

SYNOD BIOETHICS COMMITTEE

Context:

The Bioethics Committee was established to advise the Church and its agencies on matters of medical ethics and related issues. It has been involved in a particular research project for a number of years, and its membership has diminished in this time. People have come and gone, but all have made a contribution to our work. The task is now complete, and thanks go to all those who have been a part of this journey.

Responses to our Call since last Synod	Working towards our Call in the future
<i>Living with hope</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project to which we have been committed is to conduct a qualitative study to develop a Uniting Church resource for patients and families to assist them to cope with emotional, spiritual and ethical end of life issues. At the time of writing this report, the resource is at the printing stage, and should be available for distribution at the Synod meeting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With the distribution of the resource, the Committee sees its role in this project as complete, except for finalising some requirements that were set out in the original application regarding contacting families of those who were interviewed. The committee recognises that even though this project began after consultation with a previous Moderator and the Director of UnitingCare, it is not really the reason the committee was established. Given the difficulties in responding quickly to requests for advice on medical ethics issues, the committee will recommend the disbanding of the committee.
<p>Key achievements/initiatives:</p> <p>As above, the resource for patients and families has been finalised. This has been a long process, and some may be critical of the fact that there was not a high number of people interviewed. The issues that did arise were so common, though, that the need for further work was not identified. The committee does hope that what is produced will be helpful for people and families who are going through one of the most difficult of life's experiences. It is hoped that ministers and pastoral carers will find this useful also, and even if there is only one idea or suggestion that each person finds helpful, then the work has been worthwhile.</p>	

Challenges/risks as we progress:

The work of care for people at the end of their lives can never be fully regulated. It will always be a matter for discussion, assessment, review and seeking change that will improve the care for others. The resource that has been prepared is but one step along the way.

Recommendations/issues to be addressed:

That the Synod receives the report.

That the Synod receives the booklet "Emotional, spiritual and ethical end of life issues", and encourages its distribution.

That the Synod thanks and disbands the Synod Bioethics Committee.

Contact for Report questions:

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