



# Introduction to Church Facilitation & Consultancy

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

Version 9

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

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## 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 paper explains the principles and processes of our facilitation and consultancy services and how your church can access those services.

If you are interested in engaging these services then please contact one of the co-ordinators or Ministry and Mission.

### **Co-ordinators**

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## **Superintendent Ministry and Mission**

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## Background

The ministry is part 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.

Church Facilitation and Consultancy ministry has been provided to churches for over 20 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.

Our consultants are wise and mature Christian men and women who have a significant role in their local church community and have experienced the ups and down of ministry. They are made up of ordained Ministers and their wives, elders and their spouses, and other highly respected members of congregations.

Engaging these services is an opportunity for healthy churches to ensure that they remain healthy and for troubled churches to receive help. It is available to churches irrespective of their size, stage of growth, financial resources or location.

Because each church is unique, the team draws on a broad range of resources, applying them as local circumstances might need.

The ministry takes a facilitated approach to its engagements, helping those involved in the process to come up with the issues and solutions. Allowing alternative strategies to be compared and evaluated until achievable goals are determined. The team does provide insights and learnings from the wider church to help congregations to evaluate alternatives and benefits from wider teachings, trends, and insights.

The team works under the authority of Session, with the objectives, findings, recommendations and reports provided to Session. No information such as reports on the engagement are provided outside of the ministry without the permission of Session.

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## How Might the Team Help Your Church

Through the timely use of trained consultants, churches may work more effectively to identify and achieve key objectives, avoiding difficulties, addressing problems and gaining new vigour for their service of God.

### Why consultancies are valuable to local churches

**a. Advantages of an objective viewpoint**

Because the consultants come from outside the local church they are in a favourable position to hear differing points of view. They can maintain objectivity, especially in the midst of difficult situations and can often observe factors which are not so easily seen in the local church.

**b. Flexibility**

Each church situation is unique and so different methods may be appropriate for each different church. The team has been trained in a variety of techniques which they can adapt and apply to situations as needed.

**c. Objectives are set by the local church - not the consultants**

The aim of the process is to help the local Church decide on its best course of action. Consultants do not claim to have all the answers. Their role is facilitating, guiding, information gathering, communicating and recommending.

**d. The observations and recommendations that follow the consultancy are for the consideration of the local Church**

The local Church decides what to do concerning the recommendations of the consultants.

**e. The consultants are trained and gifted people**

The consultants have been carefully chosen and are involved in on-going training and supervision. They are wise and mature Christian men and women who have significant ministry experience.

### When might a consultancy be helpful for your Church?

**a. When a church wants to review its health and direction**

- Need to develop or reinvigorate Vision/Mission/Value/Goal Statements.
- Develop or review leadership structure/model.
- Review effectiveness of leadership/pastoral team.
- Evaluation of effectiveness/appropriateness of current direction of the church and its ministries.

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**b. When a church is going through a period of change**

- When the church is growing and needs to change structures to cope.
- When a church is considering a major change – e.g. a new ministry, a partnership with another church, a church plant, long term minister is leaving
- When church has reached a plateau or in decline.
- When new pastoral staff are being considered.
- When restructuring is being planned.

**c. Address periods of difficulty**

- When there is the need for outside perspective: consultants can help a church to see the real issues.
- When a Church is struggling with a specific issue that potentially could hinder unity and growth.
- When a church needs external objectivity to help crystallise issues or see through challenges.

## The Process

The key steps in the process to engage the team are:

### Understanding the need

- Session and/or wider leadership of a church identify a need for external help around an issue or issues. This may be defined like *“we need a new vision”* or could be unclear *“things are not working around here but we aren't sure why”*
- The Co-ordinator or a member of the team may meet with the minister, elders and leaders of particular ministries in the congregation to explain the ministry and processes involved and assess whether the team can assist.

### Decision to progress

- The Session will gain, from the Committee of Management, agreement to meet the costs of the consultancy.
- The Session of the local church requests a consultancy through the Co-ordinator. This will be reported and approved by the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee.
- The type of engagement will be initially identified and confirmed at the first formal meeting of the consultancy team with Session. Generally, consultancies fall into one of the following five areas:
  - Vision and Values.
  - Standard consultancy including: Preventative-Proactive.

