

# The Synod of Eastern Australia



To meet at the  
Mt Druitt Church Facilities  
Hawkesbury Nepean Congregation  
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015

## 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 2015

Time	Tuesday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Time	Wednesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May	Thursday 7 <sup>th</sup> May
	<b>Synod to Commence with Session 1 at 4.30pm</b>	9.00am  M/Tea 10.30am	<b>SESSION 3</b>  Devotions and Prayer  Law and Advisory  Training of Ministry  Church and Nation	<b>SESSION 6</b>  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
		12.30pm	Lunch	Lunch
4.30pm	<b>SESSION 1</b>  Constitution of Synod  Retiring Moderator's Sermon.  Thanks to Retiring Moderator  Presbytery Rolls.  Welcomes (New members, guests, associations as required).  Administration	2.00pm   A/Tea 3.30pm	<b>SESSION 4</b>  Media (Banner & Website)  Archivist  Youth and Fellowship  Missions  Inter-Church Relations  Delegates from Other Churches	<b>Synod Closes at the end of Session 6 at 12.30pm</b>  <b>Lunch to follow before delegates depart</b>
6.00pm	Dinner	6.00pm	Dinner	
7.00pm	<b>SESSION 2</b>  Election of Moderator for 2015/2016	7.00pm	<b>SESSION 5</b>  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:** There were no ministerial movements during 2014.

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

**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.	18.03.15	From Northern Presbytery Re Barrier Act Procedure
2.	12.08.14	From Southern Presbytery Re Barrier Act Procedure
3.	15.10.14	From Central Presbytery Re Barrier Act Procedure
4.	14.03.15	Overture from Central Presbytery Re Sale of Barrington Property.

The Clerk received a letter from the Hunter Barrington Deacons Court seeking a loan from Synod funds. This request was forwarded to the Finance Committee for consideration. The letter is included for the information of delegates and is dealt with by the Finance Committee.

**Committees:** The suggested Committee structure remains the same as last year.

**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), 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 Correspondence Items 1, 2 and 3 be taken with the Law and Advisory business.
2. That Correspondence Item 4 be taken with the Report from Central Presbytery.
3. That the Committee Structure as noted in the report be adopted.

4. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery

Rev S Bajema and Geelong elder.

Central Presbytery

Rev D Kerridge and Hastings elder.

Southern Presbytery

Rev R Tso and Hawkesbury Nepean elder.

## CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS AS AT 31.12.2014

Congregation elders/deacons	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
	2013	+	-	2014	2013	2014	>4	4- 11	12- 18	19- 64	65+	Total			
Brisbane 4/1	39	-	-	39	50	50	1	16	6	27	8	58	0	4/19	0
Nthn Rivers-4/3	47	-	4	43	40	36	-	4	1	7	36	48	0	1/3	0
Hastings 4/1	36	2	-	38	42	42	4	4	2	26	13	49	1	1/1	0
<b>North P 12/5</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6/23</b>	<b>0</b>
Manning 5/4	58	3	9	52	56	52	3	1	3	25	29	61	0	2/8	0
Hunter 1/2	40	2	1	41	59	50	4	6	4	37	14	65	1	2/9	7
St Geo's 3/3	43	1	7	37	65	61	3	3	-	33	22	61	0	2/3	0
Mt Druitt 3/1	42	2	2	42	50	50	8	14	9	23	6	56	2	3/13	18
Syd Sth 1/0	11	-	-	9	15	13	-	1	1	11	2	15	0	1/2	0
<b>Cent P 13/10</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10/35</b>	<b>25</b>
Knox-3/0	32	-	2	30	48	40	1	6	6	28	11	52	1	1/6	0
All Nations 1/0	49	13	2	60	110	110	14	40	15	75	3	147	27	2/40	10
Narre W-1/1	40	3	1	42	50	50	1	4	5	29	16	55	0	3/9	0
Carrum D 0/0	14	-	-	14	16	15	1	0	2	10	4	17	0	0	0
Geelong-2/0	20	-	2	18	14	12	0	0	1	3	11	15	0	0	0
Ulverst-1/1	24	-	1	23	40	34	1	3	6	21	14	45	0	2/7	18
<b>South P-8/2</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>8/62</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>TOTALS 33/17</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>488</b>	<b>655</b>	<b>615</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>744</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>24/120</b>	<b>53</b>

Deaths reported: Northern Rivers 3, Manning 7, Hawkesbury Nepean 2, Hunter 2, Knox 1.

## NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Brisbane:** Thanks be to God, the Year of our Lord 2014 was another year in which we as the Brisbane congregation of the PCEA could testify to the faithfulness of the Lord and his continuing providential care. “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. . . . What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:28, 31-32)

**Services:** Two services were held most Lord’s Days at 10 am and 5 pm. Our afternoon service on 26 October was cancelled because of the annual combined Reformation Celebration Service, with members from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches attending. Both services on 7 December were held at Camp Drewe instead of at our building in Woolloowin. Most services were led by Pastor Jim Klazinga. When he was unable to do so, Dr. Wes Hanna would normally lead the morning services, with various elders and visiting ministers leading in the afternoon.

We acquired a mobile phone in order to accommodate a number of our members needing to join us for worship via their phones. We have found that more people are able to join in on one call, the cost has been greatly reduced, and, for the most part, the quality of sound has been better than the old landline.

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. Of the six extra offerings, two were designated for the Missions Fund; one each was set aside for Youth and Fellowship, Church Extension and Stipend Assistance, and the Training for Ministry Fund; and the final offering was set aside for the Synodical Treasurer to use wherever he sees that the need is greatest. We also had a Missions Offering at the church camp.

**Membership:** During 2014, membership remained steady. There were no births or deaths in the congregation, and no new communicant members.

**Session:** The congregation continues to be served by the session consisting of four elders and the pastor. Elder John Anderson was unable to participate in session (and the Deacons’ Court) because of his increasing 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. Mind you, it should be noted that we continue to have to dip into our savings, as our weekly offerings are not able to meet all our expenses. 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 minister also held a Pastor’s Class at the same time for anyone who wished to participate. During this class participants would discuss a confessional statement relating to the text preached on during the morning service. On most Sundays a fellowship lunch would be held after the Sunday School time.

Two fortnightly Bible Studies, normally led by the pastor, met on alternate weeks. One would meet in families’ homes to study the book of Revelation. The other met at the church or at the manse and studied 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.

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

**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. Boehret, the Rev. S.R. Tamata, the Rev. Dr. R.S. Ward, the Rev. David Kerridge, the Rev. Donald Morrison and the Rev. R.W. Murray.

During 2013 two of our members have passed away. No new members have been added to the Roll during the year. The Roll now stands at 46 and our total Church community at about 50. Congregational givings during 2014 averaged \$849 per week. This is a reduction from the previous year. 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 \$1 000 has been donated to the Gideons, \$1 000 to the Middle East Reformed Fellowship, \$5 000 to the Chhapara School and \$5 000 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.

**Hastings:** We give thanks that the Lord Jesus Christ is the sovereign head of His church. Despite what we see of the persecution of our brothers and sisters in Christ overseas, we rejoice in the freedom we have to worship freely in Australia.

The minister was invited by the RSL to deliver the address at the 2014 ANZAC Day service. He was able to give a short Gospel address to the large crowd which gathered, but witnessed the degenerating state of public attitudes to Christianity when a small but noisy number of Returned Servicemen and their companions made an angry protest. The incident made news in the local paper, where further complaints against the message of Christ crucified were expressed in the letters section and editorial. Sadly, but not surprisingly, the 'spirit' of ANZAC has become an idol to the exclusion of the living God. Out of this negative event though, we have had a new family actually now join us for worship, citing the presentation of the Gospel at the event as one reason for joining with us. We give God thanks for working all things for His glory and our good.

Two new members, Graham and Anne Andrews, were warmly received into the Congregation by disjunction certificate. A funeral service was conducted for Mr Jim Iremonger at Kindee Church. Although not a member, Jim had professed faith before his death. Another adherent, Mr Jim Lindsay, died in 2014 and his funeral service took place in the Wauchope Church. Rev. Peter Smith, nephew of Mr Lindsay, conducted the service.

Synod was again hosted in Wauchope in May, 2014. We have really enjoyed the privilege of hosting the Synod and found that it has been a blessing to be able to fellowship with the delegates. We pray that Sydney West Congregation will find similar blessings as the next host.

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. After a fire was started under the Hall by

squatters (the fire was extinguished before doing damage), security mesh was installed to prevent access. The church investment property is occupied by long-term tenants who are maintaining it in good order. Some minor additions have been made to the building. A garden shed is a proposed addition. Gross rental income is \$420 p.w. Following the funeral of Mr Iremonger at Kindee, a new set of gates was donated and installed there by the owners of Wauchope Rural Supplies store, who had attended the funeral.

Services in Wauchope continue at 10am and 4pm, with an Adult Bible Class and Sunday School following the morning service. The Adult Class completed their study of the Westminster Confession of Faith in February, 2014 and we are now continuing study of the Lager Catechism. Kindee services are held fortnightly at 7pm. There is a mid-week Prayer meeting attended by a faithful group. The Lord's Supper was celebrated three times in 2014, preceded by a preparatory service and followed by Thanksgiving.

We give thanks to the Lord for the generosity of the Congregation and the fact that we again hold a surplus at the end of 2014. Offerings average \$1,486 per week. Donations from gracious benefactors have augmented this income. We give thanks for small advances in the Gospel work here and continue to pray that the Lord will bless us yet as we seek to serve Him in His Kingdom.

**Armidale Property:** A valuation on the Armidale church building at 35 Kirkwood St was obtained and the property put up for sale. The price was set at \$715,000. There has been interest from one potential buyer, an organization called Young Life. At the time of writing, their offers have not been accepted by Presbytery. The property continues to be used free of charge for Lord's Day meetings by previous members of the Armidale congregation and others, who have formed an independent group - Armidale Emmaus Church. One of the upstairs units is leased and provides some income to cover maintenance and property management costs.

## CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Manning:** We record our gratitude to God for another year of His faithfulness. Worship services were held morning and evening every Lord's Day. A Sunday school recommenced in 2014 thanks to the efforts of Leanne Smith, Pamela Leggott, Lorraine Murray and Clive Alley. The regular weekly activities include three midweek meetings – two in Taree and one in Tinonee. These prove to be a valuable time of learning and fellowship. The Friendship Group (when the older members and friends meet) met nine times during the year under the able leadership of David and Heather Wilson. Every meeting has a different theme and there is always a devotional talk. The Ladies Missionary Society continues their prayerful and practical support of missions. They have been encouraged by the addition of some new members.

Sadly we lost a number of folks during the year. Among the members and adherents there were eight deaths. There were two marriage breakdowns; and a few left for other reasons. On the credit side we welcomed four new members; Peter, Leanne and Stephen Smith, and Bill King; and have seen some new faces people meet regularly with us.

The Deacons Court continue to do an outstanding work in constantly maintaining and improving the church facilities; and facilitates the support of various missions and ministries. Despite our losses and disappointments the Lord has blessed us with the spirit of unity and fellowship. 'Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful' (Col. 3: 15).

**Hunter Barrington:** Lord's Day Worship Services were conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff. 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. As well the sermons have been uploaded to the website weekly. These have been appreciated by the folk.

Prayer Meetings/Bible studies were held regularly in the Raymond Terrace and Newcastle areas. Rev Tso diligently & faithfully conducted all such meetings. Studies were conducted on the books of 1

Timothy and Genesis. 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. A Youth/Young Adults Fellowship was conducted by the Minister & his wife. It has been an encouraging year as the group have been studying the book of Romans. The youth have shown a keen interest in studying the scriptures and being involved in local evangelism.

Rev Tso has served as a Chaplain to Newcastle University. This year has been a beneficial time of building relationships with other Chaplains and students at the University. Plans have been made to develop a partnership with other evangelical Chaplains in various outreach and evangelistic activities. 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. Several Missions nights were hosted by the ladies of the congregation this past year with visits from the Gideons Society, Mukti and a local missionary.

Our gratitude is extended to our Minister for his faithful and relevant expounding of the Scriptures as well as his supportive pastoral care. The ongoing 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.

**St Georges:** St Georges continues to provide an important witness in the heart of the City of Sydney although most worshippers live in the greater Sydney area from Hornsby in the north to Cronulla in the south and Penrith in the west. "Local" worshippers mostly constitute tourists and business people visiting the city.

Communicant membership for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 decreased by six to 37. Attendances at worship services were approximately 54 at the Lord's Day morning service, 35 the evening service and 23 the mid-week meeting, all held in the church. A bible class, psalmody class and Sabbath School are held each week and a small group of ladies meet each month to produce knitted rugs for the poor of the city. Sermons are uploaded to the congregation's website and many sermon CD's distributed weekly. Repairs and restoration works of the church steeple continues. Additional photographs were added to the website to assist visitors locate it because of the scaffolding. The congregation continues in good spirits generally, and thankful we are still able to gather for public worship.

**Sydney West:** Two worship services are held each Lord's day, at 11am and 6pm. The minister has completed a series of sermons on Romans, and Luke's gospel. He is in the process of making these available in print and audio. Attendance at the morning service averages 50 with less in the evening service. Bible classes and prayer times in English and Tongan are held before the morning service. Singing from 'Sing Psalms' is melodious and joyful; we are led by any of three precentors. Two Sunday School classes are conducted at 11.30am with 12-15 children. On Friday evening, 12-14 primary age children attend the Lighthouse Club, and 8-10 youth attend the Youth Club. At the Bible study and prayer time on Fridays we are studying the Larger Catechism.

Special events during the year included a church picnic, a visit from the Gideon's, and from two 'Interserve' missionaries. A special worship service on New Year's Eve was well attended; we sang praises until midnight. The induction of Mr. Sekona Latu as an elder took place on 17 August with great thanks and rejoicing. The church roof was painted and other maintenance work undertaken on the church building and manse. Three church members regularly attend nursing homes to conduct worship services and minister to patients.

We give thanks to our great God and Saviour for upholding us for another year. We saw two members taken to their heavenly home during the year and pray for their husbands. Two infants were baptized.

We rejoice in the number of young people attending, even as we pray for further outreach into the community around us.

**Sydney South:** The Sydney South congregation continues as a small but warm fellowship which meets for worship each Lord's Day morning for worship. One family joined for some time but later left. Sunday School is conducted at 9.30am. We meet once a fortnight for Bible study and prayer, 5-6 attending regularly. Two long-time members and supporters of this church died during the year: Rev Jim Cox and Mrs Beth McPherson. We meet in a council hall and praise God that this continues to be available. We pray that the Lord will add to our numbers those who are being saved.

## **SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT**

The request for succinct reports was answered by what appears below. I've not thought fit to précis where it might be appropriate. – R.S.Ward, Presbytery Clerk

**Geelong (vacant)** The congregation 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. The number of communicant members has declined only slightly during the year, but a number of our elderly congregation have been unable to attend regularly due to frailty or ill health. We have also seen the departure of adherents with young children seeking fellowship in other churches.

We continue to be blessed by the support, encouragement, and faithful service of our interim moderator Rev Sjirk Bajema. Sjirk has organised and coordinated supply for the pulpit from a variety of sources, including regular supply from our own PCEA ministers and elders. Despite being unable to meet regularly, the Session and Deacons' Court have kept in regular contact via email and phone. We have regular and faithful adherence to our weekly morning worship service and have been able to celebrate the Lord's Supper throughout the year. Efforts are being made to resume the midweek Bible studies, which are of great benefit and encouragement to all who attend.

Despite our small numbers, we have remained financially self-supporting through the consistent giving of the congregation and as a result of regular income from the rental of the manse. This has allowed us to start building our reserves and to initiate some maintenance work on the church and the manse. We have had the opportunity to benefit from the preaching from our resident RTC student, Isaac Overton, and to build a good relationship with him and his growing family. 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.

