



Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council Statutes

Preamble

A key recommendation of *Go Forth - Review of the strategic, consultative and administrative structures of the Diocese of Sandhurst* (December 2020) was the establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council to be named the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council. The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst has a history of collaborative governance and leadership, including the establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council. The shape, form and function of this leadership, including the Council has varied according to the needs of the time. In our current time, the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council is understood as an expression of *synodality* in the life and mission of the local Church of Sandhurst.

The Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council is a structure that builds co-responsibility and discernment in leadership and decision-making. It strengthens the capacity of the diocese to operate in a strategic and collaborative way, by drawing on the advice of lay people and clergy for pursuing the Church's mission. Members of the Council will be chosen and called because of their specific gifts and strengths and will reflect the diversity of "the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese".¹ At the same time each member of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council is a representative of the Diocese and not of the parish, deanery, region, or organisation from which they come. Their advice and discernment will be for the entire people of God.

The Pastoral Council: Canon Law

Can. 511 In every diocese and to the extent that pastoral circumstances suggest it, a pastoral council is to be constituted which under the authority of the bishop investigates, considers, and proposes practical conclusions about those things which pertain to pastoral works in the diocese.

Can. 512 §1. A pastoral council consists of members of the Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church – clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially laity – who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop.

§2. The Christian faithful who are designated to a pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that they truly reflect the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese, with consideration given to the different areas of the diocese, social conditions and professions, and the role which they have in the apostolate whether individually or joined with others.

§3. No one except members of the Christian faithful outstanding in firm faith, good morals, and prudence is to be designated to a pastoral council.

Can. 513 §1. A pastoral council is constituted for a period of time according to the prescripts of the statutes which are issued by the bishop.

§2. When the see is vacant, a pastoral council ceases.

Can. 514 §1. A pastoral council possesses only a consultative vote. It belongs to the diocesan bishop alone to convoke it according to the needs of the apostolate and to preside over it; it also belongs to him alone to make public what has been done in the council.

§2. The pastoral council is to be convoked at least once a year.

¹ CIC 512 §2

STATUTES

Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

1. Role of Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

The Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council exercises leadership under the authority of the Bishop by investigating, considering and proposing practical priorities and strategies relating to the mission and pastoral life of the Diocese. The Council seeks out and listens to the voices of the faithful in the local Church and all people in this part of regional Victoria, and is committed to dialogue, reflection, discernment and action. The Council is an advisory and consultative body that works in partnership with other diocesan advisory bodies and Catholic entities to support the Bishop and other groups in their local church leadership roles.

2. The Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council fulfils this role by:

2.1 Developing, monitoring, and evaluating the Diocese's strategic direction, through a process of ongoing **listening, dialogue** and **discernment**.

2.1.1 Listening:

The Council will listen and investigate by:

- 2.1.1.1 Identifying local, national or global priorities.
- 2.1.1.2 Undertaking and/or commissioning research.
- 2.1.1.3 Establishing working parties.

2.1.2 Dialogue:

The Council will examine and consider:

- 2.1.2.1 Areas of pastoral concern and importance to mission.
- 2.1.2.2 Diocesan responses to local, national or global issues, including the outcomes arising from the 5th Plenary Council of Australia, the Diocesan Synthesis for the Synod for a Synodal Church, the 2023 Diocesan Assembly, and the recommendations from the *Light From the Southern Cross* report.
- 2.1.2.3 Arrangements and timing for Diocesan Gatherings, Assemblies or Synods, bearing in mind the commitment made by Australian bishops to hold a Diocesan Synod in each diocese within five years of the conclusion of the Plenary Council and every ten years thereafter.

2.1.3 Discernment:

The Council will propose responses by:

- 2.1.3.1 Developing, implementing, assessing and reviewing strategic directions for the diocese.
- 2.1.3.2 Planning, conducting and evaluating a Diocesan Gathering, Assembly or Synod.
- 2.1.3.3 Promoting trust and unity among the people of the diocese.

- 2.2 Effective communication and consultation with parishes, the Council of Priests, College of Consultors, Diocesan Finance Council, Parish Pastoral Councils, Sandhurst Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators Network, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd, Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education & Care Ltd, Catholic Care Victoria Ltd, Chancery staff and other Catholic entities in the diocese.
- 2.3 Reviewing its role and functions every 3 years.

