



COLOSSIANS 2:6-7

LCA NSW and ACT District
40th Convention of Synod

8-10 March 2024

Wagga Wagga

Minutes

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Daily Program

Friday

6:00pm	Registration open
7:00	Opening Worship
7:30	Welcome to Synod; Introductions; Roll Call; Minute Takers; Closures; Nominations 1 st Reading
7:45	LCA Bishop Paul Smith Ministry Futures Project LCA EOC Brett Hausler ALC Principal Tim Stringer
9:00pm	Closing Prayer

1:30	Ordination Way Forward
2:30	District Administrator Property Trust
3:00	<i>Afternoon tea</i> Nominations and Elections
3:30	LEVNT St Paul's College
4:15	Warrambui
5:00	Closing Devotion – In Memoriam
5:30	<i>Pre-dinner break</i>
6:30	<i>Dinner</i>
9:00pm	Closing Prayer

Saturday

8:30am	Morning Devotion
9:00	District Bishop Mission and Ministry Team Strategic Facilitator
10:30	<i>Morning tea</i>
11:00	Frontier School of Mission DCC
11:45	District Treasurer Constitution
12:15pm	Nominations 2 nd Reading
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>

Sunday

8:30am	Morning Devotion
8:45	LLL ALWS Lutheran Women NSW and ACT Professional Standards
9:45	Closing formalities
10:15	<i>Morning tea</i>
11:00	Closing Service and Close of Convention
1:00pm	<i>Lunch</i>

Minutes - Friday 8 March 2024

Opening Worship

Pr Darren Jaensch, Pr Robert Bartholomaeus

Colossians 2:6-7 *It's all about Jesus*

Songs: Fairest Lord Jesus(LH152)
Jesus you're the one (AT554)

Formal Constitution of Convention

Opening Formalities

Welcome to Synod

NSW Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus welcomed all.

Johanna Franke, Wagga Wagga School chairperson welcomed all, the school is currently seeking a principal.

Apologies

Pr John Borchert
Jan Doecke
Pr Christian Fandrich
Pr Will Frost
Pr Robert Hamann
Sabine Hickling
Pr Bruce Hohnberg
Tuula Kuusela
Greg Lane
Peter Madirazza
Anne Riordan
Dean Salzke
Pr Melvin Salzke
Pr Mark Schultz
Lee Shipard
Pr Gabor Szabo
Pr Fred Veerhuis
Tony von Brandenstein

Conduct of Business

Voting

Resolved that decisions be reached by consensus or by vote in the manner decided by the Chairperson.

Appointments

- Synod Chairperson: Pr Robert Bartholomaeus
- Minute Secretaries:
Tanya Cunningham, Jacob Traeger
- Committee for Verification of Minutes:
Leigh Caldwell, Russell Veerhuis
- Tellers: Peter Weber, Kaye Simpfendorfer
- Reporter for 'Contact': Tanya Cunningham

Resolved that the above named persons be appointed to serve this Synodical Convention

Roll Call

Quorum: 40 Synod attendees

Per 2022 Constitution Resolution: The quorum at convention shall consist of any number of delegates greater than one-half of the number of elected lay delegates, Church Council members, and members of the ministry on active call. (BL7.2.6)

Number of delegates registered to attend Synod: 58

Actual attendance (as at Friday evening): 45

Adoption of Minutes

The NSW and ACT DCC has vetted the 39th Regular Synodical Convention Minutes as circulated to the 2022 delegates and congregation secretaries and recommends their adoption.

Resolved that the minutes of the 39th Regular Synodical Convention, 2022, be adopted.

Reading of Reports and Statements

Resolved that reports be taken as read and received unless otherwise indicated.

Adoption of Reports and Statements

Resolved that at the close of Convention reports and statements tabled during Convention be adopted.

Proposals

Resolved that agenda proposals be taken as moved and seconded.

Resolved that all tabled reports and proposals in the report book and late proposals and reports be accepted and debated at the appropriate time.

Convention Minutes

Resolved that the appointed Committee for the verification of minutes, vet Synodical Convention minutes, correct where necessary and recommend distribution of the minutes to the Secretary.

Membership

Building closure:

LifeWay Wollongong

Resolved that Convention notes this closure, giving thanks and praise to God for the many blessings He has poured out through this place of worship and fellowship.

Nominations, First Reading

Kaye Simpfendorfer

Nominations from Pastors Conference:

Bishop: Pr Richard Schwedes

Assistant Bishop: Pr John Borchert

Regional Pastors:

Canberra	Pr Tim Muller
Coastal North	Pr Mat von Stanke
Coastal South	Pr Mat von Stanke
North West	Pr Darren Kupke
Riverina	Pr David Jarman
DCC Additional Pastor	Pr Darren Jaensch

LCA Bishop

Bishop Paul Smith

Bishop Paul Smith drew our attention to the fact that Synod is meeting in a school and commended the Lutheran schools as a ministry of the LCA. He introduced the attendees representing the churchwide office: Greg Pietsch, Brett Hausler, Tim Stringer and Lisa Schmidt.

He spoke to two key elements from his report. Firstly the emphasis we place on baptism within the Lutheran Church. He recounted the story of his own infant baptism in western Queensland in 1962 in an Anglican church. This baptism is God at work, and we should look at each other as baptised children of God – it is this which gives us our unity (baptised into one spirit – 1 Cor 12).

The four appendices to Bishop Paul's report are to help us to see one another together as baptised children of God. They aren't study guides, but encouragements to draw us into conversation with one another. As we travel towards General Synod with its decision on ordination, this unity is particularly important.

Secondly, Bishop Paul wished to acknowledge outgoing Bishop Robert. "He who desires the office of bishop desires a noble task" (1 Tim 3:1) – the original Greek says "good work" (the same phrase as the woman who anointed Jesus). "Robert, well done good and faithful servant for the work you have done in Jesus' name." Paul gave thanks for Robert's servant heart, faithful proclamation of the gospel, and his mission heart, and assured him that his labours will not have been in vain. College of Bishops will miss his wit, careful thinking through things, and his pastoral heart.

In his report Bishop Paul saved the best till last: the foundation of our Lutheran identity and heritage in Australia: two pastors who served in the Adelaide plains, engaged in complex preparation for their mission work with strong training in language and culture. When a group of scholars visited the Lutheran Archives in Adelaide that what they noticed about Lutheran missionaries/pastors was that they treated the Aboriginal people as people. They translated and learned the culture so that these people could hear the gospel in their own language. The heritage we have received is to pass on the gospel in a way that people can hear in their own way. Pr Teichelmann preserved the Kaurna language which enabled it to be preserved 100 years later. Even though it was a long time until there were any converts. Another example of this in NSW/ACT was Elder Klemke at Walla Walla.

Ministry Futures Project

Pr Greg Pietsch

Pr Greg greeted synod in the name of the Lord. He was invited by DCC to share about the work he is doing in the Ministry Futures Project, a project of the college of bishops. It is seeking to consider and further develop ways of providing word and sacrament ministry in the life of the LCA for the sake of God's mission in today's changing context including an increasing shortage of pastors and rapid changes in church and culture. It's been instigated out of care for the church, so that the Word (that is, Jesus), will continue to be proclaimed.

Pr Greg showed data of the ages of Pastors, and the coming retirement of many in active ministry. While SMPs generally enter at an older age, this is still the real-

ity in our church. In one region in SA, there was a reduction of about 45% in baptised members, but a much smaller reduction in the number of congregations. However, the number of pastors more than halved, and the average congregations per pastor rose from 2.7 to 4.7.

We are responding with lay people taking more roles, and emergency responses by bishops who are licensing lay people to preach and celebrate Holy Communion. This is practiced very little in QLD and VIC/TAS. Which raises the question as to how we can be Synod travelling together, not treating it as an emergency situation.

The project is seeking to establish frameworks for common practice throughout the church.

Firstly, the project has examined regional ministry frameworks, where pastors work within teams in a region. This could involve a lead pastor supporting other GMPs, SMPs and lay leaders, to avoid 'feast and famine' of pastors in individual congregations. Delegates were directed to Pr Greg's documents outlining how regional ministry might be structured. He shared an example of this.

Finally, Pr Greg spoke about the need to equip pastors and lay people with in-service training. A congregational life website could be developed along the lines of the worship planning page.

LCA Executive Officer of the Church

Brett Hausler

Brett outlined the North Adelaide site, which doesn't include SA/NT District office or Immanuel church. The property is primarily ALC, with churchwide office also on site. He spoke about the history of the property and the value it has given to the church. Part of the reason for selling it is that ALC is moving to a distributed learning model. Secondly, it costs a lot to maintain. ALC spends \$400K p/a and LCA another \$100k p/a. Many of the halls and other buildings are empty and were boarded up 6-7 years ago. These buildings have deteriorated quite quickly and there is some significant damage to property, including vandalism because the site isn't in active use.

In the 1980s there were plans to modernise the site. At the 2013 general synod there was approval to redevelop the site. This resolution can't be satisfied because it doesn't meet the needs of the church. Many of the buildings are heritage listed, which limits what can be done with them. There is a risk that additional buildings may be heritage listed, which will make the site of very little value to anyone. Therefore, the decision has been made to look at selling the properties.

The proceeds would be used to purchase an office space to house churchwide office, ALC, and have space for other organisations within the church to be co-located. This is a great opportunity to work together more closely. Some of the roles at North Adelaide could be consolidated, which would allow more funding for mission. The sale would also give us capital to invest for future church sites, and develop revenue which would support mission and ministry.

There was an announcement in November that 11 churchwide office staff were leaving. There have been additional staff who have left in roles which haven't been replaced. There is a \$1.5m deficit to address, but that isn't the only motivating factor. If something is being done elsewhere in the church, does that mean the churchwide

office need to do this? For example, local mission is duplicated at a district and congregational level, so the decision was taken to provide funding, rather than to have positions duplicating what is happening at other levels in the church.

Churchwide office is also looking at the congregational resource site as mentioned by Pr Greg Pietsch in his report.

ALC Principal

Pr Tim Stringer

Pr Tim has been 20 working days into the role. He has been 'drinking from the firehose.' As we have heard, there has been a lot of change at ALC, including the principal.

ALC exists to support the LCA NZ and the wider church; as the church's needs have changed, so ALC needs to change to meet the needs of the church which exists today, not to meet the needs of the church which used to exist.

ALC has pivoted over the last couple of years, and are now a distributed learning institution. That means that people no longer need to relocate to Adelaide to study. They can stay where they are, with an existing network of support to prayerfully encourage them, and where fieldwork can be done in situ in their local context as part of their local church. From time to time, students will be brought in to Adelaide. On Tim's first day, he met the pastoral students who were in Adelaide for an intensive.

There have been a number of restructures, primarily because student numbers have no longer been able to support the number of FT staff. This has been coming since the early 2000s. Increasingly, ALC is making use of sessional lecturers.

ALC now offers a number of new degree structures. Lay Preacher Training is one of the courses Tim highlighted.

Where possible, pastors are spread around to gain experience in a variety of different contexts, as has been happening for many years.

Work is currently occurring on the SMP program, to align and streamline it more closely with the GMP training.

Bishop Robert has suggested people could start training with Frontier, and end up becoming a GMP.

Questions

Q. You spoke about selling properties to better support Lutheran ministries and bring them together. Why not look at inviting other denominations to co-locate their ministries for denominations which are similar in operation/geography?

Brett Hausler: We are thinking about how we can be more ecumenical. We want to have the capacity to work with others, e.g. we've been looking at locations which are adjacent to other denominations. It makes sense to share resources (giving and receiving) where possible. We're also looking to ensure that tenants - wherever we purchase property - share our values.

Q. Have we considered poaching pastors from other similar denominations?

Paul Smith: This has been happening for a long time, as people switch between study institutions. In particular, this occurs with neighbouring Lutheran bodies such as Indonesia.

Q. In streamlining the theological college – could some subjects e.g. Greek be learned at other colleges to make further changes?

Tim Stringer: that has been happening for a long time. We have students who have been studying subjects and UCLT, and particularly other colleges within the University of Divinity.

Q. Could you clarify the position of the property about heritage listing? Can you assure us that proceeds won't be used to fund child abuse claims?

Brett Hausler: there are a number of state/local heritage listed buildings on the site. There are also a number of significant trees. However, there is scope for more buildings to be heritage listed – this is what we need to be aware of in the future.

The question about child abuse claims is one for GCB. At the moment these are addressed through the National Redress Schemes. LCA NZ carries quite significant insurance coverage for these claims. At the moment, Districts bear the cost of claims which are not covered by insurance. This is something which we need to consider how we manage going forward as a church.

Q. Regarding the sale of property in North Adelaide: Do we have any restrictions as to who we can sell the property to? Some worship places in Sydney have been sold to Muslims.

Brett Hausler: It's a decision of the church who it sells the property to. The church is not bound to accept any offer. It may choose not to sell it if it doesn't receive an appropriate offer. There are no restrictions on who the property can be sold to. This decision will be prayed over by GCB.

Bishop Paul: reminded us that A Mighty Fortress is a hymn of comfort. The core consolation is that it's all about Jesus.

Closing Prayer

Minutes - Saturday 9 March 2024

Morning Devotion

Pr Mark Simpfendorfer

Phil 1:27 *Our lives reflect Jesus*

Songs: It's all about Jesus; Stand up, stand up for Jesus

District Bishop Report

Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus

The following pastors have been installed in the NSW and ACT District since last Synodical Convention:

Pr Peter Ravikumar
Pr David Jarman
Pr Francis Leung
Pr Darryl Shoesmith
Pr Darren Jaensch
Pr John Borchert
Pr Will Frost

Resolved that Convention welcome with joy the above pastors and their families and pray that these new co-workers will be richly blessed personally and bring many blessings both to their parishioners and to the NSW and ACT District.

The following pastors have accepted calls outside the NSW and ACT District since last Synodical Convention:

Pr Hans Peethala
Pr Mat Eckermann
Pr Paul Hannola

The following pastors have retired from parish ministry:

Pr David Schuppan
Pr Peter Fuhlbohm

The following pastors have passed away:

Pr Tim Zanker
Pr Peter Ravikumar

Resolved that Convention place on record its sincere thanks to the above named pastors for their faithful ministries while serving the NSW and ACT District.

Bishop Robert referred to his report, and his hope that this current synod will help us focus on Jesus.

Some congregations are trying to plant new churches, some are trying to revitalise, some are struggling as their members get older.

Highlighting the congregations that are small but trying to step out:

Narraweena – 15 people meeting regularly; host a Montessori Kindergarten. Rene van den Tol and Pastor Richard Schwedes shared the story of the congregation and finding God's role for them on the northern beaches of Sydney. 2022/23 was a major refurbishment program to modernise the church, kitchen, office and toilet blocks, and since then, the ways the church has been used has continued to grow. Ran an Alpha course which helped to make contacts, including a couple of people who have started coming to worship or the men's breakfast. As an elderly congregation, they wanted to install a ramp and the building reinvention grew from there: 'how can we change the building to be more mission-focused?' Using

the building as a tool for God's mission. A community that is reaching out and becoming a comfortable place for people to bring others along.

Port Macquarie – was vacant for 8 years, welcomed visiting pastors to come and stay. Among the people, God's Spirit started growing a spirit of generosity. Don't really have a plan – have been praying and trying to grow, and people keep showing up. In the last 2 years, 26 new members joined the congregation, a lot of these have not previously had a church home. Members work hard to make new members feel welcome, including a lot of hospitality. The main problem the congregation is experiencing is no space (average attendance is 65 people, the church can fit about 80!). Pastor Robert – it's not just the pastor, but the spirit of Jesus within the congregation which is allowing this to occur.

