

# DIOCESE OF GIPPSLAND

## SYNOD 2025

(16-18 May)

# RESOLUTIONS, ACTS, ELECTION RESULTS AND QUESTIONS

SALE, VIC

### 271/25 **Bishop-in-Council Report**

Resolved that this Synod receives the report of the Bishop-in-Council covering the work of the Council since the last session of Synod.

**Proposed Action:** No action required

### 272/25 **2023/24 Annual Accounts of the Diocese**

Resolved that this Synod adopts the audited Diocesan accounts for the year 2023/24.

**Proposed Action:** No action required

### 273/25 **HOPE 25**

Resolved that this Synod commit to maintaining the focus on outreach generated by the Hope25 project as a Diocesan priority and asks the Bishop and Diocesan Staff to identify opportunities each year for parishes and ministry centres to share what they have been doing with regard to outreach and how that has impacted the life of their communities.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

### 274/25 **Anglican Board of Mission (ABM)**

Resolved that this synod:

1. Rejoices with the Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) as it celebrates its 175th Anniversary of serving God's mission, on the 29th October 2025.
2. Acknowledges with gratitude the involvement of this diocese in this service, remembering those who have worked for God's love, hope and justice as staff, and volunteers, in Australia and abroad. We particularly honour the deep commitment of the ABM Auxiliary and ABM Diocesan Representatives over many years.
3. Encourages participation in the 175th Anniversary events organised by ABM and the diocese, including the service in the Cathedral on Sunday 26 October at 5pm and the 175th Anniversary service and dinner in Sydney on 29 October.

4. Gives thanks for the gifts and prayers offered by this diocese over many years.
5. Encourages the Diocese and its member faith communities to financially and prayerfully support:
  - a. ABM's Reconciliation work being done by First Nations peoples throughout Australia
  - b. ABM's Church to Church work being done by partner churches across the Anglican Communion as they work for love, hope and justice in their own contexts
  - c. Mission education, through the use of ABM Educational and Lenten/Season of Creation/Advent resources.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**275/25 Clergy Retirement Age**

Resolved that this synod values the ministry of all the ordained and, in light of the General Synod requirements for clergy reviews, professional development and professional supervision, resolves that all references to retirement age for priests and deacons in diocesan legislation be removed.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**276/25 Communications Strategy**

Resolved that this Synod requests Bishop-in-Council to form a working group to further develop a comprehensive communications strategy for the Diocese to be presented to the Council by September 1, 2025.

This strategy should include:

- a) Defining our communication goals
- b) Identifying target audiences – that is our internal and external stakeholders
- c) Choosing appropriate and effective communication channels
- d) Outlining the strengths and weaknesses of each channel
- e) Including a detailed plan of execution – timelines, responsibilities, resources and finances
- f) Defining key performance indicators to track progress

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**277/25 Diocesan Voluntary Workers' Insurance Policy**

Resolved that in relation to the Diocesan voluntary workers' insurance policy, Synod confirms the principle of equal status of volunteers regardless of individual age and requests diocesan officers to negotiate a policy which best reflects this position.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**278/25 2025/26 Diocesan Budget**

Resolved that this Synod accepts the budget for October 2025 – September 2026 as presented, but in view of its deep concern over losses – incurred and projected – requests Bishop-in-Council, through its Budget Review Committee, to urgently develop financial strategies to achieve a break-even Diocesan Budget and to report on the progressive implementation of that (those) strategy(ies) as reflected in the budgets of 2026/27 and 2027/28.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**279/25 Order of St Luke**

Resolved that this Synod affirms the healing ministry of Christ within the church, particularly recognised through the Order of St Luke, and requests the Bishop and Bishop-in-Council to search for ways to develop this ministry in the future.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

**280/25 Climate Change**

Resolved that this Synod:

- a) acknowledges the significant and sometimes disastrous impacts of climate change that are already happening and are predicted to increase in frequency and severity, and encourages Gippsland Anglicans in their various contexts to deepen engagement with the theology of creation and Christian responses to climate change, and further reduce greenhouse gas emissions from church properties and activities: and
- b) asks ACTinG to advise Bishop-in-Council on how to develop greater resilience to future impacts of climate change in our parishes and other ministry settings in a way that honours God and cares for people and place.

