
Proposal 8: Standing Committee: Extension of Placement General Secretary

That the Synod of WA approves the extension of Placement for the General Secretary, Rev David de Kock until the end of September 2022. It is anticipated that the Synod meeting will be in September 2022. Should that not be the case the placement extended until the end of the month of the 2022 Synod meeting

Mover: Rev Steve Francis – Moderator & Chair of Synod

Seconder: Bob Hunt – Chair of Presbytery

Rationale:

The five year appointment of the General Secretary will conclude at the end of February 2021.

The Regulations (3.6.3.3) provides that the initial term of office shall normally be for five years. The appointment shall be reviewed during the initial appointment and during any extension of appointment. Any extension may be for a period up to five years.

The Standing Committee undertook an initial review of the General Secretary in 2017 and commissioned a 360 degree Review of the General Secretary in May 2019 conducted by The Leadership Circle Organisation. A broad cross section of people from congregations, the Presbytery, Synod, Schools, Agencies and the Assembly participated. The result of the Review was largely positive, demonstrating David's strengths (see below). The Review also highlighted areas where David's leadership was not strong and where he could grow in the role.

In these reviews it was noted that Rev David de Kock had

1. Built a cohesive and strategy focussed team in the Uniting Church Centre
 - a. Steered the focus of Church to Purpose & Mission
 - b. Developed an Executive Leadership Team
 - c. Redefined Positional Responsibilities
 - d. Increased the skills base of staff
 - e. Improved staff relationships
2. Developed the Vision & Strategic Plan for the Synod
 - a. "A Christian Community for Everyone" Vision Statement
 - b. Strategic Plan 2018-2021 focussed on mission and building up the Church
 - c. Enabled the process for the Presbytery to work independently
 - d. Extended Remote Area ministry work
3. Introduced a zero-based budget plan
 - a. Separated Synod and Presbytery budgets
 - b. Broad consultation in budget development
 - c. Achieved balanced budget as required by the Synod
4. Implemented policy, financial and data controls
 - a. HR Policy upgrades (People & Culture)
 - b. Safe Church practices (Culture of Safety)
 - c. Redress & Litigation matters related to historical child sexual abuse
 - d. Improved and extended financial reporting
 - e. Introduced Expense controls
 - f. Initiated Accounting System upgrade
5. Built up the relationships with Agencies, Schools & Colleges
 - a. Strategic Plan involvement

- b. Appointment Executive Officer: Schools & Colleges
- c. Appointment Executive Officer: Caring Agencies

Rev de Kock is also a member of the Board of Juniper, Chair of the Assembly Remote Area Ministry Working Group, member of the National Safe Church Unit Governance Committee and Representative Member of UCA Redress Ltd. David was especially commended for his work during the Covid-19 crisis.

Having concern for the time required to find and appoint a new General Secretary (including the possible extension of placement for Rev David de Kock), the Standing Committee commenced a process in mid-2019 to identify the attributes required for a General Secretary to lead the Church as the executive officer of the Synod; with executive leadership, pastoral and advisory roles; and with responsibility for:

- (i) ensuring execution of Synod policy;
- (ii) coordinating Synod activities;
- (iii) overseeing the management of Synod staff;
- (iv) acting as liaison officer of the Synod with the Presbyteries and other bodies within the bounds;
- (v) providing all necessary reports and information as may be required by the Assembly; and
- (vi) such other things as the Synod may require.

A new revised job description has been drafted, recognising the former job description was written before the separation of Synod and Presbytery.

After a year of consultation and discussion, it was agreed at the June 2020 meeting of the Standing Committee to extend the term of Rev David de Kock until September 2022.

It was noted that this would allow a number of ongoing matters to be finalised (as noted in the General Secretary's Future Directions Paper), enable longer ongoing support for the incoming Moderator and allow sufficient time between September 2022 and September 2023 for a new General Secretary to settle into the role before a subsequent Moderator takes office.

Rev David de Kock has accepted the offer of an extension of placement until September 2022.

It is unclear from the Regulations whether the Standing Committee has the ability to extend the placement of General Secretary (although this has been practised in other Synods). In view of this Rev de Kock has requested that the Standing Committee decision to extend his placement to September 2022 be approved by the Synod in session.

Mover: Rev Steve Francis (steve.francis@wa.uca.org.au)

Seconded: Bob Hunt (robert006166@gmail.com)