

## Barrier Act Process

### Proposed Assembly process for considering the rule regarding leadership and sexual relationships outside faithful marriage

The debate is scheduled for 10.30 a.m. to 12.15 p.m. on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> September.

The planned process is as follows:

1. The Assembly Business Work Group will briefly explain the process to be followed.
2. The Assembly Executive Secretary will move the recommendation pro forma and briefly outline the background, as referred to in his report to the Assembly, noting the Barrier Act process and the 2003 Judicial Commission decision.

The recommendation is as contained in the AES report to the General Assembly: *That Assembly adopt the following rule: The General Assembly now rule, in accordance with the Supreme and Subordinate Standards of the Church, and with previous Assembly decisions, that this church may not accept for training, license, ordain, or induct anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman. In relation to homosexuality, in the interests of natural justice, this ruling shall not prejudice anyone who, as at the date of this meeting, has been accepted for training, licensed, ordained or inducted. [Note: "the date of this meeting" is 23 September 2004.]*

3. The Moderator will allow up to 15 minutes for questions of clarification. She intends to be strict in limiting questions to genuine questions of clarification and ruling out questions which are not. Best endeavours will be made by the Assembly Executive Secretary, Kerry Enright, to answer questions, within the limits of his role. It would be helpful for the AES to have the questions beforehand. Please note that Sessions, Presbyteries, Judicial Commissions and other bodies have responsibility for interpreting any rule, so the AES cannot comment on possible interpretations.
4. The Moderator will then open the recommendation for debate. Speeches will be for no more than two minutes.
5. The Moderator will be discouraging language that is disrespectful of people or their views.
6. Any procedural motions moved during debate will be considered according to Standing Orders. In particular:
  - 15.3 v (g) If a motion is moved and seconded during the debate *that the Assembly pass to the next business*, the Moderator will put that motion to the Assembly. There will be no discussion of that motion.
  - 15.3 v (h) If a motion is moved and seconded during the debate *that the Assembly now move to decision*, the Moderator will consider how much debate has occurred, how many people remain to speak and whether fresh perspective and information is being provided, before deciding whether to accept the motion or defer for a set period. Again, there will be no discussion of that motion.
7. At about 11.30 a.m. the Moderator will determine whether to close the debate, allow the debate to continue, or possibly change the time limit to one minute for

speakers. The Moderator will take into account the factors identified in point 6 above.

8. No later than 12 noon the Moderator will put the recommendation to the Assembly for voting. Voting will be by ballot using the ballot papers supplied to commissioners in their packs at Assembly. The Moderator will report the voting before lunch and lead in prayer.
9. If decisions are made at points 6 or 8 above and people indicate a desire to record dissent, the Assembly Executive Secretary will advise how to do so. If people indicate a desire to give reasons for their dissent, later in the day the AES will explain the process for doing so.

**David Coster and Don Hall**

Assembly Business Work Group Co-conveners.