



PLACEMENT PROFILE
Presbytery Minister, Administration

Presbytery:	Loddon Mallee
Time fraction:	FT
Term:	To be reviewed after 3 years
Suitable for:	Minister of the Word/ Deacon/ Ordinand/ Pastor
Approval date:	

Primary purpose of placement:
<p>The primary purpose of the Presbytery Minister - Administration placement is to assist and support ministry agents and lay leaders across the presbytery in dealing with matters related to property and finances, in conjunction with the Presbytery Standing Committee.</p> <p>The PMA will work cooperatively with Presbytery Ministers in the northern and southern regions.</p> <p>The PMA will have the responsibilities of Presbytery Secretary.</p> <p>The ministry of the PMA will be informed and guided by the Synod Vision and Mission Principles and Strategic Priorities.</p>

The Purpose and Role of the Presbytery

“Christ is the Good Shepherd who loves, knows, leads, protects, cares for and guides his flock. This is the loving oversight that God in Christ offers all creation, and calls the church to embody. In seeking to embody this oversight the church does so not for the church’s own sake, but for the sake of all God’s people.

Presbyteries are one means by which we as church discharge the ministry of oversight entrusted to us as followers of Christ at mission in the world. *The Basis of Union* (Paragraph 15, 1992 edition) describes the Presbytery’s function as the district council to:

...perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible, except for those agencies which are directly responsible to the Synod or Assembly. It will in particular exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another’s faith, to bear one another’s burdens and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus. It will promote those wider aspects of the work of the Church committed to it by the Synod or Assembly.”

Presbytery Transition Team Report, 2017, Section D1, pg D1.4

The core responsibilities of presbyteries are laid out in the *Constitution and Regulations* 3.1.3, and fall into three key areas: Pastoral, Mission/Education and Administration.

When Presbyteries are functioning well, they contribute to the building up of the whole Body of Christ¹:

- Congregations, agencies, faith communities and chaplaincies are supported and their life enriched;
- Congregations, agencies, faith communities and chaplaincies are helped in identifying and building their missional and ecumenical possibilities;
- Links between schools, agencies, faith communities, congregations and the wider church are forged and strengthened;
- People in ministry roles are encouraged, equipped and supported;
- Educational possibilities for congregations and those in ministry are facilitated;
- Intercultural relationships thrive;
- The relationship with Congress is strengthened; and
- Communication with the various parts of the Synod is clear, building up strong relationships between all councils of the Church.

¹ Adapted from Yarra Yarra PM Profiles, 2012

Synod 2017 resolved that funding allocated to presbyteries for the exercise of their oversight will, from October 1st 2018, amount to two equivalent full time positions, (in addition to further funding from a shared resource pool of at least \$400,000).

The level of funding for staff at Presbytery and Synod level is expected to be reduced by 15% in 2022.

The way in which Presbyteries configure their ministry from these resources varies. However, these profile guidelines lay out key elements of oversight, ministry and team function which are necessary for wise, pastoral and missional leadership in presbyteries synod-wide.

Presbytery Ministers/Staff

Key Relationships

Presbytery Ministers/Staff have a key role in facilitating collaboration between congregations, Presbytery and Synod. As a Church we have shared Vision, Mission Principles and Strategic Priorities (see Appendix) which outline our shared priorities in discipleship together. Presbytery appointed staff work collaboratively within the Presbytery and in relationship with the wider Synod in line with the Vision and Mission Principles. In particular, Presbytery appointed staff will work collaboratively in a coordinated way with

- the **eLM unit** (equipping Leadership for Mission) and;
- the **Mission Resourcing unit**

to foster cooperation between Synod and Presbytery, so as to enhance our worship, witness and service across the Synod.

Key roles of a Presbytery Minister/Staff include:

- Exercising oversight (pastoral, missional) of those providing ministry undertaken in the congregations, agencies and schools in the Presbytery;
- Supporting congregations in their worship and missional life and witness;
- Ensuring the shared flow of resourcing (missional, financial, education and practical) for equipping leadership for mission within the presbytery;
- Upholding the ethos of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
- Advocating for the work of the Uniting Church throughout the Synod and Assembly;
- Providing pastoral and liturgical expression of the ministry where appropriate
- Working effectively in a team context with other Presbytery staff (called and placed) and with Presbytery office bearers (Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer).

Presbytery Context

Context of Rural Ministry

The Loddon Mallee Presbytery covers a vast and diverse area of north-west Victoria and includes some areas of the south-west corner of NSW. Opportunities for mission and ministry abound in both regional and rural areas.

