

CHAPTER 1

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A SYNOD MEMBER

A personal guide by Robert Tong AM¹

Congratulations! Maybe it was your Bishop's suggestion that you be a representative of the Diocese at the next General Synod – or maybe you were part of a contested election – or you are a new Diocesan Bishop. In any event the next session of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia now beckons you.

Welcome to the Synod. Even though we meet for only one week every three years the work to be done is of high importance. There will be moments of tension and interest, speeches of passion and times of sheer boredom when you will wonder: "Why am I here?".

But what we do to the framework and fabric of our Church impacts on Diocesan and 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.

- 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 volume of paper 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.
- You'll soon discover that Synod operates in a very formal way that is probably quite foreign to anything you are used to. Have you ever sat in Federal Parliament or watched it late at night on the television? The way they do business can be very mysterious to an outsider. Ancient and arcane procedures and language similar to those in Parliament also clothe our own Synod procedures. They have been simplified a lot but more is to be done.
- 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 representative.

My aim in writing this note is to explain what it's all about in advance, what will happen next and what all that "jargon" really means.

¹ Dr Robert Tong AM is a long-standing member of the General Synod and of the Synod of the Diocese of Sydney and its Standing Committee. This is an edited version of a paper regularly appearing in the Synod Process Book for sessions of General Synod. The General Synod acknowledges with gratitude its indebtedness to the author.

There are four main sections:

1. What's it all about?

- who we are, what we do, the big picture.

2. Getting ready.

- do you have your lunch money?

3. Day by day.

- are there really 5 days of this?

4. Glossary of terms.

- my explanation of key words you might hear used in Synod. These have been grouped under two headings: Standing Orders and The Australian Church. Keep a finger in there and check the meaning as you read.

1. WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Who we are?

The Synod consists of the House of Bishops, House of Clergy and House of Laity under the chairmanship of the Primate.

The House of Bishops consists of the 23 Diocesan Bishops and an Aboriginal Bishop and a Torres Strait Islander Bishop.

Each Diocese sends a number of lay and clerical representatives calculated on the basis of a formula (see the table at end of Constitution). These representatives form the respective houses of clergy and laity together with two lay and two clergy being one each Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander.

What do we do?

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

"...Synod may make Canons Rules and Resolutions relating to the order and good government of this Church including Canons in respect to ritual ceremonial and discipline and make statements as to the faith of this Church and declare its view on any matter affecting this Church or affecting spiritual moral or social welfare and may take such steps as may be necessary or expedient in furtherance of union with other Christian communions." (Section 26 Constitution.)

That is, the Synod is responsible for the governance, i.e. the order and good government, of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Exercising the order and good government function is mainly by the creation of domestic rules known as Canons. (We'll talk more about how Canons 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.

Many of the Canons can be found in a very useful book called *The Constitution Canons and Rules of General Synod 2017* – commonly called The Green Book. Synod procedures are governed by the Standing Orders (Rule I, in The Green Book). There is more about the Standing Orders in the Glossary at the end of this document.

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

A third task is scrutiny of the Standing Committee and the various commissions, task forces, working groups and committees (Doctrine, Liturgy, Church Law etc.) which serve the Synod between sessions.

2. GETTING READY

You will receive a considerable amount of material from the General Synod Office such as:

- Bills for Canons and Rules with Explanatory Memoranda;
- The report of the Standing Committee, including a report on actions to implement resolutions of the previous Synod, financial reporting and proposals for financing the Synod over the next triennium;
- Reports from other bodies established by the General Synod or associated with the Anglican Church of Australia.

The General Synod Office is always willing to provide assistance.

A bit earlier I mentioned that one of the key tasks of the Synod is elections. Over 80 positions on a number of different bodies are to be filled by election, with the prospect of some emergent elections as well. 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? If you are intending to stand for election, it is important to complete the candidate profile form available on the GS18 Member Portal at www.anglican.org.au/synod-portal so that the other General Synod members will know something about you as a candidate.

Most positions are for a term which expires at the next session of the Synod. Voting is conducted at the Synod on the Wednesday and Thursday.

Before you leave for Synod have you:

- ✓ **Talked to your other Synod Representatives/your Minister, prayed about the issues?**
- ✓ **Acquired a Green Book or reviewed the General Synod Canons and Rules on the General Synod website www.anglican.org.au**
- ✓ **Explored the GS18 Members Portal at www.anglican.org.au/synod-portal and read all the material you have received from the General Synod Office?**

3. DAY BY DAY

DAY 1, SUNDAY

The Synod will commence with an opening service of Holy Communion.

If you are coming to the General Synod for the first time, you will have the opportunity on day 1 to attend a session in the afternoon when a few experienced hands will give their impressions of the General Synod and tips on making the most of your time here.

You can register for the Synod at the venue during the afternoon.

DAY 2, MONDAY

You have arrived, registered your attendance, collected the latest information pack and are ready to go.

