

NEW CRANMER SOCIETY NEWS AND VIEWS

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C/O 8 MINNIE STREET, BRUNSWICK 3056



VIEWPOINT

By Alex Milner

Budgets are always difficult. They involve competing priorities and hard decisions.

Many of us have seen first hand how hard it is for vestries to set parish budgets each year. At my parish, each year leading up to budget time, the wardens have fixed 'worry lines' imprinted on their foreheads. They know they will have to make difficulty decisions with limited resources. They know the many (good) questions they will face from those affected by cut-backs. And they suspect that, despite the most conservative budgeting faith will allow, the same people who contributed to the 'special appeal' last year, will probably be asked to do so again. That's the reality for many parishes, large or small.

So what are we to make of the proposed Diocesan Budget 2006?

Well on its face, it only provides for modest increases in expenditure and forecasts a balanced budget. Sounds good, until one reads the fine print.

Firstly, the 'balanced budget' only provides for a 'profit' of a \$788. In the context of a budget of approx \$7.5 million, \$788 is a ridiculously low margin which leaves no room for error. Diocesan income or expenditure would only need to vary by 0.01% for the budget to be in deficit. On closer inspection, Diocesan Budget 2006 appears to be a deficit budget in reality.

Secondly, the 'balanced budget' is only achieved by raising assessment revenue by an additional \$55,108 above the record high 2005 forecast level. One wonders about how such increases will be viewed in the real world of parish budgets.

Thirdly, the budget provides for significant new expenditure, principally for hospital and aged care chaplaincy. Interestingly, there was no proposal to increase hospital chaplaincy funding during the budget feedback process. So it is dif-

14TH ANNUAL SYNOD BREAKFAST

Saturday 8 October 2005

Bishop Stephen Hale

**"Denominational leadership today—
helping or hindering church renewal"**

7:45 for 8a.m. to 9.30a.m.

Sergio's 465 Spencer Street West Melbourne

\$20 for breakfast alone,
or \$30 with NCS annual subscription.

Payment on the day (No Credit Cards)

Bookings are essential, and should be made by calling 5962 6620 by Wednesday 5 October or email to tcand@netspace.net.au

ficult to understand where these proposals came from, and why other good priorities identified during the budget feedback process, such as assessment relief, were dismissed.

Finally, the budget papers outline a strategy to raise additional revenue for the Diocese (to a target of \$500,000). But please note that the stated purpose of generating additional revenue is not to build the capital base of the Diocese or to reduce assessments, but for "the purposes of funding further ministry activities". That is, every additional dollar raised, will simply be an additional dollar spent.

Diocesan Budget 2006 raises serious questions about the ability of the Diocese to restrain expenditure and to reform itself. The Diocese is proposing a budget which provides for assessment increases, expenditure increases and yet struggles to break even.

Is this good enough? Is this sustainable in the longer term?

Synod is a wonderful opportunity for parishes to ask good questions of the Diocese and its proposed budget, as you would your own vestry.

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The Budget

New Cranmer Society Council has sought to encourage transparency in the budget process, examination of current expenditures and Assessment relief for parishes (not a no assessment policy as is some of our critics claim).

We are encouraged to see progress with transparency and the process of framing the budget and commend Registry and the Budget committee for their efforts in this regard and in framing another budget.

www.newcranmer.org.au

visit New Cranmer Society's new website

Please note that the Discussion Forum feature is currently not available.

While this feature is considered to be an important one to encourage communication on various topics important to us, at this stage we do not have the human resources to manage it constructively. If you are interested in assisting, email us - newcranmer@technologymatters.com.au

Notice of

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 18 October 2005 7.45 pm
32 Fordham Ave, Camberwell.

"Curry & Wine" from 7pm (Cost \$15 - cash on the night)
RSVP by Mon 17 Oct : Denise - 9830 2955

Business will include Annual Reports, Elections (President, Vice Presidents, Council members), the role of NCS in the diocese in 2006 and onward and PRAYER.

Please note that we especially need more lay members of the Council. If interested in nominating or in assisting in networking, please contact us.