

## General Synod 2010 Session

(A report from the Standing Committee.)

### Introduction

1. The 15<sup>th</sup> General Synod was held in Melbourne from 18-23 September 2010.
2. The 15<sup>th</sup> General Synod consisted of 253 members of whom 61 were from the Diocese of Sydney. 167 resolutions were passed and 14 canons and 8 rules were made. A number of elections also took place for General Synod boards and committees.

### Resolutions

3. Many of the 167 resolutions related to formal matters concerning the business of General Synod. Others were of more significance. The resolutions that may be of particular interest are extracted in the Appendix.

### Canons

4. In 2010 the General Synod passed the following canons –
  - Appellate Tribunal Amendment (Part Heard Matters) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Appellate Tribunal Part Heard Matters) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Chapter V) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Diocesan Council) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Diocesan Council) Repeal Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Section 30) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution Amendment (Sentences of Tribunals) Canon 2010*
  - Constitution of the Province of Western Australia 1914-1984 Amendment Canon 2009 (No 1 of 2009) Ratification Canon 2010*
  - Long Service Leave Canon 2010*
  - National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council Canon 2010*
  - Special Tribunal Canon 2007 Amendment (No 1) Canon 2010*
  - Special Tribunal Canon 2007 Amendment (No 2) Canon 2010*
  - The National Register Canon 2007 Amendment Canon 2010*
  - Trust Corporation Canon 2010*
5. Some of these canons have already taken effect, others will not take effect unless the requisite majority of diocesan synods assent by ordinance, and still others will not take effect in Sydney until they are adopted by our Synod. The canons are the subject of a further report prepared for the Synod.

### **Elections**

6. The following persons from Sydney were elected to the following General Synod boards and committees –

*Council of the Australian College  
of Theology*

Mr Garth Blake SC  
The Rev Dr Peter Bolt  
The Rev Philip Bradford  
Bishop Glenn Davies  
Mrs Susan Hooke  
The Rev Dr Mark Thompson  
Dr Ann Young

*The Board Electors of the  
Primate*

Mr Garth Blake SC  
The Rev Dr Peter Bolt  
Bishop Glenn Davies  
Bishop Robert Forsyth  
Mr Justice Peter Young

*Long Service Leave Board*

Mr Doug Marr

*Standing Committee*

Mr Garth Blake SC  
Bishop Glenn Davies  
Bishop Robert Forsyth  
Mr Robert Tong  
Mr Justice Peter Young

*Defence Force Board*

The Rev Andrew Nixon

*Appellate Tribunal*

Mrs Gillian Davidson

*The Board of Assessors  
(Appellate Tribunal)*

Bishop Glenn Davies

*Special Tribunal*

Mr Robert Tong

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee

ROBERT WICKS  
*Diocesan Secretary*

11 August 2011

**Appendix**

**General Synod 2010 – Selected resolutions**

*23/10 Quadricentenary of the King James Bible*

That this Synod:

- (a) gives thanks to God for the impact of the King James Version of the Bible on English speaking peoples over the past four centuries;
- (b) recognises that in 2011 the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible provides an opportunity to celebrate the contribution which that translation has made to shaping the life, language and culture of Australia and other nations;
- (c) commends the King James Version and other faithful translations of the Bible for personal and public instruction, affirming the importance of continuing biblical translation, scholarship and teaching;
- (d) notes with enthusiasm the events throughout 2011 organised by the Bible Society in Australia and the 2011 Trust in the United Kingdom;
- (e) requests that dioceses, parishes and all Anglicans support the celebrations of the King James Version of the Bible and undertake local initiatives, where possible, to promote and teach the Bible both within the Church and throughout the Australian community.

*40/10 Improvement of educational outcomes for Indigenous Young People*

That this Synod:

- 1. Gives thanks to God for the work and ministry of the Australian Anglican Schools Network, comprising over 150 schools and almost 150,000 students across the nation;
- 2. Commends the Network on its ground-breaking research project '*Building Relationships – Indigenous Education Initiatives in AASN Schools*', which tells the stories, the successes and the struggles of indigenous young people in Anglican schools;
- 3. Notes the many and varied responses that Anglican schools – single sex and co-educational, long-established and newly-founded, boarding and day – are making to the challenge of providing indigenous young Australians with the educational opportunity that should be available for all Australians; and
- 4. Recognises how indigenous Australians are enriching the lives of students in Anglican schools, through building mutually rewarding relationships.

