

## AGENDA 2.1.2

### General Church Council

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The General Church Council (GCC) has worked during this synodical term to carry out its duties, which includes the implementation of the program of the church in accordance with the policies established by the General Synod; ensuring that the mission of the church, the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, remains central in the work of the church; and ensuring the work of the church is efficiently planned, coordinated, and controlled.

The elections of Pastor Andrew Pfeiffer to replace Pastor Greg Pietsch as Assistant Bishop; Faye Schmidt to replace the retiring Dr Gillian Heintze as the lay person at large; and Pastor Greg Priebbenow to replace the retiring Pastor Avito de Costa as the pastor at large were the only changes in the membership of the General Church Council at the commencement of the new synodical term.

During the synodical term, District Bishops Mark Lieschke, Greg Pietsch and Noel Noack concluded their service in their respective districts and were replaced on the General Church Council by their successors, Bishops James Haak; Lester Priebbenow and Paul Smith. In addition, David Menzel (NSW) retired from GCC in April 2017 after nine years of service and was replaced by Peter Zweck (NSW).

We sincerely thank all of the retiring members for their service on the GCC.

The following report provides a summary of the key decisions and actions that have been taken by the GCC during this synodical period.

#### MEMBERS OF GCC

Bishop: Rev J Henderson

Assistant Bishop: Rev Dr A Pfeiffer

District Bishops: Revs J Haak (NSW), D Altus (SA/NT); L Priebbenow and P Smith (Qld)

District Lay Representatives: Mr P Zweck (NSW), Mr M Zerner (SA/NT), Mr T Wiebusch (Vic/Tas), Mr M Stolz (Qld), Mr V Hopfmueller (WA), Ms J Hobden (NZ)

Members at large: Ms F Schmidt, Rev G Priebbenow

Consultant (Secretary of the Church): Rev N Otto

Consultant (Executive Officer of the Church): Mr P Schirmer

Consultant (Executive Officer, Local Mission): Dr T Nelson

Consultant (Business Manager): Mrs D Venz

Minute Secretary: Jayne Welke

#### **Attendance from October 2015 (including teleconferences)**

Attendances vary depending on being a current/outgoing member or consultant of the Council during the synodical term.

#### **Members**

Bishop John Henderson (30 meetings/35), Rev G Pietsch (8), Rev Dr A Pfeiffer (32), Rev M Lieschke (20), Rev J Haak (8), Rev David Altus (28), Rev P Smith (34), Rev Lester Priebbenow (15), Rev G Priebbenow (28), Mr D Menzel (6), Mr P Zweck (24) Mr M Zerner (35), Mr T Wiebusch (30), Mr M Stolz (25), Ms F Schmidt (34), Ms J Hobden (32), Mr V Hopfmueller (28).

#### **Consultants**

Rev N Otto (28), Mr P Schirmer (34), Dr T Nelson (16), Mrs D Venz (34).

We note with regret that Ms Jill Hobden, Rev Greg Priebbenow, Mr Michael Stolz and Mr Volker Hopfmueller have not re-nominated to serve on the Council in the next synodical term. GCC

acknowledges with deep appreciation their service on the Council and wishes them God's blessings for the future.

## **ACTION ON RESOLUTIONS AND PROPOSALS REFERRED TO GCC FROM CONVENTION 2015**

The following table provides a summary of the action taken in regard to most of the substantive resolutions (in terms of time and resource requirements allocated to them over the past three years) adopted at the 2015 Convention of Synod.

| <b>Resolutions for action</b>   | <b>Action to date</b>  |
|---|--|
| <b>2015:0203</b><br><b>Standing Committee on Nominations</b>  | The Standing Committee on Nominations was established in 2016 and has been operating according to the Terms of Reference approved at General Synod in 2015 (refer report of the Standing Committee on Nominations).  |
| <b>2015:0205</b><br><b>Governing Bodies</b>   | Refer to GCC's proposed motion regarding "Governing Bodies" contained at Agenda 2.2.1 in the Book of Reports.  |
| <b>2015:0206</b><br><b>National Functions</b>   | Refer to GCC's proposed motion regarding "National Functions" contained at Agenda 2.2.2 in the Book of Reports.  |
| <b>2015:0207</b><br><b>Child Protection</b>   | General Church Council has continued to commit resources to the development of effective procedures, and education and training programs to ensure that children are valued, respected, listened to and kept safe from harm.   |
| <b>2015:0208</b><br><b>Prevention of Domestic Violence campaign</b>                                     | As requested by the 2015 Convention of Synod, the General Church Council committed resources to a campaign, including the appointment of a campaign coordinator supported by a working group (refer Agenda 2.1.2, p84).  |
| <b>2015:0209</b><br><b>CTICR: understanding theological issues and implications for family violence</b> | The 2015 General Convention of Synod requested CTICR to study the Lutheran theological and spiritual understanding of subordination and the role of male headship in marriage and the contextual implications for family violence. A report of this study is presented to this General Convention of Synod (refer to CTICR report, Agenda 6.4).  |
| <b>2015:0216</b><br><b>Ordination of Men and Women: Doctrinal Statement</b>                             | The CTICR, supported by resources allocated by GCC, has developed a draft doctrinal statement that presents a theological basis for ordination of women and men; and why this need not be church divisive. The CTICR's work was released in April 2018, and is included in the Book of Reports (refer Agendas 6.2 and 6.3).  |
| <b>2015:0218</b><br><b>One Loving God: Two Hands materials</b>  | The General Convention of Synod invited Lutheran Community Care SA/NT to revisit the document: "One Loving God: Two Hands – sharing and caring in the light of our current culture". GCC provided resources for LCC SA/NT, in partnership with the LCA's Committee for Ministry with the Ageing, to undertake a project to review and revise the document, and prepare studies and related materials for distribution and utilisation across the church. The project is expected to be completed at the end of 2018. |

