

The Synod of Eastern Australia



Minutes

**Of the 171st Annual Meeting
Held at Taree NSW
1st May to 3rd May 2018**

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

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18.1 OPENING

Within the Taree Church building of the Manning River Congregation, on Tuesday 1st May 2018, at 4.30pm, the Synod of Eastern Australia met. The Moderator Rev Dennis Muldoon took the chair, and extended a welcome. Those gathered joined in praise, singing from Psalm 103:1-10, and the Moderator constituted the meeting leading in prayer.

18.2 MODERATOR’S SERMON

Mr Muldoon read from Matthew 20:20-34 and shared on the subject: “Not to be Served, but to Serve”, with reference to Jesus’ teaching the disciples what the nature of the coming Kingdom would be like. Serving the Lord could involve a cost and suffering. Jesus reprimands those seeking position and status, emphasising the need for a servant heart. Jesus the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.

Those gathered joined in the singing of Psalm 49:1-12 and the moderator led in prayer. Mr Ward gave thanks to the moderator for his address and this was acknowledged by the court with acclamation.

18.3 ROLLS OF PRESBYTERIES

The Certified Rolls of Presbyteries were tendered. Apologies for non-attendance were received from those marked † below. An apology was also received from Rev Dr WJW Hanna.

Northern Presbytery
Brisbane
Hastings
Northern Rivers

Ministers
JD Klazinga
Vacant
DJ Kerridge

Commissioned Elders
S Carswell
G Hamilton
J Greensill

Central Presbytery
Hawkesbury/Nepean
Hunter/Barrington
Manning
St. George’s

DK Muldoon
R Tso
GD Ball
JA McCallum

TM Reeve
AH Steel
DP Smith
DA McIntosh

Synod Appointment: TI Leggott (Seconded to AIM)

Southern Presbytery
Geelong
Knox
All Nations
Narre Warren
Ulverstone

Vacant
AA Miranda
TW Yoa
Vacant
Vacant

DPT Manly
C White
RS Ward
T Buck †
ID Hamilton

The Moderator welcomed Mr Chris White as a new member of Synod.

18.4 ASSOCIATION OF DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Rev Robin Tso introduced delegates from other churches: Rev Jack Sawyer, Orthodox Presbyterian Church; Rev David Lachman, Southern Presbyterian Church; Rev Graeme Hart, Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia; Mr Graeme Mitchell, Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia; Rev David Torlach, Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The moderator welcomed these brethren and it was resolved that these brothers be associated with the court.

18.5 MEMORIAL MINUTE: REV ALAN TRIPOVICH

Mr Ward presented a memorial minute noting the passing of Rev Alan Tripovich. It was resolved that the minute be included in the record and that family members of Mr Tripovich be sent copies.

The Rev. Alan Tripovich was born in Melbourne on 6 July 1929, was converted to Christ in 1958 and was received as a student for the ministry in 1961. He served the Hastings Charge for the whole of his ministry (1968 to 2010). He had a good grasp of the Reformed Faith, was careful and even cautious. He was an active participant in Synod, gracious in debate and enjoyed a quiet retirement in Wauchope. He died on 5 July 2017 his wife having predeceased him in 2016. 'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.'

18.6 ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Clerk presented the Administration Committee's Report. It was resolved that the report be received. It was resolved that Committee structure would be postponed to a later session.

The Clerk presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. That Acts of Synod are titled, listed and numbered by the Synod Clerk so as to facilitate citation, and they are incorporated by the Administration Committee into a regularly up-dated Handbook of Practice and Procedure, classified according to subject/committee. Copies of the Handbook are made available electronically or at a suitable charge to members and other interested persons.
2. That Correspondence 1 be taken with the Report from Northern Presbytery
3. That Correspondence 2 & 3 be taken with the Finance Committee Report
4. That Correspondence 4 be taken with the Law and Advisory Committee Report
5. That the following examiners of records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Rev R Tso and Geelong elder.
Central Presbytery	Rev JD Klazinga and Northern Rivers elder.
Southern Presbytery	Rev D Kerridge and St George elder.

18.7 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the session was closed with Mr Miranda leading in prayer at 6.05pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

DK Muldoon
Moderator

The session was opened with praise from Psalm 67 and the Moderator leading in prayer at 7.00pm.

18.8 MINUTES

The minutes of Session 1 were read and confirmed.

18.9 ELECTION OF MODERATOR

The Clerk reported that the Rev Tut Wan Yoa had been appointed Moderator-elect. It was moved and seconded that this appointment be confirmed. The motion was carried and Mr Yoa took the chair.

18.10 MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

The Moderator addressed the court on the topic: Confronting Today's Problems. He noted the decline of Christianity in Australia. Young people seeking church life were now looking to an entertainment model rather than a biblical basis. Sunday is no longer regarded as anything special. Things like electronic entertainment and sport are filling young lives. It is difficult for Christian parents wanting to encourage their children to be both regular at church, as well as interacting within their communities. Sexual scandals have brought the Church into disrepute. The internet has become a source of countless expressions of spirituality. Our youth have become self-nurturing and independent based. All power rests within the individual. How do we confront such problems? We need to ensure adequate biblical teaching, together with the relevant application of God's Word in the life and day in which we live. Family worship and developing good relationships are important for family life. Good Christian literature and resources are important, as is the monitoring of access children have to material available electronically. The moderator reminded members of the various activities of the church which would be good for building up the local congregation and for providing service to the community.

Mr Reeve proposed a vote of thanks to the Moderator for his address and that it be published in the Banner. The court resolved in favour.

