

The Synod *Survival Guide*



***A guide to understanding and participating
in the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney***

by Robert Tong

Sixth edition 2023

Introduction

Congratulations! Your hand went up at the parish Annual General Meeting, perhaps a little reluctantly, but you are now a Parish Representative to the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney. Now you enjoy the prospect of attending Synod for the next three years!

Welcome to Synod. Even though we meet for only a few days each year, the work to be done is important. There will be moments of high tension and interest, speeches of passion and times of sheer boredom when you will wonder: “Why am I here?”

Yet what we do to the framework and fabric of our denomination impacts on parish life, sometimes visibly and immediately, but often slowly over a period of time.

However, it won't be all plain sailing, especially if you are new to Synod.

First, by the time you get to Synod you will more than likely regret not having taken up that speed reading course! Don't let the paper warfare overwhelm you: read it through quickly—it will generally be pretty obvious which bits need more careful reading—mark it with a highlighter as you read, make notes in the margin, flag key parts to find them easily, and don't be intimidated by it. Synod has moved to a 'paperless' Synod, so all Synod materials will be available on the diocesan website for downloading. However, if you prefer you can opt in to receive documents in a hard copy as well – keep an eye out in your email for instructions when the time comes.

Secondly, you'll soon discover that Synod operates in a very formal way which is probably quite foreign to anything you are used to. Federal Parliament on late night TV will give you some idea of what I am talking about. While our own Synod procedures follow a parliamentary shape, we are regularly modernising language and procedure – and we're kinder to each other!

But it *is* important to follow what is going on during Synod if you are going to fulfil the responsibilities given to you as a Synod Rep. My aim in this guide is to explain what it's all about in advance, what will happen next, and what all that 'jargon' really means. Don't try to read this guide through in one sitting—there is a lot to digest, so put it down, take the dog for a walk, and come back to it later. Bring it to Synod with you too.

It's worth adding that there is an excellent spirit of camaraderie to the Synod, and other members will be happy to help you out, so don't be afraid to ask questions along the way. Bear in mind that each Synod gains many new members so we do our best to help welcome you in, and you won't be alone!

There are seven main Parts in this guide:

Part 1. What's it all about?

– who we are, what we do, the big picture

Part 2. Getting ready

– have you loaded all the papers onto your iPad?

Part 3. Day by day

– are there really five days of this?

Part 4. The nuts and bolts

– the key concepts for how Synod does its work.

Part 5. Some end notes

– my thumbnail sketches on Standing Orders, the Australian Church, Money, the Prayer Book and the Anglican Communion.

Part 6. Glossary

– my explanation of key words you might hear used in Synod.

Part 7. Resources

– The Lambeth 1998 Resolution of Human Sexuality, The Jerusalem Declaration, some useful websites, Information about the Anglican Church League.

1. What's it all about?

Who are we?

The Archbishop **and** clergy (Rectors and acting Rectors only!) **and** elected lay representatives from the parishes **and** those called under various parts of the *Synod Membership Ordinance* 1995 (remember, you can look these terms up in the Glossary).

Why are we here?

I looked for the word 'Synod' in my concordance, but it's not a Bible word. I did find a word for assembly—*ekklesia*—but that's another story. Instead, I offer a word of explanation from Archbishop Robinson's 1984 Synod address—

We need a Synod because the Diocese is a fellowship of many congregations for which it is desirable to have a common order and also instruments for common action. But the essence of our fellowship is not in the actions of a Synod but in our faith. St. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to be 'united in the same mind and the same judgment' and he urged the Philippians to 'stand firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel'. Of course, Christians have a long history of not doing this but we dare not acquiesce in such failure. As fellow members of Christ we are bound to cultivate a community of mind and understanding. This is not a question of mere goodwill or tolerance. Such unity comes from our agreement in the faith of the gospel. (*1985 Year Book*)

What do we do?

I'm a lawyer, so how about a legal quote to explain what we do:

‘The Synod of each Diocese may make Ordinances upon and in respect of all matters and things concerning the order and good government of the Anglican Church of Australia and the regulation of its affairs within the diocese...’ (*2nd Constitution in Anglican Church of Australia Constitutions Act 1902*)

That is, the Synod is responsible for the governance, i.e. *the order and good government*, of the Anglican Church in this Diocese. Remember the Synod is the Bishop plus clergy plus laity.

Exercising the *order and good government* function is mainly by the creation of domestic rules known as Ordinances. (We'll talk more about how Ordinances are made later.) Additionally, resolutions are made which establish enquiries, urge action and initiate activity. You will see what I mean when you look at the Business Paper for the first day.

The text of the Acts of Parliament and Ordinances relevant to the life of the Diocese and Synod can be found on the website of Sydney Diocesan Services (www.sds.asn.au). The most useful ones are tucked away in the ‘Administrative Ordinances and Regulations’ section of the ‘Acts, Ordinances and Regulations’ menu. What we actually do, day by day at Synod, is governed by the *Synod Standing Orders Ordinance 2019*. To make things easier in this booklet, any references to items in the Standing Orders will be given in square brackets like this, for example: [SSO 3.2(a)].

The second important task of the Synod is to act as the electoral college (i.e. the people who vote) for the filling of positions on boards and committees. More about this shortly.

A third task is scrutiny of the Standing Committee, which serves the Synod during the year. Their report is a full account of what they have done over the last year.

2. Getting ready

You may already have received some of the paperwork from Briony Bounds. Officially, she is the Diocesan Secretary. Briony knows all! She knows the workings of the Synod inside out, as well as where you can get a cup of coffee and the location of the toilets! She and her staff are always willing to provide assistance.

A bit earlier I mentioned that one of the key tasks of the Synod is elections. The first mailing from Briony Bounds is the Archbishop's summons to Synod and notice of elections. There are about fifty committees to be filled. Would you like to stand? You will need a nominator and a seconder. Are you mature in the faith, do you have a special skill, will you "add value" to the committee? Then why not have a go?

Most positions are for a three year term, and voting is conducted at the Synod over the first few days.

A few weeks before Synod starts you will receive an email to let you know that various materials are available on the Synod page of the SDS website. These will include the Business Paper for the first day and the Standing Committee Report. In the latter you will find an account of what Standing Committee has been doing, draft Ordinances to be considered by the Synod and reports from various committees. The Business Paper lays out our agenda, and will be updated frequently as Synod progresses through its work – and it's the thing that will save you from getting lost.

It's challenging to get through all the reading, and especially if this is your first time on Synod. My advice is to get a sense of what's there as an overview, and then drill down on things as they catch your eye. Cover to cover reading is not for the faint-hearted!

There are a number of ways that you might interact with the business of Synod in advance. You may wish to give notice of your intent to move a motion, or to amend a motion, or to ask a question. We'll talk about these

later, but just note that there are some deadlines that fall before the Synod meets.

