



The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

Gippsland Anglicans are *Committed in Christ – Connecting in Service – Creative in Spirit*

October 2024

INTRODUCTION – Lay Member of Synod

This introduction is intended to help parishioners understand the roles and responsibilities of being elected as a member of Synod for their Parish. It is best to read this in conjunction with the more detailed *A Guide to Synod 2022*. **DISCLAIMER: This is an introduction only and is subject to change. Please refer to the Gippsland Anglicans website for the most recent versions of any/all documents.**

Role: Lay member of Synod (or supplementary lay member of Synod)

'Synod' is an assembly of the clergy and sometimes also the laity in a diocese or other division of a particular Church.

Essential links

- *Parish Administration Act 1994 (including amendments to 2023)*.
[https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Parish Administration Act 1994 including amendments to 2023.pdf](https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Parish%20Administration%20Act%201994%20including%20amendments%20to%202023.pdf)
- *Synod Act 1997* <https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/SYNACT97.pdf>
- *A Guide to Synod 2022*
[https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Synod/220527 Gippsland Synod Guide 2022.pdf](https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Synod/220527%20Gippsland%20Synod%20Guide%202022.pdf)

Overview and justification

Synod is a set of annual meetings for the Gippsland Diocese held from a Friday evening to Sunday afternoon usually in either Sale, Traralgon, Warragul or Drouin. It is typically scheduled in mid-May.

Broadly speaking, Synod is something like an annual general meeting. It is the forum where reports are presented, and motions debated and voted on relating to Diocesan matters.

People who attend Synod sessions are the Bishop, the Registrar, Clergy from all thirty Parishes in Gippsland, Synod Representatives from all Parishes, representatives from various ministries and others.

One Synod runs over three years. 2025 will host the first session of the 41st Gippsland Synod and the third session will happen in 2027.

Post PO Box 928, Sale VIC 3850 **Telephone** (03) 5144 2044

Email registryoffice@gippsanglican.org.au **Website** www.gippslandanglicans.org.au

Parish members of Synod are elected at their Parish's annual general meeting every third year in alignment with the 3-year Synod cycle. They will be either lay members, or supplementary lay members who step up if lay members are not available. A Synod appointment is a three-year commitment. The next period is 2025-2027.

The position of 'member of Synod' is named in the [Parish Administration Act 1994 \(amended 2023\)](#), section 42(i):

Business at annual general meeting of parish

42. At the annual general meeting of parishioners, after prayers and the signing of an attendance register by the electors present, the order of business shall be as follows:

(i) election of lay members and supplementary lay members of Synod in accordance with the Synod Act 1970, if the mandate of the Bishop has been issued for that election;*

Diocese of Gippsland. (2023). *Parish Administration Act 1994 (including amendments to 2023)*. https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Parish_Administration_Act_1994_including_amendments_to_2023.pdf

The [Synod Act 1997](#) provides procedures and rules about who can be a member of Synod, how they are elected, and how Synod operates.

Limits on appointments

- **Eligibility:** The Synod Act 1997 says: *A lay person who (a) has attained the age of 18 years; and (b) is a communicant member of the Anglican Church of Australia— is eligible to be appointed or elected as a lay member of Synod or to hold office ex officio as a lay member of Synod.* (Section 5(1)).
- **Election:** The Synod Act 1997 says: *The electors of a parish may elect— (a) 3 eligible lay persons resident in the Diocese to be **lay members of Synod**; and (b) 3 eligible lay persons resident in the Diocese to be **supplementary lay members of Synod**.* (Section 6).

Role description

Term: Three years following election at the Parish annual general meeting aligning with the Synod cycle. Next cycle is 2025-2027.

Responsibilities:

- Complete a declaration after election to lay member of Synod (or supplementary). Refer to template in *Synod Act 1997*.
- Adequately prepare to participate in Synod meetings. This could include developing and presenting a motion(s).

* The current Synod Act is 1997. This reference to 1970 is thought to be an administrative oversight when amending the Parish Administration Act.

- Attend Synod meetings over a weekend each year that may be far from home. Accommodation may be required.
- Possibly report back to your Parish Council.

Helpful skills to succeed as a lay member of Synod

- **Connection with Parish life:** Understanding of Parish life and Parish matters.
- **Interpersonal:** Ability to listen to the ideas and opinions of others, both in the Parish and from other Parishes, and understand the essence of their point.
- **Desire to encourage Diocesan life:** Understand that the Parish contributes to the Diocese in many and diverse ways.
- **Commitment:** to attend Synod meetings over a weekend each year that may be far from home, and to adequately prepare to participate in Synod meetings.
- **Administrative:** Able to use or get support with using email.

Diocesan or Parish support in the role

- Information about Synod is maintained on the Gippsland Anglicans website, including *A Guide To Synod 2022* handbook. [Synod | Gippsland Anglicans](#)
- The *Parish Administration Act 1994 (amended 2023)* Section 54(d) outlines a process for payment of reasonable expenses incurred by lay representatives in Synod. Note that this is a decision of Parish Council and is subject to available funds for its obligations and priorities. It is not a 'given'. Extract:

Administration of Funds

54. The parish council shall administer its general funds subject to the following obligations and order of priority:

(d) payment of reasonable expenses incurred by the clergy and lay representatives in Synod or conferences approved by the parish council;

Diocese of Gippsland. (2023). *Parish Administration Act 1994 (including amendments to 2023)*. https://www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/assets/Parish_Administration_Act_1994_including_amendments_to_2023.pdf

More information

Registry Office

Website link: [Synod | Gippsland Anglicans](#)

Phone: (03) 5144 2044

Email: registryoffice@gippsanglican.org.au