

*Synod 22*



The Uniting Church in Australia  
**Synod of South Australia**  
18, 24-25 June 2022

# Presbytery Restructure Review

## Task Group Report

The June 2019 meeting of the Synod directed the Synod Standing Committee to establish a Review Group of the Presbytery restructure. The Synod Standing Committee subsequently established the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group, the terms of reference for which are set out at the beginning of this report. These extensive terms of reference form the structure of this report.

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# 1. Terms of Reference

During the course of the Presbytery restructure 2019, a review process was approved by the Synod meeting, with a review date reporting to the 2020 Synod meeting. Due to the impact of COVID-19 on the development of Presbyteries, and the longer time taken for Presbyteries to really establish themselves, this review was delayed. It will be important to report to the June 2022 Synod meeting.

The original proposal, passed at the June 2019 Synod meeting is:

*S19.27*

*18. DIRECT the Synod Standing Committee to establish a Review Group to include at least two past Moderators to:*

- a. evaluate the effectiveness of the change of structures;*
- b. identify where further changes are necessary;*
- c. comment on the impact of the changes on the **missional focus of the Uniting Church in SA**;*
- d. bring an interim report to the Annual Meeting of the Synod in 2020 and a final report to the Annual Meeting of the Synod in 2022.*

## **PRESBYTERY RESTRUCTURE REVIEW TASK GROUP DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **1. MEMBERSHIP**

At the direction of the Synod (S19.27), Synod Standing Committee establishes the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group with the following membership:

- a. 2 past Moderators (the task group seeks leave of SSC to appoint only 1 past Moderator)
- b. someone involved in the restructure process
- c. a member of SSC
- d. members from each Presbytery
- e. members with the following skills:
  - Understanding the polity of the UCA
  - Broad experience across the councils of the UCA
  - Governance knowledge
  - Financial management
  - Experience in missional thinking, planning, and doing
  - Commitment to the whole church
  - Ability to objectively evaluate
  - Current Presbytery experience
  - Insight into rural and regional areas of the state

- Understanding of life pre post restructure
- People who have been ecumenically connected
- People with knowledge of health of organisation
- Good communication/listening skills

## **2. TASK**

The review task group will:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the change of structures – is the structure life giving for the Uniting Church in SA?
- Review the structures that have developed since the 3 Presbyteries have been established
- Assess delegations from Presbyteries to Synod
- Consider how the wider church in SA experienced the restructure process
- Gauge how the challenge of resourcing the new structure both in terms of human and financial resources is going. What further resourcing is needed?
- Assess the effectiveness of the funding model
- Assess if we are meeting our compliance/government/legislative requirements
- Consider how pastoral oversight is going
- Gauge how the relationship between Presbyteries and Synod going?
- Gauge how the relationship between the Presbyteries going?
- Identify where further changes might be necessary
- Comment on the impact of changes on the missional focus of the UCA in SA. Has the mission of the church grown/ been enhanced by the change in structures?
- Consider how the Synod may meet one of its strategic priorities in resourcing and supporting the Presbyteries?
- Affirm that UCA Regulations are met
- Check how the restructure has been viewed ecumenically
- Check on any impact on our organisations associated with UCA
- What is the place of theological education in the new structure?

## **3. CONSULTATION**

The review task group will consult with:

- Synod leaders across all ministry centres
- Presbytery leaders and standing committees
- Congregations and Ministers across the Synod, and from all 3 Presbyteries – different sizes, covering rural/ urban, those who've been part of processes under one Presbytery model and new model
- Engage with individuals who may have served on Presbytery/Synod committees

The review task group will seek to meet with existing groups/committees/ meetings:

- Joint Presbytery & Synod leaders meeting
- Presbytery Treasurers
- Placements
- PRCs
- Presbytery Standing Committees
- Synod leadership EO's, Moderator, General Secretary - structural process - needing Presbyteries working with Synod e.g., closing congregations, setting up roles
- Congress – Regional Council + congregations
- Organisations & schools - ask EO UnitingCare SA to engage and feedback - letter.
- UC FAMS - Fellowships & mission
- Resources Board
- Mission Leadership Development Board

#### 4. REPORTING

The Task Group will report to SSC in December 2021 and February 2022, and to the meeting of the Synod in June 2022

#### 5. RESOURCING

Administrative support for the task group will be provided by the Synod Secretariat, through the Associate General Secretary

#### MEMBERSHIP

Rev Sue Ellis	Ex-Moderator Presbytery of Southern SA
Rev Christine Manning	Minister of the Word, Hallett Cove Generate Presbytery
Michael McClaren	Member, Resources Board Presbytery of Southern SA
Rev Sue Page	Associate General Secretary Wimala Presbytery
Anton van Bavel	Former governance officer, UnitingCare SA Presbytery of Southern SA

## REPORT

### RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSALS

That the Synod resolve to:

1. CONGRATULATE the Presbyteries for their commitment to the restructure and for the significant achievements made in establishing and working as Presbyteries amid the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many challenges faced.
2. AFFIRM the current structures of three Presbyteries and the cooperative working relationships established:
  - a) across Presbyteries and between congregations across Presbyteries
  - b) between Presbyteries and the Synod through Joint Leadership meetings, and meetings with Treasurers and Financial officers of the Synod
  - c) with the South Australian Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and their congregations
3. AFFIRM the effectiveness of the current funding model in meeting the transition to the Presbytery structures and that the funding model be continued and reviewed in 2024.
4. RECOGNISING the mandated roles of each council of the Church.
5. REQUEST the Synod Standing Committee to appoint a task group with membership from across the breadth of the Synod to review the operations of the Synod, in the light of the changed circumstances brought about by the restructure into Presbyteries.
7. CONTINUE the dialogue about delegations from Presbyteries to the Synod be continued, such that essential functions of the Church are performed by the Council of the Church best equipped to handle them and that recognition be given to those delegations already occurring between the Synod and individual Presbyteries where this is effective and necessary.
8. REQUEST the Joint Leader's meeting give consideration to a means of renewing the voluntary populating of the committees of the Synod, the Presbyteries and other councils of the Church.
9. REQUEST the Mission and Leadership Development Board:
  - a) give consideration to new educational offerings that would equip volunteers for leadership in governance and other committee work of Presbyteries and the Synod.

- b) consider ways in which the whole Synod membership might be equipped with greater knowledge of the Uniting Church and its missional purpose as a reformed evangelical church.

10. THANK and DISCHARGE the members of the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group.

## 2. Introduction

Following the devolution of the Presbytery of South Australia into three separate Presbyteries, two Presbyteries were formed based on geographic boundaries within the Synod of South Australia (Wimala Presbytery and the Presbytery of Southern SA) and one that draws its membership from across the Synod of South Australia (Generate Presbytery).

The timing of this was such that the Synod first decided that a non-geographic Presbytery would be created, and this became operational whilst the two remaining geographic Presbyteries were formed, first as a single transitional Presbytery and then as two separate entities, before taking on their own identities and governance. This meant that the trajectory from the Presbytery of South Australia was not even for the non-geographic and geographic Presbyteries.

The June 2019 meeting of the Synod directed the Synod Standing Committee to establish a Review Group of the Presbytery restructure. The Synod Standing Committee subsequently established the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group, the terms of reference for which are set out at the beginning of this report. These extensive terms of reference form the structure of this report.

