



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES

of the

SIXTEENTH MEETING OF THE

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Held at Box Hill, Victoria
30 June - 3 July 2022



Moderator: Rev David Fotheringham

General Secretary: Rev Dr Mark Lawrence

Uniting Church Synod Office

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THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SYNOD HELD IN MELBOURNE

30 JUNE – 3 JULY 2022

All activities, except for the opening service, were held at Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.

22.1 THURSDAY 30 JUNE 2022

22.1.1 OPENING SERVICE

The Synod opened at 7.30pm with a Service of Worship at Wesley Lonsdale Street Uniting Church, 148 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne. The worship began with a Welcome to Country by Uncle Ringo Terrick from the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation and included the Installation of the Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham.

The theme of the service was 'Arise, come with me' from the Song of Solomon 2: 10-14.

22.2 FRIDAY 1 JULY 2022

22.2.1 COMMENCEMENT

The Moderator occupied the chair at 9am and welcomed members.

22.2.2 WELCOME

The Moderator particularly welcomed Rev Sharon Hollis, President of the National Assembly, Colleen Geyer, General Secretary of National Assembly and Rev Mark Kickett, Interim Chair, National Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress who were attending the entire Synod meeting.

The Moderator reminded members that the meeting was a safe space and requested members to read the safe space statement in their papers.

The Moderator introduced the meeting chaplains, Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo, Rev Deacon Wendy Elson, Rev Ray Gormann and Jen Shields.

The Moderator introduced the Safe Meeting Contacts, Rev Lavingi Tupou and Rev Sandy Brodine.

The Moderator reminded members of the Synod Vision and invited them to read it aloud together.

The General Secretary indicated that the Synod Roll would be confirmed at 11.30am on Saturday 2 July 2022 and reminded members to advise any changes in the roll to the Associate General Secretary, Isabel Thomas Dobson, as soon as possible.

22.2.3 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT

Kathryn D'Alessandro, Synod Meeting Project Manager and one of the First Aid Officers, presented the OH&S announcements.

22.2.4 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator introduced his chaplains Rev Jinseon Park and Rev Semisi Tauli'i. Rev Jinseon Park led the daily devotion.

22.2.5 OPENING BUSINESS

22.2.6 THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

President of the National Assembly, Rev Sharon Hollis, presented a theological orientation for the Synod meeting.

22.2.7 BUSINESS COMMITTEE (REPORT C1.4)

Rev Sue Clarkson, Chairperson, Business Committee, spoke to a written report. She expressed appreciation to the Business Committee and the staff of the General Secretary's office for their support in preparing for and conducting the Synod meeting.

22.2.8 SYNOD 2022 PROCEDURES

Rev Sue Clarkson, Chairperson, Business Committee, presented proposals 28, 29, 3, 4 and 24 and spoke to them collectively.

22.2.8.1 Synod 2022 Procedures (Proposal 28 – revision of Proposal 1)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To note that the closure time for all nominations, except Standing Committee, was 12pm Thursday 16 June 2022;
- (b) To note that the closing time for Standing Committee nominations is 2:00pm, Friday 1 July 2022;
- (c) That the closure time for receiving proposals be 12.00pm on Saturday 2 July 2022;
- (d) That any proposal which may include financial commitment, not at present included in the Synod Ministries and Operations Consolidated Budget or other appropriate budget of the Synod, be subject to comment by the Chairperson (or nominee) of the Property & Operations Committee after consultation with the Chairperson (or nominee) of the Ministry & Mission Committee;
- (e) That the business of the Synod be dealt with in accordance with the following timetable unless the Synod specifically determines otherwise:

Thursday 30 June 2022 at Wesley Lonsdale Street

| Session Time | Session Title |
|---------------------|---|
| 7.30 | Opening Worship and Installation of Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham |

Friday 1 July 2022

| Session Time | Session Title |
|---------------------|---|
| 9am – 11.00am | Session 2 – Devotions, Theological Orientation, Reports: Business Committee; Standing Committee; General Secretary; and Ex-Moderator. |
| 11.00-11.30am | Morning tea break |
| 11.30-1.00pm | Session 3 – Bible Study, Q&A with Uniting, Uniting AgeWell and U Ethical, MoA Dr David Cousins AM, Proposals. |
| 12.55pm | Ballot 1 (General Secretary) opens. |
| 1.00-2.00pm | Lunch break |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Session 4 – Ballot 1 closed – 2.00pm, Ballot 1 announced 2.25pm. 2:00pm – Standing Committee nominations close. Proposals, Choose your own adventure. |
| 3.30-4.00pm | Afternoon tea break |
| 4.00pm-6.00pm | Session 5 – Proposals and Working Group 1 |
| 6.00-7.20pm | Dinner Break |
| 7.30-9.00pm | Session 6 – Daily Reflector, Evening Program. |

Saturday 2 July 2022 at Box Hill Town Hall

| Session Time | Session Title |
|---------------------|---|
| 9am – 11.00am | Session 7 – Devotions, Bible Study, UAICC Vic & UAICC Tas Reports, Walking Together in Covenant Committee launch, MoA Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes. 10.50am Open Ballot 2 (Standing Committee majority, Placements Chair, Property Trusts Chair and members). Proposals, Working Groups |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Morning tea break |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | 11.30am - Close of Ballot 2 (Standing Committee majority, Placements Chair, Property Trusts Chair and members). Session 8 – Q&A with Synod Ministries & Operations, Ministry & Mission and Property & Operations Committees, Annual Financial Report, Facilitation Group responses to Working Group 1, other proposals 12.50pm – Announcement of Ballot 2. Open Ballot 3 – Standing Committee preference. |
| 1.00-2.00pm | Lunch break |
| 2.00pm – 3.30pm | Session 9 –Working Group 2. |
| 3.30-4.00pm | Afternoon tea |
| 4.00-6.00pm | Session 10 – Proposals, Choose your own adventure. |
| 6.00-7.30pm | Dinner Break – Korean Dinner |
| 7.30-9.00pm | 7.30pm – Close of Ballot 3 (Standing Committee preferences) Assembly report, Q&A with Ethics Committee, MoAs: Rev David Fotheringham; Rev Claire Dawe; Rev Jay Robinson; Daily Reflector. |

Sunday 3 July 2022 at Box Hill Town Hall

| Session Time | Session Title |
|---------------------|--|
| 9am – 11.00am | Session 11 – Devotions, Bible Study, 10.00am - Ballot 3 announced, Facilitation Group responses to working group 2, and other proposals. |
| 11.00am – 11.30am | Morning tea break |
| 11.30am – 1.00pm | Session 12 – Tributes prayer and acknowledgement, proposals. |
| 1.00-2.00pm | Lunch break |
| 2.00-4.00pm | Session 13 – One-minute speeches, closing business, closing Eucharist and Commissioning. |
| 4.00pm | Meeting close. |

