ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

STANDING COMMITTEE OF GENERAL SYNOD

16-17 NOVEMBER 2012

RESOLUTION

4.8   **Royal Commission into Sexual Abuse -** Report of the General Secretary dated 13 November 2012 (Document No. 2012- 142)

*It was **resolved**:*

1. *The Standing Committee:*

    a. *reaffirms the commitment of the Anglican Church of Australia to the physical, emotional and spiritual safety and welfare of the children in its care;*

    b. *repeats the apology made by the Thirteenth General Synod in October 2004 to all children who have been sexually abused by clergy and church workers of the Anglican Church of Australia;*

    c. *welcomes the announcement of the establishment of a Royal Commission into child sexual abuse covering organisations including churches; and*

    d. *welcomes the opportunity the Royal Commission will bring for the Anglican Church of Australia to review its policies and procedures to protect children from harm.*

2. *The Standing Committee, recognising the importance of a national response on behalf of the Anglican Church of Australia, establishes a Royal Commission Working Group with the following functions:*

    a. *to participate in the consultation on the terms of reference of the Royal Commission;*

    b. *to facilitate a review of past complaints of child sexual abuse notified to the Dioceses and associated Anglican schools and agencies, and ensure that all appropriate steps have been taken in dealing with those complaints including reporting them to the police where appropriate.*

    c. *to identify the policies and procedures currently in place in each of the Dioceses and associated Anglican schools and agencies to respond to and prevent child sexual abuse.*

    d. *to identify national best practice policies and procedures to respond to and prevent child sexual abuse and facilitate their implementation by the Dioceses and associated Anglican schools and agencies including arranging for the preparation of all necessary legislation for the next General Synod.*

e.   *prepare all submissions necessary to respond to the Royal Commission.*

f.   *advise Dioceses on their response to and participation in the Royal Commission.*

g.   *co-ordinate management of issues arising out of the Royal Commission in the Church and public domain.*

h.   *contribute to the development of a more national framework for child protection.*

i.   *such other functions necessary to respond to the Royal Commission.*

3.   *The Standing Committee requests the Royal Commission Working Group to consult with the Professional Standards Commission in fulfilling its functions and such other persons it considers appropriate.*

4.   *The Standing Committee requests that each of the Dioceses and associated Anglican schools and agencies fully cooperate with the Royal Commission Working Group including providing all relevant information, and assistance necessary to fulfil its functions.*

5.   *The Standing Committee appoint the following persons to comprise the Working Group:*
   - *The Primate (ex officio)*
   - *The General Secretary (ex officio)*
   - *Garth Blake (Lawyer, NSW, Convenor)*
   - *Sue Harrington (Lawyer, SA)*
   - *Ken Spackman (Registrar, VIC)*
   - *Helen Miller (Counsellor,NSW)*

6.   *The Standing Committee delegates to the Executive Committee the appointment of a representative of Anglicare agencies and Anglican schools to the Working Group.*

7.   *The Standing Committee authorises the Working Group to co-opt such persons as it considers appropriate.*

8.   *The Standing Committee allocates $50,000 from the Reserve Fund to meet the expenses of the Working Group.*

9.   *That the General Secretary be authorised to contact law firms with the view to exploring possible representation for Dioceses and associated Anglican schools and agencies and the General Synod on a pro bono public basis.*

10. *That Standing Committee authorise Dr Muriel Porter OAM to prepare and release a media statement on behalf of Standing Committee welcoming the Royal Commission on child sexual abuse and to speak if invited on Standing Committee's behalf.*

(SC2012/2/16)