

## 16.18 REPORT 13: DEPUTIES ECUMENICITY ABROAD – AUSTRALASIA DESK (Artt 59, 60, 67)

- A. Rev HS Coetzee tables the Report.
- B. The Report will be concluded during the Synod session.
- C. The chairperson, dr DG Breed, welcomes br W Spijker of the CRCA.

### D. REPORT

**Deputies responsible for this desk:** Rev ASA de Bruyn (s) and prof HG Stoker.

#### 1. Christian Reformed Churches of Australia (CRCA)

Ecumenical unity

##### For notice

##### 1.1 *Mandate*

- 1.1.1 The GKSA is to reaffirm and promote unity with the CRCA, by means of *inter alia* cooperation on various terrains and the attending of and contributions at Synods.
- 1.1.2 Ecumenical ties are to established with the CRCA, with the aim of possible growth towards ecumenical unity.
- 1.1.3 An effort is to be made to support the churches in Australia in seeking out and possibly drawing in expatriate South Africans – especially those of Reformed Confession.

**Decision: Points 1.1.1 to 1.1.3 noted.**

##### 1.2 *Execution of the mandate*

- 1.2.1 Prof HG Stoker attended the CRCA's Synod from 6-11 May 2012 in Blacktown, Sydney and conveyed the GKSA's greetings.
- 1.2.2 The overall impression of the Synod was how serious the CRCA takes it to be a Scripturally sound, Reformed and missionary church and a large part of the Synod was spent on their turn-around strategy. Great emphasis was placed on creating a health environment that will encourage spiritual growth. Mention was also made of new churches planted or being planted.
- 1.2.3 The CRCA Synod decided against integration with the WCRC, into which the Reformed Evangelical Church (REC) was accepted. They have applied to become a member of the ICRC. The Deputies endorsed their application and indicated such to the ICRC, but unfortunately their application was turned down.
- 1.2.4 Rev W Viljoen, who had been a minister of the CRCA since 2001, was called to the Reformed Church Vaalpark and installed as minister there in 2012.

**Decision: Points 1.2.1 to 1.2.4 noted.**

##### For decision making

##### 1.3 *Recommendations*

- 1.3.1 The unity between the GKSA and the CRCA as well as the resultant cooperation is to be noted with thanks.
- 1.3.2 The unity between the GKSA and the CRCA is to be reaffirmed and promoted.
- 1.3.3 The unfortunate decision of the ICRC to turn down the CRCA's application for membership is to be noted.
- 1.3.4 The CRCA churches are to be supported by seeking out expatriate South Africans (especially those of Reformed Confession) to possibly join these churches.

**Decision: Points 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 approved.**

## 2. Presbyterian Church Australia (PCAus)

Ecumenical unity

### For notice

#### 2.1 *Mandate*

2.1.1 The GKSA is to offer ecumenical unity to the PC Australia.

2.1.2 An effort is to be made to collaborate with the PC Australia on various terrains as well as attending and contribution at Synods.

**Decision: Points 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 noted.**

#### 2.2 *Execution of the mandate*

2.2.1 Dr PJ Buys attended the general assembly of the PCAus from 8-12 September 2013 and conveyed the GKSA's greetings.

2.2.2 The assembly acknowledged with thanks the 2012 decision of the GKSA to seek full ecumenical unity with them.

2.2.3 The impression gained from the assembly is that the PCAus takes the authority of Scripture and faithfulness to the Confession seriously. The PCAus has a clear vision for and interest in evangelisation, missionary work and church planting in Australia and other countries – especially Malawi, Zambia, Kenya and South Sudan. The PCAus is also active in Timor, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and areas in India and Indonesia.

**Decision: Points 2.2.1 to 2.2.3 noted.**

### For decision making

#### 2.3 *Recommendations*

2.3.1 The unity between the GKSA and the PCAus is to be noted with thanks.

2.3.2 Cooperation between the GKSA and the PCAus must be expanded.

2.3.3 Effort needs to be made to support the churches of the PCAus by seeking out expatriate South Africans for possible joining the church – especially those of Reformed Confession.

