

# The Synod of Eastern Australia



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

**3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016**

## **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 2016

Time	Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> May	Time	Wednesday 4 <sup>th</sup> May	Thursday 5 <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 2016/2017	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 2015.

**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.	07.03.16	Overture From Southern Presbytery Re Stipend Relief
2.	15.03.16	Forwarded from Central Presbytery Petition from Stewart Upton re Anna Bay Union Church Funds
3.	18.03.16	Overture from Northern Presbytery Re Interim Moderator for Hastings
4.	18.03.16	Overture from Northern Presbytery Re Seat on Presbytery for Wes Hanna

**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), S Carswell, A Scheepers, G Hamilton, 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 be taken with the Finance Committee business.
2. That Correspondence Item 2 be taken with the Report from Central Presbytery.
3. That Correspondence Items 3 and 4 be taken with the Report from Northern Presbytery.
4. That Committee structure as noted in the report be adopted.

5. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery  
Central Presbytery  
Southern Presbytery

Rev J McCallum and Knox elder.  
Rev A Miranda and Hastings elder.  
Rev J Klazinga and Manning elder.

## CONGREGATIONAL STATISTICS AS AT 31.12.2015

	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	
	2014	+	-	2015	2014	2015	>4	4-11	12-18	19-64	65+	Total				
<b>Congregation elders/deacons</b>																
Brisbane 4/1	39	-	-	<b>39</b>	50	<b>50</b>	1	16	7	26	8	<b>58</b>	1	4/20	0	
Nthn Rivers-4/3	42	-	-	<b>42</b>	36	<b>39</b>	-	3	2	8	37	<b>50</b>	0	1/3	0	
Hastings 4/1	38	-	-	<b>38</b>	42	<b>51</b>	1	3	2	28	13	<b>47</b>	1	1/1	0	
<b>North P 12/5</b>	<b>119</b>	-	-	<b>119</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6/24</b>	<b>0</b>	
Manning 4/5	43	4	1	<b>46</b>	52	<b>50</b>	1	3	3	21	40	<b>68</b>	1	2/9	0	
Hunter 1/2	41	3	1	<b>43</b>	59	<b>53</b>	6	4	4	24	17	<b>55</b>	2	2/5	11	
St Geo's 3/3	37	-	2	<b>35</b>	61	<b>64</b>	4	4	-	50	17	<b>75</b>	0	2/3	0	
Mt Druitt 3/1	42	1	4	<b>39</b>	50	<b>50</b>	6	16	8	2	6	<b>58</b>	4	3/15	17	
Syd Sth 0/0	8	-	2	<b>6</b>	13	<b>7</b>	-	1	1	6	3	<b>11</b>	0	1/2	0	
<b>Cent P 13/10</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>235</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>267</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10/34</b>	<b>28</b>	
Knox-3/0	30	4	2	<b>32</b>	40	<b>40</b>	1	7	3	22	14	<b>47</b>	1	1/4	14	
All Nations 1/0	60	-	-	<b>60</b>	110	<b>115</b>	25	40	15	85	3	<b>168</b>	18	2/40	10	
Narre W-2/1	42	1	4	<b>39</b>	50	<b>50</b>	1	4	5	29	16	<b>55</b>	0	3/9	0	
Carrum D 0/0	14	2	3	<b>13</b>	15	<b>12</b>	1	0	0	10	5	<b>16</b>	0	0	0	
Geelong-2/0	16*	-	1	<b>15</b>	12	<b>10</b>	0	0	1	2	8	<b>11</b>	0	0	0	
Ulverst-1/1	23	-	2	<b>21</b>	34	<b>34</b>	2	3	4	16	8	<b>33</b>	0	2/7	18	
<b>South P-9/2</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>261</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8/60</b>	<b>42</b>	
<b>TOTALS 33/17</b>	<b>475</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>468</b>	<b>624</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>339</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24/118</b>	<b>70</b>	

Deaths reported: Narre Warren 1, Carrum Downs 1, Geelong 1, Ulverstone 2, St Georges 1,  
Northern Rivers 3, Hawkesbury Nepean 2, Hunter 1, Manning 1 Total: 13

## NORTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Brisbane:** 2015 was another year in which we as the Brisbane congregation of the PCEA could witness to the ongoing mercy of the Lord and his continuing providential care. "I will lift up my eyes to the hills - from whence comes my help? My help *comes* from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to be moved; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep." (Psalm 121:1-4)

**Services:** Two services were held every Lord's Day at our Emma Street building at 10 am and 5 pm, except for the afternoon service on 25 October (cancelled because of the annual combined Reformation Celebration Service), and the two services on 6 December, which were held at Camp Drewe in Lennox Head. Most services were led by Pastor Jim Klazinga. When he was unable to do so, due to holidays or illness, Dr. Wes Hanna would normally lead the morning services, with various elders and visiting ministers leading in the afternoon.

Pastor Klazinga concluded a series of sermons during the afternoon services (begun shortly after he arrived) dealing with texts connected to the teachings of the Westminster Confession, having worked through the whole Confession in order, one or more paragraphs at a time. A few weeks later he began another extended series, during which he is working through the books of the Bible in order, with one to three sermons each on texts that help to summarize the major themes of the books as a whole.

We continue to accommodate a number of our members needing to join with us for worship via their phones.

The Lord's Supper was celebrated five times. We continued the practice of having extra Thanksgiving collections for synodical causes on Lord's Supper Sundays. Of the five 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. We also had a Missions Offering at the church camp.

**Membership:** During 2015, membership remained steady. There was one birth and baptism, but no new communicant members. There were no deaths in the congregation,

**Session:** The congregation continues to be served by the session, with three elders and the pastor participating. A fourth elder, John Anderson, is not expected to again participate in either Session or the Deacons' Court because of his deteriorating condition due to Parkinson's disease. Mr. Ron Lawson served as the representative elder at Presbytery and synod.

**Deacons' Court:** The Deacons' Court has three elders, the pastor, and one deacon participating. The level of weekly offerings is not bad, considering the size of the congregation. But 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:** A number of members, led by Miss Julie Schmidt, gather together for a few minutes before the morning worship services to learn unfamiliar psalm tunes and harmonies.

Sunday-School classes continued to be held each week during the school year after the morning worship services. We give thanks for those leading and participating, for their study and projects, as well as for the outward focus they have. For example, they held a garage sale and raised enough money to sponsor a student at the Mission School in Chhapara, India, for two years.

The minister held a Pastor's Class during the Sunday-School time for young adults too old for Sunday School. During this class participants would discuss the morning sermon, along with confessional statements relating to the theme of the text. Each Sunday 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 Klazinga home and studied the book of Hebrews.

We began to have Spiritual Growth Discussion Groups every other week following the Sunday evening worship service. Males and females would meet separately, with young and old joining together. The men would discuss chapters from the book, "Disciplines of a Godly Man," by Kent Hughes. The women discussed the book, "The Pursuit of Holiness," by Jerry Bridges. The number of members attending our evening services is not too many, but of those who do attend, participation in the post-service Discussion Groups is excellent.

The pastor continued his practice of sending daily text messages to thirty phones, with a brief prayer Bible text, along with prayer requests focusing on the members and activities of the congregation.

**Camp Drewe:** The Annual Family Camp was held at Lennox Head in December. The speaker was Rev. George Ball. He led a number of studies and the Sunday morning and afternoon worship services, all connected to themes from the book of Hebrews. We were blessed again to have members from other PCEA congregations attending.

**Northern Rivers:** We give thanks to God for his continuing care for us as a congregation and the privilege that is ours in having fellowship with and serving Him.

We have 2 services each Lord's Day – Grafton at 9 a.m., Maclean at 11 a.m., 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 6-8 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 2015. Among these were the Rev Donald Morrison, the Rev. S.R. Tamata, the Rev. Samit Mishra, the Rev. Brent Evans and the Rev. R.W. Murray. We are also grateful to Mr. Murray for supplying sermons to the elders when they have been taking services.

The Rev. Brent Evans of the O.P.C accepted an invitation to supply for a period of two months from early July until early September. There was good support in the Congregation for a proposal to call Mr. Evans, but he finally decided that he did not wish this process to continue. We accept the Lord's will in this and are convinced that He is working all things for our good.

There have been no changes to the membership during 2015. The Roll now stands at 42 and our total Church community at about 50.

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, as well as providing for a full time SRE teacher in Maclean. With an annual income in excess of \$100,000 – which goes to supporting the Special Religious Education programme in the High Schools of the N.S.W. North coast – 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 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 continue to be used by the child minding centre – Care-Ring. This arrangement has been formalised by the execution of a Lease Agreement.

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:** In the face of the increasing marginalization of the Church and her witness we give thanks to the Lord that we are still able to worship and live in peace in our land (1 Tim. 2: 1-3).

We have had visits from a number of people on the Lord's Day, and a few new adherents attending, one of whom has participated in a Christianity Explored and then Discipleship Explored Course and is still hungry for more of the Truth. However, we lost a member this year who had to move for work reasons, transferring his membership by disjunction to the Manning Congregation. There were no funerals conducted in the church during 2015, although some members have suffered bereavement. One wedding took place in the Kindee Church building – the first for many years. The bride was the grand-daughter of Mrs Dorothy McKinnon. It was an opportunity to share the Gospel and rejoice in the God-given institution of marriage.

Services in Wauchope continue at 10am and 4pm, with an Adult Bible Class and Sunday School following the morning service (after a morning tea). The Adult Class is continuing their study of the Larger 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 twice in 2015, preceded by a preparatory service and followed by Thanksgiving. The intended third Communion season for the year was cancelled due to the minister breaking his ankle, being incapacitated for two services and thereafter preaching for two more months into 2016 from a chair in front of the pulpit.

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. Increasing repair costs for all our buildings, including the need for work on the church at Wauchope (now Heritage listed locally) may involve a reassessment of our usage of the Port property in the near future. The church investment property is occupied by new long-term tenants. The vacancy after the first tenants left was providentially very short due to the high rental demand here at present. Gross rental income is \$430 p.w.

We give thanks to the Lord for the continuing generosity of the Congregation. Offerings average \$1,193.69 per week. We rejoice that the Lord has lead us thus far, through 2015, and is with us yet. We pray that we might continue to honour Him as we look to the future.

**Note on Armidale:** The sale of the Armidale property was finally settled in November, 2015. As advised by the General Treasurer, the sale plus funds held by Presbytery on behalf of the defunct congregation realized a nett total of \$711,000.27.

## CENTRAL PRESBYTERY REPORT

**Hunter Barrington:** Lord's Day Worship Services were conducted weekly at Raymond Terrace (am) and Cardiff (am and pm). 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. Lord's Day sermons have been uploaded to the website weekly. These were accessed on 676 occasions.

Prayer Meetings/Bible studies were held regularly in the Raymond Terrace and Newcastle areas. Rev Tso diligently and faithfully conducted all such meetings. The studies focused on Genesis 1-10. Prayer for local and wider mission and our sister PCEA congregations has continued to be a priority. Ladies Bible studies were conducted fortnightly at Raymond Terrace and Cardiff by Mrs Tso. The beneficial series of studies was based on the book of Acts.

An All Age Sunday School was conducted at Cardiff each week during school terms. Psalms tunes, the Shorter Catechism and the Scriptures have been taught faithfully to the children. Adult participants have been studying the Westminster Confession of Faith. A Youth/Young Adults Fellowship was conducted by the Minister and his wife. The young folk have shown a keen interest in studying the Scriptures and being involved in local evangelism. One of our young men made a credible profession of faith and has been admitted to communicant membership following his baptism. Other young folk have expressed a genuine interest in finding Christ by faith.

Rev Tso has served as a Chaplain to Newcastle University. We pray that our Lord would provide fruit for labour in that field, which is ripe for harvest. Prayer for local and wider mission has been a priority. Evangelical tracts were distributed in the Raymond Terrace and Wallsend areas with plans to do the same in the Cardiff locality. Mission nights were hosted by the ladies of the congregation including representatives of the Free Church of India and Mukti.

Our Minister had the privilege of officiating at the weddings of four of our younger communicant members: Miss Elle Fennah to Mr David Tamata, and Miss Amelia King to Mr Nicholas O'Dell. Rev Tso also conducted the baptisms of Mr Nicholas O'Dell and the infant, Nyarah Dumas. Our gratitude is extended to our Minister for his faithful and relevant exposition of the Scriptures as well as his supportive pastoral care. The significant contribution of Mr Alex Steel (Assessor Elder) to the work of Session and Deacons' Court is gratefully acknowledged.

Tokens of God's blessing of His people on the Hunter Barrington include:

- a continuing faithful and challenging preaching and teaching ministry,
- an increasing desire to study God's word, and
- a genuine desire to take the gospel to the local community.

**St Georges:** In 2015 St Georges congregation worshipped at the church three times a week, with the exception of the addition of Thursday and Saturday evenings Preparatory services, and Monday Thanksgiving services for our two communion seasons. On Lord's Day meetings the pattern is [with the exception of school holidays and communion seasons]:

9.00am to 9.45am- a psalm and a prayer, followed by separate Bible Class and Sabbath School sessions  
10.30am Worship service. 5.15 pm Psalmody Class practice. 6.00pm Evening Worship service.

On Wednesday nights we met at 7 pm for our Midweek Service. At all services we had our regular worshippers, many of whom travel long distances. We also had international visitors from many parts of the world to worship with us, as well as from interstate and intrastate churches. There was a good cross section of old and young including young families in our midst.

Our Website has played a major part in attracting visitors; with on-line sermons of J. McCallum, as well as the promotion of our Standards, form of worship and our location in the city. Many, if they returned to Sydney, came back to worship with us. Because of St Georges ideal location in Sydney CBD, these visitors were able to attend our services. The visitors from overseas comprised mainly of business people, students, tourists and those attending various conferences in the city. There has been good feedback of interest being shown in our Website, and our minister's sermons are being downloaded. CDs of the services continued to be distributed weekly with good response from congregational members, adherents, visitors and orders from some who don't worship with us, but do enjoy the sermons, readings and prayers.

We celebrated the Lord's Supper twice in 2015. Communicant members for the year ending 31st December 2015 were 35. Attendances at worship services were between 48 to 69 at the Lord's Day morning services, with 28 to 32 at the evening services, and 20 to 25 at the midweek Services. A small group of ladies knit rugs for the poor of our city. Repairs and restoration work preparations for the steeple have been progressing. The congregation continues in good spirits generally and we are thankful to God for His graciousness to us in providing the means whereby we can gather together for public worship.

**Manning:** The Lord has blessed us during another year of teaching and fellowship. All the regular activities were maintained: the services on the Lord's Day; Sunday School; the midweek Bible study groups; the Friendship Group, and the Ladies Missionary Society. It's been a year of change. We were sorry to receive the resignation from two of our longstanding and faithful elders - Jim Cromarty and Bernie De Haan – who both retired due to age and health. We were delighted that Peter Smith was unanimously elected by the congregation as ruling elder and inducted on 15/3/15. Peter has also ably taken on the additional duties of congregational treasurer; after the retirement of Alison Fowler, who for many years, did an outstanding job.

We lost one faithful member on 12/7/15 through death –Mrs Enid Hands. We received four new members in March 2015; however, it's been very disappointing that only one continues faithfully a year later. Though the Sunday School continued throughout 2015; it has sadly not been possible to resume in 2016 due to lack of numbers. As well as the regular Sunday morning prayer meeting prior to the morning service, a very encouraging half day of prayer was held in May. We had a visitation from Presbytery in September which challenged us to prepare and examine ourselves.

The Deacons Court (under the leadership of David Wilson) continue to do an excellent job of maintaining the property. Air conditioning was installed in the church hall which has already proved to be a great asset. 100 Gospel calendars were ordered and distributed among friends and neighbours via our church members. Despite our losses and disappointments, the Lord has blessed us with a few new faces and a great spirit of unity and fellowship in the congregation. 'Our help is in the name of the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth'.

**Sydney West (Mt Druitt):** This congregation continues its work and witness over a large region stretching from Shalvey and Dharuk in the north to Colyton, St Marys, Penrith, Warimoo, Kurrajong and Campbelltown. Two worship services are held each Lord's day, at 11am and 6pm. The minister is preaching from the Book of Acts and Matthew's gospel. Sermon series on Isaiah, Luke and Romans are available in print and audio, and on the website. Bible classes and prayer times in English and Tongan are held before the morning service. Singing from the metrical 'Sing Psalms' is led by any of three precentors. Two Sunday School classes and a crèche are conducted at 11.30am with up to 20 children.

On Friday evening, 12-14 primary age children attend the Lighthouse Club, and 8-10 youth attend the later Youth Club. These provide Bible instruction and memorizing. Parents are involved and assist this work. At the Bible study and prayer time on Fridays we are completing studies in the Larger Catechism. The women of the congregation met a couple of times for fellowship. Four infants were baptized, one member added and one removed.

