

Dear Parish Clergy and Secretaries,

I would like to bring your attention to two recent developments: an update to the way policies are organised on the diocesan website, and a revision to the privacy policy.

The diocesan website's policy section has been improved so that policies are now grouped under subject headings, rather than being listed in numerical order. This change is intended to make it easier for you to locate specific policies and to understand them within the context of related topics. Additionally, many policies now include an index, further aiding in navigation. You can access the policy landing page [here](#). Please take a moment to review it and, if needed, help other parish council members access these documents.

Policy 42 - Privacy

On 29 November 2024, the Privacy and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024 was passed. This bill introduced several important changes to the Privacy Act:

- Expanded the scope of the Act and increased penalties for non-compliance;
- Imposed stricter consent and notice requirements, ensuring that individuals are fully informed and that consent is voluntary, specific, and easily withdrawn;
- Established broader standards of fairness, requiring businesses to ensure that data collection and use are reasonable and fair, even where consent has been given;
- Granted enhanced powers to the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner (OAIC) to enforce privacy rules, investigate breaches, and issue penalties, including to overseas companies operating in Australia;
- Expanded requirements to update data breach response plans, comply with new data retention standards, and maintain transparency in automated decision-making processes, especially those involving artificial intelligence.

As a result of these legislative changes, Diocesan Council and the Perth Diocesan Trustees have approved revisions to the diocesan privacy policy. The main updates—which also include minor adjustments to align with the new Act—are:

- More detailed information on the types of data collected, such as employment and volunteer records, parish pastoral and electoral rolls, and registers of baptisms, marriages, and funerals;
- Clear explanations about the purposes for which information is used, the management of data breaches, and protocols for data retention and disposal.

The updated policy is available [here](#), along with further information for your reference [here](#).

I encourage you to review and consider whether privacy matters are being effectively managed within your parish.

Kind Regards

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