

## 25/02 Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Funding

(A report of the Standing Committee.)

### Introduction

1. By resolution 25/02 the Synod resolved as follows -  
"Synod
  - (a) recommends to the Standing Committee that priority be given under the Mission Strategy to resourcing Indigenous peoples' ministry by directing that a percentage of the proceeds from all sales of church trust property per annum be added to the Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Trust Fund for Indigenous ministry within the Diocese or by allocating continuing funding through the Synod Appropriations and Allocations Ordinance, and
  - (b) further urges each parish of the Diocese to generously support Indigenous ministry in the Diocese any way it can, for example, by giving a percentage of any land sales to the Indigenous Peoples' Ministry trust Fund or by giving 1% of their net income to the fund or supporting existing Indigenous ministries at a local level in every possible way."
2. The Standing Committee appointed Bishop Ivan Lee, the Rev John McIntyre, Mr James Flavin and Mr Rodney Dredge as a committee to investigate and report on the ways in which regular annual funding could be added to the Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Fund (the "Fund"), as urged by resolution 25/02. The report was received in August 2003.

### Committee's report

3. The committee considered the funding question from three perspectives -
  - (a) Justice – the principle behind taking a percentage of the Synod's income is the link between income derived from land endowed to the Diocese, and the moral issues concerning the past injustice towards Indigenous people and land that was taken from them (see the note in 4 below)
  - (b) The Diocesan Mission – the funds will be added to the capital of the Fund. The purposes of the Fund include planting Indigenous churches and the training of Indigenous leadership (as outlined in the Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples' Ministry Ordinance 2002).
  - (c) Financial clarity – the committee sought a simple and clear funding proposal which would be easily understood by all Synod members.

#### 44 **Report of Standing Committee & Other Reports & Papers**

---

4. One of the committee members provided the following note concerning the perspective of justice -

“The injustice is a past injustice. When white people first arrived in this land we failed even to recognise that prior to us other peoples inhabited the land: we said it was a land belonging to no-one (*terra nullius*). Accordingly, we simply took the land as if it were ours to take.

The church benefited directly from this injustice in receiving from the colonial government what was essentially stolen land. Money derived from those lands granted to the church forms the basis of the investments from which the diocesan budget is derived.

The logic is simple. We make symbolic restitution to the indigenous peoples of Australia by giving back to them a percentage of the income derived from those investments. We give back from the proceeds of that which was given to us as a church out of that which was stolen from them. By doing this we acknowledge the past injustice and seek in a small way to redress its ongoing consequences.”

5. The committee considered the suggestion that a percentage of the proceeds from all sales of church trust property per annum be added to the capital of the Fund. However, it judged that such a method of funding would not be a regular source of funding, as it would be dependant on occasional sales of property. Further, the committee noted that church property sales so far in 2003 had generally been by smaller, struggling parishes which require the full proceeds for strategic capital projects designed to grow their ministry. To take funds from such strategic use by smaller parishes was considered to be neither equitable nor wise. The majority of parishes which may never have the need to sell church property would make no contribution towards the Fund. The committee thought that a more regular and equitable method of funding would be for a percentage of the Synod's annual income to be applied toward the fund.

#### **Main recommendation**

6. The committee's main recommendation was that a percentage of the Synod's income (which comes from basically the Diocesan Endowment plus other trusts) to be added to the Fund as an annual line item in the Synod Appropriations and Allocations Ordinance. It was suggested that the percentage reflect the indigenous population of Sydney and Australia.

7. In response, the Standing Committee has determined to recommend to the Synod that 1% of the total available income proposed to be appropriated in each year from 2006 onwards be applied as a capital addition to the Fund, before any other allocations are determined across mission policy areas. It is proposed that this recommendation be reflected in the form of the appropriations ordinance to have effect in 2006 and in subsequent years. The

Standing Committee did not consider that it expedient to recommend that this policy be implemented earlier than 2006 since its recommendations for funding in 2004 and 2005 had largely been settled at the time the committee's report was considered.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

MARK PAYNE  
*Diocesan Secretary*

4 August 2003