

# Pastoral Supervision in the Diocese of Sydney

## 54/22 Ministry Wellbeing and Development

(A report of the Standing Committee.)

### Key Points

- Pastoral Supervision is designed to benefit and support church workers and the people they minister to. It is also a requirement arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.
- The framework for Pastoral Supervision in the Diocese is proposed to include a Pastoral Supervision Ordinance, Policy and Guidebook.
- A Pilot Program for Pastoral Supervision is nearing completion and preliminary results from participants are positive.

*A previous report which included the fundamentals of Pastoral Supervision was received at the Third Session of the 52<sup>nd</sup> Synod (2022).*

### Purpose

1. To report to the Synod regarding progress of the Pastoral Supervision program.

### Recommendations

2. Synod note this report.
3. Synod, noting the report "Pastoral Supervision in the Diocese of Sydney" –
  - (a) affirm the importance of Pastoral Supervision, both as a measure to enhance the ministry wellbeing and development of church workers in the Diocese, and to implement recommendations of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, and
  - (b) request that the Standing Committee approve a Pastoral Supervision Policy as provided for by the Pastoral Supervision Ordinance 2023.

### Background

4. In 2021, the Standing Committee appointed the Pastoral Supervision Committee (**the Committee**) comprising Bishop Peter Lin (Chair), Archdeacon Kara Hartley, the Rev Gary O'Brien, the Rev Archie Poulos, and the Rev Roger Cunningham, to develop a proposal for mandatory professional supervision in the Diocese. The Committee receives advice from Ms Sarah Balogh, Psychologist and Ministry Supervisor.
5. In 2022, the Synod received the report "Pastoral Consultation (Professional Supervision) Recommendation" (the **2022 Report**) from the Committee. Among other things, the 2022 Report set out –
  - (a) what pastoral supervision is,
  - (b) the merits of pastoral supervision, including with reference to the Royal Commission,
  - (c) who should receive pastoral supervision,
  - (d) common concerns regarding pastoral supervision,
  - (e) how pastoral supervision should be administered,
  - (f) a proposed phased implementation process,

- (g) two models of pastoral supervision,
  - (h) who can deliver pastoral supervision,
  - (i) measuring effectiveness/outcomes,
  - (j) costs of the program, and
  - (k) ministry reviews.
6. By Resolution 54/22 (Ministry Wellbeing and Development), the Synod, among other things –
- (a) noted –
    - (i) recommendations 16.5, 16.44 and 16.45 for national mandatory standards for professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals of bishops, clergy, and lay personnel of the Anglican Church of Australia in any form of ministry of pastoral care or service in the final report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse,
    - (ii) the resolution of the General Synod on 9 May 2022 encouraging dioceses to fully implement the Ministry Wellbeing and Development policy, guidelines and resources document to enhance the wellbeing and professional development of clergy and some paid church workers,
    - (iii) the report titled ‘Pastoral Consultation (Professional Supervision) Recommendation’ dated 27 July 2022 tabled at that session of the Synod, and
    - (iv) the lifelong ministry resources developed by Ministry Training & Development,
  - (b) affirmed the importance of implementing a mandatory system for the professional development, professional/pastoral supervision and performance appraisals of clergy and lay church workers providing pastoral care or service to enhance their ministry wellbeing and development,
  - (c) noted the [Pastoral Supervision Committee] was developing proposals for a system of mandatory professional/pastoral supervision ... for licensed and stipendiary or paid clergy, and stipendiary or paid lay church workers providing pastoral care or service including any proposed legislation and policies, and requested a report be provided to the 1st ordinary session of the 53rd Synod.
7. This report provides an update on the work of the Committee since the 2022 Report as requested by Resolution 54/22.

