

A Culture of Respect

At public gatherings and meetings, as a sign of deepening relationships with each other, it is recommended that we acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet.

Ideally, involvement with local Indigenous people furthers our walk together. If the actual name of the traditional owners is unclear, it is recommended that we simply use the generic traditional owners e.g. we acknowledge the traditional owners of this area. We acknowledge the footsteps that have covered this country, and the people who have cared for the country and struggled to maintain connection with it.

(The end of this document offers information regarding protocols, and a few samples for use)

This is also an opportunity to acknowledge the generations of spirituality in the particular space and place where we gather.

The mission to live the reign of God is a commitment to a way of love

The Church in all its actions makes clear the dignity and value of every human person, and is committed to protect and respect the rights of all persons. In the Toowoomba Diocese we commit ourselves to relationships that embody respect, love and service. ***Integrity in Ministry*** endorses a 'Culture of Respect'.

Some Guidelines for Diocesan Meetings and Gatherings

- Establish the expectation and practice that meetings will begin and end on time – chair and members can all assist with this.
- Encourage a sense of belonging to the group, and participation of all members.
- One person to speak at a time.
- Share experiences, ideas, questions, viewpoints clearly.
- Set appropriate, clearly-stated goals or desired outcomes.
- Seek clarification when needed.
- Keep discussions focused and relevant to the topic, issue or motion under consideration.

- Engage in a process of consensus when major decisions are being made – a shared-wisdom model of decision-making respects and acknowledges each person’s piece of wisdom.
- Give credit where credit is due OR share the credit whenever you can.
- Record decisions, action plans and issues for future meetings.
- Ask members to help set the next meeting’s agenda (where appropriate).
- Put some laughter into every meeting – it is soul-food, and it is important that people enjoy attending meetings.
- Evaluate and review meeting processes – at least once a year, but more frequently when possible.

The greater the quality of inspiration provided by the leader/chairperson or presenter, the greater the quantity of self-motivation that is displayed by the participants/team members/followers. The encourager understands that words (eloquence) and ways (example) must be congruent!

Source Note: Dick Briggs, Adapted from *Executive Leadership*.

Agendas & Effective Meeting procedures

- Prepare and distribute Agenda prior to meeting.
- Be clear about the purpose of the meeting.
- Identify and resolve problems as they occur.
- Ensure that information is shared and received.
- Plan efficiently and effectively.
- Use effective and efficient procedures to complete tasks.
- Monitor the progress of the team.

Minutes

- Minutes will be written and forwarded to members as soon as possible after any meeting.
- Minutes need to note important contents of reports and discussions but do not need to include every word that was said. It is good to keep a record of any correspondence received and any decisions made at the meeting.
- Meetings, to be effective, can have formal and informal structures. It is important that we contribute to making each meeting as enjoyable as possible. This does not mean we need to agree on everything but it does mean we need to be accepting of other viewpoints.

Shared Wisdom Model of Decision-Making - *Discernment & Consensus*

- Draws on an understanding of facts without limiting itself to factual answers.
- Considers the opinions of many without being dominated by the will of the majority.
- Invites God into the process of decision-making and opens up infinite possibilities for creativity.
- Results in consensus.

Conflict Management

In groups and between individuals there will always be some form of relational conflict. To be alive means to be in conflict. Sometimes we would rather pretend that conflict does not exist or espouse to the principle that a lack of conflict is a sign of spiritual maturity. But conflict is normal. Everybody and all healthy organizations and groups experience it. Maturity is shown in how we deal with it.

Process for responding to grievances

It is understood that in any large organisation or group that there will be conflict and dissatisfaction from time to time regarding our dealings with each other and decisions that are made.

A positive process for responding to grievances and managing conflict is essential in all groups and organizations and agencies in the Diocese. The Diocese has an Appeals Board and relevant documentation for Procedures of Conciliation, Mediation or Adjudication or the Resolution of Disputes. This material is available from the Chancery Office, 68 Lindsay Street, Toowoomba.

Prayer Invocations for the Land and its First People

Invocation 1

We acknowledge the N ... people, the original owners of this land on which we now gather, and across whose sacred earth the Spirit has long brooded ...

We acknowledge – with deep gratitude – those who have been the bearers and nurturers of the faith in this place, across many generations ...

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Invocation 2

Holy Spirit, we invoke your blessing on this country and on us. We acknowledge the Indigenous elders of this area, those who once lived here and into whose sacred space our forebears came, changing forever an older way of life.

Bless us and bless their descendants. Help us to join our hands and hearts together. Help us to heal one another and the land, so that our lives may flow with harmony and our lives with love and deep respect.

Amen

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Invocation 3

God of all Creation,
Blessed are you in the sunrise of each day.
Blessed are you in the land and seas.
Blessed are you in the whisper of the wind.
Blessed are you in the insects and animals.
Blessed are you in the first people and their descendants.
Blessed are you who breathes 'yes' to life!

God of all wonder,
Bless this space, the land on which we stand.
Bless this time, eternally now.
Bless those who gather, open to your presence.

Amen

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Invocation 4

Great Spirit, we remember the land and its first people with respect and dignity.

May we live in harmony with all those who share this sacred earth and be thankful.

Amen

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