



Anglican Church of Australia

General Synod

NINETEENTH SESSION OF THE GENERAL SYNOD 9-14 August 2026

BUSINESS PAPER FOR THE FOURTH BUSINESS DAY THURSDAY 13 AUGUST 2026

The business of the Synod will commence at 9.00am on Thursday 13 August in the Grand Meeting Room (Synod Hall), at the Pullman Melbourne Albert Park, 65 Queens Road, Melbourne, Victoria, following Morning Prayer and Bible Study at 8.30am.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

PROPOSED TIMETABLE OF THE COMMITTEE TO ARRANGE THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

11.00am

Motion 19.1 - Vision36 Report on Church Planting and Revitalisation

1.30pm

Motions 16.3.4 and 16.3.5 - Finance presentation and final consideration

1 SYNOD ASSEMBLES

2 PRAYERS

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous business day will be read and confirmed on the resumption of business after the afternoon tea adjournment. [see motion 8.13 of Business Paper for Day one]

4 GENERAL SECRETARY UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS

5 QUESTIONS [SO 9(b)]

Dr Robert Tong AM asked:

Given that:

- a) Bishop's Protocols was the subject of a question at the 2001 General Synod;
- b) the ACA website under 'Bishops' cites the Bishop's Protocols;
- c) the ACA website has the text of the Protocols 1 to 13 last amended in 2017.

Since 2017:

- a) have the Protocols 1-13 as published on the ACA website been amended, deleted or otherwise changed;
 - b) have additional Protocols been adopted? If so, can the text be made available to General Synod and be published on the ACA website?
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6 PETITIONS [SO 9(c)]

7 NOTICES OF QUESTIONS [SO 9(d)]

8 NOTICES OF MOTIONS [SO 9(e)]

9 CALL OVER OF THE MOTIONS

16 MOTIONS BY REQUEST OF STANDING COMMITTEE [SO 7(j)(i)]

Note: *By resolution 2010/1/09, the Standing Committee adopted the following guidelines for deciding which motions should be brought before General Synod by the request of the Standing Committee:*

A bill or a resolution which –

- (a) Is recommended by the Standing Committee to be passed by General Synod;*
- (b) Is recommended by a Commission, by a Task Force appointed by the Standing Committee or by a body constituted under a Canon of General Synod;*
- (c) In the opinion of the Standing Committee is a matter of substantial importance to the Anglican Church of Australia or its relationships with other Churches;*
- (d) In the opinion of the Standing Committee is necessary to be considered at the next session for the order and good government of the Anglican Church of Australia and to administer the affairs thereof;*

and that matters be listed on the Business Paper under the relevant criteria above and identifying the signatory(ies) of the proposals.

The criterion or criteria by which the Standing Committee determined that a motion should be brought before General Synod by request of the Standing Committee are set out after the heading for that motion.

The signatory or signatories of the relevant proposal are set out at the head of the motion as mover and seconder.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (16.3):

- **Thursday 13 August at 1.30pm - Final consideration of Motions 16.3.4 and 16.3.5.**

16.3 Motions relating to Financial Matters (Book 3)

Criterion (a)

Ms Gillian Harrex moving, Bishop Michael Stead seconding

16.3.4 That the General Synod budget for the year ended 31 December 2027 be approved.

16.3.5 That Synod receives the General Synod forecast budget for years ended 31 December 2028 and 2030.

16.5 ~~Reducing~~ General Synod Expenditure in Future Years

Criterion (a)

Archdeacon Stephen Carnaby moving, The Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel seconding

That this General Synod:

1. notes the uncertainty around the ability of dioceses to continue to fund increases in the statutory assessment in the next 4 years given the issues of viability and redress
2. requests a review by the new Standing Committee of ~~options to reduce expenditure in the next 4 years~~ possible future budgetary options to prepare for this uncertainty.

