



# Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

## WH&S Newsletter

November 2016

Welcome to the November WH&S Newsletter, incorporating Property & Risk.

### Building condition inspections

The annual building report forms are a very important document that needs to be taken seriously and filled out properly. It is vitally important to check the condition of all structural items on site. We have had an incident at a Parish where an external column supporting a church bell collapsed due to the rotting hardwood timber support structure.

Ageing structures especially timber ones need to be looked at for any signs of damage or deterioration especially where they meet with the ground and other structural members. If you are in any way unsure, take a photo and contact parish services.



### Frequently asked questions

HERE ARE 7 QUESTIONS RECEIVED FOR THIS NEWSLETTER OVER THE PAST MONTH



**Q.1: - WE (THE PARISH) WANTED TO GET A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT CONSTITUTES A VOLUNTEER DRIVER? IS SOMEONE WHO SIMPLY DRIVES THEIR PARENTS AND FRIENDS TO CHURCH A VOLUNTEER DRIVER?**

A.1: - A volunteer driver is someone whose *express* job for the parish is to use a vehicle in a volunteer capacity for an Anglican activity.

Someone driving their parents and friends to church on a Sunday is not a volunteer driver.

The ANIP (Anglican National Insurance Program) bulletin information that was previously provided relates to persons using their own private vehicles in a volunteer capacity for an Anglican activity.

Please note that there is no coverage for private vehicles even if used for an Anglican activity under the ANIP Fleet Insurance Policy.





**Q.2: - DO WE NEED TO CONDUCT A RISK ASSESSMENT FOR OUR CHRISTMAS CAROLS EVENT? WHAT IS COVERED UNDER OUR INSURANCE POLICIES? WHAT DO WE NEED TO LOOK AT? CAN WE SIMPLY REVIEW LAST YEARS RISK ASSESSMENT?**

A.2: - Risk Assessments are a vital Work Health and Safety tool to determine potential hazards and risks that may be associated with an event or activity and the things we can do to reduce or eliminate those risks to everyone who attends the event.

The following are examples of items that would need to be considered at a large Christmas Carols event

- Has a representative of the parish had a talk with the local council and emergency services/RFS and informed them about the event and the amount of people reasonably expected to attend?
- Councils will require a permit to be applied for and approved for a large public gathering such as Christmas Carols. Has a permit been filled out, issued to the council and has approval been granted?
- What is the expected number of people attending the event?
- Is the Parishes Emergency Management Plan up to date with emergency contact numbers for those nominated current?
- Has someone organised for St Johns Ambulance or other trained first aid officers to attend?
- Are the number of toilet facilities available for both male and female adequate? \*\*\* how do we work out the number of toilets required for an event like Christmas Carols?\*\*\* -

1 toilet or portaloos per 60 - 70 people for small events with approximately 6-7 portaloos required for up to 800 people. Portaloos hire companies will have their own way to calculate required portaloos numbers.

- Is electrical power being used on site for microphones, speakers, etc? If so how is it being provided to the items needing power? Are electrical cables being utilised in a safe manner with no cables presenting trip hazards? This becomes very important in evening events or dark areas.
- If there is a dedicated stage being installed for the event? Who is installing the stage and are they licensed? They will need to certify the installation of any stage prior to it being used.
- How many wardens or volunteers from the parish are going to be present to supervise the event?

- What is the forecast temperature? Will there be enough fresh water available if the weather is hot?
- Will there be any food vendors at the event? Or other vendors? Will they require power or gas?
- Are there enough garbage bins? And are they placed in the most appropriate locations?
- If the event is being held at night is adequate lighting being provided to reduce the risk of trips and falls along paths.
- Will any public roads need to be closed for any length of time? If so have you discussed this and gained approval with local authorities etc.
- Will any Vehicles be allowed on site and how will vehicles who aren't allowed on site be restricted?
- Will there be any parking areas allocated?
- Are these parking areas affected by rain to the point where they may cause some vehicles to become bogged?
- Is there access to cool fresh water on site?
- Is there going to be adequate seating for elderly and infirmed?
- Is there safe access to and around the site for large numbers of people?
- Are any areas deemed out of bounds? If so how are they being made out of bounds and being monitored?
- Have all the neighbours been advised of the impending Christmas Carols event and the time of its completion?

