

Motion and Background Paper

The Model of Episcopal Succession for the Diocese

Presented by Standing Committee

The Motion

Motion No. 10: Model of Episcopal Succession

Mover: Christine Bryant

Seconder: Rev. Christina Syrratt

“That this Synod, noting that the Diocesan Bishop, on the recommendation of Standing Committee, has intimated to Synod in writing his desire to have a Coadjutor Bishop appointed to assist in the provision of episcopal ministry and administration in the Diocese, assents, in accordance with clause 2A of Title A Canon I of Bishops, to the appointment in due course of a Coadjutor Bishop with right of succession for the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki; directs Standing Committee to work with the Diocesan Bishop to ensure that the episcopal functions delegated to the Coadjutor Bishop increase progressively over the period of the Coadjutorship, recognising that a Coadjutor Bishop holds no jurisdiction beyond what the Diocesan Bishop delegates; and receives the background paper of Standing Committee setting out the rationale for this recommendation.”

What Is a Coadjutor Bishop?

A Coadjutor Bishop is a bishop who works alongside the Diocesan Bishop, with an automatic right to succeed as Diocesan Bishop once that office becomes vacant. The Diocesan Bishop must resign or retire within 24 months of the Coadjutor's installation. Jurisdiction over the Diocese remains with the Diocesan Bishop throughout the Coadjutorship — the Coadjutor exercises only those functions the Diocesan Bishop delegates, increasing progressively over time under this motion. Section 5 below sets out how the model works in full.

1. Purpose of This Paper

This paper does two things. It sets out the motion Standing Committee is bringing to Synod on the model of episcopal succession for our Diocese, and it explains, as fully as we can, the reasoning behind that recommendation — so that every Synod member has the background needed to make an informed decision.

It follows directly from Standing Committee's own decision, taken at a dedicated workshop on 25 July 2026, to bring Synod both a written motion and a background paper outlining the rationale. This document is that background paper.

2. Why Standing Committee Is Bringing This to Synod Now

This decision is being brought to Synod now, ahead of any vacancy, because the Diocesan Bishop, the Most Reverend Philip Richardson, has indicated his own intention to retire, and Standing Committee wants the Coadjutor model to be genuinely available to Synod in good time if this is the model chosen. Under the

Canon, that model can only be used if a Coadjutor is installed with enough lead time before the Bishop's resignation for the required 24-month window to be met. If Synod agrees to this motion, Standing Committee intends to act without delay: our aim is to have a Coadjutor appointed in the first half of 2027. This paper does not set, announce or otherwise indicate a retirement date — that timing remains the Bishop's own to confirm formally to the Primates, as the Canon requires.

The standard transition model needs no advance decision — it simply applies by default once a vacancy is declared. The Coadjutor model is different: it requires the Diocesan Bishop to intimate a desire for a Coadjutor to Synod in writing, and it requires Synod's assent, **before** a vacancy exists, not after. Deciding the model only once a vacancy has occurred would rule the Coadjutor option out by default, whatever Synod's view. Bringing the decision now keeps that option genuinely open.

The Diocesan Bishop has been careful throughout this process not to express a preference between the options, so that Standing Committee's own recommendation could be reached on its merits. His written intimation to Synod would accordingly be made on the basis of that recommendation, rather than any view of his own on which model should be adopted.

This work also builds on wider strategic discernment already under way in the Diocese. The three Diocesan Conversations held across our parishes in 2024 set the direction for the current Diocesan Strategy, *Grateful Hearts, Servant Hands* (2026–2030), and surfaced a clear preference among our people for working and partnering with others rather than going it alone. Standing Committee has treated that same body of feedback as directly relevant to how we plan for the next episcopal transition.

3. The Options Standing Committee Considered

Standing Committee worked from a discussion paper setting out four possible models, and gave each detailed consideration at a workshop on 25 July 2026, independently facilitated by Tim Clarke. The record of that workshop was then circulated to every member of Standing Committee for confirmation, with the consultation period closing on 17 August 2026.

- Standard transition. The Diocesan Bishop resigns on a set date, the See is declared vacant, the Primates appoint a Commissary, and an Electoral College elects, consecrates and installs a new Bishop.
- Coadjutor. A Coadjutor Bishop is elected with the right of succession, working alongside the Diocesan Bishop, who must resign or retire within 24 months of the Coadjutor's installation.
- Co-Episcopacy. Shared jurisdiction and authority from the outset, using existing diocesan legislation, with the new Bishop initially Waikato-focused.
- Tikanga Māori-led. A longer-term, larger possibility explored with Te Hui Amorangi o Te Manawa o Te Wheke and other Tikanga Māori partners, discussed further in section 8 below.

