



ANGLICAN  
DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

# Synod

A guide for members and prospective members

Revised August 2023

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**Disclaimer:**

*This document is a general guide to Synod only. Readers should refer to the various Acts of Synod and the Standing Orders for precise definitions and requirements.*



## What is Synod?

**Synod is the gathering of the clergy and lay representatives of the Diocese with the Archbishop to make decisions about our corporate life in Christ.**

We begin each Synod session by coming together as the Body of Christ in a celebration of the Eucharist; the business meeting which follows is an extension of the Eucharistic gathering.

Synod governs our corporate life as Anglicans in Melbourne. It also affects our relationships within the Anglican Church generally, and at times with wider society. Synod members elect Archbishops, most members of Archbishop-in-Council, other diocesan committees, and representatives on wider church bodies.

The Synod also makes decisions in many important areas, such as:

- The central governance and administration of the Diocese
- Parish governance
- Ensuring a safe church and that children and vulnerable people are protected in church and church-related activities
- Promoting, enabling and resourcing our mission
- Monitoring and reviewing diocesan finances and budgets, and the oversight of diocesan property
- Encouraging and sometimes implementing change in areas such as ecumenical relationships





Synod also comments from the Gospel perspective on issues and concerns in Australian society, such as care of the environment, marriage and family life, education, and refugees.

Melbourne Synod, which first met in 1856, was one of the first Synods in the worldwide Anglican Communion. Its creation by Melbourne's first bishop, Charles Perry, recognised the importance of clergy and laity sharing the governance of the Diocese with the bishop. The Synod has its legal basis in the *Church of England Act 1854* of the Victorian Parliament, which provides that Acts, resolutions and regulations of the Synod that are within its competence to make, and that are agreed to by the clergy and the laity and assented to by the Archbishop, are binding on the members of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

Synod conducts its business on a model based on the Westminster parliamentary system, similar to that followed by Australia's federal and state parliaments. As with parliaments, each Synod has a term, usually of three years. Each Synod is referred to by number (such as the 54th Synod). Meetings are termed "sessions", and must be held annually (except when there is no Archbishop in place). An ordinary session is generally held over four days (actually three nights and a Saturday) in October. Occasionally, additional meetings ("special sessions") are called for specific purposes.

For example, an Election Synod is convened to elect a new Archbishop. This will occur in 2025.

1. For more detail on this history, see "The origins of the Melbourne Synod" on page 26.

# Who are the members of Synod?

As with parliaments, Synods are, when making binding decisions, divided into 'houses' – the house of clergy and the house of laity – which meet with the Archbishop.

## The Archbishop

The Archbishop is a member of Synod and presides over or chairs its meetings. Although in practice it has been unusual, the Archbishop is entitled to enter into the debates of Synod, and will nominate another person to chair the meeting while participating.

## The House of Clergy

Everyone in the diocese who is ordained and holds a full licence from the Archbishop, such as vicars, intentional interim vicars, parish ministers and curates, chaplains and assistant bishops, is a member of Synod.

Clergy who have the Archbishop's 'permission to officiate' or PTO (such as retired clergy) are not licensed and therefore not members of Synod.

## The House of Laity

Laity are members of Synod in a number of categories.

The majority are elected representatives of their parishes or Authorised Anglican Congregation (AAC), with most parishes and AACs entitled to elect two representatives.<sup>2</sup> Parishes with two or more full-time licensed clergy on their staff, and which have paid their parish assessment in full, are entitled to apply to Archbishop-in-Council to elect an additional representative.



2. Unless otherwise stated, 'parish' is used throughout this guide as including AACs. From 2023, AACs have the same right as parishes to elect two representatives.



There are other categories, such as religious communities, entitled to one representative each. In each case, alternate representatives are also elected, to take the place of an elected member if a member is unable to be present for a full Synod meeting. There is a formal procedure to be followed by alternate members wishing to attend Synod in the place of an elected member (see Synod Newsletters) and the alternate must be a replacement for the whole session, not just a part of it.

Members of the Archbishop-in-Council, the Provincial Council of Victoria and General Synod who are not otherwise members of Synod can apply to the Archbishop to be Synod members. The Chancellor, Deputy Chancellor, Advocate and Registrar are also members of Synod by virtue of holding their offices.

