



12 May 2016

Manager Social Strategy
City of Sydney
Town Hall House
456 Kent Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Allison

Dear Sir/~~Madam~~

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the Sydney City Council (SCC) Draft Social Sustainability Policy.

This brief submission is prepared by the Social Issues Committee of the Anglican Church of the Diocese of Sydney, and St Andrew's Cathedral. We would be glad to meet to discuss elements of this submission in more detail, and to brief the SCC on the ministries outlined below.

Background

Since the arrival of the First Fleet, the Anglican Church has been at the heart of Sydney. As Sydney's first chaplain, the Rev. Richard Johnson and his wife Mary created the first faith community, started schools and ministered in Word and deed to the sick, the poor, and the dying. Despite many hardships, a vibrant church was planted, which for the last 228 years has continued proclaiming the gospel and ministering to the needs of the city.

The Anglican Church in the Sydney City Council LGA comprises 12 churches with at least 2,500 regular members. Many of its buildings, such as St James King Street, are important statements of Sydney's architectural, social and cultural history. Its churches are places of worship; venues for state occasions; serve as halls for concerts, education and meetings; are hubs for the delivery of community services; and are places of acceptance and safety for the down-hearted and homeless. Above all this, our churches are welcoming places of Christian community, where people gather to worship God, love one another, and care for others, regardless of social or cultural differences.

The City, the Church and a Vision for the Future

There is much to commend in the SCC Draft Social Sustainability Policy.

We applaud the commitment to the place and well-being of the First Peoples in our city. The Anglican Church has a number of significant indigenous Christian communities throughout the Diocese. In the SCC LGA, the Diocese continues developing initiatives partnering with First Peoples in schools, theological education and at a parish level, including:

- Indigenous schooling, such as Gawura at St Andrew's Cathedral School (gawura.nsw.edu.au);
- The delivery of community services and outreach for indigenous people through Anglicare in Glebe and local parishes such as St Saviour's Redfern;
- Training for indigenous students to raise up the next generation of theological leaders at Moore Theological College, Newtown; and
- Planting and development of new indigenous church communities such as Living Water Community Fellowship at Redfern (www.lwcf.org.au) and St John's Glebe.

More broadly, the depth and commitment to serving the city, and creating community in the name of Christ is demonstrated by a vast array of Anglican ministries which take place every day of the week. These include:

- Countless points of community connection through worship services, bible studies, youth groups, school homework clubs, senior's groups and playgroups across the SCC area;
- Pastoral care and practical help for people suffering addictions, financial distress, homelessness, loneliness, disability, healing, community gardens, and legal aid, offered on the basis of need. Most parishes run formal and informal programs visiting people in homes, hospitals, refuges, community housing projects, and aged care facilities. Local programs include the Overcomers Outreach and Guild of St Raphael (St Andrew's Cathedral, St James King Street); Rough Edges, Rough Threads, Acts VI and City Care Lunch, ministries to the socially disadvantaged (St John's Darlinghurst; Church Hill Anglican); financial counselling (St Barnabas Broadway); Hope for Sydney, a service to mobilise volunteers for community service (Church Hill Anglican); One4Life, ministering to the socially disadvantaged in Redfern/Waterloo (St Saviours Redfern); emergency relief (St John's Darlinghurst, St John's Glebe);
- Aged care living, home care services and community services delivered in the SCC LGA by Anglican Retirement Villages and Anglicare at a number of locations;
- Partnership between St John's Darlinghurst with HammondCare to build a new aged care facility for the homeless on Darlinghurst Road;
- English as a Second Language (ESL) classes run by many local parishes, such as St Matthias Centennial Park, St Andrew's Cathedral and St Saviours Redfern.

1. *An inclusive city: social justice and opportunity*

The Anglican Church is committed to the alleviation of poverty and assisting the most vulnerable in society. We remain deeply concerned at the level of homelessness in the SCC area and the lack of affordable and social housing in a climate of rising rents and property prices. Anglicare's *Rental Affordability Snapshot* of the City and Inner South revealed that properties listed for rental declined by 12% between 2015–16.¹ In particular, Sydney Square, Martin Place and Belmore Park are particular points of refuge for CBD rough sleepers.

