



# **A GUIDE FOR CLERGY:**

## **An Anthology of Diocesan Policies**

**and other information for Clergy**

Diocese of Wagga Wagga

Version 1: August 2022

Version 2: January 2023

Version 3: June 2023

Version 4: February 2024

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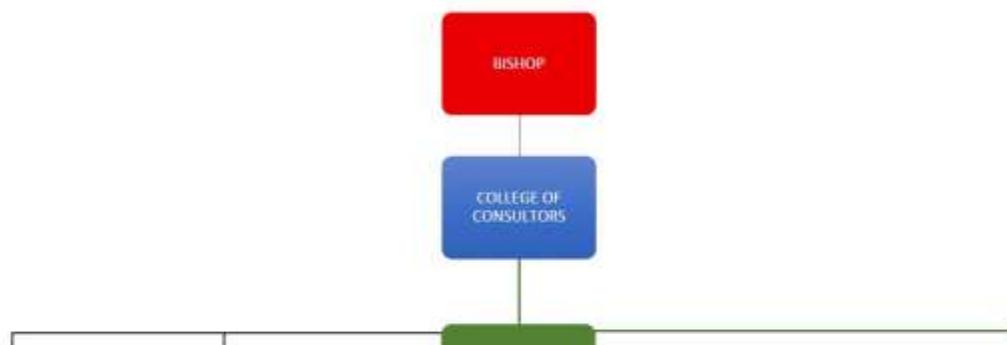
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## Diocese of Wagga Wagga Organisational Charts

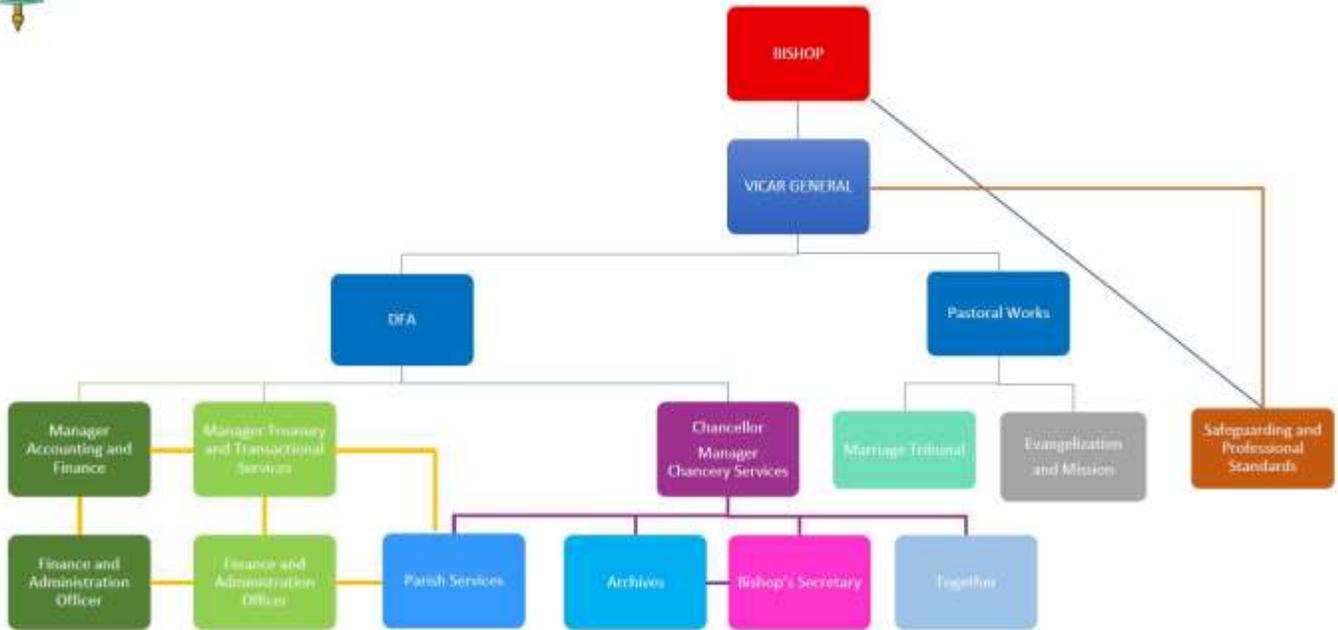


# DWW GOVERNANCE CHART





# DWW CURIA CHART



## Notion of Clergy

A cleric is anyone in holy orders, deacon or priest, incardinated, being incardinated or working with permission in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. In the universal Church, all clergy come from God's people, a royal priesthood (cf. 1 Peter 2:5.9). The members of the ministerial priesthood are called from the royal priesthood as a gift given by Christ to serve God's faithful. If the royal priesthood results from the fact that the Christian People are chosen by God as a bridge with humanity and that every believer belongs to this people, the ministerial priesthood is a fruit of that election, a specific vocation: "He called his disciples, and chose from them twelve" (Lk 6: 13-16).

## Requisites of a Parish Priest

A parish priest is appointed by the bishop with his authority, "whose ministry of Christ he is called to share, so that for this community he may carry out the offices of teaching, sanctifying and ruling..." (Can. 519). The priest chosen for this task, according to Canon 521.2, is to be outstanding in sound doctrine; uprightness of character; endowed with zeal for souls and other virtues; in possession of the requisite qualities.

As a consequence, every cleric in active ministry is expected to fulfil all Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adult training requirements of the diocese in which he ministers. Every active cleric is required to possess a current Working With Children Clearance and may on some occasions have to provide a fresh National Police Check. Visiting Clergy must provide evidence of their Working With Children Clearance from their state of residence, and their ACMR number. If they are not registered on the ACMR, then ACSL Safeguarding Statements must be provided.

