


a daring
HOPE
SYNOD 36

Procedural proposals

It is proposed that the Synod:

- 1.01 (a) Notes the appointment by the Synod Standing Committee of members of the Business Committee and the authorisation by Synod Standing Committee to the Moderator and General Secretary to make further appointments to the Business Committee:
- Rev Andrew Gunton (Moderator)
 - Rev Heather den Houting (General Secretary)
 - Ms Kellie Broderick (Executive Officer Corporate)
 - Rev Brian Kickbusch
- (b) Notes the further appointments made pursuant to (a):
- Mr Steve Drinkall
 - Mr Scott McDonald
 - Rev Janet Staines
 - Rev Faye Talatonu
- (c) Appoints Rev Brian Kickbusch as Convenor of the Business Committee.
- (d) Authorises the Committee to co-opt other persons as necessary for specific business.
- 1.02 (a) Appoints Mr Scott McDonald as Convenor of the Facilitation Committee and authorises the Convenor to co-opt members for that Committee; and
- (b) Appoints Rev Janet Staines as Small Group Co-ordinator.
- 1.03 Appoints Ms Melanie Ashby as Minute Secretary.
- 1.04 Appoints Rev Scott Ballment and Rev Glen Schweitzer as Convenors of the Ballot Committee and authorises the Convenors to co-opt members as necessary.
- 1.05 Appoints Rev Schalk Pienaar and Rev Christine Herman as Pastoral Coordinators.
- 1.06 Adopts the Roll of the Synod subject to the Roll only containing the names of those members who register on site or register on line by 1.00pm Saturday, 14 May 2022.

- 1.07 (a) Determines that unless otherwise agreed, the hours of session for the Synod shall be:
- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Saturday, 14 May | 11.00 am – 12.00 pm
1.00 pm – 5.00 pm
7.15 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Sunday, 15 May | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 6.00 pm |
| Monday, 16 May | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 6.00 pm
7.30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Tuesday, 17 May | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm |
- (b) Adopts the order of business as determined daily by the Business Committee unless the Synod specifically determines otherwise.
- 1.08 Determines that the Bar of the House be defined as those members shown as participating on line and the numbered tables in the auditorium, unless numbered tables are not present, in which case the Bar of the House be defined as those members shown as participating on line and the auditorium.
- 1.09 (a) Adopts the use of the procedures of *A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church (2015)*.
- (b) Determines that members asking questions for clarification and questions of reports, speak for no more than one minute
- 1.10 (a) Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that nominations to Synod governing bodies closed on Friday, 29 April 2022.
- (b) Determines that the ballots will be held as determined by the Business Committee.
- (c) Determines that ballots for Synod governing bodies and Moderator-Elect be conducted electronically by secret ballot.
- (c) Determines that, unless otherwise determined, appointments to membership of various Synod governing bodies will be based on a simple majority and nominees must receive at least 50% of the votes to be elected.
- 1.11 Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that General Proposals were to be submitted by 5.00 pm. on Thursday, 14 April 2022.
- 1.12 Receive the written reports contained at R00 – R16.
- 1.13 Authorises the General Secretary to convey greetings on behalf of the Synod to other Synods within The Uniting Church in Australia.
- 1.14 Authorises the Moderator to convey a greeting to the State and Federal Governments.
- 1.15 Authorises Rev Andrew Gunton (Moderator), Rev Heather den Houting (General Secretary) and Rev Brian Kickbusch (Business Committee Convenor) to confirm the Minutes of the 36th Synod.
- 1.16 Adopts the Memorial Minutes as presented concerning ministers who have died since the 35th Synod and notes the ministers who have retired permanently and receives a minute of appreciation for each.



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HOPE
SYNOD 36

Other Proposals

It is proposed that the Synod:

APPENDICES

Ministerial changes

- 1 Note the ministerial changes as contained in Appendix 1.

Appointments

- 2 Note the appointments made by the Synod Standing Committee since the 35th Synod as contained in Appendix 2.

- 3 **37th Synod**

Determines that:

- (a) the 37th Synod will be held from 20 October to 24 October 2023 at Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Alexandra Headlands.
- (b) the Synod Standing Committee be given authority to vary the dates and the venue of the 37th Synod if necessary.

- 4 **Synod Standing Committee meetings**

Determines that:

- (a) that the meeting dates of the Synod Standing Committee shall be:

2 June 2022 (induction and meeting)
1 July 2022
4 August 2022
1 September 2022
6 October 2022
3 November 2022
1 December 2022
2 February 2023
2 March 2023
6 April 2023
4 May 2023
1 June 2023
6 July 2023
3 August 2023
7 September 2023

- (b) that authority be given to the Moderator and General Secretary to vary the dates and times of the Synod Standing Committee meetings if necessary.



General Proposal 1

A Flourishing Creation: Queensland Synod Action and Advocacy Plan 2030

That the Synod

1. Adopts *A Flourishing Creation: Queensland Synod Action and Advocacy Plan 2030*.
2. Requests the Project Plenty Board within the Synod Office to develop an implementation plan for this report, including the resourcing of this plan, by 1 August 2022.
3. Directs the Synod Standing Committee to oversee its implementation, as part of the Project Plenty work.

The Scope

The proposal consists of the adoption of the Theological Statement and the Principles in this report and outlines key focus areas for implementation across all areas of the Synod. The Action and Advocacy plan section provides entry points for all parts of the Synod to engage. The implementation of the Action and Advocacy plan will be completed through resourcing support from the Office of the Synod, in conjunction with guidance from the Environment and Sustainability Team within UnitingCare Queensland.

Rationale

Environmental sustainability is one of the key commitments discerned during the Plenty engagement process throughout the Queensland Synod. It is a core part of the Shared life, flourishing communities strategic vision. This commitment has been central in the Uniting Church since it began, with the Statement to the Nation in June 1977 urging the “wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth’s resources”.

The church continues to be called to further its mission imperative, by standing up for what is fair, just, and right for the sake of the whole of creation. In the context of environmental sustainability, this means contributing to a future in which we all work more closely with the regenerative cycles of creation and enjoy a greener, fairer, healthier future for all.

A Flourishing Creation has been developed in consultation with a wide range of people across the Synod. This has included a range of forums and opportunities for feedback and submissions. This plan

presents a holistic and integrated approach, focusing on interconnected systems and structural issues in our care for creation. This is an exciting vision for the Synod.

Proposers

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Signature:



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Phone: 0427962781

Signature:





The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

A FLOURISHING

Creation:

Queensland Synod Action and
Advocacy Plan to 2030
Final Report



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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the sovereign First Peoples of the lands and waters where we live and work. We pay our respects to their Elders past and present, and to all descendants of these nations who have cared for this place since creation.

We commit to learn from, work with and celebrate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge of caring for country, to build a brighter, greener future together.

The following plan has been developed through consultation with many groups and individuals across the life of the Synod.

The Working Group members who authored this report are Rev Dr Adam McIntosh (Convenor – Associate Director of Mission: Pastoral Care, UnitingCare Qld), Simone Elias (Environmental Sustainability Advisor, UnitingCare Qld), Lea Kingdon (Strategic Change Manager, Queensland Synod), Natalie Clements (Disability Royal Commission Project Officer and Social Justice & Advocacy Strategy, Queensland Synod), and Rebecca Riggs (Communications Manager, Queensland Synod).

There were numerous others who provided input at different stages of the development process; the consultation process included feedback from a range of representatives across the life of the Synod including congregations, First Nations Peoples, Presbyteries, UnitingCare, Schools, and Wesley Mission Queensland. Consultation forums were held online and at Presbytery meetings. The paper was distributed across the Synod, with written feedback received from a range of people across the life of the church. This wide ranging feedback has been incorporated into this Final Report for consideration at the 2022 Synod meeting.

Endorsement of this paper is intended as the first step by the Transforming Communities - Environment and Sustainability working group to deliver initiative T12 of the Shared life, flourishing communities *Progress Report*, to: "Develop and promote a care for creation Position Statement and Action Plan".

Thank you

Special thanks to ZoeBK for creating the beautiful artwork throughout this document. Zoe is a proud young Koa, Wakka Wakka person who is one of many within her family who speak their truth through art. Zoe has a strong faith and a hope that her generation will continue to act for change, so that her children and grannies will enjoy the fullness of beauty and bounty this country has to offer us.

Introduction and background

In these times the environment is in the headlines, on the political agenda, part of business plans, in our school curriculums, and in conversations in the cafés, pubs, and dining room tables from Weipa to Woolloongabba. Some of us receive our livelihoods directly from the environment. All of us receive the benefits of our environment. It is in our stories as office workers, farmers, scientists, miners, tradies, teachers, First Peoples, Second Peoples, mums, dads, brothers, sisters and everyone in between. We all have different perspectives and practices about the environment. The environment matters to us all. We all know that caring for and stewarding our environment is a good thing. The significant question is, how do we do this well? How can our environment, God's creation, flourish in a way that is good for all?

It is in this context that environmental sustainability emerged as a key commitment discerned during the Plenty engagement process throughout the Queensland Synod. It is a core part of the Shared life, flourishing communities strategic vision. This commitment has been central in the Uniting Church since it began, with the Statement to the Nation in June 1977 urging the “wise use of energy, the protection of the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources”.

The church continues to be called to participate in God's mission, by standing up for what is fair, just, and right for the sake of the whole of creation. In the context of environmental sustainability, this means contributing to a future in which we all work more closely with the regenerative cycles of creation and enjoy a greener, fairer, healthier future for all.

The Queensland Synod has adopted various environmental sustainability initiatives since the Statement to the Nation, including The Queensland Synod Energy Management Policy (2012). The national Assembly has also adopted relevant resolutions on environmental sustainability which called for:

- the Commonwealth Government to ratify the Kyoto Protocol
- Uniting Church members to adopt “lifestyles which have a minimal impact on global warming”
- the Commonwealth Government to increase support for renewable energy
- Uniting Church bodies and members to advocate that the government implement policies and actions to address climate change, and
- Uniting Church bodies and members to set meaningful targets to reduce our contribution to climate change.

This Final Report outlines many ways of building on our call to care for God's creation and renews the Queensland Synod's commitment to prioritise environmental sustainability with an action plan to 2030. We recognise that each part of the Synod will engage the plan in different ways.

Every action that is made, over a long period of time, can make a difference.

Our accumulated actions can make a difference.



Theological statement

“God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good” (Genesis 1:31).

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created, things visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or powers—all things have been created through him and for him” (Colossians 1: 15-16).

The Queensland Synod seeks to witness to the goodness of God’s creation and to the beginning of a new creation in the life, death and resurrection of Christ, through embodying the servanthood of Christ, who is the image of God (Colossians 1: 15). All of creation is loved by God and has intrinsic value. God’s mission in Christ through the Spirit is for the renewal of the whole of creation. As Jesus taught his disciples: “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight” (Luke 12.6). This represents a vision for a flourishing creation, in which human beings live in communion with, and stewardship of the natural environment. The *Basis of Union* describes our hope as grounded in the resurrection of Christ in which the Church is called to witness to ‘a new order of righteousness and love.’

We are facing an urgent ecological challenge and there is clear scientific evidence of climate change and its environmental, social and economic implications. This groaning of creation is the consequence of domination, destruction, and exploitation by human beings. We lament our direct and indirect contribution to this. Too often we have forgotten that we are part of creation, dust of the earth (Genesis 2:7), and to dust all return (Ecclesiastes 3:20). In our acts of stewardship, in the image of the servanthood of Jesus and the communion of the Trinity, we are called to live in sustainable ways, caring for and living in community with the natural environment for present and future generations.

First Nation Peoples of Australia have long understood how to live in harmony with creation, using Songlines as a cultural code for the passing on of wisdom from the beginning of Dreaming. In the response to the Covenant Statement at the 1994 Assembly, Pastor Bill Hollingsworth, representing the First Nation Peoples of Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC), said the following:

“When God created the heavens and the earth He gave humankind his habitation and placed him within his bounds. When He did this He gave humankind stewardship over the bounds of

his habitation. We are also told in the Bible that when God had finished creating it was good ... Our laws were developed by our relationship with the land and our intricate system of inter-tribal government.”

To be in relationship with God is to be in a reciprocal relationship with lands, seas and each other. This includes acting in ways that sustain and promote the natural environment for future generations and all of our neighbours, especially our Pacific and Asian neighbours, who are experiencing the impacts of climate change. What happens to the lands and the sea effects the whole of creation. We are part of an interconnected whole. When creation moans, we are diminished. We must take up our responsibility to honour the balance and harmony of the natural environment through servanthood and interconnectedness, awe and wonder.