Walking Together in Mission:

- Meeting online every three months with about 15 people from across the district for a Bible Study
- James Haak Memorial fund is there to assist pastors and employed laypeople to undertake study.
- Rural development fund for mission and ministry.
- Mission development fund to help with larger projects: loan congregations money.

Bridgitte Willshire works at **St Paul's Sydney** – 35% turnover of congregation members each year. A lot of diversity of cultures. Bridgitte works in the congregation; connects the congregation with the community; and makes connections to work ecumenically across the Sydney churches, such as the World Day of Prayer, a Street Party, and opening up the hall during the Mardi Gras to offer a safe space and hospitality. 'Being present in the street where God has placed us, being His hands and feet'.

Cheryl Turek, Community Development Coordinator – Good Shepherd Community Church, **Tuggeranong**. Connect to the community and oversee church members who are involved in community outreach. Cheryl talked about three ladies who have been part of the community garden for two years after seeing a sign out the front; it's about community, friendship and feeling connected. They now come along to help with the op shop, to dinner church, and to a Bible study. One of the families who had been coming to pick up bread at the weekly bread night recently had four members baptised at Pastor Paul Hannola's farewell. Cheryl thanked the District for the funding support for her position. Sunday worship is very foreign for many people; and relationships take time to build.

Pastor Darren Kupke – District Prayer Gathering and NSW Intercessors. Can't bring about sustained, long-term revitalisation without prayer. Prayer is often in the background of ministries that are seeing mission growth, but it needs to be intentional and coordinated. The first District Prayer Gathering was held last year, and another one coming up in August 23-25 at Warrambui. The district supports the cost of people to attend. A small team is coordinating the distribution of district prayer points and the prayer gathering. Pastor Darren encouraged Synod participants to seek prayer while at Synod.

Church Plants:

Jacob Traeger – Molonglo Valley Gospel Community. Started mid-2021 with 6 people meeting in a lounge room. Monthly worship time in a community centre, and now meeting weekly in the community centre. 15 people each week in 2024. Four key things: share our faith; bless the community; grow one another as disciples; worship together. Every couple of months, the group does an activity to bless the community. The main aim of these events is to connect with and build relationships.

Peter Reed – St John’s Jindera church plant. Working as a Chaplain in the school community in order to grow relationships. Doing things a bit ‘backwards’ - kids love chapel at school and so the church plant started with fortnightly worship services on Friday nights, including a BBQ and musicians from the two school bands, an interactive message. Averaging 55 people attending, about half are children. Alternating with Cafe church, which is like a cross between a Bible study and a church service, averaging 45 people.

Pastor Mat von Stanke reported on Turning Point Ministries. Mat referred to the TPM report, the trend of declining camper and leader numbers at camps, resulting in cancellation of camps in July 2023 and January 2024. He expressed thanks for the District and LLL support for campers. ‘Competition’ from other camps is also a factor when young people can attend events closer to home, with more of their friends. The increasing administrative and compliance burden is also something that is faced by TPM volunteer leaders. Mat shared information from the latest NCLS data, including the fact that young adults are the most frequently church attending age demographic in the country – they are open to getting involved. TPM team has discussed the current situation with the DCC and asking for a review of the current camping ministry and vision for the way forward.

Table discussion: *‘If young people are attending churches as the NCLS data suggest, why are they not in our churches or attending our events?’*

Reflections from table discussions:

- *Fun – the need for fun, not doctrine*
- *Kids weren’t taken seriously as part of the faith community – are now leaders in other churches*
- *Kids not being challenged enough or recognised enough*
- *Hillsong Church – that is attracting young people*
- *Children aren’t noticed at church*
- *Church is not only about ‘us’ as Lutherans – it’s all about Jesus – need to think outside of ‘us’*
- *Newcastle Lifeway Church is surrounded by primary schools, but the challenge is how to connect to them – need to think outside the box*
- *Doing guess work – not hearing from the youth and teenagers themselves. Are we going and asking our kids what do we want to see happen and how they want to serve?*
- *Students in Lutheran schools are learning about Christ and taking that with them (even if they don’t show up in the pews!)*

- *The value of the young people in our church as missional people is untapped*
- *Someone in 18-35 demographic – growing up, was in churches with a reasonable amount of youth – needs to be some sort of critical mass (people you can connect with).*
- *Many young people are getting lost when they are moving for study*
- *The one thing young adults and teenagers want is to be known, valued and loved. What are the passion and skills that the kids have and how can we equip them to use it?*
- *Could communication be the problem – people are not hearing about the TPM events. When communication is pastor-centric, there has been a bottleneck in communication.*

The session concluded with prayer.

Morning tea

Bridgitte Willshire

Phil 2:5-11 *He emptied himself*

District Bishop Report (cont.)

Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus

Ian Rentsch – Strategic Directions Facilitator

Ian outlined the six priorities of the Strategic Plan: Walking Together in Mission.

Ian has been engaging with Mission Directors in other Districts. Next week a retreat will be held at the Mount Carmel Retreat Centre in Sydney. Around 30 people will attend and look at how we can become much more united and focussed around the whole area of mission in the LCA. A number of people from NSW/ACT are being funded to attend this. The aim is to break down some of the silos from the past and refocus as a church.

Ian referred delegates to his report which outlines the congregations and areas with which he has been working.

Ian shared the nine core qualities for active church life and ministry identified by the National Church Life Survey. Three are most strongly correlated with churches that are growing: faith sharing; leadership culture; and vision. The second and third may surprise us. A critical part of Ian’s work is helping congregations to grow their vision and leadership culture.

Ian shared the vision statement which Temora and Trungley Hall have been developing: Growing in God’s grace and reaching out to bless our community with his love.

Bishop Robert highlighted that the District pays for Ian, so congregations aren’t expected to pay for his support.

Bishop Robert thanked **Tanya Cunningham** for her work as communications office for the District, who promotes activities amongst the District. He encouraged delegates to contact Tanya with stories and news to be shared more widely.

Bishop Robert acknowledged the principals and directors of the Lutheran schools in the District: Anita Morton at St Pauls Walla Walla, Janet Moeller who stepped down in late 2023 at Wagga Wagga, Brad Moss at Jindera and Henty, and Suzie the director at St Mary's Kindergarten. Suzie has now served for 20 years as principal. Bishop Robert thanked them for their work. He also acknowledged the importance of LEVNT and their staff for supporting the work of the schools.

Pr Richard Schwedes shared a little about Better Blokes which is happening again this year. For many men, this is one of the most meaningful times in their faith walk. Peter Steicke and Mark Worthing will be the speakers. Financial assistance is available to encourage blokes to attend. There is also a need for chaplains for that weekend.

Tanya Cunningham promoted the Sisterhood weekend retreat of fellowship and community which will be happening on 23-25 August.

Finally, Bishop Robert thanked Richard Schwedes, Russell Veerhuis, Kaye Simpfendorfer, and his wife Jenny Bartholomaeus. Without them he could not have done the job as Bishop. Richard has encouraged him and kept him on track. Russell and Kaye are exceptional administration staff and a joy to work with. Russell is a good sounding board and helps Robert refine his ideas. Jenny has supported Robert in his thinking and reflecting at home, and much more as they have travelled across the District. Together over the last five years they have driven 170,000kms.

Mission and Ministry Team

Pr Ian Rentsch, Pr Richard Schwedes

The role of the Mission and Ministry Team is to support the Bishop and the District in the direction and mission of the church. It is a thinking and brainstorming group. One of the key things this group does is review grants across the District. There is a process for these grants, but criteria are quite broad because mission initiatives happen best when they come from the grassroots.

The Mission and Ministry Team help congregations and organisations in the District develop and refine their proposals and missional plans.

Richard drew delegates' attention to the processes outlined in his report. If there is someone with a 'don't spend money' approach in your community, encourage them to proceed with the exploration and come back to money later. Sometimes our focus can be too much on money – but what we really want to do is respond in a way in which Jesus is central.

