



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES

of the

FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE

SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Held by videoconference

Broadcast from Level 2, 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne, Victoria
26-28 February 2021



Moderator: Rev Denise Liersch

General Secretary: Rev Dr Mark Lawrence

Uniting Church Synod Office

Level 2, Wesley Place
130 Lonsdale Street
MELBOURNE VIC 3000
Telephone: (03) 9116 1400
Website: <http://www.victas.uca.org.au/>



Table of Contents

MINUTES	M5
Resolutions	M23
APPENDICES	
Roll of Synod	AA1.1
Membership of Boards, Commissions, Committees etc	AA2.1
Placements finalised since Synod 2019	AA3.1
'In Memoriam' from Union to Synod 2021	AA4.1
Memorial Minutes	AA5.1
INDEX	



THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF SYNOD HELD IN MELBOURNE

26 – 28 FEBRUARY 2021

All activities were transmitted digitally via videoconference with operations for the meeting based at Wesley Place, Level 2, 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne.

21.1 FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY 2021

21.1.1 COMMENCEMENT

The meeting commenced at 1.45pm with a pre-recorded video of the Welcome to Country by Alison Overeem, Manager Leprena UAICC Tasmania, and greetings and Acknowledgement of Country by Rev Will Pickett, Minister in placement at Henty cluster and member of UAICC Victoria, broadcast to Synod members.

21.1.1.1 Devotions and Bible Study

The Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch opened the meeting in prayer via a pre-recorded video presentation which included the Moderator's Chaplains, Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo and Rev Arnie Wierenga, leading the meeting in prayers and Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe leading Bible Study, on the Synod meeting theme "Like Leaven in the Loaf".

21.1.1.2 Welcome

The Moderator occupied the chair at 2.25pm and welcomed members to the meeting.

The Moderator acknowledged that this Synod meeting was not an ordinary Synod meeting, gathering in a different way to attend to essential business that cannot wait until the next Synod meeting or cannot be dealt with by the Standing Committee.

The Moderator introduced the members on the 'Moderator's table', including Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, General Secretary; Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary; Rev Sue Clarkson, Business Manager, and at all times one of the Moderator's Chaplains, today being Rev Arnie Wierenga.

Dr Deirdre Palmer, President of the National Assembly and Colleen Geyer, General Secretary of National Assembly were both welcomed and it was noted that both would be in attendance for the entire meeting.

Synod meeting members were reminded that the meeting is a safe space and were requested to read the safe space statement in their papers.

The Moderator introduced the Moderator's Chaplains, Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo and Rev Arnie Wierenga who would be leading devotions each day.

The Moderator introduced the Meeting Chaplains Rev Andrew Delbridge, Rev Gospel Ralte and Rev Deacon Wendy Elson.

The Moderator introduced the Safe Meeting Contacts, Rev Sandy Brodine and Rev Dev Anandarajan.

The General Secretary announced that the Synod Roll would be confirmed at 12.00pm on Saturday 27 February 2021, and requested that members email advice of any membership changes.

21.1.2 OPENING BUSINESS

21.1.2.1 Practical Orientation and Housekeeping

Isabel Thomas Dobson, Associate General Secretary and Concierge for the Synod meeting, provided an orientation for how the meeting will operate via videoconference.

21.1.2.2 Theological Orientation

Rev Dr Geoff Thompson presented a theological orientation for the Synod meeting.

21.1.3 SYNOD BUSINESS COMMITTEE (REPORT C1.4)

Rev Sue Clarkson, Chairperson, Business Committee, spoke to a written report regarding the changes to the Synod meeting required due to the current COVID-19 pandemic. She noted the adjustments made to make the meeting accessible. Special thanks were extended to the staff of the Secretariat, in particular Kathryn D'Alessandro, for the meeting's organisation.

Questions on notice were noted and addressed.

21.1.4 SYNOD 2021 PROCEDURES

Rev Sue Clarkson, Chairperson, Business Committee, introduced five proposals associated with the Business Committee's Report.

21.1.4.1 Synod 2021 Procedures (Proposal 1)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) That any proposal which may include financial commitment, not at present included in the Synod Ministries and Operations Consolidated Budget or other appropriate budget of the Synod, be subject to comment by the Chairperson (or nominee) of the Property and Operations Committee after consultation with the Chairperson (or nominee) of the Ministry and Mission Committee;
- (b) To note that the closure time for all nominations, excluding 16th Assembly membership was 12pm Monday 15 February 2021;
- (c) To note that the closure time for 16th Assembly membership nominations was 12pm Friday 19 February 2021;
- (d) That the closure time for receiving proposals be 7.30pm on Friday 26 February 2021;
- (e) That the business of the Synod be dealt with in accordance with the following timetable unless the Synod specifically determines otherwise:

Friday 26 February 2021

Session Time	Session Content
1.45pm – 3.35pm	Session 1 – Welcome, Synod Opening, Devotions, Bible Study, Reports and Moderator's Address
3.35pm – 4.00pm	Afternoon tea break
4.00pm – 6.30pm	Session 2 – Moderator-elect Nominees, Standing Committee, Proposals, Working Groups
6.30pm – 7.30pm	Dinner break
7.30pm – 8.30pm	Session 3 – Synod Worship