Before you leave for Synod have you:

- talked to your other Synod Rep/your Minister, prayed about the issues?
- read all the papers Briony Bounds has sent you?
- organised car pooling or transport arrangements?
- booked a ticket for the ACL dinner on the first night? (acl.asn.au/dinner)

3. Day by day

There are normally five days of Synod each year, scheduled at the end of term 3 (some may feel a holiday would be an excellent dessert course after the mains!). You'll be glad to know that each day is a little different. We'll outline the distinctives of each day before we get into the mechanics of Synod's 'bread and butter' business.

Day 1 [SSO 3.2]

There are a few members of the Synod left who can remember the first day of Synod commencing with a church service in the Cathedral and then squeezing into the Chapter House for the formal commencement of Synod.

Since those days, the Wesley Centre has become the Synod venue. The commencement service will be in the Cathedral commencing at about 1.30pm, and after that we move across to our base for the session.

The Archbishop presides over the Synod, and the Standing Orders refer to him as 'the President'. When you stand to speak you should address him 'Mr. President' or 'Archbishop'. Occasionally some will address the Archbishop as 'Your Grace' which comes from the English courtesy form of address for the Archbishops of York and Canterbury, who are given the same rank of precedence as a Duke.

We begin with a number of housekeeping matters [SSO 3.2(a-i)]. These include some elections if it's the first session of a Synod (within the three year cycle):

- electing the Secretary of Synod – Briony Bounds is the unbackable favourite for the role;
- electing a Chair and Deputy Chair or Chairs of Committee;
- electing a Committee to resolve disputes about elections and qualifications;

- electing a Committee to arrange the order of business for the succeeding days of Synod;
- electing a Committee to read the Minutes of each day's proceedings.

The text of each motion is printed on the Business Paper. The Synod can only operate by making decisions on proposals (motions). Hence the saying 'there must always be a motion before the chair'

Of course, every rule has exceptions! Briony Bounds does a little weightlifting and will hold aloft the Standing Committee Minute Book for tabling, without us even needing to vote on it. Any member of the Synod can inspect the Book while Synod is in session. And the President tables the results of uncontested elections.

Often, there will be a 'procedural motion' or two early in the piece. These are designed to help Synod work efficiently and logically, and will tend to make adjustments to the default order of things.

So far, we have watched set piece moves. The chance to take part is now upon us.

Petitions are relatively rare; a motion is needed to receive the petition. Even more rare is debate on whether the petition should be received—the subject matter would have to be highly controversial. [SSO 6.2] tells you how to make a petition. Petitions normally can only be brought on the first day of the session.

Day 1 also features the tabling by the President of questions submitted in advance. The answers will come from him on day two. Following this formality, he will invite members to give notice of motions for subsequent days.

And then it's time to get to work on the mountain we have before us. But before we get into the alpine pursuits, let's look at what changes for other days.

Days 2 and 3 [SSO 3.3]

A new Business Paper will be in the foyer and available on the Synod website. Questions and motions from yesterday have been incorporated, along with foreshadowed amendments.

After Bible reading and prayer, the President will read answers to the questions tabled (on Day 1) or that had notice given (on Day 2) the previous day.

After the despatch of yesterday's questions, the President will ask: 'Are there any notices of questions?' Here are your second and third chances to give notice of a question.

The President will then ask: 'Are there any notices of motions?' Here again is an opportunity to give notice of a motion. By now however the Business Paper is building up and the chances of your motion being reached may be becoming a little remote.

So, Days 2 and 3 are similar to Day 1 – though questions get answers, and new questions are submitted on the day, and there's none of the administrative one-off matters.

Days 4 and 5 [SSO 3.4]

The weekend break since Day 3 has been welcome. It all comes back to you when you pick up the Business Paper. Again, the early pattern of Day 2 and Day 3 will be followed, but there will be no call for notices of questions or notices of motions.

A long-established tradition means that at 7:00p.m. on Day 4 there is a Mission Hour. This is an opportunity for us to hear of mission activity from near and far.

4. The nuts and bolts

Questions

Any member has the chance to ask a question about the life of the Diocese [SSO 6.3]. You will not get an answer immediately. In fact, you are only ever giving notice of your question. If you're extra-organised, you'll have submitted your question by the deadline a week in advance of Synod, which means that the busy researchers assigned your conundrum will have had extra time to track down the answer.

For instance, you may have wondered one sleepless night, and eagerly sent in your query...

'Why does the Coat of Arms on the Year Book of the Diocese have a mitre when such headdress is not permitted in this Diocese?'

Your questions must be directed to matters connected with the business of the Synod. In your question you cannot make statements of fact (after all, those are technically termed 'answers'!) or seek a legal opinion or draw an inference.

On the first day, the President will merely table the questions received. On days 2 and 3, you can give notice of a question and submit it for an answer on a subsequent day.

That means that answers come from the President on days 2, 3 and 4 – usually at the first opportunity, unless it was a particularly curly one.

President: 'The question seeks an expression of legal opinion and is therefore out of order. Nevertheless, I am advised that the mitre forming part of the Coat of Arms shown on the title page of the Year Book is officially part of the Coat of Arms of the Diocese granted by the College of Heralds.'

You will be given a printed copy of the question and answer.

Giving notice of motions

After dealing with questions, the President will ask ‘Are there any notices of motions?’. You may at this point give notice of a motion you wish to move.

‘I give notice that at the appropriate time I intend to move that “Synod requests the Archbishop to fund, out of the Endowment of the See, secretarial assistance and travelling allowances to Mission Area Leaders to enable them to better fulfil their duties”.

The purpose of giving notice is to enable Synod members to consider the matters raised. Members can talk with the mover outside of the Synod meeting, ask questions, consider amendments and so on. While it is possible to move a motion without notice, this requires the suspension of Standing Orders and thus the goodwill of the Synod – and therefore a good reason why notice could not be given.

The call over

When these notices of motions have been exhausted, the President calls by number the motions printed on the Business Paper [SSO 4.5]. This is a simple method of clearing Synod’s desk of motions that are uncontroversial and can be passed immediately. However, if a member wishes to propose an amendment to a motion, they can call ‘amendment’, and we’ll come back to that motion in its place. (Even if an amendment has been submitted in advance, and is sitting at the back of the Business Paper just waiting for its moment in the sun, ‘amendment’ still needs to be called out.) Also, if at least 8 members of Synod stand up when a motion is called, they are politely objecting to the motion passing in this way. They may object to it entirely, or they may think the matter important enough to be debated fully. If neither of these things happens, the following exchange will more than likely take place:

President: ‘I call Jane Smith [the mover of the motion].’

Jane Smith: ‘I move the motion standing in my name.’

