

Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia
ACTS OF SYNOD 2025

Class 1 (Barrier Act Procedure)

No	Act	Reference
	None	

Class 2 (Others)

No	Act	Reference
1	Amend Act 1, Class 2, 1978 – Synod Standing Orders	25.7.2
2	Rules for Subscription of Questions and Formula	25.8.3-4
3	Church Insurances – Clarify Remit	25.8.7
4	Endorsement of Reformed Theological College for candidate training	25.10
5	Establishment of centralised Long Service Leave Scheme	25.13.1-7
6	Pulpit Supply fees and travel expenses	25.14.3
7	Synod Commissioners’ Expenses and amend Act 1, Class 2, 1984	25.14.4
8	Financial Assistance for Hawkesbury Nepean congregation	25.14.5
9	Financial Assistance for Ulverstone – manse purchase	25.14.6
10	Financial Examinations – Amend Handbook 3.15 and 2017 Act	25.15
11	Appoint Day of Prayer	25.20
12	Sale of Wantirna church with application of proceeds deferred	25.27
13	Discharge Psalmody Committee	25.32
14	Appointment of Dr. D Ramsay as General Treasurer	25.32
15	Assessors to Southern Presbytery	25.32

CLASS 1 – ACTS WHICH HAVE PASSED THE BARRIER ACT
None

CLASS 2 – ACTS OF SYNOD OF GENERAL INTEREST TO THE CHURCH

ACT 1 – Amend Act 1, Class 2, 1978 – Synod Standing Orders

Tuesday 6th May 2025

(Minutes 25.7.2)

That a new section be added to Synod Standing Orders (Act 1, class 2, 1978, as amended 1984, 1991, 2008 and 2024) as follows, by amending and incorporating the wording of Act 1, 1983 “Reports and Correspondence to Synod” (as amended 1985, 1986, 1995, 2000, 2008, 2011, 2022). Synod now repeal Act 1, 1983.

“VI – SYNOD ARRANGEMENTS

1. The Synod Treasurer forwards his report and annual accounts to Synod members at least 50 days prior to the scheduled opening of Synod.
2. All documents and Committee Reports for transmission to Synod are to be lodged with the Clerk of Synod at least 45 days prior to Synod. Any document or report presented after that date must be accompanied by a letter showing cause why it could not be presented by the due date. The Administration Committee shall judge whether the reasons advanced are sufficient, and if there are extenuating circumstances shall transmit the same to Synod, reporting

accordingly. If the Committee refuse to transmit any document it states reasons to those concerned, who, if aggrieved with the decision, may petition Synod in the usual way without conforming to the above mentioned deadline.

3. Requests for finance from Synod funds are to be forwarded by presbyteries direct to the Finance Committee to reach the Convener at least 60 days prior to Synod.

4. The Clerk of Synod shall arrange for Committee Reports and Recommendations together with Correspondence to be circulated so that they are in the hands of members not later than 21 days before the opening of Synod. Correspondence with the potential to impugn the character or reputation of any person is not to be circulated to persons other than Synod members prior to Synod considering the same.

5. At the annual meeting of Synod participation by phone or video conference will not normally be allowed. In exceptional circumstances request should be made to the Administration Committee in reasonable time before Synod, which may approve the request if it sees fit.”

And that the words “At the annual Synod participation by video conference or phone will not normally be permitted” be added to section 5.4 of the Handbook; “Live-streaming of open-court proceedings may be allowed at the discretion of the court” be added to section 5.15.

ACT 2 – Rules for Subscription of Questions and Formula

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.8.3-4)

1. Synod instructs sessions to ensure that every serving office bearer of their congregation has answered the 1952 Questions in presence of session and signed the Formula. Sessions are to retain records to be able to certify this to higher courts upon request. Presbyteries may not sustain the commission of a representative elder who has not subscribed the 1952 Questions and Formula.

2. When a person is called upon to sign the Formula he must first, on that same occasion, have the Questions put to him and answer appropriately. This requirement is evident from the Formula itself which refers to “the questions already put to me”.

ACT 3 – Church Insurance – Clarify Remit

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.8.7)

The initiation of claims under the Church’s group policy is the responsibility of the relevant church court or Synod committee that has resolved to make a claim. Advice may be sought from the committee responsible for church insurances, but its remit does not extend to initiating claims itself.

ACT 4 – Endorsement of Reformed Theological College for candidate training

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.10)

That the Synod include the Reformed Theological College, Melbourne in our Synod-approved list of

Colleges for candidate training and that the Committee be authorised to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the RTC in the terms of the pro forma.