**Knox (Andres Miranda)** Despite the departure and prolonged absence of some members, Knox is being blessed with small but not insignificant signs of numerical growth. Since the middle of 2014, we have had a number of visitors, four of which continue to worship regularly. The other two wish to become permanent members in our congregation. As elder and pastor of the church, I am able to see wonderful developments in hospitality, hunger for preaching, and willingness to take advantage of different serving opportunities in the kingdom. I am also encouraged to witness a real commitment from all members to replicate the example of Jesus in their individual lives. Knox is a listening congregation actively engaged in the process of becoming holiness to the Lord. Our average attendance at the moment ranges from 32 and 40 worshippers on the Lord's Day. Sunday-School and Mid-week studies are also generous gifts from God to strengthen the fellowship at Knox. We are thankful to God for his encouragement and resources to grow our faith and deepen our love for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. At the close of December Denver Boehret concluded a period of 21 months as pastoral assistant. Finances for the year were satisfactory.

**All Nations (Tut Yoa)** The English 11am service is small and the Nuer 2.30pm service is large. There was some slippage during the year in Nuer attendance, possibly related to the problems in South Sudan, but numbers have picked up since. Since August we have had a monthly combined service at 11am in

English with Dr Ward the usual preacher. This is attended by around 35-50, and a spill-over of Nuer families attending our regular English service is now evident, a very encouraging development. Denver Boehret took 30 morning services during the year and Rowland Ward 16. There is a Ladies' Bible Study on Wednesday, and a Youth Ministry on Friday evenings. Mr Yoa has had some health issues during the year and prayer would be appreciated. The congregation had a fairly steady year and a reduction in the subsidy from Knox was achieved. In December one of our Southern Sudanese members paid for air-conditioning the worship area.

**Carrum Downs** (David Kumnick) Carrum Downs congregation was disappointed when several new people attended during 2013 only to leave in early 2014, but a core group has continued. Morale has been boosted by the recent acquisition of a site for a future church at 8 William Road. The block is 1420 square metres in size (about the same size as the Knox Church & carpark), and suitable for a building and 25 car spaces. Knox funded the purchase. The location is only two doors off Frankston-Dandenong Road opposite the new Bunnings Store on that road. It is the newer section of Carrum Downs, with visibility possible from the Frankston Dandenong Road and with residential development occurring on the opposite side of William Road. Erection of a building will depend on availability of funds. Donations will be gratefully received.

**Narre Warren** (Sjirk Bajema) 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. This is also reflected in our steadily increasing membership.

Again this past year we have been able to be self-supporting financially. The consistent giving of the Lord's people has been most gratifying. Our members continue to be faithful in their adherence to weekly worship. Our prayer for more to attend the afternoon service is being answered but we pray that more would see the need to worship at both services. 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 2014 consisted of three classes, with about 9 students. 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 a studies on 1<sup>st</sup> Peter, *Homeward Bound* and commencing a series on Acts, *Mission Unstoppable*. We have an excellent participation from the 10 - 15 who regularly attend. The Tuesday night Bible Study at the church, twice per month, has continued, though not always so regularly due to various other commitments of those involved. 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 4 to 5 attending, and have now taken up a study in Ephesians, *Walk This Way*. The Ladies Bi-Monthly Wednesday morning Bible Study continues and now also goes through the school holidays. They presently have around 8-12 attending. They have been using material from Matthias Media but this year have begun with a most interesting study on *Heaven & Hell*, written by our minister. 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 now using a Matthias Media study booklet which takes us through 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy, *To The Householder*. 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. It is gratifying to note that our minister's sermons are being used in worship services, bible studies, and for personal study all over the world.

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 sixth 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. While there has been several instances of death and serious ill-health amongst us the response has been very loving and supportive – whether prayerfully or practically.

**Ulverstone** (Andre Scheepers) The Ulverstone Congregation continues its range of ministries with the focus point being the two worship services each Lord's Day. Rev Andre Scheepers has been continuing services with an emphasis on prayer, and also with a range of other texts with evangelical emphasis. The preached word that he brings to us is a major blessing. Over the last year we have been blessed with new people in attendance, although others have also left for various reasons. We have commenced the year with an amalgamation of the midweek meeting that has brought a number of new people into attendance. Other meetings include the Sunday School and adult catechism class, Men's prayer breakfasts, Women's Missionary Union and ladies craft meeting.

We also have a strong emphasis on fellowship as reflected in the monthly fellowship nights, car rallies and athletes camps. In August last year we held a weekend camp at the Scout Camp at Forth with invitations going interstate. Lord willing we hope to continue this again this year. In November last year our pastor took annual leave to visit Mushingashi wildlife reserve in Zambia. During that visit the Lord opened the door to ministering the word of God to a spiritually thirsty group of local people. This has led to our congregation assisting in the provision of Bibles to these people and we are much in prayer that the Lord will bless His word to them. Our pastor plans to take leave and visit them again later this year, with the hope to establish a future mission post and that the Lord will raise up a local pastor/teacher for them.

## LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Dr Rowland S. Ward (Convener 2007), Trevor Leggott, Robin Tso, Tom Reeve, Ron Lawson.

### 1. Review of archive

The convener has gathered together opinions on the constitution, on procedure and on trust law/investment mostly given by our late Procurator F. Maxwell Bradshaw, who died in 1992, classified and bound them together and placed the file in the Synod Archives. Nowadays, most matters are adequately covered in our Handbook, but a couple of points merit reference.

**a.** There were frequent queries relating to the Samuel Nicholson Bequest. While the testator had left the money free of conditions, in 1955 the Synod had declared particular purposes, such as Stipend, and Training of Ministry, without reserving, as might have been done, the right to apply the funds to other purposes in the future should it be considered appropriate. A trust for the specified purposes had therefore been created and in law it could not be changed except by application to the Supreme Court &c.. It will be wise in any future cases to keep this in mind when making application of an undesignated bequest. Of course a bequest for specified purposes *must* be applied precisely in accordance with the donor's will or other instruction.

**b.** Frequent references appear to the procedure in regard to petitions where Mr Bradshaw is emphatic about the form: that the relevant facts must to be set out in an orderly and logical manner; language must be appropriate; the petitioner must appear; other parties involved must have been notified and appear for their interests. A letter headed 'petition' is unacceptable and not lawful to accept. Our Handbook 6.7 is adequately covers these matters, but it is worth a reminder.

**c.** Bradshaw also has comments on the Barrier Act, that it does not require a year to elapse between remitting to presbyteries and approval by Synod; and an explanation of how a different set of questions for elders and deacons compared to ministers came about.

### 2. Sexual Misconduct

Our 2014 Report foreshadowed changes in the legal situation, and such have occurred. The Victorian Inquiry on sexual abuse took the view that every member of society has a moral and ethical responsibility to report to police any knowledge they have about serious crimes committed against children. In Victoria, where mandatory reporting by religious ministers of religion was not required under Victorian law, *The Crimes Act 1958* was amended in May 2014 to create two new offences. The first is failure by a person in authority to protect a child from a sexual offence. That is essentially about where there is a substantial risk that a child under the age of 16 years in the care of an organisation could become the victim of a sexual offence. It is an indictable offence with a maximum penalty of five years imprisonment, and it unapologetically targets child sexual abuse within organisations such as churches. The second imposes a community-wide legal duty to report information about child sexual abuse against a child under the age of 16 years by another adult. The obligation extends beyond people in authority to include, for example, parents, other family members and neighbours. Failure to disclose that information to the police as soon as it is practical to do so, unless he or she has a reasonable excuse for not doing so, will constitute the offence, and the maximum penalty is three years imprisonment. A further law makes it an offence to groom a child for sexual purposes. However, the government has exempted priests from reporting abuse that comes to notice during the confessional. This seems a serious weakness. For example, Father Michael McArdle, convicted in 2004 in Queensland of child sexual assault offences, confessed 1,500 times to 30 different priests to sexually assaulting children over a 25 year period.

So far as the church is concerned we see no issues in these changes. We have mandatory reporting in our ecclesiastical law, all officebearers are obliged by Scripture to take care of the flock and so are not required to do more than their obligations as Christian leaders in any case.

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.**

**Note re Public Liability insurance:** We effected a Public Liability scheme with Ansvar from 2/7/1985 (Policy 6.80.02062). The cover began at \$1 million was increased to \$2 million on renewal 1988, and to \$5 million in 1990 when property was included under the group scheme and four policies (one for each state, details in 1990 Synod Reports p. 86) were issued, and to the present \$10 million 2/7/1997 (this amount being that normally required when hiring premises). The sexual molestation limit is \$5 million. [Current policy numbers are: Qld: 03.025.0065315; NSW: 03.025.0000705; Vic: 03.0250018710; Tas: 03.025.0144197.]

### **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. Congregations should 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 including Brisbane despite its unique incorporation. 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 minister has said change is not a high priority.

#### **b. Occupational Health and Safety laws in Australia**

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> 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](http://www.cma.net.au)

### **4. Amendment of the NSW Property Act**

The proposed Bill for a new Act was sent to the Attorney-General for NSW on 14 October 2013. The request was followed up 3 December 2013 and with the Hon Fred Nile on 5 August 2014, and again with the Attorney-General’s Department on 27 February 2015. On 2 March 2015, Tom Reeve met with Mr Nile who explained that the previous Attorney-General, Mr Smith, was not very sympathetic to requirements of churches, but the new man, Mr Hazzard is, and progress is now anticipated.

### **5. Returns to remits from Presbyteries**

Synod 2014 resolved to pass down to Presbyteries the proposal to update one word in the Barrier Act which had changed in meaning since 1697, and the proposal to set out the procedure in administering the Act. Although neither proposal requires Barrier Act procedure, one would have hoped that this would provide opportunity for Presbyteries to better understand the reasoning which is clearly set out in Synod 2014 Reports. Our re-presentation of the proposals with some revisions will of course be considered in the light of reports from Presbyteries which voted 2 to 1 against, when presbyteries can indicate any areas of concern and assist any improvement needed.

There appeared to be confusion because of the way the word ‘constitution’ changed its meaning by the late 18<sup>th</sup> century so as to refer to a fixed body of principles whereas before it was used simply for laws. The Barrier Act is used when we want to pass enactments touching on doctrine, worship, discipline and church government that are to be “binding rules and Constitutions” for the church. This may sound to modern ears that we are adding to the unalterable constitution rather than simply enacting laws that fit into the framework provided by the unalterable constitution, which laws may be amended from time to time. Hence Proposed Deliverance 1. Rather than change the word in question a simple footnote “that is, laws” to the word “Constitutions” would suffice to clarify the meaning and avoid any possible confusion.

In regard to Barrier Act procedure our current section 5.39 in the Handbook needs to be written more clearly and fully. Let it be emphasised that all lawful Synod legislation binds those to whom it applies, but IF it is legislation intended to bind lower courts and the church generally AND if it relates to doctrine, worship, discipline or church government, then it does NOT bind until Barrier Act procedure is followed (unless passed as an Interim Act). A couple of amendments have been made to Proposed deliverance 2 compared to last year. The first, in Clause 2, states in positive and briefer form the area where the Barrier Act applies. The second, in Clause 3, clarifies and limits the occasions when Synod may dispense with notice requirements as was done to facilitate the union of the Free Presbyterian Church of Victoria with the PCEA. There was no controversy and the matter had been before the church for some time and decision was needed to meet legal timetables, but this practice should only apply in exceptional circumstances.

## **6. Role of trustees re congregational property**

Further to a concern expressed by the Southern Presbyterian Church that if they joined us they might lose control of their property, the Convener endeavoured to reassure them on that point but it is thought that it will be of value for them as well as ourselves, if Synod takes note of the following general statement. It might be added that this statement has been provided to and discussed by the PCEA trustees and found helpful. It is based on advice of Mr Brian Bayston, OAM, LLB, B.Comm, the law agent of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

### **NOTE RE CORPORATE TRUSTEES AND CONGREGATIONAL PROPERTY**

1. All church property is held by one of our three trust corporations rather than by individual trustees. Individual trustees cannot exclude their personal assets from any action arising from their conduct as trustee, and there are practical and sometimes expensive issues when individual trustees die or resign requiring new persons to be appointed. Our system avoids that. On the other hand, there are sometimes misunderstandings as to the role and rights of the corporate trust body. Congregations may think they lose a measure of control over their affairs, and the corporate trustee may think it has more control than it does.

2. Our corporate trust bodies are what are called bare or custodian trustees and do not have managerial oversight of the properties: this lies with the Congregation through its Session and Deacons Court. The decisions to transact on property are made at this level and at Presbytery and Synod. The trust bodies have no managerial authority to make such decisions or to disregard decisions that have been properly made at Congregational, Presbytery and Synod level.

3. A bare or custodian trustee is not absolved from responsibility if those for whom he holds acts in breach of trust, so a bare trustee may refuse to co-operate when a breach of trust is feared. The trust bodies do have a duty to see that the property is properly insured and maintained, and in rare situations may have to act to protect the interest of the church although, even then, usually in conjunction with the courts of the church.

4. Our Synod has authorised Presbyteries to approve the sale of property other than places of worship. Ultimate approval for the sale of places of worship is reserved to Synod because of the desirability in a small denomination of an extra safeguard to avoid decisions that may compromise the ability of the church to maintain its witness effectively. Even so, it must be remembered that each church court has its particular function and, where adequate provision for the maintenance of the pastoral charge is evident and financial and legal aspects are in order, refusal at Presbytery or Synod level is hardly to be expected.

## **7. Handbook/Decision Book**

The electronic version of the combined Handbook and Decision book was updated after Synod 2014 and placed on the website, and continues to be downloaded hundreds of times a year. The electronic version will be updated again following Synod. The webmaster advises that there were 1061 downloads of the 2014 edition up to 5 March 2015.

## **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES**

1. In reference to 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, Synod footnotes the word ‘Constitutions’ with the words “that is, laws”.

2. For the more clear understanding of the procedure in regard to matters requiring approval by Barrier Act procedure 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.

#### When it applies

2. The requirements of the Barrier Act apply to new legislation of church-wide significance and binding nature affecting the doctrine, worship, discipline and government of the church, that is to say, it applies to Class 1 legislation but not to Class 2 legislation (see Handbook 5.37). In practice it mainly applies to rules regarding discipline, ministers, students and oversight of congregations.

#### 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 (a) have been before the Church for over a year and (b) on which there is no reason to think a significant difference of opinion exists, and (c) where a formal decision is necessary for good reasons, 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, 2015, and replaces Sections 5.39 and 5.40 in the Handbook.

3. Synod draw attention of those concerned to the Note re Corporate Trustees and Congregational Property in the Law & Advisory Committee Report.

## **TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

D Kerridge (Convener), JA McCallum, AA Miranda, D Manly, S Bajema

The Committee considered various matters by email throughout the year. We met by phone conference to ratify some decisions and to discuss more complex matters. We continue to give thanks to the Lord that we have a student for the ministry serving Christ's church within the PCEA.

### **Mr Duncan Hickey**

Mr Hickey has now completed his first year at Christ College, Sydney (formerly PTC, Sydney). The Committee is very encouraged with his academic progress and application to study. A rearrangement of subjects during the year has meant that Duncan will now complete his M.Div., God-willing, in 4 years rather than three (3 subjects per semester rather than 4). Mr Hickey's results for 2014 were exemplary with a 100% mark in NT Greek, an HD and distinctions in others subjects. He continues to work very diligently at his studies. He continues his studies with no demands on the Synod for funding.

### **Candidate Placement Scheme**

The Committee has begun to investigate the feasibility of inaugurating a Candidate Placement Scheme (hereafter CPS), whereby a candidate is allotted a position as an assistant in an existing congregation to develop and assess his abilities in a pastoral situation. The allocation to such a position would be made by the Presbytery which has oversight of the candidate, in consultation with the Training of Ministry Committee.

The placement would be for a period to be determined in consultation with the candidate, but ideally would be for a duration of between 6 to 8 weeks. The candidate would have an opportunity to supply a number of services, and engage in pastoral work alongside an incumbent minister who would be able to mentor and assist the candidate.

