

Questions under business rule 6.3

1. Candidates for ordination

The Rev Andrew Bruce asked the following question –

- (a) How many candidates for ordination in the Diocese of Sydney are there in Moore College currently?
- (a) What is the break-up of those candidates by year of study and by gender?
- (b) How many Deacons are currently formally pursuing the process for ordination to be Presbyters in the Diocese of Sydney?
- (c) How many of those candidates have a BTh or BD from Moore College?
- (d) How many Ordained Presbyters are currently in full time paid roles with Anglicare?
- (e) How many current Rectors in the Diocese will reach retirement age by the end of 2026?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) 31. Another 21 students are in the process of approval for candidature, giving a total of 52.
- (b) Firstly, by year of study –
 - Year 1: There are no approved candidates but three students are currently seeking candidacy.
 - Year 2: There are two approved candidates and a further nine students currently seeking candidacy.
 - Year 3: There are nine approved candidates and a further nine students currently seeking candidacy.
 - Year 4: There are sixteen approved candidates.
 - Post-grad: There are four approved candidates.
 - Total: 52
- Secondly, by gender –
 - There are two female students (both post-grads) who are candidates. There are fifty male students who are either candidates or seeking candidacy.
- (c) 59 (35 applicants and 24 accepted candidates).
- (d) The current Ordination Policy requires all men ordained as presbyters to have a theological degree from Moore College. Currently 57 have a BTh or BDiv, one is currently studying for a BTh and one has a MA (theol) from Moore College.
- (e) 16
- (f) 38.

2. Composition of the 52nd Synod

Mr Peter M.G. Young asked the following question –

- (a) As of 3 May 2021, are there any variations in the figures, which are contained in the table in paragraph 46 of the Standing Committee's Report on the Composition, Purpose and Role of Synod (43/17)?
- (b) If so, what are they?

To which the President replied –

Questions & Answers for the 2021 (first ordinary) session of the 52nd Synod

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

The question is asking for the composition of the 52nd Synod. There are some differences as compared to the 51st Synod. Overall, the number of lay members of Synod has declined by two and the number of clergy members has increased by three.

A table showing a breakdown of the composition is provided with the answer on the notice board in the foyer on Level 3.

Synod membership	Lay	Clergy	Total
Parish Clergy (Part 4)		262	262
Parish Laypersons (Part 5)	500		500
Nominated Organisations (Part 6)	4	2	6
Nominated Clergy (Part 7)		27	27
Nominated Laypersons (Part 8)	27		27
Nominated Indigenous Representatives (Part 8A)	1		1
Other Members of Synod (Part 9)	3	8	11
Total	535	299	834
Percentage	64%	36%	

3. Hub and Spoke parish structure

Mr Peter M.G. Young asked the following question –

- (a) Is the proposed Hub and Spoke parish structure referred to in paragraph 47 of the Standing Committee's Report on Parish and Regional Restructure (dated 4 March 2021) to be adopted anywhere in the Diocese even in an experimental manner?
- (b) Has such structure been adopted in any form by the Diocese in the past 25 years and to date and if so, where?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) Yes. Currently, 'pilot' Hub and Spoke parish structures are under active consideration.
- (b) Something similar to a Hub and Spoke parish structure has been implemented in several areas across the Diocese during the last 25 years. Examples include – Christ Church Inner West (Ashfield, Five Dock and Haberfield), St George North (Bexley, Bexley North and Carlton), Grace West (Glenmore Park and Mulgoa) and Neutral Bay and Kirribilli Anglican.

4. Impact of Hub and Spoke parish structure on composition of Synod

Mr Peter M.G. Young asked the following question –

- (a) Noting paragraph 50 of the Standing Committee's Report on the Composition, Purpose and Role of Synod (43/17), have the Standing Committee or others in the Diocese considered managing the numbers of Parts 4 and 5 members of Synod by taking into account the proposed Hub and Spoke parish structure referred to in paragraph 47 of the Standing Committee's Report on Parish and Regional Restructure (dated 4 March 2021)?

