

Synod
2022

The Synod of Eastern Australia

MINUTES

OF THE 174TH ANNUAL MEETING

RAYMOND TERRACE, NSW, 3RD TO 5TH MAY, 2022

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF EASTERN AUSTRALIA

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SESSION 1**TUESDAY 3RD MAY 2022****4:30PM****22.2.1 OPENING**

Within the Raymond Terrace Church building of the Hunter Congregation, on Tuesday 4th May 2021, at 4.30pm, the Synod of Eastern Australia met. The Moderator, Rev George Ball, took the chair, and extended a welcome. Those gathered joined in praise, singing from Psalm 147. The Moderator constituted the meeting, leading in prayer.

22.2.2 MODERATOR'S SERMON

The Moderator read from Ps 37 and Matthew 5, and chose Matthew 5:5 as his text; "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth". By way of introduction, the Moderator showed that each beatitude built upon and fit with the other. As his first point, 'What is Meekness' he defined meekness in the biblical sense with Christ as the epitome of this grace. Secondly, he spoke on 'How should meekness be demonstrated', and again pointed to Christ's demonstration of it at the Cross. He offered four areas of the Christian life in which it should appear, following the Lord; humble submission to God; wholehearted submission to His Word; willing submission to God's will; and humble submission to God's people. In conclusion, the Moderator spoke on why meekness is so important – there is true blessing in it in the Lord; it engenders Christ-likeness and it provides a wonderful inheritance through the death and resurrection of Christ.

Following the sermon those gathered sang from Ps 37:7-11.

Mr Tom Reeve thanked the Moderator for his labour in bringing the Word to bear and it was resolved that the sermon be printed in *The Presbyterian Banner*. Mr John McCallum expressed his appreciation and noted the timeliness of the message.

22.2.3 ROLLS OF PRESBYTERY

The Certified Rolls of Presbyteries were tendered. Apologies for non-attendance were received from those marked † below. Google Meet (electronic attendees) marked #

Northern Presbytery	Ministers	Commissioned Elders
Brisbane	JD Klazinga	S Carswell
Hastings River	J Forbes	G Hamilton
Northern Rivers	DJ Kerridge	J Greensill †
Central Presbytery		
Manning	GD Ball	TI Leggott
Hunter	R Tso	AH Steel
Sydney West	DK Muldoon	T Reeve
St George's	JA McCallum	D McIntosh
Southern Presbytery		
All Nations	TW Yoa	
Geelong	[vacant]	D Ramsay
Knox	[vacant]	J Lee*
Narre Warren	AA Miranda	T Buck †
Ulverstone	[vacant]	I Hamilton

Presbytery Appointment
I Hall (Carrum Downs)#

*Dr J Lee is the commissioned Elder from Knox, but his position on the Presbytery Roll is yet to be confirmed at a meeting to take place after Session 2 of Synod (as advised by the Southern Presbytery Clerk to the Synod Clerk by email 13/4/22).

It was noted that Mr John Audet, General Treasurer, is automatically associated with the court to deliberate on matters relating to Finance.

The Moderator welcomed delegates to the Synod.

The Moderator noted that Rev. Dr Ward was present and invited a motion to associate him. Mr Leggott moved, seconded Mr Yoa, that Rev Dr Ward be associated. A counter motion was moved by Mr Tso, seconded by Mr J McCallum, that Synod defer the decision concerning associating Rev. Dr Ward until the matter of his petition be heard. Upon being put to the vote, the second motion was preferred over the first and became the finding of the court.

22.2.4 ASSOCIATION OF DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

Rev Robin Tso anticipated the attendance of Rev. Timothy McGlynn from the Free Church (Continuing); Rev. David Lachman from the Southern Presbyterian Church; and Rev. Bruce Backensto from the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. Mr Tso advised that he would notify the Moderator as these delegates were able to join online.

22.2.5 CLOSURE OF SESSION

The session closed with the Moderator leading in prayer at 5:45pm.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

G Ball
Moderator

SESSION 2

TUESDAY 3RD MAY 2022

7:00PM

The Session was opened with prayer by the Moderator at 7:03pm

22.2.6 MINUTES

The Minutes of Session 1 were read and confirmed.

22.2.7 ELECTION OF MODERATOR

The Clerk reported that the Rev. Trevor Leggott had been appointed Moderator-Elect for the ensuing Synodical year. It was moved and seconded that this appointment be confirmed. The motion was carried, and Mr Leggott took the chair.

22.2.8 MODERATOR'S ADDRESS

The court joined in the singing of Ps 133. The Moderator led in prayer. He read from 2 Peter 1 to set the tone of the Synod meetings. 2 Peter 1:5-7 describes a 'ladder' of our standing in Christ. Its outworking is in brotherly affection and love. Referring to the 10 virgins, he commented on all ten were asleep awaiting the coming of the Bridegroom. The Moderator chose Revelation 3:1-6 as his text

and spoke on Reputation versus Reality. He described the position and reputation of Sardis as impregnable, yet it fell. Christ uses the image of the church in Sardis to show the nature of the church that has a semblance of life, but the reality is deadness. How do we preserve the life of the PCEA? Awaken, watch out, strengthen what remains death threatens. But we are not left in despair by Christ. He provides the remedy - Remember. Return to foundations. Repent and believe. There is a promise of a name before God, not just a name in the world. Let us be those who are clothed in white by Christ. Let us seek to conquer lethargy and seek revival.

The court joined in singing Ps 67.

22.2.9 ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Clerk presented the Administration Committee's report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Clerk presented the proposed deliverances, and it was resolved that:

1. Correspondence Item 1 be received and dealt with following the Northern Presbytery Report.
2. Correspondence Item 2 be received and dealt with following Finance Committee business.
3. Correspondence Item 3 be received and noted.
4. Correspondence Items 4 (a),(b),(c) be received and noted. They are also mentioned in the Law and Advisory Report.
6. It was resolved that the Committee structure be deferred until Session 9.
7. That the following Examiners of Records be appointed:

Northern Presbytery	Rev. A Miranda and Hunter Elder
Central Presbytery	Rev. J Forbes and Geelong Elder
Southern Presbytery	Rev. R Tso and Brisbane Elder

Supplementary Report

The supplementary report was presented and received. The Moderator ruled the accompanying proposed deliverance out of order. The Clerk moved that the Moderator's ruling be set aside. It was seconded and carried that the ruling be set aside. Upon being put to the vote the proposed deliverance was carried.

1. Synod amend Act 6, Class 2, 2011 "Reports and Correspondence to Synod" (amending Act 1 Class 2, Synod 1983, as amended 1985, 1986, 1995, 2000, 2008) with the addition of the underlined words:
Such an appeal or complaint is heard by the Synod in the usual way for an appeal or complaint against the finding of a lower court, that is, with both the appellant or complainant and the Committee at the bar of Synod. Due to the nature of this case, however, the moderator, though a member of the Committee, should continue to preside and all other parties who are members of Synod are entitled to participate fully in deliberations once removed from the bar.

Mr Yoa tendered a simple dissent.

The Moderator dissented against the decision with the reason that it was against the law of the church and should be considered under Barrier Act.

22.2.10 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of Motion were presented. The court joined in the singing of Psalm 46. The Session closed with prayer, led by Mr McIntosh and Mr Klazinga at 8:26pm.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

SESSION 3

WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY 2022

9:00AM

The session was opened with the singing of Psalm 116:1-6, with Mr Forbes and Mr Tso leading in prayer at 9:01am After this, the Moderator led devotions from Rev. 2:1-7. Christ speaks amongst the lampstands – the churches – present with his people. He spoke on the good things, the bad and the remedy for what was still lacking in the churches.

Mr I Hamilton expressed appreciation for Rev. Leggott's initial address and it was understood that this be printed in *The Presbyterian Banner*.

Rev Robin Tso welcomed Rev Timothy McGlynn (FCC) and Rev. David Lachman (SPC), the motion was seconded and carried. The Moderator welcomed them to the court. It was resolved that they both be associated with the court. The associated delegates sent welcomes.

22.2.11 MINUTES

The Minutes of Session 2 were read and confirmed.

22.2.12 Appeal

An Appeal from Rev. Dr Rowland Ward against a decision by the Administration Committee's refusal to transmit his petition was received and distributed to delegates on 29/04/22. In accordance with the above amendment to Act 6, Class 2, 2011 "Reports and Correspondence to Synod" (amending Act 1 Class 2, Synod 1983, as amended 1985, 1986, 1995, 2000, 2008), the appellant and respondents were called to the bar. The respective cases were heard and right of reply extended. The parties were removed from the bar. By prior agreement the respondents had agreed to abstain from voting. It was carried that the appeal be rejected.

It was resolved that Rev. Dr Rowland Ward be associated with the court. The Moderator welcomed Dr Ward.

The Court adjourned for Morning Tea at 10:30am. The session resumed at 10:50am

The Minutes of the morning's proceedings were read and confirmed.

Dr John Lee was formally welcomed as a delegate to the Synod.

22.2.13 LAW AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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

1. PCEA Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct Amendment Act 2022

WHEREAS Synod is committed to the careful development and refining of its Safe Church standards, AND WHEREAS minor amendments to the 2019 Safe Church Policy and Code were suggested by the presbyteries, and further amendments and additions have been advised by the Law & Advisory committee following its review of state legislation, insurance requirements, and the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, AND WHEREAS all the presbyteries have approved the legislation under the terms of the Barrier Act, NOW THEREFORE Synod enact and ordain for the PCEA Australia-wide the amendments to the existing Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (Act 1, Class 1, 2019) as set out in the appended file 8.6 and 8.7.

2. Repeal of Act 1, Class 1 2014 (Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct)

WHEREAS the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct contained in Act 1, Class 1, 2014 are not considered to be suitably accessible to children, families and volunteers, AND WHEREAS all the key constitutional aspects of complaints handling, including requirements for confidentiality, reporting to civil authorities, and disciplinary outcomes are already contained in the PCEA Safe Church Policy, AND WHEREAS the 2021 Synod has adopted new Complaints Handling Procedures which are more child focused and accessible, AND WHEREAS all the presbyteries have approved the legislation under the terms of the Barrier Act, NOW THEREFORE Synod repeal Act 1, Class 1, 2014 (Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct).

