

Standing Committee

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Standing Committee met nine times over the past three years, moving to a pattern of three meetings a year following the review of Assembly structures. Meetings commence with dinner on a Friday evening, and conclude around 4.00pm on the Sunday afternoon.
- 1.2 From July 1998 the venue has been the Corrective Services Academy at Eastwood in suburban Sydney. This government-run facility provides an excellent well-equipped conference room, plus single-room overnight accommodation and meals fit for prison warders, firemen, police officers and others needing plenty of protein, such as church leaders. During 1997 and 1998 the Roman Catholic Church, unfortunately from our perspective, had to close down three centres in Sydney which had previously hosted meetings of the Standing Committee. Special thanks were expressed in August 1997 to the sisters and staff of Ave Maria Retreat Centre at Point Piper, where since 1980 members of Standing Committees had enjoyed marvellous hospitality, including magnificent views and a great nearby ice-cream parlour.
- 1.3 Membership of the Standing Committee has continued as elected by the Eighth Assembly, with one late change. In November 1999 Katalina Tahaafe Williams resigned, due to her shift to London. Standing Committee decided not to fill the casual vacancy, noting there was only one more meeting before the Ninth Assembly and that there were other members with similar representational qualities to Katalina (ASC minute 99.127).
- 1.4 Attendance at meetings has again been good. There are 24 voting members and the average attendance is over 21. In addition, the seven synod secretaries are most reliable participants. Since the new Assembly structure came into place, in August 1998, the Associate General Secretary, the National Director, Theology and Discipleship, and the Executive Director of the Beneficiary Fund also participate in Standing Committee meetings. Other senior staff members and/or reference committee representatives attend for particular business items. Gillian Stone, assistant to the General Secretary, and Ruth Sandiford Phelan, media relations officer, also attend.
- 1.5 Worship is a feature of Standing Committee meetings, including Holy Communion on the Sunday morning of each meeting. Members are seated in table groups for business, which facilitates frequent discussion in small groups.
- 1.6 On the Saturday evening of each meeting the President reports on his activities over the past four months and comments on issues concerning the life and witness of the church.

John Mavor has undertaken an extraordinary itinerary of visiting congregations and presbyteries as well as representing the church on many ecumenical and other occasions.

- 1.7 The amount of business has been dauntingly large, although it has eased a little with the new Assembly structure settling into place and greater attention now being given to policy-making and less to management matters. 214 documents have been presented to the nine meetings, many of which actually consist of more than one related papers. 405 minutes have been carried, some of them considerably more than a page in length. The Standing Committee works hard.
- 1.8 Business of the Standing Committee comes from referral from the Assembly, from Assembly agencies, synods, presbyteries, and from Standing Committee members and synod secretaries. Occasionally the President and General Secretary will decide that an agenda item needs to be added, in light of concerns or hopes expressed around the church. This means that congregations, church councils and church members have no direct access to the agenda of Standing Committee, a matter addressed during the triennium by the Task Group on Issues relating to the Standing Committee. The outcome was acceptance of the status quo, but with additional publicity to be distributed throughout the church on Standing Committee procedures (ASC minute 99.111.10).
- 1.9 Standing Committee minutes are circulated to all presbyteries, synods, Assembly agencies and Standing Committee members, and are available in the Assembly's web-site (<http://nat.uca.org.au>). A summary of the main business items and decisions is always printed in Assembly Update.
- 1.10 Members of Standing Committee continue to contribute towards the costs of meetings. These donations save the Assembly budget around \$3,000 per year.

2. UNFINISHED BUSINESS OF THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

- 2.1 There were six pieces of unfinished business from the 1997 Assembly. (Assembly minute 97.72)
- 2.2 The proposals from the National Education Committee were approved with very minor changes. The three resolutions affirm the "historical, continuing and potential future contributions of Uniting Church schools, and of those schools in association with the Uniting Church, to education and the life of the church"; affirm "Uniting Church teachers in government schools..." and recognise "the need for further exploration of the development of schools as faith communities...". (ASC minutes 97.84.01-03)

- 2.3 Regulation 2.7.12(b) concerning the effective date of commencement of a ministerial settlement was amended. (ASC minute 98.18 and 98.83.04)
- 2.4 It was resolved that the outcomes of referrals to Assembly agencies from the Assembly or the Standing Committee are to include reference to how any proposals will be funded, with accompanying comment from the Finance Committee. (ASC minute 98.19)
- 2.5 A proposal from the Synod of Queensland concerning the processes whereby the Assembly and its task groups consult with the church was not supported, while the concerns which led to its formulation were recognised. (ASC minute 98.23)
- 2.6 A proposal for the establishment of a task group on the nature of the Christian gospel was referred to the Victorian Synod Doctrine and Liturgy Committee for comment. It was not proceeded with. (ASC minute 98.20)
- 2.7 A proposal concerning indigenous people and Frontier Services was approved. This requests Frontier Services to expand its role "as an agent of reconciliation in the isolated parts of this country" and to explore "ways in which indigenous people can participate in the development of its progress and services". The results of this resolution can be seen in Frontier Services' report to the Assembly. (ASC minute 98.22)

3. ARISING FROM THE EIGHTH ASSEMBLY

- 3.1 **Task Group on the understanding and use of the Bible** (Assembly minute 97.31.14)
Members of the task group were appointed by the Standing Committee, in accordance with the requirements of the Assembly minute: Don Hopgood (chairperson), Robert Iles (SA), Bill Loader (WA), Hohaia Matthews (SA), Christine Ostle Tregenza (SA), Deidre Palmer (SA), Irene Parker (SA), Keith Rowe (NSW), Julia Pitman (SA), Benjamin Susilo (Vic), Jane Tiller (SA), Jwee Teo (SA) and Howard Wallace (Vic). The task group is reporting directly to the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minutes 97.65, 98.05 and 98.65)
- 3.2 **Ordination and commissioning questions** (Assembly minutes 97.16.05 and 97.37.03)
The 1997 Assembly requested the Standing Committee to reinstate within the ordination vows a revised question about the Reformed Confessions and to make changes to the ordination and commissioning questions relating to the Basis of Union. Theology and Discipleship reported to the Standing Committee in November 1998, and the changes were approved. These were immediately notified to all presbyteries. (ASC minute 98.113)
- 3.3 **Summary of Assembly decisions on worship** (Assembly minute 97.17.03)

