



# *Anglican Diocese of Newcastle*

## Media Release

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For Immediate Release

### **Anglican Church Approves Ordination of Women Bishops A Comment from the Anglican Bishop of Newcastle**

*The Anglican Church's highest legal authority, the Appellate Tribunal, has today cleared the way for the consecration of women as diocesan bishops across Australia. A comment from Bishop Brian Farran follows:*

"I welcome the Appellate Tribunal's decision that there is nothing in the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia that would prevent the consecration of a woman as a diocesan bishop in a diocese which by ordinance has adopted the Law of the Church of England Clarification Canon 1992. The Diocese of Newcastle has adopted this ordinance.

This means that when there is the next Synodical election of a Bishop of Newcastle, women priests could be nominated and could be lawfully elected.

The Appellate Tribunal's decision confirms that legally there is no obstacle to the ordination of a woman priest as a Diocesan Bishop. The Diocese of Newcastle has argued for a very long time that there was no theological objection preventing women being made bishops.

It is settling for the Anglican Church of Australia to have this legal and theological concurrence although there will be members of the church, both clergy and lay, who will be disturbed by the ruling.

I am surprised by the curious historical anomaly of language usage that persuaded the Appellate Tribunal not to include assistant bishops in their positive ruling. This is because the Assistant Bishops Canon was framed in 1966 and uses male language whereas the Law of the Church of England Clarification Canon of 1992 uses the word 'person' whose normal meaning would have included both male and female at the time of its composition.

This mixed decision means that for dioceses like Newcastle that have chosen to adopt the ordinance to be able to appoint a woman as an assistant bishop, the General Synod will have to develop an amendment to the Assistant Bishops Canon of 1966. The required process would be a circulation of this amendment to diocesan synods until the required majority of assents by diocesan synods to that canon is obtained. This could take a further three years."

**ENDS**

Contact the Communications Officer of the Diocese, Elizabeth Keevers on  
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