Although consideration would have to be made for a particular candidate's situation, it is envisaged that the placement would occur outside the candidate's own congregation, and even outside of his Presbytery (again, by arrangement between the respective courts, assisted by Training of Ministry). At the discretion of the Committee and Presbytery, such a placement might occur once a year for the last two years of a candidate's study, with a preference to make it a normal requirement for the last year of study.

The intended outcome of the scheme is to equip a candidate with practical pastoral skills in the wider context of the denomination.

The concept is already in use by a number of denominations, such as the Free Church of Scotland, the Presbyterian Church of Australia (Field Education Scheme) and a number of Reformed Churches (Summer Internships).

The advantages of a CPS are numerous:

1. Presbytery and Training of Ministry would be given a report on the placement to facilitate their ongoing assessment of the candidate;
2. The candidate would have experience of a different pastoral situation to their own within the denomination.
3. The minister, along with the elders, in the chosen congregation, although being given the added task of mentorship and reporting, would have assistance in working the charge. The benefits of mentorship are not only for the student.
4. The congregation would also get to know a candidate, who might otherwise be a stranger to them, and thus become interested and involved in his progress.

The cost of the CPS would be subsidized (or fully funded in cases of placement in a stipend assisted charge) by the Committee out of current funds.

Subsidy costs for placement scheme at, say,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the 60% stipend allowance to students for 8 weeks is \$3,133, up to full student allowance covered by the Committee @ \$4,747.

These allowances may or may not be fully utilized depending on the financial status of the host congregation. This costing also assumes the travel costs for a student, and his accommodation, are met by the host congregation in lieu of normal pulpit supply costs - the student would be expected to be supplying for a good proportion of his time on placement.

Allowing placements to take place in the second and third year of a course of study, this would be a draw on funds of approx. \$5,000 per year (allowing a margin for contingency, stipend increase and fluctuations) over a two year block. [The Synod General Treasurer has consulted on this costing and deemed the scheme viable, given current funds available to the Committee yet dependent on the number of students involved in the SPS in one year. If the church had more than one candidate eligible for the SPS, alternate year placements may have to be implemented].

The Committee seeks the wisdom and guidance of the Synod concerning this matter, knowing that there are issues of demarcation, finance and polity to be discussed and decided which are outside our remit.

### **Eldership Training Course**

Another matter under discussion in the Committee is the implementation and resourcing of an Eldership Training Course, in accordance with our responsibilities as laid out in Act 14, Class 2 Synod 1983, amended 2010.

The office of Elder within the church has Biblical criteria. The choice of an elder within our denomination is by nomination and election to office in accordance with our regular practice. Within this process, a man is chosen and elected by the congregation according to his spiritual maturity and fitness in the light of the Biblical criteria. Nothing more is required for such a man to enter the eldership.

However, as with a candidate for the ministry who meets Biblical and denominational requirements, (or indeed anyone entering upon any endeavour) a gap exists between aptness and experience. It is expected, of course, that those already in office would be available and willing to assist a newly elected elder in his duties and guide him in matters of polity and procedure. However, those entering the eldership have increasingly come from outside the PCEA and are not familiar with our Presbyterian governance. There may also be only one elder available in a congregation who must rely on his own study (which is expected anyway) to develop his ministry.

The Committee therefore proposes a non-compulsory course of study to assist those who are elders within congregations to enrich their understanding of their role and develop their ministry.

A suitable selection of readings and course material on the Biblical foundation of the office, Ecclesiology and church practice, accompanied by topics relating to the elder's pastoral work would be prepared and made available in print form online to form the basis for a local course, seminar or retreat. The material would be prepared by the Committee.

We look to the Synod to offer assistance and comment on the feasibility, preparation and potential application of such a course.

### **Proposed Deliverances:**

1. That the Synod commend the excellent progress of Mr Duncan Hickey in his divinity studies and assure him of our prayerful concern for him and his family.
2. That the Synod support the further development and implementation of a Candidate Placement Scheme by the Committee, subsequent to Synod approval.
3. That the Synod support the development and availability of a curriculum and course material for a non-compulsory Eldership Training Course, in accordance with our stated responsibilities and subsequent to Synod approval.

## CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

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

This committee communicated by email during the year and various issues were raised. We continue to monitor government policy, particularly as it affects the church and morals in society. We urge prayer for our representatives in the government. We seek to update some guidelines in the church. We continue to prepare statements on matters of significance for Christians living in an increasingly humanistic society. We give brief guidelines on these matters, based on Scripture.

**The Federal Marriage Act:** The push for homosexual or same-sex marriage continues in the press and by some members of parliament. We are thankful to God that the current Prime Minister and his government are not in favour of changing the marriage act to allow homosexual marriage. Some churches, or presbyteries at least, have resolved that ministers relinquish their marriage celebrant licences should the marriage act be changed to allow homosexual marriage.

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.

We have written to the Prime Minister with Christian greetings and with a note expressing our opposition to any changes to the Marriage Act to legally recognise homosexual marriage.

We propose writing to the Prime Minister reminding him of our prayers, and urging him to stand against moves to change the marriage act which would legalise homosexual marriage and any changes to the law that would legalise euthanasia.

**Unity in the Church:** Synod 1982, Act 11 Class 2, states in part that: ‘Synod affirm that there is no deficiency in the Gospel of Christ as it is transmitted to us in the Authorised Version, the New International Version and the New American Standard Bible, each of these having Synodical approval.’

Changes have taken place in the last three decades, such that congregations are using other versions of the Bible. It is proposed that the New King James Version and the English Standard Version be added to this list of versions having Synodical approval. It should be noted that the edition of the New International Version approved in 1982 was that current at that time; the 1984 edition was largely unchanged, but changes in more recent editions do not necessarily meet with the approval of Synod.

**Working with children:** Those in the church who work with children, which includes ministers, are required to register with their state government to get their names put on a working with children register. The websites for this are

NSW: [wwwcheck.ccyp.nsw.gov.au](http://wwwcheck.ccyp.nsw.gov.au) VIC: [online.justice.vic.gov.au](http://online.justice.vic.gov.au) QLD: [bluecard.qld.gov.au](http://bluecard.qld.gov.au)

In NSW, upon registering the worker will get a number which they must take to a government office with their ID for checking. This number should be passed on to their church. In NSW there is no cost for volunteers but ministers may need to pay.

**Statement on Funerals:** Every culture and every religion has its own particular way of burying their dead. Death comes to all human beings so all families and societies have to dispose of the body of a member who dies. We cannot bury ourselves, as much as we might like to in our fierce independence. How should Christians dispose of the dead body of a loved one and/or member of the church?

The first question is: burial or burning/cremation? In the Bible we read that Abraham purchased a plot of land with a cave in order to bury his wife, or put her dead body in a cave. Abraham was later buried by his sons in the same cave. The most detailed account of a Jewish burial is that of our Lord Jesus Christ. His dead body was wrapped in linen, anointed with spices and perfumes, and placed in a cave. There is no reference to burning dead bodies, apart from the wicked Achan, and the special case of King Saul and his sons, to prevent further abuse of their dead bodies by the Philistines (Josh 7:25 , 2Sam 31:13). Even so, no specific instruction is given to the church regarding the disposal of the bodies of the deceased. What is

important is that, no matter how or where the body is disposed of, the person will be raised on Judgment Day (Rev 20:13).

While the manner of disposal of the body of the deceased has no impact upon the dead and their resurrection, it does have importance for the living. A funeral can arouse all manner of superstitions. ‘You shall not make any cuts on your flesh for the dead’ (Lev 19:28). Sometimes mourners shave their heads. White doves can be hired for a funeral service. A Christian funeral will be different to that of the unbeliever. Christians are not to mourn as those who have no hope (1Thes 4:13).

The secular humanist has no hope beyond the grave, so emotion at a funeral can be great, or it can be turned into a strange celebration which almost forgets the person has died. When there is no belief in an after-life, all the focus is on the eulogy and giving the deceased a ‘good send-off’. But a funeral is a time for solemn reflection, not only on the dead person’s life, but on the reality of death and the great Christian hope. The presence of a dead body or casket reminds us of the reality of death. Should we have a private burial, or should we have a huge affair going on for days? Some think huge funerals inappropriate for Christians, while others see them as a way of paying respect for the deceased person.

The Roman Catholic Church enters into great ceremony when a member dies. A special mass (Requiem) is held because of sins taken to purgatory. Prayers are said and candles are lit for the dead person, while the coffin is sprinkled with holy water, and decorated with rosary beads and ‘sacred heart’ pictures of Jesus. The Reformers reacted to all this ritual and superstition by having simple funeral services. Even so, they recognised the significance of death, no matter how old or infirm the person, and the importance of dignified, godly burials.

The Directory of Public Worship, appended to the Westminster Confession of Faith, refers to the dead body as being, ‘decently attended from the house to the place appointed for public burial’, and of Christian friends accompanying the body to this place of public burial. This Directory also refers to the minister, ‘putting them in remembrance of their duty’. Being present at the graveside, or at least having a casket present, is a solemn reminder to all that this life comes to an end. We all return to the dust from which we were taken (Genesis 3:19). There is a place for remembering the life of the deceased person, but not to the exclusion of remembering their death, and of mourning their departure from this world. Mourning is not inappropriate for the believer. Abraham wept and mourned for his wife Sarah (Gen 23:2). Believers mourn, but not without hope (1 Thess 4:13). We believe in the resurrection of the dead – all the dead (John 5:28-29). Those who die in Christ will be raised to meet Christ when he returns. The death of a family member or friend, is a time to reflect on this truth, usually with the aid of a minister of the gospel.

‘Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints’ (Psalm 116:15). The Lord takes notice when a believer dies. Friends in the church also notice. They are ready to comfort those who mourn. A death should be time for the fellowship to come together, sharing in the truth of the cross and the resurrection. Great words of comfort are found in the Scriptures. These should be shared at this solemn occasion.

### **Proposed deliverances:**

1. Synod welcome the short Biblically-based statement on an issue in the church, and requests that it be published in “The Presbyterian Banner”.
2. Synod adopt an amendment to the ‘Unity in the church’ Act 11 Class 2 of 1982 to the effect that ‘the New King James Version and the English Standard Version of the Holy Bible have the approval of Synod’.
2. Synod write to the Prime Minister reminding him of our prayers, and urging him to stand against any moves to change the Federal Marriage Act which would legalise homosexual marriage, and any changes to the law that would legalise euthanasia.

## MEDIA COMMITTEE

S Bajema (Banner), D Kerridge (Website)

**Report on ‘The Presbyterian Banner’:** Again we thankfully report that the Lord has blessed the work of ‘The Presbyterian Banner again this past year of 2014. We have been able to support ourselves through the subscriptions and donations of God’s people. We have been able to hold off a proposed subscription increase but due to a further increase this may need to be reviewed for 2016.

The bulk subscriptions from congregations are what support the bulk of our finances. There is still one congregation that receives no copies and others who receive very few. Again, I would strongly encourage churches to provide a copy of *The Presbyterian Banner* for each family and have a few spare for visitors.

We continue to supply free copies mailed to State and Theological Libraries around the nation and the world at our own expense. The expense for this with the increased cost of postage is an ever increasing percentage of our overall budget. It is inevitable that after five years at the present subscription rate there will need to be an increase.

I express my gratitude to our team involved here in Narre Warren, 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. But here I need to note that a number in our support team have been quite frail and unwell. We will need to look at adding others onto our committee locally.

Presently 165 copies per month are being printed. A number of these are surplus so at any time any of the congregations not currently subscribing can also 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 ministers and others regularly contributing articles – I note here again the help of Rowland Ward, Jim Klazinga, and Herm Zandman. In addition Andres Miranda 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 five 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.

Financial Statement for year ended 31-12-14:

RECEIPTS (2014)		PAYMENTS	
Balance 31-12-13	2137.12	Printing	2746.70
Subscriptions	2290.00	Postage	526.55
Bank Interest	19.22	Other Expenses	92.72
_____	_____	Bank Fees	13.50
	\$4446.34	Balance 31-12-14	1,066.87
		_____	_____
			\$4446.34

Please note that of the current balance \$465 consists of subscriptions for 2015. Your donations will be gratefully received!

**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 PCEA website has grown and changed since its update at the beginning of 2014. Various elements and sections have been added, as well as retaining some of the old content. The benefit of the change and more accessible home page has become evident in a comparison of the statistics available for 2013 and 2014, which can be seen in this table below:

	Unique Visitors	No. of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
2013	34,332	53,887 (1.56/visitor)	309,416 (5.74 p/visit)	696,145	13.32 GB (259.14KB/visit)
2014	21,536	43,402 (2.01/visitor)	419,072 (9.65 p/visit)	791,629	59.19 GB (1,430.08 KB/visit)

Although there were fewer visitors to the site in 2014, and the average duration of stay dropped from 6.9 minutes to 4.4 minutes, the update accomplished what was required in drawing people into the site beyond the home page to view more content. The number of pages viewed per visit has increased from 5.74 to 9.65, hits on pages have increased and bandwidth used (including downloading material) has also increased substantially. Most of our visitors continue to come from the United States and Australia, with Great Britain, and Kenya being the next most frequent. (Detailed Statistical report available from Webmaster, upon request.)

The internet is a fickle thing though, and to maintain interest in a website there has to be continual input of content. We have had a steady increase in archive material over the year, through the work of the Archivist and Mr Robert Hingston. This has provided a wonderful resource to investigate the witness of our church through the periodicals that chronicled her history. I commend this to you and to your congregations. However, we have a great dearth of articles from our ministers, elders, and material from congregation members which would add to the perception of the website a vital and lively place reflecting our wider witness as a denomination. Our primary witness remains in the preaching and teaching of the Word, and in the gathering of the people of Christ in a physical Body for worship, instruction, growth and fellowship. Yet we must not think that the website is not an important tool in the furtherance of our aim to make Christ known. Our congregational statistics for 31/12/13 showed 777 people in our church community. The very fact that we have had 21,536 people view our site proves that there is some interest there and one avenue to pursue in outreach. Can I make an appeal for articles on whatever topic is of interest and importance in your local congregations, and to invite your congregation members to be active in supporting the website? Sermon transcripts, congregational events, comments on national and international occurrences or issues from a Christian perspective, photos, videos, recordings of psalm recitals; the web is a place for all these things. As the format for most of these contributions differs from that required by *The Banner*, there is not meant to be competition, rather co-operation. *The Banner* remains as a central element of the site, advertised and available online.

Three additional elements of the website introduced since last year that need to be noted here are:

1. The PCEA News blog which provides a vehicle for short comments to be made, brief articles written, and announcements to be shared by office-bearers with the wider church;
2. The Sermons page for audio files to include sermons and addresses such as the Moderator’s addresses from Synod’s, Camp talks and even Psalm tunes available to those congregations which don’t have their own page to broadcast sermons, as well as allow a wider hearing for those unable to attend church wide events such as Synod and Camp; and
3. The PCEA Community – a social media area devoted to encouraging contact and communication between members and adherents in various congregations and those interested in the work of the PCEA. To give you an idea of the potential of this last element: three users in particular have joined the

Community. A Free Church of Scotland minister from Leith, a minister of a fledgling Reformed Church in Bolivia, and a man who has leanings towards the PCEA from Coffs Harbour who is, as yet unable to meet with us in a congregation.

The usefulness of these elements, indeed the utility of the whole PCEA website, is in direct proportion to the number of people involved in contributing. Please support the website, make it known in your congregation and contribute as you are able.

[A short multimedia presentation will accompany this report devoted to familiarizing the delegates with the resources available on the website.]

#### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCE:**

1. That the Synod commend the PCEA website to delegates and congregations as a valuable resource and one worthy of material support.

### **ARCHIVIST'S REPORT**

Rev. Dr Rowland S. Ward

Last year I provided a comprehensive report. It is pleasing to be able to report further additions during the past year including material received from Mrs Harris of Sydney and Dr Allan Harman of Wallington, Victoria.

#### **1.0 CHURCH MAGAZINES**

1.01 Copies of the two surviving issues of *The Voice* (new series 1856) are in the Mitchell Library in Sydney and it is hoped to obtain copies in due course.

