



Report from

Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

The Schools and Residential Colleges Commission assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee in fulfilling its obligations relating to the oversight of affiliated schools and colleges within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Focus since the last Synod

The Commission's priority actions, detailed in its [Direction Paper](#) for the period 2018–2019 are:

- Use the existing constitution of Shalom Christian College to act as the Governance Board of Shalom Christian College.
- Address and operationalise five new By-law roles (d), (e), (f), (g) and (h) defined in the July 2017 revision:
 - Risk: Present a Risk Management Framework to Synod Standing Committee.
 - Compliance: Update the current Synod Schools and Residential Colleges Commission Governance Manual to achieve compliance requirements.
 - Performance: Collaboratively develop and populate an operational and performance profile for each Property Trust school.
 - Advice: Provide a regular briefing paper to Synod Standing Committee.
- Create strategic opportunities and directions for Uniting Church organisations in terms of the provision of resources, services and support by the Executive Officer.
- Establish biannual events and networking opportunities for Synod board appointees, school and college principals and business managers.
- Monitor the implementation of the [Religious Education Framework](#) across schools and colleges.
- Maintain rigorous recruitment, selection and appointment processes for vacancies on affiliated boards and councils.
- Review and approve resources, policy and governance documents to support the work of Synod boards, councils and executive teams.

Highlights:

- Reporting on a six-monthly basis to Synod Standing Committee on the progress of the Commission's priority actions, making associated recommendations, informing and analysing the key issues being addressed by the Commission.
- Undertaking the role as the Board of Shalom Christian College from January 2018 to February 2019 and using the college constitution to lead, oversee and be accountable for the educational delivery, financial performance and both human and physical resources on the site.
- Collaborative development of a Schools Risk Framework and Risk Register by Property Trust school principals and business managers in May 2018. Following feedback, the final framework was endorsed by the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission and submitted to the Audit and Risk Committee in October 2018. Prior to the 33rd Synod no such strategy existed. On an annual basis, commencing in March 2019, the Executive Officer of the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission and the Synod Manager of Risk will review the Risk Register to ensure the ongoing validity and currency of the identified risks/opportunities and their respective controls, as well as scanning the portfolio's present operational environment to identify and assess emerging risks or opportunities since the previous iteration.
- Assuring Synod Standing Committee in April and October of 2018 and April of 2019 that Property Trust schools are meeting educational and legislative compliance standards detailed in the appropriate Acts

and Regulations of both State and Federal legislation. This included the finalisation of the National Child Safe Framework: Implementation Audit in July 2018 and will include a Schools Workshop in May 2019 relative to strategies to assist the implementation of the Recommendations from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse at Uniting Church schools.

- Overseeing the operational and financial performance of Uniting Church schools and colleges by working with the Property Trust schools to finalise a reporting framework. Also collaborating with the Financial, Investment and Property Board to create a unified understanding of the future property and financial goals of these schools and colleges.

Priority Directions

- Serving youth, children and families
 - The construction, endorsement, and distribution of [guiding principles](#) pertaining to Synod's engagement in the ministry of delivering education to children and young people.
- Engaging in intentional, open connections and partnerships with communities.
 - To further engage with the Uniting Church schools, the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission has scheduled one in four of its meetings on school campuses. On 18 June 2018, 18 October 2018 and 18 March 2019 the Commission met at SCOTS PGC College, The Lakes College and Calvary Christian College respectively.
 - Attending many school functions including annual speech nights across the church portfolio.
- Building viable, sustainable leadership, governance and management structures and protocols.
 - Carefully enacting a rigorous recruitment and selection process to recommend appointments to governing bodies in the portfolio. Since the last Synod in Session, the Executive Officer has led the process of conducting 56 interviews. Following this, the Commission has recommended 27 appointments and 17 re-appointments to affiliated boards and councils.
 - Developing and strengthening governance for board and council members through the Executive Officer's facilitation of seven workshops across 2018. A further series of workshops are planned for May and September of 2019.
 - The Executive Officer meets regularly with principals, business managers and board chairs from Uniting Church schools and residential colleges and publishes a monthly leadership update for all board/council members and senior leadership teams from across the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission portfolio.
- Fostering Christ-centred cultures grounded in gospel values.
 - The construction, endorsement and distribution of guiding principles pertaining to Synod's engagement in the ministry of delivering education to children and young people.
 - Conducting governance-focused workshops for members of Synod boards of affiliated schools and colleges in July and December of 2018 and May 2019. Rolling out the guiding principles and focusing on governance and financial responsibilities for Uniting Church appointees.

- Participation in segments of the Finance, Investment and Property Board meetings, where affiliated schools and colleges make representations in relation to their strategic and infrastructure master plans.
- Connecting students through a revised religious education curriculum and service learning programs.
 - Finalising the RE Curriculum Framework and conducting two workshops for chaplains in affiliated schools and colleges; the first in October 2017 to launch the framework and the second in October 2018 to provide a forum for chaplains to share their practice.

