

The Synod of Eastern Australia



To meet at the
Knox Church Facilities
Melbourne Congregation
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

11th -14th May 2009

Standing Committee Reports

“Not to us, O LORD, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.”

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TIMETABLE FOR SYNOD 2009

	Monday 11 May	Tuesday 12 May	Wednesday 13 May	Thursday 14 May
9.00am M/Tea 10.30am		<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 3</p> Devotions and Prayer. Administration Report from Ad Hoc Committee re Media & Resources Committee Law and Advisory Presbytery Reports.	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 6</p> Devotions and Prayer. Training of Ministry Missions	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 9</p> Devotions and Prayer Church and Nation Youth & Fellowship Banner Examiners of Records. Causes (if any). Appt Moderator-elect Next Synod Time/Place Closure of Synod
12.30pm		Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2.00pm A/Tea 3.30pm	<p style="text-align: center;">SYNOD TO COMMENCE AT 4.00PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 1</p> Constitution of Synod. Retiring Moderator's Sermon. Presbytery Rolls. Welcomes (New members, guests, associations as required). Thanks to Retiring Moderator for his sermon.	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 4</p> Superannuation Finance Trust Corporations. Inter-Church Relations Delegates from Other Churches	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 7</p> Presbyteries and Committees to meet if necessary. 4.00pm Bus trip including visit to All Nations Mulgrave	
6.00pm	Evening Meal	Evening Meal	Evening Meal	
7.00pm 8.30pm	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 2</p> Election of Moderator for 2009/2010. Administration business as required. Moderator's address. Thanks to Moderator. Close	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 5</p> Guest Speaker: Mike Raiter Principal Bible College of Victoria Close	<p style="text-align: center;">SESSION 8</p> Missions Evening Close	

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Members: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Convener of Law and Advisory Committee, Convener of Inter Church Relations Committee.

Ministerial Movements

Rev G.D Ball was inducted to the Manning charge on 9th May 2008, and his name entered on the roll of Central Presbytery. Rev S Bajema was inducted to the Narre Warren charge on 17th January 2009, and his name entered on the roll of Southern Presbytery.

Timetable

The timetable proposed for this Synod follows a similar format to recent years with matters relating to finance being brought forward, given the significance of the current situations with funds. Tuesday evening has been set aside for a guest speaker. Synod is set to conclude at 12.30pm Thursday 14th May.

Correspondence

	<u>Date received</u>	<u>From</u>
1.	25.03.09	Overture from Northern Presbytery Re Rescinding of Alternate Questions and Answers
2.	03.05.07	Rev Dr Wes Hanna Re Clarification of his serving on Synod Committees

Correspondence from Rev Dr Hanna: Through an oversight the Clerk did not transmit correspondence from Dr Hanna to Synod 2008. The Clerk apologises for this oversight and notes that Dr Hanna wishes it recorded that the statement at the beginning of the 2007 Training of Ministry Report, which was based on Dr Hanna's communication with the Clerk, was not to be understood as indicating his unwillingness to serve on a Committee or be a Convener so long as he is asked first and that, if a Convener, he had opportunity for input into the membership of the Committee.

Congregational Statistics: See the table appended to this report.

Expressions of Sympathy: The Committee is unaware of the passing of any previous members of Synod during the past year, but does express sympathy to those in our churches who have lost loved ones during this time.

Committees: The committee structure was examined and, whilst it was felt that the structure was generally working well, the following modification is suggested. It is recommended that Church and Nation and Youth and Fellowship be separated and younger men appointed to the latter, and that a Media Committee be formed, convened by the Editor of the Banner, and consisting of the same members as Church and Nation. There are other suggested minor changes to committee membership:

Administration, Inter-Church Relations, Law and Advisory

Clerk (Convener Administration), Moderator, Moderator-elect, R.S.Ward (Convener Law & Advisory)
G.D.Ball (Convener Inter-Church Relations).

Church and Nation, Media

D.K.Muldoon (Convener Church and Nation), R.W.Murray (Convener Media, Banner), M.G.Smith (Website), R.S.Ward (Archives), D.Kerridge

Youth and Fellowship

G.Hamilton (Convener), D.P. Smith, I.Miller, S.Carswell, D.Kerridge

Finance

A.H.Steel (Convener), D.J.Ramsay, J.B.Louden, D.E.Kerr, J.Audet.

Superannuation

R.S.Ward (Convener), D.J.Ramsay, S.Bajema, J.Audet.

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Missions

D.P.Smith (Convener), T.I.Leggott, D.K.Muldoon, I.Conley, J.Greensill, F.N.Robinson.

Training of Ministry

M.G.Smith (Convener), J.A.McCallum, R.W.Murray, T.W.Yoa, D.Manly, T.Reeve.

Committee Business:

1. It is strongly recommended that Conveners of Committees arrange with their committee members to meet face to face or through phone link, internet or email, before the end of June each year, to discuss anticipated committee business for the year, and to apportion tasks for members.
2. Summary Report for Banner: The editor of the Banner has requested that each Committee Convener write a short report of their Committee's business from Synod for publication in The Presbyterian Banner.

Proposed Deliverances

1. That the timetable for Synod as proposed by the Administration Committee be approved.
2. That Synod expresses its sympathy for all those connected with this church who have been bereaved since the last annual meeting of Synod.
3. That Correspondence Item 1 be received and considered following the Law and Advisory Committee report.
4. That Correspondence Item 2 be received and considered with Administration Committee business.
5. That Committee Structure as suggested in the report be adopted.
6. That Presbyteries and Committees be permitted to meet when Synod is not in session.
7. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Rev. S.Bajema and Ulverstone elder.
Central Presbytery	Rev. M.G.Smith and Northern Rivers elder.
Southern Presbytery	Rev. D.P.Smith and Manning elder.

CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS AS AT 31.12.2008

Congregation	Communicants				Typical Attendance of different persons each LD		CHURCH COMMUNITY BY AGE Total attendance if everyone present who worships at least once a month plus the housebound but not including visitors passing through.						Baptisms	S/School Classes / Pupils	Youth Midweek
	07	+	-	08	07	08	>4	4-11	12-18	19-64	65+	Total			
Brisbane	38	0	2	36	40	40	3	3	4	38	5	53	0	3/9	0
Northern R	50	3	0	53	60	60	4	11	3	26	37	81	0	4/14	0
Armidale	17	0	5	12	45	55	3	16	16	24	4	63	0	4/34	15
Hastings	34	0	2	32	38	38	1	4	2	22	15	44	0	2/5	0
Northern P	139	3	9	133	183	193	11	34	25	110	61	241	0	13/62	15
Manning	58	1	3	56	58	63	2	5	0	27	43	77	0	3/9	35
Hunter	54	0	5	49	54	70	11	4	4	34	27	80	2	3/?	8
St George's	55	7	0	62	98	98	6	13	10	38	22	89	1	3/11	0
Mt Druitt	22	0	0	22	15	21	1	5	3	10	2	21	3	1/4	10
Sydney Sth	10	2	1	11	12	11	1	1	3	9	3	17	0	1/2	9
Central P	199	10	9	200	237	263	21	28	20	118	97	284	6	11/26+	62
Knox-GH	36	9	3	42	73	68	9	15	6	49	15	94	4	3/16	5
Nuer	-	-	-	-	200	200	10	35	30	150	5	230	0	3/63	16
Narre Warren	*35	9	8	36	50	42	1	7	2	19	24	53	1	2/9	0
Geelong	43	0	16	27	*27	27	4	3	2	18	19	46	0	1/5	0
Ulverstone	28	2	8	22	50	35	3	8	8	19	17	55	1	2/11	12
Southern P	142	20	35	127	400	372	27	68	48	255	80	478	6	11/104	33
TOTALS	480			460	820	828						1003			110

- * Corrected from last year
- The age structure of the community shows 25% over 65 in NP, 34% in CP and (excluding the Sudanese) 30% in SP.
- Deaths reported were 1 in Ulverstone, 2 in Hastings, 3 in Manning & 3 in Hunter, a total of 9 (11 in 2007, 10 in 2006, 14 in 2005).
- Reported typical attendance shows increase in NP & CP and a decrease in SP. Overall there is a 5% increase in the church community (excl Sudanese).
- While it is difficult to judge on one year the figures suggest some encouragement.

**MEDIA AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
AD HOC COMMITTEE REPORT ON ITS FORMATION**

Members: RW Murray (Convener), MG Smith, RS Ward and J Dekter.

The remit to this Committee was as follows: *“With a view to Synod 2009 disjoining Publications and Website from the Church and Nation/ Youth and Fellowship Committee and forming a Media and Resources Committee including Church Archives, Synod appoint an ad hoc Committee to progress this matter for the consideration of Synod 2009, the Committee to consist of RW Murray (Convener), MG Smith, RS Ward and J Dekter.”*

This decision arose out of a Notion of Motion put to last Synod, and recorded on page 7 of the Synod Minutes:

08.22 NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Murray presented his Notice of Motion regarding the establishment of a new Synod Committee: *“That a new Committee, named the “Communications, Publications, and Resource Committee” (CPR Committee), be formed, taking in IT, TPB, Website, and Archives, thus separating the TPB and Website from the Church and Nation Committee, and embracing the Archivist and Archival Matters. The Committee will have the following scope and remit:*

IT — *Assisting and aiding Churches with Website production and administration, Internet broadcast services, MP3 and other voice material, video and telephone services, and powerpoint equipment and presentation.*

TPB — *Oversight of Production, Policy, and General Management including the appointment of the Editor, Editors and Editorial Committee (subject to Synod approval).*

Website — *Oversight of Production, Policy, and General Management including the appointment of Webmaster, and Technical assistants.*

Archival — *Oversight of Archival material, and the appointment of Archivist. E- Books, Resources, and Other Publications.*

While we have been charged with the responsibility of “progressing” this matter, the “progress” is of a negative kind. It is the consensus of the Committee that there is little justification in altering the status quo. As one member of the Committee puts it, *“for practical purposes they [these matters] are covered under the present arrangements. Given our shortage of people I’m not a real fan of changing the status quo. I’d much rather we spent our time addressing issues of effective evangelism and outreach.”* Another said that as ministers and elders, *““Our focus should be elsewhere,” (paraphrasing Acts 6)”*.

Other reasons adduced for not proceeding with the proposal were:

[1] IT is too big a scene and too quickly changing to be adequately covered. No one has expertise in all the areas mentioned.

[2] Congregations wanting to install/use new technology would look to the local scene for advice rather than to a Committee or Committee member.

[3] Resources can be highlighted from time to time on the present website as for example, the "Reading Calvin in 2009" page, and this can be done within the present Committee structure.

In the light of the above our recommendation to Synod is that the present Committee remain as it is, and that no “disjoining” take place.

Recommendation: That this matter be passed from.

LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

R.S.Ward (Convener 2007), Synod Clerk, Convener ICR, Moderator, Moderator-elect.

The Committee duly produced and distributed the Handbook/Decision Book immediately following the rising of Synod 2008, and we trust it has been found both convenient and useful. A number of copies have been sold in addition to those supplied gratis to congregations, and some further copies remain to meet need until the next reprint. If members wish further copies they will be available at Synod (\$20).

The Alternative questions and Formula seem to have been well received. The first ordination/induction under it appears to have been Mr Kerridge of Ulverstone and the second Rev Jim Cromarty of the Manning, both to the eldership, and the third Mr Bajema on his induction at Narre Warren. Southern Presbytery follow the practice that officebearers will be installed with the 2008 form of words but where the person is a minister or student for the ministry he will also sign the 1952 Formula as well.

A couple of housekeeping items should be noted from experience in Southern Presbytery. The Guidelines for Church Workers (Synod 2004) should be pasted in the front of Session and Deacons' Court minute books as requested by Synod. The wording is on page 5 of the Handbook.

Some Communion rolls are updated by the addition of new names at the bottom and the striking through of the names of persons removed. After a while it becomes difficult to see immediately who is on the roll and who is not, and to attest rolls with clarity. The best method is for the roll to be restated in order of admission at the close of each year when the changes noted in the year's minutes can be incorporated in the fresh list.

Noting the precise leave entitlement of the minister in either Session or Deacons' Court minutes needs attention. Leave is both an entitlement and a liability of the congregation and needs to be recorded at least annually also to avoid misunderstandings.

No specific requests for advice or clarification (Handbook 1.11) were received during the year.

Proposed Deliverances nil

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

Armidale: We again have seen the graciousness of our God in action. A family left the congregation early in 2008, but another family with five children arrived the following Lord's Day. At the same time around five new Korean folk joined the congregation. The Easter weekend saw another family of seven arrive as refugees from Sudan. So the average attendance of 45 at the morning worship services in 2007 grew to 55 in 2008. Also, a young university student known only by us for 10 days, who was attending the local Baptist church, came to Sunday worship and committed her life to Jesus during the preaching of God's Word. She has leased an upstairs room in the church, expressing her desire to be involved in the youth group.

Worship services have been generally well attended. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed five times. The Sunday Adult Bible study has been profitable, and coincides with the Sunday School classes after the morning worship service. A simpler gospel study for the Sudanese women also coincides. Four Sunday school classes operated during the first three school terms, increasing to five in the last term with much larger numbers than 2007. Mission meetings were also held coinciding with the monthly fellowship luncheons. A women's craft group ran weekly throughout the year contributing \$220.00 to missions. The Ladies Bible Studies continued on Wednesday mornings. The weekly Prayer Meeting on Thursday evenings has grown. The Play Group numbers have diminished and so this activity will not run in 2009. The visits to Amity Nursing Home each Sunday have been much appreciated and two ladies have very recently expressed their trust in Christ.

Three evangelistic efforts were undertaken in 2008. The orientation Day at UNE, a movie night screening the latest Luther film and carols were again held early in December. Some folk from outside the church attended these last two events. At the recent UNE orientation day (16th February) there were a few people who expressed that they would like to come to church - nearly all were international students. A teenage Youth Group operated during school terms. Attendance was good with up to 15 young people. Two of the non-churched teenagers are now regularly coming to worship, one of whom has committed his life to the Lord. We pray that the Lord will continue to work in people's hearts and bring them to salvation. We thank God for His blessings, care and love shown to us. Our desire is that God's name will be glorified, that He will build His Church, that we will hearken to His Word, and be faithful to Him.

Brisbane: We can only repeat what was said in the Report for 2007 that the congregation remains in good heart, despite the continued disappointments in finding a new minister, though these repeated disappointments take their toll. Letters have been sent to all ministers listed on the Web site of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, and to most of the ministers of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland with little response. We also had contact with a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, but he decided to remain where he was. However, one minister from the Free Church of Scotland has been invited to visit with a view to a call. So far, he has not decided whether to accept this invitation. The congregation would value the prayers of our brothers and sisters as we continue the search.

During the vacancy only one service is being held each Lord's Day, with a fellowship lunch following the service and Sunday School. This is followed by a time of Prayer and Psalm singing for those who wish to stay. Bible studies are being conducted by the elders. There has been no change in the membership during 2008 and the level of weekly offerings remains good. During the vacancy the congregation has continued to accumulate some funds. Once again we would note the outstanding contribution being made by the small group of retired people in Rockhampton.