1.02 A complete run of *The Free Presbyterian* published by the Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia April 1875-Jan 1881 is now held in a freshly bound volume. It formerly belonged to Rev. John Sinclair. It will be digitised in due course.

1.03 The young people's paper extended to three titles:

*Our Banner* (1923-28??), *For Young Folk* (4 pages; July 1929-Dec 1932) and *The Sunbeam* (4 Pages; Jan 1929-Dec 1940). The first and last were edited by Rev. J. Campbell Robinson and *For Young Folk* by Rev. I. L. Graham. We have a complete run from July 1929 but only a few copies earlier than that.

1.04 The scanning of church magazines has been continued by Robert Hingston, deacon in the Ulverstone congregation, and have been placed on the church website by the Webmaster, David Kerridge.

#### **2.0 OTHER RECORDS**

2.01 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. It is best to make hard copies of relevant email correspondence, and date-stamp incoming items.

2.02 Sue Pacey, Librarian/Archivist at the Ferguson Memorial Library in Sydney has advised that after a search she has located a microfilm version of the PCEA minutes and scroll minutes for the Presbytery of Illawarra 1859-1864 are in their files. They were deposited in the library in March 1941 by Rev. J. H. G Auld. She has graciously undertaken to forward to me a microfiche of the minutes for our records.

#### **3.0 MCINTYRE-FORBES PRESBYTERIAN LIBRARY**

It was not possible to prepare a catalogue this year. It is proposed to list the items 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), G. Hamilton, T. Reeve, and S. Carswell

It was very encouraging to see that despite the relatively low enthusiasm shown for the Family Camp during the months leading up to it, the committee was surprised once again with the number of people who attended this family event during December 30, 2014 to January 2, 2015. I do not need to point out, of course, that without the diligent work of committee members present during the event the camp would not have been what it was. We are extremely grateful to God for making available the place and context for enjoying the wonderful gift of Christian relationships.

**Family Camp:** Theme: The biblical emphasis of the camp for this year was "The Gospel in Isaiah". This particular theme was developed by the Rev. Andre Scheepers (PCEA Ulverstone) in a series of four messages based on key passages from the same book. Each study was then, followed by a time of discussion in small groups.

Camp Report: The feedback from participants about the camp has been very positive. Anna Ward reports: PCEA Family Camps are always great camps and this year was no exception. The biennial camp was held at Elanora Heights Conference Centre, Sydney from Tuesday 30th December 2014 to Friday 2nd January 2015. About 70 people attended, travelling from Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, coming from 9 PCEA congregations (Ulverstone, Melbourne (Knox and Narre Warren), Sydney (St George's and Mt. Druitt), Newcastle, Taree, Wauchope and Brisbane) plus a number who came from other denominations. Each Presbytery was represented with 6 ministers resident at the camp and student Duncan Hickey, as well as several elders, with another minister as day visitor. It has been good in the last few years to have a greater number of ministers coming to the camps.

It was also encouraging to have so many young people present, especially those in the 15 to 25 year age group and they had an active input. We look forward to these young people taking their places in positions of responsibility in the church in future years. While we welcomed increasing ethnic diversity this year, it would be good to see to greater numbers of those of non-European background at our camps (and in our churches), in keeping with the changes in our society as we become more multi-ethnic.

The main speaker for the camp was Rev Andre Scheepers, minister of Ulverstone PCEA, who spoke on "The Gospel in Isaiah", with a particular focus on evangelism and outreach. As someone with a wealth of experience in this area, he brought a clear message on the need for Christians to be doers of the word as well as hearers. On one occasion he abandoned his manuscript and gave a passionate appeal to the church to focus on outreach and evangelism and have a burden for the salvation of the lost. It was especially directed at the young, in whose hands are held the future of the church, under God. The four addresses of the camp covered the themes of Waiting on God, The Suffering Servant, God's Pardon, and God's Purpose in Salvation, from Isaiah chapters 40, 52 & 53 and 55.

Discussion groups of 8-10 people were also held with a set of questions for each talk, prepared by Andre. These were led by ministers or elders and gave an opportunity for further exploration of some of the points raised in the talks. With so much stress on reaching the lost and being encouraging to visitors at church, it would be good to see more modern language psalms used, which most congregations are using in worship anyway.

Other camp activities included early morning prayer meetings led by Tom Reeve, morning and evening devotions, plenty of Psalm singing led by Sonja Hamilton, programmes for the children with separate groups for pre-school and primary ages, sports activities and a concert. A question panel was held on the Thursday evening, with the ministers participating and while some seem to see it as a test of a minister's ability to give profound impromptu answers to thorny questions, the real advantage is that it enables people to raise concerns anonymously.

Time was also given to missions on Thursday evening and we heard from Dr Ann Marie McCallum about several visits she has made to West Africa as an anaesthetist with Mercy Ships; from Rev Dennis Muldoon about his recent visit to India; and a presentation from Mr Ian Conley about the work in Peru. These were all encouraging and a stimulus for increased prayer.

On Wednesday morning (31<sup>st</sup>) several of us were privileged to go to Penrith to attend the funeral of Mrs Flora Neil who passed to be with the Lord the previous week. The service was conducted by Rev Dennis Muldoon and included the reading of a condolence letter from Pradeep Kumar as a lovely witness to Flora's years in India. Our thoughts and prayers are with husband Alex and son John.

A special activity was held on New Year's Eve, when a convoy of vehicles took a number of us to a viewpoint in Manly where we were able to look across to the spectacular 9 pm fireworks from Sydney Harbour and also see the local fireworks display. Camp is perhaps a misnomer for where we were, as the venue, although not entirely disability friendly is a well appointed and comfortable conference centre and not an area where we pitched our tents and cooked over primus stoves. The setting is delightful and also attracted local wildlife, including a python snake, which tried to join us. We were also blessed with lovely weather. A special thank you is due to the Youth and Fellowship Committee (Andres Miranda, Andre Scheepers, Tom Reeve, Glen Hamilton and Stewart Carswell) for all their work, especially Glen Hamilton, who in his quiet and efficient way, along with his wife Sonja, did such a great job of organising the camp and ensuring its smooth running. Give thanks for a safe and happy time and pray for long-term blessing to follow in challenges, convictions and conversions. Attending the camp is a big commitment for some, but the effort is well worthwhile and cheaper petrol this year kept the cost down significantly for those travelling a distance.

The talks were recorded and are on the PCEA website at [www.pcea.org.au](http://www.pcea.org.au). The next Family Camp will be held in Sydney in 2 years time (the week over New Year, at the end of 2016/ beginning of 2017). Please plan to be there.

**Essays:** In 2014 essays prizes were given to children from Brisbane, Ulverstone and St Georges congregations. The work submitted reflects an excellent level of biblical engagement with the set essay questions. I am always very impressed with the creative ability of children to illustrate the main point of biblical passage with short summaries and rich pictures. Here's a sample of the Prescribe Work for 2015:

#### **Prescribed Youth Work for 2015**

<b>Metrical Psalms</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Certificate</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Certificate</b>
Infants (7yrs)	Psalms 123/20:7-9	23:1-6/134
Junior (8 to 12 yrs)	Psalms 133	48:9-14
Senior (13 to 17 yrs)	Psalms 54	66:1-7

#### **Scripture Memory**

1 <sup>st</sup> Certificate (Junior)	James 4:7-8	2 <sup>nd</sup> Certificate (Senior)	Ephesians 6:10-18
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**The Ten Commandments:** Exodus 20:1-17

**Psalm Tunes:** Please choose appropriate Psalm from preferred book

Junior: St Asaph/St Catherine (Tynemouth) /Truro

Senior: Blaernwern/Abbot's Leigh/Crasselius/Silchester (Malan)

#### **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):** Please read 1 John 3:1-5. Can you tell me why Jesus came to the world?

**Junior (up to 400 words):** James 4.8 says: "Come near to God and he will come near to you". This is a beautiful promise. James tells us that if we come near to God, he will come near to us. How do we do this? Use other Bible passages if necessary.

**Senior (1000 words):** In Ephesians 6:10-18 Paul is talking about the reality of spiritual warfare.

1. Take a quick glance of chapter 6:12. What is the unavoidable conclusion of this verse?

2. Paul says that our world is controlled by the destructive rule of spiritual forces. According to verse 10, how are we to fight against these spiritual forces evil?
3. Since we are fighting against demonic enemies, we need special equipment for offense and defence. Read verses 13 to 17. List all the parts of the Christian armour and their purpose in the spiritual battle.
4. Finally, what is the advice of verse 18, and why is this important?

**Birthday Roll/Search Work:** The Y&F Committee is grateful to both Margaret Kinder and Irene Steel for their dedication in promoting creative ways for our children to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

**Proposed Deliverances:**

1. Synod recognises and continues to pray for the enduring and growth-producing work of Sunday-school teachers, and youth leaders, serving God in our local congregations.
2. Synod thanks Mrs Margaret Kinder and Mrs Irene Steel for their dedication to create new and interesting ways for children to learn the truths of the gospel.
3. Members of Synod commit themselves to keep praying for the spiritual development of our children and youth in the church. Synod is conscious of the danger of moving away from the faith, therefore, constant intercession will be made on behalf of our youth, so that they will have the courage to resist secular pressure, find their identity in fellowship with Christ, and participate with glad involvement in their local churches.
4. Synod thanks God for the work of Y&F Committee members working behind the organisation and successful management of the 2014-2015 Family Camp, and for moments of mutual encouragement during this time.

## MISSIONS COMMITTEE

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

### MISSION FIELD REPORTS

Contents:

1. Australian Indigenous Ministries
2. Mukti Missions
3. Dumisani Theological Institute
4. Taleem (discipleship) Centre
5. Dr Dickson
6. Dr Tigi Verghis
7. Lakhnadon
8. Colegio San Andrés
9. Moyobamba
10. Lima Evangelical Seminary
11. Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia
12. CWI UK and Australia

#### **1. Australian Indigenous Ministries** (reported by Rev. Trevor Leggott)

The year of 2014 saw some major developments in the ministry of AIM. The Queensland based AIM Church Council celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary during the year. At the regular three day meeting in February the Council gave serious consideration to a number of issues for the future of the mission under such headings as: Defining and Confirming our Core Values and Goals; Taking our Place in the Christian Space - Marketing and Mobilisation. These topics were occasioned by the retirement and imminent retirement of senior personnel and the need for recruiting personnel and adequately preparing them for ministry.

Stephen Bignall has been a great help, developing his role as Field Director and taking a more active part in the oversight of field personnel, providing good guidance and direction with his pastoral experience and cross-cultural ministry. Rob Alley has been really helpful providing member care and counsel to those in the north of the NT, as well as developing the Mission Awareness Tour program, including the purchase and modification of a 4wd bus to enable access to outlying communities.

Bob Quinn, our Director of Training, has been building networks amongst Qld and NSW indigenous churches as he surveys the needs and develops an appropriate training curriculum, especially seeking to prepare younger Christians for church and community leadership roles.

AIM ministry in NSW continues to develop with some soundly committed indigenous pastors. The work in Dubbo, Gilgandra, Walgett, Moree and Gulargambone continues with other ministries developing in response to local requests in Warren, Goodooga and Wellington. The “Day in the Word” regular Bible teaching seminars in Dubbo are being really well received with many folk from non-AIM centres travelling long distances for the weekends and sharing in good teaching and fellowship.

With a number of our senior personnel retiring it has been very encouraging to have new applications from other suitably gifted and qualified mature personnel with good training and pastoral experience come on board to fill these vacancies. However, the needs are still great and we need more of such people to help with this ministry. One of the more difficult issues that we need to bring before the Lord is to find someone to take on the role of General Director when Trevor retires at the end of 2016. It has been a tremendous blessing to have had the support of the PCEA to undertake this role, but it is no easy task to find a suitable replacement with sufficient support to enable him to do the job.

In September Trevor was called to speak on behalf of AIM at the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse, set to meet in Darwin to hear those who claimed to be abused whilst children at the AIM Retta Dixon Home in Darwin in the 1970s. There had been a number of complaints against one man who had been a house parent at the home during that time. Neither Trevor, nor anyone else on the AIM Council had been aware of these claims of abuse. It was very harrowing sitting through the sessions and hearing the stories from a number of people.

Trevor, with the help of a barrister, sought to provide a response, but it became obvious that the Commission, given the stories that they had already heard concerning other churches and institutions, doubted that AIM did not know of the alleged offences. Trevor had, in fact, put all of the AIM archives in the NSW State Library for safe-keeping and reference, and counsel assisting acknowledged that there was no record in these papers.

We have sought to act with integrity and have responded with a national newspaper apology and an offer of compensation, neither of which have been accepted by the claimants. At time of writing we await the findings of the commission. Meantime we have been given notice that the claimants have instituted a civil class action for compensation against AIM, the NT government and the man concerned. Please pray that there might be a just outcome to this sad business.

## **2. Mukti Mission – India** (reported by Rev. Peter Smith)

For 125 years, Mukti has been caring for Indian women and children from its base near Pune, in Maharashtra State as well as expansion homes and other centres in 18 locations across eight states of India. Their vision is to bring ‘hope and a brighter future for women and children in India.’ Glenda de Jager in Australia ably heads the work here, with the aim being to change lives through a range of development initiatives that demonstrate, in a practical way, the love of Jesus Christ. Mukti Australia supports the work of Mukti in India through four major areas of work of Mukti Mission.

**Education** - India's illiteracy rate is one of the highest in the world. Over 2000 students strain the seams of Mukti's primary and high schools. Nearly three quarters of the students come from the surrounding villages. Educational facilities include Sharada Primary School (Marathi medium), Manorama Memorial Girls Secondary College (Marathi medium), Junior College (Marathi / English medium), Braille School for the visually challenged, Special Vocational Training - Vocational training programs (such as Creative Arts) assists those who are not able to undertake academic study to become skilled in a trade or craft.

**Medical Services** - A 30-bed facility has medical personnel that treat hundreds of needy people. Sunshine Nursing Home cares for the very elderly and infirm women who can no longer care for themselves. A mobile medical team services surrounding villages.

**Holistic Care** - Mukti provides a safe refuge and home for abandoned children, widows, outcast women, unwed and single mothers and special needs children including visually and/or mentally challenged girls and women. The residents at Mukti live in family homes, which afford them shelter, food security and nutrition, access to clean water, and a sense of belonging. Mukti has agricultural fields to feed Mukti residents (and village children attending Mukti schools), and the surplus is sold for income generation.

Please pray that God will continue to wonderfully bless all the multifaceted work Mukti undertakes in His Name, so that the whole Mukti family will know his saving grace and sing his praises.

## **3. Dumisani Theological Institute – South Africa** (reported by Rev. Peter Smith)

Dumisani enters its 36th year this year, having had its roots in Dimbaza in the Eastern Cape. The main emphasis then was on lay training and the provision of basic literature in English and Xhosa. In 1985 the work moved to King William's Town. In 1991 Diploma classes were started for men studying for the ministry and in 1997 the link with what is now North-West University was forged. In recent years DTI have averaged an intake of 50 students.

With the former principal of nine years, Dr Alistair Wilson, returning to Scotland, Jack and Nancy Whytock have travelled from Canada for Jack to take up the position of acting Principal. Rev. Deon Lombard continues as vice principal and Dr Greg Phillips has been appointed acting academic dean.

Please pray for the staff as they commence the process this year of applying for an accredited course in the form of a Diploma in Theology. At present, Dumisani offers various Short Courses that will aid pastors and laymen in Christian ministry. Dumisani also continues to facilitate the North-West University Bachelor in Theology degree.

#### **4. Taleem (discipleship) Centre – Dehradun, India** (reported by Rev Dr Dennis Muldoon)

Dr Muldoon and his wife were privileged to visit Mariam, daughter of the late Dr Rahmat Hussain, during a personal visit to India in April 2014. They attended worship at the Good Shepherd Church within the Presbyterian Theological College, Dehra Dun, and later visited the village Taleem centre. Mariam had worked hard to keep the centre running. In the small office we prayed with her, and then went to a class that was in progress. The children were learning Urdu, the language spoken by Muslims in India. We had some small books to distribute, and taught a chorus with Mariam's help. After class the children went to a nearby house for a meal. Mariam has a supportive family in the village but also faces opposition. We noted her commitment to the ministry and encouraged her to press on with a small Sunday school.

