith based organisations across the world apologised to LGBTIQ communities?
- From whom could the apology come? Please outline some different options considering the various Councils, agencies and communities of faith across the life of the church, as well as individual members of the Uniting Church in Australia, and opportunities and challenges associated with each option.
- Develop a stakeholder analysis matrix that could be used for consultation ahead of a potential apology.
- Consider what proposals (if any) could be put to the 17th Assembly;

22.36.06 that the revised Terms of Reference and nominations for any changes to the Task Group membership as required be brought to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee;

22.36.07 request the Task Group to consult with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress regarding their participation in this work; and

22.36.08 request the Task Group to report back to the November 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee on its work, with regular updates provided to the Assembly Standing Committee.

6. Standards for Ministries Committee Report

Robert McFarlane introduced Document 16, consisting of a report on issues related to Phase 4 and Supervision and containing information and a recommendation regarding the Ministerial Education Board of the WA Synod. Document 16 also included the full WA Synod consultation report

- 22.37 It was resolved to:**
- 22.37.01 receive the report;
- 22.37.02 note the resignation from the Standards for Ministry Committee of Viola Leung; and
- 22.37.03 determine that the programmes of study offered under the oversight of the WA Synod Ministerial Education Board 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.

7. UnitingCare Australia Board Nominations

The General Secretary spoke to Document 14, seeking approval for the appointment of John Berger and Bronte Wilson to the UnitingCare Australia Board.

- 22.38 It was resolved to** approve the appointment of John Berger and Bronte Wilson to the UnitingCare Australia Board for a period of three years, to take effect from the July 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

8. UnitingWorld Report

Sureka Goringe and Lin Hatfield Dodds presented Document 12, consisting of a report on UnitingWorld's recent activities, the nomination of two new Board members for the UnitingWorld Board and the likelihood of needing an out-of-sessions decision regarding the appointment of a new interim-Chair.

- 22.39 It was resolved to** appoint Rev Vinnie Ravetali and Rev Thresi Mauboy to the Board of UnitingWorld.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Consent Agenda

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

- 22.40 It was resolved to:**
- 22.40.01 a) note the resignation of the following Panel members:
- Robin Yang from the Discipling the Next Generations Panel
 - Warwick Cadenhead from the Transforming Worship Panel
 - James Aaron from Transforming Worship Panel; and
- b) appoint Rev Louisa Yanhua Yu to the Being a Multicultural Church Panel
- 22.40.02 receive the report of the Disability Royal Commission National Task Group; and
- 22.40.03 appoint Andrew Fong and Thomas Hodson to the Assembly Investment Advisory Committee.

2. 16th Assembly Resolutions and Assembly Standing Committee Actions Report

The General Secretary presented Document 10, consisting of a report on the resolutions made by the 16th Assembly and the possible actions by the Assembly Standing Committee to enact these resolutions.

- 22.41** It was resolved to receive the report;
- 22.42 Act2: On the Way**
It was resolved to:
- 22.42.01 establish the Act2 Project Steering Committee;
- 22.42.02 approve the Act2 Project Steering Committee Terms of Reference; (Attachment D)
- 22.42.03 appoint the following to the Act2 Steering Committee:
- i) Sharon Hollis (Chairperson)
 - ii) Catherine Pepper (ASC Nominee)
 - iii) Richard La'Brooy (ASC Nominee)
 - iv) Katalina Tahaafe-Williams (ASC Nominee)
 - v) (still to be advised)
 - vi) Kevin Griffiths (Qld Synod Nominee)
 - vii) Jessica Hateley-Browne (Vic.Tas Synod Nominee)
 - viii) Paul Goh (SA Synod Nominee)
 - ix) Mark Brisbane (WA Synod Nominee)
 - x) (still to be advised) (NSW.ACT Synod Nominee)
 - xi) (still to be advised) (Northern Synod Nominee)
- 22.42.04 note the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress appointment to the Act2 Steering Committee:
- i) Mark Kickett; and
 - ii) and that the second nominee will be advised; and
- 22.42.05 request the Assembly Officers to appoint any outstanding nominees to the Act2 Steering Committee;
- 22.42.06 approve an initial budget for the Act2 Project of \$424,295 until the end of December 2023 (by agreement);
- 22.42.07 request the General Secretary arrange for the first meeting of the Project Steering Committee;
- 22.42.08 request the General Secretary make available resources for the establishment of the Act2 Project Unit as agreed to by the Assembly Standing Committee, and work with the Act2 Steering Committee regarding any resourcing requests;
- 22.42.09 request the Synods provide to the General Secretary any existing strategic and missional planning work they have undertaken to inform the work of the Act2 Project; and
- 22.42.10 thank and discharge the Act2 Task Group.
- 22.43 Continuing Witness**
It was resolved to:
- 22.43.01 a) request members of the Continuing Witness Task Group to continue their work as agreed to in the resolution of the 16th Assembly, and
- b) bring a report and any related proposals to the 17th Assembly; and
- 22.43.02 request the General Secretary to arrange appropriate communications support for the Continuing Witness Task Group in discharging its responsibilities.
- 22.44 A call to action for climate justice: listening to First Peoples wisdom**
It was resolved to:

