

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
FORTY-NINTH SESSION
OF THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA



HELD IN SYDNEY
SEPTEMBER 2016

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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
2016

ASSEMBLY OFFICERS

Moderator

REV. JOHN PHILIP WILSON, BSc, DipEd, BTh, DMin
23 Talbot St, Greensborough VIC 3088
(03) 9650 9311

Clerk of Assembly

REV. BRUCE McLINTOCK MELLER, BD, ThL, MA (Theol)
PO Box 2196, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
(02) 9690 9318

Deputy Clerk of Assembly

REV. LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, BA, AdDipTheol
4/19 Lang Parade, Milton QLD 4064
(07) 3716 2800

Business Convener

REV. PETER J. BARSON
4/19 Lang Parade, Milton QLD 4064
(07) 3398 9823

Procurator

MR GREGORY BURTON, S.C., F.C.I.Arb., B.C.L., B.A., LL.B.
5th Floor, Wentworth Chambers
180 Phillip Street, Sydney NSW 2000

Law Agent

MR SIMON FRASER, B.A., LL.M.
Colin Biggers & Paisley,
Level 42, 2 Park Street, Sydney NSW 2000
Phone: (02) 8281 4555 Fax: (02) 8281 4567

Trustees

PO Box 2196, Strawberry Hills NSW 2012
Telephone: (02) 9690 9333 Fax: (02) 9310 2148

**The Assembly will commence its 50th Session on Monday 9th September, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.
in the Chinese Presbyterian Church, Cnr Crown & Albion Streets, Surry Hills, NSW,
or in such other place in Sydney as the Business Committee may determine.**

PAST MODERATORS
of the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA

Rev. John Meiklejohn, D.D.....	1901
Rev. Alexander Hay, D.D.	1902
Rev. David Bruce, D.D.....	1903
Rev. P.J. Murdoch, M.A.	1905
Rev. T.E. Clouston, D.D.....	1906
Rev. Peter Robertson	1907
Rev. John Ferguson.....	1909
Rev. W.S. Rolland.....	1910
Rev. J. Laurence Rentoul, M.A, D.D.	1912
Rev. George Davidson, M.A., D.D	1914
Rev. Ronald G. Macintyre, C.M.G., C.B.E., M.A., D.D.....	1916
Rev. John Walker, D.D.....	1918
Rev. James Gibson, M.A.	1920
Rev. John Mathew, M.A, D.D.....	1922
Rev. James Crookston.....	1924
Rev. R. Scott-West, D.D.	1926
Rev. Alexander Crow	1928
Rev. Donald A. Cameron, M.A.	1930
Rev. G.R.S. Reid, M.A., D.D.	1933
Rev. John Mackenzie, M.A, D.D.	1936
Rev. John Flynn, O.B.E., D.D.....	1939
Rev. R. Wilson Macaulay, B.A., D.D	1942
Rev. Alexander C. Grieve, B.A.	1945
Rev. Julian R. Blanchard, C.B.E., B.A., D.D.....	1948
Rev. Richard Bardon, O.B.E., B.A.....	1951
Rev. Sir Francis W. Rolland, O.B.E., M.C., M.A.	1954
Rev. David J. Flockhart, M.A.....	1957
Rev. Alan C. Watson, M.A., D.D.	1959
Rev. Hector Harrison, O.B.E., M.A., B.D.	1962
Rev. William Young, B.A.	1964
Rev. Norman Faichney, B.A.....	1967
Rev. James Frederick McKay, C.M.G., O.B.E., M.A., B.D.....	1970, 1971
Rev. Gillam Albert McConnel Wood, O.B.E., A.M., B.A.	1973
Rev. Neil MacLeod, A.M., M.A., D.D.	1974
Rev. Kenneth Joseph Gardner, O.B.E, D.D.	1977
Rev. James Mullan, B.A., Dip.R.E.....	1979
Rev. Norman Monsen	1982
Rev. Edward R. Pearsons.....	1985
Rev. Alan C. Stubs, B.A., B.D., M.Th., Dip.R.E.	1988
Rev. Murray J.K. Ramage.....	1991
Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman, B.A., B.D., M.Litt., M.Th., Th.D.	1994
Rev. Bruce H. Christian, M.E., B.D.	1997
Rev. Jack J. Knapp	2001
Rev. Charles Robert Thomas, Th.D.	2004
Rev. Robert P.F. Benn, L.Th., Dip.R.E.	2007
Rev. David N. Jones, BD, CertPastoralStudies	2010
Rev. David A. Cook, B.Th., M.A., Th.L., Dip.DM	2013

**CLERKS
of the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AUSTRALIA**

Rev. James S. Laing, D.D.	1901-1906
Rev. George Tait, M.A.	1906-1933
Rev. R. Wilson Macaulay, B.A., B.D.	1933-1942
Rev. W.D. Marshall, M.A.	1942-1945
Rev. R. Wilson Macaulay, B.A., B.D.	1945-1951
Rev. W.D. Marshall, M.A.	1951-1957
Rev. G. Ross Williams	1957-1970
Rev. L. Farquhar Gunn, M.B.E., E.D., M.A., B.D.	1970-1974
Rev. Edward R. Pearsons	1974-1985
Raymond P.W. Jell, Esq., L.Th., A.R.E.I., A.I.C.M., A.A.I.M., J.P.	1985-1988
Very Rev. Kenneth J. Gardner, O.B.E., D.D.	1988-1991
Rev. Paul G. Logan, O.A.M., B.A., D.Min., Dip.Ed.Stud., M.A.C.E.	1991-2015
Rev. B.M. Meller, B.D., Th.L., M.A. (Theol)	2016-

**DEPUTY (OR JUNIOR)
CLERKS**

Rev. George Tait, M.A.	1901-1906
Rev. E.E. Baldwin, M.A., Dip.Ed.	1922-1939
Rev. W.D. Marshall, M.A.	1939-1942
Rev. G.W. McAlpine.	1942-1945
Rev. W.D. Marshall, M.A.	1945-1951
Rev. J.M. Stuckey, B.A.	1951-1962
Rev. C.M. Dyster, M.A., B.D., S.T.M.	1962-1964
Rev. L.F.F. Gunn, M.B.E., E.D., M.A., B.D.	1964-1970
Rev. A.M. McMaster, B.A., B.D.	1970-1977
Raymond P.W. Jell, Esq., L.Th., A.R.E.I., A.I.C.M., A.A.I.M., J.P.	1977-1985
Rev. J.J.T. Campbell, B.A.	1988-1991
Rev. B.M. Meller, B.D., Th.L., M.A. (Theol)	1991-2015
Rev. Lesleigh J.F. Hall, B.A., Ad.Dip. (Theol)	2016-

LAW AGENTS

Messrs Davies and Campbell	1901-1930
Mr Alexander Gerald Proudfoot.....	1930-1950
Mr J.P. Adam, M.A., LL.B., Dip.Ed.	1950-1972
Mr John G.R. McArthur, LL.B.	1972-1977
Mr Lindsay J. Moore, LL.B.	1977-1991
Mr Simon H. Fraser, B.A., LL.M.	1991-

PROCURATORS

Mr John Garland, K.C., M.A., LL.B.	1901-1921
Mr John A. Ferguson, B.A., LL.B.	1921-1936
Mr Brian C. Fuller, Q.C., B.A., LL.B.	1936-1956
Mr Douglas M. Little, Q.C.	1956-1959
Mr F. Maxwell Bradshaw, M.A., LL.M.	1959-1992
Mr Garry K. Downes, A.M., Q.C., B.A., LL.B.	1992-2002
Mr Gregory K. Burton, S.C., F.C.I.Arb., B.C.L., B.A., LL.B.	2003-

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

ROLL OF MEMBERS

APPOINTED OR ELECTED TO THE 2016 GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Assembly Officers

Moderator-General	Rt. Rev. D.A. Cook
Moderator-General Nominate:	Rev. J.P. Wilson
Clerk	Rev. B.M. Meller
Deputy Clerk	Rev. L.J.F. Hall
Business Convener	Rev P.J. Barson
Law Agent	Mr S.H. Fraser
Procurator	Mr G.K. Burton

Former Moderators-General

Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner	Very Rev. Dr. C.R. Thomas
Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman	Very Rev. R.P.F. Benn
Very Rev. B.H. Christian	Very Rev. D.N. Jones
Very Rev. J.J. Knapp	

**NEW SOUTH WALES
(Elected by the State Assembly)**

Rev. D.A. Burke	Mr A.W. Byleveld
Rev. P.G. Harris	Mr J. Falls
Rev. J.R. Irvin	Mr P.J. Graham
Rev. Dr J. McClean	Mr C.M. Langford
Rev. W.G. Morrow	Mr M. Quirk
Rev. K.D. Murray	Mr J. Rolland
Rev. D.M. Seaman	Mr M. Smith
Rev. Dr. I.K. Smith	Dr M. Whitelaw
Rev. D. Yu	Dr R. Yager

Presbytery of Canberra

Rev. J.F. Bartholomew	Mr D. Lennie
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Presbytery of the Central Coast

Rev. P. O'Rourke	Mr P. Russell
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Presbytery of the Central Tablelands

Rev. R. McKean	Mrs H. Barr
Rev. D.B. Stone	Mr B. Greig

Presbytery of the Central West

Rev. L.G. Fowler

Presbytery of the Hawkesbury

Rev. P. Beringer
Rev. I. Schoonwater

Presbytery of the Hunter

Rev. S. Taylor
Rev. R. Vandervelden

Presbytery of the Illawarra

Rev. P.J. Currie
Mr P. Sanders

Presbytery of the Mid North Coast

Rev. S.B. Donnellan
Rev. D. Hann

Presbytery of New England

Rev. G. Barnes
Mr L. Jackson

Presbytery of North West NSW

Rev. S. Smith
Mr A. McClenaghan

Presbytery of the Northern Rivers

Rev. C. Lindsay
Rev. G. Samuel
Mr T. Hewitt
Mr R. Holvast

Presbytery of the Riverina

Rev. R. Keith
Dr L. Thorpe

Presbytery of Sydney

Rev. P.R. Dunstan
Rev. B. Ho
Rev. M. Powell
Rev. D. Thurston
Rev. C.R. Tucker
Ms S. Maddrell
Mr J. Park
Mr W. Thompson
Dr B. Wong
Mr G. Wong See

Presbytery of Sydney North

Rev. J. Buchanan
Rev. W. Esdale
Rev. G. Goswell
Rev. R.J. Quadrio
Rev. D. Woolcott
Mr G. Drummond
Mr T. Kim
Mr T.A. Nestel
Mr C.C. Short
Mrs J. Stevenson

Presbytery of Sydney South

Rev. P.E. Barnes
Rev. D. McDougall
Rev. R. Stark
Mr C. Ashton
Mr S. Mak
Mr J. McGregor

Presbytery of Wagga Wagga

Rev. C. Nicholas
Rev. P. Sheely
Mrs Y. Forsyth
Mr M. Mitchell

QUEENSLAND
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. P. Case
Rev. S. Cree
Rev. M. O'Connor
Rev. A. Richardson

Mr M. Baddeley
Mr J. Eaton
Mr G. Newnham
Mr N. Stewart

Presbytery of Brisbane

Rev. P. Campbell
Rev. Dr G. Millar
Rev. M. Viney

Mr D. Anderson
Mr G. Rodgers

Presbytery of Central Queensland

Rev. A. Poyser

Mr P. Eckersley

Presbytery of Darling Downs

Rev. T. Cheetham
Rev. P. Evans

Mr B. Clarke
Mr N. Dimond

Presbytery of Moreton Bay

Rev. J. Nicol

Mr P. Cotton

Presbytery of Mowbray

Rev. A. Bain
Rev. N. Campbell
Rev. L. Fooks

Mr S. Bailey
Mr R. Pieris
Mr K. Stewart

Presbytery of North Queensland

Rev. P. Barber

Mr I. Putt

Presbytery of Wide Bay-Sunshine Coast

Rev. W. Brown

Mr B. Hooper

SOUTH AUSTRALIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. G.J. Ware

Mr B. Johnson

Presbytery of South Australia

Rev. D. Carson

Mr S. Wahome

TASMANIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. J. Summers

Mr G. Roberts

Presbytery of Bass

Rev. G. Munro

Mr N. Waterhouse

Presbytery of Derwent

Rev. C. Markham

Mr J. Khu

VICTORIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. D. Brown
Rev. D. Carroll
Rev. P. Phillips
Rev. R. White

Mr R. Butcher
Mr B. Nelson
Mr E. Papajscik
Mr R. Wright

Presbytery of Ballarat

Rev. I. Hutton

Mr R. Taylor

Presbytery of Benalla

Rev. K. Maxwell

Mr J. Finster

Presbytery of Flinders

Rev. P. Roberts
Rev. M. Wharton
Rev. M. Wishart

Mr J. McMinimee
Mr A Putnins
Mr D. Stanley

Presbytery of Geelong

Rev. D. Middleton

Rev. D.I. Combridge

Presbytery of Gippsland

Rev. C. Garrett

Presbytery of Kilnoorat

Rev. N. Benfell
Rev. B. Johnson

Mr R. Hansen

Presbytery of Maroondah

Rev. M. James

Mr A. Letcher

Presbytery of Melbourne East

Rev. P. Chang
Rev. P.D. Mercer
Rev. G.J. Nicholson

Mr P. Barton
Dr J. Hare
Rev. P. Lee

Presbytery of Melbourne North

Rev. N. Barbieri
Rev. P. Hastie

Mr T. Cuneen
Mr S. Harris

Presbytery of Melbourne West

Rev. D. Robertson

Mr A. Deeming

Presbytery of North West Victoria

Rev. S. Withers

Mr C. Morrow

**WESTERN AUSTRALIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)**

Rev. S. Bonnington

Mr W.A. MacRae

Presbytery of Western Australia

Rev. K. Song

Mr L. Kruize

COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

New South Wales:

Rev. B.M. Gorton

Rev. J.R. Irvin

Rev. P.R. Dunstan

Dr M. Whitelaw

Mr A.W. Byleveld

Mr M. Mitchell

Mrs M. Hill

Queensland:

Rev. L.J. Hall

Rev. G. Kettniss

Mr. K. Stewart

Mr R. Wilkinson

South Australia:

Rev. G.J. Ware

Mr B. Johnson

Tasmania:

Rev. T.A. Bain

Mr. G.K. Roberts

Victoria:

Rev. D.J. Palmer

Rev. P. Phillips

Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson

Mr B.D. Bayston

Mr E. de Zilwa

Mr B. Stasse

Western Australia:

Rev. S. Bonnington

Mr W. MacRae

Assembly Officers:

Moderator

Clerk

Deputy Clerk

Business Convener

Law Agent

Procurator

Chairman:

Rt Rev. J.P. Wilson

Rev. B.M. Meller

Rev. L.J.F. Hall

Rev. P.J. Barson

Mr S.H. Fraser

Mr G.J. Burton

The Moderator-General

Former Moderators-General:

Very Rev. Dr. K.J. Gardner

Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman

Very Rev. B.H. Christian

Very Rev. J.J. Knapp

Very Rev. Dr. C.R. Thomas

Very Rev. R.P.F. Benn

Very Rev. D.N. Jones

Very Rev. D.A. Cook

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEES - COMPOSITION

The composition of all standing committees, unless expressly varied by the Assembly, is: 10 members elected by the Assembly as follows: New South Wales, 3; Queensland, 2; Victoria, 2; South Australia, Tasmania and Western Australia, 1 each; a Convener elected by the Assembly; and the Assembly officers ex officio.

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

Composition: Non-standard

A Convener elected by the General Assembly; the National Director; the Convener of the State committees on world mission from New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia; an additional representative from the State committees on world mission from New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria; and 5 additional members elected by the General Assembly of whom at least three shall be from the state in which the national office is located.

Elected by the Assembly: Rev. Brett Graham, Alex Ralston, Messrs Peter Burke, Bob Quinn, Mrs Sheryl Sarkoezy
Ex-officio: National Director
Assembly Officers
Convener: Mr Alex Shaw

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. David Stone, Mr Murray Norman, Dr Leon Thorpe
Queensland: Rev. John Nicol, (*One standing vacancy*)
South Australia: Rev. Allan Clarkson
Tasmania: Mr Graeme Roberts
Victoria: Rev. Hui Lim, (*One standing vacancy*)
Western Australia: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. Andrew Vines

CHURCH AND NATION

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. A.C. "Sandy" McMillan, Messrs A. Balogh, P. Christopher
Queensland: Rev. Nathan Campbell, Nick Aroney
South Australia: Rev. Gary Ware
Tasmania: Rev. Campbell Markham
Victoria: Rev. Daniel Combridge, Darren Middleton
Western Australia: Rev. Ross Fraser
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. Dr John McClean

CODE

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. John Irvin, Kevin Murray, Bruce Gorton
Queensland: Rev. Ron Clark, Matthew Viney
South Australia: Rev. Gary Ware
Tasmania: Rev. Greg Munro
Victoria: Rev. Peter Phillips, Dr Jared Hood
Western Australia: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. Bruce Meller

COLLEGE

Composition: Non-standard

- (a) A convener elected by and from the members of the Committee.
- (b) The Convener of the state committee on theological education from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.
- (c) The principals of the theological colleges operated by the state assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.
- (d) Two members of the faculty of each of the colleges listed in (c) who shall be elected by the relevant faculty.
- (e) The officers of the Assembly ex officio.

DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY

Composition: Standard

New South Wales:	Rev. Paul Harris, Gary Hooper, John Irvin
Queensland:	Rev. John Nicol, Mr Norman Hughes
Tasmania:	Rev. Ian McKendrick
Victoria:	Rev. Martin De Pyle, Peter Owen
South Australia:	No appointment (<i>One standing vacancy</i>)
Western Australia:	Rev. Ross Fraser
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Rev. P.W. Phillips.

FINANCE

Composition: Standard

New South Wales:	Rev. John Irvin, Messrs John Rolland, Duncan Parker
Queensland:	Messrs Greg Rodgers, Keith Stewart
South Australia:	No appointment (<i>One standing vacancy</i>)
Tasmania:	Mr Graeme Roberts
Victoria:	Rev. Richard O'Brien, Mr Andrew Letcher
Western Australia:	Mr Chris Woonings
Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	The Chairman for the time being of the Presbyterian Church (NSW) Property Trust.

MISSION TO AUSTRALIA (SPECIAL COMMITTEE)

Composition: Special Committee: non-standard composition

The Convener of the Committee on home missions from each State Assembly; the Convener of the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee (PIM); the full-time Directors or Superintendents of the committees on home missions in New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria; and the Superintendent of PIM.

Ex-officio:	Assembly Officers
Convener:	Appointed by the Committee

MODERATOR'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Composition: Non-standard

The Moderator and Clerk of the Assembly, 3 ministers and 3 elders from each State Assembly, the Clerk of Assembly being the Convener.

NATIONAL JOURNAL

Composition: Non-standard

The Committee shall consist of a Convener and ten members appointed by the General Assembly. No more than three persons from any one State shall be elected to the Committee.

Persons	Rev. Stuart Bonnington, Andrew Clarke, David Cook, Guido Kettmiss, Jason Summers, Mr Neville Taylor
Victoria:	Rev. Peter Hastie, Mr Barney Zwart, Mr Walter Bruining

Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener Mr Duncan Parker

OVERSEAS AID AND DEVELOPMENT (PresAID)

Composition: Special Committee: non-standard composition

The committee shall consist of 4 members, ministers or elders, from Victoria (who shall form the executive), 2 members, ministers or elders from NSW, 1 minister or elder from Queensland, the National Director of APWM, the Convener of the GAA APWM Committee and the state Conveners of APWM.

New South Wales: Rev. William Morrow, Mr Bill Thompson, (*One standing vacancy*)
Queensland: Rev. Peter Barber, (*One standing vacancy*)
South Australia: No appointment (*One standing vacancy*)
Tasmania: No appointment (*One standing vacancy*)
Victoria: Miss Geraldine Goswell, Rev. Len Pearce
Western Australia: No appointment (*One standing vacancy*)
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener Rev. Dean Carroll

PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. Derek Bullen, Sam Smith, Mrs Evelyn Mill
Queensland: Rev. Peter Barber, Mrs Heather Ross
South Australia: Rev. Allan Clarkson
Tasmania: Rev. Peter Williamson
Victoria: Rev. Martin De Pyle, Mr Dennis Wright
Western Australia: Rev. Ross Fraser
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers and the PIM Superintendent
Convener: Rev. L.G. Fowler

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND AIDS TO DEVOTION

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. Stuart Andrews, Andrew Unwin, Dr Michael Whitelaw
Queensland: Prof. Judith Brown, (*One standing vacancy*)
South Australia: No appointment (*One standing vacancy*)
Tasmania: Rev. Peter Williamson
Victoria: Rev. Matthew James, Michael Wharton
Western Australia: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. S. Kroeger

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. Dr Ian Smith, Moses Hahn, Mr Jim Park
Queensland: Rev. Dr Gary Millar, Andrew Richardson
South Australia: Rev. Allan Clarkson
Tasmania: Rev. Jason Summers
Victoria: Rev. Chris Siriweera, (*One standing vacancy*)
Western Australia: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae
Ex-officio: Assembly Officers
Convener: Rev. David Burke

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Composition: Standard

New South Wales: Rev. Dr John McClean, Kamal Weerakoon, Corie Nel
Queensland: Rev. David Jones, Robert Thompson
South Australia: Rev. Allan Clarkson

Tasmania
Victoria:
Western Australia
Ex-officio:
Convener:

Rev. Greg Munro
Rev. Chris Duke, Matthew James
Rev. Stuart Bonnington
Assembly Officers
Rev. Dr John Wilson

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Composition: Ad hoc
Mesdames Ceale Orford, Margaret Thatcher and Vanessa Stuckings with power to co-opt.

PANEL OF ASSESSORS

(Appointed under Article 13)

Ministers

Rev. Dr A.M. Harman
Rev. J.R. Irvin
Rev. D.J. Hassan
Rev. R. Vandervelden
Rev. S.M. Bonnington
Rev. C. Garrett
Rev. J.W. Langbridge
Rev. D. Mihailovic

Elders

Mr M. Baddeley
Mr C.M. Langford
Mr J. McGregor
Mr C. Morrow
Mr G. Rogers
Mr G.K. Roberts
Mr W. MacRae

AUTHORISATIONS, INSTRUCTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Moderator-General

- Authorise the Moderator-General or, in his absence or at his request, the Convener of the Church and Nation Committee, to act on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Partner Organisations of the Coalition for Marriage. (Min. 67(7))

Assembly Committees:

- Encourage the Committee on Relations With Other Churches to continue its active role in initiating, maintaining and fostering relationships with both Australian and overseas churches of like mind. (Min. 30(1))
- Encourage the Committee on Relations With Other Churches to continue its involvement in promoting the ministries of the World Reformed Fellowship. (Min. 30(6))
- Encourage the Committee on Relations With Other Churches to continue discussions with other Presbyterian and Reformed denominations in the region. (Min. 30(9))
- Send Reference (iv) – concerned with the Church’s understanding of the eldership - to the Code Committee with a request that it undertake a comprehensive investigation of the principles and practices that have informed the Church’s understanding of the eldership and report to the next meeting of the Assembly, having given careful consideration to factors that might have changed through the Church’s history; and require the Code Committee to engage fully with the principals of the recognised theological colleges or their delegates and with the Very Rev. Dr A. Harman in its enquiry and the formulation of any recommendations anent the Church’s understanding of the eldership. (Min. 68 (2) and (3))
- Request PIM to bring to the next meeting of the Assembly any further changes to its regulations that might appear necessary to enhance the government or operation of its mission churches. (Min. 90(5))
- Request the College Committee to explore the biblical, theological, historical and pastoral implications of paedocommunion and recommend to the next meeting of the Assembly what the Church’s policy and practice should be in this matter. (Min. 92)
- Request the College Committee to consider the eschatology of the Westminster Confession of Faith and report, with recommendations, to the next meeting of the Assembly. (Min. 93)
- Request the Code Committee to consider the establishment of a judicial commission with responsibility to consider, and seek to resolve, disputes addressed to the Assembly as complaints, appeals or petitions; and to report to the next meeting of the Assembly. (Min. 96)
- Request the Business Committee to consider the possibility of conducting the next meeting of the Assembly on a residential basis at a suitable place and date, and authorise the Committee to determine that issue. (Min. 100)

Amendments to *Constitution, Procedure and Practice*

- Enact new rules for the Code of Discipline (2.04, 2.20 and 2.29), these having gained interim authority in 2013.
- Amend the composition of the Business Committee so that it will now be comprised of the Business Convener (as convener); the Moderator and, where known, the Moderator-Nominate; the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk.
- Replace the general rules relating to committees (CP&P chapter 9) to standardise the composition of almost all of the committees so that they will be comprised of a convener and ten other members, all elected by the Assembly and drawn from the several states as follows: NSW, 3; Qld, 2; SA, 1; Tas, 1; Vic, 2; WA, 1; plus the Assembly Officers ex officio.
- Amend the PIM regulations to clarify the responsibilities of PIM, the state churches, and presbyteries. (Min. 90)

State Assemblies

- Urge all state assemblies, presbyteries, and congregations to prayerfully and practically support the “No” case in opposing the redefinition of marriage to include homosexual unions in the upcoming 2017 plebiscite. (Min. 67(8))

- Commend the states on the development and support of women's ministries to their local members. (Min. 89(5))

Presbyteries

- Urge all state assemblies, presbyteries, and congregations to prayerfully and practically support the "No" case in opposing the redefinition of marriage to include homosexual unions in the upcoming 2017 plebiscite. (Min. 67(8))
- Inform all presbyteries and congregations of the websites of the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee (pwad.org.au and rejoicehymnbase.com.au) and commend them as useful resources for the conduct of public worship and as an aid to the Church in general for private and family devotions. (Min. 86(2))

Sessions

- Urge ministers, sessions, mission committees and Church members to set aside one or more Sundays in the year to promote the cause of cross-cultural mission in their congregations. (Min. 29(5))
- Urge ministers, sessions, mission committees and Church members to familiarize themselves with the APWM policy document 'Partnership in Mission 2016' so that they might understand how APWM and local congregations partner together in Indigenous and overseas cross-cultural mission. (Min. 29(7))
- Request all Sessions and Boards or Committees of Management to give sympathetic consideration to supporting future Easter and Christmas PresAID appeals. (Min. 34(2))
- Encourage ministers and elders to promote the ministry of PIM to those who might be looking for ways to serve the Lord. (Min. 51(8))

Boards/Committees of Management

- Request all Sessions and Boards or Committees of Management to give sympathetic consideration to supporting future Easter and Christmas PresAID appeals. (Min. 34(2))
- Strongly encourage ministers, elders, committees of management and congregational members to subscribe to AP, and also strongly encourage congregations to seek the publication of their details in the magazine's quarterly Church Directory. (Min. 47(8))
- Urge all state assemblies, presbyteries, and congregations to prayerfully and practically support the "No" case in opposing the redefinition of marriage to include homosexual unions in the upcoming 2017 plebiscite. (Min. 67(8))
- Encourage ministers and sessions across the Church to organise evangelistic functions under the banner, "*Taking God Seriously*", and invite the Rt Rev. David Cook to nominate one of the panel evangelists to speak at those events. (Min. 72(4))

Congregations

- Strongly encourage ministers, elders, committees of management and congregational members to subscribe to AP, and also strongly encourage congregations to seek the publication of their details in the magazine's quarterly Church Directory. (Min. 47(8))
- Call on our churches throughout Australia to pray fervently for the emergence of a gospel centred church planting movement in the city of Adelaide within the Presbyterian Church of Australia. (Min. 82(1))
- Inform all presbyteries and congregations of the websites of the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee (pwad.org.au and rejoicehymnbase.com.au) and commend them as useful resources for the conduct of public worship and as an aid to the Church in general for private and family devotions. (Min. 86(2))

Church members

- Draw the attention of Church members to the APWM website. (Min. 29(4))
- Strongly encourage ministers, elders, committees of management and congregational members to subscribe to AP, and also strongly encourage congregations to seek the publication of their details in the magazine's quarterly Church Directory. (Min. 47(8))
- Encourage the whole Church to keep up to date with the ministry of PIM by visiting the web

site at www.pim.org.au or via the Facebook page, “On Track” and other various State Church publications. (Min. 51(5))

- Urge all members of the Church to seize the opportunities provided in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation to gain whatever skill might be necessary in order to share the gospel hope that drove the Reformers and call as many people as possible to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. (Min. 72(3))
- Commend the publications and training resources of the Christian Education Committee to the wider Church. (Min. 81(2))

Remits to State Assemblies and Presbyteries under Barrier Act Procedure

- Overture (i) from the Code Committee to amend Standing Order 20(b)
- Overture (ii) from the Code Committee to amend rule 1.05 within the Code of Discipline to clarify the timeframe within which accusations should be raised against an alleged offender.
- Overture (iv) from the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga to amend the questions asked of elders at ordination or induction

REPORTS

500TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE REFORMATION

The General Assembly in 2013 resolved to:

- (1) Note that the 500th Anniversary of the beginning of the Protestant Reformation occurs on 31st October 2017;
- (2) Acknowledge that the great principles of the Reformation – faith alone, grace alone, Christ alone, Scripture alone, glory to God alone – when embraced in the power of the Holy Spirit have brought great spiritual life and health to God’s people;
- (3) Appoint an ad hoc Committee consisting of the Moderator-General (Convener), Rev. B.M. Meller, S. Bonnington, P. Barnes, J. Wilson and D. Jones to consider ways the anniversary might be marked, comprehended, embraced and affirmed by the Presbyterian Church of Australia with a report and recommendations to be presented (DV) to the 2016 General Assembly of Australia.

The Committee met on a number of occasions and resolved to mark this significant anniversary in several ways:

- By the publication of the book *Truth Matters*,
- By the publication of three new tracts to help members of our congregations in their works of evangelism and edification,
- By commissioning the Rev. John Wilson to produce three video presentations for small group use on the history of the Reformation;
- By establishing a panel of recommended evangelists to be made available throughout 2017 to speak evangelistically on as many occasions as possible across our whole nation, and
- By organising a study tour through sites of primary significance in the continental and Scottish reformation.

The first three objectives have been accomplished, thanks, in part, to the Trustees of the church in New South Wales who provided loan funding for the printing of the book and tracts. The panel of evangelists has been identified and the Committee will work with willing churches to set up opportunities for gospel presentations wherever possible.

The itinerary for the study tour has been finalised and bookings are now being received. The Rev. John Wilson (Moderator-Elect) and Robert Benn will lead this study tour. If that tour is over-subscribed a second tour will be offered if there is sufficient demand. For further information, visit www.presbyterian.org.au/reformation_study_tour or contact the Rev. Robert Benn directly on mobile: +61 2 0431 062 853 or e-mail: rpfbenn@gmail.com

The Committee has completed the preliminary work required of it, but decisions may still need to be made during 2017 before its work may be finalised. It will therefore be recommended that the Committee be thanked for its labours and that the Moderator be authorised to discharge the Committee when advised by its Convener that its work has concluded.

D.A. COOK, Convener.

AUSTRALIAN PRESBYTERIAN WORLD MISSION

Introduction: “All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.” (Colossians 1:6)

The last three years have not been without their challenges but we thank God for the way in which he has sustained the ministry of Australian Presbyterian World Mission and provided for its needs. The Committee continues to be marked by unity in relationships and direction. It is a joy to be engaged in such a strategic ministry.

1. The Committee

The 2013 General Assembly of Australia re-appointed Mr Alex Shaw as the Convener of the Committee and the Rev. Kevin Murray as Director. Mr Alex Ralston continues as Treasurer and brings a lot of practical insight into the ministry.

During the past three years the Committee has had a relatively stable membership. Our

resignations have been those of the Rev. Stuart Bonnington, Dean Carroll, Phil Simmonds and Mr Nathan Stewart. The Executive met three times a year with the full Committee meeting each January.

The Committee continues to operate with three subcommittees:

- **the Indigenous Ministry Subcommittee** is convened by the Rev. Jim Elliott from NSW. Jim is not a member of the APWM Committee but was a former APWM Committee Deputy Convener and brings a wealth of knowledge and relationships to the task. The Subcommittee has been functioning well.
- **the Administration Subcommittee** meets quarterly and does a lot of the 'day-to-day' work of APWM. It has authority to execute limited operational matters and drafts policy recommendations for the Executive where necessary.
- **the Timor Leste Subcommittee** meets annually face to face and corresponds by email during the year.

We continue to be grateful to God for the excellent relationships in each of the subcommittees.

In the first half of 2016 the Committee overhauled its policy document 'Partnership in Mission' and the result is 'Partnership in Mission 2016'. This is not being printed as a hard copy but is available for download on the APWM website at www.apwm.org.au/who-we-are/vision-and-mission/.

PIM Partnership: The Committee continues to enjoy a close working relationship with the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee. This is partly due to the fact that both Committees share a common purpose, particularly in ministry to Indigenous people in Australia. This has been expressed in two ways:

- (a) the production of a joint newsletter, resulting in an economical and efficient delivery of news to a constituency interested in mission both to inland Australia and overseas;
- (b) a decision taken in early 2013 that APWM would assist in publicity and fundraising for ministry at Mount Magnet, Western Australia, an area with a natural link to Indigenous ministry by the PIM Patrol Padres. We are grateful to God for raising up Surendra and May Wesley to serve at Mount Magnet.

2. Office Staff

Accounts Clerk: (15 hours per week): Mr Bruce Campbell continues to make sure that our accounts are properly administered.

Director's Assistant: In late 2014 it was decided to replace the part-time position of Office Administrator (15 hours per week) with the newly created full time position of Director's Assistant. Mrs Sheryl Sarkoezy, a graduate of Christ College, ably serves in this position. This has enabled the Committee to be able to respond better to emerging needs and trends.

The National Office is now located at Christ College, Sydney.

The National Director: The Rev. Kevin Murray continues to serve as National Director of APWM with his current appointment expiring in 2019. He continues to be supported by his wife, Julie, who prepares the bimonthly 'Email Update' and assists with the hosting of various missionaries and other visitors.

The Director's duties have covered the following areas:

(a) Administration

Preparation of the business papers for the Committee's Annual General Meetings, Executive Meetings and Administration Subcommittee Meetings and follow up of items. Frequent meetings with the APWM NSW Committee and annually with the APWM Queensland and APWM Victoria Committees.

The Director has been able to visit the Queensland, NSW, Victorian, Tasmanian and the West Australian Assemblies.

(b) Pastoral and Member Care Duties

Pastoral care of our missionaries is carried out by the Director and the APWM State Committees. The Director has met with a number of missionary candidates and missionaries on home assignment. The limitations of time and geography have made it difficult to meet with every missionary on home assignment. While on overseas trips he has been able to meet with missionaries on the field in Ethiopia, India, Japan, Myanmar, Vanuatu and Zambia. In addition he has met a number of times with those involved in Indigenous ministry in Australia.

(c) Publicity, Promotion and Teaching

- (i) **Speaking:** During the last three years, the Director has preached in parishes throughout Australia concerning our privileges and responsibilities in local and cross-

cultural mission

The Director has also visited the following Assemblies:

2014 Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria

2015 Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia

2016 Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria (October)

- (ii) **Print Publications:** For a number of years the APWM Newsletter material was integrated with the Queensland Assembly's 'New Directions' magazine. In the past 12 months New Directions has changed its name to 'PresLife' and APWM, along with other ministries, has had its content cut back to one page per quarterly issue. This has made it difficult for APWM to communicate with the wider church in Queensland.

APWM continues to place four pages of material in The Pulse (NSW) and Fellow Workers (Victoria) magazines. APWM is very grateful for the cooperation of the Editors of each of the state publications.

An additional publication known as 'Partnership' continues to be produced in conjunction with the PIM Committee and is distributed to congregations in South Australia, Tasmania, Western Australia and the Northern Territory through the 'Australian Presbyterian' Journal network, and in Victoria, NSW and Queensland through the Reformer's Book Catalogue mailing. For this we are very grateful for the work of Mr Mike Timmins and Mr Duncan Parker.

The 2016-2017 edition of the APWM Directory was distributed early in 2016. The aim is to place the Directory into the hands of as many Presbyterians as possible who are interested in praying for and supporting the ministry of APWM.

Our bimonthly prayer notes 'Email Update' are prepared by the Director's wife, Julie. They are either distributed by email or by direct mail to those who request it. This year Australia Post rates have risen sharply. Being mindful of our responsibility to make wise use of donor funds, a decision has been made to send hard copies of the 'Email Update' only to congregations that have no access to email. If members of the Assembly would like to be placed on the email list then please email national@apwm.org.au together with the name of the relevant parish minister, so that for security reasons the identity of the person making the request can be verified. We are constantly aware of the need to be very careful with the details of APWM members who serve in security sensitive situations.

- (iii) **Website and Social Media:** Our website continues to evolve and we now offer a number of avenues for donations (cheque, direct deposit, PayPal and credit card). We thank Jordan Gillman of [jordesign](http://jordesign.com.au) (www.jordesign.com.au) for his hard work on our behalf.

The website includes a variety of materials — information sheets about Partner Churches that can be used for 'Mission Sunday' material, logos for news sheets, PowerPoints about Partner Church countries, information about how to serve with APWM, details on how to support APWM financially, details about some of our missionaries, various forms and our latest newsletter, etc. It also contains links to APWM State websites.

APWM is actively engaged on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/AustralianPresbyterianWorldMission>.

This has proven to be a very helpful way of efficiently distributing APWM news.

APWM also has its own Vimeo channel (vimeo.com/user16292236) and this can be accessed via the APWM website.

Partnerships with Overseas Churches

APWM has Partner Church agreements with the following Churches:

Japan – Presbyterian Church in Japan

Malawi – Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Blantyre Synod)

Myanmar – Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC)

South Sudan – Presbyterian Church of South Sudan

Timor Leste – Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste

Vanuatu – Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Zambia – Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Zambia Synod)

Since the last GAA the Director has made the following overseas trips:

2014

- Vanuatu: Partner Church Consultation and visiting Talua.
- Vanuatu: Visiting the Connors and Williamsons, attending the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu.

- Japan: Visiting Osaka with Nathan and Tomoko Stewart, visiting the Evans, attending the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Japan and holding discussions with the Japan Mission to the World leadership.

2015

- Timor Leste: Representing the Moderator General at the opening of the Dili Church building of our Partner Church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste.
- Myanmar: Visiting Martin Eagle, teaching at the Reformed Bible Institute, holding discussions with the leadership of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar.
- India: Visiting the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Dehradun – including the Ellises and Joy Venning, holding discussions with the Seminary leadership and the leadership of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India.
- Vanuatu: Visiting the Dekkers and Harts and attending the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu.

2016

- Vanuatu: Attending a consultation of Partner Churches regarding the Talua Theological Institute
- Ethiopia, Malawi and Zambia: Holding discussions with the leadership of Partner Churches, assessing our potential involvement in Ethiopia and visiting the Rempels, Schwarzs and Robert Handicott.
- Vanuatu: Visiting the Dekkers and attending the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Vanuatu.

Bangladesh

On 24th October, 2014, the APWM Federal Committee decided to withdraw from our Partner Church relationship in Bangladesh. This was done because of a series of ongoing problems that had been occurring to varying degrees since 1999. The most obvious early difficulty occurred when a small group seized ownership of the Bible College building that APWM (NSW Committee) had helped to purchase.

In 2005 there was an internal dispute regarding the Principal-ship of the next iteration of the Bible College. The Federal APWM and NSW APWM Committees sent two members to investigate but the problems continued.

In 2008 we faced a situation whereby the then APWM Federal Committee supported one Presbyterian Bible College in Bangladesh while the APWM NSW Committee supported another Presbyterian Bible College in Bangladesh. This led to the APWM National Committee rejecting one Presbyterian College in favour of another.

On 28 April 2008, the NSW Commission of Assembly resolved as follows:

30 (10) "Instruct the Australian Presbyterian World Mission (N.S.W. Committee) to pass over to Australian Presbyterian World Mission (G.A.A.) Committee responsibility for and operational control of all activities in Bangladesh as from 1st May 2008."

And

30 (11c) "In recognition of the important role that APWM (NSW) has played in gospel mission in Bangladesh during the past eight years: (c) encourage the APWM (GAA) to investigate ways in which the APWM (NSW) and the Rev. Ewen Brown may continue to help in the operations of mission activity in Bangladesh."

The NSW Assembly summarily handed the management of the Bangladesh field back to the APWM National Committee. However, the then APWM National Committee handed the management of Bangladesh back to New South Wales.

In the years that followed, various levels of disruption were experienced. It is important to understand that the work in Bangladesh has always been totally dependent upon Australian funding.

The APWM Committee report to the GAA in 2013 flagged that there were issues related to Bangladesh that were yet to be resolved.

In 2013 the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh Trust Board within Bangladesh froze all funds until the APWM National Committee sent some representatives to investigate ongoing problems. In August and November 2013, three members of the APWM National Committee visited Bangladesh to assess the situation. As a consequence of these visits the Director and two members of the APWM National Committee were placed on the APWM NSW Bangladesh subcommittee to assist in the ongoing management of Bangladesh. Within Bangladesh, a new Trust Board was established while the former Trust Board refused to hand over funds from Australia and to this day

this former Board still holds these funds.

In May 2014 the church in Bangladesh appointed a new Business Committee which started a series of dismissals which included the sacking of the College Principal on flimsy grounds.

Problems arose again in July 2014 and the Director and a member of the NSW Committee visited in September 2014 to make an assessment of the situation.

While awaiting departure at Sydney airport the Director received an email indicating that the Acting Principal had been sacked and the former Principal had been reinstated.

The church in Bangladesh faced a number of problems such as:

- Deep personal divisions caused by greed, envy and strife. There was little desire among the leadership to work together.
- The leader of one church ministry created a web page in which he gave the clear impression that he was the founder and leader of the church and was seeking donations which were not being channeled into the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh.
- With malicious intent, someone in Bangladesh set up a false email address and in the name of a leader within the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh then sent pornographic photographs to members of the APWM NSW and the APWM National Committees probably with the hope that APWM would then disapprove of the church leader whose name was on the false email account.
- With only one exception, the members of the Synod Business Committee submitted travelling claims to APWM which were far in excess of what they were entitled to claim.
- The Trust Board members became extremely uncooperative.
- There were instances of corruption.

In October 2014 a report from the Director and a member of the NSW Committee was received by the NSW Committee indicating that many of the existing problems were continuing. This was compounded by a decision by the 11-month old new Bangladesh Trust Board whereby it refused to distribute the money sent by APWM NSW to Bangladesh to pay the salary allowance of Bangladeshi Pastors and others. The Trust Board still holds those APWM NSW funds to this day.

The APWM NSW Committee then decided to implement a radical modification for the Bangladesh ministry and acknowledged that the work in Bangladesh had a very poor name within Bangladesh.

When the National Committee examined the radical modification proposed by NSW it deliberated for 5 hours and concluded that the proposed modification was unworkable. It resolved to: (a) withdraw the management of the Bangladesh field from the APWM NSW Committee and (b) end the Partner Church relationship. Ending the relationship and paying severance pay to the pastors and evangelists in the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh cost the APWM National Committee in excess of \$65,000.

The decision to withdraw the management of the Bangladesh field from APWM NSW was not made suddenly or unadvisedly. It was the outcome of an ongoing conversation which occurred over approximately 18 months. The Director warned the leaders of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh on three separate occasions that unless they agreed to work together and conduct themselves in a more godly manner then there was a real possibility that the relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Australia would be ended.

It should be noted that there is a separate Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh in existence that is not associated with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Bangladesh. This separate denomination appears to be doing well.

Japan – Presbyterian Church in Japan

No APWM State Committee has a particular responsibility for this relationship.

Our Partner Church missionaries are John and Rosemary Evans. The Evans' commenced their second term of service in March 2016. John is the team leader for the Chiba City Church Planting Team which consists of four couples including one Japanese national.

Malawi – Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Blantyre Synod)

Primary responsibility for this relationship rests with the APWM Victoria Committee.

In March 2016 the Director made his first visit to Malawi to better understand the ministry there and the nature of our partnership. (The Director had planned to visit in 2011 but had to withdraw due to a death in the family).

We have one self-funded couple who serve in Malawi for 6 months of each year and they are in the process of becoming recognised APWM missionaries.

It is anticipated that the Rev. Colin M'Bawa, General Secretary of the 5 million strong Church of Central Africa Presbyterian denomination will be present at the GAA.

Myanmar – Evangelical Reformed Church (ERC)

Primary responsibility for this relationship rests with the APWM Queensland Committee.

Our Partner Church missionary is Martin Eagle. Martin has had some difficulty in achieving the necessary fluency in the Burmese language. For that reason, in early 2016 he attended an SIL Summer School in Melbourne to increase his language acquisition skills.

It is anticipated that the Rev. Dr Thang Bwee, leader of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar, will be present at the GAA.

South Sudan – Presbyterian Church of South Sudan

Primary responsibility for this relationship rests with the APWM Victoria Committee.

Our Partner Church missionary is Motor Isaac Yat. Our Partner Agency missionaries are Rhys and Rhondda Hall (ACROSS). Following the outbreak of a tribal-based civil war in December 2013, up to 50,000 people have been killed. The conflict is largely between the Dinka and Nuer tribes. As Motor Yat is a Nuer, the APWM National Committee, in consultation with Motor's home congregation and APWM Victoria, decided to withdraw him from South Sudan and re-deploy him to serve among the 280,000 South Sudanese refugees who had relocated to Ethiopia. Subsequently Motor's marriage broke down through no fault of his own and in late 2015 returned to Australia. In April 2016 Motor returned to Ethiopia. It is hoped that sometime in the next 12 to 18 months the situation in South Sudan will become stable enough to permit Motor to return and serve there.

Timor Leste – Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste

Primary responsibility for this relationship rests with the APWM South Australian and Western Australian Committees. Lauren Crase from Queensland has recently commenced missionary service in Timor Leste.

Our ministry in Timor Leste takes the form of: (a) financial aid to the Synod; (b) tangible encouragement through our relationships and (c) teaching teams that visit twice a year. We thank God for the contribution to the teaching programme made by the Rev. David Burke of Christ College Sydney and others such as the Rev. David Cook. Rev. Rob Duncanson serves as our 'eyes and ears' for Timor Leste and keeps the relationship strong.

Vanuatu – Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

No APWM State Committee has a particular responsibility for this relationship. The Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu is our oldest Partner Church.

Our Partner Church missionaries are John and Kara Dekker. Since the last GAA, Andy and Rosemary Williamson, Glen and Rachael Connor, Brian and Judy Cullen and Andrew and Marilyn Schache have permanently returned to Australia. The Williamsons and Connors served in Theological Education at the Talua Ministry Training Centre for 15 and 10 years respectively. We thank God for the way in which they gave themselves to this ministry over many years. We still have one vacancy at Talua, which we have not been able to fill despite many efforts to find suitable people.

It is anticipated that Pastor Roy Yosef, the Secretary of Mission for the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu, will be present at the GAA.

