G4.1 Property Stewardship Policy

This policy document sets forth the framework for Property Stewardship within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod.

Purpose

This Policy establishes the principles and responsibilities for the stewardship of real property within the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod including management, development, strategic planning, and alternative missional use to ensure alignment with the mission and regulatory requirements of the Uniting Church in Australia and the Property Principles set out by the Finance Investment and Property Board (FIPB).

Scope

This Policy applies to all property stewardship activities undertaken by the Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod, Presbyteries and Congregations that are Responsible Bodies under the Regulations.

This Policy does not apply to UnitingCare Queensland Limited, Wesley Mission Queensland Limited and Property Trust Schools.

In the event of any ambiguity, conflict, or inconsistency between this Policy and any other document, the provisions of this Policy will prevail and be given primacy to the extent of such inconsistency.

Principles

As endorsed by FIPB, February 2022 with *amendments* made by SSC in August 2026:

PRINCIPLE 1 – STEWARDSHIP

•Property is for the benefit *of the mission* of the whole Church

•We have a responsibility to properly maintain property to ensure it is fit for purpose and its value is maintained for future generations.

PRINCIPLE 2 – SUSTAINABILITY

•We have a responsibility to optimise utilisation of property and generate commercial returns, or near, for portions that are not solely dedicated to mission

•Property can be wholly set aside to generate commercial returns

•Property can be 'land banked' in line with strategy

PRINCIPLE 3 – DIVERSITY / ONE CHURCH

•Property should support contemporary mission strategies and priorities across the whole of the Church

•Decisions about property must not be made in isolation, but taking heed of the needs of other entities in the Church

PRINCIPLE 4 – GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

•We follow good governance practices including making collaborative decisions that are prudent and sustainable

•We have a responsibility to follow transparent processes and be accountable in reporting

•Responsible Bodies are accountable for ensuring that property is managed in accordance with these Principles.

Policy

1. Governance and Accountability

1.1 The Synod Standing Committee (SSC) holds ultimate governance, oversight and directive power over the Queensland Synod. The FIPB performs the functions of the Synod Property Board and advises and assists the SSC in fulfilling its role as it relates to stewardship of Church property.

1.2 The FIPB oversees the stewardship, use and development of Church property, ensuring property decisions are consistent with mission, the Property Principles, Synod policy and governance requirements. The FIPB oversees all property matters in the Queensland Synod and is the decision-making body for property matters as per the Regulations for the Property Board.

1.3 Significant Property Matters require Synod Standing Committee approval following consideration and recommendation by the FIPB.

1.4 All property and property-related activities must be conducted in accordance with this policy.

1.5 All property and property-related activities must be undertaken relationally, transparently, ethically, prudently, demonstrating clear accountability and responsibility at every level of decision-making.

2. Role of the Synod Property Team

2.1 The Synod Office, through the General Secretary, will ensure there is a resourced Synod Property Team.

2.2 The Synod Property Team will be provided sufficient staffing and operational resourcing to carry out its role and responsibilities.

2.3 The Synod Property Team will provide property advice and services to the Synod.

2.4 The Synod Property Team has an advisory role to the FIPB as the decision-making body for property matters.

2.5 The Synod Property Team will support the Responsible Bodies and Presbyteries by providing advice, assistance, frameworks, systems, processes and training to enable ethical, prudent and responsible decisions about the management of property.

2.6 The Synod Property Team may assess and probe the decisions made by Responsible Bodies and Presbytery as risk owners and provide overall property risk oversight to support the FIPB.

2.7 The Synod Property Team may actively manage a property project on behalf of, and in conjunction with, a Responsible Body and/or Presbytery.

2.8 The Synod Property Team may provide strategic advisory, consultancy and delivery management services to Responsible Bodies, Church Councils and Presbyteries. The Synod Property Team may charge a reasonable fee for their services.

2.9 Except in cases approved by the General Secretary, fees apply to services provided by the Synod Property Team to a Responsible Body. Reasonable fees will be determined by the Synod Office and documented in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) where required.