Lay members, including alternates, are elected at the beginning of each term and hold office for the entire Synod unless they resign. To be eligible, they must be residents of the Diocese of Melbourne,<sup>3</sup> and be communicant members of the Anglican Church of Australia. Elections are held in parishes and other bodies when the Archbishop issues a mandate, a formal document authorising the holding of elections for Synod membership.

While Synod members are always free to discuss matters coming before Synod with their congregations and parish councils, they should remember that they are not delegates from their parishes. Their parishes cannot direct them in how they should vote on any matter.



3. A proposal to extend this to parishioners in Melbourne who live elsewhere in Victoria is to come to the 2023 Synod.



## Why become a lay member of Synod?

Synod plays a crucial role in the life of the Church and especially how it is governed. Members of Synod, then, have a significant responsibility to their parish and to the Diocese, a responsibility that should be taken seriously. People interested in representing their parish at Synod should be available, and prepared, to attend each entire annual session of Synod for the duration of their elected term.

The membership of Synod should also reflect the membership of the whole Diocese. People within the Diocese with as many different experiences of life as possible, who feel they can contribute to the Church in this way, should consider representing their parish at Synod.

Potential members do not need to have special legal or other expertise, or even to be confident as a public speaker. The most important attributes are willingness to attend Synod faithfully, to read all the Synod papers carefully, to listen attentively, and to vote responsibly in all the decisions that come before the Synod.

There were 382 lay members and 374 clergy entitled to attend the 2019 session of Synod, a total of 756. Approximately two thirds of each group attended at least one day of the session. Some people might consider this disappointing, given the importance of Synod for the governance of the Church.

Only Synod members can vote in Synod elections. Other interested people (including press representatives) are welcome to attend and observe Synod, but must remain within an area designated as the 'public gallery' or, where the meeting is held online, will have view only access (as at parliamentary sittings). Occasionally visitors are invited to address Synod on a specific topic, but only with the prior agreement (leave) of Synod.





## What is the business of Synod?

The main business of Synod is the governance of the Diocese. This is achieved through **legislation** and **resolutions**, and through **elections** to key diocesan and national bodies. Synod also provides an opportunity for members to ask **questions** of fact of other Synod members (principally in practice the Archbishop and the Registrar).

By law, the only decisions of Synod that are binding are those agreed to separately by the house of clergy, the house of laity and the Archbishop. The invariable practice of this diocese is to make such decisions in the form of legislation. Other decisions of the whole Synod are not made by houses and are therefore not legally binding.

### Legislation

Legislation is a record of what Synod has agreed to in matters of church governance. Diocesan legislation is binding, in that clergy, lay office holders, such as churchwardens, members of parish council and parish nominations committee members, and all members of the Church resident in the Diocese are required to act in accordance with it on matters concerning ministry, church membership and church property. It is especially important that clergy know and contribute to what is in the legislation since they swear to uphold the Acts of Synod when they are ordained and again when they are inducted into parish appointments.

All the generally relevant Acts of Synod can be found on the diocesan website:  
<https://www.melbourneanglican.org.au/governance-synod/synod-legislation/>

For the Church to hold its consensual unity, its legislation needs to be uniformly respected even if its operation is inconvenient in particular situations. Many ordinary Church attenders might be surprised to learn what some pieces of Melbourne church legislation say about their membership obligations and limitations. Synod members need to give careful thought to potential long-term implications when exercising their vote to adopt new legislative requirements intended to have effect indefinitely.



Synod legislation usually comes from two sources:

1. Canons passed by General Synod that need to be adopted by the Diocese by means of Diocesan legislation before they take effect in the Diocese and the national church; and
2. Draft legislation promoted by Archbishop-in-Council.

An example of the first is the canon providing for the ordination of women as priests, which was adopted by Melbourne Synod in December 1992 following its passing by General Synod the previous month. An example of the second is the 2022 Clergy Act, brought to Melbourne Synod in 2022 on behalf of Archbishop in Council.