Saturday 27 February 2021

Session Time	Session Content
--------------	-----------------

9.00am – 10.35am	Session 4 – Devotions, Bible Study, Proposals, Reports, Reporting Body Questions, Moderator-elect and Standing Committee Ballots (Ballot opens 10.30am and closes 11am)
10.35am – 11.00am	Morning tea break
11.00am – 12.30pm	Session 5 – Proposals/Facilitation Group feedback, Working Groups, Moderator-elect Ballot 2 (if required) (Ballot opens 12.30pm and closes 1.30pm)
12.30pm – 1.30pm	Lunch break
1.30pm – 3.00pm	Session 6 – Annual Financial Report, Reporting Body Questions, Standing Committee Ballot 2 (Ballot opens 3pm and closes 3.30pm)
3.00pm – 3.30pm	Afternoon tea break
3.30pm – 4.35pm	Session 7 – Moderator-elect Announcement and Address, Reporting Body Questions, Theological Reflector

Sunday 28 February 2021

Session Time	Session Content
9.00am – 11.05am	Session 8 – Devotions, Bible Study, UAICC Vic and UAICC Tas Reports, Working Groups
11.05am – 11.30am	Morning tea break
11.30am – 12.30pm	Session 9 – Standing Committee Ballot results announced, Proposals, Tributes Prayer, Assembly Report, Assembly Ballot (Ballot opens 12.30pm and closes 1.30pm)
12.30pm – 1.30pm	Lunch break
1.30pm – 3.15pm	Session 10 – Proposals, General Business, Thanks, Theological Reflector, Closing Worship

21.1.4.2 Appointments and Associations (Proposal 2)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To appoint the following people for the whole of the 2021 Synod Meeting:

Minute Secretary:	Natalie Brown
Returning Officer:	Rod Mummery
Deputy Returning Officer:	Peter Mitchell
Facilitation Group Convenor:	Rev Ian Ferguson
Facilitation Group members:	Dr Paul Chandler
	Rev Jay Robinson
	Nicole Mugford
	Rev Temukisa Amituana'i-Vaeluaga
	Marian Bisset

- (b) To associate the following people for the whole of the 2021 Synod Meeting:

Rev Dr Jione Havea (Theological Reflector)
Natalie Brown (Minute Secretary)

- (c) To associate the following people for specific sessions of the 2021 Synod meeting:

Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe	For the Bible Studies;
Rev Tupe Ioelu	For the Synod Worship;



Dr Mark Zirnsak	For the business of the Ministry and Mission Committee-sponsored Justice and International Mission Cluster proposals;
Rev Sue Withers	For the business of the Placements Committee report;
Rev Dr Deacon Andy Calder	For the business of the Disability Royal Commission Response Task Group report;
Rev Greg Crowe	For the business of the UAICC Victoria report;
Cheryl Lawrie	For the business of Working Groups.

21.1.4.3 Confirmation of Minutes of Synod 2021 (Proposal 3)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That the Moderator, General Secretary, Associate General Secretary and Business Manager be authorised to confirm the Minutes of the 2021 meeting of Synod.

21.1.4.4 Reception of Reports of Synod 2021 (Proposal 4)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To receive all reports from Synod reporting entities provided to the 2021 Synod meeting.

21.1.4.5 Process for Appointing Members to the 16th Assembly (Proposal 15)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To note that the required number of nominees for Ministers and youthful Synod appointees from the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania as members to the 16th Assembly were not received; and
- (b) To address the nominee shortfall by taking the following steps:
 - i. Ministers (11 to be appointed):
 1. that a ballot to determine whether each nominee has the support of a majority of members of Synod be conducted;
 2. that those nominees receiving such support be declared appointed as members of the 16th Assembly; and
 3. to authorise the Standing Committee to fill the remaining positions.
 - ii. Lay Members of youthful age (25 and under) (5 to be appointed)
 1. to conduct a ballot to determine whether each nominee has the support of a majority of members of Synod;
 2. that those nominees receiving such support be declared appointed as members of the 16th Assembly; and
 3. to authorise the Standing Committee to fill the remaining positions.
 - iii. Lay Members beyond youthful age (9 to be appointed):
 1. to conduct a ballot to determine whether each nominee has the support of a majority of members of Synod;
 2. that nominees receiving such support be included in a preferential ballot; and
 3. that the first 9 nominees so elected in the preferential ballot be declared appointed as members of the 16th Assembly.

21.1.5 MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

Rev Sharon Hollis, the Ex-Moderator, assumed the chair and invited the Moderator to give her address.

The Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, provided a reflection and prayer was offered by Rev Sharon Hollis.

Rev Denise Liersch resumed the chair.

21.1.6 MODERATOR-ELECT NOMINATING COMMITTEE (REPORT E2)

Dan Wootton, convenor of the Moderator-elect Nominating Committee presented the Moderator-elect Nominating Committee report.