## Notion of a Parish

"A parish [parocia] is a certain community of Christ's faithful stably established within a particular Church, whose pastoral care, under the authority of the diocesan bishop, is entrusted to a parish priest as its proper pastor." Can. 515.1. Thus, the parish, which is like a diocesan cell, should give an outstanding example of community apostolate, for it gathers into a unity all the human diversity that is found there and inserts those people into the universality of the Church. The office of parish priest is principally expressed by preaching the Word of God, administering the sacraments, and by the pastoral government of the community. Such priests have been called by their bishop to be the proper shepherds of the parishes entrusted to them. They act with the delegated authority of that bishop in whose ministry in Christ they have been called to share.

## Canonical Rights and Duties of the Parish Priest

The parish priest shares with the bishop of the diocese the offices of teacher of the faith, minister of the Sacraments, and spiritual shepherd of the parish entrusted to him. This parish will include staff and students in the parish school, which is an integral part of the parish. The parish priest is answerable directly to the bishop in parish matters unless the bishop delegates another priest to act in his name in some particular area of responsibility (cf. Canons 519, 476). With regard to parish schools the rights and duties of parish priests are relevant especially in three areas:

1. In the area of Evangelisation and Catechetics, the parish priest shares with the bishop the responsibility for preaching the Gospel and for Catechetical formation. This includes preparation for sacraments (cf. Canons 528.1, 773, 776, 777).
2. In the area of the celebration of the Liturgy, the parish priest is bound to encourage all to approach frequently the Eucharistic Sacrifice (with proper dispositions) and the other Sacraments and to participate with understanding and devotion. He is also bound to see that the Mass and Sacraments are readily available to all. He directs the liturgy in his own parish and is bound to be on guard lest abuses occur (cf. Canons 528).

3. In the administration of parish goods, only the parish priest is the legal representative of the parish, which is known in Canon law as a "juridical person" (cf. Canons 532, 1281-1288).

## Clergy in the Particular Church

Diocesan clergy, as shepherds after the model of Christ the head, exercise servant leadership through their office of teaching, sanctifying and governing in building up the community of faith. In each parish, the clergy make present the bishop, their 'brother and co-worker' and chief pastor of the local Church. Incardinated for the service of the local Church, diocesan clergy are in turn supported by the faithful in order to achieve their goals. Accordingly, these pastoral insights are worthy of note:

- Every parish is unique with its own history and traditions. The parish, which the priest is called to serve, belongs to God's people. One day the priest will be called elsewhere so he should aim to leave the parish with a worthwhile legacy.
- When transitioning from a parish, he should leave behind the people of the previous parish and its endeavours. He should start afresh with new parishioners and in time seek to build up what is needed in the new pastoral realm.
- He should strive to work with people, noting that in each parish there are always key individuals, who will want to learn about him and who will want him to listen to them.
- He should create a sense of community by including a diverse range of people, making them feel as though they belong, whilst upholding the tenets of the Catholic faith. Where appropriate he should consult with others, even if he has a strong sense of what he should do, because people justly want to be a part of the decision-making process.
- His homilies should generally be both positive and uplifting. Every attempt should be made to impart in a contemporary manner the timeless truths of the Gospel.
- Let him attempt to 'meet and greet' as many people as possible, giving special importance to the sick and elderly and children in their schools. Being present at local community and sporting events can be very beneficial.
- There are correctional facilities in some parishes. It is the role of the priest to ensure that pastoral care and chaplaincy needs of the residents are met.
- He can participate in local events with liturgical and social activities e.g. Australia Day, ANZAC Day, Mothers Day, Fathers Day, and occasions of special need such as droughts, community tragedies, etc.

## Parish Pastoral Council

Many parishes have active parish pastoral councils. This is a consultative group drawn up from the parish to help the parish priest in pastoral planning and in fulfilling his role of oversight and responsibility for the parish, to which he has been appointed by the bishop. The term of the existing pastoral council ceases when the parish priest's term concludes. A wise new parish priest will usually re-appoint the previous existing pastoral council for a specified period of time and this council will facilitate his integration into the parish. The new parish priest, after the extra period of appointment for the parish pastoral council has elapsed, may choose to review or restructure his parish council. Selection of council members is often by nomination and vote, but the parish priest may invite and appoint ex-officio members. There are programs used for formation/induction of parish pastoral council members to help them to know their role and carry out their service.

Meetings may be held on a regular basis, e.g. every two months with additional ad hoc meetings when particular needs arise. Resources are available on the ACBC website: <https://www.catholic.org.au/parishes/parishes>

Parish pastoral council meetings need to be conducted efficiently by an appointed or elected Chair who is not normally the parish priest. The decisions of the parish council are of an advisory nature. The pastor is not bound by them, though he should want to consult the faithful in matters concerning their pastoral care and should take their wisdom seriously.

## Confirmation Programme

This programme is set by consultation with the chancery office. Annual or periodical dates for conferring the Sacrament of Confirmation are determined by the bishop generally after due discussion with the parish priest. A determining factor is the number of candidates that would be considered eligible on a yearly basis. The basic directives for conferring the Sacrament are to be found in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1285 - 1314). The bishop usually confirms people who are in the latter years of primary school. In such cases, the bishop will meet with Confirmation candidates from both the Catholic and State Schools. Any booklet prepared for the Liturgy in which the Sacrament of Confirmation is conferred is to be submitted for the bishop's approval prior to final printing.