On New Year's Eve we held a special service, and time of praise and prayer until midnight. Each evening during the first week of the year there is a meeting in the Tongan language. Before the beginning of the school year we had a day of prayer. Special events during the year included a day of tract distribution in Mt Druitt suburbs, and a church picnic. Visitors included Samit and Pradeep from India, Sam Tamata and Duncan Hickey. Extensive maintenance work was undertaken on the church and hall prior to the Synod. The congregation was pleased to host the 2015 PCEA Synod. Church members regularly attend three nursing homes to conduct worship services and/or minister to the aged and terminally ill. May the exceeding great and precious promises of the Word be continually before us.

**Sydney South:** The Sydney South congregation continues as a small but warm fellowship which meets for worship each Lord's Day in Bexley North. The one elder resigned and left the congregation with his wife. An elderly member has moved to a nursing home is no longer able to attend - he is visited regularly- while a widow has begun attending. Sunday school is conducted at 9.30am.

## **SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY REPORT and a Proposal for Synod**

**Knox:** It was with regret that we received Mr Denver Boehret's resignation from the eldership and membership of Knox. Attendance numbers have not varied much from the previous year, although four new communicant members have been added to the roll including one on transfer from the RP church. A visit by Rev. Samit Mishra and Mr Pradeep Kumar of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India took place in April. Knox church contributed fares for Rev. Andres Miranda and Rev. Samit Mishra to attend the Regional Conference of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) in October. Pulpit swaps with Rev. Graeme Hart of the Reformed Church at Mackinnon and with Rev. S. Bajema, Narre Warren have taken place.

Knox church activities include: - Melbourne Psalm Singers meeting regularly on Monday evenings. A regular youth meeting has been successfully resumed under the guidance of Mrs Connie Dekter. Ladies' Bible study/prayer group on Tuesday mornings. Wednesday night prayer and Bible study. Ladies' knitting group on Thursday mornings which has provided beanies for AIM and beanies, scarves, blankets and clothing for homeless/disadvantaged and refugees. Typically 10 attend, most from beyond our congregation. Elders' visitations.

Financially we managed satisfactorily, although offerings continued a slight decline, to maintain support for wider church activities. The financial support needed for All Nations continued to decline. By reason of the surplus we were able to restore capital we had drawn on several years ago for ordinary expenses. The Glen Huntly building dispute was settled at VCAT on 8/12/2015 with an irrevocable undertaking by the builder to pay \$300,000 by 8/3/2016. This sum was received on 3/3/2016.

**All Nations:** The English services have continued throughout the year although numbers are small. The Confession was gone through as part of the service and we are now back to the Shorter Catechism. The services are shared between Mr Yoa and Dr Ward and include a combined service with the Nuer folk once a month attended by 40 to 50. The afternoon Nuer service has been well maintained with some increase in numbers and givings. The rent of a room to one of the members as an office helps significantly. Offerings overall were up 7% on last year. There are opportunities to assist in ministry among the young people. The work has its ups and downs and challenges, but we believe it is well worth-while.

**Carrum Downs:** Services were maintained throughout the year. In November Rev David Kumnick's six cycles of chemotherapy treatment began, but services have continued each Lord's Day with supply from Revs. Rowland Ward and Stephen Giles, a retired PCV minister. Mr Kumnick has been able to conduct every third service. We see this trying period as a call to simple trust, which is working and will work good things in the pilgrimages of our own people and others. The six cycles concluded on 29/2/2016 but two supplementary but less invasive cycles are planned and then the scan due in May. It's reasonably positive so far. Mr Kumnick recognizes that he may not be able to maintain the services but Dr Ward is ready to cover them as required.

We wait on the Lord to implement His plan for the proposed church building project at 8 William Road, in every respect both material and personal. A modest building similar to but smaller than that at Knox is planned but will not involve external debt.

**Geelong:** The Geelong congregation has continued to meet weekly for worship and fellowship each Lord's Day and has enjoyed the blessings of sound preaching from God's Word, joyful praise, and earnest prayer. The number of communicant members remains constant although we have seen the effects of age and illness reduce the number of members and adherents able to attend regularly. Our interim moderator Rev Sjik Bajema, continues to coordinate supply for the pulpit from local ministers as well as from our own PCEA ministers and elders. The Session and Deacons' Court meet as required but also keep in regular communication via telephone and email. We have consistent attendance at our Sunday morning worship service from a core group of faithful and committed members and adherents. The midweek Bible studies, which have always been a source of great encouragement, resumed meeting in November. We have remained financially self-supporting through the consistent giving of the congregation and the regular income from the rental of the manse. Despite plans by the Reformed Theological College to move its primary training centre to Melbourne, our resident student, Isaac Overton, intends to remain in Geelong until the completion of his degree in 2017. We have built a close relationship with Isaac and his family, and enjoy his preaching whenever his studies permit. A KYB group, which has met for many years during the warmer months, continues to meet weekly for Bible studies in the church hall. There is a close fellowship being maintained between those who meet regularly for worship, with members supporting each other, particularly in times of need.

**Narre Warren:** The Narre Warren congregation was richly blessed by our Lord in this past year. While illness and other physical difficulties are impacting on a higher proportion of our members, and we had the sudden death of one of our long-term members, John Holmes, there is a good spirit in the congregation. This is evidenced by the average attendance of 45-50 in the morning service and 20 in the afternoon, continued steady attendance in the four Bible studies (two fortnightly – one held at the church and the other in member's homes, a fortnightly Ladies Bible Study and a monthly Men's Study Breakfast), with also a new student in one of our three Sunday School classes. It is also shown in the committed giving, though this did fall off further on in this last year due to the interstate transfer of several members and unemployment in our congregation. This has meant we have had to approach Synod for assistance for this year and next.

We usually have visitors most Lord's Days, and some have continued to attend, with some old friends also joining us of late. Others who have been with us for some time have been coming more regularly. One of these, Marlene Arlove, after a class of preparatory studies professed her faith on the 29<sup>th</sup> of November. One of our young people, Andrew Bajema, is studying for a Master of Divinity at the Melbourne School of Theology, through which he plans to engage in ministry related work. He successfully completed his first semester in the second half of last year.

Of particular note has been our Session's move toward seeking further office bearers, out which has come the nomination, election and ordination of Stewart Loudon in the office of elder. We pray the Lord will help to make us self-sufficient as a Session through this process.

Through the internet and email our minister's sermons are of benefit around the world, together with printed copies, C.D.'s and MP3's being locally distributed. His studies on 'The Miracles At Calvary' have been well received in several of our study groups, and have led to much further discussion and learning.

**Ulverstone:** The Ulverstone Congregation continues to be blessed by the ministry of Rev Andre Scheepers who has been gradually returning to full service following major surgery last December. Throughout February Andre has been preaching on the topics of church vision and living out the reality of our faith. These sermons have rich messages and are available on the congregation web site. During the period of Andre's sick leave a number have assisted leading services and more recently a number of available men have been publicly reading the scriptures in the services.

We thank God for bringing new people into contact with our congregation through both neighbourhood outreach and family links. Luke and Tessa Keast have recently moved here from New Zealand and we are being blessed by their fellowship. The various other ministries of the congregation continue with midweek meetings, Sunday school, adult catechism class, fellowship nights, athletes camps, car rallies, mens' prayer breakfasts, ladies craft meetings and womens' missionary union meetings. In September last year the congregation reached 50 years since joining the PCEA and we thank God for blessing and sustaining us over all this time.

**PROPOSAL FOR SYNOD:** We unanimously recommend Synod resolve to the following effect:

**RECOMMITMENT OF SYNOD & WORK OF PRESBYTERIES**

1. Mindful of the serious decline in vital Christianity and in Christian standards in public life, Synod acknowledges our many failures to live and serve him as we ought. We also acknowledge that despite this the good hand of the God of all grace has been upon us and others in proclaiming the Good News. We resolve afresh to act in the assurance that, since Christ has gained the victory and has all authority in heaven and earth, the future is bright with the promises of God for those who go forth in his name to evangelise the nations.

2. Synod urges all Presbyteries to ensure they are meetings of encouragement, spurring office-bearers and the churches to effective Christ-like ministry. To this end Presbyteries should aim to meet at least three times a year, at least two of these meetings in person, and at the personal meetings endeavour to include a theological or pastoral and/or training paper as well as a presentation on what Gospel ministry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should look like.

3. Presbyteries need to keep well in view the importance of church revitalisation and extension, as well as on-going training for office-bearers which should include ministers attending a suitable conference at least once every two years. Sessions should be meeting regularly, including by electronic hook-up where a local quorum is not available, with particular attention on pastoral care, outreach strategy and mutual encouragement.

4. Prayer for local mission (ie Australian congregations) should be included in the Prayer Notes prepared by the Missions Committee and congregations are encouraged to provide relevant material.

## LAW & ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

The Committee as usual has met by email. The first draft of the 2016 report was circulated by the Convener on 2/11/2015 and revised and supplemented subsequently to the form now submitted.

### 1. Sexual Misconduct

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.** For convenience of reference this needs to be noted in the Handbook at 4.41 (f) with a cross reference to 5.32

### 2. Public Liability Insurance

For the record we effected a church-wide Public Liability scheme with Ansvar from 2/7/1985 (Policy 6.80.02062) replacing policies effected by individual congregations, mostly with Ansvar. The cover began at \$1 million, was increased to \$2 million on renewal 1988, and to \$5 million in 1990 when property (other than St Georges') was included under the group scheme and four policies (one for each state were issued, [details in 1991 Synod Reports p. 86]. On 21/7/1997 the Public Liability cover was raised to \$10 million (this amount being that normally required when hiring premises). The sexual molestation limit was \$5 million. [Ansvar policy numbers were: Qld: 03.025.0065315; NSW: 03.025.0000705; Vic: 03.0250018710; Tas: 03.025.0144197.] On 2/7/2015 a new policy was effected through ACS Financial Pty Ltd, Melbourne with ACS Mutual Ltd. The Public Liability policy had a general limit of \$50 million (increased to \$100 million on 30/9/2015) and a molestation limit of \$5 million. [The Public Liability risk associated with the properties of St George's at Lindfield is not included in the church-wide scheme.]

With the insurance changes made in 2015 a rewording of Handbook 3.21a and b is appropriate along with some extra clarification in 3.21a.

### 3. Elders emeritus

Two congregations have raised the matter of emeritus elders with the Convener. The following extracts from the Second Book of Discipline 1578 are relevant (particularly the words highlighted in bold script).

#### **Chapter 6 Of Elders and Their Office**

1. The word *elder* in the scripture sometimes is the name of age, sometimes of office. When it is the name of an office, sometimes it is taken largely, comprehending as well the pastors and doctors, as them who are called seniors or elders.
2. In this our division, we call those elders whom the apostles call presidents or governors. Their office, as it is ordinary, so it is perpetual, and always necessary in the kirk of God. The eldership is a spiritual function, as is the ministry. **Elders once lawfully called to the office, and having gifts of God meet to exercise the same, may not leave it again.** Albeit such a number of elders may be chosen in certain congregations, that one part of them may relieve another for a reasonable space, as was among the Levites under the law in serving of the temple. The number of elders in every congregation cannot well be limited, but should be according to the bounds and necessity of the people.
3. It is not necessary that all elders be also teachers of the word, albeit chiefly they ought to be such, and so are worthy of double honour. What manner of persons they ought to be, we refer it to the express word of God, and, namely, the canons written by the apostle Paul.
4. Their office is, as well severally as conjunctly, to watch diligently upon the flock committed to their charge, both publicly and privately, that no corruption of religion or manners enter therein.
5. As the pastors and doctors should be diligent in teaching and sowing the seed of the word, so the elders should be careful in seeking the fruit of the same in the people.
6. It appertains to them to assist the pastor in examination of them that come to the Lord's table: *item*, in visiting the sick.
7. They should cause the acts of assemblies, as well particular as provincial or general, to be put in execution carefully.
8. They should be diligent in admonishing all men of their duty, according to the rule of the *evangel*. Things that they cannot correct by private admonitions they should bring to the assembly of the eldership.

9. Their principal office is to hold assemblies with the pastors and doctors (who are also of their number) for establishing of good order, and execution of discipline. Unto the which assemblies all persons are subject that remain within their bounds.

In Chapter 7 there is much more about Sessions including

**17. Yet they ought not to be deposed who, through age, sickness, or other accidents, become unmeet to do their office; in the which case their honour should remain to them, their kirk should maintain them; and others ought to be provided to do their office.**

On the Manning 20 years or so ago Rev. Jim Cromarty introduced the title elder emeritus for a couple of men who needed to retire from active duties. He made up a nice certificate and gave a book gift by way of recognition. They were told they need not attend but were still session members and could attend if they wished. They didn't. The only issue with this arrangement is that the men remained members of the court. The situation should really be analogous to a minister who retires in good standing. He retains his status as a minister but is no longer a member of session (unless elected to it) or presbytery (except under the conditions of Act of Synod, 1986 - Handbook 4.3)

#### **4. 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 currently 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.)

#### 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. Similarly, youth activities, camps etc. 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)

#### **5. 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 was. Mr Hazzard was replaced by Gabrielle Upton on 2 April 2015. On 19 June we sent a further copy of our submission to Mr Nile and on 7 July 2015 had a call from his research assistant, Peta Simpson, to whom a further copy was sent. Progress was anticipated and continues to be followed up, most recently 19/2/2016. However, Mr Nile has an extremely heavy load at present so the delay may continue for a while yet.

#### **5. Barrier Act procedure**

Last year the proposal to set out more fully the procedure in regard to the operation of the Barrier Act foundered on it being presented as one proposal when questions were raised on only one or two items, particularly the matter of dispensing with notice requirements under certain limited conditions, which has now been omitted. To enable progress on this matter and in the belief that most of the earlier proposal was non-contentious, we have set out the matter in a fresh way.

## 6. Bringing ministers from overseas

At its meeting on 2/10/2015 the Northern Presbytery requested the Committee to take up the matter of the requirements of the Department of Immigration and Border Protection [DIBP] introduced with effect from 1/7/2015 concerning the recruitment of Ministers of Religion from overseas with a view to a church-wide a Labour Agreement with the DIBP being approved by Synod. The Clerk of Northern Presbytery advised us of this decision on 18/1/2016 and steps were taken immediately to progress the matter with DIBP. In a helpful discussion with the Director of the Labour Agreement programme two paths were indicated.

(1) In many cases the simplest path is a 401 Visa valid for two years and renewable for a further 2 years. During this period if a permanent settlement is desired one can take steps to enter into a Labour Agreement. See details at <<https://www.border.gov.au/Trav/Visa-1/401->> Typical cost of a visa might be \$1,000.

(2) The other path is to enter directly into a Labour Agreement, valid for three years, which can provide temporary residency under Visa subclass 457, transition to permanent residency after two years under subclass 186 or even direct entry to permanent residency under subclass 186. While conceivably the Labour Agreement could be a church-wide agreement, one needs to nominate the place where persons to be brought in will be working (something we cannot always know 3 years in advance), and provide evidence of financial ability to support the worker at the usual rates for local ministers, with ABN of the entity. These considerations suggest that it should be the congregation needing a minister that enters into the Labour Agreement. There is some documentation, such as an organisational chart and constitutional details, that needs to be provided and we will prepare a pro-forma to supply to any congregation wishing to bring a minister from overseas.

In regard to bringing ministers from overseas it is certainly appropriate that they visit first as a tourist so that mutual assessment can be made before one proceeds further, and clearance through Presbytery as necessary.

## 7. Application of congregational funds

It seems most of our congregations raise funds for missions or Synod schemes or projects beyond the congregation and its outreach endeavours by specific collections, but the question has been raised as to the lawfulness of also applying ordinary congregational funds for purposes beyond the congregation. The general principle is that the assets of congregations are in trust for that purpose given and cannot be diverted from that trust except as provided under the church property acts following the procedure for dissolving a congregation or applying excess income. This general principle does not mean that gifts cannot be made from ordinary undesignated offerings for objects beyond the congregation so long as they are modest and can be regarded as within the normal ministry of the congregation.

Deacons' Courts which contribute to Synod schemes and other objects from general funds in addition to or instead of special collections, follow the principle that the officebearers are best placed to know particular needs and have a responsibility to administer funds wisely 'according to the judgment and appointment of the Session'. Deacons' Courts need to have authority to do this and this is best secured by a resolution at a Congregational Meeting along the following lines. *From this time forward until otherwise decided, the Congregation approves the allocation of a proportion/up to \$... per year of the ordinary undesignated offerings to needy Synod funds, such as Missions and Stipend relief, and to particular Christian ministries, such as AIM, Mukti and MERF, as judged appropriate by the Deacons' Court in consultation with the Session, provided always that the local ministry has first call on the funds if needed, the viability of the local congregation is safeguarded and the congregation's capital funds or other specified funds are not used in this way.*

## 8. Handbook 2.9

A recent legal case *Gallagher v McClintock & Ors* [2013] QSC 292 (25 October 2013) confirmed the principle **noted by Synod 2014 (Handbook 2.9)**.

