

# Serving the future



The Creation of Anglicare Victoria



*Serving the Future – The Creation of  
Anglicare Victoria* was published in  
July 2007 to commemorate the  
10th anniversary of Anglicare Victoria

It is my pleasure to commend to you, *Serving the Future - The Creation of Anglicare Victoria*. Judi Cleary's work is a thoroughly enjoyable read which brings to life the amalgamation process in all its detail – paying warm tribute to those involved in the formation and early years of the Agency.

Anglicare Victoria enjoys the enviable combination of both youth and experience. The agency came into being on 1 July 1997, after three of Melbourne's foremost Anglican welfare providers: the Mission to the Streets and Lanes; St. John's Homes for Boys and Girls; and the Mission of St. James and St. John pooled 260 years of knowledge and understanding to create one of the most vibrant and leading welfare providers in Victoria.

A staunch advocate for social justice, the combination of energy and wisdom that surrounds Anglicare Victoria is evident in all facets of our work. We pride ourselves on our capacity to speak out on behalf of the State's most vulnerable citizens and deliver a broad range of services to support children, young people and families in their time of need.

Celebration and reflection of our past achievements is important – there is much to be proud of. Equally however, we must continue to look forward to the next decade and the years beyond, to ensure the Agency remains a vital and significant contributor to the lives of the most disadvantaged in our state. We must continue to provide hope, build skills, offer support and strengthen communities.



**Dr Graeme Blackman**

With the continued support of the Anglican Church and the broader community, as well as the ongoing commitment of our staff and volunteers, I am confident we will meet the challenges that lie ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graeme Blackman'.

Dr Graeme Blackman  
Chairman, Anglicare Victoria

'We pride ourselves on our capacity to speak out on behalf of the State's most vulnerable citizens...'

## Serving the Future

On 1 July 1997, a new Anglican child and family welfare agency was launched: Anglicare Victoria.

This was both a beginning and an ending. The new agency, Anglicare Victoria, was created by the amalgamation of three long-established and well-respected Anglican child and family welfare agencies: Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne (established 1886); Mission of St James and St John (1919); and St John's Homes for Boys and Girls (1921). Between them, these three agencies had provided more than 260 years of care for children and families facing hardship and disadvantage. This rich heritage of commitment by dedicated staff and volunteers, to children and families in need, to the values underpinning the Church's mission in the world and to social justice, continued into the new agency together with a hallmark of the three parent agencies – a willingness to

change to meet the changing expectations of governments, the community and the Church itself. The story of Anglicare Victoria, then, is a story of change and continuity.

The road to amalgamation of the three Anglican child and family welfare agencies within the Diocese of Melbourne reaches back several decades, with attempts from the late 1950s<sup>1</sup> to develop links between the child and family agencies, which were perceived as having much in common in their endeavours to meet the needs of disadvantaged children, young people and families. From the 1960s to the late 1980s, these attempts at a closer working relationship between the agencies were couched in terms such as increasing cooperation, collaboration and coordination; reducing competition and duplication; and increasing efficiency while retaining separate identities and geographical areas of service delivery. It was not until the 1990s that words like merger, amalgamation and integration were seriously raised in discussions between the three agencies. An early suggestion of integration in the 1970s had met 'strong resistance from every section of church life'.<sup>2</sup>

A meeting of agency representatives convened by Archdeacon Barry Martin (Division of Community Care, Diocese of Melbourne) on 28 July 1992 discussed areas of potential cooperation or integration, which had been highlighted in a report by the Rev. Douglas Dargaville (Research Officer, Division of Community Care) in 1991. Two handwritten documents, undated but possibly prepared for the inter-agency meeting, are titled 'Benefits of a Merger of the Anglican Child and Family Welfare Agencies' by W S Couche and 'A Move to Merger' (Anon). Once the idea of amalgamation had been thus raised, a process

First Mission of St. James and St. John truck, 1926



# The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

was set in train that culminated in the launch of Anglicare Victoria on 1 July 1997.

The reasons for a full merger of the three agencies, rather than simply an increase in cooperation between the three, were established early in the process. The key reason was defined as seeking to fulfil the welfare mission of the Church in the 21st century, to 'better reflect Christ's concern for the disadvantaged'.<sup>3</sup> An amalgamated agency would be able to speak with one voice to government, the wider Church and the community. A single, larger agency would be better able to advocate on issues of welfare and justice. On a practical level, one agency would be able to increase efficiency; reduce duplication and confusion of names, roles and territories; pool expertise; and integrate services. More pragmatically, in an increasingly difficult and competitive government funding climate, it was thought the only way Anglican child and family welfare would survive into the next century was by amalgamation of existing agencies.

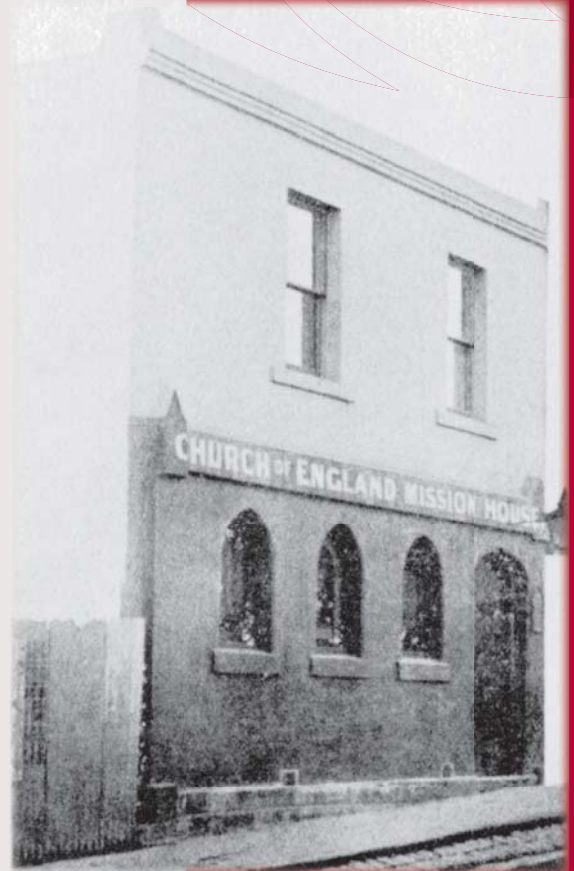
There was much work to be done, however, between these early, tentative explorations of the concept of joining three agencies into one and the final achievement of the new agency, Anglicare Victoria. Numerous stakeholders had to be considered, consulted and ultimately persuaded that a merger was the right course for Anglican child and family welfare to take.

