

## A Report for Synods and Hui Poari

July 2009

Public Questions Network  
Putting it into Action – A working paper

Responses to to be sent to Amy Scott [amys@methodist.org.nz](mailto:amys@methodist.org.nz) by August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2009

### A Public Questions Network

Methodist Conference 2008 affirmed the importance of establishing a network of people who actively want to pursue key public questions. While being a Methodist initiative the Conference wanted to remain open to ecumenical partnerships forming to enliven the network. This initiative would be hosted by Methodist Mission Aotearoa (Wesleycom).

This working paper proposes a series of steps to set up the Network.

The key objectives of this Public Questions Network are to:

- To Educate / inform – providing information to groups within the Church to spark and inform discussions in relation to current public issues (social, economic, ecological, political ...);
- To Advocate – within and on behalf of the Methodist Church on gospel responses to current public issues;
- To Research and Share – issues, evidence, key opinions and synthesise data in a form that is accessible for a general audience.

The Network would consist of 3 inter-connected components:

- 1 a network of people / groups around Aotearoa with Methodist connections who are actively interested in exploring contemporary public questions from a gospel perspective
- 2 a core group to guide / inform the network – noting the hosting role of MMA.
- 3 a skilled paid co-ordinator to facilitate the work of the network

### Process for Establishing the Network:

The following sets of actions are suggested to bring the Network into effect:

#### Relationships

<i>Actions</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Who</i>
Collate list of people interested in the Network (names provided at Conf 08)	July -August	Lynne Firth
Report to key church forums (Council of Conf, synods) of progress and requesting their involvement	July - August	Wellington core group

Establish Network core group	August	
Initiate communication with the emerging network of people who may be interested in the network	August	

**Proposed Budget:**

The following is an initial budget for this new Methodist Initiative.

*Network infrastructure:*

Electronic communications (paid by synod or parishes)		0
Travel of the network to annual gatherings (synod / parishes)		0
Project fund (small amount to help spark projects)		1000
Communications (Touchstone, newsletter, mailing)		3000
Web costs (link to existing website – some hosting and design costs)		1000
<b>Total infrastructure costs</b>		<b>5,000</b>

*Staffing costs:*

Salary	54,000	
Travel	8,000	
Admin	15,000	
Supervision	2,400	
Phone / internet	1,500	
<b>Total staffing costs</b>		<b>80,900</b>
<b>Total estimated cost</b>		<b>85,900</b>

**Methodist Public Questions Network  
Position Description  
Coordinator**

This person will be responsible for co-ordinating the network. This will involve linking research, new policies, proposed legislation and public issues with people who have an active interest in social / political engagement and deepening their understanding of these issues. The Coordinator will support people / groups to engage in ‘public questioning – giving life to questions’ (as opposed to simply providing answers) and to share their insights and considered responses with key decision making forums (local government, central government, church / business leaders). The coordinator will have a passion for supporting positive change as an expression of an authentic spirituality. They will bring honed skills in research and communications. Public questioning is about “giving life to the questions” rather than providing answers.

The person will support the mission statement of the Methodist church.

**Reports To:**

Director Wesley Community Action (on behalf of Wesleycom and core group)

**Responsible To:**

Wesleycom (MMA) and through them the Methodist Conference

**Key Relationships with:**

Methodist Public Questions Network  
 NZ Council of Christian Social Services;  
 Key staff in Methodist social service organisations  
 Other church-based social justice agencies;  
 NGO groups as appropriate (e.g. Federation of Volunteer Welfare Organisations, ANGOA, and the Community and Volunteer Taskforce).

**Hours** 40 hours per week

**Location** Wellington

<b>Responsible for:</b>	
Key Tasks	Expected Outcomes
Developing and maintaining an overview of proposed government legislation and policies that have ‘public interest’	
Researching and summarising relevant research that is related to identified key ‘public questions’	
Designing and delivering communication initiatives that share information between	

people in the network	
Facilitating meetings of people to support them explore what are Public Questions for them – and providing practical support for how they may enact this desire	
Identifying opportunities to creatively generate interest in Public Questions	
Establishing and maintaining links with a network of people who share a similar brief and vision	
Contributing to the strategic development of Methodist Mission Aotearoa and the Methodist Church.	
Developing and monitoring an annual budget for the network	
Writing submissions, briefing papers, discussion papers, articles	
Any other duties as agreed with the guiding group	

### IDEAL PERSON SPECIFICATION –

The ideal person for this role would have:

- a qualification that demonstrates they can think clearly and logically on a given issue or field
- significant experience in either research or communications areas.
- an excellent ability to design and operate communication systems
- Ability to communicate -in both oral and written modes - clearly, directly and effectively
- A commitment to positive social change that encompasses, a strength-based approach, applying the Treaty Of Waitangi and holistic practices
- A knowledge of Church (Methodist) structure and the machinery of Government
- A sense of humour.
- Current, clean, full drivers license.

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