

PART 2: THE SYNOD

2.1 Role of the Synod

- 2.1.1 The Synod is a Council of the Church, formed by the Assembly, whose responsibilities are set out in the Constitution (Division 3, Part C Synod) and in the Regulations.
- 2.1.2 The Synod or the Synod Standing Committee (subject to By-Law 2.3.5 and referred to in these By-Laws as the 'SSC') is responsible for determining all policy matters within the bounds of the Synod.

2.2 Ordinary Synod Meeting

Membership

- 2.2.1 The membership of the Synod shall consist of a maximum of 500 persons and shall include:
- (a) the President and Secretary of the Assembly;
 - (b) the Moderator, the Ex-Moderator, the Moderator-elect, the General Secretary and the Property Officer;
 - (c) two fifths (2/5) of the Ministers, Interns, Community Ministers, Lay Pastors and Youth Workers, who, being members of the Presbytery under Regulation 3.3.7, are elected by each Presbytery, the calculation being taken to the next whole number;
 - (d) two fifths (2/5) of confirmed lay members serving in Approved Placements within the bounds of the Presbytery who, being members of the Presbytery, are elected by the Presbytery, the calculation being taken to the next whole number;
 - (e) three (3) confirmed lay members appointed or elected by the Presbytery for every five (5) Approved Placements within the bounds of the Presbytery, the calculation being taken to the next whole number;
 - (f) any two of the officers of each Presbytery, provided that each shall be regarded as having been elected under either paragraph (c) (d) or (e) above, as the case may be, and shall be taken into account in determining numbers of persons to be elected under such paragraphs;
 - (g) the Executive Directors and Chairpersons of the Boards;
 - (h) two representatives of and elected by the accepted ministry candidates within the bounds of the Synod;
 - (i) two fifths (2/5) of the Ministers, Interns, Lay Pastors and Youth Workers who, being in Synod or Assembly placements or in other placements declared to be Approved Placements in accordance with Regulation 2.6.3(iii), are elected by the SSC, the calculation being taken to the next whole number;
 - (j) three lay confirmed members appointed by the SSC for every two persons elected by the SSC under the preceding paragraph, such persons being related to committees, councils or agencies of the Synod or the Assembly;
 - (k) such number of co-opted members appointed in accordance with Regulation 3.3.7(c) as shall bring the membership of the Synod up to the maximum number allowed by the Assembly or such lesser number as shall result from appointment of the maximum number of co-opted members permitted by Regulation 3.3.7(d).

- 2.2.2 Before electing or appointing lay confirmed members pursuant to paragraphs (d) or (e), the Presbyteries shall invite the Congregations to submit nominations.
- 2.2.3 Lay members appointed by the Presbytery pursuant to By-Law (e) need not be elders or members of the Presbytery but it is desirable that they be members of Congregations or Faith Communities of the Presbytery.
- 2.2.4 Co-opted members shall be appointed by the SSC from lists of names submitted by the Presbyteries and the Boards to the General Secretary by a date determined by the General Secretary and notified to the Presbyteries and Boards.

2.3 Synod Standing Committee

Name

- 2.3.1 The Standing Committee referred to in paragraph 36 of the Constitution and in Regulation 3.7.4.1 shall be known as the "Synod Standing Committee" ('SSC').

Membership of Synod Standing Committee

- 2.3.2 The SSC shall be constituted by each ordinary meeting of the Synod and shall comprise the ex officio members as specified in By-Law 2.3.3, and other members appointed in the manner specified in By-Law 2.3.4.
- 2.3.3 The ex officio members of the SSC shall be:
- (a) the Moderator, ex-Moderator, Moderator-elect and the General Secretary [pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1(a)(i)];
 - (b) Chair of each Board (or nominee).
- 2.3.4 Other members of the SSC shall include
- (a) The sixteen (16) nominated members of the SSC shall be:
 - one person from each of the 14 Presbyteries;
 - one person from the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC); and
 - one person from the Multicultural Ministry Advisory Group.
 - (b) The elected members (fifteen elected by Synod) of the SSC shall be:
 - 15 persons based on the criteria required to achieve the necessary balances and in keeping with existing by-laws and Regulations for the SSC as a whole.
 - (c) The co-opted members (up to 2) of the SSC shall be:
 - up to two co-opted members, to bring any necessary skill balances that are needed once the elected membership is known
 - (d) The overall membership of the SSC shall comprise;
 - not less than one third (1/3) women;
 - not less than five (5) persons under the age of 35 years; and
 - no fewer lay members than ministerial members.
 - (e) No Presbytery is permitted to have more than three (3) members on the SSC (excluding ex-officio, Standing invitation and Multicultural Advisory Group members).
 - (f) The Executive Director of each Board, the Chairpersons of the Synod Risk Oversight Committee (SROC) and the Synod Governance, Nominations and

Remuneration Committee (GNRC) shall have a standing invitation to attend the SSC on a speak but not vote basis.

