

## ACTS OF SYNOD 2019

### Class 1 (Barrier Act Procedure)

No	Act	Reference
1	Safe Church Policy	19.24

### Class 2 (Others)

No	Act	Reference
1	Changes to Practice re Order of Synod Business	19.14
2	Amendment to Handbook re Safe Church Policy and Working with Children	19.19.01
3	Mutual Eligibility with Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)	19.29.03
4	Inclusion of Mission Relief Bequest Proforma in Handbook	19.38.03
5	Approval of Honorarium for Synod Clerk	19.39
6	Re-establishing the Psalmody Committee	19.50
7	Gift/Loan to Brisbane Congregation for Purchase of a Manse	19.58.04
8	Victorian Trustees Changes to Investment Strategy	19.68.01
9	Committee Structure	19.71
10	Assessors' Expenses – Amend Act 1, Class 2, 1984	19.73

## CLASS 1 – ACTS WHICH HAVE PASSED THE BARRIER ACT

### ACT 1 - Safe Church Policy

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.14)

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

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

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

AND WHEREAS the need for improved preventative measures has been highlighted, requiring us to further specify standards in this area;

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

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

*The approved wording as follows:*

### SAFE CHURCH POLICY

#### 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 and young people, 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 defines and deals with the problem of 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. 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 ministry which values children, young people and the vulnerable. 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
- delivering (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
- reviewing and updating this policy on a regular basis (This responsibility will continue under the oversight of the Synod Law & Advisory Committee.)

### **4. Some 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 Abuse categories**

**(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. This constitutes a reportable offence.

**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. This constitutes a reportable offence.

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. This does not automatically constitute a reportable offence.

**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). This may constitute a criminal act and hence may be a reportable offence.

**4.5 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. For voluntary workers such clearances are valid for five years and a number is issued. Two forms of identification will be required and an on-line application process is used now.

## **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 2018**

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 through its Law & Advisory Committee.

## **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 (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

## **8. Record-Keeping**

Within each congregation there will be two sets of Records kept in books or folders (and not to be stored electronically).

**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. 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.

### **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 for at least one year (less time approved only if they are well attested from another congregation of the PCEA)
- 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

### **10. Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Abuse**

(Please refer to the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure: 7.51 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGATIONS OF CHILD ABUSE AND SEXUAL MISCONDUCT. Act Class 1 of Synod 2014)

Our church is committed to processes that strive for truth and confidentiality and will treat all allegations seriously and act upon them. 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.

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 behavior, 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.

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

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

- not pushing the child to disclose details of the alleged assault
- not attempting to investigate the allegation
- assuring the child 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
- 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. Working with a Body External to the Church**

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 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.

### **14. Training**

Mandatory training in child protection for all leaders in organisations who care for children is being enacted by State Parliaments.

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).

A different programme of training applies to Scripture teachers in State Schools (Special Religious Education) and an “Annual Assurance” declaration is currently signed by our Clerk of Synod for NSW. All Scripture teachers in State Schools should ensure that they undertake the required annual training with an approved provider and that the details are recorded with the Clerk of Presbytery.

### **SAFE CHURCH CODE OF CONDUCT**

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, or transporting children in vehicles, leaders will only do so if a parent or another appropriate adult is present.
  - b. There shall always be at least two approved leaders at any activity (except for crèche where a sole female carer is acceptable). 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.
  - c. 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.
  - d. 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.
  - e. Initiations and secret ceremonies are forbidden.
  - f. Any activity involving children or young people is open to observation by parents and other adults with a legitimate reason.
  - g. 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.
  - h. If any personal counselling is required, it shall be carried out within the sight of other people (preferably another leader).
  - i. The consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs on the church grounds or during a church activity is forbidden. 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. (A small amount of wine for sacramental purposes may be stored on the premises, in a secure location.)
  - j. In any physical contact with young people or children, leaders will respect the feelings and privacy of those persons. Violence of any kind is forbidden.
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, 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

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.

