** ***The Uniting Church in Australia***

***Synod of Queensland***

**Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee**

**Report of Meeting 2nd June 2011**

**WELCOME & OPENING:** The Moderator welcomed all to the meeting and led in prayers.

**PRESENT:** Bruce Johnson [Moderator], Dorothy Demack, David Kim, Ray Richmond, Anne Hulbert, John Agnew, Don Whebell [Secretary].

**APOLOGIES:** Heather Griffin, Neil Ballment, Jock Dunbar.

**ECUMENICAL CATCHUPS:** John reported that a gathering was held in Toowoomba with the Catholic Community, who appreciated the ecumenical participation.

 The Catholic-Uniting Church Dialogue is progressing with the theme of ‘The Church in the Public Square’. The next meeting will be held on 10th June. The Report of the previous phase [‘The Mission of the Church’] has been well received across the Churches, as have the study guides and prayer resources to go with it. They are on our website.

 There continues to be wide appreciation of the ‘Living Jesus’ Gatherings. There have been many suggestions about doing this again and extending it to other parts of Queensland.

**BUSINESS:**

1. ***‘SUCCESSION PLANNING’:***

**Suggested names were offered for Bruce to follow up..**

1. **CONVERSATION ON *EPISKOPE:***

 ***On the 3rd January, Robert Gribben sent an e-mail which included the following paragraph:***

It is true that the next draft on Episkope/episcopacy is in my hands.  At the moment, the dismaying response of the Anglican General Synod to the long-studied, carefully-produced mutual Covenant is occupying my spare time, because CUWG has asked me to draft a response to the Primate. That is a delicate matter!  We are all aware, of course, of the likely impact of any proposal for episcopacy in the Uniting Church, but I believe the matter must be faced, or else we narrow our ecumenical vision to a bit of cooperation between the last remaining Protestants (over irrelevant 16th C arguments).  Progress depends not only on what we put to our church, but when we put it. That means that draft 7 is not going to come soon, though I hope I can get it to discussion stage sometime this year.

 ***We agreed to leave this on the Agenda awaiting further information.***

1. ***EXTENDED SERC MEETING:***

In looking at this again, we agreed to explore a different approach.

The notes that have appeared in the previous few Reports are cut and pasted at the end of this Report for reference to our previous thinking.

We thought about inviting a people with strong practical local experience in local ecumenism who could assist in fresh thinking about ecumenical work. We have people on The Downs, at Stanley Rivers, at Unity College. Two comments*: “Mission works on The Downs only because it is ecumenical...”* and “*When we do engage ecumenically, people notice it – and it works. It is effective witness...”*

There is a need to offer fresh energy in ecumenism to our Presbyteries.

It was suggested that Don contact Sandy Yule at CUWG to ask for suggestions of people who have been involved in significant ecumenical work in the VicTas Synod.

***QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER:***

* A fresh Position Description for the General Secretary has been completed and was distributed to SERC Members. Applications have been called for the position.

* Queensland Churches Together will celebrate its 20th Anniversary on 1st December. The plan is for this to be celebrated at St Peter’s Lutheran School Chapel – where the Inauguration was held. The Gathering will start at 6.00pm with coffee, and the Service will commence at 7.00pm. Anne reported that planning for the event has commenced.

It was also noted that it will also be the 20th anniversary of QCT’s Joint Churches’ Domestic Violence Prevention Project. **In 2009, Georgia Corowa was appointed Project Worker, Churches Together Indigenous People's Partnership [CTIPP]. Revd Rodney Minnicom is our representative on the CTIPP Commission.**

The General Secretary [Ms Glenine Hamlyn] resigned from her position in February. This position was advertised, and a new appointee is expected to be announced in July.

The President is Lieut. Colonel Ray Wilson from the Salvation Army.

***4.* WEBSITE:**

New item added to it:

Report of the April 2011 Meeting – in the **Reports** page.

***5.* CONVERSATIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES:**

**Anglican-Uniting Church Dialogue:** the Working Paper *A Covenant of Association,* has been endorsed by the Assembly Standing Committee. The Anglican General Synod requested that “copies of the affirmations and commitments be sent to the Doctrine Commission and the Dioceses for consideration, reporting back to General Synod Standing Committee by 31 December 2012.”

 In e-mail Correspondence with Revd Geoff Hoyte of the Anglican Committee for Ecumenical Relations, he suggested that their Committee meet with the SERC to talk about this – noting that the Working Paper is to be discussed in each Diocesan Council.

