



**uniting
church**
in Australia,
Synod of NSW & ACT

Community Leave Policy

Title: Community Leave Policy
Creation Date: August 2021
Version: 0.1
Last Revised: March 2022
Approved by: Synod Office SLT

Table of Contents

- 1 Overview 4
- 2 Purpose of Policy 4
- 3 Applicability (scope) 4
- 4 Responsibilities..... 4
- 5 Principles 5
- 6 Review 6
- 7 Legislation..... 6
- 8 Terms and Conditions 7

1 Overview

The Synod recognises that, from time to time, employees may need time away from the workplace in order to fulfil community service obligations, and we wish to support those employees in their efforts.

2 Purpose of Policy

This policy outlines the community service leave provisions insofar as they relate to:

- ▶ Emergency Management Services
- ▶ Jury duty
- ▶ Blood donor leave
- ▶ Naturalisation / citizenship leave

Please note that, with the exception of Emergency Management Services, this policy does not cover Volunteer Leave as this is addressed in a separate policy.

3 Applicability (scope)

This policy applies to all employees of the Synod.

Community leave is available when an employee is required to be absent from work due to:

- ▶ jury service (including attendance for jury selection); or
- ▶ carrying out a reasonable voluntary emergency management activity with a recognised emergency management body (e.g. Fire Brigade, State Emergency Services or Army Reserve*) in response to an emergency or natural disaster;
- ▶ Giving blood at a registered blood donation centre;
- ▶ Attending to tests, interviews or ceremonies in support of their naturalization or Australian citizenship

**Members of the Army, Navy and Air Force reserves have additional protections under the Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001. If an employee is a member of any voluntary emergency service, they should inform their people manager and the People and Culture Team of this commitment prior to or on joining the Synod or the voluntary organisation.*

4 Responsibilities

The Director, People and Culture has responsibility for the development, implementation and management of this policy.

Payroll has responsibility for making salary adjustments as required under this policy.

People Managers have responsibility for supporting employees taking Community Service Leave, for re-allocating work responsibilities as appropriate and for maintaining communication with the employee (as far as is practicable). People managers are also responsible for ensuring that the appropriate leave application is submitted.

Employees have responsibility for:

- ▶ Observing the requirements of this policy and providing as much notice as practical of their absence or impending absence on the basis of serving the community;
- ▶ Where the community service leave relates to blood donations, for receiving their People Manager's approval in advance of attending any appointment and providing appropriate information as set out in clause 5.2 of this policy.

5 Principles

5.1 Voluntary Emergency Management Services

Employees absent as a result of voluntary emergency management activities are entitled to up to five days of paid leave per calendar year with any additional leave taken as unpaid leave. Emergency Management Services leave is neither capped nor cumulative. It is there in times of emergency or natural disaster.

Voluntary Emergency Management Leave applies to all permanent and fixed-term full-time and part-time employees. It does not apply to contractors, consultants, casuals or individuals engaged via external agencies.

An eligible employee engages in a voluntary emergency management activity if they:

- ▶ engage in an activity that involves dealing with an emergency or natural disaster as declared by the Federal, State or Territory Government, as relevant;
- ▶ engage in the activity on a voluntary basis;
- ▶ were either requested to engage in an activity, or it would be reasonable to expect that such a request would have been made if circumstances had permitted; and
- ▶ are a member of, or have a member-like association with, a recognised emergency management body. A recognised emergency management body is:
 - ▶ a body that has a role or function in coping with emergencies and/or disasters;
 - ▶ a fire-fighting, civil defence or rescue body; or
 - ▶ any other body, or part of a body, which is substantially involved in responding to an emergency or natural disaster. This may include bodies such as the State Emergency Service (SES), Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, ACT Fire and Rescue, Land Search and Rescue (LandSar), or the RSPCA (in respect of animal rescue).

An employee who takes community service leave must give the Synod:

- ▶ notice of the absence as soon as possible (which, depending on the circumstances, may be after the leave starts); and
- ▶ the period or expected period of absence.

At its discretion, the Synod may request the employee to provide evidence that they're entitled to emergency management services leave.

5.2 Blood Donor Leave

The Synod recognises the importance to the community of regular blood donations. We also know that sometimes life can get in the way of donating blood so the Synod offers employees paid time off to donate blood. There are a few things we'd like you to consider before donating blood.

- ▶ Most blood donation centres prefer that you make an appointment for your donation. You can also check your eligibility for donating blood online at www.donateblood.com.au. Please complete these steps before proceeding further.
- ▶ Even if you are working from home, your People Manager's approval is still required before leaving your home work space to donate blood. That's because our obligations to you continue to exist regardless of where you are working from.
- ▶ Employees wishing to donate blood should do so when it is least likely to cause any disruption

to their team or the workplace. People Manager approval is required before any attendance at blood donation sites.

- ▶ We ask that you provide your People Manager with the following details:
 - ▶ The place where you are donating blood
 - ▶ Contact details for the venue
 - ▶ Your mobile phone number, together with the name and phone number of your next of kin (some of us can feel a little woozy after giving blood and, if that happens, we want to ensure you get home safely)
 - ▶ Estimated time of return
 - ▶ A team can give blood at the same time provided the manager agrees, it doesn't cause disruptions to other teams or the workplace in general, and the donation centre can accept a group booking.
- ▶ It is up to each individual to determine their eligibility and suitability for blood donations and for taking all necessary precautions. More information can be found at www.donateblood.com.au. This website sets out what to do before, during and after donating blood, as well as what to avoid.

5.3 Jury duty

From time to time, employees may be summonsed for jury duty. If you are asked to attend jury duty, please let your People Manager know straight away.

Employees absent as a result of jury service may be paid their normal rate of pay by the Synod, less any allowance the employee is paid from the relevant court, up to a maximum period of two weeks. Employees are required to forward any cheques, appropriately endorsed, to Payroll or, in the event of electronic payment, to notify and provide evidence of the payment to Payroll. Top up payments will be made as part of the employee's normal pay cycle.

The employee is entitled to keep any expense-related allowances paid by the court e.g. for travel.

For the period of jury duty, if selected, the employee will be relieved of their regular work responsibilities. An exception to this is where the employee completes only a partial day of jury duty or jury selection in which case they are expected to return to normal duties once their jury selection or duty is completed.

Each of NSW and the ACT allow certain categories of people the right to claim exemption from jury duty. These include, but are not limited to:

- ▶ NSW - members of the clergy and vowed members of any religious order;
- ▶ ACT – Ministers of Religion or practicing members of a religious society or order whose beliefs or principles are incompatible with jury service

6 Review

This policy will be reviewed three years from its implementation date or earlier as legislative changes or circumstances require.

7 Legislation

Jury Amendment Act (2010) NSW
Juries Regulation (2018) ACT

Fair Work Act (2009) Cth

8 Terms and Conditions

This Policy does not form part of any contract of employment or contract of engagement and may be amended, replaced or revoked at any time by the Synod at its discretion.