The Financial Advisory Committee helps and supports with oversight of money – but they're not the ones who decide whether or not it is a good ministry decision. This is done by DCC. Asking difficult questions and refining proposals leads to much better results.

Frontier School of Mission

Pr Mark Worthing

Mark outlined the history of the Frontier School of Mission and its goal in providing training, resources, and supporting the district. The library is in Port Macquarie.

Subjects are also offered at Albury, Warrambui, and District Office in Sydney. As well as laypeople, Frontier is providing some subjects suitable for SMP candidates.

The Frontier Team includes Kaye Simpfendorfer as the Registrar, Russell Veerhuis as finance officer, Tanya Cunningham assisting with the website, and a number of other people and lecturers are involved.

The initial brief was to continue the training which had been happening in Albury under Pr David Grulke, and see what else could be possible. Almost immediately, the opportunity arose to provide training to Warrambui interns from PNG.

There is a series of missional books produced by Frontier and available through ACR.

Mission-Edge tracts: Bridgitte Willshire and Jacob Traeger shared the experience of a small group coming together to plan, write and design tracts that are aimed at people who are not familiar with Christian ideas – approachable, contemporary language. The tracts are aimed at answering specific questions for people, such as 'did Jesus exist?' or "will I see my cat in heaven?"

Bishop Robert noted ALC and Frontier are not in competition. ALC focuses on academic theology and Frontier on missional culture. Pr Tim Stringer (now ALC principal) has been a lecturer at Frontier. Robert's hope is that all pastors might do some initial study at Frontier, and then proceed to further study with ALC.

District Church Council

Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus

DCC tries to meet in each of the four regions of the District each year. But on the whole, they only get to each congregation about once every 20 years. Where they have been and where they hope to go this year is listed in the report.

Bishop Robert directed delegates to his report for further information.

Q How accessible is Frontier training?

Bishop Robert noted that it had been raised at Pastors Conference that currently there are no shorter, weekend intensive options. This is something which Frontier wishes to address.

District Treasurer

Bruce Arnold

Bruce told a parable about an American Lutheran gun nut and conspiracy theorist. When he's about to have a car crash, he sees an angel who gives him the chance to bring something from home to heaven with him. The guy fetches his 'go' bag, it's full of gold bars. At the pearly gates St Peter asks him why he's brought a bag full of pavers.

This is where we are as a District – we have a bag full of pavers. The financial situation of the District is a blessing. Our lasting perspective on this needs to be that if there are problems in the District which can be solved with money, we can solve them. That gives us the opportunity to engage in mission, ministry, and community with one less thing hanging over our heads.

Operating income from investments and contributions from congregations funds the day-to-day operations of the District (such as administration staff, Bishop's manse, etc). There are a number of investments which DCC makes in mission in the District. These appear as 'expenses' in the financial statements, but they are viewed by DCC as investments. Bruce encouraged delegates to view the notes on the financial statements to see where the District is investing in Mission and Ministry.

The Budget is currently approved by DCC and received and adopted by Synod, because it is not viable for Synod to approve annual budgets on a two-yearly synodical cycle. This will be formalised when the new constitution is finalised.

Resolved that the District Treasurer's Report be received and adopted.

Constitution update

Bruce Arnold

On behalf of Tony von Brandenstein, Bruce updated the Synod on the changes to the constitution which were adopted at the previous Synodical Convention.

These were submitted to the General Church Board, who responded disappointingly. The changes which were approved at the previous Synodical Convention are now being adapted in order to be presented to General Church Board. DCC are currently proceeding with this having been authorised to do this by the previous Synodical Convention.

The District remains constitutional under the previous constitution.

Q. Malcolm Kohlhagen, Wagga Wagga: Why were the GCB unreceptive?

Bruce: We've tried to be more transparent and accessible in our approach to the Constitution. Currently there is a constitution and two parts to the by-laws. The District does not have the power to amend or change its constitution or by-laws part A. Part of the proposed changes remove by-laws part A, which the GCB were unresponsive to (because it didn't fit the previous model). The adaption required will be to reintroduce a by-laws part A.

There is a change proposed which is not due to changes in NSW/ACT District's legal circumstances, but the legal circumstances of the wider church, namely defining what the church is. At a churchwide level, the church is defined as a corporation. The District would prefer to say that the church is two things: a legal entity and a moral authority (the assembled believers).

Leon Schoff, Walla Walla: This is nothing new.

Q. Robert Pfeiffer: Why aren't there updated figures for FY23?

Bruce: They are currently in the process of being audited. We have changed our auditor, so this is still ongoing (and almost complete).

The way income from investments is shown below the line as a loss, this is due to the way that the investments are accounted for – but the losses and gains shown here aren't liquid.

The unaudited 2023 accounts will be made available to delegates.

Q. How do we work out the \$200,000 contribution to the LCA?

Bruce: We have money, and they have need. So we have raised that amount for this year.

Nominations, Second Reading

Kaye Simpfendorfer

There remains one vacancy on District Church Council.

Election of Bishop

Bishop Robert gave the opportunity for Synod to move a proposal to seek a further nomination for Bishop. Nobody moved such a motion.

Resolved that Pastor Richard Schwedes be called to serve NSW and ACT District as Bishop for two synodical terms and shall be eligible for re-election as per the by-laws of NSW and ACT District.

Bishop-elect Richard shared how his father encouraged people and had an attitude of serving the diverse community around him. He was a dedicated sport administrator, who also prioritised his church and family.

At the age of 16-18 Richard stepped away from the church for a number of reasons, including a sermon focussing on exclusion which he heard. As he began moving around, his father would ring the local pastor and ask them to contact him. Eventually, that paid off. His mother prayed that he would come back into church. She said "I must've prayed too hard – you've become a pastor!"

As Bishop, he acknowledges that he won't be perfect. But he wants to encourage us to start with prayer. Richard invited people around tables to pray for local congregations, the District and the National Church. Richard encouraged us to undertake all church meetings with a long beginning of prayer and Bible reading.

Pr Darren Kupke prayed for all that had been discussed and shared during this session.

Lunch

Session starter: Jacob Traeger

Phil 3:7-9 *My gains are loss compared to knowing Christ Jesus*

Song: Keep me near

Bishop Robert introduced Pastor Richard's wife Veronica Schwedes to the Synod and spoke about the timeframe of the transition from Bishop Robert to Bishop-elect Richard.

Ordination Way Forward

Bishop Paul Smith – 'Way Forward' is a project that was established by General Synod in 2023 to address the resolutions passed at that Synod.

The panel will introduce the work that has been done by the Way Forward working groups, and answer questions about the work that has been done.

The project has a large number of volunteers who have

been working towards bringing this work to General Synod in October 2024.

Panel members:

- Pr Paul Smith, LCA NZ Bishop, Chair of College of Bishops and General Church Board
- Pr Robert Bartholomaeus, LCA NSW and ACT District Bishop, College of Bishops
- Pr Tim Stringer, Principal of ALC, former member of General Church Board
- Brett Hausler, Executive Officer of the LCA NZ

Q The way forward is arguably the biggest, most resource-intensive project in the history of the LCA NZ. Why?

Synod is occurring 18 months after the last General Synod. At the core, we wanted it to be transparent and make sure people of the LCA NZ were given a chance to engage and feedback to the project. We wanted to look at this issue from every possible way, which is why there are multiple working groups to feed into the process.

Q General Synod has voted on Women's ordination 5 times already. How is this not just another proposal to ordain women?

Bishop Paul invited synod participants to talk to someone who was at the Melbourne 2023 Synod, which was a shorter Synod after Covid had delayed General Synod. Paul gave some history of the proposals not passed and passed at that General Synod.

This time the question is different – the other times the question came forward, it was a yes/no question which needed a 2/3 majority to vote. This time, the synod voted in favour of finding a 'way forward'.

Q How many people are involved in the Way Forward project, and what is the work they have been doing?

