

Voluntary Relinquishment of Incumbency 33/17 Licensing of Incumbents interim report

(A report of the Standing Committee.)

Key Points

- A clear policy should be agreed and communicated to encourage and facilitate the voluntary relinquishment of incumbency.
- The recommended policy establishes the general expectation that, where appropriate, a negotiated voluntary relinquishment of incumbency would result in the individual receiving payment and benefits approximating the equivalent of 6 months of an incumbent's normal remuneration and benefits.
- The 'relinquishment payment' would be funded half by the parish and half by the Diocese.

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to recommend to the Synod how it implement a mechanism to facilitate the voluntary relinquishment of incumbency.

Recommendation

2. The Synod receives this report and –

- (a) recommends that the policy in the Schedule to the report be passed as a policy of the Synod,
- (b) requests that if the policy is passed as a policy of Synod, the following motion be moved “by request of the Standing Committee” –

‘Synod, noting the Voluntary Relinquishment of Incumbency report –

- (a) requests the Standing Committee to –
 - (i) notify all parishes of the policy, highlighting the financial expectations upon parishes in such circumstances,
 - (ii) notify all Anglican Schools of the policy, indicating –
 - (A) appreciation for the generosity of schools which have willingly continued school fee discounts to the children of clergy whose fathers relinquished their orders, and
 - (B) that if there is a school family utilising this policy, the Regional Bishop or his delegate will be in contact to request that the school continue the provision of any existing discounts for the “agreed period”,
 - (iii) vary the terms of the Clergy Assistance Program to continue to provide access for the ‘agreed period’, and
 - (iv) review the policy after 3 years or the 10th “relinquishment payment”, whichever comes sooner, and
- (b) requests the Archbishop to authorise that the Diocesan share of funding be provided initially from the Archbishop’s Discretionary Trust, which may be reimbursed through a new element of the fixed ministry cost recovered through the PCR charge.’

Background

3. By resolution 33/17 Synod noted the Second Interim Report of the Licensing of Incumbents Review Committee and, by paragraph (d) of that resolution, “endorsed the concept of Voluntary Relinquishment of Incumbency as a mechanism to assist Rectors who are choosing, or being encouraged to leave a parish, and requested Standing Committee to determine how it is to be implemented and report to Synod in 2018”.

4. At its meeting on 12 February 2018 Standing Committee appointed a committee comprising Dr Robert Tong AM, Mr Michael Easton, Mrs Emma Newling, the Rev Andrew Bruce and Mr Mark Robinson, subject to their consent, to address the request of paragraph (d) of resolution 33/17 and report back to Standing Committee by 30 June 2018.

Discussion

5. The committee met on 31 May 2018 (with apologies from Messrs Tong & Easton) and then approved the final form of their report by email. Dr Tong was subsequently elected Chair.
6. The committee noted that the Second Interim Report of the Licensing of Incumbents Review Committee (“the Report”) proposed two pathways following voluntary relinquishment of incumbency –
 - (a) Ministry re-deployment (eg. assistant minister, school or Anglicare chaplain, theological educator, missionary service, para-church ministries) which is considered preferable if at all possible.
 - (b) Negotiated relinquishment as the second choice, assisted by a relinquishment package to make transitioning out of ministry a financially realistic possibility.
7. The Report proposed the following as possible components of a relinquishment package –
 - (a) annual and long service leave entitlements,
 - (b) a ‘relinquishment’ payment to assist in re-training and redeployment,
 - (c) permission to remain in a parish residence for an agreed period (eg. up to 6 months),
 - (d) extension of discount at Anglican Schools for an agreed period,
 - (e) continued access to the Clergy Assistance Program, and
 - (f) provision of an outplacement service.
8. The Report also proposed the ‘relinquishment’ payment be calculated as a number of months (depending on individual circumstances but on average, say, 6 months) of each of the following –
 - (a) Stipend (based on recommended minimum, currently \$65k pa)
 - (b) Allowances or benefits (as a minimum, travel benefit of say \$12k pa)plus payment for an out-placement service (say \$8k).
9. The Report then –
 - (a) noted that assuming an average ‘relinquishment’ payment of something in the order of \$50k and an anticipated 5-8 such payments per year (based on advice from the regional bishops) the total cost would be \$250k - \$400k pa, and
 - (b) proposed the ‘relinquishment’ payments be funded 50% by the parish and 50% by the Diocese (either from the Archbishop’s Discretionary Trust, or from a new component in the ministry costs recovered through the PCR charge). [Note – the majority of the funds which were merged in 2012 to form the Archbishop’s Discretionary Trust came from the Clergy Mobility Fund. Over many years the Clergy Mobility Fund had itself been funded through a combination of the income available to Synod from trusts, including the Diocesan Endowment, and from direct parish assessments.]
10. The committee considered the allowances or benefits to be included in the ‘relinquishment’ payment should normally be limited to the fixed component of the recommended travel benefit.

