



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES

of the

EIGHTEENTH MEETING OF THE

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Held at Box Hill, Victoria
30 August – 2 September 2025



Moderator: Rev Salesi Faupula
General Secretary: Rev Dr Mark Lawrence

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THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Minutes of the Meeting of the Eighteenth Synod

30 August – 2 September 2025

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

25.1 SATURDAY 30 AUGUST 2025

25.1.1 OPENING WORSHIP SERVICE

The 2025 Synod Meeting opened at 10:00am with an Opening Worship service at Kingswood College Hall, 355 Station Street, Box Hill South, and included the installation of the Moderator, Rev Salesi Faupula.

The service was led by the then Moderator (Rev David Fotheringham), with Rev Dr Sally Douglas and Rev Yoojin Song; and included a sermon by the newly installed Moderator Rev Salesi Faupula. The service included a procession by past Moderators, and current Heads of Churches, and an anthem performed by the Canterbury UCA Congregation Choir.

The theme of the meeting and the opening service was 'Pilgrims of the Spirit'.

25.1.2 COMMENCEMENT OF THE MEETING

25.1.2.1 Welcome

The Moderator occupied the chair at 1:30pm and welcomed Adrian Greenwood, Worimi man and member of the UAICC Victoria Regional Committee, who gave an Acknowledgement of Country.

The Moderator gave the following opening remarks:

- Welcome to all members and to visitors joining us either in-person or online via the livestream;
- Welcome to Rev Charissa Suli, President, and to Andrew Johnson, General Secretary of the National Assembly; to Rev Tara Tautari, General Secretary of the Methodist Church of New Zealand/Te Hāhi Weteriana o Aotearoa, Theological Reflector for the meeting; and to Rev Janet Staines, General Secretary of the Northern Synod, as an associated member;
- Welcomes were also made to:

- Rev Faaimata Hiliau, Moderator of the Synod of NSW/ACT and Rev Bruce Moore, Moderator of the Synod of Queensland, who were present for first day of the meeting;
 - Rev Carol Bennett, Synod Safe Meeting and Chaplain Coordinator; to Synod Safe Meeting Contacts, Rev Temukisa Amituana'i-Vaeluaga and Rev Fran Barber; and to Synod Meeting Chaplains, Rev Beth Bear, Rev Joy Blamires and Rev Gospel Ralte;
 - the Moderator's Chaplains: Rev Nathaniel Atem; Tracie Mulia; and Rev Joan Wright Howie.
- The Moderator commented that the Synod Meeting is a safe space. Members were encouraged to read and take to heart the statement *Meeting Together in a Safe Place* found on the meeting app and website.

25.1.2.2 Synod Membership Roll

The General Secretary announced that the Synod Membership Roll would be confirmed at 3:45pm on Sunday, 31 August 2025. Members were reminded to advise of any changes to the roll to Rev Sharon Hollis, Associate General Secretary, as soon as possible.

25.1.3 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY ANNOUNCEMENT

Kathryn D'Alessandro, Synod Meeting Project Manager, presented the Occupational Health and Safety announcement and reminded members to review the Emergency and Evacuation Information document available on the meeting app and website.

25.1.4 THEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION

The Moderator welcomed Bethany Broadstock who presented a theological orientation on the theme of "We are the Church – governing the Uniting Church in discernment, seeking guidance of the Spirit."

25.1.5 SYNOD MEETING PLANNING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1.4)

The Moderator welcomed Rev David Fotheringham, former Chairperson of the Synod Meeting Planning Committee (SMPC), and Rev Sue Clarkson, Chairperson of the Synod Business Committee and Business Convenor for the 2025 Synod Meeting. David and Sue spoke to a written report.

Sue expressed appreciation to the SMPC members for all their hard work and dedication in planning and supporting the 2025 Synod Meeting, and particularly to

Synod staff members Kathryn D'Alessandro, Charis Fraser, Deb Penaluna, Mandy Ratnam, and Lynda Nel for their contribution to arrangements for the Synod meeting.

25.1.6 SYNOD 2025 PROCEDURES

The Associate General Secretary assumed the General Secretary's Chair

Rev Sue Clarkson, Business Convenor, and General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, introduced proposals **01**, **21** (revision of proposal 02), **03**, and **04** and spoke to them collectively.

25.1.6.1 Synod 2025 Meeting Procedures (Proposal 01)

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

- (a) That any proposal including financial commitment(s), not at present included in the Synod Ministries and Operations 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;
- (b) To note that the closure time for nominations are as follows:
 - i. 2:00pm on Sunday, 31 August 2025 for Synod Standing Committee; and
 - ii. 12:00pm on Wednesday, 20 August 2025 for all other roles.
- (c) That the closing time for receiving proposals at this Synod meeting be 3.30pm Sunday 31 August 2025;
- (d) That the business of the Synod be dealt with in accordance with the following timetable unless the Synod specifically determines otherwise:

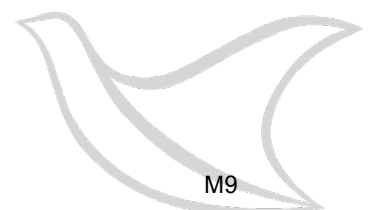
Saturday 30 August 2025 –

Session Time	Session Title
10:00am – 11:00am	Opening Worship (Kingswood College)
11:00am – 1:30pm	Travel to Box Hill Town Hall/Morning Tea/Lunch
1:30pm – 3:00pm	Session 1 – Theological Orientation, Synod Meeting Planning Committee/Business Committee report, Ex-Moderator report, Ex-Moderator Minute of Appreciation, UAICC Victoria report, UAICC Tasmania report

3:00pm – 3:30pm	Afternoon Tea
3:30pm – 6:00pm	Session 2 – Standing Committee report, General Secretary report, Proposals, Introduction to Working Group 1, Working Group 1
6:00pm – 7:30pm	Welcome Dinner
7:30pm – 8:30pm	Session 3 – Proposals, Theological Reflector

Sunday 31 August 2025 –

Session Time	Session Title
9:00am – 11:00am	Session 4 – Devotions, Bible Study, Proposals, Q&A with Uniting AgeWell, Uniting Vic.Tas and U Ethical
11:00am – 11:30am	Morning Tea
11:30am – 1:00pm	Session 5 – Electives sessions
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Session 6 – Synod Standing Committee nominations close, Tributes Service
3:00pm – 3:45pm	Afternoon tea
3:45pm – 5:30pm	Session 7 – Introduction to Working Group 2, Working Group 2
5.30pm – 7.00pm	Dinner (Nominations published)
7:00pm – 8:30pm	Session 8 – Assembly Report, Proposals, Theological Reflector



Monday 1 September 2025 –

Session Time	Session Title
9:00am – 11:00am	Session 9 – Devotions, Bible Study, Proposals, Ballot 1 opens (Placements Committee Chairperson, Property Trusts members, Standing Committee members majority)
11:00am – 11:30am	Morning Tea
11:30am – 1:00pm	Session 10 – Ballot 1 closes, Minutes of Appreciation, Q&A with Ministry & Mission Committee, Property & Operations Committee, and Synod Ministries & Operations
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm – 3:15pm	Session 11 – Proposals, Ballot 1 results announced, Ballot 2 (Standing Committee members preferential) opens,
3:15pm – 3:45pm	Afternoon Tea
3:45pm – 5:30pm	Session 12 – Deep Dive Reporting Sessions
5:30pm – 7:00pm	Dinner
7:00pm – 8:30pm	Session 13 – Ballot 2 closes, Proposals, Theological Reflector

Tuesday 2 September 2025 –

Session Time	Session Title
9:00am – 11:00am	Session 14 – Devotions, Bible Study, Ballot 2 results announced, Proposals
11:00am – 11:30am	Morning Tea
11:30am – 1:00pm	Session 15 – Proposals

1:00pm – 2:00pm	Lunch
2:00pm – 4:00pm	Session 16 – Proposals, One-minute Speeches, Closing Business, Closing Eucharist and Commissioning

25.1.6.2 **Appointments and Associations (Proposal 21 – Revision of Proposal 02)**

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

(a) To make the following appointments for the 2025 Synod meeting:

