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**Communiqué 3**

**Review of the LCA/NZ Constitution – Phase 1**

**Guiding Principles for a 21st Century LCA/NZ**

**Phase 1 of our half-century Constitutional Review**

28 April 2020

**A message to all members, bodies and agencies of the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand**

Greetings to you in this Easter season. I pray that each of you and your families are well, especially during this time of pandemic.

On behalf of our General Synod, the General Church Board is conducting a Review of the LCA/NZ Constitution, as we seek to be faithful to Christ, live the gospel and thrive in this 21st century.

In this third communiqué about the Review, I am pleased to report that the consultation process for this Review is now well underway …

* Issues previously identified by the Standing Committee on Constitutions have been incorporated into this Review
* The Review Team has met several times by teleconference
* The College of Bishops provided advice re possible participants for certain working groups
* Three ‘Issues Analysis Groups’ have been working on specific tasks
* Results to date from the above work and the church-wide survey respondents have identified several key constitutional issues for further discussion within our church as well as a number of ‘second order’ issues. These matters will be outlined in a draft Interim Report we plan to release around June this year for comment by church members sometime. We will then embark on a period of discussion about these identified issues.

On request, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the closing date for the church-wide survey has been ***extended to*** ***31 May 2020***. If you haven’t already done so, I invite you to participate in the Review through telling the reviewers what you think needs to change, or alternatively does not need to change, in the LCA/NZ Constitution.

The survey will remain open now until 31 May 2020. After that time, you can still input into this Review, but it will be by submission rather than by survey.

Congregations and Ministries: It will help greatly if as many congregations as possible complete the survey. If you are responding on behalf of your congregation or ministry, you should reflect the voice of the congregation or ministry in which you serve. This may not always be the same as your personal view, so please make sure that the congregation/ministry has had the chance to discuss what it wants to say.

Districts, Boards and Agencies: We hope every that District and every Church Board/Agency will complete the survey, after a suitable governance-level discussion.

Individuals may also complete the survey.

Important notes:

1. This Review, and therefore this survey, is only about matters relating directly to the LCA/NZ Constitution. This includes matters for the future such as our Objects; Membership Criteria; Name; relationships and processes between Congregations, Pastors, Districts, the churchwide function and the many Lutheran related services such as schools, early childhood centres, community services, overseas aid and development, and services to older persons and those experiencing disability; role & responsibilities of Pastor Conferences and the College of Bishops; role and responsibilities of the GCB and DCC/DCBs; criteria for voting delegates to Synods; how to better include Indigenous, cross-cultural and youth voices in our church; what ‘key structures’ we need to achieve the above (e.g. Districts?, Churchwide Office?) – including legal structure/s etc. These are just some of the constitution-related matters that church members have already raised in this Review.

Please note, if your responses comment on non-constitutional issues, the reviewers will be unable to respond to them, but will do their best to refer them on to the relevant persons.

1. Individuals will only be able to complete the survey once. If you are the representative of a district, agency, board, committee or congregation AND you also want to complete the survey separately as an individual, you will need to ask another member of the agency, board or congregation etc to complete the survey on that group’s behalf.

I again refer you to the ‘Constitutional Review Discussion Starter’ paper. This paper intentionally takes an ‘arm’s length’ and critical look at our Church, examining where we may be in relation to the societies in which we minister. The paper also lists a number of key issues for us to consider in this Review and, finally, it lists the substantive questions that you will find when you access the electronic survey. This way you know in advance what the survey questions are. The paper is in part provocative in order to stimulate widespread discussion about this Review. To read or download the Discussion Starter paper, [click here](https://lca.box.com/shared/static/dngk22tnm0ym9ez93qtytl0gvi1htrjz.docx).

**Please read and reflect on the ‘Discussion Starter’ paper before your congregation/district/ agency completes the survey.** **Please complete the survey as soon as you can, as the survey finishes on 31 May 2020.**

You can access the survey by [clicking here](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/6HWXZ5Y), going to the [Review webpage](http://www.lca.org.au/constitution-review) where you will find the link to the survey, or from the LCA homepage ([www.lca.org.au](http://www.lca.org.au)) locate the Projects & Events drop down list and follow the links from there.

Once the survey responses have been analysed and aggregated, high-level results will be shared with you in a future communiqué, as well as in the future Review Report.

If you want to also make a separate written submission to this Review you are welcome to do so. Simply email your submission to ConstitutionReview@lca.org.au

To find out more about this Review (including Communiqués 1 and 2), go to the [Review webpage](http://www.lca.org.au/constitution-review).

Next Steps in this Review are:

1. Collation of feedback from the three Issues Analysis Groups
2. A teleconference for GCB and District representatives about the beginnings of a constitutional vision for our church in the 21st century (based on information collected to date)
3. Analysis of the April and May Survey inputs (previous months inputs have already been collated)
4. Preparation of a draft Interim Report, and
5. Presentation of the draft Interim Report on the Review website (hopefully in June) for discussion and feedback by church members (before the finalised Interim Report is submitted to GCB later in the year).

If you have questions about the Review, please contact Peter Schirmer, Executive Officer of the Church at peter.schirmer@lca.org.au

Yours in Christ,

Pastor John Henderson

Bishop

Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand