

9/15 Licensing of incumbents

(An interim report from the Standing Committee.)

Key Points

- Authority to admit persons into Holy Orders and to license them to exercise the ministry for which they are ordained is a fundamental part of the role and function of an Anglican bishop
- In New South Wales the power of the bishop to suspend or revoke a clerical licence is governed by clause 3(4) of the constitution set out in the Schedule to the Anglican Church of Australia Act 1902
- There are five possible areas or reasons why modification or adjustment to the present practice of licensing might be warranted, namely: pastoral breakdown, capacity, suitability, stayed too long, and congestion
- The Diocese needs to develop a culture where “professional development” becomes normative
- Given the reality of some ordained ministers being unsuitable for their ministry situations, a workable “exit” or retraining process needs to be developed
- Services must be developed to help ease the pressure on ministers and provide opportunity for debriefing and unloading burdens to suitably qualified professionals

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Synod of progress in responding to Synod Resolution 9/15.

Recommendations

2. That Synod receive this report.
3. That the Synod consider passing the following motion moved “by request of the Standing Committee” –
 - ‘Synod –
 - (a) welcomes the interim report on “Licensing of incumbents”,
 - (b) encourages the Committee to continue to meet and provide a final report with recommendations and proposed ordinances for consideration by the Synod in 2017,
 - (c) notes that the survey mentioned in the report will be sent to Synod members shortly and invites members to complete the survey, and
 - (d) invites Synod members to provide feedback on the interim report to the Diocesan Secretary by 31 December 2016 for consideration by the Committee.’

Background

4. At the 2015 Synod the following motion (9/15) was passed –
 - “Synod requests Standing Committee, in consultation with the Archbishop, to report to the next session of Synod on –
 - (a) the basis on which clergy are licensed as incumbents in the Diocese, and
 - (b) whether there are circumstances where the present practice should be modified.”
5. At the meeting on 16 November 2015, the Standing Committee appointed a committee comprising the Rev Andrew Bruce, Bishop Peter Hayward, the Rev Gavin Poole, Dr Robert Tong AM and the Rev Philip Wheeler, to bring a report to a future meeting of the Standing Committee addressing the matters in Synod resolution 9/15. The committee elected Mr Wheeler as chair. The committee has met on five occasions to date.

“The basis on which clergy are licensed as incumbents in the Diocese”

6. Authority to admit persons into Holy Orders¹ and to license them to exercise the ministry to which they are ordained is a fundamental part of the role and function of an Anglican bishop². The service for the consecration of a bishop has a series of questions and answers including –

Question: Will you be faithful in ordaining, sending, or laying hands upon others?

Answer: I will so be, by the help of God³.

7. The ordination of a deacon or presbyter⁴ is to 'a title' that is to a specified ministry position⁵. There is no ordination 'at large'. Thus ordination and the exercise of ministry are connected. When clergy move to another position, a new licence is required.

8. In the Diocese of Sydney, the *Parish Administration Ordinance 2008* provides –

5.3 Persons permitted to conduct public worship in churches and for associated congregations

No person is permitted to conduct a service of public worship or preach any sermon in any church or for an associated congregation of any church unless –

- (a) in the case of a clergyman other than a deacon, he has been licensed or approved by the Archbishop or the Regional Bishop, or
- (b) in the case of a deacon, he or she has been licensed or approved by the Archbishop or the Regional Bishop, or
- (c) in the case of a lay person, he or she –
 - (i) has been requested to do so by or on behalf of the minister, and
 - (ii) holds a relevant authority issued pursuant to the *Authorisation of Lay Ministry Ordinance 2015*.

9. Prior to the Sydney Synod passing various retirement ordinances, a licence to an incumbency was 'for life'. The *Retirements Ordinance 1993* mandates retirement ages for incumbents.

10. In New South Wales, the power of the bishop to suspend or revoke a licence is governed by clause 3(4) of the constitution set out in the schedule to the *Anglican Church of Australia Constitutions Act 1902* –

The Synod of each Diocese shall have power to determine by ordinance in what cases the licence of a member of clergy licensed by the Bishop of the Diocese may be suspended or revoked. Any such licence may be suspended or revoked by the Bishop of the Diocese at the request of the member of the clergy, or (after opportunity given to that member of the clergy to show cause) in such of the said cases as the Synod shall by ordinance determine, save as aforesaid, the licence shall not be suspended or revoked, except as a consequence of a judgment or finding of the tribunal or of some other court of competent jurisdiction.