Following the damage caused by Cyclone Pam in March 2015, the Moderator General launched an appeal which raised \$357,645. Funds continue to be distributed with the approval of the GAA Trustees including the following areas:

- Cash for immediate use by the PCV;
- Repairs to school buildings
- Repairs to church buildings
- Books for pastors and church leaders
- Repairs to Bible College buildings
- Reprinting of the Bislama New Testament

Some of the funds are still to be dispersed and we are working with the Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu towards this end.

Zambia – Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Zambia Synod)

Primary responsibility for this relationship rests with the APWM Victoria Committee.

We have no resident Partner Church missionary in Zambia. Rick and Tracey Rempel serve as Partner Agency missionaries with 'Flying Mission Zambia' a group linked to the Missionary Aviation Fellowship.

PresAID – Across these partnerships APWM is extremely grateful for the partnership with

PresAID which has enabled much tangible aid to be given which has further strengthened our relationships.

Indigenous Ministry – The Rev. Rick and Mrs Kayleen Manton continue to pastor the Mount Druitt Indigenous Church in Mount Druitt, Sydney. Within the wider Indigenous Church scene this is one of the stronger congregations. This is a joint Anglican-Presbyterian ministry where the Sydney Anglican Diocese provides the church building and funding for a youth worker and APWM provides the pastor and the manse.

The APWM Indigenous Ministry Subcommittee works well with its Sydney Anglican counterpart. Rick continues as the Chairman of the Bimbadeen Bible College for Indigenous people at Cootamundra. Along with APWM Missionary Bob Quinn, he continues to be involved in a Theological Education by Extension programme. In late 2014 Rick acquired a life-threatening virus which affected his heart. By Gods’ grace he is now back to his usual self. Thank you to those who prayed for his recovery.

It should be noted that our Partner Agency missionaries, the Rev. Cliff and Mrs Carolyn Letcher and Mr Bob and Mrs Deb McKerrell and Mr Dennis and Mrs Glenys Tranter, serve in indigenous ministries.

Missionaries – For a detailed list of our missionaries please see our 2016-2017 Mission Directory

Summary of Missionary Team (as at May 2016)

	Units	Individuals
Partner Agency	99	159
Partner Church	9	15
Associates	8	12
Totals	116	186

These figures are almost identical to our report to the GAA in 2013.

New Partner Agencies accredited in the last three years

International China Concern

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of India – In the APWM 2010 GAA report it was noted that APWM had approved the establishment of a Fraternal Church relationship with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India. Since then, the relationship with the Church has been growing through: (a) The sending of missionaries such as John and Lynette Ellis and Joy Venning at PTS Dehradun; (b) Visits by Australians for short term lecture programs; (c) The training of PTS lecturers in Australia such as Chanreiso Lungleng and Vijai Tagore; (d) Scholarships for PTS.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of India is a relatively small denomination with 2 Presbyteries: (a) The Delhi Presbytery has 13 congregations, the largest of which has 50 members (there are other evangelical churches in Delhi some with approximately 200 members); and (b) Nav Jeevan (New Life) Presbytery - this is the Presbytery which takes in the city of Dehradun.

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of India is the only Reformed denomination that we are aware of in India. PTS is the only Reformed seminary in India.

On behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, and in consultation with the GAA Relations with Other Churches Committee, a Partner Church Agreement has been enacted with the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India.

The National Office – In early 2014 the National Office was relocated to Christ College Sydney. This has proven to be a tremendous blessing to APWM’s ministry through: (a) engagement with Christ College students who are preparing to serve in parish ministry; (b) contact with students who are preparing to serve as missionaries; (c) ease of transport to and from meetings in other parts of Sydney by virtue of being located in the city’s inner west; (d) excellent contact with the Christ College staff, some of whom lecture overseas with Partner Churches; (e) access to an excellent theological library; (f) access to ministers and others who call into the College on other matters and take the opportunity to visit the APWM office to discuss specific mission needs;(g) access to the Christ College infrastructure; and (h) the lifting of APWM’s profile.

APWM is grateful to the NSW Assembly’s Presbyterian Theological Centre Committee for allowing the National Office to be located within the College. APWM praises God for the close working relationship that has developed between the Principal and Staff and the National Office.

Committee Nominations – It is anticipated that following the new APWM Committee regulations recommended by the GAA Code Committee that there will be five positions on the Committee that will need to be filled. The Committee nominates the following people for election to

the APWM National Committee:

Convener: Mr Alex Shaw

Members: Mr Peter Burke, Mr Bob Quinn, Mrs Sheryl Sarkoezy, Rev. A. Ralston and Rev. Brett Graham.

A. SHAW, Convener.
K.D. MURRAY, National Director.

BUSINESS

As indicated in the Business Report for the 2013 Assembly, the Chinese Presbyterian Church is, at this point in time, the most conveniently situated to host the Assembly. Despite this, we are aware that the walk from accommodation to the church presents some problems for those commissioners who are either in their later years or suffer some physical disability.

In view of this, the Convener and the Clerk made enquiries of various premises that could alleviate some of the difficulties presently faced. Most were ruled out due to unrealistic costs. However, the venue that would prove most suitable in terms of costs, convenience, and facilities was unavailable for the duration of the Assembly. This was the NSW Teacher's Federation Conference Centre which is situated in Reservoir St at the rear of the Rydges Hotel where most commissioners are accommodated during the assembly. The centre offers comfortable seating, modern technology features, breakout rooms, and potential catering possibilities, all at an acceptable cost. Future enquiries will centre on this location for the 2019 assembly if that is to be held in Sydney.

During the assembly, two significant partnerships will be established by the signing of agreement documents. Partner church relationships will be entered into with the Presbyterian Church of Japan and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India with the former being represented by its moderator Rev. Kiyoshi Endo and the latter by its deputy moderator Rev. Hiralel Solanki. At the appropriate time, both shall be given an opportunity to address the assembly.

Opportunity will also be given for the International Director of the World Reformed Fellowship, Rev. Dr Flip Buys to address the assembly.

The assembly biblical expositions will be delivered on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday by Rev. Alistair Bain BA, LLB, MDiv, minister of St John's Presbyterian Church Hobart.

P.J. BARSON, Convener.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

In reviewing the Committee's work over the past three years, we are thankful to God for the many opportunities to assist and promote the work of Christian Education throughout the length and breadth of our nation. The committee brings together people who are actively involved in the work of education and training in the different states. The twin foci of the committee's work are: (i) developing and publishing resources that address the particular needs of the PCA in the areas of Christian nurture; and (ii) discipleship and providing in-service opportunities in states with fewer training resources.

Truth Matters

Truth Matters, edited by David Cook, was launched at the *Revitalising Preaching* conference at Christ College 16 June, 2014 by the Moderator-General. The cost is \$10 for a licence to use up to 10 copies. It is published in three formats: epub is for iPad, PDF version and mobi is for Kindle. The committee thanks Andrew Vines for his technical assistance, Bryson Smith for cover design and Bob Thomas for editing assistance. The contributors are Peter Barnes, David Burge, Neil Chambers, David Cook, Greg Goswell, Peter Hastie, Gary Millar, Bryson Smith and Ian Smith. Its aim is to attractively present and explain fundamental Christian theology, and the chapters titles are: The Bible, inspiration, authority, integrity and an appropriate hermeneutic; The Trinity, what it is, what it is not, its application to daily life; God, his character, plan and purpose; The person and work of Jesus Christ; The person and work of the Holy Spirit; Salvation, its nature, order and outworking; Humankind, what are we, what's wrong with us; The Church, what is it, what is its part in the purposes of God. Each chapter includes questions for discussion and further study.

Other recent resources

The Shorter Catechism in Modern English comes in the form of an attractive new publication, *Q&A: A Catechism for Today*. This is available in two forms: a set of (business-sized) cards and a booklet. Scripture references for each question and answer are given in the booklet, while a memory verse has been selected for each question and answer on the accompanying card set.

Another recent resource is *Teach us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer and the Gospel of Jesus*, edited by Greg Goswell and Greg Munro. The aim of the thirteen contributors is to explain what it means to pray, to show the meaning and intent of the prayer Jesus taught us, and to answer the hard questions people commonly ask about the possibility and process of prayer. Study questions are included for group and individual use.

State Visits

The committee plans to continue the schedule of visitation to the smaller states and has begun to fulfil its hope of expanding these to include the congregations in the Northern Territory. Since the last Assembly, a Christian Education in-service visit was conducted to Alice Springs. The committee wishes to record its thanks to the Rev. Keith Bell and others who assisted in this training opportunity.

GAA Christian Education Publications

A number of Christian Education products are currently available for sale and use. These include:

- *The Westminster Confession of Faith for the 21st Century*
- *Making Friends for Life* – assists in training church members in outreach
- *Christian Commitments* – a resource for church membership classes and communicant instruction
- *Q&A: A Catechism for Today* and
- *Teach us to Pray: The Lord's Prayer and the Gospel of Jesus*.

At the start of 2014 PTC Media decided it would no longer market our resources, and so all these products are presently marketed by the committee itself. The email address of the committee is christianedpca@gmail.com. The committee is investigating options and possible partnerships for the more effective promotion and distribution of our training resources.

Engage 2014-2016

The committee provided scholarships covering airfares and conference fees for a number of delegates from smaller states (WA, SA and Tasmania) to attend the Victorian training event, *Engage*, each year increasing its funding during 2014-2016. This forum, started by PYV, continued to grow and now involves more evangelical churches than the PCA. *Engage* helps youth ministry leaders to be trained and equipped in biblical theology and ministry skills, as well as to have an opportunity for encouraging and building up others in the ministry.

Finance

Once again the Committee will not be seeking a grant from the Finance Committee for the next triennium (2017-2020). The Committee seeks to be self-funded from the sale of its Christian Education resources.

G.R. GOSWELL, Convener.

CHURCH AND NATION

Membership

During the triennium, there has been a change of one member with the Queensland representative, the Rev. David Johnstone, replaced by the Rev. Nathan Campbell. We also note the omission of Rev. Stefan Slucki as the South Australian representative since 2015, though he has graciously assisted the Committee in keeping minutes. Since 2014, the Rev. Darren Middleton has been the Convener. The Committee takes the opportunity to thank the Rev. David Johnstone for his service, and in particular for our previous convener the Rev. Stefan Slucki for his many years of faithful service.

The Committee also wishes to thank the outgoing Moderator General, the Rev. David Cook for his great interest in, and contribution to, the Committee's work. The Committee is very conscious that, with the changing cultural and political landscape, we have a large responsibility to offer

guidance to the GAA in the many challenging matters relating to Church and State, none more important than the ongoing debate around marriage redefinition.

Meetings

The Committee has met on eight occasions since the last meeting of the Assembly. It is made up by the various conveners of each state committee. Since 2014, the South Australian Presbyterian Church has become part of the Queensland Presbyterian Church which means they are now represented by the convener of the Queensland committee.

Website

The committee website [www.pcacan.org] was updated late in 2015 by Mike Wharton. More content should follow in the future.

Government Submissions

A Submission was made to the Senate Inquiry into recognising overseas same-sex marriage in July 2014. The Convener was invited to appear before the Senate hearings in his capacity as a state convener but referenced both the Victorian and Federal submissions. Ultimately, the Senate recommended that overseas same-sex marriages should not be recognised under Australian law.

Anti-discrimination Legislation

The GAA in 2013 directed us “to closely monitor further developments in Federal antidiscrimination legislation with particular respect to free-speech generally and the impact on religious freedom in particular.”

We are pleased to report that a change of government has released some of the pressure on this issue. However, the committee notes that severe restrictions on “religious freedom” are planned in Victoria, which is indicative of what the future may hold for the nation as a whole. A draft Bill proposes to remove religious exemptions from the anti-discrimination law by narrowing discrimination to the inherent requirement for the job. If you cannot show how someone’s sexuality or beliefs are inherent to the job as teacher, administrator or maintenance person it will be unlawful for Christian organisations to discriminate on belief or sexuality.

It seems evident to the Committee that if marriage is ultimately redefined to include homosexual relationships, that this new right will come with corresponding legal duties. There would be increasing pressure on future legislators to follow the Victorian example and in any hierarchy of rights, homosexual rights seem to trump religious freedoms.

Reaffirmation of Ties With the Australian Christian Lobby

The Committee has continued to benefit greatly, from its connection both directly and indirectly with the Australian Christian Lobby (www.acl.org.au). We are thankful for their efforts to present a clear Christian voice in the political process and assure them of our prayers.

Freedom 4 Faith

Issues of freedom of religion are more and more pressing in Australia at present. In this context the Committee brings to the attention of the Assembly the work of Freedom for Faith. Freedom For Faith was formed several years ago as an explicitly Christian organisation to help protect freedom of religion in Australia. It works primarily by promoting academic and political discussion of freedom of religion in order to promote better legal protection of freedom of religion in Australia.

The General Assembly of Australia makes an annual contribution and the Convener of the Committee has been appointed a member of the board of Freedom 4 Faith from June 3, 2016.

Freedom for Faith appointed Michael Kellahan as the new Executive Director in 2015. He is currently the Senior Minister of Roseville East Anglican Church, Sydney; though he works several days a week for Freedom for Faith.

We hope that Michael Kellahan will be able to address the Assembly.

In light of the urgent and necessary work of Freedom for Faith, the Committee recommends that the Assembly contribute \$15,000 per annum for the next triennium to the organisation.

Syrian Refugee Update

There has been widespread concern for the humanitarian situation in Syria, in particular, the situation for Christian refugees. The federal government has committed to taking 12,000 extra Syrian refugees with the majority from persecuted Christian and other religious minorities. The former immigration minister and now Treasurer Scott Morrison was quoted as saying, Christians would make up a “very large component” of the 12,000 refugee intake (The Australian Nov. 21, 2015).

However, in a letter dated Dec. 17 to the Victorian Committee the Immigration Minister's office clarified the government's position, though it did go on to state Christians would certainly be among the 12,000.

"The 12,000 places will be available to refugees referred by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as well as to persons proposed under the Special Humanitarian Programme (SHP). People eligible for resettlement under the SHP may be registered with the UNHCR, but it is not a requirement.

The Humanitarian Visa Programme is controlled and administered by the Department of Immigration and Border Protection, which assesses and makes decisions on SHP visa applications and other refugee applications made by individuals who are referred by the UNHCR.

While Australia takes refugees from all religious backgrounds and we do not target people on the basis of their religion, this may be relevant to the nature of their claims for refugee status. All claims will be assessed on an individual basis – in line with Australia's existing refugee and humanitarian policies."

Since then the Refugee Council of Australia has accused the government of 'cherry picking' its way through the UN lists favouring families and minorities. By the middle of April less than 200 refugees had arrived under the programme, though 1600 visas have been issued overseas with imminent arrivals expected from May. However, it should be noted the Department of Social Security website indicates that "...due to the complex and changing circumstances in the Middle East, it may take a number of years for all arrivals to be settled in Australia."

In the meantime, there are numerous ways our churches can be involved in mercy ministries to all refugees here now, or coming in the future. Many churches are taking the opportunity to show love in practical ways including: teaching English (ESL classes); providing food, furniture, and transportation; and general help in settling into a new country. In NSW, Jericho Road has been active in this area and has its own web page [www.jerichoroad.org.au] that has further information for interested and praying churches.

Marriage Redefinition Effort

Marriage and Australian Society: It seems clear that one of the reasons the idea of homosexual marriage has gained political traction is because many if not most in our culture no longer view marriage as a lifelong commitment. This is primarily the result of the introduction of the 1975 no-fault divorce laws. Today, over one-third of all marriages end in divorce. Intentionally or otherwise, we have severed the link between marriage and permanence.

Another reason is that marriage is often viewed as a romantic, intimate and loving relationship. Having children is no longer fundamentally connected to marriage. Tragically, in denying the innate heterosexual nature of marriage, any redefinition of the Marriage Act to include homosexual relationships will also diminish the fundamental link between marriage and children. Once marriage has been disconnected from the idea of permanence and children, the heterosexual nature of marriage no longer sounds compelling. Indeed, it almost sounds homophobic.

Marriage and the 2013 GAA: With this lack of societal clarity surrounding the nature of marriage, the GAA in 2013 articulated and affirmed the biblical definition of marriage as a "lifelong union of one man with one woman, voluntarily entered into, excluding all others..." and resolved that "same-sex marriage will not contribute to the good of society but will reduce the respect in which marriage is held and further legitimise the production of children for same-sex couples when a child should as far as possible have a mother and father."

Marriage Redefinition and Politics: The political landscape is somewhat fluid. At the time of writing a double dissolution election is possible on July 2. The outcome of that election will be known by the time the GAA meets. The ALP policy is to legislate homosexual marriage within the first 100 days of government (around or just after the time the GAA meets). The Coalition policy is to hold a post-election plebiscite. At this stage we still do not know the nature of the question, and if legislation will be drawn up in advance of the plebiscite.

Marriage Redefinition and the Church and Nation Committee: It is hard to overstate the significance of any redefinition of the Marriage Act (1961). The Committee, therefore, takes the view that it is responsible to offer some guidance to the Assembly on how it might navigate any such changes. The committee has been debating this issue for nearly four years. In addition to our own discussions, State assemblies have also been wrestling with this issue. Last year we received correspondence from NSW and Victorian state assemblies asking our committee to consider the

option of withdrawing as a recognised denomination if the Marriage Act were to be redefined to include homosexual unions. The Queensland state Assembly has indicated it would prefer to maintain the status quo. Western Australia has sent a paper down to its presbytery, but will not form an opinion before the 2016 GAA. At the time of writing Tasmania has not yet formally discussed the issue.

It is clear that both our committee and the wider denomination has been rightly engaged on this issue. Our Moderator-General, David Cook, wrote earlier last year, "The question that Presbyterian ministers must face is, as registered marriage celebrants, are we prepared to continue to operate under an Act which unacceptably redefines marriage?" Therefore, it is prudent that our committee formulates a way forward for the GAA in response to any redefinition of the Marriage Act.

Marriage Redefinition and Arguments to No Longer Solemnise Marriage: It is important to stress that we are not proposing to withdraw from an amended Marriage Act as a political protest nor for self-protection. If we decide to withdraw, we will do so with sorrow since we will be losing a connection with the wider community which we have valued. We should not imagine that making such a decision will have any impact on the view of Federal Parliament or Australian society.

It is very unlikely that the Church will need to act to protect clergy and churches from prosecution if they refuse to marry same-sex couples. It is almost certain that if the Marriage Act is amended it will include protections of freedom for ministers who refuse on religious grounds to solemnise a marriage between a same-sex couple. (New Zealand and UK legislation provide for this).

The primary reason for the church to withdraw is that what the Act would call marriage would no longer be identifiable with the institution established by God in creation and described in the Bible. The Doctrine Commission of the Sydney Diocese of the Anglican Church (Oct, 2014) comes to the same conclusion, "Changing the Federal Marriage Act to allow for 'gay marriage' will, in fact, turn marriage into a government and societal register of sexual friendships. This will necessarily change what marriage is, not simply add to it."

It is true that Christian marriage would still be included within the redefinition; it would still be possible to enter a life-long monogamous heterosexual union under the redefined Act. However, the meaning of marriage in a society is primarily found in the way it is practiced, rather than in legislation. The law will reflect a social understanding and will also reinforce an understanding. So we need to consider not simply the definitions and regulations of the Marriage Act, but also the social reality which the law will create and sustain.

Institutional Argument: The inclusion of same-sex couples in marriage will be a further and decisive step in moving marriage in Australia away from a Christian understanding. Over the last two generations, each of the elements of the Christian view of marriage has disappeared from the social consensus and has been removed from legislation.

The sexual revolution of the 1960's was fueled to some extent by the introduction of the contraceptive pill. It was first introduced to the US market in May, 1960, and it arrived in Australia nine months later (ironically). Contraception for better or worse separated sexual activity from the covenant of marriage. No longer was sex seen as something to be kept for marriage, but something to be enjoyed, experimented with, and celebrated external to the marriage covenant. The introduction of 'no fault divorce' in 1975 then separated the idea of permanence to the marriage bond. The institution of marriage was no longer a definitive institution with a *raison d'être*. Increasingly, it was viewed as a socially subjective construct, not a definitive institution that existed to bring together a man and a woman in a biological, social and legal covenant, with a purpose to provide for and protect any children they may have, in a life-long commitment.

All of this means that marriage, as it is understood and practised in Australia, is already very different from the Christian view of marriage. The removal of gender differentiation from the definition of marriage collapses the very biological foundation and structure of the institution. At the very least, with redefinition, the positive rationale for our involvement in the Marriage Acts will have been removed.

Church and state have co-operated in relation to the regulation of marriage on the basis of a shared understanding. Marriage was a social practice which the Church sought to regulate. It was not till 1563 the Council of Trent declared that marriage could not be sacramentally valid unless declared by the priest. In time, the government also sought to regulate marriage as well.

In English law, the crucial change came with the Marriage Act of 1753 which for the first time made a valid marriage dependent on its valid solemnisation. Before the 1753 Act, marriage was

created by the consent of the parties and consummation of the marriage in sexual intercourse. This allowed a very wide range of marriage practices to establish valid marriages. Many couples were married in secret or had no formal wedding at all. Others had a religious ceremony, though this may have taken place well after the couple were living as husband and wife.

Under the Act only marriages which took place in a Church of England with the declaration of banns and a marriage licence were recognised as valid. That is, the state regulated marriage by determining that only marriages established by a church ceremony in the established church were valid marriages. Explicitly, the state shared the church's understanding of marriage by only recognising church marriages. The shared understanding of marriage and therefore the rationale for the ministers and churches having a role in the state's regulation of marriage has now disappeared.

There are various other arguments that could be briefly described as:

The moral/conscience argument: Marriage is a basic part of Christian moral teaching: we have a clear and consistent moral conviction, based in Scripture, about what constitutes marriage and about the foundational importance of marriage.

The general common good argument: Our view about the importance of marriage includes the conviction that society is built on marriage and family, and that marriage secures family life. Redefining marriage will harm society.

The protection of children argument: The biblical view relates marriage and the raising of children. A Christian understanding of marriage, family and children recognises that God's plan is that a child should be raised, where possible, by their father and mother. This has been commonly accepted in the Western legal tradition. This is not to say that all same-sex couples harm their children, nor to ignore the problems in families of heterosexual couples. The point is not about particular families, but how to frame public policy for the welfare of children.

Although the findings are disputed, social science research broadly supports the conclusion that the best possible setting for children is when they are raised in a stable married family with a husband and wife who are their biological parents. Further, some same-sex couples will want to have children and already seek access to commercial surrogacy, introducing the danger of the commodification of children. The introduction of same-sex marriage is likely to lead to pressure for commercial surrogacy or other innovative technologies to the same end.

This conclusion then leads to the question of how that could be effected. Before taking that up, there are some other issues and objections which require comment.

Should Christian couples cease being married under the Act? If clergy, acting on behalf of the church, should no longer participate in the Marriage Act, does that mean that no Christian couple should be married under the Act?

The Committee does not believe this is required. The difference between acting as celebrants and having a marriage recognised under that Act can be stated in terms of agency. Marriage celebrants act as agents for the state, conducting ceremonies under its legislation. In contrast, a couple are accessing a service but are not active in providing the service. More importantly, Christian couples may well take advantage of the fact that the government will still recognise their marriages as valid marriages, even if it is operating with a distorted definition of marriage. There are benefits, though relatively limited, which come from this recognition. (Even if the government offered only a relationship register with no reference to marriage, Christian couples could make use of this).

Christian couples may well feel that for the sake of their own conscience, or that of others, they should be married under the Act. So while we do not consider that a couple must be married under the Act, we can recognise reasons why they may wish to do so.

Are we encouraging couples to enter de facto marriages? Given a covenantal view, a marriage is properly created by promises given by the couple with witnesses. So the church should teach that couples should have a wedding before they consider themselves married and live together and begin a sexual relationship. The wedding could take two forms — it could be conducted by a celebrant recognised under the Marriage Act or it could be one conducted by a Christian minister who is not recognised under the Marriage Act. It is not proposed to recognise any marriages which are not solemnised in one of these ways.

In the second case, the couple will have a de facto marriage according to the Marriage Act. From a theological viewpoint, however, it is not equivalent to 'living together'. It will be very clear, in church communities, when people are married. There will be no extra confusion added.

Won't the church have to have to provide a divorce court? While we need to have regulations to deal with marriage, we will not need to have regulations to deal with divorce. All

couples who separate will be able to access the provisions of the Family Law Act. If the status of a relationship is unclear under the Act, then the proceedings may be more painful, but the Family Court will still have jurisdiction. Once a relationship has been ended, a church will face the range of questions, but these are questions which we already face routinely. At present we answer these questions with pastoral discernment exercised by the Session and minister. Again, we propose some simple regulations to help deal with these issues more consistently.

Won't couples who marry outside the Act face difficulties? While it is important to stress the Committee is not in a position to give legal advice, we can report the following taken from the Family Law Act SECT 4AA:

Working out if persons have a relationship as a (de facto) couple:

- (2) Those circumstances may include any or all of the following:
 - (a) the duration of the relationship;
 - (b) the nature and extent of their common residence;
 - (c) whether a sexual relationship exists;
 - (d) the degree of financial dependence or interdependence, and any arrangements for financial support, between them;
 - (e) the ownership, use and acquisition of their property;
 - (f) the degree of mutual commitment to a shared life;
 - (g) whether the relationship is or was registered under a prescribed law of a State or Territory as a prescribed kind of relationship;
 - (h) the care and support of children;
 - (i) the reputation and public aspects of the relationship.
- (3) No particular finding in relation to any circumstance is to be regarded as necessary in deciding whether the persons have a de facto relationship.
- (4) A court determining whether a de facto relationship exists is entitled to have regard to such matters, and to attach such weight to any matter, as may seem appropriate to the court in the circumstances of the case.

Family Law Act SECT 90SB:

When this Division applies--length of relationship etc.

A court may make an order under section 90SE, 90SG or 90SM, or a declaration under section 90SL, in relation to a de facto relationship only if the court is satisfied:

- (a) that the period, or the total of the periods, of the de facto relationship is at least 2 years; or
- (b) that there is a child of the de facto relationship; or
- (c) that:
 - (i) the party to the de facto relationship who applies for the order or declaration made substantial contributions of a kind mentioned in paragraph 90SM(4)(a), (b) or (c); and
 - (ii) a failure to make the order or declaration would result in serious injustice to the applicant; or
- (d) that the relationship is or was registered under a prescribed law of a State or Territory.

Potential problems could be avoided by counselling all couples to seek legal advice to ensure that they have the necessary legal arrangements in place, such as Wills, Powers of Attorney, Appointments of Enduring Guardian and provision that each spouse is the declared beneficiary of the other for superannuation. Similarly, a legal change of name, if that is desired, can be organised quite easily. (Many people use a name different to their legal name in social settings, and that may be a simpler solution). If a couple were to move to another country, they may find that a marriage under the Marriage Act was required to establish their marital status. For these reasons, it may be worth considering having a civil ceremony first.

Why not act with other denominations? There is no other significant national denomination which is likely to be able to make this step as easily as the PCA. We have a theological unity which makes the discussion possible and a polity which allows us to make a national decision. If we think that withdrawal is the right thing to do, then we can give a lead for other churches.

Do we lose a contact with the community? If the church were to withdraw from the Act, no doubt there would be fewer non-Christian couples who sought a church wedding. It should be remembered that the number of couples seeking church weddings is declining quickly. Between

1990 and 2010 the marriage rate dropped by about 20% but the number of couples having a religious wedding dropped by almost 60%.

Churches would still be able to conduct a church wedding for any couple which sought one, since membership of the church and profession of faith would not be conditions for having a church wedding.

Are we “leaving marriage”? One argument against the proposal to withdraw is that if we do so we are “leaving marriage”. Proponents of the proposal vigorously reject this characterisation. We are not recommending that the Presbyterian Church no longer conduct marriage services, nor are we recommending that church members no longer be married. We are simply arguing that we receive no benefit from acting as agents under the Marriage Act, and that we have a clearer witness to Christian marriage by standing outside the Act.

Consequently, the Committee is persuaded that if the Marriage Act is redefined to include homosexual unions then we should no longer conduct marriages under such an Act.

Marriage redefinition and how to give effect to any decision to no longer solemnise marriage: Once the Committee formed an opinion that we should no longer conduct marriages under a redefined Marriage Act (1961) our mind then turned on how best that is achieved. Two options were considered.

The first option was to withdraw as a ‘recognised religious denomination’. If the GAA made a decision not to solemnise marriages as a celebrant of the state, it would need to give a written request (to no longer be a recognised denomination for the purpose of marriage) with an appropriate minute to either the Attorney General or his department. As a consequence, the Attorney General would prepare the papers for the Governor General’s consideration at the next Federal Executive Council.

The second option is for the GAA to make a declaration that no minister should solemnise marriage under a redefined Marriage Act (1961). Such a decision is provided for under the existing provisions of Section 47(a) of the Marriage Act (1961) which states nothing in the Marriage Act “...imposes an obligation on an authorised celebrant, being a minister of religion, to solemnise any marriage...”

This Committee considered the latter approach as the preferred option as it is simple, clear and avoids any unintended consequences of giving up our status as a ‘recognised religious denomination’.

Marriage redefinition and legal advice sought: The Committee sought advice from Prof. Patrick Parkinson, who advised us to speak to the Attorney General’s department. Kimberly Williams, Principal Legal Officer of the Marriage Law and Celebrants section, gave us advice on how to give effect to any GAA decision on this matter. It was his opinion that it would be easier for the GAA to make a declaration regarding its Ministers making use of the existing provisions under Section 47(a) of the Marriage Act (1961) stating nothing in the Marriage Act “...imposes an obligation on an authorised celebrant, being a minister of religion, to solemnise any marriage...”

Preparing for a potential plebiscite: If the Coalition maintains government after the next election, Australians will head to the polls shortly after to vote on whether we should change the Marriage Act to include homosexual unions. It is the expectation of this committee that in the event of a plebiscite the PCA would urge all Presbyterians – indeed, all Christians – to support ‘traditional marriage’ and in doing so oppose any redefinition of the Marriage Act to include homosexual unions.

Previously, the 2013 GAA articulated and affirmed the biblical definition of marriage as a “lifelong union of one man with one woman, voluntarily entered into, excluding all others...” And that “same-sex marriage will not contribute to the good of society but will reduce the respect in which marriage is held and further legitimise the production of children for same-sex couples when a child should as far as possible have a mother and father.” That is, all things being equal, biological parents are better than adoptive parents. And two parents are better than one parent. And a mother and father are better than the lack of one or the other.

Given the strong biblical position of the PCA, the Committee will continue to work with Church leaders and state committees, as well as building alliances with other Christian churches and organisations. There has already been significant thought given to this at the state level. The Committee hopes to work with and encourage the Church by providing leadership and materials in support of traditional marriage.

Most importantly we need Ministers and Sessions to educate their congregations in the biblical teaching concerning marriage, emboldening them to speak out as they seek the common

good. However, it is also important that we engage in the public debate in a way that minimises offence. While we must speak truth, we must do it in love. Many in the LGBTQI and the wider community have come to believe that behaviour is identity. The distinction between being and doing has almost been erased. Consequently, there is very little space left in which to love the sinner and hate the sin. To hate the sin, is to hate the sinner. We need to understand this, even if we reject genetic determinism as unbiblical and unhelpful.

It is incumbent upon us all to be careful not just what we say, but how we say it. At some point after the vote, we'll need to live and work together again. Our kids will have play dates; we'll attend the same rugby or AFL games, see the same doctor and maybe even live in the same neighbourhood. All the more reason to ensure that we speak the truth in love. The Committee anticipates further deliverances closer to the time of the Assembly when the outcome of the Federal election is known.

D. MIDDLETON, Convener.

CODE

The Code Committee has met formally four times since the last meeting of the General Assembly. It has also transacted business by email and videoconferences.

Your committee has, as requested, examined the issue of the composition and regulation of the committees of the Assembly and relevant proposals will be presented to the Assembly in the deliverance. These proposals have been circulated to Sessions and Presbyteries and the standing committees have been thoroughly consulted.

In addition to giving advice to various bodies within the Church concerning the application of the Church's procedures and practices, your committee has grappled with a number of issues that have challenged the Church over an extended period.

Standing Order 20(b), introduced to the Constitution, Procedure and Practice in 1994, has been found to generate inefficiencies and frustration. It has caused some activities of Assembly committees to stall for years and it is the considered and unanimous opinion of the Code Committee that it ought to be removed. An overture will be presented to effect this outcome.

The Code of Discipline continues to require close attention. It is timely that the Assembly should reconsider the circumstances in which accusations might be made against persons within the jurisdiction of the Church, particularly those that might refer to behaviours alleged to have occurred more than five years in the past. Again, an overture will be presented to enact a new rule 1.05 to overcome the ambiguities inherent in the existing rule and to exhort courts to pursue matters promptly to their conclusion to promote the restorative purpose of discipline.

Ex officio, the Assembly Clerk is the Convener of the Code Committee and the law officers are members together with the Moderator, the Deputy Clerk and the Business Convener. The Committee makes the following nominations for election by the Assembly:

New South Wales (3):	Rev. John Irvin, Rev. B. Gorton, Mr M. Beveridge
Queensland (3):	Rev. R.C. Clark, Rev. M. Viney, Ms S. Anderson
South Australia (1):	Rev. G. Ware
Tasmania (1):	Rev. G. Munro
Victoria (3):	Rev. J.P. Wilson, Rev. P.W. Phillips, Rev. Dr J. Hood
Western Australia (1):	Mr W. Macrae

BRUCE MELLER, Convener.

COLLEGE

The College Committee has continued its work on behalf of the General Assembly of monitoring and enhancing the course of training for candidates. The principals and staff of our several theological colleges, conveners of state committees and Assembly officers represent a diversity of gifts and outlooks, and work well together in implementing the tasks assigned to the Committee. The Committee has continued its pattern of meeting annually, though from 2013 has moved its meeting date from February to May because of the busy schedules of college staff in February. The Committee does not oversee the managerial governance of our theological colleges;

such jurisdiction falls under the respective state assemblies. The regulations and functions of the College Committee can be found at:

<http://www.presbyterian.org.au/images/downloads/theological-education/CollegeCommitteeRegs2010.pdf>.

One of the major functions of the College Committee is to determine the Course of Training for ordination to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It therefore oversees the respective state syllabi, it grades candidates and it grants exit certificates upon completion of the Course.

Composition of the College Committee

The College Committee has agreed to the Code Committee's proposed change of its composition *viz*:

- "(1) The College Committee shall consist of:
- (a) The Convener of the state committee on theological education from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria and Western Australia
 - (b) The principals of the theological colleges operated by the state assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria
 - (c) Two members of the faculty of each of the colleges listed in (b) who shall be elected by the relevant faculty
- "(2) Accede to the desire of the College Committee that its Convener should be elected by and from the members of the College Committee and thus seek no change to clause 2."

Candidates

Since the last meeting of the General Assembly 60 candidates for the ministry (but no deaconess candidates) have completed their courses of study. Details of ministry candidates exiting over the past triennium are as follows:

	Vic	NSW	Qld	SA	Tas	WA
2013	4	11	8	0	2	0
2014	4	10	5	0	0	0
2015	5	6	5	0	0	0

No deaconess candidate graduated. There are currently (as at 9 May 2016) 63 ministry candidates and 2 deaconess candidates in the course of training.

Exit Thesis

In the wake of the decision of the 2013 GAA (Minute 35) to delete Clause 10(b) from the College Committee regulations, removing the requirement for an exit thesis, the College Committee has solicited responses from state faculties as to mechanisms to provide an integrative capstone experience for candidates.

Streamlining the Course of Training

The College Committee continues to make efforts to streamline the course of training. There are various competing priorities, and it is the Committee's aim that any change to the curriculum not increase the overall workload. To that end, the Committee revised the interpretation of College Committee Regulation 10.7.6 such that "Church History" take the form of at least three units of Church history (rather than four), two of which must focus on Reformation Church History and Australian Presbyterian Church History. The College Committee monitors and reviews annually the common course of training offered by the three approved colleges through the mechanism of the "cross-credit forms".

Grading Sub Committee

The Grading Sub-committee of the College Committee looks at cross-credits for candidates who have done formal relevant study prior to entering the Course of Training. Candidates who have studied at Moore Theological College or through the Australian College of Theology can anticipate any cross-credits through the cross-credit forms which can be found on the websites of each of the PCA theological colleges. This form also outlines the syllabus for the Course of Training in each state. Any cross-credit for other candidates, or for Reception of Ministers candidates, is determined on a case-by-case basis. The Rev. Dr Greg Goswell is the convener of the Grading Sub-committee.

Western Australia

The General Assembly has granted approval for candidates from Western Australia to undertake studies at Trinity Theological College, Perth, subject to the continued approval of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Western Australia and the annual approval of a full

curriculum by the College Committee. This training is under the oversight of the Faculty of the Presbyterian Theological College of Victoria. These conditions continue to be met, and the Committee recommends a further approval. In the last triennium, there has been no candidate from Western Australia undertaking this path.

Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, the College Committee, through the Faculty of the Presbyterian Theological College of Victoria, has continued to sponsor visits to Western Australia as a means of encouragement and support to one of our struggling state churches.

College Visitation

Each triennium, the College Committee undertakes a visitation of one of the three theological colleges of the PCA. During the present triennium, the College Committee conducted a visitation to Christ College, Sydney. The visitation committee was comprised of the Rev. Dr Gary Millar (Principal, QTC), the Rev. Peter Hastie (Principal, PTC), and the Rev. Alistair Bain (Convener, TEC, Tasmania).

Theology Conference

Following the successful theology conferences involving staff and students from our theological colleges in 2009 and 2013, a similar conference is planned for 12-14 September 2017 in Brisbane.

I.K. SMITH, Convener.

DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY

The last three years have seen a continuation of the impact of secularisation of Australian society upon the Australian Defence Force. Whereas ten years ago at least two thirds of members indicated a religious affiliation, now just under a half claim a religious connection. Of these, a far greater percentage are senior officers or warrant officers. This means that those now entering the Defence Force are much more likely to be atheists or claim to have no religion, and the trend in this direction will certainly increase in coming years.

The pressures towards multiculturalism are also making their mark. The chief of the Navy appointed a female Islamic captain as his cultural adviser, and the Minister of Defence decided that an Islamic member would join the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services. This latter appointment means that a new Memorandum of Arrangement is in process of development to accommodate the first non-Christian representative on the said committee. Throughout Defence, pressure to move towards multi-faith services and similar expressions of Australian cultural and religious diversity are readily apparent, and bring challenges to all levels of chaplaincy.

In the midst of change, our chaplains continue to use the many opportunities they have for Christian witness and service. Several of them have been involved in deployments overseas, where they have acquitted themselves extremely well. We as a church continue to provide a dedicated group of chaplains, both full-time and reserve, as part of the Protestant Ministry to the Australian Defence Force (PMADF). As the Catholic and Anglican bishops are unable to provide the number of chaplains to which they are entitled, the PMADF sector has been called upon to make up the shortfall.

Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, the Rev. David Niven has retired from full-time and reserve chaplaincy, and the Rev. Charles Green from the reserve. Later this year Chaplains Murray Fraser (RAAF) and Barry Porter (RAN) will be leaving permanent positions, but continuing in the reserve. In-service candidate Joshua Bouzanquet will complete his two years of pastoral training at Eltham Presbyterian Church, and in January 2017 he will be posted to his first chaplaincy position in the Army. While in this posting, he will be required to undergo both officer and chaplaincy training. Another in-service candidate, Joseph Hwang, was accepted by Defence late last year, and is now a student at Christ College.

In regard to recruitment, we must always look for new applicants for the permanent positions available to us, especially with the coming loss of two current chaplains. However, there is also special need for more reserve chaplains. Many reserve positions are available, and in the current climate it would be encouraging to see younger ministers prepared to take on this ministry. It opens up a new field of Christian service, and gives contact with those with whom many ministers do not normally have links. The current listing of our Presbyterian chaplains is as follows:-

Australian Army

North Queensland Region

Daniel Cassidy — Full Time
3 Engineering Regiment,
Laverack Barracks, Townsville QLD

Southern Queensland Region

Neil McKinlay
7 CSSB — Full Time
Ennoggera, Brisbane QLD
Roger Marsh
Army Aviation Regt — Full Time
Oakey QLD

Eastern Region

Martin de Pyle
Army HQ, Canberra ACT — Full Time
Bruce Hammonds
5 Engineer Regiment
Holsworthy NSW — Part Time
Andrew Robinson
Coord Chap — Full Time
Army Recruit Training Centre,
Kapooka
Ross Tucker
Defence Force Chaplains' College
Canberra ACT — Full Time
In-Service Trainee, Joseph Hwang
Christ College. Sydney NSW

Southern Region

In-Service Trainee, Josh Bouzanquet
Eltham Presbyterian Church
Trevor Cox
4 Engineering Regiment — Part Time

Kyung Rae Ee

Army School of Transport
Puckapunyal VIC — Part Time

Central Region

Chris Ten Broeke (Inactive)
3/9 SAMR
Adelaide SA

Royal Australian Navy

Miles Fagan
HMAS Cerberus — Part Time
Hastings VIC

Barry Porter
HMAS Albatross — Full Time
Nowra NSW

Richard Quadrio
HMAS Darwin (Op Manitou)— Full
Time

Max Walker

Acting Senior Chaplain Afloat
HMAS Canberra — Full Time
Sydney NSW

Royal Australian Air Force

Murray Fraser
RAAF Townsville QLD — Full Time
Garry Hooper

Senior Coord Chap — Full Time
RAAF Wagga Wagga NSW

Peter Phillips

RAAF Williams — Part Time
Laverton VIC

Peter Owen

RAAF Williams — Part Time
Laverton, VIC

The Convener, Dr Allan Harman, indicated at the last meeting of the General Assembly that he would not be seeking to continue in this position after this General Assembly. He confirmed this at the annual meeting of the Committee in February. The committee gave serious consideration to the nomination of the next convener, as, in addition to acting as the convener, the appointee will be occupying a senior role as a member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services. Hence, someone with considerable Defence chaplaincy experience and the ability to participate in decision-making at a high level, is needed. The committee decided to nominate Rev. Peter Phillips as the next convener. He was ordained in 1991, and has been a reserve chaplain at RAAF Williams (at Laverton and Pt. Cook) for 23 years, currently serving as a Chaplain (SQNLDR) there. He has served as the secretary of the GAA Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee, and is very knowledgeable about the broader aspects of chaplaincy. In addition, he has been Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, and is the present Deputy Clerk of the Assembly. In the committee's opinion he has the necessary gifts and experience to take on this significant role.

The Committee's nominations for membership for the triennium 2016-2019 are as follows:

New South Wales: Rev. Paul Harris, Garry Hooper, John Irvin, Andrew Unwin, Richard Quadrio; Dr Leon Thorpe
Queensland: Rev. John Gilmour, John Nicol, David Niven; Mr Norm Hughes
Victoria: Rev. Peter Phillips, Martin de Pyle
Convener: Rev. Peter Phillips

A.M. HARMAN, Convener.

FINANCE

Balance Sheets and Statements of Income and Expenditure

In accordance with arrangements previously approved by the Finance Committee and reported to the General Assembly, duly audited financial statements for the years ended 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015 have been submitted for inclusion in the White Book.

The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

- (1) Receive the Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- (2) Receive the Audit Reports from:
 - (a) Ernst & Young, on the accounts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
 - (b) Robert J Nixon & Associates, on the accounts of the Presbyterian Inland Mission.
- (3) Appoint the Official Auditor of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales to audit the accounts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia including the National Journal Committee from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2019.
- (4) Appoint Robert J Nixon & Associates to audit the accounts of the Presbyterian Inland Mission from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2019.

Cost of the General Assembly

The Forty-Eighth Session of the General Assembly held in Sydney in September 2013 cost \$105,913 (2010 \$91,518; 2007 \$106,424) comprising the following items:

	2013	2010	2007
Travelling Expenses, Accommodation, Meals	89,668	79,175	93,150
Honoraria to Assembly Officers	4,100	4,517	10,100
White Book/Blue Book/Other	12,145	7,826	3,174
	<u>\$105,913</u>	<u>\$91,518</u>	<u>\$106,424</u>

The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

- (5) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay the accommodation costs of Commissioners not resident in the city in which the General Assembly is held.
- (6) Request the Secretary of the Finance Committee and the Clerk of the Assembly to secure advantageous accommodation rates for lodging Commissioners during the General Assembly.
- (7) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay the accommodation costs of the Moderator, Clerks and Business Convener during the course of the General Assembly.
- (8) Approve the reimbursement of the actual expenses incurred for Commissioners travelling to the General Assembly (excluding the Presbyteries of The Central Coast, Hawkesbury, Sydney, Sydney North and Sydney South) on the following basis:
 - Commissioners who travel more than 750km - return airfares at a rate authorised by the Clerk.
 - Commissioners who travel 750km or less - return fares by train (or coach, where a train does not run).
 - Commissioners using their own car - a payment of 32 cents/km (maximum 1500 km).
- (9) Remind all Commissioners travelling by air that they should make their bookings in advance to achieve the cheapest flight possible.

Moderators Expenses and Honoraria to Officers of the General Assembly

The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

- (10) Approve payment of the following Honoraria until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise:

Clerk of Assembly	\$2,500 p.a.
Deputy Clerk	\$850 for each General Assembly
Assistance to Clerks	\$400 for each General Assembly
Business Convener	\$1,000 for each General Assembly

and authorise the Finance Committee to pay appropriate Honoraria to one or more persons acting in the positions listed above.
- (11) Approve the following provisions for the Moderator assuming office in September 2016 and for succeeding Moderators until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise:
 - (i) An allowance of up to \$52,500 to cover costs of travel, accommodation, telephone, postage, stationery and including an honorarium of \$2,500 per annum;

- (ii) An allowance sufficient to cover the cost of moderatorial dress, and;
 - (iii) Costs of pulpit supply during Moderator's absence on moderatorial duty.
- (12) Declare that when the Moderator is invited to special congregational and institutional functions the parties concerned should as a general rule meet all relevant moderatorial expenses.
- (13) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve any necessary additional expenditure in respect of the Moderator.
- (14) Increase the Moderator's allowance by CPI adjustments as at 30 September in 2017 and 2018.

PCA Website

In 2015, the Finance Committee resolved to "take steps to test the market for the cost of developing and maintaining the website of the Presbyterian Church of Australia", and to "seek expressions of interest for the position of webmaster." The Committee has not yet concluded its work in this area and recommendations are included in the Deliverance.

