

AGENDA 4.6

Secretary of the Church

ACHIEVEMENTS/RESULTS AGAINST PLAN

INTERIM MINISTRY

The initial position of LCA Interim Pastor was established in 2002 to help congregations transition from one pastorate to the next so that the congregation is healthy and ready for mission and ministry in the next pastorate. Pastor Rodney Beh was the first pastor called to serve as the LCA Interim Pastor and Pastor Rob Erickson succeeded him and continued in the role until his retirement in January 2017.

A second Interim Pastor call was approved by the College of Bishops in late 2013. This second Interim Pastor role had a special focus on Reconciliation Ministry and the call was taken up by Pastor Mike Fulwood until he was elected as WA District Bishop and concluded his interim ministry call in April 2017.

Since then, the two interim pastor calls had been vacant. Both roles are very specific Calls. The pastors require specialist skillsets and training, and a certain aptitude to serve parishes in transition and/or working through conflict. The tenure of assignments can also be varied making the role transient in nature and not easy for the spouses and families of interim pastors. This can make it difficult to find pastors who are able to commit to a full-time call.

In 2019, the College of Bishops (CoB) reviewed both roles. The review resulted in the Interim Pastor and Interim Pastor-Reconciliation positions being consolidated into one Terms of Reference (ToR) titled 'Interim Ministry Pastor' (IMP). The skills and training requirements allow the IMP to be deployed into a variety of parish situations. The new ToR also makes provision for a pool of IMPs to be maintained to serve the church in this ministry.

In late 2019, Pastor Stuart Kleinig accepted the call as the LCA IMP and commenced in June 2020. The Church is blessed by Stuart's call to serve in this specialist field and also by Julie who brings complementary skills that make this a team ministry.

Oversight of the LCA Interim Ministry Pastor is the College of Bishops with the management of the administrative aspects of the role through the Secretary of the Church. During assignment, the LCA IMP is under the oversight of the relevant district bishop and is a pastor of that district for the tenure of the assignment.

50.500

The final projects to be completed as part of 50.500 from the report to Synod for the 19th Convention in 2018 was 'Resourcing the church to serve in its ministry and mission' and 'Have a Go'.

1. Resourcing the church to serve in its ministry and mission

At the time of writing, the 'What Lutherans Believe' video project is almost complete, having come to a complete halt during 2020 as a result of COVID restrictions. During the COVID shutdowns, however, a video was produced to meet the needs of the day, providing a message of hope and assurance in God's love and providence in anxious times. This video became part of the Church@Home online resource centre. It is anticipated that the full set of eight videos explaining the essentials of Lutheran belief will be available for viewing by delegates at Convention of General Synod, before distribution to the wider church. The

videos have been scripted for people new to the Lutheran Church and for people commencing work in Lutheran institutions (eg in aged or community care facilities). They will also serve as an introduction to the Lutheran Church for those seeking information from our websites.

2. 'Have a Go' projects

The 'Have a Go' projects commenced in 2017 with \$223,000 grants distributed to 14 projects. Projects provided their 4th and final reports in 2020, including financials demonstrating final expenditure of grant funds, completing their obligations under the program. A number of projects have built on this seed funding are now self-funded or funded through congregational budgets. While others had reached their natural conclusion. One project, 'Seeing the Word Auslan Lectionary' is continuing and shown to be using funds and talents wisely. The funds are maintained by the district.

REVIEW OF THE CALL SYSTEM (2015:0220)

Following a decision by the 2015 Convention of General Synod, the then General Church Council commissioned an investigation into the LCA call process in order to hear from congregations about their views and expectations of the process and to identify ways the system could be improved.

The review made a number of recommendations. Overall it found that the system itself does not require significant structural change. However, it did identify that there is frustration about the system and a process that can be disheartening for some calling bodies. As a result, the review also identified scope for improvement in the efficiency and transparency of the process.

The General Church Board has received the report, considered its recommendations and approved a series of actions to implement them. These actions were developed in consultation with the College of Bishops.

The focus of the actions is to support both calling bodies and pastors to:

- improve trust in the call process
- increase the chances of a good calling body/pastor fit
- improve the understanding of how the call process works, and
- ensure greater professionalism, and overall efficiency and transparency in the system.

These actions can be implemented through policy, operational processes and provision of resources to support all participants in the call system.

Some of the actions are already under development, including:

- Church Worker Support is working on a framework for annual vocational reviews of pastors (Recommendation b1)
- The use of electronic means of issuing the Letter of Call is now approved as a formal and valid receipt of a call, so long as it is supplemented with all necessary call information and further accompanied by subsequent hard copies (Recommendation b3).
- The various documents, rules and practices around leave provisions for pastors has been consolidated into a single *Provision of leave for Pastors Policy* with associated Standards. The consolidated documents include the following general principles (Recommendation b4.2)-
 - District bishops should inform entities in the call process of the leave entitlements of short-listed pastors,
 - Pastors should aim to use their entitled annual leave prior to concluding a call and transferring to a new calling body, and
 - Pastors should limit the use of annual leave and R&R leave during the first 12 months of a new call.

The GCB approved the release of the draft policy and standards for consultation in April 2021.

Refer to *A Review of the Call Process of the Lutheran Church of Australia: General Church Board response* for the full report to Synod on the GCB response to the recommendations of the review.

RECONCILIATION ACTION PLAN (2018:0210)

The Convention of General Synod in 2018 resolved that the General Church Council (as it was then called) develop and implement a Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP):

- assist ongoing relationship building through listening to Aboriginal people in the LCA;
- support non-Aboriginal people in the LCA to gain insight into what is important to Aboriginal people;
- provide a culturally appropriate mechanism by which our Church together with (inclusive of) Aboriginal people and communities within the LCA can address questions of recognition and representation; and
- develop appropriate ways to encourage and enable Aboriginal people to serve and lead in all aspects of Church life in the LCA.

The LCA Churchwide RAP was approved by the General Church Board and Reconciliation Australia in June 2020, and publicly released to the Church in August 2020. It was distributed to all pastors, congregations, 2018 Synod delegates, Lutheran education schools and pre-schools, Lutheran aged and community service facilities, leadership in LCA Boards, committees, and reference groups, as well as all LCA districts and their respective councils.

The RAP consisted of 16 Actions with corresponding deliverables under the categories of Relationships, Respect, Opportunities and Governance. The timeline for achieving each of the actions was over a 12- month period to June 2021. The emergence of COVID-19 did impacted on delivering these actions although we expect them to be completed by the time Synod meets in September/October 2021.

The initiative was generously funded variously through LLL annual grants and the NSW Tithe. We give thanks to God for their support.

Refer to Agenda Item 14.3 (p409) for the full report to Synod on the development and implementation of the RAP.

FINANCE/BUDGET

OFFICE OF SECRETARY OF THE CHURCH

FINANCE REPORT

	2020	2019	2018
Income	31,300	0	20,446
Expenditure	(452,490)	(258,313)	(294,833)
Grants allocated for year	210,000	100,000	50,000
Non cash transfers	9,569	13,993	24,532
Net result for year	<u>(201,621)</u>	<u>(144,320)</u>	<u>(199,855)</u>
Amount allocated to LCA Accumulated Funds	<u>(201,621)</u>	<u>(144,320)</u>	<u>(199,855)</u>