22.2.8.2 Appointments and Associations (Proposal 29, revision of Proposal 2)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

(a) To appoint the following people for the whole of the 2022 Synod Meeting:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Minute Secretary: | Clare Boyd-Macrae |
| Returning Officer: | Rod Mummery |
| Deputy Returning Officer: | Rev Deacon Gavin Blakemore |
| Facilitation Group Convenor: | Rev Ian Ferguson |
| Facilitation Group members: | Dr Paul Chandler Rev Jay Robinson Nicole Mugford |



Rev Salesi Faupula
Helen Geard

(b) To associate the following people for the whole of the 2022 Synod Meeting:

Rev Mark Kickett (Daily Reflector)

Rev Jinseon Park (Moderator's Chaplain)

Clare Boyd-Macrae (Minute Secretary)

(c) To associate the following people for specific sessions of the 2022 Synod meeting:

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| Dr Mark Zirnsak | For the business of the Ministry & Mission Committee sponsored Justice and International Mission Cluster proposals. |
| Tim Molineux | For the business of the Ministry & Mission Committee sponsored Justice and International Mission Cluster proposals. |
| Thomas Johnson | For the business of the Uniting sponsored proposals. |
| Catriona Milne | For the business of the Uniting sponsored proposals. |
| Rev Dr Deacon Andy Calder | For the business of the Disability Action Plan proposal. |
| Rev Greg Crowe | For the business of the UAICC Victoria report. |
| Rev Fran Barber | For the business of Working Groups. |
| Rev Sarah Tomlinson | For the business of the Friday night Evening Program |
| Rev Deacon Mat Harry | For the business of the Friday night Evening Program |
| Chris Barnett | For the business of the Friday night Evening Program |
| Rev Mike You | For the business of the Friday night Evening Program |

22.2.8.3 Confirmation of Minutes of the 2022 meeting of the Synod (Proposal 3)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That the Moderator, General Secretary, Associate General Secretary and Business Chairperson be authorised to confirm the minutes of the 2022 meeting of Synod.

22.2.8.4 Reception of Reports (Proposal 4)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To receive all reports from Synod reporting entities provided to the 2022 Synod meeting.

22.2.8.5 Procedures regarding Proposal 5 (Proposal 24)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That the Synod sit in private when it considers the business relating to Proposal 5 - Reappointment of the General Secretary.

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary's chair.

22.2.8.6 Filling a Synod Standing Committee Casual Vacancy (Proposal 27)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence presented a proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That notwithstanding Synod Standing Committee By-Laws 6.1.v and 6.2, the current casual vacancy for Synod Standing Committee be filled in the following manner: that the six persons who receive the most support through the voting system that is used will be elected for terms concluding at the 2025 Synod meeting; and that the next successful candidate will be elected for a term concluding at the 2023 Synod meeting.

22.2.9 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to a written report. He thanked Rev Denise Liersch for her leadership and guidance of the Standing Committee as Moderator and Clare Boyd-Macrae for her administrative support and assistance.

22.2.10 GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT (REPORT E1)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to a written report. He thanked the Ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, the Senior Leadership Team, Isabel Thomas Dobson, Kathryn D'Alessandro, Clare Boyd-Macrae, and the Secretariat staff for their support and dedication.

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence resumed the General Secretary's chair.

22.2.11 EX-MODERATOR REPORT

The ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, presented a verbal report which was received with acclamation.

22.2.11.1 Minute of Appreciation: Rev Denise Liersch as Moderator 2019-2022 (Proposal 17)

Rev Ikani Vaitohi and Judy Causon presented a proposal .

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To record its appreciation for the ministry of the Rev Denise Liersch as Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania from 5 July 2019 to 30 June 2022; and

To give thanks to God for Denise's wise and compassionate leadership of the Synod, particularly through the challenges presented by the pandemic during this time.

From the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Denise was for many months a Moderator in lockdown, restricted in her freedom to perform many of the responsibilities - and the joys - of this role, unable to travel throughout the Synod and meet with congregations, presbyteries and agencies or to travel interstate, conducting and attending meetings online from the confines of her own home and deprived of the personal day-to-day interactions with colleagues. Nevertheless, she continued to provide wise, insightful and encouraging leadership in all aspects of her role as Moderator.

As the Synod responded to the pandemic and the effects on many aspects of its operations and ministry, Denise provided calm, encouraging and informed support to those charged with exploring and implementing necessary changes, sensitivity to the pastoral implications of difficult decisions and a clear focus on the priority of ministry and mission to all her involvement in committee meetings.

Whether it be in online or face-to-face gatherings, Denise's leadership has been marked by a consultative and respectful approach, a gentle spirit, a calm presence and an eloquent delivery. Those who met with and worked with her experienced her openness to and respect for the ideas and contributions of others and her capacity to capture the essence of complex conversations and reflect them back in a caring, thoughtful and creative ways.

The relational nature of Denise's leadership has been appreciated and greatly valued also by the agencies of the church, whose work she strongly supported, sharing her generous spirit and practical understanding of the challenges and joys of caring for vulnerable people in our communities. She continued to bring CEOs and Chairs together with Synod leaders to ensure that all were focussed on the way in which they could work together for the best interests of the people they serve.

Denise has also brought a strong focus on relationships between First and Second Peoples and a commitment to Walking Together. Her time spent with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in Tasmania provided a time of deep learning and connection:

"When we shared time on country, it was like the creator and my ancestors knew of this moment, of this relationship, of this learning, and unlearning, of this deep cultural respect emanating from Denise, and woven together at that moment, in that time, on country, in Lutrawita Tasmania - we were held as takarilya, Family." (Alison Overeem, UAICC Tasmania).

We give thanks for Denise's service as Moderator, faithfully modelling Christ's compassion in her leadership of the Synod and her care for its members through a period of great vulnerability and uncertainty.

A presentation was made to the ex-Moderator. Ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, responded briefly and prayed.

The Moderator spoke briefly and prayed.

22.2.12 BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator introduced the Bible Study leader for this meeting, Rev Associate Professor Sean Winter.

Dr Winter led a Bible Study on the subject of 'Get up and Go – Towards God: The invitation to Renewal'. Mark 1: 35-39.

22.2.13 Q&A – UNITING Vic.Tas, UNITING AGEWELL AND U ETHICAL (REPORTS B3, B4 and B5)

- Rev Alistair Macrae, Deputy Chair Uniting Board and Bronwyn Pike, CEO of Uniting;
 - Andrew Kinnersly, CEO of Uniting AgeWell;
 - Lindsay Mann, Chair of the U Ethical Board and Mat Browning, CEO of U Ethical;
- were present to respond to questions and comments from Synod members to the respective institutions' reports.

