

Report for 31st Queensland Synod October 2014



Report from **Synod Standing Committee**



Context:

The 29th Synod adopted a new model for the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) and removed the Synod Leadership Team structure with a view to both simplifying and enhancing the governance and decision making processes of the Synod [11.57]. The composition of the Committee includes the regulated ex-officio members of Moderator, ex-Moderator, Moderator-Elect and the Secretary of Synod as well as the synod determined ex-officio members of the Chairs of the Finance, Investment and Property Board; UnitingCare Queensland; Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee; Board for Christian Formation and a nominee of Congress in Queensland. Elected members, based on identified gifts, skills and experience were elected at the 30th Synod to complete the membership of the SSC.

Lay members elected at the 30th Synod were Mr John Agnew, Mr Geoff Batkin, Mr Allan Hanson Mrs Melissa Lipsett and Mr Neil Ballment. Ministerial members elected were Revs Graham Keech, Linda Hamill, Garry Hardingham, and Lu Senituli.

During the course of this Synod term, Dr Shirley Coulson resigned as General Secretary, and Mrs Melissa Lipsett resigned following her ordination. The resultant vacancies were filled according to the By-Laws, with Mr Matt Gees being appointed to the casual vacancy left by the resignation of Melissa Lipsett and Mr Greg Adsett being co-opted to membership of the SSC.

The Committee continues to reflect on the structure of its own meeting processes in order to enable a strategic focus to its work, together with effective and efficient governance of the life of the Church in Queensland. Both these areas of the Committee's work have been advanced through this term, together with the commitment to ongoing evaluation of the work of the committee to ensure that it is attending to its responsibilities in seeking to serve the Church through its leadership.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod

Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared Call and Vision

The Committee has maintained a strong strategic focus with both the call and the vision central to its deliberations and decisions. The committee has ensured that a strategic focus has formed the lead space in each meeting of the SSC following ongoing review of meeting process. Whilst this is still in early development, it has enabled both a focus on the key issues arising in the life of the Church, together with space to do some thinking around strategic developmental issues for the Church.

Improving understanding of the many and varied contexts within the Synod has been a commitment of members as various issues have arisen. In order to facilitate this work, the SSC has established opportunities to meet with Presbytery Ministers to explore common issues, and with congregational leaders to explore issues of growth across the life of the Church. The committee has also explored the demographic work arising from the President's Survey of the life of the Uniting Church Nationally, and looks forward to the discernment of the Synod as priorities for the life of the church are identified.

Working towards our Priority Directions in the future

The SSC will have primary responsibility for working with the discernment of the Synod in facilitating the strategic priorities identified by the Synod which will include establishing resourcing to support the development of the strategic intent as expressed by the Synod.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod

Promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality (individual and corporate)

The Committee continues to have been blessed by the Moderator's leadership of worship, to open and close each meeting, and intentional prayer during discernment within meetings. This worship and prayer seeks to identify who we are as a committee in terms of the life of God's church, and to seek for both the discernment of God's will, and for the well-being of the church, together with offering our pastoral concerns for the whole of the church to God. It is a significant statement of our purpose as an SSC to wrap our deliberation in worship and prayer.

Working towards our Priority Directions in the future

The Committee continues to commit to seeking opportunities for prayer within the work of the Committee and recommends this be given priority by the incoming members.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod

Developing sustainable mission orientated organisation (way of being) for the Church in Queensland

This priority direction has been the key area of work of the Committee. Some of the key responses are listed below.

Board for Christian Formation (BCF)

By-Laws were established to facilitate the new initiatives in developing lifelong Christian Education through the formation of Trinity College Queensland which incorporates Pilgrim Learning Community, Chaplaincy Education and Trinity Theological College.

Shalom (Congress Community Development and Education Unit) (CCDEU)

The committee continued to oversee the final aspects of the administration of CCDEU, together with the transition of Shalom Christian College from CCDEU to being a school under the direct oversight of Synod. This was a complex and difficult process which has resulted in the College establishing a new board, a new principal being appointed and re-accreditation achieved within its first year in this new organisational structure.

