

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA**

SPECIAL MEETING

Thursday, 2 June 2022

FIRST SEDERUNT

1. **Assembly Special Meeting:** By videoconference on Thursday, 2 June 2022, commencing at 10.00 a.m. (AEST), the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia convened for a special meeting in accordance with the requirements of Article 1.8 of the Articles of Agreement.

2. **Constitute:** The Assembly was constituted with the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson, presiding in accordance with Standing Order 6.

3. **Roll of Assembly:** The Clerk laid on the table the roll of Assembly being commissioners to the 2019 General Assembly of Australia with additions and deletions as notified by presbyteries and assemblies. The Assembly resolved that the list of commissioners as made up be the roll of this Assembly.

4. **Moderator:** Pursuant to notice the Clerk of Assembly moved:
That the Assembly:
Express its deep sympathy to the Rev. Dr Peter Barnes and Mrs Lyn Barnes on the death of their granddaughter Emily, and assure them and their wider family of our prayers that God might graciously uphold and sustain them in faith, hope and love.
The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

5. **Prayer:** The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer for Dr Barnes and his family.

6. **Business Committee:** Pursuant to notice the Clerk of Assembly moved:
That the Assembly:
Appoint the Rev. C. Garrett to act as the Business Convener for this meeting.
The motion was seconded and approved.
The Rev. C. Garrett abstained from voting on this motion.

7. **Apologies:** Apologies for absence were received from the Rev. Dr P.E. Barnes (Moderator); Rev. B.H. Christian, D.A. Cook and D.N. Jones (former Moderators-General); Mr G. Burton (Procurator); Rev. K.D. Murray, J. Norved, J. Otten, D.G. Yu (ministers); Messrs T. Guildford, L. Kruize, W.A. MacRae and N. Warnock (elders). Ms M. Mackenzie, Convener of the Finance Committee, apologised for her absence from the Assembly during the consideration of that report, and her apology was received.

8. **Circular calling this meeting:** The Clerk tabled a copy of the emails convening this special meeting of the Assembly which had been sent to all members of the Assembly on 4 April 2022 as follows:

From: GAAClerk
Sent: Monday, 4 April 2022 at 9:59 AM
Subject: Notice of GAA Special Meeting, 2 June 2022 at 10.00 a.m. AEST

To all members of the GAA

The Moderator-General, the Rev. Dr Peter Barnes, has received a requisition from 37 qualified persons from six states asking that he convene a special meeting of the GAA for purposes stated in the requisition (see below).

I have now been directed to inform all members that a special meeting of the GAA will be held by videoconference on Thursday, 2 June 2022, commencing at 10.00 a.m. AEST (9.30 in South Australia; and 8.00 a.m. in Western Australia).

The business of the meeting is as follows:

1. *Receive the resignation of the Clerk of Assembly, Rev Bruce M. Meller, that resignation to have effect from 31 July, 2022.*
2. *Receive nominations for the office of Clerk, and proceed to appoint a successor in that role.*
3. *If required, receive nominations for the office of Deputy Clerk, and make that appointment.*
4. *Receive nominations for the office of Business Convener subsequent to 31 March 2023, and make the appointment.*
5. *Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Reception of Ministers' Committee concerning an applicant who may be unhelpfully hindered by the deferral of the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly.*
6. *Receive, consider and respond to a report from the APWM Committee concerning the position of the APWM National Director which may be unhelpfully hindered by the deferral of the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly.*
7. *Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Finance Committee concerning the funding of the GAA in 2022-3, that report arising from the decision to defer the next meeting of the Assembly.*
8. *Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Committee appointed by the Commission of Assembly at Min. 15 of 7 February 2020 to review the actions of the Presbytery of North East Victoria as they pertain to the Rev J. Playfoot.*
9. *Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Clerk concerning the establishment of a National Register for persons of concern in relation to the protection of children and other vulnerable persons associated with the Church's ministries.*

Nomination forms for the positions of Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Business Convener, together with all documentation required for the meeting, will be made available on a secure website. Access details for the meeting and the documents will be provided in a later email before 7 May.

If your field of service or your contact details have changed since October 2021, or if you are no longer qualified to bear the commission that was previously provided to you, please let me know.

*Bruce Meller
Assembly Clerk
Presbyterian Church of Australia*

The request made of the Moderator was as follows:

Rev Dr Peter E. Barnes
Moderator-General, GAA
28 March 2022

Requisition

Under the provision of Article 1.8 of *Constitution, Procedure and Practice*, GAA, we whose names are appended below call upon you, Moderator, to convene a meeting of the General Assembly of Australia to deal with special unforeseen business, namely:

- a. Receive the resignation of the Clerk.
- b. Receive nominations for the office of Clerk, and proceed to appoint a successor in that role.
- c. If required, receive nominations for the office of Deputy Clerk, and make that appointment.
- d. Receive nominations for the office of Business Convener subsequent to 30 March 2023, and make the appointment.

