

Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

Background

1. In 2004 the Synod passed the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 (the "Ordinance"). Clause 8 of the Ordinance requires the Standing Committee to bring a report to the Synod in 2007 about the operation of the Ordinance.
2. The Ordinance enables special administrative arrangements to be adopted by a parish. These arrangements modify the existing administrative arrangements that currently apply under the Church Administration Ordinance 1990.
3. In essence the arrangements, if adopted, enable a parish to move away from using churches (ie buildings licensed for divine service) as the basic unit through which the parish is administered. Instead the arrangements formally recognise the congregations of the parish as the means by which the parish can be administered as a whole.
4. For this purpose, the Ordinance provides for –
 - (a) "parish meetings" (and "annual parish meetings") of members of all congregations of the parish being held instead of vestry meetings and annual vestry meetings for each church of the parish,
 - (b) the annual parish meeting deciding whether or not there should be a representative on the parish council for each congregation,
 - (c) 3 "parish wardens" for the parish as a whole instead of 3 churchwardens for each church of the parish, and
 - (d) the parish wardens exercising charge, control and administration over property, maintaining accounts and preparing financial statements for the parish as a whole.

Adoption of special arrangements by parishes

5. There have been 31 parishes that have adopted the special arrangements. The Registrar has also received notification of 14 new congregations across 11 parishes under the special arrangements. See the attached tables for further details.
6. In view of the relatively low number of congregations notified under the arrangements, it is likely that not all congregations that should be notified have been notified. A possible explanation for this is that parishes, having adopted the special arrangements, may be under the misapprehension that there is no need to notify congregations.

Feedback from parishes

7. Those parishes that had adopted special administration were contacted to obtain their feedback. Rectors were asked four questions –
 - (a) Why did the parish choose to adopt special administration?
 - (b) Has the parish experienced any problems, either in the adoption of the special administration or since adoption?
 - (c) What were the principal benefits arising from the adoption of special administration for the parish?
 - (d) Any suggestions for the improvement of the operation of the Ordinance.
8. Feedback was received from 13 parishes.
9. The most common reasons for adopting special administration were as follows –
 - a desire for streamlining the number of parish councils and church wardens,
 - the need to unify the parish by being able to enable congregations in alternative locations to vote at vestry meetings, or sit on Parish Council, and
 - amalgamation with another parish due to small sizes.
10. The general response to the Ordinance was extremely positive, with eleven parishes saying that they had not experienced any problems. The only negative comments related to perceptions by parishioners in two parishes that they might be 'losing their say'. It was felt that parishioners did not

necessarily understand the reasons why the parish would be better positioned for ministry having adopted special administration.

11. The most frequently repeated benefit was flexibility. Other benefits included –

- unity - in one case, a parish found that the adoption of special administration fitted in well with the ethos they were trying to develop of unity in the case of a church plant and the “mother church”,
- efficient and centralised administrative structure in terms of annual parish meetings and wardens.

12. One parish indicated as a benefit that the special arrangements enabled parishioners from an “amalgamated church” to participate fully in church life immediately (ie. voting at vestry meeting) rather than waiting 3 months. It is possible that such a comment reflects a slight confusion of the special administration arrangements with the provisions for associated congregations under part 7 of the Church Administration Ordinance 1990.

13. The majority of rectors did not have any suggestions for improvement. However, the following comments were received –

- in the case of having multiple locations, a great deal of pressure was put on 3 wardens, and it might have been easier if the parish could appoint more wardens,
- a leaflet to hand out to parishioners detailing the purpose and benefits of the Ordinance might be useful in convincing parishioners of the need to adopt special administration (although one rector noted the clear information available on the website which he used as the basis for creating a handout for parishioners), and
- the difficulty of managing a vestry meeting due to increased size

14. Overall, every parish contacted noted the benefits that had come with their adoption of Special Administration, and all were very positive about their experience with the adoption and continuation under Special Administration.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

