



# Presbyterian Church of Queensland

## State Moderator-Elect

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## Update to all members of the Church

The Commission of Assembly met again yesterday, and we'd like to let you know about a few significant matters facing the life of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland and its ministry through our local church communities, both to keep everyone informed and to seek your prayers.

### Receivers reporting to Court on 31 March

We're aware that reactions to the situation regarding the receivership are varied across individuals and congregations. We know this has been, and continues to be, a challenging time. There's so much complexity and uncertainty around the legal situation, and it has the potential for significant impact on our congregations and our shared ministry as a denomination.

We want to acknowledge, first of all, the administrative burden placed on Committees of Management and treasurers during this time. We're so thankful for the men and women gifted by God, and gifted to our church communities, who serve us in this time as we seek to comply with the reporting requirements of our court appointed receivers. We know this has involved a significant time commitment from members of our church communities who often serve in a voluntary capacity.

We also want to acknowledge that there is anxiety being felt by some in our communities who've invested time and energy into the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland. We too are impatient for clarity around the outcome that will shape our future Gospel ministry; one thing we can be sure of is that — while the shape of our ministry, and our resources, might change — Jesus is building his church, by his Spirit, as we confess that he is Lord, and the Gospel message remains unchanging.

We have been encouraged by the way this Gospel message has been proclaimed and embodied in and through our church communities, and our people, during this time as we've sought to point to the source of hope, the Lord Jesus. This has not been an easy time, and we are not in control of when this time will be drawn to an end, that rests in the hands of the court but, reassuringly, it is ultimately in the hand of the sovereign Judge of all.

What we are clear about is that we are reaching a key juncture in this receivership situation. On Thursday the 31<sup>st</sup> of March the Court Appointed Receivers will submit their report to a judge appointed to hear our case. The court will decide whether this submission will initially be public or private, and this decision rests in its hands alone. The strong preference of the Letters Patent Officers, and a position shared by the Commission of Assembly, is for the report to be public.

Once this submission has been given to a judge there will be some time before a hearing occurs. This is not a 'decision moment' — but rather, the court will deliberate on the facts presented in that report, and from other submissions. The Receivers have conducted a lengthy investigation into the history and operations of the PCQ. The document the

Receivers will be submitting is substantial — we've been told that it comes in at over 1,700 pages and includes over 5,000 attachments.

The Receivers will then present a summary of their report to the PCQ Assembly early in the following week — in a Zoom session of the Assembly at 5:30pm, on 4 April 2022. We will communicate key facts from that meeting to members of our church communities as soon as we are able.

Please pray for all those involved in this process — for ongoing endurance on behalf of our LPOs, for patience for all of us as we continue to step through a complex situation, and for God to work through the courts to bring an outcome that both glorifies him, and allows his church to continue proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus 'unhindered' as Paul does in his own legal quagmire at the end of Acts.

### **Committee Membership Nominations**

There have been substantial governance changes made by the Assembly in response to this situation. The Code and Legal Reference Committee made several recommendations about the make-up of our committees that have now been implemented. One of these recommendations involved ensuring that the same person could not serve on multiple committees where that created perceived, and actual, conflicts of interest. We are also very keen to see membership of our committees diversify, and specifically, to see our committees be bolstered by members with significant related expertise joining them from our church communities around the state. We have also adopted new rules around elections for committee members, where anybody elected to a committee has to have received a majority vote (rather than simply being "elected" by nominating), and we are in the process of creating and implementing governance training requirements for particular committees.

Our committees have not always represented the broad gifts God has given us in our church communities and this has been to our detriment — one of the things that has limited us here has been not giving people in our local churches sufficient time to consider joining committees like the Finance and Administration Board, the Property Board, or the Code and Legal Reference Committee. In coming weeks, as preparations begin for the 2022 Presbyterian Church of Queensland Assembly, we will be providing information about the different committees looking for membership renewal, and the particular gifts people might bring to their work. We'd love people in our church communities to prayerfully consider serving the wider body of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland in this way.

### **Fairholme College Report**

We'd love to draw your attention to the attached quarterly report from Fairholme College covering the period from October to December 2021. The receivership period has presented its own challenges to Fairholme and its ministry, but the 820 students, and Fairholme's teaching staff are a vital part of the ministry and mission of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, and the Gospel ministry happening at Fairholme is often one of the more delightful reports to the Presbyterian Church of Queensland Assembly. We'd love you to join us in praying for the school as it continues navigating the uncertainty surrounding both the receivership, and the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **PCQ Positions — Workplace Health and Safety Officer, Property Audit and Compliance Officer, and Safe Ministry with Children Risk Management Officer**

There are currently three vacant part-time positions for compliance roles within PCQ Offices. These vacancies have been created by the recent resignations of those previously serving in the positions. These roles — whether they are filled by three individuals, or taken up by one or two people — are vital to helping us meet compliance requirements in our churches, but also to keep members of our congregations, and especially our children, as safe as possible from preventable harm.

We're very keen to fill these positions with appropriate candidates and are in the process of appointing an interview panel. A brief position description is attached but if you are interested in knowing more about these positions, please contact PCQ Clerk, Stu Hoadley.

Yours sincerely in Christ

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrew Purcell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small flourish at the end.

(Rev) Andrew Purcell  
PCQ Moderator-Elect