- e. Receive, consider and respond to a report from the APWM Committee regarding the effect of deferring the next GAA meeting to Sept 2023.
- f. Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Finance Committee regarding the effect of deferring the next GAA meeting to Sept 2023.
- g. Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Reception of Ministers Committee regarding the effect of deferring the next GAA meeting to Sept 2023.
- h. Receive, consider and respond to reports from any other Committee that may be unhelpfully hindered by the deferral of the next ordinary meeting of the Assembly or considers that it needs to report in the light of that deferral.
- i. Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Committee appointed by the Commission of Assembly at Min. 15 of 7 February 2020 to review the actions of the Presbytery of NE Victoria as they pertain to the Rev J. Playfoot.
- j. Receive, consider and respond to a report from the Clerk concerning the establishment of a National Register for persons of concern in relation to the protection of children and other vulnerable persons associated with the Church's ministries.

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| Stuart M Bonnington, | PCWA, Western Australia |
| David A Cook | Former Moderator, NSW |
| Philip R Court | Melbourne West, Victoria |
| Gary J Ware | PCSA, South Australia |
| Cameron B Garrett | Gippsland, Victoria |
| David A Burke | Central Tablelands, NSW |
| Robert P F Benn | Former Moderator, NSW |
| Kevin D Murray | Sydney South, NSW |
| Graeme K Roberts | PCT, Tasmania |
| Allan M Harman | Former Moderator, Victoria |
| Andrew M Bain | Mowbray, Queensland |
| Brett Cummins | North East Vic, Victoria |
| Graham J Nicholson | Melbourne East, Victoria |
| Robert W White | Geelong, Victoria |
| Colin R Morrow | North Western Vic, Victoria |
| Greg Munro | Bass, Tasmania |
| Andrew R Vines | Melbourne North, Victoria |
| Bruce H Christian | Former Moderator, NSW |
| C R (Bob) Thomas | Former Moderator, Victoria |
| W A (Bill) MacRae | PCWA, Western Australia |
| Martin D de Pyle | Melbourne West, Victoria |
| John H Stasse | Geelong, Victoria |
| David A R Brown | Flinders, Victoria |
| Dean A Carroll | Melbourne North, Victoria |
| Ian K Smith | Sydney Inner West, NSW |
| Andrew J Letcher | PCV, Victoria |
| Ben P Palmer | Melbourne East, Victoria |
| Noel Johnston | Melbourne West, Victoria |
| W James Hare | Melbourne East, Victoria |
| Tom Guilford | Gippsland, Victoria |
| Darren R Middleton | Geelong, Victoria |
| Steven D Harris | Melbourne North, Victoria |
| Dennis K Wright | PCV, Victoria |
| Office Bearers of the Assembly: | |
| Bruce M Meller | Clerk, NSW |
| Simon H Fraser | Law Agent, NSW |
| Gregory J Burton | Procurator, NSW |
| John P Wilson | Business Convener, Victoria |

9. **Approval of Meeting:** The Clerk moved:
 That the Assembly:
 Approve the action of the requisitionists in requesting, and the Moderator in convening, this meeting.
 The motion was seconded and approved.

10. **Business Committee:** The Rev. C. Garrett presented an oral report concerning the business of this meeting of the Assembly.
 The report was received.
 The Rev. C. Garrett submitted the deliverance.
 The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:
 That the Assembly, with immediate effect:

- (1) Invoke the Nobile Officium, in accordance with the powers of the General Assembly of Australia set out in Chapter 7 of the Constitution, Procedure and Practice of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, to adopt a process for the use of remote technology to consider, and to make resolutions arising from, a requisition for a Special Meeting of the General Assembly of Australia from not fewer than thirty members who are drawn from not less than four states in accordance with Article 1.8 of the Articles of Agreement.
- (2) Adopt the use of the General Assembly of Australia June 2022 website for the provision of access to the documentation for the Assembly, and as the method by which members of the Assembly may exercise the privileges accorded to them under the Standing Orders.
- (3) Suspend for the duration of this meeting of the Assembly so much of the Standing Orders as is necessary to allow for voting to occur by electronic means in real-time.
- (4) Approve the following arrangements for this meeting:
 - (a) Sederunt 1: 10.00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.; Sederunt 2: 1.15 p.m. to finish no later than 5.00 p.m. (AEST)
 - (b) Refreshment breaks of up to 15' may be called by the Moderator at his discretion.
 - (c) Speeches shall be limited in time as follows:

| | |
|---|-----|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conveners of committees when speaking to the report | 15' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overturists (per overture) | 15' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> All other speeches | 5' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The time for any speech may be extended by resolution of the House. | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Subject to extension by resolution of the House, the total time for questions during the presentation of each report or overture | 30' |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notices of motion should be sent to the Business Convener in duplicate if submitted in hard copy. Submission of a single copy by email is preferred. | |
- (5) Confirm the following order of business:
 - (a) Constitute meeting
 - (b) Confirm Roll of Assembly
 - (c) Apologies
 - (d) Approve Moderator's action
 - (e) Business Committee (arrangements for this meeting)
 - (f) Communication 1: Resignation of Rev. Bruce M. Meller as Clerk
 - (g) Ballot: election of new Clerk, Deputy Clerk (if necessary), and Business Convener post March 2023
 - (h) Report: APWM
 - (i) Report: Reception of Ministers
 - (j) Report: Finance Committee
 - (k) Reports: other committees unhelpfully impacted by deferral of 2022 GAA meeting
 - (l) Report: Clerk, concerning the establishment of a National Register for persons of concern.
 - (m) Report: Committee appointed by the Commission of Assembly to review certain actions of the Presbytery of NE Victoria
 - (n) Close meeting
- (6) Note the declaration that has been made repeatedly by the Assembly (e.g. at GAA 1994 Min. 17(14) and 2004 Min 102(12)) as follows: "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,

- (a) the resignation of an Assembly Officer;
- (b) any other communication which has been approved by the Business Committee.

11. Communication 1: Resignation of the Rev. Bruce M. Meller as Clerk

Communication 1 from the Rev. B.M. Meller was laid on the table.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. L.J.F. Hall moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Receive Communication 1, being a letter of resignation of the Rev. B.M. Meller from the position of Clerk.
- (2) Determine that Mr Meller's resignation will have effect from 31 July 2022.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. L.J.F. Hall moved:

That the Assembly:

- (3) Record its thankfulness to God for the diligent and meticulous service rendered by the Rev. B.M. Meller to the Presbyterian Church of Australia, especially in his capacity as Deputy Clerk (1991-2014) and then Clerk of the General Assembly of Australia (2015-2022).
- (4) Record its thankfulness to God for the support provided by Mrs Lorraine Meller both to Bruce in his service as the Deputy Clerk and then Clerk, and to various Assembly Officers and members of the Assembly in hospitality and encouragement.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Pursuant to notice the Rev. L.J.F. Hall moved:

That the Assembly:

- (5) Request the Rev. B.M. Meller, should he be so requested by the Clerk, to assist in updating and maintaining the PresKey database, and request all ministry personnel to co-operate in the provision of accurate information as and when requested.
- (6) Request the Rev. B.M. Meller, should he be so requested by the Clerk, to assist in updating and maintaining the PCA website.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

12. Moderator: The Rev. R.P.F. Benn, a former Moderator-General, assumed the Chair.

13. Clerk: The Clerk reported that only one nomination had been received for the position of Clerk, and moved, pursuant to notice:

That the Assembly:

Appoint the Rev. Lesleigh James Francis Hall as the Clerk of Assembly to assume office on 1 August 2022.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr Hall made the required declaration of faithful service.

14. Prayer: The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer for the Rev. L.J.F. Hall.

15. Deputy Clerk The Clerk informed the Assembly that only one nomination had been received for the position of Deputy Clerk, and moved, pursuant to notice:

That the Assembly:

Appoint the Rev. Dr John Philip Wilson as the Deputy Clerk of Assembly to assume office on 1 August 2022.

The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Dr Wilson made the required declaration of faithful service.

16. Prayer: The Moderator led the Assembly in prayer for the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson.

17. **Business Convener** The Clerk informed the Assembly that only one nomination had been received for the position of Business Convener, whereupon the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson moved, pursuant to notice:
That the Assembly:
Appoint the Rev. Cameron Garrett as the Business Convener to assume office on 1 August 2022.
The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.
The Rev. C. Garrett abstained from voting on this motion.

18. **Moderator:** The Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson resumed the Chair.

19. **Prayer:** The Rev. Dr C.R. Thomas led the Assembly in prayer for the General Assembly of Australia and its office bearers.

20. **Moderator:** The Rev. R.P.F. Benn assumed the Chair.

21. **Convener of Relations With Other Churches Committee:** Consequent upon the appointment of the Assembly's office-bearers, the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson moved:
That the Assembly:
Accept the resignation of the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson as convener of the Relations With Other Churches Committee and appoint in his place the Rev. Kamal Weerakoon.
The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

22. **Moderator:** The Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson resumed the Chair.

23. **Finance Committee** The report of the Finance Committee was laid on the table and received.
Mr J. Falls presented the report and submitted the deliverance.
Clauses (1) to (3) were approved.
Clauses (4) to (6) were moved and seconded.
The Moderator ruled that the following amendment arose from the debate and did not alter the substance of the motion:
That the Assembly amend clause (5) by the inclusion of the words "payable in the state in which the Clerk resides" after the word "amount".
The amendment to Clause (5) was moved, seconded and approved.
Clauses (4) to (6) were approved as amended.