The meeting viewed video presentations of responses to questions by the three Moderator-elect nominees: Rev Cameron McAdam, Rev Rachel Kronberger and Rev David Fotheringham.

The Moderator thanked the Moderator-elect Nominating Committee for its work in bringing these nominees for consideration of the Synod.

The Moderator thanked the Convenor for his leadership and wished him well in his retirement.

The Moderator advised that the first ballot for Moderator-elect would be held on Saturday 27 February at 10.30am.

The Moderator led the meeting in prayer.

21.1.7 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1)

21.1.7.1 Synod Standing Committee casual vacancy (Proposal 10)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to the proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That the casual vacancy for Synod Standing Committee be filled in the following manner: that the six persons who receive the most support through the voting system that is used will be elected for terms concluding at Synod 2023 and that the next successful candidate will be elected for a term concluding at the 2022 Synod meeting.

21.1.7.2 Moderator Length of Term (Proposal 11)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to the proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To elect the Moderator to commence at the 16th Synod (2022 Synod meeting) for approximately three years, until the commencement of the 18th Synod (2025 Synod meeting); and
- (b) To request the Standing Committee to provide a report and proposals regarding the length of term for future Moderators to the 16th Synod (2022 Synod meeting).

21.1.8 MINISTRY and MISSION COMMITTEE

Rev Graeme Harrison, Chairperson, Ministry and Mission Committee introduced Dr Mark Zirnsak, Senior Social Justice Advocate (eLM), JIM Cluster, who spoke to the four proposals from the Justice and International Mission (JIM) Cluster.

The Moderator invited questions for clarification, noting that the proposals would be discussed in working groups. Questions on notice were addressed by Dr Mark Zirnsak.

21.1.9 SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (REPORT C1)

21.1.9.1 Continuing with the Strategic Framework until 2023 (Proposal 12)

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to the proposal and addressed a question on notice.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) That the current Synod Strategic Framework continue to guide the Synod's ministry, mission, and resourcing priorities until 31 December 2023, noting that if the Synod does not meet until 2024, the Synod's Strategic Framework will continue until that meeting.
- (b) To request the Standing Committee to initiate a review of the Synod Strategic Framework in the year prior to the 2023 Synod meeting, in preparation for determining the Synod's future missional and strategic directions beyond 2023.

21.1.10 WORKING GROUPS (1)

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, introduced the working group process for this meeting.

The Synod met in working groups via videoconference to discuss two JIM Cluster proposals: 'Protecting People on Temporary Visas from Family Violence' (Proposal 7); and 'Climate Justice Action' (Proposal 8).

21.1.11 SYNOD WORSHIP

The pre-recorded Service of Worship – Synod Worship - commenced at 7.30pm.

21.2 SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2021

21.2.1 DEVOTIONS AND BIBLE STUDY

A pre-recorded video of the Moderator's Chaplains, Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo and Rev Arnie Wierenga, leading Devotions and Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe leading Bible Study on the Synod meeting theme "Like Leaven in the Loaf" was broadcast to members.

21.2.2 GENERAL SECRETARY REPORT (REPORT F)

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

The General Secretary, Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, spoke to a written report.

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

21.2.3 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, presented revised proposals arising from feedback from the working groups session on 'Climate Justice Action' (Proposal 17, formerly Proposal 8) and 'Protecting People on Temporary Visas from Family Violence' (Proposal 18, formerly Proposal 7) and discussed the rationale for the revisions.

Dr Mark Zirnsak spoke to the proposed changes to the proposals.

21.2.4 ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT (REPORT F3.1)

Sam Nicholas, Executive Officer, Mission Resourcing Unit (MRU), spoke to a written report and addressed questions on notice.

21.2.5 INTRODUCTION OF BALLOT – MODERATOR-ELECT AND STANDING COMMITTEE (BALLOT 1)

Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, explained the process for Ballot 1, for the Moderator-elect and the Standing Committee and advised that the ballot would close in 30 minutes at 11.15am on 27 February.

Ballot 1 for the Moderator-elect and Standing Committee ballot were made available to members.

The Moderator led the Synod in prayer.

21.2.6 MINISTRY AND MISSION COMMITTEE

21.2.6.1 Minute of Appreciation: Rev Graeme Harrison as Chairperson of the Ministry and Mission Committee (Proposal 13)

Rev Ikani Vaitohi, member of Synod Standing Committee and Ministry and Mission Committee, presented the Minute of Appreciation for Rev Graeme Harrison's term as Chairperson of the Ministry and Mission Committee which concludes on 31 March 2021.

The Synod resolved by consensus and acclamation:

To record its appreciation to Rev Graeme Harrison for his faithful leadership and commitment as the Chairperson of the Ministry and Mission (M&M) Committee of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

Rev Graeme Harrison was appointed as the inaugural Chairperson of the Ministry and Mission Committee following the 2017 Synod governance restructure. Graeme took up this role and worked enthusiastically to build the Ministry and Mission Committee into a team.

