



CATHOLIC DIOCESE
OF ROCKHAMPTON

Governance Policy

DRAFT

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1. Purpose

To establish the principles by which the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton will be governed.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Diocesan Entities, their leaders, and their decision-making bodies.

3. Policy Statement

Good governance is important for any organisation, not least for the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton – a part of the Roman Catholic Church and a charitable organisation that depends very much on public trust.

Through this policy, the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton commits to implementing and maintaining governance practices of a high standard to ensure that it fulfils its Mission, makes best use of its resources, meets community expectations, and keeps people safe.

4. Principles

4.1. Synodality

'Synodality' in a diocesan context reflects the reality that, while the bishop is the ultimate authority over diocesan affairs, he exercises good governance by seeking and taking on advice from others when he makes decisions. While the stewardship of the diocese is entrusted to the bishop, he alone does not have all the wisdom needed to make decisions in the best interests of the Diocese. 'Fundamentally, synodality is about journeying together. This happens through listening to one another in order to hear what God is saying to all of us. It is realizing that the Holy Spirit can speak through anyone to help us walk forward together on our journey as the People of God' (Paparella, 2021).

All Diocesan entities are expected to embrace synodality.

4.2. Co-responsibility

'Through co-responsibility, the laity are invited to greater participation in Church governance (Global Institute of Church Management, 2022). 'Because of the one dignity flowing from Baptism, each member of the lay faithful, together with ordained ministers and men and women religious, shares a responsibility for the Church's mission' (Saint John Paul II, 1988).

Within the bounds of canon law, the decision-making bodies of Diocesan entities are called to be co-responsible for the mission of the Church.

Consistent with the AICD's *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles* (2019, pp. 39-43), those appointed to the decision-making bodies for Diocesan entities are to be:

- Appointed on merit, through transparent processes, in alignment with the purpose and strategy
- Subject to limited tenure to encourage renewal, and the appointments staggered so as to retain organisational knowledge
- Reflect a mix of personal attributes which enable the decision-making body's role to be filled effectively
- Have their skills and experience assessed and recorded, and disclosed to stakeholders
- Undertake succession planning to address current and future skills needs in alignment with the purpose and strategy.

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4.2.1. Roles and responsibilities

For good governance to be achieved, peoples' roles and their relationships to one another in an organisation must be clear and understood (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, p. 30).

The requirements for members of advisory and decision-making bodies of Diocesan entities will be made clear in a governing document, such as a charter or constitution. Canon law imposes additional requirements on particular bodies, such as diocesan and parish finance councils.

The Bishop has the ultimate authority and responsibility for the way that all Diocesan entities are run. However, it is not practical for him to direct all their day-to-day operations, or to perform all the tasks necessary to achieve their goals. Governing documents and delegations will be used to effect co-responsibility. Delegations will be recorded and regularly reviewed (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, p. 34).

The duties of members of advisory and decision-making bodies for Diocesan entities are consistent with the duties of directors, as defined in the AICD's *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles* (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, pp. 30-31):

1. Act in good faith and for a proper purpose.
2. Act with reasonable care, skill and diligence.
3. Not to improperly use information or position.
4. Disclose and manage conflicts of interest.

4.3. Consultation

Like synodality, 'consultation' provides the opportunity to hear from stakeholders regarding decisions that may affect them. This is in keeping with the Catholic Social Teaching termed 'Dignity of the Human Person' which states that the God-given dignity of the human person must be upheld (Caritas Australia, 2022). This includes empowering people to voice their opinion in decisions that may affect them.

Consistent with the AICD's *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles* (2019, pp. 81-83), Diocesan entities are required to:

- Have a framework for meaningful engagement with stakeholders
- Consider stakeholders in relevant decision making
- Have a process for gathering and responding to complaints and feedback from stakeholders
- Ensure that the entity's decision makers understand who the organisation's stakeholders are, their needs and their expectations.
- Ensure that the organisation's decision makers have access to and are familiar with the Diocese's *Safeguarding Policy*, which sets out how the organisation protects children and vulnerable people

4.4. Discernment

In *Gaudete et Exsultate* (2018), Pope Francis says of discernment:

The Lord speaks to us in a variety of ways, at work, through others and at every moment. Yet we simply cannot do without the silence of prolonged prayer, which enables us better to perceive God's language, to interpret the real meaning of the inspirations we believe we have received, to calm our anxieties and to see the whole of our existence afresh in his own light. In this way, we allow the birth of a new synthesis that springs from a life inspired by the Spirit.

'Effective discernment requires the disposition and time for decision-makers to carefully weigh up all elements of their decisions and enable the guidance of the Holy Spirit' (Implementation Advisory Group and The Governance Review Project Team, 2020, p. 44).

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Discernment is a tool not routinely used in the corporate world, but it is a fundamental characteristic of decision-making in a Church setting and must be allowed for in the governance of Diocesan entities.

