

# 53<sup>rd</sup> Synod of the Diocese of Sydney

## First Session

### Minutes of Proceedings of the Synod for Tuesday 19 September 2023

#### 1. Assembly

The Synod assembled in the Wesley Theatre at 3.15 pm.

#### 2. Prayers

Prayers were read by Archdeacon Kara Hartley.

#### 3. Bible study

The Rev Andrew Rees led the Bible study.

#### 4. Minutes

The President signed the minutes for Monday 18 September 2023.

#### 5. Calling of motions on the business paper

The President called the motions in the order in which they appeared on the business paper, except those motions about a proposed ordinance or those motions to be considered at a time determined by the President.

##### 5.1 Arrangements for consideration of business from the Order of Business Committee

Mrs Briony Bounds moved –

‘Synod agrees –

- (a) to reschedule items of business as shown on the Timetable for Synod Business,
- (b) to adopt the expedited time limits at Standing Order 4.19(1)(c) for the remainder of this session, with the exception of the motions at M11, M13, M14, and M15, thereby reducing the time allowed for certain speeches as follows –
  - (i) a mover of a motion (other than procedural motions or amendments) may speak for up to 8 minutes (rather than 10 minutes), and up to 4 minutes in reply (rather than 5 minutes),
  - (ii) a member moving a motion to amend a motion may speak for up to 4 minutes (rather than 5 minutes), and
  - (iii) other members speaking in a debate when Synod is not “in committee”, including the seconder of a motion, may speak for up to 4 minutes (rather than 5 minutes),
- (c) that the arrangements for the consideration of the motion at M11 (Grace City Church), as agreed on Monday 11 September, be unchanged, and
- (d) to suspend Standing Order 4.6(2), relating to the ability to move a procedural motion (without a speech) for the speaker to continue for a nominated number of minutes, for the remainder of the session,

and suspends so many of the Standing Orders as would prevent these arrangements.’

Seconded and carried

## 5.2 General Synod Long Service Leave Fund

Having been granted leave, Dr Robert Tong AM moved –

'Synod –

- (a) notes the General Synod Long Service Leave Fund was established by a General Synod canon more than 60 years ago when the forms of paid ministry were very different to the various ministries which exist now, and
- (b) asks the Standing Committee –
  - (i) to consider whether the circumstances have changed so much over the last 60 years that it may be wise to establish a Sydney Long Service Leave Fund which could have the flexibility to reflect modern ministry arrangements,
  - (ii) to consult with the Board of the General Synod Long Service Leave Fund, former members of the Board and others as appropriate, and take whatever action it considers to be in the best interests of the ongoing ministry both in the Diocese of Sydney and the wider Australian church.'

Seconded and carried

## 5.3 Temporary arrangements for diocesan schools

Bishop Michael Stead moved –

'Synod, noting –

- (i) that it has endorsed the approach of requiring governors and leaders to be of Christian faith and character, as outlined in the Exposure Draft of the revised Diocesan Governance Policy, to be further considered at the Synod next year, and
- (ii) that the Synod has not yet made a decision whether the new Diocesan Governance Policy will require a signed Statement of Personal Faith,

encourages the Standing Committee to –

- (a) consider approving appropriate temporary arrangements for Diocesan schools based on the proposed "Christian faith and character" model, provided that the temporary arrangements also require a signed Statement of Personal Faith in the form currently required by ordinance from the majority of Diocesan schools, and
- (b) report progress to each future session of Synod until these arrangements are no longer required.'

Seconded and carried

## 5.4 Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH-SA)

Bishop Malcolm Richards moved –

'Synod, noting –

- (i) the long partnership between the Diocese of Sydney and the Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of South Africa (REACH-SA), and
  - (ii) that the Synod of that Church met from 11 to 13 September 2023,
- (a) gives thanks to God for –
    - (i) the election of the Rev Dr Siegfried Ngubane as the eighth Presiding Bishop of the REACH-SA,
    - (ii) the faithful service of the current Presiding Bishop, the Rt Rev Glenn Lyons who will hand over leadership at a date to be announced, and
    - (iii) the election of three new Area Bishops for the largest regions (dioceses) in REACH-SA, and
  - (b) requests that the Archbishop's office write to Dr Siegfried and Mrs Maureen Ngubane and to Bishop Glenn and Mrs Sandra Lyons assuring them of the prayers of our

people, expressing the congratulations of this Synod and the commitment of this Diocese to continued gospel partnership.'

