



Anglican Church Diocese of Sydney

St Andrew's House
Sydney Square NSW 2000
Telephone (02) 9265 1555
Website: www.sds.asn.au

PO Box Q190
QVB Post Office NSW 1230
Fax (02) 9261 4485

24 October 2011

Circular to Ministers, Wardens and Parish Councils

Matters arising from Synod for your early consideration

As you may be aware, after each session of Synod a circular is sent to all parishes summarising the proceedings of the Synod.

While this circular will be sent in due course, I believe there are some resolutions of the Synod which warrant your early consideration and, if appropriate, action.

The text of these resolutions is set out in full in the attachment.

Some brief notes drawing your attention to particular action items for parishes in these resolutions follow –

1/11 Federal Government support of Anglican Aid – note the dollar matching program for October and November 2011 which the Federal Government has extended to the Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid for the purposes of receiving gifts for famine relief in the Horn of Africa.

4/11 Disability Sunday – note Synod's call for parishes to participate in Disability Sunday on 30 October 2011.

5/11 Threatened execution of Yousef Nadarkhani – note the Synod's request that clergy make Pastor Nadarkhani's circumstances, his family and their church and all Christians in Iran a matter of public prayer.

18/11 Gambling in Australia – note Synod's encouragement to ministers, Synod representatives and other church members to continue to write to their parliamentary representatives in support of the efforts being proposed in Australia's Federal Parliament to reduce the impact and incidence of problem gambling (note also the reference to the Social Issues Executive Briefings 33 and 91 (available on-line) for sound biblical arguments as to why gambling is both wrong for Christian believers and damaging to our community).

36/11 Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings – note Synod's request for comments and suggestions to be made to the Archbishop's Liturgical Panel about this resource, if possible by March 31 and at the latest by June 30 (note also that the services can be downloaded and feedback given at www.commonprayer.org.au).

37/11 Legal definition of marriage – note Synod's encouragement to ministers, Synod representatives and other church members to write to their parliamentary representatives affirming the current legislative definition for marriage.

Our capacity to work effectively as a Diocese in pursuing matters such as these depends largely on the willingness of our parishes to consider and take action in response to them. Could I therefore ask you to carefully consider these resolutions and progress them in the context of your parish as appropriate.

Please contact me on 9265 1671 or at rjw@sydney.anglican.asn.au if you have any questions or comments.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Wicks', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

ROBERT WICKS
Diocesan Secretary

Synod resolutions for early consideration by parishes

1/11 Federal Government support of Anglican Aid

Synod welcomes the decision by the Federal Government and Foreign Affairs Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd to match dollar for dollar the gifts of Australian people to famine relief in the most severe crisis to hit the Horn of Africa in 60 years.

And further that Synod expresses its thanks to the Federal Government through AusAID for including The Archbishop of Sydney's Anglican Aid in the NGO's who are able to participate in the dollar matching programme for October and November.

4/11 Disability Sunday

Synod, mindful of Christ's clear call in Luke 14 that those who follow Him will be socially inclusive of the vulnerable and people with a disability, and in line with Synod Resolution 34/09 which commits the Diocese to advocate to Government on behalf of people with a disability, strongly supports the establishment of a National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and calls on parishes to participate in Disability Sunday on October 30, 2011 as a way of encouraging social inclusion in church life of people with a disability and their carers.

Therefore Synod –

- (a) affirms Christ's teaching in Luke 14 that all believers should make every effort to care for and be socially inclusive of those who are vulnerable and have a disability;
- (b) supports the establishment of a NDIS as a key way to improve the wellbeing of people with a disability and their carers;
- (c) encourages churches to participate in Disability Sunday – to pray for people with a disability, their carers and government reforms that will improve their wellbeing, and to send letters of support for a NDIS to Government;
- (d) urges churches to ensure they are fostering an attitude of inclusion and care for people who have a disability and carers; and
- (e) calls parishes to proactively reach out to their communities in loving service to people with disabilities, noting that ANGLICARE can assist parishes to do this.

5/11 Threatened execution of Yousef Nadarkhani

This Synod –

- (i) requests that the Diocesan Secretary ask the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs to express publicly and privately to the Iranian Government, our nation's opposition to the imprisonment and threatened execution of the evangelical pastor: Yousef Nadarkhani;
- (ii) asks that clergy make this a matter of public prayer, especially praying for pastor Nadarkhani, his wife Fatemah, their sons Daniel and Joel, and their church as well as praying for all Christians in Iran, and
- (iii) calls upon the representatives of the media to bring the plight of this man who refuses to recant his conversion to Christ to the attention of our nation.

18/11 Gambling in Australia

This Synod again notes the Productivity Commission's report into gambling which reports that –

- (i) there are between 80,000 – 160,000 problem gamblers in Australia, with another 230,000 – 350,000 vulnerable to problem gambling;
- (ii) poker machine users are disproportionately represented among the ranks of Australia's problem gamblers;
- (iii) 41% of the \$11.9 billion that Australians lose annually on poker machines comes from problem gamblers.

Therefore Synod again endorses efforts being proposed in Australia's Federal Parliament to reduce the impact and incidence of problem gambling, for example, by the introduction of a compulsory pre-commitment system for poker machine use.

In addition, Synod calls on the NSW Government to reduce its reliance on taxation on gambling.

Synod encourages ministers, synod representatives and other church members to continue to write to their parliamentary representatives in support of such harm minimisation measures and commends to Synod members and ministers the Social Issues Executive Briefings 33 and 91 (available on-line) for sound biblical arguments for why gambling is both wrong for Christian believers and damaging to our community.

36/11 Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings

Synod –

- (a) receives Common Prayer: Resources for Gospel-Shaped Gatherings development version, and
- (b) commends its use and study by the parishes of the Diocese during the next year, and
- (c) requests that comments and suggestions be made to the Archbishop's Liturgical Panel, if possible by March 31st, and at the latest by June 30th 2012, and
- (d) notes that services can be downloaded and feedback given at www.commonprayer.org.au, and
- (e) requests the Archbishop's Liturgical Panel to bring a revised form of the book to the next session of Synod with a view to considering adding its contents to the appendix of services recognised under the Authorised Services Ordinance.

37/11 Legal definition of marriage

In light of recent continued debate, this Synod again urges the Federal Parliament to retain the current definition of marriage at law, namely as 'the union of a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life', in the Marriage Act. This definition not only reflects biblical teaching, but widespread and longstanding practice which has served the good of human societies independent of religious affiliation.