

OH&S Framework - Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Intention and Purpose

This **Framework** outlines strategic priorities for the Synod Ministry and Operations (SMO) occupational health and safety (OHS) management and sits alongside a Service Level Agreement (the SLA) for the provision of a range of OH&S services delivered by Age Well. In certain areas, this Framework extends beyond SMO for example to the Bethel and Narana/Congress properties, Covid-19 plans for congregations and Op Shops.

The Framework prioritises and promotes the safety of all across the life of the Synod and provides complementary support to those services included under the SLA. A detailed Action Plan forms part of the Framework. The Action Plan specifies items, timeframes and responsibilities.

Aligned with the Synod Ministries and Operation strategic goals and in particular, the Strategic Initiatives of *Sustainability and Trust*, this Framework fosters inter unit collaboration, simple and efficient and effective processes, pro-active communication and timely responses. It should be noted that whilst developed for the SMO domain, this Framework can apply more broadly. The Framework can be used to influence and support (but not direct) other groups and functions in their OHS activities.

Scope

This Framework incorporates activities and areas that are not included in the SLA. These further initiatives and responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Oversight of services provided under the SLA
2. The identification and notification of high risk matters to nominated Synod team/s.
3. Provision of timely reports directly to Associate General Secretary, including incidents and/or matters of concern relevant to safety across the life of the Synod incorporating congregations and presbyteries.
4. Provision of training for employees in Synod Ministries and Operations
5. Liaison and coordination of First Aid Training & Health Safety Representative Training
6. Provision of contact officers training, support, information and advice
7. Communication services including consultation with relevant teams within the Synod Ministries and Operations, Presbyteries and local sites

Indicators of success

The Framework aims to achieve the following:

- Implementation of a health and safety management system
- Reduction in lost time due to injury claim and a reduction in work cover claims
- Increase access to Health and safety information, resources and training
- Regular and transparent schedule of inspection for site reporting
- Timely incident reporting
- Increase in risk registers, regular building testing and reporting, equitable access
- First Aid Officers in every congregation
- Appropriate methods and manners of identifying, recording and managing the presence of asbestos in the UCA property portfolio
- High levels of staff satisfaction and Synod survey results

Roles & responsibilities

Associate General Secretary	Accountability and management oversight of the SLA (including billing)
Executive Officer Mission Resourcing Unit	Sponsor of the SMO OHS Framework development, implementation and review
Director Property Services	Management oversight of safety in the built environment
Director People and Culture	Management oversight of employee safety in SMO
Synod Safety Officer	Technical expertise and resource supporting safety in the built environment including usage of the buildings

Priorities

Four strategic priorities guide activities and the Action Plan.

These four priorities focus and direct work effort and include key words to deepen understanding and intention.

OHS Strategic Priorities 2021 -2023



Action Plans 2021 - 2023

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
Culture	1. Bullying & Harassment awareness training to all people managers in Synod Ministries & Operations	People and Culture	Q3 - Q4 2021	
	2. Contact Officer training	People and Culture	Q1 2021	
	3. Promote RUOK	Senior Leadership team	Q3 2021	
Systems & Processes	4. Launch new OHS manual, related forms and procedures	Synod Safety Officer	Q3-4 2021	
	5. Introduction of new Contractor Management System and Health & Safety induction for all staff and volunteers Basis and Rationale: This will: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> include newly defined Induction process provide for a reset relationship and workplace environment for entities of the UCA commissioning work by contractors give clear definition of UCA obligations and responsibilities on site to congregations Communication plan to congregations and presbyteries 	Director Property Services Synod Safety Officer	Q1-2 2021	

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	6. Review of the volunteer policy applicable to the wider SMO	Director People & Culture		
Risk Management	<p>7. Develop and deliver a workplace inspection program over (per annum):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synod - 6 work sites (including Tasmania) • Presbytery 4 offices • Congregational properties 20 <p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <p>Prioritisation is to be established by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of injury and incident reports from recent years to identify higher probability / impact risks • Review of past inspection schedules • Balancing of priorities assisted by collaboration with presbytery to see what their priorities are. • Developing a working and supportive relationship with all presbyteries. 	Synod Safety Officer Property Services	Ongoing on a recurrent annual basis	
	<p>8. Review the coming year strategic framework plan and reforecast the rolling 3 year OHS Strategy Framework</p> <p>9. Review of the SLA with Agewell – in a timely and regular manner</p>	Synod Safety Officer EO MRU Associate General Secretary Director P&C Director PS	<p>Recurrent Six Monthly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April • October <p>Q3 2021</p>	

