

AUSTRALIAN ANGLICAN SCHOOLS NETWORK

REPORT TO TWELFTH GENERAL SYNOD – BRISBANE 21 TO 27 JULY 2001

1. Introduction

At the Eighth Annual Conference of the National Anglican Schools Consultative Committee (NASCC), which took place at All Saints Anglican School, Merrimac, Queensland, in May 1999 a Statement of Agreed Principles was adopted for the creation of a new organisation to be named the Australian Anglican Schools Network (AASN), which would carry on the work previously undertaken by NASCC.

The objectives of the Australian Anglican Schools Network were expressed as follows:

1. To provide a means of collegial dialogue at the national level.
2. To provide a forum for discussion of issues of significance to educators in Anglican Schools.
3. To organise national conferences.
4. To encourage Christian mission and outreach through schools of the Anglican Church in Australia.

The Statement of Agreed Principles is attached as Appendix 1.

A Management Committee of Australian Anglican School Network was elected comprising:
President, Mr. Andrew Luckhurst-Smith, (Chairman, SA Anglican Schools Commission),
President Elect, Mr. Phillip Heath, (Headmaster, St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney),
New South Wales Representative: Mr. Colin May, (Principal, Arden Anglican School, Beecroft)
Queensland Representative: Dr Peter Coman, (Executive Director, Anglican Schools Office, Diocese of Brisbane)
South Australian Representative: Mr. Christopher Ellis, (Director SA Anglican Schools Commission)
Tasmanian Representative: Mr. Malcolm Powys, (Acting Principal Launceston Church Grammar School, Mowbray Heights)
Victorian Representative: Mr. Tony Horsley, (Principal, Gippsland Grammar School, Sale)
Western Australian Representative: Mr. Matthew Hughes, (Principal John Septimus Roe Anglican Community School, Mirrabooka)

The Management Committee normally conducts its affairs through meetings by teleconference held on a monthly basis and has arranged all-day meetings once each year to enable members to give more detailed attention to the policies and projects than is possible through teleconferencing.

Changes in the membership of the Management Committee that have taken place since its establishment are as follows:

Mrs. Stephanie Munday-Lake (Queensland Representative replacing Dr Peter Coman) 1999
Mrs. Barbara Godwin (Western Australian Representative replacing Mr. Matt Hughes) 2001

2. Inaugural Meeting

The Management Committee of AASN held its inaugural meeting at the Anglican Church Office, Adelaide on Friday 30th July 1999.

Those present were:

Mr. Andrew Luckhurst-Smith, President, Mr. Phillip Heath, President-Elect, Mr. Colin May, Mrs. Stephanie Munday-Lake (in the place of Dr Peter Coman, representative of Queensland), Mr. Christopher Ellis, Mr. Malcolm Powys, Mr. Anthony Horsley, Mr. Matthew Hughes.

Prior to the meeting the Management Committee attended the celebration of the Eucharist by the Most Reverend I.G.C. George, Archbishop of Adelaide, in St Peter's Cathedral. Special intercessions were made giving thanks for the work and achievements of the National Anglican Schools Consultative Committee and asking for God's blessing on the work of the Australian Anglican Schools Network.

The President initiated discussion on what the purposes of the new organisation should be and what had led the people present to take up membership of the group.

The themes that were expressed in the ensuing discussion were:

- We need to honour God, to put Him first and to work within His will.
- Anglican schools should be regarded as part of the mission of the Anglican Church.
- Australian Anglican Schools Network should provide a forum at the national level for Anglican schools to facilitate discussion particularly on spiritual, moral and values related issues as they have a bearing on education.
- Australian Anglican Schools Network should seek to become a network of General Synod of the Anglican Church.
- Australian Anglican Schools Network should be a forward-looking, dynamic organisation aiming to develop a strong unity of purpose among Anglican Schools.

Acknowledgement was given to the National Anglican Schools Consultative Committee for the work done from 1992 to 1999 to organise annual conferences and seminars of a high standard, to encourage a spirit of unity and sense of mission among Anglican schools and to give the lead to the formation of the Australian Anglican Schools Network.

3. Executive Officer

Mr. C. V. Ellis was appointed as the honorary Executive Officer of AASN.

4. Vision Statement

A Vision Statement was drafted, drawing upon the ideas expressed in the opening discussion at the inaugural meeting.