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| <b>2015:0219</b><br><b>ALC Pastoral training</b> | <b>General Convention supported an examination of the creation and development of an additional ministry position that does not require completion of the full ALC course for the person to be able to write and deliver sermons and to administer the Sacraments outside those envisaged by the Specific Ministry Pastor Policy. Refer CoB report (p39) for information about progress in the exploration of this proposal.</b> |
| <b>2015:0220</b><br><b>Review of Call System</b> | General Convention requested a review of the Call system. The GCC commissioned ALC, through its Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE) to undertake the review, supported by a generous grant from the NSW District (refer GCC Report Appendix I, p88).   |

## **GIVING THANKS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED**

In July 2016, the Manager of the Professional Standards Department, **Ms Liz Crawford**, retired. She had served in that position since February 2011, and prior to that had been in a similar role in the Qld District.

At the end of 2016, **Mr Glenn Schultz** retired after 36 years of service, including four years (2012–2016) as a Lay Worker Formation Officer in the Department for Lay Ministry. We give thanks to God for Glen's service in providing support to lay workers and the congregations where they serve.

In early February 2018, **Mr Chey Mattner** resigned as Executive Secretary of Australian Lutheran World Service (ALWS) to take up the position of the Lutheran World Federation/Department for World Service's Head of Operations based in Geneva. Chey served at ALWS from 2008, firstly as Program Manager and from 2013 as the Executive Secretary (having served as Acting Executive Secretary from mid-2012).

At the end of June 2018, **Mr Stephen Hoffmann** retired from the position of Finance Secretary for Missions. Stephen commenced his service in the LCA in 2008. Over the past ten years he has faithfully served International Mission, Finke River Mission and Lutheran Overseas Partner Churches (PNG).

In November 2018, **Mrs Glenice Hartwich** will retire from the position of Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission. She has faithfully served in this position since 2016, and a total of 12 years in International Mission. We give thanks to God for Glenice's leadership of this important ministry and, her lifelong service to the church which began in PNG in 1973 as a deaconess.

At the end of 2018, **Mr Stephen Rudolph**, will retire from the position of Executive Director, Lutheran Education Australia. Stephen has served in this role since 2011 and before that has served as a principal or teacher in Lutheran schools for over 40 years.

We are grateful for these servants of the church, and for other staff who have concluded their service during this synodical term.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS TO CHURCHWIDE POSITIONS

**Dr Tania Nelson** was called to the position of Executive Officer, Local Mission in August 2016. Dr Nelson has brought a wealth of experience to the role including service as the Head of ALC's School of Theological Studies, and prior to that in leadership positions in Lutheran schools.

In February 2016, **Dr Christine Materne** was appointed to the new position of Manager, Church Worker Support Department. Dr Materne came to the position from working for the SA Government in the Department for Communities and Social Inclusion.

**Mr Tim Ross**, commenced duties as the Manager, Professional Standards Department, in June 2016, replacing the retiring Liz Crawford. He came to the LCA from his previous role as a senior case manager in the Financial Ombudsman Service Australia.

In August 2018, **Ms Jamieson (Jamie) Davies**, commenced duties as the new ALWS Executive Secretary. She has significant experience working in the international aid and development field, including approximately nine years as Program Manager at Caritas Australia.

**Pastor Matt Anker** was called to replace Glenice as Assistant to the Bishop – International Mission. Pastor Anker comes to this role from his current call as pastor of the Goulburn–Murray Parish in Victoria, where he has served since 2007. He commenced in the role in August 2018.

## LCA STRATEGIC DIRECTION

In 2013 General Synod approved a LCA Strategic Direction 2013–2018 as a catalyst for action. The strategic direction of the LCA has its foundations in the Objects of the Church which are articulated in the LCA constitution.

The Strategic Direction was produced in a booklet form and distributed across the Lutheran Church of Australia and New Zealand.

LCA boards have worked to align their plans with the LCA Strategic Direction. The board reports contained in the Book of Reports include a reference to where their activities are supporting the implementation of the Strategic Direction's priorities, goals and objectives.

The GCC has also used the Strategic Direction as a framework for decision-making, particularly when considering funding applications from LCA ministries, which must demonstrate how the proposed activities to be funded align with the Strategic Direction priorities.