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	10. Annual Safety Assessments of primary work sites, CTM, Bethel, Narana and Wesley Place		Ongoing & annually	
	11. Synod moving to its own incident reporting and investigation system Basis and Rationale: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SLA notes that this is a combined responsibility between UA and the Synod. UA Safety Officers will provide training for the Synod Safety Officer in the use of quick claim / Elumina (incident reporting software) so the Synod Safety Officer can undertake Synod focussed reporting, access and logging of UCA incidents etc. UA Safety Officers will also provide information on how to access the dynamic reporting feature of Elumina. UA OHS team will provide ongoing mentoring and support and troubleshooting. 	Synod Safety Officer Uniting AgeWell (via SLA)	Q1 2021	
	12. Establish Essential Safety Measures and Electrical Safety Program comprising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a communication program explaining the onus to undertake ESM b. Advising the tools and resources necessary to identify shortcomings and the actions required to become compliant 	Synod Safety Officer Property Services	Q3-4 2021	

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whilst asbestos is a widely spoken of hazard, the more immediate risk to church is presented in lack of maintenance Essential Safety Measures. 			
	<p>13. Design/Develop/Update/Review and deliver as required Chemical Management Procedures for Hazardous Substances (HS) and Dangerous Goods (DG)</p> <p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <p>Management have the responsibility to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> HS and DG are identified and included in a register Risk assessments and controls are established for HS and DG use in consultation with OHS team Safe Work Procedures specific to the handling of HS & DG stored in the workplace are developed and implemented DG and HS register readily available Chemicals should not be introduced to the workplace unless they have been assessed, approved for use and added to the HS register Training and PPE provided for workers who may be exposed to HS & DG Ensuring that chemicals purchased are labelled according to the DG/HS system 	Synod Safety Officer	Q4 2021	

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
Reporting	14. Quarterly Synod and UA Safety Meetings	Age Well SLA convenor	Quarterly	
	15. Quarterly Executive OHS meeting to assist with strategy for dealing with emerging issues	Age Well SLA convenor	Quarterly	
	<p>16. Review of (and as necessary modification to) the OHS Reporting framework including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident severity based escalation and notification protocols for incidents • Provision of Synod specific reporting to Associate General Secretary on incidents and/or matters of concern relevant to safety across the life of the Synod on a more frequent basis than the consolidated quarterly OHS meeting reporting. <p>Basis & Rationale:</p> <p>Regular reporting reflects the deliverable established in the SLA document. It states that UA Injury management advisor will provide quarterly reports on claims and injury management issues.</p> <p>The general “rear vision mirror based” reporting structure and processes are becoming well established in the reports we prepare for our quarterly OHS meetings.</p>	<p>Synod Safety Officer Associate General Secretary Age Well SLA convenor</p>	<p>OHS Meeting Reporting – each Quarter, recurring.</p> <p>Q1 2021 – established protocol for Assoc GenSec reporting to SLT</p> <p>Q3 2021 - Review and introduction of formalised Escalation and Notification protocols</p>	

2021	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<p>The SLA does not specifically provide for more frequent OHS focussed reporting on Synod incidents and analysis of this information.</p> <p>The Synod needs to define how and when the Associate General Secretary reports to the SLT on OHS performance and initiatives.</p>			

2022	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
Culture	1. Bullying & Harassment awareness training to all staff in Synod Ministries & Operations	People and Culture	Q1 – Q2	
	2. OH & S Education Program for congregations about via webinars Review design and develop OH&S Education Program for congregations to take place via webinars. People responsible will be part of the review	Synod Safety Officer UCA IT Services	TBC	
Systems & Processes	3. Implement building maintenance schedule	Property Services Synod Safety Officer	TBC	
	4. Develop OHS Management Plan for Op Shops & retail.	Synod Safety Officer	TBC	
Risk Management	5. DDA Action Plan - access to and from buildings – criteria, prioritisation and assessment Basis and Rationale:	Property Services in combination with Presbytery	TBC	

2022	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<p>Access and egress have a crossover relationship to Disability Discrimination legislation.</p> <p>From an OHS perspective, the focus is upon the legal obligation to Essential Safety Measures at all public use buildings.</p> <p>These factors include the door hardware, signage, any other directional advice, the opening type and pathway that may reduce or elevate risk or obstruction in an emergency evacuation of the building.</p> <p>Egress pathways must be via appropriately defined and maintained avenues providing legal clearances and surfaces to assist people to reach safety for persons of all mobility levels.</p> <p>OHS is the risk but the Building Act is the defining legislation - Building Act 1993 & Regulations 2018.</p>			
	6. Review design and develop First Aid for congregations to take place via webinars.	People rep for those involved	TBC	
Reporting	<p>7. Thoughtfully worded reporting used in expressing safety matters and required actions</p> <p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <p>Working with Legal Services to improve the wording embodied in reporting approaches and procedures to align actions with the performance outcomes required and not give</p>	Property Services Synod Safety Officer UCA Legal Services	TBC	

2022	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	specific directives as to remedial actions required.			

