



# Office Bearers' Frequently Asked Questions

July 2025

## Purpose

Following the 2025 Office Bearers Day hosted by the Synod Office, several common questions were identified across the Office Bearers from Presbyteries and Congregations within the Queensland Synod. The purpose of this Information Tool is to assist with answers to these questions, grouped into the topics of finance, property, safeguarding, people and stakeholders.

Please note this information was current at time of publication (July 2025). This tool will be updated annually. Please contact Synod Office teams directly for specific questions or further clarification, or the Presbytery Support Unit ([presbyterysupportunit@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:presbyterysupportunit@ucaqld.com.au)).

## Scope

The scope for this Information Tool is primarily for use within the Uniting Church in Australia Queensland Synod and the Presbyteries and Congregations within its bounds, so please do not share it publicly.

It might also be useful to Synod Office staff in understanding services provided by another function.

## General

General	
What is the best way to contact people in the Synod Office?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Email the generic/group email (where applicable) - <a href="#">Contacts - Uniting Church Australia</a>.</li><li>• Phone and chat or leave a message with reception / team.</li></ul>
How do we find information on the Hub?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If on <a href="http://ucaqld.com.au">ucaqld.com.au</a> scroll to the very bottom and click 'Queensland Synod Hub' on the right side.</li><li>• Go directly to <a href="http://hub.ucaqld.com.au">hub.ucaqld.com.au</a></li><li>• On the left side, go to 'Resources' or 'Church Life' then click on the topic. Each topic will have sections filled with documents/links.</li><li>• Alternatively, there is a 'search' function.</li></ul>
How can I know what an acronym means?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A document listing the acronyms and a terminology document are available on the Synod Hub: <a href="#">Communications - Uniting Church Australia</a></li></ul>



## Finance

Payroll		<a href="mailto:payroll@ucaqld.com.au">payroll@ucaqld.com.au</a> (07) 3377 9732
Who do we contact regarding clarification on invoices or pay reports?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invoice enquiries: please direct enquiries to <a href="mailto:accounts@ucaqld.com.au">accounts@ucaqld.com.au</a></li> <li>• Pay Reports: Please direct any enquiries to <a href="mailto:payroll@ucaqld.com.au">payroll@ucaqld.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Bookkeeping		<a href="mailto:bookkeeping@ucaqld.com.au">bookkeeping@ucaqld.com.au</a>
What does the Bookkeeping service offer?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small Tier up to 1.5 hours Bookkeeping per week is \$200 a month</li> <li>• Medium Tier up to 3 hours Bookkeeping per week is \$400 a month</li> <li>• High Tier up to 6 hours Bookkeeping per week is \$800 per month</li> <li>• Details on the Synod Hub: <a href="#">Finance - Uniting Church Australia</a></li> </ul>
Cost of Synod Xero subscription?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ignite Plan is \$27 per month</li> <li>• Grow Plan is \$59 per month</li> </ul>
If converting software to Xero, what does it cost?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Currently Synod offers conversion from your current software to Synod Xero Software free of charge.</li> </ul>
If converting Xero to Synod Xero, how quickly can this occur?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The transfer can happen very quickly, all that is needed is church council approval minute to make the change and you can start using the helpdesk support immediately.</li> </ul>
Is there training available for Xero?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those on Synod Xero Bookkeeping – 1 hour helpdesk/month is available.</li> <li>• If not, responsibility passes back to the Presbytery.</li> </ul>
Will the treasurer's handbook be updated?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We are in the process of creating a Treasurers Pack, that will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Treasurer's Handbook</li> <li>○ Relevant Regulations</li> <li>○ GST Manual (simplified)</li> <li>○ Chart of Accounts</li> <li>○ Ministry Agent Handbook</li> <li>○ Other forms - getting the new treasurer onto the ACNC / Synod DD forms, MDF payment forms, Annual Return Template, Audit Requirements etc</li> </ul> </li> <li>• This will be very helpful going forward to assist new treasurers have all that they need for the role.</li> <li>• <b><i>Given much of this information has been revised this year. We will endeavour to send this pack to ALL Treasurers in the coming months.</i></b></li> </ul>
Can Bookkeeping assist with annual returns?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, the Bookkeeping team can help you if you have a Synod Xero Subscription. If a congregation is not on a Synod Xero subscription - they can elect to be moved over to this subscription (if they are on their own Xero) and access the 1-hour free helpdesk support, if not, they will need to be assisted by <a href="mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au">pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au</a></li> <li>• Once the Annual Return is completed send to your Presbytery and <a href="mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au">pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au</a></li> </ul>
Does my Congregation / Presbytery need a yearly audit/review?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes, your Congregation / Presbytery does need a yearly Audit / Review. The type is dependent on your Annual Turnover.</li> </ul>
Missional Relations		<a href="mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au">pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au</a>
MDF (Mission Development Fund) and renewal funds – how does it work?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following the approved proposal at the 38<sup>th</sup> Synod in Session, information will be released regarding the application process.</li> </ul>



