

**MINUTES OF THE THIRD DAY OF THE NINETEENTH GENERAL SYNOD
OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA
HELD IN SYNOD HALL, GRAND MEETING ROOM,
PULLMAN MELBOURNE ALBERT PARK, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA,
ON WEDNESDAY 12 AUGUST 2026**

1 SYNOD ASSEMBLED

The Synod assembled at 8.30am, with the Primate, Bishop Greg Anderson, presiding

2 PRAYERS

The Synod opened with morning prayer led by Bishop Vanessa Bennett.

Formal business of Synod started at 8.56am

The President welcomed all members. The Venerable Guerin James Tueno led prayers.

The following Timetable was adopted

**TIMETABLE OF THE COMMITTEE TO ARRANGE THE
ORDER OF BUSINESS**

From 9.00am

Motion 16.15 - Recommittal

Bill 08

Bill 16

Bill 17

Thereafter, bills as per the business paper.

Defence Force Motion 16.26, 16.27

From 12.20pm

Mother's Union Presentation

From 5.50pm

Anglican Schools Australia Presentation

3 MINUTES

The President announced that the minutes of the previous business day will be read and confirmed on the resumption of business after the afternoon tea adjournment.

4 GENERAL SECRETARY UPDATE ON ARRANGEMENTS

The General Secretary announced arrangements for Synod concerning issues including the election process, internet access and e-voting, and the presence of Chaplains.

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS**Question 1: Cost of the Episcopal Standards Commission**

Dr Laurie Scandrett asked:

What has been the cost of the operation of the Episcopal Standards Commission (and its associated bodies) in:

- a) 2024;
- b) 2025;
- c) the first seven months of 2026; and
- d) the total cost across these two years and seven months?

The President gave the following answer:

- a) \$305,399
- b) \$324,542
- c) \$353,882, and
- d) \$983,823.

Question 2: Faithfulness in Service

Mrs Briony Bounds asked:

Regarding the recent consultation conducted by the General Synod Standing Committee on proposed amendments to Faithfulness in Service, and in particular the Diocesan Consultation paper dated March 2026 -

- a) Was any feedback received by the Safe Ministry Commission?
- b) What are the intended next steps for reviewing and assessing such feedback?
- c) What is the expected timeframe for this work?
- d) Is it intended that a settled final revised form of Faithfulness in Service will be presented to the Standing Committee for approval, or will it be brought to the next session of the General Synod?

The President gave the following answer:

- a) Yes. Between April and July 2026, the Safe Ministry Commission received 17 responses to the FIS Consultation
- b) The Commission is working through all the responses.
- c) P111 of Book 2 Standing Committee Report notes the revised FIS taking into account the consultation process will be considered by Standing Committee in November 2026. Standing Committee will advise dioceses when FIS has been approved.
- d) P111 of Book 2 Standing Committee Report notes the revised FIS taking into account the consultation process will be considered by Standing Committee in November 2026. Standing Committee will advise dioceses when FIS has been approved.

Question 3: Doctrine Commission Reports

The Rev'd David McLennan, Clergy, Canberra and Goulburn asked:

The Doctrine Commission report to this synod on a matter of ecumenical significance showcases the rich theological resources available to assist the ministry of our church. While some of the Doctrine Commissions reports are available on the ACA website, it does not appear to offer a comprehensive collection.

- a) Is that the case?
- b) If so, on what basis are reports by the Doctrine Commission placed on this website?
- c) Given the value of such reports, and their frequent relevance to matters of pastoral practice, has consideration been given to offering a single repository of the commission's occasional papers, for the benefit of the wider Anglican community?
- d) Are you – or is the Commission – aware of any significant problems with such an approach?

The President gave the following answer:

The General Synod Office is responsible for the administration of the Anglican Church of Australia website, anglican.org.au.

- a) The reports of the Doctrine Commission to the previous four sessions of General Synod are available on the Doctrine Commission page of the Anglican Church of Australia website (<https://anglican.org.au/our-work/doctrine-theology>). The Commission's report to the Nineteenth Session of General Synod will be added to the website following the this Session.
- b) There is no mechanism that prescribes which reports or other documents of the Doctrine Commission are to be published on the website.
- c) No. To date, the Doctrine Commission's page on the website has been regarded as sufficient.
- d) No.

