

Ss Peter and Paul Parish Kiama

Pastoral Council Guidelines

Mission Statement

We, the people of Kiama Parish, inspired by Jesus Christ and guided by the Holy Spirit, strive to form a welcoming and caring community that will work together to proclaim the message of the Gospel and, in doing so, encourage the community to grow in faith, love, justice and peace.

1. Name

The Parish Pastoral Council (referred to in these guidelines as “the Council”) for Saints Peter and Paul Parish (referred to in these guidelines as “The Parish”) will be known as “**The Ss Peter and Paul Parish Pastoral Council**”.

2. Role and Aims

Through the Council, laity, religious and clergy will **share the responsibility** for building and supporting a vital parish community focussed on living and promoting values of love, justice and peace within the parish and wider community.

The Council will do this by:

- a. (i) **Listening, discerning and responding** to the hopes, needs and concerns of the parish community.
- (ii) **Assisting the Parish Priest with comment and advice** on ways to address complaints and resolve tensions in the Parish; whether this involves the full Council or a subgroup of members is at the discretion of the Parish Priest.
- b. **Identifying the gifts** of the parish community.
- c. **Setting short and long-term goals** for the parish and developing, with the parish community, a pastoral plan to meet the hopes, needs and concerns of the parish community and incorporate the gifts.
- d. **Encouraging and supporting** the good work of existing groups within the parish.
- e. **Discerning, evaluating and using information** so as to make decisions that reflect Gospel values.
- f. **Co-ordinating** the activities of parish organisations.
- g. **Involving the whole of the parish** in the work of the Church in response to the present and future needs.
- h. Fostering a **sense of community** in the parish.
- i. **Communicating** with parish and diocesan bodies, including the Diocesan Pastoral Council.
- j. **Evaluating** Council’s projects.

Ss Peter and Paul Parish Kiama

Pastoral Council Guidelines

3. Membership

The Council will consist of the Parish Priest, Assistant Priest, Pastoral Associate and eight members elected to the Council by the parishioners.

Each member is a **representative of the whole Parish Community**, not a particular group within the Parish.

It is hoped that the Council will have as broad a membership as possible, with members from a mix of ages, gender and ethnic origin.

There will be a formation session for all newly elected members prior to the first meeting of each new Council. Formation will be ongoing. Members need to be open to study and reflection.

4. Responsibilities of Members

A member of Council should aim to be a person of **prayer**, a good **listener** and someone who is open to **study** and **reflection**.

Each member of the Council will be required to:

- a. **Attend** the regular meetings of the Council.
- b. **Provide input** to deliberations of the Council.
- c. Develop a **spirit of enquiry and the ability to listen and understand** the issues affecting the life of parishioners.
- d. Take part in **preparing and implementing** Council plans and initiatives.
- e. **Represent** the Council when required (eg other Parish meetings, regional or diocesan meetings).
- f. Provide **prayerful support** with other members of the Council.
- g. **Meet regularly with such group/s** within the Parish as Council may allocate to that member and **report** to Council in relation to the activities and needs of such groups.

In meeting these responsibilities, members of Council will be carrying on the Mission of the Church.

5. Candidates

Eligible candidates for membership of the Council will be parishioners **over the age of eighteen**.

6. Nominations of Candidates

Parishioners will be asked, at an appropriate time, to **recommend other parishioners** for possible nomination to the Parish Pastoral Council.

Each person recommended will be contacted by a member of the Council, and invited to an **information session**. At the conclusion of the session, participants will be asked to indicate whether they wish to accept or decline nomination.

Ss Peter and Paul Parish Kiama

Pastoral Council Guidelines

7. Elections

Elections should take place as soon as possible after acceptances of nominations have been finalised. These elections should occur over one weekend in each of the Churches (Kiama, Gerringong and Jamberoo).

Pre-poll voting will be available in the two weeks prior to the election.

A “How to Vote” sheet shall be distributed to parishioners. It will contain a **brief resume of each candidate together with a photograph.**

The elected members shall be those that receive the highest number of votes, with the exception that there must be **at least one person from each of the worshipping communities** of Kiama, Gerringong and Jamberoo

In the event that, after votes have been tallied, it is apparent that there is not at least one person from each of these communities amongst the eight candidates with the highest votes, the candidate with the highest number of votes from any of those communities that is not represented, shall be elected and the balance of elected members determined by the number of votes received.

The number of votes for each candidate shall not be disclosed. The Parish Priest shall keep with the Parish records a list of recorded votes for each candidate.

8. Scrutineers

Two scrutineers who are not candidates shall be appointed by the Parish Priest to count the votes.

9. Term Of Office

The **term of membership is two years** with the possibility of extending this term for a further two years. (The 4 members continuing on after the term of the first Council is complete may only serve for a further 1 year.)

4 Council members will have completed 2 years of service at the end of each year and nominations will be called for in October. A meeting of nominees will be held in November and, if more than 4 acceptances are received an election will take place soon after.

In the event of **insufficient acceptances** being received the Parish Priest, in consultation with the non-retiring Council members, will appoint Councillors to make up the number required. These appointees will retire at the end of their first year but be eligible for nomination.

Any elected member who serves two consecutive terms (four years) will then **stand down for at least one two year term** and will not be eligible for that term.

10. Vacancies

In the event a vacancy occurs in relation to any elected member during that member's term of office, the vacancy should be filled as soon as possible.

The Parish Priest should refer to the recorded list from the elections and **choose the next in line.** In the event that there are no names to choose from, the Parish Priest, in consultation with Council members, will appoint a Councillor to fill the vacancy. These appointees will retire at the end of their first year but be eligible for nomination.

Ss Peter and Paul Parish Kiama

Pastoral Council Guidelines

11. Executive Positions

At the first meeting of the Council, an executive should be elected. The executive shall consist of a Chairperson, a Deputy Chairperson and a Secretary.

The executive shall be responsible for chairing the meetings and recording the minutes of the meetings. It will also take responsibility for setting the agenda for each meeting.

The executive shall also coordinate the business of the council between meetings and arrange additional formation opportunities outside regular meetings when required.

12. Executive Vacancies

Executive vacancies shall be filled by the Council from within its members.

13. Advisors

The Council may seek advice from personnel both inside and outside the parish if required. These persons would act in an advisory role only and would not be council members.

14. Council Meetings and Procedure

- a. There will be a minimum of **six** meetings of the Parish Pastoral Council each year.
- b. The agenda for each meeting will be finalised by the Council Executive and circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting, together with the minutes of the previous meeting and any notes or other relevant material required.
- c. The agenda for each meeting will be published in the Parish Bulletin on the weekend immediately preceding that meeting.
- d. Parishioners are invited to contribute to the agenda. Parishioners are welcome to attend council meetings and speak via the Chairperson.
- e. The decision-making process of the Council will be by means of discernment and consensus with each member contributing to the final decision of the Council.

15. Communication with the Parish

The Council will report to the parish community regularly and invite input from the community.

Council members will speak briefly at the Parish masses and summary of each meeting will be printed in the Parish Bulletin.

16. Review and Amendment of Guidelines

These guidelines will be reviewed at the end of each Council's term and may be amended by Council at a Council meeting, should Council agree, by consensus, to such amendment.

Ss Peter and Paul Parish Kiama

Pastoral Council Guidelines

17. "Caretaker" Role

In the event the Parish is without a Parish Priest, the Council may, by consensus, agree to continue to operate in a "caretaker" role in liaison with Diocesan authorities.

18. Dissolution

The Council may be dissolved if:

- a. The Parish Priest so determines after consultation with the Executive; or
- b. The Council, by consensus, so determines.