## Parish Visitation

Formal visitation to the parish by the bishop is conducted on a two/three-year cycle. He may be supported in these visits by Diocesan Finance, Administration and Safeguarding personnel. Parish visits are a precious opportunity for the priest and bishop to maintain personal contact. Among other things, on these occasions the bishop will discuss with the parish priest the parish finances – particularly in the light of the annual returns supplied to the chancery office for both the parish Church account (second collection) and the Presbytery account (first collection); the parish priest should prepare this paperwork in advance in anticipation of the bishop's visit. The bishop and members of his team may also meet with members of the parish council and finance council. The bishop expects to meet with the staff of the Catholic Schools at a morning tea/lunch and to have a discussion with the principal. A visit to each year level or classroom in the Catholic School is to be arranged with the school authorities. It is an expectation of the bishop that he will have an opportunity to visit the hospital, and nursing homes within the parish where the sacraments are regularly administered. The parish registers which concern baptisms, marriages, confirmations and deaths\* are to be completed at the time of the administration of the sacrament. The bishop will inspect these registers for accuracy and compliance with this regulation. (\* A death register can be easily obtained if one is not presently in use.)

*Note Bene:*

- a) Government forms for Marriages should be completed and sent to the NSW Government Registrar without undue delay after the ceremony. The Government register book is to be kept in the parish. Government forms can be obtained from the government's website.  
Church forms (pre-nuptial enquiry forms etc) are normally obtained from the chancery.
- b) All Marriage dispensation forms and requests for certain permissions should be directed to the chancellor or the Vicar General or the bishop in particular circumstances. These forms should be submitted early. The granting of permissions should never be taken for granted. Dispensations from the impediment of canonical form are to be sighted by the bishop. His express permission is required if a marriage is to take place at a venue other than a Catholic church or designated Catholic chapel. Applications for declaration of nullity of marriage should be referred to the competent authority at the diocesan tribunal.

## Hospital Chaplaincy

Clergy have an important role in the pastoral care of the sick and dying in hospitals. They carry this out principally through the administration of the Sacraments and in their general visitations to the sick and their families. However, the practice of hospital visitation is now regulated by various laws and regulations which need to be taken into consideration. The following is a brief summary of some legal requirements.

*Privacy Laws* – the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act (1998) designates information about a person's religious status as "sensitive information" and requires express consent for the disclosure of this information. This includes sharing of the information with hospital chaplains. Those who are not formally accredited as chaplains to the hospital need the individual consent of patients in order to visit them.

*Chaplaincy Accreditation* – the Civil Chaplaincy Advisory Committee, NSW has set out certain requirements that must be met in order to be formally accredited as a hospital chaplain. These requirements are set out in full in Circular 98/42 Chaplaincy Services to the NSW Health System. [An accredited chaplain is part of the Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care Service of the hospital. There are various classes of chaplains, depending on the level and type of involvement in the hospital. In order to be given the list of patients who are Catholic i.e. those who have given consent under the privacy legislation, the chaplain is required to be recognised and accredited by the hospital. In order to receive this accreditation: the chaplain is normally expected to complete pastoral training equivalent to Introductory (40 hours) or preferably Basic (400 hours) Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).] Accredited institutions for CPE include Royal Melbourne Hospital (through the University of Divinity), Sydney College of Divinity, and the Queensland Institute of Clinical Pastoral Education. Clergy who are not formally accredited by the hospital are classified as 'Visiting Clergy'. These are local priests and ministers who visit their own people in hospital as part of their normal parish responsibility. They do not fall under the chaplaincy regulations and do not have the privileges of chaplains, such as hospital ID badges, uses of hospital facilities, and wider access to staff and patients.



## Parish Schools

Canon Law and regulations in other documents are important in defining the role of the parish priest in his parish school. A good working relationship between the parish priest and his school principal, as well as between the parish priest and the executive and other key staff members, provides an essential key to a harmonious and effective school ministry and apostolate.

Accordingly, a parish priest, on his appointment to a parish, or on the appointment of a new principal, should make it a priority to meet with the principal and try to develop a relationship based on mutual trust and respect for each other's professional competence and experience. He should thereafter make time to meet the principal regularly, even weekly, as well as the other staff members, both formally and informally. He should use opportunities to get to know the students, meeting them both inside and outside the classroom on a regular basis. Likewise, he should make efforts to get to know the parents, making use of the opportunities offered before and after school, at P&F meetings, tuck shops, working bees, fetes, etc.

The parish priest should strive to help the members of the school community (i.e. teachers, parents and students) to see themselves as part of the parish community. They should be encouraged to be present at the parish Sunday Mass with their families and perhaps occasionally as a school body. Teachers who live and worship in another parish should be encouraged occasionally to worship in the parish to which their school is attached.

### Implementation of the Parish Priest's Canonical Obligations in the Parish School

The parish priest should strive to arrive at some practical agreement with the principal as to how he can fulfil within the school his canonical right and duty to impart religious and catechetical instruction to the children of his parish (which in practical terms includes all the children enrolled in his parish school). This will involve consideration of the times that he has access to the classes and how his instruction can complement the Religious Education programme that is in place with the mandate of the bishop.

Let him consider how the school can assist him in his canonical right and duty of preparing, in union with the parents concerned, the children of his parish for the first reception of the sacraments of Penance, and the Holy Eucharist and for the sacrament of Confirmation.