The whole church is involved, and can contribute to the discussion via the Way Forward website. There are three people leading the project team, and eight working groups with a chair between 5-7 people on each working group, with a diversity of voices on each group.

Q We're over half-way through the project, what has been achieved so far and are we on track to deliver a proposal to General Synod?

This proposal would normally have been handled in a three-year term, but this time-frame is quite short. The goal has been to maximise the participation of the people in the church. For example, the call for frameworks in 2023 had a large response. The number of people visiting the website has been the largest ever on an LCA site. The College of Bishops and General Church board are meeting monthly so that all Districts are represented. We are expecting a major next step in the week after Easter.

Q What happens next? Next milestones?

There were three models put forward, and the group has received more than 250 responses. Since then, the models have been reviewed to take that feedback into account. The revised model has gone to working groups and then it will be released for more discussion after Easter.

After that feedback has been received, the model will be finalised for the General Synod book of reports.

Q It seems obvious that whatever framework is put to General Synod, it will include a change to the teaching of the church to ordain both men and women. When will this be released.

All models presumed that for women to be ordained for pastoral ministry, there would need to be a change of teaching. The Theological Working Group is overseeing this, looking at how best to guide the church if this is to happen.

Q If some churches leave after this happens, what will happen to their property?

Each option is being looked at from a financial and pastoral perspective.

Q For a change of this magnitude in this church, people across the LCA need to be involved. What is happening so that people can be informed?

The LCA Communications group are looking at how to get the information to the church, we as congregations need to engage with it when it arrives. People need to discuss the materials in their congregations, and they can go online and look at the resources.

Q Can a congregation instruct their delegate to General Synod on how to vote at Synod?

A delegate should discuss the resolution with their parish, and then once they get to Synod, they listen to the debate and then vote according to the information they have. They report back to their congregation about how the vote went. They are 'delegates', not 'representatives'.

Q What will happen to the church if the Way Forward proposal is lost?

All working groups are working on contingency plans so that everyone is prepared for either outcome. A lot of work has been done on the pastoral care group. Early on, there was a pastoral care policy and procedure for people involved in the working groups and management office, as well as the wider church. Ongoing pastoral care is a priority.

Q David Pfeiffer, Port Macquarie: You said 'if this is lost' - does a 2/3 majority have to pass this new framework?

Yes, it does need the 2/3 majority required by the constitution.

Q Darren Kupke, Temora: are the contingency plans going to be available ahead of General Synod?

Church-wide conversations – the project office, Board and Bishops are wanting as much conversation as possible, some congregations are also looking at their own contingency plans that may be submitted to Synod as proposals.

Q Alan Waterson, Central Coast: What will happen if women are ordained and we've been associate members of the ILC, and we're looking at becoming full members – what will happen then?

Bishop Paul – provided information to the pastors at pastors conference. The question is answered in Bishop Paul's reports – the ILC board reminded its members of the clause in their constitution that says 'if you ordain women, you cannot be a member of the ILC'. We have good relationships with some of these churches and expect our mission partnerships to continue.

Q David Burn, Newcastle: asked for more explanation on

those international partnerships.

We are associate members of the LWF, all of the international Lutherans treat us like full members. Expect our members to go to Malaysia or the Philippines, would still be accepted. Some relationships will need to be reviewed if change occurs.

Q Jeannie Kenney, Culcairn: Looking at the resolution that passed at Synod, clarification on Section C 'it is expected that both women and men will be ordained in a District of the LCA in the next Synodical term'.

When this was written, we were expecting that a district, or a 'created' district would be likely to ordain both men and women. The current framework looks like the choice may be congregation, not district level.

Word 'expectation' is not 'must' or 'shall' - in a district there may be a woman ordained.

Q Helen Gabriel, Jindera: in 1999, LCA scholars said there was no reason for women to be excluded from being ordained as pastors. If it's all about Jesus, does it really matter what gender the messenger is?

Bishop Paul noted that while that theological advice had been published, a change to the practice of the church required a two-thirds majority at a General Synod. This has always been the case and the understanding – regardless of the theological advice, a change needs to be endorsed by two-thirds of General Synod.

Garry Watson, Belconnen (visitor): Holy Cross Belconnen has the motion to General Synod to become full members of the Lutheran World Federation.

Russell Veerhuis: there are plans for Way Forward District gatherings (and online) mid-year for prayer and information sharing, so that people across the district can engage in the conversation.

Bishop Paul – what we are doing is difficult, and extraordinary. Just as Jesus called Peter to come to him and walk on the water, he took his eyes off Jesus and started sinking. 'Lord, save me'

We ask Jesus to help us and be with us in this situation; we trust that he will save us.

Ward Westphal led a prayer for the Way Forward project, working groups, and the LCA.

District Administrator

Russell Veerhuis

Russell feels like there's been a period of change. After 11 years in his role, it feels like such a different district to work in – an increase of staff; the bishop serving NZ District has brought some changes to the office; Frontier School of Mission.

See the District office as a resource to serve the District. 'Our job is to make your jobs in congregations easier'. For example, running the payroll for 38 people across the district (and absorbing the payroll fee).

As we transition to the new bishop, there will be some changes. The stability of staff has been a blessing.

Abuse claims – we are not immune; this exists across the whole church. Other districts have faced claims that are not covered under insurance. This is why the safe church/professional standards training is vital to protect people moving forward.

Brett Hausler: LCA Insurance provides good coverage, but it is difficult to obtain insurance for historical claims. When we were uninsured, the action would be against the church itself. The LCA is subscribed to the National Redress Scheme and claims are increasing.

Property Trust Report

Russell Veerhuis

All of our congregations (aside from one) are unincorporated, which means they cannot hold property. The NSW District property trust holds all the land on behalf of the churches. What you notice in the transactions is a lot of cash flow movements – the District is not able to hold shares, but they are held by the property trust – the cash transactions are the dividends received by the Property Trust transferred to the District to be used for ministry.

Afternoon Tea

Session Starter: Cheryl Turek

John 13:3-5 He washes feet

Nominations and Elections

Bishop Robert reported that DCC has appointed all of its nominees

Additional nominee for DCC – Jeannie Kenney

Bishop Robert invited Bruce Arnold to outline a constitutional issue with the nominees for St Paul's College Walla Walla.

Bruce Arnold: The history is that the Albury Aged Care facility used to be constituted under a by-law of the District. This was no longer viable once AAC became incorporated, subject to the ACNC and receiving Government funding. AAC's constitution was developed independently by Lutheran Aged Care.

The standard approach for something like St Paul's would be for it to be a company limited by guarantee. This would mean that St Paul's will need to have its own AGM, where the Directors of St Paul's will be appointed. This is therefore not formally a process of Synod, but of DCC. DCC is therefore asking the Synod to endorse candidates for DCC to appoint at this AGM.

Q. Leon Schoff, Walla Walla: Doesn't LEVNT nominate these appointments? Will that still be the case?

Yes. Bruce noted that LEVNT is also recently incorporated, which changes some of the process also. That means that DCC authorises LEVNT to act on its behalf and advise on governance, but the DCC has moral authority for church discipline and may ignore the advice of LEVNT.

That Synod note the following names to go forward to the St Paul's AGM:

Chairperson: Anthony Schulz
Vice-Chairperson: Anthony Lieschke
Jenny Zweck
Robyn Armstrong
Charlotte Rose
Lauren Howard

Resolved that Convention note the results of the 2024 elections and the District Church Council appointments.

Lutheran Education in Victoria NSW and Tasmania (LEVNT)

Director Colin Minke

Colin outlined his history both in the Army and as a tradesperson, before working in schools in South Australia and Queensland before beginning his role at LEVNT. Having been in schools for so long, it was a difficult decision to step back from day-to-day being in a school.

It is messy being a Christian, even more so in our schools and early childhood centres. We are all church – the body of Christ is aged care facilities, schools, congregations, etc. If we take that broader view of church, we can evaluate differently how we're doing as church. If we take that broader view, we can make a lot of ticks.

