

Synod's financial support for ministry during leave

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has a Ministers Special Assurance Fund, built up from contributions from congregations as part of the stipend package associated with placements. The main function of the MSA is to cover the cost of supply (up to 50%) when a minister is on sick leave and to take responsibility for the entitlements of ministers on long term sick leave after 3 months. It also covers carers leave, maternity leave, and adoption leave.

Presbytery informs the Synod Pastoral Assistance Committee when ministers are taking sick leave. The Ministers Special Assurance Fund covers half the costs of what would normally be paid. If someone is normally in full-time ministry, then the Synod provides funds for up to half-time ministry. If someone is normally in half-time ministry, then the Synod provides funds for up to quarter-time supply ministry. To access this support, work with the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC), and indicate on the payroll form whether this is being used to cover sick leave or maternity leave.

The Synod also administers payments for ministers taking long service leave. This includes most of the costs associated with stipend, plus an allowance for travel. The congregation continues to provide housing or housing allowance during this time. The congregation is then able to use the funds saved in this time to arrange supply, whether that be occasional or short-term.

Note that this is a summary of provisions. The full details can be found in the *UCA Handbook: Ministerial Provisions and Charge*, and the latest edition should always be accessed for current information. Any differences between this document and the *Handbook* are unintentional, and the *Handbook* is always the definitive reference.

Sick Leave

When sick leave continues for more than 2 weeks (cumulatively in the placement year), or where it is known from the outset that leave will be needed for more than two weeks, supply (up to 50% of the placement time fraction) will be covered by the Ministers Special Assurance fund from the 3rd week.

When sick leave continues beyond 3 months, the Ministers Special Assurance fund will take responsibility for the minister's entitlements, with the responsible body covering the cost of supply. Financial assistance from the Ministers Special Assurance fund will either reduce or cease when the period of leave reaches 12 months.

Accessing Synod funds for Sick Leave Support & Carers Leave Support

The church council representative (chair, secretary or treasurer) sends the minister's medical certificate/s to Anne Kim, Presbytery Secretary, along with a supply ministry application form. This is sent on to the Synod Pastoral Assistance Committee. When filling out the Synod Centralised Stipends and Payroll form, the church council treasurer indicates that the supply is to cover sick leave.

Carer's Leave

From time to time, ministers may be faced with the unfortunate situation of the long term illness (a month or more) of a household or family member. In such situations the Presbytery PRC should be advised so that appropriate pastoral care can be provided for the minister and suitable arrangements can be put in place for the congregation. As part of the pastoral care the PRC may approve carer's leave for the minister, and notify the Synod Pastoral Assistance Committee of its decision. Once notified of approval of leave the PAC will provide reimbursement for supply ministry costs for the congregation.

Return to Work

It is expected that there will be regular (monthly) communication between the minister and the Presbytery during a period of long-term sick leave or carers leave. The Presbytery and Church Council will work with the minister on a return-to-work plan, which includes advice from medical practitioner(s).

Maternity Leave

Female ministers in full-time or part-time placements are entitled to three months paid maternity. Synod meets the cost of supply during the period of leave.

During the three months paid leave, the responsible body continues to pay stipend and provide other ministerial entitlements (other than, as with Long Service Leave, the distance component of the car allowance). That includes ongoing occupancy of the church provided rent free accommodation or, where no manse is provided, continuation of the manse allowance. The period is recognised as service with the church. Where the supply ministry requires provision of accommodation and that cannot be provided locally, this is part of the cost of the supply arrangement which the Synod covers.

Adoption Leave

Ministers in full-time and part-time placement are entitled to up to three months paid leave where the minister is the primary care giver of an adopted child. The general conditions are those that apply as with maternity leave, including the Synod meeting the cost of supply during the period of paid leave.

Long Service Leave

The Synod Ministers Long Service Leave Scheme covers the long service leave costs of Ministers of the Word, Deacons, those in the Specified Ministry of Youth Worker and Pastors in placement, including minimum stipend; Long Service Leave Grant, Personal Resource Development Allowance; and travel allowance, excepting distance component. The congregation continues to provide the manse or continues to pay the manse allowance. Supply ministry costs, including any accommodation, are covered by the congregation.

Leave	Reimbursement	Forms
Sick leave first 2 weeks		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presbytery online leave application
Sick Leave from 3 rd week, up to 3 months	Up to 50% of supply, paid directly to people providing supply.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical certificates• Supply Application Form to PRC• Payroll Application Forms
Sick leave after 3 months	Stipend & allowances paid to minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical certificates• Supply Application Form to PRC• Payroll Application Forms
Maternity Leave	Costs of supply, paid directly to people providing supply for up to 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Supply Application Form to PRC• Payroll Application Forms
Long Service Leave	Stipend & allowances paid to minister	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Long Service Leave form to PRC & Payroll• Supply Application Form to PRC• Payroll Application Forms