President: 'All agreed say aye. All against say no. I declare the motion carried.'

After the call over of the printed motions, we go back and tackle the day's business as outlined on the Business Paper. Depending on the time, this may mean we consider a motion or an Ordinance – though in theory, anything might have been scheduled.

Considering motions: what happens? [SSO Part 4]

Motions can come 'at the Request of Synod or the Standing Committee' from Regional Councils, or from individual members. Normally, they will be considered in that order of precedence. When it is time to consider a motion, the President will call the mover to start the debate.

The mover has up to 10 minutes to make the case for the motion. The mover has normally arranged for another person to 'second' the motion. If the seconder chooses to speak, it is done immediately after the mover and the seconder has 5 minutes.

If you are the seconder, but do not wish to speak, you can indicate that you second the motion formally. Some seconders say 'I second the motion formally and reserve my right to speak later in the debate.' Strictly speaking it is not possible to 'reserve your right to speak later'. Your official chance is now. Later on you may be called at the discretion of the President.

After the mover and the seconder have spoken, the President will ask: 'Does anyone wish to speak against the motion or move an amendment?'. If there is silence, then the President will ask the Synod to indicate by voice whether they are for or against the motion. If the volume of noise is about the same then there will be a show of hands with a count to decide the issue. It is possible to have a ballot, but this is extremely rare.

Do you want to speak in the debate? If so, stand in your place immediately after a speaker finishes so that you catch the attention of the President. When

called upon, go to a microphone to speak, and address your remarks to the President. It is helpful to give your name and parish before you start your speech. Five minutes are yours to fill—but aim to be brief and speak for less than five if you possibly can. A bell will signal when there is a minute left. Another will sound when time is up. If you know that you need a minute or two more have a friend stand when the second bell goes and call out: ‘I move an extension of time of two minutes.’ Usually the Synod will indulge you by extending the time—but don’t make a habit of it.

Don’t like the wording of the motion? Well, move an amendment: ‘Mr. President, I wish to move an amendment to the motion, as follows...’ Have it in writing to hand up. Briony Bounds has some handy forms you can use. Amendments, particularly if complex, can be hard to digest on the fly – so there’s virtue in getting them to Briony in time to get on the Business Paper, but failing that, so that they can at least be displayed on the screen in the Synod chamber.

At the end of the debate, the mover has five minutes to speak in reply. Then the vote is taken, and one way or another, that’s one item to tick off the list as dealt with.

Ordinances: Two ways to legislate

The largest and most complex part of the work undertaken by the Synod when it meets is the consideration of legislation. An Ordinance is a legally binding set of rules and procedures that operates within the diocese; a Bill is properly the name for a proposed Ordinance in draft form.

The Business Paper for the first day will list all the Ordinances for consideration by the Synod. It is here that you will see the Parliamentary model in play. The way in which we bring into effect domestic rules for the life and health of the denomination is by agreeing to the text of those rules drafted like an Act of Parliament and dealt with by the Synod by a method similar to that used by the Parliament to make legislation.

Each piece of domestic rule making requires the new measure to be considered by the Synod on three separate occasions. Parliament calls each of these stages a 'reading'. Originally the Standing Orders required each reading of an Ordinance to take place on a separate day. The purpose of this was to give Synod members time to reflect on the seriousness and impact of each new measure they wish to pass.

When the new rule or provision is merely of a housekeeping nature the requirement to deal with it over a three day period can be a ritual waste of time, and there are other ways in which the early provision of Bills made for streamlining things. Thus in 1995 Synod adjusted the three stage process and cut out various formal steps. While there is a speedy 'fast track' option (see below), the steps for most Ordinances are now—

- introducing the Ordinance and approving it in principle
- finalising the text of the Ordinance
- passing the Ordinance.

Ordinances are promoted by a mover and a seconder, who will have been significantly involved in the drafting of the Bill. They'll sit at a table down the front of the chamber while the Ordinance is being considered.

Step 1: Introducing the Ordinance

The President calls on the promoter of the Ordinance to move for the Synod's approval in principle to the Ordinance.

Mover: 'I move that the [name of proposed Ordinance] be approved in principle.'

Here is the major discussion of principle. You will notice that the text of the Bill and a statement explaining its background and purpose is printed in the Standing Committee Report. The mover has 15 minutes and will normally walk the Synod through the Bill's explanatory statement. (The mover also has 5 minutes in reply at the end of debate.) The seconder has 5 minutes. After

the mover and seconder have spoken, there is a time of questions on the subject matter of the Ordinance. These are normally directed at the mover, though at times the seconder will be better placed to answer a particular question.

After the mover and seconder have spoken and opportunity given for questions the President will ask: 'Is there anyone who wishes to speak for or against the motion?'

Commonly this type of motion is passed without dissent. Essentially, Synod is agreeing that there is something worth doing in this area. It is possible to debate the 'in principle' motion, particularly where the subject matter is controversial, but it is rare. If the motion to introduce is defeated, the Bill disappears from the Business Paper.

Amendments to the text of the Bill are not taken at this stage, although members will often in their speeches or questions foreshadow amendments they wish to move at the Committee stage. Again, opponents of the Bill may defeat it by voting against the motion so that the approval in principle is not given.

After the debate, and any speech in reply by the mover, the President will put the motion to approve the Ordinance in principle.

Step 2: The Committee Stage

After approval in principle has been given, the President will ask 'Does any member wish to move an amendment to the text of the proposed Ordinance?'

If any member wishes to move an amendment to the Bill, the control of the debate moves out of the hands of the President, into the hands of the Chair of Committee. The Synod undergoes a metamorphosis and turns itself into a Committee (strangely consisting of the whole Synod!). As a Committee, the procedure is less formal than the Synod acting as a legislative body. For example, if called, a member may speak more than once in a debate.

The Bill will be considered clause by clause and you can move an amendment at the appropriate time. The preamble and the title are considered last.

It would be out of order to move amendments which are out of line with the general intention of the Bill or to insert words which would make the Bill have the opposite effect. Your amendment can take words out, add words in, or re-arrange the Ordinance. Every amendment must be in writing and handed up to the Chair of Committee. Preferably two copies should be handed up, as this will assist the Secretaries, though there is a good reason why Briony's staff lugged that copier into the chamber at the start of the session!

At the conclusion of the committee stage the Chairman asks: 'That I do report the Ordinance, with or without amendment, to the house' as the case may be. As the same persons make up the 'committee of the whole' as the Synod, the reception of the report from the Chair of Committee to the President is largely symbolic.

With more complex Bills, it sometimes proves impossible to get through all the text in one go, and so the Chair of Committee may move to 'report progress'. This means that when Synod comes back to the Bill, we'll go straight back into Committee and pick up where we left off.