22.2.13.1 Minute of Appreciation for Dr David Cousins AM, ex-Chairperson of U Ethical Board (Proposal 18)

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary's chair.



Lindsay Mann, Chair, U Ethical Board, and Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, General Secretary, presented a proposal.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To give thanks to God for Dr David Cousins AM and to celebrate his contribution to the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, for the positions held as:

- Chairperson – Uniting Ethical Investors Limited’s board, December 2017 to December 2020;
- Chairperson – Uniting Ethical Investors Limited’s people and nominations committee, December 2017 to December 2020; and
- Non-executive director – Uniting Ethical Investors Limited, February 2016 to September 2021.

We thank David for his dedication, care, wisdom and deep faith, and wish him and his family God’s rich blessings as he moves on to future endeavours.

David Cousins was appointed a non-executive director of Uniting Ethical Investors (U Ethical) in February 2016. In September 2021, David concluded his term in this position. David served as chairperson of U Ethical from January 2018 until December 2020.

During David’s tenure with U Ethical, funds under management grew from \$1.0 billion to \$1.4 billion and grants to the Synod have totalled \$15 million.

David’s stewardship and professional experience assisted U Ethical to embark on a business transformation which sees it positioned as an ethical investment leader and competing successfully for investment mandates from a wide range of investors whose values are aligned with those of U Ethical.

U Ethical particularly benefited from David’s passion for ethical and impact investment and his focus on U Ethical’s major objective, the financial contribution which it makes to the Synod. David also championed U Ethical’s commitment to First Peoples reconciliation, both in its engagement with investee companies and in pursuit of its own reconciliation initiatives, and the company continues to build on his dedication to this important cause.

David continues to serve the Church as a member of the Synod Finance Committee. We thank David for his service to U Ethical and the broader Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

David Cousins responded.

The Moderator spoke briefly and offered a prayer.

22.2.14 BALLOT – GENERAL SECRETARY REAPPOINTMENT

This item of business was moved to a private session, and the livestream of the meeting was suspended until the conclusion of the session.

General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, left the meeting for this item of business.

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary’s chair.

A proposal was presented by Rev Ikani Vaitohi, Chairperson, Ministry & Mission Committee, and Rev Stan Clarke, Chairperson, Property & Operations Committee, both being 2021-2022 Standing Committee members, and discussion ensued.

The Returning Officer, Rod Mummery, outlined the ballot process for the reappointment of the General Secretary and confirmed that the ballot would close at 2.00pm on Friday 1 July 2022.

The electronic ballot was opened.

22.2.15 CLOSE OF BALLOT – GENERAL SECRETARY REAPPOINTMENT

The Moderator declared Ballot 1 (reappointment of the General Secretary) closed at 2.00pm.

The Moderator also declared that Standing Committee nominations closed at 2.00pm.

22.2.15.1 Establishing a Synod Meeting Planning Committee (Proposal 6)

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence and Rev Sue Clarkson presented a proposal.

After discussion, this matter was referred to the Facilitation Group and others for potential amendments to some clauses.

22.2.16 ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT – GENERAL SECRETARY REAPPOINTMENT

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, announced the result of Ballot 1 – General Secretary reappointment which was passed with well over the required threshold of 66%. This result was received with acclamation.

22.2.16.1 Reappointment of the General Secretary (Proposal 5)

The Synod resolved by ballot and acclamation:

- (a) To reappoint Rev Dr Mark Lawrence to the placement of General Secretary for a further period of up to five years from the anniversary of his commencement date (1 November 2022); and
- (b) To express its profound appreciation of the collaborative servant leadership that Mark Lawrence has exercised throughout the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania in the role of General Secretary.

22.2.16.2 Length of term for future Moderators (Proposal 8)

Ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, and General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, presented a proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That the length of term for future Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Moderators be for approximately three years, as determined by the intervals between ordinary Synod meetings.

22.2.17 REPORTS: CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence resumed the General Secretary's chair.

The Moderator invited the Business Convenor, Rev Sue Clarkson, to give an introduction to Choose Your Own Adventure.

Synod members engaged with selected Synod reports of their choice.

22.2.17.1 Response to Tasmanian Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation (Proposal 7)

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary's chair.

Ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, introduced the proposal regarding the Response to Tasmanian Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation.

Dr Jess Hateley-Browne presented the proposal.

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, introduced Working Groups.

22.2.18 WORKING GROUP 1

The Synod met in working groups for to discuss the Response to the Tasmanian Voluntary Assisted Dying report and proposal.

22.2.19 WITHDRAWAL OF PROPOSAL 14

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence resumed in the General Secretary's chair. Business Convenor, Rev Sue Clarkson, announced that Uniting had decided to not proceed with Proposal 14.

22.2.20 DAILY REFLECTION

The Moderator introduced the Daily Reflector for the 2022 Synod meeting, Rev Mark Kickett, Interim Chairperson for the National Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

Rev Mark Kickett presented the Daily Reflection.

22.2.21 EVENING PROGRAM

'Arising, Journeying, Moving Forward' – presented by Rev Sandy Brodine, Rev Sylvia Akau'ola-Tongotongo, Rev Deacon Mat Harry, Rev Sarah Tomlinson, Rev Mike You and Chris Barnett. The presentation invited Synod members to reflect on how congregational life may be intentional and innovative in response to mission in local contexts as an expression of communal and personal discipleship.

22.2.22 CLOSING PRAYER

The Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, closed the day with prayer.

22.3 SATURDAY 2 JULY 2022

22.3.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator's chaplain, Rev Semisi Tauali'i, led worship.

22.3.2 BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study was led by Rev Assoc Prof Sean Winter on the theme of 'Get up and go after Jesus – an Invitation to Discipleship' – from Matthew 9:9.



22.3.3 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (VICTORIA) (REPORT F2)

Rev Greg Crowe, Chairperson UAICC Victoria Oversight Committee, spoke to a written report.

22.3.4 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (TASMANIA) (REPORT F1)

Alison Overeem, Centre Manager, UAICC Leprena, spoke to a written report. A video on the work of UAICC Tasmania was also presented.

22.3.5 WALKING TOGETHER IN COVENANT COMMITTEE REPORT (REPORT G1B)

Rev Denise Liersch and Alison Overeem, Co-Chairpersons, Walking Together in Covenant Committee, spoke to a written report. A video about the work of the Committee was also presented.

22.3.5.1 Minute of Appreciation for Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes (Proposal 19)

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary's chair.

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence and Rev Sharon Hollis presented a proposal and Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes responded.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To record its appreciation and give thanks to God for the ministry of Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes in the role of equipping Leadership for mission Executive Officer and many other roles across the life of the Church.

Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes' (Jenny) positive contribution to all parts of the Church has been enormous. All of the qualities that Jenny has brought to her role as equipping Leadership for mission (eLM) Executive Officer (EO), and before that, in her role as Executive Director, Centre for Theology and Ministry (CTM), including: insightful and generative leadership; discerning observation; curious reflector, imaginative theology; frank conversations, effective change agent; superb humourist; pastoral sensitivity; opportunity explorer; initiator; collaborator; history bearer; horizon thinker; and so much more, have made a wonderful and profound contribution to the Synod and the wider Church.

As well ministering in eLM and CTM, and other congregation and Synod placements, Jenny has served on, and resourced, a number of Synod and Assembly committees, forums, networks, etc, and has accepted invitations to provide leadership and strategy education and resourcing sessions and workshops in this Synod, congregations, presbyteries, other synods, and the Assembly. In all these roles, Jenny embodied a deep and abiding commitment to:

- lead with hope and compassion;
- teach and encourage the Christian faith;
- nurture disciples; and
- provide teaching, resourcing, counsel and encouragement to the wider Church; all to enhance the capacity of the people of God, for discipleship and mission.

Through Jenny's service as eLM EO, previously as CTM Executive Director, all her previous placements, and the additional responsibilities Jenny willingly undertook in the life of the Church, people across the Church have been inspired and equipped for their discipleship and witness. Jenny's enthusiasm for learning and reflection leading to change and growth set a pattern for the Church. She modelled that life-long learning applies to

faith and that this has application in the Church's life and mission, as well as to all other areas. Her skill in bringing theory into practice, specifically in bringing eLM into being which was far more far-reaching than just joining CTM and Commission for mission (CFM), has been a substantial gift for the Church's future. This capacity of Jenny 'putting theory into practice' has been demonstrated in countless ways throughout her various placements and commitments to the wider Church.

Along with so many initiatives across the life of the Church, Jenny's insight and collaborative work with others was instrumental in the establishment of the Bethel Pastoral Centre in the Synod of Victoria and then the Synod of Victoria & Tasmania. She was also instrumental in the development of the Regulations and practices for Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committees and the UCA's Code of Ethics for Ministry Practice. Along with the teaching, resourcing, and strategy and leadership ministry that Jenny has offered, these are practical examples of the far-reaching contribution that she has made to the Uniting Church across Australia.

Overall, as eLM EO along all other placements and other commitments, Jenny exercised ministry so that the Church, communally and as individuals, might better witness to the gospel and serve the world. In her various roles, Jenny sought to teach, encourage, lead, manage, and care, so that the Church might know fullness of life in following Christ that calls us to strive for justice, nurture hope, speak and act with wisdom, and discernment, and be good neighbours and active participants in our communities. Jenny's ministry has helped encourage the Church communally, and helped individual members to use the gifts we have been given and which we have strengthened not for our own sake, but for the sake of world, to look past our doors and to proclaim, witness, serve, and nurture.

Jenny has demonstrated wonderful grace and forgiveness to the Church as a whole. At a time when the Synod judged Jenny harshly and publicly, Jenny embodied grace and love and forgave the Church, as a community and some individuals within it. The Church is deeply grateful that Jenny discerned a way to continue to offer ministry and continue to invite the Church to travel the journey of worship, witness, and service that reflects the gospel of justice, compassion, and inclusion. The Church has no comprehension of the cost on Jenny, and those who loved Jenny and who love Jenny, through this period and beyond. The Church is deeply sorry that Jenny 'paid that price' to live out her calling as a minister of the gospel.

There is much to thank Jenny and God for, for her gifts and graces, and for the nature and scope of the ministry and leadership that Jenny has offered to this Synod and the wider Church over the 42 years since her ordination. The Church is exceedingly grateful for all that Jenny has offered in each of her placements and other commitments, and particularly for her shepherding and leading of eLM as a Unit within the Synod.

The Synod prays that as Jenny moves into retirement from active ministry, she will enjoy an enriching period of joy, hope, rest, contentment, and wonder.

Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes offered a brief response.

The Moderator spoke briefly and offered a prayer.

22.3.6 **BALLOT 2**

The Returning Officer, Rod Mummery outlined the process for Ballot 2 which included:

- the Standing Committee majority ballot; and

the appointment of the

- Chairperson of the Placements Committee;
- Chairperson of the Property Trust;
- Members of the Property Trust.



The Returning Officer confirmed that Ballot 2 would close at 11.30am, Saturday 2 July 2022.

The electronic ballot was opened.

22.3.7 CLOSE OF SYNOD ROLL AND BALLOT 2

The Moderator declared Ballot 2 and the 2022 Synod Roll closed at 11.30am.

22.3.8 Q&A FOR MINISTRY & MISSION COMMITTEE, PROPERTY & OPERATIONS COMMITTEE AND SYNOD MINISTRIES AND OPERATIONS REPORTS

- Rev Ikani Vaitohi, Chairperson, and Lindsay Oates, Deputy Chairperson, Ministry & Mission Committee;
 - Rev Stan Clark, Chairperson, Property & Operations Committee;
 - General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, CEO for Synod Ministries & Operations;
- were present to respond to questions and comments from Synod members to the respective committees' and Synod Ministries and Operations' reports.

22.3.9 ANNUAL FINANCE REPORT (E3.1 and E3.2)

The General Secretary resumed the General Secretary's chair.

The Moderator introduced Sam Nicholas, Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing Unit, who presented the report.

22.3.10 FACILITATION GROUP REPORT ON WORKING GROUP 1 DISCUSSION AND OTHER PROPOSALS (PROPOSAL 31 – REVISED PROPOSAL 7)

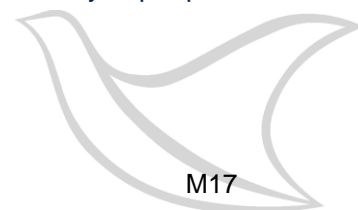
Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, presented feedback from the first Working Groups on the Response to Tasmanian Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation. Dr Jess Hateley-Browne, author of the report on the Response to Tasmanian Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation, Andrew Kinnersly, CEO of Uniting AgeWell, and Bronwyn Pike, CEO of Uniting, contributed input.

Rev Ian Ferguson presented Proposal 31 – revised Proposal 7.

22.3.10.1 Synod response to the Tasmanian end-of-life choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act (Proposal 31 – replacing Proposal 7)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- a) To affirm relevant Christian beliefs and UCA theology, including:
 - i) that life is a gift from God, and that all human life is precious to, and has dignity before, God;
 - ii) that neither death nor life, neither suffering nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (see Romans 8:38-39);
 - iii) that it is a deep and abiding mystery that, as followers of Christ and through God's accompanying grace, peace, wisdom and growth can be birthed in the midst of suffering, though suffering is not to be idolised;
 - iv) that as followers of Christ, we are called to spiritual discernment throughout our life and death journey, and to be a loving and supportive community to people in need of care.
- b) To affirm:



- i) that high-quality palliative care be the primary, preferred means through which end of life care is provided;
 - ii) the importance of equitable and timely access to culturally responsive palliative care in hospitals and community-settings.
- c) To recognise and respect that, within the bounds of the Synod, and including within our First People communities and culturally and linguistically diverse communities, there is a range of faithful Christian responses to the Tasmanian End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act and these include exploring, accessing, and conscientiously objecting to voluntary assisted dying.

