



Assembly Standing Committee

Minute of Appreciation of Ms Colleen Geyer, General Secretary

That the Assembly resolve:

To record its thanks to God and its deep appreciation for the ministry of Ms Colleen Geyer.

Since her appointment as Assembly General Secretary at the end of 2015, Ms. Geyer has been a creative, highly collaborative and steadfast leader for the Assembly.

Ms Geyer leaves behind a significant legacy, including her leadership across two triennial Assembly meetings and steering the Assembly through the difficult time of COVID-19.

Leading into and after the 15th Assembly meeting, the General Secretary provided leadership as the Church discerned its position on same-gender marriage and communicated its decision to the rest of the Church.

In 2017, Ms Geyer appeared on behalf of the Church at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses into Child Sexual Abuse and led the Church's response to its recommendations, which included the establishment of UCA Redress Ltd and the National Safe Church Unit, a result of significant national collaboration between the Assembly and the Synods.

Like all parts of the Church, during the pandemic the Assembly needed to pivot and adapt to carry out its business in new ways and meet new demands. This included the decision for the 16th Assembly to initially meet online in 2021– the first time this has taken place.

During Ms Geyer's tenure, the Act2 Project was identified by the Assembly Standing Committee and continues to be one of the most comprehensive and ambitious consultation processes the Assembly has undertaken.

She has overseen the significant re-shaping of the Assembly's ways of working, both in regard to internal structures and the way Assembly connects with the wider Church. This leadership included the development of the Assembly's first strategic plan.

Ms Geyer has been deeply committed to the Uniting Church's Covenant with First Peoples and supported the development of the first Assembly Covenant Action Plan.

Alongside the President, in 2021 Ms Geyer was announced as an Ambassador for the global Thursdays in Black movement that encourages people to speak out against all forms of gender-based violence.

Throughout a period that has at times been difficult and challenging, Colleen has exhibited and nurtured the values adopted by the Assembly during her leadership – hope, justice, compassion, respect, integrity and innovation.

Colleen has shown deep commitment to work of the Assembly and the wider Church and has brought to the role a faithfulness to Christ as we seek to join God's mission in the world.



We wish Colleen well in her new role as Director of Mission at Wesley Mission Queensland and give thanks to God for her leadership of the Assembly as General Secretary.

Proposer: Lindsay Cullen
Secunder: Sharon Hollis

UnitingCare Australia

Appreciation of Mr Geoff Batkin, Chair of UnitingCare Australia Board

That the Assembly resolve:

To record its thanks to God and its deep appreciation for the ministry of Geoff Batkin. This minute of appreciation is for the contribution Geoff Batkin made to the life of the Uniting Church in his role as Chair of UnitingCare Australia.

Geoff Batkin AM was appointed as Chair of UnitingCare Australia in July 2021 following the resignation of Hon. Bronwyn Pike AM. He will retire from this position when his term on the Board concludes at the 17th Triennial Assembly in July 2024.

Geoff brought extensive experience to the role having been involved in the UnitingCare network as an active member since its establishment in 1991; as the CEO of Wesley Mission Queensland for over 21 years and prior to that, 11 years as Director Corporate Services at Burnside in North Parramatta Sydney. He was awarded AM in the 2018 Queen's Birthday Honors for significant service to the community through social and aged welfare organisations, and to the Uniting Church in Australia.

Geoff is a member of the Gap Uniting Church, an associate member of Albert Street Uniting Church and a member of the Queensland Synod Standing Committee. In early 2024, he was appointed to the board of the Australian Regional & Remote Community Services (ARRCS). Notably, in his roles as part of the UnitingCare network, Geoff was Chair of the Aged Care network for many years at a time when effective advocacy was crucial for the survival of the sector. Geoff's leadership was instrumental in ensuring that our advocacy was influential and our voices were heard.

He also played a key role in the Uniting Church's relationship with the China Christian Council visiting China on several occasions and leading a team from his own organisation, Wesley Mission Queensland, to provide much needed training and support to their aged care providers in China.

Geoff's deep commitment to the Uniting Church, his passion for community services and their important place in the mission and life of our church has been an inspiration to many and a foundational aspect of his role as Chair. This commitment led UnitingCare Australia to participate significantly in the Act2 process over the past two years and develop two



important papers as contributions to the discernment of who we want to be as a church and the place of our services within it.

His humble inclusive manner, strong skills in strategic and business planning, and his ability to build a team and bring others along on the journey, has set the UnitingCare Australia Board on a positive and firm footing for its next phase under new leadership.

