



Lay Authorisation and Clearance Process Overview

Introduction

Under Victorian legislation and in accordance with recommendations arising from the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, all organisations and organisational leadership MUST take all steps possible to remove or reduce the risk of abuse in the organisation or by leaders/workers of the organisation.

To comply with these requirements the Diocese of Wangaratta has developed a comprehensive lay authorisation and clearance system. The Lay Authorisation and Clearance Guidelines apply to all lay roles in the Diocese, including lay administrative and governance roles in addition to licensed lay ministry roles. The Guidelines focus on clearance processes and appropriate documentation relating to appointments.

The Guidelines do not seek in any way to override the rights of parishes to elect or appoint certain roles and this has been recognised in the review of lay roles (Lay Authorisation and Clearance Guidelines, Appendix One). However, parish processes in relation to these roles must be consistent with the documentation and clearance processes as set out in the Diocese's Lay Authorisation and Clearance Guidelines and associated safe church and professional standards material.

This document provides an overview of the authorisation and clearance processes as they apply to licensed lay ministry roles, elected officebearers and other locally appointed roles. The processes outlined for each reflect the usual processes for nominating, electing or appointing people to such roles but incorporate the additional documentation required to comply with duty of care and other legislative requirements.

Position Descriptions

Position Description templates are available for a number of roles and must be customised by the responsible ministry unit (parish or diocese) for each appointment.

Where a Position Description is available for a particular role, this must be provided to the individual being appointed to the role and actioned as follows:

Clergy PDs must be signed by the member of clergy and endorsed by the Bishop, with signed copies to be provided to the member of clergy and stored securely by the Registrar.

Parish Office Holder PDs – Parish Councillors and Churchwardens may have additional documentation and declaration requirements arising from diocesan legislation. Please check with the Registrar.

Other Lay Role PDs must be signed by the appointee and appropriate church leader (as indicated on the PD), with a signed copy being securely stored by the relevant ministry unit (parish or diocese) and a copy provided to the appointee.

Submission Forms

There are two main forms relating to the lay authorisation and clearance submission process:

- Each individual being appointed to any lay role or roles must complete the **Acknowledgement of Lay Appointment, Election or Nomination** form. Only one form is required for each person covering all roles that person is appointed or elected to, unless additional appointments are made at a later time.
- Each parish must complete the **Lay Authorisation and Clearance Submission** form. Only one form is required for each parish for all the lay roles being filled, unless additional appointments are made at a later time.

For a listing of all the forms and resources supporting this process refer to page 5 of this document.

Process for Lay Ministry (Licensed) Roles

- The priest¹ and member² of the church agree to the role/s appropriate for the individual.
- The priest and individual complete the Acknowledgement of Lay Appointment, Election or Nomination form identifying ALL the roles that person will undertake.
- The priest submits nominations to Parish Council for endorsement.
- Endorsed individuals obtain/complete any clearance documentation applicable to their role/s and provide this to the priest or Parish Safe Church Officer.
- The priest and a Parish Council representative complete the Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form, including ALL people in lay roles whether licensed or not, and confirm receipt of all clearance documentation required for each individual.
- The completed Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form is provided to the Diocesan Registrar (or Diocesan Safe Church Officer, as applicable) with copies of all clearance documentation.
- Following verification of successful safe church / professional standards clearance, individuals will be licensed by the Bishop.

The above process applies to the following licensed roles:

- Lay reader / Lay preacher / Lay minister / Worship leader
- Lay chaplain
- Adult bible study leader
- Pastoral worker/visitor
- Nursing home/hospital visitor
- Home communion
- Spiritual director/advisor
- Mission outreach worker/coordinator
- Children's ministry worker/coordinator
- Youth leader
- Playgroup worker/coordinator
- School ministry / RE instructor / Sunday School worker/coordinator
- Diocesan safe church officer
- Parish safe church officer (and parish safe church committee members where applicable)

It also applies where a position requires endorsement by the Diocese or Bishop. This includes:

- Diocesan safe church committee members
- Vocational discernment panel members
- Examining chaplains

¹ "Priest" refers to the Incumbent or long term locum of the parish, or the Diocesan Archdeacon.

² "Member" refers to a congregant who has been associated with the parish for sufficient time to be eligible for appointment or election to a lay position. For most lay ministry and lay administrative roles this is at least 6 months.

