

Report

The Placements Committee has sought to do the following since the 36th Synod:

- Support the “call” process within the life of the church
- Streamline and make this process more transparent and efficient
- Review and update our processes, including improved integrity in our database and improved useability of our documentation

About our Committee

The Placements Committee (Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements) is responsible for the oversight of the processes that enable the placement of ministers, ministers from other denominations and laypeople in particular specified ministries. Membership includes the Moderator (chairperson), a delegate of the General Secretary, each presbytery minister, a delegate of the CEO of UnitingCare Queensland, and the Director of Christian Formation or their delegate. This diverse membership brings together a collective story about what is happening across the life of the church and what resources are best able to meet the needs of particular ministry contexts.

Please see below the current statistics for Placements within the Qld Synod:

Statistics as at 01/08/2023 for the period 01/05/2022 – 11/08/2023

Total number of approved placements including vacancies	250
Bremer Brisbane	39
Carpentaria	31
Central Queensland	9
Mary Burnett	21
Moreton Rivers	48
Queensland Synod	17
South Moreton	37
The Downs	13
UnitingCare Queensland	35
Number of approved placements less than 1.0 FTE	97
Number of ministry agents in approved placements	250
Female	100
Male	150
Ordained	150
Lay	100

Statistics for removals and relocations

Year	Number of Removals	Cost of Removals
2020	14	\$62,818.36
2021	31	\$166,896.84
2022	40	\$301,355.24
2023 (YTD)	11	\$99,265.11

** These amounts are exclusive of incidental expenses submitted by ministry agents, particular to their relocation.

** These amounts relate to the larger removalist suppliers only.

Plentiful focus

Focus since the last Synod (since May 2022)

- With the assistance of the Ministry Matters Unit (MMU) and the Placements Review, we have been working to make our systems, structures and processes more fit for purpose. Increased community scrutiny and expectations around the fair and just treatment of people in placements means that what we do must be defensible, transparent, fair and just.
- In addition, we are deliberately making time to talk about some of the big issues that impact on our ministers and congregations. We do this by putting time aside to discuss big ticket items that take time, research and space for discernment. Topics which have been canvassed are around housing and the cost of accommodation and the health and wellbeing of ministry agents.
- We have developed an **Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements Manual** - This manual is designed to be a one stop shop for all things Placements.
- We have prepared for an updated website which will house all policy documents and provide templates for processes.
- We have assisted with the review of the Ministry Agents Handbook (which is now called the [Ministry Agent General Placements Conditions Handbook](#)).
- We are developing a national Ministry Leadership Profile form and working on a national Congregational Profile Form, and
- A working group was asked to focus on *Transparency & Equitable Access of Placement Vacancies*. Work will continue to develop a standardised approach to advertising, templates, policies and procedures.

Finally, we have been delighted to interview exiting candidates for ministry and have welcomed several as they presented their vision for ministry to us. They were Levon Kardashian, Donna Muston, Michael Hands and Annie Baker.

Challenges

- **Two Presbytery Ministers** have or will be finishing their terms and we have taken these opportunities to reimagine how we might best serve the presbytery. These conversations must take into account the changing needs of the presbyteries, the push to reduce costs, countered by the complexity of managing a church that is in deep structural transition. Finding people who can navigate these trends is difficult.
- **Budget restraints re public hospital chaplaincy funding:** Public Hospital Chaplains provide vital pastoral support for patients, their families and staff. We also noted that COVID depleted the number of Volunteer Chaplains, increasing the load on the paid Chaplains. The Synod Standing Committee grappled with the decisions around sustainable models of funding hospital chaplaincy. Placements Committee will assist in managing the outcomes of the decision to cease the funding of chaplaincy into public hospital settings.
- **Police Chaplains:** As of July 2023, a new contract was established by the QPS that overtly treats our Chaplains as Contractors. There is increased reporting obligation, and the QPS requires the Church to submit fortnightly invoices. We have agreed to support the contract for two years to determine if the expectations of the QPS can align with the Church's understanding of being a Minister in Placement.

Proposals to the 37th Synod

It is proposed that the 37th Synod receive this report.

Greener Shoots - possibilities and opportunities

By moving into times of asking the big questions, and the support and assistance of the Ministry Matters Unit, the Placements committee is being better supported to make decisions based on the changing missional context of the church.

Contact for report questions

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