

The Synod of Eastern Australia



To meet at the
Wauchope Church Facilities
Hastings Congregation
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

6th – 8th May 2014

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 2014

Time	Tuesday 6 th May	Time	Wednesday 7 th May	Thursday 8 th May
	Synod to Commence with Session 1 at 4.30pm	9.00am	SESSION 3 Devotions and Prayer Law and Advisory Training of Ministry Church and Nation	SESSION 6 Devotions and Prayer Superannuation Finance Trust Corporations Reports of Examiners of Records. Appointment of Moderator-elect Time and Place of Next Synod Closure of Synod
		M/Tea 10.30am		
		12.30pm	Lunch	Lunch
4.30pm	SESSION 1 Constitution of Synod Retiring Moderator's Sermon. Thanks to Retiring Moderator Presbytery Rolls. Welcomes (New members, guests, associations as required). Administration	2.00pm	SESSION 4 Media (Banner & Website) Archivist Youth and Fellowship Missions Inter-Church Relations Delegates from Other Churches	Synod Closes at the end of Session 6 at 12.30pm Lunch to follow before delegates depart
		A/Tea 3.30pm		
6.00pm	Dinner	6.00pm	Dinner	
7.00pm	SESSION 2 Election of Moderator for 2014/2015	7.00pm	SESSION 5 Missions Speakers	
7.30pm	Moderator's address. Thanks to Moderator. Presbytery Reports			
8.30pm	Close	8.30pm		Close

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Members: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer.

Ministerial Movements:

Rev Robin Tso was inducted to the charge of the Hunter Barrington on 12th July 2013.
Rev MG Smith, from Geelong, retired with effect from 27th July 2013 and returned to Scotland.
Mr Denver Boehret was licenced on 8th November 2013 and is available for a call.

Timetable: This year follows a similar format as last year with a commencement time of 4.30pm.

Moderator Elect: The Clerk was notified by Mr Klazinga (appointed Moderator Elect at Synod 2013) on 7th March 2014 that he would like to be excused from Synod 2014 as it was expected that his wife Julie would be undergoing medical treatment at the time of Synod. The committee agreed to put forward the nomination of Rev Dr RS Ward to be moderator for 2014.

Congregational Statistics: See the table appended to this report.

Expression of Sympathy: We are not aware of the death of any former member of the Synod.

Correspondence:

	<u>Date Received</u>	<u>From</u>
1.	24.03.14	From Northern Presbytery Re Barrier Act return re Child Abuse
2.	24.03.14	From Southern Presbytery Re Barrier Act return re Child Abuse
3.	17.03.14	From Central Presbytery Re Barrier Act return re Child Abuse
4.	17.03.14	Overture from Central Presbytery Re Reception of Student for the Ministry

Committees:

The suggested Committee structure remains similar to that as was substantially changed last year with the suggested changes: R Tso to convene Superannuation, and to replace R Hingston on Law & Advisory.

Administration: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer.

Law and Advisory: RS Ward (Convener), TI Leggott, R Tso, T Reeve, R Lawson.

Inter-Church Relations: GD Ball (Convener), A Scheepers, J Klazinga, S Bajema, with power to coopt an elder

Church and Nation, Media: DK Muldoon (Convener Church and Nation), S Bajema (Convener Media and Banner), D Kerridge (Website), TW Yoa.

Youth and Fellowship: AA Miranda (Convener), A Scheepers, G Hamilton, S Carswell, T Reeve.

Finance: AH Steel (Convener), DJ Ramsay, T. Buck, DE Kerr, J Audet.

Superannuation: R Tso (Convener), S Bajema, DP Smith, DJ Ramsay, J Audet.

Missions: JD Klazinga (Convener), DP Smith, TI Leggott, DK Muldoon, I Conley, J Greensill.

Training of Ministry: D Kerridge (Convener), JA McCallum, AA Miranda, D Manly, S Bajema.

Proposed Deliverances:

1. That Synod assures Rev Jim Klazinga and Julie of our prayerful support as Julie receives medical treatment, and wish her a speedy recovery if it please the Lord.
2. That Correspondence Items 1, 2 and 3 be taken with the Law and Advisory business.
3. That Correspondence Item 4 be taken with Training of Ministry business.
4. That the Committee Structure as noted in the report be adopted.
5. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Rev J McCallum and Ulverstone elder.
Central Presbytery	Rev. A Scheepers and Northern Rivers elder.
Southern Presbytery	Brisbane elder and Manning elder.

CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS AS AT 31.12.2013

	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	Sunday-School classes/ pupils	Youth midweek participants	
	2012	+	-	2013	2012	2013	>4	4-11	12-18	19-64	65+	Total				
Congregation elders/deacons																
Brisbane 4/1	36	3	-	39	50	50	2	15	7	26	8	58	2	4/19	0	
Nthn Rivers-5/3	48	-	1	47	60	40	1	3	3	16	32	55	0	1/3	0	
Hastings 4/1	37	2	1	38	42	42	4	4	2	26	13	49	1	1/1	0	
North P 13/5	121	5	2	124	152	132	7	22	12	68	53	162	3	6/23	0	
Manning 6/6	55	4	1	58	56	53	3	2	2	27	29	63	0	0		
Hunter 4/4	42	3	4	41	54	59	3	7	6	32	19	67	1	4/14	0	
St Geo's 4/3	50	3	10	43	60	65	4	5	-	42	24	75	1	2/2	0	
Mt Druitt 2/1	42	-	2	40	53	55	6	15	5	22	7	56	1	2/14	18	
Syd Sth 1/0	11	-	-	11	16	15	-	3	1	12	3	19	0	1/3	0	
Cent P 17/14	200	10	17	193	239	247	16	32	14	135	82	280	3	9/33	18	
Knox-3/0	32	-	-	32	44	48	5	10	5	27	13	60	0	1/6	7	
All Nations 1/0	57	3	11	49	110	110	14	39	15	74	1	143	26	2/40	10	
Narre W-1/1	38	4	2	40	56	50	0	4	5	27	16	52	0	2/7	0	
Carrum D 1/0	15	-	1	14	16	16	0	0	2	9	7	18	0	0	0	
Geelong-2/0	20	-	-	20	16	14	2	0	1	9	9	21	0	0	0	
Ulverst-1/1	24	-	-	24	34	40	0	4	5	16	18	43	0	2/8	20	
South P-9/2	186	7	14	179	276	278	21	57	33	162	63	335	26	7/61	37	
TOTALS 39/21	507	22	33	496	667	657	44	111	59	365	198	777	32	22/117	55	

Deaths reported: 1 each on Northern Rivers, Manning, Hastings, and Hawkesbury Nepean, 2 on Hunter = 6

NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

BRISBANE: The Year of our Lord 2013 was another year in which we as congregation could testify to the faithfulness of the Lord and his on-going providential care. “Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name! For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.” (Psalm 100:3-5).

Services: Two services were held most Lord’s Days at 10 am and 5 pm. One Sunday in January both services were cancelled due to Cyclone Oswald. Our afternoon service on 27 October was cancelled because of a combined Reformation Celebration Service held with other Presbyterian churches. Both services on 24 November were held at Camp Drewe instead of at our building in Wooloowin. Most services were led by Pastor Jim Klazinga. When he was unable to do so, Dr. Wes Hanna would normally lead the morning services, while various elders and visiting ministers led in the afternoon. It was common to have visitors worshipping with us, including some who regularly participate in the life of our congregation. We have begun making our services available via Skype in order to accommodate a growing number of folks needing to join us for worship via their phones. The Lord’s Supper was celebrated regularly once every two months. We continued the practice of having extra Thanksgiving collections for synodical causes on Lord’s Supper Sundays.

Membership: During 2013, membership remained steady. There were no births or deaths in the congregation. Three young people met with the session to profess their faith and were welcomed as communicant members: Nathanael Carswell, Micah Klazinga, and Naomi Klazinga. One member of the congregation got married this year: Joy Hanna married Shannon Daly on 21 December.

Session: The congregation continues to be served by the session consisting of four elders and the pastor. The session met occasionally, with time set aside each meeting focusing on praying for the congregation. Elder John Anderson has had to limit his participation on session (and the Deacons’ Court) because of his continuing struggle with Parkinson’s disease. Mr. Ron Lawson served as the representative elder at Presbytery and synod.

Deacons’ Court: The Deacons’ Court consists of the four elders, the pastor, and one deacon. The level of weekly offerings remains relatively good, considering the size of the congregation. Once again we would note the outstanding contribution being made by the small group of retired people in Rockhampton, who worship regularly with us via phone.

Education and Fellowship: Sunday School classes continued to be held each week during the school year after the morning worship services. The pastor also continued a course on the Westminster Confession held at the same time for youth beyond the Sunday School years. On most Sundays a fellowship lunch would be held after the Sunday School time. Two fortnightly Bible Studies led by the pastor met on alternate weeks. One met on Wednesdays in families’ homes and concluded a study on 1 Peter, after which the group began studying the book of Revelation. The other met at the church on Tuesdays and concluded a study on the book of Ecclesiastes, after which they began studying the book of Hebrews. Fellowship beyond regular church activities is made somewhat difficult due to the congregation being spread out over a wide area of SE Queensland. However, at least one picnic is held each year, and it is not uncommon to have congregational Family Teas at the church, including before the annual meeting. The congregation was also invited to a congregational meal last October to celebrate with Pastor and Mrs. Klazinga their 25th wedding anniversary

Camp Drewe: The Annual Family Camp was held at Lennox Head in November. The speaker was Rev. Andre Scheepers. He led a number of studies and the Sunday morning and afternoon worship services, and his ministry was greatly appreciated. Once again members from other PCEA congregations attended, and once again a good spirit of fellowship prevailed.

HASTINGS: We are thankful to the Lord that He has upheld us as a Congregation for another year. We continue to look for His blessing as we enter another year.

The minister’s family was blessed with the arrival early in the year of Emily Charlotte Lillian Kerridge. Her baptism took place in the Wauchope church on 28th April, 2013. Rev. R.W. Murray administered the sacrament and preached the Word. One faithful and stalwart member, Jean Lindsay, died on 14th October, 2013. She had been unable to attend for a long time, troubled by dementia. While we mourned her loss to us, we rejoiced in her gain in glory.

Synod was again hosted in Wauchope in May, 2103. It was a time of blessing and good fellowship.

The Port Hall is still being used by an inter-denominational group for Sunday afternoon meetings. They pay a donation for the use of the building and associated costs. The church investment property is currently occupied

by long-term tenants. Some minor additions have been made to the building and further improvements are proposed in 2014.

Services in Wauchope continue at 10am and 4pm, with an Adult Bible Class and Sunday School following the morning service. The Adult Class continues to study the Westminster Confession (Study of the Confession was completed in February, 2104 and we have moved on to look at the Larger Catechism). Kindee services are held fortnightly at 7pm. There is a mid-week Prayer meeting attended by a faithful group.

We give praise and thanks to the Lord again for the generosity of the Congregation and the fact that we hold a surplus at the end of 2013. Offerings continue to average above \$1,000 for the year. Donations from gracious benefactors have supplemented this income.

Revival begins with concerted prayer to the Lord of the Harvest, asking first for a revival of our hearts to seek our first love. We pray for this and for growth in numbers as we move into 2014.

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 have 2 services each Lord's Day – Grafton at 9 am, Maclean at 11am, with a combined attendance of 30 to 40 for the two services. Mid-week Bible Studies are held in both Grafton and Maclean. The telephone service is continuing and is appreciated by members on the Sunshine Coast, Evans Head and Ballina as well as locally. Some 9-10 people receive the service this way each Lord's Day. The Sunday-School continues in Grafton.

We are grateful to those ministers who have given supply during 2013. Among these were the Rev D. Kerridge, the Rev. J. Klazinga, the Rev. S.R. Tamata, the Rev. R. MacDonald, the Rev. K. MacLeod, the Rev. Andres Miranda, the Rev. Dennis Muldoon and the Rev. R.W. Murray.

During 2013 one of our members has passed away. Many of our members are either retired or are near retirement. Their continued faithfulness is a testimony to the faithfulness of God. Two new members have been added to the Roll during the year. The Roll now stands at 49 and our total Church community at about 78. One of our elders, Graham Andrews, and his wife Anne, have moved into a retirement unit at Wauchope. While they are much missed in the Congregation, we wish them every blessing in their new home.

Congregational givings during 2013 averaged \$943 per week. There is considerable income from property [Manse rental] and investment, and the Deacons' Court is mindful of its responsibility to be a good steward of these resources. We continue to make the Manse in Maclean available without charge to the Lower Clarence Christian Education Board for the operation of an Op-Shop which ensures a regular contribution of \$10,000 to the work of Special Religious Education in the High Schools in Grafton and Maclean. With an annual income in excess of \$100,000 – and the provision of a shed on Manse grounds for their work, they have insisted that the Church should benefit from the income generated, and return to the Congregation some \$5,000 per year. This money is available for assistance to other congregations or worthy causes. The sum of \$1000 has been donated to the Gideons, \$1000 to the Middle East Reformed Fellowship and \$10 000 to the General Missions Fund.. 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 and Hall in Lismore continues to be used 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 have been occupied throughout the year and there is a waiting list. We are grateful for the financial position, with more than sufficient funds to cover any foreseeable demand in the future. Two of the residents, non-members, have attended our services at times.

CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

ST GEORGES: St Georges continues to provide an important witness in the heart of the City of Sydney. Communicant membership for the year ended 31st December 2013 decreased by seven to 43, this being largely due to five Disjunction Certificates being issued to one family. There has also been a slight drop in attendances at worship services etc. with approximately 60 at the Lord's Day morning service, 32 the evening service and 24 the mid-week meeting. A Saturday morning prayer meeting at 8.00am has been held in the church for the past three and one half years with a faithful few attending but it ceased in December. The time and number of the weekly Worship services, Bible Class, Sabbath School and Psalmody Practice has not changed in the past twelve months. On most Lord's Days local and/or overseas visitors attend the morning service.

The Session at its December meeting resolved to conduct the election of an additional elder. A major church maintenance programme commenced during the latter part of the year with the erection of scaffolding of the church steeple to enable repairs and restoration works which are expected to take approximately two years to complete. Ongoing maintenance was carried out at the Congregation's retirement units at Lindfield where 17 units are made available from time to time, on a rental basis.

The congregation continues in good spirits generally, and thankful that we are still able to gather for public worship in St Georges although some of our members because of age and ill health no longer attend because of distance etc.

HUNTER: The Congregation is thankful to the Lord for the Ordination and Induction of Mr. Robin Tso on 12th July, 2013 as the new Minister of the Charge. Lord's Day Worship Services were conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff. Prior to and subsequent to his Ordination & Induction, Rev Tso conducted the Worship services with occasional relief being provided by a few suitably gifted members. Weekly live telephone broadcasts of Worship services to the sick and/or aged have been made available. These have been appreciated by the folk.

Prayer Meetings/Bible studies were held regularly in the Raymond Terrace, Anna Bay and Newcastle areas. Rev Tso diligently & faithfully conducted all such meetings. Studies were conducted on the books of James and 1 Timothy. Prayer for local & wider mission and our sister PCEA congregations has been a priority. Ladies Bible studies were conducted fortnightly at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff. Mrs Tso led a series of helpful studies by John Stott based on the book of Acts. An All Age Sunday School was conducted at Cardiff each week during school Terms. Psalm tunes, the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures have been taught faithfully each week to the children. Adult participants have been studying the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Children's Sunday school was conducted on Sunday mornings each week at Raymond Terrace during school terms. Instruction in the Scriptures has been taught each week to the children. A holiday Kids' Club was conducted at Raymond Terrace and at Cardiff. A Youth/Young Adults Fellowship was re-commenced by the Minister & his wife. This encouraging event has led to the planning of a monthly meeting. Rev Tso has served as a Chaplain to Newcastle University. We pray that our Lord would provide fruit for labour in that field ripe for harvest.

Prayer for local & wider mission has been a priority. The IRFA Mission Night was appreciated by those who attended. We are thankful to the Lord for increased financial giving to Mission in 2013 by the Congregation. Our gratitude is extended to our Minister for his faithful and relevant expounding of the Scriptures as well as his supportive pastoral care. The helpful contribution of Mr Alex Steel (Assessor Elder) to the work of Session and Deacons' Court is thankfully acknowledged. Evidences of God's grace towards His people on the Hunter Barrington include:

- a faithful and challenging preaching & teaching ministry,
- a desire to study God's word, and to fellowship with one another,
- growing unity in the faith &
- genuine desire to take the gospel to the local community.

We prayerfully look to the Lord to continue to build up the Congregation in knowledge, faith & holiness. We seek Him to revive our nation.

MANNING: We record our thanks to God for another year of His faithfulness. Every Lord's Day the congregation met morning and afternoon; the Bible was read, the Psalms were sung in praise to God, prayer was made, and the Gospel of grace has been preached. The morning service has been preceded by a meeting for prayer at 9. 15 a.m. Those who attend are very regular and faithful. We would of course like to see more come and support this important ministry. During the year the minister in the morning completed a series on the book of Revelation and the little book of Ruth. He is currently engaged in an exposition of the letter to the Ephesians. This has prompted some response and discussion as to how we might be more effective in connecting with outsiders with a view to sharing the Gospel with them. In the afternoon service he has preached through a selection of Psalms; selections from the book of Judges and the kings of Israel. He is currently engaged in the book of Jeremiah.

The three midweek Bible study groups continued faithfully during the year and provide fellowship and encouragement to those who attend. The Women's Missionary Society marked their 75th anniversary. A booklet was produced by Pamela Leggott to coincide with the occasion. The monthly Friendship Group continued with a mixture of outings and meetings in the Hall.

Four new members were formally welcomed into membership – Trevor and Pamela Leggott and Ken and Tracy Higgs. Of special note was the election and induction of two new ruling elders. Trevor Leggott and David Wilson were inducted on 16th June. We are thankful for this addition and for the good spirit which prevails in session. We continue to enjoy the benefit of having a number of the AIM personnel in the congregation which provides us with the privilege and responsibility of supporting them. We continued our support toward the supply of Scripture materials in the Primary Schools in the Manning Valley – and are committed to the support of a Scripture teacher (Paul Smith) in Taree High School. An extensive letter drop was begun toward the end of the year – and continues up to the present. Pray that these leaflets will be used by God to plant seeds of faith in the hearts of many.

SYDNEY WEST/HAWKESBURY NEPEAN: This church in the western suburbs of Sydney is the centre of life and worship for around 50 people. Most of these regularly attend morning worship, with a few attending the evening service also. Prior to the morning service there is a time of prayer and praise in the Tongan language and a time of prayer and Bible study in English. During the second half of the service the children attend one of two Sunday school classes.

A New Year's Eve service brings the congregation together to give thanks for the blessings of the Lord in the past year and seek his blessings for the New Year. Some folk continue to meet each day for the first week of the New Year. Membership decreased by two with one death and one disjunction certificate. There was one baptism. Prayerful consideration is being given to electing an additional elder. At present there are just two elders and one deacon.

Outreach is focused on a Lighthouse club and Youth club held each week during the school holidays, although most attending are now from church families. A school vacation program was planned but not conducted. We hope to conduct such an outreach program in the future. A men's breakfast was conducted as an outreach activity. Mission speakers were invited to share over morning tea on a number of occasions. Some members are involved in ministry in nursing homes in the district.

SYDNEY SOUTH: The congregation continues to meet each Lord's Day in the Community Hall at Bexley North. One adherent passed away aged 100. Another member is in a nursing home. Typical attendance is 15, with 11 members, and a small Sunday school class. A Bible study and prayer time was held each fortnight with six regularly attending. There is one elder along with an assessor. The small congregation is in good spirit and praying that the Lord would add to numbers according to His will.

SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

ULVERSTONE: Ulverstone is again thankful for the Lord's mercies to us over the last year and as we commence 2014. The ministry of Rev Andre Scheepers continues to be a blessing to many. His current sermon series in the books of Isaiah and the Psalms have comforted and exhorted us greatly. The congregation continues its use of the new FCS Psalter and we have introduced a number of new tunes to complement it. A range of ministries continues - among these being the Sunday School and adult Catechism Class, Midweek meetings alternating between Ulverstone and Burnie/Wynyard, Mens' prayer breakfasts,

Womens' Missionary Union and monthly fellowship nights. Additional means of outreach are being considered.