4. Standing Committee's Assessment

4.1 Co-Episcopacy was not preferred

Standing Committee identified Co-Episcopacy as its least preferred of the four options. It was seen as a move towards two bishoprics within the one Diocese, which raised two concerns: the potential for separatism between the two parts of the Diocese — something Standing Committee has had to work to counter since returning to a single-Bishop model in 2018 — and the cost and financial sustainability of supporting two bishops on an ongoing basis, rather than for a defined transition period.

4.2 Traditional model versus Coadjutor model

Having set Co-Episcopacy aside, Standing Committee weighed the traditional model against the Coadjutor model directly.

In favour of the traditional model: it gives a new Bishop a genuinely open position to make their own, with the freedom of fresh, unconstrained thinking, and it avoids any perception that the incoming Bishop is beholden to their predecessor. Against it: it creates a period with no Bishop at all, risking a loss of momentum at exactly the point continuity matters most; it does nothing to help a new appointee build relationships with iwi and other stakeholders quickly; and it does nothing, by design, to carry forward the particular skills, relationships and unfinished work — including the Diocese's work on Abuse in State Care and on Treaty and Māori land issues, currently carried by Bishop Philip and Archbishop David — unless the incoming Bishop chooses to take that work up.

In favour of the Coadjutor model: it provides a genuine apprenticeship, giving the new Bishop the chance to be introduced to the Diocese and build relationships with the support of the sitting Bishop before taking up full jurisdiction; it removes the interregnum and the loss of momentum that comes with it; it retains the skills, relationships and institutional memory Bishop Philip has built, particularly in redress, Treaty and land matters; and it reflects a strong and consistent message from our own diocesan consultation, which points towards continuity of direction rather than a reset. Against it: it offers less scope for an entirely fresh start, it could be seen — fairly or not — as making the incoming Bishop “Bishop Philip's person,” and it would be a new approach for a New Zealand diocese, without local precedent to draw on.

Standing Committee weighed these factors and concluded that, on balance, the benefits of continuity, mentoring and retained relationships outweigh the value of an entirely open field, and recommends the Coadjutor model to Synod.

5. How the Coadjutor Model Works in Practice

- A Coadjutor Bishop is a bishop who assists the Diocesan Bishop, with the right to succeed the Diocesan Bishop when the Diocesan Bishop ceases to hold office. The Canon's general definition of a Coadjutor allows for either election or appointment, to cover different arrangements across the wider Church — but for a Diocese, only one route applies: election by the electoral college described below. The one genuine appointment in this process is separate, and comes later — the Diocesan Bishop appointing the Coadjutor as Vicar General.
- Jurisdiction over the Diocese remains with the Diocesan Bishop throughout. The Coadjutor exercises such episcopal functions as the Diocesan Bishop assigns, and is appointed by the Diocesan Bishop as Vicar General. This motion directs Standing Committee to work with the Diocesan Bishop so that the functions delegated to the Coadjutor increase progressively over the Coadjutorship, rather than being fixed at the outset.
- The Diocesan Bishop must resign or retire not more than 24 months after the Coadjutor's installation and assumption of office. When that happens, the Coadjutor succeeds immediately to the office of Diocesan Bishop — no further election is needed at that point.
- The Coadjutor is nominated by an electoral college made up of everyone entitled to an episcopal, clerical or lay vote in our own diocesan Synod — broader than the smaller electoral college used for some other episcopal appointments, and ensuring clergy and lay representation in the choice is at least as wide as under the standard model.
- All the usual conditions that apply to the election of a bishop under the Canon apply equally to a Coadjutor — the same eligibility and process requirements, just with this additional layer around timing and consent.

6. How a Coadjutor Would Be Chosen

Standing Committee has also thought through the practical steps that would follow if Synod agrees to this motion, so that Synod can see how the process would run and what would determine its timing.

- Diocesan Profile. The Diocesan Office and Standing Committee would prepare a Diocesan Profile describing the Diocese and the role, drawing on the three Diocesan Conversations held across our

parishes in 2024 and the resulting Diocesan Strategy, Grateful Hearts, Servant Hands (2026–2030). Because that engagement is recent and directly relevant, Standing Committee does not intend to run a further round of consultation to produce the Profile, and does not intend to establish a separate arrangements committee — this work would be carried out using existing Diocesan Office and Standing Committee capacity.