It has also been encouraging to note that congregations and districts have either referred to or used the LCA Strategic Direction as a framework for their own ministry plans/charters.

The GCC is proposing a new 'Our Direction' for the period 2018–2024. Please refer to the 'Report of the Strategic Direction 2013–2018' at Appendix G.

## POLICIES

During this synodical period the following policies have been approved by General Church Council, and the relevant Churchwide departments (eg PSD, Church Worker Support) will continue to support the implementation of these policies across the church:

- Prevention of Risk of Sexual Offence by a Person of Concern Policy and Procedure (revised, and previously the Prevention of Harm from a Known Sex Offender Policy)
- Social Media Policy
- Church Worker Service Policy
- Pastor Call Process Policy
- Employee Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Volunteer Identification and Selection Policy
- Vocational Development and Training Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy

- Gift Acceptance Policy.

The purpose of these policies is to provide for clear and consistent practice across the church in a manner that is in keeping with the theology of the church and the laws of the land. The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse has highlighted the importance of setting and implementing standards that protect everyone who engages with the church, and upholds the integrity and credibility of the church in the wider community.

## **PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS DEPARTMENT**

The Professional Standards Department (PSD) operates to support the Church's Object to 'take such action as is necessary for the protection of the congregations, pastors, teachers and other church workers in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights'.

Since its inception in 2010, the PSD, firstly under the management of Liz Crawford and now Tim Ross, has played an important role in the identification of possible risk and assists the church to respond to these risks, particularly related to behaviour and ethical conduct.

The PSD provides leadership in the preparation of general policies within its remit which can be then further developed and/or adapted by church bodies (eg Districts and boards) to address their specific needs and comply with relevant legislation within the jurisdictions in which they operate.

The PSD also supports the implementation of the approved policies and procedures through communication and the development of consistent training programs with a specific, but not exclusive, focus on the congregational life of the church.

In this synodical term a new training program was developed and delivered by the Professional Standards Officers in each District. It is acknowledged the training involves a time commitment by people involved in leadership positions and who are actively involved in children's ministry. However, as the Royal Commission has demonstrated, the consequences of not taking a thorough approach to protecting all who participate in the life of the church, especially children and other vulnerable people, is very serious for those people who experience harm, and to the credibility of the church 'where loves comes to life'.

The PSD is committed to making the training program as flexible and 'user-friendly' as possible, while maintaining a high standard and ensuring the LCA continues to meet its obligations under the Safe Church Training Agreement. For example, the PSD now has a process in place to recognise child protection-related training people have undertaken in their work life or other volunteer roles outside the church.

We are grateful to the almost 3000 people who have completed the new core training program, and the hundreds more who have undertaken the other 'on-line' levels of training.

During this synodical term the PSD Manager and Assistant to the Bishop - Reconciliation Ministry have been working together under the auspices of the College of Bishops, to develop complaints handling procedures that reflect the principles of fairness, natural justice and underpinned by scriptural principles.

Complaints handling matters are often complex and involve people who are experiencing hurt. PSD and Reconciliation Ministry endeavour to work through these situations in a fair manner, but acknowledge they may not always get the process right. However, they are committed to learning from any failings in order that complaints are addressed appropriately and, God-willing, restore relationships that may have been broken.

In regard to complaints, it must be stressed that the PSD only has the capacity to make findings and recommendations. It does not have the power to make directions to the parties concerned or enforce disciplinary action. This is the role of authorised bodies/persons as provided for in the LCA Constitution and By-Laws.

The PSD is organisationally located in the office of the Executive Officer of the Church. The PSD Manager is accountable to and reports to the Executive Officer of the Church.

Further detail about the work of the PSD during this synodical period is available at Appendix C.

## **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

In January 2013 the Commonwealth Government announced it would establish a Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

In welcoming the Royal Commission the LCA pledged full cooperation with authorities and in a statement LCA President Rev Dr Mike Semmler said, '[The LCA] welcomes and fully supports all initiatives that will protect children, bring healing to those abused, achieve reconciliation where that is possible, and bring to justice those who have perpetrated evil acts against vulnerable individuals'.

GCC formed a Working Group in April 2013 to coordinate the LCA's engagement with the Royal Commission. The LCA's working group engaged with the Royal Commission on behalf of the church, monitored its developments and their likely impact, and provided input into the commission's deliberations as it worked towards preparing its report and recommendations to government.

In this regard, the Working Group responded to six issues papers from the Royal Commission, including Working with Children Checks, Redress Schemes, Out of Home Care for Children, Child-Safe Institutions, Victims of Crime Compensation Scheme and Addressing the Risk of Child Sexual Abuse in Primary and Secondary Schools; as well as a Consultation Paper on Redress and Civil Litigation.

The Royal Commission delivered its final report and recommendations to the government in December 2017.

One of the commission's 189 recommendations was the establishment of a national redress scheme as a way of acknowledging people who experienced child sexual abuse in an institutional setting. The scheme comprises: psychological care and counselling; a direct personal response from the LCA; \$1000 to cover legal costs; and monetary payment of up to \$150,000.