The 1997 Assembly requested the Commission on Liturgy to "prepare a summary of Assembly decisions since union which pertain to worship services..., subject to approval by the Standing Committee". A document "Ordered Liberty in Worship" was presented to the Standing Committee in November 1998. Checking has taken place since then of all Assembly and Standing Committee minutes since 1977, to ensure the document is complete. It is expected to be issued widely throughout the church before July 2000. (ASC minute 98.113.09)

- 3.4 **Guidelines for implementation of Regulations on Discipline** (Assembly minute 97.19.05)
The 1997 Assembly authorised the Standing Committee to approve guidelines to assist in the implementation of the amended Regulations concerning sexual misconduct. The Legal Reference Committee presented the proposed guidelines in March 1998. They were approved shortly thereafter and distributed to all synods in mid-1998. (ASC minute 98.51.03)
- 3.5 **Referral of proposal re calling of a minister** (Assembly minute 97.28.03)
This proposal, referred to the Standing Committee with power to act, sought to allow presbyteries to permit a congregation to initiate conversation with any minister eligible to receive a call. Following advice from the Task Group on Church Structures and from synod secretaries, it was resolved to disapprove the proposal. (ASC minutes 97.85.01 and 98.45.02)
- 3.6 **Development of Christian communities** (Assembly minute 97.28.04)
The 1997 Assembly requested the Standing Committee to consider protocols and arrangements for Christian communities, including migrant-ethnic communities, and authorised the Standing Committee to act on any recommendations on the development of such communities. The Standing Committee took the view that the new Regulation 3.1.32 was a sufficient response. (ASC minute 98.45.03)
- 3.7 **Task Group on Church Structures** (Assembly minute 97.28.05)
The Standing Committee was authorised to act on recommendations from the Task Group on Church Structures, following comment from councils, agencies and church members on the second report of the task group "Roles, Relationships and Resourcing of Church Councils". Standing Committee chose not to act, but to bring a separate report and recommendations directly to the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minutes 99.78 and 99.104)
- 3.8 **Stewardship – "Many opportunities: many doors"** (Assembly minute 97.30.03)
The 1997 Assembly requested the Standing Committee to implement the major proposals in the report "Many opportunities: many doors", in consultation with synods, presbyteries, agencies, the UAICC and migrant-ethnic congregations. The major follow-up to this

request was the holding of a national conference in February 1999 on “Many opportunities, many doors”, and the appointment of a small group to lead this work on behalf of the Assembly. The group consists of Murray Fysh (Qld, chairperson), Carolyn Kitto (NSW), Peter Whittington (SA) and Harriet Ziegler (Vic). A second conference will be held in Queensland in 2001. (ASC minute 99.48)

3.9 **National co-ordination on the number of candidates for ministries** (Assembly minute 97.32.07)

The 1997 Assembly requested the Standing Committee to “explore the possibility of national co-ordination and/or networking regarding the number of candidates for Minister of the Word, Deacon and Youth Worker”. The Standing Committee referred this to the synod secretaries, who agreed that “national co-ordination” is impracticable and unwarranted but that networking between synod secretaries on the numbers of candidates in each synod makes good sense. It’s worth noting that the initial placement of an ordinand or graduating Youth Worker in a synod other than the synod where they have completed their training is no longer a very rare occurrence. (ASC minute 98.45.04)

3.10 **Ecumenism as a compulsory subject for candidates** (Assembly minute 97.32.11)

The 1997 Assembly referred to the Ministerial Education Commission a proposal that the theology and practice of ecumenism be compulsory for all candidates, and gave the Standing Committee power to act after receiving the MEC’s report. In November 1998 the MEC reported that it had decided not to make it compulsory, but was encouraging all theological colleges “to include within their respective ministerial formation programmes for candidates an intentional focus on the theology and practice of ecumenism”. Standing Committee received this report and took no further action. (ASC minute 98.122)

3.11 **UAICC representation in synod bodies** (Assembly minute 97.33.12)

The 1997 Assembly requested synods to “encourage the effective representation of the Congress on councils and committees of the Synod, and to advise the Assembly Standing Committee on the implementation of this request”. This matter was referred to synod secretaries, but I have to advise that no formal report was made back to Standing Committee on its implementation in synods. (ASC minute 98.45.04)

3.12 **Date of implementation of amendments to the Constitution** (Assembly minute 97.36.02)

The 1997 Assembly authorised the Standing Committee to “determine the date on which the approved amendments to the Constitution shall take effect”. In July 1998 Standing Committee received a report that all amendments to the Constitution stemming from the 1997 Assembly had been approved by the required numbers of synods and presbyteries. It then determined that the amendments:

- concerning the Basis of Union, definitions of Congregation and Lay Pastor and the UAICC, members-in-association, discipline of members, responsibility of members, and matters vital to the life of the church would take effect on 13 July 1998 (ASC minute 98.83.03);
- concerning placement of ministers would take effect on 1 January 1999 (ASC minute 98.83.03); and
- concerning congregations, the Church Council, and elders or leaders would take effect on 4 April 1999 (ASC minute 98.121.03).

Different dates were set because of the requirement that Regulations consistent with the amended clauses of the Constitution had to be approved and in place on the same date.

3.13 **Empowering synods to develop experimental forms of congregation** (Assembly minute 97.41.03)

This request to the Standing Committee “to consider making Regulations to give power to synods to develop experimental forms of Congregation ...” was considered within the context of the amendments to Regulations following the 1997 Assembly decisions on local church structure. The Standing Committee’s view is that the flexibility provided by the amended Regulations on Congregations, Church Councils and Faith Communities allows sufficient scope for synods to develop “experimental forms of Congregation”. (ASC minute 98.45.03 and 98.121.02)

3.14 **Regulations on the classification of ministers** (Assembly minute 97.56)

The Standing Committee was requested to review the Regulations on the classification of ministers, and was given power to act. Standing Committee has chosen not to act in this matter, but has encouraged the Legal Reference Committee, following advice from Church Polity and from synod secretaries, to bring proposals direct to the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minute 99.121)

3.15 **Task Group on the Teaching Ministry and Mission of the Church** (Assembly minute 97.65)