Seconded and carried

Bishop Richards led the Synod in a prayer.

## 6. Motions

### 6.1 Leadership of Bible studies

Archdeacon Simon Flinders moved –

'Synod records its appreciation for the preaching of the Rev Andrew Rees at the Synod Service and for his encouraging Bible Studies during this session.'

Seconded and carried with acclamation

Bishop Chris Edwards led the Synod in a prayer of thanks for the Rev Andrew Rees.

### 6.2 Partnership with Anglican Schools

The Rev Dr Michael Jensen moved –

'Synod, noting the report "Recommendations from the Education Committee" –

- (a) acknowledges and thanks Anglican Schools for their work as partners in the mission and ministry of the Diocese,
- (b) requests the draft statement on Reformed Anglican Education be presented to School Principals and ordained chaplains for their consideration and comment, particularly with reference to the nature and purposes of Anglican Schools within the larger context of Reformed Anglican Education,
- (c) requests the Standing Committee to form a suitably qualified committee, including current Anglican School principals and ordained chaplain(s), to prepare a draft statement for adoption by the Synod in due course, and
- (d) encourages participation by Anglican School staff in mentoring, professional development and networking through diocesan associations and professional bodies.'

Seconded and carried

### 6.3 Education Advisor

Bishop Chris Edwards moved –

'Synod requests –

- (a) the Archbishop, in consultation with Anglican School principals, to consider the role and possible appointment of a suitably qualified education advisor to support advocacy on behalf of Anglican Schools and to assist the Synod and schools to form an effective partnership towards their shared ministry goals, and
- (b) the Standing Committee to consider ways to fund such a role.'

Seconded

The Rev Andrew Bruce moved as an amendment to Bishop Edwards' motion –

'In paragraph (b), omit all the text, and insert instead the matter "the Archbishop to consult with the Anglican Schools in order to determine how such a role might be funded".'

Seconded

Mr James Flavin moved as a procedural motion –

‘That Bishop Edwards’ motion not be voted on.’

Seconded

After a time for debate the President asked –

‘Does the Synod consider that the procedural motion has been sufficiently debated and should now be voted on?’

The majority of members present answered in the affirmative.

Mr Flavin’s procedural motion was put and was carried.

Bishop Edwards’ motion lapsed.

#### 6.4 Training opportunities for Anglican educators

The Rev Dr Gavin Perkins moved –

‘Synod recommends that the Standing Committee –

- (a) request SDS to include instructional training that provides contextual information about the Diocese and its structures in conjunction with SDS supported AICD governance courses, and to offer this training or an alternate version to diocesan school staff (possibly using a similar online platform as is currently operating for safe ministry training),
- (b) request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to report to the Standing Committee on the creation of tertiary training programs for school chaplains, assistant chaplains, and Christian Studies teachers, including the development of a sample K-12 Christian Studies curriculum,
- (c) request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to develop partnerships with university Christian fellowships in order to promote training opportunities and access to tertiary courses with cross-institutional credit which train teacher education students in distinctively Christian teaching,
- (d) as one contribution alongside other suitable options for the resourcing of diocesan schools, request Youthworks to develop training units to support the teaching of the Bible in primary schools, and distinctive Christian teaching, and
- (e) consider ways to fund such requests.’

Seconded

The Rev Andrew Bruce moved as an amendment to Dr Perkins’ motion –

‘In paragraph (e), omit all the text, and insert instead the matter “consult with the Anglican Schools in order to determine how such initiatives might be funded”.’

Seconded

The Rev Emma Newling moved as an amendment to Dr Perkins’ motion –

‘Amend the motion as follows –

- (a) in paragraph (b), following the matter “Archbishop’s delegate)”, omit all the text and insert instead the matter “to consult and work collaboratively with suitably qualified chaplains and heads of Christian Studies to determine time- and cost-effective models and pathways for inter-school Christian Professional Development for Christian teachers, including proposals for suitable tertiary institutional engagement (if any)”, and

- (b) in paragraph (d), omit all the text, and insert instead the matter “request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to report to the Standing Committee the findings at (b) for review and presentation to Synod, and”.’