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.

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

### **ACT 1 - Changes to Practice re Order of Synod Business**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.14)

The Northern Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia overtures the Synod of Eastern Australia to switch and revise sections 5.35 and 5.36 of the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure, so that the current section 5.36 will become section 5.35 and read as follows:

*“The Synod takes up and deals with overtures, references, appeals, complaints, petitions and other*

*correspondence, and committee reports subject to the provisions of 5.2-25 and to Synod Standing Orders (5.46). Correspondence from the Sessions and the Presbyteries will take priority over other correspondence and over committee reports. Overtures may also originate in the Synod itself,”* and the current section 5.35 will become section 5.36 and read as follows,

*“In recommending the order of business for each sitting of Synod, the Administration Committee takes care to recommend a timetable that gives priority to correspondence from the sessions and presbyteries of the church, but also allows reports of standing committees to have a place that allows due consideration. In accordance with Synod Standing Orders, causes are normally held over until the last day of Synod, other than appeals or complaints against transmission which, depending on the circumstances, may be taken up with the Administration Committee’s report.”*

**ACT 2 – Amendment to Handbook re Safe Church Policy and Working with Children**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.19.01)

That Handbook 7.2 be amended as stated in the Report.

*Relevant wording of Report:*

7.2 No discipline, other than private discussion, can be exercised for an offence committed, or alleged to have been committed, more than five years before the charge is made, unless it be of a most serious kind (e.g., bigamy, child abuse), or becomes again flagrant, or involves a civil matter related to child abuse or the like that is not subject to the statute of limitations in the relevant civil or criminal law.

**ACT 3 – Handbook chapter on Safe Church Matters**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.29.03)

Synod, without being drawn into the debate over the merit or otherwise of the division in the Free Church of Scotland in 2000, approve mutual eligibility with the Free Church (Continuing) subject to confirmation by their General Assembly.

**ACT 4 – Inclusion of Mission Relief Bequest Proforma in Handbook**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.38.03)

That the bequest proforma for the Missions Relief Fund, approved by Synod 2018, be included in the PCEA Handbook of Practice and Procedure.

**ACT 5 – Approval of Honorarium for Synod Clerk**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.39)

Synod congratulate the Rev Trevor Leggott on his receipt of the well-deserved award of membership of the Order of Australia (OAM). Synod further expresses its appreciation of his diligent attention to

his responsibilities as Clerk of Synod since 30 September 2005 and his related duties as a member of trust bodies. As a token of appreciation Synod votes as honorarium of \$1000 for this year and subsequent years to be drawn by our brother at his request, in instalments related to work load if desired.

**ACT 6 – Re-establishing the Psalmody Committee**

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.50)

Synod re-establishes the Psalmody Committee as a Standing Committee of the Synod. The committee to consist of at least one Minister and Elder, and include where possible and available a representative from each congregation, as determined by the respective Sessions. The committee to consider and recommend options to improve the praise of the denomination and to progress towards the adoption of a common and fully supported Psalter. The committee to also consult with and seek out opportunities for shared Psalm singing occasions within our own and with other churches, and to advertise these to the broader church.

**ACT 7 – Gift/Loan to Brisbane Congregation for Purchase of a Manse**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.58.04)

- a. Synod approve in Principle to gift to the Brisbane Congregation up to \$466,000 from the Synod Capital Assistance Fund to assist in the purchase of a suitable manse for the Congregation.
- b. In addition, Synod approve in Principle an interest free Loan of \$200,000 from the Synod Capital Assistance Fund if required to complete the purchase prior to receipt of a donation for like amount from the Northern Rivers Congregation. Subject to –
- c. Approval being granted by the Brisbane Session, Congregation and Northern Presbytery when a suitable property at a purchase price no greater than \$750,000 is found.
- d. If an interest free loan of \$200,000 is required prior to receipt of a donation for this amount from Northern Rivers Congregation, an extract minute from Northern Presbytery is to be forwarded to the Synod Treasurer stating all approvals have been obtained viz. Synod for sale of Lismore Church property, Northern Rivers Deacons' Court/Session have agreed to make the donation of \$200,000 and Brisbane Deacons' Court/Session and Congregation agreed to take up the loan from Synod.