Powers and Responsibilities

- 2.3.5 Pursuant to paragraph 36 of the Constitution and to Regulation 3.7.4.1(d) the SSC shall act on behalf of the Synod whenever the SSC deems it appropriate so to do between meetings of the Synod in respect of all matters which are the responsibility of the Synod except insofar as any meeting of the Synod from time to time specifically reserves any such matters for a meeting of the Synod.
- 2.3.6 Without limiting the generality of the powers or responsibilities of the SSC pursuant to Regulation 3.7.4.1 and By-Law 2.3.5, the SSC shall, subject to any determination of the Synod from time to time:
- (a) make recommendations to the Synod on policy matters;
 - (b) ensure that the policies and decisions of the Synod are implemented and adhered to by Boards and other bodies responsible to the Synod;
 - (c) be a forum in which members shall:
 - (i) meet for corporate concern and encouragement;
 - (ii) motivate and assist Presbyteries and Boards in their development of mission programmes
 - (iii) evaluate the ongoing work of mission and assess priorities in relation to resources, making recommendations to Synod accordingly;
 - (d) through consultation and planning, facilitate the work of Presbyteries and Boards;
 - (e) appoint such members of the working groups or committees or boards as require appointment by the Synod or SSC;
 - (f) receive reports from such committees and working groups as may be required so to report by Synod;
 - (g) report to the Synod on committees and working groups appointed by Synod or the SSC except such as the Synod may require to report to itself either directly or through one of the Boards;
 - (h) report to the next ordinary meeting of the Synod on its own activities and decisions;
 - (i) nominate to the Synod persons for appointment to The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW); and
 - (j) deal with any other matters specifically referred to it by the Synod.
- 2.3.7 The SSC shall normally meet at least eight (8) times between the eighteen (18) monthly Synod meeting outside of normal business hours or as convened by the General Secretary if required.

Quorum

- 2.3.8 The number next above one-half the number of members of the SSC shall be a quorum.

Manual for Meetings

- 2.3.9 Meetings shall be conducted in accordance with "A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church".
- 2.3.10 Any matter coming before the SSC for determination may be dealt with by email or postal vote, provided that no such matter shall be deemed to be resolved in the affirmative unless at least four-fifths (4/5) of the members of the SSC vote for the affirmative, and provided further that if within seven (7) days after the referral of such matters to the members of the SSC any three (3) or more members give written notice

that they require the matter to be referred to a duly convened meeting of the SSC, the postal vote shall be of no effect.

2.4 Moderator

Nomination Process

- 2.4.1 A Moderator may be elected at each ordinary meeting of the Synod to hold office until the next succeeding Moderator is installed.
- 2.4.2 At a meeting of the SSC, which is held not less than nine (9) months prior to the ordinary meeting of the Synod at which a Moderator is required to be elected for a forthcoming period, the SSC shall determine a date by which all nominations need to be submitted to the Synod by the GNRC.
- 2.4.3 The GNRC shall be responsible for the nomination and election process for the office of Moderator.
- 2.4.4 The General Secretary shall have oversight of the manner in which nominations of all candidates for the office of Moderator shall be presented to the Synod before the ballot.

Term of Office

- 2.4.3 A person who is elected as Moderator shall:
 - (a) be designated Moderator Elect from the time of election until installation as Moderator;
 - (b) be installed as Moderator at the commencement of the ordinary meeting of the Synod after the meeting at which such person is elected; and
 - (c) hold office as Moderator, from the time of installation until the next Moderator is installed which shall, unless the Synod shall otherwise determine, be at the ordinary meeting of the Synod which is closest in time to the expiry of three (3) years from the date of the Moderator's installation.

Duties of the Moderator

- 2.4.4 The Moderator shall carry out the duties listed in Regulation 3.6.3.2 and any other such responsibilities as are given to the Moderator by these By-Laws or by the Synod or SSC.
- 2.4.5 The Moderator:
 - (a) shall be provided with a copy of the agenda, working papers and minutes of each meeting of each Board;
 - (b) may attend and speak at meetings of the Boards;
 - (c) may attend and speak at meetings of any committee, working group or other body appointed by the Synod or SSC; and
 - (d) may visit any centre or activity of the Church within the bounds of the Synod.

2.5 General Secretary

Designation of Office

- 2.5.1 The Secretary of the Synod referred to in paragraph 35 of the Constitution and in Regulation 3.6.3.3 shall be known as "General Secretary of the Synod".

