

**Anglican  
Schools  
Australia**



## **REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD STANDING COMMITTEE JUNE 2016**

### **PURPOSE OF THE NETWORK**

Anglican Schools Australia (ASA) is a Network of General Synod to which all Australian Anglican schools are eligible members. ASA is a collegial body comprising a diverse range of schools – urban, regional and rural, low through to high fee, single sex and co-educational, independent and systemic, day tuition and boarding. Overall, there is a strong commitment to the socially disadvantaged through bursaries and scholarships, Indigenous education initiatives, community service and extension of the offering of each school's activities into local communities and parishes. Each Australian Anglican school has a School Council in place to ensure it is governed effectively at the local level, is fulfilling its Christian, academic and pastoral mission, is well managed financially and is meeting the needs of the school and wider community.

ASA is recognised by the General Synod of The Anglican Church of Australia under Part V of the *Strategic Issues, Task Forces and Other bodies Canon 19, 1998* as a Network. Our purpose is as follows:

The Network, giving honour to God, putting God first and working within God's will, seeks to:

- Provide a forum at 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.
- Engage with the Commonwealth Government, national Anglican agencies, other national education bodies and industry groups on matters which affect the Church's mission through Anglican schools.
- Be a forward-looking, dynamic organisation aiming to develop a strong unity of purpose among Anglican Schools.
- Report to General Synod on major matters discussed at the Network.

### **ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**

There are over 160 Anglican schools located in 20 Dioceses across Australia. Our schools educate over 155,000 pupils. Anglican schools are the third largest schooling sector in Australia, after government and Catholic schools.

## MANAGEMENT

The work of the Network is managed throughout the year by an elected Management Committee. The Committee meets on five days each year, most of which are face-to-face, with additional meetings held by teleconference as required.

The Management Committee comprises:

President	Mr Jim Laussen
Immediate Past-President	Mrs Fiona Godfrey
President Elect	Dr Mark Sly
Executive Officer	The Reverend Peter Laurence

### State Representatives

Canberra & Goulburn	Ms Heather Walsh
New South Wales	The Revd Dr Nick Foord
Queensland	Mrs Sherril Molloy
South Australia	Mr Chris Prance
Tasmania:	Mrs Judith Tudball
Victoria	Mrs Debbie Dunwoody
Western Australia	Mrs Lynne Thomson

## STRATEGIC PLAN

One of the main responsibilities of ASA's Management Committee is implementing the Network's Strategic Plan. Adopted in 2013 with a notional life to 2016, the plan sets out the ASA's vision and strategic intent (please refer to ASA's Report to General Synod 2013) with clear core activities to achieve the Network's goals.

A key focus of the past year was developing strategic alliances with school networks and Anglican agencies that bring added value to ASA and its members. To this end The Reverend Anne van Gend, Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Office in New Zealand and Ms Kasy Chambers, Executive Director of Anglicare Australia, were invited to attend the Management Committee's two-day planning meeting in Melbourne in late May. Discussion concentrated on opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between ASA and its sister and brother schools in New Zealand and enhancing schools' relationships with their local Anglicare agencies. The Management Committee and Revd van Gend agreed to exchange newsletters and to consider 'Chaplaincy Shadowing across the Tasman'. The Committee also agreed to continue to promote member schools' links with Anglicare on ASA's website and in its newsletter, ASA NEWS. Anglicare Australia was invited to attend the Canberra Conference to showcase its programs, especially those relevant to schools. Principals and Chaplains in New Zealand schools were encouraged to attend ASA's annual conferences on a biennial basis.

Developing strategic alliances with industry was also high on ASA's agenda. Approximately half of ASA's member schools have signed up with Campus Travel as their Travel Management Company, thereby gaining access to discounted airfares with Virgin Australia and Qantas in addition to many other travel benefits.

Another of the Management Committee's strategic tasks was 'strengthening support for School Chaplains'. At ASA's Annual General Meeting in August a motion was carried allowing the number of Chaplains on the Committee to increase from one to two. This reflects the network's commitment to the ministry of Chaplains and chaplaincy as central to the life and wellbeing of students and staff in Anglican schools. It also underscores the importance of the chaplains' perspective to discussions and decision-making at national level.

Earlier in the year Stephen Harrison, Director of Mission, Anglican Schools Office (Southern Queensland) created and launched a blog ([aplaceformission.org](http://aplaceformission.org)) to stimulate discussion about important issues in Christian mission and ministry in Anglican schools. He hopes 'to create an ongoing national and international conversation' about leadership, governance, religious/Christian education, church/school relationships, chaplaincy and service.

ASA continues to see its service in assisting member schools with the recruitment of Anglican clergy from the UK, South Africa and elsewhere to work as School Chaplains in schools across Australia as a priority. Interviews are conducted annually with candidates in London and elsewhere. Shortly afterwards a list of prospective School Chaplains is sent to Principals. It is important to emphasise that the provision of this service in no way reflects a lack of commitment to or belief in Australian clergy. Rather, the opposite applies. This member service has been introduced because the demand for clergy in ASA schools exceeds the supply of clergy by the national Church.

Early in 2015 the Management Committee finalised details for an Agreement<sup>1</sup> between ASA and the Centre for Chaplaincy Studies at the University of Cardiff in Wales (in partnership with the Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong) for Australian School Chaplains to enrol in the Master of Theology in Chaplaincy Studies for working chaplains at St Michaels' College, Cardiff. The Reverend Jean-Pierre Schroeder, a Chaplain at St Mark's Anglican Community School, Perth is the first Australian to enrol in the course. He completed the first module of the three-year course at the College in September and the second, a four-day 'intensive', in Hong Kong in January. Revd Schroeder is enjoying the intellectual stimulation of studying alongside a diverse group of Chaplains from England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Hong Kong and recommends that other Chaplains take up this opportunity. His studies are being financially supported by The Anglican School Commission Inc. (WA), St Mark's Anglican Community School and the Diocese of Perth.