24. **Debate Adjourned:** Debate on the report of the Finance Committee was adjourned (Min. 26).

25. **Australian Presbyterian World Mission (APWM)** The report of the APWM Committee concerning the appointment of a National Director was laid on the table and received.
The Rev. Brett Graham, Convener of the APWM Committee, was welcomed to the Assembly, presented the report, and submitted the deliverance.
The deliverance was approved as follows:
That the Assembly:
Extend the appointment of the Rev. Kevin D. Murray as the National Director of the APWM until 31 December 2023.

26. **Finance Committee** Debate on the report of the Finance Committee was resumed (Min. 24).
Clause (7) was approved.
The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:
That the Assembly:
(1) Receive the Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2021 and associated Statement of Comprehensive Income.
(2) Receive the Audit Reports from Nexia, on the accounts of the Presbyterian Church of Australia which are two pages extracted from the PCNSW audited accounts (Green Book).

- (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 from 1 January 2023 until 31 December 2025.
- (4) (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, Western Sydney, Sydney East, Sydney Inner West, 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).
- (e) Remind all Commissioners travelling by air that they should make their bookings in advance to achieve the cheapest flight possible.
- (5) (a) Approve payment of the following Honoraria until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise –
- Clerk of Assembly See Below
 - 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.
- (b) Approve the remuneration for the Clerk being amended from the former payment of an honorarium to become a stipend plus travel allowance and that the payment will be equivalent to one day per fortnight on the stipend amount payable in the state in which the Clerk resides.
- (6) (a) Approve the following provisions for the Moderator assuming office in September 2023 and for succeeding Moderators until such time as the General Assembly determines otherwise –
- An allowance of up to \$48,000 to cover costs of travel, accommodation, telephone, postage, stationery;
 - An allowance sufficient to cover the cost of moderatorial dress, and;
 - Costs of pulpit supply during 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.
- (7) (a) Approve the following expenditure for the 2023-2025 triennium:

GAA Triennium

| Report | Budget 2023 -2025 | | | 2023- | 2020- | 2020- |
|----------------|--------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | 2025 | 2022 | 2022 |
| | Budget | Budget | Budget | Total | Total | Total |
| Code Committee | 1,700 | 1,750 | 1,800 | 5,250 | 4,260 | 3,483 |
| Defence Force | 1,600 | 1,600 | 1,600 | 4,800 | 4,800 | 2,265 |

| | | | | | | |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Chaplaincy Committee | | | | | | |
| Reception Of Ministers Committee | 3,700 | 3,700 | 3,700 | 11,100 | 11,100 | 2,947 |
| Church & Nation Committee <i>*ii</i> | 26,500 | 26,500 | 26,500 | 79,500 | 49,500 | 48,079 |
| College Committee | 12,250 | 12,250 | 12,250 | 36,750 | 36,750 | 10,368 |
| Relations with other Churches Committee | 8,500 | 8,500 | 8,500 | 25,500 | 25,500 | 8,500 |
| National Journal Committee | 13,000 | 14,000 | 15,000 | 42,000 | 39,000 | 47,500 |
| Total Expenses Committees | 67,250 | 68,300 | 69,350 | 204,900 | 170,910 | 123,142 |
| NSW Historical Records & Library Committee (GAA archives) | 8,000 | 8,000 | 8,000 | 24,000 | 22,500 | 22,500 |
| Training and discipleship | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 3,000 | 0 | 0 |
| Mission to Australia | 850 | 860 | 870 | 2,580 | 2,540 | 1,685 |
| Computer expenses incl. website maintenance | 4,500 | 4,500 | 4,500 | 13,500 | 36,000 | 12,215 |
| Procurator's Retainer | 500 | 500 | 500 | 1,500 | 1,500 | 2,000 |
| Moderator's Expenses (incl Honoraria) | 18,500 | 18,500 | 18,500 | 55,500 | 55,500 | 18,073 |
| General Expenses | 21,750 | 21,750 | 26,750 | 70,250 | 75,000 | 53,298 |
| Office Services | 10,273 | 10,273 | 10,273 | 30,819 | 30,819 | 30,819 |
| Grants – contingency <i>*iii</i> | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 | 30,000 | 30,000 | 20,000 |
| PresAid | | | | | | |
| Administration | 666 | 667 | 667 | 2,000 | 6,000 | 2,000 |
| Women in the Church | 15,360 | 16,110 | 16,883 | 48,353 | 0 | 0 |
| Assembly Costs <i>*i</i> | 105,000 | 0 | 115,000 | 220,000 | 105,000 | 0 |
| Honoraria/allowance | 8,381 | 8,633 | 8,892 | 25,905 | 25,386 | 28,646 |
| Total expenses Other | 204,780 | 100,793 | 221,834 | 527,407 | 390,245 | 191,236 |
| Total GAA Expenditure | 272,030 | 169,093 | 291,184 | 732,307 | 561,155 | 314,378 |