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

16.6 Wellbeing Policy for Professional Development, Professional Supervision and Ministry in the Anglican Church of Australia*

Criterion (a)

The Ven Kate Beer moving, Archdeacon Arthur Copeman seconding

This General Synod:

1. Notes that General Synod 18 endorsed the *Ministry Wellbeing and Development: Policy, Guidelines and Resources* document presented to the Synod by the Standing Committee.
2. ~~Recognises the importance of clergy wellbeing within the Australian Church, noting that clergy are under increased stress as a result of:~~
 - a. ~~Decline within the church in Australia.~~
 - b. ~~Greatly increased levels of compliance.~~
 - c. ~~Financial stress related to operating with a scarcity of resources.~~

~~3.2.~~ Requests the Standing Committee continue to monitor the implementation of the Wellbeing Policy and report back to the next meeting of the General Synod (GS20) with proposals to assist in developing:

- a. A framework that embeds the expectation of accountability for adherence to the Wellbeing Policy across the national church.
- b. Mechanisms for assessing a cleric's accountable practice in relation to wellbeing measures prior to a new appointment or renewal of ministry licence, including when transferring to another diocese.

~~4.3.~~ In developing such proposals, the Standing Committee shall have particular regard to avoiding, so far as possible, the imposition of new administrative, reporting, time, financial or other burdens on clergy.

~~5.4.~~ Encourages every Diocese to give consideration as to how the application of the Wellbeing Policy should apply in their context to non-stipendiary clergy and church workers.

~~6.5.~~ Encourages those responsible in each Diocese for ministry development and wellbeing to be active in networking and sharing resources across the Australian Church.

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

16.7 Safe Ministry Commission - Training Benchmarks for Professional Standards Boards (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Ian Coutts moving, Bishop Greg Anderson seconding

The General Synod requests the Safe Ministry Commission to review and update the training benchmarks for Professional Standards Boards and to report to Standing Committee.

16.9 Public Affairs Commission – Anglican Communion Forest

Criterion (b)

Bishop Matt Brain moving, the Very Rev'd Peter Catt seconding

That this Synod notes:

1. The independent and evidence-based 2021 State of the Environment report concluded that the state of Australia's natural environment is poor and deteriorating from multiple pressures resulting in many threatened species and ecosystems.
2. That in its Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 the Anglican Church of Australia acknowledges God's sovereignty over creation through the Lord Jesus Christ and that caring for the environment is part of the role of dioceses, agencies, and their people.
3. The Anglican Communion's fifth mark of mission is to '... strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth'.

4. The Anglican Communion Forest is a worldwide, practical, spiritual, and symbolic response to our current environmental and biodiversity crises and is an act of Christian hope for God's creation including humanity.

This Synod therefore:

1. Laments the damage already inflicted on God's creation here in Australia.
2. Understands that we are to be God's representatives in this physical world by taking care of creation and working with Christ in the renewing of all things.
3. Supports the work of Australia's environmental and conservation agencies as they seek to care for Australia's natural areas and plant and animal communities
4. Encourages Dioceses and Agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia to embrace the Anglican Communion Forest as a sign of healing and redemption of the physical world.
5. Endorses the creation and care for natural areas, large or small, in dioceses which reflect the beauty of God's natural world here in Australia.

16.12 NATSIAC – Raise the Age (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Matt Brain moving, Bishop Chris McLeod seconding

This Synod:

- a) notes the NATSIAC resolution made at the most recent gathering, that:

"The National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council, requests an urgent call to raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14. Our children are being treated not as children but as criminals. We share a deep grief and righteous anger with our community elders and people of faith who witness the torture of our children in prisons. The incarceration of children is contrary to the Gospel of Christ. Matthew 19:14 states "let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." We call on the churches to embody the justice of God. We cannot claim reconciliation while remaining silent as a church and imprison our children. The current system is racist, criminalizing First Nations children and ignoring intergenerational trauma. Australia's practice of imprisoning 10-year-olds is condemned for breaking international law and the Mandela Rules for prisoner treatment. Communities are left without resources, with prison being the only response offered.

The General Synod is called upon to:

- i) publicly support the national 'Raise the Age' campaign
 - ii) commit to tell the truth about the harm done to children and to walk with First Nations communities in healing and prevention
 - iii) advocate for strengthening alternatives to prison, such as Koori Courts, and resourcing family support organizations."
- b) notes that the Public Affairs Commission supports the NATSIAC motion regarding the age of criminal responsibility.

