

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY

VISITING LAY GUEST SPEAKER AND MINISTER POLICY



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BROKEN BAY

CONTENT

This document contains the Diocese of Broken Bay (**Diocese**) Policy on Visiting Lay Guest Speaker and Minister. Parishes and Chancery Offices often seek external support for the spiritual development of their parishioners and the wider community. In doing so both entities may engage experts. They are people who have not been ordained or received perpetual vows.

APPLICATION & SCOPE

This Policy applies to clergy, employees, contractors, volunteers, work experience students and trainees (**Workers**) of the Diocese. Where an Agency within the Diocese (such as the Catholic Schools Office or CatholicCare) has its own policy, the relevant Agency policy will apply to Agency Workers.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to define the responsibilities of both Parish and Chancery personnel to ensure the Visiting Lay Guest Speaker and Minister engaged with the Diocese for a set period of time as a Lay Guest Speaker or Lay Minister aligns with the mission of the Diocese as guided by the Bishop of Broken Bay. This document highlights and provides guidance of the required Safeguarding practices, legal obligations and subsequent administration processes.

POLICY

Visiting Lay Guest Speaker and Minister coming into the Diocese may be engaged to be a public speaker or perform public ministry. A determination needs to be made about the ministry or activity to determine if they are a Lay Minister or Lay Guest Speaker to determine which process is to be followed.

DEFINITIONS

Child Related Activity Parish Register (Register):	means a register that retains current information of child related ministries, associated roles and details of worker screening information of a Parish.
Lay Guest Speaker:	means a person who is invited to deliver a presentation either at a Parish or at a Diocesan level. The speaker may be an author of a book or someone who might address a particular issue, such as parenting.
Lay Minister:	means a person who has not been ordained and is authorised to perform ecclesial ministry or service including leading worship or prayer (e.g. a discussion about healing which invites participation from the congregation).
Religious Based Ministry:	means any activity within, or delivered by, a religious organisation that is designed to carry out the good works of the Catholic Church.
Screening:	means the Safeguarding practices in place to ascertain the professional standard status and suitability of a person.
Working with Children Check (WWCC):	means the background checking process which is a prerequisite for individuals engaged in child-related work and involves a full national criminal history check.

PROCESS

1. DETERMINING WHETHER LAY MINISTER OR LAY GUEST SPEAKER:

- 1.1. The Parish Priest or relevant Director of the Chancery Office (**Director**) should determine if the visiting lay person meets the definition in this policy as a 'Lay Minister' or 'Lay Guest Speaker'. If unsure advice should be sought from the Vicar General.
- 1.2. The Parish Priest and the relevant Director of the Chancery Office should then follow the process below depending on the decision.

2. LAY MINISTER

To ensure suitability and compliance with legislation and Diocesan policies, if a Lay Minister is attending a Diocesan or Parish event or ministry, the Safeguarding Office (Chancery & Parishes) (**Safeguarding Office**) administers the necessary screening.

2.1. Safeguarding responsibilities carried out by the Parish Priest and relevant Chancery Director (Director)

If the Parish Priest or Director identified that the person presents with public ministry, such as a healing ministry or an occasion of worship of some form, the person should have a reference from their Bishop or his delegate.

- (a) The Parish Priest or Director is to notify the Vicar General and request the permission of the Lay Minister to visit the Parish or Diocese (Chancery).
- (b) The Vicar General will determine suitability and if to proceed will send the information to the Safeguarding Office. The Safeguarding Office will ensure the relevant Professional Standards documentation to meet civil and church requirements are completed prior to the ministry.
- (c) Lay ministers must provide a NSW WWCC Clearance, or be eligible for a WWCC Exemption.
- (d) The Safeguarding Office will provide the outcome of the assessment to the Vicar General who will determine the permission.
- (e) Upon the granting of permission, the Safeguarding Office will inform the Visiting Lay Minister and Parish Priest or Director via email. A supporting letter of permission will be attached.