Other expenses:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Accountancy & audit | 0 | 0 | 5,000 |
| General expenses | 3,000 | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Printing, postage & stationery | 1,000 | 1,000 | 1,000 |
| Telephones | 1,250 | 1,250 | 1,250 |
| Travel | 14,500 | 14,500 | 14,500 |
| Other expenses | 5,000 | 5,000 | 5,000 |
| Income - interest etc | (3,000) | (3,000) | (3,000) |
| | <u>21,750</u> | <u>21,750</u> | <u>26,750</u> |

***2022 GAA**

**Assembly costs
moved to 2023**

- i. **Assembly Costs:** Two assemblies are budgeted-for with one in 2023 and the other in 2025.
 - ii. **Church & Nation- Freedom for Faith:** The Church and Nation Committee's budget includes its request to the GAA for funding of Freedom For Faith up to \$25,000 pa in the 2020-2022 triennium.
 - iii. **Grants Contingency** is a provision for grants, requests for which can be submitted to the Committee throughout the Triennium period.
- (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 2023 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.

27. **Private** As required by *Constitution, Procedure and Practice* Regulation 10.16.12, the Assembly sat in private.

28. **Reception of Ministers Committee** The report of the Reception of Ministers Committee was laid on the table and received. The Rev. D. Burke submitted the deliverance. The deliverance was approved as follows:
That the Assembly:

Approve the application of the Rev. James Annesley to be received as a minister of the PCA and authorise him to sign to Formula in the presence of the Presbytery of the Northern Rivers (NSW). The motion was seconded and approved.

29. **Open Court** The Assembly resumed in open court.

30. **National Register of Ministry Personnel** A report from the Clerk concerning the development of a National Register of Ministry Personnel as required by the National Safe Ministry Framework (NSMF) adopted by the Assembly in 2019 was laid on the table and received.

Clause (1) was approved.

Clause (2) was approved.

Clause (3) was approved.

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Note that the child protection agencies of the PCNSW, PCQ and PCV, between them, cover all the state churches, that they are maintaining their own databases for personnel within the states that they serve, and that they are communicating with one another as the need arises;
- (2) If, on legal advice, the maintenance of a National Register is found to be permissible:
 - a. Confirm that the PCA should maintain a National Register as envisaged by the Royal Commission into the Institutional Abuse of Children and as outlined in the National Safe Ministry Framework; and

- b. Request the Clerk, after consultation with the officers of the PCNSW Conduct Protocol Unit, PCQ Safe Church, and the PCV Safe Church Unit, to facilitate the development of a policy and procedure detailing:
 - i. who is permitted to access and share information held in the National Register,
 - ii. the reasons for which, and the circumstances under which, the National Register may be accessed, and
 - iii. who has responsibility for the records.
- (3) If, on legal advice, the maintenance of a National Register is found to be impermissible, request the Clerk, after consultation with the officers of the PCNSW Conduct Protocol Unit, PCQ Safe Church, and the PCV Safe Church Unit, to develop recommendations for necessary changes to the National Safe Ministry Framework.

31. **Commission to review and approve minutes** Pursuant to notice, the Rev.

B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

Appoint a commission consisting of the Moderator, Clerk, Deputy Clerk, Business Convener, Rev. J. Irvin, S. Bonnington and G. Ware to review, correct and confirm the minutes of this meeting.

The motion was seconded and approved.

32. **Adjournment:** The Assembly adjourned to meet at 1.15 p.m. (AEST) whereof public intimation having been given the sederunt was closed with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator pro tem
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk

SECOND SEDERUNT

33. **Constitute:** By videoconference on Tuesday, 2 June 2022, commencing at 1.15 p.m. (AEST), the Assembly met pursuant to adjournment and was constituted with the reading of Scripture and prayer, the Acting Moderator, Rev. R.P.F Benn, presiding in accordance with Standing Order 6.

34. **Private:** The Assembly sat in private.

35. **Acting Clerk:** The Assembly noted that the Rev. L.J.F. Hall has been appointed by the Assembly to act as its Clerk in matters pertaining to the Report from the Committee Appointed to Review Actions of the Presbytery of North-East Victoria.

36. **Committee Appointed to Review Actions of the Presbytery of North-East Victoria**
The report of the Committee Appointed to Review Actions of the Presbytery of North-East Victoria was laid on the table.

Questions were asked and answered.

