



## Protocols for Blessings, Openings and Events

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### **BACKGROUND:**

The term protocol is used in relation to a set of arrangements acceptable to a number of parties in terms of both diplomacy and etiquettes. The facilities comprising Mary Aikenhead Ministries receive visits by a number of different dignitaries and also host official events each year.

Any major event such as an opening or a blessing is an opportunity to increase the community's awareness of Mary Aikenhead Ministries and our mission in Catholic health care, education and welfare services. With these events we are afforded the opportunity to reinforce our reputation as centres of excellence with local, state or commonwealth government and the community in general. We also have the opportunity to promote our Catholic identity.

**Where the term Mary Aikenhead Ministries is used this is taken to mean the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries or facilities within Mary Aikenhead Ministries.**

### **Objective:**

These protocols for Blessings, Openings and Events provide for the adoption of a consistent, high quality approach that represents Mary Aikenhead Ministries and its facilities in an appropriate and professional manner. Such an approach will be consistent with our mission and values.

### **Outcomes:**

1. Establish national protocols that support a consistent approach for Blessings, Openings and Events
2. Ensure our mission is considered and appropriately expressed at important organisational meetings and events
3. Contribute to the expression of our Catholic identity
4. Promote reconciliation and maintain awareness of, and respect for, the dignity of Australia's Indigenous people by acknowledging the traditional land owners.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF DIGNATRIES**

### **Broad Principles**

When in attendance at Mary Aikenhead Ministries events, the following groups of people are always appropriately acknowledged:

- Royalty
- Representatives of Royalty such as Governors and former holders of such positions
- Trustees: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Member representative/s: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Religious leaders and those involved in religious communities
- Political leaders or representatives
- Board members
- Donors and important supporters
- Ambassadors
- Judicial Members

On occasions when more than one group of dignitaries is present, these need to be acknowledged in order of precedence as outlined:

**TABLE OF PRECEDENCE**

1. Royalty
2. The Governor-General
3. The Governor or Lieutenant-Governor administering the Government
4. The Prime Minister
5. The Premier
6. The Apostolic Nuncio
7. The Cardinal/Archbishop/Bishops of Archdiocese/ diocese where the event is being celebrated
8. The Lieutenant Governor if not administering the Government
9. The Chief Justice
10. The Chair and Trustees: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
11. Member representative/s: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
12. The Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity (or her delegate) and the Congregational Leaders of other Congregations (eg Sisters of Mercy, Holy Spirit Sisters)
13. The (a) Foreign Ambassador/s and High Commissioner/s (b) The Foreign Minister/s and Envoy/s
14. State Executive Councillors (State Ministers)
15. Anglican Archbishop, Senior Rabbi or any other chief religious representative
16. The President of the Legislative Council
17. The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
18. Former Governors-General according to the date of leaving Office
19. Former Governors of a state according to the date of leaving Office
20. Former Prime Ministers according to the date of leaving Office
21. Former Premiers of a state according to the date of leaving Office
22. Emeritus Cardinals/Archbishops
23. The Chief Justice of Australia
24. The Leader of the Commonwealth Opposition
25. The Leader of the State Opposition
26. The Local Member of Parliament
27. Judges of the Supreme Court
28. The Lord Mayor of the capital city
29. Local Mayor
30. The Director General of the Premier's Office
26. Board members of the Mary Aikenhead Ministries facility
27. Sisters of Charity and Sisters of other Congregations
28. Priests/chaplain of the facility

All the dignitaries are acknowledged by the first speaker at an event and these acknowledgements are in full.

Providing this has been done, at the discretion of any further speakers, the individual names of the dignitaries may be dropped.

For example:- The first speaker acknowledges Her Excellency the Governor by name, His Eminence the Cardinal by name, The Chair and Trustees: Mary Aikenhead Ministries by name, The Mary Aikenhead Ministries member representative/ Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity by name, The Chairman of Board by name, Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy present, other Board members, friends and colleagues.

This allows the second speaker to simply refer to:

Your Excellency, Your Eminence, Trustees: Mary Aikenhead Ministries, Congregational Leader, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of Charity and Sisters of Mercy present and other honoured guests

**Forms of Address**

Always check the official wording for invitations for VIPs with their assistants/office. See Appendix 1 for examples.

Religious: (Archbishop, Bishop, Reverend) – Correct titles and terms of address for Archbishops, Bishops and Reverends can be checked with their assistants.

