

7.2 DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY FOR PARISH RECORDS

1. INTERPRETATION

In this Policy, unless the context or subject matter otherwise requires or indicates -

"Disposal of Records" means the sale, transfer, destruction, abandonment of or otherwise doing away with Records;

"Diocesan Archives Committee" shall consist of the Diocesan Business Manager, Diocesan Records Officer, Diocesan Accountant and the Parish and Administrative Services Manager.

2. WHY HAVE A DOCUMENT RETENTION AND DISPOSAL POLICY FOR PARISH RECORDS

- Records selected for retention as archives are those records which have value as authentic evidence of administrative, corporate, cultural and intellectual activity within the Parish.
- All of the records created by a church or parish are valuable and unique documentary evidence of the activities of the parish.
- Almost all of these records can be viewed as records created to document the history of a church or parish in its day-to-day activities. The culture (social and intellectual life) of the church and parish, and the role it has played in the history of its suburb, region and the Diocese, is also revealed via the church and parish records.
- The work of every church and parish in this Diocese will be of interest to historians in the future. The diligence of parish staff and the Diocesan Archives Committee in caring for these records will ensure that church and parish collections will be available to provide a unique and irreplaceable record of the work of the past and present.

3. CONFIDENTIALITY

All entries in official registers must protect the privacy and confidentiality of certain personal information, e.g. that a child is adopted. Clergy and parish officials are therefore cautioned against providing direct access to any register by a member of the public, and to ensure any information which could identify the natural family of a person who has been adopted, or to identify a person who has been given out for adoption. Clergy and parish officials may extract details of an entry in a register in response to a request, ensuring that it does not include any details as referred to above.

4. DISPOSAL NOT REQUIRED

Nothing in this Policy shall be taken to mean or imply that disposal of any Records of a Parish, or other Records in the custody of a Parish, is mandatory.

5. PARISH RECORDS

From Administration of Parishes Ordinance 2010 Sections 75-80

All registers shall be the property of the Trustees and not the Incumbent by whom they are compiled and on the resignation suspension or removal from the cure of the Incumbent they shall subject to any direction from the Bishop surrender all the Parish records, books, registers under their control to the Secretary of the Parish Council who shall provide the Incumbent with a suitable receipt.

The Incumbent shall keep or cause to be kept, in a form approved by the Diocesan Council, and shall have the custody and control of proper registers recording all baptisms, confirmations, burials, marriages and services held in the Parish by any clerk or other member of the Anglican Church of Australia.

The Parish Council

- shall have the custody, care and control of the Parish books, registers and records during any vacancy in the cure of souls and the Secretary of the Parish Council shall hand the same to the succeeding Incumbent on appointment when taking up residence and shall obtain a receipt from such person for such records.
- provide the Incumbent with all of the books necessary for the keeping of such records and make provision for their safe custody.

The Incumbent and Parish Council may deposit registers and records not in use in such place or places as the Diocesan Council may approve.

Records may be searched for a fee

Every applicant for a search in the Parish register shall pay to the Parish Council a fee set by Diocesan Council and for any certified copy of any entry an additional fee set by the Diocesan Council and such fees shall be the income of the Parish.

5.1 Where they are kept

It is the responsibility of the Parish Council to ensure that the Parish records are retained and stored in a safe, secure, fire proof, lockable cupboard in either the Vestry or Parish Office.

5.2 Parish Council Minute Book

Minutes need to be kept in a hard-cover well bound book. Once the minutes for a meeting have been corrected and endorsed at a subsequent meeting the certified copy needs to be retained in the Minute Book.

When the book is full the Parish Council Secretary needs to purchase a new book and have the old one stored securely with other Parish records.

There is no need for the Minute Book to include detailed monthly financial statements, but it needs to include a copy of the audited annual financial statements of the Parish.

5.3 Official Parish Records include:

- The Parish Council Minute Book
- Service Record Book
- Baptism, Marriage and Burial Registers
- Columbaria and Memorial Garden Records and site map detailing allocation of “plots” and reservations of plots.
- Records of Property Transactions
- Register of Faculties
- Financial Records
- Consecration of church buildings
- Building plans, design of stained glass windows
- Parish Rolls

5.4 Process to have records retained as Archives

The University of Newcastle acts as the Diocesan Archivist and cares for and conserves the records of the Diocese and the parishes’.

A schedule of all records proposed for storage by the Diocesan Archivist must be prepared and approved by the Diocesan Business Manager. The Diocesan office will liaise with the Diocesan Archivist and the Parish for the removal of the approved archives to the University.

The Parish retains a copy of the approved schedule of records as does the Diocesan Office. A copy of the schedule accompanies the documents to the Archivist. See schedule attached.

5.5 Schedule of documents

A schedule detailing all documents proposed for disposal is to be prepared – one copy to be retained in the Parish and one copy to be forwarded to the Diocesan Business Manager for the approval prior to disposal. See Schedule attached.

6. Certain transferring of Records is not disposal

The following instances of the transfer of Records are deemed not to be disposal within the meaning of this Policy -

Where the transfer of Records is undertaken in the course of the transfer of a function, power or duty from one person or body to another, where the Records being transferred are necessary for the discharge of the function, the exercise of the power or the performance of the duty transferred;

Examples: the transfer of records to the University Archives Department; the transfer of Certificates of Title to affect a property sale or transfer.