Graeme's quality of leadership and experience has served the Committee well over this time of transition and consolidation. Often dealing with complex situations and navigating uncharted territories, Graeme brought energy, experience and expertise in leadership and change development to the work of the Committee.

As Chairperson of the Board of Mission and Resourcing (BOMAR), Convenor of the Board's Strategy Committee, and as a member of the Major Strategic Review Team, Graeme's experience has had a significant impact in shaping how the M&M Committee works, turning its attention to the Vision and Mission Principles and contributing to how the Committee relates to all the various different bodies under its oversight and with whom it is in partnership.

Graeme's calm and gentle personality has brought strength to the role. He operates relationally with a pastoral approach that holds him in good stead, especially in developing positive working relationships across various Synod committees.

Graeme has a unique gift in building teams, to move projects towards completion and to reflect upon progress and work together to overcome obstacles. Graeme has initiated tough conversations within meetings to bring about awareness of the urgency to resource the Church to be church in new ways.

Graeme's life-long passion for God's mission to be expressed in the world through the ministry of the Church remains his inspiration and unwavering commitment. Graeme has been consistent in wanting the Church to be its best and naming where he sees that the Church is not being its best.

The Synod expresses its deep gratitude and thanks to the Rev Graeme Harrison for all that he has given of his gifts, time and dedication to the Synod's work as the Chairperson of the Ministry and Mission Committee.

We wish Graeme God's rich blessings for the journey ahead.

Rev Graeme Harrison responded to the minute, reflecting on his time in leadership.

21.2.7 BALLOT PROCESS

Rev Sue Clarkson, Business Committee Convenor, advised that there had been technical problems with Ballot 1, and therefore it would need to be re-run. Any ballots cast would not count. A new poll would be issued once there was a solution to the technical problems.

21.2.8 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, introduced the process for the second working groups.

21.2.9 WORKING GROUPS (2)

The Synod met in working groups via videoconference to consider 'Online safety and curbing online child sexual exploitation' (Proposal 9) and 'Online Gambling Advertising Reform' (Proposal 6).

21.2.10 PROCEDURAL RESOLUTION

The Synod resolved by consensus to extend the session by 15 minutes.

21.2.11 BALLOT 1

Upon rectification of the Ballot program, Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, introduced and explained how to access Ballot 1 and advised that the poll would be open until 1.30pm on Saturday 27 February 2021.

The Moderator led the meeting in prayer.

21.2.12 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TO REPORTING BODIES – Ministry and Mission Committee, Placements Committee, Property and Operations Committee, Ethics Committee, Synod Ministries and Operations, and Synod Disability Royal Commission Task Group

21.2.12.1 Ministry and Mission Committee (Report C1.1)

Rev Graeme Harrison, Ministry and Mission Committee Chairperson, responded to questions received on notice.

21.2.12.2 Placements Committee (Report C1.3)

Rev David Fotheringham, Placements Committee Chairperson, and Rev Sue Withers, Secretary, were introduced. No questions on notice were received.

21.2.12.3 Property and Operations Committee (Report C1.2)

Rev Stan Clarke, Property and Operations Committee Chairperson, and Jim Milne, Secretary, were introduced. Questions on notice were addressed. Rev Stan Clarke expressed the Committee's thanks to Jim Milne, noting he was to retire as Property Officer on 31 March 2021.

21.2.12.4 Synod Ethics Committee (Report C1.8)

Rev Claire Dawe, Synod Ethics Committee Chairperson was introduced. No questions on notice were received.

21.2.12.5 Synod Ministries and Operations (Reports F1-F3)

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, General Secretary, was introduced. No questions on notice were received.

21.2.12.6 Disability Royal Commission Response Task Group (Report E1)

Rev Dr Deacon Andy Calder, Task Group Chairperson was introduced. No questions on notice were received.

21.2.13 SYNOD BUSINESS COMMITTEE

21.2.13.1 Date of Synod 2022 (Proposal 16)

Rev Sue Clarkson, Business Committee Chairperson, introduced the proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To meet in July 2022 or as close to that month as possible; and
- (b) To authorise the Standing Committee to finalise a meeting date for Synod 2022, after receiving advice from the Business Committee.

21.2.14 STANDING COMMITTEE

21.2.14.1 Process Response to Potential Voluntary Assisted Dying Legislation in Tasmania (Proposal 14)

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence, General Secretary, spoke to the proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

That in the event of the Parliament of Tasmania passing legislation to allow Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) procedures in Tasmania, to request that the Standing Committee initiate a process regarding the response of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania, including its institutions, to the Tasmanian VAD legislation; and

(a) that this process include, but not necessarily be limited to, consultation with:

- presbyteries, particularly the Presbytery of Tasmania;
- Uniting AgeWell;
- Uniting Vic.Tas;
- the Faculty of Pilgrim Theological College; and
- the Synod Ethics Committee.

(b) present a report with proposals to the 2022 Synod meeting.

21.2.15 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, outlined feedback received regarding Proposal 19 'Climate Justice Action' (formerly Proposals 17 and 8).