Members of the task group were appointed by the Standing Committee, in accordance with the requirements of the Assembly minute: Jill Tabart (Tas chairperson), Susan Burt (SA), Jenny Byrnes (Vic), Denham Grierson (Vic), Margaret Griffiths (Vic), John Hooper (Vic), Tom Kerr (Qld), Kellie Lowrey (Vic), Robin Pryor (Vic), Raoul Spackman-Williams (Vic) and Doug Turnbull (Vic). The task group has brought progress reports two or three times to the Standing Committee. The task group is reporting directly to the Ninth Assembly – see report C29. (ASC minutes 97.66, 98.06 and 98.66.01)

3.16 **Presbytery and Synod of Tasmania** (Assembly minute 97.68)

The 1997 Assembly authorised the Standing Committee to act on any proposals from Tasmania in relation to altering the bounds of the Synod and/or transferring the Presbytery of

Tasmania to the jurisdiction of another synod. In July 1999 the Synod of Tasmania advised the Standing Committee that it did not wish to proceed with any change of bounds or jurisdiction, but wished an extension of the arrangements in place since 1995 for the internal operation of the Presbytery and the Synod. The Standing Committee gave permission for the arrangements to continue "until the Synod or Presbytery of Tasmania request otherwise". (ASC minute 99.85)

3.17 **Title of "Youth Worker"** (Assembly minute 97.69)

The 1997 Assembly referred to the Standing Committee, with power to act, a proposal that the title "Youth Worker" be replaced by "Youth Ministry Worker". Standing Committee consulted with Youth Workers and after advice that Youth Workers preferred no change the Standing Committee took no further action. (ASC minute 97.85.06)

4. **REPORT OF THE THREE FORMER PRESIDENTS**

4.1 As part of the outcome of the 1997 Assembly debate on sexuality former Presidents Ron Wilson, D'Arcy Wood and Jill Tabart were asked to "consider how the Assembly might deal with the outstanding issues relating to sexuality following this Assembly, and report with recommendations to the Standing Committee". (Assembly minute 97.31.15(g))

4.2 Their report was presented to the Standing Committee in December 1997 and circulated to synods and Assembly agencies for comment. In March 1998 the Standing Committee considered the report, along with comments from four synods, four Assembly agencies and one presbytery. The twelve decisions then taken by the Standing Committee were widely distributed throughout the church, along with the report. (ASC minute 98.25)

4.3 Among the key decisions was the resolution "not to pursue at this time the search for consensus on the different attitudes within the church regarding homosexuality and the participation of homosexual persons in leadership positions". (ASC minute 98.25.04)

4.4 Another key decision was contained in the Preamble to the resolutions, which included this quote from the report "We each glimpse part of the truth, and on our way we continue to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we search the Scriptures, respect our differences, learn from each other's insights and together continue to serve the world for which Christ died". (ASC minute 98.25.02)

4.5 The decision not to pursue consensus on homosexuality, and the theme of living as pilgrim people acknowledging the diversity of views in the church, gave rise to later initiatives of the Standing Committee, which are reported separately to the Ninth Assembly in report C7 "Moving ahead with Diversity".

4.6 Another of the decisions arising from the report of the three former Presidents was to "encourage synods, presbyteries and congregations to be communities in which members of the church can share their stories and different convictions, including convictions about sexuality, in ways that will encourage respect, trust and healing within the one body of Christ". Partly arising from this resolution, Standing Committee later in 1998 resolved to "arrange for publication of a resource to assist the church in its 'continuing dialogue on the matters as yet unresolved' in relation to sexuality". A small book, "Joy Pain", will be published by Uniting Church Press before July 2000 as a result of this decision. (ASC minutes 98.25.06 and 98.117.04)

4.7 A decision was also taken to prepare a "kit for use in instructing leaders on decision-making in the Uniting Church, and how we take heed of each other within the concept of inter-related councils...". The kit has been prepared, but is not yet finalised. It will be available later this year. (ASC minute 97.25.10)

5. **REVIEW OF ASSEMBLY STRUCTURES**

5.1 As reported briefly to the Eighth Assembly, a comprehensive review of Assembly structures was undertaken by Standing Committee in 1997 and 1998. This resulted in many changes to Assembly agencies and the way the Assembly functions as a whole. See the full report C5.

5.2.1 Among the matters not immediately determined in the review of Assembly structures were those of what national functions, if any, needed to be taken up by the Assembly in relation to **children's ministry and youth ministry**. In December 1997 Standing Committee appointed a task group on national youth ministry to consult widely and work on the issues. At Standing Committee's request Uniting Education conducted a national consultation on children's ministry in June 1999.

5.2.2 The reports of the task group and of the national consultation were received by Standing Committee in July 1999. Standing Committee resolved to establish working groups in each of children's ministry and youth ministry, and expressed hope that funding might be available for a half-time staff position. But before taking firm decisions further consideration was commissioned. (ASC minute 99.63.02)

5.2.3 In March 2000 a further report was received. Standing Committee resolved to move to one joint working group on National Children's and Youth Ministry, and to provide funding from then to December 2001 which will enable the working group to function and the employment of a part-time (probably only one day per week) staff worker, within Uniting Education. During

2001 national consultations will be held on children's and youth ministry, which will lead to decisions on the Assembly's ongoing roles in these areas from January 2002 onwards. (ASC minute 00.29)

5.3.1 One suggestion which emerged from the review of Assembly structures was that the Assembly should establish a mechanism for **more deliberate inter-conciliar consultation** – at least between the Assembly, synods and presbyteries. A task group set up to consider the possibilities reported to Standing Committee in March 2000.

5.3.2 The report covered the Uniting Church's commitment to government by inter-related councils, noted what currently happens to express this inter-conciliarity, and asked the question of "is this enough?". Four suggestions for increased attention by the Assembly to inter-conciliar relationships were made:

"No departure from the current formal and informal ways of expressing the inter-relatedness of our councils is suggested, but four other expressions are recommended:

1. At each meeting of the ASC at least 15 minutes be devoted to a segment in which the ASC participants from one Synod share with the Assembly the issues and concerns facing that Synod, with particular reference to "What word is God giving to your Synod at this time?" With three meetings of the ASC per year each Synod would get such an opportunity at least once in each triennium.

