eastside community church

MISSIONS POLICY

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1 PURPOSE OF POLICY

The primary way God uses to spread His gospel and kingdom in the world is through His people. Therefore, evangelism and missions work are an essential part of the life of Christians and the Church. This includes both local and foreign work with a focus on spreading the gospel of Christ and growing the worldwide Church. While missionaries and evangelists are individuals, God intends missions to be led by local churches. Eastside is committed to taking an active part in missions in a way that best uses the resources and opportunities God has granted us and that glorifies and honours His name.

How then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? …
(Romans 10:14-15)

While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.
(Acts 13:2-3)

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.
(Ephesians 4:11-13)

And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.
(Matthew 24:14)

…so that your ways may be known on earth, your salvation among all nations.
(Psalm 67:2)

1.1 This policy sets out Eastside's approach to supporting, financing and governing missions work

2 Application

2.1 This policy applies to both Eastside's direct missions work (e.g. raising missionaries and missions team) and the direct and in-kind support of missions, missionaries and mission organisations outside of Eastside.

2.2 This policy both states Eastside's intent regarding missions support and establishes processes to facilitate the development and support of missions work at Eastside.

2.3 To remove any doubt, this policy does not apply to activities that are considered part of the day-to-day operations or ministries of Eastside, even where such activities are evangelistic in nature. This policy also does not relate to funding of external bodies except where such bodies are directly engaged in missional activities.

2.4 This policy relates to actions undertaken by Eastside as a church body. It does not preclude giving or supporting missions by individuals within the church community.[1]

2.5 This policy is not intended to establish the strategic vision of Eastside for missions but rather provides a structure for implementing this vision.

2.6 This policy has been developed in reflection of Eastside Community Church's requirements for financial management under the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). To the extent of any inconsistency between this policy and/or Eastside's practice and the legal requirements of these external standards, the latter will prevail.

[1] Note that while Eastside encourages individuals to sponsor external missionaries and organisations directly, from time-to-time, designated funds will be established that individuals can contribute to. In these situations, Eastside is acting as a *facilitator* of giving, rather than the main giving/supporting entity.

3 Guiding Principles and Actions

3.1 Eastside commits to funding and supporting missionaries and mission projects on an ongoing basis. This includes *visiting*, *short-term* and *long-term* missionaries and projects. This may also include supporting individuals undertaking training to enter the mission field.

3.2 Funding of missions will primarily be derived from the annual operating budget and subject to the following principles:

3.2.1 Eastside commit to providing a minimum percentage of the annual operating budget to missions. This percentage will be determined from time to time by the Eldership but should not be less than 10%.

3.2.2 Where considered appropriate, giving to missions should be set out in an annual missions budget as a subset to the annual operating budget.

3.2.3 Funds may be raised from time-to-time through designated giving, special offerings, fund raising projects etc. at the discretion of the Eldership.

3.2.4 If there is excess unspent missions budget in any given year, this money should be diverted to other missions projects or placed in a reserve for use in future years' budget. Excess funds should not be used for other ministries or church operations unless approved by the Congregation.

3.2.5 In managing any shortfall in operational budget, Eastside commit to maintaining full support for missionaries and mission projects where reasonably practical. At a minimum, all other reasonable options to make up the shortfall will be implemented before changes to funding for missionaries and mission projects will be considered.

3.3 The funding and support of missions will be subject to the following principles:

3.3.1 Eastside's preference is to fund missions work that directly supports evangelism, church planting and/or the equipping of churches in areas and cultures where Christ is not well known or the local church is not strong. This includes the funding of visits by Eastside pastors to missionaries for the purposes of encouragement and support.[2] Note this does not preclude the use of funding for local para-church organisations as part of a portfolio of missions.

3.3.2 At no point will Eastside engage in funding, supporting or promoting any missions work that is directly or indirectly associated with money laundering, terrorism, trafficking, child exploitation or any other activity that breaches ACNC standards and/or brings the name of God into disrepute.

3.4 The funding and support that will be provided by Eastside to different missionaries and mission projects are:

3.4.1 Direct funding and support as identified in Schedule 1 based on the type of mission work being engaged in. This includes funding of ministries established by missionaries in connection with their mission work.

3.4.2 If considered appropriate by the Eldership, in-kind support, as set out in Schedule 3 or otherwise identified as appropriate.