On 25 May 1993, representatives of Mission to the Streets and Lanes, Mission of St James and St John and St John's Homes met with Archbishop Keith Rayner and Archdeacon Barry Martin in the Archbishop's office. The Archbishop invited each agency to present the views of its Board on the 'possibilities of closer

cooperation with a view to an ultimate merger'.<sup>4</sup> The advantages of eventual amalgamation were discussed, seen chiefly as a reduction in confusion about the Church's welfare agencies amongst church members and the general community; the potential to speak with one voice to government, community and support bases; and more efficient use of resources to meet the needs of disadvantaged children and families. The main disadvantage was thought to be differences in culture and identity of the separate agencies and the possible loss of traditional support if they merged. Nevertheless, the tone of the meeting was positive and forward-looking, and a follow-up meeting of agency Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) was planned.

In March 1994, each agency's Board passed a motion to investigate possible amalgamation. This was closely followed by what can be seen as the actual start of the amalgamation process: the inaugural meeting on 4 May 1994 of the Joint Anglican Child and Family Welfare Agencies Working Party on Cooperation (Joint Working Party), attended by the Archbishop. Those present agreed that the purpose of the meeting was to investigate 'potential/possible amalgamation'<sup>5</sup> of the three agencies concerned. The Joint Working Party comprised the Chairman and two Board members of each agency, plus the CEO of each.<sup>6</sup>

First Mission House, Little Lonsdale Street, 1886, Mission to the Streets and Lanes of Melbourne



## Serving the Future

---

'...a suitable name needs to be determined which would both indicate the relationship of the organisation to the Anglican Church and yet its concern for the wider world.'

At the Joint Working Party's meeting on 7 December 1994, Canon Ian Ellis (CEO, St John's Homes) reported that the Rev. Tim Gibson had moved a motion at Synod that October encouraging the three child and family welfare agencies to co-operate more closely. In debate, Canon Ellis, long a supporter of amalgamation, had gone further, suggesting a merger would be more appropriate. Prompted by Synod's encouragement, the Joint Working Party set about preparing a proposal to go to the Boards of the agencies in March 1995 seeking an 'in principle' agreement to proceed to discuss amalgamation.

It was at the December meeting of the Joint Working Party that a key factor in the merger process was raised. This was the desirability of incorporation by Act of Parliament of the single agency that would result if the amalgamation took place. The issue of incorporation of 'all or any' of the three child and family welfare agencies had been approved by Synod in 1983, and, following experience with the incorporation of The Brotherhood of St Laurence in 1969 and Trinity College in 1979, Bishop James Grant proposed a similar course for a merged agency. Incorporation by Act of Parliament would establish the new agency on a firm legal footing, facilitating the transfer of assets while providing a degree of autonomy for the new agency to fulfil its welfare mission on behalf of the Anglican Church. Incorporation was also seen as necessary because of state government requirements for funding of welfare programs. The Constitution of the new agency would be contained in a Schedule to the Act of Parliament and could be amended through Archbishop in Council, rather than through Parliament.

On 6 February 1995, Archbishop Rayner, in a letter to Joint Working Party Chairman,

Ron Clark, affirmed the 'present consultation... concerning closer cooperation and the possibility of ultimate amalgamation' and hoped that it 'should lead to definite proposals as soon as possible'. He also supported exploration of the incorporation of the Anglican welfare agencies 'desirably under one Act of Parliament'. His final recommendation was that, 'In the event of close association or amalgamation, a suitable name needs to be determined which would both indicate the relationship of the organisation to the Anglican Church and yet its concern for the wider world.'

The next major step along the road to amalgamation was the approval in March 1995 by each of the three agency Boards of the report prepared by the Joint Working Party, 'New Directions for Challenging Times', which sought 'in principle' agreement to proceed further. This report contained an historical overview of the three agencies and comparisons of services provided, financial situations and management structures. It included a brief history of attempts at inter-agency cooperation in the past and addressed the current challenges facing all three agencies. It examined the possible advantages and disadvantages of amalgamation, the factors required for success, and finished with an outline of the way forward if all agencies agreed 'in principle' to proceed. The Joint Working Party was duly charged with continuing the investigation and at its next meeting, on 29 March 1995, Bishop Andrew Curnow recommended that 'the committee should bring to the 1995 Synod of the Diocese of Melbourne a firm proposal for the amalgamation of the three agencies'.<sup>7</sup>

Not everyone was so positive regarding a potential merger, however. One prominent

## The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

churchman voiced his concern that 'the merging of the three Anglican agencies in Melbourne to form one will make them weaker, more subject to government control, and less able to maintain their distinctive Christian values. It would be...to surrender to economic rationalism with no benefit.'<sup>8</sup>

The Joint Working Party, nonetheless, was settling to its task with the appointment of Ms Jenny Lincoln as its Executive Officer, seconded from the Mission to the Streets and Lanes and accountable to Chairman Ron Clark. This provided the Working Party with the necessary administrative backup to facilitate the decisions being made in meetings as the Joint Working Party planned its approach to Synod in October 1995. Since Synod had passed a favourable motion in 1994, it was felt that, if the agencies themselves had made a decision to amalgamate prior to the next Synod, then Synod would be in a position to endorse such a decision when it met in October.

In reporting to the Joint Working Party's meeting on May 3, the Archbishop's representative, Bishop Andrew Curnow, conveyed that the Archbishop was fully supportive of the efforts of the Working Party. The Archbishop 'indicated he had already written to the Advocate [of the Diocese] instructing her to set in train the necessary process to ensure incorporation occurs smoothly and at the appropriate time'. Furthermore, he believed 'the Working Party would have something ready for Synod'.<sup>9</sup> The interest and support of the Archbishop, following an initial approach by Bishop James Grant urging him to resume inter-agency talks prior to the establishment of the Joint Working Party, gave authority to the Working Party's deliberations throughout the amalgamation

process and is a key factor in the eventual creation of Anglicare Victoria.

Another key factor, if the proposed merger were to succeed, was the staff of the three agencies. As soon as the Joint Working Party gained the 'in principle' agreement of the Boards in March 1995, the CEOs made available to staff 'New Directions for Challenging Times' and explained that, while staff would not be consulted on whether an amalgamation should take place, at such time as a decision to amalgamate was made, there would be 'extensive and on-going consultation' regarding the 'process' of amalgamation.<sup>10</sup> The three CEOs agreed there was natural anxiety among staff regarding job security, but generally the proposed merger

'...the proposed merger was viewed positively'



## Serving the Future

was viewed positively. Further down the track, a survey of staff attitudes would be undertaken and a regular newsletter, 'Future Directions', would keep staff informed of developments related to the amalgamation. It was the stated intention of the Joint Working Party that all staff involved in service delivery would be retained and all other staff would be accommodated within the new organisational structure.

