

Sydney Central Coast Presbytery Property Application Policy

Our Mission:

To be a Catalyst for generous, inclusive and courageous congregations

Our Vision:

A world transformed by vibrant, Christ-centred communities



Title	Property Application Policy
Creation date	08/02/2017
Version	Draft 0.3
Last Revised	
Approved by	
Approval Date	

Scope

This policy describes the processes used by the Business Committee (BC) and their expectations of Congregations in seeking approval for property related activities, including:

- Building works.
- Purchase of a property
- Sale of a property

Similar processes will be applied for funding applications.

Context

All property assets are legally owned by the Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (NSW). Congregations are the Responsible Body (Regulation 4) for the properties under their day to day control and management. The Responsible Body is responsible for all construction, maintenance, compliance, etc costs for the property.

Sydney Central Coast Presbytery (SCCP) has delegation from Uniting Resources to approve building activities up to a value of \$1,000,000. Standing Committee has delegated this authority to Business Committee.

Business Committee has responsibility for the oversight of property matters within the Presbytery. Implicit in this oversight are matters including:

- Inspection of buildings
- Liaison with congregational property representatives or committee
- Monitoring of property compliance matters – e.g. public safety, asbestos, etc.
- Approval of building works
- In consultation with others, approval of sale & purchase of property assets

Early engagement

Responsible bodies should engage with Business Committee at the earliest stages of a project. Involvement at the conceptual stages can ensure any works will meet wider external requirement that may be applicable e.g. Business Committee may be aware of similar projects in adjacent congregations where collaboration may lead to enhanced missional outcomes.

Where appropriate Business Committee will engage with Uniting Resources.

By engaging at early stages relevant questions can be posed before the final approval stages, making the approval processes simpler and more timely.

Often member(s) of Business Committee will attend site to discuss details of the project.

Do you need to apply?

Application must be made for the following types of activities:

- Building projects with a value (including donations and volunteer time) of \$20,000 or greater. Notification of work of lower value is always appreciated.
- Sale of Property
- Purchase of Property
- Grant Applications

- Other situations that require SCCP approval/endorsement of financial and/or property transactions, e.g. UFS loan applications
- Other situations where the Property Trust needs to execute a document (e.g. a Development Application to the local Council)

Form of Application

All applications must be made on the relevant Uniting Resources form available from the Synod website (www.nswact.uca.org.au) or by contacting the Business Committee.

Supporting Information

In addition to completing and submitting the application form, there are several items generally required to support the application, including:

- Mission Plan. An endorsed Mission Plan should be provided which supports and/or justifies the proposed activity. This should include a detailed mission (business) case overing the proposed activity.
- Plans. Any sketches, drawings, photos, reports, etc that describe the proposed activity.
- Up to date financials. Typically, this will include 3 years of congregations AFRs plus current year. Financial reports need to be no more than 6 months old and explanation of any abnormal transactions should be provided. **Additionally, cash flow forecasts for 3-5 years should be provided, especially if any borrowing is being considered as part of the project.**
- Quotations (see below). It is essential to provide quotations for the proposed work. Without a quotation, normally it is possible to give only ‘approval in principle’ with follow up approvals required.
- If resources are being donated Business Committee may require evidence that this is the best strategy. E.g. if volunteer labour is being utilised – what skills and experience are being provided; what project management skills are available locally; etc.

Business Committee can, and normally does, ask additional questions and seek further information in assessing any application. This is not a criticism of the applicant or any person involved in preparing the application. It is part of discerning in the wider context if approval should be granted.

Quotations

It is essential to provide quotations for the proposed work. It is recognised that for some work it is difficult to obtain multiple quotations. However, Business Committee encourages applicants to make genuine attempts to comply. If there is difficulty in obtaining quotations, evidence may be sought to demonstrate efforts have been made.

Recognising the effort involved in obtaining quotations, Business Committee sets the following minimum targets for the number of quotations required.

Value of works	Minimum Number of Quotations
Less than \$20,000	1
\$20,000-50,000	2
More than \$50,000	3

Quotations are an essential part of project management. They ensure good stewardship of the Church’s scarce resources and are required even if the required amount has been donated by a benefactor(s).

It is not necessarily good enough to use a contractor that has been used before without testing the market. It is good practice to check referees for similar projects. Any reference checking should be included as part of the supporting information.

Any familial, or other close, relationship to members of the Church council or congregation, or any other matters that could lead to a potential or perceived, conflict of interest should be declared in the application. Such declarations will not necessarily disqualify a contractor, but must be in the open.

Funding

The proposed method of funding any project or activity should be clearly outlined and may include:

- Existing cash reserves
- Existing Sale Proceeds balances
- Special fundraising / donations
- Proposed repurposing of assets from another congregation
- Borrowing, noting the UFS is the only lender which can be utilised and will have its own approval processes. If borrowing is proposed the method of servicing the loan must also be detailed
- Grants from any entity e.g Uniting, Government, corporate – noting that any grant application will require Property Trust signoff

Project Management

All projects require management. In building projects, it is essential to have independent project management in place. The Project Manager should not be the architect (or any other consultant with a close involvement with the project) nor a member of the Congregation. Project Management will incur a cost to the project, but experience shows that the overall project costs will be reduced.

Assessment of Applications

Each application will be considered in detail by one or more Business Committee members. In simple cases, this may be by the chairperson.

Approval will only be given following consideration of the full Business Committee.

In addition to considering each application on its own merits, it will be reviewed in consideration of wider Presbytery and church initiatives.

Timing of Considerations

Business Committee meets every 4-8 weeks, depending on workload. It also has the ability to consider more urgent matters by email between meetings, where appropriate. It is not always possible to reach consensus by email and some matters will be held over till the next meeting.

Meeting dates can be obtained from the Chairperson and are generally also found on the Presbytery diary.

Time must be allowed for Business Committee to fulfil its role. It is not acceptable to make an application one week and expect an answer in a few days because a contractor is scheduled to commence work the next week – yes, it has happened!

Generally, Business Committee will require at least 2 weeks to consider any application following receipt of all required information and, depending on meeting schedules, it may take 6-8 weeks. As stated above, early involvement with the Business Committee will make the approval process simpler.

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