Church Toolkit

Information, checklists and activities to help your church thrive.





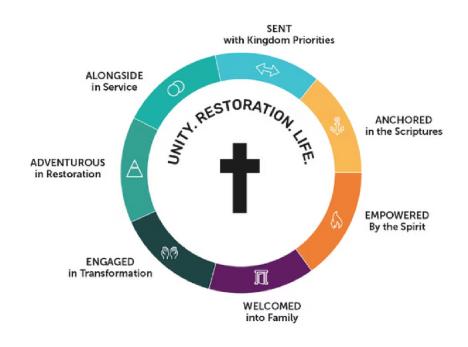
WHO WE ARE

We are the churches of Christ in NSW & ACT. We are all about Unity, Restoration and Life in Jesus!

We are a network of more than 60 churches across two States. We are diverse in expression but share a commitment to upholding Jesus as our Lord, the head of His Church, of which we are a part. That's why the "c" in our name is lowercase: we recognise we are part of the wider Christian Church and believe Christ makes us one.

We pray you will be empowered by God's love and join us in bringing unity, restoration and life to our communities!

Our core priorities -



To find out more about churches of Christ NSW/ACT head to - https://ccnswact.org.au/about/



TOOLKIT CONTENTS



PEOPLE

Section 1

This includes safety, duty of care, training, volunteer engagement, vision, strategy leadership, and communication



PLACE

Section 2

This includes risk management, insurance, fire safety, relationships with other organisations, compliance and planning for building and assets



POLICY & PROCEDURE

Section 3

This includes ACNC reporting, budgets employment contracts, governance and appropriate documentation



PURPOSE OF TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to meet you where you are and help you move towards being confident in your compliance and communication responsibilities without a sense of overwhelm.

It is important to keep sight of the faith-based motivation for the work we do, even when that work is detailed.

We have broken this compliance work into these three categories:

- 1. People
- 2. Place
- 3. Policy & Procedure

This layout will help you focus on a particular area at any given time. These checklists are by no means exhaustive, but we hope to have articulated the essential questions as it relates to you as a church.



If you have any questions, feel free to email - hello@ccnswact.org.au



MISSIONAL INTENT

Before diving into compliance checklists, it's critical to step back for a moment and consider the lens of which we are looking through? In many ways, compliance is just a way of attending to good governance. Often we feel overwhelmed by the never-ending list of demands or expectations! We could easily get lost in ticking the boxes and forget what our purpose is – 'why' we are doing this in the first place?! Jesus spent a considerable amount of time 're-humanizing' a religious bureaucracy that had forgotten its 'why'.

What if, in the holding of the beautiful 'good news', we could re-orientate our lens? What if the next few pages of 'tick-a-box' compliance lists were an invitation to attend to being 'above reproach', with the desire to be a **people** who value safety for the vulnerable, maintain **places** that are accessible and inclusive, and implement **policies and procedures** that help hold integrity for the entity or association that you govern. These things should serve the mission, not be the driving force, they should help hold it up, not 'lord it over'.

Sometimes, the best tools we can have are the ones that are accessible, practical and actually help us to do the job. We hope this toolkit can help serve you, rather than being subservient to it. We pray that the mission of God stays at the forefront! We trust that you will feel more informed and empowered to do your work. Thank you for taking time to govern your churches with diligence and grace.

Blessings,

Nathan Marshall Church Health



SECTION 1



People

The Church is the people of God and the people within the church are the most important focus and resource. Valuing people and prioritising safety, especially for the vulnerable, is not only our duty of care but crucial to the flourishing life of the Church.



