



Dollars & Sense

November 2016 Newsletter from the UCSA Resources Team

Caring for our People

As we've been preparing for our Resources Open Day, we've been imagining what visitors to the Synod office might be expecting. The nature of our 'business' side of the church and our focus on 'dollars and cents' means that people might associate us with forms to fill in, bills to be paid and compliance with legislation which seems over engineered for the small teams serving congregations.

We've found ourselves in conversation about the values that underpin what we do. As the church we are 'called to care' and this means caring for the vulnerable and the disadvantaged, often outside our congregations, but it also means caring for, valuing and respecting one another.

Our Human Resources and Work Health Safety staff see their strong compliance and regulation focus as being one of the ways the church articulates how it goes about caring for its people. We believe

that how the church treats its own people should exceed, not just meet, minimum requirements. We exercise this call to care through seeing good practices are followed and striving to make sure all congregation members, volunteers or paid staff are cared for, valued and respected. We believe this is exercising good stewardship of people and the gifts they bring as we serve the church together.

Peter Battersby
Executive Officer, Resources

Synergy

Synergy coordinates solutions to some of the common purchasing and contracting requirements of Uniting Church organisations to obtain the best value on a range of products and services.

Jointly funded and managed by representatives from Uniting Church and UnitingCare organisations, Synergy aims to ensure the good stewardship of scarce resources and draws on the combined expertise within Uniting Church networks to ensure competitive prices and conditions are accessible to all parts of the Church including staff and volunteers.

Organisations that have participated in Synergy recognise the less tangible benefits arising as well as the financial benefits realised. Working collaboratively on Synergy projects provides the opportunities to share information, expertise and build relationships. Church congregations can benefit from information that organisations and schools have provided through Synergy.

Some of the contracts that Synergy manage include Air Conditioning Scheduled Maintenance, Managed Linen, Nursing Agency Staff, Fire Equipment Scheduled Maintenance, Energy and much more.

We also provide a variety of staff benefits, accessible to staff and volunteers of Uniting Churches, Schools and UnitingCare organisations in SA, including IT, whitegoods, car hire and groceries.

Visit our website www.synergy.unitingcare.org.au for more information or contact Kylie Dayman, Synergy Manager via synergy@sa.uca.org.au or (08) 8236 4263 if you wish to engage Synergy for your purchasing needs.



Property Services

“Synod owns our property” – or does it?

The words “the Synod owns our property anyway” are often said – but is this true? Actually, no – all property is vested in The Uniting Church in Australia Property Trust (S.A.) on behalf of the whole Church, that is, all the Uniting Church members in the South Australian Synod’s boundaries (most of S.A.).

Legal entity for property

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 etc). The local congregation, Uniting Church body or the Synod is the custodial user of a particular property. It can be likened to 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.

The “commonwealth” of property

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 “commonwealth” on behalf of the whole church for worship, witness and service. Common, meaning “belonging to all,” and wealth, meaning “happiness or riches,” the word commonwealth has come to mean any government in which all people involved have a say. 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.

Sale of property

All property is sold as per the Regulations and the process outlined in the Property By-law and the Property Sale Proceeds Policy. Properties are not an asset on a Congregation’s balance sheet and similarly, when properties are sold, any sale proceeds available to the Congregation as per the “category of sale” are held by the Property Trust on behalf of the Congregation for approved purposes.

Theology of property

Although the work of God in Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit is not bound to property, the Church, through the Property Trust, 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 in worship, witness and service.

Purpose of property

“Form follows function,” (a misquote of “form ever follows function” by architect Louis Sullivan in the 1890s), speaks about the planning of a building being based on the function of the building, not the form of the building dictating what that function will be into the future. As form follows function, property follows mission. Mission should be the driving factor for any and all property issues. Property is a means to an end not an end in itself – the end, the purpose and function, being the proclamation of the gospel. The church should not be driven by buildings but exists to serve God and participate in God’s mission in the world.

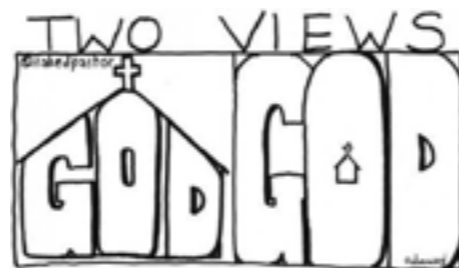
Responsibility for property

The Church Council is 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 sponibility for property can be found in the Regulations and at <http://sa.uca.org.au/property-services/>

(Note: For commercial leases, residential leases, licence agreements and all property transactions, the legal entity is the Property Trust and documentation must be in the name of the Property Trust.)