Seconded

Mr Robert Wicks moved as an amendment to Dr Perkins’ motion –

‘Omit paragraph (a).’

Seconded

Mr Wicks’ amendment was not carried.

Each paragraph of Ms Newling’s amendment was put separately, and each was carried.

Mr Bruce’s amendment was not carried.

Dr Perkins’ motion, as amended, was carried in the following form –

‘Synod recommends that the Standing Committee –

- (a) request SDS to include instructional training that provides contextual information about the Diocese and its structures in conjunction with SDS supported AICD governance courses, and to offer this training or an alternate version to diocesan school staff (possibly using a similar online platform as is currently operating for safe ministry training),
- (b) request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to consult and work collaboratively with suitably qualified chaplains and heads of Christian Studies to determine time- and cost-effective models and pathways for inter-school Christian Professional Development for Christian teachers, including proposals for suitable tertiary institutional engagement (if any),
- (c) request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to develop partnerships with university Christian fellowships in order to promote training opportunities and access to tertiary courses with cross-institutional credit which train teacher education students in distinctively Christian teaching,
- (d) request the education advisor (or, in the absence of an education advisor, the Archbishop’s delegate) to report to the Standing Committee the findings at (b) for review and presentation to Synod, and
- (e) consider ways to fund such requests.’

## 6.5 **Grace City Church**

The Rev Tim Clemens moved –

‘Synod notes that Grace City Church, Waterloo, has been declared to be a recognised church by the South Sydney Regional Council from 1 January 2021 under clause 8 of the *Recognised Churches Ordinance 2000*. Grace City began as an initiative of Evangelism and New Churches, and held its first public service in May 2015. Synod thanks God that from small beginnings, Grace City has grown both numerically and spiritually, and joins in praising God as it celebrates its 8th year of ministry.’

Seconded and carried with acclamation

A video presentation was given regarding Grace City Church.

The Rev Philip Wheeler led the Synod in prayer for Grace City Church.

## 6.6 **Box Hill**

Bishop Gary Koo moved –

'Synod praises God for the acquisition of the property at 158 Boundary Rd, Oakville for the establishment of a new church in the Box Hill area. We thank God for the partnership of the parishes of Pitt Town and Rouse Hill, the Anglican Church Growth Corporation and Evangelism and New Churches, and for the appointment of the Reverend Chris Mann as the church planter.'

Seconded and carried

The Rev Chris Mann, attending in the public gallery, was welcomed with acclamation by members of the Synod.

The Rev Philip Wheeler led the Synod in prayer for the Rev Chris Mann and Ms Helen Mann, and the establishment of a church in Box Hill.

## 6.7 **Archdeacon Narelle Jarrett**

Archdeacon Kara Hartley moved –

'Synod gives thanks to God for the life and ministry of Archdeacon Narelle Jarrett, who went home to be with the Lord on Friday 4 November 2022.

After graduating from the University of New South Wales (BA and Dip Ed), Narelle started teaching at Sydney Girls High School. There, she was led to Christ by another teacher and began attending St John's, Darlinghurst. After teaching, Narelle studied at Deaconess House, completing her ThL (Hons) in 1969 and London BD in 1970. She was active in ministry within the Sydney Diocese before she was admitted as a deaconess in 1985 upon her appointment as Principal of Mary Andrews College (formerly Deaconess House). She was ordained Deacon in 1989, among the first cohort of female deacons. As Principal of Mary Andrews College, Narelle had a significant role in training and development of the female students at Moore Theological College, as well as serving as a lecturer in Church History and Pastoral Care and training lay women across the Diocese. In 2002, she was appointed Archdeacon for Women's Ministry, while continuing as Principal of Mary Andrews College.

In 2008 she became Archdeacon full time and held this position until her retirement in 2012. Narelle also served on various boards such as the Council of Ministry Training & Development, the Mission Task Force, the Standing Committee and Synod of the Sydney Diocese as well as General Synod. She was active in the governance of the Archbishop's Overseas Mission Fund and Anglican Deaconess Ministries. She also served as an Honorary Minister at South Coogee. Synod gives thanks to God for Narelle's valuable contribution to the life of our Diocese, her passion for advancing the ministries of women and her commitment to biblical truth and making Christ known.'

Seconded and carried with acclamation

Mrs Amanda Garlato led the Synod in a prayer of thanks for the life of Archdeacon Jarrett.

## 6.8 **Archdeacon Neil Atwood**

The Rev Roger Cunningham moved –

'Synod, noting that Archdeacon Neil Atwood begins leave on the 23 September 2023 and will officially retire in March 2024, gives thanks to God for Neil and his wife Robyn's service of the gospel for over 45 years. Having served in the parishes of Dapto, Normanhurst, Willoughby, Tregear, Mt Druitt, Toongabbie and Springwood before taking up his current role in the Western Region from 2011 first as the Assistant to the Bishop and most recently as Archdeacon, Neil has demonstrated a great love for the people of the Western Region with its great number of communities, cultures and churches. We are also thankful to God for the additional responsibilities he assumed in support of Bishop Ivan Lee, Bishop

of Western Sydney, during his sustained illness. Further, we note that since 2014 Neil has combined his regional role with that of ODSM Parish Consultant, leading the production of online Safe Ministry Training, and supporting parish Safe Ministry Representatives.

As Neil and Robyn retire, Synod prays that the Lord would continue to use them to his honour and glory.'

Seconded and carried with acclamation

Archdeacon Neil Atwood, attending in the public gallery, was welcomed with acclamation by members of the Synod.

Mr Cunningham led the Synod in prayer for Archdeacon Neil and Mrs Robyn Atwood.

The President conferred the honorary title of Archdeacon Emeritus on Archdeacon Atwood.

## 6.9 Bishop Rick Lewers

Dean Sandy Grant moved –

'Synod notes that Bishop Rick Lewers is due to retire in October 2023 after 35 years of ordained ministry, and has served at Liverpool (1988-1992), Wanniasa in Canberra (1992-2002), the Department of Evangelism (2002-2005), Engadine (2005-2012), as Bishop of Armidale (2012-2021), and finally at Shoalhaven Heads (2021-2023).

Synod gives thanks to God for Rick, a sinner saved by grace, who is a lover of the Lord Jesus Christ, wonderfully partnered with Janene, persistent evangelist, shepherd of the flock, valiant for truth, pastorally caring, encourager of others in faithfulness, and always a "straight shooter", and prays for God's continued blessing on Rick and Janene in their life and ministry together.'

Seconded and carried with acclamation

Archdeacon Anthony Douglas led the Synod in prayer for Bishop Rick and Mrs Janene Lewers.

## 6.10 Bishop Ross and Mrs Jenny Nicholson

Bishop Chris Edwards moved –

'Synod records its appreciation for the ministry of Bishop Ross and Mrs Jenny Nicholson and gives thanks to God for –

- (a) their faithful parish ministry in this Diocese,
- (b) their involvement in numerous diocesan organisations and pastoral ministry groups,
- (c) Ross' work as both a parish minister and as Bishop in Launceston, Tasmania, and
- (d) their zeal and passion for the cause of Christ,

and prays God would lead them and bless them and use them more and more in the next phase of their life together.'

Seconded and carried with acclamation

Bishop Edwards led the Synod in prayer for Bishop Ross and Mrs Jenny Nicholson.

## Adjournment

At 5.46 pm, Archdeacon Simon Flinders moved –

'That the Synod adjourn and resume at 7.00 pm tonight.'

Seconded and carried

## Resumption

The Synod resumed at 7.00 pm.

## 7. Motions

### 7.1 Diocesan Ministry Strategy for 2025-2040

The Rev Zac Veron moved –

‘Synod –

- (a) gives thanks to the Lord for –
  - (i) the faithful Anglican ministry efforts of both laity and clergy since 1788,
  - (ii) the crucial work of Moore Theological College, Anglicare, Youthworks, diocesan schools and other ministry organisations, in supporting the ministry of the Diocese’s churches,
  - (iii) the visionary and theological leadership of archbishops, past and present, and
  - (iv) the property and financial resources which facilitate the ministry of the Word, which have all contributed to almost 40% of the national Anglican Church’s weekly attendance being within the geographical boundaries of the Diocese of Sydney,
- (b) recognises, according to the statistics revealed to Synod on 12 September 2023, that –
  - (i) average attendance per week in the Diocese, in this current generation, peaked in 2015, and then began a steady downward trend, and
  - (ii) average attendance per week in the Diocese was approximately 18.5% lower in 2022 compared to 2015,
- (c) therefore encourages all Sydney Anglicans to pray for the lost, so that the Lord would open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18),
- (d) notes –
  - (i) the baby boomer generation, which constitutes a large percentage of the average attendance per week, has begun its progression to glory,
  - (ii) infant baptisms across the Diocese, according to the most recently available statistics revealed to Synod on 12 September 2023, were on a downward trajectory,
  - (iii) the population within the boundaries of the Diocese is booming and is projected to include an additional one million people by 2041,
  - (iv) the majority of that net population growth is expected to reside within the brownfield areas of Sydney, and
  - (v) the challenges of ministering with ageing and often inadequate infrastructure within those brownfield areas,
- (e) further notes the external, forthcoming government-imposed challenges to overcome, that may adversely affect the impact of our ministries, including Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation, and the proposed speech suppression, misinformation and disinformation legislation, at both a state and national level, and
- (f) requests the Standing Committee to initiate a broad review of recent and current Diocesan ministry strategies and foci, together with an analysis of average attendance trends, and an assessment of the likely impact of social changes upon average attendance, with a view to recommending a fresh, comprehensive and integrated Diocesan ministry strategy for 2025-2040, and report back to Synod in 2024.’

Seconded



The Rev Dominic Steele moved as an amendment to Mr Veron's motion –

'In paragraph (e), omit the matter "including Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation, and the proposed speech suppression, misinformation and disinformation legislation, at both a state and national level,".'

Seconded

Bishop Michael Stead moved as an amendment to Mr Veron's motion –

'Amend the motion as follows –

- (a) omit paragraph (b), with consequential re-lettering,
- (b) omit subparagraph (d)(ii), with consequential re-lettering,
- (c) in paragraph (f), omit the matter "a broad review of recent and current Diocesan ministry strategies and foci, together with", and
- (d) in paragraph (f), omit the matter "with a view to recommending a fresh, comprehensive and integrated Diocesan ministry strategy for 2025-2040,".'

Seconded

The Rev Christopher Braga moved as an amendment to Bishop Stead's amendment –

'Omit paragraphs (c) and (d).'

Seconded

The Rev Dr Andrew Katay moved as an amendment to Mr Veron's motion –

'Amend the motion as follows –

- (a) in paragraph (f), omit the matter "recent and current Diocesan ministry strategies and foci" and insert instead the matter "all Diocesan-funded agencies", and
- (b) in paragraph (f), omit the matter "Diocesan ministry strategy for 2025-2040" and insert instead the matter "strategy underlying support of Diocesan organisations for 2025-2040".'

Seconded

Mr Sherwin Titus led the Synod in prayer.

Mr Steele's amendment to Mr Veron's motion was carried.

Dr Katay's amendment to Mr Veron's motion was not carried.

Having been granted leave, Mr Braga withdrew his amendment to Bishop Stead's amendment.

Each paragraph of Bishop Stead's amendment to Mr Veron's motion was put separately, and each was carried.

Mr Veron's motion, as amended, was carried in the following form –

'Synod –

- (a) gives thanks to the Lord for –
  - (i) the faithful Anglican ministry efforts of both laity and clergy since 1788,
  - (ii) the crucial work of Moore Theological College, Anglicare, Youthworks, diocesan schools and other ministry organisations, in supporting the ministry of the Diocese's churches,
  - (iii) the visionary and theological leadership of archbishops, past and present, and
  - (iv) the property and financial resources which facilitate the ministry of the Word, which have all contributed to almost 40% of the national Anglican Church's weekly attendance being within the geographical boundaries of the Diocese of Sydney,

- (b) therefore encourages all Sydney Anglicans to pray for the lost, so that the Lord would open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in Christ (Acts 26:18),
- (c) notes –
  - (i) the baby boomer generation, which constitutes a large percentage of the average attendance per week, has begun its progression to glory,
  - (ii) the population within the boundaries of the Diocese is booming and is projected to include an additional one million people by 2041,
  - (iii) the majority of that net population growth is expected to reside within the brownfield areas of Sydney, and
  - (iv) the challenges of ministering with ageing and often inadequate infrastructure within those brownfield areas,
- (d) further notes the external, forthcoming government-imposed challenges to overcome, that may adversely affect the impact of our ministries, and
- (e) requests the Standing Committee to initiate an analysis of average attendance trends, and an assessment of the likely impact of social changes upon average attendance, and report back to Synod in 2024.’

