



# Dollars & Sense

July 2018 Newsletter from the UCSA Resources Team

## Property Review Underway

Welcome to the winter edition of Dollars and Sense. As introduced in the last edition, the Property Services Team has commenced a Presbytery Property Review. The Uniting Church in SA is blessed to have significant buildings, many old and some heritage listed. Whatever the situation, each one of our buildings needs to be a safe and welcoming place, in keeping with our ethos and values.

Our properties are a gift and in many cases, a gift from past generations. As receivers of these gifts we accept the responsibility to steward them well. Maintenance is an expression of good stewardship. We all appreciate that regular maintenance and

upkeep is required to ensure buildings stay safe and functional. We also know that properties can quickly fall into disrepair if regular maintenance is not carried out. Poor (or no) maintenance can easily lead to the need for major repairs, and this poor maintenance can void insurance cover. Alongside this, as property stewards, we are required to meet government regulations which often require compliance with standards that didn't exist when the building was constructed.

The Presbytery Property Review will help the Synod understand the current status of our buildings and will help congregations to better understand and fulfil their compliance obligations. Recently, the Uniting Church SA Synod appointed John Fong to the position

of Buildings Officer to facilitate this review. Some of you would have met John at the recent Presbytery and Synod meeting and others may have read about him in New Times. We are pleased to welcome John as he combines his experience, knowledge and faith to assist the Presbytery with this major project.

I hope you find this edition of Dollars and Sense helpful. As always if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact any member of the Resources team or email [resources@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:resources@sa.uca.org.au)

**Peter Battersby**  
Executive Officer, Resources

## Property Services

### Property Ownership in the Uniting Church

"Who owns the property we worship in?"

That's a good question to ask in understanding properties of the Uniting Church. The simple answer is that all property is vested in The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.) on behalf of the whole Church. To bring some context in understanding ownership we hope the following information is helpful.

### The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.)

The Property Trust is the legal entity for all property – including congregational property, Synod property and Uniting Church bodies (e.g. Historical Society, Uniting College of Leadership & Theology).

The Property Trust is a body corporate, created by an Act of Parliament in 1977 at the inauguration of the Uniting Church. The Trust holds property as "common wealth" on behalf of the whole church for worship, witness and service. In Uniting

Church governance, all members have the opportunity to have a say through the various councils of the Church including meetings of the Congregation, Elders/ Leaders, Presbytery, Synod and Assembly.

### Responsibility

For a local church property, the Church Council is the body responsible for the management and administration of all church property acquired or held for the use of the Congregation (Regulation 4.4.1). Further information regarding the responsibility for property can be found in the Regulations and Policies [https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations\\_Policies/](https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations_Policies/)

The local congregation, Uniting Church body or the Synod is the custodial user of a particular property. It's like being a life tenant, where the life tenant has the enjoyment and use of the property together with the responsibility to maintain and care for the property.

### Theology of property

Although the work of God in Jesus Christ

through the Holy Spirit is not bound to property, the Uniting Church has acquired properties over many years as places to gather as the people of God. Hence the church has bound itself to property. But the church is still the church with or without property. The church can be separated from property but the property of the church can't be theologically thought of apart from the Christian community. For further information on the Theology of Property, please refer to: <http://sa.uca.org.au/property-services/property-sales-handbook>

### Final word

Together, we honour the legacy of the past, and seek to steward our property today for worship, witness and service, connecting with our communities in real and relevant, vital and vibrant ways.

For further information, please contact Trish Johnston, Property Coordinator, 8236 4210 or [tjohnston@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:tjohnston@sa.uca.org.au)

**Trish Johnston**  
Property Coordinator

### Safe-Tea Break

Welcome to the third instalment of 'Safe-Tea Break' for 2018 - and my ongoing quest to demystify WHS. In this issue I'm focussing on sheds as there are many of them in the Uniting Church, being used for a wide range of different purposes. Whether it serves as a simple storage area for seldom used items or as a large fully equipped wood and metal working community men's shed such as the one pictured, the Uniting Church has them all.

The humble shed is traditionally an area of retreat where we can go to gather our thoughts, reconnect with our practical and creative sides and maybe even become closer to Jesus the carpenter. It is understandable then that we can become very attached to and protective of our sheds which can propagate a **"what goes on in the shed stays in the shed!"** attitude towards them. As a Church Council though, what are your responsibilities for your sheds and what should you be doing to ensure they are safe? The following points are provided as a general guide to the legal duties and responsibilities you should be aware of:

- Congregations that are PCBU's (Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking) under the WHS Act 2012 have clear duties. A Church Council as 'officers' of the congregation hold the primary duty to manage a shed and ensure its safety so far as is reasonably practicable.
- Although the day to day running and general management of a shed may be delegated to other persons (or sub-committee), the overall legal duty for a shed cannot. A Church Council must exercise due diligence and satisfy themselves that a shed is safe.
- While some congregations may have an employee such as a caretaker who generally runs the shed, the majority will be used and looked after by volunteers. The duty of care owed to an employee is clear, but that same duty is also owed to volunteers who are considered workers under the Act as well.