The Synod resolved by agreement:

- d) To give permission within Tasmania to UCA institutions to make voluntary assisted dying allowable within the context of their facilities and services, according to the Tasmanian End-of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Act 2021.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- e) To recognise that UCA institutions have already developed and adopted clear and robust policies and procedures that protect and uphold the right of staff to conscientiously object to participating in or supporting a resident/client who is exploring or accessing voluntary assisted dying in accordance with the provisions outlined in the legislation.
- f) To request UCA institutions to review their voluntary assisted dying policies and procedures and, if necessary, revise them for the Tasmanian context to reflect the requirements and provisions in the Tasmanian legislation.
- g) To commit to the provision of a compassionate and culturally sensitive pastoral response to all people associated with the Church and UCA institutions, including those people (and their loved ones) who choose to explore or access voluntary assisted dying in a legal manner in Tasmania.

The Moderator led the Synod members in prayer.

22.3.11 INTRODUCTION TO WORKING GROUP 2

Rev Sandy Brodine introduced the discussion topic for Working Group consideration after lunch: 'Arising, Journeying, Moving Forward'. This followed on from Friday night's presentation on the same topic.

22.3.12 ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT 2 RESULT AND INTRODUCTION OF BALLOT 3

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, announced the results of Ballot 2:

- All Standing Committee nominees received majority support.
- Rev Jay Robinson was appointed as Placements Committee Chairperson.

The following were appointed as Property Trust (Victoria) and Property Trust (Tas.) members:

- Maryjane Crabtree;
- Helen Geard;
- Robert (Bob) Hodges;
- David Rowe; and
- Kenneth (Ken) Tabart.



- Robert (Bob) Hodges was appointed the Property Trust (Victoria) and Property Trust (Tas) Chairperson.

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, introduced Returning Officer, Rod Mummery, who explained the procedures for Ballot 3.

The Returning Officer confirmed that Ballot 3 would close at 7.30pm, Saturday 2 July 2022.

The electronic ballot was opened.

22.3.13 CELEBRATION OF UNITING VIC.TAS' FIFTH BIRTHDAY

A cake to celebrate Uniting Vic.Tas' fifth birthday was cut by Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, Uniting Board Deputy-Chairperson, Rev Alistair Macrae, and Uniting CEO, Bronwyn Pike.

22.3.14 WORKING GROUP 2

The Synod met in working groups to discuss:

- Signs of spring in your local context.
- The Synod Strategic Framework.
- Ways the Synod and presbyteries can encourage new growth wherever it is happening in the Church.

22.3.15 PROPOSALS

22.3.15.1 Improving the lives of people with disability (Proposal 10)

Rev Ikani Vaitohi, Ministry & Mission Committee Chairperson, introduced this proposal, and Dr Mark Zirnsak, Synod Senior Social Justice Advocate, presented it.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To support the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Australia;
- (b) To call on the Victorian Government to:
 - (i) Amend the Victorian *Disability Act* to:
 - a. recognise the right of people with disabilities to spiritual expression and that this be referenced in all Victorian State Disability Action Plans;
 - b. ensure that the Victorian Government will provide essential supports to people with disabilities where the National Disability Insurance Scheme fails to deliver such supports;
 - c. establish a Victorian Commissioner for Disability Inclusion who:
 - I. oversees compliance with the state disability plan and disability action plans;
 - II. has a duty to support, advocate for, and promote the rights and wellbeing of people with disability across Victoria, like the functions of the Commissioner for Children and Young People and the Victorian Commissioner for LGBTIQ+ Communities; and
 - III. upholds the rights of all people with disability in Victoria, in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
 - d. require all organisations that receive funding from the Victorian Government above a reasonable threshold to be required to have a meaningful disability action plan;

- e. ensure that any use of restrictive practices be a last resort in response to risk of harm to the person with disability or others. The use of restrictive practices should also comply with the human rights principles contained within the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
 - f. create an offence to hinder, obstruct, intimidate or threaten a Community Visitor carrying out their functions; and
 - g. allow designated people on the Community Visitors program to be able to visit all forms of accommodation that the National Disability Insurance Agency has introduced, accommodation provided by the Transport Accident Commission and all accommodation that is connected or managed by, or on behalf of, a disability service provider.
- (ii) Develop Minimum Accessibility Standards for mainstream services with guidance to Victorian businesses on how to improve their inclusivity. The Standards should be backed by a complaint mechanism. An education program should be conducted in the Victorian community on accessibility;
 - (iii) Establish a central register of disability residential properties that Community Visitors are able to inspect;
 - (iv) Establish a Disability Deaths Registrar modelled on the State Coroner's Victorian Suicide Register and accompanying review; and
 - (v) Ensure people with disabilities leaving prison are provided with appropriate transitional planning for post-release, including direct referrals to disability services, housing and other funded in-community supports.
- (c) To write to the Victorian Premier, the Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Disability, Ageing and Carers to inform them of this resolution.

22.3.15.2 Raising the age of criminal responsibility (Proposal 11)

Rev Ikani Vaitohi, Ministry & Mission Committee Chairperson, introduced this proposal, and Tim Molineux, Synod Social Justice Officer, presented it.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To acknowledge;
 - (i) The Tasmanian Government's commitment to, and ongoing development of, a transition plan to reform the youth justice system through strengthening the support and therapeutic interventions provided to young people to prevent engagement with the youth justice system.
 - (ii) The Victorian Government's commitment to a youth justice system that embeds self-determination as the core business of justice agencies, as recommended in *Burra Lotjpa Dunguludja*.
 - (iii) The Victorian Government's response to 56 out of 75 recommendations of the 'Our Youth Our Way' inquiry which commits itself to keeping Aboriginal children connected with their family, community and culture through community designed and led support services.
 - (iv) Its disappointment in the lack of commitment to increase the age of criminal responsibility to 14 within the Victorian Government *Wirikara Kulpa* Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategy 2022-2032.