- 22.44.01 request the General Secretary to write to Synods informing them of the *A Call to action on climate justice: listening to First Peoples Wisdom* resolution;
- 22.44.02 request the Standards for Ministries Committee to identify the most appropriate way to embed learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into formation, education and training for the specified ministries of the Uniting Church and report back to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee;
- 22.44.03 request the Standards for Ministries Committee to include in their report to the 17th Assembly information on any work and outcomes of this of this resolution.
- 22.44.04 a) request the Assembly Circles, Advocates and Panels to include learning from the wisdom of First Peoples, care of creation, climate justice and the spiritual and theological basis for a zero emissions church into their work for the remainder of this triennium; and
b) report back to the March 2024 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.
- 22.44.05 a) request the Associate General Secretary to work with interested Assembly Standing Committee members to develop Terms of Reference for a Net Zero Emissions Working Group; and
b) that these Terms of Reference and nominations are brought to the November 2022 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

Deacons in the UCA Anniversary

22.45 It was resolved to:

- 22.45.01 request the General Secretary to write to Uniting Church Theological Colleges, emphasising that the current 'Standards for Education and Formation of Candidates for Ordination - Phase 2' requires that 'due attention be given to the different perspectives of Ministry of Deacon and Ministry of the Word' (Clause 15), and remind them of the need to provide specific courses, formation and field placements for Deacon candidates to prepare them for diaconal ministry; and
- 22.45.02 request the Standards for Ministries Committee to include a question regarding courses, formation and field placements for Deacon in the consultations carried out with the Ministerial Education Boards, and
- 22.45.03 request the Standards for Ministries Committee to include in their report to the 17th Assembly any work or outcomes as a result of this resolution.

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

- 22.46 It was 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 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

Moving Forward in Being a Multicultural Church

22.47 It was resolved to:

- 22.47.01 request Being a Multicultural Church and Transforming Worship Advocates and Panels to work together to develop resources for Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday;
- 22.47.02 request the General Secretary to consider an approach to move towards simpler, friendlier, and more equitable church structures, processes, and ways of working that foster CALD participation and intercultural partnership, and report to future ASC meetings; and for this work to be included in the Act2 Project;
- 22.47.03 request General Secretary to write to Synod General Secretaries encouraging Synod Placement Committees and Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committees to review and revise the Minister Leadership Profile Form and Congregation Placement Profile and other key reporting and review documents to reflect the ethos and characteristics expressed in Living with the Neighbour Who is Different (9th Assembly, 2000) and One Body Many Members: Living faith and life cross culturally (13th Assembly, 2012);
- 22.47.04 a) request the General Secretary to undertake a review of the national property policy for the UCA following any relevant work by Act2; and
b) note that a review of Regulations in relation to Faith Communities will be included in the ongoing Act2 project.

Audit of Small Congregations Financial Statements

22.48 **It was resolved to** approve amendments to Regulations 3.8.7(c) and 3.8.7(e), on the advice of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee as at 16 July 2022, as follows:

- a) Regulation 3.8.7(c) – to amend through insertion after “The books of account” the words “when the gross receipts are above \$100,000”, the proposed wording of the revised Regulation being:
- (c) The books of account, when the gross receipts are above \$100,000, shall be audited and certified by the auditors at least once in every year and at such other times as may be required by the chairperson of the Church Council or other body responsible as the case may require.
- b) Regulation 3.8.7(e), Variations to Qualifications from 2.5 times the notional stipend to the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) financial reporting revenue threshold for small charities, the proposed wording of the revised Regulation, being:
- (e) Where the gross receipts of a Congregation or body or fund in the year is below a figure that equates to 2.5 times the notional stipend the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) financial reporting revenue threshold for small charities, the books of account may be audited and certified by two persons who are not qualified in terms of (d) above, but who are, in the opinion of the body responsible, fit and proper persons to undertake the responsibility.

Review of the Regulations – Delegation of Authority to Amend Part 5 of the Regulations

22.49 **It was resolved to** request the Regulations Review Task Group to continue its work as per the resolution and bring reports to future Assembly Standing Committee meetings

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 4:00pm with prayer led by Raul Sugunanathan.

DATES FOR 2022: 11 – 13 NOVEMBER 2022