Synod can ask Archbishop-in-Council to prepare legislation in a particular area for consideration at a future session. Individual Synod members can also bring draft legislation privately, though this is unusual. A synod member wanting to bring a private member's bill is advised to contact the Registrar in order to obtain professional drafting support. It is also prudent to establish whether the proposal is likely to be generally supported.

## Resolutions

While not binding, resolutions are influential statements that recommend certain courses of action or offer comment on matters of concern. Most are directed internally to parishes, the Archbishop or the Archbishop in Council. Others deal with matters of concern in the wider Church and community, offering formal advice or comment to the General Synod, the Anglican Communion, the Commonwealth and state governments, and other bodies. They are an important means by which the Anglican Church can make its views known in a considered and representative way. The resolutions of Synod are recorded in the Synod synopsis on the diocesan website.



## Elections

Synod members elect people to a number of diocesan committees, as well as those who will represent the Melbourne Diocese on wider Anglican bodies. Diocesan committees elected by Synod, either fully or in part, include Archbishop in Council, the Social Responsibilities Committee, members of the Diocesan Tribunal, and the Board of Nominators (the body responsible for preparing a list of candidates for the election of an archbishop by Synod members). Synod also elects Melbourne's representatives on the Provincial Council (which also includes representatives of the other four dioceses in Victoria) and the national General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia. These elections are mostly held at the first session of a new Synod, with nominations called for in the Archbishop's Mandate summoning Synod to meet.

In Melbourne Synod elections, the results are ascertained by the Scottish STV system, a system which encourages representation of the diversity of the diocese among those elected, and provides a mechanism for filling casual vacancies.

## Questions

At the beginning of each meeting of a session, the agenda provides an opportunity for members to ask questions. Questions must be provided in writing in time to be included on the notice paper. They are directed to the President (Archbishop) or to another member of Synod relating to a Bill or other business in which that member is concerned. A question must be only a question, and not include opinion or comment. The answer must also be confined to matters of fact, not opinion. Those asking questions are bound by the normal rules of orderly conduct. Answers to the questions are usually given publicly at the commencement of the next sitting day, unless the matter is complex and requires more research. In this case, the answer may be provided to Synod members in writing at a later date.

## Petitions

The Standing Orders also provide for a member to present a petition signed by members of the church in the Diocese. This is relatively uncommon.

## Other Synod activities

Synod also provides a forum where those attending can hear about Diocesan activities, such as the Church's response to severe bushfires or floods, or through information presentations. Other presentations might highlight the work of mission and welfare agencies or diocesan committees. Synod must first give leave for presentations to be made.







## How does Synod function?

### The mandates

Every three years or so the Archbishop issues a mandate (direction) for the election of a new Synod, in accordance with the rules established by the *Synod Act 1972*. Parish representatives are elected in response to that mandate and not, as is sometimes thought, as part of the elections held at the parish annual meeting.

If for any reason a new parish representative or alternate representative needs to be elected during the term of a Synod, the parish must apply to the Archbishop for a fresh mandate. Names of Synod members elected by the parish are then forwarded to the Diocesan Registry.

The Archbishop also convenes Synod by issuing a mandate, or summons, to members. This mandate is usually sent by email to all members several months in advance of the meeting date. The mandate states the vacancies for which elections will be held and provides deadlines for the submission of nominations and motions.

Copies of reports from the various bodies accountable to Synod, such as Archbishop in Council, together with details of the motions submitted, budget papers and a list of nominees for any elections are uploaded to the Synod Portal.

There will be a series of Synod newsletters. These contain a great deal of important information, including practical information about the venue, parking, and other organisational details and should be read carefully.

## The Presidential Address

Synod sessions usually commence with the Synod Eucharist in St Paul's Cathedral. Following the Eucharist, the Archbishop delivers the Presidential Address, sometimes called the 'charge', to Synod. In this address, the Archbishop customarily offers a perspective on matters confronting the Diocese, the wider Church, and the community, often outlining plans and directions, and perhaps a view on matters coming before the Synod meeting.

## Standing Orders

Standing Orders are the meeting rules for the conduct of Synod. As in other situations, participants need to know the rules!

