



Consultants Handbook

**A service of the Ministry and Mission Committee
of the Presbyterian Church in NSW**

Version 1.0

Contents

Forward.....	3
Background	4
Objectives	4
Our Values.....	5
Becoming a Consultant	5
Key Roles in Church Consultancy	6
Expectations of Consultants.....	7
Policies Governing Consultancies	8
Attachment A – Consultant’s Covenant.....	10

Forward

The Ministry and Mission Committee eagerly desires that all Presbyterian congregations develop towards maturity and be, for God, all that they can be. We are committed to resourcing congregations in any way we can so that they might be formed, developed and staffed well.

As part of that resourcing, we have established a team of consultants to help congregations discover ways to enhance their service to God.

This booklet explains the principles, policies and processes for those engaged by Ministry and Mission Committee as consultants in the Church Consultancy programme.

Bruce Meller
Superintendent

Background

Church Consultancy is a service of the Ministry and Mission Committee aimed at supporting the local church. It involves a church's leadership entering into a commitment with trained consultants to work together to develop achievable objectives for the benefit of that local church.

Consultancy services have been provided to churches for over 10 years, helping them to address issues and grow towards health.

The model and training that our consultants follow is based on best practice management and biblical principles utilised by many other denominations in Australia. These are continually under review and development.

The **Pursuing Health for Churches** document should be read in conjunction with this handbook as it provides further background and context to Church Consultancies.

Objectives

There are two main objectives that Ministry and Mission has for those who are part of the Church Consultancy team, these are:

- **Primary** – resourcing congregations to discover ways to enhance their service to God through the provision of a team of wise, mature, training and committed volunteer consultants.
- **Secondary** – to enhance individual's skills in ministry that they may assist their own church families and others through their ministry.

In other words while our main focus is on assisting churches to grow in health through our involvement in a consultancy with them, there is also great value in members of our team growing their own individual skills and abilities through the training and utilising these in their church family and in general ministry.

Our Values

Our team values are:

1. **Grace.** The team values each member showing grace towards each other evidenced by humility, trust, respect and recognition of one another's personal and spiritual needs.
2. **Communication.** The team values clear, timely, honest communication.
3. **Non-avoidance.** The team values non-avoidance in decision making and conflict management.
4. **Leadership.** The team values Christ like servant leadership that is clear, non-anxious and relational.
5. **Sharing.** The team values:
 - a. **Sharing in** – having shared values;
 - b. **Sharing out** – individual voices being heard by the team; and
 - c. **Sharing of** – honestly sharing God's work in our lives.
6. **Role clarity.** The team values clear role descriptions (eg leadership group, trainers, co-ordinator, supervisor, consultant), where each team member feels settled on what is expected and their ability to supply it, while freeing others to lead or accomplish delegated tasks.
7. **Trust.** The team values each member having and showing confidence in the personal integrity and spiritual maturity of all other team members and their capacity "to get on with the job".
8. **Diversity.** The team values inspiring and challenging each other by embracing the diversity of gifts and personality to achieve better outcomes for the team and congregations.

Becoming a Consultant

There are a number of criteria that are used to identify consultants to be invited to the team. Some of the key qualities and characteristics are as follows:

- Passion for being used by God to assist other churches.
- Willingness to learn new skills; adapt to new situations; and open to receiving wise and constructive feedback.
- Wisdom and practical real life experience in ministry (either ordained or as a layperson).
- Strong interpersonal skills.
- Ability to relate and manage large groups.
- Shows and accepts our Values as a team.

'WORKING WITH CHURCHES TO HELP THEM TO GROW & REMAIN HEALTHY'

We also try to aim for a good balanced team that will enable us to minister effectively to churches and deliver a wide range of consultancies. Some of the core aspects of a good balanced team are as follows:

- A good balance between ordained and lay people.
- A good balance between men and women.
- Ensuring we have a good number of ministers wives.
- Encouraging a good cultural diversity, particularly one reflecting our denomination.
- Balancing our team between those living in Sydney and country, based on the location of most of our churches and likely consulting need.
- Encouraging good representation from across NSW and the ACT.
- Encouraging a good breadth of skills, interests and background.

