



# Management of an Opportunity Shop

Prepared by Anglican Diocese of Bendigo  
September 2017



## Introduction

**It is with pleasure that I welcome the release of this new Op Shop policy manual for the Diocese of Bendigo.**

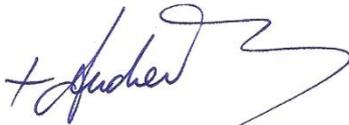
I wish to acknowledge right at the beginning the work of Deb Allan from the Diocesan Registry, Evelyn Robertson, Coordinator of the Giving and Living Op Shop in the Parish of Bendigo North who has provided much valuable input and feedback and the Diocese of Melbourne for making available their Op Shop Manual to assist in developing this new edition of the Bendigo manual.

Op shops fulfil a vital role in local communities in providing not only goods but a place where people can meet and community is enhanced. Our op shops need to be welcoming, friendly and well laid out and project a positive image of the church at work in the local community. At the same time, we live in a changing environment and this means that op shops need to be responsive and innovative in embracing change. I am enormously appreciative of all the good work of coordinators, managers, volunteers and parish councils that support the work of our op shops across the diocese.

It is important to remember opportunity shops:

- are accountable to the Parish Council
- should see their role and function as an extension of the mission of the local church
- have a clear vision of their purpose to assist the parish and the wider community

I extend my blessings and best wishes to the op shops of the Diocese of Bendigo.



**The Rt Rev'd Andrew Curnow AM**  
Bishop of Bendigo

## **Preface and Acknowledgements**

This **Management of an Opportunity Shop Manual** has been developed using information and documents provided by the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne and the Giving and Living Op Shop – Anglican Parish of Bendigo North. We thank them for their support and generosity in giving us permission to use their material.

Also included in this manual are concepts aligned to the Safe Church/Child Safe policies and practices adopted by the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo. We acknowledge the work of the National Council of Churches in Australia [www.safechurches.org.au](http://www.safechurches.org.au)

Additional information has been sourced from external regulatory bodies and links to resources and websites have been provided to assist Op Shops in keeping up to date with requirements.

The manual aims to provide guidance to all parties involved in supporting the management of an Opportunity Shop. Parish Councils should read this manual in conjunction with the Parish Administration Act and other relevant Diocesan Policies such as Safe Church, Child Safe.

Whilst all attempts have been made to provide current information, particularly in relation to legal obligations, this document should not be considered legal advice.

The Diocese office is willing to assist with Op Shop Management enquiries. Resources and forms are also available on the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo website <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au>

**Please note: This manual replaces all previous Opportunity Shop Policy manuals issued by the Anglican Diocese of Bendigo**

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Many of our Parishes offer second hand clothes and goods to the community through an Opportunity Shop. Some of these are small shops; others are significant size operations with a variety of activities. All of them are one of our 'public faces'. All of them resource our Church communities. All are ministry and are an engagement by the church with the wider community. This means that our Safe Church/Child Safe policies and principles of providing Safe Leadership, Safe Ministry and Safe Environment, where all people are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe is an important aspect of Opportunity Shops.

This manual is designed to help Parishes and Opportunity Shops understand their legal obligations and to continue to evolve and improve their operations. Your feedback and contributions can be incorporated over time. If you do have any information on Opportunity Shops or can contribute your own stories of how you have developed your Op Shop ministry we'd love to hear from you. Please contact the Registry office on 5443 4711 or email [reception@bendigoanglican.org.au](mailto:reception@bendigoanglican.org.au)

## What can we offer within our Op Shops?

Op shops are not just about buying and selling and making money. The fundraising aspects of op shops are significant and there is always more to learn about sales and marketing. Op shops can provide some of the financial backing needed for mission, whether for local parish or community causes, our Diocesan community care organisations or overseas aid organisations.

Of equal, if not greater significance to fundraising is the reality that op shops are about people and are themselves places of purpose. Op shops offer more than goods for sale - they also offer hospitality, they build community and they practice social inclusion. The Op shop at Nyah West in the Parish of Swan Hill has a dedicated area for hospitality.

The best way we can do this is simply to be open. Keep the door open so people can come in and out. Keep the window open to the light so people can see in and out. Keep our ears and eyes, our hearts and minds open to the opportunity to be a good neighbour through the work of op shops.

We should never underestimate the simple and gentle power of op shops and the ministry of people who work in them. So -what are op shops about beyond buying and selling and making money?

### **Invitation**

Is the op shop welcoming and easy to get into? Create an open space at the entrance which says 'welcome' and invites a little journey of discovery and mystery.

### **Hospitality**

Be discretely attentive to customers and visitors and learn to read the cues they give you when they want to engage in conversation or ask for assistance.

### **Friendship**

People often visit op shops as a social outlet. Those of us who work in op shops also seek friendship through this work. It's a matter of extending this sense of friendliness further where we can. This can be as simple as passing the time of day or just listening.

## **Inclusion**

Different types of people visit op shops – we need to be ready for any eventuality and treat each person with dignity and respect.

## **Safety**

Op shops need to be safe places for ourselves and our customers – we need to be sure we have good safety procedures in case something goes wrong. Can we contact people outside the shop by phone and is there someone we can call on in an emergency? Can we offer a place of safety for customers and visitors – a milestone for the journey, part of their daily or weekly pilgrimage? Safe Church and Child Safe policies and practice should be considered also and assessment of risk for children, elderly or vulnerable people who may be visitors to your shop.

## **Story Telling**

Sometimes our work is to listen and talk. When we take the time to listen to others we recognise their value as people. They may share personal things with us and we need to treat these things with confidentiality. Our listening may be of comfort to people without the need to offer advice or solutions. Sometimes we may share a story from our own life to offer empathy and support. There may be times in our listening, when we see the need for further assistance or professional help and we need to know how to help people find this.

## **Faith Sharing**

Part of our listening and speaking can involve the sharing of our faith stories and journeys. Yet this needs to be done with care and respect. In our conversation with customers or visitors they may sometimes want to talk about matters of faith. It may be that people share stories of how they have been hurt by the church; how they have been discouraged from asking questions; how they have been challenged in their beliefs by life's troubles. We need to be prepared to begin with listening, and to respond with understanding. Once again, we may be in a position to offer further support from others.

## **Information**

Providing information about community resources, services, activities and events can be an important role for op shops as places of community. Part of our role in op shops may be to ensure we know enough information about our community to be able to refer people on to a service, or inform them of different ways to get or give help. It is advisable to access or develop a list of community services available for people living in your area.

## **Adult Volunteers**

Op shops provide a place of community for many people. To what extent are we open to volunteers from the wider community to work with us? Are there any customers who might be interested in becoming a volunteer as well? Are there volunteers who may specialise in a particular area such as books, linen or crockery? Volunteer opportunities can be a way of building community and practicing inclusion – and of course having fun.

## **Creativity and Recycling**

We may be tempted to class some donations as rubbish but sometimes a little creativity can go a long way. There is a revival of crafts using 'waste' materials to make useable and saleable items. This can provide a creative outlet for people who may not be op shop volunteers, but who have an interest in crafts they make at home. This can sometimes be a way of engaging younger people in op shops, by offering an outlet for the inventive re-making of items such as jewellery out of waste materials or jeans with special tears and blotches

which can increase their value remarkably.

### **Enterprise**

Related to this is the concept of social enterprise. It may seem impossible, but it can and does work. The idea is that people on low incomes make things on consignment then get a share of the profits when sold. This could be organised in partnership with a local neighbourhood centre, youth program or employment network. For some people having items they have made displayed and sold in our op shop can be a great encouragement to them.

### **Goodwill and Generosity**

Donations and offers of help come our way – how well do we respond? How well do we say thanks?

### **Loss and Grief**

Some donations may be made as a result of the death of a loved one, or people moving house for reasons of work or family. Such situations can involve loss and grief for the people who donate items to our op shop. It's advisable to refrain from selling items of clothing that have names written on them. Once again, our response is to listen well, to show understanding, and offer further support we know is available.

### **Celebration**

Op Shops can be places of compassion, community and justice. It is good to have events to celebrate the work of op shops and the way they contribute to the life of local communities.

Some of our Op Shops are busy creating opportunities to connect with other community groups and individuals, along with working in partnership with other parishes or Anglican organisations.

Below are some ideas and suggestions for further developing your Op Shop networks.

### **I. Become a resource for community groups**

**Special projects:** *There have been a number of appeals from Anglican agencies for a number of different resources. In the last year Anglican Churches have provided magazines for a school program teaching children about emotional resilience, toys for children's play therapists and fabric for a craft group for socially isolated people. Op Shops are great places to broaden these sorts of appeals to the public. Putting out a basket and asking for people to contribute to these special projects lets them know about the scope of our Anglican caring work and opens the door to conversations about what we as a Church are all about.*

**Musical instruments:** *Op Shops sometime find musical instruments among their donations. You could consider making an arrangement with a local community music program where the Op Shop manager contacts the leader of that group when an instrument is donated. A system like this has worked well in the Diocese of Perth - the program works with disadvantaged children through teaching music and is always desperate for instruments and is supported by their local Anglicans through this simple ministry.*

**Scarves:** *Perhaps your Op Shop is situated in an area where large numbers of Muslim refugees have settled, with many more arriving each month? Most refugees arrive with very little and you could consider developing a relationship with a Migrant Resource Centre to supply scarves for newly*

arrived women who need head coverings.

**Towels:** Are often hard to sell. Most often they are sent for rags or discarded. Why not approach your local Vet and offer these as a way of supporting their work, and building up a connection in your locality? These relationships are especially handy when the parish wants to hold a Creation / St Francis Day.

**Craft materials:** It is very simple for Churches with a ministry to local aged care facilities and schools to offer support through the Op Shop. For instance, Op Shops can be wonderful resources for materials used in craft activities, fabrics, bric a brac and so on.

**2. Work experience:** There are a number of people who need practical experience when it comes to work. Young people wanting work experience and some on Centrelink payments have to accumulate a certain number of hours per week to meet various requirements. A supportive, informal environment is very important in these cases and could be offered by an Op Shop. Please note, these opportunities should only be offered to adults, that is, people over 18 years of age.

**3. Community information.** Libraries and local council offices are vital centres for information sharing in local communities. A very simple addition to an Op Shop's set up can make it also a very useful place for sharing important local information. Why not create a notice board, put in a pamphlet stand or table, contact the local library and shire office and offer to display pamphlets and posters? And if you do this, don't forget to put out information with all of this about what you are offering as a local Church.

**4. Vouchers** for your priest or pastoral team to use. Some Churches use their Op Shop to support their pastoral ministry team. They have developed a budget which includes a certain amount towards assistance to people in need. Then vouchers are made up to that money value and are given to the pastoral carers in the parish. When the Priest sees a need, they can give a voucher to that individual or family who can then use it in the Op Shop. A very practical way to support those God sends our way.

**5. Coffee gatherings.** If you have any space in or near to your Op Shop you could try this idea. Why not have a free morning tea scheduled to operate during one or more of the Op Shop's opening hours? This is a way for parishioners to meet and interact with local people, a way for locals to meet each other and for visitors to become more comfortable with Church surrounds.

## **6. Combining your Opportunity Shop with Other Ministry**

Op Shops are a great point of contact with the local community. In many cases they are the face of the Church and are ideal opportunities for us to engage with people from outside of our congregations and Parishes. They are perfect places to meet people, and share with them some of the prospects our Churches offer for social contact, to hear the Gospel, and to receive support and encouragement.

Op Shops are so much more than fundraisers to keep our Churches going. They are remarkable openings for ministry. One simple way to engage this opportunity is to think creatively about how this doorway into our Church community might lead to other ministries. How might we connect those who shop with us to our playgroup, our social group, the craft ladies, our Sunday worship, the Bible study? How do we offer our

community a much greater experience?

We invite you to share your ideas with your Parish council and encourage you to continue to develop your Op Shop.

## 2. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

The diocese recommends that every Opportunity Shop have a written agreement to clarify how it will operate. A “Memorandum of Understanding” (MOU) between the Opportunity Shop Committee and Parish Council will clarify expectations and minimise misunderstandings.

An outline of what the Diocese believes to be the essential elements of a Memorandum of Understanding is in **Appendix A** and includes how to set up a Op Shop Management Committee.

If a Memorandum of Understanding is not adopted, the Parish Council should adopt this Opportunity Shop Management Manual as the management and operational guide for the op shop.

**Anyone who tries to operate outside this framework puts themselves at considerable personal risk.**

#### Pop Up Opportunity Shops

In some cases, a Parish may not have the resources to manage a permanent Opportunity Shop, however, they may wish to consider a “Pop-up” Op Shop, which is a temporary arrangement for a short duration. It is also important to check with local council to be understand and whether any permits are required. See Section 3 of this manual, which outlines a number of considerations.

The general principles and policies outlined in this manual also apply to “Pop-Up” Opportunity shops. This includes a providing a written plan, outlining consideration of risk and safety management, along with goods that can’t be sold be law, which must be approved by Parish Council and the Diocese. Failure to do this may result in individuals placing themselves at risk.

### Role of Parish Council

It is important to recognise that the **Churchwardens and Parish Council** are always responsible for the operation of the Opportunity shop, even with a Management Committee.

It is imperative that your parish council is part of approving the Op Shop set-up and ongoing operations and must have representatives on the Op Shop committee. Parish council must be informed of all the Op Shop is doing including financial statements. The parish council is expected to ensure there is clear expectations and oversight of the Op Shop putting a Memorandum of Understanding in place is recommended.

In addition to the good governance of Op Shops, the role of Parish council is:

- Approval of mission and activities
- Support and promote the Op Shop
- Support the Manager/Coordinator & Op Shop Committee with adherence to policy & process
- Give due consideration to Op Shop reports and provide support where needed
- Provide constructive feedback to the Committee and Manager/Coordinator
- Undertake property and safety inspections at least annually
- Ensure regular maintenance of premises and fittings is undertaken
- Appoint the Op Shop Manager or Coordinator, provide support and pastoral care

The Parish Council will appoint the Op Shop Manager or Coordinator and the Op Shop

Management Committee, where a separate Management Committee is in place. If the position is paid the Parish Council should seek advice from the diocesan Registry Office with regard to the employment contract.

To appoint a Manager or Coordinator of the Op Shop, the Parish Council may appoint a selection committee of three members including one Churchwarden to interview candidates and make a recommendation to the Parish Council.

Consideration should be given to the time period that the Manager or Coordinator is appointed for and whether a trial period will apply. Providing all parties with an opportunity to regularly review arrangements is healthy and can assist with avoiding volunteer “burnout”.

## Opportunity Shop Committee

The main role of the Op Shop Management Committee is to provide support to the Manager or Op Shop Coordinator/Supervisor and to the volunteers. Please see Appendix A, which gives a draft Memorandum of Understanding for an Op Shop including the membership of the Committee.

It does this by:

- Support Op Manager/Coordinator with establishing a friendly and healthy environment adopting good practices, encouraging adherence to Policies and procedures
- Holding regular meetings and ensure minutes are kept and report back to Parish Council at least quarterly
- Support Manager/Coordinator in finding and assessing suitability of all new volunteers in conjunction with Parish council
- Regularly reviewing Op Shop activities, to determine where improvements and changes are desirable or required
- attending to matters of “due diligence” such as insurance, security, safety, council requirements, police matters, etc.
- encourage regular review of workplace safety and risks, support the churchwardens annual safety inspection review
- reviewing the opportunities for mission and the trends in op shop business in the locale,
- attending to Op Shop needs, such as advertising, new shelving, equipment, etc.,
- reporting to the Parish Council on a range of topics, including trading activity, Op Shop requirements, repairs etc., and organising collections of goods for sale, as well as disposal of unwanted or unsaleable items, and
- making recommendations to Parish Council on distribution of mission funds.

### Reports to Parish Council

The Management Committee will report to Parish Council at least quarterly on the following:

- Trading results.
- Mission issues.
- Security concerns, incidents and injuries.
- Expenditure
- Requests for special expenditure.
- Requests for events.
- Changes to significant Op Shop arrangements.

The Limit of Authority for the management committee of the Op Shop is a maximum of \$500.00 per item or other amount as agreed with Parish Council. Expenditure in excess of this amount is to be approved by the Parish Council

## Opportunity Shop Manager or Coordinator

All Opportunity Shop Manager Coordinator/supervisors are required to undergo background screening and clearances in line with Diocese Safe Church leader's (lay authorization) policy requirements i.e. National Police check, Working with Children checks, referees. The Diocese office facilitates this process – details and forms can be found on our website <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/>

The role of coordinator is quite a demanding and diverse role which covers responsibilities such as

- Volunteer management -finding and assessing suitability, rostering, supporting etc.
- Training and safety management
- Day-to-day coordination of Opportunity Shop operations
- Management of stock and donations
- Financial transactions, including regular banking of funds
- Reporting to Op Shop Committee/Parish Council
- Fostering community care and mission

A sample template role description in the resources section.

## Role of the Diocese

The role of the Registrar and Diocese team is to support the management of the Op Shop by providing advice and support on:

- Setting up an Op Shop
- Facilitating lay authorisation ( Safe Leader screening & checks )
- Provision of mandatory training such as Safe Church, OH&S
- Review and execute all legal agreements and contracts ie leases, employment
- Legal obligations and good practice
- Advice on Diocese policies such as Safe Church and Child Safe
- Support with serious OH&S risks, incident and injury matters
- Maintain the Op Shop Management Manual and provide resources on Diocesan website
- Diocesan insurance matters – policies and claims
- Employment and payroll services (where required)

## Office of Professional Standards

- Provides independent objective process to deal with complaints of misconduct
- Contact 1800 135 246

### 3. DIOCESAN OPPORTUNITY SHOP POLICIES

This section outlines the policies and processes that Parish Councils, Op Shop Committee and Op Shops are expected to adopt to ensure they are legally compliant and adopting Safe Church principles and practice. Being seen to be a safe operation that abides by community standards is critical for the broader community to place their trust in us. Failure to adopt these policies could put individuals at risk.

#### Goods Not to be Sold

Not all donated items will be suitable for resale. In particular, goods covered by Australian laws regarding mandatory safety standards, such as bike helmets, prams and strollers baby capsules.

Also products that have been recalled from sale due to safety concerns, such as certain children's toys must not be sold or given away. Penalties for non-compliance with mandatory safety and information standards can mean severe penalties under the *Trade Practice Act 1974*. **Courts can impose fines up to \$1.1 million for organisations and \$220,00 for individuals**

The following items should **not** be sold by the Op Shop as they may be unsafe - thereby making the shop liable for any injuries, or fined for not meeting the appropriate re-sale safety, health and other regulations.

- Cots – children or baby (health concerns)
- Mattresses (health concerns)
- Helmets – cyclists or motor cyclists (due mandatory safety standards)
- Baby capsules (due to mandatory safety standards)
- Car booster seats (due to mandatory safety standards)
- Prams and Strollers (due to mandatory safety standards)
- Knives and dangerous instruments (prohibited goods)
- Products that have been banned or recalled. Please see:  
<https://www.productsafety.gov.au/product-safety-laws/safety-standards-bans/mandatory-standards>  
<https://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/products-and-services/product-safety/banned-products-and-recalls>
- Electrical Goods of **any** description (unless in new or original packaging AND covered by the manufacturer's warranty) or have been “tested and tagged” by an independent licensed inspector

#### Sale of Electrical Goods

If an Opportunity Shop is considering selling second hand electrical appliances and equipment, the Parish Council must ensure that procedures and process are compliant with current legal obligations and that the “test and tag” inspector is currently licensed and an independent contractor with their own insurances.

At the time of printing this manual (Sept 2017) Energy Safe Victoria advise the following legal obligations apply to electrical appliances and equipment:

Organisations and individuals supplying or offering to supply second-hand electrical equipment **must be aware of the legal obligations imposed on them under electricity safety legislation.**

These include:

- A person supplying or offering to supply second-hand electrical equipment must attach a label to the equipment stating that it is second-hand,
- A business, including major charitable organisations, supplying or offering to supply second-hand electrical equipment must also attach a label stating that the equipment is second-hand and has been inspected and tested, and is compliant with Australian/New Zealand Standard(AS/NZS) 3760r

#### Labels for second-hand electrical equipment is mandatory

Labels should include the "test and tag" inspector's identity. The use of generic AS/NZS 3760 compliance tags, commonly used by tradesmen and inspectors and available from electrical wholesalers, is acceptable **in conjunction** with a label stating the equipment is second-hand.

Further information:

<http://www.esv.vic.gov.au/technical-information/electrical-appliances-and-equipment/sale-and-supply-of-second-hand-equipment/>

Op Shop Managers or Coordinators are expected to exercise judgement on all donated goods as to their condition and any safety concerns that might arise. In addition Parish Council and Opportunity Shop committees may also exclude other items from sale due to the size of the operations and concern for public or worker safety ie large, heavy furniture items.

## Insurance

Opportunity Shops have various insurance cover under the Diocese's insurance policies. All incidents of injury or property damage must be reported in writing to the Registry and Parish Council in a timely manner. In the case of serious incidents or injury the Registrar should be contacted as soon as possible. Where the Op Shops is in a rented property it may also have obligations to notify the landlord.

- All insurance matters must go through the Diocese
- It is important that Parish councils include Op Shops on their annual returns, particularly insurance. This includes the number of active Op Shop volunteers, insuring trading stock etc.
- Any issues pertaining to Property Insurance (e.g. burglary, fire storm), Volunteer Workers Personal Accident (e.g. volunteer injured), and Public Liability Insurance (customer fell or tripped), are to be referred to the Diocesan Registry Office. Generally, loss of income is not covered by Diocesan insurance policies
- Insurance claim forms are available on <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/> and should be sent to the Registry Office and a copy to Parish Council
- It is a requirement under Occupational Health and Safety that records must be kept to record any incident that results in an injury to a person or may contribute to psychological injury such as a personal threat or hold-up and aggressive customer. The Diocesan Incident/Injury Report form found on the Diocesan website <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au> will meet this requirement.

#### Off Site Events

When a Parish/Diocesan Entity conducts an activity, such as a Street Stall, on someone else's property there is usually a request for a Certificate of Currency for Public Liability Insurance. Please contact the Registry Office **prior** to holding an event for further advice/information.

## Financial Management

The treasurer/churchwardens are responsible to the parish council for the financial accounting of the Op Shop's activities - with the banking and accounting for the Op Shop being included in the processes and accounts of the Parish.

The Op Shop should not operate independently with its own ABN (Australian Business number). All Op Shop documentation should include the Parish ABN. All financial transaction should be handled in line with parish requirements, including GST. (goods and services tax). Second hand goods are generally exempt from GST.

It is however preferable to have a separate working bank account to the normal parish operating bank account.

The auditing of Op Shop activities is to be included in the auditing of parish accounts, which are reported to the Annual Parish Meeting in February/March each year.

Parish Council is responsible for the distribution of funds.

## Legal agreements

The Op Shop Management Committee is not an independent body and may not enter into employment, leasing/rental or other contracts, except under the authority of the Parish Council. All leasing/rental agreements must be in the name of the **Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation** and be executed (signed) **by the Diocese**. No individual is to sign a lease on behalf of the Op Shop, this includes agreements such as "Work for the Dole" and similar programs.

## Safe Leader (Lay) Authorisation

The diocesan Safe Church policy requires that all church leaders undergo background screening process prior to appointment. The Op Shop Manager or Coordinator/supervisor are required to undergo these background checks such as a national police check, working with children check (WWCC) and referee checks. Coordinators will also be required to undergo mandatory training in line with diocese policy such as Safe Church, OH&S to ensure they understand legal obligations. Please contact the Registrar to confirm current training requirements.

## Handling Concerns and Complaints

In any organisation there will be times when we need to handle concerns or complaints from either members of the public, customers, workers and volunteers. The nature of people's concerns and complaints can vary widely from matters concerning customer service, health and safety, workplace conflicts that may be able to be discussed and resolved at a local level in a timely manner. Op Shop coordinators are encouraged to seek the support the church wardens and/or advice from the Registrar in matters that are escalating and becoming protracted. Procedures for handling customer service complaints should also be adopted with referral to the Op Shop Manager or Coordinator to ensure volunteers are supported.

It is important to note that complaints or concerns relating to **professional standards or allegations of misconduct** which may include matters such as suspicion of fraud, risk of abuse or actual abuse, bullying and harassment etc. should be directed to the Office of Professional Standards – Kooyoora Ltd on **freecall 1 800 135 246**. The Professional Standards team are trained in providing independent, objective process and understand when matters should be referred to external bodies such as the police. It is important to ensure that posters are displayed in

prominent positions to ensure awareness is created. Please that people are made aware of this option for speaking up. A poster is available on the Diocese website and in the resources section of this manual.

## Minors and Volunteering

Whilst we understand there will be requests to provide minors (people under the age of 18 years) with an opportunity to volunteer in the Opportunity shop, the Diocese does advise against this.

Victorian Child Safe standards have a number of requirements that **MUST** be met and these would be onerous on Opportunity Shops. We recommend that the Parish look for other ways to assist the minor develop their skills such as volunteering in the church or asking local businesses through the Parish newsletter etc.

## Child Safety in Op Shops

Obviously children will visit the Opportunity Shop with a legal guardian who is a customer or visitor and should be made welcome. In line with maintaining safety for the general public, additional steps may be required to ensure the safety of children in particular the use of toilets and fitting rooms. Op Shops should develop their own procedures around the risks and safety of children and train their volunteers to adopt these practices. Undertaking Safe Church and Child Safe training may assist. The Diocese regularly advises of training programs through its newsletters and website. Please contact the Registry for additional support

It is also recommended that Op Shop volunteers and workers are reminded that it is not appropriate for their children or grandchildren to be “minded” on the premises when they are working on a roster.

## Occupational Health and Safety

The Church has a legal responsibility for the health & safety of all employees and volunteers working for us, under the OH&S Act 2004 (OHS Act).

The legal obligations for health and safety include:

- Safe working policies and procedures
- Provision of safe work environments
- Training and supervision of volunteers/workers in all required tasks and safety matters
- Policies and practices to prevent bullying and harassment
- Procedures for dealing with aggressive and abusive customers
- Incident and injury reporting
- First aid procedures and supplies
- Fire, electrical and chemical safety practices
- Removal of slip and trip hazards
- Good lighting and clean, uncluttered premises
- Emergency and evacuation plans
- Policies for extreme weather conditions, such as high temperature or Code Red Days

When engaging volunteers, it is essential that we ensure they have the appropriate skills, training & supervision to perform the work safely. It is our obligation to protect the health & safety of both employee and volunteer under the OHS Act. The best way to manage these obligations is to have clear policies and processes in place.

Managing health & safety as part of the day-to-day operations demonstrates to the volunteer we value their help & commitment, and we are serious about their health & safety; contributing to higher volunteer retention.

If we do not manage the health & safety of our volunteers, we risk damage to our reputation & possible legal action. Volunteers, like employees need to have experience to do their role safely OR they need to be supervised by an experienced person.

We need to provide volunteers with information, instruction & training on the safe use of any object, substance or equipment they need to use. This will help lessen the risk of injury to themselves or others, who may be affected by their actions.

Before volunteers start their role, we should outline:

- The tasks & boundaries of their roles, ideally with role description
- Health & safety procedures (i.e. instructions for equipment they will be using)
- Who to talk to if they have any health or safety concerns & how to report incidents
- Arrangements for support/counselling after an incident or other traumatic circumstance
- What situations they should remove themselves from
- Emergency procedures, location of exits, & where equipment is kept.

All Op Shop staff, including volunteers, should be aware of safe working practices. Attention must always be directed to:

- Tidiness of work areas. (Is your floor clear of obstacles? The shop should be arranged so as to provide a safe environment for all employees, volunteers and customers. The correct placement of tables, shelving and racks will minimise the risk of a person injuring themselves. Routine checking of equipment is also recommended if using second-hand items.)
- Clear floor to avoid people tripping over
- Does your storage area have clutter on the floors?
- Do you have an up-to-date first aid kit? Is it accessible? Does someone know how to use the kit? Location of First Aid kit should be known by all staff
- Clear exits - Are all fire exits clear? I.e. nothing in front of the doorways.
- Careful stocking of shelves – ensure you have safety procedures for reaching high items.
- Correct step ladder for reaching such higher areas (using the first two rungs only)
- No stretching beyond the capacity of the person i.e. within easy reach
- Repetitive tasks
- Be aware of best practice for manual handling of goods.
- Correct placement of appropriate fire extinguishers. Are the extinguishers checked regularly by the CFA or fire brigade? Do the workers know how to use them? Do you have an evacuation plan? Do you know the emergency services number?
- Existence of smoke alarms.
- Preparation of an evacuation plan. Do the workers know about it?
- Holding a fire drill every six months
- Ensure that your shop is a safe environment for your volunteers to work in. e.g. no dark corners in the shop.

#### Tidiness of work areas

- Walkways and exits to be clear of cords and other tripping hazards
- Work stations to be worker friendly to avoid over stretching
- Clean and hygienic

- All workers, contractors etc. must be aware of emergency procedures

#### Evacuation plans

- Do workers have access to a phone to make calls for emergencies?
- A site plan of the premises with evacuation points clearly marked
- Where the exits and muster points are
- What the process is after all staff have left the building

#### Fire

- Where the appropriate fire extinguishers are held
- Who the designated warden is

#### Keep in mind some common causes of injuries:

- Volunteers using hazardous or unfamiliar equipment
- Lack of role clarity
- Tasks requiring work at height (ladders/other)
- Volunteers who come into contact with substances that are not labelled
- Congested aisles; loose items on the floor; heaters next to clothing; items stored at high level; moving/handling heavy bags & boxes; bending/twisting while sorting goods
- Lack of training, instruction & supervision.

#### Annual Safety inspections

Annual safety inspections should be undertaken and documented (see the resources section). These could be carried out by church wardens as part of their overall Parish safety responsibilities.

## Finding Premises

There are a number of considerations when finding premises for an Op Shop – whether it is a temporary (Pop-Up) or more permanent arrangement. Consideration should be given to a number of factors including safety of the public and Op shop workers, costs, suitability of location, state of repair. In addition there will be local government bylaws and permit requirements. This section provides some tips:

#### Where:

Some parishes are able to use church property for their Op Shop but many of the Anglican Op Shops are in rented premises. It is very important that the financial aspects are well researched (feasibility study) before launching into a contract that could bind the Parish to an unprofitable commitment. For this reason a lengthy lease arrangement when commencing is probably to be avoided until the viability is realised.

#### Process:

- Approval to lease must be obtained from the Diocesan Executive Committee, and the lease is to be between the Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation (BDTC) and the owner of the property.
- **Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation:** All leases, including a lease for an Op Shop is to be between the *Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation* and the owner of the property. This is because the parish is not a legal entity, and therefore the Diocese is responsible for all legally binding contracts. (The lease will be in the name of the Diocese legal entity – Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation and the Lease is signed by two Trustees under seal.)

The procedure is that parishes liaise with the Registry Office of the Diocese as soon as negotiations start. The lease will be submitted to the Registry for review and approval from the Diocesan Executive Committee.

## Local council requirements

It is important that you are informed of local bylaws so that you do not contravene local council regulations. You need to contact the planning department of the council to find these out.

Consideration should be given to:

- **Planning Permit** - Does your shop need a planning permit? Check with the Planning department of your local council. Business Zone 1 does not need a permit but if you are church premises you may need a permit especially if you are zoned residential.
- **Rubbish** – does the council have any issues with what sort of donations are left out side your premises? Check with Infrastructure Department of your local council regarding this.
- **Rubbish disposal** – is a pick up part of your lease or do you have to pay for your own rubbish disposal?
- **Sandwich boards** – are these allowed? You need to check with Bylaws department of your local council.
- **Advertising** – are you allowed to display any sort of advertising outside the shop? There are state regulations regarding signage and you must check with Planning Department of your local council that you comply.
- **Wheelchair access** – be aware of council regulations here.
- **Who is responsible for maintenance** – you need to have an understanding of who is responsible for implementation of maintenance of the premises. Check the lease.

Also be aware if **Council owns the land** the owner is really a tenant of the building – this means we might be a sub-tenant. In this situation some councils will get involved to ensure that their interests are safeguarded e.g. being sued because the interior of our building causes injury/damage to a person or other property. Council may impose operating hours e.g. if the site is used for after hours say for a special day.

## 4. OPPORTUNITY SHOP PROCEDURES

Each Opportunity shop will have different goals and vision, approved by the Parish Council. Whilst there may be different aims the management of an Op shop on a day-to-day basis is quite an involved exercise. Whilst it is a non-profit concern, it does require considerable skill in the overall management and supervision of volunteers – much the same as any small retail business. There are decisions to be made about what donated goods can be sold and at what price, safety and management of people and finances. How these various operational processes should be handled will vary depending on the size and scale of the operations.

The following considerations aim to provide a good practice guide for parishes considering opening a shop or for those who might like to review their operation. Not all of the headings included here will be relevant to your circumstances, but they do provide a checklist that contribute to successful management.

### Volunteer Management

#### Suggested Duties of Volunteers

- Open shop at 10:00am. Check till float (\$100.00 in various notes and coins) and place in till.
- Close shop at 4:00pm.
- Sell items in the Op Shop at the prices marked or listed in the pricelist - and place cash in till.
- Write down goods sold into the daily diary, and tally up line sub-totals.
- Tally up goods sold each morning and afternoon.
- Place all donated goods in Storage Room for sorting.
- Remove all empty coat hangers from racks.
- Straighten and tidy shelves.
- Ensure that the rear door to the car park is locked, unless an Op Shop person is in attendance at the rear.
- Discard any unwanted goods or rubbish into council bin.
- Wash and or clean any “hard” goods.
- Most importantly, have a good time!!!

#### Working with Children Check

Opportunity Shop Managers and Coordinators should hold a current Working with Children check. Whilst volunteers who are working in an Opportunity Shop do not need a WWC Check as the activity is not child-related work within the meaning of the Working with Children Act 2005, it is prudent to ask questions about a volunteer’s background during interview and reference checking

#### Criminal History check

Opportunity Shop Managers and Coordinators are required to undergo regular national criminal history record checks in line with Safe Church – Safe Leader (lay authorization) policy. It is also recommended that all persons who hold a key to the Op Shop have a national criminal history (police check). The Registry office will facilitate this and forms can be found on the Diocese website <http://www.bendigoanglican.org.au/>

It is not compulsory for all volunteers to undergo a criminal history check. However, Parish Council can determine what is appropriate given the specific risks identified in the local activities and operations.

## Training New Volunteers

The Op Shop is founded on the basis of 'our care for others' - so it is crucial for new volunteers to grasp the importance of being helpful and pleasant to everyone in the shop.

New volunteers are to be given clear explanations to assist them in their duties - to become effective as soon as possible. Therefore, for the first two or three shifts, a new volunteer may be rostered on ideally as a third person, or at least with an experienced person - to allow such staff to understand shop procedures, generally familiarise themselves with the shop and to read this manual.

During these first few shifts, money should not be handled by the new volunteer, neither should they be informed of where the cash is kept overnight or prior to banking. This is intended to protect the staff and shop. It is not meant to be offensive to our new volunteers!!!

Staff with whom a new volunteer is working should inform the Op Shop Coordinator about the person's progress, including any relevant suggestions.

Once the new volunteers have read the local Op Shop handbook and/or attended training, and have become familiarised with the procedures, they should be rostered with someone who has worked for some time in the shop. At this stage they are permitted to accept payments for goods hand out change and write up the sales book (daily diary).

The Op Shop Coordinator will decide when it is appropriate to inform the volunteers about the fuller procedures regarding handling cash, tallying figures, storage etc. The Coordinator will make every effort to roster each volunteer into suitable shifts.

## Operating Procedures

It is a useful practice to develop a written set of operating procedures or develop a local Op Shop handbook. Procedures are a good resource for new volunteers, when leadership changes and to provide an overview to the Opportunity Shop Committee and Parish council.

You may consider having procedures dealing with the following:

- Store Opening hours
- Opening and closing procedures
- Emergency Contact numbers
- Sorting of goods
- Goods not to be sold (See *Safe Op Shop policies – Section 2 of this manual*)
- Donations not accepted
- Pricing (Price List example in the resources section)
- Reserving goods and purchasing
- Controlling stock
- Stock Rotation
- Sale of goods by commission
- In-house purchases
- Cash handling and petty cash
- Banking
- Shoplifting
- Security
- First Aid
- Occupational health and safety including emergency procedures, bullying and harassment

- policy
- Handling concerns and complaints

This is not an exhaustive list, your Op Shop is encouraged to consider the risks and what is helpful to everyone. The next section of the manual provides ideas for consideration and helpful hints. There is also a resources section of this manual and on the Diocesan website.

### Store Opening Hours

Decide on the extent of weekly trading hours, giving consideration to the number of volunteers available and their capacity. Also give due consideration to the workload of the Op Shop Manager or coordinator/supervisor. It is also generally a good idea to close the shop during the traditional Christmas and New Year Holiday period. There are also likely to be some times during the year i.e. January when the shop will be quiet and volunteers need a break. Preparing rosters one month in advance is a good practice. Consider what length shifts i.e. 3 or 4 hours may be preferable rather than volunteers needed to commit a full day. Rest and meal breaks should also be considered. No one should work more than 5 hours without a break.

It is also recommended that there is a policy to close the Op Shop on days where the forecast is for extreme weather events, particularly “Code Red” fire days.

A regular review of hours/rosters is recommended to ensure Op Shop workers well-being is considered, along with customer and community preferences.

### Opening and Closing Procedures

Develop clear procedures to ensure safety and security of volunteers is important, along with clarity of tasks to be done. For example:

#### Opening:

- Check that there have been no break in's.
- Floor walk through - make sure walkways are clear and that emergency exits are not blocked.
- Float - makes sure that the correct amount of float is in the till and that the safe is locked.  
Staff working area - make sure the work area is not cluttered and if any hazards are identified, that they are dealt with immediately.
- Stock - shelves and rails to be stocked and checked throughout.
- Shop areas to be tidy.

#### Closing:

Banking has been completed and float is securely locked in the safe.

Ensure all bins are emptied at the end of the day.

No unauthorised persons are remaining on the premises.

All windows and doors are securely locked.

A procedure template is provided in the resources section.

### Emergency contact numbers

All stores are to display at a convenient place emergency numbers to consist of : *For example:*

<b>POLICE, AMBULANCE AND FIRE SERVICES</b>	<b>000</b>
St. Somewhere Opportunity Shop	xxxx xxxx
Op Shop Coordinator – First name / Last name	xxxx xxxx
Rector/Priest - St. Somewhere Anglican Parish	xxxx xxxx
Churchwardens	xxxx xxxx
	xxxx xxxx
	xxxx xxxx
Somewhere Police Station	xxxx xxxx
Citizens' Advice Bureau	xxxx xxxx
City of Somewhere	xxxx xxxx
TAXI	xxxx xxxx
The Registry Office	<b>5443 4711</b>
Glass Repairs	xxxx xxxx
Locksmith	xxxx xxxx

The list needs to be kept up to date and relevant names and numbers available to all staff. A current list of all volunteers needs to be recorded in store. For privacy reasons, individual details must not be shared without permission and should not be displayed in a public area

### Sorting

Goods donated should be sorted and priced by only people experienced in this work, and all sorting and pricing is to be organised by the Op Shop Coordinator.

Sorters will determine whether:

- Items fall within “goods not to be sold” policy
- items are to be scrapped because of poor quality
- items require cleaning or checking for safety
- old clothing may best be sold for use as rags, etc.
- items are better sold on commission through another outlet

Some examples of the issues covered by this heading are:

- Whilst sorting stock, protective gloves may be required. Sorting of goods should be done in designated areas
- Any items that are to be discarded need to be authorised by a trained member of staff.
- All clothing that has been sorted and is appropriate for sale must be tagged, hung and placed ready for sale on the shop floor.

The sale of goods on commission should be handled by the Op Shop Coordinator. This may require independent valuation prior to sale.

### Donations not accepted

Along with laws that prohibit certain second hand goods to be sold or given away ( see *Section 2 - Goods not to be sold policy*), Op Shops are likely to be constrained by their space and capacity of their volunteers ie large heavy furniture items. Decisions on what donations will be accepted should be agreed and communicated. See the resources section for an example of a poster to help create awareness of the policy

### Pricing

It is important to have a general pricing guide for items. See the resources section.

Pricing of most goods sold in the shop should be in accordance with the prices on the pricelist. Since the prices are so low, further reductions of prices are not possible, unless specified by the Op Shop Coordinator.

Valuables such as antiques will be independently valued by a reputable dealer prior to pricing or sale by commission.

### Reserving goods and purchasing

Due to the space considerations and simplicity of transactions, an Op shop may choose not to provide for 'Lay-bys'. For customers who cannot pay for goods they wish to purchase, the Op Shop may choose to adopt a process to reserve items for a set period to allow the customers to return with payment.

*For example:*

Goods going into storage for two weeks must have an “on hold” for approval (appro.) storage slip filled out and placed with the goods so that dates, prices etc. may be referred to later if necessary. The customer may pay for and collect reserved goods within two weeks of them being placed in the appropriate storage shelf.

If at the expiry of these time period - and after the customer has been telephoned and reminded of the items on hold, the goods will be returned to stock for sale if the customer has not paid for and collected them. **It is vital that the slip is filled out in full:** When the goods on hold are collected and paid for, this should be recorded in the daily sales diary - that the money is from reserved goods.

Payments or deposits for goods going into 'on-hold' storage should NOT be accepted. Instead, the customer should be advised that full payment is required when the goods are collected.

Op Shops should document their own policies and procedures in this area and train all volunteers.

### Controlling Stock

Goods may only be removed from the shop for cleaning, repair or valuation.

**All** goods removed from the shop must be recorded in the Goods Removed book provided for this purpose, together with the name of the person taking the goods and the date.

When the goods are returned, the note in the book must be amended to indicate “goods returned” with the date of return.

### Stock Rotation

It is important that the stock look fresh and appealing. Here are some ideas that have been shared by Op Shops for moving stock

- 50c an article day
- Once a month Saturday specials
- Half price sales – twice a year
- \$5 bag days. Cram a bag day
- Half price book and shoe sale
- Toys and game sale prior to Christmas
- Clearance rack at front of shop
- Different coloured tags for stock each month and a clearance policy on how long it has been there
- Special displays to coincide with local events ie Racing Cup Day
- Donating stock to other Anglican organisations such as Anglicare, other Op Shops etc

Minimising the amount of donated goods that are sent to landfill is encouraged. Op shops should develop their own policies and procedures to achieve this. Contact with other Op Shops may provide ideas and opportunities.

### Sale of Goods by Commission

Offers may be made by third parties to sell Op Shop goods on a commission basis. This may occur when goods of significant value (such as antiques) have been presented for valuation. The justification for selling goods in this way may be

- size,
- a better price through a third party, or
- some other opportunity.

Those authorised to make arrangements for sale of Op Shop goods by commission will be nominated and a list will be held in the shop. All goods put on sale in this way must be entered into the “Goods Removed Book”. In addition, a receipt for the goods must be obtained from the third party and left in the book.

As a “rule of thumb”, the Op Shop approves payment of 15% - 25% commissions to the third party for selling the goods, depending on standard practices employed in the sales trade. Goods may only be left with and sold through bona fide organisations or individuals.

### In-house purchases

It is important to be clear about the way in which staff and volunteers can use the services of the Op Shop to avoid misunderstanding and even misappropriation. Here are some examples of guidelines dealing with the issue of items purchased by staff and volunteers from the Op Shop.

Staff members and volunteers can purchase goods from their store. A record needs to be kept in store for all staff and volunteer purchases. A receipt book must be allocated at each store for recording all in-house purchases. The manager must be notified of the sale and where possible a copy of the till receipt is to be kept in the receipt book.

### Cash handling and Petty Cash

Workers and volunteers are employed on the basis that they will be diligent and honest during the course of their work. Cash may only be handled by a competent staff member. During business hours all cash should be securely stored. Outside of business hours cash should be stored in a safe.

Any losses, thefts and unexplained shortages over a set amount must be immediately reported to the store manager.

The Petty Cash Float from the Op Shop Operating Account is \$100.00 (Op Shops to decide the amount of their float) for purchasing requisites and consumables for the shop.

The Coordinator will keep a written record of purchases and balance of petty cash to report to the Parish Treasurer for the purposes of balancing and auditing accounts.

Petty Cash covers purchases of requisites such as:

- tea, coffee, milk, sugar
- cup-a-soup, biscuits
- stationery and hygiene supplies
- cleaning materials
- first aid supplies
- telephone calls for the Op Shop
- stamps

### Banking

Banking of cash from sales is carried out direct from the Op Shop at a local branch of the bank used by the Parish for its accounts.

At the end of each trading day, the takings for the day are tallied against the record of sales in the daily diary, and placed in an envelope in safe storage or banked daily. Takings must be banked as minimum weekly, however more frequently may be prudent, dependent on sales.

The till float (\$100.00 in a mix of notes and coins or other amount approved by Parish Council is placed separately in safe storage. It is the Op Shop Coordinator's responsibility to coordinate cash deposits in such a way as to ensure minimal accumulation of cash in the shop. This means depositing cash daily or at least every two days. A monthly reconciliation and summary is also generated to compare with Op Shop figures in the Parish Accounts.

### Theft Prevention

Unfortunately, theft of money and goods may happen from time to time. Consideration can be given on how to make the store a less attractive target to shoplifters by:

- Placing more expensive merchandise under lock and key, or behind the counter.
- Considering how the store is laid out
- Being attentive to customers when they are in the store

### Security

Applying simple but sensible security measures benefits all involved and aids the smooth running of the Op Shop. The first and best guideline to enhance shop security is for those working in the shop to be vigilant.

Guidelines to be observed in the shop are:

- keep the back door locked at all times, except when extra people are in the shop for cleaning, sorting etc. when the rear door can be supervised, i.e., not left open and unattended
- money is to be kept secure in the desk drawer
- large amounts of money are to be put away securely until collected for banking
- counting of money must be undertaken after the shop door is locked at the end of the

- day.
- Taking precautions when going to the bank, varying the routine etc.

<b>POLICE EMERGENCY NUMBER      000    Ask for Police</b>
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***The following is advice extracted from the Victoria Police website document: Preventing armed robbery. Release date: Wed 2 May 2007, last updated: Thu 5 January 2012.***

The majority of armed robberies are not thoroughly planned and a large number are drug or alcohol related making it a potentially dangerous situation. On the other hand, in a planned robbery the robber sometimes goes to great lengths to prepare, and looks over the premises extensively before the event.

### Planning for security

Do not wait until a robbery has occurred to update your security procedures and systems. Improve the safety of both your staff and your customers by adopting a security plan. The Crime Prevention Officer at your local police station can give you practical ideas and advice to suit your business security needs.

### Layout of the premises

An open, uncluttered environment providing a clear, well-lit view of the sales area from outside is a deterrent to armed robbers. Strong interior lighting used with an open glass shop front can make an offender highly visible and increase their chances of being identified.

### If a robbery occurs

During an armed robbery the overall aim should be to ensure the offender leaves the premises as soon as possible, without injuring or harming anyone

#### **Do:**

- Remain calm.
- Do exactly as you are told.
- Try to picture a description of the offender.
- Remember where the offenders have been and which way they left the premises.
- Notify police on 000.

#### **Don't:**

- Confront the offender.
- Touch anything immediately after the event.

### First aid

The Shop should have a standard, basic First Aid Kit - to be used for treating minor injuries. It is good practice to include a book suitable for recording details of first aid provided. This will help with replenishing supplies and also a record to be included in the minor injury register, such as a bandied for a paper cut. All injuries requiring medical treatment or slips/trips/falls should be reported to the Registrar using the Incident/Injury Reporting form. Workers and the public should be encouraged to seek medical attention, particularly as in most Op Shops won't have trained first aiders available. Where an ambulance is called, it is recommended that the Registrar be contacted as soon as possible, after the person has been attended to. In case of serious injury or death there is an obligation to contact external parties such as WorkSafe which the Registrar can provide

guidance on.

The Op Shop Coordinator must check the contents on a regular basis to ensure that it has sufficient supplies and that the contents are in good condition. The cost of replenishments is to be borne by petty cash as required. Whenever the kit is used, it is recommended that a note be left in the daily diary for the Coordinator (for re-ordering purposes).

All staff and volunteers must know the following:

- Location of First aid box
- Location of Smoke alarms
- Any other safety features i.e. safety switches
- Evacuation & Emergency response procedures

All staff and volunteers need to know that any incident/accident or hazard needs to be reported to their manager straight away.

### Occupational Health and Safety

All Op Shop staff, including volunteers, should be aware of safe working practices. Attention must always be directed to:

- Safe working policies and procedures (based on risk assessment – see below)
- Provision of safe work environment, with regular consultation with workers and safety inspections
- Training and supervision of workers in all required tasks and safety matters
- Workplace bullying and harassment is not tolerated
- Procedures for dealing with aggressive or abusive customers
- Incident reporting procedures
- First aid procedures and supplies

**See Section 3 - Safe Opportunity Shop Policies for detailed safety check list.**

### Making a Risk Assessment

A risk assessment is an important step in protecting workers, as well as complying with the law. It provides us with important information which can then be used to offer due care to volunteers, staff and those who visit us. It helps you focus on the risks that really matter in your Op Shop – the ones with the potential to cause real harm. In many instances, straightforward measures can readily control risks, for example ensuring spillages are cleaned up promptly so people do not slip, or cupboard drawers are kept closed to ensure people do not trip. For most, that means simple, cheap and effective measures to ensure your most valuable asset – your workforce – is protected.

You are not expected to eliminate all risk, but you are required to protect people as far as reasonably practicable. This section tells you how to achieve that with a minimum of fuss.

This is not the only way to do a risk assessment, there are other methods that work well, particularly for more complex risks and circumstances. However, we believe this method is the most straightforward for our Op Shops.

### What is risk assessment?

A risk assessment is simply a careful examination of what, in your work, could cause harm to people, so that you can weigh up whether you have taken enough precautions or should do more to prevent harm. Everyone has a right to be protected from harm caused by a failure to take reasonable control measures. This includes workers, volunteers, contractors, customers, visitors

and the general public. Special consideration needs to be given to vulnerable people such as children, people with disabilities and the elderly.

Accidents and ill health can ruin lives and affect the Parish, Op. Shop and church reputation. There can also be loss of income and stock, property could be damaged, insurance costs increase or you may have to go to court. You are required to assess the risks in your Op Shop so that you put in place a plan to control the risks.

Follow the five steps:

- Step 1** Identify the hazards
- Step 2** Decide who might be harmed and how
- Step 3** Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions
- Step 4** Record your findings and implement them
- Step 5** Review your assessment and update if necessary

Don't overcomplicate the process. In many organisations, the risks are well known and the necessary control measures are easy to apply. You probably already know whether, for example, you have employees who move heavy loads and so could harm their backs, or where people are most likely to slip or trip. If so, check that you have taken reasonable precautions to avoid injury.

If you are confident you understand what's involved, you can do the assessment yourself. You don't have to be a health and safety expert.

When thinking about your risk assessment, remember:

- a hazard is anything that may cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, working from ladders, an open drawer etc.;
- the risk is the chance, high or low, that somebody could be harmed by these and other hazards, together with an indication of how serious the harm could be

### Step 1

#### **Identify the hazards**

First you need to work out how people could be harmed. When you work in a place every day it is easy to overlook some hazards, so here are some tips to help you identify the ones that matter:

Walk around your Op Shop and look at what could reasonably be expected to cause harm.

Ask your volunteers and workers what they think. They may have noticed things that are not immediately obvious to you.

Check manufacturers' instructions or data sheets for chemicals and equipment as they can be very helpful in spelling out the hazards and putting them in their true perspective. These can be found on the manufacturers websites. For example, products used for cleaning can contain chemicals and cause harm if used incorrectly or not stored appropriately.

Have a look back at your accident and ill-health records – these often help to identify the less obvious hazards.

Remember to think about long-term hazards to health (e.g. constant twisting or lifting when sorting donations, repetitive actions, working long hours regularly) as well as safety hazards.

#### **'Workplace hazards' include:**

- environment (such as slippery floor surfaces, extreme heat)
- energy (such as electricity or heat)

- manual tasks (heavy lifting)
- noise (constant machinery noise, i.e. air conditioning)
- substance (such as chemicals)
- faulty machinery, equipment and systems
- mental fatigue/stress, workplace conflict

## Step 2

### **Decide who might be harmed and how**

For each hazard you need to be clear about who might be harmed; it will help you identify the best way of managing the risk. That doesn't mean listing everyone by name, but rather identifying groups of people (e.g. 'people working in the storeroom' sorting or 'shoppers' passers-by).

In each case, identify how they might be harmed, i.e. what type of injury or ill health might occur. For example, 'sorting staff may suffer back injury from repeated lifting of boxes'.

Remember:

- Some workers have particular requirements, e.g. new and young workers, new or expectant mothers and people with disabilities may be at particular risk.
- Elderly or infirm people who work or visit the Op Shop may be at higher risk
- Extra thought will be needed for some hazards;
- Cleaners, visitors, contractors, maintenance workers etc., who may not be in the Op Shop all the time;
- Members of the public; and
- ask your workers if they can think of anyone you may have missed.

## Step 3

### **Evaluate the risks and decide on precautions**

Having spotted the hazards, you then have to decide what to do about them. You are required to do everything reasonably practicable to protect people from harm. You can work this out for yourself, but the easiest way is to compare what you are doing with good practice.

So first, look at what you're already doing; think about what controls you have in place and how the work is organised. Then compare this with good practice and see if there's more you should be doing to bring yourself up to standard.

In asking yourself this, consider:

- Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
- If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

When controlling risks, apply the principles below, if possible in the following order:

- Can the risk be eliminated or removed all together? Ie don't accept donation of heavy goods
- Is there a less risky option (e.g. switch to using a less hazardous chemical);
- prevent access to the hazard (e.g. by guarding);
- organise work to reduce exposure to the hazard i.e. consider rotation of tasks to avoid repetition
- can training provide safety work practice i.e. manual handling training
- Improving health and safety need not cost a lot. For instance, placing a mirror on a blind corner to help prevent accidents is a low-cost precaution considering the risks.
- Failure to take simple precautions can cost you a lot more if an accident does happen.

Involve volunteers and workers, so that you can be sure that what you propose to do will work in practice and won't introduce any new hazards.

WorkSafe Victoria also provide excellent resources, good practice guides and ideas of common risks, such as manual handling guides. See <https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

#### Step 4

##### **Record your findings and implement them**

Putting the results of your risk assessment into practice will make a difference when looking after people and your business.

Writing down the results of your risk assessment, and sharing them with your workers and volunteers, encourages you to do this. When writing down your results, keep it simple, for example 'tripping over rubbish: bins provided, staff instructed, and weekly housekeeping checks'.

A risk assessment is not expected to be perfect, but it must be suitable and sufficient. You need to be able to show that:

- a proper check was made;
- you asked who might be affected;
- you dealt with all the significant hazards, taking into account the number of people who could be involved;
- the precautions are reasonable, and the remaining risk is low; and
- you involved your volunteers and workers, committee church wardens in the process.

If, like many organisations, you find that there are quite a lot of improvements that you could make, big and small, don't try to do everything at once. Make a plan of action to deal with the most important things first.

A good plan of action often includes a mixture of different things such as:

- a few cheap or easy improvements that can be done quickly, perhaps as a temporary solution until more reliable controls are in place;
- long-term solutions to those risks most likely to cause accidents or ill health;
- long-term solutions to those risks with the worst potential consequences;
- arrangements for training staff / volunteers on the main risks that remain and how they are to be controlled;
- regular checks to make sure that the control measures stay in place; and
- clear responsibilities – who will lead on what action, and by when.

Remember, prioritise and tackle the most important things first. As you complete each action, tick it off your plan.

#### Step 5

##### **Review your risk assessment and update if necessary**

Few workplaces stay the same. Sooner or later, you will bring in new equipment, substances and procedures that could lead to new hazards. It makes sense, therefore, to review what you are doing on an ongoing basis. Every year or so formally review where you are, to make sure you are still improving, or at least not sliding back.

Look at your risk assessment again. Have there been any changes? Are there improvements you still need to make? Have your workers spotted a problem? Have you learnt anything from accidents or near misses? Make sure your risk assessment stays up to date.

During the year, if there is a significant change, don't wait. Check your risk assessment and, where necessary, amend it. If possible, it is best to think about the risk assessment when you're planning your change – that way you leave yourself more flexibility.

## Other helpful tips

### When people ask for money or other forms of help.

Volunteers working for charities, including op shops, are sometimes approached by people with requests for cash to help them over a tide of bad luck, or to see them through an emergency. Often, they claim to be without food, or they need money to travel urgently to visit family members. There may be other reasons for the need to get some cash in a hurry. Experience shows that sometimes they may not be telling the truth.

In the past, churches have provided some cash to people who have been verified as having a genuine need. Very often a food parcel or clothing provided to the person proves to be of more assistance at the time.

We are obliged to account carefully for the money coming into the Op Shop by way of sales and donations, through the proper keeping of the books, banking, accounting and audits. Giving money from Op Shop proceeds runs the risk of “opening the flood gate”, as word spreads quickly that money is available at the shop. As hard as it may seem, money is NOT to be given out of Op Shop funds to people in need of assistance.

However, because we aim to be charitable, in keeping with our Christian ideals, we should continue to assist people who come to us with a request for help. The Parish supports various services, whose responsibility it is to assist such people in need. It is definitely best to refer these people on to such services, which will make sure the requests are genuine and work out the best form of assistance for them.

Service Groups in your area are on a list in the shop and should be used to refer requests.

### What should we do if there is a difficult person in the shop?

From time to time visitors to our Op Shops have expressed concern about what to do if there was a difficult person in your shop.

