

Repairs and Improvements at St Cecilia's

This short report details some recent work on and around our church. It doesn't cover everything which has been done, but it does report on some of the major works.

1. Soffit and gutter repairs



These are two photos from September last year. They're both from the back of the north side of our church.

The soffit is the underside of the roof edge. You can see in the photo on the left that some material had fallen from the soffit, leaving it damaged.

The photo on the right reveals the cause of this damage. The gutter is directly above this damage, and it had two holes in it. These are circled in red. Water leaked through the gutter, saturated the soffit, and caused it to fail.



Our handymen inspected all the gutters on the church roof. They found damage in other areas of the gutters which was similar to the above. At least 20% of the gutters had to be replaced. All the rest have been coated with a bituminous waterproof membrane. This should preserve them and keep them waterproof.

The cost of this work was \$387 for new gutters, \$156 for the waterproof membrane, and \$840 for 12 hours of labour by our handymen – a total of \$1,383. (All prices in this report do not include GST. While we pay GST, St Cecilia's is a registered charity which claims back our GST expenditure in our quarterly BAS. These prices not including GST therefore represent what is ultimately the cost to our parish.)



The final step was repairing the soffit.

Two of our handymen worked on this on 10 April 2025.

You can see in the photo that they had to remove more of the soffit which was also water-damaged. They then skilfully inserted a new piece.

We have not yet received the invoice for this repair, so I cannot tell you exactly what it cost. Given the time that the two men were here, it will certainly be over a thousand dollars.

Over the last six months, our handymen have worked on a number of other projects. One involves the tiled floors of our church. St Cecilia's Church was built in 1976. Since then, some movement in the building has in some places moved or damaged some tiles or the grouting between them. Our handymen have begun the task of fixing these tiles and grouting.

2. Evacuation Diagrams

Because our church is a public space, we are required to have Evacuation Diagrams in it. All parishes in the Archdiocese of Melbourne were advised of this requirement in mid-2024.

Staff at the Archdiocese recommended that we engage a firm called First Five Minutes (F5M) to prepare these diagrams for us. F5M prepared a floor plan of our church. We worked with them to identify the best paths of travel in an emergency. One of our handymen installed the diagrams on 10 April 2025.

In fact, it's pretty simple: in an emergency, head out the main door of the church. This is the way we usually come into our church. Because we're familiar with this, it's the best way out in an emergency. Only look for another way out if this path is blocked. Then, we all gather in the front yard of the presbytery. This allows us to check that everyone has made it out, and that everyone is ok.

We have five Evacuation Diagrams. There are three in the nave or main body of the church. There's one in the narthex or foyer. And there's one more in the sacristies.

The cost of our consultation with F5M and their preparation of our Evacuation Diagrams was \$2,009.75. When our church was audited on 7 May 2025, we were commended for having met this statutory requirement promptly.

3. Garden works in May 2025

When our Memorial Garden was blessed and opened on 30 August 2015, one area of it was planted with bamboo and grape vines. A parish volunteer has tended and pruned these plants ever since. It's not been easy because the bamboo in particular grows very fast and very high.

At the beginning of this year, we decided to replace the bamboo and grape vines with a more manageable hedge.

Ever Bloom Horticulture provides the gardeners for our school and church. They helped us to select Lilly Pilly Firescreen as the plant for this hedge. Their team came here on 16 May 2025. They worked hard to remove the bamboo and grapevine. They had purchased five Firescreen plants for us, and planted them. Here are before and after photos:



While they were here, the team also pruned the two Karo trees on the north side of our church and the Golden Diosma in the garden across from the Karo trees. They also removed about eight self-sown gum tree saplings just inside the school fence on Hillside Parade.

The cost of all this work – including the provision of the five Firescreen plants – was \$2,795.

4. Red vestment with a symbol of the Holy Spirit

In recent years, we've invested in a few new vestments to enhance our celebration of the Mass. Some parishioners have also donated new vestments to our parish.

In February this year, we purchased a red vestment with a symbol of the Holy Spirit. It came from a Polish firm called Ackermann Liturgical Vestments. With shipping costs, the cost of this vestment was \$344.42. It's probably the last vestment which we'll buy.

While it'll be used at other times, above all it's for Pentecost Sunday. What does it look like? You'll have to be here on Pentecost Sunday in two weeks' time to find out!

Fr Kevin McGovern,
25 May 2025.