Integrity in the Service of the Church

A Resource Document of Principles and Standards for Lay Workers in the Catholic Church in Australia

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A Committee of the Australian Catholic Bishops & the Leaders of Religious Institutes in Australia

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Requests and enquiries concerning reproduction and rights should be addressed to:

Executive Officer,

National Committee for Professional Standards

PO Box 7132

Alexandria NSW 2015

Phone: (02) 9669 6218 Fax: (02) 9669 6216

Websites: Australian Catholic Bishops Conference: www.catholic.org.au

Catholic Religious Australia: www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org

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INTRODUCTION

Integrity in the Service of the Church (A Resource Document) represents the third stage in the compilation of a document of principles and behavioural standards which will serve as a resource for Lay Church Workers, both employees and volunteers.

The principles and standards in this document, with due distinction, parallel those for religious and clergy found in ***Integrity in Ministry***, and reflect the fundamental belief that all people are made in the image of God and are worthy of respect. ***Integrity in the Service of the Church*** aims to help Church Workers reflect on and uphold Christian vision and values in all relationships and actions.

The service of Church Workers has its origins in the Gospel and in particular in Jesus' statement that he had come that all might have life, 'life in all its fullness.'(John 10:10). The principles and standards put forward in this document are extensions of five basic principles for Church Workers in which they:

1. **are committed to justice and equity**
2. **uphold the dignity of all people and their right to respect**
3. **are committed to safe and supportive relationships**
4. **reach out to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised**
5. **strive for excellence in all their work.**

Service, given according to these principles, is life-enriching for both providers and recipients.

The National Committee for Professional Standards is grateful to all who assisted in the preparation of this Document and its 2007 and 2009 consultation and trial precursors. Their work takes us a significant step forward in the generation of appropriate behavioural standards across the Australian Church.

It is to be noted that the document is not, itself, a code of behaviour but aims to provide resources which groups of Church Workers might use in devising their own specific guidelines, documents and processes.

Your organisation may already have behavioural guidelines and processes. When you review your guidelines and processes, it may be useful to refer to this Resource Document. The National Committee welcomes any suggestions for further improvement of its Resource Document which arise in such a review.

+Philip Wilson

Archbishop Philip Wilson DD JCL
Co-Chair
National Committee for Professional Standards

Annette Cunliffe

Sr Annette Cunliffe RSC
Co-Chair
National Committee for Professional Standards

PREAMBLE

What is this Document about?

This Document outlines principles of conduct for any lay person who performs paid or unpaid work in the service of the Church (*Church Worker*). Church Workers, along with clergy and religious, contribute to the mission of the Church. This document deals with the behavioural standards expected of them in their work.

The principles and standards in this document, with due distinction, parallel those for religious and clergy found in ***Integrity in Ministry***.

Who is the Document for?

- organisations or bodies within the Church to which Church Workers belong.
- those who employ, engage, assign, supervise, train or are responsible for Church Workers.

What use is to be made of the Document?

This document is not a code of conduct. It is meant as a guide to assist organisations to develop new, or review existing, behavioural processes and/or guidelines to meet their own particular circumstances or needs. It is also non exhaustive in its content. Different groups may draw from the principles and standards given here and adapt them and extend them according to their own situations.

Organisational guidelines, policies and procedures are developed by organisations to assist in the effective management of their business. Such guidelines, policies and procedures are not intended to be legally binding on the organisation. They are not incorporated in contracts of employment. The organisation may modify, replace or withdraw any of its guidelines, policies and procedures at any time and it reserves the right to depart from them in individual cases. Copies of these documents are to be available and readily accessible to all employees.

Behavioural guidelines arising from the use of this Resource Document are intended to apply to all Church Workers including Clergy and Religious engaged in any place where paid or unpaid work is performed (workplace).

Working with this Document

The National Committee will supply, at the time of issue of this document and from time to time thereafter, a number of ancillary documents to assist in using this document to devise guidelines, processes and documents suited to particular workers and workplaces.

When Church Workers Breach Guidelines

Unfortunately, organisational guidelines are not always observed. When guidelines are breached, effective response by individuals and by the appropriate authority in the Church is necessary. Concern for justice and healing requires full co-operation with applicable civil authorities and processes.

Therefore:

- All Church bodies need to have appropriate Policies in place for protection of vulnerable persons, and Church Workers need to be aware of and understand and comply with them.

All Church bodies and agencies must comply with all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation.

- Guidelines need to specify the *Responsible Authority* to whom Church Workers are to report any breaches of guidelines.
- All *Responsible Authorities* in the Church and all Church Workers need:
  - to be aware of their obligations in reporting suspected abuse of children or other vulnerable persons under both civil law and Church protocols.
  - to see that reports of breaches of guidelines are dealt with appropriately and in compliance with relevant legislation.
  - to follow the principles of natural justice and procedural fairness in dealing with breaches of the guidelines.
- A primary concern of *Responsible Authorities* within the Church is to remedy any harm that has been done and to prevent harm to others.

