

PARISH COUNCILLORS & WARDENS

Parish Councillors and Wardens are Category 3a Church Workers



Anglican Diocese of
Canberra & Goulburn

Parish Councillors and Wardens serve together with the Incumbent (either Rector or Priest in Charge) as the body responsible for the management, leadership, and governance of ministry units. They are responsible for ensuring oversight and control of finance, maintenance and WHS issues. Some are elected by popular vote, others are appointed directly by the Incumbent. Because of the important role Parish Councillors and Wardens play in our ministry units, and because of the level of oversight and trust granted to them, it is important to understand their place in our Safe Ministry Training & Screening Guidelines.

Category 3a normally is for those working with Children and Vulnerable People. However as stated in the Parish Administration Ordinance:

Parish Council are in partnership with the Bishop and the Rector responsible for the ministry and mission of the parish. Any nominee for election to the Parish Council must successfully complete the Safe Ministry Screening & Training requirements.

This requirement also extends to any ex-officio members brought in to serve on Council.

As laid out in the Diocese's Safe Ministry Protocol, the requirements for Category 3a are:

- Working With Children Check (NSW)/Working with Vulnerable People Check (ACT)
- Safe Ministry Questionnaire (Lay Volunteers)
- Interview and Endorsement
- Referee Checks

- National Register Check (carried out by the Safe Ministry Unit)
- Safe Ministry Modules 1, 2, and 3.
- This information needs to be recorded and maintained in each worker's Safe Ministry Information System (SMIS) account.

In the past, the Diocese required Parish Councillors and Wardens to complete a Statutory Declaration as part of their Safe Ministry screening. This form is no longer required and has been replaced by the Safe Ministry Questionnaire.

Of particular note was a requirement in the Statutory Declaration that no person could be eligible for office without first being a member of the parish for twelve (12) months. This does not reflect the requirements of the Governance of the Diocese Ordinance which does not specify a time period. However, the Appendix to the Safe Ministry Protocol (approved by Bishop-in-Council June 2023) states that:

It is a requirement that applicants for Lay Church Worker positions will be a committed church member, and in ordinary circumstances will have been involved in a Ministry Unit for a period of not less than three months prior to commencement of screening.

This three-month period is to allow newcomers to test the waters in a new church, to confirm that this is indeed a community they wish to be a part of, and for the church to observe and get to know the person and have a sense of their character and discipleship.