3. New Handbook chapter on Safe Church Matters (Class 2 legislation)

WHEREAS safe church legislation must be understood easily by young people and others attending PCEA church activities, AND WHEREAS all such legislation must be accessible and readily found in the one place, NOW THEREFORE Synod enacts and ordains that all items of enacted safe church legislation, as well as the particular duties of sessions, presbyteries and synod be placed in the Handbook together as the new chapter 8, as set out in the appended files, 8.1 to 8.7.

4. Head of Entity

Synod designates the Clerk of Synod as the PCEA Head of Entity for the purpose of the various state Reportable Conduct Schemes, with the exception of the States of Victoria and Tasmania where the Clerk of Southern Presbytery shall fulfil this role for the time being.

5. Listing of all the Acts of Synod

- a. Synod instructs the Law and Advisory committee to compile the Acts of Synod from past Minutes and Reports and to make them available on the Church website. The assistance of the Synod Clerk, Webmaster, and Archivist to be sought as required.
- b. Synod requires that, in future, full wording of decisions and enactments be included in the Synod minutes rather than a mere reference to Synod Reports. This is to ensure that decisions and enactments of Synod will be clear from the Synod minutes alone.

6. New South Wales Property Act, 1918

Synod notes that the current Act is not causing any difficulties at present and instructs the Law &

Advisory committee to monitor any issues and to make recommendations if problems arise in the future.

7. PCEA Statement (guidelines) on Divorce, Separation and Remarriage

Synod resolves to establish a panel, under the oversight of the Law & Advisory Committee, charged with preparing a statement for the PCEA Handbook to provide clear scriptural guidance on Divorce, Separation and Remarriage, and to bring proposed legislation to Synod 2024.

22.2.14 Notice of Motion

Mr Forbes presented a notice of Motion. The motion was received. It was resolved that Synod amend the relevant section of Handbook 4.53 as follows:

“The Interim Moderator is responsible to the Presbytery during a vacancy and particularly for the pulpit. A person proposed for **full-time supply or residential supply** who is not a minister in good standing of the PCEA must be first approved by the Presbytery as a person of knowledge and capacity who is sufficiently familiar with the position of the PCEA and able to work in harmony with it. **In the case of residential supply** the terms of occupancy of a church residence must be so arranged by the Presbytery so as to ensure the church will not be prejudiced by overstaying when the period of supply ends.

Previous amendment was Act 5, 2013 “Additions to 4.53 in the Handbook: Vacancy” (Per Synod Minutes 13.17.6 b)

APPENDIX to Law and Advisory Report

Handbook Chapter 8

Contents

8.1 Introduction and Overview

8.2 Complaints Handling Procedures

8.3 Duties of Session

8.4 Duties of Presbytery

8.5 Duties of Synod

8.6 Safe Church Policy

8.7 Safe Church Code of Conduct

8.1 Introduction and Overview

Following revelations of unacceptable incidences of historic child abuse in churches and other institutions, the 2017 report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse highlighted the need for institutions in Australia to improve their preventative measures, and to ensure that they have clear and understandable procedures to safeguard against abuse and to deal effectively with cases that may arise.

In 2018 Synod adopted a comprehensive Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct as a further step towards ensuring a safe church for all who attend our ministries. The ongoing development of these standards is guided by the key recommendations of the Royal Commission, including its 10 Child Safe Standards, and the resolve to maintain a clear biblical basis.

The addition of this chapter to the Handbook is intended to ensure that information about the Church's policies and procedures is collected in one place to be easily accessed by church courts, office-bearers, other leaders and church members alike.

Relevant PCEA legislation is found in the following documents:

2019, Act 1 Class 1 - *Adoption of Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct.*

2022, Act 1 Class 1 - *Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct Amendment Act 2022*

2021, Act 5, Class 2 - *Complaints Handling Procedures*

2004, Act 1, Class 2 - *Guidelines for Church Workers*

8.2 COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES

(This section is Act 5, Class 2, 2021 - *Complaints Handling Procedures*)

1. MAKING A COMPLAINT

If you are a child, young person or vulnerable adult who has been abused then it is important that you tell someone about it.

Anyone who has reasonable grounds to believe that a child or other vulnerable person has been abused or is at risk of abuse should also report this.

1.1 Who should you speak to? You can speak directly to the minister or one of the elders, or you can speak to any leader of a church activity such as a Sunday school teacher or youth leader. All our leaders have been trained to listen to your complaint, to take it seriously, and to report it to the session. You also have the right to go directly to the police or relevant government agency to report abuse.

1.2 What if the abuser is one of the church leaders? As a Church we try to be very careful about who we appoint to leadership positions but it is a sad reality that sometimes even a person who was trusted to be a suitable leader may use that position of trust wrongly to abuse others. This is unacceptable and it is important that it is reported to another leader in the Church, or directly to the police or relevant government agency.

1.3 What if the abuse happened somewhere else? Even if the abuse happened somewhere else, such as at school, or at a friend's house, you can still speak to the leaders at your church about this. They will listen to you and seek to help you.

1.4 What if the victim is now an adult?

Abuse by a church leader should be reported even if it happened a long time ago. It may not be easy for a victim to speak about the abuse they experienced but the Church should seek to ensure that help and support are provided to the victim, who should be encouraged to bring a report to police.

1.5 What is abuse?

Children and vulnerable people have a right to be safe, protected, and looked after in their family, daily life and at church activities. Abuse is when a leader, adult, or even another young person, uses their power or position of trust in a wrong way to hurt or exploit by doing things to a child or vulnerable person, or making them do things, that are inappropriate or distressing. It can take many forms, including physical, sexual and emotional abuse, as well as neglect and exploitation.

2. OUR RESPONSE TO A COMPLAINT OR DISCLOSURE OF ABUSE

2.1 We will treat all disclosures seriously and record the details - Our Church is committed to processes that strive for truth and confidentiality and will treat all allegations seriously and act upon them. A child or young person may disclose, deliberately or inadvertently, that he/she is a victim of abuse. Alternatively there may be reasonable grounds to suspect that a child or young person has been or is being abused. 'Reasonable grounds' is a subjective concept, but this does not remove responsibility from a person to act. In all cases, details will be recorded of what happened, when and where it happened, details of persons present or witnesses, using the complainant's own words as far as possible.

2.2 We will be compassionate - We are to ensure as far as possible that a compassionate response is a priority in all reported allegations especially at the time when details are sketchy and it is not yet certain that the allegations are accurate. At these times, when emotions may run high, leaders are not to pass judgment but to offer care and support to the aggrieved person(s) and, if practicable, to the alleged offender.

2.3 We will report abuse to the relevant church body and the proper civil authorities - Leaders and any others in the congregation who hear such disclosures or have reasonable grounds for concern should report the matter to the minister or an elder. You also have the right to go directly to the police or relevant government agency yourself and can ask advice from the congregational Protection Officer. From that time the session (or the presbytery if the allegation is against a minister), will appoint a suitable elder who will be the only one to have carriage of the matter for reportable conduct and will become the liaison person with the police and/or relevant government agency. This procedure shall also apply if a child discloses that the abuse has occurred somewhere else other than the church.

2.4 We will not let fear of being wrong prevent us from reporting abuse - The fear of being wrong is not sufficient ground for not reporting the concerns.

2.5 We will take immediate steps to minimise the risk of further harm – As soon as the session becomes aware of a complaint of abuse they must carry out a risk assessment to identify risks of harm that exist and they must take steps to ensure that those risks are minimised in order to protect the safety of children and vulnerable.

2.6 We will keep careful and confidential records – Confidential records (as a record apart) will be kept by the session clerk and controlled under the privacy legislation of the Church. These records will contain the details of any alleged abuse and the steps taken to process the alleged abuse with the resolution of the process and any conditions placed on the parties involved with all relevant supporting documents (or attested copies) attached. Copies will be kept with the session records for 50 years and then archived at the direction of Synod. A duplicate certified copy of the above records will be lodged with the presbytery clerk.

3. INVESTIGATING A COMPLAINT

3.1 Initial stage - At the initial stage, allegations of child sexual abuse when the alleged victim is still under 18 years of age must not be further investigated by the Church, and neither should the child/young person or the accused be questioned by the Church. When the matter involves criminal behaviour, this must be investigated first by the police.

3.2 Confidentiality - There will be no disclosure to any interested parties connected with allegedly abused child to avoid contamination of evidence and prejudice of investigations. Although the Church minister and session are to be advised, at this stage it will not become a matter for session to act upon nor of presbytery involvement (unless a minister of the Church is the accused).

3.3 Precautionary suspension - Any church leader or worker who is accused will be stood down by the session or presbytery from his/her position until the police investigations and Church investigations are concluded.

3.5 Investigation according to Biblical standards – When any police investigation is concluded the Church will conduct its own investigation. It is possible that charges arising from the police investigation may not be proved to the satisfaction of the civil court. Nevertheless, the standards of conduct required by the Word of God are to be maintained by the Church. Irrespective of any other action that may be taken, the Church reserves the right to exercise its own powers of discipline over adherents, members and office-bearers.

3.6 Disciplinary action – Following investigation by the Church, any minister, office-bearer or other leader found guilty of the sexual abuse of a child, young person, or other vulnerable person, will be immediately removed from office and from all other positions or roles they may hold within the Church.

4. PROVIDING SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE

4.1 We will seek to provide appropriate support to victims - Appropriate sensitive pastoral care will be extended to any child, young person or vulnerable adult who has made a disclosure of abuse, by the following protocols:

- not pushing the child or young person to disclose details of the alleged assault
- not attempting to investigate the allegation
- assuring the person that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- not making contact with the alleged offender to discuss the case.
- maintaining confidentiality by speaking only to those parties recommended by the police (or delegates), even though this may cause emotional tension.

4.2 We will provide ongoing care and support for victims and their families – This is the responsibility of the session and will normally be carried out by the minister or an elder. The Church should also assist victims and families to find information and obtain help from sources outside the Church if desired.

5. REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

5.1 Commitment to review

We are committed to regularly reviewing and improving our Safe Church standards to ensure that our Safe Church Policy, Code of Conduct and procedures are effective in protecting children and the vulnerable from harm. We also want our stated procedures to be clear, accessible and easy to follow for all.

An internal review is to be carried out after a complaint process has been concluded. Any causes of systemic failure should be identified and the views of leaders, complainants, and the victim or their family should be sought wherever possible. Details of the review are to be retained as confidential records.

Safe Church training events may provide a regular opportunity for presbyteries to review, with leaders, how well they are able to understand and implement the Safe Church standards in their congregations.

Observations, comments and suggestions should be forwarded to the relevant Synod committee to facilitate improvements to the Church's policies and procedures.

5.2 Review with leaders

Questions to leaders who were involved in reporting or investigating a complaint may be along the following lines:

- a. Was there some inadequacy or systemic failure in the Church's procedures, or in the implementation of these procedures, that resulted in harm to a child or other vulnerable person under your care?
- b. Were you as a leader/session clear about your duties?
- c. Was the complaint process easy to understand and follow?
- d. Was there anything unclear in the Safe Church Policy, Code of Conduct or complaints procedure, or anything in these documents that requires to be clarified or to be updated?

5.3 Review with complainants, victims or their families

The views of complainants, victims or their families should be sought wherever possible in the review process. This will require particular care and sensitivity depending on the nature of the case. They may wish to submit responses in writing or prefer to meet with an appropriate person who has been appointed by the Church to talk with them and record their views. If it has not been possible to obtain these views then the reasons for this should be stated in the report. Questions may be along the following lines:

- a. Was the complaint process easy to understand and follow?
- b. Did you feel listened to and was your complaint taken seriously?
- c. Did you feel the Church handled the complaint appropriately?

8.3 DUTIES OF SESSION

The particular duties of the session in regard to Safe Church matters are:

1. Actively minimising risks of harm to children and the vulnerable (*Safe Church Policy 2, 10 & 13*)

The Bible requires us (as per the principle in Deuteronomy 22:8) to do our best to foresee possible sources of danger and put in place reasonable safeguards. We also recognise the need in doing this to strike a sensible balance between taking precautions on the one hand and, on the other, not being unreasonably oppressive when it comes to guarding against possible scenarios.

If the session becomes aware of a complaint of abuse they must carry out a risk assessment to identify risks of harm that exist and they must take steps to ensure that those risks are minimised in order to protect the safety of children and vulnerable.

If the minister, elders or other leaders become aware that any person attending any of its services or activities is the subject of a substantiated complaint of child sexual abuse, or has been convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, they must make this known to the session. On receiving such information the session must assess the level of risk posed to children by such a person's ongoing involvement in church activities and take appropriate steps to manage that risk. Such steps may require that the known offender always attend all meetings under the supervision of a responsible individual named by session.

2. Carefully selecting and appointing church workers (*Safe Church Policy 9*)

This is a critical aspect in preventing harm and requires care and patience, with prayer. The most important thing is to appoint godly leaders who are well known members of the congregation. When Paul chose Timothy to be his assistant ministry worker, he obtained the opinions of the local church members at Lystra/Iconium (Acts 16:2). The session should also be encouraging those who have the gifts for service and leadership.

For those who will be working with children and young people, the following protocols apply:

- applicants must be members of the congregation for at least one year (less time approved only if they are well attested from another congregation of the PCEA with at least two referees' reports)
- applicants for leadership positions must be approved by the local session
- before they commence working as a leader they must have a WWCC clearance
- they must undertake initial and follow-up training as prescribed by presbytery
- they must continue regularly at the public worship in the congregation
- they must have ongoing supervision and mentoring by an elder

3. Working with Children Checks (*Safe Church Policy 9*)

The following guidance is believed to be correct as at February 2022:

New South Wales – www.ocg.nsw.gov.au

The session (as 'employer') must ensure their congregation is registered with the Office of the Children's Guardian. Two names of session members have to be supplied for notification if a leader

(‘employee’) subsequently offends and is barred. All who have a role in working with children must obtain a Working with Children Check number which they must supply to the Church along with their date of birth. The session through its clerk or congregational Protection Officer will use this information to verify that the person is cleared to work with children.

Queensland - www.bluecard.qld.gov.au

Church employees and volunteers who work with children and young people must hold a blue card. The session through its clerk or congregational Protection Officer must notify Blue Card Services that the individual is commencing regulated child-related work with the Church by submitting the relevant form available from the website.

Tasmania – www.cbos.tas.gov.au/topics/licensing-and-registration

Individuals who will be working with children, whether as employees or volunteers, must register with the Tasmanian government.

The session through its clerk or congregational Protection Officer must check the status of employees and volunteers online before they start working or volunteering with the church. The registration card alone is not to be accepted as proof. It is important that the Church's details are linked to a registration so that it can be notified if there has been a change to the status e.g. suspended or cancelled registration.

Victoria - www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au

Individuals who engage in child-related work in Victoria must apply for a Working with Children Check either as an employee or volunteer.

The session through its clerk or congregational Protection Officer must check the status of a worker's Working with Children Check card before engaging them. It's not enough to just see a worker's card. The individual must update their details to include the congregation's name via their MyCheck account and a letter of confirmation will be sent to the Church.

4. Appointing a protection officer (*Safe Church Policy 7*)

The session of each congregation will appoint a suitable protection officer (or officers) who will be responsible for the following:

- promoting to the congregation the details and importance of the Safe Church Policy including the Code of Conduct
- being readily available to answer queries and to provide information to the congregation and others (e.g. parents) when required
- keeping the non-confidential records such as the WWCC documentation and training records for each leader (and other records as outlined below)
- checking on the training of all leaders and liaising with the clerk of presbytery concerning training courses
- providing a report to the clerk of session annually, or as required

5. Maintaining proper documentation (*Safe Church Policy 8*)

Within each congregation there will be two sets of records kept in books or folders.

Non-confidential records showing the list of approved workers, dates of appointment to positions, Working with Children Check approval numbers and dates and training programmes attended; also to be recorded here are the training course programmes delivered to the congregation with name of the providers, objectives, content, dates of delivery and attendees. Registers are also to be kept showing attendance records of all those participating in youth activities, and these are to be retained for 25 years. These records are kept by the congregational protection officer.

Confidential records (as a record apart) are kept by the session clerk and controlled under the privacy legislation of the Church. These records are to contain the details of any alleged abuse and the steps taken to process the alleged abuse with the resolution of the process and any conditions placed on the

parties involved with all relevant supporting documents (or attested copies) to be attached. Copies are to be kept with the session records for 50 years and then archived at the direction of Synod, in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Policy. A duplicate certified copy of the above records should be lodged with the presbytery clerk. Session clerks are authorised to release relevant confidential information for insurance purposes upon receipt of a written request from the person or committee that organises the Church's insurance renewal. Confidential records are not to be stored or communicated electronically except where there is a statutory requirement to do so.

6. Receiving and responding to allegations of abuse (*Safe Church Policy 10*)

Leaders and any others in the congregation who hear disclosures of abuse or have reasonable grounds for concern may go directly to the police and/or report the matter to the minister/interim-moderator or an elder. From that time the session will appoint a suitable elder who will be the only one to have carriage of the matter for reportable conduct and will become the liaison person with the police and/or relevant government agency. This procedure shall also apply if a child discloses that the abuse has occurred somewhere else other than the Church.

Allegations against a minister or licentiate must be dealt with by his presbytery. The allegation should go immediately to the clerk of presbytery, (or to the moderator if the clerk is the one accused).

Full details of the procedures for responding to and investigating allegations can be found in the Handbook 8.2 (*See also Safe Church Policy section 10*)

7. Determining exceptions to the Code of Conduct in specific cases (*Code of Conduct 3(1)*)

Where a minor protocol cannot be followed due to an emergency or unexpected situation, the session (or supervising body) must be notified in writing as soon as practicable. A temporary variation may also be approved in advance. In both cases the session must determine whether or not the circumstances justify the departure from protocol and must carefully document its finding.

8. Review (*Safe Church Policy 3*)

The Church is committed to regularly reviewing and improving its Safe Church standards. Comments and suggestions may be forwarded to the Law and Advisory committee at any time to facilitate improvements to the Church's policies and procedures. In particular, sessions are required to carry out an internal review after a complaint process has been concluded. Further details can be found in Handbook 8.3 section 5.

8.4 DUTIES OF PRESBYTERY

The presbytery has a responsibility to promote Safe Church matters throughout its bounds and oversee the implementation of the Safe Church Policy and procedures within its jurisdiction. The particular duties of presbytery in regard to Safe Church matters are:

1. Careful selection and appointment of ministers, licentiates and other workers

In processing a call to a minister or licentiate, and before licensing, ordination and induction, the presbytery has a duty to ensure that background checks have been carried out and that the individual concerned is of good character and reputation and has a Working With Children Check (WWCC) clearance.

If the call is to a minister outside the PCEA, including from another country, who is eligible for call, the appropriate credentials must be sought including a fully completed application form, criminal/sexual abuse checks and at least two appropriate referees' reports.

Other workers appointed by presbytery to particular roles should be well known within the church, having been members of a PCEA congregation for at least 12 months and well attested by that congregation. If they have not been members for 12 months then they should be well attested by their previous congregation, with a minimum of two referees' reports being required.

2. Organising training for leaders (*Safe Church Policy 15*)

It is required that those working with children and the vulnerable be given appropriate training in Safe Church matters. The clerk of presbytery is to organise approved initial and ongoing training for all leaders and office-bearers in the congregations of their jurisdictions. Records will be kept and details provided to government agencies as required. Records also are to be kept by the congregational Protection Officers.

3. Maintaining proper documentation (*Safe Church Policy 8*)

The presbytery clerk will maintain two sets of records kept in books or folders.

Non-confidential records showing the list of ministers, licentiates and other workers, dates of appointment to positions, Working With Children Check approval numbers and dates and training programmes attended; also to be recorded here are the training course programmes delivered with name of the providers, objectives, content, dates of delivery and attendees. Registers are to be kept showing attendance records of all young people participating in youth events organised by the presbytery, and these are to be retained for at least 25 years.