The Annual Family Camp was held at Lennox Head in December. This venue made it easier for people from the northern New South Wales congregations to attend. The "Playtime" Mothers' and Children's group continues to function and attracts a number of local mothers.

Hastings: Worship services are conducted on the Sabbath Day at Wauchope in the morning at 11 am, and in the afternoon at 4 pm which presently incorporates the Prayer Meeting. It is not as well

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attended as the morning service. A service is also conducted at Kindee (40 km. west of Wauchope) at 7 pm every 2nd Lord's day with up to 10 adults and 4 young children usually present there.

Some of our older members — in their nineties — have recently passed on to their reward in the presence of Christ. These, as others still with us, have long histories of faithful witness have been fine examples to others in the congregation, especially the young. We miss their cheerful godliness.

The 29th August 2008 was the 90th Anniversary of the opening of our Wauchope church building in 1918. The Congregation experienced a long Vacancy of 24 years – from the death of the Rev. John Davis in 1897 until 1921 - when Rev. M.C. Ramsay was inducted. We no longer enjoy the large congregations once so common. A number of our people are confined to their homes or are in care. However we are encouraged by the young people who are regular at our services and who receive the annual certificates for repetition work set each year. We continue to pray that the Lord will send the spirit of revival and renewal and create a willing people in the day of his power.

Northern Rivers: We give thanks to God for his continuing care for us as a congregation and the privilege we have to have fellowship with and serve Him. We had 3 services each Lord's day during 2008 - Grafton at 9 am, Maclean at 11 am and 4 pm., with a combined attendance of 50 to 60 for the morning services. About 15 -20 attend the evening service. The morning Bible Study on Wednesday has an average attendance of about 14. The telephone service is continues to be appreciated by members from the Sunshine coast, Evans Head and the Retirement village.

The Lord has been merciful to us, and only one death occurred in the Congregation during the year. A number of the Congregation are in their nineties. We thank God for them. They are demonstrations to us all of the grace and faithfulness of God. Our membership now stands at 53 with a total Church Community of 81. The Sunday School continues with 3 attending in Grafton and 12 in Maclean.

The Givings in the congregation average approximately \$930 per week. There is a considerable income from property [Manse Rental] and Investment, and the Deacon' Court is mindful of its responsibility to be a good steward of these resources. The Church Hall at Maclean continues to serve a number of groups in the community as well as the needs of the congregation. The Church in Lismore continues to be used and maintained by the child minding centre - Caring. The Bethesda Retirement Units are operated by a Management Committee under the supervision of the Deacons' Court. All units were occupied during 2008, but two have recently become vacant. However funds are available to cover all foreseeable demands.

We continue to look to the Lord to bless the work during 2009.

CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

St Georges: In the CBD of Sydney people gather from distant parts of the city for worship. Visitors passing through Sydney and seeking a place of reformed worship often join for worship. They usually find the church on the internet or by enquiry at city hotels, 35 of which we have been circularized with church details. Two services are held on the Lord's Day and a mid week meeting, in the church, on Wednesday. Attendance at these meeting has been stable during 2008 (approximately 90 morning, 70 evening and 38 mid week). Communicant membership increased by 6 to 62 during the year.

Approximately 15 adults attend a Bible Class and a weekly psalmody practice, and 11 children from four families attend the Sabbath School.

Sermons preached by Rev JA McCallum since 1994, have been made available by audio broadcast via our congregation's web site at www.stgeorgespcea.org.au. These are updated weekly. Three Deacons' were also installed in 2008. Rev McCallum celebrated 30 years in the ministry.

Hunter Barrington: Services continue to be conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace (am) and Cardiff (am & pm). An all age Sunday School is conducted at Cardiff each week during school terms. Psalms tunes, the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures have been taught faithfully each week to the children and adult participants. A crèche is conducted on Sunday mornings at Raymond Terrace to provide for the growing number of children. This year services have not been conducted at Anna Bay due to the advanced years and failing health of the folk. The viability of continuation of fortnightly services at Barrington is currently under consideration by the Session. Services are made available over the telephone to the sick and/or aged. 'Question & Answer' discussions have been conducted at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff during Fellowship luncheons. It is our prayer that these events will contribute to the development of biblical understanding and more faithful Christian living.

Prayer Meetings are held on alternate weeks at Raymond Terrace and in the Newcastle area. This year prayer for missions and sister PCEA congregations have been emphasised. A Ladies Bible study has been conducted fortnightly at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff. A Kids' Club afternoon has been conducted on the first Saturday of each month. Rev Tamata had a period of poor health during the year. He is giving prayerful consideration to the matter of retirement from full-time ministry.

Manning: Rev. George Ball was inducted as pastor of the congregation on 9th May 2008. Rev Jim Cromarty was elected and inducted as a ruling elder on the 14th December 2008. The congregation lost through death Mr. John Milligan on the 16th January 2009, who had been a faithful elder since 1957. There are five active (though aging!) elders. Services on the Lord's Day begin at 9.30 am with a congregational prayer meeting in Taree. The worship service follows at 10.30 a.m., with an average attendance of about 60. There is an afternoon service in Taree at 4 p.m., with an average attendance of about 12, and an evening service in Tinonee at 7 p.m. with an average attendance of about 12.

The Sunday School meets at 9.30 – 10.15 with 9 pupils. The Kid's Club meets in Taree on Friday at 4.30 p.m. with an average attendance of 15. The Lighthouse Club meets in Tinonee at the same time with a similar attendance. Mr. Neil Robinson continues to lead a weekly youth group in Tinonee for older teenagers from the community. There are a couple of KYB studies and a couple of Bible studies/prayer meetings held during the week which are well supported.

Some repairs and new floor covering were made to the manse. The Taree church building is in need of repairs and refurbishment. The meetinghouse in Wingham has been disused and active consideration is being given toward its disposal.

There is the need for men who will demonstrate Christian maturity, and who will display elder material. There is the challenge to seek to disciple the younger men who are in the congregation. There is the need for traditional Christian families – some are effectively single parent families – and we have a high proportion of elderly people in the congregation (43 are over sixty-five). There is the need to see conversions in the church families – so often children and grandchildren are unconverted and no longer attend church. There is the need to minister to those of our number who are enduring severe trials. There is the challenge to connect with the parents of the kids in the Kid's Club. There is

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the challenge to reach out in the community with the good news. 'Except the Lord build the house the builders build in vain.'

Hawkesbury Nepean: Regular morning (11am) and evening (6pm) worship services continue, with attendance of 12-14 adults and 8-9 children. A Bible class is held before the morning service. A weekly prayer meeting (Thursday) is conducted in the church hall. A Lighthouse club is held every Friday during school term with average attendance of 10 children. A Youth club has been started for high school children. These activities are promoted in the local newspaper at the beginning of term. Through the church website a number of visitors have joined us for worship and some continue to worship with us.

Kurrajong nursing home is visited each fortnight for ministry and the sick are visited on a regular basis by church members. A successful working bee was held to carry out maintenance work on the hall. Another church group uses the hall each Sunday afternoon. The manse was relet to a church family. The congregation continues in good spirit though members face uncertainty with regards to employment. One member was farewelled after moving interstate with his work. We have been encouraged by the number of visitors and especially those who have continued with us. We pray to the Lord of the Harvest to bring more people to his house to worship him.

Sydney South: A 9.00am service is conducted in the community hall at Bexley North along with a mid-week Bible study and prayer meeting each fortnight. A Sunday school class is held at 9.30am. The funeral of a regular worshipper held in July. A new family has joined and taken membership. Average attendance is 12 at the worship service

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY

Presbytery: There were 7 meetings of Presbytery in 2008 (5 in each of 2007 and 2007) and 3 so far in 2009 as Presbytery exercised care of the congregations. Meetings have been constructive and harmonious. The provision of the Mulgrave property in November 2008, along with the accession of Rev Andres Miranda and his family to membership of the Knox Congregation and Rev Sjirk Bajema and family to Narre Warren, Sjirk as minister (inducted 17/1/09), has injected a note of thankfulness to our Lord and optimism for the future. Mr David Kerridge was licensed 9/3/09, all centres have resident ministry, and the prospects for the planned new parish at Mulgrave are very bright. Presbytery issued a pastoral letter to congregations following the meeting on 9/3/09. An annual training day for existing and prospective officebearers has been agreed to and a day conference on the theme of 'Building a Christian Family' is scheduled for September.

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Ulverstone: Mr Hamilton reported as follows: The congregation is averaging 40 at the AM service and 15-20 at the PM service. A recent car rally and Sunday school picnic day was attended by 29. The two Sunday school classes have resumed with a total of 12 attending. It is worthy of note that at least one student has her sights set on the ultimate shorter catechism certificate - 1 to 107 word perfect. The adult catechism class led by David has also resumed, as have the mid-week meetings which rotate between Ulverstone one week - Burnie/Wynyard the other week. Despite some losses of members and adherents last year - we have been encouraged that one family of five expected to relocate has secured employment locally. Givings currently average around the \$620 mark - a matter that will need to be addressed this year and emphasised again at the congregational meeting should there be any possibility of a call. Our Clerk of DC is still pending relocation to Qld as he finalises his Bakers Beach property. Our original Deacon Jim Elson has been in and out of hospital with Pneumonia. In general the congregation is quite positively looking to the future with good relations and fellowship being experienced with the SPC and EPC folk. Currently there is a youth night once a month with 11 to 15 attending, some from beyond our congregation.

Geelong: Mr Smith reported Geelong was still going through some consolidation since he had accepted the call signed by 25 members in 2005. At his arrival in mid 2006 attendances were about 40. Numbers are down on that through a variety of circumstances but appear now to have turned the corner with morning attendance back around 30. Sunday School restarted in August 2008 after a long gap. At Presbytery's direction the Communion Roll was restated and properly purged, something which apparently hadn't occurred for a number of years, and the current figure is 27. While there remained some issues from the past affecting the congregation the outlook appeared to be improving. Financially things were not so good with offerings having to be subsidised from accumulated funds to about half, but continued improvement was hoped for.

NarreWarren: Dr Ward as Interim-Moderator in 2008 reported that the congregation had held together quite well with good and regular supply mainly from Rev Stephen Giles (PCA) and Rev Andres Miranda. Membership had increased by one during the year. The mid-week evening meeting had been poorly attended but was worthwhile for those who did attend. The Ladies Bible Study led by Betty Simpson had been excellent and well attended. It was anticipated offerings would rise as Mr Bajema's ministry was established. They have already moved ahead. He had been well received and morning attendances were encouraging, as were the mid-week meetings in homes and the ladies study.

Knox / Glen Huntly: Dr Ward reported that the year had been very positive. There had been a decline in attendance at Glen Huntly as two Indian families had settled in Narre Warren and transferred there. Overall commitment had increased with new members at Knox and the outlook was bright with the morning attendance of recent days in the 60s and 70s. Financially, the year had been exceptional with increased givings, and rental income from the 3 units coming on stream producing a healthy surplus. In 2009 cash funds would be expended on the Mulgrave building. A modest revenue surplus was still anticipated despite taking on Mr Miranda as part-time Pastoral Assistant and continuing and hopefully increasing support to the wider church.

Nuer: Mr Yoa reported that work continued steadily. There are typically 150 adults and about 70 children in the service. There are some 30 committed families plus others attending. There has been some turnover as Mr Yoa stresses the work is Gospel focussed not simply a cultural activity. The building at Mulgrave has been a great encouragement. Mid-week activities (ladies and young adults meetings) at Mulgrave began mid February. The issue of givings is being addressed and the response so far in 2009 is very positive at around \$600pw.

All Nations Mulgrave: An English service at Mulgrave is expected to begin in April and it is likely the few at GH will combine at the new centre. When the extension is ready (say July/August) the Nuer language service will relocate from the Christian Reformed Church building in North Dandenong. Plans are not final as at the date of this report (24/3/09), but we hope to progress the work very positively this year.

SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

RS Ward (Convener 1978), Messrs JB Loudon, J Audet, D Ramsay

A: Superannuation Fund: Mr Bajema was added upon his induction. The average age of the 11 current members is about 58.2 years, with an average of 15.3 years of service as at 31/12/08 with the PCEA.

1. Membership

Name	Service from	Service to 30.6.83	Total service at 31.12.08	Year 65
S.R.Tamata	16.10.1998	00.00	10.12	2006
R.W.Murray	11.12.1968	11.72	36.57	2006
J.A.McCallum	28.06.1985	00.00	24.50	2007
R.S.Ward	20.03.1976	07.28	32.78	2010
M.G.Smith	16.06.2006	00.00	02.54	2013
T.I.Leggott	11.03.1989	00.00	19.80	2014
D.K.Muldoon	29.11.2002	00.00	06.09	2017
G.D.Ball	01.12.1997	00.00	11.08	2020
S. Bajema	17.01.2008	00.00	00.00	2023
T.W.Yoa	09.05.2006	00.00	02.64	2024
D.P.Smith	16.11.2001	00.00	07.12	2025

Note: Mr Murray's service excludes a one year absence in Scotland 1975/76. Other commencement dates are ordination or induction except Mr Ball whose service as an ordained minister began 1/12/97, and Mr Yoa from date of admission by Synod.

The Superannuation Guarantee levy is 9% from 1/7/2002. Congregations which employ a preacher aged under 70 on a supply basis where earnings are \$450 per month or more are liable for this levy and should contact the Committee for advice/assistance.

2. Church Contributions to Superannuation

1. Superannuation Levy on congregations:

An email was issued 15/1/2009 indicating the levy for 2009 on the approved formula would be \$1,576 per quarter, only \$12 more than last year given the reduction of the levy from 15% to 14.5% from 1/1/2009 foreshadowed at Synod 2009. It is based on estimated stipend of \$43,485 in 2008 (assuming \$12 increase 1/7/09).

We have been particularly mindful of the burden of the levy. At the same time we need to keep in mind that superannuation is a tax-advantaged method of providing for retirement rather than accumulating an estate. Accordingly the law does not require Superannuation contributions to be made once a person has reached 70 years of age and we propose to recognize this in part (see 2.3 below).

It needs to be appreciated that over much of a minister's period of service the contribution for Super for him may be at a higher rate than the levy on his congregation and it is proper that vacant congregations contribute to the common pool. However, with effect 1/4/09 we propose the following changes to the Superannuation Levy.

- a. A discount on levy for settled congregations receiving Synod aid of 20% of the levy otherwise payable (ie from 1/4/09 11.6% rather than 14.5% = a saving of \$315 per quarter making their levy \$1,261 a quarter compared with \$1,414 in 2008).
- b. A discount for vacant congregations or congregations which are not required to make Superannuation contributions for their inducted or full-time supply minister of 60% for the period the situation applies. The effect is an annual saving of about \$630 pa for each of Brisbane & Hastings.
- c. A discount for congregations paying Superannuation Guarantee [SG] contributions for full time residential supply of 80% for the period the situation applies. (The effect of this is to reduce the levy on Ulverstone to \$1,260 in 2009 from \$3,128 in 2008); and increase Knox's contribution for Mr Yoa from the current 10% (= SG+) to 11.9% (9%SG & 2.9%) ie to \$5174 from \$4348

We aim to maintain these arrangements in 2010 but they may not be maintained for an extended period since outflow will easily exceed income in 2009, and it will not be prudent for large draw-downs from the Support Fund in any one year given the uncertain world financial situation - and the potential for an outbreak of inflation.