**Proposed Action:** ACTinG to provide advice to Bishop-in-Council.

**281/25 Ministry of Women in the Diocese**

Resolved that this Synod:

Noting that in December 2026 we will be celebrating 30 years since the first ordination of a woman as a priest in this Diocese:

- a) gives thanks for the long and faithful ministry of women in this Diocese, from the pioneering ministry of Deaconesses in the early 1900s through to the present day;
- b) gives thanks for the leadership of our bishops past and present, and other senior leaders, who have striven to actively encourage the appointment of women and the fostering of women's vocations to ordained ministry;
- c) notes the Report Regarding Gender Equity on Diocesan Bodies as of 1 April 2025 in the current BIC report and gives thanks for the figures that show that both licensed clergy and the majority of diocesan bodies have 50% or greater representation by women, while acknowledging that there is still work to be done in the areas of Finance and Trusts;

- d) notes the findings of the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn's *Addressing Disparity Report* ( <https://anotherplacetoparty.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Addressing-Disparity-Report.pdf> ) particularly noting the challenges that younger women face in discerning and exercising vocation to ordained ministry;
- e) requests BIC to create a working group to trace recent trends in women's ministry, including collecting the stories of ordained women in the diocese in preparation for our thirty-year celebration at the Cathedral in December 2026; and,
- f) encourages the Governance Review Group of BIC to consider the findings of the Canberra and Goulburn report, including legislative measures such as paid parental leave that would enable better working outcomes for women in ministry.

**Proposed Action:** Bishop-in-Council to take the matter forward.

## 282/25 Motion of Appreciation

Resolved that this Synod expresses its appreciation as follows:

Preamble: Synod 2025 – the Year of Hope – will be remembered as a happy and gracious gathering. While it was not heavy on legislation or crammed full of necessary business, these past two days have been a demonstration of what it means to be the Anglican Church: unity within our diversity with every voice being equally respected and valued. Gippsland Diocese can be a model to many others in the gracious and loving spirit in which we conduct our Synods. Gippsland Synods are approached with a sense of joy and anticipation rather than foreboding and party spirit. We demonstrate in many ways what it means to be one in Christ, celebrating our commonalities, our divergences, our eccentricities and our life in good heart. Thank you to each and every member of Synod for this strong witness of what it means to be connected in service. Synod expresses particular appreciation to all those who have worked hard to provide the space for us to be Gippsland Anglicans:

- a) Bishop Richard for being here and for being him. Being here because we have no ABC — Archbishop of Canterbury; we have no ABM — Archbishop of Melbourne but we do have a BG — Bishop of Gippsland. And having a BG is rich with memories and music for some of us. During recent weeks our BG has focused on 'Staying Alive, Staying Alive.' Bishop we are glad to have you with us looking so much better than a couple of weeks ago. We pray that you will continue to be nourished with health and strength. Thank you for your presidential address and for many ways in which you ask us 'How deep is your love?', and in recent days for watching over the days of 'jive talking' here in Synod. Bishop Richard during these days when the tyranny of distance has spoken in very real ways for you and your family, we can only assure you, Leanne, Rachel and Nicholas and the extended family of our continuing prayers.
- b) Rae Riley, our Registrar, for climbing Everest and still being able to breathe during this her first year as Secretary of our Synod. Rae, we are amazed at how much you have achieved during these first few months in office. We hope that you will increasingly find space to draw breath among the myriads of issues before you.

Our particular thanks are also with Brian Norris, our much-loved one-time Registrar, for returning to us and guiding us all through a time of transition with wisdom, unflappability, and the capacity of never looking more than a duck swimming serenely across the waters regardless of what is going on underneath. Thank you for being you, and being such a loyal servant of this Diocese and the God you serve.