A new meeting this year is a ladies' craft meeting. The car rallies continue with good participation from people from other churches. We are currently proceeding with some internal building improvements that we trust will assist in a number of areas. We are noticing increasing frailty amongst some of our older members as some have moved into aged care or will be considering it this year. Positive interchurch relations are being maintained within the state with which we trust the Lord will bless.

KNOX: The congregation has experienced a slow increase in the number of people attending. The Session is encouraged to see one family making real efforts to create habits of consistent participation. Some visitors (4) are making return visits, and seem eager for Christian fellowship after the service. In 2014 the Session has prioritised a fortnightly schedule of street evangelism using a survey approach. The aim is to engage in positive dialogues concerning questions of life and the work of Jesus on the cross. Church fellowship has become more than what it was through home lunches happening every two months after church on Sundays. Weekly offering was down about \$50pw but overall income was up, given the completion of the Glen Huntly project with a capital surplus of \$441,000, and we were able to support All Nations as well as Mr Boehret and the wider church, and end the year with a small surplus.

ALL NATIONS: Both English and Nuer services have been maintained. Three new members were added to the English roll. Mr Boehret's mentoring continued through the year. He took 41 services plus two Knox evening services per month and two Knox mid-week meetings per month. Mr Boehret also contributed to the organisation of the Nuer Sunday School and made some contacts through teaching English to non-English speakers. The Nuer services was steady with many baptisms in June, but Mr Yoa's health has been less than ideal for much of the year. The Nuer elder, Isaac John, was in South Sudan for some months, returning safely in January 2014. The outbreak of fighting, which still continues although there seems a virtual official news blackout, has impacted all families and increased the pastoral load. Nuer offering was up 16.2% over 2012. Aid from Knox was on a par to the previous year but we anticipated a significant reduction in 2014. The hall floor-covering was renewed during the year. Significant gifts were received for Barnabas Fund.

CARRUM DOWNS: During 2013 two properties were investigated for possible acquisition (Knox had allocated \$350,000 toward this). Neither had come to anything as 2013 closed. Meanwhile we continued thankful for the Lyrebird Community Centre for our services. A founding member departed to accompany two daughters who had recently returned to churchgoing. Two related families commenced with us near the start of the year but left disgruntled near its end. Joshua Moore, one of our young men, having gone before Session in March was encouraged to further his experience of service to the church as he considers possible ministry. He gave some appreciated short talks on the Ten Commandments during the year and also contributed to the Boys Camp run by All Nations in January 2014. He has enrolled for the MDiv program at PTC as a private student starting 2014.

NARRE WARREN: We have much to be thankful for in our congregation. Each Lord's Day we are able to have two worship services and the response of the members and adherents is gratifying. Indeed, we have had a number of visitors over the year, with some continuing to regularly attend. These new folk are also actively involved in the life of the congregation through various activities.

Again this past year we have been able to be self-supporting financially. The consistent giving of the Lord's people also meant no special appeal had to be made at the end of the year. Our members continue to be faithful in their adherence to weekly worship but we still pray for more to attend the afternoon service. We are encouraged by the fellowship after the morning worship service over very bountiful refreshments in the hall.

The Sunday School classes continue on as before, and so we are thankful to our teachers for their ongoing commitment. The Sunday School in 2013 consisted of two classes, with about 6 – 7 students. Due to two new entrants at primary school in 2014 a new class is envisioned for 2014, thus making it three classes with around 8 students, and six teachers who rotate with each other.

The Adult Bible Study continued on being held twice per month in member's homes, on a Wednesday evening. We use Matthias Media Interactive Bible Studies – completing the studies on Hebrews, *From Shadow to Reality*, and also completing a study through Obadiah & Malachi, *Burning Desire*. We have an excellent participation from the 10 - 12 who regularly attend. There was also commenced a Tuesday night

Bible Study at the church, twice per month. This is held on the alternate week to the Wednesday night Bible Study, and is particularly focussed on those who are new to the reformed faith. We have had from 5 to 7 attending, and have begun with a study through the Gospel of Mark, *News of the Hour*.

The Ladies Bi-Monthly Wednesday morning Bible Study continues in school term. They presently have around 8-12 attending. They have been using material also from a Sydney Anglican source, but now have turned to Matthias Media material – *Woman of God*. We are thankful to Mrs Betty Holmes for her continued leadership of this group.

The Men's Study Breakfast also continues on, usually on the first Saturday morning of the month. We are using R. Kent Hughes' book, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*. We usually have 6 – 8 men attending these. It is also a much appreciated and encouraging time of fellowship. In fact, I would even go on to say that this is the essential hub to our congregation. With having men meeting in pray and study there is a strongly spiritual focus at the heart of the leadership in our congregation. Terry Buck's help is much appreciated as the supplier of the physical supplies and the cooking of them.

In addition to this, printed sermons are given out to those not able to attend church services, as well as CD's being given upon request, and some series being posted on the church's website – such as the series on the Westminster Shorter Catechism currently being preached in the morning services.

A number of our folk, together with our minister as the editor, are involved in the publication and distribution of *The Presbyterian Banner*. So far this has proceeded well – it is our fifth year – and we thank the Lord for its ongoing and increasing reception within the denomination and elsewhere.

There is warm fellowship that also takes place informally amongst the members. Where there are those unwell and unable to attend, there is contact in different ways. There is regular prayer for each other, both in the public worship services and privately.

GEELONG: The congregation has faced many challenges this year and has seen the Lord's provision in many ways as we continue to depend on Him for all our needs. We have continued to meet weekly for worship and fellowship each Lord's Day and we have enjoyed the blessings of faithful preaching from God's Word, joyful praise, and earnest prayer. While the number of communicant members has remained constant throughout the year, we have suffered loss at the passing of four past members and adherents.

This year has been punctuated by the retirement and return to Scotland of Rev Gavin Smith, our faithful minister for the past seven years, and his wife Janet. The departure of a long-serving minister is never easy but is made more difficult by the knowledge that it will be quite some time before we are in a position to call another minister. Nevertheless, we have been blessed by the support, encouragement, and faithful service of our interim moderator Rev Sjirk Bajema. Sjirk has been able to organise and coordinate supply for the pulpit from a variety of sources, including regular supply from our own PCEA ministers and elders. Despite the distance, we have met as a Session and Deacons' Court, and keep in regular contact via email and phone.

We have regular and faithful adherence to our weekly morning worship service but we have been unable to continue our afternoon worship due to low attendance and the logistics of supply. This is in part due to the elderly nature of our congregation and the frailty and limitations on travel that ensue. We have changed from tape to digital audio recordings of the worship service so that it is easier to store and distribute sermons to those who are unable to attend or wish to review a teaching series. At present, this is done on an *ad hoc* basis but investigations are being made to make recordings available through the PCEA website. The midweek Bible Studies were suspended last year also but there is interest in restarting it in the near future.

Despite our small numbers, we have remained financially self-supporting through the consistent giving of the congregation and by drawing on reserves from past years. Our finances have begun to improve recently with the arrival of tenants for the manse. In seeking a student at the Reformed Theological College we felt that we could be supportive of his training for the ministry and build a close relationship with his lovely family. It is hoped that opportunities for his preaching for us might arise in the future. A KYB group continues to meet weekly in the church hall as it has for many years. It is encouraging to see the close fellowship being maintained and strengthened as we meet after worship and support each other in various ways throughout the week, particularly in times of need.

LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr Rowland S.Ward (Convener 2007), Clerk, Robert Hingston, Tom Reeve, Ron Lawson.

1. Barrier Act procedure

Laws of general application to the church in matters of doctrine, worship, discipline and church government are not binding on lower courts if they are not passed or deemed to have passed under Barrier Act procedure. They can of course be altered following the same procedure. Refer Handbook 5.17-18. Barrier Act laws are commonly called Class 1, and other legislation Class 2. The principle in the Barrier Act was followed by the Church of Scotland from 1639 to the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, and was formally enacted again in 1697. It binds us since we inherited the Church of Scotland constitution. (It should be noted that some other Presbyterian churches have a Barrier Act that is not simply procedural but enables wide-ranging change.) While we have not used the Barrier Act procedure a great deal it remains an important safeguard against hasty or inadequately considered legislation, and it is necessary that it be followed in regard to laws of general and binding application for the church at large in matters of doctrine, worship, discipline and church government.

However, we (and others) have had some difficulties. For instance, in correcting a mistake in the wording of the Federal Relations Act with the Free Church of Scotland in 1984 we followed Barrier Act procedure although for such minor matters it is not needed (cf. William Mair *Digest of Church Laws of the Church of Scotland*, 1912). Again, when we rescinded the Federal Relations Act in 2004 we did not properly follow Barrier Act procedure in doing so. [The Free Church of Scotland also ignored Barrier Act procedure, despite the advice of its Clerk, when changing its worship position in 2010.] In addition, the Barrier Act itself uses the word ‘constitutions’ which then meant ‘decrees, ordinances, laws or regulations’ but may be confused with our more modern use of ‘constitution’ to refer to that which is more fundamental than any particular law and which contains the principles with which all legislation must be in harmony. (Refer definitions 3 & 7 in the full Oxford English Dictionary below.) The Barrier Act in our tradition is a means of regulating lawful change not of changing anything that enters into the fixed constitution of the Church (as was unsuccessfully argued in the famous Free Church legal case [*Bannatyne v Overtoun*, 1904]. The Barrier Act itself is not part of the fixed constitution of the Church and could be amended or repealed with consent of a majority of Presbyteries, but repeal of this procedural device is not something that should ever be contemplated. However, of recent times it is evident not all are clear about Barrier Act procedure.

Perhaps adding to misunderstanding is the fact that the Barrier Act does not incorporate the full procedure which has grown up around it over more than 300 years nor precisely define what is meant by ‘the more general opinion’, although in original context a majority of Presbyteries (there were 50 Presbyteries in the C of S in 1697) is meant. Of course Presbyteries can be of widely different size today with the preponderance of people in cities. (Does the CofS Presbytery of Lochaber with 8 charges today equal the CofS Presbytery of Glasgow with 140?) There were only two Presbyteries in the PCEA 1852-59, 1865-78 and 1907-53, and only one in the FPCV during most of its post-1859 history to 1953.

Further, while the Act refers to the responses of Presbyteries being sent to the next General Assembly, Mr Bradshaw, our then legal advisor, considered it was quite in order for the Synod of 1952 to remit the *Act anent Questions and Formula*, prepared in connection with the proposal for union with the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria, to the two PCEA Presbyteries and for them to report their finding to a latter session of the same Synod so that Synod could immediately enact accordingly. There was of course no controversy about the Union. In 2008 Synod approved certain existing legislation long in our Handbook as sufficiently meeting Barrier Act requirements. Again, these were not matters about which there was any disagreement.

However, in view of the potential for confusion as well as for wrong action, it seems opportune that we should safeguard the church in the future as much as lies with us by a small amendment to the Barrier Act which gives one word (underlined in the text below) its equivalent modern meaning, and which also summarises the procedure that applies. Refer Proposed deliverances 1 and 2.

BARRIER ACT 1697

Act anent the Method of passing Acts of Assembly of general concern to the Church, and for preventing of Innovations. (Commonly called the Barrier Act.)

The General Assembly, taking into their consideration the overture and act made in the last Assembly concerning innovations, and having heard the report of the several commissioners from Presbyteries to whom the consideration of the same was recommended, in order to its being more ripely advised and determined in this Assembly;

and considering the frequent practice of former Assemblies of this Church, and that it will mightily conduce to the exact obedience of the Acts of Assemblies, that General Assemblies be very deliberate in making of the same, and that the whole Church have a previous knowledge thereof, and their opinion be had therein, and for preventing any sudden alteration or innovation, or other prejudice to the Church, in either doctrine or worship, or discipline, or government thereof, now happily established;

do, therefore, appoint, enact, and declare, that before any General Assembly of this Church shall pass any Acts, which are to be binding Rules and Constitutions to the Church, the same Acts be first proposed as overtures to the Assembly, and, being by them passed as such, be remitted to the consideration of the several Presbyteries of this Church, and their opinions and consent reported by their commissioners to the next General Assembly following, who may then pass the same in Acts, if the more general opinion of the Church thus had agreed thereunto.

Appendix: Relevant definitions of ‘constitution’ from the Oxford English Dictionary

3. a. A decree, ordinance, law, regulation; usually, one made by a superior authority, civil or ecclesiastical; *spec.* in *Roman Law*, an enactment made by the emperor. Also *fig.* (Now *hist.*) Apostolical Constitutions (in *Church Hist.*): a collection of ecclesiastical regulations, purporting to have been made by the apostles, but known to be of much later date. Constitutions of Clarendon (in *Eng. Hist.*): a body of propositions drawn up at the Council of Clarendon in the reign of Henry II (1164), defining the limits of civil and ecclesiastical jurisdiction in England.

7. The system or body of fundamental principles according to which a nation, state, or body politic is constituted and governed. This may be embodied in successive concessions on the part of the sovereign power, implied in long accepted statutes, or established gradually by precedent, as in the British Constitution; or it may be formally set forth in a document framed and adopted on a particular occasion by the various orders or members of the commonwealth, or their representatives, as in the Constitution of the United States, the various Constitutions of France after 1790, and those of other nations, framed in imitation of these. In the case of a *written Constitution*, the name is sometimes applied to the document embodying it. In either case it is assumed or specifically provided that the *constitution* is more fundamental than any particular law, and contains the principles with which all legislation must be in harmony.

This sense gradually arose out of the prec. between 1689 and 1789: see the early quotes.

2. Sexual Misconduct

The returns from Presbytery are as follows

Southern Presbytery: 13/7/2013 approved *simpliciter*

Central Presbytery: 18/9/2013 the minute does not approve or disapprove but we understand the content was agreed to. However, the Presbytery did not wish it to be made Class 1 which of course is for Synod to decide.

Northern Presbytery: 14/9/2014 disapproved *simpliciter*

In the 2013 Report we stated:

“The Procedure approved in 2004/05 did not pass under the Barrier Act then, nor in 2008 when certain legislation was approved as sufficiently meeting the Barrier Act requirements, and therefore is not binding except in so far as it incorporates existing material passed under the Barrier Act. There was a reason for the 2008 omission: it was thought that there were some questions of practicality and legality that needed to be addressed, while the procedure might well be adjusted to embrace at least non-sexual child abuse as well.”

We await any recommendations or changes in the law arising from the different commissions of enquiry into sexual abuse that may have a bearing on the church’s responsibility and/or liability. Meantime we emphasise that **the examination of records each year needs to sight minutes showing that the questions of office-bearers specified by Synod 2013 have been satisfactorily answered.**

3. Government legislation affecting the Church

a. The *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission* [ACNC] was established 1/11/2012 and began operation on 3/12/2012. Returns for the three trust bodies and 7 congregations were duly lodged by the Convener on 20/6/2013. Narre Warren, St Georges, Mt Druitt, Sydney South, Hunter, Northern Rivers, Armidale and Brisbane were to be lodged by the congregations concerned. A request for confirmation of lodgement was made to these congregations by the Convener on 24/10/2013. We assume congregations have implemented the requirement of Synod 2012 that a fair value of assets and liabilities appear in the financial accounts, which is simply an aspect of proper financial practice and good governance in any case.

Under certain conditions ‘basic religious charities’ have been exempted from financial and governance reporting to the ACNC. This exemption applies to all our entities/congregations except the corporation in

Queensland which is incorporated under associations incorporation legislation. Once the new NSW legislation is in place it will be appropriate for simplicity's sake to transfer Queensland property to the NSW corporation in a manner analogous to the holding of Tasmanian property under the Victorian Act. When making **the annual return** it should be noted that our congregations are classed as for the advancement of religion, are 'basic religious charities' and are not part of a group (refer Questions 8,9,10 of the annual return.) There is the possibility the ACNC will be absorbed back into the ATO but at time of writing the situation has not changed.

b. *Occupational Health and Safety laws in Australia* are being harmonised with the introduction of new model Work and Health Safety Laws. Important bits of the new laws in most states are:

- Employers and Directors can be held criminally negligent
- Workplace is extended to include the safety of any workers working overseas
- 'Employee' is now changed to 'worker' which includes volunteers and is likely to capture missions staff.
- It is a risk based legislation, which will likely put greater obligation on organisations

Deacons Courts should periodically check the Church property carefully to locate any hazards such as broken steps or defective guide rails, cracked or broken electrical fittings, fix them and minute the result. Voluntary workers should be supervised in such a way that the very young, the unskilled or the elderly are not left to do hazardous tasks. Incident report should be made at the time (sample form has been provided to all congregations by the Convener). A useful site is: <http://safeworkaustralia.gov.au>

c. The Christian Management Association has a number of simple, helpful and inexpensive publications, particularly CMA'S Essential Standards for Church Workplaces which are recommended. See www.cma.net.au

4. Disturbance in a church service

From time to time there may be serious incidents of disturbance in a church service, usually because of mental disturbance rather than deliberate aggression. A caring Christian approach is usually able to resolve the issue without recourse to legal measures. As advised to the Convener on 1/11/2010 by Brian Bayston, the Law Agent of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the legal position is as follows: There is an implied licence to enter a church for the purpose of public worship. If a person acts in a manner that is contrary to this purpose the licence can be revoked by words spoken to him, and he can be asked to leave or the police will be called (although they may not come). He can be told that if he returns he will be committing trespass and can be sued for trespass. One must not use force to remove a person or you are likely to be sued for assault. If needed one can seek a court order, although the occasions on which such a step would be appropriate are likely to be rare indeed.

5. Marriage

The pressure for same sex marriage is intense from some parts of society, and it may well be that civil unions will be approved by the Commonwealth Parliament whether by modification of the Marriage Act or by distinct legislation. It is possible, perhaps likely, that the civil and religious approaches will be separated. Marriage could become entirely a civil matter with a religious service afterwards where desired (as is the case in the Netherlands, for example). The implications of any proposed legislation will need careful consideration.

6. Amendment of the NSW Property Act

No suggested changes having been received by the date of 30.9.2013 specified by Synod 2013, a submission was prepared by the Convener, circulated to Committee members and the NSW Trustees, and after adjustment forwarded to the Attorney General for NSW on 14 October 2013. The request was followed up 3 December 2013 and it is hoped progress will have been made by Synod time.

7. Bequests

From time to time inquiries are received concerning bequests. This valuable form of giving has been of great benefit in the past and if we are to see expansion of the PCEA work it will be important in the future, particularly for funding new work. Examples of the wording are provided. Amendment of a will by codicil is a straightforward matter, but advice of a solicitor is a prudent course.

8. Handbook/Decision Book

The electronic version of the combined Handbook and Decision book was updated and placed on the website on 29/5/2013. In the following 9 months over 600 downloads occurred. Forty hardcopies were produced and

sold at cost and there was no cost to Synod funds. The electronic version will be updated again following Synod. We've had a request for a specimen Disjunction Certificate and will add that to the reprint.

9. Committee

Mr Hingston has expressed his desire to be relieved of membership of the Committee. It is suggested one of our younger men be added, and Mr Tso has indicated that he is willing to serve.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. Synod amend the ACT CONCERNING THE METHOD OF PASSING ACTS OF ASSEMBLY OF GENERAL CONCERN TO THE CHURCH, AND FOR PREVENTING OF INNOVATIONS [COMMONLY CALLED *THE BARRIER ACT*] enacted by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1697 by deleting the now ambiguous word 'Constitutions' and replacing it with the word 'Laws'.

2. For the more clear understanding of the procedure in regard to matters requiring approval by Barrier Act procedure (ie. Class 1 legislation) the Synod summarise the procedure as follows:

Limitations

1. The Barrier Act is a means of regulating the lawful exercise of the Synod's powers not of changing anything that enters into the fixed constitution of the church. In making rules and laws the Synod is always to aim to apply the mind of Christ as given in the Holy Scriptures and thus to seek in an orderly way the building up of the people of God.

2. The requirements of the Barrier Act do not apply to the passing of Acts which merely declare what the existing law of the church is, or which relate to matters of an exhortatory or advisory character, or that are entirely or substantially related to the Synod itself such as the regulation of its business and its committees, or to matters other than the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the church. However, matters to which this Act does not apply may be referred to Presbyteries by Synod if she wishes but their consent is not required for enactment to take place.

