

Top 10 things that every parish should know about property

1. Consult early and often - Your ACPT Regional Manager is here to help. Don't waste time and money before speaking with us! Our team has a combined experience of over 40 years in providing guidance to the 270 parishes across our Diocese on such matters as:

- asbestos & other hazardous materials
- fire safety
- heritage
- land sales & purchases
- loans & mortgages
- building projects & maintenance
- grants programs
- insurance
- leases & licences
- property development
- cemeteries & crematoria
- greenfield lands & church projects
- investment of parish funds
- local council matters
- wills and estates

2. Partnership in property matters – As the corporate trustee of the Diocese, the ACPT is the registered legal owner of over 1,000 properties comprising churches and halls, residences, cemeteries, and commercial properties. Under our trustee relationship with the parishes, a YES is required from both your wardens/parish council and the ACPT. We work in a collegiate way to help deliver dozens of major parish projects each year.

3. Property doesn't solve ministry issues – Be wary of thinking that the next building project will draw many people and solve the world's problems - there is no magic bullet! Rather, it takes lots of patience and discipline for the parish to plan how your property can best serve your ministry needs now and into the future.

4. Government grants – Each year parishes collectively receive over \$1 million in grant funding. This is typically for capital improvements to the church buildings. Everything from church roof repairs, fencing and building extensions, to men's sheds. Make sure parish council has a project ready to submit each year so that you can make the most of the opportunities as they arise. When grant funds are received make sure they are placed in a separate bank account so that there is no temptation to spend the funds on day to day running costs.

5. Regional Bishop Approval – Consult with your Regional Bishop and his Executive Assistant for approval of proposals for use of and building on parish property.

6. Budget for building maintenance – Putting off dealing with the leaking roof until next year will come back to bite you! Industry best practice is to allocate 1% of a building's value in capital expenditure for maintaining the value of your asset. It may be tempting to allocate less or to raid the maintenance fund if there is a budget shortfall. This may result in a build-up of maintenance issues, risk the health and safety of occupants, and eventually cost twice as much to repair. Why not aim for 0.5% budget expenditure on property maintenance? If needs be, ramp up the property maintenance budget over 3 years until this is achieved. It requires discipline, but just consult with a church hiring a school hall & they will remind you of the ministry benefits of owning church property with access 7 days a week.

7. **Warden responsibilities** – Under the Parish Administration Ordinance, wardens are responsible for matters of property and finance, and should do the heavy lifting in dealing with these matters.
8. **Wardens' Delegation Thresholds** – Wardens may deal with certain matters without consulting the ACPT including licences under \$50,000 (excluding children's services agreements) and building contracts under \$100,000. Otherwise consult with us to expedite the signing of documents. We sign over 300 documents and make over 1,500 payments on behalf of parishes every year!
9. **We want to establish a child care centre** – Be cautious when venturing into this field given the potential loss of use of church buildings for ministry activities. Seek professional advice first.
10. **Which consultant should we choose?** – It is important to receive the right professional advice. We can put you into contact with a number of consultants in each area of expertise who have successfully advised other parishes. This includes property advisors, valuers, builders, architects, quantity surveyors and others.