It had been decided, after considerable discussion at Joint Working Party meetings in the first half of 1995, that an external consultant should be engaged to investigate and report back on the advantages and disadvantages of amalgamation. Accordingly, Mr Jamie Pearce, an independent consultant, spent time in July 1995 visiting the three agencies and meeting representatives of staff and Boards. He subsequently reported to the Joint Working Party on 17 August. As part of his report,<sup>11</sup> Pearce examined other merger models, noting the problems with each and the lessons to be

learned. Taking a neutral stance, Pearce pointed out that, 'Any decision for or against amalgamation must take account of both a changing and unpredictable external environment and the welfare mission of the contemporary Church.'<sup>12</sup> By this stage, July 1995, the nature of government funding of welfare programs

through competitive tendering by agencies had created financial pressures and uncertainties within and between agencies and was increasing the need for agencies to consider pooling their resources in order to survive as service providers. Other external factors beyond the agencies' or the Church's control included a changed understanding of family, role of government and nature of work; the emergence of a growing 'underclass' of permanently disadvantaged people; the growing diversity of Melbourne demographically, leading to more complex welfare issues; and the move out of social welfare provision by local government. Pearce suggested the key question regarding amalgamation was: 'Given the undoubted and significant changes taking place in the environment in which the three agencies operate, how can their respective missions, and the welfare mission of the Anglican Church, be best achieved – by the three existing agencies or by a new, single amalgamated agency?'<sup>13</sup>

This in essence was the dilemma that was put to the Joint Board Meeting held on 24 August 1995: how best to relate the Church's welfare mission to the changing external environment. The Joint Working Party was convinced that amalgamation was the answer, but not just amalgamation. Ron Clark, in his role as Chairman of the Joint Working Party, told the meeting that, 'One of the insights the Working Party had developed was that the word 'amalgamation' was a hindrance as it implied the cobbling together of three separate agencies each with its own history...Looked at from another perspective it is about a notion of renewal, the best way of combining resources to create something new, a better way to address welfare needs.'<sup>14</sup> This shift in emphasis from *amalgamation* to *renewal*



## The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

and the creation of a new agency to meet the demands of the 21st century was the sign of another key factor in the success of the eventual merger: the organisation resulting from the amalgamation of the three existing agencies was to be a new entity with its own name and community profile. Built on the foundations of the past, but not bound by the past, it would be an organisation that would establish itself as a provider of services in its own right, not merely as the child of its parents. Here was a golden opportunity to design an agency for the new century, one that would be the product of thorough research and planning in a way that the original three agencies were not, each having been founded in response to urgent need at a particular point in time. After considerable discussion canvassing a number of concerns raised by individual Board members, Bishop Andrew Curnow put a three-part motion to the meeting, the third part of which stated: 'That Synod be asked to encourage the three Agency Boards to continue to investigate the formation of a new single Anglican child and family welfare agency.' The motion was carried 'without dissent'.<sup>15</sup>

As a result of the Joint Board Meeting, the Joint Working Party prepared its presentation to the 1995 Synod. The third part of the motion passed by the Joint Board Meeting became the core of the Synod motion to be moved by Bishop Curnow and seconded by Bishop Grant. The Archbishop, meanwhile, had embraced the idea of a renewal rather than simply an amalgamation, and would refer to the proposed merger in his charge to Synod. If Synod responded positively, the Archbishop would authorise the reconstitution of the Joint Working Party as it moved into a new phase of the amalgamation process.

In moving the motion at Synod on 16 October 1995, Bishop Andrew Curnow concluded: 'It is my own belief, and I know of many other people, that this Diocese and the Anglican Church...have a unique and wonderful opportunity at its feet. We have the potential to build a welfare agency that would strengthen the Church's mission, work constructively with parishes and, above all, fulfil our Lord's command [in Matthew 25:35ff]. This was part of the mission our Lord gave to the Church...I ask members of Synod to support the motion.' In seconding the motion, Bishop James Grant said he believed that time had removed any historical differences between the three agencies and that one single Anglican child and family welfare agency would be better placed to meet the needs of Church and community in the 21st century.<sup>16</sup> After debate, two amendments, the first by Mr Ronald White and the second by the Rev. Alan Nichols, were made to the original motion, which was then carried without dissent:

That the report of the Working Party on the possible amalgamation of the Mission of St James and St John, St John's Homes for Boys and Girls and the Mission to the Streets and Lanes be received, and that this Synod encourage that the three agencies boards continue to investigate *as a matter of urgency with a firm recommendation to be presented to the next Synod* for the formation of a new single Anglican child and family welfare agency *provided that the primary purpose is to better meet the needs of disadvantaged Victorians.*<sup>17</sup> [amendments indicated in italics]

Buoyed by the positive response of Synod, especially with the addition of the amendment urging a firm proposal be brought to the 1996 Synod, the reconstituted Joint Working Party met in November 1995 to map out the next phase

'To create a more just society, by expressing God's love through service, education and advocacy.'

## Serving the Future

---

of their task. The meeting, on 28 November, was attended by the Archbishop and marks a watershed between the two phases of the Joint Working Party's life. The Archbishop thanked the 'old' Working Party for their work, which he believed had been 'wholeheartedly affirmed by Synod' and acknowledged the leadership of the Chairman, Ron Clark, in what had been achieved so far. Archbishop Rayner expected that a concrete proposal would be brought forward to Synod in 1996.<sup>18</sup> The Chairman then outlined the time line for the lead-up to the 1996 Synod. All preparations would need to be completed by the end of June 1996 to allow for discussions both with key stakeholders and at pre-Synod conferences. To accomplish this, he suggested setting up a number of sub-groups of the Working Party to prepare key areas related to establishing a new agency. Areas covered by the sub-groups were the constitution, finance and administration, services, human resources

and marketing; sub-groups could co-opt outside members to supplement their expertise. It was also decided that time should be set aside in January 1996 to create a mission statement and strategic goals for the new organisation. Ms Jenny Lincoln would continue as Executive Officer from January 1996 to Synod in October 1996.

The first task completed in 1996 was the drafting of the new agency's Mission Statement. A workshop at Retreat House, Cheltenham, on 25–26 January encapsulated the proposed agency's guiding principles:

*To create a more just society, by expressing God's love through service, education and advocacy.*

A list of ten strategic objectives<sup>19</sup> of the new organisation was also drawn up to give effect to the Mission Statement.