THIS CHECKLIST IS A SIMPLIFIED GUIDE FOR YOUR CHURCH GOVERNANCE.
AS YOU READ EACH QUESTION SIMPLY TICK "YES" IF YOUR CHURCH IS COMPLIANT OR TICK THE
'ACTION REQUIRED' BOX IF WORK IS NEEDING TO BE DONE.
PLEASE NOTE, THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT RANKED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

PART A - CHILD SAFETY

1	OUR CHURCH HAS A "CHILD SAFE POLICY" NOTE: IF YOU HAVE A SAFE CHURCH POLICY THEN IT MUST ALSO SATISFY THE LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS OF A CHILD SAFE POLICY	YES COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
2	THERE IS A SYSTEM TO ENSURE ALL ELDERS, PASTORS AND CHILD RELATED VOLUNTEERS HAVE A VERIFIED WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (WWCC) PRIOR TO APPOINTMENT AND THAT THEY ARE RENEWED AND VERIFIED AS REQUIRED	YES COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
3	WE HAVE AN IDENTIFIED MANDATORY REPORTER AND MANDATORY REPORTING POLICY, THAT IS KNOWN BY ALL THOSE IN CHILD MINISTRIES (THOSE REQUIRED TO HOLD A WWCC)	YES COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
4	WE HAVE RELEVANT INDUCTIONS TO ENSURE YOUR SAFE MINISTRY POLICIES ARE READ, UNDERSTOOD, AND ADHERE TO BY APPLICABLE STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS	YES COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
5	WE HAVE A DATA RETENTION SYSTEM IN REGARDS TO WORKING WITH CHILDREN (THAT IS HELD FOR AT LEAST 45 YEARS, IDEALLY 100 YEARS) AND IS IT REGULARLY REVIEWED AND UPDATED	YES COMPLIANT	ACTION REQUIRED
6	WE OBTAIN AND RECORD PARENTAL CONSENT FOR ALL CHILD RELATED ACTIVITIES (E.G.: GENERAL CONSENT AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE YEAR, AND INDIVIDUAL CONSENT FOR OFFSITE OR ONE-OFF ACTIVITIES)	YES COMPLIAN	ACTION T REQUIRED



PART	B - PEOPLE	
7	WE HAVE A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR YOUR CHURCH'S VISION AND MISSION THAT IS SUBJECT TO REGULAR REVIEW	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
8	WE HAVE ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR ALL EMPLOYED STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
9	WE HAVE A WHS POLICY AND CONDUCT RISK ASSESSMENTS	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
10	OUR ELDERSHIP ALLOWS REGULAR FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS FROM OUR CONGREGATION. (AND THERE ARE AVENUES TO SAFELY RAISE CONCERNS OR OBJECTIONS)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
11	WE HAVE AN ELDERS DECLARATION THAT BINDS EACH ELDER TO THE CLAUSES OUTLINED IN <u>ACNC GOVERNANCE</u> <u>STANDARD NO. 5</u> **	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
12	OUR CHURCH CONDUCTS ROBUST BACKGROUND CHECKS THROUGH REFEREES OR REFERENCES (FORMER CHURCH, SECULAR EMPLOYEE OR FRIEND) OF ALL APPLICANTS IN STAFF OR VOLUNTEER ROLES	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
13	DO YOU HAVE A CLEAR PROCESS TO BEHAVIOURALLY MANAGE CONGREGATION ATTENDEES OR MEMBERS WHO HAVE A HISTORY OF ABUSE?	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
14	CHURCH LEADERS, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS ARE UP TO DATE WITH SAFE MINISTRY TRAINING AND A SAFE CHURCH HEALTH CHECK	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
15	DO WE HAVE A 'STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO SAFETY' EITHER IN THE CONSTITUTION OR SAFE CHURCH POLICY AND ON YOUR WEBSITE	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED

**THE ACNC DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO REMOVE A RESPONSIBLE PERSON FROM A <u>BASIC</u> <u>RELIGIOUS CHARITY</u>, HOWEVER IF A PERSON IS DISQUALIFIED FROM RESPONSIBILITIES OF OTHER CHARITIES, IT IS LIKELY THAT THEY ARE UNSUITABLE FOR CHURCH LEADERSHIP.



SUMMARY

IF THE CHECKLIST IDENTIFIES SIGNIFICANT ISSUES THEN IT IS CRITICAL THAT THESE QUESTIONS ARE IMMEDIATELY ADDRESSED.