3.4.3 Any other support considered appropriate by the Eldership in consultation with the Congregation.

3.5 Direct funding of missionaries and missions projects is to be undertaken only where funds are provided directly to the individual, to a reputable missionary organisation, or where, subject to a risk assessment, the Eldership is satisfied that the funding will meet the requirements of Clause 3.3.2. This extends to any payments being made by Eastside on behalf of individuals within the church.

3.6 Any individual (or individuals) wishing to be supported by Eastside in missions work must meet the requirements set out in Schedule 1, based on the type of missions work they intend to engage in.

3.7 In supporting short-term and long-term missions, Eastside's preference is to send missionaries in partnership with the mission organisations noted in Schedule 2. Only in exceptional circumstances, subject to eldership approval, will short-term and long-term missionaries be supported in the absence of support from a mission organisation.

3.8 Any individual (or individuals) wishing to be supported by Eastside in missions work must first apply to the Eldership for consideration. This includes individuals seeking support while undertaking training before entering the mission field. Except where an application is considered clearly frivolous or inappropriate, the Eldership must consider all applications in good faith, subject to any process considered appropriate (e.g. interview).

3.9 As an exception to Clause 3.8, visiting missionaries who wish to speak at Eastside events may be approved by the responsible pastor without the need for an application process.

[2] Typically this will occur as part of a short-term mission team. While the visit will be part of the paid role of a pastor, funding can be provided to cover expenses associated with the trip. Non-pastoral members of the team would be visiting or short-term missionaries for the purposes of this policy.

3.10 All funding and support provided by Eastside is subject to individuals continuing to uphold an appropriate standard of conduct and continuing to engage within missions work. Individuals are also expected to be members of local church or, where there is no local church, to maintain a close relationship under the elders of Eastside or another sending or supporting church. Regardless, individuals should also regularly report to Eastside regarding their missionary works.

3.11 In the event an individual (or individuals) is known or suspected to no longer be engaged in missions work, have failed to meet the required standard of conduct or are otherwise bringing the name of God into disrepute, the Eldership will undertake appropriate disciplinary action, proportionate to the conduct, which may extend to cessation of all funding and support. This includes engaging in any activity noted in Clause 3.3.2.

3.12 Eastside will provide support to long-term missionaries returning from missions as set out in Schedule 1. Note that individuals returning for a period of 6-12 months with the express intention of subsequently returning to the mission field will be considered to be missionaries for the purpose of this policy (unless subject to discipline under Clause 3.9). Support may also be provided for returning short-term missionaries at the discretion of the eldership.

3.13 The Eldership at Eastside will regularly review missionary arrangements to ensure appropriate use of resources. At a minimum, this will occur annually as part of establishing a new annual operating budget.

3.14 Eastside reserves the right to end a relationship with any missionary or mission project where it is considered that support will be better provided to other missions work or ministries. The decision to end a relationship must only be undertaken in good faith and after due consideration by the Eldership and must be discussed with the missionary individuals at least 6 months prior to the relationship being ended.

3.15 Where deemed necessary by the Eldership, Eastside will develop any other procedures or documents necessary to give further effect or clarity to this policy.

3.16 Where deemed necessary by the Eldership, a Missions Action Team can be established to provide support to Eastside missionaries. The role of the team will be determined by the eldership but will consist primarily of providing and coordinating practical support for missionaries. Note that the Missions Action Team will not have authority to screen, approve or discipline missionaries under this policy.

3.17 The guidelines provided in the schedules form part of this policy. However, changes to these schedules are not considered changes to the overall policy and therefore can occur without initiating a re-issue of the policy. These schedules must be reviewed annually to ensure they remain up-to-date and appropriate.

4 Relationship to Constitution and Other Policies

4.1 To the extent of any inconsistency between this policy and the Constitution, the latter prevails, except as required by law.

4.2 All financial management associated with supporting missions is subject to the Finance Policy.

4.3 Any breaches of this policy are to be handled in accordance with the issue / incident requirements of the Risk and Compliance Policy. At a minimum, any breach of Clause 3.3 or action under Clause 3.10 must be accompanied by an investigation and the findings used to support a review of the policy.

4.4 Any actual or suspected instance of money laundering or funding of terrorism, trafficking or child exploitation identified through the implementation of this policy must be immediately reported to the ACNC.

Schedule 1 – Missions Support and Expectations

Date of Revision	20 March 2024
Approved by	Council of Elders
Description of Change	Added provision for support for those training to enter the mission field

Table 1 sets out Eastside's support levels and expectation requirements for different types of mission work.

