Registry Update – December 2025

Anglican Diocese of Grafton

Registrar's Forward

As we enter this blessed season of Christmas, I encourage everyone to pause and truly enjoy the joy and hope that Christ's birth brings. Celebrate with family, friends, and your parish community. However, let us not become complacent. This time of year often sees an increase in incidents due to lapses in attention and safety. Please remain vigilant in your ministry and operations, our shared mission continues even during festivities.

May this season remind us of God's abundant grace and the light we are called to share. Take time for worship, reflection, and rest.

Also, I'm on a noble quest this Christmas: to discover which parish can deliver the most thunderous, joy-filled rendition of *"Angels We Have Heard on High"*, "*ö Come all Ye Faithful*" or *"Carol of the Bells"* at Midnight Mass. If you can shake the rafters and make the bells jealous, I want to know! And should any noise complaints arise from such glorious praise, please consider them a blessing and kindly direct them to the registry, we'll frame them as trophies of triumph.

Let the heavens and the neighbours hear your Gloria!

Thank you for your dedication throughout 2025. Let's step into 2026 with renewed faithful purpose and mission.

Yours in Service,
James Gale

Registry Holiday Closure

The Bishop's Registry will be closed from Monday 22 December 2025 to Monday 5 January 2026. A soft opening will operate until Monday 19 January 2026, with limited staff and services available. Normal operations resume Tuesday 20 January 2026.

Clergy Stipends from 1 January 2026

We use the Australian Bureau of Statistics' Wage Price Index (WPI) to be the basis on which the clergy stipend is revised each year. As the WPI over the applicable 12 month period, released on the 19 November 2025 was 3.4% the following schedule of clergy stipends will be effective from **1 January 2026**.

Clergy role	Current annual stipend	Current monthly stipend	New annual stipend from 1 January 2026	New monthly stipend from 1 January 2026
Rector[1]	$77,615.30	$6,467.94	$80,254.20	$6,687.85
Priest Associate[2]	$76,849.00	$6,404.08	$79,461.90	$6,612.83
Assistant Priest[3] or Deacon[4]	$73,401.30	$6,116.78	$75,897.20	$6,323.27

(Notes: [1] includes Priests-in-Charge and Locums; [2] typically a senior priest in a challenging role; [3] typically a priest in a curacy or training stage; [4] Stipendiary deacons only)

Clergy Five-Day Working Week – Starts 1 January 2026

The Diocese will implement the five-day working week for clergy from 1 January 2026, promoting well-being and sustainable ministry.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

• What is the standard expectation?
A full-time ministry load is ordinarily undertaken across five working days, 40 hrs(including Sunday where applicable), with an attempt for two consecutive rest days each week. Parish rosters should be planned to support this.

• Are Sundays considered a working day?
Yes, where Sunday worship and pastoral duties are part of the role, Sunday is a working day. Rest days should be scheduled around Sunday commitments.

• How do public holidays interact with rest days?
If a public holiday falls on a working day, normal public holiday entitlements apply under Diocesan policy.

• What about annual, personal (sick) and long service leave?
Leave entitlements remain unchanged and are governed by relevant Diocesan ordinances/policies and legislation. Rest days are separate from annual leave. Long service leave accruals and personal leave arrangements continue as normal.

• **How is emergency pastoral care covered on rest days?**
Clergy will remain reasonably available for true emergency pastoral matters even on rest days. Each Ministry Unit should maintain an on-call roster so urgent care is always covered. When a clergy member is on a rest day, emergencies should be triaged e.g., associate clergy, chaplains, neighboring parish clergy. Wardens should be briefed on the contact protocol. Rest days are vital for spiritual renewal, but ministry is never about turning away from those in genuine need. Parishes are encouraged to network and support one another by sharing clergy availability for emergencies. Wardens should be familiar with this protocol to ensure compassionate, timely care.

• **Can weddings or funerals be scheduled on rest days?**
These should be avoided. If pastoral necessity requires a service on a rest day, appropriate time-in-lieu should be scheduled within the same fortnight and not become a recurring pattern that erodes rest.

• **What boundaries apply to out-of-hours communications?**
Clergy are encouraged to set clear voicemail and email notices indicating rest days and alternative contacts. Non-urgent calls/emails should be attended to on the next working day. Parish offices should help uphold these boundaries.

• **What if I serve across multiple parishes or have specialized duties?**
Supervisors and Parish Councils should agree a schedule that preserves two rest days while honoring local ministry demands. Document arrangements in the Ministry Unit's rosters and share with wardens.