18.11 PRESBYTERY REPORTS

The report of Northern Presbytery was presented. After comment and discussion it was resolved that the report be received.

18.12 CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 1

An Overture from Northern Presbytery seeking a seat on Presbytery for Rev Dr WJW Hanna. It was resolved in favour of the prayer of the Overture and that Rev Dr WJW Hanna be granted a seat on Northern Presbytery until the induction of Rev John Forbes to the Hastings charge.

18.13 PRESBYTERY REPORTS

The report of Central Presbytery was presented. After comment and discussion it was resolved that the report be received.

The report of Southern Presbytery was presented. It was resolved that the report be received.

18.14 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and read, and members joined in prayer, led by Mr Kerridge and Mr Ian Hamilton. The moderator closed in prayer after the singing of Psalm 78.

TI Leggott
Clerk

TW Yoa
Moderator

The session was opened with prayer and the singing of praise from Psalm 145:1-10 at 9.00am. The Moderator read from Ephesians 1:3-14 and shared concerning the spiritual blessing that we have in Christ, past, present and future. Members joined in praise, singing from Psalm 33:1-6, and Mr Steel led the court in prayer.

18.15 MINUTES

The minutes of Session 2 were read and confirmed.

18.16 LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Convener Mr Ward presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented proposed deliverances and it was resolved:

1. At Handbook 4.63: *add to paragraph 3* 'If the minister under call desires further time for consideration the answer should be given in the time specified by the Presbytery (up to 30 days is usual).' *Insert new paragraph* If the call is to a minister in another country who is eligible for call and whose credentials are in order, including a fully completed application form, criminal/sexual abuse checks and referees' reports, the impact of immigration requirements needs to be considered carefully and acceptance of the call will be conditional upon meeting those requirements in a timely manner. Immigration eligibility should be ascertained first as delays could be lengthy and detrimental to the congregation's interests. Presbytery should explore the issues with the calling congregation first before forwarding a call to a minister overseas.
2. Delete from the section regarding Legal obligations (Approved by Synod 2017 Minute 17.36.5) beginning with the words "The Deacons' Court is to see that mandatory Government Legislation is complied with including:" and ending with the words "It is to submit an *Annual Information Statement* as at 31st December, to the ACNC and advise of any changes to the detail recorded on their register when it occurs."

Add the following to the Handbook after existing 3.14 to be designated 3.14a:

OBLIGATIONS UNDER AUSTRALIAN LAW

[Note: The Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) is the independent national regulator of charities which includes the Church who may have specified more detailed requirements.]

- A. The Deacons' Court and its members are
 - a. to act with reasonable care and diligence
 - b. act honestly and fairly in the best interests of the charity and for its charitable purposes
 - c. not to misuse their position or information gained as a responsible person
 - d. to disclose conflicts of interest [cf. *Handbook* 6.1]
 - e. to ensure that the financial affairs of the charity are managed responsibly, and
 - f. not to allow the charity to operate while it is insolvent. [Presbytery must be promptly advised if there is any risk of the congregation being unable to meet its commitments, *Handbook* 3:17.]
 - g. to comply with legal requirements re child abuse and related matters according to applicable State and Commonwealth legislation.

- B. The Deacons' Court is to ensure that
- a. an ABN is secured for the congregation.
 - b. the Congregation is registered with the Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission [ACNC] as a 'basic religious charity' (or other classification if appropriate) and submits the Annual Information Statement for each calendar year not later than the prescribed cut-off date (currently 30 June following), as well as promptly advising any changes to personnel, contact details or other matters on the ACNC register.
 - c. the Congregation is duly registered with the Australian Taxation Office for GST, FBT Rebate and Income Tax Exemption, and submits the required Business Activity Statement [BAS] in respect of Stipend payments, PAYG tax deductions and GST, preferably quarterly.
 - d. Superannuation Contributions are remitted quarterly per Synod regulations.
 - e. the minister/s and any employees are issued with a PAYG payment summary immediately following 30th June each year and that the PAYG Payment Summary is sent to the Australian Taxation Office.
 - f. financial records are accessible and available for at least seven years, being all the records necessary if a fresh audit was being carried out.
 - g. the annual financial statement discloses all assets and liabilities of the congregation and its controlled entities, and meets not less than the minimum audit requirements set by the ACNC from time to time.

3. In the mutual eligibility acts with FCS, RCNZ and OPC, replace the words

Where a minister is potentially or actually under call or appointment called by a pcea congregation such a meeting with the presbytery (colloquium doctum) may take place after a call is issued and before it is accepted in order that the called minister may assess more closely whether he should accept the call and know, should he accept it, that he will be admitted.

with the words:

Where a minister is potentially or actually under call or appointment by the PCEA, he must, *inter alia*, (a) have read the history of the PCEA and also its Handbook of Practice and Procedure, and have answered satisfactorily questions on them; (b) assure the presbytery that he will maintain the simplicity and purity of the PCEA form of worship; and (c) answer satisfactorily concerning his adherence to the teaching of the Confession of Faith as per Formula of Subscription. His satisfactory compliance with this admission procedure is to be minuted by the Presbytery and must be met before a call or invitation is transmitted so that the minister may know that his acceptance will enable his admission.

The Convener presented proposed deliverance 4

4. The Synod transmit the following overture to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act and meantime pass the same as an Interim act in force until next Synod. Returns are to be in the Clerk of Synod's hands by 30 November 2018 with specific suggestions where changes are recommended.