## Discussion

### Why do we need Pastoral Supervision?

8. The Final Report of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (**Royal Commission**) was released on 15 December 2017. Volume 16 of the Final Report contains specific recommendations for the Anglican Church.
9. Recommendation 16.45 of the Final Report states –
- “Consistent with Child Safe Standard 5, each religious institution should ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry, including religious leaders, have professional supervision with a trained professional or pastoral supervisor who has a degree of independence from the institution within which the person is in ministry.”
10. Additionally, Recommendation 16.5 (c) of the Final Report states –
- “The Anglican Church of Australia should develop, and each diocese should implement mandatory national standards to ensure that all people in religious or pastoral ministry (bishops, clergy, religious and lay personnel) ...undertake mandatory professional/pastoral supervision.”
11. While the Royal Commission recommendations are not legally binding, the Diocese has an ethical and reputational imperative to implement them. This matter is explored further in the 2022 Report.
12. Accordingly, Pastoral Supervision has become a fundamental requirement and not an optional extra or luxury. As of July 2023, other major religious denominations and organisations in Australia have

already taken the step of establishing Pastoral Supervision programs, policies and frameworks. This includes the Australian Baptists (formerly the Baptist Union of Australia), the Uniting Church of Australia, as well as non-Protestant denominations and organisations.

## Supporting Churches and Church Workers

13. Pastoral Supervision has merits for the Pastoral Supervisee, the persons they minister to, other church workers, and the Diocese as a whole. A recent survey at the Faithfulness in Ministry Conference found that 30% of respondents already had Pastoral Supervision, and of those who did not 67% were either likely or very likely to want to engage in Pastoral Supervision in the future.<sup>1</sup>
14. First and foremost, Pastoral Supervision provides opportunity for personal and ministry development of the supervisee as a church worker. Through Pastoral Supervision, the individual fosters their emotional wellbeing, accountability and professional development.
15. Significantly, it contributes to a suite of preventative measures against harmful behaviour, including abuse, by growing the Pastoral Supervisee's reflective practice, self-awareness, modified thinking and behaviour, and their resilience.
16. These qualities and skills both moderate against poor resilience declining into inappropriate habits and behaviours, as well as develop and grow alignment of the inner-self with external expectations for the individual.
17. Pastoral Supervision involves conversations between a Pastoral Supervisor and Pastoral Supervisee, leading to more constructive discussions and relationships between ministry workers and parishioners.
18. Armenakis et al. observe that changes in belief and practice are facilitated by people feeling there will be support from their peers and leaders. The provision of Pastoral Supervision, and the improvements in efficacy that may flow from this, benefit not only the Pastoral Supervisee but other ministry workers and the broader team.<sup>2</sup>
19. The benefits for clergy and churches constitute an immense return on investment. The Dean of Students at Moore College, the Rev Paul Grimmond has said –  

“I spent much of my early ministry life avoiding reflection because I was ‘too busy’. In reality, my lack of reflection was a symptom of living in reactivity and not taking responsibility for proactively managing my life. Taking time out in supervision and stepping back to see the big picture has helped me to say no more often and to live a more thoughtful and healthily balanced ministry life”.<sup>3</sup>
20. Similar supervision and professional development frameworks have long-existed for other professions, such as legal<sup>4</sup> and healthcare practitioners<sup>5</sup>.

## Pastoral Supervision Framework

21. It is proposed that the Pastoral Supervision Framework for the Diocese be comprised of an Ordinance, Policy, and Guidebook, which are each described further below.

### The Ordinance

22. The proposed Pastoral Supervision Ordinance 2023 (**the Ordinance**) encompasses –

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<sup>1</sup> Anglican Church of Australia Diocese of Sydney, Faithfulness in Ministry, Trends from 1 minute Survey (2023)

<sup>2</sup> A. Armenakis, J.B. Bernerth, J.P. Pitts, and H.J. Walker 'Organisational Change Recipients' Beliefs Scale: Development of an Assessment Instrument'. *Journal of Applied Behavioural Science* (2007) 43(4) 481, 505.

<sup>3</sup> S. Balogh, 'Five misconceptions about pastoral consultation', Moore Matters, Moore Theological College (3 March 2023).

