



# Ministry Agent Housing

E/8.2

## Purpose

The Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod must provide ministry agents called to serve in an approved placement a stipend. The stipend provides for the living needs of a person who is called by God to serve in ministry. A fundamental part of the need to provide living needs is the provision of appropriate accommodation for the ministry agent and their family. This accommodation is either within the Church manse or other approved accommodation. Such requirements are grounded in relevant Uniting Church in Australia – Regulations; the Queensland Synod By-Laws and this policy.

## Scope

This policy applies to:

- all ministry agents in placement engaged in ministry and related activities of the Uniting Church in Australia within the bounds of the Queensland Synod, Trinity College Queensland and the other service agencies across the Church.
- Compliance is achieved through adherence to the Regulations, By-Laws and the principles of this policy.

## Policy

### 1. Governing Principles

Regulation 2.7.1(c) currently requires the provision of housing for ministry agents in placement to be determined by the Synod or other determining body.

### 2. Governing By-Laws

Queensland Synod By-Law Q5.4.1 requires the church to provide a suitable residence (manse) as part of appointing a ministry agent to a placement within a congregation or service agency.

### 3. Place of Residence

- a. Ministers serving in a congregation shall normally reside within its bounds at a place determined by the Church Council, provided that residence elsewhere may be permitted if approved by the Church Council, and by the presbytery.
- b. Ministers serving other than in congregations shall reside at such place as may be approved by the Presbytery, Synod, Department or other body concerned.

### 4. Furniture and furnishings provided by Congregation

Manses shall be provided with the following -

- a. **Basic Furnishings** - blinds, curtains, light fittings, floor coverings (in neutral tonings).
- b. **Furniture** -
  - a. Lounge - nil
  - b. Dining Room - nil
  - c. Kitchen -
    - i. Kitchen suite, unless rendered unnecessary by the design of the kitchen.



- ii. Refrigerator - minimum capacity 400 litres, complete with separate freezer storage.
  - iii. Ample built-in cupboards.
- d. Main Bedroom - built-in wardrobes, painted in neutral tonings.
- e. Each additional bedroom -
  - i. Two single beds in each bedroom complete with good quality inner-spring or rubber mattress to each bed.
  - ii. Dressing table or chest of drawers.
  - iii. Wardrobes, preferably built-in.
- f. Study -
  - i. Desk of minimum size 1400mm x 750mm with at least three (3) drawers.
  - ii. Chair with swivel and tilt mechanism.
  - iii. Steel four (4) drawer lockable filing cabinet.
  - iv. Storage cupboard.
  - v. Three (3) visitor's chairs.
  - vi. Shelving of minimum length 20m.
- g. Bathroom –
  - i. Shaving Cabinet.
  - ii. Mirror
  - iii. Towel rails of minimum total length 3m

#### 5. Provision by Minister

A minister is expected to provide the following items -

- a. Main bedroom furniture, except wardrobes.
- b. Lounge and dining room furniture.
- c. Washing machine.
- d. Crockery, cutlery, kitchenware, all domestic items.
- e. Electric appliances.
- f. Linen and bedding.

#### 6. Range of Flexibility

Notwithstanding clause 4 and 5, the minister shall, after consultation with the congregation at the commencement of a placement, have the option of providing the following-

- a. any item of bedroom furniture, in which case any congregational furniture not required during that particular placement shall be stored or sold by the congregation. This provision shall not apply to a bedroom designated as a guest room.
- b. any other item of furniture listed as a congregational responsibility under clause 4 only if the congregation is satisfied that there is suitable space available for the surplus item in the manse.

#### 7. Building and Furnishing Standards

- a. Manses, and other Church-owned ministerial residences shall satisfy the principles and criteria outlined in the Synod document titled "The Design, Equipping and Furnishing of Manses", together with any current amendments and additions.
- b. In exceptional circumstances approved by the presbytery, appropriate reductions in the space and furniture requirements may be approved by the presbytery and the FIP Board in consultation with the congregation or department concerned and after reference to the person who is to take up occupancy.



