

# 'We're All People'

[Report and recommendation, of the LCA Committee on Aboriginal Issues and Ministry, to 1997 Synod](#)

A copy of the full 1997 report can be accessed from the [LCA RAP website; Resources](#) page [\[Click Here\]](#)

## **THE RECOMMENDATIONS: *An Overview as presented in 1997***

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### **1 Reconciliation**

- 1.1 That the LCA publicly commit itself to a process of working for reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the church.
- 1.2 That the church prepare a range of resources to help church members (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal)
  - think about and understand the need for reconciliation
  - learn about, understand, and acknowledge what has happened in the past between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people
  - find ways of interacting and working together, as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, with mutual acceptance and respect
- 1.3 That the LCA establish a group, with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal membership, to explain and promote the reconciliation process in the church, and to consider the possibility of some form of reconciliation event in 2001, the centenary of federation.
- 1.4 That the church publicise and promote in all its parishes the annual Week of Prayer for Reconciliation (27 May - 3 June).
- 1.5 That the LCA publicise accounts of programs or events involving Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members of the church working together, learning about each other, and acknowledging and overcoming past misunderstanding and distrust.

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### **2 Racism**

- 2.1 That the church speak out strongly against racism, affirming the equal value of all people in God's eyes, and stressing the importance for people, in the power of the gospel, to show acceptance and respect towards one another.
- 2.2 That the church prepare materials to help its members understand the problem of racism, recognise racist tendencies in all of us, and overcome racist attitudes and behaviour.
- 2.3 That the church develop materials and programs to help its non-Aboriginal members understand, appreciate, and value Aboriginal people, their culture, and the contributions that Aboriginal people have made and continue to make in Australian life and in the life of the church.
- 2.4 That the church facilitate programs of exchange and interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the church, so that they can come to know, understand, appreciate, and accept one another better.

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### **3 Land rights**

- 3.1 That the church publicly state its support for the principle of land rights for Aboriginal people.

- 3.2 That the church establish a consultative group of Aboriginal people to advise church leaders in relation to land rights issues.
- 3.3 That the church prepare materials to help its members (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) understand the issue of land rights (the traditional importance of land for Aboriginal people; the history of land rights; the present legal situation; theological perspectives), to clear up misunderstandings, and to help members view the issue from a gospel perspective.

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#### **4 Involvement of Aboriginal people in the church**

##### 4.1 Aboriginal involvement in congregational life

That the LCA provide resources (in the form of personnel, materials, or programs) to help congregations that have Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members find out

- better ways of providing an appropriate ministry to all members (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal)
- ways of facilitating greater contact and interaction between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members and creating better relationships between them
- ways of making the church more welcoming and inviting for everyone, especially Aboriginal people
- ways of listening to Aboriginal members, consulting with them, including them in decision making, and involving them more fully in the life and work of the congregation.

##### 4.2 Aboriginal mission boards and committees

That the LCA no longer use the word 'mission' in relation to the ministry provided to Aboriginal people; and that the LCA review the present administrative structures in relation to its work with Aboriginal people with a view to providing structures that are locally based, that have majority Aboriginal membership, and that operate in ways that are congenial to Aboriginal people.

##### 4.3 Aboriginal involvement in decision making

That the LCA adopt and promote a policy of including Aboriginal people more fully in decision making in the church at the congregational, district, and general church levels, especially (but not only) in bodies responsible for the church's ministry among Aboriginal people.

##### 4.4 Facilitating contact between Aboriginal people

That the LCA facilitate meetings and other forms of contact between Aboriginal members of the church from various parts of Australia; and that the LCA arrange for Aboriginal people, as opportunities arise, to meet with Lutheran visitors from overseas (especially visitors that are themselves members of indigenous groups or have close acquaintance with indigenous peoples) and to make visits to Lutheran churches in other countries.

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#### **5 Confidence building and leadership**

5.1 That the relevant District authorities of the LCA appoint one or more appropriate and qualified person(s) to develop and conduct leadership courses in each of the Aboriginal communities of the LCA, and that these courses be community-specific and include such things as:

- confidence building through storytelling, music, and other culturally relevant forms
- leading worship, teaching Scripture and Lutheran teaching

- the gospel and Aboriginal culture
- motivation, management, community building, and pastoral care
- Aboriginal spirituality.

5.2 That these authorities also encourage and support Aboriginal members to take TAFE, university, and other courses available in areas such as management, education, counselling, and social work.

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## **6 Training for ministries**

- 6.1 That the above three-stage plan for preparing Aboriginal members for participating in the various ministries of the LCA be implemented where appropriate.
- 6.2 That at Luther Seminary special courses be developed in which Aboriginal history and culture are studied and the task of relating the gospel to this culture seriously explored, and that these courses be integral to the training of people for the various ministries of the LCA.
- 6.3 That screening procedures, orientation programs, in-service courses, and support mechanisms be developed for those ministering in Aboriginal communities.
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## **7 Women**

- 7.1 That training programs for female Aboriginal parish workers to work together with pastors in Aboriginal communities be developed and implemented in a culturally sensitive way.
- 7.2 That training and resources be provided to support Aboriginal women in their local ministry roles, such as teaching the young.
- 7.3 That the church work together with women in Aboriginal communities to encourage and support them in developing appropriate ways to address issues of community concern, such as petrol sniffing; and that successful programs in Australia and overseas be reviewed and adapted for use in communities.
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## **8 Education and youth**

- 8.1 That the LCA investigate opportunities to be involved in primary education in Aboriginal communities.
- 8.2 That appropriate models of accommodation and support be sought for Aboriginal secondary students who live away from home to attend college.
- 8.3 That cultural awareness training be made available to teachers and students of Lutheran schools and those training at LTC; and that where schools are currently running successful programs in cultural awareness, these programs should be promoted in other Lutheran schools.
- 8.4 That the LCA investigate the feasibility of establishing a Lutheran secondary college in the western suburbs of Adelaide, with a special focus on multiculturalism, to cater particularly for Aboriginal students.
- 8.5 That the church encourage worship styles and forms suitable for young people in Aboriginal communities and young people's involvement in music for worship.
- 8.6 That LCA and District youth directors examine how they can support the development of youth programs in Aboriginal communities, foster contact across communities and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and encourage the participation of Aboriginal youth in wider church youth activities.

## **9 Community issues**

- 9.1 That the LCA draw on the expertise of the Lutheran World Service and the Lutheran Community Care departments to determine, in consultation with those concerned, how the social needs of disadvantaged Aboriginal communities and people can best be met, and act on the findings where possible.
- 9.2 That the LCA encourage its members to be sensitive to Aboriginal community issues and encourage congregations to work in partnership with these communities to develop a holistic ministry.