

PRESBYTERY OF WA

PRESBYTERY STANDING COMMITTEE

REPORT TO PRESBYTERY MEETING – 3 AUGUST 2019



Membership

- Chairperson- Bob Hunt
- Past Chairperson- Rev Lorraine Stokes
- Secretary- Vacant (Acting: Rev Bev Fabb until 3 August 2019)
- Treasurer- Ps Marilyn Price
- Chair of Thrive Mission - Rev Greg Ross
- Chair of CEDAL- Rev Bev Fabb
- Chair of PRC- Rev Dr Ian Tozer
- Member elected by Presbytery – Louise Powell
- Member elected by Presbytery – Rev Nalin Perera
- Member elected by Presbytery – Rev Luke Williams
- Member elected by Presbytery – Yvonne Robinson

PRESBYTERY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Presbytery shall have such oversight as is necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area committed to it; it shall stimulate and encourage the Congregations within the bounds, providing them with opportunities for counsel in the strengthening and assistance of one another and in their participation in wider aspects of the work of the Church. (*Section 26 of the UCA Constitution*)

Our Vision A Christian Community for Everyone

Our Purpose

- **Uniting in God's Mission to the World**
- **Growing Communities of Christ-Followers**
- **Grounded in Worship, Witness and Service**

Overview

Since May 2019 the PSC has been working on addressing the Presbytery/Synod relationships, implementing the new committee/network structure, filling the outstanding key committee positions, filling of presbytery staff positions and resolving some outstanding funding issues.

1. Relationships with Synod

This is an ongoing progress as we work with Synod to get a clearer picture of who is doing what between the Synod and Presbytery. The issue of financial surpluses has now been resolved and discussions are in progress with regard to property

responsibilities. There will never be a clear distinction between the Presbytery and Synod roles and responsibilities and it is important that the conversations continue.

2. Committees

- a. New committees/Networks – These are now taking shape and starting to operate as planned.
- b. New members of Committees – the majority of the positions on the various committees have now been filled and action is continuing to fill the outstanding positions.
- c. Secretary of Presbytery Standing Committee – as yet this position has yet to be filled. Rev Bev Fabb has been acting in this position which has been very much appreciated.
- d. Chairperson of Pastoral Relations Committee – Presbytery Standing Committee has approved the appointment of Rev Dr Ian Tozer as Chairperson of the Pastoral Relations Committee effective from 1 August 2019.

3. Staffing

- a. Pastoral Relations Coordinator – Rev Alan Jeffery will be taking up this placement from 1 August 2019. Rev John Barendrecht's willingness to step in to undertake the duties of the Coordinator until the vacancy is filled has been very much appreciated.
- b. CEDAL 6 month position – Rev Narelle Collas will be taking up this 6 month position as of 1 August 2019
- c. Presbytery Officer/Rural Minister - applications for this placement closed on 22 July 2019 and the applications are being assessed.
- d. Uniting Generations/Multicultural Minister – awaiting confirmation of funding from GSI.

4. Funding

The issue of management of surpluses and mission and service contributions are covered in the Treasurer's Report

5. Property

- a. Property Inspections – The independent property inspections which arose out of the unsafe and dangerous situation caused by collapsing ceilings have now been completed. Over 200 buildings have been inspected with 18 buildings being closed due to significant defects and a number of others have been highlighted as needing immediate attention. All reports for completed inspections have been forwarded to the relevant Church Council for their action.

The Inspection Reports included maintenance works that are required over the next three years with an estimated cost. The total estimated cost of these repairs is over \$5m. Funding for these repairs and maintenance should be sourced in the following order of preference:

- i. Congregation Operating funds
- ii. Congregations Future Maintenance fund
- iii. Congregation Investment funds
- iv. Congregation Embargoed Funds (if available and by application)

If a congregation does not have access to any of the above funding sources and the Thrive Mission Committee confirms that the building should be retained, alternative funding will need to be considered such as:

- i. Community or Government Grants
- ii. Uniting Church Investment Fund Loan
- iii. Uniting Church Foundation Grant

An estimated amount that congregations are advised to set aside annually for future maintenance has also been provided in the building inspection reports. Church Councils are urged to give serious consideration to setting aside the amount suggested, particularly if they do not have ready access to the expertise within their congregation to undertake these maintenance works.

