



# AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

## Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council

### **ROLE DESCRIPTION** **SECRETARIAT FOR PLENARY COUNCIL** **Discernment and Writing Group Member**

June 2019

*This document outlines the role, areas of responsibility and accountability for the Discernment and Writing Group Member. It follows on the experience gained from previous documents and is approved by the Chairman of the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council.*

#### **Role: Discernment and Writing Group Member**

This is a voluntary role, appointed by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference (ACBC), accountable to the Conference through the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council.

This role is for a period of fourteen (14) months from August 2019 to October 2020.

The Discernment and Writing Group member is eligible to apply for membership of the body of delegates of the Plenary Council.

#### **Key Areas of Responsibilities**

The work of the Discernment and Writing Group member is, always in the context of faith and prayer to:

- a) Participate in the process of communal discernment and actively contribute to the theological reflection in order to draft a working paper on the appointed national theme of discernment by March 2020, which will help to form the agenda for the first session of the Plenary Council.
- b) Attend the meetings of the Discernment and Writing group and participate in the practices of listening and dialogue, spiritual conversations and communal reflective sharing.
- c) Throughout the communal discernment and writing process, suggest advisors, practitioners, testimonies or other expertise to the Chair in order to support and enable the Discernment and Writing Group to discern.
- d) Utilise the limited face-to-face time with the Discernment and Writing group effectively by: making suggestions to the Chair for the agenda; preparing in advance by reading the information provided; encouraging and enabling the individual contribution of all Discernment and Writing group members.
- e) Attend and participate in the formation programs as requested by the Chair or the Plenary Council Facilitation Team and take personal responsibility for your own ongoing formation and learning in order to fulfil your role on the Discernment and Writing Group.



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- f) Contribute to interim reports and updates on the process and progress of the Discernment and Writing Group when requested by the Chair.
- g) Communicate effectively and work collaboratively with the Chair, other members of the Discernment and Writing Group and the Plenary Council Facilitation Team.

#### **Essential Knowledge, Skills & Attributes**

- a. Proven commitment to the faith, life and ministries of the Catholic Church in Australia and the mission of God.
- b. Proven ability to work in a team of diverse people and collaborate in order to achieve a shared objective.
- c. Practical expertise in the relevant thematic area for discernment:
  - i. Missionary and evangelising;
  - ii. Inclusive, participatory and synodal;
  - iii. Prayerful and Eucharistic;
  - iv. Humble, healing and merciful;
  - v. A joyful, hope-filled and servant community;
  - vi. Open to conversion, renewal and reform.
- d. Excellent written and oral communication skills.
- e. An understanding of information privacy principles and that the work involves working with confidential information.

#### **Desirable Knowledge, Skills & Attributes**

- a. Previous experience of participating in communal discernment that is, coming to a shared decision using processes of listening, prayer, reflection and dialogue.
- b. Knowledge of and experience with theological reflection, canon law, ecclesial structures, customs and culture, or other practical areas relevant to the Plenary Council and the selected theme for discernment.
- c. Previous experience writing papers.
- d. Highly organised, with an ability to manage small details whilst maintaining focus on the big picture.

#### **Accountability**

- (a) The members of the Discernment and Writing Groups are appointments of the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council and are accountable to the Chair.
- (b) Each Discernment and Writing group will be allocated a budget and it is the responsibility of the Chair to determine the effective use of the available funds. Any



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additional financial expenditure must be applied for in writing and approved by the Plenary Council Facilitation team.

### **Organisational Environment**

The Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council (BCPC) oversees the planning for and preparation of a plenary council, which the Church in Australia will celebrate in 2020.

The Plenary Council Discernment and Writing Groups have the responsibility of providing reports to the BCPC through discernment, reflection and discussion of the themes emerging from submissions to the Plenary Council.

The Discernment and Writing Group Member must conduct themselves at the highest level of integrity.

As a volunteer, the Discernment and Writing Group Member is responsible for their own working environment. The personal work environment must comply with relevant State work health and safety legislative requirements.

### **Expenses**

Discernment and Writing Group expenses, as previously approved and budgeted for in the project costs of the Plenary Council, will be paid by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. This includes flights, accommodation and administrative costs for Discernment and Writing Group meetings and communications.

### **Review**

A review of progress and status of the Discernment and Writing Groups will be conducted by the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council and the Facilitation Team in November 2019 and immediately after Easter 2020. Any changes to the appointment of Discernment and Writing Group Chairs or members are at the discretion of the Bishops Commission for the Plenary Council.