The Lutheran lens that families and kids have when they come to schools is a significant thing for them – even if it doesn't always translate into numbers in the pews (although sometimes it does).

The footprint of Lutheran schools in NSW/ACT is fairly low. But there's a real opportunity for us to think about 'what does this look like in this context?'

Numbers in NSW schools have been going up. Like churches, schools can go in cycles. One particular focus in NSW has schools has been looking at how we can work better together.

Q. Alison Short, Sutherland: In the past 30 years there has been a number of proposals about developing schools in the Sydney region. We've been told that this isn't a priority, and more recently that Lutheran schools aren't being built. Is this changing, and could we get schools in Sydney region and the ACT.

Colin expressed surprise that we haven't had schools in Sydney. There is appetite to look at it – the question is capacity and viability.

St Paul's College

Principal Anita Morton

Last year St Paul's celebrated 75 years. It was a wonderful time to celebrate. At this time, the school opened up its master plan, and the school has been working on its strategic plan.

Ground has been broken on a few facilities, including an amenities block to service the farm and technologies area. One of the major projects moving forward is a multi-purpose hall. Detailed plans will be developed over the next six months.

Recently the college updated its mission and vision in line with what is actually happening in the college. Anita shared these with the Synod.

Enrolments continue to hover around the 300 mark. Being above 300 is a good number for the college – and a couple of year levels are now at 3 streams. Growth and maintenance of numbers continues to be strong.

The InspirED partnership of collaboration of schools across the Riverina (including Victory Lutheran College in

Wodonga) has been encouraging. This has included sharing administrative resources, and a combined spiritual retreat.

The school is prototyping contemporary learning practices.

Service is a key value at the college – following the LEA Head/Heart/Hands model. The college is exploring ways to involve Zion church in Walla Walla in this process.

John Borchert was Pastor at St Paul's for 20 years, before accepting a call to Walla Walla and Alma Park. His parting gift to the school was a board table from materials salvaged from the upgrade to the Lieschke building.

The new chaplain, Robbie Wenke, has been connected to the college for a long time.

The college's boarding program remains really strong. However, there has been an increasing trend for families to only board their students during the week. This meant at the end of 2023 the college was left with only 5 full-time boarders, meaning the college had to accelerate its process to end full-time boarding. All five students are still enrolled this year, despite the change.

Jack Nicholas is the new boarding manager, and has been working to ensure that there isn't a separation between boarding and non-boarding students.

The rise of cost in living is affecting the college – especially as it is looking at new building projects.

There are increasing enrolments in the agricultural section of the school. There has been a recent investment in upgrading the old farmhouse to a classroom for a new Farm Studies class.

Anita thanked the District, Bp Robert, and LEVNT for their support.

Warrambui

Neal Mason, Garry Watson

Neal and Gary were accompanied by this year's interns and Florence Siba, the Intern Program Coordinator.

The team in 2024 is much bigger and more stable than where we were during COVID times. Dean Salzke deserves much credit for the way he has rebuilt the team following COVID.

Gary noted that it's a competitive market for hospitality workers, especially 50km from a major city (Canberra). Many of the staff have arrived from overseas, and are committed to Warrambui. This is strengthening the ministry at Warrambui, especially connections with schools.

Neal noted that there were schools looking to engage in programs with the interns from PNG.

A review: 2020-2021 Warrambui was essentially shut down. In 2023 there were more bookings than 2021-22 combined. Warrambui expects to be back in the black this year. Warrambui was able to utilise the lockdown period for a major program of works.

In 2023 there were 89 bookings. In 2025 they are hoping that bookings will be back up around 150 (pre-COVID levels). Community group booking numbers are lower (other than churches), but schools are up. There is a higher demand for programs, and schools are much more likely to book at short notice (3 months rather than

18-24). Warrambui is about to embark on a redesign of the programs it offers.

There have been new members join the board over this synodical period (Pr Dennis Obst and Anita Short). These people have been a blessing and have come just at the right time. Teresa Heyne is stepping down from the board, they are thankful for her service.

Q Geoff Hartwig, Belconnen, to Florence: What are the mission plans for the Warrambui interns?

Florence: From talking with people after last year's intern program, I came to realise that Warrambui was a seed-planting project, with many now-senior citizens responsible for creating Warrambui. Last year, the interns visited some churches within the District, this is planned again for this year.

Warrambui has put a lot of resources into the interns. They are here doing mission, but at the same time learning skills. The plan is to have an integration approach to this, where they can reflect back on the congregation they have come from, identify a real issue and how they could work on this when they go back at the end of the year.

Q Pr Darren Kupke, Temora/West Wyalong: Last year the program was for students, this year's interns have already graduated. What does this mean for the intern program?

Florence: Frontier Ministry is part of this. There are a number of projects which will be completed as part of this. Some of the interns have graduated with Diplomas or Bachelors Degrees, and others will complete their studies when they return to PNG.

Some of the graduates were still looking for work when the graduate program came up – especially those who have a STEM degree. This is regarded as 'men's work' so it is difficult to find employment.

Q Russell Veerhuis: Can you explain why the PNG interns are all female, and why are we looking at people with graduate backgrounds?

For graduates its a gap year after study – but especially those who are looking for a job. Finding a job can be difficult for graduating women from PNG. A one year internship in Australia adds weight to their CV.

Neal – this is a great opportunity to improve women's lives in PNG.

Q Bridgitte Willshire, Sydney: We had visitors from PNG in Sydney last year. It was only in having conversations with these people that I realised that women in PNG have an experience in life that we have no clue about. Bridgitte encouraged delegates to speak to the PNG interns and Florence to get to know them, encourage them, and hear their stories.

Q Pr Tim Muller, Woden: It's a privilege for me to be a chaplain to Warrambui. Could you tell us about the chefs?

Neal – God has sent us some wonderful people in the kitchen from Sri Lanka (currently 4). This enables Warrambui to run its kitchen efficiently and effectively. Some of them have brought family with them – there's now quite a large Sri Lankan community in the Yass region. Kitchen/hospitality is one of the skills we want to build in our interns, and we're in a much better position to provide that now.

The kitchen team are really focussed on service. Many of them were working away from their families. Some of them working in large events. Now many of them are able to live with their families.

Gary – the number of overseas staff, and the drawing of them into community is a radical and unique move which Warrambui has undertaken.

Neal – it is wonderful to have a community of faith at Warrambui, and that there are more faith conversations happening with staff members who have not come as Christians.

Pr Darren Kupke, Temora/West Wyalong: It is refreshing to hear Florence and the PNG interns talking about their faith. It is rare for older men to be listening to these women.

Geoff Hartwig: There is a wider, Australian government focus on what Warrambui is doing – as part of DFAT wanting to build people-to-people links with Australia, including some connections with the United Nations on International Women's Day.

Synod received the Warrambui report with acclamation. Interns were encouraged and thanked. We're not just missioning them, they are missionaries amongst us.

Ward Westphal gave thanks to God for all that was discussed in the previous session.

Closing Devotion – In Memoriam

Pr Darren Jaensch

1 Thess 4:13-18 They are already with Jesus

Songs: Holy, holy, holy; Facing a task unfinished

We remembered:

Pr Lionel Otto
Pr Rob Fechner
Alice Hoffman
Pr Gordon Gerhardy
Pr Michael Hassold
Pr Lloyd Boughen
Pr Tim Zanker
Pr Leo Doecke
Dawn Weiss
Pr Peter Ravikumar
Pr Evan Koch
Toby Rudolph
Pr Bruno Matuschka
Pr Peter Pfitzner
Pr Milton Fritsch

Dinner

Guest Speaker: Dr Tim Stringer, ALC Principal:
'When we say no and God says yes'

Special thanks were expressed to Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus and his wife Jenny, in acknowledgement of Robert's retirement, after 42 years in pastoral ministry. After 17 years in New Zealand, Robert served in various NSW and ACT parishes from 2001-2018, also as Assistant Bishop, and finally as District Bishop for the past five years. Robert and Jenny were thanked and farewelled.