### 2.1 Overview

#### **Review of the structures that have developed since the three Presbyteries were established**

Because it had been 15 years since multiple Presbyteries existed in the Synod, there had been a blurring between the roles of Presbyteries and Synods, and varying levels of corporate knowledge about the distinct place and role of Presbyteries. Coupled with this came a challenge to establish Presbyteries with vision for what they needed to be in the future, not what they were in the past.

As a consequence, structures have developed within each Presbytery depending upon their preferences in order to fulfil their requirements under the regulations and their own missional and operational goals, as well as between these Presbyteries and the Synod and its staff.

Presbyteries developed these structures as a consequence of differences in preparedness, planning and resources. Generate Presbytery established six months before Wimala Presbytery and the Presbytery of Southern SA, and established out of passion and commitment to a pathway that had

already been determined – people felt called into Generate Presbytery. As a consequence, this Presbytery had had a strength and energy that was not shared by the other Presbyteries, which needed to create their own passion and drive.

Whilst Generate Presbytery had the time to plan for the structure it wanted and was able to put in place a professionalised structure with experienced leaders, the Presbytery of Southern SA and Wimala Presbytery had to develop their structures whilst simultaneously operating as Presbyteries. Whilst the Presbytery of Southern SA also had the benefit of experienced leadership - in part because this Presbytery has more ordained ministers than any other, the leadership model in Wimala Presbytery grew more organically. The latter two Presbyteries are significantly reliant on lay volunteers.

At the June 2019 Synod meeting, delegation of executive functions was made by the new presbyteries to the Synod. (See Attachment B) Synod's gain of three new 'clients' has stretched their present structures, with very little restructuring within their parameters to meet the demands. Mission Planners from the former Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning Ministry Centre unit of the Presbytery of SA were outsourced to Presbyteries through the funding model.

### **3. Relationships**

#### **3.1 Relationship between Presbyteries and the Synod, including resourcing and supporting of the Presbyteries by the Synod**

The relationship between Presbyteries and the Synod is one that is highly significant and continues to develop in the wake of the restructure. The model under which the Uniting Church is governed based on interrelated councils, means that all members are invested in this relationship.

Some of the elements of the relationship that have developed could be described as being for functional purposes. In these elements, responses received by the Task Group indicate that they have been useful and successful.

The Task Group heard evidence that establishment of the meeting between Presbytery office bearers and Synod leaders has been critical to talk about matters and address issues between these councils of the church.

One such gathering, the joint meeting of leaders of the Presbyteries and the Synod, was the subject of specific consultation by the Task Group. The group is operationally focussed and members have found the forum a helpful space for discussing issues and for learning from one another. These issues have included: the church's response to COVID-19, policy matters around property, relationships between the Synod, Presbyteries and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, dealing with conflict and discipline issues, and engagement with the National Church Life Survey.

Feedback indicated the group is a collaborative space defined by generosity of spirit, mutual relationships and operational learnings, all to assist the mission of Presbyteries and their congregations, Presbyteries provided feedback that the inclusion of Synod leaders in the meeting has been helpful because they have listened well and responded in helpful ways. As some Presbyteries have come to a point of changing leadership, the Task Group recommends these meetings continue for at least a further 12 months, to assist incoming leaders.

There was particular praise for the collaboration between Presbytery treasurers and the Resources Ministry Centre in the Synod. Important to this seems to be the relational way in which these meetings were established, with an emphasis on coaching and providing feedback to treasurers rather than an inflexible rules-based approach or series of prescriptions. This has enabled treasurers to understand their role and feel supported in doing so. Treasurers worked together with the Synod to establish processes that formalise their accountability and protect them from risk. This is to be commended.

Importantly, evidence was received that whilst there was an understanding from Presbyteries that centralisation of matters like finance is a necessity, it does not mean that Presbyteries are not in control of their own money. The Task Group saw the benefit of these meetings continuing into the foreseeable future.

Boundaries were often raised in feedback provided to the Task Group, with some examples provided by Presbyteries of where they thought the Synod was going beyond its role, or struggling to let Presbytery responsibilities go, or that Presbyteries were being treated as a department of the Synod and not a full council of the church in their own right. However, there was also grace to recognise that the Synod is adjusting to a new way of operating in the same way as the Presbyteries are grappling with their new responsibilities and that there needs to be good communication to ensure Presbyteries and the Synod appreciate where these boundaries might lie. Respondents with Synod roles were not without their own examples of difficulties with & lack of support & understanding from Presbyteries.

The feedback was more mixed when it came to matters relating to pastoral relations and placements. In some cases, this was internal within Presbyteries, with occasional conflict between Synod Placements Committee and Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee reported from within one Presbytery. Hopefully this is an easily resolvable symptom of these bodies evolving into new Presbyteries and needing to grow in their understanding of each other's responsibilities.

The Placements Committee continues to grapple with the challenges of undertaking its role in the new environment. Some issues confronted by this committee are not a consequence of the restructure, but the new circumstances that have added additional complications or made issues more difficult to resolve. For example, the Task Group was told that involvement of more people through the Pastoral Relations Committees of each Presbytery means some processes take longer with more people

involved in conversations, and comments from Presbyteries on profiles are not as readily obtained as in the past.

Some issues have arisen as a consequence of the restructure, such as unwillingness of ministry agents to move across Presbyteries. A comment was also received that there has been less commitment as a whole Church to placements in the Presbyteries of others. The different models adopted by Presbyteries internally – such as hubs, or region ministers, or a single Presbytery Minister – also mean adaption and flexibility is required at Placements level, as there is now not one unitary system.

However, members of the Placements Committee have also found that meeting together has resulted in the discovery that many issues they might have in their own Presbytery are shared in common with other Presbyteries, and there is empathy and support available as a consequence. The collective wisdom of the membership has been helpful and the diversity of thinking helps to find to a solution, and conversations are healthy. With more emphasis on the development of skills for members of Pastoral Relations Committees of the Presbyteries, the functions and support for the work of Placements committee will be enhanced.

Where the relationship between the Presbyteries and the Synod is not required for functional purposes or to fulfil the requirements of the regulations, success has been less obvious and, in some cases, there has been a disappointing lack of engagement. This is detrimental to the overall life of the Synod, particularly if the Synod is to adequately reflect the totality of its membership.

In particular, some negative feedback was received about frustrations when not every Presbytery would return information requests for the Engagement Team's work. It is desirable for the unity of the church that all Presbyteries to share initiatives and activities within the life of the whole Synod.

The change has also provided space for the Synod to reassess its distinct role and responsibilities. In the same way that emergent Presbyteries needed to, and continue to need to identify their responsibilities and formulate their missional and strategic goals, the Synod also needs to work out its identity within the new structure. Preparatory work in this regard prior to the dissolution of the Presbytery of South Australia was not possible due to timeline constraints.

Whilst most of the emphasis on the relationship between Presbyteries and the Synod focussed on the relationship with the Synod Office and its staff and not the council itself, some positive feedback was received about the conduct of a Synod meeting attended by members of the Presbyteries. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided limited opportunities for the Synod to meet in its traditional way since the restructure. The Task Group notes that the membership of the Synod was subject to a separate, concurrent review, which was completed in October 2021. The Task Group identified a need for the Synod to consider its role and what it does in the context of the new Presbytery structure,

including priorities, shared activities and working relationships, and to review its role in collaboration with the Presbyteries.

