Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES

of the

ELEVENTH MEETING OF THE

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Held at Melbourne
19-24 September 2014

Moderator: Mr Dan Wootton

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

19-24 September 2014

All activities were held at La Trobe University, Kingsbury Drive, Bundoora.

14.1 FRIDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2014

14.1.1 PRE-SERVICE SINGING

A pre-service singing session took place at 7.20pm.

14.1.2 OPENING SERVICE

A Service of Worship, including the Eucharist, was held at 7.30pm and was attended by approximately 400 people.

The Moderator led the service with Rev Jennie Gordon presiding at the Eucharist. The preacher was Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes, Executive Director, Centre for Theology and Ministry.

14.2 SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2014

14.2.1 OPENING

The Moderator occupied the chair and welcomed members.

14.2.2 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator introduced the Moderator's Chaplains: Rev Lynette Dungan, Ms Kirsty Bennett and Ms Cath James. Rev Lynette Dungan led worship.

14.2.3 OPENING BUSINESS

14.2.3.1 Theological Orientation

The Moderator introduced the theological reflector, Rev Dr Geoffrey Thompson, Coordinator of Studies: Systematic Theology at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, who presented a theological reflection on the Synod meeting.

14.2.3.2 General Orientation

Rev Sue Withers led an orientation session regarding decision-making at Synod, table groups, working groups, business procedures involving the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, and confidentiality.

Mr John Bridge, Synod Occupational Health and Safety Advisor, addressed the meeting regarding occupational health and safety issues, and emergency procedures throughout the Synod meeting.

14.2.3.3 Appointments and Associations

The General Secretary spoke to a proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.1.1).

14.2.3.4 Roll of Synod

The General Secretary tabled the Roll of Synod and announced that it would be adopted at 3.00pm, Sunday 21 September.

14.2.3.5 Confirmation of Minutes of Synod 2014

The General Secretary spoke to a proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.3).

14.2.4 BUSINESS COMMITTEE AND SYNOD 2014 PROCEDURES (REPORT C3)

Mr Geoffrey Grinton, Synod Business Manager, spoke to a written report.

Two resolutions were passed by consensus (14.7.1.2 and 14.7.37.1).

14.2.5 MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

The chair was taken by the Ex-Moderator, Ms Isabel Thomas Dobson.

The Moderator spoke to a report which was received with acclamation.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.2).

The Moderator resumed the chair.

14.2.6 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1)

The General Secretary spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.4.1).

The Moderator welcomed Rev Terence Corkin, Assembly General Secretary and noted an apology from Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, Assembly President.

14.2.7 UNITING OUR FUTURE (REPORT B4.1)

Rev David Parker, Chairperson of the Property Board, and Mr Rob Costa, Convenor of the *Uniting our future* Project Control Group, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.5).

There was discussion in table groups and questions were addressed by Rev David Parker and Mr Rob Costa. The Moderator offered a prayer.

Rev Lynette Dungan led the meeting in a prayer.

Discussion continued after the lunch break and concluded with a response from Rev Fiona Winn, Response Group Coordinator.

14.2.8 GENERAL SECRETARY (REPORT E1)

The General Secretary spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.6).

14.2.9 UCA FUNDS MANAGEMENT (REPORT B6)

Mr Dick Carter, Chairperson of UCA Funds Management and Mr Michael Walsh, Executive Director of UCA Funds Management spoke to a written report. The Moderator noted that Dick Carter was appointed a Member of the Order of Australia

(AM), in part for services to the Uniting Church, and the meeting responded with acclamation.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.7).

14.2.10 UNITING HOUSING VICTORIA (REPORT B8)

Mr John Preston, Board Chairperson, and Mr Ian Brain, Chief Executive Officer of Uniting Housing Victoria spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.8).

14.2.11 WORKING GROUPS

The Synod met in working groups for the purpose of community building, and to identify major issues and questions to be referred to reporting bodies.

14.2.12 MODERATOR'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE (REPORT D1)

Rev Alistair Macrae, Convenor of the Moderator's Nominating Committee, spoke to a written report. Five-minute videos of each Moderator-Elect candidate were presented.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.9).

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

A written report was presented by Rev Grant Finlay and Auntie Eva Richardson.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.10).

14.2.14 BOARD OF MISSION AND RESOURCING (BOMAR) (REPORT B1)

Rev Graeme Harrison, Deputy Chairperson of BOMAR and Ms Heather Ackland, Director of Accounting Services spoke to written reports.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.11).

14.2.15 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE (REPORT E2)

Ms Pauline McGillivray, Executive Director, Administration and Finance, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.12.1).

14.2.16 ACCOUNTING SERVICES (REPORT E2)

Ms Heather Ackland, Director of Accounting Services, spoke to the 2012 and 2013 annual Synod audited financial reports.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.13).

14.2.17 PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE (REPORT C10)

Rev Stan Clarke and Rev David Fotheringham, Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson of the Placements Committee, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.14.1).

14.2.18 CLOSING PRAYER

Ms Cath James led the Synod in a closing prayer.

14.3 SUNDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Moderator opened the session.

14.3.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator's Chaplains, Ms Cath James and Ms Kirsty Bennett led worship.

14.3.2 UNITING AGEWELL (REPORT B7)

Dr Alan Wilkinson, Board Chairperson; Mr Graeme Barnes, Acting Executive Director; Rev John Clarke, Director of Mission; and Rev Allan Thompson, Deputy Board Chairperson, Uniting AgeWell spoke to a written report.

14.3.3 CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS (REPORT D3)

Ms Annette Bennet, Chairperson of the Christian Religious Education Task Group, and task group members Rev Jennie Gordon, Rev David Carter and Rev Cameron McAdam spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus. (14.7.15.1).

Rev David Fotheringham and Mrs Lyn Bromage, UCA ACCESS ministries members and ACCESS ministries Board directors, addressed the Synod.

14.3.4 UNITINGCARE AGENCIES

Ms Stephanie Lagos, Director, UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, introduced Ms Carol Muir, CEO and Ms Vaska Derviskovski, Senior Social Worker, UnitingCare Werribee Support and Housing, who addressed the Synod.

14.3.5 WORKING GROUPS: CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

The Synod met in working groups to discuss the report of the Christian Religious Education Task Group.

14.3.6 SERVICE OF TRIBUTES AND THANKSGIVING

The Moderator welcomed the special guests to the Service of Thanksgiving for the life and witness of ministers and deaconesses, including those:

(a) who had died since the 2013 meeting of Synod;

(b) who had retired since the 2013 meeting of Synod;

(c) who had celebrated 50, 60 and 70 years since ordination or commissioning, from the 2013 meeting of Synod to March 2015;

(d) who had been ordained since the 2013 meeting of Synod; and

(e) who had been received from another denomination since the 2013 meeting of Synod.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.16).

Rev Kerrie Graham responded on behalf of those recognised in the tributes.

14.3.7 ADOPTION OF THE ROLL OF SYNOD

The General Secretary proposed the adoption of the Synod Roll.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.17).

14.3.8 BALLOT – MODERATOR ELECT

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, advised on the ballot process.

The Moderator led the Synod in prayer.

Ballot papers were distributed for the Moderator Elect ballot.

14.3.9 UNITING AGEWELL (REPORT B7)

Dr Alan Wilkinson, Board Chairperson; Mr Graeme Barnes, Acting Executive Director; Rev John Clarke, Director of Mission; and Rev Allan Thompson, Deputy Board Chairperson, Uniting AgeWell addressed questions related to the report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.18.1).

14.3.10 COMMISSION FOR MISSION (CFM) (REPORT B3)

A report was presented by Rev Greg Crowe (Board Chairperson, CFM), Rev David Pargeter (Executive Director, CFM), Dr Mark Zirnsak (Tax Justice Network), Ms Alys Gagnon (*Balloons in Bendigo* event) and Ms Jill Ruzbacky (*About FACE* program).

Two resolutions were passed by consensus (14.7.19.1 and 14.7.19.2).

14.3.11 ENERGY REDUCTION COMMITTEE (REPORT D4)

Mr Adrian Pyle, Convenor of the Energy Reduction Committee, presented a report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.21).