Final words on property

So back to property ownership – Synod doesn’t own all our property, the Property Trust owns all Uniting Church property on behalf of all members of the Uniting Church.



Together property-wise, we honour the legacy of the past, seek to use our property today for worship, witness and service, connecting with our communities in real and relevant, vital and vibrant ways, whilst we long and prepare to be the church of the future as a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal (Basis of Union, para.3).

For further information, please contact Lynne. Lynne Aird, Property Administrator, 8236 4210 or laird@sa.uca.org.au

WHS Safe-Tea Break

Welcome to the final instalment of ‘Safe-Tea Break’ for 2016 - and my ongoing quest to try and demystify WHS. In this article I’m again focussing on the ‘Duties and Responsibilities’ theme and hopefully clarifying how this extends to different types of activity in the church and in particular ‘Work for the Dole’. In the previous edition I focussed on contractors in general and thought it might be useful to clarify a congregation’s

duties when hosting a Work for the Dole (WfD) activity.

A number of our congregations have sought to, began and even completed WfD projects; they can be a beneficial way of undertaking work in a church that might otherwise have few other options. Whether this is much needed decoration, grounds keeping, general building improvement works or

even additional admin support, the potential benefits can appear very attractive.

However, before becoming a host for this programme, a Church Council must ensure the proper consideration and due diligence is given. The following is provided as a brief guide intended to help with this:

- Agreement – this should be discussed, accepted and minuted by Church Council (as the Host) and signed by their appointed person. (The implications and duties inferred by this program are wider than the remit of property or resources sub-committees).
- Host – this will be the Church Council on behalf of the congregation and this cannot be a subcontractor. Hosts effectively become the lead contractor and accept the main WHS duties and responsibilities; particularly for supervising workers, training and any subcontractor providing professional services. (Hosts are also required to ensure that any works undertaken meet the relevant building codes and/or heritage requirements. If your project includes property improvements which are valued over \$10k, requires Development Approval, impacts heritage requirements or affects the structure of the property, you should discuss the proposed work with Property Services in the early stages of planning).
- Employment Provider – the government approved agency who arrange and administer the program. They will approve and sign the agreement, and require ongoing information relating to attendance etc. be forwarded to them.
- WfD Coordinator – appointed to secure and provide the link between the Employment Provider and the Host organisation.
- Subcontractor – a Host cannot subcontract any part of the WfD program without the approval of the Employment Provider.

You should ensure that a subcontractor is named in the agreement, even if they are not required to sign this. They often have the most to gain financially from the project for providing expertise and supervisory services. A congregation as the Host must discuss and verify all WHS matters with them and have clear responsibilities and procedures in place prior to and throughout the program.
- Risk assessment – the WfD Coordinator is required to undertake this with the Host prior to the start of program. If you are using a subcontractor for any of the work you should ensure that they are also present to complete this. Done properly, this should be comprehensive; nevertheless any additional, ongoing or unforeseen risks will remain the responsibility of the Host and their subcontractor and must be raised with the Employment Provider.
- Insurance – the Host is required to submit a certificate of currency with a minimum public liability cover of \$10 million; the government has also taken out specific insurance for this program. Although it is not a requirement of the Employment Provider, as a Host, you must ensure that any subcontractor also has the relevant insurance covers for this type of project. In the event that something does go wrong, any claim will be complicated and will be for the insurers to work out. You should contact Insurance Services to request a certificate of currency and discuss any concerns.

I’ve included the link to an example Contractor Engagement Checklist which is available on the UCSA website using the following link:

<http://sa.uca.org.au/whs/service-team-contact-details/contractors>

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

Wayne Booth
WHS Coordinator

Insurance Services Department

Hi everyone,

As you would be aware our new 2016-2017 renewal year is already upon us and you will all be receiving your renewal notices soon. Hopefully you have already advised us if you require to pay your insurance renewal by quarterly direct debit.