Consultants are added to the Consultancy Team by invitation. If a person wishes to accept the invitation, the Superintendent will write to the Session of the prospective consultant, seeking its agreement to release the minister or other nominee for service as a consultant.

Significant benefits are derived by churches whose members serve as consultants due to the training they receive and the wisdom that they accumulate through experience.

Members will only be added to the Consultancy Team when the approval of the Session has been received.

Key Roles in Church Consultancy

The following is a brief description of the key roles in Church Consultancy and their responsibilities:

Superintendent Ministry and Mission

The Superintendent has direct responsibility to Ministry and Mission Committee for Church Consultancy activities. This includes approving and inviting new consultants; and approving new policies and processes.

Church Consultancy Co-ordinator

The Superintendent has delegated day to day oversight of Church Consultancy to the Co-ordinator.

The Co-ordinator position is a part-time position and is responsible for provision of consultancies to churches; identifying new team members; training of team members; provision; development, maintenance and application of policies; managing the budget; leadership and direction; and general health of this area.

Leadership team

The leadership team is made up of the Co-ordinator and other wise, experienced and respected members of the Church Consultancy team.

'WORKING WITH CHURCHES TO HELP THEM TO GROW & REMAIN HEALTHY'

This team assists the Co-ordinator in key decisions and directions in relation to Church Consultancy and providing good oversight of its activities and team members.

John Mark Ministries

Tim Dyer from John Mark ministries provides assistance in training and development of our Church Consultancy. John Mark provide this to many denominations throughout Australia and are continually reviewing and developing tools and guidance in this area.

Supervisors

Supervisors are wise and mature members of the team who understand the consultancy process and can provide independent oversight of a consultancy team engaged in a consultancy.

Expectations of Consultants

Ministry and Mission make a significant investment into training new consultants, so we ask that consultants seriously consider their commitment to this ministry. To cover all of the material to an adequate standard takes 3 years of training.

Initial Commitment

We ask new consultancy members to seriously and prayerfully consider their commitment to the Church Consultancy team. Initially we ask consultants to commitment to 12 months of training. At the end of this period there will be the opportunity for the consultant and Co-ordinator to assess their appropriateness and commitment to this area of ministry. We will then ask that the consultant commit for a further 2 years.

Are you expected to be an expert?

No. We do not expect members of the team to be experts or to have all of the answers and tools immediately. However we do expect members to be to be prayerful, willing to hear from God, humble, flexible and willing to learn.

We are continually learning and no one consultancy is the same.

The tools and training provided do help deal with many situations but the best learning is when they are applied in a church consultancy situation.

You will also be supported by the rest of the team in a consultancy and particularly the Supervisor and Co-ordinator.

'WORKING WITH CHURCHES TO HELP THEM TO GROW & REMAIN HEALTHY'

Consultant's Covenant

We ask each consultant to enter a binding agreement (depending on God's enabling grace and subject to unforeseen circumstances) to do all of the following:

- Maintain a spirit of humble service of Christ's church.
- Adhere to the values and model of consultancy to be used by the Team.
- Adhere to the official policies and procedures established for the consultancy process.
- Respect and adhere to the role and responsibilities of the Co-ordinator, leadership team, supervisor and Superintendent.
- Over a three-year period, be available for one consultancy per year, the consultancy to involve a time commitment of two to five days per year.
- Seek advice and/or support from other consultants in the Team where appropriate.
- Prepare a written report for each consultancy undertaken.
- Participate in a minimum of four workshops per year involving five days per year.
- Be subject to the ongoing review of functioning in the consultancy by the Co-ordinator, leadership group and relevant Supervisor.
- Preserve with care the confidentiality of all discussions occurring in a consultancy.

Those consultants who are ministers have entered an additional commitment not to consider a call to a church in which they have conducted a consultancy within the previous two years.

Attachment A contains the declaration to be signed.