Minute Secretary	Charis Fraser
Returning Officer	Rod Mummery
Deputy Returning Officer	Jacob Westley
Facilitation Group Convenor	Rev Ian Ferguson
Facilitation Group members	Rev Sylvia Akau'ola Tongotongo
	Carol Boyce
	Rev Deac Sandy Boyce
	Rev Cath James
	Rev Carlynne Nunn
	Rev Rod Peppiatt
	Janet Snashall-Woodhams

(b) To associate the following people for the 2025 Synod Meeting:

Rev Tara Tautari (Theological Reflector)

Charis Fraser (Minute Secretary)

Rod Mummery (Returning Officer)

Rev Janet Staines (General Secretary, Northern Synod)

Madeline D'Alessandro (Youthful Associated Member)

Joseph Kim (CALD Associated Member)



- (c) To associate the following people for specific sessions of the 2025 Synod meeting:

Rev Duncan Turuva	For the Business of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Victoria Regional Committee Report
Joy Han	
Carleen Pickett	

Peta Jones Pellach and	For the Business session on Saturday evening
Riman Bakarat	

Aunty Esme Bamblett	First Nations Assembly Guest Speaker for the business session on Monday afternoon
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Rev Dr Randall Prior	For the Tributes Service
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Rev Janet Munro	For the business of the Working Groups
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25.1.6.3 Confirmation of Minutes (Proposal 03)

The Synod **resolved by consensus:**

That the Moderator, General Secretary, Associate General Secretary and Business Convenor be authorised to confirm the Minutes of the 2025 meeting of the Synod.

25.1.6.4 Reception of Reports (Proposal 04)

The Synod **resolved by consensus:**

To receive all reports from Synod reporting entities provided to the 2025 Synod meeting.

The General Secretary resumed the General Secretary's Chair.

25.1.7 EX-MODERATOR'S REPORT

The Moderator welcomed ex-Moderator Rev David Fotheringham who presented a verbal report, which was resolved by acclamation.

25.1.8 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION

The Moderator welcomed Libby Gregory and Rev Lucas Taylor to present a Minute of Appreciation for Rev David Fotheringham in his term as Moderator from 2022 to 2025.

25.1.8.1 Minute of Appreciation for Rev David Fotheringham, Moderator 2022-2025 (Proposal 18)

The Synod **resolved by acclamation:**

To give thanks to God for and express deep appreciation to Rev David Fotheringham (David) for his leadership as Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (2022 – 2025), that is both steady and Spirit-led, and marked by calm wisdom, deep theological grounding, and a pastoral heart for the Church as a whole and the collection of diverse individuals who make it up.

‘We Belong to the Day’, a theme of David’s time as Moderator, has been a reminder and encouragement to be engaged in the inevitable change and reorientation for the Church and its communities, and to discern and consider the creative possibilities that arise, framed by the development of the Synod’s Faithful Futures Project and the national Church’s Act2 Project.

David has modelled a disciplined focus on the work that rightly needs our attention and, in establishing safe conversational spaces, he creates the opportunities for the various, and at times disparate, nominees and appointees to respond to the challenges presented. He has brought a gentle humour and a warm presence into these spaces, which have turned groups of strangers into communities of trust and collaboration. He always meets people with kindness, a great smile, attentiveness, and heartfelt interest in what is happening in their various patches.

Across the Synod, David has been relational and respectful, strengthening connections among presbyteries, congregations, institutions, and culturally diverse faith communities. In moments of crisis, both local and global, he has offered a compassionate steadiness, embodying the Church’s care and solidarity. His ministry as Moderator has been one of consistent presence, careful listening, and gentle diplomacy, ensuring voices on the margins have been honoured and heard.

David has provided strategic leadership in ecumenical and interfaith contexts, representing the Uniting Church with grace and theological clarity. He has been an active member of the Victorian Council of Churches (VCC) Standing Committee, and instrumental in some significant change processes for the VCC. He has also been a committed and influential participant in the Victorian Church Leaders Network.

His broad horizons and awareness contribute to a shared voice amongst leaders for all faiths to respond together to persecution and prejudice being expressed toward any group. His writing and public reflections have revealed careful discernment, enabling the Church to recognise and hold complexity with hope and humility.

A particular hallmark of David’s leadership has been his visible and deep commitment to covenanting with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. His

guidance in the Synod's response to and representation at the Yoorrook Justice Commission has been a significant act of truth-telling and solidarity with First Peoples. Through this, and his advocacy for the Voice to Parliament and Treaty processes, we have been strengthened in our commitment to walking together faithfully in justice, truth, and reconciliation, while respecting First Peoples' self-determination.

The Moderator presented a gift to the ex-Moderator on behalf of the Synod.

The Moderator prayed for the Ex-Moderator.

25.1.9 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS VICTORIA (UAICC) REGIONAL COMMITTEE (REPORT F2)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Will Pickett, Chairperson of the UAICC Victoria Regional Committee, and other Regional Committee members including Carleen Pickett, Rev Duncan Turuva, Joy Han, Adrian Greenwood, and Rev Jennie Gordon. Will, Jennie, Duncan and Joy each spoke to a written report.

Adrian advised the Synod there are currently two (2) ministry positions available to support the UAICC Victoria Regional Committee's strategic directions.

Will presented a gift to the Moderator on behalf of the UAICC Victoria Regional Committee.

25.1.10 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS TASMANIA (UAICC) (REPORT F1)

The Moderator welcomed Alison Overeem, Statewide Manager, UAICC Tasmania, and Ayla Williams, Community and Cultural Resource Officer, UAICC Tasmania. Alison and Ayla spoke to a written report and offered a series of reflections.

Alison presented gifts to the ex-Moderator and Moderator on behalf of the UAICC Tasmania Regional Committee.

25.1.11 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1)

The Associate General Secretary assumed the General Secretary's chair.

The General Secretary spoke to a written report.

The General Secretary thanked members of the Synod Standing Committee, and particularly thanked the ex-Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, for his leadership and guidance of the committee during his term as Moderator, and Kathryn D'Alessandro for her administrative support for the Committee.

The General Secretary invited reflection, discussion, and questions from the members.

The General Secretary resumed the General Secretary's Chair.

25.1.12 INTRODUCTION TO WORKING GROUP 1 – FAITHFUL FUTURES PROJECT

The Moderator welcomed Rev David Fotheringham, ex-Moderator, and Cathie Halliwell, Synod Standing Committee member, to speak to the Faithful Futures Project report for Working Group discussion and feedback.

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, introduced the Working Group processes to Synod members.

The Moderator's Chaplain, Tracie Mulia, led the Synod in prayer.

25.1.13 WORKING GROUP 1 – FAITHFUL FUTURES PROJECT (REPORT D2)

The Synod met in Working Groups to discuss and provide feedback on the Faithful Futures Project.

25.1.14 GUEST SPEAKERS – PEACE PROCESSES

The Moderator welcomed Dr Mark Zirnsak, Senior Social Justice Advocate, Discipleship and Advocacy, eLM, who led an interview discussion session with special guests Peta Jones Pellach and Riman Barakat who shared their perspectives about peace processes between Muslims and Jews. Riman and Peta are Palestinian and Israeli speakers who are part of peace groups 'FeelBeit' and 'Women Wage Peace', respectively, which promote the message that Palestinians and Israelis can share a future built around lasting peace.

25.1.15 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTOR AND CLOSE OF DAY

The Moderator welcomed Rev Tara Tautari who shared a theological reflection.

The Moderator's Chaplain, Rev Joan Wright Howie, closed the day with prayer.

25.2 SUNDAY 31 AUGUST 2025

25.2.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting's second day. He gave an Acknowledgement of Country and introduced his Chaplain, Rev Joan Wright Howie, who led the daily devotions.

25.2.2 BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator welcomed Rev Prof John Flett who led a Bible study on the theme of "*Jesus the Same*" (*Hebrews 13:7-14, John 3:8, Galatians 3:28*) and led the Synod in prayer.

25.2.3 QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION – UNITING AGEWELL, UNITING VIC.TAS, AND U ETHICAL (REPORTS B3, B4, AND B5)

The Moderator invited representatives of U Ethical, Uniting AgeWell, and Uniting Vic.Tas to speak to their written reports in the following order:

- Uniting AgeWell – Raelene Thompson (Board Chair) and Andrew Kinnersly (CEO);
- Uniting Vic.Tas – Rev Alistair Macrae (Board Chair Designate) and Carol Jeffs (CEO); and
- U Ethical – Fiona Pearse (Board Chair) and Mathew Browning (CEO).