VISION STATEMENT

Australian Anglican Schools Network, giving honour to God, putting Him first and working within his will, seeks to:

- *provide a forum at the national level for Anglican schools to facilitate discussion particularly on spiritual, moral and values related issues as they have a bearing on education.*
- *be an effective network of General Synod of the Anglican Church.*

- *achieve recognition of Anglican schools as part of the mission of the Anglican Church.*
- *be a forward-looking, dynamic organisation aiming to develop a strong unity of purpose among Anglican schools.*

5. Statement of Agreed Principles

The Statement of Agreed Principles, which was accepted at the National Anglican Schools Consultative Committee Conference as a framework for a constitution, was accepted as the basis for the operations of the Australian Anglican Schools Network for the time being.

It was agreed that the Statement of Agreed Principles was not adequate for the long-term operation of the organisation and that it will be desirable for the Management Committee to present to a future conference a framework for a fully developed constitution.

6. Financial Matters

The funds for the operation of the new organisation were derived from the surpluses achieved from recent annual conferences.

It was agreed that there is a need for a regular, reliable source of income. This matter should become part of the consideration of the constitution.

7. Financial Report

8. Position Paper – Chaplaincy in Anglican Schools

The document Chaplaincy in Anglican Schools, Guidelines for Bishops, Heads of Schools and Chaplains by the Reverend Dr Tom Wallace, which was the outcome of a project initiated by the National Anglican Schools Consultative committee, was approved by the Management Committee in August 1999. It was distributed to all Bishops, Anglican Theological Colleges, Anglican Schools Systems and Anglican Schools.

9. AASN as a Network of General Synod

In October 1999 the Management Committee was advised by The Reverend Dr Bruce Kaye, General Secretary, General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia that Standing Committee had resolved to recognize the Australian Anglican Schools Network as follows:

That under Part V of the Strategic issues, Task Forces and Other Bodies Canon 19, 1998, the Australian Anglican Schools Network be recognized as a Network.

Dr Kaye made the following comments in his letter written on 25 October 1999:

The formation of this Network is a very significant and important step both for the Standing Committee and for the schools involved. I hope very much that the Network will be able to develop in an effective way in order that the schools may be able to consult amongst each other in the formulation of the Anglican vocation that they have as schools in our Australian environment. We are, I believe, at a critical stage in the development of education in Australia, with the balance of influence lying with the government, and particularly with the Federal Government, and the way in which Anglican Schools are

able to formulate and persist with an Anglican vision of their role will be an increasing challenge.

The Standing Committee looks forward to receiving reports of the development and activities of the Network.

10. National Schools Forum of the Christian Churches

Mr. Harry Macdonald, who attends its meetings to represent the Anglican Church, made the Management Committee aware of the existence of the National Schools Forum of the Christian Churches (NSFCC). Its membership is made up of representatives of the Lutheran Church of Australia, the Uniting Church of Australia and the Anglican Church of Australia.

It has three focuses

- a) National – it consists of national groups rather than state groups
- b) Church – it consists of representatives of churches rather than associations or groups
- c) Christian – it represents those churches that are regarded as Christian by member churches

It exists to

- a) encourage and support one another in ministry through schools by the sharing of ideas, resources and personnel
- b) promote and develop an understanding of church/school relations
- c) promote the effectiveness of Church schools through a sharing of ideas on religious education. Chaplaincy and faith formation
- d) encourage the promotion and facilitation of joint action
- e) facilitate general sharing of information on what is happening in members' schools
- f) be supportive of one another in formulating policy on national educational issues

The Management Committee decided that it should seek status as observer at the meetings of the National Schools Forum of the Christian Churches. Mr. Tony Horsley has agreed to attend the meetings of NSFCC and to keep AASN informed of its activities.

11. Conferences

The Ninth Annual Conference for Anglican Schools organized by Australian Anglican Schools Network was held at Canberra Grammar School from 7 to 9 April 2000.

The theme was "New Hope for A New Millennium". Keynote Addresses were presented by Dr Stuart Piggin, Master of Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University and Founding Director of the Macquarie Christian Studies Institute, Dr Janet West, Anglican historian and Elizabeth Ward, Principal of Presbyterian Ladies College, Burwood, Victoria.

An array of workshops was presented by members of Anglican Schools.

A feature of the Conference was a visit to the National gallery of Australia from a private viewing of the Book of Kells and Revealing the Holy Land Exhibition prior to which an informative introduction was provided by The Most Reverend Ian George, Archbishop of Adelaide.

The Tenth Annual Conference will be held at Brighton Grammar School, Brighton Victoria, from 26 to 29 July 2001. The theme will be: "Learning and Living a Christian Faith".

12. Website

The Management Committee decided to establish a website for the Network in order to provide a source of information about its activities, to establish a reference for the resources that it has developed and to facilitate links among Anglican schools throughout Australia.

Christopher V Ellis
Executive Officer