When the report from the committee as a whole is adopted, the mover will move that 'Synod agrees to consider a motion that the (name of Ordinance) pass as an Ordinance of the Synod'. This will happen on a later day of the session.

Step 3: Passing the Ordinance

While, in many cases, the motion to pass the Ordinance (previously the Third Reading debate) is purely formal, it still presents an opportunity for debate. Standing Orders (Rule 5.8) allow for the whole Bill, or any clause, to be recommitted and it is possible to have a repeat of the second reading debate.

A failure to carry the motion means that the Bill does not pass and disappears from the Agenda. This is extremely rare – given that the Synod

has agreed upon the text already – but it can be done if the Synod decides to hold off for this session. If the motion is carried, the Bill is presented to the President for his assent.

The Archbishop gives his assent to the Ordinance by signing a fair copy. Occasionally the Archbishop may wish to reflect further on the Ordinance made by the Synod and if assent is not given within one month of the passing of the Ordinance, then the Ordinance lapses.

For many years, at 7:00p.m. on Day 2, the Synod would consider the Synod Appropriations and Allocations Ordinance—referred to some as ‘the Money Bill’. This term comes from the English Parliament and refers to Bills which raise taxation and authorise expenditure.

There is an end note in this book on the ‘Money Bill’.

More recently Synod moved from annual budgeting to three year allocations. Synod in year 1 of a triennium agrees on policies for funding and in year 2 adopts a 3 year budget. This sequence was disrupted during the COVID pandemic, but should return to normal from 2023.

If you have questions to ask about money, they should be directed to the mover and seconder of any Appropriations and Allocations Ordinance.

The Fast Track [SSO 5.3 and 5.4]

The promoter of an Ordinance can take advantage of the ‘fast track procedure’ if it is thought that the proposal is not controversial. Thus, permission is sought to pass the Ordinance immediately.

Mover: ‘I move that Synod agrees to consider passing the proposed Ordinance formally.’

If Synod agrees, the mover has three minutes to explain the Ordinance, and then fields questions put by members. When sufficient time has been given for questions and answers:

Mover: 'I move that the [name of Ordinance] pass formally as an Ordinance of the Synod.'

If eight members of the Synod object to the Ordinance passing as a formal Ordinance, or the motion to pass it formally is lost, it must take its place in the queue with the other Ordinances and be processed in the ordinary way. If it passes, then it heads off to the Archbishop for his assent, and Synod moves on to its next item of business.

5. End Notes

So as not to break the flow of the main text, I have used these notes to say a little more about a number of topics. The Standing Orders Note is my paraphrase of some key rules. The other Notes are my own views, not necessarily those of the Anglican Church League. I offer them as background material. Feel free to disagree!

Note 1 – Standing Orders

You will get more out of a team game if you know the rules. In our Synod these are called Standing Orders. The full text can be found on the Diocese of Sydney website, and should also be available to Synod members in printed form before Synod meets. If you have been a Synod member in another Diocese, or even at the General Synod, you will notice that some of our own rules are different, e.g. in the way amendments are dealt with.

Do we all vote together?

With one exception all the members of Synod meet together in one body and transact business as one body (SSO 4.12). The exception is that 8 members can require a vote on any question to be voted on separately by the clergy and the laity. This is called a vote by orders or houses. To pass, the question must have the support of both groups (*5th Constitution in Anglican Church of Australia Constitutions Act 1902*).

It is also possible for 8 members to ask for a vote by ballot. This is somewhat time-consuming, so make sure you listen to instructions from Briony so it can proceed as smoothly as possible.

Order of Business

Unless varied by the Synod, the meeting time commences at 3:15p.m. but no legislation can be considered before 4:30p.m. (SSO 1.1). You may wonder how the business is arranged day by day. SSO 3.2 prescribes the order of

business for the first day. SSO 3.3 and 3.4 prescribe the order of business for succeeding days. Synod, on Day 1, appoints an ‘Order of Business Committee’ to settle mechanical matters concerning the Business Paper from day to day.

Speaking

If you wish to speak, stand in your place and when called by the President, go to a microphone, give your name and parish and address all remarks to the President. The Standing Orders give the control of the Synod to the President—he is like the Speaker in the Parliament. You will be encouraged to keep your remarks to the subject matter of the motion. There are time limits on speeches (SSO 4.6). At the beginning of a major debate the Synod may agree to reduce the time limits. This may also happen on the last day of Synod to enable as much business as possible to be transacted. Such changes will be effected through a procedural motion; SSO 4.19 contains a cluster of possible adjustments that will usually supply the substance of such a motion (to save Synod spending time debating precisely how to save time!).

Point of Order

If a speaker transgresses the Standing Orders, then another member can take issue with this by raising a ‘point of order’. You stand in your place, call out ‘point of order’ and attract the attention of the President. Having got yourself to the microphone you point out the breach, e.g. the speaker was making a personal reflection on a member. You can speak for or against the point of order. The President rules on the point of order (SSO 4.2(4)). It is possible for the Synod, by vote, to disagree with the ruling.

Avoiding a Standing Order

Can you get around the Standing Orders? Yes! But there are two hurdles.

First you must ‘seek the leave of Synod to move a motion without notice’. You should indicate what motion you want to move. Secondly, you move to

‘suspend so much of the Standing Orders as to allow..’ whatever it is you wish to do. If it is some mechanical matter you want attended to then usually the Synod will give you leave. You can be stopped. Eight members can stand in their place and object to the Standing Orders being suspended—if this happens, you lose.

Another way is to give notice that, at some future time, you wish to suspend some part of the Standing Orders. Notice must be given on the previous day or, if it is the first day of Synod, before 7:00p.m. In these situations eight members cannot stop you suspending Standing Orders if a majority decides to allow you to do it. The whole idea of giving notice is to prevent surprise and to give time to think about proposals.

Amendments

What if you are not happy with the question being debated? You can move an amendment to omit words, to add words or to reshape the motion. SSO 4.9 sets out the possibilities. When all amendments have been proposed and spoken to, the President will put the amendments in an order which makes sense so that, at the end of the process, there is a text refined by amendments for Synod to vote on.

Avoiding a decision

What if you think the Synod should make no decision? Under SSO 4.14 you can move ‘that the motion not be voted on’. This is sometimes known as ‘moving the previous question’, or ‘moving that the motion not be put’. It does not happen that often, but confusion can reign when it does. Debate on the motion itself stops, and this procedural motion is debated and voted on. If it fails, then debate on the original motion resumes at whatever point it was up to.

Making a decision

While normally the President will ‘read the room’ and ask the Synod whether it considers a matter has been sufficiently debated if it seems like arguments are dragging, it is also possible for any member to move for debate to cease (SSO 4.14A). They can move the procedural motion ‘that debate cease and the motion be immediately put to the vote.’