Procedure

3. The norm is for the overture to be transmitted to Presbyteries for consideration. It includes the proposed rule or law and the grounds for it. The Presbytery decides to either 'approve' or 'disapprove' the content of the proposed legislation, with the liberty to add comments when thought appropriate and with the result of voting being recorded. The Presbytery reports to the next Synod within the time prescribed. In matters that have been before the Church for some time and on which there is no reason to think a significant difference of opinion exists, the notice requirements of this Act may be satisfied by Synod directing Presbyteries to meet at Synod time, when Synod is not in Session, to approve or disapprove the proposal and to report in order that enactment may then be considered by the same Synod rather than the next (cf. Act Anent Questions & Formula, Synod, 1952).

4. An overture approved by a majority of Presbyteries may be passed into law by the Synod, but Synod is not bound to do so, and cannot do so if a majority of Presbyteries do not approve. It is competent for the substance of remarks by Presbyteries which in no way modify the substance, sense or intention of the overture to be adopted by the Synod. An 'approved' overture may be passed into law notwithstanding such changes, or other minor changes made by the Synod which are not at variance with the spirit and purpose of the overture.

5. In the event the Presbyteries are evenly divided, Synod may assess what is the mind of 'the whole church' in line with the spirit and intent of the Barrier Act by considering the proportion of individual Presbytery members approving, and/or consulting all the ministers and elders of the Church.

6. If Synod twice transmit an overture to Presbyteries in terms of the Barrier Act, the Synod may take the matter into consideration and enact or reject as she sees fit so long as those Presbyteries that have approved and those who have neglected to send in their opinion form a majority of Presbyteries. (cf. Act 5, Class 1, Assembly 1758).

Interim Authority

7. The Synod may immediately convert an overture that is to be transmitted under the Barrier Act into an Interim Act which has authority only until the next Synod deals with the returns from Presbyteries, but this may be done only if an immediate change in the law is considered of urgent practical importance.

Rescission of Class 1 legislation

8. Acts passed under Barrier Act procedure may only be rescinded by that procedure. (cf. Act 8, Assembly 1736).

9. This Act may be cited as ACT REGULATING PROCEDURE UNDER THE BARRIER ACT, 2014.

3. The content of Interim Act (Act 1 Class 1 of 2013) having met with the approval of a majority of Presbyteries the Synod convert the said act into a standing rule, and encourage Presbyteries to send any further suggestions for improvement to the Law & Advisory Committee.

4. Synod note the procedure in regard to serious disturbance in a church service stated in the Report and draw the attention of Sessions to the same.

5. Synod draw attention of members to the importance of giving by bequests for the furtherance of Christ's work, and provide the following examples of forms of bequest.

(i). General or undesignated Bequests

These general bequests are of most benefit to the mission of the Church. In such cases, the funds can be applied to specific areas of priority need at the time. If a person wishes to make an undesignated bequest, the following clauses can be used:

Clause A where the capital gift is to be made directly to the Church.

"I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATHto the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia for the charitable and/or religious purposes of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia as the Synod of the said Church may direct."

Clause B where the capital of the gift is to be permanently invested, with the income earned to be used by the Church

"I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATHto the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to be invested and the income therefrom from time to time received to be used for the charitable and/or religious purposes of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia as the Synod of the said Church may direct."

(ii). Specific Bequests

If a person wishes to designate a particular congregation, parish, project, activity, agency or institution within the Church the following clauses can be used:

Clause C where the capital gift is to be made directly to the particular part of the Church:

"I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATHto the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia for the general work and activities of of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia provided that should that work or activity of the said Church have ceased prior to my death or thereafter cease, the said sum shall be used in such other manner as determined by the Synod of the said Church."

Clause D where the capital of the gift is to permanently invested, with the income earned to be used by the nominated activity:

"I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATHto the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to be invested and the income therefrom from time to time received to be used for the general work of of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, provided that should that work or activity of the said Church have ceased prior to my death or thereafter cease, the income arising from said sum shall be used in such other manner as determined by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia"

After the desired clause A, B C or D has been selected for the Will, the following wording should also be added:

"...the receipt of the Secretary or other proper officer for the time being of the relevant corporate trust body of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia shall be a sufficient discharge to my Trustees". (or similar)

TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

Members: D J Kerridge (Convener), J A McCallum, A Miranda, S Bajema, D Manly.

We rejoice that the Lord has blessed us with another candidate for the ministry. We continue to look to the Lord of the harvest that He would bless us with yet more labourers.

Mr Duncan A. Hickey (B.A. B. Sc., DipAncLang.)

Mr Duncan Hickey was provisionally accepted by the Central Presbytery as a student on 18th September, 2013. In accordance with the directions of the Handbook, the Training of Ministry interviewed Mr Hickey on 18th October, 2013.

Mr Hickey's academic record is exemplary and he has graduated from Macquarie University with a B.A. B.Sc. He also holds a Diploma in Ancient Languages from the same University. The Committee saw no impediment to Mr Hickey commencing theological study based on his academic record. After discussion with Mr Hickey and hearing the warm recommendation of his Minister, the Committee concurred with the view of Presbytery as to Mr Hickey's spiritual fitness for the task ahead. We therefore sent our recommendation to Central Presbytery that Mr Hickey be provisionally recognised as a student, subject to their overture to this Synod. We further agreed that he commence studies in 2014, in the Master of Divinity course (3 years full-time), at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney (renamed Christ College in 2014).

Mr Hickey was advised of the decision of the Committee and agreed to sign the Student Bond. He was offered the usual book allowance but advised the Committee that he did not wish to avail himself of it at this stage. His study is currently funded by government assistance and so he is not seeking assistance from the Committee for tuition or other costs at this time. Mr Hickey subsequently enrolled in the M.Div. at PTC, Sydney in November, 2103 and commenced his studies in February of this year. We have established contact with the Academic Dean of PTC, and they are willing to assist with any extra-curricular work we may wish to set Mr Hickey throughout the course of his studies.

Mr Hickey is married to Sharon with three children, James, Jonathan and Matthew. He has been a member of St George's Congregation since 2003. Mr Hickey is expected to be present at this Synod and members are encouraged to speak with him.

Proposed Deliverances

1. That, subsequent to the overture of Central Presbytery regarding Mr Hickey's acceptance, Synod ratifies the decision of the Committee to direct Mr Duncan Hickey to commence study at the Presbyterian Theological Centre, Sydney in the Master of Divinity course in 2014. The Committee further asks that Synod assure Mr Hickey of their prayerful interest in his course of study.
2. That Synod approve the payment of Mr Hickey's costs for attendance at Synod as an observer out of Committee funds.
3. That Synod engage in prayer for the wise and careful training up of men to serve the Lord.
4. That the Training of Ministry Committee be given leave to meet with Mr Hickey at a time convenient during the course of this Synod.

CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

Members: D.K. Muldoon (Convener), S. Bajema (Media and Banner), D. Kerridge (Website), and T.W. Yoa.

This committee communicated by email during the year. A number of statements have been prepared on matters of significance for Christians living in an increasingly humanistic society. We give brief guidelines on these matters, based on Scripture.

One issue that continues to be of concern is that of homosexual or same sex marriage. We adopted a statement at Synod 2013 and sent this with covering letters to the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader in Federal Parliament. Since that time we have seen the government of the ACT pass a bill legalising homosexual marriage. We are thankful to God and the Federal Government which challenged the legality of this bill and won the case in the High Court of Australia.

Despite claims that homosexual marriage will inevitably become legal in Australia, we continue to pray in the knowledge that it is not inevitable because God is all powerful; “He removes kings and raises up kings” (Daniel 2:21). We pray that there will be wise and God-fearing people whom God can raise up.

Notwithstanding, we continue to monitor the politics of this moral issue. We are in contact with other churches that are doing the same - namely the PCA and CRC. They are discussing the propriety of ministers maintaining their registration as marriage celebrants, which is given under the Commonwealth Marriage Act. We do not propose further discussion or action at this stage. However, we propose to again write to the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader to remind them of our opposition, based on the Bible, to homosexual marriage.

Statement on Gambling

Gambling is widespread in our society. Very few people do not bet or have a ‘flutter’ on the Melbourne Cup. Schools (and some churches) run raffles or games of bingo in order to raise funds. The States run lotteries to raise money for public services. Clubs have poker machines to raise funds for their social work- ‘to help the poor’ they say, when the poor may well have put the money into their machines. Gambling wreaks havoc in many families. Some have lost all their money, and even their home, through gambling. Yet, just because gambling does so much harm, does not make it a sin.

Is gambling a sin or not? To answer this question we must look to Scripture. What does God’s word tell us? Actually, it does not give a definitive statement on gambling. For this reason some Reformed theologians conclude it is matter of Christian liberty. But we cannot dismiss this matter so quickly. Are there not principles in Scripture which might guide us? Before discussing the issue we must try to define gambling. Some see a sweepstake on the horses, or the school raffle as harmless- although some gambling addicts admit their problem began here. Lottery tickets are seen as more serious because more money is involved. Poker machines are seen as particularly harmful- hence attempts to curb their operation by law.

All gambling involves the operation of chance. Some say that God in his providence overrules in this (Prov 16:33), but we could also say we are not trusting God but testing Him. While casting of lots was sanctioned under the Old Covenant (Num 26:55), it was done to determine God’s will, not for something of value at risk. Gambling involves the transfer of property without proper (equivalent) payment or gift, but on the basis of chance. There is no equivalent service rendered or product supplied. We are to work with our own hands to provide for our family and help the poor as we are able (Eph 4:28, 1Thess 4:11, 1Tim 5:7).

Stewardship (Eph 4:28): Gambling is not faithful stewardship of the money God gives through working. Most money gambled is, by definition, lost. It is not the same as ‘risks’ generally taken in saving and investment where the money is used in productive activity. If you do not have, ask God - do not gamble.

Not covet (Exod 20:17, 1Tim 6:8-10): Most people gamble with the hope of gaining a jackpot- they gamble out of covetousness, not contentment. ‘Do not covet’ is the tenth commandment. If you regard your raffle ticket as just a donation, then why do you not donate instead of going in the raffle? And if you win the raffle, do you return the jackpot to those who joined you in this ‘game’?

Love your neighbour (Mat 22:39): You cannot covet what your neighbour has and love your neighbour at the same time. It is argued that those who gamble do so voluntarily but this is not necessarily the case. Desperate and addicted people gamble; if you win you are defrauding or stealing from many losers; you are not loving

them according to the second commandment of Jesus. Truly voluntary gifts are given without the expectation return.

Ends not justify the means: Scripture does not condone attempts to justify gambling by saying the winnings are used for a good cause. We must live with what God gives us through proper means. Churches must manage with free will offerings- raffles and games of chance are forbidden (PCEA Handbook 3:14). Governments must do the same. If they need money they should raise taxes, not lotteries!

The official stand of the PCEA is found in our subordinate standard. The Westminster Larger Catechism, in detailing sins forbidden in the eight commandment, refers to 'wasteful gaming'. It does so in the context of 'prejudice to our own outward estate' and 'defrauding others'. 'If the gambler wins, he is a thief; if he loses he is a waster of his Lord's property' writes Voss.

Statement on Tattoos

The number of young people having their bodies tattooed is on the increase. Around 25% of those under 30 in Australia have a tattoo. Why this increase? Why do people want a tattoo? Is it wrong for a Christian to get a tattoo? A tattoo is made by injecting ink into the dermis of the skin to make a permanent mark. In the times of Moses it was made by cutting the skin and rubbing in a dye.

The word 'tattoo' does not appear in older versions of the Bible, but it is found in the NKJV and ESV in Leviticus 19:28. In the KJV it is written, "Nor print any marks upon you". The word 'tattoo' came into English from Samoan '*tatau*' after Cook's Pacific expedition in 1769. Sailors adopted the practice and brought it to the Western world.

In Polynesian and other Asian cultures men and women have tattooed themselves for centuries. They did this to mark a young person's rite of passage, to ward off evil spirits, or help scare off the enemy. In the Bible it was done by pagans to honour the dead, along with shaving the hair (Leviticus 19:28, Deuteronomy 14:1). Cutting the flesh was also a religious practice among the Canaanites (I Kings 18:28). Hindus in mourning shave their heads and make an offering to the gods. Tattoos have also been used as a form of identification, as with prisoners in Nazi Germany.

Why would a Christian want to tattoo their body? Some defend the practice if they have the symbol of the cross or the name 'Jesus' in the tattoo. Others argue that the tattoo is simply cosmetic, having nothing to do with any rite or religion. They say it is simply a form of self-expression, or an expression of their love for someone.

We have noted the specific prohibition in the Bible about getting a tattoo for the dead. Some will say, "But what about the other prohibitions in the Levitical code? These no longer apply". Nevertheless, this was a specific command not to follow a pagan practice but to be a holy people to the Lord. "The disfiguring of the skin ... dishonoured the divine image in a person, and was forbidden because it did not reflect God's holiness" (R.K. Harrison in Tyndale commentary). Moreover, the second commandment states, "You shall not make for yourselves a carved image". A religious symbol carved on the body must qualify as a carved image. So, just because tattoo is in the form of a cross does not make it acceptable.

When God made man, he said 'Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness' (Genesis 1:26). This may not mean physical likeness, although when God sent his Son into this world he came in a body like ours; and there is no record of either Jesus, or the apostles, or any early Christians getting tattoos. The Psalmist, speaking about his physical body wrote, 'I praise you for I am fearfully and wonderfully made' (Psalm 139:14).

The apostle Paul writes, "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit ... therefore honour God in your body" (I Corinthians 6:19-20). While the context of this verse is that of sexual immorality, the point remains that God made us in his image and he wants us to glorify him in our body. We must ask how tattoos and other forms of body modification, other than for medical reasons, are glorifying to God.

Statement on Social Media and the Body of Christ

Broadly defined, social media are services that create networks for people to share messages, photos and videos, blog and "chat" using the Internet. It would be wrong to call social media a new phenomenon anymore since Facebook alone, the most popular social media site, had befriended 1.1 billion users in 2013.

More and more varied and niche social media services appear every year such as Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, LinkedIn etc.

Social media has become the way in which a fast growing number of people spend a large amount of time interacting with others. But is this a good thing or a bad thing for Christians to be involved in?

Many would say that the social media are value neutral, meaning they are neither good nor bad. It is what we do with them that makes them bad. Just like the often touted adage “Guns don’t kill people, people do”, we can use the tools we have at our disposal for good or bad. The Internet itself is a mine of information and a source for all sorts of wonderful truths, great discussions of important things, free archives of Christian literature and all such things. Even the secular corporation Google has the informal motto “Don’t be evil.” The Internet can also be the darkest of places, where pornography is easily available, where wicked men lurk in chat-rooms and where terrorists learn how to make bombs. As this report was being written, another person committed suicide because of hurtful comments by Internet trolls, people who hound others on the internet and, because of their anonymity, feel free to behave and write in a sub-human, trollish, manner. The world is mirrored in cyber-space.

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 10 verse 23: “‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things are helpful. ‘All things are lawful,’ but not all things build up.” Some would argue then from this statement about tempered Christian liberty that, as long as you avert your gaze from the evil elements, avoid the bad, the social media can be used to the glory of God as people blog and message edifying things, post wisely, and share the Word. Reformed thinkers like Francis Schaeffer and Hans Rookmaaker argued that we *can* enjoy culture, including art, music and all the good that God has placed in the world without sacrificing our purity. There is a definite truth here, as Paul goes on to state in 1 Cor. 10 verse 26, quoting from Psalm 24: For “the earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof.” Sadly though, there are also those libertines who just want to indulge in the things of the world and use Paul’s words as a blanket to cover their sin.

There is more to the use of social media than just a discerning attitude to its use. Media ecologists, those who study the effects of media on our society, have made the observation that as we use tools to shape our world, those tools unconsciously shape us. In Genesis 4, Cain’s descendants mastered all sorts of technologies including animal husbandry, metal-working and music. The technologies in themselves are neutral, even commendable, but the fact that these technologies are being developed by the sons of Cain rings an alarm bell. After the flood in Genesis 10, men have become so enamoured with their technological skill that they use their skills of masonry and architecture to build a tower up to heaven to avoid God’s punishment by flood and to reach up to where He sits. The technology is neutral, the proud hearts of men are emboldened by the technology to make an attempt to overthrow God’s throne. Solomon built for himself, in imitation of Egypt, squadrons of chariots, even chariot cities (1 Kings 10:26). He developed quite a trade in chariots and war-horses with nations to the North, but Solomon developed his technology in the face of Moses’ prohibition against a king returning to Egypt in search of power (Deut. 17:16). The tool was used by Solomon to shape his kingdom’s prestige, but it also shaped his actions, especially his reliance on his military hardware, rather than the power of God.

This is the point of the Christian’s use of social media: It is not that it is right or wrong, *per se*. It is how it shapes us, even as we use it, that we should seriously reflect upon. The real goal of social media is not community, but a promotion of the individual. You Tube’s motto is “Broadcast yourself” and the secret desire of Youtubians is that their video snippet goes viral (i.e. viewed by thousands, even millions around the world). Blogs are used to advance the ideas of people whose opinions are not worth seeking, and should never be published. The comment threads that follow are sometimes unreadable. Facebook is intended to build networks of friends, and some claim hundreds of Facebook friends, when in reality they never communicate with more than the handful they would normally interact with in the real world. Status in the community is numbered by how many friends you can garner.

Social media has the built in technology to fulfil the most basic desire of the natural man: That we, as individuals, are the most important people in the world. This is linked with the ever so close commercial partners of social networks who all want to sell us those things that make us richer, more popular, more empowered by our socially connected lives (usually this entails more technology). The heart of social media is the Self. The heart of the Christian should be the Other; principally God, really fleshed in the person of Christ Jesus, and then our brothers and sisters in Christ. The Body of Christ cannot exist in Facebook’s disembodied world; it must be gathering together on the Lord’s Day (Hebrews 10:25) to hear the Word

spoken (a sermon will not tweet in 140 characters), and to partake of the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper evidencing our community in what is really real.

Proposed deliverances:

1. Synod welcome the short Biblically-based statements on some ethical issues and requests that these be published in “The Presbyterian Banner”.
2. Synod write to the Prime Minister and Opposition Leader stating our opposition, based on the Bible, to any changes to the Marriage Act to legally recognise homosexual marriage.

MEDIA COMMITTEE

Report on ‘The Presbyterian Banner’: We may thankfully report that the Lord has blessed the work of ‘The Presbyterian Banner again this past year of 2013. We have been able to support ourselves through the subscriptions and donations of God’s people. This will need a review this coming year as Australia Post have indicated increases in postage, and as we have undergone an increase already two years ago with International Mail, it will mean a slight increase in subscription prices. Please note also that a number of free copies are mailed to State and Theological Libraries around the nation and the world at our own expense. The cost for this equals the cost for around 10% of our overall budget. A previous editor has called this our “silent witness”, but it is an expense nonetheless, and, as a promotion of the denomination as a whole needs to be kept in mind.

I warmly thank our team involved here, from the contributors to the proof-reader to those involved in printing, packaging and then posting our magazine. There is also our Webmaster who places a pdf copy on the PCEA website every month. I am grateful to those involved in this process and I’m thankful the Lord has spared us to continue on in this work for him. The subscriptions have continued to increase so that now 165 copies per month being presently printed. A number of these are surplus so at any time any of the congregations not currently subscribing can become part of our ‘support team’. There has also been an encouraging downloading of the magazine in its on-line version, and the number of complimentary electronic issues sent out by the editor has continued to increase in number. If you would like to receive it this way or know anyone who would like to have it this way, please let me know.

There are those ministers regularly contributing articles – I note here again the help of my brothers Rowland Ward, George Ball, & Jim Klazinga. In addition Andres Scheepers also contributed several articles. I would use this opportunity again to encourage our other colleagues to contribute at least one item a year. This may be a helpful article or local news – there are several congregations who have not yet in my time as editor passed on news and/or photographs for our magazine (this is over four years now!). We’re sure there are things happening in your churches and would love to know what they are so that we can be encouraged and in prayer for you.

And this is what we need to keep very much in mind – it is our magazine. The more we support it – prayerfully, financially, contributing articles and news – the more this will become so. This is an opportunity to show how serious we are to be united and involved churches in Australia. And what a helpful thing it is that when we have visitors to our church that we can give them a complimentary copy of *The Presbyterian Banner*? There they can see and read of the heart in our churches – the glorious proclamation of the unchanging and ever-powerful Word of God. May God continue to bless this vital ministry amongst us.