The flow of the first day is:

- corporate worship at 8.30am
- the Presidential Address
- business
- morning tea
- business
- lunch
- business
- afternoon tea
- business
- dinner
- business until 9.00pm

We will all be called to order at 8.30am. Corporate worship in the main Synod hall will mark the start of the day's business. Then follows the "State of the Church" address from the President of Synod.

The Primate presides over the Synod and the Standing Orders refer to him as "the President". When you stand to speak you should address him as "Mr President" or "Archbishop".

After the Presidential Address we turn our attention to a number of housekeeping elections:

- electing a Clerical Secretary and a Lay Secretary;
- electing a Chair and Deputy Chairs of Committees;
- 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; and
- electing a Minutes Reading Committee.

The text of each motion is printed on the Business Paper for the first day. The Synod can only operate by making decisions on proposals (motions). Hence the saying, *“There must always be a motion before the chair”*.

The progress by dioceses in adopting or assenting to canons since the last Synod is reported by the Primate.

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

President: “Are there any petitions?”

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 must be highly controversial for a petition to be rejected.

President: “Are there any notices of questions?”

Here is your chance to ask a question about work of the General Synod and its agencies. You will not have an answer immediately. In fact, you are only giving notice of your question at this time:

“I give notice of the following question: Is there any requirement for Clergy to wear distinctive clerical dress when attending Synod?”

Your questions must be directed to matters connected with the business of the Synod. In your question you cannot make statements of fact or seek a legal opinion or draw an inference.

You will receive the opportunity to actually ask your question and get an answer tomorrow.

President: “Are there any notices of motion?”

When the notices of question have been exhausted, the President will ask “Are there any notices of motion?” You may at this point give notice of a motion you wish to move.

“I give notice of the following motion: That the Standing Committee investigate and report to the next Synod on the desirability and

feasibility of printing at the back of A Prayer Book for Australia the Canons of 1604 or where a canon has been repealed its Australian replacement”.

The Call Over

When these Notices of Motion have been exhausted the President calls by number the motions printed on the business paper. This is the Call Over. Unless you or someone else stands and shouts “*Object*”, then 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”.

The Call Over allows Synod to formally pass (i.e. without debate) motions which convey greetings or are not controversial.

After the Call Over of the printed motions we go back and tackle the first of the printed motions.

Motions: What happens?

The President calls the mover of the first motion printed in the section of the business paper headed "Motions at the Request of the Standing Committee".

The mover has up to 15 minutes to make the case for the motion. The mover normally arranges for another person to "second" the motion. If the seconder chooses to speak it is done immediately after the mover and the seconder has 10 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, but it will be 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?

Come forward to a microphone and, when acknowledged by the President, address your remarks to the President. Five minutes are yours to fill. 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. Some handy forms are in a box at the entrance to the Synod Hall. Only amendments written on the forms will be accepted.²

At the end of the debate the mover has five minutes to speak in response.

Canons: What can happen?

Two things can happen:

- **Full Procedure**
- **Full Procedure with discussion groups**

I will now comment about each a little further.

A Canon is presented to the Synod as a Bill which, if passed by the Synod, becomes a Canon.

The Business Paper for the first day will list at this point all the Canons for consideration by the Synod.

Full Procedure

(a) Approval in Principle

- The President calls on the mover of a Bill to move "that the Bill be approved in principle". Here is the major discussion on the objects of the Bill. The mover has 15 minutes (and 5 minutes in response at the end). The seconder has 10 minutes. After the mover and seconder have spoken there is a time of questions directed to the mover on the subject matter of the Bill.

You will notice that the text of each Bill and a statement explaining its background and purpose [the *Explanatory Memorandum*] is published on the GS18 Member Portal at www.anglican.org.au/synod-portal, and in Book 1 of the Synod papers.

² You can complete a handwritten Notice of Motion Form at the Secretaries' desk during General Synod. You can also send your motion to gs18@anglican.org.au.

- Amendments to the text are not taken at this stage although members will often in their speeches foreshadow amendments they wish to move at the committee stage.
- After the Mover and Seconder have spoken and opportunity given for questions the President will invite debate on the principle of the Bill. After a number of speakers have debated the issue, the President will put to the Synod the question “that the Bill be approved in principle”.
- Opponents of the Bill may defeat it by voting against the motion so that the committee stage does not take place.

(b) No Opposition to the Principle of the Bill

If the principle of the Bill is agreed to and no amendments to the text have been foreshadowed the mover may move that the Bill pass. If agreed to by the Synod the Bill then becomes a Canon. Unlike Diocesan Synods which require the assent of the Bishop before a Bill becomes law, General Synod legislation is made upon the passing of a motion “that this Bill do pass”.