Debate is allowed on the procedural question, and it is then voted on. If it passes, then the mover of the motion can give their speech in reply, and all amendments and the motion itself are then voted upon.

Set piece debates

Occasionally, a matter will come to Synod where it is felt that it would assist our debate if we vary our Standing Orders to enable two sides of a particular question to be presented. This will be enabled via a procedural motion on the first day’s Business Paper. When you see one of these pending, it’s a good clue that you may want to familiarise yourself with the material fairly thoroughly, so you can make the most of the pre-arranged speeches.

Policies of the Synod

In recent years, Synod has found it helpful to agree upon policy statements from time to time. These tend to be more complex than can be dealt with through a simple motion, and may run to a few pages. Our practice has been to debate them like an Ordinance, using the Committee procedures to finalise the text, even though they don’t operate with the force of an Ordinance once they’re in place.

Note 2 – The Australian Church

Our denominational life as Christians—to the extent we wish to participate—has parallels with our life as citizens. Participation in the constitutional life of the local community is by voting and standing in elections and this can

proceed to State and National level. Membership or support of groups, causes and organisations is another mark of community involvement.

We are all members of local churches where opportunity exists for ministry. But what of beyond? Here we are members of the Sydney Synod. In what way are we connected to other Synods and to other Christian bodies?

Australia Wide

Structurally, and at least on paper, there is the General (National) Synod, the Provincial (State) Synod and the Diocesan Synod. In New South Wales there are seven Dioceses which make up the Province of New South Wales—Armidale, Bathurst, Canberra/Goulburn, Grafton, Newcastle, Riverina and Sydney. Each has a Bishop. In Sydney he is called Archbishop because he is Bishop of the Province of New South Wales – the ‘Metropolitan’.

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) is made up of twenty-three Dioceses. One might expect that a General Synod has power over the big questions, the Provincial Synod over the not so big and the Diocesan Synod over local questions. However, the path of historical development of the Anglican Church in Australia has put each Diocese in the box seat for initiative and activity. The ACA Constitution recognises the Diocese in accordance with historical custom to be ‘the unit of organisation of this Church’.

When Do They All Meet?

We meet as a Synod annually and the Standing Committee meets monthly.

The Provincial Synod meets every five years and its Standing Committee once a year. The General Synod did meet on a four year rotation but, in the last few years, has met on a three year interval. Its Standing Committee meets every six months.

General Synod Composition

Each Diocese sends at least the Bishop, one clergy and one lay person. There is a formula to determine how many reps each Diocese can have, that is based on the number of licensed clergy. There is one clerical rep for every 20 fulltime clergy in the diocese. This is matched by an equivalent number of laity. At the 2022 General Synod, Sydney had 72 reps plus the Archbishop. In addition to their bishops, Melbourne had 36, Brisbane 20, Perth 16, and Canberra/Goulburn 12 – all other dioceses were in single figures.

The Primate

Elected by a General Synod committee made up of all Diocesan Bishops, twelve clergy and twelve laity. You must be a Diocesan Bishop to be a candidate. The Primate is the Chair of General Synod.

General Synod Canons

The ACA Constitution is a schedule to the *Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961*. A copy is found on the diocesan website. While the General Synod has power under Section 26 to pass Canons for the order and good government of the ACA, the reality is many Canons only apply in a Diocese if that Diocese adopts the Canon.

If a Canon deals with some purely General Synod matter (such as a superannuation fund) then it comes into force usually in a month.

If a Canon affects the ‘good order and government of a Diocese’ or its ‘church trust property’ it only comes into effect in a Diocese if it is adopted by Ordinance of that Diocese. Similarly, if the subject matter concerns ‘ritual, ceremonial or discipline’ it requires an adopting Ordinance.

So, for example, Sydney has not adopted General Synod Canons on the remarriage of divorced persons or on Defence Force Chaplains or on *A Prayer Book for Australia (1995)*.

Provisional Canons

If a General Synod proposed Canon deals with 'ritual ceremonial and discipline' then it is called a Special Bill.

Special Bills require a two thirds majority at the third reading in the General Synod. If passed, the Canon becomes a 'Provisional Canon' and must then be considered in turn by each Diocese. This Special Bill procedure is to enable every Diocese to give specific consideration to the proposal. At the end of the process, the fate of the Provisional Canon in each Diocese is reported back to the next General Synod. If two thirds of that next General Synod at the third reading pass the Provisional Canon it then becomes a Canon. It still needs adoption at the Diocesan level because 'ritual ceremonial and discipline' canons affect the 'good order and government' of a Diocese.

Our normal practice is to consider all General Synod Canons as soon as possible.

General Synod Funding

General Synod raises funds by assessment on the dioceses. The total is shared in proportion to the number of representations sent by each diocese, consequently, as our representation level rises so does our share of General Synod expenditure.

Section 32 of the 1961 Constitution set out the categories under which money can be levied. Over the last 20 years or so there has been debate as to whether all the assessment is properly authorised under this Section.

Additionally, there is a special (voluntary) assessment, mainly for international Anglican activities. For many years, our Synod has not paid this. Instead, selected activities have been supported directly.

Note 3 – Money

The last 50 years have witnessed an enormous change to the shape and direction of Synod income and expenditure.

Up to the 1960s the Income and Expenditure Ordinance, sometimes referred to as the ‘Money Bill’, raised assessments on the Parishes to fund the running of the Diocesan administration.

In 1966 (see Year Book) the total Synod expenditure was approximately \$180,000, of which \$128,000 was raised by parish assessment and \$28,000 from the Glebe Administration Board. There was a special (voluntary) assessment of \$92,000 for the benefit of Synod Organisations. The major payment was \$30,000 for religious instruction in schools followed by \$25,000 for Moore College.

The Archbishop and the one or two Assistant Bishops were paid out of the Endowment of the See Fund (EOS), which is quite separate from Synod generated funds.

The most dramatic change to Synod economics came about through the sale of the various Glebe estates so that the Glebe Administration Board had enormous amounts of cash to invest – now known as the Diocesan Endowment, or DE. This investment provided an income to the Synod for dispersal year by year. So, for example in 2022, the Glebe Board provided Synod a total of \$7.683M for application in 2023 (\$3.4M from the DE; \$2.4M from Synod’s half-share of St Andrew’s House; the rest largely from various parish-based trusts).

Note 4 – The Prayer Book

The Book of Common Prayer 1662 (BCP) has a special place in the Anglican Church of Australia. By the 1961 Constitution (Section 4), the ACA ‘retains and approves the doctrine and principles of the Church of England

embodied in the Book of Common Prayer and the 39 Articles' BCP and the Articles are the authorised standard of worship and doctrine in the ACA.