Both encouraged in their task by progress made and daunted by the deadline of Synod in October, at the suggestion of Ron Clark, the Working Party's sub-groups sought to dovetail their recommendations to ensure they were working towards a cohesive agency. It was decided that any proposal put to Synod should have the prior approval of the three existing agency Boards, so to that end, two joint Board meetings were scheduled, the first in May and the second in July. While conscious that the new agency's Board and CEO would need flexibility to enact the Working Party's recommendations, it was recognised that any proposal put to the Boards and Synod would need to be fairly specific in terms of what was envisaged for the new agency. With this in mind, the Joint Working Party began preparation of a detailed report to go to the joint Board meeting in July and to



## The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

Synod in October. Staff would be kept informed through the newsletter, 'Future Directions', which would also be distributed in parish mailings. An article was planned for the May edition of *The Melbourne Anglican*.<sup>20</sup>

Given Synod's encouragement in 1995, the Joint Working Party proceeded on the basis that an amalgamation would take place, but there were still some in the Diocese who insisted that all that Synod had approved was continued investigation of a merger, not approval of a merger itself. One such critic questioned the gains to be made from amalgamation in terms of the Church's mission. In reply, Bishop Grant pointed out the reality of the situation, given the impact of agencies having to tender for government funding of programs, 'The question is not, what additional benefits will a new, larger agency provide to clients, but, how long will an unamalgamated agency be able to provide existing services?'<sup>21</sup> He concluded that many people were working hard for the merger 'in the hope that this will ensure survival in the short term and an enhancement in the long term of Anglican care of the poor and needy'.<sup>22</sup>

The Joint Board Meeting on 13 May 1996 began with Bishop Curnow conveying the Archbishop's view that 'if the three Boards approved the proposal developed by the Working Party... a well prepared scheme would be brought forward to Synod for endorsement following clear support for the continuing investigation into amalgamation given by Synod in October 1995'.<sup>23</sup> The meeting then heard reports from the five sub-groups of the Working Party. Mrs Jennifer Tikotin, in presenting the Human Resources report, stressed that three basic concepts underpinned her group's recommendations: the concept of 'best practice', a commitment to the Church's

mission, and the concept of being 'forward looking'. In presenting the report of the Services sub-group, Bishop Curnow pointed out that the 'Philosophy and Values statement' designed to guide provision of services was 'the first time there had been an attempt to express the Church's mission in welfare'.<sup>24</sup> The Finance sub-group under Kevin Hill, concerned with the financial viability of a merged agency, compared estimated financial information for the year ending 30 June 1996 with actual data from 1994 and 1995. A final report on the financial situation would be issued in June, well before Synod. Bishop Grant outlined the proposed Constitution being drafted by Mr John Henry, the Diocesan Solicitor, and the Constitution sub-group: a Council of 40 members representing a variety of interests, a Board of Directors of 12 plus Chairman to consider policy issues and appoint/dismiss the CEO, and a Chief Executive Officer to manage the agency. The sub-group was preparing for incorporation by Act of Parliament as the preferred option.

Another key factor in the successful creation of a new agency was highlighted by the Marketing sub-group's report. If the new agency were to establish itself in the community, then a professional marketing plan was essential. Such a plan needed to go beyond the fundraising of the past. A strategy was needed which established the 'new agency's identity, promote[d] its mission and maximise[d] support'.<sup>25</sup> Integral to this would be the name of the new agency, yet to be decided. The Chairman of the Working Party, Ron Clark, indicated that Mr Keith Smith, Chairman of Anglican Community Services in South Australia and with expertise in marketing,



## Serving the Future

had been asked to advise on the choice of name. Towards the end of the meeting, Mr Bill Thomson (Chairman, St John's Homes) put the question to the assembled Boards: 'Do you wish us to continue?' The show of hands was 'overwhelmingly' affirmative.<sup>26</sup> This support was mirrored by the Archbishop himself, in accepting the subsequent resignation of a Board member who opposed the merger. Archbishop Rayner stated that he believed the Working Party to be 'on the right course and as at present advised I am prepared to give my full support to it'.<sup>27</sup>

Ron Clark, however, identified that finance was an area of concern that would require further clarification before the next Joint Board Meeting, planned for July. He wrote

to members of the Joint Working Party to urge their continued support in the face of last minute doubts in some quarters: 'From the feedback coming in following the Joint Board meeting on May 13, it is clear the amount of anxiety and resistance to a merger and the creation of a new agency is rising. This is to be expected and natural as we get closer to the event.'<sup>28</sup> He recognised that the three Boards needed some reassurance regarding the transition phase should a new agency be approved. He proposed that each sub-group prepare a transition plan to be put to the next Joint Board Meeting.

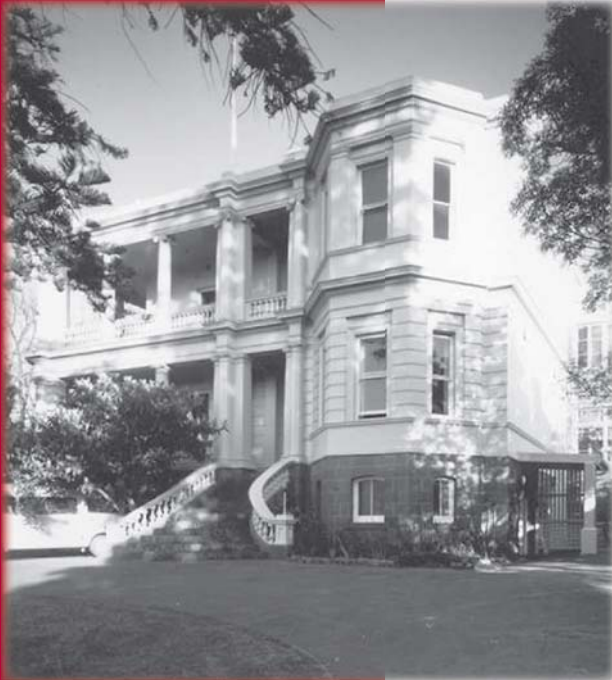
Although such plans would not be binding on a new Board and CEO, they would at least constitute a starting point for the new agency's implementation.

At its June 19 meeting, the Joint Working Party heard the report of Keith Smith, who stressed the importance of strongly promoting the new agency in its formative years to establish its identity in the community and in parishes. He highlighted the necessity of retaining existing goodwill and reassuring long-term supporters by including the names of the three agencies on the new agency's letterhead, but only for a set time during transition.<sup>29</sup>

The issue of the new agency's name was crucial, but still undecided. Smith's advice was that it must be evocative, memorable and short, a name to which the whole community could respond, not just Anglicans: 'Our client base is representative of society and we hope our supporter base is similarly representative.'<sup>30</sup> At the same time, the agency's links with the Anglican Church should be incorporated somehow. This reinforced the Marketing sub-group's own thoughts in March 1996 when they suggested that the name must also be timeless, wholesome and involve children.<sup>31</sup> Clearly, marketing and an appropriate name would be key factors in the success of the new agency.