Let him see whether the school can provide opportunities within the timetable for the students to approach the sacrament of Penance, and participate in parish weekday Masses and other liturgical celebrations. This would include working together with the teachers to assist the students as a whole to participate according to the mind of the Church, and for individuals to be trained to carry out special ministries such as serving at the altar, singing in choir and reading the Word of God.

Only if agreement cannot be reached on any of the above matters should recourse be had to the bishop. The parish priest should make it a high priority to render all the assistance possible to teachers so that they may understand the Catholic Faith and liturgy. He should be available to assist them as a group (e.g. at staff meetings) and as individuals to deepen their spiritual life.

While it is for the bishop to mandate a particular programme of religious education for the diocese, it is presumed that he will want to consult the parish priests beforehand. Parish priests should be familiar with the programme in place so that they can give effective help to the teachers and so that they can give informed advice to the bishop on the effectiveness of this programme.

The school library should be stocked with appropriate books which complement the Catholic faith.

## Parish School Staffing

Principals are appointed and employed by the bishop. The parish priest is automatically a member of the Principal Selection Panel set up by the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education to interview and advise on the appointment of a principal. The bishop will not make a final appointment until he has conferred with the parish priest regarding a candidate. The parish priest should also be informed of the appointment before it is made public. The parish priest's judgement of appointments to his school, especially the role of principal and REC, should be held in the highest degree of importance.

Should a parish priest later have reasonable grounds for concern about the conduct of a principal he should approach the Director of Catholic Education. Should he be dissatisfied with the outcome, he should approach the bishop. If the matter seems to warrant it, he always has the right to go directly to the bishop.

Assistant principals, Religious Education Coordinators and other teaching staff are appointed by the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, on behalf of the bishop, on the advice of the principal and parish priest, and the parish priest should always be invited to sit on any selection panel. The parish priest should be informed of the selection before it is publicly announced and may appeal to the bishop if he has serious reservations concerning the chosen candidate.

Should the parish priest later have reasonable grounds for concern about the conduct of a member of the school's staff, he should advise the principal of that concern, specifying the complaint and nominating the teacher concerned. The principal will investigate the complaint and advise the parish priest of the outcome. If the parish priest is not satisfied with the outcome, he has the right to appeal to the Diocesan Director of Catholic Education, or, if the matter seems to warrant it, directly to the bishop, who always remains the final court of appeal. The process of principal assessment will always include the parish priest among those interviewed.

## School Plant

In civil law, school buildings and grounds are the property of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. The custom and practice of the diocese is that the parish priest manages the property on behalf of the trustees. In Canon Law, the parish priest administers the property on behalf of the juridical person of the parish. In practice the buildings and grounds are managed through the Education Office. This is to meet the requirements of WHS, fire regulations, building regulations and particularly in regard to applying for Government block grants.

The parish priest is automatically a member of the school board and any sub-committee that manages finance. He should be kept fully informed of the financial situation of the parish school, receiving all relevant statements and other documentation. The parish priest is also encouraged to take an interest in the parish school's Parents and Friends organisation.

Normally the parish priest's approval is required to be given to the principal and school board for all capital development and maintenance of a school's plant. In addition, the approval of the trustees is required both for the sale or transfer of that property and for capital improvements. In the case of disagreement, representations by the parish priest, principal and/or the school board should be made to the Director of Catholic Education, and as a last recourse, to the bishop.

## Parish Finances

In the Church, every public juridical person has a canonically recognised administrator who is charged with overseeing that public juridical person's affairs and who manages its property. The parish priest is the designated administrator of the parish (can 532). All parish priests and those who assist them are encouraged to be familiar with the requirements set forth in the Code for responsible administration of the goods of the parish (can 1284). This is a responsibility laid upon the parish priest by virtue of his appointment by the bishop to care for the parish. The parish priest is accountable both to the parish and to the bishop in his stewardship. It is a general principle of Canon Law that every person who administers temporal goods on behalf of a group is to consult with that group in carrying out the administration. For parishes, canon 537 makes it obligatory that there be a finance council to advise the parish priest.

### Finance Council

A finance council assists the parish priest in an advisory capacity in his care for and administration of the assets of the parish. Parishioners have a right to express their views and a duty to support the parish priest in his endeavours for the good of the parish and the Church. Through the parish finance council, the parishioners are to seek to lessen the burden of the parish priest in administering parish finances, in maintaining parish properties, in planning for future capital works, in raising the necessary finances and in establishing a framework for greater shared responsibility within parish life. The parish finance council is to understand its role in the light of the mission of the universal Church and the mission of the parish, which is to build up the life of the Church and to promote evangelisation.

### Parish Collections and Bank Accounts

There are usually two collections at Sunday Mass, one for the Presbytery and one for the Church. The parish should have separate bank accounts for the Presbytery (First collection) and Church (Second collection). To mitigate the risk of online fraud, the practice in this Diocese is that there are two signatories for every bank account, however, the parish priest is permitted to be the only signatory on the Presbytery Account under certain circumstances and with permission from the bishop. All excess parish funds are to be invested in the Diocesan Provident Fund.

(See also [Cash Handling](#))

**Presbytery Account:** The Presbytery account contributes to the central Priests Stipend Fund. This reflects the duty of the parish to provide for remuneration and support of those priests appointed to that parish. As many of our parishes are not able to support their priests, the first collections from across the diocese are aggregated and shared. This expresses our care for our brother priests in smaller parishes. From the first collection, the priests of the diocese also support the Priests Sustentation and Retirement Fund with an annual grant of \$25,000.

