

23/94 Regionalism

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

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Introduction

1. This report supports the following bills for ordinances promoted to the Synod by request of the Standing Committee.

Regions Ordinance 1995
Regions (Transitional Provisions and Miscellaneous
Amendments Ordinance 1995
Standing Committee Ordinance 1897 Amending Ordinance
1995

2. These bills are part of a movement which started before 1967 when the Wollongong Diocese Commission of Enquiry reported to the Synod. In between there were resolutions, ordinances and reports on the subjects of the creation of new dioceses and regionalism.

3. In 1991 the Synod called for an ordinance with proposals on how regionalism could be further extended within the Diocese of Sydney (4/91). An extensive report was made in 1992 and the Synod invited submissions on the proposals for 1993.

4. In 1993 there was a change of Archbishop. The new Archbishop announced the formation of 5 episcopal areas and the Standing Committee reported that it was considering several models of regionalism or diocesan development. This consideration was deferred until early in 1994 to permit the new Archbishop and his Assistant Bishops time to settle in.

5. In 1994 an exposure draft was distributed and submissions were sought by 31 March 1995. The Synod directed the Standing Committee to bring an ordinance to the Synod in 1995 (23/94).

6. Very few submissions were received but these may reflect the views of much wider groups. The submissions were useful and were

appreciated. But it is clear that there are conflicting views which will need to be talked out.

Overview of the Proposals

7. Regional Councils will be set up for all 5 episcopal areas focused on area ministry and with functions under major Synod Ordinances. Decision-making on matters of financial detail will be delegated down from the Synod to the Standing Committee and Regional Councils.

8. The Standing Committee will be reconstituted so that it will have members elected from the Regions by the Synod members from those Regions, members from wider diocesan interests elected by the whole Synod and ex officio members.

9. The members of the Standing Committee elected from a Region will be members of their Regional Council together with the Area Bishop and Archdeacon, and other members from the area deaneries elected by the Synod members from the Region.

10. The effectiveness of these proposals will be determined through time and experimentation. No structure adopted now should be permanent and a review should be made in the year 2005, or earlier if circumstances require.

Regions Ordinance 1995

11. The main provisions of this Bill are -

<i>Clause</i>	<i>Content</i>
3	Regional Bishops - General Responsibilities
4	Formation etc of Regions
5	Regional Councils - Constitution
7	Regional Councils - Functions, Powers and Duties
11	Regional Councils - Proceedings

12. Previously it was proposed that decisions on the formation etc of Regions and their boundaries should be made by the Archbishop-in-Council. This means the Archbishop acting on the advice of the Standing Committee. The Archbishop may or may not accept the advice but there is no "act" unless both agree.

13. PARC considers that these decisions should be made by the Synod. We disagree for 4 reasons.

- (a) Both procedures require the approval of the Archbishop. The "Synod" procedure requires greater involvement of clergy and laity than the "Archbishop-in-Council" procedure, but it adds formality and delay.
- (b) Once Regional Councils are established, it will not be possible as a practical matter, easily or quickly to increase or reduce the number of Regions.
- (c) The function of an Assistant Bishop is to assist the Archbishop.

(d) Regions are comprised of Area Deaneries. The Archbishop may change Area Deanery boundaries.

14. For the most flexibility we think the Archbishop should form and change Regions and the need for consultation, the difficulty in effecting change and the financial constraints of establishing a Region will act as retarders.

15. Under this bill, a Regional Council would consist of -

The 2 laypersons from the Region elected to the Standing Committee by the Synod members from that Region.	2
The member of the clergy from the Region elected to the Standing Committee by the Synod members from that Region.	1
1 layperson from each area deanery in the Region elected by the Synod members from the Region.	6 *
1 member of the clergy from each area deanery in the Region elected by the Synod members from the Region.	6 *
The Regional Bishop	1
The Regional Archdeacon	1
	<u>17 *</u>

* Will vary according to the number of area deaneries.

16. The foregoing could place a heavy burden on the regional members of the Standing Committee. Therefore, there could be 7 ordinary meetings of the Standing Committee in each year to enable Regional Councils to hold meetings in the other 5 months.

17. Paragraph 27 of the 1992 Report deals with Archdeacons. The 1994 Exposure Draft did not comment on the role of Archdeacons. No submission was received on either.