By the second Joint Board Meeting on 3 July 1996,<sup>32</sup> the Working Party had addressed the concerns raised in feedback from the May 13 meeting. A comprehensive report, 'Securing the Future', had been prepared so that Board members could make a thoroughly informed final decision on amalgamation. The report included a message from the Archbishop; a summary of the work done by the Joint Working Party; a statement on the Church and its mission;

'Shrublands', donated to St John's Homes for Boys and Girls by the Hindson family in the mid 1920s



## The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

the Mission Statement, strategic objectives, and philosophy and values of the new agency; sub-group reports and transition plans; and Keith Smith's report. The Archbishop set the tone of the report:

I believe the time has come for a new, stronger Anglican agency to come into being. It will take up the strengths and experience of the existing agencies and mould them into an instrument better able to minister to people in today's environment. A stronger, united agency will also be a more effective advocate in the community on behalf of the needy.<sup>33</sup>

In his Chairman's report, Ron Clark posed the question:

What action is required to ensure the continued presence of the Anglican Church in welfare policy development and the delivery of welfare services into the next millennium and for the foreseeable future?<sup>34</sup>

The report included a financial modelling exercise, conducted by Mr Peter Horsburgh (Treasurer, St John's Homes), which sought to allay earlier concerns and concluded that there was 'no apparent financial impediment to merger.'<sup>35</sup> In fact, the exercise suggested a merged agency would be more financially secure than the three separate agencies. Clark's report concluded: 'Our clear recommendation is that we should proceed with the creation of a new united organisation designed to take Anglican welfare into the 21st century.'<sup>36</sup>

It was hoped that all Board members would be prepared to commit to a final decision at the Joint Board Meeting on 3 July. In the week before, Ron Clark had written to Board members

acknowledging that 'as Board members of three similar but different organisations, each with a long and proud history', it was not an easy decision, but one which must be made 'to secure the future for Anglican child and family welfare'.<sup>37</sup> It was planned that following the Joint Board Meeting, each Board at its separate July meeting would vote on the same motion to accept the merger.

In his opening remarks to the crucial meeting on 3 July, Ron Clark referred to the support shown for the merger by the Archbishop throughout the Working Party's deliberations. He also drew attention to the changing external environment, which was affecting the three current agencies' operations.

In addition to a difficult state government funding process, there were now threats of federal government cutbacks in welfare spending under the newly-elected coalition government in Canberra.<sup>38</sup> In acknowledging opposition to the merger expressed in an article in *Church Scene*<sup>39</sup> and the same article in the *New Cranmer Society News and Views*,<sup>40</sup> Clark stated that the decision to merge was first a question for the three Boards and that, if they chose to merge, there would follow wide distribution of the report 'Securing the Future' and opportunities for discussion at Regional Conferences before Synod in October.

Those present were encouraged to raise 'any and all questions' regarding the recommendation to amalgamate, because the Working Party wanted no unresolved issues that could impede a formal acceptance by each Board at its own July meeting. At the conclusion of discussion, it was agreed 'without dissent'<sup>41</sup> that the report 'Securing the Future' be accepted and that the Chairman of each Board

'I believe the time has come for a new, stronger Anglican agency to come into being.'

'...the National Anglican Caring Organisations Network adopted as its new name, Anglicare Australia.'

put to their respective Boards at their July Board meeting the following motion:

Following the Joint Meeting of the Boards of the three Agencies held on July 3rd 1996 the Board of <name> ratifies the Report presented at such meeting and agrees to adopt its recommendation to merge and form one new agency. It further agrees that Synod be advised accordingly and its endorsement requested.<sup>42</sup>

If all agencies passed the above motion at their separate July Board meetings, followed by Synod endorsement in October, it was planned that the new agency would come into being on July 1st 1997, after the passage of an Act of Parliament in the Autumn Session.

It was not unexpected that, at the Joint Working Party meeting on 31 July 1996, the Chairmen of the three agencies each reported the adoption of the motion from the July 3 Joint Board Meeting. Significantly, the vote in each case was unanimous, which was seen as a strong affirmation of the planned merger.<sup>43</sup>

Assuming 1 July 1997 were to be confirmed as the launch date of the new agency, there were many tasks that the Joint Working Party needed to undertake. These included the appointment of a CEO and senior staff; the organisational structure; the financial arrangements and budget of the new agency; and the marketing strategy (including a name) to be ready by the launch. There was also the period of transition anticipated between Synod endorsement and passage of the Act of Parliament, during which the three agencies would still be operating as separate entities, but with an overlay of the joint tasks mentioned above. It was also envisaged that an interim board, with delegated powers

from the three agency Boards, would see through the implementation of the new agency, while the existing agency Boards would continue to oversee day-to-day operations. Ms Tricia Harper was asked to draw up a Strategic Planning Framework for the transition phase.<sup>44</sup> Staff were to be encouraged to 'own the vision and process, and to develop a base of goodwill and trust'.<sup>45</sup> It had long been recognised that the staff would be a critical factor in the success of the merger.

The Joint Working Party on 7 October made final plans for the presentation to Synod. Feedback from Regional Conferences suggested 'most people appeared to accept that the merger would take place'.<sup>46</sup> It was hoped that the Synod motion would be scheduled for the session on Friday evening, October 11.

For legal reasons, the planned interim board, discussed at the July 31 meeting, had to be abandoned. It now became necessary to set up a new working group to manage the projected period from November 1996 to June 1997. The new working group would be chaired by Ron Clark for continuity, but would be known as the Establishment Committee to distinguish it from the previous Joint Working Party. The three current CEOs would not be members of the Establishment Committee, membership being a mixture of current Board members and outside experts in various areas. The Establishment Committee would take over the tasks then occupying the Joint Working Party, such as the choice of name and completion of the incorporation process through the Parliament. It was unanimously agreed by the Working Party on 7 October that, subject to Synod endorsement, the Archbishop should constitute the Establishment Committee 'to do all things necessary or convenient to facilitate the implementation of the proposal for

# The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

a new Anglican welfare agency as approved by Synod in October 1996'.<sup>47</sup>

On Friday, 11 October 1996, the motion:

That this Synod:

- a) welcomes and approves the proposal for a new Anglican welfare agency outlined in the Joint Working Party Report 'Securing the Future'; and
- b) authorises the Archbishop in Council to seek the promotion of a Bill in the Parliament for the incorporation of the new Agency on such terms and conditions as are approved by the Archbishop in Council

was moved by Bishop Andrew Curnow, seconded by Bishop James Grant and 'overwhelmingly passed without amendment'.<sup>48</sup>

Two subsequent motions to amend the Mission of St James and St John Act 1992 and the St John's Homes Act 1926, in order to give effect to the previous motion, passed without debate. A fourth motion, designed to ensure that the new agency should maintain a strong Anglican character, was passed after amendment.<sup>49</sup> The Archbishop then thanked Ron Clark and members of the Joint Working Party for their work to this point.