In June 2018, GCC resolved that the LCA will opt-in to the scheme. The scheme officially commenced on 1 July 2018 and will be in place for ten years. The LCA will fund its obligations to the scheme by way of a special redress premium added to the annual LCA Insurance premiums payable by LCA entities which hold LCA Insurance.

The Working Group has carefully reviewed all of the commission's recommendations relevant to the LCA. The GCC has accepted the Working Group's action plan to work towards complying with these recommendations and has committed resources to achieve that end.

The Royal Commission has been a forceful reminder to the LCA that it is not immune from the prevalence of child sexual abuse and reinforced how important it is that LCA take very seriously the protection of children by implementing appropriate policies and procedures, including adequate screening, working with children checks, and sufficient training.

The Working Group also contributed to a submission to the Australian Law Reform Commission's inquiry into Elder Abuse, prepared by the LCA's Committee for Ministry with the Ageing.

The GCC thanks the Working Group members: Ms Faye Schmidt, Ms Colleen Fitzpatrick, Mr Leon Doecke (until September 2015), Bishop Paul Smith (until July 2016), Ms Linda Macqueen, Ms Liz Crawford (until July 2016), Mr Tim Ross (from July 2016), Mr Stephen Rudolph and Mr Peter

Schirmer (convener) for their service and contribution to the church in this capacity over the past five years.

## **PREVENTION OF DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE CAMPAIGN**

The 2015 General Convention resolved that:

*the Convention of Synod reaffirms its condemnation of all forms of violence in the family and authorises GCC to commit resources for a churchwide campaign to address the prevalence of family violence amongst us, which may include sharing of resources, education initiatives and the provision of pastoral care to the survivors of violence, as well as the perpetrators of abuse.*

The GCC allocated funding from annual LLL grants to support the implementation of the campaign. A campaign coordinator, Ian Rentsch, was engaged to lead the campaign, assisted by a Working Group.

The Hidden Hurts/Healing Hearts campaign commenced in November 2017, which included an information pack sent to all parishes/congregations across the LCA, in both Australia and New Zealand; the development of a resource website [preventDFV@lca.org.au](mailto:preventDFV@lca.org.au); publication of a Domestic Violence Handbook for pastors and church workers that was distributed to all pastors; and the commencement of a training program in late May 2018.

The CSBQ and the Prevention of Domestic Violence Working Group is proposing a continuation of the campaign in the next synodical term in order to build on the work that has started.

The GCC thanks the Working Group members: Ms Colleen Fitzpatrick; Ms Helen Lockwood; Ms Libby Jewson; Ms Angela Mayer, Rev James Winderlich, Mr Stephen Rudolph, and Rev Keith Stiller for their support of the campaign, and to Ian Rentsch in his role as campaign coordinator.

The GCC also thanks the LLL for its financial support of the campaign.

Further information about the campaign's activities is included in this report at Appendix H.

## **50.500**

50.500 was launched at the Eighteenth General Convention of Synod as the official LCA banner for the LCA celebrating and commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the LCA in 2016 and the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Reformation in 2017.

We are grateful to the LLL for making available a special grant that has funded the 50.500 activities. Refer to Appendix B: Secretary of the Church/50.500 (p53).

## **FINANCE, AUDIT AND RISK COMMITTEE**

In March 2013, the GCC established a committee called the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee.

The primary objective of the committee is to assist the GCC in fulfilling its finance-related responsibilities prescribed in the LCA's By Laws (Section 8. 4.) and in respect to compliance with relevant legislation. Its role is to provide independent comment, advice and counsel to GCC on matters considered by the committee at its regular meetings.

A governance focus of GCC relates to risk and risk mitigation. Some specific activities in this regard are reflected in the report in regard to policy development, HR and payroll compliance, various reviews and financial accounting and reporting standardisation.

The current membership is Mr Mel Zerner (SA/NT District), Mr Steve Podlich (Qld District); Ms Karen Pienaar (SA/NT District); Mr Peter Schirmer (EOC) and Ms Debbie Venz (LCA Business Manager).

A separate finance report is included at Agenda 14.1.

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONS

The Standing Committee on Constitutions provides advice and recommendations on constitutional matters relating to the church and its boards, councils, commissions and committees and to its Districts and auxiliary organisations in their relationship to the church.

The committee has, among its many activities during this synodical term, provided significant support in drafting the necessary changes to the Constitutions and By-laws to support the structure-related proposals to be considered at this General Convention of Synod.

The current membership is Mr David Dreckow (Chairperson), Rev Wally Schiller (Secretary), Rev Tim Ebbs, Ms Margaret Koch, Mr Gilbert Materne and Ms Faye Schmidt.

A separate report from the Standing Committee on Constitutions is included in the Synod Book of Reports.

## STANDING COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

The re-structured Standing Committee on Nominations was established at the 2015 General Convention of Synod.

