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

***Synod of Queensland***

**Synod Ecumenical Relationships Committee**

**Report of Meeting 2nd December 2010**

**WELCOME & OPENING:** The Moderator, Revd Bruce Johnson, Welcomed all to the meeting and led us in prayers.

**PRESENT:** Bruce Johnson,Anne Hulbert, Garth Read, Heather Griffin, John Agnew, Jock Dunbar, Ray Richmond, Don Whebell.

**APOLOGIES:** Neil Ballment, David Kim, Dorothy Demack.

**GUEST** Ms Glenine Hamlyn, General Secretary, Queensland Churches Together.

**AGENDA:** As it developed the meeting became pretty much a combined one of the SERC and SIRC.

**ECUMENICAL CATCHUPS:**

**John** gave an account of his time at Grafton Correctional Centre as part of a Kairos team, particularly the Muslim person who spoke of experiencing peace and sense of being loved by Christians.

**Don** mentioned the CUWG Conference and referred members to material he had circulated.

 **Glenine** gave a PowerPoint presentation of the work of QCT. Highlights of 2010 were:

* Visit to Western Suburbs Inter-Church Council: as they talked about the things the churches do in the area, the question emerged: ‘Why not do this together?’
* ACT for Peace is no longer part of QCT structure, but handled nationally. The cards that Glenine handed out to members illustrated the new pattern of working.
* The 2010 Christmas Bowls Appeal kits were ready and were handed out to members.
* Glenine also handed out the brochure for *Living Church in Rural Queensland.*
* There have been repeated problems with the QCT website having problems with hackers. It will be re-constructed.
* Youth co-ordinators are being established in SE Queensland for networking ideas and news.
* 2011 will be the 20th Anniversary of the launch of QCT. It will be celebrated with a Service at St Peter’s Lutheran College on 1st December. The Service will be prepared the QCT Ecumenical Worship Group. **John asked if the Order of Service could be made available to centres outside Brisbane.** Glenine welcomed the suggestion.
* Brother Ghilain of the Taize Community will visit Brisbane on 9-11 September 2011. He has been a frequent visitor to Brisbane over the years.
* Churches Together Indigenous Peoples Partnership [CTIPP] has been a blessing in 2010. Georgia Corowa has been very effective in making connections. The Reconciliation Service in St John’s Cathedral was a very effective act of worship.
* The WCC’s ‘Living Letters’ team visit to the Northern Territory in September was very effective. Georgia participated and made significant ecumenical contacts with people from overseas. She is writing a Report of the ‘Living Letters’ Team visit.
* Work is beginning to make the QCT offices at ‘Old Bishopsbourne’. [and the site itself] more welcoming to indigenous people.
* Wild Rivers legislation: CTIPP has not taken this up, but Graham Mundine is ensuring that more voices than one are being heard in the debate.

**QCT Mandate for Chaplaincy in State Schools:** Glenine presented the Mandate for discussion:

**Commission for Religious Education and Chaplaincy**

**In State Schools**

 The QCT Commission for Religious Education and Chaplaincy in State Schools acts as an advocate for Religious Education [RE] and chaplaincy in state schools by:

1. promoting state School REC and chaplaincy among members of QCT and the wider community;
2. facilitating dialogue between Members of QCT and other churches, as well as with interdenominational agencies and Education Queensland, in order to promote the highest standards in RE and chaplaincy id state schools;
3. co-ordinating the engagement of Members of QCT with issues of RE and chaplaincy in state schools;
4. encouraging and enabling Members of QCT to be advocates for state school RE and chaplaincy among their own members.

**This statement of mandate was confirmed by the Executive of QCT on 28 July 2010.**

The Queensland Government’s Religious Education Advisory Committee [REAC] has Anglican and Catholic members on it to assist in giving advice to the Director-General of Education Queensland. They are the employing authority for RE. The department is writing a new handbook for RE in state schools.

 The QCT Commission has members from the Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran Churches, but nobody yet from the Uniting Church. **Anne and Bruce will discuss this.**

Garth gave some interesting and valuable background history about RE in Queensland and his work with the REAC in its early life.

Our discussion ranged across the field of chaplaincy and RE in state schools.

**BUSINESS:**

1. ***‘SUCCESSION PLANNING’:*** Members were asked to contact Bruce with names to suggest for the position[s] of Secretary for the SERC and SIRC. ***This will be the main item of business at our meeting on 3 February 2011, along with nominations to QCT.***
2. **CONVERSATION ON *EPISKOPE:***

Our last discussion on this was at the June 2008 Meeting. ‘Episkope’ was the theme of the 2008 Christian Unity Working Group Conference. The Draft Minutes were circulated to SERC members after the Conference. A complete Report of the discussion will be circulated as soon as it arrives.

 ***Members may have noted in the Minutes of the CUWG’s May meeting [p1 re ‘Trilateral Responses Draft 6, that a 7th Draft is being written by Robert Gribben]***

 ***I collated the papers that I have and sent them to SERC members after the Meeting.***

 ***This item will remain on our Agenda until we receive and discuss the Draft from the Christian Unity Working Group.***

 ***Sandy reported that Robert has been overseas and the Draft he is working on should be ready soon. He commended our keeping this on our Agenda so that it will receive our attention. CUWG will be very interested to receive our comments.***

**By the time of this Meeting, the CUWG would have had its annual Conference. There s should be a progress report on this matter – and the situation of the Dialogues the UCA is having with other Churches.**

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

At the October 2011 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 February Meeting.***

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.”
1. ***QUEENSLAND CHURCHES TOGETHER:***

* QCT has been advised that Bruce and Anne be our representatives on the QCT Executive.
* We need to find some alternate members for meetings.

* Andrew Gunton has been appointed Presbytery Minister for Moreton Rivers and will need to withdraw from his position on the Faith and Unity Commission of QCT.
* Two more churches have asked about membership of QCT: Ethiopian Orthodox and the Metropolitan Community Church.

***5* WEBSITE:**

New item added to it: Report of the October 2010 Meeting.

Edition 2 for 2010 of EI News arrived on 23rd December and was circulated on 27th December.

**6 CONVERSTIONS WITH OTHER CHURCHES:**

Initiate conversations with Pentecostals? Meet together with a group of them for shared prayer and reflection? Conversation about school chaplaincy?

 ***Bruce to chat with Wayne Alcorn about this.***

 ***Points from discussion:***

* Wayne Alcorn is now the national leader of the AOG and John Hunt Leader of the AOG in Queensland. The rhetoric in relating to the AOG is that they are open to working together – but it’s not a big priority. In many local areas they work with other churches functionally. Bruce: “It is important that people of faith stand together in the face of rampant atheism.

**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.***

The Working Paper is in our website in the Dialogues Page.

***7 DATES FOR MEETINGS***

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

**2011:**

**February 3** and the first Thursday in April, June, August, October and December

***Grace and peace***

***Don Whebell***

Secretary

28 December 2010