

Speaking Plan - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What to do when?

We have a Study Weekend on a particular date. How do I ensure that we do not book a visiting Speaker on that date and that our Speakers are not speaking away on that date?

There are 2 steps to achieve this:

1. On the Incoming section "Setting Dates for Incoming Speakers" page do not put a priority number in the date for your Study Weekend.

If you have entered this as a "Dates for Ecclesial Activities" (in the Setting Up section) then it will appear on the right hand side of the "Setting Dates for Incoming Speakers" page to remind you to avoid this date.

2. Ensure that the date is ticked for each of your Speakers (as unavailable dates) so that none of them can be booked on that day. This is done on the Outgoings section "Speaker Dates" page for each of your Speakers. If you have entered this as a "Dates for Ecclesial Activities" (in the Setting Up section) then it will appear on the right hand side of the "Speaker Dates" page as a reminder to each Speaker.

Our ecclesia only needs 5 visiting Speakers this plan period. How can I set that as a limit?

In the "Incoming" section on the "Set No. Incoming Appoints Requested" page you set the maximum requirement number of incoming Speakers that you want. This maximum should influence your planning for Incoming Speakers and Incoming Date. As a general rule select between 2 and up to 3 times the number of Incoming Speakers than your requirement limit (i.e. if you require 5 incoming appointments then select up to 15 Speakers). This does not mean that you have to select Speakers or dates for Incoming Speakers that you do not wish to include in the 6 month period. In addition the larger the requirement then the more Incoming Date should be prioritised to maximise the opportunity of achieving your target requirement.

If a speaker in the Newcastle area only wants to be available to speak in the 'local' Newcastle area (Boolaroo, Charlestown, Gosford, Hunter Valley, Newcastle, Southlakes, The Watagans and Toronto) and not further away than that, then what must they do?

If a speaker only wants to be available to speak at the 'local' Newcastle area ecclesias and not in Sydney area then they must have all these 'local' ecclesias ticked and all others left blank. Toronto is the exception and is not current utilising the Speaking Plan system. A "Speaker Availability" number other than zero (see the base of "My Contact Details" menu function for the Speaker Only self service webpage or on the "Speakers Menu") would flag that the Speaker is available for the ecclesias that they have ticked as available for. The three Availability Groups were to cater for Regional ecclesias taking up the Speaking Plan system. This has not occurred as yet. An offer to speak at these ecclesias will only be visible for selection by those ecclesias if these three conditions are met:

1. ticked the particular ecclesia (as ecclesias they are willing to attend).
2. at least one appointment available for one or other ecclesial Group OR both Groups.
3. the requesting ecclesia wishes to be involved in the Speaking Plan system.

Group 2 only includes Toronto.

The Group 1 includes Boolaroo, Charlestown, Gosford, Hunter Valley, Southlakes and Watagans as well as Blue Mountains, Cabramatta, Camden, Campsie, Castle Hill, Doonside, Hunter Valley, Hurstville, Moorebank, Punchbowl, Riverwood, Shaftesbury Road, Sutherland, West Ryde and Yagoona. [This group is based on the ecclesias involved with the two historical Plan meetings].

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A Speaker is not available for the next planning period. What is the easiest way to stop a Speaker being booked?

The easiest and simplest way is to zero the number(s) shown for this Speaker on the Limits page "Speaker Availability" (for all Groups). This will make the Speaker invisible on the "Incoming Speakers" page to all ecclesias.

There is no need to mark all their Outgoing "Speaker Dates" as unavailable or to de-selecting all ecclesias on the Limits page "Ecclesial Selections for Speakers". To do so creates more effort for the next planning period.

A Speaker no longer wants to be available for the Speaking Plan?

If a Speaker just wants a pause or a break for a while, then it is best to leave the Speaker on the plan with a "Speaker Availability" of zero (for all Groups). This will make the Speaker invisible on the "Incoming Speakers" page to all ecclesias. There is no need to mark all their Outgoing "Speaker Dates" as unavailable or to de-selecting all ecclesias on the Limits page "Ecclesial Selections for Speakers". To do so creates more effort for the next time the Speaker is available for appointments.