2. Superannuation Support Fund

The Capital/quasi capital declined by 16% to \$132,802 even after \$8,527 was added from the balance at 31/12/2007. Accumulated working funds at year end were \$12,912.

3. Contributions to ministers' accounts

Current the contribution for the first five years is 10% rising to 18% thereafter. Overall this is a reasonable figure the 18% equating to about 12% if the housing component of ministers' remuneration is included. The current Superannuation law says that you do not have to pay super contributions for those 70 years of age and older, while self-employed persons cannot contribute beyond age 75. We propose that we reduce Superannuation contributions for ministers from the end of the quarter in which they attain 70 years to 5% of minimum stipend only and to nil from their attainment of age 75. Our present generous contribution assumes a man will be reasonably provided for by normal retirement age. To continue to contribute generously mistakes the purpose of Superannuation, which is not to enable a man to accumulate an estate but to retire with some dignity.

The positive effect will be to reduce upwards pressure on the levy, particularly for aid-receiving congregations. The proposal has no immediate effect as no one in Super is over 70 at present although several are getting close.

3. The Superannuation Funds

1. Default Fund

All but two of our members have chosen HESTA, our default fund, for their contributions. The other two retain membership of the ING Fund.

2. Performance

Results for the year to 30/6/08 are sent direct to members by the ING or HESTA, but before this occurred were also circulated in an information memo to members from the Convener dated 15/08/2008. The return on the default settings for each Fund compare as follows:

	ING	HESTA
1 year to 30/6/08	- 7.26	-5.4
5 years to 30/6/08	+6.80	+10.5
For the 6 months to 31/12/08 results were	-15.46%	-12%

The default ING setting is actually more conservatively invested than HESTA Core Fund, but performed worse. HESTA also outperformed the approximately equivalent ING Managed Growth option.

3. Outlook

At the date of preparation of this report the outlook remains very uncertain. Several years will probably need to elapse before there is a strong recovery in the world economy.

B. Long Service Leave/Annual Leave: We remind Synod members of the provision by Synod 2003 of an extra week of annual leave (5 weeks in all), which must be taken, or the provision of LSL at a week a year at the local level up to age 70. It is increasingly normal in the general community not to allow annual leave to accumulate beyond two years. We commend this as very appropriate.

C. Regulations: The necessary changes are embodied in the Proposed Deliverance.

D. Committee: Through oversight the requirement that the Committee be two members of the Fund and two others has been overlooked. It is suggested that Mr Louden, who has served on the Committee since 1985 and has now attained the age of 77, be replaced by Mr Bajema.

Proposed Deliverance:

1. Synod approve the following amendments to the current Superannuation Committee Regulations:
 - a. the following addition immediately after the second last sentence in Section C 5 of the Superannuation Regulations: Superannuation contributions for members from the end of the quarter in which they attain 70 years is limited to 5% of minimum stipend/non-cash benefits figure and reduces to nil from their attainment of age 75.
 - b. the substitution of the following words for those in Section B 1 a) of the current Superannuation Regulations: SANCTIONED CHARGES (a) As from 1/4/2009 an annual levy of 14.5% of the minimum stipend/non-cash benefits as estimated at the beginning of each calendar year, such levy to apply to every sanctioned charge as a preference burden after stipend, and to be paid in four approximately equal quarterly instalments by 28/2, 31/5, 31/8 and 30/11 in each year. Aid to aid-receiving charges is to allow for the levy but a discount of 20%, or as otherwise resolved from time to time by Synod resolution, is to be allowed for those settled charges receiving stipend assistance from Synod.
 - c. the substitution of the following words for those in Section B 1 c) of the current Superannuation Regulations: VACANT CHARGES c) As from 1/4/2009 the discount for vacant congregations and congregations which are not required to make Superannuation contributions for their inducted or full-time supply minister will be increased from 50% to 60% for the period the situation applies. A discount of 80% of the levy otherwise payable will apply for vacant congregations paying Superannuation Guarantee [SG] contributions for full time residential supply for the period the situation applies.

This Act may be cited as Superannuation Regulations Amendment Act (Class 2, Synod 2009)

- d. Synod, note the levy for 2009 of \$1, 576 per quarter payable by the end of February, May, August and November with concessions as stated in the report.
- e. Synod approve the immediate addition from the Super Support income account of the working funds balance as at 31/12/08 to the amount treated as capital in the SSF, and the transfer from the Super Support income account of an amount necessary to meet any deficit in the levy proceeds account as at 31.12.2009.
- f. Synod record its appreciation to Mr Loudon for his lengthy service on the Committee (1985-2009).
- g. Synod remind fund members of the advisability of seeking professional advice in regard to both choice of Fund and investments within any particular fund, and the effects of recent changes in Government legislation, so that it meets their particular needs, as this is their responsibility and not that of the church.
- h. Synod request Sessions and Deacons' Courts to keep a close eye on ministers' leave entitlements to ensure ministers do not suffer burn out through failure to take it, and that Presbyteries keep this in mind in the annual examination of records to ensure outstanding entitlement is minuted at least once a year.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Incorporating General Treasurer's Report)

Committee members: AH Steel (Convener), J Audet, DE Kerr, JB Loudon, DJ Ramsay

Business attended to by the committee included:

1. Ministers' Minimum Stipend/Benefits

Current Level and Basis of Review of Minimum Stipend: Synod 2008 resolved the adjustment of Minimum Stipend – Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2008/2009 be made on 1st January and 1st July in line with the movement in the *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six monthly review period, no adjustment be made.

In light of a rundown in Synod funds available to make payments for Stipend Relief to aid receiving congregations and the effects of the global economic downturn on the values of equity investments and income received to Synod accounts, the Committee felt some contribution ought to be made to this situation by lightening the burden on these congregations in meeting increasing stipend and superannuation payments. It therefore recommends that the six monthly reviews of Minimum Stipend NOT be undertaken for the next twelve months ie. reviews due 1/7/09 and 1/1/10. The situation to be reviewed and recommendation made to Synod 2010.

The Committee also recommends that Synod draw the attention of Presbyteries to the Church Handbook 4.60 when requested to moderate in a call, paying particular attention to the financial viability of the charge involved.

2. Stipend Relief

Assistance Sought: All three Presbyteries have sought Stipend Relief, on a strictly needs basis, for 2009/2010:

\$ 21,400 – Armidale (up to 50% of Minimum Stipend - \$42,861 as at 1/1/09)
\$ 21,000 - Hawkesbury-Nepean
\$ 20,000 - Narre Warren
\$ 10,000 - Ulverstone

\$ 72,400 Total
=====

As at 31/12/08 there were no working funds in the Synod *Stipend/Church Extensions* accounts – a deficit of \$11,439 for year ending 31/12/08 had to be met by transfer from Synod *General Funds*. At that time there was still \$17,000 undrawn against the approvals granted to aid receiving congregations by last Synod. It is expected that \$13,000 of this amount will be taken up before 30/4/09, and will mostly have to be provided again from Synod General Funds - Refer to General Treasurer's Report herein for further comments on General Funds.

The Committee felt a close watch ought to be kept on the situation and recommends Presbyteries make *Presbyterial Visitations* to congregations receiving aid of approximately 50% of the minimum stipend and a church wide appeal for *Stipend Relief* funds be made if considered necessary.

Armidale Congregation: Additionally, the Committee received the following request from Northern Presbytery: “*That the Presbytery request Synod through the Finance Committee to take note of the pressing financial situation in Armidale and authorize an Appeal throughout the Church to help the Congregation meet its outstanding and current obligations;*”

Synod Reports 2009

Fully detailed financial statements and budgets evidencing the congregation's need were submitted to the Committee by the Presbytery. The request is recommended and included in our *Proposed Deliverances* bearing in mind we have also included a *Proposed Deliverance* for church wide appeal(s) for Stipend Relief funds, if considered appropriate. If both are approved, then the appeal for Armidale assistance should be made first.

Other Suggestion/Ideas: Suggestions were received from two members of Synod regarding stipend relief. One suggested as a general rule of thumb, under the current arrangements, that for a congregation to be considered viable for a call, the weekly general offerings ought to at least match the minimum stipend levels. He also wondered whether the 50% maximum of minimum stipend for assistance from Synod should be lifted and whether Presbyteries should allow for other part time employments by ministers when assessing the viabilities of calls. The Committee considered these ideas and advised him we felt that current regulations adequately provided for the suggestions and any requests falling outside the regulations ought to be considered on their merits and referred to Synod on a case by case basis.

Then during February 2009, another member of Synod put forward suggestions, which may be appropriate, to help lessen the call by aid receiving congregations for stipend relief. It was decided to receive and note the ideas which would need quite a bit of working through in some cases, before appropriate recommendations, if any, could be made to Synod for adoption, nevertheless, for your information we list them as follows:

1. Adoption of *Tent-maker ministries* in aid receiving charges.
2. Tiered stipends - say two or three tiers.
3. Phasing in of stipends - say for the first 3 years following ordination.
4. Lower stipends - say 10% lower or more if a minister's wife is in paid employment for more than 15 hours a week.
5. Replacement of vehicles - providing Non Cash Benefits to ministers for cars in lieu of church owned vehicles.

3. The Capital Assistance Fund

Balance:

Fund balance as at	<u>31/12/08</u>	<u>31/12/07</u>
Loan – Hunter-Barrington Congregation	5,400	9,240
Working Funds	87,605	87,735
	-----	-----
Total Funds	\$ 93,005	\$ 96,975
	=====	=====

Total funds of \$93,005, excluding \$7,300 held on deposit, decreased by \$3,970 (4%) for year ending 31/12/08 from interest received, share dividends and revaluations and the annual \$50 rent from St Georges Deacons' Court. No donations were received.

Loan(s): Only one loan existed as at 31/12/08. The Hunter-Barrington Congregation was granted a loan of \$15,000 on 13/6/06. They have continued to repay the loan by \$320 per month as arranged, with the outstanding balance as at 31/12/08 being \$5,400.

4. Estimates (Major Working Fund Receipts/Payments)

Estimates have been made for the major working funds to 31/12/09. A projection for General Funds to 30/4/10 is also included. (Appendix 1).

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Proposed Deliverances:

1. We record our thanks to God for all temporal blessings received since last Synod.
2. The Minimum Stipend – Cash and Non-cash components, (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2009/2010 be \$822 per week (\$42,861 pa.) ie. to remain unchanged from the last review on 1/1/09. The six monthly reviews due on 1/7/09 and 1/1/10 to be suspended and the situation to reviewed and recommendation made to Synod 2010.
3. Where a congregation has requested Stipend Relief of approximately 50% of the Minimum Stipend for the 2009/10 Synodical year, Presbytery is to conduct a *Presbyterial Visitation* during 2009, unless one was conducted in 2008, paying particular attention to the ongoing viability of the congregation and its efficient working with a view to the progressive reduction of aid over five years as detailed in Synod's Decision Book page 92 Sections 2 & 3.
4. Synod take note of the pressing financial situation in the Armidale congregation and authorize an appeal throughout the Church to help the Congregation meet its outstanding and current obligations.
5. A church wide appeal for funds to assist in meeting requests for Stipend Relief from Synod by aid receiving congregations be made. The Synod Finance Committee be authorised, upon advice of the General Treasurer, to make this appeal from time to time, if consider appropriate, during the 2009/10 Synodical year. The appeal to be made through *The Presbyterian Banner*.
6. Stipend Assistance for 2009/2010 (1/5/09 to 30/4/10) be granted to the following Deacons' Courts, on a strictly needs basis and subject to the availability of funds at the time of the request. Requests to be made at least on a quarterly basis from 1/5/09:

\$ 21,400 – Armidale (up to 50% of Minimum Stipend - \$42,861 as at 1/1/09)
\$ 21,000 - Hawkesbury-Nepean
\$ 20,000 - Narre Warren
\$ 10,000 - Ulverstone

\$ 72,400 Total
=====

GENERAL TREASURER

1. Financial Needs

The financial needs of the Synod were adequately provided for during 2008. However, total funds decreased by \$357,701 (22%) to \$1,290,669 after allowing for \$237,684 held on behalf of congregations (Davis memorial Bequest), ministers' superannuation levies etc.

Net decreases occurred in:

Capital Funds	\$ 82,378
Other funds	\$ 18,037
Hamilton Dissolution	\$ 27,128
Working Funds	\$ 230,158

Net Decrease in Funds	\$ 357,701
	=====

The major contributing factor to the decrease was the markdown of \$381,691 in the value of share investments as at 31/12/08 and the provision of stipend assistance amounting to \$47,500 for year ending 31/12/08.

For details of increases/decreases refer to Notes in Synod's Financial Statements.

2. Congregational Contributions to Synod Funds

Contributions of \$14,361 by congregations to Synod Funds during 2008 decreased by \$3,136 (18%) on contributions made in 2007. Refer to Congregational Contributions Summary at back of Financial Statements for full details.

3. Synod General Working Funds

A deficit of \$12,566 was recorded in Income and Expenses for the year ending 31/12/08. This was mainly caused by covering a deficit of \$11,439 in *Stipend Relief Funds* at year end. Confirmation by Synod of this action is sought. Refer to Income & Expenditure Statement (Page 2 of the Financial Statements) for full details

Note 14 (Page 8 of the Financial Statements) shows *Synod's General Working Funds* total \$86,226. Of this total \$75,410 has come from bequests, with interest added, in more recent years and can be applied as resolved by Synod. However, as portion of the Working funds for the Ramsay and McKinnon bequests was invested in shares, a markdown of \$18,812 was recorded as at 31/12/08. The net result being a decrease of \$25,844 in overall funds held.

If the present level of call on *Stipend Relief* funds is continued and there is not a significant inflow of funds for this purpose, it appears likely that the current balance of *Synod General Working Funds* will be required to meet this need in 2009/2010.

4. Books of Account Audit

A satisfactory audit report has been obtained from Partlett, Chave & Rowland, Chartered Accountants of Caringbah and is included in the published Financial Statements.

