



Anglican Church of Australia

General Synod

September 5, 2017

'SEMINAL MOMENT' ON CHILD PROTECTION FOR ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Anglican Church of Australia has passed national rules to protect children that are binding on all clergy and church workers and include regular independent audits that will be published publicly.

Garth Blake, SC, who led the national church working group with the Royal Commission, said it was a seminal moment for the Anglican Church because the rules were binding for the first time and because the church would be publicly accountable.

The church's triennial General Synod, meeting in Maroochydore, Queensland, passed the Safe Ministry to Children Canon unanimously.

Mr Blake told the synod it had been confronting for the Anglican Church to hear the extent of abuse.

The new rules provide a code of conduct binding on all clergy and church workers, and standards for screening people and for dealing with "persons of concern", usually sex offenders.

Robert Fitzgerald, a Royal Commissioner on the child sexual abuse inquiry, told the Synod that nearly 600 people had told the commission of being abused in Anglican institutions, with an average of 10.6 years old at first offence. He said the church's response must be forthright, clear and just.

The week-long synod will also consider two other important bills about redress for victims and holding current and retired diocesan bishops to account.

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