WHEREAS Christians are required by the Lord to think, speak and act in ways that are God-honouring, biblically obedient and motivated by the Christian values of love, mercy and justice;

AND WHEREAS the incidence of child and other abuse in the community in church and welfare institutions has been highlighted of recent years;

AND WHEREAS the measures the PCEA already has in place address the problem, particularly the mandatory reporting of abuse and the interviewing of vulnerable children and adults, but do not take full account of recent civil legislation or fully specify the standards expected in this area (as illustrated in the Law & Advisory Committee Report to Synod 2018);

a. Synod adopt for the PCEA Australia-wide the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct set out in Appendix 1 of the Law and Advisory Committee Report 2018 and direct that it be carefully followed, sending this proposal down under the Barrier Act, Training requirements are to be arranged in each state to meet not less than minimum requirements under applicable civil legislation, the Presbytery of the bounds through its Clerk to be responsible for co-ordinating arrangements. Details of training requirements are to be minuted, advised to the Law & Advisory Committee by 30 November 2018 and updated regularly as required.

b. The Guidelines for Church Workers 2013 as amended and set out in Appendix 2 be approved.

c. Handbook 7.3 be amended to read as follows (the underlined words being the changes):
7.3 No discipline, other than private discussion, can be exercised for an offence committed, or alleged to have been committed, more than five years before the charge is made, unless it be of a most serious kind (e.g., bigamy, child abuse), or becomes again flagrant, or involves a civil matter that is not subject to the statute of limitations in the relevant civil law.

18.17 MINORITY REPORT: LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Mr Reeve presented his report and followed with a notice of motion.

18.18 NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Reeve presented an alternative Law and Advisory Deliverance 4/4a to adopt the Minority Report Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct:

That Synod transmit the following overture to Presbyteries under the Barrier Act, and meantime pass the Minority Report PCEA Safe Church Policy 2018 and Code of Conduct as an Interim Act.

WHEREAS Christians are required by the Lord of the Church to uphold the Biblical values of love, mercy and justice;

AND WHEREAS unacceptable incidences of child and other abuse in the churches, community and other institutions have been brought to light in recent years;

AND WHEREAS the measures the PCEA have in place already address their responsibilities, particularly the mandatory reporting of abuse and the interviewing of vulnerable children and adults, but do not take full account of recent civil legislation;

AND WHEREAS the need for improved preventative measures has been highlighted, requiring us to further specify standards in this area (as illustrated in the Law & Advisory reports);

AND WHEREAS documented policies and procedures are to be accessible and easy to understand;

NOW THEREFORE Synod enact and ordain, for the PCEA Australia-wide, the Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct set out in the Law and Advisory Minority Report 2018.

On being put to the vote the Notice of Motion was favoured over the Law and Advisory deliverance 4a. It was further resolved to approve the Notice of Motion, and including parts b. and c. of proposed deliverance 4.

Mr Ward dissented on the grounds that the decision is good as far as it goes, but is not adequate in the present circumstances.

18.19 CORRESPONDENCE ITEM 4

Overture from Central Presbytery regarding the solemnising of marriage by PCEA Ministers. Mr Tso presented the overture. It was resolved to receive the overture.

It was proposed that: Synod acknowledge the Biblical definition of marriage as an ordinance in creation, created by God before the fall (Gen 2:24), reaffirm its commitment to the statements in the Westminster Confession of Faith 24.2&3 and resolved that our ministers may only conduct covenant marriages, which are between a professing Christian man and a professing Christian woman, and that the PCEA Handbook 2011: Act Concerning Marriage (page 81) to be amended accordingly.

After discussion it was proposed and agreed: That the content and request of this overture be forwarded to both the Law and Advisory Committee and the Church and Nation Committee for investigation and report to the next meeting of Synod.

18.20 CLOSURE OF SESSION

The session was closed with the singing of a portion of Psalm 73 and with Mr Ball leading in prayer at 12.40pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

TW Yoa
Moderator

SESSION 4

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2018

2.00PM

The session was opened at 2.00pm with praise from Psalm 76 and Mr McCallum leading in prayer. The moderator welcomed visitors to the meeting.

18.21 MINUTES

It was resolved to defer the confirmation of the Minutes of Session 3 to the next session.

18.22 MISSIONS SPEAKERS

Mr Ward was appointed Clerk pro tem.

The Convener of the Missions Committee introduced Trevor Leggott and invited him to address those gathered, given his intended retirement.

Mr Leggott spoke of how the present was a good time and a sad time. A good time because he was completing some 21 years of service with AIM; a sad time because there was still the unresolved dilemma of a successor to him as CEO/General Director. There was however an indigenous man with potential as CEO and the AIM Board was to meet next Tuesday to consider the matter. Prayer was solicited for this. He was continue assisting on a transition basis. He never the less was looking to the future and entrusting things into the Lord's hands.

John Keane, Chairman of AIM Council addressed the Synod at some length. He spoke of how he had interviewed Trevor at the beginning of Trevor's AIM service. He spoke of the tireless work of Trevor in administration and visiting communities including in remote areas and the great affection the indigenous people have for him. His was effective as Minute Secretary and getting things done. His communication to the field was done in a gentle and understanding way which gained wide respect. His faithful testimony to the Christian faith is notable. Trevor's work has been demanding but rewarding and done as to the Lord. He mentioned examples of the changed lives of indigenous people through the Gospel, as well as the tough times related to the Retta Dixon Home where he gave clear testimony, despite abuse and provocation. He sought to walk in step with Lord. The encouragement and support of Pamela in Trevor's work is notable. Their labour in the Lord has not been in vain. May the blessing of the Lord continue upon them.