With the recent September/October storms, we found some congregations had trees or branches fall onto properties. We understand some congregation members wanted to keep the wood for their fires, however we need to remind you that our insurance cover allows for the removal of the fallen trees as part of the claim. You can request to keep the wood if you wish, however we understand that many staff and volunteers climbed onto rooftops and used large chainsaws to cut up the wood. This practice is not only very dangerous, but is also a breach of the SA’s WH&S legislation.

If you know of any properties damaged in the storm and are State Heritage listed, it is even more important that you contact Insurance Services and the Property Department for advice, as there are many regulations that need to be addressed involving the repair of these properties. Repairs to heritage buildings are monitored by the Property Department as any non compliant repairs may cause the Church to be held liable.

If your congregation has found any damage as a result of the storms, please contact Insurance Services as soon as possible and we can advise you of any claims process.

If you have any other questions about insurance, please contact Susanne Alley or me at Insurance Services on 08 8236 4222 or email us at insurance@sa.uca.org.au

Last of all some “Fun Facts”! Did you know that....

- Singer Bruce Springsteen has his voice insured for \$5 million?
- Actor Daniel Craig insured his body for \$9.5 million while filming “Quantum of Solace”, since he did many of his own stunts.
- Soccer star Cristiano Ronaldo has his legs insured for \$144 million!

Regards,
Tony Phillips
Manager, Insurance Services

Finance - general:

2017 Stipends and Allowances

The approved Stipend and Allowances rates are available for your information on the UCSA website at:

Uniting Church SA - Stipends

Of particular note is the change to Accommodation Allowance in that there is now only one rate.

Audited 2015 Financial Statements

Copies of audited annual Financial Statements (of congregations, faith communities and parishes) should be sent in each year to the UCSA Synod Financial Services Team within 6 months of the end of your financial year. This is in line with regulation 3.8.7 Accounting and Audit which can be viewed on the National Assembly web site.

For those with a year end of 31 December these were due by 30 June 2016.

Please ensure that your Financial Statements have been sent in if not already actioned.

If you have any questions regarding this please contact Peter Harbison on (08) 8236 4270 or for Country Callers 1300 766 956.

Mission and Service Fund Contributions – 2017

Response forms for 2017 Mission and Service Fund contributions can be downloaded from Uniting Church SA <http://sa.uca.org.au/mission-and-service-fund>

Please print, complete and return your form by 20 December 2016. Please note that the contribution rate increased to 10% from January 2016.

If your congregation wishes to have all 2016 contributions recorded in the 2016 financial year (ending 31 December) please ring (08) 8236 4270 to discuss payment methods before Friday 16 December 2016.

Christmas Bowl Appeal

The Christmas Bowl is the appeal of 'Act for Peace', the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

Cheques and queries should be directed to: Act for Peace, Locked Bag Q199 QVB, NSW 1230. Free Call 1800 025 101.

Website: <http://www.actforpeace.org.au/christmas-bowl>

This appeal is not administered by the UCSA Synod office.

Synod Office opening times – Christmas 2016 and New Year

The Synod office will close at 3:00pm on Friday 23rd December and re-open on Tuesday 3rd January 2017.

UC Invest will be available during normal business days through the Christmas period. Please check the UC Invest website for opening hours.

For important cut-off times relating to the Payroll Bureau (for December and January pay cycles) please see the Payroll section in this newsletter.

UCSA Screening Services Unit – using the correct Police Check application form

Please ensure that persons requiring a UCSA police check (new checks or renewals) use the current application form.

The form can be viewed and downloaded from <http://sa.uca.org.au/documents/called-to-care/police-check/National-Police-History-Check-Informed-Consent.pdf>

Applicants should read and follow the instructions included on the form and ensure that original ID documents are checked and correctly witnessed by an authorised person i.e. UCA Ministers, UCA employees or members of UCA Church. (Please note that authorised persons for the purpose of this check does not include JPs or Police Officers).

Details of where an applicant is volunteering/working and also the role and duties being undertaken must also be included where indicated. This information is required in order to process the application.

This is a 'fillable form' into which you can type your details online before printing it off to sign and send in.

If you have any questions please call 08 8236 4282 or email screeningunit@sa.uca.org.au

Australian Charities and Not for Profit Commission (ACNC)

The Annual Information Statement (AIS), required by the ACNC, must be lodged with them no later than 6 months after the end of your financial year.

For congregations with a 30 June end of year, this should be lodged with the ACNC by 31 December.

Please see the link below for further assistance.

