

# **Lutheran Church of Australia Governance Change Project Basic Questions and Answers**

## **Q. What are the benefits to the Mission of the Church in this proposed Governance change?**

**A.**

- Most significantly, an improved culture of collaboration and communication.
- This has been the strong focus throughout this governance change project. It started with workshops with our original facilitators Les Stahl and Terence Corkin.
- The District Church Council and the Departments of the District have been building a culture of collaboration and communication to strengthen our common identity and purpose as people of the Lutheran Church in Queensland.
- This culture of collaboration and communication is priceless. It cannot be expressed in budgetary dollars. It is not quantifiable. It is not tangible. But it pulsates and gives life to our mission and ministry.

## **Q. What would be some examples of proposed benefits to the people of the Church with these proposals?**

**A.**

- Efficient and effective use of our resources (both human and other resources) through collaboration.
- Strengthening our working together with collaborative activities such as District Assemblies, Senior Managers Forum and a District resource network.
- Enhancing the Department of Mission and Ministry e.g. developing connected communities of witness and service; developing services offered to parishes and congregations; Full Time Assistant Bishop supporting the personal and professional development of pastors and church workers.
- Enhancing communications and integration with the work of the National Church.
- Improving District-Wide policies.
- Revised By-laws and Delegations and Authorities for greater efficiency.
- More clarity for LCAQD staff development and career pathways across the Departments
- Development of training programmes for all leaders in our congregations, parishes and Departments, which will provide future leaders, including training in governance theory and practice.
- Comprehensive longer term budget planning across the District.

## **Q. Who has been on the Governance Change Project Committee?**

**A.**

- Bishop Paul Smith; LYQ: Keziah Sydes; LEQ: Pastor Brenton Altmann; MnM: Carl Eckermann; LS: Dr Clare Seligmann; DCC: Bruce Lockwood.
- Supported by staff: John Hoffmann and Crystal Bignall.

## **Q. Were other people in the Church involved in this project?**

**A.**

- Yes. The project has been accompanied by continuing "communiques" distributed to the people in parishes and the pastors of the District.
- The actual first form of the proposals was distributed across the District at the beginning of 2019, to enable the people of the Church to ensure that the proposals were in the best form to be tabled at Synod.
- The people involved in the work behind these proposals has also included District Church Council members; the Departmental Council members, members of the District Church in working groups; Church leaders; and other resources engaged for specific tasks.

**Q. What is the benefit of having a Full-Time Assistant Bishop?**

**A.**

- One of the key roles in the proposed full time position would be the support and development of our Church workers, especially pastors. This is a matter of great need in our District and elsewhere.
- In our District with so many entities such as schools, aged and community services and child care centres, the Bishop's work of oversight needs this full time support.

**Q. Is there something wrong with the District's current governance?**

**A.**

- The current governance structure was formed for the Church of the 1966 Union. This was a time when we only had two colleges and a variety of congregation-run entities.
- The 1966 model has been added to over the years with amendments and new thinking.
- This is the first major governance review of our District.
- The proposed model is the response of investigations into the best way to design a contemporary governance structure able to address concerns whilst providing flexibility and nimbleness to engage with future matters.

**Q. What is the relationship between our LCAQD Governance Change Project and the National LCA Governance Change Project?**

**A.**

- There has been ongoing engagement between our LCAQD work and the LCA work. Even the legal advisor for the LCAQD project, Matthew Turnour is also the advisor for the LCA's constitutions and governance working group.
- When the LCAQD's Strategic Charter was devised, it was carefully aligned with the LCA's Strategic Planning materials. The collaboration in the current LCAQD Strategic Charter development was a key factor in the subsequent LCAQD investigations into governance change.
- At the LCA Synod in Sydney in October 2018, there was no clarity regarding the role and function of Districts in the published LCA Governance model.
- Our work in Queensland helps give clear guidance to ongoing LCA Governance work, regarding how the District Church functions with its congregations and Departments.

**Q. How do we know this proposed structure is the best governance structure?**

**A.**

- There is no "best" governance structure. In any proposed revision, there needs to be thorough and careful investigation from relevant stakeholders. This has been done to the best of the abilities of those involved.
- The work brought to Synod 2019 is the result of thousands of hours of conversation, collaboration and investigation.