Stephen Bignall, past Field Director of AIM for eight years and currently pastor of Wee Waa PCA, spoke as one who had known Trevor for 33 years. He spoke of Trevor as a man who had the grace of the doctrines as well as the doctrines of grace, and could see and encourage the potential in others. He persevered prayerfully serving the Lord as he humbly and in a conciliatory way sought to serve. This facilitated self-determination and positive developments in indigenous Christian communities and he gave his life for them for the sake of Christ.

Henry Louie, AIM pastor at Gilgandra and Pilliga, spoke of how Trevor has taught him how to trust in Lord to bring change; that it was worth persevering in the communities. He was confident that though Trevor was retiring his heart was still in the work and he would help as he could in the days to come. He was really thankful for the encouragement Trevor has given him and the wisdom and strength God had given him

Ki-Ok Jong, pastor of Antioch Korean Presbyterian Church in Sydney, spoke of his respect for Trevor and AIM and the work of church planting and care for indigenous Australians. He expressed thanks to God for Trevor whom he had first met at a Banner of Truth Conference about 2004, when Trevor had introduced himself to him. Through that contact he gradually became involved with AIM and introduced indigenous ministry to Korean Christians. Mission Awareness tours were undertaken and a Korean Christian Mission Organisation for indigenous people was formed. It was always a pleasure working with Trevor whose sense of humour was infectious and good counsel. The hard part of mission can be getting people involved. Trevor never ran out of patience in engaging in this cross-cultural endeavour. It had been a real blessing to work with Trevor, his fellowship delightful. He prayed that the blessing of the Lord would rest upon his future endeavours in retirement. He concluded: "Well done. May the Lord bless you." He made a presentation from his congregation to Trevor.

The Missions Convener (Mr Muldoon) spoke on behalf of the church, noting that Trevor was not put off by discouragements but pressed on in line with the vision that included the change of name from Aborigines Inland Mission to Australian Indigenous Ministries, the restructuring of the mission including divesting Missions Publications of Australia and legal incorporation of AIM in 2005, developing training programmes, the beginning of Mission Awareness Tours, the gradual development of local leaders, self-sufficiency in a number of communities, their endeavours in evangelism and outreach to their own people, and self-government of AIM churches in Queensland. The translation of Scripture also received attention. Grace, diligence and perseverance are marks of Trevor's work. We give thanks to the Lord for his upholding grace as well as various positions in the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia including as Clerk of Synod since 2005.

Anna Ward then presented a card and gift to Trevor and Pamela.

The Clerk resumed his chair.

18.23 TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

It was resolved to move into closed court. The Convener invited student Mr Duncan Hickey to share his recent experiences and progress with his studies, and Mr Hickey answered questions from the floor.

Mr Kerridge presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received.

After considerable discussion the Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved:

1. That Synod again commend Mr Duncan Hickey on the (near) completion of his formal studies for the M. Div. degree to a consistent and exemplary high standard. That we commit Duncan and his family to God in prayer.
2. That Synod authorise the development of a stated curriculum under the Candidate Placement Scheme to augment formal studies over the entire student candidacy. This curriculum to be presented to next year's Synod for consideration.
3. That a draft Student Handbook be produced for the use of student and evaluators to orient and guide the candidacy, for consideration at next year's Synod.
4. That Synod authorise continuing development of the Eldership Course.
5. That all costs for the Candidate Placement Scheme from 2019 be subject to the Student Bond, subject to the discretion of Synod.

18.24 NOTICES OF MOTION: TRAINING OF MINISTRY

Mr Ward presented his motion and it was seconded. It was resolved as follows:

1. Pursuant to the Act Concerning Conflict of interest (Act 1, Class 1, Synod 2011; *Handbook* 6.1) Synod resolve that the involvement of a student's minister in assessment of that student at Presbytery level or in the Training of Ministry Committee is to be limited to a written report on the student and answering questions on the same. The rights of the minister at Session or Synod level are unaffected by this decision.
2. In meeting not less than annually with a student for the ministry, as required by Handbook 4.49g, areas appropriate for Presbytery to cover include the following:
Personal life. Are there any issues of health or stress? Is the family supportive? Are finances satisfactory? Any other personal struggles? How is his sense of call?
Family life. Are there areas of housing, health, education or other needs affecting the family?
Church Involvement. Regularity of attendance of student and family in worship? What tasks has he in the church (eg. Bible Class or Youth leader? Elder? Precentor? Is he gaining familiarity with the Handbook of Practice and Procedure? Has he had opportunity to experience the operation of church courts? How often has he conducted public worship and what is Session or Presbytery's opinion of his efforts?
Doctrinal issues. Does he have any questions concerning the Reformed faith as set out in the Westminster Confession of Faith as adhered to by the PCEA?
Study programme. How is he finding the demands of study? Are his grades below or above average?
Is Pastoral Care included in his College course?
Overall. Is the Presbytery satisfied with the candidate and his progress? Have positive and negative issues been discussed with him? Are there matters requiring advice of the Training of Ministry?

Mr Hickey was invited to rejoin the meeting and the moderator shared some words of encouragement.

The Moderator asked Mr Ian Hamilton to lead in prayer.

The Synod moved into open court.