11. In summary, in a New South Wales diocese⁶, a licence can be suspended or revoked –

- (a) at the request of a member of the clergy; or

¹ The Ordinal or 'The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests and Deacons' are the three services where a person is *made* a deacon, *ordained* a priest or *consecrated* a bishop. These services have been printed with the Book of Common Prayer since 1552. The Anglican Church of Australia 'retains and approves the doctrine and principles of the Church of England' embodied in the Ordinal. The implication in (the 1603) Canon 32 and Canon 33 is that ordination is only at the hands of a bishop.

² The Letters Patent constituting William Grant Broughton, Bishop of Australia (18 January 1836) contain these words:

And we do by these presents give and grant to the said William Grant Broughton and his successors Bishops of Australia full power and authority to admit into the Holy Orders of Deacon and Priest respectively any person whom he shall upon examination deem duly qualified especially for the purpose of taking upon himself the cure of souls or officiating in any spiritual capacity ... and further:

grant to the aforesaid Bishop of Australia and his successors full power and authority by himself or themselves or by his or their commissary or commissaries by him or them to be thereunto especially authorised to grant Licences to Officiate to all Ministers and Chaplains of all the Churches or Chapels or other places within the said Diocese of Australia wherein Divine Service shall be celebrated according to Rites and Liturgy of the Church of England. Giles, Robbie A, *The Constitutional History of the Australian Church* (Skeffington & Son, London: 1929) 222-223

³ Book of Common Prayer 1662.

⁴ In the Diocese of Sydney, it has been the recent custom to use 'presbyter' instead of 'priest'.

⁵ This is the principle in Canon 33.

⁶ The dioceses comprising the Province of NSW are: Sydney (originally Diocese of Australia 1836, Newcastle 1847, Canberra/Goulburn (originally Goulburn 1863), Armidale 1867 (formerly Grafton & Armidale), Bathurst 1869, Riverina 1884, Grafton 1914.

- (b) where the synod, by ordinance, has determined a situation where a licence can be suspended or revoked; or
- (c) where there is 'a judgment or finding of the tribunal or of some other court of competent jurisdiction'.
12. Sydney Synod has passed ordinances which contain 'cases' where the 'licence of a member of clergy licensed by the Bishop of the Diocese may be suspended or revoked'. For example –
- A member of the clergy may relinquish Holy Orders pursuant to the provisions of the *Relinquishment of Holy Orders Ordinance 1994*
 - *Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001*
 - *Working With Children Check (Clerical Licences) Ordinance 2014*
13. Ordination is the responsibility of the Archbishop of Sydney and while he may choose whom he may ordain, Archbishop Davies has determined minimum qualifications for ordination in the Diocese of Sydney.
14. Ordination to the *Diaconate* is a lifelong vocation open to men and women who –
- (a) have successfully completed at least two years of observation and supervision in ministry, and discernment as a candidate for ordination;
 - (b) are baptised, communicant members of the Anglican Church of Australia;
 - (c) have completed the Working with Children Check and the Diocesan Questionnaire;
 - (d) have normally completed the four year Bachelor of Divinity at Moore Theological College;
 - (e) have an appointment to a full-time (or substantially full-time ministry) position; and
 - (f) are neither divorced nor married to a person who has been divorced.
15. Exceptions to paragraph (d) above may apply to –
- (i) those who are over the age of 40 years and have completed the three year Bachelor of Theology at Moore College; and
 - (ii) those who are not seeking to be further ordained as a Presbyterian and who have completed at least the two year Associate Degree in Theology at Moore College, or the Advanced Diploma of Theology at Youthworks College, or a theological degree in a language (other than English) and have completed the Moore College PTC. However, such deacons will not be ordained Presbyterian without completing the requisite study.
16. Ordination to the *Presbyterate* is open to men who have been ordained Deacon in the Diocese of Sydney, who –
- (a) have successfully completed the three year Ministry Development Program; and
 - (b) have successfully completed at least two years of observation and supervision as a Deacon and discernment by the Archbishop's Presbyteral Panel as a candidate for ordination.
17. The assessment of a candidate's suitability to be ordained as a Presbyterian is with a view to incumbency. However, once approved for ordination a candidate can be ordained prior to an offer to become Rector of a Parish.
18. For persons seeking to be ordained as Presbyterian, who have completed a theological degree other than through Moore College, the equivalent of one year's full-time study at Moore College in the BD or MA program, including completion of the subject Anglican identity and Issues in Theology, is normally required.
19. An existing or an approved presbyter can be considered by the Nomination Board for any Parish in the Diocese. The Archbishop offers the Parish on the recommendation of the Nomination Board. On acceptance the Archbishop licenses the presbyter to that Parish. A full Parish will offer the incumbents position full-time. A Provisional Parish can negotiate with the incoming incumbent to offer less.
- “Whether there are circumstances where the present practice should be modified”**
20. The Committee identified five possible areas or reasons why modification or adjustment to the present practice might be warranted.