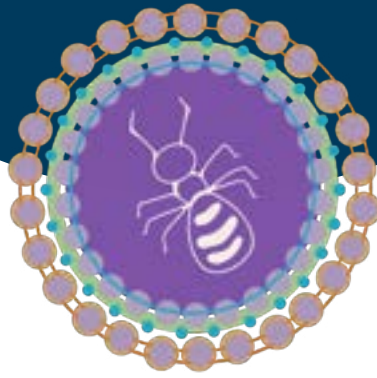
Through love of God, neighbour and Earth, we participate in God's mission of the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation, inaugurated in the resurrection of Christ. “The Uniting Church in Australia believes the whole world is God’s good creation. Each person is made in God’s image and is deeply loved by God. In Jesus, God is completing the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation.”ⁱⁱ Our actions are shaped by this vision and hope of reconciliation and the renewal of the whole creation. “I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it. I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert” (Isaiah 43: 19). This “new thing” that God is doing is central to the mission of the Church. “God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation” (*Basis of Union*, Paragraph 3).

Creation makes known and declares the glory of God and is a source of awe, wonder and joy. The Earth itself bears witness to the glory of God and the Lordship of Christ (Luke 19: 38–40). During the traditional communion service, we say, “with choirs of angels, and the whole creation” that Heaven and Earth are full of God’s glory. “Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars! Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! Let them praise the name of the Lord, for he commanded and they were created.” (Psalm 148: 3–5). Human proclamation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ is alongside the proclamation of the natural environment. The Earth bears witness to human beings of the glory of God the creator and bears witness to God’s reconciling and renewing love.

The whole of creation is joined together in relationship through Christ. “All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.” (John 1: 3–5). This interdependence and interconnectedness are the heart of our witness as the church. “The Uniting Church believes that God calls us into a particular relationship with the rest of creation, a relationship of mutuality and interdependence which seeks the reconciliation of all creation with God.”ⁱⁱⁱ In our life as the church, we have a calling to embody a particular witness in the world to be in deep communion with the rest of creation.

We renew our commitment to our care for all creation, to walk together with First Nation Peoples in order that we listen, learn, build friendship, and give of love for all that God has made and First Nation Peoples have cared for as custodians of our vast country.





Principles

In our social witness as the church, we affirm the following key principles for our collective life together across the Synod. These principles give expression to the core belief, in the tradition of First Nation Peoples of Australia, that to be in relationship with God is to be in a reciprocal relationship with lands, seas and each other. They also emphasise a holistic approach to the Synod’s response to care for creation. The principles provide a framework for guiding our decision-making, and for prioritising our resources and actions. They are aimed to assist the Synod as we move forward in progressing the church’s strong commitment to taking action, supporting our people to give expression to their discipleship through choosing sustainable practices and in advocating for social changes.

Hope: In the face of great challenges and uncertainty, we respond with hope.

We are people of hope—a belief that God’s mission is for the reconciliation and renewal of the whole creation. Hope enables us to imagine new possibilities and empowers actions resulting in a new future. This does not deny the experience of suffering of all kinds and our lament of the current groaning cries of creation. While still bearing witness to our current reality, we will stay focused on the hope for a future flourishing with all creation and let this guide our actions and advocacy.

Spiritual: We promote a spirituality that cultivates a joyful connection, awe and wonder, and passionate concern for and connection with the natural environment, grounded in a belief that the “earth is the Lord’s and all that is within it” (Psalm 24: 1).

Care for creation is not seen as a burden or sacrifice, but as a deep spiritual and cultural response that enhances our own flourishing and wellbeing. Spirituality, grounded in the convictions of our faith in God as creator, reconciler and redeemer, can motivate us personally and collectively to a deep connection with the natural environment that results in a flourishing natural environment for future generations. In doing so, we can learn from the long tradition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples. Their wisdom will be a rich resource to guide our practices as a Synod and we must make time to listen and walk together.

Equitable Transition: For rural farming and mining communities that are experiencing economic transitions, we commit to supporting and being with them in advocating for transitions that are equitable and build sustainable local communities.

The Uniting Church has deep roots in regional, rural, and remote communities, many of which are engaged in carbon emitting industries such as agriculture and mining. We recognise the commitment in these places to bring abundant life to their communities, together with an economically and environmentally sustainable future for Australia. Many communities are also feeling the impacts of climate change through extended drought, prolonged fire seasons, higher summer temperatures and increased storminess.^v We will listen, support and advocate for our rural farming and mining communities that are in transition to develop and implement long-term, sustainable and equitable transition plans.

Structural Interconnectedness: We understand and advocate for the interconnection of health, social and environmental outcomes and impacts, and commit to actions that address this interdependence.

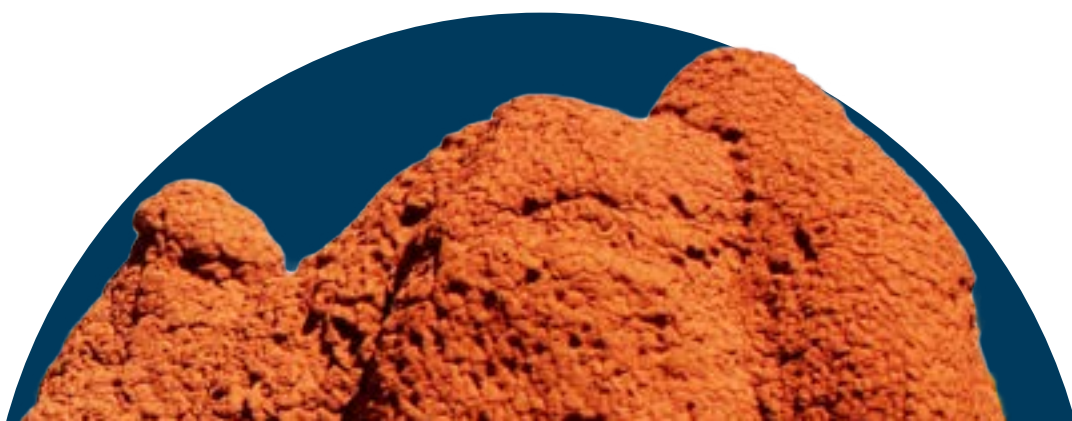
We recognise that acting to renew God's creation is a powerful opportunity to improve human health, well-being, livelihoods, social systems and justice, for both present and future generations. For example, measures such as clean energy, public transport, active transport (riding and walking) and increasing green spaces deliver significant physical and mental health benefits, while reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. It is also acknowledged that climate change disproportionately impacts the most vulnerable people.^{vi} Advocacy and action to address climate change will therefore prioritise policies and measures that support vulnerable people.

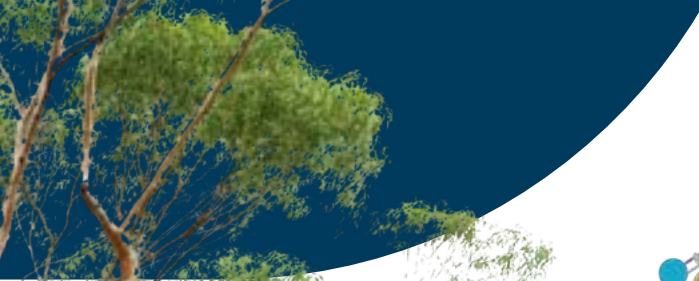
Collaboration: We commit to a collaborative approach in our vision for a flourishing creation: sharing resources, working together and modelling collective solutions.

The causes of, and responses to human-induced climate change and environmental degradation are many and complex and we recognise that no single person, organisation or country holds the whole solution. We will take approaches that invite a model of collective organisational resource participation, working together in local communities and supporting the work of partner churches.

Healing: We commit to a ministry of healing in our relationships in communities, to land and to God.

A flourishing creation requires the healing and reconciliation of broken relationships. These relationships take many forms. Some communities in regional and remote areas have experienced broken relationships over issues related to care for the environment and competing demands for limited natural resources. The church has an opportunity to commit to a ministry that creates spaces for reconciliation and healing in light of God's reconciling mission.





Action and advocacy plan:

opportunities and priorities

We recognise the importance of localised action and solutions, that think globally and act locally. As such, we commit to implementing a 2030 Action and Advocacy Plan that encourages, supports and equips our congregations, individuals, schools, agencies and communities to make positive changes, that address impacts and opportunities within their direct sphere of influence.

We recognise too, that sharing information, integrating efforts, and connecting those who work locally can create change that is felt nationally and globally. It is important that these initiatives are also incorporated into the personal actions of our members and staff. Change in every area of life is required to make a substantial and sustainable difference. For members of our church, this is an expression of their discipleship.

While many of our sustainability opportunities have low or no financial cost, we acknowledge that some actions—such as installing solar panels—may have a higher short-term cost. However, we commit to taking a long-term view in our prioritisation decisions, for the sake of love of God's creation, our role as stewards and our responsibility to future generations. Through this long-term lens, we recognise that investment in sustainability initiatives can support good financial stewardship through reduced operating costs. Furthermore, we recognise that there are significant costs—in terms of financial, social, physical and mental health—of inaction.^{vii}

In responding to the environmental challenges and opportunities in our communities, we have identified six themes to focus our actions and advocacy efforts up to 2030.

A 'commitment' and 'pathway' is outlined under each of the six action themes. This plan proposes that these **commitments** will act as shared goals that unite the environmental sustainability hopes of all congregations, presbyteries, agencies, and schools. But, we recognise that the way forward to achieving these commitments will look different across the life of the church. Thus, the **pathways** suggest a menu of options to empower all parts of the church to contribute to a flourishing creation in ways that are meaningful and feasible for them.



EMPOWERED PEOPLE AND CONNECTION

Commitment: Encourage and support individuals and groups among our congregations, presbyteries, schools and agencies to connect with creation, take action to support a flourishing creation and leverage the health and social benefits of improved environmental outcomes.

Pathway

- Promote resources and opportunities for individuals and households to explore and celebrate ways to live differently that supports the healing of creation
- Create community food gardens at our congregations to foster connections with nature, promote health and social outcomes, and develop community
- Encourage group meditation and prayer practices in nature
- Establish a voluntary pledge program to encourage congregations, households, schools and agencies, to commit to local actions that are important to their community

- Share stories of successful initiatives implemented by our Uniting Church community
- Build relationships with other communities, particularly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, and learn from the environmental sustainability initiatives of other groups
- Encourage congregations and groups within the Synod to participate in other local groups' initiatives in caring for the local environment (e.g. bushcare, repair cafes)
- Establish a forum for young people's action and advocacy including Covenanting with First Nation Peoples
- Encourage employees of Uniting Church entities to dedicate a day each year to contribute to this Action Plan in some way
- Support worshipping communities with liturgical resources related to "Caring for Creation", such as Seasons of Creation (September).

MOBILITY

Commitment: Support climate-friendly and healthy mobility options.

Pathway

- Post timetables for public transport and schedule worship services to suit local transport timetables
- Provide bicycle access and parking
- Set up a carpooling or car-sharing system
- Install charging points for electric vehicles
- Establish incentives for leaders to take up electric vehicles, modelling the way
- Incorporate remote meeting practices into everyday activities
- Advocate for active transport facilities in local communities.

ENERGY

Commitment: Use energy efficiently and source from clean energy providers, focusing on a target of 70 per cent greenhouse emissions reduction by 2030, with a further aim of net zero by 2040, in line with targets set by the National Assembly.^{viii}

Pathway

- Support and resource congregations and households with ways to monitor and reduce energy consumption
- Purchase appliances with a minimum 5-star energy efficiency rating
- Install solar panels and battery storage at facilities, where possible
- Purchase electricity from large-scale renewable energy projects
- Switch as much energy-using activities to electricity (e.g. hot water, cooking).

WATER

Commitment: Be good stewards of water through acts of conservation and protection.

Pathway

- Purchase appliances with a minimum 5-star water efficiency rating
- Install low-flow taps, shower heads and toilets
- Use native drought-tolerant plant species in landscaping projects
- Install rainwater and/or stormwater collection systems at facilities, where possible
- Host or participate in clean-up events to prevent litter pollution in waterways
- Establish process for measuring and monitoring water usage
- Set targets for water use reduction.