## 7.2 Conversion Practices Legislation

Bishop Michael Stead moved –

‘Synod –

- (a) reaffirms Synod Resolution 31 of 2018, in particular that –
  - (i) “the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney does not practise, recommend or endorse ‘gay conversion therapy’”, defined as practices that “seek to re-orient sexual attraction to heterosexuality”, and that
  - (ii) Synod “values prayer for same-sex attracted Christians who wish to live celibate lives, noting that prayer is not a form of ‘gay conversion therapy’”,
- (b) notes that the *Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023 (NSW)*, introduced by Mr Alex Greenwich, has been closely modelled on the Victorian *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*, and adopts its expansive redefinition of Conversion Practices by including the broad and vague concept of suppression, according to which the following are illegal –
  - (i) a religious leader meeting one-on-one with a member of their congregation to encourage them not to act on same-sex attraction by practising celibacy,
  - (ii) religious teaching that someone is “broken” because of their sexual orientation or gender identity,
  - (iii) the provision of support through group prayer to a young person to help them fight a desire to act on their feelings of same-sex attraction,
  - (iv) a religious leader telling a member of their congregation that they will be excommunicated if they continue their same-sex relationship,
  - (v) parents declining to support their child’s request for puberty blockers if a health professional recommends it, or otherwise restricting their child access to any health care services that would affirm their child’s gender identity, and
  - (vi) a teacher telling a student that God does not accept them unless they keep the sex they were assigned at birth and dress accordingly  
(All examples from <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/change-or-suppression-practices/have-you-experienced-a-change-or-suppression-practice/> ),
- (c) notes the pre-election commitments of the Premier and other members of the ALP that its legislation would prohibit ‘dangerous and damaging’ conversion practices, but that it would not ban a consenting individual seeking prayer or other advice and assistance, nor would it ban the expression of religious belief through religious teaching,
- (d) notes that the government’s Consultation Paper on Banning Conversion Practices has proposed an approach that is very similar to the Victorian legislation and the Bill

- introduced by Mr Greenwich, which is inconsistent with the ALP's pre-election commitments,
- (e) calls on the Minns Labor Government to uphold its commitments regarding LGBTQ conversion therapy by introducing legislation that –
    - (i) bans dangerous and damaging practices that seek or promise to *change sexual orientation*, but does not use the broad and vague concept of “suppression”,
    - (ii) does not prohibit a consenting individual from seeking the support and assistance that they consider appropriate for themselves,
    - (iii) does not prohibit religious instruction and guidance that encourages church members to live in conformity with the ethical teaching of the Scriptures by not acting on desires that are contrary to this teaching,
    - (iv) does not expose parents to prosecution for failing to affirm and support their child's sexual orientation or gender identity, and
    - (v) does not introduce a bias towards gender-affirming treatment and the threat of prosecution for health professionals who recommend a different treatment approach, and
  - (f) encourages Sydney Anglicans to meet with, or write to, their local MP to express their concerns and requests, and notes that Freedom for Faith has developed resources to assist in organising meetings and writing letters (<https://contactyourmp.org.au>).

Seconded

The President read the following statement –

'I want to alert Synod members to the fact that one of our members has chosen to absent himself from the house while we give consideration to this item. Judge Andrew Colefax SC is a lay representative for the parish of Christ Church St Laurence. As a serving Judge of the District Court, Judge Colefax may be called upon, in that capacity, to interpret the Bill, if enacted, and/or to impose a penalty in respect of a conviction. For that reason, he is withdrawing himself from the house and this will be noted in the minutes.

The Chancellor, Justice Michael Meek, as a serving judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales will not absent himself from the house during consideration of this matter, however he will abstain from voting, and this will be noted in the Minutes.'

The Rev Andrew Barry moved as an amendment to Bishop Stead's motion –

'Omit paragraph (a).'