The Moderator invited reflection, discussion, and questions from the members.

The Moderator thanked each of the representatives on behalf of their Institutions for undertaking the crucial and important work they do as part of the wider Church.

25.2.4 FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATION GROUP – FAITHFUL FUTURES PROJECT

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, provided members with feedback from the Faithful Futures Project Working Groups.

25.2.5 ELECTIVE SESSIONS

Synod members participated in a number of Elective Sessions. Topics included:

1. *“Tools and takeaways” - How to think about Coordinated Ministries in your area* by Ken Manson, Bob Hodges, and Cynthia Page;
2. *“Belonging to Place: Deepening our Respect for Country”* by Rev Tara Tautari, Assoc Prof Kerrie Handasyde, Alison Overeem, and Rev Will Pickett;
3. *“CALD: Can All Love Dearly”* by Rev David Kim and Nia Lavaki (eLM);
4. *“Let’s talk about All Age Growth”* by Rev Sandy Brodine, Marilyn Cassidy, Bethany Broadstock, Jim Davies, and Pam Grant;
5. *“Beyond Broadcasting – Your church: digital accessibility, live streaming and so much more”* by Kelly Woods, and Rev Will Nicholas; and
6. *“Doing Public Theology in a polarised, post-truth, Trumpian world”* by Rev Assoc Prof Robyn Whitaker.

25.2.6 RECOGNITION OF TRIBUTES AND THANKSGIVING FOR MINISTRY

The Moderator offered an Acknowledgement of Country and led a service of worship, including thanksgiving for the life and witness of those ministers who died since the

2023 Synod meeting, and paying tribute to those celebrating milestone anniversaries of ordination, as listed below.

Rev Randall Prior gave a response on behalf of all those recognised in the service.

The Synod gave thanks to God for the life and witness of ministers, including past Moderators, who:

(a) Have died since the 2023 Synod meeting and to record their names as follows:

Rev Dr Warren Bartlett (Moderator, Synod of Victoria, 1994-1997)	Rev William (Bill) Pugh
Rev Alexander (Alex) Adam	Rev Alan Renton
Rev John Blaze	Rev Robert (Bob) Ross
Rev Malcolm Campbell	Rev Howard Secomb
Rev Bruce Crowle	Rev Eunice Smith
Rev Clement (Clem) Dickinson	Rev John WH Smith
Rev Stanley Ford	Rev Deac Barbara Spencer
Rev John Furness	Rev W Leigh Swaby
Rev Cyril Germon	Rev Suipeli Taiamoni Taliai
Rev Kim Groot	Rev Harold Taylor
Rev Arthur (John) Haysey	Rev Robert Grant Thomas
Rev Fredric (Ric) Holland	Rev Wesley W Trigg
Rev John Howard	Rev David Volk
Rev Raymond Jones	Rev Alfred Webber
Rev Judith (Marion) Latham	Rev Deacon David T Webster
Rev Kenneth Lindsay	Rev Keith Whitford
Rev John Lukies	Rev Richard (Dick) Wootton
Rev Alan Parton	Rev Prof Norman Young
Rev Robert Potter	



(b) Have retired or plan to retire between 1 January 2024 and 31 December 2025:

Rev Gordon Bannon	Rev Dr Fiona Hill
Rev Graham Bartley	Rev Swee Ann Koh
Rev Kevin Barton	Rev Michele Lees
Rev Deacon Peter Batten	Rev Denise Liersch
Rev Paul Blacker	Rev Kerrie Lingham
Rev Deacon Amanda Blacker	Rev Siotame Paletu'a
Rev Andrew Boyle	Rev John Payne
Rev Dr Deacon Andy Calder	Rev Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt
Rev John Clarke	Rev John Rigby
Rev Tony Davies	Rev Paul Sanders
Rev Wendy Elson	Rev Paul Stephens
Rev Charles Gallacher	Rev Dr Geoffrey Thompson
Rev Jennifer Gordon	Rev Andy Tiver
Rev Angelina Griffin	Rev Lavingi Tupou
Rev Graeme Harrison	Rev Arnold Wierenga

(c) Have celebrated 25 years since ordination or commissioning or will celebrate this anniversary between July 2024 to December 2025:

Rev Deacon Richard Arnold	Rev Roslyn McDonald
Rev Fran Barber	Rev Denise Naish
Rev Craig Collas	Rev Dhirendra Narayan
Rev James Douglas	Rev Jennifer Pretty
Rev Deacon Chris Duxbury	Rev Deacon John Tansey
Rev David Fotheringham	Rev Dr Craig Thompson
Rev Barbara Gayler	Rev Andrew Tiver
Rev Tevita Holani	Rev Dianne Watson
Rev Heeyoung Lim	Rev Gordon Wild
Rev Renate Macdonald	Rev David Withers

- (d) Have celebrated 50 years of ordination or commissioning or will celebrate this anniversary between July 2024 to December 2025:

Rev Peter Batchelor	Rev William Lidgett
Rev John Bottomley	Rev Ian Nicolson
Rev Dr Wesley Campbell	Rev Elaine Oliver
Rev Donald Clarke	Rev Dr Randall Prior
Rev John Cleghorn	Rev Robert Renton
Rev Edwin Curnow	Rev Dr Robyn Schaefer
Rev Brian Giddings	Rev Dr John H Smith
Rev Colleen Grieve	Rev Penaia Te'o
Rev Robert Humphreys	Rev Erick Thomas
Rev Valerie Johnson	Rev Maxwell Woolcock

- (e) Have celebrated 60 years of ordination or commissioning or will celebrate this anniversary between July 2024 to December 2025:

Rev Norman Cameron	Rev David Stark
Rev John Connan	Rev David U'Ren
Rev Boris Doncev	Rev John Vander Reest
Rev John Gillan	Rev Frederick Waive
Rev Roger Rooks	

- (f) Have celebrated 65 years of ordination or commissioning or will celebrate this anniversary between July 2024 to December 2025:

Rev Douglas Lloyd	Rev Dr David Merritt
Rev Donald McLean	Rev Ian Williamson

- (g) Have celebrated 70 years of ordination or commissioning or will celebrate this anniversary between July 2024 to December 2025:

Rev Dr Noel Schultz



(h) Have been ordained since the 2023 Synod Meeting:

Rev Deacon Chris Booth

Rev Dr Daniel Sihombing

Rev Annie Brophy

Rev Ram Thanga

Rev Deacon Chris Machar

Rev Tanya Walker

Rev Kyle Moffitt

Rev Jae Eun Yun

Rev Andreana Reale

(i) Have been received from other denominations since the 2023 Synod Meeting:

Rev Hui Young Han

Rev Valentina Satvedi Leydon

Rev Craig Madden

Rev Han Song

Rev Peter Rivett

25.2.7 CLOSE OF SYNOD ROLL

The General Secretary announced the 2025 Synod Roll closed at 3:45pm.

25.2.8 INTRODUCTION TO WORKING GROUP 2 – RESPONSE TO THE YOORROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION’S FINAL REPORTS AND TRUTH TELLING

The Moderator welcomed Rev David Fotheringham and Rev Jennie Gordon to speak to the Response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission’s Final Reports and Truth Telling Proposal for Working Group discussion and feedback.

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, introduced the Working Group processes to Synod members.

25.2.9 WORKING GROUP 2 – RESPONSE TO THE YOORROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION FINAL REPORTS AND TRUTH TELLING (PROPOSAL 07)

The Synod met in Working Groups to discuss and provide feedback on the Response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission Final Reports and Truth Telling Proposal.

25.2.10 ASSEMBLY (REPORT I)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Charissa Suli, President, and Andrew Johnson, General Secretary, of the National Assembly. Charissa and Andrew spoke to a written report.

The Moderator invited reflection, discussion, and questions from the members.

25.2.11 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTOR AND CLOSE OF DAY

The Moderator welcomed back Rev Tara Tautari who shared a theological reflection.



The Moderator's Chaplain, Rev Nathaniel Atem closed the day with prayer.

25.3 MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2025

25.3.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting's third day. He gave an Acknowledgement of Country and introduced his Chaplain, Tracie Mulia, who led the daily devotions.

25.3.2 BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator welcomed back Rev Prof John Flett who led a Bible study on the theme of "*Give us Friends*" (*Ephesians 4:11-16*) and led the Synod in prayer.