The General Synod Office would be pleased to assist the Commissions in making materials available through the website as required.

A refresh of the website is among the projects to be undertaken by the General Synod Office in the near future.

PETITIONS

The President called for petitions.

None were received.

7	NOTICES OF QUESTIONS Notice was given of the following question: 1. Bishop's Protocols (Dr Robert Tong AM)
8	NOTICES OF MOTIONS Notice was given of the following motions: 1. Motion of Thanks to Dr Ian Gibson (Ms Rachel Ellyard) 2. Protection of the Environment Canon 2007 (The Hon Richard Refshauge)
9	CALL OVER OF MOTIONS The following motions were passed formally:
R61/19	16.25 Liturgy Commission - Australia Day Readings (Book 4) Criterion (b) The Very Revd Richard Humphrey moving, The Revd Canon Di Langham seconding General Synod requests NATSIAC and the Liturgy Commission in conversation to prepare liturgical and lectionary resources alternative to those in APBA for Australia Day and related occasions. Carried
R62/19	24.7 Proactive youth and children's ministry The Rev'd Canon Craig Roberts moving, Archdeacon Kate Beer seconding General Synod, noting: Carried 1. the persistent NCLS finding that almost 80% of churchgoers made a first time decision for Christ before their eighteenth birthday, and 2. the important items of Synod business pertaining to young people (including, but not necessarily limited to, Safe Ministry, Child Safe Organisations and Churches Response to Domestic and Family Violence) requests consideration be given by the Standing Committee, and a proposal brought back to the next meeting of General Synod regarding proactive steps provinces, dioceses and parishes could take to see children and youth reached with the good news of Jesus and discipled to maturity in Him.
R63/19	24.8 Appellate Tribunal Retirements Justice Debra Mullins moving, the Most Reverend Kanishka Raffel seconding General Synod: Carried 1. notes that The Hon Justice Clyde Croft AM who was appointed to the Appellate Tribunal in 2014 retired as a Tribunal member at the commencement of this session of the Synod; 2. notes that The Hon Richard Refshauge AM who was appointed to the Appellate Tribunal in 2010 and subsequently appointed as the Deputy President retired as

a Tribunal member at the commencement of this session of the Synod;

3. notes that The Right Rev'd Garry Weatherill who was appointed to the Appellate Tribunal in 2016 will cease to be a Tribunal member when he retires as Diocesan Bishop in October 2026;

records its thanks to these retiring members for their contributions to the work of the Tribunal and their willingness to use their skills, experience and wisdom in serving the Anglican Church of Australia as members of the Tribunal.

16.15 Recommittal of Motions: Safe Ministry Commission – Budget

The President explained that electronic voting on this item was held yesterday but did not succeed due to technical issues, that this item shall be re-committed to a vote today, that there shall be no further debate on this item today, and that voting shall be held on the question 'that the Motion do now pass'.

Electronic voting was held.

Yes: 105

No: 124

Lost

The President announced that the Motion was lost.

17 MOTIONS FOR BILLS FOR CANONS BY REQUEST OF STANDING COMMITTEE

17.8 Bill 08 – A Bill for the Constitution Amendment (Bishop of Multiple Dioceses) Canon 2026

Bishop Michael Stead moving, the Ven Canon Arthur Copeman seconding.

Bishop Garry Weatherill sought leave to re-present the Bill in a slightly amended form. Leave was granted.

Bishop Michael Stead moving, the Ven Canon Arthur Copeman seconding.

That a Bill for the Constitution Amendment (Bishop of Multiple Dioceses) Canon 2026 be approved in principle.

The President advised that this is a Constitutional amendment, that voting shall be conducted by Houses, and that a majority is required to approve the Bill *in principle*.

Carried

Dr Carolyn Tan moving, with the support of more than 10 lay members –

That the voting be conducted electronically. The motion passed.

Electronic voting was held on the question 'that the Motion do now pass'. Voting was conducted by Houses.

House of Laity

Yes – 67

No – 37

Clergy

Yes – 62

No – 39

Bishop Michael Stead moving, the Ven Canon Arthur Copeman seconding:

That Bill 8 is withdrawn

A voice vote was conducted, but the result was unclear. The President adjourned Synod for morning tea

Synod adjourned for morning tea at 10.43 am

Synod resumed at 11.15am

The President announced that the motion passed the House of Bishops by a narrow margin; as such, the Bill has passed in principle.