- Does your church ensure that all people working with children have a verified WWCC?
- Does your church have a means for children, families and the community to raise concerns?
- Are all staff and volunteers who work with children or young people screened and interviewed prior to appointment?

IF THESE QUESTIONS IDENTIFY POTENTIAL WEAKNESSES, THEN THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE:

- Safe Church Health Check https://creatingsafespaces.org.au/schc/
- Childrens Guardian https://ocg.nsw.gov.au/
- Contact our Safe Churches Practices Leader <u>hello@ccnswact.org.au</u>



SECTION 2



Place

Place making and the importance of place in a fractured world can allow us to be present in our communities. The places we inhabit and make room for others often aid and support ministry in our local context. Maintaining buildings that are safe and fit for purpose enable ongoing opportunities for outreach.



IT IS IMPORTANT THE PLACES WE OPERATE ARE FIT FOR PURPOSE, COMPLIANT AND SAFE. THIS CHECKLIST IS A SIMPLIFIED GUIDE FOR YOUR CHURCH GOVERNANCE.

AS YOU READ EACH QUESTION SIMPLY TICK "YES" IF YOUR CHURCH IS COMPLIANT OR TICK THE 'ACTION REQUIRED' BOX IF WORK IS STILL NEEDING TO BE DONE.

PLEASE NOTE, THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT RANKED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

1	HAVE WE REVIEWED OUR BUILDING TO ENSURE IT IS COMPLIANT WITH LOCAL PLANNING AND ZONING LAW REQUIREMENTS FOR A PLACE OF PUBLIC WORSHIP	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
2	IS OUR CHURCH LOCATED IN A FLOOD OR BUSH FIRE ZONE? IF YES, DO YOU HAVE AN EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDING EVACUATION PLAN.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
3	WE KEEP A RECORD OF OUR ASSETS – E.G.: FURNITURE, SOUND EQUIPMENT ETC	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
4	WE KEEP AN ASSET REGISTER AND A DEPRECIATION SCHEDULE	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
5	WE REVIEW OUR BUILDING/S AND ASSETS TO DETERMINE IF THEY ARE STILL MEETING THE NEEDS OF OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY, ITS MINISTRIES, AND THE COMMUNITY WE ARE IN. (E.G. ARE THEY FIT FOR PURPOSE)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
6	WE HAVE AN ESSENTIAL FIRE SAFETY SCHEDULE	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
Α	WE HAVE AN <u>ANNUAL FIRE SAFETY STATEMENT (AFSS</u>)?	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED



С	WE UNDERTAKE 6 MONTHLY FIRE SAFETY SCHEDULE TESTING BY A SUITABLE QUALIFIED FIRE SERVICES CONTRACTOR	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
D	WE HAVE CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE EMERGENCY EVACUATION PLANS DISPLAYED IN YOUR BUILDING/S	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
7	DOES YOUR CHURCH HIRE OUT ITS SPACES TO OTHER CHURCHES OR COMMUNITY GROUPS?	YES NO
Α	WE HAVE IN PLACE HALL HIRE AGREEMENTS, LICENCE AGREEMENTS OR LEASES IN PLACE FOR THESE GROUPS? (CONTACT PROPERTIES@CCNSWACT.ORG.AU FOR MORE INFORMATION IF NEEDED)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
В	WE ENSURE THAT THESE GROUPS PROVIDE ADEQUATE INSURANCE COVERAGE.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
С	THESE GROUPS PROVIDE APPROPRIATE WORKING WITH CHILDRENS CHECKS.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
8	OUR CHURCH BUILDING/S HAS APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF ELECTRICAL PROTECTION AND SAFETY IN THE METER BOARDS AND SUB METER BOARDS BY WAY OF RESIDUAL CURRENT DEVICES (RCDS) AND OTHER DEVICES.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
Α	WE UNDERTAKE AN AUDIT OF THE ELECTRICAL SAFETY ACROSS ITS BUILDINGS/S	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
В	WE UNDERTAKE REGULAR TEST AND TAGGING OF EQUIPMENT AND FIXED ITEMS FOR SAFETY AND COMPLIANCE?	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED



9	WE HAVE A HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGISTER FOR OUR BUILDINGS	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
Α	WE KNOW WHAT <u>HAZARDOUS MATERIALS</u> MIGHT BE IN OUR BUILDING (E.G. ASBESTOS)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
В	OUR VOLUNTEERS AND CONTRACTORS ARE MADE AWARE OF THE POSSIBLE HAZARDS WHEN PERFORMING WORK IN THE BUILDING (NOTE: MAKE SURE YOUR HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGISTER IS AVAILABLE)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED



SUMMARY

IF THE CHECKLIST IDENTIFIES SIGNIFICANT ISSUES THEN IT IS CRITICAL THAT THE FOLLOWING OUESTIONS ARE IMMEDIATELY ADDRESSED:

- Does your church have an Annual Fire Safety Statement (AFSS)? (This is a mandatory document which is submitted to your local government office (Council) and NSW Fire and Rescue)
- Is your church registered as a public place of worship?
- Does your church have adequate building and contents insurance?

TERMS:

AFSS: Annual Fire Safety Statement is a mandatory document that is submitted to your local government office (Council) and NSW Fire and Rescue.

Essential Fire Safety Schedule: Most buildings at the time of completed construction/ occupancy are issued by Planning approval body (e.g.: Council or Private Certifier) an Essential Fire Safety Schedule, this is then used as the mechanism for fire service contractors to assess and manage your building.

RCD: A Residual Current Device is a sensitive safety device that switches off the electricity within 10 to 50 milliseconds if there is an electrical fault.

LINKS TO WEBSITE:

Churches of Christ in NSW - website link to Church Compliance: https://ccnswact.org.au/church-compliance/

Fire and Rescue - Lodge a Fire Safety Statement:

https://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/page.php?id=9157

NSW Government - Fire Certification:

https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/policy-and-legislation/buildings/fire-safety-in-buildings/fire-safety-certification

Fire and Rescue - Bush Fire Zones:

https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/building-in-a-bush-fire-area/planning-for-bush-fire-protection/bush-fire-prone-land/check-bfpl

Flood Zones:

How do you check if a property is in a flood zone NSW? Information specific to your property and potential flood risk may be available from your Local Council.



SECTION 3



Policy & Procedure

Whether you are unincorporated or an incorporated association, it is important to be registered with the Australian charities and the non for profits commission (ACNC). The ACNC regulates Australian charities and helps them meet their obligations. This helps the public understand our work and also creates the proper avenues for appropriate tax exemptions.



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AS YOU READ EACH QUESTION SIMPLY TICK "YES" IF YOUR CHURCH IS COMPLIANT OR TICK THE

'ACTION REQUIRED' BOX IF WORK IS STILL NEEDING TO BE DONE.

PLEASE NOTE, THIS CHECKLIST IS NOT RANKED IN ORDER OF PRIORITY.

1	WE HAVE REVIEWED OUR ABN ON THE <u>ABR WEBSITE</u> TO CONFIRM THAT THE CHURCH IS CORRECTLY REGISTERED, WITH CHARACTER PERFECT NAME AND PUBLISHED DETAILS, AND IS LISTED AS A CHARITY LINKED TO THE <u>ACNC WEBSITE</u>	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
2	WE HAVE REVIEWED THE ACNC WEBSITE TO CONFIRM THAT OUR CHURCH IS CORRECTLY REGISTERED WE HAVE CORRECT SUB-TYPE OF "ADVANCING RELIGION" (UNDER HISTORY) WE HAVE ACCURATE DETAILS (UNDER PEOPLE AND PROFILE) WE HAVE 'RESPONSIBLE PEOPLE' AS YOUR ELDERS WHO ARE YOUR OFFICE BEARERS	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
3	WE ARE UP TO DATE IN SUBMITTING AN ANNUAL INFORMATION STATEMENT TO THE ACNC	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
4	OUR CHURCH HAS A CONSTITUTION (OR EQUIVALENT) THAT DEMONSTRATES THAT WE OPERATE AS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT AND WORK TOWARD THAT CHARITABLE PURPOSE - (ACNC GOVERNANCE STANDARD 1)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
5	OUR CONSTITUTION (OR EQUIVALENT) GETS REVIEWED FOR FUNCTIONALITY AND SUITABILITY EVERY 5 YEARS (OR WHEN APPROPRIATE)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
6	FOR LEGAL REASONS, IF YOU EMPLOY A MINISTERING PERSON/S AND APPLY THE FBT EXEMPTION YOU MUST BE REGISTERED WITH THE ACNC AS A RELIGIOUS CHARITY AND HOLD A VALID CONSTITUTION.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
7	ALL STAFF HAVE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED



8	WE HAVE RELEVANT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (I.E. A COMPLIANT MANAGEMENT POLICY, HUMAN RESOURCE POLICY ETC) AND WE REVIEW THESE ON A 3-YEAR CYCLE	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
	NOTE: SEE MINISTRY PORTAL, IN MY RESOURCES	
9	IF WE ALLOW OTHER ENTITIES TO OPERATE ON OUR SITE, AND THEY CONDUCT ACTIVITIES WHICH INCLUDE CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE, DO YOU ENSURE THAT THEY CAN SUBSTANTIATE THAT THEY SATISFY MINIMUM CHILD SAFETY REQUIREMENTS?	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
10	OUR CHURCH KEEPS RECORDS THAT SHOW ITS INCOME, EXPENSES, ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS FOR SEVEN YEARS (ACNC)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
11	WE CONDUCT AN ANNUAL AGM WITH AGENDA, MINUTES, AND FULL REPORTING ON ALL AREAS OF THE CHURCH AND GOVERNANCE OUR MINUTES ARE PUBLISHED & DISTRIBUTED	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
12	WE PROVIDE AN ANNUAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY REPORTS TO MEMBERS?	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
13	WE CONDUCT AN ANNUAL INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTING FINANCIAL REVIEW OR AUDIT	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
14	OUR INSURANCE POLICIES ARE RE-EVALUATED FOR SUITABILITY AND APPROPRIATE COVERAGE, WHEN NECESSARY.	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED
15	WE ARE COMPLIANT WITH COPYRIGHT AND LICENSING LAWS (I.E. CCLI, COPYRIGHT LICENSE FOR PHOTOCOPYING BOOKS ETC)	YES ACTION COMPLIANT REQUIRED



SUMMARY

THE FOLLOWING RESOURCES MAY BE OF ASSISTANCE:

ACNC website - https://www.acnc.gov.au/

Constitution guide - https://ccnswact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Constitution-Guide-2024.pdf

CCNSWACT Employment guidelines - https://ccnswact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/CCNSWACT_Employment_Guidelines_Nov-2023.pdf



ACTION PLAN

Theme	Priority Actions	Person Responsible	Due
People			
Place			
Policy & Procedure			



SAMPLE MONTHLY RHYTHM

JANUARY

People Prayerfully review
vision and strategic
direction

FEBRUARY

Place -Annual review of WHS and site safety

MARCH

Policy & Procedure Set governance
focus and dates

APRIL

People Check in with
ministry leaders to
see if they need
support or updated
training in Safe
churches

MAY

Place Batteries in smoke
detectors, check fire
alarms, fire blankets
etc

JUNE

Policy & Procedure Review policies and
check appropriate
insurance coverage

JULY

People Plan a whole church
activity, service or
reflection regarding
the important of
Safe Church issues

AUGUST

Place Building safety
audit, including
signage and up to
date documentation

SEPTEMBER

Policy & Procedure Check ACNC
paperwork and any
leases or
agreements with
other organisations

OCTOBER

People Consider leadership
development for
people at all stages

NOVEMBER

Working Bee and
Spring Clean

DECEMBER

God has done throughout the year



YOUR CHURCH RHYTHM

TOOK CHOKCH KHTTHM			
JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	
People -	Place -	Policy & Procedure -	
APRIL	MAY	JUNE	
People -	Place -	Policy & Procedure -	
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	
People -	Place -	Policy & Procedure -	
OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	
People -	Place-	Celebration	



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