Overall role, function and purpose of the General Secretary

- 2.5.2 The General Secretary is the Executive Officer of the Synod of NSW and the ACT and his/her primary role is to provide strategic leadership in developing and executing the Synod's strategies in mission and ministry in partnership with Presbyteries, Congregations and the Boards. The occupant of the position carries out the decisions of

Synod and the SSC, and is not independent of those bodies but is the principal conduit and facilitator for the implementation and presentation of decisions made by Synod and the SSC.

- 2.5.3 The General Secretary exercises the responsibilities of Secretary to the Synod as determined by the Regulations and these By-Laws.
- 2.5.4 The General Secretary works closely with the Moderator, noting that the position of Moderator is primarily not an administrative position, whereas that of the General Secretary is. The General Secretary deals with pastoral matters; that is those pertaining to specified ministries, and, as with all Church appointments, shall conduct him/herself in a pastorally sensitive manner.

Appointment and Re-appointment

- 2.5.5 The appointment of a person to become General Secretary shall be made by the Synod on the recommendation of the SSC. The appointment shall be made at the next ordinary meeting before the appointment is to take effect and shall take effect from the date determined by the Synod when the appointment is made.
- 2.5.6 Unless the General Secretary who is in office has given indication of not being available for re-appointment, the SSC shall:
 - (a) implement a review to enable it to recommend to the Synod whether the term of appointment be extended; and
 - (b) the review shall normally be commenced twelve (12) months prior to the meeting of the Synod at which a decision regarding any extension of appointment shall be made; and
 - (c) the review shall be conducted with procedures which shall be approved by the SSC.
- 2.5.7 If the SSC shall recommend to the Synod that the term of appointment be extended, it shall also recommend the length of such extension.
- 2.5.8 If the SSC shall determine not to recommend that the term of appointment be extended, it shall implement procedures for recommending a new appointee.
- 2.5.9 Not less than six (6) months prior to the meeting of the Synod at which the appointment of the General Secretary is to be made or such lesser period as the SSC may determine, the SSC shall determine a date by which all nominations need to be made by the GNRC to a meeting of the SSC.
- 2.5.10 The SSC shall recommend not more than one name to the Synod for appointment as General Secretary.
- 2.5.11 When the SSC brings to the Synod its recommendations for appointment of a General Secretary the matter shall be dealt with in closed session and in a manner that will avoid debate that may be unfair to the interests of the nominee.
- 2.5.12 If the meeting of Synod rejects the nomination submitted under By-Law 2.5.11 it shall thereafter appoint a General Secretary in whatever manner may be determined.

Reporting Relationships

- 2.5.13 The General Secretary is appointed by the Synod and shall be responsible to the Synod meeting and the SSC.
- 2.5.14 The General Secretary shall convene and chair the Synod Executive Directors' Meetings pursuant to By-Law 3.5 to ensure that individual Board strategic directions are consistent with those of the Synod as a whole and to assist Boards in achieving compliance to SSC objectives, strategies, policies and governance requirements in a co-operative and co-ordinated manner under 'best practice' outcomes.

- 2.5.15 The General Secretary shall act as Chief Executive Officer and the Synod Associate Secretary (Ministry) and the Executive Directors of the Boards shall be accountable to the General Secretary.

Duties of the General Secretary – Major Responsibilities

- 2.5.16 The General Secretary shall co-ordinate Synod strategic and mission initiatives. In so doing, the General Secretary shall:
- (a) Provide leadership to the Church by actively engaging in strategic thinking about the life, direction, vision and mission of the Church.
 - (b) Facilitate the processes by which strategic discussions about the direction, vision and mission can occur in the broader context and life of the Church.
 - (c) Ensure the implementation of key directional, strategic and mission imperatives and initiatives of the Synod.
 - (d) Ensure that the work and strategic direction of the Boards is consistent with that of the Synod as a whole.
 - (e) Maintain communication with Boards and their Executive Directors in order to foster the implementation of decisions and policies of Synod and the SSC.
 - (f) Undertake change management processes and practices which enable the Church's members to participate in and engage with key directional, strategic and mission imperatives and initiatives of the Synod.
 - (g) Meet with Presbytery officers at least twice-yearly to ensure there is clear understanding of SSC objectives, strategies, policies and governance requirements, while listening and reporting on Presbytery issues, concerns and recommendations for improving the mission of the Church, the relationships between various bodies and groups within Synod and in the general well being of such groups in the life of the Church.
 - (h) Provide support to the Moderator on pastoral issues with specific reference to the administration and governance of the Church and Synod.
 - (i) Act as the key contact point for the Synod for the wider Church and community.