Frontier Services Aged Care

Together with this significant piece of work, the SSC endorsed UnitingCare Queensland offering significant support to the Assembly in working through a whole of church issue with respect to the need to transition Aged Care services from Frontier Services into another organisation. The SSC determined to endorse the decisions of the UnitingCare Queensland board during this process, and to accepting transition of these services under the oversight of UnitingCare Queensland through an entity established for these purposes called Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (AARCS) (with WA services transitioning to Juniper, a WA Synod Community Service entity). The significant expertise of Anne Cross, Robyn Batten and their team was recognised with gratitude by the SSC, and indeed by the wider Church, in aiding this transition to occur, and supporting the ongoing operation of these services in remote and regional areas of Australia

Royal Commission

Oversight and managing the Synod's engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has been a further significant piece of work for the SSC.

Background

1. On 12 November 2012 the former Prime Minister called for the formation of a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).
2. In response to the formation of the Royal Commission the Uniting Church in Australia, Assembly formed the Uniting Standing Committee's National Engagement and Response Task Group (NTG).
3. On 11 April 2013 the Qld Synod received a Notice to Produce (Notice 1) from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Royal Commission).

4. Notice 1 required the Qld Synod to:
 - a. produce all documents in the possession, custody or control of the Qld Synod relating to any allegation, complaint, account, review or investigation regarding the sexual abuse of a child, where such abuse occurred or was alleged to have occurred within the geographical boundaries of the state of Qld where such abuse was alleged against:
 - (i) any Uniting, Congregational, Presbyterian or Methodist minister, working living or operating within the bounds of the Qld Synod or engaged by the Qld Synod for the period from 1 January 1970 to date.
 - (ii) any employee, volunteer, contractor or other authorised person of or engaged by any primary or secondary school or boarding school including any operated by or under the authority of the Qld Synod for the period 1 January 1970 to date.
 - b. produce all documents in the possession, custody or control of the Qld Synod that set out the policies and procedures of the Qld Synod in relation to the handling of allegations of child sexual abuse within institutions, including parishes and schools, and other activities operated by or under the authority of the Qld Synod for the period from 1 January 1970 to date.
5. As a result, it was determined that:
 - a. whilst the documents to be provided relate to any complaint, account, review or investigation made in relation to a minister or school person engaged by the Uniting Church Qld 'from 1 July 1970' (which includes the period 1970 – 1976 prior to Union), the initial incident may actually have occurred prior that time.
 - b. a broad definition of 'minister' be adopted where minister includes anyone employed (stipend or salaried) in a ministerial capacity where they may be acting in a liturgical and pastoral role even if not ordained, which may include lay pastors. This excludes lay preachers, but includes all ministry agents in ministerial placement now, and past equivalents such as home missionaries, community ministers, youth workers etc.
 - c. 'child' is anyone below the age of 18 years, pursuant to the definition in the Convention on the Rights of the Child of 20 November 1989.

In order to respond to the above notice, and more importantly, resource the Church's engagement with the Royal Commission as a whole, the SSC established a Synod Royal Commission Task Group to support the work of the church in this space, to liaise with the Assembly with regard to the Royal Commission, and to resource the staff employed to facilitate this work. This work has been regularly reported to the SSC, who, in light of this work, have resourced our engagement with the Commission through a Complaints Legal Counsel role, followed by a Professional Standards role. These roles are tasked to facilitate our engagement with the Commission; to work with the outcomes of the Commission's ongoing work to identify development needs in terms of our own Policy and Process; and to work with the wider church and the Assembly's Royal Commission Task Group, as required, to support a national approach. In addition, the SSC determined to appoint a Child Safe Church Resource role to enable the Church's compliance with its Child Safe Church Policy.

Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) Charities such as the Church and its agencies and activities play a unique role in Australian society and as a result are funded by governments, both directly and through tax concessions, by donations from members of the public and just as importantly by their own members through donations of time, money, property and services.

As public trust and confidence in the Charity sector is essential to the ongoing sustainability of the sector and the services it delivers to the public, on 3 December 2012, the federal government established the ACNC to promote the good governance, accountability and transparency of the sector. Implementation of the ACNC's governance framework was an opportunity for the Church to review its governance framework. Together the Church's Congregations, Councils, Agencies, Presbyteries,

Committees, Synod Office and Synod Standing Committee have undergone a journey of self-discovery and reflection which has allowed the Synod to see commonalities across and within the bounds of the Synod, as well as provide insight to the areas requiring more financial support. Many governance improvement opportunities to improve consistency were identified, such as adopting levels of reporting for all Church bodies, and continue to be implemented. The Church has met the initial ACNC requirements of multiple registrations and provision of annual information statements, which has provided more transparency to the community regarding the activities carried out by the Church.