2. On at least one occasion in each triennium (maybe tied in with a Synod meeting or a Placements Committee or other meeting which has representatives of all presbyteries in a synod) a couple of Assembly staff and a couple of ASC members from outside that synod could spend a day with representatives of the presbyteries in that synod. It would probably be useful to include the Moderator and General Secretary of the synod, although it would primarily be an Assembly-presbyteries encounter. A part of the time could be devoted to the Assembly sharing with presbyteries the issues which are occupying the Assembly, and where Assembly people feel that God is leading the Church. However, the major part of the day would be for representatives of the Assembly to "give heed" to the presbyteries as they share their joys, concerns and issues. A report of the gathering would be given to the next following meeting of the ASC.

The value of this is that it provides an opportunity, albeit only once in three years for the Assembly and presbyteries to talk to each other face to face rather than through the usual exchange of correspondence.

3. In the same way that presbyteries are required [Regs 3.4.4 (u) and 3.5.36] to submit annual reports to Synod, each Synod could be requested to submit to the triennial meeting of the Assembly a report concerning the life of the Church in that Synod, and the major issues/challenges facing that synod.

If the Assembly made that request it would be necessary to prescribe some parameters for such a report (eg. something like two pages, to be included in the Working Papers.) Such reports would not need to be spoken to, but could simply be received en bloc.

Such an exercise would enable members of the Assembly to get a pen picture of each synod and of the things happening in that synod which are worth sharing with the Assembly and the wider church across Australia.

4. During the "Assembly Presentation" segment at regular meetings of Synods, members of ASC who are members of that synod should stand or be with the assembly staff person/s making the presentation, and be willing to answer questions or to give support when issues are raised. This could present an effective model of the relationship between assembly and synod."

5.3.3 Standing Committee requests the Assembly to ask the incoming Standing Committee to continue this work, with a view to at least some of the four possibilities above being taken up by the Assembly during the next three years. (ASC minute 00.19.02)

5.4.1 In 1999 **Gospel and Gender** advised Standing Committee that it was in severe difficulty fulfilling its functions with the limited funding available. A review process was put in train (ASC minute 99.23.05). Interim decisions were taken at the following meeting, to retain Gospel and Gender as a separate agency at least until July 2000, but with staffing reduced to a national director of only two days per week. (ASC minute 99.65)

5.4.2 The Associate General Secretary reported in March 2000 that the Management Advisory Group is facilitating further discussion in the period March-May 2000. Standing Committee may be in a position to resolve this matter before the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minute 00.54)

5.5 An issue which emerged from the review of Assembly structures was that of **salary and stipend policies** across the Assembly. In the former less co-ordinated structure, decisions on stipends and salaries were sometimes taken within an agency without reference to practices elsewhere in the Assembly. In March 1999 a Queensland-based task group was set up to consider all the issues. Its report was received in November 1999 and it was

determined that an Assembly-wide salary structure will be established and phased in from 1 July 2000; that Assembly stipends will relate closely to those paid in the synod of residence, and that the Assembly General Secretary will receive a margin of 20% over the minimum stipend of the synod of residence (ASC minutes 99.37 and 99.107).

6. REVIEW OF THE MANUAL FOR MEETINGS

- 6.1 A small group consisting of Jill Tabart, David Pitman (Qld) and Helen Robertson (NSW) was asked in 1997 to review the Manual for Meetings in light of the church's experience of consensus decision-making since the 1994 Assembly. Progress reports were made to the Standing Committee twice in the following two years, with decisions taken at the March 2000 meeting. A copy of the proposed revised Manual is included in the Assembly working papers, in section J. (ASC minute 00.25)

7. REPLACEMENT OF STONE ON JOHN FLYNN'S GRAVE

- 7.1 In 1996 Frontier Services first reported to Standing Committee on the desire of Aboriginal groups in Alice Springs and Tennant Creek to replace the stone on John Flynn's grave. The strong conviction of the Aboriginal people was that the stone which came from the Devil's Marbles near Tennant Creek should be returned there, and replaced with a similar stone from the country around the site of the grave near Alice Springs. Progress reports were made to several meetings of Standing Committee during the triennium. In November 1999 Standing Committee received a report of the great day for reconciliation on 4 September 1999, when the stone was replaced and the original stone returned to its resting place near Tennant Creek. Brian Smith, then national director of Frontier Services, had a leading role in the ceremonies, and Congress and Northern Synod leaders also participated. (ASC minute 99.129)

8. AMENDMENTS TO REGULATIONS

- 8.1 Following the many decisions of the Eighth Assembly for amendment of the Constitution and the Regulations, the Legal Reference Committee worked long and hard finalising the amendments to Regulations. From August 1997 to March 1999 Standing Committee dealt with recommendations for the amendments, on matters such as the Regulations on Discipline, Placement of Ministers, Lay Pastors, Congregations and Church Councils, Ministerial education, alternate Regulations for Korean Congregations, and many changes of lesser import. The 1999 edition of the Constitution and Regulations was then published.

9. RELOCATION OF ASSEMBLY OFFICE IN SYDNEY

- 9.1 In March 1998 Standing Committee received a report concerning the plans of the NSW Synod to consider relocation of its offices in Sydney, on the conclusion of the lease of office space in 222 Pitt St, Sydney. On hearing that negotiations were likely to lead to shifting to refurbished space within 222 Pitt St, with savings on the rental costs, Standing Committee decided to remain in 222 Pitt St with the Synod. (ASC minute 98.32)

- 9.2 In December 1998 Sydney-based Assembly agencies moved to the 8th floor of 222 Pitt St, continuing as a sub-tenant of the Synod. By moving to a work-station pattern all agencies were able to be accommodated on one floor, where previously Frontier Services had been located three floors away from the rest of the Assembly. Savings have been achieved through the decision to occupy reduced floor space. There was both advantage and disadvantage in the office relocation happening at the same time as the new Assembly structure was being implemented - advantage in that the new office arrangements confirmed the changes in agency structure and relationships; disadvantage in that it meant more disruption and change in a time of uncertainty for many staff members.

