

## AGENDA 2.2.7

# Lutheran Education Australia review

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(See also Agenda 11.4)

## PROPOSED MOTION

*Submitted by General Church Council*

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the General Synod:

1. celebrates Lutheran education in its many forms across Australia, welcomes the mission and ministry opportunities that the LCA's schools and early childhood centres provide, and commits the church to supporting on-going improvements in collaborative ministry, governance and relevant administration.
2. acknowledges and affirms:
  - the strong commitment of the Lutheran education sector as a whole to mission and ministry through the LCA's schools, teachers, staff and leaders;
  - the strong commitment of the Lutheran education sector as a whole to upholding and growing Lutheran identity and culture through a Gospel-centred focus on the education and development of young people;
  - the commitment of the Lutheran education sector as a whole to a vibrant, sustainable Lutheran education sector into the future, underpinned by strong relationships and a desire to work together for shared goals and outcomes.
3. directs GCC and BLEA to develop and resource action plans to support the collaborative engagement of schools, congregations, districts and the LCA in mission and ministry.
4. affirms that Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) becomes the system authority for Commonwealth government funding, as the authorised body for the distribution of Commonwealth funds in collaboration with the three regions, within the synodical period ending 2021.
5. affirms the governance authority of the BLEA in the following five key areas of responsibility, and commits to enabling the BLEA to enact its authority and develop strategic direction for the whole Lutheran education body by working collaboratively with each of the education regions:
  - setting strategic direction and policy for Lutheran education;
  - strengthening Lutheran identity;
  - risk oversight (legal, financial and reputational, including engaging with the Commonwealth government and, in collaboration with the districts, approval of school opening and closure);
  - formation, leadership succession and development;
  - culture (including facilitating and driving greater collaboration across the Lutheran education body)
6. affirms the role of education regions as part of the national Lutheran education body and requests GCC and BLEA to work with the districts and the education regions to define the scope of the entities within the Lutheran education body and set the relevant boundaries by clarifying governance and management accountabilities and responsibilities at regional and local levels. This includes developing relevant reporting arrangements and enabling a greater governance focus on mission and ministry through schools and ECC's.

7. requires regional and national governing boards to be aligned to comply with LCA policy about being skills-based and to ensure appropriate separation between governance and management (eg employees of the system are not board members but may be consultants).
8. affirms that flexibility be provided for local school governing bodies to allow for increased participation by non-Lutheran members, whilst maintaining a majority of Lutheran members, and allowing for a model where a governing body may have oversight over more than one school.
9. directs GCC and other relevant bodies to determine a streamlined loans approval and guarantee process.
10. directs the GCC to ensure all relevant LCA Constitutions are re-written to enable the agreed changes in structure to be addressed.
11. requires that regular reports on progress of the above recommended actions be submitted to GCC by all relevant stakeholders/parties.

## REASONS FOR THE MOTION

The 18<sup>th</sup> General Convention of Synod, held in October 2015, authorised GCC to trial a restructure of the National church functions in a phased approach to provide more effective leadership, governance and other resources that are churchwide, mission-focused, service oriented, efficiently delivered and effective in enacting the decisions of General Synod. The resolution provided a context and way forward for a GCC-LEA (Lutheran Education Australia) governance dialogue process<sup>1</sup> culminating in the presentation of the report to GCC in August 2017, *Lutheran Education Governance and Administration Review*.

As a consequence, GCC resolved to affirm the governance authority of the Board for Lutheran Education Australia (BLEA) for Lutheran education in Australia, for five key, focus areas:

- setting strategic directions and policy for Lutheran schools
- strengthening Lutheran identity
- risk oversight (legal, financial and reputational)
- formation, leadership succession and development
- culture.

GCC also resolved to establish a joint BLEA/GCC working group, led by BLEA, to continue the dialogue process and finalise the review, with an emphasis on governance rather than the administration and management of Lutheran education in Australia. The working group was asked by GCC to make recommendations on any changes, including associated transition or phasing, necessary to the Lutheran education governance structure for presentation to the General Convention of Synod in October 2018.

From December 2017 – March 2018 the joint BLEA/GCC working group met with key stakeholder groups as part of a consultation process designed to focus on the five key areas identified by GCC as areas of governance responsibility of BLEA.

The stakeholder groups were broadly representative of the whole Lutheran education system, including district church councils, regional education councils, school governing bodies and congregational chairs, principals, the National Leadership Team, the Australian Lutheran College (ALC) Board, Lutheran Laypeople's League (LLL) Board and Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) and regional office staff.

The BLEA/GCC Working Group presented its report and recommendations to the GCC in June 2018. The GCC discussed the recommendations and provided feedback for the joint Working Group to consider. It also requested the Working Group to seek feedback from District Church Councils and Education Councils about the recommendations and report back in July 2018.

This work was completed by the Working Group and a report with revised recommendations, based on feedback received from the June 2018 meeting of GCC and District Church Councils and Education Councils, was submitted to GCC's meeting in July 2018.

The GCC received the report. It then considered the recommendations and resolved to accept most of them and amend others.

The proposed motion to the General Convention of Synod reflects the report's recommendations, as amended by the GCC. The findings and observations contained in the report provide the rationale for the proposed motion.

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<sup>1</sup> The report, *Lutheran Church of Australia, Governance and Administration Review Final Report 20 February 2015*, by Dr Maureen Cleary of Governance & Management Pty Ltd was presented to the General Convention of Synod by GCC in September 2015. This report contained 27 recommendations, including the recommendation "That GCC enters into serious dialogue with the LEA Board about their desired governance structure", which was accepted by GCC. This resulted in the first review of Lutheran schools and early childhood services undertaken in 2015-16.

In summary, the proposed motion seeks to address the key themes and issues that emerged during the review in a way that will ensure a sustainable, healthy and vibrant Lutheran education sector for the future.

Key to the achievement of this outcome will be establishing ongoing collaboration and connection between all areas and bodies of the LCA. The education and spiritual development of young people in our Lutheran schools is a critical area of the church's mission and ministry and as such requires the commitment of all, united in common purpose.

The GCC therefore stresses that the motion to the General Convention of Synod, if adopted, is a starting point and framework to enable further and ongoing dialogue and collaboration between all entities that make up the Lutheran education community, including the LEA and its board, the education regions and DCCs, schools and school governing bodies, and ALC and its board.

The final report (July 2018) can be found at Agenda 11.4.