Confidential records (as a record apart) These records are to contain the details of any alleged abuse and the steps taken to process the alleged abuse with the resolution of the process and any conditions placed on the parties involved with all relevant supporting documents (or attested copies) to be attached. Copies are to be kept with the presbytery records for 50 years and then archived at the direction of Synod. Similar records are also kept by session clerks relating to cases within their congregation. A duplicate certified copy of such session records should also be lodged with the presbytery clerk. These records are to be kept by the presbytery clerk and controlled under the privacy legislation of the Church. Presbytery clerks are authorised to release relevant confidential information for insurance purposes upon receipt of a written request from the person or committee that organises the Church's insurance renewal. Confidential records are not to be stored or communicated electronically except where there is a statutory requirement to do so.

4. Receiving and responding to allegations of abuse (*Safe Church Policy 10*)

Leaders and any others who hear disclosures of abuse or have reasonable grounds for concern must report it immediately. They may go directly to the police and/or report the matter to the minister/interim-moderator or an elder.

Allegations against a minister or licentiate must be dealt with by his presbytery. The allegation should go immediately to the clerk of presbytery, (or to the moderator if the clerk is the one accused). From that time the presbytery will appoint a suitable minister or elder who will be the only one to have carriage of the matter for reportable conduct and will become the liaison person with the police and/or relevant government agency. This procedure shall also apply if a child discloses that the abuse has occurred somewhere else other than the church.

When presbytery becomes aware of a complaint of abuse it must immediately assess the risks of harm that exist and take steps to ensure that those risks are minimised in order to protect the safety of children and vulnerable.

Full details of the procedures for responding to and investigating allegations can be found in the Handbook 8.2 (*See also Safe Church Policy section 10*)

5. Approving temporary exceptions to the Code of Conduct in specific cases (*Code of Conduct 3(1)*)

Where a minor protocol cannot be followed due to an emergency or unexpected situation, the session (or supervising body) must be notified in writing as soon as practicable. A temporary variation may also be approved in advance. In both cases the supervising body must determine whether or not the circumstances justify the departure from protocol and must carefully document its finding.

6. Work with a body external to the Church (*Safe Church Policy 13*)

Decisions to enter into agreements with other churches or organisations for the provision of advice on child protection issues or to conduct appropriate training for church workers will be made by presbyteries.

Using the services of other organisations in child related ministries (e.g. at camping, conference and other sites) is allowed if that organisation agrees to uphold this Church's Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct.

7. Review (*Safe Church Policy 3*)

Presbytery should regularly review the implementation and effectiveness of Safe Church matters within its bounds. Comments and suggestions for improvement should be forwarded to the Law and Advisory committee. In particular, presbyteries are required to carry out an internal review after a complaint process has been concluded. Further details can be found in Handbook 8.3 section 5.

Safe Church training events may provide a regular opportunity for presbyteries to review, with leaders, how well they are able to understand and implement the Safe Church standards in their congregations.

8.5 DUTIES OF SYNOD

The particular duties of Synod in regard to Safe Church matters are:

1. Legislating for a clear PCEA-wide approach to Safe Church matters

Synod is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the Church has effective and clear policies and procedures in place for the prevention of abuse, and for the processing of complaints about abuse should they arise. The Royal Commission recommended that each denomination have a unified national approach. It is the responsibility of Synod to put in place policies and procedures which apply throughout the PCEA, Australia-wide, that take into account relevant state legislation and the examples of best practice from other similar institutions. Synod should be advised in this by its Law and Advisory Committee.

2. Reviewing and updating Safe Church legislation (*Safe Church Policy 3*)

Synod should ensure that the review of its current Safe Church standards be ongoing through its Law and Advisory Committee. Observations of difficulties in implementing or using the Safe Church standards, as well as suggestions for improvements, may be submitted by individuals, sessions and presbyteries to the Law and Advisory Committee at any time but especially following an incident or complaint. Standard questionnaires may be made available to church courts to facilitate feedback. Identification of systemic failures or recommendations for improvement should be made to Synod through the Law and Advisory Committee.

3. Insurance

Synod maintains Australia-wide Public Liability insurance in respect of the activities of the Church but 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.

It is necessary that certain confidential information be disclosed to insurers to maintain cover. Presbytery clerks and session clerks are required and authorised to release such information upon receipt of a signed request from the person or committee that organises the insurance renewal. Such information is to be used only for insurance purposes and is not to be retained longer than is necessary for these purposes nor is it to be retained electronically by either party.

4. Record Keeping by Youth and Fellowship Committee

The Youth and Fellowship committee must keep a register showing attendance records of all those participating in the camps and other activities which it organises. These are to be retained for at least 25 years.

8.6 SAFE CHURCH POLICY

[PCEA Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct Act, Class 1, 2019, amended 2022]

1. Introduction

Christians are required by the Lord of the Church to think, speak and act in ways that are God-honouring, biblically obedient and motivated by the Christian values of love, mercy and justice. Unfortunately, perpetrators of crimes often seek out churches because they are welcoming, while Christians can also backslide into serious sin. Accordingly, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, in applying the principles of God's Word, has adopted this fuller Safe Church Policy and the associated Code of Conduct for Church Workers.

This policy is a public document highlighting our resolve to maintain a safe church for all who attend our ministries. It is a privilege to serve Christ in working with all those who entrust themselves to our care, particularly children, young people, and the vulnerable as we help them to become and to mature as disciples of Jesus Christ.

However with this privilege comes responsibility. We have a high calling to protect the vulnerable among us, especially the young, and it comes from the Lord Jesus Himself. *“Let the little children come to me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say unto you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter in.” And He blessed them.* Mark 10: 14-16. Just as those first century children felt safe and secure with Jesus, so all children should feel safe and secure in our care. Their parents should also feel confident in leaving their children with us, knowing that we shall protect them from harm, whilst sharing the love of Christ in word and deed.

Parents have the primary responsibility to teach and to protect their children and they need to be assured that church leaders will similarly teach good things and protect their children. Church leaders undertake their task with responsibility towards parents and towards God. This policy seeks to fulfil the expectations of parents as well as society in these matters. These are set down in state laws but biblical standards are even higher, particularly when it comes to the care of children (including the unborn), the disabled and the elderly.

2. A Biblical Perspective

Firstly, we recognise that sin not only affects our relationship to God but also our relationships with one another. The Bible identifies sin as the root cause of the abuse and miseries we see in society. The institutional church is not free from such abuse as it is comprised of sinful people at varying levels of Christian commitment, as well as the unregenerate. But the church should be conforming to God's standards.

In His teaching summarising the Ten Commandments, Jesus said, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’ (Luke 10:27). Jesus pronounced severe punishment upon anyone bringing offence or harm to ‘one of these little ones’ (Luke 17:2). The church therefore should always be ready to help the poor, the young and the vulnerable and to defend them from harm and exploitation. This teaching underlies our Safe Church practices.

In the law given through Moses there were many regulations designed to provide for, and to protect, ‘the stranger, the fatherless and the widow’ (Deuteronomy 14:29, 24:17-22, 26:12-13, 27:19, Psalm 82:3-4, Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 7:5-7, 22:3, Zechariah 7:9,10). This law reflected the heart of God himself, and Jesus reflected the same heart of love. He was moved with compassion for the widow of

Nain (Luke 7:13), and for little children (Matthew 19:14). James writes, ‘Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep himself unspotted from the world’ (James 1:27).

Biblical standards include those of justice as well as mercy. These standards make provision for false allegations of abuse, either mistaken or deliberate, which may arise in the Church. This is also a serious offence (Deuteronomy 19:16-21) as persons falsely accused in public can suffer loss of reputation and health. Therefore, when an accusation is made it is important that we, as a church, judge with righteous judgment (Proverbs 17:15). ‘The house of God, which is the church of the living God, (is) the pillar and ground of truth’ (1 Timothy 3:15).

The Bible requires us (as per the principle in Deuteronomy 22:8) to do our best to foresee possible sources of danger and put in place reasonable safeguards. We also recognise the need in doing this to strike a sensible balance between taking precautions on the one hand and, on the other, not being unreasonably oppressive when it comes to guarding against possible scenarios.

3. Outline of Principles and Practices by the PCEA and its Congregations

As a national organisation, the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia is committed to safe ministry by the following principles and practices:

- advocating Biblical principles which value children, young people and the vulnerable. We believe this will result in a safe, friendly and nurturing environment
- complying with Government requirements concerning all vulnerable people
- carefully appointing and monitoring leaders who oversee church ministries
- appointing a ‘Protection Officer’ in each congregation to promote safe church matters and to keep records
- providing initial and regular follow-up training on safe church matters
- reporting to the civil authorities any whose conduct infringe criminal codes
- disciplining (by documented procedures) and counselling any who exploit children, young people, the vulnerable or those who make false accusations
- regularly reviewing the implementation and effectiveness of this policy and updating as required

4. Definitions

4.1 Child: A person under the age of 16 years (some laws, under 18 years of age)

4.2 Young Person: A person from 16 to 18 years of age

4.3 Vulnerable Person: A child or someone who by reason of mental incapacity or other disability, age or illnesses may be unable to take care of or protect themselves against harm or exploitation by another person

4.4 Risk of Significant Harm: This is a term for situations where a reasonable person has concerns about the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child.

4.5 Abuse categories: Each of the following constitutes a reportable offence

(Serious) physical abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable person is severely and/or persistently hurt or injured. It can occur in the context of domestic violence.

Sexual abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable person is exposed or subjected to sexual behaviours or threat to commit such behaviours that are exploitative or inappropriate. It usually occurs when a person uses their power and authority to take advantage of another's trust to involve them in sexual activity. Sexual abuse does not necessarily involve physical contact. It includes any act which erodes the sexual boundary between two persons. It may appear to be consensual, but the validity of consent is negated by the power differential.

Emotional (psychological) abuse occurs when a child or vulnerable person is repeatedly treated in ways that damage their ability to feel, express their feelings and develop self-esteem.