(c) The Committee Stage

- If after a debate on the Bill in principle a member has indicated that an amendment will be moved to the text of the Bill the Synod then by virtue of Standing Order 63 (10) 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, and is chaired by the Chair of Committees.
- The Bill will be considered by the Synod in Committee clause by clause and you can move an amendment at the appropriate time. The preamble – the “whereas” bits 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, insert or add words, or re-arrange the Canon. Every amendment must be in writing and handed up to the Chair. Forms are available in a box at the entrance of the Synod Hall. Motions moved in the “Committee Stage” do not require a seconder.
- At the conclusion of the Committee stage the President asks that the report (of the Committee) be agreed to. If yes, the mover then has a choice to move “that the Bill do pass” or alternatively, that the question of the passing of the Bill be made an Order of the day for some future day. Postponing this stage to a different day is often desirable where there has been strong debate and many amendments. It gives time for reflection.

- It is desirable to give advance notice of your amendment as it allows all members to give proper consideration to what you propose.
- Where there are a number of amendments and it is clear that a conversation between amendment movers and the person moving the Bill would be productive, then the Chair of Committees may adjourn, with the consent of the Synod, further debate until the various parties have had the opportunity to confer to see if some measure of consensus can be reached. Over the last few Synods these conversations have been referred to as “huddles”.

(d) That the Bill do Pass

While in many cases this third consideration is purely formal it still presents an opportunity for debate. Standing Orders allow for the whole Bill or any clause to be recommitted and it is possible to have a repetition of the committee debate although the scope of the debate is restricted to any material to be added or deleted.

A failure to carry the “third stage” means that the Bill does not pass and disappears from the Agenda. If it is carried the Bill becomes a Canon.

Full Procedure with Group Discussion

The 1998 (Adelaide) General Synod directed the Standing Committee to explore means of presenting some business by way of a non adversarial procedure.

So, in Brisbane in 2001, several topics had small group discussion after the topic was introduced by the mover and a second speaker providing additional points of view and time for questions. When time for adequate discussion was had, the President called the Synod to order and the procedure for either legislation or consideration of motions came back into play. This procedure is now Standing Order 37B. It requires a motion to activate this way of dealing with an item of business.

Special Bills

- To ensure that measures concerning “the ritual, ceremonial or discipline of the Church” are not foisted on individual dioceses by a simple majority vote of General Synod, there is a measured series of safeguards built into the 1961 Constitution by way of the Special Bill Procedure.

Section 28(1) requires Bills concerning “ritual ceremonial or discipline” to follow the Special Bill Procedure unless three quarters of each house of the Synod vote to treat the Bill as an Ordinary Bill.

- A Special Bill proceeds in the normal way through the approval in principle stage and Committee stage. It is at the “Bill do Pass” stage that the first Constitutional safeguard is met. To pass this stage, what is required is a vote of at least two thirds of the members present in each house whereupon the Bill passes provisionally and is called a “Canon provisionally made”.

The Provisional Canon is then referred to each Diocese for consideration. If all Dioceses assent to the Provisional Canon it becomes a “Canon duly passed”.

Unless there is unanimity among all the Dioceses the next General Synod receives a report on the reception by each Diocese of the Provisional Canon and the Provisional Canon is recommitted to the Synod for its further consideration at the approval in principle stage.

If the Bill successfully negotiates this subsequent consideration and is approved by at least two thirds of the members of each house present at the "Bill do pass" stage the Bill becomes a "Canon duly passed".

There is an alternative available to the Synod at this stage. A majority of the three houses voting together may declare that the "Bill do pass" motion be provisional only whereupon the Provisional Canon will again make the rounds of the Dioceses.

When does a Canon take Effect?

By Section 30 a "Canon duly passed" comes into force on a date provided for in the Canon or on an appointed day within one month from passing. It applies to every Diocese and prevails over inconsistent Diocesan Ordinances.

However:-

- Twenty-five or one-third of any house or the Primate can refer the Canon to the Appellate Tribunal to decide if the Canon is inconsistent with the Fundamental Declarations or Ruling Principles, or that the Canon should have been dealt with by the Special Bill Procedure but was not. If the Appellate Tribunal finds that there is no inconsistency or breach of procedure the Canon comes into force, otherwise the Canon is void;
- If a Canon affects the ritual, ceremonial or discipline of the Church or the General Synod declares that a Canon affects the order and good government of the Church or Church Trust property within a Diocese, the Canon will not apply in a Diocese until adopted by Ordinance of that Diocese (Section 30(a) and (b)). In practical terms nearly all General Synod legislation falls into one or other of these categories;
- a Diocese may itself declare that in its opinion a Canon affects the order and good government of the Church or Church Trust property within that Diocese. If the Standing Committee of General Synod agrees with the diocesan opinion a Canon shall not come into force in that Diocese or if it has already come into force then it shall cease to apply. Where the Standing Committee of General Synod disagrees with the opinion of a Diocese the President must refer the question to the Appellate Tribunal for determination (Section 30(c)).

How Can the Constitution be Altered?

No change can be made by the General Synod to Sections 1, 2 and 3 which contain the Fundamental Declarations.

The remaining Sections of the Constitution are, in Chapter XI, divided into three groups; each group requiring different conditions to be met before the particular Sections can be altered. Provisions which are central to the character of the Constitution require wide national consensus before change can occur.

First Group

[Applies to Constitution Sections 11-14, 18-25, 27, 32-35, 64(1)(2) and (3), 68-70, 75.]