Process for Elected or Appointed Officeholders

- Nominations called and submitted in accordance with Diocesan legislation.³
- Clearance process commenced.⁴
- Election/s held in accordance with usual processes (as per the Diocesan legislation).
- Elected/appointed individuals complete the Acknowledgement of Lay Appointment, Election or Nomination form, identifying ALL the roles that person will undertake, and obtain/complete any clearance documentation required for their role/s.
- Elected individuals provide relevant clearance documentation to the priest or Parish Safe Church Officer.
- The priest and a Parish Council representative complete the Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form, including ALL people in lay roles whether elected or not, and confirm receipt of all clearance documentation required for each individual.
- The completed Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form is provided to the Diocesan Registrar (or Diocesan Safe Church Officer, as applicable) with copies of all clearance documentation.
- Following verification of successful safe church / professional standards clearance, Parish Council issue letter/s of appointment to elected individuals.

The above process applies to the following roles:

- Warden
- Parish councillor
- Parish secretary
- Parish treasurer
- Nominator / Supp. Nominator
- Other elected officeholder

³ Individuals must be parishioners of at least 12 months' standing to be eligible for election or appointment as a parish councillor or churchwarden, and at least 6 months' standing in order to be eligible for appointment to other roles.

⁴ The appointee cannot commence in the role until the relevant clearance process has been completed so all nominated persons are encouraged to start the process prior to elections being held.

Process for Other Parish Appointments

- Nomination or recruitment process occurs (as appropriate).
- The priest and individual complete the Acknowledgement of Lay Appointment, Election or Nomination form, identify ALL the roles that person will undertake.
- The priest submits recommended appointments to Parish Council for endorsement.
- Endorsed individuals obtain/complete any clearance documentation and provide this to the priest or Parish Safe Church Officer.⁵
- The priest and a Parish Council representative complete the Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form, including ALL people in lay roles (elected, appointed, licenced, employed), and confirm receipt of all clearance documentation required for each individual.
- The completed Lay Authorisation & Clearance Submission form is provided to the Diocesan Registrar (or Diocesan Safe Church Officer, as applicable) with copies of all clearance documentation.
- Letter/s of appointment issued by the Parish Council where applicable.

The above process applies to the following roles:

- Crucifer / server / acolyte
- Intercessor
- Bible reader
- Eucharistic / communion assistant
- Sidesperson / usher
- Welcomer
- Offertory collector / collection counter
- Verger
- Sacristan
- Op shop coordinator
- Op shop worker
- Community meals / catering / event coordinator
- Community meals / catering / event worker
- Community services program worker / coordinator
- Music leader / choir coordinator
- Stipendiary music director
- Stipendiary musician
- Choir member / musician (over 18)
- Bus driver / transportation
- Guild official (treasurer or chair)
- Communications / publicity officer
- Coordinator of volunteers (general)
- Office administration / reception
- Groundskeeper / landscaper
- Property / maintenance / cleaners
- Flower arranger

⁵ The appointee cannot commence in the role until the relevant clearance process has been completed so all nominated persons are encouraged to start the process early.

Summary of Lay Authorisation / Clearance Resources

Resource Title	Document Type	For Use By
Lay Authorisation and Clearance Guidelines	Guideline/Policy	All
Lay Authorisation and Clearance Process Overview (<i>this document</i>)	General Resource	All
Summary of Checks and Screening	General Resource	All
Lay Authorisation and Clearance Submission	Form	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese)
Acknowledgement of Lay Appointment, Election or Nomination	Form/Checklist	Individuals
Church Worker Summary	Form	Individuals
Safe Ministry Questionnaire (over 18s)	Form	Individuals
Safe Ministry Questionnaire (13-17 yr olds)	Form	Individuals
Guidelines for Submitting Requests for Exemption from Clearance or Certification Requirements	Guideline	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese)
Request for Exemption from a Clearance Requirement for an Individual	Form	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese)
Fact Sheet – Verifying Working with Children Checks	General Resource	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese)
Fact Sheet – Safe Ministry Questionnaire	General Resource	All
Lay Church Worker Referee Check Record	Form	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese)
Position Descriptions	Guideline - Role Specific	Ministry Units (parishes/diocese) Individuals in Specified Roles