- (b) If so, in what way?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) The matter raised has been noted in discussions but has not yet been formally considered.
(b) Not applicable.

5. Flu vaccine

Canon Sandy Grant asked the following question –

- (a) What advice can parishes be given about whether having the flu vaccine could be considered a workplace requirement and if so, for which categories of ministers and staff, and what exemptions should be considered allowable?
(b) Would the Stipends and Allowances Committee consider this matter in regard to the possibility of advising that the flu vaccine should be a legitimate expense which should be paid or reimbursed directly, or provided for as a permissible expense for a MEA under 11(2) of the Remuneration Guidelines?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

Part (a) of the question is out of order under rule 6.3(4)(f) of the *Synod Standing Orders Ordinance 2019* as it seeks a legal opinion.

In respect to Part (b), the Stipends and Allowances Committee has considered the question and is of the view that the flu vaccine would be an allowable expense under the paragraph 11.2(d) of the Remuneration Guidelines.

6. Signing of the Statement of Personal Faith by School Board members

Ms Lyn Bannerman asked the following question –

In the Report from Standing Committee (Book 2, page 207, para 5.2) it advises that it has amended the rule in the Governance Policy for Diocesan Organisations which requires the signing of the statement of personal faith by all School Board members, except for alumni members, who, as an alternative, must sign a statement of support for the Christian ethos and charter of the school. The amendment removes this exception.

As this matter was well debated in Synod at the time, and the exception was made by a majority decision of Synod –

- (a) Acknowledging that the Policy had a time limit for the exception (July 2020), why was it not seen as appropriate for Synod to be given the opportunity to review the matter first, determining whether the exception should be extended, deleted or enshrined permanently?
(b) Given the date of July 2020, why was the matter not brought to Synod before that date, that is in 2019?
(c) Have there been serious issues arising in School Boards because of the exception, and if so, what are they?
(d) If no known serious issues, why was the matter seen as urgent, by-passing Synod?
(e) How many Principals and School Boards were consulted before this decision was made? Please name the Schools?
(f) What was the feedback from such consultations, if any?
(g) If there was little or no such consultation, why not?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

The question is out of order under rule 6.3(4)(a) of the *Synod Standing Orders Ordinance 2019* as it contains assertions, in particular an untrue assertion that the amendments made by the Standing Committee removed an exception in the Policy allowing alumni members to sign an alternative form of statement.

Nonetheless, I can make the following comments.

The question of whether alumni appointed members on the boards of diocesan schools should be permitted to sign a statement of support for the Christian ethos of the school as an alternative to signing a statement of personal faith was debated and decided by the Synod in 2014. There was an extensive consultation process undertaken in respect to the Governance Policy at that time.

By resolution 23/14, the Synod determined that the alternative form of statement would remain available as an option for alumni members until 1 July 2020. Thereafter, any person appointed as an alumni representative on the governing board or council of a diocesan school must sign the statement of personal faith instead. The resolution amended the Policy to insert the words “before 1 July 2020”. These words operated as a ‘sunset’ provision on the availability of the alternative form of statement under the Policy. The amendment gave diocesan schools almost 6 years advanced notice of the change.

The Synod did not request that the matter be the subject of any further debate or review. There was no reason to bring the matter to Synod in 2019.

The amendments to the Policy that were made by the Standing Committee that are referred to the Report did not have any substantive effect. The substantive amendment was made by the Synod in 2014 when it set the 1 July 2020 end date. From this date the statement of support for Christian ethos became a ‘dead letter’ in the Policy. The amendments made by the Standing Committee merely removed redundant content from the Policy.

Finally, it should be noted that it is the constituting ordinance of the relevant school that determines whether and what form of statement is to be signed by an alumni appointed member. Appendix 2 of the Policy sets out guidelines to which these constituting ordinances are usually expected to conform. The policy guidelines do not have force and effect in relation to a particular diocesan school unless and until its ordinance is amended to reflect them.