3. Composition

- 3.1 Ex-officio Members
 - 3.1.1 The Bishop.
 - 3.1.2 The Vicar General.
- 3.2 Members
 - 3.2.1 Membership of the Council shall comprise up to twelve persons appointed by the Bishop, having regard to personal skills and experience and appropriate diversity.
 - 3.2.2 These members will include three lay members and one priest from each deanery of the Diocese (Goulburn Valley, Northeast and Western).
 - 3.2.3 Members shall be appointed by the Bishop after inviting Expressions of Interest.
- 3.3 Other Members
 - The Bishop may appoint up to two other members.
- 3.4 Term of appointment
 - Council members will be appointed for 3 years, except for ex-officio members. No member should serve more than two consecutive terms, except for ex-officio members.
- 3.5 Executive Officer
 - The Executive Officer of the Council shall be the Director of Mission and Pastoral Life. A minute secretary will also attend each meeting.

4. Attributes and skills of members, expressions of interest, membership panel

- 4.1 Members are to have the following personal attributes:
 - 4.1.1 A baptised person of faith and actively involved in the Catholic community of the Sandhurst Diocese.
 - 4.1.2 Demonstrated leadership capabilities.
 - 4.1.3 A commitment to synodality.
 - 4.1.4 A preparedness and ability to be present at each meeting of Council.²
 - 4.1.5 A preparedness to continue or to take up a consultative process with the deanery and/or the community base from which the member is called.

² See Appendix, 'Interim Protocols for Meetings of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council'.

- 4.1.6 Have attained the age of 18 years.
- 4.2 Members must hold a Working with Children Check current in the state of Victoria or provide evidence that they are a member of a group exempt from holding a Working with Children Check.
- 4.3 Prospective members will submit an Expression of Interest addressing the personal attributes in 4.1, provide relevant information as required and nominate a priest in the diocese to act as a referee.
- 4.4 Following the submission of Expressions of Interest, a membership panel will be convened and chaired by the Bishop.
 - 4.4.1 The membership panel will consist of the Vicar General, the Episcopal Vicar for Education and three members of the lay faithful of the Diocese.
 - 4.4.2 The attributes in 4.1 will form the selection criteria used by the membership panel.
 - 4.4.3 A skills matrix will also be developed to assist the membership panel.

5. Appointment and commissioning of members

Members of the Council shall be appointed by the Bishop and commissioned at the annual Mass of the Oils.

6. Vacation of office

- 6.1 Resignation
Members of the Council may resign at any time. Resignations are to be in writing and addressed to the Bishop, giving one month's notice.
- 6.2 No longer meeting membership criteria
Members who no longer meet the membership criteria will be asked to resign. For example, changing address to another deanery within the Diocese or relocating to an address outside the physical boundaries of the Diocese.
- 6.3 Removal by the Bishop
The Bishop may at any time remove any member from the Council.
- 6.4 In the event of a casual vacancy a new member shall be appointed for the remainder of the original term of office.

7. Executive

- 7.1 The Bishop shall appoint a Chair for the Council from among the members.
- 7.2 The Executive will be comprised of the Bishop, the Chair and the Executive Officer.

- 7.3 The Executive determines the meeting protocols and work plan for the Council. Interim Meeting Protocols for the Council are in the Appendix.

8. Conflict of interest

- 8.1 A conflict of interest is a situation in which an individual has competing interests or loyalties such as:
- 8.1.1 Personal interests that conflict with his or her professional position.
 - 8.1.2. A person who has a position of authority in one organisation that conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation.
 - 8.1.3. A person who has conflicting responsibilities.
- 8.2 If a member becomes aware of a possible conflict of interest, the person must notify the Chair of the conflict. The Chair will consult with the Bishop and may also consult other members of the Council before making a decision relating to the declared conflict of interest.

9. Ceasing operations when the see is vacant

When the see is vacant, the Council ceases to function. Within a year of taking possession, the new diocesan bishop should establish a new pastoral advisory body in accordance with Canon 511.

10. Amendments

These statutes may be amended:

- 10.1. By the diocesan Bishop on his own initiative.
- 10.2. By a vote of two-thirds of all Council members, subject to 10.3 below.
- 10.3. No new statutes or amendment of the statutes shall be effective without approval by the Bishop.
- 10.4. Nothing in the statutes may contradict the universal law of the Catholic Church, or the particular law of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst.

Approval

Status	Approved
Date	31 January 2023
Approved by	Bishop Shane Mackinlay

Appendix

Interim Protocols for Meetings of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

1. Meetings

- a. Council meetings shall be convened by the Bishop and must be held at least three times a year.
- b. Meeting dates will be published in advance.
- c. The first meeting of each year will include extended time allocated for the formation of Council members.
- d. Wherever possible meetings will be held in person, at a location geographically central to the majority of members.
- e. For those required to be away from home for the duration of the meeting, reasonable costs of accommodation and meals will be met by the diocese.
- f. Meetings may be held online.
- g. Meetings will always open and close with prayer. Council members may be invited to plan and lead prayer and may call upon the assistance of the Mission and Pastoral Life Team as needed.

2. Code of conduct

- a. Council members will strive always to act with dignity, deep respect and care for others.
- b. Each member will be required to sign the Sandhurst Diocesan Code of Conduct for Volunteers.

3. Attendance

- a. Members will be expected to attend all meetings.
- b. If a member is unable to attend all or part of a meeting, they are to contact the Executive Officer.
- c. Members who are unable to meet these requirements and who miss two consecutive meetings without an apology may be asked by the Executive to reconsider their membership in order that full representation may be maintained.
- d. A quorum of the Council shall be two-thirds of its members.

4. Preparation and communication

- a. The Executive shall meet no later than two weeks before an ordinary meeting and otherwise as required.
- b. Except in cases of extreme urgency, members are to be given written notice of special meetings not less than three weeks prior to the date of the meeting. Notice of ordinary meetings will be given at the previous ordinary meeting.
- c. A draft agenda will be prepared by the Executive and approved by the Bishop before each meeting of the Council. Copies of the agenda and Council papers shall be emailed to members to reach them not less than one week before the relevant meeting. Members will be invited to submit items for the agenda.

5. Decision-making

- a. While in all matters it is hoped that members will come to resolutions by consensus, the Bishop retains final decision-making authority.

6. Tasks, working groups and committees

- a. The Council may request individual members or groups of members to undertake tasks between meetings. This includes, but is not limited to, reporting to and consultation with the faithful in their deanery and/or base community.
- b. The Council may appoint special working groups and committees to investigate and report on particular matters referred to them.
- c. All working groups and committees of the Council shall have the power to co-opt either on their own initiative, or by direction from the Council.

7. Minutes and reporting

- a. Minutes shall be kept for each meeting of the Council. Copies of draft minutes shall be distributed to members as soon as practicable after each meeting.
- b. A report of each meeting will be shared with key councils, advisory bodies and entities in the Diocese of Sandhurst within two weeks of the Council meeting.
- c. A public report will be published in the Sandpiper e-News following each Council meeting.
- d. A report on the activities of the Council will be published annually.

8. Relationship to other Councils, Catholic entities, working groups and staff

- a. The Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst also has other councils and working groups, as well as staff who provide advice to the Bishop and diocesan leadership, including: College of Consultors, Council of Priests, Diocesan Finance Council, Mission and Pastoral Life Team, Finance and Administration Team, Sandhurst Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators Network, Boards and Staff of Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd, Sandhurst Catholic Early Childhood Education & Care Ltd and Catholic Care Victoria.
- b. Members of the Council may be invited by the Bishop to attend meetings of the College of Consultors and the Council of Priests or to nominate others who would be suitable for this.
- c. One member of the Council is nominated by the Council for appointment by the Bishop as a member of the Diocesan Finance Council.
- d. The Council develops and promotes the vision and mission for the Diocese by which all other councils, advisory bodies and Catholic entities are guided to fulfil their contribution to the Diocese of Sandhurst in its life, faith and mission.
- e. Other Councils, working groups and diocesan staff may be approached by the Council for advice, project work or dialogue.
- f. Other Councils, working groups and diocesan staff may, by their own initiative, make recommendations to the Council, request advice, or dialogue with the Council on issues and matters which pertain to their mandate. Such proposals will be considered in the first instance by the Council's Executive.

Approval

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