



GA 12 TAKE HOME INFORMATION

Moderator-designate

The Rev Andrew Norton was announced as the Moderator-designate. More information about Andrew and his background is available on the church website.

Pacific Island Synod

General Assembly agreed to grant the Pacific Islands Synod presbytery status. The Synod now has status and powers equivalent to a presbytery or Te Aka Puaho.

New formula

Assembly agreed to the adoption of a new formula, by which ministers, elders and office bearers make themselves accountable to the Church.

New subordinate standard

Assembly agreed to adopt Kupu Whakapono and its Commentary as a Subordinate Standard of the Church along with its historic reformed standards.

General Assembly meeting and Assembly Week

Assembly agreed to retain a biennial meeting cycle for General Assembly, and declined to uphold a proposal to meet annually. Assembly also agreed to select commissioners based on membership numbers, rather than by congregation for future general assemblies. It is anticipated that the changes will be in place for GA 2016.

Role of the Moderator of General Assembly

Assembly asked that a revised report about proposed changes to the role of General Assembly Moderator, which takes into account feedback from Assembly, be sent to presbyteries, parishes, Te Aka Puaho, the Pacific Island Synod and Asian Council for consideration. With this report will also be a report inviting the church courts to consider conferring the Moderator of Te Aka Puaho with equivalent status as the Moderator of General Assembly.

Declaration on vulnerable children

Assembly agreed to train church leaders to identify need, actively support those who work with children and to advocate for vulnerable children as a church. It also agreed to raise awareness in congregations and communities of the plight and needs of children in our midst.

New regulations for Co-operating Ventures

Following a major review, regulations governing co-operating ventures have been re-written, and General Assembly approved the updated procedures.

Sexuality and leadership

After hearing several proposals, Assembly 2012 affirmed the decisions of previous General Assemblies, that those in relationships outside a faithful marriage between a man and woman, were inappropriate persons to be considered as church leaders.

Postal voting

Assembly decided to retain the existing methods of voting on resolutions being considered at congregational meetings, and that postal voting would not be allowed.

Living wage endorsed

Assembly agreed to affirm and support the Living Wage campaign. In doing so, Assembly encouraged congregations, church schools and related social service agencies to examine their employee remuneration packages and work towards a living wage.

Mission Enterprise Fund

Assembly asked that proposed supplementary provisions that would enable the release of 10 percent of net proceeds from building sales to a Mission Enterprise Fund, be sent to presbyteries and congregations for discussion.

Asian Council

Council of Assembly was asked by Assembly to initiate a discussion about the implications of declaring the Presbyterian Church to be a cross-cultural church within the context of our bi-cultural church, with a view to adopting a short statement on the nature and priorities of the church as an ethnically diverse community in and for its mission and ministry.

Climate Change

Assembly agreed to advocate for climate change refugees in the Pacific, by strongly encouraging the Aotearoa New Zealand government to establish relocation strategies with the governments of those Pacific island nations whose national island habitats were no longer tenable due to the effects of climate change.

Presbytery reform

Council of Assembly was asked to establish a process whereby it consults with presbyteries as it considers matters that will be brought to General Assembly, and that this process be implemented in time for GA 2014.

Assembly also asked that there be annual meetings between presbytery representatives, the Moderator, Council of Assembly and the Assembly service team, to facilitate an aligned vision and sharing of resources. These gatherings will be funded from the Assembly budget.

Book of Order changes

A raft of changes to Book of Order regulations were agreed by Assembly. Some of the key changes are summarised here:

- New provisions provide the right of appeal against presbytery decisions to form or dissolve congregations.
- New regulations allow now up to 40 percent of a church council to be non-ordained persons.
- Changes were made to the disciplinary regulations in Chapter 15.

Land and mission

Assembly endorsed a Te Aka Puaho proposal that asked the Church consider engaging in conversation with local Maori about returning unwanted land to local iwi and hapu.

Same-sex marriage

Assembly upheld the historic Christian understanding that marriage as a loving, faithful union between a man and woman. The Church will be asking the government not to pass the proposed amendments to the Marriage Act, currently being considered by parliament.

Assembly agreed that Presbyterian ministers and lay celebrants will continue to retain the right to administer marriage ceremonies between couples whom the ministers deem as appropriate.

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