

renewal

FAITH FOR A NEW SEASON ■ SYNOD 37

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, Moderator Elect and General Secretary to make further appointments to the Business Committee:
- Rev Andrew Gunton (Moderator)
 - Rev Heather den Houting (General Secretary)
 - Rev Bruce Moore (Moderator Elect)
 - Ms Kellie Broderick (Executive Officer Corporate)
 - Rev Brian Hoole
- (b) Notes the further appointments made pursuant to (a):
- Mr Steve Drinkall
 - Rev Fa Matangi
 - Ms Kym Korbe
 - Rev Linda Hanson
 - Rev Doug Foster
 - Mr Adrian Demack
- (c) Appoints Rev Brian Hoole as Convenor of the Business Committee.
- (d) Authorises the Committee to co-opt other persons as necessary for specific business.
- 1.02 (a) Appoints Rev Doug Foster as Convenor of the Facilitation Committee and authorises the Convenor to co-opt members for that Committee; and
- (b) Appoints Rev Linda Hanson as Small Group Co-ordinator (Yarning Circle Co-ordinator)
- 1.03 Appoints Ms Kellie Broderick 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 Roberta Stanley, Rev Peter Arnett and Rev Beatriz Skippen as Pastoral Coordinators.
- 1.06 Adopts the Roll of the Synod subject to the Roll only containing the names of those members who register by 12 noon on Saturday, 21 October 2023.

- 1.07 (a) Determines that unless otherwise agreed, the hours of session for the Synod shall be:
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| Friday, 20 October | 7.00 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Saturday, 21 October | 11.00 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 6.00 pm
7.30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Sunday, 22 October | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 6.00 pm
7.30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Monday, 23 October | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
2.00 pm – 6.00 pm
7.30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Tuesday, 24 October | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm |
- (b) Adopts the timetable and 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 the numbered tables in the auditorium, unless numbered tables are not present, in which case the Bar of the House be defined as the auditorium.
- 1.09 (a) Adopts the use of the procedures of *A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church (2015)*.
(b) Determines that when considering the procedural proposal “Determining the need for a decision now” (5.6.16 and 6.10), “leave of the council” be a simple majority. Refer below for rationale.
(c) 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, 22 September 2023.
(b) Determines that the ballots will be held as determined by the Business Committee.
(c) Determines that ballots for Synod governing bodies be conducted electronically by secret ballot, and any proceedings in formal majority.
(d) When it comes to a decision, any ballot taken as part of formal procedures shall be conducted electronically by secret ballot.
(e) 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.
(f) Determines that a ballot for a proposal for the appointment of the General Secretary will be conducted by secret ballot with the proposal requiring not less than 65% support of ballots received for such a proposal to pass.
(g) Authorises the Synod Standing Committee to perform the functions of Regulation 3.3.8(a)(iii)(5) and Regulation 3.3.9 as required to meet the Synod membership requirements for the meeting of the 17th Assembly, as advised by Assembly from time to time, including but not limited to appointing vacant positions and youth members as required.
- 1.11 (a) Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that Yarning Circles will perform the function and meet the requirements of small groups as referred to in the manual for Meetings.
(b) For the purposes of the 37th Synod, the small group leader/facilitator of the Yarning Circle is named the Wayfinder. This reflects their task as assisting in discerning a way forward, creating a safe space for speaking, building Christian community as members share the life they have in Christ.

- 1.12 Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that General Proposals were to be submitted by 4.00 pm on Monday 21 August 2023.
- 1.13 Receive the written reports contained at R00 – R15.
- 1.14 Authorises the General Secretary to convey greetings on behalf of the Synod to other Synods within The Uniting Church in Australia.
- 1.15 Authorises the Moderator to convey a greeting to the State and Federal Governments.
- 1.16 Authorises Rev Bruce Moore (Moderator), Rev Heather den Houting (General Secretary) and Rev Brian Hoole (Business Committee Convenor) to confirm the Minutes of the 37th Synod.
- 1.17 Adopts the Memorial Minutes as presented concerning ministers who have died since the 36th Synod and notes the ministers who have retired permanently and receives a minute of appreciation for each.
- 1.18 That any business not dealt with on the floor of the synod, will be referred to the Synod Standing Committee pursuant to regulation 3.7.4.1(d and e)
 - (1) The SSC is empowered:
 - (a) to act on behalf of the Synod between ordinary meetings of the Synod in relation to all matters that are the responsibility of the Synod, except such as the Synod may determine; (clause 36 of the Constitution; regulation 3.7.4.1(d)); and
 - (b) to deal with matters referred to it by the Synod; (regulation 3.7.4.1(e)); and
 - (c) to exercise the powers, and fulfil the responsibilities, as provided for in the Synod By-laws.
 - (2) In exercising its powers and fulfilling its responsibilities, the SSC must have regard to the following guiding principles:
 - (a) focusing on the strategic and policy issues of the Church;
 - (b) engaging in competence-building activities for its members;
 - (c) efficiency and timeliness in approvals and decision-making.
- 1.19 It was **RESOLVED by Consensus** that the Synod adopts the Roll of the Synod subject to the Roll only containing the names of those members who register by 6.00pm on Saturday, 21 October 2023.