THE PRINCIPLES AND BEHAVIOURS ASSOCIATED WITH THE SERVICE OF CHURCH WORKERS

1. Church Workers are committed to Justice and Equity

For the Church justice is central to its mission and way of life. There is a thread of revelation that runs through the First Testament reminding the people of God that their ritual and activities are incomplete if they do not live and act justly as a community. The prophet Amos expresses this clearly: "I hate, I scorn your festivals, I take no pleasure in your solemn assemblies…but let justice flow like water, and uprightness like a never failing stream." (Amos 5:21,24) Micah continues the theme: "You have been told what is good and what the Lord requires of you: To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God."(Micah 6:8) Jesus took up the same message many times in his stories and actions. The reign of God is revealed when the hungry are fed, the naked clothed, the poor and outcast gathered back into the communion of God's love and given their just share in the gifts of creation.

Principle	People observing this principle will:
1.1 Church Workers exhibit justice and fairness in relationships and service.	1.1.1 Familiarise themselves with the social justice teachings of the Church as they apply to paid workers and volunteers. 1.1.2 Encourage just action among all those in whose interests they work. 1.1.3 Extend courtesy and respect to all in the workplace. 1.1.4 Refrain from attributing motives and blame to those seeking help. 1.1.5 Behave in ways that are not discriminatory and use language that is appropriate and not sarcastic or belittling of others.
1.2 Church Workers promote proper working conditions characterised by justice and fairness.	1.2.1 Promote just structures for paid workers and volunteers. 1.2.2 Have the necessary knowledge and skills for the optimum exercise of their roles and responsibilities. 1.2.3 Provide clear, detailed and manageable role descriptions for staff they lead and ensure that alterations are made by negotiating with the people concerned. 1.2.4 Comply with statutory requirements in matters such as work-place safety, privacy, anti-discrimination. 1.2.5 Observe all relevant State and Commonwealth legislation regarding terms and conditions of employment. 1.2.6 Pay workers justly and fairly on the basis of skill, responsibility and performance. 1.2.7 Provide paid workers and volunteers with access to adequately resourced training, formation, professional development and, where appropriate, professional supervision.

Principle	People observing this principle will:
1.3 Church Workers recognise injustice, unfairness and abuse when it occurs in the workplace and respond appropriately	1.3.1 Be alert to workplace inadequacies/injustices and responding promptly, sensitively and decisively. 1.3.2 Implement appropriate grievance procedures against improper and unreasonable administrative acts and any other expressions of injustice in the workplace. 1.3.3 Alert proper authorities to signs and acts of injustice, unfairness and abuse. 1.3.4 Inform complainants of appropriate resources and procedures for redress. 1.3.5 Remain impartial when allegations of injustice, unfairness and abuse arise. 1.3.6 Provide support impartially for both accused and complainant when grievances arise. 1.3.7 Familiarise staff and volunteers with the Church's protocols and procedures for addressing complaints for the specific workplace and as contained in *Towards Healing* and *Integrity in Ministry*.
1.4 Church Workers act responsibly and are accountable in the use of resources	1.4.1 Exercise responsibility and accountability for the financial and material resources they manage and use. 1.4.2 Exercise prudent judgment and proper accountability in relation to financial and property matters. 1.4.3 Keep accurate records of income and expenditure. 1.4.4 Maintain an assets register. 1.4.5 Have all accounts audited or monitored annually. 1.4.6 Present to stakeholders, at least annually, budgets, financial statements and reports on property administration and maintenance. 1.4.7 Not solicit gifts or favours from clients, even by implication. 1.4.8 Not misappropriate funds allocated for their work. 1.4.9 Issue receipts for all financial gifts and benefits for and on behalf of the works and projects in which they are engaged. 1.4.10 Use responsibly and ethically all work equipment and resources.

2. Church Workers uphold the dignity of all people and their right to respect.

"By daily acts that often surprised his contemporaries, Jesus made God's love for every human person very clear. He made a special effort to make it clear in the case of those who might have doubted it the most: the poor, the vulnerable, the sick, the young and those publicly regarded as sinners. He showed to them in particular that they were invited into the communion of God's love. For this reason the Church also, in all of its actions, makes clear the dignity and value of every human person, especially those most vulnerable." (Integrity in Ministry)