3. LAY GUEST SPEAKER

3.1. Safeguarding responsibilities carried out by the Parish Priest and relevant Chancery Director (Director) in relation to a Visiting Lay Guest Speaker

It is for the judgement of the Parish Priest or Director to determine the suitability of Lay Guest Speakers for both the life of the Parish and the Diocese, though their presentation should be in harmony with the mind of the Bishop. There is no requirement to seek permission of the Vicar General. It is at the discretion of the Parish Priest or Director.

The Parish Priest and Director must consider if a WWCC is required and comply with one of the following: (Contact with the Safeguarding Office can be made if advice is required). A valid WWCC will be required if the visiting Lay Guest Speaker (such as a visiting speaker, adjudicator, performer, assessor, or other similar) is specifically addressing an audience of children at which their parents are not present. Thus, they are providing a child-related activity under the Act.

3.2. Working with Children Check (WWCC) not required

- Visiting Lay Guest Speakers are not required to provide a valid NSW WWCC if their role is to address an audience of adult participants and is therefore not child-related under the Act.
- The Parish Priest or Director can continue to confirm their attendance in the Diocese.

4. WWCC OR A VALID WWCC EXEMPTION IS REQUIRED

4.1. Steps for a Parish Priest

The Parish Office is required to verify the NSW WWCC and update the Child Related Activity Parish Register (Register) to include the details of the Lay Guest Speaker. If the visitor does not have a NSW WWCC, consideration should be made to determine if an exemption can be applied. An international or interstate guest may be eligible for an exemption, however terms and conditions apply under the legislation.

4.2. Steps for the Director

The Director should inform the Safeguarding Office, who will verify the NSW WCCC and update the WWCC Register held in the Chancery on behalf of the Director. The Safeguarding Office will assist the Director if the guest speaker requires an exemption. The Safeguarding Office will retain a record of the relevant process applied.

5. PARISH PRIEST AND DIRECTOR OF THE RELEVANT CHANCERY OFFICE (DIRECTOR) RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1. The Parish Priest should always be present at the occasion of the invited person's presentation in the Parish.
- 5.2. The Director or his/her delegate should always be present on the occasion of the presentation.
- 5.3. The Parish Priest and Director should inform the Diocesan Office for Communications about the event. The Office supports and promotes Parish and Diocesan (Chancery) events. It may be that surrounding communities would be keen to know about the event and participate.

