

AGENDA 7.1

Commission on Social and Bioethical Questions

MEMBERS

Christian Fandrich, Cathryn Hamilton, Timothy Kowald, Helen Lockwood, Kimberley Pfeiffer, Basil Schild (Bishop's representative), Tanya Wittwer (chair)
Consultants: Kristine Gebbie, Paul Meyer (for ALWS), Ian Rentsch, Nick Schwarz (ex-officio: Assistant to the Bishop, Public Theology)

BACKGROUND

The Commission for Social and Bioethical Questions reflects and researches on, and prepares responses to contemporary social and bio-ethical questions, fulfilling both educative and consultative roles.

ACHIEVEMENT AGAINST PLAN

Assisting actioning of synodical resolutions

Stewardship of Creation/Environment (2015:0211): brainstorming, scoping, prioritising, developing resources, finding case studies, liaison with LCA communications officer for LCA website.

Domestic Violence (2015:0208/0209): liaison with DV subgroup and coordinator; combined CTICR/CSBQ subgroup on theology of headship and submission and implications for DV Refugees and Asylum Seekers (2015:0212): liaison and consultation with, and support to Australian Refugee Taskforce; LCCSA.

Responding to emerging issues

- Same-Sex Marriage
Liaison with *All are Accepted* (formerly *ACCEPTS*), a Lutheran support group for LGBTIQ people and their families; consultation on the SSM survey.
- End of Life Issues
Response to paper by Committee for Ministry to the Aging
- Abortion
Response to questions regarding reduction in Abortions: preparation of discussion paper, liaison with Lutherans for Life (LFL).
- Religious Freedom
Preparation of discussion paper
- Uluru Statement
Request for informal consultation among LCA indigenous members prior to formulating a response.
- Interfaith Statements on Climate Change
Providing input and liaison with Assistant to the Bishop – Public Theology regarding LCA's participation in interfaith statements on climate change.

SUCSESSES

- Preparation of resources for congregations to assist in minimising their environmental footprint.
- Collaboration with CTICR on Synodical Resolution regarding headship, submission and implications for domestic violence.
- Liaison with and support to *Assistant to the Bishop: Public Theology*, the DV working group and its project officer, and various other LCA and ecumenical groups.
- Website of the affiliated group, *Lutherans for Life*, redeveloped.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

- Need for orientation process for new members.
- The need to be able to respond quickly to issues if the commission is to truly serve the church.

RISKS

The value of our work depends on well-researched yet timely responses, and discussion and educative materials that can assist members of the church.

Limiting parameters

- It is necessary that the commission reflects or takes account of the diversity of attitudes and theological approaches within the LCA.
- We are all volunteers and meet only four times a year which limits the effectiveness of the commission.

We are therefore seeking alternative ways of working together and communicating with the church.

ALIGNMENT TO LCA STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2013 – 2018

As we strive to faithfully search God's word for direction on social and bioethical questions (SD 1.1) we seek to reflect the diversity of approaches within the LCA (SD 1.2) to provide guidance to help individuals to discern God's will on the issues we wrestle with, so that they may *Grow as God's People*. It is our hope that this will assist those we seek to resource to serve, with grace, the communities in which God has placed them and that the consultations we participate in are a gift of service by the LCA (SD 1.3).

We are giving increasing attention to the diversity of cultures within our society and church (SD 2.1) so that we play our part in developing a missional culture within the LCA.

Individual members of CSBQ have assisted with liaison with other LCA committees and groups, and we have successfully collaborated on specific projects with a number of other boards, agencies, working groups (SD 3.B3).

COOPERATING LCA BOARDS AND AGENCIES

LEA	Environmental working group (synodical resolution)
ALWS	Environmental working group, refugee issues (synodical resolutions)
CTICR	Syndical resolution: DV/headship, submission
Assistant to the Bishop	Consultation, liaison, support