

National Tasks Review

Terms of Reference

GA04.126 That the Council of Assembly engages in an urgent focused discussion with parishes and presbyteries, Te Aka Puaho, Pacific Islanders Synod, and Council of Asian Congregations, to determine the necessary tasks to be undertaken by the PCANZ at the national level with the aim of preparing a budget which is palpably owned and appreciated by congregations, with funding by continuing to be a single clearly targeted assessment, but with provision for some project-based mission funding.

GA04.123 That the Council of Assembly urgently investigate the outsourcing of the work currently being done by the Assembly's Financial Services Department, and be empowered to act, if this is a more effective option and to report to the presbyteries.

These resolutions led to the Council of Assembly 'Focus on the Future' consultations and subsequent terms of reference for Focus on the Future Report Task Group:

- To read and assimilate the collated responses to *Focus on the Future* – face to face conversations and direct submissions
- To identify and consider what the responses say about priorities for the General Assembly and tasks to be performed and how they might be performed
- To correlate the responses with the priorities and tasks presently being performed and identify divergences between the two and issues to be addressed
- To consider alternative ways of functioning as a Presbyterian Church with due reference to good theology and Presbyterian principles
- To identify recommendations, including possibilities, opportunities, implications and risks
- To bring a report with recommendations to the Council of Assembly about the way forward, including decision processes and timing, going forward.

Members

Helen Beaumont (convener), Helen Bichan, Murray Talbot (minister Hornby, larger congregation, member of Administration and Finance Policy Group), Geoff King (minister Knox Christchurch), Viv Coleman (Howick minister, Convener National Assessment Work Group), Emily Wootton (Auckland lay worker, recommended by Mo Mansill, part of youth and children's work networks), Karima Fai'ai (Gore minister), John Daniel (National Mission Enabler), Graham Redding (minister, St John's, Wellington), Charlotte Economu (Wellington lay person).

Executive Summary

The Council of Assembly initiated the *Focus on the Future* conversations through regional gatherings and submissions from those interested in the future shape of the church and the services needed to support mission.

The highest priority for local congregations was a focus on Bible-based teaching, outreach and mission to be delivered at the local level – with a call for more empowerment of and autonomy for congregations.

Congregations made a strong plea for more emphasis on leadership development, both lay and ordained, with consideration being given to a change in the way we deliver training and ministry formation. This led directly to the Review of the School of Ministry.

The call for leaner and more effective governance was picked up and the five policy groups of the Council of Assembly were disbanded. Two sub-committees now focus on the top priorities identified by congregations. Further proposals to reduce the size of Council are before this Assembly for decision.

Congregations also sought a review and rationalisation of property and financial resources at local, regional and national levels. Some of this has been referred to the Church Property Trustees for consideration and other aspects will feed into the ongoing review of the form and function of presbyteries.

Historical difficulties led to a strong focus on the need for efficient and effective service delivery on compliance and administrative matters utilising the economies of scale possible with national coordination and delivery – health and safety, employment, legal and judicial, insurance, and investments. This has been picked up in a comprehensive review of national tasks with consequent process changes, outsourcing and/or termination of some services.

The Wellington office has significantly fewer staff and relocated to smaller premises. For all General Assembly work the focus continues to be on the efficient and effective provision of those services that are essential to facilitating and enabling mission.

Recommendations

1 That the General Assembly affirm the work of the Council of Assembly to focus the Assembly's operations on core functions.

2 That the Council of Assembly give priority to addressing the effectiveness of presbyteries in their role of supporting congregations in mission and ensuring the strategic use of resources (people, property and finances) within their region.

Report

1 Overview

1.1 The Council of Assembly Focus on the Future gatherings in April 2005, and subsequent submissions, were gathered together by the Report Task Group and reported back to Council for decisions on the way forward. Every meeting and most of the submissions focused on the primacy of the local congregation and its mission. They also expressed both frustration with and the need for a

national church structure to support congregations in their mission. The importance of leadership development and training (along with a call to reconsider how that training is delivered) and ensuring effective use of resources (people, money and assets) were the strongest two themes from all submissions and gatherings.