16.13 NATSIAC – Climate Change (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt moving, Dr Rose Elu seconding

This Synod:

a) notes the NATSIAC resolution made at the most recent gathering, that:

“First Nations communities are leading action to keep towns, neighbours, and kids safe from unnatural disasters, but they shouldn't have to do this alone. Big polluters burning coal, oil and gas are heating our planet causing more frequent and destructive heatwaves, storms, floods, fires and sea level rise. Our communities are contributing the least to the problem but we are on the frontlines. A small handful of corporations are raking in record profits for polluting our climate and fight against action to solve climate change. They plan massive news projects making the problem ever worse. This is our last chance to get it right. The science says that this will be the last decade we have to drastically change paths or we face tipping points which would put all of earth and humanity in danger.

We call upon the Federal Government to:

1. Stop approving new coal and gas projects;
2. Set targets that keep warming below 1.5°C below preindustrial levels;
3. Stand up to the fossil fuel lobby, stop using public money to prop up polluting projects, and make big polluters pay for damage they have caused;
4. Support community-led efforts to prevent damage from climate disasters and help people recover; and
5. Trust and learn from local leaders and Traditional Owners who know how to care for their land and water.

We call upon the Anglican Church of Australia through General Synod to:

1. Share our hurt at the effect of climate change for, ‘...when one part of the body weeps, the whole body weeps.’ (1 Cor 12:26)
2. Share our advocacy at local, state, and federal levels of government; and
3. Change such activities as is possible so that temperatures do not rise.

If communities are enabled to work together to limit climate change we can recover and rebuild with your help.”

b) notes that the Public Affairs Commission supports the NATSIAC motion regarding climate change.

16.17 Safe Ministry Commission – National Repository (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Greg Anderson moving, Ms Dianne Shay seconding

That the General Synod:

1. request the Safe Ministry Commission, in consultation with diocesan Professional Standards authorities and Kooyoora, to establish and maintain a secure National Repository for de-identified and

anonymised Professional Standards determinations, accessible only to Professional Standards Directors (or their equivalents) for the purposes of supporting consistent practice, training and decision-making; and

2. that the Safe Ministry Commission develop and promulgate national protocols for
 - i. the submission of determinations by dioceses in accordance with applicable diocesan legislation and confidentiality requirements,
 - ii. minimum standards for anonymisation and de-identification, and
 - iii. governance, access controls, record-keeping and cyber security, and
 - iv. report to the next session of General Synod on implementation.

16.18 Safe Ministry Commission – Non-Child Related Matters (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Ian Coutts moving, Bishop Greg Anderson seconding

The General Synod requests the Safe Ministry Commission to:

1. develop policies, frameworks, or model legislation to resolve non-child-related matters, such as grievances, interpersonal conflicts, and psychosocial work health and safety issues.
2. report to Standing Committee with recommendations.

16.20 Safe Ministry Commission – Principles for Child Safe Organisations (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Ms Dianne Shay moving, Bishop Ian Coutts seconding

The General Synod requests the Safe Ministry Commission:

1. to monitor, evaluate, and report on the Church's ongoing implementation and embedding with the National Principles for Child Safe Organisations, ensuring that the Church maintains and continually strengthens its status as a child safe institution, and to report its findings to the Standing Committee;
2. to report to the 20th General Synod as to the progress of the Church in the ongoing development, implementation and review of safe ministry policies and structures.

16.21 Safe Ministry Commission – Review of Safe Ministry Resources (Book 4 page)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Greg Anderson moving, Ms Dianne Shay seconding

The General Synod requests the Commission to monitor the Church's progress in developing and implementing safe ministry policies and structures, and promoting a safe ministry culture, including the continuing review and updating of Safe Ministry Policies and Resources, and to report to Standing Committee with recommendations, and to report progress to the 20th General Synod.

16.24 Liturgy Commission - Response from the Liturgy Commission to the 2025 Assisi Seminar on the possibility of a Feast of God the Creator (Book 4)
Criterion (b)

The Very Rev'd Christopher Chataway moving, The Very Rev'd Richard Humphrey seconding

General Synod, in the light of the Fifth Mark of Mission, to "strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth":

1. Notes the biblical, theological and liturgical work being done internationally and ecumenically on care for creation, including the exploration of a possible addition to the church's Calendar of a Feast Day recognising the role of Christ through whom all things were made;
2. Encourages dioceses to consider local observance of a Day of Prayer for Creation on 1 September each year; and

Requests the Primate, the Bishops' Meeting, NATSIAC, the Doctrine Commission, the Public Affairs Commission, and the Liturgy Commission to develop and promote resources for a theologically wholesome, culturally adapted, and liturgically rich Day of Prayer for Creation in the Anglican Church of Australia.