The Court's judgement was concise and uncontroversial. The Court held that:

1. It was up to the Church's discretion to allow or refuse any person licence onto their property. Mr Gallagher had no "right" to be on Church property, but simply had implied permission of the Church to be there. This permission was revoked by the letter sent to him by the Church.
2. While Mr Gallagher is entitled to express his views, this does not equate to a right to enter someone else's property and distribute pamphlets there. The Court held that this was not a "freedom of speech" issue, but a question of whether Mr Gallagher can enter someone else's property and distribute pamphlets without the owner's permission. The answer is no, he cannot do that.

The Court held that there was not a serious question to be tried and hence dismissed Mr Gallagher's application.

## 9. Handbook/Decision Book

The electronic version of the combined Handbook and Decision book was updated after Synod 2015 and sent to the webmaster, 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 1,061 downloads of the 2014 edition up to 5 March 2015, and a total of 2,039 was reached when taken down and replaced by the 2015 edition on 6 October 2015. A further 97 downloads have occurred to 3 March 2016. These are surprisingly high figures but suggest the Handbook is proving helpful.

### PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. Under Examination of records by Presbyteries (Handbook 4.41) add: “f) ensures minutes appear at least once a year showing that the questions of office-bearers specified by Synod 2013 re the Guidelines for Church Workers and the matter of sexual abuse and pornography have been satisfactorily answered.” Similarly, the report of examiners of the records of Presbyteries (Handbook 5.32) is to specifically cover this point.

2. Handbook 3.21a & b is now to read as follows:

3.21a. The Synod maintains Australia-wide **Public Liability** insurance in respect of the activities of the church except liability arising from the properties of St George’s Congregation at Lindfield. Renewal date is 30 September. Each deacons’ court is allocated an appropriate share of the premium. Appropriately skilled and qualified members (or qualified external contractors with appropriate insurance) must conduct activities such as archery, beach and water activities, bike riding, flying foxes &c, and have risk management procedures in place to ensure adequate supervision, first-aid kit, emergency contact details &c. Unless otherwise agreed there is no cover for liability arising from major building works. There is NO cover for sexual molestation arising from persons known to have been previous offenders or against whom a complaint has been made which has not been appropriately investigated. [A record of historical Public Liability insurance cover appears in Law & Advisory Committee Report, Synod 2016.]

b. Guidelines for **insurance** cover generally (including vehicles) were set by Synod 1982. In 1990 the Synod effected a group insurance scheme for all church, manse and other **buildings and church-owned contents** allowing St George’s Congregation to opt out and make their own arrangements. In 2015 the renewal date was changed from 2 July to 30 September, and each congregation contributes according to the insured value of its property.

3. Add to Handbook 2.5 before last sentence: “An elder who wishes to demit his duties and responsibilities as elder in his congregation because of 'age, sickness or other accidents' [Second Book of Discipline (1578), 7.17] may be accorded recognition as elder emeritus. In a manner similar to a retired minister the elder retains status as an elder but ceases to be a member of the Session although he may be invited to sit in on Session meetings to offer advice. An emeritus elder is entitled to be held in honour by his fellow elders and the members of the congregation which he has served. Should the disability which led to him retiring from active duties be removed he may of course be re-elected a serving elder.”

3. Synod draw attention of affected congregations to the requirement of Synod 2012 that a fair value of assets and liabilities appear in the annual financial accounts

4. 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 [each paragraph to be presented as a distinct proposal]:

#### 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.

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 there is an even number of Presbyteries and 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, 2016, and replaces Sections 5.39 and 5.40 in the Handbook.

5. The Synod note the procedure for bringing ministers from overseas set out in the Report.

## **TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE**

The Committee kept in touch over the year through the exchange of emails and met once by phone conference. We thank the Lord that, despite some reversals during the year, He has continued to uphold our denomination.

Considering our remit and the projected need of the church for ministers we feel that the work of the Committee must expand and increase over the coming years. We cannot be complacent. We must adapt to the changing situation in which we find ourselves. A number of Ministers are at or beyond normal retirement age and, while we treasure their continuing service, they too will be looking to the possibilities for succession and see the dearth of possible successors. In the interim, we will increasingly look to the Ruling Elders to take up the burden of ministry, in the vacant congregations especially, and to that end we hope that the Eldership Course proposed below will provide a useful resource for them.

We give thanks to the Lord that Mr Duncan Hickey continues his studies with diligence and devotion, but Duncan remains our only student. Vacancies remain and will only grow. Recent attempts within the Convener's own Presbytery to secure candidates for the ministry from sister churches overseas have met with either an awkward demureness, or a desire to help constrained by difficulties similar to our own. Despite William McIntyre's longing for the PCEA to be a truly Australian denomination, our history has generally been one of finding our help from Scotland and elsewhere. We need to look to our own backyard, as it were. With all the Biblical caveats and conditions in place (including Luke 10:2; Titus 1:5-16; 1 Tim. 3:2-7; 2 Tim. 2:15 – 3:9), we need to re-evaluate why so many of our own young men do not consider the ministry, or are not considered.

### **Mr Duncan Hickey**

The Committee is again very encouraged by Mr Hickey's excellent progress in his course work. He has achieved outstanding results, all above distinction level. Duncan continues his studies and has had various preaching opportunities, including consecutive weeks in the Hastings and Manning churches at the close of the year. Duncan is due to complete his course of study at Christ College at the end of 2017.

### **Candidate Placement Scheme (CPS)**

Further to last year's proposed deliverance that the Synod support the further development and implementation of the CPS, the Committee has agreed to ask that they be authorised to implement the Scheme from this year. Thus, as outlined in last year's report, the Scheme entails:

1. A nominal 8 week placement with a mentoring Minister in a charge outside the candidate's own congregation in both the penultimate and final year of the candidate's theological study. The location of the placement would be determined by agreement between the Committee, the Presbytery and the candidate's Session (Assessors). Its duration may be varied by consultation with all parties. Notification to the student of the location and duration of the placement to be not less than six months in advance to allow personal arrangements to be made.
2. The cost for the student's placement to be borne by the Training of Ministry Committee, up to the value of 8 weeks stipend at the rate applicable to students' supply (currently 60% of full stipend). Costs for travel and accommodation would be borne by the host congregation (they should view the CPS as they would extended supply and budget accordingly). Other incidental costs to be borne by the student themselves. Notwithstanding the allowances provided, financial difficulties (e.g. loss of paid work) in undertaking the placement will be assessed in confidence on a case-by-case basis by the Committee.
3. The student's placement is to be under the mentorship of the host congregation's Minister ("Mentor"). It is expected that the Mentor maintain a strictly confidential relationship with the candidate (especially for the sake of the candidate's prospects) and seek to develop the student's abilities according to both the wisdom and experience of the Mentor and within set criteria to be supplied by the Assessors. The relationship between mentor and student cannot be fully defined as it involves imparting personal approaches as well as fundamental skills. Sermon evaluation (forms provided) will constitute one regular assessment, but the mentor would be expected to evaluate the progress of the student in pastoral ministry while visiting and engaging in other aspects of working the charge. At the close of the placement, the mentor would provide a report to the Assessors

- advising of areas of excellence and those that need attention. The whole goal of the program is the development and progression of a student, not a merciless critique of all their faults.
4. During the placement it would be good for the student to keep a journal record of their experience. The experience of the student will be determined to a large part by the focus of the mentor's congregation and the work to hand. This may include, but is not limited to, conducting and preaching worship services, visitation, evangelism, and conducting Bible studies and Sunday School classes. The theological development of a student is undertaken by the College he attends. The Spiritual oversight of the student is the work of the Presbytery, this scheme seeks to develop and evaluate the ministerial abilities of the student within the wider context of the denomination. The student should see the CPS as an opportunity to delve into ministry in a place not so familiar to them as their own congregation. At the close of the placement, the student would be expected to provide a report of their experience and self-evaluation, to the Assessors.
  5. Upon completion, and the receipt and evaluation of reports by the Assessors, constructive feedback and recommendations are to be provided to the student. Completion of the CPS to the satisfaction of the Assessors would be a normal requisite of their candidature with the PCEA. It is hoped that this course will provide data to assist in an easy transition from candidature to licencing and thence a helpful springboard into pastoral ministry within the PCEA.

### **Eldership Training Course**

After a slower start to the development of this course than was hoped, it has now gained some momentum. Due to the number of resources available on the internet, the course has naturally migrated to be available online. A page has been set up on the website as a blog with each chapter of the training course available as an article within that. Elders participating in the course can already log in to the site, download course notes, follow links to referenced online articles or even whole books and pursue their own research on the subject of the Eldership.

Another advantage of placing all the material on the website is that comments can be left on each article for writers and participants to see and respond to, and a group has been established on the PCEA Community part of the website for those undertaking the course, to allow for ongoing discussion beyond seminars or private study.

For those who cannot or do not wish to avail themselves of the plethora of materials online, the Eldership Training Course is available in PDF Booklet format, available by application to the Convener (or again, as a PDF for download and printing from the website). The draft PDF booklet should be available for review at Synod this year.

Only utilisation of the course will test its true worth and the draft edition may soon be expanded and or revised in the light of feedback from users. We look to the Synod to authorise the implementation of the Course as a useful, non-compulsory resource for Eldership training. We further look to delegates to take up the course and use it for study and growth in their own congregations, and send their feedback to the Committee.

### **Proposed Deliverances**

1. That the Synod again commend the excellent progress of Mr Duncan Hickey in his studies and recommit to supporting him and his family in prayer.
2. That the Synod authorise the implementation of the Candidate Placement Scheme (CPS) as described above from the rising of this Synod and that our current student be advised of his initial placement after consultation with Assessors, and not less than six months in advance.
3. That the Synod authorise the implementation of the Eldership Training Course as an online and paper-based resource for the edification, growth and strengthening of the Eldership within the PCEA.

## CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

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

This committee communicated by email during the year. 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 examined the 2011 edition of the New International Version of the Bible.

### The Federal Marriage Act

The push for homosexual or same-sex marriage continues in the press and by some members of parliament. We wrote to the Prime Minister expressing our Biblically based views on this matter and received a reply (copy attached in the appendix). We are concerned that the current Prime Minister is in favour of homosexual marriage, yet thankful that some in his government are expressing their opposition. He remains committed to a plebiscite on this matter should his government be returned. But we, along with other churches, are concerned about the framing of the question in this plebiscite and the overall nature of the debate. Our voice of opposition is under threat from anti-discrimination laws.

On 12 February, 2016, the Moderator of the PCA, along with others, met with the Prime Minister in his Sydney office. His comments on this meeting can be found on the PCA website- they are not encouraging. Briefly, the Prime Minister assured the group that the government would fund each side of the debate equally, and would be bound by the result of the plebiscite- massive funding of the homosexual lobby contributed to the recent change in Ireland. The homosexual lobby opposes a plebiscite. The ALP will force all sitting members to vote for homosexual marriage from 2019, and will legislate for same sex marriage within 100 days of taking office. The PM was optimistic that common sense would prevail- but how common is common sense? When reminded that only 19 of the 195 nations in the UN had approved same sex marriage, the PM said that those closest in culture to ours had done so. The Moderator concluded, "We need to be much in prayer at this time and the silent majority need to speak up".

We urge ministers and members of our church to continue in urgent prayer over this matter (Luke 18:1-8). Again we say, 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 pray that God will work in the hearts of those in the parliaments of our land. It is also our duty to vote wisely and communicate with our elected representative; a letter or email to encourage the godly in their views and encourage the ungodly to change their views.

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.

We propose writing to the Prime Minister urging him to cease Federal Government funding of abortion services.

### The NIV 2011 Bible

Synod 2015 minute 15.24:

*That the review of the 'Unity of the Church' Acts 11 (1982) be continued to include a clear statement on the New International Version (NIV) for the guidance of our church members.*

The committee prepared the following report on the NIV (2011) for this synod.

### Introduction

If you go into a bookshop to buy an NIV Bible today you will be given a new translation published in 2011. You will not be able to buy the version published in 1984. In 2005 a new version called, Today's NIV (TNIV), was published. This version introduced gender-neutral language, following the pattern of the NSRV published in 1989. The TNIV did not sell well. The NIV 2011 version maintains gender-neutral language, but is an improvement in that it backtracks in some places, allowing some generic use of 'he', particularly where plurals distort the meaning of the text- text that is singular in the original language (Hebrew or Greek).

The NIV 2011, marketed only as the NIV, differs from the NIV 1984 in 12,056 verses or 39% of the text (Slowley). To market this version under the same name, without any indication of it being a new translation, is deceptive; the copyright line reads: ‘1973, 1978, 1984, and 2011 by Biblica, Inc.’

### Reason

The Committee (CBT) that translated the NIV was never dissolved. This Committee decided that, among other things, English usage has changed significantly in the last 30 years. The first change was after 370 years, but this change after just 30 years! In the preface, found at the back of this Bible, the translators state their first concern to be, ‘accuracy and faithfulness to the intended meaning of the Biblical writers’; this moves them to, ‘go beyond word-for-word rendering of the original text’. The NIV 1984 was translated on the basis of ‘dynamic equivalence’ rather than ‘complete equivalence’, as we know. The question asked of this new version is, ‘what is the new scholarship that demands such a vastly different translation?’ The preface goes on, ‘one of the main reasons ... is the change in our own language, English’. ‘No part of language has seen greater change in the last thirty years than the way gender is presented’. So the main reason for this new version is to make a gender-neutral translation. To do this, almost 40% of verses have been changed.

Before looking into some of the changes, we ask, ‘were these changes really necessary?’ Some changes are an improvement: in 1John 2:16 it returns to the words, ‘lust of the flesh’, rather than ‘cravings of sinful man’. Other changes are acceptable: the word ‘saints’ becomes ‘holy ones’ or ‘holy people’, which is literal, or ‘the Lord’s people’. The Greek word ‘*adelphos*’ means ‘brothers’, but in most cases includes sisters, so the translation, ‘brothers and sisters’ in the new NIV is acceptable in most cases, although it makes reading tedious. The translation task seems more computerised than considered. In the attempt to gender-neutralise the word ‘son’, the new NIV gets into problems in Psalm 8:4-6, which is quoted in Hebrews 2:6 with reference to Jesus. It uses the word ‘a son of man’ in the Hebrews quote (still not ‘**the** son of man’), but back in Psalm 8:4 has, ‘human beings that you care for them’. It also changes ‘him’ to ‘them’, but includes a marginal reading with ‘him’ because of the confusion created.

It is interesting that Don Carson criticised the KJV for translating ‘children’ rather than ‘sons’ in Matthew 5:9 (Greek ‘*huios*’), but accepts this translation in the NIV 2011: in 1978 he wrote, “The difference is slight but significant. In Jewish thought ‘son’ often bears the meaning of, ‘partaker of the character’ rather than just the position”.

### Pronouns

The most extensive change in the NIV 2011 is the avoidance of generic ‘he’ pronouns’ - he/his/him/himself. In a generic sense, we use ‘he’ without specific reference to gender. This singular pronoun is usually changed to a plural, ‘them/their/they’ to avoid ‘gender bias’. The CBT goes into the statistics of changes in the use of pronouns in the English language, but it is hard to avoid the conclusion that feminist sensitivity was the primary motivation. In fact, their policy guidelines were, ‘not to offend modern sensibilities’, and ‘because of patriarchalism in ancient cultures’ they felt they must use alternative ‘modes of expression... though care must be taken not to distort the intent of the original text’ - not the text itself, but its intent!

Poythress and Grudem detailed changes made in the TNIV, many of which flowed into the NIV 2011, in the book, ‘The gender neutral Bible controversy 2003’. Changing the generic ‘he’ into the plural ‘they’ leads to confusion and potential error in some places. For example, in John 14:23: “Jesus replied, ‘Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them’”. While the change to plural pronouns avoids the generic ‘he’, this verse can now be understood to mean that the Father and the Son dwell in believers corporately or collectively rather than individually. In Greek the pronouns are singular and masculine. Again in Matthew 16:24: “Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me’”. The TNIV began with ‘those’ followed by ‘themselves’, making everything plural. At least the NIV 2011 begins with the singular ‘whoever’, but still it can be understood as a group of people (plural) taking up their group cross (singular). The singular antecedent helps but it is not good grammar, and it is potentially confusing to follow this with plural pronouns. “The focus subtly shifts from the individual to the group when there is a change from ‘he’ to ‘they’” (Grudem). Hundreds of other verses, especially in the book of Proverbs, present the same problem because of this potentially plural interpretation when the original is clearly singular.

## Conclusion

It is difficult to recommend a translation that appears to put political correctness, a concern 'not to offend modern sensibilities' or the sensitivities of feminism, before accuracy in translation of the inspired and infallible word of God, and the needs of the body of Christ for such a translation.

## **Proposed deliverances**

1. We thank the Lord that the Federal Marriage Act has not been changed, and continue to pray there will be no change that legalises homosexual marriage.
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.
3. Synod write to the Prime Minister urging him to cease Federal Government funding of abortion services.
4. Substantial changes in the 2011 edition of the New International Version of the Bible mean that while maintaining approval of the NIV1984 edition, Synod does not recommend the 2011 edition of the NIV for use in our churches.