Principle	People observing this principle will:
2.1 Church Workers treat all people with respect, sensitivity and courtesy	2.1.1 Listen attentively to and respond courteously towards all. 2.1.2 Respect gender difference and honour the dignity of women, men and children. 2.1.3 Resolve disputes amicably, fairly, justly through dialogue and mediation.
2.2 Church Workers embrace diversity and difference in those they serve or with whom they work.	2.2.1 Respectfully welcome diversity and difference. 2.2.2 Respond sensitively to the issues that arise when different cultures meet. 2.2.3 Be sensitive and helpful to those who have difficulty with language or communication. 2.2.4 Seek to understand and respect the beliefs, fears and desires of all irrespective of disability, culture, race, religious affiliation, gender or sexual orientation.
2.3 Church Workers promote personal growth and development in those with whom they come in contact.	2.3.1 Respect and promote the mission and vision of the Church through performance and behaviour consistent with the Gospel values articulated in this document. 2.3.2 Seek to bring out the best in people. 2.3.3 Develop decision making skills 2.3.4 Be eager to learn relevant new skills and encourage such learning in others. 2.3.5 Set realistic goals and encourage others to do likewise. 2.3.6 Show cultural and social awareness. 2.3.7 Exhibit perseverance, dedication and commitment. 2.3.8 Witness to respect, compassion and sensitivity.

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3. Church Workers are committed to safe and supportive relationships

"The ministry of serving society, human dignity and human rights is intrinsic to the church's mission and life…

In the context of the relationship with society, the Church's role is based on its religious ministry, but that ministry must be conducted in such a way that it contributes to four socially significant objectives:

- *The protection of human dignity*
- *The promotion of human rights*
- *The unity of the human family*
- *The provision of a sense of meaning to every area of activity."*

From: Towards a More Just World: The social mission of the Church and new Catholic approaches - July 2008 – pp6, 10 - Duncan MacLaren

Principle	People observing this principle will:
3.1 Church Workers know, understand and respect the physical and emotional boundaries of adults, children and young people	3.1.1 Understand that: an unsafe relationship is one that poses risk to the emotional, physical or sexual health of any of the individuals involved; an unsupportive relationship is one that does not recognise the needs of those it is supposed to assist; and unsafe and unsupportive relationships have an extremely harmful impact on human dignity and self-esteem. 3.1.2 Be conscious of and respect the physical and emotional space and privacy required by others. 3.1.3 Provide pastoral support always in accordance with proper accountability guidelines. 3.1.4 Provide pastoral support in places that offer sufficient safe, open and visible environments. 3.1.5 Recognise that physical contact can be necessary and helpful in giving care, comfort or affirmation, and follow the appropriate standards for such contact. 3.1.6 Interact with others in a consistent professional manner. 3.1.7 Work within a well-defined role description that complies with the relevant legal obligations associated with the tasks.

3.2	**Church Workers are aware of the dangers involved when the boundaries between personal and service relationships are blurred**	3.2.1	Consciously draw distinctions between the role as church worker and other social interactions.
		3.2.2	Monitor any unavoidable dual relationships and evaluate their impact on those being served with the assistance of a third party if appropriate or needed.
3.3	**Church Workers understand the importance of meeting their own personal emotional needs outside work relationships**	3.3.1	Reflect on the reasons for undertaking Church work to determine that they are grounded in a desire to be of service to others rather than in a need for emotional attachment or fulfilment.
		3.3.2	Maintain a reasonable balance between time spent at work and other aspects of life, such as family, friends and community.
3.4	**Church Workers take appropriate action when a relationship is not benefitting those being served.**	3.4.1	Recognise when service relationships are becoming unsafe and/or ineffective and be prepared to terminate those relationships with appropriate referral.
3.5	**Church Workers understand the problems which can occur because of the imbalance of power in a service relationship.**	3.5.1	Understand that by virtue of their position of trust Church workers are placed in a position of power in the relationship.
		3.5.2	Exercise this power in a caring, compassionate and non-patronising way that enriches a safe and supportive relationship.
		3.5.3	Not engage in any form of physical, psychological or emotional coercion within relationships.

4. Church Workers reach out to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised.

"In its various forms – material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death – human misery … elicited the compassion of Christ the Saviour, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a preferential love on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defence, and liberation…" (CDF instruction Libertatis conscientia,' 68)

Principle	People observing this principle will:
4.1 Church Workers, in word and action, cooperate in bringing about a just world and a truly human community	4.1.1 Accept responsibility for sustainable and equitable stewardship of the earth's resources. 4.1.2 Be involved in advocacy for the poor and disenfranchised. 4.1.3 Build partnerships with government and non-government agencies to influence policy and legislation that protects the vulnerable in our society as well as the global community. 4.1.4 Seek to build strong partnerships with the whole community in the service of others.
4.2 Church Workers involved with people who are vulnerable or abused express particular concern, care and protection for them	4.2.1 Listen in a non-judgemental way to the story of one who speaks of abuse or neglect. 4.2.2 Familiarise themselves with: -the causes and signs of child and adult abuse and neglect; -the steps to be taken for the protection of the vulnerable; -the procedures to follow if abuse or neglect is suspected or observed. 4.2.3 Avoid any form of over-familiarity or inappropriate language. 4.2.4 Provide, whenever reasonably possible, for another adult to be present or close by when providing any form of pastoral care to a child or young person or to a disturbed/ vulnerable adult. 4.2.5 Avoid, whenever reasonably possible, being alone with a child or young person, or group of such people, in sleeping, dressing or bathing areas, and exercise prudent judgement and behaviour when another adult cannot be present. 4.2.6 Follow relevant laws and protocols concerning supply or use of alcohol, drugs, and the supply or administration of medication.

