

## ROLE

Our Pastoral Council's role is to **participate in God's** mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in the world around us.

Our Pastoral Council shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of our parish community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.

Our Parish Pastoral Council seeks to:

- Listen and respond to the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners.
- **Generate responses to these identified issues.**
- Encourage and support the continuing good work of existing groups within our parish.
- Provide opportunities for parishioners
  - to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
  - to support and encourage them in their continuing efforts to be a Christian influence in the wider community.
- Set **realistic and achievable** short-term and long-term pastoral goals for our parish community within the framework of diocesan priorities.
- **Oversee the implementation of these goals.**
- Contribute towards making parish decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
- Provide support for our Parish Priest, working collaboratively with him and with each other.

## MEMBERSHIP

There will be nine members consisting of our Parish Priest, six members chosen by parishioners (two from St Patrick's, St Ambrose and St. Brigid's) and two chosen by our Parish Priest. In addition, ex-officio members **may** include the Principals of the Parish Schools, a member of the Liturgy Team and a member of the Finance Committee.

The Council will have as broad a membership as possible, **with a diversity** of age, gender and ethnic origin. Each **Pastoral Councillor** is a representative of the whole parish community and **not a representative of a specific parish group only.**

There will be a session of formation for all Council members prior to the first meeting of the newly chosen Council and after each changeover of membership.

## TERM OF MEMBERSHIP

The term of membership is two years. To facilitate continuity, it is anticipated that approximately half the Pastoral Council members will choose to continue for a second term. Anyone who serves **two terms consecutively** will normally then stand down for at least one term.

## NEW MEMBERS

All parishioners will be asked to recommend other parish members for possible **membership** of the Council. Each person recommended will be invited either to a combined Information Meeting or to an individual meeting with a Pastoral Councillor, to receive current information about Pastoral Councils. At the conclusion of this meeting, participants will be asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline **possible membership.**

If the number of acceptances of **possible membership** is more than required, the membership will be finalised by either negotiation or a prayerful selection process.

## CASUAL VACANCIES

The Council may fill any casual vacancy by invitation. **Prior to joining the Council, the proposed candidates will receive a short briefing on responsibilities and expectations as a member. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for this casual vacancy, the new member will be eligible for recommendation for a second term.**

## RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

In a spirit of prayerfulness each member of the Parish Pastoral Council will:

- Attend the regular meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- Provide input to deliberations of the Council.
- Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners.
- Provide prayerful support and encouragement for other members of the Parish Pastoral Council.
- **Actively participate in the implementation of finalised plans of action.**
- Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Council's operations.
- Represent the Parish Pastoral Council when required, eg: other Parish meetings, deanery or diocesan meetings.

## OFFICE BEARERS

The Parish Priest plus office-bearers will form the executive of the Pastoral Council. The office-bearers, chosen by the members, will be Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary.

The role of the executive is to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of each previous Council meeting. **What went well? What can we do better?**
- Organise the agenda for each meeting, incorporating input from all pastoral councillors.
- Arrange distribution of the agenda, minutes and all relevant material one week in advance of that meeting.
- Coordinate the business of the Council between meetings.
- Arrange additional formation opportunities outside the regular meetings.

## MEETINGS

There will be a minimum of four meetings of the Pastoral Council each year.

### Committees

**Committees** may be set up **under the auspices of the Pastoral Council** for specific purposes for a definite duration **and will report regularly to the Pastoral Council.**

These Committees **may** include **members** of the Pastoral Council.

## CONSENSUS

The consensus approach will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of parish decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome. Majority voting, lobbying, competition and domination are to be avoided.

## COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH

The Pastoral Council will report to the parish community regularly. It will seek the input of parishioners through various means, e.g. parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations.

### Review of Guidelines

These *Pastoral Council Guidelines* will be reviewed at the end of each Pastoral Council's term, or more frequently if the need arises. **Consultation with the Parish community will occur regarding any changes to these Guidelines.**