



Baptist Churches
of NSW & ACT

Church Consultancy Manual

A Ministry of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT
“Together in Ministry”

Updated October 2024



The Church Consultancy Ministry is officially endorsed by the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

This manual has been prepared by the Church Health Team for the information of churches. Some of the content is adapted from original material prepared by John Mark Ministries and is used by permission.

This manual should not be reproduced without the consent of the Team Leader – Gen1K Church Health.

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From the Team Leader - Gen1K Church Health

Thank you for considering church consultancy. This ministry has operated since 1999 and been effective in improving church health. More than 150 Association churches have engaged in consultancy to date, and much positive feedback has been received.

The Association's Gen1K Goal is 1,000 healthy churches by 2050. This represents a tripling of the number of churches that existed when the goal was set. In helping to achieve this the Church Health Team recognises the importance of continuing to support and assist existing churches. This is because their wellbeing is itself important and because it is healthy churches that will produce the healthy disciples and healthy leaders needed for the planting of new congregations.

This manual contains basic information about the Church Consultancy Ministry. We hope that you will find it useful and would be pleased to answer any questions arising from it. We would also welcome the opportunity to discuss church consultancy with you if you would like to explore it further.

The Church Consultancy Ministry is offered by members of the Church Health Team and approved volunteers from Association churches who have completed the Church Consultancy Training Program, participate in ongoing training, and receive professional supervision.

The Church Health Team would welcome the opportunity to support and assist your church and we hope to hear from you soon.

An Introduction to Church Consultancy

1. Church consultancy is...

- * An officially endorsed ministry of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT that aims to serve and support the local Church
- * A valuable strategic tool for improving church health
- * A clearly defined process in which a church's leadership team makes an agreement with trained and approved consultants that results in them working together for the benefit of the local church.
- * A proven tool that is used by churches from a wide variety of denominational backgrounds

2. Church consultancy is not...

- * Just another program
- * A "quick-fix" solution
- * A process that is only relevant for unhealthy Churches

3. Types of church consultancy...

The Church Consultancy Ministry offers various consultancies including:

- * Preventative & Proactive
- * Health & Revitalisation
- * Crisis Intervention, including Conflict and Moral Failure
- * Church Planting
- * Transitional
- * Team, including Pastoral Reviews and Pastoral Team Reviews

For more information on these and other types of consultancies, please contact the Church Health Team: health@nswactbaptists.org.au . Please note that Regional Ministers will also be able to respond to preliminary enquiries regarding church consultancies.

4. Consultancies are valuable because...

- ***They provide objectivity***

Our consultants are external to the life of your church. Consequently, they are well-placed to process the different perspectives that exist. They are equally well-placed to remain objective in difficult situations, including when conflict is present.

- ***They bring a different perspective***

Our consultants will sometimes observe factors which are not apparent to many members of the congregation who are used to the way things are.

- ***They allow for flexibility***

Our consultants do not use a single programme or method but rather construct each consultancy based on the objectives that are set for them. They have at their disposal a wide range of resources and tools, as well as access to the wide knowledge and experience of the Baptist Ministry Centre Staff Team.

- ***The objectives are set by the local church - not the consultants***

The consultancy process empowers the local church to set the objectives. Our consultants do not embark on a consultancy thinking they know what is best or that they have all the solutions. Instead, they work with the church leadership to identify clear objectives and then facilitate, guide, gather information, provide considered reflections, and make appropriate recommendations.

- ***The reflections and recommendations that are provided in the Church Engagement Report are for the consideration of the local Church***

It is the local church that decides whether to implement any recommendations our consultants make.

- ***In many situations difficulties can be avoided, problems addressed, and new direction and vigour gained***

It makes sense!

- ***The consultants are gifted and trained people***

Our consultants have been trained and invited to join the Specialised Consultancy Team. Each of them has entered into a covenant with the Church Health Team that commits them to on-going training and supervision.