 We noted that the final decision-making is at the national level of the churches’ Standing Committees.

***Bruce agreed to meet with the Anglican Primate, Archbishop Philip Aspinall, to discuss the matter of a meeting of the two ecumenical relationships Committees. They have met and agreed to the suggestion of a joint meeting.***

***Don has taken this up with the Chairperson of their Ecumenical Relations Committee, Revd Geoff Hoyte.***

***MEANWHILE, it would be advisable for our members to read and become familiar with the document, ‘a Covenant of Association’, which is in our website, in the Dialogues Page. It’s the last article you’ll find as you scroll down.***

***6. DATES FOR MEETINGS***

*Meetings of the SERC and SIRC commence at noon with a BYO lunch and conclude at about 3.00pm.*

**Dates of Meetings in 2011**

**August 4th**

**October 6th**

**December 1st**

***Don Whebell***

Secretary

16 June 2011

***EXTENDED SERC MEETING from previous Meeting Reports::***

**Don was asked to contact Sharon Kirk for advice re the possibility of an Extended Meeting in May or August, and to send her the notes from our conversations as follows:**

At the October 2010 Meeting, we agreed that an Extended Meeting of the SERC be planned each year, when Presbytery Ministers and other leaders are together for meetings at the UC Centre. It was felt that the great values of the meeting are in its opportunities for sharing the stories of ecumenical activity at various levels and the raising of questions to explore further.

The key question for the next Extended Meeting would be; ***‘what do we want see achieved ecumenically in the State over the next 18 months?’***

Bruce advised that the date we had set in consultation with the Presbytery Ministers and other leaders – 17th February - will not be possible as it clashes with other meetings. ***We will decide on this at our Meeting.***

On 15th January 2011 I sent this e-mail to SERC Members:

**From:** Don Whebell [mailto:donwheb@dovenetq.net.au]
**Sent:** Saturday, 15 January 2011 4:35 PM
**To:** Don Whebell (donwheb@dovenetq.net.au)
**Subject:** SERC Extended Meeting 2011

**Greetings all**

**Many of you will recall that there was to have been an Extended Meeting of the Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee on 17th February. As this clashes with other meetings, we have had to postpone it. Apologies for the oversight in arranging the meeting!**

**The SERC meets on 2nd February and will try to set another date. And hopefully choose one that won’t clash with others!**

**The Extended Meeting last year was a helpful opportunity for Presbytery Ministers and other leaders in the Synod to share stories of ecumenical activities in their areas – both the positive things that have happened and the challenges encountered. We also see the Extended Meeting as an opportunity for the SERC to do some visioning and planning for its work in the Synod. For this Year’s Meeting, we would also like to have some discussion of recent ecumenical documents, such as *Living Church in Rural Queensland, A Covenant of Association* [Anglican – Uniting Working Paper] *The Mission of the Church* [Catholic-Uniting Dialogue Report]**

**We should try to arrange the date of the Meeting for a time when the Presbytery Ministers are in Brisbane for other meetings.**

**Grace and peace**

**Don**

Suggestions from August 2010 Meeting:

* Re-visit the 2004 NCCA Covenants, with reports of any local responses to it. The study kit written by Rockhampton Churches Together continues to be a useful resource and is available from QCT. It is used in the Ecumenism part of the Basis of Union Course at Trinity College. Perhaps it could be used at a meeting.
* A presentation on the new document *Living Church in Rural Queensland.*

* I suggest the following be the program, which we’ll finalise at the meeting:

**9.30am Opening Prayer**

**9.35am Outline of the purpose of the Gathering**

**9.40am Sharing stories of ecumenical activities currently happening**

**9.45am Exploring the Working Paper: *Living Church in Rural Queensland***

[Attached to e-mail inviting people to the Gathering]

**10.45am Coffee break**

**11.15am Overview of Dialogues with the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches**

[Website addresses given prior to the Gathering]

 **12.30pm Lunch**

  **1.30pm** **Question from the SERC:**

**2.30pm Finish**

**This is from Bruce Johnson’s Introduction to last year’s Gathering:**

“The purpose of our meeting today is:

* to take time to get a snapshot of what is already happening;
* identify the areas of difficulty and impediments to ongoing ecumenism;
* provide some wisdom about how more might be achieved locally, regionally and nationally.”

***We will need to have further discussion on this at our next meeting***