Neglect is a legally defined term and occurs when a child or vulnerable person is deprived of the basic physical and emotional necessities of life (such as freedom of movement, food, medical care, clothing, housing, education).

4.6 WWCC: A Working with Children Check is carried out by State Governments, using a national database, to provide a clearance to work with children based on police records.

5. Positions for Ministry

These include the minister and any other paid employees, elders, deacons, carers (including the crèche), Sunday School teachers and helpers, Kid's Club leaders and helpers, Youth Group leaders and helpers and Scripture Teachers (SRE). Most of these positions are voluntary.

6. Code of Conduct for Church Workers 2021

This is an associated document to be followed by all leaders and office-bearers. This Code may be updated from time to time by the Synod.

7. Protection Officer

The session of each congregation will appoint a suitable Protection Officer (or Officers) who will be responsible for the following:

- promoting to the congregation the details and importance of the Safe Church Policy including the Code of Conduct
- being readily available to answer queries and to provide information to the congregation and others (eg. parents) when required
- keeping the non-confidential records such as the WWCC documentation and training records for each leader (and other records as outlined below)
- checking on the training of all leaders and liaising with the clerk of presbytery concerning training courses
- providing a report to the clerk of session annually, or as required

8. Record-Keeping

Within each congregation there will be two sets of Records kept in books or folders

8.1 Non-Confidential records showing the list of approved workers, dates of appointment to positions, Working With Children Check approval numbers and dates and training programmes attended; also to be recorded here are the training course programmes delivered to the congregation with name of the providers, objectives, content, dates of delivery and attendees. Registers are also to be kept showing attendance records of all those participating in youth activities, and these are to be retained for at least 25 years. These records are kept by the congregational Protection Officer.

8.2 Confidential records (as a Record Apart) kept by the session clerk and controlled under the privacy legislation of the Church. These records are to contain the details of any alleged abuse and the steps taken to process the alleged abuse with the resolution of the process and any conditions placed on the parties involved with all relevant supporting documents (or attested copies) to be attached. Copies are to be kept with the session records for 50 years and then archived at the direction of Synod. A duplicate certified copy of the above records should be lodged with the presbytery clerk. Confidential records are not to be stored electronically, nor to be communicated electronically except where there is a statutory requirement to do so. Presbytery clerks and session clerks are authorized to release relevant confidential information for insurance purposes upon receipt of a written request from the person or committee that organises the Church's insurance renewal.

9. Selection Process for Church Workers

This is a critical aspect in preventing harm and requires care and patience, with prayer. The most important thing is to appoint godly leaders who are well known members of the congregation. When Paul chose Timothy to be his assistant ministry worker, he obtained the opinions of the local church members at Lystra/Iconium (Acts 16:2). We also should be encouraging those who have the gifts for service and leadership.

For those who will be working with children and young people, the following protocols apply:

- applicants must be members of the congregation who have been regular attenders for at least one year (less time approved only if they are well attested from another approved congregation, with at least two referees' reports)
- applicants for leadership positions must be approved by the local session
- before they commence working as leaders they must have a WWCC clearance
- they must undertake initial and follow-up training as prescribed by presbytery
- they must continue regularly at the public worship in the congregation
- they must have ongoing supervision and mentoring by an elder

10. Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Abuse

Our Church is committed to processes that strive for truth and confidentiality and will treat all allegations seriously and act upon them. Information about how to make a complaint can be found in our COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURES (Act 5, Synod 2021), which also sets out how the Church will respond and investigate the complaint.

A child may disclose, deliberately or inadvertently, that he/she is a victim of abuse. Alternatively there may be reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being abused. 'Reasonable grounds' is a subjective concept, but this does not remove responsibility from a person to act.

We are to ensure as far as possible that a compassionate response is a priority in all reported allegations especially at the time when details are sketchy and it is not yet certain that the allegations are accurate. At these times, when emotions may run high, leaders are not to pass judgment but to offer care and support to the aggrieved person(s) and, if practicable, to the alleged offender. Pastoral care at all stages is very important (see further under Item 11).

Leaders and any others in the congregation who hear such disclosures or have reasonable grounds for concern may go directly to the Police and/or report the matter to the Minister/Interim Moderator or an elder. From that time the session will appoint a suitable elder who will be the only one to have carriage of the matter for reportable conduct and will become the liaison person with the Police and/or relevant Government agency. This procedure shall also apply if a child discloses that the abuse has occurred somewhere else other than the church.

When session becomes aware of a complaint of abuse it must immediately assess the risks of harm that exist and take steps to ensure that those risks are minimised in order to protect the safety of children and the vulnerable.

At this stage, allegations of child sexual abuse when the alleged victim is still under 18 years of age must not be further investigated by the Church, and neither should the child/young person or the accused be questioned by the Church. When the matter involves criminal behaviour, this must be investigated first by the police.

There will be no disclosure to any interested parties connected with allegedly abused child to avoid contamination of evidence and prejudice of investigations. Although the church minister (or interim moderator) and session are to be advised, at this stage it will not become a matter for session to act upon nor of presbytery involvement (unless a minister of the Church is the accused).

Any church leader or worker who is accused will be stood down by the session from his/her position until the investigations are concluded. Irrespective of any other action taken by bodies outside the

Church, the PCEA church discipline procedures, if necessary, will apply according to the Handbook of Practice and Procedure following the conclusion of Police investigations and the outcome of any Court or other legal proceedings.

Following investigation by the Church, any leader found guilty of sexual abuse will be immediately removed from office and from all other positions or roles they may hold within the Church.

11. Pastoral Care for Children & Young People who are Alleged Victims of Abuse

Appropriate sensitive pastoral care will be extended to any child, young person or vulnerable person who has made a disclosure of abuse, by the following protocols:

- not pushing the child or young person to disclose details of the alleged assault
- not attempting to investigate the allegation
- assuring the person that they are understood; that their disclosure is being taken seriously; that what has happened is not their fault and that they are correct in disclosing the incident.
- not making contact with the alleged offender to discuss the case
- maintaining confidentiality by speaking only to those parties recommended by the police (or delegates), even though this may cause emotional tension

12. False Allegations

Accusations of abuse raised due to ignorance, by unwarranted suspicion or malice may prove to be false. Reputations can be irrevocably tarnished by a false accusation which is clearly forbidden under the ninth commandment, "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." Exodus 20:16.

False accusations may themselves constitute criminal behaviour and as such, redress may be contemplated by the aggrieved. But it is preferable that false accusations should be dealt with by the session with counselling and seeking of forgiveness.

However, the fear of being wrong in reporting situations where it is believed that abuse has occurred is not sufficient ground for not reporting the concerns.

13. Managing Known Offenders

If the Church become aware that any person attending any of its services or activities is the subject of a substantiated complaint of child sexual abuse, or has been convicted of an offence relating to child sexual abuse, they must make this known to the session.

On receiving such information the session must assess the level of risk posed to children by such a person's ongoing involvement in church activities and take appropriate steps to manage that risk. Such steps may require that the known offender always attend meetings under the supervision of a responsible individual named by session. The Church's insurer must also be informed as soon as possible.

14. Working with a Body External to the Church

Using the services of another organisation in child related ministries (eg. at camping, conference and other sites) is allowed if that organisation agrees to uphold the policies contained in this document.

Decisions to enter into agreements with other churches or organisations for the provision of advice on child protection issues or to conduct appropriate training for church workers will be made by presbyteries.

15. Training

It is required that those working with children and the vulnerable be given appropriate training in Safe Church matters. The clerk of presbytery will organise approved initial and ongoing training for all leaders and office bearers in the congregations of their jurisdictions. Records will be kept and details provided to Government agencies as required. Records also are to be kept by the congregational Protection Officers (see item 8.1 above).

8.7 SAFE CHURCH CODE OF CONDUCT

[PCEA Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct Act, Class 1, 2019, amended 2022]

1. As a person in a position of leadership within the church you must always be concerned about the integrity of your position and remember that you are representing the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. You should avoid situations where you will be vulnerable to temptation and where your conduct may be construed to be a breach of God's holy standards.
3. With regard to young people and children, appropriate conduct includes the following protocols:
 - a. When visiting children in their homes, leaders will only do so if a parent or another appropriate adult is present.
 - b. When transporting children in vehicles, no leader is to be alone in a vehicle with a single child or young person.
 - c. There shall be at least two approved leaders at any activity (except for crèche where a sole female carer is acceptable). On occasion a parent present as an observer may suffice as a second adult. Preferably there should be male and female leaders for mixed groups with male leaders for boys' groups and female leaders for girls' groups. It is recognised that there may be occasions where there is a sole leader when breaking up into small groups; but in such cases, the small groups will not be out of eyesight or earshot of others.
 - d. A camp or other activity involving overnight accommodation should include "camp parents" (ideally a married couple over the age of 25 years, of known maturity and Christian commitment) approved by the church. In such overnight accommodation there will be a strict segregation by sex, with the exception of married couples and families. Supervision of children and young people must be provided by a person of the same sex.
 - e. A biblical pattern of behaviour is to be observed with respect to modesty and standards of morality. Adults and children are to respect the privacy of others during activities that require undressing and changing clothes. Leaders are to set an example by protecting their own privacy in similar situations.
 - f. Initiations and secret ceremonies are forbidden.
 - g. Any activity involving children or young people is open to observation by parents and other adults with a legitimate reason.
 - h. Leaders have the right to ask persons who do not have a valid reason to be present at child related activities to leave. Police may be contacted if such persons refuse to comply with any such reasonable request.
 - i. If any personal counselling is required, it shall be carried out within the sight of other people (preferably another leader).
 - j. The consumption of alcohol during a church or youth activity is forbidden, with the exception of communion services where wine is ordinarily used. Any young person found under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs is to be counselled and removed from the activity. Any such drugs found on the church grounds are to be witnessed (by a second person) and removed. Where appropriate, police should be informed.
 - k. In any physical contact with young people or children, leaders will respect the feelings and privacy of those persons. Physical violence of any kind is forbidden.
 - l. Where a protocol cannot be followed due to an emergency or unexpected situation, the session (or supervising body) must be notified in writing as soon as practicable. A temporary variation may also be approved in advance. In both cases the supervising body must determine whether or not the circumstances justify the departure from protocol and must carefully document its finding.
4. The Bible commands us very clearly on purity of body and mind, for example in Ephesians 5:3,4, Matthew 5:27-29 and Job 31:1. This is expanded in our Larger Catechism (Nos 138 and 139). All leaders should be familiar with these standards and be prepared to uphold and encourage these values in their personal lives and in all their dealings with others. Any sexualised behaviour (apart from that within marriage as defined by the Word of God) is to be carefully avoided. What is forbidden

includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- a. inappropriate conversation, remarks and jokes of a sexual nature, grooming behaviour, coarse language, suggestive gestures and impure looks
- b. pornographic literature or media of any kind (from books, magazines, newspapers, posters, videos, movies, DVDs, internet sites, photographs, etc)

5. Leaders are to the best of their ability to take reasonable action to maintain the safety of all persons in their care. This particularly applies to the young, the elderly and other vulnerable persons.