Proposed Deliverance

Synod confirm the charging of the deficit of \$11,439 as at 31/12/08 in *Stipend Relief Working Funds* to *Synod General Working Funds*

Synod Reports 2009

FINANCE COMMITTEE - APPENDIX 1							
BUDGET - MAJOR WORKING FUNDS							
for twelve months ending 31/12/2009 (Synod General Funds to 30/4/10)							
Fund	Balance as at #####	Estimated Income Int/Divnds to 12/09	Estimated Givings	Estimated Expenditure to 12/09	Estimated Surplus (Deficit)	Estimated Balance 38,716	T'fer from Gen Funds
Capital Assistance Fund	93,005	6,800	0	0	6,800	99,805	Nil
Church Extension	0	250	300	550	0	0	Nil
Chr/Extn - Stipend	0	4,100	3,000	48,650	-41,550	-41,550	-41,550
Chr/Extn - Stipend (DAABeq)	0	0	0	0	0	0	Nil
Missions - General	0	15,000	8,000	7,500	15,500	15,500	Nil
Missions - (Legg/AIM)	0	0	4,000	38,200	-34,200	-34,200	Nil
Missions - (PFCF - DAABeq)	49,117	3,000			3,000	52,117	Nil
Missions - (Fiji Support)	681	0	0	0	0	681	Nil
Missions Relief	348,838	25,000	0	58,100	-33,100	315,738	Nil
Training of Ministry	104,424	11,000	800	500	11,300	115,724	Nil
Youth & Fellowship	12,394	1,500	0	3,500	-2,000	10,394	Nil
General Funds	86,226	3,500	1,000	4,000	500	86,726	
Total Estimated Transfers from General Funds							-41,550
General Funds - Estimated balance 31/12/2009 (including Ramsay,Harris & McKinnon bequests)							86,726
Estimated Balance of Synod General Working Funds as at 31/12/09						\$	45,176
Fund	Estimated Balance as at 31.12.09	Estimated Income Int/Divnds to 30/4/10	Estimated Givings	Estimated Expenditure to 30/4/10	Estimated Surplus (Deficit)		
Chr/Extn - Stipend	Nil	2,000	?	38,000	-36,000		-36,000
Estimated Balance of Synod General Working Funds as at 30/4/10						\$	9,176
Notes:							
1. Income from Interest estimated at 40% less than 2008 and Diviends 15% less.							
2. Estimated givings are based on 2008 givings ONLY except for \$3,000 for Stipend received March 2009.							
3. Estimated expenditure for Stipend is on the basis of drawings made quarterly by Deacons' Courts.							
4. No allowance is made for possible falls in the value of equities below the 31/12/08 prices.							
5. The estimated shortfall of \$34,200 in <i>Missions - (Legg/AIM)</i> can be covered by transfers from <i>Missions - General</i> and <i>Missions - (PFCF - DAABeq)</i> .							
6. Estimated deficit of \$36,000 in <i>Chr/Extn - Stipend</i> from 31/12/08 to 30/4/10 takes into account the \$72,400 Stipend Relief sought from Synod 2009.							

NSW TRUST CORPORATION
‘THE TRUSTEES OF THE SYNOD OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA’
 Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer

Deed Box: The Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia is lodged with the National Australia Bank Ltd, 163 Rowe Street, Eastwood NSW. The following deeds were lodged in the box during 2008:

- (26/5/08) Certificates of Title Identifier 101/1122138 and 102/1122138
 Replacing Old System Conveyance No.711 Book 1482 - Barrington church.

Common Seal Applications: No Common Seal applications were made during 2008.

Investment Strategy: As a result of the effects of the current world wide financial downturn, it is timely to review the Investment Strategy targets for Trust Assets approved by Synod 2002, so as to be more realistic in the current financial climate.

The following changes are therefore recommended:

	<u>Current Target</u>	<u>Proposed Target</u>
Growth -	CPI+ 0.5%	CPI only
Income -	Official Cash Rate + 1.75%	Official Cash Rate + 1.00%

Review of Results as at 31/12/08:

Diversification - Specified Capital Funds:

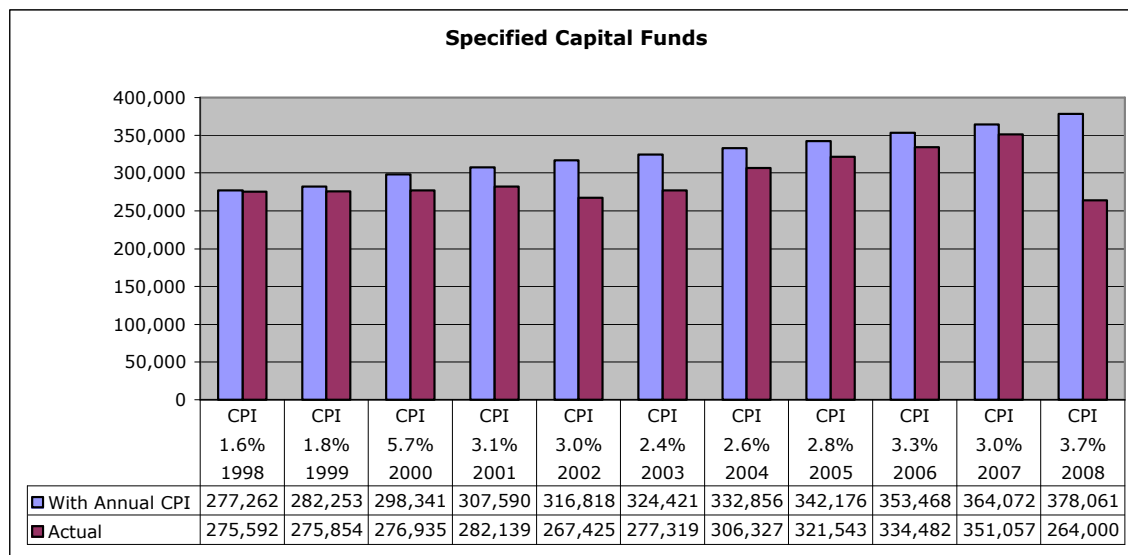
Amount Invested	Percentage of Total	Strategy Benchmark	Strategy Range	Where Invested
85,754	32%	5%	5% - 10%	Banks/Trustee Coys
Nil	0	30%	20% - 40%	1 st Regd. Mortgages
46,300	18%	15%	10% - 25%	Bonds/Debentures
<u>131,946</u>	<u>50%</u>	<u>50%</u>	40% - 60%	Equities (Shares/Units)
<u>\$264,000</u>	<u>100%</u>	<u>100%</u>		

Investments are within the Strategy Ranges except for *Banks/Trustee Coys and 1st Registered mortgages*. Funds are currently held in Banks because of the inability to arrange suitable 1st registered mortgages.

Return on Investments:

Growth: Total investments decreased by \$87,057 representing a negative return of -24.79% against a positive Target of 4.2% (CPI of 3.7% plus 0.5%)

Synod Reports 2009



As at 31/12/08 the total of Specified Capital Funds “Actual” (\$264,000) fell short of the total of Capital Funds “with Annual CPI” added (\$378,061) by 30% (\$114,061). This is a significant decline on the 2007 shortfall of 5.37% (\$18,986).

As the above graph shows the gap between “Actual” funds invested and Actual “With Annual CPI” has been narrowing over the past six years, however, this trend has now ceased as a consequence of the dramatic downturn in equities across the share market generally during the past twelve months. As a result the level of Specified Capital Funds is back to where we were in 2002. No changes were made in equities during 2008.

Income: Income of \$25,392 represented a return of 7.23% against a Target of 8.42% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 6.67% Plus 1.75%).

Overall Return:

(24.79)% Growth
7.23 % Income

(17.56%) Negative return on investments totalling \$351,057 as at 1/1/08.

Return on Investments Summary: In an endeavour to “maintain real value” ie. “keep up with inflation”, in Trust assets, as required by law, approximately 50% has been held in equities for the past six years. Approximately half of these funds being in Manager Funds (Unit Trusts) and the other half in Shares (direct). The direct investment in shares have fared better than the Managed Funds, with a decrease of approximately 37% compared with the Manager Funds write down of approximately 44% as at 31/12/08.

Income at 7.23% was marginally below the target, however, this included a significant amount of interest received as the result of a mortgage enforcement settlement early in the year.

Proposed Deliverance: The *Growth* and *Income* Targets forming part of the Investment Strategy for *The Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia* be amended as follows:

	<u>Current Target</u>	<u>Proposed Target</u>
Growth -	CPI+ 0.5%	CPI only
Income -	Official Cash Rate + 1.75%	Official Cash Rate + 1.00%

**QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION
'PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA'**

Members: Moderator, Clerk and Treasurer

Deed Box and Common Seal: The title deeds of the Church Property at Kalinga are held in the Locked Deed Box of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia with the National Australia Bank Ltd, 163 Rowe Street Eastwood NSW. The Common Seal is held by the Clerk of Synod. There were no applications of the Common Seal in 2008.

Proposed Deliverances: Nil.

**THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA
OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

Members: JRB Webster (1966), JB Louden (1985), WJW Hanna (1994), AH Steel (2001 Secretary),
DJ Ramsay (2002)

Administration: All business requiring attention was transacted via email. A quarterly report was sent to all members of the Body Corporate members by the Secretary which included a record of business transacted. Business requiring the Trust Corporation's attention included:

Bequests: No new bequests were received by Synod or reported to the Secretary by congregations during 2008.

Property Holdings:

Purchase of Mulgrave property: On 6th December 2008 the Trustees were directed by Southern Presbytery to sign and seal necessary documents in the proposed purchase of a church property at 91 Tiverton Drive, Mulgrave. A Transfer of Land was duly executed and it was understood settlement in the purchase was set for 13th February 2009.

Investments: Specified Capital Funds (Bequests)

Diversification:

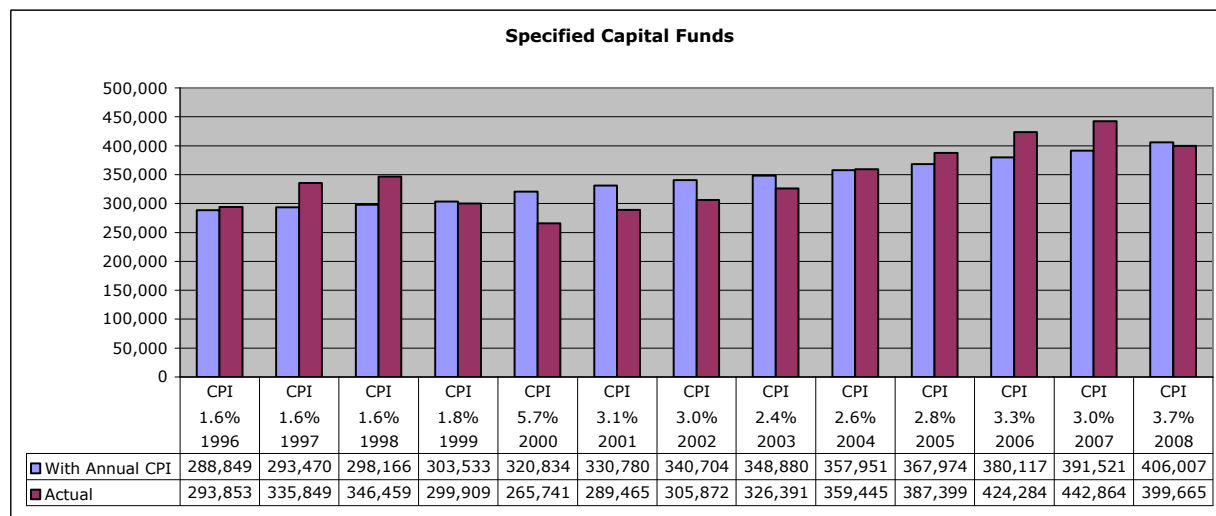
Actual 31/12/08	as at	at	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage	Asset Class	Benchmark	Range
138,316	35%	Cash	5%	5% - 10%
0	0%	Mortgages	30%	20% - 40%
45,000	11%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
216,349	54%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
----- 399,665	100%		----- 100%	
=====			=====	

Investments were within the Strategy Ranges except for *Cash* and *Mortgages*. Funds are currently held in Banks because of the inability to arrange suitable 1st registered mortgages.

Synod Reports 2009

Return for twelve months ending 31/12/08:

Growth: Total investments decreased by \$43,199 representing a negative return of (10.18%) against a positive Target of 4.2% (CPI of 3.7% plus 0.5%).



As at 31/12/08 the total of Specified Capital Funds “Actual” (\$399,665) just fell short of the total of Capital Funds “with Annual CPI” added (\$406,007) by 1.56% (\$6,342). This is a decline on the 2007 excess of 13.11% (\$51,343).

The total value of Specified Capital Funds has appreciated at a rate greater than annual inflation (CPI) for the past four years but just fell short in 2008.

Income: Income of \$33,517 represented a return of 7.57% against a Target of 8.42% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 6.67% Plus 1.75%).
Target shortfall was just 0.85%

Overall return: Growth (10.18%) Income 7.57% = (2.61%) overall negative return on investments totalling \$442,864 as at 31/12/07.

Summary: Investments are considered to be adequately *Diversified* in the current economic downturn.

Our *Investment Strategy Objective* was not achieved in Growth because of the fall in the value of equities held. However, the total value of our share portfolio was held up by one stock (Origin Energy Ltd) which achieved an 82% increase as at year end compared with falls of 20/35% in other stocks. Thus, an overall negative return of only 10.18% was sustained.

Income at 7.57% was just below the target of 8.42%, however, this included a significant amount of interest received as the result of a mortgage enforcement settlement early in the year.

Investment Strategy: As a result of the effects of the current world wide financial downturn, it is timely to review the Investment Strategy Targets for Trust Assets approved by Synod 2002, so as to be more realistic in the current financial climate.

The following changes are therefore recommended:

	<u>Current Target</u>	<u>Proposed Target</u>
Growth -	CPI+ 0.5%	CPI only
Income -	Official Cash Rate + 1.75%	Official Cash Rate + 1.00%

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Deeds/Bonds and Common Seal

Title Deeds/Student Bonds Custody: There were no changes to deeds held in *Safe Custody* at the National Australia Bank, Eastwood during 2008. A Student Bond for DJ Kerridge was received from the Training of Ministry Committee on 11th November, 2008 but had not been lodged for safe keeping as at 31/12/08 as correspondence was awaited from the Convener in the matter.

Common Seal Application: The Common Seal was applied to the following documents during 2008:

Executed	by	Details	On behalf of
84	25.2.08	JBL/AHS Deed of Settlement (TVIC) & Child Care Centres Aust(Tenant)	- Knox
85	9.12.08	JBL/DJR Transfer of Land Vol 10290 Folio 98 - 91 Tiverton Dr, Mulgrave	- Knox

Proposed Deliverance:

The *Growth* and *Income* Targets forming part of the Investment Strategy for *The Trustees for Victoria of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia* be amended as follows:

	<u>Current Target</u>	<u>Proposed Target</u>
Growth -	CPI+ 0.5%	CPI only
Income -	Official Cash Rate + 1.75%	Official Cash Rate + 1.00%

INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Members: G.D.Ball (Convener 2006), Moderator, Clerk, Moderator Elect, Convener Law & Advisory

A. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

1. Free Church of Scotland. (FCS). 1954 and 2005.

We (along with other churches with whom the Free Church has fraternal relations) were informed by the Principal Clerk of Assembly, Rev. James Maciver, of the decision of a Commission of Assembly, which met on 3rd December 2008 in Edinburgh. In the words of Mr. Maciver:

“The Free Church of Scotland has terminated the suspensions sine die imposed upon the men who repudiated the authority of the Commission of Assembly in January 2000 and then walked out of its proceedings, on the basis that they are recognised by the Free Church of Scotland to be a valid, separate church...The Free Church of Scotland is concerned to reach an acceptable settlement of outstanding issues of property and other assets currently held by the Free church (Continuing), through dialogue between the two bodies, beginning at the level of local congregations. This decision directs all Free Church congregations where dispute exists about property and other assets to initiate and engage such dialogue.