- b. Presbytery Property Committee – is being re-established as a part of the Thrive Mission Committee and members are being appointed. One of the first tasks is to delineate the property functions between the Presbytery and Synod. Once completed, Church Councils will be advised accordingly. The aim will be to make sure decisions are resolved in a timely manner, which unfortunately, due to a number of reasons, has not been happening in the recent past.
- c. Property Strategy – it has become obvious that the Presbytery, with the Synod, needs to develop a Property Strategy to determine which church buildings need to be retained and developed in the long-term and which areas of future development are suitable for planting new churches. This may mean that work to maintain or upgrade some existing buildings may not be supported. It may mean some buildings will have to be closed. The affect congregations will have to address how they will operate in the future.

6. Key Priorities for Presbytery of Western Australia

Attached is a summary* of the key priorities identified in the table discussions at the AGM held on 18 May 2019.

7. The Future

A recent risk management workshop highlighted the significant potential risk to the Presbytery of the declining congregations and diminishing local leadership. When also considering the average attendances of our congregations, there needs to be considerable work to make the Uniting Church vibrant and engaging for younger generations.

There are pockets of change arising out of Mission Shape Ministry courses and other missional activities being explored by congregations. However a lot more work needs to be done by both the Presbytery and the congregations to ensure the Uniting Church is relevant church into the future.

The challenge is how we engage with the Millennials and Gen Ys when the average age of our congregations is over 60 and gradually increasing.

The challenge for congregations is to take a long term view i.e. greater than 10 years and then start now to put into place the building blocks so that the Uniting Church can have a long term future in Western Australia. The Presbytery and its committees and networks are available to assist congregations through this challenging period as per the responsibilities of the Presbytery as set out in the UCA Constitution.

The most important thing to do is the keep praying for guidance as we discern our way with God into the future.

“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”. (Jeremiah 29:11)

Mover: Bob Hunt
robert006166@gmail.com
0428006166

Secunder: Rev Bev Fabb
bev.fabb@bigpond.com
0429 777 992

*** KEY PRIORITIES FOR PRESBYTERY OF WA**

As identified in table group discussion at AGM in May 2019

1. Renew and strengthen the work of the Pastoral Relations Committee to ensure that

- Priority is given in all its work to the pastoral care and wellbeing of congregations and ministers
- Matters are dealt with in a timely manner
- Reports to Presbytery provide more qualitative information about issues affecting ministers and congregations
- The role of Regional Pastor and Regional Gatherings are reviewed to ensure better pastoral support is provided to congregations.
- PRC has adequate resources, including staffing.

2. Consolidate changes already underway, in particular

- Roll out of MSM training is continued and Fresh Expressions are encouraged
- Implementation of new model of Uniting Generations ministry
- Implementation of new Rural Ministry model
- New Networks are established, flourish and are heard

3. Establish a strong financial basis for Presbytery including

- Get agreement with Synod about Presbytery retaining its surplus
- Negotiate funding agreement with Synod
- Review and promote Mission and Service contributions
- Review draw-downs from Trust Funds

4. Leadership Development

- Recruit and mentor people into key roles
- Foster and resource leadership development among younger people, including an internship program
- Fill key Presbytery staff positions
- Develop team work amongst Presbytery staff

5. Presbytery Meetings

- Develop a plan of action and vision for Presbytery meetings
- Include more story telling at meetings to stimulate and encourage
- Focus more on congregational and regional sharing
- Provide opportunity for Presbytery staff to become known

- More faith sharing and prayer, take time to listen to the voice/call of God
- Make sure voices of young people, multicultural members & chaplains are heard
- Celebrate successes

6. Communication

- Assist congregations to better understand how the UCA works and what the role of its councils are
- Get regional gatherings going again to promote greater communication
- More use of audio and visual communication
- Improve communication between Presbytery and Synod
- Ensure minority voices are heard- younger people, multicultural, etc.

7. Future Planning for Mission

- Make some difficult decisions about where growth will come from
- Development of proposal for use of Cottesloe funds for Alternative Mission
- Develop a Presbytery wide Strategic Property Plan