18. The regional structure has to be standard for all Regions but sufficiently flexible for adaptation to the needs of each Region. A Regional Bishop should have the means for regular contact with the clergy and laity in his area, and the clergy and laity should have some means of contact with each other and a forum to discuss matters of common interest.

19. The Synod operates best when making decisions of principle. The establishment of Regional Councils should shift some activity from the Synod and the Standing Committee to the Regional Councils, especially decisions of detail focused on parochial units.

20. The bill for the Synod Appropriations Ordinance 1995 is compatible with the development of regionalism in the form of Regional Councils, should the Synod be so inclined. The Synod should be responsible for approving the totals of the various expenditure categories but the application schedules which could be substantially delegated to Regional Councils after 1996 are -

	1996
	\$000s
7th Schedule: Parish-Based Area Ministry Initiatives	1,365
8th Schedule: Parish Support Projects	<u>2,727</u>
	<u>4,092</u>

21. But please note this is not "new" money, and some items in these schedules, however, might not be suited to this treatment.

22. A 3-year phasing-in programme could be used along the following lines.

Year 1: as in the bill for the Synod Appropriations Ordinance 1995.

Year 2: each Regional Council is given money for parish/area ministry, for education, youth work and evangelism etc and would be free to spend within these parameters.

Year 3: each Regional Council is allocated a single amount to apply according to its priorities.

23. If parish grants are to be made by a Regional Council instead of HMS, the Regional Council must be prepared to observe and audit the effectiveness of the work done with the money it has distributed.

24. How these money allocation matters will be worked out is beyond the scope of this report, but in the first years of delegation existing commitments would need to be honoured and cooperation would be needed with diocesan organisations.

25. A Regional Council must service certain administrative needs of parishes in the Region. But it must also develop ministry strategies, which it might seek to implement through the money available to it. There is no reason a Regional Council should not be active in facilitating ministry in a Region.

26. As regards fiscal powers, the Standing Committee proposes that-

- (a) to avoid duplication, the actual distribution of Synod funds should be made from St Andrew's House but at the direction of a Regional Council; and

- (b) Regional Councils should be free to engage in fund-raising via existing diocesan facilities and should be free to spend the funds that they raise.

27. However, since the main function of a Regional Council is to discuss matters of common interest in the Region, it is inappropriate for any Regional Council to engage in trade or commerce or in investment activities; the existing diocesan facilities should be used.

28. PARC proposes that each Region should receive 2.5% of the annual total income of the Diocesan Endowment. If there are 5 regions and 75% of the income is distributed, this is, in aggregate, 16.7% of the distributable income. The Standing Committee does not agree with this proposal and considers that the Synod should decide priorities.

29. A concern is administration and we propose that the secretarial and accounting work for Regional Councils should be done by staff from the Sydney Diocesan Secretariat. In one submission it was proposed that a part-time registrar and part-time diocesan secretary will be needed for each Region! The Standing Committee thinks that, if a Regional Council sees a need for extra administrative staff, it should be open to that Regional Council to raise the necessary funds. If the need is perceived by the parishes in the Region, no doubt the money will be readily provided by them.

30. It was submitted that Regional Councils must be given authority to make decisions about ministry strategies and property matters. The mix of functions proposed for Regional Councils gives Regional Councils equal authority with the Standing Committee under the major ordinances regulating parish life and further powers to use parish property, which the Standing Committee does not have. The matters not delegated or which cannot be delegated include the passing of ordinances, the preparation of the diocesan budget, the Archbishop-in-Council functions of declaring properties and schools extra-parochial, and arranging the business for Synod sessions.

Regions (Transitional Provisions and Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 1995

31. This Bill does the housekeeping to enable the Regions Ordinance 1995 and Regional Councils to function. The main provisions are -

<i>Clause</i>	<i>Content</i>
3/5	Commencement dates, confirmation of existing Regions and names of Regional Councils
6/9	Declaration of vacancies and repeal of other ordinances
10/11	Reporting, accounting and audit requirements
12/20	Amendment of various ordinances to provide functions etc for Regionalism

- 21/27 Variations of trust and directions re property etc of organisations whose ordinances have been repealed.

32. In the absence of a proposal for a new diocese, the need for pro-cathedrals with their chapters and canons disappears. Clauses 6 to 9 and 27 of the bill deal with this matter. But present titles are retained and the Standing Committee proposes that no more pro-cathedrals be created.