It is very much the hope of the Commission of Assembly that the Free Church (Continuing) will see this finding as a sincere attempt to reach agreement by brotherly conference and that they will accept the invitations to discuss these issues at the level of local congregations as well as ensuring that any agreement reached locally will not then be blocked by the higher courts of the church.

I would respectfully request the prayers of your denomination for a successful outcome to this process.”

2. The Reformed Churches of New Zealand. (RCNZ). 2002.

Rev. Trevor Leggott was able to represent us at the RCNZ Synod in September 2008. We are delighted to welcome Rev. Sjikr Bajema into membership of the PCEA. Mr. Bajema had been ministering in the RCNZ for some 10 years before he accepted the call of the Narre Warren congregation, where he was inducted on the 17th January 2009.

3. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia. (RPCA). 2004.

Communication with the Reformed Presbyterians is mainly through the channels of the Southern Presbytery. An invitation has been received to send a delegate to their annual meeting of Presbytery to be held in Frankston 8th-9th May 2009. It is intended that Rev. Sjikr Bajema will represent us.

4. Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (Liberated). (BBK). 1999.

The Synod of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands met during the course of 2008. Among other things they agreed, “to maintain the relationship with the 29 sister churches listed...with a view to learning from each other, supporting each other, and praising Christ’s name together.” The Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia is listed as one of these sister churches.

5. Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. (RPCI). 2006.

This past year has seen some encouraging events. There have been five inductions, a new ‘society’ formed in Enniskillen, four students in the Theological College, with a number of young men doing short term service. There is concern that freedom for Christians in the province of N. Ireland is being gradually eroded by ongoing legislation. The Clerk of Synod conveys the greetings of the RPCI.

6. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (OPC). 2007. (Nothing to report).

7. The Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia. (PRCA). 2009.

We anticipate being able to report on the response of the PRCA regarding our desire to have fraternal relations with them at Synod.

8. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. (RPCNA). 2008.

The 2008 Synod of the RPCNA accepted our invitation to enter into Fraternal Relations but did not accept mutual eligibility (full intercommunion) at this stage. The Convener states, "as we have more opportunity to interact, I pray that we would indeed grow into full intercommunion/mutual eligibility."

This effectively means we have an 'ambiguous' relationship with the RPCNA at present. We, by our deliverance 5 in 2008, are enabled to call men from the RPCNA, but the RPCNA are not able to call men from the PCEA.

B. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONTACT.

1. The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. (CRCA).

The CRCA Synod meetings correspond with our own – to be held in Wonga Park, Vic., from 11th – 15th May 2009. An invitation has been received to send a delegate to bring greetings and address Synod at an appropriate time.

2. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. (EPC).

We are glad to note ongoing correspondence between the EPC and the Southern Presbytery.

3. The International Conference of Reformed Churches. (ICRC).

The next ICRC conference is scheduled to be held in Christchurch, New Zealand, on October 15 - 22, 2009, hosted by the Reformed Churches of New Zealand. For further details see the web site: www.icrconline.com

The theme of the conference will be, 'The Vitality of the Reformed Faith.' Four major papers will be presented. 'Facing the Challenge of the Charismatic Movement,' by Dr. George Knight III. 'Facing the Challenge of Individualism in Church Life,' by Dr. Nelson Kloosterman. 'Facing the Challenge from Islam,' by Dr. Frank Van Dalen. 'Facing the Challenges in the Asian-Pacific Context,' by Dr. Mohan Chacko.

The Conference provides excellent opportunities to personally meet delegates from other churches.

4. Gereja-Geraja Reformasi Calvinis (GGRC-NTT).

As reported last year this is a Reformed Church in West Timor, which is a member of the ICRC. The Convener of the Relations with Churches Abroad, Rev. Yonson Dethan would like to visit our churches on his way to the ICRC in New Zealand. We hope he will be able to visit as many churches as possible.

5. The Presbyterian Church of the Philippines. (PCP).

The Convener received communication from the PCP with a view to entering into fraternal relations. We await more information from this church. For information see their web site: www.gapcp.org

Proposed Deliverances:

1. We express our satisfaction that some progress has been made in Scotland between the Free Church and the Free Church Continuing as a result of the outcome of the Commission of Assembly in December 2008. We pray that there will be a sincere attempt by everyone to seek to resolve local disputes by brotherly conference.
2. We record with gratitude the decision of the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America in 2008 to enter into fraternal relations with us. We would be further encouraged if our relationship with the RPCNA could grow so that they might recognise us as a church in full intercommunion (ie. with mutual eligibility).
3. That Synod appoint two delegates to attend the International Conference of Reformed Churches scheduled to meet in Christchurch from 15-22 October 2009.

TRAINING OF THE MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Members: M G Smith (Convener), J A McCallum, R W Murray, T W Yoa, D Manly, I Hamilton.

The committee did not meet during the year. We have, however, dealt with a number of items of business.

1. Mr David Kerridge BA, MDiv.

The additional study required of Mr Kerridge by Southern Presbytery on behalf of Synod was completed and assessed. Having accepted these essays, the Southern Presbytery additionally recognised Mr Kerridge as a student for the ministry. The Committee then took this additional study under our consideration. We decided to accept these essays and therefore declared our satisfaction with Mr Kerridge's course of study. Subsequently the Southern Presbytery agreed to take Mr Kerridge on trials for license, which were sustained. Mr Kerridge was licensed on 10 March 2009.

2. Revd Andres Miranda BA, DipTh.

In February 2009 we received a letter from Southern Presbytery which included the following extract minute:

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery 17/2/09, inter alia:

“5. Application for Ministerial Status – Rev Andres Miranda, BA, DipTh
(basic background is in Minutes 6/11/08)

Mr Miranda's application was before the Presbytery, and the procedure in Handbook 4.51 was appropriate. After discussion of the application Mr Miranda withdrew and the Presbytery deliberated in closed court.

It was resolved unanimously that the Presbytery note the very positive response to Mr Miranda's ministry in Narre Warren or Knox more than 30 times in 2008 from May onwards, Knox Congregation's engagement of him as Pastoral Assistant in 2009, and Mr Miranda's readiness to heartily subscribe the Formula of subscription. Presbytery view the application with favour and suggest to the Training of Ministry Committee that the Committee recommend to the next meeting of Synod that Mr Miranda be declared a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia eligible for call upon (1) their certification to Southern Presbytery that he has satisfactorily completed essays on our history and distinctive position, and (2) his signing the Formula of Subscription in the presence of Southern Presbytery.

The Presbytery met in open court, Mr Miranda was recalled and the decision intimated to him. The Moderator led in prayer.”

Mr Miranda's application form, together with academic transcripts, was available to the Committee. Having considered this application from Mr Miranda the Committee decided to view it with favour and to recommend to Synod in terms of the suggestion from Southern Presbytery.

3. Enquiries from prospective student/minister.

The convener responded to enquiries; one from an overseas minister. Although this applicant was referred to a vacant congregation in order that he might pursue his interest, nothing seems to have resulted. This was true of the other enquiries.

4. Revising and redesigning of paperwork.

In the course of this year the Application Form to be used by those applying as students or for recognition as ministers, and also the Student Bond, were revised and redesigned. Digital copies are being placed in the Synod download section of the website so that they will be readily available in future years.

Proposed Deliverances

1. Synod gives thanks to God for answering prayer in regard to the provision of students/ applicants for the ministry. Synod exhorts the church to continue to ask the Lord of the harvest and Head of the church to send out more workers both for our situation and for the wider work of God's kingdom.
2. Synod welcomes the application from Revd Andres Miranda and approves the proposal contained in the report, namely, that Mr Miranda be declared a minister of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia eligible for call upon (1) the certification of the Training of the Ministry Committee to Southern Presbytery that he has satisfactorily completed essays on our history and distinctive position, and (2) his signing the Formula of Subscription in the presence of Southern Presbytery.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT TO SYNOD 2009

Committee Members 2008-2009

D.P. Smith (Convener), I Conley, J Greensill, D Muldoon, N Robinson and T Leggott

Contents of Report:

1. Committee Activities
2. Mission Field Reports
3. Malcolm McSwann Mission Relief Fund
4. Prayer Calendar
5. Finance Aspects
6. Proposed Deliverances

Committee Activities

The committee has not formally met since Synod 2008. However, communication, dialogue and discussions have been carried out by telephone and email throughout the ecclesiastical year.

Mission Field Reports

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES – Rev Trevor Leggott reports:

A major emphasis in my work during 2008 has been in developing leadership training, particularly for the Eastern States. AIM has entered into a memorandum of understanding with the Aborigines Evangelical Fellowship, and their Bimbadeen College, to commence a teaching program base on the Theological Education by Extension (TEE) model. The TEE model, developed by the Presbyterian Seminary in Guatemala in 1963, and since spread throughout the world, meets the present need for training indigenous church leaders, “to encourage and enable local leaders to develop their gifts and ministries without leaving their homes, jobs, communities, and local congregations.”

God in His providence has provided a most eminently suitable and gifted man to head up this work. AIM has established a Director of Training Eastern States and appointed Amos Leana to this role. Amos comes with a Masters in missiology, with specific experience in TEE work in both PNG and Samoa, and he will head up the work based at Walgett in Western NSW.

I continue to develop networks to assist with this ministry and it has been very encouraging to have the support of the Bishop of Armidale, Australian Presbyterian World Mission, and organisation like Langham Partnership and Arrow Leadership.

In the Northern Territory progress has been made with the development of our regional training centres. For some time there has been a need for personnel at Alice Springs to head up the work there. Again the Lord has heard the prayers of His people. A young couple, who have been doing pastoral relief work and building maintenance around the field for some years, have applied to serve full time at Alice Springs. Phil and Cathy Stuart commence their ministry in July 2009. Phil is an ordained minister with the Westminster Presbyterian Church from Western Australia and will serve as their missionary, complementing our more established field personnel.

Dennis and Glenys Tranter have been in furlough from their base at Borroloola in the NT after 10 years service. It has been most encouraging to see the fruit of their labours result in the leadership of the Borroloola church well equipped to take up and continue the ministry amongst their own people, saying, “We won’t need a missionary at Borroloola any more!”

There remains an ongoing need to recruit more personnel to take up the challenges of ministry amongst our indigenous people. Most of our population, even amongst the churches, remain ignorant of the desperate needs and many opportunities to assist in Gospel ministry. To assist this process it has been good to have our Mission Awareness Tour facilitators join AIM full time in 2008. Robert and Jenni Alley, both well known to the PCEA, are now based at the AIM office in Springwood. Regular contact with Bible colleges, Christian groups at universities, and church youth groups has brought increasing exposure for young adults considering their career paths and prospects for the future.

As I have said before I remain deeply appreciative of the support I receive as a missionary of the PCEA, and the encouragement I have received from many to continue with this ministry. I recognise that there are stresses on church finances and that support for mission suffers as do other areas at the present time. Mission is none-the-less at the very heart of the Gospel. I press on with the confidence that as Christ's Church we do a good thing in obedience to His word: Jesus came and spoke to them saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, telling them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

The Convener adds: The congregational giving to missions in 2008 is down by 40 percent compared to 2007. Within that, AIM giving is down by 60 percent. The funds held by Synod, including mission funds, have also been reduced significantly due to the global economic downturn. Also, the DAA bequest for missions will possibly be depleted in the next two years.

Synod 2008 agreed to second Rev. Leggott as missionary to AIM for a further three years commencing on the 1st January 2009. So we must always look to, and depend upon, the Lord who wonderfully provides, sometimes in surprising ways to continue this ministry. Please bring these matters before your congregations so that they can uphold this vital work in prayer and contribute financially as they are able. Please also convey my thanks to all those who have contributed over the years to this work amongst the indigenous people of Australia.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL – Rev Paul Morris reports:

General: We are grateful to God for His provision for the work in every department. However, we are still earnestly looking for a missionary for Melbourne. The work among Israelis has grown and more churches are aware of us and supportive.

Early in 2008 a promotional DVD was completed for use on deputation and to send to churches. A lot of work was involved and we are pleased with the outcome. We plan to send it out to the Presbyterian Church of NSW and to Sydney Anglicans in 2009 to stimulate interest.

KayChan Park: Interest in Korean churches has grown as KayChan has spoken in many congregations. KayChan was approached by his mission in Korea to be their representative in the Australasian region and CWI have agreed to this. It requires the occasional trip abroad to encourage their missionaries and is a good opportunity to stimulate their interest in his work among Israelis. Things are settling down in KayChan's home church but his support level has dropped due to their financial constraints and due to a significant change in the exchange rate. KayChan returned to Korea on two occasions, once because of the death of his wife's father, and once to finish his Masters degree in International Relations.

Outreach: The Friday book table witness in Bondi Junction has gone on regularly. KayChan and I man this with occasional assistance from volunteers, like Greg Fox of Macquarie University. KayChan has met many Israelis in this context and seeks to keep in contact with them. KayChan also meets Israelis by street tracting in Hall Street, near the beach, and visiting cafes frequented by Israelis. We have continued to know some disruption of our activities by the anti-missionary Rabbi but it has been less frequent than a year ago.

Work is still being done on the backpacker network. KayChan and Sue have had one opportunity to open their home to an Israeli couple for a month and this led to many long discussions of the Gospel. They have also travelled to New Zealand to learn about such ministry there.

Our monthly meeting in the Sydney CBD (ECOM Chavurah) has continued with a small regular attendance of Christians with Jewish colleagues.

Throughout 2008 Paul met with a young Jewish student whom he initially met at the book table. The purpose was a series of studies giving an overview of the Bible and its message, which the student had requested. Paul was away a lot in '08 so it was spread out. Out of this a 10-part Bible Study booklet

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for Jewish seekers has been produced. At the time of writing the young man appears to have come to faith but is taking some time to think about things.

The Melbourne witness by volunteers has not really been sustained on any regular basis but Paul has made regular visits to stimulate interest.

Developments have taken place for partnership with Christ Church, St Ives, to partner with them in their Connect '09 outreach to their neighbours in '09. This is a major breakthrough among Sydney Anglicans. A Passover meal, lectures and seminars are planned. A letter to their Jewish neighbours has been prepared for the visitation programme.

A number of churches have heard a lecture from Paul on witness to Jews as part of their programme to equip people for witness to all people.

JEF Day: In 2008 we had just two Saturday morning events, one on the theme of celebrating festivals and the other on the significance of the covenant for Jewish believers. The former was well attended but not the latter. We are planning a similar programme for 2009 but hope to have some more informal evenings as well, led by the Park's.

IJEF (International Jewish Evangelical Fellowship): Only one edition of the e-journal was prepared in 2008 due to Paul being away often. Time is limited for such ventures, especially when it seems few are clamouring for it. The IJEF conference in September will be crucial for the future direction of the organisation.