*71/10 The Anglican Communion Covenant*

That this General Synod:

- (a) thanks the Covenant Design Group for their faithfulness and responsiveness in producing the Anglican Communion Covenant;
- (b) recognizes that an Anglican Communion Covenant seeks to provide a means to strengthen and promote our common life as a Communion;
- (c) affirms the value of the relationships we share with the other member churches of the Anglican Communion;
- (d) renews our commitment to maintain and strengthen those relationships to further the mission we share;

and further this General Synod:

- (e) receives the final text of the Anglican Communion Covenant as an expression of aspirations for the life of the Anglican Communion;
- (f) commends it for further study, dialogue and deliberation in the Dioceses;
- (g) requests the Synods of all dioceses to consider the question of the Anglican Church of Australia adopting the Covenant by resolution and report to the Standing Committee by December 2012;
- (h) requests the Standing Committee to produce a report for consideration at the Sixteenth Session of General Synod.

*81/10 Sanctity of Life*

That this Synod affirms the sanctity of life; that life is God's gift and that our task is to protect, nurture and sustain life to the best of our ability.

That this Synod makes this reaffirmation amidst media reports, so soon after a federal election, suggesting a future federal parliamentary debate about euthanasia.

*91/10 Caring for the Creation: the need to acknowledge and respond to population issues*

That this General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia gives thanks to Almighty God for the gracious gift of human life and for the privilege of being divine image bearers.

Synod acknowledges:

- (a) That all human life comes from God, irrespective of age, gender, race, or ability, and that God does not delight in the death of any he has made, and notes:
- (b) Resolution I.8 of the Lambeth Conference 1998, which
  - (i) reaffirms the Biblical vision of Creation according to which the divine spirit is present in Creation and human beings have responsibility to make personal and corporate sacrifices for the common good of all Creation; and

- (ii) recognizes that unless human beings take responsibility for caring for the earth, the consequences will be catastrophic because of: overpopulation, unsustainable levels of consumption by the rich, poor quality and shortage of water, air pollution, eroded and impoverished soil, forest destruction, and animal extinction.
- (c) The encouragement in Resolution 14.15 of the Anglican Consultative Council in May 2009 for Provinces 'to advocate sustainable restorative economies with national governments, the United Nations through the Anglican Observers Office, and local constituencies'.

And requests:

- (1) Australian Anglican Dioceses and individuals to:
  - (i) Grow in understanding of global and national environmental challenges, and the role of human population growth in contributing to them.
  - (ii) Use resources including those identified by the General Synod's Public Affairs Commission and Environment Working Group to assist in developing integrated views of issues and potential responses, and take action to reduce our impacts.
  - (iii) Contribute thoughtfully and prayerfully to public debate about how to
    - achieve justice not only for current Australians but for our descendants,
    - nurture and protect life on this fragile land with all its beauty and diversity,
    - share in a world of finite resources, showing love for our neighbours, particularly those who live in the two-thirds world.
  - (iv) Remain confident in the gospel of Jesus Christ to address environmental challenges as it calls people to turn from human selfishness and greed.
  - (v) Prayerfully consider and reduce their levels of consumption.
  - (vi) Explore ways to ensure that every child is welcomed and has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.
- (2) The Australian Government to:
  - (i) Recognise the role of population growth and unsustainable levels of consumption by the affluent in contributing to global and national environmental challenges, and avoid any reliance on continuing population growth to maintain economic growth.
  - (ii) Determine a sustainable population policy for Australia which is fair and just.

- (iii) Consider carefully any incentive aimed specifically and primarily at increasing Australia's population while continuing to support low-income families and sustainable immigration.
  - (iv) Support agricultural research both to care for our land and to preserve our ability to produce food.
  - (v) Contribute more generously to improving the welfare of people in the least developed nations, and other life in their environments, in particular by including support for family planning and women's reproductive health programmes with aid for development, in ways that respect the cultures of those people and take account of Christian values including respect for the sanctity of all human life.
- (3) The reporting of the outcome of this Motion to the United Nations Anglican Observers' Office.