Pastoral Breakdown

21. There are parishes where a significant breakdown in pastoral relations has occurred and the mechanism of review (*Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001*) would appear to be unsuitable or inadequate. This ordinance has never been utilised despite there having been several parishes in which a serious breakdown in relationship has occurred. This has resulted in continued difficulties and hurt people in these churches and the cause of Christ damaged. Sadly congregation members will 'vote with their feet' and simply join an alternative church nearby or not go anywhere for a time.

Capacity

22. There are other parishes where the 'performance' of the minister is questioned by either the parishioners or the Regional Bishop (eg, the parish has shrunk dramatically and is now below viability). In other situations it is not a performance or suitability matter but rather a mental health issue. For a variety of reasons there are mounting psychological pressures upon rectors. That there are significant mental health issues (anxiety, depression, addictions) for clergy in our Diocese is evidenced both by increased utilisation of the Salary Continuance system⁷ and by the data collected through the NLCS and Anglicare⁸. This is hardly a surprise given the rise in these issues in our society in general. According to the Beyond Blue Website⁹, 1:8 Australian Men will experience depression at some stage of their life, and 1:5 men will experience Anxiety. Recent studies¹⁰ in the US for the United Methodist Clergy report that rates of depression were twice the national average and anxiety rates were also concerning. These studies suggest that perhaps 15-20% of Senior Ministers will suffer from depression with approximately 10% more suffering from anxiety at some stage of their working life.

23. There is counselling help available through Anglicare as well as Salary Continuance assistance available through insurance and covered by PCR charges¹¹. The new program of counselling through Anglicare is to be commended as starting to address this issue. It has an important place in a systematic and structural response, but it is not by itself a complete response as a stand-alone option. For instance, in most cases it requires a problem to have occurred and also then a person to be aware enough of the problem to self-report prior to obtaining assistance. In more serious cases relief offered under the Salary Continuance plan may prevent further exacerbation of the situation but this is not an actual 'plan of care'. The issue of how to help someone recognise their mental health issues and address them and determine whether they ought to continue in ministry is complex. The current licence would allow a rector to remain in his position whether or not he was able to fulfil his office or to be indefinitely on sick leave. Invoking the *Parish Relationships Ordinance 2001* in such circumstances would not be appropriate.

Suitability

24. There are situations where the issue is the suitability of the minister for the ministry they are engaged in. This can be suitability for the office in general or suitability for the particular parish where they are working. Given the size of the cohort in ministry in the Diocese (around 650 clergy) it is no surprise that some people have offered for full time ministry, completed their training, been assessed carefully by the Diocese and ordained and yet have proven not to be suitably gifted for the role. The unsuitability may emerge in areas of conviction, character or competency (such as certain personality types, lack of robustness or resilience for the demands of the work, difficulties in relating to people, inability to teach well, etc). In other situations it can emerge that while still well suited for ministry the person is unsuited for that particular parish or role. This might be because they have stepped up to be a presbyter/incumbent when they might be better suited to remaining as a deacon/assistant minister. It could be that they lack the necessary interpersonal skills to relate the particular 'culture' of the parish. In such situations the minister themselves may or may not have the self-awareness regarding their unsuitability. Even if it is apparent to them, changing and 'exiting' to other roles is not easy especially if these issues emerge many years after offering for ordination.