18.25 DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Mr Tso introduced Rev Jack Sawyer, delegate from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and the moderator invited him to address the Synod. Mr Sawyer brought the greetings of his church giving an overview of the church in the United States, their interest in mission and particularly the support of developing ministry in China. Jack spoke of his fond memories of contacts with Australian and New Zealand churches, and the encouragement of seeing the smaller churches having more interaction and fellowship together.

18.26 CLOSURE OF SESSION

The session was closed with the singing of Psalm 92:1-7 and Mr Smith leading in prayer at 6.15pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

TW Yoa
Moderator

SESSION 5

WEDNESDAY 2ND MAY 2018

7.10PM

The session was opened at 7.10pm with Mr Klazinga leading in prayer.

18.27 MINUTES

The minutes of Session 3 and 4 were read and confirmed.

18.28 DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Mr Tso introduced Rev Graeme Hart, delegate from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia, and the Moderator invited him to address Synod. Mr Hart brought greetings and his address is included as an appendix to the minutes.

18.29 RESIGNATION OF TREASURER

The clerk tabled a letter of resignation from the Synod Treasurer. It was resolved that the letter be received.

18.30 NOTICE OF MOTION

The Clerk presented his notice of motion and it was seconded. After a number of comments expressing thanks to the retiring Synod Treasurer for his long and faithful service, it was resolved as follows:

1. That Synod give thanks for the thorough and faithful service of Mr Alex Steel as General Treasurer of the Synod and wish him God's blessing as he steps down from this responsibility.
2. That Synod now appoint Rev Donald Peter Smith as General Treasurer from the 1st July 2018.

18.31 CHURCH AND NATION COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Ball, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod records its dismay and deep disappointment at the introduction and legalisation of same sex marriage in December 2017. It is clearly and obviously contrary to the Word of God and the purpose of God. It represents a clear rejection of His authority and of that which is good and honourable. The prophet warns, 'Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness' (Isaiah 5: 20).
2. Synod encourages every office bearer and member to be like the men of Issachar, 'who had understanding of the times' (1 Chron. 12: 32) so as to be able to speak the gospel in a relevant way to our secular culture.
3. Synod continues to heed the biblical injunction in 1 Timothy 2: 1-4 to pray for those who rule over us. Synod also desires that the prayers of the Lord's people, and the witness of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by the Lord's servants, may produce the same effect as the preaching of Jonah in Nineveh, when the people believed God and turned from their evil way (Jonah 3).
4. Synod encourages sessions and members to consider the importance of appropriate gospel outreach in their own area and to seek opportunities for one to one Bible studies.
5. We encourage all our members to seek the Lord's grace, favour and pardon and earnestly pray for our church in the words of the psalmist 'Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you'? (Ps. 85: 6).
6. Synod encourages the pastors to preach from the Psalms with the aim of showing how they relate to Christ.
7. Synod encourages the pastors and elders to recommend helpful books on the psalms to congregational members, and where possible to have such books available in the church library.
8. Synod agrees that it would be desirable if all our congregations sang from the same psalter.
9. Synod records its warmest thanks to Rev. Sjirk Bajema, who as editor of The Presbyterian Banner for the last 9 years faithfully produced a very attractive and informative magazine.
10. Synod records its thanks to Rev. Dr. R. S. Ward who has been acting editor pro-tem of The Presbyterian Banner.

It was resolved to extend the meeting time of Synod until 10.00pm.

18.32 MEDIA COMMITTEE

The Convener Pro Tem, Mr Ward, presented the report, and the supplementary report submitted. It was resolved that the reports be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved:

1. To warmly encourage our congregations and members to pray for and actively support the ministry of *The Presbyterian Banner*.
2. To appoint Rev Dr RS Ward as Editor of the Presbyterian Banner.

18.33 WEBSITE

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved:

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.

18.34 ARCHIVIST

Mr Ward presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The proposed deliverance was presented and it was resolved:

1. Synod again records its appreciation to Mr Robert Hingston, deacon Ulverstone, for his detailed and painstaking work in scanning church magazines.
2. Synod approves the lodgement with the Ferguson Library in Sydney on permanent loan of the three volumes of the Witness 1877-78; 1878-79 and 1880-81.
3. Synod approves the lodgement of a bound set of magazines 1924-84 (ex AFP for 1949-54) with the Ferguson Library Sydney on permanent loan together with unbound issues from April 1999 to December 2006 (complete) which will supplement their existing holdings from 2007, as well as an unbound set for 1990 and 1991.

18.35 YOUTH & FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Carswell, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

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 Irene Steel and Mrs Margaret Kinder for their ongoing work and commitment to the search work and birthday card greetings to encourage the church's youth and children in biblical study and teaching.
3. Synod thanks Mr Glen Hamilton for his many years of service to the church as a member and convener of the Youth and Fellowship Committee.
4. Synod amends the Handbook in relation to biennial Youth camps to allow annual youth camps where there is interest and a suitable venue can be found, and allow for other suitable dates in the calendar, to read as follows: [Synod 1990; amended 2018] It was resolved that there be a biennial Youth Rally (at Easter) in the alternate year to the Family Rally, and at other times where there is interest.
5. In addition to the responsibilities of shepherding God's flock, Synod members are also invited to enthusiastically encourage church members to participate in future Family Camps and Youth Camps.
6. Members of Synod commit themselves to keep praying for the spiritual development of the children and youth in our church. Synod is conscious of the danger of moving away from the faith, therefore, constant intercession will be made on behalf of our youth, so that they will have the courage to resist secular pressure, find their identity in fellowship with Christ, and participate with glad involvement in their local churches.

