



*incorporating the worshipping community of  
St Patrick's, Fortitude Valley*

## **Pastoral Council Guidelines**

### **ROLE**

Our Pastoral Council's role is to promote the Church's mission, to worship God, to celebrate the Eucharist and to live and communicate, and so proclaim, the love and values of Christ in Brisbane City, Fortitude Valley and the wider community.

Our Pastoral Council shares in the responsibility for the ongoing life and development of our parish community, working together with parishioners and visitors to provide support for their efforts to live as followers of Christ.

In all circumstances, our Pastoral Council will be attentive to the significant role that St Stephen's Cathedral plays in the life of the Archdiocese of Brisbane and will strive to promote a welcoming and inclusive approach to all people who visit and worship in our Cathedral church.

In addition, our Pastoral Council seeks to:

- Listen to and gather information about the hopes, ideas, needs and concerns of parishioners
- Generate responses to these identified issues.
- Encourage and support the continuing good work of existing groups within our parish.
- Provide opportunities for parishioners
  - to grow in their relationship with God and with each other
  - to support and encourage them in their continuing efforts to be a Christian influence in the wider community.
- Set realistic and achievable short-term and long-term pastoral goals for our parish community within the framework of the Archdiocesan Synod priorities of *Jesus/ Communion/Mission*.
- Oversee the implementation of these pastoral goals.
- Maintain links with the Central Deanery Pastoral Council and support its initiatives
- Contribute towards making parish decisions that reflect the values of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church.
- Provide support for our Pastors, working collaboratively with them and with each other.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

There may be a total of twelve members consisting of:

- the priests appointed to this Parish
- seven (7) parishioners from the Cathedral
- three (3) parishioners from St Patrick's worshipping community.

The Pastoral Council will have as broad a membership as possible with a diversity of age, gender and ethnic origin. Each Pastoral Councillor is a representative of the whole parish community and not a representative of a specific parish group only.

There will be a formation session for all members prior to the first meeting of the newly chosen Pastoral Council and after each changeover of membership.

## **TERM OF MEMBERSHIP**

The term of membership for parishioners is two years. To facilitate continuity, it is anticipated that some the Pastoral Council members will choose to continue for a second term. Anyone who serves two (2) terms consecutively will then stand down for at least one term.

## **NEW MEMBERS**

All parishioners will be asked to recommend other parish members for possible membership of the Pastoral Council. Each person recommended will be invited to an Information Meeting to receive current information about Pastoral Councils. At the conclusion of this meeting, participants will be asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline nomination.

If the number of acceptances of nomination is more than required, the membership will be finalised by either negotiation or a prayerful selection process.

## **CASUAL VACANCIES**

The Pastoral Council may fill any casual vacancy by invitation, after the members reach consensus. Prior to joining the Council, the proposed candidate will receive a short briefing on responsibilities and expectations as a member. After completing the remainder of the current term of membership for this casual vacancy, the member will be eligible for recommendation for a second term.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS**

In a spirit of prayerfulness, each member of the Pastoral Council will:

- Attend the regular meetings of the Pastoral Council.
- Develop a spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand the issues affecting the lives of parishioners.
- Provide input to deliberations of the Pastoral Council.
- Provide prayerful support and encouragement for other members of the Pastoral Council.
- Embrace opportunities for personal faith development and for gaining skills to assist with effective participation in the Pastoral Council's operations.
- Represent the Pastoral Council when required e.g. other parish meetings, deanery or diocesan meetings.

## **OFFICE BEARERS**

The Pastors plus office-bearers will form the executive of the Pastoral Council. The office-bearers, chosen by the members, will be chairperson, deputy chairperson and secretary.

The role of the executive is to:

- Reflect on the effectiveness of each previous Pastoral Council meeting.
- Organise the agenda for each meeting, incorporating input from all pastoral councillors.
- Arrange distribution of the agenda, minutes and all relevant material one week in advance of that meeting.
- Coordinate the business of the Pastoral Council between meetings.
- Arrange additional formation opportunities for all Council members outside the regular meetings.

## **MEETINGS**

There will be a minimum of ten monthly meetings of the Pastoral Council each year.

## **TASK GROUPS**

Short term task groups may be set up under the auspices of the Pastoral Council for specific purposes for a definite duration.

## **CONSENSUS**

The consensus approach will be used in the process of contributing towards the making of parish decisions, with each member offering input towards the final outcome. The Pastoral Council will sincerely seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit through prayer in contributing to all decisions. Hence majority voting, lobbying, competition and domination are to be avoided. Members of the council will respect the role and particular responsibilities of the Pastors when contributing to all decisions.

## **COMMUNICATION WITH THE PARISH**

The Pastoral Council will report to the parish community following its meetings. It will seek the input of parishioners through various means, e.g. parish consultations, focus meetings, conversations.

## **REVIEW OF GUIDELINES**

These *Pastoral Council Guidelines* will be reviewed at the end of each Pastoral Council's term, or more frequently if the need arises. Consultation with the parish community will occur regarding any changes to these *Guidelines*.

*April 2008*