At his last Board meeting in May Geoff said in his final report as Chair *'For me, my work within our extensive UnitingCare service network has always been part of my Christian faith journey. A passage of Scripture that I always reflect on is from Micah 6:8:*

'What is it that the Lord requires of you/us ... to act justly, and to love mercy and compassion and to walk humbly with God'. This is evident every day in and through the work of our 50,000+ staff and volunteers as we reach across the length and breadth of Australia in our 1600+ service centres. I feel that we do this as an expression of God's mission in the world.'

We thank Geoff for his long and steady commitment to service, and to his three years of dedication in the role of Chair for UnitingCare Australia and we wish him well as he moves into new paths.

Proposer: Claerwen Little
Secunder: John Berger

Frontier Services

Appreciation of Ms Lisa Sampson, Chair, Frontier Services Board

That the Assembly resolve:

To record its thanks to God and its deep appreciation for the ministry of Lisa Sampson as Chair of Frontier Services Board.

Lisa Sampson joined the Board of Frontier Services in 2016.

She brought years of experience in business development, fundraising, media relations, strategy and development in the non-profit sector, along with experience working at board and senior executive level for several charitable organisations.

Lisa also brought important Uniting Church understanding and experience from her consultant role to the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of NSW and the ACT.

Lisa was a strong contributor to the Board in all areas, working particularly closely through the Development Sub-committee to support the communications, marketing and fundraising work of the Agency.



In 2018 Lisa was appointed as the Chair, a role she filled with distinction. Her time as Chair involved her in the significant improvement in the financial position of the organisation and the transition from the previous to the current National Director. Her willingness to commit her time, energy, skills and experience to the organisation were greatly appreciated by fellow Board members and management alike.

Lisa was always approachable, willing to listen, question and contribute in all matters relating to the life of the Agency.

Lisa resigned from the Board and her role as Chair in December 2023. Approaching the end of her 9-year maximum term on the Board, and wanting to facilitate a smooth transition for the next Chair, Lisa identified this as the best time to begin that process.

Frontier Services expresses its deep appreciation to Lisa Sampson for all has brought to the governance and work of the Agency and wish her well for the future.

Proposer: Rob Floyd
Secunder: Heather den Houting

Assembly Legal Reference Committee

Appreciation of Mr Warwick van Ede, Chair, Assembly Legal Reference Committee

That the Assembly resolve:

To record its appreciation of the service of Mr Warwick Van Ede as chairperson of the Assembly Legal Reference Committee from his appointment by the 13th Assembly in 2012 to 2024.

Warwick had been a member of the Committee for some years prior to accepting appointment as Chairperson. He brought to the Committee his expertise and wide experience in legal practice as well as his experience in the Church and his understanding of its purpose and mission.

The amount of work referred to the Committee fluctuates. During Warwick's four terms of office, several major projects have been undertaken. The Committee routinely advises the Assembly and Assembly Standing Committee regarding proposals to amend the Constitution or Regulations that have been initiated by Assembly or other councils or bodies of the Church. The Committee also assists the President and Secretariat in dealing with Church law issues from time to time.

Warwick has ensured that all work has been undertaken carefully and sensitively. He took particular responsibility regarding the drafting and implementation of the Part 6 Appeals Regulations and has served the Assembly as Convenor of the Standing Appeals Panel.

Warwick has been associated with the Assembly for several of its triennial meetings as a resource person from the Legal Reference Committee, and has also served as Returning Officer at Assembly meetings on several occasions.



Proposer: Lindsay Cullen
Seconder: Cathy Williamson

Assembly Standing Committee

21 Appreciation of Mr Stuart Woodward, Chair, Assembly Finance, Audit and Risk Committee

That the Assembly resolve:

To recognize and thank Mr Stuart Woodward for his tenure and significant contribution to the work of the Assembly Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (AFARC).

- As a member of AFARC at the July 2014 ASC (taking effect from February 2015)
- As the Chair of AFARC appointed at the July 2017 ASC

The Audit Finance and Risk Committee “AFARC” is a body as defined under 3.7.5.2 of the regulations. AFARC is accountable to the Assembly and its Standing Committee and makes reports and recommendations on financial matters and policies and assist the Standing Committee to discharge its responsibilities to matters related to Finance Audit and Risk for the National Assembly and its agencies.

Stuart Woodward has now completed, as prescribed under the Committees Charter, the full 9-year term of his tenure, noting he has also served as Chair of the committee for the past 7 years.

Stuart’s dedication to the work of the committee and his focus on ensuring the committee meets and fully discharges its duties and obligations in a proficient manner is highly respected, acknowledged and appreciated. Stuart has provided a significant amount of his time on a volunteer basis to assist this committee as it carried out its work and its responsibilities.