Expenditure by GAA

The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly:

- (15) Approve the following expenditure for the 2017-2019 triennium:

	2017	2018	2019	Triennium Total
Code Committee	1,600	1,600	1,600	4,800
Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee	1,600	1,600	1,600	4,800
Reception of Ministers Committee	3,700	3,700	3,700	11,100
Church Planting Taskforce	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Mission to Australia	3,500	3,500	3,500	10,500
Church & Nation Committee	4,200	2,500	3,100	9,800
College Committee	18,080	10,580	8,080	36,740
Presbyterian Inland Mission	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500
Relations with other Churches Committee	9,300	8,100	8,100	25,500
National Journal Committee	34,000	35,500	37,000	106,500
Total Expenses Committees	81,480	72,580	72,180	226,240
NSW Historical Records & Library (GAA Archives)	6,500	6,500	6,500	19,500
Website Maintenance	12,000	12,000	12,000	36,000
Procurator's Retainer	500	500	500	1,500
Moderator's Expenses (incl. Honoraria)	17,500	17,500	17,500	52,500
General Expenses	25,000	25,000	25,000	75,000
Office Services	11,000	11,000	11,000	33,000
Para Hills PCSA	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
500th Anniversary of the Reformation	7,000	0	0	7,000
PresAid Administration	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Assembly Costs	0	0	100,000	100,000
Honoraria	2,500	2,500	2,250	7,250
Total Expenses Other	94,000	87,000	186,750	367,750
TOTAL GAA EXPENDITURE	175,480	159,580	258,930	593,990

Notes

- i. **Relations with Other Churches, Dr Flip Buys:** The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the payment of expenses relating to the 2016 visit to Australia by the International Director of the World Reformed Fellowship, Rev. Dr Flip Buys of up to \$3,000.
- ii. **Para Hills (PCSA):** The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve continued financial support to Para Hills in South Australia of \$10,000 p.a.
- iii. **500th Anniversary of the Reformation Committee:** The Finance Committee recommends that the General Assembly approve the payment of \$7,000 to support the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation Committee for the purposes of, travel, production of a video and the printing of the book entitled "Truth Matters". Although printing and travel costs are expected to be much higher than this contribution, the expected additional costs are budgeted to be covered from sale proceeds of the book.
- iv. **PresAid Administration:** the administration costs of \$2,000 p.a. for running PresAid had been previously met through St. Kilda Presbyterian Church however this will no

longer be the case with the impending retirement of Mr. Thomas as Convener of PresAid. An allocation has been made to meet this cost accordingly.

- (16) Approve the reimbursement of travelling expenses incurred by members of committees attending committee meetings on the same basis as determined for meetings of the General Assembly of Australia with incidental expenses as determined by each committee.
- (17) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve additional expenditure that may arise, after consultation with any committee, reporting details to State Finance (or equivalent) committees.
- (18) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve payment of audit fees, office service charges and other necessary administrative expenses and include such costs with committee expenses to be recovered from State Assemblies.
- (19) Request the State Assemblies, when called upon to do so, to reimburse the Finance Committee without delay expenditure in connection with the holding of the 2016 General Assembly of Australia, the expenses of committees of the General Assembly of Australia and expenditure of the Moderator, in the proportion set out in the Finance Committee regulations.
- (20) Request the NSW Trustees to finance expenditure authorised by the Finance Committee pending reimbursement by State Finance (or equivalent) Committees.

Expressions of Appreciation

Appreciation is extended to the National Journal Committee for the regular production of the Year Book and Church Directory and to Rev. Mike Wharton for his work in maintaining the PCA Website.

Committee Membership

Rev. Stuart Bonnington resigned from the Committee as a member from the PCWA. The PCWA then nominated, as its member, the person who currently holds office as the Convener of its PCWA Finance Committee, currently Mr Chris Woonings. The casual vacancy was filled by Mr Woonings, in accordance with CP&P 9.5.

- The General Assembly, when it met in 2013, left three vacancies on the Finance Committee because it did not elect persons to those positions that are filled without reference to the state from which such members might come.
- These vacancies did not arise between meetings of the General Assembly and are thus standing vacancies rather than casual vacancies.
- While the General Assembly has prescribed regulations generally for the administration of its committees by which there is a power to fill casual vacancies, there is no power in either the general rules of committees or in the particular regulations of the Finance Committee by which the Committee may fill those standing vacancies.
- The Finance Committee nominates, for election by the General Assembly in 2016, Messrs JR Falls, RD Parker and K Turner together with the following currently elected members:

New South Wales:	Rev. Leslie Fowler, Rev. John Irvin, Mr John Rolland (Convener)
Queensland:	Mr Keith Stewart
South Australia:	Vacant
Tasmania:	Mr Graeme Roberts
Victoria:	Mr Andrew Letcher, Rev. Richard O'Brien
Western Australia:	Rev. Stuart Bonnington (Mr. Chris Woonings)
Elected by GAA:	3 Vacancies

J. ROLLAND, Convener.

MISSION TO AUSTRALIA

The Mission to Australia Special Committee was established by the General Assembly of Australia (GAA) in recognition of its responsibility for the expansion of the Church within Australia. The Assembly's responsibility for overseas mission has long been known and observed through Australian Presbyterian World Mission, but knowledge of the work within Australia was poor and partial with little communication between the state committees for home missions. Although there had been informal meetings involving conveners and directors of home missions in the eastern mainland states, there was little connection with the other states. We are pleased to report that this

problem has been addressed very helpfully, and with increasing interest and involvement as the following schedule of meeting participation demonstrates.

State	Committee	Office	Person	2014	2015	2016	
NSW	Ministry & Mission	Convener	J. Read		Y	Y	
		Superintendent	B. Meller	Y	Y	Y	
		Assoc. Super.	J. Irvin	Y	Y	Y	
QLD	Ministry Resourcing	Convener	A. Richardson	Y	Y	Y	
		Director	P. Barson	Y		Y	
SA	Now under PCQ admin. but still associated	Convener (rep.)	G. Ware	Y	Y	Y	
TAS	Church Extension	Convener	I. Partridge to 2015; then G. Roberts	Y	Y	Y	
VIC	Ministry Development	Convener	I. Hutton		Y	Y	
		Director	R. Carner (overseas in 2015-16)	Y			
WA	Theological Education	Convener	D. Thatcher to 2015; then S. Woods		Y		
GAA	PIM	Convener	R. Duncanson to 2015; then L. Fowler		Y	Y	
		Superintendent / CEO	S. Bonnington to 2015; then A. Letcher		Y	Y	
		Assembly Officer	Moderator-General	D. Cook		Y	Y
		Assembly Officer	Clerk	P. Logan to 2014; then B. Meller	Y	Y	Y
	Assembly Officer	Deputy Clerk	B. Meller to 2014; then L. Hall	Y	Y	Y	

There is now a known forum for sharing matters of concern which arise in the several states and for seeking a common understanding of the prevailing circumstances and possible responses so that overall learning is increased. Terminology differs across the States and the Committee, comprised of members from every state, has benefited from opportunities to understand the terms of choice and the reasons behind their selection. That understanding sharpens intentional thought about the optimisation of church processes and the purposes that ought most to be promoted. It also helps to ensure that persons engaged in ministry in one state are able, as far as possible, to continue their service in another state if that is desirable for them or for the congregations of the Church.

At each meeting, members of the Committee also consider reports on the work and welfare of each of the state Churches and pray for God to direct and develop his work. In each of the states there are causes for thanksgiving. But there are also causes for distress and for earnest intercession. In each of the mainland eastern states, several new churches are being planted every year and, for the most part, these new plants are prospering. Over the triennium, new churches have also been planted in Tasmania and Western Australia. But in almost every state, some existing churches have been closed in that period. There have also been occasions of intense conflict, some of which have involved the use of external mediators.

The Committee gives thanks to God that across the nation, there is a developing awareness of the need to maintain open communication and to minimise occasions of destructive conflict while harnessing for good ends the opportunities that conflict provides.

Although the Mission to Australia Committee has not had any particular involvement in South Australia, members have maintained awareness of the changes that have been effected through the partnership between the Presbyterian Church of Queensland and the Presbyterian Church of South Australia. The direct support provided by the ministry team of the Creek Road congregation to the congregation at Para Hills in Adelaide has been as exceptional as it has been helpful. Likewise, the ministry of the Rev. John Langbridge in seeking to promote the revitalisation of ministry in Adelaide through service to the congregations at North Adelaide, Norwood and Seacliff has been highly significant, holding promise of a new beginning for Presbyterian ministry in that city.

Committee members appreciate the opportunity provided by the Assembly to facilitate mutually beneficial awareness of and support for each of the state churches and thank the Assembly for providing the resources to enable such effective interchange.

BRUCE MELLER, Convener.

MODERATOR'S NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The following nominations were received from State assemblies for Moderator-General of the 2016 General Assembly of Australia:

- Rev. D.A. Burke, New South Wales
- Rev. J.P. Wilson, Victoria

Upon the names being circulated to the Moderator's Nominating Committee the Rev. J.P. Wilson received an absolute majority of votes and Mr Wilson is therefore Moderator-General Nominate of the 2016 General Assembly of Australia.

BRUCE MELLER, Convener.

MODERATOR-GENERAL'S CHURCH PLANTING TASK FORCE

The Adelaide Restoration Project

At the 2010 GAA, a report was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia outlining the desperately weak state of the South Australian Church, particularly in Adelaide. (GAA BB 2010 Min. 47). This was received as a "Macedonian" cry for help and led to the setting up of the Moderator General's Church Planting Task Force. The situation has turned out to be more desperate than any of us thought, with fewer than 100 people in Presbyterian churches in Adelaide on any given Sunday. The seriousness of the situation in South Australia has meant that the Taskforce has concentrated its efforts almost exclusively on revitalizing the church in South Australia, particularly in the city of Adelaide.

Strengthening what remains

As an immediate step to help the churches in Adelaide, assessors were appointed to the Presbytery of Torrens and money was made available to assist the Para Hills congregation to continue its support for Rev. Damien Carson as the only full time Presbyterian Minister in Adelaide.

In May 2015 Rev. John Langbridge was appointed as an Intentional Interim Minister for the purpose of stabilising the existing congregations in Adelaide, prior to church planting. John's wisdom and ministry experience is greatly needed and much appreciated.

In August 2015, as an interim arrangement, the South Australian Church came under the oversight of the Queensland Assembly. (See Appendix - "Letter of Understanding", attached to this report). This action, was taken after extensive consultation with representatives of the South Australian Assembly and members of the Queensland Assembly, particularly the Queensland Director of Ministry Resourcing and the Clerk of the Queensland Assembly. This will relieve the South Australian personnel of a very heavy administrative load which was disproportionate to the size of the Church in South Australia. Under this arrangement, the South Australian church would continue to exist as a legal entity, the Assembly would follow the normal practice of being dissolved, and would not be reconstituted until some future date. In the period between the dissolution of the South Australian Assembly and its reconstitution, the Queensland Assembly would undertake the normal Assembly work on behalf of the South Australian church with one notable exception, that matters which would directly concern the Trustees and matters of property, would be dealt with within South Australia, particularly under the guidance of the newly formed Presbytery of South Australia – an amalgamation of the former presbyteries of Torrens and Penola. The new Presbytery would have full standing as a Presbytery of the Assembly of the Queensland church.

The Moderator General's Church Planting Task Force is of the opinion that the South Australian church was in danger of total collapse in Adelaide and urgent measures such as these were necessary to make the 'building' safe for restoration. We are extremely grateful to the Queensland Assembly for their willingness to take on this role and suggest that this may be a model for church restoration in other parts of Australia where we are struggling to survive.

A Bold new plan for Adelaide

The task force recognises that "churches plant churches", not committees or denominations, so our first priority has been to locate within the PCA, an "Antioch" type church with the vision and resources to ignite a church planting movement in Adelaide. Creek Road in Brisbane has generously

agreed to take on this role for us, with Rev. Phil Strong as project manager. A bold, achievable multi-site plan for Adelaide has been adopted and agreed to by the churches in Adelaide. The long term goal is to kick off a church planting movement which will lead ultimately to a new presbytery in Adelaide. As the first phase of this project, the immediate aim is to have a central church and senior pastor based in Central Adelaide, along with northern suburbs and southern suburbs churches with campus pastors. This will make a Presbyterian church accessible from any suburb in metropolitan Adelaide.

For the plan to work effectively a single overseeing Session and Management Committee is needed to oversee and resource the new multi - site Adelaide ministry.

Damien Carson and the Para Hills church already have a vision and a passion for the Northern Suburbs. We have put our limited resources towards strengthening Damien's ministry at Para Hills and recognise him as the Campus Pastor for the Northern Suburbs. We are presently looking for a co-worker for Damien, and a suitably gifted Senior Pastor/Team Leader to head up the work of re-establishing the Church in Adelaide.

Materially, we are not well-placed to take on this challenge, but in the belief that resources follow vision, we must strive boldly. We record our gratitude for the \$10,000 that has been provided annually by the GAA Finance Committee to advance the Para Hills work. We are also grateful that the interest on the Martha Stewart estate is being made available for work in South Australia and we record our gratitude to the Trust Corporation of the Victorian church for its generous support of the work of Rev. John Langbridge.

This project is one which we would very much like the **whole denomination** to own in prayerful and financial support. To that end, we will seek the Assembly's support for a grant to produce some promotional materials to bring the project to the attention of the wider church while we persevere in prayer.

Like any major restoration project, this is slow, long term work, especially in the early phases when walls are demolished and new foundations are laid. Our hope and prayer is that Jesus will build his church in Adelaide, in his time, in his way, and to his praise and glory.

Appendix 1: Agreement between the Queensland and South Australian Assemblies

This Letter of Understanding constitutes an agreement entered into by:

The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland

and The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia

By decisions of those Assemblies dated:

25 June 2015 Queensland Assembly

7 August 2015 South Australian Assembly

Therefore since the General Assembly of South Australia was dissolved on 7 August 2015 this agreement is as follows:

The Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia agreed in principle to the proposal dated 13 July 2015 put before the Assembly by the Queensland Assembly.

1. In relation to a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia Committee proposal for the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland to enter into an interim relationship with the Presbyterian Church of South Australia affirm the following in principle processes and authorise the Commission of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland following necessary detailed arrangements and further, subject to the approval of the Finance and Administration Board, based on the availability of finance to approve any related expenditure thereto:
 - (a) Note correspondence from the Clerk of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland dated 19 February 2015 as printed in the Commission's report to the Presbyterian Church of South Australia.
 - (b) The South Australian church although continuing as a corporate entity shall dissolve its State Assembly until it is called again through provisions as determined.
 - (c) The Moderator, Clerk and Law Agent of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia shall continue as a legal entity.
 - (d) All charges shall become the Presbytery of South Australia and shall be accountable to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.
 - (e) All bodies within the South Australian church which would normally report to the General Assembly of South Australia shall report to the Queensland Assembly and

- any body which would normally report to the Presbytery shall report to the Presbytery of South Australia.
- (f) Any assessments shall be decided by the Queensland Assembly/Commission based on a recommendation of the Finance and Administration Board.
 - (g) The Clerk of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland and church liaison officer shall deal with any matters arising in relation to insurance, particularly where the Queensland Assembly may have oversight within the Presbytery of South Australia.
 - (h) Any matters of discipline or similar matters shall be dealt with on the advice of the Queensland Assembly Clerk and the South Australia Assembly Clerk.
 - (i) Any property matters dealt with under this present arrangement will be resolved in terms of the rules of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia.
 - (j) The process shall be deemed as a temporary arrangement based on 'request' and 'consent' of the relevant bodies.
2. The State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia enters into an agreement with the Presbyterian Church of Queensland based on the above documentation contained in clause 1.
 3. The following detailed ramifications arising out of the situation above are:
 - (a) That upon the South Australian Assembly being dissolved it may be reconstituted by either:
 - (i) Action of the Moderator and Clerk; or
 - (ii) A request by the Presbytery of South Australia to the Commission of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland or;
 - (iii) An action by the Commission of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.
 - (b) That in the event of the offices of Moderator, Clerk (and any other necessary office) becoming vacant this vacancy shall be filled immediately by the Commission of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland upon the recommendation of the Presbytery of South Australia.
 - (c)
 - (i) That the Presbytery Commissioners to the General Assembly of Australia shall be appointed in terms of the requirements of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
 - (ii) That the South Australian State Commissioners to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia shall be appointed in terms of General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia requirements through the Presbytery of South Australia making the appointment of the Commissioners to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
 - (d) That in terms of reporting the Dunbar Homes Committee and the Karnkendi Committee shall report through the Presbytery of South Australia to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland.
 - (e) That all other bodies within the South Australian church shall have their work carried out by the Presbyterian Church of Queensland's committees with the exception that committee/committees dealing with trust matters shall report to the Presbytery of South Australia which shall keep the Queensland Assembly acquainted with what is occurring in their areas.
 - (f) That the Assembly maintain the current method of calculating and remunerating the Stipend and Allowances of the Ministers serving in South Australia at this time until such time as they, Rev. Donald Broadwater, Rev. Damien Carson, Rev. Ian Touzel, and Rev. Gary Ware, retire from full time or part time ministry, or depart for service in another state. (Note: The current stipends are calculated based on New South Wales stipends determined for the 1 January in the current year and applied at the 1 January in the next year.)
 4. Note that before the General Assembly of South Australia was dissolved it appointed under South Australia Code Rule 5.1.19 an ordinary Commission of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia and empowered the Commission to:
 - (a) deal with all property matters in terms of the rules of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia,

- (b) deal with all matters consequent upon dissolution of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia and ceding powers to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland,
 - (c) fix the date and the place of the next General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia,
and directed the Commission to meet on 23 May 2016 according to Rule 5.1.19 and then annually thereafter until the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia is reconstituted.
5. Note the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia joined the Presbyteries of Penola and Torrens to be known as the Presbytery of South Australia at the rising of the house with Rev. John Langbridge as Moderator and Brian Johnson as Clerk to become effective and meet for the first time on Saturday, 8 August 2015 at St Andrews Para Hills at 9.30am.

Whereupon the above actions were approved separately by both General Assemblies, or by processes authorised by each or both Assemblies this Letter of Understanding is attested by the following persons as authorised by the said General Assemblies.

DAVID JONES, Moderator-General.

NATIONAL JOURNAL

Introduction

Since the 2013 GAA, the team at Australian Presbyterian has continued to produce an internationally recognised magazine marked by quality content, attractive presentation and timely delivery. Most of the team are volunteers, and all are committed to advancing the cause of the Gospel through the printed word.

Relaunch and Reach of AP Magazine

Commissioners might remember that at the start of 2012, AP Magazine moved from being a monthly, mostly-black-and-white 32-page subscription magazine (circulation 2250) to a quarterly, high-gloss 16-page (now 24-page) magazine that is free to readers, with a circulation nowadays of just under 20,000 reaching into a range of evangelical denominations throughout Australia and New Zealand. This was a result of merging the mailing lists of AP Magazine and Reformers Bookshop (to remove duplication and minimize postage costs) and piggybacking the Reformers quarterly mail-out. (Reformers is a joint-venture Presbyterian/Reformed Baptist ministry that is managed by the PCNSW).

We were able to increase advertising rates in the AP Magazine as a result of the vastly increased circulation, but still keep the rates market-competitive. (The Presbyterian Supplement has lower rates because of the smaller circulation and also to support Presbyterian advertisers). With the increasing circulation, we have had growing interest from non-Presbyterian advertisers including SMBC, Trinity Theological College, Reformation Heritage, Ligonier Ministries/Reformation Trust, Katoomba Convention, Compassion, TEAR, Barnabas Fund and AIFC.

To facilitate access into non-Presbyterian circles, the magazine was relabelled "AP" (but still with "Australian Presbyterian" in smaller print on the front cover strap line just below the masthead). The following words appear on the response form in the magazine: "AP is provided as a ministry tool through the generous support of the Presbyterian Church of Australia."

We continue to have a strong response from existing readers (who donate generously - \$8,000 in 2015) and new subscribers (many non-Presbyterians) who are keen to place copies into the hands of as many people as they can.

The magazine is mailed to over 9,000 separate addresses, eventually reaching an estimated 6,000 Presbyterian households and 12,000 other households (as well as over 200 e-subscribers). Since its relaunch, it has increased in size from 16 to 24 pages. As part of the increased reach, AP is mailed to the staff of 270 Christian mission organizations, university Christian unions (AFES, EU, CU etc.), radio stations, campsites and conference centres. It is also posted to the staff of 260 parent-controlled Christian schools and Presbyterian schools, several evangelical Anglican schools and pastors of evangelical churches in New Zealand. It is, of course, mailed to Presbyterian missionaries overseas, usually in plain envelopes. In addition, the 16-page Presbyterian Supplement accompanies AP to Presbyterian households and elsewhere as requested. The

Supplement carries the PIM and APWM newsletters, the Church Directory and articles highlighting aspects of our Presbyterian distinctive.

Thanks to the Rev. Mike Wharton, the AP website ap.org.au is now mobile-friendly (using a Joomla Epic template). It has 18 years of back issues available for browsing and download free of charge. Like the rest of the relaunched AP Magazine, it has been done as efficiently as possible and at minimal cost. The Committee also expresses its thanks to Rosie Timmins (our volunteer social media co-ordinator) for setting up and maintaining our blog site apmagonline.org and Facebook page facebook.com/apmagonline since mid-2015. As well as the opportunity to interact with readers, it has helped identify possible future contributors to the printed AP Magazine.

Titles of Interviews and Articles

We live in an era of culture wars and we are conscious that religion should be lived in the Public Square, as Christianity is civilisational as well as redemptive in its effects. At the same time, to face the world's challenges, encouragement to seek holiness, prayer and reading of the Word is critically important. Hearing of the faithfulness of the Lord in the challenges other believers face (human interest stories) also encourages us to persevere.

Since the 2013 General Assembly, the National Journal Committee has produced twelve editions of AP magazine. These twelve issues contain 12 interviews and 65 additional articles (see below), and 11 back-page articles (the *Last Post*) as well as a further 12 articles in the Presbyterian Supplement. These all total 100 interviews and articles. A variety of subjects have been covered over the past three years, ranging from human sexuality, organ donation and our perception of disability, to preaching with warmth, the persecuted church, revivals in Australian history, our prayer life, personal bible reading, Christian hospitality and a number of human interest stories (e.g. being gaoled for the sake of the unborn, dealing with chronic pain, and being freed from bondage to pornography).

Titles of interviews and articles in AP Magazine (excluding *Last Post* articles)

2013

August 2013 Interview – For life: Ethics at the beginning of life – Dr Megan Best

- The last gift: Organ donation – Drs Nalini Pather and Joanna Barlow
- Cultivating life – Bruce Coleman and Ali Maeraith
- Piercing the heart: Calvin's warm heart is on full display in his preaching – Dr Peter Moore

November 2013 Interview – Battle for the Bible – Dr Ligon Duncan

- God is able: Our perception of disability should follow God's – Rev. Jason Forbes
- Biology and sex: Myths about sexuality – Dr David Phillips
- Out of Tune: Why a debate over a hymn proves central to Christianity – Dr Gordon Coleman

2014

February 2014 Interview – By One Man: Adam was the first man, not a stepping stone – Dr Jared Hood

- A divine declaration – Dr Mark Harwood
- Same-sex debacle – Rev. Campbell Markham
- Pain's many blessings: Pain is both one of God's great gifts and a theological problem – Irene Howat.

May 2014 Interview – The Master Wordsmith: C S Lewis – Douglas Gresham

- Salvation Pty Ltd: Jesus died for the company of the elect – and only them – Rev. Bill Medley
- One by One: Helping unbelievers means being sensitive to their situations – Rev. David Burke
- The war on Christians: Persecution is worse now than any time in history – Barney Zwartz
- No way is Noah revelation: The new Hollywood blockbuster is a flood of ideological distortion – Rev. Peter Hastie
- Charismatic Chrysostom: To the great preacher, an authentic life was what shaped the words – Dr Peter Moore

August 2014 Interview – Revival: Glorious Demonstration of God's Grace and Power – Rev. Iain Murray

- Awake Indeed – Dr Stuart Piggin
- Out of Bondage: Enslaved to homosexuality and pornography, only Jesus could set me free – Name withheld
- Useful Lists: the people of God in action are the hero of Ezra-Nehemiah – Dr Greg Goswell
- Chemical reaction: Medicines from the Creator's pharmacy – Professor Phil Burcham
- Making history: The Bible's honesty makes it a model – Professor Noel Weeks
- Tell them why: We must not separate ethics from redemption – Rev. David Cook

November 2014 Interview – Moral Monster: Who is the God the Old Testament portrays? – Dr Richard Belcher

- Bound but unchained: Don't confuse biblical slavery with the American version – Dr Peter Barnes
- Lessons of holy furniture: How the Tabernacle illuminates Jesus' life and purpose – Rev. Mark Powell
- Jesus in Islam: Muslims do honour Jesus, but they do not know who He is – Samuel Green
- Unhealthy future: Are we losing the Christian concept of healthcare – Professor Phil Burcham
- Thinking God's thoughts: We have a guiding light – Dr Madeleine Turner
- The Dawkins Syndrome: The famous atheist blunders again on morality – Barney Swartz
- God's self-portrait: The 10 commandments teach us much more than how to behave – Dr Gordon Coleman
- The Spirit of Christmas: The Holy Spirit in the conception of Christ – Pastor Douglas O'Donnell

2015

February 2015 Interview – Preaching with purpose: Application is the missing element – Dr Murray Capill

- So help me, God: Preaching is too important to prepare unaided – Peter Owen
- A refreshing history: Australia has enjoyed many revivals, which should still be our prayer – Robert Evans
- A murderous toll: Christianity is about Rescue – including the unborn – Graham Preston
- Christians in the Qur'an: Muslims are usually better prepared for inter-religious discussion – Samuel Green.
- Degenerate Rules: Secular media is having a gay old time – Dr Madeleine Turner
- Mental block: Professorial infallibility and other modern fairy tales – Dr Phil Burcham

May 2015 Interview – The greatest goal: Our pursuit of holiness needs more vigour – Rev. Peter Hastie

- Wholly holy: Sanctification is our blessed freedom and duty – Dr Jared Hood
- Inexpressible joy: The departed soul goes straight to God – Jim Greenbury
- Well ruled: Who shall lead, teach and pastor the Church? – Rev. Stephen Moore.
- Children at Risk: Why the Safe Schools Coalition program is unsafe – David Sandifer
- Celebrity culture: Help, I need (to be) somebody – Dr Madeline Turner
- A very present help: They also serve who only stand and wait – Professor Douglas Milne
- Our spiritual mirror: The law shows us our stains and need for grace – Rev. Darren Middleton

August 2015 Interview – A Conventional Ministry: The gospel shapes our preaching – Rev. David Cook

- To Jew and Gentile: Acts is the greatest missionary story of all time – Rev. Andrew Stewart
- Child-safe: Godly principles for raising children – Rev. David Palmer
- God's goose: John Huss – Rev. Campbell Markham
- Domesticating sin: The moral absurdity of mainstreaming mummy porn – Dr

- Madeleine Turner
- Wedding or alarm bells: Can a Christian accept an invitation to a same sex wedding? – Rev. Ben Johnson
- When abstinence is sinful: The Bible is clear: frequent sex is a duty for both husband and wife – Rev. Darren Middleton

November 2015 Interview – I will be your God: God’s covenant the key that unlocks the Bible – Dr Guy Waters

- The eternal covenant: Like the Trinity, this vital truth is clearly implied – Rev. Darren Middleton
- Prayer and promises: God’s promises show us how to pray – Dr John McClean
- Planned profiting: Undercover videos expose abortionists selling body parts – Samantha Balmforth
- Our natural nihilism: Materialist philosophy can only breed nihilism, not cure it – Dr Phil Burcham
- The blame game: Why is it always someone else’s fault? – Dr Madeleine Turner
- A problem with purple: You can’t stop the bullying of one group by bullying another – Rev. Mark Powell

2016

February 2016 Interview – Black-market baby bodies – Dr Scott Rae

- Battling for life: Some discussions universities try to shut down. Not this time. – Rebecca Elias.
- Freedom on Trial: A view held by the majority until recently may be illegal in Tasmania – Rev. Campbell Markham
- Saved by grace: God’s grace is as amazing today as it has been through history – Andrew Zutitis
- Atheism’s family squabble: The bleaker view rings truer – Dr Phil Burcham
- Rediscovering prayer: The day that prayer began – Dr Gary Millar
- Priorities for the pressed: The daily dilemma: do I get my heart or my home in order? – Dr Madeleine Turner

May 2016 Interview - Fight the good fight: Secularists have not yet won Australia – Rev. David Cook

- Step right up: The church’s challenge goes beyond same-sex marriage – Dr Jared Hood
- Heavens above: Where did you get that idea? – Rev. Bill Medley
- A spiritual check-up: Test yourself against the lessons from Psalm 23 – Irene Howat
- A mere liaison: How abortion cost marriage its special character – Dr Phil Burcham
- Hospitable hearts: It’s not about impressing people, but following God’s example – Dr Madeleine Turner
- Rediscovering prayer: Prayer in the Old Testament – Dr Gary Millar

The titles of the 12 Supplement articles were as follows. (As can be seen, Supplement articles highlight aspects of our Presbyterian distinctive):

- August 2013: Our faithful guide, the Westminster Confession – Dr John McClean
- November 2013: The right order – Rev. Bruce Christian
- February 2014: Why baptize infants? – Rev. Chris Balzer
- May 2014: Lifting the cloud: The reformed Presbyterian faith is again flourishing in New Zealand – Pastor Geoff Macpherson
- August 2014: God’s measure: Faithfulness, not numbers, is how to judge success – Pastor Joel Radford
- November 2014: A busy Christian: the astounding life of John Hay Goodlet – Dr Paul Cooper
- February 2015: Triple treat: Have evangelicals lost sight of the Trinity? – Rev. Chris Balzer
- May 2015: Bridging the gulf (On the Holy Spirit) – Rev. Jeff Read
- August 2015: Sydney to the Bush – Rev. David Stone
- November 2015: In the beginning: How science endorses the Genesis account – Rev.

Bruce Christian

- February 2016: Comfort in pain: Adversity, like blessing, is part of God's good providence – Jim Greenbury
- May 2016: Imitating your elders – Rev. Campbell Markham

Magazine Format

We continued to seek authoritative opinion leaders as our interviewees, regardless of where they live in the world. Our editorial committee believes it important that our national magazine has links with a broader spectrum of reformed evangelical thought. We take the opportunity to interview opinion leaders either during their visits to Australia or during the travel of an NJC member overseas.

Each issue of AP Magazine features a major interview with an internationally renowned author, and the interview is usually designed to cover the basic content of the interviewee's most well-known book/s. This means readers get an insight into a major Christian book in the space of four pages in a relatively easy question-and-answer, oral style. Many readers have expressed appreciation for this format because it enables them to gain a quick understanding of important topics in a readable and oral style.

A reader survey was conducted prior to the 2013 meeting of the GAA, with the following feedback.

- Those being surveyed were each asked what AP Magazine could do better. Feedback was received that AP needed to have more pages, and the World News section needed a broader selection of items. As a result, AP increased to 24 pages in 2014, having an additional article with a public theology emphasis, a revamped World News and an expanded book review section.
- As part of the reader survey, there was a strong favourable response to the articles in general, in terms of their content and their being easy to read and theologically sound. (It should be noted that of the 100 interviews and articles published since the 2013 GAA, a couple generated a number of negative responses. The Committee has reviewed those articles and while recognizing that the topics in question will always prove controversial, accepts that those articles in their final form could have been written in a more appropriate style.)

Function Within the Church

- AP plays a vital function in the life of the church in terms of communicating ideas. The magazine's Supplement also serves as an important advertising and communication channel for Presbyterian Inland Mission and Australian Presbyterian World Mission as well as a large number of congregations in the Church Directory. It also plays a role in allowing Christian businesses and ministries to advertise their services.

These activities are all conducted in a frugal manner. The magazine does not pay the Editor, Peter Barnes; and Barney Zwartz (production editor) works for a part of his real cost. Mr Graham Wye provides graphic design for about half the normal commercial rate.

Staff

AP is reliant on the dedicated services of a team of writers who provide reliable and professional service to the magazine. Rev. Dr Peter Barnes performs the role as an unpaid Editor in addition to everything else he does for the Lord. Barney Zwartz does an excellent job as production editor. The appearance of the magazine and its overall journalistic quality reflect his skill and professionalism. During the current triennium, an increasing number of ministers have assisted with book reviews.

The content and theological thrust of our journal are often the subject of favourable comment, at home and overseas and from within and outside our denomination. With respect to the layout: our thanks go to Mr Graham Wye of Sydney Design Studios, who has been generous with his time and expertise.

We express our debt of appreciation to Messrs Mike Timmins and Walter Bruining in their respective roles as Yearbook Editor and Minute Secretary.

Role Changes

- Because of family and parish commitments, Rev. Mark Powell will not be standing for re-election at the GAA. We thank him for his faithful service to the NJC and pray that the Lord blesses him and his family in the years ahead.
- Mike Timmins retired as our Business Manager in June 2015, and Mrs Lisa Mitchell was appointed to this (part-time) role. However, because a change in family circumstances necessitated full-time employment, Lisa resigned in June 2016. Mr Gordon Fay has been

appointed as the new Business Manager, with the appointment to be ratified at the next full Committee meeting of the NJC in February 2017.

Nominations

With the exception of Mark Powell (who is retiring for the reasons given above), the NJC nominates all existing members for re-election to the NJC. The NJC also nominates Mr Michael Timmins (Victoria) to fill the vacancy created by Mark's retirement. Mr Timmins has indicated his willingness to stand for election to the NJC.

New South Wales:	Mr Duncan Parker
Queensland:	Rev. Andrew Clarke, Guido Kettmiss; Mr Neville Taylor
South Australia:	
Tasmania:	Rev. Jason Summers
Victoria:	Rev. Peter Hastie; Messrs Walter Bruining, Mike Timmins, Barney Zwartz
Western Australia:	Stuart Bonnington
Convener:	Mr Duncan Parker

R.D. PARKER, Convener.

OVERSEAS AID AND DEVELOPMENT (PresAID)

PresAID ('Presbyterians Assisting In Development') is the Aid and Development Department of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. It works in co-operation with Australian Presbyterian World Mission, and under the patronage of the Moderator General. PresAID seeks to facilitate the church in her desire to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ as 'He had compassion on them' and 'went about doing good'. It raises funds by asking all PCA congregations to donate their Christmas Day and Good Friday offerings to PresAID for two or three worthy causes selected in consultation with receiving churches and APWM, whose Director, Rev. Kevin Murray, is an active member of the PresAID Committee.

Every cent raised from these offerings is sent off to receiving churches to be used for the stated purposes on the understanding that we will follow up in due course so that we can report progress to our donors for the purpose of encouraging their ongoing Christian generosity. Since its formation by the General Assembly of Australia in 2007, PresAID has become an enhancement to both our traditional mission work and relations with sister and like-minded churches in other parts of the world.

Again, we give thanks to God for the way in which He has moved His people in our church to great generosity in seeking to assist our fellow Christians overseas to minister Christ in word and deed in the context of their endeavours to meet overwhelming need with strictly limited resources. To date (Easter 2016) some \$1,000,001,379 has been raised. A complete list of 'the story so far' is appended to this report.

All of this has been done without any cost to the General Assembly, expenses having been borne by the congregation of St Kilda and collection and disbursement of funds having been handled by the Office of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, again at no charge. For this we are most grateful, especially to Mr John Vandenberg of the PCV Office, and the Rev. John Wilson, Clerk of the PCV GA for liaison with the church office. Committee members have been active in making suggestions, and we are especially grateful to Miss Geraldine Goswell for her work as secretary and the Rev. John Wilson for overseeing the collection and disbursement of funds. We have worked in close co-operation with Rev. Kevin Murray, National Director of APWM, whose input to the committee has been most valuable in choosing the beneficiaries of each appeal. We are grateful to successive Moderators General for the wholehearted support and encouragement they have given to the committee. We especially thank the members of the many congregations throughout the church for their generous financial contributions, and the ministers who have encouraged them.

We have followed up on the projects for which funds have been dispersed and have received numerous expressions of thanks from recipients of funds, so that we are well satisfied that the funds raised have been used for the designated purposes.

We have been pleased to see kindred spirits in the denomination do similar things: ORBUS has established an orphanage in Blantyre, the Presbytery of Melbourne East has raised scholarship

money for two students from Zimbabwe to train at Chasefu Theological College in Zambia, five shipping containers of goods have been sent to Malawi, Zambia and Lokichoggio (Kenya), three congregations bought a minibus for CCAP Zambia and funded a study trip for students for the ministry to visit Malawi and Zambia. Mt Stuart congregation in Hobart has raised funds for water purification schemes in Uganda.

In all, we have to date assisted churches in 13 countries but the committee is always on the lookout for projects to assist, and appreciates receiving suggestions. We would particularly appreciate receiving suggestions for projects which would assist PCA mission partners in their respective work locations.

The Convener has advised the Committee that, with advancing years, he feels the need to retire as the Convener and as a member of the Committee, and the Committee nominates Rev. Dean Carroll, Minister of Ringwood-Heathmont (Vic) and Business Convener of the Victorian General Assembly to fill the resultant vacancy.

PresAID Record of Gifts

Date	Appeal	Received by...	Amount (\$)
Christmas 2005	Malawi Famine Relief	Malawi – CCAP synod grain for starving families	95,309
	Pakistan Cyclone Relief	Pakistan –	
Christmas 2006	Moderators Mercy Appeal for Africa	Sudan – candidates for Presbyterian ministry	21,555
		Malawi – CCAP orphan care	13,481
		Zambia – roofing churches for southern presbytery	29,776
		Zimbabwe – housing for displaced Presbyterian families	9,778
Easter 2007	Dehra Dun INDIA – orphanages	India – Bhogpur Children’s Home	3,917
		India – Hope for Children Society	3,917
Christmas 2007	Mercy Appeal	Myanmar – Evangelical Reformed Church ministry	25,671
		Bangladesh – Grace Presbyterian Church ministry	25,671
		Malawi – CCAP Mulanje Mission Hospital	25,705
Easter 2008	Mercy Appeal	Vanuatu – building projects on Tanna	14,874
		Indonesia – Elim Hospital	13,819
Christmas 2008	Mercy Appeal	Zambia – Chasefu Theological College	40,000
		Vanuatu – water reticulation project	21,000
Easter 2009	Mercy Appeal	Evangelical Pres’n Church – East Timor	8,800
		Evangelical Bible Church, Namibia – HIV/AIDS ministry	8,800
		Orbus Ministries, Malawi – orphan and vulnerable children care	8,800
Christmas 2009	Mercy Appeal	Myanmar – famine relief	22,302
		Zambia – theological education, construction of principal’s house	22,302
		IRFA, India - guest house	22,302
Easter 2010	Mercy Appeal	SEWAH, India – provision of vehicle	9,510
		Bangladesh – correspondence courses	9,510
		Vanuatu – Bible College of Southern Presbytery	9,510
Christmas 2010	Mercy Appeal	Vanuatu – Talua student accomm	22,000
		Sudan – synod ministry, esp Theological Education	22,000
		Bangladesh – Christian schools	22,000
Easter 2011	Mercy Appeal	Vanuatu – Talua student accomm	27,806
		Bangladesh – self supporting projects for	14,565

Date	Appeal	Received by...	Amount (\$)
		pastors	
Christmas 2011	Mercy Appeal	India – Dehra Dun – Hope for Children orphanage	5,000
		Zambia – Chasefu Theological College, incl sponsorship of Zimbabwe students	20,733
		Timor Leste – Bible translation	20,733
Easter 2012	Mercy Appeal	Timor Leste – church construction in Dili	40,545
Christmas 2012	Mercy Appeal	Zimbabwe – theological students Myanmar – Bible College buildings Bangladesh – publication program Zambia – church planting	48,434
Easter 2013	Mercy Appeal	Zimbabwe – Nyabira Presbyterian School Vanuatu – Presbytery Resource Centre	24,559
Christmas 2013	Mercy Appeal	Uganda – water for life project Timor Leste - EPC	52,500
Easter 2014	Mercy Appeal	Timor Leste – diaconal fund Malawi/Zimbabwe – containers India – rural church project	30,808
Christmas 2014		Vanuatu - Talua Bible College Myanmar - Bible Institute Zambia - Chasefu College Zimbabwe - students	47,920
Easter 2015		Central Africa – General Assembly CCAP Malawi – Flood & Famine relief	27,689
Christmas 2015		Farm water project at Santo Bush Mission, Vanuatu – fund in full (\$10,000). Ablution block at Meekathara Community Centre, WA – fund in full (\$15,000). Completion of St Peter's Prayer House, Kabwata, Zambia – fund in full (\$9,000). Establishment of children's village, Uganda – remainder of funds raised	73,774
Easter 2016		Malawi CCAP Prison Ministry and Dehra Dun (India) for student scholarships.	39,341
		Total:	\$1,006,716

C.R. THOMAS, Convener.

PRESBYTERIAN INLAND MISSION

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

The PIM is seeking to reach out into the remote and isolated parts of Australia with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In doing so we are seeking to fulfil our mandate from the GAA in the two essential areas of evangelism and edification (discipleship) with those with whom our teams come into contact.

In the field

Our teams continue to work in many places throughout this great land. Please continue to give your support to these teams through your prayers and practical means as each day brings a variety of blessing and challenges to them as they seek to share their hope in King Jesus.

We praise God that there has been some stability in our teams during the previous three years. Mr Bert and Mrs Penny Pierce have retired after many years of service. Mr Chris and Mrs Sandra Woonings have resigned (effective in September 2016) in order to serve the Lord in another area of ministry.

At the same time we have welcomed into our teams Mr Surendra and Mrs Ma'yan Wesley who have taken over the Mid-West (WA) patrol and mission church in Mt Magnet. Mr Colin and Mrs Alison Morrow have also joined us and are ministering in Mildura as well as patrolling in the Mungo Patrol.

As you can see from the following list our teams are scattered throughout the land but we also have many vacant patrols and we are actively seeking workers for these places.

WESTERN AUSTRALIA

Southern Patrol (full time)	Vacant
Mid-West Patrol (full time)	Mr Surendra and Mrs Ma'yan Wesley
North West Patrol (full time)	Vacant
Kimberly Patrol (part time)	Vacant

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

John Flynn SA Patrol (full time)	Mr David and Mrs Gai McDonald
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TASMANIA

Regional Ministry (part time)	Vacant
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NEW SOUTH WALES

Darling Patrol (full time)	Vacant
Mungo Patrol (part time)	Mr Colin and Mrs Alison Morrow

QUEENSLAND

North Patrol (full time)	Mr Roger and Mrs Margaret Crane
Central Patrol (full time)	Vacant
South Patrol (full time)	Mr Greg and Mrs Janet Cripps
Leichardt Patrol (part time)	Rev. Laurie and Mrs Gwen Peake

NORTHERN TERRITORY

North Patrol (part time)	Vacant
Central Patrol (part time)	Vacant
Darwin Mission Work	Rev. Rob and Mrs Jeanette Duncanson
Alice Springs Mission Work	Rev. Keith and Mrs Jenny Bell

In the new year we will see more changes as the McDonalds relocate to the Darling patrol in NSW and the Cranes retire from North Queensland.

Support from the church

The ministry of PIM could not continue without the ongoing support of the whole church. We are grateful for this support and look forward to this wonderful relationship continuing. Our teams gratefully rejoice in the support they receive financially, practically and most importantly through prayer.

The support received from the women's organisations of the church is so generous and fully appreciated by all of our teams.

Finance

The ongoing financial support of the whole church is earnestly sought.

The Committee through the CEO and the Office Manager keeps a close watch over the liquidity of PIM. Part of this process is that the Committee continues to watch over costs. We continue to ask our incoming teams to assist by raising support for themselves throughout their time with PIM. We are also blessed by some teams working as volunteers, with PIM covering their patrol expenses.

These arrangements continue to work well.

Publicity

Through various means the Committee continues to raise the profile of PIM.

Promotional activities include Christmas Cards, Dollars for Diesel, Deputation, and the production of various brochures. There is also "On Track" and articles in the various State church publications.

We encourage people to keep up to date with the ministry of PIM by visiting our web site at www.pim.org.au or via our Facebook page. Our website carries up to date reports from our teams as well as other important information.

Committee

At this time we would thank all of the members of the Committee for their involvement and support of the work of PIM.

During the previous triennium we received the resignations from the Committee of Rev. Ian Partridge and Rev. Rob Duncanson. We thank both members for their support for the work of PIM. More will be said later in the report on the work of Rev. Rob Duncanson as Convener over many years.

The following members of the PIM Committee have indicated their willingness to serve a further term and will be nominated to the GAA accordingly.

NSW	Rev. D. Bullen, Rev. L.G. Fowler; Mrs E. Mill
QLD	Rev. P. Barber; Mrs H. Ross
VIC	Rev. M. dePyle; Mr D. Wright
SA	Rev. A. Clarkson
WA	Rev. R. Fraser
TAS	Vacant
CONVENER	Rev. L.G. Fowler

Restructuring of PIM

In the previous three years it became obvious to the Committee that with the rapid changes happening with regulations and governance requirements there was a need to ensure that we met our commitments as required. The executive spent time in discussion with the Trustees seeking their professional advice into this whole issue as well as considering financial advice given the financial crisis in that time.

PIM is operating in a rapidly changing world with issues of governance, regulatory requirements and compliance that are particularly important as we employ staff and operate in every state in Australia with their varying rules and regulations.

In consultation with the Trustees the Committee recognised that a full time CEO would be of great benefit to PIM. The search began for the right person to fulfil the role of CEO to help PIM get on top of all of this and keep up to date. The incoming CEO would also bring experience in the business world and especially have Christian business experience.

Following due process and with great assistance from Mr Wayne Richards who was part of the interview committee the search was completed with the appointment of Mr Andrew Letcher as CEO for PIM. Andrew commenced his employment on 1 June 2015 and his contribution to the work of PIM is greatly appreciated.

To enable these changes to take place smoothly Rev. Stuart Bonnington, who was serving as the Superintendent, graciously stepped down from his position after many years of faithful service to PIM and our workers. In the changeover period from Stuart to Andrew we must note the great support provided by Stuart to Andrew enabling a smooth transition.

A minute of appreciation to Stuart is included in the deliverance.

Another part of the restructuring of PIM was that Rev. Rob Duncanson resigned as the Convener of PIM to concentrate more on his ministry in Darwin. Rob Duncanson has faithfully served the committee as Convener for many years. He has been involved in the movement of PIM into establishing mission church ministry and saw the committee through many other exciting times.

This change took effect after the appointment of Andrew Letcher as CEO to enable a smooth transition. The committee appointed Rev. Les Fowler as the Acting Convener until the 2016 GAA.

A minute of appreciation to Rob is included in the deliverance.

One of the key components of the work of the CEO is to ensure that PIM meets all of our obligations in the complex world of business, administration and employment regulations.

These areas include governance, compliance, and practice and procedures. Already the Committee has approved one document "PIM Personnel, Policies, Procedures and Process".

The hope is that gradually most of the day to day operations will be handled by the CEO with him reporting to the monthly executive meetings. The CEO is the link between all of our workers and the Committee. This set up will enable the Committee to focus more on the big picture of the whole ministry of PIM especially in the area of strategic planning.

In that area the executive of the Committee has already spent 3 days together looking into the future direction of PIM always under God's guiding hand.

