

Ministry Agents Housing Update

Overview of Changes (June 2026)

Summary

Following a period of consultation with Presbyteries, Presbytery Synod Interface and the Placements Committee, The Remuneration and Nominations Committee (RNC) have approved an updated Ministry Agents Housing Policy (E8.2).

RNC have also approved a new Use and Maintenance of Housing Procedure (E8.2.1) and Statement of Mutual Expectations Form (E8.2.1.1). Consequential changes have been made to the Ministry Stipend and Allowances Policy (E8.5) and the Stipend and Allowances Benchmarks Procedure (E8.5.1).

The updated Ministry Agent Housing policy, the new Use and Maintenance of Housing Procedure and the new Statement of Mutual Expectations form will be available on the Hub under the [Ministries resource page](#).

The following table provides a summary of the changes to ministry agents housing, and what conditions are unchanged:

<i>Condition</i>	Current Policy	Updated Policy
<i>Housing Options</i>	Existing terms: Manse owned by the Church Rented Manse Residence Privately Owned by Ministers Shared Manse.	Revised terms: Church owned housing. Church rented/leased housing Private residence Shared housing
<i>Furniture and Furnishings</i>	Detailed list of items to be supplied by appointing body. Items to be supplied by ministry agent. Some flexibility for the minister after consultation with the congregation at the commencement of the placement. Standards of building and furnishings consistent with “The Design, Equipping and Furnishings of Manses” (dated 2012).	Simplified list of housing requirements including minimum characteristics and furniture requirements which may be included during negotiations prior to call being issued. Ministry agent responsible for providing all other furniture and household equipment unless agreed to between the ministry agent and the appointing body. Presbyteries are responsible for ensuring all items provided by the Church are of a satisfactory standard.
<i>Limit on Rent/Lease paid by responsible body for rented manse</i>	If a rent/lease limit applies for a rented manse, this is agreed to prior to a call being issued and should be documented in the “call” documents.	For Church rented/leased housing, the appointing body will pay no more than the average weekly rental for a 3 bedroom house in Queensland (RTA Cap), as calculated once a year based on Residential Tenancy Authority data and published on the Ministry Agent Payment Notice (\$640 p.w. or \$33,2980 p.a from 1/7/26). An alternative cap (Negotiated Cap) can be agreed to by the ministry agent, the appointing body and the presbytery). The Negotiated Cap to be expressed as a

		percentage of the RTA cap so that the Negotiated Cap can be varied annually. Where the rental exceeds the RTA Cap (or Negotiated Cap), the ministry agent would be required to pay the difference.
<i>Payment of a bond</i>	No reference to payment of a bond.	A bond is not mandatory for a Church owned housing or Church rented/leased housing but may be agreed to between the ministry agent and the appointing body.
<i>Maintenance of a manse</i>	The ministry agent is responsible for utility costs for a rented manse if those are not included in the rental agreement.	The new Use and Maintenance of Housing Procedure outlines the responsibilities of using and maintaining church owned housing and church rented/leased housing. Responsibilities apply to the ministry agents, the appointing body and the Presbytery. The Statement of Mutual Expectations documents the responsibilities and is mandatory for all church owned housing and church rented/leased housing.
<i>Housing Allowance</i>	Applicable where a manse is not provided. In situations where a ministry agent is in at least a placement of 50% or more, the ministry agent is entitled to the full house allowance. No minister is to receive a housing allowance greater than 100%.	Conditions remain unchanged, but an approval process has been included where there is a request to pay more than 100% of the housing allowance.
<i>Call Documents</i>	Terms and conditions of a placement including any negotiated allowance must be agreed to prior to a call being issued. Agreed accommodation arrangement must be written in all "call" documents.	The agreed housing option and any other housing arrangements must be written in all "call" documents, including any variation to the placement regarding housing. "Call" documents will provide for a review of the cap for church rented/leased housing where the appointing body is notified of an increase in the lease rate.

While the Ministry Agent Policy will be effective **1st April 2026**, the following provisions will apply to all new placements commencing on or after 1st July 2026:

- E8.2.1 Use and Maintenance of Housing Procedure and the mandatory E8.2.1.1 Statement of Mutual Expectations Form
- Housing Cap referred to in E8.2 Ministry Agent Housing
- The payment of a bond (if agreed) referred to in E8.2.1 Use and Maintenance of Housing Procedure.

Background

The Ministry Agents Housing (Housing) Policy was overdue for a review.

The current Housing policy provides housing requirements for housing in relation to placement, including:

- Place of residence
- Furniture and furnishings provided by the Congregation and a Minister
- Building and furnishing standards, referencing a 2012 document entitled “The Design, Equipping and Furnishing of Manses”.
- Conditions for alternatives to a manse including rented manses, shared manses and private residences (as a result of a decision by the 3rd Synod), in an order of hierarchy.
- Conditions for the payment of a housing allowance (as a result of decisions by then Governance Nomination and Remuneration Committee, and the Placements Committee).

