

PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Terms of Reference (2023)

PURPOSE

The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) is a committee of Presbytery, mandated by the Regulations, which discharges a range of responsibilities on behalf of the Presbytery. It reports to the Presbytery Standing Committee, but has full authority in those matters which are prescribed for it by the Regulations.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Regulations (3.7.3(b)) specifies the following responsibilities for the PRC:

Responsibilities

- (b) *The responsibilities of the Pastoral Relations Committee shall include:*
- (i) *overseeing on behalf of the Presbytery the pastoral relations between the Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Ministers and Pastors and Congregations within the Presbytery;*
 - (ii) *being accessible to Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Ministers and Pastors and Congregational representatives for the purpose of giving counsel on matters relating to pastoral relationships and responsibilities;*
 - (iii) *counselling Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Ministers and Pastors for their encouragement and enrichment in the fulfillment of their ministries, including reference to the Code of Ethics;*
 - (iv) *providing such reports as may be required by the Presbytery, with due regard to the confidentiality of information given to the Committee;*
 - (v) *conferring with Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Ministers, Pastors and Congregations to ascertain relevant information in all cases where changes in placement or appointment are involved and advising the Presbytery regarding those matters;*
 - (vi) *dealing with matters relating to the placement or appointment of Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Minister and Pastors as may be delegated to it;*
 - (vii) *dealing with complaints as set out in the Regulations on Church Discipline;*
 - (viii) *making provision for the appropriate pastoral support and accountability of Ministers, Lay Pastors, Youth Workers, Community Ministers and Pastors in active service who are not in approved placements;*
 - (ix) *reviewing the list of Ministers, Lay Pastors or Youth Workers under its care who are awaiting placement with a view to assisting them either to return to active service or to make other appropriate vocational decisions or suggesting to a Church Council that an invitation be extended to the Minister to become a Minister-in-Association;*

- (x) *determining the manner of appointment of persons to preside at worship and preach in a Congregation during times when there is no Minister in placement.*

RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO PRESBYTERY'S STRATEGIC PLAN

In line with the Presbytery's Strategic Plan, the PRC, subject to any relevant Regulations and By-laws, and with respect to the directions of the Presbytery, shall:

Flourishing Leaders

- exercise oversight of Specified Ministries, including for their formation, continuing education, supervision, support and accountability systems (including but not limited to Affirmations of Call and Vital Ministry Consultations);
- arrange for Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) processes to take place;
- strategically manage Placement and Supply matters;
- provide and support access to training and development opportunities;
- offer encouragement and support to Ministry Leaders in a culture of positive leadership;
- exercise discipline of Ministry Leaders as may be required;
- support Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) community leaders;
- oversee Ministry of Pastor (MoP) persons;
- exercise oversight of other ministry leaders including but not limited to Lay Preachers and Lay Presiders;
- initiate and implement mandatory reporting mechanism/s for Ministry Leaders;
- oversee the work of the Ministry Committee;
- appoint at least two members of PRC to participate in interviews of those seeking to conclude Phase 2 formation for ordained ministries;
- oversee those in Phase 3 of formation.

Fruitful Congregations

- arrange for regular Life & Witness Consultations with Congregations;
- arrange educational opportunities for Congregations as may be required,
- exercise discipline over Congregations as may be required;
- support Congregations to comply with legal obligations and Synod policies and procedures (such as Safe Church, Work, Health & Safety (WH&S), employment, Human Resources (HR), property, insurance and risk, complaints);
- support CALD communities.

Faithful Operations

- keep appropriate records in secure storage, maintaining strict confidentiality.

Future Growth

- work strategically with Congregations and Ministry Leaders to encourage growth (discipleship, relationship, number, impact);
- plan strategically to build relationships between congregations which might share vision and mission opportunities.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Many matters brought to the PRC are confidential in nature. All members, including *ex-officio* and co-opted members, must maintain complete confidentiality. This obligation does not cease upon the member leaving the PRC.

A breach of confidence will involve appropriate disciplinary measures. Such disciplinary measures may include, but not be limited to, removal from the PRC.