17 MOTIONS FOR BILLS FOR CANONS BY REQUEST OF STANDING COMMITTEE
[SO 7(j)(i)]

17.15 Bill 15 – A Bill for a Miscellaneous Legislative Amendments and Repeals Canon 2026

The Ven Arthur Copeman moving, Mrs Juliet Wenden seconding.

That a Bill for a Miscellaneous Legislative Amendments and Repeals Canon 2026 be approved in principle.

19 MOTIONS BY REQUEST OF THE HOUSE OF BISHOPS
[SO 7(j)(ii)]

19.1 Vision36 Report on Church Planting and Revitalisation

Archbishop Ric Thorpe moving, Bishop Peter Stuart seconding

That this General Synod:

1. Welcomes the agreement by the Anglican Consultative Council to the Vision36 report on church planting and revitalisation.
2. Is encouraged to know that evangelism, discipleship and church planting are priorities of the Anglican Communion.
3. Encourages Dioceses to find out further information about Vision36 and apply the principles locally.
4. Prays that Vision36 will see Anglican Churches across the globe being more focused on evangelism, discipleship and church planting.

5. Recommends to the incoming Standing Committee that it establish Vision36 as a Strategic Issue of this Church under the oversight of the Mission and Ministry Commission.

20 MOTIONS BY REQUEST OF A DIOCESAN SYNOD OR DIOCESAN COUNCIL [SO 7(j)(iii)]

20.1 Salvation Exclusively in Jesus

The Rev Dr Mark Thompson moving, The Rev Natalie Rosner seconding

General Synod affirms the biblical and apostolic conviction that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of all who will come to him. "Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to ~~man~~ humankind by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12-NIV).

Article 18 also states that it is a mistake to say people shall be saved by diligent observance of the law or religion they profess, "For Holy Scripture doth set out to us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men (sic) must be saved".

Therefore, in this era of confusion and doubt in which we live, we encourage every member of the Anglican Church of Australia to bear faithful witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed, sharing with humility and love the good news of salvation in him alone, and inviting all people to come to him in faith and so discover real hope and new life.

~~In an era of confusion and doubt, we encourage every member of the Anglican Church of Australia to share the message of salvation only in Jesus with all inside and outside of the churches.~~

(Moved at the request of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney, pursuant to Standing Order 7(j)(iii).)

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

20.2 Minimum Requirements for Ordination

Bishop Michael Stead moving, Dr Michael Tong seconding

General Synod, recognising the urgent need for an increasing number of well-prepared, biblically literate and theologically astute candidates for ordination, and the state of theological education around the world, encourages the Ministry & Mission Commission to continue its work on Minimum Requirements for Ordination and publish its guidelines as soon as possible. It further expresses its desire that the requirements published in the draft guidelines of one year's full-time study for the diaconate and of an approved theological degree for the priesthood be at least retained, if not strengthened.

(Moved at the request of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Sydney, pursuant to Standing Order 7(j)(iii).)

23 NOTICES OF MOTIONS RECEIVED BY STANDING COMMITTEE FROM MEMBERS OF SYNOD

[SO 7(l)]

23.1 Ministry to and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander People

Bishop Keith Joseph moving, Bishop Chris McLeod seconding

This General Synod:

1. notes
 - the significance of ministry to and by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to the life and health of the Anglican Church of Australia
 - that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are disproportionately located in less resourced remote and regional Dioceses; and
2. recommends to all the dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia that they provide financial support for ministry in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in remote and regional dioceses and requests them to work together to provide for this ministry according to their financial resources.

23.2 Metropolitan Support for Regional and Rural Dioceses

Bishop Keith Joseph moving, Bishop Donald Kirk seconding

This General Synod recognising the financial stress and administrative strain placed on regional and rural dioceses due to the legacy of historic sexual abuse claims, the higher costs associated with the provision of ministry in regional and remote locations and the smaller asset base of most regional and rural dioceses: requests that the Metropolitan Dioceses as a whole take on greater responsibility for supporting ministry across Australia and authorises the General Synod Standing Committee to coordinate with the Metropolitan Dioceses and the Diocesan Financial Advisory Task Force to put together a plan with sufficient financial contributions from the Metropolitan Dioceses such as to support regional and rural dioceses to enable the continued presence of the Anglican Church of Australia in regional and rural ministry.