Office Work: Garry Griffin has had to leave us but we have been grateful to Hugh Varnes for filling his shoes.

Web Site: Our new CWI web site is now uploaded (www.cwi.org.au) although the Resources page has yet to be added. We are now working on the evangelistic one.

Deputation: There was a lot of travelling in 2008, principally to the UK and Ghana for two months, speaking on behalf of CWI. There were also trips to Perth and Brisbane to speak in churches.

Annual Edersheim Lecture: In 2008 the lecture was given by Dr Mark Thompson on Luther and the Jews and was very well received. 2009 is a special Calvin anniversary so we plan a lecture on Calvin and the Jews by Dr Peter Barnes.

Melbourne developments: The committee has developed well and begun to prepare the way for a future worker. We look to the Lord in faith.

Church denominations and Mission to Jews: As mentioned above, the DVD will be used to promote interest in some church denominations.

One outcome of the 2007 Edersheim lecture was that Dr. Steve Voorwinde has taken the initiative to propose the Christian Reformed Churches in Australia support CWI in some way. This will be discussed at their May Synod.

Paul also had the opportunity to speak at the Mission Lunch during the 2008 Assembly of the PCVIC in Melbourne

Support and Finances: We are very grateful to the PCEA and individual congregations for its strong financial support to our ministry. The financial year 07/08 saw income meeting expenditure when expenditure grew considerably. We are grateful to God and continue to look to the Lord to meet our needs.

Literature production: A number of items of new literature have been produced in the past 12 months: a new Shalom broadsheet, a new street tract on the financial crisis, a leaflet for Christians on witnessing to Jews, the 10 part Bible Study, the letter to Jewish neighbours, a CWI bookmark and a new version of the Passover Haggadah.

CWI Australia - Looking ahead: We continue to give serious consideration to future developments for the work, including the matter of how it should be lead and for new workers in Melbourne.

May the Lord establish the thoughts of our hearts according to His will.

DUMISANI THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE – The Convener reports:

It is hard to realise that almost a year has gone by since we had the wonderful privilege of Dr Alistair and Jenny Wilson visiting our churches and speaking at Synod. The profile and work of the Dumisani Theological Institute (DTI) was raised to new heights amongst God's people in the PCEA. I know that many people now receive the Dumisani News and also Jenny Wilson's newsletters. This is a vital work in South Africa and the bar seems to have been lifted with Dr Wilson as Principal for the last 16 months. Please urge your congregations to continue their interest in DTI and uphold the staff, students and the outreach into the local community in prayer before the throne of grace.

The book appeal that was conducted during the Wilson's visit to Australia last year netted a sum of \$7,198.00 dollars. This is a very significant amount and Dr Alistair Wilson was really taken by the generosity of our congregations and asked me to convey his heartfelt thanks to our people. He also appreciated greatly the books donated by various ministers and members of our Church. I, too, would like to add my thanks for the tremendous response from you all. As convener of the missions committee, I was able to add \$4,782.00 of unspecified mission's funds to the library appeal. So in all, \$11,980.00 dollars plus the gifted books were given to bolster the DTI library.

Below is a report on DTI from Dr Wilson which will bring you up to date with details of current activities and developments worth noting. I also would like to refer you to something in Jenny's last newsletter which struck the hearts of some committee members. The situation described below is just the kind of thing that the Malcolm McSwan Relief Fund is suited for. Accordingly, the budget for 2009 reflects a donation for this relief.

On the topic of money, let me tell you about a frustrating time I had this month. I received a phone call from one of our church members asking me to meet her the next day. As I read the text message, my heart sank. I knew it could mean only one thing – she needed money. There have been so many situations over the last couple of months where we have had to help out so many people in different ways, and are conscious of how much of our money goes in helping others. The cynical side of me was saying, 'people only want you as a friend for your money'. People see a white skin and think because we are paid in pounds that we are very well off.

I met the lady as requested. I had thought that she would ask me for about R200 (about £15) and wasn't prepared for the request for R1800. (about £130) I tried to explain that I just did not have that kind of money even in a savings account, but as she told me her story, I knew that we would have to find the money somehow. I managed to find someone with a charity budget and the money was paid to the necessary place. This whole issue of need is one of the hardest things that I have ever faced. Hardly a day goes by when we don't have someone needing money or help. I find it very distressing when I am not able to help and the temptation is to keep on giving and helping and finding ourselves in financial troubles. There are definitely some people who just chance their luck by asking for help yet for most, the need is very real and pressing. Even though we might not have the ready cash to help, we have so much in comparison to them. We have a large house, a car, adequate furniture, a choice of clothes and food on our table. Saying 'No!' is very hard.

Principal's Report on Recent Developments at Dumisani Theological Institute

New 2009 academic session: *New Students:* We are very encouraged by the current student numbers. We have 23 new students who have registered for our BMS, AMS, BTh or BA Hons courses for the first time this year bringing our total student number to approximately 62. In addition, we have some 13 students who are attending one of the BMS classes on the Old Testament for interest only. This group has brought significant diversity to the student body.

Continuing Students: In addition to new students, we have 10 of last year's BMS students who have progressed to the AMS/BTh course and one of our BTh graduates has begun the BA Hons degree

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Awards Ceremony: Our 2009 Awards Ceremony took place on Saturday 14 March 2009. Prof T Derrick Mashau, Professor of Missiology at the NWU Faculty of Theology in Potchefstroom was the guest speaker. He gave two special lectures on courting and marriage in the morning and then preached at the Awards Ceremony in the afternoon, at which we had 23 students who completed their courses, including 6 BTh graduates. It was a very encouraging day, with an attendance of around 180 people at some or all of the events.

Staff: *Full-time academic staff:* Rev Deon Lombard joined the full-time academic staff at the beginning of July 2008 as Lecturer in Old Testament and Biblical Theology. Shortly afterwards, Dr John Ross joined the Institute as Lecturer in Church History and Missions at Dumisani Theological Institute.

Part-time academic staff: We are grateful for the contributions from our part-time lecturers, although we have fewer people working in this capacity this year. Mrs Jenny Wilson is contributing a full-time teaching load on a voluntary basis. We will continue to involve any suitable academic staff who may be available to us when visiting the area.

Registrar: Mrs Shelley Lombard has quickly grown into her role as Registrar and has significantly improved our financial systems and the office management.

Support Staff Miss Nomaphelo Kwikwi continued her Lower Diploma in Library and Information Science at the University of Fort Hare. In general she has achieved very good results but we still await the final results of her course. We plan to continue to support further training for our administrative staff whenever required.

Buildings: The Steve Biko Foundation has arranged a valuation of 15 Leopold Street, which has been carried out. We have not heard any more from the Foundation since then. Given the reluctance of our neighbour to sell the house across the street, we have given some thought to whether we could develop new buildings on our existing property, particularly 12 Leopold Street which is a very large site. We have approached a professional and have held initial discussions about our thoughts. He has agreed to produce initial sketches and some quotations free of charge and without obligation. We also understand that the site behind No 12 may be available for sale in whole or in part and we will explore that possibility for acquiring further land.

Development: We have been working hard at raising the profile of Dumisani, locally, nationally and internationally. Locally, we have publicised conferences and other public events. At our various Day Conferences, we have representatives of most of the local KWT churches and of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Fort Hare, as well as our more traditional constituency. We have begun to run a small bookshop/coffee shop (the Mustard Seed) in No 12, and this has led to many local people visiting Dumisani who had not previously done so. Some church house groups have also visited the premises as a venue for their meetings or to hear about Dumisani. A good number of local people have joined the Dumisani Library for a small membership fee which encourages connections with local churches and brings in some financial resources for the Library. Increasingly positive relations with local churches have led to some donation income from at least one local church. The option of informal attendance at an evening class has also drawn some local people more fully into the life of Dumisani. Further afield, Dumisani was well represented at the recent Synod of the GKSA and there were various opportunities, both formal and informal, to highlight this work. Internationally, Dr John Ross continues to update our web site (www.dumisani.org) and more recently Dr Ross has created a page on Facebook which identifies it as a “cause” which people may join and indicate support. This has the potential to introduce Dumisani to many people with whom we have no contact but with whom our friends and colleagues do. There are presently 126 members scattered throughout the world. During his visit to the ETS and SBL conferences in the USA last November, the Principal had numerous opportunities to share news of Dumisani on an informal basis and to encourage interest in the work among academic friends. In the last few days we have distributed a new *Dumisani News* which went out to approximately 400 email addresses. We anticipate that there will be several opportunities for “deputation” meetings in the UK this year.

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Funding: We are very thankful for the significant level of financial support which we received from churches throughout the world, notably from the Free Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, during 2008. The latter funding, together with some significant donations of books, has enabled us to develop the Dumisani Library very positively and we hope to invest a considerable amount of funds in both the buildings and the stock during 2009 also. It is difficult to predict funding for 2009, given that virtually all our income comes as donations. I would suggest that our main strategies will be to extend our support base as widely as possible; to keep supporters fully informed of developments, with an emphasis on encouraging news; and to bring various specific needs before our supporters.

INDIA – Dr Dennis Muldoon reports:

The world has been given an amazing view of India in the highly acclaimed film ‘Slum Dog Millionaire’. India is a land of many and great contrasts; in landscapes, language and in culture. Mumbai slums are but one culture. Life in cities is changing rapidly and the middle class is thriving (est. at 200m) but in the millions of villages life has not changed greatly. Hinduism is the dominant religion but India has the world’s second largest population of Muslims. The city of Mumbai was news not only for this film but also for a bloody attack by Muslim terrorists.

Hinduism also has its militants. In August 2008 they targeted the Christians in India killing over a hundred, raping women, burning houses and destroying churches in the eastern state of Orissa. The Christian population in Khandamal district had grown from 14,000 in 1970 to over 150,000 - that was before the attacks. It is now only 10,000 with most still living in refugee camps - the militants will not allow them to return. Of one thousand churches only a handful were left undamaged.

Presbyterian Free Church: Two ministers of the PFC went to the city of Raipur in Jan 2009 on the border of Orissa to take a church service. Their ministry was well received, but distance and finances limit further ministry. The churches in Jabalpur, Lakhnadon and Chhapara continue to grow with satellite groups being formed in three villages. At Dhuma they have land and plan to build a place for worship - also at Purva and Chulgaon. An evangelist has started assisting in the work. A youth rally was attended by over 70 young people from these congregations. Rev Shyam Babu has been appointed as secretary (clerk) for the PFC with a couple of ministers scheduled to retire this year.

Lakhnadon Christian Hospital: The Medical Superintendent, Dr Adarsh Benn, and his wife continue in the medical ministry of this hospital. They struggle because of shortages of doctors, especially a surgeon. It is difficult to get doctors to come to these rural areas. They conducted only one free eye camp during the year due to a shortage of doctors. Without a surgeon many patients have to go elsewhere and the income of the hospital is also affected.

The monsoon (June - Sept) is the busy season for Lakhnadon hospital. They have epidemics of malaria, viral fever and acute gastroenteritis. The wards get flooded with the patients and extra beds have to be brought in at times. Dr Benn wrote ‘We did not have a junior doctor (MBBS) since last one year and Lata and me are the only doctors, it is very difficult for us to manage everything especially with many night calls. Sometimes we hardly sleep at night’. The PCEA continues to support LCH from missions relief funds

Spandana and Chhapara Community Health and Development Projects: The people involved in these projects work in many villages surrounding the two centres. They deliver primary health care including immunization and mother and child care. Awareness of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria is given along with general hygiene information. Water and sanitation projects are undertaken when the village community is informed and motivated. The gospel is brought to these villages in evening ministry programs.

Mission Schools: Students from the Chhapara Mission School achieved excellent results in board exams last year. Mr Michael John Kumar continues to give faithful Christian leadership. The school in Chhapara is a major one in the region with many children from non-Christians homes attending. The PCEA provides funds for some scholarships to needy students.

Synod Reports 2009

Mrs Anju Singh has taken over as principal of Lakhnadon Mission School. Rev Shyam Babu continues to provide Scripture teaching in the school. The PCEA also provides scholarship funds to this school.

Dr Dickson – New Delhi: Dr Dickson is engaged in mission work from his base in Delhi. His wife is active in teaching slum children. He visited Bihar in October to train rural women in livestock and poultry production. Such activities help these women to earn money and rise out of their poverty. Dr Dickson has now been asked to consult in a goat farm project not far from Delhi. He assists other Christian workers in establishing tent making ministries in rural areas to help the poor and reach them with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dr Tigi Verghis – Siliguri: Dr Tigi Verghis was on home assignment in Germany for six months in the past year. He returned to Siliguri in North India in January where he has recommenced his work in rural development. He does this work in partnership with local churches including Presbyterian Reformed churches in the Darjeeling hills.

Taleem Centres: Dr Rahmat, an elder in the Covenant Reformed Church in North India, requested help with ministry to his native community in Bihar, India. Synod 2008 agreed to support him for three years and in January 2009 he was able to open a Taleem (discipleship) centre at Siwan, Bihar. He was excited to visit this centre in February. He found 22-25 children were attending daily. They are taught English from the Bible and receive a meal each day. There is also an evening literacy program for young adults. On Sundays the centre is used for worship. Rahmat has been able to train some teachers for this centre at Dehra Dun. The local community has accepted the centre, although an open air meeting was attacked by an angry Muslim crowd. They have to provide good security for the children as many children are kidnapped for the flesh trade in this place.

On March 16 we received the tragic news that Dr Rahmat's wife, Irshadi, was electrocuted at home and died. Irshadi was a great help and encouragement to him in the ministry. Dr Rahmat is left with three school age children.

The Convener adds: The Synod decision in 2008 to support a Taleem centre in Patna, Bihar hinged on a report from Rev Calum Ferguson (FCS) who was to visit Dr Hussain in October of that year. The report from Rev Ferguson was very encouraging and supportive of the work Dr Hussain had put into the development of the first Taleem centre, with some initial funding from the FCS. On that positive basis the committee agreed to go ahead and support the Taleem centre for the three year period. Initially, the Taleem centre was to be in Patna, Bihar, however, Rahmat saw the potential to establish the centre in Siwan, Bihar. The main reason for this change was that a number of Christian people were already in this area that could be utilised as staff straight away. As Dennis has indicated above, Rahmat's report on the 7th of March was very encouraging. Please uphold him and his three children, Miriam, Shekinah and Zachariah in prayer as they deal with the loss of a loving wife and a caring mother.

SOUTH AMERICA – Mr Ian Conley reports:

Peru: Colegio San Andres: Mr Clive Bailey the current principal of San Andres took up his position at the beginning of 2008. Clive has a wealth of experience in both Perú and Scotland in education. He brings a very practical and practiced view to the position.

Like all private schools enrolments are critical to the financial viability of the school. Enrolments in 2008 remained stubbornly below the critical 500 students. A greater emphasis on recruitment was implemented towards the end of 2008 along with a priority for this issue in prayer.

It is with gladness that at the commencement of first term in 2009 the enrolment is 527 students. This is a cause for considerable thanksgiving.