For those undertaking training to enter the mission field, the level of support should be based on the rate for a part-time intern, as per the Remuneration Policy.

Table 1 – Levels of support and expectation for different types of mission work

	Visiting	**Short-term**	**Long-term**
Duration	1-12 weeks	3-24 months	>2 years
Example Assignment	Short-term exposure; visit to missionaries	Short-medium term exploration; medical placement; recognised practical support assignment; working holiday	Substantial missionary vocation
Minimum requirements for applicant to receive support	Demonstrated life as disciple of Jesus, can work in a team environment and respect authority Attending Eastside for a minimum of 1 year	Have been actively involved in the church life for a minimum of 2 years. Member of the church	Demonstrated evidence of making disciples Committed member Have been actively involved at Eastside or another church for a minimum of 2 years. Minimum of 1 year of Bible college training
Who at Eastside should know?	Missions Action Team or Eldership and personal friends	Missions Actions Team, Eldership and Congregation	Missions Action Team, Eldership and Congregation
What sort of exposure might the person expect?	An opportunity to share with the congregation where appropriate, and/or to advertise your own private gatherings	Opportunities to speak at Eastside, regular publicity and prayer support from the whole church	Opportunities to speak at Eastside + Growth Groups, at other churches, regular publicity and prayer support from the whole church
What sort of financial support might the person expect?	None from the church budget The person will be expected to raise their own travel costs	An expectation that financial needs may be part of public discussions; perhaps also a church-based contribution	A commitment from the church to regularly contribute a proportion of their annual financial costs See further below

	Visiting	Short-term	Long-term
What sort of support can the person expect while away?	Prayer support	Full support of the church	Full support of the church
Application process	Notify Missions Action Team or Eldership (where a church reference is required, must give sufficient notification)	Formal application begun with Eldership using prescribed form	Formal application begun with Eldership using prescribed form
Time frame of application process	3 months	6 months	12+ months

The level of financial support for long-term missionaries will be determined by the following:

Annual financial support = TSF x No. adults x P%

where:

TSF = the Total Support Figure determined by one of the means set out below
P% = proportion of TSF that Eastside will cover, as determined by the Eldership (15-20% is general guide)

Note that dependent children are counted as 0.3 of an adult.

TSF can be determined based on one of the following means:

1. The figure set by the sending missionary organisation, or
2. If no figure is set by the missionary organisation:
    a. $60,000 plus any administrative cost set by the sending missionary organisation minus any income that will be received through formal employment undertaken as part of mission work
    b. An alternative figure proposed by the missionary if the costs associated with the mission work can be demonstrated to exceed that noted above. A proposal for alternative costing must be accompanied by a detailed cost breakdown.

Note that financial support will cover the period from commencement of missionary work; financial support under Table 1 does not relate to costs associated with training and preparation for missions in home country. This does not preclude this being provided as part of in-kind support in accordance with Clause 3.4.2.

Whether support will be provided to short-term missionaries will be determined at the discretion of the Eldership. If the decision is made to provide support, this should not exceed 10-20% of the total funds required by the short-term missionary.

If the Eldership choose not to provide funding to short-term missionaries, an encouragement gift can be provided up to a value of $500 per adult.

Schedule 2 – Preferred Mission Organisations

Date of Revision	
Approved by	
Description of Change	

In **providing** direct support to *short-term* and *long-term* missionaries, Eastside's preference is for missionaries to be sent through one of the following mission organisations:

1. OMF
2. The Christian and Missionary Alliance of Australia
3. Pioneers
4. CMS Australia
5. ECM (European Christian Mission)
6. SIM (Serving in Mission)
7. WEC (Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ)
8. Wycliffe
9. AIM (Africa Inland Mission)

Other mission organisations may also be considered, subject to a review by the Eldership.

Schedule 3 - In-Kind Support

Date of Revision	
Approved by	
Description of Change	

Table 2 - Examples of in-kind support and associated limitations

In-kind support	Description	Limitations
Accommodation	Use of the ministry centre, rent-free (e.g., missionary on home assignment)	Maximum 12 months rent free, unless otherwise agreed to in writing
Training and ministry opportunities (unpaid)	Internship or other ministry opportunities with direct oversight/mentoring from pastor Volunteer arrangement	Subject to approval of Eldership based on resourcing
Training and ministry opportunities (paid)	Internship or other ministry opportunities with direct oversight/mentoring from pastor Part-time or full-time employment	Subject to release of budgeted or unbudgeted funds as per processes in Financial Policy