The Standing Orders have been finely honed over the more than 150 years that Melbourne Synod has been meeting, and provide a carefully considered, comprehensive means of running a meeting that is fair to all participants, while respecting the seriousness of Synod business. Completely rewritten Standing Orders were first used at the 2016 Synod, and in 2022 several amendments were made to provide for Synod sessions to be held in person and online. For "old hands" it will be unwise to assume that everything is unchanged from what has previously applied. In particular, many things that formerly could be done without notice now have to be sent to the Registrar in time to be included on the notice paper.

A detailed knowledge of the Standing Orders enables members to participate fully in the meeting and to use the meeting procedure to achieve outcomes efficiently and fairly.

**Sessional Orders** will sometimes be adopted to be read alongside the Standing Orders. For example, these were used in 2022 when Synod was first held both in person and online to address rules in the Standing Orders that related only to in person meetings. Sessional Orders are made by the Archbishop in Council ahead of the meeting, but can be disallowed by that meeting. It is important to be aware of any Sessional Orders that may change the application of the Standing Orders.







## Participating in Synod

Synod can be daunting at first because of its formal style and detailed rules of participation. It is advisable for members who wish to take a more active role, by speaking in debates (see below) and proposing motions, to understand the key elements of the Standing Orders.

### In debate

When addressing Synod for any reason, whether in moving or seconding a motion, asking a question or speaking in debate, Synod members are expected to address, principally, the Archbishop who is addressed as “Mr President”. Members should state their name and the legal basis for their right to address the Synod. This will usually be their name and their parish. So the formula is for members to commence speaking by saying: “Mr President, name, parish” (eg “Mr President, Jay Brown, All Hallows’, Alicetown”).

Synod members name their parish in this way only if they are a member of Synod by virtue of being an elected parish representative. Otherwise, they should instead identify their membership category, for example, General Synod or Provincial Council, rather than giving the name of their parish (eg “Mr President, Chris Green, General Synod”).

Synod is a formal assembly, and Synod members are expected to speak and behave in a manner that reflects the seriousness of the meeting, and in a manner befitting a Christian assembly. This is not to say that there cannot be moments of humour and even good fun! But members must not speak derogatively of other Synod members or of anyone else in the course of addressing the Synod. They are generally assured of a better hearing from other Synod members if they have a positive and respectful contribution to make.

It is also unacceptable for Synod members to hiss speakers, or ‘cat call’, or behave in any other way which could be interpreted as partisan. They should not interrupt a speaker (except to ask the President to rule on a point of order). The Standing Orders are strict about inappropriate speech and behaviour.

Sometimes a motion is brought forward which Synod members find difficult either to adopt or reject. For example, a motion may call for adoption of a moral stance where bona fide differences of opinion exist within our Church, and the Church as a whole still has an open mind, or where assumptions are asserted as a premise for action without adequate evidence. A procedural method of dealing with such a motion is by moving that the Synod not consider this matter further. (Such a motion may, however, itself be superseded by a successful motion to adjourn the house.)

## Synod courtesies

Synod members stand when the Archbishop enters or leaves the Synod venue. When a member enters or leaves while the meeting is in progress, it is customary for them to incline their head slightly to the Archbishop, as they would do in parliament or a court of law.

## Microphones

In exceptional circumstances (such as when a point of order arises) the member should first stand in order to gain the President's attention and then move to the nearest microphone. (When Synod is held online, there will be on-screen buttons to raise procedural objections, such as a point of order.)

Members should not stand at a microphone when there is no present reason to do so (for example, there is nothing currently before the meeting to which members may speak).

## Circulating or distributing papers or materials

Because it is such a wonderful opportunity to promote the local parish fete or the next religious musical event, strange and sometimes problematic circulars and posters have been known to appear at Synod. Rules are now in place to manage how all such material is to be circulated to this large captive audience. Distribution of materials may be permitted, for example, to advertise training occasions or events, but only with the approval of the Synod Business Committee. These rules apply to electronic distribution as well. Refer to the Standing Orders for more details or email the Registrar.

