



*Honouring God, serving others
and being responsible in ministry and life*

ENDORSEMENT OF MINISTERS



Churches of Christ in NSW through the Fresh Hope network, provides you with an environment that inspires innovation, encourages collaboration and nurtures responsible behaviour.



Do you sense the call of God to serve in ministry, pastoral work or some other specialised vocational ministry within the Fresh Hope Network?

We believe that you have unique gifts that will shape your future life and influence the spiritual wellbeing of many. That is why we are intentional about offering you informal engagement spaces to explore your ministry calling as well as the opportunity to apply for formal endorsement. Through the Fresh Hope Movement, we aim to provide you with an environment that inspires innovation, encourages collaboration and nurtures responsible behaviour.

We care about you and desire that you become everything that you are created to be, we provide opportunities for personal development so that you can be a spiritually healthy and mature leader. As a member of our movement, we want you to know that you are a supported, loved and valued member in our Fresh Hope Family.

"The Fresh Hope tribe is family. There is a true sense of love for one another. There is genuine concern for each other. There is accountability to one another. The Fresh Hope Family models the Kingdom of God in our family." David Hargreave, Senior Pastor

The first step

Initially, we ask that you seek prayer and dialogue about your calling. If you are already connected with a Churches of Christ, your Pastor/Elders are good people to do this with. If not, we can facilitate this opportunity. Contact the NSW Ministry Centre via email at endorsement@freshhope.org.au or call (02) 8719 2600.

Applying for endorsement

If your Pastor/Elders or the person you spent time with from the NSW Ministry Centre encourages you to enter the formal endorsement process, the next step is to fill out the formal application ([available here](#)).

As with all things in life, the greater the level of responsibility, the higher the levels of training and accountability required. Aligning your life values with relationships of trust and accountability creates a safety net for you and the people with whom you connect with in ministry.

Therefore the application for endorsement requires you to agree to appropriate Induction, Training, Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) and Accountability provisions.

This involves

A) Undertaking an approved course of study to gain appropriate theological and ministry qualifications if you have not already done so. Recognition of prior learning is taken into consideration where there is compelling evidence of extensive ministry experience.

B) Attending a NSW Ministers Pilgrimage, which introduces new ministers in NSW to the ethos and values of our movement.

C) Signing and complying with the Churches of Christ in NSW Code of Conduct for ministering persons (see attached).

D) Obtaining references from your local church Pastor/Elders, and several ministers of religion who know you well.

E) Agreeing to Ongoing Professional Development (OPD). Participation in Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) is an expected link with the lifelong learning provided through our conferences and opportunities for training and mentoring through the Australian College of Ministries (refer to page 5).

F) Completing Police checks and Working with Children Checks (WWCC) or Working with Vulnerable Person (WWVP) checks (ACT).

Our Endorsement Review Group will assess your application, contact your referees and inform you of the outcome by mail. In certain circumstances the Endorsement Review Group may request further references, further proof of identity, interviews, and/or a psychological assessment and review by a clinical counsellor or psychologist.

There is no charge for initial endorsement.

Once your application is approved, you will receive an ID card verifying your endorsement. This card remains the property of Churches of Christ NSW. It must be returned upon request. If the card is lost or stolen the

Ministry Centre must be notified immediately. The cost of replacement is \$25.

Review of your Endorsement is undertaken every year by the Endorsement Review Group referencing our Professional Standards Unit which exists to ensure the promotion of high ethical and professional standards and acts as a resource for you and your church community.

Your endorsement will be renewed, provided there are no outstanding complaints before the Professional Standards Unit (PSU), and you provide evidence of completing the required number of Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) activities and other requirements such as Police History Check, WWCC & WWVP.

If an applicant is rejected, an appeal against this decision can be sent to the Endorsement Appeals Committee c/o the Executive Ministry Director at Churches of Christ in NSW, PO Box 3561, Rhodes, NSW 2138.

The "Application for Endorsement" provides information about the supporting documentation required. If you have any questions about the endorsement process don't hesitate to contact the NSW Ministry Centre at (02) 8719 2600.

YOUR JOURNEY / it's important

If you have belonged to a previous Christian movement or denomination, we respect your past journey and believe that you have something to offer back into our church network. For our part, we offer you ongoing support and care through a highly experienced staff that have walked the terrain you live in as a minister.

Our aim is to reconnect your ministry into the right context made sustainable with on-going support.

If you are engaged in an independent ministry or in an informal emerging church plant, rather than an established Church situation, we welcome the possibility of exploring with you how a ministry relationship may be of mutual benefit.

ENDORSEMENT CATEGORIES / What do they mean?

There are multiple roles that ministers serve in within the Churches of Christ community.

A person who is an endorsed minister within Churches of Christ in NSW is “a religious practitioner as described in the Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986”. The following categories of endorsement generally align with those adopted by other states.

Endorsed Minister (E)

(Equates to the role of ordained Pastor, Minister of the Word or Minister of Religion in other denominations).

An Endorsed Minister (E) will:

- Have completed a recognised training course of at least three years duration (at least two years of which must be theological higher education – typically a BTh or BMin).
- Have a minimum of three years relevant ministry experience.
- Be employed within Churches of Christ in NSW, or a Church affiliated or provisionally affiliated with Churches of Christ in NSW (including Churches of Christ in ACT), or an agency of Churches of Christ in NSW.
- Be recognised as having appropriate character, calling and competence by ministry peers and local church leaders.
- Have a demonstrated commitment to recognised Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) & mentoring or supervision.

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- **Retired ministers may be specially endorsed on the recommendation of their local church’s leadership, provided they continue to serve in active ministry.** (With reduced OPD requirements.)

Provisionally Endorsed Minister (PE)

A Provisionally Endorsed Minister is a probationary classification for ministers new to Churches of Christ in NSW from another State Conference or denomination, or a recently trained individual new to ministry. A Provisionally Endorsed Minister will:

- Have completed a recognised training course of at least three years duration (at least two years of which must be theological higher education), but not previously ministered in a NSW Church of Christ.

OR

- Be new to Churches of Christ in NSW from another State Conference or denomination and have completed a recognised training course (two-year diploma).

AND

- Be employed within Churches of Christ in NSW, an agency of Churches of Christ in NSW or a Church affiliated or provisionally affiliated with Churches of Christ in NSW.
- Be recognised as having appropriate character, calling and competence by ministry peers and local church leaders.
- Be engaged in supervised field education or a recognised mentoring process.
- Have a demonstrated commitment to recognised Ongoing Professional Development (OPD).

Specially Endorsed Minister (SE)

A Specially Endorsed Minister is a category open to persons who are in transition between ministry roles; or who are employed in legitimate ancillary ministries recognised by Churches of Christ in NSW. This might include: serving as an Interim Minister, Chaplain, Church Consultant, Approved Spiritual Mentor/Supervisor, Missionary, Christian Counsellor, or where the applicant does not fit the criteria for endorsement under any other criteria. A specially endorsed minister will:

- Have completed a recognised training course of at least three years duration (at least two years of which must be theological higher education – typically a BTh or BMin).
- Have a minimum of three years relevant ministry experience.

Student Minister (SM)

A Student Minister is a Minister in training. A Student Minister will:

- Be undertaking a ministry training course considered appropriate by the Endorsement Review Group.
- Be engaged in supervised field education in a church-based ministry setting or a recognised mentoring process.
- Be recognised as having appropriate character, calling and competence by ministry peers and local church leaders.

Locally Endorsed Minister (LE)

A Locally Endorsed Minister is a person undertaking a role in a Church affiliated or provisionally affiliation with Churches of Christ NSW in either a paid or recognised capacity but does not fit the endorsement categories above. A Locally Endorsed Minister is recognised by Churches of Christ in NSW as endorsed by the local church for service within that local church context only. A Locally endorsed minister will:

- Have a demonstrated commitment to recognised Ongoing Professional Development (OPD).
- Be engaged in supervised field education in a church-based ministry setting.
- Be recognised as having appropriate character, calling and competence by ministry peers and local church leaders.

Note:

It is a pre-requisite to endorsement and continuing endorsement that a minister subscribes to the Minister’s Code of Conduct. By applying for and accepting endorsement in any category each minister agrees to be bound by the Code of Conduct and the findings of the Professional Standards Unit (within the PSU’s scope as detailed in the Code of Conduct). Note - A minister with endorsement status E, PE or SE may be recommended by Churches of Christ in NSW as a marriage celebrant upon application. Minister’s who hold either a LE or SM status are not eligible for marriage celebrant status apart from special circumstances.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / What is it?

Ongoing Professional Development (OPD) is used in most professions to ensure high professional standards in the areas of character and competence.

Continuous learning for ministers needs to be balanced, helpful and practical. Research shows that many Australian ministers are struggling to cope with the demands of ministry, and are suffering stress, depression and emotional exhaustion.

The OPD process is designed to encourage ministers to take opportunities to be emotionally refreshed, mentally stretched, spiritually renewed, and professionally equipped.

Examples of some of the activities that might be recognised for OPD are:

- Attending annual “Fresh Hope Collective.”
- Being mentored by a qualified Spiritual Mentor/Supervisor.
- Participating in a recognised Accountability Group.
- Serving on a Fresh Hope Ministry team.
- Undertake recognised ministry training through ACOM or Fresh Hope.

RECOGNITION OF LEARNING RELATIONSHIPS / Spiritual Mentoring

Structured learning relationships (mentors, coaches, spiritual directors or pastoral supervisors) add real value to a minister's Ongoing Professional Development. For the purpose of OPD any of these relationships will usually be referred to as 'Spiritual Mentors/Supervisors'.

Spiritual Mentoring is not to be interpreted as a mere casual catch-up with a friend with whom one may share the joys and woes of ministry with. Rather, a Minister contracts a Spiritual Mentor/Supervisor to engage in an intentional series of sessions.

These sessions are focused on accompanying & sharpening the life, work and wellbeing of the Minister. The Minister opens their life and work in a spirit of transparency, accountability and co-discernment.

A person deemed suitable to be engaged as a Spiritual Mentor/Supervisor is one who has incorporated mentoring as part of their ministry vocation and exhibits rich life experience, wisdom and insight.

Both Fresh Hope's Spiritual Mentoring Training Course (2.5 years) as well as ACOM's graduate certificate with a focus on spiritual mentoring or graduate certificate with a focus on ministry supervision, serve as benchmarks in gauging the suitability of a qualified Spiritual Mentor.

ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT / Points

Fresh Hope Collective (everyone must attend at least 1 day) (4 points available)	1 Point (per day of attendance)
Ministry Pilgrimage	3 Points
ACOM (or equivalent) Master's Subject & Workshop (per subject passed)	3 Points
ACOM (or equivalent) BTh Subject & Workshop (per subject passed)	3 Points
Being Mentored by a qualified Spiritual Mentor/Supervisor	1 Point
(6 face to face hours minimum/year) Formal agreement/accreditation information should be available upon request.	
Facilitating an ACOM unit	1 Point
Serving on a Fresh Hope Ministry team	1 Point
Conducting Workshops or seminars for Fresh Hope	1 Point
Active Member of an Accountability Group (annual membership)	1 Point
Member of Transformational Church	1 Point
Attending other Fresh Hope events	1 Point (per day of attendance)
Other approved ministry related workshops/courses.	

Many ministers will find that gaining the Ongoing Professional Development Points they need requires very little extra work. For others it will require being stretched in a healthy way. OPD is designed to be a challenge but not a burden.

POINT REQUIREMENTS

6 points/year Endorsed & Specially Endorsed & Provisionally Endorsed

4 points/year Student Minister & Locally Endorsed

The reporting period runs from 1 July - 30 June.

*Note: Part-time and volunteer ministers may require fewer points than listed above as determined. If you have any questions or would like more information go to www.freshhope.org.au or call the Ministry Centre on (02) 8719 2600 or e-mail: endorsement@freshhope.org.au.

This brochure is a summary of the policy for Endorsement of Ministers - Version 3.0 (23 June 2015)
A copy of this policy is available in the members area of the Fresh Hope website (www.freshhope.org.au).



Fresh Hope / Churches of Christ in NSW
PO Box 3561 Rhodes NSW 2138
P/ (02) 8719 2600

E/ endorsement@freshhope.org.au

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