PRIME MINISTER

Reference: C15/21244

21 July 2015

Reverend Dennis Muldoon  
Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia  
PO Box 3007  
MOUNT DRUITT VILLAGE NSW 2770

Dear Reverend Muldoon

Thank you for letting me know your views on same sex marriage.

My own view is well known: I support the traditional definition of marriage.

This is my considered position.

Marriage is an “institution” on which societies and civilisations rest. We should be cautious about changing institutions that have served us well.

However, this is one of those subjects upon which decent people can disagree.

There are currently a number of private members’ bills on the issue before the Parliament.

If a private member’s bill were to be brought on for a vote, the matter would be handled by the Coalition Party Room.

We are a people who are respectful of others even when we disagree. My hope is that courtesy and respect for differing views will be the hallmarks of this debate.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tony Abbott', written over a horizontal line.

TONY ABBOTT

Parliament House CANBERRA ACT 2600

## MEDIA COMMITTEE

**Report on ‘The Presbyterian Banner’:** The Lord has been good to us again in the ministry of *The Presbyterian Banner* during this past year of 2015. We have been able to support ourselves through the subscriptions, donations, and volunteer work of God’s people.

Sadly, however, after some six years of keeping the subscriptions pegged, increases in publishing costs and, in particular, postage, have meant that the Committee has had to increase the subscriptions. We also had the Lord take to himself our capable Treasurer and mail-out man, who had been able to buy discounted stamps.

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.

I express my thanks to the team involved here in *The Presbyterian Banner*, 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.

After using a side account of the Knox PCEA bank account, thanks to Rowland Ward, we have now opened up our own local bank account, as you would have read of on the pages of *The Banner* or been informed of via email.

Presently 150 copies per month are being printed. We had previously printed extra in the hope that any congregation wishing to take up a bulk subscription or add to their subscription would be readily supplied, but as this has not changed over the last several years we have cut back to save costs.

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, George Ball, and a new column by Andrew Bajema, taking in his specialist area of film studies. The Missions Committee have organised a roster of Missions’ news, which is an added plus to the magazine. There are also those who send in the beautiful photos that help make up such attractive covers.

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. Sadly, there is still a congregation which has not yet in my time as editor passed on news and/or photographs for our magazine (this is over six 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 31-12-15

RECEIPTS (2015)

Balance 31-12-14	1,066.87
Subscriptions	3,668.50
Bank Interest	17.59
	<hr/>
	\$4,752.96

PAYMENTS

Printing & Postage	3,173.50
Other Expenses	00.00
Bank Fees	9.70
Balance 31-12-15	1,569.76
	<hr/>
	\$4,752.96

Please note that of the balance for 31/12/15, \$805 consists of subscriptions for 2016.

**PROPOSED DELIVERANCE:**

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

S. Bajema (Editor)

**Report on the Website:** The PCEA website has continued to grow and change in 2015. Whilst a number of congregations have their own sites linked to the main site, the PCEA Website remains a first port of call from which a sizeable number then navigate to a particular congregational site. Various elements have been added but the statistics here show a downturn in the number of visitors to the site in 2015.

	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
2013	34,332	53,887 (1.56/visitor)	309,416 (5.74 pages/visit)	696,145	13.32 GB (259.14KB/visit)
2014	21,536	43,402 (2.01/visitor)	419,072 (9.65 pages/visit)	791,629	59.19 GB (1,430.08 KB/visit)
2015	14,516	26,239 (1.8/visitor)	600,414 (22.88 pages/visit)	921,609	46.66 GB (1,864.5 KB/visit)

Although there were fewer visitors again to the site in 2015, the average duration of stay has increased slightly from last year to 4.5 minutes and the number of pages visited by these fewer visitors has increased dramatically to 22 pages/visit. Hits on pages has also increased substantially. What this means is that we have a readership that is spending time, returning and exploring more of the site than previously. This is encouraging, but as mentioned in previous reports, the web feeds on content. What we need to bring in more visitors to the site (particularly that group who only quickly look and are gone in 30 seconds) is a steady diet of interesting material, new images from activities in the church and a sign that we are vital and alive in an active News and Views blog. Most of our visitors continue to come from the United States and Australia, with Germany and Great Britain, being the next most frequent for this year.

The Community pages remain and the number of users is growing, albeit slowly. We want to continue to promote this area of the site as a valuable place for general communication amongst members. It proved its worth this year during the establishment of the Missions Sponsorship Scheme as a forum for discussion and

establishing instant contact with our Indian brothers. It is hoped that the Community will also be a hub for a young adults group and a forum for discussion amongst those participating in the Elder's Course.

The draft Training of Ministry Committee's Elder's Course has also found a presence on the website and, pending its review under Training of Ministry business, will be accessible by those undertaking the Elder's Course in seminars or privately. The content will also appear as a PDF for download from the site. Links from here will direct participants to other online resources.

A wonderful collaboration with the Missions Committee and the General Treasurer has resulted in a major addition to the site in 2015: the Donations and Sponsorships Scheme (DSS) pages. From the launch of the scheme online in August, 2015, by God's providence, within the four months to December we have been able to set up ongoing sponsorships for 22 of an initial 29 students, as well as raise some supplementary monies for general missions work (money raised and sent will be reflected in Missions Committee accounts). In conjunction with the Missions Committee DSS coordinator, Mr John Greensill, we are now looking to expand the operation and seek the co-operation of the Free Church of Scotland. The scheme has the potential to be a focal point to help support funding for other Missions projects.

One dark note is that the site was hacked at the very close of the year. Nothing was vandalized, and certainly no financial details were accessed since all that information is stored off-line or on Paypal. Yet there were malicious files inserted and the site was compromised. Providentially, our provider, Webdoor, was very very prompt and locked down the site as soon as it was hacked. Still, it took a few weeks, with their help, to locate all the corrupted files and clean up. The site was reloaded from a backup and restored online by mid January 2016. Security has been increased with an auditing scan being done every week. The site is again working well, perhaps better than it was prior to the hack.

The archiving of material has continued in the year and we now have complete issues of many historical magazines, thanks again to the tireless work of Mr Robert Hingston and Rev. Dr Ward. A browse through these records is always rewarded with something fascinating.

To maintain the appeal of the site for the general public and for those of the congregations we need content. I again appeal to the delegates to make themselves familiar with the site and in turn make the site known to members of their congregations. Please encourage them to get involved in the Community as a first step and then get writing, reading, posting, commenting and make the site grow and blossom as a lively witness to our Lord within the denomination.

#### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCE:**

1. That the Synod commend the PCEA website to delegates and congregations and they be encouraged to participate in the life of the church online by active registration, collaboration and comment.

D. Kerridge (Webmaster)

# ARCHIVIST

Rev Dr Rowland ward

## Scanning of Magazines 1846-1913

Since last Synod further additions to the digital magazine archive at pcea.org.au have been made including a complete run of *The Free Presbyterian* 1875-81, magazine of the Free Presbyterian Church of South Australia, and the even more rare *Australian Witness* 1853-54. The important magazine *The Presbyterian* (1878-81, 1884-86), edited by Arthur Paul of St Kilda, should be up on the website soon. This will mean only *The Standard* (1859-61) and the broadsheet weekly newspaper edited by George Sutherland of St George's, *The Witness and Australian Presbyterian* (1872-74) and its successor *The Witness* (1877-84) remain for the period 1846-1913. At this point we do not have a copy of *The Standard* (although there is a copy in the State Library of Victoria) and while we have three recently bound volumes of *The Witness* 1877-78, 1878-89, 1880-81 in the archives, it will not be practical to scan such large pages.

Mr Alex Neil, who has been a great help in filling gaps in the Archivist's collection of magazines, has kindly given to the archives a hardbound copy of the *Australian Witness* (1853-54). It is the only copy known and is in good condition.

A complete run of *The Free Churchman* issued by "The Reconstituted Synod" 1883-93 has been assembled, and this can be added to the web site in due course.

## Magazines 1913-2015

In September 2015 we received from Doug Mackechnie, a son of the late former elder at St Kilda, Charles Mackechnie, a bound volume of the *Free Church Monthly* 1924-28. This volume along with 16 volumes bound uniformly in light blue covering the period 1928 to 1984 was lodged with Rev S. Bajema on 20 March 2016 as the Editor's reference set. The archive already has a complete run of all magazines during this period.

Over the next period we hope to see the national magazine for 1913-24 scanned as well as the issues of *The Presbyterian Banner* from its beginning in the present format in 1985 up to and including September 2006 as after this date it is already on the website.

## Conclusion

A comprehensive archive listing (excluding published books) appears in 2014 Synod Reports pages 21-25.

## PROPOSED DELIVERANCE

1. Synod records its appreciation to Mr Alex Neil, elder Mount Druitt, for assistance in locating missing copies of early magazines and for the gift of the *Australian Witness* 1853-54.
2. Synod records its appreciation to Mr Robert Hingston, deacon Ulverstone, for his detailed and painstaking work in scanning church magazines.

## **YOUTH AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE**

Members: A. Miranda (Convener), G. Hamilton, T. Reeve, and S. Carswell

This year (2017) Y&F committee has focused on particular ministries that have strengthen cooperative partnership in mission activities overseas.

### **Encouraging Youth to Serve Others**

Early this year the committee received overseas invitations for mission awareness and for urgent volunteering work in India (Teaching English). With regards to mission awareness the Y&F committee has promoted this initiative among local congregations with the commitment to provide some financial help for the trip to India. (See correspondence between John Greensill and Pradeep Kumar outlining the idea behind this initiative)

**From:** [Pradeep Kumar](#) **Sent:** Tuesday, January 12, 2016 5:53 PM **To:** [John Greensill](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Prayer Notes

Dear brother in Christ,

Thanks for your kind email. We are well by God's grace and trust and pray the same for you both and all the dear friends, prayer partners and supporters of PCEA.

We are excited to know the interest of the youth group of PCEA to visit Central India. We welcome them from the bottom of our heart and will be happy to spend time blessed and joyous time with them.

We see it as God's will for the next generation as well as better relationship and understanding. It would be a great opportunity for PCEA and PFC-CI. We have school holidays in our Christian schools from 23rd Dec. To 1st of January. We can spend ten very useful, blessed and fun time with them, will they be happy to celebrate Christmas and New Year with us? If so, it would be a great idea. During this time all the youths of our Churches come back to home from their studies and job, there are different kind of programs here during this time, not only spiritual activities but also social and fun time. We believe it would be a memorable time. If this plan suits, they can plan to arrive here by 20th of December, before this we would be busy in half yearly examinations in the school and Christmas preparations. We are not bothered about the size of the group, accommodation or catering, however, we would be very grateful if you please confirm how many young people are willing to visit us and how many days they want to spend with us. You can also suggest us what is their expectation, plan, and area they are interested in when they are with us. Please convey them our message that we are more than excited and happy to welcome them. We would try our best to use this time for the betterment of PCEA and PFC-CI. I will send you prayer points in the next email very shortly,

Kind regards, Pradeep

The second request is urgent and this too has been brought to the church's attention in order to meet this challenge (see, email from 8 March 2016).

### **Family Camp 2017**

Locally, and in consultation with other committee members we have also agreed that Elanora –Uniting Venues would be a suitable location for the PCEA Family Camp, starting from Tuesday 3 January to Friday 6 January 2017. The booking was confirmed on 20 August 2015. The Y&F committee is convinced that the Family Camp is an important event in the life of the church, which provides fresh opportunities for strengthening our fellowship and deepening our love for God and his Word. We thank in advance all those who are already planning to participate in this strategic program for church unity. Further details will be provided sometime during the year.

### **Essays**

In 2016 essays prizes were given to children from Brisbane, Ulverstone and St Georges congregations. The work submitted shows an impressive level of Bible-reading and Bible- understanding that will definitely produce joy and devotion in the spiritual development of children and young adults in the church. Sample of the Prescribe Work for 2016:

## Prescribed Youth Work 2016

### Metrical Psalms

Infants (7)  
Junior (8 -12)  
Senior (13 -17)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Certificate

Psalms 117/106:1-2, 47-48  
Psalm 8  
Psalm 47

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Certificate

107/131  
14  
16

### Scripture Memory

1<sup>st</sup> Certificate (Junior) Proverbs 30:24 –28  
2<sup>nd</sup> Certificate (Senior) John 4:16 –26

**The Beatitudes:** Matthew 5: 1 –12

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

Junior: Glasgow/Effingham

Senior: Kilmarnock/Ernan/Darwall's

**Catechism 1:** 1-10    2:11-20    3: 23-38    4:39-62    5: 63-88    6:89-107    7: 1-107 word perfect

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

### Essay Questions:

**Infants (7):** Read Ecclesiastes 12:1. The bible tells us to do something here? What is that? And when do we have to do it?

**Junior** (up to 400 words): Proverbs 30:24 –28 say that the ants, the coney, the locusts and the lizard are small, and weak creatures but they are wise. What can we learn from the ants? What do the locusts teach us? What can we learn from the coney? Why is the lizard wise?

**Senior** (1000 words): When Jesus was with us, he told us many things about God the Father. Read the following Bible passages and express in your own words the truths that these texts highlight about God (approximately 250 words for each)

1. Matthew 11:25 –27
2. John 4:16 –24
3. John 10:22 –29
4. Mark 12:28 –34

### Birthday Roll/Search Work

The Y&F Committee is very grateful to both Margaret Kinder and Irene Steel for their ongoing commitment to promote creative ways for our children to grow in the knowledge of Christ.

### PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:

1. Synod recognises the importance of giving special attention to children and youth in the Church and commits to keep praying for the 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 fun ways for children to learn the truths of the gospel.
3. In addition to the responsibilities of shepherding God's flock, Synod members are also invited to enthusiastically encourage church members to participate in the next Family Camp.
4. Synod through Youth & Fellowship Committee supports the decision to provide financial assistance (\$500) to young persons interested in seeing the activities of God and the church in Central India.

## 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. Central India
8. South America: Peru and Colombia
9. CWI UK and Australia

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

In 2015 AIM sought to continue to provide Gospel ministry, help and resources to our Aboriginal brothers and sisters across Australia. The year has been one of a process or assessment of ministries, recruitment of personnel and searching for the way ahead with a number of needs for additional mission personnel, and for a replacement for Trevor as he approaches retirement.

The Lord has graciously provided new personnel with a new mature couple now placed at Tennant Creek providing support ministry there, and also to Elliott on a regular monthly basis. We've had a young lady doctor based at Alice Springs whilst undertaking internship has held prayer meetings, bible studies and fellowship with folk who visit for appointments etc.

The NSW work is developing with growing relationships at a number of centres including Dubbo, Gilgandra, Walgett, Moree, Gulargambone, Pilliga, Warren, Goodooga and Wellington. The "Day in the Word" regular Bible teaching seminars held in Dubbo under the oversight of pastor David Cox continue to be well received and supported, and there are regular "Rivers Conventions" held each long weekend at the different centres. It is most encouraging to hear that there are a number fine young Christian men taking part and being encouraged to think about training for leadership role.

The Queensland based AIM Church Council has been suffering from a lack of leadership and they too are going through a reassessment process with a primary desire to have more Aboriginal folk in leadership roles. At present there are a number of South Pacific Islanders who have been called as pastors. Whilst this has been a great benefit in terms of having a regular preaching ministry and pastoral care, there has been a recognition that "the Islander way is not our way". This has been coupled with the need to provide financial support for a full time ministry with very limited resources.

The need for encouraging, seeking out and training suitable men for leadership remains a critical need, and one which Bob Quinn, our director for training, continues to pursue through developing a suitable curriculum to meet the needs.

Stephen Bignall continues to be a great help as Field Director and has worked hard at providing member care for both mission personnel and Aboriginal leaders. Mission Awareness Tours, overseen by Rob and Jenni Alley, continue to provide a vital link through connecting interested personnel with first-hand experience of what needs and opportunities exist on the field.

In September 2015, following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse in relation to the AIM Retta Dixon Home in Darwin in the 1970s, there has been a subsequent civil legal action launched against AIM and the Commonwealth by 83 claimants seeking compensation for injury whilst placed at the Retta Dixon home. Since Trevor has been involved in process from the beginning, and since this legal process could go on for quite some time, the AIM Council has unanimously sought to have Trevor to stay on until this matter is resolved, which he has agreed to do.

It has become obvious that to find a fully supported replacement for Trevor as General Director was not going to be an easy task. There have been those well suited and qualified but developing financial support for a CEO role has proved very difficult. In considering the future of AIM and the needs for recruitment and provision of

member care and administration, AIM has begun a process of conversation with another major international mission organisation. This mission agency is well represented in Australia, and has just committed to provide for ministry to Indigenous people in Arnhem Land through contact with Missionary Aviation Fellowship, in an area that used to be under the oversight of the Uniting Church. Conversation is at an early stage but it may well prove a very satisfactory way ahead, particularly for the AIM ministry amongst folk in the NT where many still live in a traditional lifestyle. Again the AIM Council has sought to have Trevor continue in his role with a view to progress this opportunity to a happy conclusion if possible.