Ultimately, formation and dissolution of Presbyteries is the responsibility of the Synod. Accordingly, the Synod has a significant role in ensuring that Presbyteries are viable and operating in accordance with the regulations. For a Synod to directly intervene in the operation of a Presbytery and in the most dramatic case, dissolve a Presbytery, there would have to be a substantial problem or combination of problems – such as unacceptable behaviour that breaches the Code of Ethics, a Presbytery living beyond its means, operating outside the governance structures of the Basis of Union, Constitution, and Regulations of the UCA, or be in substantial decline.

But this does not mean there is no ongoing role for the Synod in respect of the Presbyteries that operate within its bounds unless one of these thresholds is reached. Indeed, not only is the church established so that its councils operate relationally, but it is also a matter of good governance to ensure there is sufficient knowledge of the operational state of the Presbyteries to ensure that dramatic intervention never becomes necessary. But this relies on cooperation and trust.

In the coming years, it will be important for the Synod and Presbyteries alike to shift from viewing the relationship as one borne of the restructure and instead looking to how it will be in the future. It will be relevant to understanding the conversations that are taking place in other Synod, and the Assembly about the nature of the relationships between Synods and Presbyteries, and particularly the ministry and pastoral support that is required to sustain them.

Some of the structures that have resulted from the restructure will be important in this, whilst others may give way to alternative approaches to achieve the necessary outcomes. As a Synod, we have undertaken a significant step in restructuring, but it will also be important to remain open to changing or tweaking arrangements in order to improve them.

Presbyteries have an essential role in the overall structure of the Uniting Church – to love and nurture congregations. In the Synod of South Australia where the centrality and population of Adelaide can lead to a lack of connectedness for congregations the further away they are from the capital city, multiple vibrant and active Presbyteries have a valuable role to play to ensure connection is not lost.

Conscious of wanting to establish their own identities, evidence was provided that the Presbyteries, to some extent, have pushed the Synod away and have rejected support. Whilst this is understandable, Presbyteries also need to recognise the legitimate role of the Synod in engaging with them and supporting them. The relationship between both councils is not one that can only exist on the terms set by a Presbytery; only seeking assistance when it suits them. Similarly, the Synod should be comfortable with Presbyteries being different, which means there is also a need to service them differently.

## 3.2 Relationship between the Presbyteries

With all three Presbyteries still in their establishment phases, there does not appear to have been a significant amount of collaboration between the Presbyteries. To the extent that Presbyteries have developed relationships with one another, these have largely been through shared participation of office-bearers in joint meetings, as detailed above. The evidence is that at this level, the relationships have been positive ones.

There may be scope for further development of these relationships to enable a greater degree of mentoring between Presbyteries, which was one suggestion made to the Task Group. It is also worth noting that the primary functional mixing of Presbyteries is through meetings of the Synod, but these have been limited since the restructure as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The coexistence of two geographic Presbyteries with a non-geographic Presbytery is going to continue to be a concept that requires work and development. Given Presbyteries normally do not operate with overlapping boundaries, having two Presbyteries operating in the same geographic area is a different arrangement, that has met with some difficulties. This will require continued attention to ensure it is not ultimately a negative scenario. The Task group was made aware that the validity of a non-geographic Presbytery is still a topic of discussion within the whole Uniting Church in Australia.

Very little comment was received about the number of Presbyteries. The Synod of South Australia's diversity in theology and vastness of geography means that there is an advantage in maintaining multiple geographic Presbyteries alongside at least one non-geographic Presbytery to avoid the head-to-head that could occur with one geographic and one non-geographic Presbytery. The Task Group concluded that the three Presbyteries should continue as per the current structures.

The South Australian Regional Council of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress reported positive early attempts by all presbyteries in engaging with Congress. A Congress member was part of the first Standing Committee of the Presbytery of Wimala, and helped to generate the Presbytery name in consultation with the Adnyamathanha people of the Flinders Ranges. Unfortunately, people from other aboriginal groups complained to Congress that they were not consulted.

The Presbytery of Generate worked with the Adelaide Congress community to keep that community within the Uniting Church following the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly decision on marriage. Excellent pastoral support was given to their leader, the Anangu people were part of a Presbytery meeting and a joint Vitality of Call was conducted well.

The Presbytery of Southern SA has connected to Raukkan community, with Rev Ken Sumner speaking at one Presbytery meeting.

All three Presbyteries worked well with Rev. Ken Sumner on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Presbyteries, which is due to be signed at the Synod meeting. The Synod granting Congress some of the Powers of a Presbytery has given Congress certainty in their relationship with the Presbyteries, and allows individual Congress ministry centres to engage with their Presbytery as they are able. Continuing to explore engagement with the South Australian Congress in keeping with the Covenant between the Uniting church and the Uniting aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress seems to be a significant priority within all Presbyteries.

### **3.3 Assessment of delegations from the Presbyteries to the Synod**

The formation of the Presbytery of South Australia brought with it a professionalisation of the resources and services of the church as a consequence of the unitary Presbytery and Synod model. Yet winding back the clock is not possible when it comes to redefining the separate roles of Presbyteries and the Synod because in the intervening time period, the churches and the broader non-government and charity sector have moved to a deeply regulated environment during this time.

When the Presbyteries had to set up their structures, often it was the case that volunteers were performing work that had been previously undertaken by paid staff. This has been challenging for some Presbyteries as they grapple with a host of new responsibilities as part of the process of establishing themselves. The Synod has faced its own challenges with the work of three new entities that was kept within the Synod structures.

As an example of the necessity of clarity around responsibilities and also of the importance of delegations was given in the case of handling matters related to discipline. The Task Group was told that such matters have become so litigious that Presbyteries, led by groups of volunteers, do not have the skills to handle, and by the time they reach the Synod a significant effort is required to unravel them because too many people have been involved at church council and Presbytery level. This can be a difficult and costly process and whilst it may formerly have been handled pastorally, in today's environment this is inadequate.

Delegation back to the Synod in instances such as these may help and as long as the Synod works respectfully with Presbytery, the Presbytery is more likely to be happy for Synod to deal with the matter. However, it is also necessary to ensure that when discussing delegations, the Synod has the personnel and resources to adequately handle.

The Task Group saw the benefits to the restructure that continuing dialogue over delegations would bring. Where delegations are working well, these should be acknowledged. The Uniting Church regulations and the Basis of Union will continue to assist in ensuring the essential functions of the Church are performed by the appropriate council.

### 3.4 Consideration of how the wider church in SA experienced the restructure process

For some, the call to establish new Presbyteries was an exciting and purposeful one, allowing fresh expressions of identity and mission and reinvigoration of vital aspects of the church's structure. As one respondent to the Task Group's survey said, "[The Presbytery restructure] allowed many congregation members to remain a member of our Uniting Church congregation with integrity. Shared vision and goals, so that speakers at Presbytery meetings are directly connected to the ministry priorities of our congregation." (Quote from survey comment 43)

For others it was about dividing the church, not uniting, and adding complexity through the development or reincarnation of an extra organisational layer. As one respondent to the survey said, "The new Presbyteries are a meaningless division and distraction. The Uniting Church is growing smaller by the year and we need greater unity not greater division. Please revisit this division decision."