- c) The many other people who enable Synod to function effectively:
- The Chancellor, Mr Roger Blythman for his advice to The President and Synod and for demonstrating that he is possibly one of the few who has read all the Acts, and possibly the only one who understands them.
  - The Synod Arrangements Committee — those shadowy figures who I'm sure would have a role in 'Yes Minister' as they shape our agenda.
  - The Acting Chair of Committees, the Rev'd Brian Norris, for guiding us swiftly through what is required;
  - The Diocesan Solicitor, Mr James Sullivan, for providing us with comfort, attentiveness, and willing support;
  - The Assistant Secretaries — The Revd Kate Campbell and Mrs Marion Dewar; for their quiet and efficient service, and for reminding us of schooldays as they called the roll;
  - The timekeeper — The Revd Daniel Gebert — for not getting too preoccupied with games on his phone and missing the moment.
  - Those who will certify the minutes – The Revd Lyndon Phillips and Mr Tim Gibson for this unseen service;
  - The scrutineers — Colin Oakley, Wendy Shiels, Rebecca Hayman, David Miller — who enabled elections to be declared more swiftly than has been going on in some electorates recently;
  - The Synod Chaplain, The Revd David Perryman, for his good humour and capacity to take everything in his stride, and for leading us through moments of quiet reflection and prayer, and for understanding the noise making equipment and making it work so that we hear each other; and,
  - The Registry Staff for their careful planning and increasing happiness as is evident as they have prepared for Synod.

d) The Dean and others involved in The Synod Eucharist at the Cathedral and those who provided the quietness of Evening Prayer last night following a busy day.

e) The team who provided our Sunday morning Eucharist and for The Venerable Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey for his address then and for his valuable insights and conversation this morning.

f) The team from the Cathedral for cheerfully providing refreshments during our breaks and for lunch yesterday; and to all those who catered for our Synod dinner last night.

g) The team from Gippsland Grammar for providing the venue for Synod such that we can focus on what lies before us and particularly Mr Tim Morrison, the school chaplain.

**Proposed Action:** Appropriate letters to be written.

**Attachment A****Elections Results - Synod 2025***NB. Bishop-in-Council to ensure all vacancies are filled*

<b>Body</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Lay</b>
<b>Board of Electors (Bishop)</b>	Kate Campbell	Marion Dewar
	Gradwell Fredericks	Robert Fordham
	Graham Knott	Tim Gibson
	David Perryman	Ian Maxfield
	Dean Spalding	Kerrie Schmidt
	John Webster	<i>One vacancy</i>
	<i>Alternates (in order of election):</i>	<i>Alternates:</i>
	Keren Terpstra	<i>Three vacancies</i>
	Sue Jacka	
	Belinda Seabrook	
<b>Board of Reference</b>	Graham Knott	Marion Dewar
	Belinda Seabrook	<i>Two vacancies</i>
	Keren Terpstra	
	John Webster	
<b>Clergy Appointments Board</b>	Kate Campbell	Marion Dewar
	David Perryman	Sarah Gover
	Gradwell Fredericks	<i>One vacancy</i>
<b>Cathedral Chapter – Clerical Canon</b>	No Vacancy	
<b>Cathedral Chapter – Lay Canon</b>		Marion Dewar
<b>Provincial Council</b>	Graham Knott	Marion Dewar
	Keren Terpstra	Rae Riley
<b>General Synod</b>	Graham Knott	Marion Dewar
	Keren Terpstra	Rae Riley
<b>Diocesan Tribunal</b>	Graham Knott	Marion Dewar
	Belinda Seabrook	<i>One vacancy</i>
	Keren Terpstra	
	John Webster	
	<i>Alternates:</i>	<i>Alternates:</i>
	<i>Four vacancies</i>	<i>Two vacancies</i>
<b>Stipends Commission</b>	Graham Knott	<i>Three vacancies</i>

<b>Bishop in Council</b>	Belinda Seabrook	Marion Dewar **
		Ian Maxfield
		Kerrie Schmidt
		Malcolm Reed *
<b>Trusts Corporation</b>	No vacancy	
** Existing ex officio member; elected position reverts to next elected candidate * (Malcolm Reed)		

## Attachment B

### Bishops' Appointments

<b>Body</b>	<b>Clergy</b>	<b>Lay</b>
<b>Cathedral Chapter – Lay Canon</b>		Ian Maxfield
<b>Bishop in Council</b>		Jaan Enden
		Alice Weatherall
<b>Trusts Corporation</b>	John Webster	Kerrie Schmidt
<b>Stipends Commission</b>	Kate Capmbell	Rae Riley

## Attachment C

### Answers to Questions

#### Notice of Questions:

1. David Chambers, Parish of Heyfield.

My questions are in relation to the safe ministry checking process:

- a. What extra value does Kooyoora add to the process over and above the police check and the Working with Children Check?