If the Speaker definitely doesn't want to be on the plan any longer, then initially set the Speaker's "Speaker Availability" to zero (for all groups). To no longer display the Speaker in planning webpages, deselect their tick box of "Speaker" (or see "Services I can provide" on the Speaker self service webpage or the "Speakers Menu") as well as "Exhortation" etc on the "Speaker Details" webpage. This makes the Speaker record invisible throughout the Speaking Plan. Alternatively, contact the Plan Coordinator to arrange this.

To confirm that this has been done successfully, it is recommended to click on "Review Data" on the "End" webpage captioned "Indicate Ready for Plan Run"; the Speaker should no longer be listed with an appointment availability.

I can't organise the plan next time. How can I delegate my access to someone else?

In the "Ecclesial Contacts" menu option or the "Speaker Details" option (in the Speaking Plan), select a contact and tick the boxes as follows:

Access to NCC Site	Delegates all the access of your ecclesial Secretary / Recorder (includes Calendar and Speaking Plan). Multiple Secretary / Recorder access Users can be created or can be assigned to an existing User or Speaker.
Access to Calendar	Delegates only Calendar app access for your ecclesia.
Access to Speaking Plan	Delegates only Speaking Plan app access for your ecclesia to be used by an Ecclesial Planner).
No Access ticked	This default is for a Speaker of your ecclesia.

Don't forget to click on **Update** after any change. Alternatively please contact the Plan Coordinator to arrange this.

Please also note that you can access the planning system at any time and from anywhere.

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How can I delegate my access to another User who is not an existing User?

1. Add a New Speaker under the “Speaker Details” option section by clicking on the “Add a Speaker” button and fill in the details. When complete click on the “Update” button.
2. Alternatively on the main NCC menu click on the “Ecclesial Contacts” menu option and then click on “Add a Contact”.
3. Another alternative is to re-use an old Contact that is no longer being used; just update all of the details shown

In the “Manage Ecclesial Contact(s)” webpage or the “Speaker Details” option (in the Speaking Plan), select a contact and then tick the boxes as follows:

Access to NCC Site	Delegates all the access of your ecclesial Secretary / Recorder (includes Calendar and Speaking Plan). Multiple Secretary / Recorder access Users can be created or can be assigned to an existing User or Speaker.
Access to Calendar	Delegates only Calendar app access for your ecclesia.
Access to Speaking Plan	Delegates only Speaking Plan app access for your ecclesia to be used by an Ecclesial Planner).
No Access ticked	This default is for a Speaker of your ecclesia.

Don't forget to click on **Update** after any change. Alternatively please contact the Plan Coordinator to arrange this.

How can I add a new Speaker to the system?

Add a New Speaker under the “Setting Up” section on the “Speaker Details” page. Click on the “Add a Speaker” button and fill in the details. When complete click on “Save” button.

A Speaker has transferred to another ecclesia. How can I arrange that?

Contact the Plan Coordinator to arrange the transfer. This is a very simple task and will also maintain the Speakers plan history.

A Speaker is no longer available, can I re-use the Speaker details for someone else?

Just overtype a Speaker, Secretary, Recorder, Member as required, replacing all the details shown on the screen.

A Speaker has retired. How can I remove them from the system?

If the Speaker definitely doesn't want to be on the plan any longer, then initially set the Speaker's "Speaker Availability" to zero (for all groups). To no longer display the Speaker in planning webpages, deselect their tick box of “Speaker” (or see “Services I can provide” on the Speaker self service webpage or the “Speakers Menu”) as well as “Exhortation” etc on the “Speaker Details” webpage. This makes the Speaker record invisible throughout the Speaking Plan. Alternatively, contact the Plan Coordinator to arrange this.

To confirm that this has been done successfully, it is recommended to click on “Review Data” on the “End” webpage captioned “Indicate Ready for Plan Run”; the Speaker should no longer be listed with an appointment availability.

I have finished my planning. Is there a way to check that it is complete?

There is a simplified summary of keys parts of your plan. On the End section “Indicate Ready for Plan Run” just click on the “Review Data” button. Scrolling down you can view key parts of your planning. Review this data to check if there is anything missing or incorrect? One key data check, that is not on this report, is that all the Speakers have updated their Unavailable Dates for the planning period.

You can clipboard this review data report OR print it OR download the page as a record of what you have planned.

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I have finished my planning. Is that all?

If you have reviewed your planning data and it looks OK then on “Step 5 – End” webpage “Indicate Ready for Plan Run” click on the rectangle with the caption “This is the last screen of the Plan Meeting Data Entry Program”. Then click on the “Save” button. This indicates to the Plan Coordinator that you have completed your Speaking Plan data entry. You can fine tune your plan until the plan is run.

I am available to speak face to face locally but I am only available via Zoom for outside the Sydney area. How do I show this in the plan?

If you are using the Speak self service then click on “Notes for Ecclesias” and enter your restrictions as well as any other services you are willing to offer (e.g. “Can play a piano”); some examples are “Only available via Zoom for ecclesias outside the Sydney metropolitan area” or “Only available via Zoom”. **Ecclesial planners should note these restrictions when selecting “Incoming Speakers”.**

If you provide your details to an ecclesial planner then let them know of your restrictions and they can add your restrictions and services into the “Speaker Details” page in the “Notes” box.

Why have the number of ecclesias that Speakers are able to speak at been greatly expanded?

All the regional ecclesias of NSW have been added to the list of ecclesias that a Speaker can speak at. This was a development initiated on the basis that Speakers can now use Zoom or online conferencing to visit regional locations and visa versa. No regional ecclesias have been officially set up as yet, primarily because Speaking Plans have been having regular shortfalls for our existing appointments, and we didn't want to exacerbate this shortfall situation.

If there is a regional ecclesia that has several Speakers available and has the capability for Zoom or online conferencing of their meetings, then please let the Speaking Plan Coordinator know.

Tips

Is there a way to prevent repeat appointments at the same Ecclesia each six months? It would be good to have the opportunity to visit other meetings if that is possible.

This is generally because the "Incoming Speakers" selection page does not get cleared each 6 month. It is occasionally left uncleared so you could see what you had selected in the last planning period. Unfortunately, some ecclesias are not reviewing the list and updating it. Consequently, Speakers are being reselected each 6 month period. The Planning Coordinator will generally clear the "Incoming Speakers" selections at least once a year to avoid this issue. Alternatively, each Speaker can de-select (and re-select) ecclesias that they are willing to visit (or not visit) for the next 6 month period. This is done in the Limits section on the “Ecclesial Selections for Speakers” page.

Why do I need to set Dates for Incoming Speakers? I don't care when visitors speak?

Dates for Incoming Speakers are mandatory. By Setting Dates for Incoming Speakers you control when visitors speak at your ecclesia. You probably don't want visiting Speakers booked when you have an Ecclesial Camp or when you have a Study Weekend or perhaps on a Public Holidays or when you are supporting Padstow etc. So you enter a priority in order to achieve this (1 for your first date, 2 for your second date, 3 for your third date etc). You should assign a priority in a random order as well because if you requested that you want 8 visitors and your date priority order is July 5, 12, 19, 26 and then August 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 etc you might be fortunate (or unfortunate) to get all your visitors in that order which means that all your visitors will be visiting in July and August and not at any other time within the 6 months (i.e. a flood of visitors in the first month or 2 only).

Also note that, for your convenience in editing your entered priority, the numbers can increment by any number. For example, your priority numbers used could be 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, etc. This will allow you to re-sequence your priorities more easily.

What should I do when the formal planning period starts?

1. Ask your Speakers for their Availability (the maximum number of appointments for each group → Group 1).
2. Ask if your Speakers have any dates that they are unavailable for (NB Mother's Day, Father's Day, birthdays).
3. Check if your Speakers wish to vary the ecclesias that they are available for.
4. Ask your Speakers if they are willing to use the Speaker Self Service. If Yes then give them their logon details.
5. Determine special ecclesial dates (Family Camp, Study Weekends, Anniversaries, Preaching efforts etc). This may affect your Speaker's available dates.

Enter the above planning information over the first 2 or 3 weeks of the formal planning period.

After this initial couple of weeks of the formal planning period, complete your planning by entering your "Incoming Speakers" and "Incoming Dates" selections etc.

How can I check that my planning is complete?

On "Step 5 End" webpage is a button titled "Review Data". This displays a summary of your planning. Click the button and then scroll down to view the planning summary for your ecclesia. This does not show Speaker's unavailable dates.

I don't care when Incoming Speakers speak? Can I set all the Dates for Incoming Speakers as the same priority?

If you assign 1 to all of your Incoming date selections then you are delegating the priority assignment to the planning system which will generally choose dates in ascending date order. This could mean that all your Incoming Speakers could be booked for the first month or 2 of the planning period.

What is the Speaker self service?

The Speaker self service is a simple one webpage version of the Speaking Plan system for Speakers. It allows a Speaker to maintain their contact details, enter the number of available appointments, select which ecclesias they are willing to support, select the dates that they are available for, add special comments (e.g. "available by Zoom", "can play a piano" etc) and view their bookings once the plan has been run. The webpage URL is the same as the usual access link however the Speaker must have only a Speaker role (and not a Recorder/Secretary as well) and must be informed of their Logon name and Password. This information is maintained under the "Setting Up" section on "Speaker Details" page.

Are there tips for entering the priority sequence for Incoming Speakers?

It is recommended to use a priority sequence for Incoming Speakers (starting with a low number like 1) but not repeating the same number. Priority numbers do not have to be sequential. The number you use (and therefore its priority) should take into account the number of appointments the Speaker has and their popularity; a popular Speaker with only 1 appointment is very likely to be booked up early.

Also note the descriptions on the right hand side of the page that may include explanations such as “Only by Zoom” or “By Zoom and Visit”, and “Can play a piano” etc.

As a general rule select between 2 and up to 3 times the number of incoming Speakers than your requirement limit (i.e. if you require 5 incoming appointments then select up to 15 Speakers). This does not mean that you have to select Speakers or dates for Incoming Speakers that you do not wish to include in the 6 month period.

Also note that, for your convenience in editing your entered priority, the numbers can increment by any number. For example, your priority numbers used could be 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, etc. This will allow you to re-sequence your priorities more easily.

Are there tips for entering the priority sequence for the Dates for Incoming Speakers?

The more dates that you make available for incoming Speakers the better you will be in matching their potential date restrictions. Also by randomly spreading your date priorities throughout the 6 months, rather than in a sequential order, will also distribute the incoming appointments that you will achieve throughout the 6 months as well. By randomise your dates throughout the planning period rather than working sequentially through the 6 months you will generally avoid all of your bookings occurring in the same month or two. Priority numbers do not have to be sequential; this can aid your planning process.

Also take notice of your Ecclesial and the Common Activities shown on the right hand side of the page. These may indicate dates to avoid. Don't select a date that you don't want to have a visiting Speaker to be booked on.

You must balance the quantity of dates with the number of Speakers that you request. The rule of thumb is: the fewer the incoming dates you have set, then the more Speakers you will need to select; the fewer the Speakers then the more incoming dates will need to be selected. Always remember that Speakers may also be booked up by other ecclesias as well.

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What is the recommended sequence for undertaking planning?

The recommended sequence for undertaking planning is as follows.

Do the first 4 items (shown in yellow below) ASAP once planning is initiated. This displays to all ecclesias which Speakers are available for this planning period. After this initial planning, you may receive an email if a Speaker's availability changes from what you may have already planned as an ecclesia may have some late changes after the first 4 steps should have been completed. The email is a prompt just in case you want to add another Incoming Speaker to your list.

