

ACTS OF SYNOD 2004

Class 1 (Barrier Act Procedure)

No	Act	Reference
1	Act to Rescind Federal Relations Act	04.29.1.1

Class 2 (Others)

No	Act	Reference
1	Recognition of RPCA in terms of Fraternal Relations Act	04.26.(a).4.2
2	Conclusion of appointment of Rev. S.R Tamata as missionary to Fiji	04.31.1
3	Adjustment to Minimum Stipend	04.34.2
4	Revision of insurance arrangements for ministers	04.38.3
5	Procedures for investigating complaints of sexual impropriety	04.47.1
6	Procedures for guarding against sexual impropriety	04.47.2-5
7	Guidelines for Church Workers	04.47.6
8	Explanation for Rescinding Federal Relations	04.29.1.1

CLASS 1 – ACTS WHICH HAVE PASSED THE BARRIER ACT

ACT 1 – Act to Rescind Federal Relations Act

Tuesday 4th May 2004

Minutes 04.29.1.1

That Synod, having considered the returns from Presbyteries do now pass Act 1, Class 1 of Synod 2003 into permanent law of this Church, and notify the Free Church of Scotland of this decision.

CLASS 2 – ACTS OF SYNOD OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE CHURCH

ACT 1 – Recognition of RPCA in terms of Fraternal Relations Act

Tuesday 4th May 2004

Minutes 04.26.(a).4.2

That Synod hereby extend formal recognition in terms of the Fraternal Relations Act (Act 93.39, Class 2) to the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Australia, and express to our brothers and sisters in the RPCA the prayerful good wishes of the PCEA, with the hope that in the future we may be able to deepen and strengthen still further the bond of fellowship between us, to the glory of God, and the good of his people.

ACT 2 – Conclusion of appointment of Rev. S.R Tamata as missionary to Fiji

Tuesday 4th May 2004

Minutes 04.31.1

1. Synod concludes the appointment of the Rev. S.R. Tamata as a Missionary of the P.C.E.A. to minister in the P.F.C.F. in Fiji, and that he be recalled to Australia by the end of July 2004 at the latest.

2. Synod agrees that financial support through the Missions Committee for the Rev. S.R. Tamata will continue up to the end of July 2004.
3. That Synod express its thanks to the Rev. S.R. Tamata for his diligent endeavours in the work in Fiji over the past eleven months, and assure Sam and Muriel of its prayerful interest in their wellbeing and future ministry.

ACT 3 – Adjustment to Minimum Stipend

Wednesday 5th May 2004

Minutes 04.34.2

Adjustment of Minimum Stipend (Excluding Manse, Car and Telephone) for 2004/2005 be made on 1st January and 1st July in line with the movement in the Average *Weekly Earnings, Australia (Full-time adult ordinary time earnings)* as published by the Australian Bureau of Statistics. In the event of a negative movement in any six monthly review period, no adjustment be made.

ACT 4 – Revision of insurance arrangements for ministers

Wednesday 5th May 2004

Minutes 04.38.3

Synod approve a revision of insurance arrangements in the Superannuation plan so as to provide Life and TPD cover as outlined in the Report at a fixed cost of \$156pa with effect 1/7/2004.

ACT 5 – Procedures for investigating complaints of sexual impropriety

Thursday 6th May 2004

Minutes 04.47.1

Synod adopt the revised “Procedures for Dealing with Allegations of Sexual Misconduct” set out in Appendix A of the Report.

ACT 6 – Procedures for guarding against sexual impropriety

Thursday 6th May 2004

Minutes 04.47.2-5

1. In the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*, a new sub-section (e) be added to paragraph 4.51, as follows:

4.51 (e) his suitability to work with minors, as shown by his having been approved to do so by the civil authorities in the State in which he resides, or, if the applicant resides outside Australia at the time of application, the State in which he intends to take up residence.

2. In the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*, a new Section 4.49 (c) be inserted as follows:

4.49(c) The candidate shall be required to satisfy the requirements of the State in which he resides with regard to approval to engage in employment involving contact with minors.

and that the present sections 4.49 (c) and following, become sections 4.49 (d), (e), etc.

3. In the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*, the present section 50.3 (d) be amended to read:
4.50 (d) The presbytery must be assured that the character and conduct of the student are in accord with his desire to enter the Christian ministry. As part of this assurance, the Presbytery must ensure that the candidate for licence has satisfied the requirements of the State in which he resides with regard to approval to engage in employment involving contact with minors. A statement to this effect should be recorded in the Presbytery Minutes.

4. In the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*, the following statement be added to follow the second paragraph of section 4.48:

No minister may be inducted to a charge (or licentiate ordained and inducted) unless he has satisfied the requirements of the State in which the charge to which he is to be ordained/inducted is situated with regard to approval to engage in employment involving contact with minors. A statement regarding this approval should be recorded in the Presbytery Minutes.