SSC Projects

A project co-ordination group has been working to progress key governance and financial relationship issues relating to Wesley Mission Brisbane and Uniting Care Qld. This work has not progressed as originally anticipated; however, there is continued commitment to bringing resolution to these projects to enable clarity in the operation of these important parts of our organisation, together with the Synod.

Policy and Procedures

A key development throughout the term of this SSC has been the ongoing policy development work that has been overseen. A number of policies are in development, and/or being prepared for implementation. There is a clear recognition by the SSC of the importance of well designed and embedded policy and procedures to support the work of the church in its varying contexts.

Appointments

At each meeting appointments to Synod Boards, Committees and Councils are made on the recommendation of the relevant appointing bodies, with input from GNRC where appropriate.

Working towards our Priority Directions in the future

The Committee's agenda will continue to focus on simplifying/enhancing governance processes across the synod, especially through the By-law review and approval work, together with Policy development. A list of By-law Amendments since the 30th Synod is attached (see Attachment A)

The Committee will continue to review its Agenda to ensure that the Committee focuses its time and energy on the areas of importance for the mission of the church.

A list of strategic and policy issues will be developed as an outcome of the open space process of the Synod and will form some priorities for the incoming Committee to consider.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod

Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church

Reflection and evaluation of Committee processes has occurred. Members identify a growing capacity in the SSC to reflect on the strategic and governance responsibilities of the Committee, and the need to continue to work with other councils of the church in exploring how strategic directions find effective implementation. A table has been constructed from the Minutes of the SSC meetings which have occurred since the 30th Synod (see Attachment B)

In signing off on the By-Laws for the renewed approach to lifelong Christian education and formation, the Committee encourages the work of the Board in seeking to implement the vision of the Network for Christian Formation in the changed context of the synod. Having launched on 20 July, the work of the BCF in activating this Vision in its renewed operational contexts continues to be developed. The Chair of the BCF sits ex-officio on the SSC, enabling an ongoing engagement in this work.

Working towards our Priority Directions in the future

An intentional program of committee development has been undertaken through GNRC fellowship events. This development work will continue for the next Committee cycle.

Review and evaluation program for committee processes and member participation will be developed and adopted.

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod

Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnerships

The Committee has sought to identify and proactively respond to developments within the wider community and particularly the Federal Government. This has included the already identified appointment of a Synod Royal Commission Task Group (Institutional responses to child sexual abuse) and briefings on the introduction of the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC) together with oversight of the initial responses to the ACNC Annual Information Statement reporting process.

Working towards our Priority Directions in the future

Identify ways in which the Committee can be better informed about developments within the wider community which may impact on our ability to promote and encourage mission; as well as developments which offer opportunities for mission through connections and partnerships.

Key achievements/initiatives

The re-shaped Agenda giving priority to strategic work of the Synod and the decision making that flows from the strategy and the SSC's responsibilities.

Establishing engagement opportunities with Presbyteries and Congregations to explore opportunities and issues across the life of the Church.

Policy development work.

The work referred to the SSC by the 30th Synod. A summary of this work can be found at Attachment C to this report.

Challenges/risks as we progress:

The SSC will, and will need to continue to, give priority to the strategic priorities which emerge from the Synod in Session. The strategy for the Synod, which is developed out of the Synod in session and within the Together on the way framework, is vital for the work of the Synod office to offer support to the Church, prioritising and deploying resources, together with enabling the development of alignment as the councils work together to achieve agreed outcomes. The elements are in place to enable this work to go forward, however, it will require intentionality by the councils of the church.

Contact for Report questions:

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Queensland Synod Governing Rules

Queensland Synod By-laws Amendment 2 of 2013

- Contains new Property Trust By-laws
- Contains new FIP Board By-laws
- Contains SSC By-laws
- Contains other amendments

Queensland Synod By-laws Amendment 1 of 2014

- Commenced on 1 July 2014
- Appointments of elected members of the LRC, Schools' Commission, MCCC, SERC and SIRC are now made by the SSC (as opposed to the Synod)

Queensland Synod By-laws Amendment 2 of 2014

- Commences on 20 July 2014
- Contains new BCF by-laws
- establishes Trinity College Queensland
- contains By-laws about the college's faculty for the purposes of regulation 3.7.4.5
- contains By-laws about the Director of the college and its teaching members of staff

Synod Standing Committee Member Meeting Attendance

This table has been constructed from the Minutes of the SSC meetings which have occurred since the 30th Synod.