• **How does this apply to curates, SRE/chaplaincy roles and locums?**
All clergy appointments shall adopt the five-day pattern proportionate to load. Curates and chaplains follow the same principle, tailored to their context. Locums should be briefed on the parish's rest days and emergency coverage.

• **Is there a review period?**
Yes, an initial three-month review (January–March 2026) will gather feedback from clergy and wardens. Adjustments and additional guidance will then be issued by the Registry.

• **Where can I find more information?**
Refer to the Parish Guide (online) and forthcoming detailed guidance from the Registry. Queries can be sent to admin@graftondiocese.org.au.

Workflow & Tracking – Use the Right Email

Using the correct mailbox helps us track and resolve matters promptly:

- Payroll: payroll@graftondiocese.org.au
- Insurance: insurance@graftondiocese.org.au
- General enquiries: admin@graftondiocese.org.au

Please include Parish/Ministry Unit name, contact number, and brief context in the subject line. Emailing personal or direct emails to staff may be missed and cannot be tracked appropriately. This also allows us to monitor the volume of work and adjust resourcing appropriately. Please respect staff if they direct your emails or calls to the correct channel.

Highlights from Bishop-in-Council – 4 December 2025

- Work Health & Safety Policy (GEN-013) – revised and approved for implementation across the Diocese.
- Property Ordinances – Lawrence Church Property Ordinance (amendments) and Hat Head Church Property Ordinance passed.
- School CAPEX – Lindisfarne Anglican Grammar School Year 7 Centre & Creative Industries upgrade approved; Emmanuel Anglican College STEM & Digital Technology Centre approved.
- St Thomas' Port Macquarie – Master Plan endorsed in principle.
- Governance – Resolution Register, Risk Register and Synod Resolutions status noted; Governance Conference planned for early 2026 (details to follow).
- Committee membership – Dr Bruce Rixon reappointed to Grafton Anglican Schools Commission (second term from 1 February 2026).

Following the recent Bishop-in-Council highlights, it is important to note the upcoming governance milestones that will shape our Diocese in 2026.

- **Parish Annual General Meetings (AGMs)** will be held throughout February 2026. These meetings are a vital part of parish governance and provide an opportunity to review ministry, elect office bearers, and plan for the year ahead.

  Synod Positions – Call for Nominations
  At Parish Annual General Meetings in 2026, elections will be conducted for Synod representatives and key governance roles. We encourage all parishes to prayerfully consider suitable candidates for these important positions.

  Roles and Responsibilities of Synod Representatives
  Under the Anglican Diocese of Grafton Governance Ordinance, Synod representatives serve as the voice of their parish in the wider governance of the Diocese. Their responsibilities include:
  - Attending all sessions of Synod and actively participating in debate and decision-making.
  - Representing the interests and concerns of their parish while considering the mission and well-being of the whole Diocese.
  - Voting on ordinances, budgets, and policies that shape diocesan life and ministry.
  - Electing members to key bodies, including the Bishop-in-Council (BiC), which provides strategic oversight between Synods.

  Prayerful Discernment
  Please pray for wisdom and guidance as parishes nominate and elect representatives. These individuals will play a significant role in shaping the mission and governance of our Diocese in the coming years.

Election of Bishop-in-Council
The next Bishop-in-Council will be elected at Synod 2026 from among the elected representatives. This is a critical leadership group that supports the Bishop and oversees Diocesan governance between Synod sessions.

For further details on nomination processes and timelines, contact the Registry at admin@graftondiocese.org.au

Seasonal Safety & WHS Reminders

- Electrical safety – Use tested and tagged equipment; avoid overloading power boards; keep cables clear of walkways.
- Decorations – Secure ladders and step-stools; never climb on pews or chairs; store items safely after events.
- Crowd management – Conduct simple risk assessments for large services; brief ushers; ensure clear exits.
- Fatigue – Monitor volunteer and clergy workloads; roster breaks; observe two consecutive rest days where possible.
- Cash handling – Use two-person counts; secure storage; avoid late-night banking alone.
- Heat & weather – Provide water and shade for outdoor events; monitor severe weather; have cancellation plans.
- Child safety – Follow Professional Standards and Safe Ministry protocols at all times.

Contacts

Bishop's Registry: admin@graftondiocese.org.au
02 6642 4122

Payroll: payroll@graftondiocese.org.au

Insurance: insurance@graftondiocese.org.au

Parish Guide: https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/parish-guide/