

GENERAL SECRETARY'S REPORT
TO THE GENERAL SYNOD / TE HĪNOTA WHĀNUI 2026

Introduction

The years of 2024 -25 saw GSTHW meet together in Heretaunga / Hastings, hosted by Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa in Tairāwhiti in May 2024. Again, it involved a mixed programme of wānanga (this time over several mornings) and more formal business sessions (handling Bills and Motions), alongside cultural engagements (powhiri and opening at Omahu marae), a number of caucus sessions (by Tikanga, and by leave of Synod/ Hīnota also by gender), as well as several presentations. There was also an informal caucus of the rainbow community at Synod/ Hīnota who then brought a formal question the floor.

Most significantly, perhaps, the GSTHW also saw the election by Tikanga Pākehā, and consequent affirmation by Tikanga Māori and Pasefika, of the Most Rev'd Justin Duckworth as Senior Bishop Tikanga Pākehā and thus Archbishop and Primate, joining Archbishop Don Tamihere and Archbishop Sione Ulu'ilakepa in the shared Primacy.

I acknowledge again with deep gratitude those with whom I work most closely and who offer the regular support for the work I undertake on behalf of our church. Firstly, the Archbishops as noted above and the General Synod Standing Committee, who are a committed and hard-working group. Secondly, the provincial staff 'team', those based in the General Synod Office (GSO) at TUIA, especially Marissa Alix and Vanda Breslin, and others based around the Church. And thirdly, the many members of GSTHW and its various Commissions, Councils, Boards, Committees, and Small Working Groups, who offer so much voluntarily to the mission and administration of this Church. Thank you.

The wider three Tikanga staff group, for whom I carry some oversight responsibilities alongside their respective ministry bodies, has had some changes over the past two years, with Rev'd Chaans Tumataroa-Clarke (August 2024) and Aleshia Lawson (June 2025) with the Youth Commission, and Ceridwyn Parr with CAWS (July 2025), all finishing in their roles. Serena Williams was appointed to follow Ceridwyn in the CAWS administrative role.

Unchanged positions, other than the GSO above, include the Anglican Taonga Magazine Editor Julianne Clarke-Morris, Cheryl Thompson and Rev'd Vicki Terrell as Disability Ministry Educators. This team is a highly skilled and motivated group who often work away alone in their own spheres, but who offer support and collegiality to one another as they serve this Church.

Some key highlights of the past two years for the General Secretary have been, participating in the ordinations of Bishop Ana in Wellington (2024) and Bishop Anne in Dunedin (2025). Also, attendance at The Episcopal Church Convention in Louisville Kentucky (2024) alongside Archbp. Don, and Carole (independently for IAWN).

I was able to take some sabbatical due, July-Sep 2024, including a week of intensive Institute of Directors Governance Training in late Sep, completing the 'Certificate in Company Direction', and then subsequently undertaking the IoD 'Chartered Member' exam and assignment, graduating in mid-2025.

Much of the work of General Secretary involves routine ‘office work’ and many ‘meetings’, as we seek to serve the many Commissions, Councils, Boards, Committees, and Small Working Groups of the GSTHW and the GSSC. This administrative support work, and the regular accounting, personnel, and payroll oversight responsibilities are key elements of my role and the office team in our day-to-day, week-to-week, and month-to-month routines. I acknowledge the work of the General Synod Office staff, DAC, TML, and the GCTB in supporting much of this task. Also, the work of the Employment Subcommittee, and the GSTHW Order Paper Committee, of the GSSC. As can be seen from the range and detail of reports to this General Synod / te Hīnota Whānui the past two years have again seen some significant work, both ongoing and some exciting new initiatives, by these many and varied bodies.

I commend their various reports to you for further detail and acknowledge the commitment, effort and time that go into achieving their various outcomes.

Key publications handled by the General Secretary and Office included the annual Lectionary (2024 and 2025) through the Liturgical Commission, and the Proceedings for GSTHW (2024), and a hard copy update to the printed Canons (2024). The previously biennial Clerical Directory has not been published, and by recommendation of the House of Bishops will not be again in its previous format. Instead, a more up-to-date listing of clergy currently licensed and approved for safeguarding will be published online.

A limited print run of a revised edition of A New Zealand Prayer book – He Karakia Mihinare o Aotearoa was printed in 2024.

The General Synod and Online Prayer Book websites, and the TUIA Daily Prayer App, are under our oversight, and we do all we can to keep information up to date and add new resources as time and resources allow. The Prayer Book website is highly visited from around the world, and the App has several thousand regular users, while the GSTHW website is old and currently being reviewed for replacement as part of a wider communications restructure, following a joint research project between GSO and Te Kurahautū.

The usual biennial Australasian Anglican Registrars Conference met in 2024, hosted in Christchurch. Our own Registrar-Managers network meets annually as well and have met in Dunedin and Napier in this period as well as regularly by zoom. These are valuable professional development, networking, and collaborative opportunities.

Alongside the Primates, I attended the annual Oceania FONO, in Cairns (2024) and hosting in New Plymouth (2025).

This GSTHW, my ninth as your General Secretary, sees me coming up to 17 years in this role on 1st December, and I am as always much indebted to all those who share in this work with me, and I continue to enjoy the role, both its joys and its challenges.

Michael Hughes
General Secretary
April 2026