

Pursuing Health

An Introduction to Church Consultancies



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

An Introduction to Church Consultancy

Within the Presbyterian Church

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Foreword

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 and processes of our consultancy services and how your church can access those services.

Please read through this booklet carefully. If you would then like to consider having our consultants help in your work or if you need more information before making that decision, please contact the Rev. Peter Currie, Ministry Development Coordinator, by phone on (02) 4284 4057, email to peter@woononapcc.org.au, or mail to 7 Gray St, Woonona NSW 2517.

Bruce Meller
Superintendent

What is Church Consultancy?

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.

Church Consultancy is being provided with benefit to congregations in at least ten other denominations. As a result, they have become more "healthy" and are making a greater impact for the kingdom of God.

Church Consultancy 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.

What Church Consultancy is not.

Church consultancies do not hold out easy, unrealistic solutions. Rather, they allow alternative strategies to be compared and evaluated until achievable goals are determined.

Church consultancies do not impose a monochromatic, stereotypical programme. Because each church is unique, the Consultancy Team draws on a broad range of resources, applying them as local circumstances might indicate.

Church consultancies do not serve as an opportunity for outsiders to impose their views. While Team members have the advantage of objectivity because they are not caught up in local issues, their role as consultants is to assist the leadership. Ultimately, local objectives are set by the leaders of the local church.

Church consultancies do not substitute for presbyterial visitations. Presbyteries have their own role within the Church and our consultants are not permitted to undertake fact-finding missions for presbyteries.

How a Consultancy Might 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.

Our trained consultants can help churches to:

- review the health or direction of the church,
 - establishing values, vision, mission and goal statements
 - reviewing achievements against goals
 - reviewing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the church's current ministries
 - reviewing the leadership structure or model
 - reviewing the effectiveness of the pastoral team's leadership
- face change responsibly
 - when a church is growing and needs to change its structures
 - when a church has reached a plateau
 - when a church is vacant
 - when a church is declining
 - when a church is considering a major change – e.g. a new ministry, a partnership with another church, or a church plant
- address periods of difficulty
 - when a specific issue threatens to hinder unity and growth – e.g. moral failure
 - when the church needs external objectivity to crystallise issues or see through challenges
 - when the church is experiencing conflict

Consultancy Processes

We set out, here, the key steps in the consultancy process.

- The Session of the local church requests a consultancy through the Consultancy Co-ordinator. This will be reported to the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee and the Consultancy Team Supervisors.
- If the Superintendent considers it desirable, he may meet with the minister, elders and leaders of particular ministries in the congregation to explain the consultancy process and assess the application.

- The type of consultancy will be agreed upon. Generally, consultancies fall into one of the following five areas:
 - Preventative-Proactive
 - Leadership Review
 - Church Vacancy
 - Church Planting
 - Crisis Intervention (typically involving conflict or moral failure)
- The Session will gain, from the Committee of Management, agreement to meet the costs of the consultancy.
- The Consultancy Agreement will be confirmed by the Session.
- If a consultancy is approved, two consultants will be assigned by the Consultancy Co-ordinator.
- The consultants will conduct an Information Evening where they will explain the consultancy process, clarify expectations, and answer questions. This meeting will be open to all interested members of the congregation.
- The Session will establish a consultancy working party consisting of the minister/s, some or all of the elders, and selected leaders of other ministries within the congregation.
- Meetings will be held with this working party as necessary and action will be taken to promote the purposes of the consultancy.
 - The first meeting with the working party will establish objectives for the consultancy.
 - At least two further meetings will be held with the working party (and other persons as necessary) according to the type of consultancy and the objectives established.
- The consultancy report will be prepared towards the conclusion of the consultancy process. A draft of this report will be submitted to the Consultancy Supervisor and/or trainers for their consideration and feedback. The report will then be finalised and presented to the congregation's leadership, normally on a weeknight. (Occasionally it will become apparent that the objectives established for a consultancy are not as important as some other issues. In such situations, the church's leadership will be asked to review and amend the original recommendations or request a different type of consultancy.)
- The process ends with the presentation of the report to the congregation, normally on the Sunday following its presentation to the congregation's leadership. [In some instances the consultants may be available to help the church in the implementation of one or more of the recommendations made through the consultancy, however this will be require a new agreement to be made for this purpose.]