<sup>4</sup> *Legal Profession Uniform Law (NSW) 2014*

<sup>5</sup> Medical Board of Australia, Registration Standard – Continuing Professional Development (2023)

- (a) provision for the Archbishop-in-Council to declare classes of persons who are required to undertake Pastoral Supervision,
  - (b) provision for a Pastoral Supervision Policy to be approved by the Archbishop-in-Council,
  - (c) a requirement for Pastoral Supervisors to hold an approval from the Archbishop, and
  - (d) insurance requirements for Pastoral Supervisors.
23. The Ordinance will give the Pastoral Supervision Policy a legal basis. A similar legislative approach was taken for the Property Use Policy, which is approved pursuant to the *Sydney Anglican Use of Church Property Ordinance 2018*.
24. A bill and an accompanying explanatory report for the Ordinance are printed separately.

## The Policy

25. The Ordinance provides that there is to be a Pastoral Supervision Policy (**the Policy**). Having some matters in the Policy rather than the Ordinance provides more flexibility for the Policy to state the minimum requirements and also the aspirational outcomes of Pastoral Supervision in the Diocese.
26. The Ordinance sets out an indicative list of matters that may be covered in the Policy. These are explored below in further detail for the benefit of Synod members.

### *Classes of church workers that must undertake Pastoral Supervision*

27. As outlined in the Explanatory Report for the Ordinance (printed separately), it is proposed that the Policy include a list of the classes of persons who are required to undertake Pastoral Supervision. This will enable the implementation of Pastoral Supervision to be staged (if required), by declaring broader classes of persons over time.
28. In May 2022, the Standing Committee recommended to the Archbishop that the following classes of persons should be required to undertake Pastoral Supervision –
- (a) first-time rectors from mid-2023,
  - (b) new full-time assistant ministers from the beginning of 2024, and
  - (c) all full-time parish ministry workers thereafter in a staged process based on years of service.
29. These classes will be reviewed and formalised as part of the Archbishop-in-Council making a declaration for the purposes of the Ordinance.

### *Pre-requisites and process for a person to be approved as a Pastoral Supervisor*

30. There are two categories of Pastoral Supervisor envisaged, which have been refined since the 2022 Report –
- (a) Approved Pastoral Supervisors, who have completed a recognised qualification in pastoral supervision and who have met the requirements of the Policy, and
  - (b) Provisionally Approved Pastoral Supervisors, who have not completed a recognised qualification in pastoral supervision, but instead have relevant vocational training or ministry experience, and meet the requirements of the Policy. Supervisors in this category will be required to progress to the 'Approved' category within three years.
31. Having two categories accounts for the diversity of skills and backgrounds amongst Pastoral Supervisors, while also having regard to the supply of Pastoral Supervisors, and the requirements of the Royal Commission.
32. The Policy will provide for the Diocese to create a 'live' and accessible list of Pastoral Supervisors, making it as easy as possible for those undertaking supervision to select the supervisor they want based on factors such as area of practice, experience, cost and geographical location.
33. Insurance arrangements for Pastoral Supervisors will also be covered by the Policy, including coverage amounts in line with benchmarked norms.

*How Pastoral Supervision is to be conducted*

34. The Policy will outline the 'degree of separation' required between Pastoral Supervisors and Pastoral Supervisees, for example one should not undertake Pastoral Supervision with a Pastoral Supervisor who is related or a friend.
35. Detail around stipendiary ministry, charging for Pastoral Supervision services and a range of paid work arrangements will also be covered in the Policy in a manner consistent with existing Codes of Conduct, such as *Faithfulness in Service* Standard 8 'Financial Integrity'.

*Minimum requirements to be met by those receiving Pastoral Supervision*

36. The Policy will establish minimum standards for Pastoral Supervision that are not onerous. It is expected to include a minimum of six one-hour supervision sessions per annum. This can be pro-rated for part-time ministry workers.
37. The Diocesan Registrar and SDS Privacy Officer will continue to be involved in the development of the Policy to ensure that the Pastoral Supervision framework and program are both as user friendly as possible and meet current information security standards and protections.