Kooyoora offers a fully independent Professional Standards and Safe Ministry Clearance service at 'arm's length' from the Diocese.

Clearances are processed using a secure platform to manage, audit, and report on this compliance area.

In addition to the checks referred to above, a Kooyoora clearance includes:

- International police checks when required
- Safe ministry form review
- National Register check
- Professional Standards check
- Director of Professional Standards check (Clearance for Ministry only)
- Review of two referees

Kooyoora reviews completed application for any anomalies. Kooyoora is able to assess any negative notices or concerns raised in the clearance application with the Director of Professional Standards. This assessment looks at the information received, the role the person is wishing to undertake and then assesses risks.

The new OSCA system allows Kooyoora to transfer a clearance within and across dioceses. This saves time, cost, and administrative burdens for people completing clearances.

- b. What guarantees do we have that the personal information supplied by applicants is kept in a safe manner?

The OSCA system was designed by Kooyoora with the assistance of five IT companies:

- *IT for Business* (provides general IT support and advice);
- *Forensic IT* (provides IT security consultancy, audits the work of *IT for Business* for Kooyoora, and developed and tested the Kooyoora Cyber Security plan);
- *Intranet Solutions* (IT development service provider);
- *Volkis* ('ethical hackers'; planned hacking of the system to test its strength and identify any weaknesses; auditing and testing of *Intranet Solutions'* work);
- *Vertex* (monthly training for the Kooyoora team, and overall review and testing of the Kooyoora cyber system and security plan).

The OSCA system was designed to be a system that retains very little high risk to personal information. High risk information like ID documents is retained in the Crimcheck environment. Critical information held in OSCA (e.g. in answer to questions such as whether an applicant has ever committed a criminal offence) is 'sanitised' weekly, meaning this information is removed from OSCA.

- c. What arrangements are in place for those people who, for whatever reason, are unable to complete the application process on-line?

A help desk is provided by the diocesan Clearance Officer and members of the Safe Ministry Authority (SMA), over the phone, in person, or by email. The Clearance Officer is available to type up a safe ministry check form with the applicant on the phone.

2. David Miller, Parish of Yarram.

- a. I note the answer to synod motions 264/24 in the papers. I also notice that the major part of the motion has not been addressed. When will Bishop in Council be reviewing the Safe Ministry Check questionnaire, and when can Synod expect the feedback? Further to this question, when do you expect that proposed amendments be forwarded to the Safe Ministry Commission of General Synod for their consideration?

As per the advice on progress against synod motions in your papers, Bishop-in-Council has delegated review of the Safe Ministry Check screening questionnaire to the Safe Ministry Authority (SMA), which has had this matter on its agenda throughout that period.

Legal advice sought with respect to the questions asked in the questionnaire (one of the two aspects of motion 264/24) clarifies that Commonwealth and State privacy legislation regulating the collection, use, disclosure, and management of personal information by organisations does not regulate the information (or extent of information) that an organisation can request from an individual with that individual's consent. Once information is provided by a consenting person to a relevant organisation, the handling of that information is regulated by the privacy legislation. An individual is free to decide not to provide the requested information.

The relevance of the information sought is determined in part by the Safe Ministry Commission of General Synod and in part by Kooyoora as our independent Professional Standards and Clearances office. The SMA has been negotiating with Kooyoora with respect to how renewals of existing clearances will be treated in the transfer to the OSCA platform.

Any recommendations to the GS SMC will be made by BiC upon advice from our Clearances Officer and SMA once migration to this platform has been successfully completed, which remains a priority ahead of a mooted GS audit of our compliance as a Diocese.