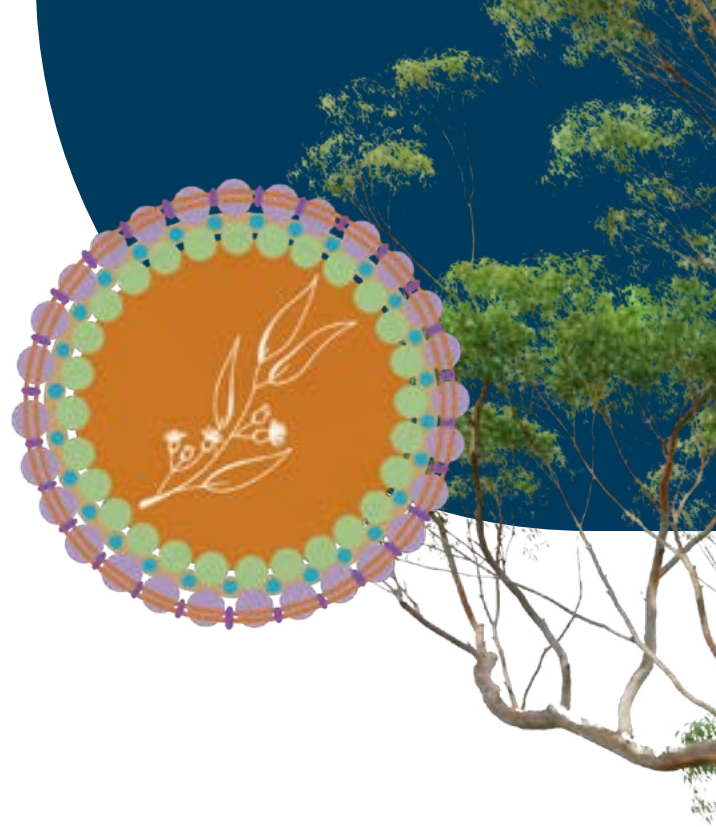
REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

Commitment: Reduce our demand on Earth's resources and generation of waste by supporting the transition to a circular economy.

Pathway

- Organise exchange circles that bring people together, help to save money and reduce consumption and waste
- Foster a "sharing economy" through the establishment of community tool libraries
- Establish community recycling points at our facilities for recovering specialist recyclable items (e.g. batteries, oral care packaging)
- Adopt a "digital first" approach for meeting materials, forms, etc.
- Equip our facilities with reusable foodware and phase out single-use items (e.g. cups, cutlery, plates)
- Establish onsite food composting or worm farms in conjunction with community food gardens
- Install community native beehives
- Divert pre-loved clothes, furniture and household items from landfill by donating to op shops or hosting jumble sales
- Set up a local system for sharing excess produce and food.





ADVOCACY

Commitment: Develop an Advocacy Plan that enables us to leverage our collective wisdom to contribute and influence the direction of economic and ecological issues, as well as the interconnection of health, social and environmental outcomes in our communities and beyond.

Pathway

- For rural farming and mining communities that are experiencing economic transitions, advocate for transitions that are equitable and build sustainable local communities
- Advocate for stronger government action on climate change
- Speak out about the impacts of climate change—and opportunities of climate action—on vulnerable groups in relation to social, economic and health outcomes and impacts
- Amplify the voices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in their calls for greater efforts to heal country
- Amplify and support the environmental advocacy efforts of young people in our communities
- Align external communication of Synod’s environmental sustainability efforts with the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals
- Accelerate progress towards an environmentally sustainable future through collective advocacy, such as inter-organisational and cross-sectoral climate action and advocacy networks like the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)
- Encourage ministers and congregational leaders to preach and teach in relation to climate change
- Embed eco-theology in theological teachings, for example through short courses and degree level subjects at Trinity College Queensland.



Next Steps

To achieve this advocacy and action plan to 2030 requires resourcing, encouraging and supporting the different parts of the Synod to engage this plan. It also requires collaboration by building on the knowledge and resources of different parts of the Synod and the wider community. This is a long term plan taking the Synod to the year 2030.



References

- ⁱ Justice and International Mission Cluster, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia (2020). Living in harmony with creation – What is the role of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania in addressing climate change? Consultation Paper.
- ⁱⁱ Uniting Church in Australia (2020), [Our Vision for a Just Australia](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ Uniting Church in Australia (2018), [For the Whole Creation](#)
- ^{iv} United Nations Global Compact (2021) [An Empowering Narrative and Call for Health Resilient Climate Action](#)
- ^v Department of Environment and Science (2021), [State of the Environment 2020](#)
- ^{vi} Department of Economic & Social Affairs (2017) [Climate Change and Social Inequality](#)
- ^{vii} Deloitte (2020), [A new choice: Australia's climate for growth](#)
- ^{viii} Based on (incomplete) FY19 energy and emissions reporting data from Synod, schools, Wesley Mission Queensland and UnitingCare, it is conservatively assumed that at least 70 per cent of our carbon footprint is attributable to electricity usage. Therefore, it is feasible to deliver on a 70 per cent emissions reduction commitment by moving to 100 per cent renewable electricity (through installing solar panels and purchasing remaining electricity from large-scale offsite renewable generators).

Source material

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The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



General Proposal 2

Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee (MC3)

That the Synod

Approves the formation of a missional sub-committee of the Synod Standing Committee to have the powers and responsibilities as articulated in the attached Charter.

The Scope

The Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee's (MC3) purpose is to fund, resource and enable the missional presence of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod by facilitating the cross entity and collaborative mission of the church. It will:

- Provide a voice for Congregations and Presbyteries missionally at a whole of Synod level;
- Support Presbyteries to empower local ministries and stream-line mission-related processes where applicable;
- Facilitate and enable missional initiatives which have multiple entities involved or can be networked together for mutual support;
- Provide Synod Standing Committee (SSC) visibility of significant missional activities across the life of the church with particular focus on those developing or requiring connections across Congregations, Presbyteries and/or agencies; and
- Support SSC's decision-making with up-to-date information on ministry and missional contexts.

The MC3 does not oversee, manage, fund or participate in local or Congregational ministry. It exists to support initiatives that involve multiple entities or require collaboration outside presbytery boundaries, and/or are able to be scaled across the Synod.

Rationale

There are two reasons for this proposal.

1. The “Shared Life. Flourishing Communities.” consultation process uncovered some frustration amongst Congregations and Presbytery bodies when they tried to implement missional activities involving multiple entities or attempted to access Synod funding.

2. The Presbytery Synod Interface (PSI) group, by virtue of its composition of Presbytery Ministers, Moderator, General Secretary, Trinity Principal, Executive Officer Corporate and Director of Mission UCQ, was viewed as the vehicle for promoting, funding and supporting these broader missional activities. However, this group has no mandate to do so. The purpose of the PSI is to facilitate operational matters between the Synod office and Presbyteries. As such, the PSI has not been formally accountable to any governing council of the church and has no mandate to oversee cross-entity mission governance.

How might this committee support mission? Here are some examples:

Example 1: A Congregation seeks to undertake church planting across Presbyteries. This could come to the MC3 to facilitate cross-presbytery support, and for consideration of seed funding.

Example 2: A Congregation wants to implement Congregation B’s successful migrant ESOL program, but Congregation A doesn’t have the capacity to train and assist. This might come to the MC3 for funding and support as MC3 recognises that this is a scalable mission opportunity that other Congregations might like to adopt.

Example 3. MC3 identifies that there are several Congregation amalgamations underway in various stages of development across the Synod. It recognizes the benefit of building a network of mutual learning and support among these projects, including missional teaching. It sponsors a training workshop, mentor arrangements, or other avenues for learning and support across this network to maximise support and outcomes in governance, ministry and mission.

Proposers

The proposer and seconder:

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CHARTER

1.1 Purpose

The Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee's (MC3) purpose is to fund, resource and enable the missional presence of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod by facilitating the cross entity and collaborative mission of the church. It will:

- Provide Synod Standing Committee (SSC) with a line of sight of significant missional activities within Congregations and Presbyteries (including non-Congregation ministry within their bounds), with particular focus on those developing or requiring connections across Congregations, Presbyteries and/or agencies;
- Support SSC's decision-making with up-to-date information on ministry and missional contexts;
- Provide a voice for Congregations and Presbyteries missionally at a whole of Synod level;
- Support Presbyteries to empower local ministries and stream-line mission-related processes where applicable; and
- Facilitate and enable missional initiatives which are cross-entity or can be networked together for mutual support.

1.2 Responsibilities

The MC3 is responsible for prayerfully:

- Framing Synod-wide missional context and providing a space for missional thought leadership to occur
- Determining how to resource collaborative, cross-entity mission initiatives and providing recommendations to the SSC
- Assessing how Synod wide mission-focused policies might affect Congregations
- Acting as a sounding board for presbytery collaboration
- Developing mission initiative assessment criteria
- Reviewing and evaluating relevant proposals
- Identifying missional priorities in line with Plenty (or any subsequent whole of Synod plan)
- Allocating Synod mission funding on behalf of SSC up to an identified delegation level
- Providing creative space for mission innovation discussions.

1.3 Delegations

The MC3 does not oversee, manage, fund or participate in local or Congregational ministry. It exists to support initiatives that involve multiple entities or require collaboration outside presbytery boundaries, and/or are able to be scaled across the Synod.

Example 1: A Congregation seeks to undertake church planting across Presbyteries. This could come to the MC3 to facilitate cross-presbytery support, and for consideration of seed funding.

Example 2: A Congregation wants to implement Congregation B's successful migrant ESOL program, but



Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee

Congregation A doesn't have the capacity to train and assist. This might come to the MC3 for funding and support as MC3 recognize that this is a scalable mission opportunity that other Congregations might like to adopt.

Example 3. MC3 identifies that there are several Congregation amalgamations underway in various stages of development across the Synod. It recognizes the benefit of building a network of mutual learning and support among these projects, including missional teaching. It sponsors a training workshop, mentor arrangements, or other avenues for learning and support across this network to maximise support and outcomes in governance, ministry and mission.

Financial Delegation: The MC3 has the authority to direct the Synod Office on behalf of the SSC where a missional outcome and business case has been identified and agreed for the initiative. The financial delegation provided to MC3 will be determined by SSC.

Initiatives requiring Synod policy changes may be reviewed by the MC3 but will be deferred to SSC for final decision.

TABLE OF MC3 INVOLVEMENT IN MISSIONAL INITIATIVES

Mission Level	Wider church connection (inherent or potential)	Amount	Funding source	Decision-making Authority	MC3 Involvement
Single Presbytery or Congregation initiatives but working across entities or Presbyteries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agencies Other Synod entities Congregations in other Presbyteries Other Presbyteries 	As per agreed by parties involved	Agencies or other Synod entities, including other Presbyteries. Or could be Synod funding through MC3 budget.	MC3	MC3 facilitates discussions, and makes funding decision
Synod wide	Whole-of-state mission or mandate. Could be multiple agencies or entities or across multiple Presbytery boundaries	Up to amount specified by SSC	Synod funding	MC3	MC3 makes funding decision
Synod wide	As above, except those initiatives that require either changes to existing Synod policy, or finance beyond MC3 delegation.	Above agreed SSC amount	Synod funding	SSC	SSC makes the decision based on MC3 recommendation

1.4 Composition

The MC3 includes the following members to be appointed by the SSC:

- A representative from each Presbytery, as determined by the Presbytery
- The Moderator(ex-officio)
- The General Secretary (ex-officio)
- Board of Christian Formation representative
- Director of Mission UnitingCare Queensland

The chair is the Moderator.

The MC3 will be supported by an Executive Officer who will be an ex officio member.



The MC3 may co-opt others onto the committee when specialist knowledge is required.

It is expected that all members will provide contextual knowledge, theological perspectives and/or specialist missional skills and experience.

1.5 Funding

The MC3 oversees and allocates an annual mission budget, the amount to be determined by the SSC.

1.6 Assessment Process

1. MC3 develops mission assessment criteria
2. Proposals brought to MC3 must meet the assessment criteria
3. Prayer and discernment
4. The proposal is either
 - (a) Accepted and funding approved
 - (b) Given qualified approval- needs more information before acceptance
 - (c) Rejected
5. Funding for the proposal will be released upon approval
6. Funded activities will provide regular updates as per mission assessment criteria to MC3.

1.7 Meetings

Bi-monthly, or as required.

The notice and agenda of meetings includes supporting papers. The agenda for meetings is determined by the MC3 chairperson in consultation with the MC3 executive officer and others directed by the MC3 chairperson.