24 NOTICES OF MOTION RECEIVED AFTER CONFIRMATION OF THE ORDER OF BUSINESS FOR FIRST DAY

[SO37]

24.1 ABM's work in the Middle East

Mr Howard Benson moving, Canon Dr Dianne Rayson seconding

With reference to the ABM report on page 103 of the Reports to Synod Book 4, General Synod:

1. ~~requests that the Reverend Dr. John Deane, Executive Director of ABM and AID, be invited to speak on~~ notes the impact the conflict in the Middle East is having on the ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East, especially the Al Ahli Hospital and the field clinic at Kahn Younis in Gaza;
 - a) critical shortages of medicine and medical supplies
 - b) critical shortages of food and clean water

- c) an estimated ten thousand children with life changing injuries.
2. encourages the members of General Synod to pray for the work and ministry of the Diocese of Jerusalem and the Middle East and the work of the Anglican Board of Mission Australia in that diocese.

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

24.2 **Welcoming the publication of a True and Lively Faith**

The Rev'd Professor Mark Lindsay moving, The Rev'd Nigel Fortescue~~Canon Dr Robert Derrenbacker~~ seconding

General Synod:

1. ~~welcomes~~notes the publication of A True and Lively Faith: Contested Issues in Australian Anglicanism, Volume One as an invitation into 'particular way of being the church'; ~~to initiate generous and respectful conversations about matters that threaten to divide us;~~
2. congratulates the editor, Bishop Stephen Pickard, and the contributors; ~~and looks forward to the second volume in due course.~~
3. notes the intention for there to be a second volume, and so encourages the editors to include within that publication contributions from across the breadth of Australian Anglicanism; and
4. encourages generous and respectful engagement with this and other written materials on the nature and future of Anglicanism in Australia.

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

24.3 **Say No to Commercial Surrogacy**

The Rev'd Dr Danielle Treweek moving, The Very Rev'd Sandy Grant seconding

1. notes that the Australian Law Reform Commission's (ALRC) Review of Surrogacy Laws (Discussion Paper 89) promotes proposals that, if accepted would move Australian law away from a purely altruistic model of surrogacy as currently legislated; ~~makes proposals that, if accepted and enacted into law, would amount to the legalisation of commercial surrogacy in Australia~~
2. informs the Commonwealth Parliament that it:
 - a. affirms that all people, including unborn children in surrogacy arrangements, are made in the image of God, and that their ~~sanctity of life and~~ rights must be upheld;
 - b. holds the formation of family and the welcoming of children in the highest regard, honours the social significance of gestational and maternal care, and recognises with compassion the pain of infertility;
 - c. affirms that children are a gift to be received, not a right to be claimed or a good to be provided, and that no universal right to parenthood has been established in law;

- d. believes children have a natural interest, wherever possible, in knowing and being raised by their own biological ~~mother and father~~ parents;
 - e. ~~opposes~~ deplores the commodification of children and the exploitation of vulnerable women, whether in Australia or overseas;
 - f. opposes absolutely the legalisation of commercial surrogacy — whether ~~described as "commercial," "compensated" or by any other name~~ in name or effect — and calls on the Commonwealth Parliament to definitively reject any recommendation to that effect.
3. notes that the ALRC's final report is due to the Attorney-General on September 11, 2026 and thereafter to be tabled in Parliament within 15 sitting days;
 4. requests the Primate to write to the Prime Minister, the Attorney-General and the Leader of the Opposition informing them of this resolution by the end of September, 2026.

