

APPENDIX B

SYNOD PROCEDURES

A diocesan synod is an assembly of selected priests and other Christian faithful of a particular Church which offers assistance to the diocesan Bishop for the good of the entire diocesan community (Canon 460).

On Saturday 22 May 2021 and Saturday 20 November 2021, the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle will be holding the second and third session of the Diocesan Synod Assembly. The Synod Members¹, although from various parishes and communities throughout the Diocese, gather as members of the Church of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle working for the good of the entire diocesan community.

During the process leading to the second and third session of the Synod Assembly, open and free discussion has taken place within the diocesan community on the papers for discussion. Most Synod Members have been part of that process and will be meeting to discern what action should be taken concerning the proposals contained in the papers.

The following procedures have been drawn up in an effort to facilitate this discernment and ensure that all Members have equal opportunity to participate in it. These procedures are based on those used by the 1992/93 Diocesan Synod in the Diocese of Maitland.

PRESIDENCY:

1. The Bishop presides over the Synod Meeting. He may delegate the Vicar General to fulfil this office at individual Sessions of the Synod Meeting.
2. The Bishop, in accordance with Canon 466, is the sole legislator in the Diocesan Synod: he alone can give the Synod's decisions the force of the local law. Therefore, its decisions are presented to him for approval and he alone signs the synodal declarations and decrees which can be published only through his authority.

CHAIRING THE SESSIONS:

3. The Chair has responsibility for order in the Synod Hall, directing who may speak, supervising the voting procedure, concluding the discussion etc. It is the Chair's responsibility to keep the proceedings moving.
4. The Chair will call the Meeting to order for Prayers according to the Timetable and will indicate the breaks and the time for resuming after them.
5. There may be more than one Chairperson who will decide amongst themselves who will Chair the particular sessions of the Synod. The other two will remain at the Main Table in an advisor capacity to the one chairing the session.
6. The same Chairperson would not normally chair consecutive Sessions.

¹ **Synod Members** refer to those **Delegates** who have been chosen to represent the various aspects of diocesan life.

SPEAKING IN THE HALL

7. Only Synod Members may join in the discussion during the Sessions unless the Bishop directs otherwise. Members will stand at the rostrum to speak for or against a proposal (See § 15). During clarification periods, members may speak from their position in the hall (See § 12b).
8. The Chair will indicate who will speak. Time will be limited to allow as many speakers as possible. The Chair will give first preference to those members who have not yet spoken during the assembly and second preference to those who have not yet spoken during the current session.
9. Members will be expected to keep to the point, to develop the subject further without going over old ground and to be brief.

PRESENTATION OF PROPOSAL:

10. All Proposals to be put to the Synod Meeting are contained in the papers which all members will have studied in the weeks prior to the Synod Meeting.
11. The Paper will be presented to the Synod Meeting by a Panel of either the Diocesan Synod Working Party or the relevant Focus Group.
12. The following procedure will then take place:
 - a. The leader of the Panel will give a brief explanation of the development of the relevant paper. (Time to be allocated).
 - b. The Panel will suggest to the Chair that the Paper be divided into sections and be dealt with accordingly. For each section there will be a clarification period when Members may ask the Panel, through the Chair, questions about that section. Speakers should identify themselves and their parish, agency, or organisation. The Chair will ensure that Members keep to one question of clarification at a time, and that they not comment on the proposals. (Time to be allocated).
 - c. Proposals will then be put to the Synod Meeting one by one for discussion and debate.

DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSALS:

13. The role of the Synod Members is not to discuss the teachings of the Church, or the rationale of the work of the Teams but rather:
 - a. the merits of the proposal/recommendations
 - b. what is the pastoral importance of the Proposal or
 - c. whether it should be accepted for implementation or go to another body for future study and development.
14. Synod members will bear in mind that the Synod Papers have resulted from a lengthy consultation process and the Synod Working Party's attempts to be faithful to the voices of those who have been involved with that process.
15. Prior to the assembly Members who intend to speak for or against a proposal are asked to give notice of this on the form provided. Prior to the discussion of a particular proposal, others may give notice of intention to speak on that proposal in that session, but they will be called only if time permits.
16. Speakers when called by the Chairperson will identify themselves and their parish, agency or organisation and indicate whether they wish to speak for or against the proposal.

17. Each speaker is allowed a maximum of 3 minutes or more or less at the discretion of the Chair. A warning bell will sound at two minutes and another will indicate when a speaker's time has expired.
18. Any suggested amendments to the proposals will be considered during the discussion process. Notice of Motion of Amendment should be given where possible in writing on forms provided. Amendments moved from the floor should also be in writing so the secretariat can rapidly make copies available to all Synod members.
19. Any Member who introduces matters for decision-making not contained in the papers under discussion will be ruled out of order.
20. Synod Members will decide whether the Proposal will be recommended for:
 - a) adoption (green card)
 - b) rejection (red card) or
 - c) referral for further development (orange card)
21. The Chair will seek the mind of the Synod Members on each proposal by a show of coloured cards.
22. In the event of a significant dissenting vote, a numerical count will be taken and if necessary, allowance will be made for a further period of prayerful reflection, dialogue and discernment before a decision is taken.
23. A Theological and Canonical Consultancy Panel will be on hand to answer immediate theological or canonical questions should they arise. As advisors to the Synod they are unable to participate in the voting process.

ADMINISTRATION

24. The Synod Moderator shall be responsible for all aspects of the running of the Synod: Secretariat, Liturgy, Hospitality and Security.
25. All involved with the Synod Meeting will be registered as being Synod Members, Administration, Wardens, Secretariat, Liturgy, Hospitality, etc. and will carry a colour coded badge at all times for identification.

ADMISSION TO THE SYNOD HALL

26. Synod Members will have free access to the Synod Hall, but others have access only in accordance with their approved function, for example Couriers, Recorders, Secretaries, Reporters.
27. Both Synod Members and Support staff have a special place of trust in the Synod Hall and they are expected to honour that trust.
28. In the Synod Hall there will be two Couriers, one of whom will sit at the Manager's table to keep contact between the Synod Hall and other Synod Offices.
29. Under the Synod Manager a group of Wardens will be responsible for supervising entry to the Synod Hall and environs. All are asked to cooperate with their requests.

SECRETARIAT

30. In the Secretariat there will be two Recorders for each session, who shall record in writing a summary of the sessions. A recording will ensure a word for word record of each Session as a back up to the other Recorders.

31. At the end of the Session the Recorders will draft the Minutes. They will submit the drafts to the Chairperson of the relevant Session before having them printed and copied. Copies will be made available immediately to the Bishop, the Recorders, the Chairpersons, and the Diocesan Synod Working Party.
32. Copies of the Minutes will be distributed to the Synod Members as soon as possible.

LITURGY

33. The Synod Liturgy Group will be responsible for all the liturgical functions during the Synod Meeting. Members are asked to co-operate with them when asked to read and otherwise participate in the prayer life of the Synod Meeting.

HOSPITALITY

34. A Hospitality Group is responsible for accommodation, all Synod meals, transport arrangements where necessary and first aid. Morning and afternoon tea and lunch will be available for all Members and Support Staff.

CONCLUSION

35. Our Synod Meeting is not just a business meeting, but an experience of our Diocesan Church gathered to be of assistance to our Pastor. We have come from different directions, different backgrounds, with different hopes and aspirations, but we are united by the prayer of our brothers and sisters of our diocese who are not there. Their prayer is that the Holy Spirit will be with us so that we will make God's thoughts our own and God's desires for our Diocesan Church a reality.