Stuart has led the committee with a high level of integrity and in a manner acknowledging the highest standards of ethics and competency all within the framework of the values and mission of the church. Stuart’s commitment to challenging matters and raising further enquires as the committee discharged its duties is complimented with his ability to guide, develop, direct, and empower those around him.

The Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) has greatly appreciated the resourcing of the ASC through AFARC under Stuart’s watch, combining both technical, governance and financial expertise with a clear understanding of, and commitment to the life and mission of the Uniting Church.

Proposer: Lindsay Cullen
Seconder: Richard La’Brooy





UnitingWorld

Appreciation of UnitingWorld Board

As we come to end of the 2021-24 triennium, UnitingWorld celebrates some significant milestones, which has required visionary leadership from our Board.

The journey of the past three years has seen UnitingWorld weather the storms of a global pandemic that brought the world to its knees, but also saw the global church step up be the hands and voice of God in the midst of the pain.

This Minute of Appreciation acknowledges the contributions made by those who served the UnitingWorld Board during this challenging time.

Lin Hatfield Dodds (Bsc (Hons), MPsych, MAICD)

This Assembly marks the resignation of Ms Lin Hatfield Dodds from the Board of UnitingWorld.

Lin stepped into the role of Chair in July 2021, during the tumult of the COVID pandemic, having served as a Board member for a year before.

While Lin only served for a year, it was a very challenging year for UnitingWorld. Both the Agency and the world navigated the uncertainty and disruption of new waves of COVID and renewed lockdowns and UnitingWorld had to adapt the strategic plan to respond to radically altered global landscape.

Lin's frank and open style of engagement, and enthusiasm for new and different ways of working added fresh energy to the work of the Board. Her deep compassion and commitment to the mission of UnitingWorld was greatly appreciated by both staff and Board members.

The Agency is deeply grateful for Lin's willingness to step into the role of Chair, and for the support and guidance that she offered to both the Board members and the staff during her tenure.

James Batley

James has served on the UnitingWorld board for nine years and retires in July 2024.

The impact that James has made on UnitingWorld over the past nine years has been nothing short of remarkable. He originally joined the National Committee of the Relief & Development Unit of the UnitingWorld and has journeyed with the Agency through a season of seismic change in governance and structure. During his time, he has seen the Agency merge its two operating units into a single organisation, bringing together teams, finances and mandates, disbanding two National Committees to constitute a single Board, establishing the Agency as a Public Benevolent Institution and Registered Charity with its own ABN and adopt a new constitution. His diligence, wise counsel and attention to detail were invaluable during these transitions, which took several years to complete.



James' generosity and commitment to making a strong contribution was obvious early on when we asked to serve on both the Board's subcommittees, so that he could be fully informed across the entire organisation. With his professionalism, diligence and astute Board engagement, he was a natural choice to take over as Chair of the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, and that was another duty that he carried out with utmost care.

Over the years, his wisdom has left an indelible mark on the organisation. James was never reticent in asking the hard questions and cutting through the noise to get to the heart of an issue. Management was acutely aware that no half-baked answers would be acceptable when James was at a meeting, appreciated his considered guidance and respected him for keeping them accountable.

The Board and senior staff are deeply grateful for James's time on the Board, noting that it has been an absolute pleasure working with him, and that he will be greatly missed by all.

Colleen Geyer

Colleen served on the Board of UnitingWorld in an ex-officio role during her term as the Assembly General Secretary.

She was a wise and thoughtful Board member and was a critical liaison between UnitingWorld and the Assembly Standing Committee. Her support and advice as we transitioned UnitingWorld to being a separately registered charity with PBI status was invaluable. Colleen's insights into how the work of UnitingWorld fitted into the wider national church was a significant guiding light for the work of the Board.

Her kindness and generosity in her relationship with the staff of UnitingWorld was a gift to the Agency, and her unstinting championship of our work in the wider UCA a tremendous help.

The Board and staff of UnitingWorld will miss her.

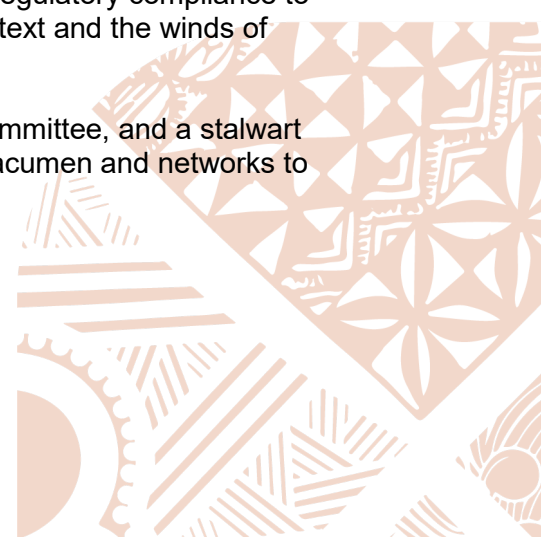
Andrew Johnson and Warren Tapp

Two other Board members concluded their service on the UnitingWorld Board over the past triennium.