18.36 MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Muldoon, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. It was resolved that:

1. The Synod gives thanks to the Lord for the opportunity and privilege of being involved in the work of missions at home and abroad, both in giving, in praying and being directly involved during this past year.
2. The Synod expresses special thanks to the work of Rev Trevor Leggott in leading the work of AIM over the past 21 years. We pray for Trevor and his wife Pamela in their retirement. His secondment to AIM ceased at the end of 2017 and his retirement from missionary service in the PCEA becomes effective from this Synod.
3. Synod approve the bequest proforma for the Missions Relief Fund.
4. Synod thanks Rev Klazinga for editing the bi-monthly prayer notes and encourages congregations to use these notes.
5. That Synod approve the attendance of the convener, Dr Dennis Muldoon at the 3rd meeting of the ICRC Member Churches, World Mission Agencies Representatives, September 18-20, 2018 in Willow Grove PA, USA, and that \$1000 be contributed from Synod funds to help with the costs.
6. That Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2018-19 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for this period.

18.37 INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The convener indicated that Rev David Torlach, of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, present earlier, had to leave the meeting and had apologised for not being available to bring a greeting. The convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia gives thanks to God for the churches with whom we have formal fraternal relations and for those churches with whom we have contact and resolve to pray for the Lord's blessing upon their work and witness.
2. Synod, while recognising that the RCN(L) sought to base its decision on women in office on Scripture, is grieved at the direction that is being taken by that denomination which has such an honourable history of furthering Reformed ecumenism and assisting needy churches in the developing world. We particularly urge further review of the decision and also counsel that homosexual practice cannot be condoned as acceptable on the part of those in membership of Christ's church.
3. Synod approve payment of a contribution of \$1500, towards additional travelling expenses of Rev. Robin Tso in his deputation to Scotland.

18.38 SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The convener presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that:

1. 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.

18.39 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr A Steel, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The convener presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. We record our thanks to God for the continual temporal blessings the church as a whole has enjoyed since Synod 2016.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2018/2019 be made on 1st January and 1st July in line with the movement in the *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six-monthly review period, no adjustment be made.
3. Stipend Assistance of up to \$19,000 for 2018/2019 be granted to Brisbane Deacons' Courts as follows:
 - Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
 - Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1st January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
Be subject to the availability of funds.

18.40 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of motion were called for and the session was closed singing of Psalm 34:1-7 and with Mr Miranda leading in prayer at 10.00pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

TW Yoa
Moderator

SESSION 6

THURSDAY 4TH MAY 2018

9.00AM

The session was opened with praise singing from Psalm 46 and the Mr Tso leading in prayer. The Moderator read from Ephesians 2 and spoke under the head Man by Nature and Man by Grace, and spoke of the blessing and comfort that we share being one in Christ Jesus, knowing that nothing will separate us from that love of Christ.

18.41 MINUTES

The minutes of Session 5 were read and confirmed.

18.42 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The convener continued with the proposed deliverances. It was resolved:

4. The prayer of the Petition of Brisbane Deacons' Court for financial assistance be not granted.
Refer to Appendix "A" for the Committee's assessment of the request and recommendations

18.43 GENERAL TREASURER'S REPORT

The General Treasurer, Mr AH Steel, presented his report. It was resolved that the report be received.

1. Synod confirm the General Treasurer's action in transferring \$6,700 from *Synod General Funds* to the *Missions General* account to cover a deficit balance of \$6,630 as at 31/12/17.
2. Accounting software and equipment (computer and printer) for the General Treasurer's use be purchased from *Synod General Funds* at a cost of up to \$3,500.

3. The name Donald Peter Smith be added to the list of authorised signatories to operate Synod's bank account(s), and the name Donald Peter Smith be added to the list of authorised users of Synod's Bendigo e-banking facility. (Handbook – Finance Committee (B – Synodical p.92)
4. Mr Steel presented his motion and it was seconded. It was resolved as follows:
The thanks of Synod be sent by the Clerk to Mr KR Shaw, Deacon of St Georges Congregation, for the assistance given by him to the Synod Treasurer in authorising payments made through the Synod's e-banking facility with Bendigo Bank. His prompt attention in authorising payments has meant the Treasurer has been able to ensure they have always been made in a timely manner. The Treasurer and Synod thank you Ken for this contribution since 2010.

18.44 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

There was some modification suggested for the Committee Structure. It was resolved that the Committees be as follows:

Administration: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-elect, Treasurer, Convener L&A

Law and Advisory: RS Ward (Convener), T Reeve, S Louden, T Leggott, D Kerridge.

Inter-Church Relations: R Tso (Convener), GD Ball, T Leggott, RS Ward.

Church and Nation, Media: GD Ball, (Convener Church and Nation), DK Muldoon, RS Ward (Banner), D Kerridge (Website), TW Yoa.

Youth and Fellowship: S Carswell (Convener), AA Miranda, T Reeve, Cameron Hamilton, Stephen Smith, Mandy Kerridge.

Finance: AH Steel (Convener), DJ Ramsay, T. Buck, DE Kerr, DP Smith.

Superannuation: R Tso (Convener), DP Smith, DJ Ramsay.

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

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

18.45 NSW TRUST CORPORATION

The Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received. It was resolved:

1. The Trustees' action in transferring the Synod Deed Box from the National Australia Bank, 163 Rowe Street, Eastwood NSW to Paton Hooke, Lawyers, 25 Albert Street, Taree NSW, be confirmed.
2. Synod Deed Box be held under the oversight of the Clerk of Synod and the Synod Treasurer and an audit of the contents be carried out by them every three years, the next being due in 2020.

