

SERVICE LEADERS, READERS & INTERCESSORS

Service Leaders, Readers and Intercessors are Category 4 Church Workers



Anglican Diocese of
Canberra & Goulburn

Ministry in the Anglican Church is not restricted to clergy; lay people regularly lead services speaking the words of the Prayer Book, serving as another representative of the community welcoming guests and directing the congregation in their common purpose. One of the most profound moments of the Anglican service is when a person rises from their seat, walks to the lectern, and reads from the Bible. The liturgy tells us this is no mere book, and this is no small thing the reader has done – at the conclusion of their passage they say, “Hear the Word of the Lord.” or “For the Gospel of the Lord”. Reading in church is a special thing that we should not take lightly – in allowing someone to read we are platforming them, giving them a status and role in our common life. It is a great honour to lead God’s people in prayer, naming the issues of the world, the congregation, the church around the world, and remembering the faithful departed, and to lead us in the prayer Jesus taught his disciples.

We know from the Royal Commission that some perpetrators used the status of standing in front of a church to gain the trust of their victim. When we appoint someone to lead the service, to read the Bible, or say the prayers, we are giving them a role; we are saying in our community that we are vouching for this person’s character. It is important therefore, that we remember that service leaders, readers and intercessors are also Church Workers and need to be given training appropriate to their role.

While we have children present in our services, unless they are directly working with children they are Category 4 Church Workers (unless they are subject to a higher classification, such as leading a service as a Licenced Lay Person – Cat 2).

Category 4 Church Workers require:

- Safe Ministry Declaration
- Interview and Endorsement
- Safe Ministry Module 1
- This information needs to be recorded and maintained in each worker’s Safe Ministry Information System (SMIS) account.

It is important to remember for Service Leaders, Musicians, and Intercessors as with other volunteers that 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.