21.2.16 MINISTRY AND MISSION COMMITTEE – JIM Cluster

21.2.16.1 Climate Justice Action (Proposal 19)

The Synod resolved by agreement:

- (a) To acknowledge that God calls us to live in harmony with our natural environment and to seek justice and well-being for all creation.
- (b) To affirm the covenanting relationship between the Uniting Church in Australia and the UAICC, and our relationships with our partner churches in the Pacific as these groups are significantly impacted by climate change.
- (c) To acknowledge that the World Council of Churches Executive Committee has declared a climate emergency "which demands an urgent and unprecedented response by everyone everywhere".

- (d) To acknowledge the need for immediate and substantial action by governments, businesses and communities, including the councils and institutions of the church in this Synod, to mitigate climate change caused by human activity and the threat it poses to God's good creation.
- (e) To undertake urgent action on climate change based on the overwhelming scientific evidence and the Synod Vision and Mission Principles that guide the Synod to "care for creation" and "live justly and seek justice for all".
- (f) To encourage members of the Church to join the Synod Climate Action Task Force to identify and facilitate actions for the councils and institutions of the Church in this Synod to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.
- (g) To request congregations to inform their presbyteries what actions they are already taking to address climate change, and for the presbyteries to provide that information to the Synod Climate Action Task Force, and report back to Synod 2022 with an update.
- (h) To thank the Commonwealth Government for its efforts to promote greater recycling and reduction in waste generation in Australia.
- (i) To call on the Commonwealth Government to commit to:
 - (i) showing leadership in taking actions to limit global average temperature rise to 1.5°C above preindustrial levels;
 - (ii) net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 at the latest;
 - (iii) meaningful engagement and support for communities currently dependent on coal mines or coal-fired power stations to allow for a just transition away from financial dependence on fossil fuel production and consumption;
 - (iv) not providing financial support to new natural gas developments; assisting businesses to reduce or eliminate any dependence on natural gas, and Australia's natural gas requirements being met by reserving a portion of existing production, as is already the case in Western Australia;
 - (v) no financial or other support for new coal-fired power stations;
 - (vi) no approval for new coal mines and coal mine expansions of existing mines; and
 - (vii) continued support for the uptake of renewable energy sources.
- (j) To commend the Victorian Government for the passage of the *Climate Change Act 2017* that sets a target of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- (k) To commend the Tasmanian Government for:
 - (i) establishing an aspirational emissions reduction target of net-zero emissions by 2050;
 - (ii) having 90 per cent of its electricity generated from renewable sources;
 - (iii) having set a target of 200 per cent renewable energy generation by 2040; and
 - (iv) having reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 95 per cent on 1990 levels.
- (l) To call on the Tasmanian Government to legislate the net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050, including a credible mechanism to progressively achieve the target.

- (m) To write to the Prime Minister, the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Climate Change and Energy, the Leader of the Greens, the Premier of Victoria, the Victorian Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and the Premier of Tasmania informing them of this resolution

21.2.17 DECLARATION OF BALLOT 1 - MODERATOR-ELECT

The Moderator advised that the result of the first ballot for Moderator-elect was that the preferred nominee was Rev David Fotheringham, and that the next phase of the ballot process would be held later that afternoon.

The Moderator invited the meeting to bring to mind all three nominees, and led the meeting in prayer.

21.2.18 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, outlined the feedback received regarding Proposal 18 (formerly 7) 'Protecting people on Temporary Visas from Family Violence'.

Dr Mark Zirnsak spoke to the changes to the proposal and addressed questions received.

21.2.19 MINISTRY AND MISSION COMMITTEE – JIM Cluster

21.2.19.1 Protecting People on Temporary Visas from Family Violence (Proposal 18)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

- (a) To call on the Commonwealth Government to introduce reforms to ensure:
 - (i) The definition of family violence as it applies to people on temporary visas is broad enough to include all recognised forms of family violence;
 - (ii) People on temporary visas can report family violence and seek assistance as a result of family violence without there being a risk they will face removal from Australia for doing so;
 - (iii) Survivors of family violence on temporary visas can apply for permanent residency in their own right;
 - (iv) Survivors of family violence on temporary visas are provided with access to appropriate stable accommodation, income support and support services; and
 - (v) Those on temporary visas are aware of the assistance available to them if they experience family violence.
- (b) To inform the Prime Minister; the Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs; the Minister for Women; the Leader of the Opposition; the Shadow Minister for Immigration and Citizenship; the Shadow Minister for Women and the Leader of the Greens of this resolution.

21.2.20 STANDING COMMITTEE

21.2.20.1 Appointments of Placements Committee Chairperson and Property Trust Members and Chairperson by Synod 2021 (Proposal 5)

Rev Dr Mark Lawrence spoke to the proposal.