14.3.12 BALLOT – MODERATOR ELECT (SECOND BALLOT

The Moderator advised that a ballot was required to confirm that the preferred candidate had the support of two-thirds of the Synod members.

Ballot papers were distributed for the second Moderator Elect ballot.

14.3.13 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – MR SEBERT RUDDOCK

Mr Ben Cohen, Chair of the Finance Committee, and Ms Heather Ackland, Director, Accounting Services, spoke to a proposal and Mr Sebert Ruddock responded.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.4.3).

14.3.14 FINANCE COMMITTEE (REPORT C7)

Mr Ben Cohen, Retiring Chairperson of the Finance Committee, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.22.1).

14.3.15 RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (REPORT C11)

Mr Russ Rechner, Chairperson of the Risk Management Committee, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.23).

14.3.16 BALLOT – DECLARATION OF MODERATOR 2016 - 2019

The Moderator announced the election of Rev Sharon Hollis as Moderator 2016-2019. This was received with acclamation.

The Moderator Elect addressed the meeting.

The Moderator thanked the other nominees and offered a prayer for the Moderator-Elect.

14.3.17 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A theological reflection was presented Rev Dr Geoff Thompson who concluded with a prayer.

14.3.18 PRAYER

A prayer was offered by Rev Lynette Dungan.

14.3.19 INTERCULTURAL CHURCH ENGAGEMENT

Rev Swee-Ann Koh, Director of the Cross-Cultural Ministry and Mission (CCMM) Unit, introduced a presentation celebrating thirty years of cultural diversity since the declaration that the UCA is a multi-cultural church was made at the 1985 National Assembly.

Rev Aigofie Marino, Secretary of the CCMM Committee addressed Synod.

The inaugural Inter-Faith Awards 2014 were presented by Mr Larry Marshall, *Uniting through Faith* Project Manager to Ms Gillian McAnalley from The Avenue Uniting Church, Blackburn and to the Swan Hill Uniting Church Community Issues Group.

This was followed by a presentation from the Next Gen group, a dialogue between Rev Swee-Ann Koh and Rev Apwee Ting, and a discussion in table groups.

14.3.20 ASSEMBLY REPORT

Rev Terence Corkin, Assembly General Secretary presented a report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.24).

14.3.21 PRAYER

Ms Cath James closed the session with a prayer.

14.4 MONDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Moderator opened the session with a reading.

14.4.1 DEVOTIONS

The Moderator's Chaplains, Rev Lynette Dungan, Ms Cath James and Ms Kirsty Bennett led worship.

14.4.2 BIBLE STUDY

Bible study was led by Rev Dr Sunny Chen.

14.4.3 MAJOR STRATEGIC REVIEW (REPORT C1.1)

Rev Nigel Hanscamp, Ms Leeanne Keam, Ms Joy Nunn and the General Secretary engaged in a panel discussion, facilitated by Ms Penny Mulvey (Director, Communications and Media Services). Dr Jason Talbot (Major Strategic Review Project Director) joined the panel to address questions.

14.4.4 UNITINGCARE AGENCIES

Ms Stephanie Lagos, Director, UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania, introduced Ms Lindy O'Neill, CEO of UnitingCare Tasmania, who addressed the Synod

14.4.5 BALLOTS – SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

Mr Rod Mummery, the Returning Officer, introduced the Standing Committee ballot process.

Ballot papers for the preliminary (majority support) Synod Standing Committee election were distributed.

14.4.6 WORKING GROUPS: MAJOR STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Synod met in working groups to discuss the Major Strategic Review report.

14.4.7 ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE (REPORT C1.2)

Rev David Pargeter, Chairperson of the Synod Royal Commission Response Task Group, and Mr Charles Gibson, Executive Officer of the Synod Royal Commission Response Task Group spoke to a report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.26).

14.4.8 BETHEL PASTORAL CENTRE (REPORT G1)

Rev Jacob de Ridder, Council Chairperson, and Mr Marcel Koper, Coordinator of Bethel Pastoral Centre, spoke to a report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.27).

14.4.9 DEFENCE FORCES CHAPLAINCY (REPORT I2)

Rev Dr Murray Earl, Convenor of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, and Rev Andrew Delbridge and Rev Mark Dunn, Reserve Army Chaplains, spoke to a report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.28).

14.4.10 CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Rev Sharon Hollis, Convenor of the Facilitation Group spoke to an amended proposal.

The Moderator offered a prayer which was followed by discussion in table groups.

Ms Annette Bennet, Chairperson of the Christian Religious Education Task Group, and task group members Rev Jennie Gordon, Rev David Carter and Rev Cameron McAdam addressed questions to the Facilitation Group for clarification.

The matter was adjourned for further consultation by the Facilitation Group.

14.4.11 WORKING GROUP ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS (REPORT G3)

Rev Dr Lorraine Parkinson, Chairperson of the Working Group on Christian-Jewish Relations, spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.29).

14.4.12 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – MS SHARON DONOVAN

Dr Alan Wilkinson, Board Chairperson, and Rev Allan Thompson, Deputy Board Chairperson, Uniting AgeWell spoke to a proposal.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.18.2).

14.4.13 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – DR ALAN WILKINSON

Rev Allan Thompson, Deputy Board Chairperson, and Mr Graeme Barnes, Acting Executive Director, Uniting AgeWell spoke to a proposal. Dr Alan Wilkinson responded.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.18.3).

14.4.14 ETHICAL INVESTMENTS

Mr Michael Walsh, CEO of UCA Funds Management, and Dr Mark Zirnsak, Director of the Justice and International Mission Unit, presented a proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.20).

14.4.15 COMMISSION FOR MISSION

14.4.15.1 Justice and International Mission (JIM) Unit

Dr Mark Zirnsak, JIM Director, spoke to four proposals.

Four resolutions were passed by consensus (14.7.19.3.1, 14.7.19.3.2, 14.7.19.3.3 and 14.7.19.3.4).

14.4.16 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

14.4.16.1 Synod Standing Committee By-Laws

The General Secretary spoke to a proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.4.2).

14.4.17 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

14.4.17.1 Adoption of Mission and Support Fund Budget

The General Secretary spoke to the proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.12.2).

14.4.18 BALLOT - DECLARATION OF PRELIMINARY BALLOT (MAJORITY SUPPORT) SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

The Moderator announced the result of the preliminary ballot for the Synod Standing Committee as follows:

All candidates in Groups A and B had received the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot.

14.4.19 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson presented a theological reflection.

14.4.20 CLOSING PRAYER

Rev Lynette Dungan led the Synod in a short reflection and closing prayer.

14.5 TUESDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Moderator opened the session with a reflective story.

14.5.1 DEVOTIONS

Ms Cath James led worship with readings by Rev Lynette Dungan and Ms Kirsty Bennett.

14.5.2 BIBLE STUDY

Bible study was led by Rev Dr Sunny Chen.

14.5.3 ECUMENICAL AWARDS (REPORT C6)

Rev Peter Weeks, Chairperson of the Ecumenical Relations Committee announced the following awards, which were presented by the Moderator:

Highly Commended:	Bridport Uniting Church (Tasmania) Beechworth Uniting Church (North East Victoria) St Andrews Uniting Church Yarram (Gippsland)
Joint Winners:	Strathmore Uniting Church (Port Phillip West) St Marks Uniting Church Mornington (Port Phillip East)

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.30).

14.5.4 UPPER LONSDALE STREET WESLEY PRECINCT PROJECT (REPORT B4)

Rev David Parker, Chairperson of the Property Board; Mr Rob Costa, Deputy Chairperson of the Property Board; Rev Alistair Macrae, minister of Wesley Lonsdale Street Uniting Church; Mr Rob Evers, CEO of Wesley Mission Victoria; and Mr Jon Purcell, Senior Development Advisor, spoke to a report.

14.5.5 UNITINGCARE AGENCIES

Ms Stella Avramopoulos, CEO of Kildonan UnitingCare, addressed the Synod.

14.5.6 ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, spoke to a proposal regarding Assembly membership.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.37.2).

14.5.7 BALLOTS – SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (GROUP B), ASSEMBLY AND CHAIRPERSON OF BOMAR

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery advised on the ballot process.