The risks associated with sheds can be numerous and varied and therefore Church Councils should ensure that those risks have been identified, assessed and are being controlled effectively to meet their duty. The following points are provided as a general guide to some of the safety issues that should be considered:

- Security of the shed and its contents is extremely important as they attract more than their fair share of crime. Only church owned contents are covered under our policy and we recommend high value and personal items are secured elsewhere.
- Hazardous substances such as fuels, some paints, solvents and cleaning products must be controlled effectively and should be itemised in a register which includes their current safety data sheet. In most cases they should be kept locked away in a metal (non-flammable) cabinet and users must be aware of the risks and be competent to use them safely.
- General storage and 'shed-keeping' should be of a high standard to reduce the risk of slips and trips, manual handling injuries and flammable material accumulation.
- Tools, machinery and other equipment must be managed effectively. They are often donated to sheds in good faith, however they may well have reached the end of their intended working life, in need of repair (or worse dangerous), non-compliant with current standards, missing safety features or have been superseded by newer safer designs. It is important that any electrical items are tested and tagged routinely and inspected/serviced in line with the manufacturer's instructions.



*Pictured: The all new **Victor Harbor Men's Shed**, a shining example of collaboration between the local community and Adare Uniting Church*

- Access to and use of any work equipment such as tools much be undertaken by competent persons only or under the supervision of a competent person as part of someone's training to obtain competency. It should not be assumed that someone is already competent to use a particular item without appropriate supervision. You may also need to consider having clear safe operating procedures (SOPs), localised safety signage and providing suitable personal protective equipment.
- Medium to high risk work should not be undertaken in sheds alone and there should always be someone available within calling distance who can assist in an emergency.
- A shed should generally be considered as a workplace and as such should have suitable lighting, heating/cooling, emergency provisions and procedures appropriate to the risks as well as easy access to toilets and fresh drinking water.

Ensuring the safety of a small shed shouldn't be complex, however if you're operating a men's shed as a community or church fellowship project, I would recommend becoming members of an official body such as the **Australian Men's Shed Association**. This will give you access to experienced people who can provide you with more specific support and resources to help you get it right.

If you would like to discuss this or any other WHS related matters, I work Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday at the Synod office and can be contacted on [wbooth@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:wbooth@sa.uca.org.au) or by phone on 8236 4214.

**Wayne Booth**  
WHS Coordinator

Lately the Insurance Services team has noticed that many congregations have been taking on more volunteers from organisations such as Centrelink and Volunteers SA etc. That is fine in general as we do have insurance cover in place for Public liability as well as Personal Accident insurance. However we just want you to be aware of the following information and to consider this when planning to use volunteers in your congregations.

As we all know, volunteers are an essential lifeblood for many community organisations. While workers' compensation legislation covers paid workers if an accident happens, what if you are a volunteer? What are the insurance limitations and where do you stand as an employer of volunteers?

There is no existing legislation at the federal or state level that says organisations must take out volunteering insurance. However, Work Health & Safety legislation requires organisations to organise personal accident and public liability insurance on behalf of their volunteer. It is not the duty of the volunteer.

Many not-for-profit organisations, including the Uniting Church, have a Voluntary Workers Personal Accident Policy, which covers accidental injury or death. But there are gaps because it only covers limited benefits. There is no cover for expenses like ambulance, pharmaceutical or optical.

Because of legislation, insurers cannot cover any out of hospital expenses that have a Medicare component. This is not new; when the government introduced Medicare it amended the National Health Act (1953, Commonwealth), the Health Insurance Act (1973, Commonwealth), and later the Private Health Insurance Act (2007, Commonwealth), ensuring insurers were locked out from providing full cover for any medical expenses that Medicare was to cover. These laws state that where there is a contract of insurance, the insurer isn't liable to make a payment for anything that is covered by these Acts. The onus is therefore on Medicare to cover the client.

This all sounds well and good, but how does this work in practice? There can be minor injuries sustained in the workplace as part of everyday operations. If you have a volunteer and they jam their hand in a door or have a fall and injure their knee, for instance, you may well be liable for some expenses. The doctor will charge a fee, say \$100, of which Medicare will only rebate 75%, and the volunteer will be out of pocket for the remaining \$25; unless they go to a hospital or a clinic that bulk bills.

This gap in the market and the Medicare coverage affects anyone who engages volunteers, including not-for-profit, charity and community organisations. In the spirit of transparency, it's an issue that volunteers do need to be aware of.

Finally, if a person is injured on the church premises whilst it is important to offer the injured person your care and concern, please do not admit or acknowledge any liability, or promise to pay or negotiate with the injured person as this may actually breach our policy conditions. Our insurers need to be advised of the matter immediately and they can give us advice on the best way to handle the situation.

Take notes of what happened, when and why and whether there were any witnesses. Then contact us in Insurance Services as soon as you can to report what has happened. We can then advise the broker who will liaise with the injured person and our insurer.