33. The bill also tidies up other and earlier expressions of regionalism so that there will be a standard regional approach across the Diocese.

Standing Committee Ordinance 1897 Amending Ordinance 1995

34. This Bill provides for some members of the Standing Committee to be elected by the Synod members within Regions of the Diocese. The main provisions are -

<i>Clause</i>	<i>Content</i>
2	Commencement date
3	Definitions, constitution, and election of members
4	Transitional matters

35. In the past 100 years, the membership of the Standing Committee grew from 22 to 51.

	1895	1995
Archbishop	1	1
Assistant Bishops	0	5
Archdeacons	0	5
Clerical Secretary	1	1
Lay Secretary	1	1
Dean	0	1
Chancellor	0	1
Registrar	0	1
Elected Clerical	7	13
Elected Lay	12	22
	<u>22</u>	<u>51</u>

36. There has been a shift in elected lay and clerical membership in favour of the assistant bishops and archdeacons. For many years, only 2 archdeacons were ex-officio members but other archdeacons were often elected as clerical members, sometimes reducing the number of elected parish clergy.

37. The several Regions are not evenly represented among the elected clergy and laypersons as the following table shows. In this table, a person is regarded as associated with a Region if he or she

is a member of a church in the Region but the office holders of diocesan organisations have been separated and a different result is obtained if these executives are categorised by region. A more even result is obtained from including the ex officio members.

	<i>Lay</i>	<i>Clergy</i>
Diocesan Organisations	3	4
Georges River	-	1
North Sydney	12	2
Parramatta	4	-
South Sydney	2	4
Wollongong	1	2

38. In one sense the foregoing is not surprising. Meetings of the Standing Committee are frequent and lengthy. Not many lay members from Wollongong and Parramatta have been able to share in the work of the various sub-committees of the Standing Committee or willing to remain members for long.

39. Then there is the size of the Standing Committee. In 100 years, membership has doubled. Some argue that a body of 51 persons is not an efficient executive body even if disciplined. But what is the right size for an executive body?

40. Within the Standing Committee, there needs to be a balance of regional representation, representation across the Diocese and ex-officio members. Different views can be argued but the recommendation of the Standing Committee is as follows -

7	clerical members of the Synod elected by the whole Synod	7
12	lay members of the Synod elected by the whole Synod	12
1	clerical member of the Synod elected by the Synod members from each Region	5
2	lay members of the Synod elected by the Synod members from each Region	10
	The Archbishop	1
	The Regional Bishops	5
	The Chancellor	1
	The Registrar	1
	The Dean	1
	The Diocesan Secretary	1
	The Archdeacons	7
		<u>51</u>

41. Provision is made for the Archdeacons to be non-voting members of the Standing Committee but for an Archdeacon to vote if acting as an alternate for an Assistant Bishop.

42. Rules are set down in proposed new clause 1A(4) for the procedure to be followed if a person is elected to the Standing Committee in 2 capacities.

Regionalisation of Presentation Boards

43. It was submitted that Presentation Boards should be elected so that some of their members come from the Region and have more understanding of the parishes and their needs.

44. A Presentation Board is comprised of 10 persons: 5 elected by the parish vestry meeting, 4 elected by the Synod, and the Assistant Bishop or Archdeacon. On any view, 60% of the members already come from the Region and what is sought already exists.

45. The main difficulty with Presentation Board meetings is that they can involve significant travel. We have arranged for an enquiry to be made on the cost of electronic equipment stationed at St Andrew's House, Parramatta, Wollongong and other suitable points for use by Presentation Boards and perhaps by others. This will not be suitable for all meetings but it might help with some.

46. The Diocesan Executive Board is considering the Presentation Board procedure. This matter, while it is another expression of regionalism, is not a part of the Regional Council/Standing Committee proposals.

Timing for Implementation

47. The timetable for the implementation of these proposals is -

Synod 1995

(a) The Synod passes the 3 bills as ordinances.

Synod 1996

(b) The 3 ordinances operate from day 1 of the session.

(c) The election of Standing Committee members is held.

(d) The election of members of Regional Councils is held.

(e) The new framework for regionalism operates.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

WARREN GOTLEY
Diocesan Secretary

19 March 1996