- 9.3 In March 2000 a full report was made to Standing Committee on the outcome of the office relocation, including the financial arrangements with the Synod of New South Wales. Gratitude was expressed to the Synod for largely funding the costs of refurbishment and relocation, to the tune of \$279,000, and for providing meeting rooms at no cost to the Assembly. However, there is disappointment among senior staff and in Frontier Services that the ongoing rental savings are not as great as was hoped. Standing Committee resolved to request the Synod to reconsider its decision to remove the rental subsidy to the Assembly and in due course to explore possible alternative locations for the office, including interstate as well as elsewhere in Sydney. (ASC minute 00.23)

10. GUIDELINES ON THE USE OF THE CHURCH EMBLEM

- 10.1 In March 1998 it was decided to prepare guidelines on the use of the Uniting Church emblem (ASC minute 98.58). In early 1999 interim guidelines were distributed and comment invited from synods and presbyteries (ASC minute 99.09). The guidelines were then finalised in July 1999 and issued to the church. (ASC minute 99.90)

11. COOLAMON COLLEGE

- 11.1 A review of Coolamon College was undertaken in late 1997, in light of its fragile financial

position. In March 1998 a full report was received, in which Coolamon was highly affirmed for its level of educational output and innovation, especially in light of the low level of funding provided. Standing Committee expressed support for the continued development of Coolamon College, with the aim of reaching financial self-sufficiency by 2002. It was noted that the church would need to provide subsidies until then. A subsidy of at least \$30,000 per year has been provided since this decision. (ASC minute 98.26)

11.2 Standing Committee requested all synods to respond to the proposal "that Coolamon College be the sole Uniting Church provider of distance theological education" (ASC minute 98.26.06). In March 1999 the responses of synods were considered. Standing Committee accepted that Coolamon could not be the "sole provider" but stated that it is the "preferred provider" and asked theological colleges not to engage in distance education except in full consultation and co-operation with Coolamon. (ASC minute 99.10)

11.3 The Synod of Queensland is currently carrying an accumulated deficit of \$147,155 for Coolamon, although the Assembly has accepted liability. In early 2000 synods were approached with a request to provide funding to eliminate the deficit, with the Assembly to contribute \$20,000 from its reserves. (ASC minute 98.115.03)

12. INTERIM CODE OF ETHICS

12.1 In July 1998 three amendments were made to the Interim Code of Ethics, and the revised Code was circulated throughout the church. It is printed within the 1999 edition of the Constitution and Regulations. A fuller revision of the Code will be presented by Gospel and Gender for consideration of the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minute 98.84)

13. SOCIAL JUSTICE MATTERS

13.1 Standing Committee receives regular reports from Social Responsibility and Justice on justice issues within Australia. Synods also raise justice matters with the Standing Committee. Often these reports lead to policy decisions on particular issues, including:

- preparation of resource papers to assist members in considering their vote at the Federal election (ASC minute 98.280);
- support for the Mirrar people in opposing the Jabiluka uranium mine (ASC minute 98.89.02),
- welcoming of the progress by infant formula companies towards ending free and low-cost supplies and noting the lifting by Social Responsibility and Justice of the boycott of companies (ASC minute 98.89.03);
- endorsement of the Jubilee 2000 third world debt campaign (ASC minute 98.110);

- revised policy on the nuclear fuel cycle (ASC minute 00.22).

14. CATEGORIES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

14.1 In March 1998 the Standing Committee received the report of the Task Group on membership, set up by the former Commission for Mission. The task group examined the question of the appropriateness of our categories of church membership, and raised several possibilities for change. Standing Committee referred the report and the background material of letters from presbyteries and comments from Church Polity and other groups, to Theology and Discipleship for further work. Standing Committee has been advised that Theology and Discipleship will not be ready to report on this matter until November 2000. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minutes 98.112 and 00.34)

15. EXEMPTIONS FROM REGULATIONS AND ALTERNATE REGULATIONS

15.1 Standing Committee is asked from time to time to exercise its authority under Regulation 3.6.34 to approve alternate Regulations and/or exemptions from Regulations for particular bodies. During the past triennium Standing Committee has taken decisions involving the Northern Synod (ASC minute 98.94), the Synod of New South Wales (ASC minutes 98.140, 00.43), the Synod of Tasmania (ASC minute 99.85), the Synod of South Australia (ASC minute 00.48), Alternate Regulations for Korean Congregations (ASC minutes 98.111, 99.24.04 and 00.44), and Church Councils in Small Congregations. (ASC minutes 99.97 and 00.35)

16. CROSS-TASMAN RELATIONSHIPS

16.1 In March 1999 a draft agreement for the seconding of ministers between the Methodist Church of New Zealand, the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and the Uniting Church in Australia was received by Standing Committee. Further work is underway on some aspects of the agreement, which is expected to be finalised in 2000. (ASC minute 99.13)

17. NSW SYNOD INSTITUTE FOR MISSION

17.1 In March 1999 Standing Committee received a report on Assembly participation in the Institute for Mission, one of the four schools located at the Centre for Ministry in North Parramatta. Following the NSW Synod's decision to cut

funding to the Institute, it was decided that the Assembly would withdraw from the Institute from 31 December 1999. The Assembly's share of the Institute's assets will be paid out during 2000. (ASC minute 99.19)

- 17.2 In March 2000 Standing Committee received a report from the Associate General Secretary that the NSW Synod Board of Mission was now moving to retain the Institute for Mission, although the Institute would no longer have its own staff. At the request of the Board of Mission it now appears likely that the Assembly will still retain an interest in the Institute, including a small representation on its Board. In this way the Assembly also retains its interest in the Centre for Ministry at North Parramatta. Amendments to the Constitution of the Institute are in process within the Synod, and will require Assembly approval in due course. Authority has been given to four members of the outgoing Standing Committee to act on behalf of Standing Committee on this matter. (ASC minute 00.14.02)

18. ASSOCIATION OF EVANGELICAL CONGREGATIONS

- 18.1 In March 1999, following the February launch by Evangelical Members within the Uniting Church (EMU) of the "Association of Evangelical Congregations" Standing Committee received reports from Church Polity and Theology and Discipleship concerning the declaration of the Association. Standing Committee noted the Church Polity advice that the declaration was inconsistent with the Basis of Union, expressed concern that some church members "may be effectively excluded from full participation in congregations which have adopted the declaration", requested EMU to withhold further promotion of the Association, and requested Assembly leaders to continue conversations on these matters with national leaders of EMU. (ASC minute 99.20)
- 18.2 In July 1999 Standing Committee received the news that EMU was not undertaking any further promotion of the Association, was considering the contents of the declaration and that conversations had taken place between church leaders and EMU leaders nationally and in several synods. (ASC minute 99.58)