## Property

Property	<a href="mailto:property@ucaqld.com.au">property@ucaqld.com.au</a>
What information or training is available for property officers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is being compiled respectively for property officers and Ministry Agents.</li> <li>• In the future, the aim is for an online quarterly property officer training.</li> <li>• Current Protecht training: <a href="#">Protecht Training on Vimeo</a></li> </ul>
Can a list of trades be created?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Trade List</a> for Greater Brisbane Area.</li> <li>• Please send recommendations of preferred trades to <a href="mailto:property@ucaqld.com.au">property@ucaqld.com.au</a> so they can be added to the list.</li> <li>• If you are seeking assistance for trades (particularly for heritage listed buildings), please contact us.</li> </ul>
What happens if you can't get a second quote in preparation for MDF application?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Document who you have contacted with aim of getting quotes and include this in the submission. A discussion would follow.</li> <li>• Aim is for good stewarding of resources.</li> </ul>
Is it possible to get property valuation from real estate rather than valuer?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are valuers who will travel.</li> <li>• If real estate valuation is different to valuer, there is the option to challenge the initial valuation.</li> <li>• Has been considered in the past (for remote areas).</li> </ul>
Do you need a valuer if you want to sell land with no buildings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yes.</li> </ul>
What forms are required to sell a property?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The form to sell a property can be found on the <a href="#">Hub</a>.</li> </ul>
Can MDF be used for maintenance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, they cannot.</li> </ul>
NEULA (short-term facilities hire)	<a href="mailto:property@ucaqld.com.au">property@ucaqld.com.au</a>
What is the application process for short-term leases?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">NEULA</a> includes information within details of document.</li> <li>• Steps outlined in the new <a href="#">Church Facilities Hire and Public Liability Insurance Fact Sheet</a> under 'Insurance Guides' on the Hub.</li> </ul>
If a group hires regularly, is there a way to keep Public Liability Insurance Certificate of Currency on file at the Synod Office so Congregations do not need to send these through?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A NEULA can be used for the length of the hirers Public Liability Insurance. Best practise is to renew the NEULA along with the insurance renewal.</li> <li>• There are 100-150 NEULAs processed each month. To assist with processing, best practice is for the certificate of currency to be sent through each time.</li> </ul>
Why does the NEULA need to be completed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The NEULA is designed to be a simple document that clearly articulates roles, responsibilities and insurance requirements for all parties involved (hirer, congregation, property trust). It helps keep our insurance premiums low and ensure that items like rent and care are discussed before the hirer attends.</li> </ul>
Is a NEULA required for every booking?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any events that are considered activities of the church do not require a NEULA. Other congregations or entities of the Uniting Church in Queensland also do not require a NEULA, but we recommend that some level of documentation is done around potential conflict points (rental fees, condition of facilities at end or rental etc.).</li> </ul>
Why is a NEULA declined or needs additional information?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There can be many reasons why, but most of them come down to incomplete or incorrectly filled out forms. If something is amiss, the response email will outline the best method to get it sorted.</li> </ul>