- ***Those who are trained as members of the consultancy team gain skills which will prove valuable in their own Church***

While consultancy benefits any church that engages in it, a spin-off is the additional benefit it produces for the churches that our consultants belong to. As they work with other churches our consultants will sometimes discover things, they were not aware of before and go on to commend these to their own churches.

5. A consultancy will be helpful...

When a church wants to review its health and direction, including:

- * Its Mission, Vision, Values, and Goals
- * Its strategic plan
- * Its structures
- * The effective functioning of its teams E.g., Pastoral Team; Leadership Team
- * The effectiveness and appropriateness of its current ministries

When a church is going through a period of change including:

- * When its growth has plateaued
- * When it is considering the appointment of new pastoral staff
- * When it is restructuring
- * When it is in decline
- * When faced with a significant change

When a church requires assistance in times of difficulty including:

- * Handling conflict
- * Navigating a crisis

6. A consultancy involves...

- * As many members of the congregation as possible. While it is essential that all church leaders are committed to the process in most instances the consultants also look to obtain input from the congregation

Who are the Consultants?

All our consultants are members of Baptist churches who have completed the Association's Consultancy Training Program and been invited to join the Specialised Consultancy Team. Membership of this team involves on-going training and supervision.

The Standard Consultancy Process

- * A church makes an enquiry to the Church Health Team
- * A member of the Church Health Team then meets with the church leadership to discuss the type of consultancy that is most appropriate
- * The church leadership formally requests a consultancy by submitting a completed agreement form (see p10 of this manual) to the Church Health Team
- * The Church Health Team appoints at least two consultants to work with the church
- * The consultants meet with the church leadership team to agree the objectives that will form the basis of the consultancy
- * The consultancy process takes place
- * The consultants prepare a Church Engagement Report and Recommendations and present it to the church leadership team
- * The Church Health Team provides appropriate supervision during the consultancy process and conducts an evaluation at the conclusion.

Notes:

- * Once the report has been presented the consultancy is complete. However, in some instances, the consultants may be available to assist with the implementation of recommendations
- * The work the consultants do may identify matters that are best addressed by a further consultancy, and this can be discussed with the Church Health Team
- * In the case of a conflicted situation, an extended relationship may be necessary, and this can be discussed with the Church Health Team.

Policies and Procedures

1. Accountability

The Consultancy Team operates under the authority of the Team Leader - Gen1K Church Health of the Association of Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT. This authority may be delegated through the Church Health Team. The Team Leader - Gen1K Church Health will invite and accredit members of the Consultancy Team and will be responsible for the discipline of team members, if necessary.

Consultants will have successfully completed the initial 2 years of training.

In the context of a Church Consultancy, consultants always work with one or more other team members and with a Supervisor. The Supervisor will usually be the relevant Regional Minister or a member of the Church Health Team and will be appointed by the Team Leader - Gen1K Church Health. The role of the Supervisor is to offer support and accountability throughout an engagement.

2. Supervision of the Consultancy Team

Each Consultancy Team has a supervisor appointed to them by the Team Leader – Gen1K Church Health.

3. The Covenant

All consultants have agreed to be bound by the following:

- Association policies and procedures and satisfying all Safe Church requirements
- The model of consultancy to be used by the team
- Be accountable to the Supervisor's role in the team and to the Gen1K Church Health Team Leader
- Function with one or more other team members in any consultancy
- Available to be involved in at least one consultancy per year*
- Seek advice and/or support from other consultants in the team
- Write up a report for each consultancy undertaken
- Participate in the ongoing 'Specialised' consultancy training*

- Submit to ongoing review of participation in the consultancy ministry
- Make a minimum commitment of two years to the Consultancy Team
- Not accept a call to a church in which they have conducted a consultancy, until at least two years after the completion of the consultancy, without the written approval of a member of the Gen1K Leadership Team.

* **Regional Ministers** may be involved in consultancies and training in line with their role, recognising they have additional responsibilities and their own regular meetings for input, support and accountability.