A wonderful resource book for each facility is **The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia** published annually by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the National Council of Priests of Australia

Governor General: for information: [www.gg.gov.au/governorgeneral/category.php?id=14](http://www.gg.gov.au/governorgeneral/category.php?id=14) or check with assistant

State Governor: for information see the following websites or check with assistants

NSW: [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/V3ListDownloads](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/V3ListDownloads)

Queensland: [www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/government\\_house/office\\_of\\_governor.aspx](http://www.govhouse.qld.gov.au/government_house/office_of_governor.aspx)

Victoria [www.governor.vic.gov.au/welcome.htm](http://www.governor.vic.gov.au/welcome.htm)

Federal Ministers and Senators: information regarding Federal Ministers and Senators can be found online at [www.aph.gov.au](http://www.aph.gov.au). This website includes directions for correspondence, envelopes, oral communication etc <http://www.aph.gov.au/Library/TUTORIAL/address.htm>

State Ministers and Senators: information regarding State Ministers and Senators can be found online

NSW: [www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/V3ListDownloads](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/prod/parlment/members.nsf/V3ListDownloads)

Queensland: [www.qgd.qld.gov.au/](http://www.qgd.qld.gov.au/)

Victoria: [www.vic.gov.au](http://www.vic.gov.au)

**INVITATIONS**

Invitations are approved by the CEO/ED of the facility in consultation with the relevant Board chair. Final sign off of the invitations is the responsibility of the CEO/ED. Approval must be obtained from those listed on the invitation as host or hostess. Otherwise embarrassment may occur.

Please note if the Mary Aikenhead Ministries crest or signature is to be used approval will need to be sought from the Trustees of Mary Aikenhead Ministries in accordance with the latest version of the Visual Identity Guidelines.

Guidelines for invitations – these apply to all facilities except for St Vincent’s Private Hospital, Sydney where the Congregational Leader of the Sisters of Charity will replace the Chair, Trustees Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

Type of Event	Invitation from
Opening or Blessing	Chair, Trustees Mary Aikenhead Ministries Chair of the facility Board/Committee CEO/ED

**Invitees:**

For important events the invitation list would typically include:

- Trustees: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Member representative/s: Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Congregational Leader (where other Congregations are involved their Congregational Leaders are also invited)
- Archbishop/Bishop/Parish Priest/Chaplain
- Relevant Ministers of Parliament
- Board Members
- Sisters from the relevant Congregations, particularly those in the Facilities
- Relevant staff
- Relevant members of Community Groups

**Please note the following:**

- If the Prime Minister or a Premier has been invited then the correct protocol is to invite the Archbishop/Bishop of the Archdiocese/diocese
- If a Minister or Senator will be in attendance then the Archbishop/ Bishop is invited to bless the facility
- If a parliamentary Secretary or Member of Parliament will be in attendance then one of the Facility's chaplains should be invited to officiate at the blessing.

**Printing**

Invitations should display the Mary Aikenhead Ministries Crest/ Signature. For facility events the facility Crest (if there is one), is to be used as well.

The Visual Identity Guidelines are to be adhered to when using the Mary Aikenhead Crest/Signature (available at [www.maryaikenheadministries.com.au](http://www.maryaikenheadministries.com.au) or from EPS, tiff files included on the CD provided to all facilities)

If the facility function involves one of our partners (eg the Sisters of Mercy, Melbourne) their crest is also displayed as a matter of respect.

Invitations should be printed on good quality paper, addressed officially and sent in a timely manner

**PUBLICITY**

Any publicity should be in accordance with our mission, vision and values

**CEREMONY – (see Appendix 2 for a running sheet)**

**Welcome**

- Appropriate courtesy suggests that official guests are met by the appropriate representatives (eg Chair of Board or Trustees, CEO)

**Blessing Ceremony**

- Prior to the blessing the traditional peoples of the land are acknowledged (see list of suggested acknowledgements). If it is possible/appropriate, an indigenous elder should be involved in the ceremony
- The Blessing Ceremony, including the homily, is conducted by the Archbishop/Bishop. In the case where a Bishop is not present, a Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries will conduct the ceremony and give the address
- The Blessing should always be taken from the official "Book of Blessings". Appropriate hymns and readings are chosen and copyright acknowledged.

**OFFICIAL SPEECHES**

These are usually given by  
The Chair or a Trustee of Mary Aikenhead Ministries  
Government Representative  
Chair of relevant facility  
CEO or representative of facility  
Others as appropriate

**WORDING OF PLAQUE**

To be approved by the CEO/ED in conjunction with a Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries.

**UNVEILING OF PLAQUES**

This is done in the presence of the Archbishop/Bishop with the Chair or another Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries and the Government Representative.

## **APPENDIX 1 - TIMETABLE**

Guidelines:

### **10- Weeks Prior**

- Advise Trustees Mary Aikenhead Ministries
- Official invitations to VIPs are sent under the Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director's signature.
- Prior research will have identified the commitments (eg Trustees meetings, parliamentary sitting days, cabinet meetings etc) of VIP guests.
- Select a venue - tentatively book several dates and times (thereby providing greater choice for the VIPs)
- Know the capacity of the venue – this will determine the number who can be invited as distinct from the number who may be invited
- Relevant departments to draft list of invitees (with contact addresses) in an Excel spreadsheet in consultation with the Events/Communications Manager, Director of Mission or equivalent and/or Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director.