The committee has developed processes to receive and review nominations, worked with boards, councils, committees and commissions to identify their membership requirements, fill casual vacancies that have arisen during the synodical term, and prepared the Book of Nominations for the General Convention of Synod.

A report from the Standing Committee on Nominations is included in the Synod Book of Reports.

## LOAN MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Loan Management Committee consists of six members appointed by the General Church Council.

The Loan Management Committee considers, assesses and approves loan applications in accord with the LCA Loan Rules, monitors loans to ensure that borrowers are meeting their loan agreements, and works with District Church Councils, and where appropriate the General Church Council, to ensure appropriate action is taken where borrowers experience difficulty in adhering to their repayment commitments.

A report from the Loan Management Committee is included in the Synod Book of Reports.

## EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

At its Convention in April 2013, the LCA General Synod adopted the following resolution:

***THAT the GCC, consistent with the Strategic Direction of the LCA - especially regarding improving our "Governance and Leadership capability" and being "good stewards of our available resources" - undertake a review of the current governance and administrative structures of the LCA including at the National level, District level, boards, commissions, councils and agencies during the next synodical term.***

The GCC appointed an external consultant, Dr Maureen Cleary, to lead the review, which involved three rounds of consultations and culminated in a Final Review report from the Consultant that was received in February 2015.

The GCC's response to the Consultant's report and its 28 recommendations was included in the 2015 Synod Book of Reports.

At the 2015 General Convention of Synod the following proposed motion arising from recommendations of the consultant's report was resolved:

*That Synod approves in principle support for competency-based, appropriately structured councils, boards, committees and commissions; and authorises GCC to develop and trial as far as practicable the new Rules and Governance Policy, as well as prepare necessary changes to the LCA By-Laws, for approval by General Synod in 2018 to give effect to the new arrangements for governing bodies.*

During the synodical term a competency-based, appropriate structure has been trialled, as far as practicable, and this has been assessed as part of the evaluation (refer to the evaluation report, which is included in the Agenda Document section of the Book of Reports – p373).

The GCC is satisfied that the outcomes of the trial have been generally positive and the proposed changes in governance reflect good practice that is appropriate to the LCA's context.

The proposed motion requests General Convention to approve the changes to the LCA Constitution and By-laws necessary to enable the new governance structure, and provides a summary of the reasons for the changes.

A second distinct but complementary motion was also adopted at the 2015 General Convention, as follows:

*That GCC be authorised 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 and directions of General Synod; and*

*That GCC report back to General Synod in 2018 on the results of the trial restructure and submit proposals for changes to the Constitution and By-laws to formalise those structural changes that have been demonstrated to provide more effective leadership, governance and other resources that are churchwide, mission-focused, service oriented, efficiently delivered and effective in enacting the decisions and directions of General Synod.*

The National Functions structure was established and has been operating as outlined in the 2015 General Synod proposal.

As required by the 2015 resolution, an independent evaluation of the trial structure was commissioned by GCC and the final report is included in the Agenda Document section of the Book of Reports (p373).

The GCC is satisfied the evaluation has demonstrated, within acknowledged constraints, the trial structure has or is on the way to meeting the criteria outlined in the 2015 Synod resolution and therefore recommends that the structure is formalised.

The proposed motion requests General Convention to approve the changes to specific areas of the Constitution and By-laws which will give effect to the new structure, as well as terms of reference for the boards and councils; and provides a summary of the reasons for the changes (refer Agenda 2.2.1 and 2.2.2).

The proposed changes are designed to be consistent with the governing bodies proposal.

## **REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS OF THE CHURCH**

Since the church's constitution was originally drafted in 1965 and adopted by the Constituting Convention of the LCA in October 1966, it has undergone a number of amendments and additions.

This revision process is ongoing, led by internal changes and initiatives such as those described in the section above and those driven by external requirements; both regulatory/legislative and what is considered to be good governance practice for organisations, be they commercial enterprises or not-for-profit/charitable in purpose.

In light of the above the GCC has resolved that a comprehensive review of the Constitution and By-laws will be undertaken during the next synodical period.

The review will include, but not be limited to, a consideration of the following:

- identifying the key content of the current constitution that must be retained;
- identifying those matters that should be removed from the constitution and by-laws and developed as Policy and Procedure; and
- developing the required Policies and Procedures to align with the current constitution's intent while updating it to reflect the church's self-understanding and comply with current legal requirements of the Federal and State laws.

The aim is for a Constitution that has longevity and reflects who we are, why we exist, how we are governed, and be of such a nature that would require minimal changes over time.

The review will be carried out under the guidance of the Standing Committee for Constitutions and in collaboration with the Executive Officer of the Church.

A report of the review, and any proposed new Constitution with supporting documents (e.g. policy), will be submitted to the 2021 General Convention of Synod for approval.

## **LUTHERAN EDUCATION AUSTRALIA REVIEW**

The GCC approved a dialogue-based review of Lutheran education, based on one of the 28 recommendations from the final report of the LCA's Governance and Administration Review.

