



The ACC Newsletter

Assembly of Confessing Congregations within the Uniting Church in Australia

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*This is the first issue of an occasional newsletter to be provided to all our members. Publication dates will usually occur between the magazine publication periods to keep you informed. It is simply called **The ACC Newsletter**.*

1. State and Region Reports

During the months of February, March and April, a series of ACC regional meetings were held. The ACC Chair, Revd Dr Max Champion attended most of these meetings, providing a message of biblical encouragement, and an update about the latest ACC developments.

New South Wales

The ACC – NSW Movement state network met on Saturday April 14, and joined together for prayer and worship and inaugural business. Guidelines for the group were adopted, and a new executive committee was appointed to replace the steering committee. The officers are:

Chair: Revd Dr Alan Russell **Deputy Chair:** Pastor Grahame Abrahams
Secretary: Bruce Fairhall **Prayer Convenor:** Revd Anne Hibbard.

A regional group of congregations in Georges River, Sydney, is holding a dinner in May to enable members to meet each other, encourage local networks, and support in their region. Wesley Institute has planned a full day seminar with bible messages and resources for congregations. The date is Saturday August 11. More information will follow.

The Hunter

(A summary from a prayer report by ACC local member Alton Bowen)

About 35 UCA members from congregations in adjacent suburbs and from Maitland & Raymond Terrace arrived for a meeting on Sunday February 11 at the New Lambton Uniting Church. Those present included several lay preachers, two ministers in placement and two “retired” ministers. There was an encouraging time of prayer, singing and fellowship. Peter Bentley was the guest speaker and set aside time for questions after the presentation and continued with informal discussions during afternoon tea. Representatives from several congregations have been encouraged to support ACC and to begin educating their fellowships about ACC. The Hunter-based members have a common goal of providing support and nurture for each other and especially for those who are attending congregations which are not sympathetic to evangelical ministry. A follow up meeting was held on March 11, and the next meeting is scheduled for May 20. The group is considering the possibility of setting up a regional fellowship comprising two groups, one in Newcastle and the other in Maitland/Cessnock.

We would appreciate further prayer for our group and members.

QUEENSLAND

Revd Ivan Kirk reports:

“About sixty people gathered on Saturday March 23rd for the inaugural meeting of **ACC QLD Movement**. We met at St David’s Uniting Church on the south side of Brisbane and some people travelled for up to two hours to attend the meeting. Of particular interest was support from the Tongan and Sudanese congregations. Revd Dr Max Champion brought some of us up to speed on the formation and agenda for the ACC. A steering committee was formed and we hope to figure out some ways of advancing the confessional cause in Queensland. We hope over time there will be an increase of support from the Queensland clergy for the confessional cause and also an increase in interest among young people.”

North Queensland (NQ)

Revd Dr Champion also visited Cairns the next day (March 24), and spoke at events organised by ACC executive member and Cairns Emmanuel Minister, Revd Hedley Fihaki. At the Cairns based gathering of ACC members, those present agreed to form a regional network known as the **ACC NQ Regional Movement**, which would be part of the ACC Queensland Movement.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

A new ACC group: **ACC – South Australian Movement** was formed in South Australia on February 25. This was the day after the wonderful night of praise and thanksgiving for the work by EMU SA – ‘Passing on the Torch’.

The first Steering Committee was held on March 26, and monthly meetings which are open to all members have been scheduled. The Convenor is Revd John Cranmer.

TASMANIA *(from material supplied by Revd Bob Imms)*

EMU/ RA Past History: The strength of EMU & RA in Tasmania in the past was centred on the North West Coast and this is still the case with five ACC Congregations in this area, as well as one ACC congregation near Launceston and one on the East Coast. Hobart has an ACC Group that meets bi-monthly on Sunday afternoons. It is made up of 33 members drawn from five congregations in the Hobart area and the Huon.

ACC Tasmanian Movement: We have had incidental RA State Gatherings centred at Legana. Following the establishment of the new Assembly we gathered at Legana on February 17th with the Revd Dr Max Champion, Chair of ACC Australia, in attendance. Forty-eight members were present. It was agreed that we constitute ourselves as the ACC Tasmanian Movement with a Steering Committee of seven members. Rev Water Abetz who is now living in Poatina was appointed the Convenor and we had our first meeting last Wednesday week at Campbell Town. Walter also leads worship at Legana and the NW Coast Congregations when invited.

ACC Tasmania and the Presbytery of Tasmania: The Presbytery of Tasmania had recognised EMU as a part of its structure and there were two EMU representatives appointed to the Presbytery. It is hoped that ACC Tasmania will be similarly recognised. Two members of the Steering Committee hope to meet with representatives of Presbytery to finalise this matter.