Where the alteration does not concern 'ritual ceremonial or discipline' the Bill requires two thirds of each house and a majority of all Dioceses including two metropolitan sees at the "Bill do pass" stage. A Diocese is taken to have given agreement if a majority of lay and clerical representatives and the Bishop have voted in favour of the proposal. (See Section 67(1)(a)(i)).

Other Bills in this group require a majority of each house at the "Bill do pass" stage **BUT** will not come into effect until assented to by three quarters of the Dioceses including **ALL** metropolitan sees.

Second Group

[Applies to Constitution Sections 64(4)(5), 67(1)(b)].

These changes require a majority in each house on the "Bill do pass" stage and **EVERY** Diocesan Synod has assented to the change by Canon. (See Sections 67(1)(b)).

Third Group

[Applies to Constitution Sections 4-10, 15-17, 26, 28-30, 36-63, 65, 67(1)(a) and (c), 71-74 and the Table annexed to the Constitution.]

These changes require a majority of each house on the "Bill do pass" stage **AND** three quarters of the Diocesan Synods including **ALL** metropolitan sees have assented to it by Canon (See Section 67(1)(c)).

You will be glad to know that all this will not happen on the first day! The Standing Orders require legislation to have precedence during the day and General Business at night.

At about 9.00pm and at the end of a debate or speech, someone will catch the eye of the President and say: "I move the adjournment until 8.30am tomorrow."

This is a motion about procedure and must be dealt with immediately. Procedural motions take precedence over all other motions.

If the Synod agrees with the motion then we all go home and come back tomorrow.

DAY 3, TUESDAY TO DAY 5, THURSDAY

The flow of days 3 to 5 is similar to day 2. But there will be some differences.

The business paper will be brought up-to-date and a fresh one will be posted on the GS18 Member Portal at www.anglican.org.au/synod-portal. Hard copy will be available at the entrance to the Synod hall. Questions and motions from yesterday, new motions and amendments to Bills and motions will be incorporated and Orders of the Day will be notified.

The Minutes of the previous day's business will be signed and then any petitions presented.

The President will then call by name those who gave notice of their questions the previous day. When called upon, you stand and say: "I ask the question standing in my name".

President: **"The question seeks an expression of legal opinion and is therefore out of order. Nevertheless, it is my wish that clergy at all times be clothed in a manner befitting their calling".**

After the dispatch of yesterday's questions the next question will be:

President: **"Are there any notices of questions?"**

Here is your second chance to give notice of a question. Following this:

President: **"Are there any notices of motion?"**

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 are becoming a little remote.

The President will then call over by number the motions. Don't forget to call "object" if you wish to vote against a motion or move an amendment – if you don't then the motion may well pass formally and you have lost your chance.

Time off has been programmed for Tuesday evening.

DAY 6 - FRIDAY

There will be a closing service at 8.30am before the business for the day starts.

The Synod wraps up its business with motions acknowledging the contributions of key people.

The business of the Synod will finish at 1.00pm.

4. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

SOME KEY TERMS

To maintain the flow of the main text I have used these notes to say a little more about a number of topics. These are notes on key terms in relation to the Standing Orders, and on the Australian Church in alphabetical order. The notes are my own views. I offer them as background material. Feel free to disagree!

A. 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 is in Rule I (in The Green Book 2017, available online at www.anglican.org.au).

Do We All Vote Together?

With one exception all the members of Synod meet together in one body and transact business as one body (Standing Order 45) (SO.45). The exception is that five members of the House of Bishops or 10 members of the laity or of the clergy can require a vote on any question to be voted on separately by the Bishops, the clergy and the laity. This is called a vote by Houses. To pass, the question must have the support of each House.

Order of Business

Unless varied by the Synod, the meeting time commences at 10.00am. Legislation is dealt with in the morning and afternoon sessions. General business in the evening (SO.10). You may wonder how the business is arranged day by day. SO.7 prescribes the order of business for the first day. SO.9 prescribes the order of business for succeeding days. On the first business day, Synod appoints an "Order of Business Committee" to settle mechanical matters concerning the Business Paper from day to day.

Speaking

If you wish to speak, go to a microphone and, when called by the President, give your name and diocese and address all remarks to the President.

The Standing Orders give the control of the Synod to the President. You will be encouraged to keep your remarks to the subject matter of the motion. There are time limits on speeches (SO.34). 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.

Point of Order

If a speaker transgresses Standing Orders (SO.29, SO.30) 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. It is possible for the Synod, by vote, to disagree with the ruling (SO.28).

Getting Around Standing Orders

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" (SO.37). You should indicate what motion you want to move if leave is given. Secondly you move "to suspend so much of Standing Orders so as to allow..." If it is some mechanical matter you want attended to then usually the Synod will give you leave.

You can be stopped. Ten members can stand in their place and object to the Standing Orders being suspended - if this happens, you lose! (SO.56).

