

What qualities are required of pastoral councillors?

- Commitment to Christ and the Church, with a parish community perspective
- Openness to listen and evaluate
- Willingness to work in a team
- Positive and hopeful outlook
- Respect for the efforts of others
- Sufficient time and energy
- Reliability in attendance and tasks undertaken
- Readiness to include others in action
- Loyalty to the Pastor and to one another
- Willingness to serve for a time and then let go.

What is the process for finding new Parish Pastoral Council members?

There is no set process for finding new members. However, one very fruitful process is to invite all parishioners to recommend (not nominate) other parish members for possible membership. All those recommended are then invited to an Information Meeting to receive current information about Pastoral Councils and to hear what is expected of members. At the end of the meeting, participants are asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline possible membership. If the number of acceptances is more than required, the membership can be finalised either by negotiation or a discernment process.

The civil approach of obtaining members by using the nomination and voting process often produces less than helpful outcomes e.g. parishioners may become Council members with inaccurate ideas of what is expected of them. Also, those not chosen may have a sense of being rejected by the whole parish community.

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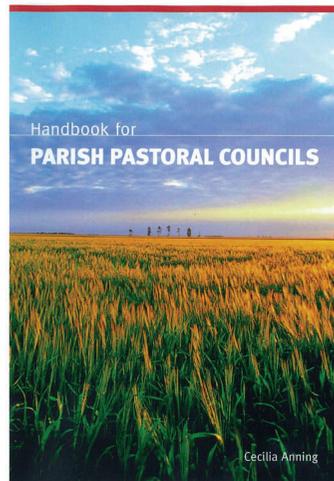
For further information see website:

Parish Pastoral Councils in Australia
www.ppc.catholic.org.au/ppc/

An initiative of the
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

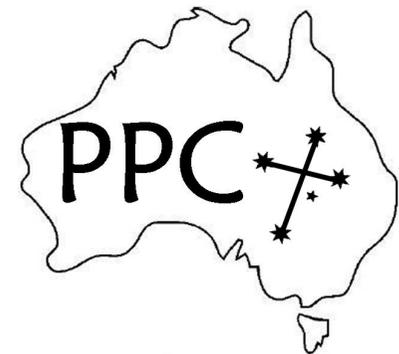
Helpful resource:

Anning, C. (2007) 3rd edition
Handbook for Parish Pastoral Councils



For details of contents, reviews and online ordering see:
www.bne.catholic.net.au/opc/manual.html

Parish Pastoral Councils



Brief Overview

Why have Parish Pastoral Councils?

One of the outcomes of the Second Vatican Council (1960s) was the promotion of the Parish Pastoral Councils as part of the movement towards shared responsibility and shared service.

Parish Pastoral Councils are a practical expression of the reality that by reason of our Baptism, every one of us is equal in dignity and responsibility when it comes to living and communicating the love and values of Christ in our world. This can be understood as promoting the Mission of the Church, which is the task of all of us, not just our Church leaders.

The Vatican II's Document on the Laity #26 states:

The purpose of Parish Pastoral Councils is to assist the Church's apostolic work

- *In the field of making the Gospel known and people holy, and*
- *In charitable, social and other spheres.*

What is the role of the Parish Pastoral Council?

The Parish Pastoral Council's role is to:

- Promote the Church's mission to live and communicate the love and values of Christ in the world around us
- Share in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of the parish community, working together with parishioners to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.



In what ways are Parish Pastoral Councils implementing their role?

- Listening and gathering information about the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners
- Generating responses to the identified issues
- Encouraging and supporting the continuing good work of existing groups within the parish
- Providing opportunities for parishioners to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
- Supporting and encouraging parishioners in their continuing efforts to be a Christian influence in the wider community
- Planning for the future of the parish by setting realistic and achievable short-term and long-term pastoral goals for the parish community within the framework of the Archdiocesan Synod priorities of *Jesus Communion Mission*
- Overseeing the implementation of these pastoral goals
- Contributing towards making parish decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church
- Providing support for their Pastor, working collaboratively with him and with each other.

What are the issues for Parish Pastoral Councils to avoid?

- Finance council responsibilities e.g. financial planning, practical aspects of building and maintenance, direct involvement in planned giving
- Day to day organisational responsibilities of the parish staff.

What are some examples of issues on which Parish Pastoral Councils have worked?

- Planning for the future of the parish in consultation with parishioners
- Managing times of transition e.g. change of pastor, sharing a pastor
- Promoting participation by young people
- Organising or encouraging appropriate Faith Education opportunities
- Linking with the wider community e.g. in the areas of ecumenism, social justice, community events
- Establishing interpersonal links within the parish and between local parishes
- Building welcome, inclusion and communication within the parish.



How long is the term of membership?

In general, the term of membership tends to be for two (2) years with the option of serving a second consecutive term, before standing down for at least one term.

How many people are usually members?

The recommended size for an effective Parish Pastoral Council is approximately 12 members. For small faith communities, this may be reduced to 6-10 members. The Parish Priest must be a member. Usually the Pastoral Associate and parishioners make up the total. Sometimes, there may be one or two ex-officio members e.g. the Catholic School Principal and a member of the Finance Committee.