

3(a) Synod Standing Committee

<i>Moderator</i>	Rev Steve Francis
<i>Acting Ex-Moderator</i>	Rev Ken Williams
<i>General Secretary</i>	Rev David de Kock
<i>Members elected by Synod</i>	Rev Bev Fabb
	Rev Craig Collas
	Alison Xamon
	Steve Higgins
	Julie Ridden
	Heather Hamblin
<i>Presbytery</i>	Rev Lorraine Stokes
<i>Congress</i>	Des Lawson (until February 2018)
	Rev Robert Jetta
	Mitchell Garlett (from April 2018)
<i>Co-opted</i>	Margaret Martin
<i>By Invitation</i>	Rev Dr Ian Tozer (Deputy General Secretary) (until December 2017)
	Robert Locke (GM Resources)
	Rev Mark Illingworth (Deputy General Secretary) (from June 2018)
<i>In Attendance</i>	Maree Kemp (Minutes)
	Maggie Johns (Media)

I. MEMBERSHIP OF SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

I.1 Membership

The elected members of Synod Standing Committee serve until the next meeting of the Synod in session. The following members were elected at the September 2017 meeting of Synod:

Rev Bev Fabb, Rev Craig Collas, Alison Xamon, Steve Higgins, Julie Ridden and Heather Hamblin.

Presbytery of Western Australia Standing Committee appointed Rev Lorraine Stokes and the WA Regional Committee of the Uniting Aboriginal Islander Congress (Congress) appointed Des Lawson (succeeded by Mitchell Garlett) and Rev Robert Jetta.

Margaret Martin (Chair, Nominating Committee and Resources Commission member) was co-opted for gender balance, skills and knowledge.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer (Deputy General Secretary) and Robert Locke (General Manager Resources) attend by invitation to resource the meeting. On his resignation as Deputy General Secretary, Rev Dr Tozer was replaced by Rev Mark Illingworth in June 2018.

I.2 Meetings

Six ordinary meetings of the Synod Standing Committee were held on 9 October 2017, 11 December 2017, 12 February 2018, 9 April 2018, 11 June 2018 and 13 August 2018.

A special video conference with other Synod Standing Committees was held on 23 May 2018 at the KPMG offices to consider the establishment of a legal entity to progress the interest of the Uniting Church in Australia in the Commonwealth Redress Scheme. Following the conference, the Synod Standing Committee met separately to consider the recommendations and agreed to accept membership of this legal entity, and determined that the Synod Standing Committee is the governing body to direct the member interest and that the General Secretary is the nominee representative.

A joint gathering of the Synod Standing Committee and the Presbytery Standing Committee met on 29 May 2018 with the Assembly General Secretary to consider a paper from the Presbytery Standing Committee entitled “Relationship between Presbytery and Synod”.

2. MATTERS ADDRESSED

2.1 Synod/Presbytery Relations

At the 9 October 2017 meeting, the Synod Standing Committee requested that the General Secretary initiate discussions with the Presbytery Standing Committee, the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) and the Director of Education and Formation to consider the transfer of all powers and authority over education matters from the Presbytery of Western Australia to the Synod of Western Australia and to report on 11 June 2018.

Following the meeting of parties on 17 May 2018, it was agreed at the June meeting of Synod Standing Committee that no change was required on the basis that education and training in WA was mainly directed towards lay training and upskilling of current ministers and that until there was a more significant cohort of candidates training for ordained ministry, the focus of CEDAL would remain in the areas which are primarily Presbytery responsibilities.

The Synod Standing Committee also considered the paper from the Presbytery Standing Committee entitled “Relationship between Presbytery and Synod” and a separate paper from the General Secretary entitled “Responses to the Recommendations of the Presbytery Standing Committee” and agreed for a small group from each Standing Committee to discuss further. This group met under the leadership of past Moderator, Robert Watson on 9 August 2018 and considered further steps to separate the staff and budget of the Presbytery.

2.2 Church Discipline Committees

Following the higher standards of compliance expected of the Church and noted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, the Synod Standing Committee requested that the General Secretary conduct a review of the membership and training of the committees noted in Chapter 5 of the Regulations – Church Discipline. Following this review, it was found that neither the Committee for Discipline nor the Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee were fully operational. A request was made to the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, for their Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee to act on behalf of the Synod of Western Australia until the matter could be remedied. Training for members of the Committee for Counselling, the Committee for Discipline and the Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee was provided by Rev Ann Drummond from the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. All the committees are now fully functional.

2.3 Church Law

A number of changes to By Laws and Constitutions were approved during the past year

- By Law S2.1 Membership of Synod (greater representation by Agencies and Schools)
- By Law S5.2 Synod Standing Committee (greater representation by Agencies and Schools)
- By Law S5.4 Nominating Committee (relationship with Presbytery)
- By Law S6.2 Moderator (following Presidential Ruling 33 – Regulation contravenes Constitution. Synods and not Regulations determine Term of Office for Moderators)
- Constitution – Tranby College
- Constitution – Methodist Ladies College
- Constitution – Wesley College
- Constitution – Uniting Church Homes (Juniper)
- Constitution - UnitingCare West

2.4 Policy Matters

Visiting Preachers Policy

In December 2017, the Synod Standing Committee approved the Guideline for Visiting Preachers or Speakers from other Denominations to Uniting Church congregations – Ministry Handbook 9.2 Visiting Preachers Policy. This was distributed to all congregations.

Green Church Policies

The General Secretary was requested to review the Green Church Policies of the Synod and some changes to make it easier to calculate the carbon footprint were agreed and forwarded to the Social Justice Commission following the August 2018 meeting.

Persons of Concern Policy

Synod Standing Committee agreed to the Persons of Concern Policy and Safety Agreement for congregations and entities. This policy establishes the process to identify, assess the risk and put into place a risk management strategy through the Safety Agreement to ensure no harm to those involved in the Church and its entities.

Model Litigant Principles

The Synod Standing Committee adopted the Model Litigant Principles to be applied by itself and any legal advisers in any matters of litigation.

Professional Standards

In October 2017, the Synod Standing Committee determined the requirements for compliance with the Professional Standards training and the consequences for non-compliance. This training encompasses both the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice (Code of Ethics Overview, Ethical Ministry Workshops, and Professional Supervision) and Safe Church Awareness Training. The standards apply to candidates, ministers, lay people in ministry roles and retired ministers.

2.5 General Secretary Oversight Team

The Synod Standing Committee have established an Oversight Team for the General Secretary as well as the Terms of Reference for the group. This group will work with the General Secretary in setting key objectives, conducting an end of year review and provide pastoral support and counsel to the General Secretary.

2.6 Mapoon Appeal

Following a request from Ex-President, Stuart McMillan, the Synod Standing Committee agreed to a donation of \$68,729.76 to the Mapoon Appeal. This is equivalent to the amount received by the Synod of Western Australia following the closure of the Assembly Minister's Benevolent Fund.

Rev David de Kock
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