



Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki

22nd February 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are writing to you to set out how, as a Diocesan family, we will consider the very important work set out in the report of the Way Forward Working Group to General Synod Te Hinota Whanui.

As you will remember, Motion 30 affirmed the traditional doctrine of marriage: that it is a lifelong monogamous union between a man and a woman. It asked the Way Forward group to provide:

- *A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is contrary to scripture, doctrine, tikanga or civil law, will not be required to perform any liturgy for the blessing of same-gender relationships, will continue to have integrity within the Church, and will remain compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction;*
- *A process and structure by which those who believe the blessing of same-gender relationships is consonant with scripture, doctrine, tikanga and civil law may perform a yet to be developed liturgy for blessing same-gender relationships in a manner which maintains their integrity within the Church, is compliant with the parliamentary legislation within any relevant jurisdiction, and can remain in communion under scripture, doctrine and law; including*
 - (i) A proposal for a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships;*
 - (ii) A process and legislation (whether church or parliamentary) by which a new liturgy to bless right ordered same-gender relationships may be adopted;*
- *Recognising that this work has the potential to impact on the Church's theology of ordination and marriage, asks the group to report for our future on:*
 - The theology of ordination to Anglican orders and requirements for that; and*
 - The theology of marriage."*

The full report of the Way Forward Working Group is attached along with a letter from the Primates of our Church encouraging us all to engage with this report and for wide discussion to take place on what the Report offers for the Church's consideration. We particularly ask that you read the Primates letter along side this letter.

We do want to reiterate one of the key messages of the letter from the Primates; that this report is for the Church to consider. It does not tell the Church what to do.



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The report suggests an extended period of debate, discussion and consideration across the whole Church.

General Synod meeting in May 2016 will need to consider the report and its recommendations and has to decide whether to receive the report and act on all or some of its recommendations, or to not receive the report and its recommendations or thirdly General Synod could decide to let the report lie on the table pending further as yet to be defined work.

If the report and recommendations are received and acted upon then all the proposals come back to each Diocese and Hui Amorangi for consideration and debate and decision by each Diocesan Synod.

We want to invite you to a series of presentations where the report will be explained in detail and an opportunity to understand the content fully will be provided for.

We will then offer a second series of gatherings across the Diocese for you to provide feedback and responses.

The first round of gatherings will be held as follows:

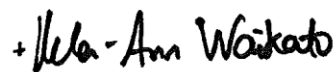
- 7th March 7pm at Holy Trinity, Eltham;
- 10th March 7pm at St Peter's Cathedral, Hamilton;
- 21st March 7pm at Holy Trinity, Fitzroy;
- 11th April 7pm (Waikato venue tbc);
- 12th April 7pm at St Bride's, Otorohanga.

We commend this important work to you and join with the Primates in encouraging your "*careful and prayerful consideration of this report and all that it contains and may we all seek the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit*".

Yours in Christ,



Philip Richardson
Bishop of Taranaki



Helen-Ann Hartley
Bishop of Waikato



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