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

24.5 Establishment of the Australian Anglican Chaplains Network

Mr James Flavin moving, Dr Karin Sowada seconding

General Synod:

1. requests the Standing Committee to facilitate the formation of a General Synod Network to be known as the Australian Anglican Chaplains Network pursuant to the Strategic Issues, Commissions, Task Forces and Networks Canon 1998;
2. determines that the purposes of the Network are:
 - a) to foster fellowship and collaboration among Anglican chaplains serving throughout Australia;
 - b) to promote excellence in Anglican chaplaincy across all recognised ministries, including but not limited to defence, hospitals, prisons, schools, universities, emergency services, aged care, racing, sport, industry, airports, ports, welfare agencies, and other community ministries;
 - c) to encourage the exchange of information, research, training resources and examples of best practice;
 - d) to facilitate cooperation between dioceses, commissions, agencies and chaplaincy organisations;
 - e) to identify emerging issues affecting Anglican chaplaincy and communicate those matters to the Standing Committee of General Synod;
 - f) to encourage the planting and development of Anglican chaplaincies where opportunities arise;
 - g) to support theological reflection on chaplaincy within the ministry of the Anglican Church of Australia.
3. requests the Standing Committee to appoint an initial Convenor following consultation with dioceses and recognised Anglican chaplaincy organisations.

4. encourages every diocese to nominate representatives engaged in chaplaincy ministries to participate in the Network.

24.6 Antisemitism and Social Cohesion

The Very Rev'd Sandy Grant moving, Rev'd Dr Chris Porter seconding General Synod, affirming that the Jewish people have been entrusted with the ancient wisdom and oracles of our God:

1. mourns the tragic events at Bondi in December 2025 and the distressing rise of antisemitism in our nation;
2. prays for the Bondi community and the Jewish people of our nation;
3. welcomes the establishment of the Royal Commission into Antisemitism and Social Cohesion and prays for the work of its Commissioner, the Honourable Virginia Bell AC SC, and commission staff; and
4. pledges that our churches, schools, and agencies will play our part in combating antisemitism and all forms of racism, and in promoting social cohesion among our diverse nation.

24.9 ~~Celebration and~~ Inclusion of those with Neurodiversity and Invisible Disabilities

Dr Renae Barker moving, the Rev'd David Ould seconding

General Synod:

- ~~1. welcomes the recent comments by the Archbishop of Canterbury that neurodiversity is a gift and not a problem to be solved;~~
- ~~2.1.~~ affirms that all people are created in the image of God and that experiences of disability do not negate this essential truth;
- ~~3.2.~~ affirms that the experience of neurodivergence and invisible disability is no bar to the God-given dignity of those individuals, nor of the Spirit's work in giving a variety of gifts including those particular to that experience; ~~affirms the God-given dignity, gifts and vocation of neurodivergent people and all people living with invisible disability;~~
- ~~4.3.~~ calls upon dioceses, parishes, schools and agencies of the Anglican Church of Australia embrace and affirm the gifts of neurodiverse people, recognise the particular challenges they may face and to actively work to remove barriers to the full participation of neurodivergent people in every aspect of the life of the Church, including worship, ministry, governance and leadership;
- ~~5.4.~~ noting the example set by the Archbishop of Canterbury in talking about her own dyslexia, encourages clergy and lay leaders who are comfortable doing so to speak openly about their lived experience of neurodiversity and invisible disability, helping ~~to normalise people to~~ better understand disability and neurodiversity within the life and leadership of the Church; and
- ~~6.5.~~ commends to the Anglican Church of Australia the following (not exhaustive) list of resources and respectfully asks the Primate to communicate such commendation to the wider church:
 - a) The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program (<https://hdsunflower.com>)
 - b) An Extraordinary Normal: Faith, Family and Neurodiversity (<https://substack.com/@anextraordinarynormal>)

- c) Autism and the Church: Bible Theology, and Community. Grant Macaskill <https://www.baylorpress.com/9781481311250/autism-and-the-church/>)
- d) Unwin, K., & van Ommen, A. L. (2024). Autistic and Non-Autistic Experience of the Sensory Aspects of the Church Service. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, 52(4), 410–425. (<https://doi.org/10.1177/00916471241266810>)

**NOTE: At the agreement of the Committee to arrange the Order of Business, this motion is being moved in an amended form as agreed to by the mover and seconder.*

24.10 Thanks for Financial Presentation

Mr Doug Marr moving, Mr James Flavin seconding

General Synod:

1. thanks the Hon Treasurer, GSO staff and others involved in the financial presentation made on 11 August 2026;
2. values the information provided;
3. asks for a similar presentation to be made on the first day of future General Synods so all matters discussed at future General Synods can be in the context of the best known financial situation.