Trevor had indicated that he would have liked to retire at the end of 2016, but with these two critical matters in process it seems best to defer retirement and reassess circumstances on a year to year basis.

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

By now, delegates of Synod should know Mukti Mission and the work it seeks to do in Christ's name. The work is multi-faceted and diverse. For 126 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. In Sanskrit, the word 'mukti' means freedom, liberation and salvation.

The PCEA have been privileged to have visits from Mukti women both in 2014 and 2015. The dedication and love for Jesus within these young girls was so transparent, deep and natural. It really was something beautiful and spoke volumes about their faith and confidence in the Lord Jesus. We also have been blessed by having Glenda De Jager as the National Director of Mukti Australia. Glenda and her staff have been instrumental in introducing Mukti to the Australian churches, thereby increasing sponsorships and raising much needed financial support for many projects.

In India, like many other places in the world, it's a constant challenge to provide the daily necessities of life. The cost of food, fuel, education and other basic necessities is always rising. With this in mind the Missions Committee decided to support five Mukti girls about seven years ago. This support is ongoing and provides a safe home where the girls are part of a family and receive healthy food, clothes, education, shelter and a loving family. The girls' need these things to realise their potential, so that they can go back into the community confident, equipped and ready to be the 'salt and light' God intended them to be.

Two of the girls of the initial five have left Mukti and we have taken on someone needy on both those occasions. I received some lovely Christmas letters from the girls – two of which are copied below.

Dear Presbyterian Church of Eastern

How are you? I hope you will be fine in name of Jesus I always praying for you. Thank you so much you are supporting me. Now I am studying special school. I learn to make a candle also I lots improving to speaking in English. I was so happy here take care at yourself. I always remember you in my prayer. In Christ Chhaya Shendge

Dear Aunty and Uncle,

Hope you are all fine. I wish you all in the name of Lord Jesus Christ. I'm so happy to get your sponsorship. Kindly pray for my health. I'm doing well in making baskets. I also enjoy playing flute. I'm waiting to meet you all some day. With love, Shital

There are a number of current projects such as The Good Harvest. This project focuses on water catchment and farming for Mukti's future. You can find details of this and other projects on the Mukti Australia website [https://www.mukti.org.au/ourwork.php#tab\\_projects#myModal003](https://www.mukti.org.au/ourwork.php#tab_projects#myModal003). Please encourage your congregations to think seriously about supporting a Mukti project. Many people will be helped and blessed and we can change a child's future as we support such worthwhile projects.

Please pray for more frontline staff. Pray fervently for the women, children and current staff of Mukti. Uphold Lorraine Francis - Mission Director & Anil Francis - Deputy Director who are the senior leaders at Mukti India. Both have a passion to serve the lowest and least in society. They have worked with Mukti for 28 years.

### 3. Dumisani Theological Institute (DTI) – (reported by Rev Peter Smith)

The face of DTI continues to evolve even after the return of the Principal, Rev. Dr. Alistair Wilson and his family, to Scotland in December 2014. Dr. Jack Whytock, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, is the acting principal. His other roles in DTI are Lecturer/Facilitator and Extraordinary Professor in the Reformed Study Unit, North-West University.

Dumisani continues its Bachelor of Theology degree through the North-West University. However, Dumisani is also pursuing accreditation for its own Diploma in Theology course. The aim is to complete this accreditation by the end of 2016.

The institute offers a variety of short courses, some on a foundational level and others on a more advanced level. These short courses will be suitable for men and women who want to grow in their knowledge of the Christian faith, or who want to be trained for the Christian ministry. Periodic Sunday school workshops to support the training of teachers and Bible study leaders continue as required. A short course entitled 'Foundations for Teaching' is also available to help people to become better teachers.

DTI is a non-profit organisation and depends on donations from churches and individual supporters. They need our help to pay staff salaries; to maintain, furnish and equip classrooms, administrative buildings and the library; and to meet the general running costs of the institute. Synod delegates need to encourage their individual congregations to pray for DTI's finances. In particular, the need to raise more support and develop new supportive relationships within South Africa and internationally.

Please pray that the Lord will provide the students he has chosen to study at DTI this year, and that he will provide the necessary finance to support them in their studies. Pray too, for the staff, that they maintain enthusiasm and encouragement that comes from serving the Lord Jesus Christ.

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



*Mariam teaching a chorus*

Mariam, who runs this centre for village children since her father died in 2013 (her mother died in 2009), wrote the following report. "Greetings to you in the name of Lord Jesus Christ Our Saviour. It's been a great pleasure being in partnership in working for his kingdom.

After the Lord called my dad to be with him, it's been a roller coaster with ups and downs. But He has been so faithful to us orphans. I would like to thank the Mission Committee to have given me this opportunity to serve in His kingdom. It's been 2.5 years working with PECA along with the help and guidance of ETANI (an organisation that assists with funding small NGO's). I would like to share the work in detail.

We are presently working among children in a village of north India. It's about 1.5 hr drive away from where we live. The Lord has used a group of people to help these children grow in their life and teach them about His word. As it is a Muslim and Hindu populated area we can't share the word very openly and they have madrasa- a place of Muslim education- very close to our TALEEM CENTRE (BAL SHIKHSA ETANI). We have 7 people working for us in the village on the Taleem centre project. We have about 30 regular children and many come when we give some snacks- it's difficult to say NO.

1. Mrs J (full name withheld) is the cook; she is not a teacher. She cooks and cleans for the children. She has been known to us for 6 years now. She came to worship at church when dad was taking worship services. She does know about Jesus but not as her personal saviour. But is open to sit and listen to His word

2. Mr. J is a kind and open minded man. I have seen very few Muslim men who would allow their wife to work. He is also working with us; he drives, so he takes me to the village, drives his wife when we have studies in the word, or need to meet to discuss about the work.
3. H helps us with cleaning and assisting J in the kitchen to cook daily for the kids; this is not one man's job.
4. S is H's daughter, very different from her mother. She teaches the children Urdu. She goes to school in the mornings and comes back at 3. Later at 4 she comes and teaches the kids. She is good with kids. I have not had a lot of time to personally interact with S other than things related to the kids. I see the difference between her and her mother. Different personality. Hardworking girl, I have never got an opportunity with her alone to share the word.
5. Sh is the main teacher, teaching English and math and science to the kids. He is talented and the kids like him and listen to him. He has a way with kids. He is doing his bachelors and is in his 3rd year of college. He also has some problem with his head; we keep him in our prayers. The doctors are trying to find what it is. He is honest with the work; he informs before talking leave. He also has a shop of mobile phone repair.
6. G is J's daughter. She helps in the Taleem centre when we need a hand; always ready to do anything we ask her to. She might be getting married soon. I am talking to her parents to wait till she is 18 or 20. I talked them out of it last year and prayed with them. She is wonderful girl.
7. Mr.M is back with us now after 6months with his family. He is a man with different talents. He is someone we can trust more than other workers. He has proved his dedication and honesty with the work time and again. Going to the village and spending few days there with the staff is something good that he can do. He is a believer and baptised. The staff is willing to hear his word.

I go to the village on Saturdays or Sundays. With gift money we could buy bags for the children; it is absolutely amazing to see how God works and gives what we need. Tomorrow I will go and distribute the bags to the children. The work has been going on very well by God's grace. The children are given nutritious food, snacks, fruits, games, stationery etc. I go every week to spend time with the children. We do colouring, singing songs, playing games etc.; the kids absolutely love it. Taleem centre is a place where they can relax play, laugh, enjoy, eat and drink. No doubt there have been a lot of challenges but nothing out of control. There was objection regarding teaching His word so we had to stop that; some parents stopped sending their children. I would like to thank PCEA for their support to this ministry, for having the faith in this work”.

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

Dr Dickson, an Interserve missionary, started the **Animal Wellness Centre** in 2009 at Goyla Dairy, Delhi. Through this centre he aims to bring strategic changes in this poor community. Besides providing animal health care, he runs a computer classes and a knitting training centre for the urban poor in order to bring sustainable changes. Dickson writes, “Continue to pray for the work at Goyla Dairy. Animal Wellness Centre is doing well in the New Year. Now we run tuition classes for village kids, computer coaching for girls, jute making and knitting work for slum women, besides treating animals. In December we had Christmas program in the office. Please pray for the young ones to have encounter with our Lord. Dickson also conducts livestock husbandry courses across North India in partnership with EFICOR and World Vision. Being based in Delhi he also coordinates mission conferences and student ministries.

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

Dr Tigi Verghis, an Interserve partner, has been serving with HIMserve in the Darjeeling Hills for 11 years. He has assisted many churches in development work like building roads, agriculture, primary health and youth work. His children are now in Hebron Christian School in South India. Tigi will be winding up work with HIMserve early this year. He will be taking on a role in the leadership team of Interserve India, and also working as a facilitator in teaching Christian leaders in South Asia. A group called Development Associates International (DAI) has asked him to join this team. Astrid, his wife, has a short term teaching assignment at Hebron School. Tigi is thankful that his serious health problems have been resolved with limited medication.

## 7. Central India (reported by Mr. John Greensill, letter from Pradeep Kumar)

Dear brothers and sisters, Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, (PCEA)

“May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 14:5-6).

As we write the report to the upcoming Synod of PCEA on behalf of Presbytery and Education Committee, we remember the previous synod. Certainly it was a great testimony of our brotherhood in Christ. As we moved one place to another, sharing about the work and need of the church and school; we were honored beyond what we really deserved. The visit did strengthen our union with Christ, and we still feel blessed by the visit. Thanks for arranging such a blessed experience for us.

The visit did produce many good things. One of those is certainly the Sponsorship Scheme. Good practical suggestions from the members of the mission committee were given time to time. As the scheme was being set up, we recognized that tremendous efforts had been put in the scheme from your side; of course you did more than what we did here. As a result of your kind labour, now we have 22 students sponsored by the members and churches of PCEA. The sponsorship scheme has benefitted the school and children greatly. It was encouraging to know how thankful the parents and sponsored children were when they were informed about the help which was coming through you. Also, one month deficit salary of the staff of school in Chhapara was met due to the scheme. Certainly, the scheme has brought us great hope, not only on financial sides of the school, but also towards the ministry of the gospel. Now the Christian staff of the school in direct position to influence the life the sponsored pupils and their parents through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Further, as the sponsorship scheme is set up online, we see a greater possibility of introducing this scheme to our sister churches in aboard, especially to members of the Free Church of Scotland. We are mindful that this will bring you some issue to deal with. However, we continue to hope of your kind support in this regard as well. In the future, we plan to upgrade the English Medium Section in Chhapara Mission School because it is not only the requirement of the time, but also it has the capacity to sustain the financial needs of the Hindi Medium department of the school.

We have also noticed that the available facilities of the school are not sufficient to increase more fees as well as attract and satisfy the parents of English Medium students in Chhapara. So we are steadily planning to improve the school campus and facilities. The school in Chhapara is also looking forward to have a volunteer English spoken teacher from PCEA to increase the quality of the English Medium Section of the school for a longer period of time.

Regarding the church work, we are humbled to see the way the Lord is blessings our churches and ministry of the Presbytery. 2015 was a special year in many ways. A new church building and parsonage had been constructed in the Vijaaynagar Jabalpur Church. Also, in the month of August the presbytery was able to appoint four church planters and two evangelists to extend the work of PFC is surrounding region. Thus far, the work of these servants is increasing despite of many challenges and threats from some fanatic groups. The presbytery is planning to purchase a piece of land in Kahani, near Lakhnadon, with hope to build a new church for the believers there. The second phase of Diploma in Theology course has also started with nineteen students enrolled, mostly coming with Pentecostal influence.

The Sunday School ministry among the non-Christian children and Adult new believers in Chhapara is also remarkable and fruitful, we thank for the used greeting cards we receive from the individual members of PCEA.

We are thankful to some of the members of PCEA for sending financial help to Mr. Ashok Das through the Rev. P. Kumar Memorial Trust, for the treatment of Prostate Cancer. It is really a great help for him and his family at the time of their need. Please remember him in your prayer.

We hope that this report will help you know the growth we had achieved by God’s grace but also continue through your financial support and prayer in school and church. We are thankful to all of you for being considerate to the needs of the school and church and supporting our ministry through your hard labour, valuable suggestions, generous gifts, and constant prayer. We know that there are many more people of PCEA

to be thanked for making such a valuable contribution to the ministry in Central India. We extend our heartfelt thanks to all of you and praying that the Lord may continue to use all of you for his glory and extension of his kingdom.

As you continue in this gathering of prayer and mutual encouragement, please know that our personal prayers and those of the Presbyterian Free Church of Central India and Education Committee of the Mission Schools in Chhapara and Lakhnadon are with you.

May God richly bless this Synod with His abundant grace. May the love of Christ draw you close to one another in fellowship. May the Holy Spirit renew you in faith for the great works of service that God is calling us in order to perform for His glory and Kingdom.

To God be the glory! Yours in Christ, Pradeep Kumar

## **8. South America - (reported by Mr. Ian Conley)**

### **Peru: *Colegio San Andrés***

The total enrolment in 2016 as at early March is 820 students. This is the effective limit to the capacity of the site. Professor Jesús Guzmán continues as Principal and with a senior leadership team run the school on a daily basis.

During the 2015/16 end of year break the three classrooms on the third floor of the school had to be moved to the second floor due to change in the Peruvian law that prevents classrooms for students being on floors above the second floor. This necessitated the library being moved and new classrooms being constructed.

This move and reconstruction exacerbated the constraints already imposed by the inner city site. Expansion of the school in its present form on its present site is not possible. The options considered to date include obtaining the use of another building for the infant's school thus freeing up space on the main campus, changing the site to bigger premises, 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.

There is a real need for further reinforcing of the English Department with native speakers of English. Catriona Macdonald from Scotland continues at the school and Hugh Varnes (St Georges) made a valuable contribution during 2015 to the work. 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. Is there anyone else from Australia able and willing to take up the challenge?

### ***Moyobamba:***

The March 2016 enrolment in the school is close to 270 and for this the Board is thankful. However the School needs a minimum of 300 enrolments to enable long term financial viability and flexibility with teaching staff.

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.

Basic improvements in the school have been completed including reroofing of classrooms and getting the Elementary School toilets and washrooms upgraded and in working order. An upgrade of the High School toilets and washrooms is planned for first term this year. The school has needed to take out a loan to complete this necessary work.

Hugh Varnes (St Georges) provided valuable assistance to the school in 2015. The opportunity for volunteer assistance at the school remains and is on a similar basis to that at San Andrés.

**Cajamarca:** The Christian Bookshop in Cajamarca, which was commenced by Hugh Varnes (St Georges) in 1968, continues under the auspices of the Peruvian Bible Society and staffed by Juvenal Pando and his son Fernando. The town has grown from 40,000 to 200,000 due to the mining expansion and now has an extension congregation of the IEPP. The long coming Spanish translation of a metrical version of the Psalms for singing has new life and is underway again.

**University Evangelical Seminary Lima (USEL):** The Rev Donnie Smith continues in the leadership post of Rector but with a new Board of Governance. This institution remains the leading facility for theological training in Perú and as such is of strategic importance. The aim is to keep the Theological Faculty “healthy” as well as develop degree courses in Administration, Psychology and Environmental Engineering and add at some stage a Post Graduate stream. The University “Laws” have had to be rewritten and added to. This is to meet Government requirements and there will be further changes and challenges during 2016 as the new institution takes shape.

**Colombia: *Fundación Universitaria Seminario Bíblico***

Dr Manuel Reaño continues at the Seminary and is authoring sections of Spanish language aids to Bible study. Patty Reaño remains heavily involved with *Fundacion Vinculo* and organisation dealing with and counselling for divorce, abuse, depression, relationship and sexual brokenness. The Reaños continue their counselling work with Pastors and their families as well as retreats.

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

Christian Witness to Israel maintains its focus on taking the Gospel to Jewish people, but is undergoing changes to make it more effective in a contemporary society. Some changes are:

- The Herald Magazine. As a cost saving measure this will now come out twice a year rather than quarterly, with a four page news-letter available in between. It will only be available outside UK as a PDF version. Contact [cwi.org.uk](http://cwi.org.uk) to subscribe.
- Finances. The ideal is for CWI in western countries to support its own workers. Consequently, missionaries in Australia need to be supported by Australian churches, although short term finance may be available from UK. This presents a significant challenge for churches here. The PCEA is one of very few churches to give financial support.
- Upgraded website. This contains many interesting and informative article – [www.cwi.org.uk](http://www.cwi.org.uk)
- New missions:

*The Netherlands:*

CWI's new worker in Amsterdam is Asaf Pelled, who was born in a Kibbutz to an Israeli father and a Dutch mother. He came to Christ after moving to the Netherlands as a boy. He wants to challenge Jews, “Whether this Jesus could make you a non-Jew if you believe in Him or otherwise whether He could make you a true, deeper Jew than you have ever thought possible.”