18.46 QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION

The Clerk presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received.

18.47 THE TRUSTEES FOR VICTORIA

The Secretary Mr RS Ward, presented the report on behalf of the Trustees. It was resolved that the report be received. Mr Ward presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that:

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

2. Synod extends Mr Kerridge's term as trustee by a further five years terminating at midnight on 30 June 2023, and extends Dr Ward's term as trustee by a further three years terminating at midnight on 30 June 2021.
3. The packet containing land Title Deeds and other documents in the name of The Trustees for Victoria of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia be uplifted from the National Australia Bank, 163 Rowe Street, Eastwood, NSW and lodged for safe keeping with Paton Hooke, Lawyers, 25 Albert Street, Taree, NSW.
4. Synod Title Deeds Packet continue to be held under the oversight of the Clerk of Synod and the Synod Treasurer and an audit of the contents be carried out by them every three years, the next being due in 2020.

18.48 REPORTS OF EXAMINERS OF RECORDS

The minutes of the Northern Presbytery for 2016-2017 were reported to be in order. The minutes of Central Presbytery for 2016-2017 were reported to be in order. The minutes of Southern Presbytery for 2016-2017 were reported to be in order. It was resolved that the reports be received and the records attested.

18.49 MODERATOR-ELECT FOR SYNOD 2019

The Clerk nominated Rev R Tso. It was resolved that Mr Tso be appointed Moderator-elect for Synod 2019.

18.50 NOTICE OF MOTION

Mr Tso presented his motion and it was seconded. It was resolved that the planned duration of Synod be extended by one day with closure time to be by 12.30pm on the Friday in lieu of Thursday of the week. The change to be commenced with Synod 2019.

18.51 TIME AND PLACE OF SYNOD 2019

The Clerk reported that the Manning Congregation had again indicated their willingness to host Synod again in 2019. It was resolved that Synod 2019 be hosted by the Manning Congregation at Taree from 4.30pm on Tuesday 7th May 2019 to 12.30pm on Friday 10th May 2019.

18.52 TREASURER'S REPORT RE COSTS INCURRED BY SYNOD 2018.

The General Treasurer, Mr AH Steel, gave an indication of costs incurred by Synod 2018.

18.53 THANKS

The Moderator invited Mr Manly to address Synod. David expressed the thanks of Synod to all who had provided food and accommodation for their generous hospitality.

The Moderator thanked the delegates for their help and encouragement during Synod. He assured the retiring Treasurer of our prayers and best wishes. The Moderator was thanked for his leading of the meetings and for his devotional messages.

18.54 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The minutes of this closing Session 6 were read and confirmed.

18.55 CLOSURE OF SYNOD 2018

Synod 2018 concluded with praise, singing from Psalm 63, and with Mr Ward leading in prayer. The Moderator closed with the benediction at 11.10pm.

TI Leggott
Clerk

TW Yoa
Moderator

ACTS OF SYNOD 2018
Appended by the Direction of Synod (09.50)

Class 1 (Barrier Act Procedure)

No	Act	Reference
1	Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct	18.18

Class 2 (Others)

No	Act	Reference
1	Re Call Procedure (time limits & overseas considerations)	18.16.1
2	Legal Obligations of Deacons' Courts	18.16.2
3	Amendment of Mutual Eligibility requirements	18.16.3
4	Candidate Placement Scheme costs bonded from Synod 2019	18.23.5
5	Student's Minister & Conflict of Interest	18.24.1
6	Annual Examination of Students	18.24.2
7	Appointment of DP Smith as Treasurer of Synod effective 30 June 2018	18.30.2
8	Response to Same-sex Marriage Legislation	18.31.1
9	Youth Rallies	18.35.4
10	Resolution re Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated)	18.38.2
11	Addition of Rev DP Smith to list of signatories on Synod bank accounts	18.43.3
12	Extension of terms for Trustees of Victoria (Kerridge & Ward)	18.47.2
13	Lodgement of Deeds with Paton Hooke Lawyers, Taree	18.45.1 18.47.3

APPENDIX 1

Address to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia

Rev Graeme Hart

Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia

Mr Moderator, brothers, (sisters). Thank you for the invitation to attend the Synod of PCEA. It's been a real joy to meet and fellowship with you again. I bring warm greetings & encouragement from your brothers & sisters in the RPCA.

You all well know the condition of our culture in which we live. I don't need to elaborate on its degenerating morals, or its depraved lifestyles. Your Moderator did this last night, and did it with thorough examination and provided some thoughtful, insightful responses. However, allow me encourage you by enumerating some reasons why we ought not feel defeated, depressed, anxious.

- Psalm 24 declares boldly that this world belongs to God
- Psalm 110 says that Christ is ruling in the midst of his enemies
- Book of Revelation reminds us that Jesus wins and any on his side is part of the winning side.
- Jesus building his church and the gates of Hades will not/cannot prevail against the forward moving, gospel-advancing church where he is firmly at helm.
- I'm reminded that in Corinth there were converted homosexuals, and that their conversion came about through being washed, sanctified, justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.
- What the church has been given...is the *gospel*, and that last time I checked, the gospel is the power of God to salvation for all who would believe.
- Father has earmarked for salvation all who will come to X in repentance and faith...and it will happen b/c God is not a liar.
- The Bible also tells me that God is a God of providence. He has all things in his control...that all things work out for good of his church, that hardship is good for us as it builds hope, perseverance. It creates a longing for glory. It lessens our love and attachment for the world.
- I'm reminded that every knee will bow to King Jesus...whether willingly or forced.

