

## General Synod Session 1998

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

### Introduction

1. The 11th General Synod was held in Adelaide from 14-20 February 1998. The 12th General Synod will be held in 2001, probably in Brisbane.
2. The 11th General Synod consisted of 223 members of whom 49 were from the Diocese of Sydney. 76 resolutions were passed and 21 canons, 1 provisional canon and 1 rule were made. A number of elections also took place for General Synod boards and committees.

### Resolutions

3. Many of the 76 resolutions related to formal matters concerning the business of General Synod. Others were of more significance. The following paragraphs summarise those resolutions of particular interest. As will be seen, General Synod proposes debating in 2001 matters such as lay and diaconal administration of the Holy Communion, women bishops, the mission of the Church and human sexuality.

#### *27/98 "Bringing Them Home" Report*

4. The General Synod acknowledged the deep hurt and trauma suffered by indigenous people by the removal of children from their families and, on behalf of The Anglican Church of Australia, unreservedly apologised for any part played, knowingly or unwittingly, by the Anglican Church that contributed to that hurt or trauma, and for the Church's past silence on the issue.

#### *42/98 Ordained Ministry*

5. The General Synod has asked that its Standing Committee produce a report on the meaning and place of the three-fold ordained ministry in the life and mission of the Church to be debated at General Synod in 2001. The report is to canvass the implications for ordained ministry of the Appellate Tribunal opinion on the constitutional status of lay and diaconal presidency at the Eucharist.

#### *47/98 Episcopal Oversight of Defence Force Chaplains*

6. A canon to approve of the establishment of a Defence Force diocese from the Diocese of Canberra/Goulburn was not passed. However, while the General Synod did not endorse a proposal for a separate Defence Force diocese, it acknowledged the concerns of the Defence Force chaplains regarding episcopal oversight and their relationship with the wider church and has requested that its Standing Committee, after consultation with the Defence Force Board, establish the most appropriate means of providing for and funding a full-time bishop to the Defence Forces and initiate a protocol providing for the participation of chaplains in the life of the dioceses of the Church.

#### *48/98 Reconciliation*

7. The General Synod supports the process of reconciliation in Australia and has called upon all Anglicans and Anglican Agencies to support initiatives and to take initiatives which will forward the process of reconciliation with indigenous people.

#### *49/98 Native Title*

8. The General Synod has urged all Australians to seek an honorable, decent and worthy compromise on the issue of native title to further the cause of reconciliation and build a more secure, certain and prosperous Australia for all Australians.

#### *51/98 Women Bishops*

9. The General Synod received reports from the General Synod Doctrine Commission and the General Synod Canon Law Commission concerning the consecration of women to the episcopate and noted the undesirability of a woman bishop being appointed until at least General Synod in 2001. In addition, the General Synod has asked that its Standing Committee prepare a draft bill and a discussion paper on the implications of consecrating women to the episcopate together with practical ways of addressing those implications, including forms of alternative episcopal oversight, for circulation among the dioceses by December 1999.

#### *52/98 Christian Conscience*

10. The General Synod affirmed that a Christian conscience ought to be bound by Holy Scripture, as being the ultimate rule and standard of faith, and the creeds and articles of the scriptural faith of the Church. It also affirmed that Anglicans who conscientiously believe that the ordination of women to the presbyterate and to the episcopate is inconsistent with the teaching of the New Testament along with those who conscientiously believe it is consistent stand within the Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution of The

Anglican Church of Australia and the doctrine of the Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles.

*53/98 Future Issues*

11. The General Synod has asked its Standing Committee to appoint a task force to advise on future issues, including a proposed definition of the mission of the Church for today, with consequent strategies and priorities, and report to General Synod in 2001. All Church Agencies have been asked to adopt strategies which will enable a more effective engagement with other Australians and each diocese has been invited to develop indicators by which effectiveness in promoting the Gospel might be measured, such indicators to be the subject of a report to the next session of General Synod.

*70/98 Kuala Lumpur Statement*

12. The General Synod noted the Kuala Lumpur Statement on human sexuality issued by Anglican delegates from Provinces in the Developing World who met at the Second Anglican Encounter held in Kuala Lumpur in 1997. The General Synod has asked that its Standing Committee appoint a task force to prepare an Australian Anglican statement on human sexuality, with particular reference to discipline in this Church, for consideration by the General Synod in 2001.

*76/98 Appreciation to the Primate*

13. The 1998 session of the General Synod was the last session attended by the Primate, Archbishop Keith Rayner, who has attended every day of every General Synod since 1961. The General Synod recorded its deep gratitude for the Primate's service, commitment, energy and leadership and for his courtesy, wisdom and integrity.

**Canons and Provisional Canon**

14. A separate report, "General Synod Legislation 1998", reports on the canons and provisional canon made by the 11th General Synod.

**Elections**

15. The following persons from Sydney were elected to the following General Synod boards and committees. (Not all of these persons are members of the General Synod or are members of the General Synod representing Sydney).

*Standing Committee*

Archdeacon Trevor Edwards  
Bishop Peter Watson  
Deaconess Margaret Rodgers  
Mr Robert Tong  
Justice Peter Young

*Council of the Australian College of Theology*

Bishop Paul Barnett  
Archbishop Harry Goodhew  
The Rev Dr Glenn Davies  
The Rev Dr Graeme Goldsworthy  
Dr Barry Newman  
The Rev Dr Peter O'Brien  
Dr Ann Young

*The Board of Electors for the Primate*

Dean Boak Jobbins  
Mr Doug Marr  
Deaconess Margaret Rodgers  
Dr Laurie Scandrett  
Mr Robert Tong  
Justice Peter Young

*The Special Tribunal*

Archbishop Harry Goodhew  
*Defence Force Board*  
The Rev Howard Dillon  
The Rev Richard Hurford

*Anglican Board of Mission - Australia*

Assoc. Professor Michael Horsburgh

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

MARK PAYNE  
*Diocesan Secretary*

14 August 1998