Ballot papers for the election of Standing Committee Group B members (nominal three-year term), members of the 2015 Assembly and the Chairperson of BOMAR were distributed.

14.5.8 WORKING GROUPS: 'THE NEW NORMAL'

Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes introduced the concept of 'The New Normal' and this was followed by discussion in Working Groups.

14.5.9 PROPERTY BOARD (REPORT B4)

Rev David Parker spoke to a written report and a proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.31).

The Moderator thanked Mr Rob Costa for his work as the Convenor of the *Uniting our future* Project Control Group.

14.5.10 CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

Ms Annette Bennet spoke to an amended proposal and thanked members of the CRE Task Group for their work on the report.

On behalf of the Facilitation Group, Rev Sharon Hollis and Rev Jay Robinson responded to questions and further discussion followed. The matter was adjourned.

14.5.11 LAUNCH OF PILGRIM THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Dr Jill Tabart (Board Chairperson of the Centre for Theology and Ministry) (CTM), Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes and Rev Dr Sean Winter (Principal and Deputy Principal of the Uniting Church Theological College) and Prof Peter Sherlock (Vice-Chancellor, University of Divinity) introduced the launch of Pilgrim Theological College, which was performed by the Moderator.

14.5.12 CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY (REPORT B2)

Dr Jill Tabart, Board Chairperson, and Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes, Executive Director, CTM spoke to a written report.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.32.1).

14.5.13 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – REV PROF RANDALL PRIOR

Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes and Rev Prof Sean Winter spoke to a proposal and Rev Prof Randall Prior responded.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.32.2).

14.5.14 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – MR BEN COHEN

The General Secretary and Rev Julie Ross spoke to a proposal, and Mr Ben Cohen responded.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.22.2).

14.5.15 CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

An amended proposal was discussed, further amendments were made and a proposal was passed by a combination of consensus, agreement and formal procedures (14.7.15.2).

14.5.16 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson presented a theological reflection.

14.5.17 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION – REV STAN CLARKE

Ms Judy Causon and Ms Isabel Thomas Dobson, Secretary of Placements Committee, spoke to a proposal. Rev Stan Clarke responded.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.14.2).

14.5.18 FACILITATION GROUP: MAJOR STRATEGIC REVIEW

Rev Sharon Hollis, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, summarised feedback from the Working Groups and presented questions to which members of the Major Strategic Review team responded.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.25).

14.5.1 DECLARATION OF BALLOT

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, announced the result of the ballots for BOMAR Chairperson and Synod Standing Committee Group B members.

14.5.2 CLOSING HYMN AND PRAYER

A hymn was sung and Rev Lynette Dungan led the Synod in a prayer.

14.6 WEDNESDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2014

The Moderator opened the session with a prayer and reading.

14.6.1 DEVOTIONS

Ms Kirsty Bennett, Rev Lynette Dungan and Ms Cath James led worship.

14.6.2 BIBLE STUDY

Bible study was led by Rev Dr Sunny Chen.

The Moderator thanked Rev Dr Sunny Chen for his leadership of the Bible study. This was received with acclamation by the meeting.

14.6.3 BALLOT – SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (GROUP A)

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, advised on the ballot process.

Ballot papers for the election of Standing Committee Group A members (until the next ordinary Synod meeting) were distributed.

14.6.4 AMENDMENT TO REGULATION 4.6.3 PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Rev Dr Robert Johnson and Rev Peter Gador-Whyte spoke to a proposal and discussion followed.

14.6.5 UNITINGCARE AGENCIES

Mr James Beckford-Saunders, Director, Education & Advocacy, UnitingCare REGEN, addressed the Synod.

14.6.6 LAUNCH OF SAFE CHURCH RECOGNITION

Rev Lauren Mosso, Ethical Standards Officer; Mr Josh Woollett, Safe Church Educator; and Ms Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary, presented the launch of the Safe Church Recognition Program. The program was formally launched by the Moderator.

14.6.7 AMENDMENT TO REGULATION 4.6.3 PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Rev Dr Robert Johnson addressed the meeting and withdrew the proposal.

14.6.8 LETTERS FROM STUDENTS

Rev Jeanne Beale, Chaplain at Aitken College, offered letters of greeting from Aitken College students.

14.6.9 RURAL MINISTRY

Rev Gordon Bannon and Ms Wendie Wilkie spoke to a proposal.

Rev Graeme Harrison spoke on behalf of the Board of Mission and Resourcing.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.33).

14.6.10 DATE OF SYNOD 2016 / SYNOD MEETINGS

The Business Manager spoke to a proposal. Ms Lorene Day and Rev Gordon Bannon spoke to a proposal. Discussion followed and the matter was adjourned.

14.6.11 FACILITATION GROUP: 'THE NEW NORMAL'

Rev Sharon Hollis, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, summarised feedback from Working Groups.

14.6.12 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson presented a theological reflection. The Moderator thanked him for his theological reflections during the course of the meeting and this was received with acclamation.

14.6.13 PRAYER

Ms Kirsty Bennett led the meeting in a prayer.

14.6.14 UNITING AGEWELL

Dr Alan Wilkinson, Board Chairperson of Uniting AgeWell, announced that Ms Valerie Lyons had been appointed as the new Executive Director of Uniting AgeWell as from 5 January 2015.

14.6.15 ONE MINUTE SPEECHES

Approximately twenty-five members made one minute speeches to the Synod. These were received by acclamation.

14.6.16 NOMINATIONS ADVISORY PANEL

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.36).

14.6.17 PRESBYTERY REPORTS

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.34).

14.6.18 RECEPTION OF OTHER REPORTS

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.35).

14.6.19 DATE OF SYNOD 2016

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.37.3).

14.6.20 SYNOD MEETINGS

Discussion resumed. A resolution was passed by agreement (14.7.37.4).

14.6.21 LEARNINGS FROM *UNITING OUR FUTURE*

Rev Steve Terrell and Mr Ken Tabart spoke to a proposal.

Following discussion, the matter was referred to the Standing Committee.

Note: The Synod requested the Moderator to offer an apology on its behalf to the Church for the hurt that some parts of the Church experienced due to the *Uniting our future* processes.

14.6.22 FACILITATION GROUP: CHAPLAINCY IN STATE SCHOOLS

Rev Sharon Hollis, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, presented an amended proposal.

A resolution was passed by consensus (14.7.38).

14.6.23 DECLARATION OF BALLOT

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, announced the result of the Synod Standing Committee Group B ballot.

14.6.23.1 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE ELECTION

The Returning Officer, Mr Rod Mummery, announced the results of the election for members of the Synod Standing Committee.

Standing Committee

Elected:

Group A	**Presbytery**
Mr Chris Begg	Port Phillip East
Mr Richard Carter	Port Phillip East
Rev Stan Clarke	Yarra Yarra
Mr Ben Cohen	Port Phillip East
Rev Greg Crowe	Port Phillip East
Mr John Diprose	Western Victoria
Mr Ron Gowland	Gippsland
Rev Jeff Gray	Tasmania
Rev Dr Morag Logan	Yarra Yarra
Rev Lavingi Tupou	Port Phillip West

Group B (2016)	
Dr Jill Tabart	Yarra Yarra
Mr Ken Tabart	Yarra Yarra
Ms Wendie Wilkie	North East Victoria

Group B (2017)	
Mr Geoffrey Grinton	Yarra Yarra
Rev Fiona Winn	Port Phillip East
Rev Sue Withers	Port Phillip East

14.6.24 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION

The Moderator thanked Mr Lindsay Doig for his service as Logistics Manager for Synod meetings since 2006. Mr Doig responded.

Rev Cynthia Page, Presbytery of Loddon Mallee, spoke to a proposal.

A resolution was passed by acclamation (14.7.39).

14.6.25 CLOSING WORSHIP AND EUCHARIST

Members and visitors joined in a closing service which was led by the Moderator, with Rev Lynette Dungan preaching and Rev Prof Randall Prior presiding at the Eucharist.