**ACT 8 – Victorian Trustees Changes to Investment Strategy**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.68.01)

The investment allocation approved by Synod 2004 be amended to permit up to 80% in shares/units predominantly in listed investment companies, and the balance in cash.

## **ACT 9 – Committee Structure**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.71)

That Synod Handbook re Committee structure be modified as follows:

5.19 Synod Committees: membership and method of operating [Act 7 Class 2 Synod 2011]

“Synod appoints such standing and occasional Committees as deemed appropriate.

2. Most Synod Committees shall consist of five members, and given the prevalence of electronic means of communication, these members do not normally need to be geographically close to each other. Some Committees may have more than five members (eg: Missions or Youth and Fellowship) or less than five members (eg: Superannuation) and these are determined at the discretion of the Synod. Some committees (eg: Administration) may be comprised solely or in part of positional memberships at the discretion of the Synod (eg: Moderator, Moderator-elect, Clerk). It is desirable that Committee membership is made up where possible of at least one representative from each of the geographic areas of the Presbyteries. Members are expected to serve on their Committee for at least three years unless otherwise decided by Synod.

The Administration Committee proposes a committee composition for each Synod however delegates and courts of the church are welcome and encouraged to also propose changes to the committees, either by previous contact to the Administration Committee or by petition, overture or notice of motion at Synod. Sessions are encouraged in particular to search out, foster and cultivate suitable people from their congregations to serve, within their God given interests and abilities on Synod committees.

3. It is courtesy that parties being proposed for new membership of committees be informed of and agree in advance of their appointment (to be referred to as ‘entry courtesy’). It is also courtesy that parties who are currently members of committees be informed of and agree in advance to their names being removed (except in cases of church discipline, or other established reason. This to be referred to as ‘exit courtesy’).

4. Committees have the power to seek assistance and advice from other qualified persons if considered appropriate.

5. All members of a Committee have a responsibility to contribute promptly to its deliberations and proposals. When using emails the subject line should include reference, in an agreed form, to the Committee concerned. 'Reply to all' should be used in all responses so that each member is aware of the responses of all other members and can interact accordingly, just as if they were personally present. Members have the responsibility of advising of any change to their email address. The use of employer-provided email addresses should be avoided. When using a conference call (audio or video) care must be taken to give each member opportunity to contribute, and decisions arising out of such hook-ups are to be very clearly expressed at the time and circulated in written form immediately thereafter.

6. The Convener of a committee is to ensure that the proposed report to the next Synod is distributed to all members of the committee and this is done sufficiently in advance to incorporate changes. In the event of significant disagreement or alternate opinion then committee members are entitled to submit minority reports to the Synod. It is expected that this is the exception rather than the rule – with all members endeavouring to work in Christian harmony so far as is possible.

7. Committees are encouraged to begin their work soon after each Synod and where appropriate to divide the work among themselves. Committees may elect a Vice-convener to understudy the Convener so as to maintain the work if the Convener is not available.”

Since Synod 2013 standing committees have been arranged as follows:  
Administration, Law and Advisory, Finance, Superannuation, Inter-Church Relations, Church and Nation, Media, Youth and Fellowship, Missions, Training of Ministry.

**ACT 10 – Appointment of General Treasurer**

Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2019

(Minutes 19.73)

That the court accept the offer of Mr Alex Steel to continue in an interim role as General Treasurer, until a replacement General Treasurer can be appointed, and that this be recognised as an urgent matter, and that Mr Smith be appointed Assistant Treasurer.