Minutes - Sunday 10 March 2024

Morning Devotion

Pr Ian Rentsch

Col 1:15-20 *In Jesus all things hold together*

Song: Christ is changing everything (AT182)

LLL

Ross Smith, CEO; David Kalisch, Board member

Bishop Robert thanked the LLL for its subsidy of LCA NSW and ACT Synod 2024.

Ross Smith spoke about the Board Members and the recently announced changes to the LLL to become a Religious Charitable Development Fund. The reason for this change is so that the LLL can continue to fulfill its mission purpose to support work in the LCANZ. In 2016, LLL became an Authorised Deposit-taking Institution, regulated by APRA. Since then, APRA has changed their standards, and to remain as an ADI, the LLL would need to reduce its lending support to the Lutheran church (currently \$320M). The Board made the decision to stay with the purpose of the LLL. What that means is there will be some changes for people with accounts with the LLL, including offering an 'at call' bank account. You can still invest with the LLL and earn interest. More communication is happening currently.

Ross encouraged people to share the information widely about these changes, because depositors need to take action on their individual account. He encouraged people to contact the LLL office through email or phone for more information.

Ross shared more information about the support LLL provides to the LCANZ through lower interest rates on loans, grants to ministries, loans to church bodies who may not otherwise receive a loan.

David Kalisch presented information on the mission work of the LLL, including supporting Lutheran Aged Care Albury and ALWS. The Mission Outreach Grants have provided \$25,000 to Holy Cross Belconnen, Immanuel Woden Valley and Church of the Good Shepherd Tuggeranong to create electronic signage to promote their activities.

ALWS

Aaron Glover

Aaron Glover is the Community Engagement Manager for ALWS – the overseas aid and development agency of the LCANZ. The 'bridge' between generous church members and people in desperate need. In 2022, 64,700 lives were impacted through donations from the LCA NSW and ACT District via ALWS projects.

Next year, ALWS will celebrate 75 years of practical care for people in need. It was established at Bonegilla Migrant Centre Wodonga, and National Office is based in Albury.

Current aid goes to many countries impacted by war, providing funds for aid, education, therapy, and many other needs.

Aaron shared stories of many people impacted by ALWS

work, and thanked the District for the hope provided to people across the world.

Lutheran Aged Care Albury

Pastor Robert spoke about the LACA report, highlighting the challenges with ongoing staffing. He encouraged the Synod to keep praying for them.

Lutheran Women NSW/ACT

Tanna Mackenzie

Tanna Mackenzie spoke about the love being shared by Lutheran Women on a local, national and international level, including many mission projects.

Tanna spoke about the upcoming retreat 'A Patchwork Life' and the way God creates blessings out of the pieces of our life. LW NSW ACT Convention is at Dubbo on 27th April.

Q Anita Short: What are the LW NSW ACT doing to attract younger women?

Tanna mentioned that there is no plan to attract younger people

Q Veronica Schwedes: What is the difference between joining as an individual or as a group?

Tanna said there is information on the enrolment forms

Q Veronica Schwedes: Can the convention be livestreamed so that people who can't travel can still be involved?

Q Alison Short: With the church looking at ways to connect with people, have the Lutheran Women had support to examine how they could reach out to engage with younger people? - What can the District do to support the Lutheran Women in its current challenges?

Professional Standards

Carolyn Kiss

Carolyn Kiss presented the congregational audit form that is required to be filled out annually so that WWCC can be verified by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

Carolyn reminded people in paid positions that they need a paid WWCC/WWVP card.

Religious bodies are required to report behaviours of concerns in NSW and ACT.

Risk Management plans should be in place for worship and activities that are happening in congregations and ministry.

Carolyn referred to Safety Management Online and the LCA website, and pointed out the resources that are available to support congregations in their risk management and safe church policies. She talked about the 10 LCA Child Safety Standards for congregations, particularly the resources that mention how to get feedback from children about their experiences.

In 2023, the first Child Safety Plans were created by many congregations (94% response across the LCA),

and it is now time to revisit these plans and take action, before the next plans are required in 2025.

Face-to-face training is going to be phased out. Online training will now be self-paced, and webinar-style training will be available soon.

Carolyn thanked people who are engaged in promoting safe church procedures in their congregations and encouraged people to reach out for support and clarification when needed.

Pastor Robert thanked Carolyn for her work and commitment to her role.

Q Pr James Leach: What will the assessment be like for the new online training, and for people who struggle with tech?

Within the new training, there will be 'polls' where people can submit their answers – this is still in development.

Q Mat von Stanke: We have an expectation that people taking leadership roles should be members of our community for 12 months. Wrestling with the idea of membership and what that means. He encouraged the LCA to look at this requirement as it can be challenging.

Carolyn clarified that six months is the requirement.

Closing formalities

Resolved that Reports and statements tabled at Convention be adopted.

Resolved that unfinished business be referred to the District Church Council for action.

Next Synod 2026

Resolved that the 2026 Convention of Synod be held at Warrambui Retreat and Conference Centre in the second half of the year with the DCC to confirm dates.

Vote of Thanks

David Pfeiffer

Closing Service and Close of Convention

Bishop Paul Smith, Bishop Robert Bartholomaeus, Pr Darren Jaensch

Hebrews 12:2 *Fix our eyes on Jesus*

Songs: Its all about Jesus; AT313 Christ be our light; Turn your eyes upon Jesus; Chataway liturgy; AT554 Jesus you're the one

Lunch

2024 Elections and Appointments

Section 1. Synod Election

ADMINISTRATION

BISHOP

(elected for 2 Synodical terms – currently to 2026)

Pr Richard Schwedes

ASSISTANT BISHOP

Pr John Borchert

REGIONAL PASTORS

Canberra	Pr Tim Muller
Coastal North	Pr Mat von Stanke
Coastal South	Pr Mat von Stanke
North West	Pr Darren Kupke
Riverina	Pr David Jarman

SECRETARY

Leigh Caldwell

TREASURER

Bruce Arnold

DISTRICT CHURCH COUNCIL

9 members (skills-based structure) Bishop, Assistant Bishop, Secretary, Treasurer, 1 pastor, 4 Lay

Pastor	Pr Darren Jaensch
Layperson	Jeannie Kenney
Layperson	Jarmo Ronneberg
Layperson	Tony von Brandenstein
Layperson	Ward Westphal

Consultant:

Administrator	Russell Veerhuis
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PROPERTY TRUST

5 members: 3 elected by Synod, 2 appointed by DCC.

Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes
Administrator	Russell Veerhuis
Assistant Bishop	Pr John Borchert
Secretary	Leigh Caldwell
	Kaye Simpfendorfer

2024 Elections and Appointments

WELFARE

Lutheran Aged Care Albury Board of Governance

7 members, including one pastor. 7 nominated by Board for election by Synod

Chairperson	Tim McInnes
Executive Director	Wendy Rocks
Pastor	Pr Christian Fandrich
	Ron Asquith
	Peter Schirmer
	David Smith
	Louise Ward

AUXILIARIES

Warrambui Management Board

11 Members. DCC appoints Committee Treasurer and DCC rep. 9 elected by Synod, one being a pastor

Chairperson	Neal Mason
Vice Chairperson	Garry Watson
Secretary	Donald McLean
Treasurer	Hanne Paton
Pastor	Pr James Leach
DCC Rep	Ward Westphal
	Geoff Hartwig
	Brianna O'Keefe
	Anita Short
	Pr Dennis Obst

Ex Officio:

Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes
District Treasurer	Bruce Arnold

Consultant:

Retreat Director	Dean Salzke
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Section 2. DCC Appointments for Synod Endorsement

Finance Advisory Committee

Consists of at least six members: the Treasurer, Administrator, a pastor and others.