Large parish organised events like Christmas Carols being held on Church Property should be nominated as a major event on the insurance renewal forms. If it has then the event is covered under our insurance policies. If a large event is not nominated under insurance renewal forms then it isn't covered.

*Please see Diocesan Memo 017/2016 for details – attached*

**Can you re-view last years risk assessment and make adjustments?** Of course, if anything has changed though then you will need to include those changes in the risk assessment review.



**Q.3: - WE HAVE A MEN'S GROUP WHO MEET IN A SHED ON CHURCH PROPERTY. THEY USE A RANGE OF HAND AND POWER TOOLS, SOME OF WHICH ARE THEIR OWN. WHAT SHOULD WE BE DOING TO MINIMISE RISKS UNDER WH&S LEGISLATION?**

A.3: - The success of men's groups and men's sheds for the social and health benefits for men have been well documented and are a resounding success story. We want to encourage the Men's Sheds gatherings and do not wish to in any way discourage the use of sheds for woodworking or any other activities that bring men together. However we do need to make sure that we are providing a safe place for men to undertake the activities that are organised. The following are some points that need to be looked at in regards to activities that may have large risks associated with them;

- The Diocesan Handbook's policies regarding high risk activities
- Making sure that Personal Protective Equipment is available and being requested to be used properly when required.
- Making sure that anyone using the equipment is deemed competent to use the equipment
- That electrical equipment is to be tested and tagged every 6 months.
- That the shed or area is kept in a tidy manner as can be reasonably expected to reduce the risk of slips trips and fall injuries.
- That the storage of the raw materials is done in a manner that allows easy access to any materials to reduce the risks of manual handling injuries.
- Flammable or explosive items are stored correctly according to Australian Standards if any such items exist in the shed or area.
- If there are any tools or items that are potentially hazardous a risk assessment needs to be undertaken.



**Q.4: - WE ARE HAVING A MARKET DAY AT OUR PARISH ARE WE COVERED UNDER STALL HOLDERS INSURANCE?**

A.4: - Stall Holders Insurance covers market stall holders on Anglican Church Property. The Certificate of Currency for Market Stall Holders Insurance comes out approximately 3 weeks after our other Insurance Certificates of Currency.

Parish organised Market Days being held on Church Property should be nominated on the insurance renewal forms.

*Please see Diocesan Memo 018/2016 for details – attached*



**Q.5: - WE HAVE A PARISHIONER WHO NEEDS VOLUNTARY WORK TO QUALIFY FOR HIS PENSION. WE CAN GIVE HIM SOME HOURS, ASSISTING IN THE OFFICE, AND WITH OTHER VOLUNTEER RELATED ACTIVITIES. THE FORM HE HAS GIVEN US TO FILL IN ASKS WHETHER WE HAVE PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE AND PERSONAL ACCIDENT COVER. CAN I PUT 'YES' TO THESE QUESTIONS?**

A.5: - Yes with a proviso, the Diocese has Public Liability Insurance. In the case of personal accident cover the person will need to be nominated under the parishes insurance renewal forms for coverage and re-issued for updating with our insurer.

*Please see Volunteers Insurance Memo – 013/2015 for details – attached*

**Q.6: - WHAT DO WE (THE PARISH) HAVE TO DO IF WE WANT TO HIRE OUT OUR CHURCH HALL? AND WHAT IS COVERED UNDER INSURANCES?**

A.6: - Memo 015/2014 regarding hall hire and a hall hire/casual use agreement was issued in 2014. This outlines the requirements that need to be fulfilled by the parish and by the hall hirers.

Basically we need the hall hire/casual use agreement signed by an authorised person from the group or body hiring the hall and either evidence of the group's insurance details or evidence of the group utilising the one off \$25 insurance policy from our insurer.

This is needed to be done for any group outside the parish who wishes to hire the hall. If the group is a direct part of the parish then they do not need to go through with this procedure.