Carried

Bishop Michael Stead sought leave to remove Bill 8. Leave not granted.

The President moved to adjourn debate on Bill 8 to allow time for amendments to occur.

**17.16- Bill 16 – A Bill for the Constitution Amendment (Defence
17 Force Representation in General Synod) Canon 2026
and Bill 17 – A Bill for the Defence Force Ministry
(Representation in General Synod) Canon 2026**

The President moved that Bills 16 and 17 be considered as cognate bills

Carried

The President explained that the Bills 16 and 17 are cognate bills and may be discussed and approved in principle together.

Bishop Paul Barker moving, Bishop Keith Joseph seconding.
That a Bill for the Constitution Amendment (Defence Force Representation in General Synod) Canon 2026 (Bill 16) be approved in principle

Carried

Bishop Paul Barker moving, Bishop Keith Joseph seconding.
That a Bill for the Defence Force Ministry (Representation in General Synod) Canon 2026 (Bill 17) be approved in principle.

Carried

R64/19

Bishop Paul Barker moving, Bishop Keith Joseph seconding.
That Bill 16 does now pass. Voting was conducted by Houses.

Carried

R65/19

That Bill 17 does now pass.

Carried

**ORDER OF THE DAY – Wednesday 12 August after consideration of
Bills 16 and 17, 2026 (Motions 16.26 and 16.27)**

16.26 Defence Force Board (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

	The Ven Andrew Nixon moving, The Rev'd Catherine Wynn-Jones seconding That Bishop Grant Dibden be permitted to speak Carried Bishop Grant addressed Synod The Ven Andrew Nixon moving, The Rev'd Catherine Wynn-Jones seconding	
R66/19	1. That General Synod thank God for the privileged position and blessed opportunity to still have Christian chaplains living among and ministering to our Defence Force personnel in the increasingly difficult climate of growing secularism and pluralism. 2. That General Synod commends the work of Anglican Chaplains in the Australian Defence Force, particularly noting we are in the most dangerous security environment since WWII, and calls on: • all members of the ACA to pray for peace, and • all clergy and suitably qualified lay members of the ACA to prayerfully consider Defence Chaplaincy as primary or additional ministry. 3. That General Synod notes the benefits to the Church of partnering with Defence Chaplaincy in gospel ministry, notes the strategic importance of having high calibre younger women and men serve as chaplains, and encourages each diocese to financially support Defence Chaplaincy by collecting a congregational donation each year on Defence Sunday (the Sunday before Remembrance Day).	Carried
	16.27 Veterans' Chaplaincy (Book 4) Criterion (b) The Ven Andrew Nixon moving, The Rev'd Caitlin Orr seconding	
R67/19	1. General Synod acknowledges the final report of the Royal Commission into Defence and Veteran Suicide and commends the tireless work of the commissioners, Nick Kaldas APM (Chair), The Hon. James Douglas KC and Dr Peggy Brown AO in listening compassionately to serving members, veterans and families, presenting their findings and making 122 recommendations for action, including Recommendation 78: Prevent, minimise and treat moral injury. 2. Synod recognises the magnitude of the task ahead noting: the ongoing investigation of the Office of the Special Investigator and the commencement of criminal proceedings for alleged war crimes; the rapid development in recognition of the prevalence and impact of moral injury in the veteran community; the persistence of PTSD, psychological distress, mental illness and associated difficulties including substance abuse, relationship breakdown and homelessness; the long	Carried

term debilitating effects of physical injury and pain management; and the immediate and intergenerational impact of service on the families of veterans.

3. The Synod welcomes the extension of funding for the Veterans' Chaplaincy Program pilot in the Department of Veterans' Affairs for a further two years until 30 June 2028, noting the spiritual dimension of moral injury and the particular aim of this program to "develop, upskill and support community-based faith leaders to deliver this support to veterans and their families". It calls on Anglican Churches and welfare agencies to pray that this Government might commit to extend this program nationally and prayerfully consider how they might be upskilled.
4. The Synod acknowledges and thanks the outgoing Primate, the Most Reverend Geoff Smith, for his unwavering support of the work of veterans' chaplaincy and the collation of an additional non-stipended archdeacon to champion ministry to veterans and families and be a point of contact between the ADF, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and the Church in response to the resolution of this Synod on 11 May 2022.