25.3.3 FEEDBACK FROM FACILITATION GROUP – RESPONSE TO THE YOORROOK JUSTICE COMMISSION FINAL REPORTS AND TRUTH TELLING

Rev Carlynne Nunn, Facilitation Group member, provided members with feedback from the Response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission Final Reports and Truth Telling Working Groups.

25.3.4 PROPOSALS

25.3.4.1 Frequency of Synod Meetings (Proposal 05)

After an introduction by the Business Manager explaining a potential perceived conflict of interest and a procedural proposal, the Moderator left the meeting.

Rev Sharon Hollis, the most recent past-Moderator who was a member of the 2025 Synod meeting, assumed the Moderator's Chair and welcomed Rev David Fotheringham to introduce proposal **05** on behalf of the Synod Standing Committee and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by agreement:**

- (a) To change to a normal pattern of in-person Synod meetings to be held every two years in the second half of August-early September;
- (b) To note that the Synod membership shall be from an in-person meeting as per clause (a) above, for approximately 24 months;
- (c) That Synod members may be recalled for an online or hybrid meeting in the second part of August-early September of the alternate years, if determined appropriate by the Synod Meeting or the Moderator or the Synod Standing Committee;

- (d) To commence this pattern for Synod meetings from the conclusion of the 2025 Synod meeting; and
- (e) To request the Synod Meeting Planning Committee to undertake a review of the two-year meeting cycle in 2028, and report to the Synod Standing Committee and the 2029 Synod meeting.
- (f)
 - (i) that, in accordance with UCA Constitution clause 34, to determine that the term of Moderators in the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is henceforth four (4) years, commencing with the Moderator installed at the 2025 Synod meeting;
 - (ii) that, in accordance with Reg 3.7.4.1(iii), to extend the term of Synod Standing Committee members elected at the 2023 Synod meeting to the next ordinary Synod meeting in 2027; and
 - (iii) to authorise the Synod Standing Committee to amend the Synod Standing Committee Membership Bylaws to allow for the membership of the ex-Moderator to be shortened through:
 - 1. the provision of leave of absence for the ex-Moderator from attending Standing Committee meetings; and/or
 - 2. requesting the Assembly Standing Committee to grant an exemption to Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i) to provide for the ex-Moderator to serve a shorter term as ex-Moderator; and/or
 - 3. other mechanism(s) as may be determined.
- (g)
 - (i) to request the Synod Standing Committee to consider a model for elected Standing Committee members to provide for election for multiple continuous terms for up to eight (8) years of service and to report any proposed Standing Committee Membership Bylaws by the 2027 Synod meeting; and
 - (ii) to authorise the Synod Standing Committee to undertake any other actions as may be appropriate to implement matters related to clauses (a) to (f) above, and any related matters, and to report these by the 2027 Synod meeting.

The Moderator resumed the Moderator's Chair.

25.3.5 INTRODUCTION TO THE BALLOT (PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF PROPERTY TRUSTS – VICTORIA AND TASMANIA, SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE MAJORITY)

Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, and Jacob Westley, Deputy Returning Officer, introduced the ballot process and instructions for the Ballot – Placements Committee Chair, Members of Property Trusts – Victoria and Tasmania, and Synod Standing Committee Majority.

Rod reminded members of the ballot threshold, and confirmed the ballot for Placements Committee Chair, members of Property Trusts – Victoria and Tasmania, and Synod Standing Committee Majority would close at 2:00pm on Monday, 1 September 2025.

The electronic ballot was opened.

25.3.6 MINUTES OF APPRECIATION

25.3.6.1 Minutes of Appreciation for Synod/Synod Standing Committee Appointed Chairperson and Staff Roles (Proposal 19)

The Moderator presented a Minute of Appreciation for Synod / Synod Standing Committee Appointed Chairpersons and Staff Roles who have completed their role since the 2023 Synod meeting. The full text of each Minute of Appreciation is included in Appendix 1 to these Minutes

The Synod **resolved by acclamation:**

To give thanks to God and to express its deep appreciation for the contribution that the following Synod/Standing Committee appointed Committee Chairpersons or staff have made to the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania's life and mission:

- Rev Stanley (Stan) Clarke, Property & Operations Committee Chairperson, 2017-2025;
- Robert (Bob) Hodges, The UCA Property Trust (Victoria) Chairperson and The UCA Property Trust (Tas.) Chairperson, 2017-2025;
- Rev Susan Malthouse-Law, Synod Ethics Committee Chairperson, 2022-2024;
- Rev Fiona Morrison, Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee Chairperson, 2022-2024;
- Roderick (Rod) Mummery, Terms of Placement Committee Chairperson, 2010-2025;

- Rev Neil Peters, Pastoral Relations Committee Chairperson, 2010-2025; and
- Rev Assoc Prof Sean Winter, Pilgrim Theological College – Head of College, 2017-2024.

The Moderator led the Synod in prayer for Stan, Bob, Susan, Fiona, Rod, Neil, and Sean.

25.3.7 QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION – SYNOD MINISTRIES AND OPERATIONS, MINISTRY AND MISSION COMMITTEE, AND PROPERTY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (REPORTS E, C1.1, AND C1.2)

The Associate General Secretary assumed the General Secretary's chair.

The Moderator invited representatives of Synod Ministries and Operations (SMO), Ministry and Mission Committee (M&M), and Property and Operations Committee (P&O) to speak to their written reports in the following order:

- SMO – Rev Dr Mark Lawrence (General Secretary), joined by Sam Nicholas, Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing Unit and Rev Duncan Macleod, Executive Officer, equipping Leadership for Mission Unit;
- M&M – Assoc Prof Paul Chandler (Committee Chairperson); and
- P&O – Helen Geard AM (Committee Chairperson).

The Moderator invited reflection, discussion, and questions from the members.

The General Secretary resumed the General Secretary's chair.

25.3.8 PROPOSALS

25.3.8.1 Response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission Final Reports and Truth Telling (Proposal 07)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Carlynne Nunn, Facilitation Group member to speak to proposal **07** following feedback received from Working Group 2.

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

- (a) To welcome the Yoorrook Justice Commission's Final Reports: *Yoorrook Transformations and Yoorrook Truth be Told* (Final Reports), as tabled in the Parliament of Victoria on 1 July 2025, and
 - (i) To commend the Final Reports to the councils and institutions of the Church within the bounds of the Synod, noting this historic account of colonialism in the lands now called Victoria, the call to respond to these

injustices, and the Church's commitment to walking together as First and Second Peoples; and

- (ii) To note Recommendation 19 in *Yoorrook for Transformation Vol II, chapter 8, The impacts of Country being stolen*, which states:

Consistent with their commitments to First Peoples, Churches should identify, as a priority, opportunities within the State of Victoria to:

- a. Return land acquired for little or no consideration, or reserved by the Crown or Governor for Church purposes, to Traditional Owners of that land; and
 - b. Share a portion of proceeds from the future sale of land of the nature described in (a) with Traditional Owners of that land (irrespective of whether it is subject to the State Aid to Religion Abolition Act 1871 (Vic)).
- (b) To request the Standing Committee to establish a Working Group or other suitable vehicle (Working Group) to develop a robust response by the Synod to:
 - (i) the Yoorrook recommendation noted in clause (a)(ii) above;
 - (ii) any related matters identified by the Working Group and approved by the Standing Committee, to contribute to the Synod's response to the Final Reports; and
 - (iii) other matters related to responding to truth telling and treaty processes within the geographical bounds of the Synod.
 - (c) To request the Standing Committee to approve Terms of Reference for the Working Group to include, but not be limited to, the following responsibilities and functions:
 - (i) to seek engagement in partnerships and consultations as appropriate, including with:
 - 1. Traditional Owners or similar communities within Victoria and lutruwita/Tasmania;
 - 2. the Victorian Regional Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Tasmanian Regional Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;
 - 3. councils of the Church; and



- 4. institutions of the Church;
 - (ii) the Church's commitment to the Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress;
 - (iii) the Working Group being appropriately resourced; and
 - (iv) ensuring that relevant councils of the Church are resourced with appropriate materials related to responding to the Final Reports, truth telling, and the treaty process;
- (d) To request the Standing Committee to report back to the next ordinary Synod meeting about the results of the Working Group.