This is still very much a work in progress at the moment but it revolves around how PIM can remain relevant and reach out more effectively to the people in the inland of Australia. One factor that does influence this plan is the reality that the inland is expanding with so many small rural towns losing people. Many of these towns are also losing any form of Christian ministry which makes the ministry of PIM more important.

The executive committee would greatly value your prayer support as these things develop and are shared with the full committee for their consideration.

Conclusion

The Lord continues to raise up workers for the harvest field including ministry with PIM and

we thank him for that provision. Through recent advertisements the Committee is actively seeking to fill some of the vacant patrols. If you know of anyone who might be looking for ways to serve the Lord please ask them to consider PIM and to contact the CEO in the first instance.

PIM continues with the wonderful and exciting ministry that God has given to it. As a church we continue to have a wonderful opportunity to reach out into the rural and remote parts of this great land.

Please continue to pray for the ministry of PIM as we seek to evangelise and edify people in the remote and isolated parts of Australia.

L.G. FOWLER, Convener.
A. LETCHER, Chief Executive Officer.

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

Federal PWA Executive: The current Federal PWA Executive from New South Wales was appointed at the Federal Conference held on 9th September, 2013 at Scots Presbyterian Church Sydney. The members appointed to the Federal PWA Executive were Mrs. Evelyn Mill, President; Mrs. Barbara Bullen, Senior Vice-President; Miss Patricia Watts, Secretary; Mrs. Sylvia Johnson, Treasurer; and Committee Members, Mrs. Roslyn Abbey, Miss Nancye Harris and Mrs. Joan Thuaux. Our Federal President, Mrs. Evelyn Mill travelled to Western Australia in March 2015 to attend their annual Conference. Evelyn has a dual role as Home Mission and Church Extension Convener and in that capacity presented the work of the PWA to country and city PWA branches throughout New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory. The Federal Committee express our appreciation to Mrs. Evelyn Mill for her commitment to the PWA at Federal and State Level.

P.W.A. New South Wales Unit: In March, 2014 we celebrated 50 years of PWA in NSW with a Special Thanksgiving Service at Scots Church Sydney. SPAN magazine (Service, Prayer and News) is printed and distributed quarterly and is a wonderful outreach to PWA branches in country and metropolitan regions of the state bringing news and interesting articles for members. The Home Mission and Church Extension Committee's annual Ceilidhs are held in May each year and over the last three years have travelled to Dubbo, Young and Taree. P.W.M.U. supports missionaries throughout the world. Dorcas provides wonderful assistance to Allowah Children's Hospital and continues to provide sandwiches, socks and hankies to the homeless in Belmore Park and Matthew Talbot Hostel. Christian Education aims to promote the teaching of Christian faith in various ways such as the distribution of teaching material (Letterbox Lessons) to small Sunday Schools and producing the booklet 'Opening Devotions' each year.

Sylvia Johnson, State Secretary PWA of A (NSW Unit).

P.W.A. Queensland Unit: The P.W.A. of A (Queensland Unit) thanks God for His blessings to us. Our members remain faithful to their calling to be in our Lord's Service. We commence each year with the Annual Dedication and Communion Service except this year when this Service preceded our State Conference. PA Rallies were held as well as monthly branch meetings. The ladies enjoy the Annual Camp at Tinaroo organized by Far North PA. Our State Council meets on the fourth Thursday of each month – February to November.

Beth Knowles, State Secretary PWA of A (Qld Unit).

P.W.A. South Australia Unit: The State Council of the PWA in south Australia meets three times a year, holding an Annual General Meeting and Thanksgiving Service in May. Our last 'State Conference' was held in 2014 due to declining numbers over recent years. In 2015 we organised a Thanksgiving Service in the morning, followed by an AGM in the afternoon. That format worked well for our small Committee which is planning to follow that procedure in the future. The PWMU Committee was disbanded in November, 2013, however we continue to support Missions. Newsletters are distributed twice a year with each branch contributing reports.

Julie McLean, State Secretary PWA of A (S.A. Unit).

P.W.A. Tasmania Unit: A letter was received from the P.W.A. Tasmania State Secretary, Miss Muriel Bissett, on 17th January 2014, advising that at the close of the State Conference to be

held on 14th May 2014, the unit would be going into recess with two ladies nominated to be Liaison Officers, Miss Norah Gibson and Mrs. Gillian Roberts, reporting to the Federal PWA Executive in New South Wales. A letter was received on 11th November 2015 from Norah Gibson advising that 'our groups are happy to simply operate in their own congregation with the occasional statewide activity. They have expressed no desire to participate on a national level. Therefore, we wish to resign from the position of Liaison Officers'. It is with regret that Tasmania is no longer involved with the PWA at the Federal level.

Report prepared by Federal PWA Secretary, Patricia Watts.

P.W.A. Western Australia Unit: After three years holding Federal Office we settled down to normal events. Our yearly membership has remained at nearly 50. Mrs. Julie White has been our President for the last three years doing an excellent job and our State Executive now has some new members. We have held three "Times of Encouragement" each over a weekend, with 2014 and 2016 being in Albany and Perth in 2015 with Federal President Evelyn Mill. Several PWA's held "At Homes" with varied and interesting speakers. Also there were yearly AGM's and twice yearly General Meetings with Speakers. Support has been given to our WA PIM's and other missionaries.

Joy Parnell, State Secretary PWA of A (W.A. Unit).

PATRICIA WATTS, Federal PWA Secretary.

PUBLIC WORSHIP AND AIDS TO DEVOTION

Since the last meeting of the Assembly the PWAD Committee has undergone some functional changes with members taking up portfolios in which they will concentrate their efforts. We decided to group them as follows:

- Music Development
- Websites
- Publications
- Communications & Publicity
- Secretary
- Treasurer

This format seems to be working very well and we have been able to bring about projects and efforts from them over the last three years.

Worship Statement

Several years ago, the GAA asked the PWAD Committee for a working definition of Reformed Worship that would be easily understood by elders and worship leaders conducting services in our congregations. As the Committee tackled this request, it produced a rather lengthy study paper of some 27 pages. There was wide consultation of this initial study paper among the PCA's academics and scholars, ex-moderators, and ministers as to the content and style. The Committee reviewed and included several submissions to get the document where it is today. It is located on the PWAD website for your consideration at: <http://pwad.org.au/index.php/what-is-worship/a-study-paper-on-worship>

However, we still needed to reduce the larger document to a summary. That summary is now appended to this report. It is designed to be easily copied and given to service leaders for them to refer to when preparing a service. It fits onto one page, front and back and is easily read and understood. The summary is dealt with further in the Public Worship & Aids to Devotion Committee's study paper provided on our website at the link above.

You will also find elsewhere on our website, templates for orders of worship and examples of the Scriptural references to the components for worship.

Projects We've Committed To

Video-casting of worship services from selected base churches using peer-worship software to be viewed with smaller congregations that are either church plants or rural parishes with limited resources.

This will fit a number of scenarios:

- distant churches hooking up to a host church with no other close connection
- parish ministry with a main church and several other preaching points or congregations

- churches wishing to explore church planting in a collegiate-satellite model.

We are exploring Teamview Software which is a popular and an industry used program. Compatible hardware would need to be bundled with it to deal with it in every location. We would expect that this would have to be Project Managed for at least a term. It would need to be a user pays operation with some subsidies as needed. This would all be field tested over a trial period with variety of scenarios. Host churches could be varied in the "kind" of worship they do (Traditional with hymns or organ; Contemporary with band; Even music mix; Ethnic mix; Sudanese, Korean, Chinese etc.). Publicity will be needed at state assembly and presbytery levels with the involvements of directors of home mission and equivalents helping to roll it out. Technical response initiatives and upgrading would have to be planned and rolled out.

Children's Devotional Material Rev. Stuart Andrews reported on the material previously circulated to the Committee regarding a four year Bible reading programme for children and families called "*Who's Who In The Bible*", written by Mrs Marion Andrews. This is now available on the PWAD Website.

The PWAD Website has had an overhaul which has seen the introduction of several new features and contributions, most notably help for worship leaders and elders looking to create worship services.

Rejoice! Hymnbase Plus online has had major upgrades with downloadable music scores, music sampling and PowerPoint slides added. We are grateful for the services of Rev. Michael Wharton for the many hours he has put into this effort. About a quarter of the original Rejoice! Hymnal lack present copyright authority and is not available to be published online. The Committee is presently considering the costs of further pursuit of them.

Short Course in Sermon Construction for Lay Preachers The Committee has developed a short series of online videos to be produced for the purpose of training lay preachers in constructing a sermon or bible talk. They will be short segments covering the component parts of a good sermon. These should be up by the end of 2016.

Future Projects in Planning Stages

The use of smartphone and notepad apps is being investigated for such resources as the Rejoice! Hymnbase and our own PWAD websites with a view to making them available either to selected clientele or more generally in Australia and overseas according to our needs, taking into account legal issues, duty of care and other restraints. The Committee has approved the expenditure of up to \$1,000.00 on the production of an app for access to *Worship* which we will trial when it has been completed.

Expansion of our website library of material in the areas of public worship and aids to devotion, bible studies, training material (e.g. for lay preachers, Bible reading in worship and other ministries, Scripture or children's work course material, devotional material, etc.) is ongoing and with the new website, will be increasing.

Marketing our resources at state assemblies We are seeking a way to make USB sticks available at State Assemblies as well as at the General Assembly of Australia to promote some of our website materials to commissioners.

Seeking web-links between congregational websites and the PWAD website. We hope to do this by an annual letter to all congregations in the PCA's database.

Baptism Vows in Worship: We have noted that there are variant forms of vows for parents seeking infant/Covenant Baptism for their children in the Worship Book. It was determined that the Publications Sub-committee will review the Baptism section of Worship for any needed changes.

Anticipation of Federal changes to the Marriage Act If the future federal government changes the Marriage Act and the GAA responds in ways yet to be determined, we will no doubt have to revisit our Worship Book to make any necessary changes.

Committee Membership is as follows:

NSW (5):	Rev. Stuart Andrews, Andrew Unwin, Joy Bartholomew, David Seaman; Dr Michael Whitelaw
QLD (3):	Prof Judith Brown, Rev. Scott Kroeger (Convener)
SA (1):	Rev. Gary Ware
TAS (1):	
VIC (3):	Rev. Michael Wharton, Matthew James, Luke Isham
WA (1):	

[The Committee Co-opts Mrs Marion Andrews for the Publications sub-committee.]

Appendix: A Short Paper on Public Worship

Biblical & Confessional: The Holy Scriptures are the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and as such, the principles of public worship must be derived from the Bible, and from no other source. We must not take on worship practices that have originated from cultural influences.

Principles and Components: It is God who determines how it is that His people worship Him. We are not to deviate from the Scriptural commands concerning the principles and components of His worship. In any worship liturgy, we are not to introduce new and different components of worship not commanded by God. This is commonly called the Regulative Principle of Worship: “See that you do all I command you; do not add to it or take away from it.” (*Deuteronomy 12:32 NIV*)

However, we must distinguish between God’s commands in the components of worship, and the ways and means by which we accomplish them. We must not take on worship principles or components that have not originated from Scripture. We must seek to employ biblical worship principles within our respective cultures. The style of worship of God may differ from culture to culture and from congregation to congregation in terms of expression and creativity, and yet still comprise the same God-ordained components of worship.

Application in Our Culture: The Lord Jesus Christ has prescribed no fixed forms for public worship but, in the interest of life and power in worship, He has given His Church a large measure of liberty in this matter. However, we must not forget that there is true liberty only where the Spirit of the Lord is and the rules of God’s Word are observed and obeyed. We are reminded that all things must be done decently and in order and that God’s people should serve Him with holy reverence. From its beginning to its end a service of public worship should be characterized by that simplicity which is an evidence of sincerity and by that beauty and dignity which are a manifestation of holiness. Orders of worship should be carefully planned and thought through in their preparation and participants trained and practiced in presentation of the orderly worship of God.

For example, one congregation may choose to use an organ to accompany congregational singing, while another might choose to use a contemporary band. The former may choose to use a hymnbook, the latter using contemporary music displayed through projection devices. Some churches may use choirs to lead the singing, while others may use song leaders. One might have the choir sing a Scriptural call to worship, while others might just read a passage from Scripture. A church may choose to use a responsive reading for their confession of sin, while another church has a time of silence before the minister leads the congregation in corporate prayer. All of these ways of expression are appropriate before the Lord when done with genuine service and worship of the heart, be it a cathedral or school hall...but the components of worship never change and are always included in some way.

The Lord’s Supper and baptisms are components that are occasional by nature.

Guidelines for Corporate Worship: The Bible teaches that the following are proper components of a worship service:

1. Call of God to come and worship(Psalms 100:1–5; John 4:23-24)
2. Confession of sin(Psalm 51; Luke 18:13)
3. Assurance of faith and forgiveness (Hebrews 10:19–22)
4. Reading of Holy Scripture(1 Timothy 4:13; Revelation 1:3)
5. Singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs(Colossians 3:16)
6. The offering of prayer (1 Timothy 2:1–2)
7. The preaching of the Word (2 Timothy 4:2)
8. The presentation of tithes and offerings(1 Chronicles 16:29; Mark 12:41-44)
9. Confessing the faith (Romans 10:9–10 NIV)
10. Observing the Sacraments (Acts 2:38–39; Matthew 28:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–26)
11. On special occasions taking oaths and vowsNumbers 30:2; Matthew 5:33-37)
12. The charge to the congregation (Joshua 24:14–15; 1 Timothy 5:21; Hebrews 10:24-25)
13. God’s blessing on His people(Number 6:24-26; 2 Corinthians 13:14)
14. Worshipping God in communal fellowship (Nehemiah 8:12; Acts 2:42–47)

C. SCOTT KROEGER, Convener.

RECEPTION OF MINISTERS

The Reception of Ministers Committee meets annually during the first week of February,

together with other Standing Committees. The Committee continues to deal with numbers of applicants as the Report below indicates. The members of the Committee are committed to the task which the Assembly has entrusted to them, and as the Convener, I am very grateful for their support and willingness to process the applications and to deal with, and discuss, other matters of relevance.

Farewells And Welcomes

Since the last meeting of the General Assembly, we have thanked and farewelled the following Committee members:

- Rev. David Jones (Moderator General 2010-2013)
- Rev. Paul Bloomfield (Western Australia)
- Mr David Turner (Tasmania)

The Committee recognized that Messrs Turner and Bloomfield had served the Committee well over a number of years. Their contributions were certainly valued and on behalf of the General Assembly, the Committee thanked them sincerely for serving the Lord through this Committee.

We welcomed as new members to the Committee:

- Rev. Jason Summers (Launceston, Tas)
- Dr Michael Whitelaw (Wagga Wagga, NSW)
- Rev. Dr Gary Millar (Principal, Queensland Theological College)

The Committee has also appreciated the contributions of these new members.

Applications

The Committee has dealt with many applications. The Convener has also dealt with a number of inquiries which have not resulted in applications being forwarded.

Applicants who have signed the Formula: The following ministers have completed all requirements and have signed the Formula (date shows when Formula was signed):

1. Rev. Dr Gary Millar*	Presbytery of Brisbane	22/11/2013
2. Rev. Michael Boyd*	Presbytery of Northern Rivers	04/12/2013
3. Rev. Nasif Kalada*	Presbytery of Hawkesbury	04/12/2013
4. Rev. Tim Kie-sun Lee*	Presbytery of Hawkesbury	04/12/2013
5. Rev. David Els*	Presbytery of the Riverina	20/02/2014
6. Rev. Isaac Hwan Jung*	Presbytery of Sydney/Illawarra	01/04/2014
7. Rev. Bruce Dixson*	Presbytery of Brisbane	15/05/2014
8. Rev. Luke Isham*	Presbytery of Ballarat	15/01/2015
9. Rev. Shawn Newsome	Presbytery of Western Australia	30/12/2014
10. Rev. Ian Spence*	Presbytery of Mowbray	03/02/2015
11. Rev. Peter Min*	Presbytery of Mowbray	07/06/2015
12. Rev. Risati Palemene	Presbytery of Melbourne North	19/04/2016
13. Rev. Rod Thompson	Presbytery of Hawkesbury	04/05/2016
14. Rev. Ben Wingard	Presbytery of Western Australia	19/02/2016

Applications withdrawn, not recommended or lapsed: The following applications, have been withdrawn, rejected or have lapsed (date relates to presbytery's approval of application):

1. Rev. Joung Yeol Kim*	Presbytery of Sydney	(2008)
	Study not completed and no contact.	
2. Rev. Andrew Morris	Presbytery of North Qld	03/09/2013
	Interviewed by Full Committee in 2014 and not recommended.	
3. Rev. Dr David William Kim	Presbytery of Brisbane	(2014)
	Never pursued the application	
4. Rev. Duncan Robinson	Presbytery of Sydney North	21/02/2014
	Transition and logistics were not going to work for him.	
5. Rev. Michael Lee*	Presbytery of Melbourne East	19/12/2012
	Felt the study load was too great.	
6. Rev. Manni Pillay*	Presbytery of Brisbane	29/11/2012
	Felt the study required was too great and withdrew his application	
7. Rev. Joosuk Lee*	Presbytery of Sydney North	19/10/2012
	Study not completed and no contact	
8. Rev. Kamran Nazir*	Presbytery of Melbourne North	22/05/2013

Resigned from charge and withdrew his application.

[* Came before the 2013 or an earlier Assembly]

Studies not completed therefore the Formula not signed and recommended to be received when all the due processes have been completed: (see confidential white paper) - (date relates to presbytery's approval of application):

1. Rev. Kim Jaeger	Presbytery of Brisbane	06/01/2015
2. Rev. Sam Chidamber	Presbytery of Brisbane	02/06/2015
3. Rev. Joshua Swarts	Presbytery of Mowbray	08/10/2014
4. Rev. Stephen Desilva*	Presbytery of West Australia	03/09/2011
5. Rev. Gordon Peden	Presbytery of Hunter	12/12/2012
6. Rev. David Whittingham	Presbytery of Central Tablelands	22/08/2014
7. Rev. Seong Mo Byun	Presbytery of Western Australia	10/09/2015

[* Approved by the GAA in 2013 or earlier.]

Applications under consideration – received but interviewing process not completed, no decision by the Committee made as yet and no study set. The Committee recommends that the decision on whether or not to receive the Candidate into the Presbyterian Church of Australia, be left to the Committee to make, after it finalizes the interviewing and grading process:

1. Rev. Douglas Campbell	Presbytery of Melbourne East	22/04/2015
2. Rev. Brett Peatman	Presbytery of Flinders	01/09/2015
3. Rev. Nathan Holloway	Presbytery of Western Australia	10/09/2015
4. Rev. Karam Kravayem	Presbytery of Melbourne East	29/02/2016
5. Rev. Morimoto Minoru	Presbytery of Western Australia	10/09/2015

Presbytery help sought

To avoid unnecessary delays in the processing of applications and to ensure that Presbyteries fulfil their responsibilities, the Committee again requests Presbyteries to:

- a. obtain a recent Certificate of Status and Academic Transcripts of tertiary study completed by applicants, attaching them to the Application Form, and then forwarding these on to the Committee.
- b. consider carefully such Certificates of Status (or the absence of them) when they process applications, and to contact referees.
- c. ensure that the Applicant signs and returns the Duty of Care Statement, and also obtains the following:
 1. Australian Federal Police clearance check.
 2. A Police Clearance from their country of origin if applicable.
 3. A Working with Children Clearance.
- d. ensure that applicants from overseas secure either Australian citizenship or permanent residence status, or can show that the application for permanent residency is well under way.
- e. fulfil their duty in assessing the theological, spiritual, practical and moral suitability of applicants for the ministry within the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Duty of Care

Members of the Assembly can be assured that the Committee takes its Duty of Care very seriously, and in line with the 2007 Assembly decision, the following are required from all applicants:

- An Australian Federal Police clearance, and
- The signing of the Duty of Care Statement.
- A Police Clearance from their country of origin if applicable.
- A Working with Children Clearance.

“Fall Away” rate of Applicants and Regulation Clause 5

Commissioners will recall that this Committee successfully recommended that Clause 5 of its regulations be changed to include the Clause 5(a) as follows: “already be committed to an appointment or to a call in the Presbyterian Church of Australia.” The Committee wishes to report that this additional requirement is serving its purpose. For example, out of 12 inquiries over the past 12 months (in addition to the 6 applications received and being processed), only one applied and was successfully received into the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Previously many more would have applied and been processed, and then did not proceed with their application.

Applicants and Regulation Clause 9

Commissioners will recall that the Committee successfully recommended the addition of

certain words to Regulation Clause 9, and this has certainly ensured that the applicant completes a course of theological training equivalent to the standard set by the College Committee of the Church.

Regulation Clause 17 and 18

Commissioners will recall that the Committee successfully recommended the re-wording of Clauses 17 and 18, and the Committee can report that this has clarified the Conditions required before signing the Formula. Applicants are now left in no doubt as to what is required of them before being able to sign the Formula.

Questions asked of Applicants to be received into the Presbyterian Church of Australia

At its 2014 meeting, the Committee formed a Sub-Committee to review the questions to be asked of Applicants wishing to enter the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The Sub-Committee presented its Report at the Committee's 2015 meeting, and an expanded and revised template of suggested questions was approved by the Committee to further ensure that the only applicants to be recommended by the Committee for approval are theologically and pastorally attuned to the beliefs and practices of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Change in Religious Visa Conditions

The immigration law in regards to Religious Visa conditions was changed from 1st July 2015, making it harder for ethnic congregations to invite future ministers. This means that until an overseas minister has a firm Call to a Congregation, his stay in Australia will be very limited. This creates problems when these Ministers wish to be preach for a Call, and for the Presbyteries and Reception of Ministers Committee to do interviews in order to determine their suitability to be received into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. The Committee is currently working through a process which would enable the interviews to be carried out without the Applicant having the extra expense for additional visits to Australia.

The Adaptation of Overseas Ministers to Australian Culture

The Presbyterian Church in Western Australia will be trialling a workshop later this year for ministers and elders on the topic, "What it means to be a Presbyterian in Australia". The workshop will cover not only polity, but also local customs and traditions. A report will be given to the Committee's 2017 meeting, and it is planned that the workshop (with any necessary modifications) will be offered to other States.

Nominations for the Committee

The Committee, following the schema set down in the regulations, nominates to the Assembly the following, bearing in mind that the Assembly officers, the Principals of the three recognized Theological Halls and the Convener of the College Committee are ex-officio members:-

NSW	Rev. Moses Hahn, NSW, Dr Ian Smith; Mr Ji Won "Jim" Park
QLD	Rev. Guido Kettniss; Mr Neville Taylor
S.A.	Rev. Allan Clarkson
TAS	Rev. Jason Summers
VIC	Rev. Chris Siriweera
W.A.	Mr Bill McRae
Convener	Rev. Guido Kettniss

GUIDO KETTNISS, Convener.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES

Introduction

Our Committee is preparing this report to the forty-ninth Assembly of the PCA with thanks to the church, and to our God for the grand opportunities of Kingdom service entrusted to us. Thank you.

You would be aware that the functions of the RWOC are as follows, to:

- (a) initiate and maintain relationships with appropriate ecumenical bodies and recommend to the Assembly membership in such bodies;
- (b) arrange for appropriate representation at conferences and councils of such bodies within the restraints applied by the Assembly;
- (c) transmit study documents and resolutions of such bodies to relevant Assembly and State Committees and to make submissions thereon to such bodies;

- (d) foster relationships with other Presbyterian and Reformed Churches throughout the world;
- (e) advise the Assembly on relations with other Churches within Australia on a national level; and
- (f) deal with other matters referred to the Committee by the Assembly.

Our report will attempt to demonstrate the ways in which we have followed through on the opportunities and responsibilities entrusted to us.

Attendees at PCA's General Assemblies

At the last meeting of the GAA under the good leadership of Moderator Rt Rev. David Cook, we were able to participate in both introducing and welcoming these overseas attendees:

Dr Flip Buys (South Africa) of World Reformed Fellowship; Pasta Kalorongo Ova, Moderator of the PC Vanuatu (his wife and two other ladies from PWMU Vanuatu); Dr Donald Watts (and Fiona), Clerk of the PC Ireland; Rev. Dan Iverson III, PC in America - MTW Team Leader in the PC Japan together with Rev. John Evans PC Australia missionary and Rev. Daisuke Kimura from the PC Japan; Rev. Greg McPherson, Grace PC NZ; and of course the Assembly Expositor, Dr Ligon Duncan, President of the Reformed Theological Seminary Jackson Mississippi.

This begins to practically demonstrate what we are concerned with as a GAA committee: Relations With Other Churches.

In cooperation with the APWM, we have recommended that representatives from local denominations be invited to attend. But also, our proposal to the Business Committee for this meeting of the GAA is that the following representatives from overseas churches be invited to attend this Assembly:

Moderator, General Assembly, Grace Presbyterian Church, New Zealand

Moderator, General Assembly, Free Church of Scotland

Moderator, General Assembly, Free Church of Scotland, Continuing

Moderator, General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Moderator, General Assembly, Presbyterian Church in America

Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Japan;

Ps Roy Yosef, Secretary of Mission, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu

Rev. Dr Thang Bwee, Moderator of the Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar

Rev. Colin M'bawa, General Secretary of the General Synod of the Church of Central Africa

Presbyterian

Ways in which we have engaged with Other Churches in Australia

a. Soon after the 2013 General Assembly, our Moderator General, the Right Rev. David Cook announced that he and others would be conducting "Revitalising Preaching" conferences in several Australian States.

Your RWOC committee worked with the Moderator General in encouraging members of the Presbyterian Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, the Westminster Presbyterian Church and the Christian Reformed Churches to attend, and indeed representatives of those churches did participate.

b. In 2014, the RWOC Committee Convener; the Rev. Kevin Murray (APWM); Elder Ken Stephenson, the PRC Ecumenical Relations Committee Convener; together with other members of PCA and PRC, met together at Christ College to consider how we might better cooperate in ministry in Myanmar.

c. During his term as Moderator General, by invitation from Bull Creek Westminster Presbyterian Church WA, Rev. David Cook spent good time in ministry and engagement with them, thus furthering the fraternal relationships with that large congregation, and in so doing, was following in the footsteps of other PCA officers and local Presbyterians who have enjoyed ministering among these folk.

d. In respect to the proposed visit to Australia of the International Director of the WRF in September 2016, there has been considerable correspondence with denominations "of like mind" to the PCA, and where possible representatives of these denominations will participate in ministries of the WRF and associated discussions.

What individual members of the RWOC committee have been doing in engaging with overseas churches:-

Dr John McClean spent a month teaching at the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Dehra Dun in India (the only conservative Reformed seminary teaching at degree level and above in India).

During the time he was there he visited several Reformed Presbyterian Church of India congregations.

Also while attending the Evangelical Theological Society conference, John visited Robert and Helen Ferguson (from PCNSW) who have ministered within the Presbyterian Church in America but are now with the Associated Presbyterian Church in Houston. While there, John spent time with Dr Ligon Duncan as well.

The Very Rev. David Jones was able to attend the Assembly of NZ's Grace Presbyterian Church, and deliver the Bible Readings.

Whilst PCWA Moderator Elder Bill Macrae is not a member of the committee, the Committee requested that he represent the Committee in attending the Synod of the Christian Reformed Churches convened in Perth during 2014.

Rev. Peter Hastie has had opportunity to engage with many denominational members of other churches through the production of interviews for our national magazine AP, and in turn to lift the profile of the ministries of the PCA through AP distribution nationally and internationally.

And again, while Rev. Luke Tattersall and Rev. Craig Tucker are not members of the Committee, the Convener keeps the Committee up to date with their special annual ministries in the CCAP Harare Synod (APWM/RWOC has strong associations with CCAP, and specifically partners with the Zambia and Blantyre Synods of the CCAP).

On two occasions during the trimester, the RWOC Committee Convener:

i. was able to visit the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste for pastoral ministry, partnership building, and attendance at the triennial Assembly. On the occasion of meeting with the EPCTL, the issues outlined below were discussed at length:

- weaknesses and strengths of the partnership,
- the Spiritual life in the church,
- the work/ministry teams coming from Australia,
- the teaching weeks (under David Burke's administration),
- scholarships for students; Bible translation progress;
- the Official Opening of the Dili Church's new buildings;
- financial issues and accountability, and other matters

ii. attended worship services at the PRC, PCEA, WPC and CRC when opportunity presented itself, and also met with PRC ministers in Sydney giving good opportunity to discuss matters of mutual interest and ministry.

iii. met on two occasions with Middle East folk (some from Merrylands East Arabic PC) who are associated with Australian Christian Nation Association relating to their concern for the increasing infiltration of Islamic ideology in our education system and nation.

Chalmers Church Sydney

Many of us were saddened to see the decline in membership of the Welsh church in Chalmers Street Sydney, and ultimately the cessation of public worship in that building: a sadness exacerbated when the building was sold to become an opportunity shop.

We then received an invitation in October 2015 to the rededication of Chalmers Church as a place of Christian worship and centre of gospel mission.

Chalmers Church was purchased by a Jakarta Indonesia based presbyterial/synodal/confessional church known as the Church of Christ Jesus (Gereja Kristus Yesus). The building has been thoroughly refurbished. A strong congregation now meets there each Sunday. They have a full time minister who is working with the team there to "build the church". They anticipate being given "sanctioned status" by the Synod of the GKY when their membership reaches 300!

During proceedings on "opening night" a greeting was received via video from the governor of Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, enthusiastic Christian, and member (indeed elder) of the GKY.

The RWOC Convener was able to attend the opening and dedication of the church, and then (by invitation of the Jakarta mother congregation), to visit Jakarta to report on the history, refurbishing and re-establishing of a congregation of Indonesian folk at Chalmers Church (at their expense!).

Praise God, Chalmers Church Sydney has returned to its original purpose.

Partnerships with other Churches, and special engagements with others

Your committee, at its annual meeting in February 2016, again expressed concern about the direction the Church of Scotland (CofS) is taking regarding some of its theological and practical outworkings. Your committee has strong sympathies with the ministries of the Covenant Fellowship

Scotland within the CofS, and particularly through the ministries of the World Reformed Fellowship, has attempted to supportively and prayerfully keep in touch with this group who are committed, as much as is within them, to work reformation from within the Church.

As these struggles continue in the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland (with which our church has strong theological sympathies) has requested “engagement” with the PCA. The RWOC Committee was pleased to receive this invitation, and has continued to “engage” with the Convener of the Ecumenical Committee, the present Moderator and the Moderator-elect. The Very Rev. Bob Thomas was able to attend the 2015 Assembly of the FCS, and brought a greeting from the PCA. During December 2015 our Moderator-elect Rev. Dr John Wilson also visited ministers of the FCS and in so doing, represented the RWOC Committee. In 2016, the FCS became a member denomination of the WRF.

Cooperation with GAA Standing Committees APWM and PresAid

Because there is a certain amount of overlap between the RWOC committee, APWM and PresAid, in ministry travels the committee representatives are often wearing more than one hat.

This cooperation and mutual support between RWOC and APWM is reflected in the Summary Table (see Addendum I).

When returning from the Brazil General Assembly and Board meeting of the World Reformed Fellowship in 2015, the RWOC Convener visited the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya at the very time of the Garissa massacre of the 148 Christian university students. Opportunity was taken to meet with the Moderator, the Moderator elect and the Clerk and to address the Assembly, both to bring greetings from our church, and to express sympathy and support for them as they grieved their loss and ministered to both Christians and Muslim folk in the Garissa area.

Following attendance at the Kenya Assembly, the Convener visited Uganda, and by invitation of PresAid Australia and PresAid of the Presbyterian Church in Uganda, participated in the joint-venture commissioning of a clean water project for the village of Nangunga east of Kampala. Since that time there has been considerable communication with the PCU, and PresAid Australia, as a result of the generosity of Australian Presbyterians through the 2015 Christmas Appeal, has made a significant contribution to the PCU for the building of a Children’s Village for disadvantaged and orphaned children.

Finance

Because of the increase of activity and ministry of the RWOC committee, the committee approached the GAA Finance Committee seeking a \$4,000 increase in funding. This was graciously granted, specifically for the Convener to attend and participate in the 4th General Assembly of the World Reformed Fellowship in Brazil.

At the beginning of 2016, a proposal was sent again to the Finance Committee requesting that our budget be increased to \$25,500 for the 2017-2019 triennium: \$4,500 per annum as contribution to the WRF (\$13,500 for the triennium); and \$4,000 per annum for committee activities and ministry.

Facebook page

The RWOC Committee now has, for its own use, a Facebook page for communications and discussions.

Members of the RWOC committee

During the triennium the Convener has supplied the Committee with regular updates of ongoing ministries and developments in the fulfilment of the Committee’s responsibilities.

Early in the triennium it became apparent that Queensland’s Rev. Bill Lutton would not be able to continue his membership. His resignation was accepted with regret, and Bill was thanked for his work with the Committee.

Mr Lutton was replaced by Rev. Jens Norved towards the end of 2015, but before mid-2016 it became evident to him, that he would not be able to continue his membership, so again, with regret his resignation was accepted by the Committee.

Rev. Peter Hastie and Rev. Dr Jared Hood do not wish to stand for election to membership of the Committee for the next triennium.

The Convener Rev. Robert Benn has also indicated to the Committee his intention not to continue as Committee member beyond the 2016 GAA, except to discharge his ministry activities with the WRF International Director during his Australian visit through to 27th September.

GAA Code CHAPTER 9 “Committees of the General Assembly”

Following the 2013 GAA, the Assembly Clerk circulated new proposals for Committees of the

General Assembly. The RWOC committee indicated its approval.

The World Reformed Fellowship

PCA membership: Prior to 1977, the Presbyterian Church of Australia was a member of the World Council of Churches. We moved on to become a member of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, then of the Reformed Ecumenical Council. Following a certain amount of disillusionment with international church councils, our church through decisions of the 2004 General Assembly opted to become a member of an international fellowship, namely the World Reformed Fellowship.

Dr Allan Harman, who was Convener of the RWOC Committee at the time, was invited to become a Board member of WRF, and a member of the Theological Commission. Dr John Wilson then spent some years, both as Convener of the RWOC committee and as WRF Board member. In 2014 the present Convener of RWOC was invited to membership on the Board. The Rev. Dr John McClean was appointed a Board member in 2015. At the March 2016 Board meeting in Jakarta Indonesia, Dr John McClean was appointed member of the Theological Commission, and the Very Rev. Robert Benn was appointed Convener of the Evangelism and Mission Commission of the WRF.

WRF's motto is: "That the strengths of some might become the strengths of all in the service of Jesus Christ" (see Paul's prayer in Ephesians 4:11-13).

As you are aware our denomination is already a member of this valuable Fellowship. Membership however, is made available for organizations (such as our organizational members – GAA Church and Nation Committee and Christ College Sydney), and also individual members, of which there are now about 50 from Australia, a majority of whom are members of the PCA.

Our committee encourages the members of the PCA to become WRF members, and therefore receive from, and contribute to, the purpose of the WRF, "that the strengths of some will become the strengths of all in the service of Jesus Christ."

To become members, google wrfnet.org, go to ABOUT, scroll down to JOIN, and all the information is there for you to proceed with membership.

In February 2016 we were informed that the Westminster Presbyterian Church as a denomination has now become a member of WRF, although its Sunshine Coast Seminary (Queensland) has been an organizational member for some time.

WRF Assemblies: Thus far the WRF has organised four General Assemblies: in Florida, South Africa, Scotland and Brazil. To give some idea of the content of these Assemblies, I note the main subjects addressed at the most recent Assembly in February 2015:

Trans-denominational Ministry Partnerships

The Langham Partnership

The Gospel Coalition

The Lausanne Movement

The World Evangelical Alliance

Issues of social and church concern:

Radiating God's Compassion in the midst of sexual trafficking and trauma

The Street is no place for a child

God's mission within the context of such Human Trauma

Church revitalization and her mission - including trauma counseling

The Church - a safe place for victims

Preventing and Responding to Child Abuse allegations in Christian contexts

The prosperity gospel and concern of Christ for the poor

Ministry in the Context of Islam

Ministry in the Context of Homosexual Concerns

Human Trafficking and Child Sexual Abuse in Religious Environments

These presentations, lectures and workshops are all available as videos via the WRF website.

Reformation Conference 2017: October 2017 is the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting of his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg. Therefore WRF is organizing a Reformation Conference in Wittenberg, and has already confirmed a formidable line up of speakers and presenters under the theme name, "*The Global Impact of the Reformation and its Relevance for Continuing Reformation.*" (For further information, see Addendum II.)

Expansion within the family of Presbyterians and Reformed Churches: As an onflow from responsible denominational, organizational and individual WRF membership, there has been considerable correspondence and indeed some support from your committee to WRF member

churches overseas, and particularly in Africa: Angola, Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique and South Africa.

Other expansions: WRF is a “connecting” fellowship.

During the triennium, the membership were enlightened by Dr Ric Cannada, (Chancellor Emeritus of RTS Jackson Mississippi) in respect to a very special process of education and health services in Indonesia, and of opportunities to serve.

PCA minister, Rev. Morris Key (trainer and administrator of our hospital and prison chaplains in NSW and senior lecturer in Clinical Pastoral Education at Moore College) was approached about the prospect of taking up the role of trainer of chaplains for the Foundation of Light and Hope (Yayasan Pelita Harapan) in Jakarta. Following due process, Morris and Florianna Key were set apart as associate missionaries by APWM and now serve the Lord within this educational and health services Foundation. Christian schools are springing up in many places (1,000 targeted), and Christian Hospitals are being built at the rate of about one per annum with about 20 now operational around Indonesia (100 targeted).

Other individuals and families from our church are presently discussing options available for them to serve within the ministries of this organisation which has very close links to the Reformed Evangelical Church of Indonesia.

Visit of International Director Dr Flip Buys: Rev. Dr Flip Buys (Potchefstroom South Africa) succeeded Dr Sam Logan (Philadelphia USA) as International Director of WRF in February 2015. He plans to visit Australia at the time of the 2016 General Assembly. He will spend about three weeks in Australia, following an itinerary arranged by your RWOC committee as follows:

September	6th	arrive Australia
	7th-12th	Queensland – mainly Sunshine Coast and Brisbane
	12th-16th	NSW – mainly Sydney
	16th-19th	Victoria – mainly Geelong and Melbourne
	20th-22nd	NSW – mainly Sydney
	23rd-26th	WA – mainly Perth
	27th	return to South Africa

During this time he will visit individual members of the WRF, preach on Sundays, speak at seminars at theological seminaries and colleges, and generally represent WRF and educate in respect to WRF as a Reformed Fellowship, and focus on the WRF ministries.

While here, Dr Buys will work with us on attempting to form an active and energetic Regional Council of the WRF for Australasia and the Pacific.

Other denominations of like mind will be invited to participate in this strategic visit from the International Director, and especially so the Presbyterian Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, the Westminster Presbyterian Church, the Christian Reformed Churches, and others. And of course, individual and organisational members from several other denominations will be notified, and attempts will be made to make the International Director available to spend productive time with them.

To date during this triennium, apart from the PCA, there has been the addition of WPC to the membership of WRF, and an increase in individual membership from PCA and other denominations.

Undergirding the mandate of the RWOC committee

Your RWOC Committee seeks in all its engagement (locally, nationally and internationally) to own every part of this concern and prayer expressed by the apostle Paul when writing that circular letter to the churches: *“For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”*

Addendum I: Summary table

	Expressed by	Key Contacts	Status
AFRICA			
3-sister Reformed Churches Sth Africa: NGK, GKSA, NHK	on-going discussions; assistance sought to find ways to help S.A. reformed church migrants find connection within PCA, esp WA, QLD	Drs Kobus Gerber (NGK), Arie Kuyper (NHK), Henk Stoker & Douw Breed (GKSA)	

CCAP Blantyre Synod (Malawi)	short-term mission trips (PCV) with multi-faceted projects; teaching & preaching in CCAP churches; orphan care @ ORBUS.	Rev. Alex Maulana (Gen Sec), Rev. Michael Ngaiyeye (studied at PTC (Vic). John and Sue Steendam (Eltham PC)	Partner (2011)
CCAP Zambia Synod	short-term mission trips (PCV) with multi-faceted projects; preaching in CCAP churches; evangelism & church planting.	Rev. Maleka Kabandama (GS), Rev. David Chiboboka (Principal, CTC), Rev. Dr Victor Chilenje (Synod Projects Coordinator).	Partner (2011)
CCAP Harare Synod (Zimbabwe)	annual teaching and preaching missions by Craig Tucker & Luke Tattersall (PCNSW); sponsorship of students to CTC (PCV)	Rev. Chirongo Mufakose, Rev. Libias Boloma (Gen Sec)	
CCAP General Synod	CCAP Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi	Rev. Colin MBawa (Gen Sec)	
Presbyterian Church of Ethiopia	Kevin Murray visited April 2016. Exploring possibility of entering into Fraternal relationship. Motor Yat currently working with PCE in Gambella region ministering among South Sudanese refugees.	Rev. Solomon Gossaye (General Secretary)	
Presbyterian Church of South Sudan (PCOSS)	Emerging discussions, no official visit since 2007, phone discussions with PCOS in June 2011; funding for theological education, hymn books, Bible translation. Kevin Murray visited 2013	Moderator is Rev. Peter Gai Lual Marrow and Gen Sec is Rev. John Yor Nyiker Deng, Chuol Yat, Motor Isaac Yat	Partner (2013)
Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) - Kenya	John Wilson, Robert Benn and Bob Thomas have visited, preached and made contacts in Nairobi	Rev. Julius Mwamba (Mod); Rev. Peter Kaniah (Secretary General)	
Presbyterian Church of Ghana (PCG)	Emerging discussions, but mainly through Bruce Meller in contact with the Australian Ghanaian congregation in Sydney. Robert Benn	Rev. Prof Emmanuel Martey (Moderator), Rev. Dr Samuel Ayetey-Nyampong (Clerk)	
Presbyterian Church of Mauritius (PCM)	emerging discussions, student trained at PTC(Vic) Rev. Joel Mestry (now back in Melbourne)	Rev. Joel Mestry (ex PTC Vic)	
Reformed Presbyterian Church in Uganda (RPCU) – separated from PCU in 1989 (disciplinary issue)	Early exploration through World Reformed Fellowship Board member Petersen Sozi who invites us to 'partnership' in the gospel. WTS in Kampala.	Pastor Peterson Sozi (works with Back to God Evangelistic Association). Rev. Ian McIver	
Presbyterian Church in Uganda	Mission and work parties from Mt Stuart PC Tasmania; health ministry; clean water project (PresAid) commissioned by Robert Benn (2015)	Secretariat Office Director, Presbyter Fred Kabange; PresAid Coordinator Noel Kalunda	
Presbyterian Church of Tanzania (PCT)	there is no expression of this relationship, but the PCT church was mentioned in the 2010 report to the GAA		
ASIA / SE ASIA			
Presbyterian	strong mission-based	Rev. Dan Iverson of MTW.	Partner (2016)

Church in Japan (PCJ)	relationship. Working closely with PCinA's MTW. Connections over three decades through Hugh Price, Allan Harman, Robert Benn, Kevin Murray.	John and Rose Evans (PCA) and Adam & Helene Ramsay (APWM-CMS)	
Hap Dong Presbyterian Church in Korea	Robert Benn as APWM director visited, and worked with Mission Committee. Allan Harman frequently lectured in Seoul; Andrew Bray, as GAV Mod, visited.		
Reformed Presbyterian Church of India (RPCI)	Fraternal relationships through WRF member and Dr Matthew Ebenezer. Dehradun Seminary; John Ellis long term lecturer, Ian Smith and John McClean visiting lecturers; visit from Kevin Murray	Rev. Dr Matthew Ebenezer, Interim Principal; Rev. John Ellis (ex-Aus) Partner (2016)	Partner (2016)
Presbyterian Church of Pakistan	Vic Moderator, Bob Carner, visited in 2012, cordial relationship		
Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar (ERCM)	Dr Thang Bwee to Australia. Regular visits from Australian reps of APWM, including Kevin Murray.	Rev. Dr Thang Bwee, Martin Eagle, Peter Barnes	Partner (2008)
Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Timor Leste (EPCTL)	Rob Duncanson and Robert Benn (with the East Timor sub-committee of APWM) are working closely with APWM in all matters relating to East Timor ministry (includes regular visits, practical and teaching ministries);	Rev. Daniel Marcal (Moderator), Rev. Carlos Marcal (vice-Mod), Saturnino Pereira (Gen Sec), CMS missionaries Chris and Grace Adams working closely with EPCTL; PCA missionary Lauren Crase.	Partner (2012)

	Expressed by	Key Contacts	Status
ASIA / SE ASIA			
PACIFIC			
Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu (PCV)	historically connected ever since Rev. Dr John G Paton's days; now centres on Talua MTC and Tanna SIPBC;	Rev. Kalorongo Ova (Moderator), Rev. Alan Nafuki Gen. Sec; John & Kara Dekker	Partner (2013)
NTH AMERICA / CANADA			
Presbyterian Church in America (PCA)	past connections through missionaries sent to PCV; Robert Benn as MG built a strong relationship with PCinA by channelling money through a Disaster Relief Fund (Haiti disaster); Allan Harman lectured at RTS. Ligon Duncan of RTS visited PCAustralia on two occasions		
LATIN AMERICA			
Presbyterian Church of Brazil (IPB)	past years through church planting in PCV (Rev. Lievano); co-operation agreement signed 1980s; now revived through WRF; Robert Benn and John McClean Board members of WRF visited in 2015	Rev. Dr Davi Gomes (Brazil), Rev. Dr Wilson Fernandes (Australia).	
AUSTRALIA / NEW ZEALAND			
Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA)	David Jones has been in contact and they "again urge sessions and classes to develop context for cooperation with PCA". Robert Benn visited	Geoff van Schie (Ecumenical Secretary of the CRCA)	

	congregations, and made connections with the Ecumenical Body via member Rev. Leo Douma. Bill Macrae attended 2015 Synod meeting in Perth. Invited ministers to David Cook preaching seminars.	
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA)		Rev. Dr Rowland Ward
Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia (PRCA)	warm discussions; relationship emerging; invitations to their Presbytery and hope to reciprocate; Vic members taking lead; Robert Benn made contact with Ecumenical Committee which resulted in meeting with members of PRC and PCA re ministries in Myanmar.	Mr Bob Wright (Clerk); Rev. Tim Zylstra (Mod)
Westminster Presbyterian Church (WPC)	warm discussions; relationship emerging; report coming; WA members taking lead; expect reciprocal invitations. Robert Benn had contact with Canberra congregation during 2015	Rev. Simon van Bruchem (Mod), Mr Steve Heathcote (Clerk), Rev. Andrew Priddle
Reformed Evangelical Church in Australia (RECA)	warm discussions; relationship emerging; Afrikaans speaking in Perth (mainly); WA members taking lead; expect reciprocal invitations	Rev. Gawie van der Merwe, James Walters, Jan van den Berg
Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand	warm discussions; long-standing relationship; several teaching trips; members trained at PTC(Vic): Wally Rakete, Richard Eyre, Peter Boyd. Robert Benn has been in touch during 2015, where indications are that there is keenness for strong fraternal relationships	Rev. David Bayne (Clerk)
EUROPE		
Church of Scotland (CoS)	historically our mother church; now the relationship is distant	
Free Church of Scotland	Bob Thomas attended 2015 Assembly. Robert Benn has been corresponding with the Convener of the Ecumenical Relations Committee Rev. David Meredith; John Wilson visited David Meredith, Moderator David Robertson and Moderator-Elect Dr John Nicholls in Dec 2015	Rev. David Robertson (Moderator); Rev. Dr John Nicholls (Moderator Elect and Board member of WRF); FCS is member of WRF
Free Church of Scotland Continuing	Jack Knapp, Bob Thomas, Robert Benn each have attended Assemblies and firmed up our fraternal relationship	Rev. John McLeod, Ross-shire, (Clerk)
Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI)	Jack Knapp, Bob Thomas and Robert Benn each visited and warmly received; exit students did pastoral training in W.A., Vic and NSW	Immediate past Assembly Clerk Dr Donald Watts attended our 2013 GAA
NETWORK / ECUMENICAL BODY		
The World Reformed Fellowship (WRF)	the only ecumenical body we belong to; PCA hosted the April 2012 meeting of the Board and our reputation in WRF is prominent because of this and Allan Harman's theological input. John Wilson and Allan Harman have served on the Board. Robert Benn (Chair of Evangelism and Missions Commission) and John McClean (Theological Commission) are presently on the WRF Board, both of whom attended the 2015 General Assembly of WRF in Brazil, and the 2016 Board meeting in Jakarta Indonesia.	Rev. Dr Flip Buys, International Director. Rev. Dr Sam Logan (assistant International Director). Dr Flip Buys is planning a visit to Australia at the time of our 2016 General Assembly

**Addendum II: REFO500 Conference, Wittenberg 25-30 October 2017
Luther Hotel Wittenberg**

***“The Global Impact of the Reformation and its Relevance for
Continuing Reformation”***

Wednesday 25 October

- 15:00 Arrival and registration
19:30 Worship and devotions
20:00 “The Relevance of the Doctrine of Justification by Faith Today,” **Dr Michael Horton**

Thursday 26 October

- 09:00 “Sola Scriptura in a Global Post-Modern Context,” **Dr. Don Carson**, Professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and one of the founders of the Gospel Coalition
- 11:00 The Uniqueness of Christ Christine in the midst of global pluralism **Schirmacher** “Do Christians and Muslims worship the same God?”
- 14:00 Workshops running concurrently
1. “Biblical and Reformational principles of the Christology of worship” **Dr Ron Man** Director, of *Worship Resources International*.
 2. “Revitalization of Traditional Reformed Churches,” **Dr Stephan Paas**, Professor of Missiology and Intercultural Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam and Professor of Missiology at the Theological University of Kampen in The Netherlands
 3. “Gateway for Postmoderns to the Gospel: Meditating on the Psalms,” **Dr Ferguson MacDonald**, Former Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, General Secretary of the National Bible Society of Scotland, and of the United Bible Societies, and Executive Chair of the Lausanne Movement (1994 – 1998).
- 16:00 Workshops running concurrently
- 1) “Stimulating a Resurgence of Reformed faith Among the Next Generation,” **Dr Davi Gomes**, Chancellor of Mackenzie Presbyterian University in Sao Paulo, Brazil
 - 2) “Ministries of Mercy and Compassion in the Midst of Poverty and Prosperity Gospel Challenges,” **Prof. Bong Ho Son**, Korean Philosopher and author of “Some Dangers of Rapid Church Growth.”
 - 3) “Martin Luther and Jonathan Edwards: A Correct Understanding of Justification by Faith Alone.” **Dr Sam Logan** Emeritus President Westminster Seminary and Associate International Director World Reformed Fellowship.
- 19:30 Worship and devotions
20:00 “A Theology of Suffering and Persecution,” **Dr Thomas Schirmacher**, President of the International Council of the International Society for Human Rights and Ambassador for Human Rights and Executive Chair of the Theological Commission of the World Evangelical Alliance.

