

General Proposal 2

Composition of SSC: Standing Associated

That the Synod

Direct the Synod Standing Committee to amend the bylaws so that up to two Presbytery Ministers may be appointed as Standing Associated members of the SSC.

The scope of a proposal

This proposal intends to bring the insights and experience of Presbytery Ministers into discussions of the SSC for information, explanation and advice as may be needed, through the mandated presence of two Presbytery Ministers. Being 'Standing Associated,' they would have the right to speak but not to vote. Consultation may be needed with Presbyteries on how this provision is fulfilled in the terms of the bylaw. This provision would not preclude any individual Presbytery Minister from standing for election as a voting member of the SSC.

Rationale

The current membership of the Synod Standing Committee, as reflected in the Synod's by-laws (Q2.2.3), comprises six *ex-officio* members and eight members elected by the Synod in session. The *ex officio* members include the Chief Officers of the Synod – the Moderator, either the (immediate past) ex-Moderator or the Moderator-Elect (these do not serve on the SSC at the same time), and General Secretary and three others.

The chairpersons of the Uniting Care Queensland Board and the Wesley Mission Queensland Board respectively, and the nominee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for Queensland. The inclusion of these latter three reflects the critical importance of the work within the life of the Queensland church of both UCQ and WMB and of the special place in the life and witness of our First Peoples within both Church and nation. As *ex officio* members, these people have the right to speak and to vote.

Bylaw Q2.2.6(2) also provides for the following persons to be Standing Associated at SSC meetings (with the right to speak but not to vote):

- a) Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Queensland;
- b) Synod Property Officer at the Synod Office or the holder of an equivalent position, however described;
- c) such other persons with appropriate qualifications, expertise and skills who are invited to attend the meetings by the SSC, including a theological listener.

Another group of persons also plays a crucial part in the life and witness of the Queensland Synod, and these are the Presbytery Ministers. They have a representative role on the Placements Committee, and meeting with Synod leadership in the Presbyteries-Synod Interface (PSI), a consultative and information-sharing group with no decision-making powers. While in the past this important relationship and potential contribution of Presbyteries, represented through Presbytery Ministers was reflected in the membership of the Synod Standing Committee, it is not so at the present time. Currently their presence on Synod Standing Committee is available only by election.

This proposal seeks to recognise the important ways in which Presbytery Ministers may resource many of the discussions at SSC. The focus of this proposal is not on voting rights but on availing the SSC of the information, perspectives and depth of experience uniquely represented by our Presbytery Ministers. Although Presbytery Ministers may be appointed Standing Associated under clause (c), so could those mentioned in clauses (a) and (b). A specific provision offers certainty and transparency about those being asked to regularly participate in SSC discussions. Similar recognition is made by the Assembly Standing Committee with respect to the Synod General Secretaries, each of whom is Standing Associated at ASC meetings.

It is not intended that acceptance of this proposal would preclude any Presbytery Minister from standing for election to the SSC. Any member of a Synod in Session is entitled to nominate for election as they wish, and the Synod in Session will exercise its discernment on the nominees' merits. Provision being made for two Presbytery Ministers to be Standing Associated may be relevant to Synod members as they exercise their vote for SSC members. What this proposal seeks to do is to obviate the necessity for one or more Presbytery Ministers to stand for election to SSC, in order for this important aspect of church leadership to participate in SSC meetings.

An alternative avenue through which Presbytery Ministers may be brought into SSC is through being co-opted. However, as co-opted members have voting rights, such co-options will impact on the required balances between lay and ordained, and younger-aged. This adds an unnecessary complication.

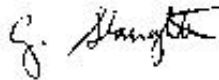
This proposal does not intend to address the mechanism by which the one or two Presbytery Ministers may be selected to be Standing Associated on the SSC. This might be through the Moderator's engagement with the group of Presbytery Ministers, or with Presbytery Chairpersons or Standing Committees. The Bylaw change may reference this. The focus would be on identifying the experiences, perspectives and skills from among the Presbytery Ministers who would be willing and available to serve on the SSC for a term. The nomination of Presbytery Ministers would be reviewed with each new term of the SSC.

Proposers

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