Seconded

Ms Elise Christian moved as an amendment to Bishop Stead's motion –

'Amend the motion as follows –

- (a) in subparagraph (e)(i), omit the matter “but does not use the broad and vague concept of ‘suppression’,”,
- (b) insert a new subparagraph (e)(ii) as follows, with consequential re-lettering –
  - “(ii) clarifies that prayer for same-sex attracted Christians who wish to live celibate lives, if offered in a genuinely non-coercive and ethically acceptable manner, would not constitute a change or suppression practice within the scope of the legislation,”,
- (c) in re-lettered subparagraph (e)(iii), following the matter “appropriate for themselves,”, insert the matter “but includes a requirement that religious organisations and leaders in religious communities are not to withhold from such an individual access to broader sources of support and full information as to the documented long-term risks and harms associated with change and suppression practices,”, and

- (d) in re-lettered subparagraph (e)(vi), omit all the text, and insert instead the matter “takes account of relevant health professionals’ ethical guidelines and codes of conduct, and”.’

Seconded

Mr Jason Marriott moved as an amendment to Bishop Stead’s motion –

‘In subparagraph (a)(i), following the words “defined as” insert the word “psychological”.’

Seconded

Bishop Stead led the Synod in prayer.

Mr Barry’s amendment was not carried.

Ms Christian’s amendment was not carried.

Mr Marriott’s amendment was carried.

Bishop Stead’s motion, as amended, was carried in the following form –

‘Synod –

- (a) reaffirms Synod Resolution 31 of 2018, in particular that –
- (i) “the Anglican Church in the Diocese of Sydney does not practise, recommend or endorse ‘gay conversion therapy’”, defined as psychological practices that “seek to re-orient sexual attraction to heterosexuality”, and that
  - (ii) Synod “values prayer for same-sex attracted Christians who wish to live celibate lives, noting that prayer is not a form of ‘gay conversion therapy’”,
- (b) notes that the *Conversion Practices Prohibition Bill 2023* (NSW), introduced by Mr Alex Greenwich, has been closely modelled on the Victorian *Change or Suppression (Conversion) Practices Prohibition Act 2021*, and adopts its expansive redefinition of Conversion Practices by including the broad and vague concept of suppression, according to which the following are illegal –
- (i) a religious leader meeting one-on-one with a member of their congregation to encourage them not to act on same-sex attraction by practising celibacy,
  - (ii) religious teaching that someone is “broken” because of their sexual orientation or gender identity,
  - (iii) the provision of support through group prayer to a young person to help them fight a desire to act on their feelings of same-sex attraction,
  - (iv) a religious leader telling a member of their congregation that they will be excommunicated if they continue their same-sex relationship,
  - (v) parents declining to support their child’s request for puberty blockers if a health professional recommends it, or otherwise restricting their child access to any health care services that would affirm their child’s gender identity, and
  - (vi) a teacher telling a student that God does not accept them unless they keep the sex they were assigned at birth and dress accordingly  
(All examples from <https://www.humanrights.vic.gov.au/change-or-suppression-practices/have-you-experienced-a-change-or-suppression-practice/>),
- (c) notes the pre-election commitments of the Premier and other members of the ALP that its legislation would prohibit ‘dangerous and damaging’ conversion practices, but that it would not ban a consenting individual seeking prayer or other advice and assistance, nor would it ban the expression of religious belief through religious teaching,
- (d) notes that the government’s Consultation Paper on Banning Conversion Practices has proposed an approach that is very similar to the Victorian legislation and the Bill introduced by Mr Greenwich, which is inconsistent with the ALP’s pre-election commitments,

- (e) calls on the Minns Labor Government to uphold its commitments regarding LGBTQ conversion therapy by introducing legislation that –
  - (i) bans dangerous and damaging practices that seek or promise to *change sexual orientation*, but does not use the broad and vague concept of “suppression”,
  - (ii) does not prohibit a consenting individual from seeking the support and assistance that they consider appropriate for themselves,
  - (iii) does not prohibit religious instruction and guidance that encourages church members to live in conformity with the ethical teaching of the Scriptures by not acting on desires that are contrary to this teaching,
  - (iv) does not expose parents to prosecution for failing to affirm and support their child’s sexual orientation or gender identity, and
  - (v) does not introduce a bias towards gender-affirming treatment and the threat of prosecution for health professionals who recommend a different treatment approach, and
- (f) encourages Sydney Anglicans to meet with, or write to, their local MP to express their concerns and requests, and notes that Freedom for Faith has developed resources to assist in organising meetings and writing letters (<https://contactyourmp.org.au>).