Stayed too long?

25. There is some evidence from surveys and anecdotally that in quite a few parishes there is a perception that the rector has 'stayed too long' and 'run out of puff'. While there are many examples of ministers staying long term in a parish and it bearing great fruit, there are others where the long stay has not been so fruitful¹². There is a complex tension between staying the course in a parish, working through the problems and not 'jumping ship' and the reality that often a change is good for both the person and the

⁷ At April 2016 there had been in the previous 12 months seven clergy taking time out of ministry and utilising the Stipend Continuance because of mental health issues as well as a further three taking significant time out of ministry (greater than 3 months) for similar reasons but not utilising the SC scheme.

⁸ For example NCLS Fact Sheet 14001 'Thriving and Burnout' and NCLS Fact Sheet 15003 'Hours Worked By Australian Church Workers' both indicate that while many clergy are thriving in ministry a considerable number are not and are in danger of burn out and associated mental health risks. This finding is consistent with the findings of Tim Sims and his research into the Diocese and pressure upon clergy and their busyness (contact effectiveministry.org for details of Tim's research).

⁹ <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/the-facts>

¹⁰ <http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007%2Fs10935-013-0321-4>

¹¹ At April 2016 there had been in the previous 12 months seven clergy taking time out of ministry and utilising the Stipend Continuance because of mental health issues as well as a further three taking significant time out of ministry (greater than 3 months) for similar reasons but not utilising the SC scheme.

¹² Policy 3 Strategy Committee in 2011 commissioned Anglicare research on 'Church Growth and Years in Ministry' utilising the NCLS data. While it is a complex question why a church may or may not grow data collected revealed that less than 1/3 of ministers ordained over 20 years were in churches that were growing but that this factor (age of minister and years in that church) was less significant than other factors of leadership and congregational life on growth.

parish. With age comes experience, maturity and a steady hand but often with it less energy, drive and willingness to take risks and hand over to younger people. Compounding this is an 'ageism' in the society in general and in the Diocese where a pastor over 55 is regarded as 'too old' and perhaps set in his ways and so is over looked for invitation to take up a new parish, even though at 55 he would have 12 or more years of paid ministry before retirement. The current licensing arrangements and practice do not easily allow a senior minister with extensive ministry experience and 'wisdom' to step down into an assistant minister role in the parish and allow a younger man to take over as Incumbent and the senior man to act as mentor. There are few places for a senior minister to go within the Diocese to utilise their depth of pastoral and leadership experience. Parish Nominators invariably want 'a younger man'. There are few positions now available for a rector to go to such as Archdeacon, Heads of Organisations and the like. The default is therefore to stay where you are, despite it not necessarily being good for the person or the parish. Performance maybe adequate but both the parish and the pastor may feel that a change would be good to stimulate and refresh all parties.

Congestion

26. Given that there are currently more clergy trained and available than ever before, a large list of persons seeking new positions, an ageing cohort of clergy retiring later and only limited growth in the number of possible positions for ministers within the Diocese, the system is 'congested'. Anecdotally the number of vacant parishes is less than it was some years ago. Therefore is a change to licensing warranted to 'free the system' and get new and younger ministers into churches? The previous Standing Committee report into Clergy Tenure (38/99) investigated lowering the retirement age for this same reason however it was rejected as unworkable financially. However a change in the licence of a rector is not the same as changing the retirement age.