The report was received.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Express concern at the responses made to the Assembly's committee by the Safe Church Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and the Presbytery of North East Victoria.

The motion was seconded.

In response to a point of order raised by the Acting Clerk, the Moderator ruled that questions may only be asked in accordance with Standing Order 23.

As a motion without notice, it was moved that the Assembly grant leave to move the suspension of standing orders to the degree necessary to permit members of the Assembly to ask questions of the Convener pertaining to clauses within the Committee's deliverance.

Leave was not granted.

Rev. D. Brown sought leave to move, as an amendment to clause (1):

That the Assembly:

Express concern that Committees and Presbyteries feel restricted by State law in fulfilling their responsibility to higher courts of the Church.

The Moderator ruled that the motion was not an amendment to clause (1).

Dissent from the Moderator ruling was moved, seconded and disapproved.

The Moderator's ruling was upheld.

Clause (1) was approved.

The dissent of the Rev. D. Brown, M. Cole, P.W. Phillips and J. Walz was recorded.

The Rev. D. Carroll recorded his dissent with this reason: "To express concern over the responses of the Safe Church Committee and the Presbytery of North East Victoria casts a shadow over their integrity as if they wilfully refused to co-operate with the committee, rather than being unable to comply with the request due to State legislation including privacy concerns."

The Rev. D Brown sought leave to move, as a substantive motion without notice:

That the Assembly:

Express concern that Committees and Presbyteries feel restricted by State law in fulfilling their responsibility to higher courts of the Church.

Leave was not granted.

The Moderator ruled that Notice of Motion 19 (clause 2) and Notice of Motion 14 were not counter-motions.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (2) Request the Law Agent, within a period of six months, and in respect of New South Wales and Victoria, to advise the Assembly Clerk of any secular laws or governmental regulations or requirements, including requirements imposed by the Commissions for Children and Young People or the National Redress Scheme, which forbid the state churches to communicate to the GAA or its officers, information about persons of concern which

information might help the PCA as a whole to maintain an environment of safe ministry to all people, especially children, who might access the Church's services

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. P.W. Phillips moved:

That the Assembly:

- (3) Accept the assurances of the Safe Church Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) and the Presbytery of North-East Victoria that there are some circumstances where, because of their ongoing obligations under Victorian State law, they are not able to divulge information relevant to those circumstances to bodies that, for the purpose of the applicable laws, are external to the PCV.

The motion was seconded and approved.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (4) Thank and discharge the Committee appointed at Min. 15 of 7/2/2020.

The motion was seconded and approved.

The Moderator ruled that Notice of Motion 19 (clause 4) and Notice of Motion 15 were counter motions.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (5) Direct the Commission of Assembly to take up, anew, consideration of the petition of the Rev. James Playfoot from the point where, on 11/9/2019, it had been received by the Assembly, the prayer of the petition had been granted, and the Commission of Assembly was empowered to take certain actions by which it would "determine, with finality, the ultimate outcome of the prayer of Petition (iii)."

The motion was seconded.

Pursuant to notice, the Rev. P.W. Phillips moved:

That the Assembly:

- (a) Decline to further consider Mr Playfoot's petition;
- (b) Inform Mr Playfoot that if he wishes to pursue the matter further in relation to any concerns he may have that the presbytery may have acted improperly towards him, he should raise those concerns with the Commission for Children and Young People Victoria.

The motion was seconded.

The motions of the Rev. B.M. Meller and the Rev. P.W. Phillips were debated.

The Rev. P.W. Phillips made a personal explanation.

The motions of the Rev. B.M. Meller and the Rev. P.W. Phillips were put to a vote.

The motion of the Rev. B.M. Meller was the preferred motion and, being put to the vote, was approved.

The dissent of the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson; the Rev. D. Brown, P.W. Phillips, and J.H. Stasse; and Mr C. Morrow was recorded.

The Rev. D. Carroll recorded his dissent with this reason: "The Presbytery is well within its rights and responsibilities to refuse Mr Playfoot permission to work outside the PCV and require him to complete certain training prior to returning to work. Mr Playfoot's concerns would be better placed with the Victorian CCYP and not taken up afresh by the Commission of Assembly."

The deliverance as a whole was approved as follows:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Express concern at the responses made to the Assembly's committee by the Safe Church Committee of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria and the Presbytery of North East Victoria.
- (2) Request the Law Agent, within a period of six months, and in respect of New South Wales and Victoria, to advise the Assembly Clerk of any secular laws or governmental regulations or requirements, including requirements imposed by the Commissions for Children and Young People or the National Redress Scheme, which forbid the state churches to communicate to the GAA or its officers, information about persons of concern which information might help the PCA as a whole to maintain an environment of safe ministry to all people, especially children, who might access the Church's services.
- (3) Accept the assurances of the Safe Church Unit of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (PCV) and the Presbytery of North-East Victoria that there are some circumstances where, because of their ongoing obligations under Victorian State law, they are not able to divulge information

relevant to those circumstances to bodies that, for the purpose of the applicable laws, are external to the PCV.