14.7 RESOLUTIONS

14.7.1 PROCEDURAL

14.7.1.1 Appointments and Associations

The Synod resolved:

(a) To appoint the following people for the whole of the 2014 Synod Meeting:

Minute Secretaries:	Mrs Robyn Hansen and Ms Natalie Brown
Returning Officer:	Mr Rod Mummery
Deputy Returning Officer:	Rev Dr Robert Johnson
Stewards:	Ms Joan McRae
	Rev Deac Jeanne Beale
	Ms Bethany Broadstock
	Ms Robyn Burke
	Ms Merril Clayton
	Ms Helen Collins
	Jen Davies
	Ms Jeni Fitzgerald
	Rev Glenys Gill
	Ms Josie McRae
	Mr Cameron Shields
	Ms LouAnne Stabb
	Ms Karen Wall
	Ms Wendie Wilkie
Timer Operator and notices:	Mr Colin Thompson
	Mr Malcolmbe Looker

(b) To associate the following people for the whole of the 2014 Synod Meeting:

Ms Josie Crisara
Ms Kym Dyson
Ms Angela Goodwin
Rev Scott Kelly
Ms Stephanie Lagos
Mr Sam Nicholas
Mr Andrew Phillips
Dr Jason Talbot
Ms Gail Thannhauser
Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

(c) To associate the following people for specific sessions of the 2014 Synod meeting:

Mr Ian Brain	For the business of Uniting Housing Victoria
Ms Annette Bennet	For the business of the Christian Religious Education in Schools Task Group
Ms Joy Nunn	For the business of the Major Strategic Review
Rev Dr Peter Sherlock	For the launch of the Pilgrim Theological College

Rev Alistair Macrae	For the business of the Moderator Nominating Committee and Wesley Upper Lonsdale Street
Rev Julie Ross	For the business of the Minute of Appreciation for Ben Cohen
Mr Russ Rechner	For the business of the Risk Management Committee
Mr Charles Gibson	For the business of the Royal Commission Task Group
Mr Rob Evers	For the business of the Wesley Upper Lonsdale Street Development
Mr Jon Purcell	For the business of the Wesley Upper Lonsdale Street Development
Rev Dr Lorraine Parkinson	For the business of the Christian-Jewish Working Group

14.7.1.2 Synod 2014 Procedures

The Synod resolved:

(a) That any proposal which may include financial commitment not at present included in the Mission Support Fund or other appropriate budget of the Synod be subject to comment by a representative of the Board of Mission and Resourcing (BOMAR) after consultation, where possible, with representatives of the Synod Finance and Risk Management Committees;

(b) That the closure time for receiving nominations for the Standing Committee be 7.30pm on Saturday 20 September 2014;

(c) That the closure time for receiving proposals be 7.30pm on Saturday 20 September 2014;

(d) That the election for Moderator-Elect be held at 3.30pm on Sunday 21 September 2014;

(e) That any necessary elections for chairpersons be held at 10.55am on Tuesday 23 September 2014, and that the ballot close at 2.00pm on that same day;

(f) That any elections for members of boards, commissions and committees be held at 4.00pm on Tuesday 23 September 2014 and that the ballot close at 7.30pm on that same day;

(g) That the election of members of Standing Committee be conducted as follows:

Event	**Ballot commences**	**Ballot closes**
Determine majority support for nominees	10.55am Monday 22 September	2.00pm Monday 22 September
Election of Group B members (3-year term)	10.55am Tuesday 23 September	2.00pm Tuesday 23 September
Election of Group A members (between meetings term)	4.00pm Tuesday 23 September	7.30pm Tuesday 23 September

(h) That the business of the Synod be dealt with in accordance with the following timetable unless the Synod specifically determines otherwise:

(i) regular items throughout the Synod meeting will be as follows:

Event	Times
Devotions	Sat, Sun, Mon, Tues, Wed 9.00am

Event	Times
Bible study	Mon, Tues, Weds 9.15am
Morning tea	11.00–11.30am
Lunch	1.00pm–2.00pm
Afternoon tea	Sat, Mon, Tues 3.30–4.00pm Sun 3.00–3.30pm
Dinner break	6.00pm–7.30pm
Start of evening session	Sat, Sun, Tues 7.30pm
Close of evening session, unless extension of time is approved by Synod	Sat, Sun, Tues 9.30pm

(ii) The close of business will be 3.00pm Wednesday 24 September, prior to the closing Eucharist; and

(iii) An initial timetable showing those items with fixed time allocations on Saturday 20, Sunday 21, Monday 22, Tuesday 23 and Wednesday 24 September is contained in the attached table.

14.7.2 MODERATOR

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Moderator.

14.7.3 CONFIRMATION OF SYNOD 2014 MINUTES

The Synod resolved:

That the Moderator, General Secretary, Associate General Secretary and Business Manager be authorised to confirm the minutes of the 2014 meeting of Synod.

14.7.4 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

14.7.4.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Synod Standing Committee.

14.7.4.2 Synod Standing Committee By-Laws

The Synod resolved:

To adopt the following By-Laws for implementation from the close of Synod 2014:

SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE BY-LAWS

1 NAME AND SOURCE OF AUTHORITY

1.1 The name of this body shall be the Synod Standing Committee.

1.2 Source of Authority: Constitution paragraph 36.

2 DEFINITIONS

In these By-Laws, unless the context indicates otherwise:

"the Standing Committee" means the Synod Standing Committee.

"the Synod" means the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania of the Uniting Church in Australia.

“the Congress” means the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

"the Moderator" means the Moderator of the Synod and "Ex-Moderator" and "Moderator-Elect" shall have a corresponding meaning.

"the General Secretary" means the General Secretary of the Synod.

"the Synod Journal" means the journal published by the Synod.

"the Nominations Committee" means the Nominations Committee of the Synod.

"the Business Committee" means the Business Committee of the Synod.

"the Assembly" means the Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia.

"the Constitution" means the Constitution of the Uniting Church in Australia.

"the Regulations" means the Regulations of the Assembly (November 2013 Edition).

“Members” are defined within the Manual for Meetings of the Uniting Church as persons authorised to participate in the activities and decisions of the council.

“Participants” are defined within the Manual for Meetings of the Uniting Church as non-members who are given permission by a council to participate in meetings of the council for all or part of the proceedings as appropriate. Leave of the council is required for this association to be approved.

3 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Standing Committee is empowered to act on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod in respect of any of the responsibilities of the Synod except such as the Synod may determine [Regulation 3.7.4.1(d)].

4 RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS

4.1 The Standing Committee shall have the power to act between meetings of the Synod in accordance with Regulation 3.7.4.1(d), (e) and (f).

4.2 The Standing Committee shall report its decisions to the next meeting of the Synod, which shall give directions as to the publishing thereof, and as to any further action that may be required in accordance with Regulation 3.7.4.1(g).

5 MEMBERSHIP

5.1 The membership of the Standing Committee shall consist of:

(a) The Moderator, the ex-Moderator, the Moderator-Elect, and the General Secretary as ex-officio members [Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i)];

(b) As ex-officio members [Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(ii)], one person appointed by each of the Tasmanian and Victorian Congress Regional Committees, each of those persons being a member of the Synod. For the purpose of the electoral processes necessary in (c) below, it will be assumed that Congress members will be ordained.

At the specific request of the Regional Committee of Congress Victoria or Congress Tasmania made to the General Secretary prior to the date of the meeting an alternate person appointed by the relevant Regional Committee, also being a member of the Synod, may attend particular meetings as a member.

In the inclusion of members appointed in this way it is acknowledged that each Congress has the right to attend or not attend particular meetings of the Standing Committee.

(c) Up to sixteen members of the annual Synod elected by the Synod having regard to the requirements that:

(i) The lay members of Standing Committee be not fewer in number than the ministerial members [Regulation 3.7.4.1(b)];

(ii) Six of the elected members shall be classified as Group B members with a nominal three-year term of membership subject to the processes of election detailed in the appendix to these by-Laws;

(iii) The balance of the elected members be classified as Group A members elected until the next ordinary meeting of the Synod [Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(iii)] subject to the processes of election detailed in the appendix to these by-Laws;

(iv) Within the elected membership there is available one place for a person who is a member of each Victorian Presbytery and two places for persons who are members of the Presbytery of Tasmania;

(v) If there is no nomination of a member from any particular presbytery (or less than two nominations of members from the Presbytery of Tasmania), or if none (or only one in the case of Tasmania) receives the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot, then the available place for that presbytery shall be filled from general nominations who have been so affirmed;

(vi) No more than two persons who are members of the Synod staff (lay or ministerial) may be elected;

(vii) Members of the Standing Committee who move within the bounds of the Synod will retain membership of the Standing Committee whether or not they continue to reside in the bounds of a particular presbytery.