- 1.2 It is worth noting the significant changes already underway before the national tasks review began. The Mission Resource Team (with four regional staff) was disestablished by the 2004 General Assembly – the new position of National Mission Enabler was established. Following the Assembly the Ecumenical Relations Secretary finished and the Global Mission Secretary went from full-time to one-quarter time. During the following year the Pacific Island Co-director position was disestablished, and the Youth Co-director went from full-time to one-quarter time.
- 1.3 The high priority on leadership development and interest in different modes of training and formation led to the review of the School of Ministry. Recommendations for changes are proposed for decision at this Assembly (School of Ministry Review report D6).
- 1.4 The call for leaner and more effective governance led to the disestablishment of the five policy groups of Council and the setting up of just two sub-committees focused on the priorities identified by the wider church – leadership and resources (for more detail see Council of Assembly report D1).

The regional location of the sub-committees (Leadership in Dunedin and Resources in Auckland) was deliberate to reduce meeting costs, improve communication and effectiveness, and to move functions away from the centre (Wellington) and out to the regions.

Further changes to both reduce numbers and broaden the membership of Council are proposed for decision at this Assembly (Composition of Council report D12).

- 1.5 Releasing resources for mission at the local level was another strong theme. Many spoke of encouraging small parishes to explore different options, looking strategically at regional needs, and releasing resources tied up in property and trust funds. The Church Property Trustees have picked up the challenge and will be undertaking further work. The work of the National Mission Enabler and the Moderator has confirmed the need to address the effectiveness of presbyteries and their role in strategically supporting mission at a regional level. The Council of Assembly has appointed a task group to look at the form and function of presbyteries in support of mission.
- 1.6 There was a call for efficient and effective service delivery on compliance and administrative matters. These include health and safety, employment, legal and judicial matters, insurance and investments. The Council directed the service team to initiate a review of services with a focus on core and essential functions.
- 1.7 The vision for both governance and national services is to focus on those functions essential to facilitating and enabling mission. Our organisation needs to become more flexible and responsive to meet changing circumstances and evolving priorities. We are keen to see national functions dispersed across the country, rather than concentrated in one centre, and delivered in partnership

with presbyteries and parishes. This is already being modelled in relationships between the School of Ministry, Archives and the Synod of Otago and Southland in Dunedin; the Global Mission office in Auckland; the Pacific Island Synod in Auckland; Te Aka Puaho in the Bay of Plenty and the Youth Ministry networks across the country.

- 1.8 Some core national tasks are seen as remaining in Wellington. There are economies of scale possible with national coordination and delivery of compliance and administrative matters – legal and judicial, policy and executive support, secretarial services, finance, investments and insurance, communications, health and safety, employment, and human resources support. The Wellington office has reduced in size from 23 staff, 5 years ago, to just 10 staff today. The office has relocated to smaller rented premises, on the outskirts of the central business district, with good access by public transport.
- 1.9 The national tasks supporting and facilitating the mission of the church were identified as:
- Archives
 - Strategic policy and executive support to General Assembly
 - Finance
 - Communications
 - Human resources
- 1.10 Each area of national tasks was assessed to consider the potential to improve efficiency and effectiveness, the options for outsourcing, the case for terminating some functions, and the opportunity to move to user pays and/or a self funding basis. Where feasible and obviously beneficial, changes were implemented immediately. More complex or larger scale changes have been introduced over time. Significant restructuring has been undertaken following good employment processes and including extensive consultation and involvement of the staff concerned. This work is continuing.
- 1.11 For all General Assembly work the focus continues to be on the provision of those services that are essential to facilitating and enabling mission. The review has resulted in a significant reduction in staff numbers and an overall decrease in the personnel budget of \$543,000 from the previous financial year. Specific measures taken or underway in each of the areas identified are summarised below.