General governance protocols, including those relating to quorums and electronic decision making, as outlined within the Synod by-laws apply to this committee

In the absence of the MC3 chairperson or appointed delegate, the members will elect one of their number as chairperson of that meeting.

The MC3 may invite other people including any employee of Synod to attend all or part of its meeting.

Any person with a material personal interest in a matter being considered at a meeting must not be present for consideration of that matter.

Decisions of the MC3 may be made at a duly constituted meeting or otherwise agreed by all MC3 members. Where approvals are granted outside a meeting of the MC3, a report is to be provided to the next meeting of the MC3.

1.8 Minutes

The MC3 executive officer prepares minutes for each MC3 meeting.

The draft minutes of each meeting are reviewed by the chairperson and circulated to all MC3 members by the MC3 executive officer as soon as practicable after each meeting.



A copy of the MC3 minutes, once they have been approved by the MC3, are signed by the MC3 chairperson.

1.9 Access to information

The MC3 has the authority to seek any information it lawfully requires from any employee of the Synod and all employees must comply with such requests.

Professional advisers may be appointed at Synod's expense to assist the MC3 in evaluating specific issues or risks and mitigating strategies to meet the MC3's purpose and discharge its responsibilities. In engaging such advisors, the MC3 must consider the reasonableness of the expense and budget availability.

1.10 Reporting to the Synod Standing Committee

The MC3 will report quarterly to the SSC on the missional activity across the church.

1.11 Review of MC3

The MC3 reviews their mandate annually to provide assurance it remains consistent with the SSC's objectives and responsibilities.

The SSC approves or further reviews the MC3.



General Proposal 3

Mission Development Fund Policy

That the Synod

Adopts the **policy** found at **Appendix C** for the operation of the Mission Development Fund.

The Scope

Since the 34th Synod the operation and intent of the Mission Development Fund (which has been in operation since 2008) has been examined and reviewed. The intent is to ensure that the funds collected and managed in this fund are properly aligned to contemporary mission strategy and priorities.

Since the 35th Synod an MDF working group, consisting of Rev Glen Schweitzer, Rev Stuart Bosch, Rev Yvonne McRostie, Mr Corey Lunn, Mr Kendell Yates and Rev Heather den Houting, oversaw the development and circulation of an initial consultation paper. The feedback from this consultation was collated, assessed, and reviewed by the working group and was developed into a series of **principles** which are contained in a second consultation paper, currently circulating in the Synod (**Appendix A**).

The **existing guidelines** in relation to the MDF and which have been in operation since 2008 are found at **Appendix B**.

The Synod is being asked to approve a new **policy** that is based the principles collated during the consultation process over the last 3 years. The draft policy is attached at **Appendix C**.

Rationale

At the 34th Synod it was RESOLVED by Consensus that the Synod:

- (a) requests an updated policy be prepared, after detailed consultation with congregations, presbyteries, and faith communities, covering the operation of the Mission Development Fund (MDF) and the policy be developed in accordance with these principles:

1. The MDF will be a fund that will support the contemporary mission strategy and priorities across all Presbyteries in the Queensland Synod. As such we acknowledge:
 - (a) According to our Constitution, we are all stewards of the property and funds held by a congregation or presbytery;
 - (b) The property and funds of the church are for the benefit of the mission of the whole church;

- (c) Beneficial use of funds in the MDF may be required to be forgone by an individual congregation or presbytery to achieve the objective of this principle.
- 2. The MDF will be a sustainable resource for long term church growth and development:
 - (a) It will be used for capital and/or development opportunities that produce a return benefit to the church;
 - (b) It will not be used for operational (including general maintenance) expenses or sensitive matters' expenses. (note "sensitive matters" was a term used for payment of claim for institutional sexual abuse)
- 3. It is a requirement of MDF funding allocation that projects need to meet good governance practices including prudent and sustainable decision making, and accountable and transparent processes and reporting.
 - (b) notes that when developed, the policy on the operation of the MDF will be circulated to presbyteries and congregations for consultation and then submitted to the 35th Synod for approval.

Due to time constraints, General Proposal 7 "Mission Development and Innovation Fund Policy 2020 (MDIF)" was not considered by the 35th Synod. Instead, a working group was formed and has overseen the consultation process since that time.

Proposers

The proposer and seconder:

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Consultation Paper 2

MDF: the future of the Mission Development Fund



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

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Consultation Paper 2

MDF: the future of the Mission Development Fund

Introduction

The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, currently utilises guidelines around retaining and using funds from the sale of properties. Developed in 2008, they are called the Mission Development Fund (MDF) Guidelines and are attached to the back of this document (Appendix A).

During 2021, a consultation paper was circulated to ask the question: What is the best way to use MDF resources to meet the emerging needs of the church?

This paper summarises the responses received contains a proposed new policy which the General Secretary will take to the 36th Synod in Session in May 2022. The proposed new policy is attached to the back of this document (Appendix B).

Your feedback on the proposed new policy is welcomed and will be included in the briefing that will be given to the Synod in Session in May 2022. This feedback needs to be received by 30th April 2022.

**All feedback can be provided through the General Secretary
by email: generalsecretary@ucaqld.com.au**



Recap on our current situation

All property and assets in the Uniting Church in Australia are held for the broad purposes of the church. No single part of the church 'owns' the assets they are responsible for. However, we do say that different parts of the church are the **responsible bodies** for the care and use of assets. In the current MDF Guidelines we use the colloquial term 'beneficial interest'.

Because we all have a shared life as a church, there are times when we work together to make sure that the assets across the life of the church are managed to meet the current and future needs of the church. Often this is referred to as the stewardship of church resources.

The MDF is a capital fund administered by and included within the accounts of the Synod Office at the direction of the Synod Property Board, currently known as the Finance, Investment and Property (FIP) Board. However, it is important to note that it is a specified fund for capital purposes. This means that it has a particular purpose and funds from it **must be used for that purpose only**. This means that the funds can only be used at the request and with the consent of the responsible body, such as a congregation.

The purpose of the MDF was to create savings to provide for church development and growth in congregations, presbyteries, and the Synod. The focus in the guidelines was to ensure that the proceeds from sales of capital assets were primarily used for the development of/purchase of other capital assets.

When a Church property is sold, according to the current guidelines the net funds from the sale is deposited into an MDF account, which is administered by the Synod Office. If a congregation or responsible body wishes to access those funds, they make a request to Finance, Investment and Property (FIP) Board. The FIP Board is bound to ensure the funds are used for capital purposes and in accordance with the directions of the responsible body.

The FIP Board is then guided by the MDF guidelines which says it should remit the funds on that request for matters that are:

- For approved capital purposes,
- For interest only to assist in normal operating expenses,
- For special church growth or outreach programs which have been approved by Presbytery, or
- For gifts or loans to other parts of the church.



Results of Consultation Paper 1

The reference group received responses from across the life of the church, including from bodies that currently hold monies in the MDF account. As well as commenting on the questions in the discussion paper, some shared stories with us about how they are planning to use their MDF funds.

As our congregation grows, especially in our Sunday School and Youth, we would like to renovate the rear hall to build a community hub that would foster and grow our youth fellowship and our senior citizens including our local community and the surrounding neighbourhoods. This is our local outreach and is vital to meet our mission; "God's love in action...serving the Community." We are currently putting together a proposal for the back hall either to be renovated or rebuilt to be presented to Presbytery.

The working group synthesised these responses into the following themes and propositions. The major changes to the current practices are:

- Greater involvement by Presbyteries in decision making,
- An expectation on the FIP Board to ensure there is adequate consultation across the various bodies involved in decision making,
- A reduction on the period of unused funds from 10 years to 7 years,
- A capacity for the FIP Board to invest monies in higher growth funds when given consent by the responsible body, and
- The removal of the Future Development Fund provision.

The proposed policy as drafted reflects these broad principles and tries to make the information about the purpose and use of the funds clearer and more accessible.

Broad principles

Purpose of the Fund

1. *The purpose of the fund is to provide for Church development and growth across Congregations, Presbytery and Synod wide activities.*

There was no dispute in this response. There was no response which argued that the MDF should be disbanded.

Drawn from Capital Growth

2. *The fund is primarily intended to be drawn down for capital growth. The funds shall not be used for property maintenance costs.*

Examples of maintenance costs are replacement of carpets, painting, replacement of items such as dishwashers and data projectors, signage, gardening and landscaping.

Capital growth includes new buildings and renovation fit outs, major property improvements such as new toilet and kitchen facilities.

Where there is a question between 'what is a renovation' and 'what is a repair', the Presbytery will be the primary decision maker in the first instance and then if approved, provide their reasons to the Synod Property Board.



Non-capital expenditure

3. *Draw-down on funds can be made for non-capital expenditure. But to do so will require a significant business case that includes a demonstration of non-capital return (missional) from the expenditure or the development of a sustainable funding model for the enterprise.*

Any submission for non-capital expenditure must be accompanied by a strategic missional plan, including regular reporting to the Presbytery and the Synod Property Board. Guidelines for the expectations of reporting will be developed in consultation with the responsible body.

While the question may remain how we might measure missional return against such activities as a church planting model that may require an initial investment of funds, this will be worked out through the development and delivery of missional guidelines to guide the responsible body. However, these would not be designed to limit any strategic missional plan developed by a congregation, presbytery or other body.

Synod Property Board

4. *Money should be collected, held and administered through a Synod wide system via the. The Property Officer shall be responsible for the institution of all such practices, processes and procedures in order to give effect to this policy.*

While there were some views that indicated support of the Presbytery being responsible for the administration of funds, in the main, the centralised approach had more support. The arguments for this approach include:

- Greater investment potential with combined fund,
- Capacity to monitor and support the Property Trust and Synod Property Board,
- Presbyteries have significant involvement in the development of missional plans in this new plan,
- Whole of Synod strategic view is maintained, and
- Greater potential for the cross use of resources across the Synod as a whole.

Use of Interest

5. *Interest on monies held in the account can be used by the responsible body for non-capital purposes.*

While this is not considered a desirable attribute, it is recognised that some bodies have based their current ministry resourcing on this approach. There will be no change to this approach at this time. However, the Presbytery will be responsible for consulting with the congregation around their future missional plans and the viability of the continuation of such arrangements.

Where the body is a non-congregational entity, the Synod Property Board will be responsible for consulting around their future their future missional plans and the viability of the continuation of such arrangements.



Processing of Congregational Requests

6. *Congregational requests for any draw down from the fund can only be made to the Synod Property Board with the endorsement of the Presbytery.*

All non-congregational requests must come to the Synod Property Board with the endorsement of the appropriate governing body.

To ensure that there is a broader perspective on the use of the church's resources, this approach allows for there to be oversight and guidance provided by the appropriate Presbytery or Governing body.

Consultation

7. *Before it makes its determination on any application, the Synod Property Board will be required to consult with Congregations, Presbyteries, and relevant governing bodies, as is appropriate, in order to be satisfied that the application demonstrates alignment of the request for funds with the missional priorities of the Congregation, Presbytery or the governing body.*

This principle is a mandate on the Property Board to act in collaboration with the responsible body and their governing body. Currently in the Church's life, the policy aims to build in collaboration into the use of funds. This approach ensures that no decision about the use of funds is made in a vacuum by anybody given responsibility under this policy.

Future Development Fund

8. *That the provision for the Synod to hold a proportion of the funds received on sale for the Future Development Fund be removed.*

This part of the policy allowed for there to be a percentage of the sale income put into a Future Development Fund. With the closure of the Future Development Fund, these funds have been paid into the Synod Reserve Fund, which is a savings account used to cushion the church against financial shocks. It is no longer considered appropriate that these funds be used for this purpose. Instead, all monies in the MDF should be considered as potentially being applied for the future development needs of the church.

Review of Unused Funds

9. *Monies that have been held in the fund for a period of longer than 7 years will be subject to a review against the missional plans of the responsible body.*

Section 4.4 of the current guidelines suggests that when funds have been unused for a period of 10 years, then the responsible body may lose its control of those funds. However, this provision is unclear and has never been utilised.

The proposed policy seeks to clarify the intent and purpose of this provision, by making it clear that in the event the monies have not been used for a period of 7 year then they will be subject to a review against the missional plans of the responsible body, and if no plans exist then the funds will become available to the governing body such as the Presbytery. This means the Presbytery then has the responsibility for the use of those funds.

