

AGENDA 1.2.13.2 (2.1.11)

LCA Constitution Review: GCB to consult and inform

PROPOSED MOTION

Submitted by General Church Board

PROPOSED THAT General Synod:

1. Receives the Constitution Review Working Group's paper
2. Requests the General Church Board to initiate opportunity for further consultation with congregations on the Constitution Review process, and
3. Requests the General Church Board to initiate a period of education/information leading up to Convention of General Synod in 2024 with the dual objectives of keeping the constitution review before the LCA NZ and ensuring delegates are well informed before any proposal to move to Phase 2 is considered.

REASONS FOR PROPOSAL

The LCA Constitution Review Final Report of Phase 1 was presented to the 20th Convention of Synod online sessions (Agenda 14.2, Book of Reports p340). The General Church Board (GCB) proposed motion (Agenda 2.1.8) was resolved in the affirmative by the General Synod:

2021:0214 RESOLVED that General Synod:

1. *Affirms the work of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review and acknowledges the contributions made by church members to it;*
2. *Authorises the General Church Board to establish a Working Group that considers the issues raised in the review, in particular the questions, 'who we are now as a LCA NZ' and 'why do we gather as LCA NZ', noting that these are fundamental questions for the LCA's constitutional arrangements, and ask the Working Group to:*
 - a. *prepare a position paper that responds to these issues and questions*
 - b. *have due regard to the principles and findings contained in the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report; and*
 - c. *engage with key groups within the LCA NZ, including the CTICR and*
 - d. *for the General Church Board to submit the Working Group's paper to the in-person sessions of the 2022 Convention to enable discussion by Synod delegates on the issues raised in it;*
3. *Requests the General Church Board to submit any necessary proposals authorising the move into Phase 2 of the review of the LCA Constitution and By-laws to continue the journey of ensuring the LCA NZ has quality constitutional documents appropriate for the future and that reflects the LCA NZ's understanding of who it is for the future, based on the Phase 1 final report and the Working Group's position paper, for the General Synod's consideration at the 2022 sessions of the 20th Regular Convention of General Synod; and*
4. *the Working Group consists of LCA NZ members with a mix of backgrounds and perspectives which, together with relevant qualifications and experience, will enable the working group to fulfil its role.*

After the 2021 online sessions of General Synod the GCB enacted paragraph 2 of the resolution on the Constitution Review. This saw the formation of a Working Group tasked to consider the final report of the Phase 1 of the Constitution Review report with a specific focus of consulting on and considering the two particular questions: 'Who we are now as LCA NZ?' and 'Why do we gather as LCA NZ?'

The report titled 'One in Christ: The faith and purpose of those who are gathered as the LCA NZ' is available in this Addendum to the Book of Reports (Agenda 14.4, p55)

The 2021 resolution also requested GCB 'to submit any necessary proposals' to move into Phase 2 'to continue the journey of ensuring the LCA NZ has quality constitutional documents for the future and that reflects the LCA NZ's understanding of who it is for the future, based on the Phase 1 final report and the Working Group's position paper'.

It is envisaged that a Phase 2 would include the development of a new draft LCA NZ constitution for consideration by the church.

GCB is recommending that before moving to a Phase 2 of the constitution review, the church would be best served by providing opportunity for further consultation within the church, especially at a congregational level, identified by the Working Group as being advantageous.

The GCB recommendation acknowledges that paragraph 3 of the resolution adopted by General Synod in 2021 is deferred to a future convention.

Together with congregational engagement, the GCB will initiate an informative/educational phase to keep the constitution review process before the church.

This is 'a half-century review' of our church's constitution (Bishop John Henderson, quoted in the Phase 1 Report in the paragraph 'Context of this Report', p2). It is a large task. It can be expected to take time. To achieve a constitutional framework with durability to serve the LCA NZ over the next half-century, the process needs to be done properly and collaboratively.