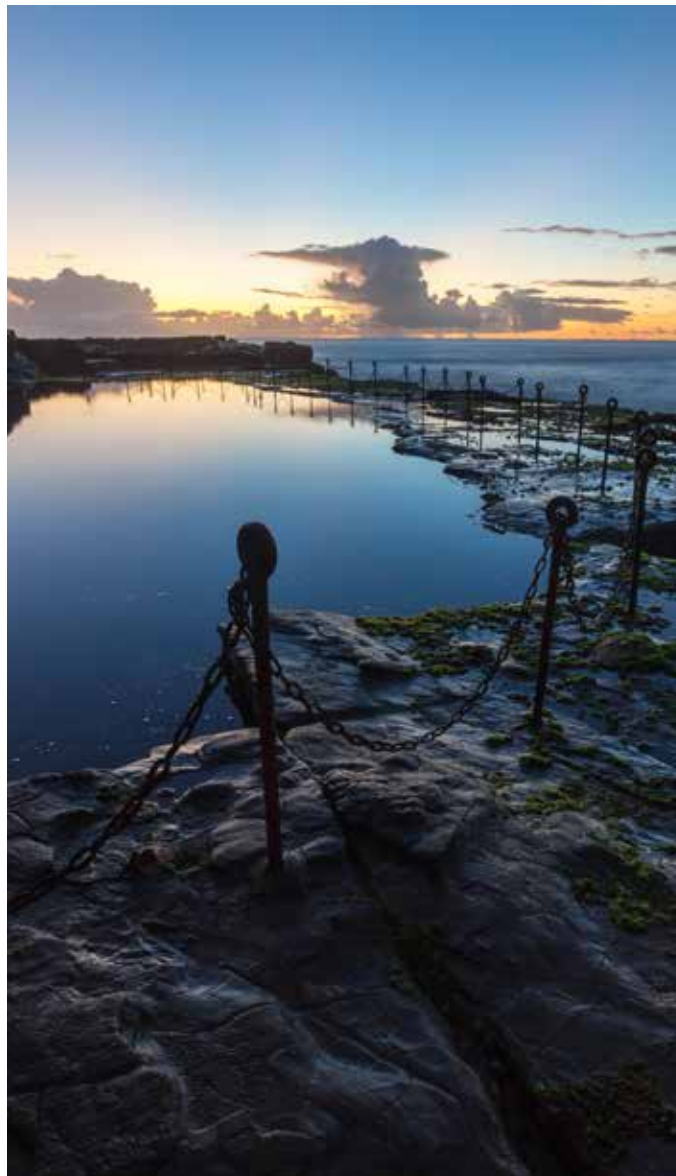


What happens at the conclusion of Dispute Resolution?

At the conclusion of the Dispute Resolution Conference the Conference Convenor will assist the participants to formalise any agreement reached in a written document. In the event the participants are not able to reach agreement on all the issues between them, an Administrative Review will be conducted by the Diocesan Complaints Management Service to close the outstanding concerns. Information about the Administrative Review may be found at www.mn.catholic.org.au/about/policies.

Continuous improvement

The Diocese and its agencies values feedback from participants to Dispute Resolution. Your feedback may be received by phone 1300 461 831 or email feedback@mn.catholic.org.au.



Dispute Resolution

What can I expect?

Governance



Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle

841 Hunter Street, Newcastle NSW 2302

PO Box 756 Newcastle NSW 2300

P 1300 461 831

E feedback@mn.catholic.org.au

www.mn.catholic.org.au



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What is Dispute Resolution?

Dispute resolution involves the people who are in dispute talking about the issues and coming to an agreement on how these issues may be resolved.

What are the benefits of Dispute Resolution?

- ▶ Dispute Resolution is flexible and responsive to the needs of the people involved.
- ▶ Dispute Resolution provides an opportunity for concerns to be resolved more quickly than most formal processes.
- ▶ Dispute Resolution gives the participants the right to make a commitment to a decision they have determined themselves through the dispute resolution process.
- ▶ Dispute Resolution is designed to preserve goodwill between the people involved, which is especially important when there is a shared commitment for the relationship to continue.
- ▶ Dispute Resolution has a future focus and is not a process for testing facts or making findings.

Eligibility

For a matter to be eligible for Dispute Resolution at Governance:

- ▶ there will be an absence of significant safety concerns,
- ▶ the issues will relate to a service provided by the Diocese,
- ▶ a diocesan worker will be involved, and
- ▶ there will be a shared commitment from all participants for their working relationships to continue.

Voluntary participation

There is no obligation to participate in Dispute Resolution convened by the Diocese. Timeliness is an important feature of the process so when you are invited to participate in Dispute Resolution you will be asked to provide your consent within two working days.

The Conference Convenor

The Conference Convenor is an impartial person appointed to assist people in dispute to discuss the issues and consider options for resolution.

Confidentiality

Each participant is required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The discussions held in Dispute Resolution are confidential except as required by law or diocesan policy.

Participation in 'good faith'

Dispute Resolution is an opportunity for the participants to make a genuine effort to reach practical and lasting agreement, in a confidential and future focused setting. Each participant is expected to be resolution focused and respectful throughout the Dispute Resolution process.

The role of a support person

Each participant may nominate a support person. The role of a support person is to support the emotional wellbeing of the person participating in the Dispute Resolution, and not to advocate on their behalf. A support person will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement.

The voice of the child

In general, children under 16 years are not participants in Dispute Resolution. However, as children get older the Dispute Resolution process may afford them a greater level of independence and participation in decisions that may affect them. The conference convenor may consult with the responsible adult for any child that seeks to participate in Dispute Resolution and consider the appropriate involvement of the child (if any) in Dispute Resolution on a case-by-case basis.

Procedural matters

Consent to participate

Each person must provide their written consent to participate before the process of Dispute Resolution is commenced.

A participant should tell the Conference Convenor if they require an interpreter, assistive technology or other support to participate in the Dispute Resolution process.

The preliminary conference

Is the first of a two-part Dispute Resolution process, and an opportunity for each person to separately meet the Conference Convenor to share their experiences and consider what they hope to achieve at the conference. Any questions about the process may be asked and answered here.

Dispute Resolution works best when the participants are prepared and able to adopt a cooperative and outcomes focused approach to problem solving. Dispute Resolution may not be the best option where one or more participants is not able to frankly outline their needs and interests. The appropriateness of Dispute Resolution in each particular circumstance may be considered at the preliminary conference.

The joint conference

The joint conference is the second part of the Dispute Resolution process, and is an opportunity for the participants, with the assistance of the Conference Convenor, to identify the issues for resolution, develop options, consider alternatives and work towards an agreement.

When participating in the joint conference you will be expected to:

- ▶ present your experience and point of view in a calm manner
- ▶ be willing to listen to the experience and perspective of the other people involved
- ▶ put forward options that may assist in resolving the issues
- ▶ be practical about outcomes that may be achievable and sustainable
- ▶ formalise any agreement reached in writing.