

Privacy Policies of the Theological Education Committee

1. Introduction

On 21 December 2001, a series of National Privacy Principles (NPPs) became operable within the private sector across Australia as a result of amendments to the Privacy Act 1988 (Cth). The Presbyterian Church (the Church) in all its parts must comply with this Act and associated principles which, among other things, cover the collection, use, disclosure, quality and security of information held in relation to identifiable persons and require affected persons to have access to, and the opportunity to correct, such information. Persons referred to in the legislation are natural living persons, not bodies corporate.

Desiring to deal responsibly and lawfully with all persons, the Theological Education Committee (the Committee) has embraced the following policy in relation to privacy. This policy is to be read alongside the NPPs as an explanation of the way in which they will be implemented.

2. Information

2.1 What information is held? The Committee holds employment-related information concerning lecturers and others who work for the Presbyterian Theological Centre (PTC). It also holds personal information concerning students and former students and may, in respect of some of these people, also hold sensitive information.

2.1.1 Employment data Information relating to employment is exempt from the provisions of the Act and is necessary to determine relevant entitlements to remuneration, leave and other benefits.

2.1.2 "Personal" Personal information includes an individual's name, address and contact details and date of birth, together with the name of that person's spouse if married.

2.1.3 "Sensitive" From time to time the Committee may hold sensitive information concerning an individual. Sensitive information is described as "information or opinion about an individual's racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of a political association, religious beliefs or affiliations, philosophical beliefs, membership of a professional or trade association, membership of a trade union, sexual preferences or practices, criminal record or health information about an individual."

2.2 To whom does information relate? Personal or sensitive information or employment data collected and retained by the Committee relates to present and former employees of the Committee and unsuccessful applicants for positions who wish their curricula vitae to be held on file, together with present and former students or persons applying to become students at the PTC or candidates for the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

3. Collection

3.1 How is information collected? Information collected by the Committee may be submitted by individuals, church courts or Committees by phone, mail, email or fax.

3.2 How are people advised that information is being collected? When a

file is to be created for a person in respect of whom information has not previously been collected, the person concerned will be advised of its creation and anticipated contents, together with their rights under this policy.

3.3 How is the purpose of data collection recorded? The purpose of collection will not necessarily be recorded with the information collected. The purpose will be deemed to be implied by the type of information as follows:

3.3.1 Personal information is needed for administration of work-related situations or academic progress.

3.3.2 Sensitive information is not normally collected. When it is, the purpose will be identified with the file.

3.4 How is person's permission recorded? Ordinarily, each person about whom information is held will be advised of the sort of information held and be given an opportunity to consent to the holding of that information.

4. Use and Disclosure

4.1 How will information be used? Information will be used only for the purposes for which it has been collected: principally personnel management and the administration of courses of theological education.

4.2 What personal information will be disclosed and to whom? Employment data and personal information may be disclosed upon request to the individual to whom it relates, and may be disclosed without that person's expressed permission to General Office staff, Assembly Committees, Moderators of home mission stations, Interim-Moderators of vacant charges, relevant courts of the church and the editor of the Church's Yearbook.

Some personal information may also be included in the Committee's and Faculty's minutes and its reports to the Standing Committee and the Assembly and be circulated to members of the Committee's executive and presbytery representatives to the Standing Committees.

4.3 How will personal information be disclosed? Personal information may be disclosed by phone, mail or email as appropriate to the circumstances of a particular inquiry.

4.4 How will identity be assured? The Committee and its agents will take reasonable steps to ensure that persons to whom information is disclosed have a valid reason for seeking such disclosure.

4.4.1 By phone Where an inquiry is made by phone, information may be disclosed if the inquirer's voice is recognised or the inquirer is able to answer reasonable and relevant questions.

4.4.2 In writing Where an inquiry is made in writing, information may be disclosed if it is made on official stationery from a known address and from a known inquirer.

4.5 Rights Reserved The Committee reserves its right to charge a reasonable fee to cover costs associated with the disclosure of information held by it or to refuse a particular application for disclosure in accordance with NPP 2.

5. Redundancy

5.1 How will redundant information be identified? Active files will be examined annually for currency. Non-current files will be removed to a filing cabinet for completed or inactive files.

5.2 How will redundant information be treated? Inactive files will be examined annually. Files which have remained inactive for three years or more will be shredded or archived.

6. Storage/ security

6.1 How will info. be stored? Personal and sensitive information will be kept in locked filing cabinets normally in the Committee's office.

6.2 How will privacy of information be preserved? Personnel files will be returned to the filing cabinet after every use. Personnel files will not be left open in the presence of a third party. Files will not be left on display.

7. Notification

The Committee will take reasonable steps to notify persons of its intention to collect personal information at or before the time of such collection. Where the Committee records or collects sensitive information, the permission of affected individuals will be sought unless NPP 10 provides an exemption to the obligation so to inform.

The Committee will inform members of the Church of the existence of its Privacy Policy through the Church Offices Newsletter, through reports to the Assembly and the Standing Committee and by use of its web-site.

8. Data Quality - Corrections

The Committee is eager to maintain its records with the greatest possible accuracy. To facilitate that accuracy and to ensure the reliability of its data, the Committee welcomes the opportunity to have information corrected by persons to whom that information relates.

8.1 What policies govern corrections? Corrections which are consistent with other information held, or are otherwise verifiable, will be accepted. Corrections which contradict formal advice from a court of the church will not be accepted without satisfactory supporting evidence, but may be appended to the contested information.

8.2 How can corrections be submitted? Minor corrections may be submitted by phone, fax, mail or email. Major corrections will only be accepted by fax, mail or email.

9. Access

Where a person wishes to examine information relating to them and held by the Committee, a request should be made in writing and be addressed as follows:

The Principal
Presbyterian Theological Centre
77 Shaftesbury Rd
BURWOOD NSW 2134