Section 4 is long and convoluted—a product of hotly debated amendments on the floor of the General Synod. A curious phrase in the section, 'provided that until further order', comes before the provision for a Diocesan Bishop, at his discretion, to authorise deviations from BCP at the request of parishioners from a vestry meeting. Just what does 'other order' mean? Bishop Donald Robinson, who was a member of the Committee which produced AAPB (and a member of General Synod when the 1961 Constitution was debated), said that it means the adoption by the ACA of a replacement for BCP. So far that has not been done.

Since 1961, the General Synod has authorised for use two prayer books. What is their status?

The 1978 *AAPB* title page: "AN AUSTRALIAN PRAYER BOOK for use together with The Book of Common Prayer 1662."

The 1995 *APBA* title page: "A PRAYER BOOK FOR AUSTRALIA For use together with The Book of Common Prayer (1662) and Australian Prayer Book (1978). Liturgical Resources authorised by the General Synod."

Both books are 'experimental' and neither is a replacement for BCP.

The adoption of the 1961 Constitution, the desire for contemporary liturgy and a significant period of Australia-wide experimentation resulted in AAPB passing in the General Synod without dissent. All Diocesan Synods adopted the Book with alacrity. The passage of APBA in the 1995 General Synod was marked by passionate debate and division. The defence of Reformation Theology, represented in its Anglican form in BCP and the Articles, was a principal motivation for Evangelical opposition in the General Synod.

This is not the place to tell the story of why APBA passed General Synod. What is clear is that Anglican liturgical change—worldwide—has moved from its plain Reformation structure to embellished pre-Reformation forms.

Or, to quote from the book, *Thomas Cranmer: Essays in Commemoration of the 500th anniversary of his Birth*:

‘...now that many parts of the Anglican Communion have largely abandoned worship in the Prayer Book tradition... will it be possible to say what the character and ethos of Anglican worship is, in brief and simple terms, on a worldwide basis at this end of this century.’

This is seen most clearly in the Lord’s Supper. The centre and essence of the Canon of the Mass was the Prayer of Consecration. Cranmer broke this up to more truly reflect biblical doctrine. However, the trajectory of liturgical change in the Anglican Communion is to restore in Anglican Prayer Books the structure of the Roman Canon. The 1997 Diocesan Year Book (pp 450-473) has a full discussion of the problems with APBA. Sydney did not adopt the Prayer Book for Australia Canon 1995. However, Sydney did adopt the 1992 Canon Concerning Services which gives much flexibility in drawing suitable new forms for services. Additionally, the 2012 Sydney Liturgical Panel’s *Common Prayer* provides further resources.

Note 5 – The Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion is a fellowship of Churches historically associated with the Church of England and which are in conformity with the faith and doctrine of that Church. There are some 40 independent national Churches in this fellowship. Military and mercantile reasons lie behind the growth and development of the Church of England overseas.

The Bishops of the Anglican Communion have met at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, at ten year intervals, the first being in 1867 and the most recent in July-August 2022. In addition to the *Lambeth Conference*, the *Anglican Consultative Council* has been in existence since 1971 and meets every three years. Each member national Church can send three persons, a Bishop, a Priest and a lay person. The Primates, since 1979, also meet regularly. None of these bodies exercise Synodical or legislative

functions and there is no legal jurisdiction over member churches. While any resolutions passed by these meetings are of persuasive value only, the resolution on Human Sexuality passed by Lambeth 1998 carries immense weight as senior leaders of the Communion voice their endorsement of the Biblical standard.

The blatant disregard by the Diocese of New Westminster in Canada (the authorisation of a Public Rite for the blessing of same sex unions) and The Episcopal Church in America (the election of a practising homosexual as a Diocesan Bishop), of the clear terms of the Lambeth Resolution on human sexuality spurred the Primates of the various national churches into an emergency Primates Meeting which prevailed upon Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, to commission a report on these developments. The *Windsor Report* (2004) was the fruit of that Commission and contained theological and legal reflection on the presenting problems and the nature and character of the international Anglican instruments available to meet the challenge. The North American churches have refused to repent of their actions and the Communion instruments have been unable to resolve the crisis.

As a counterpoint to the crisis, more than 1100 Anglican Christians gathered in Jerusalem in June 2008 for the *Global Anglican Future Conference*, 'GAFCON'. This number included nearly 300 bishops representing about two-thirds of worldwide Anglican Communion membership. The Jerusalem Declaration was written and endorsed as a statement of Anglican orthodoxy. (See page 41.)

GAFCON held further conferences in Nairobi in 2013 and Jerusalem in 2018, and in Kigali in 2023. The continued drifting apart of the Communion in recent decades is likely to see GAFCON playing an increasing role internationally, and in parts of the Communion where division is most apparent.

The ACL's website, www.acl.asn.au, features articles on developments in the Communion.

6. Glossary

1662

See BCP.

1902 Constitution

This refers to the *Anglican Church of Australia Constitutions Act 1902*. It is a NSW Act which has a Schedule of some 13 clauses giving categories of power to Diocesan Synods. This Act applies to each of the seven Dioceses in the State of New South Wales. Pursuant to this Act, Synod passed the *Synod Membership Ordinance 1995* and the *Synod Standing Orders Ordinance 2019*.

1961 Constitution

This refers to the *Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961*. It is a NSW Act with a Schedule setting out the constitution of the federal body known as the Anglican Church of Australia. This constitution is often referred to as the “1961 Constitution”. Each State and Territory Parliament passed a similar Act.

1917 Property Trust Act

This refers to the *Anglican Church Trust Property Act 1917*. This NSW Act applies to each of the seven New South Wales Dioceses. A Property Trust is created to hold church property and extensive powers are given to the Synod to manage, sell, mortgage and vary trusts for church property.

AAPB

An Australian Prayer Book (1978).

Amendment

This is when you propose a change to a motion (or to the text of an Ordinance) being considered by the Synod. You may wish to delete words, add words or change the structure of a motion. The amendment cannot be so extensive that you reverse the direction of the motion. Your amendment should be in writing, preferably two copies and handed up to the Chairman. See SSO 4.9 and 5.5-5.6.

Anglican Church of Australia

This is the federation of Dioceses which came into existence upon the coming into effect of the *Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act* 1961. Before 1961, the confederation at the national level was much looser and the Anglican Church in Australia was an extension of the Church of England. The ACA operates by way of a Synod made up of representatives from each of the 23 Dioceses.

APBA

A Prayer Book for Australia (1995).

Appellate Tribunal

This is created by the 1961 Constitution. Three bishops and four lawyers are elected by various sections of the General Synod. One function is to act as the final court of appeal on discipline charges against clergy. Another function is to rule on whether General Synod Canons are consistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles of the ACA. See Sections 1–4 1961 Constitution. The third and most frequently used function is to give opinions on matters arising under the Constitution. These Section 63 opinions are only advisory. They have no binding effect.