The churches are aware that homelessness is not only an issue of accommodation. A comprehensive solution to homelessness includes access to family counselling and domestic violence services, employment opportunity and mental health services. Anglican churches in the SCC LGA are often a point of 'first contact' and in the position of providing referral to government and non-government providers. The Cathedral is currently examining ways that it can be more pro-active in assisting those in the immediate environs of the building and Sydney Square. *We would welcome an opportunity to work with the SCC more intensively on this issue in the Square and at other CBD churches where the homeless gather.*

We support measures to continue working co-operatively with homelessness agencies, NFPs, community housing providers, the private sector and the state government, to increase the level of

social and affordable housing in the SCC LGA. The St John's/Hammondcare partnership in Darlinghurst provides a model for how Anglican parishes can work co-operatively with the NFP sector on service delivery to provide much-needed inner city homeless services. *When such developments are proposed, it is important that SCC planning regulations deliver a win-win for social justice outcomes and community amenity.*

2. A connected city: diverse, cohesive communities

A striking feature of the SCC data is that 40% of residents live alone, with the majority living at high density. This is a significant number of people who, by the nature of their living arrangements, are likely to feel higher levels of isolation and loneliness. From the churches' perspective, it is hard to connect with people living in multi-story apartment blocks protected by tight security systems. With increased high-density development combined with forecast population increases in the SCC LGA, particularly around Alexandria and Zetland, creating a sense of community will be even more important.

Historically, churches are places where communities have gathered, fostered relationships and cared for one another. In an increasingly fragmented and socially independent world, a beautiful public park can still be a lonely space. Our churches can always improve on strategies to promote events, outreach and activities in the local area.

Christmas is a major community celebration, supported by the SCC through the Martin Place Christmas Tree, street banners, decorations and other events. At its heart, Christmas is major gathering point for Christians as we celebrate God's love for us expressed in the birth of Jesus. Christmas is an occasion when many people look especially for a sense of connection with others, but it can be a lonely time for many.

Anglican churches in the SCC run many events and services for all ages in the lead-up to Christmas. *We would welcome an opportunity for more formal inclusion in SCC Christmas event planning and publicity, to highlight the essential meaning of Christmas, and partner in the SCC aims of strengthening communities and reaching the disconnected.*

3. Liveable City: Quality Places and Spaces

Sydney Square, jointly owned by the SCC, the St Andrew's House Corporation and St Andrew's Cathedral, is a much-loved space for leisure and social interaction, as well as outdoor performance (for example, by the Choir of St Andrew's Cathedral and student music groups of St Andrew's Cathedral School), in addition to education, tourism, and as a place of public gathering. The pedestrianisation of George Street is likely to result in increased accessibility and use of Sydney Square. *We look forward to cooperating with SCC in the active management of the Square to facilitate safe and enjoyable use of the area.*

Many of the churches in the SCC LGA are open to the public during business hours throughout the week (e.g. St Andrew's Cathedral, St James King Street, Christ Church St Laurence). They receive hundreds of visitors including tourists, those attending organ recitals or music performances, those seeking assistance or an opportunity for private prayer and contemplation. *We welcome the opportunity to provide a place of rest, refuge, assistance or appreciation of the arts and history in this way.*

Recognition in planning laws that places of worship have an important place in the broad spectrum of community facilities is part of 'strengthening people's connections to their communities and to each other'. Likewise, newer forms of church meeting are emerging which do not rely on a formal 'church' building, but need access to existing community, often Council-provided, facilities at reasonable cost.

Finally, our parishes want to connect with community but are often hampered by property and facilities that are not fit for purpose and burdened with significant heritage requirements. Renovations, especially of heritage buildings, are costly. *We accept the responsibility of caring for our heritage and wish to work with the SCC to ensure that our buildings meet all reasonable building requirements while ensuring they are functional and meet public expectations of amenity, environmental efficiency, technology and comfort.*

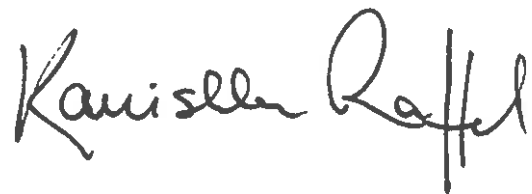
4. An engaged city: good governance and active participation

We welcome the opportunity to engage and debate ideas and proposals for the city and look forward to continued dialogue with the SCC and other community groups.

Yours sincerely



Dr Karin Sowada
Chair, Social Issues Committee
Anglican Church of Australia
Sydney Diocese



The Very Rev. Kanishka Raffel
Dean
St Andrew's Cathedral

¹ B. Kemp et al, *Rental Affordability Snapshot 2016, Greater Sydney and Illawarra* (Anglicare, 2016), 17.