Various congregations have been actively exploring, in exciting ways, how best to be present and attentive to their own particular and unique contexts. Many of their innovative responses have grown out of the reality that a number of rural areas are needing to respond to:

- the increasing fragility of employment;
- the gradual decline of government and business resources;
- the difficult seasonal issues of disease, drought and flood;
- along with the increasing number of pockets of poverty and mental health issues.

Committed and faithful people are nurturing their local communities; addressing local and wider issues; and beginning local missional and justice initiatives with the support, encouragement and assistance of the Presbytery and others.

Ministers and lay people are working energetically together, and where no ministry agent is in placement the lay people are taking up leadership roles and engaging in ongoing training to ensure mission and ministry continues and flourishes

Flexible training opportunities are important and rural presbyteries often share ideas and resources.

Many Synod staff, and others, have willingly come to the Presbytery for various gatherings – generously sharing their skills and knowledge.

The growing use of online facilities has opened up even more opportunities for learning and connecting across the Synod.

While distance and geography are an ever-present challenge in rural areas, this Presbytery keeps a close watch for any signs of burnout or loss of creativity in clergy, chaplains and lay leaders in congregational or agency contexts.

Like other presbyteries, we too value the many creative solutions for supporting ministry and mission in our area. This is important due to the number of external challenges faced - over which we have little control.

These include:

- Climatic conditions and events that affect not only the farming community but to the towns and regional centres which support and serve them.
- Developing new patterns of ministry as the place of the church in society changes and financial and personnel resources diminish;
- Setting strategic priorities for Placements as the number of ministry workers declines and for property matters as our mission context changes;
- Retaining momentum for mission, when it may seem easier to retreat or maintain the familiar status quo;
- Seeking ecumenical partnerships

Description of the geographic and demographic area of the Presbytery

The presbytery is bounded by Heathcote in the south-east, and Castlemaine, Maryborough and Avoca in the south, Wentworth in the north-west where the boundary runs east along the Murray River to Gunbower, including Moulamein and Barham in NSW. The western boundary of the Presbytery includes Hopetoun and Rainbow.

The largest city in the Presbytery is Bendigo with over 100,000 people. Other larger centres are Mildura/Sunraysia with population of approx. 60,000, Swan Hill 20,000, and Castlemaine and Maryborough, each with about 10,000 population.

In recent times this Presbytery has experienced incredible growth as many Melburnians have moved north for the safer and healthier lifestyle offered in regional and rural settings.

Alongside this, though, a report released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics following the most recent census showed that the area of the Loddon Mallee Presbytery includes a large number of areas of disadvantage, with places such as Avoca, Dunolly, Eaglehawk, Maryborough, Nyah West, Robinvale and Wedderburn recording the greatest level of disadvantage.

We are a Presbytery of rich diversity and this brings with it both challenges and wonderful opportunities.

We seek at all times to work together and to support and encourage one another as we explore new and fresh ways to engage with our communities and their unique demands

Description of the Uniting Church in Loddon Mallee

Congregations

There are currently 61 congregations and one faith community. Several of the small congregations are considering their future viability and at least one is exploring the possibility of becoming a faith community.

There are 10 full-time placements and 5 part-time placements, 2 of them vacant.

Nineteen congregations, some in clusters or groupings, are unable to afford stipended ministry. Retired ministers provide oversight for several.

During the pandemic lockdown, the presbytery offered a weekly worship service via Zoom, which provided support particularly for small congregations. This has continued fortnightly, making use of technology subsidised and installed by the presbytery to enable easier access to worship and education opportunities for all congregations.

Four placements have ecumenical arrangements: one with the Baptist Church and three with the Anglican Church. Regular ecumenical services are held in several places, including a number of informal local arrangements.

While many congregations are ageing there is also work among youth in some congregations and Messy Church is offered at the St. Andrew's congregation in Bendigo, and at Swan Hill.

Normally, a number of congregations have programs of outreach into their communities, including community meals and Op Shops and refugee support. There is a strong connection between congregations and communities in small rural towns.

Cross cultural ministry is a feature of several congregations. There is ethnic diversity of members in Robinvale, Mildura, Irymple and Swan Hill. St. Andrew's Bendigo hosts a small Karen (Myanmar) congregation and there are other Bendigo congregations with members from various cultures. A small Colourful Gathering Group meets monthly in Bendigo.

Agencies

There is one large Uniting agency located in Bendigo, under the auspices of Lentara. The agency serves the Greater Bendigo Region, focussing on Emergency Relief. Operations include 3 Opportunity Shops, two Emergency Relief Centres and a weekly lunch and community support activity. Uniting is exploring ways of enhancing the services available in Bendigo and more widely in the presbytery. Uniting representatives meet regularly with Presbytery staff.