S. Bajema (Editor)

Financial Statement for year ended 31-12-12

RECEIPTS (2011)		PAYMENTS	
Balance 31-12-12	910.56	Printing	2649.91
Subscriptions	4320.00	Postage	446.40
Bank Interest	14.97	Bank Fees	12.10
		Balance 31-12-13	<u>2137.12</u>
	\$5245.53		\$5245.53

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE:

1. To warmly encourage our congregations and members to pray for and actively support the ministry of *The Presbyterian Banner*.

Report on the Website: The use of smartphones and tablets to access the internet is increasing and so the format in which a website is presented must change accordingly. In answer to this, at the time of writing, the website is undergoing a major change in structure and presentation to be what is called “responsive” to access from mobile devices as well as larger screen desktops and laptops. For example, a person accessing the website for information from their phone will not have to scroll around endlessly to find the right link to a congregation’s contact page, and try to press a tiny button to access it. Pages will be simplified and re-oriented on small-screens.

Also, while we want to retain a primary emphasis on the text content of the site – the presentation of the Word, understanding Reformed theology, as well as providing information on the history and ongoing presence of the PCEA within Australia – an effort has been made to make the delivery and presentation of that content appealing by the use of a more graphic/visual interface. Hence, the website has more photographs and graphic design elements to engage the “passer-by”. We hope not only the Truth of the Word will be accessible to all, but the life of the denomination, and each congregation within it, will be portrayed winsomely.

For those interested in statistics, a detailed report of access to the website for 2013 is available from the webmaster. In brief, we have had 34,322 distinct visitors to the site over the year, some of whom have visited more than once. (Avg. 1.56 visits/ 5.74 pages viewed per visitor). The majority access the site from Australia, but a large number “visit” from the US, followed by the Ukraine, Russia and France. 62 percent of the visitors stay for only 30 seconds and it is these that we hope to entice with a more arresting presentation on the homepage, where the majority of people “land” and spend their time. Just over 25% spend more than 5 minutes on the site, up to an hour.

A number of congregations have their own web presence and so the denominational site looks set to be a hub for these, but we also want to have unique content that reflects the unity of the denomination. The online version of *The Presbyterian Banner* is one way of promoting this, additionally we now have an archive of past Presbyterian periodicals for general research, but we also look for articles and information to be posted on the PCEA site that enhance the picture of denominational life. Proposals for the future already include: an article or two as teasers on the website proper for people to investigate further when they download the *Banner*; a central Sermon Audio database of sermons by various ministers in the denomination; introductory courses available online for members and Elders in theology and related subjects; photo galleries of denominational life (eg. Camps); and possibly short, blog-type reflections by ministers on various helpful truths.

The website increasingly provides the first impression of our denominational face to the world. I appeal to our members to help in making it an effective and attractive prospect. Towards this end, the Media Committee seeks to establish a network of congregational correspondents, and representatives with technical skills who can facilitate the aims outlined above.

D. Kerridge, Webmaster

ARCHIVIST’S REPORT TO SYNOD 2014

Rev. Dr Rowland S. Ward

1.0 GENERAL

1.0.1 The last Report was in 2008. I have continued collecting material, sorting it and, when complete and if relevant, binding same. I summarise past reports here, and add some new data. The material is archives strictly so-called established by Synod 1989 (Act 2) as well as other material in line with the decision of Synod 1999 (minute 61) as follows:

1. That Synod establish the *McIntyre Forbes Presbyterian Library* of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to include material in the following categories:
 - a. Synodical: bound copies of magazines issued by Synod, copies of reports and minutes (other than those archived elsewhere) and Synod publications;
 - b. Ministerial: publications, papers and diaries (originals or copies) by PCEA ministers or other members or congregations;
 - c. Historical: material bearing on the history of the church in Australia;
 - d. Scottish: selected material bearing on the history of the Scottish Church, especially the Free Church of Scotland, principally FCS magazines and literature published by the FCS;
 - e. Theological/biblical: selected items of significance in elucidating the Reformed tradition in which we stand or related to our distinctive position whether on worship or otherwise.

1.0.2 With the approval of the Administration Committee the permanent Synod record (permanent minutes for 1962-72, 1973-81, 1981-91, printed copies for 1992-95), were lodged with the Ferguson Memorial Library on 11 December 2013 (accession # 2013/301) and a volume for 1996-2005 with the same institution by the Synod Clerk on 31 January 2014. Thus there is a complete backup outside our Archive in Wantirna. Report of early Synod meetings are found in the *Sydney Morning Herald* and/or other newspapers for most years until 1900. These are sometimes more useful than the actual minutes which have gaps. I have downloaded these in pdf format but they can be found by going to the wonderful searchable site <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/home> which includes many Australian newspapers from the earliest times to the 1950s and which is being added to constantly.

1.0.3 The Synod Treasurer since 1991, Mr Alex Steel, has advised me that he has the Synod Cash Book 1943-48, Journal 1953-90 and General Ledger 1968-91. He also has printed Synod Accounts from 1948 onwards except 1951, 1952, 1954, 1955, 1961, 1971 and 1986. The archives has 1951 and 1952 and from 1971 onwards, and I have personal copies of the rest, so a complete set can be provided for him.

1.0.4 So far as I can ascertain all earlier properties of the PCEA/FPCV have been accounted for, and only property where ownership will need to be sorted out is the union church at Anna Bay.

1.0.5 It is important that Committees keep appropriate records and in the case of Training of Ministry and Inter Church Relations this is of particular importance.

2.0 RECORDS LODGED WITH OTHERS

Location data for material not held at Knox PCEA Melbourne but lodged by us elsewhere is as follows:

2.0.1 *Assembly of the Free Presbyterian Church of Australia*, minutes (complete 1913-61)

Ferguson Memorial Library of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales pursuant to resolution of Synod 97:48 (lodged 1998).

2.0.2 *Synod of Eastern Australia*, permanent minutes 1864-2005 [scroll from 1905 held by us]

Ferguson Memorial Library of the Presbyterian Church of Australia in the State of New South Wales pursuant to resolution of Synod 97:48 (lodged 1998), which also has first volume 1846-64 acquired by Mr Justice Ferguson from a bookstall!

2.0.3 *Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria* pre 1953 various

Presbyterian Church of Victoria Archives, Melbourne, pursuant to resolution of Synod 2001:47. Letter 15/5/2001 refers.

2.0.4 *Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia* various pre 1953

Mortlock Library, Adelaide, pursuant to Act of Synod 1989 (lodged 6/8/2003)

3.0 SYNOD & PRESBYTERY MINUTES HELD IN PCEA ARCHIVE, WANTIRNA

3.0.1 *Synod Minutes*

[1846-2005 in Ferguson]; 1905 to date in our Archive, chiefly scroll.

3.0.2 *Presbytery Minutes*

Presbyteries were formed (Sydney and Maitland) in 1852 and Illawarra in 1859. We are missing: Presbytery of Sydney 1852-70; Presbytery of Maitland 1852-86; Presbytery of Illawarra 1859-64 (believe in Ferguson Memorial Library); Presbytery of Grafton 1879-1909 (probably fragmentary because of schism); Presbytery of Manning 1894-1909 (probably fragmentary because of schism)

Central (1865)

Presbytery of Sydney 20.09.1870-2.1886 when amalgamated with Presbytery of Maitland
Presbytery of Sydney and Maitland 2.1886-30.10.1930. Books since then (1930-60, 1960-88; 1988-2004 and 2004 to date) are with Clerk of Presbytery, Dennis Muldoon.

Northern (1909)

Minute books 1909-60, 1960-75 held in archives; 1975-97 and 1998 to date are with Clerk of Presbytery, David Kerridge. [Minutes of Presbytery of Manning (embracing Manning, Barrington, Hastings, Bellinger) from institution 1882 to 1894 are in front of 1909-60 book.]

Southern (1953)

Presbytery minutes 1953-68, 1968-82, 1982-1999 to date plus selected correspondence. Clerk, Rowland Ward, has current book 7/3/2000 to date. [FPCV Presbytery minutes also held in archive from 1935.]

4.0 MISSING SYNOD & PRESBYTERY RECORDS

4.0.1 Synod of Eastern Australia

None missing

4.0.2 'Reconstituted' Synod of Eastern Australia

20 April 1886-1904

To ca. 1893 some recoverable from church magazine &c.

4.0.3 PCEA Presbyteries post 1864

Presbytery of Maitland 1864-86

Presbytery of Grafton 1879-1909 (probably fragmentary because of schism)

Presbytery of Manning 1894-1909 (probably fragmentary because of schism)

Some material recoverable from church magazines &c.

4.0.4 Defunct PCEA Congregations

Bombala (1864-76), Parkes (1875), Wellington (1878-93), Newtown (1887-1906)

Namoi (1883-87) Bellinger (1878-85), Bowraville/Macksville (1878-91) Wyrallah/Coraki (1875-86), Casino (1885-95).

4.0.5 Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria post 1864

Synod operated 1864-70, 1877-1902, 1939-53. Last Clerk, I. L. Graham.

Presbytery 1864-1902; (inoperable 1902-08) 1908-35.

Substance in most cases can be recovered from church magazines &c.

Defunct congregation of Nareen (1879-88); some records from the Ballarat region (1890s).

5.0 MISSING CONGREGATIONAL RECORDS SO FAR AS REPORTED

Many St Kilda records pre 1921 are missing.

St George's Session minutes April 1865 to April 1881 are missing

6.0 CHURCH MAGAZINES

A full run of church magazines now exists with the exceptions marked *, although *The Voice in the Wilderness* and *The Port Phillip Christian Herald* are on microfiche which I had made some years ago from the hardcopies belonging to F. Maxwell Bradshaw. Particular thanks are due to Mr G. A. Neil of Penrith who enabled many of the gaps previously reported to be filled. Recently it has been discovered that a second series of the *Voice* occurred in 1856. The two extant copies have not yet been inspected.

New South Wales

The Voice in the Wilderness, fortnightly Jan 1846-Dec 1852

ed. William McIntyre, Maitland

The Australian Witness, weekly April 1853-March 1854

ed. Alex Salmon, Sydney

**The Voice*, weekly Jan 1856-Dec 1856 [only two issues in Mitchell Library]

The Testimony, monthly Oct 1865- Feb 1870

ed. William McIntyre, Sydney

**The Australian Witness & Presbyterian Herald*, weekly Nov 1872-74¹

**The Witness & Australian Presbyterian*, weekly 1874-77

The Witness, weekly June 1877- 84² (3 recently bound volumes are held)

ed. George Sutherland, Sydney

¹ In 1874 the publisher joined the PCNSW and continued the publication; whereupon Sutherland continued the original paper under a new name.

² *The Free Churchman*, 1883-93, was published monthly in the interest of the 'Reconstituted Synod' ed. John S. Macpherson, Raymond Terrace.

The Free Presbyterian Magazine, irregularly from Aug 1905-11 (13 issues)

The Australian Free Presbyterian Magazine, from Sept 1911-12 (3 issues)

ed. William McDonald, Sydney

Victoria

Port Phillip Christian Herald, monthly Jan 1846-50

Victorian Christian Herald, monthly Jan 1851- April 1851

ed. James Forbes

**The Free Presbyterian Messenger*, 1847-49

ed. James Forbes

**The Standard*, monthly Jan 1859- June 1861 [copy in State Library of Victoria]

ed. Peter MacPherson

The Presbyterian, monthly 1878-81, 1884-86

ed. Arthur Paul, St Kilda

The Free Church Quarterly, March 1889-1913

ed. John Sinclair

South Australia

**The Free Presbyterian*, 1875-81 [Copy in State Library of South Australia]

ed. James Benny

PCEA/FPCV in co-operation [FPCV merged into PCEA 1953]

The Australian Free Presbyterian, quarterly 1913-24

The Free Church Monthly, 1924-28

ed. John Sinclair, Geelong

The Free Presbyterian Banner, monthly 1928-29

ed. J. Campbell Robinson, St Kilda

Our Banner, monthly 1929-40³

ed. Isaac Graham, Hamilton 1929-32

ed. J. Campbell Robinson, St Kilda 1933-40

The Australian Free Presbyterian, 1941-54

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Our Banner, 1954-81

ed. Neil MacLeod, Sydney 1941-43

ed. Arthur Allen, Sydney 1944-58

ed. Stewart N. Ramsay, Hunter 1958-66

ed. Alexander D. Campbell, Grafton 1966-70

ed. Ray Murray, St Kilda 1970-72

ed. Eric S. Turnbull, St Kilda 1972-75

ed. Allan M. Harman, 1975-1979

ed. Edwin R. Lee, Manning 1979-1981

ed. Rowland S. Ward, Melbourne 1981

The Presbyterian Banner, [A4 format] 1982-

ed. Rowland S. Ward, 1982-87; 1996 (part), 2000-06

ed. Ray Murray, Grafton 1987-88; 2006-09

ed. W. Peter Gadsby, Manning 1988-2000

ed. Sjik Bajema, Narre Warren 2010-

Grass Roots 1973-75 ed. Julie Davies (nee McPherson, complete: 15 issues)

Fellowship 1986-97 (chiefly ed. Jim Cromarty, complete)

With the freely offered work of Mr Robert Hingston, Ulverstone deacon, *The Voice* and *The Port Phillip Christian Herald* have been scanned as photographs, while a start has been made scanning *The Free Church Quarterly* in searchable format. At the time of writing the issues from 1889-1908 have been done. These will be added to the pcea.org.au website by Mr Kerridge, the webmaster.

7.0 BOUND PAMPHLET MATERIAL

7.0.1 FPCV material 1863-1953 – one volume contents listed 2006

7.0.2 Pamphlets re PCEA schism 1884-1904 – one volume contents listed 2006

7.0.3 PCEA printed Synod Minutes 1881-1887 – one volume

8.0 BOUND MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL

8.0.1 *The 1953 Union and the Victorian Property Act*

³ A monthly 4 page paper for young people was issued under the name *Our Banner* from July 1923 to 1928.

The union was championed by Rev Arthur Allen, supported by the Victorian ministers lest the church become unable to act, and was preceded by controversy over the status of the Paraphrases. It involved abandonment of the Assembly formed in 1913 as a federal arrangement, and the reception of the FPCV into the PCEA. The architect was F. Maxwell, Bradshaw, MA, LL.M., the Procurator. Contents as listed Synod 2008.

8.0.2 Papers re NSW Trustees legislation 1918-2004

Papers related to incorporation in NSW 1918 as '**The Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia**'. Proposed comprehensive amendment drafted by F. Maxwell Bradshaw MA, LL.M. 1966. Actual amendment 2004 to date (2008) relating simply to indemnity of members of the incorporated body. Contents as listed Synod 2008.

8.0.3 South Australian Property negotiations 1982-2006

These were successfully concluded in with the passing of the Free Presbyterian Church (Vesting of Property) Act 2001 by the South Australian Parliament, and the receipt of \$78,000 in 2007.

8.0.4 Papers re Victorian Trustees legislation 2011-13 will be bound with the parallel NSW Trustees legislation when that is complete.

8.0.5 Synod Committees

Provident Funds Committee 1967-96 (1 volume)

8.0.6 Other

FPCV/PCEA Melbourne Historic records 1846-96 (1 volume)

9.0 UNBOUND PCEA MATERIAL

1. Law & Advisory Committee (2 files)
 - (i) Richmond NSW Property 1991-94; (ii) Revised Church Practice 1982-92
3. Training of Ministry Committee 1962-75
covering John Knox Theological College & RTC Geelong
4. Psalmody/Psalter Revision Committee 1976-91
5. Ministers/students
(Material relating to ministers and students is being kept in orderly fashion in Lever Arch files.)
6. Archive box for each congregation

10.0 BOUND JOURNALS/MAGAZINES

1. The Scottish Christian Herald 1836-39 (4 vols.)
2. The Christian Miscellany 1842
3. The Scottish Christian Journal 1849-50, 1851-52 (2 vols.)
4. Free Church Magazine 1852
5. Church Heritage from commencement 1978-2010 (8 vols.) [This is the magazine of the Uniting Church Historical and Records Society NSW, which we receive in exchange for the Presbyterian Banner.]
6. Scottish Church History Society Records 1923-71 (17 vols newly bound as 8)
7. Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland 1973 -2012 (14 vols.)

e. Published books

It is proposed to list these next year as the writer expects to transfer further volumes of his own to the Library. We have a good coverage of Scottish history and ecclesiology relevant to our constitutional history.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. That congregations and committees be encouraged to deposit significant material in the Archives retaining an extra copy locally.

YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

Members: A. Miranda (convener 2014), T. Reeve, J. Klazinga, S. Carswell, Glen Hamilton

In 2013 the Y&F committee discussed the time and place of family camps and continued to provide resources to encourage the spiritual growth of children and youth in the church. In terms of the regularity of family camps, the committee recommended January 2015 as the next date for meeting with other families.

Essays: 10 essays prizes were awarded in 2013. The work submitted shows an excellent level of thoughtful engagement with the questions and wonderful creativity from the little ones to the main point of the biblical passage through drawings. Personal letters of congratulations were sent to all participants commending them for the diligent work, clear articulation and eagerness to keep growing the faith through deeper study of the Bible. The names of children and youths who submitted essays are provided below: Becky Hamilton, Belinda Hamilton, Jonathan Hickey, Tahnee Carswell, Nick Geerds, Simone Hamilton, Shaun Hamilton, Niklavs Bosveld, Caleb Klazinga and Naomi Klazinga.

Prescribed Youth Work 2014:

<u>Metrical Psalms:</u>	1 st Certificate	2 nd Certificate
Infants (7yrs)	Psalms 119:9-16/117	93:1-5/131
Junior (8 to 12yrs)	Psalms 113	27:1-6
Senior (13 to 17yrs)	Psalms 13	24

Scripture Memory: 1st Certificate (Junior) Psalm 91:1-7 2nd Certificate (Senior) Revelation 1:1-18

The Ten Commandments: Exodus 20:1-17

Psalm Tunes: Please choose appropriate Psalm from preferred book

Junior: Denio/Greyfriars/Jackson/Credition Senior: Blaernwern/Shelter/Hanover/Gainsborough

Catechism: Sections **1:** 1-10, **2:** 11-22, **3:** 23-38, **4:** 39-62, **5:** 63-88, **6:** 89-107, **7:** 1-107 word perfect

Books of the Bible: Correct repetition of the Books of the Bible in order.

Essay Questions:

Infants (7): Read Luke 10:38 –42. This story says that there is “one thing” that you really need to worry about in life. Can you tell me what that “thing” is? Why do you think this is so important?

Junior (up to 400 words): Look up Psalm 91. Who can enjoy the blessings in this Psalm? According to verses 14 to 16, what will God do for the people who dwell in the shelter of his presence?

Senior (1000 words): Revelation 5:1-14 is one of the most majestic descriptions of Jesus. Please answer the following questions from this passage:

1. Why does John begin to weep in v.4?
2. How is the worth of Jesus brought out in verses 5, 6 and 9?
3. Quickly compare v.12 with v.13. What do you see here?

Birthday Roll: Mrs Margaret Kinder’s commitment to encourage the children through birthday cards every year is a great contribution to their happiness, and sense of belonging in the PCEA. The number of cards sent to children under 12 years old this year was 101.

Search Work: Mrs Irene Steel continues as coordinator of this program. The program provides motivation and fun ways for children to grow their knowledge in the things of God.

PCEA Camps:

Brisbane Camp 2013: In 2013, 45 people attended the Brisbane Congregation family Camp at Camp Drewe, Lennox Head, NSW from Nov 22 to 25. Rev. Andre Scheepers (Ulverstone, PCEA, Tasmania) delivered 5 talks, and there was much discussion and encouragement amongst the campers.

Boys Camp 2014: Although, the Y&F committee was not directly involved in the organisation of this event, I have included it not only to congratulate the organisers for their initiative, but also to encourage members of Y&FC to provide support and see that this initiative becomes a long-term plan.

A boy's camp was held from Friday the 24th to Sunday the 26th of January at Wishart Lodge, in Mount Evelyn. The lodge is a popular scouting camp, conveniently located in the Yarra Ranges only 30 minutes drive from the Knox congregation, and is close to beautiful Lilydale Lake.

