ANGLICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA

THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN CENTRAL & WESTERN NSW DIOCESE OF BATHURST

DOMAIN REGISTRATION & MANAGEMENT POLICY

UPDATED 1 JUNE 2026

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OVERVIEW

An Internet domain serves as an organization's online identity. In the context of parishes, Internet domain names are used for website and email branding.

Domains are registered on a first-come, first-served basis, subject to eligibility criteria. For example, a .org.au domain name can only be registered by Australian non-commercial organisations.

While domain names are licensed rather than owned in a traditional property sense, they are recognised as valuable digital assets of the Diocese and its parishes and must be managed accordingly.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that Internet domain names used by parishes are managed securely, consistently, and sustainably as diocesan digital assets, protecting the interests of the Church and supporting the ongoing mission and ministry of the Diocese.

Parishes will adopt this policy for domain requests, registration, and management, where:

- the Diocese is the legal registrant of all parish domains,
- technical administration is performed centrally,
- And day-to-day website content remains under parish control.

This strikes a balance between *local parish autonomy* and *responsible stewardship of diocesan digital assets*. For parishes, this policy provides the following benefits:

Protect Parish Assets

A domain name is a valuable digital asset, much like a parish bank account or property lease.

Without central management:

- Domains may be registered in the name of a volunteer, clergy member, or former staff member.
- Access can be lost when individuals move on.
- Ownership disputes can arise.
- Domains can accidentally expire and be purchased by third parties.

Central management ensures domains remain assets of the Church rather than individuals.

Improve Cybersecurity

Churches are increasingly targeted by phishing and cyber-attacks.

A diocesan approach allows:

- Consistent DNS security settings.
- Multi-factor authentication on domain registrar accounts.
- Central monitoring of suspicious activity.
- Enforcement of email security standards such as SPF, DKIM, and DMARC.
- Faster incident response if a parish account is compromised.

Ensures Business Continuity

Parishes often experience turnover among clergy, wardens, administrators, and volunteers.

Central management:

- Prevents loss of access when key individuals leave.
- Maintains continuity of websites and email services.
- Allows rapid recovery of services after personnel changes.

Reduce Administrative Burden

Many parishes lack dedicated IT expertise. The diocese will be responsible for:

- Managing renewals.
- Maintaining registrar accounts.
- Configuring DNS records.

This allows parish leaders to focus on ministry rather than technical administration.

Reputation Management

Centralised domain management helps ensure that official parish websites and email communications are authentic, reducing the risk of fraudulent websites, impersonation, and reputational damage to the Church.

SCOPE

This policy applies to:

1. All Internet domain names used by parishes, ministries, and other entities operating under the authority of the Diocese.
2. Domain names used for websites, email services, and other digital services.

This policy does not apply to personal domain names owned and used exclusively by individuals for non-Diocesan purposes.

GOVERNANCE MODEL

The proposed framework is as follows:

Domain Transfer

- Parishes must transfer their domain registration to the Diocese no later than 1 December 2026.
- The Diocesan Registrar will be listed as the registrant and technical contact for each parish domain name.
- The Diocese will oversee domain name records, managed by Diocesan staff or an appointed external IT contractor.

Domain Standardisation

- Website domains with .org, .com, and .com.au Top Level Domains (TLDs) will be retained, but permanently redirected to .org.au TLDs to ensure consistency.
- Email domains with .org, .com, and .com.au TLDs will be configured as alias domains on the email server. These aliases will seamlessly route email traffic to the primary .org.au domain.

NEW DOMAIN REQUESTS

Parishes requesting a new domain must provide to the Registrar the requested domain name(s) for approval and processing.

DNS CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Many security incidents occur through DNS changes. Requests for DNS changes must be submitted in writing to the Registrar and authorised by the parish representative and the Diocese before implementation.

AUTHORITY

The Registrar, or delegate appointed by the Bishop, has final authority regarding:

- domain registrations
- domain transfers
- DNS configuration changes, and
- resolution of domain-related disputes.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Diocese

The Diocese is responsible for:

1. The Diocese will be responsible for renewing domain names and covering associated costs.
2. The Diocese will be responsible for ensuring domain registrar accounts must:
    - use multi-factor authentication,
    - be secured using Diocese-approved credentials,
    - be managed through Diocese-approved systems,
    - and restrict administrative access to authorised personnel.
3. Access to domain administration must not depend on any individual clergy member, employee, volunteer, or contractor. The Diocese is to ensure that succession arrangements are maintained at all times.
4. The Diocese will maintain renewal reminders and monitoring processes to minimise the risk of accidental domain expiry.

Parishes

Parishes are responsible for:

1. advising the Diocese of required DNS changes,
2. maintaining current contact details,
3. managing website content,
4. ensuring content complies with diocesan policies,
5. and funding website hosting and email services, where applicable.

DECOMISSIONING

When a parish, ministry, or Diocesan entity ceases operation, the associated domain name will remain under diocesan control and may be retained, redirected, archived, or retired at the discretion of the Registrar.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to this policy may be approved by the Registrar where there is a demonstrated operational, legal, or historical requirement.