

## 3.9a MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT

Diocesan Council has adopted a Model Code of Conduct which all its members will endorse annually by signing a copy of the Code. Diocesan Council also agreed to commend the Model Code of Conduct to all governing entities and their Councils, Committees and Boards for their members to also endorse the Code, annually, in the same manner.

The Code of Conduct was updated following the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse to address conflicts of interest in child sexual abuse and professional standards matters.

The implementation of a Code of Conduct allows the Diocese to monitor and maintain

- sound governance
- confidentiality where required
- transparency and accountability in our decision-making
- an atmosphere of objectivity, collegiality and respect.

Governing entities, including Parishes, are asked to implement this by using the Annual Declaration for Governance Bodies and returning it to the relevant governing entity. For a Parish the completed forms are to be retained by the Parish Council Secretary. A suggested timing for completion of the form is prior to the first meeting of the year, or for a Parish, the first meeting after the Annual General Meeting following the election or appointment of members to its Parish Council.

The Code of Conduct’s *Annual Declaration for Governance Bodies* is signed to acknowledge agreement to the Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement and *Being Together*. For Councils, Boards and Committees, this should be signed by members annually. For appointments which occur out of the standard annual cycle, completion of the Code of Conduct Declaration should occur prior to attendance at the first meeting.

### ***Being Together – Expectations of Behaviour in our Church Community***

*Being Together* describes the expectations we should seek to bring to our relationships with others within our Church communities and affirms our commitment to the safety of people participating in Diocesan life.

*Being Together* was Approved by General Synod July 2014 and subsequently revised by Standing Committee on 17 April 2020. It was approved by the Newcastle Diocesan Synod in October 2015 and the revision adopted by the Diocesan Council from 15 May 2021.

## Anglican Church of Australia Diocese of Newcastle

### Model Code of Conduct

**Jesus told us to love one another as he loves us. As Christians, we know our life together is strengthened when our behaviour is consistent with our faith. However, our experience of being together can be difficult at times, particularly when there are differences. So, it is important to be clear about how we will behave towards each other and towards the body we have been appointed to.**

In this code, governing body means a board, committee or council operating within the Diocese of Newcastle that has adopted this Code of Conduct.

When a governing body adopts the Code of Conduct, the existing and future members are expected to sign the Code of Conduct.

### Code of Conduct

**As a member of the governing body, I confirm that I will comply with the following standards of behaviour:**

- I will support the work of the Anglican Church of Australia in the Diocese of Newcastle and its governing bodies.
- I will act in good faith towards the Diocese and the governing body at all times.
- I accept the responsibility of publicly supporting the work of the governing body and its decisions that have been duly and properly made.
- I will undertake my duties as a responsible person and observe the highest possible standard of ethical conduct
- I will protect the confidentiality of information received as a member of the governing body and not divulge any information except as agreed by the governing body both during and after my term of appointment.
- I will declare any potential conflict of interest (whether real or perceived) should such arise during the course of the work for the governing body.
- I will withdraw from the oversight or management of any professional standards matters (including an allegation relating to abuse of a child or a vulnerable person) in which I have a conflict of interest or in which I may be perceived to have a conflict of interest.
- I will act at all times with objectivity, collegiality and respect observing the standards outlined in the Code adopted by the Synod called Being Together.
- I will not use information obtained as a member of the governing body for my personal benefit or the benefit of another.

## Explanation

### **To support the work of the Anglican Church of Australia in the Diocese of Newcastle:**

- To be aware of the work of the Diocese and the specific body whether it be a parish, agency or the like.
- To participate in and promote the activities of the body and the Diocese.

### **To act in good faith towards the Diocese and the governing body at all times:**

- The work of a particular governing body forms part of the wider work of the Diocese of Newcastle. By acting in good faith, a member brings their best efforts and goodwill to the particular and broader expressions of the work of the Anglican Church in which they are participating by virtue of their election and appointment.