Use for Investment

10. *The funds held in trust in the MDF can be made available for investment by the Synod Property Board in a high yield investment fund when instructed to do so by the responsible body.*

With a large balance in the MDF, the Synod Property Board can be given permission for the funds to be invested in higher yielding investments. This will be done with the understanding that such an



approach can 'lock away' investment funds for some time, which would then not be available for draw-down. Investment of this sort will only occur with the permission of the responsible body and will incur an investment fee to be determined at the time.

The application to invest monies into higher yield funds shall be subject to the same application and approval processes as for any other application to utilise MDF and will also be subject to review after 7 years.

The responsible body shall benefit from any interest or bear any loss from of this higher yielding investment, into their MDF account.

Transitional Provisions

11. *Transitional Provisions*

Funds and projects that are already in place and are aligned with missional planning shall remain without alteration.

After the policy is adopted, the Synod Property Board will advise the Presbytery or governing body of any funds that have or will have been held for a period of 7 years in the next 18 months. That Presbytery or governing body shall consult with the responsible body to determine if a missional plan exists. If at the conclusion of a period of 18 months after the adoption of this policy, no missional plan exists for those funds, then the Synod Property Board shall transfer the relevant funds, within the MDF, to the Presbytery or governing body for their use as the responsible body.





The Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod
MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUND GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Uniting Church in Australia carries out its mission and service through its congregations, parishes and a variety of agencies. The legal framework for the Church is based on an Act of Parliament (The Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977). This Act provides for the establishment of the Church and the legal entity called 'The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.)'. (Property Trust)

All Church property is, for legal purposes, vested in the Property Trust.

- 1.2 Synod departments, agencies, presbyteries and congregations shall accept the right of the Church to have jurisdiction over their properties and in certain circumstances either to realize, transfer or centralize control for the good of the Church as a whole, in accordance with priorities determined by the Synod.
- 1.3 The Synod by Resolution 78.13, established the Reserve Fund pursuant to Regulation 4.8.1.
- 1.4 The Synod by Resolution 07.56 transferred all congregation/presbytery assets and balances held in the Synod Reserve Fund at 31 December 2007 to the Mission Development Fund.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 The purpose of the Mission Development Fund is to provide for Church development and growth in congregations, presbyteries and the Synod.

3. APPLICATION

- 3.1 These guidelines shall apply to all major sales of property (as defined in Regulation 4.1.1) held in the name of the Property Trust.

4. GUIDELINES

4.1 Proposals Involving Sale of Property

The Synod Property Board shall ensure that prior to assessing any proposal involving the sale of property, the following procedure is observed:

- 4.1.1. That it is established which congregation, department, organisation or other activity is deemed to have a beneficial interest in the subject property.
- 4.1.2. That there is consultation with such Congregation or other body and the Presbytery. During this consultation process, regard shall be given to the missional goals of the Congregation concerned as determined by a mission audit conducted by the Presbytery and/or the Synod.
- Such audit shall be assessed by the Presbytery in relation to priority of needs in other congregations across the Presbytery and secondly by the Synod in relation to the overall mission strategies of the Church.
- 4.1.3. There shall also be consultation with the Department for Financial and Property Services and with the Presbytery to determine whether the property should continue to be held for investment, developmental or other purposes.
- 4.1.4. The Property Officer shall be responsible to institute all such processes as are necessary, including those prescribed by Regulation to seek sales of properties when appropriate agreements have been reached.



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MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUND GUIDELINES

4.2 Determination of Proposals

The Synod Property Board shall assess and determine all proposals involving the sale of property and shall give due advice in writing to the relevant congregation, department, organisation or other activity.

4.3 Application of Proceeds of Sale

4.3.1. As a general rule, 15% of the net proceeds from the sale of all properties shall be apportioned:

4.3.1.1. in the case of departmental properties, to the Synod Reserve Fund;

4.3.1.2. in the case of congregation properties, to the Future Development Fund.

4.3.2. Account shall be taken as necessary of any consequences which flow from government and community funding in the acquisition and development of the property being sold.

4.3.3. The net proceeds of sale shall be applied as follows:

4.3.3.1. That proportion identified with any approved proposal under 4.1 above shall be deposited until required in the Mission Development Fund;

4.3.3.2. The balance, if any, relating to departmental property shall be applied to the Synod Reserve Fund;

4.3.3.3. The balance, if any, relating to parish property shall be applied to the Future Development Fund.

4.4 Proceeds of Sale

The balance of proceeds of all properties sold shall be held in the Mission Development Fund on behalf of the congregation or other body deemed to have an equitable interest therein until there is a valid need up to ten (10) years.

4.4.1. Interest may be paid and credited to the proceeds at an agreed rate not exceeding the maximum set by the Finance, Investment & Property Board.

4.5 Use of Proceeds of Sale

4.5.1 Departments and congregations should exist, as far as possible, without having to use interest accruing on proceeds of sale for normal expenses. Nevertheless some will find it necessary to use such interest for normal purposes in order to remain viable and to continue their witness and service in the community.

4.5.2 The Synod Property Board considers as undesirable the practice of depending on property sales to cover cost of maintenance, painting, etc. These costs should be provided for by proper management and financial planning. The Church cannot have the capital to grow and expand if resources are being used for maintenance purposes.

4.6 Purposes for which Sale Proceeds may be used

Upon the request of the Congregation Council, Presbytery or other body, the Department of Finance & Property Services shall remit:

4.6.1. Proceeds of sale (capital and interest) for approved capital purposes;



The Uniting Church in Australia
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MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUND GUIDELINES

- 4.6.2 Interest accruing on proceeds of sale to be used, in whole or in part, for normal operating expenses;
- 4.6.3 Proceeds of sale (capital and interest) for any special church growth or outreach program approved by the relevant Presbytery;
- 4.6.4 Proceeds of sale (capital and interest) for purposes of making a gift or loan to congregations, presbyteries, and other church institutions, in addition to the provisions contained in the Regulations.

THE MANAGEMENT OF THE MISSION DEVELOPMENT FUND

- 5.1 The Director, Department for Financial and Property Services shall be responsible to the Finance, Investment & Property Board for the management of the Fund.
- 5.2 All moneys credited to the Mission Development Fund and not immediately required shall be invested with the Uniting Church Investment Service.
- 5.3 Moneys credited to the Mission Development Fund shall be dealt with as follows:
 - 5.3.1 Under 4.3.3.1 held on deposit. Interest, where applicable, shall be credited each 30 June and 31 December.
 - 5.3.2 Under 4.3.1.1 and 4.3.3.2 treated as Capital donations to the Synod Reserve Fund.

Draft Mission and Development Fund (MDF) Policy – 2022

1. Introduction

The Uniting Church in Australia carries out its mission and service through its congregations, presbyteries, institutions, parish missions and other entities, schools, childcare centres, committees commissions and councils. According to our Constitution, we are all stewards of the property and funds held by any part of the church. We acknowledge that the property and funds of the church are for the benefit of the mission of the whole church. We pray that as one church we may be open to the sharing of all our resources to fulfil this mission.

2. Purpose

We agree that the Mission Development Fund (MDF) will be a sustainable resource for long term church growth and development. We agree it will be used for capital and development opportunities which provide growth in Congregations, Presbyteries, and the Synod in order to promote the mission of the church. (Reg 4.8.1(c)(i)).

3. Explanatory notes for this policy

Property Trust

The legal framework for the Church is based on an Act of Parliament *the Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977*. This Act provides for the establishment of the Church and the legal entity called 'The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.)'. All Church property held in the name of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod is vested in the Property Trust.

The Responsible Body

Is the body responsible for the management and administration of the property (Reg 4.1.1). For the purposes of this policy, a responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod.

Synod Property Board

The role of the Synod Property Board is to supervise the implementation of the Synod's policies in regard to property within the bounds of the Synod (Reg 4.2.1 (b)). The Synod Property Board must assess any proposed sale of property before that transaction can be put into effect. (Reg 4.2.1(d)). The Synod Property Board is a relevant entity when considering any application under this policy and it will observe the missional priorities of the Synod.

Presbytery

The role of the Presbytery is to have such oversight as is necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area committed to it (Const. 26). This includes promoting the wider work of the Church through the promotion and conduct of activities that promote a fuller participation in the whole range of Christian witness and service (Reg 3.1.3(e)(iii)). The Presbytery is a relevant entity when considering applications by a Congregation under this policy.

Synod Property Officer

The Synod Property Officer shall be responsible for instituting all such processes as are necessary, including those prescribed by Regulation to seek sales of properties when appropriate agreements have been reached. The Synod Property Officer shall do all things necessary to give effect to this policy including the disbursement of funds and interest on funds and the investment of funds.

4. Principles

4.1 Consultation

In the application of this policy the Synod Property Board is obliged to consult with all relevant entities when assessing the proposed sale of property. During this consultation process, regard shall be given to the missional priorities of the responsible body and any other relevant entity.

4.2 Alignment with promotion of the mission of the church

Any relevant entity can work with any responsible body for the development of missional plans to promote the mission of the church. Eg. Presbyteries will consult and work with congregations in assisting them to develop missional plans and to regularly assess the progress of those plans.

4.3 Application for capital or investment use only

4.3 (a) An application may be made for capital development or capital and financial investment. This does not include applications for maintenance of property.

Maintenance expenses include such things as carpets, painting, signage, replacement of items such as dishwashers, data projectors etc.

Capital or investment use includes purchase of real estate, financial investment, major property re/development etc.

4.3(b) If upon an application by a Congregation, there is a question between maintenance and capital, the Presbytery will be the decision maker in the first instance and then if approved, provide their reasons to the Synod Property Board. The Synod Property Board will be the final decision maker.

4.4 Application for strategic innovation or strategic mission

A responsible body applying for funds toward strategic mission or innovation shall ensure their application complies with the strategic mission and priorities of any relevant entity. Strategic innovation or mission can include church planting project costs, including property and people, and major missional outreach programs.

4.5 Funds cannot be used for any other purpose

Funds held in the MDF account can only be used in accordance with this policy. They shall not be used for operational purposes or for the payment of any legal claims made against the church.

5. Application of this policy

5.1 This policy shall come into effect as at a date determined by the Synod.

5.2 This policy shall apply to all major sales of property (Reg. 4.1.1) held in the name of the Property Trust, where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod.

5.3 Subject to the Regulations (Reg 4.8), the sum of the net proceeds from a property sale where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, shall be deposited into the MDF.

5.4 The sum of the net proceeds from a property sale shall be held in the MDF on behalf of the responsible body for a period of up to seven (7) years.

5.5 Interest may be paid and credited to the proceeds at an agreed rate not exceeding the maximum set by the Synod Property Board.

6. Selling a property

6.1 The Responsible Body

The body responsible for the management and administration of the property to be sold, shall make an application to the Synod Property Board, with the approval of all relevant entities for the sale of property (Reg 4.6.3).

6.2 Synod Property Board

The Synod Property Board shall assess and determine all proposals involving the sale of property and shall give due advice in writing to the responsible body and any other relevant entity.

7. Applying to use funds held in the MDF

Any Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, may seek access to the fund for projects which are aligned with the missional priorities of the responsible body and all other relevant entity and:

- a. Support or fund capital development and/or strategic innovation opportunities for the church; and/or
- b. Produce a financial return on investment and/or strategic mission benefit to the church.

8. Reporting obligations on use of funds

Where funds have been used under this policy, the responsible body shall provide annual reporting as to the use and outcomes of the use of the funds to the Synod Property Board, as directed by that Board.

9. Use of interest on funds

Responsible bodies should avoid having to use interest accruing on proceeds of sale for normal expenses. Nevertheless, this policy will allow a responsible body to use such interest for normal expenses to remain viable and to continue their witness and service in the community. This arrangement will be reviewed annually by the Synod Property Board in consultation with the relevant entity.

10. Use of funds held for a period of over 7 years

Where the responsible body is a Congregation and has funds in the MDF for a period of 7 years and no approved missional plan has been presented to the Presbytery within those 7 years, the Presbytery shall become the responsible body for the funds held by that Congregation.

For all other entities, if no approved missional plan has been presented to the Synod within 7 years the Synod shall become the responsible body for the funds held by that entity.

11. Ability of responsible body to surrender its funds

Any responsible body may transfer the funds held in the MDF on its behalf, to any other responsible body at any time.

12. Transitional provisions

Existing funds and projects that are already in place and are aligned with the missional planning and priorities of the relevant entities shall remain in the MDF without alteration.