Assessments

This is the term given to the payments made by parishes to Synod funds – the ‘Parish Cost Recoveries’ or PCR. The amount and basis of the assessment is fixed each year by Synod.

The term is also used for the payments made by the Sydney Synod to the Provincial (NSW) Synod and the payments by the Sydney Synod to the General (National) Synod.

BCP

This is the *Book of Common Prayer* 1662. It is also referred to as “1662”. In the years of the Reformation, the English Church fundamentally revised its liturgy, principally under the hand of Archbishop Thomas Cranmer. The first Book was in 1549, revised significantly in 1552 and again in 1559. On the Restoration of the monarchy (1660) and following the Savoy Conference, the 1559 Book with many minor amendments became the Book annexed to the *Act of Uniformity* 1662. This Act required use of the Book—**and no other**—in all public services in the Church of England.

Bill

A proposed Ordinance in draft form. When the Bill has been passed by the Synod and is assented to by the Bishop it becomes an Ordinance.

Business Paper

This sets out the text of each motion and the order of business for the day. A new Business Paper is produced each day.

Business Rules

See Standing Orders

Calling Over the Motions

SSO 4.5 allows the President, at the beginning of each day of sitting, to call over the motions by number to see if any can be dealt with formally, i.e. without debate. It is a method of clearing the Business Paper.

Canon

A name for church legislation. In Sydney we call them *Ordinances*. In Melbourne they are *Acts*. General Synod calls its legislation *Canons*.

Chair of Committee

This is the person who takes the chair when the Synod turns itself into one big Committee, 'a committee of the whole,' to discuss on a more informal basis an issue or more commonly the text of a Bill.

Committee

A very Anglican way of solving problems is to give it to a Committee. Synod itself often acts as a Committee, but also much of the preparation work for new ordinances and policies is done by committees that report back to and through Standing Committee to the Synod.

Constitution

See '1961 Constitution' and '1902 Constitution.'

Core Standing Committee Members

These are the clerical (4) and lay (8) members of the Standing Committee elected by the whole Synod.

Diocese

Geographically, it is the territory for which the Bishop and the Synod have the care and responsibility.

Endowment of the See (EOS)

A trust fund to produce income to pay the Bishop of the Diocese, Assistant Bishops, Archdeacons, Deans and includes payment of housing, travel, etc.

GAFCON

This is the Global Anglican Future Conference held in Jerusalem in June 2008, Nairobi in 2013, Jerusalem in 2018 and Kigali in 2023. It has also given its name to the fellowship of dioceses and provinces that continue its work out of session.

General Synod

This is the national Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia. See *Anglican Church of Australia Constitution Act 1961*.

Glebe Administration Board (GAB)

Administers properties held on trust for the Diocese.

Metropolitan

The Metropolitan is the Senior Bishop of a Province. In the Province of NSW there are seven dioceses. Sydney is the Senior Diocese and its Bishop is the Metropolitan and has the title Archbishop.

Motion

The name given to a proposal made by a member of the Synod.

Mover

The person who moves the motion.

Notice of Motion

Motions cannot be sprung on the Synod by way of surprise. You must give notice, usually the day before, of any motion you wish to move. It is possible

to ask the Synod to give its consent to you ‘moving a motion without notice’. You should tell the Synod the substance of the motion you wish to move.

Orders of the Day

On the first day of Synod each item of business is in the form of a motion. Some items will be dealt with by giving them a special place on the Business Paper for the next, or some other, day of Synod. Where an item is specially fixed it becomes an ‘Order of the Day’ for that particular day.

Ordinance

This is the name given to the domestic legislation when it is enacted by the Synod.

Ordination

This has become the generic term for admission to any of the three orders of clergy—namely deacons, priests and bishops. BCP ‘*makes*’ deacons, ‘*ordains*’ priests and ‘*consecrates*’ bishops.

Part 6, Part 7, Part 8 and Part 9 Members

In addition to the Rectors and the elected lay representatives, the Diocesan Bishop may call to the Synod a number of additional clergy (Part 7 members). This number is capped at 10% of the rectors summoned to Synod. Standing Committee elects an equivalent number of lay persons (Part 8 members).

The CEOs of up to seven ‘nominated organisations’ are invited as members of Part 6, and two indigenous members are elected by the Sydney Anglican Indigenous Peoples’ Ministry Committee

Long ago, when St. Paul’s College was the only Anglican university college in the only university of the State, it was deemed right to have the Warden and two others as members of the Synod. These three are Part 9 members, together with the Chancellor, the Archbishop’s Executive Officer, the regional

Assistant Bishops, the Diocesan Secretary, the Archdeacon for Women's Ministry and the Principal of Moore College.

Petition

A formal request to Synod for action or to register a complaint.

President

The chairman of the Synod—the Archbishop.

Procedural Motion

Any motion dealing with the procedure of the Synod takes precedence over any other motion, even if you are halfway through a debate. A procedural motion might be to adjourn and go home, or to stop the debate on this question and go to the next question.

Regionalisation

This term is used interchangeably with Regionalism although some argue about differences. Either word is a reference to the process where the 1995 Synod acted to create Regional Councils in each of the five episcopal areas and to give to those Councils regional initiatives in ministry areas. See *Regions Ordinance 1995*.

In addition, part of the Standing Committee is now elected by regions and part by the Synod as a whole.

Scandrett v. Dowling

The New South Wales Court of Appeal judgment reported in 27 NSWLR 483. The plaintiffs sought an injunction against the Bishop of Canberra/Goulburn to prevent him ordaining to the priesthood a number of female deacons. Rodgers J refused to grant the injunction but the Court of Appeal, (Gleeson CJ, Samuels JA and Meagher JA) granted an interim injunction pending a full hearing. Various questions were framed to focus the issues. In

the end it was held (Priestly JA, Hope A-JA, Mahoney JA) that the only parts of the 1961 Constitution which have statutory force are those relating to church property. The remaining terms of the Constitution have no contractual force but are binding in conscience only (Priestly JA, Hope A-JA). This is a NSW decision which turned on a particular form of words in the 1961 NSW Act which adopted the 1961 Constitution.

Secunder

The person who supports the mover of a motion.

Standing Committee

This is a committee elected by the Synod at the beginning of each triennium. The Synod has delegated to this committee many of its functions so that, when Synod is in recess, the Standing Committee can act in the place of the Synod. It has delegated power to pass Ordinances and to fill casual vacancies on Boards and Committees. See *Delegation of Powers Ordinance 1998*. It also acts as a committee of advice to the Archbishop.