The two scholarships, provided from the McSwan bequest, are assisting not only the students and families involved who other wise would not be able to attend San Andres, but have generated a great deal of interest as well as one other positive enrolment. The scholarships were awarded to two first

Synod Reports 2009

year high school boys who look as though they will benefit significantly from the school and the assistance.

The school repainted and improved the early primary class rooms during the year but the site remains old and cramped but there is no viable alternative at present. The school's plans to purchase a small bus for student transport had to be shelved with the funds needed elsewhere within the school. Staff numbers were reduced during the year to assist in balancing the finances.

The possibility for short term volunteer assistance in teaching English or possibly other areas of needed expertise remain. These are self funded opportunities that need a commitment of at least 3-6 months. Young people from mainly Scotland have contributed to the school in this way.

Moyobamba: The major change in Moyobamba was the accepting of a call to the Aberdeen congregation in Scotland by Rev David MacPherson. David and his family are now settled in Aberdeen and David and Marta are applying the same enthusiasm in Aberdeen as they did in Moyobamba with clear plans and activity for building the church in that area.

David retains a keen interest in the Peruvian work and plans to return to Peru for some weeks in mid 2009 to further the work there. Along with Dr Apolos Landa and others from the Moyobamba congregation there are plans and negotiations underway for the establishment of a Christian University in the Moyobamba area.

Outreach continues in a number of surrounding communities with new work commencing in both the Loreto Province with Pastor Dario and in Lluylluvucha a suburb of Moyobamba where the congregation leadership wish to start as a second church in the greater Moyobamba area.

The Annie Soper School in 2009 has an enrolment of 320. For this we are very thankful. Again the scholarships provided under the McSwan bequest for needy students are of great benefit. A new Headmaster was appointed from within the Annie Soper staff, Mr Joaquin Briones, and evidently this has been a wise choice.

Volunteers have made a significant contribution to the Annie Soper School with helpers coming from Scotland and the USA. There is considerable benefit to the volunteer and the home church.

Lima Evangelical Seminary: The Rev Donnie Smith continues in the leadership post of Rector of the Seminary. This seminary remains the leading institution for theological training in Perú and as such is of strategic importance.

Colombia: Bible Seminary Medellin: Dr Manuel Reaño continues to head up the Seminary as Principal. Financial constraints continue to affect the Seminary, students and prospective students. Also helping in the Seminary is Rev Dr David Ford who has worked in both Perú and Scotland. Colombia is more stable than it was some years ago but safety issues remain.

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Malcolm McSwann Mission Relief Fund (MMRF): There were no extra disbursements from this fund in 2008.

Prayer Calendar: The Convener continues to compile and distribute the prayer calendar bi-monthly and from all reports the information is well received by our congregations and overseas recipients. It is an excellent means in providing for informed prayer and therefore delegates are urged to recommend its use amongst their congregations and at their weekly prayer meetings.

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Finance Aspects: Following are the items reflected in the missions' budget for 2009, which is tabled at the end of this report.

1. MMMRF funding for Rev Trevor Leggott: Mr Leggott furnished the Committee with a report indicating that 25% of his work time was spent on the relief of need amongst indigenous Australians during 2008. This is reflected in the budget for 2009, with 25% of his support coming from the MMMRF.
2. India:
 - a. The Chhapara Mission School: The Committee recommend that the Chhapara Mission School receive \$2,000, as per last year, from the MMMRF for scholarships and resources.
 - b. The Lakhnadon Mission School: The Committee recommend that the Lakhnadon Mission School receive \$1,500 from the MMMRF for scholarships and resources.
 - c. The Committee recommend continuing the support of the important medical work in India. Lakhnadon Christian Hospital: \$10,000, Chhapara Christian Health Centre: \$10,000 from the MMMRF.
 - d. The Committee recommend that Dr P. Dickson continue to receive support of \$2500 from the MMMRF.
3. CWI: The Committee continues to be greatly encouraged by the work of Paul Morris and KayChan Park. Therefore, the Missions committee recommend that CWI Australia again receive a grant of \$5,000 from Missions General Funds.
4. South America:
 - a. The Committee recommend continuing the provision of funds, \$6,500 from the MMMRF, to provide scholarships for needy students at Colegio San Andres, Lima, Peru.
 - b. The Committee also recommend that the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba receive \$2,200 which will provide scholarships for two needy children.
5. Dumisani Theological Institute:
 - a. The Committee recommend that \$1,000 be granted from Missions General Funds to support the vital role of reformed teaching by the Institute.
 - b. The Committee also recommend that DTI receive \$2,000 from the MMMRF to assist in relief of needy individuals and families in poverty. Mrs Jenny Wilson to be responsible for administrating this funding.

Proposed Deliverances

1. That Synod express its continued prayerful support and interest in the work of Rev Trevor Leggott in his ministry with Australian Indigenous Ministries.
2. That Synod delegates direct their congregations attention to the prayerful and financial support needed for Rev. Trevor Leggott in his ministry with Australian Indigenous Ministries
3. That Synod encourage congregational members to consider volunteering to help as native English speakers in either San Andres or the Annie Soper School.
4. That Synod adopt the budget for 2009 and express general agreement with the estimates for 2010.

Missions Budget 2009

	Budget	2008 Actual	2008	2008	Estimate 2010
			Balance 1 Jan 2009	Balance 1 Jan 2010	
Balance at 1 Jan 2008		82558			35246.96
Income Investments & Positive Asset					
Revaluation	20000	28648	Income Investments & Assett Revaluation	18000	20000
Giving Missions General	10000	8510	Giving Missions General	8000	9000
Refund Air Fares	0	1732 *			
Missions Support AIM: Giving	8000	3732	Missions Support AIM: Giving	4000	5000
From the Frontiers Subscriptions	900	794	From the Frontiers Subscriptions	900	1000
	38900	43416	Income	30900	35000
Expenditure					
Fiji Expenses	1100	0	Expenditure		
CWI	5000	5000	Fiji Expenses	0	
AIM (TIL Part Salary, SAW/LSL Levy)	39500	38114	CWI	5000	6000
Visiting Missionary Expenses	1000	581	AIM (TIL Part Salary, SAW/LSL Levy)	37050	41000
Dumisani Theol. Institute & Bible School	1000	1000	Visiting Missionary Expenses	1000	2000
Admin: Postage, telephone etc	600	280	Dumisani Theol. Institute & Bible School	1000	1500
From the Frontiers, Banners	1000	697	Admin: Postage, telephone etc	500	600
Reimbursement Rev Muldoon	969	969	From the Frontiers, Banners	900	1100
RTIFA Project	1000	1000			
Negative Assett Revaluation		28635			
Total Expenditure	51169	76277	Total Expenditure	45450	52200
Closing Balance	70389	49797	Closing Balance	35247	18047

* Part of this reimbursement covers 2007 expenditure

Note: Account Balances 1 Jan 2009	2008 Actual
DAA Bequest	49117
Missions General	0
Missions Support Fiji	680
Missions Support Legg/AM	0
Total	49797

	Budget	2008 Actual	2008	2008	Estimate 2010
			Balance at 1 Jan 2009	Balance at 1 Jan 2010	
Malcolm McSwan Missions Relief Fund					
Income					
Balance at 1 Jan 2008	50000	526593	Income	348838	314588
Income Investments & +ve Revaluation		35668	Balance at 1 Jan 2009	526593	50000
	50000	35668	Income Investments & Revaluation	25000	45000
Total Income			Total Income	25000	45000
Expenditure					
Lakhnadon Christian Hospital	10000	10000	Expenditure		
Lakhnadon Mission School	1500	1500	Lakhnadon Christian Hospital	10000	11000
Chhapara Christian Health Centre	10000	10000	Lakhnadon Mission School	1500	2000
Chhapara Mission School	2000	2000	Chhapara Christian Health Centre	10000	11000
San Andres Schlorships	6500	6500	Chhapara Mission School	2000	2500
Annie Soper Schlorships	2200	2200	San Andres Schlorships	6500	7000
AIM (TIL Part Salary, SA/LSL levy)	15000	11063	Annie Soper Schlorships	2200	2500
Fees and Charges	200	129	AIM (TIL Part Salary, SA/LSL levy)	12350	15000
Dr Dickson Allahabad	2500	5000 *	Fees and Charges	200	200
Negative Assett Revaluation		155031	Dr Dickson Allahabad	2500	2500
Taleen Centre (Dr Rahmat Hussain)	10000	10000	DTI Relief Funds South Africa	2000	10000
Total Expenditure	59900	213423	Taleen Centre (Dr Rahmat Hussain)	10000	
Closing Balance 31 Dec 2008	516693	348838	Total Expenditure	59250	63700
			Closing Balance 31 Dec 2009	314588	295888
			* includes budget 2007 allocation paid in 2008		

Giving By Congregation 2008

	Brisbane	Armidale	Hastings	Hunter/Barrington	Manning	Hawkesbury /Nepean	Hamilton	Knox	Narre Warren	Geelong	Ulverstone	Totals
Congregation/Fund	0	0	1000	0	60	0	0	2000	672			3732
Legg/AM	600	0	180	500	3372	40	0	500	0	2386	933	8510
Missions General	600	0	1180	500	3432	40	0	2500	672	2386	933	12242
Totals												
IC 20 March 2009												

CHURCH & NATION, WITH YOUTH & FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Members: *D. K. Muldoon (convener), R.W. Murray (Banner), M.G. Smith (website), G. Hamilton, T. Reeve, S.R. Tamata.*

The committee met in May 2008 at Cardiff mainly to discuss organisation of the family camp.

Church and Nation:

While the world places its hope in politicians and scientists we place our hope in the Lord our God. There was great rejoicing in the USA and much of the world with the election of a new president in the USA. Millions hope for a new beginning. Most presidents and political leaders come to power with the promise of a new order. But all world leaders are just men or women who have little power to change poverty, morals or the climate. We remind our leaders that God is the one who raises them up and puts them down. Only in God's strength can they govern effectively. With this understanding we pray for them.

Not so long ago it was the church that was accused of proclaiming a message of doom and gloom. Today it is the economists who proclaim gloom and doom. Today it is the scientists who are proclaiming the end of the world as we know it if we do not act now to do something. The secular world, the 'experts' in all their worldly wisdom, give us little to be thankful for, and offer us little to hope.

Some years ago many feared a nuclear bomb would bring the end of the world. Today it is climate change they fear. What will it be next? Those who believe the word of God are the ones offering hope. We always have, but this message is one we hold out afresh to the world today. God is the creator and sustainer of this world. In Jesus Christ all things hold together. The world and everything in it is his, and he has set a day when this world will come to an end. Moreover, he said that it will come when we least expect it, like a thief in the night. What God tells man to do is be humble before him, to repent and worship God not the creation.

We are to be just, love mercy, and walk humbly with God (Micah 6:8), fearing neither man nor nature, but obeying God's commands. The new governments in Australia and the USA have lifted the bans on funding abortion in their overseas aid work. There is a weakening of the stand against homosexual marriage. Proponents of euthanasia are more vocal. We must stand firm for the sanctity of human life and against immorality, considering such matters when we vote and letting the law makers know what God requires.

Christians must be alert to laws that deny them freedom to worship and proclaim the gospel. We have enjoyed freedom of religion in Australia since first settlement, freedom to worship and freedom to preach. Many nations do not enjoy such freedom. How much longer will we? Freedom of religion laws are often a smoke screen for freedom to practice *some* religions and freedom to silence preaching of the Bible. Some are calling for a Bill of Rights in Australia. Why we might ask? Will such a Bill impact upon our freedom to live and worship according to God's commands?

We were all shocked at the destruction and loss of life in the Victorian bushfires. They were a powerful reminder of the forces of nature, forces over which the Lord has control. Jesus said 'be still' to the howling wind on the lake. As a church we prayed and were kept informed of the need by those nearest to the fires. With this information many gave appropriate help to the victims.

Psalmody:

The Decision Book 2008 records a minute from Synod 1988 welcoming the initiative of the Free Church of Scotland in preparing a new version of the Psalms for singing (Psalmody- p101). This version has been prepared by the Psalmody committee of the Free Church of Scotland and approved for use in their churches. Drafts of this translation of the Psalter were circulated among PCEA ministers at the time. Some congregations are now using this version called 'Sing Psalms', along with the 1650 version, on the advice of their minister; even though some Psalms (13-15) have difficult tunes. Recommendation No 5 acknowledges this publication by the Free Church of Scotland and the use of the 'Sing Psalms' by PCEA congregations.

The Presbyterian Banner (from the Editor).

I never thought I'd be producing the 2009 Banner Report to Synod! I'm thankful to God for the strength given thus far to produce the magazine. I'm also thankful for those who continue to subscribe, read, and refer to the magazine. If we take into account its pdf presence on the web [hits], direct e-mail distribution, subscribers, complimentary copies, and congregational distribution, our 'readership' averages about 470 per month. A few have indicated that they now wish to receive the magazine on the web – which, of course, is our ultimate goal – dropping our printed copies from 105 to 95 and our packages to 32.

We are also thankful to those who have given donations to the magazine. We also record our thanks to those who have given well in excess of the subscription price.

I would also like to thank those contributors and correspondents who have made it possible for me to be more of an Editor than a Producer. The Rev. George Ball, Wes Hanna, Dennis Muldoon and Peter Carswell have been most faithful in this area and deserve special mention. I would also like to thank our very competent team in the Northern Rivers for their help –Roberta Murray for looking after packaging, John McPhee for looking after the finances, and Ross Campbell for handling the postage. And, of course, we also thank our faithful readers for their encouragement and support.

The Balance Sheet for 2008 is available below. We finished the year with a credit balance of \$1,790.55, and with subscriptions and donations, our opening balance for 2009 stands at about \$3,586.55. We estimate that production and postage in 2009 will cost in the vicinity of \$1,600 leaving a balance of about \$2,000 at the end of the year.

As I pointed out last year, with our present very satisfactory arrangement, if congregations now involved in their own production [6] wish to review their options, the production team could cope with it! It would add less than 10 packages to the distribution list. The current cost of producing one copy is \$1.00. Factoring in postage, we can supply copies [in bulk] for \$13.75 per year.

Robert Hingston [Tasmania] continues to work away quietly and efficiently at scanning books – and very shortly we hope to be able to make available his work in the form of a number of e-books.

RECEIPTS and PAYMENTS

Balance 31/12/2007 cf \$ 997.83

Printing \$1,155.73

Postage/Labels \$438.14

Subscriptions \$2,373.00

Interest \$ 13.59 \$1,593.87

Total \$3,384.42

Balance, 31/12/2008 \$1,790.55

The PCEA website (from the Webmaster)

Development of the church website (www.pcea.org.au) has continued throughout this past year, as time and other commitments have allowed. On two occasions the site was hacked. No significant damage resulted although on both occasions it left the site unavailable for a short time. In order to minimise the risk of a re-occurrence of this problem a number of steps were taken to enhance security. One of these was the removal of the global access to the Synod download area. Those (office-bearers) wishing to access this area should contact the webmaster asking for a personal login to be created for them.