APPOINTMENT QUALITIES

It is essential that all members of the Pastoral Relations Committee understand and agree to work within the Sydney Presbytery Statement of Values and Culture.

Members with appropriate gifts and skills representing the values and ethos of the Uniting Church and Sydney Presbytery shall be elected by the Presbytery. Elected members will serve for a three-year term. They are eligible for re-election up to a maximum of nine years' consecutive service.

There will be at least six members of the PRC. At least two members will be lay persons, and at least two members will be ordained persons. Ideally, the membership of the PRC will reflect gender and cultural diversity.

A quorum shall consist of at least one half of the total voting membership of PRC.

The Convenor of the Ministry Committee shall be a member *ex-officio* of the PRC with full voting rights, and will be expected to attend PRC meetings. In the unusual circumstance of their unavailability, the Convenor may appoint an alternate from among the members of the Ministry Committee.

The Chairperson of PRC is generally chosen by the voting members of the PRC, with the requirement that the nominee's name be submitted to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Presbytery annually for endorsement by ballot. The Chairperson of PRC will normally be the Presbytery's representative on the Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements (ACOMP).

The PRC may co-opt additional members where appropriate.

- Co-opted members will be less in number than elected members.
- Co-opted members are given the right to speak but not vote.
- Co-opted members are not considered when determining quorum.
- Such membership shall not normally exceed one year (with co-opted members being eligible for election at the Presbytery AGM).

Presbytery Standing Committee has the right to recommend that an elected, *ex-officio* or co-opted member of PRC be removed with reasonable grounds for such removal.

PRESBYTERY STAFF

Presbytery staff with PRC-related responsibilities are members *ex-officio* of PRC with the right to speak but not vote.

MEETINGS

Meetings shall be held at least monthly and there will be at least ten meetings per calendar year, with extraordinary meetings called as may be necessary. Elected and co-opted members, and members *ex officio* are required to attend all meetings unless prevented by unavoidable circumstances. Attendance by electronic means such as Zoom is permitted in extenuating circumstances. Where a member misses three consecutive meetings without reasonable cause, the member is required to step down from the PRC.

An agenda, agreed by the Chairperson and Secretary, in consultation with relevant staff members, shall be circulated no less than four days prior to a meeting. Minutes are to be recorded at each meeting, presented to the next PRC meeting for confirmation or amendment, and then kept in a suitably secure location. Normally minutes will be circulated to PRC members within a week of the meeting to which they apply. Minutes will be held in the strictest confidence due to the sensitive material contained in them.

Matters arising between meeting that are of urgent nature may be dealt with by email if appropriate.

PRC EXECUTIVE – DELEGATED AUTHORITY

An Executive may be appointed by the PRC, comprising of the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson and Secretary, and up to two other elected members of the PRC. Staff members with PRC responsibilities will be members *ex officio* of the Executive. The Executive is delegated authority by the PRC to deal with urgent matters which may arise between meetings, or other such matters as may be remitted to it by PRC. Executive resolutions will have the same status as resolutions of the PRC, but must be reported to PRC at the next regular meeting. Minutes will be kept of Executive meetings in the same way as for meetings of the PRC.

MINISTRY COMMITTEE

The Presbytery shall elect a Convenor and at least five members to form a Ministry Committee. The Ministry Committee will be responsible for oversight of those undertaking a Period of Discernment (Phase 1 of formation) and Candidates for ordained ministries (Phase 2 of formation). Members of PRC will be eligible also to be elected as members of the Ministry Committee. Staff members with direct responsibilities for ministry agents will be members *ex officio* of the Ministry Committee. Membership of the Ministry Committee must include at least two ordained, and at least two lay persons. The Convenor of the Ministry Committee may be lay or ordained, and if not a member of the PRC in their own right, will be a member *ex officio* with full voting rights, and with the same expectations as for any other member of PRC. The Convenor of the Ministry Committee will report in writing to the PRC at least on a quarterly basis.

PROCESS FOR REVIEW

The PRC Terms of Reference are to be reviewed by the PRC every three year {unless required earlier} following the Presbytery AGM, and submitted for approval to the Presbytery Standing Committee.