6. State Governments from time to time legislate for reportable offences in the realm of child abuse. These standards vary from state to state. When any such abuse of children and young people is seen or reported to you, these must be notified to the minister or an elder of the congregation for reporting to the Police or Government agency. You also have the right to go directly to the Police yourself and can ask advice from the congregational Protection Officer. The church's own disciplinary procedures may also apply.

You, in your position of leadership, are required to report any of the following (which are defined in the Safe Church Policy):

- physical or sexual child abuse,
- a child or young person at risk of significant harm,
- a child suffering neglect, and
- any sexual misconduct by leaders (per 4 above)

7. Before you commence working with children and young people in your position of leadership in the church, you will undertake the Government Working with Children Check (WWCC) and provide a copy of the documentation and approval number to the congregational Protection Officer, together with your date of birth.

8. Initial training and regular follow-up training in Safe Church matters must be undertaken if you are in any position of leadership. Approved training sessions will be organised by the clerk of presbytery.

22.2.15 TRAINING OF MINISTRY COMMITTEE

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

1. Synod recognise the Free Church Seminary (Free Church of Scotland - Continuing) as a suitable college to recommend for online courses.
2. Synod approve negotiation with Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary as another suitable seminary to recommend for online courses and distance learning.
3. Synod note that the Committee plans to review the list of Synod-approved colleges for candidate training, with the hope of bringing a report and recommendations to Synod 2023.

22.2.16 YOUTH AND 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 praying for the children and youth in the Church. While at any age we are assaulted and tempted, it seems that it is the youth that are especially vulnerable to the temptations of the world and Satan.
2. Synod gives thanks to Tom Reeve and Cameron Hamilton for their contribution to the Youth and Fellowship committee and their own congregations over the years.
3. The Synod gives thanks and pray for those are involved in the work of teaching Sunday-school and youth classes.
4. Synod thanks Irene Steel for her dedication to the scripture search work and acknowledge God's blessing for her commitment and encouragement in continuing this role.
5. Synod upholds Nic and Amelia O'Dell in prayer as they continue in sending birthday greetings to the children of the church.

22.2.17 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notices of Motion were called for. The Moderator called for a time of prayer. Mr Ball and Mr Kerridge led in prayer. The Session closed at 12:30pm.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

SESSION 4 WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY 2022 2:00PM

The session opened with the singing of Psalm 96 and the Moderator leading in prayer.

22.2.18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the second part of Session 3 (following Morning tea) were read and confirmed.

22.2.19 MISSIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Dr Muldoon, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. The Synod gives thanks to the Lord for the opportunity and privilege to be 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 thanks to Rev Jim Klazinga for editing the bi-monthly prayer notes and encourages congregations to use these notes.
3. Synod agrees that the PCEA Missions Committee, under the terms of the Rev J. A. Harman Memorial Fund (Est 1977), give the Synod Treasurer a standing instruction to donate annually the sum of \$600 from this fund towards the training of pastors at the Dumisani Theological Institute, until further notice, funds permitting.

4. As a result of the difficulties of maintaining the sponsorship scheme for the Chhapara Mission School, especially during the pandemic, a sub-committee was appointed last Synod. This committee, comprising of Alex Steel, David Kerridge and John Greensill, implemented change from a sponsorship scheme for individual students to a much simpler donation scheme. This enables the schools at Chhapara and Lakhnadon much more flexibility to apply funds where needed. Synod commends the donation scheme to all, and thanks those who have continued to keep up their support.

5. Synod approve a memorial minute to Dr Helen Ramsay as follows:

MEMORIAL MINUTE - DR HELEN RAMSAY

Of all the women missionaries to leave the shores of Australia to serve the Lord, Dr Helen Ramsay was one of the most notable- not that she ever wanted or accepted any praise for her many years of service as a medical doctor in rural India. Helen was the only daughter of Rev M. C. Ramsay, who ministered on the Manning for almost thirty years. Helen grew up in Taree, and in 1952 she graduated MBBS from the University of Sydney. Helen went to serve the Lord in India in 1955. She ministered at a small rural clinic in Chhapara, MP, from where she travelled out to villages for eye camps and to train village health workers. She travelled by bullock cart to these villages, one of which can now be reached by a sealed road. Helen came home on extended leave 1970 to look after her ageing parents. In 1976 she returned to India to serve another nine years. She contracted Multiple Sclerosis and spent her latter years in a nursing home in Sydney. She maintained a prayerful interest in the work in India and rejoiced when brethren from India were able to visit her nursing home. She died on 12 October 2021 at the age of 93.

Dr Helen's missionary service in India impacted many in our churches, and a number ended up on mission fields. Young people grew up with a deep sense of the importance of 'foreign missions' through listening to Dr Helen's talks at Mission Gift Evenings. Her greatest impact however, was upon the lives of many in India, from where the following tribute was sent: 'We are thankful to the Lord for sending her into our midst and enabling her to serve faithfully and joyfully, despite the lack of many comforts and privileges of her homeland. She was a perfect demonstration of the gospel. In fact, it was her service that still makes our proclamation of the gospel much easier and accepted in many villages today'.

6. When mission donations are to missions supported by the Synod, congregational treasurers are urged to send funds through the Synod treasurer.

7. Synod recommends that our churches hold mission events at which missionaries on the field could be invited online to outline and update their ministry, and field questions from church folk- as we have done at Synod. This would be undertaken on a Presbytery basis.

8. Synod adopt the Missions Committee Budget 2022/23 and expresses its general agreement with the estimates for this period.

22.2.20 INTER-CHURCH RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received. Mr Klazinga, recently returned from the CRCA Synod, gave a report on the proceedings, including maintaining orthodox positions on homosexuality, female deacons and infant baptism. Mr Klazinga brought greetings from CRCA, RCNZ and RPCA, the latter two churches having delegates being unable to attend our Synod due to commitments at the CRCA Synod.

The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. 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 appoint Rev. Jim Klazinga as its delegate to the URCNA synod in Buffalo, New York, 17-21 October, 2022 and agrees to contribute appropriately to his economy airfare and travel insurance if he is able to physically attend.

22.2.21 Motion

It was proposed that Synod appoint Mr R Tso and Mr G Ball to be representatives to the ICRC conference by electronic means.

22.2.22 PRESBYTERY REPORTS

Northern Presbytery

The Clerk of Northern Presbytery, Mr Forbes, presented the Northern Presbytery Report. It was resolved to receive the report.

22.2.23 Northern Presbytery Petition re Sale of Grafton

The Petition from Northern Presbytery was presented by Mr Kerridge. It was agreed to receive the correspondence.

After questions and discussion, it was resolved that the crave of the petition be refused.

An adjournment was called at 4:10pm. The meeting was resumed at 4:30pm.

Central Presbytery

The Clerk of Central Presbytery, Mr Ball, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

Southern Presbytery

The Clerk of Southern Presbytery, Mr Ramsay, presented the report. It was resolved that the report be received.

22.2.24 CHURCH AND NATION and PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Ball, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. Synod reaffirms its conviction that the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, is the only Saviour of sinners. As a result of purchasing salvation for His elect, He has received from His Father a position of glory, honour, and authority, so that He now reigns as the King of kings and Lord of lords and is worthy of universal worship and obedience (Matt. 28:18, 1 Cor. 15:25, Phil. 2:9, Eph. 1:20-22, Rev. 19:16).
2. Synod acknowledges the dark and potentially dangerous days in which we live and exhorts members to intercede for the spiritual well-being of our nation so that men and women will seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near (Isa. 55:6).
3. Synod urges members to pray for the reformation and revival of the church in the words of the Psalmist, 'Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You? Show us Your mercy Lord and grant us Your salvation' (Ps. 85:6-7).
4. Synod appoint 30th July, 2022 as a Day of Prayer to seek the Lord's mercy and favour. The meeting could be hosted by 'Zoom' and organised by the Clerks of Presbytery, with the technical assistance of Rev. Robin Tso.
5. Synod records its thanks to the editor of the Presbyterian Banner, Rev. Jim Klazinga, for producing an attractive and informative magazine, and resolves to pray for him in his editorial work, and for the witness of the magazine.
6. Synod records its appreciation to Rev. Jim Klazinga for his diligence in sending out regular prayer texts.

7. Synod notes that 'The Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act' is now law in Victoria. Synod urges pastors, teachers, and members not to be intimidated into silence, yet to be wise as serpents and innocent as doves as they seek to share the faith (Matt. 10:16)

22.2.25 Banner Report

The Editor, Mr Klazinga, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Editor presented the proposed deliverances and it was resolved that:

1. Synod continues to endorse the Presbyterian Banner as the official magazine of the PCEA and encourages members and adherents to read it and contribute material to it.
2. Synod expresses thankfulness for the assistance of the Presbyterian Banner liaisons from each of the congregations and encourages them to continue in this work.
3. Synod supports the printing and mailing of paper copies of the magazine, along with making pdf copies of the magazine available online and by email.

22.2.26 Archivist Report

The Archivist, Dr Ward, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Archivist presented the proposed deliverance and it was resolved that:

1. As scanning of earlier magazines nears completion after commencement in 2013, Synod again record its appreciation for the laborious work cheerfully undertaken by Robert Hingston of the Ulverstone Congregation.

