Assembly Business Work Group

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Terms of Reference (Summary)

- To set the location, date and times of the Assembly.

- To appoint a co-ordinator to facilitate the functioning of Assembly.

- To make requests to presbyteries regarding the hosting of Assembly.

- To approve reports, papers, documents and presentations for Assembly.

- To arrange the order of Assembly business and to advise people of processes and procedures.

- To prepare prior to Assembly, in consultation with the Book of Order Advisory Committee, the Standing Orders of the Assembly.

- To determine associate membership of the Assembly and applications for leave.

- The Assembly Business Work Group operates under the following policy: *The Assembly Business Work Group is a servant of the Church meeting in General Assembly, and as such is to operate in, and order the business of the Assembly, in a fair, independent and transparent manner. The Assembly Business Work Group will make every effort to ensure that all voices are heard, and all matters presented to the Assembly in the appropriate manner, are dealt with.*

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Report

At GA06 the business of the Assembly was completed within the time allocated by the Business Work Group and at GA08 the business was completed on the Sunday evening leaving the Monday morning free. At GA08 a number of Commissioners, anticipating that General Assembly was likely to finish early made arrangements to travel home on the Sunday evening. The Business Work Group did not anticipate an early finish at GA08. We envisaged stronger and more robust debate would have taken the Assembly through to the Monday morning.

For GA10 the Business Work Group, in consultation with the Assembly Executive Secretary and the Moderator Designate, has shortened the Assembly anticipating that all business should be able to be concluded by the Sunday evening.

Standing Orders

GA06 and GA08 both had Consensus Decision Making as an option in the Standing Orders. At neither Assembly was the option exercised. For this reason the Assembly Business Work Group, in consultation with Moderator elect the Rev Peter Cheyne, has amended the Standing Orders to delete the words "The Moderator, in consultation with the Assembly Business Work Group, may seek leave of the Assembly to trial making decision by consensus."

Personnel

The membership of the Assembly Business Work Group was reduced to five for GA08. Soon after GA08 Margaret Inch, a member of the Work Group and Local Arrangements Co convener, died. The members of the Work Group record their deepest appreciation for all that Margaret contributed to GA08, even though she was suffering from ill health, and extend our sympathy to the members of her family.

A vital aspect of the Work Group is continuity of membership and institutional memory. Along with knowledge of process these are vital to the smooth functioning of the General Assembly. At the conclusion of GA10 the Rev David Coster and the Rev Hugh Perry, after serving three General Assemblies, retire from membership of the Work Group. The Rev Brett Johnstone and Margie Apa will continue to provide continuity of membership. The Nominating Committee will bring further Work Group suggestions to GA10.

Rev David Coster and Rev Brett Johnstone
Co-Convenors