

## Ministry Development Programme

**Proposed by Christchurch Presbytery**

## Recommendations

1. The clergy review cycle be amended from two to five years. [Bullet point 1 of section 2.1.2 of the Ministry Development Programme be amended to read “They have been reviewed every five years.”]
2. The requirement that a minister’s parish complies with presbytery requests to undergo reviews every five years where they are in a Presbyterian parish be removed altogether as a criterion for the granting of a certificate in good standing. [Bullet point 2 of section 2.1.2 be deleted entirely.]
3. All costs associated with ministry reviews be met by the national church budget. [Reference to “the application fee” in section 2.4.1 be deleted.] [All reference to costs to be borne by ministers as part of the clergy review process of the Ministry Development Programme in section 3.4.1 be removed.]
4. The General Assembly establish a workgroup to oversee and thoroughly review the Ministry Development Programme, including the Parish Review component, and report back to the next General Assembly with its findings and recommendations for the church.

[illegible]

## Proposal

- 1 The proposal is that those sections of the Ministry Development Programme relating to the granting of Certificates of Good Standing to ministers that are unjust and inconsistent with the Presbyterian ethos and understanding of the nature of ordained ministry be amended or removed.

- 2 The reason for the proposal is that the Ministry Development Programme relating to the granting of Certificates of Good Standing to ministers contains in its present form criteria and requirements that are unjust, unworkable and inconsistent with the Presbyterian Church's historic theology of ministry.
- 3 Proposed amendments and deletions are outlined below, with reasons given in italics:
  - a. Amend the clergy review cycle from two years to five years.  
*The amount of time, energy, and under the current system, financial cost associated with the clergy review process makes a biennial review cycle unrealistic and quite possibly unworkable for a number of ministers in parish charges.*
  - b. Remove altogether as a criterion for the granting of a certificate of good standing the requirement that a minister's parish complies with presbytery requests to undergo reviews every five years where they are in a Presbyterian parish.  
*Parish compliance with presbytery requests for visitation needs to be removed as a criterion for the granting of a Certificate of Good Standing, as this potentially and unjustly makes a minister's livelihood and 'employability' contingent upon something that is not his or her responsibility under a Presbyterian system of church governance.*
  - c. Determine that all costs associated with ministry reviews shall be met from the national church budget.  
*The Presbyterian Church has historically taught and maintained a theology of ministry as a vocational calling, confirmed by the Church in the act of ordination of suitably trained and licensed individuals as ministers of word and sacrament. Requiring its clergy to bear in part or full the cost of the review process and to pay to apply for a certificate, without which according to section 2.5.1 of the Ministry Development Programme they may not transfer to another presbytery, be inducted into a new charge, remain on the marriage celebrant register, apply for a minister's loan, apply for a Best Travel Fund Grant, stay at Glen Innis, or retire with the status of minister emeritus is in direct contravention of our denomination's historic understanding of the nature of ordained ministry. By making the granting of a Certificate of Good Standing dependent upon the payment of a fee in addition to review costs borne in part or in full by the minister, and by establishing a number of punitive consequences for 'failure to meet the criteria' which could conceivably include the inability to pay, the Presbyterian Church is exploiting the goodwill and breaching the trust of its clergy, as well as setting itself up for a potentially disastrous encounter with New Zealand Employment Law. The Presbyterian Church is effectively requiring its clergy to pay for the privilege of continuing to work for an organisation that declines to grant them the legal status of employees. Given that the Certificate of Good Standing has no standing outside the denomination (unlike other certificates such as those required by teachers, counsellors and medical professionals), and given the Presbyterian Church's historic understanding of ordained ministry as a vocational commitment, it is both inappropriate and*

*unethical to impose upon clergy a system of certification based on a philosophy of 'user pays.' Unless the Presbyterian Church decides to fall from this vocational understanding of ministry, the full cost of minister reviews should be borne by the national church.*

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## Appendix

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**Appendix:** Selected excerpts from the Ministry Development Programme published by the Assembly Office, April 2009:

### Section 2.1.2 General Criteria

For a minister to be in good standing they must be able to show that:

- They have been reviewed every two years
- Their parish complies with presbytery requests to undergo reviews every five years where they are in a Presbyterian parish
- They have fulfilled the developmental requirements of the minister review
- They receive regular and adequate supervision
- They are not the subject of disciplinary procedures
- They have received a clearance from the police.

Section 2.5.1 After 4 October 2013, all ministers must hold a current Certificate of Good Standing in order to:

- transfer to another presbytery
- be inducted into a new charge
- remain on the marriage celebrant register
- apply for a minister's loan
- apply for a Best Travel Fund Grant
- stay at Glen Innis
- retire with the status of minister emeritus