Upon the adoption of this policy, the Synod Property Board will advise the Presbytery or relevant entity of any funds that has been or will have been held in the MDF for a period of 7 years in the next 18 months. That Presbytery or relevant entity shall consult with the responsible body to determine if a missional plan exists. If at the conclusion of a period of 18 months after the adoption of this policy, no missional plan exists for those funds, then the Synod Property Board shall transfer the relevant funds, within the MDF, to the Presbytery or relevant entity for their use as the responsible body.



General Proposal 4

Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships committees - governance change

That the Synod

1. Conclude the Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee (SERC) and Synod Interfaith Relationships Committee (SIRC) as committees of the synod from the rising of the synod date.
2. Requests the Project Plenty team to continue to work on ways to develop interfaith and ecumenical relationships within the synod
3. Acknowledges the significant work done by these committees in the life of the Synod.

The Scope

This proposal seeks to shift the governing structure of these committees from being accountable directly to the Synod, and instead being accountable to and working alongside the Moderator as part of the Moderator's portfolio of responsibilities. The specific details of how this accountability and working process will happen will be determined as part of an ongoing consultation process with the current committees. This work aligns to the ongoing 'Shared Life, Flourishing Communities' mission priority work of Fit for Purpose, Life Together, and Transforming Communities.

Rationale

The synod's 'Shared Life, Flourishing Communities' ambition has been an opportunity for different parts of the church to review their life and purpose to ensure they are being the most effective. The Synod Ecumenical and Interfaith Relationships committees have participated in a consultation review over the past 8 months, in order to identify the most appropriate structure and environment in which the work of ecumenism and interfaith engagement can occur.

It has been recognised that for some time the capacity of these committees has been constrained by a number of challenges relating to resourcing, broader buy-in and energy, communication, and networking within the church. The members of the committees have faithfully developed deep and long-lasting relationships with other denominations and faiths and are passionate about helping the

church understand and wrestle with how to hold difference in tension. And it has been affirmed again that this work is a responsibility of the whole synod, given it is a core element of our Christ-centred and 'uniting' DNA. Instead of leaving the work to a small under-resourced committee on behalf of the church, it is recognised that we need to find a way to remove the siloes of individual committees and create an environment of collective support and engagement in this work.

In conjunction with the ongoing Plenty work emerging out of the Transforming Communities mission priority, a draft operating and accountability shape has been created, in which the Moderator would take responsibility of overseeing this work alongside other social action and justice advocacy work, as part of the Moderator's portfolio. A working group under the project plenty banner will meet in June to continue the important work in the interfaith and ecumenical spaces that the church already has commitments in while also looking at new initiatives in these areas (Draft shape and structure attached – Attachment A).

Proposers

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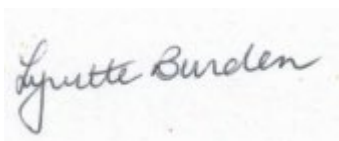


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Signature:

‘Shared Life. Flourishing Communities’

UCAQLD Plenty ambition 2025



We are one church active in every Queensland community, bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness. Through our shared life we are committed to a flourishing future for church and community.

2025 ambition





Discipleship

Foster a renewed discipleship culture within the church through modelling, educating, training and equipping.



Transforming communities

We will be active partners in meeting existing and emerging needs and building upon the strengths of the communities and world in which we live.



Fit for purpose

Our governance, service delivery and use of assets are shaped to support the missional priorities of our church, with effectiveness and efficiency as two key markers.



Life together

Across the life of the church we seek closer collaboration to bring God's gifts to the world.

Each body within our church has its own part to play in realising the mission priorities and directions as it responds prayerfully to God's leading.

- Refresh discipleship culture across the life of the church through discovery, development and deployment of discipleship and evangelism training and toolkits.
- Pursue innovation in church and mission models and practices to suit a constantly changing world.
- Encourage and empower young people to nurture their faith, serve God and practise leadership in church and world.

- Develop tools, training and practices to support well-being in our communities, including in such areas as mental health and domestic and family violence.
- Pursue covenantal relationship with First Peoples.
- Deliberately engage in environmentally conscious processes and practices.

- Create enabling mechanisms to develop a contemporary, agile operating model, including reform of governance structures.
- Pursue operational efficiencies across the life of the church.
- Progress a strategic review of missional presence, health and vitality.
- Develop leadership across all levels and entities of the wider church.

- Encourage and resource local and regional mission partnerships.



SERC and SIRC

Current State of Ecumenism and Interfaith Engagement in the UCA Qld synod

(WHERE THESE ARE MANAGED BY THE COMMITTEE)

THESE ARE DONE WELL:

- Strong relationships
- Gatherings
- Learning about each other
- Understanding difference
- Opportunities for collaboration in shared activities and goals

THESE ARE CHALLENGES:

- Limited communication beyond the smaller group
- Hard to enable wider buy-in and participation
- Differences in theology within the UCA
- Struggle to create a succession plan in the current model of a synod committee's responsibilities
- Lack of resourcing for this work to be sustainable beyond the small committee



SERC and SIRC

Ongoing and Future Hope for Ecumenism and Interfaith Engagement in the UCA Qld synod (reframed out of current charter of responsibilities)

We will seek to encourage and enable across the synod the flourishing of a culture of ecumenical and interfaith engagement, as an outworking of our Christ-centred and 'Uniting' life together, in order to contribute to the transformation of life in all its fullness for church and community.



SERC and SIRC

Current responsibilities

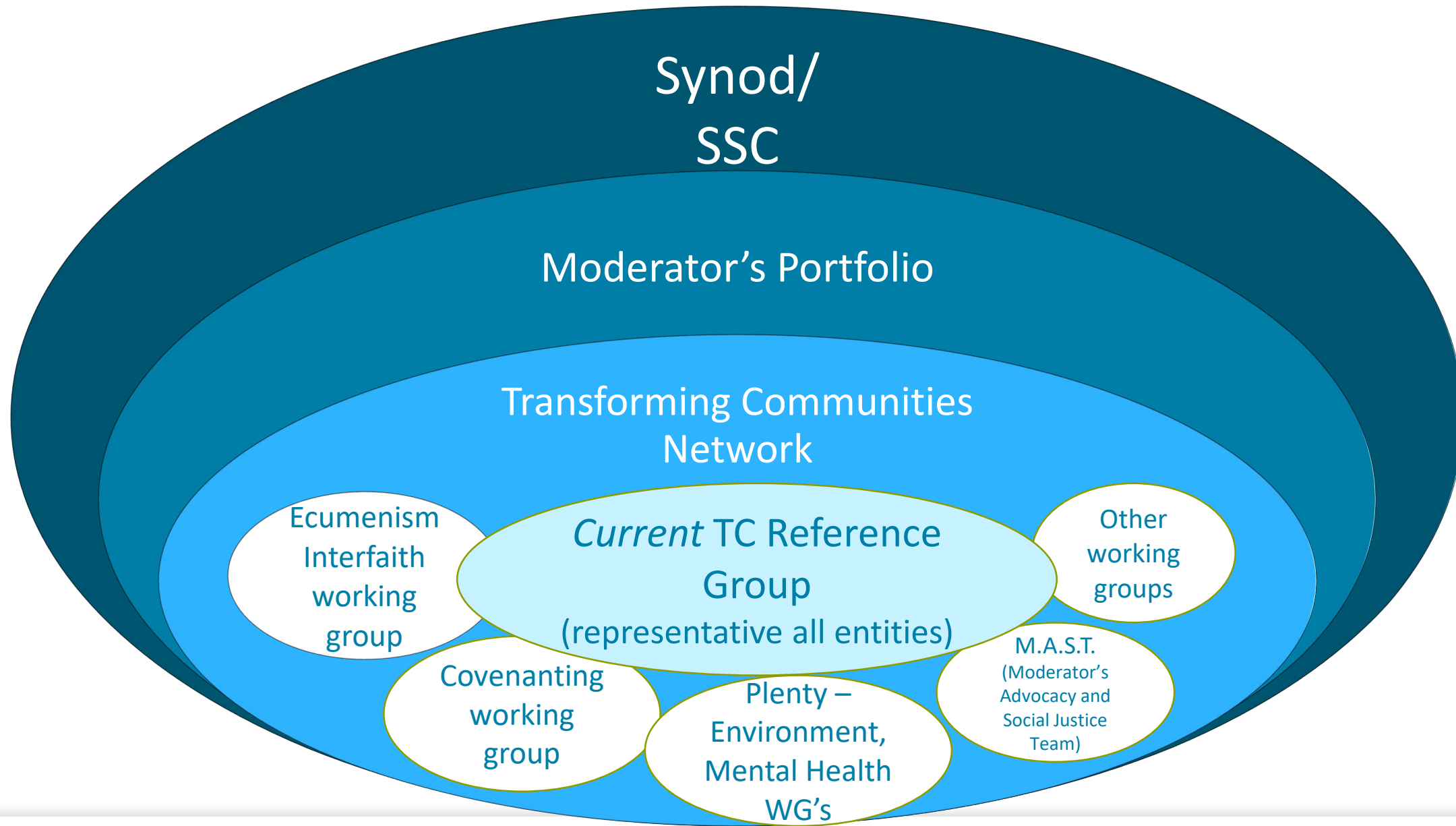


- Representation, liaison and presence
- Relationship-building
- Deep listening, truth-telling, theological and ecclesiological wrestling
- Enabling participation in opportunities to further God's mission of reconciliation
- Communication and information management



Suggestions for how this work could be best managed

- Location within the *'Moderator's portfolio'*
 - Provides the **mechanism for appointing representatives** on behalf of the synod
 - Aligns with **Moderator's duties as the voice of the synod** with other churches and faiths
 - Greater **opportunity for work to be championed and actioned** through the Moderator's engagement across the synod and beyond, than through the SSC
 - Opportunity to be **connected into a larger network and platform** through a potential 'Transforming Communities Network', and the Plenty Life Together working group



Moderator's Responsibilities

UCAQLD synod by laws, Q2.3.5:

- (d) in consultation with Presbytery Officers, **encourage congregations** in furthering their mission within their respective bounds and in such **areas of geographic, sociological and ethnic grouping** as may seem appropriate;
- (e) in consultation with the General Secretary of Synod, **encourage the provision of resources and material** for the **promotion of the mission of the Church**;
- (h) **issue media releases** in the name of the Synod on **matters of public interest**;
- (i) **liaise** as appropriate with the **General Secretary of the Assembly and the National Director for Social Responsibility and Justice**;
- (j) **initiate research and investigate studies** into **social justice and other issues which impact upon the missional development of the Church**;
- (k) **initiate both formal and informal forums** which will **reflect on the missional priorities of the Church and which may draft strategic missional directions**;
- (l) except in those cases in which negotiations are necessary with Governments and Government Departments or officers in respect of the work of the Synod, act as the **liaison person of the Church** with Governments in respect of **public issues**;
- (m) have the **oversight** of the Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee and **relationships with other branches of the Church catholic**;

Moderator's Portfolio

MAST – Moderator's Advocacy and Social Justice Support

- Support the Moderator's public voice, on behalf of the Synod, in response to, external requests and opportunities for strategic, quality and timely submissions and statements about emerging social issues and justice advocacy.
- Reactive, responsive and timely
- meets fortnightly dealing with requests to Mod for submissions/opportunities to speak on behalf of the church
- Currently resourced from within the synod office and UCQ through existing policy/communications support
- Fits within the scope of the Moderator's responsibilities in the synod's by laws: Q2.3.5 (h), (i), (l)

Moderator's Portfolio

TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES NETWORK

- Moderator hosts **2 gatherings/year for the whole network** to come together and share stories, build capacity and learning, and identify opportunities for collaborative engagement in mission on the ground
- **Individual working groups meet according to their own cadence and rhythm**, with a connection into the Transforming Communities Reference Group with the Moderator
- **Potentially resourced from within the synod office with a focussed mission integration** role, with the purpose of connecting and catalysing the work of each of the working groups with the wider church and the Moderator
- Moderator **connects network to opportunities** emerging across the synod through the Moderator's travels and engagement with the wider church

Moderator's Portfolio

Current TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES REFERENCE GROUP (TCRG)

- **Prioritise** issues of social justice and responsibility in which the Uniting Church in Queensland should intentionally engage both in justice advocacy and practical local mission initiatives.
- **Oversee** the collaborative organisational response to identified Plenty commitments, by leveraging the diversity and expertise that exists across the synod, in order to build organisational capacity.
- **Report** on the Transforming Communities Mission Priority, through the Moderator, to Synod Standing Committee.
 - Representative, pro-active and capacity-building (up to 12 members?)
 - Moderator and Convenor (2)
 - Presbyteries/MC3 (1)
 - UCQ (1)
 - WMQ (1)
 - Schools and Residential Colleges Commission (1)
 - Trinity College Qld/theologian (1)
 - **Ecumenism** rep (1)
 - **Interfaith** working group rep (1)
 - **Covenanting** working group rep (1) *(The UCA's commitment to First Nations people should be included as BAU representation not just as a Plenty project-limited working group. Other Plenty working groups could just provide an update as they will be project-limited.)*
 - Meets 6 times/year for information sharing, prioritising whole-of-synod focus areas, enabling capacity-building across the wider church
 - Individual working groups meet independently throughout the year, self-organised



'Shared Life, Flourishing Communities'

Guiding Principles

- Work together
- Grounded in theology
- Invitational
- Collaborative
- Alignment
- Supported autonomy
- Measurable
- Fit for Purpose
- Transparency
- Continuous improvement





General Proposal 5

Gender Representation for Synod Standing Committee from 36th Synod

That the Synod

1. Amend By-Law Q2.2.7 (Relevant competencies for SSC elected members) by inserting the following:
 - (o) gender diversity
2. Amend By-Law Q2.2.13 (Election of SSC elected members) by inserting the following:
 3. At least 50% of persons to be declared elected to fill the required number of elected member positions at the Synod meeting must be female
3. Apply the proposed changes to By-Law Q2.2.7 and Q2.2.13 from and including the election of SSC elected members at the 36th Synod

Precis

This proposal is only to introduce a quota for the elected members of the Synod Standing Committee. Because other committees are appointments, the expectation of gender diversity is managed in that appointment process.