As well, the Presbytery Account provides for the following expenditure: food, housekeeping, newspapers (1 local, 1 metropolitan). Additional to the weekly collections (by hand or electronic, further income comes from donations, annual dues (Christmas and Easter Offerings) and 'stole fees' for Baptisms, Funerals and Weddings. The amount from such offerings to be sent into the Priest's Salary Fund is as follows:

- Funerals \$100
- Marriages \$100
- Baptisms \$50

After this dedicated amount has been paid into the Priest's Salary Fund the remainder of the offering is to be distributed as follows:

- 2/3 of the remainder is taken for the Parish Account (maintenance etc);
- 1/3 of the remainder is for the priest celebrant if he lives alone, or in households where there are two or more priests on the parish staff, this amount is to be placed in common, to be re-distributed equally among the priests by the Administrator or Parish Priest.

The Parish Priest or Parochial Administrator is to exercise discretionary judgement in regard to offerings received by visiting priests celebrating a Funeral/Marriage/Baptism in their parish.

All presbytery account monies remaining after the above-mentioned expenditure are to be sent to the Priests Stipend Fund (PSF) as requested in the Quarterly Returns sheet complete with a record of the income and expenses.

**Parish Church Account:** The Church collection pays for the expenses of the Presbytery building and all other Church property, including insurance. All monies from the second collection (envelopes and loose) are deposited in the Church account. An annual statement (end of the financial year) of Income and Expenditure of the account is forwarded to the chancery and, from this, assessments are made for Diocesan Levies. The diocese will levy the Church account for Education of Priests and Pastoral Care. This is a levy on all income of the Church account except monies raised specifically for capital works in the parish.

A Parish Annual Statement will be sent to the parish each year from the chancery office, to be completed by an appointed date. On the debit side there is room for payments made: (1) Including GST and (2) Excluding GST. The Annual Statement of the parish normally lists expenses such as rates, water and electricity, repairs, maintenance, phone, education, sacramental costs, secretarial, sundries etc.

Also, the parish is to fill out a BAS (Business Activity Statement) for the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as required, generally quarterly. Help with this form can be sought from an accountant in the parish or from the dean or the Diocesan Accounts staff.

Planned Giving contributions should be recorded each week in a separate ledger and a report of the contributions should be noted in the Annual Statement. A proportion of this planned giving may be transferred into a school building fund every month. (See also [School Building Fund](#) )

Special collections are banked in the Church account and forwarded to the diocesan office or the diocesan missions office according to the nature of the collection.

Annual leave supplies are paid from the Church account. (See "Annual Leave" page 11) for details on supply expenses).

## Financial Records

In accordance with the requirements of the Australian Taxation Office and other institutions, financial records such as BAS or tax returns, including all supporting receipts and documentation, and other financial records, must be kept for seven (7) years.

## Cash Handling

In accordance with Canon 1284 §2 (1-4) all offerings, contributions and other collections related to church events and activities are to be handled with financial integrity to protect the property of the church. All offerings,

contributions and other collections are to be counted by two (2) people unless specific permission has been sought from the Bishop to do otherwise.

Safe cash handling practices minimise the risk of theft and protect the safety of priests, staff and volunteers.

### Church Property

Acquisition and alienation of Church Property requires canonical and civil legal permission of the trustees of the diocese. All correspondence to this effect needs to be lodged with the chancery for due deliberation by the consultors who are the trustees of the diocese. The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference regularly updates conditions governing expenditure and alienation of Church property.

### Capital Expenditure

The parish priest, with the finance council's permission, may incur expenditure up to \$40,000 (amount updated in 2021) but not in excess, for any deemed maintenance or repairs. A single item of work should not be split into multiple items so as to get around this limit.

### School Building Fund

This parish fund manages school building loans in a manner acceptable to the Australian Taxation Office so that parishioners who contribute to the Church collection may receive the benefit of income tax deductibility. Receipts are issued to the parishioners on the basis of their yearly contribution so that they can claim on the percentage of their contribution to the planned giving programme transferred to the building fund. A school building fund operates solely to provide money for the acquisition, construction or maintenance of school buildings. It cannot be used for any other purpose. To be tax deductible, donations to the school building fund must be voluntary and not provide any material benefit to the donor such as a reduction in school fees. There are now much tighter regulations around school building funds. CEDWW has to account to the Dept of Education on funds in the account. At any stage Dept of Education or ATO can audit these accounts. Significant penalties apply if not managed and accounted for properly.

## Clergy Remuneration

### Stipend:

Since clerics dedicate themselves to the ecclesiastical ministry, they deserve the remuneration that befits their condition, in accord with the nature of their office and the conditions of time and place. Fair Work Australia classifies as stipend as: *“The stipend is not a wage or a salary, but rather a living allowance paid to the Minister, so he is able to cover his needs while exercising his call to God and his ministry across the life of the community.”*

The remuneration is to be such that it provides for the necessities of their own life and for the just remuneration of those whose services they need (can. 281/1). Suitable provision is likewise to be made for such social assistance as they may need in illness, incapacity or old age (can. 281/2). Incardinated clergy in full-time Parish Ministry will receive an annual stipend approved by the Council of Priests. The stipend will be paid from the PSF.

The aggregated first collections are the major contribution to the Priest Stipend Fund (PSF) from which the Clergy Stipends and Car Allowance are paid. As well, the diocese contributes to this fund using a portion of the DPF distribution to the diocese.

