



28 September 2016

STATEMENT REGARDING THE REVEREND KEITH MASCORD

At the Annual General Meeting of Anglicans Together held on Sunday 25 September, 2016 the matter of the de-licensing of The Reverend Keith Mascord was raised by a member from the floor.

Keith Mascord has been a priest of good standing in the Anglican Church for the past thirty years and has served in the Dioceses of Armidale and Sydney in parish ministry, chaplaincy, and as a lecturer in philosophy and pastoral theology at Moore College. More recently he has been an honorary associate priest in the Parish of Dulwich Hill.

It was brought to the attention of the meeting that the Archbishop of Sydney, Dr Glenn Davies, has decided not to renew Keith's general licence for ministry because of his views on same-sex marriage and the underlying Biblical hermeneutic (method of interpretation) that gives rise to them. The meeting was also advised that the Archbishop offered Keith a 'local licence' (to a particular church), which he declined because it was on the proviso that he did not articulate his views on homosexuality in the future.

A resolution was passed unanimously at the meeting requesting that the President of Anglicans Together write to the Archbishop expressing its concern over this action and the effect that it will have on the standing of the Anglican Church and its mission in the wider community, as well as the question it raises regarding the basis for the granting of licences in the Diocese.

The President has subsequently written to the Archbishop expressing grave concern that there should be an attempt by the Diocese of Sydney to coerce its clergy into such conformity, and that either the threat or the actual withdrawal of a licence be used as a means to stifle debate on issues that are current in both the church and the wider community. He stated that it would be difficult for the church to argue for a respectful and open community debate on same-sex marriage if people in the church are to be silenced in this way.

It is noted that the ongoing implications for the Anglican Church and its engagement with Australian society will hang on the church's capacity to allow people a free voice and not to force silence from those with whom it disagrees. Moreover, it would seem to cheapen the value of an Archbishop's licence if it can only be held because of adherence to a prevailing Diocesan expectation that is beyond the scope of the ordinal (in the Prayer Book), which outlines the basis for a person's ordination.

The Reverend Andrew Sempell,
President, Anglicans Together