[Uniting Church SA - ACNC](#)

Payroll

December Payroll cut-off times

December is a significantly shortened working month so we ask that all **timesheets and leave forms** are submitted to the Payroll Bureau as soon as possible and no later than **Thursday 1st December**. This will greatly assist Payroll in completing the pay cycle and all other obligations on time.

Please note, any leave reflected on December timesheets or planned to be taken in December should be accompanied by an authorised leave form. Timesheets & leave forms can be scanned & emailed to payroll@sa.uca.org.au or posted or faxed.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Payroll by emailing payroll@sa.uca.org.au or phone 8236 4241 or 4242.

Payroll Bureau Administration Processing Fee increase - 2017

The Payroll Bureau Service Fees will be increasing from 1st January 2017 in order to partially recover costs associated with providing the Payroll Bureau Service. The new rates are listed below:

	Excluding GST	Including GST
Payroll Monthly Admin Fee	\$20.10	\$22.10
Set up of New Company	\$104.55	\$115.00
Set up of New Employee	\$52.27	\$57.50
Termination of MOU Fee	\$26.13	\$28.75
Reprocessing Fee	\$26.13	\$28.75
Recovery Fee (Payment Summary)	\$46.90	\$51.59

Congregational Bookkeeping Unit (CBU):

Services offered by CBU
The CBU offer a variety of services to congregations including:
Bookkeeping Services
General Bookkeeping Support
Consultancy Services
MYOB software - Installation and Training

Information about these is available on the UCSA website at Uniting Church SA - Congregational Bookkeeping Unit or email cbu@sa.uca.org.au with any enquiries.

Please note that during the end of financial year period (December to March) the CBU is unable to undertake MYOB Installations and Training or Consultancy as resources are fully utilised in preparing financial statements for all CBU clients. Enquiries are still welcomed and CBU will endeavour to accommodate requests as soon as possible.

Information Technology and Telephony

Ransomware : a type of malicious software designed to block access to a computer system and / or files until a sum of money is paid.

With the Synod Office having had a recent experience with this type of software we thought it timely to send out some tips to help everyone protect their computers and information. In our case a convincing email claiming to be from a well-known company tricked one of our users into clicking a link to view a consignment note. Once the link was clicked this downloaded the ransomware which got to work straight away and encrypted all of the files that our unsuspecting user had access to (including network files), it then left a message with instructions on how to pay the ransom to get the file decrypted. As we have a rigorous backup regime, data loss was minimised to 2 hours and some lost work time whilst the files were being restored. Whilst this was unfortunate, we were very lucky that we could do this and did not have to pay the ransom. It's worth noting, that paying the ransom does not always guarantee that the files can be decrypted as this depends on the honesty of the ransomware creator - which may be questionable!

Our recommendations to protect yourself are:

1. Install a good virus scanner and keep this up to date (both the program and virus definitions).

Whilst this won't stop all ransomware (as antivirus is always one step behind the creators of ransomware), it's a good start and will also protect against other threats. There are plenty of good, free and paid virus scanners available, and some (like FortiClient) also have the added bonus of being able to block malicious websites.

2. Learn how to spot fake emails.

Almost anyone can fake an email to look like it has come from a legitimate source and these are not dangerous in themselves, it's the links or attachments within them that are the problem.

- Never open attachments from unknown sources. If in doubt call the sender to verify the email; if they know nothing about the email delete it immediately.

- Be careful clicking on a link from within an email. Most email programs will display the web address when you hover the mouse pointer over the link (without clicking). If the web address looks suspicious delete the email immediately.

More information can be found here: <https://blog.returnpath.com/10-tips-on-how-to-identify-a-phishing-or-spoofing-email-v2/>

3. Make regular backups of your files and store these off-line.

Microsoft have a built in backup program in their operating systems or simply copying your files to an external hard drive every other day will suffice. The amount of data, how often it is changed, and what you can live without will determine how often you should be backing up. USB sticks can sometimes be unreliable so they are not recommended as a backup media.

Keeping the files off-line means not having them accessible from your computer. An example would be storing an external backup drive in a filing cabinet. If your computer is affected by ransomware, the files on your off-line drive are still safe. If the external drive spends all its time plugged into your computer (i.e. online) you risk your backups being encrypted along with the rest of your files leaving you with no choice but to either pay the ransom or live without your files.