24.11 Various Financial Matters

Mr James Flavin moving, The Rev'd David Ould seconding

General Synod:

1. asks the Standing Committee to consider capping the growth in expenditure using the average weekly earnings (AWE) percentage rather than a percentage based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and;
2. asks the Standing Committee to invite each Diocese to make an additional voluntary contribution to the Statutory Assessment notionally on behalf of the Bishop of that Diocese equivalent to the amount contributed for an individual diocesan representative.

24.12 Protection of the Environment Canon 2007

The Hon Richard Refshauge moving, Bishop Matt Brain seconding

General Synod:

1. notes:
 - a) the strong support of General Synod for the 5th mark of mission for the care of creation; and
 - b) only 14 of the 23 Diocese of this Church submitted a report under the Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 to this Synod; and
2. strongly urges:
 - a) all those Dioceses who have not adopted the Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 to adopt that Canon and to accept the obligation under that Canon to report progress in reducing their environment footprint and;
 - b) those Diocese who have adopted the Canon but not submitted a report, as by the adoption of the Canon they have undertaken to

each session of the Synod, to do so for the next General Synod and thereafter.

24.13 Doctrine Commission resources

The Rev'd David McLennan moving, the Rev'd Canon Dr Rhys Bezzant seconding

General Synod requests Standing Committee to give consideration to the creation of a single online repository for reports of the Doctrine Commission produced since its inception, and future reports as these become available.

24.14 Sustaining Rural Ministry

The Rev'd Canon Tim Swan moving, The Right Reverend Mark Calder seconding

General Synod, in light of the challenges of sustaining rural ministry and the unavailability of centralised support:

1. notes with appreciation the significant support given to rural parishes and dioceses by BCA, CMS, the Diocese of Sydney and others, that has sustained and expanded gospel ministry across various dioceses;
2. notes that Christians give generously to fund ministry when they are confident that the gospel of the Lord Jesus is being clearly and effectively proclaimed;
3. encourages the deepening of relationships and building of trust between struggling dioceses and those mentioned above, that gospel ministry may grow across regional and rural Australia.

24.15 Motion of Thanks – Dr Ian Gibson

Ms Rachel Ellyard moving, Mr Eric Ross-Adjie seconding

General Synod acknowledges and gives its deepest thanks to Dr Ian Gibson for his significant and ongoing service and contribution, as Chair of Committees and of the Church Law Commission, to the continued development and strengthening of the Church's legal framework.

24.16 150 Years of Mothers Union

The Rev'd Dr Ruth Mathieson moving, The Most Reverend Jeremy Greaves seconding

General Synod gives thanks to God for the initiative of Mary Summer and the ministry of Mothers Union across the Anglican Communion for the last 150 years.

Following the presentation of the current president of the Mothers Union Australia, Dr Robin Ray, this General Synod thanks and encourages the Mothers Union Australia in living out their "vision of a world where God's love is shown through loving, respectful, and flourishing relationships that demonstrate the Christian faith in action through care of families."
(<https://www.muaustralia.org.au>)

24.17 Procedural Motion regarding Motion 24.18 - Dr Robert Tong AM

Dr Laurie Scandrett moving, The Hon Justice Debra Mullins AO seconding

In the event of the motion regarding Dr Robert Tong AM being treated as a formal motion then so much of standing orders as required be suspended in order to allow:

- a) the mover to speak for 3 minutes;
- b) the seconder to speak for 2 minutes; and
- c) the seconder to pray.

24.18 Dr Robert Tong AM

Dr Laurie Scandrett moving, The Hon Justice Debra Mullins AO seconding

General Synod, noting that this is likely to be the last session of the General Synod he will attend as a member, gives great thanks to God and records its deep appreciation for the outstanding service of Dr Robert Tong AM to the Anglican Church of Australia and the wider Anglican Communion.

Dr Tong was first elected as a Sydney Diocesan Representative to the General Synod in 1979 and attended his first General Synod in 1981. He has attended 14 ordinary sessions and two special sessions of General Synod, a total of 16 sessions.

General Synod acknowledges Robert's deep personal commitment to Christ, his tireless commitment to the ministry and mission of Christ's Church, his dedication to fostering unity and understanding, and his leadership in church governance. Robert has always brought a gospel priority to the issues before him and has encouraged us all to keep Christ front and centre. His knowledge and love of God's word have enabled him to give sage advice when the way forward has not always been as clear to those around him.