### Clergy Stipend Package consists of:

Stipend + Car Allowance + 10.5% superannuation (on the stipend and car allowance)

<b>Clergy Stipend Package as at February 2023</b>	<b>Stipend</b>	<b>Car Allowance</b>	<b>11% Superannuation</b>	<b>Total</b>
Annually	\$19,630.00	\$11,778.00	\$3,455.00	\$34,863.00
Fortnightly	\$752.93	\$451.76	\$132.52	\$1,337.21

*Clergy remuneration is indexed in the first February payment using the annual NSW CPI on December 31.*

### Car Allowance:

The Car Allowance is paid to clergy to assist with the expenses incurred in operating a vehicle for the purpose of carrying out their ministry. This payment is only available to priests in active ministry in the Diocese of Wagga Wagga. Priests who do not have their own car, or are studying outside the diocese, or are no longer in active ministry in the diocese, are not eligible to receive the Car Allowance.

### Travel Subsidy:

Clergy receive a car allowance to assist with the cost of running a car. To acknowledge the extra travel for ministry that is required in some appointments, those who are parish priests or administrators of multiple parishes are invited to apply for an additional petrol allowance including justification for their claim.

Currently petrol is just above \$2.00 per litre and a car should achieve 10 litres/100 km or better. The current allowance for petrol consumed between the two centres of ministry is thus calculated at 24 cents per km.

So, on the payment of 24c/km on the transfer from one parish to the other, this is calculated as follows:

Distance travelled in a week = *nn* km x *m* times a week = *total* km per week

Travel allowance/week = 24c/km x *total* km = *\$weekly amount*

The travel allowance is claimable yearly, by application to the Bishop, including distance travelled and number of times per week.

### Deacon Remuneration:

Deacons who are on Pastoral Placement preparing for Priestly Ordination will receive the Clergy Stipend and the Car Allowance if they have their own car. A diocesan car can be made available for ministry purposes if a deacon does not have his own car.

### Other Remuneration:

Any remuneration received from an appointed to a part-time ministry role (e.g., in the Police Department, the Armed Services, in Prison Ministry, Hospital, School or University etc.) must be paid into the PSF. Clergy who on their own initiative receive income additional to their annual stipend need written permission from the bishop. They are bound to declare it for taxation purposes.

### Mass Stipends & Stole Fees:

Mass stipends (offerings) accepted and retained by clergy for their own personal use must be recorded upon reception and completion. One may accept only one Mass stipend per day, except on Christmas Day (cf. Can 951.1) Additional Mass stipends received for a given day are to be forwarded to Vianney College. The amount recommended by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is \$10 per Mass or \$20 for November Masses for the Holy Souls.

Parish priests must offer Mass for the parish faithful pro populo (Can 534.1 says 'pro populo sibi commissio', i.e. 'for the people entrusted to him', which means the living.) on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation i.e. Christmas Day and the Solemnity of the Assumption). Hence, they cannot claim a Mass stipend on those particular days. As a consequence, it is not advisable for parish priests to accept Gregorian Mass offerings (40 consecutive Masses).

### Income Tax:

Clergy are responsible for their own personal tax. The Diocesan payroll system reports to the ATO through Single Touch Payroll (STP). An annual payment summary (income statement) is available in ATO online services through MyGov. For those who don't use ATO services through MyGov, a copy of your income statement can be obtained by phoning the ATO on 13 28 61. A registered tax agent can access your income statement in order to complete your tax return.

### Superannuation:

In accordance with federal legislation, the diocese pays a Superannuation levy for the clergy. These contributions, which are compulsory, are fixed by the government as a set percentage of the clergy's gross stipend.

## Clergy Car Scheme

The purposes of this opt-in scheme are to provide a motor vehicle to participating clergy and to provide for a more cost-effective way of operating the vehicle in carrying out their ministry. The car account may be used to pay for: car registration and third-party insurance; comprehensive motor vehicle insurance; petrol card; periodic services; other mechanical repairs and maintenance; NRMA membership; driver's licence renewal.

For those in the scheme, a motor vehicle is purchased in accordance with the following procedure. The priest works out with the business manager what car he wants. The business manager negotiates a purchase with the dealer. The sum of the current car as a trade-in with available loan funds from the DPF and any personal funds pays for the new car. A motor vehicle purchased under the Scheme is the property of the Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

The scheme operates via a salary (Stipend) sacrifice system. Each priest has his own account in the car scheme, and the priest is able to nominate the amount to be sacrificed from his stipend to go towards his car scheme account each fortnight. It is from this money that any expenses associated with his car will be paid. This money can only be used for vehicle-related expenses. If the priest wishes to access the money for a purpose not related directly to his car, he must write to the diocesan business manager outlining how much he would like to draw out of the account and for what purpose. The request will only be considered if it is related to the priest's work and ministry. As the priest's car scheme account increases over time, the priest may use the money accrued to purchase a new car if he so wishes, bearing in mind the process outlined in the above paragraph.

Participation in the scheme is open to priests and transitory deacons who are incardinated into the diocese; are not subject to ecclesiastical sanction; are not unlawfully absent from the diocese; and have not de facto returned to the lay state. Other clerics with the consent of the bishop may participate in the Scheme. Participation in the scheme is voluntary. An application to participate is to be made in writing in which the applicant states that he accepts the conditions as established in the Statutes. The scheme is administered by the Diocesan Business Office through the Diocesan Business Manager.