The review, led by Dr Maureen Cleary, commenced in 2016 and the process included consultations, surveys and consideration of written submissions which culminated in the preparation of a final report that was submitted to the GCC in August 2017.

In response to the recommendations contained in the final report, the GCC resolved to establish a joint BLEA/GCC group under the leadership of the Board for Lutheran Education Australia to build on the work of the Cleary Lutheran Education report by engaging the Lutheran Church and its Education community on core issues that impact on effective governance of Lutheran Education in Australia and NZ.

The BLEA/GCC Group report is included at Agenda 11.4.

The GCC is submitting to the General Convention of Synod a proposed motion based on the recommendations arising from the report (Agenda 2.2.7).

## **AGED CARE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES DIALOGUE**

In November 2015 the GCC resolved that "consideration be given by the GCC to a national 'system' model for the governance oversight of aged care facilities within the LCA." This was subsequently expanded to include Lutheran Community Service organisations.

This decision was consistent with the Governance and Administration review report, which recommended that 'the GCC initiates a governance review of the LCA's aged and community care organisations with a view to identifying the various models of service provision how they fulfil the Object of the Church to: 'Minister to human need in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord in the spirit of Christian love and service, and to provide institutions and agencies for this purpose'.

A consultant, Les Stahl, was engaged in 2016 to lead the process supported by a Dialogue Group including GCC member, Mel Zerner.

The majority of the LCA's Aged Care and Community Service organisations participated in the dialogue, which included a one-on-one engagement with all of the participating organisations and two consultations/workshops.

The final report was submitted to the GCC in February 2018 and contained 33 recommendations, all of them consistent with agreements supported by the participating organisations, and which were broken down under the following headings:

1. Continuation of a dialogue-approach involving the LCA, its districts and the Aged and Community Services organisations;
2. Focus on changing processes rather than structures;
3. Development and adoption of core governance documents;
4. Implementation of 'in-house' improvements to governance;
5. Greater support from the LCA at the national level; and
6. Establishment of funding and support mechanisms;

The GCC accepted the report's recommendations and has committed resources to commence the initial implementation phase. The key expected outcome will be greater confidence that all the Lutheran Aged Care and Community Services are sustainable and well governed.

This outcome will require an ongoing commitment from the church and all the organisations to build on the agreements and commitments made during what is considered to have been a successful dialogue process.

## **NORTH ADELAIDE PRECINCT DEVELOPMENT**

At its Convention in 2013 the General Synod endorsed the North Adelaide Redevelopment concept and authorised the GCC to oversight the detailed master planning and implementation of the project upon satisfying itself that key issues had been addressed.

The redevelopment concept was initiated, consistent with the LCA's Strategic Direction, to ensure that the resources and assets of the LCA are fully and effectively utilised.

During this synodical term, there has continued to be a very careful and deliberate approach to establishing the viability of the project. The GCC has now established a clearer understanding of the financial options, which will inform the basis of further conversation with potential partners, particularly interested Lutheran Aged Care organisations.

A significant achievement in this synodical term was the approval by the State Government of a LCA-specific Development Plan Area, which subject to any appeal by the Adelaide City Council, means that the proposed LCA masterplan for the site will comply with development policy and thereby maximise the prospects of gaining development approval.

The GCC has taken the position that it is important to make a 'right' decision, and not be pressured into making a decision within a certain timeframe. This will continue to be its position, especially in the light of rapid change within the policy environment for Aged Care organisations.

## **CHURCH WORKER SUPPORT**

The LCA identified the need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to the care, support and management of its pastors, lay workers, employees and volunteers, which is reflected in the current LCA Strategic Direction 2013–2018 which includes a goal to: ***Enhance care of our people, especially church workers and their families*** by: *developing and making available support structures that ensure appropriate care for people in the LCA, and those in contact with it.*

The Department for Lay Ministry can take much credit for the improved conditions for Lay Workers, but its good progress highlighted the need to support calling and employing bodies in their care of all church workers: paid or unpaid.

The Church Worker Support Department is building on the foundations laid by the Department for Lay Ministry by implementing a program that addresses this wider need which will support church workers to 'start well, stay well, and finish well'.

The work of the Church Worker Support Department has included: the development of an overarching Church Worker Service Policy; provision of financial, physical and personal support to ALC and the Coordinator of Continuing Education Program for Pastors; preparation of resources and promotion of career and service opportunities in LCA schools; development of resources to support service management processes in congregations; and visits to over 50 congregations to support them with the resources that have been developed, and to hear from them what their issues and needs are.

Further detail about the work of the Church Worker Support Department during this synodical period is available at Appendix E.

## **FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION**

### **HUMAN RESOURCE SYSTEM (HRS)**

In recognition that existing systems and approaches to HR management (including payroll) were not meeting the needs of the LCA and exposing the church to significant risk, the GCC resolved to implement a churchwide Human Resource/Payroll System (LCA HRS).

As at July 2018, Churchwide and district offices, ALC, ALWS and almost 80% of all congregations and parishes in Australia are using the system, with over 1500 individuals registered into the LCA HRS.