#### **5. Dr Dickson – New Delhi, India** (reported by Rev Dr Dennis Muldoon)

Dr Dickson continues to operate an Animal Wellness Centre for dairy farmers on the outskirts of Delhi. He has moved to a new office but still occupies the old centre, where he has organised computer classes for poor girls from the dairy farming community. He is thankful for a reliable assistant who keeps the centre open when he is away. Dr Muldoon was able to see this work during his visit in April 2014. One day we sat with Dr Dickson in a meeting with representatives from EFICOR and World Vision, India. He conducts animal husbandry training programs through these agencies in remote districts of India, a work he enjoys despite the difficulties of travel- usually in the heat of summer when the farmers are not busy.

Not long after our visit Dr Dickson underwent a heart bypass operation; thankfully he has now recovered, although his wife is currently being treated for cancer. The family value our prayers.

#### **6. Dr Tigi Verghis- Siliguri, India** (reported by Rev Dr Dennis Muldoon)

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. We were able to visit one of the churches with which Dr Verghis works closely. He had assisted them with community organisation; this in turn assisted them in getting a road built to their village. We arrived to take part in worship in a new church they had built. The pastor of this church, the Gitdubling Kirk Session of the UCNI, had been taught by Dr Muldoon at the PTC in Dehradun. It was wonderful to be able to worship with over one hundred people, many of them young, in this remote region of the Darjeeling hills (four hours drive from Siliguri). Dr Verghis plans to stop over in Sydney briefly in November 2015, on his way to visit New Zealand where he studied under sponsorship from the PCEA in 1995.

#### **7. Lakhnadon - Central India** (reported by Mr. John Greensill)

The work of the Presbyterian Free Church Central India & schools continues faithfully with blessings & challenges. Rev Samit Mishra & Mr Pradeep Kumar will be able to inform us first hand on the work & mission of the church & schools in Central India when they speak on missions night at synod & visit the congregations afterward.

The medical work based at Lakhnadon hospital with the clinic at Chhapara carries on providing Christian medical facilities & services to all in the community. Especially to those who cannot afford to pay. Dr Chering Tenzing, doctor in charge at Lakhnadon, gives thanks for the financial support received from the PCEA & the Free Church of Scotland along with words of encouragement from time to time. Dr Tenzing also gives thanks to the Lord for sustaining them throughout the lean winter months & keeping the medical families in good health. The hospital has provided the opportunity for medical personal to complete training & also new nursing staff to gain experience. Dr Tenzing has requested continuing prayer for the spiritual & physical health of the officers on the campus.

There is a desire to start the first air conditioned medical unit within the region of the hospital in the near future. This will be beneficial for the patients & staff. This is all possible from donations from various churches including the PCEA.

The Spandana project (community health & development) works in conjunction with the hospital is about to wind up in 2016. I hope to receive further information on the outcome of the impact this will have on the

hospital. This year will be crucial year for the hospital as it comes to terms with the withdrawal of Spandana & the adjustments that need to be made.

#### **8. Colegio San Andrés – Peru** (reported by Mr. Ian Conley)

Professor Jesús Guzmán continues as Principal and with a senior leadership team run the school on a daily basis. The total enrolment in 2015 is expected to be in excess of 800 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. In 2014 there was again much thought put in to obtaining the use of another building for the infants school thus freeing up space on the main campus. Previous options have included changing the site to bigger premises or doing a new build on a vacant site or redeveloping an existing site. Nothing at this stage appears financially doable. This is a matter for prayer for the Lord's leading for the 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. The school leadership is grateful for the Lord's provision. 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.

Catriona Macdonald from Scotland has returned to Perú to again take up teaching. 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. Is there anyone from Australia able and willing to take up the challenge?

#### **9. Moyobamba – Peru** (reported by Mr. Ian Conley)

Along with the city of Moyobamba the Annie Soper School experienced severe flooding in late Nov 2014. The Municipal water supply was knocked out and as a consequence the toilets at Annie Soper ceased to function. Emergency repairs were to take place over the end of year break, information is not available at time of writing (late Feb) as to the school's preparedness for the early March start of the school year. The emergency work is on top of a heavy program of maintenance and facility upgrades. The School needs a minimum of 300 enrolments to enable financial viability.

After a difficult year in 2014 in keeping enrolments it is again hoped that the School will have 300 enrolments in early term 1. 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 and the Chair of the School Board, Pilar Urquieta, has expressed a desire for interest from persons in Australia.

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) now (ULES).

#### **10. Lima Evangelical Seminary – Peru** (reported by Mr. Ian Conley)

The Rev Donnie Smith continues in the leadership post of Rector of the now University (previously Seminary). This institution remains the leading facility for theological training in Perú and as such is of strategic importance. The previously LES is now the ULES but the work continues to get full degree conferring status. Also options need to be further considered and financially modelled for additional courses both in Lima and Moyobamba.

#### **11. Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico – Colombia** (reported by Mr. Ian Conley)

Dr Manuel Reaño and his wife Patty are in Scotland (early 2015) for some months on furlough. They both will be speaking to congregations and meetings while on leave. In addition their future work is to be reviewed in conjunction with the FCS Board of Missions. During 2014 the Reaños were heavily involved in counselling of Pastors and their families. Manuel continued his work within the Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico de Colombia and to lead men's conferences where participants are challenged to assume their God given function within families. Patty Reaño co-directed the Christian Family Centre called "Vinculo" which is also involved in Christian counselling.

## **12. Christian Witness to Israel** (reported by Mrs. Anna Ward)

**CWI UK:** Joseph Steinberg became CEO of CWI UK in July 2014, replacing Mike Moore. Joseph had a Jewish American upbringing and as a teenager came to see Jesus as the Messiah through searching the OT Scriptures. At 18 he became a missionary to his own people and has been active in Christian ministry and evangelism ever since. He lives in UK and brings much experience to this role. It is hoped he will visit Australia in the next year or two.

Alex Cowie is Chair of CWI Council. He is a minister of the Free Church of Scotland serving in a parish in Glasgow and a former CWI missionary, so also well experienced.

**CWI Australia:** The Australian Council: Colin Chamberlain remains Chair of the Australian Council, which is undergoing changes. Up to now, CWI workers have almost all come from overseas and been funded by their home country (mostly UK). UK Council now feels that workers here should be supported locally, freeing funds for elsewhere. However it is willing to fund a worker for a limited time. UK Council has asked the Australian Council to undertake a full review of its governance, which is now in process by Resolve Consulting. This will take time and major decisions are deferred until its completion. The aim is to develop good policies and management to enable constructive development.

There is also a Melbourne Committee of which Rev Alastair McEwen of Geelong is Chair.

Melbourne: After 3 years as endorsed workers, Rev Stephen and Mrs Lana Holmes completed their commitments in the Anglican Church at the end of 2014, freeing them to begin with CWI in early 2015. They are now making contacts, building a support and prayer base and undergoing training with CWI Australia and CWI UK.

Sydney: KayChan and Sue Park, originally from Korea, have been in Sydney since 2006. Craig Myers assisted with administration 2 days a week, but has left CWI to work with Jews for Jesus, so Sue Park has resigned from paid employment elsewhere to fill this gap.

CWI Office has moved from the Anglican Church it leased, to the Bexley mission house where the Parks live. This has meant significant reorganisation but came about due to a steep rent increase.

Prayer Groups. Several prayer groups are held in the eastern states, but they are small, and many Christians are oblivious of the need for Jewish mission.

The Edersheim Lectures are given annually in Melbourne and Sydney on an issue related to Jewish mission. This year they will be held in mid May and the speaker will be Dr Brian Rosner, Principal of Ridley College, Melbourne. The last nine are available in a book entitled The Gospel and Israel, published by Wipf and Stock in 2014 (see wipfandstock.com).

**CWI Korea:** Development of this work is progressing and a committee has been formed, with KayChan Park (Sydney), Paul Morris (UK) and Martin Pakula (Melbourne) having oversight.

**CWI Workers elsewhere:** Although small, CWI ministers in several countries - Australia, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Israel, New Zealand, UK (Glasgow, Leeds, Bournemouth and London), USA + a Hong Kong centre and Korea.

### **Needs for CWI:**

- \* Rising anti-Semitism in western and middle eastern countries is concerning; pray that workers will bring healing in Christ's name.
- \* In the face of Christian groups who evangelise aggressively, or focus on prophesy and Middle Eastern politics, or don't think the Jews need Christ, we can give thanks that CWI focuses clearly on the necessity on the salvation of the Jewish people.
- \* It would be great to see more Christian churches focusing on the importance of Jewish mission and to see students in Bible and Theological Colleges thinking of service in this area.
- \* Generosity by Christians will enable CWI to move forward when workers are available.

## PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:

- 1) That Synod express its ongoing commitment to missions by encouraging the congregations to give generously and continue praying for the mission works we support.
- 2) That Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2015 – 2016 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for the aforementioned period.

## MISSIONS BUDGET 2015:

General Funds	Budget	2014	Actual	2014	Budget 2015	Estimate 2016
Balance 1 Jan 2014		34570		34570	29034	20734
(Miss Gen, DAA, Fiji, Aim Leggott)						
Income: Investments	14000		14577		14000	14000
Giving Miss General	7000		12001		12000	12000
Miss Sprrt AIM	16000		12743		12000	12000
Transfer from Fiji Acc			681			
Income *1	37000	37000	40002	40002	38000	38000
Expenditure						
Fiji Expenses Transfer to Missions Gen	681		681		0	0
CWI	3000		3000		3000	3000
AIM (TIL Salary) * 2	44800		39571		40400	44000
Visiting Miss espenses	1000		0		1000	1000
Dumisani Theo, Institute & Bible School	1500		1500		1500	1500
Admin: Postage, 'ph etc	400		120		400	400
From the Frontiers (FCS)	0		666			
Rounding			0			
Total Expenditure	51381	51381	45538	45538	46300	49900
Closing Balance		20189		29034	20734	8834
IC 28 Feb 2015						

Account Balances 1 Jan 2015	
DAA Bequest	21751
Missions General	7283
Missions Support Fiji	0
Missions Support Leggott/AIM	0
Total	29034
IC 28 Feb 2015	

### 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 2015, For T I Leggott's Stipend is \$51800 split 22% to the McSwan MRF (\$11400) and 78% to Missions General/Leggott (\$40400), figures are rounded.

MRF: \* 1 The expenditure on grants estimates for 2016 have been reduced by 30%.

\* 2 No reduction in 2016 allocation for Rev Leggott has been factored in to the 2016 estimate.

<b>Malcolm McSwan Missions Relief Fund</b>								
<b>MRF Working Account</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Actual 2014</b>		<b>Budget 2015</b>		<b>Estimate 2016 *1</b>	
Balance 1 Jan 2014		5383		5383		<b>8543</b>		8643
Income Investments	16000		23766		<b>16000</b>		16000	
Other	0				<b>0</b>		0	
Transfer from Equities Ac	35000		30000		<b>35000</b>		21000	
Income	51000	51000	53766	53766	<b>51000</b>	<b>51000</b>	37000	37000
<b>Expenditure</b>								
Lakhnadon Christian Hospital	<b>10000</b>		10000		<b>10000</b>		7000	
Lakhnadon Mission School	<b>1500</b>		1500		<b>1500</b>		1050	
Chhapara Christian Health Centre	<b>2500</b>		2500		<b>2500</b>		1750	
Chhapara Mission School	<b>2000</b>		2000		<b>2000</b>		1400	
San Andres Scholarships	<b>6700</b>		6700		<b>6700</b>		4690	
Annie Soper Scholarships	<b>2200</b>		2200		<b>2200</b>		1540	
AIM (TIL Part Salary, SA/LSL levy) *2	<b>12700</b>		11166		<b>11400</b>		12000	
Fees and Charges	<b>300</b>		240		<b>300</b>		300	
Dr Dickson Allahabad	<b>2500</b>		2500		<b>2500</b>		1750	
Taleen Centre (Dr Japla Hussein)	<b>10000</b>		10000		<b>10000</b>		7000	
Mukti child sponsorships	<b>1800</b>		1800		<b>1800</b>		1260	
Total Expenditure	52200	52200	50606	50606	<b>50900</b>	<b>50900</b>	39740	39740
Closing Balance		4183		8543		<b>8643</b>		5903

<b>Equities Account</b>	<b>Budget 2014</b>		<b>Actual</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Budget 2014</b>		<b>Estimate 2015</b>	
Balance 1 Jan 2014		266986		266986		<b>229361</b>		194361
Income Revaluation of shares & Managed Funds	0		2467		<b>0</b>		0	
Income (Retained Investment Income)	0	0	0		<b>0</b>		0	
Total			2467	2467	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	0	0
<b>Expenditure</b>								
Transfer to McSwan Working Account	35000		30000		<b>35000</b>		21000	
Revaluation			10092		<b>0</b>		0	
Total	35000	35000	40092	40092	<b>35000</b>	<b>35000</b>	21000	21000
Closing Balance 31 Dec 2014		231986		<b>229361</b>		<b>194361</b>		173361
<b>Total Funds Held McSwan Missions Relief Fund</b>								
		231659		237904		<b>203004</b>		179264
Net Movement from previous year		-34000		<b>-28800</b>		<b>-34900</b>		-23740
IC 28 Feb 2015								

# INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

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

## 1. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE FRATERNAL RELATIONS.

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

We look forward to welcoming Rev. David D. Miller (Moderator) who will bring a report and extend greetings.

### **1:2 The Reformed Churches of New Zealand. (RCNZ). 2002.**

A letter of greetings has been received from the Convener Pieter van der Wel. They are unable to send a delegate this year – but anticipate sending a representative in the future. Rev. Sjirk Bajema was our representative at their 2014 Synod held in the Bishopdale Church, Christchurch, 13-19 September. A full report of his visit was published in the November 2014 Presbyterian Banner.

### **1:3 Reformed Churches (Liberated) of the Netherlands. (BBK). 1999.**

Their General Synod met last year in Ede amidst some controversy. Before the Synod met some sister churches had expressed concern over what was being taught and published at the Theological University of Kampen; as well as concern over a report by the Committee on, ‘Men and Women in the Church’; as well as concern that the Church was moving closer toward the Netherlands Reformed Churches (NRC/or NGK churches), churches which had placed themselves outside of the federation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (NRC) almost 50 years ago. There would appear to be a growing diversity of theological opinion within the BBK.

However the Corresponding Secretary, Rev. R. J. Vreugdenhil, has informed all the churches with which the BBK have a sister relationship (including PCEA) of the decisions of Synod Ede. (See appendix 1). Regarding the ‘Men and Women in the Church Report’, he writes that, ‘the Synod almost unanimously did not agree with the argumentation of the report’. We are thankful for that. It would appear however from his letter that this matter will not quickly disappear. Note that they invite the opinions of sister churches regarding the implementation of the offices of minister, elder and deacon.

The periodical Lux Mundi has been published for a number of years by the BBK. The editorial team are proposing changes to the magazine so that it might reflect a wider and more international coverage with the intention that it might be embraced ultimately as a publication of the ICRC, and thus provide a platform for theological exchange between member churches.

### **1:4 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church. (OPC). 2007. Nothing to report.**

### **1:5 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia. (RPCA). 2004.**

No representative is able to attend this year. Rev. Jonathan Haney who had been doing a pulpit exchange with the Frankston minister, was able to attend the recent March meeting of the Southern Presbytery and brought greetings. Dr. Rowland Ward was our appointed delegate to attend the RPCA Presbytery held in McKinnon on Sat 2<sup>nd</sup> May.

### **1:6 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland. (RPCI). 2006.**

Greetings have been received. We have yet however to receive a reply to our letter of January 2014.