25.3.9 CLOSE OF BALLOT (PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF PROPERTY TRUSTS – VICTORIA AND TASMANIA, SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE MAJORITY)

The Moderator declared the ballot for Placements Committee Chair, Members of Property Trusts – Victoria and Tasmania, and Synod Standing Committee Majority closed at 2:00pm.

25.3.10 FIRST PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY SPEAKER

The Moderator welcomed guest speaker, Aunty Esme Bamblett from the First People's Assembly, with Alison Overeem and Rev Will Pickett.

Aunty Esme offered an Acknowledgement of Country and addressed the Synod on Treaty in Victoria. Aunty Esme invited reflection, discussion, and questions from the members.

On behalf of the Synod, the Moderator expressed heartfelt appreciation to Aunty Esme presented a gift to her and led the Synod in a song for Aunty Esme and for the First People's Assembly.

25.3.11 PROPOSALS

25.3.11.1 Healthy Food and Climate Change (Proposal 10)

The Moderator welcomed Carol Boyce, Facilitation Group member to speak to proposal **10** following feedback from the Facilitation Group.

The Synod **resolved by consensus:**

- (a) To call on the Commonwealth Government to further regulate the food industry in the following ways:



- (i) Implement additional measures that make informed healthy food choices easier for people to make;
 - (ii) Implement measures to curb excessive food consumption that is detrimental to the natural environment, human health and sustainability;
 - (iii) Heavily restrict the harmful marketing of foods, especially to children;
 - (iv) Impose a health levy on the manufacturing of sugary drinks;
 - (v) Implement mandatory added sugars labelling across the packaged food supply;
 - (vi) Regulate to ensure commercial foods for infants and young children provide good nutrition and are promoted in accordance with best practice as outlined by the World Health Organisation;
 - (vii) Ensure that the food regulation system assesses all food additives for their long-term health risks and not just short-term risks before they can be added to food;
 - (viii) Legislate to implement in Australia the World Health Organisation International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and subsequent relevant World Health Assembly Resolutions relating to the marketing of breastmilk substitutes; and
 - (ix) Implement a comprehensive conflict of interest and stakeholder engagement policy to ensure that all food policy is developed without inappropriate influence from food and related businesses.
- (b) To write to the Prime Minister, Minister for Health, Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Minister for Health, Leader of the Greens and Greens Spokesperson for Health to inform them of this resolution.
- (c) To inform the National Assembly and other Synods of clauses (a) and (b) above.

25.3.11.2 Synod Emission Reduction Fund (Proposal 12)

The Moderator welcomed Dr Mark Zirnsak and Dr James Thom to introduce proposal **12** on behalf of the Ministry & Mission Committee and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by consensus:**

- (a) That the Synod provide up to \$100,000 to the Synod Emission Reduction Fund (SERF) that would match, dollar-for-dollar, contributions from presbyteries,

congregations, faith communities and individuals up until the next ordinary meeting of Synod;

- (b) That grants from the SERF be limited to a maximum of \$10,000 per applicant entity per annum, and the grant must not subsidise a project by more than \$500 per tonne of CO2 eq emissions prevented by 2040; and
- (c) To authorise the Ministry & Mission Committee to make changes to the SERF Terms of Reference, including any additional appointments to the SERF Administrative Group.

25.3.11.3 Democratic Reform (Proposal 09)

The Moderator welcomed Associate Professor Paul Chandler, Rev Deacon Gavin Blakemore, and Dr Mark Zirnsak to introduce proposal **09** on behalf of the Ministry & Mission Committee and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by agreement**:

- (a) To express its concern that in the Australian democratic system a person's wealth allows them to have a more significant say in laws and government policies, often to the detriment of the common good and undermining trust in democracy and government by people on lower incomes;
- (b) To request the Australian Government to instigate reforms that will curb the influence of wealth in the democratic system, including:
 - (i) Restricting private political donations and the amount candidates and political parties can spend on elections so that public funding of elections is the primary way elections are funded;
 - (ii) Implementing a system where all Australian citizens can make a small government-funded donation to the political party or candidate of their choice before an election;
 - (iii) Requiring the amount of all private political donations to be disclosed on tax returns, and aggregated data on political donations by income level be deidentified and made public.
- (c) To request the Australian Government to regulate the influence of political lobbying by:
 - (i) Legislating the creation of a Lobbying Register that covers in-house professional lobbyists as well as third-party lobbyists;

- (ii) Requiring all professional lobbyists to disclose to the Lobbying Register which politicians and public servants they have met with, including when, why, on whose behalf, and the topics that were discussed;
 - (iii) Requiring Ministers to publish their diaries covering official duties on a regular basis; and
 - (iv) Prohibiting Ministers and senior public servants from being employed in direct lobbying activities related to their previous portfolios for at least three years after leaving office.
- (d) To request the Australian Government to build greater confidence in Australia's democratic government by requiring that the public service recognise the value of people's experience by using meaningful codesign with people directly impacted by policy as the default mechanism for designing services and programs that people need;
- (e) To write to the Prime Minister, Special Minister of State, Attorney General, Leader of the Opposition, Shadow Special Minister of State, Shadow Attorney General and the Leader of the Greens to inform them of the resolution; and
- (f) To inform the National Assembly and other Synods of clauses (a) to (e) above.

25.3.12 ANNOUNCEMENT OF BALLOT (PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE CHAIR, MEMBERS OF PROPERTY TRUSTS – VICTORIA AND TASMANIA, SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE MAJORITY)

The Moderator announced the results of the Ballot for Chairperson of the Placements Committee, Members of Property Trusts – Victoria and Tasmania, and Synod Standing Committee Majority (members of the Synod Standing Committee to serve from 2025-2029).

Placements Committee Chairperson: Rev Gareth Darlow

Members of Property Trusts – Victoria and Tasmania:

- Maryjane Crabtree
- Rev David Fotheringham
- Helen Geard AM
- David Rowe
- Jo Verity

Members of Synod Standing Committee to serve from 2025-2029:

- Lisa Carey
- Rev Fiona Morrison
- Helen Geard AM
- Rev Heather Hon
- Erika Schaumkel
- Damien Tann

The Moderator's Chaplain, Tracie Mulia, led the Synod in prayer for the elected members of the Placements Committee, Property Trusts Victoria and Tasmania, and the Synod Standing Committee.

25.3.13 DEEP DIVE REPORTING SESSIONS

Rev Sue Clarkson, Business Convenor, introduced the Deep Dive Reporting sessions.

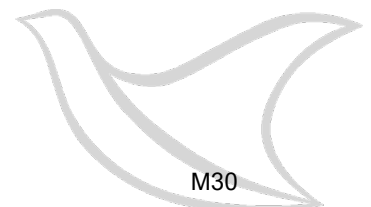
Synod members engaged with selected Synod reports of their choice, including:

Deep Dive Reporting 1

- Culture of Safety;
- eLM – Relationships and Connections, including Schools, Chaplaincy and Grants;
- eLM – Education and Formation including Theological and Ministerial Education Committee (TMEC), Pilgrim Theological College, Ministry Formation and Lay Leadership;
- Ministry & Mission Committee;
- Uniting Vic.Tas.

Deep Dive Reporting 2

- eLM - Priorities, Focus and Advocacy including Younger Generations Ministry, New & Renewing Communities, Justice & International Mission, Multicultural Ministries and Disability Inclusion;
- Placements Committee;
- Property & Operations Committee / Trusts;
- U Ethical;
- Uniting AgeWell.



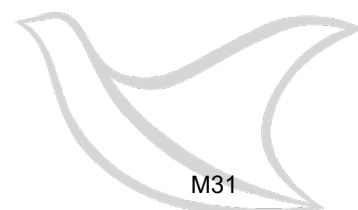
25.3.14 PROPOSALS

25.3.14.1 Faithful Futures Project (Proposal 23 – Revision of Proposals 22, 06)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor to speak to proposal **23** (revision of proposals 22, 06) following feedback received from the Facilitation Group.