The Synod resolved by consensus:

To appoint the following people to the bodies named below:

- (a) Placements Committee Chairperson

To commence 28 February 2021 until the conclusion of the next ordinary meeting of Synod

Rev David Fotheringham

(b) Property Trusts (Victoria and Tasmania) members

To commence 28 February 2021 until the conclusion of the next ordinary meeting of Synod

Kenneth Tabart

David Rowe

Helen Geard

(c) Property Trusts (Victoria and Tasmania) Chairperson

To commence 28 February 2021 until the conclusion of the next ordinary meeting of Synod

Robert Hodges

21.2.21 BALLOT MODERATOR-ELECT (BALLOT 2), SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE (BALLOT 2) and 16th ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, explained the process for the Ballots noting that Ballot 2 for Moderator-elect was required to confirm that the preferred candidate had the support of two-thirds of the Synod members.

The Moderator advised that the ballots were open and would close at 3.30pm (30 mins).

The Moderator led the meeting in prayer.

21.2.22 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, outlined the feedback received from the second working groups session regarding Proposal 9 and introduced the redrafted proposal - Proposal 20 'Online safety and preventing online child sexual exploitation' (formerly Proposal 9) noting that a preamble had been included.

Dr Mark Zirnsak spoke to the changes to the proposal and addressed questions received.

21.2.23 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – Uniting, Uniting AgeWell, and U Ethical

21.2.23.1 Uniting (Report B5)

Jude Munro, Board Chair, Uniting, and Bronwyn Pike, CEO, Uniting were introduced. No questions on notice were received. Both representatives briefly shared recent work and events of Uniting.

21.2.23.2 Uniting AgeWell (Report B4)

Raelene Thompson, Board Chair, Uniting AgeWell, and Andrew Kinnersly, CEO, Uniting AgeWell were introduced. Both representatives responded to questions on notice.

21.2.23.3 U Ethical (Report B3)

Mat Browning, CEO, U Ethical, was introduced. No questions on notice were received. Mat briefly shared recent work and events of U Ethical.

The Moderator thanked all representatives for their work and extended the thanks of Synod to their organisations as expressions of the Church's mission.



21.2.24 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Convenor of the Facilitation Group, addressed questions received regarding Proposal 20 'Online safety and preventing online child sexual exploitation' (formerly Proposal 9) including changes to the preamble.

21.2.25 MINISTRY AND MISSION COMMITTEE – JIM Cluster

21.2.25.1 Online safety and preventing online child sexual exploitation (Proposal 20, formerly Proposal 9)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

The Synod acknowledges:

The gospel calls us to relate to each other with love, treating each other with dignity and respect, and to condemn exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people. God's people are called to pursue justice including by empowering those who are exploited and abused.

The covenanting relationship between the Uniting Church in Australia and the UAICC, as we pursue justice together.

In our age, there is a need to prevent and address human rights abuses online, including acting against the promotion and facilitation of child sexual abuse.

It is the role of Parliament, through the laws it passes, to provide the framework for how law enforcement agencies and the courts can access information and people's communication online. This is not a role for technology corporations.

That the Synod resolve:

- (a) To commend the Commonwealth Government for its preparedness to act to make the online world a safer place for everyone.
- (b) To call on the Commonwealth Government to ensure that the laws governing social media and the online world give law enforcement agencies the tools and budgets needed to prevent and address harms online. Such laws need to:
 - (i) Be effective and expedient to maximise the number of cases of harm that can be prevented and to ensure that evidence is not destroyed;
 - (ii) Provide appropriate protections for the privacy of people not engaged in inflicting harm on others or criminal activity without undermining the ability of law enforcement agencies to address serious online harms;
 - (iii) Provide thorough oversight and transparency on how law enforcement agencies use the powers they are provided with; and
 - (iv) Provide adequate sanctions to deter any misuse of powers granted to law enforcement agents.
- (c) To commend the Commonwealth Government for its resourcing of the e-Safety Commissioner to educate the community about online safety.
- (d) To call on the Commonwealth Government to ensure Australian law enforcement agencies work effectively with overseas law enforcement agencies to investigate and gather evidence of child sexual exploitation that have partly or wholly taken place in Australia or involving Australian residents.
- (e) To call on the Commonwealth Government to ensure Australian law enforcement agencies take reasonable steps to guarantee information provided to overseas law enforcement agencies will not itself be used to perpetrate human rights abuses.

- (f) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Home Affairs, the Minister for Communication, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, the Shadow Minister for Communications and the Leader of the Greens of this resolution.

21.2.26 PROCEDURAL

The General Secretary announced that the Synod roll had closed.

21.2.27 ADOPTION OF THE ROLL OF SYNOD

The Associate General Secretary, Isabel Thomas Dobson, proposed the adoption of the Synod Roll.

The Synod resolved:

That the Roll of Synod as finalised at 12.00 pm on Saturday 27 February 2021 be adopted. (Refer to Appendix AA1.)

21.2.28 BALLOT – DECLARATION OF MODERATOR 2022 – 2025

The Moderator announced the election of Rev David Fotheringham as Moderator 2022-2025. This was received with acclamation.

The Moderator-elect addressed the meeting. The Moderator prayed for David and the other nominees and their families, and for the Church.