There are 8 elected Synod Standing Committee members. However, because we now stagger membership turnover there are only 4 positions currently up for election at the 36th Synod. This proposal, if accepted will ensure that 2 of those people elected at this Synod will be female.

The proposal would then also apply for the 37th Synod and thereafter to ensure that at least 4 elected members of the Standing Committee would be female.

Background

The Synod Standing Committee (SSC) acts on behalf of the Synod between meetings of the Synod and under current Queensland Synod By-Laws has up to 15 members (up to 7 ex-officio and 8 elected members by Synod). Elected members are appointed for two ordinary meetings of the Synod. Current ex-officio membership is:

- Moderator
- ex-Moderator

- Moderator-Elect
- General Secretary
- chairperson of the UnitingCare Queensland Board
- chairperson of the Wesley Queensland Board
- nominee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for Queensland.

Results of elections of the members to the SSC has shown a significant lack of female representation. We have seen almost equal numbers of male and female people nominating for this committee, but this has not resulted in a change to the gender diversity. This has been the case specifically for the past three Synods where we have not seen meaningful and sustained elected appointments of women to the SSC. The Australian Institute of Company Directors, in their publication *Towards Board Gender Parity* identified key drivers for women on boards, such as gender is a significant indicator of diversity and inclusion, diverse boards are more effective, and the main governing committee should represent the diversity of the community it serves.

Rationale

The Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RNC) has a charter responsibility to “oversee the strategy and approach to the creation of a diverse and inclusive workplace and membership of Synod governing bodies”. The RNC has identified that during the next Synodal term, the committee will develop practices for improving diversity and inclusion. This will include, but not be limited to, a Diversity and Inclusion policy, consideration of quotas, recruitment processes, training, consultation and identification of supportive strategies. This proposal intends to give this work a kick start by ensuring we have gender diversity on the SSC.

Basis of Union

The Uniting Church, from inception, will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognise among its members men and women called of God to preach the Gospel, to lead the people in worship, to care for the flock, to share in the government and to serve those in need in the world (Paragraph 14 of The Basis of Union).

Paragraph 15 of The Basis of Union includes:

The Uniting Church recognises that responsibility for government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks which God has laid upon them. The Uniting Church therefore so organises her life that locally, regionally and nationally government will be entrusted to representatives, men and women, bearing gifts and graces with which God has endowed them for the building up of the Church.

Paragraph 17 of The Basis of Union includes:

The Uniting Church will keep its law under constant review so that its life may increasingly be directed to the service of God and humanity, and its worship to a true and faithful setting forth of, and response to, the Gospel of Christ.

Historic Synod in Session voting patterns

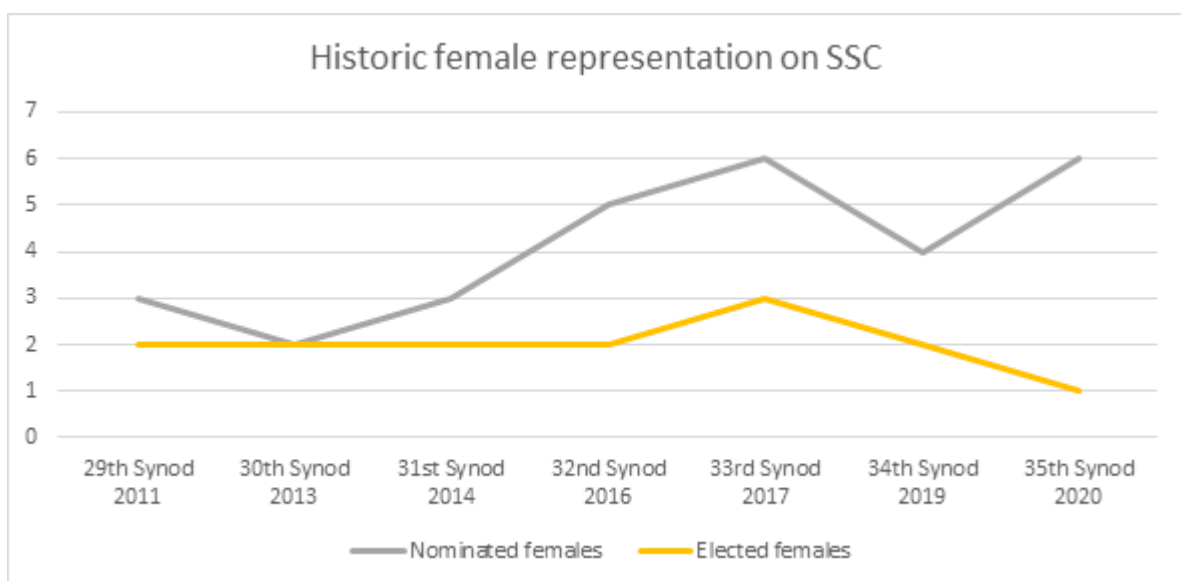
There have been previous attempts to increase gender diversity on the Synod Standing Committee, by providing greater information to Synod to assist members in their discernment for elected members to SSC.

This has included data posted on the entrances to buildings at Synod, short videos from nominees and short videos from governing body Chairperson. More recently, efforts have been made to increase female representation for nominees which resulted in 50% female representation for nominees at the 35th Synod.

Despite these measures, the historic voting patterns by the Synod evidence an under-representation of females elected to the SSC. Whilst the number of females who nominate for the SSC is below that of males who nominate, the previous five Synods also show that the number of elected females is consistently low.

Indications are that despite suitably qualified female nominees making themselves available for nomination, the Synod trend favours the election of male nominees over female nominees.

	Nominated males	Elected males	Nominated females	Elected females	% females elected
29th Synod 2011	17	8	3	2	20%
30th Synod 2013	10	8	2	2	20%
31st Synod 2014	10	8	3	2	20%
32nd Synod 2016	14	8	5	2	20%
33rd Synod 2017	8	7	6	3	30%
34th Synod 2019	11	7	4	2	22%
35th Synod 2020	6	6	6	1	14%



Gender representation amongst the communities the church serves

The overall results from the 2016 National Church Life Survey reveal that 60% of Australian church attenders identify as female and 40% as male. This figure has been constant since 2006 and in every

denomination, in every age grouping, women outnumber men. Australian churches contain proportionally more females than the wider population, with 60% of churchgoers being female, in comparison with 51% of all Australians.

With respect to the Uniting Church specifically, 63% of attenders are female and 37% are male. It is worth noting that of the placements within the Queensland Synod, 64% are held by males and 36% are held by females.

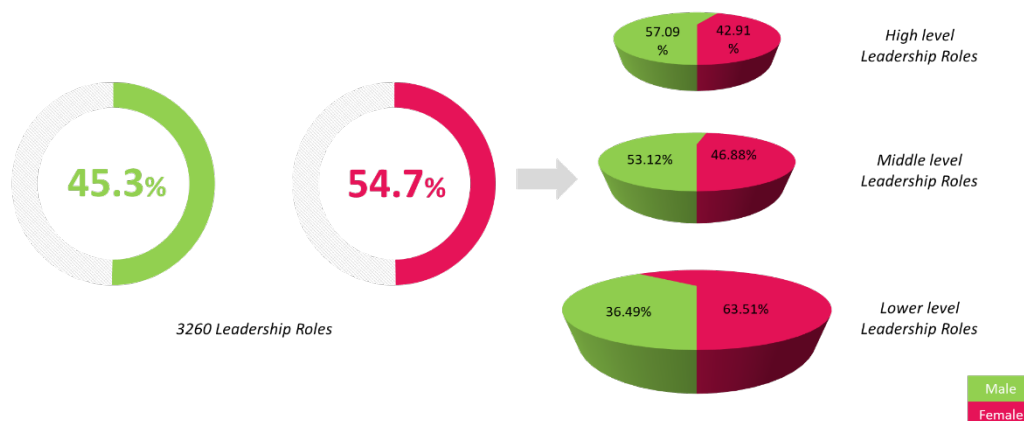
At the 32nd Synod in 2016, it was resolved that a diversity task group be established to workshop representation on boards, committees and commissions. This task group presented strategies to improve diversity in leadership positions across the whole of the church to SSC in 2017.

The first recommendation was to implement a deliberate developmental strategy for identifying and preparing people to take on roles. After years of work exploring what this might look like and conducting extensive stakeholder engagement across the whole of the church, the Women in Leadership program was developed. In 2020, the Synod initiated the Plentiful Leadership Women in Leadership Program. Due to COVID-19, the program was expanded to male and females.

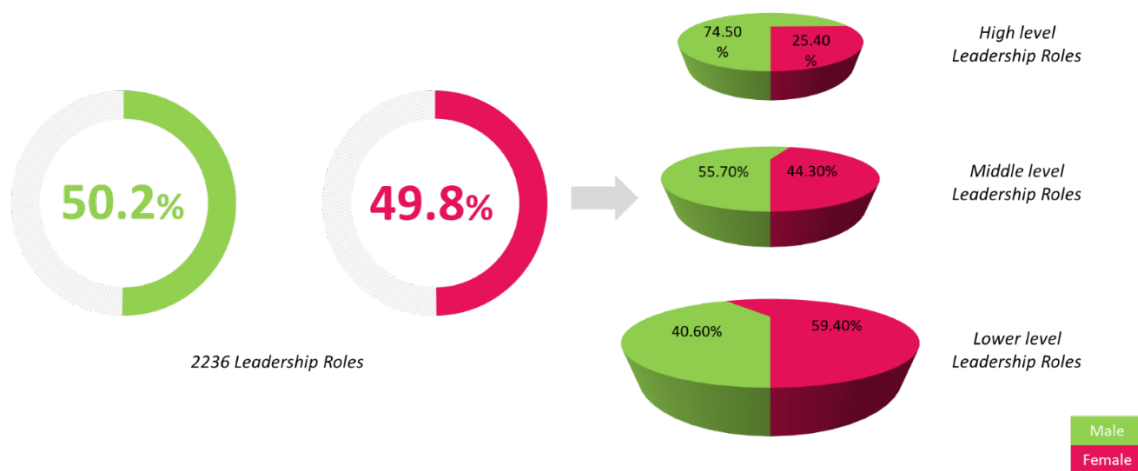
Analysis to support the need for the program focused on three levels of leadership across the Synod:



Data sourced from the Commonwealth Government’s Workplace Gender Equity Agency public reports (UCQ, WMQ, 6 of 19 schools and residential colleges) and the Synod’s registers for office holders/governing bodies identified 3,260 leadership roles with the following gender representation:



While the above data suggests a reasonable balance of gender representation across all leadership roles, by excluding agency and school data, the remaining 2,236 leadership roles identifies a significant disparity in high level leadership roles:



When it came to strategic leadership roles like SSC, boards, chairs, church council leaders, the male to female representation of 75:25 strongly supported the need for the Plentiful Leadership Women in Leadership Program, that aimed to:

- Increase effective leadership capacity across the Synod
- Increase skills and engagement of senior leaders
- Increase the pool of women for future governance roles
- Increase feelings of inclusion and connection with and across the Church
- Increase awareness of hidden gender bias with the Synod
- Increase the engagement across the Synod of a lived-out faith and spirituality

Why a quota?

