



**Uniting Church**  
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

# Ministry Transition Assistance Scheme

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## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide vocational, pastoral and financial support to specified Ministers who are in transition, that is, awaiting or concluding placement.

## 2. Rationale

- 2.1 To retain, protect and support the church's investment in ordained leadership.
- 2.2 To affirm that the call to specified ministry is not limited to stipended placements.
- 2.3 To encourage and support Ministers during such transitional periods.

## 3. Assistance

- 3.1 **Transitional Assistance** for Ministers will be facilitated by a Vocational Discernment Panel (VDP). The priority of the Discernment Panel would be to attend to the interests and wellbeing of the Minister.
  - 3.1.1 The purpose of each VDP is to journey with the Minister as they engage in a period of intentional prayer and reflection to discern and clarify God's call at this particular time in their life.
  - 3.1.2 Each VDP will include a member of the Placements Committee, a representative of the Presbytery PRC and a trusted colleague or mentor nominated by the Minister.
  - 3.1.3 The vocational discernment process will be coordinated by the Associate Secretary and will include:
    - i. A guided transition retreat conducted by providers approved by the Placements Committee;
    - ii. An outplacement services provided by a firm recommended by the Synod HR Manager.
  - 3.1.4 Referral to a VDP should be made, in writing, at least six (6) months prior to the conclusion of placement (and taking Annual and Study Leave into account) by
    - the Presbytery PRC; or,
    - the Placements Committee; or,
    - at any time by the Committee for Counselling through the Presbytery PRC.
  - 3.1.5 A confidential report, prepared by the VDP and including comment and reflection from the Minister, shall be provided to the Minister, the Presbytery PRC and the Placements Committee Executive. It is appropriate for the VDP to make recommendations to the Minister, the Presbytery PRC, the Placements Committee and / or any other relevant body. Recommendations may include:
    - A review of the minister's classification
    - Leave of absence

- Positive exploration of a different vocational path or career redirection
- The pursuit of specialist ministry of a different kind
- Counselling
- Further continuing education
- Retirement

- 3.2 **Outplacement services** will be offered to support ministers in transitional situations. This includes reviewing their career, assessing their current circumstances, assisting with interview skills and providing whatever support they need to find a new role. The particular nature of ordained ministry requires that transitional support also include prayerful attention to the discernment of God's call in the life of each Minister.
- 3.3 **Financial Assistance** will be limited to an initial period of 2 months and a maximum of 3 months in total upon review.
- 3.4 Financial Assistance may include any or all of the following:
- 3.4.1 Stipend: either full or part-time depending on percentage of last placement
  - 3.4.2 Beneficiary Fund contributions
  - 3.4.3 Full housing allowance, if this has been provided by the previous placement
- 3.5 Ministers remain under the pastoral care and oversight of the presbytery once MTAS support has concluded

## 4. Eligibility

- 4.1 Access to Financial Assistance is dependent upon the placement having paid the Ministers Support Fund Levy on behalf of the Minister concerned as specified in the Terms of Placement.
- 4.2 Ministers who withdraw from placement will not normally be considered for MTAS unless, prior to giving notice of withdrawal, they have consulted with their PRC, and the PRC, having considered the matter, has resolved to recommend that assistance be made available.
- 4.3 On Termination of Placement, an application for Transitional Assistance will require a resolution from the Presbytery PRC, and be subject to the Minister engaging in the vocational discernment process.

## 5. Process

- 5.1 The Presbytery resolves that a Minister's placement will conclude and determines the date of conclusion / termination.
- 5.2 The Minister makes Leadership Profile available to the Placements Committee through Presbytery PRC.
- 5.3 At least six (6) months prior to the conclusion of the placement (taking Annual and Study Leave into account), the Minister is referred to the MTAS and a VDP is formed.

- 5.4 At least three (3) months prior to the conclusion of the placement, a report, with recommendations, from the VDP is submitted to the Presbytery PRC, the Placements Committee Executive and the Minister.
- 5.5 An application for Financial Assistance can be made three (3) months prior to the conclusion of placement through the Presbytery and will presuppose that:
  - 5.5.1 A VDP has been formed, a Transition Retreat has been completed and an outplacement consultation has been conducted;
  - 5.5.2 a report, with recommendations, has been received from the VDP;
  - 5.5.3 a statement of Presbytery support has been provided; and
  - 5.5.4 a current Leadership Profile has been received.
- 5.6 If Financial Assistance is recommended, the PRC submits an approved application to the Placements Committee Executive for determination.
- 5.7 The Executive considers the application and advises the Minister, PRC and UR (for payment purposes) of the determination.
- 5.8 Following a successful application, the Minister will update the Placements Committee Executive of any changes in circumstances in regards to placement, supply or other employment.

## 6. Further Information

Contact Synod Secretariat on (02) 8267 4323 for approved providers.