Another way is to give notice that at some future time you wish to suspend a particular Standing Order. Notice must be given on the previous day or, if it is the first day of Synod, before 7.00pm. In these situations 10 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. SO.42 sets out the possibilities. Each amendment is spoken to and put 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 SO.43 you can move "that the motion be not put". This is known as "moving the previous question". You can still keep debating the issue as well as the procedural question. No further amendments will be considered until the procedural motion is voted on.

No further amendments can be entertained until the Synod votes on the motion.

No Standing Order

If at any point the Standing Orders do not provide an answer then SO.67 brings into play the rules and practice of the Federal House of Representatives so far as they can be applied.

Huddles

This is the term given to the informal conversations between the mover of a Bill and movers of conflicting amendments to see whether a measure of consensus can be reached rather than wasting the time of Synod in a debate on the splitting of hairs! At any time during the committee stage of a debate on a Bill, a member can move that further consideration of the Bill be adjourned to allow interested members to confer to see if a consolidated amendment can be brought back to the Synod for consideration.

It is possible to use this procedure in relation to motions.

B. THE AUSTRALIAN CHURCH

Our synodical life as Anglicans - 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? Some are members of a Diocesan Synod as well as the General Synod.

Australia Wide

Structurally and at least on paper in the 1961 Constitution, there are the General (National) Synod, the Provincial (State) Synods and the Diocesan Synods. For example, in New South Wales there are 7 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 Metropolitan of the whole province. A similar structure is found in each State of the Commonwealth, except for Tasmania.

The Anglican Church of Australia (ACA) is made up of 23 Dioceses, five of which are Metropolitan 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. The path of historical development of the Anglican Church in Australia has put the 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?

Diocesan Synods usually meet annually. The New South Wales Provincial Synod for example meets every 5 years and its Standing Committee annually. The General Synod did meet on a 4 year rotation but in the last few years has met on a 3 year cycle. General Synod Standing Committee meets several times each year.

General Synod Composition

Each Diocese sends at least the Bishop, a Priest and a lay person. There is a formula to determine how many representatives each Diocese can have. It is based on the number of licensed clergy. See the Table at the end of the Constitution. In addition NATSIAC nominates an Aboriginal and a Torres Strait Islander member to each of the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity.

The Primate

Elected by a Board elected by the General Synod (see the *Primate Canon 1985*). He is the Chair of General Synod and its Standing Committee.

General Synod Canons

While the General Synod has power under Section 26 to pass Canons for the order and good government of the ACA the Canons only apply in a Diocese if that Diocese adopts the Canon.

If a Canon deals with some purely General Synod matter such as NATSIAC then it comes into force usually within a month.

Where the subject matter is "ritual ceremonial and discipline" then a special procedure must be followed. See Provisional canons below.

So for example some Dioceses have not adopted Canons on the Marriage of Divorced Persons or Defence Force Chaplains or Women Priests.

Funding

General Synod raises funds by assessment on the Dioceses. The total is shared in proportion to the number of representatives sent by each Diocese. Section 32 of the 1961 Constitution sets out the categories under which money can be levied.

CHAPTER 2

ANGLICAN JARGON EXPLAINED

1662	See BCP.
1961 Constitution	This refers to The Anglican Church of Australia Constitution. Each State and Territory Parliament passed an 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". The Act was necessary to give effect to at least property matters. The most up to date version of the Constitution is included in The Green Book 2017, available online at www.anglican.org.au .
AAPB	An Australian Prayer Book (1978) for use together with the Book of Common Prayer, 1662.
Amendment	This is when you propose a change to a motion 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, and handed up to the Chairman. See Standing Orders 41 and 42.
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 and the six indigenous representatives.
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. On one view, these Section 63 opinions are only advisory. They are not judgments. Another view is that these opinions are binding.

Assessments

This is the term given to the levies made on Parishes by Diocesan Synods. The term is also used for the levies made by Provincial Synods and the General 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.

The Book of Common Prayer (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.

An Australian Prayer Book (AAPB) was authorised by General Synod for use in worship together with BCP in 1978. A Prayer Book for Australia (APBA) was authorised by the General Synod for use together with BCP (1662) and AAPB in 1995.

Bill

A proposed canon in draft form. When the Bill is passed by the Synod it becomes a Canon.

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.

Call Over the Motions

Standing Order 10(b) 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 paper.

Canon	A name for church legislation. General Synod calls its legislation Canons. In Melbourne they are called Acts. In Sydney and many other dioceses they are known as Ordinances.
Chair of Committees	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.
Corporate Trustees	A body corporate under Section 64 of the Constitution and governed by the Corporate Trustees Canon 1962 exists to hold property on behalf of the Anglican Church of Australia. The Standing Committee appoints the Trustees.
Constitution	See "1961 Constitution".
Diocese	Geographically it is the territory for which a Diocesan Bishop and Synod have the care and responsibility.
Elections	These take place during Synod. The Election days for the Eighteenth Session of General Synod will be Wednesday and Thursday. Elections are conducted according to Rule III in The Green Book. The full notice of elections is available on the GS18 Members Portal at www.anglican.org.au/synod-portal .
Executive	Under clause 6(b) of Rule II – Standing Committee, the Standing Committee can create an Executive to carry out the functions of the Standing Committee between meetings. It is usually chaired by the Primate and is made up of several members of the clergy and laity elected by the Standing Committee.
Green Book	A green covered bound collection of the Constitution, Canons and Rules of the General Synod called <i>The Constitution Canons and Rules of the Anglican Church of Australia</i> . Every Synod Representative should have one. Your Diocesan Registrar can supply it, or you can download a soft-copy from the General Synod website www.anglican.org.au . A new edition is published after each session of Synod.