### Provision of a car for newly ordained clergy

Newly ordained clerics are given a free gift of \$12,000 to go towards the purchase of a car. The new priest also has the option of applying in writing to the DPF for an interest free loan to cover the remaining cost of the car and/or associated costs eg. registration, insurance, etc. If the new priest applies for and is granted such a loan, he is able to pay back the loan via an agreed payment plan which draws from his car scheme account. The repayment period should not exceed 5 years. *(See also: Clergy Remuneration - Car Allowance)*



## Annual Leave

In addition to the following leave arrangements, clergy are entitled to one full day off each week. Annual holidays consist of 3 weekends a year and as much as can be taken on either side of these weekends. It is not in the spirit of this policy to take 3 weekends at intervals giving 6 weeks holiday a year. This policy is not absolute, and allowance can be made for special circumstances after appropriate discussion with the bishop. The chancery office should be given the dates for planned annual holidays and be informed if the parish is left unattended for periods outside the annual leave or weekly day off.

## Supply Priests

The parish is responsible for the cost of a supply priest for approved annual leave weekends. A parish should not have to meet the cost of a supply priest for more than the designated 3 weekends. If a supply priest is needed when a parish priest is out of his parish for family commitments (weddings, baptisms, etc), the priest himself should cover the cost of the supply priest. The current approved stipend rates for supply are as follows:

- 1) **Diocesan priests** supplying a parish within the diocese are entitled to reimbursement of fuel expenses at the rate of 24c/km, paid from the Parish Account.
- 2) **Retired priests of our diocese** supplying in a parish of our diocese are entitled to the rate for travel specified on the CRA schedule, for up to 3 Sundays coming from the parish account
- 3) **Visiting clergy** on supply in a parish in our diocese are entitled to rates for Travel, Mass, etc. according to the current CRA Recommended Ministerial Stipends Rates schedule, for 3 Sundays per parish - from the parish account.

Supply priests from outside the diocese must provide their Professional Standards documentation to the Bishop with their request for Permission to Minister. See: <https://wagga.catholic.org.au/visiting-clergy-requirements/>

(See also [Visiting Clergy](#))

## Sabbatical and Long Service Leave

Once a cleric has served in ministry for seven years and depending on the needs of the diocese, one may apply for sabbatical leave (study leave) for professional study or for fostering his pastoral experience and this will have as its focus the needs of the diocese. Long service leave is leave given to a priest for rest, holiday, health or other reasons. Availability of both forms of leave will be considered along with provision of adequate care of the pastoral needs of the people and the availability of adequate private and diocesan finances. In theory, a priest is entitled to three (3) months paid leave after the first ten (10) years and an extra three (3) months for each ten years of ministry thereafter, up to a maximum of six (6) months on any one occasion. The timing of the leave will be determined by the applicant in conjunction with the Personnel Board and with the approval of the bishop. Normally at least twelve (12) months' notice in writing and with full particulars of course details, costs, etc, will be required. General Principles: The cost of one's leave would normally be supported by contributions from the diocese, parish, and the priest. Personal consultation with the bishop will determine the contribution of each. Because cost is such a large factor, it will have to be closely monitored. For those taking sabbatical or personal study leave, it is expected that a written report of the study be given to the Personnel Board within three months of return to the diocese. Leave is not automatically granted and requires the prior approval of the bishop. If leave is taken at the conclusion of an appointment, and before taking up a new appointment, funding will come from one of these sources: the vacated parish, the new parish, the Clergy Salary Fund.

## Overseas Travel

Clergy travelling overseas are obliged to take out comprehensive travel insurance. The diocese will help fund this cost for overseas born clergy travelling home to see their family and for those on study leave or travelling for some other official purpose. The proposed insurance should be presented to the DFA for approval before it is taken out if its cost exceeds AUD\$450. Clergy travelling for other holidays, long service leave, pilgrimages and/or sabbatical leave are required to take out travel insurance at their own expense. Economy class is the recommended mode of travel. Before travelling overseas, clergy should obtain a celebret (a letter of good standing) from the diocese. Evidence of travel insurance should be submitted when applying for a celebret.

The Diocese has established a relationship with a Travel Arranger for overseas travel. Anyone wishing to use their services should contact the Chancery.

## Ongoing Formation

Clergy are bound to pursue holiness because of their consecrated state (can. 276). Every life is a constant path towards maturity, a maturity which cannot be obtained except by constant formation. Continuing education is a right and duty in the life of every priest and deacon (cf. Decree on the Ministry and Life of Priests, 19). Constant and regular spiritual and professional reading, along with regular exercise, a healthy sleep pattern and friendships and constant and prolonged mental prayer are essential elements in ongoing formation.

All priests are encouraged and expected to attend formation opportunities including the Diocesan Clergy Retreat, Diocesan Clergy Conference, Deanery Meetings, and any other ongoing formation or professional development offered by the Diocese. All priests are also expected to attend the annual Chrism Mass and any Ordinations held in the Diocese.

## Annual Retreat

Every cleric is bound to make an annual retreat. In order to assist this important endeavour, the diocese is willing to organise and pay for the diocesan retreat. All priests, therefore, are invited to attend this annual event. They are to pay their own travel expenses. The diocese will pay for 50% of the retreat expenses and the Parish Church account pays the remainder. If a priest is not in a parish or is retired then the Diocese will meet the full amount. Clergy who choose not to attend the diocesan retreat and make their own arrangements are obliged to pay their own expenses. There is no diocesan or parish reimbursement. It is expected that all clergy will attend the diocesan retreat at least every second year. The retreat duration is in addition to the priest's annual leave of four weeks for the year.

## Spiritual Direction

Each priest is encouraged to have a qualified spiritual director. It is expected that one meets on a regular basis throughout the year.