4. Confidentiality Agreement:

- A consultant will regard details of a Church Health Engagement (CHE) as confidential to the Consultancy Team. Details of a CHE may be discussed in the context of Consultancy Training for the purposes of learning, support and accountability, but those details will remain strictly confidential to the Consultancy Team.
- Any issue arising from the CHE process may be referred to the Supervisor by members of the Consultancy Team.
- Professional advice may be sought by consultants with appropriate regard for confidentiality and transparency with the church (e.g. for relevant legal, financial, property advice, etc.)
- The final consultancy report is recommended for release to the local church. The report is made available to the Team Leader - Gen1K Church Health. The Team Leader will provide a copy of the report to the relevant Regional Minister and the report may also be accessed as required by relevant members of the Church Health Team and, in certain circumstances, by the members of the Executive Leadership Team and/or Assembly Council
- Cases of alleged moral failure emerging during the consultancy process shall be reported immediately to the Supervisor and Team Leader Gen1K Church Health.
- Legal and statutory requirements may render the above confidentiality agreement not binding on the consultant (e.g. a court order; an offence against a minor; when a person's life is in danger).
- The local church should be informed of this confidentiality agreement before entering into a Consultancy.

CHURCH CONSULTANCY AGREEMENT FORM

Name of Church:

Address:

Postcode:

Name of Church Contact:

Phone:

Email:

On behalf of the church leadership team, I confirm that we:

Acknowledge the information contained in the Church Consultancy Manual and request a consultancy for our church.

Will co-operate with the consultants and respect the consultancy process.

Understand that should it be necessary then representatives from the Ministry Standards Committee (MSC) will become involved in the process and that where appropriate a report will be provided to that department.

Will arrange for the reimbursement of all costs as per the **Consultancy Costs Sheet** to provide for the travel and accommodation needs of consultants. NB: It is usual for Baptist Ministry Centre to provide the treasurer with an invoice for any costs to be reimbursed by the church.

Signature:

Role in the church:

Date:

When completed this form should be returned to the Church Health Team by email to health@nswactbaptists.org.au or by post to the address below.

*Church Health Team
Ministry & Learning Centre
Level 4, 5 Saunders Close
Macquarie Park, NSW, 2113*

Church Consultancy Costs Sheet

The following fee structure applies to all Church Consultancies. Participating churches will be invoiced for the travel and any additional costs at the conclusion of the consultancy. If you would like to discuss costs, then please contact the Church Health Team – health@nswactbaptists.org.au

1. Initial Consultancy Fee

There will be an initial cost of \$500 at the commencement of the consultancy process. Churches will be invoiced for the initial consultancy fee once the Church Consultancy Agreement Form is received.

2. Travel

It is important to remember that the consultants are not paid for their ministry and therefore it is vital that their travel costs be met by the host church. (If there is a problem in meeting these costs, then please contact the Church Health Team to discuss a possible travel subsidy.)

- Travel costs will be charged at 0.88 cents per kilometre.
- Air or rail travel if required will be negotiated with the church.

Note: Travel and any additional costs will be invoiced at the conclusion of the consultancy

3. Accommodation and Hosting Costs

In most cases the consultants are hosted in homes of church members if accommodation is required. Motel accommodation would only be requested in special circumstances, and this would be discussed with the Church before the consultancy commenced. The host church should also provide meals and refreshments for the consultants during their visit.

4. Association Staff

When Consultancies involve or require key Association Senior staff, a day rate of \$550 may be invoiced. Costs related to Association staff should be clarified and agreed upon prior to commencement of the consultancy process.

5. Suggested Donation

Where a Church is able to, we also suggest that the Church give strong consideration to making a donation of \$150 to each of the consultants as a way of thanking them for serving your congregation.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOUR CHURCH WILL BE INVOICED FOR TRAVEL COSTS AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONSULTANCY