



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

# Performance Development

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## 1. Overview/Background

We want our people to be the best that they can be and it's in our everyday practices that we achieve the most.

Our performance development program is designed to support skill building by setting goals which will stretch you but not break you; provide you with regular feedback (and feed-forward) and offer you the opportunity to really excel. Human pursuit is never so great as when we work with others, taking guidance along the way.

*The strength of the team is each individual member.  
The strength of each individual member is the team.*

Phil Jackson

## 2. Purpose of Policy

This policy sets out our performance management approach and process.

Please note that underperformance is dealt with in the Performance Management and Misconduct Policy

## 3. Applicability (scope)

This policy applies to all permanent employees ('**employees**') of the Synod of NSW and ACT ('**Synod**').

## 4. Responsibilities

**People and Culture** are responsible for:

- ▶ Designing, setting and communicating the performance development program to all employees;
- ▶ Designing performance ratings and calibration method that recognises strong performance while also ensuring consistency and fairness across the Synod; and
- ▶ Managing the remuneration review process to ensure that strong performance is differentiated and appropriately rewarded.

**People Managers** are responsible for:

- ▶ Supporting employees in the development of their career plan;
- ▶ Working with employees to develop and set stretch goals;
- ▶ Providing regular feedback (even the uncomfortable kind) to employees in support of their ongoing development;
- ▶ Where possible, identifying and removing any barriers that might be impacting the employee's development or achievement of their goals; and
- ▶ Coaching and mentoring employees and identifying on-the-job opportunities for development.

**Employees** are responsible for:

- ▶ Working with their People Manager to set and develop stretch goals;
- ▶ Striving to attain stretch goals;

- ▶ Being open and receptive to feedback, even when it's hard to hear;
- ▶ Proactively speaking with their People Manager about any challenges they're struggling to overcome; and
- ▶ Working with, helping and supporting others in the achievement of their goals and the objectives of the overall team.

## 5. Principles

Whether you have designs on a leadership role, or a role as a subject matter specialist or you're content in your current role, we want to support you in achieving your objectives.

### Goals

- ▶ Goals need to be achievable, with a stretch.
- ▶ Goals need to be focused and aligned with your team's purpose. Not too many goals, and not too few – about 5 or 6 is good.
- ▶ Goals should be weighted according to their level of priority so that, if you can't achieve everything, you know what's most important – but always speak with your People Manager first.
- ▶ Goals should be reviewed throughout the year. Life changes, so do priorities; yours might need to too.
- ▶ Like us, our goals need to be SMART
  - Specific
  - Measurable
  - Achievable
  - Realistic
  - Time-specific

### Competencies

- ▶ Competencies develop over time.
- ▶ Think about the competencies that are most important to your current role and your aspirational role – how can you get involved with those assignments or responsibilities that support your career plan?

### Feedback

- ▶ Giving feedback is hard and most of us are uncomfortable with it; focus on the overall message. We can all be a bit clumsy with our words sometimes; if that happens, seek clarification to understand. The person who's provided you with feedback has provided you with an opportunity to be even better.
- ▶ No one individual can have the total picture of our performance. That's why we want you to get feedback from others with whom you work closely. It's best to agree the feedback sources with your People Manager before proceeding.
- ▶ Feedback can be attributed to the individual providing it or given anonymously. Our main objective is that feedback is actually provided.

### Learning

- ▶ The Synod is committed to the development of its people. To this end, we have developed separate Professional Development Guidelines which covers short courses, studies and

memberships of professional organisations or associations.

## 6. The process

Our process has been developed with ongoing feedback in mind. It's up to all of us to help us achieve that aim. We use the Threads System to set goals, undertake monthly check ins, and complete six-monthly reviews. Threads allows for the cascading of goals from the executive to all roles.

### 6.1 Our Performance Development Cycle

We call it a cycle, but it's really an ongoing process. We've set a few timelines but the real value is in having regular, meaningful discussions.

**[Month]** Goal-setting. Not too many. 5-6 is the ideal number.

Prioritise goal-setting by applying weightings

**Ongoing** Feedback – ask for it, accept it, give it;

Be gracious, be constructive and be performance/task focussed

Be forward-focussed, e.g. if we were doing X again, what would we do differently?  
None of us can change the past so let's learn from it.

**[Month]** Mid-year goal progress review – how are we doing? Any adjustments necessary? If so, let's make them

**[Month]** Year-end review – we've set out goals, we've revisited them as needed, we've had feedback along the way. We know where we've done well, and where we need to pick up a little.

**[Month]** Remuneration review. This can be tricky. As a not-for-profit, we need to balance the needs of our communities and congregations against monetary recognition for our people. So, we've put some guidelines in place – here they are:

### 6.2 Eligibility for Salary Review

Employees with less than 6 months' service are not eligible for salary increases.

- ▶ Performance will be measured on a scale of 1-5.
- ▶ Only those with a performance rating of 3 or higher will be eligible for salary review.
- ▶ Salary reviews don't guarantee salary increases.
- ▶ Performance ratings will be calibrated.

## 7. Performance ratings

Part of our performance process is a rating scale that is embedded into our Threads system. The employee and the manager will have the opportunity to rate and comment on their performance in relation to the goals that have been assigned.

The rating process is intended to assist employees and managers to continuously review and improve performance.

## **Modelling our Values is also Important:**

It's not all about what we do, it's also about how we do it. How we present ourselves and work with others is critical to how we go forward in our communities, whether you are community facing or not. That's where our values come in. People Managers have been authorised to adjust your rating up or down depending on how well you modelled our values.

## **8. Disagreement with goals or rating**

If you feel that either your goals weren't set fairly, or weren't a proper reflection of your contribution, or there was something beyond your control that stopped you from reaching them, please speak with your People Manager or your People and Culture Business Partner – the sooner the better.

Similarly, if you feel, at the end of the year, that your rating doesn't reflect your contribution, please speak to your People Manager – they may have some further feedback for you. If, after that, you still have a concern, then please speak with your People and Culture Business Partner. We can't guarantee that'll change anything but we can guarantee that you'll be heard and we'll look into the matter as appropriate.

## **9. Your career**

We want you to have a rewarding and fulfilling career with us. Each year, your People Manager will speak with you about your career aspirations and, together, we hope you'll identify ways to get the experience and exposure you need to develop the relevant competencies.

You and your manager should also discuss opportunities to broaden your skills and experiences. This could include, for example, secondments, or acting roles as appropriate.

We ask that you initiate these discussions – after all, no-one should care about your career more than you do and we want you in the driver's seat. So go ahead, plan your journey and work with your People Manager to help you reach your destination.

## **10. Other policies**

Code of Conduct and Ethics  
Professional Development and Memberships Policy  
Performance Management and Misconduct Policy

## **11. 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.