StrathHaven in Bendigo is a Uniting AgeWell facility which has accommodation for 94 people. It also provides home care packages across a wide area.

Presbytery Staffing

There are two part time Chaplains, one based at "StrathHaven" Agewell and the other serving the two hospitals in Bendigo. The Hospital Chaplaincy has been funded by a BOMAR grant, which runs out at the end of 2021, so the future of this ministry is in question.

The work of the presbytery is supported by a part-time Administrative Assistant, a Chairperson and a Treasurer.

Organisational Structure

In 2015, in order to reduce the need for so many people to be on committees, the Presbytery adopted a new structure: Standing Committee was broadened to include the work of the original PRC, Administration, and Mission and Education Committees. However, the complex needs of congregations led to the re-institution of a Pastoral Relations Committee in 2019.

Experience has also shown that a reference group, to be called on as required, would be a helpful support for the Presbytery Minister, Administration.

The presbytery office is located in Bendigo and provides a base for administration and small gatherings. Several rooms provide office space for presbytery staff.

Format for Meetings of Presbytery:

Normally, 4 meetings are held per year, in February, May, August and November. One of these is a Saturday meeting, with an emphasis on learning and sharing. The other meetings are held on Tuesdays and are held in either the Swan Hill or the Kerang Uniting Church.

During the time of the pandemic, meetings were held online.

Standing Committee normally meets on the fourth Tuesday of the months when presbytery meetings are not held. In the past, meetings were usually held in the Presbytery Office in Bendigo, with video links to Mildura and Swan Hill. It is likely that the practice of online meetings, developed during the pandemic, will be continued for the majority of meetings in the future, enabling and simplifying the participation of members from the wide geographical area of the presbytery.

The PRC meets on the second Tuesday of the month and also makes use of Zoom technology.

The Presbytery needs for the next 3 years include:

1. IT installation and training: with a growing number of small congregations being unable to afford stipended ministry and following the success of online worship experiences during the pandemic, the presbytery has instigated and subsidised greater use of IT. This is expected to become an important tool for the presbytery's work with congregations into the future.

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2. Plans for new ways of being Church will require consideration of missional purpose/finances/property.
 3. Plans for worship and ministry and leadership in congregations without stipended ministry or Supply.
 4. Addressing the Synod initiatives re Money for Mission and Here for Good.
 5. Living out the Presbytery strategy (attached)

Team Ministry/ Team Expectations

It is expected that the Presbytery Ministry Team will:

- provide a leadership role together; particularly in ministry to the "on-line" community
- meet regularly and work as a team in prayer, learning, planning and evaluating;
- support each other;
- respect and encourage each other in their roles within the Presbytery;
- model team ministry across the Presbytery and in relationships with Synod staff.

Members of the team may work from their own residences, but it is also expected that they will make regular use of Presbytery Office facilities where practicable.

Each member of the team will work across the Presbytery to engage with congregations, faith communities, chaplaincies and agencies where people are exercising their ministries, and the wise use of electronic communication is encouraged.

Having been called and inducted or commissioned within the Team Ministry, each Presbytery Minister will exercise their own ministry with their own gifts and graces. Some parts of their ministry are parallel to one another, and other parts are specific to each person, some parts can best be done together. Cooperation and the sharing of gifts and strengths maximises the effective functioning of the team.

Accountability

All three Presbytery Ministers are members of Standing Committee and are accountable to the whole Presbytery through the Standing Committee. Each PM is required to report regularly to Standing Committee.

Presbytery also requires the team to have a Team Supervisor, in addition to a personal Supervisor for each team member. The Team Supervisor or a different person will facilitate the process of a new member joining the existing team.

Part 1 - Guiding principles

The Presbytery Ministry team will undertake:

- ❖ *Relational oversight* with ministry workers and those providing ministry undertaken in the congregations, faith communities and chaplaincies in the Presbytery;
- ❖ promote understanding of the Uniting Church and upholding the ethos of the Uniting Church as expressed in the Basis of Union;
- ❖ Advocate throughout the presbytery for the work of the Uniting Church through the Synod and Assembly;
- ❖ Encourage the development of local and Presbytery leaders for ministries in the Uniting Church.

Presbytery Ministry in the Loddon Mallee Presbytery for the past 2 years has been offered in a configuration involving

- *Two fulltime Generalist PM positions with shared responsibilities for Pastoral Care, Mission Strategy and Education. The eLM liaison role is incorporated in one of these positions.*
- *One of the Generalists has been based in the northern part of the presbytery and the other in the south.*
- *One fulltime position devoted to Administration*

Despite projected cuts to Synod funding, the Standing Committee is committed to ensuring that the Presbytery Minister positions will be fully funded for 3 year from the beginning of 2022 to the end of 2024.