### **8 Weeks Prior**

- Confirm venue
- Follow up invitations to VIPs
- Draft official invitation list
- Identify special guests who will form the official party
- Send article to relevant media(check with Trustee Mary Aikenhead Ministries who has responsibility for media )

### **4 Weeks Prior**

- Confirm date, time and duration of the event
- Print and distribute invitations
- Organise AV requirements
- Prepare detailed Ministerial briefing (including speech notes, order of proceedings, order of seating)
- Book catering and provide written details of requirements
- Book stage and chairs if required
- If required, organise for plaque to be engraved.

### **3 Weeks Prior**

- Prepare Blessing, prayers and program
- Draft and confirm media release
- Advise Security/Car Parking of Arrangements

### **2 Weeks Prior**

- Confirm Order of Proceedings and seating arrangements with each speaker and member of the Official Party.
- Print program/Order of Proceedings
- Arrange for an Executive and/or Facility Sister of Charity to meet with each VIP
- Check plaque has arrived. Issue media release to relevant media

### **1 Week prior**

- Finalise catering
- Confirm numbers and seating arrangements
- Reconfirm with Security and Car Parking
- Finalise media releases
- Ensure information on VIPs required for introductions etc has been received
- Organise flowers/gifts

### **On Day of Event**

- Official guests are met at the front entrance (those meeting the guests should be present 15 minutes prior to the guests due time of arrival)
- Each VIP is escorted to the venue and introduced to other guests and staff

Mary Aikenhead Ministries Protocol for Blessings, Openings and Events

- Official proceedings commence when all members of the Official Party have arrived
- At the conclusion of the function VIPs are escorted to their cars if required

Task	Responsibility	Due Date	Date Completed
General Invitation List			
Invitations to VIP's			
Background Briefing Notes			
Blessing liturgy			
Media Release			
Catering			
Flowers/Gifts			
AV			
Official Party			
Order of Proceedings			
Parking			
Photography			
Plaque			
Pre-publicity, event publicity			
Program			
Seating			
Speech notes fro dignitaries			
Acknowledgements speeches			
Security			
Signage			
Venue			

**APPENDIX 2 - FORMS OF ADDRESS**

Typical Forms of Address:

**Cardinal**

Written Address: His Eminence, Cardinal \*\*\*\*\* (decorations if any)  
Written salutation: Dear Cardinal \*\*\*\*\*  
Written conclusion: Yours sincerely  
Conversation: Your Eminence or Cardinal\*\*\*\*\*

**Archbishop**

Written Address: Most Reverend Archbishop \*\*\*\*\* (decorations if any)  
Written salutation: Dear Archbishop \*\*\*\*\*  
Written conclusion: Yours sincerely  
Conversation: Your Grace or Archbishop \*\*\*\*\*

**Governor General**

Written Address: Her Excellency The Honourable \*\*\*\*\* (decorations if any)  
Written salutation: Your Excellency  
Written conclusion: Yours sincerely  
Conversation: Your Excellency

**Prime Minister**

Written Address: The Honourable \*\*\*\* MP, Prime Minister of Australia  
Written salutation: Dear Prime Minister  
Written conclusion: Yours sincerely  
Conversation: Sir or Mr Prime Minister

**State Governor**

Written Address: Her Excellency The Honourable \*\*\*\*\* (decorations if any)  
Written salutation: Your Excellency  
Written conclusion: Yours sincerely  
Conversation: Your Excellency

Refer to the websites for details and mailing information for:  
Federal Minister – who is a member of House of Representatives  
Federal Minister – who is a Senator  
Federal member of the House of Representatives  
Federal Member of the Senate  
Member of the Lower House of State Parliament  
Member of the Upper House of State Parliament

### **APPENDIX 3 - ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL PEOPLE**

Suggested forms of acknowledgement:

1. I would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land, the ..... People, and call on the Spirit Ancestors to walk with us today as we share and learn together
2. I would like to begin by acknowledging the .... ....People, the traditional custodians of the land we stand on, and pay tribute to the unique role they play in the life of the region.
3. We acknowledge the traditional peoples of the land on which we stand. We pay our respects to them for their care of the land.
4. I acknowledge the living culture of the ..... People, the traditional custodians of the land we stand on, and pay tribute to their continuing culture, and I acknowledge the memory of their ancestors,
5. I would like to acknowledge the ..... People, the traditional custodians of the country in which we meet today. I acknowledge that they have occupied and cared for this country over countless generations and I celebrate their continuing contribution to the life in this region
6. We acknowledge and pay respect to the ..... people as the original and ongoing owners and custodians of this land. We commit ourselves to actively work alongside indigenous people for reconciliation and justice.

**We acknowledge much of the material above is taken from:**

SCHS National Policy – Protocols for Blessings, Openings, Events (2004, reviewed May 2007)

SV&MHS Official Events Protocol Documents (July 2007)

St Vincent's Hospital Launceston Protocol, Guide for Blessings, Openings & Events (May 1999)

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