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

- (a) To adopt the Vision for the Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania of **Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation.**
- (b) To adopt the Goals developed through the Faithful Futures Project for the Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania of:
 - A. **Coordinated Ministries:** Coordinated ministry and mission in geographic areas such as Local Government Areas by 2030: attentive to renewing discipleship, and to the life and needs of the local context;;
 - B. **Respecting Country:** Honouring the Church's Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, all communities of faith will listen to and be able to tell about some of the histories of the Country on which they are located by the end of 2028, and be invited to develop local and appropriate ways to respond;
 - C. **Intercultural Leadership:** By 2028 to:
 - be providing appropriate intercultural leadership formation and equipping for all ministry agents and congregations; and
 - develop intercultural networks for worship, witness and service.
 - D. **All-Age Growth:** To have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative in 80% of Coordinated Ministries by 2030.
 - E. **New Communities of Faith:** establish at least five new Christian communities by 2030.
- (c) To establish a Faithful Futures Steering Committee (FFSC) with the following characteristics (1-8 below):
 - 1. Purpose to:



- (i) Provide oversight for the work of the Faithful Futures Project Lead (FFPL);
 - (ii) Develop a strategy and resourcing plan for the implementation of the five Faithful Futures Goals;
 - (iii) Assist with identifying progress and difficulties being faced around the presbyteries with respect to the Goals;
 - (iv) to receive input from the goal focused groups (see g below); and
 - (v) Develop a review process for the Project including a major review to be presented to the 2027 ordinary Synod Meeting.
2. Membership to consist of:
- (i) One member appointed by each of the presbyteries (8 in total);
 - (ii) Chairperson appointed by the Synod Standing Committee;
 - (iii) The General Secretary (or nominee); and
 - (iv) The eLM Executive Officer (or nominee).
3. Meeting at least quarterly;
4. Quorum of at least five appointed presbytery members and at least one member from categories 2(ii) or 2(iii) or 2(iv) above;
5. FFPL to attend meetings as a participant;
6. Providing updates at least twice per year to the Presbytery Standing Committees and to the Synod Ministry and Mission Committee;
7. Providing a report to ordinary Synod meetings;
8. Meetings to be resourced by presbytery and Synod Ministry and Operations personnel as required.
- (d) To request the Synod Standing Committee to finalise the FFSC's Terms of Reference, noting clause (c) above.
- (e) To request the Synod Standing Committee to ensure resourcing for a Faithful Futures Project Lead (FFPL) and related matters, with the role including the following characteristics:
- 1. up to full-time role;
 - 2. Appointed by and reporting to the Associate General Secretary, and accountable (for overall role emphases) to the Faithful Futures Steering

Committee, with the FFPL nominating committee comprising at least two members with significant presbytery life and mission engagement.

3. Primary relationship with the Faithful Futures Steering Committee;
4. Key responsibilities including but not limited to:
 - A. Resource the development of a Project Plan, for approval by the Faithful Futures Steering Committee, including mapping and measurement of progress;
 - B. Provide leadership towards the achievement of the Faithful Futures Goals;
 - D. Support Goal-focused groups;
 - E. Facilitate the sharing of Faithful Futures related resources drawn from the breadth of Faithful Futures related activities;
 - F. Facilitate and track the measurement of progress against the Goals;
 - G. Liaise with the Act2 related Assembly staff and commissions/committees regarding relevant possible changes to the Regulations to enable the Coordinated Ministry Goal and any Act2 related matters; and
 - H. Attend Presbyteries-Synod Forum meetings as a participant, as negotiated with the Associate General Secretary.
- (f) To note that the Faithful Futures Implementation Plan includes the formation of Goal Focused Groups for each of the Goal areas, to be overseen by the Faithful Futures Steering Committee;
- (g) To invite the presbyteries to give heed to the Synod's discernment regarding the Faithful Futures project: and
 - (i) to endorse the amendments in Faithful Futures Goals A, B and C; and
 - (ii) to endorse the additional Faithful Futures Goal E of **New Communities of Faith**: establish at least five new Christian communities by 2030.

The Moderator led the Synod in prayer.



25.3.15 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTOR AND CLOSE OF DAY

The Moderator welcomed back Rev Tara Tautari who shared a theological reflection.

The Moderator welcomed Sylvia Akau'ola Tongotongo who, on behalf of the Synod, thanked Tara for providing the theological reflection over the past three (3) evenings. Sylvia presented a gift to Tara and led the Synod in prayer for her.

25.4 TUESDAY 2 SEPTEMBER 2025

25.4.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator welcomed members to the meeting's fourth day. He gave an Acknowledgement of Country and introduced his Chaplain, Rev Nathaniel Atem, who led the daily devotions.

The Moderator thanked his chaplains, Joan, Tracie, and Nathaniel for leading the devotions each morning.

25.4.2 BIBLE STUDY

The Moderator welcomed back Rev Prof John Flett who led a Bible study on the theme of *"In the Image of its Creator"* (Colossians 2:8-15, 3:8-17, Galatians 5:22-23) and led the Synod in prayer.

The Moderator thanked John for leading Bible Study over the past four (4) mornings, presented a gift, and led the Synod in prayer for him.

25.4.2.1 ADOPTION OF THE SYNOD ROLL

The Associate General Secretary, Rev Sharon Hollis, proposed that the Synod Roll be adopted.

The Synod **resolved by consensus:**

That the Roll of Synod as finalised at 3:45pm on Sunday, 31 August 2025 be adopted.

25.4.3 PROPOSALS

25.4.3.1 Non-Violent Peace Building (Proposal 11)

The Moderator welcomed Associate Professor Paul Chandler, Rev Deacon Gavin Blakemore, and Dr Mark Zirnsak to introduce proposal **11** on behalf of the Ministry & Mission Committee and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by agreement:**

- (a) To support, in principle and as appropriate, organisations and grassroots initiatives that seek:
 - (i) to prevent armed conflict by addressing injustices; and

- (ii) just and lasting peaceful outcomes for situations of armed conflict through means that reject lethal tactics;
- (b) To encourage congregations, faith communities, and individual members to support such organisations and initiatives, as referred to in clause (a), through their prayers, financial support, and advocacy;
- (c) To use its social justice efforts to support reforms that address injustice in Australia and globally that will make armed conflict less likely; and
- (d) To inform the National Assembly and other Synods of clauses (a), (b), and (c) above.

25.4.3.2 The Farmer and the Fire Levy (Proposal 17)

The Moderator welcomed Harvey Champness, Scott Harrison, and Rev Trevor Basset to introduce proposal **17** on behalf of the Presbytery of Western Victoria and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

- (a) To request the Justice and international Mission (JIM) Cluster to investigate the issues of financial and mental health impacts brought about by Victorian State Government legislation, especially the Emergency Services Volunteer Fund Levy (ESVFL), and similar issues in Tasmania that directly affect farmers and rural communities to a degree greater than metropolitan dwellers;
- (b) That the JIM Cluster liaise with the Victorian State Government on how such impacts noted in clause (a) above can be alleviated; and
- (c) That the JIM Cluster's response related to clauses (a) and (b) above, take place within the paused time frame announced by the Victorian State Government, and to inform presbyteries within Victoria and Tasmania regarding these actions.

25.4.3.3 Appointment of the Next General Secretary (Proposal 25 – Revision of Proposal 16)

The General Secretary left the meeting for this item.

The Associate General Secretary assumed the General Secretary's chair.

Rev Cameron McAdam and David Higham introduced proposal **25** (revision of proposal 16) on behalf of the Presbytery of Port Phillip East and spoke to it.

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:



That, in relation to draft Proposal 16, clauses 1 and 6 and the rationale (as below) of the original proposal be forwarded to the Standing Committee to guide the appointment processes for the General Secretary.

1. That the next General Secretary have a pastoral heart and have experience and/or qualifications in change management and strategic development to support the Church in a time of transition, as we seek to implement Faithful Futures, potential Act2 changes, and to show a demonstrated commitment to the renewal of congregations and communities of faith, new and renewing ministries and church planting.
6. That the SSC ensure the position description is drafted based on Reg. 3.6.3.4, taking account of the matters outlined in clause one of this proposal, and the general principles of consultation, collaboration, and transparency.

Rationale of Draft Proposal 16

We acknowledge the work of the previous and current General Secretaries. During this unfolding time of transition this proposal provides the Synod with an opportunity to set some direction in required skillset, experience and demonstrated commitment of the next General Secretary.

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is in a period of momentous change and transition. The profile of congregations and communities of faith, along with ministry agents is rapidly shifting. Many congregations are in decline, merging, buildings closing and resources reallocated. Some communities of faith, especially those with an intercultural or intergenerational focus, or perhaps strong community ministries, are thriving.

Faithful Futures and Act2 are work the Church has and is undertaking to respond to this unique time. The Synod has worked to ensure strong foundations and financial stability are in place.