5.2 Participants

5.2.1 The Executive Directors of the Commission for Mission, the Centre for Theology and Ministry, Administration and Finance, the Director of Communications and Media Services, the Associate General Secretary, the Chairpersons of the Board of Mission and Resourcing, and the Synod Finance Committee will be participants in meetings of the Standing Committee. Others may participate from time to time at the invitation of the Standing Committee or the General Secretary.

5.2.2 From time to time, each of the Congress Victoria and Congress Tasmania Regional Committees may choose to send a person along with or other than the appointed member as a participant in a particular meeting of the Standing Committee. The name of this extra person is to be provided to the General Secretary prior to the date of the meeting involved.

5.3 Casual Vacancies

5.3.1 When filling a casual vacancy of elected members, the Standing Committee shall consider first those members of the Synod who, although included in the ballot used to elect the Standing Committee, were not elected.

5.3.2 Where a casual vacancy occurs in an elected position, that position may be filled by the nominee receiving the next highest number of votes at the most recent Synod ballot (either Group A or Group B, as appropriate), provided that the person so appointed:

(a) shall have been a member of the most recent Synod;

(b) shall have received the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot;

(c) shall complete the term of office of the member replaced in the case of a Group B casual vacancy;

(d) shall be of the same status — whether Minister or lay person — as the person being replaced.

5.4 Appointment of Officers

5.4.1 The Moderator or, in the absence of the Moderator, the Ex-Moderator, shall chair meetings of the Standing Committee. If neither is available, the meeting shall elect a Chairperson.

5.4.2 The General Secretary shall be Secretary of the Standing Committee.

5.5 Co-options

The Standing Committee shall have the right to co-opt not more than two persons as members for specific purposes, having regard to the requirement that the lay members be not fewer in number than the ministerial members. Co-opted persons must already be members of Synod and shall have full responsibility to participate in decision making.

6 ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Meetings

The Standing Committee shall meet at such times and places as is determined by the Standing Committee or as called by the Moderator in order to discharge its responsibilities.

6.2 Quorum, Procedures, Minutes and Representation

6.2.1 Quorum

The normal quorum for Standing Committee will be two-thirds of Standing Committee members [Regulation 3.7.4.1 (f)(i)], unless otherwise prescribed by the Synod.

For matters referred to the Standing Committee by the Synod the quorum will be half the number of members [Regulation 3.8.5 (e) (f)].

If a decision on a matter cannot be made by the consensus procedures, to carry the relevant motion, a majority of three-fourths of those present shall be required [Regulation 3.7.4.1 (f) (ii)].

6.2.2 Procedures

Meetings of the Standing Committee shall be conducted in accordance with the "*Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church" (2009)*

6.2.3 Minutes

Minutes of meetings recording all resolutions shall be kept and circulated as determined by the Standing Committee.

6.2.4 Representation

Any commission, committee, presbytery or congregation of the Synod, or any body, the constitution of which is granted by or subject to the approval of the Synod or its Standing Committee, that refers any matter to the Standing Committee for decision may send up to three representatives to address the Standing Committee meeting at which the matter is discussed.

7 COMMITTEES

7.1 The Standing Committee shall appoint the permanent committees listed hereunder and it may appoint and discharge such other committees as it sees fit from time to time.

*7.2 **Legal Reference Committee***

7.2.1 Responsibilities and Functions

The Legal Reference Committee shall be responsible for the examination of proposed constitutions and legal documents of bodies associated with the Synod, for tendering advice on legal matters and for carrying out such other functions as the Standing Committee may direct.

7.2.2 Membership

(a) The General Secretary (Chairperson)

(b) The Property Officer of the Synod

(c) The Synod Legal Officer (Secretary)

(d) The legal advisers to the Synod

(e) One Minister in Placement and one lay person appointed by the Standing Committee at its first meeting after each Synod meeting, following receipt of advice from the Nominations Committee.

7.2.3 The Legal Reference Committee shall report to the Standing Committee.

7.3 Admission of Ministers Committee

7.3.1 Responsibilities and Functions

The Admission of Ministers Committee shall consider applications by a minister of another denomination to serve in a placement or to be admitted to the Ministry of the Word or the Ministry of Deacon within the Uniting Church from Ministers of other denominations and from former Ministers of the Uniting Church and report with recommendations to the Standing Committee [Regulations 2.5.1-2.5.3].

7.3.2 Membership

(a) The Moderator (Chairperson)

(b) The Associate General Secretary (Secretary)

(c) The Principal of the Theological College or nominee

(d) Five members of whom at least two shall be Ministers and two shall be laypersons, appointed by the Standing Committee at its first meeting after each Synod meeting.

7.3.3 Administration

(a) The Admission of Ministers Committee shall meet at such times and places as it finds necessary to discharge its responsibilities. Minutes shall be kept and circulated to all members of the Reception of Ministers Committee; and

(b) The Admission of Ministers Committee shall report to the Standing Committee.

8 AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Proposed amendments to these By-Laws shall be submitted to the Synod for approval and shall not take effect until approved by the Synod.

Appendix: Election Procedures

The following guidelines are taken from the report of the Standing Committee Review Group to the Standing Committee in July, 2007. They are included for the information and guidance of those who call for nominations and for those who then determine the outcome of the electoral process.

(i) The call for nominations for membership of the Standing Committee, and the advice to members of Synod prior to any ballot to determine membership of

the Committee, shall provide that nominees should have demonstrated skills in areas which may include:

- competency in leadership skills;
- experience in the life of the Uniting Church and ongoing awareness of the practical mission priorities of the Synod;
- appreciation of the structures of the Uniting Church, the roles and responsibilities of its inter-related councils;
- hands-on experience of presbytery life;
- appreciation of rural, regional and metropolitan issues generally;
- understanding of the needs of areas of high growth and/or development;
- ability to work as a team person;
- willingness to participate in task group and sub-committee activities;
- experience with strategic planning and priority setting.

(ii) Because of the particular governance role of the Standing Committee, the call for nominations will include a reminder that the Standing Committee needs to include members with expertise in, or understanding of, accountancy, business management and budgeting.

(iii) Prior to each meeting of the Synod, a call for nominations shall be forwarded to each Presbytery and to each member of Synod, and Presbytery Secretaries will be reminded of the right of Presbyteries to make one or more nominations.

(iv) Nominations for election as members of the Synod Standing Committee may be received from members of the Synod or from presbytery secretaries until the time fixed by the Business Committee for the closing of such nominations, not before the evening meal break on the first day of business. Each such nomination shall be made on the form provided, and shall be accompanied by the written consent of the person nominated, a declaration by the person of his or her intention to make every effort to attend meetings of the Synod Standing Committee during the term of office, and a profile which provides background information relevant to the nomination.

(v) If there is no nomination of a member from any particular presbytery (or less than two nominations of members from the Presbytery of Tasmania), or if none (or only one in the case of Tasmania) receives the support of a majority of those participating in the ballot, then the available place for that presbytery shall be filled from general nominations who have been so affirmed;

(vi) A preferential ballot shall be conducted.

(vii) In order to provide continuity of experience and thus to enhance the ability of the Standing Committee to exercise its governance role, six of the sixteen elected positions shall be designated as having a nominal three-year term of office (to be named Group B), with the balance of positions being appointed for a term that will end at the next ordinary meeting of the synod after their appointment (named Group A).

(viii) A separate ballot shall be conducted for Group B membership, prior to any ballot for the Group A members of the Standing Committee.

(ix) Members of both Group A and Group B shall be eligible for re-election (if members of the ensuing Synod) at the conclusion of the term of office for which they have been elected.

(x) The number of Group B members to retire at each Synod meeting is a function of the frequency of Synod meetings. A number of Group B members equal to six divided by the number of Synod meetings held in each three year period, and rounded to the next highest number, shall complete their term of office at each Synod. In practical terms, this means that while there are annual meetings, two Group B members would be elected each year. On

initial implementation, the terms of office of Group B members shall be determined by lot in order to establish the rotation. Once the rotation has been established, then standing for election shall be upon the basis of seniority from the date of election of that member of Group B.