*Berlin:*

An outreach will be held in Berlin in July to reach the huge community of Israeli and Russian Jews. CWI is seeking volunteers who will be given 3 days of training followed by 12 days of outreach. Information is on CWI's website or contact PCEA Mission convener.

**CWI UK:** Rev Joseph Steinberg remains CEO of CWI UK and Rev Alex Cowie, a minister of the Free Church of Scotland, continues as Chair of Council.

**Australia: Council:** On 1st February 2016 Peter Kaldor became a member of CWI Australian Council and was elected Chair. He has a Jewish father and is the current national Managing Director of City Bible Forum, based in Sydney. He has a strong background in business and Christian ministries and is expected to make a significant contribution to furthering the work of CWI in Australia. Sydney: KayChan Park is on sabbatical leave, stepping back from CWI ministry and hoping to undertake further studies later in 2016. Give thanks to God for KayChan and Sue Park's 10 years of ministry in Australia and previous 8 years in Israel. Without KayChan and Sue Park there is now no missionary in Sydney. Melbourne: Stephen and Lana Holmes began work with CWI in January 2015. They are based in Ormond and their ministry is called Nechamah Melbourne

which comes from Isaiah 40 and has the meaning of comfort, solace, redemption. Stephen is an Anglican minister and he and Lana have 3 young-adult children. They also care for Lana's mother who has dementia. They are gradually making contacts with Jewish people, although it is a long, slow process. However, due to lack of financial support, Stephen is taking on part time ministry in a nearby Anglican Church during the first half of 2016 while they establish their CWI ministry.

Overall, despite the difficulties of the work and increasing anti-Semitism around the world, there are both encouragements and opportunities in Jewish ministry. Jean Paul Rempp, CWI missionary in Lyon, France, writes, "Many asked about the situation in France following the November killings and I always conclude by saying we are praying that what is happening in France will be used in the sovereign providence of God to open the hearts of the people to the gospel and that it might be the same for the Jewish people."

**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 2016 – 2017 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for the aforementioned period.

## MISSIONS BUDGET 2016

Missions Budget 2016								
General Funds	Budget 2015		Actual	2015	Budget 2016		Estimate 2017*3	
Balance 1 Jan 2015		29034		29034		18418		7418
(Miss Gen, DAA, AIM/Leggott)								
Income: Investments	14000		18330		16000		18000	
Giving Miss General	12000		3843		4000		6000	
Miss Sprt AIM	12000		12618		12000		12000	
Income *1	38000	38000	34791	34791	32000	32000	36000	36000
Expenditure								
CWI	3000		3000		1000		0	
AIM (TIL Salary) * 2	40400		40564		41100		42000	
Visiting Miss espenses	1000		0		500		500	
Dumisani Theo, Institute & Bible School	1500		1500		0		0	
Admin: Postage, 'ph etc	400		343		400		400	
Rounding			0		0		0	
Total Expenditure	46300	46300	45407	45407	43000	43000	42900	42900
Closing Balance		20734		18418		7418		518
IC 6 Mar 2016								

### 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 2016, For T I Leggott's Stipend is \$52700 split 22% to the Mc Swan MRF (\$11600) and 78% to Missions General/Leggott (\$41100), figures are rounded.

\*3 Except for the T I Leggott salary the budget for 2016 and estimates for expenditure in 2017 have been reduced drastically in line with the expected income.

MRF: \* 1 Using 2015 as the base year the expenditure on grants budget for 2016 have been reduced by 30% (rounded) with a further 30% (rounded) foreshadowed for the 2017 estimates.

\* 2 No reduction in 2016 allocation for Rev Leggott has been factored into the 2016 budget nor 2017 estimate. \*3 An extra payment of \$900 was inadvertently made to Mukti, the MC recommends that this be approved by Synod.

Account Balances 1 Jan 2016	
DAA Bequest	0
Missions General	18418
Missions Support Leggott/AIM	0
Total	18418
IC 6 March 2016	

<b>Malcolm McSwan Missions Relief Fund</b>									
<b>MRF Working Account</b>	<b>Budget 2015</b>		<b>Actual 2015</b>		<b>Budget 2016*1</b>		<b>Estimate 2017</b>		
Balance 1 Jan 2015		<b>8543</b>		8543		<b>1363</b>			3063
Income Investments	<b>16000</b>			19616		<b>16000</b>			16000
Other	<b>0</b>					<b>0</b>			0
Transfer fr Equities Ac	<b>35000</b>			25000		<b>25000</b>			15000
<b>Income</b>	<b>51000</b>	<b>51000</b>		44616	44616	<b>41000</b>	<b>41000</b>		31000
<b>31000</b>									<b>31000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>									
Lakhnadon Christian Hospital	<b>10000</b>			10000		<b>7000</b>			5000
Lakhnadon Mission School	<b>1500</b>			1500		<b>1100</b>			800
Chhapara Christian Health Centre	<b>2500</b>			2500		<b>1800</b>			1300
Chhapara Mission School	<b>2000</b>			2000		<b>1400</b>			1000
San Andres Scholarships	<b>6700</b>			6700		<b>4700</b>			3300
Annie Soper Scholarships	<b>2200</b>			2200		<b>1600</b>			1200
AIM (TIL Part Salary, SA/LSL levy) *2	<b>11400</b>			11456		<b>11600</b>			11700
Dr Dickson Allahabad	<b>2500</b>			2500		<b>1800</b>			1300
Taleen Centre (Dr Japla Hussein)	<b>10000</b>			10000		<b>7000</b>			5000
Mukti child sponsorships*3	<b>1800</b>			2700		<b>1300</b>			1000
Fees and Charges	<b>300</b>			240		<b>300</b>			300
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>50900</b>	<b>50900</b>		51796	51796	<b>39300</b>	<b>39300</b>		31600
<b>31600</b>									<b>31600</b>
<b>Closing Balance</b>		<b>8643</b>			1363		<b>3063</b>		2463
									<b>2463</b>

<b>Equities Account</b>	<b>Budget 2015</b>		<b>Actual 2015</b>		<b>Budget 2016</b>		<b>Estimate 2017</b>		
Balance 1 Jan 2015		<b>229361</b>		229361		<b>206173</b>			181173
Income Revaluation of shares & Managed Funds	<b>0</b>			1957		<b>0</b>			0
Income (Retained Investment Income)	<b>0</b>			0		<b>0</b>			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		1957	1957	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		0
<b>0</b>									<b>0</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>									
Transfer to McSwan Working Account	<b>35000</b>			25000		<b>25000</b>			15000
Revaluation				145		<b>0</b>			0
<b>Total</b>	<b>35000</b>	<b>35000</b>		25145	25145	<b>25000</b>	<b>25000</b>		15000
<b>15000</b>									<b>15000</b>
<b>Closing Balance 31 Dec</b>		<b>194361</b>			<b>206173</b>		<b>181173</b>		166173
									<b>166173</b>
<b>Total Funds Held McSwan Missions Relief Fund</b>		<b>203004</b>			<b>207536</b>		<b>184236</b>		168636
<b>Net Movement from previous year</b>		<b>-34900</b>			<b>-30368</b>		<b>-23300</b>		-15600
<b>IC 14 March 2016</b>									

## **INTERCHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

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

With the number of churches with whom we have a relationship growing; your committee is giving active consideration to devolving responsibility to individual committee members to maintain communication with assigned churches. Your committee has given some consideration to redefining the categories in our relationship with other churches. This will require more time. In the past we have said that the ICRC is where we would normally express our relationship, but given the changing ecclesiastical scene in Australia; and with a number of Reformed groups not in the ICRC, we propose to keep the matter under consideration with a view to reporting next year.

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

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

Nothing to report.

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

We look forward to welcoming and hearing from Rev. David Waldron from the Reformed Churches in Christchurch and member of their Interchurch Relations Committee.

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

Greetings have been received from the general secretary, Melle Ostererhaus. He states, 'Please receive our heartfelt greetings and our prayers for your continuing wellbeing. May your Synod be a fruitful one and may you receive all wisdom to make decisions pleasing to the Lord'. He informs us that his committee is currently reviewing their management of church relations in light of manpower and financial resources. They are considering in the future focusing on networks of churches (such as ICRC and its member conferences) rather than visiting individual synod meetings. Nonetheless they are open to consider an invitation to our next Synod when they would like to discuss how our mutual relationship might be given more 'body' in order to be more effective in God's kingdom.

#### **1:4 The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). 2007.**

An invitation has been received to attend the 83<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly planned to meet from June 8-14, 2016, at Sandy Cove Conference Centre in North East Maryland.

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

We look forward to welcoming and hearing from Rev. Graeme Hart, minister of the McKinnon congregation, Vic. Rev. Andres Miranda plans to represent us at the RPCA Presbytery planned for McKinnon on Sat 7<sup>nd</sup> May.

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

Nothing to report.

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

We hope it may be possible to welcome a representative from RPCNA. The original appointee had to decline because of family commitments.

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

Nothing to report

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

We look forward to welcoming and hearing from John Coles, elder in the Hobart congregation and clerk of the SPC Presbytery.

#### **1: 10 The United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA). 2015.**

Last year we agreed to extend Fraternal Relations to the URCNA. We look forward to welcoming and hearing from Mr. Douglas Field, a retired lawyer and elder from California.

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

### **2:1 The Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA).**

We look forward to welcoming and hearing from Rev. Andrew Nugteren, minister of the congregation in Toowoomba, Qld. We have had extensive discussions with the CRCA; especially since the ICRC meeting in 2013. This has helped to pave the way to where we are now, when we understand each other better than before. The CRCA would desire us to formalize our relationship with them. The CRCA has since 2000 included the PCEA as a church 'in full ecclesiastical relationship'. We were remiss in failing to acknowledge their correspondence at that time (in 2002 and 2004). They have also requested that we support and sponsor their reapplication to membership of the ICRC in 2017. This we are happy to recommend.

### **2:2 The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia (EPCA).**

Nothing to report.

### **2: 3 The Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia (PRCA).**

We look forward to having a representative from the PRCA with us. Our contact has resumed as a result of a meeting between Rev. Sjirk Bajema and Ken Stevenson (convener of their ICR committee) at the RCNZ Synod in Christchurch in 2014. It became clear that there had been a breakdown of communication on their part in the past. We welcome the fact that they still desire improvement in our relationship. We were pleased to receive an invitation to attend their Presbytery planned for Friday 29<sup>th</sup> and Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> April in Wangaratta. Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward has been appointed as our representative.

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

Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward who was appointed by the ICRC in Cardiff in 2013 as Convener for Regional Conferences in the Asia-Pacific region helped organize the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Regional Conference held in Korea during October 2013. See his report in Appendix 1.

The next Asia Pacific Regional Conference of the ICRC is planned for Melbourne in 2019.

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.

2.1 The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA) acknowledges its long association with the Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA) – a relationship dating back before their first Synod in 1952. We note that this relationship has never been formalized on our part, though delegates have been exchanged at Synod level over the years.

2.2 The Synod notes in reference to two points of concern that were recorded in the PCEA Synod minutes of 1987 and 1999 that the CRCA withdrew from the World Communion of Reformed Churches (into which the Reformed Ecumenical Council merged in 2012); and we believe the CRCA has done what it could reasonably do to overcome differences with the Free Reformed Church of Australia.

2.3 The Synod notes the constructive discussion that took place between representatives of our two churches in November 2013; the gracious invitation which was renewed by the CRCA in 2014 to formalize the relationship between our two churches; and note that the CRCA since the Synod 2000 has recognized the PCEA as a church in full ecclesiastical relationship.

2.4 The Synod therefore cordially extends Fraternal Relations to the CRCA in the following terms: - Fraternal Relations should exist between Churches that openly and practically profess the true faith of Christ as summarized in one or more of the classical Reformed symbols e.g. The Westminster Confession of Faith, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, the Canons of Dort.

Certain duties and courtesies devolve upon churches sustaining fraternal relations.

A. There should be a spirit of cordial love and trust as becomes brothers in the faith.

B. There should be an attitude of mutual helpfulness. Each should be willing to share problems and difficulties with the others. By the same token each should be allowed to exhort to more exact obedience any who appear to relax faithfulness to their avowed confession. This should not invite an inquisitorial interference but to strengthening one another in love for Christ.

C. There should be willingness to accept certificates of communicant membership, normally without examination.

D. There should be in the highest courts of the Churches a cordial welcome to visiting delegates from other Churches recognized as in fraternal relationship. This need not amount to according membership in the court to the visiting delegate.

E. There should be a willingness to allow ministers of one Church access to the pulpits of fraternal Churches as a matter of courtesy.

F. Churches should exchange copies of the Acts and Proceedings of their highest courts or at least inform one another of major decisions.

2.5 Synod supports the admission of the CRCA to membership of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) when it is scheduled to meet in Canada in 2017.

2.6 Synod note that the next Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the ICRC is planned for Melbourne in 2019 and invite the CRCA to participate on an equal basis with the PCEA in hosting the event; and expresses the hope that this will enhance co-operation between the two churches for mutual benefit and the furtherance of the cause of Christ.

3.1 Synod note that the next meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches is planned to meet in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada in 2017.

3.2. Synod acknowledges the work of Rev. Dr. R.S. Ward in assisting the organizers of the fifth Asia Pacific Conference 2015 in Korea.

Appendix 1.

**Report of the 5<sup>TH</sup> ASIA-PACIFIC REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES, 13-16 OCTOBER 2015**

As agreed at a meeting of the delegates from the Asia Pacific region at the ICRC meeting in Cardiff, UK in September 2013, the 5<sup>th</sup> Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the ICRC was hosted by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea with the theme of the Sacraments.

Delegates were accommodated in the Hoam Faculty House at Seoul National University which is on the bus route direct from Incheon Airport. Each day the delegates were conveyed the 18kms to the facilities of the Riverside Church at Anyang south of Seoul where also most meals, including breakfast, were provided by a happy and capable staff of volunteers.

Each of the ten ICRC churches in the Asia-Pacific region was represented. Observers were also present from several other churches along with representatives of ICRC member churches in The Netherlands, Canada, USA and South Africa who have mission interest in the region. Including about 70 delegates from the churches, the total number attending the Conference was about 170.

The Conference was opened with welcoming greetings by the Convener of this regional conference, Rev. Prof. Heon Soo Kim of the IRCK, and followed by worship conducted by Rev. Byoung Kil Chung, minister of the Riverside Church. Farewell greetings were then brought by Rev. John Goris who had been the Convener for Missions Committee of the ICRC for many years and facilitated the past four Asia-Pacific Regional Conferences. Rev. Dr Rowland Ward, the Convener for Regional Conferences of the ICRC appointed in September 2013 by the ICRC Cardiff, expressed appreciation for Brother Goris' long and faithful service given unobtrusively and beneficially since 1997.

Dr. Ward outlined the aim of the Regional Conference to benefit the wider church, particularly through producing useful materials for village pastors following the meeting. We need to remember we are here to serve the church.

While the major papers had been provided in electronic form before the Conference, all participants were provided with two properly bound volumes of these along with the text of most devotions and church introductions. These documents had been translated into Korean. This was of great benefit for the Korean brothers, and the translations were also projected on a screen for the benefit of the significant number of men and women from the Independent Reformed Church who were present during most sessions.

The theme was the Sacraments and this was addressed in several ways: through three devotions at the beginning of each day, ten devotions during the sessions by those representing their church federation, three evening lectures (by Rev. Professor Dr. Mohan Chacko, Rev. Dirk van Garderen and Rev. Professor Dr. Hae Moo Yoo) and three bible studies, prepared by Rev. Professor Heon Soo Kim, and group discussions on these. These, especially the last paper, stimulated considerable discussion. Clearly, the programme was very full but it worked very well, and it is hoped that the aim of the Conference mentioned above will be fulfilled.

The organization of the Conference by the Independent Reformed Church in Korea has set a fine benchmark for the future. As well as valuable opportunities for net-working, there was a visit on Thursday to Holy Covenant Independent Reformed Church and Press in central Seoul where a wonderful lunch was provided. A visit was also paid to Yanghwajin Foreign Missionaries Cemetery in Seoul and a closing festive meal and concert was held on Friday evening. A wonderful team of helpers has ensured smooth running throughout the Conference. New relationships have been made and old ones renewed and strengthened. We give thanks to the Lord who blessed the gathering and gave us the privilege of learning and praying around his Word. (RSW).

# SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

R Tso (Convener 2015), Messrs P. Smith, J Audet, D Ramsay

## A: SUPERANNUATION

### 1. Church Contributions to Superannuation

*1.1 Superannuation Levy on congregations:* Refer to 4. Superannuation Review herein.

*1.2 Superannuation Support Fund & Superannuation Levy Account:*

a. *The Superannuation Support Fund (SSF) Capital Account* balance as at 31/12/15 was \$215,108. This was decrease of \$276 (0.1% on the 2014 balance) The fund arises from specific legacies and forfeited benefits under earlier no longer existing provisions. The intention of the fund is to support the levy account from time to time.

