**Pastoral  
Search Team**

Information sheet

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| Welcome to the Pastoral Search Team (PST) of your church. Our hope is that as you embark on the spiritual journey of selecting a new Pastor you will experience God’s leading. We would encourage you to meet regularly, pray together and individually, read from His Word and where possible, eat and fellowship with one another.  The PST journey is a unique season in the life of the Church. Hopefully on your PST you represent the age, gender and cultural diversity of your Church family. All of you have been encouraged and endorsed by your Church family to have a voice in this team and so while sharing your collective conversation in prayer and His Word, you may faithfully anticipate that He will guide you and at the right time show His will for the leading of your Church family. |

# Scope

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| The PST is tasked by the Leadership team (Governing body) of a Church to find a suitable Pastoral candidate. The Leadership team should provide you with details such as position description (including key selection criteria), desired weekly hours, commencement timelines, remuneration benchmarks and general position details.  The role of the PST is to identify a suitable candidate by advertising, interviewing, praying and discussing. At this point, when the team is unified, and depending on your brief from your leadership team, you will likely refer your preferred candidate/s to the Leadership and upon their approval, on to the members for endorsement. Once the preferred candidate/s is identified, largely the PST’s job is done.  The role of the PST is also to communicate as best you can with the Leadership team and wider church sensitively as to your progress. |
| The PST does not: Set remuneration, negotiate contract conditions, confirm employment, or change position descriptions. |

# Research

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| **Your Church** Gather information that will paint a picture about your church, including ministries, annual events, numerical size current staff etc. It is helpful to source current vision and future development plans also, as well as your constitution. |
| **Your region**  Gather information on demographics, local schools, community festivals, celebrations and challenges, active community groups and other churches in the area – this is all helpful for you to include in an application package so that potential candidates can become familiar with the type of community they would be pastoring and living in. **Your History**  It’s helpful to summarise your church’s history both recent and further back. When was the church started, highlights of the journey, commencement of ministries, other staff appointments if any etc. |

# Collate an Application package

# *This should contain:*

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| * A summary of your research * Position description * Application invitation letter | * Copy of your church constitution and current vision * Details of process going forward * How to apply and what to submit with the application |

# Advertising

Develop an advertisement, discuss where you wish to circulate, who will be the email contact, will you have a phone contact?

Our advice is that you elect a person to have initial contact when candidates apply. This could be a secretary of the PST or the Chairperson. This person would acknowledge interested candidates and forward them the application package. This allows candidates to pray and discuss with trusted people in their lives before applying. The elected communicant does not pre-interview, screen or give their thoughts at this stage. It is important to allow enquiries to progress prayerfully into formal applications that the whole PST can pursue. Send your advertisement to [churchsupport@cofcqld.com.au](mailto:churchsupport@cofcqld.com.au) for assistance with advertising to our networks.

**Shortlisting and Interviewing**

When you have an application, or several, it is then time to meet and openly discuss. In the confines and under agreed confidence of the PST, it may be helpful to have more open, frank conversations about candidates. Obviously, this should be respectful and God honouring and should not make any team members uncomfortable.

Conflict of interest/duality: upon receiving applications to the PST it may be that a member of the team knows the applicant by relation, association or friendship. While the PST holds that power to make decision on whether this is appropriate or not, the member should disclose this to the team and allow process to follow.

Initial screening and shortlisting: there are key selection criteria and experience or qualifications that the Leadership team has included in the position description. Assuming more than 2-3 applications are received, the PST should do an initial screen against those criteria, qualifications and experience to determine a short list of candidates to discuss in more depth and take forward to an interview stage. Shortlisting can be done by each individual and then results compared among the PST to come up with an agreed shortlist of 3-5 candidates.

The PST should also ensure they are aware of any ‘non-negotiables’ from the leadership team to avoid a situation where the PST pursues a candidate that does not fit this (e.g. a theological qualification or a minimum number of years of experience may be non-negotiable). Of course, if the PST identifies someone who they feel is an excellent candidate, they should be at liberty to go back to the Leadership team on the criteria, qualifications and experience and recommend flexibility around this.

Prayer and Fasting: It may be wise and helpful at this point to go away and not discuss shortlisted applicants with each other, and pray individually about them for an agreed time. Often reconvening then can bring clarity. Remember at this vital time, this is a spiritual process and members may take different times to move forward. The team should observe this.

Interviewing: It is recommended that you interview more than one candidate and that the whole PST is involved in the interview. The same pre-prepared list of questions should be asked of each candidate (ask your REP or the Church Engagement team (or google!) for examples) and should ideally be conducted within as short a timeframe as possible to make it easier for the PST to remember everything they have heard from each candidate when considering all the applicants. Have someone take notes of the answers and spend some time in discussion after each interview as your general impressions of the ‘cultural fit’ of the person for your church and the role are important to draw out alongside their actual answers.

References:

There are two options here and we suggest for you to discuss this with your REP and Leadership. It may be that members of the PST or Leadership do reference checks. It is important to be sensitive in this process where the applicant has another position or ministry. It is appropriate to check with an applicant first before doing the reference check.

Churches of Christ involvement:

Throughout this process your local Regional Engagement partner (REP), Church Engagement Manager, and other Church and Community Engagement team are available to assist at any stage of this process. The CCE team will be aware of other Pastors and Church movements, can help with advertising, and you may even choose to invite a CCE team member as a consultant to the PST.

**Recommendation**

Once a consensus has been achieved, it is then time to formally recommend your applicant to the Leadership team of your church. It is then that the Leadership should endorse the candidate and move to a membership vote, according to your constitution. It may be beneficial for the Leaders to invite the candidate to a service/ morning tea etc. prior to a members meeting.

**Conclusion of the PST**

At the conclusion of your time as the Pastoral Search Team, it is now time to give thanks to God, share a meal together and show appreciation for each other and what He has brought about through the work of the team. By this stage you have likely had numerous meetings, conversations and connections, often with people you didn’t know well before this season. So, celebrate!

**The 3 C’s that PST’s must observe**

**Communication;** It is vital that the Leadership team, and wider church members are all sensitively kept in the loop. Our recommendation is that at the end of every meeting you have a repeat agenda item “Communication” asking “What do we need to say at this point?” You will most often withhold names and even discussion points, but it is important for the PST to take the Church on the journey with them. Even if it’s just to say you met and ask for prayer.

**Confidentiality;** You will be discussing people, families and things that effect sometimes many people. Do not discuss PST matters outside of the assigned meetings unless agreed. Strict consideration must be given to what you may know or find out. An applicant’s current church or ministry may not be aware of their intentions and Church circles can be smaller than you think.

**Caring;** Because of the unique situation, PST members should care for each other. If a member needs to conclude or a new one come on, care is critical.

**The 3 C’s that pastoral candidates must reflect**

**Character**; The first threshold to pass is to ponder the question of the character of the candidate. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control; against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

**Chemistry;** Once the candidate has been determined to have the required maturity of character, the next is to determine if they are a good fit for the culture of the church community.

**Competency;** Finally, it is important that they can demonstrate that they have the necessary competencies to be able to meet the expectations of the role. This is comprised of two elements: capability and results. Does the candidate seem to have a track record in both these elements?