21.2.29 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A theological reflection was presented by Rev Dr Jione Havea.

21.2.30 CLOSING PRAYER

The Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch, closed the day with prayer.

21.3 SUNDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2021

21.3.1 DEVOTIONS AND BIBLE STUDY

A pre-recorded video of the Moderator's Chaplains, Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo and Rev Arnie Wierenga, leading a devotion and Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe leading Bible study on the Synod meeting theme "Like leaven in the loaf" was broadcast to members.

The Moderator welcomed all members to the last day of the Synod meeting and thanked Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe for her Bible studies over the last three days and the Moderator's Chaplains for their leadership of the devotions throughout the meeting.

21.3.2 UNITING ABORINGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (VICTORIA) (REPORT G2)

The Moderator introduced Rev Greg Crowe, Chairperson of the Victorian UAICC Oversight Group. No questions on notice were received.

Rev Greg Crowe acknowledged the work of the staff at Narana and in particular Melesa Osborne, Manager.

21.3.3 UNITING ABORINGINAL AND ISLANDER CHRISTIAN CONGRESS (TASMANIA) (REPORT G1)

The Moderator introduced Alison Overeem, Centre Manager, Leprena, UAICC Tasmania. A visual presentation was provided and questions on notice were addressed.

21.3.4 INTRODUCTION TO A DISCUSSION ON COVENANTING

Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes, Executive Officer, equipping Leadership for Mission, introduced a discussion on covenanting which was to be explored during working groups.

21.3.5 WORKING GROUPS (3)

The Synod met in working groups via videoconference for a discussion on covenanting.

21.3.6 BALLOT – DECLARATION OF BALLOT 2: SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE

The Moderator, announced those who had been elected to the Standing Committee.

(a) Elected until the 2023 Synod meeting

Rev John Clarke
Rev Stan Clarke
Belinda Clear
Ron Gowland
Rev Berlin Guerrero
Cameron Shields

(b) Elected until the 2022 Synod meeting

Karen Eller

The Moderator thanked Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, and those elected to serve the Church on the Synod Standing Committee. The Moderator acknowledged ongoing members, ex officio members, and the new ex officio member Rev David Fotheringham – Moderator-elect.

21.3.7 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Jay Robinson, Facilitation Group member, outlined the feedback received from working group sessions regarding 'Online Gambling Advertising Reform' (Proposal 21, formerly Proposal 6).

21.3.7.1 Online Gambling Advertising Reform (Proposal 21, formerly Proposal 6)

The Synod resolved by consensus:

The Synod acknowledges:

The gospel calls us to relate to each other with love, treating each other with dignity and respect, and to condemn exploitation and abuse of vulnerable people.

The covenanting relationship between the Uniting Church in Australia and the UAICC, as we walk together.

The Synod resolution 11.6.18.2.1 which called on the Federal Government "To introduce legislation and regulation to end aggressive and unethical marketing activities by online sports wagering companies".

Since that time the evidence is that harm from online gambling has increased, especially during the COVID restrictions.

The Synod therefore resolves:

- (a) To thank the Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth Parliament for the introduction of several reforms to reduce the harm caused by online gambling corporations.
- (b) To call on the Commonwealth Government and Commonwealth Parliament to introduce legislation to end gambling advertising and marketing by businesses

regulated by the *Interactive Gambling Act 2001* to reduce further online gambling-related harm and the exposure of children to gambling advertising.

- (c) To inform the Prime Minister, the Minister for Communication, Cyber Safety and the Arts, the Leader of the Opposition, the Shadow Minister for Communications and the Leader of the Greens of this resolution.

The Moderator thanked Dr Mark Zirnsak and all the JIM Cluster for bringing the well-researched and reasoned proposals to the Synod meeting.

21.3.8 RECOGNITION OF TRIBUTES AND THANKSGIVING FOR MINISTRY (REPORT E4)

The Moderator relocated to the chapel.

The Moderator invited members to acknowledge the First Peoples on the land on which they are located and led the meeting in prayer for those named in the Tributes and Thanksgiving for Ministry.

The Moderator and Rev Arnie Wierenga lit candles in tribute for each group of Ministers identified.

The Synod gave thanks to God for the life and witness of Ministers who:

- (a) have died since the 2019 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Murray Allen	Rev Stewart Paddle
Rev Albert Bell	Rev Alexander (Alex) Palmer
Rev Laurel Davey	Rev David Pentecost
Rev William du Plessis	Rev Darryl Porritt
Rev Edward (Ted) Edwards	Rev Charles (Lindsay) Purdie
Rev Alfred (Alf) Foote	Rev Lesley Sheckleton
Rev John Gardner	Rev Robert (Bob) Seipolt
Rev Ronald Gordon	Rev L James (Jim) Stevens
Rev Samuel (Lindsay) Gorfine	Rev Norman Tong
Rev Boyd Granzow	Rev Paul Voumard
Rev Alan Hardie	Rev Frank Walker
Rev Barbara Higgins	Rev Emeritus Prof Henry (Harry) Wardlaw
Rev Alexander (Alec) Hilliard	Rev Joseph (Joe) Wilson
Rev Murray Little	

