

# Presbytery Disaster Contact Role Description

## Preamble

It is anticipated that there will be at least two persons in each Presbytery throughout the NSW Synod who will act as Presbytery Contacts. Their names will appear in the Synod Directory, along with their contact details.

The Presbytery and the congregations that are its defining localities are the best place to provide support during times of crisis and disaster, especially during the “recovery” phase, which may be ongoing for months or years.

The Presbytery Contact Person should have a passion for pastoral care, a desire to know more about disaster recovery and a willingness to learn how to be effective in the local community in this rewarding field of endeavour.

The Presbytery Disaster Contact Person (Contact Person) acts as the ‘hub’ of information and organisation within the Presbytery in the event of a disaster or major traumatic event which affects the churches of the presbytery or the community in which they operate. While the Contact Person will not need to ‘do everything’ in this regard it is his or her responsibility that appropriate communication and response takes place before, during and after the emergency, to ensure the best outcome.

It is preferred that a Contact Person is not also a combat agency (eg. Police or Fire) chaplain in the same geographical area. This would be likely to compromise his or her capacity by involvement in two areas of responsibility at a time of need.

The Contact Person will:

## 1. Before an emergency

### Be familiar with:

- the NSW Disaster Recovery Plan, understanding the role of each agency within the NSW Welfare Plan eg. Red Cross (personal support in evacuation centres), Salvation Army (catering) etc.
- the role and purpose of the Synod Peer Support Team.

### Have at hand:

- The contact numbers and (including mobile phone numbers) of all ministry agents and officers within the Presbytery.
- The contact numbers of the Moderator and the Peer Support Coordinator.
- Contact numbers for insurance queries from within your presbytery.
- An up-to-date list of assets useful to disaster recovery within the presbytery. This includes halls, buildings, key people in (at least) high-risk congregations (eg. flood prone areas). Keep this handy and share it with local Red Cross coordinators.

## Build Networks

- Liaise with organisations within your locality in terms of potential for providing assistance, eg. DoCS, Red Cross.
- Liaise with other church/faith groups in your locality in terms of provision of resources and facilities.
- Network with other Disaster Contact Persons in other Presbyteries to enable sharing of resources and wider support.
- It is given that the UCA provides specialist chaplaincy support to combat agencies (police, fire, ambulance, SES and RFS) during times of emergency, crisis or disaster. These people will often be deployed in a strategic role. Know who they are in your locality.
- In discussions with government organisations and agencies, indicate your willingness to accept responsibility for providing support. Prior to the event, liaison is the key to being used when needed.
- Become known by those in the Presbytery as the Presbytery Contact Person. Report on a regular basis to Presbytery meetings. It need only be short, sharp and to the point.
- Ensure you have your own personal support network in place.

## Train

- The Contact Person will attend the annual Synod-wide training day.

## 2. During an emergency

The Contact Person will make an assessment of what is happening and, in consultation with the ministry agents affected and the Presbytery Chairperson determine:

- the level of need (is help required from beyond the Presbytery?)
- the capacity of the church/es to help with that need
- Make contact with the Moderator to give situation report/s
- Ensure that there is a coordinated response to the emergency with and from the Presbytery itself.
- In the event that outside help is required, the Contact Person should be aware of what is happening, who is taking on what roles, and liaise with the Peer Support Team if they are involved.

## 3. Following an emergency

The Contact Person should:

- ensure that adequate debriefing and assessment takes place at the end of the crisis.
- ensure that new people coming in afterwards are familiar with what has happened and why.
- continue to update lists etc in preparation for any upcoming emergency (See Point One).