Treasurer	Bruce Arnold
Administrator	Russell Veerhuis
Pastor	Pr David Cherry
	Andrew Hoffmann
	Mark Waldron
	Hanne Patton
Ex Officio Bishop	Pr Richard Schwedes

Nominations Committee

5 members, 2 pastors 3 lay people

Convenor	Tony von Brandenstein
Assistant Bishop	Pr John Borchert
Pastor	Pr Ian Rentsch
Secretary	Leigh Caldwell
	Kaye Simpfendorfer

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

LW NSW & ACT Spiritual Advisors

Pr Mark Simpfendorfer

Professional Standards

Professional Standards Officer

Carolyn Kiss

EDUCATION

Lutheran Education Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania (LEVNT) NSW members

2 members

Marianne Hammerton
Kevin Klose

St Paul's College Board of Management

6 members: Appointed by LEVNT endorsed by DCC

Chairperson	Anthony Schulz
Vice Chairperson	Anthony Lieschke
	Lauren Howard

Jenny Zweck
Robyn Armstrong
Charlotte Rose

DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVES

NSW Ecumenical Council

Alison Short

Council for Christians and Jews

Johann Lorenzsonn

Section 3. NSW and ACT Representatives in LCA Roles

Lutheran Laypeople's League Board of Directors NSW Representatives

Deepa Justus

David Kalisch

LCA JUDICIAL TRIBUNAL NSW Rep (Nominated by DCC for GCB appointment)

Jim Ironside

2024 Attendees and Apologies

Albury

Caldwell, Leigh	DCC member	Albury
McClelland, John	Delegate	Albury
Reed, Peter	Visitor	St John's Church Plant Jindera

Albury Aged Care

Jarman, David	Chaplain	Lutheran Aged Care Albury
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Belconnen

Jaensch, Darren	Pastor	Belconnen
Obst, Dennis	Pastor Emeritus	Belconnen
Hartwig, Geoff	Delegate	Belconnen

Burrumbuttock Parish

Gabriel, Helen	Delegate	Jindera
Jarick, Julia	Delegate	Bethel
Salzke, Ann	Delegate	Gerogery
Jarick, Ray	Visitor	Bethel
Salzke, Noel	Visitor	Gerogery

Campbelltown

Weber, Barbara	Delegate	Campbelltown
Weber, Peter	Visitor	Campbelltown

Canberra - Queanbeyan

Canberra Finnish

Pekkarinen, Janne	Pastor	Canberra Finnish
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Central Coast

Waterson, Alan	Delegate	Central Coast
Waterson, Susanne	Visitor	Central Coast

Central West NSW Parish

Leach, James	Pastor	Central West NSW Parish
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Cooma

Henty Parish

Shoemith, Darryl	Pastor	Henty Parish
Kenney, Gary	Pastor Emeritus	Culcairn
Kenney, Jeannie	Delegate	Culcairn
Terlich, Bruna	Delegate	Pleasant Hills
Terlich, Bryson	Delegate	Henty
Shoemith, Shirley	Visitor	Henty
Terlich, Barry	Visitor	Pleasant Hills

Dubbo – Gilgandra

Doering, Carolyn	Delegate	Dubbo
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Griffith – Leeton

Lieschke, Charmain	Delegate	Leeton
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Lavington

LifeWay

Simpfendorfer, Mark	Pastor	LifeWay
von Stanke, Mathew	Pastor	LifeWay
Burn, David	Delegate	LifeWay Newcastle
Dobie, Michael	Delegate	LifeWay Illawarra

Liverpool	Lorenzsonn, Johan Hammarlund-Lorenzsonn, Elisabeth	Delegate Visitor	Liverpool Liverpool
Port Macquarie	Worthing, Mark Pfeiffer, David Worthing, Kathy	Pastor Delegate Visitor	Port Macquarie Port Macquarie Port Macquarie
Springwood			
St Marys	Vanags, Martin	Delegate	St Marys
Sutherland	Short, Alison	Delegate	Sutherland
Sydney – Narraweena	Schwedes, Richard Arnold, Bruce van den Tol, René Willshire, Bridgitte Schwedes, Veronica	Pastor DCC member Delegate Delegate Visitor	Sydney and Narraweena Sydney Narraweena Sydney Sydney
Sydney Finnish	Pappinen, Lassi	Pastor	Sydney Finnish
Sydney Indonesian			
Tamworth			
Temora	Kupke, Darren Pfeiffer, Rob	Pastor Delegate	Temora and West Wyalong Temora
Tuggeranong	Turek, Cheryl	Delegate	Tuggeranong
Wagga Wagga and Milbrulong	Cherry, David Kohlhagen, Malcolm Bahr, Colin Kohlhagen, Des Kohlhagen, Leonie Salzke, Bradley Salzke, Jillian	Pastor Delegate Delegate Visitor Visitor Visitor Visitor	Wagga Wagga and Milbrulong Wagga Wagga Milbrulong Wagga Wagga Wagga Wagga Wagga wagga Wagga Wagga
Walla Walla Parish	Biar, Tim Kotzur, Gavin Schoff, Leon	Delegate Delegate Visitor	Walla Walla Alma Park Walla Walla
St Paul's College Walla Walla	Morton, Anita	Principal	St Paul's College, Walla Walla
Woden and Molonglo Valley	Muller, Tim Mayer, Nicholas Traeger, Kate Westphal, Ward Short, Anita Traeger, Jacob	Pastor Delegate Delegate DCC member Visitor Visitor	Woden Woden Woden Woden Woden Molonglo Valley

LCA NSW and ACT District Office

Bartholomaeus, Robert	Bishop	NSW and ACT District
Bartholomaeus, Jenny	Visitor	NSW and ACT District
Cunningham, Tanya	Communications	NSW and ACT District
Rentsch, Ian	Strategic Directions	NSW and ACT District
Simpfendorfer, Kaye	Office Secretary	NSW and ACT District
Veerhuis, Russell	Administrator	NSW and ACT District

Warrambui

Mason, Neal	Delegate	Warrambui Board Chairperson
Watson, Gary	Presenter	Warrambui Board
Armba, Miriam	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Amemai, Betty	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Dom, Illeana	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Makindi, Harriet	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Patel, Jessica	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Siba, Florence	Visitor	Warrambui Intern Coordinator
Temme, Elijah	Visitor	Warrambui Intern
Yuke, Koyange	Visitor	Warrambui Intern

LCA Guests/Presenters

Glover, Aaron	Community Engagement Manager	ALWS
Hausler, Brett	Executive Officer of the Church	LCA
Kalisch, David	Board member	LLL
Kiss, Carolyn	Professional Standards	LCA
Mackenzie, Tanna	President	LW NSW & ACT
Minke, Colin	Executive director	LEVNT
Pietsch, Greg Pr	LCA Ministry	Future Project
Smith, Paul Pr	Bishop	LCA
Smith, Ross	CEO	LLL
Stringer, Tim Pr	Principal,	ALC
Schmidt, Lisa	visitor,	Lutheran Education Australia

Apologies

Borchert, John	Pastor	Walla Walla
Doecke, Jan	Delegate	West Wyalong
Fandrich, Christian	Pastor	Burrumbuttock Parish
Frost, Will	Pastor	Albury and Lavington
Hamann, Robert	Pastor	Springwood
Hickling, Sabine	Delegate	Cooma
Hohnberg, Bruce	Pastor Emeritus	Coffs Harbour
Kuusela, Tuula	Delegate	Sydney Finnish
Lane, Greg	Delegate	LifeWay Epping
Madirazza, Peter	Delegate	Tamworth
Riordan, Anne	Delegate	Gunnedah
Salzke, Dean	Presenter	Warrambui Centre Director
Salzke, Melvin	Pastor	Cooma
Shipard, Lee	Delegate	Lavington
Szabo, Gabor	Pastor	Canberra - Queanbeyan
Taruste, Allan	Pastor	Central Coast
Veerhuis, Fred	Pastor Emeritus	
von Brandenstein, Tony	DCC member	Belconnen