(xi) Group B members must be able to attend Synod meetings held during their terms of office expected to be three years. This is essential in order to meet the requirements of the Regulation that a member of the Standing Committee must have been a member of the preceding Synod. Where a Group B member is unable to attend a Synod Meeting during their term of appointment, that person will forfeit their membership of Standing Committee and another member elected to complete that term.

(xii) Elected Group B members who are not appointed as members of any Synod held during their term of office under some other category will be included in the co-options to membership of the Synod, under Regulation 3.5.3(a)(i) [to make available to the Synod the participation of persons whose gifts and experience would be of special value and not otherwise available to the Synod].

(xiii) A member of Synod may be nominated for membership under either or both Group A and Group B. Candidates for Group B membership who are not elected as members of that Group, shall be eligible for election in Group A only if they have also been nominated for that Group.

(xiv) Positions available for presbytery members may be filled by either Group A or Group B members.

(xv) The term of office for Group A members shall be from the conclusion of the Synod to the opening of the next ensuing ordinary meeting of the next following Synod. The term of office for the Group B members shall be from the conclusion of the Synod by which they were elected until the opening of the ordinary meeting of the Synod held three years later.

14.7.4.3 Minute of appreciation – Mr Sebert Ruddock

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the service of Sebert Ruddock as Executive Director, Administration and Finance of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania for ten and a half years from 2003 to 2014.

14.7.5 *UNITING OUR FUTURE*

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of *Uniting our future.*

14.7.6 GENERAL SECRETARY

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the General Secretary.

14.7.7 UCA FUNDS MANAGEMENT

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of UCA Funds Management.

14.7.8 UNITING HOUSING VICTORIA

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of Uniting Housing Victoria.

14.7.9 MODERATOR'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Moderator's Nominating Committee.

14.7.10 UNITING ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (TASMANIA)

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Tasmania).

14.7.11 BOARD OF MISSION AND RESOURCING

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Board of Mission and Resourcing.

14.7.12 ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

14.7.12.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the Administration and Finance report.

14.7.12.2 Adoption of Mission and Support Fund Budget

The Synod resolved:

To authorise the Standing Committee to approve budgets for the Mission and Support Fund as required between meetings of the Synod.

14.7.13 ACCOUNTING SERVICES

The Synod resolved:

To receive the annual 2012 and 2013 audited financial reports.

14.7.14 PLACEMENTS COMMITTEE

14.7.14.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Placements Committee.

14.7.14.2 Minute of appreciation – Rev Stan Clarke

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the ministry of the Rev Stan Clarke as Chairperson of the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (Placements Committee) from 2010 – 2014.

14.7.15 CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TASK GROUP

14.7.15.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Christian Religious Education Task Group.

14.7.15.2 Christian Religious Education in Schools

The Synod resolved:

(a) That from the 1st July 2015 the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania of the Uniting Church in Australia no longer be a supporting Church of the Council of Christian Education in Schools (trading as ACCESS ministries) unless the Standing Committee is satisfied that ACCESS ministries demonstrates by 31st May 2015 that there has been:

  (i) A commitment to changes in the governance practices and structures that facilitate the full participation of members of the company trading as ACCESS ministries in the policy development and direction setting of ACCESS ministries;

  (ii) Increased and transparent communications with the General Secretary of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania;

  (iii) An inclusive and consultative approach to the development of the Special Religious Instruction (SRI) program materials, and a commitment that these materials will be theologically broad and pedagogically sound, and that this is reflected in the training of SRI instructors;

  (iv) The removal of the compulsory nature of the Partnership Program payment; and

  (v) A conversation with the Centre for Theology and Ministry (CTM) about the possibility of the CTM's involvement in the training of SRI instructors. *(Passed by agreement)*

(b) To request the General Secretary:

  (i) To notify ACCESS ministries in writing of this decision and the reasons for it; *(Passed by agreement)*

  (ii) To communicate this decision and the reasons for it to the Heads of all other Supporting Churches; *(Passed by formal procedures)*

  (iii) To communicate this decision and the reasons for it to the Minister for Education and the Shadow Minister for Education of the Victorian Parliament, and; *(Passed by agreement)*

  (iv) To initiate a proactive communication process to inform Church members and the wider community of this decision and the reasons for it. *(Passed by agreement)*

(c) To affirm, acknowledge and thank Uniting Church members whose dedication over many years contributes to the work of ACCESS ministries and its predecessors as CRE teachers, members, Council members and Board members. *(Passed by consensus)*

(d) To continue to affirm and support Uniting Church members who wish to continue to be involved in SRI instruction. *(Passed by consensus)*

(e) To request the Commission for Mission and the Centre for Theology and Ministry to continue to advocate for the inclusion of General Religious Education in the Australian Curriculum. *(Passed by consensus)*

14.7.16 SERVICE OF TRIBUTES AND THANKSGIVING

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the life and witness of ministers and deaconesses who:

(a) have died since the 2013 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Prof Robert Anderson
Rev Bonnie Bradley
Rev Dr Robert J Brown
Rev Graham Colquhoun
Rev William Gillard
Rev Kenneth Gilson
Rev Richard Golding
Rev Malcolm Hay
Rev Ronald Hollick
Rev John (Jock) Lavender
Rev Evan Lewis
Rev Norman Lowe
Rev Jack Lutge
Deaconess Lesley McMullin
Rev Dr Peter Moonie
Rev Dr Thomas Maxwell O'Connor
Rev Barry Prior
Rev Dr Robin Pryor
Rev Ian Steer
Rev Ian Tennant
Rev Athol Wall
Rev Albert Wicks
Rev Alfred Wilhelms
Rev Malcolm Williams

(b) have retired since the 2013 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Dr Peter Blackwood
Rev Lynden Broadstock
Rev Dr Wesley Campbell
Rev Daryl Colless
Rev Brenda Cooper
Rev Dr Norberto Dellosa
Rev Andrew Donnelly
Rev Tony Duncan
Rev Deac Meg Evans
Rev Arthur Faulkner
Rev Joan Fisher
Rev Ojitha Goonetilleke
Rev David Hunnerup
Rev Gereldine Leonard
Rev Philip Lyles
Rev David Manks
Rev David Manzoney
Rev John Maynard
Rev David Mills
Rev Bruce Monro
Rev Deacon Graham Morris
Rev Margaret Russell
Rev Dr Benyamin Susilo
Rev Graeme Wells
Rev Donald Whitelaw
Rev Maurice Wildish
Rev Dr Ian Wilson

(c) have celebrated 50 years of ordination or commissioning from the 2013 meeting of Synod to March 2015, and to record their names as follows:

Rev Norman Cameron
Rev Boris Doncev
Rev Stanley Ford
Rev Joseph Fraser
Rev John Gillan
Rev G Kerrie Graham
Rev George W Grant
Rev John Haysey
Rev Ian Higgins
Rev Rodney Jepsen
Rev Graham Lehmann
Rev Robert Potter
Rev Deacon Beverley Pratt
Rev Stuart Reid
Deaconess Shirley Renshaw
Rev Walter Rolley
Rev Roger Rooks
Rev Barry Rowe
Rev David Stark
Rev L James Stevens
Rev David U'Ren
Rev Dr Fred Vanclay
Rev Paul Voumard
Rev Frederick Waine

(d) have celebrated 60 years of ordination from the 2013 meeting of Synod and March 2015, and to record their names as follows:

Deaconess Margaret Allan	Rev Dr Noel Schultz
Rev Richard Collard	Rev Bert Stevens
Rev Cyril Germon	Rev Wesley Trigg
Rev Thomas Howells	Rev Beth Walpole
Rev David Rayment	

(e) have celebrated 70 years of ordination from the 2013 meeting of Synod and March 2015, and to record their names as follows:

Rev William Morgan

(f) have been ordained since the 2013 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Temukisa Amituana'i-Vaeluaga	Rev Ross Pearce
Rev Claire Dawe	

(g) have been received from another denomination from the 2013 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Dr Glen O'Brien	Rev Alf Thistlethwaite
Rev Peter Welsh	

14.7.17 ADOPTION OF THE ROLL OF SYNOD

The Synod resolved:

That the Roll of Synod as finalised at 3pm on Sunday 21 September be adopted. (Refer to Appendix AA1.1.)