Number	Sequence order – Screen section	Mandatory	Action or Tip
1	Speaker Availability - Limits	Mandatory	Zero means the Speaker is not available for this planning period
2	Speaker Details - ADDING new Speakers and updating contact details	Infrequent; additions	ADD new Speakers; update Email or Mobile details
3	Dates for Ecclesial Activities - Setting up	Optional	To guide you and your Speakers in your planning (e.g. set family camps etc that you want your Speakers to not miss out on)
4	Incoming Speakers - Incoming	Mandatory unless no visiting Speakers are required	For Speaker proposals select 2 to 3 times more than your total number requested at Step 6
5	Setting Dates for Incoming Speakers - Incoming	Mandatory unless no visiting Speakers are required	Prioritise/randomise (not sequential) dates for incoming Speaker proposals and set as many dates as is possible
6	Set No. Incoming Appoints Requested - Incoming	Mandatory	Sets the maximum number of Incoming Speaker appointments.
7	Speaker Dates – Outgoing	Optional BUT Speakers will likely get appointments on any date in the plan period unless they select their UNAVAILABLE DATES	Best to add any ecclesial or Speaker UNAVAILABLE DATES (e.g. Family Camps, Study weekends, Speaker's holidays, Padstow etc)
8	Indicate Ready for Plan Run – End	Mandatory to help Planning Coordinator assess planning progress	View the "Review Data" for a summary of your key planning data.
9	Ecclesial Selections for Speakers - Limits	Rarely changes	

Are there any restrictions as to when and where I do my planning?

You can do your planning at any time during the year; not just during the formal planning cycle (in April and October each year). You can access the system from anywhere in the world. All you need is the [Speaking Plan URL](#) and your Username and Password.

What is the Speaking Plan Link / URL?

<https://www.christadelphiansaustralia.org.au/nccplan/index.php>

After the plan run I am still short some more Speakers. Is there anything else I can do?

Unfortunately there are generally more requests than there are Speaking appointments available.

Initially assess why you may have missed out with some of your planning (e.g. you may have not selected enough Incoming Speakers or not selected enough Incoming Date perhaps). You can also review the Full Plan to see who may be still available for particular dates. You can also contact the Plan Coordinator who has a report of Speakers who have not had been fully booked up at the end of the plan run process. This is not a straight forward listing as various unavailabilities need to be checked out. And such a request is on a first in first served basis and will require personally contacting the Secretary of the Speaker's ecclesia.

You can also make private arrangements with Speakers but that runs contrary to the objectives of the online plan.

Speaking Plan - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

What is the purpose of ecclesial groups?

This is currently not being used. The purpose of ecclesial groups is to allow the sharing of Speakers with and between ecclesial groups. These groups facilitate and precisely restrict inter group sharing of Speakers. For example Group 2 (i.e. Toronto) ecclesias may only want to share their Speakers amongst other Group 2 ecclesias. This restriction of sharing is achieved by every Speaker defining what ecclesias they are willing to speak at AND assigning available appointments to each group. For example:

- John in Ecclesia A (in Group 1) is willing to speak at Ecclesia B (in Group 2). John must have ticked that he is willing to speak at Ecclesia B and John must also assign a maximum number of appointments for Group 2 otherwise his willingness to speak at Ecclesia B will never be visible to Ecclesia B for them to select him.
- John in Ecclesia A (in Group 1) is willing to speak at Ecclesia C (in Group 1). John must have ticked that he is willing to speak at Ecclesia C and John must also assign a maximum number of appointments for Group 1 otherwise his willingness to speak at Ecclesia C will never be visible to Ecclesia C for them to select him.

What are the ecclesias in each ecclesial group?

