

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE ARCHBISHOPRIC AND CLERGY

SUMMARY PAPER G – CONFIRMING OR EXTENDING A VICAR

What this is about

- Reviewing a priest in charge after 3 years for suitability as an incumbent
- Extending an incumbent for further periods of 5 years

What are the main issues

- In the case of assessing a priest in charge for incumbency: when the review takes place (before or after the end of three years, whether the three-year period can be extended, should it commence a fixed time before the end of the licence), who is and must be involved (especially regarding the role of the parish nominators).
- In the case of extending an incumbent: separating the extension process from a possible new incumbency. (Currently consideration of the extension is seen as a first step in the work of the parish nominations committee convened to seek a new vicar.)
- What to do when the vicar is the subject of current professional standards or diocesan tribunal proceedings.

What are the recommendations

The review of a priest in their first parish in the Diocese for transition to incumbency should take place between 6 and 4 months before the 3rd anniversary of their appointment and should always be assisted by the parish nominators in a manner determined by the Archbishop.

The new Bill should provide that a priest in charge who is not assessed as suitable to continue as incumbent after 3 years ceases to be the vicar on the expiration of the term of their licence

The current process for deciding whether to extend an existing incumbency should be replaced with a process where the designated bishop and the parish nominators meet four months before the date on which the incumbency will otherwise end and the incumbency is extended if so agreed by the designated bishop and a majority of the parish nominators (with the involvement of the Archdeacon).

In a situation where at the time for the review of a priest in charge or the extension of the term of an incumbent that priest is the subject of a professional standards complaint or a charge before the Diocesan Tribunal, the Archbishop, following consultation with the designated bishop and parish nominators, should determine whether the review or consideration of an extension should proceed or be deferred.

Where to find it in the consultation paper

Review of priest in charge: section 7.12

Extension of incumbency: section 7.13

Extension when there is a professional standards complaint: section 7.14