Both these Board members served only two years on the Board, but they had a profound impact on our work.

Andrew Johnson served as the Chair of the International Programs Committee of the Board, bringing his extensive experience of the development sector and regulatory compliance to his role. He pushed the Agency to reflect deeply on the global context and the winds of change that shape of what we do.

Warren Tapp was a committed member of our Finance & Audit Committee, and a stalwart champion of growing our fundraising. He brought in his business acumen and networks to explore new opportunities for the Agency.





Beyond the gift of their skills, their passion and commitment to the work of UnitingWorld, their love for our global church partners and the generosity of spirit and service they brought to us will be deeply missed.

Recognition of Serving Board members

UnitingWorld has been extraordinarily fortunate to have the commitment, energy and wisdom of the members of the Board.

We honour and give thanks for the contributions during the last triennium of all our Board members spread across the nation, listed here in alphabetical order:

James Batley (retiring), Steve Bevis (Chair), Colleen Geyer (concluded ex-officio), Lin Hatfield Dodds (resigned), Andrew Johnson (resigned), Ashleigh Johnston, Thresi Mauboy Wohangarra, John Manning, Renee O'Shanassy, Viniana Ravetali.

We are also grateful to Nacanieli Speigth who served on Board subcommittees.

All of them have overseen a period of significant change and shown discernment on the issues, significant wisdom and great good will. We have been fortunate to have their commitment and assistance.

Proposer: Steve Bevis
Secunder: Sureka Goringe

Assembly Resourcing Unit

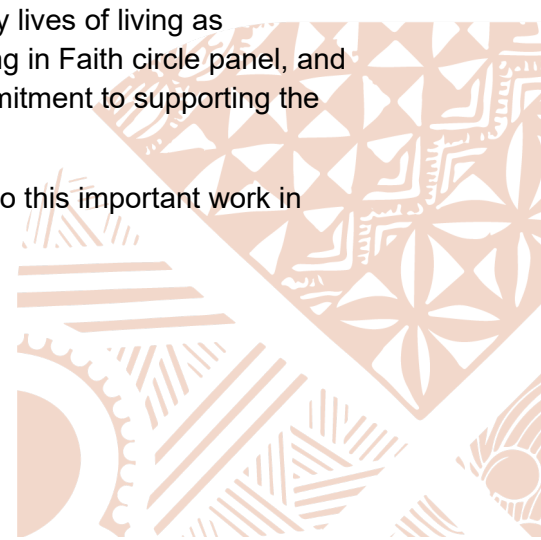
That the Assembly resolve to record its Appreciation for the following Circle of Interest Advocates who have completed their term this triennium:

Appreciation of Rev Jon Humphries, Advocate Transforming Worship Circle

Rev Jon Humphries was appointed to the role of Advocate for the Transforming Worship Circle of Interest in March 2023. In just over 12 months he has facilitated contributions from the circle to the development of a number of key worship resources for the wider church, including Uniting in Prayer 2023 and 2024 resources, Frontier Services Order of Service, the Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday Celebration Guide, and multiple posts of prayers, liturgies and creative resources to encourage the circle facebook group members.

Jon has been passionate about challenging the church to think about how worship itself is a transformative act and cannot be separated from the ordinary daily lives of living as disciples. Jon has also been a prolific supporter within the Growing in Faith circle panel, and will continue to participate in both circle panels as part of his commitment to supporting the wider church.

The Assembly wishes to thank Jon for his unwavering dedication to this important work in the life of the church.





Appreciation of Rev Dr Matagi Vilitama, Advocate Being a Multicultural Church Circle

Rev Dr Matagi Vilitama was the inaugural Advocate for the Being a Multicultural Church Circle of Interest. His vision for this Circle was that it should be much more than a gathering point for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities. Matagi was passionate to see the Circle working across the other Circles and the wider Church, raising awareness, promoting and resourcing the aspirations of the UCA as a diverse church that seeks to serve the multicultural kingdom of God.