Metropolitan	The Metropolitan is the Bishop of the Senior Diocese in a Province. 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.
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.
Petition	A formal request to Synod for action or to register a complaint.
President	The person who presides at the General Synod, is usually the Primate, or in his absence an Archbishop.
Provisional Canons	<p>If a Bill deals with "ritual ceremonial and discipline" then it is called a Special Bill.</p> <p>Special Bills require a two thirds majority at the final voting stage 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 final voting stage pass the Provisional Canon it then becomes a Canon.</p>

It still needs adoption at the Diocesan level because “ritual ceremonial and discipline” Canons affect the “order and good government” of a Diocese.

Procedural Motion

Any motion dealing with the procedure of the Synod takes precedence over any other motion, even if you are half way 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.

Reading

The consideration of a bill by Synod. Strictly no longer used as our procedure has been simplified but old hands will still use the term.

Red Book Case (The)

In the 1940s the Bishop of Bathurst authorised the use of an alternative service book which included an order for the Holy Communion service. This service contained variations and additions to the Holy Communion Service in the BCP. An injunction was sought in the Supreme Court of NSW to restrain the use of this alternative service book. The injunction was granted. On appeal to the High Court, the injunction was modified to apply to certain named churches in the Diocese of Bathurst. The High Court Report can be found – *Wylde v Attorney General (NSW) (1948) 78 CLR224*. The essence of the decision was that in NSW the only authorised services on church trust property were those services contained in the BCP. Given that there are now a multiplicity of authorised services, a similar case today would be unlikely to succeed.

Ritual, Ceremonial and Discipline

This phrase appears in Sections 28 and 30 of the Constitution. Each word is defined in Section 74. In a general sense, ritual are the words, ceremonial are the gestures or acts preceding accompanying or following the saying of those words. Discipline, while defined in Section 74, has a number of other meanings depending where it appears in the Constitution. Again, in very general terms, the word refers to the obligations and rules which affect clergy.

Scandrett v Dowling

The NSW Court of Appeal judgment reported in 27NSWLR483. The plaintiffs sought an injunction against the Bishop of Canberra/Goulburn to prevent him ordaining to the priesthood a number of female deacons. The Court of Appeal granted an interim injunction pending a full hearing. Various questions were framed to focus the issues. In the end it was held that the only parts of the 1961 Constitution which have binding force are those relating to church property. 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.

Special Tribunal

Where a charge is brought against a member of the House of Bishops, Section 56 of the Constitution provides for a special tribunal consisting of a lay person, a priest and a bishop to try the charge.

Standing Committee

This is a committee elected by the Synod at each session. Rule II (in The Green Book) sets out the composition and function of this committee.

Standing Orders

These are the rules which determine how business will be conducted by the Synod. It is possible to set aside a Standing Order 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 Standing Order. However, 10 members can object and you can be prevented from doing what you wish.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONVERSATION AT SYNOD

INTRODUCTION

Meetings of General Synod are opportunities for our representatives to seek God's will about legislation to govern the Church and issues of interest or concern to the Church nationally. By its very nature, the General Synod will deal with matters that are sometimes complex, sometimes contentious. Discussion can often be challenging because we live with institutionalised diversity at national level.

Synod uses formal, parliamentary-style processes to transact its business. The Standing Orders of General Synod provide for discussion in small groups as an adjunct to help us deal with matters in a constructive and productive manner. Discussion groups can be formed to clarify important matters such as the purpose or intended effect of a bill. The Synod has developed the huddle as a streamlining process for dealing with multiple conflicting amendments to improve Synod's effectiveness. The movers of the motion and amendments withdraw to discuss informally how to achieve the most beneficial result and report back to the Synod. All this facilitates candour and respect as we seek to fulfil our Christian vocation together.

WORKING IN STAGES

Synods have sometimes been forums characterised by conflict. Participants may tend to view those with different opinions as opponents in a process where there are winners and losers.

To manage the undesirable effects of conflict, a non-adversarial approach has been consciously encouraged and adopted. Participants should see each other as partners with common goals and diverse concerns. It assists members to take a problem-solving attitude to issues and find a way forward that is acceptable to as many people as possible. The process involves a number of steps.