In a follow-up letter to Clark, Archbishop Rayner reiterated his thanks and offered congratulations to all on the Working Party. He believed 'the Working Party deserve[d] the thanks of the entire diocese for the care with which this matter ha[d] been progressed'.<sup>50</sup>

The Joint Working Party met for the last time on 21 October 1996. After congratulating those who had led the presentation at Synod, the meeting

addressed the next phase of the creation of the new agency. The composition and terms of reference of the Establishment Committee were discussed. Ron Clark defined the role of the Establishment Committee as 'set[ting] up the framework of the new agency and establishing the policies and systems the new Board would work with'.<sup>51</sup> This final meeting also agreed that a name would need to be chosen by February 1997, to enable it to go forward with the documentation to be included in the Bill for the Act of Parliament to incorporate the new agency. It was hoped the Constitution would be finalised following the meeting of Archbishop in Council in November.

On 11 November, Ron Clark wrote to members of the Joint Working Party, thanking them for their contribution over the past two and a half years (May 1994-October 1996). He no doubt captured the feelings of all when he wrote, 'Sitting at Synod I felt a sense of joy and, indeed, relief when the debate successfully concluded with the carrying of the relevant motions as it meant the goal for which we had all worked so hard had been achieved.' He saw the newly formed Establishment Committee's task as completing 'the creation of the new agency, building on the foundations which were put in place by the months and years of thorough and dedicated work by our original Working Party'.

The Establishment Committee<sup>52</sup> met first on 26 November 1996 and faced the enormous task of bringing to life the new agency approved by Synod so decidedly in October. In particular, the choice of a name, the appointment of a CEO, and incorporation by Act of Parliament had to be dealt with immediately. In addition, the structure and management of the new agency had to be developed and senior staff appointed. A 'stunning launch' had to be

'In the space of 24 hours, every office of the three former agencies was re-badged, with the new name, logo and Mission Statement prominently displayed.'

## Serving the Future

'the amalgamation  
of the three former  
agencies into one  
new agency is seen  
as a success'



planned for the projected commencement date of 1 July 1997. Unfortunately, not long after the Establishment Committee began its work, Chairman Ron Clark was forced to resign due to ill health. This was a huge blow, since Clark had been with the amalgamation process from its beginning and had steered the merger through three Synods to the point where a single agency was about to become a reality. Bishop Andrew Curnow became Chairman for the remaining life of the Establishment Committee.

Following lengthy consideration of possible names for the new agency, and even a competition run through *The Melbourne Anglican* in November 1996, the final choice of name fell into place after the National Anglican Caring Organisations Network adopted as its new name, Anglicare Australia. Originally a suggestion of Archbishop Peter Carnley, Anglicare, combining links with the Anglican Church and the care that gives practical expression to the Church's mission in the world, seemed a perfect description of what the new child and family welfare agency would represent in Victoria.

Incorporation of the new agency, Anglicare Victoria, was achieved following passage of the Bill on 30 April 1997. The Anglican Welfare Agency Act 1997 was proclaimed on 20 May that year. In the preparations for the Bill to go to the Autumn Session of Parliament, the Establishment Committee was greatly assisted by the Advocate of the

Diocese, Ms Rowena Armstrong, who finalised the Constitution of the new agency, to which the Act of Parliament would give effect. Several Members of Parliament supported the new agency and its planned incorporation. In particular, the Hon. Rob Knowles MLC (Minister for Health), agreed to take the Bill to Cabinet. On the floor of Parliament, in both the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, members from both sides of the House spoke glowingly of the previous work of the three existing agencies and wished the new agency well in the future. While Opposition speakers quoted 'Securing the Future' in support of their argument that the amalgamation had been brought about because of the 'increasingly competitive and hostile economic and funding environment in which the agencies find themselves',<sup>53</sup> there was strong bipartisan support and goodwill expressed by all speakers. The Hon. Denis Naphine MLA (Minister for Youth and Community Services), in closing the debate in the Assembly, stated, 'It is most enlightening to hear that all honourable members support the bill, wish it speedy passage and wish the new Anglicare organisation [which] the bill will create the very best for the future...

This legislation, which the government is pleased to sponsor and support, will provide the framework for Anglicare to develop and improve its services into the 21st century.'<sup>54</sup> Bishop Andrew Curnow, as Chairman of the Establishment Committee, played a key role here, but the instigator and champion of incorporation from the start of the amalgamation process was Bishop James Grant. He saw it as essential to bringing together three differently constituted agencies, so that all would be on an equal footing, as well as facilitating the transfer of assets to the new agency. In retrospect, it is hard to see how

# The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

the merger could have been successful without incorporation.

In tandem with the parliamentary activity, the various sub-committees of the Establishment Committee were developing the structures and processes for the main operating areas of the new agency: client services, finance, human resources, marketing, and information technology. It was always the intention of the transition phase to leave room for a new Board and CEO to establish the new agency as they saw fit. The Establishment Committee, and before them the Joint Working Party, did, however, attempt to do as much as possible to smooth the changeover within the constraints of time. It was, of course, impossible to plan everything in advance; some things could only be dealt with once the new agency had commenced operations.

On 1 July 1997, Anglicare Victoria opened for business. In the space of 24 hours, every office of the three former agencies was re-badged, with the new name, logo and Mission Statement prominently displayed. Several events were held to mark the occasion. A dinner celebrated the '1st Day in the Life of Anglicare Victoria' on Tuesday, 1 July 1997, and on 12 August, a formal launch by the then Governor-General, Sir William Deane, in the presence of Archbishop Keith Rayner, took place at Anglicare Victoria's new headquarters at Batman Street, West Melbourne.

