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## Proposal 1 1: Placements Commission: Conclusion of Chaplaincy at Royal Perth Hospital

### That the Synod

- a) Notes that the longstanding contractual agreement between each of the Anglican, Catholic and Uniting Churches for the provision of chaplains to Royal Perth Hospital and related campuses has come to a conclusion;
- b) Gives thanks to God for opportunities over recent decades for the Church to appoint chaplains for service through the RPH Pastoral Care Service, providing ecumenical compassionate care to many many patients, staff and others;
- c) Acknowledges with gratitude ten years of faithful service by Edith Smirk as Chaplain with the Royal Perth Group, initially at Shenton Park RPH Campus, and in recent years (and continuing) at the Bentley Health Service;
- d) Notes with appreciation the continuing provision of pastoral and spiritual care at the Royal Perth Group through the Centre for Wellbeing and Sustainable Practice;
- e) Notes the continuing provision of quality training in Clinical Pastoral Education through the RPG Centre for Wellbeing and Sustainable Practice;
- f) Encourages members of the church to be aware of, and to pray for, continuing and growing opportunities for members of the Christian community to offer for various forms of Chaplaincy or pastoral care within hospitals, prisons, aged care, schools, defence and industrial contexts even though not necessarily direct church appointments.

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### **Rationale:**

The church has a long tradition of involvement in health care, beginning with Jesus the healer and his parables such as 'The Good Samaritan'. In Western Australia Christians have long played a part in health care through many forms – personal and institutional. Back in the early 1890s there was an outbreak of smallpox. A tent encampment from the hospital was moved west of Subiaco. Two nurses were available to care for patients. Three nuns offered their nursing abilities too. Father Prendergast, a Roman Catholic priest and Rev Wallace, an Anglican minister, voluntarily went into isolation with the patients.

Over the last century ministers and churches have gone through various forms of informal and official relationships with the Department of Health and its various branches across the city and the state. There has been a particularly strong relationship with the Royal Perth Hospital. The 1980 Synod of the Uniting Church actively supported the appointment of a Clinical Pastoral Educator within the Chaplaincy Service. Subsequent continuous involvement in that field led to the Uniting Church as co-sponsor of Rev Michael Hertz as current Director of Clinical Pastoral Education at Royal Perth Hospital. We have also provided a Chaplain on behalf of 'Other Protestant Denominations'.

Many ministers and lay people have participated in paid or voluntary service with the RPH Pastoral Care Service over the last forty years. There have been challenging times of sharing in pain, loss, anxiety and grief with patients, families, staff and others. Amongst and beyond such times there has also been rich opportunities for profound compassionate companionship, shared conversations and searching for meaning, along with prayer, healing, restoration and thanksgiving.

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