



25 September 2023

Presbytery Treasurers  
cc Presbytery Secretary  
cc Presbytery Ministers  
Via email

Dear Presbytery Treasurer

**RE: Mission Development Fund (MDF) Policy – Current Matters update**

We wish to remind you of a number of approaching deadlines and matters that are being raised regarding the Mission Development Fund (MDF) with the aim of allowing you enough time to fulfil the requirements. The topics which are discussed in more detail below include:

- The Transition Period specified in the policy concludes on 31 October 2023
- Implications from this:
  - Missional Plan completion and approval – applicable to congregations AND Presbyteries – what will happen if not completed or approved?
  - Collecting information regarding missional plan completion and approval and potentially change Responsible Body status for various MDF accounts – the timing of this
  - Follow up re complying with missional plans in 2024
  - MDF interest clarity
  - House Keeping – reinstatement of the MDF buffer amounts (applicable to some Presbyteries only)

The following is an extract from the MDF policy as a reminder as to the purpose and scope of the MDF:  
(To see the full Policy [click here](#))

**“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).”

**Responsible bodies are currently in a transition period – Concluding end October 2023**

The MDF policy includes a transition period of 18 months from when the Policy was approved – this means the transition period expires at Synod October 2023.



### What does this mean for Responsible Bodies with a MDF balance?

All Responsible Bodies with a MDF balance have until end October 2023 to write a missional plan that covers what they are planning to do with the funds in the MDF (in line with the policy). This plan will need to be approved by the Presbytery (if the responsible body is a congregation) or approved by the Synod (FIP Board) if the responsible body is a Presbytery.

### **Extract from the MDF Policy**

#### “9. Transitional provisions

...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.”

Below are some likely scenarios which could occur:

### What if a Responsible Body does not complete a missional plan or it is not approved by end October 2023?

- The funds remain in the MDF, but the Responsible Body for the funds change. If the previous Responsible Body was a congregation, the new Responsible Body will be the relevant Presbytery. If the previous responsible body was a Presbytery, the new responsible body will be the Office of the Synod.

### What if a Responsible Body still needs more time to complete a missional plan and have it approved?

- One Presbytery identified this as an issue and sought to have the transition period extended. The Synod Standing Committee resolved not to extend the transition period date and instead encouraged Presbyteries to discuss the completion and approval of a missional plan with impacted congregations. If the congregation produces a missional plan at a later time that is approved by Presbytery, the Presbytery can choose to transfer all (or some) MDF funds back to the congregation (in other words – reinstate their Responsible Body status for the relevant MDF account).

### What if a Responsible Body doesn't want to complete a missional plan?

There are a number of options:

- Clause 8 of the policy states:  
“Any responsible body may transfer the funds held in the MDF on its behalf, to any other responsible body at any time” – ie gift the balance;  
In this scenario, please make sure you send the appropriate minute to [pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au) and to your Presbytery so the change can be made.
- Refer to the first scenario in this section – if a plan is not completed, the responsible body change will be made in early 2024.



Process steps required to ascertain which MDF accounts should have Responsible Body status changed:

- The Presbytery and the Office of the Synod will need to work together to ensure appropriate changes are made.
- As at 31 October 2023, the Office of the Synod will compile reports per Presbytery detailing which MDF accounts belonging to which Responsible Bodies have been in the Fund for more than 7 years.
- The Presbytery will note whether or not missional plans have been received and approved and for which Responsible Bodies. They will also note which Responsible Bodies they are expecting a missional plan from within a short period of time.

Follow up in 2024

- Missional Plans will state a reasonable time period in which MDF funds are to be used. Follow up in 2024 will ascertain whether these plans are being complied with. If not, the Responsible Body status will be altered accordingly.

MDF Interest clarity

- The MDF policy allows for interest on MDF funds to be used for operational purposes subject to approval and a review in 12 months
- The requests for use of MDF interest is expected to reduce in 2024 as the funds will either be used in accordance with a missional plan or transferred to another Responsible Body
- Presbytery is considered to be the appropriate body for approval of congregational requests and performing the annual review. Please let the Office of the Synod know ([pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au)) if you do approve any requests so funds can be released.

House keeping – MDF buffers (applicable to some Presbyteries only)

- At the commencement of the Combined Presbyteries Mission Pool (CPMP), buffers were established to ensure the specified fund had sufficient liquidity to operate,
- The CPMP processes have matured and the buffers are no longer considered necessary to maintain,
- The MDF allocation to the buffer will be reinstated reflecting the original transaction (the amount may vary due to accrued interest over time). This transaction will be effective 31 December 2023.

If you have any questions in relation to the MDF, please contact Janna Hakimova at [pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:pres.accounts@ucaqld.com.au), and please don't hesitate to reach out to your Presbytery or the Office of Synod if you require any assistance with these processes.

Yours sincerely

**Peter Cranna**  
**Secretary - The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (Q.)**