STEVE LUCAS
Manager, Legal Services

27 August 2007

List of parishes in accordance with clause 4(4) of the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 (as at 13 August 2007)

Parish Name	Region	Date of Regional Council approval
Avalon with Palm Beach	Northern	28 June 2005
Bondi	South Sydney	14 February 2007
Carlingford	Western Sydney	3 February 2005
Concord West with Concord North	South Sydney	23 February 2005
Dapto	Wollongong	8 February 2005
Denham Court	Wollongong	8 November 2005
Dundas with Telopea	Western Sydney	24 November 2005
Emu Plains	Western Sydney	24 November 2005
Enfield	South Sydney	23 February 2005
Fairfield	Georges River	7 February 2005
Glenquarie	Wollongong	14 February 2006
Helensburgh with Stanwell Park	Wollongong	14 November 2006
Macquarie	Northern	22 February 2005
Mulgoa	Western	25 August 2005
Mona Vale	Northern	24 June 2005
Moorebank	Georges River	22 February 2005
Naremburn/Cammeray	Northern	22 February 2005
Narrabeen	Northern	22 November 2005
Northmead and Winston Hills	Western Sydney	3 February 2005
Parramatta North with Harris Park	Western Sydney	22 March 2007
Pitt Town	Western Sydney	27 May 2005
Pyrmont	South Sydney	15 February 2006
St George North	Georges River	Not applicable*
St Marys	Western Sydney	30 November 2006
Shellharbour City	Wollongong	13 February 2007
Smithfield Road	Georges River	22 February 2005
Springwood	Western Sydney	3 February 2005
Toongabbie	Western Sydney	3 February 2005
Turrumurra	Northern	24 June 2005
Turrumurra South	Northern	22 February 2005
Wentworth Falls	Western Sydney	24 November 2005
Yagoona	Georges River	22 February 2005

* The provisions of the Schedule to the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004 apply to the Parish of St George North by operation of the St George North (Special Administration) Ordinance 2006.

Notification of congregations under clause 17 of the Schedule to the Parishes (Special Administration) Ordinance 2004

Parish	Congregation name	Location	Date of notification of congregation	Date of notification of congregation ceasing
Carlingford and North Rocks	North Rocks Anglican Church	North Rocks Public School	14 August 2007	
	Baulkham Hills North Anglican Church	Baulkham Hills North Public School	14 August 2007	
	Cumberland Uni Church	Lidcombe Public School	14 August 2007	
Concord West with Concord North	10.00am Morning Church	Church Hall	2 February 2006	
	7.00pm Evening Church	Church Hall	2 February 2006	
Dapto	Dapto Public School Congregation	Dapto Public School	1 June 2006	
Emu Plains	9.30am Congregation	Church Hall	25 November 2005	
	6.30pm Congregation	Church Hall	25 November 2005	
Enfield	6.00pm Service	Church Hall	6 May 2005	
Mona Vale	Loquat Valley Service	Loquat Valley Preparatory School	27 May 2005	
Moorebank	Wattle Grove Anglican Church	Wattle Grove Public School	20 April 2005	30 July 2007
Naremburn/Cammeray <i>*(Previously known as Naremburn Asian Anglican Church)</i>	Naremburn Asian Australian Church* (10.00am to 12.00noon)	Naremburn School (previously met at Naremburn community centre)	23 June 2005	
	Naremburn Asian Australian Church* (5.00pm to 7.00pm)	Crows Nest Centre	23 June 2005	
Shellharbour City	Family Church at The College	Shellharbour Anglican College	26 July 2007	
St Mary's	North St Mary's Community Church	North St Mary's Neighbourhood Centre	25 January 2007	
Turrumurra	Bobbin Head Anglican Church	Turrumurra North Primary School	27 May 2005	
Turrumurra South	St Philip's Community Church	Turrumurra Public School	20 April 2005	

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Parish	Congregation name	Location	Date of notification of congregation	Date of notification of congregation ceasing
Wentworth Falls	10.00am Service	Blue Mountains Grammar School	9 February 2006	