Whilst a range of individual responses were received to the survey, there was little evidence to indicate a strong collective desire to turn back to the previous model of one Presbytery and Synod, even where there was concern expressed about the structure as it has now evolved. In particular, the reestablishment of Presbyteries and the associated return of governance and pastoral support to be closer to the ground was a welcome development for many. However, some were concerned that the Presbyteries lacked the resources to provide all the necessary support.

It is noted that these models continue to develop, particularly where Presbyteries are seeking to establish hubs or clusters as the primary means of providing connection and support to congregations. This may not address some of the concerns that were raised, which related to inadequate resourcing of Presbyteries. As the Presbyteries continue to develop, a greater sense of understanding about the level of resourcing adequate for the Presbytery to meet its obligations may well evolve, especially if Presbyteries seek guidance from other Presbyteries across the Assembly about how they structure their affairs.

Evidence was received that the reestablishment of multiple Presbyteries was welcomed by those congregations that had lamented the loss of a multiple Presbytery structure or even of parishes. One respondent indicated "It has clarified and strengthened our congregations shared sense of mission with the Presbytery and the Uniting Church. It has given our congregation a sense of belonging and the resourcing of the Presbytery have been of great value."

One challenge that was raised is where neighbouring congregations are members of different Presbyteries. Dealing with congregations from a different Presbytery is difficult, and it also affects availability of personnel. The Task group affirms those congregations maintaining local relationships with other congregations that foster the Christian witness of the Uniting Church as a whole.

Despite all of the changes that have taken place over the last three years, one response to the survey indicated that the respondent's congregation heard very little from the Presbytery and some congregations do not see the point of Presbyteries, which can especially be the case for city congregations that are generally strong and focussed on their own development. Other congregations have a greater need for the advice and support of their Presbytery.

There was generally a mixed level of knowledge demonstrated about the role of Presbyteries. Whilst to some Presbyteries were an unknown quantity, the contrary view expressed was that whilst not all members of a congregation may understand what a Presbytery is and what it does, enough people within congregations do understand and appreciate the role of the Presbyteries. The challenge exists to engage with and explain governance of the wider church. The greatest risk from a lack of knowledge about and engagement with Presbyteries is that it diminishes the pool of people who are willing and able to serve their Presbytery. The Task group recognised that there was a wider issue of Uniting Church congregation members lacking understanding of their own Church structures and knowledge of the Uniting Church ethos and that urgent attention should be given to education in these matters.

The Task Group did not hear much specifically about how different age or cultural cohorts within the church have experienced the restructure. It may be valuable to have a greater understanding of the health and vitality of the Presbyteries by understanding how they have been able to engage with young people or people from different cultural backgrounds, for example. If congregations with a strong participation of people under 35 are mostly located within one Presbytery, or are not being engaged by their Presbyteries, then this would be detrimental to the health of the Presbyteries.

### **3.5 Impact on organisations associated with the Uniting Church**

Many of the organisations associated with the Uniting Church appear to have been largely unaffected by the change at an institutional level.

In response to outreach undertaken on behalf of the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group by UnitingCare SA, ten organisations responded to the following questions:

1. Were you aware of the Presbytery restructure?
2. What impact, if any, has the restructure had?
3. Does your organisation relate to any Presbytery or Presbyteries in particular? If so, which one(s)?
4. Is there anything else about the restructure which you would like to share with the Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group?

Whilst most of these were aware that the restructure had occurred, in some instances, perhaps because the person completing the questions was not a Uniting Church member, the majority reported little to no impact or relationship with any of the Presbyteries.

A comment was received that “it is a pity that the Uniting Church has differing doctrines on some central matters”, whilst another noted “I was disappointed with some of the discussion at the time, but one moved on and we don’t see people whom we once joined with at meetings of the Presbytery.”

The most direct impact on organisations has been that where they support placements, such as chaplains, these individuals were required to align themselves with a Presbytery. Chaplaincy connections will allow Presbyteries to connect with organisations associated with the Uniting Church in meaningful ways that will assist the mission of the Church through these organisations.

### **3.6 Ecumenical view of the restructure**

Churches together SA reported that the restructure of the Uniting Church was largely unnoticed by the wider church, and this was confirmed by the Moderator who attends Leaders of Christian Churches in South Australia.

## **4. Mission**

### **4.1 Impact of changes on the missional focus of the Uniting Church in South Australia, including whether the mission of the church has grown and been enhanced.**

The overwhelming administrative and governance tasks involved in establishing a Presbytery - leadership, financials, following rules and regulations - seems to have had an impact on all Presbyteries in the restructure. There have been many hours devoted to this end. The priority given to the tasks of laying the foundational structures has initially taken from the conversations of mission emerging and being implemented. However, mission has continued.

The COVID-19 pandemic, its variants and resulting lockdowns and restrictions have certainly impacted the foundational work done by each Presbytery. The restrictions also had a negative impact on the ability of Presbyteries to conduct mission outreach. This global situation has also changed missional focus throughout all Presbyteries, with many going on steep learning curves to grow churches and communicate missionally through technology. Pivoting to technology has enhanced communication all round, especially for country churches through the ability to attend meetings in the city via online platforms such as Zoom, and even for faith communities to be planted and grow, not just state wide, but also internationally.

The breadth of the understanding of mission across the Uniting Church is an expression of the breadth of the church's diversity within the restructured Presbyteries and across the wider church. Now that the Presbyteries have established their basic structures, there is greater scope to develop a fuller understanding of mission, whether this be stemming from the Basis of Union; about "enabling every congregation to fulfil its highest calling in Christ"; seeking to see people come to faith, grow as disciples, raise courageous leaders and plant or renew churches; or related to each other out of geographical connections.

Each Presbytery will need to determine its key missional priorities. Importantly, the establishment of new Presbyteries forced the church to ask the healthy question: What is the missional priority of each congregation, each Presbytery, and the Synod? These questions and more are borne out in the current Act2 document from the Assembly about the future of the UCA:

***To be a church of missional, vibrant and life-giving local communities of faith***

*How we nurture and grow vibrant local communities of faith, discipleship, worship, witness and service is the key driving question at the heart of Act2. This is the core business leading us into conversations about structures, governance, and resourcing. What does it look like to enable local mission and ministry more fully? Perhaps: a renewed emphasis on faith formation, releasing communities from major administrative workloads, simpler processes, or sending resources where they are most needed. What do you think it will take?*

Considering whether the mission of the church has grown and been enhanced during, or as a result of, the restructure, it has been useful for the Task Group to gain an overall impression across the Synod of the vitality of mission. Whilst there have been churches close, which was not unexpected, the positive side is that we have seen a number of faith communities planted and churches seeking renewal.

The Mission Resourcing Team of the Synod reported an increase in churches from all Presbyteries seeking help with mission planning in particular. This sits alongside an increase in help sought in other departments of mission, such as children, families, and youth/young adults ministries. Funding for Mission planners that were connected with the former Synod Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning team was redirected to the Presbyteries at their formation, because it is the Presbytery's responsibility to undertake Mission Planning with their congregations. The Mission Resourcing Team of the MLDB is a Synod function. This misunderstanding is another example of the South Australian Church members lack of understanding of its structures and ethos.