2.10 The Synod Property Team will manage, maintain, and oversee all property matters where the Synod Office is designated as the Responsible Body, ensuring compliance, strategic use, and alignment with the Church's mission and policies.

2.11 The Synod Property Team may request information from Responsible Bodies and Presbyteries to facilitate planning and reporting in relation to property across the Synod.

3. Mission Plans and Property

3.1 Each Church Council, as a Responsible Body, will develop a Mission Plan to promote the mission of the Church.

3.2 A Church Council, as a Responsible Body, will provide their Mission Plan to the Presbytery which will consider the plan and, if appropriate, approve the plan.

3.3 Presbyteries are responsible for the oversight of Mission Plans and may review plans and request progress updates with respect to a plan from Church Council.

3.4 The use of Church property must align with the approved Mission Plan of each Responsible Body and with the Property Principles.

4. Property Oversight

4.1 Appropriate property oversight supports good stewardship of property and is necessary to ensure that all Church properties are managed, inspected, maintained and administered in accordance with legislative requirements (e.g. the *Building Act 1975* (Qld)).

4.2 The Responsible Body is accountable for the management and administration of property for which they are responsible. A Responsible Body must carry out those responsibilities or appoint another body to undertake those responsibilities either in whole or in part.

4.3 A Church Council, as a Responsible Body, subject to the Regulations and this Policy, will:

- Determine the use of land and buildings for which they are responsible;
- Manage proposals for acquisition, disposal, or changes to property rights;
- Make recommendations regarding construction, demolition, or alteration of buildings;
- Consult with the Congregation on proposals with substantial impact; and
- Consult and engage with the Presbytery in relation to these matters.

All property decisions made by a Church Council must be made in alignment with their approved Mission Plan and the Property Principles.

4.4 Each Presbytery must appoint a Presbytery Property Committee to:

- Advise Church Councils and other bodies on property matters;
- Review and where appropriate endorse property proposals;
- Initiate property-related actions, and
- Arrange regular inspections to ensure properties are well maintained.

A Presbytery Property Committee may be authorised by the Presbytery to supervise, maintain, and report on properties, or undertake other property responsibilities.

4.5 All property work undertaken by a Church Council, as a Responsible Body, where the total project value exceeds or is anticipated to exceed $50,000 excluding GST, must be endorsed by the Presbytery Property Committee and approved by the FIPB prior to the commencement of the property work.

5. Property Utilisation

5.1 The Responsible Body must ensure that all property under its care is utilised in alignment with the Property Principles.

5.2 If a property is vacant, the Responsible Body must document the reason for its vacancy and the purpose for retaining the property.

5.3 Where property is leased or licensed for non-missional or commercial purposes, the Responsible Body must apply market rent, or within 10% of market rent, to generate appropriate returns.

5.4 Appropriate documentation must be in place for all temporary, short-term, and long-term uses of property which specifies purpose of property use, insurance coverage, and ensures compliance with legislation, regulatory requirements, and Church policy.

5.5 Manse housing for Ministry Agents must be managed in accordance with the Ministry Agent Housing Policy (E8.2) and associated procedures.

5.6 Residential properties, including manses and other residential properties, must adhere to the Queensland Government minimum housing standards for residential properties.

6. Property Maintenance

6.1 Property Maintenance encompasses the mandatory ongoing care, upkeep, and legislative compliance required for all Church properties to ensure they remain safe, functional, and fit for purpose in support of the Church's mission.

6.2 A Responsible Body must assign funds to budget for appropriate property maintenance, and the establishment of a sinking fund is recommended.

6.3 A Responsible Body must ensure that structural or specialised maintenance and repairs are undertaken by an appropriately qualified and insured person.

6.4 Each Church Council, as a Responsible Body, is responsible for the care and maintenance of all property acquired or held for the use of the Congregation, ensuring that all properties are maintained in a safe, functional, and compliant condition.