### **1:7 The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. (RPCNA). 2008.**

We have received an invitation to send a delegate to their annual meeting of Synod which is planned to meet at Bonclarken Conference Centre in Flat Rock, North Carolina, June 8-12. While it’s not possible to be represented this year, as we look ahead to 2017 it might be possible, depending on the timing of the ICRC, to combine a visit to the RPCNA and the OPC. Rev. Bruce Martin (Clerk) who was with us last year has indicated that they would desire to have a delegate visit our Synod every other year if possible.

### **1:8 The Presbyterian Free Church of India. (PFCI). 2010.**

We look forward to welcoming Mr. Pradeep Kumar (elder, and teacher in the Christian School at Chhapara) and Rev. Samit Mishra (minister in Chhapara), who will bring a report and extend greetings. Our thanks to the brothers in the Northern Rivers congregation for making this visit possible; especially to Ross Campbell and John Greensill who also have organised deputation meetings around the churches.

**1: 9 The Southern Presbyterian Church of Australia. (SPCA). 2014.**

Correspondence with the SPCA has been conducted (in consultation with the Convener) via the Southern Presbytery. The following proposal was received from John Coles, Clerk of Presbytery of the SPCA:

*Dear Brethren,*

*I present the following proposal from our Presbytery for your consideration.*

*At its meeting on 21 February 2015 the Southern Presbyterian Church Presbytery took up, inter alia, discussion on the proposal of closer ecumenical ties with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.*

*Presbytery acknowledges its gratitude to the PCEA for their proposal towards discussion on our mutual obligation to seek unity in the Body of Christ. However, after prolonged and detailed contribution from Presbytery members it was felt that the time was not right to pursue full union between the two denominations.*

*Presbytery members concluded that it would be wiser at this time to seek full fraternal relationship with our brethren in the PCEA whilst retaining our mutual distinctives.*

*It was therefore moved and agreed that Presbytery forward the following proposal to be considered by the PCEA Southern Presbytery with the intention of forwarding the matter to their next Synod meeting. The proposal is in two parts:*

*Part A: A basis of non-negotiable elements consisting of:*

- 1. The Westminster Confession of Faith.*
- 2. Exclusive Psalmody.*
- 3. Non-instrumental music in worship.*

*Part B: Areas of relationship open to discussion:*

- 1. Pulpit exchange and mutual eligibility.*
- 2. Access to assessor eldership.*
- 3. Sharing of minutes between our higher courts.*
- 4. Delegate exchange at higher court meetings.*
- 5. Matters to be reviewed in 5 years.*
- 6.*

**The reply from the Southern Presbytery which met on 14/3/15 is as follows:**

*'Thank you for your correspondence arising from your Presbytery meeting on 21/2/2015.*

*The Presbytery adheres to the Confession of Faith and to a capella psalm singing in public worship in terms of our vows (your Part A). Presbytery notes that Synod 2014 recognised the Southern Presbyterian Church in terms of our Fraternal Relations between Churches Act (Synod 1993, page 95 in 2014 Handbook). This would seem to address points B3 (sharing of minutes) & B4 delegate exchange) and part of B1 (pulpit exchange) in your letter.*

*As regards the balance of B1 (mutual eligibility) and also B2 (access to assessor eldership), we have no objection to the use of the King James Version in the pulpit where the Session judges this to be for edification and would respect this. However, your present constitution appears to commit you to support this practice by argumentation that is not a requirement in the PCEA. We therefore think there are barriers to mutual eligibility and access to assessor eldership needs further discussion and clarification.*

*We look forward to having Rev Ian Hall with us at Synod in May when there will be opportunity for interaction and discussion'.*

## **2. CHURCHES WITH WHOM WE HAVE CONTACT.**

**2:1 The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. (EPCA).** Nothing to report.

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

We look forward to welcoming Rev. Geoff Van Schie, the ecumenical Secretary of the CRCA, who will report and extend greetings. We are thankful that we have been able to clarify and make repairs to our relationship with the CRCA. We have appointed Rev. Sjirk Bajema as our representative to attend the Synod of the CRCA which is planned to be held in Gosnells, WA, from 18-23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015.

**2:3 The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA).**

We have received an invitation from the URCNA to enter into ‘Ecclesiastical Contact with a view to eventually entering into Ecclesiastical Fellowship.’ This is a church which is about twenty years old; formed as a result of the liberalism in the CRCNA; consisting now of more than 110 congregations across North America. To discover more about the URCNA visit their website: [www.urchna.org](http://www.urchna.org)

**3.1 The International Conference of Reformed Churches.**

The ICRC website has been extensively revamped and expanded. Go to [www.icrconline.com](http://www.icrconline.com) and have a look.

The revised Constitution which was discussed and amended at the Cardiff meeting of the Conference (2013) needs to be adopted by member churches before it can go into effect. You can find it on the website; click on ‘About us’; then click on the Constitution section and you will find a document with the proposed changes, as well as one which shows the suggested deletions and the proposed deletions. (See appendix 2).

A regional European Conference was held in 2014; and an Asia – Pacific conference is planned to be held in October 13-16 in Anyang, a suburb of Seoul, South Korea. Dr. Rowland Ward is the Convener of the Regional Conferences Committee. The topics and speakers are as follows: ‘The Sacraments’ by Dr. Mohan Chako (RPC India). ‘Baptism’ by Rev. Dirk van Garderen (RCNZ). ‘The Lord’s Supper’ by Haemoo Yoo (PCKK). While the host church provides accommodation for the Conference; each individual participant is responsible for their own travel expenses.

The next General Conference of the ICRC is planned to meet in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 2017.

### **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. Synod approves the idea of the periodical Lux Mundi becoming a publication of the ICRC and published on line.
3. Synod notes with approval the discussions which the Southern Presbytery have had with the Southern Presbyterian Church.
4. Synod welcomes the invitation from the United Reformed Churches in North America to enter into ‘Ecclesiastical Contact’ and resolves to extend Fraternal Relations to the URCNA in terms of our Act of Synod 1993.
5. Synod approves the constitution of the ICRC as amended in 2013.

## Appendix 1. Generale Synode van de Gereformeerde kerken in Nederland.

Esteemed brothers and sisters in our Lord,

Greetings in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of kings on earth (Revelation 1:5)! In 2014 the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in The Netherlands met together as a General Synod. One of its decisions reads as follows: to maintain relations with the sister-churches listed below, in accordance with the rules adopted for the purpose (General Synod Ommen 1993, Article 68, 1, 2), in accordance with the agreements separately made with each of these churches, to the end that we may learn from one another, support each other, and together praise the name of Christ. (There then follows a list of churches, including the name of your church).

We would also like to inform you about a number of decisions taken by this Synod.

a. A new Church Order has been adopted. After preparation at previous Synods, “Church Order 2014” was agreed upon; it is to be in effect starting July 1, 2015. The Dutch text can be found at [www.gkv.nl](http://www.gkv.nl)

b. The report of the Committee “M/W (Men and Women) in the Church” has evoked many reactions, both from voices within the Reformed Churches (Lib.) and from foreign sister-churches. Many critical questions were also asked at the Synod. As a result, the Synod almost unanimously did **not** agree with the argumentation of this report. The synod did not adopt the view that, while Paul’s words clearly opposed against equality of man and woman, yet his intention (namely, the missionary progress of the gospel) should in our time lead to an exactly opposite conclusion. This decision is a clear rejection of a proposed line of reasoning. It is, importantly, no general statement about hermeneutics. The discussion about hermeneutical principles guiding the understanding of Scripture will continue, both in the churches and at the Theological University.

In a different context, the Synod only made the following statement: *no hermeneutics is legitimate in which the context of the Bible or the context of the modern reader either (1) plays no role, or (2) plays an autonomous role in the exposition and application of texts.* In this way the Synod intended to indicate the boundaries within which the discussion ought to take place. The rejection of the report does not mean, however, that the Synod declared that its authors crossed these boundaries.

The Synod also declared that *the view that, besides men, women may also serve in the ecclesiastical offices must be open for free debate, provided that arguments are based on Scripture.* In this declaration, the Synod acknowledges that the clear instructions which the Holy Spirit gave through the apostle Paul do not speak directly about the church offices as we, in line with the Reformation, implement them today. There is an application move involved. That application move must be open for discussion, provided that the authority of Scripture is acknowledged and arguments are derived from the Scripture. The committee report attempted to do this; however, the Synod did not agree with the reasoning in that report.

Once again the Synod appointed committees to deal with these matters. The mandate calls for reflection about the structure of the church offices, on the basis of a recognition that our three church offices (minister, elder, and deacon), and their current implementation, are not directly derived from Scripture. Is it possible to shape the offices in such a way that justice is done to Scripture, while allowing room for institutional ministry by women? And if so, what are the Scriptural boundaries of that ministry? In the following years we hope to find answers to such questions. The Synod decision emphasizes that we will inform the sister-churches concerning these decisions and plans, both in The Netherlands and abroad, and ask them for advice.

By sending you this letter, we are hereby asking for your response and advice about these matters. We look forward sincerely to hearing from you!

c. The Synod of Ede of 2014 gratefully decided to continue talks with the Netherlands Reformed Churches (Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (NGK)). Previous Synods rightfully viewed the use of Scripture in the NGK report concerning female officers and ministers (VOP report 2004) as an obstacle to ecclesiastical unity. For six years the hermeneutics of this report were discussed in great depth. These discussions have led to agreement about the authority and use of the Holy Scripture.

Based on that agreement, criticism about the use of Scripture in the VOP report was also expressed at the last NGK National Assembly (their equivalent of a General Synod). The Synod of Ede declared that there are no more obstacles in this area. The next phase of the process is now to be entered: that is, talks between the delegated committees with the aim of reaching ecclesiastical unity at the national level. For a good understanding of these decisions, please take note of the document “Second Agreement” concerning hermeneutics. The Dutch text of this note, together with the Dutch text of the decisions, is included as an attachment.

d. With thankfulness to the Lord we would like to inform you about the decision of our Synod to engage in a sister-church relation with the Presbyterian Church of Uganda and the Christian Reformed Church of Sri Lanka. We praise the Lord, who unites us across the world in the unity of the Reformed Confession!

We would like to close this letter in the following way: We deeply hope that we may be able to continue to learn from each other as sister-churches, support one another, and praise Christ’s name together! May the Lord bless our fellowship in Him!

Cordial greetings in the Lord, on behalf of the synod,

Rev. R.J. Vreugdenhil  
Correspondence secretary

**Appendix 2. As Proposed to the Member Churches by ICRC 2013**  
**PROPOSED CONSTITUTION of the**  
**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES**  
(Showing amendments in Context).

**CONSTITUTION**

**I. NAME**

The name of the Conference shall be The International Conference of Reformed Churches (“ICRC”).

**II. BASIS**

The basis of the Conference shall be the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity (the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort) and the Westminster Standards (the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms).

**III. PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Conference shall be:

1. To express and promote the unity of faith that the Member Churches have in Christ;
2. To encourage the fullest ecclesiastical fellowship among the Member Churches;
3. To facilitate and promote cooperation among the Member Churches in such areas as missions, theological education, and ministries of mercy;
4. To study the common problems and issues that confront the Member Churches;
5. To present a Reformed testimony to the world.

**IV. MEMBERSHIP**

1. The Conference was duly constituted on October 26, 1982, by delegates from the eight founding churches, having been previously authorized to do so by their major assemblies. A list of past and present members of the Conference shall be maintained among the Conference’s documents.
2. Churches eligible for membership are those which:
  - a. faithfully adhere to the Reformed Faith stated in the confessional documents listed in the Basis, and whose confessional standards agree with the said Reformed Faith;
  - b. have complied with the applicable *Regulations* regarding applications for membership;
  - c. are not members of any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis.
3. Admission to membership in the Conference shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the Member Churches, each Member Church having one vote.
4. Suspension or termination of membership in the Conference shall be by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the Member Churches, each Member Church having one vote, whenever the Conference concludes that the Member Church, in its doctrine and/or practice (which includes the ordination of persons to the offices of minister or ruling elder contrary to the rule prescribed in Scripture, *cf., Belgic Confession*, Article 30), is no longer in agreement with the Basis; removal of suspension shall also be by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the Member Churches, each Member Church

having one vote. A proposal to suspend, terminate, or remove the suspension of the membership of a Member Church may be initiated only by the major assembly of a Member Church. A suspended Member Church may send Delegates to meetings of the Conference but shall not vote.

5. When a Member Church fails to send at least one Delegate to three consecutive meetings of the Conference, its membership shall be automatically terminated as of close of the third such meeting, unless during that meeting the Conference determines by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the member Churches, each Member Church having one vote, that there are good and sufficient grounds for such failure.

## **V. NATURE AND EXTENT OF AUTHORITY**

It is understood that the Conference is not a synodical, classical, or presbyterial assembly, and therefore all actions and decisions of the Conference, other than those with respect to a church's membership in the Conference (*Constitution*, IV), are advisory in character and may in no way curtail, restrict, or intrude into the exercise of the jurisdiction or authority given to the governing assemblies of the Member Churches by Jesus Christ, the King and Head of the Church.

## **VI. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

This *Constitution* may be amended by two-thirds majority vote of the major assemblies of the Member Churches eligible to vote, such amendment having been proposed to the Member Churches by a two-thirds majority vote of the delegations of the Member Churches present and eligible to vote, each Member Church having one vote. An amendment, as proposed to the Member Churches, is not amendable. A proposal to amend the *Constitution* may be initiated only by the major assembly of a Member Church eligible to vote, or by a Committee of the Conference, and shall be sent to the Corresponding Secretary not later than two years before the meeting of the Conference.

# SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

R Tso (Convener 2014), Messrs P. Smith, J Audet, D Ramsay

## A: SUPERANNUATION FUND

**1. Membership:** There were no changes in membership occurred in 2014.

### Current members -

Name	Service from	Total service at 31.12.14	Year 75
J.A.McCallum	28.06.1985	29 y 6m	2017
T.I.Leggott	11.03.1989	25 y 9m	2024
D.K.Muldoon	29.11.2002	12 y 1m	2027
J.A.Scheepers	15.02.2012	2 y 10m	2029
G.D.Ball	01.12.1997	17 y 1m	2030
S. Bajema	17.01.2009	5 y 11m	2033
T.W.Yoa	09.05.2006	8 y 7m	2034
D.P.Smith	16.11.2001	09.83 w/c	2034
J.D.Klazinga	20.05.2010	4 y 7m	2039
D.J.Kerridge	25.11.2010	4 y 1m	2045
A.A.Miranda	01.12.2009	5 y 1m	2047
Robin Tso	12.07.2013	1 y 5m	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

Superannuation Levy on congregations: The Superannuation Levy on congregations is 14.5% of the Minimum Stipend - base levy of 5.00% plus 9.50% Government Superannuation Guarantee (SG).

Vacant charges are to pay the base levy of 5.00% only.

### Superannuation Support Fund & Superannuation Levy Account:

a. The Superannuation Support Fund (SSF) Capital Account balance as at 31/12/14 was \$215,384.95. This was an increase of \$3090.95 (1.4% on the 2013 balance) The fund arises from specific legacies and forfeited benefits under earlier provisions that are no longer existing. The intention of the fund is to support the levy account from time to time.

The SSF Working Account balance as at 31/12/14 was \$8,458 after providing \$9,132 for Rev TI Leggott's superannuation contributions.

b. The Superannuation Levy Account balance as at 31/12/14 was \$11,300 after paying contributions totalling \$78,071 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 9.5% 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 2021	10
4	Year starting on 1 July 2022	10.5
5	Year starting on 1 July 2023	11
6	Year starting on 1 July 2024	11.5
7	Year starting on or after 1 July 2025	12

The effect will be that from the year beginning 1 July 2021 the existing 10% we pay for the first three years will begin to rise. This is a change that has taken place under the current government.

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.

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.

Performance: The return on HESTA Core Fund for twelve months ending 30/6/14 was 13.23%. Historical performance results to 30<sup>th</sup> June have been 9.8%pa over the past 5 years.

