

## Questions and Answers under business rule 6.3

(Question 1 was asked at the Special Session of Synod to Appoint an Archbishop on 4 June 2001.)

### 1. Gilbulla Memorial Conference Centre (1)

The Rev David Mulready asked –

- (a) Why has the Standing Committee acted so quickly on the sale of Gilbulla that the matter couldn't wait to be brought before the Synod in October this year?
- (b) Why was there no consultation with Parishes, Church Schools & Regional Councils before deciding to sell the only Conference Centre the Diocese has?
- (c) What plans are in hand for the replacement of Gilbulla as a Diocesan Conference Centre?
- (d) While the Standing Committee might not wish to allocate the funds for the development of Gilbulla as recommended by the Gilbulla Board, why was it felt necessary to sell the property so quickly rather than let it continue trading until other means of financing the development could be explored?

To which the President replied –

- (a) A request for significant additional Diocesan funds (in the order of \$1.5m) for a proposed development of the Gilbulla Memorial Conference Centre was made by the Gilbulla Board of Management in February 2001.

After commissioning a detailed report on this proposal and the alternatives, Standing Committee accepted that even after new expenditure totalling \$1.85m, the majority of which would have to be provided from Synod funds, the new development would not solve Gilbulla's financial problems and would only marginally increase the value of the property. Furthermore, either with or without the proposed development, Gilbulla suffers from some physical disadvantages (including that it is now land locked since there is now no further access to the Nepean River). Gilbulla would also be likely to remain more expensive to operate than other alternatives for a new conference centre.

The Standing Committee therefore resolved to sell Gilbulla with a view to its replacement with another adult conference facility. In making that decision Standing Committee was aware that there would be a number of disadvantages if the sale was then delayed or the issue left unresolved. These include –

- (i) significant expenditure (approximately \$200k) would soon be needed on essential services work,
  - (ii) it would be unfair to the present staff of Gilbulla who had demonstrated very considerable skill and commitment and achieved significant improvements to the property over the last 3 years,
  - (iii) it would adversely impact on the centre's ability to secure future bookings,
  - (iv) it would preclude the possibility of achieving a sale in Spring, which it was thought should maximise the likely sale price and facilitate a smooth change-over for the new owners.
- (b) A delay in the sale of Gilbulla to allow for wider consultation would have involved some of the same disadvantages noted in the answer to the previous question. The Standing Committee intends to replace Gilbulla with a modern adult conference facility. The Standing Committee consider that the most appropriate way of facilitating an adult conference ministry while responsibly managing the resources of the Diocese is to sell and replace Gilbulla.
  - (c) Standing Committee has reviewed a number of 'in principle' options for a new adult conference centre. These include the development of one of the Diocese's present camping and conference centres or the purchase of a new site in conjunction with Anglican Youthworks' development strategy. The Secretariat is working closely with Youthworks at

present to identify and assess the most suitable opportunity and report back to Standing Committee with specific details.

- (d) Standing Committee's investigation had confirmed that Gilbulla's financial position and prospects for the next few years was not strong enough to fund the work required from its own resources. The Gilbulla Board of Management had already investigated other sources of funding for their development proposal and concluded that the majority of the funds would have to come in the form of a grant. However, even if the majority of the development costs were provided by way of an obligation free capital grant, the proposal would still not produce a viable outcome. It was felt that a wider search for development funds was unlikely to be successful, and any delay in the sale of Gilbulla would have involved some of the same disadvantages noted in the answer to an earlier question. Gilbulla continues to trade with a view to trying to maintain future bookings as part of the sale if that is possible.