



## 1.1 Purpose

The Schools and Residential Colleges Commission (the Commission) assists and advises the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) of the Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church (the Church) in fulfilling its obligations relating to the oversight of schools and residential colleges in which the church has an interest by way of ownership, or power of appointment to relevant boards or by way of ecumenical collaboration (the Schools and Colleges).

## 1.2 Scope

The Commission assists the SSC in the oversight of the Church's activities in accordance with the responsibilities of this Charter.

## 1.3 Responsibilities

In respect of Schools and Colleges, the Commission has the responsibility, wherever it is appropriate under the constituting documents or relevant operating arrangements or collaborations for each School and College, to:

- (a) foster a relationship and connection between the Schools and Colleges and the wider church
- (b) engage for the purpose of understanding strategic direction and challenges
- (c) provide advice to Synod about its strategic directions
- (d) review and assess risks and ensure techniques, procedures and controls are in place to eliminate/mitigate adverse effects on the Uniting Church in Australia or the Schools and Colleges
- (e) provide advice to Synod on these risks including the potential impact on Synod
- (f) ensure effective procedures are in place to achieve compliance with educational, legislative and community requirements
- (g) oversee operational and financial performance of the Schools and Colleges and to advise and collaborate with such Schools and Colleges as may be appropriate
- (h) oversee and report to the SSC on matters which may affect the reputation and culture of the Uniting Church in Australia, or the Schools and Colleges
- (i) strengthen the profile and participation of the Uniting Church in appropriate educational and government forums and networks
- (j) make recommendations to the SSC on appointments to Schools and Colleges' boards or councils and amendments to their constitutions or other governing arrangements or collaborations
- (k) oversee the provision of governance training to Uniting Church appointees to Schools and College boards or councils
- (l) provide advice to and receive information from the Finance, Investment and Property Board on property matters relating to Uniting Church schools and residential colleges.

## 1.4 Accountability

Each member of the Commission is entitled to rely on Synod office management on matters within their responsibility, and on external professionals on matters within their areas of expertise and may assume the accuracy of information provided by such persons, so long as they are not aware of any reasonable grounds upon which to question its accuracy.



## 1.5 Composition and term

The Commission is a commission of the SSC and consists of 8 members:

- (a) a chairperson
- (b) the General Secretary, or nominee, as an ex-officio member
- (c) 6 other members.

The SSC appoints all members, other than ex-officio members, to the Commission. The SSC will not ordinarily appoint a member of staff serving in a Uniting Church school or college or a Uniting Church related school or college unless recommended by the Commission.

Members noted in (a) and (c) above must have gifts, skills or experience in one or more of the following competencies:

- (a) educational leadership, the independent schooling sector or residential colleges
- (b) commitment to education improvement and developing a faith perspective across the Schools and Colleges
- (c) policy discernment and development which can be applied to the Schools and Colleges
- (d) relevant discipline such as education, theology, law, accounting, marketing or business
- (e) commitment to the faith growth of students across the Schools and Colleges in the Commission's portfolio.

Appointment to the Commission is for a 3 year term or as determined by the SSC. The maximum continuous time a person can serve as a Commission member is 9 years, unless that person has served 1 or more terms as chairperson, in which case the maximum continuous time is 12 years.

A member of the Synod office is the secretary of the Commission.

## 1.6 Meetings

The Commission meets a minimum of 6 times per calendar year. The Commission chairperson convenes meetings at other times to carry out the role of the Commission. Any member may request the Commission chairperson to convene a meeting.

The notice and agenda of meetings includes supporting papers. The agenda for meetings is determined by the Commission chairperson in consultation with the Commission secretary and others directed by the Commission chairperson.

General governance protocols, including those relating to quorums and electronic decision making, are outlined within the Synod by-laws.

In the absence of the Commission chairperson or appointed delegate, the members will elect one of their number as chairperson of that meeting.

Subject to the discretion of the Commission, the Executive Officer Schools and Residential Colleges Commission attends all Commission meetings by standing invitation but does not have the right to vote and may be asked to withdraw for all or any part of a meeting. The Commission may invite other people including any employee of the Synod to attend all or part of its meeting.

Any person with a material personal interest in a matter being considered at a meeting must not be present for consideration of that matter.

Decisions of the Commission are made at a duly called and constituted meeting or otherwise agreed by all Commission members. Where approvals are granted outside a meeting of the Commission, a report is provided to the next meeting.



## 1.7 Minutes

The Commission secretary prepares minutes for each Commission meeting.

The draft minutes of each Commission meeting are reviewed by the Commission chairperson and circulated to all Commission members by the Commission secretary as soon as practicable after each Commission meeting.

A copy of the Commission minutes, once they have been approved by the Commission, are signed by the Commission chairperson.

## 1.8 Access to information

The Commission has the authority to seek any information it lawfully requires from any employee of the Synod and all employees must comply with such requests.

The Commission has the right of direct contact with management. The Commission holds a separate private meeting at least annually with each of the General Secretary and Executive Officer Schools and Residential Colleges Commission.

Professional advisers may be appointed at Synod's expense to assist the Commission in evaluating specific issues or risks and mitigating strategies to meet the Commission's purpose and discharge its responsibilities. In engaging such advisors, the Commission must consider the reasonableness of the expense and budget availability.

## 1.9 Reporting to the Synod Standing Committee

The Commission chairperson reports to the SSC on the activities and considerations of the Commission during the period since the last report at a frequency to be determined by the SSC.

## 1.10 Performance review

The Commission performs an annual self-evaluation of its performance to determine whether it is functioning effectively and meeting the requirements of its Charter and will submit the results of this review to the SSC.

## 1.11 Review of charter

The Commission reviews their charter annually to provide assurance that it remains consistent with the SSC's objectives and responsibilities.

The SSC approves or further reviews the charter.