27. The Committee noted a further licensing issue around the licence as full time however felt at this point the problem was not large and outside the scope of this discussion. However the Committee noted the current assumption is the licence is for full time ministry within a parish. While many rectors do ministry outside of the parish (for Diocesan organisations, boards and committees, para-church ministries and the like) there is a small but increasing trend for or 'part time incumbent' who while licensed as rector of a parish has taken up other formal responsibilities (sometimes remunerated or other times voluntary) outside the parish with an agency or organisation. While this is often done with the knowledge and approval of the Archbishop, other times not so. Given the original intention of the licence as 'wholly to the work of the parish' ought this practice to be restricted/limited in some way? How much time is allowable for 'outside' responsibilities? One of the original intents of the Ordinal was to guard against medieval clerical abuse and greed where a clergyman received their stipend but then spent their time earning income from other sources as well. A simple legislative change could be considered to ensure that all income from other employment/responsibility was paid to the parish not the minister. A balance to this must exist, however, so that where parishes cannot afford a minister, the minister should be able to seek other income to provide for his family. In the future the Diocese may need to consider 'bi-vocational' ministry or some degree of 'tent-making' for rectors if we are to reach our city especially in areas of high social disadvantage. The cost of employment is so high that many church plants, new initiatives and even existing ministries in areas of high social disadvantage will simply not be able to afford a full time pastor unless there is some flexibility with bi-vocational ministry.

What happens in other dioceses

28. The committee obtained information from some dioceses in Australia and overseas as to their practice of licensing. In the Anglican Communion, an incumbent's terms are dictated by their licence and relevant synodical legislation. There is a wide variety of terms among dioceses. Some dioceses place the locus of power to terminate with the Bishop whilst others with the incumbent. In all cases, incumbents' tenure is subject to discipline ordinances and retirement. This survey briefly outlines the distinctive ways in which incumbents are licensed. The survey of other dioceses not only revealed the differing legislation under which they operate but also diocesan expectations. Diocesan culture plays just as important role as legislation when it comes to the rights and authority of incumbents.

In Australia

Armidale

29. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to the Diocese of Armidale, *Patronage Ordinance 2013*¹³. This grants an incumbent tenure as long as he desires or until he reaches an age by which he may qualify for the aged pension. Even after this, his term may be extended by 2 years by agreement of the Bishop and Parish Council.

¹³ http://www.armidaleanglicandiocese.com/literature_142861/ORD-Patronage_Ordinance_2013

Brisbane

30. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to the Diocese of Brisbane, *Licensing of Clergy Canon 2009*, *The Parishes Regulations Canon 2013* and the *Benefice Avoidance Canon 2005*¹⁴. Pursuant to the *Benefice Avoidance Canon* a commission may recommend to the Archbishop that an incumbent be removed if found guilty of habitual or wilful neglect; absence and contravention of the Constitution, Canons and Rules of Synod. Under such circumstances the Archbishop has authority to remove his licence.

31. Pursuant to the *Parish Regulations Canon* the Archbishop has the power to appoint every third incumbent to a benefice. A person is typically appointed a Priest in Charge (PIC), rather than a Rector, to non-benefice parishes; first time incumbents; or ministers that have moved from another diocese. This can be upgraded to a Rector's licence after 3 years. A PIC licence may be suspended or revoked by the Archbishop for any cause which to him shall appear good and reasonable.

Melbourne

32. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to the Diocese of Melbourne, *Appointments Act 1971*¹⁵. An incumbent is appointed for 10 years with the possibility of further extension at the approval of the Archbishop. A licence can be removed during the term of tenure if a Board of Reference declares an irretrievable breakdown in pastoral relationships.

33. The Archbishop has power to appoint every third incumbent.

34. A person is appointed a PIC if it is their first parish. The PIC may be removed at the discretion of the Archbishop. A PIC is assessed every three years.

Perth

35. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to the Diocese of Perth, *Clergy Appointments Statute 1996*¹⁶. The length of tenure shall be for such period of time and upon such conditions as shall be agreed by the Archbishop, Rector, Parish Council and the member of the Clergy concerned and may be renewed with the agreement of those four parties. If a clergyman is appointed as a PIC, the Archbishop has authority to cancel his licence at his absolute pleasure. Recent appointments have been predominantly PICs rather than Rectors, giving the Archbishop more control over terminations.

The Church of England

36. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to The Church of England's *Ecclesiastical Offices (Terms of Service) Measure 2009*¹⁷. Up until recently incumbents operated under *Freehold* whereby upon induction they received deeds to benefices until their resignation or retirement. Since 2011 the majority of clergy hold licences under *Common Tenure*. Under this system an incumbent still receives deeds to benefices however there are more conditions attached. The conditions pertain to employment rights, participation in ongoing professional development and regular reviews which are conducted by diocesan officials. Incumbents with Freehold are invited to convert to Common Tenure. All new licences are issued under Common Tenure.