19. TASK GROUP ON THE UNDERSTANDING AND PRACTICE OF BAPTISM

- 19.1 Standing Committee received the final report of the Task Group on the understanding and practice of Baptism in March 1999. The task group had been established in 1993. Standing Committee resolved to support the publication of resources, to commend the formation of a catechumenate as a mission strategy and to ask Theology and Discipleship to oversee the development of the catechumenate. (ASC minute 99.26)

20. RECRUITMENT OF THE NEXT GENERAL SECRETARY

- 20.1 In March 1999 Gregor Henderson advised the Standing Committee that after 12 years of service as General Secretary, he did not plan to seek a further term. Standing Committee put in train a process for recruitment of the next General Secretary. (ASC minutes 99.29, 99.74 and 99.101)
- 20.2 The nominating committee brought a report and recommendations to the Standing Committee in March 2000. Standing Committee was unable to reach consensus by unanimity or agreement on the key recommendation and has appointed a new Nominating Committee. A special meeting of Standing Committee will be held in May or July to determine Standing Committee's recommendations to the Assembly. Report C8 will either be in the second mailing of Assembly working papers or available in Adelaide. (ASC minute 00.16)

21. EAST TIMOR AND INDONESIA

- 21.1 At every meeting since March 1999 Standing Committee has received a report from Unity and International Mission concerning the situation facing the churches and people of East Timor and Indonesia. Standing Committee has encouraged Unity and International Mission to distribute information widely throughout the church, and has affirmed the important work undertaken by Unity and International Mission in support of our partner churches and others in East Timor and Indonesia. John Barr, UIM Secretary for Indonesia, and James Haire, because of his longstanding relationship with the churches in the Maluku Islands, have been crucial participants in the world church's response to the situations. (ASC minutes 99.31, 99.64.03, 99.119.01 and 00.26.01)

22. CATO VISITOR COMMITTEE

- 22.1 In March 1999 the trustees of the Cato Fund informed the Standing Committee that they would be unable to provide funding for a Cato Visitor for the Ninth Assembly. Standing Committee accepted this news with regret, decided that for the time being there would be no Cato Visitor Committee, and resolved to contact the trustees in late 2001 to ascertain the possibility of financial support for the Tenth Assembly in 2003. (ASC minute 99.43)

23. NATIONAL PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION

- 23.1 The Assembly continues to participate in the process of reconciliation. Djiniyini Gondarra, national chairperson of the UAICC and a member of Standing Committee, is a member

of the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation. Standing Committee made representation to the Federal Government on issues of heritage protection (ASC minute 99.49) and on behalf of the church nationally responded to the draft document for reconciliation. (ASC minute 99.114)

24. INTERCHURCH MARRIAGES

24.1 In July 1999 Standing Committee approved the document presented by the Roman Catholic – Uniting Church dialogue group from Brisbane “Interchurch Marriages – their ecumenical challenge and significance for our churches”. The document has been published and widely distributed throughout Australia. It has also been the subject of interest overseas in both Catholic and Protestant churches. (ASC minute 99.64.02)

25. PREVENTION OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT PROJECT

25.1 In July 1999 Gospel and Gender reported to Standing Committee on the conclusion of the three year project in prevention of sexual misconduct. Various decisions were taken, and it was noted that from now on the synods, co-ordinated by the synod secretaries, will be responsible for ongoing work in this area. (ASC minute 99.66.07-12)

25.2 Also in July 1999 Standing Committee approved changes to the policy document “Guidelines for dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct made against a lay staff person or voluntary worker of the Uniting Church in Australia and its agencies” and approved a new document “Pastoral procedures for responding to allegations of sexual misconduct at special events run by the Uniting Church in Australia”. (ASC minute 99.66.02-03)

25.3 The policy document “Policy for dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct made against a member or adherent of the Uniting Church in Australia” is under review by the Legal Reference Committee in consultation with Gospel and Gender.

26. FINANCIAL MATTERS

26.1 The possibility of the Assembly undertaking further work in examining the **distribution of resources across the councils of the church**, with a view to their equitable and effective use, has been under sporadic consideration since the 1994 Assembly. A paper prepared by Ed Walker, in his capacity as chairperson of the Finance Committee and former chairperson of the now disbanded task group on financial services, was received by Standing Committee in July 1999. It was referred to the Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) for consideration as to the process by which the issue might be taken further. It's expected

the SPU will report to the incoming Standing Committee later in 2000. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minute 00.11)

26.2 In November 1999 Standing Committee asked for papers to be prepared on two matters relating to the outlook for the Assembly's financial position:

- first steps in an assessment of how synods are, comparatively, supporting the Assembly financially – are some synods bearing a disproportionate share of responsibility in financial contributions to the Assembly;
- possible new or increased sources of income for the Assembly.

Reports were received on both these matters in March 2000. It was agreed that further consultation and consideration is needed. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that these matters be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minutes, 99.112.06-07, 00.51-52)

26.3 Standing Committee is grateful to synods for the consistency in their financial contributions to the Assembly for each of the three years of 1999, 2000 and 2001. This has given the new Assembly structure a period of relative financial stability over the triennium. But Standing Committee is well aware that the financial position for the next three year period, 2002-2004, is less certain. Discussions with synods will commence before the end of 2000 concerning the 2002-2004 triennium. In times of financial stringency, determining priorities for expenditure is a very significant, complex and difficult business. In the new Assembly structure it is the Standing Committee which determines financial priorities, following advice from the Management Advisory Group and the National Finance Committee.

27. ESSENTIAL PUBLICATIONS

27.1 Publication of Christian resources in Australia, including books, has been reducing dramatically in recent years. The Joint Board of Christian Education used to generate much income from publications, but during the 1990's the publishing results became more stories of deficits rather than surpluses. However, Standing Committee recognises there are some publications which are essential to the life of the church, provision for which must be maintained.