7. Domestic Abuse Leave for Clergy

Mr David Barker asked the following question –

In relation to Item M7 – Domestic Abuse Leave for Clergy –

- (a) With respect to paragraph 23: What if the abuse is not physical violence and more of a psychological or financial nature? How does the policy address these types of violence? These are not as obvious, but also prevalent in the way abuse is perpetrated. It then becomes one person’s word against another person. How would the Diocese expect the wardens or parish council to deal with this situation? Especially in the granting of “leave”?
- (b) With respect to paragraph 32: The better approach may well be to leave it to each parish to discuss with the member of clergy the amount of leave required. However what if those charged with the discussion (e.g. Wardens or Parish Council) are not sympathetic or empathetic to the situation because they do not believe that the person alleged doing the abusing is actually an abuser? In that light is leave denied?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

The question is out of order under rule 6.3(4) of the *Synod Standing Orders Ordinance 2019* as it contains assertions, expresses an opinion and offers an argument.

Nonetheless, I am able to comment as follows.

Domestic Abuse is a scourge on our society and as a diocese we are committed to ensuring incidences of Domestic Abuse are addressed in our church. Resources have been developed to help individuals and churches respond to domestic abuse. These are all available on the safe ministry website.

The definition of abuse in the Domestic Abuse Leave for Clergy is taken from the Domestic Abuse Policy. This definition is that:

‘Domestic abuse includes but is not limited to emotional, verbal, social, economic, psychological, spiritual, physical and sexual abuse. Such behaviour often seeks to control, humiliate, dominate or instil fear in the victim’

It is not intended that wardens and rectors attempt to determine the legitimacy of the abuse when applying the Policy. The movers of the motion at M7 have chosen the phrase “experiencing domestic abuse” to put the emphasis on the felt experiences and needs of the victim of the abuse. If a member of clergy does find themselves as a victim of abuse it is important they have the support and care of their rector and wardens. The member of clergy is also able to speak to the Archdeacon for Women’s Ministry, the Chaplain of the Professional Standards Unit, their Regional Bishop or the Anglicare Family and Domestic Violence Advisor. Female clergy in particular will be directly informed of the inclusion of this leave by the Archdeacon for Women’s Ministry should it pass the Synod, also alerting them to these avenues of support should they need them.

Regarding the amount of leave, the local parish is always able to offer more leave for clergy if the Wardens and/or Rector agree. This is also the case for annual leave or carer’s leave.

If a member of clergy reveals they are the victim of abuse, then like all victims and in line with our diocesan policy, we urge rectors and wardens to value, respect and listen to them, taking their disclosure seriously, and supporting them as appropriate.

8. Modification to the composition of a parish council

Mr Matthew Robson asked the following question –

Regarding the Parish Administration Ordinance 2008 –

- (a) Schedule 2, Section 2.5 states that “Archbishop-in-Council may, on the application of the wardens, make any modification to the composition of the parish council in a particular case.” Could you please outline the steps involved in executing this process? May I have some examples of this clause in use if possible?
- (b) Schedule 2, Section 2.8 outlines the circumstances that would result in the end of parish councillor’s appointment. With regard to 2.8(1)(a)(v) “becomes mentally incapacitated”, what circumstances are required for this threshold to be met?

To which the President replied –

I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) The Archbishop-in-Council’s functions under rule 2.5 are exercised by the Regional Bishop acting with the concurrence of the Regional Council (see rule 9.6). Formally the only step required is for the Wardens to write to the relevant Regional Bishop to apply for the modification. It would be advisable for the Wardens to canvass any such proposals with the Parish Council beforehand and to make an informal approach to the

Regional Bishop to obtain his preliminary views on the proposal before making an application.

One of the most common modifications to the composition of parish councils has been to provide for congregational representation. However this is less relevant for a Schedule 2 parish since the rules already allow the AGM to determine this matter itself. A multi-church parish that has a large number of congregations may still wish to make a modification to cap the number of representatives to keep the size of the parish council manageable.

- (b) Mental incapacity is defined in rule 1.1(5)(b). It arises if a person becomes an involuntary patient or a forensic patient or a correctional patient within the meaning of the *Mental Health Act 2007 (NSW)*, or a protected person within the meaning of the *Trustee and Guardian Act 2009 (NSW)*.