Member	Originating Appointment Capacity	Meetings Eligible to Attend	Fully Attended ¹	Partially Attended ²	Not Attended ³
Greg Adsett	SSC appointed co-opt	8	5	2	1
John Agnew	elected - lay	15	11	-	4
David Baker	elected ex officio (Moderator-Elect)	15	13	-	2
Neil Ballment	elected - lay	15	12	1	2
Craig Barke	SSC appointed ex officio (UCQ Board Chair)	6	4	-	2
Chris Barnard	elected ex officio (GNRC Chair)	15	9	4	2
Geoff Batkin	elected - lay	15	11	2	2
Dennis Corowa	UAICC appointed ex officio (UAICC nominee)	15	12	-	3
Shirley Coulson	elected ex officio (General Secretary)	7	6	-	1
John Cox	SSC appointed ex officio (General Secretary)	8	8	-	-
Matt Gees	Moderator appointed	8	8	-	-
Linda Hamill	elected - ministerial	15	14	-	1
Allan Hanson	elected - lay	15	14	1	-
Garry Hardingham	elected - ministerial	15	11	-	4
Bruce Johnson	elected - Ex Moderator	15	11	2	2
Graham Keech	elected - ministerial	15	8	1	6
Melissa Lipsett	elected - lay	7	4	1	2
John Lister	elected - lay	15	12	1	2
Peter Lockhart	elected ex officio (BCF Chair)	15	14	-	1
Andrew McBryde	elected ex officio (FIP Chair)	15	10	-	5
Kaye Ronalds	elected ex officio (Moderator)	15	11	-	4
Lu Senituli	elected - ministerial	15	10	-	5
Heather Watson	SSC appointed ex officio (UCQ Board Chair)	9	6	2	1

From time to time personal, family, Church and other professional duties (some of which are not within the control of SSC members) may impact on the ability of SSC members to attend meetings.

- 1 Fully Attended – where the member was in attendance for at least 90% of the meeting time
- 2 Partially Attended – where the member was in attendance for at least 50% of the meeting time
- 3 Not Attended – where the member was not in attendance for 50% or more of the meeting time

30th Synod General Proposals Progress Report

	Resolution	Status
GP1	<p>13.65 Establishment of a Synod Post Disaster Recovery Team/s</p> <p>(a) It was RESOLVED that the Synod – Refers to the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) the creation of a Post Disaster Recovery (PDR) Plan for the period six months to two years eighteen months after the event, in consultation with Presbyteries, UnitingCare and Assembly to assist in the provision of pastoral care to communities affected by a disaster event.</p> <p>(b) Noting that the plan is to include -</p> <p>(i) Resourcing, costs, skills, deployment and training of PDR Team/s including psychological first aid, communication skills, pastoral care, loss & grief counselling; and</p> <p>(ii) PDR Team/s working alongside Congregations and Ministry Agents.</p> <p>(c) The PDR Plan and Team/s to be established by 30 June 2014.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SSC received advice from Rev Stephen Robinson (NSW/ACT disaster response officer) on 6 Mar 14 regarding PDR Plan content options for differing scenarios • A peer support training day occurred on 21 Mar 14 with 25 participants & one observer from UnitingCare Community • At the SSC meeting on 4 September 20143: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ terms of reference for the Queensland Synod Disaster Response Committee ○ a budget for the Committee; and ○ appointments of the Committee's Convenor, Peer Support Co-ordinator, Presbytery Disaster Contact Person Coordinator and Secretary <p>were approved.</p>
GP2	<p>13.66 Disbanding of the Synod Bioethics Committee</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Synod – Thanks and disbands the Synod Bioethics Committee.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The By-laws were removed from reprint 5

