

General Proposal 2

Composition of SSC: Standing Associated

That the Synod

- a) note the desire of the Presbyteries to more fully resource the discussions of the Synod Standing Committee
- b) direct the Synod Standing Committee for the 35th Synod term only, to appoint additional Presbytery Ministers to the SSC as Standing Associated under Synod By-law Q2.2.6(2)(c) until there are two (2) Presbytery Ministers across the Synod Standing Committee membership
- c) direct the Synod Standing Committee to consult with the Presbyteries about options to change the by-laws to select Presbytery Ministers to resource the Synod Standing Committee and bring a proposed amendment to the 36th Synod.

The scope of a proposal

This proposal intends to bring the insights and experience of Presbytery Ministers into discussions of the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) for information, explanation and advice as may be needed, through the mandated presence of two Presbytery Ministers.

Being 'Standing Associated,' they would have the right to speak but not to vote. This provision would not preclude any individual Presbytery Minister from standing for election as a voting member of the SSC. If Presbytery Minister(s) were elected by the Synod in session to serve on the SSC, this would reduce the number of Standing Associated appointments required.

Further consultation is needed to determine how this provision is fulfilled in the by-laws. It is proposed that a temporary solution is put into place over the next Synod term and the revised by-law is brought back to the 36th Synod for approval.

Rationale

Presbytery Ministers play a crucial part in the life and witness of the Queensland Synod. They have a representative role on the Placements Committee and meet with Synod leadership in the Presbyteries-Synod Interface (PSI)—a consultative and information-sharing group with no decision-making powers. While in the past this important relationship and potential contribution of Presbyteries represented through Presbytery Ministers was reflected in the membership of the Synod Standing Committee, it is not mandated at the present time. Currently their presence on the Synod Standing Committee is available only by election.

This proposal seeks to recognise the important ways in which Presbytery Ministers may resource many of the discussions at SSC. The focus is not on voting rights but on availing the SSC of the



information, perspectives and depth of experience uniquely represented by our Presbytery Ministers. Similar recognition is made by the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) with respect to the Synod General Secretaries, each of whom is Standing Associated at ASC meetings.

Types of Synod Standing Committee membership:

The current membership of the Synod Standing Committee, as reflected in the Synod’s by-laws (Q2.2.3), comprises six *ex-officio* members and eight members elected by the Synod in Session.

It is not intended that acceptance of this proposal would preclude any Presbytery Minister from standing for election to the SSC. Any member of a Synod in Session is entitled to nominate for election as they wish, and the Synod in Session will exercise its discernment on the nominees’ merits. What this proposal seeks to do is to remove the necessity for one or more Presbytery Ministers to stand for election to SSC in order for this important aspect of church leadership to participate in SSC meetings.

The *ex officio* members include the chief officers of the Synod—the Moderator, either the [immediate past] ex-Moderator or the Moderator-Elect (these do not serve on the SSC at the same time), and General Secretary—and three others, the chairpersons of the UnitingCare Queensland (UCQ) Board and the Wesley Mission Queensland (WMQ) Board respectively, and the nominee of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) for Queensland. The inclusion of these latter three reflects the critical importance of the work within the life of the Queensland church of both UCQ and WMQ and of the special place in the life and witness of our First Peoples within both church and nation. As *ex officio* members, these people have the right to speak and to vote.

By-law Q2.2.6(2) also provides for the following persons to be Standing Associated at SSC meetings (with the right to speak but not to vote):

- a) Chief Executive Officer of UnitingCare Queensland;
- b) Synod Property Officer at the Synod Office or the holder of an equivalent position, however described;
- c) such other persons with appropriate qualifications, expertise and skills who are invited to attend the meetings by the SSC, including a theological listener.

An alternative avenue through which Presbytery Ministers may be brought into SSC is through being co-opted (by-law Q2.2.3(c)). However, as co-opted members have voting rights, such co-options will impact on the required balances between lay and ordained. This adds an unnecessary complication.

It is for these reasons, that we believe if additional Presbytery Ministers are required, that they should be added as Standing Associated. The Regulations are silent in relation to Standing Associated or non-voting participants to the SSC.

By-law change options

Although Presbytery Ministers may be appointed Standing Associated under by-law Q2.2.6(2)(c), it does not specifically call out the unique perspective that a Presbytery Minister can bring nor does it have transparency about how the Presbytery Ministers may be selected. A specific provision within

the by-laws would offer long-term certainty and transparency about those being asked to regularly participate in SSC discussions.

This proposal does not address the mechanism by which the Presbytery Ministers would be selected to be Standing Associated. The focus would be on identifying the experiences, perspectives and skills from among the Presbytery Ministers that is most needed within the current Synod term.

Some potential options include:

- through the Moderator's engagement with the group of Presbytery Ministers
- in consultation with Presbytery Chairpersons or Standing Committees.

The by-law change will need to determine the final mechanism as well as include that the selection is for an entire Synod term and if required, new Presbytery Ministers will be appointed for the next term.

Proposers

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