

Property Services : How to Guide

SOLAR PANELS

The Property Services Unit within Synod of Victoria assists all parts of the Church to manage properties for purchase, sale, build, lease and maintenance. The UCA Property Services team offers advice as an internal resource to ensure that risks are managed.

The advice below is provided, current as at 1st July 2018:

Solar Energy initiatives can provide positive outcomes for Congregations considering sustainability together with environmental benefit. However, planning should be carefully considered.

Here are some checklist tips:

- Congregations considering solar installations must determine if the property is subject to a Heritage Overlay as a planning permit will likely apply.
- The roof structure of a Church or missional building must be assessed for structural suitability prior to engaging a solar panel installation. Other considerations need to include the roof and roof frame material, batten / purlin material thickness and spacing, waterproofing (penetration versus no penetration) and edge zone for safe maintenance access. Therefore such supply and installation should only be carried out by accredited installers and the building assessed by a registered practitioner.
- The supplier of the solar system must provide a structural certificate by an Australian registered practitioner. These certificates demonstrate that the mounting system will help prevent damage to a solar installation and help safeguard the roof in the event of a wind-induced failure. The system must be accredited to the latest wind code, Australian Standard AS1170.2. Some wind-induced failures can be due to panels being installed too close to the edge or ridge of the roof. Like buildings, solar framing needs to be designed for major storm events.
- Accredited installers are required to advise on maintenance. The maintenance must also comply with the current standards due to impacts as a result of weathering, damage or an upgrading of the standards themselves. Cost of maintaining the solar system is a key consideration in the budgetary planning for the project.

Apply long-term thinking to a Solar Panel installation by seeking professional advice to the specification, accreditation, maintenance and warranty.

As part of the UCA - OH&S policy, The Uniting Church in Australia requires that all contractors working on or at property undertake an Online Health & Safety Induction Course. This is available on line at <http://www.inductme.com.au/uca>

For further support from The Uniting Church in Australia Property Services team, please call 9116 1956 or email property@victas.uca.org.au