Proposal

11. The committee recommends that Standing Committee recommend to Synod that it adopt the policy in the Schedule to this report.
12. If Synod adopts the policy, it should then make it publically available in a suitable form on the SDS website, and ask Standing Committee to –
 - (a) notify all parishes of the financial expectations on parishes,
 - (b) notify all Anglican Schools of the policy and, acknowledging the past generosity of schools in such circumstances, to request their agreement to extend discounts when requested by the Regional Bishop,
 - (c) vary the terms of the Clergy Assistance Program to continue to provide access,
 - (d) review the operation, effectiveness and future funding of the policy after 3 years or the 10th “relinquishment payment”, whichever comes sooner.
13. If Synod adopts the policy it should then also request the Archbishop to authorise the Diocesan share of the funding to be provided initially from the Archbishop’s Discretionary Trust, with provision for reimbursement through the PCR.

For and on behalf of the Standing Committee.

DR ROBERT TONG AM
Chair, Voluntary Relinquishment of Incumbency Committee

16 July 2018

Policy on Voluntary Relinquishment of Incumbency

(as adopted 22 October 2018)

1. After all other options have been exhausted, a rector may be encouraged privately by the Archbishop to relinquish voluntarily his licence. If the rector so wishes, he can progress the matter to the Parish Council for their consideration.
2. Where the rector, the Archbishop and the Parish Council agree on such action, the preferred outcome should be to identify a suitable opportunity for the rector to be re-deployed in other ministry.
3. However, where ministry re-deployment is not considered appropriate, the rector, the Archbishop and the Parish Council should negotiate a voluntary relinquishment of incumbency and/or Holy Orders that incorporates a 'relinquishment payment', calculated with regard to the 'agreed period' as defined below.
4. Where the rector, the Archbishop and the Parish Council or representatives appointed on their behalf, with the agreement of the Archbishop, negotiate such a voluntary relinquishment of incumbency –
 - (a) The parish should –
 - (i) arrange for the rector to take substantially all of his accrued long service leave entitlement (and therefore receive the corresponding sabbatical allowance) prior to relinquishing his licence;
 - (ii) pay the accrued annual leave entitlement;
 - (iii) permit the rector to remain in the parish residence (either rent free or at a rental set to recover just outgoings) or continue to pay any existing housing benefit, for the 'agreed period'; and
 - (iv) contribute 50% of the 'relinquishment payment' by continuing to pay that portion of the rector's former stipend and allowances which equates to the parish's contribution towards the 'relinquishment payment' over the 'agreed period'.
 - (b) The Archbishop will –
 - (i) where appropriate, request the Anglican School, where the rector's children are enrolled, to continue to provide the existing discount for the children for the 'agreed period' after the rector relinquishes his licence;
 - (ii) ensure continued access to the Clergy Assistance Program by the rector and his wife for the 'agreed period' after he relinquishes his licence; and
 - (iii) agree to pay 50% of the 'relinquishment payment', funded in the first instance from the Archbishop's Discretionary Trust, but on the understanding that the Archbishop's Discretionary Trust may later be reimbursed from a new element of the fixed ministry cost recovered through the PCR charge.
 - (c) The rector will fully cooperate in good faith with the negotiated arrangement.
5. A person may only receive one relinquishment payment under this Policy.
6. Definitions –
 - (a) The 'agreed period' is generally expected to be about 6 months, but may be varied to suit individual circumstances.
 - (b) The 'relinquishment payment' is to be negotiated to include any or all of the following –
 - (i) the recommended minimum stipend for the 'agreed period';
 - (ii) the fixed component of the recommended travel benefit for the 'agreed period';
 - (iii) up to \$8,000 (for outplacement services); plus
 - (iv) an amount to assist with medical expenses incurred as a result of the ill health of the rector or a member of his immediate family where that ill health has led to the relinquishment of his incumbency,
 subject to adjustment on a pro rata basis where a rector is part time.

I Certify that the Policy as printed is in accordance with the Policy as reported.

P COLGAN
Chair of Committees

I Certify that this Policy was passed by the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney on 22 October 2018.

D GLYNN
Secretary