Following consultation with Presbyteries in 2025, the Presbytery Synod Interface and the Placements Committee, the RNC has approved an updated housing policy and a supporting procedure and form. The updated Housing Policy includes the following:

- Retains references to previous decisions by Synod, GNRC and Placements Committee
- Collates key information under logical headings.
- Provides clarity on the housing options.
- Introduces a ‘cap’ for Church leased housing.
- Provides clarity for the approval by Placements Committee for conditions of a placement where a housing allowance exceeds 100%.
- Introduces guidance on responsibilities for housing maintenance and costs.
- Simplifies the requirements for housing characteristics, furniture, and fittings.
- The policy also introduces a mandatory procedure and form to be used by parties for establishing expectations regarding the housing at the beginning of a placement.

The Remuneration and Nomination Committee (RNC) has a charter responsibility to “review management recommendations regarding ministerial stipends and allowances and allowances for students and provide approval of such”. The RNC is seeking the feedback of Presbyteries prior to further consideration of the Housing Policy.

Revised Policy

The updated policy seeks to provide improved guidance for ministry agents, appointing bodies and Presbyteries in the provision of suitable housing, while providing the ability for agreement to reflect the ministry agents personal or domestic arrangements, and the use of rented/leased housing. The following is a summary of the sections of the draft policy.

Previous decisions regarding housing

The updated policy has retained previous committee and Synod decisions, although they have been moved under relevant headings. For example, information on the housing allowance was in multiple places in the previous policy.

Housing options

This section then outlines the three options available under the current policy. There is no order of priority for the housing options. Where the appointing body rents or leases housing, a cap on the annual rental/lease amount will be applied.

Church Leased Housing Cap

Where the appointing body needs to lease housing, the appointing body will pay no more than a weekly lease rate equivalent to the same benchmark used for variations to the housing allowance (RTA cap) i.e. RTA data on the average weekly rental for a 3-bedroom home in Qld. The current average rent is \$640 p.w. (\$33,200 p.a) and this will be the RTA cap from 1st July 2026 for any new placements with a leased housing commencing on or after 1st July 2026.

The RTA cap would be published 1st July each year on the existing Ministry Agent Payment Notice.

When filling a placement vacancy, during the discernment conversations and no later than the discussions over matters of concern, an alternative cap may be negotiated between the preferred minister, the appointing body and the Presbytery (Negotiated cap). The Negotiated cap is not to exceed the RTA cap and must be expressed as a percentage of the RTA cap.

Where the leased housing amount exceeds the cap, the minister would be required to pay the difference between the cap and the actual weekly lease rate for the property.

Housing Allowance Cap

The policy provides for the Placements Committee to approve a payment greater than 100% of the housing allowance. The process for approval will be:

- Secretary of Placements Committee to approve (and noted at the subsequent Placements Committee) where the housing allowance does not exceed 100% of the housing allowance rate; or
- Placements Committee to approve where the housing allowance exceeds 100% of the housing allowance rate.

Housing maintenance and costs

The current policy has minimal information in relation to cost, referring only to placements of at least 50% and shared manses. The updated policy provides greater clarity on responsibilities of the appointing body and the ministry agent, noting costs related to a rented/lease housing and a separation of insurance costs.

The updated policy also introduces minimum expectations regarding maintenance of the housing, including wear and tear, repairs, and cleanliness.

For all new placements with a church owned housing or church rented/leased housing commencing on or after 1st July 2026, the appointing body must use the Use and Maintenance of Housing procedure and the supporting Statement of Mutual Expectations form. These documents establish:

- The optional use of a bond which is intended to be available for the financial protection of the appointing body against any damage that may be caused to the accommodation, other than 'fair wear and tear';
- Expectations for ministry agents and their families, responsible bodies and presbytery in the maintenance, upkeep, and repair of the housing; and
- A framework for the mediation and resolution of any disputes between these parties and relating to the use of the bond and/or maintenance, upkeep, and repair of the housing.

The Use and Maintenance of Housing procedure and the supporting Statement of Mutual Expectations would be optional for existing placements which commenced before 1st July 2026.

Furniture requirements for housing

The updated policy acknowledges that housing serves both a ministry and a family and should have some key characteristics in its design, regardless of a property owned by the Property Trust or a rented manse.

The current policy has a very detailed list of furniture and fittings based on the 2012 Design, Equipping and Furnishing of Manses. This document assists in planning the construction or purchase of a new manse and seeks to provide guidance on the fundamentals. The document has less relevance for existing housing or housing that are rented or leased, particularly in a market where rentals are in short supply.

The updated policy takes a simplified approach by listing a recommended minimum list of characteristics and requirements. The list of furniture that an appointing body must provide is reduced, with the ministry agent requiring to supply more household furniture reflecting their personal or domestic arrangements. A provision for agreement between the ministry agent and the appointing body on furniture and fittings is made.

Housing allowance

No change is made to the historical information concerning the housing allowance, other than aggregating all references from the current policy under the one heading.

Call documents

This section was previously called "Other Considerations", and no change has been made to the section.