*Matters under review*

38. Further matters relating to provision of Pastoral Supervision, such as delivery by stipendiary church workers, and costs of the program, remain under active consideration.
39. If an individual is engaged in stipendiary ministry, it is expected that the remuneration will be directed to the relevant parish (see *Faithfulness in Service*, Standard 8 'Financial Integrity'). Nonetheless, further consideration will be given to the appropriateness of this arrangement and any additional approvals required.
40. The costs of administering the Pastoral Supervision Framework are proposed to be borne by the Diocese. This includes resourcing to coordinate supervisors and supervisees, provide information, recruit and approve Pastoral Supervisors, and monitor compliance. It does not include the costs of the sessions.
41. Consideration will be given to alternate model(s) involving Pastoral Supervision being offered on a voluntary basis. To that end, it is noted that various supervision providers, such as Chaplaincy Australia, already list intern supervisors who are able to provide pastoral supervision free of charge or at reduced rates as part of their ongoing professional training and practical experience requirements.

**The Guidebook**

42. As an added support tool for ministry workers and churches, a Pastoral Supervision Guidebook will be developed and will include topics and answers to questions such as –
  - (a) Who is required to receive Pastoral Supervision?
  - (b) Who will be qualified to be a Pastoral Supervisor?
  - (c) How often is supervision required?
  - (d) Who will pay for supervision, and how?
  - (e) What should I expect in a supervision session?
  - (f) Where will or can supervision take place?
  - (g) Can I be supervised by someone I already know?
  - (h) Is supervision 'really' confidential? What records will be kept?
43. The Guidebook is intended to be a helpful resource for supervisors and supervisees focusing on various supervision functions: formative (educational), normative (maintaining standards of practice) and restorative (supporting the individual).

## Pilot Program

44. In May 2022, the Standing Committee directed the Committee undertake a Pastoral Supervision Pilot Program (**Pilot Program**) and requested the Pilot Program be reviewed once complete by Ministry Training & Development (**MTD**).
45. As at the date of writing, the Pilot Program is nearing completion. Approximately 30 participants have been involved in the Pilot Program.
46. An exit survey is being conducted as participants finish their initial 12 months of Pastoral Supervision. The survey seeks participants' views on any previous pastoral supervision, approaches to costs of supervision, previous experiences and supervision styles (if applicable), how helpful supervision was to ministry and individual, and a focus on critical supervision elements including:
  - (a) sharing experiences
  - (b) reflection and self-awareness
  - (c) approach to ministry and
  - (d) resilience.
47. At a high-level, the results of the Survey of the Pilot Program already show –
  - (a) Participants were likely to pursue supervision in the future,
  - (b) Individual supervision was the preferred option,
  - (c) There is a diversity in what individuals were prepared to pay for supervision, and
  - (d) There is a range of views about who should be paying for supervision (e.g., church, individuals themselves, a combination etc.)
48. The feedback obtained from the Pilot Program and other sources will be incorporated into the draft Pastoral Supervision Policy.
49. Accordingly, the Pilot Program appears to indicate that the benefits of Pastoral Supervision are perceived in a generally positive light – it is not merely a requirement but something that participants view as being beneficial to their ministry and to themselves as individuals.
50. Surveys of participants in Pastoral Supervision programs in countries and jurisdictions outside of Australia have similarly found beneficial results, with one study finding that 94% of respondents found Pastoral Supervision to be beneficial, worth continuing, and worth being funded by their denomination.<sup>6</sup>
51. In Q4 2023, MTD will conduct a review of the Pilot Program and provide any recommendations to the Standing Committee.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

BRIONY BOUNDS  
**Diocesan Secretary**

14 August 2023

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<sup>6</sup> P.M. Gubi, 'A pilot evaluation study of pastoral supervision in the Moravian Church' (April 2022) Volume 25 *Journal of Mental Health, Religion and Culture*, Taylor & Francis 197, 206.