The BMC Circle under Matagi's guidance was especially active during the pandemic, organizing a number of very well attended webinars where multicultural congregations could share and learn from one another about how they were responding to the crisis. These webinars soon morphed into opportunities to highlight diverse voices within the Church and to attend to themes which were especially relevant to our growth as an intercultural Church. During Matagi's period of leadership, the BMC Circle developed and distributed the first "Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday" materials.

Rev Dr Vilitama has returned to Niue, necessitating him laying down this responsibility, but the Assembly wishes to record its thanks for his commitment and work in this area of ministry.

Appreciation of Rev Liam Miller, Advocate Growing in Faith Circle

Rev Liam Miller served as the Advocate for the Growing in Faith Circle this triennium. Liam's enthusiasm for theology and for sharing the joy of theology widely – not only through academic publications but also through blogging and podcasts – made him a good fit for the Growing in Faith Circle.

During Liam's period as Advocate, the GiF Circle engaged with writing pieces focused on Basis of Union, regularly articles, prayers and liturgies to Assembly communications, and responded to a number of requests from the Assembly Standing Committee. In particular, Liam facilitated and was the principal writer of a thoughtful and well-received paper requested by the ASC, considering the post-COVID context of the Church and in particular a theological exploration of humanity and personhood along with the theology and practice of being ecclesia and of the sacraments.

The Assembly wishes to express our appreciation for the leadership and commitment of Rev Liam Miller in the theological and discipleship life of the national Church.

Appreciation of Rev Dr Matthew Wilson, Advocate Seeking Common Ground Circle

Rev Dr Matt Wilson has a long history of both interfaith and ecumenical work and before becoming the Advocate for Seeking Common Ground he had served the Assembly as a member of the Relations with Other Faiths Working Group and as UCA Co-chair of the UCA-Jewish dialogue. As Advocate for the SCG Circle, Matt was regularly consulted by the Assembly Resourcing Unit for wisdom in thinking through the ecumenical or interfaith implications of Assembly statements or projects. This has been especially important in the



past half year as the UCA has attempted to navigate the complexities of the situation in Israel and Gaza, considering relationships, commitments to justice and politics.

At a time in the Church's life when ecumenism and interfaith work can sometimes take 'second fiddle' to internal concerns, Matt has been a constant voice reminding us of the centrality of ecumenical commitment in the life of the Uniting Church, and of the importance of the interfaith relationships which underpin commitments to justice and peacemaking. The Assembly wishes to express its sincere thanks for the service that Matt has undertaken in his role as Advocate.

Appreciation of Rev Loni Vaitohi, Advocate Working for Justice

Rev Loni Vaitohi was the inaugural Advocate for the Working for Justice Circle. Loni's passion for the needs of migrants and refugees, along with a great concern for the issues of justice related to seasonal workers arose from his own pastoral context and experience in more than 20 years of ministry. This focus underpinned important awareness raising and collaborative work done by the members of the WfJ Circle along with members of the Church in other Councils and Agencies.

Under Loni's guidance the Circle also focused on the justice of the whole creation and on the commitment of the Uniting Church to climate action and advocacy. Loni was also strongly committed to justice for First Peoples and brought that focus into the work of the Circle

Loni stepped down from the role of Advocate shortly before his passing in June 2023, and the Assembly wishes to record its gratefulness for the wise and gentle leadership Rev Vaitohi brought to his time as Advocate. We honour his life and ministry and give thanks for his commitment to the justice that is at the heart of the gospel.

Proposer: Lindsay Cullen,
Secunder: Nicole Mugford

Church Polity Reference Committee

Appreciation of Rev Dr Chris Budden, Chair of Church Polity Reference Committee

That the Assembly resolve: to record its thankfulness for the work of Rev Dr Chris Budden in membership and then chairing of the Church Polity Reference Committee.

Chris's appointment to the Church Polity Reference Committee was a further avenue of service for someone who had served the Church in numerous ways, including serving as a Synod General Secretary, chairing the Preamble Working Group, membership of the Standing Appeal Committee and serving as Interim National Co-ordinator for UAICC.

The thing that ties these engagements together is the passion that Chris has for the Church to live up to its vision and its fundamental commitments, never forgetting that we are the Church and not any other organisation. Chris's wisdom and thoughtfulness in engaging with



questions of polity have been appreciated by Presidents, General Secretaries and the Assembly Standing Committee from time to time.

Chris served as a member of the Church Polity Reference Committee from August of 2018, and was appointed as the chair at the 16th Assembly. His willingness to utilise his deep knowledge of the Church, its structures and processes, and to help enable the Church's faithfulness to its core 'ways of being' has been a gift which is greatly appreciated by the Assembly.

Proposer: Lindsay Cullen
Secunder: Kerry Wilson