That, of course, was the relatively easy part. The hard work of actually melding three into one was just beginning and, as Jamie Pearce had pointed out in his report in August 1995, in general, major change means 'disruption, distraction and pain'.<sup>55</sup> Despite the planning of the Joint Working Party and the Establishment

Committee, the transition and implementation presented unavoidable challenges. To go from drawing board to working model meant three financial and administrative systems had to be brought together; three lots of property had to be transferred to the new agency; three groups of staff, each with their own particular culture and heritage, had to work together; and three loyal donor bases had to be encouraged to bond to a new entity. In addition, a new Board had to succeed the Establishment Committee and the new agency had to gain acceptance by the wider Church, government and community. Much of the responsibility for making the dream a reality would lie with the Chief Executive Officer, whose task it would be to give effect to the plans of the Establishment Committee and later the Board of Anglicare Victoria. In many ways, the inaugural CEO would have the toughest job of all in the amalgamation process.

In April 1997, Mr John Wilson took up his appointment as CEO of Anglicare Victoria. It was hoped that appointing someone who was not previously part of the three agencies, someone who could establish a new culture in the new agency, someone with strong skills in management, business and marketing, would effectively act as a 'new broom' and minimise the carryover of 'inherited baggage'<sup>56</sup> that could undermine the sense of a new beginning. This was always going

'Anglicare Victoria is today perceived as bright, contemporary and efficient...'

Anglicare Victoria  
Central Office, 2007



## Serving the Future

to be a tall order. Wilson's ultimate aim, however, was that 'no client was to suffer or be aware of the amalgamation except for the better'.<sup>57</sup> Largely thanks to Wilson's efforts, ready acceptance of the new agency by government meant no interruption to service delivery funding. Much credit is due to the executive staff, including Angie Were, John Blewonski, Chris Baring-Gould, and Jenny Potten, and to Regional Managers and their staff for the continuity of programs in the midst of substantial upheaval accompanying the consolidation of three agencies into one. Similarly, the inaugural Board spent many hours dealing with complex financial, property and governance issues related to the merger, the last of which are still being resolved. The dedication of Board and staff enabled Anglicare Victoria to overcome early transitional difficulties and develop a distinctive profile in the community. Concerns expressed by some at the time of the merger that a larger agency would lose its Anglican character have proved groundless. In fact, the present CEO, the Rev. Dr Ray Cleary, has enhanced the spiritual life and prophetic role of the agency, and he and Dr Graeme Blackman, Chairman of the Board, have sought to strengthen Anglicare Victoria's ties with the wider Anglican community at every opportunity. In addition, the current CEO has developed stronger relationships with governments and other agencies. The Board continues to address difficult questions regarding financial and human resources, changing federal and state government legislation, and increasing demand for services. Staunch support by volunteers and donors has allowed Anglicare Victoria to maintain an independent voice in advocating on behalf of disadvantaged children and families. Since 2000, the 'Friends of Anglicare Victoria', currently led by Ms Elizabeth Prideaux,

has operated as the official support body of the agency, providing financial assistance through fundraising and donations, volunteers for agency programs, and advocacy through a speakers group.

Despite the challenges of the formative years of Anglicare Victoria, the amalgamation of the three former agencies into one new agency is seen as a success, both in terms of how the amalgamation was carried out and in terms of the finished product. Some may see the merger as a *fait accompli* right from the start of negotiations, arguing that the agencies had no option in the external environment of the 1990s if Anglican child and family welfare were to survive. The fact remains, however, that all previous attempts to bring the three agencies closer together had failed. It is clear that there were certain key factors in this attempt that ensured its success and the success of the resultant agency, Anglicare Victoria. What is obvious about the amalgamation process is the thorough planning for over two and a half years prior to Synod in October 1996 and the 'softly, softly' approach taken by Ron Clark and the Joint Working Party throughout. The support of the Archbishop was a key factor in encouraging acceptance across the Diocese and there was a strong sense of renewal in the creation of a single agency. Other key factors were the decision to seek incorporation by Act of Parliament and the name eventually chosen for the new agency. There was also a sense that the time was right for such a move, that the right people were in the right place at the right time.<sup>58</sup> Above all, two things stand out in the success of the amalgamated agency: the willingness demonstrated by staff and Boards of the three agencies to change to meet changing expectations of Church, government



## The Creation of Anglicare Victoria

---

and community; and, simultaneously, the continuity of pre-existing Christian values in the new agency and an ongoing commitment to children, young people and families in Victoria.

The story of the creation of Anglicare Victoria, then, is a story of great change and significant continuity. As the product of three organisations in which change was a hallmark, the formation of Anglicare Victoria can be seen as the logical response to the changing environment in the late twentieth century.

The vision of one Anglican child and family welfare agency for the 21st century resonated with those who guided the amalgamation through. It was a vision that acknowledged the past, but recognised that the way forward was as one agency, not three. It was a vision that brought the best of the past into the future. It was a vision that was radical, but grounded in reality. Anglicare Victoria is today perceived as bright, contemporary and efficient, but at the same time the values and commitment of the founding agencies are still central to everything Anglicare Victoria is and does. In ten short years, Anglicare Victoria has established itself as the Anglican Church's foremost child and family welfare organisation. As such, it is widely respected by government, Church and community, as it seeks 'to create a more just society, by expressing God's love through service, education and advocacy'.

*JL Cleary 14/6/07*

## Endnotes

---

- 1 Beginning with the formation of the Church of England Social Services Advisory Committee (CESSAC) and the efforts of Archdeacon Geoffrey Sambell
- 2 I G Ellis & B N Martin, 'Guidelines for Inter-agency Cooperation', 7 September 1989
- 3 'Securing the Future', A report from the Joint Anglican Child and Family Welfare Agencies Working Party on Cooperation', Melbourne, July 1996, p. 9
- 4 Archbishop Keith Rayner's notes on the 25 May meeting, 28 May 1993
- 5 Minutes, Joint Anglican Child and Family Agencies Working Party on Cooperation, 4 May 1994
- 6 See Appendix 1
- 7 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 29 March 1995
- 8 Letter to Archbishop Keith Rayner, 12 April 1995
- 9 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 3 May 1995
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 'A Report on a Review of the Potential Amalgamation of the Three Anglican Child and Family Agencies', August 1995
- 12 Ibid., p. 3
- 13 Ibid., p. 32
- 14 Minutes, Joint Meeting of the Boards of the Mission of St James and St John, St John's Homes for Boys and Girls, and Mission to the Streets and Lanes, 24 August 1995
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Notes of Synod debate taken by Jenny Lincoln, 16 October 1995
- 17 Synod proceedings, 16 October 1995
- 18 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 28 November 1995
- 19 'Securing the Future', p.15
- 20 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 21 February 1996
- 21 Bishop James Grant, Letter, late April 1996
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 Minutes, Joint Board Meeting, 13 May 1996
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Archbishop Keith Rayner, Letter, 11 June 1996
- 28 Ron Clark, Letter, 31 May 1996
- 29 Independent Marketing Consultant's Report by Keith Smith of Keith Smith Management Pty Ltd, South Australia, June 1996
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 20 March 1996
- 32 See Appendix 2 for those present at Joint Board Meeting, 3 July 1996, and members of Joint Working Party as at July 1996
- 33 Archbishop Keith Rayner, 'Securing the Future', p. 3
- 34 Ron Clark, 'Securing the Future', p. 5
- 35 'Securing the Future', p. 6
- 36 Ibid., p. 7
- 37 Ron Clark, Letter, 27 June 1996

