



Anglican Church of Australia

General Synod

POLICY

Gender Balance in Membership of General Synod Bodies

Approved by Standing Committee 1 June 2019 (SC2019/01/08)

Purpose

1. This policy is established in response to the following General Synod resolutions.
 - **Resolution of the Fourteenth Session of General Synod (GS85/07)**
That this General Synod in responding to ACC Resolution 13.31 requesting member churches to work towards the goal of equal representation of women in decision making at all levels:
 - a) *recognises and celebrates the giftedness of women and the multitude of ministries in which they participate;*
 - b) *requests Standing Committee of General Synod to apply the principle of equal representation of women in its appointments to Commissions, Task Forces, and Working Groups wherever legislatively and practically possible and to report progress to ACC14 in 2009; and*
 - c) *encourages each diocese to adopt this principle in elections and appointments and report progress to General Synod Standing Committee by the end of 2008.*
 - **Resolution of the Seventeenth Session of General Synod (GS25/17)**
 1. *Notes with disappointment that the resolution of the 2007 fourteenth Session of General Synod in regard to the equal representation of Women on General Synod Bodies (GS85/07) has not been effectively implemented, with equal representation of women on only three of the General Synod's current 27 Bodies.*
 2. *Requests the next General Synod Standing Committee to*
 - a) *Re-commit to the principle of equal representation of women in membership of its bodies and to ensure that this goal is met the Standing Committee agree to a target that all General Synod bodies (General Synod commissions, task forces and working groups) have 50% equal representation of women in their membership by 1st December 2019 wherever legislatively and practically possible.*
 - b) *Apply the principle of equal representation of women in membership of organisations where Standing Committee make appointments to other bodies wherever this is legislatively and practically possible.*
 - c) *Review annually the progress of this target.*
 3. *Encourages each diocese to adopt the target of 50% equal representation of women in elections and appointments wherever legislatively and practically possible and to report back to the next General Synod.*
 4. *Requests Standing Committee to report progress on this matter to the 18th Session of General Synod.*

Principle

2. This policy notes that the General Synod resolutions GS85/07 and GS25/17 support the principle of equal representation of women. This policy recognises that equal representation does not necessarily require a strict 50:50 balance on every committee, as this is not possible for a body with an odd number of committee members. Most General Synod bodies have less than 10 members, so the difference of a single member either way can exaggerate the statistical difference.
3. To pursue the principle of equal representation on General Synod bodies, this policy applies a target of 40:40:20 gender representation: 40 per cent women, 40 per cent men, and 20 per cent discretionary, with a commitment to achieving a gender balance overall.

Scope

4. This policy applies to membership of all General Synod bodies, whether members are appointed by Standing Committee or the Primate on the recommendation of the Standing Committee.
5. This policy does not apply to:
 - a. the election or appointment of General Synod representatives by diocesan synods
 - b. the appointment of National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC) representatives by diocesan bishops
 - c. the appointment of members to General Synod bodies by the House of Bishops or diocesan bishops.

Where this policy does not apply it is recommended that the principle of gender balance be taken into account when filling these vacancies.

Nominations and Appointments Committee

6. A Nominations and Appointments Committee (the committee) will be established as a permanent committee of Standing Committee to assist Standing Committee to meet the gender balance target.
7. In addition to the gender balance target the committee's terms of reference will include broader diversity considerations including age, ethnicity, cultural background and regional participation.
8. The committee shall have three members, to be drawn from Standing Committee membership.
9. The committee will identify and maintain a list of suitably qualified persons in a range of skill categories who are willing to serve on General Synod bodies.
10. The committee will establish its own procedures for implementing its terms of reference.
11. The committee will develop and implement a process to identify and encourage women to stand for elected positions at General Synod.

Appointment and election processes at Standing Committee

12. The Standing Committee has the authority to appoint persons to General Synod bodies or recommend appointments by the Primate.
13. A woman must be nominated for any vacancy on a General Synod body if women comprise less than 40 percent of the current membership.
14. The General Synod Office will refer all vacancies to be filled by appointment to the committee and provide advice on the membership composition of the General Synod body which has the vacancy.
15. The committee will review any nominations received by the General Synod Office. The committee may identify additional nominees for consideration in the interests of meeting gender balance targets and broader diversity considerations.
16. Elections may be conducted at Standing Committee meetings when more than one nominee is submitted for appointment to a General Synod body if the decision to appoint cannot be resolved following discussion.
17. The committee will include commentary on all nominations for appointment to General Synod bodies.

Reporting

18. At each Standing Committee meeting, the General Secretary will report on progress against the gender balance target in two categories:
 - a. General Synod bodies elected by General Synod
 - b. General Synod bodies appointed by Standing Committee.
19. At each General Synod session, the Standing Committee will report on the application of this policy and progress against the gender balance target in two categories:
 - a. General Synod bodies elected by General Synod
 - b. General Synod bodies appointed by Standing Committee.

Review

20. The Nominations and Appointment Committee shall review the gender balance target and make a recommendation to the Standing Committee's second meeting in 2021.