



## DECREE OF CONFIRMATION OF STATUTES OF COUNCIL OF PRIESTS

**Whereas** on 13 February 2015 as Archbishop of Sydney I instituted Interim Statutes for the Council of Priests and the said Council has operated in accordance with those Interim Statutes since that time, and

**Whereas** I have again consulted with my Council of Priests on the effectiveness and appropriateness of those Interim Statutes at a meeting on 1 November 2017 and they have given unanimous support for those Statutes as proposed with minor amendments,

**By this Decree** the attached amended Statutes for the Council of Priests dated 1 Nov 2017 are issued as permanent Statutes of the Council of Priests until amended by me or my successors.

This decree takes effect on 1 November 2017.

  
Archbishop of Sydney

  
Notary

**ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY**

**COUNCIL OF PRIESTS STATUTES**

**CANONS**

Can. 495 § 1 In each diocese there is to be established a council of priests, that is a group of priests who represent the presbyterium and are to be, as it were, the Bishop's senate. The council's role is to assist the Bishop, in accordance with the law, in the governance of the diocese, so that the pastoral welfare of that portion of the people of God entrusted to the Bishop may be most effectively promoted.

Can. 496 The council of priests is to have its own statutes. These are to be approved by the diocesan Bishop, having taken account of the norms laid down by the Episcopal Conference.

Can. 497 As far as the designation of the members of the council of priests is concerned:

1. about half are to be freely elected by the priests themselves in accordance with the canons which follow and with the statutes;
2. some priests must, in accordance with the statutes, be members ex officio, that is belong to the council by reason of the office they hold;
3. the diocesan Bishop may freely appoint some others.

Can. 498 § 1 The following have the right to both an active and a passive voice in an election to the council of priests:

1. all secular priests incardinated in the diocese;
2. priests who are living in the diocese and exercise some useful office there, whether they be secular priests not incardinated in the diocese, or priest members of religious institutes or of societies of apostolic life.

§2 Insofar as the statutes so provide, the same right of election may be given to other priests who have a domicile or quasi-domicile in the diocese.

Can. 499            The manner of electing the members of the council of priests is to be determined by the statutes, and in such a way that as far as possible the priests of the presbyterium are represented, with special regard to the diversity of ministries and to the various regions of the diocese.

Can. 500            § 1 It is the prerogative of the diocesan Bishop to convene the council of priests, to preside over it, and to determine the matters to be discussed in it or to accept items proposed by the members.

                          §2 The council of priests has only a consultative vote. The diocesan Bishop is to consult it in matters of more serious moment, but he requires its consent only in the cases expressly defined in the law.

                          §3 The council of priests can never act without the diocesan Bishop. He alone can make public those things which have been decided in accordance with §2.

Can. 501            § 1 The members of the council of priests are to be designated for a period specified in the statutes, subject however to the condition that over a five year period the council is renewed in whole or in part.

                          §2 When the see is vacant, the council of priests lapses and its functions are fulfilled by the college of consultors. The Bishop must reconstitute the council of priests within a year of taking possession.

Can. 502            §1 From among the members of the council of priests, the diocesan Bishop freely appoints not fewer than six and not more than twelve priests, who are for five years to constitute the college of consultors. To it belong the functions determined by law; on the expiry of the five year period, however, it continues to exercise its functions until the new college is constituted.

## STATUTES

1.        This body will be known as the Council of Priests of the Archdiocese of Sydney.

                          The aims of the Council of Priests are set out in Can. 495 §1.

2.        **ELECTED MEMBERSHIP**

                          Each Deanery shall elect one member for the Council of Priests, together with a substitute member to ensure continuing representation of the Deanery should the elected member be lawfully impeded from attending a particular meeting.

### 3. ELECTIONS

In the elections to be conducted every three years:

Each Dean shall appoint, every three years, a returning officer from amongst members of the Deanery. He shall conduct a secret ballot among all members of the Deanery to elect a delegate and a substitute to be a member of the Council of Priests.

The priest attracting the most votes will be considered elected delegate. The priest attracting the next highest number of votes will be considered the substitute delegate.

- a) A priest who has served two consecutive full terms (i.e. 6 years) on the Council of Priests is not eligible for election for a further period of three years; a priest who has been a substitute for any length of time is eligible for election for a three year term as the delegate or the substitute delegate;
- b) It will be assumed that priests are prepared to serve on the Council; priests not wishing to be elected should indicate to the appointed returning officer that they do not wish their name to be included on the list.

### 4. CASUAL VACANCIES

If an elected member dies in office, or his resignation for a serious reason is accepted by the Archbishop, or he moves from the Deanery that he represents or he is appointed to a position which entails ex officio membership of the Council, the place so vacated is to be filled for the rest of that person's term by the substitute delegate mentioned in No. 2.

### 5. MEMBERS EX OFFICIO

The Auxiliary Bishops, Vicars General and the Episcopal Vicars are members of the Council of Priests by reason of their office and shall be members so long as they hold office. Should the Chancellor be a priest he too shall be a member so long as he holds office.

### 6. ARCHBISHOP'S APPOINTEES

The Archbishop may, at his discretion, appoint up to six other members to the Council of Priests who shall hold office for three years but shall be eligible for reappointment.

### 7. TENURE

Even though their term may have expired, all members hold office until replaced.

**8. MEETINGS**

- a) When a delegate or a substitute delegate cannot attend a meeting, the Dean is to ensure that a substitute attends;
- b) A quorum consists of half the members of the Council;
- c) Meetings are to be held at least three (3) times a year;
- d) At the discretion of the Archbishop, a Chairman and a Secretary shall be elected by the Council for a term of three (3) years; otherwise the Archbishop will be Chairman and the Vicar General will be Secretary;
- e) The Secretary is to act as secretary of the Council of Priests, and to liaise with the Chancellor in providing members with adequate notice and documentation before meetings, and furnishing the Archbishop and members with minutes of the previous meeting, and forwarding minutes to each Dean within fourteen (14) days prior to each Council Meeting and to the Chancery for inclusion in the monthly Ad Clerum.

**9. EXECUTIVE**

The executive committee consists of the Chairman, Secretary and a Vicar General and this committee is to work with the Chancellor to assist the Archbishop:

- i) by planning the Agenda of each meeting;
- ii) by preparing documentation necessary for meetings;
- iii) by communicating with those responsible for enacting Agenda items;
- iv) by ensuring the smooth operations of the Council of Priests.

**10. COMMITTEES**

Any committee appointed by the Council of Priests is to include at least one member of the Council: it may include personnel not members of the Council of Priests; it is to report to each meeting of the Council on its activities and recommendations and is bound by the relevant codes and these statutes.