6.5 Each Presbytery Property Committee must regularly inspect or arrange for the regular inspection of properties for which the Presbytery, Church Councils, and other bodies within its bounds are responsible, excluding properties where the Synod is the Responsible Body, and must propose and report to the Presbytery Standing Committee such actions as may be necessary to ensure that properties are maintained in good and safe condition.

6.6 The Synod Property Team will perform the duties of inspection and maintenance for properties for which the Synod Office is responsible.

7. Property Development Projects

7.1 Property Development encompasses the planning, management, and delivery of projects that unlock the potential of current or proposed Church property assets, balancing missional objectives with commercial opportunities to support the long-term sustainability and growth of the Church.

7.2 All property development projects are subject to the governance requirements of the FIPB. Except for Significant Property Matters, property development projects are subject to approval by the FIPB.

7.3 Significant Property Matters must be considered by the FIPB and referred to the Synod Standing Committee for approval.

7.4 All property development activities, from initiation to closure, must be undertaken in accordance with the Property Development Process and the associated Policies and Procedures.

7.5 The Synod Property Team, reports to the Executive Director of Finance, Property and Enterprises. The Team is responsible for the management and oversight of:

- All property development projects undertaken by the Synod Office;
- All property development projects which fall within the description of a Major property development project; Any other property development project where the FIPB determines that the Synod Property Team should be engaged; and
- All property development projects where a Responsible Body engages the Synod Property Team to provide advice and/or services.

7.6 The Synod Property Team must maintain a register of all property development projects.

7.7 Non-Major and Moderate Value property development projects may be led and managed by a Responsible Body in accordance with the Property Development Process and the Property Development Procedure which administers and controls activities for Non-Major and Moderate Value projects.

7.8 A Responsible Body may seek the support and assistance of the Synod Property Team in relation to a Non-Major project and Moderate Value projects.

8. Strategic Asset Management Planning

8.1 Strategic Asset Management Planning provides a systematic approach to the long-term stewardship, optimisation, and reporting of Church property assets, to ensure decisions are informed by accurate data, aligned with the mission and priorities of the Church, and that property meets all compliance requirements.

8.2 The Synod Office will maintain and update the strategic asset management platform for the purpose of long-term planning and to support FIPB in the stewardship of the property portfolio.

8.3 The Synod Office will review, validate, and upload property data to the platform, and will provide regular summary reports to Responsible Bodies and Presbyteries, including key findings, compliance status, and recommendations.

8.4 The Synod Property Team will utilise platform data for strategic planning and reporting to the FIPB, Presbyteries and Congregations.

9. **Alternative Missional Use**

9.1 Alternative Missional Use (AMU) enables Church property and related resources to be reclassified and directed towards new or strategic mission initiatives, ensuring that assets are utilised to support emerging congregations, faith communities, and other missional priorities as determined by the Synod, and that use of Church assets is in alignment with the Property Principles.

9.2 Church Property may be classified as available for Alternative Missional Use where:

- The Congregation and Church Council resolve to make the property available for AMU; or
- Following a consultation convened by the Presbytery with the Congregation and Church Council, for the purpose of consideration of whether the property should be classified for AMU, the Presbytery recommends that all or part of the property be classified for AMU; and
- FIPB endorses and provides a recommendation to the Synod Standing Committee to classify property for AMU; and
- The Synod or Synod Standing Committee resolves to classify the property for AMU.

10. Reporting and information requirements

10.1 To fulfil its property governance mandate, the FIPB requires access to timely and accurate information about Church property across the Queensland Synod. Responsible Bodies must comply with the governance requirements in relation to property.

10.2 All Responsible Bodies must provide the Synod Property team with the information required for reporting to the FIPB, and any other information required to facilitate the role of the Synod Property Team under this policy in the format and time prescribed by the Synod Office.

10.3 A Church Council, as a Responsible Body, must report to the Presbytery about the property for which the Church Council is responsible, including matters of oversight, utilisation and maintenance, on a regular basis.