- Advertising and applications. The Coadjutor role would be advertised, in the usual way bishopric vacancies are advertised across the Church, and applications would be invited and processed by the Diocesan Office.
- Screening. Applications would be processed in the same way as any senior diocesan appointment, including police vetting and background screening.
- Candidate profiles and video presentations. Following recent practice elsewhere in the Province, including the 2018 election of the Bishop of Christchurch, candidates would be asked to provide a written profile and a recorded video presentation, made available to the Electoral College ahead of, or at, the College itself, so members can properly consider every candidate even where not all have met them personally.
- Electoral College. Once these steps are complete, the Electoral College described in section 5 above — made up of the episcopal, clerical and lay members of our own Synod — would convene to elect the Coadjutor, in the same way as for a standard episcopal election under the Canon.

How long these steps take will determine when the Electoral College can be held, and therefore when a Coadjutor could be installed. Standing Committee's aim of the first half of 2027 reflects our intention to move through these steps without unnecessary delay, but it is an aim, not a guarantee — the right process, properly run, matters more than hitting a particular date.

This process differs from the rohe-based nomination process used within Tikanga Māori — most recently for the process currently under way to elect the Bishop of Te Manawa o Te Wheke, and previously for the election of the Bishop of Te Waipounamu. That process rests on regulatory authority held by Te Rūnanganui o Te Pīhopatanga o Aotearoa under its own legislation, which is specific to Tikanga Māori and has no equivalent within Tikanga Pākehā. Title A Canon I instead fixes the Coadjutor's electoral college as the members of our own Synod, so we are not able to adopt the rohe-based model for this appointment. That difference is part of what makes the wider tikanga rua possibility discussed in section 8 below a longer-term, co-designed conversation, rather than something this motion can extend to on its own.

7. The Constitutional and Canonical Process

The appointment of a Coadjutor Bishop is already provided for in the Church's own governing law, and does not depend on the Diocese creating new legislation of its own. Clause 2A of Title A Canon I of Bishops — "Appointment of Coadjutor Bishop in any Diocese with Right of Succession" — sets out two conditions, both of which must be satisfied before any election of a Coadjutor can take place:

"Unless the Diocesan Bishop shall have previously intimated in writing to the Primates / ngā Pīhopa Mātāmua an irrevocable intention to resign or retire as Diocesan Bishop not more than 24 months after the installation to and assumption of office of the Coadjutor Bishop; and..."

"...Unless the Diocesan Bishop shall have previously intimated to the Synod of the Diocese in writing a desire to have a Coadjutor Bishop to assist in the provision of episcopal ministry and administration in the diocese and a majority of the episcopal, clerical and lay members of the Synod shall have assented to such a proposal."

In practice, this means two separate written steps by the Diocesan Bishop, alongside Synod's own assent: an irrevocable written intimation to the Primates of intention to resign or retire within 24 months of the Coadjutor's installation, and a written intimation to Synod of a desire to have a Coadjutor — to which a majority of each of the three orders of Synod, episcopal, clerical and lay, sitting and voting separately, must assent. As with the rest of this process, the Diocesan Bishop has taken care not to favour any one model,

and his intimation to Synod would be made on the basis of Standing Committee's recommendation rather than his own view.

Once both conditions are met, clause 2A goes on to provide that a Coadjutor Bishop is nominated by the diocesan electoral college described in section 5 above, that all the Canon's usual conditions for electing or appointing a bishop apply, and that a Coadjutor has an automatic right of succession — taking up the office of Diocesan Bishop immediately it becomes vacant, with no further election required.

Because this mechanism is already established in Church-wide Canon, Standing Committee's reading is that Synod's assent is given by resolution — the motion above — and does not itself require a new diocesan Bill or Statute. This is Standing Committee's interpretation of clause 2A, not a separately legislated position, and Standing Committee will advise Synod promptly if that reading changes or if any consequential amendment to diocesan legislation proves necessary.

8. A Firm Aspiration: The Wider Tikanga Rua Direction

Standing Committee's decision on 25 July 2026 was not only about the Coadjutor model. It first recorded a strong aspirational commitment to the fourth option — a Tikanga Māori-led approach — understood not narrowly, but as reflecting the wider direction our diocesan conversations have been pointing towards: a possible *tikanga rua* expression of church across the centre of the North Island. This could, over time, involve the Diocese of Waikato and Taranaki coming together with Te Hui Amorangi o Te Manawa o Te Wheke, the Diocese of Waipapu, and Te Hui Amorangi ki Te Tairāwhiti — potentially including joint trustees across our trust boards and a new, shared trust for properties held in common.