4.3	**Church Workers treat those who are alienated or marginalised with understanding and compassion.**	4.3.1	Encourage and support programmes of outreach that seek to meet needs of those who are alienated.
		4.3.2	Seek to understand the factors that have led to alienation through listening non-defensively to people, especially when they express their pain or anger.
		4.3.3	Behave in conformity with the Gospel values of justice and charity, so as not to contribute further to alienation.
4.4	**Church Workers act with justice and consideration towards those who are poor or disadvantaged.**	4.4.1	Recognise the personal and social factors that contribute to poverty and disadvantage in today's society.
		4.4.2	Listen sensitively to people's needs and put them in touch with government and church resources that address these needs.
		4.4.3	Recognise the need to work with and care for those who bear the scars of poverty and struggle and not just those who are less confronting.
4.5	**Church Workers who are policy and decision makers work to create conditions where those who are poor, alienated or marginalised are treated with understanding and compassion.**	4.5.1	Establish and support programmes that reach out to those who are poor, alienated or marginalised.
		4.5.2	Assist all Church Workers for whom they are responsible to act always with sensitivity and compassion.
		4.5.3	Provide a climate of warmth, welcome and connection when those who feel alienated or marginalised from the Church take tentative steps to return.

5. Church Workers strive for excellence in the performance of their work

Now as you excel in everything - in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in utmost eagerness, and in our love for you- so we want you to excel also in this enormous undertaking. [2Cor 8:7 (NRSV)]. Church Work calls for the application of skills appropriate to different types of service in the Church. Competence in the skills needed for each particular area of Church work is necessary for all Church Workers. The demand of justice means that they develop and maintain the skills their particular work requires. It also means that they recognise the limitations of their skills, and the implications that has for those being served.

Principle	People observing this principle will:
5.1 Church Workers commit themselves to providing professional and competent service	5.1.1 Carry out all requirements of their role with due diligence and commitment. 5.1.2 Strive for optimum performance in all areas of their work. 5.1.3 Respect and promote the particular mission/vision of the organisation. 5.1.4 Be conscious of their leadership role and responsibility as role models. 5.1.5 Work within their defined role and avoid the overstepping of boundaries. 5.1.6 Observe appropriate confidentiality and privacy. 5.1.7 Be open to processes of personal and organisational review and development. 5.1 8 Maintain an appropriate balance between pastoral concern and professional responsibilities. 5.1.9 Provide mutual encouragement and support and affirm the initiatives of co-workers.
5.2 Church Workers commit themselves to ongoing professional development	5.2.1 Maintain the currency of their competence. 5.2.2 Engage in ongoing spiritual formation, especially when holding a leadership or teaching role. 5.2.3 Provide appropriate modelling, advice and guidance to assist others in their professional development.

5.3 Church Workers commit themselves to effective professional working relationships with colleagues, clients and all to whom they minister	5.3.1 Maintain appropriate boundaries in their working relationships. 5.3.2 Establish professional relationships that prioritise needs of others. 5.3.3 Be alert to the inherent risks of conflict of interest, personal gain, manipulation and emotional dependence. 5.3.4 Be fair and equitable in dealing with others, and use consistent and appropriate methods of settling grievances. 5.3.5 Maintain clear communication with colleagues, clients and with their designated supervisor/mentor. 5.3.6 Use consultation methods that provide appropriate transparency, collaboration and involvement in decision-making.
5.4 Church Workers do not operate beyond the limits of their competence and qualifications	5.4.1 Show willingness to seek guidance and advice from others. 5.4.2 Not engage in tasks or activities for which they have inadequate expertise or qualifications, especially Pastoral Care, Counselling or Spiritual Direction. 5.4.3 Recognise the appropriate time to make referrals to those with proper qualifications/expertise.
5.5 Church Workers exercise responsible stewardship.	5.5.1 Maintain accurate and reliable records and documents as appropriate. 5.5.2 Comply with relevant legislation and directives. 5.5.3 Follow all policies, procedures and other requirements particular to their organisation and position. 5.5.4 Seek advice and guidance from appropriately qualified supervisors when in doubt. 5.5.5 Be mindful of privacy principles and manage information accordingly. 5.5.6 Avoid misuse of position for personal or financial advantage.

NOTES