

This report is based on the Synod Directions framework.

1. Enacting the Synod/Presbyteries partnership

- Support for our congregations and faith communities in our NRCC and PPNA Presbyteries, many conversations with Rev Bruce and Rev Steve.
- Also many conversations with Moderator Thresi and have been using the Synod Leadership Team (Moderator, two Presbytery Ministers, General Secretary) on a more regular basis.
- The General Secretary serves as the PPNA Pastoral Relations and Placements Committee secretary.
- He also is the Synod representative on the National Task Group concerning the Royal Commission into Child Sex Abuse.
- Rev Helen Paine as our Safe Church Coordinator is doing great work in putting together our Safe Church policy and procedures manual.
- Jemma Whittaker works part-time to liaise and facilitate participation of our young people from both NRCC and PPNA in Synod and national youth/young adult activities.
- Revision of the Synod By-Laws is underway but progress has been slow. The FAPS Committee has completed review of the congregation Treasurer's Handbook and has made a good start of the Finance and Property By-Laws.
- CBD Plaza profit distribution continues to underpin the Synod financially.
- With the closure of Frontier Services as an aged care and patrol ministry service provider, the Synod has taken on the Centralian, Barkly and West Arnhem Patrols. Aged care facilities in the NT are now managed by Australian Rural and Remote Community Services (ARRCS) and Juniper (UnitingCare WA) in Western Australia.
- In Central Australia a conversation involving the Alice Springs congregation, both Presbyteries and the Synod has commenced, seeking God's ways of being and doing remote area ministry together.

2. Coordinate/CSIS - Supporting Indigenous Scriptures

Coordinate Resource Worker Louise Macdonald continues the work in this area. A feature of 2015 was the Coordinate meeting at Riyala where our Indigenous translators raised their concerns and requested greater input into the translation decision making process. As in previous years, cooperation continues with our AuSIL, Bible Society, Nungalinya, ARDS and MAF partners.

3. Supporting our Synod agencies

Kormilda College: The General Secretary serves as the College Board Chair. The Synod FAPS Committee has provided financial loan assistance to enable the College to move to longer term sustainability. The College remains in a challenging position and the Kormilda Board has sought greater assistance from the Anglican Church partner to secure the College's future.

St Philips College: Discussions with the Board Chair and Principal regarding the College becoming separately incorporated along the same lines as Kormilda, whilst still remaining a Uniting Church College, have begun.

Nungalinya College: The Uniting Church funds three teaching staff at Nungalinya. Of particular note is the interest in Theology Certificate III and IV and Certificate II Media and Music courses. Mr Marajta Dhamarrandji has been appointed as Chairperson of the new College Board, now formed under Office of the Registrar for Indigenous Corporations.

ARDS: In latter 2015 CEO Chris Marshall returned to Melbourne to care for his wife. Ms Johanna Ward was appointed as CEO and is working with the NRCC appointed Board to refocus the organisation as the focus of government funding bodies has also changed.

Somerville: This year celebrated 50 years of service to the community. A related theme is the high number of staff who have also served with Somerville for more than 10 years, with others serving more than 20. Daphne Read serves as the Somerville representative on the UnitingCare National Reference Committee. The role being played by Somerville CEO Vicki O'Halloran as the Chair of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) is very significant.

4. Advocating for justice

The main areas of activity and/or advocacy have been:

- Dialysis on Country;
- Indigenous education, specifically the closure of secondary education in Aboriginal communities and increased funding for Indigenous boarding students;
- Withdrawal of funding/closure of homelands in Western Australia and possibly the Northern Territory;
- The NT Intervention and Aboriginal languages/Bilingual Education have been retained in the Our Views section of the Synod website;
- Supporting PPNA/Rev Basil Schild in the asylum seeker, social justice/environment area.

Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse: A Northern Synod Task Group has been established with Thresi Mauboy, Helen Paine, Steve Orme, Robyn Kidd, Bruce Slater and Peter Jones. The main focus of the Task Group has been to implement the Safe

Church program, which focusses on making our meeting places safe for all who are involved.

5. Furthering ecumenical and inter-faith relationships

Our Moderator has continued to be active with other NT Heads of Church and through support for the NT Council of Churches. We have ongoing relationships with the Anglicans through Nungalinya and Kormilda Colleges and the Catholics through Nungalinya College and through asylum seeker activity.

6. Strengthening our International partner church relationships

Our partner Synod in Nusa Tenggara Timur, Geneja Masehi Injili Di Timor – Majelis Sinode (GMIT) is involved in Bible translation work through Unit Bahasa dan Budaya (UBB).

There exists a strong relationship between Bible translators within our Synod and UBB which is about mutual support and encouragement together with professionalism. Together we seek to grow true mutuality in this relationship.

7. Telling our story

The Synod website and occasional eNews distributions have sought to keep people informed. We have also used emails to communicate with Ministers, Congregation Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers.

Significant Issue – Woolworths/Caltex Petrol Station

At our 2014 Synod, there was considerable consideration about the FAPS decision to enter into an Agreement to Lease with Woolworths for a petrol station. The matter concerning the petrol station is now with the NT Government's Development Consent Authority and a decision is expected this dry season. The Standing Committee was asked to review this matter and has developed a new policy on Ethical Guidelines for commercial Decision-making that will be considered at this Synod.

Rebuilding capacity

Rebuilding capacity within the Synod in support of congregation, presbytery and synod mission and ministry activities has continued. It is important to note that since 2008 the following resource people have been added: one full-time bookkeeper, PPNA Presbytery Minister increased from part-time to full-time, a full-time Property Officer, a part-time National Youth Activities Officer linking our Synod into specific projects such as National

Young Adult Leaders Conference (NYALC), About Face, National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) and the School of Discipleship, a part-time Safe Church Coordinator and in 2105 we add a part-time Moderator.

Score card?

In the view of the General Secretary, Synod performance in implementing the Synod Directions could be rated as:

Very well: enacting the PPNA/NRCC/Synod partnership; Coordinate/CSIS; support for Synod agencies; international church partnerships with West Timor.

OK: ecumenical and inter-faith relationships, advocating for justice.

Poorly: telling our story; regular communications with congregations; revising Synod By Laws.

Thanks go to the Synod Leadership Team and Synod staff, without whose support, not much of the above would have happened.

Peter Jones
General Secretary