- (b) have retired since the 2019 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Tim Angus	Rev Youn Sang Kim
Rev Wayne Brown	Rev Philip Liebelt
Rev Brian Cole	Rev Christine MacDowall
Rev Paul Creasey	Rev Roslyn McDonald
Ref Jeff Dart	Rev Christine Moimoi
Rev Kevin Dobson	Rev Johannes Schaefer
Rev Robert Elkhuisen	Rev Sue Stott
Rev Glenys Gill	Rev Bruce Wood
Rev Peter Grayson-Weeks	Rev Peter Whitaker
Rev Kim Groot	

- (c) have celebrated 50 years of ordination or commissioning from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, and to record their names as follows:

Rev Laurel Davey	Rev George Robertson
Rev Dr Graeme Gibbons	Rev Leonard Sherratt
Rev Emeritus Prof Robert Gribben	Rev David Sloane
Rev Rodney Horsfield	Rev Geoffrey Smith
Rev Pamela Kerr	Rev Terence Trewavas
Rev Graeme Kerr	Rev Ron Upson
Rev Keith Kynoch	Rev John van Riet
Rev Ian Littler	Rev Dr Alexander Little
Rev Robert Ower	

- (d) have celebrated 60 years of ordination from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, and to record their names as follows:

Rev Andrew Hope	Rev Douglas Lloyd
Rev Peter Aumann	Rev Dr Francis Macnab
Rev Deacon Margaret Black	Rev Donald McLean
Rev Deacon Katharine Davies	Rev Dr David Merritt
Rev John Howard	Rev Siupeli Taliai
Rev Graeme James	Rev Harold Taylor
Rev Wally Johnson	Rev Ian Williamson
Rev Raymond Jones	

- (e) have celebrated 65 years of ordination from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, and to record their names as follows:

Rev Wesley Trigg	Rev Stanley Bannon
Rev Dr Noel Schultz	Rev Dr Warren Bartlett

- (f) have celebrated 70 years of ordination from 1 January 2020 to 30 June 2021, and to record their names as follows:

Rev Raymond Outhred

- (g) have been ordained since the 2019 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Joy Blamiers	Rev Joedy Meers
Rev Deacon Fiona Bottcher	Rev Trang Vo
Rev Annetia Goldsmith	Rev Mike You

- (h) have been received from another denomination since the 2019 meeting of Synod and to record their names as follows:

Rev Ajub Jahja
 Rev Sung Hyun Joo
 Rev Jong Eog Lee
 Rev Gordon Wild

21.3.9 ASSEMBLY

The Moderator welcomed Dr Deidre Palmer, President, National Assembly and Colleen Geyer, General Secretary, National Assembly, to present the Assembly report to the meeting.

The President and General Secretary gave a visual and verbal report. Questions on notice were received and addressed.

The Moderator thanked the Assembly President and General Secretary for their time sharing with the Synod meeting and expressed appreciation for their leadership.

The Moderator acknowledged that Rev Sharon Hollis, the Synod Ex-Moderator, is also the Assembly President-elect, and assured her of the Synod's prayers as she prepares to take on the role of President at the 16th Assembly meeting in July 2021.

21.3.10 BALLOT ASSEMBLY MEMBERSHIP

Rod Mummery, Returning Officer, explained the ballot process for appointment of members to the 16th Assembly, noting that all nominees received majority support. The only ballot required was a preferential ballot for lay members not of a youthful age. The ballot would be open until 1.30pm on Sunday 28 February 2021.

The Moderator advised that the results would be distributed by email to Synod members over the coming days.

21.3.11 FACILITATION GROUP

Rev Ian Ferguson, Facilitation Group Convenor, presented a summary of the diverse feedback received from the working groups on covenanting.

Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes responded, acknowledging that all feedback is helpful and that covenanting is a difficult journey that is challenging for all involved.

The Moderator thanked the Facilitation Group, and acknowledged the work load had been much more intense, with the same engagement required over a shorter period of time than available in other Synod meetings.

The Synod affirmed this with acclamation.

21.3.12 ONE MINUTE SPEECHES

Six members made one minute speeches to the Synod.

21.3.13 MINUTE OF APPRECIATION

Andrew Boatman presented a proposal, thanking all those people who had contributed to the successful organisation and running of the Synod Meeting.

The Moderator added personal thanks to the Synod Intercultural Forum, Rev Will Pickett and Alison Overeem who had been consulted in the preparation for Synod.

The Synod resolved by acclamation.

21.3.14 THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

A theological reflection was presented by Rev Dr Jione Havea.

The Moderator, thanked Jione for his reflections throughout the Synod meeting.

21.3.15 CLOSING WORSHIP AND COMMISSIONING

The Moderator and Rev Sylvia Akauola-Tongotongo led members in the closing worship, with the Moderator providing a reflection. The service included a commissioning of elected and appointed Synod committee members and leaders.

The meeting closed at 2.55pm.

