



Discussion Paper – Purpose, Composition and Size of Diocesan Council

Background

The 168th Session of Synod in 2022 passed a resolution “*requesting Diocesan Council to conduct a governance review focussing on the purpose, composition and size of Diocesan Council. The review is to encompass comprehensive parish engagement and consultation with independent persons. A report with recommendations is to be made to Synod 2023.*”

The Report

The report for Synod consists of 5 documents:

1. This Discussion Paper
2. Independent Consultant’s Report “Governance Review of Diocesan Council – Perspectives on the purpose, composition and size of Diocesan Council” Lynette Glendinning, Tempo Strategies.
3. Diocesan Governance Comparison
4. Governance – Parish Consultation Sessions Summary
5. Governance Introduction Adelaide Diocese

Recommendations

The Consultant made 12 suggestions for further consideration including 3 specific recommendations which appear as items 1, 6, and 8 on page 15 of her report.

Diocesan Council has resolved to adopt the three recommendations and has requested the Secretary of Synod to develop proposals for their implementation:

1. [Develop a Competencies Framework for DC](#)
6. [Undertake an assessment of the mix of individuals, aptitudes and traits on DC against the DC Competencies Framework \(cf1.1\) and identify any gaps](#)
8. [Develop a protocol for managing multiple roles and personal vested interests on DC](#)

The Diocesan Council Task Group

Diocesan Council appointed a Task Group to respond to the Synod resolution and instigate the report. Its members are the Venerable Andrew Mintern, the Rev’d Michael Lane, the Rev’d Julia Denny-Dimitriou, Katherine Dellit and the Secretary of Synod, Joe Thorp. The Task Group is assisted by the Governance Manager, Helen Clarke.

The task group endorsed a paper “Governance Introduction Adelaide Diocese” which is **attached**. That paper was distributed widely across the Diocese with an invitation to attend consultation sessions in parishes during May and June 2023.

A summary report of those sessions “Governance – Parish Consultation Sessions Summary June 2023” has been promulgated to participants and is **attached**.

Issues identified in those consultation sessions can be grouped into two categories:

1. Communication and procedural matters for action by Diocesan Council / Secretary of Synod which I have attached as an appendix but which do not form part of the brief for the independent person, and
2. Issues for consideration by independent persons which are set out below. The Constitution and Diocesan Council Ordinance will be provided to the independent persons.

Diocesan Council purpose, composition and size – Issues for Consideration by independent person

1. Is size a problem?
2. Should DC formally delineate within its agenda or at meetings when it is being the Board of the Association and when it is being a council of advice to the bishop?
3. The perception of “management” being on the Board. This arises because some people perceive / characterise the Archbishop, the three Assistant Bishops and the Archdeacons as “management”. There are currently two lay staff of the Secretary of Synod who have been elected by Synod – is this an issue? And does the automatic inclusion of all three Assistant Bishops and two Archdeacons appointed by the Bishop contribute to that. The Constitution refers to the assistant bishop, however the singular applies to the plural. Is this a real governance issue? If so, how might we address that?
4. Our Synod is one Bishop, roughly 100 clergy (including currently three assistant Bishops) and 150 laity. Our DC is proportionately different:
 - 11 laity, 9 voting (8 elected and 1 or two appointed by DC) plus Chancellor and Secretary of Synod non-voting
 - 12 clergy (4 elected, Archbishop, Three assistant Bishops, two archdeacons, two others appointed by Apb, one or two appointed by DC)

This gives rise to the questions broadly around rationale - We should have a clear rationale for our structure.

At present we think the unspoken rationale to having bishop, dean and archdeacons is they have a more global view of the diocese than the elected people who have a more regional view (generally speaking) - that is another balance to be achieved which has probably not been fully addressed:

- a) Should the balance between elected and appointed be different? Why?
 - b) Should the basis for appointment be different? Why?
5. Should there be a skills matrix?
 6. What other diversity considerations might we address – and how?
 7. How might election processes and appointments be changed / structured to achieve a preferred mix?
 8. Do we need a nomination committee? What might its charter be?
 9. Should we think about rolling elections / appointments, rather than the current wholesale change once every triennium?



Joe Thorp
Secretary of Synod

Appendix

Communication and procedural matters for action by Diocesan Council / Secretary of Synod

1. Diocesan Council updates via Information Update are a welcome innovation.
2. Full PFRC report to Synod is a welcome improvement
3. Please update the list of DC members on the website and include a brief Bio on each
4. Provide even more clarity for parishes on core processes e.g. property leasing and sales
5. Provide guidance to parishes and individuals about how that can raise things to DC
6. Publish the review cycle for policies and invite input
7. Publish the DC calendar so people can see the breadth of issues being reviewed by DC – perhaps the workplan for DRAC would be useful also
8. Provide new Wardens and Parish Councillors with information on who is who on DC, in Synod and Bishop's office etc and how to do things
9. Clarify confidentiality arrangements for DC deliberations
10. DC to consider modelling being Anglican by, for example, undertaking retreats or study.