

4/98 Provincial Synod Welfare Commission

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Introduction

1. By resolution 4/98, the Provincial Synod of the Province of New South Wales created a new provincial commission, namely the Provincial welfare commission. The text of resolution 4/98 is -

"This Synod -

- (a) receives the report of the working group comprised of representatives of the dioceses of the Province;
- (b) notes the desirability of State-wide focus on -
 - (i) disaster welfare responses,
 - (ii) drought relief responses,
 - (iii) life after prison activities;
- (c) supports Anglicare NSW as its authorised agent to represent all dioceses in relation to dealings with Government agencies and all appropriate non-Government organisations; and
- (d) establishes a Welfare Commission to coordinate State-wide activities, and appoints the following members:

The Rev H Dillon (Convener)
 The Ven R T Platt (Sydney)
 Mr J Hansen (Armidale)
 Mr C Shevels (Newcastle)
 The Very Rev G Reynolds (Riverina)
 The Rev G Malcotsis (Grafton)
 The Rev B Craig (Bathurst)
 The Right Rev R Randerson (Canberra - Goulburn)
 The Provincial Registrar (Ex-Officio)."

2. The Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod has asked that the Sydney Synod pass a resolution to "implement" resolution 4/98.

3. In April 1998 one of our representatives on the Provincial Synod prepared a paper expressing concerns about the funding of the Provincial Synod commissions, their authority and constitution. In 1998 the Synod deferred consideration of a resolution to "implement" resolution 4/98 of the Provincial Synod pending further consideration about these concerns by the Standing Committee. In June 1998 the Standing Committee appointed a committee comprising the Rev Ian Mears, Deaconess Margaret Rodgers and Mr Robert Tong to consider the matter and report.

Consideration

4. The committee considered the concerns raised by our representative. It appears that those concerns were well founded because the Provincial Registrar subsequently sent to each diocese in the Province a bill for the Provincial Synod Commissions Ordinance 2001. The Standing Committee has commented on this bill. Hopefully, if passed, the concerns about the Provincial Synod commissions system will be addressed.

5. Until then, what should our Synod do in relation to resolution 4/98?

6. The purpose of establishing the Provincial welfare commission is to co-ordinate a state-wide Anglican response to disaster relief. The need for such a commission arose out of the experience in the Jannali bushfires in Sydney in 1994 when the Anglican Church was effectively excluded from participating in the welfare recovery process because of a lack of accreditation in the State Disaster Welfare Plan. As the Government will only accredit organisations on a State wide basis, a provincial approach to the issue was necessary. Resolution 4/98 was passed by the Provincial Synod for this purpose. Subsequently, accreditation has been obtained enabling Anglicare, for example, to provide welfare assistance following the recent Sydney hail storms.

7. The Provincial Registrar has advised that no funding was provided to the welfare commission by the Provincial Synod in 1998 and 1999, and no funding is anticipated to be provided in the next few years. Accordingly, the work of the commission is not intended to create any financial liability for any diocese, at least in the foreseeable future.

8. The committee's principal concern was that other dioceses in the province may be reluctant to support the appointment of Anglicare as their agent for the purposes set out in resolution 4/98. However, the Provincial Registrar has advised that the resolution 4/98 has been adopted by the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of

2 4/98 Provincial Synod Welfare Commission (1999)

Armidale, endorsed by the Bishop-in-Council of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn and the Synods of the Dioceses of Newcastle and Grafton, and noted and implemented by the Diocese of Riverina. The Synod of the Diocese of Bathurst is to formally consider the matter this year, and no objection from that diocese is expected.

9. The Standing Committee of the Provincial Synod wants the synod of each diocese in the Province to endorse the establishment of the Provincial welfare commission and, for this reason, it is recommended that our Synod give its in principle endorsement.

Recommendation

10. Standing Committee recommends that the Synod endorse in principle the creation of the Provincial welfare commission under resolution 4/98 of the Provincial Synod of New South Wales.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

MARK PAYNE
Diocesan Secretary

22 June 1999