A significant outcome has been to improve the consistent implementation of the LCA approved remuneration and entitlement policies and schedules for pastors and other church workers. Another benefit for congregations of the LCA HRS system will become evident when the ATO introduces the Single Touch Payroll, which will be compulsory for any employing/calling body with paid staff. The HRS system will be compliant with the STP and means congregations will not have to introduce their own new systems to comply with the ATO's requirements.

The LCAHRS was not intended to be solely a payroll system. The process for managing the administration of Pastor calls through the LCA HRS will soon be introduced. Once that is functioning, attention will focus on the opening of the remaining modules including the recording of training and development activities and performance reviews.

The LCAHRS will continue to refine the functioning of the system and its related processes to make it as user-friendly and responsive as possible.

### **ACCOUNTING PLATFORM**

The LLL has provided 'treasury services' to the LCA since 2000, which has been a great benefit to the church. However, the LLL and LCA mutually agreed that it was time for the LCA to resume responsibility for its own finance and accounting functions in order to meet its needs at operational, management and governance levels. This decision was also consistent with the LCA auditor's opinion that the LCA will be better served by the adoption of a new accounting platform.

The LCA, with a generous grant from the LLL, has now implemented a new accounting system, which will support the timely processing of transactions and improved financial reporting to all the LCA ministries using the system.

### **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

In the past synodical term there has been a consolidation of IT functions under one LCA IT Team within the Finance and Administration Department. Besides the Churchwide departments, the ministries now served, to one extent or another, include ALC, SA/NT District and Vic/Tas District.

The LCA IT team is now also offering IT services to congregations with the aim that all parts of the church will benefit from the cost efficiencies gained by doing things together.

### **LUTHERAN WINEMAKERS**

The Lutheran Winemakers releases of four “Classic Cases” and “Stelzer Sixes” continues to provide financial support to the Longest Lutheran Lunch programme. GCC is grateful to **Mr Tyson Stelzer and Mr Chris Pfeiffer** for their willingness to support the Lutheran Winemakers project.

## COMMUNICATIONS

During this synodical term, the Communications Department has worked to the GCC-approved Communications and Engagement Plan to give effect to the following LCA Strategic Direction priorities:

1. Increase enthusiasm for mission by sharing how love is coming to life through individuals, families and communities;
2. Support LCA ministries to effectively communicate and engage individuals, families and communities to grow and go;
3. Improve collaboration between the ministries of the LCA to establish an integration of communications around the theme “Where love comes to life”; and
4. Achieve internal LCA communication that is efficient, coordinated and relevant.

The Plan is implemented by the Communications Department under the leadership of Communications Manager, Ms Linda Macqueen.

The achievements during this synodical period include, but are not limited to:

1. Assistance to the mission departments to share their stories by: (a) developing effective means of communications, including websites, eNews, ‘Story of the Week’ videos and bulletin inserts, social media (LCA Facebook) and dedicated coverage in every edition of *The Lutheran*, and (b) providing expertise in writing, editing and design.
2. The provision of a wide range of communications support services across the church, including: graphic design, writing and editing support to assist in effective communication; rollout of e-communications (eNews) for most national departments and districts; and the development and maintenance of social media (LCA Facebook) platform
3. With the generous support of the New South Wales District, development of an integrated website network across the whole church, including national departments and agencies, districts and congregations. This included the roll-out of 566 one-page congregational websites.
4. Standardised branding and developing common/consistent messages across national departments and districts; coordinated designs for department, agency and project promotional materials, including banners, brochures, larger publications and online media; and development of branding, design and editing manuals.
5. A consistent growth in eNews (16 lists in 2014; 34 in 2017) as a key means of communication across the church. The distribution of the eNews has stimulated increased visits to LCA websites.

In addition, the Communications Department has continued to help to coordinate the Longest Lutheran Lunch (LLLunch) established as a means of reaching out to former and infrequently attending church members and to the wider community. The first LLLunch was held on 30 October 2011 (Reformation Sunday) and in 2017 more than 100 congregations, schools and aged care facilities registered to participate in the Lunch, which was part of the 50.500 Reformation commemorations.

Further detail about the work of the Communications Department during this synodical period is available at Appendix D.

## LUTHERAN ARCHIVES

As part of the trial restructure, responsibility for the Lutheran Archives came under the Executive Officer of the Church, supported by a Committee of Lutheran Archives.

While there has been a change in the structural arrangements Lutheran Archives has continued to carry out its purpose of serving the church by ensuring the records of the church are available for the church and wider community to access today, and for generations to come.

During the past synodical term a major project was to digitise the collection of 140 8mm and 16mm films (commenced 2015). Thanks to a generous response from church members to the 'Seeds that Sprout' appeal, 95% of the collection now has been digitised.

A number of other preservation-related projects also commenced, including the systematic digitisation of 24,000 catalogued photographs and photographing artefact collection for identification purposes and use in promotional ventures; rehousing of records (SA Parish Registers, congregation records) into acid-free archival enclosures; and conservation and stabilisation of fragile Immanuel Synod letter-press correspondence books (funded through a national Community Heritage grant).

