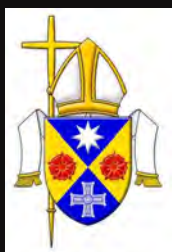




SANDHURST MISSION AND PASTORAL COUNCIL

Preparation and Consultation Plan 2022 - 2023



I dream of a “missionary option”, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today’s world rather than for her self preservation.

Pope Francis
The Joy of the Gospel, 27



Prepared by
Mission & Pastoral Life Team | Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst

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*A synodal Church is a Church
which listens, which realises
that listening is more than
simply hearing.*

Address of Pope Francis at the
Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops
17 October 2015





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Introduction

The establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council, to be called the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council, was a key recommendation in the 2020 *Go Forth* Review of the Diocese. This Council will support synodal governance in the Diocese through a structure that builds co-responsibility and discernment in leadership and decision-making. It will strengthen our capacity to operate in a strategic and collaborative way, by drawing on the best possible advice of lay people and clergy for pursuing the Church's mission.

A year of preparation and consultation for establishing the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council commenced on 27 April 2022, the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Patroness of the Diocese. This Preparation & Consultation Plan has been developed by the Diocese's Mission and Pastoral Life Team. It provides a timeline for the year, a description of the preparation and consultation process and meetings, as well as information about the forthcoming Diocesan Assembly to be held in Shepparton on 15 February 2023.

I encourage you to read this plan, discuss it with fellow parishioners, and participate in one of the local preparation and consultation meetings. Please continue to pray for our Diocese as we prepare for this significant enhancement to the way we live together as missionary disciples of Jesus.

Most Reverend Shane Mackinlay

Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst



Prayer for the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

We turn to Mary, our Mother of Good Counsel and patroness of our Diocese, as we seek to become a more missionary and pastoral Church: people of faith, hope and love for our world.

May we be led by the same wisdom and courage sent by the Holy Spirit to guide her along unfamiliar paths and through challenging decisions.

We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Lady of Good Counsel, pray for us!



Timeline

for Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council



Preparation
May-June
2022



**Preparation
and Consultation**
July-Dec
2022



**Diocesan
Assembly**
15 February
2023



EOIs Close
10 March
2023



**Members
Announced**
24 March 2023
**Members
Commissioned**
4 April 2023



**First Meeting
of SMPC**
27 April 2023



To stay up to date with new developments and other Diocesan news register to receive the Sandhurst eNews

Preparation

Developing resources and a plan for preparation and consultation meetings.

Develop the budget, claim dates, liaise with CES Ltd and make bookings.

Preparation and Consultation

Why are we entering a preparation and consultation process?

All the baptised share responsibility for the mission and for structures that facilitate the living out of the mission entrusted to the Church. A key learning from the listening and dialogue phase of the Plenary Council of Australia and the Synod on Synodality is that the people of God are seeking inclusion and opportunities to exercise co-responsibility for governance and leadership of the pastoral life of the diocese. Establishing a Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council is a significant commitment by our diocese to create a structure that supports synodal governance, leadership and decision-making. As steps are taken to establish these structures, it is also important to inform, prepare and consult the people of God along the way.

What do we want to achieve with this process of preparation and consultation?

The primary objective of this process of preparation and consultation is to make progress toward the formulation and establishment of a Diocesan Pastoral Council, to be known as the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council (SMPC). The process will build on the significant work already undertaken via the Review of the Strategic, Consultative and Administrative Structures of the Diocese, as described in the *Go Forth* Report (December 2020), the Listening and Dialogue Phase of the 5th Plenary Council of Australia and the Diocesan Consultation for the 19th Ordinary Synod of Bishops on Synodality. The process of preparation and consultation is intended to empower the people of God and enhance the sense of co-responsibility and synodality across the diocese. It will also aim to encourage expressions of interest in becoming a member of the SMPC. Feedback from this process will inform the Statutes of the SMPC.

Who will lead and facilitate the preparation and consultation process?

Members of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Life Team.

How will the preparation and consultation work?