The groups are made up as follows:

Group 1	Group 2	Group 3 (Regional NSW)
Blue Mountains	Toronto	For Indication of interest only at this stage
Boolaroo		
Cabramatta		Ballina
Camden		Bodalla
Campsie		Canberra
Castle Hill		Caniaba
Charlestown		Casino
Doonside		Central West
Gosford		Cobar
HVE Hunter Valley		Coffs Harbour
Hurstville		Coonabarabran
Moorebank		Dorrigo
Punchbowl		Forbes
Riverwood		Lismore
Shaftesbury Road		Newcastle
Southlakes		North West
Sutherland		Taree
Watagans		
West Ryde		
Yagoona		

NB Group 1 was historically based on all the ecclesias involved with the original two Plan meetings.

What can I do to improve the number of Incoming Speakers booked?

This depends on several factors including:

- Popularity of particular Speakers.
- The number of Available Appointments for Speakers.
- Speaker's available dates.
- Your ecclesia's booking sequence position (the further down the booking order, the less likely you are to be able to book very popular Speakers who have only 1 or 2 available appointments).

The best practice is to increase your numbers of:

- Incoming Speakers – select 2 to 3 times the number of Incoming Appointments Requested.
- Incoming Dates – select as many dates as possible.

For example if your number of Incoming Appointments Requested is 7, then having only 7 Incoming Speakers and only 7 Incoming Dates is very unlikely to result in 7 Incoming Speaker bookings.

If your number of Incoming Appointments Requested is 7, then having 21 Incoming Speakers and 20 Incoming Dates is much more likely to achieve 7 Incoming Speaker bookings.

Are there any restrictions on the use of special characters in my logon password?

There are a number of special characters that are not permitted in your password. Please avoid using special characters, except for the following ~ . ! @ # \$ % ^ * - + =

Explanations

Understanding how the overall planning limits work

At the outset these settings are rarely changed. Please do not apply these overall planning limits unless they are really necessary. They will significantly reduce your ecclesia's outgoing available appointments which in turn will greatly restrict other ecclesia's ability to book your Speakers. The first two restrictions can be set to "No Limit".

The 3 outgoing Speaker limitations are:

1. **How closely can outgoing consecutive appointments occur for each one of your Speakers?** If this limit is applied then each one of your Speakers must have a gap between each appointment booking of a set number of weeks. For example, if you have set this to "2 weeks apart" then each one of your Speakers will have a gap of 2 weeks before any appointment booking and 2 weeks after any appointment booking; therefore resulting in a much reduced number of days that your Speakers will be able to be booked.
2. **How closely can outgoing appointments simultaneously occur for all of your Speakers?** This is designed primarily for the benefit of smaller ecclesias who only have a few Speakers. If this limit is applied then all your Speakers must all have a gap between any appointments of any of your Speakers for a set number of weeks. For example, if you have set this to "At least 2 weeks" then none of your Speakers can be booked at least 2 weeks before and at least 2 weeks after any other appointment bookings for your ecclesia; therefore resulting in a dramatically reduced number of days that your Speakers will be available to be booked.
3. **What is the maximum number of away appointments for your Ecclesia on the same day?** **DO NOT ENTER 0!** This limit sets the maximum number of your Speakers that can be speaking away on any one day. Carefully assess how many Speakers you can cope with being away on the same day. Again, if this is set too low then it will severely impact the number of bookings that your ecclesia offers to other ecclesias. If set too high, then it may deplete your ecclesia considerably when bookings align.

It is recommended that no limits be set for 1 & 2 however this may result in some Speaker's booking being on consecutive weeks. This can be controlled somewhat by Speakers themselves through the setting of their available dates (Speaker Dates).

Any update to User details through the Speakers Menu self service will result in the Username being overwritten

Any update to the User details through the Speakers Menu self service webpages will result in the Username being overwritten by the User's email address. The password will remain the same but if the Username was something other than their email address, it will be overwritten by their email address. A Secretary / Recorder can update all User data through the "Ecclesial Contacts" menu option and through the menu option "Speaking Plan" → "Speaking Plan" → "Speaker Details".