**Q. Is the District Office suitable to accommodate the new governance structure?**

**A.**

- Yes. DEO Michael Turner has been working on options. The key need would be a desk/office for a new full-time Assistant Bishop.
- We also have a manse that is unused, which is the current MnM Director's manse. (Pastor David Schmidt lives in his own home)
- For some time there have been ongoing conversations regarding relocating our District Office to a purpose-built facility with better parking and access.

**Q. What new jobs would be created?**

**A.**

- There would be the various "governance positions" such as Chairperson of DCB and District Treasurer.
- The proposal for a "full time 1<sup>st</sup> Assistant Bishop" is the only salaried position proposed.

**Q. Would anyone lose their jobs?**

**A.**

- There is no plan to end any jobs. The project has been designed to allow as smooth a transition as possible.
- The proposed structure would certainly redefine the role of the current District Executive Officer and our DEO Michael Turner is aware of that.

**Q. Are the new structures, constitution and by-laws compliant with the Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission's requirements?**

**A.**

- Yes. The proposed structures have been reviewed by legal opinion both within and outside of the LCAQD.

**Q. How are we managing risk?**

**A.**

- We are continuing with a robust "Risk Audit and Finance Committee" as in the previous structures of the District.

**Q. How would we compensate for the creation of the First Assistant Bishop as a full time position?**

**A.**

- In the event that the Synod adopts the proposal for a full time First Assistant Bishop, the pastor called to that position, if he accepts, will leave a vacancy in his current ministry. A new call would need to be extended to fill that position. Budget to this Synod includes provision for the salary of a full time First Assistant Bishop position. This would take a pastor out of the work of parish or institutional ministry but the working groups which prepared the proposals for this Synod believed that the full time work of the Assistant Bishop alongside of the Bishop would greatly strengthen and support our pastors in the field.

**Q. What are the ramifications if the governance changes are not approved by this Synod?**

**A.**

- The whole project with its proposals, has been developed after careful, broad and collaborative investigations into our current structures and governance needs.
- In the event that Synod does not adopt the current proposals for governance change, further investigations will be required according to the direction from Synod.

**Q. What happens next if the governance change proposals are approved by this ?Synod?**

**A.**

- The District will have a Board with some new faces, a treasurer and chairperson and each department will have representation on the board.
- We will conduct the first District Assembly in October. The District Assembly will focus on the strategic collaboration of the departments and the district.
- We will complete the good work on By-laws and a comprehensive review of the policies and procedures of the District and departments.

- The Senior Managers Forum will continue its work of collaboration and resource networking in management and administration.
- The Governance Change Working Parties which have ongoing tasks will move into Phase 2, building on early work. Culture and Communications will remain the thread running through all our work, and Connected Communities of Witness and Service will be a highlight of the next Synodical term.
- We will have a review panel to ensure that all matters which arise during the transition are dealt with expeditiously and proactively.
- We will be gifted with a governance structure which will enable the District and the Departments to be more efficient, effective, agile, collaborative and compliant.
- We will have a District gifted with people of good will and specific governance skills when challenges face us.
- We will have a District which has a plan to provide for and develop our future leaders.
- We will have a District where the Objects of the Church can shine.

## **OBJECTS**

The District accepts the Objects of the Church, and shall promote them within its assigned area.

These Objects are to:

- (a) fulfil the mission of the Christian Church in the world by proclaiming the Word of God and administering the Sacraments in accordance with the Confession of the Church laid down in Article II;
- (b) unite in one body Evangelical Lutheran congregations in Australia and New Zealand for the more effective work of the Church;
- (c) promote and maintain true Christian unity in the bond of peace;
- (d) ensure that preaching, teaching, and practice in the Church are in conformity with the Confession of the Church;
- (e) provide pastors and teachers and other church workers for service in the Church and its congregations, and for this purpose to establish and maintain institutions for their training;
- (f) encourage every congregation to carry out its mission to its local community;
- (g) establish, develop and support new congregations where it is not possible for individual congregations to do so;
- (h) support and cooperate with selected churches in other lands as they seek to carry out their mission;
- (i) dialogue with other Christian church bodies;
- (j) establish and maintain schools and other institutions and to foster all other means whereby the members of the congregations receive Christian education;
- (k) cultivate uniformity in worship, ecclesiastical practice and customs in accord with the principles laid down in Article X of the Formula of Concord;
- (l) publish, procure, and distribute literature compatible with the Confession and principles of the Church;
- (m) minister to human need in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and provide institutions and agencies for this purpose;
- (n) take such action as is necessary for the protection of the congregations, pastors, teachers, and other church workers in the performance of their duties and the maintenance of their rights.