In another show of support for Chaplains ASA has held preliminary discussions regarding the formation of a national Chaplains Representative Group.

### **ROYAL COMMISSION INTO INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE**

The Management Committee submitted a response to Issues Paper 9 (Risk of child sexual abuse in schools) of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The Committee endorsed the Commission's concerns for the welfare of all children in our schools. Concern was expressed about the lack of a national body that registers teachers and is therefore in a position to pass consistent information about staff across state borders in an appropriate manner. The importance of equal access to quality in-servicing for all staff and board members was emphasised.

Following the release of the Royal Commission's Redress paper in October 2015, the focus is now on redress and what type of scheme will be put in place.

### **FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

- Developing a new Strategic Plan to 2020, to be launched by the President at ASA's Conference in Adelaide in August.
- Adopting new industry agreements.
- Establishing a closed Facebook Page for School Chaplains.
- Refocussing attention on Chaplaincy Shadowing.
- Organising a national Anglican Schools Celebration Week (2017).

### **NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

ASA's National Conference remains the Network's key annual event. Held in August each year in a different state, the Conference provides the opportunity for over 200 governors, principals, chaplains and senior staff to meet and discuss issues of common interest.

Keynote speakers at the Canberra Conference (2015) challenged delegates to think about new possibilities through their examination of the theme *Emergence: transforming the world through faith*.

The Reverend Dr Sarah Bachelard explored ways in which Service Learning could be truly transformative. She invited delegates to consider how Anglican schools might give students opportunities 'to accept their whole selves, not just their ideal selves' and how they may be 'allowed to fail as well as succeed'. Sarah believes true service 'requires the cultivation of self-knowledge and authentic humility'. She asked delegates to consider how students could be 'deeply engaged' in service programs, 'yet neither overwhelmed and anxious, nor subtly arrogant and alienated' by their experiences. She advocates service learning experiences that encourage students to 'be with what is' and 'to listen'.

Associate Professor Dr Rufus Black, Master of Ormond College at the University of Melbourne, identified five forces of disruption that are reshaping the world of the current generation – GEN E: globalisation; digitalisation; digitalisation of the physical world; scarcity; and other technological breakthroughs. His key message was: 'We need to accelerate the development of the entrepreneurial skills of all members of GEN E.'

Delegates were also privileged to hear from Dan Haesler (teacher, writer, educational consultant); The Reverend Gillian Moses (School Chaplain); Stephen Harrison (Director of Mission, Anglican Schools Office [STH QLD]); Nick Farr-Jones (former Captain of the Wallabies); Michael Brissenden (ABC and Walkley-award winning journalist); and Annabel Crabb (TV host and popular commentator).

In August 2016 the ASA membership will convene in Adelaide to discuss the theme 'Rivers in the Desert'. God's promise of rivers in the desert invites us to reflect upon our sources and resources of hope.

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<sup>1</sup> A formal Agreement is due to be signed in 2016.

## **CHAPLAINCY SHADOWING**

ASA plays an important role in supporting and nurturing school chaplains through the Chaplaincy Shadowing Program. The purpose of Chaplaincy Shadowing is to provide an opportunity for chaplains to share with each other, become refreshed/re-energised and refocused, to get new ideas and to develop a spiritual mentor/buddy with whom to 'share the journey'. Two chaplains, generally from different dioceses, are paired for a period of one to three years, spending one week a year in each other's schools.

ASA has sponsored Chaplaincy Shadowing for more than eight years and in that time 60 chaplains in 44 schools across six states, and in one case, Singapore, have been involved in the program.

In 2015, 20 chaplains met for the Shadowing Workshop in Canberra, prior to the annual ASA Conference. Here they learnt about the concept if it was their first involvement with shadowing, or shared their experiences for those already participating in the program. Currently eight School Chaplains are organising shadowing experiences.

## **ADVOCACY**

ASA also plays an important role in advocacy, engaging with the Commonwealth Government, national Anglican agencies, other national education bodies and industry groups on matters which affect the Church's mission through Anglican schools. Issues on which the Network has advocated in the last year include:

- Funding of non-government schools. From 2018 the Commonwealth Government will index grants according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than to the index of Average Government School Recurrent Costs (AGSRC) as is currently the case. For a number of years the CPI has increased at a lower rate than the index of AGSRC. The AGSRC captures the increasing cost of providing education through the inclusion of among other things wage rises for teachers, which the CPI does not. The longer-term impact of this change will be to shift to parents even more of the costs of educating their children in non-government schools.
- Continuation of the Commonwealth Government as the funder of non-government schools, rather than handover some or all of this responsibility to the states and territories.
- National collection of data and how it will be linked to funding.
- Funding for students with disabilities.
- Funding for chaplaincy programs.

For a number of years ASA has been recognised by the Australian Government as a peak body with whom to consult. Having our voice heard in an election year is particularly important.

## **PRAYER DIARY**

ASA provides an online Prayer Diary for schools to enable the members and others to pray for each other systematically throughout the year.

## **NATIONAL OFFICE**

The ASA office is located at the Anglican Schools Commission (ASC) in Perth, Western Australia.

The work of ASA is carried out by the Management Committee, who are assisted by the staff at the ASC. It is supported by levies from each member school. In particular we thank The Reverend Peter Laurence (Executive Officer), Ms Hazel Cole (Executive Assistant), Mrs Wendy Hillman (Communications Manager) and Ms Asher Dymock (Accountant). The ASC continues to underwrite many of the costs associated with running the national Network, for which we are most grateful.

Mr Jim Laussen  
PRESIDENT