14.7.18 UNITING AGEWELL

14.7.18.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of Uniting AgeWell.

14.7.18.2 Minute of appreciation – Ms Sharon Donovan

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the work of Sharon Donovan and her significant contribution to the Synod as Executive Director of Uniting AgeWell (formerly Uniting Aged Care) from April 2011 to August 2014.

14.7.18.3 Minute of appreciation – Dr Alan Wilkinson

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the service of Dr Alan Wilkinson for seven years as Chairperson of the Board of Uniting AgeWell (formerly Uniting Aged Care), and to thank Alan most sincerely and extend good wishes to him as he continues to contribute to the ministry of aged care.

14.7.19 COMMISSION FOR MISSION

14.7.19.1 Associations

The Synod resolved:

To associate the following people for the business of the Commission for Mission:

Mr Larry Marshall, Ms Alys Gagnon, Ms Jill Ruzbacky and Ms Stephanie Lagos

14.7.19.2 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Commission for Mission.

14.7.19.3 Justice and International Mission

14.7.19.3.1 Alcohol Reform

The Synod resolved:

(a) To express its deep concern about the misuse of alcohol and the impact this has on the Victorian community, with alcohol being responsible for the preventable deaths of over 600 Victorians each year;

(b) To welcome the actions the Victorian Government has already taken to try and address this problem, particularly those addressing the role of the alcohol industry in the misuse of alcohol;

(c) To urge the Victorian Government to follow the example of Newcastle where further restrictions on liquor outlets were put in place that successfully reduced harm and improved community safety, namely:

  (i) To require liquor outlets be to shut at 3 am to stop serving alcohol at 2:30 am;

  (ii) To require liquor outlets to not serve straight shots after midnight; and

  (iii) To require packaged liquor outlets to not sell alcohol after 10 pm; and

(d) To write to the Victorian Premier, the Minister for Liquor and Gaming Regulation, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Gaming and Racing to inform them of this resolution.

14.7.19.3.2 Protecting people with disabilities

The Synod resolved:

(a) To express concern at the increasing number of cases of abuse, neglect and assault of people with a disability in care identified by the Office of the Public Advocate;

(b) To ask that the Victorian Government increase the powers of investigation of the Office of the Public Advocate; and

(c) To write to the Premier, the Attorney General, the Minister for Community Services, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Attorney General and the Shadow Minister for Mental Health to inform them of this resolution.

14.7.19.3.3 Combating Corruption

The Synod resolved:

(a) To continue its support for action by the Commonwealth Government to combat corruption, both in Australia and internationally; and

(b) To request the Commonwealth Government:

  (i) To modify the Australian Criminal Code to remove the defence of making a facilitation payment to foreign officials when bribes are paid by Australian companies to foreign officials;

(ii) To seek to assist Australian companies being subjected to extortion payments to be able to resist having to make such payments, especially in cases involving foreign officials;

(iii) To extend Australia's anti-money laundering/counter-terrorism financing laws to cover designated non-financial businesses and professions named in the Financial Action Task Force international standards, and specifically to real estate agents in relation to the buying and selling of property, dealers in precious metals and stones, lawyers, accountants, notaries and company service providers;

(iv) To introduce by law a public register of the ultimate beneficial owners of companies and trusts, so that companies and trusts cannot be used as a veil for money laundering activities, and to seek to ensure such registries become a global norm;

(v) To require a bank or other financial institution which assesses that funds it is dealing with have a high risk of being associated with money laundering to refuse to deal with the funds unless instructed otherwise by the appropriate Australian law enforcement agency;

(vi) To modify Australian law so that a public official should be asked to provide a copy of any asset and income declaration form filed with their authorities, as well as subsequent updates, and, if a customer refuses, to require the bank or other financial institution to assess the reasons and to determine, using a risk-based approach, whether to proceed with the business relationship;

(vii) To share information automatically with the relevant foreign authorities when a foreign politically exposed person purchases property or transfers funds to Australia, unless the Australian authorities have some reason to carry out a prosecution of the person themselves and sharing the information would compromise that prosecution, or if the Australian Government has reasonable concerns the information is likely to be misused to carry out human rights abuses;

(viii) To require financial institutions to disclose full details of foreign government assets which they manage;

(ix) To establish a dedicated unit within the Australian Federal Police to investigate money and assets stolen from foreign governments and shifted to Australia by politically exposed persons and to seek to return the stolen assets where possible;

(x) To establish a national unexplained wealth scheme to combat the ability of organised criminals to profit from their crimes, where unexplained wealth provisions are not limited by having to prove a predicate offence;

(xi) To implement an effective non-conviction based confiscation and restraint mechanism to deal with criminal assets transferred from overseas to Australia; and

(xii) To introduce legislation to protect and reward private sector whistle blowers who expose fraud and corruption against Australian governments, similar to laws that already exist in the UK and US; and

(c) To write to the Prime Minister, the Attorney General, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Attorney General to inform them of this resolution.

14.7.19.3.4 TAFE Funding

The Synod resolved:

(a) To express deep concern that the Victorian Government has cut funding (especially 'full-service provider' funding to provide services to students,

including students from disadvantaged backgrounds), to Technical and Further Education institutes (TAFEs);

(b) To express concern this has led to an increase in course fees for many courses offered by TAFEs and to job losses from this sector;

(c) To ask that the $300 million of operating costs cut from the operating budgets of TAFEs be restored; and

(d) To write to the Premier, the Minister for Higher Education and Skills, the Leader of the Opposition and the Shadow Minister for Higher Education to inform them of this resolution.

14.7.20 REVISED ETHICAL INVESTMENT POLICY

The Synod resolved:

(a) To repeal the Ethical Investment Policy of the Synod which was adopted in Synod Minute 03.3.7.1;

(b) To adopt the following revised Ethical Investment Policy for application to all investment decisions of Synod bodies:

Preamble

At its simplest, all Christian discipleship is a response to Christ's 'great commandment' to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. (Matthew 22: 34-40)

The Church, in its worship and mission, including its investment policies and practices, seeks to bear witness to God's love for that which God has created; to support that which enhances life and to resist that which diminishes life.

Positively, the love commandment will motivate the Church, where possible, to invest its financial resources in areas which promote human welfare, dignity and respect, and the general good.

Negatively, this perspective will proscribe investment in enterprises whose products or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe fundamental human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment.

Love of neighbour extends to caring for the natural environment which supports our neighbours' life; and it extends in time to those who come after us – and so long term considerations will also come into decisions relating to investments.

Our theological tradition teaches that we live in a world where God's intention that we live in love, peace and justice has been distorted. Accordingly, our choices are rarely pure or unambiguously good and true. Choices made in good faith are often a careful weighing up of 'the greater good' or the 'lesser of evils'. Such processes will inevitably be part of the context of investment choices.

Investment Process

The investment process will ensure that all investment decisions are made having regard to the values expressed in the preamble and to our requirement to exercise good financial stewardship. Good financial stewardship can be achieved by the evaluation of negative and positive screens together with a focus on appropriate economic returns, investment risks and sustainability. The Church will, where appropriate, undertake a process of engagement with companies involved in unacceptable activities.

The Church, through UCA Funds Management, will participate as socially responsible investors by membership of relevant industry bodies.

Positive screen

We seek to invest in companies which promote human welfare, dignity and respect, and the general good. Examples include companies which produce goods or services which enhance the health and welfare of individuals and communities, and companies which produce goods or services which preserve the environment. Each portfolio managed by UCA Funds Management will maintain at least 10% exposure to positive companies.

Negative screen

We avoid investing in companies whose products, services or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment. Industries included are armaments, uranium, gambling, alcohol production, thermal coal, unconventional oil and gas, tobacco manufacturing and pornography.

Companies are also excluded where their practices are unacceptable in areas such as human rights, occupational health and safety, environmental management and wherever companies support oppressive regimes.

