

Question: 12 October 2011

Associate Professor Alan Watson asked the following question –

1. Concerning levels of donations to ORAF over the past decade, can you inform Synod of –
 - (a) the annual totals of donations given to ORAF over the past ten years in current values, and
 - (b) the Synod budgeted funding for the conduct of the ABAU over that period in current values?

1. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) The answer will be provided in tabular form and a copy will be provided to the questioner and posted on the notice board in the foyer.

2001	\$431,269
2002	\$628,688
2003	\$540,673
2004	\$711,847
2005	\$1,822,859
2006	\$961,803
2007/08	\$1,554,935
2008/09	\$966,123
2009/10	\$672,722
2010/11	\$732,182

Notes:

1. In 2007 the financial year changed to June/July.
2. The spike in 2005 was due to the Boxing Day tsunami appeal.
3. The spike in 2007/2008 was due to reporting covering an 18 month period in changing from a calendar to a financial year.

- (b) Synod did not provide any funding.

Question: 12 October 2011

Ms Caroline Bowyer asked the following question –

2. Of the 84 complaints of abuse of misconduct by clergy or church workers to the PSU from 2005-2011 how many were determined at first instance to be without substance and not pursued?

2. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

None. At first instance, all complaints are taken seriously and assessed.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Michael Toull asked the following question –

3. Does the Anglican Church Property Trust have any immediate intention of changing its current method of calculating its management fee of 1.10% per annum on the funds it holds as trustee for parishes?

3. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

No.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Hans Norved asked the following question –

4. What steps has Standing Committee taken over the last 4 years to ascertain the extent to which Anglican schools are developing their staff (both Christian and non-Christian) in thinking and teaching Christianity in line with the Diocesan Education Policy?

4. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

The Standing Committee has not taken any steps because it is not directly responsible for this matter. However, for the past four years the Anglican Education Commission, as the responsible body established by the Synod, has undertaken the following actions –

- deploying curriculum consultants to work in schools with teachers,
- conducting professional development courses across schools which carry accreditation by the NSW Institute of Teachers,
- commending participation in courses and programs offered by various tertiary institutions, and
- promoting a suite of over 30 half-day and full-day whole-school development seminars professionally delivered by staff from Moore Theological College, the Centre for Public Christianity, CASE and the Wesley Institute.

The schools and teachers who have availed themselves of the programs and services offered by the Commission speak very positively about them.

Question: 12 October 2011

The Rev Michael Williamson asked the following question –

5. Does the Bishop or Archbishop have the authority to trump the work of Mission Area Leaders and Rectors to plant new churches or parishes within existing parishes?

5. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

Yes. The Parishes Ordinance 1979 has for many years given the Archbishop the authority to form a new ecclesiastical district, being a provisional parish.

Question: 12 October 2011

The Rev Andrew Sempell asked the following question –

6. Concerning attendance at Standing Committee of General Synod, who are the Sydney Diocesan members of the General Synod Standing Committee, how many meetings of the Standing Committee were held in the past 12 months and how many times did each Diocesan member attend those meetings?

6. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

A diocese has no direct say in who will be elected or whether any person will be elected from that diocese.

The names of the persons from Sydney who were elected to the General Synod Standing Committee at its last session are set out at page 104 of the Synod Book. These persons are –

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

As Metropolitan I am also a member.

The Standing Committee has met on 2 occasions in the last 12 months.

We do not keep, nor have access to, an attendance register for meetings of the General Synod Standing Committee. It is therefore not known how many meetings were attended by each person.

Question: 12 October 2011

Professor John Clark asked the following question –

7. Does the Standing Committee plan to obtain a third party risk assessment of the revised investment management structures which it will bring to the 2012 Synod?

7. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

The Synod only resolved last Tuesday to refer the recommendations in the report of the Archbishop's Strategic Commission to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee is therefore yet to consider those recommendations.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Peter Hanson asked the following question –

8. My question concerns access by Synod representatives to Standing Committee minutes. Are Synod representatives able to obtain access to the minutes of the Standing Committee as is the case in the Anglican Diocese of Perth? If not, why is this the case? If so, then can consideration be given to giving Synod members access to the minutes on a secure section of the SDS website?

8. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

Strictly speaking this question is out of order under business rule 6.3(4)(a) as it contains an assertion.

However since I understand this is a second attempt to ask a question about this matter, could I make the following comments as a courtesy to Mr Hanson.