This was a camp for boys in years 7 - 12 at school, and 11 teenage boys attended. Although the camp was not widely advertised within the PCEA, two boys flew in from the Ulverstone congregation in Tasmania (Shaun Hamilton and Niklavs Bosveld), and another from the Brisbane congregation (Nathanael Carswell), which was an encouragement to those organizing the camp. The majority of attendees were boys from the Sudanese congregation at All Nations, Mulgrave.

Although the aim of the camp was meant to be an experiment in bringing together some of the boys within the congregations in the Southern Presbytery for fellowship and learning, we welcomed those attending from afar. Indeed, a future boys camp will now aim to include as many boys as are willing to attend from the entire PCEA.

The specific purpose of the camp was to run four sessions from the youth version of the *Christianity Explored* course called *Soul*. These sessions looked at *Who Jesus is and what it means to follow him*. The first session was run on the Friday afternoon, two on the following Saturday (morning and afternoon), with another run on Sunday morning.

From the feedback received, the boys found the sessions helpful and interesting. Indeed, the *Soul* DVD presented Christianity in a fresh and engaging fashion for teenagers. We highly recommend the course, especially for believing teenagers to invite their friends along to. In addition to the Bible study sessions, outdoor activities were organized to complement the concepts learned, including a walk to the Lake. A short Sunday morning service was used to reinforce the course material. The text for the sermon, based on Mark 8:27-38, was titled, *Jesus' Identity, Mission, and Call*. In conclusion here is some of the feedback received from the boys: "More! I'm coming back next year!" ... "It was fun because we learnt more about God." ... "The Bible study was extremely good!"

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all who helped organized the camp, including Joshua Moore from the Carrum Downs congregation and Rowland Ward. Thanks you also to Anna Ward, Lorraine Loudon, and Connie Dekter from the Knox congregation who provided meals for the boys. Please keep the boys in your prayers. They are the future of our PCEA! ... Denver Boehret.

Proposed Deliverances:

1. Synod thanks God for all Christian workers and their commitment to encourage our children with the teachings of Scripture.
2. Synod commits to keep praying for the children's spiritual growth, and for the youth to find meaning and fulfilment in their relationship with Christ.

MISSIONS COMMITTEE REPORT TO SYNOD 2014

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

Committee Activities: The committee did not meet face to face but communicated by telephone and email throughout the year.

Mission Field Reports

AUSTRALIAN INDIGENOUS MINISTRIES – Rev Trevor Leggott reports:

The ministry of AIM continues as a mixture of great encouragements coupled with strong challenges. During 2013 our mission personnel in the Northern Territory having been seeking to build on the revival that took place in the Barkley region. Whilst things have “quietened down” there are still many who are seeking after good Bible teaching and resources to help them grow in the Lord. Our challenge is to recruit more gifted, qualified and able personnel to engage in this important mission undertaking.

Whilst the field is ripe for harvest the labourers are growing fewer in number. A number of our personnel are reaching retirement age. Others have to consider the needs for education of their growing children and this might necessitate a relocation to a better resourced centre. We could currently place personnel in Alice Springs, Epenarra, Tennant Creek, Elliott, Barunga, and Borroloola.

It has been a challenge for me to meet all the needs in my role as general director, whilst also seeking to cover much of the work of our field director who has been on compassionate leave for some years caring for his ailing wife. Stephen Bignall has been appointed to the role of field director after Cliff Letcher retired in November 2013. Whilst Stephen is located in western NSW and has a heavy commitment there, it was thought necessary to assist him with providing extra member care for those in the NT. I have been greatly encouraged to have Robert Alley and Jono Wright, both very able men, take up this critical work. Robert will visit those in the north whilst on his mission awareness tours, as well as flying visits from time to time, and Jono will cover the southern centres from Camooweal.

AIM ministry in NSW continues to develop with sound work now established in Dubbo, Gilgandra, Walgett, Moree and Gulargambone, with other ministries developing in response to local requests in Warren and Goodooga. There are regular Bible teaching seminars in Dubbo and good teaching times every long weekend throughout the year at the AIM Rivers Conventions held at different towns.

At Moree the children’s work continues to be a great opportunity and with the help of Neil and Wilma Robinson there is also the beginnings of an adult program seeking to link Aboriginal and wider Christian community together. The growing involvement of the local Presbyterian Church has been a tremendous benefit. The church has made available its property and resources, and the minister has been a real encouragement.

One of the most discouraging events has been the disruption in the Gilgandra church brought on by a small group wanting to have the elder Henry Louie stand down. We have sought to mediate and at their request have investigated the matter only to conclude that there was no legitimate charge against Mr Louie. AIM has unanimously expressed their support of him as follows: *Given the long-standing support and recognition of the role of Henry Louie in his ministry in the community, both by AIM, and the wider Aboriginal Christian ministry, it was unanimously resolved that the AIM Council will continue support Henry Louie and those supportive of him in his pastoral role in the Gilgandra Church. Legalism and traditionalism is a constant danger in the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. AIM wants to continue to support the emphasis on the ministry of the Grace of God through His Gospel and personal relationship with Jesus Christ, as evidenced in the present leadership under Henry Louie in the Gilgandra church.* Trying to resolve such disharmony in the church is very time consuming and draining on those involved.

Trevor has indicated that, God willing, he will continue in his role as General Director until the end of 2016.

Rev Peter Smith: In August 2013 Peter took up the role of prayer convener for the mission and indicated that he was intending to relocate to the Taree area to join the Manning congregation. Peter gained office skills through retraining and has made himself available for further service with AIM.

On 6th February the AIM Council unanimously resolved to offer Peter the permanent part-time position of Office Administrator. With the full encouragement of the Manning Session, and the further support of Central Presbytery, Peter has applied through the Mission Committee for Synod to consider appointing him a voluntary missionary of the church as he serves in this role with AIM.

CHRISTIAN WITNESS TO ISRAEL – Anna Ward reports:

A. The extension of CWI to Korea

This is not to evangelise Jews, but to educate Korean churches on the importance of Jewish mission and to mobilise missionary candidates. To help achieve this, a visit to Korea was undertaken by Kaychan Park, Ben Midgley (CWI Chairman, UK) and Paul Morris (UK) from 18th October to 8th November 2013.

KayChan Park was the main organiser and although aspects of the visit were not as planned, God is sovereign and they saw doors opened and had wonderful opportunities. Despite a declining interest in missions in Korea in general, there is a stirring of interest in Jewish work. The attitude of many Korean Christians to Israel focuses on prophecy and politics rather than Reformed teaching. Some Korean Christians they met were surprised (and impressed) that they spoke openly to Jews about their need of Christ.

Following this visit a committee has been set up in Korea and there are promising developments.

B. Within Australia

CWI has one missionary couple in Australia and they work in Sydney – Rev Kaychan Park and his wife Sue. KayChan and Sue Park are both Koreans and he is a minister of the Hap Dong Presbyterian Church. They worked in Israel before coming to Australia eight years ago, are fluent in Hebrew and KayChan's main work in Sydney with CWI is among Israeli backpackers. The work is stressful and Jews have cursed him, but many young backpackers are searching for meaning and appreciate hearing someone talk in their native tongue. Kaychan and Sue Park are hardworking and cheerful, in a ministry that is often lonely and discouraging.

Rev Stephen Holmes (Anglican minister, Kinglake, Victoria) and his wife Lana were appointed prospective workers for Melbourne in February 2012. They have not yet taken up the work as Stephen Holmes had to oversee the rebuilding of Kinglake church that was destroyed in the 2009 bushfires. The building was opened in March 2014, but no date is given for the Holmes' commencement with CWI and perhaps questions might be raised about that. They also need to raise their financial support and this has not yet been done.

Paul Morris was Australian Director for nine years to early 2011 and his departure left a vacuum in the promotion and organisation of CWI. Although Craig Myers (in Sydney) undertakes part time administrative work, there is no one person responsible for developing and co-ordinating CWI's ministry. In 2013 CWI Australia Council (Chairman Colin Chamberlain) approached CWI UK Council asking it to appoint and fund an Australian Field Leader. However while UK Council is willing to appoint someone and pay their initial stipend, they stipulate that after two years the onus is on the Australian Council to ensure ongoing support. The UK Council will not appoint and train a person if there is a likelihood of no financial support after two years. This issue is still under discussion.

The Melbourne prayer group is held bi-monthly in Knox PCEA and is mainly supported by members of Knox congregation. The Edersheim lectures are given annually in Melbourne and Sydney on an issue related to Jewish mission. The last nine will be available soon in a book called *The Gospel and Israel*, published by Wipf and Stock.

CWI's crucial need is for a person or persons with the commitment to Jewish mission and the vision and drive to transform it, to make it known in the Christian community and financially viable, so that missionaries can get on with the essential work of evangelism.

DUMISANI THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE - *An abridged report from Rev. Dr Alistair Wilson*

2014 marks the 35th anniversary of the establishment of Dumisani Theological Institute, which was begun in 1979 as the Dimbaza Reformed Bible School, thanks to the vision and labour of Rev Bill and Mrs Elizabeth Graham. And once again, there is much to be thankful for as we look back on another year of the Lord's faithfulness and provision at Dumisani. There are several areas, which deserve particular attention:

Staff: We are very thankful for a strong staff team in which the various members work very well together. Dr Jack Whytock and Mrs Nancy Whytock joined the team formally in 2013 as missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland. We have an excellent group of able and well-qualified teachers, but there is also a constant process of improvement. Several of the staff have recently completed academic qualifications which adds significant benefit to the college, in terms of increase in skills and knowledge which enables the college to carry out its task of equipping students for ministry and in terms of how the college is perceived by others.

Buildings: There have been very substantial changes to the Dumisani buildings over the past year, largely due to the very significant funding which was raised by the Women for Mission organisation, although significant amounts of funding also came from various other churches and individuals from various parts of the world. We are deeply thankful to all those who worked so hard to raise the funds which have enabled us to completely refurbish the building which was previously our library and turn it into a very suitable office block. This has transformed our working environment. The Library is now housed in the iconic church building at 15 Leopold Street. The old office partitions have been stripped out and have left a wonderful open space, which makes a very suitable and dignified library. Having carried out significant work on our classroom at 12 Leopold Street some time ago, we now enjoy excellent building resources, even though there is significant scope for further improvement. We are very grateful to the team of builders who did fine work and to Rev Deon Lombard who devoted his experience and skills and a considerable amount of his time to overseeing and contributing to the work. Regarding Dumisani's financial situation more generally, we were encouraged in 2013 by the Lord's provision. In particular, we thank our friends in the PCEA for the regular support of the denomination as a whole, as well as congregations and individuals, for the contributions, which have made a significant positive impact on our ability to carry out our ministry.

Courses and Students: DTI continue to teach students from a very diverse range of church backgrounds, but all are very appreciative of the opportunity to study at Dumisani, even if our Reformed theological position differs from the views of their own churches. Most of our students are amaXhosa, although we are glad to welcome others from time to time. Many come with limited educational foundations in place and many struggle with various financial and family pressures and some are not able to meet the demands of their courses. But we have also seen some very encouraging successes, including numerous students gaining their BTh degree.

Informal courses include regular Sunday School Workshops and in 2013, we presented a day conference on "A Christian Approach to Work". We continue to have many students (including a significant proportion of prisoners) working on our basic correspondence course and there continues to be demand for our booklets published in English and isiXhosa.

In all our teaching and training, we place a strong emphasis on the Gospel of God's gracious salvation in Jesus Christ and we pray that this same emphasis is taken by our students into their various churches and ministries.

Visitors and Events: Many distinguished guests who have visited us and either spoken at our college chapel service, spoken at our annual Awards Service, and/or given some lectures, have blessed Dumisani over the years. Over the past few years, we have welcomed several Free Church moderators and other friends and colleagues including Professor Allan Harman, Dr David Wenham and Professor Howard Marshall. All of these visitors have encouraged our staff and students with their ministry and many have enabled us to build new relationships with people who previously did not know about Dumisani.

At the end of 2013, Dumisani hosted an international course arranged by the Dutch mission organisation *De Verre Naasten*, which drew participants from numerous countries and introduced most of them to Dumisani

for the first time. Since 2012, we have become a regular venue for the annual African Pastors' Conference, which is held in various parts of Africa and promotes biblical-theological preaching among African church leaders.

All of these events contribute to our overall strategy of establishing relationships with individuals and churches in South Africa and internationally with a view to future partnership.

All of us at Dumisani continue to be grateful for the support of the PCEA in prayer and finance and we hope that this report will encourage the church to join with us in giving thanks to God for his faithfulness over 35 years and to look forward to what he will yet accomplish through the ministry of this institution.

INDIA – Dr Dennis Muldoon reports:

Taleem (discipleship) centre- Dehradun: Dr Rahmat Hussain, who began this work among children from Muslim families, went to his heavenly home on 17 May 2013. We recall that his wife died in an accident in 2009. He left behind three children.

At the Taleem centre in Bihar state a place was rented to conduct classes in literacy, maths and Bible for children, mainly girls, from poor Muslim homes. They were often children at risk of sexual abuse or being sold into the flesh trade. Dr Muldoon visited this centre with his wife in 2011. At this time Dr Rahmat spoke of a similar community of people in a town near Dehradun in Uttarakhand state. We also saw that his eldest daughter Mariam was assisting him in this work.

With Rahmat's death the work in Bihar sadly stopped. We were in contact with Mariam who said it was not safe for her to travel into Bihar. However, she kept contact with the group near Dehradun. After discussion with Mariam, the steering committee, the FCS Mission Board, and after much prayer, the committee decided to continue supporting this work, with Mariam developing the centre near Dehradun- the FCS are supporting the education of Rahmat's children. Dr Muldoon and his wife plan to visit the new centre with Mariam in April 2014.



The Taleem centre is functioning with three teachers and over 40 children, who attend daily for classes and a meal. Mariam has rented a place and purchased new equipment for the centre. She supplied the committee with an account of expenditure, as was done previously. She also sends photos of the children and special occasions when gifts like books and pencils are distributed. A man converted under the ministry of Dr Rahmat is assisting at the centre. The steering committee, under the leadership of Rev Sam McGregor of the CRPC continues to guide the work. We pray that these children and their families

will hear the name of Jesus and be brought by the grace of God to believe in Him.

Dr Dickson- New Delhi: Dr Dickson continues to operate an Animal Wellness Centre for dairy farmers on the outskirts of Delhi. Through this centre he contacts many farmers, helping those who are poor and sharing the gospel as he has opportunity. He has taken on staff to assist in running this centre. Dr Dickson also publishes a newsletter for vets and has spoken to students at a vet college in Bareilly.

Dr Dickson previously taught and coordinated in a rural training program at Allahabad. He enjoys going into rural areas to teach poor farmers how to care for their animals and share the gospel with them. He has been asked by agencies such as EFICOR (TEAR Fund supported), and World Vision to conduct training programs in tribal areas of Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa, UP and MP states, as well as in Kashmir. He writes "It is an irony that in a country where cows are worshipped by millions, the welfare of livestock remains neglected. Animals lead a miserable life for want of proper food and vet care".

We pray for Dr Dickson in the difficulties of travel to these interior places but are thankful that he can encourage the tribal believers who are often persecuted for their faith. We are thankful that the PCEA can continue to support this servant of the Lord.

Dr Tigi Verghis- Siliguri: Dr Verghis continues with his family in the northern part of Bengal state in India. As an *Interserve* partner he leads in the work of HIMserve, a local mission which does community work in partnership with churches in the foothills of the Himalayas. They are able to help poor villagers with income generation work like poultry, goats, dairy and kitchen garden. They also assist in literacy and primary health care.

Dr Verghis has arranged for Dr Muldoon to visit a minister in the Git-Dubling Kirk session near Darjeeling with whom he is working. It is encouraging to see the ongoing work of this Indian believer whom the PCEA, through Dr J C Andrews, assisted in doing post graduate studies in NZ.

Central India – Mr John Greensill reports:

The PCEA has had a long association with the Presbyterian Free Church in Central India, with several members serving the mission there, including Dr Helen Ramsay, Sisters Heather Beaton, Flora Neil, Barbara Schmidt & Ian and Alina McKenzie.

Ross Campbell, John and Sue Ramsay, my wife Judy and myself were privileged to spend a week (15-21 February 2014) with the church there. Several folk there expressing disappointment that there had been a 14 year gap from the last Australian visitors,

Dr Helen, John and Sue Ramsay, until the recent visit of Hugh Varnes in 2013. There are many ways we could mutually benefit and support each other by visits, especially ministerial and English teaching.

We met the Sessions informally both in Lakhnadon and Chhapara and were taken by the desire to extend God's Kingdom in both these areas. The fruit they are seeing for their labour, they give full credit to those who went before them sowing the seed of the Gospel. Both centres have a problem we would all like to have: a need to extend their church buildings to cope with growing congregations.

The medical, church and schools in Chhapara and Lakhnadon are each centres for approximately 180 surrounding villages, which they seek to serve by impacting on the spiritual, medical, social and economic wellbeing of the area.

The Lakhnadon Christian hospital has 45 staff working in various ways through the community to help through medical, agriculture, water supply, advocacy and advice also supported by DVN in the Netherlands.

The PFC has the desire to lift theological understanding and education with two students for the ministry attending the Presbyterian Theological College in Dehra Dun. The college conducts a Hindi Diploma course in Chhapara where 13 students continue to follow through with their study.

Grace Ministries with Vinay Das (an elder and former orphan of the mission) as the co-ordinator has 12 missionaries working in the Chhapara block and works in co-operation with PFC Central India.

The Christian school in Chhapara has 1200 students, Lakhnadon has 400 with both facing many challenges with meeting government requirements such as having to allow free education to 25% of the student population for the poor and with others who may face difficulty meeting payments. It is easy to see how extreme difficulties arise when the school had to face big payments to the Provident Fund, required by the government and as a result teachers who already receive lower pay than government teachers are owed back pay.

There was a proposal put forward where individuals, for \$80 per year, could sponsor a poor child and a lot of these financial difficulties could be alleviated, which in turn has a positive flow on effect in many ways and frees up finances for other work.

There is a desire at both schools to expand and meet the challenges and needs of education remembering the great mission service they provide and reputation and respect they have in their communities, they certainly are worthy of the support we give and more.

May we all be encouraged by what the Lord is doing through our brothers and sisters in India and that we will continue supporting them prayerfully and financially and perhaps through new and meaningful ways.

Mukti Mission – Rev. Peter Smith reports:

As most of the Synod delegates and congregations know, Mukti was founded in 1889 in India, known there as Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission after its founder Pandita Ramabai. The Marathi word ‘mukti’ means freedom, liberation and salvation. Mukti as a Christian mission is taking action to bring hope and a positive future to girls and women in India. Their aim is to change lives through a range of initiatives that demonstrate in a practical way, the love of Jesus Christ to this mainly Hindu and Muslim nation.

Of prime importance is the provision of secure, Christian homes for destitute women and children. Not only may this be the first home they have ever lived in, but a home full of love, care and acceptance, regardless of their backgrounds. Mukti also supports the local community through a hospital and mobile medical clinic, a farm, community development projects, schools and vocational training. Mukti celebrates its 125th year of caring, loving and bringing the gospel to so many this year.

A Women’s conference was held, with some from Australia and other parts of the world attending. Their comments give a glimpse into life at Mukti. ‘We saw lots of poverty but at Mukti we saw the richness the girls have in their lives; the love of God is abundant. They know so much about the Bible from their studies.’ ‘There are many challenges they face at Mukti including administrative challenges, such as the government’s plan to build a four lane overpass right through the middle of their land; difficulty with long waits to get their operating licence renewed and to get a little boy’s adoption papers finalised because of government red tape. There are challenges with funding, people issues, and loving and helping heal those who have come from situations of great trauma. Despite the challenges, prayer underpins life at Mukti, with the strategically and centrally placed prayer tower a witness to the complete trust and dependence of the people on our Lord who provides all.’

The most needful thing for Mukti right now is that Synod and our congregations pray earnestly that the Lord will work in the hearts of the authorities concerned, to revoke the decision made and divert the four lane overpass road extension elsewhere.

We have supported five young women since 2010 with some changes due to girls returning to their own families, for example. The sponsorship contributes directly to the health, education, emotional wellbeing and spiritual development of each young woman. As the website states, ‘When you give a child hope, you create a future.’ Girls with hope grow into women with a future. They can go back into the community confident, equipped and ready to be the ‘salt and light’ God intended them to be.

