



Anglican Church of Australia

General Synod

September 6, 2017

ANGLICAN CHURCH PREPARES TO JOIN REDRESS SCHEME

The Anglican Church of Australia will set up an independent company to handle complaints and compensation to victims of sex abuse, enabling the church to join the Commonwealth redress scheme when it is announced.

The company will coordinate and manage redress for survivors of child sexual abuse through participation in the Commonwealth redress scheme as well as for survivors of abuse who are unable or unwilling to use the Commonwealth scheme.

The church's triennial General Synod meeting at Maroochydore, Queensland, voted a new church law to set up the company, so that it has the flexibility to join the Commonwealth scheme. The draft legislation is expected from the Federal Government in the next fortnight, and the church cannot vote to join before that. .

Many of the 23 Anglican dioceses already have redress schemes, but they are not nationally consistent, and depend on survivors approaching the church.

Garth Blake, SC, who led the national church working group with the Royal Commission, told the synod that the church needed to face its moral responsibility, including financial consequences, to the survivors of child sexual abuse.

He said the Anglican Church had paid more than \$30 million to victims so far, but the financial commitment required next would be much greater than that.

"It will cause significant pain and hardship, but nonetheless is the right thing to do. We will be paying for a long time to come for the sins of our fathers and of our colleagues," Mr Blake said.

Yesterday the synod unanimously passed new rules on child protection that for the first time are binding on all clergy and church workers, and feature independent audits that will be published.

It also approved for the first time a national scheme for dealing with child protection complaints against diocesan bishops, including former bishops. Complaints that question the fitness of a bishop to hold office or remain in holy orders will be referred to the national Episcopal Standards Board.

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