Anecdotal information indicates that at union there was originally a 1/3 quota of females on each Synod committee, however a move was made soon after to a regional representation model.

The Synod by-laws in March 2009 (refer Attachment A) were far more prescriptive around representation but the SSC (or Council of Synod as it was called then) was also much larger.

At the 29th Synod, the composition of the SSC was changed from this representative focus to a greater focus on representational competence. By Law Q2.2.7 outlines the relevant competencies for SSC elected members, including consideration of some aspects of diversity and inclusion:

- Multi-cultural expertise
- Indigenous expertise
- A youth perspective

The Uniting Church in Australia has traditionally tried to incorporate diverse voices across its Councils by using the Manual for Meetings. The consensus decision making process captured in the Manual is designed to encourage multiple voices to be heard in its debates and decision making.

Governing bodies typical use two methods to improve gender representation, targets and quotas.

This proposal suggests a quota, as the impact of this approach will be a gradual transition to gender diversity on the SSC over a period of several years. It will help focus attention and demonstrate commitment to deliver on the commitment.

Proposers

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Signature:

EXTRACT – SYNOD BY-LAWS MARCH 2009

Membership and Method of Election

Q1.2.3 The membership of the Council of Synod shall comprise -

- a. Members ex-officio -
 - The Moderator;
 - The Moderator-Elect; The Ex-Moderator;
 - The General Secretary (who is also the Secretary of Synod as referred to in the Assembly Regulations);
 - The Chairperson of the UnitingCare Queensland Board; The Chairperson of the Finance and Property Board; The Director, UnitingCare Queensland;
 - The Director, Department for Financial and Property Services.
- b. Elected members - Twenty-two (22) persons elected at each Synod from amongst its members, provided that there shall be included in those elected -
 - i. at least one (1) representative from each presbytery;
 - ii. at least three (3) women;
 - iii. at least two (2) persons of age twenty-five (25) years or under;
 - iv. at least one (1) person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island descent;
 - v. at least one (1) person from another culturally diverse background;
- c. Should nominations not be received in sufficient numbers to fill the various reserved places, those places not filled are to be filled from general nomination.
- d. The twenty-two (22) elected members shall include the six (6) persons elected to the Synod Leadership Team as provided by By-Law Q1.3.2. Those persons shall be taken into account in determining whether members elected to the Council of Synod include persons satisfying the specific qualifications listed in By-Law Q1.2.3(b).

Q1.2.4 Each Presbytery shall submit to the General Secretary prior to the commencement of each Synod one (1) nomination for membership of the Council of Synod, provided that the person so nominated shall be a member of the Synod at which the nomination is to be received.

Q1.2.5 Nominations for election as members of the Council of Synod may be received from members of the Synod until the time fixed by the Synod for the closing of such nominations. Each such nomination shall be made on the form provided by the General Secretary and shall be accompanied by the written consent of the person nominated and a declaration by that person of his or her ability to attend meetings of the Council of Synod.

Q1.2.6 Should more nominations be received in accordance with the provisions of By-Laws Q1.2.4 and Q1.2.5 than the number of members of the Council of Synod to be elected, a ballot shall be conducted.

Q1.2.7 (a) The names of the persons nominated by the Presbyteries under the provisions of By-Law Q1.2.4 shall be placed first on the ballot paper with the respective names of the Presbyteries from which the nominations have been received against them.

b. The names of the other persons nominated shall then be placed on the ballot paper in alphabetical order of surname with the name of the Presbytery in which the nominee holds confirmed membership noted against each name.

Q1.2.8 Subject to the provisions of Regulation 3.5.45, members of the Council of Synod to the number required in By-Law Q1.2.3 shall be declared elected in accordance with the number of votes received.



General Proposal 6

Uniting Church Membership for Appointment to a Synod Governing Body

That the Synod

Requests the General Secretary to review By-Law Q2.7.8(1)(f) in relation to Uniting Church Membership for members of Synod Governing Bodies, and provide a report on that review and any recommendations, to the Synod Standing Committee for decision prior to the 37th Synod to enable Synod Governing Bodies to remain fit for purpose.

The Scope

The proposal consists of reviewing the application of By-Law Q2.7.8 (1) (f) in relation to Synod Governing Bodies that have a Charter approved by the Synod Standing Committee, with reference to:

- The Governing Bodies “Purpose”, “Responsibilities” and “Synod governing bodies nomination criteria” as stated in its Charter
- The Capabilities Matrix for the Synod Governing Body, expected to be approved by the Synod Standing Committee during the next Synodal term
- Whether By-Law Q2.7.1 (1) should be amended to provide for By-Law Q2.7.8 (1) (f) to not apply to all or some members of a Synod Governing Body

Rationale

‘Shared Life, Flourishing Communities’ has a mission priority for the Church to be fit for purpose, with a particular commitment to review the governance structure. While we recognise that through the Basis of Union, the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ’s Church with a diversity of gifts, Governing Bodies of the church operate in an ever increase complex environment. Governing Body members must have skills, attributes and perspectives that allow the Governing Body to fulfil their purpose and undertake appropriate discernment to discharge its responsibilities.

By-law Q2.7.8(1)(f) specifies that one of the eligibility requirements for appointment to Synod governing bodies is that a person must be a member of the Uniting Church. This By-law applies to all Synod governing bodies.

The applicable by-law extracts are below.

Q2.7.8 Eligibility for office

(1) The eligibility requirements for appointment to a Synod governing body are that a person appointed must:

- (f) be a member of the Uniting Church; and

Q2.7.1 General

(1) The By-laws outlined in this section apply to all Synod governing bodies except:

- (a) the Synod Committee for Counselling;
- (b) the Synod Sexual Misconduct Complaints Committee;
- (c) the Synod Committee for Discipline; and
- (d) Institutions and Agencies of the Synod (with the exception of Bylaw Q2.7.13)

Charters currently identify the purpose, responsibility and required membership requirements for the Synod Governing Body. This includes any skills, attributes and perspectives that have been recommended for a Synod Governing Body through consultation with the governing body’s Chairperson and others (refer to [E1.6.1.2 Governing Body Skills, Attributes and Perspectives Definitions](#)). Of the above Synod Governing Bodies, Audit and Risk Committee, Remuneration and Nomination Committee and Schools and Residential Colleges Commission have recommended skills, attributes and perspectives.

The following Synod Governing Bodies have a Charter approved by the Synod Standing Committee:

Governing body	SSC approval date	Resolution #
Audit and Risk Committee	1/04/2021	SSC 21.072
Remuneration and Nomination Committee	6/05/2021	SSC 21.090
Board for Christian Formation	3/09/2020	SSC 20.227
Finance, Investment and Property Board	6/08/2020	SSC 20.201
Schools and Residential Colleges Commission	28/05/2020	SSC 20.134
Synod Chaplaincy Commission	3/06/2021	SSC 21.118
Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee	6/09/2019	SSC 19.174
Synod Inter-Faith Relationships Committee	30/04/2020	SSC 20.103
Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group	10/05/2019	SSC 19.083
Synod Reception of Ministers Committee	10/05/2019	SSC 19.083
Disaster Response and Community Recovery Committee (Queensland)	6/09/2018	SSC 18.199

The review by the General Secretary will identify the application of By-Law Q2.7.8(1)(f) to the governing body member's ability to fulfil the governing bodies purpose and discharge its responsibilities. The review will include appropriate consultations, analysis and findings. Recommendations will include what changes to By-Law Q2.7.1 (1) would need to be made in line with the review findings.

This is not to say that By-Law Q2.7.8(1)(f) should not apply to a Governing Body in its entirety, but rather whether there is a need for some flexibility where specific skills, attributes and perspectives are of critical importance to the considerations of the governing body in order to serve the Church.

Proposers

The proposer and seconder:

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General Proposal 7

Appointments to the Board for Christian Formation

That the Synod

approve an appointment model for the Board for Christian Formation whereby appointment of members is made 50:50 by Synod in Session and Synod Standing Committee where:

- (a) chairperson plus three members of the Board for Christian Formation are appointed by Synod in Session
- (b) remaining four members of the Board for Christian Formation are appointed by Synod Standing Committee
- (c) 3 year terms remain per the Board for Christian Formation charter (roughly two Synodial terms)
- (d) appointments to the Board for Christian Formation are staggered to minimise board turnover at any given point:
 - (i) every 2nd Synod in Session would have four Board for Christian Formation member appointments going to it
 - (ii) at the time of the alternate Synod in Session, the Synod Standing Committee would make their four appointments.

The Scope

It is proposed that a move be made to a 50:50 appointment model of members to the Board for Christian Formation (BCF) by Synod in Session and Synod Standing Committee (SSC).

The BCF charter currently stipulates that the BCF chairperson and the seven non ex-officio members be elected by Synod in Session. Except for the Finance, Investment and Property Board chairperson, all other Synod governing body appointments are made by the SSC (with the exception of the SSC itself which is appointed by Synod in Session).

The role and purpose of the BCF has grown more strategic and requires a set of skills that is firmly grounded in the training and development of all people within the church, both lay and ordained. The current practice of electing people every eighteen months does not provide the flexibility required to manage appropriate appointments.

This is further exacerbated by a lack of nominations that come to this meeting at this time. At the time of the writing of this report there are currently no nominations to the BCF. The effect of this will be direct appointments by the SSC to the BCF to fulfill its charter.

Rationale

The proposed appointment model for the BCF is:

1. Chairperson plus three members be appointed by Synod in Session, with the remaining four members appointed by SSC
2. 3 year terms remain per the charter (roughly two Synodial terms)
3. Stagger appointments to minimise board turnover at any given point
 - a. every 2nd Synod in Session would have four BCF appointments going to it
 - b. at the time of the alternate Synod in Session, the SSC would make their 4 appointments.

It is noted that vacancies arising between Synod meetings are filled by the SSC as per the Synod by-laws and current practice.

Advantages

The benefits of a hybrid appointment model such as this include:

- oversight and involvement in the appointment of members to the BCF is retained by Synod in Session
- honours the role of the Synod in Session in discerning important matters such as this for the Queensland
- any identified skills gaps on the BCF can be targeted as part of the SSC appointments
- more agile, with SSC able to focus on changing skills / capability needs of the BCF.

Disadvantages

One of the potential downsides of this suggested appointment model is that those members who get appointed initially by Synod in Session then remain in that cycle and would always be appointed by Synod in Session.

It is however worth noting that all nominees (whether being appointed by Synod in Session or SSC) would have to complete a nomination form based on the same template and the same recruitment and selection principles would be followed, tailored as required (e.g. nominees being appointed by Synod in Session may have an extra requirement such as the video which was recorded in 2020).

Endorsement

At their 4 November 2021 meeting, the SSC endorsed this proposal to be submitted to the 36th Synod.

Current BCF composition

The current elected BCF members and their end dates is:

BCF member	End date
Rev Peter Armstrong (chairperson)	16/05/2022
Mr Trent Wheeley	16/05/2022
Mr Peter James	16/05/2022
Rev Lynette Burden	16/05/2022
Rev James Neil Storey	16/05/2022
Mr Grant Erickson	20/10/2023
Rev Gwendolyn Fisher	20/10/2023

Rev Gwen Fisher will have reached her maximum continuous time as a member having served 9 years by October 2023. Whilst Gwen served for nearly 1 year as chairperson, the BCF charter requires a person to have served 1 or more terms (a term being 3 years) as chairperson to be able to serve for a maximum continuous time of 12 years.

Timetable and transition

Given five member terms end at the 36th Synod, a transition plan is required to transition one member appointment to be appointed by the SSC under the suggested appointment model. All five vacancies have come to this Synod in Session (including chairperson), but one member will be appointed for only 18 months (and that member then move into the SSC cycle of appointment)

On this basis, if this proposal is accepted the timetable is:

1. May 2022 – 36th Synod
 - a. This proposal put regarding 50:50 appointment model
 - b. Election of BCF chairperson plus four members, with one member being appointed for 18 months only. Recognising that in the event there are no or limited nominations to this committee, appointments will be made by the SSC.
2. October 2023 – Synod Standing Committee
 - a. Appoints four members
3. May 2025 – 38th Synod
 - a. Election of BCF chairperson plus three members.

Proposers

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