

## CLERGY PERSONAL LEAVE SUPPORT POLICY

*Version:* 1.0  
*Contact:* Registrar

*Date of Issue:* January 2018  
*Review Date:* May 2025

### Introduction & Rationale

This Clergy Personal Leave Support Policy was developed following the outcomes of the Clergy Attraction, Retention and Development (CARD) project in 2017. The policy was established to enable clergy to manage their own well-being and care for their families in times of need.

This policy does not replace any existing paid leave entitlements available to clergy outlined in the *Clergy Manual 2016 – Material Support (Chapter 3)* or, any paid leave they may be entitled to under legislation.

### Statement of Intention

The Diocese of Bendigo acknowledges the pastoral, social and welfare needs of clergy, their partner and families. This policy aims to provide tangible support to clergy to manage their own well-being and care for their families in times of need by:

- 1) provision of up to ten (10) days paid personal leave per annum for full time clergy and pro-rata equivalent for part-time clergy. Paid personal leave support is a privilege and not a right. Any unused personal leave **will not** accrue from year to year.
- 2) the diocese providing access to a confidential professional counselling service to proactively support their wellbeing

#### *1) Paid Personal Leave*

The provision of up to ten (10) days per annum for full-time clergy, pro-rata for part-time clergy, is available to cover absences in any of the follow circumstances:

- *Sick leave* – for clergy with an illness or injury, whether work or non-work related,
- *Carer's Leave* - to provide care or support to a member of family or household because of personal illness, injury or unexpected emergency affecting the member,
- *Compassionate leave* – where a family or household member has sustained a life-threatening illness or injury. Compassionate leave can be taken after the death of the clergy's family or household member.

*How will personal leave be made available?*

Each year from 1 January, eligible clergy will be provided with 10 days personal leave allocation (pro-rata for part time) through the centralized payroll function for use throughout that calendar year. At 31 December each year any unused personal leave balance for clergy will be removed. Personal leave is not an accumulative employee entitlement. It is provided to enable clergy to manage the wellbeing needs of themselves and their family.

When a clergy member joins the Diocese after 1 January, a pro-rata amount of personal leave for use until 31 December of that year, will be agreed.

*How is personal leave accessed?*

Personal leave will be approved by the Bishop. Leave forms are available from the Diocesan website <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/> and are expected to be completed as soon as practical.

Where an absence affects the exercise of ministry the Churchwardens and Rural Dean, Archdeacon and/or Vicar-General are to be informed so that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place, including service relief arrangements.

*Work-related injury or illness*

Full-time and part-time stipendiary clergy who suffer a work-related injury or illness may lodge a WorkSafe Workers Injury claim form. After seeking appropriate medical treatment, injured clergy or someone on your behalf should contact the Registrar or Bishop to report the injury/illness, discuss leave arrangements and any return-to-work planning.

Written reports of any work-related injury or illness should be made within 30 days of you becoming aware of it. Failure to do so could mean you are not entitled to compensation. Incident/Injury Reporting form is available on <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/resources/>

If you wish to claim WorkSafe entitlements, you must complete a WorkSafe approved Workers Injury claim form available from <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/> or the Registrar. You will also need to provide a Certificate of Capacity from your medical practitioner. Worksafe insurance agents have 28 days to accept or reject your claim.

*Leave without pay:*

In some circumstances, clergy may not have an adequate balance of paid personal or annual leave available to cover any required absence.

Leave without pay is a privilege and will only be granted in special circumstances at the discretion of the Bishop. All leave without pay applications must be endorsed by the Parish and the Bishop will be the final approving authority. Supporting evidence and documentation may be requested to support your application.

*2) Confidential Counselling Program (EAP)*

Clergy may also access a free confidential counselling service to proactively support their wellbeing. This service is provided by external professional counsellors, known as Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Clergy will be entitled to access up to three (3) free sessions per annum to assist with personal, familial and work stress to develop strategies to support their wellbeing. See Employee Assistance Program guidelines for full details.

*Definitions*

**EAP – Employee Assistance Program**, external confidential counselling service funded by the Diocese

*Policy Scope & Coverage*

This policy applies to stipendiary clergy, full and part time. It may also apply to locum clergy at the Bishop's discretion.

*Policy Responsibilities*

*Bishop in Council* – approval, review and amendment of this policy

*Bishop* – approval of personal leave **Reviewed and amended by Bishop-in-Council February 2022** for individual clergy

*Clergy* – appropriate application of personal leave policy, completion of leave applications and where requested, provision of supporting documentation such as certificate of capacity from a medical practitioner

*Registrar* - administration of annual clergy personal leave allocation, provision of EAP services, support with work related injury claims and return to work plans.

*Related Documents: Internal*

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) guidelines
- Leave Application Forms <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/resources/>

*Related Documents: External*

- Works Injury Claim forms <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

*Approved by Bishop in Council:*

1 January 2018

<i>Policy History</i>	
<i>Policy created</i>	January 2018
<i>Policy reviewed</i>	February 2022
<i>Policy amended</i>	February 2022