Friday 27 October

- 08:30 Worship
09:00 “Addressing Atheism and Neo Paganism,” **Rev. David Robertson**, Minister St Peter’s Free Church in Dundee Scotland and director of the Solas Centre for Public Christianity.
11:00 “Global Urban Church Planting,” **Dr Michael W. Goheen**, Director of Theological Education and Scholar-in-residence at Missional Training Center (Phoenix), Professor of Missiology at Calvin Theological Seminary (Grand Rapids), and Senior Fellow at Newbigin House of Studies (San Francisco).
14:00 “The relevance of Judeo Christian Worldview of the Reformers for today.” **Bishop Nazir Ali**, Bishop of Rochester in the Church of England (1994 – 2009) and Director of the Oxford Centre for Training, Research, Advocacy and Dialogue (current).
16:00 “Global Reformed Mission for the 21st Century from the Perspective of Christian Politics,” **Prof. Dr. Roel Kuiper** (Member of the Dutch Senate, Professor of Christian Identity at Kampen Theological University, and Professor of Reformational Philosophy at Erasmus University of Rotterdam).
19:30 Worship
20:00 “The Pursuit of Unity Among Christians,” **Dr Thomas Johnson** (Prague), Global Scholars

Professor and Research Vice President at Martin Bucer Seminary and Research Institutes, Senior Advisor to the Theological Commission of The World Evangelical Alliance, and Advisor to The International Institute for Religious Freedom.

Saturday 28 October

- 08:30 Worship and devotions
09:00 "Ministry in Islamic Contexts," **Dr Bernard Reitsma**, Director of The Open Doors International Study Centre (2005 – 2009) and currently Professor of Missiology at the Free University of Amsterdam, focusing on the church in the context of Islam.
11:00 "Reformational Motives for Mission to Unreached People Groups," **David Gomes**
19:30 Worship and devotions
20:00 "The Impact of the Scottish Reformation on World Missions," **Rev. Iver Martin**, Minister of the Free Church of Scotland and Principal of Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

Sunday 29 October

- 10:00 Worship service **Phil Ryken** President Wheaton College (to be confirmed)
16:30 Worship service, **Dr Michael Oh**, Executive Chair of the Lausanne Movement
19:30 Music concert, Bach Choir from Korea

Monday 30 October

- 08:30 Worship
09:00 "Revival and Continuing Reformation," **Dr. Wilson Chow**, Former President of the China Graduate School of Theology in Hong Kong
11:00 "Refo500 –The Next Steps," **Dr Herman Selderhuis**, Professor of Church History at the Theological University of Apeldoorn (The Netherlands) and Director of Refo500, a Co-Sponsor of the Wittenberg Conference
12:00 Closing service **Dr Conrad Mbewe** Kabwata church, Lusaka Zambia

RPF BENN, Convener.

RETURNS TO REMITS

Overture (i): An overture from the Code Committee to amend the Code of Discipline by the insertion of new clauses 2.04, 2.20 and 2.28(b).

Approve:

State Assemblies (4):

New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria

Presbyteries (17):

Canberra, Central Coast, Central Tablelands, North West NSW, Northern Rivers, Sydney, Sydney North, Wagga Wagga, Brisbane, Darling Downs, Derwent, Ballarat, Geelong, Kilnoorat, Maroondah, Melbourne West, North Western Victoria,

Disapprove:

State Assemblies (0):

Presbyteries (0):

No reply:

State Assemblies (2):

Tasmania, Western Australia

Presbyteries (21):

Central West, Hawkesbury, Hunter, Illawarra, Mid North Coast, New England, Riverina, Sydney South, Central Queensland, Mowbray, Moreton, North Queensland, Wide Bay - Sunshine Coast, South Australia, Bass, Benalla, Flinders, Gippsland, Melbourne East, Melbourne North, Western Australia.

BRUCE MELLER, Clerk of Assembly.

TRUSTEES

In accordance with the Trust Deed of The Presbyterian Church of Australia dated September 1985 "The Trustees shall consist of persons who for the time being hold office as the Trustees of

The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust being a body corporate of that name established by The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust Act 1936 of the State of New South Wales”.

The Trustees currently comprise Messrs J. Davis, RD Parker, JM Rolland, K Turner, A Yen and Mrs L Russell, Rev. KR Boulden, Rev. MS Oates, Rev. DM Seaman, Rev. JED Seaton, Rev. R Vandervelden and Rev. D Yu. Mr JM Rolland is Chairman of Trustees. Mr JR Falls (General Manager of The Presbyterian Church in the State of New South Wales) is Secretary to the Trustees.

The Trustees report that they have met on eleven occasions since the last Session of the General Assembly of Australia: on 2 December 2013, 28 April 2014, 26 May 2014, 27 October 2014, 1 December 2014, 23 February 2015, 23 March 2015, 27 April 2015, 25 May 2015, 22 June 2015 and 27 June 2016. Meetings are held, as business requires, at the offices of the Presbyterian Church New South Wales at Level 1, 168-180 Chalmers Street, Surry Hills. Business dealt with by the Trustees during the period includes:

- (a) Monitoring of governance, financial controls and exit process from the mission work in Bangladesh by APWM – Mission Partners;
- (b) Purchase of the “Smith of Dunesk” church building in Beltana, SA for Presbyterian Inland Mission;
- (c) Assisting with a Business Review of Presbyterian Inland Mission;
- (d) Leasing-out of the APWM residential property at 8 Sylvan Grove, Picnic Point, NSW;
- (e) Whyte Trust; distributions to state theological colleges;
- (f) Bequests notified:
 - (i) Jean Evelyn Godwin for Presbyterian Inland Mission;
 - (ii) Alice Jean Keir for Presbyterian Inland Mission;
 - (iii) Janet Constance Emily McKay for Presbyterian Inland Mission;
 - (iv) Molly Belle Unicomb for Presbyterian Inland Mission, and;
 - (v) Annette Joan Taylor for Presbyterian Inland Mission.

The NSW Church Office in Sydney arranges, on behalf of the Trustees for the Presbyterian Church of Australia, appropriate insurance cover to protect the insurable assets and liabilities of the federal body within the insurance programme for The Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales.

J.M. ROLLAND, Chairman.

WOMEN’S MINISTRIES (AD HOC COMMITTEE)

The ad hoc Women’s Ministries Committee of the GAA (WMPCA) has continued under the leadership of Mrs. Cecelia (Ceale) Orford and has included members from Victoria, Western Australia, Queensland and New South Wales. The committee greatly appreciates the opportunity to network and work with women from many places around Australia and has seen growth in smaller churches in remote and rural areas, large city churches and at state levels. God has used this ministry to encourage many women (and men) as evidenced in the very positive feedback from those who attended the triennial conference this year.

The main activities of the WMPCA have been to review the committee’s directions and work toward the holding of a third national Conference. The first two conferences (Flourish 2009 and 2012) had been held in Sydney and had sought to provide a setting where men and women together could consider the needs of ministry to and by women. Unfortunately this model did not seem to engage many men in the second triennium. It was decided to hold a Women’s Conference instead but to provide a Men’s Event on the Friday afternoon specifically focused toward ministers and elders within the church. It was also decided to hold the Conference in Melbourne. Due to the use of the *Flourish* name by another group, and the theme of the conference, it was decided that the conference would be known as *Connecting 2016*. It was held at Scots Church, Melbourne on May 28-29. A website was set up to facilitate communication and networking.

Approximately 200 women gathered over the course of the two days from most states. Robyn Bain led the Bible Studies and there were 24 workshops covering a large array of topics from which participants could choose three. Rev Nathan Campbell, Mrs. Robyn Campbell and Mrs. Andrea

Pryde led the Friday afternoon session with Rev Dr Douglas Milne and Rev Darren Middleton joining them for a Q&A panel discussion. A round 30 men attended the session that included men. During the conference a session was held asking women to comment on a number of contemporary issues around women's ministry across Australia. Women engaged in the session as they knew it was an opportunity in which the leaders of the church would hear their voices. These comments are summarized in a table as an appendix. The most frequent issues were about effective communication and inclusiveness.

The PCA holds to a "complementarian" approach in its polity and the majority of sessions and congregations operate on these principles, though with some variety of practices. The complementarian view is that "male and female were created by God as equal in dignity, value, essence and human nature, but also distinct in role whereby the male was given the responsibility of loving authority over the female, and the female was to offer willing, glad-hearted and submissive assistance to the man."¹ We do not believe that the WMPCA should be involved in debating these issues where they are controversial in the courts of the church or in congregations and that it serves the church best by working within a complementarian framework while recognising that this can be expressed in various ways.

Unfortunately there was some controversy in the week prior to the conference in response to an article in *Australian Presbyterian* that caused a lot of stress to some in the organising committee. The nature and the timing of this dispute on social media could have hijacked the afternoon session. The WMPCA was not seeking to stir up a controversy but was caught in the middle of one.

The biggest difficulty that has faced the WMPCA has been the seeming lack of engagement of the GAA on these issues and the difficulty in encouraging men to participate in a true partnership of women and men in the church enabling ministry to and by women within our churches.

This lack of engagement has been seen in the inability of the Convener to find any commissioner or possible commissioner to the GAA willing to join this committee. Unless this changes this committee will not be able to fulfil effectively the terms of reference established for it. It is very important that the partnership between men and women be one of willing participation if we desire to equip and encourage women in our churches and contribute to the overall mission of the church to honour Christ and make His name known.

Andrea Pryde left the committee as she commenced paid employment at Creek Road Presbyterian Church. Fiona Millar and Vanessa Stuckings both accepted an invitation to join WMPCA. Fiona left the committee due to family and ministry commitments. After the 2013 meeting of the GAA, Ceale Orford was appointed the Convener since no commissioner to the Assembly was found to accept nomination to that role. Despite a number of attempts, no commissioner was found even for the committee. While the committee has functioned well, the fact that no members of the committee are members of the Assembly left the committee without strong connections to the Assembly and denominational leadership. If the church is committed to a partnership, then both sides need to be committed and demonstrate brotherly and sisterly love in this partnership for God's glory. Mairi Girgis (Victoria) has indicated her intention to not continue on the committee. Mairi has given extensive offerings of her time, gifts and substantial commitment to the work and is actively involved in building up women's ministry in Victoria.

Nominations

Margaret Thatcher (WA), Vanessa Stuckings (NSW) and Ceale Orford (QLD) have agreed to continue in the committee for the next three years. In view of the changes around Australia within the leadership of women's ministry, appropriate representation and inclusiveness of each state and all women is vital. The committee desires to work in partnership with the church leadership and bring glory to God.

MRS. CECELIA (CEALE) ORFORD, Convener.

¹ Bruce Ware, "Summaries of the Egalitarian and Complementarian Positions on the Role of Women in the Home and in Christian Ministry", Council of Biblical Manhood and Womanhood, <https://www.cbmw.org/Resources/Articles/Summaries-of-the-Egalitarian-and-Complementarian-Positions>

APPENDIX: Summary of comments about contemporary issues impacting on women’s ministry

Issue 1:	Approaches in ministry teams where women’s ministry thrives and flourishes
Enablers to healthy women’s ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • effective two way communication between men and women, leaders and members • communication with respect, where both men and women listen to each other with respect • when church leadership encourages team ministry e.g. dedicated women’s ministry position • having supportive ministers • effective Godly role models, sharing and storytelling.
Barriers to women’s ministry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mostly around communication • confusion between male leaders of the church in their application of practices e.g. 1 Corinthians 14:34 • rigid traditions and cultures • fear to use the words “ministry” and “women” in the same phrase • lack of volunteers • lack of support by male leaders and role models • ministers not passing on vital information that is posted to them
Issue 2	Opportunities for women to grow.
Known or desired opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • many respondents expressed a desire for Bible-teaching days, conferences, networking sessions and outreach sessions to be held in local areas • a handful of committees were listed as opportunities to participate in the church at various levels within church structure • request for more specific targeted encouragement such as teens and singles (singles again), remote, professionals
Women and Bible College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible College commonly perceived as equipping people for a “man’s job” and thus not for women • generally not encouraged by churches (although there have been recent increases with the relevant programs being run for women) • qualification does not lead to employment • limited positions available or there was confusion as to how Bible-college training could be used in our churches • financial cost of study was too high • stage of life issues made studying inconvenient
Issue 3	Support from local churches, state and national
Perceptions of support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good support experienced in many churches to attend local seminars and bible teaching days • support for the WMPCA national conference was felt to be very encouraging • financial support was encouraging • conferences perceived as being for leaders only • ministers are the gatekeepers but don’t pass on information about conferences and training opportunities for women
Final comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • thank you to GAA for support and encouragement • persevere in embracing change • listen with respect • be involved and interested • don’t be defensive when talking about the role of women in the church, we are on the same side • communications about women’s ministry should not just be channeled to ministers but include other individuals where possible • be genuine in making people feel adequate and of worth

APPEALS

(i) **From the Rev. J. Dekker against a decision of the 2013 General Assembly of Victoria**

This appeal was withdrawn by the Rev. J. Dekker via an email dated 23 May 2016 which stated, in part, "I am writing to you as Clerk of the GAA to formally withdraw from an appeal I had made concerning a decision from (sic) the GAV regarding the Federal Vision."

Because it has been withdrawn, this appeal will not appear in print.

COMMUNICATIONS

(i) **From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland to the General Assembly of Australia**

24 June 2016
Rev. Bruce Meller
Clerk of Assembly
General Assembly of Australia
C/- Presbyterian Church Offices
PO Box 2196
STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

Dear Bruce,

In relation to the marriage clauses from the GAA Church and Nation Committee, the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland meeting at its annual Assembly in June 2016 resolved to advise the General Assembly of Australia that it has written to the GAA Church and Nation Committee, drawing that Committee's attention in the strongest terms to this Assembly's deep concern in relation to the report and deliverance anent the marriage clauses, particularly matters of

- (a) Polity (noteworthy the total misunderstanding of ministerial accountability);
- (b) Any relation to the Basis of Union and particularly the formula;
- (c) Departure from normal use of worship aids within the document.

Extracted from the minutes of the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland (Minute 118) by me.

With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely in Christ,
(Rev.) Ron Clark
Clerk of Assembly

(ii) **From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland to the General Assembly of Australia**

24 June 2016
Rev. Bruce Meller
Clerk of Assembly
General Assembly of Australia
C/- Church Offices
PO Box 2196
STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

Dear Bruce,

At its annual meeting in June 2016 the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland instructed the Clerk of Assembly to forward a communication to the General Assembly of Australia from the meeting of the 175th Session of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland raising the following issues in the proposed deliverance of the GAA Church and Nation report:

- (a) The Assembly is very concerned about the comment of clause (8)(c) in which it states that a Session has jurisdiction over a minister contrary to the polity of the church.
- (b) The Assembly questions the competency of clause (8)(a) which requires that a marriage service shall be conducted by a minister according to the service provided by the public worship and aids to Devotion Committee, noting GAA BB 1997 Minute 95(2):

Note that, at the request of the Moderator the Law Agent (speaking for the Law Officers), advised the Assembly that the resolution approved by this Assembly and stating that the purpose of "Worship" is to "set a standard of the kind of services the Assembly commends", does not constitute a mandatory declaration by the General Assembly pursuant to its powers in respect of worship under Article IV of the Articles of Agreement, but it's in the nature of a recommendation which is not binding on the church and its officer bearers.

Extracted from the minutes of the State Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland (Minute 118) by me.

With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely in Christ,
(Rev.) Ron Clark
Clerk of Assembly

(iii) From the Presbyterian Church of South Australia conveying thanks for financial support

1 November 2014
Clerk of Assembly
Rev Dr Paul Logan
PO Box 2196
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Dear Paul,
Greetings in the blessed Name of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia convened and constituted on 26th May 2014 resolved, among other things, to refer to the Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia the matter contained in the following extract minute for direction:

34. Communication 4: Clerk, General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia: Para Hills Support

The Communication was laid on the table and received.

Pursuant to notice, the Clerk moved that:

The Assembly:

Thank the General Assembly for their very generous continuing support of Para Hills for the next three years, and the Assembly look forward eagerly to the resolutions of the Mission to Australia Special Committee in this regard.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Extracted from the minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Australia on 26th May 2014 by me: Brian W Johnson, Clerk.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN JOHNSON, **Clerk of Presbytery.**

(iv) From the Presbyterian Church of Victoria concerning marriage

20 October 2015
Rev Bruce M Meller
Clerk of Assembly
Presbyterian Church of Australia
PO Box 2196
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Dear Bruce,

Please receive the following communications from the General Assembly of the PCV. They are being sent to the GAA in the form of extract minutes:

Communication 1

Meeting on 8 October 2015 Min. 85

The deliverance as a whole was moved: That the Assembly:

6. *Write to the GAA in the following terms: If a plebiscite or referendum is held concerning changes to the Marriage Act (1961), to encourage the GAA and its Church and Nation Committee to do all it can to assert, maintain and defend the biblical teaching on marriage for the common good.*

The motion was seconded and approved.

Communication 2

Meeting on 8 October 2015 Min. 85

The deliverance as a whole was moved: That the Assembly:

7. *Write to the GAA expressing that, in the event that the Marriage Act (1961) is amended to include homosexual relationships, the PCV believes it would be wise to consider withdrawing as a recognised religious denomination under the Marriage Act (1961).*

The motion was seconded and approved.

With warm regards,

JOHN WILSON, Clerk of Assembly.

(v) From the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia seeking changes to its Constitution

6 August 2016
The Clerk,
Presbyterian Church of Australia
PO Box 2196
Strawberry Hills NSW 2012

Dear Bruce,

The Executive of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia has been concerned to address unnecessary restrictions within the Constitution of our organisation and will be recommending some changes to the Federal Conference when it meets on 12 September.

In anticipation that the Conference will approve those changes, I am sending to you a copy of the constitution marked up to show how it would be after the changes are approved. The Constitution may be amended by the Conference, but any changes cannot be effective until they have been approved by the General Assembly of Australia. Could you please prepare the necessary paperwork so that the Assembly may consider this issue? I will inform you of the outcome of the Conference's deliberations immediately after the Conference.

Yours sincerely,
Pat Watts

OVERTURES

(i) From the Federal Code Committee to Amend Standing Order 20.

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS

- A. Standing Order 20(b) requires that reports of committees of the General Assembly that concern doctrinal matters that do not require Barrier Act procedures or that propose changes to regulations must be submitted to presbyteries and state assemblies for consideration and report at least nine months before the next meeting of the General Assembly of Australia and that any relevant report that is not circulated in this way may only be considered by the Assembly by leave of a majority of the House or else wait for another three years to be considered.
- B. Standing Order 20(b) was introduced to the GAA in 1994. It did not previously exist and the Assembly's business prospered without it.
- C. The General Assembly is designed to operate with graded protections of important privileges and, in the opinion of the Code Committee, these protections are sufficient.
- D. The unstated premise of the overturists in 1994 was that the GAA was only the servant of the state Churches and that it should not consider matters without the prior deliberation of the assemblies and presbyteries. That premise is false. According to the Articles of Agreement, "the General Assembly shall have powers legislative, administrative and judicial, which powers shall be supreme with respect to [the matters there prescribed]." For the good of the whole Church, the Assembly and its committees should not be prevented from fulfilling the important responsibilities assigned to it.
- E. Standing Order 20(b) seriously interferes with the effectiveness of the Assembly's committees and with the efficiency of the Assembly as a whole.
 - a. After the General Assembly meets in September at the start of a new triennium, little committee activity takes place until February of the following year when a work schedule is normally prepared for the new triennium.
 - b. Because of the cost of travel from every state in the nation, most committees only conduct formal meetings annually in February, therefore any report to presbyteries or Assemblies will need to be approved at the next annual meeting because the one that follows (in the third year of the triennium) will occur within the nine month limitation period and, thus, be too late for the committee to comply with S.O. 20(b).
 - c. Once the report has been distributed, the committee may be able to effect little further work pending the outcome of the matter impacted by S.O. 20(b), thus causing the committee to be idle and ineffective for the next 21 months!
- F. S.O. 20(b) has therefore proved obstructive and unhelpful in the operation of the committees of the Assembly and of the Assembly itself.
- G. S.O. 20(b) does not achieve what it purports to. While committees are constrained by the operation of the Standing Order, individual commissioners are not constrained, so that a committee's deliverance might be made invalid, but a commissioner could present the same proposal as an individual and be constrained by no standing order.
- H. S.O. 20(b) does not help the Assembly give due consideration to weighty matters. These are caught up under requirements of the Articles of Agreement (2.2 and 2.4). Rather, it bogs the Assembly down over minor matters such as how it comprises its committees.
- I. Now therefore the Code Committee overtures the General Assembly of Australia to take these premises into consideration, and:
 - (i) Delete Standing Order 20(b); and
 - (ii) Change the numbering of the remaining clause from 20(a) to 20.or do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. B. Meller and L. Hall were appointed to state the overture.

(ii) From the Code Committee to amend Constitution, Procedure and Practice, Ch. 8, rule 1.05 within The Code of Discipline.

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

WHEREAS:

- A. Rule 1.05 within the Code of Discipline reads as follows:
If an alleged offence has subsided and lain dormant for a period of five years it shall not be revived or form the subject of discussion unless the party concerned is accused of later and grave wrongdoing.
- B. The Church must have clarity about the circumstances in which allegations may be made against persons within its jurisdiction, particularly behaviour that is alleged to have occurred more than five years in the past.
- C. Rule 1.05, in its present form, has long proved problematic in its interpretation and application, having been considered by the Law Agent, the Procurator and other senior officers of the General Assembly as well as by Clerks of some State assemblies in at least 2004, 2007, 2010, 2014 and 2015.
- D. The following expressions within Rule 1.05 have been particularly difficult to interpret contextually: "alleged offence", "subsided and lain dormant" and "later and grave".
- E. The Code Committee has consulted various manuals of church practice both in Scotland and Australia scanning a period of well over 100 years.
- F. The Code Committee desires to see the Church adopt a form of words that will be more straightforward and much easier to interpret.
- G. The church must also be exhorted to pursue disciplinary action to its prompt conclusion to promote the restorative purpose of discipline.

Now, therefore, the Code Committee overtures the General Assembly to delete rule 1.05 where it occurs within the Code of Discipline and replace it with these words:

No accusation shall be received or proceeded with in respect of any offence alleged to have been committed more than five years before the date of the accusation, unless it relates to sexual abuse or abuse of authority.

When an allegation is made under the Code of Discipline, it must be investigated and pursued thoroughly, responsibly and as quickly as the case might allow so that no delay in process or judgement will prejudice either the accuser or the accused.
or do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. B. Meller and L. Hall were appointed to state the overture.

(iii) From the Church and Nation Committee relating to church marriage

To the venerable General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

WHEREAS:

- A. The Church and Nation committee has proposed that the Presbyterian Church of Australia will decline recognition as a denomination under the Marriage Act (1961) should it be amended to allow for the marriage of same sex couples;
- B. Some members of the church may wish not to be married under the amended Marriage Act;
- C. Members and ministers will likely wish to continue to solemnise marriages in a service of worship;
- D. It is wise for the church to regulate such church marriages under its jurisdiction;
- E. It is appropriate that the Session, as the body responsible for the discipline of the congregation should oversee church marriages;
- F. Such regulations should direct the Session in how to appropriately determine if a couple may be lawfully married and how a marriage should be properly recorded;
- G. From time to time it may be necessary for a Session to provide documentation when a church marriage has ended;
- H. It is appropriate that the Church should keep a central record of marriages so that documentation can be provided in the future even if local records are not available.

Now, therefore, the Church and Nation Committee humbly overtures the Assembly to take

these premises into consideration and to:

- (1) Adopt the following as the regulations which Ministers and Sessions shall follow in conducting a church marriage service.
 - (a) A church marriage service shall be conducted by a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia according to the service provided by the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee.
 - (b) When parties approach a minister seeking a church marriage, he must supply to them the material prepared and approved by the Assembly and ensure, as far as possible, that both parties understand that a church marriage is not a marriage solemnised under the Marriage Act (1961).
 - (c) The determination that a couple may be married is to be made by the Session of the congregation. Where a minister has a non-congregational ministry, he shall submit the matter to the Session which has jurisdiction over him, or to a Session related to the couple or his field of ministry. No minister shall proceed with a church marriage which has not been approved by a Session.
 - (d) A Session is not bound to approve any marriage, and may adopt its own policies limiting marriages, for instance that at least one party must be a member of the congregation.
 - (e) In making a determination to allow a marriage to proceed the Session shall view the "Notice of intention to marry" completed by the couple and minister. From the Notice and a report from the minister, the Session shall assure itself that the parties intending to be married are a man and a woman; are not within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity stated in the Westminster Confession as amended by the Assembly; are not validly married; that neither party is in a sexual co-habiting relationship with another person; that they are eighteen years of age; and are entering into the marriage voluntarily. The Session or its representatives may interview the parties if necessary, in order to assure itself that these conditions are met.
 - (f) If one or both of the parties have been previously married, the minister shall cite the proof of divorce from the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Circuit Court of Australia; or a Church certificate of divorce; or the equivalent, if the divorce took place in another jurisdiction. The minister must supply a copy of this to the Session, or, if one is not available, provide a detailed explanation to the Session of its unavailability.
 - (g) In determining whether to approve the conduct of a marriage in which one of the parties has been divorced, the Session shall be mindful of the declaration of the Assembly (GAA BB 1967, Min. 107(3)(a), see Ch 5, part (2)) and consider "whether the person concerned is aware and repents of any part he or she may have played in the breakdown or unwarranted dissolution of the former marriage, is willing to accept and exercise forgiveness and is prepared to begin a new marriage trusting in the grace and power of God in Jesus Christ".
 - (h) In approving a church marriage between parties, Session should always make it clear "it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord" (WCF 24.3).
 - (i) The minister who conducts the marriage must ensure that the couple receives a copy of the Certificate, that a record of the marriage in the approved form and a copy of the Certificate is retained in the records of the Session and that the Clerk of the GAA is informed using the approved electronic forms. The Session shall confirm that all records have been appropriately lodged.
 - (j) A person who has been married in a church marriage by a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia may approach any Session for a certificate of divorce. The person must provide a copy of the marriage certificate and the Session shall verify the certificate with the Session under whose jurisdiction the marriage was conducted or with the Clerk of the GAA. The Session shall, in the first place, determine if there is any possibility of a reconciliation. In doing so, it must seek to contact the other party to the marriage. If it is satisfied that the marriage has dissolved and that there is no possibility of a reconciliation, or that there are grounds to end the marriage, it shall provide a Certificate of Divorce. A

Session has no power to determine custody of children or division of property. It must refer parties to the Family Court.

- (k) All documents relating to marriage shall be recorded in an electronic system whereby notice of intended marriage, marriage registers and ecclesiastical marriage certificates are recorded into a PCA database for use locally and centrally with appropriate privacy protections.
- (2) Instruct the Church and Nation Committee to produce a simple leaflet which ministers are required to give to all couples who approach them about marriage. It would state:
 - (a) The importance of marriage in the Christian view of life.
 - (b) The biblical teaching on what constitutes marriage in God's eyes, as well as the historical and ecclesiastical developments around marriage solemnisation.
 - (c) The view that redefined marriage in the Marriage Act is so different to the biblical view that the PCA has opted to no longer solemnise marriages under the Marriage Act.
 - (d) If you are married by a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, you will not be married under the Marriage Act (1961).
 - (e) Because the Family Law Act recognises marriages which have not been solemnised under the Marriage Act, the status of your marriage will be much the same as if you were married under the Marriage Act.
 - (f) The PCA recommends you seek some independent legal advice to ensure that you will not be disadvantaged.
 - (g) You may decide that you would prefer to be married under the Marriage Act, for instance at the Registry Office, and then have a church celebration.
 - (h) Most States of Australia also provide the possibility to register a relationship with Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages.
 - (i) If you are likely to seek to establish your marital status outside Australia, you may be well advised to be married under the Marriage Act.
 - (j) If you decide not to be married under the Marriage Act you should seek legal advice about wills, binding financial agreements, Powers of Attorney, Appointments of Enduring Guardian and legal change of name; and ensure that each spouse is the declared beneficiary of the other for superannuation.
- (3) That the GAA fund, administer and provide ongoing administrative support for an appropriate electronic system of ecclesiastical marriage registration.
- (4) In accordance with Rule 2.14 grant interim authority while the matter is dealt with under the Barrier act.
- (5) Set up a Commission of the GAA to deal with any matters related to the implementation of the overture.
or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

(iv) From the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga concerning Questions at Ordinations and Inductions

6 December 2022

The Clerk
General Assembly of Australia

Dear Mr. Meller,

On receipt of an overture from the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga and in accordance with Rule 2.06 of CPP of the GAA, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW has resolved in the following terms:

GANSW 2016 BB Min 30

Communication (ii): *A communication was received from the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga concerning an overture to the General Assembly of Australia relating to the questions to a minister-elect and an elder-elect.*

*Pursuant to notice the Rev. J.R. Irvin moved:
That the Assembly:*

*Forward the overture to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
The motion was seconded and approved.
The overture is appended to this correspondence.*

JOHN IRVIN, Clerk of Assembly.
Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW.

Overture to amend questions for the minister-elect and elder-elect specified at 6.1(i) and 6.6 (i) of the *Constitution, Procedure and Practice* of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

To the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia:

WHEREAS:

- A. "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness", (2 Timothy 3:16 NIV 11); and
- B. "Under the name of Holy Scripture, or the Word of God written, are now contained all the Books of the Old and New Testament" (Westminster Confession of Faith Chapter 1 Section 2); and
- C. "Do you believe the Word of God which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, to be the only rule of faith and practice?" is the first question asked of ministers-elect at their ordination (Constitution, Procedure and Practice 6.1(i)) and of elders-elect (Constitution, Procedure and Practice 6.6(i)); and
- D. The words "contained in the scriptures" although drawn from the shorter catechism at least imply that there may be words in the Scriptures that are not the Word of God and so create unnecessary theological confusion; and
- E. The Larger Catechism expresses the same truth as:- "The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the Word of God, the only rule of faith and obedience."

Now, therefore, the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga overtures the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia to take these premises into consideration and to:

Amend Constitution, Procedure and Practice 6.1(i) such that it reads, "*Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice?*"

and amend Constitution, Procedure and Practice 6.6(i) such that it reads, "*Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only rule of faith and practice?*"

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

The Rev. C.W. Nicholas and P.R. Sheely were appointed to state the overture in the General Assembly of Australia.

PETITION

(i) **Mr Russell Steyne concerning a decision of the 2016 General Assembly of Tasmania**

(By order of the Assembly (Min. 65), this petition is not included with the Blue Book.)

PROCURATOR'S OPINION – ELDERSHIP OVERTURE REFERENCE FROM GANSW 2016

1. Reference (iv) from GANSW 2016 concerning elders arises from debate on an overture to that Assembly which was presented in an original and a revised form and which in both forms sought to re-structure and in part to rewrite Chapter 4 of the NSW Code currently titled "The Session".

2. The original and revised form were each the subject of an opinion by me, given respectively to GANSW Code Committee and, urgently, to the Assembly by its officers, and received by GANSW in the course of the debate. Copies of those opinions, dated respectively 29 June 2016 and 5 July 2016, are attached. The history of the matter is set out in those opinions, as are the arguments and the conclusions. I have made some typographical corrections.

3. The revised overture, presented in response to my original opinion on the day Assembly opened (4 July 2016) is the one that forms part of the current GAA Assembly Paper One; my second opinion dated 5 July 2016, as requested, applies the analysis in my opinion to that revised proposal, which was debated and became the subject of a reference to GAA on 7 July 2016.

4. In high-level summary, my original opinion dated 29 June 2016 on the original proposal was that the proposed overture in the form that I was then considering was not competent to effect the change to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code which it sought to make and that the competence of proposed pronouncements on doctrinal matters by a State Assembly needed to be reviewed on a case by case basis.

5. This is because the nature of some defined matters reserved to supremacy of the federal national church (the historic categories of doctrine, worship and discipline) will require preclusion of State Assembly activity in that matter until the GAA has chosen to act *because the absence of action in itself (be it by deliberate choice or by simple inactivity) is an expression of supremacy and may also in some areas be affected by the special majority and other requirements under the Basis of Union set out in my opinion.*

6. I then examined the existing limited pronouncements by GAA on the characterisation of the eldership and concluded that *there was sufficient, but barely sufficient, to say that those pronouncements precluded a choice by a State Assembly to compel all elders to teach, in a co-ordinate role with the Minister, as well as to govern, which was what the proposed changes did.*

7. I then concluded that, even if the limited current pronouncements by GAA were not viewed as a real entry into the question of the characterisation of the eldership, the very fact that GAA has chosen not to exercise its power, or has simply not exercised its power, to prescribe or proscribe a particular doctrinal matter on which there is historic controversy within the core faithful traditional teaching of the historic Presbyterian church – in this case the characterisation of the eldership – *infers an intention to leave the matter open to the historic difference of interpretation and opinion and without prescription or proscription until GAA chooses (if it does so choose) to propound a resolution and take that proposed resolution through whatever requirements in the Basis of Union or otherwise are necessary to implement that resolution.*

8. Further, for the same reasons of principle as set out in relevant part in my earlier opinion (and stated more fully in my opinion of 29 June 2009 on a previous eldership overture), prescription or proscription that in effect chooses one controversial characterisation of the eldership, just like

prescription or proscription of age and gender requirements for the eldership, *would constitute a restatement of the national church's doctrine within the meaning of Section III of the Basis of Union and would require compliance with the special majority and other protections set out in Sections III-V and the liberty of opinion protection in paragraph 5 in the Declaratory Statement in Section II.*

9. I have added emphasis in the above summary to capture and highlight the main points. The historic controversy in the characterisation of the eldership was summarised in paragraph 9 of my 29 June 2016 opinion:

"9. It also seems to me indisputable that the proposed amendments [to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code] choose, as their foundation, one doctrinal characterisation of the essential character of the eldership and the concomitant role and responsibilities of elders, being that characterisation in which all elders have and ought to have a teaching ministry and in which an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament is but one teaching elder, in contrast with a more segmented view of the "teaching eldership" as overlapping or perhaps coincident with the ordained ministry of Word and the "ruling eldership" as ordained but focused on matters traditionally described as matters of government even if they also share a limited or subordinate role in matters of Word and Sacrament."

10. In my further opinion dated 5 July 2016 I conclude that the revised proposed overture and the proposed amendments to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code that it propounds remain incompetent for the same substantive reasons as applied to the earlier form to which my opinion of 29 June 2016 was addressed. This is because:

(a) The revised form still in substantive effect prescribes one characterisation of the eldership which is controversial and unresolved by GAA as described in my opinion of 29 June 2016.

(b) The overt reference in the introduction "Ministers and Elders all hold this single pastoral office and share a common purpose", with supporting scriptural references, has been removed and replaced (now in rule 4.01) with "Under the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Elders and Minister(s) of a congregation are its shepherds, who co-operate in the oversight and government of the congregation. The Minister(s) and Elders work together to promote the congregation's maturity in Christ and mission in the world by [there then follows equivalent reference in each version to leading, praying, proclamation of the Gospel, teaching and setting an example]". There remains in substantive effect in both formulations an equation, co-ordination and effective unity, and interchangeability of roles, between Ministry and eldership which in substantive effect is a choice of one characterisation of the eldership.

(c) Proposed rule 4.02 remains substantively unchanged; the scriptural references are omitted but their presence made no difference to my conclusions as I said in my 29 June 2016 opinion. *It prescribes as a mandatory qualification for the eldership a competency to teach; the list of requirements starts with "must" and is cumulative*, and its mandatory nature is reinforced by the prescriptions in the proposed addition to rule 4.40 which also remains unchanged between the original and revised proposal, particularly "When considering candidates a Session must ensure that they meet these qualifications [being the "scriptural qualifications and duties of the eldership, especially those outlined in 4.02 above"]".

(d) This is not removed by (and may be contradictory with) the slightly revised opening of proposed rule 4.03, but which relevantly remains unchanged between original and revised proposed versions, and says that "According to their own gifts, Elders/they are to", among other matters, teach.

(e) In the proposed re-structure the statements in rules 4.01 to 4.03 give an effective co-ordination and unity to ministers and elders by placing those

statements before the rules dealing with Ministers, elders and session.

11. I then say in my 5 July 2016 opinion that "[t]he possible way ahead posited in the final paragraph of my opinion of 29 June 2016 equally applies, namely, to engage the appropriate mechanisms to approach the GAA on the doctrinal issue of the character of the eldership which may initiate procedures and protections under the Basis of Union mentioned above."

12. The final paragraph (paragraph 27) of my 29 June 2016 opinion said:

"27. A possible way ahead in relation to the proposed overture could be to engage the appropriate mechanisms to approach the GAA on the doctrinal issue of the character of the eldership. In my view it would not be an appropriate mechanism for that task simply to refer the current proposed overture to GAA because more than opinion or advice (GAACPP rule 4.01) is required. Depending on the wording of the proposal, the appropriate requirement may be an overture which initiates at least the procedure required under Parts III-V of the Basis of Union and engages with the question whether the liberty of opinion provision in the declaratory statement in Section II paragraph 5 of the Basis of Union is attracted."

13. It will be apparent from the last two paragraphs that I respectfully consider that the current form of bringing this issue to GAA, effectively by reference of the overture, is inappropriate because it will not validly or effectively resolve the issue constitutionally for the Church at a State or Federal level.

14. Putting briefly what I elaborated in my 29 June 2016 opinion (at paragraphs 10-25), this is because defining one side of the controversial characterisation of the eldership as *the doctrine of the national church, when the matter has previously been left open*, constitutes a restatement of the national church's doctrine and engages the special constitutional requirements required for such restatement (including special procedures and majorities).

15. The above point was captured in essence in paragraphs 21-23 of my 29 June 2016 opinion:

"21. Doctrinal matters are the foundation stone and the keystone in the existence and mission of PCA as a national church and its temporal affairs (such as its charitable trust purpose being the advancement of the Christian religion in the Presbyterian cause). This is recognised in the close connection between matters of doctrine and the special majorities and other protections provided in Sections III to V of the Basis of Union and the liberty of conscience provision in paragraph 5 of Section II of the Basis of Union, canvassed above and in my earlier eldership opinion [given 29 June 2009 on the then proposed transfer to the national church of supreme power concerning admission to the eldership and insertion of age and gender requirements for the eldership].

22. Even if the limited pronouncements mentioned above [in current GAA pronouncements] are viewed as not a real entry into the question of the characterisation of the eldership, the very fact that GAA has chosen not to exercise its power, or has simply not exercised its power, to prescribe or proscribe a particular doctrinal matter on which there is historic controversy within the core faithful traditional teaching of the historic Presbyterian church - in this case the characterisation of the eldership - infers an intention to leave the matter open to the historic difference of interpretation and opinion and without prescription or proscription until GAA chooses (if it does so choose) to propound a resolution and take it through whatever requirements in the Basis of Union or otherwise are necessary to implement that resolution.

23. Further, for the same reasons of principle as set out in relevant part above (and stated fully in my eldership opinion), prescription or proscription that in effect chooses one controversial characterisation of the eldership, just like prescription (or proscription) of age and gender requirements for the eldership, would constitute a restatement of the national church's doctrine within the meaning of Section III of the Basis of Union and would require compliance with the special majority and other protections

set out in Sections III-V and the liberty of opinion protection."

16. In my respectful opinion, if the reference is passed it will not be valid or effective to remove the matters that make the proposed overture to GANSW incompetent.

17. To do that, the national church through the GAA and the special majority procedures in the Basis of Union would need to endorse, as the correct and only characterisation of the eldership and its qualifications, the characterisation in the proposed overture.

[Signed in the original:]

G. Burton

Wentworth Chambers

6 September 2016

Gregory Burton SC, FCI Arb Procurator, PCA

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29 JUNE 2016

ELDERSHIP DUTIES AND DOCTRINAL ISSUES IN STATE CODES

Opinion

1. The Code Committee of GANSW on 7 June 2016 referred for my opinion a proposed overture to GANSW2016 in the following minuted terms (the minute is in draft and I have made some typographical corrections to that draft):

"Proposed Overture to amend The Code Chapter 4 (Session): An email was received from the Special Committee on Elders and Deacons enclosing a proposed overture to amend The Code Chapter 4 (Session).

The Committee identified three issues of concern relating to the proposed overture:

- (a) Given the function and purpose of The Code, the desirability of inserting scriptural references and a theological underpinning within the text of The Code.
- (b) The strategy of proposing changes to The Code prior to the Assembly adopting a view of eldership upon which The Code changes are based.
- (c) The permissibility and competence of the State Assembly making a doctrinal statement in the absence of any doctrinal statement on the same issue by the Federal Assembly.

It was resolved that the Committee:

- (1) Request the Procurator of the NSW Assembly to provide an opinion on the competence of that which is proposed by the overture
- (2) Request the Procurator of the NSW Assembly to provide advice on the permissibility of a State Assembly making a statement on a question of doctrine (for example, on the roles, responsibilities and qualifications of an elder, or on sexuality) without referring it first to the GAA in circumstances where the GAA has not made a statement on the same question of doctrine."

2. My opinion on questions (1) and (2) follows, recognising the overlap between them and the further intertwining of matters of principle with issues of principle considered in my earlier opinions to GAA and GANSW on the eldership overture remitted from GAA 2007 dated 29 June 2009 and to GAA on a national church dated 10 February 2010. My conclusion in brief is that the proposed overture is not competent to effect the change to Part 4 of the NSW Code which it seeks and that the competence of proposed pronouncements on doctrinal matters by a State Assembly need to be reviewed on a case by case basis. These conclusions and their potential

implications for a way ahead in respect of the proposed overture are elaborated at the end of this opinion.

3. Without repeating in detail the reasoning, in my earlier opinions referred to above I concluded that the Presbyterian Church of Australia is one united federal national church formed by the consensual union on 24 July 1901 of the then independent Presbyterian Churches of each State (colonies prior to the Federation which had then just occurred). The basic constitutional documents within the Scheme of Union are the Basis of Union and the Articles of Agreement (with the latest complete revision and wholesale adoption of the latter being at GAA2001). Sections III and IV of the Basis of Union provide:

"III. Any proposed revision or abridgement of the subordinate standard of the church, or restatement of its doctrine, or change of the formula, shall, before being adopted, be remitted to the local assemblies, and through them to the presbyteries, and no change shall be made without the consent of a majority of the local assemblies, three-fifths of the presbyteries of the whole Church, and a majority of three-fifths of the members present when the final vote of the General Assembly is taken. [Section II of the Basis of Union states that the subordinate standard of the united church shall be the Westminster Confession of Faith read in the light of the declaratory statement contained in clause II and as amended by the GAA set out in Part 5.1 of the PCA's Constitution, Practice and Procedure (GAACPP).]

IV. On any change being made in the Basis of Union in accordance with Section III, if any congregation thereupon refuses to acquiesce in the change and determines to adhere to the original basis of union, the General Assembly is empowered - (1) to allow such congregation to retain all its congregational property; or (2) to deal in such other way with the said property as to the assembly may seem just and equitable."