**Decision: Points 2.3.1 to 2.3.3 approved.**

## 3. Reformed Evangelical Church of Australia (RECA)

Ecumenical contact

### For notice

#### 3.1 *Mandate*

3.1.1 Ecumenical ties are to be established with RECA to possibly grow into ecumenical unity.

3.1.2 Effort must be made to support the churches in Australia, by seeking out expatriate South Africans to possibly join this church – especially those of Reformed Confession.

**Decision: Points 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 noted.**

#### 3.2 *Execution of the mandate*

Contact with RECA was limited to e-mail enquiries and input by the Deputies.

**Decision: Noted.**

### For decision making

#### 3.1 *Recommendations*

3.3.1 Ecumenical ties are to be established with the RECA with the possibility of growth towards ecumenical unity.

3.3.2 Effort needs to be made to support the churches of the RECA by seeking out expatriate South Africans for possible joining the church – especially those of Reformed Confession.

**Decision: Points 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 noted.**

#### 4. New Zealand

Information about the churches in New Zealand will be provided in the Supplementary Report.

**Decision: Noted.**

#### E. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT

##### 1. Reformed Churches of New Zealand (RCNZ)

Ecumenical unit

*For notice*

###### 1.1 *Mandate*

- 1.1.1 That the GKSA takes note of the concern and warning of the RCNZ regarding the decision of women in the service of deacon.
- 1.1.2 That the RCNZ be requested to indicate as to how the above mentioned decision of the GKSA is contrary to the Scripture and Confession.
- 1.1.3 That notice be taken about the decision of the RCNZ regarding her ecumenical ties with the CRCA.
- 1.1.4 That the unity of the GKSA with the RCNZ be reaffirmed and be built out further by working together on various fields and the attendance and input during Synods, amongst others.
- 1.1.5 That effort be made to support the churches in NZ in following up and possible joining of former South-Africans – especially those of Reformed Confession.

**Decision: Points 1.1.1 to 1.1.5 noted.**

###### 1.2 *Execution of mandate*

- 1.2.1 Reverend ASA de Bruyn attends the Synod of the RCNZ held from 13 to 19 September 2014 at Bishopdale, Christchurch, and conveyed greetings on behalf of the GKSA. The travel costs for the attendance of the Synod were covered by the Commission for Foreign ministry/service.
- 1.2.2 The amount of South-Africans that joins the RCNZ is still striking.
- 1.2.3 The Synod makes the following decisions regarding the relationship between the RCNZ and the GKSA:
  - To continue to express our deepest concern to the GKSA concerning its decision to allow women to be ordained as deacons (with emphasis on the matter of ordination)*
  - To express our concern to the GKSA at the way they dealt with the appeals surrounding the ordination of women at their 2012 Synod.*
  - To inform the GKSA that if they continue to ordain women as deacons this may lead to our relationship being put under strain.*
  - That Synod charge the IRC (Interchurch Relation Committee) to respond to the request of the GKSA Synod 2012 to demonstrate to them where their decision to ordain women to the office of deacon is contrary to the Scripture and the Confessions.*

**Decision: Points 1.2.1 to 1.2.3 noted.**

*For Decision-making*

###### 1.3 *Recommendations*

- 1.3.1 That the Synod takes note of the concern and warning of the RCNZ regarding the decision of women in the service of deacon and also of their concern about how the complaints at the 2012 Synod were handled.
- 1.3.2 That the answer of the IRC of the RCNZ regarding the matter is awaited. (The answer has in the meantime been received and is referred to the to be named Deputies.)

- 1.3.3 That the unity between the GKSA and the RCNZ be reaffirmed and built out further through cooperation on various fields and the attendance and input during Synods, amongst others.
- 1.3.4 That effort be made to support churches in New Zealand in the follow-up and possible joining of form.

**Decision: Points 1.3.1 to 1.3.4 approved (amendments already added – Deputies Acta).**