- (4) Thank and discharge the Committee appointed at Min. 15 of 7/2/2020.
- (5) Direct the Commission of Assembly to take up, anew, consideration of the petition of the Rev. James Playfoot from the point where, on 11/9/2019, it had been received by the Assembly, the prayer of the petition had been granted, and the Commission of Assembly was empowered to take certain actions by which it would “determine, with finality, the ultimate outcome of the prayer of Petition (iii).”

37. **Moderator:** The Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson resumed the Chair.

38. **Open Court** The Assembly resumed in open court.

39. **Expression of Thanks** Pursuant to notice, the Rev. B.M. Meller moved:

That the Assembly:

- (1) Thank the Moderator-General for convening this meeting, the Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson and Rev. R.P.F. Benn for chairing this meeting, the Clerk, Deputy Clerk and Business Convener for their contributions to its smooth operation, Dr R.I. Yager for his invaluable assistance in establishing, maintaining and operating the digital interface that made this meeting possible, and Mr P. Merrick for facilitating the videoconferencing for the meeting.
- (2) Resume Standing Orders.
- (3) Adjourn to meet for ordinary business at 7.00 p.m. on Monday, 4 September 2023, in the Hurstville Presbyterian Church, corner Park Road and MacMahon Street, Hurstville or at such other date, time and place as may be decided.
- (4) 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.

40. **Closing comment from Clerk** The Moderator invited the Rev. B.M. Meller to offer a closing remark to the Assembly. Mr Meller thanked the Assembly for the privilege it had afforded to him by allowing him to serve as its Deputy Clerk and Clerk. He then read the words of Psalm 122:6-9.

41. **Closure** The business of this meeting being concluded, the Moderator thanked the members of the Assembly for their faithful attention to duty, declared that the Assembly stood adjourned to meet again for ordinary business in Sydney on 4 September 2023 and closed the meeting with prayer.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator pro tem
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk

Certificate

The minutes of this special meeting, having been carefully reviewed and corrected, are confirmed as authorised in Minute 31.

JOHN P. WILSON, Moderator pro tem
BRUCE M. MELLER, Clerk
LESLEIGH J.F. HALL, Deputy Clerk

No minutes appear below this line

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
ROLL OF COMMISSIONERS AND OTHER MEMBERS
APPOINTED OR ELECTED TO THE 2019 GENERAL ASSEMBLY
as amended for the special meeting on 2 June 2022

The Assembly Officers

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

Former Moderators-General

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

NEW SOUTH WALES
(Elected by the State Assembly)

| | |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Rev. D.A. Burke | Mr J. Falls |
| Rev. J.R. Irvin | Mrs Y. Forsyth |
| Rev. J. Macintyre | Mr R. Holvast |
| Rev. Dr J. McClean | Miss S. Maddrell |
| Rev. K.D. Murray | Mr M.Quirk |
| Rev. I. Schoonwater | Dr L. Thorpe |
| Rev. D.M. Seaman | Mr N. Warnock |
| Rev. Dr. I.K. Smith | Dr M. Whitelaw |
| Rev. D. Yu | Dr R. Yager |

Presbytery of Canberra

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Rev. P. Pallett | Mr D. Lennie |
|-----------------|--------------|

Presbytery of the Central Coast

| | |
|---------|-----------------|
| Vacated | Mr J. McGeachie |
|---------|-----------------|

Presbytery of the Central Tablelands

| | |
|---------|---------------|
| Vacated | No Commission |
|---------|---------------|

Presbytery of the Central West

| | |
|------------------|-------------|
| Rev. K. Hartberg | Mr J. Greig |
|------------------|-------------|

Presbytery of the Hunter

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Rev. S. Taylor | No Commission |
|----------------|---------------|

Rev. R. Vandervelden No Commission

Presbytery of the Illawarra

Rev. B. Richardson Mr P. Boggs

Presbytery of the Mid North Coast

Rev. S. Donnellan No Commission
Rev. V. Smith No Commission

Presbytery of Northern Inland NSW

Rev. S. Andrews Mr S. Bignall
Rev. P. Barber Mr L. Jackson

Presbytery of North West NSW

Rev. S. Smith No Commission

Presbytery of the Northern Rivers

Rev. G. Samuel Mr T. Hewitt

Presbytery of Southern Rivers

Rev. R. Keith Mr A. Lawson
Rev. C. Nicholas Mr C. Monamy
Rev. P. Sheely Mr J. Van Every