Consultancy Participants

All members of a congregation may participate in the consultancy process, however that participation will be expressed in different ways. At the very least, participants should include the minister/s, elders and leaders of other congregational ministries. However, for the best results, the whole congregation should be available to share in the consultancy process.

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.

Supervision

The Consultancy team is supervised by the Rev. Peter Currie, John Irvin and Mrs Karen McMillan. The Supervisors provide regular training to all team members. Additional training is provided by Rev. Tim Dyer, an associate of John Mark Ministries.

Each consultancy, while in progress, is supervised by one of the Supervisors.

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.
- The final consultancy report will be released, complete and unamended, to the congregation. After its presentation to the congregation, the report will be provided to the Superintendent of the Ministry and Mission Committee. The Session may then

- choose to submit the report to the Presbytery.
- Members of the Consultancy Team may refer to the Supervisor any matter arising from any consultancy.
- 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.
- 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.

Session Agreement

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 because of both the training they receive and the wisdom that they accumulate through experience. We therefore consider that few Sessions would withhold their agreement, although we respect their right to do so.) Members will only be added to the Consultancy Team when the approval of the Session has been received.

Consultant's Covenant

For an initial period of three years, with the option of renewal for a further three year period after accreditation, each consultant has entered 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 model of consultancy to be used by the Team.
- Adhere to the official policies and procedures established for the consultancy process.
- Respect and observe the Supervisor's role in the consultancy process.
- 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 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.

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.

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.

What Next

If you would like to engage consultants for your church, please complete the attached Church Consultancy Agreement Form.

If you would like more information, please contact the Ministry Development Coordinator of the Ministry and Mission Committee as shown below:

Name: Rev. P. Currie
Mail: 7 Gray St, Woonona NSW 2517
Email: peter@woononapcc.org.au
Phone: (02) 4284 4057



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168 Chalmers St
Surry Hills NSW 2010

Church Consultancy Costs Sheet

The following costs will apply for a Church Consultancy

1. Consultancy Fees

Based on total adult attendance of congregation

Less than 50 people	\$250	151-200 people	\$400
51-100 people	\$300	201-250 people	\$450
101-150 people	\$350	251-300 people	\$500

2. Travel Costs

The Consultants are not paid for their service as consultants. It is vital, therefore, that their travel costs are met by the congregation in which they are consulting. (If these costs would present a problem, please speak to Bruce Meller about this issue.)

When the consultants travel by car, costs will be charged at 40c per kilometre based on the two consultants travelling together. Where distance prevents car travel, other arrangements will be negotiated with the congregation on a case-by-case basis.

3. Accommodation and Hospitality Costs

Normally, consultants are hosted in the homes of church members. Where it will be necessary to use motel accommodation, the costs will be agreed with the church before the start of the consultancy.

Meals and refreshments should be provided by the congregation involved in the consultancy.

4. Suggested donation

Where possible, the congregation involved in the consultancy should endeavour to make a donation to the consultant's home church as a way of thanking it for releasing the consultant. The donation should respect the value of the time devoted to the consultancy both in meeting with the congregation and preparing reports and recommendations.

5. Invoice

Consultancies are not charged in advance. Instead, costs (as agreed) will be invoiced to the congregation at the end of the consultancy.

6. More information

You are welcome to discuss the costs of a consultancy for your church. Please contact:

Peter Currie Phone: (02) 4284 4057 Email: peter@woononapcc.org.au
or
Bruce Meller Phone: (02) 9690 9318 Email: bmeller@pcnsw.org.au