- (v) That the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child has called on all member States to raise the age of criminal responsibility to at least 14 years based on leading legal and health positions.
 - (vi) That the current criminal age of responsibility of 10 years in Victoria and Tasmania does not meet international standards.
 - (vii) The covenanting relationship between the Uniting Church in Australia and the UAICC, as we pursue justice together.
 - (viii) That the number of First Peoples' children in contact with the criminal justice system is unacceptably high.
- (b) To call on the Victorian and Tasmanian Governments to:
- (i) Increase the age of criminal responsibility to 14 years.
 - (ii) Increase investment in early intervention services to support children who come into contact with the criminal justice system.
 - (iii) Prioritise early intervention, diversionary, and prevention strategies and programs led by the Aboriginal Community within Aboriginal Youth Justice Strategies.
 - (iv) Encourage the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety, and the Tasmanian Department of Communities and Department of Justice to partner with Aboriginal communities through Aboriginal peak bodies and youth sector organisations, to increase their capacity to contribute to the design, coordination and delivery of youth support.
- (c) To write to the Premiers of Victoria and Tasmania to inform them of this resolution.

22.3.15.3 Disability Action Plan 2022-2025 (Proposal 12)

Rev Ikani Vaitohi, Ministry & Mission Committee Chairperson, introduced this proposal, and Synod Disability Advocate. Rev Dr Deacon Andy Calder, presented it.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To acknowledge:

- The 2018 Assembly's adoption of its 'Statement of Access and Welcome' and the resolution that each Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia develops a Disability Action Plan;
 - The successful work completed in the 2000–2003, 2015–2018 and 2019–2022 Disability Action Plans; and
 - The need for ensuring ongoing vigilance and attention to eliminating discrimination against people with disabilities, referencing the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and*
- (a) To affirm the significant work completed out of the 2019-2022 Synod Disability Action Plan;
 - (b) To develop a further Disability Action Plan for the 2022-2025 period for congregations, presbyteries, Synod Ministries and Operations and Synod reporting bodies; and
 - (c) That the development of the plan (referred to in (b) above) be led by eLM, through the Synod's Disability Inclusion Advocate;
 - (d) To authorise the Synod Standing Committee, as appropriate, to approve the 2022-2025 Disability Action Plan, act on its recommendations, and distribute the plan to presbyteries and Synod reporting bodies; and

- (e) To invite other councils and institutions of the Church to adopt the Disability Action Plan.

22.3.15.4 Synod Meeting Planning Committee (Proposal 30 - Revision of Proposal 6)

Facilitation Group Convenor, Rev Ian Ferguson, presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To establish a Synod Meeting Planning Committee (SMPC), commencing by 31 December 2022, with the purpose to plan and arrange the theme, venue, community life and timetabling for future meetings of the Synod, including, but not limited to:
 - (i) giving priority to broad engagement of the membership of the Church;
 - (ii) building up the Synod in faith, hope and the participation in Christ's mission with reference to the Synod's responsibilities and the Synod's Strategic Framework;
 - (iii) the business requirements of the Synod;
 - (iv) the implementation of interactive, engaging and creative strategies and processes in order to foster the increased and active engagement of participants;
 - (v) overseeing the preparations for the meeting;
 - (vi) considering how future Synod meetings may be arranged; and
 - (vii) undertaking other tasks as indicated as required.
- (b) That the membership of the SMPC shall be up to 13 members comprised of:
 - (i) Moderator or Moderator-Elect (whomever is chairing the next Synod meeting);
 - (ii) General Secretary;
 - (iii) Associate General Secretary;
 - (iv) Business Committee Chairperson (as appointed by the Standing Committee);
 - (v) UAICC member or nominee;
 - (vi) Synod Meeting Project Manager;
 - (vii) The remaining members, appointed by the Standing Committee, to include a diversity of Church members with the presence of minority voices.
- (c) To request the General Secretary to develop Terms of Reference for the Synod Meeting Planning Committee, and revised Terms of Reference for the Business Committee, in consultation with the Business Committee, for consideration by the Standing Committee.

22.3.15.5 Improved system of income support (Proposal 15)

CEO of Uniting, Bronwyn Pike, Tom Johnson Manager, Uniting Advocacy and Public Policy and Uniting Director of Mission, Rev John Clark, presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- a) To acknowledge the positive impact of the coronavirus supplementary payment and tenancy support measures on people's lives and wellbeing, and the negative effects of withdrawing these measures. This is evidenced in Uniting Vic.Tas' No fighting chance report with the Swinburne Centre for Social Impact, published in October 2021;
- b) To call on the Australian Government to permanently increase the rate of Jobseeker, Youth Allowance, and related income support payments, in line with recommendations from the Australian Council of Social Service. Specifically, that the following be implemented as soon as possible:
 - (i) Adequate and fair payment rates, increasing base rates to meet a minimum income floor across the working age payments system set at the pension payment rate (including the COVID-19 Pension Supplement);

- (ii) Remove barriers to accessing payments, including permanently removing the Liquid Assets Waiting Period, One-Week Waiting Period;
 - (iii) Establish an independent mechanism, such as a Social Security Commission, to advise on income support payment settings;
- c) To encourage congregations and presbyteries to be part of activities during Anti-Poverty- Week in October 2022; and
- d) To write to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Social Services, the Minister for Government Services, the Opposition Leader, and the Shadow Minister for Social Services to inform them of this resolution.

22.3.15.6 Making homelessness a thing of the past (Proposal 16)

CEO of Uniting, Bronwyn Pike, and Tom Johnson, Uniting Advocacy and Public Policy, presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To recognise that the housing affordability crisis in the country is pushing people, including children, into housing related stress, poverty and homelessness;
- (b) To call on the Victorian & Tasmanian Governments to plan, fund and implement homelessness and housing strategies that adequately meet the housing affordability and homelessness crises in Victoria and Tasmania: This includes the following actions to be implemented as soon as possible:
 - (i) Prioritise, strengthen and promote early intervention programs to identify individuals and families at risk and to prevent them from becoming homeless;
 - (ii) Procure and provide sufficient long-term social and affordable housing in line with the national average and at a rate to keep up with demand;
 - (iii) Reform state planning policies to increase supply of social and affordable housing in new developments;
 - (iv) Review the current crisis housing system to ensure it is fit-for-purpose to provide early intervention and safe, appropriate and self-contained emergency accommodation;
 - (v) Provide flexible and innovative accommodation options that meet the needs of people experiencing housing stress and homelessness, including connection to services and communities; and
 - (vi) Embed integrated wrap-around services that support people to address other compounding needs and issues, to avoid cycling back into homelessness.
- (c) To call on the Commonwealth Government to permanently increase the rate of income support payments to meet a minimum income floor across the working age payments system set at the pension payment;
- (d) To call on the Commonwealth Government to provide immediate relief to Australians in chronic rental stress by increasing the rate of the Commonwealth Rent Assistance payment;
- (e) To continue support for Uniting Vic.Tas and Uniting Housing in our work to support people experiencing homelessness, and to build and deliver affordable housing across the state; and



- (f) To write to the Premier and Minister for Housing in Victoria; Premier and Minister for Housing in Tasmania; and Prime Minister, Minister for Housing and the Leader of the Opposition at the Commonwealth level to inform them of this resolution.

