

13.48 It was resolved to receive the report.

10. Review of the Ministry of Lay Preacher

Craig Mitchell presented Document 21, consisting of a report on the findings of the national review of the ministry of Lay Preacher undertaken by the Ministerial Education Commission.

13.49 It was resolved to:

13.49.01 receive the report;

13.49.02 reaffirm the significance of the ministry of Lay Preacher for the life and witness of the Uniting Church and to invite congregations and councils of the church to celebrate the service of Lay Preachers;

13.49.03 encourage presbyteries, church councils and Ministers, in the light of Paragraph 13 of the Basis of Union,

...It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ... The Uniting Church will thereafter provide for the exercise by men and women of the gifts God bestows upon them, and will order its life in response to God's call to enter more fully into mission.

to

- a) encourage members whose gifts are in worship leading and preaching to develop and exercise their gifts;
- b) seek to provide support and resourcing for the development of such gifts;
- c) offer local opportunities for affirmation and recognition of those who serve in these ways; and
- d) seek to offer encouraging and constructive feedback to those who serve in these ways;

13.49.04 request Synod Secretaries to discuss the differences in systems and levels of remuneration and financial assistance for Lay Preachers and candidates across Synods in terms of training costs, travel costs and preaching/leading fees, and bring a recommendation to ASC regarding

- a) the possibility of reducing the degree of discrepancy;
- b) ways to encourage presbyteries and congregations to follow such guidelines; and
- c) sources of financial assistance (e.g. study scholarships or subsidies);

- 13.49.05 request the Education for Ministry Working Group to
- a) review the responsibilities and accountability of the National Lay Preachers' Committee in the light of the Working Group's responsibilities;
 - b) consult with synod education agencies and work with the Assembly Communications Unit to prepare a promotional strategy relating to the ministry of Lay Preacher;
 - c) consult with MEBs, presbyteries which were identified in the Review as providing effective support and oversight, a range of culture and language groups, and the National Lay Preachers' Committee to develop Guidelines for presbyteries in providing oversight of, and support for, Lay Preachers, including
 - (i) suggest goals and strategies for promotion and recruitment
 - (ii) suggest goals and strategies for support and encouragement
 - (iii) suggest goals and strategies for education, formation and continuing education;
 - (iv) suggest goals and strategies for provision of feedback and review
 - (v) identify ways in which any additional duties requested of individual Lay Preachers may be addressed in terms of competencies and oversight, including mention of the ministry of Pastor as an appropriate option in some circumstances; and
 - (vi) ways in which the "Code Of Ethics And Ministry Practice for Lay Preachers In The Uniting Church In Australia" may be promoted and used as a tool for reflection and review;
 - d) include in the Guidelines produced in response to 6 (c) consideration of the training, recognition and oversight of other ('non-accredited') church members who lead worship and preach regularly;
 - e) collaborate with Synod Lay Education agencies and a range of presbyteries to develop a national strategy for the education and formation of lay people for preaching and worship leading in the context of Christian discipleship in the light of the report findings by March 31 2015, including
 - (i) revised 'Rules' for education and formation of Lay Preachers
 - (ii) a national competency framework and national assessment framework s, allowing for (but not requiring) the option of VET sector accreditation for training courses
 - (iii) guidelines for ministry formation for lay preachers and worship leaders
 - (iv) a national certificate of recognition for Lay Preachers
 - (v) a tiered or incremental approach to competency development
 - (vi) modular learning with a range of delivery approaches and teaching styles
 - (vii) varied learning approaches for people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities
 - (viii) a range of approaches to teaching, learning and assessment
 - (ix) options for online delivery
 - (x) consideration of the provision of resources for local mentoring in worship leading and preaching by ordained Ministers and others
 - (xi) tools for feedback or review of Lay Preachers within presbyteries
 - f) review education and training programs offered within synods during 2015 in co-operation with MEBs; and
 - g) consult with the Assembly Working Group on Worship about the possibility of expanded provision of online resourcing of worship leaders and preachers, covering a range of worship and preaching styles, with particular attention to the needs of smaller congregations