7. Records which may be disposed of

The following Records may be disposed of, unless the Diocesan Archives Committee notifies the Parish Council Secretary that they must not be disposed of -

- 7.1 Copies of documents which are held in the same office or which are known to be held in another office of this Diocese;
Examples: extra copies of reports and business papers for meetings; extra copies of bulletins, newsletters.
- 7.2 Correspondence of no present or future interest, provided that the disposal is agreed to by the Wardens and Parish Council Secretary -
Example: circulars and brochures of a limited interest or application.
- 7.3 Financial Records more than seven years old, except for cash books, ledgers and journals;
Examples: receipt; invoices; bank statements.
- 7.4 Records which are not listed in the following sections.

8. Records which may not be disposed of

The following Records may not be disposed of -

- 8.1 Records which are required to be raised, made or kept under the provisions of any of the Ordinances of the Diocese;
Example: Minutes of Diocesan Meetings
- 8.2 Records which by law must be retained;
Example: documents issued pursuant to fire safety regulations.
- 8.3 Ordinances, regulations, instructions from the Bishop, the Diocesan Synod, the Diocesan Council and any others in authority;
Example: instructions on the administration of the sacraments, i.e. Confirmation – see Policy 3.1.
- 8.4 Property Registers and inventories of properties, contents of properties, and goods owned by or in the possession of the Diocese;
Examples: inventories made for insurance purposes; superseded inventories.
- 8.5 Records relating to properties, contents of properties, and goods owned by or in the possession of the Diocese at the present or in the past, which provide information as to their history, how the Diocese came to own or have possession of them, their construction, alterations and work done to them, and their disposal from the ownership or possession of the Diocese (Parish);
Examples: title deeds; correspondence; maps; local histories; photographs; drawings; instruction manuals for equipment; faculties; deeds of dedication.
- 8.6 Records relating to bequests, legacies and memorial gifts;

Examples: copy of wills; correspondence with an executor or donor; material relating to the person making a bequest; material relating to a person in whose memory a gift was received.

- 8.7 Correspondence with, and certificates, licences and permits issued by, any branch of government and financial institutions;
Examples: art union permits; certificates of exemption from federal tax; permits to hold street stalls and processions.
- 8.8 Records made or acquired by an officer of the Diocese pursuant upon the exercise of the officer's duties, responsibilities or functions;
Examples: notes of meetings and conversations; drafting notes; reports, correspondence received and sent; official diaries.
- 8.9 Records tabled at meetings, or referred to in minute books, or Records considered by officers of the Church in making decisions;
Examples: correspondence tabled or received; circulars or brochures which led to payments being made; annual reports; annual financial statements; reports of committees tabled, received or referred to.
- 8.10 Records which are necessary for administration, or which would be of assistance in administration, including a copy of past annual returns, charts of files and charts of accounts;
Examples: general correspondence; current rosters & checklists; copies of Bishop's licences.
- 8.11 Any financial Records less than eight years old, and all cash books, ledgers and journals of any age;
Examples: receipts, invoices and bank statements less than eight years old.
- 8.12 Circular letters, newsletters and brochures originating in the Diocesan Office;
Example: file copy of newsletters.
- 8.13 Forms and orders of service for particular events, seasons and occasions, and papers produced for use or distribution at particular church services;
Examples: dedication services; carol services; services for Consecration or blessing of parish church; pew bulletins.
- 8.14 Speeches, sermons and addresses given in relation to any activities of the Diocese where an original or a copy is given into the custody of the Diocese;
Example: Bishop's sermons or Charge to Synod.
- 8.15 Private Records.
Example: private papers deposited with the Diocese relating to a Parish, school, institution, entity, society or person.

9. Method of Disposal

- 9.1 All records to be disposed must have any personal details, confidential information, or other sensitive writings removed (i.e. blacked out with thick pen).
- 9.2 All documents are then to be shredded by a Secure Shredding company (such as Security Destruction Pickup) in full view of a Parish Warden.
- 9.3 Whoever observes the destruction must sign off on the Disposal Schedule (see copy attached) that they have witnessed the destruction of the documents.

10. Access to Parish Registers and other Information

Churches and parishes often produce updated versions of their published parish histories in response to approaching anniversary celebrations. Parish historians may wish to undertake research using their own parish records which are held by the parish, or which have been previously deposited in the Diocesan Archives at the University, or to undertake wider contextual research using Diocesan records, even if the church and/or parish records are still held within the parish.

A person is able to obtain access to the Records of the Parish if searching out ancestral or descendant information. Such persons may be given a certified copy of the relevant entry in a Register; but under no circumstances should anyone be given access to the registers themselves.

11. Electronic Back-up of Computer Data

It is a requirement of the Diocesan Insurer that all computer data and records are backed-up on a weekly basis, with back-up files stored off-site. [Ansvar's – Protecting Property – at Section 16, page 17]

Data back-up ensures the recovery and restoration of data in the event of a total or partial system failure.

Backup media can include saving the data to

a CD or DVD

a flash drive

an external hard drive

an external system such as *Cloud*

or through a third party provider.