22.3.15.7 Appointment of Chairperson for the Moderator Nominating Committee (Proposal 9)

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, assumed the General Secretary's chair.

General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To appoint Rev Sue Withers as the Chairperson of the Moderator Nominating Committee for the Moderator who will commence their term at the 2025 Synod meeting.

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence resumed the General Secretary's chair.

22.3.16 REPORTS: CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

The members engaged with selected Synod reports of their choice.

22.3.17 CLOSE OF BALLOT 3

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, declared Ballot 3 was closed at 7.30pm.

22.3.18 ASSEMBLY REPORT

National Assembly President, Rev Sharon Hollis, and National Assembly General Secretary, Colleen Geyer, presented a verbal report.

The Synod received the report.

22.3.19 Q&A SESSION FOR PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE AND SYNOD ETHICS COMMITTEE REPORTS

- Placements Committee Chairperson, Rev Jay Robinson; and
- Synod Ethics Committee Chairperson, Rev Susan Malthouse-Law;

were present to respond to questions and comments from Synod members to the respective committees' reports.

22.3.19.1 Minute of Appreciation for Rev David Fotheringham, ex-Chairperson of the Placements Committee (Proposal 20)

Ex-Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, assumed the Moderator's Chair.

Rev Jay Robinson, Chairperson, Placements Committee presented a Minute of Appreciation for Rev David Fotheringham for his chairing of the Placements Committee.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To record its appreciation to Rev David Fotheringham for his leadership of the Placements Committee over the past seven years, from 2014 as Deputy Chairperson, and from 2016 as Chairperson.

To give thanks to God for David's faithful sharing of his many gifts and skills in service to the Church and its ministry agents, living out the call to follow Christ and participate in this ministry of reconciliation and renewal.

Over the past seven years David has faithfully led and discerned with members of the Placements Committee as they served the Synod and the wider Church through their considered and prayerful deliberations to assist congregations, presbyteries, the Synod and its Agencies fill ministry vacancies and opportunities.

To this task David has brought his pastoral heart, his listening ear and his knowledge of the necessary procedures and policies required of this important Synod Committee. David has shared his skills in discernment, facilitation, and the ability to look forward with this Committee, and we are grateful for that.

David has also taken on the task of helping the Placements Committee continue to operate faithfully through the COVID pandemic through all the challenges of not being able to meet in person, but to continue to undertake the work of the Church through this committee. Again, his patience, insight, knowledge, and pastoral awareness has assisted the Placements Committee as we met the challenge of online meetings and changing ministry placements needs.

David has encouraged and challenged the Placements Committee to consider its processes and procedures in the light of changing ministerial placement needs. This has resulted in extra meetings of the Placements Committee as it discerns how best to serve the Church in the current day. David's leadership through these conversations has shown his understanding of the processes, the pastoral needs of the Church and its ministry agents, and an awareness of the current circumstances the Church is operating within.

David at times discerned a way through difficult situations, while on one side holding a pastoral heart and on the other applying the Regulations. Having the interest of the Church and the people it served, he has helped the Placements Committee to consider alternative/new ways to address situations and concerns. He has helped in discernment through encouragement and asking the hard questions. He has been an attentive listener to diverse points of view and has helped the Placements Committee to navigate complex and difficult situations with diligence and care. By his willingness to seek the wisdom both within the Placements Committee and other councils of the Church, he sought to find the best possible outcomes for the Church. His attention to detail and consideration of possible scenarios which needed proactive strategies have been greatly valued.

We wish him God's blessings as he takes on the role of Moderator of the Synod.

Rev David Fotheringham responded to the Minute of Appreciation.

The ex-Moderator, spoke briefly and offered a prayer.

22.3.19.2 Minute of Appreciation for Rev Claire Dawe as Synod Ethics Committee Chairperson (Proposal 21)

The Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, resumed the Moderator's Chair.

Synod Ethics Committee Chairperson, Rev Susan Malthouse-Law, presented a Minute of Appreciation for Rev Claire Dawe for her chairing of the inaugural Synod Ethics Committee.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To give thanks to God for the ministry of Rev Claire Dawe in her role as the inaugural chairperson of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Ethics Committee June 2018-October 2021.

For a period of four years, Claire established a gentle and diligent manner for guiding the work of the Ethics Committee through its early work in finding its place, and as it delved

deeply into the challenging work of “Voluntary Assisted Dying”, and other ethically demanding issues that the committee has tackled in its responsibilities.

In the Ethics Committee’s own Minute of Appreciation for Claire as Chairperson, it was recorded as follows: Claire was “thanked for her wonderful ability to ‘herd cats’ with warmth and love. The Committee has appreciated the way in which she has been able to include all voices whilst remaining vulnerable, downplaying her own abilities, and opening up possibilities for others. Her sense of humour has been appreciated, the ability to help the Committee laugh during difficult discussions, her thoughtfulness, and carefully considered response to members and discussions has been valuable in this space. She was thanked for her leadership and care, and offered a blessing in her new role”.

From her deep pastoral heart and continual thoughtfulness, Claire’s work has prepared the Committee for the future. She has mentored and cared for its members, and we are sincerely grateful. We give thanks for Claire’s ministry to the Synod in serving as Chairperson of the Ethics Committee, for her gentle leadership, and for her wonderful gifts of ministry which dwell among us all.

Rev Claire Dawe responded to the Minute of Appreciation.

The Moderator spoke briefly and offered a prayer.

22.3.19.3 Minute of Appreciation for Rev Rachel Kronberger as Chairperson of Committee for Counselling (Proposal 22)

Rev Ian Brown presented a Minute of Appreciation for Rev Rachel Kronberger for her chairing of the Committee for Counselling.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To record its sincere appreciation to Rev Rachel Kronberger for her leadership of the Synod Committee for Counselling for the past six years, commencing in December 2015 and concluding in January 2022.

To give thanks to God for the wise and sensitive leadership of the Committee and for the tactful and gracious manner with which Rachel has shared her gifts in the often difficult tasks the Church calls on this body to undertake on its behalf. This has involved Rachel in work for this Synod and at times, across Synod boundaries, as powers for this work are sometimes referred where a Synod is not able to deal with a matter. Rachel has handled the difficulties of coordinating diverse interests, working across state borders, time zones and having to use video conferencing with grace and competence.

Rachel has shown a strong commitment to the values expressed in the Regulations and the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice and has brought both a keen sense of compassion and justice to the work of resolving matters of complaint and difficult conflict. As with many committees, this particular ministry is voluntary, on top of the normal day to day work of ministry.

The Committee for Counselling, by its nature involves close interaction with people who are hurt and perhaps angry and others who are defensive or resistant. Matters are often pressing. Rachel has been able to help the Committee navigate through complex and thorny issues and more importantly, to help Complainants and Respondents find their way to some degree of healing and wholeness through the process.