	Resolution	Status
GP3	<p>13.67 Supporting the Micah Challenge's Finish the Race Campaign</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Synod –</p> <p>(a) Acknowledging progress towards advancing the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, resolve to actively encourage the church to continue support for the Make Poverty History and Micah challenge coalitions and engage with the Finish the Race campaign in 2013 through prayer, promotion and political and community engagement.</p> <p>(b) Request the Moderator write to the Prime Minister and the Federal Opposition Leader indicating the Synod's support of the Finish the Race campaign.</p> <p>(c) Encourage Uniting communications to continue to share information on the Finish the Race campaign.</p> <p>(d) Invite Church members, councils and groups to actively promote the Movement to End Poverty petition with resources from the Micah challenge website.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the then looming federal election and change of Prime Minister, the Attachment A letter was despatched to the Right Hon Campbell Newman, Premier of Queensland on 4 July 2013. • The Attachment B response was received from Minister Newman on 8 August 2013 • The Make Poverty History and the Finish the Race Campaign were promoted in in <i>Journey</i> during: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ June 2013 (Synod proposal round-up) ○ September 2013 (interviewed John Beckett) ○ November 2013 (Fast News) • Calls to Action were made <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ in Uniting News on 13 August 2013 ○ via the Social Justice/Poverty section of the Synod website (see the Attachment C screen shot) • Synod social media posts (Synod Facebook and Twitter) on the following dates show engagement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 26 May (2L, 188v) ○ 27 May (33L, 4C, 1S, 877v) ○ 31 May (3L, 244v) ○ 13 July (3L, 479v) ○ 29 August (1L, 124v) ○ 2 September (4L, 1C, 4S, 330v) ○ 18 September (68L, 4C, 1S, 864v) <p>(L = likes, V = views, C = comments, S = shares)</p>

	Resolution	Status
GP4	<p>13.68 Closure of the Housing Acquisition Fund (HAF)</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Synod –</p> <p>(a) Determines that Synod close the Housing Acquisition Fund (HAF) to any new members from 27 May 2013.</p> <p>(b) Directs the Synod Standing Committee to close the HAF, and as far as practicable not disadvantage members with current balances in the HAF.</p> <p>(c) In settling with individual members, the FIP Board to arrange rollover of a member's HAF balance to the member's nominated superannuation fund, fringe benefits account or other account, and further pay up to a limit of 15% tax on that amount from the General Reserve;</p> <p>(d) Requests the GNRC to look at the total ministerial remuneration package and to report to the 31st Synod on the total living allowance package</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The HAF was closed to new members from 27 May 2013. • An initial letter to existing members advising of progress was despatched in Jan 2014 • Following the receipt of legal advice regarding the appropriate treatment of tax liabilities, an Explanatory Memorandum regarding proposed constitutional changes was despatched to all HAF members on 30 April 2014 • Pursuant to a SSC resolution to alter the Constitution of the HAF [SSC resolution 14.137(a)], the HAF was closed on 30 June 2014 • In accordance with SSC resolution 14.137(a)(ii), amounts remaining in the HAF fund at 30 June 2014 were distributed to HAF members in accordance with the amended Constitution & Rules of the Housing Acquisition Fund • Since the 30th Synod, the GNRC has reviewed and adjusted many elements of the remuneration available to ministers and ministerial candidates, including living allowances, travel allowances, fringe, stipends and financial support for ministerial allowances. As part of its mandate, the GNRC is required to continuously review ministerial remuneration on an ongoing basis.
GP5	<p>13.69 Report of House Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Australia</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Synod –</p> <p>Commend the Report of House Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Australia (Link: http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House_of_Representatives_Committees?url=ra/fifodido/report.htm) to individuals and congregations as a source of information regarding what is happening in rural communities.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <p>The print and online versions of June 2013's <i>Journey</i> (refer to Attachment D), which included the 30th Synod wrap up, included this commendation resolution</p>

	Resolution	Status
GP6	<p>13.70 Support for Candidates for Ministry</p> <p>It was RESOLVED that the Synod –</p> <p>(a) Direct the Board for Christian Formation and Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee to determine measures by which ministry candidates may receive improved financial and other support, particularly during their candidature and upon exit; and</p> <p>(b) Report on this to the 2014 Synod in session.</p>	<p>COMPLETE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Board for Christian Formation (BCF) and Governance Nomination Remuneration Committee (GNRC) have considered various funding options since the 30th Synod. • On 14 August 2014, the BCF determined a recommended model, which was reviewed for consistency with Synod wide remuneration policies by the GNRC on 20 August 2014. • On 4 September 2014, the Synod Standing Committee approved the following principles for the provision of financial support to ministry candidates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The allocation of financial support to individual candidates is the responsibility of the Board for Christian Formation; ○ Maximum financial support of \$20,000 per annum can be provided to a candidate ○ Candidates in receipt of an allocation are able to claim the FBT exemption on 100% of the financial support provided; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prior to the provision of financial support of a candidate in receipt of Centrelink support, that candidate must together with their financial adviser, consult their Centrelink case worker to ensure that 'replacement' of Centrelink funding with Church funding is minimised

Attachment A

**THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
QUEENSLAND SYNOD**

MODERATOR: REV KAYE RONALDS

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04 July 2013

Right Hon Campbell Newman Premier of Queensland
PO Box 15185
CITY EAST QLD 4002

Dear Mr Newman

Warm greetings.

