

Faith and Unity Commission

Appendix 1

Preamble

The Commission will engage with the theological work of the wider church, both to learn and to contribute. It will do so with explicit awareness of and regard to its Australian context, in particular its Aboriginal and Islander heritage, multi-cultural experience, and the current setting of its churches in a post-Christian, multi-faith and secular environment with the Asia-Pacific region.

Mandate

To focus, and reflect theologically,

- on the faith that unites us;
- on the Gospel imperative to work towards unity; and
- on the way in which our member (and other) churches can move towards greater visible unity in worship, common life and mission in Christ.

Key Tasks

1. To study such questions of faith, worship and church order as bear on the quest for unity, by reflecting on the issues of ecumenical theology and method, seeking to develop a way of doing theology for a church in which divisions are healed and diversities embraced.
2. To share diverse theological and ecclesial insights, so that we may learn from one another and be a source of mutual renewal.
3. To consider any matters of relationship between the churches that cause difficulties and require theological clarification; and to do this in the process of freshly appreciating their common apostolic tradition, for the sake of their common faith, unity and mission.
4. To reflect on bilateral dialogues, both national and international, on the work of the Faith and Order Commission of the WCC, and on other projects of the WCC where relevant, in order to identify the consequences of the communion already achieved for the life and mission of the churches, especially possibilities for local ecumenical partnerships.
5. To dialogue and interact with the NCCA Aboriginal and Islander Commission in order that our reflection on the koinonia of the churches may be informed by a deeper understanding and greater appreciation of our indigenous heritage.
6. To network with and encourage state and local faith and order working groups in their localised tasks.

Accountability:

The Commission shall be responsible to the Directors of the National Council of Churches in Australia. It will provide regular reports to the Directors on an annual basis through the General Secretary and will also report on its activities to the National Forum.

Towards Implementation:

- The Commission will facilitate focussed study on topics when requested by the Assembly or Forum. For example, theological reflection on the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- The Commission will look for ways to engage younger theologians in its work.
- Invite experts to address the Commission as necessary.
- The Commission will invite the Churches to engage in particular projects, for example, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, Ecumenics courses, and consultations on bilateral dialogues.
- The Commission will work to challenge the churches to take specific steps towards unity through engaging with the document *Australian Churches Covenanting Together*.

Amended: April 2018