

Thursday, 30 October 2025

Registry Update: Moving Forward in Mission and Ministry!

We're delighted to share this update on the Diocese's mission, ministry, and governance following the Bishop-in-Council (BiC) meeting held on Thursday, 2 October 2025. The energy and collaboration witnessed continue to propel us toward our vision of *Transforming lives through Jesus Christ*

Registrar's Forward



Leading as a Visible Servant: A Reflection from the Registrar/General Manager 6 months in

The role of Registrar is, for me, a unique Christian vocation. It is a profound blend of the practical and the spiritual. My aim is to be a leader who serves the church not just from an office, but as a visible force of our shared values and mission. Every policy, budget line, and legal document we manage is purposed to help transform lives through Jesus Christ and support the Diocese in its great mission of sharing the Good News and growing our faith communities.

In the Registry office, we constantly navigate between the sacred and the temporal. We are the stewards of the Diocese's practical life: its finances, governance, risk management, legal compliance, and property. This is serious work, demanding a systematic and pragmatic approach to ensure our institution is stable, accountable, and sound. It is a true reflection of our commitment to Accountability and Discernment.

Crucially, this temporal work is *never* an end in itself. Our spreadsheets, policies, and contracts are the infrastructure that supports the spiritual life of our clergy, congregations, schools, and wider community. Our task is to build a robust "trellis"; a reliable framework upon which the vine of faith can flourish and grow. This is our Christlikeness and Distinctiveness in action.

My commitment is to be a visible leader in this Diocese, not for the sake of attention, but as an act of service. This is servant leadership that requires me to be the first to embody our shared Christian values.

By being present and engaged across the Diocese, I can better understand the real-world challenges our clergy and laity face. This helps us ensure the Registry provides the resources and support you need to thrive; a tangible expression of our value of Collaboration. By taking responsibility and fostering transparency, we set a clear operational and moral example, creating a culture where everyone feels empowered to lead and serve. Our administrative work, when rooted in this purpose, becomes a tangible act of faith.

The Registrar's role is crucial in making the Diocese's mission and values tangible. It is about transforming abstract ideals into concrete action.

- If social justice is a core value, it must be reflected in our investment policies, along with our community outreach.
- If we are called to be an inclusive church, our processes and communications must be accessible to all.

This commitment requires Openness to new ideas and a dedication to continually transforming our structures for the better. In this way, the administrative function becomes a powerful engine for our mission, turning faith into action. My hope is that my visible presence and dedicated work will help to model this truth: every task, no matter how small, is a step in our shared journey toward the spiritual kingdom of God on Earth.

Positive Highlights from Bishop-in-Council

A Healthy Ministry: Implementation of the 5-Day Clergy Working Week

The Diocese has taken a significant step forward in promoting clergy well-being and sustainable ministry with the decision to formally implement a five-day working week for our clergy. This important initiative, arising from a Synod motion, moves towards full activation on January 1, 2026. This change underscores our commitment to ensuring our clergy have the necessary time for rest, renewal, and family, allowing them to serve with renewed strength and joy.

We encourage Church Wardens, Incumbents and any other clergy to start discussions within their ministry units, and if any questions or concerns arise, don't hesitate to reach out for clarification or help. The registry will be developing a frequently asked question document to assist in answering questions or concerns. We will also be providing an update to the online parish guide at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/parish-guide/> for reference as well.

It was recently raised with me that, you cannot pour from an empty cup. True Christian service is serving from the overflow, from the abundance of God's grace and the rest The Lord provides. Take the time to be filled by Him, and you will have more than enough to give to the world.

Standing for Justice: Palestinian Solidarity Letter to Government

Following the 38th Synod's resolution (R20/25: Solidarity with Palestinian Dignity), the Diocese demonstrated its commitment to global justice by

sending a formal letter to Senator the Hon. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs. The letter was a positive summary of the Synod's call for action, respectfully urging the Australian Government to:

- **Suspend all economic and military cooperation with the State of Israel** until it complies fully with all relevant United Nations resolutions.
- **Advocate for a just and lasting peace** in the region, grounded in international law, human rights, and the dignity of all peoples.

This action affirms the Diocesan commitment to seeking transformation of unjust structures of society and upholding the dignity and rights of all people. We will continue to pray for peace and monitor any official response from the Government on this critical matter.