Preparation and consultation meetings will be arranged for groups across the diocese and facilitated by the Mission and Pastoral Life Team. These will be designed to run for between 60 and 90 minutes. The preparation and consultation meetings will provide information about what the SMPC is and why it is important for our diocese. The meetings will be supported with handouts and use the 'Listening and Dialogue' process from the first phase of the Plenary Council. Information sessions and videos will also be provided to groups and made available on social media. The meeting process will include opportunities to ask questions and provide feedback to the Bishop. A record of the collective questions and feedback of each group will be kept and processed by the facilitators and a copy provided to the group. Where possible, questions asked by the group will be responded to in the meeting, or a response provided as soon as practicable. De-identified collective feedback and questions will be provided to the Bishop and help inform the Statutes of the SMPC.

Arrangements for the preparation and consultation meetings will begin to be made in late June and early July. The meetings will commence in late July and conclude in December.



What is the outline and flow of a typical Preparation and Consultation Meeting?

Acknowledgement of Country
Welcome and introductions
Prayer

INTRODUCTION TIME

- Purpose of the meeting
- Why, what, how will the SMPC be constituted and function?
- Membership: qualities/expectations/responsibilities and process for EOI and selection
- Timeline

SILENT REFLECTION (Guided)

- What encourages you? What challenges you?
- What questions do you still have? What would you like to know more about?

LISTENING AND DIALOGUE (Plenary Council Listening and Dialogue process)

- Reflect on your responses to the reflection questions
- Share your responses and listen to others' responses
- Reflect again on how others' responses have influenced your perspective
- What questions do you still have? What feedback do you want to give?

CONCLUSION

- Next steps, stay connected, pray
- Concluding prayer and blessing



Who could participate in the preparation and consultation meetings?

DIOCESE

Chancery staff, College of Consultors, Council of Priests, Retired Priests, Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators Network, seminary staff and seminarians, Diocesan Finance Council, other reference groups.

PARISH

Parish pastoral councils, parish leadership teams, parish staff and volunteers, parishioners, youth representatives and other groups.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION SANDHURST LIMITED (CES Ltd)

CES Ltd leadership and staff, principals, deputy principals, religious education leaders, advisory councils, student leaders.

OTHER

Catholic Care Victoria, religious congregations, ethnic and language groups, Knights of the Southern Cross, local St Vincent de Paul conference members, and other Catholic groups.

What is the proposed schedule of preparation and consultation meetings?

FROM 18 JULY and AUGUST

North East Deanery, Pastoral Associates and Lay Coordinators, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd.

SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER

Goulburn Deanery, College of Consultors, Council of Priests, Retired Priests, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd.

NOVEMBER and DECEMBER

Western Deanery, Catholic Education Sandhurst Ltd.



Why a Diocesan Assembly?

The Diocesan Assembly is part of a larger movement of synodality, being a church on the journey together. This will be the first time in living memory that the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst has gathered as a whole community of parishes, schools, professed religious and chancery staff. It is the right time for our entire community, ordained and lay, to gather in one place at one time to celebrate, to pray, and to enter into the collective experience of listening and dialogue. At the Assembly a keynote address on Synodality will be delivered, the recommendations of the 5th Plenary Council of Australia noted, the synthesis from the diocesan consultation for the Synod on Synodality celebrated and feedback from the preparation and consultation meetings for the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council will be considered. The Assembly will be held in Shepparton at the Riverlinks EastBank Centre on 15 February 2023. The date will be claimed, and invitations issued by the Bishop.

A Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council

Why a Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council?

Establishing a Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council (SMPC) is a significant commitment by our diocese to create a structure that supports synodal governance, leadership and decision-making.

The SMPC will operate as an instrument of relationship and collaboration, bringing together lay people and clergy with the bishop for delivery of the Church's mission in a strategic way. As all the baptised share responsibility for this mission, the SMPC will support and encourage co-responsibility at a diocesan level. Starting from a commitment to discernment and listening to the signs of the times, it will provide advice to the bishop, review our current situation, develop strategic pastoral plans and cast a vision for the future.

What is a Mission and Pastoral Council?

Usually referred to as a Diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC), it is one of the participatory processes for clergy, religious and laity that a bishop can employ in his diocese (see Vatican II Council's *Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity*, 26). A DPC is advisory to the bishop. Pope Francis says that the aim of a DPC "should not be ecclesiastical organisation but rather the missionary aspiration of reaching everyone" (*The Joy of the Gospel*, 31). The SMPC will be a leadership body whose purpose is to discern and propose practical solutions to the Bishop in order to support the mission and pastoral life of the diocese.