SOUTH AMERICA – Mr Ian Conley reports:

PERU:

Colegio San Andrés: Professor Jesús Guzmán (Jesus is pronounced hay-sus in Spanish) continues as principal and with a senior leadership team run the school on a daily basis.

The total enrolment in 2014 is expected to be close to 820 students. This is the effective limit to the capacity of the site. The inner city site remains a constraint on the expansion of the school in its present form. There has been much thought put in over the years to changing the site to bigger premises or doing a new build on a vacant site or redeveloping an existing site. This is a matter for prayer for the Lord’s leading for the local Board and the leadership team.

The full enrolment contributes significantly to the financial viability of the school and allows flexibility in managing the staffing and building maintenance budgets. However a rebuild or move is way outside the normal financial parameters.

We knew that the 2013 final graduating year was a “challenge” but the results are reasonable with all 71 students applying for university places. To date 85% have been accepted and some will commence later in the year.

The two scholarships provided from the McSwan bequest have assisted students and families who would not otherwise be able to attend San Andrés. These scholarships help not only the students and families involved but also assist in lifting the profile of the school.

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 (and sometimes not so young) people from mainly Scotland have contributed to the school in this way. Miss Erin Coghill from Scotland, a gap year student from Aberdeen, is volunteering in the school until July. Is there anyone from Australia able and willing to take up the challenge?

Moyobamba: One of the Elders has been appointed as the interim Pastor of the church in Lluyllovucha, a church plant in Moyobamba. This follows the resignation and moving to Lima of the previous Pastor. The original church in Moyobamba continues with much the same numbers and activity as in previous years.

It is expected that the Annie Soper School will have 300 enrolments in 2014. There is a new Director, Jorge Briones, and he has expressed confidence that the school can recruit the teachers it needs for 2014. As at early February this process was well underway.

Chair of the School Board, Pilar Urquieta Landa, reports that the school has an extensive maintenance program underway to keep facilities at least repaired and where possible upgraded. In the summer break of 2013/14 there has been repainting of some buildings and furniture. In addition some replanting has taken place of the mini football field, lawns and gardens. A priority plan is being drawn up for more extensive projects such as building re-roofing, new toilets etc. Finance for these types of works is always very tight.

The two scholarships provided under the McSwan bequest for needy students are of great benefit as the school continues to offer, as do many schools in Australia, discounts for siblings attending and hardship cases. The opportunity for volunteer assistance at the school remains.

Moves toward the establishment of a Christian University in Moyobamba continue and the best of the options appears to be a link with the Lima Evangelical Seminary (LES). The LES has that status subject to the formal approval process. Politically it appears as if private universities are out of favour at the moment so it is expected that the process will take some time.

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. The Seminary is now almost totally self-supporting and has tertiary status subject to the completion of the formal application and recognition process which is still underway.

COLUMBIA:

Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia: (Previously Medellín Bible Seminary): Dr Manuel Reaño maintains his involvement with this institution. The Reaños have become more heavily involved in counselling of Pastors and their families and Manuel continues to lead men's conferences where participants are challenged to assume their God given function within families. Patty Reaño co-directs the Christian Family Centre called "Vinculo" which is also involved in Christian counselling. As is common the need outstrips the financial resources for this work.

PRAYER NOTES: The Convener continues to compile and distribute the prayer notes 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.

FINANCIAL ASPECTS: Following are the items reflected in the missions' budget for 2014, which is tabled at the end of this report.

AIM: The secondment of Rev. Trevor Leggott to Australian Indigenous Ministries is the committee's primary commitment to mission. It is wonderful to see the hand of God working through many years of solid foundational work and now having just the right people for the various areas joining the mission. This again is evidence that the Lord is blessing the work.

MMMRF funding for Rev Trevor Leggott: Mr Leggott indicated that 22% of his work time was spent on the relief of need amongst indigenous Australians during 2013. This is reflected in the budget for 2014, with 22% of his support coming from the MMMRF.

INDIA: 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.
The Lakhnadon Mission School: The Committee recommend that the Lakhnadon Mission School receive \$1,500 from the MMMRF for scholarships and resources.

The Committee recommend continuing the support of the important medical work in India to Lakhnadon Christian Hospital of \$10,000.

The Chhapara Christian Health Centre has ceased to operate, as we knew it. The Spandana Community Health Development Project has subsumed the original health work we had been funding and is a very substantial endeavour reaching into many fields. The committee recommend that the Project receive \$2,500 from the MMMRF.

The Committee also recommend that Dr P. Dickson continue to receive support of \$2500 from the MMMRF.

The committee recommend that \$10,000 from the MMMRF be received by Dr Rahmat Hussain for the continuing work of the Taleem centre.

The committee recommend sponsorship for the five children in the Pandita Ramabai Mukti Mission India, commenced in 2010, from the MMMRF to the amount of \$1,800.

CWI: The Committee continues to be greatly encouraged by the work of CWI. Considering that there will be only one full time worker until Paul Morris is replaced the Missions committee recommend that CWI Australia receive a grant of \$3,000 from Missions General Funds.

SOUTH AMERICA:

The Committee recommend continuing the provision of funds, \$6,700 from the MMMRF, to provide scholarships for needy students at Colegio San Andres, Lima, Peru.

The Committee also recommend that the Annie Soper School in Moyobamba receive \$2,200, which will provide scholarships for two needy children.

DUMISANI: The Committee recommend that \$1,500 be granted from Missions General Funds to support the vital role of reformed teaching by the Institute.

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, and confirms his secondment as General Director of Australian Indigenous Ministries until the end of 2016.
2. That Synod recognises and confirms Rev Peter Smith as a missionary to serve in a part-time voluntary capacity as office administrator with Australian Indigenous Ministries, and assures him of its prayerful interest and support.
3. That Synod adopt the budget for 2014 and express general agreement with the estimates for 2015.

Missions Budget 2014									
General Funds	Budget	2013	Actual	2013	Budget 2014		Estimate 2015		
Balance 1 Jan 2013		21280		21280		34570			20189
(Miss Gen, DAA, Fiji, Aim Leggott)									
Income: Investments	19000		14519			14000			14000
Giving Miss General	7000		16077			7000			6000
Miss Sprt AIM	12000		26259			16000			16000
From the Frontiers Subs	600		0			0			0
Rounding			1						
Income *1	38600	38600	56856	56856		37000	37000		36000
36000									
Expenditure									
Fiji Expenses	681		0			681			0
CWI	3000		3000			3000			3000
AIM (TIL Salary) *2	42000		39036			44800			45000
Visiting Miss expenses	1000		0			1000			1000
Dumisani Theo, Institute & Bible School	1500		1500			1500			1500
Admin: Postage, 'ph etc	500		30			400			400
From the Frontiers, Banners	600		0			0			0
Rounding			0						
Total Expenditure	49281	49281	43566	43566		51381	51381		50900
Closing Balance		10599		34570			20189		5289
IC 22 Feb 2014									

Account Balances 1 Jan 2014	
DAA Bequest	21194
Missions General	12695
Missions Support Fiji	681
Missions Support Leggott/AIM	0
Total	34570
IC 22 Feb 2014	

Notes:

1. Income needs to be spread through the year to ensure there are sufficient funds on hand to meet the commitment when due.

2. Budget 2014, For T I Leggott's Stipend is \$50700 split 22% to the Mc Swan MRF (\$11200) and 78% to Missions General/Leggott (\$39500), figures are rounded.

Malcolm McSwan Missions Relief Fund									
MRF Working Account	Budget	2013	Actual 2013		Budget 2014		Estimate 2015		
Balance 1 Jan 2013		5647		5647		5383		4183	
Income Investments	18000		15864		16000		16000		
Other					0		0		
Transfer from Equities Ac	35000		35000		35000		36000		
Income	53000	53000	50864	50864	51000	51000	52000	52000	
Expenditure									
Lakhnadon Christian Hospital	10000		10000		10000		10000		
Lakhnadon Mission School	1500		1500		1500		1500		
Chhapara Christian Health Centre	2500		2500		2500		2500		
Chhapara Mission School	2000		2000		2000		2000		
San Andres Scholarships	6500		6500		6700		6700		
Annie Soper Scholarships	2200		2200		2200		2200		
AIM (TIL Part Salary, SA/LSL levy)	12700		11858		12700		12700		
Fees and Charges	300		270		300		300		
Dr Dickson Allahabad	2500		2500		2500		2500		
Taleen Centre (Dr Japla Hussein)	10000		10000		10000		10000		
Mukti child sponsorships	1800		1800		1800		1800		
Total Expenditure	52000	52000	51128	51128	52200	52200	52200	52200	
Closing Balance		6647		5383		4183		3983	

Equities Account	Budget 2013		Actual	2013	Budget 2014		Estimate 2015		
Balance 1 Jan 2013		260012		260012		266986		231986	
Income Revaluation of shares & Managed Funds	0		41974		0		0		
Income (Retained Investment Income)	0	0	0		0		0		
Total			41974	41974	0	0	0	0	
Expenditure									
Transfer to McSwan Working Account	35000		35000		35000		36000		
Revaluation			0		0		0		
Total	35000	35000	35000	35000	35000	35000	36000	36000	
Closing Balance 31 Dec 2013		225012		266986		231986		195986	
Total Funds Held McSwan Missions Relief Fund									
		231659		272369		236169		199969	
Net Movement from previous year		-34000		5665		-36200		-36200	
IC 22 Feb 2014									

INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE REPORT

Members: G. D. Ball (Convener 2006), S. Bajema, J. Klazinga, A. Scheepers.

1. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES.

1: 1. The major event this past year on our agenda was attending the eighth meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) in Wales from 28th August to 4th September 2013. We were represented by yours truly and Rowland Ward (who was accompanied by Anna). I think both delegates would testify to the benefit of having the support of another brother at these meetings. The hosts of the conference were two small congregations of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales; Immanuel and Bethel. They did an excellent job in all the arrangements. (The EPCEW is a small church with a membership of just over 600 – similar to the PCEA). The main conference venue was in the campus of the University of South Wales, in Treforest, Pontypridd – about 18 kms from Cardiff city centre.

The ICRC was first planned in 1982 and has met every four years since 1985, each time in a different country. The aim is to develop the unity and fellowship of the churches, to foster cooperation in mission and theological education and to promote a common witness to the world. The PCEA has been in membership since the beginning.

The main focus this year was on the preaching of the Word of God. At the present time some are losing confidence in preaching as the way to reach the unchurched community; and are tempted to try other, more novel methods. By examining the subject of preaching it was hoped to strengthen confidence in it, knowing that it has pleased God to appoint preaching as his instrument to call men and women to himself. The main speakers were Rev. Ian Hamilton (Cambridge); Dr. Robert Letham (Cardiff); Dr. James Visscher (Canada) and Dr. Ho Jin Jun (Korea).

Ian Hamilton delivered a passionate opening message to the Conference – entitled, ‘The Context and Privilege of Gospel Ministry,’ from 2 Cor. 2: 12-17. Bob Letham delivered an address entitled, ‘The Necessity of Preaching’. He noted that preaching involves a proclamation of the Word of God and an appeal to the hearers, which requires the work of the Holy Spirit to bring about change in the hearts of the hearers. He noted that while the Spirit and the Word are distinct yet they are (mysteriously) inseparable, (cf. the two natures of Christ). We can therefore be confident that the preaching of the Word of God will accomplish God’s intended purpose.

James Visscher delivered an address entitled, ‘The Nature of Preaching.’ He noted that preaching is the faithful proclamation of God’s Word, which is a Triune revelation, covenantal in character, Christocentric, progressive, relevant (the preacher should always be asking himself, ‘so what?’), comprehensive, compelling and evangelistic.

Ho Jin Jun delivered an address entitled, ‘The Practice of Preaching in Non-Literary Cultures.’ He noted that 55% of the 650 million evangelical Christians are not Caucasian – providing evidence that the centre of Christianity has shifted from the West to Africa and Asia. Dr. Jun (who is 74 years old and still working in the Cambodia Presbyterian Theological Institute) recommended that preaching in non literate cultures should be clear and simple; should include apologetics designed for the culture; should be expository and applicatory; should rise from a cultural ‘point of contact’; and should address the power encounters common in Asian culture. The Conference divided into four workshop groups as opportunity was given to discuss each paper.

1: 2 Membership

When the Conference opened there were 30 member churches. When the Conference ended there were 32 member churches. The Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the Sudanese Reformed Churches were received into membership during the Conference. Five churches applied for membership and each gave an introduction of their church to the Conference. It is encouraging that interest in the conference is growing from churches in Africa, India and Pakistan.

Of particular interest to us was the application for membership from the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA), which was represented by Rev. Geoff Van Schie (WA). The two sponsoring churches were the Reformed Churches of New Zealand and the Reformed Churches of South Africa. As it turned out,

it proved to be a sensitive matter for the conference – and a somewhat awkward matter for the two PCEA delegates. We had not been aware that the CRCA had been intending to make application for membership until late May 2013. However, in a subsequent meeting with the Ecumenical Committee of the CRCA on 14/11/13 it was brought to our attention that the CRCA's application for membership was indeed on the proposed agenda of the ICRC which had been sent out in March 2013. The Convener has since apologised to the CRCA committee for this oversight.

The committee appointed to assess the CRCA application recommended that the application of the CRCA be deferred until the next meeting of conference; that they be granted observer status in the interim; and that meantime the CRCA and PCEA discuss their areas of concern. The report produced some vigorous and passionate discussion. A part of the committee's report was rejected together with its recommendation.

The committee agreed to go 'back to the drawing board' and produced a second report which was presented on the last morning of conference. This time their report was accepted; but the recommendation to admit the CRCA narrowly failed to meet the required number of votes. A fresh recommendation from the floor was adopted which basically restated the original recommendation of the committee and was accepted.

The matter was difficult and delicate for everyone concerned. Our actions undoubtedly were not appreciated by some delegates, especially from the RCNZ, the RCSA and the CRCA. We therefore had a responsibility to meet with the ecumenical committee of the CRCA as soon as possible to seek a solution to this impasse as well as having regard for our other brethren. It would give us great pleasure to be able to support, with a clear conscience, the application of the CRCA for membership in the ICRC in 2017, DV.

1: 3 Committees

A special committee to review the constitution, regulation and structures of the ICRC presented its report at this meeting of Conference. It recommended several changes to the structure of the conference together with appropriate changes to the regulations in order to encourage more regional interaction between member churches and to give a higher priority to their theological education and diaconal ministries. To enable this, a Coordinating Committee, A Theological Education Committee, A Diaconal Committee and a Regional Conferences Committee (the latter convened by Rowland Ward) have been appointed in addition to the already existing Missions Committee. (Tentative plans are in hand for a regional Asia/Pacific Conference to be held in Korea during October 2015). In order to give greater visibility to the ICRC and to improve communication among member churches and make information about the various ministries of the member churches more easily accessible, a website committee was appointed.

The conference appoints various committees to expedite the work of conference. I was the convener of the Finance committee and Rowland was the Reporter of the committee appointed to review the work of the review committee.

1: 4 Meetings

The Conference provides opportunity to meet informally and formally with delegates from other churches. We made arrangements to meet (formally) with the delegates from the OPC; EPCI; RPCNA; RPCI and FCS(C). In discussing our relationship with the FCS(C) there appeared no enthusiasm on their part to do anything more than at present.

1: 5 Officers

The chairman of the Conference was Rev. Richard Holst (Cardiff). Apart from chairing the meetings he led us each morning in devotions with meditations on aspects of Paul's ministry among the Thessalonians.

Two retiring officers of the Conference were publicly thanked and recognised when they were presented with suitably inscribed Bibles. Mr. Henk Berends (Canada) has been the honorary treasurer of the ICRC for more than 25 years; and Rev. Cornelius VanSpronsen (Canada) has been the secretary to the Conference for most of its existence.

1: 6 Missionary Emphasis

The closing evening of the Conference was a highlight with a strong missionary emphasise. We heard the moving testimony of an Eritrean believer where there is much torture and oppression against Christians. Rev. Malcolm Ball (RPCI) who has been serving as a missionary pastor in Nantes (France) for 25 years

challenged us to consider Europe as a mission field and provided up to date information on France (especially the need for a reformed theology professor in the seminary at Aix-en-Provence), and the mission work in Nantes. Rev. Bruce Martin (RPCNA) delighted us with a report of the growing church in China and the opportunities to teach there. Dr. James Visscher also spoke of his work in China and again spoke of the need for teachers and workers. The Lord is building His church!

The Conference was a full and busy programme. There was however time to relax and enjoy fellowship over the weekend. It is traditional to have one day off for something of a recreational nature. On the Saturday there was a choice of organised tours. There was a trip to the centre of Cardiff including a visit to Cardiff Castle. I chose to go to the 'Big Pit National Coal Museum', where we had a guided tour down the mine. This was followed by a visit to Wales' largest Castle in Caerphilly (and birthplace of comedian Tommy Cooper) which was concluded with a sumptuous carvery meal.

On the Lord's Day delegates were divided into two groups. One group attended the Bethel Church and the other Immanuel Church. I attended the Bethel Church where Dr. Iain D. Campbell (FCS) preached a challenging sermon on how Satan sought to have Peter but was disappointed (Luke 22: 31-32). In the evening Rev. Tony Curto (OPC) preached on the vision Isaiah had in the Temple (Isaiah 6). Both men exemplified all the elements of what constitutes good preaching.

We thank you for the privilege (and responsibility) of representing our church once more at the ICRC. It provided opportunity to strengthen relationships with some; as well as proving a strain upon others. The work of inter church relations continues. The next meeting of the Conference is scheduled for 2017 in the Hamilton area of Ontario, Canada, with the Jordan United Reformed Church (URCNA) as the host.

'That they all may be one; even as you Father art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me' (John 17: 21).

2. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

2:1. Free Church of Scotland. (FCS). 1954 and 2005.

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

An invitation has been received from the RCNZ to send one or two delegates to attend their upcoming Synod to be held at the Reformed Church of Bishopdale, in Christchurch. The Synod will be held from Saturday 13th September until Friday 19th September 2014, DV. It would be beneficial particularly in the wake of the ICRC to send a delegate to attend that it may be of mutual benefit.

2: 3. Reformed Churches (liberated) in the Netherlands. (BBK). 1999.

An invitation has been received to attend their General Synod which was to be held in Ede. The Synod began on 1st February 2014 and foreign delegates were invited to attend during the week 24th -29th March. The convener has sent greetings.

2: 4. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (OPC). 2007.

An invitation has been received to send a fraternal delegate to attend their upcoming General Assembly to be held from 4th – 10th June at Kuyper College, Grand Rapids, Michigan. We don't envisage being able to send a delegate – unless one of our brethren plans to be in the US at this time? The Convener will send greetings.

2: 5. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia. (RPCA). 2004.

An invitation has been received to send a delegate to their Presbytery AGM on Saturday 3rd May in McKinnon, Melbourne. Rev. Sjirk Bajema has kindly agreed to represent us.

2: 6. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. (RPCI). 2006.

As a result of a useful discussion with the delegates in Wales at the ICRC we have since sent a letter suggesting closer cooperation.

2: 7. The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. (RPCNA). 2008.

We are delighted to welcome the stated Clerk of the RPCNA Synod, and pastor of Ridgefield Park, New Jersey congregation, Rev. J. Bruce Martin (and his JoAnne), who will attend our Synod for the first time. We look forward to building a closer practical cooperation with the RPCNA.

2: 8. The Presbyterian Free Church of India. (PFCI). 2010.

3. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONTACT.

3: 1. Southern Presbyterian Church

We are delighted to welcome Rev. Iain Smith (Hobart) and (welcome back) Mr. John Coles to the Synod. (The Southern Presbytery has been conducting communication with the SPC - and with the RPCA and the EPCA). The SPC arose from a split in the EPC in 1986. It has two main centres; a congregation in Hobart (Glenorchy) with around 70 regulars; and a congregation of about 40 in Launceston which is currently without a minister since Terreth Klaver accepted a call in April 2013 to a church in British Columbia, Canada. Mr. Smith attended the most recent meeting of the Southern Presbytery in Melbourne where he presented an up to date picture of his church. We are heartened to note that the general opinion in the SPC would welcome closer relations with the PCEA.

It was the mind of the Southern Presbytery to recommend that Synod extends Fraternal Relations to the Southern Presbyterian Church in terms of our Act of Synod 1993, and through pulpit exchange or supply, assist in getting to know each other and so progress closer relations.

