



1.1 Purpose

The Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee (the Committee) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) in fulfilling its commitment to encourage a culture of ecumenism throughout the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church (the church).

1.2 Scope

The Committee assists the SSC in the oversight of Synod's¹ activities in accordance with the responsibilities of this Charter.

1.3 Responsibilities

The Committee performs an advisory role and acts with delegated authority of the SSC as detailed in this Charter in carrying out its functions, authorities and powers.

The Committee has responsibility to:

- (a) encourage a culture of ecumenism throughout Synod;
- (b) recommend to Synod appropriate ecumenical action.

In carrying out its responsibilities, the Committee:

- (a)
 - (i) facilitates the relationship between Synod and Queensland Churches Together (QCT)
 - (ii) receives and processes reports from QCT
 - (iii) receives funding submissions from QCT and forwards them with recommendations to the appropriate body within Synod
 - (iv) nominates UCA representatives to QCT and to other ecumenical bodies as appropriate;
- (b)
 - (i) receives reports from relevant Assembly, Synod, and Presbytery bodies and sends to them Committee reports and documents that may be appropriate
 - (ii) keeps Synod, Presbyteries and the church informed of issues raised by ecumenical councils, inter-church councils, QCT, the Assembly's ecumenical work and the progress made in the dialogues with other churches
- (c) nominates representatives to Assembly ecumenical bodies and working groups as required.
- (d)
 - (i) seeks to establish and encourage inter-church relationships with ecumenical committees of other denominations in Queensland and encourages the councils of the church to do likewise
 - (ii) encourages exploration of shared mission opportunities and activities with other churches;
- (e) is a catalyst for the Biblical, theological and practical consideration of ecumenical matters within Synod, its Presbyteries and Congregations;

1.4 Accountability

Each member of the Committee is entitled to rely on Synod office management on matters within their responsibility, and on external professionals on matters within their areas of expertise, and may assume the accuracy of information provided by such persons, so long as they are not aware of any reasonable grounds upon which to question its accuracy.

¹ The definition of Synod incorporates all entities, agencies and institutions of The Uniting Church of Australia Property Trust (Q.) and entities where the church provides membership of governance bodies.



1.5 Composition and term

The Committee is a committee of the SSC and consists of up to 11 members being:

- (a) the Moderator as an ex-officio member, who is chairperson of the Committee
- (b) up to 10 other members.

The SSC appoints all members, other than ex-officio members, to the Committee.

Appointment to the Committee is for a 3 year term or as determined by the SSC. The maximum continuous time a person can serve as a Committee member is 9 years, unless that person has served 1 or more terms as chairperson, in which case the maximum continuous time is 12 years.

A member of the Committee is the secretary of the Committee, as elected by the Committee.

1.6 Meetings

The Committee meets a minimum of 4 times per calendar year. The Committee chairperson convenes meetings at other times when necessary to carry out the role of the Committee. Any member may request the Committee chairperson to convene a meeting.

The notice and agenda of meetings includes supporting papers. The agenda for meetings is determined by the Committee chairperson in consultation with the Committee secretary and others as directed by the Committee chairperson.

General governance protocols, including those relating to quorums and electronic decision making, are outlined within the Synod by-laws.

In the absence of the Committee chairperson or appointed delegate, the members will elect one of their number as chairperson of that meeting.

The Committee may invite other people including any employee of the Synod to attend all or part of its meeting.

Any person with a material personal interest in a matter being considered at a meeting must not be present for consideration of that matter.

Decisions of the Committee are made at a duly called and constituted meeting or otherwise agreed by all Committee members. Where approvals are granted outside a meeting of the Committee, a report is to be provided to the next meeting.

1.7 Minutes

The Committee secretary prepares minutes for each Committee meeting.

The draft minutes of each Committee meeting are reviewed by the Committee chairperson and circulated to all Committee members by the Committee secretary as soon as practicable after each Committee meeting.

A copy of the Committee minutes, once they have been approved by the Committee, are signed by the Committee chairperson.

1.8 Access to information

The Committee has the authority to seek any information it lawfully requires from any employee of the Synod and all employees must comply with such requests.

The Committee has the right of direct contact with management. The Committee holds a separate private meeting at least annually with each of the Moderator and General Secretary.



Professional advisers may be appointed at the Synod's expense to assist the Committee in evaluating specific issues or risks and mitigating strategies to meet the Committee's purpose and discharge its responsibilities. In engaging such advisors, the Committee must consider the reasonableness of the expense and budget availability.

1.9 Reporting to the Synod Standing Committee

The Committee chairperson reports to the SSC on the activities and considerations of the Committee during the period since the last report at a frequency to be determined by the SSC.

1.10 Performance review

The Committee performs an annual self-evaluation of its performance to determine whether it is functioning effectively and meeting the requirements of its Charter and submits the results to the SSC.

1.11 Review of charter

The Committee reviews its charter annually to provide assurance that it remains consistent with the Synod Standing Committee's objectives and responsibilities.

The SSC approves or further reviews the charter.