



# Being a Warden in the Diocese of Bendigo

## Introduction

Thank you for your willingness to be nominated for election or appointment as a Warden in the Diocese of Bendigo. It is a position of significant responsibility and leadership in your parish. It is a position of trust and is a reflection of the goodwill and esteem in which you are held.

Wardens are elected or appointed for a three-year term. Any Warden for various reasons can resign at any time and be replaced. Wardens may serve two consecutive terms, but then must take a break for at least one term so as to allow others to take their turn in leadership. This may be varied, but only after approval from the Diocesan Executive.

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth and the role of Wardens, above all else, is to see that the part of the body to which they belong is in good health.

*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 challenging, particularly when there are differences. So it is important to be clear about what is loving, appropriate behaviour towards each other (Being Together)*

## The duties of Wardens

### **The duties and responsibilities of a Warden as set down in the Parish Administration Act are:**

7.2 The duties of the Churchwardens are as follows:

- (a) to act with the Incumbent in planning and developing the work of the Church both within and beyond the Parish and by their own examples to encourage all parishioners to establish an active and intelligent Christian witness;
- (b) to ensure that there is proper pastoral support for the Incumbent and the Incumbent's immediate family;
- (c) to ensure that adequate provision is made by each congregation for the proper preservation and safe custody of the Church Registers and all Church plate and other valuables;
- (d) to ensure that an inventory is kept of all Church property whether movable or immovable;
- (e) to have the care of all Church buildings within the Parish, the Rectory and other buildings, Church grounds, furniture and all other items necessary for divine service;
- (f) to report to the Annual Parish Meeting on the condition of all Church property and of any expenditure necessary to keep the residences of the clergy of the Parish in good order and repair;
- (g) to report to the Bishop any grave irregularities in the performance of divine service or of any willful neglect of duty or misconduct on the part of the Incumbent;
- (h) to have special responsibilities in the time of ministry transition including providing satisfactory evidence of means when the Parish is considering a new appointment;
- (i) to ensure that a current Parish Profile is maintained for the use of Parish Nominators in the event of a vacancy;
- (j) To see that the Parish is informed of the Code of Practice relating to those authorised for ministry in the Parish;
- (k) such other duties and responsibilities as may be delegated to them with their consent by the Parish Council.

Churchwardens are expected to meet with the Incumbent on a monthly basis, using an established Agenda, and (as necessary) with a written record of decisions being kept.

Churchwardens' meetings should deal with matters such as:

- Primary maintenance and environmental issues for parish buildings
- Financial matters, "ensuring that all accounts, Diocesan and otherwise, are paid in a prompt and timely manner"
- The preparation of Diocesan Returns, for approval and prompt submission by the Parish Council
- Clergy leave requests for submission to Diocesan Registry
- Assisting the Incumbent to prepare the agenda for Parish Council meetings.

The meeting should also have a pastoral dimension, where mutual concern for the Parish's leaders, Incumbent (and family members) and Churchwardens is considered.

## What conduct is necessary to sustain the task?

### 1. As with Parish Councillors, Wardens must understand the responsibilities and limitations of their role:

- These are summarized above and set out in the Parish Administration Act (Amended 2016)

### 2. In behavior and speech wardens are to set an exemplary standard

- In taking up leadership within the parish Wardens are bound by:
  - a. 'Faithfulness in Service: A Code of Practice for church workers and leaders', and
  - b. The Lay Authorisations policy.
- A Parish Council covenant

### 3. The General Synod statement 'Being Together' is a starting point for all Wardens and parish leaders in establishing a Code of Practice for their role in the parish.

- 'Being Together' is consistent with 'Faithfulness in Service' and forms the basic expectation for behavior with each other.

#### 1. Being a Community

- We will **seek the common good** of the church, not just our own interests.
- We will **encourage each other to participate** in the life of the church.
- We will be **aware of how our behaviour affects others**.

The role of a Warden is to help build and encourage the common good of the church community. This means acting in accordance with the Biblical principles of honesty, fairness and accountability.

#### 2. Relating to each other

- We will **treat each other with respect and dignity** irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age, or contribution of the church.
- We will **act with integrity and honesty** in our interactions with each other.

While Wardens will obviously have friends in the congregation(s), you are urged to treat all parishioners the same as much as possible.

#### 3. Communicating with each other

- We will **communicate respectfully** with others, and not in a way that threatens, belittles or humiliates.
- We will **respect confidences**, and refrain from speculation and gossip.

## Practically, this means that Wardens will:

- Be careful with their use of language, especially in times of disagreement.
- Refrain from any physical contact with parishioners, except for shaking of hands.
- Conduct visits to parishioners in the company of another Warden or Parish Councillor. Preferably one of the opposite sex to yourself.
- Ensure that diocesan protocols in relation to the handling of church funds are observed and maintained
- Be very cognizant of boundaries; you are not expected to do everything or solve every problem in the parish. Consult, seek advice, call the Diocese!

## Being nominated as a Warden

To be nominated as a Warden you need to:

- Be on your Parish's Electoral Roll before the roll closes (which involves signing a declaration warranting that you can be listed prior to 30 days before the Annual Parish Meeting),
- Be nominated according to the process used in your parish (this is usually via two other members of the Electoral Roll or directly by the Rector),
- Be able to fulfil the Parish Administration Act, **significantly this includes not having served for two terms immediately preceding this one.**

### SCHEDULE 1

#### Parish Electoral Roll Declaration

Full name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, wish to be enrolled on the Electoral Roll of the Anglican Parish of \_\_\_\_\_

I declare that:

- (a) I am not less than eighteen years (18) old;
- (b) I have been baptised;
- (c) I am a member of the Anglican Church;
- (d) I am not on the Electoral Roll of another Anglican Parish; and
- (e) I am a regular worshipper in this Parish.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_

*Figure: The 'Parish Electoral Roll Declaration' which must be signed to allow for addition to the parish electoral roll*