

Uniting Church in Australia

ASSEMBLY STANDING COMMITTEE

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA OFFICES 130 LONSDALE STREET, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA

11 - 13 November 2022

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

In attendance: Jenny Bertalan, Jane Fry, Heather den Houting, Mark Lawrence, 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 UCA Assembly Limited (UCAAL) Annual General Meeting, Lisa Sampson and Rob Floyd for matters related to Frontier Services, Chair and Board Directors of UCA Assembly Limited for matters related to UCAAL Annual General Meeting; Lin Hatfield Dodds and Sureka Goringe for matters related to UnitingWorld; Andrew Johnson for matters related to Act2, Rob Floyd for matters related to Climate Action Plan; Denise Liersch and Craig Thompson for matters related to UCA-Lutheran Dialogue, Lindsay Cullen for matters related to SOGICE and A Call to Action reports; Malcolm Hinton for matters related to the Regulations Review 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, Geoff Thompson led the Saturday morning worship, the Sunday morning worship was delivered by Sandy Boyce and the closing prayers were offered by Deidre Palmer.

APOLOGIES

22.50 **It was resolved** to receive the apology of Roberta Stanley, David Busch, Lilliani Tahaafe-Williams, Philip Gardner and David Fotheringham for the whole meeting.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

22.51 **It was resolved to** 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 MEETING

22.52 confirm the minutes of the meeting held 15 – 17 July 2022 with the deletion of David Fotheringham’s name from the list of those present; ~~and~~

22.52.01 ~~approve that ASC Minute 22.30 be deemed confidential for 10 years and not be included in the July 2022 minutes that are published on the Assembly website.~~

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

22.53 **It was resolved to:**

- a) note:
 - (i) Charissa Suli’s conflict of interest in relation to Document 6 – Associate General Secretary Nomination since she is a referee for the nominee;
 - (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 July 2022 meeting of the Standing Committee..

22.54 **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.

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

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE PREVIOUS STANDING COMMITTEE

1. **A Call to Action for Climate Justice – Net Zero Emissions Task Group Terms of Reference and Member Nominations (ASC Minutes 22.44.02 and 05)**

Lindsay Cullen spoke to Document 13, consisting of a report on the draft Terms of Reference and the appointment of a working group to undertake work to address the Assembly resolution, A call to action for climate justice: listening to First Peoples wisdom.

22.56 **It was resolved to:**

22.56.01 receive the report;

- 22.56.02 adopt the Terms of Reference for the Net Zero Emissions Working Group as amended at the meeting (Attachement C); and
- 22.56.03 note that recruitment for the Working Group members continues and will be reported to the March 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

2. Climate Action Plan Report (ASC Minute 21.07.02)

Rob Floyd spoke to Document 15, consisting of a progress report on the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Report as at November 2022 and the updated National Climate Action Plan.

22.57 It was resolved to:

- 22.57.01 receive the report;
- 22.57.02 affirm the Assembly's Carbon Emissions Accountability Report;
- 22.57.03 acknowledge the work of Assembly Secretariat, Agency staff and the climate champions in gathering carbon footprint data to develop an Emissions Inventory; and
- 22.57.04 encourage all Assembly personnel to continue to work towards the 2040 Zero Emissions target.

3. General Secretary Report Including Redress Matters (ASC Minute 22.09.07) and the Review (ASC Minute 22.29.02)

The General Secretary spoke to Documents 5 and 5A, consisting of a report on various matters and the Assembly Strategic Plan and Business Plan.

22.58 It was resolved to:

- 22.58.01 receive the report;
- 22.58.02 note the revised Strategic Plan and Business Plan; and
- 22.58.03 note the Protocol for Resourcing/Supporting Assembly Committees, Task Groups and Panels. (Attachment C)

4. Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE) – Task Group Terms of Reference and Member Nominations

Lindsay Cullen introduced Document 12, consisting of the proposed Terms of Reference and a report on the appointment of a task group to develop resources for the Church in regard to Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE)

22.59 It was resolved to:

- 22.59.01 receive the report;
- 22.59.02 adopt the Terms of Reference for the Preventing Harm from Sexual Orientation & Gender Identity Change Efforts (SOGICE) Task group;
- 22.59.03 note that recruitment for the Task Group members continues and will be reported to the March 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee, and

22.59.04 authorise the Assembly Officers to appoint members and the Convenor to the Task Group and bring a report to the March 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

5. Risk Management (ASC Minute 21.42.03)

Leo Iosifidis introduced Documents 8, 8A, 8B and 8C, consisting of reports on Risk Appetite Statement, Dashboard/Heatmap Reporting of Risks, November 2022 ASC Risk and ASC Risk Governance Principles, respectively.
Table group discussion followed.