That possibility needs time, and it needs to be worked through in genuine co-design with our Tikanga Māori partners — including questions specific to Taranaki, to Te Hui Amorangi o Te Upoko o Te Ika, and to the part of Te Hui Amorangi o Te Manawa o Te Wheke that lies within our own Diocese — rather than being settled as a precondition of this decision.

This is a firm aspiration of Standing Committee, not a passing idea raised and set aside. We recognise it will take years, worked through properly and at the pace our Tikanga Māori partners set, and we do not intend to let the demands of an immediate episcopal transition crowd it out. Adopting the Coadjutor model for the immediate succession does not just leave this door open — it gives us a practical way to keep walking through it. Because a Coadjutor works alongside the Diocesan Bishop well before any change of Bishop, they can be part of this relationship-building and groundwork from the outset, and are then positioned to carry it forward with continuity once Bishop Philip retires, rather than that momentum being lost while a newly arrived Bishop, under the standard model, gets their bearings. Standing Committee sees the two as directly connected: a stable, well-supported transition now is part of how we intend to sustain this wider aspiration, not separate from it.

9. Financial Considerations

The Coadjutor model means the Diocese will, for a period of up to two years, be resourcing two bishops rather than one. Standing Committee discussed one possible source of funding for this period — proceeds from the sale of the Bishop's residence in Taranaki, which is no longer in day-to-day use now that the Bishop's PA is based in Hamilton — but has not yet finalised detailed costings.

The Episcopal Budget is not one that Standing Committee or Synod oversees directly, and finalising its detailed costings is not a matter this motion asks Synod to resolve. Standing Committee will work through the funding arrangements as part of implementation, alongside those responsible for administering the Episcopal Budget. Given the timeframe Standing Committee is working to, there will not be an opportunity to bring detailed costings back to Synod before a Coadjutor appointment process begins — Synod's role in this respect is the assent sought in the motion above.

10. Questions Synod May Ask

Q: Has the Diocesan Bishop, Philip Richardson, asked for a Coadjutor, or is this Standing Committee's recommendation?

A: This is Standing Committee's own recommendation, reached after weighing all four options at a dedicated workshop. The Canon requires the Diocesan Bishop to take two formal written steps before a Coadjutor can be appointed — an irrevocable intimation to the Primates of his intention to resign or retire within 24 months of a Coadjutor's installation, and a written intimation to Synod of a desire to have a Coadjutor. These are the legal steps the Canon requires to trigger the process, not an independent preference the Bishop has expressed between the options — he has been careful throughout not to favour any one model, and his intimation to Synod would be made on the basis of Standing Committee's recommendation, not his own view. Synod's own assent, sought in this motion, is the other half of the requirement.

Q: Does this decide who our next Bishop will be?

A: No. It decides the process by which our next Bishop will be chosen, not the person. Under the Canon, a Coadjutor is nominated by an electoral college made up of everyone entitled to an episcopal, clerical or lay vote in our own diocesan Synod, so clergy and lay involvement in that choice is broad and unchanged in kind from the standard model. Section 6 above sets out the practical steps that would lead up to that Electoral College.

Q: Is this about Bishop Philip retiring?

A: Yes — Bishop Philip has indicated his own intention to retire, and that is why Standing Committee is bringing the question of succession model to Synod now. This paper does not set, announce or otherwise indicate a date — that timing is the Bishop's own to confirm formally to the Primates, as clause 2A requires, and stays his to share. What Standing Committee can say is its own plan: if Synod agrees to this motion, we intend to act without delay, with the aim of having a Coadjutor appointed in the first half of 2027.

Q: Why not simply wait and decide when the vacancy actually arises?

A: Because the Coadjutor model is only available if it is set in motion well before the vacancy — it requires the Bishop's written intimations and Synod's assent in advance, with enough lead time for a Coadjutor to be installed within the Canon's 24-month window. Waiting until the vacancy actually occurs would rule the Coadjutor model out by default, regardless of Synod's view on its merits — which is why, if Synod agrees, Standing Committee intends to move straight to the electoral college process, aiming for a Coadjutor appointment in the first half of 2027.

Q: Would this set a precedent in New Zealand?