Mother's Union Presentation

The President welcomed Dr Robin Ray, President of Mother's Union, to address Synod.

Dr Robin Ray addressed Synod. Dr Ray celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Mother's Union, and its ministry in Australia.

The President led Synod in a Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Synod adjourned for lunch at 12.37.

Synod resumed at 1.31pm

The President welcomed Members back to Synod.

The President sought leave to suspend so much of Standing Orders such that at 5pm motion 16.23 being an Order of the Day. **Carried**

17.14 Bill 14 – A Bill for a General Synod Staff Committee Membership Canon 2026

Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy moving, Bishop Paul Barker seconding.

That a Bill for a General Synod Staff Committee Membership Canon 2026 be approved in principle. **Carried**

Archbishop Kay Goldsworthy moving, Bishop Paul Barker seconding.

R68/19

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

That the Bill do now pass **Carried**

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.

Carried

Synod moved into Committee to consider the Bill.

Dr Ian Gibson reported progress and recommended that debate on this Bill is adjourned.

The President announced that deliberation of this Bill is adjourned.

17.18 Bill 18 – A Bill for the Long Service Leave (Amendment) Canon 2026

The Rev'd Dr Andrew Ford sought leave that the Bill is re-presented the in a slightly amended form. Synod granted leave.

The Rev'd Dr Andrew Ford moving, Bishop Donald Kirk seconding.

Carried

That a Bill for the Long Service Leave (Amendment) Canon 2026 be approved in principle.

Carried

The Rev'd Dr Andrew Ford moving, Bishop Donald Kirk seconding.

That the Bill do now pass

Carried

17.19 Bill 19 – A Bill for the Trust Corporation Amendment Canon 2026

Mrs Carine Collins moving, Ms Gillian Harrex seconding.

Mrs Carine Collins sought leave to re-present the Bill in a slightly amended form. Synod granted leave.

Mrs Carine Collins moving, Ms Gillian Harrex seconding.

That a Bill for the Trust Corporation Amendment Canon 2026 be approved in principle.

Carried

Mrs Carine Collins moving, Ms Gillian Harrex seconding.

That the Bill do now pass

Carried

R69/19

16.4 Diocesan Financial Self-Assessment (Criterion a)

Archdeacon Arthur Copeman sought leave to move motion 16.4 in a significantly amended way.

Part A unchanged; noting Part B seeks to respond to debate on Bill 8. Leave Granted.

Bishop Michael recommended that Members debate on Part A of the Bill first. The recommendation was accepted by the President.

Archdeacon Arthur Copeman introduced amendments to Part A. Archdeacon Arthur Copeman moving, Bishop Michael Stead seconding

That amendments on Part A be accepted

Lost

The President resumed discussions on Part A in its unamended form.

Deliberation was adjourned.

Synod adjourned for afternoon tea for 3.26pm

Synod resumed at 4pm

Amendment

Archdeacon Arthur Copeman moving, Bishop Michael Stead seconding

That Clause (a), Part B is deleted

Carried

R70/19

Archdeacon Arthur Copeman moving, Bishop Michael Stead seconding

Part A

That this General Synod:

- a. receives the report of Standing Committee on steps taken in response to the General Synod resolution GS80/18 (Viability of Regional Dioceses)
- b. notes that the recent consultation with individual dioceses has shown that the Standing Committee has been unable to find new or improved mechanisms to address these issues at a national level that would be broadly supported
- c. notes that one of the few existing mechanisms to assist a Diocese experiencing financial difficulties is found in the Missionary Dioceses Canon 1997, which allows a Diocese to apply to the Standing Committee to be declared a Provisional Missionary Diocese and be exempt from paying fixed assessments to General Synod for a period of no more than 3 years, subject to the satisfaction of certain financial requirements
- d. recommends that where a vacancy in the See occurs, a Diocese does not proceed with the election or appointment of a new Bishop unless and until a financial self-assessment has been prepared that provides a comprehensive and realistic appraisal of its financial position over the next five years, including an estimate of the liabilities that are reasonably likely to arise from Redress claims and civil claims, and that demonstrates whether the Diocese has the capacity to fund the remuneration and associated costs of the Bishop for at least the next 5 years without the need to sell church property assets, and allowing for the discharge of all of its Redress and other civil liabilities
- e. recommends that the above-mentioned requirement be included in the legislation of each Diocese that regulates the appointment of a new Bishop
- f. recommends Dioceses as soon as they become aware that they are likely to cease being viable within the next

