

AUSTRALIAN CHARITIES & NOT-FOR-PROFIT COMMISSION (ACNC) INFORMATION FOR CHURCHES

Several of the COCWA Staff have participated in ACNC briefings. The following information is a guide to help churches understand what the ACNC requirements are for all of our churches.

1. Checking and Providing Church Details

You may have already received a request from the ACNC to register your Church with ACNC. If you are not sure, you can check your registration from the ACNC website using your Church name and ABN number.

http://www.acnc.gov.au/ACNC/FindCharity/Search_the_ACNC_Register/ACNC/OnlineProcessors/Online_register/Search_the_register.aspx

2. Maintain Charity Status

Most COCWA affiliated churches are registered to have not-for-profit status for taxation purposes. In order to maintain taxation exception status, your church must be registered with the ACNC.

3. Duty to Notify if Things Change

Please ensure that you notify the ACNC promptly when any of the following things change:

- Name (Church and/or Responsible Person)
- Address (Church and/or Responsible Person)
- You change your Constitution
- You change any of the Responsible Persons (Elders or Board Members – your Constitution will identify who your Responsible Persons are. This will be different from church to church depending on how each church is structured).

4. Record Keeping & Reporting

All churches are required to:

Keep all Minutes of Board/Elders Meetings and Financial records for seven (7) years.

- Submit an "Annual Information Statement". This will be sent to you.
- Submit Annual Financial Reports. If this is required by your church, the ACNC will inform you. As a guide, churches with an annual revenue of less than \$250,000 can expect not to be required to submit annual financial reports.

5. Comply with any directions of the ACNC Commissioner.

COCWA will endeavour to keep all Churches up-to-date with any changes in requirements as they arise.

GROUP REPORTING

COCWA investigated the possibility of reporting to the ACNC as a single entity in order to assist particularly smaller churches with reporting requirements. However, at this time, we do not believe that there would be any benefit due to the following reasons:

- Registration with ACNC does not diminish the requirement of each church individually with regard to State and Commonwealth law.
- In order to receive tax exemption status, each church needs to be individually registered with the ATO and with the ACNC.

- The reporting group would mean that all churches would have to report to the standard required of the largest entity within the group. Given that small churches are not required to report financials, this would only add additional work to either smaller churches or to COCWA for no significant benefit.

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions relating to ACNC requirements for churches, please do not hesitate to contact the COCWA office (Tuesdays – Thursdays; 9am – 4pm) 9471 8500 or you can find helpful information on the ACNC website www.acnc.gov.au.