However, the mission of the church continues to grow in the work of local congregations and through Presbytery work around church plants and innovative ministries - all of which transform communities around them.

Presbyteries have increased communication in the area of mission through meetings and developing training with Mission Resourcing and other agencies. The result has been an increase in contact with grassroots church members. As a consequence, congregations encouraged by this, are renewing their missional planning. This missional focus embraces the great commission of making disciples to issues of justice in communities (nationally and internationally), and the care of God's creation and environment. The survey to all congregations expressed appreciation for this input from all Presbyteries.

More communication also means challenges plus enhancement as each Presbytery is requested for representation to serve on different Synod and wider church committees. This does mean more diverse representation and more feedback to consider as more take active parts in the mission of the church.

## 4.2 Status of Pastoral Oversight

All three Presbyteries have formed Pastoral Relations Committees that are operating successfully, engaging in placements, reviews and pastoral matters. Some pastoral issues have been forwarded onto other committees, such as the Committee for Counselling. Navigating the administration of this has taken time, as not all Presbyteries have leaders with the same amount of experience and knowledge.

Each Presbytery has adopted a different structure to support the pastoral care of congregations and ministry agents. The Presbytery of Southern SA has a Presbytery Minister, Generate Presbytery operates with hub leaders, and Wimala Presbytery has appointed regional coordinators.

The leadership of churches and the placement of non-congregational ministers within the life of each Presbytery needs clarification. The Task Group is not aware of Presbyteries maintaining a list of retired ministers despite this being a responsibility, they hold under the regulations.

It is evident that a greater understanding of the role of Pastoral Relations Committees, and the responsibilities of the Presbyteries and of the Synod, is required. Clarity around the roles of different councils is required, and improved education about the structure of the Uniting Church, including in congregations, would enhance mission.

This need for clarity extends to such matters as property, finance, Safe Church and complaints. Where there is confusion about these elements, mission suffers. It was suggested that there be a review of the Synod structures and Synod committees to ensure they align with the responsibilities that rest with the Synod, and take into account those responsibilities that rest with the Presbyteries.

Evidence received by the Task Group indicates that the new Presbytery structure has largely improved pastoral communication with congregations, through means such as hub and cluster

leaders, or Presbytery meetings. Many congregations that previously fell through the cracks are now in the fold, and so pastoral care has been widened and enhanced.

Part-time placements and volunteers share and extend the workload of Presbyteries. This helps congregations to recognise that their Presbytery is part of everyone, as is mission. The survey conducted by the Task Group bore this out, and there were positive and enthusiastic responses. For example, the following responses were received to the question, “*Share how your Presbytery has been of assistance to your congregation’s mission and pastoral needs*”:

- Hub meetings; visits from Hub Minister to our congregation; training days;
- In so many ways - regular encouraging and informative emails, gatherings/meetings for support/resourcing both state-wide and hub-based, recent review of staffing and structure;
- I have had one visit from the Presbytery Minister, which is great. It was a supportive conversation. The Chairperson has also helped with commissioning of Ministry of Pastor.

### **4.3 Place of theological education in the new structure**

The Mission and Leadership Development Board and its subcommittees have sought representation from all Presbyteries, which is welcome.

The Task Group has heard from all Presbyteries that they have a real need for more ministers, and that they are aware theological education is a Synod function and practically the responsibility rests with the College.

As students and new candidates study and develop at the College, pastoral care groups have been established by each of the Presbyteries to support candidates through formation. Each Presbytery is also represented on formation panels. The Presbyteries are supporting and engaging in life ministry for candidates as they step out into missional service.

Formation panels are also instrumental in forming ministers in the structures and ethos of the church, and thus as a resource to the Presbyteries. This is also the case for people who fill roles as Ministry of Pastor from other denominations, or who have come into the Uniting Church later in life. Concerns were raised about the capacity of people from other denominations to lead Uniting Church congregations within the ethos and polity of the Uniting Church. Concerns were also expressed about the lack of experience with the structures of the Uniting Church, its consensus decision making and poor knowledge of the Basis of Union for the teaching of congregations and the shaping of the Uniting Church identity. The changes to the structures of Formation panels for candidates was also mentioned as a concern, citing a request from the Generate Presbytery that their candidates be formed with people only from their Presbytery. The perception of the identity of the Uniting Church as a denomination varies between Presbyteries. The hope of living up to the name, Uniting Church in Australia and Christ’s call for unity expressed in Paragraph 1 of the Basis of Union will need a unified

formation of her ministry candidates, and greater attention to the education of people from outside the Uniting Church who are commissioned to Ministry of Pastor.

## 5. Resourcing

### 5.1 Challenges of resourcing the new structure for human and financial resources, including what further resourcing is needed

All Presbytery interviews reported a huge amount of work had been undertaken to establish the Presbyteries. Interviews with members of the Resources Ministry Centre of the Synod also indicated that the workload had been very demanding as they resource new Presbyteries.

The distinctly different pathways to formation of Generate Presbytery on the one hand, and Wimala Presbytery and the Presbytery of Southern SA on the other, through the Transitional Presbytery, had a significant impact on the resourcing of the Presbyteries.

Generate Presbytery benefited from a longer and more cohesive gestation, as a consequence of a desire for common expression within the Uniting Church. The Presbytery grew from unrest felt by many congregations about the theological direction of the Uniting Church, and a series of well-attended meetings of concerned people from across the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia allowed this concept to flourish. It meant that when the Synod decided to move from the Presbytery of South Australia to a model of multiple Presbyteries within the Synod, including a non-geographic Presbytery, state-wide structures were already well advanced. Some reported that this was seen as an adapted continuation of the former single Presbytery model.

Brought together under a common vision, Generate Presbytery attracted a high percentage of the larger congregations in the Synod. These congregations, often with multiple placements and paid leaders, brought established human resources to attend to the necessary set-up of regulatory Presbytery structures and populate committees.

Generate Presbytery made an intentional decision not to use a Presbytery Minister structure, but to put practitioners around the table, who had other roles beside Presbytery duties. The leadership felt the Synod Standing Committee had berated them for employing leadership, and were grateful for the support of the General Secretary, who helped them work through the employment model. Although Generate Presbytery had begun early and was inspired by the moral injury felt by many around the marriage decision of the 15th Assembly, the establishment required a great deal of hard work by the initial leadership team.

The formation story of the other two Presbyteries was not as cohesive. While there was considerable joy in getting to know congregations, the dilemma of finding human expertise in congregational

membership was very apparent. Presbyteries found themselves, “forming, storming and norming at the same time” as they tried to establish meetings, leadership and committees.

Wimala Presbytery and the Presbytery of Southern SA, each united by geography but with no common experience working together before their initial governing structures were elected at the time they became Presbyteries, were overwhelmed by the responsibilities thrust upon them. These Presbyteries did not know who they were. The work of the Transitional Presbytery assisted them to find their feet. Once their primary committees were populated, there then came the necessity to populate Synod committees with representation.

One leader reported that 10 minutes into the first Presbytery meeting following the 2019 Synod meeting, it was recognised how little was known about Uniting Church structures. Both of the geographic Presbyteries are concerned they lack suitable and willing people to provide the leadership and resources the Presbytery needs, and feel hindered by “ageing people and diminishing resources”.