5 years, to initiate a process either to return the Diocese to viability (in consultation with the Diocesan Financial Advisory Task Force or otherwise), to appoint a financial administrator, to seek to amalgamate with another Diocese or to wind up the Diocese

PART B

That this General Synod:

- a. Recognises that at this time it has not been established that the Constitution prevents a Bishop of a Diocese being elected as the Bishop of another diocese.
- b. Recognises that circumstances may arise where a Diocese is not able to carry out some functions because of the lack of a Bishop.
- c. Recognises the desirability that those in episcopal orders in the National Church be able to assist and support a diocese without a bishop by functioning as a Provisional Diocesan Bishop as an interim appointment.
- d. Encourages Diocesan councils to consider what they may be able to put in place to enable their administrator to perform all the functions of a Diocesan bishop pending the election of the next Diocesan bishop.
- e. Asks Standing Committee to examine all the issues raised by this decision and either to propose legislation to the next meeting of General Synod or to circulate to dioceses legislative options that could be adopted at a diocesan level.

The President advised Members that they shall vote on the motion as a whole, i.e. on both Part A and Part B. Voting was held and the motion is passed.

Carried

Synod adjourned at 4.46pm

Synod resumed at 4.53pm

17.8 Bill 08 – A Bill for the Constitution Amendment (Bishop of Multiple Dioceses) Canon 2026

Bishop Michael Stead moving, the Ven Canon Arthur Copeman seconding.

That Bill 8 is withdrawn

Carried

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

Committee deliberation of the Bill resumed.

The Deputy Chair of Committees reported progress and sought leave to sit again. Leave was granted.

Consideration of the Bill was adjourned.

ORDER OF THE DAY – Wednesday 12 August at 5pm (Motions 16.23)

16.23 Funding the Church's Response to Domestic and Family Violence* (Book 4)

Criterion (b)

Bishop Genieve Blackwell moving, The Very Rev'd Richard Humphrey seconding

The General Synod, acknowledging the long-term nature of the need for prevention and response to domestic and family violence in our churches:

- a) requests the Treasurer to bring forward a recast General Synod budget that includes an annual allocation of \$189,000 in the General Synod Statutory Assessment budget, commencing in 2027 and continuing in each subsequent year, with the allocation adjusted annually in accordance with the CPI adjustments applied to Statutory Assessments;
- b) requests Standing Committee to allocate this funding to staffing and resourcing the Anglican Church of Australia's prevention and response to domestic and family violence affecting its members;
- c) recommends that such funding is to be sourced through increased statutory assessments; and
- d) asks Standing Committee to return to the next General Synod with a budget that allocates funding to these matters rather than requiring this matter to be debated at each General Synod.

**NOTE: This motion involves expenditure that will, if passed, result in expenditure from the funds available to the General Synod. As required by Standing Order 37A of Rule I – Standing Orders, attached to this business paper as Annexure A is a paper setting out: (a) the proposed source of funding; and (b) an itemised statement of expected income and expenditure that will result from the passing of the motion, being, if the expenditure will continue for more than one year, the expected income and expenditure per year.*

Electronic voting was held.

Yes: 93

No: 132

The President announced that the Motion was lost.

The President led Synod in prayer.

Elections – Nominated Persons

The President announced that a nominee to the elections was invalid, that elections shall be reconducted with voting open tomorrow morning, and that a fresh list of nominees will be posted as soon as possible.

Anglican Schools Australia Presentation

The Rev Peter Laurence OAM, CEO of Anglican Schools Australia made a presentation in relation to the Ministry of Anglican Schools Australia. **(5.55pm)**

The President led Members to Evening Prayer at 6.07 pm.
Synod adjourned at 6.23pm.

President

Date

Minutes of the Second day of the Nineteenth General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia
on Wednesday 12 August 2026

Confirmed by Minutes Reading Committee:

The Venerable David McGougall

Mrs Sue Williams