RPCA consists of three congregations - all in Victoria: Two in Melbourne (Frankston & McKinnon), and one in the regional city of Geelong. Each Lord's Day morning just under 200 people gather for worship among our three congregations. Evening worship attendance is lower, equating to around 60% of the morning service. Even though our attendance figures are lower from the previous years, there is not a sense of hopelessness or fatalism. However, I think we would do well, like you, to do some serious self-examination, enfold people better into congregations, avoid disharmony within sessions, instill a deep & desperate need for corporate prayer.

Across the denomination:

Along with you, we have also had to implement Safe Church policies and procedures. Due to our small size, the time-consuming task of drawing up policies and procedures, and the fact that the task was huge and overwhelming, we utilised the work of the PV and have been assisted by them. We are grateful for their permission to use their policies and procedures with small tweaks to make it relate to the RPCA.

We are so thankful to the Lord that quite a few baptised children/young people have publicly professed their faith in Christ and committed themselves to Christ and the local church. We must remember they have not "arrived." They need to be nurtured and established in their faith and commitment to Christ. That takes time, prayer, effort, patience, pain, joy!

In December we sent our second mission team to Japan for four weeks to serve and encourage the congregations of the JRPC. The need is real and huge - the JRPC are small, in need of elders, in one of the least reached countries in the world where less than 1% are evangelical Christian.

Possibilities for mission work in Myanmar is currently being investigated. We have had the opportunity to partner with the EPCA & PCC (Singapore) in providing aid for the members of Malawi EPC suffering from famine.

We have close links with our sister RP churches around the world, especially North America, Ireland, and Scotland. We share an electronic platform called the RP Global Alliance which is designed to be a website where we can learn about others in the RP family, read news items, updates, congregations, contacts, missions with links to the various countries and their congregations. It certainly makes it easy to get in contact with fellow RPer around the world! We have contributed a number of articles of the past year.

Geelong

- Our largest congregation with 131 average attendance.
- Give generously to missions.
- Two elders have recently retired. Thus there is a need for new elders to replace the retired one. A small group of men took eldership training classes sadly but all declined to go further to nomination. We need to pray for elders now, but also in the future. That means praying for our young boys, that the Lord might grow, mature them to be future elders, future pastors.

Frankston:

- During 2016 and 2017 Alastair McEwen (retired minister) acted as interim pastor. However, at the end of last year, he stepped back from that position due to the demands of travelling twice a week to Frankston from Geelong, a two hour drive each way.
- The congregation are now worshipping with McKinnon for this year (2018). We are hoping it is a time of refreshment and strengthening for that congregation.
- Hoping to call minister from o/s next year to help rebuild the congregation. As you can imagine, there is quite some work fulfilling immigration processes. So we hope to be able to bring some good news to you in the future regarding this matter.

McKinnon

- We've been encouraged by the arrival of one young couple and one young family (both couples from RPCNA) moved to Australia to help serve at McKinnon.
- I had the opportunity to go overseas to Northern Ireland and minister in the Newtownards RPC for five months in the second half of last year. It was a marvelous experience for the whole family. Likewise, it was a wonderful experience for Rev Robert McCollum and his young family to be in McKinnon, a smaller but much more culturally diverse congregation than Newtownards.
- With the exchange now behind us, we have firmed up plans to sell the manse this year in order to renovate our church building, hopefully in 2019.
- With the remainder of the sale proceeds of the manse we hope to purchase a property in Western suburbs of Melbourne with view to church planting in future.
- We are thankful that the Lord has answered our prayers regarding the revitalisation of the congregation. He has been teaching us just how important to be learning to place Christ and his gospel at the centre of life and faith. We have been taught much to pray.

Our work together as denominations:

- Over the recent years I believe our denominations have worked together for mutual benefit and encouragement. For example: shared bulletin details, some pulpit swaps, receiving *The Presbyterian Banner*, providing articles, me speaking at last year's (2017) family camp at Elenora

Heights, Rev Andres Miranda speaking at our family camp Easter last year, and me currently providing pulpit supply at the Narre Warren congregation each fortnight.

- I'm sure there are other areas we could work on, for mutual encouragement. One area is our youth camps: I'd love to see some of our youth attend your youth camps and yours attend ours. Sadly your youth camp clashed with our family camp. Another opportunity could possibly be a future combined youth conference between the PCEA, RPCA, EPCA and SPCA. I'd be interested to hear from you regarding this ideas and others.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to bring greetings from the RPCA.
We pray God will yet revive you for the cause of Christ.

Southern Presbyterian Church

Mt Tso introduced Rev David Lachman, delegate from the Southern Presbyterian Church, and the moderator invited him to address Synod.

Mr Lachman brought the greetings of his church and noted the strong ties that there were between the different churches represented at our meeting, and that there might be a growing together in fellowship under the banner of the Lord as we seek to serve him in a fallen world.

Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia

Mr Tso introduced Mr Graeme Mitchell, delegate from the Presbyterian Reformed Church of Australia, and the moderator invited him to address Synod.

Mr Mitchell brought greetings of his church and noted especially the common grounds of the different churches represented. The church had celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, and he noted something of the history of the origins of the church. He noted that collectively we seek to promote the doctrines of the Reformed Faith or Calvinism, and it was a great challenge to promote this cause in Australia and overseas. The church had interest in mission in the Pacific Islands and student ministries to overseas students whilst they study in Australia. He closed with reading Psalm 50:1-3.