



Anglican Diocese of Grafton Registry Update

Edition 15 – March 2019

For distribution to any office bearer within the Anglican Diocese of Grafton including its parishes and organisations.

This is the first edition of the Registry Update for 2019 and as usual it contains important information on a variety of topics. These Registry Updates are not only important for reading at the time of receiving but also worthwhile for putting aside for future reference. If you are looking for any of the previous copies, you can find them on the Diocese's website at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/registry-update/>

This Registry Update has been widely distributed by email but if you believe that someone has been missed who should also be receiving the Registry Update, please feel free to share your copy with them and advise admin@graftondiocese.org.au of the update to the distribution list.

The information contained in this Registry Update is not confidential or private, so please feel free to share it with others who would benefit from knowing.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURE DEVELOPMENTS

In its February 2019 meeting, the Bishop-in-Council considered a number of policies and procedures that have been in development throughout 2017 and 2018. A number of policies and procedures were adopted for immediate effect.

Being Together

In the Anglican Church of Australia, there is a widespread awareness of the code of conduct Faithfulness in Service. Faithfulness in Service focusses on the responsibilities of individuals and sets out a range of standards and guidelines for personal behaviour.

In 2014, the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia also adopted a statement called "Being Together" which describes how the church should operate as a community. The recent meeting of Bishop-in-Council endorsed "Being Together" for use in this Diocese and for inclusion in a number of policies relating to conduct.

The "Being Together" statement can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/beingtogether/> on the Diocesan website.

Handling Suspected Misconduct

Have you ever had the experience of noticing something that may have been misconduct in the church but didn't know the proper way to handle it? Or perhaps you have had a problem with someone's conduct toward you and you didn't know what procedure applies?

The Bishop-in-Council has recognised that this is a confusing area for most people and has now approved a new procedure GEN-007 Handling Suspected Misconduct. This new procedure has a flowchart which helps you work out the proper approach for a matter of suspected misconduct.

GEN-007 Handling Suspected Misconduct can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/policies-procedures/> on the Diocesan website.

Prevention of Bullying and Harassment

A resolution of the 2016 Synod asked for more to be done on the topic of preventing bullying and harassment.

After considerable work by a special committee, a new procedure GEN-004 Prevention of Bullying and Harassment has been approved by the Bishop-in-Council.

The Bishop-in-Council has also recognised that this matter needs more than a procedure and has approved a program of education and awareness raising regarding bullying and harassment and other conduct issues. This program will commence with a special presentation at the 2019 Synod and will be followed by training and awareness sessions in parishes in the second half of this year. More information on this training will be made available in the coming months.

GEN-004 Prevention of Bullying and Harassment can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/policies-procedures/> on the Diocesan website.

Grievances

For a number of years there has been a procedure for the handling of grievances. Experience with that procedure has pointed to a number of improvements that were needed to handle grievances better and to ensure fairness.

At the recent meeting of Bishop-in-Council a new procedure GEN-005 Grievances was approved to replace the existing procedure.

GEN-005 Grievances can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/policies-procedures/> on the Diocesan website.

If you look at Attachment A of the new procedure you will see that there is a poster for display in parishes. The poster promotes the statement "Being Together". The poster also advises that there is a policy for the handling of grievances and gives the names of the contact person(s) relevant for the parish.

The template for this poster will be sent to each parish office so that the names of contact persons can be added and the poster printed, laminated and displayed prominently in each church and hall.

The training program relating to bullying and harassment will also include training and awareness relating to grievances. More information will be available in the coming months.

Background Checks and Minimum Training

From time to time, information has been shared on decisions as to who needs a Working With Children Check, who needs a criminal record check, who needs to attend Faithfulness in Service training and who needs to attend Safe Ministry training. Until now, there was no single reliable source for this information.

Recently Bishop-in-Council approved a new procedure GEN-006 Background Checks and Minimum Training Standards for Community Protection. This new procedure collects each of the previous decisions regarding criminal record checks, Working With Children Checks, Faithfulness in Service training and Safe Ministry training and is a clear guide to the minimum requirements for each of these matters which reflect strongly on the safety and reputation of the church.

GEN-006 Background Checks and Minimum Training Standards for Community Protection can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/policies-procedures/> on the Diocesan website.

If this procedure reveals a need for someone from your parish to attend Safe Ministry training, please contact Maree Collett at the Bishop's Registry so that training can be planned.

Social Media

Digital and electronic communication and social media are now an accepted part of the landscape of our society. With the advantages and opportunities that these developments provide come challenges and pitfalls.

To set appropriate standards for the use of social media within the Diocese of Grafton, the Bishop-in-Council has approved GEN-008 Use of Social Media.

Please make sure that you bring this new policy to the attention of all who hold authority in your ministry especially anyone responsible for a church website, Facebook or other social media page or if they are involved in an activity concerning youth.

GEN-008 Use of Social Media can be found at <https://www.graftondiocese.org.au/documents/policies-procedures/> on the Diocesan website.

POTENTIAL ORDINANCE CHANGES – PARISH ADMINISTRATION

The Bishop-in-Council has agreed that the business papers for the 2019 Synod will include an ordinance that will make major changes to Chapter 10 of the Diocesan Governance Ordinance 2008. This is the chapter that covers Parish Administration.

As the changes are significant and will affect every parish of the diocese, the Bishop-in-Council has asked that the latest draft be sent to each Parish Council for consideration and comment.

Bishop-in-Council hopes that Parish Councils take up this opportunity to consider the wording and structure of Chapter 10 of the Diocesan Governance Ordinance. This is the single most important piece of church legislation that affects the governance of parishes.

Any suggestions for changes to the draft received at the Registry by 30 April will be considered before finalising the ordinance for the 2019 Synod.

DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

In November 2018, I advised that the Diocese of Grafton had appointed Ms Amanda Hickey as Acting Director of Professional Standards (DPS). I am pleased to advise that after an advertising and selection process, Ms Amanda Hickey has been confirmed as Director of Professional Standards.

The contact details for the DPS are 1800 370 757 or dps@graftondiocese.org.au

In November, I also advised that each parish would have received a number of laminated A4 size posters with the contact details of the Director of Professional Standards. If you haven't already removed the outdated posters and prominently displayed the new posters in churches and church halls, then please do so as a priority.

GIFTS AND HONORARIUMS

The Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission (ACNC) recently published a webinar called "Gifts and Honorariums: What Your Charity Should Know". This webinar is available on the ACNC website at <https://www.acnc.gov.au/tools/webinars/gifts-and-honorariums-what-your-charity-should-know>

It is strongly encouraged that Churchwardens and Parish Treasurers take the time to watch this webinar as it covers areas that can be pitfalls for the operation of parishes.

In particular, the webinar highlights the problems and legal pitfalls in paying gifts and honorariums where a payment for service (e.g. wages) would be appropriate.

INSURANCE AND RISK MANAGEMENT

From time to time, the Registry receives an enquiry that talks of an unsafe situation within a parish and asking if such a situation is covered by insurance.

It is important to point out that these questions are looking at the problem in the wrong way.

Insurance should be considered as the 'last resort' for things that go wrong despite 'best efforts'.

Having identified that a hazard or an unsafe situation exists, the focus should be upon managing the risk to make the situation safer for all concerned.

When managing a risk to make a situation safer, there are 6 types of action that can be taken. These 6 types of action are listed below with the typically most effective action listed first and the typically least effective action listed sixth:

1. eliminate the hazard (remove hazardous equipment or cease hazardous activity);
2. substitute the hazard with a lesser risk (adopt a safer alternative);
3. isolate the hazard (restrict access);
4. use engineering controls (apply guards, electrical safety switches or similar);
5. use administrative controls (regular inspections, safer procedures, provide instruction or training);
6. use personal protective equipment (safety clothing, rubber mats or similar).

While it is important to have insurance and to be aware of what insurance covers, it is even more important to identify risks and hazards and take appropriate action to reduce the severity and chance of an incident.

COUNTING OF CHURCH COLLECTIONS

A specific area of risk is in the counting and handling of money.

For the physical safety of those counting money, to reduce the chance of theft, fraud, or accusations of theft or fraud, the methods of handling and counting of money should be reviewed from time to time.

Some quick points:

- Money counting should always be done by at least two people together and these people should not be from the same family (e.g. husband and wife);

- Similarly, any authorisation of expenditure or the signing of cheques should be done by two people with that authority but not people from the same family;
- Those under the age of 18 should not be responsible for counting or handling of money;
- Wherever possible, money should not be taken home. If money is to be taken home, then it should be counted and the amount recorded first;
- The practice of taking funds to the bank should be varied as much as practicable. Changes of time, route, person, bag etc. reduce the predictability of the banking practice and reduce the chance of theft.

EMPLOYMENT PRACTICES INSURANCE COVER

As advised in the November 2018 Registry Update, as part of the insurance renewal, there has been a change to the Employment Practices Insurance Cover. The new arrangements mean that the organisations covered by the policy are required to get appropriate legal advice before the termination of any employee.

Failure to get appropriate legal advice would mean that the excess on a claim is \$25,000; but where advice is obtained prior to termination, the excess will be \$5,000.

Parish officeholders are reminded that whenever termination of an employee is being considered or where an action could prompt an employee's resignation, the matter should be referred to the Registrar for advice and the Registrar will source legal advice where necessary.

EMPLOYMENT

As advised in the November 2018 Registry Update, many complications in an employment relationship can arise because a person was employed without a detailed letter of appointment or a clear job description. All paid employment within the Diocese of Grafton, including casual employment, must have a signed and agreed letter of appointment as part of the offer of work.

Please contact the Registrar to discuss this matter prior to advertising any position and before making any offer of employment.

IMPORTANT DATES

Bishop-in-Council

11th April 2019

16th May 2019

15th August 2019

17th October 2019

19th December 2019

Corporate Trustees

14th March 2019

23rd May 2019

18th July 2019

19th September 2019

7th November 2019

Buildings and Property Committee

7th March 2019

1st May 2019

3rd July 2019

28th August 2019

30th October 2019

11th December 2019

If you have any submission to a meeting of Bishop-in-Council, the Corporate Trustees or the Buildings and Property Committee, please provide these to the Registrar at least 10 days prior to a meeting to ensure that your submission can be included in the business of that meeting.

Synod

The 2019 Synod of the Diocese of Grafton will commence on Friday 21st June with the Synod Eucharist and the opening session.

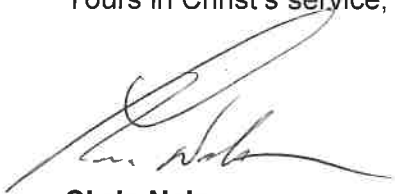
On Saturday 22nd and 23rd June, synod business will continue at the Grafton District Services Club (GDSC) in Fry Street, Grafton.

Pre-synod meetings have been organised to preview and explain the business of the 2019 Synod. These meetings have been planned for:

- 10am Saturday 8th June - St Bartholomew, Alstonville
- 5pm Wednesday 12th June - St Augustine, Woolgoolga
- 10am Saturday 15th June - All Saints, Kempsey

Synod representatives are encouraged to attend these pre-synod meetings however any interested member of the Anglican church can also attend.

Yours in Christ's service,



Chris Nelson
Registrar/General Manager
Anglican Diocese of Grafton