Recently the Queensland members of the Uniting Church in Australia gathered on the Sunshine Coast for our Synod. 350 people attended including clergy and lay leaders from across the state. In the last census 276,000 Queenslanders identified their connection with the Uniting Church in Australia. I thought you may like to know about the matters about which we deliberated.

We noted that this year the ministry of Blue Care, previously Blue Nursing Service, celebrates 60 years of improving life for Queenslanders through the provision of aged care services, community assistance and support for people with a disability. For 50 years the ministry of Lifeline has been responding to people in emotional crisis. Both of these community services began as initiatives of the churches in our faith tradition. We resolved to continue to work together to provide quality community services and in particular to advocate for adequate funding for care for Older Australians.

We listened to our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander members whose families are affected by loss and grief for relatives who die young because of suicides, preventable diseases, alcohol and substance abuse. We heard their frustration about the breakdown in relationships between local government agents and local church leaders. We humbly appeal to government representatives to recognise the traditional leadership and culture in Indigenous communities. In many cases the church leaders are also the traditional leaders (Indigenous leaders) who play a crucial role in facilitating reconciliation in these communities. Church leaders would welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the government to improve relationships on the ground.

We held a forum about the impacts of the mining boom. Recognising that amongst our membership there are people from mining communities, areas with processing facilities and feeder communities in various contexts; FIFO and DIDO workers; rural land holders; tourism operators; environmental advocates; mining company executives and legislators. That diverse membership base provides the Uniting Church with a unique perspective and understanding about the complex issues and circumstances experienced in these divided communities.

The Uniting Church is also a large provider of human services across Queensland, including towns impacted by the mining boom. The staff and those who they support, along with Church leaders and members, have first-hand experience in dealing with the complex and competing issues. The Uniting Church in Queensland urges you as Premier and your government to include our church leaders in conversations about the impacts of mining, and the costs and benefits for the people. This raises the question: what makes a community wealthy and what makes it rich?

We believe it is necessary to provide space for conversations of people with different interests and to give voice to those who have no voice.

Church members were invited to sign the Movement to End Poverty petition and resolved to support the Micah Challenge Finish the Race Campaign.

Finally we listened to the plight of women in Micronesia and Pacific Island communities who are frequently the victims of domestic violence. We expressed support for programs to enable women to participate in leadership and training. It is my conviction that including women in the leadership and decision making roles will contribute to changing the culture of violence against women. We will continue to pray for our government and community leaders as you seek to serve communities, set policy and craft legislation with insight and wisdom.

Grace and peace

(Rev) Kaye Ronalds

Moderator



Premier of Queensland

For reply please quote: *SHPIKT- TF/13/15171- DOC/13/130035*

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0 8 AUG 2013

Reverend Kaye Ronalds Moderator
The Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod
GPO Box 674
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Dear Reverend Ronalds

Thank you for your letter of 4 July 2013 updating me on the issues and themes discussed at the recent Synod gathering of Queensland members of the Uniting Church in Australia.

I commend the Uniting Church for its ongoing dedication to assisting Queenslanders in need. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Lifeline and Blue Care for reaching the milestones of 50 years and 60 years respectively, and to thank the hardworking members of these services for tirelessly providing support to the most vulnerable members of our community.

I note your request for government representatives to recognise traditional leadership and culture in Indigenous communities. Please be assured that the Government is committed to working in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders throughout Queensland to address the needs and interests of their communities. As you may be aware, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and Multicultural Affairs, in conjunction with the Public Service Commission, is devising a whole-of-Government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Capability Framework to develop improved government policies, programs and services in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

In terms of the social impacts of the mining boom, the Queensland Government is mindful of the difficulties in striking a balance between the strong economic contribution of mining and the associated social issues and challenges the boom brings to communities. These issues are under consideration by the Government and we remain committed to achieving an appropriate balance. I appreciate the Synod's observations and welcome contributions to this work from church leaders and members, through existing consultation mechanisms.

