

Matters reported to Synod Standing Committee

Meetings: Standing Committee met on 1 October 2016, 18 March and 20 May 2017.

Members: Thresi Mauboy Wohangara, Bruce Slater (in 2016), Djawanydjawany Gondarra, Ronan Garrawurra, Wendy Beresford-Maning, Lee Levett-Olson, Steve Orme, Felicity Amery, Barry Hansen, Teubiti Tapera, Chris Paine, Gary Lewis (in 2016), Jemma Whittaker, Yanyi Bandicha (in 2016), Mätjarra Garrawurra, Peter Jones..

Issues

1. *Kidney Disease in the Northern Synod*

Standing Committee continues to monitor developments in the APY Lands concerning the provision of dialysis on country. Benjamin Quilliam, the new Remote Area Ministry minister based in Alice is taking up advocacy on this matter. Another health and wellbeing matter concerns the NT Government change to the law about abortion. The Moderator, Gurimaju, Steve Orme and Jo Ward from ARDS met with the Health Minister Natasha Fyles following her invitation to meet with all churches.

2. *Bring them Here*

The Assembly of the Uniting Church has a campaign Bring them here, seeking to have the refugees detained on Mannis Island and Naru brought to Australia. A banner with the words: Bring them Here has been hung on the Synod front fence.

3. *Closure of Homeland Centres*

Due to the change of Northern Territory and Western Australian Governments the Standing Committee requested the General Secretary write a letter to the NT Chief Minister and the WA Minister for Aboriginal Affairs. We do so in support of Aboriginal people living on homeland centres who may lose Government funding for essential services (power and water)

4. *Woolworths Petrol Station*

Standing Committee has continued to monitor and consider this matter. Woolworths has been advised that no further approval to seek development consent to establish the petrol station will be given. It may be noted Woolworths has withdrawn its latest application to the NT Development Consent Authority.

5. *Assembly Disaster Recovery Officer*

If there were a cyclone or other natural disaster in the Northern Synod, not only is the Synod not very well organized, but neither are any of the other churches. The

Northern Territory Council of Churches and the Synod have applied for and received a grant from the Northern Territory Government to provide training for chaplains from all denominations so they may then be recognised within the NT Disaster Recovery Plan. Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, the Assembly's Disaster Recovery Officer, has travelled to Darwin to provide the training.

6. *General Secretary's Term*

The General Secretary's ten year term finishes on 31st December 2017. A report from the Committee established by the Standing Committee concerning a one year extension will be considered during this Synod.

7. *Safe Church Officer*

Rev. Helen Paine is our Safe Church Officer. In the last 12 months the policies that underpin our Safe Church approach have been finalized and approved by the Standing Committee, which has enabled Helen to complete much of our Safe Church manual. Due to Helen being on carers leave for most of this year, further progress has been limited but is ongoing. Our Safe Church Officer will report later during the Synod.

8. *Moderator-elect term*

Standing Committee formed a working group to consider an extension of our Moderator for another term. The working group will report later during the Synod.

9. *Marriage Conversation*

The President, Stuart McMillan, has arranged two consultations on marriage. The Northern Synod sent four representatives to each of these meetings. The current UCA policy still stands and this matter has come to the fore again because of the conversations taking place in the general community about the possibility of the introduction of same sex marriage legislation.

10. *National Cooperation*

Several working groups comprising people from each Synod have been formed to look at areas such as insurance, motor vehicles and IT provision and support. Our Synod has been represented by our Chief Financial Officer Lal Wijeratne and the General Secretary.

11. *National Schools Chaplaincy Program*

Since 2009 the Living Water Humpty Doo congregation has facilitated and managed chaplaincy services in five schools in the Darwin rural area. The Living Water congregation now has a different focus and has asked the Synod to take over support for the service. This means that the Synod is now the recognised service provider. In 2017 Ros Mc Millan is continuing to provide supervision and

pastoral support for the school chaplains and the Synod is providing the payroll support service.

12. Synod By-laws

The FAPS Committee has completed its review of the finance and property sections of the Synod By-laws. This work was tabled at the May 2017 Synod Standing Committee meeting. A copy is tabled for consideration by the Synod, comments, suggestions and questions should be addressed to our CFO or the General Secretary. It is intended the By-Laws will be finalized at the September Standing Committee meeting.

13. Kormilda College

The Anglican and Uniting Churches have been responsible for Kormilda since 1989 when the NT Government asked the Churches to take it over. The Churches have done a very difficult job well, but the last six years have been very difficult. The two main issues facing the College are under-funding of Indigenous boarding and under-enrolment in the day school. When these two matters came together, it meant the Churches did not have the financial resources to manage the College. The Board is currently negotiating with a College in Melbourne to take over the College which means the two Churches would not longer be involved at Kormilda, but boarding for Indigenous students from remote communities will continue.

14. Synod communications

Standing Committee discussed how we can improve our communications within the Northern Synod, the wider Church and the community. Jemma Whittaker will add to her current work with Youth/Young Adults and also undertake the Communications Officer role.

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