Section V of the Basis of Union is a partial entrenching clause which requires any amendment to Sections III and IV to be made only under the same regime. That entrenching regime is not expressed in terms to apply to Section V itself.

Paragraph 5 in the Declaratory Statement in section II of the Basis of Union contains the "liberty of opinion" provision: "That liberty of opinion is allowed on matters in the subordinate standard not essential to the doctrine therein taught, the Church guarding against the abuse of this liberty to the injury of its unity and peace."

Article 15 of the Articles of Agreement provides:

"15.1 The General Assembly by resolution expressed to be pursuant to this Article may repeal, amend or add to these Articles of Agreement from time to time, but not without the prior consent of the majority of the Presbyteries of the Church and a majority of the State Assemblies.

If the General Assembly resolves to remit to State Assemblies and Presbyteries a proposed alteration to these Articles, a record shall be taken and recorded in the minutes of the General Assembly of the number voting for and against, and of those present but not voting, in respect of such resolution.

For the purposes of Article 15.1, the failure by a Presbytery or a State Assembly to respond to a remit shall be deemed to be disapproval of that remit."

The deeming provision in Article 15.3 is the opposite to the deeming provision for Rules in Article 2.3, where failure to respond is deemed to be approval of the remitted proposed Rule.

4. In my eldership opinion I went on to discuss that Article 2.1 says that the GAA "shall have powers legislative, administrative and judicial, which powers shall be supreme with respect to" a number of specified matters. The specified matters are mostly within three of the four historic categories into which the laws of the Presbyterian Church have been classified, being doctrine, worship and discipline; on the historic division see the authorities cited in the Law Agent's speech to GAA 1997 min 59. Two, being Article 2.1(k) the publication of a national journal and Article 2.1(l) Christian education, appear to overlap those categories with the other historic category of government.

5. I then pointed out that, unlike the grant of legislative power in the Commonwealth Constitution, it is not made express in Article 2.1 or elsewhere in the constitutional documents of the PCA that the specified matters in Article 2.1 are the only matters with respect to which the GAA can exercise its legislative, administrative and judicial powers. The establishment of the GAA under Article 2.1 as the Supreme Court of a united federal national church would suggest that the GAA might have broader powers than those in which it is specified as "supreme", as does the fact that it was necessary to specify in which powers it was "supreme". As a practical matter, a broader exercise of power beyond "supreme" powers by the GAA would be concurrent with any exercise of power by State Assemblies or other qualified courts of the church and, as mentioned below, there is no necessary override of the other exercise of power by reason of the federal exercise of power. The use of the words "Supreme Court" would not necessarily infer such an override given that the areas of "supreme" exercise of power are specified. Thus, if the Articles contain an exercise of power which falls outside a specified grant of "supreme" power in Article 2.1, it is likely that other courts or officers or members of the Church are not bound to observe that exercise of power at least if there is an inconsistent exercise of power by another qualified court of the Church on the same subject matter. The Law Agent in his speech to GAA 1997 min 59 referred to this by using the 1991 inclusion of Article 7.9 which prescribed gender requirements for "admission to the ministry of Word and Sacraments". The Law Agent referred to that exercise of power as "supreme" because he said it came within Article 2.1(e) being an exercise of legislative power by the GAA with respect to "the admission of candidates to the ministry". The Law Agent contrasted, by way of example, a similar prescription of gender requirements for the eldership generally which was not supported by any grant of supreme power in Article 2.1.

6. I then turned to the effect of a grant of "supreme" power in the matters specified in Article 2.1. The effect of such a grant is not expressly defined in the constitutional documents of the PCA. One depends on the meaning of the word "supreme" which itself is not defined. "Supreme" does not of itself necessarily and inherently mean "exclusive" and does not of itself necessarily and inherently preclude or exclude concurrent exercise of power, but it is likely, particularly in this context, to infer an overriding or preclusion of other exercise of concurrent power to the extent of any inconsistency. Whether or not that override or preclusion would operate only on direct inconsistency or direct contradiction (one permits, the other forbids), or would have some wider operation (if, for instance, the federal exercise of power or its absence of exercise beyond a limited aspect was intended to "cover the field"), is not express. There is no equivalent in the constitutional documents of the PCA to section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution which operates on concurrent exercise of power and has been interpreted by case law to extend to each of the meanings just given. The only other guide in the constitutional documents of the PCA is Article 10.1, which provides:

"The autonomy of the State Assemblies shall not be further interfered with than is necessary to give effect to the Basis of Union and the Articles of Agreement."

Article 10.1 appears intended to achieve the same type of effect given to secular Commonwealth Constitutional arrangements by case law, namely, that one reads the plenitude of grants of concurrent Commonwealth power on ordinary principles to see if a particular exercise of power is valid, without reference to any doctrine of "reserved State powers" limiting that reading, but that it is a principle of intergovernmental relations in the federal compact that the exercise of power will not interfere with core governmental functions of another government and thereby destroy or prejudice the federal compact.

7. The currently proposed overture would re-title, re-order and in material part re-write Chapter 4 of Part II of the NSW Code. A copy of the proposed overture in my possession (which I understand may not be the final form but in substance and form is close to what is proposed) is appended to this opinion together with a copy of the revised Chapter 4 as it would appear if the proposed overture was enacted. I shall refer to provisions in that attachment rather than quote from it in the body of this opinion. The primary changes in text are an introduction and new rules 4.02 and 4.03. Proposed rule 4.02 would replace current rule 4.41 which reads: "An elder must be in full communion within the congregation, regularly attend its services and contribute to its funds, and have signed the documents the Conduct Protocol Unit requires of

elders. An elder should be of acknowledged piety, upholding the worship of God and exemplary in conduct. When an election is to take place opportunity should be taken to direct the attention of the congregation to the scriptural qualifications and duties of the eldership." Proposed rule 4.03 would replace current rule 4.37 which reads: "Elders co-operate with the minister in the oversight and government of the congregation. They visit the aged and sick in the district assigned to them, they care for the young, guide and encourage enquirers, edify and comfort believers, and generally promote the spiritual welfare of the congregation."

8. It seems to me indisputable that the proposed amendments deal with matters of doctrine concerning the role and responsibilities of elders and the essential character of the eldership. This is the case either with or without the express insertion of the scriptural references in the proposed text.

9. It also seems to me indisputable that the proposed amendments choose, as their foundation, one doctrinal characterisation of the essential character of the eldership and the concomitant role and responsibilities of elders, being that characterisation in which all elders have and ought to have a teaching ministry and in which an ordained minister of Word and Sacrament is but one teaching elder, in contrast with a more segmented view of the "teaching eldership" as overlapping or perhaps coincident with the ordained ministry of Word and the "ruling eldership" as ordained but focused on matters traditionally described as matters of government even if they also share a limited or subordinate role in matters of Word and Sacrament.

10. The foregoing chosen doctrinal characterisation is expressed strongly in the premises to the proposed overture, particularly premises 2, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9. It is also strongly exhibited in the nature of the re-titling and re-structuring and embodied in the introduction and in rules 4.02 and 4.03 in the proposed amendments.

11. In my eldership opinion in 2009, in the course of analysing the interaction of the nature of eldership with the PCA constitutional documents and the exhibition and application of that interaction in the then proposed overture (which proposed to insert into the Articles a grant of supreme power to the GAA in respect of the eldership and in the same overture to insert a further Article that prescribed (and inherently proscribed) age, gender and other requirements in respect of the eldership for the future), I discussed the doctrinal nature of choosing the universal teaching characterisation of the eldership. The following parts of my eldership opinion are repeated as apposite to the currently proposed overture:

"17. The overture [then proposed] refers to admission to the eldership, and eligibility for such admission, in general terms, that is, all elders. It does not distinguish, as does historic Presbyterian thought, between those called "teaching elders" (which could be co-extensive with "ministers" although that is controversial and unclear) and those called "ruling elders", with regulation of the former being seen to be a matter of doctrine and regulation of the latter a matter of government: see, for example, the Law Agent's speech to GAA 1997 min 59 and authorities there referred to.

18. If it is correct, as the preamble to the [then proposed] overture infers, to say that the distinction in the preceding paragraph was never complete and/or is no longer valid (among other reasons, because of the changes to the Book of Common Order in 2003 to specify that an elder's duty includes teaching from God's Word), and that in effect all elders perform at least some of the functions of teaching elders or could be called "teaching elders", that would reinforce the conclusion to which I have come below that the [then proposed] overture taken as a whole impacts on doctrine so as to affect the Basis of Union and attract Section III of the Basis of Union. The same reinforcement would occur if, for instance, the correct position was that a "teaching elder's" focus is on teaching (that is, the "ministry of Word" to use the language in Article 7.9), and all elders equally can carry out all other functions including "ministry of Sacraments" (to use the language in Article 7.9).

...

31. In historic Presbyterian thought, regulation of the teaching eldership has been

bound up with matters of doctrine. Supreme power with respect to doctrine has been granted to the GAA under Article 2.1(a).

34. ... the proposed eligibility requirements in the second proposed amendment [the prescription of requirements for the eldership] in their application to all elders are based, as the preamble to the [then proposed] overture propounding them states and as the text of the second proposed amendment (by its incorporation of Biblical references) recognises, on a particular interpretation of scripture. I emphasise that the merits of that interpretation and alternatives to it is NOT the issue here, nor the subject of this opinion. Indeed, such a matter would be beyond the legitimate scope of this opinion, of my role as Procurator, and of my specialist expertise which informs this opinion.

35. It is clear that there are differing views within historic Presbyterian and Reformed theology on the [then topic of prescriptive requirements on age and gender] eligibility for the teaching and ruling eldership, including within those who consider themselves otherwise within the same tradition on evangelical interpretation of scripture. Again, the nature and merits of the differing views is not the subject of this opinion, just the fact of the existence of such differing views.

36. The proposed eligibility requirement prescribes (and in some ways proscribes) one side of the differing views and one particular interpretation of the scriptures. This is a restatement of "its" doctrine [the reference is to "its" in line 2 of Section III of the Basis of Union], being the doctrine of the church.

37. To the extent that the teaching (and ruling) eldership is based on scriptural standards in the subordinate standard (the Westminster Confession of Faith read in the light of and with the explanations given in the Declaratory Statement), prescription of one interpretation of that standard in the proposed amendment, or prescription or proscription where in the subordinate standard the matter was left open, in a substantive sense is a revision of the subordinate standard and for that reason in itself comes within Section III of the Basis of Union. ...

38. Further, such prescription infringes on liberty of opinion on matters in the subordinate standard protected by para[graph] 5 of the Declaratory Statement. ... Indeed, prescription of one alternative and proscription of another could be seen to be injurious to unity and peace on a matter non-essential to doctrines of grace, justification and salvation in reformed theology.

39. In a substantive sense, such infringement on liberty of opinion is a revision or abridgement of the subordinate standard in respect of its preserving liberty of opinion in para[graph] 5 and for that reason in itself comes within Section III of the Basis of Union."

12. The present issue focuses on: whether or not GAA has exercised its supreme power on the doctrinal controversy concerning the characterisation of the eldership that is the subject of the present proposed overture; if so in what form; even if it hasn't, or has to a limited extent only, does the absence or limited extent of such exercise, taken with the nature of the supreme power over doctrine granted to GAA and the provisions of the Basis of Union mentioned above, affect the ability of a State Assembly to choose one doctrinal characterisation of the eldership prior to there being an express exercise of supreme power on that topic by GAA which will necessarily require a State Assembly to act consistently with that exercise whatever it may be.

13. If the scope of supremacy is only one of direct inconsistency or contradiction (express or implied) between exercise of power by GAA and by a State Assembly, then in my view there is sufficient, but barely sufficient, pronouncement by GAA, at least implicitly, on the characterisation of the eldership so as to preclude choice by a State Assembly of one characterisation, all the more so as the GAA pronouncement (to the extent it makes a choice) implicitly chooses a characterisation of the eldership different from the characterisation that all elders must teach as well as govern.

14. GAACPP Part 4.2.2 implicitly recognises, in its determination on which elders can be appointed to administer the sacraments in specified situations, that some elders will have a greater understanding of the theology of the sacraments than others.

15. Somewhat more strongly, the questions ordered by GAA in Part 6.6 for elders-elect expressly

refer (at (v) and (vi)) to "the office of Ruling Elder". This could be argued to be simply a reference to an aspect of concentration within the overall teaching eldership, as distinct from the aspect of concentration within the same overall teaching eldership of ordained ministers or other specially-focused preachers or teachers who are elders. However, that would be inconsistent with the overall structure of the questions in Chapter 6 of GAACPP.

16. Irrespective of the position on direct inconsistency or contradiction, in my respectful opinion the concept of "supremacy" in Article 2.1 does encompass within its overriding effect a "cover the field" test similar to, but in fact broader than, that provided within section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution (as discussed in paragraph 6 above), at the least in the context of the supreme power over certain doctrinal matters and potentially in some other grants of supreme power to GAA.

17. The secular "cover the field" test is founded on the need under section 109 of the Commonwealth Constitution for the presence of a Commonwealth law that is a valid exercise of one of the enumerated Commonwealth heads of constitutional power. This is the means by which the Commonwealth enters the particular field of activity. One then determines whether or not such entry, even if specific and limited in scope, is intended to preclude State laws from entering the same field because the limited Commonwealth entry exhibited an intention to leave the rest of the particular field of activity unregulated.

18. In my view, the limited pronouncements by GAA on the characterisation of the eldership mentioned above constitute sufficient, but barely sufficient, entry into the field so as to attract a principle akin to the secular "cover the field test" and preclude activity of State Assemblies on the topic of characterisation of the eldership.

19. However, in my opinion there is a stronger "cover the field" test in relation at least to certain matters of doctrine within the PCA constitutional documents than within the secular Commonwealth Constitution. Grants of power in the Commonwealth Constitution are either exclusive (which is self-explanatory) or, mostly, *concurrent* with the powers of the States, hence the need for a provision such as section 109 with its requirement for an actual exercise by the Commonwealth of the grant of concurrent power to be the trigger for the test of inconsistency.

20. By contrast, GAA is granted by the PCA constitutional documents "supreme", not concurrent or exclusive, power with respect to defined matters. The nature of that supremacy may vary as between, and within the scope of, the various defined matters on which power is granted depending on the nature of the defined matter. The nature of some defined matters reserved to the supremacy of the federal national church will require preclusion of State Assembly activity in that matter until the GAA has chosen to act because the absence of action in itself (be it by deliberate choice or by simple inactivity) is an expression of supremacy and may also in some areas be affected by the special requirements under the Basis of Union set out above.

21. Doctrinal matters are the foundation stone and the keystone in the existence and mission of PCA as a national church and its temporal affairs (such as its charitable trust purpose being the advancement of the Christian religion in the Presbyterian cause). This is recognised in the close connection between matters of doctrine and the special majorities and other protections provided in Sections III to V of the Basis of Union and the liberty of conscience provision in paragraph 5 of Section II of the Basis of Union, canvassed above and in my earlier eldership opinion.

22. Even if the limited pronouncements mentioned above are viewed as not a real entry into the question of the characterisation of the eldership, the very fact that GAA has chosen not to exercise its power, or has simply not exercised its power, to prescribe or proscribe a particular doctrinal matter on which there is historic controversy within the core faithful traditional teaching of the historic Presbyterian church - in this case the characterisation of the eldership - infers an intention to leave the matter open to the historic difference of interpretation and opinion and without prescription or

proscription until GAA chooses (if it does so choose) to propound a resolution and take it through whatever requirements in the Basis of Union or otherwise are necessary to implement that resolution.

23. Further, for the same reasons of principle as set out in relevant part above (and stated fully in my eldership opinion), prescription or proscription that in effect chooses one controversial characterisation of the eldership, just like prescription (or proscription) of age and gender requirements for the eldership, would constitute a restatement of the national church's doctrine within the meaning of Section III of the Basis of Union and would require compliance with the special majority and other protections set out in Sections III-V and the liberty of opinion protection.

24. It is appropriate to reserve for an occasion on which it arises the operation of "supremacy" on other doctrinal issues (where there may not be the same principled controversy) and on other grants of power to GAA in Article 2.1.

25. Even with that reservation however, it does not necessarily follow from the foregoing that State Assemblies are precluded from pronouncing on every issue of doctrine until GAA has spoken. Many, indeed probably nearly all, such pronouncements will be grounded in clear commonality of interpretation within the national church on the doctrinal issue informing the statement and will not constitute a restatement of national church doctrine so as to attract Section III of the Basis of Union or the liberty of opinion protection. One reasonably clear example is a declaration by a State Assembly or one of its committees on certain matters of sexual conduct and relationships including the marriage relationship that was consistent with and applied in a particular context the express and implicit statements on the character of marriage in Chapter XXIV of the Westminster Confession of Faith with the amendments recorded in GACPP Part 5. I have been briefed with some specific examples from State Codes other than NSW which contain doctrinal pronouncements on the eldership. I have not been briefed with a comprehensive review of doctrinal pronouncements within all the State Codes. I think it would not be appropriate to comment further except in response to a specific request concerning a specific example.

26. A separate issue raised by the Code Committee's concerns is the wisdom or otherwise of placing comprehensive and substantial doctrinal statements in a document such as the NSW Code (or the PCA Articles of Agreement) whose role is essentially to establish and define a governance and operating structure and processes for the NSW (or federal) church. This is not a matter on which the laws of the church speak prescriptively so I express purely a personal view founded on the useful distinction in legal documents between those that state foundational and important principles and those that establish and define the operating structure and processes, with brief reference to the relevant principles stated elsewhere in full. In my respectful view, it is better for that distinction to be maintained for reasons of clarity and practice. This suggests that, for PCNSW, the appropriate medium for permissible doctrinal pronouncements would be declaratory acts (including pursuant to rule 3.79) or statements made by GANSW or its committees rather than the standing orders in Part I of the Code, the rules in Part II of the Code or the regulations in Part III of the Code.

27. A possible way ahead in relation to the proposed overture could be to engage the appropriate mechanisms to approach the GAA on the doctrinal issue of the character of the eldership. In my view it would not be an appropriate mechanism for that task simply to refer the current proposed overture to GAA because more than opinion or advice (GAACPP rule 4.01) is required. Depending on the wording of the proposal, the appropriate requirement may be an overture which initiates at least the procedure required under Parts III-V of the Basis of Union and engages with the question whether the liberty of opinion provision in the declaratory statement in Section II paragraph 5 of the Basis of Union is attracted.

[Signed in the original:] **G. Burton**

Wentworth Chambers, 29 June 2016

Gregory Burton SC, FCI Arb Procurator, PCNSW

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ELDERSHIP OVERTURE GANSW2016 IN REVISED FORM

Opinion

1. The Clerk of Assembly with the consent of the GANSW Code Committee has circulated my opinion dated 29 June 2016 on a proposed overture with proposed amendments to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code in the form attached to that opinion. My opinion with attachments has been reproduced and circulated in Assembly Paper 3 for GANSW2016.
2. The Special Committee on Elders and Deacons has issued on 4 July 2016 a revised version of the proposed overture which has been reproduced and circulated in Assembly Paper 4 for intended debate on 7 July 2016. I shall not further reproduce that revised proposal since it has been circulated to Commissioners.
3. I have been asked to apply the analysis in my opinion to that revised proposal.
4. In high-level summary, my opinion was that the proposed overture in the form that I was considering was not competent to effect the change to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code which it sought and that the competence of proposed pronouncements on doctrinal matters by a State Assembly needed to be reviewed on a case by case basis. The nature of some defined matters reserved to supremacy of the federal national church will require preclusion of State Assembly activity in that matter until the GAA has chosen to act because the absence of action in itself (be it by deliberate choice or by simple inactivity) is an expression of supremacy and may also in some areas be affected by the special majority and other requirements under the Basis of Union set out in my opinion.
5. This has particular application where, if the limited pronouncements by GAA were not viewed as a real entry into the question of the characterisation of the eldership, the very fact that GAA has chosen not to exercise its power, or has simply not exercised its power, to prescribe or proscribe a particular doctrinal matter on which there is historic controversy within the core faithful traditional teaching of the historic Presbyterian church - in this case the characterisation of the eldership - infers an intention to leave the matter open to the historic difference of interpretation and opinion and without prescription or proscription until GAA chooses (if it does so choose) to propound a resolution and take that proposed resolution through whatever requirements in the Basis of Union or otherwise are necessary to implement that resolution.
6. Further, for the same reasons of principle as set out in relevant part in my earlier opinion (and stated more fully in my opinion of 29 June 2009 on a previous eldership overture), prescription or proscription that in effect chooses one controversial characterisation of the eldership, just like prescription or proscription of age and gender requirements for the eldership, would constitute a restatement of the national church's doctrine within the meaning of Section III of the Basis of Union and would require compliance with the special majority and other protections set out in Sections III-V and the liberty of opinion protection in paragraph 5 in the Declaratory Statement in Section II.
7. In my opinion, the revised proposed overture and the proposed amendments to Chapter 4 of the NSW Code that it propounds are incompetent for the same substantive reasons as applied to the earlier form to which my opinion of 29 June 2016 was addressed.
8. The revised form still in substantive effect prescribes one characterisation of the eldership which is controversial and unresolved by GAA as described in my opinion of 29 June 2016.
9. The overt reference in the introduction "Ministers and Elders all hold this single pastoral

office and share a common purpose", with supporting scriptural references, has been removed and replaced (now in rule 4.01) with "Under the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Elders and Minister(s) of a congregation are its shepherds, who co-operate in the oversight and government of the congregation. The Minister(s) and Elders work together to promote the congregation's maturity in Christ and mission in the world by [there then follows equivalent reference in each version to leading, praying, proclamation of the Gospel, teaching and setting an example]". There remains in substantive effect in both formulations an equation, co-ordinance and effective unity, and interchangeability of roles, between Ministry and eldership which in substantive effect is a choice of one characterisation of the eldership.

10. Proposed rule 4.02 remains substantively unchanged; the scriptural references are omitted but their presence made no difference to my conclusions as I said in my 29 June 2016 opinion. It prescribes as a mandatory qualification for the eldership a competency to teach; the list of requirements starts with "must" and is cumulative, and its mandatory nature is reinforced by the prescriptions in the proposed addition to rule 4.40 which also remains unchanged between the original and revised proposal, particularly "When considering candidates a Session must ensure that they meet these qualifications [being the "scriptural qualifications and duties of the eldership, especially those outlined in 4.02 above"]".

11. This is not removed by (and may be contradictory with) the slightly revised opening of proposed rule 4.03, but which relevantly remains unchanged between original and revised proposed versions, and says that "According to their own gifts, Elders/they are to", among other matters, teach.

12. In the proposed re-structure the statements in rules 4.01 to 4.03 give an effective co-ordinance and unity to ministers and elders by placing those statements before the rules dealing with Ministers, elders and session.

13. The possible way ahead posited in the final paragraph of my opinion of 29 June 2016 equally applies, namely, to engage the appropriate mechanisms to approach the GAA on the doctrinal issue of the character of the eldership which may initiate procedures and protections under the Basis of Union mentioned above.

14. It may be technically possible, by skilful parsing of phrases, refinements of words and clever use of emphasis and tone, to achieve an effective choice of one characterisation of the eldership in a proposed amendment without overtly stating that outcome or appearing to make it mandatory in the literal terms used. In my respectful opinion, that would have difficulty in coming within the substantive intent of the Basis of Union and the supreme authority given to the national church to pronounce on doctrinal matters, which are the foundation stone and the keystone in the existence and mission of PCA as a national church and its temporal affairs. The appropriate path is to place the matter squarely before GAA.

[Signed in the original:] **G. Burton**

Wentworth Chambers, 5 July 2016

Gregory Burton SC, FCI Arb Procurator, PCNSW

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REFERENCES

- (i) **From the Presbytery of Western Australia asking the GAA to express an opinion on whether the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches or excludes particular views on eschatology and the millennium.**

The Presbytery of Western Australia duly convened and constituted on the 28th April 2016 resolved to refer to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia for opinion, advice, decision, direction or judgement the matter contained in the following extract minute;

That Presbytery:

Send a reference to the 2016 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia requesting the Assembly to express an opinion on whether the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches or excludes particular views on eschatology and the millennium.

Extracted from the records of the Presbytery of Western Australia this 13th day of June 2016, by me,

S.M. BONNINGTON, Clerk of Presbytery.

- (ii) **From the Presbytery of Melbourne West seeking clarification as to the delineation of powers and responsibilities between PIM and a presbytery in relation to PIM mission churches.**

A Commission of the Presbytery of Melbourne West duly constituted on 2 June 2016 resolved, among other things, to refer to the General Assembly of Australia the matter contained in the following extract minute for opinion, advice, decision, direction or judgment:

Minute 008/16 of Commission of Presbytery of Melbourne West

"It was moved that the Commission send a reference to the GAA asking them to rule on the delineation of powers and responsibilities of Presbyteries and PIM with regards to PIM Mission Stations (i.e. Darwin and Alice Springs). Motion was seconded and carried."

Extracted and confirmed from the minutes of the meeting of the Commission of the Presbytery of Melbourne West on 2 June 2016 by me,

Adam Humphries

Clerk

2 June 2016

The facts of the case

The Darwin congregation was re-established by Presbyterian Inland Mission ("PIM"). In 2010, the General Assembly of Australia ("GAA") resolved a number of matters in relation to the congregation at Darwin.

The GAA resolved that:

1. The Presbyterian Church activity and interests in Darwin be under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria ("PCV").
2. Request the Presbytery of Melbourne West ("PWM") to exercise Presbyterial function and authority over Darwin in relation to and consistent with the work of PIM, at and from the date of the Presbytery's next meeting.
3. Acknowledge that the work of the Presbyterian Church in Darwin is under the authority and management of the PIM Committee, but such to be consistent with the practice and procedure of the PCV and Presbyterian Church of Australia.
4. Request the PIM Committee to provide the PWM and the General Assembly of Victoria with reports from time to time in respect of its work in Darwin.

Since 2010, the Presbytery of Melbourne West ("PMW") believed that it exercised authority and jurisdiction over the Darwin congregation. This was evidenced by the maintenance of a pastoral care committee to the Darwin minister, and required reporting to PMW by the Darwin congregation.

In May 2016, PMW was notified of an employment dispute between the minister at

Darwin and PIM.

PMW sought to act upon the dispute, however upon review of the 2010 resolutions passed by the GAA, the PMW is uncertain as to what, if any jurisdiction, that it can exercise in the employment dispute, because the minister at Darwin is not an inducted minister, but an employee of PIM. Additionally, the code of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and the regulations of PIM do not appear to define the nature or status of the Darwin congregation.

PMW now seeks clarification as to the delineation of powers and responsibilities between PIM, the Darwin congregation and the Courts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

PMW believes that it is appropriate for the GAA to determine this question, before further action is taken, as similar resolutions were passed in 2013 in relation to the Alice Springs congregation, and further clarity is required for the parties.

ADAM HUMPHRIES

Clerk, Presbytery of Melbourne West.

(iii) From the Presbytery of Melbourne West concerning Rule 1.05 within the Code of Discipline

3rd June 2015

Rev Bruce Meller

GAA Clerk of Assembly

Presbyterian Church of Australia

PO Box 2196

STRAWBERRY HILLS NSW 2012

Dear Bruce and Members of the GAA,

The Presbytery of Melbourne West, duly convened and constituted on 20th May, 2015, resolved, among other things, to refer to the 2016 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia (GAA) the matter contained in the following extract minute for opinion, advice, decision, direction or judgement:

“Minute A85/15 Item 2.

It was moved that Presbytery approve this Reference be forwarded to the General Assembly of Australia through the General Assembly of Victoria (GAV) and request the Clerk of the GAV to assist Rev Peter Owen with the wording of this Reference.

The motion was seconded and carried.”

Extracted from the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Presbytery of Melbourne West, held on 20th May 2015, by me: Mrs. Glenys Wright, Clerk. Dated: 3rd June 2015.

The Facts of the Case

The Presbytery of Melbourne West received conflicting advice as to the proper interpretation of GAA Code, Chapter 8, Rule 1.05. The conflicting advice was not helpful to the Presbytery when it was recently working through a case.

The Presbytery asks for a ruling from the GAA as to exactly when the "Time Limit" referred to in Chapter 8, Rule 1.05 commences.

Yours in Christ's service

GLENYS WRIGHT, Clerk, Presbytery of Melbourne West

Mr Dennis Wright was appointed to state the Reference.

(iv) From the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders

6 December 2022

The Clerk, General Assembly of Australia

Dear Mr Meller,

At its meeting in July 2016, The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in NSW considered an overture to amend a section on the NSW Code concerning elders.

The NSW General Assembly has resolved (inter alia) to seek the advice of the

General Assembly of Australia by means of a Reference in the following terms:

GANSW 2016 BB Min. 87

That the Assembly:

- (a) Forward to the GAA as a reference (GAA Rules 4.01-4.07) the overture, seeking the advice of the GAA as to whether it finds any objection to the overture due to inconsistencies with the doctrinal position of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (b) Forward the paper "Summary of Findings: Shepherds and Servants" to the GAA, as an accompanying document to the reference.
- (c) Appoint Mr M. Smith and the Rev. Dr J. McClean to state the reference.

The Overture and the accompanying document are appended to this correspondence.

JOHN IRVIN, Clerk of Assembly.

**Overture from the Special Committee on Elders and Deacons
to amend *The Code* [PCNSW] Part II Chapter 4.**

To the Venerable, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales,

WHEREAS:

- A. The ministry of elders is crucial for the life and mission of the Church;
- B. The Code at present outlines the constitution, powers and role of Sessions at the start of chapter 4, and has short sections on the duties of elders (4.37) and the qualifications of elders (4.41), whereas the biblical material describes in detail the qualifications of elders and addresses their ministry, with little discussion of the function of the Session;
- C. The emphasis in the Code on the role of the Session may give the impression that the formal governance role of the elders meeting in Session is the primary aspect of their work, whereas the work of the elder as a pastoral leader is the primary task of the office and the function of Session is to serve and provide direction for that wider task;
- D. It would be more appropriate for the Code to describe the role of elders first and affirm the importance of this, and then to set out the constitution, powers and role of the Session in the context of the wider work of elders;
- E. The current description of the duties of elders (4.37) while specifying important parts of the ministry of elders, does not describe the full biblical expectation of the ministry of elders.

Now therefore, the special committee on Elders and Deacons humbly overtures the General Assembly of Australia in the State of New South Wales to take these premises into consideration and amend Chapter 4 of The Code Part II as follows;

1. Replace the chapter heading "The Session" with "Elders and Sessions";
2. Insert the section heading ELDERS before 4.01;
3. Replace 4.36 with a new 4.01 as follows;

4.01 Elders. Under the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Elders and Minister(s) of a congregation are its shepherds, who co-operate in the oversight and government of the congregation. The Minister(s) and Elders work together to promote the congregation's maturity in Christ and mission in the world by leading, praying, proclaiming the gospel and teaching the Word of God, and setting an example of life in Christ.

Elders are communicants of the congregation who have been elected to the Session by the communicants of the congregation. They are ordained and admitted by the Session of a congregation following the regulations given in this Code and are under the jurisdiction of the Session as are all other members of the congregation.

4. Replace 4.41 with a new 4.02 as follows;

4.02 Qualification of Elders. An elder must:

- (a) have a living faith in Christ;
- (b) hold firmly to the truths of the faith as stated in the confession of the Church;
- (c) be a mature Christian, who demonstrates exemplary Christ-like character as defined by the Scriptures, over 21 years of age, and a communicant member of the

congregation who consistently attends worship and participates in the life of the congregation;

- (d) be competent to teach and to lead;
- (e) be willing and able to serve as an elder.

5. Replace 4.37 with a new 4.03 as follows;

4.03 Duties of Elders. According to their own gifts, Elders are to:

- i. Lead the congregation in its life and mission, including:
 - a. provide biblical vision for the congregation and effective oversight of its common life;
 - b. participate in and lead worship;
 - c. provide spiritual care and encouragement for the members of the congregation, including children, young people, the aged and the sick, so that they grow together towards maturity in Christ;
- ii. Pray for and with the members of the congregation, including:
 - a. public prayer in gathered worship;
 - b. prayer with individuals and small groups, including teaching others how to pray;
 - c. private prayer for the congregation, its life, its mission and its individual members.
- iii. Proclaim the gospel and teach the congregation, including:
 - a. teach the whole counsel of God from the Scriptures, and correct false teaching;
 - b. train and equip others to serve Christ in the church, home, workplace and world;
 - c. share the love of Christ and the message of the gospel beyond the congregation;
- iv. Set an example of the Christian life of faith and repentance.

Elders must watch their own life and teaching carefully. They must also diligently attend meetings of the Session and other Courts to which they may be commissioned. Elders are to devote themselves to these duties and the promotion of the spiritual welfare of the congregation; and are encouraged to avoid being overly busy with other responsibilities, including those within the congregation.

6. Replace the wording of 4.40 "Election of Elders" with the following:

Election of elders. Elders are elected by the communicants of a congregation from among the communicants who are appropriately qualified. When an election of an elder or elders is to take place opportunity should be taken to direct the attention of the congregation to the scriptural qualifications and duties of the eldership, especially those outlined in 4.02 above. When considering candidates a Session must ensure that they meet these qualifications. Before proceeding to ordain or induct an elder a Session must ensure that the candidate has signed the documents the Conduct Protocol Unit requires of elders.

- 7. Relocate 4.29-4.35 to follow the new 4.03 and renumber as 4.04-10;
- 8. Relocate 4.01-4.10 to follow the new 4.10 and renumber as 4.11-4.20;
- 9. Relocate 4.40-4.55 to follow the new 4.20 and renumber as 4.21-4.37;
- 10. Relocate 4.38 "Discipline" to follow the new 4.31 "Presbytery Advised";
- 11. Relocate 4.39 "Elder Emeritus" to follow the new 4.33 "Certificate of Status";
- 12. Renumber the remainder of the Chapter accordingly;
- 13. Delete the section heading "DUTIES OF ELDERS";
- 14. Delete the section heading "DUTIES OF MINISTERS";
- 15. Insert the section heading "MINISTERS" above the renumbered 4.04;
- 16. Insert section heading "CONSTITUTION OF SESSION" above the renumbered 4.10
- 17. Relocate the section heading "ELECTION AND ADMISSION OF ELDERS" above the renumbered 4.21

so that chapter 4 of The Code Part II up to clause 4.55 reads as produced on the following pages (clauses 4.56ff are unchanged):

Or to do otherwise as the Assembly in its wisdom may deem fit.

Mr Murray Smith and the Rev. Dr John McClean were appointed to state the Overture.

(v) From the Presbytery of Darling Downs concerning paedocommunion

14th June 2016
Rev Bruce Meller
Clerk, GAA

Dear Sir,
Subject: Reference for GAA - paedocommunion

At a duly constituted meeting of the Presbytery of Darling Downs held in Miles on Thursday, 9 June 2016, the Presbytery voted to refer questions raised by the South Burnett Charge to the GAA.

Extract minute:

Letter from South Burnett charge re paedocommunion.

16/137 MSA that Presbytery refer the correspondence from South Burnett regarding paedocommunion to the General Assembly of Australia as a reference for clarification and advice.

Extracted by me today.

The letter from the South Burnett Charge is attached.

NICK PRINS, Clerk, Presbytery of the Darling Downs

[Letter from the pastoral charge of South Burnett]

21.05.2016

Dear Nick,

At Presbytery's next meeting the Session of the South Burnett Charge would like Presbytery to discuss the matter of infant communion (paedocommunion), and we request Presbytery refer this matter to the GAA for a determination on where this practice sits with Scripture and our doctrinal standards (the Westminster Confession).

Our Session recently had to deal with an issue where a family were encouraging their small children to take part in communion, upon a profession of their faith to their parents. This was happening with children as young as five years old. When we talked to the parents about this practice, we discovered they had been encouraged to do this exact practice by their previous ministers from a PCA church in Victoria. This had made more difficult the whole process of counselling this family that infant communion is not wise in the light of 1Corinthians 11:27-29, and is not consistent with the practice of Reformed churches, and is a recent innovation. It has also been pointed out that it is the desired practice of our church (like Reformed churches have historically done) that the children of believers do not partake of communion until interviewed by the minister or elders, and are able to make a credible, public profession of faith.

It has been challenging for the family involved to deal with this issue, as they have been given conflicting advice on when their children should partake of communion by different ministers in the same denomination. It has been difficult for all the elders of our session to deal with this matter because none have ever seen this practice be endorsed and taught in Presbyterian churches (our eldership includes one retired Home Missionary, Allan Grant, who has ministered in our denomination, in several charges, for more than 30 years). It has also been challenging for Greg as a newly-ordained minister as he has had to comprehend this issue, not having dealt with it during his training at QTC, or in meeting other ordination requirements, and having no official direction that he can find from our denomination on this matter. All parties concerned have found it difficult to grapple with as there is no formal direction from our denomination, and our denomination, following leads from North America, appears to be embracing an increasingly diverse practice on the matter of infant communion.

In the light of the above, our session asks for:

1. Clarification as to whether infant participation, apart from a profession of faith, and apart from the shepherding/oversight of the elders of a local session, is in accordance with the Scriptures and the Westminster Confession, and in accord with our Reformed polity, piety and practice;
2. Assistance for ministers and elders as we deal with what is becoming an increasingly prevalent situation, of young children being encouraged to participate in the Lord's Supper, until such time as the GAA provides a doctrinal ruling;
3. If, in fact, infant communion is in accord with the Scriptures and the Westminster

Confession, and our denomination wishes to be a 'multi-practice' denomination on this issue (with different churches encouraging children of believers to participate at widely different ages and stages of professing the Christian faith, or with no profession of faith at all), what assistance or guidance can be provided to those churches retaining the historic practice of Reformed churches when families from churches with different practices in our denomination transfer their membership to those churches?

Presbytery's help in this matter will be most welcome.

Yours in Christ,

Greg Cooney

AUDITOR'S REPORT & FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

Presbyterian Church of Australia
in the State of New South Wales

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OFFICE OF THE CHAIRMAN OF TRUSTEES

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH (NEW SOUTH WALES) PROPERTY TRUST FINANCIAL STATEMENTS 2015

The financial statements for the three years ended 31 December 2015 reflect exclusively the assets and liabilities of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

In the opinion of the Trustees, the accompanying balance sheets disclose the funds and investments for which the Trustees are responsible and the income statements are properly drawn up so as to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs at 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015 and the results for the three years ended on that date.

The following pages are extracts and supplementary schedules from the audited accounts of the Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust and Presbyterian Inland Mission.

John Rolland
Chairman of Trustees
Signed at Sydney



Building a better working world

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Independent Auditor's Report to the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia

We have audited the extraction of the attached balance sheet and statement of comprehensive income of the Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust – Funds held on behalf of the General assembly of Australia (“Assembly Fund Statements”) for the three years ended 31 December 2015 as attached Schedule A and Schedule B.

The Assembly Fund balance sheet and statement of comprehensive income has been extracted from the audited financial statements of The Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales (“The Church’s Statements”). We have conducted audits on the Church’s Statements for each of the three years now reported. Our unqualified audit opinions on The Church’s Statements were dated 24 March 2014, 23 March 2015 and 21 March 2016.

The Responsibility of the Trustees for the Statements

The general manager is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the Assembly Fund Statements in accordance with the accounting policies which are appropriate to meet the requirements and the needs of the General Assembly. The General Manager is also responsible for such controls as the Trustees determines are necessary to enable the preparation of the Assembly Fund Statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on the extraction of the Assembly Fund Statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Australian Auditing Standards. Those standards require that we comply with relevant ethical requirements relating to audit engagements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the Assembly Fund Statements have been extracted free from material misstatement.

Our procedures have been limited to the extraction of the Assembly Fund Statements from the Church’s Statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Independence

In conducting our audit we have met the independence requirements of the Australian professional accounting bodies.

Opinion

In our opinion Assembly Fund Statements comprising the balance sheet and statement of comprehensive income of The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust – Funds held on behalf of the General Assembly of Australia for the three years ended 31 December 2015 are properly extracted, in all material respects, from the financial records of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales in accordance with the requirements of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Basis of Accounting and Restriction on Distribution

The Assembly Fund Statements have been prepared for the purpose of reporting to the General Assembly for the purpose of fulfilling the requirements of the trustees of the Church. We disclaim any assumption of responsibility for any reliance on this report on the Assembly Fund Statements to which it relates to any purpose other than that for which it was prepared.

Ernst & Young
Sydney
21 June 2016

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Schedule A
Extracted from Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust audited accounts
Balance sheet as at 31 December 2015

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Assets				
Cash or cash equivalents	27,175	11,872	32,432	24,222
Funds with Trustee Investment Fund	2,174,356	1,933,523	1,834,449	1,738,901
Trade and other receivables	16,720	25,001	76,084	13,561
Property, plant and equipment	457,826	466,330	474,835	483,721
	<u>2,676,077</u>	<u>2,436,726</u>	<u>2,417,800</u>	<u>2,260,405</u>
Liabilities				
Trade and other payables	41,014	14,503	28,755	49,907
Funds held for Vanuatu	135,726	0	0	0
Employee Entitlements	14,729	9,314	4,310	1,833
Other provisions	20,000	27,059	30,000	24,000
	<u>211,469</u>	<u>50,876</u>	<u>63,065</u>	<u>75,740</u>
Net assets	<u>2,464,608</u>	<u>2,385,850</u>	<u>2,354,735</u>	<u>2,184,665</u>
Balance at 1 January	2,385,850	2,354,735	2,184,665	1,537,841
Surplus/(deficit) for the year:				
Finance Committee - Specific	19,795	21,432	27,511	505,865
Finance Committee - Ordinary	0	0	0	0
Christian Education Committee	(5,039)	(2,208)	(4,503)	(36)
World Missions Committee	67,021	25,849	140,676	126,161
National Journal Committee	(4,390)	(10,675)	7,479	11,981
Hymn Book Committee	277	(4,468)	(2,238)	1,504
Special Publications Committee*	1,094	1,185	1,145	1,349
Total capital and reserves	<u>2,464,608</u>	<u>2,385,850</u>	<u>2,354,735</u>	<u>2,184,665</u>

*Special Publication Committee Funds for worship and contemporary worship were merged in 2012.