27.2 In July 1999 Standing Committee approved plans for ensuring that essential publications would be identified and provided for the church (ASC minute 99.77). In March 2000 financial arrangements were put in place which should enable the plans to be met. (ASC minute 00.31.02)

28. GUIDELINES FOR THE PERIOD OF DISCERNMENT

- 28.1 Decisions on the implementation of the period of discernment, in accordance with Regulation 2.2.1 were taken by the Standing Committee in July and November 1999. The approved guidelines were issued to the church in January 2000. (ASC minutes 99.79.02, 99.115.02, 00.08)

29. WESLEY UNITING EMPLOYMENT

- 29.1 Standing Committee welcomed the establishment of Wesley Uniting Employment, the Uniting Church's national employment services body. In July 1999 Standing Committee affirmed the parish missions and Uniting Community Services Australia (since renamed Uniting Care Australia) for their role in setting up the national network and facilitating the submission of a huge national tender for employment services. (ASC minute 99.87)
- 29.2 In December 1999 the Uniting Church Council for Mission Trust Association (the Assembly property trust) signed contracts with the Federal Government for the provision of employment services at 69 sites in NSW (Sydney Wesley Mission), 2 in Queensland (Brisbane Wesley Mission, for Maryborough, the UAICC for Townsville) and 1 in South Australia (Port Pirie Mission). In March 2000 Standing Committee received a report on the contracts, which are estimated to amount to more than \$75 million of work, and put in train a process for consideration of a number of policy matters which arise. (ASC minutes 00.42 and 00.56)

30. CONSIDERATION OF NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGY

- 30.1 In November 1999 and March 2000 Standing Committee gave consideration to a proposal from the National Public Relations Group for the establishment of a national public relations strategy. A national consultation with participation from all synods and from relevant national agencies and others will be held during 2000, probably in late August, to recommend what action should be taken by the Assembly. (ASC minutes 99.106 and 00.28)

31. PROPOSED REVIEW OF THE MINISTRY OF DEACON

- 31.1 Following an approach from Diakonia UCA, the national association of deacons and deaconesses in the Uniting Church, Standing Committee agreed to consider the need for a review of the ministry of deacon, 8 years since the diaconate was renewed. Following consultation with Diakonia UCA and with synod secretaries, Standing Committee approved a detailed proposal to come to the Ninth Assembly. (ASC minutes 99.123 and 00.24).

32. PRESIDENTIAL RULINGS

- 32.1 In November 1999 Standing Committee confirmed Presidential Ruling 19, concerning Regulation 2.7.3(b)(iv) and the involvement of deacons and youth workers in the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements. (ASC minute 99.125)
- 32.2 In March 2000 Standing Committee confirmed Presidential Ruling 20, concerning decisions of the Victorian Synod Standing Committee. (ASC minute 00.38)

33. PLANNING FOR THE NINTH ASSEMBLY

- 33.1 At most meetings over the past three years Standing Committee has received reports on planning for the Assembly in Adelaide. The Standing Committee has general oversight of preparations for the Assembly, including the appointment of the Business Committee, the Local Arrangements Committee and the Worship Committee. (ASC minutes 99.15 and 99.76.02)
- 33.2 Under Regulation 3.6.2(e) Standing Committee determines which Assembly agencies shall be directly represented in the membership of the Assembly. In March 1998 Standing Committee decided that 20 agencies would be represented in the Ninth Assembly's membership; Theology and Discipleship receives 3 places and Unity and International Mission 2 places in recognition of their coverage of core roles of the Assembly, with all other agencies having 1 representative.
- 33.3 Under Regulation 3.6.2(f) Standing Committee has authority to appoint a limited number of additional members of the Assembly. In the past these positions have been filled by 10 young people and 6 people representing migrant-ethnic congregations. Standing Committee has appointed 8 young people after inviting nominations from synods and presbyteries, 6 members from migrant-ethnic congregations, the Associate General Secretary, and two persons with disabilities. (ASC minutes 99.116 and 00.13)

34. MINISTRY OF YOUTH WORKER

- 34.1 Following the report of the task group on National Youth Ministry, Standing Committee noted that a few issues of concern had emerged on the ministry of Youth Worker. A brief exploratory paper has been referred to synod youth ministry units and synod secretaries for comment back to a later meeting of Standing Committee. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minutes 99.63.06 and 00.50)

35. REGULATIONS ON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION BOARDS AND THE MINISTERIAL EDUCATION COMMISSION

- 35.1 A small working group has been appointed by Standing Committee to consider the Regulations relating to the relationships and responsibilities of synods' Ministerial Education Boards and the Assembly Ministerial Education Commission. In March 2000 the group reported that it needed more time for consultation and consideration. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minutes 99.142 and 00.36)

36. PROMOTIONAL AND FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE NORTHERN SYNOD

- 36.1 In November 1999 Standing Committee received correspondence from the Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia concerning the financial needs of the Northern Synod. After a report from the General Secretary in March 2000, Standing Committee noted that the Northern Synod needs an additional \$30,000 per year from the wider church from January 2002 (the Assembly currently passes on from synod contributions the amount of \$423,775 per year, down from over \$500,000 in the early 1990's). Standing Committee has also set in train a consultation process involving the Synod and Frontier Services on the financial and promotional needs of the Synod. Accordingly Standing Committee recommends that this matter be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. (ASC minutes 99.145 and 00.53)

37. INITIATIVES IN MULTI-CULTURAL MINISTRY

- 37.1 Following a small national workshop on future emphases in national responsibilities in multicultural ministry, Standing Committee received a report in March 2000. Standing Committee supported the decisions of Multicultural Ministry to develop education strategies for use in congregations on the multicultural nature of the gospel and accepted the recommendation that orientation courses be developed for leaders in presbyteries, synods and Assembly on racism and cultures. (ASC minute 00.32)

38. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEES AND REPRESENTATIVES

- 38.1 Standing Committee makes many appointments of committees, task groups and representatives of the Uniting Church to other bodies. Groups thus appointed include:

- all agency reference committees, taking note of appointments made by the Eighth Assembly where the new Assembly structure has brought change;
- Board of Directors of Benefund Ltd;
- Board of Directors of the Council of Mission Trust Association;
- Disaster Relief Fund trustees;
- Task Groups, as directed by the Eighth Assembly or as established by Standing Committee;

Uniting Church representatives to:

- the Christian Conference of Asia 2000 General Assembly, Indonesia;
- the Eighth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, Harare 1998;
- the 1998 National Forum of the National Council of Churches in Australia, Sydney;
- the World Alliance of Reformed Churches;
- the World Methodist Council.

- 38.2 Changes in membership of bodies following withdrawals, resignations etc are also made by Standing Committee.