## Synod dress

The Archbishop, as President of Synod, is traditionally dressed formally in an episcopal cassock. This suggests to Synod members that a degree of care is required about their own dress code. In earlier generations, and still in some dioceses today, clergy are expected to dress for Synod in cassocks or at least in clerical collars. That is not the case in Melbourne, where a more informal style of dress has become acceptable for both clergy and laity. Smart casual is generally the expected minimum dress code.



The process for presenting legislation to Synod is quite formal. Proposed legislation will invariably be contained in the papers uploaded to the Synod Portal before the meeting. In each case there will be a "Bill" which is the text proposed for the eventual Act, and an Explanatory Memorandum which provides background explanation but is not part of the formal Bill.

## Before the Synod

Sometimes there will be pre-Synod sessions (usually on-line) to provide background to a Bill, and these can be valuable both for the Synod members attending and for those presenting the Bill.

In all cases, a Synod member who wants to know more about a Bill (whether to help their understanding, or because they are considering an amendment) is encouraged to contact the Registrar, who will put them in touch with someone who can assist them.

## Understanding proposed legislation

Each Bill has the text of the proposed legislation together with an "Explanatory Memorandum". Once passed, only the Bill (now called an "Act") will become law. The Explanatory Memorandum is just that: information to assist, but of no legal force. Nevertheless, the Explanatory Memorandum is the right starting point in understanding why the Bill is being proposed, and what it is intended to achieve. It will often provide a better overall picture than can be achieved from the text of the Bill.

Consideration by the Synod happens in four separate stages:

### **1. Introduction and general debate**

The mover and seconder of the Bill seek to "bring in" the Bill, that is, to have it considered by the Synod at all. They explain the purpose of the legislation and how it works. The time of the speech is established by Standing Orders, but may be extended with the prior permission of the Synod Business Committee. Unless there has been an information session ahead of the meeting, the Archbishop usually allows a time in which synod members can ask questions of the mover and seconder regarding the Bill.

Synod members then debate the general principles of the legislation before the Synod votes on the motion to bring in the Bill. A simple majority vote is required for the Bill to move to the next stage.

If that motion is carried, the Standing Orders allow for a choice of procedure. If notice has been given of any amendments, then the Bill will be considered in committee. If no-one has given notice of an amendment, the mover may seek leave to proceed straight to the passing of the Bill.

## **2. Committee stage**

If a Bill is to be considered in committee, the Synod now becomes a 'committee of the whole house', and each amendment is considered in turn.

Unlike earlier practice, amendments to Bills in committee stage now need to be provided to the Secretary in time to be included in the notice paper. The only exceptions are when the Chair considers that an amendment may help with considering a provision already being considered, or is necessary as a result of other amendments.

This stage is chaired by the 'Chair of Committees' or a deputy chair, who are officers elected by Synod at the beginning of each Synod term. This is the time when any proposed amendments are considered and, after discussion, decided on by a vote. Proposals in committee do not require a seconder.

For those participating in the debate, it may be helpful to note that each numbered provision of a Bill is referred to as a "clause"; once the Bill becomes an Act, the same provision will be referred to as a "section".

At the end of this stage, a certified copy of the draft legislation incorporating any agreed amendments is produced.

## **3. Passage of the Bill**

This stage is usually a formal process which happens once the certified copy of the legislation is available. If there have been several amendments, this might not be until a subsequent sitting day in the Synod session.

It is possible for the motion that the Bill do now pass to be debated, and for the Bill to be sent back to the Committee for further consideration (although there has been no instance of this in at least the last 40 years).

Otherwise, there is a vote on whether the Bill do now pass 'by houses', that is, the clergy vote is taken separately from the vote of the laity. If the Bill is not passed (by a simple majority) in each house (clergy and laity) the Bill fails. This is an important form of protection, ensuring that legislation is acceptable to both clergy and laity.

## **4. Assent**

The Bill does not become church law until the Archbishop assents to it.

## **5. Coming into force**

An Act comes into force on the day it receives the Archbishop's assent, unless the Act itself provides for some other day, such as a particular date, or a day decided by the Archbishop in Council.







## Proposing Synod motions

Any member of Synod can propose a motion ahead of time for consideration by Synod. Each motion must be seconded by another member of Synod, and it will not be included on the notice paper (which tells people the business for the day and the rest of the session) unless it is. The mandate for an ordinary session will state the deadline for the submission of motions.