3: 2. The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia. (CRCA).

We are delighted to welcome Rev. Geoff van Schie (WA) who is attending our Synod for the first time. Since our 'memorable' encounter at the ICRC in Wales our two committees have had a very helpful meeting in Melbourne on Thursday 14th November 2013. The air has been cleared over the matter of the CRCA's application for membership in the ICRC. It was agreed that had there been better communication on both sides the matter might have been avoided. The meeting also revealed that the PCEA had been remiss in failing to respond to requests from the CRCA to reciprocate a formal ecumenical relationship (2002 and 2004). During this time (as we've been given to understand) the CRCA had granted the PCEA the status of a church in 'full ecclesiastical relationship.' The matter has revealed shortcomings in communication on both sides. At the meeting we also discussed some matters we perceive of concern in the CRCA.

As a result of that meeting we received a letter (13/2/14) from Reiner Noppers (Clerk of the CRCA Committee for Ecumenical Relationships). In it he says; *'We write to you to formally seek to encourage the PCEA to consider our request to formalise an ecclesiastical relationship between our two churches . . . We wish to inform the PCEA gathering in Wauchope in May 2014, (that) the CRCA renew(s) our call to you to establish a formal and close ecclesiastical relationship with us. The CRCA Synod of 2000 decided to extend this invitation, declaring at the time that while we awaited the response of the PCEA, the CRCA had decided to already include the PCEA and its membership in our closest category of relationship. . . To this day the PCEA remains at that closest level of relationship from the point of view of CRCA. We commit this request to your Inter Church Relations Committee and ask that it be laid before you as they meet in Synod at Wauchope in May 2014'.*

3: 3. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. (EPCA).

The Southern Presbytery wrote to the EPCA in January and received a very brotherly reply. The next meeting of the EPCA Presbytery is planned to meet in Brisbane in July when a visitation of the congregation is being undertaken. We hope it may be possible for our Brisbane minister to bring greetings. A very informative article documenting the background of the church scene in Tasmania appeared in the February 2014 Presbyterian Banner; 'Reformation and Revival in Tasmania,' by Dr. R. S. Ward.

3: 4. The Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia. (PRCA).

We wrote to the PRCA in 2009 asking them to consider formalising a relationship with us. We never received a reply. The convener has recently written again renewing our request. The Melbourne PRCA congregation of some 17 folk is preparing to formally dissolve. Two elders met with Revs. Miranda and Ward on 14th March 2014. They are wishing to inform the congregation of the future options for a church home. It is likely that the people will find different homes depending on their circumstances.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCES.

1. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia gives thanks to God for the churches with whom we have formal fraternal relations and for those churches with whom we have contact and resolve to pray for the Lord's blessing upon their work and witness.
2. The Synod acknowledges the kind invitation of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand to appoint a delegate to attend their upcoming Synod to be held at the Reformed Church of Bishopdale, Christchurch, from Saturday 13th September until Friday 19th September 2014 DV. The Synod cordially agrees to appoint a member to represent us.
- 3 The Synod records its pleasure at the developing relationship with the Southern Presbyterian Church in Tasmania. Synod resolves to extend Fraternal Relations to the Southern Presbyterian Church in terms of our Act of Synod 1993. Synod also encourages pulpit exchange or supply to assist in getting to know each other and thus progress closer relations.
4. The Synod encourages the Southern Presbytery to continue developing relations especially with the EPC and the RPCA.
- 5: 1 The Synod acknowledges its long association with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia – a relationship dating back to its formation over 60 years ago. We note that this relationship has never been formalised on our part, though delegates have been exchanged at Synod level.
- 5: 2 The Synod notes in response to two points of concern that were recorded in the PCEA Synod minutes of 1987 and 1999 that the CRCA is no longer a member of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod; and that we believe the CRCA has done what it could to overcome differences with the Free Reformed Church of Australia.
- 5: 3. The Synod records it thanks for the gracious invitation which has been renewed to us by the CRCA to formalise the relationship between our two churches.
- 5: 4 The Synod desires to formalise our relationship with the CRCA. Toward that end, and with a view to ensuring a stable and satisfactory outcome, we resolve to appoint a delegate (or delegates) to attend the upcoming CRCA Synod planned to be held in Gosnells, Western Australia, from 18th to 23rd May 2015.

SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

S Bajema (Convener 2013), Messrs P. Smith, R. Tso, J Audet, D Ramsay

A: SUPERANNUATION FUND**1. Membership****Changes in membership during 2013 -**

- Mr Robin Tso inducted to the Hunter-Barrington charge on 12/7/13.
- Mr MG Smith retired from the Geelong charge on 26/7/13.

Current members -

<u>Name</u>	<u>Service from</u>	<u>Total service at 31.12.13</u>	<u>Year 75</u>
J.A.McCallum	28.06.1985	28.50	2017
T.I.Leggott	11.03.1989	23.80	2024
D.K.Muldoon	29.11.2002	10.09	2027
J.A.Scheepers	15.02.2012	00.88	2029
G.D.Ball	01.12.1997	15.08	2030
S. Bajema	17.01.2009	03.97	2033
T.W.Yoa	09.05.2006	06.64	2034
D.P.Smith	16.11.2001	09.83 w/c	2034
J.D.Klazinga	20.05.2010	02.61	2039
D.J.Kerridge	25.11.2010	02.08	2045
A.A.Miranda	01.12.2009	03.08	2047
Robin Tso	12.07.2013	00.53	2061

Unless otherwise indicated the 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.

2. Church Contributions to Superannuation*2.1 Superannuation Levy on congregations*

The Superannuation Levy on congregations has been 14% of the Minimum Stipend - base levy of 5.00% plus 9.00% Government Superannuation Guarantee (SG). As the SG was increased on 1/7/13 to 9.25% with a further adjustment to 9.50% on 1/7/14, it is necessary to adjust the levy on congregations accordingly i.e. to 14.50%. While congregations were advised the levy amount for 2014 was calculated as 14.00% of minimum stipend, the Committee now recommends that from 1/7/14 it be increased by 0.50% to 14.50% (Reference to the 2013 Synod Committee Report and Synod Minutes rather than the Handbook of Practice and Procedure page 93 Section B.1 resulted in this oversight).

As the SG rate is to be gradually increased on 1st July each year until it reaches 12.00% by 1st July 2019 it is recommended that the Superannuation Levy on congregations be adjusted, where necessary, annually on 1st July in lieu of 1st January

2.2 Superannuation Support Fund & Superannuation Levy Account

a. **The Superannuation Support Fund (SSF) Capital Account** balance as at 31/12/13 was \$212,294. This was an increase of \$40,436 (23.5% on the 2012 balance) and was due to \$25,000 being transferred from the SSF Working Account with the remaining increase coming from revaluation of investments in equities. The fund arises from specific legacies and forfeited benefits under earlier no longer existing provisions. The intention of the fund is to support the levy account from time to time.

The SSF Working Account balance as at 31/12/13 was \$6,918 after making the above transfer of \$25,000 to the Capital account and providing \$6,483 (three quarters) for Rev TI Leggott's superannuation contributions.

b. **The Superannuation Levy Account** balance as at 31/12/13 was \$4,647 after paying contributions totalling \$ 62,961 to ministers' nominated superannuation funds.

3. Contributions to Ministers' Accounts

The current position is that for the first three years of service the contribution is 10% of minimum stipend, rising to 12% after the end of the quarter in which a man attains three years service, and to 18% after the end

of the quarter in which he attains 5 years service, reducing to 9.25% from the end of the quarter a member attains 70 years of age and to nil from age 75.

Congregations which employ a preacher aged under 75 years 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.

Beginning on 1 July 2013, new laws mean the Superannuation Guarantee will gradually increase from its then level of 9%, and the 70 years age cap was abolished. The change is summarised as follows:

1	Year starting on 1 July 2013	9.25
2	Year starting on 1 July 2014	9.5
3	Year starting on 1 July 2015	10
4	Year starting on 1 July 2016	10.5
5	Year starting on 1 July 2017	11
6	Year starting on 1 July 2018	11.5
7	Year starting on or after 1 July 2019	12

The effect will be that from the year beginning 1 July 2016 the existing 10% we pay for the first three years will begin to rise. Contributions for serving ministers 70 to 75 years of age rose from 5% to 9.25% on 1 July 2013.

4. Superannuation Review

Ministers are free to choose which Complying Superannuation Fund they wish to contribute to. The Health Employees Superannuation Trust Australia (HESTA) remains as the Default Fund as approved by Synod. Ministers contributing to HESTA are free to make investment choice within the default fund. The Committee is not privy to such choice nor does it wish to be so.

4.1 Default Fund

All but two of our members have chosen HESTA, our default fund, for their contributions. The default for HESTA is their Core Fund.

4.2 Performance

The return on HESTA Core Fund for twelve months ending 30/6/13 was 14.79% with six months ending 31/12/13 9.73%. Historical performance results to 30th June have been 3 years 8.58%pa and 5 years 4.33%pa

4.3 Outlook

At the date of preparation of this report the outlook remains uncertain noting that 2013 was the highest calendar year return since the GFC.

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

No changes are required.

D. COMMITTEE

The Convener after being appointed last year has found that his skill-set is not fitted with this position and while the work is not onerous yet with other commitments, such as editing *The Presbyterian Banner*, this has proven too much for him. He acknowledges the help of our Synodical Treasurer during this past year and has every confidence that the new Convenor will also be blessed in that association. The Rev. R. Tso is recommended as the new Convenor and has indicated his willingness to accept if appointed.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:

1. The Superannuation Levy on congregations be reviewed annually on 1st July and adjustment made where necessary in terms of the Handbook of Practice & Procedure – Superannuation Committee Section B.1.
2. Deacons' Court should note the levy for self-supporting charges is \$1,782 per quarter (ending February and May) i.e. 14% of the estimated minimum stipend for 2014 \$50,900. For aid-receiving charges with PCEA ordained supply it is 10% \$1,273 per quarter and for vacant charges without a supply minister 5% \$636 per quarter. For quarters ending August 2014 and November 2014 self-supporting charges is \$1,845 per quarter i.e. 14.50% of the estimated minimum stipend for 2014. For aid-receiving charges with PCEA ordained supply it is \$1,336 i.e. 10.50%, and vacant charges without a supply minister \$636 i.e 5.00%
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Synod approve the appointment of Rev R. Tso as Committee Convener and accept the resignation of Rev S. Bajema from the Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

(Incorporating General Treasurer's Report)

Committee members: AH Steel (Convener), J Audet, T Buck, DE Kerr, DJ Ramsay

Business attended to by the committee included:

1. Ministers' Minimum Stipend

Level and Basis of Review of Minimum Stipend –

After taking into account rates paid by other Presbyterian churches in NSW and Victoria, the continuing increases in average weekly earnings and CPI the committee recommends the current level (\$968 per week) and basis of review of the minimum stipend be continued.

2. Stipend Relief

A request for Stipend Relief of \$5,000 was received from Central Presbytery on behalf of Hawkesbury-Nepean Deacons' Court. Of the \$7,750 provision granted to them last year they only had need to take up \$5,000. The committee recommends approval of their request on a strictly needs basis.

3. The Capital Assistance Fund

Total funds of \$122,182 excluding \$7,300 held on deposit, increased by \$5,214 (4%) for year ending 31/12/13 from interest received, share dividends and revaluations and the annual \$50 rent from St Georges Deacons' Court. No donations were received.

Loans – As at 31st December 2013 no loans were outstanding.

4. Synod Commissioners' Expenses

Current regulations have a provision whereby Commissions may claim reimbursement for air travel: Decision Book page 87

b) Should a journey entail continuous travel for an unreasonable time (e.g., greater than the equivalent of rail or road between Melbourne and Sydney or Sydney and Brisbane) then air travel may be provided for all or part of the journey at the most economical rate.

When this provision was enacted air fares were very expensive compared with other means of transport, however over recent years they have been dramatically reduced with the introduction of Budget Airlines etc. to the point where reimbursement for travel by motor vehicle over longer distances can exceed air fares.

As Synod provides reimbursement of commissioners' travel expenses on the basis of "economy class" travel by public transport and air travel at the "most economical rate" and overnight accommodation when necessary at "reasonable cost" the Committee recommends amendment (Proposed Deliverance 4) of Decision Book 9 (page 87) regulations "Synod Delegates' Expenses" to take into account the change in costs of travel by motor vehicle verses travel by aeroplane.

5. Southern Presbytery Travel Costs

Synod 1988 resolved " that 60% of the cost of airfares to and from Tasmania in the course of the proper exercise of the Southern Presbytery's oversight be met in future by the Synod General Fund upon the Clerk of Southern Presbytery furnishing a certified extract of a relevant Presbytery resolution as to costs"

This practice has continued since 1988 however, because of the rundown in Synod General Funds during 2013 (\$912 having been refunded during the year) the General Treasurer asked the Clerk of Southern Presbytery whether the Presbytery could review the present need for continuance of the subsidy. As a consequence Presbytery resolved "to advise the Finance Committee that it is Presbytery's desire that Synod

2014 repeal the subsidy to Southern Presbytery provided by legislation of Synod 1988". This Committee recommends accordingly.

6. Estimates (Major Working Funds Receipts/Payments)

Estimates have been made for the major working funds to 31/12/13 – See Appendix "A"

PROPOSED DELIVERANCES

1. We record our thanks to God for temporal blessings granted for another year.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2013/2014 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.
3. Stipend relief of \$5,000 be granted to Hawkesbury-Nepean Deacons' Court on a strictly needs basis for the 2014/2015 Synodical year.
4. SYNOD COMMISSIONERS' EXPENSES [Act 1 of Class 2, Synod 1984 as amended in section c by Synod 2003, 2005 & 2007]
Be amended to:
"Expenses incurred by Commissions attending Synod meetings may seek reimbursement as follows:
 1. Economy class return fares for travel by rail, road or air to apply.
 2. Should reimbursement for travel by motor vehicle at the rate per kilometre set by Synod from time to time, exceed the cost of air fares where services are available, commissioners' claims are to be limited to the lesser of the two for that portion of their journey.
 3. Reimbursement for travel by motor vehicle:
 - One claim per congregation represented at Synod allowed.
 - For church owned vehicles, reimbursement be *Running* (operating) Costs only.
 - For privately owned vehicles, *Running Costs* with an option to include *Fixed Costs*, if commissioners so desire. The NSW NRMA annual Vehicle Operating Costs Survey figures to be used as the basis for reimbursement. These figures to be adjusted on the last business day before Synod convenes, taking into account the average unleaded fuel pump price in the area where Synod is meeting.
 4. Miscellaneous expenses allowed including taxis, car parking, accommodation at reasonable cost if necessary."
5. That 60% of the cost of airfares to and from Tasmania for Southern Presbytery members in the course of the proper exercise of the Southern Presbytery's oversight met by the Synod General Fund as approved by Synod 1988, be repealed.

GENERAL TREASURER**1. Financial Needs**

All financial needs of the Synod were adequately provided for during 2013 with total funds increasing by \$87,949 (7%) to \$1,328,053 after allowing for \$278,706 held on behalf of others - congregations etc.

Net changes occurred in:

Capital Funds	\$ 89,975
Working Funds	\$ (2,026)

Net Increase in Funds	\$ 87,949
	=====

The main contributing factor to the net increase in funds was the increase in the value of Equity investments as at 31/12/13 (Refer Balance Sheet Notes 1 & 2 for details).

2. Contributions to Synod Funds and Other Missions etc. by Congregations

Contributions of \$45,861 by congregations to Synod Funds during 2013 increased by \$20,652 (82%).

Givings of \$12,124 to other Specified Missions decreased by \$14,980 (55%). Refer to the Congregational Contributions Summary at back of the Financial Statements and Note 5 on page 5 for further detail, noting in particular the increased givings, some most generous, to *Missions General* \$16,078 an increase of \$9,453 (143%) and *Missions Support (Leggott – AIM)* \$26,258 an increase of \$19,007 (262%)

These increases followed an appeal by the Missions Committee which resulted in a 40% increase in Missions working funds at the close of 2013. However, the need for support for Missions continues as we go forward into 2014.

3. Synod General Working Funds

Synod General Working funds were depleted during the year, however, following notification to Deacons' Courts of the need, three Courts responded with donations which enable the account to have a balance of \$515 at 31/12/13.

Net administration costs, including ICR Committee (\$480) expenses and reimbursement of 60% of air fares for Tasmanian commissioners attending Southern Presbytery meetings (\$912) amounted to approximately \$4,500 for the year ended 31/12/13. Income from donations and interest received was approximately \$2,000 therefore there is an ongoing need in 2014 of approximately \$2,500 on the basis of similar income and expenses as resulted in 2013.

It is recommended this need be brought to the attention of Deacons' Courts for their assistance.

4. Books of Account Audit

An unqualified audit report has been obtained from Mr Richard W Partlett A.C.A. of Partlett Chave & Rowland and is included in the published Financial Statements.

Proposed Deliverance

Deacons' Courts note the need of funds for the *Synod General Fund* as outlined in the General Treasurer's Report to Synod and are requested to make a contribution to help cover the administration costs of Synod.

FINANCE COMMITTEE - APPENDIX "A"**BUDGET - SYNOD MAJOR WORKING FUNDS
for twelve months ending 31/12/14**

Fund	Balance as at 31/12/13	Estimated Income Int/Divnd s to 12/14	Estimate d Givings & Other	Estimated Expenditur e to 12/14	Estimate d Surplus (Deficit)	Estimate d Balance 31/12/14	Estimate d Deficit Balances 31/12/14
Capital Assistance Fund	122,182	4,000	50	0	4,050	126,232	
Church Extension	986	50	200	0	250	1,236	
Stipend Relief	13,873	3,000	100	10,000	-6,900	6,973	
Missions - General	12,694	14,000	7,000	6,581	14,419	27,113	
Missions - (Legg/AIM)	0		16,000	44,800	-28,800	-28,800	-28,800
Missions - (DAABeq)	21,193	683	0	0	683	21,876	
	266,985						
Miss Relief (Equities)	5	0	0	0	0	266,985	
Miss Rel (Working Fnd)	5,383	18,000	0	52,200	-34,200	-28,817	-28,817
	110,065						
Training of Ministry	5	6,000	600	400	6,200	116,265	
Youth & Fellowship	9,692	2,000	600	1,400	1,200	10,892	
General Funds	515	1,000	1,000	4,500	-2,500	-1,985	-1,985

Notes:

1. The estimated deficit of \$28,800 in Missions (Leg/AIM) as at 31/12/14 can be covered by:

Missions General	27,113
Missions (DA Anderson Bequest)	21,876
	<u>48,989</u>
Less: Missions (Leggott/AIM)	<u>-28,800</u>
Net Estimated balance of Missions Wkg Funds as at 31/12/14 \$	<u><u>20,189</u></u>

2. A Sale of equity investments of say \$35,000 will cover the estimated deficit of \$28,817 in Missions Relief (Working Funds)

3. Deacons' Courts are asked to make a contribution to Synod General funds to provide for the estimated deficit of \$1,985 in administration expenses in 2014.

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

Bequests

No new bequests were received by Synod during 2013.

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 uplifted from/lodged in the box during 2013:

- 05/07/13 - Uplifted Cert of Title Id 10/1062667 – Part sale Tinonee vacant land
- 09/09/13 – Lodged Cert of Title Id 14/1187874 - Residue after sale Tinonee vacant land
- 16/12/13 – Uplifted Student Loan Agreement – Transferred to Victorian Trustees Safe Custody Packet.

Audit of Deed Box

On 9th September 2013, in terms of Synod resolution (08.37.2), the Clerk and Treasurer of Synod carried out a joint inspection of the contents of the Deed Box held by the National Australia Bank, Eastwood. It was verified that the contents were in accordance with Trust Corporation records.

Common Seal Applications

Applications during 2013 were:

<u>No.</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Document Executed</u>
233	5/07/13	Contract - Sale lot 13 Vacant Land Tinonee (CT Id 10/1062667)
234	11/07/13	Plan of Subdivision Lot 10 DP 1062667 Vacant Land Tinonee
235	25/07/13	Transfer - Sale lot 13 Vacant Land Tinonee (CT Id 10/1062667)

Investments: Specified Capital Funds - Review of Results as at 31/12/13 – Diversification

Actual as at 31/12/13		Asset Class	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage		Benchmark	Range
148,484	44%	Cash (Banks)	5%	5% - 10%
0	0%	1 st Regd Mtges	30%	20% - 40%
0	0%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
188,505	56%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
336,989	100%		100%	

The repayment of a congregational loan during 2013 resulted in \$140,000 coming back to Cash (Banks). The inability to place these funds in suitable low risk investments resulted in them being held in Bank Term Deposits as at 31st December 2013.

