

AGENDA 4.3

Standing Committee on Constitutions

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS AND KEY RESULTS AGAINST PLAN

The role of the Standing Committee on Constitutions (SCoC) covers a range of areas. As this SCoC is a standing committee of the General Church Board, (GCB) we focus on the tasks given to us which includes Model constitutions, Terms of Reference, constitutions of other LCA organisations and the Constitution and By-laws of the Church. During this synodical term there has also been a lot of focus on the LCA Constitution Review project.

SUCSESSES

The approved Model constitutions for congregations and parishes, along with the LCA Constitution, are now on the LCA website for all to access. There are quite a number of variations of the congregation models to suit different State requirements.

Notes have also been provided to assist members of congregations in their understanding of the key requirements of a congregation of the LCA.

At the 2018 Convention of General Synod there were additional clauses put in to the Models. The key one is an additional Object regarding the care for the vulnerable. All congregations are encouraged to update their own constitution to include these changes if they have not already done so.

For the last 2 years two members of SCoC met with the final year pastoral students of ALC just prior to graduation and allocation to congregations. This is to give the new pastors a basic understanding of the importance of the constitution for congregations and parishes before they need to provide leadership to their congregations/parishes for good governance and order. The intention is to do this for each group of final year pastoral students.

MAJOR IDENTIFIED RISKS

Succession planning for the SCoC is a challenge as there needs to be a good balance between the 'corporate memory' with a clear understanding of constitutional matters for the Church within the committee and new people coming on to serve. This is a greater risk as the number of terms members can be on boards and committees has been restricted to three [3] synodical terms.

SharePoint is now being used to allow committee members better access to documents.

In 2020-21 considerable time was spend on reviewing and providing advice on the draft Constitution and Charter for the proposed changes to the Lutheran Education Victoria NSW and Tas structure. Concerns were raised regarding the need for the change to be separately incorporated and the impact that this may have on the Schools of that District of the LCA.

MEMBERS

Standing Committee on Constitutions

Current members are David Dreckow (Chairperson), Pastor Tim Ebbs, Sabine Haeusler, Margaret Koch, Pastor Joe Kummerow, Pastor Wally Schiller and Faye Schmidt (GCB member). Jayne Welke (LCA office staff member) provided assistance as minute secretary.

BACKGROUND

The role of the Standing Committee on Constitutions covers a range of areas. Model constitutions, Terms of Reference and constitutions of other agencies of the Church. During this synodical term there has been a lot of focus on what may need to be changed in the LCA Constitution. Several members have been involved in the forum led by Les Stahl. Generally, the committee meetings have been held face to face with Sabine Haeusler travelling from Victoria and at times by Teams when face to face was not an option.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES

In addition to providing advice on constitutional matters when requested, there always seems to be a need to make changes to the Constitution of the Church. This included the need to change the constitution to allow the Convention of General Synod to be held electronically. A reasonable proportion of the work of the SCoC is reflected in the proposals for the various constitutional changes that GCB will bring to the Convention of Synod.