Use of Church Halls and Rooms as Polling Places for Elections - 12 February 2003

With the upcoming state election to be held on 22 March 2003, I would like to remind you that the Property Trust has a standard licence agreement for use of a church hall or rooms as a polling place. The agreement has been approved by the NSW Electoral Commissioner for signature by Returning Officers.

If you are approached by a Returning Officer on behalf of the State Electoral Office for use of your hall or rooms for an election you can easily access the agreement on our website www.sydney.anglican.asn.au and follow the path - Administration / Parish Administration / Leasing and Licensing of Church Property.

There is no set fee payable for the hire of premises for use as a polling place. The cost of hiring each premises is subject to negotiation between the Returning Officer and the churchwardens.

The licence agreement includes a clause which allows the churchwardens to issue directions to the Returning Officer about the use of the premises for the election eg, the distribution of political information and "how to vote" cards on church property can be prohibited; similarly access to areas of the church grounds can be restricted. Such directions should be given to the Returning Officer in writing by the churchwardens.

A final note of caution. The State Electoral Office has a standard agreement for hire of premises for use as a polling place. Ministers and churchwardens should not sign this agreement without written approval from the Property Trust.

If you have any questions at all about this matter, please do not hesitate to call me on 9265 1686.

ANDREW SILLAR
Secretary, Anglican Church Property Trust
Diocese of Sydney