Return:

Growth –

Total Trust Funds (Specified Capital Funds) increased by \$31,174 (10.19)% against a Target of 2.2% (CPI). While this result easily maintained “real value” (kept up with inflation) in 2013 the value when CPI is taken into account since 1998 lags behind by \$91,574 (21%) as at 31/12/13. This shortfall results mainly from the effects of the GFC in 2008, however the gap has gradually reduced since then. Refer graph below.

Specified Capital Funds



Income – Income of \$16,501 represented a return of 5.40% against a Target of 3.74% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 2.74% Plus 1.00%).

Summary –

Diversification – To minimise risk and achieve a reasonable return in a climate of low inflation and low interest rates, investments are mostly held in the financial sector.

Investment Strategy Objectives – achieved in both *Growth and Income*.

Armidale Property: Synod 2012 (12/19) resolved as follows:

1. That permission be granted to Northern Presbytery to sell the church property at 35 Kirkwood Street, Armidale, at fair market value, and the NSW Trustees be authorised to execute necessary documents.
2. That \$50,000 of the net proceeds from the sale of the church property at 35 Kirkwood Street Armidale be applied to the Synod *General Funds* with the balance being credited to the Synod *Capital Assistance Fund*.

There has been no progressing of the sale of the property for two years because it seems that valuation has been difficult to obtain. The property is not being effectively maintained. There has also been changes in the timetabling of university courses and rental of the rooms has been difficult to secure.

The Trustees propose that they be authorised to negotiate the sale of the property at a fair and reasonable market value, with the proceeds applied as per Synod resolution 12/19 of 2012.

Proposed Deliverance –

1. That Synod authorise the Trustees for NSW to negotiate the sale of the Armidale property at 35 Kirkwood Street Armidale at a fair and reasonable market value, with the proceeds applied as per Synod resolution 12/19 of 2012.

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 2013.

Proposed Deliverances: Nil.

THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA [TVIC]

Incorporated by the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act, Victoria 1953.

Trustees: R.S.Ward (Secretary 2013), Clerk (T.I.Leggott), Treasurer (A.H.Steel), D.J.Kerridge, R.A.Lawson

This Report is longer than is likely in the future given the desirability of a thorough overview for the information of Synod members and for future reference.

1.0 Changeover

At Synod time (9 May 2013) Mr Steel, the Secretary 2001-13, passed over the TVIC records to the new Secretary in exemplary order.

2.0 Legislation governing TVIC

2.1 Civil legislation

TVIC operates under the provisions of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act 1953 (#5691) of the Victorian Parliament. It was assented to in 1953 and amended in 2012 at Synod's request. It was drafted for us by F. Maxwell Bradshaw, MA, LL.M (1910-92), who was advisor on trust law to the Victorian government for many years and is the author of *The Law of Charitable Trusts in Australia* (Butterworths 1982). Mr Bradshaw prepared some *Notes* on the Act, which the Secretary has digitized and provided in parallel columns with the Act to the other members.

The Secretary noted three typos in the printed Act as amended in 2012 (in the unaltered part) and in formally thanking the Department of Justice has drawn them to their attention and they have said they will be corrected. [The word 'session' is written 'sessions' in 5(2) c and 5 (4) d and the word 'shall' has been omitted after the dash in 6 (2)b.]

2.2 Synod legislation

Synod has passed legislation which can be summarized as follows, and which for substance is incorporated in the Handbook 2013 edition.

- 1954 Regarding use of the seal (keeping a register of applications of the seal)
- 1958 Regulating sales & mortgages – Handbook 3.22
- 1961 Regulating Leasing – Handbook 3.19b
- 1983 Reporting of Legacies &c. – Handbook 3.23
- 1988 Power for Presbytery to approve sales of property other than places of worship – Handbook 3.22
- 1992 Procedure in investment of Capital Funds of Synod - Handbook p. 90
- 1994 Permitting Deacons' Courts to execute leases under certain conditions – Handbook 3.19
- 2002 Investment Strategy re Synod funds (Synod Reports pp.49, 51-52)
- 2008 Report each 3 years on contents of Deed Box held in Eastwood NAB (same was due Synod 2013 but delayed until 2014) – Handbook p.90
- 2009 Providing for substitutes for Synod Clerk and Treasurer – Handbook, p.91
- 2009 Power to approve mortgages between Synod meetings (other than on church buildings)
- 2013 **13.17.12.** Synod resolve in regard to the appointment of five trustees under the *Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act* (Victoria, 1953) and the proposed amendment of *The Synod of Eastern Australia Property Act* (NSW, 1918):
 - (i) the persons from time to time holding the office of Clerk of Synod and of Treasurer of Synod shall by virtue of their appointment be trustees and the provision for substitutes for these officeholders in Act 7 Synod 2009 and Act 7 Synod 2008 shall continue to apply with the necessary changes.
 - (ii) the other trustees will be ministers, elders or deacons of some experience and capacity for the task and shall hold office at the pleasure of Synod in accordance with Section 3 (11).
However, they shall in any case cease to be trustees, *inter alia*, at midnight on 30 June following their completion of five years service, but are eligible for reappointment for further periods of up to five years at a time. As a general rule any appointment will cease at midnight on 30 June occurring after the person's attainment of the age of 75.
- 2013 **13.17.13** Synod appoint the following five persons to be the initial trustees in terms of Section 4 of the proposed amendment of *The Synod of Eastern Australia Property Act* (NSW 1918), and from the rising of this Synod these five persons to be the trustees pursuant to the *Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act* (Victoria 1953):
 - Alex Henry Steel (Treasurer) (00/9/1942)
 - Rowland Skipsey Ward (00/12/1945)
 - Trevor Ian Leggott (Clerk) (00/3/1949)
 - Ronald Arthur Lawson (00/10/1950)
 - David John Kerridge (00/7/1970)

- 2013 **13.17.14.** Pursuant to Sections 3 (7) and (8) of the *Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act* (Victoria 1953):
- (i) Synod appoint that the **quorum** for a meeting of trustees shall be three not two. Such meetings may be held by electronic means and must be suitably documented.
 - (ii) Pursuant to Section 3 (5) the affixing of the **common seal** shall be attested by two persons.
 - (iii) The **attestation clause** for the affixing of the common seal shall be in the form: ‘The Common Seal of the Trustees for Victoria of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia was hereto affixed in accordance with the provisions of the *Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia Property Act* (Victoria, 1953), Section 3.’

3.0 General

3.1 Liability

True trustees have statutory protection from liability so long as they act in good faith. The persons called ‘trustees’ in the Act of Parliament are not true trustees so there is specific provision in the Act of Parliament to give protection as if trustees. No worries there.

3.2 Scope of responsibilities

While TVIC holds all the assets as the legal owner, TVIC holds them in trust for the various congregations/objects and is subject to the lawful direction of the appropriate church courts.

3.3 Real Estate

It is primarily in reference to sales, mortgages and purchases of real estate that TVIC becomes involved, as the key documents need to be executed by TVIC. A small amendment to Handbook 3.20 is recommended to ensure that purchase proposals or capital renovations are first cleared with presbytery in cases where full funds are not available. Currently the Church holds no real estate except what is congregational. On 1 July 2013 a Fire Services Levy was charged by Victorian Councils on previously non-rateable property, and as a consequence valuations were produced as at 1 January 2012. Those valuations totalled \$3,482,500 and are conservative. All properties are on Torrens title and adequately insured.

3.4 Bequests

These are to be reported in line with Handbook 3.23. We have had none, or none reported, for a good number of years. From time to time questions are asked about bequests and this form of giving is certainly very helpful, particularly where capital sums for extension work in Australia or infrastructure on the mission fields is concerned. In the past much of this need was met through gifts during a person’s life time or by bequests after their death. The body corporate must deal with them strictly in accordance with the deed of gift or the terms of the will of the deceased and the rules of Synod.

3.5 Student Bonds/Agreements

TVIC executes these as since, on the advice given by Mr Bradshaw, there is no power to do so under the NSW Act until it is amended.

BOND AGREEMENTS

David Kerridge 2/11/2008; licensed 10/3/2009 so bond expired 10/03/2014

Denver Boehret 25/10/2012; licensed 8/11/2015 so bond expires 8/11/2018 – \$15,000

Duncan Hickey 9/12/2013

LOAN AGREEMENT

Denver Boehret, loan of \$40,000 repayable by 31/12/2015

3.6 Safe keeping - Title Deeds etc.

On 10/9/2013 the Clerk and Treasurer certified all TVIC title deeds were held in safe custody at the NAB Eastwood, NSW Branch (163 Rowe Street) and also the Bonds for Messrs Kerridge and Boehret. The Loan agreement for Mr Boehret and the Bond agreement for Mr Duncan Hickey were subsequently placed in the TVIC deed box.

3.7 Common Seal application during 2013

No	Date	By whom	Details	On behalf of
101	24.1.13	TIL/AHS	Transfer Lot 2, 183 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly	Knox
102	24.1.13	TIL/AHS	Transfer Lot 4, 183 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly	Knox
103	24.1.13	TIL/AHS	Transfer Lot 5, 183 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly	Knox
104	?	TIL/SB	Transfer Lot 1, 183 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly	Knox
105	?	TIL/SB	Transfer Lot 3, 183 Grange Rd, Glen Huntly	Knox
106	9.12.13	AHS/RSW	Bond Agreement – Duncan Hickey	T of M

4.0 Investments

4.1 General

Three congregations plus TVIC holds shares in listed companies for Synod and three congregations hold shares in listed Companies,. The holdings are in the name of TVIC with a suitable account identifier and the on-line broking platform used in each case is operated by authorized users. The Synod portfolio was reviewed in January 2014 and some adjustment made which should spread risk and increase return.

4.2 Congregational investments

Congregations can operate normally without TVIC involvement, and can open bank accounts without reference to TVIC. The share portfolios for Narre Warren and Ulverstone. have continued to pay increasing dividends and both show an increase in value as well. Knox had a substantial portfolio which was progressively sold down at a surplus to fund the Glen Huntly development. Following the completion of that project early in 2013 a further share portfolio has been established with a dividend return of about 8% (including franking credits) and a small capital surplus at year end. Geelong sold the last of their shares in October 2012 to fund on-going expenses.

Following Synod 2013 the Secretary with the concurrence of the other trustees sent an outline of a provisional investment strategy to the Deacons' Courts. Some Deacons' Courts may have people of experience others not so. It is not particularly practical or desirable in normal circumstances that TVIC manage congregational investments, and management can be devolved to Deacons' Courts in ordinary cases.

Deacons' Courts must seek at all times to deal with investments in line with the Victoria Trustee Act, any requirement of the will, bequest or trust deed that may be involved, and any requirements of the Australian Taxation Office. The Trustee Act is available on line and sections 6 and 8 are of particular relevance. We have a proposal to set some parameters as the subject has not been entirely clear hitherto.

4.3 Synod investments

TVIC is responsible for investments for Synod itself according to the Strategy adopted by Synod in 2002. Allocations then approved were:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Benchmark</u>	<u>Range</u>
Cash	5%	5-10%
Mortgages	30%	20-40%
Debentures	15%	10-25%
Shares/units	50%	40-60%

As at 31/12/2013 Shares were 58.65%, and cash 41.35%. [There are limited opportunities for mortgages as our funds are small. Debentures tie up funds for a period and few satisfactory offerings are available at present.] The strategy was designed to allocate only sufficient funds to equity investment as would maintain the real value of bequests, and was bench-marked against CPI. Despite losses in the collapse of HIH in 2000 and the GFC downturn in 2008, and the downturn in Australian shares in 2011, by and large we have kept up with CPI inflation and the income from equity investments has steadily improved as dividends have increased. However, our typical expenses related to stipend are not tied to CPI but to the higher average weekly earnings (more than twice CPI over 1996-2012 roughly 44% to 100%), so while equity investment has proved its worth in an unusually tough environment it has not been high enough to be altogether satisfactory.

Cash may be more liquid than debentures and mortgages, but mortgages, debentures and cash are of similar nature in that there is little or no potential for growth in the capital sum. Currently we are in a low interest rate environment with deposit rates above 3.5% hard to obtain, whereas back in the 1980s government bonds were paying well into double figures. With inflation around 2-3% (and more in respect of the expenses we seek to meet from investment) there is no real return and the purchasing power of the capital is eaten away over time. That is an inevitable risk with fixed interest investments in most circumstances, even though the nominal capital is intact.

Money always involves risk. Aside from the inflation risk in non-equity investments just mentioned, is the risk of exposure to loss from equity investment. Consider how your own Super is invested. It is almost certainly around 75% in equities, with many Funds recommending that this % be reduced significantly a few years before retirement so you don't face a problem retiring in a year that the market is down (as it is 2 or 3 times every 10 years), when you need the cash. Compare this with the situation that we have with perpetual trusts where the capital can NEVER be spent. The example of Rev D. K. McIntyre's legacy which were around £2,500 when he died in 1899, an amount about 10 times the annual stipend at the time (\$480,000 today). Although his will gave extensive powers of investment, monies were placed in cash and government and semi-government bonds and so the real value declined. Only of recent years, when the law made us, did the situation

really change, but of course most of the value had been lost. If we keep in mind that most of our investment funds are perpetual trusts where the capital cannot be spent, the point is rather clear. We need a higher equity exposure for such trusts, but at this time we do not have sufficient funds for direct property investment. We therefore recommend a change in asset allocation: Cash/mortgages/debentures 25-35% and Shares/units and managed funds 65-75%. Obviously the strategic allocation needs to be kept under review as circumstances in the economy change. There was some diversity of view but this was the position arrived at by the trustees.

5.0 Layout of Accounts

TVIC is registered with the Australian Charities and Not-for profits Commission and may in the future need to lodge specific accounts with ACNC or its successor. As a distinct legal entity all our investments should be clear in the published accounts. In consultation with the Synod Treasurer some minor changes in layout may be appropriate so that the assets held in trust by TVIC can be immediately distinguished in the published accounts as indeed they are in the Treasurer's working papers.

PROPOSED DELIVERANCES

1. The Synod commend giving by bequest to our people.
2. The responsibility of congregational investment funds is hereby devolved to Deacons' Court subject to the oversight of Presbytery in the normal course according to the following principles and to the right of the Trustees to call for reports from to time (at least once a year), and to provide guidance/direction where appropriate.:

1. It is proper and prudent in meeting trust requirements for Deacons' Courts to place a proportion of investment funds that are not reasonably required in the medium/long term (at least 3 to 5 years) in equities so as to endeavour to maintain real value. The principles in Section 6 and 8 of the Victorian Trustee Act 1958 provide a convenient summary of the principles to be observed in all investment.

2. Deacons' Courts are not to invest in mortgages, mortgage trusts, debentures, managed funds, derivatives, contracts for difference, or unlisted equity funds unless the specific approval of the Trustees is first obtained. Deacons' Courts are not to invest funds directly in alcohol, tobacco, gambling, armaments or speculative mining stocks, nor other morally wrong or ethically dubious enterprises. If in doubt the Deacons' Court is to clear with the Trustees first.

3. The primary focus for equity investment in the absence of real estate is listed dividend-paying shares in the ASX200, or in listed readily tradeable investment companies of proven performance and sound management.

4. All other investment funds not in real estate and all current funds should be held in bank accounts at call or on term deposit according to the circumstances as determined by the Deacons' Court from time to time. It is prudent and proper to add some income back to capital to offset inflation, subject to applicable trust requirements..

5. Separate trusts may be invested as a Common Fund so long as accurate records of each trust are kept. Manse and other capital funds must not be applied for other than purposes consistent with the trust (eg. must not be expended for stipend)

6. This Act may be cited as 'Investment of Congregational Funds Act 2014'. Previous legislation except in so far as it is incorporated herein is repealed.

3. Synod amend the allocation in the investment strategy of Synod 2002 as follows:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Benchmark</u>	<u>Range</u>
Cash/mortgages/debentures	30%	25-35%
Shares/units	70%	65-75%

4. The following be added to paragraph 3.20 in the Handbook: "Purchase or capital improvements of property where full funds are not available must be cleared with Presbytery first and any loan proposals approved by the Presbytery."

Synod 2014 Correspondence Item 1



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

Northern Presbytery

Clerk

Rev. David Kerridge,
63 Cowarral Circuit,
Wauchope, NSW, 2446
Phone: 02 6585 3581
Mobile: 0411 023344
Email:
dkerridge@hastingspcea.org.au

24th March, 2014

Clerk of Synod
Synod of Eastern Australia

Dear Trevor,

Below is the extract Minute from a Pro re nata meeting held to reconsider Northern Presbytery's decision regarding the remit on child abuse.

Extract Minute from Pro re nata meeting, 14th March, 2014:

"1. Remit from Synod under Barrier Act re Child Protection Act. A reconsideration of decision due to clerical error.

The Clerk suggested that a clerical error had prevented serious consideration of the legislation at the previous meeting. Further discussion raised a number of new points of dissatisfaction with the legislation as it has been framed. It was moved seconded and unanimously carried that: Notwithstanding the clerical error, Presbytery agree to uphold the previous decision it had made regarding the remit from Synod, vis that Presbytery disapprove the remit."

Yours in Christ Jesus,

David Kerridge
Clerk of Northern Presbytery



Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Central Presbytery

Clerk: Rev Dennis K Muldoon, BScAgr, PhD, BD, MA (Theol) PO
Box 3007 Mt Druitt Village, NSW, 2770

Ph 02 97240877

Email: dkmuldoon@hotmail.com

To Clerk of Synod, PCEA
Rev T I Leggott
PO Box 126 Taree 2430

24 September 2013 Dear

Sir,

Below is an extract minute (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery at Lindfield retirement units, Lindfield, NSW on 18 September, 2013. This minute relates to Synod Minutes 2013 page 16 -13.18.2

EXTRACT MINUTE

Act concerning Procedures for dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct (Interim Act) (Ref 13.18.2)–Barrier Act procedure

Resolved that this Act not be passed under the Barrier Act as a Class 1 Act. We recommend that it remain as the current Class 2 Act of Synod 2004 as amended.

Yours

Rev. Dr D.K. Muldoon Clerk
of Central Presbytery

Synod 2014 Correspondence Item 3



SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA
CLERK: REV DR ROWLAND S. WARD

26 ROXBURGH RD,
WANTIRNA 3152
T: 03 9720 4871
E: ROWLAND.WARD@GMAIL.COM

13 July 2013

Clerk
Synod of Eastern Australia
Via email

Dear Trevor,

Remit under Barrier Act re Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct (Synod Minutes 13.18.2)

At a duly constituted meeting of this Presbytery this day the remit from Synod was approved *simpliciter*.

Extracted from the records of Southern Presbytery by me

Rowland S. Ward
CLERK

Synod 2014 Correspondence Item 4



Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Central Presbytery

Clerk: Rev Dennis K Muldoon, BScAgr, PhD, BD, MA (Theol)

PO Box 3007 Mt Druitt Village, NSW, 2770

Ph 02 97240877

Email dkmuldoon@hotmail.com

To Clerk of Synod, PCEA
Rev T I Leggott
PO Box 126 Taree 2430

17 March 2014

Dear Sir,

Below is an extract minute (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery in the PCEA church at Raymond Terrace 11 March 2014. This minute is an Overture to the Synod relating to Mr Duncan Hickey.

EXTRACT MINUTE

Overture from Central Presbytery

Re: Mr Duncan A. Hickey, BA, BSc

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Wauchope on 6 May 2014

WHEREAS Central Presbytery met on 18 September 2013 at Lindfield to consider Mr Hickey's application to become a student for the ministry, and after examination agreed to recommend his application AND WHEREAS the Training of Ministry Committee heartily concurred with the same, and wrote to inform Presbytery on 18 October 2013

NOW THEREFORE Central Presbytery seeks confirmation by Synod of Mr Hickey's reception by Central Presbytery as student for the ministry.

Or to do otherwise as Synod in its wisdom sees fit.

Resolved to approve the overture and send it to the clerk of synod

Yours

Rev. Dr D.K. Muldoon

Clerk of Central Presbytery