Clear Future: Adopted Diocesan Governance Calendar

To ensure clear and accountable governance, BiC has formally adopted the Diocesan Governance Calendar for 2026. This provides certainty for all our corporate bodies and parishes. Key dates to note are:

- **Bishop-in-Council Meeting Dates:**
 - 26 February,
 - 30 April,
 - 6 August,
 - 8 October, and
 - 10 December 2026.
- **39th Synod:** Scheduled for **26–28 June 2026**, at Opal Cove, Coffs Harbour.

GASC Chair

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Stephanie Munday-Lake as the Chair of the Grafton Anglican Schools Commission. This is a moment of great excitement and anticipation for our entire school community. The Chair holds a crucial position, responsible for leading the Commission in its governance, strategic planning, and oversight of the schools under its care. They play a vital role in ensuring the schools maintain their educational standards, financial stability, and Anglican ethos.

The community looks forward to her leadership and the positive direction she will undoubtedly bring to the role.

Diocesan Budget – Parish Budget tips

Developing the 2026 budget for a parish in the Anglican Diocese of Grafton requires a focus on both mission and financial prudence, particularly aligning with Diocesan investment targets.

Here are 5 quick tips for parishes starting their 2026 budget development:

- **Anchor to Mission, Not Just Last Year** - Base your budget on a clear articulation of your parish's mission and ministry priorities for 2026. This ensures expenditure is purposeful. Avoid simply applying an inflationary increase to all line items. Estimate the costs for personnel (stipends, salaries) and ministry programs first, followed by essential maintenance, administrative costs, then consider nice to haves, such capital development costs.
- **Plan for Property Maintenance/Capital Expenditure** - Set aside a specific reserve or fund allocation within the budget for essential future property maintenance or capital works, separate from routine utility and cleaning costs. This forward planning avoids emergency appeals or depleting reserves later. When planning major expenditure or applying for funds from your Trusts, remember that the Diocese has specific policies and approval processes (e.g., the MUP-005 Parish Delegations and CTS-004 Trust Fund Applications) that must be followed.
- **Prudent Investment Income Forecasting** - Align your forecast for income from your parish's Trust Funds with the current market realities and the Trustee's objectives. The Corporate Trustees of the Diocese of Grafton Investment Fund (TFIP) has an overall return objective of CPI + 3% p.a. over a rolling 3-year timeframe (after fees and adjustments). Consult the

Diocese or The Corporate Trustees for the current distribution/interest rate *actually* being paid to parishes, as the market return objective is a long-term goal, not a guaranteed annual payout. Budget conservatively on this income to ensure financial stability.

- **Accurately Budget for Stipends and Parish Share** - Ensure you use the most current figures and anticipated increases for Stipends and related on-costs (like superannuation/pensions) for clergy. Also, confirm the anticipated Parish Pledge with the attached budget.
- **Stress-Test Income Scenarios** - Develop realistic income projections based on current giving trends, perhaps budgeting for a small, conservative increase (or even a flat figure) in envelopes/plate collections. Perform a "stress test" on your budget by calculating how it holds up if collections fall by 5% or 10%. If a exacerbated deficit results, proactively identify corresponding cuts or new fundraising goals now.

Upcoming Events & Opportunities

Lismore Commissioning

We are excited to announce an upcoming **Commissioning Service in the Parish of Lismore**. This is a wonderful opportunity to gather as a Diocesan family to pray for and celebrate a new chapter in ministry leadership in Lismore. Details and dates will be shared by the Bishop's Registry shortly. Please keep the Lismore Parish in your prayers as they prepare to welcome their new minister the Reverend Roxanne Addley.

Governance Conference for Parish Representatives

To support our parishes and uphold strong governance standards, a dedicated Governance Conference is being planned and budgeted for in the new year. This will be an essential training opportunity for **all new Parish Representatives** elected at Parish AGMs in 2026, covering key aspects of Diocesan Ordinances, financial oversight, and compliance. Look out for dates and registration details coming soon; it's a vital way to equip our lay leaders for effective service!

Invitation to Contribute to North Coast Anglican

We invite all members of the Diocesan family, clergy and laity, to contribute their stories, reflections, and news to the North Coast Anglican. This publication is your platform to share how God is moving in your parish and community. Please submit your articles, photos, and ideas to the Editor to help us share the good news across the Diocese!

Yours in Service,



James Gale
Registrar/General Manager
Anglican Diocese of Grafton

