

# Setting up an Opportunity Shop

Setting up an Opportunity Shop can be a good way to undertake church mission, engage with your community and raise some extra income for the parish.

Depending on your parish's vision, an Opportunity Shop could be used to raise funds for parish mission, outreach, or for other charitable and ministry purposes.

Whatever your aims, setting up and managing an Opportunity Shop is a very involved activity that requires careful thought and planning to understand what is involved. Op Shops can consume a large amount of parishioners' time, so it is important that your parish endorses this venture as a ministry direction and understands the commitment required.

This brief guide is designed to help identify the op shop management considerations and risk management practices to assist with **developing your Op Shop proposal for Parish Council approval, prior to any commitments being made.**



## Insurance Requirements

Your Parish Council will need to ensure that your shop is covered by property and liability insurance and that you have personal accident cover for volunteers. You may also wish to insure stock, shop fittings etc. against loss. Please contact Andrew Apostolou on 03 5443 4711 at the Registry Office, Anglican Diocese of Bendigo to discuss your requirements.

## Legal Entity Requirements

An Opportunity Shop and its Management Committee are not an independent body and may not enter into employment, leasing/rental or other contracts. All leasing/rental agreements must be executed in the name of the Bendigo Diocesan Trust Corporation and be signed by the diocese. Any employment contracts are to be developed by the diocese.

# Setting up an Opportunity Shop

Day-to-day operations of the Opportunity Shop falls under the parish's existing Australian Business Number (ABN).

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between an Op Shop Committee and their parish is recommended to ensure roles and responsibilities are clear. The diocesan website contains a template of a MoU.

## Shop management and support

People involved in the management of your Op Shop will need to have skills in sales, basic book-keeping, staff management & supervision, OH&S, ability to deal with legal and council requirements, overall premises and business management. You will also need to decide whether to hire any paid employees to manage the business or to have all volunteers. Remember, it can be difficult for volunteers to maintain the level of commitment required to essential manage a retail outlet.

An Op Shop Committee is recommended to help support the Op Shop Manager/Coordinators

The suggested role for the Op Shop committee is:

- Support Op Shop Manager/Coordinator with establishing a friendly and healthy environment adopting good practices, encouraging adherence to policies and procedures
- Holding regular meetings and ensure minutes are kept and report back to Parish Council at least quarterly
- Support Manager/Coordinator in finding and assessing suitability of all new volunteers in conjunction with Parish Council
- Regularly reviewing Op Shop activities, to determine where improvements and changes are desirable or required
- Attending to matters of "due diligence" such as insurance, security, safety, council requirements, police matters, etc.
- Encourage regular review of workplace safety and risks, support the churchwardens annual safety inspection review
- Reviewing the opportunities for mission and the trends in Op Shop business in the locale
- Attending to Op Shop needs, such as advertising, new shelving, equipment, etc.
- Reporting to the Parish Council on a range of topics, including trading activity, Op Shop requirements, repairs etc, and organising collections of goods for sale, as well as disposal of unwanted or unsaleable items, and
- Making recommendations to Parish Council on distribution of mission funds.

## Staff/volunteer matters

There are many considerations for staff and volunteers (workers) including:

- Skill level of employees and/ or volunteers (such as sales and cash handling)
- Roles, responsibilities and tasks documented
- Hours of opening and work
- Drawing up of rosters
- Recruitment and selection processes, along with induction
- Assigning of appropriate tasks according to skill and experience

# Setting up an Opportunity Shop

- Safe Church screening and background checks i.e. police checks, especially for those people who hold keys. Diocesan policy will assist will clarify requirements.
- Minimum age requirement – Diocesan policy does not allow people under the age of 18 to volunteer or work in Op Shops
- Policies and procedures will need to be developed
- All volunteers will need to be trained in policies and procedures
- Reward and recognition program for workers to acknowledge their contribution
- Staff and workers purchasing goods policies
- Any paid employment arrangements MUST be discussed with the church wardens and Registrar

## Health and Safety obligations

Running a venture, such as an Op. Shop gives the church and those involved in the running of the venture obligations with regards to workplace health and safety such as:

- Safe working policies and procedures
- Provision of a comfortable and safe work environment
- Good lighting, clean and uncluttered premises
- Training and supervision of all workers in required tasks and safety matters
- Workplace bullying and harassment policies
- Procedures and training for dealing with aggressive and abusive customers
- Incident reporting procedures. Diocesan template available.
- First aid procedures and supplies
- Fire, electrical and chemical safety procedures
- Removal of slip and trip hazards
- Emergency and evacuation procedures
- Safe manual handling procedures and avoiding heavy lifting
- Regular safety inspections

Safety considerations are a key in choosing appropriate premises with plenty of space, good lighting and access for both customers and workers.

## Security of premises and cash management

Good security measures help to reduce the risk of burglary, theft and vandalism occurring. This involves have the following:

- Procedures for opening up and closing the shop
- Lock and key management policy
- Cash handling procedures – such as floats, cash counting, register tallying, segregation of duties and banking procedures
- Secure storage of cash and valuable items

# Setting up an Opportunity Shop

## Goods for Sale

Not all donated items will be suitable for resale – second-hand bike helmets, child car seats and baby capsules, cots, mattresses, for example. Some goods are dangerous such as knives.

Certain other items will need to meet “mandatory safety standards” before they can be sold. The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission has more information on product safety laws <https://www.productsafety.gov.au/>

Significant penalties can be imposed on both the organisation and individuals for non-compliance with mandatory standards.

## Other considerations

- Clarify the Op Shops key purpose to ensure the parish share the same vision
- What skills can be utilised, where is extra support needed
- How can the workload be shared and sustained?
- Financial feasibility – can the parish afford the financial commitments
- Planning permits, zoning and council regulations
- Disability access for customers and volunteers
- Shop location with access to public transport
- Store design and fit out, shelving, storage etc.
- Building amenity and comfort for workers
- Shop lease obligations
- Number of other Op Shops in the area and likely demand in the area
- Availability of appropriate volunteers in the area. Volunteer Resource Centre may be able to assist
- Sorting and pricing goods
- Areas for sorting and storage of goods
- Repairs, maintenance and cleaning
- Rubbish disposal
- Maintenance of an inventory register, particularly for valuable items
- Disposal procedures for unwanted goods
- Op Shop name and registration by parish
- Marketing and advertising to customers and volunteers
- Budget and fundraising to help with set-up costs
- Impact on the parish, if the venture is not successful

## Where to get more information

The diocese has developed a manual *Management of an Opportunity Shop* which contains more information about roles & responsibilities and must be adopted by the Parish Council. There are also a number of practical resources <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/>. You can also contact Deb or Naomi at the Registry office on 03 5443 4711 to discuss further. We can also put you in touch with Op Shop Coordinators at Anglican Parishes Op Shops in our diocese.