ACT 5 – Establishment of centralised Long Service Leave Scheme

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.13.1-7)

1. Synod approves the establishment of a centralised Long Service Leave (LSL) fund for ministers to ensure financial stability and predictability for congregations.
2. Synod agrees to set aside an initial amount of \$90,000 in a LSL fund to cover current LSL liabilities, and thus authorises the drawing of \$45,000 from the Superannuation Support Fund (SSF) working account, current balance of \$50,414, and \$40,000 from the SSF capital account.
3. Synod agrees to impose an LSL levy on congregations with an ordained minister eligible for LSL, ensuring fair contribution to the fund.
4. Synod approves setting the LSL levy at 0.9 times the weekly minimum stipend to cover LSL entitlements, assuming a 4% annual increase in the stipend.
5. Synod agrees to review the LSL levy annually on January 1st to adjust for changes in stipend rates and ensure the fund remains adequately funded.
6. Synod approves the requirement that applications for LSL leave be approved by the Session and Presbytery, with these approvals reported to the Superannuation and Insurance Committee for monitoring and record-keeping.
7. Synod approves the refund of LSL levy payments to the contributing congregation(s) on a pro rata basis when long service leave is taken.

ACT 6 – Pulpit Supply Fees and travel expenses

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.14.3)

Pulpit Supply Fees be at least 12.00% of the weekly minimum stipend and where travel is by private motor vehicle, reimbursement at the same rate as Synod Commissioners.

ACT 7 – Synod Commissioners' Expenses and amend Act 1, Class 2, 1984

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.14.4)

Synod Commissioners' Expenses where travel is involved by motor vehicle be reimbursed at 66% (two thirds) of the Australian Taxation Office's tax deduction rate for use of private vehicles for work related purposes – the rate to be reviewed annually and adjusted, when necessary, in line with the ATO's current rate. (58c per kilometre in 2024).

Delete point 3 of Act 1 Class 2, 1984 (as amended) "Synod Delegates' Expenses"

ACT 8 – Financial Assistance for Hawkesbury Nepean congregation

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.14.5)

Financial Assistance of up to \$6,000 for 2025/2026 be granted to Hawkesbury-Nepean Court as follows:

- Strictly on a quarterly needs basis.
- Applications be submitted to the General Treasurer on a calendar quarter basis i.e. commencing 1st January/April/July/October and be accompanied with a Budget for the quarter being applied for.
- Be subject to the availability of funds.

ACT 9 – Financial Assistance for Ulverstone – manse purchase

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.14.6)

The prayer of the Petition of Ulverstone Deacons' Court for financial assistance of \$470,000 be granted in the following terms:

Amount: \$470,000

Funding:

\$200,000 – Capital Assistance Fund

\$270,000 – Synod General Funds

\$470,000

Drawdowns:

The Deacons' Court's contribution of \$315,000 to be fully applied in the purchase of the dwelling with the balance thereafter drawn as required for renovations from the remaining Synod funds provided. The Synod Finance Committee Convener to oversee drawdown(s) for the renovations.

ACT 10 – Financial Examinations – Amend Handbook 3.15 and 2017 Act

Wednesday 7th May 2025

(Minutes 25.15)

That the wording of Handbook 3.15 and the related Act of 2017 be amended as follows:

DELETE “While the ACNC does not require Small Charities to submit a Review or Audit report with their Annual Information Statement, SYNOD requires either a Review or Audit report to form part of the congregation’s Annual Financial Report when presenting it to the Presbytery of the bounds for attestation (see 2.33).”

REPLACE WITH “Congregations classified as Small Charities are required by Synod to have their annual Financial Statement examined. They may obtain a professional Review or Audit or they may appoint as examiner a competent independent person who is not a member of the court.”

ACT 11 – Appoint Day of Prayer

Thursday 8th May 2025

(Minutes 25.20)

Synod urges members to pray for the reformation and revival of the church and seek the Lord's mercy on our nation. It appoints a day of prayer on 28th June and encourages its members to also make this matter a regular part of personal and corporate prayer. The Lord's words to Solomon in 2 Chron. 7: 14 are still relevant, 'If my people who are called by my name humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land'.

ACT 12 – Sale of Wantirna church with application of proceeds deferred

Thursday 8th May 2025

(Minutes 25.27)

1. Permission be granted to Knox (renamed Melbourne) Deacon's Court to sell the Wantirna church situated at 358 Mountain Highway, Wantirna Vic.
2. That proceeds from the sale to be held by Melbourne Deacons' Court until the restructuring of the existing centres of worship is completed.
3. Melbourne Deacons' Court is then to decide on the application of the proceeds and seek permission for such from Synod in terms of Handbook 3.22

ACT 13 – Discharge Psalmody Committee

Friday 9th May 2025

(Minutes 25.32)

The Committee be discharged.

ACT 14 – Appointment of Dr. D Ramsay as General Treasurer

Friday 9th May 2025

(Minutes 25.32)

Mr Steel's resignation was accepted by the Synod with thanks and Dr Ramsay was appointed as General Treasurer.

ACT 15 – Assessors to Southern Presbytery

Friday 9th May 2025

(Minutes 25.32)

That synod thank the assessors to Southern Presbytery who have worked diligently within that presbytery over the last several years - Rev John Forbes, Rev Dennis Muldoon, and Tom Reeve. And that synod review the assessors and appoint Rev Jim Klazinga and Rev Robin Tso and Rev George Ball as assessors.