We recognise that there will be occasions when companies inadvertently breach some of the principles and where genuine efforts are made to rectify the breaches.

We will not prohibit investment in a company where a breach of the principles, in relation to its products or services, is immaterial; the breach may also be balanced by other positive actions. The materiality of the breach is determined by reference to its proportion of the company's activities, the proportion of the industry in which the excluded activity operates, and/or whether the activity is clearly of an egregious nature regardless of this proportion.

We acknowledge that decisions may be complex involving a balance between positive and negative factors.

Neutral

The majority of investments will be in companies which are considered to be neutral in terms of the positive and negative screens. Such investments will be made on the basis of investment criteria, which will assist us to exercise good stewardship and provide a reliable source of income and capital growth to the Church. The wise use of resources is, in itself, an ethical outcome.

(c) To note that the Revised Ethical Investment Policy supersedes the policy on investment decisions embodied in Synod Minute 81.4.6.6.

14.7.21 ENERGY REDUCTION COMMITTEE

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Energy Reduction Committee.

14.7.22 FINANCE COMMITTEE

14.7.22.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Finance Committee.

14.7.22.2 Minute of appreciation – Mr Ben Cohen

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the significant contribution of Ben Cohen to the Church and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania as a member of the Audit Committee from 2002 and its Chairperson from 2008 to 2013, and more recently as the first Chairperson of the Finance Committee in 2014.

14.7.23 RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Risk Management Committee.

14.7.24 ASSEMBLY

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Assembly.

14.7.25 MAJOR STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Synod resolved:

(a) To receive the Major Strategic Review report;

(b) To affirm the following as the emerging themes for the Major Strategic Review:

- The changing nature of the church;
- Faith formation and discipleship;
- Leadership, training, governance;
- Relationships and communication;
- Resources: people property, social capital;
- Our financial future;

(c) To request the MSR team to continue to engage in theological reflection, including consultation with the theological college faculty, and that this theological reflection shape and inform the ongoing work of the MSR and its reporting to the church; and

(d) To conclude stages 1 and 2 (Understanding and Preparing for the Journey) of the Major Strategic Review by 31 December 2015, with stage 3 (Shaping the 21st Century Church) to be undertaken progressively during 2015 and beyond.

14.7.26 ROYAL COMMISSION TASK GROUP

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Royal Commission Task Group.

14.7.27 BETHEL PASTORAL CENTRE

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Bethel Pastoral Centre.

14.7.28 DEFENCE FORCES CHAPLAINCY

The Synod resolved:

To receive the Defence Forces Chaplaincy report.

14.7.29 WORKING GROUP ON CHRISTIAN-JEWISH RELATIONS

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Working Group on Christian-Jewish Relations.

14.7.30 ECUMENICAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Ecumenical Relations Committee.

14.7.31 PROPERTY BOARD

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Property Board,

14.7.32 CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY

14.7.32.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Centre for Theology and Ministry.

14.7.32.2 Minute of appreciation – Rev Prof Randall Prior

The Synod resolved:

To give thanks to God for the ministry of Randall Prior as Professor of Ministry Studies and Missiology for the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (2003-2014), for his leadership as Principal of the Uniting Church Theological College (2006-2013), and for his contribution to teaching, research and the formation of candidates for Christian ministry across the Synod over twelve years.

14.7.33 RURAL MINISTRY

The Synod resolved:

(a) To request the Standing Committee to establish a special rural ministry leadership fund with the aim of enabling and promoting ordained and lay ministry leadership in rural Presbyteries;

(b) That the objectives of the fund include enabling the Synod Placements Committee, on the recommendation of the relevant rural Presbytery:

  (i) To provide support for rural placements and other rural situations of need in the areas of innovation, remoteness, disadvantage or strategic capacity; and

  (ii) To provide an incentive on stipend and/or other matters for rural ministry placements.

(c) To request BOMAR to work with rural presbyteries to prepare terms of reference for the Fund, for approval by the Standing Committee no later than June 2015; and

(d) To request the Terms of Placement Committee to find mechanisms that will address the disadvantage that ministers and congregations in rural areas experience where a minister in placement, wishing to live in their own house, has to agree to terms of placement that require the minister to accept less than the housing allowance as set by the synod.

14.7.34 PRESBYTERY REPORTS

The Synod resolved:

To receive the following reports.

Presbytery of Gippsland (H1)
Presbytery of Loddon Mallee (H2)
Presbytery of North East Victoria (H3)
Presbytery of Port Phillip East (H4)
Presbytery of Port Phillip West (H5)
Presbytery of Tasmania (H6)
Presbytery of Western Victoria (H7)
Presbytery of Yarra Yarra (H8)

14.7.35 RECEPTION OF REPORTS

The Synod resolved:

To receive the following reports:

Audit Committee (C2)
Beneficiary Fund (I1)
Committee for Counselling (C4)
Committee for Discipline (C5)
Ethics Committee (C14)
Nominations Advisory Panel (C8)
Pastoral Assistance Committee (C9)
Presbyteries Consultative Group (G2)
Property Trust (Tasmania) (B5.1)
Property Trust (Victoria) (B5.2)
Renewing the Covenant Task Group (D2)
Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee (C12)
Terms of Placement Committee (C13)
Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Victoria) (F2)

14.7.36 APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES, COMMISSIONS AND ECUMENICAL BODIES BY SYNOD 2014

The Synod resolved:

To appoint the following people to the bodies named herein:

A ACCESS ministries

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Rev David Fotheringham	Mr Chris Barnett
	Mrs Lyn Bromage
	Mrs Catherine Clarke

B Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (Chairperson)

To commence 23 September 2014 until the convening of the next ordinary Synod meeting

Rev David Fotheringham

C Australian Church Women (Victorian Unit)

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Mrs Joy Morley

Mrs Margaret Pedler

D Business Committee

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Rev Carol Bennett

Mrs Marjorie Crothers

Mr Geoffrey Grinton

E Council for Chaplaincies in Tertiary Institutions

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

No nominations

F Property Trust (Victoria and Tasmania)

To commence 23 September 2014 until the convening of the next ordinary Synod meeting

Rev David Parker

Mr Robert Costa

Mr Robert Ewing

Dr Fiona Hanlon

Mr Peter Hunter

G Property Trust (Victoria and Tasmania) Chair

To commence 23 September 2014 until the convening of the next ordinary Synod meeting

Rev David Parker

H Terms of Placement Committee

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Rev Dhirendra Narayan

Mr John Eldridge

Rev David Thompson

Mr Jim O'Shea

I Victorian Council of Christian Education

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Rev Sandy Brodine

Mr Chris Barnett

Rev Andrew Delbridge

Ms Joan McRae

J World Day of Prayer Australia

To commence 1 January 2015 and retire 31 December 2017

Mrs Jean Thorpe

14.7.37 BUSINESS COMMITTEE

14.7.37.1 Report

The Synod resolved:

To receive the report of the Business Committee.

14.7.37.2 Appointment of members of Assembly 2015

That the Synod resolve:

To authorise the Standing Committee to make an appointment to fill the vacancy for a lay person of youthful age to Assembly 2015.

14.7.37.3 Date of Synod 2016

The Synod resolved:

(a) To meet at La Trobe University Bundoora in May 2016 or as close to that month as possible, and

(b) To authorise the Standing Committee to finalise a date once the availability of the venue has been determined.

14.7.37.4 Synod Meetings

The Synod resolved:

To request the Standing Committee:

(a) To appoint a task group, through a process which includes inviting expressions of interest, and including people known for their lateral, creative and strategic abilities, to look again at the structure, content, length and timing of the Synod meeting; and

(b) To report, with recommendations, to the next Synod meeting in 2016.

14.7.38 CHAPLAINCY IN STATE SCHOOLS

The Synod resolved:

To request the Standing Committee to appoint a Task Group to explore matters associated with Chaplaincy in State Schools, to establish terms of reference for the Task Group and to bring a report to the meeting of Synod in 2016.

14.7.39 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION

The Synod resolved:

To express the heartfelt thanks of the Synod to the teams who have worked so hard to make Synod 2014 a life-giving time of sharing, discernment and decision-making, of movement and rest, and of some healing and recovery for us and our ‘not so normal’ church.

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