22.2.27 CLOSURE OF SESSION

Notice of Motion were called for and presented. The session closed with the singing of Ps 36:1-7 at 6:10pm after Messrs Muldoon and McCallum led in prayer.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

SESSION 5 WEDNESDAY 4TH MAY 2022 7:00PM

The session opened with the singing of Psalm 100 and Mr Tso leading in prayer. The Moderator welcomed visitors to our Missions evening.

22.2.28 MISSION SPEAKERS

It was resolved that the reading of the Minutes from Session 4 be deferred to the beginning of next Session.

The Moderator called the Convener to host the evening. The Convener introduced the Moderator to the speakers: Jose David Sanchez-Medina from Annie Soper School; Wilbert Chippenyu from Dumisani Theological Institute; and Mr Rowan Butler, Project Video. The Moderator welcomed the speakers.

David Sanchez (Annie Soper), a graduate of the school and now Principal, spoke on the 33 years of Annie Soper influencing the lives of children and families as a Christian School in Moyobamba. He introduced Joseph Almeida who spoke of the academic program of the school. Hugo Upiachihuay presented on the financial situation of the school and current infrastructure projects.

Mr Wilbert Chippenyu (Dumisani) Principal Chippenyu spoke of the work of Dumisani in the Eastern Cape province of South Africa. He described the wonderful influence of Dumisani on churches throughout the Eastern Cape. He also spoke of an outreach work with a community Church for the deaf.

Rowan Butler (Project Video) Mr Butler spoke on the changes and opportunities in Mission. He spoke on the changes in commitment from lifetime to short term, he spoke of the changing media used in proclamation, and the ease of travel in a global community. He presented a video on the work of Project video, and a message from Shekinah Hussain.

The Convener led in prayer to close the programme of speakers.

22.2.29 CLOSURE OF SESSION

The evening was closed with the singing of Psalm 25:4-10. Mr Miranda and Mr Carswell prayed. The session closed at 9:10pm.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

SESSION 6 THURSDAY 5TH MAY 2022 9:00AM

The Session opened with the singing of Ps 121. The Moderator opened the session with prayer at 9:05am. The Moderator led devotions from Rev. 2:6-8 under the headings of commendation, call and challenge. Commendation: The church's doctrine is retained, and hatred, with Christ, of that which dishonours God. Call: To follow through with hard instruction from the Holy Spirit. Challenge: To those who overcome in the Spirit there is reward – entrance into Paradise. (Jude v24-25).

Mr Glen Hamilton and Mr Tso led in prayer.

22.2.30 MINUTES

The Minutes of sessions 4 (deferred) and session 5 were read and confirmed.

Clarification on J A Harman Bequest

Mr Ball asked for clarification on the dispersal of funds from the J A Harman Bequest. Mr Audet explained the situation.

22.2.32 Report on Zach Dotson

Mr Reeve asked the court for an update on the progress of contact with Mr Zach Dotson. It was agreed that Mr Ian Hamilton provide a brief report. Mr Hamilton reported that Mr Dotson is due to arrive on 19th May to commence work under a 4 year Visa. Mr Hamilton reported on the process of obtaining the Visa for Mr Dotson after a very involved process demanded by government. An Immigration lawyer had been retained to deal with the matter and Mr Hamilton advised any other congregations who might face similar processes to engage the services of such an agent. Mr Dotson is bringing his wife, Wilma, and two children, Archie and Jane.

22.2.33 DELEGATES FROM OTHER CHURCHES

The Convener, Mr Tso, of the Inter-Church Relations Committee introduced Rev. Tim McGlynn (FCC) and Rev. David Lachman (SPC) to the Moderator. The Moderator welcomed the delegates and they were invited to speak.

Rev. David Lachman (SPC)

Rev. Lachman conveyed apologies for his inability to attend Synod in person. He spoke on 2 Chronicles 14 where King Asa sought the Lord with all his heart. When a great crisis came, he cried out that nothing was too hard for the LORD and that men would not prevail against Him. He had a complete trust in and reliance on the sovereignty of God, and by God's help they destroyed their enemies. He exhorted the members in the words of Azariah, to seek the Lord and he will be with you, forsake Him and he will forsake you. Mr Lachman spoke on the continual reformation of the church and that our smallness was no obstacle to God. He was thankful for the preservation of SPC congregations, elders and the provision of supply. He rejoiced in much improved relations with the EPC and the possibility of a man considering ministry from among their own number. He asked the Lord to bless the work of the PCEA.

Rev. Timothy McGlynn (FCC)

Rev. McGlynn brought greetings from the Free Church Continuing. He remembered the presence with our Synod in 2019 of Rev. John McLeod. Mr McGlynn recalled personal relationships in the PCEA with Mr D E Kerr (deceased). He greeted members at this Synod well known to him. He rejoiced in the close relationship of the FCC with the PCEA. He was overjoyed that reciprocal relations had been established formally. He looked forward to continued and closer mutual labour and assistance in our respective harvest fields. He asked that the Lord bless our work.

Mr Tso led the court in prayer for both delegates and their respective denominations.

Apologies were given on behalf of Rev. Bruce Backensto. A letter of greeting from Bruce Martin (RPCNA Interchurch Committee) on behalf of the RPCNA was read by the Convener. The correspondence was received and noted to be incorporated in Minutes (see appendix).

22.2.34 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. 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.
2. The Information Technology Committee proposed budget for 2022 be approved and funds

provided for the work of this Committee.

3. Mr Nic O'Dell be appointed as a member of the IT Committee.

The Court adjourned at 10:30am for morning tea. The Session resumed at 11:00am.

Notices of Motion were read and presented to the court.

22.2.35 PSALMODY COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. The Committee seeks to extend the remit given in 2021 to further investigate the matter of a common Psalter for the PCEA.
2. We encourage the continuation and multiplication of Psalmody conferences in Presbyteries and that a common repertoire of tunes be announced in the Banner and online to facilitate this.

22.2.36 Notice of Motion re Sing Psalms

Mr Tso moved the motion, it was seconded and resolved that: "Synod directs the Committee to seek permission to use *Sing Psalms* from the Free Church of Scotland for local printing and production."

The Moderator requested and the court agreed to address Notices of Motion brought regarding previous business.

22.2.37 Notice of Motion re Law and Advisory Panel

Mr Reeve moved: "That Synod, having appointed a panel to formulate guidelines on Divorce, Separation and Remarriage for the PCEA, approve Tom Reeve and John Forbes to oversee the work of the panel, with Jim Klazinga and Ian Miller assisting." It was seconded and the motion was carried.

22.2.38 Notice of Motion re Margaret Hockett Bequest

Mr Reeve presented the motion, that: "Given that communications with Colegio San Andres School, Peru, was re-established shortly after our ordinary Synod last year as printed in the Missions report, it is now considered appropriate to acknowledge the contribution of the late Margaret Hockett both financially and personally in visits made to the school to assist in teaching. It is recommended that a donation of \$10,000 be made to Colegio San Andres in recognition of the long and faithful support of the school, the funds to be applied as a scholarship for needy students in her name." The motion was seconded and carried.

22.2.39 SUPERANNUATION COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Tso, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. Synod approves the committee's proposal for changes in section C above, starting from the 1/7/22. Viz.

C. COMMITTEE'S Proposed Changes

One of the agreed changes from last year's Synod was that every minister receives the same amount of superannuation, regardless of their age. However, it has been brought to our attention that ministers aged 75 and above cannot accept non-mandated contributions. Therefore, there is a need to amend the

policies in both congregational levy (with ministers over the age of 75) and the contributions to ministers over the age of 75, in line with the government legislations.

Note: The St Georges' congregation has paid the full levy last year since the new policy was adopted, but only the Superannuation Guarantee amount has been credited to the minister's Superannuation Fund. There is a need to refund the difference.

Proposed changes:

To add:

Superannuation Levy on congregations

- Self-supporting congregations (with minister aged 75 and over): Superannuation Guarantee Rate (currently at 10%)

Contribution Rates:

- Inducted ministers (from age 75): Superannuation Guarantee Rate (currently at 1

2. Synod approves a refund of \$2980 from the Superannuation Levy Account to the St George's Deacons' Court.

3. Synod directs that Deacons' Courts transfer their annual insurance premiums, as invoiced by the Synod Superannuation and Insurance Committee, to the Synod Bank account (633-000 140199514)

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

22.2.40 CLOSURE OF SESSION

The session was closed with prayer by Mr Reeve and Mr Ramsay at 12:35pm.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

SESSION 7 THURSDAY 5TH MAY 2022 2:00PM

The session opened with the singing of Psalm 1, and prayer, led by Dr Lee and Mr Ian Hamilton at 2:05 pm

22.2.41 MINUTES

The Minutes of session 6 were read and confirmed.

22.2.42 FINANCE COMMITTEE

The Convener, Mr Audet, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Convener presented the proposed deliverances. It was resolved that:

1. We record our thanks to God for temporal blessings granted especially during the time of pandemic restrictions during 2021.
2. Adjustment of the Minimum Stipend, Cash and Non-cash components (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2022/2023 be made on 1st January in line with the movement in the Wage Price Index as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any review period, no adjustment be made.
3. Emergency Stipend Assistance of \$10,000 paid to Narre Warren Deacons' Court in December 2021 be ratified.
4. Stipend Assistance of up to \$ 14,000 for 2022/2023 Synodical year be granted to the Hawkesbury-Nepean Deacons' Courts as follows:
 - Be strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
 - Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1st July/October/January/April and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
 - Be subject to the availability of funds.
5. Stipend Assistance of up to \$30,000 for 2022/2023 Synodical year be granted to the Narre Warren Deacons' Courts as follows:
 - Be strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
 - Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis ie commencing 1st July/October/January/April and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
 - Be subject to the availability of funds.
6. A transfer of up to \$20,000 be made from general funds to stipend relief funds to cover any deficiency in stipend relief funds arising from these approvals.
7. A \$50,000 investment in equities be made from Training of Ministry working funds.
8. The investment benchmarks for the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia be adjusted to: Equities 80% (+/-10%) and cash/term deposits 20% (+/-10%)

22.2.43 Notice of Motion re Act 1 Class 2 Synod 1984 (as amended) Delegates Expenses

Mr Tso moved a motion to propose an amendment to the Act: "Relating to assessors appointed by Synod, their travel expenses will be covered". It was resolved that the motion be carried.