The next General Secretary will need to be responsive to, and provide appropriate leadership for, the needs of the Church in this challenging time and as we work to fulfill our vision to “Follow Christ, walk together as First and Second Peoples, seek community, compassion and justice for all creation.”

The next General Secretary will need to pastorally and administratively support the Church as it reshapes and implements discerned ministry and mission change. At the same time, the next General Secretary will need to be someone who can cast vision and encourage new and renewing ministries, movement into urban and regional growth areas, and ensure these emerging ministries are resourced and supported.

At a time when trust in institutions is low, this Synod has an opportunity in this appointment, through consultation, collaboration, and a transparent process, to ensure the strong support of the whole Church in the selection of the next General Secretary.

The proposal encourages the appointment of a Nominating Committee to draw on the work of previous Nominating Committee's in a call to the General Secretary role, researching widely, but also to look forward, determining the scope of the position for the future period with its unique challenges and opportunities.

To ensure there is broad representation, it is proposed that at least half of the Nominating Committee have presbytery knowledge and experience. A diverse Nominating Committee will encourage the support of the wider church, and a transparent process will further strengthen trust.

The Nominating Committee would commence work in the first half of 2026, providing time for research and discernment ensuring the Synod is on the front foot when the time comes to seek a new appointment.

The General Secretary resumed the General Secretary's chair.

25.4.3.4 Non-Violent Anti-Genocide Action (Proposal 20)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Dr Avril Hannah-Jones and Rev Alex Sangster to introduce proposal **20** on behalf of Synod members and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by consensus**:

- (a) That, noting that groups including Amnesty International, B'Tselem, Defence for Children International, International Federation for Human Rights, Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, Médecins Sans Frontières, and Physicians for Human Rights Israel have all described Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide:
 - i. To condemn antisemitic acts against the Jewish community in Australia, including the arson attacks on the Adass Israel Synagogue in Ripponlea and the City Shul in Melbourne;
 - ii. To condemn the mischaracterisation of non-violent anti-genocide action as antisemitic;
 - iii. To encourage Uniting Church members in Victoria and Tasmania to engage in non-violent anti-genocide action; and
 - iv. To write to the Prime Minister, the federal Leader of the Opposition, and the Premiers and Leaders of the Opposition in Victoria and Tasmania informing them of this resolution.

25.4.4 Listening to our Rural Communities (Proposal 24)

The Moderator welcomed Rev Deacon Christopher Booth and Janet Snashall-Woodhams to introduce proposal **24** on behalf of Synod members and speak to it.

The Synod **resolved by agreement:**

- (a) To commit to being pastorally present to the concerns of rural communities in lutruwita/Tasmania and Victoria; and
- (b) To commit to bringing the stories and concerns of rural communities to the attention of all communities within the bounds of the Synod.

25.4.5 Withdrawn Proposals

Proposals **08, 13, 14** and **15** were withdrawn.

25.4.6 CLOSING BUSINESS

25.4.6.1 Minute of Appreciation for the Synod Organisers

The Moderator presented a Minute of Appreciation thanking all those people who had contributed to the successful organisation and running of the 2025 Synod Meeting, which was resolved by acclamation.

25.4.6.2 Closing Worship and Commissioning

Synod members joined in the closing worship and Eucharist, led by the Moderator, Rev Salesi Faupula, and included preaching by the President of the National Assembly, Rev Charissa Suli.

During the service, those elected to Synod leadership roles during the Synod meeting, or have ongoing Synod leadership roles, were commissioned.

The meeting closed at 4:00pm.



APPENDIX 1

Minutes of Appreciation

Synod/Standing Committee – Appointed Chairperson and Staff Roles

Minute of Appreciation for Rev Stanley (Stan) Clarke as Chairperson of the Property and Operations Committee, 2017-2025

Rev Stan Clarke (Stan) accepted the invitation to be appointed as the inaugural Chairperson of the Synod's Property & Operations Committee (P&O) as part of the Synod's then-new governance arrangements in 2017. It was the beginning of a steep learning curve for Stan and the rest of Synod as the newly established P&O worked together, with Stan's leadership, to shape a dynamic and purposeful Committee. Fortunately, Stan enjoyed the role and exploring of new subjects and issues for which P&O has responsibility.

Stan entered into the P&O Chairperson role whilst in a full-time congregation placement. This breadth of experience was very important as Stan was able to use this for his P&O leadership with its responsibilities, for the purpose of supporting and encouraging ministry and mission. Some would argue that P&O looks after the 'boring stuff'; others will argue that P&O looks after the practical arrangements that underpin the Church's ministry and mission in the world. Stan's leadership as P&O Chairperson certainly enabled the latter. Stan also took this commitment into P&O's oversight of its subcommittees, working very well with the Chairpersons and all of members of the Finance and Audit & Risk Committees.

Chairing is never easy when you have competing time demands and potentially sensitive issues to discuss within meetings. Stan, with the support of all members, was able to ensure meetings remained focused and productive.

The Synod is very fortunate that Stan said yes to this role because he provided an exceptional and distinguished commitment to chairing the Committee. At the start of each meeting Stan provided a thought-provoking devotion based on a wide range of different subjects. The devotions reflected his deep faith and love of God's word, and P&O's call to support the Church in its expression of ministry and mission. Stan has always remained focused on ensuring there is good governance and financial and operational oversight within the Church for the sake of supporting ministry and mission.

Stan was also aware of the high caliber of Synod staff and acknowledged regularly that the Synod is blessed with exceptional management and staff and acknowledging their commitment to contribute to the Church's overall life and mission.



The Synod grateful to God and thankful to Stan for his leadership of P&O from 2017 to 2025. It has been a time of profound change with many challenges and yet the Synod is well placed with financial and operational resources to continue the work it is called to do.

The Synod wishes Stan God's blessing as he undertakes new adventures and has more time to share with and support his loving family.

Minute of Appreciation for Robert (Bob) Hodges as Chairperson of The UCA Property Trust (Victoria) and Chairperson of The UCA Property Trust (Tas.), 2017-2025

Bob Hodges (Bob) served as Chairperson of The Property Trust (Victoria) and The Property Trust (Tas.) (Property Trusts/Trusts) from 9 September 2017 until the conclusion of 2025 Synod meeting.

Bob was appointed as Chairperson of both Property Trusts when the current Synod governance arrangements commenced in 2017. He came into this role after:

- a significant corporate and governance career in a range of commercial and community and church-based contexts;
- serving on the Synod Standing Committee; and
- a life-long practice of discipleship and commitment to serving the Church in various ways.

All these experiences – and so much more – provided the foundation and experience for Bob to provide excellent leadership in chairing the Property Trusts, which was consistently characterised by his profound personal qualities of integrity and authenticity.

Bob chaired the Property Trust with distinction. Always: personally prepared; assisting the Trusts members to address matters on the agenda; maintaining momentum in meetings inviting contribution from the Trusts members and providing for free-flowing discussion; summarising effectively and offering well-considered ways forward resulting from shared discernment between the Trusts members; and so much more.

As well as Bob chairing the Property Trusts, he also represented the Trusts as the Members of the Synod's institutions: Uniting AgeWell; U Ethical; Uniting Vic.Tas. Bob's words of encouragement and appropriate challenge to the Synod's institutions at Annual General Meetings, and in other contexts, were always insightful and a wonderful expression of his personal, and the Church's, priorities for worship, witness, and service expressed through the work of the institutions. These comments always provided a cohesive expression of the relationship between an institution and the wider Church and the Trusts' role as Members.

As well as chairing the Trusts so well, when rostered, Bob's opening reflections drew upon his deep faithfulness and thoughtfulness, to make meaningful connections between either historical or

contemporary life experience and contemporary matters that the Church was addressing. Bob's reflections always framed meetings for the Trusts' role as part of the wider Church's ministry and mission and were always a helpful reminder of the Trusts being part of the Church's greater story.

The members of the Property Trusts, and the Synod as a whole, can be deeply thankful to Bob for so much. Thankful for him using his gifts and graces across a lifetime of service generally, and particularly over the past eight years in the role of Property Trusts' Chairperson. Thankful for his enthusiasm for the Church's life and mission and his preparedness to express this through leadership of the Property Trusts. Thankful for his faithful example and discipleship in the many ways he expresses his commitment to follow Christ.