We are deeply thankful for the way Rachel has exercised this ministry of reconciliation which is so important for the good health of the Church. We wish Rachel well as she settles into a new placement and fresh challenges.

Rev Rachel Kronberger responded to the Minute of Appreciation.

The Moderator spoke briefly and offered a prayer.



22.3.20 DAILY REFLECTION

Rev Mark Kickett presented the Daily Reflection.

22.3.21 CLOSING PRAYERS

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, closed the day with prayer.

22.4 SUNDAY 3 JULY 2022

The Moderator welcomed members and opened the session with an acknowledgement of country and the reminder that today marked the start of NAIDOC week.

22.4.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator introduced Alison Overeem, Leprena Manager, UAICC Tasmania, to lead the morning devotions.

Alison Overeem led morning devotions.

22.4.2 BIBLE STUDY

Bible Study was led by Rev Assoc Prof Sean Winter on the theme of 'Get up and Go ... Away from home: the invitation to mission.' Mark 10:1.

The Moderator thanked Rev Assoc Prof Sean Winter for leading Bible study throughout the Synod meeting and presented him with a gift.

22.4.3 ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT 3 – STANDING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Moderator announced the results of the Synod Standing Committee election and led a short prayer.

Members elected to Standing Committee were:

- Lisa Carey – until Synod 2025;
- Matthew Julius – until Synod 2025;
- Jacob Westley – until Synod 2025;
- John Diprose OAM – until Synod 2025;
- Helen Geard – until Synod 2025;
- Rev Ikani Vaitohi – until Synod 2025;
- Cathie Halliwell to fill the casual vacancy – until Synod 2023;

22.4.4 FACILITATION GROUP RESPONSES TO WORKING GROUP 2

Rev Ian Ferguson, Convenor, and Rev Jay Robinson, Member, Facilitation Group, presented the responses to Working Group 2 discussions.

22.4.5 PROPOSALS

22.4.5.1 Minute of Appreciation of Rev Jay Robinson as Chairperson of the Synod Nominations Committee (Proposal 23)

Rev Lavingi Tupou presented a Minute of Appreciation for Rev Jay Robinson as Chairperson of the Synod Nominations Committee.

The Synod resolved by acclamation:

To give thanks to God for the ministry of Rev Jay Robinson as the Convenor of the inaugural Synod Nominations Committee, from August 2019 to the end of 2021.

The Synod has had several iterations of Nominations Committees and Panels, but in 2019, a new Synod Nominations Committee was formed, with Jay as Convenor.

During the most challenging COVID years that followed, Jay maintained the 'Noms Com' with regular email contact and meetings (initially in person, then by video conferencing). In the not quite four years of its existence, the membership of the Committee changed considerably, but despite this, Jay managed to infuse members with her enthusiasm and vision regarding finding good people (often from beyond the pool of 'usual suspects') to populate the many committees and other bodies that are such an integral part of the life of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Jay's energy and enthusiasm for the task fuelled the group, and inspired some new initiatives, such as an 'Expression of Interest' page on the Synod website.

More recently, Jay's wise advice in conversations regarding the future of the Nominations Committee have been an essential part of the formation of the new Synod Nominations Advisory Panel.

Jay's contribution to the area of nominations in the Synod will be missed, and we wish her well with her new responsibility as Chairperson of the Placements Committee.

Rev Jay Robinson responded to the Minute of Appreciation.

The Moderator spoke briefly and offered a prayer.

22.4.5.2 Process for setting the ministerial stipend and related allowances (Proposal 13)

Rod Mummery, Chairperson of the Terms of Placement Committee, presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) Notwithstanding Synod Minute 10.7.26.2, to set aside the process requiring the Synod meeting to set ministerial stipends as resolved by Minute 10.7.26.2;
- (b) To authorise the Standing Committee to set the ministerial stipend and associated allowances each year, after receiving recommendations which take into consideration movements in the Wage Price Index, Consumer Price Index, the stipends set by the other synods and the Synod Lay Staff Agreement from the Terms of Placement Committee; and
 - (i) That annual adjustments to the travel allowances be guided by the Australian Tax Office estimates;
 - (ii) That annual adjustments to the manse allowance be guided by Consumer Price Index trends for housing.

22.4.6 TRIBUTES PRAYER AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, spoke of the Synod's practice of acknowledging milestones in ministry and offered a Tributes prayer.

Synod members were reminded that the Synod's Tributes Service would be held on Saturday 23 July 2022, 2:30pm, at Wesley Uniting Church, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne.

22.4.7 PROPOSALS FROM MEMBERS

22.4.7.1 Ministries Pathways Reporting (Proposal 33, Revised proposal 26)

Matt Julius and Rev Heather Hon introduced this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:



To request the Ministry & Mission Committee to bring a report to the 2023 Synod meeting regarding the opportunities and challenges related to lay or ordained ministry pathways.

22.4.7.2 Succession Planning and Leadership Development (Proposal 32)

Rev Susan Malthouse-Law presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To request the Standing Committee

- (a) To broaden its consideration of succession planning beyond senior Synod leadership roles to include leadership across the wider Synod (e.g. presbyteries, institutions of the Church); noting that this broadened exploration may lead to establishing a task group or similar, comprising (where possible) representatives from the relevant councils and institutions to undertake this work:
- (b) That the scope of this work include, but not be limited to, exploring:
 - (i) opportunities for Church members to explore and to consider leadership roles within the Church;
 - (ii) how people are prepared and mentored to undertake future leadership roles and given ongoing support whilst in those roles;
 - (iii) how diverse and creative voices can inform this; and
- (c) To report regarding this work to the 2023 Synod meeting; whilst progressively sharing information with presbyteries as appropriate.

22.4.7.3 Ecumenical Engagement with Pentecostalism

Matt Julius and Rev Susan Malthouse-Law presented this proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To request the Ministry & Mission Committee to actively pursue, in consultation with relevant committees and roles within the Synod, dialogue and engagement with Pentecostal churches; and
- (b) To report on the work described in clause (a) above to the 2023 Synod meeting.

22.4.8 THANKS TO REV MARK KICKETT

The Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, thanked Rev Mark Kickett for his daily reflections, presented Rev Mark Kickett with a gift, and said a prayer.

22.4.9 ONE MINUTES SPEECHES

A number of Synod members gave one minute speeches.

22.4.9.1 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION FOR SYNOD ORGANISING TEAM

Rev Liz McMillan presented a Minute of Appreciation for the Synod Organising Team.

Synod resolved this by acclamation.



22.4.10 CLOSING WORSHIP AND COMMISSIONING

Synod members joined in the closing worship and Eucharist, led by Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham. The preacher was Rev Mark Kickett. During the service, those elected to roles during the Synod meeting were commissioned.

22.4.11 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