There is also concern around burn-out of Presbytery leaders, with concern that the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has added additional stressors to the establishment work. The lack of time and opportunity for strategic planning by Wimala Presbytery and the Presbytery of Southern SA has frustrated leaders in their establishment efforts too. One person likened the work of creating their Presbytery to “building a plane in the sky”. The work of establishing these Presbyteries has left no time or energy for engaging new missional work, or picking up missional work like KCO.

All Presbyteries are seeing fruit emerge from their leadership and have appreciated the support offered by each other's leaders through meeting together with Synod leaders, and for some leaders, this has been opportunity for personal growth through service.

Appreciation for the group meeting with leaders of the Presbyteries and the Synod was widely expressed, especially in the newer area of Safe Church. The establishment by the Synod of meetings for treasurers and key leaders was described as a “standout success” by those involved. The Synod Placements committee has worked well as it has continued, although it was noted that there is not yet movement of ministers across Presbyteries within the Synod.

The Task Group heard some criticisms of the way existing resourcing structures are hindering their work. In the area of property, there exists frustration that property reports put strain on congregations, and that individual congregational reports from the recent Property Review have not been made available to Presbyteries, who see these as an important part of their engagement with their congregations. We are aware that the Strategy, Planning and Property group are working in this space.

The Synod was also criticised for holding all directory information on its CRM platform, the availability of which around “privacy reasons” was confusing to some Presbytery leaders. One Presbytery was

advised it could not create its own directory. Additional training is already offered to Presbytery office bearers to utilise CRM to its potential and access to CRM has been offered to further Presbytery appointments, such as Pastoral Relations Committee chair people. The Task Group noted that the Property Trust entity is the legal body who must deal with any data breaches.

As identified in the previous section of this report, the Mission Resourcing Team is considered underfunded and lacking capacity to resource Presbyteries, who have key roles in resourcing mission in their congregations. One Presbytery felt that there was no recognition by the Synod of the role that Presbyteries play in congregational mission.

All Presbyteries reported times when the Synod struggled to relinquish roles to Presbyteries, with some indicating they felt the Synod wanted to control the Presbytery and one implying Synod leadership had usurped leadership from the Presbytery in a crisis situation. One suggestion was that the Synod needs to restructure itself to resource itself, while others felt communication through trial and error was the key to working through the difficulties.

Synod resource managers also report a much greater workload upon various sections of the Resources, Placements and Safe Church Ministry Centres, as they deal in triplicate with their portfolios, or attend to work in timely ways. One example of challenges is that the signing of contracts is delayed because arrangements now need to be made with Presbytery people external to the office. Others relate to the additional work being undertaken by synod staff in triplicating financial information. The Task group recognised a need to review the Synod work operations would help acknowledge these difficulties and others noted below, and contribute to solutions for them.

A greater workload has also been felt by the Mission and Leadership Development Ministry Centre. There are significant losses of human resourcing at the College and those remaining are unable to meet the needs of the Presbyteries. The separate Formation Panel requested by Generate Presbytery for their candidates has resulted in one staff academic advisor now needing two days to complete Formation Panel obligations amidst other essential duties. The recent absence of an EO and Principal has not helped the Uniting College initiate any opportunities to engage with Presbyteries and discern their needs. The MLDB is discussing the need for a Review of Formation Panel guidelines.

The Mission Resourcing Team of the Synod Office also reported an experience of greater workload, with limited human and financial resources to meet the demands of both congregations and Presbyteries. In 2021, the Mission Resourcing Team resourced 120 congregations. A surprising request of Mission Resourcing was to actually undertake the Mission Planning of some Presbyteries. The Presbytery restructure seems to have given Mission Resourcing a higher profile among congregations, allowing for great and more meaningful engagement.

## 5.2 Effectiveness of the Funding Model

The *Blended Pool & Flow Model* of funding was the model agreed to by the Synod, following the recommendations from a task group set up by the Synod Standing Committee. It was determined this model brought the least change for congregations, and gave certainty and predictability to income for the Synod and Presbyteries alike. From an audit point of view for the Synod, which undertakes Presbytery bookkeeping (ex gratia), this model was the more efficient. The Synod receives its contribution from congregations first because it is the legal entity of the UCA. It then distributes the Presbytery contribution. The centralising of funding, assists with audit and compliance requirements, for which the Resources Ministry Centre has responsibility.

A strong emphasis was given to clear communication, training and preparation of Presbytery treasurers and creating budgets driven by Presbytery strategic plans and mission goals, rather than employment costs of staff. The Task Group heard that it will be essential to support treasurers of Presbyteries, who have a time-consuming role, which could prove difficult to fill in the future with adequately gifted volunteers.

More recent concern has been expressed by the Synod Resources Ministry Centre about the drift away from Uniting Church financial structures, with some congregations not wishing to contribute to the Synod at all. The Presbyteries all reported that congregations lacked education on the Uniting Church structures, polity and ethos, and many felt disengaged from the Assembly and the Synod, had forgotten the role of the Presbytery and were focussed on their own survival and mission.

Two Presbyteries were critical of the funding Model. Generate Presbytery prefer the *Direct Flow Model*, claiming it would give exactly the same financial income as the current funding model. It feels well-equipped to administer the work involved.

The Presbytery of Southern SA found its resources compromised by the large number of ordained ministers in non-congregational placements, and the number of small congregations without any ministerial placement, all of which need support. No funding is received by the Synod or Presbyteries for non-congregational placements such as chaplaincies to public health hospitals, correctional services or UnitingCare organisations and schools, whereas congregations all pay Mission and Service Fund contributions, whether they have ordained ministers or not. This is a matter that may benefit from further conversation with UnitingCare organisations, hospitals and other organisations that pay ministerial stipends to approved placements, and perhaps between the Placements and Safe Church Ministry Centre and the Resources Ministry Centre, but is beyond the work of this Task Group.

One presbytery commented that closing churches will bring less Mission and Service Fund contributions, with the Presbytery being better off paying the small amount of Mission and Service

Fund contributions for such congregations, to ensure its share of the pool, which is related to the number of congregations in the Presbytery.

### **5.3 Effectiveness in meeting compliance, government and legislative requirements, and the Uniting Church Regulations**

“We are a team of well-meaning amateurs, not highly skilled professionals” was a comment from one person in one of the geographic Presbyteries. These Presbyteries have needed to work very hard to be effective in establishing themselves, as they grappled with the requirements of Uniting Church regulations and governance without having a number of people familiar these requirements and processes. The Task Group found that not all people elected to Presbytery positions knew that the Uniting Church actually operated under a Constitution and Regulations and By-laws.

Where Presbyteries had people who had other committee experience, there were still concerns expressed of the Synod at times acting like “big brother” and over-reaching into Presbytery “territory”. In reality all of the Presbyteries are to be congratulated on their due diligence in establishing themselves, working with the Synod to set up their structures in accordance with Uniting Church governance and compliance, and that work is still happening.

The fact that all Presbyteries have faced steep learning curves about the nature of the Uniting Church of which they are all a part, suggests a major lack of education of the current generations who populate our pews, about the history, polity and ethos of the Uniting Church: the how and why God called this church into existence. The role of ordained leadership within the Uniting Church to equip all its members for missional ministry must surely include teaching the people about their church and its structures and missional objectives.

