



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

Stewarding Congregational Property By-law



While the Church's mission is not tied to buildings, the Church has many places to gather for worship, witness and service. These properties are entrusted to each generation as stewards, to honour their past, use them today and sustain them for the future.

We acknowledge and respect the First Peoples who have cared for the land for thousands of years. We also acknowledge their ongoing spiritual connection to the land on which church buildings sit.

Since Union in 1977, properties have been vested in the UCA Property Trust (SA). Congregations have 'Beneficial Use' of properties to express God's mission in their communities. With Beneficial Use comes responsibility for managing and maintaining the property.

The Synod has responsibility for ensuring that properties across the state are used in the best way to achieve the Church's mission and priorities. The Resources Board, as a sub-committee of the Synod Standing Committee, is mandated to maximise financial and property resources available to the Synod and Presbyteries for mission.

The Stewarding Congregational Property By-Law provides an explanation of the stewardship responsibilities that Congregations and Synod share for properties. This includes the process for allocating and retaining Beneficial Use. The by-law also provides a mechanism for the Synod to engage with a Congregation regarding the best care and use of a property and how this aligns with the missional goals of the Congregation and the community it serves.



**Download the Stewarding
Congregational Property By-law**

The by-law links a congregation's core stewardship responsibilities for a property to the UCA Regulations and current government requirements. It lists the responsibilities of a Congregation with Beneficial Use of a property, including that:



The Church Council fulfils its purpose and responsibilities (UCA Reg 3.1.2)



Congregation finances are managed responsibly, and record keeping is up to date (UCA Reg 3.8.6 and 3.8.7)



The Congregation is following Church regulations and guidelines and is compliant with government regulations.



The Congregation is managing the property responsibly, including addressing building maintenance, conducting annual property reviews, addressing safety matters and insuring the property for replacement value.



If a Congregation is unable to meet these responsibilities, the Synod will engage in a conversation with the Congregation and its Presbytery. Conversations will consider the following core elements:

1. Mission

Recognising that the use of Congregational Property should align with the Congregation's Mission Plan and the Synod's mission priorities.

2. Stewardship

Exercising responsibility for the maintenance of Congregational Property with consideration of the Congregation's mission and ministry.

3. Vitality

Congregational Property should be prioritised from where there is low missional vitality to where there is, or is anticipated to be, vitality and growth.

4. Common life and wealth

Congregational Property should be used for the common good of the Church and enable the whole of the Church to be greater than the sum of its parts. Consideration should be given to how the Congregational Property can help the wider Church achieve its mission and ministry activities across SA and across different generations.

In some cases, this process may conclude with the Congregation and the Synod agreeing that the Congregation's mission no longer requires the Beneficial Use of the property it currently occupies. This does not mean the Congregation needs to dissolve but rather that it requires the Congregation to think differently about where it will gather. This may lead to the property being returned to the Synod.

It is hoped the by-law will assist Congregations, Presbyteries and the Synod to work together to ensure all properties are used to achieve the missional goals of God's Church.

For further information please contact the Resources Ministry Centre on (08) 8236 4200 or resources@sa.uca.org.au.





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