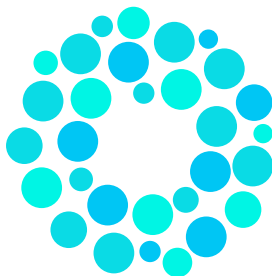




**churches of Christ**  
in NSW & ACT

# **SABBATICAL GRANTS**



## INTRODUCTION

As part of its desire to care for those presently leading, especially after enduring the pandemic season, the churches of Christ in NSW & ACT are offering grants to support leaders in taking sabbatical leave.

*“The draining nature of pastoral ministry means that the stewardship of emotional (and spiritual) resources is an important issue. Part of this stewardship is the biblical principle of sabbath rest (in particular see Lev 25:1-7). I believe this necessity for refreshment and recuperation of the Israeli land is an indication of a general order of creation – ongoing productivity requires regular recuperative rest.”* Keith Farmer “The Perfect Storm”

Each church within the churches of Christ in NSW & ACT network can apply for a maximum of \$10,000.\* Ideally, in the seventh year of ministry a sabbatical grant may be offered to support both an endorsed leader and church. Each request will be assessed according to the leader’s length of service, planned leave, and the church’s current resourcing capacity.

## WHAT IS A SABBATICAL?

David Alves says *“A sabbatical is not a vacation. It is a different kind of work—it is a directed time of refreshment and restoration. It is a time for drawing closer and listening more carefully, with the intent of deeper intimacy with God. It can involve reading, writing, and wrestling in prayer—especially wrestling with the tendency to be busy, wrestling to let go, to jump off the performance-go-round, and relax.”* (A Sabbatical Primer for Pastors: How to Initiate and Navigate a Spiritual Renewal Leave)

## HOW LONG SHOULD IT BE?

Typical sabbaticals are a minimum of three months.

We suggest that a leader has an intentional and slow entry and reentry time of two weeks either side of the sabbatical leave.

Keith Farmer suggests that sabbatical leave normally be in the order of 1 – 1 ½ weeks per year of service. Sabbatical leave can be combined with annual or long service leave to extend the duration of the break but differs from both.<sup>1</sup>

Please see the resource link for assistance in forming a sabbatical leave policy for your church. [Click for Resources](#)

<sup>1</sup> Some Principles and Practices for Sabbatical Leave, July 2017

## HOW TO PLAN FOR A SABBATICAL?

Sabbaticals are best planned 12 months- to two years in advance. They require preparation for both the leader and the church community. As churches consider establishing a sabbatical policy for pastors and leaders there is much to consider in becoming a community that embraces Sabbath principles.<sup>2</sup> Sabbatical planning involves the leader, their mentor or supervisor, the eldership/leadership team of the church and support is available from churches of Christ NSW & ACT.

[Click for Resources](#)

## WHO CAN RECEIVE FUNDS?

- All endorsed leaders at a church, whether senior or junior, full-time or part-time.
- An endorsed leader can apply as they approach seven years (or the equivalent) of ministry, with one application per church in a year.
- Grants will be paid to the church, not individuals.
- Sabbatical grants are distinct from our other grants so a church may apply for both in a given year.

## EXAMPLES OF WHAT THE FUNDS CAN BE USED FOR?

### For the church

- Cost of interim minister
- Travel and accommodation
- Paying staff to do additional hours

### For pastors

- Intentional retreats
- Counselling, psychology, spiritual direction
- Study
- Attend events and conferences
- Travel and accommodation

For more information and resources on sabbaticals go [here](#).

<sup>1</sup> Creating Rhythms of Work and Rest - Ruth Hayley Barton

## HOW DO I APPLY?

1. Expressions of interest are encouraged to be lodged 6-12 months before the intended sabbatical leave. [Express your interest here](#)
2. The Leader Health team will contact the applicant to offer support and guidance in forming a Sabbatical plan, and the Grant application process.
3. Sabbatical Grant Application to be completed online and submitted to Grant Assessment Committee for approval. [Apply Here](#)
4. Applicant is informed of the outcome and provided with a written agreement as per Grant Assessment Committee procedures.
5. Applicant to complete an online acquittal at the end of the sabbatical leave which includes (completed one month after sabbatical end date).
  - a) Feedback/Testimony on sabbatical leave.
  - b) Provide receipts for expenses.
  - c) These documents will be assessed for OPD points.
6. The Leader Health team contacts the applicant during their reentry time to reflect on learnings from the sabbatical leave.

## GRANTS ASSESSMENT COMMITTEE

Grants are overseen by the Grants Assessment Committee, a subcommittee of Conference Executive. The committee consists of one Conference Executive member, a Property Trust member, and a minimum of three members from our local churches.

The GAC meets throughout the year to review and approve suitable grant applications.

\* In principle, grants are offered on a matching funds basis with the church, however this should not deter your application if the church does not have this capacity.