

Name: Presbytery Standing Committee

1. Purposes of the Policy

1/ The first purpose is to guide Sydney Presbytery in its provision of Manses for ministry agents in Presbytery placements, where Sydney Presbytery is the responsible body.

2/ The second purpose is to guide Sydney Presbytery in its oversight of Manses where the Presbytery is the responsible body but the Manse is occupied by a ministry agent from a church body other than Sydney Presbytery.

3/ This policy has more general use across the Presbytery as supplementary guidelines to the Synod standards, for Congregations and agencies in their provision of Manses for their Ministers.

2. Overall Framework

Note: *The details of the policy are to be read with the understanding that it is not always possible to fully define what the expected standards of a Manse should be for every circumstance. This is because there will inevitably be different expectations about what a 'good' standard is, especially in terms of the quality of floor coverings, window coverings, painted walls, kitchen facilities and heating/cooling.*

Therefore some negotiation and discussion may be needed to work through differences of opinion, even with these extra guidelines.

i/ Synod Standards

These protocols are to be read in conjunction with the Synod Regulations for provision of housing that are provided in the Synod Ministry Handbook. The Handbook outlines the key standards. (See Section 5, page 7 following).

<https://nswact.uca.org.au/about-us/secretariat/ministry-handbook/>

The minimum standards are described in the Handbook (5.2 Manse Inclusions) as:

Inclusions to be provided (clean and in good working order):

- *Floor coverings, window furnishings and light fittings*
- *Wardrobes or equivalent*
- *Study desk, chairs, shelves, filing cabinet (if required by the minister)*

- *Refrigerator, dishwasher and washing machine*
- *TV connection*
- *Smoke detectors*
- *Clothesline or dryer if no clothesline available (for example, in apartments)*
- *Telephone and internet connection points*

There are a number of details not spelled out in this list. These Sydney Presbytery protocols provide additional guidelines that supplement the above.

ii/ General Approach – Sydney Presbytery

- the standard of the facilities and the quality of the house facilities should be based around a spirit of 'generous hospitality'.
- a helpful guiding question is 'what does a ministry agent/family need to live comfortably in this property for 5 years'?
- the property should be of a 'good' standard, comfortable, clean and safe.

Processes within Sydney Presbytery

- The Business & Property Committee acts as the equivalent of a Church Council Property Committee in these matters.
- The process for preparing a property for use as a Manse/residence is:
 - : when a property is vacated the B&P will conduct an inspection and document essential repairs and replacements. Any essential repairs/improvements can be decided upon and ideally completed before the ministry agent views the property. The property and white goods should be thoroughly cleaned by the outgoing user of the Manse.
 - : B&P views the property with the prospective ministry agent. A list of items for non-essential modifications is negotiated and documented for approval. These are assessed by the B&P in terms of whether they are essential and within budget.
 - : The B&P negotiates with the ministry agent and ensures the agreed modifications are carried out.
- Where there is a disagreement between the B&P and the ministry agent over the condition of a property or its inclusions, the matter will be referred to the Standing Committee Executive for resolution.
- After all repairs and agreed modifications are completed, a full inspection report is completed (using the Synod pro-forma), ideally before the ministry agent

moves in. This will be signed by the Presbytery and ministry agent.

- A clause should be added to the agreement between the parties, stating that 'unreasonable' damage beyond normal wear and tear should be remedied at the cost of the ministry agent.
- The Presbytery will conduct an annual inspection of the property, as required by the regulations.

Particular Aspects of the Manse

i/ Size of Property

- In line with the Synod's approach, the guide is that a property be 'fit for purpose'. (This replaces a formal definition of number of bedrooms, study etc.)
- As a general guide, there is not an expectation that a Manse be larger than 4 bedrooms.
- Study: the Synod Ministry Handbook does not mandate a Home Office.

5.6 Provision of an Office

The appointing body shall provide a minister with 'one' office including provision of internet and phone. This may be located in the Manse/home or at the church/office building. The location and furnishings should be discussed and recorded in the Terms of Placement document.

There is a recognition that ministry agents in Presbytery placements are more likely to work from the Presbytery office rather than a Manse office, so there may not be a need or desire for a study in the Manse.

There is also less likelihood of needing a Manse that is open for meetings and other church gatherings.

li/ Clothes Storage

Built-in wardrobes should be provided where possible.

If there are no built-in wardrobes, then other wardrobes should be provided.

These wardrobes should be of a style and quality that are in keeping with the room and house.

Rationale – Ministers move between houses, some with built-ins and some without. It is better for the clothes storage to be provided.

lii/ Cooling

We are mindful that there have been significant weather pattern changes since the Synod Standards were written and hence the need to address climate change and the need for ministers to have adequate heating and cooling for home and office. This would be to make the Manse of a "reasonable standard and fit for purpose".

Reverse cycle Air-conditioning in home office and bedrooms at a minimum should be considered. While this may not be the best option for sustainability it is an option for the minister's family to use or not use.

There may be exceptions where air-conditioning is regarded as a requirement rather than as an 'option'. Where it is apparent that a particular room or space is very hot and not liveable without air-conditioning, in such circumstances provision for AC needs to be made by Presbytery.

Ceiling fans are desirable, where practicable.

Other cooling – If ceiling fans are unable to be retro fitted then portable pedestal fans should be provided by the ministry agents at their expense and taken from manse to manse.

Iv/ Heating

Gas – if gas outlets are installed, gas heaters should be provided by the Presbytery and stay as a fixture with the property.

Rationale: these are expensive items that may not be needed by the ministry agent at the next residence, so are best provided by the Presbytery.

Portable Electric heating – electric heaters should be provided by the ministry agent. Rationale: tastes vary widely between people when it comes to heaters, so better that each ministry agent owns them and takes them with them.

v/ Windows

Windows should be able to be opened and have key locks. Flyscreens should be provided where practicable.

Vi/ Green Energy /Affordable energy

Noting that energy is paid for by the Minister but capital cost by the Presbytery, Presbytery should investigate the long term investment of installation of solar panels to Manses where possible would be a long term cost saving for Ministers and an investment for SP properties and responsible green affordable energy use.

Vii/ Car parking

Garage or car port or parking allocation provision should be made for one vehicle.

Safe parking provision for other members of the family unit is desirable.

Viii/ Safety

Safety is an important priority.

Yards should be secure and pet-friendly. Fences should be in good condition.

Trees should be appropriately trimmed to eliminate dangerous branches.

Safety lighting – high consideration should be given to safety lighting at entrances and pathways where no street lighting is offered.

Pest treatments – It is expected that regular pest treatments and annual inspections will be conducted by the Presbytery.

Any Disability provisions for any members of the minister's family need to be retrofitted to the manse.

An assessment process for the impact on health of ministers within the Manse to provide "Healthy Housing" needs to be actioned prior to new tenants taking residence.

i.e. Noise, pollution, Humidity, Hot/Cold, Asbestos, Rising Damp leading to mould spores Insulation ceiling or walls. Draught from poor window and door seals.

Checking the electrical box is current providing Australian standards for output.

Document Control

Date issued	06 March 2021
Reviewed by	G Tutt
Approved by	Full Standing Committee
Version N#	1 – initial issue
Edits from prior version	Sydney Presbytery Manse Protocol - 2015 & Manse Policy - Paper 1 - Standards February 2016
Policy N#	P02: Sydney Presbytery Manses Policy