The Church of Ireland

37. An incumbent is licensed pursuant to Chapter 4 of *The Constitution of the Church of Ireland*¹⁸. This provides tenure until retirement or resignation subject to incapacity, abandonment and discipline, which is generally determined by an ecclesiastical court.

Further thinking

38. During the course of our meetings a number of thought lines emerged. Further reflection is required as well as seeking the views of synod members and wardens.

39. The Committee agrees that a licence should provide for the following –

- (a) lawfully appointing an incumbent to preach the word of God and administer the sacrament to a church, without fear of recrimination for teaching the truth;
- (b) provide clear and certain conditions for the discharge of ministry responsibilities along with the guarantee of stipend, allowances and entitlements; and
- (c) safeguard against abuse by incumbents and failure to hold office.

¹⁴ http://anglicanchurchsq.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Constitution_and_Canons_-_5_November_2015_with_bookmarks.pdf

¹⁵ <http://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/Whowere/Governance/Acts-of-Synod/Documents/Appointments-Act-Consolidated-1971-July-2014.pdf>

¹⁶ <http://www.perth.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Clergy-Appointments-Statute-1996-PAGE-227.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/56729/eotos%20measure2009.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://ireland.anglican.org/cmsfiles/pdf/Information/Constitution/constitution.pdf>

40. Flowing out of the concerns noted in paragraph (c) above, the Committee would like to gather more information on several of the identified areas (professional development, the extent of burnout and feeling stuck in a role, extent of mental health issues, support for change to tenure, etc). A questionnaire/survey has been developed to invite feedback from Synod members. There will be opportunity to participate in regional focus groups of both clergy and laity.

Possible developments

Professional Development

41. The Diocese needs to develop a culture where 'professional development' becomes 'normative'. Currently there is little by way of professional development beyond the initial training at theological college and the first three years out of college with the Ministry Training and Development (MT&D) program. This currently requires personal development of an agreed 'Ministry Development Plan' together with attendance at 10 MT&D training days each year. While many ministers are self-motivated to continue to train and grow personally, beyond this post college training little else is mandated or expected other than the mandated Safe Ministry training every three years. This situation is well below what most other professional people in our society have (doctors, lawyers, engineers, accountants, psychologist, etc) and well below the expectations and assumptions of lay people who are regularly surprised by the lack of any professional development requirements for their ministers.

42. A possible **recommendation is** that a Professional Development program be developed using the available resources and structures of MT&D and Moore College.

43. Features of this program could include –

- A system similar to those in other professions with points accrued over several years from different training elements some of which are compulsory (such as Safe Ministry every three years), others are accredited (approved courses, coaches, training seminars etc) but also allowing points accrued from optional programs or courses (the person submits a program of development of their choice and shows some evidence of learning to attain their points).
- Adjustment for different stages of ministry life (first incumbency, 10 years ordained, 20+ years ordained, last phase before retirement).
- Significant review points where a minister would be assessed and guidance provided as to how and where to continue in ministry ('career guidance' for want of a better term). There are significant points at entry to candidacy/beginning of training, exit from training/decision for ordination, decision to seek presbyter/possible incumbency, seven years into full time vocational ministry (especially for those not incumbents at that point), turning 50, etc.

44. MT&D or some organisation would need to be resourced from Synod funds or PCR to oversee and develop the program. This would not be to deliver all the training rather to oversee, develop assessment tools and accredit courses and programs and make changes.

45. Parishes would be encouraged to 'normalise' this approach by allocating a % of budget each year for 'professional development' and training. Wardens and Parish Councillors would be encouraged and expected to have regular and honest conversations with their Senior Minister about their development and how they are growing. Simple training could be provided to wardens and parish councillors (such as a 360 degree review tool). Candidates seeking Ordination in the Diocese ought to be given the clear expectation that ongoing professional development is expected for all of their ministry years. Similarly, Parish Nominators ought be educated to ask as standard practice when seeking a new minister whether the candidate has engaged in professional development (a certificate of currency of professional development could be provided). A culture needs to develop where those making appointments in the Diocese have an expectation of 'professional development' by prospective candidates.