Step 1. Clarifying the issue(s)

This stage is not about finding solutions or arguing against someone else's thoughts or feelings. It is about hearing and understanding what is at stake. It often includes addressing questions such as:

- What is at stake for participants, the Church as a whole or our particular diocese?
- What is important for each participant?
- What feelings are evoked: are some participants seeking to gain and are others feeling threatened?
- What will I be looking for in a solution?
- What criteria will I use to assess options?

Step 2. Generating options

This stage may require some lateral and creative thinking as participants explore and freely identify the possible approaches to resolving an issue.

Step 3. Assessing the options

Participants will need to weigh up the various options generated (Step 2) against what each is seeking to gain (Step 1). In particular:

- each participant is invited to be clear and explicit about the criteria used to assess options;
- the implications of each option are developed and considered; and
- options may be developed or adapted as necessary.

Step 4. Deciding

In this stage, the advantages and disadvantages (Step 3) are taken into account as the best (often adapted) option is selected. The aim is for a *win-win* solution that:

- achieves, as far as possible, the common goals; and
- takes into consideration, as far as possible, the particular concerns of each participant or group.

Step 5. Implementing

This stage is concerned with the question of who will need to do what, when. Many good ideas often flounder at this stage because little consideration has been given to matters like resources and getting the right group to do the job. For example:

- The budget and forecasts for the next triennium are to be considered during the Synod. Adding new work to this agenda is challenging, more so as the financial cost for any proposal increases the budget.
- If your proposal has any financial implications, please speak with the Honorary Treasurer, the General Secretary and the Finance & Operations Manager at an early stage, preferably before the Synod commences, to ensure that implementation will not be hamstrung by the lack of resources. SO.37A may apply to your proposal.
- Activities required of dioceses may also have financial implications which may not fit easily into their budget cycles.

Step 6. Evaluating

This stage is concerned with identifying appropriate criteria for evaluating all outcomes achieved against the Synod's initial expectations or intentions. Were they in the zone or wide of the mark? If so, what improvements or remediation might be required?

Although there is a sense in which a session of the General Synod is a coming together to address Step 4 only, that is, to make decisions, that is only one element in a larger process. The Synod's effectiveness depends largely on the quality of this wider process.

Before members of General Synod arrive at the event, a great deal of preparatory work has already been done. Some General Synod members, Commissions, Task Forces and other groups have endeavoured to clarify the issues and identify solutions (Steps 1 and 2) in the lead up to the Synod. As a result, General Synod members are then better able to engage with assessing the options and making decisions (Steps 3 and 4).

Of course, most decisions require someone in our Church to do something in response. Often the Standing Committee or some other group will need to look after implementation (Step 5). The following Synod is often the time when the success of an activity or a course of action is often evaluated (Step 6).

It is clear then that various issues will come before the General Synod at different points in the process. Some issues will appear early as matters of awareness raising or to sound out an initial response from the Church nationally. Some matters will be clearer than others or have implications that require additional exploration. Rarely, will an issue move through each and every step at a single meeting of Synod. Some issues may require several meetings of Synod to progress through each of these steps before a satisfactory outcome is achieved. This process is illustrated in the table on the next page.

Step	This Synod	Interim	Next Synod	Interim	Following Synod
Step 1	Groups begin clarification.				
Step 2	Groups begin to generate options.	Refining options. Refining criteria. Consultation. Preliminary assessment of options. Options presented to the General Synod.			
Step 3			Groups to assess refined Option(s).		
Step 4			Plenary debate and decision.		
Step 5				Action by Standing Committee or designated group.	
Step 6			Reporting to General Synod.		Reporting to General Synod.

GROUP DISCUSSION PROCESSES UNDER STANDING ORDERS

Group discussion processes have been incorporated in the Standing Orders to assist with the decision-making processes of the General Synod.

The Synod timetable is comprised of two types of sessions. There are *plenary* sessions where legislation and resolutions are considered. *Group discussion* sessions may be planned in advance to occur throughout the course of Synod. But the need for group discussion may also arise during a session.

During such times, members of Synod will be asked to form small groups of between 4 and 6 people with a mix of diocesan representatives in order to assist with mutual understanding and engagement.

The Group Discussions are designed to help individual members of the Synod to clarify the issues before us as a Synod. Sometimes groups may be asked to brainstorm or to formulate options on the question that can be used in future work on the question. In this case, there will be provision for reporting back to the whole Synod.

Small groups are not designed for the purpose of proposing amendments to the resolution before the Synod. Such amendments can only be made in the normal way in plenary session.

The Group Discussion process works in the following way:

- The mover of the motion will introduce the subject and speak to the motion. They have 15 minutes.
- The seconder will formally second at this stage. They will have an opportunity to speak in the usual way in the plenary debate after the small group process.
- Another speaker from a different perspective will speak. They have 15 minutes.
- The President will invite any question of clarification to which the speakers will respond.
- The Synod breaks into small groups. The small groups will have a note of the questions that are at stake in the motion as agreed between the two lead speakers.
- After time for discussion the President will announce that the plenary debate will proceed. Synod then returns to debate the motion in the usual way.