22.60 It was resolved to receive the report.

6. UCA-Lutheran Church Dialogue Report (ASC Minutes 19.44 and 21.20)

Craig Thompson presented Documents 18, 18A and 18B, consisting of a report on the background of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) – Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) Dialogue, a letter from the UCA and LCA Co-convenors and a revised version of “At the Table – the Eucharist”.

22.61 It was resolved to:

22.61.01 receive the report; and

22.61.02 receive and adopt the document “At the Table: The Eucharist” as an agreed statement between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Lutheran Church of Australia.

FROM ASSEMBLY BODIES

1. Act2 Report

Andrew Johnson spoke to Document 16, consisting of a report on the work of the Act2 Project.

22.62 It was resolved to receive the report.

2. Assembly Audit, Finance and Risk Committee

Stuart Woodward and Leo Iosifidis spoke to Document 7, consisting of a report on the management of finance, audit and risk issues across the Assembly.

22.63 It was resolved to:

22.63.01 receive the report; and

22.63.02 note the satisfactory finalisation of the June 2022 Audit of Annual Financial Statements.

3. Frontier Services Update

Rob Floyd and Lisa Sampson spoke to Document 9, consisting of an update report on the organisation.

22.64 It was resolved to receive the report.

4. Regulations Review Task Group Report

Heather den Houting presented Document 11, consisting of an update report on the work of the Regulations Review Task Group.

22.65 It was resolved to:

22.65.01 receive the report; and

22.65.02 note the current status of the review of Part 5 – Church discipline – of the Regulations.

5. UnitingWorld Board Chair Nomination and Report on Redress Matters

Sureka Goringe and Lin Hatfield Dodds introduced Documents 10 and 10A, consisting of a nomination for UnitingWorld Board Chair and a response from the UnitingWorld Board re Croker Island.

UnitingWorld Board Chair Nomination

22.66 It was resolved to:

22.66.01 receive the report;

22.66.02 note that the ASC note that Lin Hatfield Dodds is stepping down as Chair of the UnitingWorld Board, and thank her for her service;

22.66.03 appoint Steve Bevis to the Board of UnitingWorld; and

22.66.04 appoint Steve Bevis as Chair of the UnitingWorld Board.

Response from the UnitingWorld Board re Croker Island.

22.67 It was resolved to:

22.67.01 note the response from the UnitingWorld Board to the Standing Committee regarding Croker Island Mission matters;

22.67.02 note that following resolutions of the Standing Committee, the General Secretary has provided a briefing to the UnitingWorld Board to explain the history of Croker Island including UnitingWorld's historic connection; as well as explaining the current status of redress and civil claims; and

That given the historical links that can be traced between the Methodist Overseas Mission and UnitingWorld, recognising UnitingWorld's acceptance of that historical link and obligation; request the UnitingWorld Board to share equally with the Assembly the funding of such redress and civil claims utilising funds and other assets to the extent that these can legitimately and appropriately be used for this purpose.

22.67.03 request the General Secretary to bring together a small group of Assembly Standing Committee members to prepare a paper on the governance documents of all Assembly agencies, to inform a discussion of the Assembly Standing Committee on its governance and oversight responsibilities of Assembly Agencies, and to report to the July 2023 meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.

GENERAL BUSINESS

1. Associate General Secretary Nomination

The General Secretary presented Document 6, consisting of a nomination for Associate General Secretary.

22.68 **It was resolved to** approve the appointment of Rev Lindsay Cullen as the Associate General Secretary, Assembly Resourcing Unit.

2. Consent Agenda

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

22.69 **It was resolved to:**

22.69.01 receive the report;

22.69.02 grant the Northern Synod an exemption from Regulation 3.6.3.3(a) to allow the Synod Standing Committee to appoint a new General Secretary on the recommendation of the Joint Nominating Committee;

22.69.03 receive the UCA Redress Limited Annual Report;

22.69.04 receive Disability Royal Commission National Task Group Update; and

22.69.05 receive the report on the Global Christian Forum meeting.

3. World Council of Churches General Assembly Report

The President, the General Secretary and Mark Kickett spoke to Document 14, consisting of a report on on the World Council of Churches General Assembly held in Karlsruhe Germany, 29 August – 9 September 2022.

22.70 **It was resolved to:**

22.70.01 receive the report;

22.70.02 request the General Secretary to investigate the possibility of the Assembly achieving a Gender Status Card, and including Break the Silence Sunday in the calendar for 2023; and

22.70.03 request the President, in consultation with Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, to work with UnitingWorld, Church Partners in West Papua and the Pacific Conference of Churches regarding possible advocacy to the Australian Government for West Papua.

CLOSURE

The meeting closed at 4:00pm with prayer led by Deidre Palmer.

DATES FOR 2023: 10 - 12 MARCH 2023
21 – 23 JULY 2023
10 – 12 NOVEMBER 2023