

Adelaide West Uniting Church—a new model of church governance

A new model of church governance was approved by the meeting of the congregation on Sunday, 23 May 2012. This paper is intended to help explain the change for those who were not able to be at the meeting. More detailed (and hopefully more legible) diagrams are provided on the following page.

Previous model

Our current church council is made up of our paid staff and the leaders of key ministry teams (“portfolio leaders”). This structure means the council effectively has three areas of responsibility:

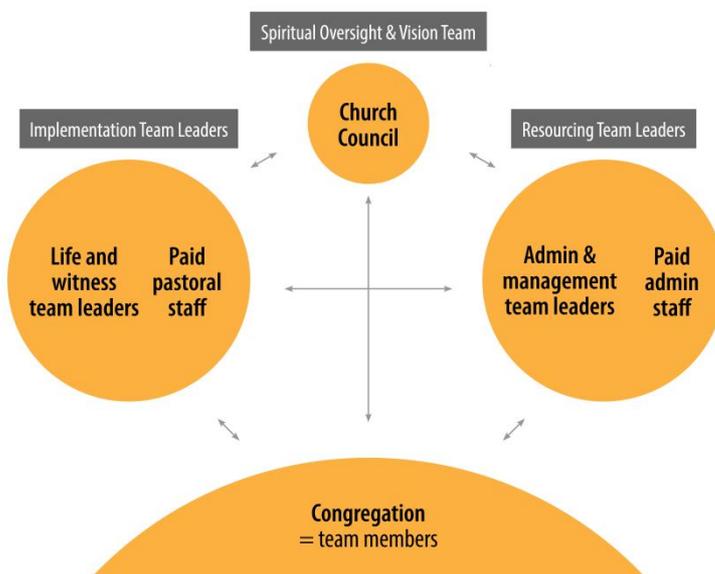
1. **Spiritual Oversight & Vision**—discerning God’s vision and leading for the Church and seeking God’s guidance on spiritual oversight of the church community
2. **Implementation**—coordinating the implementation of the Church’s vision through the pastoral life and witness ministry teams
3. **Resourcing**—coordinating the resourcing of the Church’s vision through administration and support teams.



New model

The new model shares these areas of responsibility across three different groups of Church leaders with different functional gifts:

1. **Spiritual Oversight & Vision Team**—the new Church Council remains the governing body for the church and is a group of 8–10 people meeting regularly with a specific focus on discerning God’s vision and strategic direction for the Church and seeking guidance on spiritual oversight of the church community
2. **Implementation Team**—ministry team leaders meet as necessary, and in whatever combination suits current needs, for mutual encouragement and to enable teams to work together effectively
3. **Resourcing Team**—
 - a. ministry team leaders meet as necessary, and in whatever combination suits current needs, for mutual encouragement and to enable teams to work together effectively
 - b. a subset of these ministry team leaders meets regularly to deal with administrative, management and maintenance issues with delegated authority to make and realize decisions (e.g. within specified \$ limits).



The key reason for the change is to enable the council to concentrate on its core functions of spiritual oversight and vision. While the church council retains ultimate responsibility for decision making—in accordance with the Uniting Church regulations—in this new model, day-to-day responsibility for managing church activities is delegated to the relevant teams; team leaders will report to council as appropriate and refer policy-related matters to council.

Ideally, church councillors should be people recognised as committed to the Adelaide West church family, regarded for their spiritual maturity, their creativity and ability to consider the ‘big picture’ and to prayerfully discern the spiritual health, future direction and ministry possibilities of the church.

The Minister is a member of the church council *ex officio*. Councillors will be elected for a period of 18 months to three years. At the first meeting of the new council, lots will be drawn (or volunteers sought) to determine which councillors will have their terms expire first. The council will elect a chair from among its members and a secretary will be either elected from within or coopted to the role from the wider church community.

Many of the current team leaders (“portfolio leaders”) will remain in those roles for now; they will simply no longer be part of church council. The congregation charged the new council with the task of devising a mechanism for appointing new team leaders by August 2012. It should be noted that there are already some team leader vacancies. In particular, the Property Team will need a new leader from the end of June. In addition, if any existing team leaders are elected to the new church council, their portfolios will also need new leaders.

Previous model



New model

