



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

INTERIM MANDATE

OF THE

BISHOPS COMMISSION

FOR

SOCIAL JUSTICE, MISSION AND SERVICE

NOVEMBER 2019

Preamble

“To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God”

Micah 6:8

1. Membership and Meetings

- 1.1. The Commission shall comprise eight (8) members as determined by the Conference by-laws.
- 1.2. The Commission shall meet at a time and place that the members determine.
- 1.3. The Commission shall meet using communications technology when the agenda or circumstances warrant.

2. Areas of Responsibility

The Commission sets priorities in consultation with the Conference, plans and develops strategies at the national level to promote the life and mission of the Catholic Church in Australia in the following specific areas of responsibility:

- 2.1. International aid and ecology
- 2.2. Health and aged care
- 2.3. Marginalised or disadvantaged people in Church life and Australian society: actual or perceived
- 2.4. Social services
- 2.5. People with disability
- 2.6. Specialist chaplaincies (prisons, seafarers)
- 2.7. Other social justice issues

3. Particular Functions

In particular, the Commission performs the following functions:

- 3.1. The Commission guides and supports the activity of the Church and its agencies in these areas:
 - 3.1.1. Social services
 - 3.1.2. Health and aged care
 - 3.1.3. The Apostleship of the Sea
 - 3.1.4. International aid and ecology
 - 3.1.5. The annual wage review

- 3.2. The Commission develops national policies in the specific areas of its responsibilities as approved or requested by the Conference.
- 3.3. The Commission, in accordance with Conference policy, undertakes public and private advocacy in support of:
 - 3.3.1. Asylum seekers, migrants and refugees
 - 3.3.2. Health and aged care
 - 3.3.3. Marginalised or disadvantaged people in Church life and Australian society: actual or perceived
 - 3.3.4. Pastoral care related to other areas within the Commission's mandate
 - 3.3.5. People with disability
 - 3.3.6. Social services
 - 3.3.7. International aid and ecology
 - 3.3.8. Social justice issues, including work and the low paid.
- 3.4. The Commission undertakes such specific projects as the Conference may from time to time approve or request.
- 3.5. The Commission delegates to individual bishops responsibility for the following areas:
 - 3.5.1. Apostleship of the Sea (The Episcopal Promoter shall be the national delegate to the Holy See and other international representative bodies for this apostolate)
 - 3.5.2. Advocacy for asylum seekers, migrants and refugees
 - 3.5.3. Employment relations
 - 3.5.4. Health and aged care
 - 3.5.5. International aid and ecology
 - 3.5.6. People with disability
 - 3.5.7. Prisoners' pastoral care
 - 3.5.8. Social justice
 - 3.5.9. Social services

4. Advisory Role

The Commission advises the Conference and its members on issues that arise in the

areas of its responsibility and, where appropriate, makes recommendations for action that the Conference might undertake at a national level.

5. Advisory Bodies

The Commission establishes, in accordance with the mandates in Schedule 1, the following advisory bodies to assist it in its responsibilities:

- 5.1. Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
- 5.2. Caritas Australia National Council
- 5.3. Catholic Social Services Australia Board
- 5.4. Employment Relations Reference Group

6. Relations

6.1. The Commission maintains relations with:

- 6.1.1. Apostleship of the Sea (the Commission approves the appointment of the National Committee Chairperson following a nomination from the Committee)
- 6.1.2. Catholic Health Australia (the Conference appoints a Commissioner to the Stewardship Board [Catholic Health Australia Constitution Clause 22(c)])

6.2. The Commission, through the National Council of Caritas Australia, maintains relations with:

- 6.2.1. Australian Council for International Development
- 6.2.2. Caritas Internationalis
- 6.2.3. Commonwealth Government
- 6.2.4. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- 6.2.5. Department of the Environment and Energy
- 6.2.6. Department of Innovation and Science (Register of Environmental Organisations)
- 6.2.7. United Nations Economic and Social Council

6.3. Through the Office for Social Justice, the Commission maintains consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations and the Holy See's Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development.

