



subsequently consider specific actions including a possible further 'all boards' meeting. Any constitutional changes that may emerge will be brought to the 2010 AGM. It was also agreed that the proposed adoption at the 2009 AGM of the Mission and Ministry Constitution be deferred pending the outcomes of this conversation. The Council has already affirmed the M&M constitution, and this deferral will not complicate any of M&M's operational processes.

### **Questions**

Alan Matheson (Camberwell) asked several questions about the timing of the adoption of the M&M Constitution including, 'affirmed by council – what does that mean?' and 'when do we see Ted Keating's report, as promised in the Newsletter?'

Council responded that the deferral of the M&M Constitution does not interfere with its operation, in affirming the Constitution Council gives an operational mandate to M&M; the report on the Review into Conference structures and relationships was tabled at an all boards meeting and dealt with on the basis of a process it determined.

Rod Brown (Boronia) reminded delegates of a motion of the 2006 AGM that the governance shape be reviewed three years later, so it should really be seen by the AGM not just the Council.

Council responded that the review has taken place, and the all boards group decided on this process. Delegates noted the comment of Ron Buckland (Montrose) that such reviews take time and,

**Resolved:** That the 2009 Conference AGM give Conference Council another year for the review process and requests that it report to the 2010 Conference AGM.

**Moved:** Ron Buckland, **Seconded:** Ian Smith

### **Mission and Ministry Focus and Report**

Grant Mackenzie (Chair, Mission and Ministry) introduced Executive Director Martin Boutros to assembled Conference delegates.

Martin gave an overview of M&M's activities, including its Mission Statement and a broad overview of its Strategy Framework (summarised in the Report Book).

Conference affirmed David Brooker (Southern Community) and Steve Jackson (Parkdale) as new members of the M&M Board.

Conference then commissioned two new M&M Team members, Martin Boutros (Executive Director) and Greg Illingworth (Director—Minister Care) through a prayer offered by Robyn Millership (Conference President Elect).

Conference was reminded that M&M exists to serve local churches.

### **The AGM Process: A Comment from the Chair**

This Conference gathering, the Annual General Meeting, has changed. It will continue to change. For a range of legal and corporate reasons CCTC, Community Care (as companies limited by guarantee) and the Properties Corporation (operating under an Act of the Victorian Parliament) have their own reporting processes and procedures. All of us are learning the best way, within the Conference constitution that is based on an accountability lived out in relationship and trust, for these Partner Departments to give feedback on their activities to Conference as assembled. Bear with us as we continue the learning process. Give us constructive feedback (not necessarily today...) so we can improve it.

### **Minutes of the 2008 AGM**

**Resolved:** that the 2008 AGM Minutes be approved as distributed.

**Moved:** Russell Kilgour, **Seconded:** Robyn Millership

### **Conference Council Report**

The Report was introduced by Meryll Blair.

The Executive Officer noted that Council had approved as from 1 July 2009 an increase to the Recommended Minimum Salary for Ministers within Churches of Christ of an amount equivalent to the 3.28% CPI increase, but that the actual impact on the budget of churches will be less than that as the percentage that can be paid to a Ministry Expense Account has been increased to 50% (45% previously).

## Financial Reports

### 1. Conference

The report was presented by Frank Morabito on behalf of Lindsay Cutler (Conference Treasurer)

**Resolved:** That the Conference Financial report be accepted as published.

**Moved:** Frank Morabito **Seconded:** Russell Kilgour

### 2. Mission and Ministry

The report was presented by Frank Morabito on behalf of Lindsay Cutler (M&M Treasurer)

**Resolved:** That the M&M Financial report be accepted as published.

**Moved:** Frank Morabito **Seconded:** Kaye Reid

Frank concluded his reports by expressing his thanks to Kaye Reid (M&M).

The Chair commended Properties Corporation for the financial support services they provide both Conference Council and M&M.

Delegates were reminded that copies of full financial reports were available, and in the event of the supply running short, invited to register with Claire for a copy to be sent out.

## Properties Corporation (Joel Plotnek)

John Bailey (representing the Trustees) introduced Joel Plotnek who reported that while it was a hard year it was also rewarding: A new insurance scheme offering price stability, better claims management and the ability to offer further services was initiated (with assistance from the Baptists); a Red Book risk management scheme is being implemented; there are lots of new property developments taking place; a possible church banking service is being considered. In summary, Joel reported that a healthy and forward thinking Properties Corporation enables the broader church work to thrive.

Joel also noted with regret the sad loss of Karen Mitchell, a valued long-term member of staff; and also the retirement of Ian Loft as a trustee (and at the same time encouraged churches to suggest people who could be considered as future Trustees).