## Office Bearers' FAQ 2025

<b>Property Management (Rent Roll)</b>	
<b><u><a href="mailto:rentals@ucaqld.com.au">rentals@ucaqld.com.au</a></u></b>	
What is the Rent Roll?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pilot project in greater Brisbane area.</li><li>• Manage rental of manses that are vacant or have tenants that are not Ministry Agents. E.g. Inspections, updating leases, transferring leases from another property management company.</li></ul>
<b>Uniting Early Learning (UEL)</b>	
Why has the rent changed for UEL?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rents have been reviewed to ensure Congregations are getting fair commercial rates, ensuring equity within the regions.</li></ul>
What obligations are there for a Congregation when UEL is a tenant?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• UEL is responsible for internal upkeep (lawns etc).</li><li>• Congregation is responsible for structural repairs etc.</li><li>• UEL is highly regulated and unannounced visits by regulators can occur, looking at practice, buildings and facilities.</li><li>• Issues have short timeframes (more likely 7 days than 30 days) and if there are significant issues, the regulator can shut the UEL down.</li></ul>



## Safeguarding

<b>Risk &amp; Protecht</b>		<b><a href="mailto:health.safety@ucaqld.com.au">health.safety@ucaqld.com.au</a>   <a href="mailto:protechtsupport@ucaqld.com.au">protechtsupport@ucaqld.com.au</a></b>
Are there plans to support congregations with risk assessment templates for regular events that occur in the church?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition that risk assessments are common across Churches and thank you for your diligence in completing them.</li> <li>• Risk assessment requirements come from safeguarding legislation and WHS legislation.</li> <li>• Safety plans (equivalent to risk assessments) can be completed in Protecht. There are some limitations (e.g. access to complete outside nominated 4 people), so further exploration is occurring.</li> <li>• Risk assessment resources: <a href="#">Safe Church - Uniting Church Australia</a>. Includes 'C.2.1.8.2 Safe Programs Planning Tool' and 'Risk Assessment editable'.</li> </ul>	
Where do you upload documents regarding building maintenance/inspections/reports?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upload to Protecht. The area may vary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Register → Property → Actions → Create New</li> <li>○ Register → Safety Incidents → 'Create New' or use QR code/<a href="#">link</a></li> <li>○ Actions → 'Create New'. This allows it to be assigned to a person if the problem needs to be addressed.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
Why are actions from 2018 in the system?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspection tours occur for each property across the Synod. Previous notes have been imported into Protecht as actions. Complete, then close as applicable.</li> </ul>	
<b>Safe Church</b>		<b><a href="mailto:safechurch@ucaqld.com.au">safechurch@ucaqld.com.au</a></b>
If I complete Safety Plans in Protecht, do I have to upload one in the Safe Church audit?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No, simply indicate in the comment that a Safety Plan exists, and as the audit is reviewed, this will be checked.</li> </ul>	
Does training need to occur in person?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recommended to be face to face for the first time to encourage discussions and input from others (even if watching the videos).</li> <li>• It is a Presbytery decision (if it is mandatory).</li> <li>• Reach out to <a href="mailto:safechurch@ucaqld.com.au">safechurch@ucaqld.com.au</a> for options.</li> </ul>	
<b>Insurance</b>		<b><a href="mailto:ucinsurance@ucaqld.com.au">ucinsurance@ucaqld.com.au</a></b>
How can people with no insurance cover their own hire of our properties?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-time bookings can apply for public liability insurance cover, if they meet the conditions. <a href="#">Details here</a>.</li> <li>• Individual needs to complete the form, which will automatically come to group insurance to approve/decline. The Church contact listed will be notified of this outcome.</li> <li>• Note: the NEULA process still needs to be followed.</li> </ul>	
What increase will insurance be at the next renewal?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insurers will not negotiate premiums until closer to the annual renewal date i.e. 31 October.</li> </ul>	
<b>Legal &amp; Complaints</b>		<b><a href="mailto:legal@ucaqld.com.au">legal@ucaqld.com.au</a> or for complaints, <a href="mailto:complaints@ucaqld.com.au">complaints@ucaqld.com.au</a></b>
Which council of the Church is responsible for discipline?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Councils of the Church have a role to play.</li> <li>• Synod and Presbyteries discipline officeholders and Ministers.</li> <li>• Church Councils discipline members and adherents.</li> </ul>	



**Legal & Complaints (cont.)**

What is a complaint and how can a complaint be made?

