

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF MELBOURNE

LEGISLATION RELATING TO THE ARCHBISHOPRIC AND CLERGY

SUMMARY PAPER H – BREAKDOWN IN PASTORAL RELATIONSHIPS

What this is about

What formal processes and options are available when other processes to address a possible breakdown in pastoral relationships have not worked.

What are the main issues

- Finding a model that addresses all the relevant issues and possibilities (including possible fault by parish leaders and parishioners, rather than the vicar; considering whether incapacity or ill-health may be factors; allowing for natural justice; providing the Archbishop with effective options).
- The lack of a comprehensive precedent in other metropolitan dioceses in Australia.
- How to proceed when there are accusations of bullying from within a parish and an enquiry into whether there has been a serious breakdown in pastoral relations.

What are the recommendations

The Diocese of Melbourne should adopt an approach in relation to the serious breakdown of pastoral relations modelled on the Incumbents (Vacation of Benefices) Measure 1977 of the Church of England.

All accusations of bullying (including spiritual and emotional abuse) made to the Professional Standards Commission from within a parish against the current vicar should be suspended if an enquiry into whether there has been a serious breakdown in pastoral relations is commenced. Those allegations would only be further pursued if so recommended at the end of that enquiry.

Where to find it in the consultation paper

Chapter 7

(see also section 4.6 and recommendation 11 regarding incapacity)