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Schedule B
Extracted from Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust audited accounts
Statement of Comprehensive Income for the year:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Finance Committee - Ordinary				
Income				
Interest - Trustee Investment Fund - at call	8,551	4,703	3,839	5,558
Other income	402	902	157	12,888
	<u>8,953</u>	<u>5,605</u>	<u>3,996</u>	<u>18,446</u>
Expenditure				
Audit and accountancy	3,300	3,300	3,250	3,250
Computer expenses	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Grants	20,000	10,000	20,000	10,000
Honoraria	2,750	2,750	4,850	2,600
National Journal funding	34,000	34,000	35,000	25,000
Archives funding	12,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Office services	10,273	10,273	10,273	9,870
Sundry expenses	8,602	22,883	29,354	29,952
Travel and accommodation	30,316	40,429	130,880	34,331
	<u>133,241</u>	<u>140,635</u>	<u>240,607</u>	<u>132,003</u>
Deficit for the year	<u>(124,288)</u>	<u>(135,030)</u>	<u>(236,611)</u>	<u>(113,557)</u>
State funding	<u>124,288</u>	<u>135,030</u>	<u>236,611</u>	<u>113,557</u>
Net surplus/(deficit)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Finance Committee - Specific				
Bequest E M Lewis	0	0	7,135	499,251
Specific Interest - Estates Lewis & Matches	19,795	21,432	20,376	6,614
Net surplus	<u>19,795</u>	<u>21,432</u>	<u>27,511</u>	<u>505,865</u>
Christian Education Committee				
Income	1,816	4,151	3,209	3,117
Expense	(6,855)	(6,359)	(7,712)	(3,153)
Net (deficit)/surplus	<u>(5,039)</u>	<u>(2,208)</u>	<u>(4,503)</u>	<u>(36)</u>
World Missions Committee				
Income	908,840	1,111,164	999,344	998,389
Bequests	75,693	0	0	0
Expense	(917,512)	(1,085,315)	(858,668)	(872,228)
Net surplus	<u>67,021</u>	<u>25,849</u>	<u>140,676</u>	<u>126,161</u>
National Journal Committee				
Income	131,254	120,676	121,068	111,176
Expense	(135,644)	(131,351)	(113,589)	(111,789)
Transfer accumulated funds to Property Trust GAA	0	0	0	12,594
Net surplus/(deficit)	<u>(4,390)</u>	<u>(10,675)</u>	<u>7,479</u>	<u>11,981</u>
Hymn Book Committee				
Income	1,540	1,925	5,445	8,448
Expense	(1,263)	(6,393)	(7,683)	(6,944)
Net surplus/(deficit)	<u>277</u>	<u>(4,468)</u>	<u>(2,238)</u>	<u>1,504</u>

Special Publications Committee - Contemporary Worship

Income	1,094	1,185	1,145	1,349
Expense	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net surplus	<u>1,094</u>	<u>1,185</u>	<u>1,145</u>	<u>1,349</u>

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule
Trustees (Federal Finance Committee)****Balance Sheet as at:**

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and Reserves				
Opening balance	809,477	788,045	760,534	254,669
Surplus for the year - specific	19,795	21,432	27,511	505,865
Surplus/(deficit) for the year - ordinary	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>829,272</u>	<u>809,477</u>	<u>788,045</u>	<u>760,534</u>

Represented by:**Assets**

Debtors	16,722	25,001	73,057	14,279
Deposit (Presbyterian Church NSW)	<u>948,481</u>	<u>783,149</u>	<u>714,988</u>	<u>746,255</u>
Total ordinary assets	<u>965,203</u>	<u>808,150</u>	<u>788,045</u>	<u>760,534</u>

Liabilities

Sundry creditors	<u>135,931</u>	<u>(1,327)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total liabilities	<u>135,931</u>	<u>(1,327)</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Net assets	<u>829,272</u>	<u>809,477</u>	<u>788,045</u>	<u>760,534</u>

**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule
Trustees (Federal Finance Committee)**

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Ordinary Income				
Sales Journal Publications	402	152	157	287
Trustee Interest	8,551	4,703	3,839	5,558
Sundry income	0	750	0	12,600
Contributions received or receivable from the States:				
New South Wales	62,400	67,793	112,982	56,836
Queensland	23,061	25,054	48,421	22,216
South Australia	1,864	2,025	3,549	1,628
Tasmania	1,864	2,025	3,549	1,628
Victoria	33,235	36,107	64,561	29,621
Western Australia	1,864	2,025	3,549	1,628
Total income	133,241	140,634	240,607	132,002
Expenditure				
General Assembly				
Honoraria	0	0	4,100	0
Travelling including accommodation & dinners	0	0	89,668	0
Other	0	0	12,145	0
Total General Assembly	0	0	105,913	0
Moderatorial				
Honorary	2,000	4,000	0	2,000
Travel and Accommodation	8,608	14,084	9,423	5,408
Other	1,000	1,870	1,883	88
Total Moderatorial	11,608	19,954	11,306	7,496
Committees				
Church & Nation*	10,973	1,362	11,023	1,948
Code	372	1,567	712	1,253
College	4,018	2,915	4,302	2,679
Defence Forces	1,089	1,362	1,502	1,510
Reception of Ministers	1,305	1,764	3,634	2,991
Relations with other Churches	5,752	9,795	6,737	18,420
Total Committees	23,509	18,765	27,910	28,801
*\$10,000 grant to Freedom 4 Faith in 2015				
Other				
Office Services	10,273	10,273	10,273	9,870
Communication fee NJC	34,000	34,000	35,000	25,000
Donation to archives	12,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Grant - Parra Hills	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Website maintenance	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Other	19,852	30,642	23,205	33,836
Total Other	98,125	101,915	95,478	95,706
Total Expenditure	133,242	140,634	240,607	132,003
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	0	0	0	0
Specific Income	\$	\$	\$	\$
Bequests	0	0	7,135	499,251
Trustee Interest	19,795	21,432	20,718	6,614
Expenses	0	0	(342)	0
Surplus for the year	19,795	21,432	27,511	505,865

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule

Christian Education Committee

Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Opening balance	44,033	46,241	50,744	50,780
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(5,039)</u>	<u>(2,208)</u>	<u>(4,503)</u>	<u>(36)</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>38,994</u>	<u>44,033</u>	<u>46,241</u>	<u>50,744</u>

Represented by:

Assets

Cash at bank	736	574	0	0
Deposits) Presbyterian Church NSW	38,258	43,656	46,371	50,744
Sundry debtors	<u>0</u>	<u>(197)</u>	<u>(130)</u>	<u>0</u>
Net assets	<u>38,994</u>	<u>44,033</u>	<u>46,241</u>	<u>50,744</u>

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Bequests and donations	10	50	0	0
Interest	1,522	1,778	1,709	2,171
Publication Income	<u>283</u>	<u>2,323</u>	<u>1,499</u>	<u>946</u>
Total Income	<u>1,815</u>	<u>4,151</u>	<u>3,208</u>	<u>3,117</u>
Expenditure				
Advertising and Publicity	0	0	0	430
Office Services	273	273	273	273
Publication Expenses	3,188	3,689	5,604	68
Travelling Expenses	<u>3,393</u>	<u>2,397</u>	<u>1,834</u>	<u>2,382</u>
Total expenditure	<u>6,854</u>	<u>6,359</u>	<u>7,711</u>	<u>3,153</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(5,039)</u>	<u>(2,208)</u>	<u>(4,503)</u>	<u>(36)</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Opening balance	1,439,356	1,413,507	1,272,831	1,146,670
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>67,021</u>	<u>25,849</u>	<u>140,676</u>	<u>126,161</u>
Total Capital	<u>1,506,377</u>	<u>1,439,356</u>	<u>1,413,507</u>	<u>1,272,831</u>
 <u>Represented by:</u>				
Assets				
Cash	9,637	3,756	15,840	2,247
Fixed Assets	457,826	466,331	474,835	483,721
Deposit (Presbyterian Church NSW)	<u>1,115,886</u>	<u>1,022,004</u>	<u>984,014</u>	<u>864,187</u>
Total assets	<u>1,583,349</u>	<u>1,492,091</u>	<u>1,474,689</u>	<u>1,350,155</u>
Liabilities				
Provisions	20,000	27,059	20,000	24,000
Creditors	<u>56,972</u>	<u>25,676</u>	<u>41,182</u>	<u>53,324</u>
Total liabilities	<u>76,972</u>	<u>52,735</u>	<u>61,182</u>	<u>77,324</u>
Total ordinary net assets	<u>1,506,377</u>	<u>1,439,356</u>	<u>1,413,507</u>	<u>1,272,831</u>

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Interest	31,771	37,274	29,828	31,519
Donations	768,752	913,318	719,488	738,725
Mission Challenge	81,091	74,122	170,552	132,339
State Contributions	74,000	70,500	79,500	81,150
Other income	<u>34,920</u>	<u>15,951</u>	<u>4,475</u>	<u>21,256</u>
	<u>990,533</u>	<u>1,111,165</u>	<u>1,003,844</u>	<u>1,004,989</u>
 Expenditure				
Salaries and wages	475,644	486,526	397,443	386,567
Mission Challenge transfers	148,972	291,931	212,772	254,752
Advertising and publicity	3,622	4,494	4,760	(322)
Property costs	68,522	84,202	37,784	32,069
Interest expense	0	0	0	56
Insurance	7,066	13,414	10,362	14,301
Office services	1,365	1,365	1,365	1,365
Postage	2,650	3,745	2,316	3,430
Printing and stationery	16,430	20,407	18,952	26,991
Sundry expenses	119,419	102,676	100,598	83,076
Telephones	5,731	7,572	6,219	5,422
Travel expenses	<u>74,092</u>	<u>68,985</u>	<u>70,597</u>	<u>71,121</u>
Total expenses	<u>923,513</u>	<u>1,085,316</u>	<u>863,168</u>	<u>878,828</u>
Surplus for the year	<u>67,021</u>	<u>25,849</u>	<u>140,676</u>	<u>126,161</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule
Public Worship and Aids to Devotion
Committee
Hymn Book

Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Opening balance	49,685	54,153	56,391	54,887
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>277</u>	<u>(4,468)</u>	<u>(2,238)</u>	<u>1,504</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>49,962</u>	<u>49,685</u>	<u>54,153</u>	<u>56,391</u>

Represented by:

Assets

Deposits (Presbyterian Church NSW)	49,962	49,670	54,217	56,391
Sundry debtors	<u>0</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>(64)</u>	<u>0</u>
Net assets	<u>49,962</u>	<u>49,685</u>	<u>54,153</u>	<u>56,391</u>

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Interest	1,540	1,808	1,888	2,338
Publication Income	<u>0</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>3,557</u>	<u>6,109</u>
Total income	<u>1,540</u>	<u>1,924</u>	<u>5,445</u>	<u>8,447</u>
Expenditure				
Computer - web hosting	0	0	0	566
Storage	0	0	0	2,437
Secretarial	0	0	0	990
Travel and Accommodation	1,014	3,134	1,704	1,848
Other	<u>249</u>	<u>3,258</u>	<u>5,979</u>	<u>1,102</u>
Total expenditure	<u>1,263</u>	<u>6,392</u>	<u>7,683</u>	<u>6,943</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>277</u>	<u>(4,468)</u>	<u>(2,238)</u>	<u>1,504</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule
Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee
Special Publications - Contemporary Worship

Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Opening balance	34,516	33,331	32,186	30,837
Surplus for the year	1,094	1,185	1,145	1,349
Total capital and reserves	<u><u>35,610</u></u>	<u><u>34,516</u></u>	<u><u>33,331</u></u>	<u><u>32,186</u></u>
Assets				
Deposits (Presbyterian Church NSW)	<u>35,610</u>	<u>34,516</u>	<u>33,331</u>	<u>32,186</u>
Total assets	<u><u>35,610</u></u>	<u><u>34,516</u></u>	<u><u>33,331</u></u>	<u><u>32,186</u></u>

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Interest	<u>1,094</u>	<u>1,185</u>	<u>1,145</u>	<u>1,349</u>
Surplus for the year	<u><u>1,094</u></u>	<u><u>1,185</u></u>	<u><u>1,145</u></u>	<u><u>1,349</u></u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

Extract from Presbyterian Inland Mission audited accounts

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Investments income	182,748	192,198	151,644	138,915
Profit/(loss) - shares unrealised	(110,904)	23,245	227,988	174,645
Capital gains/(losses)	(23,633)	28,805	34,000	(8,321)
Donations & bequests received	502,115	168,409	247,291	796,139
Sales - Christmas Cards	3,286	6,496	4,733	7,952
Sales - Beyond the Furthest Fences	1,419	4,645	17,755	29,895
Sales - The Man from Oodnadatta	0	80	52	167
Sales - Calendar	0	0	0	0
Projects	35,500	7,905	24,175	31,078
GAA Allocation	0	5,000	0	0
Support - D & G McDonald	55,407	34,027	40,029	93,043
Alice Springs	60,046	40,119	50,490	
Other income	143,836	124,695	30,212	36,314
	<u>849,820</u>	<u>635,624</u>	<u>828,369</u>	<u>1,299,827</u>
Expenditure				
Administration costs	344,103	192,476	202,440	198,522
Alice Springs Mission Church	63,812	48,159	46,151	1,100
Costs - Christmas cards	2,382	4,019	4,594	0
Costs - The Man from Oodnadatta	0	0	0	123
Donations	64,838	79,169	55,015	70,000
Padres retreats etc	12,608	0	0	1,899
Relief Payments	2,000	90	0	338
Patrols	437,988	401,271	386,537	386,886
	<u>927,731</u>	<u>725,184</u>	<u>694,737</u>	<u>658,868</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(77,911)</u>	<u>(89,560)</u>	<u>133,632</u>	<u>640,959</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
Extract from Presbyterian Inland Mission audited accounts
Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Opening balance	3,115,456	3,205,016	3,071,384	2,430,425
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(77,911)</u>	<u>(89,560)</u>	<u>133,632</u>	<u>640,959</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>3,037,545</u>	<u>3,115,456</u>	<u>3,205,016</u>	<u>3,071,384</u>
Represented by:				
Current Assets				
Cash at bank	77,656	78,376	50,437	133,089
Investments	2,386,247	2,474,205	2,554,826	2,499,708
Sundry debtors	<u>80,810</u>	<u>73,358</u>	<u>69,489</u>	<u>66,516</u>
Total current assets	<u>2,544,713</u>	<u>2,625,939</u>	<u>2,674,752</u>	<u>2,699,313</u>
Non Current Assets				
Property, plant, and equipment	<u>492,832</u>	<u>489,517</u>	<u>530,264</u>	<u>372,071</u>
Total non current assets	<u>492,832</u>	<u>489,517</u>	<u>530,264</u>	<u>372,071</u>
Net assets	<u>3,037,545</u>	<u>3,115,456</u>	<u>3,205,016</u>	<u>3,071,384</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule
Australian Presbyterian

Statement of comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Income				
Sales - Journal Publications	240	250	375	469
Sales - Journal Advertising	34,502	21,978	19,070	19,191
Sales - Fellow Workers	8,748	11,150	11,860	9,741
Sales - Supplement Advertising	2,117	3,180	4,320	9,370
Year Book Sales	10,857	13,019	11,484	10,714
Overseas Subscriptions	0	0	0	0
Year Book Advertising	4,824	4,965	6,052	5,200
APWM/PIM advertising	16,000	16,000	16,000	16,000
Directory Advertising	11,930	12,585	12,896	10,432
Communication service fee	34,000	34,000	35,000	25,000
Sundry Income	0	0	0	
Donations Received	7,931	2,971	3,690	4,383
Interest Received	106	578	321	676
Total income	<u>131,255</u>	<u>120,676</u>	<u>121,068</u>	<u>111,176</u>
Expenditure				
Audit and Accountancy	0	0	0	1,780
Bank Fees	0	39	102	189
General Expenses	1,827	1,386	685	748
Publication expenses	109,064	109,388	93,359	86,699
Salaries, stipends and staff costs	24,754	20,538	19,443	22,238
Telephones	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>135</u>
Total expenditure	<u>135,645</u>	<u>131,351</u>	<u>113,589</u>	<u>111,789</u>
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(4,390)</u>	<u>(10,675)</u>	<u>7,479</u>	<u>(613)</u>

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA - Management Supplementary Schedule

Australian Presbyterian

Balance Sheet as at:

	2015	2014	2013	2012
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Capital and reserves				
Ordinary				
Opening balance	8,785	19,460	11,981	12,594
Surplus/(deficit) for the year	<u>(4,390)</u>	<u>(10,675)</u>	<u>7,479</u>	<u>(613)</u>
Total capital and reserves	<u>4,395</u>	<u>8,785</u>	<u>19,460</u>	<u>11,981</u>
Assets				
Fixed Assets	0	0	0	0
Cash and cash equivalents	2,962	8,070	18,122	21,976
Debtors	<u>1,433</u>	<u>715</u>	<u>1,338</u>	<u>867</u>
Total assets	<u>4,395</u>	<u>8,785</u>	<u>19,460</u>	<u>22,843</u>
Liabilities				
Presbyterian Church (NSW)	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,862</u>
Total liabilities	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>10,862</u>
Net assets	<u>4,395</u>	<u>8,785</u>	<u>19,460</u>	<u>11,981</u>

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS
of the
FORTY NINTH SESSION
of the
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
of the
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

FIRST SEDERUNT

1. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 12 September, 2016, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia convened. Public worship was conducted by the Right Reverend D.A. Cook, Moderator. Thereafter the Assembly was constituted with prayer.

2. Roll of Assembly: The Clerk laid on the table the list of commissioners appointed to this Assembly by the state assemblies and presbyteries of the Church together with those who are members ex officio. It was resolved that the list of commissioners as made up be the Roll of this Assembly.

3. Apologies: Apologies for absence were received from the Very Rev. J.J. Knapp, Rev. Dr P.G. Logan, P. Beringer, B. Ho, Messrs D. Anderson, S.H. Fraser, C.M. Langford, and A. McClenaghan.

4. Associates: The following representatives of overseas churches were present in the Assembly:

- Rev. Dr Flip Buys, International Director, World Reformed Fellowship also representing the Reformed Churches of South Africa;
- Rev. Dr John Nicholls, Moderator, Free Church of Scotland;
- Rev. David Bayne, Clerk of Assembly, Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand;
- Rev. Roy Yosef, Secretary for Mission, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu;
- Rev. Dr Thang Bwee, Moderator, Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar;
- Rev. Colin M'Bawa, Secretary, CCAP General Assembly (Central Africa);
- Rev. Kiyoshi Endo, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Japan; and
- Rev. Hiralel Solanki, representing the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India.

It was resolved that the representatives of overseas churches be associated.

5. Election of Moderator: The Clerk laid on the table the report of the Moderator's Nominating Committee.

The report was received.

It was resolved that the Assembly accept the nomination of the Moderator's Nominating Committee and elect the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson, Clerk of Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, as Moderator of the Assembly.

The Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson was welcomed and inducted into office with prayer by the Moderator, took the chair and delivered an address.

6. Representatives of Overseas Churches: The Moderator welcomed the following representatives of overseas churches:

- Rev. Dr Flip Buys, International Director, World Reformed Fellowship also representing the Reformed Churches of South Africa;
- Rev. Dr John Nicholls, Moderator, Free Church of Scotland;
- Rev. David Bayne, Clerk of Assembly, Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand;

- Rev. Roy Yosef, Secretary for Mission, Presbyterian Church of Vanuatu;
- Rev. Dr Thang Bwee, Moderator, Evangelical Reformed Church of Myanmar;
- Rev. Colin M'Bawa, Secretary, CCAP General Assembly (Central Africa);
- Rev. Kiyoshi Endo, Moderator, Presbyterian Church of Japan; and
- Rev. Hiralel Solanki, representing the Reformed Presbyterian Church of India.

7. Representatives of other Churches: The following representatives of other Australian churches, being present, were welcomed by the Moderator:

- Rev. Ed Kastelein, Moderator of Presbytery, Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia;
- Rev. David Kerridge, Moderator of Synod, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia;
- Elder Donald de Vries, Moderator of the National Assembly, Westminster Presbyterian Church in Australia;
- Rev. Dr Hedley Fihaki, National Chair, Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia;
- Rev. Brian Vaatstra, Pastor, Christian Reformed Churches of Australia, and
- Rev. Dr Glenn Davies, Archbishop, Diocese of Sydney, Anglican Church of Australia.

8. Business Committee: The report of the Business Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. P.J. Barson submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (9) were approved.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 16).

9. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 1 to 33 were laid on the table.

10. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet tomorrow, Tuesday, 13 September, 2016, at 9.30 a.m. in the Chinese Presbyterian Church for the celebration of the Lord's Supper followed by the transaction of other business whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator
 BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk
 LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk

SECOND SEDERUNT

11. Lord's Supper: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills on Tuesday, 13 September, 2016 at 9.30 a.m. the Assembly met for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The service was conducted by the Moderator assisted by the Rev. A.R. Vines (preacher); G. Munro, M. Viney, (chaplains on duty); S. Bonnington, D. Carroll, G. Ware, I. Schoonwater (chaplains); S. Donnellan, D. Hann; Dr J. Hare, Messrs R. Butcher, A. Deeming, J. Finster, P. Graham, D. Stanley, W. Thompson, D. Wright, and Mrs Y. Forsyth (elders).

12. Assembly Constituted: At the conclusion of the service the Assembly was constituted with prayer, the Moderator presiding.

13. Motion of Loyalty: The following Motion of Loyalty, submitted by the Business Convener pursuant to notice, was approved.

To the Queen's most excellent Majesty,

We, ministers and elders of the Presbyterian Church of Australia convened in General Assembly on 13 September, 2016, take leave to assure your Majesty of our loyalty and devotion to your most gracious person and throne. Instructed by the Scriptures, we pray regularly in our congregations and in the General Assembly asking that the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords might sustain your Majesty in his providential care, granting to you personally all the gifts necessary for the discharge of your Majesty's exacting duties so that your work might be a joy and not a burden and that we may be quietly and peaceably governed.

Signed in our name and at our direction,

John Wilson

Moderator

14. Prayers for the Australian Parliament: Pursuant to notice the Business Convener moved:

That the Assembly:

Forward to the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the President of the Senate of the Australian Parliament assurances of the regular prayers of the people of the Presbyterian Church of Australia for the nation's elected representatives in the exercise of their responsibilities.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Assembly joined in prayer for those in authority over us.

15. Report of Retiring Moderator: The report of the retiring Moderator was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. D.A. Cook addressed the house.

Pursuant to notice the Clerk of Assembly moved:

That the Assembly:

Give thanks to God for the ministry of the Very Rev. David Cook as Moderator-General of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia during his term of office and assure him of the continuing prayers of Assembly members for his continued ministry and that of his wife Mrs Maxine Cook.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Moderator conveyed the thanks of the Assembly to Mr Cook.

16. Business Committee: Debate was resumed on the report of the Business Committee (Min. 8).

Clauses (10) to (13) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

(14) Amend the regulations of the Business Committee by deleting and adding words so that the regulations will read as follows:

1. There shall be a committee called the Business Committee which shall consist of the Business Convener of the Assembly (who shall be the Convener, and who shall be

- elected by the Assembly and hold office until he resigns or is superseded), the Moderator, the Moderator-Nominate (when known), the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk.
2. The Committee shall be responsible to:
 - (a) receive from the Clerk all business to be brought before the current or next succeeding session of the Assembly;
 - (b) ensure that all business to be considered by the Assembly is submitted in proper form;
 - (c) ensure that the Moderator is adequately informed of the proposed business;
 - (d) consider how the business of the Assembly might be dealt with responsibly;
 - (e) recommend to the Assembly:
 - (i) the time to be allotted to speeches of various kinds;
 - (ii) the order in which business should be considered during the current or next succeeding session of the Assembly and its several sederunts;
 - (iii) any other matter which might expedite consideration of the Assembly's business;
 - (iv) the date, time and location of the next session of the Assembly.
 3. All reports and papers proposed to be submitted to the Assembly must be lodged with the Clerk at least three months before the meeting of the Assembly and be submitted by him to the Business Convener. All appeals, complaints, overtures, petitions and references not presented to the Clerk within the specified time will be barred from consideration by the Assembly unless the relevant parties can show cause to the Assembly why the relevant documentation was not lodged within the specified time.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) (a) Determine the hours of meeting to be:

Morning sederunt	9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.
Lunch interval	1.00 p.m. to 2.00 p.m.
Afternoon sederunt	2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Tea interval	5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.
Evening sederunt	7.00 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
- (b) Determine that morning and afternoon tea breaks may be taken for up to 20 minutes, the taking of each recess to be at the discretion of the Moderator.
- (2) Declare speeches to be limited as follows:

Convener of Committee speaking to report.....	15 mins.
All other speakers	5 mins.
Overturists and Petitioners.....	10 mins.
Appellants, Complainants, and Respondents - per party.....	15 mins.
- (3) Declare that the total time allowed for questions during the presentation of each report, overture, petition, appeal, or complaint be limited to 30 minutes such time to be subject to extension by resolution of the house.
- (4) Appoint the Ballot Committee as follows: Rev. D. McDougall (Convener), M. Viney, Messrs R. Holvast, G. Rogers, and W. Thompson, with power to co-opt.
- (5) Appoint the members of the Ballot Committee as Tellers of the Assembly.
- (6) Appoint the Committee to scrutinise the minutes as follows:-
Rev. J.R. Irvin (Convener), P. Phillips, S. Bonnington, Mr G. Roberts, with power to co-opt.
- (7) Declare that Notices of Motion must be submitted to the Clerk in duplicate on the form provided or by email.
- (8) Declare that video and/or audio recording of Assembly business (except for the Opening service and the Communion service) shall not be permitted for the purposes of reproduction or broadcasting, without the express permission of the Assembly.
- (9) Approve the Order of Business for the second sederunt as follows:

SECOND SEDERUNT
9.30 a.m.
The Lord's Supper
11.00 a.m. and following:
Report of Retiring Moderator

Business Committee (resumed)
Returns to Remits
Code Committee
Overture (i) – S.O. 20
Overture (ii) – Rule 1.05, Code of Discipline
Reference (iii) – Presbytery of Melbourne West – Rule 1.05, Code of Discipline
Unfinished Business
Notices of Motion

- (10) Approve generally the following Order of Business for:

TUESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER, 2016

THIRD SEDERUNT

2.00 p.m. – Devotions

2.10 p.m. (O.D.) – Presbyterian Women's Association

2.20 p.m. (O.D.) – Biblical Exposition

2.45 p.m.

Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee

Christian Education Committee

Moderator-General's Church Planting Taskforce

Mission to Australia Committee

Communication (iii) – Presbyterian Church of South Australia conveying thanks for financial support

Appeal (i) – against a decision of the General Assembly of Victoria - withdrawn

Unfinished Business

Notices of Motion

FOURTH SEDERUNT

7.00 p.m.

Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee

Relations with Other Churches Committee

Unfinished Business

Notices of Motion

- (11) Approve generally the following Order of Business:

WEDNESDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER

FIFTH SEDERUNT

9.30 a.m. – Devotions

9.35 a.m. (O.D.) – Close of nominations for Ballot

Finance Committee

The Trustees

Overture (iv) – Presbytery of Wagga Wagga – questions of ministers and elders

College Committee

National Journal Committee

Overseas Aid and Development Committee

12.20 p.m. (O.D.) – Biblical Exposition

Reference (i) – Presbytery of Western Australia re eschatology in the WCF

Unfinished Business

Notices of Motion

SIXTH SEDERUNT

2.00 p.m. – Devotions

Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee (PIM)

Reference (ii) – presbytery powers in PIM mission churches

Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee

500th Anniversary of the Reformation

O.D. (5.00 p.m.) – Ballot

Unfinished Business

Notices of Motion

SEVENTH SEDERUNT

7.00 p.m. - Devotions

Church and Nation Committee

Communication (iii) – Presbyterian Church of Victoria re marriage
Communication (i) – Presbyterian Church of Queensland re marriage
Communication (ii) – Presbyterian Church of Queensland re polity
Overture (iii) re marriage
Ballot Committee
Unfinished Business
Notices of Motion

THURSDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER

EIGHTH SEDERUNT

9.30 a.m. – Devotions

9.40 a.m. (O.D.) – Petition (i) – Confidential document

Reception of Ministers Committee

Ad Hoc Women’s Ministries Committee

Reference (iv) – General Assembly of NSW re elders

12.20 p.m. (O.D.) – Biblical Exposition

Unfinished Business

Appointment of time and place for the 2019 General Assembly of Australia

Close

- (12) Declare that the Assembly should not receive, as a communication, a document which could be submitted in another form, but may receive as a communication:
- (i) the resignation of an Assembly Officer;
 - (ii) any other communication which has been approved by the Business Committee.
- (13) Appoint the Moderator-General or his representative as the Assembly’s representative to the Assemblies of overseas churches without any commitment to costs.
- (14) Amend the regulations of the Business Committee by deleting and adding words so that the regulations will read as follows:
1. There shall be a committee called the Business Committee which shall consist of the Business Convener of the Assembly (who shall be the Convener, and who shall be elected by the Assembly and hold office until he resigns or is superseded), the Moderator, the Moderator-Nominate (when known), the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk.
 2. The Committee shall be responsible to:
 - (a) receive from the Clerk all business to be brought before the current or next succeeding session of the Assembly;
 - (b) ensure that all business to be considered by the Assembly is submitted in proper form;
 - (c) ensure that the Moderator is adequately informed of the proposed business;
 - (d) consider how the business of the Assembly might be dealt with responsibly;
 - (e) recommend to the Assembly:
 - (i) the time to be allotted to speeches of various kinds;
 - (ii) the order in which business should be considered during the current or next succeeding session of the Assembly and its several sederunts;
 - (iii) any other matter which might expedite consideration of the Assembly’s business;
 - (iv) the date, time and location of the next session of the Assembly.
 3. All reports and papers proposed to be submitted to the Assembly must be lodged with the Clerk at least three months before the meeting of the Assembly and be submitted by him to the Business Convener. All appeals, complaints, overtures, petitions and references not presented to the Clerk within the specified time will be barred from consideration by the Assembly unless the relevant parties can show cause to the Assembly why the relevant documentation was not lodged within the specified time.

17. Returns to Remits: The report on Returns to Remits was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. B.M. Meller submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

- (1) In accordance with returns to remits on Overture (i) (BB 2013 Min. 62) from the Code Committee to amend the Code of Discipline of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, insert the following new clauses:
 - (a) 2.04: "A court of the Church in considering the report of a committee dealing with a matter of discipline may remit the report to the committee for further consideration and report but must, in all matters, follow the procedures of the Code of Discipline".
 - (b) 2.20: "A presbytery may remit a case of discipline to a committee for investigation and report to a future meeting of the presbytery but the judgement on the matter must be that of the presbytery".
 - (c) 2.29: "The General Assembly may remit a case of discipline to a committee for investigation and report to a future meeting of the Assembly but the judgement on the matter must be that of the Assembly."
- (2) Renumber existing clauses as necessary.

18. Code: The report of the Code Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. B.M. Meller submitted the deliverance.

Pursuant to notice Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Delete chapter 9 from Constitution, Procedure and Practice and replace it with the following:

CHAPTER 9

Committees of the General Assembly

1. Standing Committees:

- 1.1. In accordance with Article 4.1, standing committees of the Assembly are:

- Australian Presbyterian World Mission
- Business
- Christian Education
- Church and Nation
- Code
- College
- Defence Force Chaplaincy
- Finance
- Moderator's Nominating
- National Journal
- Presbyterian Inland Mission
- Public Worship and Aids to Devotion
- Reception of Ministers
- Relations with Other Churches

- 1.2. These regulations apply having regard to Standing Order 101.

2. Composition of Committees

- 2.1. The following committees shall be elected under their own regulations:

- Australian Presbyterian World Mission
- Business Committee
- College Committee
- Moderator's Nominating Committee

- 2.2. All other standing committees shall consist of:

- (a) ten elected members
- (b) a convener appointed under 3.1, and
- (c) ex-officio members.

- 2.3. When these regulations refer to members of a committee they include the elected members, the convener and the ex-officio members unless it is clear from the wording that a particular regulation is referring to only the ten elected members, convener and/or ex-officio members.

- 2.4. The ten elected members shall be elected by the Assembly through the ballot on the following basis and according to the rules of the Ballot Committee:

New South Wales	3 members
Queensland	2 members
Victoria	2 members

South Australia	1 member
Tasmania	1 member
Western Australia	1 member

- 2.5. The members elected under 2.2(a) shall so far as practicable be comprised ordinarily of an equal number of ministers and elders.
- 2.6. The Officers of the Assembly as defined in Article 1.7 of the Articles shall be ex-officio members of all Assembly standing and special committees unless expressly excluded.

3. Conveners

- 3.1. The convener of each committee shall be elected by the Assembly through the ballot except for:
 - (a) the Code Committee, where the convener shall be the Clerk of Assembly,
 - (b) the Finance Committee, where the convener shall be the Chairman from time to time of The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust, and
 - (c) the College Committee, where the convener shall be elected in accordance with the regulations of the Committee.
- 3.2. As the convener of the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee is also the Presbyterian Member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, the convener of that committee must be a minister.
- 3.3. If for any reason a convenueership is vacant, or the incumbent convener is unable or unwilling to act as convener, then such incumbent is, from the time the Clerk of Assembly receives the communication of such inability or unwillingness, removed as convener. The Clerk of Assembly will then convene a meeting of the committee as soon as may practically be arranged and the committee, at that meeting, will elect from its membership an acting convener, who on such election will act as convener until the next meeting of the Assembly.

4. State Nominations

- 4.1. A State Assembly may nominate persons from that State for election to a committee in accordance with regulation 2.4.
- 4.2. The submission of nominations by a State Assembly shall not prevent further nominations being made to the Assembly in accordance with the procedures of the Ballot Committee.

5. **Additional members** Any committee may appoint one or more persons as additional members of the committee if and when required. Such additional members shall not be entitled to vote.

6. **Eligibility for membership** Members of state assemblies, ministers without charge, elders and communicants of the Church may be nominated as members and conveners of Assembly committees whether or not they are members of the General Assembly.

7. **Casual Vacancies** Casual vacancies on any committee arising between meetings of the Assembly shall be filled by the committee, subject to the terms of its own regulations.

8. **Special Committees** In accordance with Article 4.2 the Assembly may appoint special committees, for which the membership and tasks shall be specified in the minute establishing them. The above regulations do not apply except for those providing for the filling of casual vacancies of the convener or membership, and eligibility for membership.

9. Ballot Committee

- 9.1. The Ballot Committee shall be a special committee which functions only during a meeting of the Assembly. Its task is to arrange and hold the ballot for elected positions during the Assembly.
- 9.2. Membership of the Ballot Committee should be as specified in the regulations of the Ballot Committee.
- 9.3. The Ballot Committee shall be appointed by the Assembly upon a recommendation in the deliverance of the Business Committee.

10. **Finance** Financial arrangements for committees are made in accordance with the regulations of the Finance Committee.

11. General Rules of Committees

- 11.1. Standing Order 101 applies to all committees of the Assembly.

- 11.2. In terms of Standing Order 101(a) three members of a committee shall constitute a quorum.
- 11.3. A committee shall appoint its own executive and/or sub-committees and shall arrange the work of the committee as it shall see fit.
- 11.4. Committees are encouraged, where appropriate, to do business other than in face to face meetings with care being taken to preserve the rights of all members.
- 11.5. The convener of a committee is responsible for ensuring that the committee keeps proper records of its proceedings, including meetings held and/or resolutions adopted pursuant to 11.6 and 11.7.
- 11.6. A committee is permitted to hold a meeting by means of a telephone or internet audio or video conference whereby all members participating in the meeting are able to hear and be heard by all other participants.
- 11.7. A committee may without meeting make a resolution by email provided that:
 - (a) the proposed resolution is notified by email to each committee member in time for each member to make a considered decision, and
 - (b) every such response is sent to all members by the person making it.
 In the determination of a particular matter, no response shall be considered if it has not been sent to all members. Any proposal for a decision to be made by email shall specify a response time which shall not be less than four days and, upon the expiration of that period, the matter will be determined in accordance with those responses received at that time which are able to be considered because they have been circulated to all members. A proposal for a specific resolution to be determined by email may be vetoed by any three members.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. M. Powell moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Amend clause (1) above by including the National Journal Committee in the list of committees in the proposed new regulations for Committees of the General Assembly which shall be constituted under their own regulations.
- (2) Amend clause 2 of the regulations of the National Journal Committee so that it will read: "The Committee shall consist of a Convener and ten members appointed by the General Assembly. At least three States shall be represented on the Committee."

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. L.J.F. Hall moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend clause (2) of Mr Powell's motion by deleting the words, "At least three States shall be represented on" and insert in their place, "No more than three persons from any one State shall be elected to".

The amendment to the amendment was seconded and approved.

The amendment was approved.

Clause (1) of the deliverance was approved as amended.

Pursuant to notice Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (2) At the request of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee, amend the regulations of that Committee so that:-
 - (a) clause 2 will read:-
 2. The Committee shall consist of:
 - (a) A Convener elected by the General Assembly.
 - (b) The National Director.
 - (c) The Convener of the state committee on world mission from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.
 - (d) An additional representative from the state committee on world mission from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.
 - (e) Five additional members elected by the General Assembly of Australia of whom at least three shall be from the state in which the national office is located.

(b) clause 3 will be deleted.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

(3) Amend clause 1 of the College Committee regulations, so that it will read:

1. The College Committee shall consist of:

(a) A convener elected by and from the members of the Committee.

(b) The Convener of the state committee on theological education from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.

(c) The principals of the theological colleges operated by the state assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.

(d) Two members of the faculty of each of the colleges listed in (b) who shall be elected by the relevant faculty.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice Dr M. Whitelaw moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the Code Committee deliverance clause (3) by adding the following words after section (d):

"(e) Two members elected by the General Assembly of Australia."

The motion was seconded and disapproved.

Clause (3) was approved.

By Leave of the house, Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Declare that the resolutions recorded in (1) – (3) above have effect forthwith.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

(1) Delete chapter 9 from Constitution, Procedure and Practice and replace it with the following:

CHAPTER 9

Committees of the General Assembly

1. Standing Committees:

1.1. In accordance with Article 4.1, standing committees of the Assembly are:

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

Business

Christian Education

Church and Nation

Code

College

Defence Force Chaplaincy

Finance

Moderator's Nominating

National Journal

Presbyterian Inland Mission

Public Worship and Aids to Devotion

Reception of Ministers

Relations with Other Churches

1.2. These regulations apply having regard to Standing Order 101.

2. Composition of Committees

2.1. The following committees shall be elected under their own regulations:

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

Business Committee

College Committee

Moderator's Nominating Committee

National Journal Committee

2.2. All other standing committees shall consist of:

(a) ten elected members

(b) a convener appointed under 3.1, and

- (c) ex-officio members.
- 2.3. When these regulations refer to members of a committee they include the elected members, the convener and the ex-officio members unless it is clear from the wording that a particular regulation is referring to only the ten elected members, convener and/or ex-officio members.
- 2.4. The ten elected members shall be elected by the Assembly through the ballot on the following basis and according to the rules of the Ballot Committee:
- | | |
|-------------------|-----------|
| New South Wales | 3 members |
| Queensland | 2 members |
| Victoria | 2 members |
| South Australia | 1 member |
| Tasmania | 1 member |
| Western Australia | 1 member |
- 2.5. The members elected under 2.2(a) shall so far as practicable be comprised ordinarily of an equal number of ministers and elders.
- 2.6. The Officers of the Assembly as defined in Article 1.7 of the Articles shall be ex-officio members of all Assembly standing and special committees unless expressly excluded.
- 3. Conveners**
- 3.1. The convener of each committee shall be elected by the Assembly through the ballot except for:
- the Code Committee, where the convener shall be the Clerk of Assembly,
 - the Finance Committee, where the convener shall be the Chairman from time to time of The Presbyterian Church (New South Wales) Property Trust, and
 - the College Committee, where the convener shall be elected in accordance with the regulations of the Committee.
- 3.2. As the convener of the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee is also the Presbyterian Member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, the convener of that committee must be a minister.
- 3.3. If for any reason a convenueership is vacant, or the incumbent convener is unable or unwilling to act as convener, then such incumbent is, from the time the Clerk of Assembly receives the communication of such inability or unwillingness, removed as convener. The Clerk of Assembly will then convene a meeting of the committee as soon as may practically be arranged and the committee, at that meeting, will elect from its membership an acting convener, who on such election will act as convener until the next meeting of the Assembly.
- 4. State Nominations**
- 4.1. A State Assembly may nominate persons from that State for election to a committee in accordance with regulation 2.4.
- 4.2. The submission of nominations by a state assembly shall not prevent further nominations being made to the Assembly in accordance with the procedures of the Ballot Committee.
- 5. Additional members** Any committee may appoint one or more persons as additional members of the committee if and when required. Such additional members shall not be entitled to vote.
- 6. Eligibility for membership** Members of state assemblies, ministers without charge, elders and communicants of the Church may be nominated as members and conveners of Assembly committees whether or not they are members of the General Assembly.
- 7. Casual Vacancies** Casual vacancies on any committee arising between meetings of the Assembly shall be filled by the committee, subject to the terms of its own regulations.
- 8. Special Committees** In accordance with Article 4.2 the Assembly may appoint special committees, for which the membership and tasks shall be specified in the minute establishing them. The above regulations do not apply except for those providing for the filling of casual vacancies of the convener or membership, and eligibility for membership.
- 9. Ballot Committee**
- 9.1. The Ballot Committee shall be a special committee which functions only during a meeting of the Assembly. Its task is to arrange and hold the ballot for elected

- positions during the Assembly.
- 9.2. Membership of the Ballot Committee should be as specified in the regulations of the Ballot Committee.
- 9.3. The Ballot Committee shall be appointed by the Assembly upon a recommendation in the deliverance of the Business Committee.
- 10. Finance** Financial arrangements for committees are made in accordance with the regulations of the Finance Committee.
- 11. General Rules of Committees**
- 11.1. Standing Order 101 applies to all committees of the Assembly.
- 11.2. In terms of Standing Order 101(a) three members of a committee shall constitute a quorum.
- 11.3. A committee shall appoint its own executive and/or sub-committees and shall arrange the work of the committee as it shall see fit.
- 11.4. Committees are encouraged, where appropriate, to do business other than in face to face meetings with care being taken to preserve the rights of all members.
- 11.5. The convener of a committee is responsible for ensuring that the committee keeps proper records of its proceedings, including meetings held and/or resolutions adopted pursuant to 11.6 and 11.7.
- 11.6. A committee is permitted to hold a meeting by means of a telephone or internet audio or video conference whereby all members participating in the meeting are able to hear and be heard by all other participants.
- 11.7. A committee may without meeting make a resolution by email provided that:
- (a) the proposed resolution is notified by email to each committee member in time for each member to make a considered decision, and
 - (b) every such response is sent to all members by the person making it.
- In the determination of a particular matter, no response shall be considered if it has not been sent to all members. Any proposal for a decision to be made by email shall specify a response time which shall not be less than four days and, upon the expiration of that period, the matter will be determined in accordance with those responses received at that time which are able to be considered because they have been circulated to all members. A proposal for a specific resolution to be determined by email may be vetoed by any three members.
- (2) At the request of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee, amend the regulations of that Committee so that:-
- (a) clause 2 will read:-
 2. The Committee shall consist of:
 - (a) A Convener elected by the General Assembly.
 - (b) The National Director.
 - (c) The Convener of the state committee on world mission from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.
 - (d) An additional representative from the state committee on world mission from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.
 - (e) Five additional members elected by the General Assembly of Australia of whom at least three shall be from the state in which the national office is located.
 - (b) clause 3 will be deleted.
 - (3) Amend clause 1 of the College Committee regulations, so that it will read:
 1. The College Committee shall consist of:
 - (f) A convener elected by and from the members of the Committee.
 - (g) The Convener of the state committee on theological education from the assemblies in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, and Western Australia.
 - (h) The principals of the theological colleges operated by the state assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland, and Victoria.
 - (i) Two members of the faculty of each of the colleges listed in (c) who shall be elected by the relevant faculty.

- (4) Amend clause 2 of the regulations of the National Journal Committee so that it will read: "The Committee shall consist of a Convener and ten members appointed by the General Assembly. No more than three persons from any one State shall be elected to the Committee."
- (5) Declare that the resolutions recorded in (1) – (4) above have effect forthwith.

19. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2.00 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

THIRD SEDERUNT

20. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Tuesday, 13 September, 2016 at 2.00 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

21. Presbyterian Women's Association: The report of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia was laid on the table and received.
Mrs E. Mill, Immediate Past President; Mrs J. White, President; Mrs S. Johnson, Treasurer; were presented to the Moderator and at his invitation Mrs E. Mill and Mrs J. White addressed the house.
Pursuant to notice the Clerk moved:

That the Assembly:

Give thanks to God for the work and ministry of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia through the congregations of the Church and in the life, work and mission of the Church across several states.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Moderator conveyed the thanks of the Assembly to the PWA.

22. Bible Exposition: The Rev. T.A. Bain delivered an exposition of Acts 2.

23. Public Worship and Aids to Devotion: The report of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. C.S. Kroeger submitted the deliverance.

Clause (1) was approved.

Clause (2) was moved and seconded.

The Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 86.)

24. Private Sitting: The Assembly sat in private.

25. Petition (i): A petition from Mr R. Steyne concerning a decision of the 2016 meeting of the General Assembly of Tasmania was laid on the table.

Numbered copies of the petition were circulated, commissioners signing for their particular copy.

Time was allowed for members to read the petition.

It was moved and seconded that Petition (i) be received.

The motion was approved.

Mr R. Steyne appeared as the petitioner and addressed the Assembly.

Questions were asked of the petitioner.

By leave, the Rev. P. Barson moved that the Assembly:

Extend this sederunt of the Assembly until 6.00 p.m.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Allow Mr R. Steyne to remain in the house during the consideration of his petition.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Not grant the prayer of the petition.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The dissent of Ms S. Maddrell is recorded.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Dismiss the petition.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The petitioner was advised of the decision and removed from the bar.

All of the numbered copies of Petition (i) were recovered for destruction.

26. Open Court: The Assembly resumed in open court.

27. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 7.00 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

FOURTH SEDERUNT

28. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Tuesday, 13 September, 2016 at 7.00 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

29. Australian Presbyterian World Mission: The report of the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee (APWM) was laid on the table and received.

Mr A. Shaw submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (6) were approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. K.D. Murray moved:

That the Assembly:

- (7) Urge ministers, sessions, mission committees and Church members to familiarise themselves with the APWM policy document 'Partnership in Mission 2016' so that they might understand how APWM and local congregations partner together in Indigenous and overseas cross-cultural mission.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Moderator and the Rev. K. Endo signed a partnership document between the Presbyterian Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Japan.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Express its thankfulness to God for his continued blessing upon APWM in the provision of candidates, the sustaining of missionaries and the progress of the gospel throughout the world.
- (2) Express its gratefulness to Andrew & Rosemary Williamson and Glen and Rachel Connor for their many years of service in Vanuatu.
- (3) Praise God for those individuals and congregations who support the ministry of APWM.
- (4) Draw the attention of Church members to the APWM website.
- (5) Urge ministers, sessions, mission committees and Church members to set aside one or more Sundays in the year to promote the cause of cross-cultural mission in their congregations.
- (6) Call the Presbyterian Church of Australia to regular prayer for local and overseas mission.
- (7) Urge ministers, sessions, mission committees and Church members to familiarise themselves with the APWM policy document 'Partnership in Mission 2016' so that they might understand how APWM and local congregations partner together in Indigenous and overseas cross-cultural mission.

30. Relations With Other Churches: The report of the Relations With Other Churches Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr P.J. (Flip) Buys, International Director of the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF), addressed the Assembly.

The Very Rev. R.P.F. Benn submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Encourage the Relations With Other Churches Committee to continue its active role in initiating, maintaining and fostering relationships with both Australian and overseas churches of like mind.
- (2) Note the Summary Table which clarifies the partner church and fraternal relationships which have been established over the years through the GAA Standing Committees: APWM, PresAid and Relations With Other Churches.
- (3) Note the 2015 request of the Free Church of Scotland's Ecumenical Committee for "engagement" with the Presbyterian Church of Australia, and the ongoing development of this "engagement" by the Relations With Other Churches Committee.
- (4) Thank members of the Relations With Other Churches Committee who served the committee during the triennium, but who do not plan to stand for election to membership of the committee beyond the 2016 Assembly, namely: the Very Rev. Robert Benn, the Rev. Dr Jared Hood, Rev. Bill Lutton, Jens Norved, and Peter Hastie.

- (5) Continue with the practice of directing committees wishing to invite representatives of other churches to attend meetings of the General Assembly, to process those invitations through the Relations With Other Churches Committee in cooperation with the Australian Presbyterian World Mission Committee, the Clerks and the Business Convener.
- (6) Encourage the Relations With Other Churches Committee to continue its involvement in promoting the ministries of the WRF, and thank the Rev. Dr John McClean and the Very Rev. Robert Benn for their services on the WRF Board.
- (7) Make an annual contribution, during the triennium 2017-2019, to the WRF of AUD \$4,500.
- (8) Approve the travel and accommodation expenses of the Convener to attend one meeting of the WRF per annum during the triennium 2017-2019.
- (9) Encourage the Committee to continue discussions with other Presbyterian and Reformed denominations in the region and encourage them to join the membership of the WRF.

31. Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland: At the invitation of the Moderator, Rev Dr John Nicholls, Moderator of the Free Church of Scotland, addressed the Assembly.

32. Clerk of Assembly of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand: At the invitation of the Moderator, Rev. David Bayne, Clerk of the Assembly of the Grace Presbyterian Church of New Zealand, addressed the Assembly.

33. Variation to the Order of Business: The Order of Business was varied in order to take up the report of the Overseas Aid and Development Committee.

34. Overseas Aid and Development: The report of the Overseas Aid and Development Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. C.R. Thomas submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Give thanks to God for the generosity of his people in supporting the Easter and Christmas PresAID Appeals, and for the privilege of assisting our mission partners and sister churches in their endeavours to extend the Kingdom of God.
- (2) Request all sessions, and boards or committees of management, to give sympathetic consideration to supporting future Easter and Christmas PresAID appeals.

35. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 34 to 35 were laid on the table.

36. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 9.30 a.m. tomorrow Wednesday, 14 September, 2016 whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
 BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
 LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

FIFTH SEDERUNT

37. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Wednesday, 14 September, 2016 at 9.30 a.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

38. Finance: The report of the Finance Committee was laid on the table and received. Mr J.M. Rolland submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (7) were approved.

Clause (8) was approved.