4.5. Purpose and strategy

4.5.1. Purpose

The purpose, or mission, of the universal Catholic Church is 'to reveal Jesus Christ to the world' (Catholic Enquiry Centre, Australia, 2022). Each Diocesan entity, then, while a part of the Diocese of Rockhampton and subject to the Bishop, possesses its own distinct purpose that is complimentary to the mission of the universal Church.

It is important that the purpose of each Diocesan entity is clear so that it can be easily understood and those involved in it share a common understanding (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, p. 22).

The organisation's purpose may be expressed as a mission statement, a vision statement, or a combination of both; or it may be further detailed in the 'objects' within the organisation's governing document (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, pp. 22-23).

4.5.2. Strategy

An organisation's purpose sets out what it does and why it does it, whereas its strategy sets out how the purpose will be achieved (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, p. 22).

Organisations use different ways to develop their strategies, such as through strategic planning exercises. The agreed strategy will often be recorded in a strategic plan, which can make the strategy easier to understand (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019). Whatever means are used by Diocesan entities to develop or record strategies, 'it is important that the strategy is clear, understood by relevant stakeholders' and that decision-making processes are aligned to it (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019, p. 23).

4.6. Accountability and transparency

According to Pswarayi-Riddihough (2018) of the World Bank, good governance 'requires credible and trustworthy institutions built on principles of transparency and accountability'.

Diocesan entities are encouraged to demonstrate accountability and transparency to their stakeholders by:

- Making the organisation's governing documents available to stakeholders
- Providing appropriate reporting to stakeholders about the organisation's performance and financial position
- Giving members the opportunity to ask questions about how the organisation is run and to hold the board to account for their decisions.

4.7. Risk management

'Risk management is recognised as an integral component of good management and governance. It is an iterative process consisting of steps, which, when undertaken in sequence, enable continual improvement in decision making' (Government of Western Australia, 2022).

Consistent with AICD's *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles* (2019, p. 55), decision-making bodies of Diocesan entities are required to:

- Oversee a risk management framework that aligns to the purpose and strategy.
- Seek and be provided with information about risk and how it is managed
- Periodically review the risk management framework.

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4.8. Culture

'Culture represents the shared values, assumptions and beliefs that shape the behaviour of the people involved in an organisation' (Australian Institute of Company Directors, 2019). Those bodies responsible for making decisions on behalf of Diocesan entities can influence culture by being explicit about the organisation's values.

'The Catholic Church's core value is spreading the message of salvation through Jesus Christ to all people in all contexts' (Catholic Schools Office - Diocese of Armidale). This can be broadly expressed as the following principles (Tohill, 2004):

- Human dignity
- The common good
- Preferential option for the poor
- Subsidiarity
- Participation
- Stewardship of Creation
- Global Solidarity
- Promotion of Peace
- Universal purpose of goods

Diocesan entities may have other values in addition to, but not inconsistent with, these.

Consistent with AICD's *Not-for-Profit Governance Principles* (2019, p. 95), decision makers for Diocesan entities must:

- Define and model a desired culture that aligns to the purpose and strategy
- Oversee a strategy to develop and maintain the desired culture
- Oversee mechanisms to monitor and evaluate organisational culture
- Ensure the organisation's values are clear, periodically reviewed and communicated to stakeholders
- Oversee a framework for the reward and recognition of workers

4.9. Communication

Accessible communication is a core governance principle (Implementation Advisory Group and The Governance Review Project Team, 2020, p. 50). 'Formal reporting to authorities is one dimension of accountability and transparency, but equally important is ensuring that [others in the community] know how [Diocesan entities] operate' (Implementation Advisory Group and The Governance Review Project Team, 2020, p. 50). Accessible forms of communication include official websites, newsletters, annual reports and social media.

Diocesan entities will strive to communicate regularly with their stakeholders and communities in forms that are accessible.

4.10. Appropriate use of resources

The resources of Diocesan Entities must be used in accordance with the *Use of Diocesan Resources Policy*.

4.11. Effectiveness of meetings

Meetings enable the exercise of governance by decision-making bodies of Diocesan Entities by providing the opportunity for to gather, deliberate, and make recommendations and decisions. Meetings must be conducted in accordance with the *Meetings Procedure*.

5. References

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6. Schedules

This policy must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7. Policy Information

Subordinate Schedules	
Accountable Officer	Director of Diocesan Services
Policy Type	
Approved Date	[Approved Date]
Effective Date	[Effective Date]

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Review Date	[Review Date]
Relevant Legislation	
Related Policies	Use of Diocesan Resources Policy
Related Procedures	Meetings Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	
Definitions	<p>Diocesan Entity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, whether in its own right or on behalf of one its operations or ministry activities • A parish of the Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton • Catholic Education: Diocese of Rockhampton, whether in its own right or on behalf of a school or college • CatholicCare Central Queensland

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