Challenges/risks as we progress

Since the 33rd Synod the minimisation and mitigation of risk associated with compliance, financial and governance has been a clear and continuing focus of the Commission and the deployment of the Performance Framework across the Trust Schools ensures the qualification and quantification of risk. Table 1 (below) further elaborates on the Risk Management Framework presented to the 33rd Synod.

| Table 1 Risks associated with the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission | |
|--|---|
| <p>Risk category <i>Compliance risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Low Severity – High Importance – High</p> | <p>Aspects</p> <p>Compliance and accountability, legislation and associated regulations, church By-laws and legal (e.g. child safety).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Non-compliant schools’ operations and procedures under the NSSAB Act. ● Trust schools not complying with church By-laws. |
| <p><i>Financial risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Medium Severity – High Importance – High</p> | <p>Budget and financial performance reporting, transactional finance (accounts payable, accounts receivable, taxation). Financial strategy and policy, financial sustainability (long-term financial planning). Grants management, procurement planning, sourcing, contract management, purchasing.</p> <p>Payroll services, HR policy, HR major initiatives. Here the intent of the Commission is to use data from performance reports to create time series information to inform advice to the Standing Committee.</p> |

Table 1 Risks associated with the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

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|--|--|
| <p><i>Governance risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Medium Severity – High Importance – High</p> | <p>Community relationship, external stakeholders, organisational and government changes, workforce relations, attraction and retention, recruitment and selection, staff development and diversity.</p> <p>Having and maintaining a group of 55 board members who are members of the Synod has been a bridge too far and the Commission, through its Executive Officer, has worked assiduously to make the proportion as high as possible.</p> |
| <p><i>Operational or program risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – High Severity – Medium Importance – Medium</p> | <p>Losing key members of the Commission or the executive staff. This is mitigated by continual attention to succession planning.</p> <p>For example, the difficulty in recruiting and selecting new members from the Uniting Church with the appropriate skill sets to serve and progress the mission on the 19 boards under the umbrella of the Schools and Residential Colleges Commission.</p> |
| <p><i>Environmental, including event risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Low Severity – Low Importance – Low</p> | <p>Holding of appropriate approvals, permits or permissions before conducting events and works.</p> <p>Reducing your waste and becoming more sustainable can result in energy, water or waste management savings.</p> <p>This aspect has not yet been able to be a focus of the Commission.</p> |
| <p><i>Brand and reputational risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Medium Severity – High Importance – High</p> | <p>Media and issues management, marketing, publication and web management, internal and external communication, public affairs management.</p> <p>Fraud, corruption, code of conduct, student protection, official misconduct.</p> |
| <p><i>Strategic risks</i></p> <p>Likelihood – Low Severity – High Importance – Low</p> | <p>School sustainability.</p> <p>Client, industry and customer services.</p> <p>Critical incident management, external stakeholders.</p> <p>Currently working on minimising and mitigating this risk with the development of a UCA Schools Strategy, for example the EO as part of strategic planning in schools and colleges.</p> |

For consideration

Table 2 Board composition and enrolments at portfolio schools and colleges as of March 2019

| Entity | Board Members | | Student Enrolments | | | | Entity | Board Members | | Student Enrolments | | | |
|---|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--|---------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | Total | Synod Appoint. | Aug-17 | Mar-18 | Aug-18 | Mar-19 | | Total | Synod Appoint. | Aug-17 | Mar-18 | Aug-18 | Mar-19 |
| Calvary Christian | 12 | 1 | 1021 | 946 | 934 | 842 | Emmaus College | N/A | N/A | 1348 | 1390 | 1383 | 1415 |
| Shalom Christian | 4 | 4 | 242 | 101 | 91 | 0 | Jubilee Primary | N/A | N/A | 601 | 623 | 626 | 640 |
| The Lakes | 8 | 7 | 715 | 831 | 831 | 811 | Unity | N/A | N/A | 1421 | 1435 | 1403 | 1465 |
| Scots PGC | 10 | 10 | 364 | 392 | 394 | 406 | | | | | | | |
| Trust School Sub-totals | 34 | 22 | 2342 | 2270 | 2250 | 2059 | Ecumenical Sub-totals | | | 3370 | 3448 | 3412 | 3520 |
| Moreton Bay College | 12 | 5 | 1121 | 1109 | 1119 | 1136 | Cromwell College | 17 | 5 | 251 | 249 | 247 | 263 |
| Moreton Bay Boys College | 12 | 5 | 463 | 475 | 475 | 484 | Emmanuel College | 10 | 2 | 352 | 337 | 337 | 342 |
| Clayfield College | 15 | 0 | 620 | 586 | 586 | 510 | Grace College | 17 | 6 | 175 | 125 | 125 | 117 |
| Brisbane Boys College | 15 | 0 | 1556 | 1502 | 1502 | 1485 | The John Flynn | 12 | 5 | 245 | 250 | 249 | 253 |
| Somerville House | 15 | 2 | 1437 | 1414 | 1414 | 1277 | Kings College | 17 | 3 | 320 | 298 | 265 | 286 |
| Sunshine Coast Gram. | 15 | 0 | 1228 | 1299 | 1299 | 1245 | Raymont College | N/A | N/A | 95 | 99 | 99 | 112 |
| Letters Patent School Sub-totals | 84 | 12 | 6425 | 6385 | 6395 | 6137 | Residential Colleges Sub-totals | 73 | 21 | 1438 | 1358 | 1322 | 1373 |
| TOTALS | 118 | 34 | 8767 | 8655 | 8645 | 8196 | TOTALS | 73 | 21 | 4808 | 4806 | 4734 | 4893 |

Table 3 Membership of the Commission as of March 2019

| Participant | Role | Commencement date | Term expires | Maximum renewal |
|---|--|-------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Neil Ballment | Member | 1.5.2015 | 30.4.2021 | 1.5.2024 |
| Peter Campbell | Chair | 29th Synod | 34th Synod | 34th Synod |
| Noela Lister | Member | 30th Synod | 35th Synod | 35th Synod |
| Kristian Wale OAM | Member | 15.8.2018 | 15.8.2021 | 15.8.2027 |
| Vacant position | | | | |
| Vacant position | | | | |
| Stuart Christ | Director, Church Enterprise (ex officio) | N/A | | N/A |
| Mark Bensley | Executive Officer, SRCC | N/A | | N/A |
| Melissa Hulbert | Minute Secretary | N/A | | N/A |
| Notes | | | | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently there are two vacancies | | | | |

Proposal

It is proposed that the 34th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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