1.20 Association of Visitors

It was **RESOLVED by Consensus** that the Synod associates the following people with the Synod:

- (a) For the purpose of the bible studies:
 - Katie Isles
- (b) For the purpose of the Plenty report:
 - Mr Steve Drinkall
- (c) For the Act2 presentation:
 - Mr Andrew Johnson
- (d) For the purpose of the report of the Uniting Education Schools & Colleges presentation:
 - Mr Jon Moriarty
- (e) For the purpose of the Norman and Mary Millar Lecture:
 - Dr Stanley Grant
 - Aunty Kym Henderson
- (f) For the purpose of the report of the UnitingCare Board:
 - Craig Wildermuth, Sue McKean, Suzanne Marlow and Ruth McKechnie

1.21 That the Synod note Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Ministerial changes

Appendix 2 – Governing body member changes since the 36th Synod

Appendix 3 – Minutes of Appreciation

Appendix 4 – Ministerial Retirements and Memorial Minutes

Appendix 5 – Spirit of Synod Award – Winner

Appendix 6 – Moderator’s Community Service Medal - Recipients

1.22 38th Synod dates

That the Synod determines that:

- (a) the 38th Synod will be held from 16 May to 20 May 2025 at Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Alexandra Headlands.
- (b) the Synod Standing Committee be given authority to vary the dates and the venue of the 38th Synod if necessary.

1.23 It was **RESOLVED by Consensus** that the Synod determines that:

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

- 2 November 2023
- 7 December 2023
- 8 February 2024
- 7 March 2024
- 4 April 2024
- 9 May 2024
- 6 June 2024
- 4 July 2024
- 1 August 2024
- 5 September 2024
- 3 October 2024
- 7 November 2024
- 5 December 2024
- 6 February 2025
- 6 March 2025
- 3 April 2025

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

1.24 **Courtesies Extended**

It was **RESOLVED by Consensus** that the Synod places on record its sincere appreciation of:

- the coordinators and the of the Synod Worship Celebrations and those that brought the Bible Studies
- the Business Committee Convenor, members of the Business Committee and the 37th Synod Project Manager
- the Facilitation, Yarning Circles, Ballot Convenors and members of their respective teams
- the staff of the Synod office
- the Moderator's Chaplains and the Pastoral Coordinators
- the Coordinators of the Celebration of Ministries
- all staff of the Alexandra Park Conference Centre for support in preparation and hosting of the Synod
- to CPC Productions, IT and AV teams, Events and back of house team, including Sunshine Coast Coffee Roastery
- the Moderator, Rev Bruce Moore and the General Secretary, Rev Heather den Houting, for their leadership of the Synod meeting
- the past Moderator, Rev Andrew Gunton
- the members of Synod for their time, dedication and discernment
- God, our Father, Son and the Holy Spirit as we met to his glory.

Rationale for procedural proposal 1.09(b):

Recent meetings of Councils of the UCA have demonstrated that 25% of council's members plus one can prevent a decision being made on any matter before a council.

This is a consequence that can arise from a faithful application of the Manual for Meetings. The manual stipulates that after the consensus process of decision making on a matter, if a number of participants do not agree with a decision being made, either by consensus or by agreement, the chair is required to bring the procedural proposal "That the council needs to resolve this question now." (Manual for Meetings 6.10)

This procedural proposal requires leave of the council to be carried. In the Manual for Meetings definitions, "leave of the Council means permission granted by the council by a three-fourths majority vote or by such other majority as may be specified by the council". (Manual for Meetings 5.1 Definitions)

Consequently, a minority of just over 25% who are opposed to a proposal can effectively determine against that proposal when this procedural proposal is put. In other words, and perhaps to be a little provocative, the minority can disenfranchise the majority.

The Business Committee believes a simple majority, as allowed for in 5.1 above, would be a fairer and more reasonable bar for seeking leave of the council to be given.

While the consensus model for decision making sets a worthy ideal for the councils of the church to work by, the capacity, through the rules, for a decision to be prevented to be made by as few as 26% of the membership is, we believe, a vulnerability to decision making that should be mitigated.

Where there is significant concern about a decision, there are means at the council's disposal to manage that matter – the participation of the members themselves in presenting rationales for not proceeding with a proposed course of action, proposition of alternatives, proposals from the facilitation committee, etc. The Business committee believes that the 75% bar represents a risk to the capacity of the Synod to make decisions on matters before it.

This proposal does not impact other procedural proposals where leave of the council is required as per the Manual for Meetings (a three-quarter majority vote would still be required).