Outlook: It is considered prospects for this financial year, 2014/2015, are sound because interest rates are likely to remain at historically low levels, forcing yield-seeking investors to retain and even add to their share and property holdings. Balanced and growth superannuation investors are likely to continue to receive solid returns on their overseas holdings of shares and property, even if the dollar remains at or above its recent levels. The returns available to cash and fixed interest investors are the only bleak spot in investment prospects. Low interest rates overseas are providing cheap sources of funding for our major banks, resulting in a sharp fall in the term deposit rates offered locally.

**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 Committee anticipates a review of some of the Superannuation policies in the coming year.

#### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:**

1. The Superannuation Levy on congregations be reviewed annually on 1<sup>st</sup> July and adjustment made where necessary in terms of the Handbook of Practice & Procedure – Superannuation Committee Section B.1. The figures will be advised by the Committee in due time.

2. 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.

3. Synod request Sessions and Deacons' Courts to keep a close eye on ministers' leave entitlements to ensure ministers do not suffer burn out through failure to take it, and that Presbyteries keep this in mind in the annual examination of records to ensure outstanding entitlement is minuted at least once a year.

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **(Incorporating General Treasurer's Report)**

Committee members: AH Steel (Convener), J Audet, 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 (\$989 per week) and basis of review of the minimum stipend be continued.

#### **2. Stipend Relief**

No requests for Stipend Relief for 2015/16 were received

#### **3. The Capital Assistance Fund**

Total funds of \$126,944 excluding \$7,300 held on deposit, increased by \$4,761 (4%) for year ending 31/12/14 from interest received, share dividends and revaluations and the annual \$50 rent from St Georges Deacons' Court. No donations were received.

##### **Loans –**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2014 no loans were outstanding.

However, at the time of writing (17/3/15) a copy of an application for a Car loan of \$15,000 sent to the Synod Clerk by the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court was received. The loan sought is to assist in the purchase of a larger vehicle for the Minister and his family. Repayments of \$300 per month are offered which will repay the loan in approximately four years or sooner from donations by the congregation to a *Car Replacement Fund* appeal to be opened.

The Committee is satisfied the loan sought meets the requirements of The Capital Assistance Fund, is viable and recommends Synod's approval on a no interest basis.

#### **4. Estimates (Major Working Funds Receipts/Payments)**

Estimates have been made for the major working funds to 31/12/15 – See Appendix "A"

### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES**

1. We record our thanks to God for the sufficiency of temporal provisions for the church since last Synod.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2015/2016 be made on 1<sup>st</sup> January and 1<sup>st</sup> 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. An application by the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court for a loan of \$15,000 from The Capital Assistance Fund be approved to assist in the purchase of a larger motor vehicle for the minister and his family. Repayment to be at least \$300 per month (approximately four years) with no interest to be charged

## GENERAL TREASURER

### 1. Financial Needs

All financial needs of the Synod were adequately provided for during 2014 with total funds decreasing by \$18,230 (1%) to \$1,309,824 after allowing for \$263,827 held on behalf of others - congregations etc.

Net changes occurred in:

Capital Funds	\$ ( 6,951)
Working Funds	\$ (11,279)
	-----
Net Decrease in Funds	\$ (18,230)
	=====

The main contributing factor to the net decrease in funds was the decrease (33%) in givings to Synod Working Funds by Congregations.

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

Contributions of \$30,834 by congregations to Synod Funds during 2014 decreased by \$15,027 (33%). Givings of \$11,895 to other Specified Missions decreased by \$229 (2%). Refer to the Congregational Contributions Summary at back of the Financial Statements and Note 5 on page 5 for further detail.

### 3. Synod General Working Funds

Synod 2014 resolved "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."

When advising Synod Costs to Deacons' Court they were invited to make a contribution to the Synod General Working Fund as it was anticipated \$3,500 would be needed for administration costs to 31/12/14. Only half of the Courts responded so that by the end of October the Fund was overdrawn \$308. A second invitation was made on 21<sup>st</sup> November and as a consequence further funds were received resulting in a credit balance of \$1,677 as at 31<sup>st</sup> December.

For the year ending 31/12/15 it is estimated givings of \$3,500 will be required to meet ongoing administration costs of Synod. Deacons' Courts are therefore again requested to make a contribution to this need when reimbursing Synod for the cost of Synod 2015.

### 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. As Mr Partlett has retired from full time practice but indicated he is willing to continue auditing the Synod accounts it is recommended the thanks of Synod be conveyed to him for his services since 1993.

## PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

Synod convey its thanks and appreciation to Mr Richard W Partlett, A.C.A. for his services as Synod auditor for the past 22 years and his willingness to continue to carry out the annual audit of Synod accounts since retiring from full time practice.

**FINANCE COMMITTEE - APPENDIX "A"**

**BUDGET - SYNOD MAJOR WORKING FUNDS  
for twelve months ending 31/12/15**

Fund	Balance as at 31/12/2014	Estimated Income Int/Divnds to 12/15	Estimated Givings & Other	Estimated Expenditure to 12/15	Estimated Surplus (Deficit)	Estimated Balance 31/12/15	Estimated Deficit Balances 31/12/15
Capital Assistance Fund	126,944	4,000	50		4,050	130,994	
Church Extension	1,151	0	100	70	30	1,181	
Stipend Relief	12,371	3,000	300	0	3,300	15,671	
Missions - General	7,283	14,000	12,000	5,900	20,100	27,383	
Missions - (Legg/AIM)	0		12,000	40,400	-28,400	-28,400	-28,400
Missions - (DAABeq)	21,751	550	0	0	550	22,301	
Miss Relief (Equities)	229,361	0	0	0	0	229,361	
Miss Rel (Working Fnd)	8,543	16,000	0	50,900	-34,900	-26,357	-26,357
Training of Ministry	111,645	7,500	600	100	8,000	119,645	
Youth & Fellowship	11,321	2,000	600	2,500	100	11,421	
General Funds	1,677	1,000	3,500	4,800	-300	1,377	

Notes:

- The estimated deficit of \$28,400 in Missions (Leg/AIM) as at 31/12/15 to be covered by:

Missions General	27,383
Missions (DA Anderson Bequest)	22,301
	49,684
Less: Missions (Leggott/AIM)	-28,400
Net Estimated balance of Missions Wkg Funds as at 31/12/15 \$	21,284
- A Sale of equity investments of say \$35,000 will cover the estimated deficit of \$28,800 in Missions Relief (Working Funds)
- Deacons' Courts are asked to make a contribution to Synod General funds to provide for the estimated givings of \$3,500 to meet administration expenses in 2015.

**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 2014.

**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. No deeds were lodged and only one uplifted from the box during 2014:

- 21/05/14 - Cert of Title Id 14/1187874 – Sale Lot 15 Winter Street, Tinonee

**Common Seal Applications:** Applications during 2014 were:

No.	Date	Document Executed
236	6/05/14	Contract - Sale lot 15 Winter Street Tinonee (CT Id 14/1187874)

**Investments: Specified Capital Funds - Review of Results as at 31/12/14**

**Diversification:**

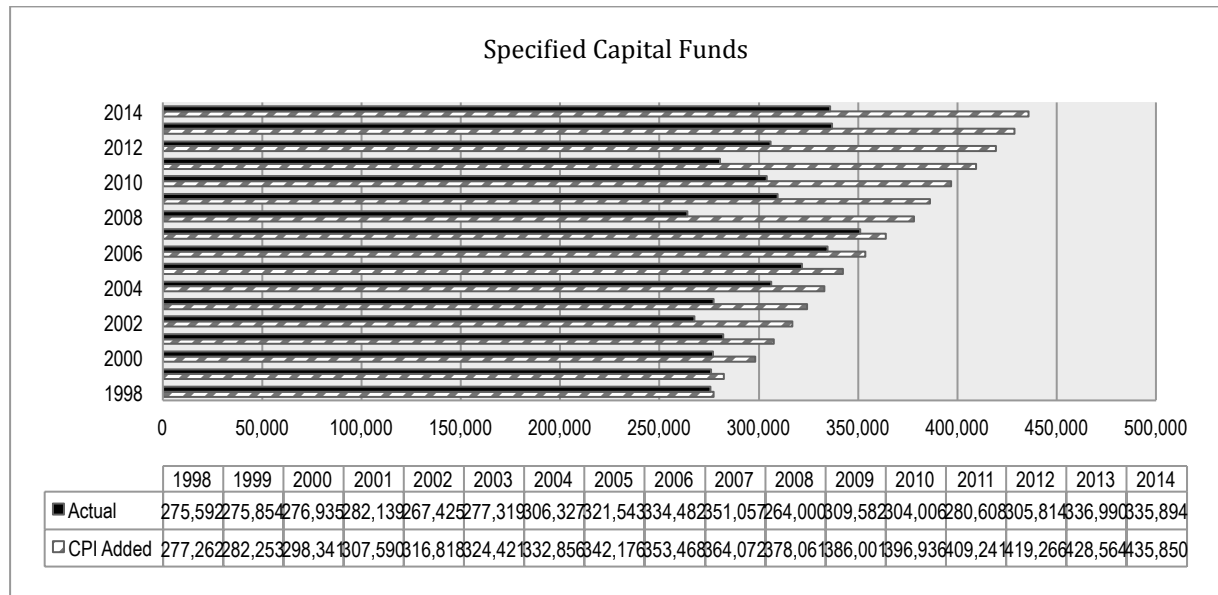
Actual as at 31/12/14		Asset Class	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage		Benchmark	Range
148,484	44%	Cash (Banks)	5%	5% - 10%
0	0%	1 <sup>st</sup> Regd Mtges	30%	20% - 40%
0	0%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
187,409	56%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
335,893	100%		100%	

No change in the spread of investments during 2014 was made.

**Return:**

**Growth –**

Total Trust Funds (Specified Capital Funds) decreased by \$1,096 (-0.33%) against a Target of 1.7% (CPI). “Real value” (keeping up with inflation) was not therefore achieved in 2014. When CPI is taken into account since 1998 total Capital Funds lag behind by \$99,956 (22%) as at 31/12/14. This shortfall results mainly from the effects of the GFC in 2008, however the gap has been gradually reducing. Refer to graph below.



**Income –** Income of \$19,131 represented a return of 5.68% against a Target of 3.50% (Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 2.50% 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 only held in Banks and Equities, mostly the financial sector.

*Investment Strategy Objectives* – not achieved in *Growth* (-0.33%) but exceeded (2.18%) in *Income*.

**Proposed Deliverances:** Nil.

**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 OF THE SYNOD OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA  
PROPERTY REGISTER 31 DECEMBER 2014**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Acquired Title Ref.</u>	<u>Approx. Land Area m2</u>	<u>Description of improvements</u>
<b><u>St Georges'</u></b>			
1859	3/1134880*	600	Church 201A Castlereagh Street, <b>Sydney</b> . Church approx. 400m2 built 1860
1961	CT3842/154	727	Manse 15 Bay Road, <b>Waverton</b> . Approx 300m2 built ca. 1928.
1970	CT11280/213	1853	3 Beaconsfield Pde, <b>Lindfield</b> . 21 x 1BR retirement units built 1977 leased to ST G's Deacons' Court to 30/9/2027 @ \$50pa
1984	CT 4067/46	1207	3a Beaconsfield Pde, <b>Lindfield</b> . Old timber dwg, tenanted
<b><u>Mt Druitt</u></b>			
1985	CT 2669/192	1011	Church, 115 Mt Druitt Road (1916) 97m2 (formerly C of E) Fibro hall iron roof (1930s) 150m2 & toilet block
1985	CT 10628/13	1031	Manse, 111 Mt Druitt Road cnr Narelle, built 1986 (adjoins church)
<b><u>Hunter/Barrington</u></b>			
1865	2/16/758871*	2023	Church built in timber 1905 approx 112m2, plus metal hall/facilities 80m2; Timber manse built 1952 (200m2) 155 Adelaide Street, <b>Raymond Terrace</b>
1927	101/1122138^	1773	Timber church (1935), Lot 6 Barrington Road, <b>Barrington</b> 1935
1927	102/1122138^	2276	vacant land at rear of <b>Barrington</b> church
2003	CT B/382231	303.5	Hardiplank cottage 100m2, 1 Queens Ave., <b>Cardiff</b>
2003	CT1008-176	607	Brick church (1925) 168m2; timber hall (1961) 180m2, 3 Queens Ave [Lots 8 & 9 in DP 2472]
<b><u>Manning</u></b>			
1878	12/1062667	805	Brick Church cnr Manchester & Winter Sts, <b>Tinonee</b> (1880) (used by AIM).
1878	11/1062667	805	vacant land 805m2 Manchester St (adjoins church) Tinonee
1878	14/1187874 +	805	vacant land 805m2 Manchester St, Tinonee
1878	16/1187874 +	805	vacant land 805m2 Winter St, Tinonee
1878	17/1187874 +	3224	vacant land 3,224m2 Winter St, Tinonee
1907	CT 1781/195	?700	Brick church, 62 High Street, <b>Taree</b> built 1977, 310m2
2011	255/41241	4280	Vacant land, 15 Cedar Party Road, Taree
1991	37/252012	?716	BV manse, 9 Craiglea Close, Taree
<b><u>Hastings River</u></b>			
1913	12/1168214* hall	4161	Brick Church Campbell Street, <b>Wauchope</b> 1918 & WC, 108m2; timber built 1955, 150m2.
193?	CT 10555/249	1011	Timber church <b>Kindee</b> built 1939, 54m2
1960?	CT 14210/104	1357	Timber hall Table Street, <b>Port Macquarie</b> built 1963, 120m2
2012	3/1167842	1133	Manse 4BR (built 2012) 170m2 & DLUG, 9 Bindi Close, <b>Crosslands</b> ; tenanted
<b><u>Armidale</u></b>			
1993	3/837007	1885	Brick Church & Manse complex built ca 1958, 35 Kirkwood Street
<b><u>Northern Rivers</u></b>			
1863	11/853183	4050	Brick Church (1864) 140m2, timber former manse (1916) 158m2, plus Garages – 8-10 & rear of 12 Warf Street, <b>Macleay</b> (cnr River Street)
1870	25/778063	3648	Brick church 1871, 120m2; Timber manse 1931, 158m2 - 136 Fry Street, <b>Grafton</b>
1972	CT 11916/173	791	Brick Church/hall built 1972, 175m2, cnr Philip & Hayes Sts, <b>Goonellebah</b>
1973	CT11916/175	835	Brick veneer manse built 1975, 160m2, 3 Hayes Street, <b>Goonellebah</b>

\* = qualified title for 6 or 12 years from issue of Torrens title 31/12/2008 (replacing old system title)

^ = qualified title for 6 or 12 years from issue of Torrens title 07/04/2008

+ = all lots currently on 14/1187874

The PCEA interest in Anna Bay (CT4589 fol 79) is not shown.

**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

**1. Property Holdings**

The last schedule of real property was provided in 1998. The following is the current list.