6. REPORTABLE CONDUCT SCHEME

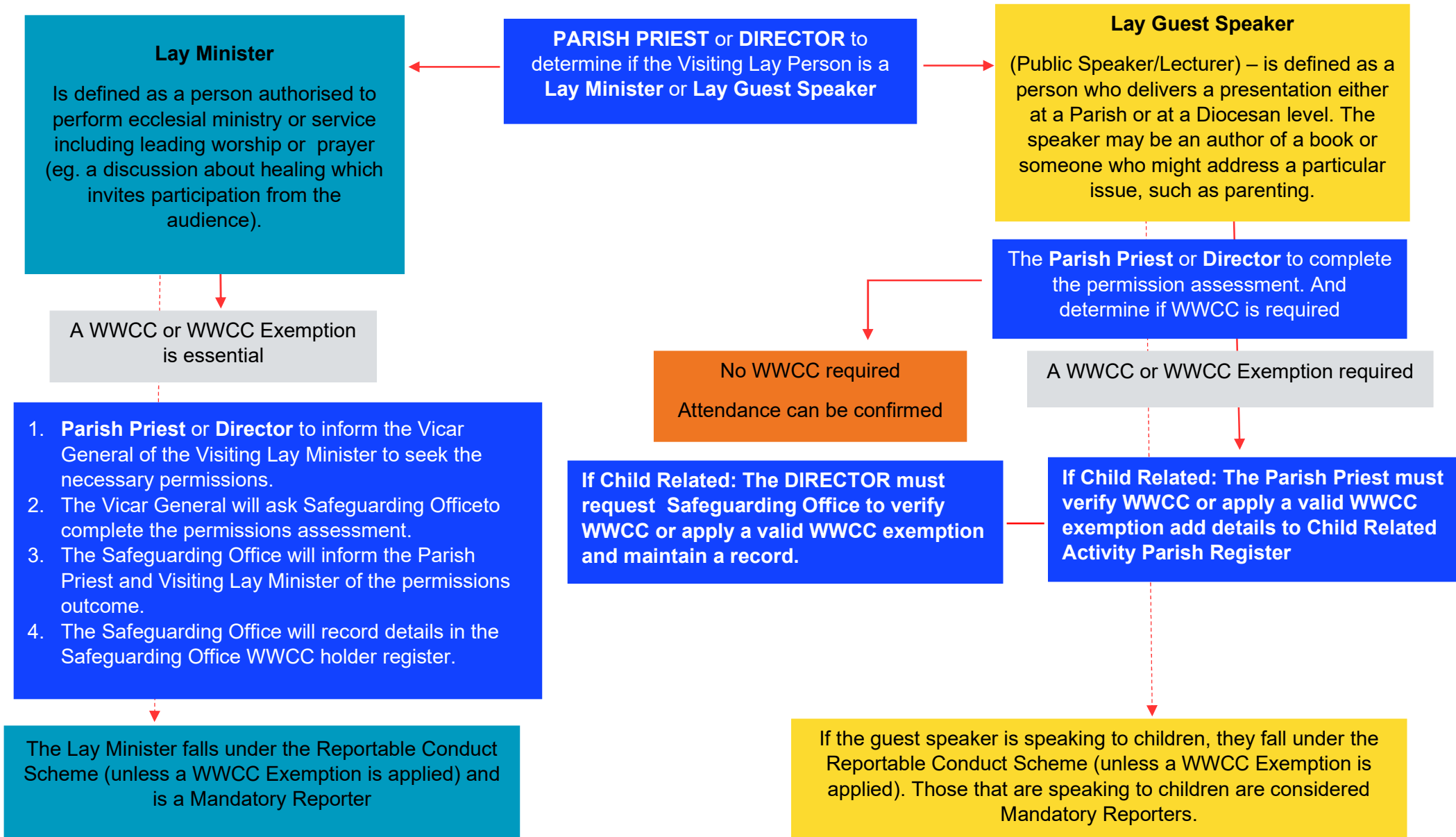
Those Lay Persons visiting the Diocese who are required to have a WWCC for their ministry/activity fall under the Reportable Conduct Scheme as outlined in the NSW Children's Guardian Act 2019. Please refer to the **Reportable Conduct Policy** for more information.

7. MANDATORY REPORTING

Those who are Lay Ministers as well as those providing religious based 'guest speaking' (religious-based activity) to children are considered Mandatory Reporters. That is, if they have reasonable ground to suspect that a child (under 16) may be at Risk of Significant Harm, they have a legal obligation to report this to the Child Protection Helpline. Please refer to the **Mandatory Reporting Policy** for more information.

APPENDIX A

A Lay Person visiting the Parish or Diocese (Chancery) as a Lay Minister or a Guest Speaker



REFERENCE

Children's Guardian Act 2019

Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998

Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012

RELATED FORMS

Lay Minister Form

Statement of Conduct

Child Related Activity Parish Register Template

RELATED POLICIES

Working with Children Check Policy

Child Related Activity Parish Register Policy

Mandatory Reporting Policy

Reportable Conduct Policy

POLICY REVIEW

Review of this Policy, any related procedures and forms will be undertaken every three years by the Safeguarding Manager in consultation with the Safeguarding Officer, Office for Safeguarding and approved by the approved by the Vicar General.

REVISION/ MODIFICATION HISTORY

Date	Version	Current Title	Summary of Changes	Approval Date	Commencement Date
05/05/20	1.	Visiting Lay Person Policy	New	Jul 2020	Jul 2020
12/03/24	2.	Visiting Lay Guest Speaker and Minister Policy	Definition of Lay Minister and office name changes	Mar 2024	Mar 2024

APPROVAL DATE/REVISION SCHEDULE

Approved by: Rev Dr David Ranson, Vicar General

Date approved: 12 March 2024

To be revised: 12 March 2026