

The nine Bills to come before Synod provide for the adoption by the Diocese of Grafton of certain Canons or church laws passed by the General Synod of the Church of England in Australia. We adopt these Canons by passing an Ordinance through Synod with the Canon appended in a Schedule. We cannot alter the Canons in any way; we can only adopt or reject them.

The first five Canons were all passed by General Synod in 1962. It was thought that they became effective immediately under the appropriate provisions of the Constitution of the Church of England in Australia. However, doubts have been raised on the grounds that they affect the good order and government, etc., of individual dioceses. If this is so, then such a Canon must be adopted by Ordinance of the Synod of each diocese. The legal experts feel it is safer to adopt them, even though it may be unnecessary.

1. Special Tribunal and Board of Assessors. These bodies are concerned with the trial of bishops for breaches of faith ritual ceremonial discipline or other specified offences.
2. Canon to Specify Offences. Certain ecclesiastical offences for which clergy and bishops may be tried are mentioned in the Constitution (see list in previous paragraph. Other offences, mainly to do with the character, or lack of it, of clergy and bishops, have been specified by General Synod.
3. Appointment of Board of Assessors Canon. The Appellate Tribunal is the highest court concerned with the trial of clergy and bishops. The Tribunal may need advice on matters of doctrine ritual etc., and the Board of Assessors is appointed to provide this advice.
4. Matters Incidental to the Exercise of Jurisdiction Canon. This simply provides certain rules of procedure for the Special and Appellate Tribunals.
5. Appointment of Members of Appellate Tribunal Canon. The Constitution gives General Synod the responsibility of deciding how the Appellate Tribunal is to be elected. This Canon provided for the appointment of the first Appellate Tribunal and the election of subsequent Tribunals.

The next four Canons were passed by General Synod last year and as they all affect affairs within a diocese, the Synod of the diocese must adopt them before they become effective.

6. Form of Declaration Canon. Clergy have to make certain oaths and declarations before being admitted to office. This Canon prescribes the declaration concerning forms of worship. It is, in fact, an old form of declaration.
7. Lay Assistants at Holy Communion Canon. This allows the bishop of a diocese to authorise lay persons to assist in the ministrations and distribution of the Bread and Wine at Holy Communion, and to make appropriate regulations. Synod may also make rules.
8. Admission to Holy Communion Canon. The Prayer Book can be interpreted to mean that only confirmed Anglicans can be permitted to receive Holy Communion in Anglican Churches. This Canon makes it possible for Christians of other denominations to receive Holy Communion in suitable circumstances.
9. Long Service Leave Canon. General Synod passed a Canon in 1966 providing for Long Service Leave for clergymen, and that Canon was adopted by the Synod of the Diocese of Grafton.

This Canon extends Long Service Leave to Deaconesses, liberalises slightly the definition of 'qualifying service', and makes provision for the payment of money upon the death or resignation of clergy before they had taken all long service leave accruing to them.

Remember, we cannot alter the Canons. If we disagree violently with them, we can only ask Synod to vote against adopting any particular Canon. Debate must be on matters of principle, not detail.