

## **Associated Congregations (Amendment) Ordinance 2005**

### **Explanatory Statement**

#### **Purposes**

1. The main purposes of the proposed ordinance are -
  - to enable congregations which do not meet in a church building to be associated with a church
  - to treat members of an associated congregation as parishioners of that church for vestry meeting and other purposes.
2. The proposed reforms arise from the increasing number of congregations which do not meet in church buildings. Currently, people attending such congregations in parishes which have not adopted the arrangements in the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 cannot participate in the administration of the parish.

#### **How the purposes will be achieved**

3. The main rules for associated congregations are to be included in a new part 7 of the Church Administration Ordinance 1990. Consequential amendments will be made to the Church Grounds and Buildings Ordinance 1990 and the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004.

#### **Amendment of the Church Administration Ordinance 1990**

##### *Meaning of "associated congregation"*

4. An "associated congregation" of a church will be a group of people -
  - (a) who meet together on a regular basis within the Diocese for public worship as part of the Anglican Church of Australia under the pastoral leadership of the minister of the church, and
  - (b) about whom a notification to the Registrar from the minister and churchwardens of a church has been made.

##### *How a congregation becomes "associated"*

5. The minister and churchwardens of a church may only notify the Registrar of an associated congregation if -
  - the building in which the congregation meets is not a church building of the parish, and

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- the vestry meeting of the church has approved the congregation being associated, and
  - if the congregation meets in a building outside the parish, the regional council and the parish council of the parish in which the building is situated have been consulted.
6. The notice to the Registrar is to include a brief description of the group of persons and the address of its meeting place.
7. An associated congregation will cease to be associated if -
- the minister and churchwardens notify the Registrar that the group has ceased to meet together on a regular basis within the Diocese for public worship as part of the Anglican Church of Australia under the pastoral leadership of the minister, or
  - the building in which the group meets is licensed or consecrated as a church of the parish, or
  - the vestry meeting of the church resolves that the group should no longer be associated.

*Consequences of a group becoming an "associated congregation"*

8. The people who attend an associated congregation of a church of a parish will be regarded as parishioners of the church and the parish. This means -
- those who attend divine services as part of the associated congregation during 3 months in the past 12 months can participate in vestry meetings of the relevant church, and
  - they are qualified to be elected to various offices connected with the church and the parish, for example churchwardens and parish councillors.

*Other matters*

9. The following rules will apply to the change of meeting place of an associated congregation -
- the minister and churchwardens are to notify the Registrar in writing as soon as practicable of the address of the new building, and
  - before an associated congregation moves to a new building situated outside the parish, the regional council and the parish council of the parish in which the building is situated must be consulted.

*Other provisions*

10. The minister and churchwardens of a church with an associated congregation are to exercise, so far as is relevant, their

functions in relation to the associated congregation and the building in which it meets as if the associated congregation and the building are part of the church.

11. Similarly, the parish council is to exercise, so far as is relevant, its functions in relation to an associated congregation of a church of the parish and the building in which the associated congregation meets as if the associated congregation and the building were part of the church.

12. The Archbishop will determine any question or dispute which arises as to whether a group of persons is an associated congregation of a church.

**Amendment of the Church Grounds and Buildings Ordinance 1990**

13. The Church Grounds and Buildings Ordinance 1990 currently provides that no building intended to be used regularly for the celebration of divine service is to be used for that purpose unless the building has been licensed or consecrated as a church. It is proposed that this provision not apply to a building used by an associated congregation.

**Amendment of the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004**

*Consequential amendments*

14. If a parish wants to adopt the special administration arrangements under the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 and the parish already has an associated congregation, the associated congregation will be taken to be a congregation of the parish for those arrangements.

*Additional amendments*

15. Currently, under the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004, the minister and churchwardens of the principal or only church of a parish which has adopted that ordinance cannot notify congregations before the first annual parish meeting.

16. As a transitional matter it is proposed that after a parish has adopted the arrangements under the ordinance the minister and churchwardens of the principal or only church of the parish may notify congregations before the first annual parish meeting. A corresponding change is proposed when a parish decides to discontinue the arrangements under the ordinance.

**Recommendation**

17. The Standing Committee recommends that Synod pass the proposed ordinance as an ordinance.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

Robert Wicks  
*Diocesan Secretary*

17 August 2005