

Leadership of Indigenous Ministry in the Diocese

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Key Points

- The Sydney Anglican Indigenous People's Ministry Committee (**SAIPMC**) has written to the Archbishop to highlight the limitations faced by it, as a voluntary committee, in progressing the development of indigenous ministry across the Diocese.
- It is recommended that an indigenous person (or persons) be appointed to lead Aboriginal ministry in our Diocese.
- The Synod should ask the Standing Committee to appoint a subcommittee to determine how best to progress this matter from in-principle support towards implementation.

Purpose

1. This report seeks the in-principle support of the Synod to recognise and appoint an indigenous person (or persons) to lead and represent Indigenous ministry in our Diocese.

Recommendations

2. Synod receive this report.
3. Synod, noting the report "Leadership of Indigenous Ministry in the Diocese" –
 - (a) expresses its gratitude for the work of the volunteers who serve on the Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Committee (**SAIPMC**),
 - (b) notes the report from the SAIPMC that indigenous ministry in the Diocese is hampered because a committee of volunteers is not able to lead and drive the vision for indigenous ministry (and true gospel reconciliation) across our Diocese and beyond,
 - (c) expresses in-principle support for the recommendation of SAIPMC that an indigenous person (or persons) be recognised and appointed to lead and represent Indigenous ministry in our Diocese,
 - (d) requests the Standing Committee to appoint a committee to explore how best to implement the recommendation of SAIPMC. The committee should consider –
 - (i) the scope of the role,
 - (ii) whether this role should be full time or part time, and/or a possible staged implementation,
 - (iii) whether there should be Indigenous representation on the Standing Committee,
 - (iv) the appropriate form of appointment (e.g., Canon, Archdeacon or Bishop), and
 - (v) the funding of this role.
 - (e) requests, to the extent that the recommendations of the committee require ordinance changes, that such changes be brought to the next session of the Synod for consideration.

Discussion

4. In a letter to the Archbishop dated 6 April 2023, the SAIPMC identified limitations faced by the committee and its members, which hamper efforts to grow indigenous ministry across the Diocese. Their letter makes the following points –

"The SAIPMC, as with most Diocesan Committees is a voluntary committee and has no external personnel support. Included on the Committee are our three Aboriginal ministers: Rev Michael Duckett (Chair), Rev Rick Manton and Pastor Brendon Garlett.

Although each of these members are paid in ministry, they each have churches to oversee and have limited time.

As Chair of the Committee there are many additional demands on Michael Duckett's time with requests from parishes, schools and other community bodies for specific Indigenous ministry support and input. The time demands on Michael and other Indigenous members and limitations of the SAIPMC generally has revealed the need for a person who will specifically drive the vision for Indigenous ministry (and true gospel reconciliation) across our Diocese and beyond.

Although the Committee is thankful for the funding provided through the generosity of the Synod and many supporters, the reality is that this funding falls far short of what is required to develop and sustain viable Indigenous ministries. Without someone able to drive the gospel vision it is difficult to raise the necessary funds to see the vision realised."

5. In the view of SAIPMC, what is needed is for a suitable person to be recognised, authorised and set apart to progress this work. The SAIPMC can assist but is unable to fulfill this need as it operates as a committee of volunteers and functions more in a consultative role than an implementation role.
6. SAIPMC suggests that this role would include coordination of –
 - Training pathways for Indigenous ministry in the Diocese
 - Participate in the planning and development of training pathways for Indigenous people in ministry in a culturally safe environment.
 - Development of financial and accountability structures for Indigenous Churches
 - Currently churches raise their own funds with accountability being managed by their partner churches. The goal would be to develop a process to standardise all formal structures and processes managed by the Indigenous churches.
 - Enhancing cultural awareness and guidance in sensitive matters within the Diocese, eg;
 - Aboriginal spirituality
 - Acknowledgement of Country
 - Smoking ceremonies
 - Property sales and development
 - Indigenous ministry succession
 - Plan, search and develop strategies for ministry succession when pastors move on.
 - Indigenous church planting proposals
 - Provide counsel and guidance on the engagement and consultation with Indigenous communities to prevent mistakes of the past
 - Providing resources and educational material
 - Sorry Day
 - NAIDOC
 - Significant dates on the Indigenous calendar
7. To progress this, Synod is invited to express its in-principle support for the SAIPMC's recommendation that an indigenous person (or persons) be recognised and appointed to lead and represent Indigenous ministry in our Diocese.
8. The Standing Committee should be asked to appoint a committee to develop a plan as to how to progress this, recognising that a staged implementation may be required. The committee would, in close consultation with SAIPMC, consider –
 - (a) the scope of the role,
 - (b) whether this role should be full time or part time, and/or a possible staged implementation,
 - (c) whether there should be Indigenous representation on the Standing Committee,
 - (d) the appropriate form of appointment (eg. Canon, Archdeacon or Bishop), and
 - (e) the funding of this role.

9. To the extent that the recommendations of the committee require ordinances changes, these matters should be brought to the next session of the Synod for consideration.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

BRIONY BOUNDS
Diocesan Secretary

17 July 2023