Given the Uniting College’s strong focus on ministry leadership development over the past 10 years, it is surprising to discover that Uniting Church leaders may be ignorant about the church to which they belong. From the Listening and Information meetings held across the Synod in the time leading up to the 15<sup>th</sup> Assembly discussions on marriage, the lack of understanding of inter-related councils of the church and their responsibilities and the role of trust in the discernment of the Holy Spirit by councils of the church was apparent.

One Presbytery noted a need for education, formal induction and training for Presbytery leadership roles by the Synod. It would appear pertinent for the Mission and Leadership Development Board to review how current ministry formation of ordained ministry agents might better equip ministers to equip their own congregational leaders and Presbytery leaders with knowledge of the Uniting Church structures and meeting ethos.

The process of disentangling the three Presbyteries from the former unitary structure of the Presbytery and Synod of South Australia has given opportunity for the Synod and the leadership of Presbyteries to wrestle with how the South Australian church restructure can better serve the mission of Jesus Christ in today's Australian and world context.

## **6. Conclusions**

### **6.1 Evaluation of the effectiveness of the change of structures, whether the structure life giving for the Uniting Church in South Australia**

The task group concludes that the change of structures from one Presbytery and Synod to 3 Presbyteries has been a positive, life-giving change for the UCA in SA. The Synod and the Presbyteries are to be commended for the enormous amount of work that has gone into setting up the new structures. It is important to recognise that the restructure has not been without its challenges and further work around human resourcing, governance structures and attention to relationships will be important going forward.

### **6.2 Potential for further changes**

The task group has not identified further changes, but offers the proposals for the consideration of the Synod; and the suggestions throughout the report for the consideration and attention of the relevant bodies with those responsibilities.

## 7. Consultation

The Task Group undertook formal consultation with the following individuals and entities:

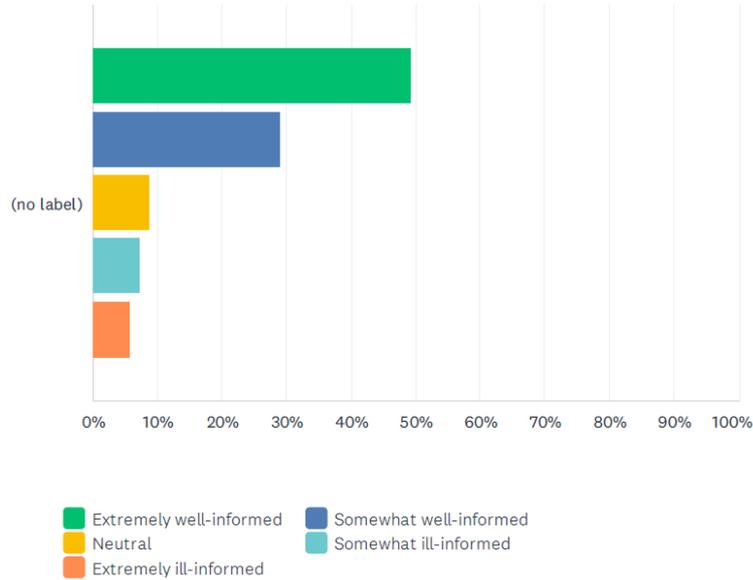
General Secretary of the Synod	UnitingCare SA Agencies and Schools
Generate Presbytery Standing Committee	Placements Committee of the Synod
Presbytery of Southern SA Standing Committee	Executive Officers of the Synod
Wimala Presbytery Standing Committee	Resources Board of the Synod
Joint Presbytery Leaders (Chairs, Secretaries and Treasurers of Presbyteries together)	Mission and Leadership Development Board of the Synod
Presbytery Treasurers	Treasurer of the Transitional Presbytery
Property Team of the Synod	Mission Resourcing Team of the Synod
	Uniting Church Fellowships and Mission (UC FAMS)
	Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress in South Australia

These consultations largely took the form of in-person discussions between members of the Task Group and the individuals and entities.

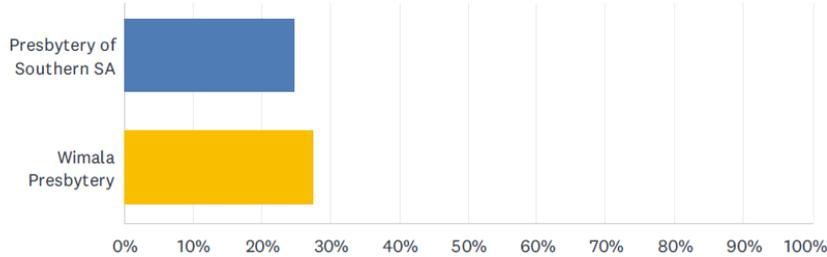
In addition, the Task Group prepared a short survey that was advertised through *UC E-News*. A total of 69 responses were received. A basic summary of the quantitative responses to the first three questions is provided below:

## Q2 How well informed were you about the restructure at the time?

Answered: 69 Skipped: 0



	EXTREMELY WELL-INFORMED	SOMEWHAT WELL-INFORMED	NEUTRAL	SOMEWHAT ILL-INFORMED	EXTREMELY ILL-INFORMED	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	49.28%	28.99%	8.70%	7.25%	5.80%	69	4.09
	34	20	6	5	4		



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	Count
Generate Presbytery	47.83%	33
Presbytery of Southern SA	24.64%	17
Wimala Presbytery	27.54%	19
TOTAL		69

The Task Group would like to thank all those who engaged with its work.

**ATTACHMENTS****ATTACHMENT An Original proposal from November 2018****Synod**

PS18.16	"PROPOSAL 28" – SEPARATE STRUCTURALLY THE PRESBYTERY AND SYNOD
15-17 NOV. 2018	<p>It was AGREED that the Presbytery and Synod resolve:</p> <p>1. To put in place the processes that will enable the Synod and Presbytery to be separated structurally at the June 2019 meeting of the Presbytery and Synod.</p>
P18.23	<p>It was AGREED that the Presbytery resolve to:</p> <p>2. Acknowledging the work of those members who have contributed to the process of preparing a proposal to form a non-geographical Presbytery,</p> <p>2.1 affirming again that the Uniting Church belongs to the people of God on the way to the promised end (B of U 18), THANK GOD for leading us in new ways and directions to be Christ's Church in South Australia,</p> <p>2.2 As per Regulation 3.4.6 (a) (ii), REQUEST the Synod of SA form the Presbytery of name N within the Synod of South Australia with no fixed geographic bounds, noting that the N Presbytery will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise oversight and pastoral care of congregations, who hold the view that marriage is between a man and a woman, in addition to the other responsibilities of a Presbytery</li> <li>• Along with the rest of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Presbytery will pursue the Great Commission and effective mission and leadership.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Notwithstanding the view of marriage expressed in this minute, the proposers assure the Presbytery and Synod that those who hold a different view of marriage will still be welcome).</i></p> <p>2.3 UNDERTAKE A REVIEW by a Task Group appointed by Standing Committee in the fifth year after its inception.</p> <p><i>(Note from Interim General Secretary – "the wording of 2.3 is as decided at the meeting. However, it is unclear if this Review is to be undertaken by the Standing Committee of the Presbytery or the Synod. Given the reference to Regulation 3.4.6 (a)(ii), it is assumed this will be the role of the Synod Standing Committee".</i></p>
S18.24	<p>It was AGREED that the Synod (by Agreement) of South Australia resolve to:</p> <p>2.4 affirming again that the Uniting Church belongs to the people of God on the way to the promised end (B of U 18), THANK GOD for leading us in new ways and directions to be Christ's Church in South Australia.</p> <p>2.5 Following the request from the Presbytery of SA and as per Regulations 3.4.6. and 3.4.7, FORM THE PRESBYTERY of name N</p>