In walking the way of Jesus, it is expected that the ministry team will reflect a healthy model of shared servant ministry, namely:

- provide a leadership role together;
- respect each other's roles;
- accept a discipline of openness to accountability and supervision.
- meet regularly and work as a team;
- ensure there is a designated Presbytery Centre (primary office space); and
- model team ministry across the eight Presbyteries and in relationships with Synod staff.

Presbytery will designate the team member who has responsibility for convening meetings and coordinating ministry functions (Reg 2:11.3 (b)).

THE PRESBYTERY MINISTER, ADMINISTRATION

Key Responsibilities

The role of Presbytery Minister - Administration includes the key ministry elements of pastoral care and mission strategy and planning in relation to property and finance matters. The PMA may at times be called on to preach and lead worship as part of this pastoral aspect of the role.

The PMA will also act as Secretary to the Presbytery, supported by the Administration Assistant. In principle, the roles will be shared on a 0.8/0.2 basis.

The General Secretary has provided advice on how this might function and offered to assist in setting relevant protocols in place.

While the PMA has the responsibility of oversight, ensuring that the listed tasks are carried out, some may be delegated and/or shared as appropriate.

Specific responsibilities will include:

- To be the face of the Presbytery for finance and property issues;
- To be the Presbytery representative for the Synod Missional Grants process
- To be familiar with the Synod Vision and Mission Principles and Strategic Priorities and to assist the Presbytery and congregations to apply them to matters of property and finance
- To communicate with and assist congregations in regard to Synod financial initiatives.
- To respond quickly to congregational needs and enquiries in regard to property and finance
- To assist with the conduct of mission studies in relation to property and finance
- To maintain a record of Presbytery property.
- To ensure that the Presbytery exercises a faithful and careful stewardship of its property and finances resources in partnership with the Standing Committee and its Executive;
- To work with the Presbytery Treasurer on preparing the Presbytery Budget.
- To advise congregations on the availability of Presbytery grants, assist with applications, and coordinate the allocation of those grants.
- To assist congregations to fulfil the UCA Regulations, especially those referring to investments, banking and auditing;
- To assist congregational treasurers with budgeting, cash books entries and Balance Sheets;
- To assist congregations with preparation and completion of forms for selling or leasing property, buildings and loans;
- To support and encourage congregations to maintain appropriate records, particularly regarding property, insurance, OH&S and compliance matters
- To monitor the Mission and Service contributions within the presbytery and to support and encourage the participation of congregations
- To maintain up-to-date compliance records relevant to the Synod Child Safe program, particularly Working With Children Checks, Code of Ethics, Supervision
- To work with the Synod HR Department to ensure oversight of human resources practice in congregations.
- To receive and process presbytery correspondence, prepare the Agenda and Minutes, and plan for the Standing Committee and Presbytery in Council meetings.
- To assist the Chairperson with the arrangements for presbytery services, such as Inductions and Commissionings and Services of Closure.
- To ensure that avenues of communication within the presbytery are maintained, including regular newsletters and the River of Life and an active online media presence.
- To oversee the provision of IT services within the presbytery, including the installation of suitable technology and training where required.
- To establish and maintain a presbytery blog, particularly for the purpose of providing worship resources for congregations

Required gifts/skills/knowledge

- Awareness of issues facing rural communities, particularly of the needs of indigenous and intercultural communities across the presbytery
- Ability to work as a team member with colleagues and volunteers;
- Ability to reflect theologically
- A clear understanding of the Uniting Church, its structure, regulations and processes
- A missional approach to church administration
- Ability to network with Synod personnel
- Good listening and communication skills
- Pastoral sensitivity
- The willingness to drive long distances
- A knowledge, familiarity and competency using forms of information technology;
- A capacity to bring leadership in information technology
- Experience in and knowledge of general business administration
- Ability to strategically work, plan and delegate;
- Ability to self-motivate, take initiative and work on one's own;
- Ability to handle conflict creatively and pastorally;

Experience

- Facilitating and leading groups
- Leadership in councils of the church
- Working as a change agent / catalyst
- Working in a diverse theological context

Attitudes

- Supportive and encouraging to those in the church and leadership.
- Willingness to see God outside walls of church, wanting to explore new ways of being church/ being faithful.
- A heart for rural, indigenous, cross cultural work and ministry in small and large congregations.

Appendices to be provided prior to conversation:

1. The Presbytery Strategy
2. Bridging the digital divide in rural congregations
3. A video prepared for the 2021 meeting of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania can be seen at <https://youtu.be/kZUpNmPKQeU>