The Lutheran Archives has also developed relationships with Aboriginal communities, which has included the digitisation and repatriation of Koonibba Mission photographs and films to Ceduna Aboriginal Corporation, Far West Language Centre, and Koonibba community; and the exploration of a significant project to digitise and repatriate Qld mission records to the Wujal Wujal and Hope Vale communities. The project, facilitated by the State Library of Queensland, included a very successful scoping and relationship-building visit in 2017 by traditional Wujal Wujal owners.

Further detail about the work of Lutheran Archives during this synodical period is available at Appendix F.

## ORDINATION OF WOMEN

The 2015 Convention of Synod resolved the following:

*That Synod requests the CTICR to build on its earlier work regarding the ordination of women and men to develop a draft doctrinal statement for GPC and the 19<sup>th</sup> Convention of Synod that presents:*

- *A theological basis for the ordination of women and men.*
- *A theological basis for why ordination of women and men need not be church divisive.*
- *And that GCC resource it.*

The GCC agreed to a plan proposed by Bishop John Henderson and prepared in consultation with the CTICR, which included a process of consultation across the church. The GCC approved an allocation of resources, generously provided by the LLL, to fund the plan. This included the appointment of a part-time Project Officer, Timothy Pietsch, who provided logistical support to the CTICR in organising the 33 consultations across Australian and New Zealand which involved over 1300 people.

The GCC joins CoB (refer report at Appendix A) in thanking the members of the CTICR for faithfully and diligently carrying out the resolution of the General Synod, which culminated in the finalisation and distribution in April 2018 of the Draft Doctrinal Statement and the paper outlining a theological basis for why the ordination of women and men need not be church divisive, and they are now included in the CTICR report (Agenda 6.1).

The GCC extends its thanks to the LLL for providing funds to assist in the implementation of this Synod resolution.

## **REVIEW OF THE CALL SYSTEM**

The 2015 General Convention of Synod support the conduct of a review of the LCA call process which was to identify and examine potential new models for filling pastoral vacancies in congregations with a view to increasing efficiency, transparency and inclusion; and include facilitated conversations with congregations as part of the research process

The engaged Australian Lutheran Institute for Theology and Ethics (ALITE) at Australian Lutheran College (ALC) to conduct the review, led by Prof. Wendy Mayer, Associate Dean for Research.

The GCC thanks the NSW District for providing a generous grant to cover the cost of the review.

The GCC received the final report of the Review of the Call System slightly too late for inclusion in the Synod Book of reports. However, the GCC has prepared a document, including the general conclusions of the final report, which is at Appendix I of this GCC report.

## **LUTHERAN LAYPEOPLE'S LEAGUE**

The GCC once again acknowledges the invaluable support of the Lutheran Laypeople's League (LLL). It has helped to fund many of the programs and projects of the church, including among others, Grow Ministries, Church Worker Support, Communications, Local Mission, International Mission and Reconciliation Ministry. As mentioned earlier, the 50.500 project was also funded by the LLL. The LLL has also continued to be an important partner in managing a number of Funds of the church, including LCA Insurance and its operations.

The GCC is also grateful to all the church members who support the LLL by holding a deposit account or have contributed to the various LLL Funds. We encourage all members of the LCA to continue to support them with personal deposit accounts and through the other facilities that the LLL offers. It is another way you can play an active role in the mission of the church.

The transition of the LLL from a Religious Charitable Development Fund to an Authorised Deposit-taking Institution will involve changes to the way the LLL operates, particularly in regard to its lending policies and procedures. A GCC/LLL Working Group has been established to ensure the LCA responds appropriately to these changes.

Although this has involved a significant amount of change for the LLL in structure and operations, the church can be assured that the LLL's core purpose of supporting the mission and ministry church is unchanged, along with protecting its depositors' funds. Customers will not notice anything different in the day to day operations of the LLL.

## **COLLEGE OF BISHOPS**

The College of Bishops (CoB) deals with all pastoral matters across the church and where appropriate reports on these issues to the GCC. The Report of the College of Bishops is printed below.

## **APPEALS**

During the synodical period (2015 – 2018) two appeals were launched to support the following projects through the LCA Disaster and Welfare Fund:

Queensland Floods - Lockyer Valley (2013). A total of \$275,000 was raised and this amount was forwarded to the Qld District for distribution to people affected by the disaster.

South Australia Bush Fire Relief (2015). The response to this appeal generated contributions of \$73,000, which was provided to the SA/NT District to enable it to render assistance to people impacted by this event.

## **SCHOLARSHIPS**

During the synodical period a total of 11 scholarships with a value of \$35,360 were awarded to pastors, lay workers and teachers to enable them to undertake a course of study to better equip them for service in the church.

A LLL Scholarships Permanent Fund provides financial support to the Scholarship Fund (\$25,000) and the LCA ALC Lecturer Succession Planning Fund (\$50,000) on an annual basis.