6.4. The Commission may approve the establishment of relations between its Offices and other organisations.

7. Offices

The Commission supervises the work of the following offices:

- 7.1. Caritas Australia
- 7.2. Catholic Social Services Australia
- 7.3. Office for Social Justice
- 7.4. Disability Projects Office

8. Secretariat

The General Secretariat assists the Commission in fulfilling its tasks.

Schedule 1: Mandates for Advisory Bodies

Name:	Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
Area(s) of Responsibility:	The Council advises the Commission, in accordance with an agreed rolling triennial strategic plan, in the promotion of Catholic Social Teaching through the engagement of social justice issues with the Catholic faithful and wider Australian society.
Number of Councillors:	<p>The Council will comprise eight (8) appointed councillors and four (4) <i>ex officio</i> councillors, namely: the Director of the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office; the Chief Executive Officer of Caritas Australia; the Chief Executive Officer of Catholic Health Australia; and the Executive Director of Catholic Social Services Australia.</p> <p>A Bishop Delegate will represent the Commission at all meetings of the Council and will liaise as required with the Council Chair in between meetings.</p> <p>The Director of the Office for Social Justice will provide support at all meetings of the Council and will liaise as required with the Council Chair in between meetings.</p> <p>The Council Chair will ordinarily include the Bishop Delegate and the Director of the Office for Social Justice in discussions and consult them as part of the process of developing advice to the Commission.</p>
Appointment of Councillors:	Following the appointment of members to the Commission at the May Plenary Meeting, the Commission will appoint councillors for the triennial term and will report these appointments to the Conference at the November Plenary Meeting. The Commission may re-appoint councillors for up to two subsequent terms.
Appointment of the Chair:	The Commission, on recommendation from the Council, will appoint the Chair from among those members appointed by the Commission for a triennial term from the membership of the Council.
Meetings:	The Council will meet biannually at a place of mutual convenience. The Council may meet at other times as required using a variety of communications technology.
Administrative Support:	The Office for Social Justice will provide administrative support to the Council.

Name:	Caritas Australia National Council
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The significant contribution of the Council is to ensure the effective promotion and implementation of the Mandate of Caritas Australia, which encompasses international aid and ecology.</p> <p>This Council will achieve this through the provision of timely, independent and pertinent advice to the Commission on the formulation of policies and the administration of Caritas Australia.</p> <p>The Council is accountable to the Commission for monitoring the organisation's performance and its fulfilment of the Mandate.</p>
Number of Councillors:	<p>The Council will comprise ten (10) councillors, two (2) being members of the Commission, in accord with the mandate of Caritas Australia.</p> <p>The Chief Executive Officer will provide support at all meetings of the Council and will liaise as required with the Council Chair in between meetings.</p> <p>The Council Chair will ordinarily include the Chief Executive Officer in discussions and consult him/her as part of the process of developing advice to the Commission.</p>
Appointment of Councillors:	<p>Following the appointment of members to the Commission at the May Plenary Meeting, the Commission will appoint councillors for the proceeding quadrennial term and will report these appointments to the Conference at the November Plenary Meeting. The Commission may re-appoint councillors for up to two subsequent terms, unless the Commission unanimously and specifically decides to extend an appointment further. A rotation of membership may be appropriate in order to avoid a significant loss of skills and experience from the Council.</p>
Appointment of the Chair:	<p>The Commission, will appoint the Chair for a quadrennial term from the membership of the Bishops Commission.</p>
Frequency and Place of Meetings:	<p>The Council will ordinarily meet no fewer than four (4) times a year at a time and place determined by the Chair. The Council may meet at other times as required using a variety of communications technology.</p>
Administrative Support:	<p>Caritas Australia will provide administrative support to the Council.</p>