- 38 'Massive welfare cuts proposed', *The Age*, 26/6/96
- 39 R. Brown, H. Gordon-Clark, B. Pratt, D. Powys, 'Melbourne welfare amalgamation queried', *Church Scene*, 14/6/96
- 40 R. Brown, H. Gordon-Clark, B. Pratt, D. Powys, 'The \$30 Million Questions', *New Cranmer Society News and Views*, No. 13 July 1996
- 41 Minutes, Joint Board Meeting, 3 July 1996
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 31 July 1996
- 44 Tricia Harper's Strategic Planning Framework was subsequently adopted at the Joint Working Party's meeting on 4 September 1996.
- 45 J. Tikotin, recorded in Minutes, Joint Working Party, 31 July 1996
- 46 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 7 October 1996
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 Summary of business at Diocesan Synod, October 1996, prepared by Jennifer Tikotin
- 49 Ibid.
- 50 Archbishop Keith Rayner, Letter, 17 October 1996
- 51 Minutes, Joint Working Party, 21 October 1996
- 52 See Appendix 3
- 53 'Securing the Future', p. 5, quoted in Votes and Proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament of Victoria, 30 April 1997
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 'A Report on a Review of the Potential Amalgamation of the Three Anglican Child and Family Agencies', August 1995, p. 31
- 56 Bishop Andrew Curnow, Interview, 8 May 2007
- 57 John Wilson, Interview, 14 May 2007
- 58 Ron Clark, Interview, 18 April 2007

# Appendices

---

## Appendix 1

### Members of Joint Anglican Child and Family Welfare Agencies Working Party on Cooperation as at March 1995

#### Mission to the Streets and Lanes:

Mr Ron Clark (Board Member and Chairman of Working Party)  
Bishop James Grant (Chairman, Mission Board)  
Mr Ewen Tyler (Board Member)  
Mr Bill Couche (Chief Executive Officer)

#### Mission of St James and St John:

Mr Rick Brown (Board Member and Deputy Chairman of Working Party)  
Ms Tricia Harper (Board Member)  
Mr Kevin Hill (Board Member)  
Ms Linda West (Acting Executive Officer)

#### St John's Homes for Boys and Girls:

Mr Peter Hodges (Board Member)  
The Rev. Canon Neale Molloy (Board Member)  
Mr Bill Thomson (Chairman, Board of Management)  
The Rev. Canon Ian Ellis (Director)

#### Archbishop's representative:

Bishop Andrew Curnow

## Appendix 2

### Those present at Joint Board Meeting, 3 July 1996, and Members of Joint Working Party as at July 1996

#### Joint Board Meeting 3 July 1996

Present: Mr Ron Clark (Chairman)  
Bishop Andrew Curnow  
Mr John Podger  
Mr Kevin Hill  
The Ven. Clem Watts  
Ms Tricia Harper  
Mr Nigel Creese  
The Rev. Don Meadows  
Ms Marilyn Webster

The Rev. Heather Marten  
The Hon. Justice John Fogarty  
Ms Linda West

Mr Bill Thomson  
Mr Peter Hodges  
Mr Peter Horsburgh  
Ms Jane Sullivan  
Mrs Jennifer Tikotin  
Ms Elspeth Sharp  
The Rev. Stephen Williams  
The Rev. Canon Ian Ellis

Mr Ewen Tyler  
Mr Malcolm Boyce  
Mr Carl Massola  
Mrs Jan Short  
Mr Ian Smith  
The Ven. Andrew Oddy  
Sister Hilda CHN  
Mr Bill Couche

Mr John Henry (Diocesan Solicitor)  
Ms Jenny Lincoln (Executive Officer)

Apologies: The Most Rev'd Dr Keith Rayner  
Mr Barry Roberts  
Mrs Beth Delzoppo  
Bishop Arthur Jones  
Dr Peter Harvey  
Mr Chris Molnar  
Bishop John Stewart  
Bishop James Grant  
The Rev'd Mother Valmai CHN  
The Rev. Murray Morton  
The Ven. Marjorie McGregor  
Mr Patrick Moore

#### Joint Working Party, July 1996

#### Chairman:

Ron Clark (on leave of absence from Board of Mission to the Streets and Lanes)

#### Mission to the Streets and Lanes:

Bishop James Grant (Chairman, Mission Board)  
Mrs Jan Short (Board Member)  
Mr Ewen Tyler (Board Member)  
Mr Bill Couche (Chief Executive Officer)

### **Mission of St James and St John:**

Bishop Andrew Curnow (Chairman, Mission Board)  
Ms Tricia Harper (Board Member)  
Mr Kevin Hill (Board Member)  
Ms Linda West (Director)

### **St John's Homes for Boys and Girls:**

Mr Bill Thomson (Chairman, Board of Management)  
Mr Peter Hodges (Board Member)  
Mrs Jennifer Tikotin (Board Member)  
The Rev. Canon Ian Ellis (Director)

## **Appendix 3**

### **Members of Establishment Committee Nov 1996-June 1997**

Mr Ron Clark (Chairman until December 1996)  
Bishop Andrew Curnow (Chairman, December 1996-June 1997)  
Mr Peter Hodges  
Mrs Jennifer Tikotin  
Mr Kevin Hill  
Mrs Beth Delzoppo  
Mrs Jan Short  
Mr Carl Massola  
Dr Graeme Blackman  
Mr Greg Rodway  
Mr Reg Smith  
Dr Linda Campbell

## **Appendix 4**

### **Members of Inaugural Board of Anglicare Victoria 1997**

Bishop Andrew Curnow (Chairman)  
Dr Graeme Blackman (Deputy Chairman)  
Mr Peter Horsburgh  
Mrs Jennifer Tikotin  
Mrs Beth Delzoppo  
Mr Kevin Hill  
Mr Carl Massola  
Mr Patrick Moore  
Mrs Leigh Mackay  
Mr Reg Smith  
Mr Andrew Guy  
Dr Linda Campbell

Supporting families, building communities

The agency exists to  
create a more just society  
by expressing God's love  
through service, education  
and advocacy

[www.anglicarevic.org.au](http://www.anglicarevic.org.au)