ACC Ministry in Tasmania: The North West Congregations have been enthusiastically led by the past State EMU Chairperson, Rev Trevor Faggotter, until he moved to SA. The Rev Bob Imms, a retired minister, is continuing to lead the Southern Tasmanian Group. The Rev Aminiasi Volau, a retired minister is involved with the St Helens Congregation.

One Congregation's News: The Legana Congregation was early in declaring itself as a RA Congregation within the UCA, and was accepted by the other three congregations in the East Tamar Parish. But once they changed their notice board with the name RA Congregation there was verbal abuse. After much prayer there now has been a breakthrough and the Parish Council has asked representatives of the Legana Congregation to share the significance of the new Assembly within the UCA with the other three congregations.

The Future: Because of the smallness of Tasmania it has not been too difficult to gather together a large number of its members in one place at one time. This has distinct advantages when seeking the guidance of God and moving forward together with faith and courage. Although we are separated by distance, we can still feel a sense of our unity in Christ Jesus and with one another. It also means that the isolated members can feel that they are not alone, but are members of a larger group, which is praying for and supporting them. We look forward to the future with a conviction that God has called us out to be the "leaven in the lump" of the UCA. This does not mean declaring war but that quietly and earnestly we witness to the Truth and take Jesus' words seriously "If you abide in my Word you shall be my disciples, and you will know the Truth and the Truth will set you free. If the Son sets you free you will be free indeed". This means that we are in for the long haul. It may take many years but we must never doubt the call of God that brought the new Assembly into existence and our call to be a part of this wonderful new direction for the UCA. Paul writes "If we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait patiently for it".

VICTORIA

Around 65 people gathered at Ashburton Uniting Church on Saturday March 3 to form a new network: **ACC Victoria**. The meeting was charged with certain responsibilities, including the arrangements for the Second National Confessing Assembly. A committee was formed which met for the first time on April 14, considering how it can help encourage Victorian ACC members. The state convenor is Revd Graeme Harrison.

2. Report of the Latest ACC National Executive meeting

Staffing

The ACC Executive meeting held on March 19 received a report from an executive task group with recommendations about future staffing. The report is a valuable working paper, with recommendations that will need to be implemented over time by the Board of Administration and Finance. For the first year (July 2007 – June 2008), the ACC Executive approved the following appointments:

- *Office Assistant* – Part-time (65 hours a month)
- *Executive Co-ordinator* – Part-time (65 hours a month)

Peter Bentley has been asked by the Executive to consider continuing in the employment of the ACC as the Executive Co-ordinator. The Board of Administration and Finance will clarify the role of the suggested position of Executive Officer, and other roles over the coming year.

Commissions and Boards

Each Commission and Board has either held or arranged an initial meeting and begun work on their terms of reference and individual major items. The Executive has resolved to confirm that all members of Commissions and Boards need to hold individual membership in the ACC.

Constitution

The Constitution is almost finalised and application for an ABN and GST will be made before the end of the financial year.

New Treasurer

Mr John Mason was appointed Treasurer of the ACC. It is envisaged that Mr Mason will take over full ACC responsibilities from Mrs Thelma Pendlebury in the new financial year.

Second ACC Conference and Assembly

The Victorian ACC group has been asked to plan and arrange the second ACC National gathering. It is likely to be held in October, with details to be advised soon.

The next Executive meeting will be held by teleconference on Monday May 14.

3. New Magazine and Editor

You have probably been wondering about a new publication for our new organisation. The Board of Communication has been actively working to appoint a professional editor and prepare material for the first magazine issue, which is planned for release in May 2007. While the name for the magazine has been chosen, there is still some work to be done with the design, and we hope you will enjoy reading the first edition and being introduced to our editor when you receive the magazine for the first time. We plan to publish the ACC Magazine on a three monthly basis: **February, May, August and November**

4. Congregational Membership: A brief update

At the time of publication of this newsletter, 110 congregations and groups have joined the ACC. There has been considerable growth in South Australia, and overall nearly 20 non-Reforming Alliance member congregations have joined.

5. Network Developments Commission

The first meeting of the Networks Development Commission will take place on May 28 in Sydney. This Commission will assist with the development of regional networks of ACC congregations and groups. The representatives are listed below and you are welcome to contact your state representative about local matters and prayer issues.

Members

Revd Rod James	Convenor
Pastor Grahame Abrahams	ACC - NSW Movement
Revd Graeme Harrison	ACC Victoria
Revd John Cranmer	ACC - South Australia
Revd Walter Abetz	ACC - Tasmanian Movement
Revd Don McKay	ACC - Queensland Movement
Revd Anne Hibbard	National Prayer Network
Revd Steve Estherby	Association of Confessing Ministry Workers

6. Cross Cultural Commission website: www.ccc.confessingcongregations.com

The CCC has developed a very helpful website. Resources include Tongan translations of the ACC founding documents and a forum to discuss common concerns and ministry issues.

Next newsletter: June 2007
Deadline for submissions: 15.6.2007