

Procedural proposals

It is proposed that the Synod:

- 1.01 (a) Notes the appointment by the Synod Standing Committee of members of the Business Committee and the authorisation by Synod Standing Committee to the Moderator and General Secretary to make further appointments to the Business Committee:
- Rev David Baker (The Moderator)
 - Rev Heather den Houting (The General Secretary)
 - Rev John Ruhle (Associate General Secretary)
 - Ms Kellie Broderick (Executive Officer – Support Services & Event Management)
 - Rev Brian Kickbusch
- (b) Notes the further appointments made pursuant to (a):
- Mr Scott Guyatt
 - Rev Monique Coughlin
 - Rev Bradley Foote
 - Mr Scott McDonald
- (c) Appoints Rev Brian Kickbusch as Convenor of the Business Committee; and
- (d) Authorises the Committee to co-opt other persons as necessary for specific business.
- 1.02 (a) Appoints Mr Scott McDonald as Convenor of the Facilitation Committee and authorises the Convenor to co-opt members for that Committee; and
- (b) Appoints Rev Bradley Foote as Small Group Co-ordinator.
- 1.03 Appoints Ms Belinda Bones as Minute Secretary.
- 1.04 Appoints Rev Glenn Louttit as Convenor of the Ballot Committee and gives him authority to co-opt members for that Committee.
- 1.05 Appoints Rev Johnson Makoti and Rev Melanie Wheeley as Pastoral Coordinators.
- 1.06 Adopts the Roll of the Synod subject to the Roll only containing the names of members who register by 12 noon on Saturday, 18 May 2019.

- 1.07 Determines that unless otherwise agreed, the hours of session for the Synod shall be:
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| Friday, 17 May | 5.00 pm – 6.05 pm
7.30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Saturday, 18 May | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
1.30 pm – 6.00 pm
7:30 pm – 8.30 pm |
| Sunday, 19 May | 8.30 am – 12.30 pm
1.30 pm – 6.00 pm
7.30 pm – 9.00 pm |
| Monday, 20 May | 8.30 am – 12 noon |
- 1.08 Determines that the Bar of the House be defined as the numbered tables in the auditorium, unless numbered tables are not present, in which case the Bar of the House be defined as the auditorium.
- 1.09 (a) Adopts the use of the procedures of *A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church (2015)*.
(b) Determines that when considering the procedural proposal “Determining the need for a decision now”, leave of the council be a simple majority. Refer below for rationale.
- 1.10 (a) Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that nominations to Boards, Commissions and Committees closed on Friday, 10 April 2019.
(b) Determines that the ballots will be held as determined by the Business Committee.
(c) Determines that, unless otherwise determined, appointments to membership of various Councils, Boards, Commissions and Committees, will be based on a simple majority and nominees must receive at least 50% of the votes to be elected.
(d) Determines that, unless otherwise determined, ballot papers shall be destroyed following the declaration of a Ballot.
- 1.11 Endorses the decision of the Business Committee that General Proposals were to be submitted by 5.00 pm. on Friday, 19 April 2019.
- 1.12 Authorises the General Secretary to convey greetings on behalf of the Synod to other Synods within The Uniting Church in Australia.
- 1.13 Authorises the Moderator to convey a greeting to the State and Federal Governments.
- 1.14 Authorises Rev David Baker (Moderator), Rev Heather den Houting (General Secretary) and Rev Brian Kickbusch (Business Committee Convenor) to confirm the Minutes of the 34th Synod.
- 1.15 Adopts the Memorial Minutes as presented concerning ministers who have died since the 33rd Synod and notes the ministers who have retired permanently and receives a minute of appreciation for each.

Rationale for procedural proposal 1.09(b):

Recent meetings of Councils of the UCA have demonstrated that 25% of council's members plus one can prevent a decision being made on any matter before a council.

This is a consequence that can arise from a faithful application of the Manual for Meetings. The manual stipulates that after the consensus process of decision making on a matter, if a number of participants do not agree with a decision being made, either by consensus or by agreement, the chair is required to bring the procedural proposal "That the council needs to resolve this question now." (Manual for Meetings 6.10)

This procedural proposal requires leave of the council to be carried. In the Manual for Meetings definitions, "leave of the Council means permission granted by the council by a three-fourths majority vote or by such other majority as may be specified by the council". (Manual for Meetings 5.1 Definitions)

Consequently, a minority of just over 25% who are opposed to a proposal can effectively determine against that proposal when this procedural proposal is put. In other words, and perhaps to be a little provocative, the minority can disenfranchise the majority.

The Business Committee believes a simple majority, as allowed for in 5.1 above, would be a fairer and more reasonable bar for seeking leave of the council to be given.

While the consensus model for decision making sets a worthy ideal for the councils of the church to work by, the capacity, through the rules, for a decision to be prevented to be made by as few as 26% of the membership is, we believe, a vulnerability to decision making that should be mitigated.

Where there is significant concern about a decision, there are means at the council's disposal to manage that matter – the participation of the members themselves in presenting rationales for not proceeding with a proposed course of action, proposition of alternatives, proposals from the facilitation committee, etc. The Business committee believes that the 75% bar represents a risk to the capacity of the Synod to make decisions on matters before it.

This proposal does not impact other procedural proposals where leave of the council is required as per the Manual for Meetings (a three-quarter majority vote would still be required).