



Governance Formation for Mission Framework for Mercy Partners Trustee Directors



Introduction

Mercy Partners is a dynamic, multi-charism, multi-ministry Public Juridic Person (PJP) dedicated to continuing expressing God's mercy through the work of its ministries. Trustee Directors hold a mandate to ensure that Catholic identity is preserved and strengthened, and that the unique charisms of the Stewards' congregations and orders, are honoured, nurtured and reimaged.

This Formation for Mission Framework focuses specifically on one of the canonical obligations of the Trustee Directors, Formation.

The name *Mercy Partners* reflects the mercy of God at work in partnership. Mercy Partners operates within both Canon Law (church law) and civil law. It is a company limited by guarantee, a registered charity, and the sole member and owner of its subsidiary ministries.

The Mercy Partners Theological Framework is a core identity document. It provides the theological context of Mercy Partners' mission and of its ministries. It also "*expresses a deep, binding value*"¹ and guides Mercy Partners' Formation approach.

A Theological Framework for the Mission – Part 1 (extract)

Mercy Partners aims in all of its activities to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating, and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

This statement of mission expresses a deep, binding value. Members of Mercy Partners discern their way forward in diverse ministries according to their shared desire for people to know the experience of God's Mercy. And because they are partners, their relationships rely more on the formative value or friendship and collective vision than on inflexible institutional structure.

The building of partnerships cultivates a diversity of gifts and charisms, embracing lay leadership, and creatively responds to the changing needs of many ministries. Mercy Partners stands within the Church's long history of communicating mercy in the world. Since the early days of the Church, Christians have gathered in communities of different kinds, expressing their faith in liturgy and sacrament, in friendship and service, whether in households, hospitals, prisons, schools, or church buildings...

Each Catholic community and organisation hands on (tradere/tradition) a Eucharistic way of seeing that animates its distinctive mission, activities, and place in the world.

**Mercy Partners Theological Framework,
Part 1, page 3, 2016
Dr. Christiann Jacobs-Vandegeer**

¹ Mercy Partners Theological Framework, Part 1, page 3, 2016, Dr. Christiann Jacobs-Vandegeer

Definition of Formation

Formation is a transformative process. It helps cultivate a contemporary mission ethos that responds to the signs of the times and supports effective leadership. Rooted in faith and guided by the Holy Spirit, Formation involves theological reflection, dialogue, and discernment.

Expressed within a communal context, Mercy Partners Trustee Directors' Formation is a faith-based journey, grounded in Scripture, Catholic tradition, and charisms of our ministries. It fosters stewardship of the Mercy Partners mission by nurturing each individual's spirituality, while also forming a common spirituality, unique to Mercy Partners – one that contributes *to a world where the healing, liberating, and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.*



Principles for addressing Formation

The following principles provide a guide for applying the Mercy Partners' Trustee Directors Formation Framework.

PRINCIPLES	DESCRIPTOR
Holistic	Formation engages the whole person – intellectually (<i>head</i>), emotionally/spiritually (<i>heart</i>) and practically (<i>hands</i>) – fostering deep alignment with the mission.
Discernment	Formation involves discerning the voice of God through: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Mission Discernment process – <i>Prepare, Analyse, Decide, Act (Call to Action)</i>.• Synodal processes, such as <i>Conversations in the Spirit</i>.
Fidelity to Mission	Formation supports individuals and our community in aligning with the mission of Mercy Partners – <i>to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating, and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.</i>
Spirituality and Theological Reflection	Each Trustee Director has her/his own unique spirituality which may be enriched through engagement with the spiritual traditions and charisms of Mercy Partners.
Dynamic and Contextual	Formation responds to the signs of the times, adapting to evolving roles and contexts – equipping people to respond meaningfully to present-day needs.
Communal	Formation embraces a collaborative approach, with the Mercy Partners Board acting as a small Christian community in partnership with the Steward Representatives, its ministries and the wider Catholic Church.

Domains within Mercy Partners’ Formation Framework for Trustee Directors



MISSION	Understanding of and alignment of the mission of Mercy Partners, with a personal expression of mission.
SPIRITUALITY AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION	Engaging in personal and communal prayer, discernment using synodal processes, and theological reflection.
CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND CONTEXT	Understanding of scripture, Canonical Law, Catholic doctrine, practice, and Catholic social teaching within relevant contexts.
LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE	Demonstrating competency in leadership and governance roles.
MINISTRY CONTEXT	Maintaining knowledge and experience of Mercy Partners’ ministry context.
HUMAN RELATIONS	Respecting the dignity and diversity of all people and stakeholders.

Domain Elements

The domain elements outline the values, knowledge, and competencies for Mercy Partners' Trustee Directors.

DOMAIN 1: MISSION

Each Trustee Director:

- Articulates the mission and values of Mercy Partners.
- Articulates the heritage of Mercy Partners.
- Articulates the heritage and traditions of the partner charisms.
- Exemplifies behaviour recognised by others as aligned with the mission and values of Mercy Partners.

DOMAIN 2: SPIRITUALITY AND THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Each Trustee Director:

- Values spirituality and the regular practice of individual and communal prayer.
- Shares their spirituality with other Trustee Directors and supports the development of a shared spirituality.
- Understands synodal processes as a way of working together and listening.
- Applies discernment processes in personal, professional, and organisational life.
- Appreciates the centrality of 'relationship' in Christian theology – with God, self, others, and creation.

MISSION 3: CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND CONTEXT

Each Trustee Director:

- Understands and engages with scripture, theology in particular ecclesiology, missiology, and Catholic Social Teaching.
- Appreciates the centrality of Christ.
- Demonstrates a commitment to and capacity for developing mature relationships with Church authorities, ministries, and Catholic communities.
- Understands the history and structure of the Catholic Church in Australia, Canon Law, and its application to Mercy Partners as a Ministerial PJP.

DOMAIN 4: LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

Each Trustee Director:

- Articulates an understanding of faith leadership grounded in contemporary theory and good practice.
- Recognises the role of leaders in shaping organisational cultures appropriate to Mercy Partners.
- Demonstrates an understanding of governance processes for ethical decision-making in a Catholic PJP, including strategic planning, risk management, and financial stewardship.
- Demonstrates corporate governance knowledge and capability aligned with a mission lens and understands the distinct roles of Mercy Partners' leaders: Trustee Directors, Ministry Board Directors and CEOs/Principals.

DOMAIN 5: MINISTRY CONTEXT

Each Trustee Director:

- Demonstrates knowledge and experience relevant to the context of Mercy Partners' ministries.

DOMAIN 6: HUMAN RELATIONS

Each Trustee Director:

- Demonstrates a commitment to human dignity, especially in relationship to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- Recognises First Nations' People and is committed to reconciliation and action for justice.
- Demonstrates the importance of stakeholder relations and establishing relationships that nurture *communio*.²

² *Communio* refers to the idea of communion, fellowship, or mutual sharing.