The Synod Business Committee, appointed by the Archbishop in Council annually, arranges the order in which motions are placed on the Synod agenda. (Legislation generally has priority over other motions.) The Synod Business Committee tries to group motions by topic and to ensure that the most pressing matters will be dealt with. The committee aims to balance matters in the most reasonable way open to it.

Motions can also be submitted on the first meeting day of each Synod session (currently Wednesday). In this case they must be given to the Registrar by 12 noon on that day. After that first day, fresh motions can be moved only if Synod agrees by a majority vote.

In both cases, unless Synod decides that any of these later motions are urgent, they are placed on the agenda to follow those submitted by the pre-Synod deadline. There is a risk that later items will not be dealt with before the session concludes.

Both the mover and seconder of a motion have the right to speak to it when it comes before the Synod. Their speeches are subject to a time limit: seven minutes for the mover, and five minutes for the seconder (speaking once only). Any other speaker has three minutes and may speak only once. At the conclusion of the debate the mover has another three minutes to speak in reply. These time limits are enforced unless Synod agrees to a brief extension of time.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Speakers can ensure they keep to time limits if, when they write their speeches, they remember the general rule of thumb: 100 words takes one minute to deliver. So a seven-minute speech should be no longer than 700 words.

Updated Standing Orders now also require the mover of a motion to pre-record their speech in most circumstances. This allows them to ensure their speech will not run overtime. There are time limits on debates, as well as a rule that ensures balance between the number of speakers speaking for and against the motion under consideration.

Motions can be amended from the floor of Synod, but those proposing an amendment must convince either the mover of the motion or a majority of Synod members to agree to their proposed change. All amendments need to be written out clearly and handed to the Synod Secretary to ensure accuracy.

Motions and amendments are voted on by the whole Synod, not by separate houses.

In the course of the meeting, there are opportunities for the President to ask whether any of the resolutions are 'formal', that is, can be agreed to without debate. If a resolution is declared formal the mover may speak to it for three minutes before it is formally agreed to. (It is wise for the mover not to say anything that might cause members to revisit their decision to allow it to pass.) If a member objects to a motion being considered formal they can be asked by the President to say who they are and to give the reasons for their objection.

In some cases, especially where a motion is not obviously contentious, it may be useful for the mover to talk to the member who objected to it being taken formally to see whether there is some alteration that could be accommodated.

A **condolence motion** and a **long-service motion** are moved at the end of a Session to record the work of previous members. Names are sought from parishes and members prior to the last day of Synod business.

While the Diocese itself has records of clergy who have died, it is highly desirable that parish representatives (lay and clergy) provide the names of former parishioners who were once Synod representatives and who have died.



## The origins of Melbourne Synod

Melbourne Synod, which first met in 1856, was one of the first Synods in the worldwide Anglican Church. Adelaide and Toronto were earlier by a year or two, and the United States by several decades. Melbourne was, however, the first synod to be authorised by parliamentary legislation. The Victorian Legislative Council passed an Act allowing the creation of a Church Assembly (Synod) in November 1854. When in February 1856, Queen Victoria gave the royal assent to that Act, her government effectively approved the creation of synods throughout the British colonies. Melbourne Synod is still enabled by the 1854 Act of Parliament.

More than 300 years earlier, when the English Parliament legislated to make Henry VIII the Supreme Head of the Church of England in 1534, it declared that clergy and bishops could not assemble and pass canons in any of the king's realms without the royal assent. The Church of England was to be governed by the monarch, with assistance from the bishops in the House of Lords and the laity in the House of Commons. When the diocese of Melbourne was created in 1847, it was therefore illegal to hold a synod. Our first bishop, Charles Perry, was solely responsible for all aspects of church government, from hiring and firing the clergy to managing church property.

Bishop Perry wanted to share the burden of church government with his diocese, in order to give his clergy security of employment, and to empower the laity whose voluntary contributions made the Church's work possible in the colony. So he asked the Victorian Legislative Council to help him by passing pioneering legislation to create a governance body of clergy and representative laity.