Related documents

Property Development Process

Property Development Procedure (in draft)

Ministry Agent Housing Policy (E8.2) (POL-MAP-02)

Definitions

Term	Meaning
Alternative Missional Use	See Regulation 4.11.10
Church Council	See Regulation 4.4
Moderate Value Property Development project	A Moderate Value Property Project is a capital works project with an estimated total project value between $2 million and $5 million excluding GST where a Responsible Body has requested, and FIPB has given approval for the Responsible Body lead the Property Development project. FIPB may approve this request where it is satisfied the Responsible Body it demonstrates suitable: • capability, • capacity, • governance arrangements, • project management expertise and • access to appropriate specialist resources. Approved projects are to be supported by a Project Steering Committee and reported to the Responsible Body, Presbytery and FIPB set out in the Property Development Process.
Finance Investment and Property Board (FIPB)	See Regulation 4.2 Known in the Regulations as the “Property Board”, the Board is responsible for advising on property policies, supervising their implementation, consulting and advising Church entities on property matters, receiving and deciding on property proposals, initiating property-related actions, and performing additional duties as delegated by the Synod.
Missional Project	A Property Development project where the primary purpose is the advancement of ministry, mission, or an approved Synod strategic priority, rather than the generation of a financial return. A project may be classified as a Missional Project in accordance with the Property Development Process.
Major project / Major property development project	A major project includes any of the following: The project has planning or statutory complexity; The scale of the project exceeds the $2m threshold but doe not fall into the Moderate Value Project classification as determined by the FIPB; The project has financial or delivery risk; The project has complex governance, strategic or reputational considerations. FIPB may declare a property development to be major. The Synod Property Team will centrally oversight any major project.
Minimum Housing Standards	A set of standards defined by the Queensland Government to ensure residential properties provide safe, secure, and functional living conditions. These standards aim to protect occupants health and wellbeing by requiring properties to meet basic safety and habitability requirements.
Mission Plan	A plan developed by a Responsible Body, to promote the mission of the Church, which is approved and oversighted by Presbytery. A Responsible Body must make property decisions in alignment with their approved Mission Plan.

Term	Meaning
Non-Major project / Non-Major property development project	Responsible Bodies may manage non-major property development projects where the following criteria are met: The project total cost is under $2 million; The project is not large, complex or at risk as determined by the FIPB; The project does not meet the criteria for a Major Project; The development activity complies with the Property Principles; and The Responsible Body has access to suitably skilled and competent personnel. Responsible Bodies may seek the assistance of the Synod Property Team in relation to these matters.
Presbytery Property Committee	See Regulation 4.3
Property Development	Property development *includes,* but is not limited to: • Due Diligence (pre-acquisition and pre-development) • Acquisition of property • Sale of property • Feasibility and Business Case development • Applications for Development Approval from the relevant regulatory authority • Procurement and engagement of specialist services • Construction • Modification, extension and/or renovation • Repurposing or change of use • Negotiation of and engagement in property partnerships for the purpose of property development and/or sale • Procurement of specialist services to support property development projects • Land banking • Strategic planning in relation to the property portfolio for the wider Church Property development *excludes:* • Acquisition or sale of a property for the purpose of day-to-day management of Church activities eg. purchase of a manse • Day-to-day management of property • General maintenance for the upkeep and preservation of property.
Regulations	Uniting Church in Australia REGULATIONS 2025
Responsible Body	As per Regulation 4.1. In the context of this policy, the Responsible Body may be the Synod Office, a Presbytery or a Church Council. The Responsible Body of a property is recorded in the Synod Property Register.
Significant Property Matter	A Significant Property Matter is a property development project where the Synod Office is the Responsible Body and the total project cost exceeds $5 million excluding GST.
Synod Standing Committee (SSC)	See Paragraph 36 Constitution, Regulation 3.7.4, Queensland Synod By-Laws Q2.2

Revisions

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1.0	13.08.2026	Synod Standing Committee	13.08.2026	Synod Property Team	General Manager - Property
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