

The Partnered Catholic Parishes of:
Sacred Heart Diamond Creek, St. Mary’s Greensborough
& St. Thomas the Apostle Greensborough North



Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitation Group

The following documents have been endorsed by Parish Priest, Father Steven Rigo, February 2021.

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

The Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitation Group has been formed by the partnered parishes to maintain engagement by parishioners in the Plenary process and to coordinate local actions or activities that have been proposed by the Plenary Council Listening and Discernment sessions. Parishioners came together to consider what God was asking of us in Australia at this time and to discern those actions that may take us forward as a Christ-centred church.

Foremost in our approach is that we remain cognisant of the stated vision of each parish and that we understand our leadership stems from the good news of the Gospel, with an underlying message of hope, faith, compassion and justice. We aim to engage all parishioners in a process to build confidence and trust in the Church that will ultimately increase the spread of the Gospel.

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

- a. To follow through on the responsibility we feel to ensure the voices from the listening and discernment sessions in our parishes in the form of agreed actions are voiced and acted in the context of the Plenary Process.
- b. To share the discerned actions from our parishes with one another as partnered parishes in a spirit of support and for help in dealing with the actions and where appropriate look for any actions that might be best undertaken together across all Partnered Parishes.
- c. To be a conduit to engage each of our parishes in the Plenary process through educative role via alerting them to the process, the available documentation but also in a continuing discerning role.
- d. To respond to the Plenary Council National Facilitators Group as appropriate including to strongly encourage accountability, transparency, respectfulness and timely communication of every aspect of the Plenary process to all.
- e. To role model transparency, accountability, good governance and respectfulness to the discussions entrusted to us in the listening and discernment process.

MODEL FOR PROGRESSING PLENARY COUNCIL LOCAL ACTIONS LISTS

The Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitation Group has developed a model of working that will enable the parishes to maintain commitment to and momentum in consideration of what God wants for the Church in Australia. We have recommended that there is consideration of proposed local actions that may be prioritised in each parish according to their own processes and practices and-in a timeframe as determined by each parish. These actions have come directly from the Local Actions lists generated from each parish Listening and Discernment sessions.

We believe that it is vital that we work in a way that is participatory, inclusive, respectful, transparent, accountable and effective. Therefore our intention is to invite and work with those already established groups in the parishes and any interested individuals on specific actions and to communicate directly with the whole parish or parishes on this process. Where a particular action is considered appropriate to either or all of the partnered parishes, parishes may decide to work collaboratively on such actions.

Following is the Model for working on local actions for our Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitation Group:

- We have a Statement of Intent, Purpose and Governance which provides structure and proper process for working on local actions.
- These proposed actions are coming from a Recommendation Only basis and are proposed with no authority unless and until agreed to by the Parish Priest.
- Each parish will determine how actions will be considered and progressed as appropriate, according to their own structures and operating procedures.
- Prospective action groups or individuals will be approached with great sensitivity and inclusiveness
 - *(Inviting → Encouraging → Nurturing → Enabling)*
- This group is prepared to assist proposed groups or individuals in initiating actions through to establishment
 - *(Inviting → Encouraging → **Participating** → Nurturing → Enabling)*

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Partnered Parishes Plenary Council Facilitation Group, which acts in an advisory capacity to our Parish Priest, is committed to working within its parishes based on the principles of good governance. While governance principles apply to any group, organisation or institution, we speak directly to their application within our Church and parishes. Good governance within our Church and local parishes is particularly important as it bears witness to Gospel values and enables its members to faithfully carry out God's mission.

Governance is the way that a parish is managed and the processes and structures that are established to achieve goals and outcomes. When working well governance is collaborative, participatory, inclusive, equitable, transparent and unambiguous, consensus oriented, accountable and effective, with clear decision making processes, including the practice of discernment as appropriate, and adheres to the rule of law. There is a strong commitment to stewardship whereby the needs of all its members are listened to, treated with respect and taken into the decision making process. Good governance ensures that wrongdoing or errors of judgement in any form are identified honestly, openly investigated with appropriate consequences, and with determination and specific oversight strategies to ensure that such wrongdoing or errors of judgement will not occur in the future. Behaving with integrity and without favour, taking responsibility for actions, making reparation and restoration of relationships, making a genuine commitment to change is crucial for proper functioning. We believe these principles express well our Christian beliefs.

Effective governance begins with ethical and responsive leaders who empower all members to bring forward their ideas with confidence and so contribute to the vision and activities of the parishes. Authority is drawn from a collective partnership of clergy and laity within each parish and in partnership with the three parishes. There is a commitment to co-responsibility in planning and decision making whereby the voice of the laity sits alongside the voice of our ordained priests and together we work towards building flourishing parishes. Co-responsibility encourages a sense of community and commitment to each other; it develops positive relationships between those who belong to the parishes and also leads to sharing skills and knowledge that enables parishioners to be well informed, empowered and active. Thriving parishes are able to look to others in the community and invite and welcome them into shared activities and connections.