### **To accept the responsibility to uphold the work of the governing body and its decisions that have been duly and properly made:**

- By agreeing that outside the meeting, members will honour the “letter and the spirit” of the decisions when in contact with other parties.
- Believing in the collective, group decision-making processes of the governing body.
- By debating issues openly and constructively and by questioning or challenging the opinions presented at meetings where their own judgement differs from that of other members.
- When disagreeing with a decision a member may request the minutes of the meeting reflect this disagreement, however, in the case of a majority decision, the member will recognise that a decision has been duly and properly made and do all that is reasonable to ensure the smooth implementation and communication of the decision.
- A member will discuss any concerns about a decision with the Chair of the meeting.
- The Chair is responsible to assist members to identify ways to address those concerns.
- A member will raise any concerns about a decision being duly and properly made in the first instance with the Chair of the meeting but may also raise those concerns with one of the bishops, the diocesan archdeacon, or the Diocesan Chief Executive.

### **To undertake my duties as a responsible person and observe the highest possible standard of ethical conduct members will:**

- Observe the duties of a Responsible Person as outlined in the Responsible Persons Ordinance 2015.
- Be open and transparent in their dealings by using any power (real or perceived) responsibly.
- Discharge their duties with care and diligence

### **To protect the confidentiality of information received as a member of a governing body and not divulge any information except as agreed by the governing body both during and after a term of appointment, members:**

- The work of a governing body is assisted when its members recognise that the communication of what has occurred at the meeting occurs formally and in an agreed manner.
- As members talk about their involvement with the governing body, they should not communicate decisions unless that has been agreed by the governing body. They should not divulge to others any written material (such as documents, notes correspondence, records of meetings) unless that is required by law or has been approved specifically by the meeting.
- When members communicate with others about the work of the governing body they should speak of the mind of the meeting as a whole and not the specific opinions and thoughts of individual members whether verbal or written down.

### **To declare any potential conflict of interest should such arise during the course of the work of the governing body:**

- Members will comply with the requirements of the Diocesan Conflict of Interest Policy on all occasions where their duties within the governing body comes into conflict with their interest/involvement with two or more bodies;
- Will declare either before or during a meeting such potential conflict, when the governing body will decide whether the member should continue within the meeting, or take leave from the meeting during its discussions;
- Where such conflict may be real, or perceived, and may interfere with their fiduciary obligations to the governing body it should be declared;
- Each member will ensure that no decision or action is taken that has the effect of placing his or her interests in priority to the interests of the governing body.

### **To withdraw from the oversight or management of any professional standards matters (including an allegation relating to abuse of a child or a vulnerable person) in which I have a conflict of interest or in which I may be perceived to have a conflict of interest.**

- Members will advise the Chair of the meeting on becoming aware that they have a conflict of interest or may be perceived to have a conflict of interest. They will withdraw from the meeting and from all further consideration of the matter.
- The Chair may need to assist the member find pastoral or other support. The attention to the needs of the member must not take precedence over ensuring the welfare of any person (including a child or vulnerable person) affected by the allegation.

### **To act at all times with objectivity, collegiality and respect:**

- Members will work together in accordance with the Diocese’s adopted ***“Being Together – Expectations of Behaviour in our Church Community”***

### **To not use information obtained as a member for the benefit of themselves or another:**

- Will use the powers vested in them properly and for the best interest of the governing body.

- Will not misuse their position for their own or a third party’s possible advantage unless this course of action is consented to by the governing body after full disclosure.
- Must ensure all information received is only applied for the purposes of the governing body and is kept confidential.
- Will ensure that any personal information coming to their attention is handled in compliance with the Diocesan Privacy Policy.

### Related Documents:

- Diocesan Handbook Section 3.9b Confidentiality Agreement
- Diocesan Handbook Section 3.9c Annual Declaration for Governance Bodies
- Being Together – Expectations of behaviour in our Church Community