*93/10 Jerusalem Declaration*

That General Synod notes the publication of the Jerusalem Declaration and acknowledges the particular context in which it has arisen. The General Synod encourages its study by dioceses and parishes in this Church to assist our understanding of some of the current issues facing the Anglican Communion.

*105/10 Fresh Expressions of Church*

That this Synod:

- affirms the mixed economy of existing and fresh expressions of church, working in partnership, as a most promising mission strategy in a fast changing culture;
- recommends that each diocese should have a strategy for the encouragement and resourcing of church planting and fresh expressions of church, reflecting the network neighbourhood reality of society and of mission opportunity;
- recommends that the initial training of all ministers, lay and ordained, should include a focus on cross-cultural evangelism, church planting and fresh expressions of church;
- encourages those responsible for vocations and training in dioceses and parishes to promote the imaginative recruitment, training and deployment of ordained and lay pioneer ministers;
- commends the Back to Church Sunday initiative to dioceses;
- requests that Fresh Expressions Australia give particular attention to the development of the following aspects of the mission-shaped church in the next triennium (2010-2012), namely –
  - (a) the ongoing growth of fresh expressions in suburban, rural, regional and remote Australia;
  - (b) the challenge of multicultural contexts;
  - (c) the need for collaboration between dioceses;

- (d) the development of pioneer training for lay and ordained leaders;
- (e) the consolidation of a network of practitioners; and
- (f) the consideration of partnership with Anglican schools in the development of Fresh Expressions, especially in new and growing housing areas.

*110/10 Freedom of Religion*

That this General Synod calls on the Commonwealth, State and Territory governments to reaffirm their commitment to religious freedom and to take all practical steps necessary to ensure that the following six freedoms are safeguarded in Australia within the constraints of the civil and criminal law generally applicable:

- freedom to manifest a religion through religious observance and practice;
- freedom to appoint people of faith to organisations run by faith communities;
- freedom to teach and uphold moral standards within faith communities;
- freedom of conscience to discriminate between right and wrong;
- freedom to teach and propagate religion; and
- freedom of a person to change their religion.

*125/10 Human Rights*

That this Synod:

1. affirms that every human being is made in the image of God and has inherent dignity and worth; and that it is essential to protect the human rights that reflect this inherent dignity of all people, especially of the most vulnerable;
2. notes the June 2009 submission of the General Synod Standing Committee of the Anglican Church of Australia to the National Human Rights Consultation;
3. supports Commonwealth Government's initiatives to increase funding and efforts to promote human rights education, to provide a statement of compatibility with human rights when introducing new legislation and to set up a Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights to scrutinise legislation for compliance with human rights.

*132/10 Diaconal or Lay Celebration of the Holy Communion*

That General Synod:

1. Recalls the opinion of the Appellate Tribunal of 24 December 1997 that it is consistent with the Constitution of The Anglican Church of Australia to permit or authorise diaconal or lay celebration of the Holy Communion, but only under and in accordance with a Canon of General Synod.

2. Notes the opinion of the Appellate Tribunal of 12 August 2010 concerning diaconal or lay celebration of the Holy Communion and the Tribunal's opinion that no existing Canon of General Synod authorising diaconal or lay celebration at the Holy Communion has been identified; and
3. Noting the Tribunal's majority advice that "it is up to the Bishops and this Tribunal to see that the rules of the Church are upheld", encourages all diocesan Bishops in their task of upholding the rules of the Church.

*134/10 School Chaplains*

That the General Synod:

- (a) calls on the Commonwealth Government to reaffirm its commitment to the funding of the School Chaplains' Program and to defend the proposed challenge in the High Court to the validity of such funding; and
- (b) authorises the Standing Committee, if it considers it appropriate, to join in supporting, financially and otherwise, on behalf of this Synod opposition to such challenge in the High Court.

*141/10 Gambling*

That Synod notes the Productivity Commission's report into gambling which indicates that:

- (i) there are between 80,000-160,000 problem gamblers in Australia, along 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 on poker machines annually comes from problem gamblers; and
- (iv) the public benefits and jobs creation, which the registered clubs claim to offer through their gambling profits are highly debatable.