The appropriate balance between the provision of information to Synod members about decisions made by the Standing Committee and the need for confidentiality in certain circumstances as a key requisite for effective management is an important matter that is raised from time to time at the Synod. The matter has been addressed again this year in the report printed at page 59 of the Synod Book. I believe the report addresses many of the issues that underlie Mr Hanson's question.

The appropriate balance between the provision of information and the need for confidentiality will vary from body to body depending on the nature of the body and the context in which it operates.

In his question, Mr Hanson asserts that Synod representatives in the Diocese of Perth are able to access minutes, presumably of their diocesan council. Leaving aside the fact that this assertion renders the question out of order (and without commenting on the correctness of the assertion), I simply observe that any arrangements which exist in Perth may be appropriate in their context. It would equally be possible to point to the situation reported from the Brisbane Diocese that access to their diocesan council minutes (and other committees of the diocese) is "closed for 30 years" pursuant to their Records and Archives Canon.

As indicated in this year's report to Synod, the Standing Committee has considered this matter and has reached the view that existing arrangements for the provision of information to Synod members about the decisions of the Standing Committee remains appropriate in our context for the reasons set out in the report.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Peter Hanson asked the following question –

9. My question concerns the annual reports of certain Diocesan organisations –
 - (a) Do Moore Theological College, Anglican Retirement Villages and the Anglican Schools Corporation make their annual reports (including full audited financial statements) publicly available? If not, why not?
 - (b) Would the Archbishop consider encouraging all organisations required to provide Synod with annual report, to provide them (with full audited financial statements) on either own website or on the website of SDS?

9. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

- (a) No. The financial obligations of our diocesan organisations are set out in the Accounts, Audits and Annual Reports Ordinance 1995. They do not extend to making audited accounts publicly available.

The annual reports and audited accounts of each of the three organisations are tabled at Synod in the required form and are reviewed on behalf of the Synod by the Finance Committee. They are therefore subject to internal checks.

In addition this year the Standing Committee also agreed to commence making copies of annual reports and audited accounts available for a reasonable fee to any member of the Synod on request to the Diocesan Secretary. Copies are available after review by the Finance Committee and on condition that the member agrees to treat the information as confidential unless the organisation has itself made the information publicly available.

The finances of those three organisations are also subject to external checks –

Moore College produces an additional annual report that meets the requirements of the Higher Education legislation under which the College operates as a self-accrediting higher education institution.

Anglican Retirement Villages makes its full audited accounts available to the Department of Health and Ageing. It also makes the finances of each individual independent living village available to the residents of that village as is required under the Retirement Villages Act.

The Schools Corporation sends the audited accounts for each school that it operates to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations on an annual basis. Some financial data for each school is made publicly available by that Department on the MySchool website, as is 'annual census' enrolment and staffing information.

It is important to note that some, perhaps many, of our diocesan organisations operate in a competitive environment. To ensure competitive neutrality, it is important that all operators in those environments have common financial disclosure obligations. It would be unwise for our organisations to make more information available publicly than do their competitors.

(b) No.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Peter Hanson asked the following question –

10. My question relates to me receiving at my private home address unsolicited mail from the Anglican Church League and the Anglican Church Record –

- (a) What part, if any, did the SDS or any other diocesan body play in me receiving at my private home address, addressed mailed material from the Anglican Church League (on two occasions) and the Anglican Church Record?
- (b) If a part was played by the SDS or any other diocesan body –
 - (i) Under what rule, policy or procedure was that action taken?
 - (ii) Has that rule, policy or procedure been tested against the SDS (or other diocesan body's) Privacy legislation compliance program and if so, what were the results of that test?

10. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

Given the nature and purpose of the Synod, an essential part of its functioning involves dialogue and the exchange of views between its members about the business of the Synod. The exchange of views between Synod members is facilitated, in part, through the circulation of material in accordance with guidelines published on the Secretariat's website, www.sds.asn.au. This is available to all members.

Part (b)(ii) is out of order under business rule 6.3(4)(f) as it seeks a legal opinion. Suffice to say that these guidelines have been assessed against relevant privacy principles.

Question: 12 October 2011

Mr Raymond Minniecon asked the following question –

11. Is it at all possible at this stage to indicate how the Diocese, in developing strategies for ministry as we move towards 2050, may give proper regard to the growing Indigenous population in the Diocese?

11. I am informed that the answer is as follows –

I understand the committee responsible for developing the report is aware of these issues but is yet to specifically engage with them.