Name:	Catholic Social Services Australia Board
Area(s) of Responsibility:	The Board advises the Commission in the promotion of the life and mission of the Catholic Church in Australia in the area of social services.
Appointment and Number of Members:	<p>In accordance with the Catholic Social Services Australia Constitution, a person shall become a member of the Board on receiving an appointment from the Conference.</p> <p>The Conference shall appoint one or more of the Commissioners to the Board from time to time, one of whom will be the Bishops' Nominee.</p> <p>The Conference shall appoint, as the Commission may nominate, the following persons to the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One (1) person as the Chair 2. One (1) person that Catholic Religious Australia will nominate 3. Up to three (3) persons following an election by secret ballot of nominees of the Members has been conducted at an Annual General Meeting of Catholic Social Services Australia 4. Up to three (3) other persons <p>Members of the Board (excluding the bishops appointed pursuant to Clause 13 of the Constitution and the Chairperson appointed pursuant to Clause 20 of the Constitution) hold office for a triennial term and shall be eligible for reappointment for one subsequent term of office.</p>
Appointment of the Chair:	The Conference, on recommendation from the Commission, will appoint the Chair. The Chair does not have to hold membership of the Board at the time of nomination.
Frequency and Place of Meetings:	<p>In accordance with the Catholic Social Services Australia by-laws, the Board shall meet at least biannually at such time and at such place as the Board may from time to time determine.</p> <p>The Board may meet at other times as required using a variety of communications technology.</p>
Administrative Support	Catholic Social Services Australia will provide administrative support to the Board.

Name:	Employment Relations Reference Group
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The Group provides advice to the Commission as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Promotion of the life and mission of the Catholic Church in Australia in the area of work and the employment relationship 2. Development of national policies and guidelines that relate to work and the employment relationship in areas of Catholic employment 3. Advocacy in support of work and the employment relationship in Australian society based on Catholic Social Teaching 4. The annual national wage review, the National Minimum Wage, the family wage and the low paid
Number of Members:	<p>The Group will comprise eight (8) appointed members.</p> <p>A Bishop Delegate will represent the Commission at all meetings of the Group and will liaise as required with the Group Chair in between meetings.</p> <p>The Employment Relations Manager will provide support at all meetings of the Group and will liaise as required with the Group Chair in between meetings.</p> <p>The Group Chair will ordinarily include the Bishop Delegate and the Employment Relations Manager in discussions and consult them as part of the process of developing advice to the Commission.</p>
Appointment of Members:	<p>Following the appointment of members to the Commission at the May Plenary Meeting, the Commission will appoint members for the triennial term and will report these appointments to the Conference at the November Plenary Meeting. The Commission may re-appoint members for up to two subsequent terms.</p>
Appointment of the Chair:	<p>The Commission, on recommendation from the Group, will appoint the Chair for a triennial term from the membership of the Group.</p>
Meetings:	<p>The Group will meet as required to deal with the annual wage review.</p> <p>The Group will meet at other times in response to a request for advice by the Bishop Delegate using a variety of communications technology.</p>
Administrative Support:	<p>The Office for Employment Relations will provide administrative support to the Group.</p>

Schedule 2: Mandates for Offices

Name:	Caritas Australia
Area(s) of Responsibility:	Caritas Australia manages the Conference's international aid activities and its work in the area of ecological sustainability.
Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer:	The Commission will appoint the Chief Executive Officer on recommendation of the National Council and a suitably qualified selection panel. The Commission will comply with the Conference policy on recruitment and selection and will appoint the Chief Executive Officer in accord with Conference policy.
Staff:	The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining the staffing needs of Caritas Australia with the endorsement of the Caritas Australia National Council.
Accountability:	The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Chair of the National Council for fulfilling the Mandate of the Office and for fulfilling the position of Chief Executive Officer.