22.2.44 Notice of Motion re Finance Committee Convener

Mr Forbes moved and it was seconded that the Convener of the Finance Committee is to be a serving Elder or minister of the church. The motion was not carried.

22.2.45 Notice of Motion re Authorisation of Payments

Mr Forbes moved that if expenses arise that are not anticipated by existing rules of Synod, the Treasurer may seek authorisation from the Finance Committee to proceed with payment and the matter to be noted in the committee's report to Synod. The motion was carried.

22.2.46 Northern Presbytery Petition re Investment of Funds

The Clerk presented the petition. It was agreed to receive the petition.

WHEREAS,

The Deacons' Court of Northern Rivers seeks to maintain real value in investments, according to directions in Handbook 3.26.4,

AND WHEREAS,

An attempt by the Deacons' Court to open an investment account through Commsec (according to section 3.26.4 of Handbook) was rejected by Commsec without satisfactory explanation.

AND WHEREAS,

Investments are held on behalf of other PCEA congregations by the Trustees for the Synod of Eastern Australia, and periodical dividend payments are made to these congregations from the

investments,
THEREFORE,

The presbytery respectfully overtures Synod to take these premises into consideration and grant that the Trustees for the Synod of Eastern Australia invest congregational funds for the benefit of the Northern Rivers congregation to the value of \$200,000 in Argo investments Pty Ltd, through the Trustee Share Account. Or do otherwise for this object as in its wisdom may seem best.

22.2.47 Notice of Motion

Mr Steel moved that the prayer of the petition be granted in the following terms:

“Deacons’ Courts may approach the relevant Trust Corporations in the Congregation’s name without an appropriate designation to the particular congregation to invest funds in their online share broking accounts.”

Note: Insert after “subject to the lawful direction of the Deacons’ Court.” in Handbook 3.26.4

The Clerk agreed that Mr Steel’s motion become the crave of the petition. It was resolved that the motion be carried.

22.2.48 GENERAL TREASURER

The Treasurer, Mr Audet, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The Treasurer presented the deliverances:

1. That the General Treasurer, John Audet, be authorised to open a Community Fees Saver account in the name of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia with National Australia Bank, with any two of John Audet, Alex Steel, and Terry Buck authorised to operate the account, including internet banking.
2. That any two of John Audet, Alex Steel, and Terry Buck be authorised to give instructions to National Australia Bank in relation to term deposits in the name of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.
3. That the General Treasurer, John Audet, be authorised to give instructions in respect of any managed funds held in the name of the Trustees of the Synod of Eastern of Australia.
4. That the General Treasurer, John Audet, be appointed account operator of the Commonwealth Securities share trading accounts held in the names of The Trustees of the Synod of Eastern Australia and the Trustees for Victoria of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia.
5. That the provision of \$3,000 from general funds as assistance towards the purchase of computer equipment for the Synod Clerk be ratified.

22.2.49 PRO RE NATA SYNOD ADMINISTRATION COSTS

The Treasurer reported that the cost of the *pro re nata* Synod in January, 2022 was approximately \$1800

22.2.50 TRUST CORPORATIONS NSW TRUST CORPORATION

The secretary, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The secretary presented the proposed deliverance. It was resolved that:

1. Noting the change in NSW practice regarding conveyancing, Synod direct the Trustees to continue to hold the historical NSW Certificates of Title with the Deed Box for archival safe-keeping.

22.2.51 QUEENSLAND TRUST CORPORATION

The secretary, Mr Kerridge, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report.

22.2.52 VICTORIAN TRUST CORPORATION

The secretary, Mr Hall, presented the report. It was resolved to receive the report. The secretary presented the proposed deliverance:

1. Synod extends the appointment of Rowland Ward by one year to 30th June 2023.

22.2.53 Notice of Motion re R Tso Trustee appointment

Mr Steel presented the motion that: Dr R S Ward be replaced by Robin Tso as a member of the Victorian Trust Corporation from 30 June, 2022. The motion was seconded.

The motion was put against the proposed deliverance. The motion was preferred. It was resolved that the motion be carried.

22.2.54 Notice of Motion re D Ramsay Trustee appointment

Mr Forbes moved that Synod appoint Dr Donald Ramsay as a Trustee for Victoria, noting that he has previously served in this role and has the necessary experience and capacity for the role. The motion was seconded and carried.

22.2.55 EXAMINERS OF RECORDS

The minutes of the Northern Presbytery for 2020/2021 were reported to be in order. The Minutes of the Central Presbytery for 2020/2021 were reported to be in order. The Minutes of Southern Presbytery for 2020/2021 were reported to be in order. It was resolved to receive the reports of the examiners. The Presbyteries' Minute books were attested.

22.2.56 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Deferred from session 1, the Committee Structure from the reports was proposed by the Administration Committee.

It was resolved that the Committee Structure be as follows:

Committee Structure:

Administration: Clerk (Convener), Moderator, Moderator-Elect, Presbytery Clerks.

Law and Advisory: T Reeve (Convener), RS Ward, D. Kerridge, J. Forbes, I. Miller.

Inter-Church Relations: R Tso (Convener), GD Ball, AA Miranda, J Forbes, JD Klazinga.

Church and Nation and Publication: GD Ball (Convener), I Miller, JD Klazinga (Banner), RS Ward (Archive).

Information Technology: D Kerridge (Convener), R Tso, N. O'Dell.

Youth and Fellowship: S Carswell (Convener), AA Miranda, J Forbes, Matthew Schmidt, Mandy Kerridge

Finance: J Audet (Convener), AH Steel, DJ Ramsay, G. Hamilton.

Superannuation: R Tso (Convener), RS Ward (Insurance), DJ Ramsay, AH Steel.

Missions: DK Muldoon (Convener), ID Hamilton, JD Klazinga, J Greensill, R Tso, T. Yoa.

Training of Ministry: D Kerridge (Convener), AA Miranda, R Tso, ID Hamilton, G Hamilton.

Psalmody: D Kerridge (Convener), DA McIntosh, GD Ball, Julie Schmidt, Esther Hamilton.

22.2.57 APPOINTMENT OF MODERATOR-ELECT

The Clerk nominated Rev Andres Miranda. It was resolved that Mr Miranda be appointed Moderator-elect for Synod 2023.

22.2.58 TIME AND PLACE FOR SYNOD 2023

It was resolved that Synod be held at Raymond Terrace Church to commence at 4:30pm Tuesday 2nd May, 2023 and to conclude at 12:30pm, Friday 5th May, 2023.

22.2.59 THANKS

Thanks were conveyed by acclamation to the Moderator for his able leading of the meeting and his challenging devotions.

Thanks were conveyed by acclamation to the host congregation, to Rev. Robin Tso, the office-bearers, those who catered and provided wonderful hospitality to the delegates.

Thanks were conveyed to the Synod Clerk and to the precentor, Mr Donald McIntosh.

22.2.60 CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of this closing session were read and confirmed.

22.2.61 TIME OF PRAYER

The delegates joined in singing Psalm 119:169-176. Following this they engaged in a time of prayer.

22.2.62 CLOSURE OF SYNOD

The meeting closed at 6:06pm with prayer and benediction.

DJ Kerridge
Clerk

TI Leggott
Moderator

PRINCIPAL ACTS OF SYNOD 2022

Class 1

No.	Act	Reference
1	PCEA Safe Church and Code of Conduct Amendment Act 2022 (amending Act 1, Class 1, 2019)	22.2.12.1
2	Repeal of Act 1, Class 1, 2014 (Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Child Abuse and Sexual Misconduct)	22.2.12.2

Class 2 (Other)

No.	Act	Reference
3	Reports and Correspondence to Synod (amendment to Act 6, Class 2, 2011)	22.2.9
4	Act re Handbook chapter on Safe Church Matters	22.2.12.3
5	Head of Entity	22.2.13.4
6	Clarity of Synod Minutes	22.2.13.5b
7	Amendment to Handbook 4.53	22.2.14
8	Day of Prayer	22.2.24
9	Margaret Hockett (Ramsay) Scholarship	22.2.38
10	Stipend Relief – Hawkesbury Nepean	22.2.42.4
11	Stipend Relief – Narre Warren	22.2.42.5
12	Assessors' Expenses – Amend Act 1, Class 2, 1984	22.2.43
13	Authorisation of unexpected expenses	22.2.45
14	Amend Handbook 3.26 - Investments with Trustees	22.2.47

APPENDIX



Reformed Presbyterian Church Of North America Interchurch Committee

The Reverend R. Bruce Pattell, Chairman
1011 South Duncan
Stillwater, OK, 74074
Pastor@stillwaterpc.org 405-372-4910

The Reverend J. Bruce Martin, Executive Secretary
7822 Whitewood Road
Elkton Park, PA, 19027
execpelerk@gmail.com 201-403-6527

April 25, 2022

Dear Brothers,

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus Christ our only Savior and King.

We pray for God's richest blessings to be yours whether as a deliberative body or in the local churches spread across the land. May you see great progress in the cause of the Gospel as you labor for the destruction of Satan's kingdom, the progress of the Kingdom of Grace and the hastening of the Kingdom of Glory.

We are glad to have you stand with us as Christ's servants and representatives before the world. The world needs to see us standing together, unashamed of Jesus Christ and unflinching before the attacks of His enemies and ours.

We are aware of the attacks of the evil one in seeking to divide our communion and disrupting the peace God's grants us by His grace. We ask you to pray with us for the peace of this branch of Christ's Church and that any foothold the enemy seems to gain will be dissolved by His glorious power.

We had planned to send a delegate in person to represent us but for various reasons we are not able to do so this year. Please accept this letter of greeting with the hope that by God's grace we will be able to send a delegate in 2023.

Brothers, "be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." [1 Cor 15:58]

In Christ's bonds,

J. Bruce Martin