

## That the Synod:

Noting the adoption of "A Manual for Meetings", adopt the following process for discernment of priorities for the life of the Synod until 2020:

- a. Information – receiving information from the reports and presentations at the Synod in Session,
- b. Deliberation – using small group time, prayer and conversation, reports from the Facilitation Group to discuss and deliberate on themes arising
- c. Decision: receiving proposals for further deliberation and decision from the work of the small groups as compiled by the Facilitation Group and presented in the Tuesday morning Session of Synod.

## Discernment Processes – 32<sup>nd</sup> Synod

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### The scope of a Proposal

This proposal outlines the process the Synod in Session will use to exercise discernment to identify the major priorities for the life of the church in Queensland from 2016 to 2020.

# Rationale

## Discernment at the 32<sup>nd</sup> Synod

The Uniting Church's decision-making manual, "A Manual for Meetings" describes the underlying philosophy and the processes the Uniting Church uses in its Councils for discernment and decision-making.

Essentially, it seeks to put a decision-making process to the Basis of Union's statement in Paragraph 15: "The Uniting Church acknowledges that Christ alone is supreme in his Church, and that he may speak to it through any of its councils. It is the task of every council to wait upon God's Word, and to obey God's will in the matters allocated to its oversight."

The Manual describes three major movements in decision-making: Information, Deliberation, and Decision.

In proposals that are formed by members or bodies that report to the Synod, this process is followed by Information being shared in written proposals and presentations to the Synod in Session; information and Deliberation flow together in the question and answer time after presentation, and for some proposals, in the time small groups spend looking at proposals. Deliberation can also happen when the synod breaks into buzz groups, in small group work, and in the synod deciding to let the matter sit for a time before decision-making. At times, the facilitation committee of synod helps the proposers and those who have responded to confer and present a re-worked proposal to the synod.

Decision-making occurs when the proposal comes back to the floor of synod. Further Deliberation takes place, and the synod will decide to adopt the proposal by consensus, by agreement (where some members are not convinced of the arguments for the proposal), to refer a matter to an executive or small group, or decide that a decision on this matter is not needed at this time.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Synod will be following this process, unless it decides, as per "A Manual for Meetings", to move to formal voting procedures.

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Synod will also be asked to make discernments and decisions across a broader perspective, not confined to proposals brought by members or bodies reporting to the Synod.

The Business committee will be providing a way for the Synod to discern some general priorities for the church's life to 2020. This is consistent with the pathway the Synod discerned through Together on the Way: Enriching Community from the 29<sup>th</sup> Synod. That pathway identified that 2016 would be a review point along the way.

To this end, through your own participation in the synod – listening to reports, engaging in Synod Unchained, through the small groups activities, through information from the Facilitation Team, the Synod in session will spend time in small groups and on Tuesday morning discerning and deliberating on the major themes that are priorities for the Synod to 2020. That deliberation will result in a resolution by the Synod in Session that adopts the priorities discerned.


These priorities will then guide the Synod Standing Committee and the Synod office in serving the life of the church.

Given the inter-related conciliar nature of the Uniting Church, these priorities will also form a basis for discernment of other councils and deliberation between themselves and the synod.

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# Proposers

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