ACT 7 – Guidelines for Church Workers

Thursday 6th May 2004

Minutes 04.47.6

That the “Caring for the People Guidelines” adopted by Synod 2003 be rescinded and that the following revised “Guidelines for Church Workers” be adopted to replace them and that these Guidelines be publicised within the Church:

GUIDELINES FOR CHURCH WORKERS

General

1. Those activities of the congregation not the prerogative of the minister are under the ultimate supervision of the Session. The Session should know what is happening in the various areas. If necessary, Session will appoint a liaison person to report on a particular activity.

Guarding against Sexual Misconduct

1. Where there is to be regular contact with minors, those persons appointed by the session should have been approved under local State Government laws as people suitable to be in such situations.
2. The supervision of others should be carried out by appropriately experienced people who are well known to the Congregation, and have been connected with it for at least six months. No person with a previous record of sexual molestation may be involved in a supervisory position, except with the express authorisation of Presbytery. This will be granted only in the most exceptional circumstances where the risk of reoffending will be completely eliminated.
3. When children are involved out of the sight or hearing of others, at least two adults should supervise. Those leading camps or outings should be registered under local State laws regarding approval to work with minors. They should also sign a declaration that they have never been convicted of sexual abuse or of trafficking in illicit substances.
4. Church workers should avoid one-to-one counselling of the opposite sex, or of any minor. In any counselling, church workers, including ministers, should be ready to seek specialist help where necessary.

5. Ministers/elders should exercise great care in visiting women or children unaccompanied. In most circumstances it will be prudent for another person to be present, or available nearby.
6. Leaders of church activities must report any suspected physical or sexual abuse to the Session immediately and the Synod's procedures followed. No allegation may be trivialised.
7. In the case of persons from other congregations applying for membership, the Session should check with the previous church to ensure that there are no outstanding issues or adverse history. Sessions should also be careful concerning history of those who apply for membership by confession of faith.
8. A Session shall not issue a Disjunction Certificate if there is any suspicion/allegation of abuse without first investigating the matter. The result of the investigation must be duly minuted, and the Certificate qualified if necessary.

Protection of Those Working on Church Property

1. When work is being done by volunteers on the church premises, a competent person should supervise, particularly when heights, or the use of special tools, are involved.
2. Non-PCEA groups using Church facilities must commit in writing to having proper supervision of their people at all times, as well as meeting other conditions set by the local Deacons' Court or by the Minister, each acting in accordance with Section 3.18 of the *Handbook of Practice and Procedure*. Such conditions might include no smoking; no raffles or other gambling; appropriate Public Liability Insurance; and responsibility for damage.

Protection of Privacy

1. Membership lists should only be used outside the Session according to a procedure agreed by Session communicated to all those whose names will be included in such a list.
2. Health information secured for camps or outings is to be used only for the purpose obtained and kept in confidence. Records of such information should not be kept after their purpose has been fulfilled.
3. It is important also to exercise care in revealing personal information on notice sheets or in church announcements. Before revealing personal information, permission should be obtained from the person concerned.

(Note: Act 8 here is the wording of an explanation for rescinding the Federal Relations with the Free Church. It was not listed as a separate Act in the clerk's original list of Acts. This may be because the clerk assumed the wording would simply be included along with Act 1, Class 1. The wording of this explanation did not go under the Barrier Act, however, so it ought not to be given Class 1 status. Listing it as a separate Class 2 Act seems more appropriate.)

ACT 8 – Explanation for Rescinding Federal Relations Act

Tuesday 4th May 2004

Minutes 04.29.1.2

That Synod adopt the following explanation for this decision, to be annexed to it, and also conveyed to the Free Church of Scotland and published in our church magazine.

1. the PCEA has for many years valued its special relationship with the Free Church of Scotland, as formalized in our respective Federal Relations Acts. We have appreciated the provision of

theological training at the FCS College in earlier years, and a number of our ministers have come from, and/or served in the Free Church. We have also benefited from the ministry of FCS men, as the Rev. Prof, Douglas Macmillan, Principal Clement Graham, the Rev. A.M.Macleod, and others.

2. we acknowledge the expressed view of the FCS 2003 Assembly that they prefer that the *status quo* remain, but accept the right of the PCEA to alter the arrangement from its side, and thank our brothers for this.
3. for over 15 years, the PCEA has been, with other churches including the FCS as a founding member, a part of the International Conference of Reformed Churches. We desire to pursue our ecumenical relations primarily with these churches, and we believe that a 'level playing field' approach is best. On that basis we can proceed to formalize relations with other ICRC churches on the basis of our Fraternal Relations Act of 1993. This is a process that has already begun.
4. there is a general view within the PCEA that our relationship with the FCS needs to be changed. Various reasons have been advanced for this, and while Synod does not necessarily endorse any or all of them, we believe that the time is ripe to put our fellow ICRC churches on an equal footing before proceeding to negotiate new forms of relationship with them.