A: Standing Committee understands this would be a new approach among our own dioceses. It has treated that as a factor to weigh, not a reason in itself to avoid the model — the Coadjutor model is long-established in wider Anglican practice, and Standing Committee's assessment is that its practical benefits for our Diocese outweigh the fact that we would be the first in this Province to use it.

Q: Does the Coadjutor model limit who might apply, or unfairly favour an internal candidate?

A: Standing Committee discussed both directions. A period of mentoring alongside the sitting Bishop could appeal to an external candidate wanting support to get established, as much as to an internal candidate already familiar with how the Diocese works. Standing Committee did not conclude that the model favours one type of candidate over another, and will ensure the Electoral College process and selection criteria are set up to draw from as wide a field as possible.

Q: What safeguards are there if the working relationship between the two bishops does not go well?

A: This motion itself builds in a safeguard: it directs Standing Committee to work with the Diocesan Bishop so that the functions delegated to the Coadjutor increase progressively over the Coadjutorship, rather than the Coadjutor holding the full range of delegated authority from day one. A Coadjutor has no jurisdiction beyond what the Diocesan Bishop delegates, so that progressive approach gives both bishops, and the Diocese, time to test the working relationship as responsibility grows. Standing Committee will work

through the detail of that progressive delegation, including its pace and scope, with the Diocesan Bishop as part of implementation.

Q: Will this affect the redress, Treaty and land work currently under way?

A: This was a specific reason Standing Committee favoured the Coadjutor model. It allows the relationships, expertise and continuity Bishop Philip and Archbishop David have built in these areas to be carried forward through a supported transition, rather than risking a gap while a new Bishop, appointed under the standard model, decides whether and how to pick this work up.

Q: Does adopting the Coadjutor model rule out the wider Tikanga Rua / Te Hui Amorangi o Te Manawa o Te Wheke possibility discussed at Synod?

A: No — the opposite. This is a firm aspiration of Standing Committee, not a passing idea, and we see the Coadjutor model as a practical way of sustaining it rather than a distraction from it. Because a Coadjutor works alongside Bishop Philip well before any change of Bishop, they can be part of the relationship-building this wider possibility needs from the outset, and carry it forward with continuity once he retires. This motion addresses how the current succession is managed; the wider, longer-term possibility continues to be worked through in co-design with our Tikanga Māori partners, at the pace they set.

Q: Why isn't the Coadjutor chosen using the same rohe-based nomination process Tikanga Māori uses for its own bishops?

A: Tikanga Māori's nomination process rests on regulatory authority that Te Rūnanganui o Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa holds under its own legislation, which is specific to Tikanga Māori and has no equivalent for Tikanga Pākehā dioceses. Our Coadjutor would instead be nominated by the electoral college fixed by Title A Canon I — the same electoral college used for a standard episcopal election in our Diocese, made up of our own Synod's episcopal, clerical and lay members. Section 6 above sets out how that process would run in practice.

Q: Does this need a new diocesan Statute or Bill?

A: Standing Committee's reading is no — the Coadjutor mechanism already exists under Church-wide Canon, and what Synod is asked to do is assent by resolution. This rests on Standing Committee's interpretation of clause 2A of the Canon; Standing Committee will say promptly if that reading changes.

Q: What happens if Synod does not pass this motion?

A: The standard transition model would continue to apply by default at the next vacancy: the See would be declared vacant, a Commissary appointed, and the usual Electoral College process would follow, with the effects on continuity and momentum discussed in section 4.2 above.

11. Next Steps

If Synod passes this motion, Standing Committee intends to move promptly. It will: confirm the Diocesan Bishop's two written intimations — to the Primates and to Synod — are in the form required by clause 2A of the Canon; begin the process set out in section 6 above, working with the Diocesan Office to prepare a Diocesan Profile and open the role for applications; agree with the Diocesan Bishop how delegated functions will increase progressively over the Coadjutorship, as directed by the motion; work through the funding arrangements discussed in section 9 above; and convene the diocesan electoral college once these steps are complete, with the aim of having a Coadjutor appointed in the first half of 2027.

12. Standing Committee's Recommendation

Standing Committee recommends that Synod pass the motion set out at the beginning of this paper, adopting the Coadjutor model as the mechanism for the Diocese's next episcopal succession, directing a progressive increase in the functions delegated to the Coadjutor over the course of the Coadjutorship, and

affirming Standing Committee's firm and continuing commitment to the wider tikanga rua aspiration discussed in section 8.