*Please see Diocesan memo 015/2014 for details – attached (3 parts)*



**Q.7: - I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT ANY LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES A PARISH SAFETY OFFICER MIGHT HAVE. A PARISH IS HAVING TROUBLE APPOINTING AN OFFICER (SAFETY DELEGATE) BECAUSE OF CONCERNS THAT THE OFFICER MAY BE HELD LEGALLY AND FINANCIALLY ACCOUNTABLE IN THE EVENT OF A FAILURE OF A DUTY OF CARE BY A PARISH.**

**MY UNDERSTANDING IS THAT SUCH A RESPONSIBILITY DOES NOT REST WITH THE OFFICER OR THE LOCAL PARISH COUNCIL, BUT RESIDES WITH THE DC OR DIOCESE.**

A.7: - The Work Health & Safety responsibilities of anyone across the Diocese is set out in Chapter 16.2 of The Diocesan Handbook entitled "Roles and Responsibilities", which I have attached. The responsibilities for Work Health and safety do ultimately rest with Diocesan Council, however the question was regarding a failure of a duty of care within a parish. This is a very broad question that could have many different outcomes so I shall talk about 2 examples later on.

The diocese holds Insurance policies that offers coverage for almost all insurable events that could take place on Church Property or that are associated with a nominated Church Event off site. The policies include;

1. Property
2. Motor Vehicle Fleet Insurance for vehicles registered by parishes that are then included in the register. This insurance does not cover private vehicles.
3. Workers Compensation Insurance for paid workers
4. Volunteers Insurance
5. Professional Indemnity Insurance

They are available for viewing on the diocesan website

In hypothetical scenario one for example, a light bulb located in an external light that is above a path has broken and has genuinely gone unnoticed for a short period of time. A parish group decides to use the hall for an event of an evening, and at the conclusion of the evening someone using the path cannot see adequately and trips over spraining their ankle for example. So, what happens? In this instance an incident form and an insurance claim form would need to be completed correctly and issued to the Diocesan Office, so that our insurers would have a record of the incident with a date of the injury and could then cover all medical costs of the injured person. There would be no further action taken as a failure of a Duty of Care, however the external lighting would need to be fixed immediately and included in the building inspection

review to reduce the risk of the fall happening again.

In hypothetical scenario two, a timber step that is obviously damaged, is broken and has been quite unstable for some time, which is known by all to be dangerous is not repaired. A visitor to the Parish goes to use the step and falls badly breaking their hip. The person needs to go to hospital and will require extensive surgery and a large amount of time off work to recuperate from the fall. An incident form needs to be completed and sent onto the Diocesan Office. The injured person describes what has happened to the hospital and their personal health insurer and Workcover NSW is called to investigate the incident. There has been an obvious failure of a duty of care by the parish to provide a safe environment for visitors. Parish representatives who obviously knew of the damaged unsafe step are liable, however the site representatives\* are ultimately responsible for site safety and would be interviewed about the incident.

As part of churchwardens' duties, a safety inspection is required to be performed at regular intervals to try to catch any damaged or unsafe areas in parish buildings or on parish grounds. If this inspection is completed at regular intervals, and any obvious damage or hazardous items are repaired in an acceptable amount of time then there are not a great deal of incidents that could cause an injury that arise from a failure of a duty of care on Parish grounds in the day to day activities of the Parish. The largest area of incidents across the Diocese is still slips trips and falls.

The Diocesan Office issues a Building Report each year for Parishes to complete, and as part of the Parishes duties this needs to be looked at seriously as the repercussions are serious for obvious failures to make the parish grounds safe, free of hazards and risks.

If you have any specific questions regarding site safety please contact myself or Parish Services.

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**If you have any queries regarding building, development, property, risk, WH&S, insurance or if you would like to offer some useful, helpful advice on a related subject found in the Newsletters please do not hesitate to contact me or Parish Services.**

**Best regards,**



**Brendon Lowndes  
Property and Risk Officer**

or if you have any WH&S specific questions you can e-mail me at: [whs@newcastleanglican.org.au](mailto:whs@newcastleanglican.org.au)