Mr Gavin Jones led the Synod in prayer.

The Chancellor abstained from voting on this motion.

Ms Michelle England abstained from voting on this motion.

### 7.3 Closure of Anglicare’s Mary Andrews Village Retirement Living Centre at South Hurstville

Having been granted leave, Mr James Mayfield withdrew a motion of which he had previously given notice.

### 7.4 Doctrine Commission Report: The Doctrine of Concupiscence and its Relevance to the Experience of Same-Sex Attraction

Prof Bernard Stewart AM moved –

‘Synod, having received the Doctrine Commission Report: *The Doctrine of Concupiscence and its Relevance to the Experience of Same-sex Attraction*, in the context of provision for “Tabling and reception of accounts and reports etc” is aware that such procedure does not provide any opportunity for Synod members to be aware of why any particular publication was sought, be informed of its content, or alerted to its availability as a resource in particular circumstances.

In respect of the Doctrine Commission report in question, Synod acknowledges misgivings of some members concerning specific matters including –

At 1.2, when identifying “one of the most contentious issues facing the Christian churches at this moment”, the report does not provide contextual information to the effect that even within the Anglican Church of Australia, Bible-believing Christians contend with God-given diversity as to whether a legally-affirmed life-long exclusive and voluntary commitment between two adults of the same gender is inherently and necessarily sin in every instance and indicate that this report is premised of one interpretation of scripture in relation to this matter.

At 3.7, Jesus’ statement at Matt. 5:28 addressing adultery should be specified in scripture as immediately following Christ’s teaching about murder (Matt. 5:21-22), and other sins, as introduced by the words “You have heard that it was said...”. The report might acknowledge that the primary teaching from this scripture involves the futility of relying on compliance with the law as a means of achieving salvation any other consideration is secondary.

At 4.4, where concupiscence is recognized as an “infection of nature” and much more than sexual lust, the report should warn that a sense of desire is inherent in all sin involving

gratification including the sin about which Jesus explicitly warned most, namely the self-focused accrual of personal financial wealth.

At 6.5, although the report specifies that actual sin only occurs when we fail to resist temptation and allow ourselves to be enticed - an interpretation re-affirmed at 6.6, such a determination is not consistent with Matt. 5:29 and the specification at 4.4 that concupiscence is not only on sin, and inclines to sin, but is sin itself.'

Seconded

After a time for debate the President asked –

'Does the Synod consider that the motion has been sufficiently debated and should now be voted on?'

The majority of members present answered in the affirmative.

The motion was put and was not carried.

## 8. Closure

### 8.1 Committees and Officers of the Synod

Archdeacon Kara Hartley moved –

'Synod records its appreciation for –

- (a) the President and his chairmanship,
- (b) the Chair and Deputy Chairs of Committee and their work in the consideration of the text of ordinances,
- (c) the members who helped during the session by giving advice and serving the Synod, especially the Chancellor and Deputy Chancellors, Registrar, Archdeacon to the Archbishop, and Chair of Committee, the Synod Secretary, as well as the Order of Business and Minute Reading Committees, and
- (d) the services given by the staff of SDS and the Archbishop's Office, Anglican Media, the music team, Bible readers, Wesley staff, and all those who have helped facilitate this session of Synod.'

Seconded and carried by acclamation

### 8.2 Minutes of 19 September 2023

Archdeacon Simon Flinders moved –

'Synod authorises the President to sign the minutes of 19 September 2023 upon the production to the Standing Committee of the certificate of any 2 members of the Minute Reading Committee.'

Seconded and carried

### 8.3 Hymn

Members joined in the singing of the hymn 'I vow to you my Saviour'.

## Adjournment

At 9.48 pm, Archdeacon Simon Flinders moved –

'Synod adjourns without appointing another day of meeting.'

Seconded and carried

We certify that, to the best of our recollection, these minutes are a correct record of the Synod's proceedings.

Two Members of the )  
Minute Reading Committee )

Signed by the President

23 October 2023

DRAFT