Presbytery of Sydney East

Rev. G. Pather Dr B. Wong
Rev. C.R. Tucker No Commission

Presbytery of Sydney Inner West

Rev. D. Au Mr J. Ong
Vacated Mr J. Park

Presbytery of Sydney North

Rev. J. Buchanan Dr J. Pratt
Rev. Dr G. Goswell Mr M. Smith
Rev. P. Harris No Commission
Rev. M. Oates No Commission

Presbytery of Sydney South

Rev. J. Ang Mr W. Richards
Rev. Dr P.E. Barnes Mr J. Rolland
Rev. D. McDougall No Commission
Rev. J. Mobbs No Commission

Presbytery of Sydney West

Rev. S. Mannyx Mr J. Pickering

Vacated

No Commission

**QUEENSLAND
(Elected by the State Assembly)**

Rev. P. Case
Rev. G. Henderson
Rev. J. Norved
Rev. M. O'Connor

Mr A. Farguharson
Mr A. Gregory
Mr G. Newnham
Mr N. Vickers

Presbytery of Brisbane

Rev. S. Hoadley
Rev. G. Kettniss
Vacated

No Commission
No Commission
No Commission

Presbytery of Central Queensland

Rev. A. Poyser

No Commission

Presbytery of Darling Downs

Rev. P. Evans
Vacated

Mr J. Parry
Mr A. Schache

Presbytery of Moreton Bay

Rev. M. Lewis

Mr S. Powell

Presbytery of Mowbray

Rev. Dr Andrew Bain
Rev. N. Campbell
Rev. R. Wilson

Mr M. Baddeley
Mr S. Bailey
Mr R. Thompson

Presbytery of North Queensland

Rev. A. Richardson

Mr I. Putt

Presbytery of Wide Bay-Sunshine Coast

Rev. W. Brown
Vacated

Mr J. Eaton
Mr B. Hooper

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

Rev. G.J. Ware

Mr B. Harvey

Presbytery of South Australia

Rev. D. Gunning

Mr R. Bannister

TASMANIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Vacated Mr G. Roberts

Presbytery of Bass

Rev. G. Munro Mr J. Gibb

Presbytery of Derwent

Rev. Alistair Bain Mr D. Leitch

VICTORIA
(Elected by the State Assembly)

Rev. D. Brown Mr R. Butcher
Rev. P. Phillips Mr A. Letcher
Rev. J. Stasse Mr C. Morrow
Vacated Mr D. Wright

Presbytery of Ballarat

Rev. M. Crabb Mr J. Peet

Presbytery of Flinders

Rev. M. Cole Mr A Putnins
Rev. B. Peatman Mr D. Stanley

Presbytery of Geelong

Rev. D. Middleton Mr R. Worth

Presbytery of Gippsland

Rev. C. Garrett Mr T. Guilford

Presbytery of Maroondah

Rev. B. Porter Mr M. McNair

Presbytery of Melbourne East

Rev. P. Chang Mr P. Barton
Rev. G.J. Nicholson Dr J. Hare
Rev. C. Siriweera Mr B. Palmer

Presbytery of Melbourne North

Rev. D. Carroll Mr T. Cuneen
Rev. A. Vines Mr S. Harris

Presbytery of Melbourne West

Rev. C. Duke Mr N. Johnston

Rev. J. Ellis

Mr N. Vasiliades

Presbytery of North East Victoria

Rev. K. Maxwell

Vacated

Presbytery of North West Victoria

Rev. J. Walz

Vacated

Presbytery of South West Victoria

Rev. B. Johnson
Rev. I. Leach

Vacated
No Commission

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

Rev. S. Bonnington

Mr W.A. MacRae

Presbytery of Western Australia

Rev. J. Otten
Rev. K. Song

Mr L. Kruize
Mr C. Woonings

COMMISSION OF ASSEMBLY

New South Wales:

Rev. D. Balzer
Rev. M. Cropper
Rev. P. Harris
Rev. J.R. Irvin

Mr J. Falls
Mr C.M. Langford
Dr M. Whitelaw
Dr R. Yager

Queensland:

Rev. P. Betts
Rev. P. Campbell
Rev. P. Case

Mr. J. Eaton

South Australia:

Rev. G.J. Ware

Mr B. Johnson

Tasmania:

Rev. J. Summers

Mr. G.K. Roberts

Victoria:

Rev. D. Carroll
Rev. D.J. Palmer
Rev. J.H. Stasse
Rev. P.W. Phillips

Mr C. Morrow

Western Australia:

Rev. S. Bonnington

Mr W. MacRae

Assembly Officers:

Moderator
Clerk
Deputy Clerk
Business Convener
Law Agent
Procurator
Chairman:

Rev. Dr John 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. Dr. C.R. Thomas

Very Rev. R.P.F. Benn
Very Rev. D.N. Jones
Very Rev. D.A. Cook
Rev. Dr J.P. Wilson