**SCHEDULE OF REAL PROPERTY AS AT 31.12.2014**

<b>CT &amp; Folio ref</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Land m2</b>	<b>Improvements</b>
<b>VICTORIA</b>			
<b>Geelong Congregation, Newcomb (City of Greater Geelong)</b>			
8191/599	12 Coppards Rd, Newcomb	4,267	BV dwg 280m2 built 1968, bought 1989 \$228,000; renovated 2006; Church & hall 316m2 built 1991; 15 car spaces and ex- tennis court. [Title not easily sub-dividable.] All-up cost \$529,000 1990/91
<b>Knox Congregation, Wantirna (City of Knox)</b>			
9706/731	358 Mountain Hwy, Wantirna	1,441	Brick church 245m2 built 1987; 20 car spaces; air con 2000; land purchased 1986. - \$73,919. All-up cost 1986/87 \$214,000
9613/915	360 Mountain Hwy, Wantirna	726	BV dwg 208m2 plus DLUG built 1987 extended 1997; land purchased 1986 \$36,469. All-up cost 1986/1997 \$161,000
8458/720	10 Bentley Street, Wantirna	979	Three x 2BR units totalling 265m2 plus single garages built 2007; land purchased 2004 - \$260,000. [Capable of strata sub-division.] All-up cost 2004/07 \$628,538
<b>Narre Warren Congregation, Narre Warren (City of Casey)</b>			
9542/544	108 Prospect Hill Road	1,901	Brick Church 267m2 built 1990, air con, 29 car spaces; land purchased 1987 – \$75,840. All-up cost 1987/90 \$302,000
<b>All Nations Congregation, Mulgrave (City of Monash)</b>			
10290/987	91 Tiverton Drive	2,835	BV church & hall 273m2 1972; virtually rebuilt 1997; extended to 407m2 after purchase 2009; 29 asphalt car spaces. [Only 870m2 free of power line easement.] All-up cost 2009 \$395,000
<b>Carrum Downs Congregation (City of Frankston)</b>			
7990/147	8 William Road	1420	Old fibro cottage [future church site] All up cost 2014 \$417,000
<b>TASMANIA</b>			
<b>Ulverstone Congregation (Central Coast Council)</b>			
3468/087	13 Leven Street	559	BV church 160m2 built 1977; land purchased 1975 \$2,000
3587/002			All-up cost 1975/79 \$22,500

All properties on Torrens title, free of debt and adequately insured. Council valuation [CV] of land and improvements as at 1 January 2014, is about \$4 million which is generally very conservative.

## 2. Bequests

These are to be reported in line with Handbook 3.23 which includes specimen forms of bequest. 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, particular 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. Student Bonds/Agreements

TVIC executes these as since there is no power to do so under the NSW Act until it is amended.

### BOND AGREEMENTS

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

Duncan Hickey 9/12/2012

### LOAN AGREEMENT

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

Mr Boehret has advised that he is not pursuing a call at this time and has resigned as an elder. He is very mindful of his obligation to the church and expects to discharge them in the current year.

## 4. Contents of Deedbox

On 10/9/2013 the Clerk and Treasurer certified all title deeds were in the TVIC Custody Packet at the NAB Eastwood Branch (163 Rowe Street) and also the Bonds for Mr Boehret. The Loan agreement for Mr Boehret and the Bond agreement for Mr Duncan Hickey were subsequently placed in the TVIC deed box. The title for the new Carrum Downs property has been placed in the Custody Packet.

## 5. Common Seal application during 2014

<i>No</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>By whom</i>	<i>Details</i>	<i>On behalf of</i>
107	07/01/14	RSW/AHS	CPA & CFX units moved from Issuer to CHESS register	Synod
108	23/06/14	RSW/TIL	Certification re Westpac Broking Cash Investment Ac	Knox
109	24/10/14	RSW/TIL	Purchase of 8 William Road, Carrum Downs	Knox
110	08/10/14	RSW/TIL	Authority for settlement of building dispute	Knox

Note: The building dispute relates to the claim by the Knox congregation against the builder contracted to convert the Glen Huntly church to five units. It was necessary to terminate this contract 20.12.2011 and employ another builder who satisfactorily completed the work. The claim is being pursued through the Victorian Civil and Administrative tribunal and is expected to settle this year.

## 6. Investments

### 6.1 General

Three congregations plus TVIC for Synod hold shares in listed Companies, while Geelong sold the last of their shares in October 2012 to fund on-going expenses. 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.

### 6.2 Congregational investments

Deacons' Courts must seek at all times to deal with investments in line with the relevant 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 Victoria 1958 is available on line and sections 6 and 8 are of particular relevance. The parallel sections in the New South Wales Trustee Act 1925 are 14A and 14C, and under the Queensland Trusts Act 1973 are 22 and 24. [Tasmanian property is held under the Victorian Act but the provisions are parallel in Tasmania (sections 7 & 8 of the Trustee Act 1898).] We have a proposal to set some parameters as the subject has not been entirely clear to all, and it includes at point 6a to 6o the substance of the Trustee Acts just referred to. It also has the approval of the majority of

the NSW trustees and has been worded so as to apply to all Deacons' Courts. At the present time interest rates are so low that equity investment for long term funds is increasingly attractive, but prudence is always necessary. We trust the proposed deliverance will assist Deacons' Courts and their advisors. It needs to be remembered that the trust bodies are bare or custodian trustees holding for the congregations who's Deacons' Courts have the management and chief responsibility. We have no desire for the trust bodies to intrude unnecessarily. [Refer also the Law & Advisory Report for explanation of 'bare trustees'.]

### 6.3 Synod investments

TVIC is responsible for investments for Synod itself according to the Strategy adopted by Synod in 2002 as amended in 2014. Allocations as approved 2014 were:

Asset Class	Benchmark	Range
Cash/mortgages/debentures	25%	20-35%
Shares/units	75%	65-80%

As at 31/12/2014 Shares were -2.2%, and cash +4.6 %. The year 2015 has begun very positively. [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 suitability of allocation will be kept under review as, particularly when interest rates rise or franking credits are cut back, it may be appropriate to propose a change.

### 7 ACNC and transparency of TVIC as distinct entity

A recent announcement from the minister is that the proposed abolition of the Australian Charities and Not-for-Profit Commission is not a high priority. It is likely to continue as is although one cannot be certain at this point. It may be that TVIC will at some point be required to submit accounts as a distinct legal entity. Accordingly, as foreshadowed in last year's report, steps are being taken to adjust the layout of our published accounts a little so that TVIC funds can instantly be seen by Synod members separately from those held by the NSW Trust Corporation, and provided to the ACNC or other authority if required.

### PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. The Synod commend giving by bequest to our people.
2. The responsibility of investing congregational investment funds belongs to Deacons' Court subject to the relevant Church Property Act, the civil law relating to trust funds and any specific Synod legislation. Funds held in banks and other Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions usually do not require the involvement of the Trust Corporation, but on-line accounts for the purchase of shares must be opened by the relevant Trust Corporation in its name with an appropriate designation to the particular congregation, and with at least two persons authorized to operate it, one usually being a member of the trust corporation and all being subject to the lawful direction of the Deacons' Court..

The following principles are to be followed in the management of church funds held by congregations:

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.
2. All other investment funds not in real estate and all current funds should be held in Authorised Deposit-taking Institutions according to the circumstances as determined by the Deacons' Court from time to time.
3. 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 relevant Trust Corporation 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.
4. The primary focus for equity investment in the absence of real estate is listed dividend-paying shares in the ASX200, including listed readily tradeable investment companies of proven

performance and sound management. Review of the portfolio by Deacons' Courts should occur regularly and in any case at least once a year.

5. Separate bequests or other trusts held under the Victorian Property Act should be invested as a Common Fund but accurate records of each trust must be kept. Manse and other capital funds must not be applied for purposes inconsistent with the trust (eg. must not be expended for stipend).

6. Deacons' Courts: Deacons' Courts must exercise the care, diligence and skill that a prudent person would exercise in managing the affairs of other persons, and may obtain and consider independent and impartial advice reasonably required for the investment of trust funds or the management of the investment from a person whom the Deacons' Court reasonably believes to be competent to give the advice; and pay out of trust funds the reasonable costs of obtaining the advice. In making and monitoring investments a Deacons' Court must, so far as they are appropriate to the circumstances of the trust, have regard to—

- a. the purposes of the funds and the needs and circumstances of those persons or objects for which the funds are held; and
- b. the desirability of diversifying trust investments to spread risk; and
- c. the nature of and risk associated with existing trust investments and other trust property; and
- d. the need to maintain the real value of the capital or income of the trust; and
- e. the risk of capital or income loss or reduction in value; and
- f. the potential for increase in the capital value; and
- g. the likely income return and the timing of income return; and
- h. the length of the term of the proposed investment; and
- i. the probable duration of the fund if the capital sum may lawfully be expended; and
- j. the liquidity and marketability of the proposed investment during, and on the completion of, the term of the proposed investment; and
- k. the aggregate value of the funds held for the particular purpose; and
- l. the effect of the proposed investment in relation to any tax liability which may result; and
- m. the likelihood of inflation affecting the value of the proposed investment and other funds held for the same purpose; and
- n. the costs (including commissions, fees, charges and duties payable) of making the proposed investment; and
- o. the results of a review not less than once a year of existing trust investments and strategy

7. Presbyteries

- a. Presbyteries, among their other responsibilities, are to ensure congregational annual financial statements show the basis of valuation of investments.

8. Trust Corporation

- a. The relevant Trust Corporation has the right to call for reports from to time (at least once a year), and to provide guidance, as well as direction where appropriate.

9. This Act may be cited as 'Investment of Congregational Funds Act 2015'.

3. Synod assure Mr Boehret of its interest and prayers for his future usefulness in the Lord's service, and notes his intention to meet the obligations of his Loan and Bond agreement by the close of 2015.



**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

18th March, 2015

Clerk of Synod  
Synod of Eastern Australia

Dear Trevor,

Below is the extract Minute from the Ordinary Meeting of Northern Presbytery concerning, inter alia, the remit from Law and Advisory Committee on the Barrier Act.

Extract Minute from Ordinary Meeting, 3rd October, 2014:

“Item C2 Remit from Synod re Barrier Act Procedure. It was moved, seconded and carried to disapprove the remit”.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

David Kerridge  
Clerk of Northern Presbytery



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**SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY**  
**PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

CLERK: REV DR ROWLAND S. WARD

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

12 August 2014

Clerk  
Synod of Eastern Australia  
Via email

Dear Trevor,

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 9 August 2014, *inter alia*,

**4. Remit from Synod re Barrier Act** (refer 2014 Synod reports & Minutes 2014.18)

The Court took up the remits from Synod with regard to (a) the amendment of the Barrier Act 1697 by deleting the now ambiguous word “Constitutions” and replacing it with the word “Laws”; and (b) the summary of procedure in regard to the operation of the Barrier Act in Proposed Deliverance 2 of the Law & Advisory Committee Report 2014, pages 14-15.

It was resolved unanimously (7-0) to approve both remits *simpliciter*.

Extracted from the records of Southern Presbytery by me

Rowland S. Ward  
CLERK

Synod 2015 Correspondence Item 3



*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](mailto:dkmuldoon@hotmail.com)

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

15 October 2014

Dear Sir,

Below are two extract minutes (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery at Raymond Terrace 16 September, 2014. These minutes relate to your letter of 28 June 2014 and Synod 2014 Minutes, 14.17 and 14.18.

EXTRACT MINUTE

**8. Synod Remit re Barrier Act Procedure**

**1. Resolved** that Central Presbytery does **NOT approve** *simpliciter* the proposed amendment to the ACT CONCERNING THE METHOD OF PASSING ACTS OF ASSEMBLY OF GENERAL CONCERN TO THE CHURCH, AND FOR PREVENTING INNOVATIONS (COMMONLY CALLED **THE BARRIER ACT**), enacted by the Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1697 as outlined in Synod 2014 minute 14.17 and transmitted vide Overture from the Synod Clerk dated 20 June 2014.

**2. Resolved** that Central Presbytery does **NOT approve** *simpliciter* the proposed **Summary of Procedure** relating to **the Barrier Act** procedure as set out in the *Law and Advisory Committee report* to Synod 2014 and their proposed deliverance No.2 vide Overture from the Synod Clerk dated 20 June 2014.

Yours

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



*Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia*

**Central Presbytery**

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

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To Clerk of Synod, PCEA

Rev T I Leggott

PO Box 126 Taree 2430

14 March 2015

Dear Sir,

Below is an extract minute (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery at Raymond Terrace on 10 March 2015. This minute relates to an overture from Central Presbytery for Synod approval to sell the Barrington Church Property.

5/3/15 Overture from Hunter Barrington re sale of Barrington Church property

**Resolved** to receive the overture

Overture stated by Mr Steel and discussed

**Resolved** to approve the overture (unanimous)

**Resolved** to amend the overture in the third 'whereas' about pastoral visits, changing 'to continue on a quarterly basis' to 'planned to continue regularly', and to transmit the overture to the Synod for approval or to do otherwise as synod deem best.

**Resolved** to appoint Mr Steel and Rev Tso to state the Overture.

**OVERTURE OF CENTRAL PRESBYTERY**

**Re: Sale of Barrington NSW Church Property**

To: The Synod of Presbyterian Church Eastern Australia appointed to meet at Mount Druitt on 5 May 2015.

**WHEREAS** there are now only four elderly communicant members of the Hunter-Barrington Charge living in the Barrington district, (All reside in the nearby township of Gloucester, two live in retirement/nursing care and only three of them are able to attend services in the Barrington church situated in the small village of Barrington 7km from Gloucester);

**AND WHEREAS** for some years services have only been conducted in the church on a quarterly basis by the minister who resides at Raymond Terrace, or by an elder/former elder in the Newcastle/Anna Bay districts and an Assessor elder from St Georges congregation, Sydney, (The minister conducts three services each Lord's Day, one at Raymond Terrace and two at Cardiff, a southern suburb of Newcastle);

**AND WHEREAS** pastoral visits to the remaining communicant members at Barrington, including the two in retirement/nursing care, have been made by the minister and are planned to continue regularly after the proposed sale of the church property, (He has also liaised with the local minister of the Presbyterian Church of NSW to assist pastorally as required);

**AND WHEREAS** a return car trip from Cardiff to Barrington takes two and three quarter hours (265 kms);

**AND WHEREAS** the Barrington property comprises two lots of approximately 2,000 square metres each, the church on one, the other vacant land, (The property is financially unviable with annual maintenance costs totalling approximately \$4,000 for Council/water rates, electricity, insurance, grounds maintenance etc. and further major expenses on the church building are anticipated in the foreseeable future);

**AND WHEREAS** at the duly constituted annual meeting of the Deacons' Court with the Congregation on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2014 it was unanimously resolved that the Deacons' Court proceed with the sale of the entire Barrington property and request Session to overture Central presbytery to Overture Synod 2015 for their approval:

**NOW THEREFORE** the Session respectfully overtures Central Presbytery to take these premises into consideration and approve transmission of such to Synod 2015 to grant approval for the sale of the entire Barrington property situated in Argyle Street (Lots 101 and 102) Barrington, NSW at market price with the proceeds to be applied to the spread of the gospel in, and general maintenance of, the ministry in the Hunter-Barrington Charge or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom may seem best.

Yours

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



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA  
**Hunter-Barrington Congregation**

PO. Box 30, Raymond Terrace NSW 2324

Rev Robin Tso – Minister  
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 Richard Alley – Clerk  
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10 March 2015

Rev TI Leggott  
 Synod Clerk – PCEA  
 PO Box 126  
 Taree NSW 2430

Dear Trevor,

**re: Hunter-Barrington Congregation Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia  
 Application for Loan of up to \$15,000 from Synod "Capital Assistance Fund"**

At a duly constituted meeting of the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court on 5 March 2015 it was resolved:

*intra alia*

"The Deacons Court was made aware of the need to replace the current church car with a larger one due to the increasing size of the minister's family, following discussion it was agreed to purchase a car similar to a late model Kia Carnival LWB auto 3.5 litre V6 petrol s/wagon. (IK & RA to investigate)

Further it was agreed to assist in financing the purchase by application to the Synod Capital Assistance Fund for a loan of \$15,000, the Court would make repayments of \$300/month and a car replacement fund would be established. (AS)"

We therefore provide the following detail:

**Funding of purchase**

Purchase price for 2<sup>nd</sup> hand vehicle approximately \$22,000

Less:

Trade-in of existing Toyota Corolla, say \$ 7,000

Loan (Capital Assistance Fund) up to - \$15,000

=====

**Term/Repayment**

Repayment of at least \$300 per month are offered which will result in a term of approximately four years (50 months). A *Car Replacement Fund* is to be established to which the congregation will be invited to contribute. The balance of funds in hand at the time of the purchase of a replacement vehicle will also be applied to the funding required.

**General**

The current church vehicle does not provide for three child restrains which will be necessary upon the expected arrival of the minister and his wife's third child in a few months time. Copy of the 2014 Balance Sheet & Financial Statements is enclosed.

Yours faithfully,

Richard Alley  
 Clerk of Deacons' Court  
 cc. Convener Synod Finance Committee