Clause (9) was approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Receive the Financial Statements for the years ended 31 December 2013, 2014 and 2015.
- (2) Receive the Audit Reports from:
 - (a) Ernst & Young, on the accounts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
 - (b) Robert J. Nixon & Associates, on the accounts of the Presbyterian Inland Mission.
- (3) Appoint the Official Auditor of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales to audit the accounts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia including the National Journal Committee from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2019.
- (4) Appoint Robert J. Nixon & Associates to audit the accounts of the Presbyterian Inland Mission from 1 January 2017 until 31 December 2019.
- (5)
 - (a) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay the accommodation costs of Commissioners not resident in the city in which the General Assembly is held.
 - (b) Request the Secretary of the Finance Committee and the Clerk of the Assembly to secure advantageous accommodation rates for lodging Commissioners during the General Assembly.
 - (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay the accommodation costs of the Moderator, Clerks and Business Convener during the course of the General Assembly.
 - (d) Approve the reimbursement of the actual expenses incurred for Commissioners travelling to the General Assembly (excluding the Presbyteries of The Central Coast, The Hawkesbury, Sydney, Sydney North and Sydney South) on the following basis:
 - Commissioners who travel more than 750 km - return airfares at a rate authorised by the Clerk.
 - Commissioners who travel 750 km or less - return fares by train (or coach, where a train does not run).
 - Commissioners using their own car - a payment of 32 cents/km (maximum 1500 km).
 - (e) Remind all Commissioners travelling by air that they should make their bookings in advance to achieve the cheapest flight possible.
- (6)
 - (a) Approve payment of the following Honoraria until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise:

Clerk of Assembly	\$2,500 p.a.
Deputy Clerk	\$850 for each General Assembly
Assistance to Clerks	\$400 for each General Assembly
Business Convener	\$1,000 for each General Assembly
 - (b) Authorise the Finance Committee to pay appropriate Honoraria to one or more persons acting in the positions listed above.
- (7)
 - (a) Approve the following provisions for the Moderator assuming office in September 2016 and for succeeding Moderators until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise:
 - (iv) An allowance of up to \$52,500 to cover costs of travel, accommodation, telephone, postage, stationery including an honorarium of \$2,500 per annum;
 - (v) An allowance sufficient to cover the cost of moderatorial dress; and
 - (vi) Costs of pulpit supply during the Moderator's absence on moderatorial duty.

- (b) Declare that when the Moderator is invited to special congregational and institutional functions the parties concerned should as a general rule meet all relevant moderatorial expenses.
 - (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve any necessary additional expenditure in respect of the Moderator.
 - (d) Agree to increase the Moderator's allowance by CPI adjustments as at 30 September in 2017 and 2018.
- (8)
- (a) Reappoint the Rev. M. Wharton as webmaster for the Presbyterian Church of Australia for a period of twelve months from the close of this meeting of the Assembly with accountability to the Assembly Clerk.
 - (b) Request the Assembly Clerk to undertake a comprehensive review of the Church's communication needs across multiple media in consultation with the Finance Committee, the webmaster and the Clerks of the Assemblies of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria and to make recommendations concerning an interim communication strategy.
 - (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to adopt an interim communication strategy and make consequential decisions about the technical and personnel requirements of that strategy, including the appointment of a webmaster after September 2017 on suitable terms and conditions.
 - (d) Direct the Finance Committee to report to the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly concerning its communication strategy, any personnel appointed pursuant to these resolutions and the relevant terms of any and all such appointments.

- (9) (a) Approve the following expenditure for the 2017-2019 triennium:

	2017	2018	2019	Total
Code Committee	1,600	1,600	1,600	4,800
Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee	1,600	1,600	1,600	4,800
Reception of Ministers Committee	3,700	3,700	3,700	11,100
Church Planting Taskforce	3,000	3,000	3,000	9,000
Mission to Australia	3,500	3,500	3,500	10,500
Church & Nation Committee	4,200	2,500	3,100	9,800
College Committee	18,080	10,580	8,080	36,740
Presbyterian Inland Mission	2,500	2,500	2,500	7,500
Relations with Other Churches Committee	9,300	8,100	8,100	25,500
National Journal Committee	34,000	35,500	37,000	106,500
Total Expenses - Committees	81,480	72,580	72,180	226,240
Historical Records & Library (GAA Archives)	6,500	6,500	6,500	19,500
Website Maintenance	12,000	12,000	12,000	36,000
Procurator's Retainer	500	500	500	1,500
Moderator's Expenses (incl. Honoraria)	17,500	17,500	17,500	52,500
General Expenses	25,000	25,000	25,000	75,000
Office Services	11,000	11,000	11,000	33,000
Para Hills PCSA	10,000	10,000	10,000	30,000
500th Anniversary of Reformation	7,000	0	0	7,000
PresAid Administration	2,000	2,000	2,000	6,000
Assembly Costs	0	0	100,000	100,000
Honoraria	2,500	2,500	2,250	7,250
Total Expenses - Other	94,000	87,000	186,750	367,750
TOTAL GAA EXPENDITURE	175,480	159,580	258,930	593,990

- (b) Approve the reimbursement of travelling expenses incurred by members of Committees attending Committee meetings on the same basis as determined for meetings of the General Assembly of Australia with incidental expenses as determined by each Committee.
- (c) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve additional expenditure that may arise, after consultation with any Committee, reporting details to state Finance (or equivalent) Committees.
- (d) Authorise the Finance Committee to approve payment of audit fees, office service charges and other necessary administrative expenses and include such costs with Committee expenses to be recovered from state assemblies.

- (e) Request the state assemblies, when called upon to do so, to reimburse the Finance Committee without delay expenditure in connection with the holding of the 2016 General Assembly of Australia, the expenses of committees of the General Assembly of Australia and expenditure of the Moderator, in the proportion set out in the Finance Committee regulations.
- (f) Request the NSW Trustees to finance expenditure authorised by the Finance Committee pending reimbursement by State Finance (or equivalent) Committees.

39. Trustees: The report of the Trustees of the Presbyterian Church of Australia was laid on the table and received.

40. Overture (iv): An overture from the Presbytery of Wagga Wagga concerning Questions at Ordinations and Inductions was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. P.R. Sheely presented the overture.

The Rev. J. Bartholomew asked the Moderator to rule on the competency of Overture (iv).

The Moderator ruled that the overture was competent.

Ms S. Maddrell moved dissent from the Moderator's ruling.

The motion was seconded and disapproved.

The moderator's ruling was upheld.

Questions were asked of the overturist.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P. Sheely moved:

That the Assembly:

Sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P. Sheely moved:

That the Assembly:

Send the overture to state assemblies and presbyteries under Barrier Act procedure with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2018.

The motion was seconded.

Arising from the debate, the Rev. J. Irvin moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the motion by the addition of the word "alone" after the words "New Testaments" and before the words "to be the Word of God" within the questions proposed in the Overture.

The motion was seconded.

The Rev. M. Powell moved the Previous Question.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The motion of the Rev. P. Sheely was approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. P. Sheely moved:

That the Assembly:

Grant interim authority to the vow proposed in the overture.

The motion was seconded.

The Rev. D. Burke moved the Previous Question.

The motion was seconded and approved.

41. College: The report of the College Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr I.K. Smith submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

Continue to grant approval for candidates from Western Australia to undertake studies at Trinity Theological College, Perth, subject to the continued approval of the General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church of Western Australia and the annual approval of a full curriculum by the College Committee, such training to be under the oversight of the Faculty of the Presbyterian Theological College of Victoria.

42. National Journal: The report of the National Journal Committee was laid on the table and received.

Mr R.D. Parker submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (8) were approved.
The debate was adjourned (Min. 47).

43. Bible Exposition: The Rev. T.A. Bain delivered an exposition of Acts 10.

44. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 36 to 41 were laid on the table.

45. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2.00 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

SIXTH SEDERUNT

46. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Wednesday, 14 September, 2016 at 2.00 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

47. National Journal: Debate resumed on the report of the National Journal Committee (Min. 42).

Pursuant to notice Mr B. Greig moved:

That the Assembly:

Instruct the National Journal Committee to investigate the advantages and disadvantages (including financial) of a solely digital distribution of AP magazine and report to the next meeting of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and disapproved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note that AP magazine and the Supplement have been produced regularly and within budget for each issue since the 2013 General Assembly of Australia.
- (2) Note that AP magazine and the Supplement have consistently supported the confessional position of the Presbyterian Church of Australia on matters of life, ministry and doctrine.
- (3) Commend Mr Walter Bruining for his secretarial service to the National Journal Committee from 2013 to 2016.
- (4) Commend Mr Mike Timmins, the former Business Manager of the National Journal (and Yearbook editor from May 2013 onwards), for his loyal and efficient service to the wider Church through the production of AP, for his continuing support and training of replacement Business Managers, and for his efforts to streamline activities.
- (5) Congratulate the editorial and production team of AP, as well as the regular contributors, for the work that they produce for the Presbyterian Church of Australia – particularly the Rev. Dr Peter Barnes (Editor), the Rev. Peter Hastie (interviewing editor), Mr Barney Zwartz (production editor), Mr Graham Wye (art-work and layout), the Rev. Stuart Bonnington and the Rev. Mark Powell.
- (6) Note that AP has been the vehicle for the regular distribution of news, views and promotional material for several Assembly Committees such as PIM and APWM and, as such, is a vital conduit of communication for the national Church and fundraising vehicle.
- (7) Note that the magazine and Yearbook retain the confidence of a large number of regular and loyal advertisers.
- (8) Strongly encourage ministers, elders, committees of management and congregational members to subscribe to AP, and also strongly encourage congregations to seek the publication of their details in the magazine's quarterly Church Directory.

48. Reference (iv): A reference from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders was laid on the table and received.

Mr M. Smith and Rev. Dr J. McClean stated the reference.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 50).

49. Procurator's Opinion on the Reference on Eldership: The Procurator's Opinion on the Reference from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders was laid on the table.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Receive the Procurator's Opinion on the reference from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders, and resolve that the Opinion be incorporated in the Blue Book.

The motion was seconded and approved.

50. Reference (iv): Debate resumed on a reference from the General Assembly of the

Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders (Min. 48).
Questions were asked of those stating the reference.
It was moved, seconded and agreed that the reference be sustained.
The debate was adjourned (Min. 68).

51. Presbyterian Inland Mission: The report of the Presbyterian Inland Mission Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. L.G. Fowler submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Express its thankfulness to God for his continued blessing upon the ongoing ministry of the patrol teams, mission church workers, administration staff and Chief Executive Officer and commend them to the continuing prayers of the Church.
- (2) Acknowledge with gratitude the dedication and faithful service of former PIM workers: Mr Bert and Mrs Penny Pierce and Mr Chris and Mrs Sandra Woonings.
- (3) Thank all members, congregations and organisations – especially the PWA and the PWMU within the Church who have so generously supported the PIM in the past three years and encourage further support as part of their commitment to the work of the Church to the outback and inland Australia through the PIM.
- (4) Thank the Trustees of the PIM and the GAA for their very prudent administration and oversight of PIM funds.
- (5) Encourage the whole Church to keep up to date with the ministry of PIM by visiting the web site at www.pim.org.au, or via our Facebook page, “On Track” and the various State Church publications.
- (6) Thank the Rev. Stuart Bonnington for his service as Superintendent of PIM for ten years (2005-2015) as well as serving on the full committee between 1994 and 2015. Stuart’s enthusiasm, energy and sacrificial commitment to the role have most certainly advanced the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the remote parts of our nation.
- (7) Thank the Rev. Robert Duncanson for his service as Convener of PIM for ten years (2005-2015) and as a member of the full committee between 1994 and 2015. Rob’s leadership over these years has seen many positive things develop in the ministry of PIM.
- (8) Encourage ministers and elders to promote the ministry of PIM to those who might be looking for ways to serve the Lord.

52. Ballot: A ballot was held for the following committees: Christian Education (TAS); Code (NSW); Defence Force Chaplaincy (QLD); Finance (NSW); National Journal (VIC); Overseas Aid and Development (NSW); Overseas Aid and Development (QLD); Public Worship and Aids to Devotion (NSW); Public Worship and Aids to Devotion (VIC); Reception of Ministers (Convener); Reception of Ministers (NSW); Reception of Ministers (QLD); and Relations with Other Churches (NSW).

53. Defence Force Chaplaincy: The report of the Committee on Defence Force Chaplaincy was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. Prof. A.M. Harman submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Thank our Defence chaplains for their dedication to the task of ministering to our service personnel, and assure them of our prayerful support and encouragement.
- (2) Ask our younger ministers in particular to consider available opportunities for service either in full-time or reserve chaplaincy.
- (3) Thank Dr Allan Harman for his service as convener of the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee, and a member of the Religious Advisory Committee to the Services for the period 2004-2016.

54. Variation to the Order of Business: By leave of the house, the Rev. P. Barson moved:

That the Assembly:

Vary the Order of Business and extend this sederunt of the Assembly until 6.00 p.m.

The motion was seconded and approved.

55. Overture (ii): An overture from the Code Committee to amend *Constitution, Procedure and Practice*, Chapter 8, Rule 1.05 within The Code of Discipline was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. B.M. Meller and Rev. L.J.F. Hall stated the overture.

Questions were asked of the overturists.

Debate on Overture (ii) was adjourned (Min. 88).

56. Notices of Motion: Notices of Motion 42 to 45 were laid on the table.

57. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 7.00 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.

LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

SEVENTH SEDERUNT

58. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Wednesday, 14 September, 2016 at 7.00 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

59. Communication (i): A communication from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland concerning that Church's response to potential changes to the Marriage Act was laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice, Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Receive communication (i) from the General Assembly of Queensland and note that Assembly's unanimous opinion that:

- (a) Marriage is a covenant between a woman and a man, and that the Presbyterian Church of Australia cannot allow its ministers to conduct celebrations of same sex marriage.
- (b) Notwithstanding proposed changes to the Marriage Act, continuing to conduct marriages in our community according to the rites of the Presbyterian Church is a testimony to God's good created order, and creates gospel opportunities for our churches and ministers.
- (c) The appropriate trigger for reconsidering our position would be at the point at which we are legislatively compelled to conduct same sex marriages.

The motion was seconded and approved.

60. Communication (ii): A communication from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland concerning polity implications of the report of the Church and Nation Committee was laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice, Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Receive communication (ii) from the General Assembly of Queensland and note that Assembly's concern that:

- (a) Ministers should not be made subject to the direction of a session; and
- (b) While the General Assembly, may set guidelines for the conduct of worship, it should not impose on ministers a mandatory order of service for weddings.

The motion was seconded and approved.

61. Communication (iv): A communication from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria concerning that Church's response to potential changes to the Marriage Act was laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice, Rev. P. Phillips moved:

That the Assembly:

Receive communication (iv) from the General Assembly of Victoria and note its opinion that:

- (a) If a plebiscite or referendum is held concerning changes to the Marriage Act (1961), the General Assembly should instruct the Church and Nation Committee to do all it can to assert, maintain and defend the biblical teaching on marriage for the common good.
- (b) In the event that the Marriage Act (1961) is amended to include homosexual relationships, it would be wise for the General Assembly to consider withdrawing as a recognised denomination under that Act.

The motion was seconded and approved.

62. Church and Nation: The report of the Church and Nation Committee was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. D.R. Middleton submitted the deliverance.

Clauses (1) to (3) were approved.

It was moved that the Assembly:

Continue to support the work of Freedom 4 Faith Inc, by allocating \$15,000 per annum for the next three years subject to the annual recommendation of the Church and Nation Committee to the Finance Committee.

The motion was seconded.

The competency of the motion was challenged.

The Moderator ruled the motion to be incompetent because the funding request had not been submitted to the Finance Committee as required.

Clause (4) was approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D.R. Middleton moved:

That the Assembly:

Declare, if the Marriage Act (1961) is redefined to allow for homosexual unions to be recognised as marriages under the Marriage Act (1961), that the Presbyterian Church of Australia will decline recognition as a denomination under the Act.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

(5) Affirm the views expressed by the Queensland Assembly and noted above (Min. 59).

The motion was seconded.

The Moderator declared the motion of the Rev. D.R. Middleton and the motion of the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell to be counter-motions.

By leave of the house, Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Extend this sederunt until the counter-motions have been determined.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The motion of the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell received a majority of votes and on being put as the motion was approved.

The dissent of the Rev. C. Markham is recorded.

The debate was adjourned (Min. 67).

63. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, 15 September, 2016 whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

EIGHTH SEDERUNT

64. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Thursday, 15 September, 2016 at 9.30 a.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

65. Blue Book: By leave of the Assembly, Rev. B.M. Meller moved:
That the Assembly:
Instruct the Clerk of Assembly not to print Appeal (i), Petition (i) and Assembly Papers (iii) or (iv) in the Blue Book.
The motion was seconded and approved.

66. Ballot: A ballot was held for the following positions: Code Committee (QLD).

67. Church and Nation: Debate on the report of the Church and Nation Committee was resumed (Min. 62).

Pursuant to notice the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

- (6) Acknowledge that, if the Marriage Act is changed to permit same-sex marriage, some members may feel that they cannot continue to officiate at weddings as they have done in the past, and so allow individual conscience to dictate whether ministers retain their registration as marriage celebrants.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Assembly sat in private.

As an addendum to the report of the Church and Nation Committee, a Memorandum of Understanding for Partner Organisations for the Coalition for Marriage was laid on the table and circulated to members of the Assembly as Assembly Paper (iv) and received.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D. R. Middleton moved:

That the Assembly:

- (7) Authorise the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia or, in his absence or at his request, the Convener of the Church and Nation Committee, to act on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Partner Organisations of the Coalition for Marriage.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Instruct the Church and Nation Committee and any future delegates to the Coalition for Marriage to make every effort to ensure that all public and private statements regarding the issue of same sex marriage are made in a tone of graciousness seeking to understand the concerns of the LGBTI community.

The motion was seconded.

The Rev. D. Brown moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the motion by deleting all words after the word “graciousness”.

The amendment was seconded and approved.

With application to the substantive motion, the Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. D. R. Middleton moved:

That the Assembly:

- (8) Urge all state assemblies, presbyteries, and congregations to prayerfully and practically support the “No” case in opposing the redefinition of marriage to include homosexual unions in the upcoming 2017 plebiscite.

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice the Rt Rev. P.M. Campbell moved:

That the Assembly:

Amend the motion by replacing the word “practically” with the word “graciously”.

The motion was seconded.

With application to the amendment, the Previous Question was moved, seconded and approved.

The motion was approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Record its appreciation for the contribution of the Rev. David Johnstone and, in particular, the Rev. Stefan Slucki for his many years of service and contributions, to the Church and Nation Committee.
- (2) Thank its immediate past Moderator, the Very Rev. David Cook, for his enthusiastic and encouraging support of the work of the Church and Nation Committee.
- (3) Express its thanks to the Australian Christian Lobby for its efforts to present a clear Christian voice in the political process and assure it of our prayers.
- (4) Commend the need of prayer for, and assistance of, all refugees, in particular Syrian Christian refugees.
- (5) Affirm the views expressed by the Queensland Assembly and noted above (Min. 59).
- (6) Acknowledge that, if the Marriage Act is changed to permit same-sex marriage, some members may feel that they cannot continue to officiate at weddings as they have done in the past, and so allow individual conscience to dictate whether ministers retain their registration as marriage celebrants.
- (7) Authorise the Moderator-General of the Presbyterian Church of Australia or, in his absence or at his request, the Convener of the Church and Nation Committee, to act on behalf of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in signing the Memorandum of Understanding for Partner Organisations of the Coalition for Marriage.
- (8) Urge all state assemblies, presbyteries, and congregations to prayerfully and practically support the "No" case in opposing the redefinition of marriage to include homosexual unions in the upcoming 2017 plebiscite.

The Assembly resumed in open court.

68. Reference (iv): Debate on a reference from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in New South Wales concerning elders was resumed (Min. 50).

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Advise the General Assembly of New South Wales that:
 - (a) The proposal contained in Reference (iv) may tend towards the imposition of a uniform or exclusive view of the duties and functions of the eldership;
 - (b) The Presbyterian Church of Australia has not, thus far, required a uniform or exclusive view of the duties and functions of the eldership but has allowed a variety of practice;
 - (c) To require an exclusive view on the matter may constitute a restatement of the Church's doctrine and thus invoke the requirements of Section III of the Basis of Union;
 - (d) Inasmuch as any move to require uniformity in this matter may impact on the Church's understanding of its ministry, the GAA claims jurisdiction over the matter pursuant to Article 2.1 of the Articles of Agreement;
 - (e) The Church's doctrine on the eldership is not fully developed and the General Assembly requests that no substantial changes to state Codes in relation to eldership be made until the matter has been further considered within the General Assembly.

The motion was seconded.

The Rev. Dr J. McClean moved:

That the Assembly:

Advise the General Assembly of New South Wales that the General Assembly of Australia finds no doctrinal objection to the proposal contained in the reference.

The motion was seconded.

The Moderator declared the motion of the Rev. B.M. Meller and the motion of the Rev. Dr J. McClean to be counter-motions.

The motion of the Rev. B.M. Meller received a majority of votes.

On being put to the vote, parts (a) to (d) were approved.

On being put to the vote, part (e) was approved.

The dissent of Messrs B. Greig and M. Smith is recorded on part (e).

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (2) Send the reference to the Code Committee with a request that it undertake a comprehensive investigation of the principles and practices that have informed the Church's understanding of the eldership and report to the next meeting of the Assembly, having given careful consideration to factors that might have changed through the Church's history.
- (3) Require the Code Committee to engage fully with the principals of the recognised theological colleges or their delegates and with the Very Rev. Dr A. Harman in its enquiry and the formulation of any recommendations anent the Church's understanding of the eldership.

The motion was seconded and approved.

69. Private Sitting: The Assembly sat in private.

70. Reception of Ministers: The report of the Reception of Minister's Committee was laid on the table.

Debate on the report was adjourned (Min. 79).

71. Open Court: The Assembly resumed in open court.

72. 500th Anniversary of the Reformation: The report of the Committee on the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation was laid on the table and received.

The Very Rev. D. A. Cook submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Approve the decisions of the Committee for the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation to:
 - (a) Publish the book, *Truth Matters*;
 - (b) Produce three new tracts to help members of our congregations in their works of evangelism and edification;
 - (c) Establish a panel of recommended evangelists to speak evangelistically as widely as possible during 2017; and
 - (d) Organise a study tour through primary sites of the continental and Scottish reformation.
- (2) Commend to all ministers, sessions and congregations the use of the videos prepared by the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson to explain the significance of God's actions during the Reformation.
- (3) Urge all members of the Church to seize the opportunities provided in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation to gain whatever skill might be necessary in order to share the gospel hope that drove the Reformers and call as many people as possible to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- (4) Encourage ministers and sessions across the Church to organise evangelistic functions under the banner, "Taking God Seriously", and invite the Convener to nominate one of the panel evangelists to speak at those events.
- (5) Commend the book "Truth Matters", for use privately and in group discussion as a means of developing a mature understanding of the key doctrines of the Christian faith.

73. Bible Expositions: The Rev. T.A. Bain delivered an exposition of Acts 28.

74. Thanks to Rev. T.A. Bain: The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Thank the Rev. A. Bain for his faithful exposition of Scripture delivered in an incisive, engaging, timely, relevant and stimulating examination of Acts 2 ("Pentecost"), Acts 10 ("Peter's Vision") and Acts 28 ("Paul's Ministry to Malta and Rome").

The motion was seconded and approved.

75. Adjournment: Thereafter the Assembly adjourned to meet at 2.00 p.m. whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.

BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

NINTH SEDERUNT

76. Assembly Constituted: At Sydney and within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, on Thursday, 15 September, 2016 at 2.00 p.m. the Assembly met, pursuant to adjournment, and was constituted with praise, the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Moderator presiding.

77. Ballot: The report of the Ballot Committee was laid on the table and received. The Rev. D. McDougall submitted the deliverance. The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows: That the Assembly:

- (1) Confirm the following elections, with the proviso that the Convenership of the Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee shall remain with the Rev. Dr Allan Harman until 31 December, 2016, to allow for necessary notification to, and response by, the Department of Defence.

Australian Presbyterian World Mission

Convener Mr Alex Shaw

Members Rev. Brett Graham, Alex Ralston, Messrs Peter Burke, Bob Quinn, Mrs Sheryl Sarkoezy

Christian Education

Convener Rev. Andrew Vines

NSW: Rev. David Stone, Mr Murray Norman, Dr Leon Thorpe

QLD: Rev. John Nicol

SA: Rev. Allan Clarkson

TAS: Mr Graeme Roberts

VIC: Rev. Hui Lim

WA: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae

Church and Nation

Convener Rev. Dr John McClean

NSW: Rev. A.C. "Sandy" McMillan, Messrs A. Balogh, P. Christopher

QLD: Rev. Nathan Campbell, Nick Aroney

SA: Rev. Gary Ware

TAS: Rev. Campbell Markham

VIC: Rev. Daniel Combridge, Darren Middleton

WA: Rev. Ross Fraser

Code

Convener Rev. Bruce Meller

NSW: Rev. John Irvin, Kevin Murray, Bruce Gorton

QLD: Rev. Ron Clark, Matthew Viney

SA: Rev. Gary Ware

TAS: Rev. Greg Munro

VIC: Rev. Peter Phillips, Dr Jared Hood

WA: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae

Defence Force Chaplaincy

Convener Rev. Peter Phillips

NSW: Rev. Paul Harris, Gary Hooper, John Irvin

QLD: Rev. John Nicol, Mr Norman Hughes

TAS: Rev. Ian McKendrick

VIC: Rev. Martin De Pyle, Peter Owen

WA: Rev. Ross Fraser

Finance

Convener The Chairman from time to time of the Presbyterian Church (NSW) Property Trust

NSW: Rev. John Irvin, Messrs John Rolland, Duncan Parker

QLD: Messrs Greg Rodgers, Keith Stewart

TAS: Mr Graeme Roberts

VIC: Rev. Richard O'Brien, Mr Andrew Letcher

WA: Mr Chris Woonings

National Journal

Convener Mr Duncan Parker

Persons Rev. Stuart Bonnington, Andrew Clarke, David Cook, Guido Kettniss, Jason Summers, Mr Neville Taylor

VIC: Rev. Peter Hastie, Mr Barney Zwartz, Mr Walter Bruining

Overseas Aid and Development

Convener Rev. Dean Carroll
 NSW: Rev. William Morrow, Mr Bill Thompson
 QLD: Rev. Peter Barber
 VIC: Miss Geraldine Goswell, Rev. Len Pearce

Presbyterian Inland Mission

Convener Rev. Les Fowler
 NSW: Rev. Derek Bullen, Sam Smith, Mrs Evelyn Mill
 QLD: Rev. Peter Barber, Mrs Heather Ross
 SA: Rev. Allan Clarkson
 TAS: Rev. Peter Williamson
 VIC: Rev. Martin De Pyle, Mr Dennis Wright
 WA: Rev. Ross Fraser

Public Worship and Aids to Devotion

Convener Rev. Scott Kroeger
 NSW: Rev. Stuart Andrews, Andrew Unwin, Dr Michael Whitelaw
 QLD: Prof. Judith Brown
 SA: Rev. Gary Ware
 VIC: Rev. Matthew James, Michael Wharton
 WA: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae

Reception of Ministers

Convener Rev. David Burke
 NSW: Rev. Dr Ian Smith, Moses Hahn, Mr Jim Park
 QLD: Rev. Gary Millar, Andrew Richardson
 SA: Rev. Allan Clarkson
 TAS: Rev. Jason Summers
 VIC: Rev. Chris Siriweera
 WA: Mr W. "Bill" MacRae

Relations With Other Churches

Convener Rev. Dr John Wilson
 NSW: Rev. Dr John McClean, Kamal Weerakoon, Corrie Nel
 QLD: Rev. David Jones, Mr Robert Thompson
 TAS: Rev. Greg Munro
 VIC: Rev. Chris Duke, Matthew James
 WA: Rev. Stuart Bonnington

- (2) Authorise the Clerk of Assembly to destroy the ballot papers.
- (3) Thank and discharge the Ballot Committee.
- (4) Instruct the Clerk of Assembly to notify the Minister of Defence that the Rev. P.W. Phillips has been appointed as Convener of the General Assembly of Australia Defence Force Chaplaincy Committee with effect from 1 January 2017.

78. Private Sitting: The Assembly sat in private, with Mrs T. Stewart permitted to remain in the house for the purpose of translation.

79. Reception of Ministers: Debate on the report of the Reception of Ministers Committee was resumed (Min. 70).

The Rev. G.K. Kettmiss submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note that the following have been received as Ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Australia under Clause 12 of the Regulations:

Person	Presbytery	Date
Rev. Dr Gary Millar*	Presbytery of Brisbane	22/11/2013
Rev. Michael Boyd*	Presbytery of the Northern Rivers	04/12/2013
Rev. Nasif Kalada*	Presbytery of the Hawkesbury	04/12/2013
Rev. Tim Kie-Sun Lee*	Presbytery of the Hawkesbury	04/12/2013
Rev. David Els*	Presbytery of the Riverina	20/02/2014
Rev. Isaac Hwan Jung*	Presbytery of Sydney/Illawarra	01/04/2014
Rev. Bruce Dixon*	Presbytery of Brisbane	15/05/2014
Rev. Luke Isham*	Presbytery of Ballarat	15/01/2015
Rev. Shawn Newsome**	Presbytery of Western Australia	30/12/2014
Rev. Ian Spence*	Presbytery of Mowbray	03/02/2015

Rev. Peter Min*	Presbytery of Mowbray	07/06/2015
Rev. Risati Palemene**	Presbytery of Melbourne North	19/04/2016
Rev. Rod Thompson**	Presbytery of the Hawkesbury	04/05/2016
Rev. Ben Wingard**	Presbytery of Western Australia	19/02/2016

* Presented at the 2013 or an earlier Assembly.

** Received under Clause 12 of the Regulations

- (2) Receive the Rev. Kim Jaeger as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (3) Receive the Rev. Sam Chidamber as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (4) Receive the Rev. Joshua Swarts as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (5) Receive the Rev. Gordon Peden as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (6) Receive the Rev. David Whittingham as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (7) Receive the Rev. Seong Mo Byun as a Minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (8) Receive the Rev. Douglas Campbell as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (9) Receive the Rev. Brett Peatman as a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to take effect: (i) when he has completed the study set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when he receives and accepts either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently signs the formula.
- (10) Authorise the Committee to make the final decision on whether or not to receive the Rev. Nathan Holloway, Karam Krayyem and Morimoto Minoru as ministers of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, following the finalisation of the interviewing process. If received into the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to only take effect: (i) when they have completed the study

set by the College Committee; (ii) after a satisfactory Exit Interview; (iii) when they receive and accept either a call to a congregation of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, or an appointment made to a congregation or an institution of the Church, or by the General Assembly, a State Assembly, or a Committee or board thereof; and (iv) subsequently sign the formula.

- (11) In order to avoid unnecessary delays in the processing of applications, direct presbyteries to:
- (a) obtain a recent Certificate of Status and Academic Transcripts of tertiary study completed by applicants, attaching them to the Application Form, and then forward these to the Committee;
 - (b) consider carefully such Certificates of Status (or the absence of them) when they process applications, and to contact referees;
 - (c) ensure that the Applicant signs and returns the Duty of Care Statement, and also obtains an International (if applicable) and Australian Federal Police clearance check;
 - (d) ensure that any applicant from overseas secures either Australian citizenship or permanent residence status;
 - (e) ensure that the applicant is already committed to an appointment or to the acceptance of a call in the Presbyterian Church of Australia; and
 - (f) fulfill their rightful duty in assessing the theological, spiritual, practical and moral suitability of applicants for the ministry within the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (12) Thank the following for serving the Lord through this Committee:
Rev. David Jones (Moderator-General 2010-2013), Rev. Paul Bloomfield (Western Australia) and Mr David Turner (Tasmania).

80. Open Court: The Assembly resumed in open court.

81. Christian Education: The report of the Christian Education Committee was laid on the table and received.

Mr G. Roberts submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Encourage the committee in its practice of providing training to the smaller states.
- (2) Commend the publications and training resources of the Christian Education Committee to the wider Church.
- (3) Give thanks for the leadership of the retiring Convener of the Christian Education Committee, Rev. Dr Greg Goswell, over the last six years.

82. Moderator-General's Church Planting Taskforce: The report of the Moderator-General's Church Planting Taskforce was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. D. Jones submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Call on our churches throughout Australia to pray fervently for the emergence of a gospel centred church planting movement in the city of Adelaide within the Presbyterian Church of Australia.
- (2) Send financial support via the offices of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland for the purpose of placing workers in the Adelaide churches.

83. Communication (iii): A communication was received from the Presbyterian Church of South Australia conveying thanks for financial support.

84. Mission to Australia: The report of the Mission to Australia Committee was laid on the table and received.

85. Appeal (i): The Clerk reported that Appeal (i) against a decision of the General Assembly of Victoria made on 11 October 2013 and recorded at Min. 95 had been withdrawn. The Rev. C. Garrett took protestation, on behalf of the General Assembly of Victoria, that the decision of that Assembly had become final and requested that an extract minute of this Assembly be provided

to the General Assembly of Victoria.

86. Public Worship and Aids to Devotion: Debate on the report of the Committee on Public Worship and Aids to Devotion was resumed (Min. 23).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. J. Bartholomew moved:

That the Assembly:

- (2) Inform all presbyteries and congregations of the websites of the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee (pwad.org.au and rejoicehymnbase.com.au) and commend them as useful resources for the conduct of public worship and as an aid to the Church in general for private and family devotions.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note the following Committee websites and recommend them as useful tools to ministers, home missionaries, lay preachers, elders and Church members in their conduct of public worship, and as an aid to the church in general for private and family devotions: pwad.org.au and rejoicehymnbase.com.au.
- (2) Inform all presbyteries and congregations of the websites of the Public Worship and Aids to Devotion Committee (pwad.org.au and rejoicehymnbase.com.au) and commend them as useful resources for the conduct of public worship and as an aid to the church in general for private and family devotions.

87. Overture (i): An overture from the Code Committee to amend Standing Order 20 was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. B.M. Meller and Rev. L.J.F. Hall presented the overture.

Questions were asked of the overturists.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Send the overture to state assemblies and presbyteries under Barrier Act procedure with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2018.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Grant interim authority to the rule change proposed in the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

88. Overture (ii): Debate on the overture from the Code Committee to amend *Constitution, Procedure and Practice*, Chapter 8, Rule 1.05 within The Code of Discipline was resumed (Min. 55).

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Sustain the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The dissent of Dr L. Thorpe is recorded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Send the overture to state assemblies and presbyteries under Barrier Act procedure with replies to be in the hands of the Clerk of Assembly by 31 December, 2018.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The dissent of Dr L. Thorpe is recorded.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Grant interim authority to the rule change proposed in the overture.

The motion was seconded and approved without dissent.

89. Women's Ministries: The report of the Committee on Women's Ministries – Presbyterian Church of Australia was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. Dr J. McClean submitted the deliverance.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Receive the report of the Committee on Women's Ministries - Presbyterian Church of Australia (WMPCA).
- (2) Thank Andrea Pryde, Fiona Millar and Mairi Girgis for their valuable contribution to women's ministry within Australia through WMPCA.
- (3) Appoint Ceale Orford, Margaret Thatcher and Vanessa Stuckings as continuing members of the WMPCA committee with the power to co-opt new members as required.
- (4) Instruct the Committee to consider how it can best encourage women's ministry in various forms in churches and build helpful connections between activities and organisations in various states.
- (5) Commend the states on the development and support of women's ministries to their local members.

90. Reference (ii): A reference from the Presbytery of Melbourne West seeking clarification as to the delineation of powers and responsibilities between PIM and a presbytery in relation to PIM missions churches was laid on the table and received.

Mr A. Deeming stated the reference.

Questions were asked of the person stating the reference.

It was moved, seconded and agreed the reference be sustained.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Affirm that a minister without charge whose name appears on the Roll of a presbytery is subject to the jurisdiction of that presbytery in matters of life and doctrine but does not, by that fact, become subject to the authority of the presbytery in matters of employment except if it becomes necessary to receive permission to work outside of the Presbyterian Church of Australia. Thus, a minister employed by PIM whose name appears on the Roll of a presbytery is not subject to the direction of that presbytery in relation to his employment but is accountable to the PIM.
- (2) Notwithstanding the resolutions recorded at GAA BB 2010 Min. 34(5)(d)-(e) and GAA BB 2013 Min. 96(12)-(14) by which ministries of the PIM in Darwin and then Alice Springs were placed under the jurisdiction of the General Assembly of Victoria and the presbyteries of Melbourne West and Melbourne North respectively declare that henceforth churches founded and maintained by PIM are to be regarded as mission churches of PIM subject to its exclusive governance and jurisdiction.
- (3) Authorise and request PIM to exercise, in the operation of any such mission church, the powers normally exercised by a presbytery until such mission church shall have reached the stage where it may be transferred to, and received by, a presbytery as a congregation within a pastoral charge or home mission station as those terms might be interpreted within the relevant state church.
- (4) Amend the regulations of the PIM by:
 - (a) Adding these words at the end of clause 9: "as the Committee shall determine"; and
 - (b) Adding a new clause after clause 10 as follows:

Mission churches

In the fulfilment of its responsibilities, and after consultation with the relevant presbytery, PIM may establish mission churches which shall remain under its governance and control until they may be transferred to a presbytery as pastoral charges or home mission stations as those terms might be interpreted within the relevant state church. Until any such mission church shall be transferred to a presbytery, PIM shall exercise the powers of a presbytery.

- (5) Request PIM, in consultation with the Code Committee, to bring to the next meeting of the Assembly any further changes to its regulations that might appear necessary to enhance the government or operation of its mission churches.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Because they are employed by PIM, Messrs C. Morrow and A. Letcher did not participate in the debate or the vote.

91. Reference (iii): A reference from the Presbytery of Melbourne West concerning Rule 1.05 within The Code of Discipline was laid on the table and received.

Mr D. Wright stated the reference.

Questions were asked of the person stating the reference.

It was moved, seconded and agreed the reference be sustained.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Inform the Presbytery of Melbourne West of the changes made by the Assembly to Rule 1.05 within the Code of Discipline.

The motion was seconded and approved.

92. Reference (v): A reference from the Presbytery of Darling Downs concerning paedocommunion was laid on the table and received.

The Rev. T.N. Cheetham stated the reference.

Questions were asked of the person stating the reference.

It was moved, seconded and agreed the reference be sustained.

The Rev. M. Powell moved:

That the Assembly:

Request the College Committee to:

- (a) Survey all presbyteries in Australia as to how many of their congregation practice paedocommunion.
- (b) Investigate the position and policy of other Presbyterian Churches throughout the world.
- (c) Explore the biblical, theological, historical and pastoral implications of the issue.
- (d) Bring to the next GAA recommendations as to what our own policy and practice should be.

The motion was seconded.

Rev. G. Ware moved:

That the Assembly:

Delete clause (a) of the motion.

The amendment was seconded and disapproved.

The motion was approved.

93. Reference (i): A reference from the Presbytery of Western Australia asking the GAA to express an opinion on whether the Westminster Confession of Faith teaches or excludes particular views on eschatology and the millennium was laid on the table and received.

There being no person present from the Presbytery of Western Australia to state the reference, it was moved, seconded and agreed the reference be sustained.

The Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Refer Reference (i) to the College Committee for consideration and report, with recommendations to be brought to the next meeting of the Assembly.

The motion was seconded and approved.

94. Communication (v): A communication was received from the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia seeking changes to its constitution.

Pursuant to notice the Clerk of Assembly moved:

That the Assembly:

Approve amendments to the constitution of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia so that it will read as follows:

PRESBYTERIAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA

In Australia, Presbyterian Women have banded themselves together to work for the Kingdom of God through their Church.

Distinctive organisations have developed, different in detail in each State but the same in spirit and in aim. They are linked together in membership of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia. This Federal body came into being in September, 1954.

A Federal Conference is held usually at the time and place of the meetings of the General Assembly of Australia. Delegates attend from all States and a Federal Executive is located in each State in turn.

CONSTITUTION

- 1. Name:**
The name of the Association shall be the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia.
- 2. Aim:**
The aim of the Association shall be:
 - (a) To link the Women of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in a friendly comradeship for mutual help and inspiration and for united service to Christ and his Church at home and abroad.
 - (b) To extend the range of Presbyterian Women's influence by co-operation and/or affiliation with other organisations of a religious, educational, social, national and international character working for the advancement of God's Kingdom upon such conditions and subject to such provisions as the Conference may approve.
- 3. Composition:**
The Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia shall comprise all members of the affiliated State Units (hereinafter called "State Units").
- 4. State Units:**
The Constitutions of State Units shall not be standardised but may vary in the different states according to the varied groupings of Presbyterian Women within the States. Each State Unit of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia shall be autonomous, but its Aim shall be approved by the Conference as being in accord with the Aim of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia. It shall be known as the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia in _____ (Name of State).
- 5. Governing Body:**
 - (a) The Governing Body shall be the Federal Conference, which is a meeting representative of all the women of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia
 - (b) Voting Delegates of the Federal Conference shall be appointed by the State Units as follows: up to five (5) in New South Wales, up to four (4) in Queensland, up to two (2) in South Australia, and up to two (2) in Western Australia.
 - (c) All business of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia shall be presented, discussed and decided upon at this Conference.
 - (d) A Quorum shall comprise half of the voting delegates representing three States.
 - (e) The Governing Body is empowered to make By-Laws to implement this Constitution.
 - (f) The time and place of meeting shall be determined from Conference to Conference.

- (g) Should a decision on any matter affecting the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia be necessary between meetings of the Governing Body the Executive shall consult with State Units by letter, telephone, email or tele/video conferencing and shall act on a decision reached by three (3) of the State Units.

6. Office-Bearers:

The Office-Bearers of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia shall constitute an Executive and be:

- (a) Patron: wife of the Moderator-General
- (b) President: elected from each State Unit in turn
- (c) Vice-President
- (d) Secretary
- (e) Treasurer
- (f) Badge Secretary.

The successors in office of the Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and Badge Secretary shall be elected by the serving Executive from the members elected to the Federal Conference from each State Unit.

The Office-Bearers may come from different States.

The Federal Executive has the power to co-opt other members if and when necessary.

- (a) Office-bearers shall be elected at the Conference. Prior to the Federal Conference, all State Units shall be notified of all nominations received.
- (b) Office-bearers shall hold office from Conference to Conference.
- (c) The Federal Executive must meet at least every six (6) months at a selected meeting place or by tele/video conferencing.
- (d) No person shall hold the office of President for a second term.

7. Executive:

The Executive shall:

- (a) Carry out the decisions of the Governing Body;
- (b) Receive suggestions and recommendations from the State Units, and, in consultation with all State Units, prepare business for the Conference;
- (c) Keep State Units informed about significant new emphases in Christian life at home and abroad;
- (d) Deal with routine affairs of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia. Should any member of the Executive, other than the President, be unable to complete her term of office, the Federal Executive in consultation with the Executive of the State Unit shall appoint another member resident in the same State.

8. Badge:

All members of the Presbyterian Women's Association of Australia shall have the right to wear the Badge of the Association.

9. Finance:

All matters of finance shall be determined by the Governing Body or the Executive in accordance with clause 5 paragraph (g).

10. Amendment of Constitution:

Notice to amend this Constitution shall be given by one or more State Units not less than six (6) calendar months before the meeting of the Federal Conference and shall require to be passed, after being remitted to all State Units, by a majority of the voting delegates present, representing not less than three (3) States and shall not come into operation until approved by the General Assembly of Australia.

95. Panel of Assessors: Pursuant to notice the Rev. B. M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

In terms of Article 13 of the Articles of Agreement appoint the following panel of assessors: the Very

Rev. Dr A.M. Harman, the Rev. J.R. Irvin, D.J. Hassan, R. Vandervelden, S.M. Bonnington, C. Garrett, J.W. Langbridge, D. Mihailovic (ministers); Messrs M. Baddeley, C.M. Langford, J. McGregor, C. Morrow, G. Rogers, G.K. Roberts, W. MacRae (elders).
The motion was seconded and approved.

96. Judicial Commission: Pursuant to notice the Very Rev. D.A. Cook moved:
That the Assembly:
Request the Code Committee to consider the establishment of a judicial commission with responsibility to consider, and seek to resolve, disputes addressed to the Assembly as complaints, appeals or petitions, and to report to the next meeting of the Assembly.
The motion was seconded and approved.

97. Church of Scotland: Pursuant to notice the Rev. M. Powell moved:
That the Assembly:
(1) Express its concern at the decision of the 2016 General Assembly of the Church of Scotland to allow congregations to call ministers who are living in a same-sex relationship, a relationship which is not allowed in Holy Scripture.
(2) Advise the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland that:
(a) while this Assembly is thankful for its heritage, which owes much to the Church of Scotland, it cannot consider the Presbyterian Church of Australia to be in fellowship with the Church of Scotland in the light of that decision.
(b) notwithstanding the foregoing resolutions, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia will continue to pray for the Church of Scotland, especially that the King and Head of the Church would give it a renewed conviction of the truth, relevance and authority of the Word of God in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.
The motion was seconded and approved.

98. Overture (iii): Overture (iii) was fallen from.

99. Residential Assembly: Pursuant to notice the Rev. M. Powell moved:
That the Assembly:
Request the Business Committee to consider the possibility of conducting the next meeting of the Assembly on a residential basis at a suitable place and date, and authorise the Committee to determine that issue and act upon it accordingly.
The motion was seconded and approved.

100. Appointment Next Assembly: Pursuant to notice the Clerk of Assembly moved:
That the Assembly:
(1) Resolve to meet on Monday, 9 September, 2019, at 7.00 p.m. within the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Surry Hills, or at such other place in Sydney as the Business Committee might determine if it should find a more convenient facility where the Assembly could operate with greater effectiveness, efficiency and comfort.
(2) Authorise the Business Committee to appoint another time or date of meeting should it become impracticable for the Assembly to discharge its functions at the time or on the date appointed.
The motion was seconded and approved.

101. Minutes Commission: Pursuant to notice the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:
That the Assembly:
Appoint the Moderator, Clerks, Business Convener, the Rev. K.D. Murray, J.R. Irvin, D. Yu and Mr G. Roberts a Commission with the Clerk of Assembly as Chairman to examine, correct and confirm the minutes of the first to ninth sederunts.
The motion was seconded and approved.

102. Thanks: It was resolved that the Assembly record its thanks to the Rev. D. Tsai, Mrs S. Lim, Mr G. Jessup and Dr B. Wong of the Chinese Church for their assistance at all times; the members of the Chinese Presbyterian Church for the use of their premises; Mr J. Falls and the staff of Church Offices in Sydney for their work in preparing for the Assembly and, in particular, Miss

S.H. Jensen in all her work of preparing documentation and undertaking other tasks associated with the Assembly; Mr M.J. Quirk, Dr R. Yager and the staff of Presbyterian Youth for their assistance in the logistics of the Assembly; the Rev. J.R. Irvin for his assistance to the Clerks; Mrs Julie Murray, the Rev. R. Keith and Mr C. Short for playing the piano at the openings of the sederunts; Mr E. Cia and Mrs S. Seah, for playing the organ and piano respectively on the opening night and for the Communion service; Mr P.J. Graham and the elders who served Communion; and all who assisted in the operation of the Assembly.

103. Moderator's Address: The business of the Assembly having been completed, the Moderator addressed the house.

104. Close: After prayer, the Moderator then intimated in pursuance of the General Assembly's appointment that the next session of the General Assembly will be held at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 9 September, 2019, in the Chinese Presbyterian Church, corner Crown and Albion Streets, Sydney or at such other date, time and place as may be decided (Min. 99).

Thereafter the Moderator in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only King and head of the Church, declared this session of the General Assembly closed and pronounced the benediction.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

The minutes of the first to the ninth sederunts, having been carefully corrected, are confirmed as authorised in terms of Min. 101 thereof.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator.
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk.
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk.

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