- Generally, a complaint under the Uniting Church in Australia Regulations means a written complaint made by a Complainant, that is a member, adherent or Minister, against:
  - a member or adherent,
  - office holder,
  - Minister as defined in Part 5 of the Regulations, describing, in each case, the *conduct* complained of. See Reg.5.1
- Sexual misconduct complaints can be made by anybody. In other words, the Complainant does not have to be a member, adherent or Minister. See Assembly's Member or Adherent Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Policy and Regs.5.2.4 and 5.6.2.
- Sexual misconduct complaints against lay people do not have to be made in writing. See Assembly's Member or Adherent Sexual Abuse and Sexual Misconduct Complaints Policy.
- Complaints are made to the church in various ways including to [complaints@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:complaints@ucaqld.com.au), Presbytery Chairpersons (for congregational Ministers) and appointing bodies (or their delegates). Complaints are triaged by Synod Legal Services.



## People & Stakeholders

<b>Fundraising</b> <a href="mailto:fundraising@ucaqld.com.au">fundraising@ucaqld.com.au</a>	
Can you apply for grants for heritage buildings to be painted?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It can be difficult to get funding for historical buildings.</li> <li>Potential for grants through the Gambling Community Benefit grant, however trades need to be specialised in working on historical buildings.</li> </ul>
What is the best process for applying for grants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan early (including does it align with the missional plan?).</li> <li>Follow Governance – seek Church Council and Presbytery approval.</li> <li>Find a grant and apply.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tips:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is obvious if you try and fit a project to a plan, rather than having a plan and seek potential grant options.</li> <li>Don't use AI (e.g. Chat GPT) for anything confidential – make sure if using these, the data is stored safely internally.</li> </ul>
<b>Records</b> <a href="mailto:records@ucaqld.com.au">records@ucaqld.com.au</a>	
Where can records be stored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Physically on location at your Congregation.</li> <li>Digitally – follow <a href="#">Presbytery Archive Advice</a> (Hub → Governance → Tools and Forms) which includes details about how long to keep.</li> </ul>
How do we respond to requests for baptism/funeral records?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records prior to 1977 is referred to Brisbane State Library.</li> <li>Baptism requests are referred to the Congregation.</li> </ul>
Where do records go if a Church closes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Presbyteries are responsible for storing Presbytery records and records of any closed church within their Presbytery.</li> <li>Synod Office only retains physical copies of Synod Office information.</li> </ul>
<b>Communications</b> <a href="mailto:communications@ucaqld.com.au">communications@ucaqld.com.au</a>	
How can I find out what is happening around the Synod?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New stories and news are available on the <a href="#">Queensland Synod website</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>People &amp; Culture</b> <a href="mailto:hr@ucaqld.com.au">hr@ucaqld.com.au</a>	
What can People and Culture assist with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff contract templates.</li> <li>Award rates and general employment conditions (depending on the role).</li> <li>Position descriptions.</li> <li>Recruitment.</li> <li>Termination process of employees.</li> </ul>
What is the difference between paid employees and volunteers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The primary difference is in the level of responsibility and accountability. If you are looking for guidance as to whether someone should be classified as a paid employee or volunteer, please reach out to us <a href="mailto:hr@ucaqld.com.au">hr@ucaqld.com.au</a></li> </ul>



## Definitions

Term	Meaning
MDF	Mission Development Fund
NEULA	Non-exclusive use licence agreement (agreement for short term facility hire)
Protecht	Is a risk management system also known as Speak Up"
UEL	United Early Learning see <a href="http://uel.org.au">uel.org.au</a> for more information
Xero	Accounting software

## Revisions

Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Tool owner	Tool contact
1.0	23.07.2025	Presbytery Support Unit Manager	23.07.2025	Presbytery Support Unit	Presbytery Support Unit Manager
Next scheduled review		23.07.2026			