



*Established by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly Minutes 24.08.06-10.*

*These Terms of Reference were approved by the Assembly Standing Committee on 16 March 2025 following consultation with Congress, Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods, Assembly and agencies, and further amended on 19 July 2026 following the introduction of the role of Associate General Secretary, Strategy & Governance.*

## **The Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

#### **1 NAME AND SOURCE OF AUTHORITY**

- 1.1 The name of this body shall be *the Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration* (hereafter referred to simply as “the Commission”).
- 1.2 Source of Authority – This Commission was established by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly, Minutes 24.08.06, 24.08.07, 24.08.09, and 24.08.10.

#### **2 STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Commission is to progress, implement and realise the vision for the ordering and resourcing of the Uniting Church in Australia by the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly:

*“A network of deeply connected councils responding to God’s call to enter more fully into mission through healthy oversight of ministry and mission, celebrating our diverse and shared identity and being faithful stewards of our common life and wealth.”*

(This vision statement can be accessed in Uniting Church community languages other than English [HERE](#).)

#### **3 RESPONSIBILITIES AND FUNCTIONS**

- 3.1 The Commission shall:
  - (a) have the authority to work with all Councils, agencies and institutions of the Church to prioritise sharing our resources with one another for the benefit of the whole Church;
  - (b) identify and progress any actions to make progress towards the vision consistent with the principles below between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly;
  - (c) having investigated both council models (see 3.2(g)) consistent with the principles outlined in 3.2, bring a report, proposals and any roadmap for implementation to the 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly.



3.2 The 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly has adopted the following principles to guide the work of the Commission (17<sup>th</sup> Assembly *Minute 24.08.10*):

- (a) The purpose of our ordering is in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission and therefore we do so in a way that lives out our unity in mutual submission in service of the Gospel.
- (b) Christ alone is the supreme head of the Church, and we are entrusted with responsibilities to serve Christ by virtue of our gifts and graces through the councils of the Church in relation to the Church and the world.
- (c) The responsibilities, authorities and powers of the respective councils should be clearly defined, balanced across the respective councils and avoid confusion and ambiguity so that all councils can be accountable for the exercise of those responsibilities.
- (d) Councils should have the ability to establish bodies for the fulfillment of their responsibilities with limited prescription from the Regulations.
- (e) Resources should be allocated to the respective councils so that they can fulfil their responsibilities. There will need to be some financial redistribution between the councils of the Church to ensure all councils have the resources they need to fulfil their responsibilities. This may include the adoption of minimum resource standards for respective councils.
- (f) Efficient and accessible shared administrative functions across the Church on the principle of 'only doing separately what we cannot do together' should be established to unlock more resources for ministry and mission.

and (17<sup>th</sup> Assembly *Minute 24.08.11*):

noting that in Act 2: The Gift of the Spirit there is a preference to explore implementation of a three-council model, request the Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration to:

- (g) Investigate the feasibility, consequences, risks, opportunities and possible roadmap to implement:
  - (i) a three-council model consistent with the vision and principles; and
  - (ii) a four-council model consistent with the existing Constitution of the Uniting Church, the vision and principles.
- (h) That investigation of both models include collaboration with leaders and gain insights from Congress, Church Councils, Presbyteries, Synods, the Assembly and agencies of the Church, and bring a report, proposals and any roadmap for implementation to the 18th Assembly.
- (i) Identify ways to implement other actions to make progress towards the



vision, consistent with the principles, between the 17th and 18th Assembly.

#### 4 MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Members of the Commission shall be appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC).

4.2 The membership of the Commission shall be made up of a minimum of 12 and up to 22 members with skill and diversity appropriate and commensurate to the responsibilities of the Commission:

- (a) one Commission chairperson;
- (b) six nominees from Synods. To the extent that it is possible, all six Synods shall have a nominee on the Commission;
- (c) up to six nominees from Presbyteries (one Presbytery nominee per Synod bounds). Care should be taken to ensure an appropriate diversity of Presbyteries is represented;
- (d) two nominees from the Board of the UnitingCare Australia network;
- (e) two appointees from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to serve on the Commission;
- (f) the Assembly President (associated, non-voting member);
- (g) the Assembly General Secretary and the Assembly Associate General Secretary for Strategy and Governance (associated, non-voting members);
- (h) up to three members co-opted by the Commission for particular skills, experience or diversity as required;
- (i) the Commission may form an executive (or similar) and/or task groups (or similar) to assist in progressing its responsibilities and functions. Membership of this executive and/or task groups shall be reported to the Assembly Standing Committee.

#### 4.3 Participants

In addition to the members, the Commission may from time to time invite staff members directly involved in the work to attend and resource meetings of the Commission. To the extent that this occurs, these additional participants do not participate in the determination phase of decision-making.

#### 4.4 Chairperson

The Chairperson of the Commission is directly appointed by the Assembly Standing Committee. In addition to the meetings of the Commission, the



Chairperson may also participate in a Coordinating Committee which would coordinate and prioritise work across both Commissions. The Commission may also choose to appoint a Deputy Chair from among its members.

#### 4.5 Gifts, Skills and Experience of Commission Members

The Commission brings together skilled, qualified and experienced people who together share the following complementary attributes:

- a) A deep love and commitment to the vision of the Uniting Church in Australia as described in its foundational documents including the Basis of Union.
- b) A deep knowledge of the polity, structure, practices, and culture of the Uniting Church.
- c) A commitment to the Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.
- d) An appreciation of, and commitment to, the Uniting Church as a multicultural Church.
- e) A commitment to the vision and principles of the Act2 Project for sharing our common life and wealth.
- f) Demonstrated experience in new and imaginative ways of giving expression to the Church's vision and calling.
- g) Knowledge of the Church's legal, ethical, and social obligations.
- h) Experience in the oversight and governance of complex projects.
- i) Experience in utilising design thinking, organisational development and change management within large, complex organisations.

## 5 CASUAL VACANCIES

### 5.1 When a member ceases to be eligible for membership by reason of

- i. resignation; or
- ii. death; or
- iii. for such other reasons as the Assembly Standing Committee determines,

then a casual vacancy shall arise.

### 5.2 The casual vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the Assembly Standing



Committee after it has consulted with the Commission.

- 5.3 Persons appointed to fill casual vacancies shall hold office for the duration of the term of the person who they replace.

## 6 LENGTH OF SERVICE

- 6.1 The Commission is appointed for the triennia between the 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Assemblies.
- 6.2 Members shall be appointed for terms of six years or until the 19<sup>th</sup> Assembly, whichever occurs first.
- 6.3 Co-opted members may be invited to serve for a shorter term.

## 7 MEETINGS

- 7.1 The Committee shall normally meet at least five (5) times a year at a time and form determined by the Commission.
- 7.2 A quorum shall be the nearest whole number above 50% + 1 of the number of members of the Commission.
- 7.3 Confirmed minutes of proceedings detailing all resolutions passed at each meeting shall be kept and provided on request to the Secretary of the Assembly Standing Committee.
- 7.4 Meetings may be held in person or through the use of technology.
- 7.5 Additional work outside the meetings of the Commission may be required.

## 8 REPORTING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 8.1 The Commission is accountable to the Assembly Standing Committee and will provide a report to each meeting of the Assembly Standing Committee.
- 8.2 In addition, where relevant and appropriate, the Commission will also regularly report to other Councils, bodies and agencies.

## 9 INDEMNITY

- 9.1 Any person acting as a member of the Commission and its committees shall be entitled to be indemnified in accordance with Regulation 4.11.2.



END