*The SSF Working Account* balance as at 31/12/15 was \$9,096 after providing \$9,358 for Rev TI Leggott's superannuation contributions.

b. *The Superannuation Levy Account* balance as at 31/12/15 was \$13,922 after paying contributions totalling \$86,314 to ministers' nominated superannuation funds.

**2. Contributions to ministers' accounts:** Refer to 3. Superannuation Review herein.

**3. 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.

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

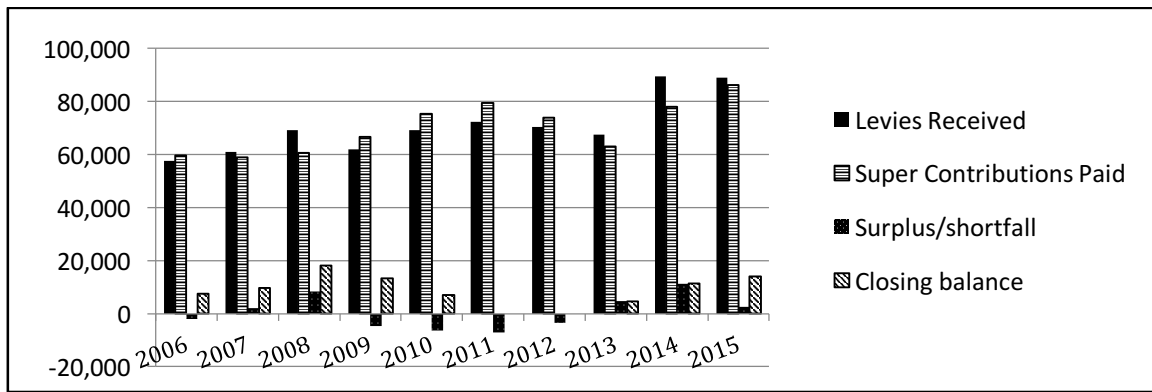
*3.2 Performance:* The net return on HESTA Core Fund for twelve months ending 30/9/15 was 6.5% Historical performance as at 30<sup>th</sup> September for the past 5 years was 8.6%.

*3.3 Regulations:* The Committee indicated, in last year's report, a review was anticipated. A review to investigate the viability of the current system for our ministers' superannuation has therefore been conducted.

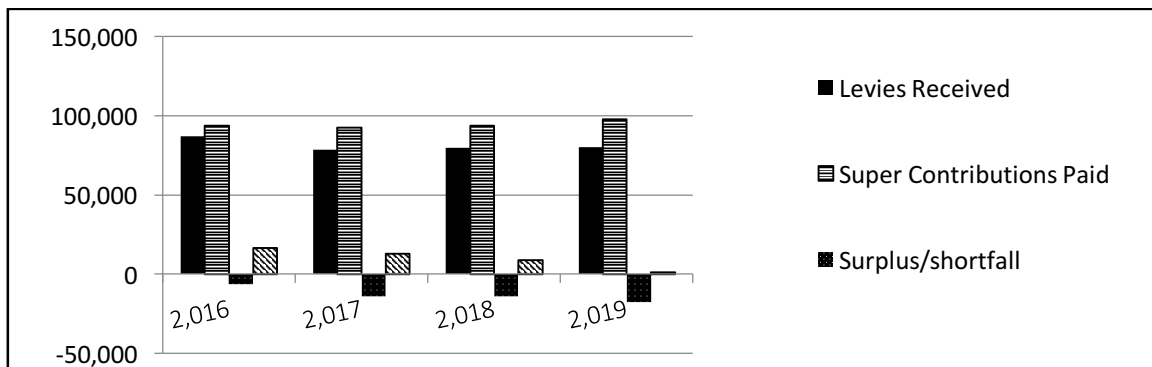
Current situation: The current position is that for the first three years of service the contribution to a minister's superannuation is 10% of minimum stipend, rising to 12% after the end of the quarter in which a man attains 3 years of service, and to 18% after the end of the quarter in which he attains 5 years of service, reducing to 9.5% from the end of the quarter a member attains 70 years of age and to nil from age 75. The current levy for all self-supporting charges is 14.5%, aid-receiving charges is 10.50%, and vacant charges 5% of the minimum stipend.

While we are thankful to God that we have more ministers who have been serving in our denomination for 5 years or more, with less vacant charges at the moment, the current "pooling system" is becoming less sustainable, as most congregations are paying a superannuation levy of 14.5% while their ministers are receiving superannuation contributions of 18%, this is also inequitable.

The chart below shows the volatility during the past 10 years in levies received and superannuation contributions paid under the present system.



A shortfall of approximately \$ 6,336 in levies received/superannuation contributions paid is estimated for 2016 and future projections are that this deficit will continue to increase as our remaining ministers reach 5 years of service. Below is an estimate for the next 4 years:



The current system is not therefore only unsustainable, but inequitable. After reference to other denominations’ superannuation policies (PCNSW at 15.5%, PCV at 15%, UCA at 14.5%), and current regulations the Committee recommends an amended model as follows:

**Superannuation contributions for ministers**

A flat rate for all ministers, up to age 70, of 16%.

Maintaining the current government regulated superannuation guarantee level of 9.5% for ministers between the ages of 70 and 75.

Maintaining the current government regulated superannuation guarantee level of 9.5% for ministers and licentiates providing full time residential pulpit supply.

The rate is to be reviewed annually.

**Superannuation levies on congregations**

- For self-supporting congregations: 16%\*
- For aid-receiving congregations: 9%
- For vacant congregations: 3%

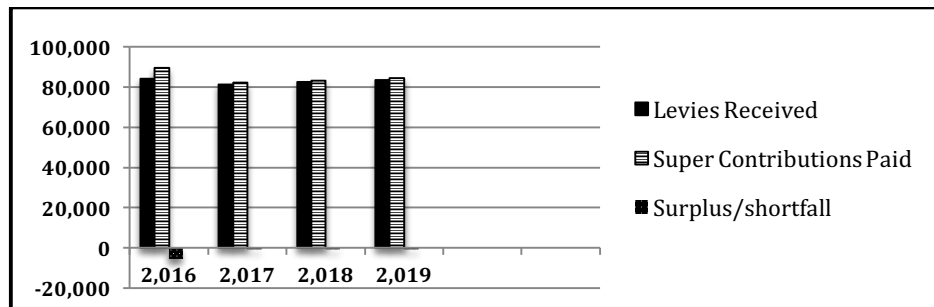
An interim period to be introduced to help congregations to ease into the new system better. Therefore, in this coming ecclesiastical year, 15% for the first year for all self-supporting charges, and 9% for aid-receiving charges and 3% for vacant charges.

In actual terms, this will mean an 0.5% increase in superannuation levy for year 2016, and 1% for year 2017.

\*However, in situations where the number of aid-receiving congregations rises, the Committee may request all congregations to contribute additional 1% for self-supporting, and 2% from vacant charges.

### Superannuation levy figures review update

In order to provide a more accurate figure for superannuation levy for congregations, the committee recommends that the levy figures be reviewed and adjusted in line with the stipend review, which occurs sixth monthly in lieu of annually.



The chart above shows that the interim period (year 2016) will have a shortfall of \$5,561. However, the following years will only have a short fall of less than \$830 each year. Also, the above chart is taking two aid-receiving charges and estimated increased stipend into consideration.

### 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

To be amended as detailed in “3.3 Regulations” above.

#### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES:**

1. The Superannuation Levy on congregations be reviewed and adjusted on 1<sup>st</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> January in accordance with the minimum stipend review. The figures to be advised by the Committee in due time.
2. The current system of stepped superannuation contributions for ministers based on years of service be replaced by a flat rate of superannuation contribution of 16% for all inducted ministers in a charge up until the age of 70 years. Maintaining the current government regulated superannuation guarantee level of 9.5% for ministers between the ages of 70 and 75 years.
3. The Superannuation Levy be:  
From 1/7/16 to 30/6/17
  - Self supporting congregations: 15%
  - Aid receiving congregations: 9%
  - Vacant congregations: 3%  
  - Rising to 16% for self supporting congregations from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017.
  - In situations where the number of aid-receiving congregations rises, the Committee may request all congregations to contribute additional 1% for self-supporting, and 2% for vacant charges.

4. Handbook regulations be amended by replacing:

***SECTION B - THE FUNDS ADMINISTERED***

with:

**“1. Superannuation Levy**

With effect from 1 July 2016 all self supporting congregations pay an annual base levy of 5.5% of minimum stipend increasing to 6.5% from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2017 for each minister in the charge. In addition to the base levy, each congregation with an inducted or supply minister pays the equivalent of the *Superannuation Guarantee* (SG) for each of its ministers as required by government legislation (9.5% of minimum stipend as at 1/7/16). The annual levy for Aid-receiving congregations being 9% of minimum stipend and vacant congregations 3.00%. In situations where the number of aid-receiving congregations rises, the Committee may request all congregations to contribute additional 1.00% of minimum stipend for self-supporting, and 2% for vacant charges.”

and

***CHURCH CONTRIBUTIONS***

with:

“ 5. With effect from 1 July 2016 the contribution for inducted ministers is 16.00% of the minimum stipend until the age of 70 years. From the beginning of the quarter following a member’s attainment of age 70 years the current government regulated *Superannuation Guarantee* (SG) applies (9.5% of minimum stipend as at 1/7/16).

For an ordained PCEA minister eligible for call giving full time residential pulpit supply the current SG is to be paid; all others giving pulpit supply the SG is to be paid on actual earnings so long as they meet the legal threshold (\$450 per month as at 1/7/16).”

5. 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 *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics and the *Consumer Price Index (CPI)* the committee recommends the current level (\$1,010 per week) and basis of review of the minimum stipend be continued.

### **2. Stipend Relief**

Requests for Stipend Relief were received from Southern Presbytery totalling \$27,000 (Narre Warren \$12,000 and Ulverstone \$15,000). The balance of the Synod *Stipend Relief Fund* as at 31/12/15 was \$16,238. It is therefore recommended that all applications made for stipend relief be:

- Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
- Be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
- Subject to the availability of funds.

It is also recommended this need be brought to the attention of all Deacons' Court and they be encouraged to contribute, if possible, to the Synod *Stipend Relief Fund* so as to assist in filling this possible need of these two Deacons' Courts.

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

As at 31/12/15 assets totalled \$792,244 which was an increase of \$665,300 (524%) on 2014 and included an outstanding loan of \$12,900 granted to the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court.

The increase in assets resulted from interest received, share dividends and revaluations, the annual \$50 rent from St Georges Deacons' Court, and part proceeds of the sale of the Armidale church and accommodation complex. The property was sold for \$715,000 (plus GST) with net proceeds amounting to \$686,863. These funds were applied to *The Capital Assistance Fund* (\$636,863) and *Synod General Fund* (\$50,000) vide Synod minute 2012.19. A further \$24,137 was credited to the *Capital Assistance Fund* coming from a refund of insurance premium paid (\$1,263), water consumption (\$54) and the balance of Working Funds (\$22,928) held by Northern Rivers Deacons Court in relation to the Armidale property.

At the time of writing this report (11<sup>th</sup> March) a copy of an Overture by Brisbane Session was received from Northern Presbytery, seeking approval to borrow in "the order of \$500,000" to help in the purchase of a permanent manse for the minister and his family in a location that would assist in the extension of the Lord's work in the centre and denomination in the longer term. Additional information was sought from the Deacons' Court to enable adequate consideration by the committee but this was not to hand in time to be included in this report. In terms of Handbook – *Capital Assistance Fund page 90 (6)* - the Committee will formulate its recommendation(s) and distribute it to Synod commissioners for their consideration prior to the commencement of Synod.

#### **Loans –**

As at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 \$12,900 was outstanding on a loan of \$15,000 granted to the Hunter-Barrington Deacons' Court by Synod 2015. The loan is being repaid by \$300 per month.

#### 4. Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC)

The *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission* (ACNC) was established by the former Commonwealth Government but in December 2013 the then Federal Social Services Minister revealed plans for a *Centre for Excellence* to replace it. However, on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2016 the incumbent Minister for Social Services and Minister for Small Business and Assistant Treasurer, jointly announced the ACNC was to be retained.

As a consequence it is recommended our regulations for Congregational *Financial Records & Auditing* (Handbook 3.15) be reviewed to take into account relevant obligations as detailed in the ACNC legislation. In particular noting *Charity Size* (Small charities – annual revenue is less than \$250,000) *Financial Reporting Obligations* (Record keeping/Annual Information Statement/Financial Reporting/Review or Audit). It is optional for small charities to submit annual financial reports and there is no obligation to have a *Review* or *Audit* of them. Nevertheless we recommend we continue with our current requirements that books of account be audited but provision be made to adopt the more recent practice of a *Review* by qualified persons as set out by ACNC – less scrutiny but also less cost.

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

Estimates have been made for the major working funds to 31/12/16 – See Appendix “A”

### **PROPOSED DELIVERANCES**

1. We record our thanks to God for temporal blessing for another year and pray for wisdom in the administration of such in 2016.

2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2016/2017 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. Stipend Assistance for 2016/2017 be granted to Deacons’ Courts as follows:

\$12,000 Narre Warren

\$15,000 Ulverstone

\$27,000 Total

- Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
- Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1<sup>st</sup> January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
- Be subject to the availability of funds.

4. Presbyteries bring the need of Synod in meeting requests for Stipend Relief to its members. That Deacons’ Courts be encouraged to contribute to the Synod *Stipend Relief Fund*, if possible, for this purpose.

5. The Synod Finance Committee review the current legislation for *Congregational Financial Records & Auditing* (Handbook 3.15) taking into account relevant obligations as detailed in the *Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission* and report to Synod 2017 with updated draft regulations.

6. Committee recommendation(s) regarding a request by Brisbane congregation for financial assistance from the *Capital Assistance Fund* to be distributed to Synod Commissioners prior to the commencement of Synod.

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# GENERAL TREASURER

## 1. Financial Needs

All financial needs of the Synod were adequately provided for during 2015 with total funds increasing by \$661,365 (50%) to \$1,971,188 after allowing for \$264,401 held on behalf of others (Mission Fields, GST, Congregation Bequests etc.)

Net changes occurred in:

Capital Funds	\$ ( 32,025)
Working Funds	\$ 693,390
	-----
Net Increase in Funds	\$ 661,365
	=====

The decrease in Capital Funds resulted from the revaluation of investments held in equities (Shares in individual companies and Managed Funds) as at 31/12/15.

The main contributing factor in the net increase in Working Funds was the net proceeds received from the sale of the Armidale church complex and working funds held totalling \$ 711,000 (see details in *Finance Committee* Report - "3. The Capital Assistance Fund").

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

Contributions of \$25,347 by congregations to Synod Funds during 2015 decreased by \$5,487 (18%). Givings of \$21,886 to other Specified Missions increased by \$11,991 (84%). 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 General Working Funds received \$50,000 as part of the proceeds from the sale of the Armidale property as detailed in the *Finance Committee* report and a most generous donation of \$5,000 from Northern Rivers Deacons' Court resulting in a balance of \$56,866. as at 31/12/15. Receipt of these funds will assist greatly in Synod being able to meet ongoing administrative expenses etc.

## 4. Books of Account Audit

An unqualified audit report of the books of account has been obtained from Mr Richard W Partlett A.C.A., GPA Accountants and is included in the published Financial Statements.

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**FINANCE COMMITTEE - APPENDIX "A"**

**BUDGET - SYNOD MAJOR WORKING FUNDS  
for twelve months ending 31/12/16**

Fund	Balance as at 31/12/2015	Estimated Income Int/Divnd s to 12/16	Estimate d Givings & Other	Estimated Expenditur e to 12/16	Estimate d Surplus (Deficit)	Estimate d Balance 31/12/16	Estimate d Deficit Balances 31/12/16
Capital Assistance Fund	779,344	20,000	3,600		23,600	802,944	
Church Extension	1,271	70	50	1,391	-1,271	0	
Stipend Relief	15,671	1,800	3,000	13,500	-8,700	6,971	
Missions - General	18,418	16,000	4,000	2,436	17,564	35,982	
Missions - (Legg/AIM)	0	0	12,000	40,564	-28,564	-28,564	-28,564
Miss Relief (Equities)	206,173	0	0	25,000	-25,000	181,173	
Miss Rel (Working Fnd)	1,363	16,000	0	39,300	-23,300	-21,937	-21,937
Training of Ministry	172,294	9,000	500	6,510	2,990	175,284	
Youth & Fellowship	11,421	1,900	750	1,250	1,400	12,821	
General Funds	56,866	1,500	2,500	0	4,000	60,866	

Notes:

1. The estimated deficit of \$28,564 in Missions (Leg/AIM) as at 31/12/16 to be covered by:

Missions General	35,982
Less: Missions (Leggott/AIM)	<u>-28,564</u>
Net Estimated balance of Missions Wkg Funds as at 31/12/16 \$	<u><u>7,418</u></u>

2. A Sale of equity investments of say \$25,000 will cover the estimated deficit of \$21,937 in Missions Relief (Working Funds)

**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 2015.

**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 2015:

- 10/08/15 - Cert of Title Id 3/837007 – Sale Armidale church/manse complex.

