



That the Synod:

Records its appreciation of the thesis of Dr Keith Suter entitled *The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia*, and directs its Standing Committee to do all things necessary and convenient to effect the below.

The Future UCA in Queensland

Proposal

Within Four Months

- a) Record and publish some simple videos and articles:
 - i. Promoting Dr Suter's thesis and the need for each Congregation to think about their futures and changes they might need to embrace, and
 - ii. Explaining that wherever the future takes each Congregation and the Uniting Church, we individually and with other believers witness Christ's love to others through our lives, wherever we are.
- b) Rapidly collate and provide electronically quantitative data about the entire population of Queensland Congregations to all Congregations and specific information for Congregations about their nearest six Congregational neighbours, including but not limited to:
 - i. Basic demographic and economic data about their region, available for free from the Queensland Statistician,
 - ii. Attendance and turnover for the last three years,
 - iii. Minister and Office Bearer contact details, and
 - iv. A one page guide encourage Congregational leaders to meet and talk about relationships they might form to support each other into the future.

Within Five Months

- a) Appoint a Synod Change Champion until the next Synod in Session, for remuneration to be decided by Standing Committee, being a person selected as:
 - i. a committed member of a protestant denomination,
 - ii. a person who has never been a member (lay or ordained) of any Queensland Synod or Presbytery,
 - iii. has demonstrated medium-large business turn-around or change management skills.
- b) Having free access and communication through Queensland and access to external advice and resources as reasonably required, Commission the Change Champion to independently develop options – including alternative legal or other structural and functional changes – that Congregations might adopt.

Within twelve months

Publish a draft of options so that all Presbyteries and Congregations can start considering their futures and which options might be taken up.

By the next Synod in Session

Make the options available to Congregations, empowering them to determine their futures.

The scope of the Proposal

The proposal aims to:

- a) Equip Congregations with information to enable them to better understand the shape and nature of Uniting Church Congregations throughout Queensland and how they compare to their neighbours,
- b) Stimulate discussion within and between Congregations about how they can adapt their witness of Christ to the changes in their community and in neighbouring Congregations,
- c) Offer new options to Congregations about how they relate to and operate with other Councils of the Church – Synod, Presbyteries and other Congregations.
- d) New options for interrelationship could be expected to incorporate technology-driven efficiencies for Congregations keen to take them up – for example:
 - i. The handling of suitable business by videoconferencing,
 - ii. Turnkey options for recordkeeping through digital banking, accounting, event-management and pastoral care systems,
 - iii. Streamlined decision-making for suitable business.

Rationale

The Synod acknowledges that:

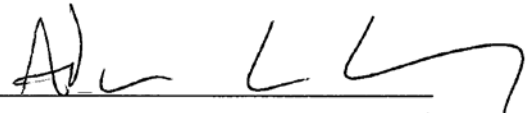
- 1. Each Uniting Church Congregation is the embodiment, in one place, of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ,

2. Dr Keith Suter's thesis *The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia*, offers timely insights, that the Uniting Church is facing a crisis as to its mission and the continued viability of so many Congregations,
3. Various activities are undertaken directly by Synod and its agencies with paid employees and government-provided economic resources but without substantial Congregational involvement,
4. Given the long-term crisis currently faced by the Congregations, Congregations need to be empowered with choices for different for options that do not resemble old structures for doing things,
5. The Uniting Church within Queensland enjoys a legal structure that functions under State law, but conveyance of property to other legal structures is readily possible,
6. This resolution does not seek to displace Assembly's role, but nor does it require their approval, and
7. It is appropriate for the Queensland Synod to provide urgent leadership and take prompt action now before the situation of Congregations in Queensland deteriorates further.

Proposers

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