If you have any other questions about insurance, please contact Susanne Alley or myself in Insurance Services on 08 8236 4222 or email us at [insurance@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:insurance@sa.uca.org.au)

**Tony Phillips**  
Manager, Insurance Services

## Financial Services & Screening Services Unit

### Finance - General

#### New form for Nationally Coordinated Criminal History Checks

The latest application and consent form for a police check can be downloaded from <http://sa.uca.org.au/safe-church/screening-process>

*Please destroy any stocks you might have printed of the old form as these are no longer accepted.*

You will notice that the Identification requirements have been updated. There is an information sheet on the UCSA/Safe Church web page to help. In particular at least one document must include your photograph or a certified photograph provided to the verifier.

Once you have completed your application and signed it you should take the form plus your original pieces of identification to a UCA Minister, member of Church Council or employee of the UCA who can verify and sign off on the application.

Should you have any queries please contact: Peter Harbison (08) 8236 4282 Country Callers 1300 766 956 Email: [ssu@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:ssu@sa.uca.org.au)

#### **2018 Mission & Service Fund Contribution Response Forms**

Thank you to those congregations who have forwarded their 2018 Mission and Service Fund Contribution Response Form to the Financial Services Team. This allows the team to operate the Mission and Service Fund budget which was approved by the Resources Board, Standing Committee and Presbytery and Synod of SA.

Some congregations are still to provide their response form so we ask that you please download it from the following link and return it to the Synod Finance department. Your prompt attention to this is appreciated.

Forms can be downloaded from <http://sa.uca.org.au/finance/mission-and-service-fund>

Should you have any questions about completing the form or payment methods please contact Peter Harbison on (08) 8236 4282 and for Country Callers 1300 766 956.

### **Audited Financial Statements for 2017**

Faith Communities, Congregations and Linked Congregations ('parishes') are reminded that copies of audited financial statements should have been forwarded to the Synod office **by 30 June 2018**.

Financial statements consist of a Balance Sheet, an Income Statement (Profit & Loss) and an Audit Statement. Audit regulation 3.8.7 can be viewed at [https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations\\_Policies/2015-Regulations-updated-August-2017.pdf](https://assembly.uca.org.au/images/resources/Regulations_Policies/2015-Regulations-updated-August-2017.pdf)

Any queries please contact: Peter Harbison (08) 8236 4282 Country Callers 1300 766 956.

## **Payroll**

### **Single Touch Payroll – do you run a payroll process at your congregation?**

From 1 July 2018, the UCSA Payroll Bureau will be complying with the latest ATO requirement for reporting.

Single Touch Payroll (STP) initiative means that Payroll Bureau will be reporting the following on a monthly basis to the ATO:

- Employee payments such as salaries and wages
- PAYG (pay as you go) withholding tax
- Super information
- As an individual, if your pay is processed through UCSA Payroll Bureau, you can access this information through your own myGov account. The reporting requirement means:
- Employers may not need to provide the ATO with an end of year payment summary
- Payment Summaries at the end of the financial year (30 June) may not be necessary if your employer starts reporting through STP
- Employees will be able to see their year-to-date tax and super information through myGov
- In the future, STP information will be used to prefill your activity statement

### **Does your congregation process its own payroll? Do you have 19 or less employees?**

If so you will be required to commence STP from **1 July 2019**, subject to legislation being passed.

### **Actions required by your congregation if you run your own payroll processing:**

- Check out when STP-enabled software will be ready from the supplier of your payroll software.
- Ask your payroll service provider how to get ready.
- Review your current payroll processes to see if they can be updated.
- Develop an implementation plan.

More information is available on <https://www.ato.gov.au/Business/Single-Touch-Payroll/>

### **2018/19 Return to Work SA (formerly WorkCover) levy rate**

The UCSA Payroll Bureau will be notified of the new levy rate after the end of the 2017/2018 Payroll Financial Year.

The rate, if amended, will be reflected on September Tax Invoices / Payroll Statements.

### **Award Rate changes & National Adult Minimum Wage changes**

New Modern Award pay rate changes are effective from 1st July 2018.

A summary of these will shortly be available on the UCSA website under the Congregational Resources section of the Human Resources page.

### **Annual leave records - Ministers**

Congregations should ensure that they maintain records for Ministers taking annual leave.

Synod by-laws 11.1 set out the standard guidance regarding annual leave:

11.1.6 Annual leave for Ministers shall be four (4) weeks per calendar year taken within that year by arrangement with the Congregation or other appropriate body.

### **Leave Request Forms – an important document of record**

It is vital that Leave Request Forms are completed & signed by the employee & the authorised person they report to, and submitted to the Payroll Bureau in a timely manner.

This ensures that records are correct and up-to-date prior to Payroll processing.

All unused annual leave being accrued and recorded in the Payroll system remains a financial liability of the Congregation.

### **Long Service Leave provision – lay employees**

Congregations should ensure that they are maintaining a provision for Long Service Leave for lay staff employed.

Full and part time lay personnel will be entitled to Long Service Leave under the terms and conditions of the Long Service Leave Act 1987.

On completion of ten (10) years continuous service with Uniting Church SA, long service leave will be allowed to be taken. Per the Uniting Church SA Personnel Handbook this is generally a minimum amount of two (2) weeks at a time convenient to both the individual and their employer.

**Diane Hughes**  
**Manager Financial Services**