Name:	Catholic Social Services Australia
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>Catholic Social Services Australia envisages an Australian society that reflects and supports the dignity, equality and participation of all people. As the Catholic Church's peak body for social services, Catholic Social Services Australia promotes a fairer, more inclusive society that gives preference to helping people most in need.</p> <p>As a national advocate, Catholic Social Services Australia works with its members to produce evidence/research which informs public opinion and assists lawmakers to develop just and compassionate social and economic policies that will improve the lives of the poor and vulnerable in Australia. In doing so, Catholic Social Services Australia fosters connectedness and partners with Catholic social service providers.</p> <p>Catholic Social Services Australia draws on the experience of decades of Catholic social service and social policy development in Australia. It serves the Bishops of Australia, Leaders of Religious Institutes, Catholic social service organisations and the broader Church community in advancing the social service ministry of the Church. Catholic Social Services Australia is a national federation of Catholic social service organisations that provide social services to over 450,000 Australians a year delivering services in local communities in metropolitan, regional and remote Australia. Catholic Social Services Australia draws its membership from Catholic social service organisations operating under the authority of a diocesan bishop or a religious order and from Catholic lay associations. Individuals and other Catholic social policy organisations that operate at the state or local levels are eligible to become associate members of Catholic Social Services Australia. The reach of the network encompasses the whole of Australia.</p> <p>In pursuit of its mission, Catholic Social Services Australia seeks to embody and promote the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching of the dignity of the person; common good and community; preferential option for the poor; and rights and responsibilities.</p>
Appointment of the Chief Executive Officer:	The Conference will appoint the Chief Executive Officer on recommendation of the Commission and a suitably qualified selection panel. The Commission will comply with the Conference policy on recruitment and selection and the Conference will appoint the Chief Executive Officer in accord with its policy.
Staff:	The Chief Executive Officer is responsible for determining the staffing needs of Catholic Social Services Australia with the endorsement of the Catholic Social Services Australia Board.

Accountability:	The Chief Executive Officer is accountable to the Chairperson of the Catholic Social Services Australia Board for the implementation of the Mission and the Objects of Catholic Social Services Australia and the directions and the policies of the Board with the approval of the Commission.
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Name:	Office for Social Justice
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The Office is responsible for the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development of policies for the consideration of the Commission and advice of the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council 2. Undertaking initiatives and on-going programmes as approved by the Commission 3. Developing and maintaining relationships with Church and other agencies concerned with social justice issues 4. Collaboration where appropriate with other Catholic, other church, and wider community based agencies with objects similar or complementary to those of the Office. 5. Preparation of an annual operations programme setting out a schedule of activities and targets against which the Commission can measure performance 6. Provide administrative support to the Australian Catholic Social Justice Council. 7. Support the annual meeting of the Social Justice Diocesan Contacts
Appointment of the Director:	The Commission will appoint the Director on recommendation of a suitably qualified selection panel. The Commission will comply with the Conference policy on recruitment and selection and will appoint the Director in accord with Conference policy.
Staff:	The Director may employ staff as required from time to time to assist and be accountable to the Director in meeting the Mandate with the approval of the Commission and in accordance with Conference policy.
Accountability:	The Director is accountable to the Bishop Delegate for fulfilling the Mandate of the Office. The Director is accountable to the General Secretary or the Executive Secretary of the Commission (as mutually agreed) for fulfilling the position of Director.

Name:	Disability Projects Office
Area(s) of Responsibility:	<p>The Office undertakes projects as approved by the Commission that promote the full participation of people with disability in the life of the Church.</p> <p>The Office is responsible for the following tasks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Manage and deliver projects approved by the Commission that deal with the promotion of the full participation of people with disability in the life of the Church. 2. Provide advice to the Commission, and other commissions and agencies as requested, on disability issues in the Church and society that relate to the full participation of people with disability. 3. Provide a central point of contact for dioceses, parishes and other Church organisations to obtain resources and references to assist in the full participation of people with disability. 4. Promote a forum in Australia for people with disability, their families, and individuals and organisations, in raising awareness of their needs in participating in Church life. 5. Promote the full participation of people with disability in the life of the Church through liaison with and advice to agencies of the Conference, as well as provincial and diocesan-based Catholic agencies.
Appointment of the Disability Projects Officer:	The Commission will appoint the Disability Projects Officer on recommendation of a suitably qualified selection panel. The Commission will comply with the Conference policy on recruitment and selection and will appoint the Disability Projects Officer in accord with Conference policy.
Staff:	The Disability Projects Officer may employ staff as required from time to time to assist and be accountable to the Disability Projects Officer in meeting the Mandate with the approval of the Commission and in accordance with Conference policy.
Accountability:	The Disability Projects Officer is accountable to the Bishop Delegate for fulfilling the Mandate of the Office. The Disability Projects Officer is accountable to the General Secretary or the Executive Secretary of the Commission (as mutually agreed) for fulfilling the position of Disability Projects Officer.