**Common Seal Applications**

Applications during 2015 were:

No.	Date	Document Executed
237	29/06/15	Contract – Sale 35 Kirkwood St, Armidale church/manse complex
238	23/10/15	Transfer - Sale 35 Kirkwood St, Armidale church/manse complex

**Investments: Specified Capital Funds (Bequests) - Review of Results as at 31/12/15**

**Diversification**

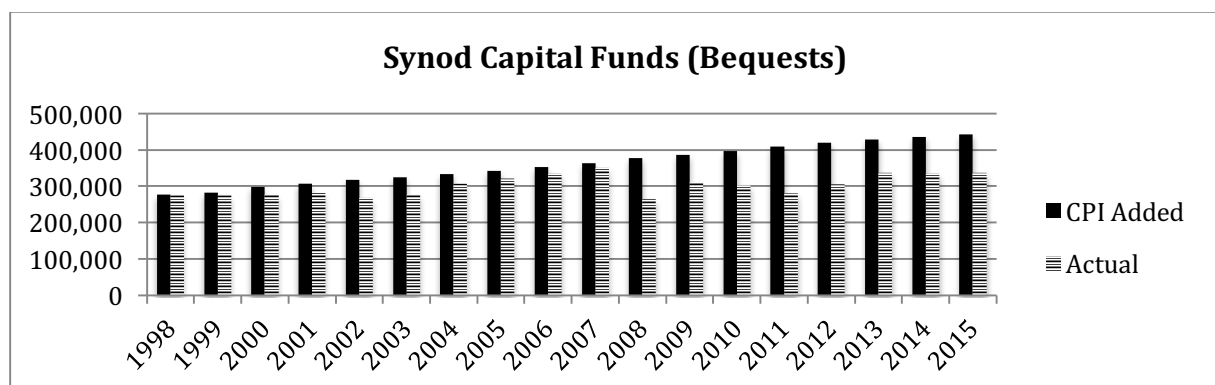
Actual as at 31/12/15		Asset Class	Investment Strategy	
Amount	Percentage		Benchmark	Range
148,484	44%	Cash (Banks)	5%	5% - 10%
0	0%	1 <sup>st</sup> Regd Mtges	30%	20% - 40%
0	0%	Debentures	15%	10% - 25%
188,007	56%	Shares/Units	50%	40% - 60%
336,491	100%		100%	

No change in the spread of investments was made during 2015.

**Return:**

**Growth –**

Total Trust Funds (Specified Capital Funds) only increased by \$598 (0.18%) during 2015 against a Target of 1.7% (CPI). “Real value” (keeping up with inflation) was not therefore achieved. When CPI is taken into account since 1998 total Capital Funds lag behind by \$106,769 ( 24%) as at 31/12/15. The following chart shows we are slowly “recovering” from the effects of the GFC in 2008 but little change has been achieved in the past three years.



**Income** – Income of \$19,292 represented a return of 5.74% against a Target of 3.11% (2015 Average Official Cash Interest Rate of 2.11% 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 in the financial sector).

*Investment Strategy Objectives* – not achieved in *Growth*, at only 0.18% but exceeded in *Income* by achieving a 5.74% return.

.....

**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 2015.

**Proposed Deliverances:** Nil.

**THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA OF**

# THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA [TVIC]

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

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

## 1. Property Holdings

No changes since the full listing last year.

## 2. Bequests

The Ulverstone Congregation received an unrestricted request of \$5,000 from the estate of Morva (Bunny) Elson, an original member who died on 5 May 2015.

## 3. Students Bonds

In October 2015 Mr Denver Boehret repaid the loan of \$40,000 in full. The allowance of \$15,000 granted to him was discounted as per regulations by 20% in view of his year of service since licence and also repaid. Receipts in discharge were provided by the Synod Treasurer.

## 4. Contents of Custody Packet at NAB Eastwood

The last three-yearly Report (as required by Synod 2008) was made to Synod 2014 following inspection September 2013, but should have been done in time for Synod 2013. The next inspection should therefore be made in 2016 to put us back on the cycle.

## 5. Common Seal Applications during 2015

No.	Date Executed	Executed by	Document Executed	On behalf of
111	8/12/15	TIL/RSW	Authority to settle building dispute re Glen Huntly	Knox

The building dispute was settled in our favour at VCAT on 8/12/2015 with settlement proceeds of \$300,000 due on 8/3/2016. They were received on 3/3/2016.

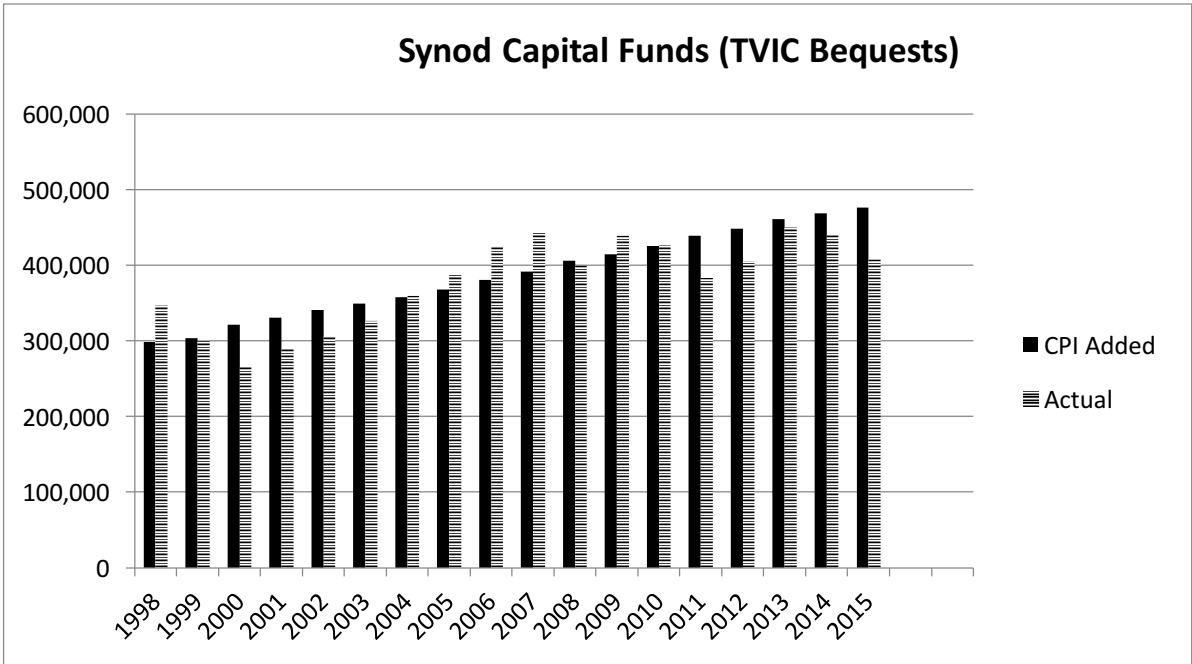
## 6. Investments

Current low interest rates are seriously affecting many individuals and charities who rely on investments. Current returns from fixed deposits are around 2.6 – 3.0%, not even covering typical real inflation. The only option in many cases is equity investment in shares of some of our well-established companies where returns of 8% including tax credits are readily obtainable, but at the risk of short-term fluctuation in value up or down. This is not a major issue where holdings are long-term. Also if holdings are realized at a loss down the track one has to take account of the higher income they have generated while held.

There is always fluctuation in values and a negative result is normal every few years. Volatility has been much higher than normal in much of 2015 and into 2016. Taking an overall view we note that, apart from the investment made in 2014 in Bank of Queensland which has done well (up 14%), overall our capital value has declined this year. A major casualty of the ‘oil crisis’ was our investment in Origin Energy which dropped 58%. It is still well above what we paid (\$13,037.50) in 1999/2005. We continue to monitor performance. No change in the benchmarks approved in 2014 (Cash 35%, Equities 75%) is proposed.

TVIC's Investment Strategy's Objectives as approved by Synod are

- To grow Bequest Funds by the rate of inflation. Inflation was 1.7% for year ended 31/12/15. The result in 2015 was minus 7.35%.
- To achieve income from Bequest Funds of 1.00%pa above the Official Cash Rate set by the Reserve Bank of Australia. - Cash Rate 31/12/15 was 2.00%. The result was 6.11%.



**PROPOSED DELIVERANCE**

Synod commend to our people giving by bequest to aid the extension of the Gospel in Australia and overseas.



**Correspondence Item 1**  
***SOUTHERN PRESBYTERY***

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

**2 HADLOW DRIVE,  
WANTIRNA 3152  
T: 03 9720 4871 M: 0421 823 231  
E: ROWLAND.WARD@GMAIL.COM**

7 March 2016

Clerk of Synod,  
PCEA

Dear Brother,

At a duly constituted meeting of Southern Presbytery on 5 March 2016, *inter alia*, The Presbytery took up the matter of the overture brought forward by Mr Bajema. It was moved and seconded, and agreed to on a 4-3 vote with 1 abstention, to forward the Overture noted below to Synod 2016. Dr Ward dissented from this decision on the grounds that the overture lacked clarity and tended to confuse things that differ.

Mr Bajema was appointed to state the Overture.

Extracted from the records of Southern Presbytery,

Rowland S. Ward, Clerk

**Overture Regarding Stipend Relief**

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia meeting May 3-5, 2016, at Mt Druitt PCEA, New South Wales:

WHEREAS

- 1) There is a present inequality amongst our congregations regarding the access to investments, assets, and other monies held under Deacon's Courts. This means that while there are congregations larger in number than other congregations, and who give more in their plate offerings more than other congregations, yet by means of their lack of resources in investments, assets, and other monies held in their Deacon's Court, are required to request Presbytery to go to Synod, which may not have the funds available;
- 2) There are situations that have arisen and presently exist where congregations and mission posts are funded independently of aid granted through a request to the Presbytery to Synod because of a single Deacon's Court. This means that there are situations where a congregation or mission post is not financially accountable to Presbytery and thus to Synod;

NOW THEREFORE we respectfully overture the Synod to take these premises into consideration and so move that this may be the united position amongst us all that in regards to Stipend Relief of a congregation that does not have the resources or assets within its Deacon's Court to continue paying all of her minister's stipend, that:

- 1) Appeal must first be made to the Presbytery to which the said congregation belongs. Presbytery is to consider this request and if it deems it lawful use Presbytery funds available or/and encourage the Deacon's Courts of those congregations within the Presbytery blessed with assets and investments to help support the said congregation. This is consistent with the Presbyterian understanding that all within the denomination is shared together.
  - 2) If a Presbytery and/or the Deacons' Courts within the bounds is unable to so support a congregation for the matter of Stipend Relief, after deeming it a lawful request, the matter is passed on to Synod or the appropriate Synod Committee, but not only to possible access from the Synodical fund for Stipend Relief, also for possible support from other Deacon's Courts within the wider denomination, which are blessed by our Lord to be in a position to support gospel work in this way.
  - 3) In future this would be the way all aid-receiving congregations to present their requests for assistance and so there is no inequality between the brethren but that all may be received, prayed for, and helped in an equal way;
- or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom may seem best.

END

## Correspondence Item 2



### *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 March 2016

Dear Sir,

Below is an extract minute (unconfirmed) from the duly constituted meeting of Central Presbytery at Raymond Terrace, NSW on 8 March 2016. This minute relates to a petition from Mr Stewart Upton of Anna Bay, NSW.

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

To The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

This petition of Douglas Stewart Upton, Trustee of the Union Church at 4187 Nelson Bay Road, Anna Bay vide Deed of Trust dated 11/4/1933, respectfully shows;

**THAT WHEREAS** the former Union Church at, Anna Bay was constructed in the 1930's using funds contributed by the members at Anna Bay of the Church of England, Methodist and Free Presbyterian denominations, with each group having the right to appoint up to two Trustees from among its worshippers;

**AND WHEREAS** Title Deeds to the property have always been held on behalf of the Trustees by the Newcastle law firm now known as Sparke – Helmore Lawyers;

**AND WHEREAS** construction and maintenance of, and improvements to the church building and property were carried out by the members at Anna Bay of the three denominations, with no costs incurred by their respective denomination;

**THAT WHEREAS** in recent years the Hunter-Barrington Deacons Court agreed to include the church building at Anna Bay in its Church-wide insurance policy, since the Anglican and Uniting congregations had discontinued holding services at Anna Bay approximately thirty years earlier. These premiums have been repaid in full to the Deacons Court;

**THAT WHEREAS** sale of the property was finalized in 2015, the building having been unused for a number of years;

**THAT WHEREAS** the 2015 meeting of the PCEA Synod determined that the one-third share of nett sale proceeds due to be held on trust by the surviving Trustee for existing members at Anna Bay of the PCEA be directed to the Hunter-Barrington Congregation.

**NOW THEREFORE** I Douglas Stewart Upton prays the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia to take these recitals into consideration and to rescind its previous decision (Minutes 15.42.3) and direct Hunter-Barrington Deacon’s Court to forward the subject sale proceeds to me as surviving Trustee to be held on trust for the existing members of the PCEA at Anna Bay in terms of the Deed of Trust, or do otherwise as in their wisdom they may deem fit, And your petitioner will ever pray.  
Dated this 29<sup>th</sup> day of February 2016.

.....  
Douglas Stewart Upton

- Presbytery
- Resolved** to receive the petition
- Resolved** to hear the petitioner
- Resolved** to transmit the petition to the Clerk of Synod (unanimous)

Yours

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

## Correspondence Item 3



### **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

Northern Presbytery

18<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

The Clerk of Synod  
Rev. T. Leggott  
PO Box 126  
Taree  
NSW 2430

**RE: Overture to Synod to second Rev. George Ball to the Northern Presbytery as Assessor for the impending Interim Moderatorship of Hastings River Charge**

Dear Rev. Leggott,

I have accepted the call to be the minister of the Northern Rivers Congregation and my induction is scheduled to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> May. Presbytery thus has felt that it is best to seek the assistance of Rev. Ball to take on the interim moderatorship of the Hastings Charge once it is declared vacant (at a date TBA but expected around the same time). To this end, we seek Synod approval to second Rev. Ball to our Presbytery as an Assessor. Appended is the extract Minute and Overture to this purpose:

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**5. Interim Moderator** It was moved, seconded and carried that the Presbytery overture Synod to second the Rev. George Ball to the Northern Presbytery as an Assessor member for the specific purpose of fulfilling the role of Interim Moderator of the Hastings River Congregation in the vacancy.

The Overture to be presented thus:

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS, the Northern Presbytery has large geographical bounds and, WHEREAS, the Minister of the Hastings River Congregation has been called and is to be inducted to the Northern Rivers Charge on 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2016, some 4 hours North, and WHEREAS it is the considered view of the Presbytery that it is not ideal for the said minister to immediately take on the role of Interim Moderator of the Hastings, and WHEREAS the Minister of the Manning River Congregation resides approximately 50 minutes from the Hastings Church NOW THEREFORE the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take these premises into consideration and appoint the Rev. George Ball as an Assessor to the Northern Presbytery for the specific purpose of undertaking the position of Interim Moderator to the Hastings River Congregation, or to do otherwise for this object as the Synod in its wisdom may deem best.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery

## Correspondence Item 4



### **PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA**

Northern Presbytery

18<sup>th</sup> March, 2016

The Clerk of Synod  
Rev. T. Leggott  
PO Box 126  
Taree  
NSW 2430

**RE: Overture to Synod to allow Rev. Dr. W.J.W. Hanna to retain a seat on Presbytery for the purpose of strengthening the Court**

Dear Rev. Leggott,

I have accepted the call to be the minister of the Northern Rivers Congregation and my induction is scheduled to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> May. On that date, Rev. Dr Wes Hanna's invaluable service there as Interim Moderator for nearly five years will automatically come to a close. To assist in the working of our Presbytery, particularly at this time of change, we ask that Synod grant that Rev. Dr Hanna retain his seat on Presbytery. The extract Minute (circulated but unconfirmed) and Overture regarding this are appended below:

#### EXTRACT MINUTE

**6. Seat on Presbytery for Rev. Dr. W.J.W. Hanna** It was moved, seconded and carried that the Presbytery consider it best that Rev. Dr W.J.W. Hanna continue to hold a seat on the Presbytery for advice and the strengthening of the court. To this purpose an overture be presented to Synod in the terms below:

#### OVERTURE

To the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia:

WHEREAS Rev. Dr W.J.W. Hanna would normally no longer hold a seat on Presbytery now his term as Interim Moderator of Northern Rivers Congregation has ended, and WHEREAS, the advice of Dr Hanna would be invaluable, and the Presbytery's hand strengthened by his presence, NOW THEREFORE the Northern Presbytery respectfully overtures the Synod to take the premises into consideration and to grant that Rev. Dr Hanna retain his seat on the Northern Presbytery, or to do otherwise for this object as the Synod in its wisdom may deem best.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

Rev. David Kerridge  
Clerk of Presbytery