Your letter also indicates the assistance provided by the Uniting Church to women, particularly those at risk of domestic and family violence. I applaud all efforts to put an end to this unacceptable behaviour and agree that supporting women to participate in leadership and training can assist in addressing the culture of violence against women. In my role as a White Ribbon Ambassador, I encourage other organisations to provide leadership opportunities for women, such as those offered by the Uniting Church, to raise awareness of domestic violence.

The Queensland Government currently supports women to participate in leadership and training through various programs, such as the free Women's Infolink service. It offers online information, resources and links for women and 500 scholarships of up to \$20 000 are available to support women to be leaders by taking up employment in non-traditional industries, such as building services, agriculture and engineering.

Additionally, through the Queensland Government's participation on the Select Council on Women's Issues, we are working to create greater opportunity for Indigenous women to collaborate with Government, through work to develop a national approach to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women's leadership and participation in governance and decision making.

In closing, your interest in forging stronger relationships between the Uniting Church in Australia and the Queensland Government is welcomed. I encourage you and your members to participate in existing consultation and engagement mechanisms such as Community Cabinet, and consultation with local Members of Parliament, or relevant ministers. There is also an opportunity to provide information on the issues and themes raised at your recent Synod meeting through *The Queensland Plan*, which is our 30-year vision for our future. To contribute to the plan, please visit the website at www.queenslandplan.qld.gov.au, then click on the 'Have your say' link on the left and follow the prompts.

I wish you and your members all the best in continuing to support disadvantaged Queenslanders through the invaluable community services of the Uniting Church.

Again, thank you for bringing these matters to my attention.

Yours sincerely

CAMPBELL NEWMAN

Movement to End Poverty/Micah Challenge

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <http://ucaqld.com.au/social-justice/key-issues/poverty/>. The page has a teal header with the word "POVERTY" in white. A navigation menu includes HOME, FAITH, SOCIAL JUSTICE, GET INVOLVED, ADMINISTRATION, ABOUT US, and CONTACT. The main content area features a white box with the following text:

We pledge ourselves to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur, [Statement to the Nation, 1977](#), Uniting Church in Australia.

The Uniting Church's role in the mission of God in the world requires us to be constantly asking how we might be good news in our own world. We are challenged to do this in a way that acknowledges both the huge problem of economic poverty within its complex casual context (historical, economic, social and environmental) and the impoverishment of all peoples, through the tyranny of greed, abuse, violence and obsession, disconnecting us from each other and the natural world.

Billions of people around the world live in conditions of dire poverty as a small minority of the world's people continue to consume the majority of the earth's resources and hold a large majority of the world's wealth.

The Uniting Church believes we must re-imagine and redefine our success, our progress, as societies and nations according to how well we support what is necessary for the flourishing of all people, including financial security for a reasonable standard of living, decent and meaningful work, education, healthcare, secure housing and appropriate social services. ([An Economy of Life: Re-Imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World](#), July 2009, Uniting Church in Australia)

Below this text is a section titled "Uniting Church statements" with a minus sign icon. It lists several documents:

- [Towards a Decent Life: An Economy to Serve and Sustain All Australians](#) - August 2013, UnitingCare Australia
- [Income Support Justice for a Decent Life](#) - August 2013, UnitingCare Australia
- [Financial Hardship in Australia](#) - May 2013, UnitingCare Australia
- [An Economy of Life: Re-Imagining Human Progress for a Flourishing World](#), 2009, Uniting Church in Australia
- [A Call for Justice Concerning Employment](#), 1994, Uniting Church in Australia

At the bottom of this section is a "Connect" button with a plus sign icon.

On the right side of the page, there is a "Social Justice" sidebar with a list of links:

- About social justice
- Housing and Homelessness Directory
 - Housing and Homelessness Directory
 - How to find a service
- Principles of engagement
- Understanding homelessness
- Key areas
 - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - Asylum seekers and refugees
 - Criminal justice
 - Disability
 - Environment
 - Human rights
 - Mental health
 - Mining
 - Poverty

<http://journeyonline.com.au/disciples-embark-on-30th-synod-adventure/>

Disciples embark on 30th Synod adventure - JourneyOnline

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SEARCH...



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30TH SYNOD

DISCIPLES EMBARK ON 30TH SYNOD ADVENTURE

JUN 7, 2013 | JOURNEY | NO COMMENT | 30TH SYNOD

Members from **Uniting Churches across Queensland** gathered together at **Alexandra Park Conference Centre** to commence the **Queensland Synod's 30th meeting**.