46. A possible **recommendation is** that responsibility for developing materials and resources and the overall program be given to the Synod appointed committee looking at rector training. This committee is expected to bring a report to Standing Committee sometime in 2016.

Suitable 'Exit' from Ministry pathway

47. Given the reality of some ordained ministers being unsuitable for their ministry situations, a workable 'exit' or retraining process needs to be developed.

48. There are a variety of reasons for unsuitability including lack of giftedness, mental health issues, personality types unsuited to ministry, family situation, eg, divorce or the poor health of a family member. The extent of this problem is hard to assess however some experienced observers have suggested perhaps 10% of our ministers are 'in the wrong job'. Exacerbating this is the reality of how difficult it is to re-enter the secular work force after some years out of it doing ministry, and this only gets more difficult the longer that period is and the older the person.

49. A possible **recommendation is** that a mechanism be developed to allow the Bishop in conjunction with the parish leadership to be able to offer a minister an 'exit strategy' that enables them to retrain and return to secular work. This may involve some stipend continuance for a period of perhaps 12-18 months. A financial model needs to be developed to manage this process together with the criteria for access to such a scheme. It could be an 'insurance' scheme such as the current Stipend Continuance scheme or a 'superannuation/LSL' model where the minister (and perhaps a contribution from the parish or diocese) puts aside an amount each year into a fund that is then available to that minister for retraining. If the fund is never accessed by the minister it may be payable to them upon retirement.

Counselling/Professional Supervision for Clergy

50. Given the current moderate incidence of mental health issues for ministers and the expectation of higher incidence in the future, and given the pastoral demands upon ministers in a culture that is increasingly broken and needy, services must be developed to help ease the pressures on ministers and provide opportunity for debriefing and unloading burdens to suitably qualified professionals. Professional counsellors, psychologists and medical practitioners have commented on how clergy often face complex and intense pastoral situations, however clergy have none of the debrief and supervision structures other professions utilise. Any supervision or service may be separate to the pastoral care provided by the bishops and other officials, and separate from the care and peer support provided by staff teams in parishes or networks of clergy who get together for prayer and support. Independence, confidentiality and professional skills in supervision and pastoral care are essential.

51. Where pressures mount on ministers without suitable care and supervision in place significant mental health issues can arise. These go beyond the individual minister and their own wellbeing and spiritual life. It will inevitably detrimentally affect their family life and indeed the life and ministry of the parish. This is an issue of Christian concern for those we care for, as well as an issue for the cause of the spread of the Gospel in the Diocese. It is therefore an issue of this significance requires a response at a Diocesan level as well as parish to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach, that spreads the load across the network of parishes rather than being borne exclusively by an individual parish. We need a response of planned and intentional prevention first and then suitable care if it is required for those who do face these mental health issues.

52. The Diocese recently organised, through Anglicare, a package of six counselling sessions for clergy. This ought to be monitored and determined whether it meets the needs of clergy. It can only be accessed once a problem has been identified and as such is responsive rather than preventative. A possible recommendation is whether an annual/regular 'mental health check-up and debrief' with a qualified counsellor or psychologist be required for all ministers. It would be part of the Professional Development program. Synod has appointed a Pastoral Supervision Working Party¹⁹ to investigate the area of 'supervision' for ministers to help address these issues. It is recommended that both Committees share their research and reports and develop a co-ordinated Diocesan response.

Response of the Standing Committee

53. At its meeting on 25 July 2016, the Standing Committee considered this matter and –
- (a) encouraged the Committee to continue to meet and provide a final report with recommendations to the 2017 Synod,
 - (b) encouraged the Committee to liaise with the Pastoral Supervision Working Party and the Rector Training Review Group, and
 - (c) invited Synod members to complete the survey prepared by the subcommittee and to provide comments on the interim report to the Committee for further consideration.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

PHILIP WHEELER

Chair, Subcommittee of Standing Committee

24 August 2016

¹⁹ The Pastoral Supervision Working Party has prepared an interim report for Standing Committee and is due for discussion in July 2016.