



# Mission Development Fund (MDF)

Policy No. G1.6

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## Introduction

The Uniting Church in Australia carries out its mission and service through its congregations, presbyteries, institutions, parish missions and other entities, schools, childcare centres, committees commissions and councils. According to our Constitution, we are all stewards of the property and funds held by any part of the church. We acknowledge that the property and funds of the church are for the benefit of the mission of the whole church. We pray that as one church we may be open to the sharing of all our resources to fulfil this mission.

## Purpose

The Mission Development Fund (MDF) will be a sustainable resource for long term church growth and development. It will be used for capital and development opportunities which provide growth in Congregations, Presbyteries, and the Synod in order to promote the mission of the church. (Reg 4.8.1(c)(i)).

## Scope

The intent is to ensure that the funds collected and managed in this Fund are properly aligned to contemporary mission strategy and priorities across all Presbyteries in the Queensland Synod (but not agencies and schools).

## Policy

### 1. Principles

#### 1.1 Consultation

In the application of this policy the Synod Property Board is obliged to consult with all relevant entities when assessing the proposed sale of property. During this consultation process, regard shall be given to the missional priorities of the responsible body and any other relevant entity.

#### 1.2 Alignment with promotion of the mission of the church

*Any relevant entity can work with any responsible body for the development of missional plans to promote the mission of the church. Eg. Presbyteries will consult and work with congregations in assisting them to develop missional plans and to regularly assess the progress of those plans.*

#### 1.3 Application for capital or investment use only

1.3.1 An application may be made for capital development or capital and financial investment. This does not include applications for maintenance of property.

- Maintenance expenses include such things as carpets, painting, signage, replacement of items such as dishwashers, data projectors etc.
- Capital or investment use includes purchase of real estate, financial investment, major property re/development etc.

1.3.2 If upon an application by a Congregation, there is a question between maintenance and capital, the Presbytery will be the decision maker in the first instance and then if approved, provide their reasons to the Synod Property Board. The Synod Property Board will be the final decision maker.



**1.4 Application for strategic innovation or strategic mission**

A responsible body applying for funds toward strategic mission or innovation shall ensure their application complies with the strategic mission and priorities of any relevant entity. Strategic innovation or mission can include church planting project costs, including property and people, and major missional outreach programs.

**1.5 Funds cannot be used for any other purpose**

Funds held in the MDF account can only be used in accordance with this policy. They shall not be used for operational purposes or for the payment of any legal claims made against the church.

**2. Application of this policy**

2.1 This policy shall come into effect as at 15 May 2022 determined by the Synod.

2.2 This policy shall apply to all major sales of property (Reg. 4.1.1) held in the name of the Property Trust, where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod.

2.3 Subject to the Regulations (Reg 4.8), the sum of the net proceeds from a property sale where the responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, shall be deposited into the MDF.

2.4 The sum of the net proceeds from a property sale shall be held in the MDF on behalf of the responsible body for a period of up to seven (7) years.

2.5 Interest may be paid and credited to the proceeds at an agreed rate not exceeding the maximum set by the Synod Property Board.

**3. Selling a property**

**3.1 The Responsible Body**

The body responsible for the management and administration of the property to be sold, shall make an application to the Synod Property Board, with the approval of all relevant entities for the sale of property (Reg 4.6.3).

**3.2 Synod Property Board**

The Synod Property Board shall assess and determine all proposals involving the sale of property and shall give due advice in writing to the responsible body and any other relevant entity.

**4. Applying to use funds held in the MDF**

Any Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod, may seek access to the fund for projects which are aligned with the missional priorities of the responsible body and all other relevant entity and:

- a. Support or fund capital development and/or strategic innovation opportunities for the church; and/or
- b. Produce a financial return on investment and/or strategic mission benefit to the church.

**5. Reporting obligations on use of funds**

Where funds have been used under this policy, the responsible body shall provide annual reporting as to the use and outcomes of the use of the funds to the Synod Property Board, as directed by that Board.

**6. Use of interest on funds**

Responsible bodies should avoid having to use interest accruing on proceeds of sale for normal expenses. Nevertheless, this policy will allow a responsible body to use such interest for normal expenses to remain viable and to continue their witness and service in the community. This arrangement will be reviewed annually by the Synod Property Board in consultation with the relevant entity.



**7. Use of funds held for a period of over 7 years**

Where the responsible body is a Congregation and has funds in the MDF for a period of 7 years and no approved missional plan has been presented to the Presbytery within those 7 years, the Presbytery shall become the responsible body for the funds held by that Congregation.

For all other entities, if no approved missional plan has been presented to the Synod within 7 years the Synod shall become the responsible body for the funds held by that entity.

**8. Ability of responsible body to surrender its funds**

Any responsible body may transfer the funds held in the MDF on its behalf, to any other responsible body at any time.

**9. Transitional provisions**

Existing funds and projects that are already in place and are aligned with the missional planning and priorities of the relevant entities shall remain in the MDF without alteration.

Upon the adoption of this policy, the Synod Property Board will advise the Presbytery or relevant entity of any funds that has been or will have been held in the MDF for a period of 7 years in the next 18 months. That Presbytery or relevant entity shall consult with the responsible body to determine if a missional plan exists. If at the conclusion of a period of 18 months after the adoption of this policy, no missional plan exists for those funds, then the Synod Property Board shall transfer the relevant funds, within the MDF, to the Presbytery or relevant entity for their use as the responsible body.

**Related documents**

Document No.	Document
1	Document comparing 2002 Policy and 2008 MDF Guidelines
2	General Property Proposal Template
3	Tailored Property Proposal for Accessing Mission Development Funds (MDF) Template
4	Sale of Property Flowchart (Reg 4.6.3)
5	Application for Purchase of Property



## Definitions

Term	Meaning
<b>Property Trust</b>	The legal framework for the Church is based on an Act of Parliament <i>the Uniting Church in Australia Act 1977</i> . This Act provides for the establishment of the Church and the legal entity called 'The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.)'. All Church property held in the name of the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod is vested in the Property Trust.
<i>The Responsible Body</i>	Is the body responsible for the management and administration of the property (Reg 4.1.1). For the purposes of this policy, a responsible body is a Congregation, Presbytery, or the Synod.
<i>Synod Property Board</i>	<i>The role of the Synod Property Board is to supervise the implementation of the Synod's policies in regard to property within the bounds of the Synod (Reg 4.2.1 (b)). The Synod Property Board must assess any proposed sale of property before that transaction can be put into effect. (Reg 4.2.1(d)). The Synod Property Board is a relevant entity when considering any application under this policy and it will observe the missional priorities of the Synod.</i>
<i>Presbytery</i>	<i>The role of the Presbytery is to have such oversight as is necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area committed to it (Const. 26). This includes promoting the wider work of the Church through the promotion and conduct of activities that promote a fuller participation in the whole range of Christian witness and service (Reg 3.1.3(e)(iii)). The Presbytery is a relevant entity when considering applications by a Congregation under this policy.</i>
<i>Synod Property Officer</i>	<i>The Synod Property Officer shall be responsible for instituting all such processes as are necessary, including those prescribed by Regulation to seek sales of properties when appropriate agreements have been reached. The Synod Property Officer shall do all things necessary to give effect to this policy including the disbursement of funds and interest on funds and the investment of funds.</i>

## Revisions

Document number		G1.6			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
1.0	15/05/2022	36 <sup>th</sup> Synod	15/05/2022	Synod Property Officer	Manager, Finance
Next scheduled review		TBA			