## 8. Ministerial Housing

The Third Synod adopted the following statement as indicating policy on ministerial housing -

- a. **Rented Manses:** Where consideration is being given to a new manse in localities where dwellings are readily available for rental or lease, and the standards would meet the requirements of the By-Laws for manses [now outlined in this policy], Church Councils should give consideration to rental or lease as an alternative to manse ownership. Such an arrangement assumes that the varying family needs of successive ministers may be better met in rented dwellings. Where this is not likely to be the case, rented accommodation should not be considered as a long-term solution.
- b. **Residences Privately Owned by Ministers:**
  - i. The Church recognises that the necessity for a minister to take up duty in varying localities often places the minister in a disadvantageous position with respect to the provision of a home at retirement.
  - ii. The Church acknowledges a responsibility to offset this disadvantage where possible.
  - iii. Therefore, where a minister seeks to purchase or rent a home and reside in it in preference to occupying a manse, and the proposed dwelling would reasonably meet the requirements for a manse, the church will give serious consideration to meeting such a request. However, a residence beyond the bounds of a minister's appointed congregation would not normally be considered suitable. Approval by the presbytery of such occupancy is necessary, and negotiations with the Church Council prior to purchase are recommended.
- c. **Shared Manse:** Where the cost of the manse will be shared between two or more congregations or bodies, the contributions towards the cost (eg maintenance, rental, lease) will be negotiated and shared between the bodies.

## 9. GNRC Resolution

Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee resolution of 13.111 of 11 December 2013 approved, irrespective of marital status and or living arrangements, all ministers in receipt of a stipend who are entitled to the provision of a manse and are not provided with a manse, are entitled to the provision of the housing allowance equal to their pro-rata stipend.

## 10. Placements Committee Determinations

- a. In situations where a ministry agent is in at least a 50% placement, and where a manse is available, the ministry agent is entitled to the provision of the manse without the need to contribute financially.
- b. Where there is no available manse, the ministry agent in a placement of 50% or more, the ministry agent is entitled to a full house allowance.
- c. Where the placement is less than 50%, the ministry agent should only be paid a house allowance equal to the percentage of their placement.

## 11. Other Housing Considerations

- a. To be clear, no one ministry agent is entitled to receive a housing allowance greater than 100% unless a higher payment has been negotiated prior to a call being issued.
- b. The terms and conditions of a placement including any negotiated allowances must be agreed to prior to a call being issued.
- c. Where there are other circumstances that impact on the provision of the manse or the house allowance, an alternative arrangement through mutual agreement which is endorsed by the presbytery and approved by the Synod's placements committee may be put in place.



- d. The agreed accommodation arrangement must be written in all “call” documents.

## 12. Quantum of Manse Allowance

The manse allowance is reviewed on an annual basis by the GNRC. This review gives consideration to comparable rental markets with an aim that ministry agents are not adversely affected. Where the house allowance does not cover all rented accommodation, no further consideration will be given

## 13. Location of Alternate Housing

Where a ministry agent is requested to live in the area of the placement and there is no manse available, the congregation may offer rented accommodation which meets the guidelines in lieu of providing the house allowance. In situations where this occurs, the ministry agent is responsible for their respective utility costs if those are not included in the rental arrangement.

## Related documents

- POL-0001 Privacy
- The Uniting Church in Australia Regulations
- The Queensland Synod By-Laws

## Definitions

Term	Meaning
Queensland Synod	Means the work and activities of the Uniting Church in Australia performed within the bounds of the Queensland Synod office including the Trinity College Queensland, Rayment Residential College, the Alexandra Park Conference Centre, Uniting Education and Learning, congregations, presbyteries and service agencies of the Church.
Regulations	Means those regulations as prescribed and changed from time to time by the Uniting Church in Australia.
By-Laws	Means the support rules as determined by the Queensland Synod which may be changed from time to time.
GNRC	Means the Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee (no known as the Remuneration and Nomination Committee) as established by the Queensland Synod which determines stipend, and allowance matters for ministry agents.
Manse	Means a suitable residence for each minister called or appointed thereto as defined in Queensland Synod By-Law Q5.4.1 .
House Allowance	Means the quantum of money that is determined by the GNRC to assist in the provision of housing for the ministry agent and their family.

## Revisions

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Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
2.0	16.03.2023	Remuneration and Nomination Committee (Res 23.070)	16.03.2023	People and Culture	People and Culture Manager
Next scheduled review		01.07.2025			