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- Leadership and/or Governance Review.
- Transitional or change management.
- Crisis Intervention (typically involving conflict or moral failure).
- The Facilitation & Consultancy Agreement will be confirmed by the Session.
- The engagement is approved, at least two consultants will be assigned by the Co-ordinator.

### What's involved

No one engagement is the same as the issues and dynamics from one church to another are not the same.

Consultants are trained in a number of tools and techniques that they can adapt to each engagement. However, the following will commonly occur:

- **Objectives setting** - The consultants will generally conduct an Objectives setting meeting with Session, broader leadership and/or congregation on its first visit, which will set the key objectives to be met for the engagement. This will be agreed by Session before the consultancy continues.
- **Facilitated Information gathering sessions** involving the broader membership of the church, to gather demographics, identify and clarify issues, work through the resolution of key issues,
- A **report** will usually be presented at the end of the engagement which will include the objectives, findings and recommendations for Session. The team will usually walk the Session and others (as Session views appropriate) through the report prior to finalising it and presenting it to Session.

### Governance

The services provided by the team are governed by the Ministry and Mission Committee. Following are key policies:

#### Independence

The team will take note and accommodate reasonable requests in relation to findings and recommendations in reports provided to the church at the end of an engagement. However, the team reserves the right to provide a clear and independent report based on their findings.

#### Accountability

The ministry operates under the authority of the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee who invites and accredits members of the team and who is responsible for maintaining professional standards among team members.

#### Supervision

The ministry is lead by the Consultancy Co-ordinator. The Co-ordinator ensures regular training and oversight of all team members.

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Each consultancy, while in progress, is supervised by an experienced member of the team.

### Confidentiality

The ministry 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 engagement as confidential to the church concerned and the currently accredited members of the team. Details may be discussed within the broader team for the purpose of skill development and peer review. Under some circumstances, legal and code of conduct requirements may obligate a consultant to disclose particular matters to relevant authorities.
- Any allegation of sexual abuse emerging during a consultancy will be treated under the Presbyterian Church of NSW policy in relation to the prevention of sexual abuse and relevant State/Territory laws.
- Before any referrals are made to people outside the team (e.g. for professional advice) permission will be gained from the appropriate authority in the church.
- The Superintendent Ministry and Mission Committee, having general oversight of the consulting work, or their representative have access to any and all information pertaining to engagements. They may request information from the consultancy team and matters may be referred to the Supervisor if required. The Superintendent will receive a copy of the final report of each consultancy.

### Session and Presbytery

- Should any matter arise which might appear to call for the exercise of discipline, the roles of the Session and Presbytery will be respected.
- The ministry is usually engaged by Session of the church. Where Presbytery has a role and wants to be involved in an engagement with a church that Session will need to provide approval.
- Presbytery's can engage the ministry to provide it with services.

### Costs

Consultants provide their time free of charge. However, there are costs associated with ongoing training of the team, travel to churches and other incidental out of pocket expenses. M&M's aim is to keep these costs as low as possible, charges are based on covering the costs of delivering the engagement with a small contribution towards the ongoing support of this ministry (which is mainly covered by M&M).

Fees for church consultancies are reviewed regularly to ensure the sustainability of the ministry.

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The standard consultancy fee is **\$1500 for each engagement**. This cost assumes the following:

- Two to three visits;
- Two consultants are involved; and
- The consultancy is not a major conflict or recovery type of consultancy (which will usually have a higher cost as more consultants are needed).

Depending on the type of consultancy this fee could be discounted (ie facilitation of a planning day requiring only 1 consultant) or additional charges might be applied (ie significant conflict or recovery where more than 2 consultants are required). Consideration will be given to churches in financial hardship on request.

## What Next

If you would like more information, please contact the Coordinator or the Ministry and Mission Committee. Co-ordinator contact details are as follows:

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