General Synod recognises the dependence of all state and territory governments on revenue from poker machine gambling leads them to have a conflict of interest when considering strategies to reduce problem gambling. General Synod endorses efforts being proposed in Australia's Federal Parliament to reduce the impact and incidence of problem gambling, eg., by the introduction of a compulsory precommitment system for poker machine use.

Synod respectfully asks the Primate to inform all state governments and all political parties and independents in the Federal Parliament of General Synod's position.

*152/10 Alcohol Abuse*

That Synod notes the right of adult persons to enjoy alcohol in moderation, and the legitimate enterprise of making and supplying alcohol to responsible adults.



Synod however regrets:

- (i) the increasing practice of binge drinking in society, particularly among young persons,
- (ii) the scourge on society of alcohol-fuelled violence and property damage,
- (iii) the high levels of injuries suffered by police officers while attempting to quell late night pub brawls,
- (iv) the knock-on effects of alcohol abuse which are felt by our hospitals,
- (v) the carnage on our roads often caused by speeding drunk drivers,
- (vi) the alcohol-led physical assaults on many women and children in their own homes, and
- (vii) the practice of specifically targeting teenagers in some advertising of alcohol campaigns, which is directly contributing to the establishment of a binge drinking culture among young people.

Synod calls on all State and Territory governments to consider a range of drinking laws designed to address the problems brought on by alcohol abuse, and encourages our law makers to consider research which highlights the relationship between crime and extended liquor trading hours, when determining their response to community calls for an immediate cutback in licensing hours. Synod also encourages our politicians to examine other initiatives to limit the curse on society brought on by alcohol abuse.

Synod further requests the Primate to write to the Premiers and Chief Ministers of Australia, Leaders of the Opposition and Police Commissioners to encourage them to pursue this matter vigorously and to assure them of our support as they do so.

In light of this, Synod recalls the biblical teaching:

- (a) that “everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving” (1 Timothy 4:4, cf John 2:1-11, Psalm 104:15);
- (b) that drunkenness is always to be avoided (1 Cor 6:10, Eph 5:18);
- (c) that civil rulers and church leaders must take special care in any consumption of alcohol (Prov 31:4-5, 1 Tim 3:3);
- (d) that Christians should avoid causing others to stumble by what they drink (Rom 14:21).

Synod also notes the Personal Behaviour section of our code of conduct *Faithfulness in Service* and particularly items 6.5, 6.6 and 6.16 which relate to the consumption of alcohol.

Synod therefore encourages Christian pastors and other leaders and teachers to proclaim scriptural truths concerning the use of alcohol and to set a godly example in regards to any personal use of alcohol.

Synod especially encourages all Anglican church youth leaders to diligently teach their teenagers about the dangers of binge drinking culture, and to set a godly example to them in all things including refraining from excessive alcohol consumption.

*155/10 Unity of The Anglican Church of Australia*

Noting that this Session of General Synod is the closest scheduled meeting to the fiftieth anniversary of the commencement of the 1962 Constitution of The Anglican Church of Australia expresses its gratitude for the benefits that independence from the Church of England have brought.

It also acknowledges the serious stresses to the unity of the ACA that have developed over these 50 years and requests Standing Committee to appoint a representative commission to examine how the dioceses might better live together as a national body and bring to the next Session of Synod proposals, including constitutional amendments, which will allow the ACA to better express its unity and fellowship into its second 50 years.

*156/10 Definition of Marriage*

As the Greens political party is committed to the legislation of same sex marriages, this General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia expresses its commitment to the present definition of Marriage under Commonwealth Law.

*157/10 Asylum Seekers*

That this General Synod requests the Primate to write to both the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Federal Opposition to communicate the following:

- (a) that members of the General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia do not minimise the complexity of the issues surrounding the arrival on our shores of men, women and children; however
- (b) that the General Synod, affirming unambiguously the clear teaching of Scripture about the value of every person in the sight of God, urges that the Government take immediate and sufficient steps to ensure that all persons intercepted on their way to or arriving on our shores, by whatever means, are treated with dignity, respect and in a way which does not impact adversely their physical or mental well-being.