39. STAFF MATTERS

- 39.1 Over the past three years there have been many changes in the executive staff of the Assembly, due chiefly to the review of Assembly structures. Several staff members were retrenched in 1998 and two former staff members within the Commission for Mission found new positions with the Assembly. Several other staff members moved to new placements within the church on the expiry of their fixed-term appointment with the Assembly. Many of these changes would have taken place with or without the review, because of the financial situation.

- 39.2 Standing Committee carried minutes of appreciation for staff members who left the Assembly's employ over the past three years:
- Peter Bentley, on conclusion of his appointment as Secretary of the Commission on Doctrine, in July 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Jill Bickford, on conclusion of her appointment as administrative assistant within national Mission and Evangelism, in July 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Graham Brookes, on his resignation from the position of National Director, Unity and International Mission, in October 1998 (ASC minute 98.109);
 - Christine Cargill, on conclusion of her appointment as National Director, Gospel and Gender, in September 1999 (ASC minute 00.47.01);
 - Hilary Christie-Johnston, on conclusion of her appointment as Secretary of the Commission for Christian Unity, in June 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Michael Emmett, on conclusion of his employment in Uniting Education, in April 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);

- Judi Jabour, on conclusion of her employment with Uniting Education, in June 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Cheryl Lawrie, on conclusion of her employment with Uniting Education, in December 1998 (ASC minute 98.137);
 - Dorothy McRae-McMahon, on her retirement from the position of Director for Mission, in September 1997 (ASC minute 98.11);
 - Craig Mitchell, on conclusion of his appointment as National Director of Youth Ministry, within Uniting Education, in June 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Ruth Sandiford Phelan, on her resignation from the position of Media Relations Officer as from May 2000 (ASC minute 00.47.03);
 - John Shipway, on conclusion of his appointment as Secretariat Executive Officer, in June 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Brian Smith, on his resignation from the position of National Director, Frontier Services, in December 1999 (ASC minute 00.47.02);
 - Robert Stringer, on his resignation from the position of Secretary for Social Justice, in December 1998, (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Vivi Venevongsos, on conclusion of her employment with the Communications Unit, in July 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Bob Warrick, on conclusion of his appointment as Secretary of the Commission on Liturgy, in June 1998 (ASC minute 98.82.02);
 - Geraldine Wheeler, on conclusion of her appointment as Secretary of the Commission on Liturgy, in December 1997 (ASC minute 98.41).
- 39.3 John Mavor's position as Secretary of National Mission and Evangelism ceased on 31 July 1998 and John shifted to the half-time position of Consultant for Evangelism within Theology and Discipleship for the period from 1 August 1998 to 31 July 2000. The position ceases with John's retirement on that date. Gwenda Davies, the personal assistant to the Director for Mission, shifted to a similar position within the Secretariat on 1 August 1998. Standing Committee recorded minutes of appreciation of their service in their former positions in July 1998. (ASC minute 98.82.02)
- 39.4 Positions filled by decision of the Standing Committee over the past three years are:
- Ms Wendie Wilkie was appointed to the position of Associate General Secretary for the period 1 November 1998 to 31 December 2003 (ASC minute 98.86.02);
 - Rev Dr Geoffrey Lilburne was appointed to the position of National Director, Theology and Discipleship, for the period 1 November 1998 to 31 December 2003 (ASC minute 98.86.03);
 - Rev Bill Fischer was appointed to the position of National Director, Unity and International Mission, for the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2003 (ASC minute 98.86.04);
 - Mr Peter Lewis was appointed to the position of National Director, Covenanting, for the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001 (ASC minute 98.86.05);
 - Mr John Emmett was appointed to the position of National Director, Uniting Education, for the period 1 January 1999 to 31 December 2001, following his period of service as Director of the former Uniting Education and as Acting Director since 1 August 1998 (ASC minute 98.119.02);
 - Ms Christine Cargill was appointed to the position of National Director, Social Justice, for the period 6 September 1999 to 5 September 2004 (ASC minute 99.21);
 - Ms Rosemary Young was appointed to the position of National Director, Frontier Services, for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2003 (ASC minute 99.71.02);
 - Rev Dr Anita Monro was appointed to the part-time position of National Director, Gospel and Gender, for a period of up to 12 months from 1 January 2000 (ASC minute 99.98);
 - Rev Jon Watson was appointed to the position of Associate National Director, Frontier Services, for the period 1 April 2000 to 31 March 2004 (ASC minutes 99.100 and 00.07).
- 39.5 Several other staff positions and/or Assembly placements, with the UAICC and with the Beneficiary Fund, were noted by Standing Committee.
- ## 40. FUTURE MEETING DATES
- 40.1 The incoming Standing Committee elected by the Ninth Assembly will hold its first meeting, either in Canberra or Sydney, on 25-27 August 2000. Other meeting dates have been set for 17-19 November 2000, 16-18 March 2001, 27-29 July 2001 and 16-18 November 2001.
- ## 41. BUSINESS MATTERS NOT COMPLETED BY THE OUTGOING STANDING COMMITTEE
- 41.1 The outgoing Standing Committee has not completed its consideration of the following business matters. It brings a proposal to the Assembly that these matters be referred to the incoming Standing Committee. These are:
- inter-conciliar relationships (see item 5.3.1-5.3.3 above);
 - matters relation to the rental costs and location of the Sydney Assembly office (see item 9.3 above);
 - membership in the Uniting Church - definitions, categories, privileges and responsibilities (see item 14 above);
 - agreement on cross-Tasman relationships (see item 16 above);

- future of the Cato Visitor Committee (see item 22 above);
- approval of the policy document “Policy for dealing with a complaint of sexual misconduct made against a member or adherent of the Uniting Church in Australia” (see item 25.3 above);
- more equitable distribution of resources across the councils of the church (see item 26.1 above);
- levels of financial contributions to the Assembly from synods and possible new and increased sources of income for the Assembly (see item 26.2 above);
- consideration of policy matters arising from contracts between the Federal Government and Wesley Uniting Employment (see item 29.2 above);
- consideration of recommendations from the national consultation on public relations strategy (see item 30 above);
- any follow-up after comment is received on possible concerns re the ministry of Youth Worker (see item 34 above);
- possible amendments to Regulations on Ministerial Education Boards and the Ministerial Education Commission (see item 35 above);
- the promotional and financial needs of the Northern Synod (see item 36 above).

Gregor Henderson
General Secretary