The Synod may by resolution declare that a motion requires group discussion. This process can be used when considering legislation (see SO.63(5)) prior to entering the committee stage or resolutions (see SO.37B).

The use of small group discussions during the meeting of the General Synod can help with undertaking a particular step as outlined above. Care is needed to ensure that any appropriate processes that would be required are prepared beforehand. For example, if a small group discussion is intended to generate options (Step 2) a mechanism by which groups could report back would be necessary.

STREAMLINING AMENDMENTS

One of the most time-consuming aspects to Synod is processing amendments to Bills and resolutions. Standing Order 42A was introduced to facilitate this important, if potentially frustrating, process.

The system works best if amendments to Bills and motions are notified early and those proposing amendments discuss them with the mover and seconder.

The 'huddle' has become an important feature of managing General Synod business. The aim is to allow the mover of a relevant motion and those seeking amendments to meet outside of a plenary session to process the proposed amendments which have been notified to the Secretaries of the Synod.

The opportunity to confer is important because it allows the original mover to consider, accept or reject any of the changes proposed without necessarily debating each item on the floor of Synod. The redrafted item can be then resubmitted to the Secretaries of Synod and the members informed of the status of the proposed amendment. This process can reduce considerably the time otherwise spent by the Synod as a whole for any redrafting.

Where there is a multitude of amendments, the Chair or Deputy Chair of Committees may suggest that the interested parties form a 'huddle' to progress the matter out of session, thereby freeing up the agenda for other items. Of course, members are welcome to take the initiative too!

PARTICIPATING IN THE CONVERSATION

Listening

Empathy is important to good listening. Empathy is about rapport and openness between people. When these are absent people are less likely to consider the ideas, commitments, understandings or faith of others. The best way to build empathy is to help other people know that they are understood. There are specific listening activities which are relevant in various situations.

Listeners may assist communication by:

- Being aware that a person's history and experience influences how they see things. Listeners may need to appreciate some of that history to understand the point of view being expressed.
- Asking questions –
 - to clarify what is being said
 - to enquire about what is being said
 - to clarify anxieties, concerns or difficulties
 - to explore unstated premises on which thinking is built
- Checking – that they have understood accurately what is meant.
- Summarising – to ensure that they have the overall picture straight.

Listeners may also assist communication by:

- not ignoring or denying feelings,
- checking with the speaker about feelings as well as content even though they may only speak about content,
- being attentive to non-verbal as well as verbal communication.

In small groups and in large conversations like a Synod we all engage in our minds with our own private version of a conversation with the speaker, even though we are simply listening. Emotions can become inflamed when we feel attacked or identified as the problem.

As a listener you have the opportunity to choose the most helpful response when someone is saying that they are unhappy with you, criticising you, complaining about you or yelling at you. It can help communication if you:

- Don't defend yourself at first, to avoid inflaming the speaker further.
- Deal first with the speaker's emotions. People shout because they don't think they are being heard. Make sure they know they are, that you are hearing how upset and angry they are.
- Acknowledge their side. This doesn't mean you are agreeing with them, only that you are registering their viewpoint.
- Draw them out further. Explore gently what more there is behind the emotion. What is at stake for the speaker that generates such strong feelings?
- Explore the issue once the heat is gone from the conversation.
- Don't rise to the bait and retaliate.
- Don't start justifying yourself.
- Don't act defensively.
- Listen carefully until they have calmed down and conversation can occur.

Speaking

Good communication relies on you being able to state your case without arousing the defences of the other person. A key to such communication lies in saying how things seem to you, without saying what the other person should or shouldn't do. Using 'I' statements can be helpful. An 'I' statement says how it is from my point of view, how I see it.

Inordinate amounts of time and energy can be wasted debating how the other person will or won't respond. Don't bother! But you do need to be sure you haven't used language that inflames the situation and causes a negative response. 'I' statements assist you to let the other person know you are feeling strongly about an issue. Others may not perceive how hurt or angry or put out you are, so it's useful to say exactly how you are feeling and what you are thinking, without under- or over-stating the case.

"I" statements are:

- not about being polite, soft, nice or rude but about being clear;
- conversation openers, not conclusions, that help improve relationships rather than allowing deterioration;
- not the answer in a nutshell;
- not about getting the other person to respond immediately as you want them to because that is unrealistic;
- unlikely to do any harm;
- a step in the right direction;
- sure to change the current situation in some way; and
- likely to open up possibilities as yet unexamined.

When someone acts in an aggressive or hostile manner, resist the temptation to withdraw rapidly. Resist, too, the temptation to respond aggressively to stop the onslaught. Instead be aware of your own rising anger, and using clear "I" statements say what you are thinking and how you are feeling.

CONCLUSION

In short, effective Synod participation means that we will need to talk openly about issues on which we have strongly and sincerely held views that may arouse intense thoughts and feelings – after all we're talking about discerning God's will! And because we are seeking God's will for our Church that we should strive to understand another person's point of view and even to stand in their shoes. Truth and love can't be traded off against each other. Often our love for each other will help us all to see, understand and follow God's truth more fully than before.