Consultants' Support

Whenever consultants are engaged to deal with an issue of moral failure, they will be provided with opportunities to seek and receive appropriate counselling.

Policies Governing Consultancies

Consultancies provided by the Ministry and Mission Committee are governed by policies established by the Committee. The policy suite may be obtained, upon request, from the Superintendent. The following statements are explanations of selected policies.

Accountability

The Consultancy Team operates under the authority of the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee who invites and accredits members of the Consultancy Team and who is responsible to maintain professional standards among team members.

The Co-ordinator is directly responsible to the Superintendent for Church Consultancy and has the day to day oversight of the team with the assistance of a leadership group.

Supervision

Each consultancy, while in progress, is supervised by a member of the Team.

'WORKING WITH CHURCHES TO HELP THEM TO GROW & REMAIN HEALTHY'

Confidentiality

The Consultancy process is subject to the Privacy Policy of the Ministry and Mission Committee together with the following principles:

- Each consultant will regard the details of each consultancy as confidential to the church concerned and the currently accredited members of the Consultancy Team.

Details may be discussed within the Team for the purpose of skill development and peer review. Under some circumstances, legal requirements may obligate a consultant to disclose particular matters to relevant authorities.
- Summarised non-specific information (ie where consultancies were conducted during the year) may be provided to Ministry and Mission or others.
- No details will be shared outside of the Church Consultancy team (which includes the Superintendent) without prior approval from the appropriate authority in the church concerned.
- A consultancy may require external advice on a matter. Before any referrals are made to people outside the Consultancy Team (e.g. for professional advice), permission will be gained from the appropriate authority in the congregation.
- Members of the Consultancy Team may refer to the Supervisor any matter arising from any consultancy.
- Any allegation of sexual abuse emerging during a consultancy will be treated under the Church's policy in relation to the prevention of sexual abuse.
- Should any matter arise which might appear to call for the exercise of discipline, the roles of the session and presbytery will be respected.

Engagement by Presbyteries

While presbyteries may encourage congregations to engage consultants to address particular concerns, any consultants thus involved will be engaged by, and work with, the congregation, not the presbytery.

Reimbursement of costs

Ministry and Mission will cover all reasonable travel and accommodation costs associated with attending training, consultancies or other meetings and activities approved by the Co-ordinator or Superintendent.

Reimbursement of travel and accommodation costs will be in line with standard policies and guidelines of Assembly or Ministry and Mission. Noting there is an expectation that churches hosting a consultancy will provide accommodation and meals for the duration of the consultancy, if this is not possible then appropriate accommodation will need to be agreed by the team member and Co-ordinator.

Other out of pocket expenses can be approved by the Co-ordinator. Ideally these should be identified to the Co-ordinator before they are incurred.

Claims with some form of evidence should be sent to the Co-ordinator for approval and will then be reimbursed by Church Offices.

Attachment A – Consultant’s Covenant

I [name of consultant] depending on God’s enabling grace and subject to unforeseen circumstances enter into a covenant with Ministry and Mission to do all of the following during my time as a member of the Church Consultancy team:

- Maintain a spirit of humble service of Christ’s church.
- Adhere to the values and model of consultancy to be used by the Team.
- Adhere to the official policies and procedures established for the consultancy process.
- Respect and adhere to the role and responsibilities of the Co-ordinator, leadership team, supervisor and Superintendent.
- Over a three-year period, be available for one consultancy per year, the consultancy to involve a time commitment of two to five days per year.
- Seek advice and/or support from other consultants in the Team where appropriate.
- Prepare a written report for each consultancy undertaken.
- Participate in a minimum of four workshops per year involving five days per year.
- Be subject to the ongoing review of functioning in the consultancy by the Co-ordinator, leadership group and relevant Supervisor.
- Preserve with care the confidentiality of all discussions occurring in a consultancy.

Those consultants who are ministers enter into an additional commitment not to consider a call to a church in which they have conducted a consultancy within the previous two years.

.....[Signature of consultant]

dd/mm/yy