Some suggestions to address this issue include:

- Implement a policy of no-one working alone and if a difficult person who cannot be dealt with is in the shop they can be asked to leave, or alternatively a worker could leave the shop taking the mobile phone with them and call for help from outside the premises
- Training staff in dealing with aggressive customers, there are techniques to reduce escalation
- Contact the local police for an emergency number for immediate help. (It is unlikely this would be needed / used but may provide some reassurance to staff members).

If you have concerns about this then please ensure your Parish Council is informed so they can look for solutions for you.

## 5. GUIDELINES FOR A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

### Appendix A - Diocesan Guidelines - Memorandum of Understanding For Opportunity Shops

The Diocese recommends that every Opportunity Shop should have a written memorandum of understanding (MOU). This will clarify expectations and minimise misunderstandings.

It is important to recognise that the Churchwardens and Parish Council are always responsible for the operation of the Opportunity Shop, even with the appointment of a Management Committee. Where a Parish Council elects not to appoint a Management Committee, the Parish Council will have a more direct responsibility through the Churchwardens, for the operation of the Op Shop. Anyone who tries to operate outside this framework puts themselves at considerable personal risk.

Following is an outline of what the diocese believes to be the essential elements of a memorandum of understanding plus an example of a Memorandum of understanding.

When developing or modifying your own you Memorandum of understanding should seek your own legal advice and send a draft copy to the diocesan Registry Office.

Please Note: The information included here should not be used as legal advice.

### GUIDELINES FOR A MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

#### Essential Elements

Parishes adopting and/or modifying these guidelines are advised to forward a copy of their draft M O U *before* being adopted to:

General Manager / Registrar  
Anglican Diocese of Bendigo  
PO Box 2  
BENDIGO VIC 3552  
Tel: 03 5443 4711  
Email: [registrar@bendigoanglican.org.au](mailto:registrar@bendigoanglican.org.au)

#### AIMS

- To benefit.....and its work.
- To provide a service to the community with cheap clothes and goods for sale.
- To provide funds for outreach in the community.
- To provide support for a specific project.

#### MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Management Committee of the shop shall comprise the following:

- **Chairperson**, appointed with the approval of Parish Council
- Secretary/Treasurer (can be appointed from within the membership of the Committee)
- And up to **five** other members which may include an **Assistant Secretary** and **Assistant Treasurer**. There must be at least **one member of Parish Council, nominated by Parish Council**, on the Management Committee.

At least two-thirds of the Management Committee shall be enrolled on the Parish Roll.

A Quorum will consist of a majority (i.e. more than half) of committee members. The Management Committee has the right to appoint replacements as required, subject to **ratification by the Parish Council**.

Meetings of Management Committee are to be held monthly/quarterly and Minutes should be kept and sent to Parish Council for information.

It is preferable that the Annual General meeting of the Opportunity Shop be held between 1 February and 31 March each year but before the AGM of the Parish. ***It is suggested that the annual general meeting of the Management Committee be chaired by the Rector or a Nominee, and that elections of office bearers occur at each annual meeting.***

### **DISPOSAL OF PROFIT**

An amount of money, determined by the Parish Council, is to be retained in the bank for running costs of shop (to be determined annually). The remainder of profit to be assigned quarterly to Parish Council for distribution. The Management Committee may make recommendations on the distribution.

Income and expenditure of Opportunity Shop to be shown as a separate item in the monthly and annual accounts.

### **POLICY AND OPERATION**

After consultation with Parish Council, the Management Committee shall:

- Operate and manage the Opportunity Shop.
- Make recommendations to Parish Council on rental/lease agreements concerning the Opportunity Shop. Such agreements must be consistent with Diocesan policy.
- Acquire stock, by donation, for sale in the Opportunity Shop or for distribution without charge to needy people.

### **AGREEMENTS**

The Management Committee is not an independent body and **may not** enter into employment contracts or leasing contracts, except under the authority of the Churchwardens/Parish Council and the Diocese. All lease/rental contracts **must** be in the name of the Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation and be executed (signed) by the Diocese.

### **FINANCE**

All monies should be banked at a bank designated by the Parish Council. Withdrawals should be signed by any two of the following authorised signatories – President/Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, one other member PLUS 2 others who are authorised signatories of the parish's main operating bank account.

Proper accounts should be kept of all transactions in the Shop, and these accounts should be audited by the Parish auditors and an audited statement of account presented to the Annual General Meeting of the Opportunity Shop and the Parish.

It is the duty of the **Chairperson** and **Treasurer** to inform the **Parish Treasurer** if financial difficulties are foreseen.

### **ALTERATIONS TO MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING**

The Memorandum of Understanding may **only be amended by Parish Council**; this should not be done without giving the Management Committee adequate opportunity to comment upon a written draft of the amendment(s).

### **CESSATION OF OPERATIONS**

In the event of the Opportunity Shop ceasing operations all assets are to be returned to **Parish Council** for disposal.

EXAMPLE ONLY

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING  
ANGLICAN PARISH OF 'SOMEWHERE' OPPORTUNITY SHOP**

1. The name of the organisation is **THE ANGLICAN PARISH OF [insert name of parish] OPPORTUNITY SHOP**, hereinafter referred to as the **OP SHOP**.
  
2. The **MISSION AND OBJECTIVES** of the Op Shop shall be:-
  - a. To operate staff and manage the aforesaid Op Shop of **[insert name of parish]** situated at the **[insert location]**.
  - b. To raise funds for the Parish.
  - c. To use such funds to benefit the parish and its work and for any future development of the Op Shop.
  - d. To provide a service to the community with cheap clothes and goods for sale.
  - e. To acquire stock by donation for sale or for distribution without charge to needy people.
  
3. **THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** of the Op Shop shall comprise the following:-
  - Chairperson, appointed with the approval of Parish Council
  - Secretary/Treasurer can be appointed from within the membership of the Committee)
  - Up to five other members, one of whom must be a Parish Council member - and be nominated by the Parish Council.

At least two-thirds of the Management Committee shall be enrolled on the Parish Roll.

A quorum will consist of a majority (i.e. more than half) of committee members. The Management Committee can appoint replacements as required between annual meetings, subject to ratification by the Parish Council.

Meetings of the Management Committee are to be held at least quarterly and minutes must be kept and sent to the Parish Council for its information.

The annual general meeting of the Op Shop will be held in October or November of each year but before the annual general meeting of the Parish, for reporting and election of office bearers. The annual general meeting of the Management Committee is to be chaired by the Vicar or a Churchwarden who must not be a member of the Management Committee.

The Op Shop coordinator will be convener of the Op Shop and the duties will include keeping a register of all volunteer helpers, re-allocating dates for helpers as required and attending to any day to day enquiries. The coordinator must be a member of the Management Committee.

**4. FINANCE:**

All monies will be banked at a bank directed by the Parish Council. The Bank Account will be designated as the **'SOMEWHERE' ANGLICAN OP SHOP**.

The cheque signatories will be any two of the following signatories – Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary, one other member of the Management Committee and two others nominated by Parish Council who are also cheque signatories of the Parish's operating Parish Council account.

The Treasurer will check and balance the daily takings and bank such takings as required.

The profit shall be given at least quarterly to the Parish by the Treasurer of the Management committee - after retaining an amount of money determined by the Parish Council for running costs of the Op Shop. The Management Committee may make recommendations on the distribution of this profit.

Income and Expenditure of the Op Shop will be shown in a Cash Book kept by the Treasurer. Proper accounts will be kept of all transactions in the Op Shop, and these accounts will be audited by the Parish Auditor and an audited statement of account presented to the Annual General Meetings of the Op Shop and also the Parish.

The financial year of the Op Shop shall end on 31 December.

It is the duty of the Chairperson and/or the Treasurer to inform the Parish Treasurer if financial difficulties are foreseen.

**5. THIS MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING** may only be amended by the Parish Council after giving the Management Committee adequate opportunity to comment upon a written draft of the amendment(s).

**6. AGREEMENTS**

The Management Committee is not an independent body and may not enter into employment, leasing/rental or other contracts, except under the authority of the Parish Council. All leasing/rental agreements must be executed in the name of the Bendigo Diocesan Trusts Corporation and be signed by the diocese. Any employment contracts are to be developed by the diocese.

**7. CESSATION OF OPERATIONS**

In the event of the Op Shop ceasing operations all assets are to be returned to the Parish Council for disposal.

**DATED** this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ Two thousand and \_\_\_\_\_.

**Based on a document from the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne  
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September 2017**



## 6. **RESOURCES**

Various resources and templates to help you carry out your obligations. Some resources may be helpful to create or update your local opportunity shop handbook.