The *Go Forth* report states that the SMPC responsibilities may include:

- Discernment of the vision and mission of the Diocese;
- Discernment on matters concerning the mission and pastoral life of the Diocese particularly with concern to parishes;
- To discern, develop and make recommendations to the Bishop on a mission and pastoral plan for the Diocese in relationship and collaboration with the other consultative bodies and parishes of the Diocese;
- Collaboration with other bodies in the implementation of the pastoral plan;
- Collaboration with other bodies in an annual review of the mission and pastoral plan and recommend any necessary revisions to the Bishop.





Who can be a member of the Sandhurst Mission and Pastoral Council?

The Code of Canon Law (CIC) of the Catholic Church makes the following statements relating to membership:

512 §1. A pastoral council consists of members of the Christian faithful who are in full communion with the Catholic Church—clerics, members of institutes of consecrated life, and especially laity — who are designated in a manner determined by the diocesan bishop.

§2. The Christian faithful who are designated to a pastoral council are to be selected in such a way that they truly reflect the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese, with consideration given to the different areas of the diocese, social conditions and professions, and the role which they have in the apostolate whether individually or joined with others.

Members are to devote adequate time to prayerful study of council materials and agenda items. They are to enhance discussion through future-oriented thinking, balanced assessment, and a constructive attitude. Council members consult periodically with a diverse spectrum of the diocesan community as feasible to learn concerns and possible solutions appropriate to the local Church and region.

It is important to note that whilst the members of the SMPC should reflect the diversity of “the entire portion of the people of God which constitutes the diocese”, each member of the SMPC is a representative of the Diocese and not of the parish, deanery, region, or organisation from which they come. Their advice and discernment must be for the entire people of God.

How will the SMPC be constituted and function?

It is proposed that the SMPC will comprise 16 members: the Bishop, the Vicar General, three lay members and one priest from each of the three deaneries, and up to two members selected by the Bishop, all (excluding the Bishop and Vicar General) appointed for a term of 3 years. Usually, The SMPC will meet four times per year. One meeting per year will include significant time allocated to formation of members. Some meetings may be held online. To facilitate continuity approximately half of the initial SMPC members continue for a second term.

Statutes for the SMPC will be developed and then promulgated by the Bishop. The Statutes will be informed by *The Code of Canon Law*, *The Light from the Southern Cross Report*, the *Go Forth Report*, the outcomes of the Plenary Council, and feedback from the preparation and consultation meetings.

An executive will be constituted to carry forward the business of the SMPC between meetings comprising the Bishop, Chairperson, and Director of Mission and Pastoral Life who is to be the Executive Officer.

On 15 February 2023 the Bishop will call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from the Christian faithful of the Catholic Diocese of Sandhurst who meet the membership requirements described in CIC 512 and criteria aligned with the stated purpose of the SMPC. All EOIs will be submitted using an electronic form. The electronic EOI form with clearly described requirements and criteria will be developed by the office of the Director of Mission and Pastoral Life and approved by the Bishop.

EOIs will close on 10 March 2023.




How will the EOIs be assessed?

A panel will be convened and chaired by the Bishop. The panel will consist of the following members: the Vicar General, the Episcopal Vicar for Education, and three lay people. Each EOI submitted will be prayerfully considered through a process of discernment and weighed against the membership requirements and criteria.



What happens once a decision has been made by the panel?

-  First, all who submitted an EOI will be contacted personally.
-  The Bishop will then announce the membership of the SMPC on 24 March 2023.
-  The members of the SMPC will be commissioned at the Mass of the Oils at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Tuesday 4 April 2023.
-  The first meeting of the SMPC will be held on 27 April 2023, the Feast of Our Lady of Good Counsel, Patroness of the Diocese.

References

Address of Pope Francis at the Ceremony Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Synod of Bishops (October 2015)

The Code of Canon Law (CIC) of the Catholic Church (1983)

Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (Vatican II Council, 1965)

Go Forth (Report on the Review of the Strategic, Consultative and Administrative Structures of the Diocese of Sandhurst, Dec 2020)

The Joy of the Gospel Apostolic Exhortation On The Proclamation Of The Gospel In Today's World (2013)

The Light from the Southern Cross Report (2020)





OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL
Patroness of the Sandhurst Diocese