2023	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
Culture	1. Review, design and develop education program for Presbyteries to be OHS educators.	In collaboration Secretariat, Support Material and technical advice from Synod Safety Officer	TBC	
	2. Introduce Safety Awards Program - reward excellence in safety performance	In collaboration Secretariat, Synod Safety Officer	TBC	
Systems & Processes	<p>3. Audit high risk properties in coordination with presbyteries and property strategy</p> <p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <p>Property strategy is Presbyteries responsibility and should identify which properties they will retain.</p> <p>High risk properties are those where presbytery identifies that a congregation is not sustainable, the absence of upkeep, visitation showing that a building is a potential hazard, persistent lack of ability to undertake OHS related improvements &/or repairs</p>	Synod Safety Officer Presbytery with support of Property Services	TBC	

2023	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<p>The focus should be on assessing the current and future usage pattern and from this, the attendant probability of incidents –directing improvement works to the sites with highest future relevance and higher utilisation. This approach manages risk on a pragmatically assessed combined (site future, risk presence and usage frequency) profile.</p> <p>The Presbytery role is to identify and inform the Synod Safety Officer of issues that are identified and the outlook for the future network.</p> <p>This is being done on a spot basis in 2020, but in 2023 Presbyteries would (ideally) have a completed strategy and the focus would move to a rolling review of safety compliance so they can continue to provide safe community use.</p> <p>Education and technical support comes from Property Services.</p>			
	<p>4. Develop OH&S Standard Operating Procedures A tailored to site involving high risk activities i.e. men shed and machinery, op shops.</p>	Synod Safety Officer	TBC	
Risk Management	<p>5. Continue the communicate asbestos and Essential Safety Measures management plans</p> <p>Basis and Rationale:</p>	Synod Safety Officer Property Services	TBC	

2023	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<p>A CRM anchored database will assist awareness of and access to records detailing the existence and risk presented by asbestos or other hazardous substances in the property network. This will assist in limiting the risk of exposure and (as appropriate) establishing programs for actions to address the presence of asbestos in buildings to consistent with best practice and duty of care.</p> <p>Database preparation and recording will start in 2021 in tandem with the contractor induction process</p>			
	<p>6. Coordinated approach between OHS and the Crisis Management Team in preparing emergency response plans for major and high risk events</p> <p>Basis and Rationale:</p> <p>While the CMT maintains responsibility for preparation and execution of responses to emergency events, OHS involvement and support should be integrated in an agreed and complementary manner in the response planning.</p> <p>This would be for events like bushfires – where response and emergency plans are an important resource for the more remote parts of the Synod.</p>	<p>Synod Safety Officer Property Services Crisis Management Team (as required)</p>	Q2 2023	

2023	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	For example, the Synod Safety Officer role would work with Fire Rescue Victoria to put together plans for the Church and this would then form part of the CMT response plan.			
Reporting	7. Improving quality assurance/ wording around reporting to ensure that risk is managed in relation to compliance and other legal obligations	UCA Legal Property Services AgeWell Synod Safety Officer	Q1 2023	
All Years from 2022 Onward – Recurrent Activities				
All Priorities	<p>For each of the 4 priorities, there are recurring activities e.g. quarterly reports, annual inspections and assessments.</p> <p>For simplicity of development of the Framework, these are carried forward to subsequent years once established and incorporated in the plan for the following year.</p> <p>These include at this stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Six-monthly review of the SLA with Agewell – in a timely and regular manner ii. Develop and deliver a workplace inspection program over (per annum): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Synod - 6 work sites (including Tasmania) b. Presbytery 4 offices c. Congregational properties 20 	Review and re-establish plan for coming year including recurrent regular and annual activities		

2023	Action	Responsible	Time	Status
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> iii. Annual Safety Assessments of primary work sites, CTM, Bethel, Narana and Wesley Place iv. Quarterly Synod and UA Safety Meetings v. Quarterly Executive OHS meeting to assist with strategy for dealing with emerging issues vi. Bullying & Harassment awareness training to all staff in the Synod Ministries & Operations. vii. In September each year review the coming year strategic framework plan and reforecast the rolling 3 year OHS Strategy Framework 			