## Community Care (Jillian Carson)

Delegates noted that all sites have achieved accreditation; that a current priority is safety systems; that CareWorks has been strengthened through its restructured relationship with M&M and particularly through the contribution of Tamra Maddox; that the number of church services for residents is increasing, with family members being impacted; that the Department's debt has been reduced, with the goal of clearing its debt by 2010; and that key changes in government policy have affected funding.

Jillian also acknowledged the valuable chaplaincy internship partnership with CCTC through Alan Niven and Merrill Kitchen; and the hard work of staff at all sites, the Board, as well as the invaluable support of Conference Council.

The Chair expressed thanks to Jillian for keeping 'the mission of care' at the forefront of Community Care's work.

## CCTC (Merrill Kitchen)

Delegates noted the Principal's comments that things are going very well at CCTC as it: trains people for aged care ministries (in partnership with Community Care); offers training to school chaplains (an essential mission field to tell the 'story'); has about 10% of students preparing for 'traditional' church ministry, hopefully addressing some gaps.

Merrill noted that the Conference CEO's meet regularly, and while they each do different work they are not isolated but in communication; and acknowledged the faculty at College and their deep commitment to the ethos of Churches of Christ; and that she is part of a panel talking with government about funding for higher education, and that while extra government funding would be helpful the panel is not willing 'to sell our souls' for it.

The Chair noted that this was Merrill's last time of reporting as she plans to conclude as CCTC Principal at the end of 2009.

### **Tasmania Report** (Kay Groves, Tasmanian President)

Kay reported that Tasmanians do feel very isolated, but this is not Victoria's fault, as there is a culture of isolation in (and within) Tasmania. The Tasmanian executive appreciated a recent visit of the Conference Executive Officer to begin looking at ways to lessen the perceived divide.

Kay also reported that the churches are 'ticking along'; that the recent Tasmanian convention went well; that there is some minister movement; that she is leading a mentoring initiative; and that the biggest current issue is discussion and decisions about the use of the proceeds of the sale of Camp Seaview at Bicheno (delegates were invited to join in prayer for the next week's Executive meeting and for the process).

Kay concluded with a request for the prayers of delegates and churches for this decision, and to increase the feeling of partnership with Victoria.

### **Questions on Reports**

Pat Grieg (Ringwood): Tell us more about CareWorks.

Martin Boutros responded that CareWorks would recommence in June with Monique ten Hoopen whose role while broader in the encouragement of a wholistic strategy for mission awareness and training will have a primary focus on CareWorks; CareWorks takes place in conjunction with Community Care and it offers churches tax exemption for specific mission projects. Jillian Carson added that CareWorks also gives churches and projects access to funding opportunities (eg suicide prevention workshops funded by the State Government).

Rod Brown (Boronia): Asked the CEO to explain the sixth paragraph of the Future Directions report on p12 of the Report 2009, in response to the question 'does the left have a place in today's church?' *The CEO responded<sup>1</sup> acknowledged that the paragraph was rather clunky or clumsy and that the words 'theological left' and 'theological right' can be unhelpful. The key, of course, is that in Christ there is no left or right but a new creation, and a key question therefore is Jesus Christ as the way, truth and life being articulated today. The issues raised here and the statistics mentioned in this morning's State of Conference piece deserve a more dignified response than satire. When a Christian community, Churches of Christ indeed, has nearly 23% who don't see 'Salvation through Christ alone' as 'Central to (their) understanding of Churches of Christ', we have a necessary conversation theme around Christology. When added to that we have nearly 30% who don't hold as a central value 'The Gospel compels us to be a missional movement' we have another theme, and a possible trend, emerging. The question then needs to be considered: What do we belong around, and 'Who' do we belong around? Again I acknowledge that some of the words can be unhelpful but can we have the conversations?*

Ken Ryall (Southern Community) asked for clarification around the apparent changed reporting of net market value of market securities and funds in the Properties Corporation accounts.

Joel Plotnek responded that there has been a change in accounting policy regarding the reporting of investments. In past we recorded the full market change, but in 2008 we applied a new accounting standard that didn't require market changes to be shown on the income statement.

### **Reports**

**Resolved:** That all reports be accepted as published in the Report 2009 book.

**Moved:** Anne Spoelder (One Community), **Seconded:** Anthony Risson (Hartwell)

### **Other Business**

#### **Notice of Motion 5 From the Social Justice Network—Local Indigenous Connections**

After discussion around whether the words 'endeavour to' needed to be inserted in the Motion delegates **Resolved** to amend the motion in that way.

**Moved:** Ron Buckland (Montrose), **Seconded:** Andrew Tonkin (Mildura)

---

<sup>1</sup> This requires further editing once a recording of the response is received.

Delegates also noted a comment by Alan Matheson (Camberwell) that at the 1998 AGM the Indigenous Ministry Unit reported that 'the health of conference is directly linked to health of indigenous ministry'.

It was then **Resolved** that: Following the resolution at the 2008 AGM (which affirmed the Federal Parliament's apology to the Stolen Generations and added our own apology) and believing that local churches have the capacity to help reveal Christ to, and promote justice for, our indigenous brothers and sisters by relationally connecting with appropriate local bodies and networks, the Conference of Churches of Christ in Victoria and Tasmania resolves that churches affiliated with the Conference endeavour to form local connections with indigenous peoples, cultures and organisations in the spirit of partnership, practicality and humility, including working ecumenically where appropriate.

**Moved:** Craig Brown **Seconded:** Ian Smith

### **Elective Conversations**

Delegates then moved into elective groups.

### **Notice of Motion 6—Affiliation Fees 2009-2010**

**Resolved: *That*** the affiliation fee for Victorian churches for 2009-2010 be set at a total of \$22 per Member and Christian in Fellowship (pm), including an amount of \$2pm that Conference contributes to the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia and a further \$2pm towards the salary of a Minister Care position that will facilitate pastoral support of ministers and be part of the Mission and Ministry Team;

***That*** the affiliation fee for Tasmanian churches for 2009-2010 be set at \$15 per Member and Christian in Fellowship (pm), including \$2pm towards the salary of a Minister Care position that will facilitate pastoral support of ministers and be part of the Mission and Ministry Team.

*It is noted: that the Tasmanian Council pays its own affiliation fee to National Council, and also charges a fee per member as an affiliation to the Tasmanian Conference, hence the lower amount.*

**Moved:** Anthony Risson **Seconded:** Paul Cameron

Delegates noted that Council acknowledges the impact of this increase, but affirms the need to provide ongoing support and care for ministers.

### **Other Reports**

#### **Church as Employer (Alan Niven)**

Delegates noted that the facilitator's disappointment to not have a final report completed; that there had not been a great level of interest in attending focus group/s; and that an interim report containing process recommendations had been distributed.

Delegates noted the recommendation to Conference Council that each Partner Department be invited to engage with this process, and to form a new group to manage the process.

Delegates were also invited to suggest people or resources to Alan Niven.

#### **Review into our Work and Ministry among Indigenous People (Ian Smith)**

Delegates were reminded that the Vic/Tas Conference have had a long and good engagement with indigenous ministries, and that while some connection has been lost, that we are now returning to this level of engagement. The Review group is seeking to create a theological framework for our movement to operate in, as well as documenting the journey so far including the collection of oral histories.

Interim recommendations included the earlier SJN motion and:

- That council recommission a group to become an Indigenous Ministry group of Conference
- The creation of a calendar with significant dates related to the Indigenous for distribution to churches
- That each church recognise the original owners of their land, and erect appropriate signage

Delegates were reminded that the recommendations were made to Council and not the AGM; that the full report will be made at the 2010 AGM; and also noted that copies of the interim report would be distributed to all churches.

**ACCIM Snapshot** (Avon Moyle)

Avon expressed appreciation for the support and prayers of Vic/Tas Conference in difficult financial times; for the support of the Dareton project which is a unique partnership between Vic/Tas Conference, local people and ACCIM (noting the comment from mayor at the induction of John Saulo—"there are many problems in this region, but today I can see some of the answers are on the way"); and encouraged delegates that 'a lot is going on'.

**GMP Snapshot** (John Gilmore)

John expressed deep thanks to Jack Edwards who is retiring at the end of this year; welcomed Greg Illingworth who will be working as 1.5 day per week GMP Mobiliser in Vic/Tas; acknowledged the ongoing worth of COCOA; and invited delegates and church members to become GMP Personal Partners.

**Federal Co-ordinator** (Craig Brown)

Craig outlined the changes at what is now the Council of Churches of Christ in Australia; introduced the October 4 Great Communion celebration and the resources available, including the 'D&A is in our DNA' study guide; and indicated that the national values survey was nearing completion and that a youth resources kit had been prepared.

**Closing**

Keynote speaker Billy Williams then reflected on the day, and made several observations about what he had seen; in affirming the freedom and flexibility of our movement he also reminded us of the need to follow through on conversations about important issues like the Indigenous resolution and review process.

The Chair then concluded the AGM, inviting delegates to send further questions and suggestions to the Conference Centre.