The 1995 Synod put in place a measure of regional representation which means that, from 1996, part of the Standing Committee is elected by the whole Synod and part elected by Synod members from a particular region. There are four clergy and eight lay persons to be elected by the whole Synod by vote before the Synod meets. In addition, each region will elect two clergy and four lay persons from its own region to be members of this Committee. The Bishops and Archdeacons are *ex officio* members, as are the Chancellor, the Archbishop's Executive Officer, the Diocesan Secretary, the CEO of SDS, the Principal of Moore College and the Dean. The Archdeacons have no vote unless their Regional Bishop is absent.

Standing Orders

These are the rules, previously known as Business Rules, which determine how business will be conducted by the Synod. It is possible to set aside a part

of the Standing Orders if you give notice to the Synod on the previous day. If you have not given notice then you can ask the Synod to suspend the Rule; however, 8 members can object and you can be prevented from doing what you wish. (SSO 6.5)

Triennial Elections

These are elections which happen once every three years.

Triennium

A period of three years. Our Synod meets over three years. Each year is called a session. In 2023, the First session of the 53rd Synod meets.

7. Resources

Lambeth Conference 1998: Resolution 1.10 Human Sexuality

This Conference:

1. commends to the Church the subsection report on human sexuality;
2. in view of the teaching of Scripture, upholds faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union, and believes that abstinence is right for those who are not called to marriage;
3. recognises that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of the Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of relationships. We commit ourselves to listen to the experience of homosexual persons and we wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptised, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are full members of the Body of Christ;
4. while rejecting homosexual practice as incompatible with Scripture, calls on all our people to minister pastorally and sensitively to all irrespective of sexual orientation and to condemn irrational fear of homosexuals, violence within marriage and any trivialisation and commercialisation of sex;
5. cannot advise the legitimising or blessing of same sex unions nor ordaining those involved in same gender unions;
6. requests the Primates and the ACC to establish a means of monitoring the work done on the subject of human sexuality in the Communion and to share statements and resources among us;
7. notes the significance of the Kuala Lumpur Statement on Human Sexuality and the concerns expressed in resolutions IV.26, V.1, V.10, V.23 and

V.35 on the authority of Scripture in matters of marriage and sexuality and asks the Primates and the ACC to include them in their monitoring process.

The Jerusalem Declaration (agreed at GAFCON, June 2008)

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all.

In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.
6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.
10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.

11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.
13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.
14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.

Jerusalem

Feast of St Peter and St Paul

29 June 2008

Some useful websites

Diocese of Sydney

sydneyanglicans.net

Sydney Diocesan Services

sds.asn.au

Anglican Church League

acl.asn.au

Australian Church Record

australianchurchrecord.net

Anglican Church of Australia

anglican.org.au

GAFCON

gafcon.org

Anglican Communion

anglicancommunion.org

What is the Anglican Church League?

The ACL is an association of evangelical Anglican Christians who desire to maintain the reformed, protestant and evangelical character of the Anglican Church.

This character is based on Scripture and is expressed in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles of Religion.

The League has been active in the Anglican Church for the last 100 years, mainly in the Diocese of Sydney but also by encouraging evangelical Christians elsewhere.

What Does the ACL Do?

The League is active in Synod affairs. It offers advice to Synod members about people suitable for election to committees and other bodies which influence the quality and direction of Church life.

The Council, through its members, nominates people for positions on committees within the Diocese.

It also appoints task forces to promote the League's policies and to consider other relevant matters and convenes regional and local meetings for its members. The League encourages the study of relevant issues through literature, lectures and conferences. Papers on theological and diocesan matters are released from time to time and a website (acl.asn.au) is maintained.

How is the ACL Operated?

The League is governed by the Council elected at the Annual General Meeting. Members work with the Council to implement the ACL's objectives through task forces as well as regional groups. All members are encouraged to take part in these activities.

Who May Join?

The League is always seeking like-minded evangelical men and women to join in this vital and strategic work.

Anyone who is a member of the Anglican Church of Australia may apply to join. Those seeking membership declare that they accept the authority of Scripture and the teaching of the Thirty Nine Articles. Their application is supported by someone who is already a member and then considered by the Council.

Policy Objectives

As an evangelical fellowship, the Anglican Church League is committed to these policy objectives –

- To defend and advance the protestant and reformed principles of the Anglican Church based on Holy Scripture and as set out in the Book of Common Prayer and the Thirty Nine Articles.
- To uphold and promote the local church as the fundamental sphere of Christian ministry, teaching and fellowship.
- To promote the ministry of lay men and women to strengthen the outreach of the gospel within the churches and the community.
- To support the training of godly, competent and biblically committed pastors and teachers to equip the churches to serve Christ through loving obedience to his Word.
- To uphold the supremacy of the Synod in the governing of the Diocese, subject to the Scriptures, and to affirm the need for diocesan committees and organisations to be accountable to the Synod which established them.

- To reform the structures and practices of (Sydney) Diocese to increase their effectiveness in assisting local church-based evangelism and ministry.

From the late John C. Chapman

“It has been interesting to me to see how the churches in the New Testament, who were founded by the apostles, so soon fell into such error that the apostles say that they have lost the gospel itself (see 2 Corinthians 11:4). There is, in the Pastoral epistles, a strong call to guard and preserve the gospel. The ACL was founded and exists to do that.

The way they seek to do it is to help us by finding people who are committed to this cause who will serve us on the committees and boards of the various agencies of this vast Diocese.

I have been a member of ACL for more than 30 years and commend its activities.”

From Phillip D. Jensen

“ACL has played a major role in keeping the Diocese of Sydney committed to Biblical and Reformation principles. As a member of ACL I am glad to be associated with its objectives and activities.

I would urge all Evangelicals who wish to preserve the gospel in our Diocese to join ACL and support its endeavours.”

To learn more about the ACL, and to apply to join, please visit **acl.asn.au/how-to-join**

About the Author

Dr Robert Tong AM is a member of the Standing Committee, the Nomination Board and the Moore College Council.

Nationally, he is a member of the Standing Committee of General Synod and the Church Law Commission.

Internationally, he was the lay representative of the Anglican Church of Australia at the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Panama, Lambeth Conference (1998) and Dundee, and a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Panel of Reference arising from the Windsor Report.

He was appointed Deputy Chancellor of the Diocese of Sydney in 2009, and from 2013, Chancellor of the Diocese of The Murray.

St. Matthias' Centennial Park was his church for 30 years; he is now a member of Christ Church St. Ives.

The Synod Survival Guide – 6th edition

1st edition 1996; 2nd edition 2002; 3rd edition 2005; 4th edition 2008; 5th edition 2014; 6th edition 2023.

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ISBN: 978-0-9941768-0-6

Published by the Anglican Church League, Sydney, as a service to the members of Sydney Synod.

To learn more about the ACL, please see our website at **www.acl.asn.au**

With thanks to Russell Powell for the cover photo, Anthony Douglas for help in updating text and Colin Mackellar for layout and publishing.