General Synod particularly gives thanks for Robert's strategic mind, theological wisdom, an almost encyclopaedic knowledge of church law, and the personal example of faith and integrity he has provided throughout his years of service.

Robert's *"A Member's Guide for General Synod"* has been the handbook many members of the Synod have used to understand the processes and how to participate in what we do.

General Synod also acknowledges with great thanks the many roles that Robert has served the Anglican Church of Australia, including as:

- a member of the General Synod Standing Committee since 1985;
- a member of the Church Law Commission (formerly the Canon Law Commission) since 1994;
- a member of the Panel of Electors of the Primate since 2010;

- a lay representative on the Anglican Consultative Council 1995-2002;
- a member of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Panel of Reference 2005-2008; and
- for some time, the Chancellor of the Diocese of The Murray.

In 2010 Robert was most deservedly awarded an AM *“for service to the Anglican Church of Australia through a range of diocesan and national executive and administrative roles, and to the law as a practitioner and as an academic”*.

In all this Robert has been supported by his loving wife, Winsome, and their children Andrew, Peter, James, Michael, Stephen and Sylvia and their families. General Synod gives special appreciation to Winsome and especially acknowledges the generous partnership between the two of them that has allowed Robert to be away so often and involved so much in the affairs of the national Church.

General Synod offers its prayers and best wishes to Robert in his retirement from General Synod, trusting that his example of lay ministry will continue to inspire others to use their gifts and professions to serve God in the years to come. May God raise up many more lay people to follow his example.

24.19 Motion of Thanks – Bishop Garry Weatherill

Bishop Michael Stead moving, The Ven Arthur Copeman seconding

General Synod notes that Bishop Garry Weatherill will retire as the Bishop of Ballarat in October this year and therefore this is his last session of the General Synod. Synod thanks God for, and records its deep appreciation for, Bishop Garry's extensive service to the life of the Anglican Church of Australia and beyond.

Bishop Garry was ordained in Adelaide in 1986 and served in the parishes of Brighton, St Peter's Cathedral, St Bede's Semaphore and St Paul's Port Adelaide. He was elected as a member of General Synod in 1995, representing the Diocese of Adelaide.

In 1997, he moved to the Diocese of Willochra to serve as the Ministry Development Office. After serving as Archdeacon of Willochra, then the Administrator of the Diocese, he was elected as the Bishop of Willochra in 2000. In 2011, he was elected as the Bishop of Ballarat.

In a quarter of a century of episcopal ministry, Bishop Garry has not only served with distinction in two dioceses, but has also served on a range of national roles, including:

- Chair of Mission to Seafarers (2004-2011)
- Co-chair of the Anglican / Lutheran Dialogue (2002-2011)
- Episcopal Advisor (Australia) to the Oratory of the Good Shepherd (since 2014)
- Bishop Protector for the Third Order of Society of St Francis (since 2014)
- Warden of The Community of the Holy Name, Cheltenham 2012-2021
- Visitor to the Society of the Sacred Mission 2007-2012
- Visitor the Community of St Barnabas and St Cecilia 2001-2011
- Chair, Advisory Council for Anglican Religious Life in Australia (since 2012)
- Chair, Liturgy Commission of General Synod (2015-2022)
- An Episcopal Member of the Appellate Tribunal (since 2017)

Bishop Garry has also made a long and significant contribution to the work of the Anglican Board of Mission. He commenced as a Board Member in 2006, and was a Director from 2011 to 2022, also serving as Chair from 2015 to 2020.

Since 2014, Bishop Garry has served on the General Synod Standing Committee and its Executive Committee. He has served on innumerable sub-committees and task forces with commitment and grace. Bishop Garry has demonstrated a commitment above and beyond the call of duty, not letting ill-health or limited mobility prevent him from serving. Garry has often spoken words of wisdom from his years of experience at just the right moment, that have altered the course of debate and helpfully resolved an apparently intractable impasse, always with good humour and courtesy.

Bishop Garry has the courage to present contrary positions but also with wisdom, principle, deep thoughtfulness and care for the church. He is respectful of the principles and theological positions of other. He has a thoughtful and reflective understanding of the episcopal vocation.

General Synod offers its prayers and best wishes to Garry on his retirement as Bishop as Ballarat, and prays for God's riches blessing on his continued service of the Lord in his retirement.