With regard to the other substantive aspect of the motion, recent correspondence from the Clearance Officer to Lay Readers and clergy with PTOs (Permission to Officiate) regarding the renewal process outlined the support – including pastoral support – available to assist applicants through the process. Diocesan Clearances Officer, Jules Lanham, currently devotes much of her 2.5 days each week to working with individual applicants at this level.

- b. What written proof has Kooyoora provide to the Diocese that their systems are encrypted and hardened against hackers? What has the diocese done to ensure that its system are secure and that all data held in the cloud is appropriately encrypted and salted? What measures has the diocese taken to ensure cyber safety, security and encryption of all data held by SMO's in parishes? How has the diocese monitored the destruction of all paper records and electronic wiping of hard drivers used for the work when a SMO ceases in a parish or the computers used for such work are retired?

In relation to the first part of question 2.b, see the response to question 1.b, above.

With respect to diocesan records, electronic data, including on the cloud, is encrypted and password protected, and paper records are kept securely under lock and key in the Registry Office. [*See further technical advice provided below by our internet service provider 'Jacobus' subsequent to this Session of Synod \*\*]*

Migration from the SMO system to OSCA is a work in progress, and we look forward to all safe ministry data being housed in that secure environment as outlined in response to the previous question (1.b).

The SMA and the Diocesan Clearances Officer are working tirelessly not only to address the issues raised in motion 264/24 under BiC's delegation, but to ensure that the safe ministry clearance process is as robust as it needs to be, and user-friendly as it can be, in keeping with the requirements of General Synod legislation as adopted by this Synod, and in line with community expectations with respect to professional standards.

We look forward to a presentation on these and related matters at the Second Session of the 41<sup>st</sup> Synod.

**\*\* Further information on data security provided by 'Jacobus'**

Here is a summary of how your cloud data, emails, and systems are protected, using the **Essential Eight** cybersecurity strategies recommended by the Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) as a framework.

### **How Your Data Is Secured**

Your organisation uses Microsoft 365 Business Premium, which includes a comprehensive suite of security features. All data in Microsoft 365 (emails, SharePoint files, Teams messages) is encrypted both in transit and at rest.

Here's how your setup aligns with the Essential Eight:

#### **1. Application Control**

While specific application control (whitelisting or blocking unapproved software) is not currently in place, your systems benefit from a degree of protection through our existing device management practices.

#### **2. Patch Applications**

Devices are configured to receive regular updates for both applications and Windows OS, ensuring known vulnerabilities are patched promptly. We monitor and manage this through our RMM software that is installed on all the devices covered by your support contract.

#### **3. Patch Operating Systems**

Microsoft 365 and your cloud services (including SharePoint and Teams) are automatically updated by Microsoft to ensure the latest security patches are applied.

#### **4. Configure Microsoft Office Macro Settings**

Macros are restricted by default to prevent malware embedded in Office documents from executing.

#### **5. User Application Hardening**

Features like Flash and legacy scripting are disabled, and DNS filtering is in place to block access to malicious websites. Microsoft Edge and Office apps are configured with features such as SmartScreen and Protected View to reduce exposure to potentially malicious content.

#### **6. Restrict Administrative Privileges**

Admin access to systems is limited to essential personnel only, reducing the risk of privilege misuse or escalation.

**7. Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)**

MFA is enabled for all Microsoft 365 accounts. MFA adds a strong second layer of protection beyond passwords. This is especially effective against phishing and credential theft.

**8. Regular Backups**

Your cloud-based files (Teams, SharePoint, and Exchange) are stored within Microsoft's geo-redundant infrastructure. The data is also backed up daily using Cove Data Protection, which we manage and monitor, ensuring recoverability in the event of accidental deletion or cyber incidents.

**In Summary**

Your Diocesan records stored in Microsoft 365, including cloud data and emails, are encrypted, password-protected, and further secured through MFA and device-level controls. These measures align with the ACSC's Essential Eight framework, which is considered best practice for Australian organisations.

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**Please give us your feedback on Synod via the QR code below – thank you!**

