



## That the Synod:

Request the Synod Standing Committee to develop and implement a mechanism for the publishing and reporting of changes to Synod By-Laws or policies that affect Congregations and/or Presbyteries to the broader Synod community; and for Congregations and /or Presbyteries to be able to request such decisions be referred to the next Synod-in-session for further discussion prior to their implementation.

# Synod Standing Committee Communications

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## The scope of a Proposal

This proposal is at best about better communication and at worst lessening the need for control. While recognising the significant leadership role the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) plays, it seeks to urge the SSC to ensure that other Councils of the Church are aware of potential changes to the Synod's life and witness before decisions are made; and to be amenable for other Councils to request a delay of such decisions until fuller consultation has occurred on the floor of Synod.

# Rationale

As it stands, the Synod Standing Committee exercises the full authority of the Synod in Session between its meetings. This is important, as changes often need to be made that require this authority to respond to a rapidly changing world. That being said, one of our Together on the Way Enriching Community aims is to be a prayerful, listening church and the lines of communication between the Synod Standing Committee, the Synod in Session, the Presbyteries and Congregations need some work to fulfil the vision of mutually listening councils working in their own spheres of responsibility as envisioned in the *Basis of Union*. This was seen when the first many members of the Synod heard of a proposed change to the role of the Moderator was when it was released in one edition of Journey and then retracted in a later edition.

There are some decisions that the Standing Committee is required to handle with confidence and certainty, and it is appropriate that they stay in the sphere of operation of this committee and do not get published.

That being said, any changes to policies or to the By-Laws affect the operations of the Synod as a whole, and thus there should be a mechanism by which the Synod Standing Committee engages with the Synod as a whole as a part of the decision making process.

In the case of the Assembly Standing Committee there are clear reports generated from each meeting that respect that certain matters need to be held in confidence while informing the Church at large of the changes being made on their behalf. There is also a mechanism by which should a number of Synods or Presbyteries request that further review such discussions are held before such decisions are implemented. This is a wise choice that balances the need for decisions to be made between the gathering of the council and the need for communication in order to allow a diverse community to come alongside such decisions, and one that is worthy of consideration and adaptation for the situation of our Synod.

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# Proposers

Name: Mary Burnett Presbytery

Email: [presmin@maryburnettpres.org.au](mailto:presmin@maryburnettpres.org.au) phone: 0418 195564

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Rev David Ferguson

Email: [david.ferguson@dovenetq.net.au](mailto:david.ferguson@dovenetq.net.au) phone: 0417 790330

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_