2 Archives

- 2.1 Development and distribution of a parish resource package to support the organisation of anniversary and jubilee celebrations.
- 2.2 Significant increase in access to resources and advice to researchers.
- 2.3 Incorporation of additional material from regional repositories no longer willing to hold archives (libraries and provincial museums).
- 2.4 Upgrade of the website with additional guidance material on preservation of historical records.
- 2.5 Facilitation of document record management systems across the church.

3 Strategic policy and Executive Support to General Assembly

- 3.1 Assembly Executive Secretary (AES) to support policy groups, task groups, and sub-committees appointed by the Council of Assembly and coordinate production of reports.
- 3.2 AES to deal with significant issues and disputes at parish and presbytery level – previously handled by regional staff on Mission Resource Team
- 3.3 Outsourcing some advisory work on Book of Order to the Synod of Otago and Southland.
- 3.4 Upgrade of systems within the national office to improve compliance with legislation including Employment Relations Act, Health and Safety in Employment Act, and Charities Act.
- 3.5 Major responsibility for sexual misconduct and employment related matters moved from the AES to the new Human Resources Manager.
- 3.6 Improvements to administrative and record keeping processes within the national office.
- 3.7 Disestablish Ecumenical Relations position and pass responsibility to AES and Global Mission Office.

4 Finance

- 4.1 Strong focus on process improvement with the specific objective ‘to get it right first time’ and therefore reduce rework, complaints and enquiries – improvements to accounting processes and practices have resulted in a significant reduction in the number of staff required (from 10 to 4) and a dramatic decrease in the audit fees.
- 4.2 Improved financial management reporting to Resources Sub-committee, Council of Assembly and the wider church.
- 4.3 Revision of administration of the Mobil card scheme for ministers to reduce debts and decrease time involved.
- 4.4 Implementation of the new financial system and revision of parish statements to improve communication.
- 4.5 Rationalisation of the Assembly Assessment into one payment covering the General Assembly, Beneficiary Fund and Seniority Allowance has simplified processing of parish payments.
- 4.6 Increased use of electronic transactions and direct credit to reduce fees and processing time.
- 4.7 Termination of payroll services to parishes (were only being used by 10% of parishes).
- 4.8 Outsourcing of information technology services – has reduced costs, improved reliability and reduced risks.
- 4.9 Outsourcing of the administration of the Beneficiary Fund.

- 4.10 Outsourcing of the administration of the Presbyterian Investment Fund.
- 4.11 Establishment of the Insurance Fund as an independent entity with the Presbyterian Church a partner with other stakeholders.
- 4.12 Exploration of participation in the All Churches Insurance Bureau.

5 Communications

- 5.1 Improved access to information and transparency of decision-making through regular Council of Assembly newsletters and resources updates.
- 5.2 Upgrade of the website to improve access to information and resources
- 5.3 Increased use of email for communications with parishes, presbyteries, UDCs, synods, ministers and various committees and task groups.
- 5.4 SPaNZ made largely self-funding through revenue streams from advertising and subscriptions.
- 5.5 Candour, the ministers' magazine, distributed largely in electronic form and moved to become self-funding.
- 5.6 Increased focus on resourcing parishes for communications work and engaging with the media – through provision of resources and workshops to coach local people throughout the country.
- 5.7 Development of parish website package to support congregations who wish to have an Internet presence.

6 Human resources

- 6.1 Appointment of dedicated human resources specialist to support leadership development across the church.
- 6.2 Appointment of half time human resources administrator to deal with routine compliance and record keeping matters.
- 6.3 Provision of guidance notes and standard employment agreements for parish staff available through the website.
- 6.4 Development of Conditions of Service manual, covering people in pastoral positions, for parishes and presbyteries.
- 6.5 Presentations to presbyteries throughout the country to inform about legal compliance issues.
- 6.6 Review and reform of the complaints processes.
- 6.7 Significant work is still required on legal compliance, ministers' appraisals and arrangements for supervision.

Helen Beaumont

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