The Property Trusts, and the Synod as a whole, give thanks to God for the wonderful, faithful, and thoughtful leadership that Bob Hodges has provided as the Property Trusts Chairperson between 2017 and 2025.

Minute of Appreciation for Rev Susan Malthouse-Law as Chairperson of the Synod Ethics Committee, 2022-2024

Rev Susan Malthouse-Law (Susan) served as the Chairperson of the Synod Ethics Committee (Ethics Committee) from April 2022 to February 2024, after serving as a member of the Ethics Committee from its inaugural meeting in August 2018.

During her period as Chairperson, Susan provided leadership for the Ethics Committee to resource Synod leaders and the wider Church in addressing important ethical matters impacting on the Church and/or the wider community. These matters often, and understandably, intersected with work being done by other parts of the Synod and/or related bodies. Susan's leadership of the Ethics Committee supported its engagement with other parts of the Church to complement and/or widen consideration of ethics-related matters, which was a very helpful contribution to ethics matters under consideration. Susan also continued the important and valued commitment by the Ethics Committee to collaborate with other parts of the Synod that are engaged in addressing various ethics related research, education, policy development, and activism.

As developments with other parts of the Synod and related parts of the Church occurred, it became apparent that the Ethics Committee may no longer be needed to assist in resourcing the Church for reflection and action on ethics-related issues. Susan's constructive engagement in these processes, her guidance to the Ethics Committee, and her shared discernment with other Synod leaders in determining to conclude the Ethics Committee demonstrated a gracious and thoughtful approach to seeking the best use of people's, and the Church's as a whole, focus on ethics-related matters. After due processes, the Synod Standing Committee resolved to conclude the Ethics Committee at its February 2024 meeting.

The Synod is grateful to God and deeply thankful to Rev Susan Malthouse-Law for her leadership of the Synod Ethics Committee from 2022 to 2024, and expresses its best wishes to Susan for her ongoing contribution to the wider Church in other ways.

Minute of Appreciation for Rev Fiona Morrison as Chairperson of the Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee, 2022-2024

The Synod gives thanks to God Rev Fiona Morrison's careful and thoughtful leadership as the Chairperson of the Synod's Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee (SSMCC) from October 2022 until June 2024. Fiona's calm and approachable presence in the SSMCC and pastoral approach to all involved in the Committee's work was greatly appreciated. This approach sustained and supported the members of the Committee and enhanced its work for the Church.

Fiona's attention to detail, clear leadership of meetings (in person and online) and careful and faithful follow up have been valuable gifts to the Committee and the wider Church.

The Committee regrets that Fiona needed to conclude her leadership role as SSMCC Chairperson upon being appointed to a placement in the Presbytery of Gippsland as its Chairperson and wishes God's blessings on her in her current leadership role, and in her future ministry.

Minute of Appreciation for Roderick (Rod) Mummery as Chairperson of the Terms of Placements Committee, 2010-2025

Roderick (Rod) Mummery has faithfully and diligently chaired the Terms of Placement Committee (Committee) for 15 years from 2010 until the 2025 Synod meeting.

Rod's care for both the need for ministers to be paid a fair and adequate living allowance along with his sensitivity to the situation of congregations greatly enhanced the work of the Committee; ensuring stipends and other allowances were set mindful of the situation of both ministers and congregations.

Rod demonstrated an attention to detail ensuring that all information that was presented to the Committee was accurate, timely and helpful. This supported the Committee to make wise and sensible decisions. His knowledge of the different factors to be considered in the setting of stipends and allowances meant that stipends and allowances were adjusted fairly, reflecting the various factors that impact the rate of stipend and allowances.

Rod was the Terms of Placement Committee's representative on the Housing for Ministry Task Group. He also served as convenor of that Task Group. The careful work of this Committee resulted in clear guidelines around all aspects of minister's housing provision and maintenance, which is proving helpful for ministers, congregations and presbyteries.

As the Terms of Placement Committee Chairperson, Rod was dedicated and conscientious, ensuring all members knew that their point of view was valued and that all decisions were grounded in prayer and discernment.

We give thanks to God for Rod's service to the Terms of Placement Committee.

Minute of Appreciation for Rev Neil Peters as Chairperson of the Pastoral Assistance Committee, 2010-2025

The Synod records its deep appreciation to Rev Neil Peters (Neil) for his leadership as Chairperson of the Pastoral Assistance Committee (PAC) from 5 May 2010 to 30 June 2025 and gives thanks to God for Neil's faithful and committed contribution to the PAC's responsibilities.

Neil served on the PAC as a member from May 2007 and led the Committee as its Chairperson from May 2010 until June 2025. He was always thoughtful, ready to listen and considered all decisions with compassion informed by his faith and experience. His longevity as a member of the Committee enabled him to provide an informed perspective to all matters that were considered, which assisted greatly in discerning a fair and considered outcome for ministers and careful attention to the correct use of funds under trust.

Neil offered this experience and knowledge alongside his ministry in full time congregational placement, always making time to prepare well for each meeting and attend to the discernment of the PAC Executive between meetings.

Neil guided the PAC with a gentle pastoral hand for 15 years. His knowledge of finance and his unwavering compassion for others served the Committee very well.

We give thanks to God for all that Neil has contributed to the PAC and wish him well as he enters fully into retirement. He will be greatly missed.

Minute of Appreciation for Rev Associate Professor Sean Winter as Head of Pilgrim Theological College

In 2009, Rev Dr Sean Winter (Sean) moved, with his family, from the United Kingdom to Melbourne for his appointment to the role of New Testament Lecturer, as part of the United Faculty of Theology (UFT), Melbourne College of Divinity, and a staff member of the Centre for Theology and Ministry.

Sean had been teaching at Northern Baptist College in Manchester, serving in the Centre for Theology and Ministry alongside United Reformed, Methodist and other traditions. In the UFT role, he was able to serve as a colleague within another ecumenical setting – a Baptist serving alongside staff from Uniting, Catholic, Anglican, and other traditions.

In 2012 Melbourne College of Divinity became University of Divinity (UD). Over the next year or so, the three members of the United Faculty of Theology became three separately instituted UD colleges. Sean was appointed to the role of Academic Dean and helped to guide the way for Uniting Church Theological College to become Pilgrim Theological College (Pilgrim) in 2014.

In establishing Pilgrim, it was clear that a Head of College would be needed. Sean allowed his name to be considered. He was appointed by the Synod Standing Committee to the role of Head of College, commencing in 2017. This was a significant period as the College became part of equipping Leadership for Mission, as well as contributing to the UD's ongoing development.

Sean provided visionary and strategic leadership to Pilgrim, its faculty and student body. This was crucial in the early stages of Pilgrim establishing itself as a theological college within UD. He is highly respected in the UD as a leader and as someone who contributes to strategic planning and other leadership tasks. His passion and competency in theological education have been significant in Pilgrim's high profile and influence within the UD and ecumenical engagements. Sean also effectively represented Pilgrim in the UD, the Assembly's Standards for Ministry Committee, and the wider Church.

As Head of College Sean exercised oversight of the formation of candidates and lay ministry students involved in Pilgrim's life. Sean was a pastoral and engaged presence with the candidates and students of Pilgrim, who found him to be very approachable. Candidates noted that Sean encourages robust and thoughtful engagement, with a gift of picking up and reflecting on theological issues for candidates and exploring them in deeper ways.

Sean served the wider Church through his speaking, preaching, as well as in his ongoing research and teaching on Paul's letters and theology. He has taught and written about issues relating to the historical Jesus. He has an ongoing interest in hermeneutics, especially theological hermeneutics, with a focus on the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Through his passion for teaching and engagement, Sean developed strong relationships across the presbyteries and wider Church. Sean was often a guest speaker at presbytery and congregation events and was deeply respected and appreciated for his inspiring and encouraging reflections on the crucial nexus between biblical awareness and a life of faithful discipleship.

In July 2024 Sean shared the news of his appointment to the role of Research Coordinator and Director of New Testament Studies with Whitley College, commencing on December 1, 2024.

The Synod is deeply appreciative of all that Rev Assoc Prof Sean Winter has provided to the life of the Uniting Church within Victoria and Tasmania and further afield. The Synod gives thanks to God for all that Sean has contributed to the Church's life and witness during his years within the Uniting Church and particularly as the Head of Pilgrim Theological College from 2017-2024.