Around 50 persons per day visit the site—so far from 73 countries. As might be expected, Australia leads the list and accounts for around one third of the total, USA follows with 21%; China with 4%; Germany and UK nearly 3% each; Canada 1%. The origin of nearly 30% is unknown. Some of these visitors are linked to us from the searches they have made on different search engines (Google etc). The most popular article appears to be one entitled 'Guido de Bres and the birth of the Belgic

Confession'. Permission was granted to a Spanish-speaking congregation of the OPC to translate this article for their own website.

An upcoming update to Joomla will allow better control of what different users will be able to do on the website. When this is in place it will be easier for individuals to contribute material without any reference to, or involvement by, the webmaster.

In the meantime, a start has been made on a series of articles alerting readers to the resources that are available on the Internet. At first this will focus on digital copies of books by John Calvin and others. For the website to develop more of its potential many more people need to be contributing articles. If you, or someone in your congregation has written something that would be suitable then please let the webmaster know about it.

Churchwide Family Camp 2009 (from T. Reeve)

We give thanks to our God for our PCEA Family Camp held at 'Naamaroo', Lane Cove National Park, Sydney in January. There was an uplifting family atmosphere with over 80 in attendance from babes in arms to veterans in wheelchairs, all happily mingling together. Families came from Brisbane, Grafton, Armidale, Wauchope, Taree, Mt Druitt, Sydney, Melbourne and Ulverstone, as well as from three other denominations. It was encouraging to have a good number of our ministers (two others were prevented from coming by illness in their families) leading in the ministry of God's Word and answering our questions on the last night.

'Naamaroo', an aboriginal word for white man's compass, was referred to in a children's talk at the camp. They were taught that it is God's Word alone that 'shows us the way' in what we are to believe and how we are to live. A very helpful series of studies on the first four commandments was given by Rev George Ball. Each of the commandments was linked to the theme of worship with the central premise that it is God Himself who directs us in our worship and obedience. Mrs Kay Hilberts lead in sessions of hearty and harmonious Psalm singing. After the morning session the primary aged children and pre-schoolers went off to their activities, ably organised by Glen Hamilton and some of the ladies. The remaining campers went into groups to discuss practical questions on how we daily live out God's commandments.

Recreation was built in to the programme with every afternoon 'free' –ball games, table tennis competitions, swimming in the on-site pool, bushwalks, enjoying fellowship out on the verandahs or inside the air conditioned dining room or even a recuperative snooze. Some went sightseeing or visiting in Sydney. On Missions night we received an update on the work of God amongst our own aboriginal people by Trevor Leggott, A.I.M. Janice Reid, a missionary with the Reformed Church of New Zealand, gave us an insight into radio ministry in Indonesia where she trains broadcasters for regional Christian radio stations.

Other Camps

The Brisbane congregation organised Camp Drew at Lennox Head for the Northern Presbytery congregations over a weekend in December 2008. Ray Murray led studies of the Lord's Prayer. A talent show on the Saturday night was a highlight for the children as well adults.

The Manning congregation held a youth/family camp in October at a new site on the Hastings called Jasper Peak - they were prevented from using the Pappinbarra site at late notice. Over 50 children along with 20 adults attended. They enjoyed lots of games, hikes and talks by George Ball.

Memory Work

In 2008 our Sunday Schools presented 82 certificates (5 congregations). It is encouraging to see the children being taught the Scriptures, the Catechism and Psalm singing. We acknowledge those who are so faithfully teaching the children in our congregations.

Essays

Essay prizes were given to 12 children, 2 more than in 2007. It is encouraging to see the young people reading their Bible and writing very interesting answers to the set questions. They were surely blessed

Synod Reports 2009

of the Lord in doing this work. We encourage more of the children in the church to put pen to paper and write an essay.

Birthday Roll

Mrs Margaret Kinder sent out birthday cards to 139 of our children. Of the 166 in 2007 11 reached the age of 12years, and 10 moved. 8 names were added to the roll. Please notify Margaret of any children who could be receiving greetings from the church family on their birthday. The cards are sent with prayer for the child and their family.

Search Work

Mrs Irene Steel continued as coordinator of this program. 15 children were presented with book awards in 2008, an increase from the previous year. Irene now has all the questions on CD which makes her work slightly easier. She still has to correct the work sent in, and find suitable books to present to the children.

Set work for Youth in 2009

Metrical Psalms

Infants (< 7 yrs)	Psalm 23/121 Psalm 67/100
Junior (8-12 yrs)	Psalm 37:1-11 Psalm 96
Senior (13-17yrs)	Psalm 92 Psalm 111

Scripture memory

Junior	Hebrews 12:22-29
Senior	Hebrews 10:12-25 Revelation 21:1-8

Psalm Tunes. Please choose an appropriate Psalm from preferred book (sol fa copies available from convener).

<u>Junior</u>	<u>Senior</u>
St Thomas (SM)	St Cecilia
Winchester	Dominus Regit Me /Shepherd
Main	Dennis
Rest Love	Unknown

Catechism

Section 1	1-10
Section 2	11-22
Section 3	23-38
Section 4	39-62
Section 5	63-68
Section 6	89-107
Section 7	1-107 word perfect

Essays

Infants(<7)

Q. Describe or draw the Ark of the Covenant and the things that were in it (Heb9:4).

Junior (8-12) (400 words)

Q. Describe or draw the plan of the temple built by King Solomon, together with the furnishings (Heb 9). What happened to the curtain when Jesus died on the Cross (Matthew 27:51)?

Senior (13-17) (1000 words)

Q. Describe the Ark of the Covenant and explain its significance in Old Testament worship. Why is the Ark of the Covenant not part of our worship today?

Youth Outreach

Northern Presbytery

Young people at Armidale are involved in Boys brigade.

Synod Reports 2009

Southern Presbytery

Ulverstone has a monthly youth meeting. Knox has a fortnightly meeting led by Connie Dekter with five or more attending. There were 18 youth at a combined Knox/Narre Warren gathering in March 2009. There is a young adults group of about 16 in the Sudanese congregation which meets weekly.

Central Presbytery

The Manning continues to run a Kid's club and Lighthouse club on Friday with some 15 children attending each. Neil Robinson leads a youth group in Tinonee for teenagers from the community. On the Hunter a Kid's club is conducted on the first Saturday of each month. At Mt Druitt some 10-14 children from the church and neighbourhood attend the Lighthouse club every Friday after school. A Youth club for teenagers was started in 2009 with a few church youth and others attending.

Youth and Fellowship Budget

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>
Brisbane family camp	400	400
Melbourne family camp	-	400
Essay prizes	300(part)	250
Search work prizes	130	100
Birthday cards	220	250
PCEA Family camp 2009	2450	200
TOTAL	<u>3500</u>	<u>1600</u>

Proposed Deliverances:

1. Synod thank all Sunday School teachers and youth leaders for their dedicated work in teaching the young people.
2. Synod thank Rev Ray Murray and all engaged in the production and distribution of *The Presbyterian Banner* - Susan Scott, Roberta Murray, John McPhee, and Ross Campbell - and all who have provided material for this publication.
3. Synod thank Rev Gavin Smith for managing the website www.pcea.org.au
4. Synod thank Mrs Margaret Kinder for sending birthday greetings to children in the PCEA, and Mrs Irene Steel for setting and assessing Search Work questions and awarding prizes to the children.
5. Synod note and record in the Decision book that, further to the minute of Synod 1988 (Decision book 2008, Psalmody, p101), The Free Church of Scotland has published a new version of the Psalter entitled 'Sing Psalms', and this Psalter is being used in a number of PCEA churches.
6. Synod write to the Prime Minister reminding him of our prayers for him as our civil leader appointed by God, and of what God requires of us as written in Micah 6:8.

Correspondence Item 1

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA
Northern Presbytery

Clerk: Rev. R.W.Murray, 33 Tallowood Street, South Grafton, 2460
Phone 02 6643 4272; E-mail: raymurray@compuserve.com

24th February, 2009.

The Clerk,
Synod of Eastern Australia,
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.

Dear Mr. Leggott,

OVERTURE

At a duly constituted meeting of the Northern Presbytery at 33 Tallowood Street, South Grafton, at 1.00 pm on Friday, the 20th February, 2009,

Inter alia,

10.10. From the Northern Rivers Session: Overture Anent Alternative Questions and Formula. It was moved, seconded and carried that the Correspondence be received. Mr. John Ramsay, and Mr. Graham Andrews appeared in support of the Overture. It was moved, seconded and carried unanimously that the Overture be sustained, and that the Northern Presbytery Overture the Synod of Eastern Australia in the following terms:

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church Of Eastern Australia,
Whereas,

1. Synod 2008 resolved that: "Synod approves the "Act Allowing Optional Alternative Questions and Formula while not reducing commitments in terms of the Act of Synod 1952;"

2. And whereas the words in the declaration "*that no reduction in the commitments required by the Act of Synod 1952 is intended, and that if any question of interpretation shall arise the obligations of the said Act shall be decisive*" leaves open the possibility of difference between the Act of 2008 and that of 1952 in the words "No reduction is intended", and "if any question of interpretation shall arise the obligations of the said Act shall be decisive;"

3. And whereas it is desirable, as far as possible, to avoid litigation, confusion and unrest and preserve and promote unity and harmony in the Church, especially in the fundamental and solemn act of admission to Office, and its witness to the world;

4. And whereas there are significant differences in phraseology between the new Act and the old, namely:

[1] faith and manners/ faith and life.

[2] own and believe / believe and declare;

[3] "whole doctrine" founded upon the Word of God/ the doctrine;
a confession of your faith/ true doctrine to which you will constantly adhere.

[4] "Do you sincerely own the purity of worship presently authorized and practised in this church"/Do you sincerely acknowledge the Biblical warrant for the worship authorised by the Confession of Faith, which worship is illustrated in the Directory for Public Worship of 1645 and in Acts of Synod from time to time?

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[5] “Sessions, Presbyteries, Provincial Synods, General Assemblies”// “Congregational, regional, and national assemblies”.

5. And whereas there are obvious omissions from the Act of 2008, for example,

[1] Specific examples of errors that must be rejected;

[2] Any reference to a specific historical illustration of the Headship of Christ over the Church, and the spiritual independence of the Church, that is integral to our Church’s history and reason for existence over against other Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

6. And whereas there is the introduction of new, and undefined, concepts and statements into the Questions and formula of the New Act, namely

[1] “the mutually helpful relationship between Church and State; and

[2] “the ideal of a united Christian Church in a Christian Nation;”

[3] “The Church does not regard the involvement of the State in matters concerning religion as of itself contrary to liberty of conscience.”

[4] “the care of your family” over against “ruling well your own family.”

7. And whereas there are apparent differences in meaning between the said Act, and that of 1952, namely,

[1] The 2008 Act does not require the “owning of the purity of worship presently authorised and practised in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia,which worship, I am persuaded are founded on the word of God, and agreeable thereto.” It only requires that the worship authorised by the Confession, illustrated in the Directory for Public Worship, and in “*Acts of Synod from time to time*” be acknowledged as having Biblical warrant.

[2] The Act of 1952 defines precisely how the relationship between Church and State is to be understood – namely, in the view embodied in the Claim Declaration and Protest of the Free Church of Scotland of 1843, and commonly known as the Establishment Principle. The Act of 2008 speaks only of a “mutually helpful relationship” and gives no indication of what that might be.

8. And whereas there are additional promises required in the alternative form of the questions asked –

[1] Deacons/Elders now have to answer a question about purity of worship as well as subscribe the formula.

[2] The respective duties of Deacons, Elders and Ministers are spelled out in greater detail, including one relating to meetings. Elders have to promise to attend the meetings associated with their office, and prospective ministers have to take part in them “in a positive and constructive way.” The older form requires no such promise concerning meetings.

9. And whereas there are fundamental legal difficulties in having an alternative form of subscription, namely, that inasmuch as “An oath is taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation,” an Office Bearer, in giving affirmative answers to the Alternative Questions, and subscribing the Alternative Formula, cannot be regarded as committing himself to the terms of the Act of Synod 1952 unless both sets of Questions and Formula are identical in requirements, or he also subscribes to the Act of 1952.

10. And whereas there are practical problems connected with having two forms of Subscription, namely

[1] Whether the Presbytery has the right to determine which vows are used;

[2] Whether the minister elect chooses which vows he uses;

[3] Whether the Session is bound to use the same vows as those chosen by Presbytery;

[4] And in calling a minister, whether a congregation is free to reject a minister who has not subscribed a particular formula.

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11. And whereas it is desirable that all Office Bearers in the Church should express their oneness and unity in subscribing the same formula, instead of creating two classes of Office bearers - Those who are bound by their 1952 vows and new Office bearers who subscribe the new vows;

Now therefore the Northern Presbytery respectfully Overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia to rescind the "Act allowing optional alternative questions and formula while not reducing commitments in terms of the Act of Synod 1952"; delay any attempt to introduce a new form of Subscription until such a time as greater unity of mind can be secured on the matter; and effect the change under Barrier Act procedure, or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom may seem best. It was further moved, seconded, and carried that Mr. John Ramsay, and Mr. Peter Smith or Mr. Ray Murray appear in support of the Overture."

Extracted from the Records of the Northern Presbytery,
the 24th day of February, 2009,

I append herewith the Overture, together with the supporting documents from the Northern Rivers Session.

Yours sincerely,

R.W.Murray - Clerk of Presbytery.

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3rd May, 2007

To the Synod of Eastern Australia,

Dear Moderator,

I would, firstly, like to apologise through you to the Synod for the lateness of this letter. I have been overseas since 9th April until today and so have not seen a copy of the Reports to Synod until now.

Having now looked at the Reports, I have been disturbed by the entirely misleading impression of myself and of my actions given by the opening sentence of the training of Ministry Report to Synod 2007. Accordingly, I would like, through you, to set the record straight for the members of the court as follows.

The Report of the Training of Ministry Committee states that:

Dr. Hanna ... advised the Synod Clerk [on] 15/1/07 that he did not wish to be involved in any Synod Committees and certainly did not want to take on the Convenership of Training of Ministry.

This statement gives an entirely incorrect impression of what occurred. Here is the actual sequence of events:

Sometime in December 2006, I received a letter addressed to the Convener of the Training of Ministry Committee. Since I had never been asked to undertake this role I knew that, whoever the convener might be, it certainly could not be myself. I, therefore, sent the letter to the Clerk with the request that he should forward it to the correct person. On the 15th January I received a telephone call from the Clerk to tell me that, much to his own surprise, he had found that Synod Minutes named me as Clerk. I found it difficult to believe that anyone would have nominated me for this position without the common courtesy of asking me first whether I was willing to undertake the task! I also found it difficult to believe that, even if all this had happened, no one would have bothered to inform me for some eight months after the event!

It was in the light of this that I informed the Clerk that I did not wish to be involved in any Synod Committees as long as this sort of thing happened. However, this does not mean that I would not be willing to help in the workings of the Church in circumstances where the ordinary conventions of behaviour were observed – and where a Convener was also given the opportunity to have an input into the membership of the committee.

Yours respectfully,

W.J.W. Hanna