Duties of the General Secretary - The Synod in Session

- 2.5.17 The General Secretary shall fulfil the following duties and responsibilities in relation to the business and decisions of the Synod in Session.
- (a) Make arrangements for any meeting of the Synod, including the recording of all proceedings and preparation, publications and distribution of agendas [Regulation 3.6.3.4(a)].
 - (b) Attend to the proper conduct of the business of the Synod to advise the Moderator and members of the Synod on business procedures (c) Ensure that a correct entry of the decisions of the Synod is kept in the minutes [Regulation 3.6.3.4(b)].
 - (c) Convey the resolutions of the Synod to those concerned, and to act as the liaison officer of the Synod with the Presbyteries and other bodies within the bounds [Regulation 3.6.3.4(d)and(e)].
 - (d) Keep copies of reports and other documents furnished to the Synod by the Committees, Council and Boards of the Synod [Regulation 3.6.3.4(c)].
 - (e) Furnish electronic copies of the printed minutes to all persons entitled to receive them unless paper copies are specifically requested [Regulation 3.6.3.4(b)].
 - (g) Be a member of the Synod [Regulation 3.3.7(a)(i)].
 - (h) Ensure the implementation of decisions of the Synod and the SSC.
 - (i) Communicate decisions of the Synod where necessary both within and outside the Church.

- (j) Correspond with and on request supply information concerning the business of Synod to presbyteries, congregations, ministers, elders or leaders.

Duties of the General Secretary - Synod Administration

- 2.5.18 The General Secretary shall fulfil the following duties and responsibilities in Relation to Synod Administration;
- (a) Be an ex officio member of the SSC and to be Secretary of the SSC and discharge all other duties set out in Regulation 3.6.3.4 and as may be prescribed by the Synod or the SSC.
 - (b) Provide secretarial facilities for the SSC.
 - (c) Identify and make recommendations for the reduction of overlaps and bureaucracy which hinders the work of the Church.
 - (d) Convene and chair Executive Directors' Meetings.
 - (e) Co-ordinate the activities of the Boards.
 - (f) Be an ex-officio member and Secretary of the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements, and advise Ministers, Congregations, Presbyteries and other bodies in matters concerning placements as requested.
 - (g) Oversee the handling of complaints made against Ministers in accordance with Regulations and facilitate the discipline processes referred to in Part 5 of the Regulations.
 - (h) Oversee the administration of matters relating to Ministers' Support Funds.
 - (i) Act as Nominating Authority for marriage celebrants, and to maintain a register of marriage celebrants.
 - (j) Be an ex-officio member of the Property Trust (Uniting Church in Australia).
 - (k) Deal with matters relating to the admission of ministers from other denominations.
 - (n) Oversee any other matters, and make executive decisions as necessary, which arise in the operation of the position of General Secretary.

Duties of the General Secretary – The Assembly and other churches

- 2.5.19 The General Secretary shall fulfil the following duties and responsibilities in Relation to the Assembly and other Church Activities:
- (a) Maintain close liaison with the executive staff of the Assembly, attend (as a non-voting member) meetings of the Assembly Standing Committee, and deal in the first instance with all Assembly remits affecting the Synod of NSW and the ACT [Regulation 3.7.5.1(j)].
 - (b) Be a representative to the Assembly [Regulation 3.3.8(a)(iii)(1)].
 - (c) Be the official Synod link with the Assembly and its agencies, including the Beneficiary Fund and such other authorities as necessary
 - (d) Be available as a point of reference for contact between the Church and other churches in New South Wales, the media, government and the community in matters of public relations in conjunction with the Moderator.
 - (e) Maintain an active ecumenical presence and involvement at State level on behalf of the Church in conjunction with the Moderator.

Duties of the General Secretary - Miscellaneous

- 2.5.20 The General Secretary shall fulfil the following duties
- (a) Inform Synod and the SSC on matters affecting or likely to affect the Church.
 - (b) Provide pastoral support and counsel to Ministers and Presbyteries as may be appropriate.

Committee Membership and Representation

2.5.21 The General Secretary is an ex officio member of the following:

- Synod
- Synod Standing Committee
- Executive Directors' Meetings (Convenor and Chairperson)
- Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee
- Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements
- Boards of the Synod
- Reception of Ministers Committee
- Korean Presbytery
- Ministers Support Fund
- Constitutions Committee
- Synod Mission Resource Fund
- Synod Fund Management Committee
- Ministry of Pastors Committee
- Assembly Standing Committee (observer)
- Synod Risk Oversight Committee.

2.5.22 Following discussion with the Synod Associate Secretary, the General Secretary shall determine the allocation of specific Committee and Board responsibilities relating to By-Law 2.5.21.

2.6 The General Secretary's Office

2.6.1 There shall be a General Secretary's Office which shall be responsible for providing support to the General Secretary in fulfilment of his/her duties and shall consist of any units of the Synod's work which the Synod or the SSC shall resolve to be under the direct oversight of the General Secretary.