# Guidelines for proposals

**Submitting proposals**

All proposals shall be submitted in writing, over the signature of at least two members, to [synodinsession@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:synodinsession@ucaqld.com.au) which will then be forwarded to the Synod Business Committee.

The deadline for submitting all proposals (except those concerned with business arising from the floor of Synod) is Monday, 10 March 2025.

**Nature of a proposal**

One of the roles of the Synod is to establish policy and to initiate action. Hence proposals brought to the Synod should be designed with some specific intention for an outcome which results in change. The Synod is able to change policy, or to set new directions, but it is not appropriate for it to simply affirm, re-affirm, or note the actions of a previous Synod meeting unless they are directly related to some new action the Synod is being asked to take.

It is not necessary or appropriate for the Synod to consider proposals which request or authorise a body to do work for which it already has responsibility, and which it is willing to undertake.

Requesting a body to undertake work should be about giving new responsibility to a body or requesting a body to give a particular priority to work.

**Form of a proposal**

A number of past proposals are available for review on the Hub (<https://hub.ucaqld.com.au/synod/synod-in-session/#about> ). It is suggested these be reviewed in preparation for writing a proposal.

All proposals commence with the words: “That the Synod:”

What follows normally sets out the action to be taken. In the Synod minutes, this initial wording will be changed to read: “The Synod:”

A brief subject line is required to allow a short-form reference to the proposal. This will be printed in both the working papers and the minutes on the line above the text of the proposal/resolution, as a form of sub-heading.

Usually, the text of the proposal commences by making reference to the body to whom it is directed. Typical phrases which might commence the body of a proposal are:

requests

encourages

directs

adopts the statement/report

appoints a committee/task group

records its appreciation

approves the guidelines

**Scope of a proposal**

A proposal should be short, precise and explicit. It should specify as many of the following points as are appropriate:

* what is to be done – the task or action to be carried out
* who is to do it – the responsible person or body
* subsequent action or reporting – such as a report back to the Synod, or to another body
* the time frame – when the action is to be taken or completed
* any required personnel – if a committee is required, who is to set up the committee.

In drafting a proposal, it must be something the Synod is capable of doing. For instance, the Synod cannot direct a presbytery, it can only direct those for which it has direct responsibility, however it can request or encourage a particular action.

It is also helpful to use sub-sections to separate different actions and ideas rather than one long proposal. This increases clarity and also allows people to focus on questions or issues they have with one part.

A proposal must be complete in itself, without reference to other material or documents. Hence, for example, it is not appropriate to propose that someone be asked to “carry out the review described in the report”. If the proposal does refer to other material it should be one contained document which is clearly identifiable and that document will need to be recorded in the minutes as an appendix. The only time this is not necessary is where the minutes of another meeting of the Synod are referred to, in which case the precise minute should be recorded in the resolution. It must be possible to read the text of a minute, or to send that text to someone not present during the discussion, and to expect them to understand what was resolved and what is now to be done.

It is helpful to ask someone who is not closely associated with the matter concerned in the proposal to read a draft to check that it is understood in the way intended.

It may be appropriate in some cases to include a brief explanatory phrase or clause at the start of a proposal in order to establish a context. These words must be brief and relevant, so that the body of the proposal might take a form such as:

“In the light of the decision of ..., that ... be requested ...” “Noting the effects of ..., etc.”

**Rationale**

Each proposal should be accompanied by a rationale of no more than 250 words, unless it is a proposal arising from a report in which case the report should provide the rationale. This should outline the background, reasons and argument for the proposal however it is important to ensure the rationale does not include material which has such importance that the proposal cannot be understood without it. The rationale is not included in the minutes therefore the proposal must be understood without reference to the rationale.

**Proposers**

A proposal from one of Synod’s reporting bodies (committee, board, presbytery, task group) should be submitted and signed by an authorised officer of the body (usually the secretary or executive officer). The officer should also advise the names of one or two people who will present the proposal in the Synod meeting. Any person who is to present a proposal who is not a member of the Synod will need to be associated with the meeting for the presentation of the proposal. A contact name must also be provided for those seeking further information prior to the Synod meeting; this may be one of the people presenting the proposal, or someone else, as appropriate. It must be clearly indicated that the proposal is presented in the name of the reporting body.

A proposal from members of Synod is signed by two members of the Synod. It is expected that the first named person (the proposer) will present the proposal in the Synod meeting, and that the second named person (the seconder) will be available to provide additional information. There is a total of eight minutes for the presentation of the proposal, five for the proposer and three for the seconder. Contact details for each must be provided to the Synod Business Committee.

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| **Due Date** | **What** | **Action** |
| Monday,  10 March 2025 | Proposal/s | Consult prior with chairperson of Synod Business Committee or the General Secretary to ensure appropriate format of proposal/s. Email final proposal/s to [synodinsession@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:synodinsession@ucaqld.com.au) |