Moderator's celebrates unity

On the first full day of business at the 30th Synod Rev Kaye Ronalds reflected on the first half of her journey as Moderator.



Ms Ronalds said her position as Moderator has enabled her to partake in many events and celebrations amongst the life of the church in Queensland.

"There have been various openings, dedications, centenaries and all kinds of opportunities to gather with the church family when it is in a celebration mode," she said.

"We need to be always uniting in Christ, acting with love, living with hope, witness in faith and working for justice."

General Secretary reshapes funding

Queensland Synod General Secretary, Dr Shirley Coulson, addressed members of the 30th Synod calling them to continue to live out the **Vision 2020**.

Dr Coulson's report told a story of the Church in Queensland on its own discipleship journey, defining the best way to use our valuable resources and the importance of exploring "how we provide resourcing models that provide ministry where it is needed, rather than where it can be afforded".

Dr Coulson finished her report by reminding people of the **President's** call at the recent **NSW/ACT Synod** meeting: "We are being invited and resourced afresh to share in God's mission today."

Moderator-elect encouraged by church leaders

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery Minister, Rev David Baker, was selected as Moderator-elect of the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod.

Mr Baker said he is greatly encouraged by the leadership in the life of the **Uniting Church**.

"My hopes for the Synod is that it would continue to grow in finding its hope, its life, and its rest in the faithfulness of its Lord's capacity 'to come, address, and deal with people in and through the news of his completed work' (*Basis of Union*, para 4)."

Mr Baker will begin his three-year term as Moderator at the 31st Synod in October 2014.

Synod celebrates great servants

Jubilant pilgrims from the Uniting Church in Australia waved coloured flags at the beginning of a service of celebration of people in ministry (graduated, retired and passed away) at **Unity College** in Caloundra.

The service also celebrated the **Moderator's Community Service medals**.



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Disciples embark on 30th Synod adventure - JourneyOnline

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Members and visitors of the 30th Synod enjoyed a morning of discipleship and song as Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, commented on [National Sorry Day](#).

"The God in community invites us to express our sorrow and seek reconciliation so that the whole community can be restored."

[UnitingCare Queensland](#) CEO, Anne Cross, said there were record nominations for the Moderator's Community Service medals from which 11 recipients were selected.

Four people were in attendance to receive their medals.

As the disciples departed Ms Ronalds encouraged attendees to "love God's world, bring friendship into our work and courage into our politics".

Synod finances stable, but not happy

Synod Director of [Finance](#), [Investment](#) and [Property](#), Robert Packer, reminded 30th Synod members that the Synod is not a simple organisation able to give a straightforward overview of its financial health.

During the report from the Finance Investment and Property (FIP) Board, Mr Packer indicated that the 2011-2012 audited financial statements were included in the Synod information, but spoke to current results.

"The Queensland Synod remains in a stable, but still not happy financial position," he said.

While the Synod's financial position is a lot better than a few years ago, a small deficit is forecast for the year ending 30 June 2013.

Assisting the continuation of services of the [Congress Community Development and Education Unit](#) (CCDEU) will likely cost around \$8 million.

While this is a worthwhile expense, it means the Synod is less able to plant new congregations or sustain similar financial costs without borrowing internally or externally.

Andrew McBryde, FIP Board chair, said that a recently discovered, significant fraud had reinforced the need to constantly remind office bearers across the whole of the Synod of the importance of following policies and procedures.

Read all the reports from the 30th Synod at ucaqld.com.au.

Podcasts:

[Synod Bible studies](#) by Trinity Theological College facility

Chaplain Gary Stone's [Norman and Mary Millar lecture](#) [download]

[Impacts of mining on communities and the environment Q&A](#) [download]

Proposals all passed by consensus

General proposal 1: Establishment of Synod Post Disaster Recovery Team/s

General proposal 2: Disbanding of the [Synod Bioethics Committee](#)

General proposal 3: Supporting [Micah Challenge's FINISH THE RACE](#) campaign

General proposal 4: Closure of the Housing Acquisition Fund

General proposal 5: Commend the report of the House Standing Committee on rural and regional Australia

General proposal 6: Support for candidates for ministry

Read all the [proposals](#).

Resolutions available on ucaqld.com.au.

See the 30th Synod [photo gallery](#).

Photo : Chaplain Gary Stone and Moderator Kaye Ronalds. Photo: Holly Jewell

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