When the first Church Assembly, later to be called Synod, met on 16 October 1856 at St James' Church, Melbourne, there were 122 members: the bishop, 53 clergymen, and 68 laymen. As well as the parish clergy, the Assembly included the chaplains to the Melbourne Hospital and the Melbourne Gaol.

The first lay members were powerful and wealthy men, including fifteen members of the Victorian Parliament, a judge, several lawyers, businessmen, bankers, headmasters, squatters, and one of the first professors at the fledgling University of Melbourne.

Members ranged in age from a 24-year-old deacon to the 62-year-old Sir George Stephen, though most were in their thirties or forties.

That Assembly was entirely male: women could not even vote for synod representatives until 1914, and could take part in Synod as lay members only from 1924 and as clerical members from 1986.

*Information supplied by church historian  
and Melbourne Synod member Dr Peter Sherlock.*



## Glossary of terms

*Acts of Synod* – Legislation made by the Synod. It may be accessed on the Diocesan website.

*Alternate* –someone who can replace a lay Synod representative who is unable to attend Synod for the whole of a session.

*Amendments to motions* – motions may be amended by omitting words, by omitting some words and inserting or adding others, or by inserting or adding words. There are many Standing Orders relating to how and when this may be done. Standing Order (SO) 22.

*Bill* – name given to draft legislation presented to Synod.

*Charge* – the address or speech given by the Archbishop at the opening of a new session of Synod.

*Clergy member* – licensed clergy eligible to attend Synod.

*Committee of the whole* or '*in committee*' – name given to Synod when in the process of considering legislation.

*Condolence motion* – motion to record former Synod members who have died during the past year. Names should be given to the Registrar by the beginning of the last day of Synod business.

*Formal motions* – motions that the Synod determines may be adopted without debate. SO 20

*Houses* – all the clergy, and all the laity, each voting separately.

*Lay members* – laity elected to Synod membership by a parish, an Authorised Anglican Congregation or a religious community, and those holding certain positions or offices.

*Leave* – various procedural steps require leave. Leave is granted to suspend Standing Orders unless 10 members stand in their place. In most cases, leave must be refused if 5 members rise in their places (SO13).

*Legislation* – a record of what the Synod has agreed to in matters of church governance.

*Long-service motion* – moved annually to commend members about to retire who have served the Synod for longer than 10 years in total. Names should be given to the Registrar by the beginning of the last day of Synod business.

*Mandate* – the summons or call of the Archbishop

- i) to elect lay Synod representatives, or
- ii) to call the Synod to meet on a specified date.

*Meeting* – the period of 3 evenings and a Saturday devoted annually to the business of Synod. Also known as an Ordinary Session.

*Members* – anyone legally entitled to be present and vote.

*Motions* – These are of different kinds: those that relate to

- i) the business of the meeting (SO 12);
- ii) pre-session notices of motion (SO 16);
- iii) notices of motion after a session has commenced (SO 17);
- iv) motions (general requirements) SO 18;
- v) motions relating to finance (SO 19);
- vi) formal motions (see above)

*Objections* – may occur in response to a motion to suspend the Standing Orders or to oppose the granting of leave for a particular purpose. (SO 13)

*Observers* – people who are not members of Synod who may attend the meeting but may not vote. They must sit in a designated area or will have view only access.

*Order of the day* – an item of business (motion or legislation) given a particular time slot during the meeting. (SO 11)

*Petitions* – may be presented at the start of each day of business. Certain requirements apply. (SO 5)

*President* – the Archbishop as the Chair of the Synod.

*Questions* – may be asked of the Archbishop (President) or of any member of Synod. (SO 4)

*Quorum* – one third of the total members. (SO 7)

*Session* – name given to each meeting of the Synod. The session may be Ordinary or Special.

*Sessional Orders* – rules which may be made to govern a session of Synod. They are to be read with the Standing Orders.

*Standing Orders* – the permanent rules which govern the conduct of the meeting. These may be found on the Diocesan website.

*Synod* – the ‘parliament’ of the church; its lay members are normally elected every three years.

*Term* – the duration of a membership of Synod, usually three years.



**ANGLICAN  
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