## Supervision for Clergy

The Catholic Church in Australia has accepted the recommendation from the Royal Commission that each priest has access to some form of regular pastoral supervision. The diocese of Wagga is moving towards providing this supervision for all priests which will become mandatory. The costs of the Supervision for Clergy will be paid by the diocese.

## Conferences-Short Courses

Financial support is available from the Diocese, at the Bishop's discretion, to support priests' attendance at Conferences and short courses. A maximum amount of \$700 is available. Any expenses over and above this amount, including travel and accommodation, are the responsibility of the priest. Application should be made directly to the Bishop and should include:

- Name of Conference/course
- Subject matter and its relevance to the mission of the diocese
- Conference/course costs

## Clergy Healthcare

Medicare is Australia's health care system which provides access to free treatment as a public (Medicare) patient in a public hospital, and free or subsidised treatment by medical practitioners, including general practitioners and specialists.

### Private Health Care

Clergy are requested to take out private health insurance in the interest of providing the best possible medical treatment and care for themselves, and to ensure that the diocese does not become liable for excessive hospital and medical costs on their behalf. Top hospital cover with an appropriate range of ancillary extras, for example dental, optical and physiotherapy, is the recommended level of cover.

### Diocesan Clergy Health Insurance Policy

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga together with the Priests Sustentation & Retirement Fund offer Health Cover to all eligible clergy through the Diocesan Clergy Health Insurance Policy with BUPA. The cost of this Health Cover will be covered by the Diocese of Wagga Wagga with the support of The Priest Sustentation & Retirement Fund.

#### **Hospital Cover**

The Diocese selects BUPA to be the sole Health Fund for Hospital Cover for the Diocesan Clergy Health Insurance policy.

The Hospital Cover selected with BUPA is to be at the level of "Advance Silver Plus" Hospital Cover with a Hospital excess level of \$750.00.

The Diocese will cover the Hospital excess of \$750.00 for any Clergy admitted to hospital.

Ambulance cover is included.

#### **Extras Cover**

The Diocese will fund 100% of applicable Extras expenses up to a total limit of \$2,500.00 per annum per Clergy member. There are no Category Limits within the \$2,500.00 limit. Proof of payment is required prior to any reimbursement being paid.

## Non Diocesan Policy holders

For clergy wishing to make their own arrangements for private health insurance, the following applies:

**Private Health Rebate** of up to \$1,642.27 (*as at January 2023*) is offered by the Priests Sustentation & Retirement Fund (PSRF) to the clergy of the diocese of Wagga Wagga to assist with the cost of their private health insurance. The subsidy can be claimed from the Diocesan Accounts Office. The amount is indexed annually.

**Financial assistance for medical treatment** should be sought prior to receiving treatment (except in the case of an emergency) by a request to the bishop.

**Ambulance services** are not covered by Medicare; therefore, all clergy are required to have ambulance cover either through their private health fund or as Pensioner Concession cardholders.

## Health Care for Temporary Visa Holders

The Diocese of Wagga Wagga acts as sponsor for visas for priests from other countries being incardinated or engaged to work in our Diocese. This process is administered by the Australian Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office. One of the requirements made of the sponsor is a commitment to provide adequate private health insurance for the visa holder. To this end, the diocese arranges and pays for a private health insurance policy in the name of the visa holder. The visa holder is subject to the same conditions as all clergy of the diocese of Wagga Wagga in regards to "out of pocket" expenses or "gap fees." If it is expected that financial assistance will be required for medical procedures or treatment, then assistance and approval is to be sought prior to undertaking the procedure.

## Sick Leave

When clergy are unwell and unable to carry out their duties up to a maximum of three months, they will continue to receive their usual stipend. With regard to medical costs, clergy should first apply to Medicare and their private health fund for any eligible rebates. (See "Annual Leave - Supply Priests" for supply arrangements.) If sick leave is beyond three months, then once medical documentation has been submitted, the bishop after consultation with the personnel board will arrive at a decision with the clergy involved.

## Retirement

Care for our elderly and infirm clergy is a priority. Retirement is a word that captures well the reality that, as one ages, one cannot do what one used to do. The ageing process, which is different for every person, must be respected if one is to maintain one's health. The reality is that at some stage in one's life one enters reduced ministry or fully retires from active ministry.

The age of retirement for priests in the diocese is 75 with an option to continue if they are capable and wish to do so. Each priest is to have an ACAT assessment as soon as practicable after he turns 74 and then to meet with the Bishop to discuss whether he will continue to work full time, limit himself to part-time work, or request residence in a community or nursing home where he will have part time or no active assignment in ministry. Discussions should reach a mutual understanding on remuneration, accommodation and health care needs for retirement. If necessary, the Chancery will support the priest in the ACAT assessment process.

Those priests continuing in ministry after 80 are to have an annual meeting with the bishop to reassess their willingness and capacity.

Retirees can remain in a larger parish as Priest in Residence.

## Pension

If they have not already done so, eligible clergy are encouraged to apply for an Aged or Disability Pension. Once approved, they can reduce or cease the amount drawn from the Clergy Stipend Fund accordingly.

## Wills

It is the stated policy of the diocese that clergy must lodge a copy of their will with the chancery. Wills should be reviewed when circumstances change. Ideally, one executor should be a member of the clergy of the diocese and he should be notified of his appointment. Clergy are also strongly encouraged to discuss with their legal representative the appointment of someone with power of attorney or enduring guardianship and a medical enduring guardianship. A copy of these documents should be lodged with the chancery.