	<p>within the Synod of South Australia with no fixed geographic bounds, noting that the N Presbytery will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise oversight and pastoral care of congregations, who hold the view that marriage is between a man and a woman, in addition to the other responsibilities of a Presbytery</li> <li>• Along with the rest of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Presbytery will pursue the Great Commission and effective mission and leadership.</li> </ul> <p><i>(Notwithstanding the view of marriage expressed in this minute, the proposers assure the Presbytery and Synod that those who hold a different view of marriage will still be welcome)</i></p> <p>2.6 DETERMINE that the first meeting of the N Presbytery will be held no later than 1 July 2019 at a venue to be determined and approved by Standing Committee.</p> <p>2.7 AUTHORISE the Moderator to preside and the General Secretary to act as secretary at the first meeting of the N Presbytery.</p> <p>2.8 DETERMINE that the N Presbytery will fulfil all the responsibilities of a Presbytery as per Para 26, Constitution and Regulation 3.1.3 unless the Task Group (see below) and Standing Committee agree to delegate certain matters pursuant to section 70(c) of the Constitution.</p> <p>2.9 DETERMINE that the initial membership of the N Presbytery shall be formed in accordance with Regulation 3.3.4 and will be made up of those congregations/faith communities who decide to join Presbytery N by a decision of the congregation, which if not by consensus or agreement would require a two-thirds majority in formal procedures.</p> <p>2.10 DETERMINE that once formed, congregations/faith communities may decide to leave Presbytery N by a decision of the congregation, which if not by consensus or agreement would require a two-thirds majority in formal procedures.</p> <p>2.11 APPOINT and authorise a MNGP Task Group to complete all necessary work to enable the N Presbytery to be formed by 1 July 2019 at the latest and such work to include determination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• of the name of the <i>N Presbytery</i></li> <li>• as to which, if any, responsibilities of the <i>N Presbytery</i>, under Para 26 Constitution and Regulation 3.1.3, will be delegated to other councils</li> <li>• regarding funding arrangements for the <i>N Presbytery</i></li> <li>• of any specific new rules or by-laws or changes to current rules or by-laws required for the <i>N Presbytery</i></li> </ul> <p>2.12 APPOINT the following people to the MNGP Task Group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General Secretary of the SA Synod or delegate</li> </ul>
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S18.25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One person appointed by Standing Committee</li> <li>• One person appointed by the Resources Board</li> <li>• Rev Barry Littleford</li> <li>• Rev Di Holden</li> <li>• Rev Steph Tai</li> <li>• Rev Dianna Muir</li> </ul> <p>It was AGREED that the Synod of South Australia resolve to:</p> <p>3. FORM additional Presbyteries. In order to do this, we will review the current structure and consider the best ways that Presbyteries can be formed to serve the mission and ministry. This will be done by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) APPOINTING A TASK GROUP to give oversight to the process with wide consultation, including with UAICC SA, Mission Networks, Resources Board, the NGP task group, and rural communities.</li> <li>b) PREPARE progress reports to Standing Committee.</li> <li>c) PREPARE a full report and any recommendations for the June 2019 meeting of Presbytery and Synod for decision and implementation.</li> </ul>
PS18.26	<p>It was agreed that the Presbytery and Synod resolve to:</p> <p>4. RENEW our commitment to each other to work across the Councils of the Church to share our stories and strengths, so that the whole body will be built up.</p> <p><i>Note from the Interim General Secretary</i></p> <p><i>Please note that in 3 (a) the details of the role and membership of the Task Group were not formally resolved by the Presbytery and Synod meeting. These details will be referred to the Standing Committee for decision.</i></p>

ATTACHMENT B Executive Functions delegated to the Synod by the Presbyteries approved at the June 2019 Synod meeting

### **DELEGATIONS – EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS**

The Standing Committee in consultation with the Task Groups agreed that the Synod would retain executive functions. To determine these executive functions the following rationale has been used:

- where there is a direct accountability or report required to an external regulator on behalf of UCSA
- that requires a high degree of ongoing specialist professional knowledge / expertise / skill
- which constitutes a high degree of risk to the Property Trust
- Where it can be demonstrated that existing resources will be better stewarded at the Executive level through:
  - minimizing or avoiding duplication of effort
  - avoiding the creation of structural inefficiencies

- Where no value-add can be demonstrated by delegating the function to a Presbytery
- To ensure a consistent policy framework and implementation for all Executive functions listed.

#### **EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:**

- Work, Health, (Environment) and Safety (WHS)
- Human Resources – policy, involuntary termination, oversight of disciplinary action
- Payroll Bureau Service and associated Fringe Benefit Accounts (including PAYG and FBT reporting)
- Insurance – placement of cover and claims management
- Screening Services (criminal history check) – including policy requiring all congregations to adopt the same approach
- Information Technology (and also consider Intellectual Property) – including:
  - policy
  - data security
  - data storage and back up
  - website deployment
  - ownership and management of UCSA domain names within the bounds of the SA Synod,
  - email for Synod and Presbytery ministry agents
  - firewall
  - IT network content management
- Risk Management – including crisis management response, Business Continuity Plan, Disaster Recovery Plan
- Privacy – protection of UCSA corporate data and response to data breaches
- Corporate Governance – including establishment of new entities or changes to governance structures
- Finance – financial policy, oversight of finances including budget and financial statements of entities within the bounds of the SA Synod

It was also agreed by the Standing Committee that the following financial administrative functions be retained by the Synod:

- Payroll – process/calculate wages/stipend, payment to personnel, leave administration, records management, payment of superannuation, payment of PAYG
- Accounts Payable – classify, verify and enter transactions, record and prepare payments to creditors, file relevant and supporting documentation
- Ministers Fringe Benefit Accounts – initialise and administer trust accounts, make reimbursements and 3<sup>rd</sup> party payments
- Accounts Receivable – Prepare invoices (as agreed), bank monies and provide information to the Presbytery in relation to payments. Prepare receipts (as necessary)

- Congregation Contributions – collect and disburse
- Ensure financial services remain compliant when legislation and accounting standards change
- Reporting – provide regular financial reports (actual versus budget) and prepare annual financial statements.
- Audit – arrange for audit, manage auditor interactions and finalise audited accounts
- Lodge returns with relevant authorities
- Provide appropriate data to authorised officer(s)
- Respond to queries from external regulators.

It has been noted that:

1. Bequests remains a function of the Property Trust,
2. Uniting Venues and the UC Loan Fund, remain functions of the Synod; and
3. Relationships with regulators – APRA, ASIC, ATO and ACNC rests solely with the Synod

It is also noted that Presbyteries have delegated their responsibilities with regard to Property to the Synod.

### **Presbytery Restructure Review Task Group**

*Rev Sue Page*

*Rev Sue Ellis*

*Rev Christine Manning*

*Michael McClaren*

*Anton Van Bavel*

*May 2022*