MERCY PARTNERS



Annual Ministry Planning Guide

2027 Edition

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Welcome

Dear Ministries,

Welcome to our 2027 Edition of our Annual Ministry Planning Guide.

Below is an overview of the updates included in this edition.

3 - Formation
- The introduction of a new Formation Reporting template.

4 - Grants Available
- A link to the new Nudgee Trust microsite (which sits within the Mercy Partners Ministry Portal, has now been included.

5 - Board Approvals and Advice
- 2027 submission dates included for matters to be approved by the Mercy Partners Board.
- Introduction of the new Policies for on the appointment of a new CEO or Principal.
- New guidelines on the appointment of a new CEO for non-education ministries.
- Updated Ministry Board Members Application form that includes a section on Individual Qualities and Formation.
- New Board Skills Matrix which should be used from the beginning of 2027.

6 - Ministry Reporting Responsibilities
- The addition of an Attestation Clause is to be included in the final reports for the reporting year for each ministry.
- Ministry Quarterly or Half Yearly Reports should be circulated to the ministry Board in addition to the Chair so that they are aware of the ministry's reporting through to Mercy Partners.
- A revised Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults Protocol.
- Ministries are required to provide Mercy Partners with their budgets, once approved along with their future financial forecasts.
- Ministries are asked to send through each year the dates of their Board meetings and key events.

7 - Marketing and Brand Support
- Please include the hashtag #MinistryofMercyPartners and tag Mercy Partners Australia in your social media posts.
- Ministries are asked to check their listing in the Official Directory of the Catholic Church to ensure they are referencing their relationship with Mercy Partners correctly.

8 - Connect with Mercy Partners
- New protocols for ministries when communicating with their respective Archbishop.
- A reminder to follow Mercy Partners Australia on Facebook and LinkedIn.

A quick reminder: All documents referenced in this Annual Ministry Planning Guide are readily available on the Ministry Portal. If you've misplaced your ministry login details, please contact our office at info@mercypartners.org.au and we would be only too happy to assist in sending you your ministry's login details.

Kind regards

Jenny Parker
Chair – Mercy Partners

1. Introduction

Mercy Partners and its ministries collaborate to strengthen their shared mission and achieve mutual benefit.

Mercy Partners fosters open communication and close working relationships with ministries, ensuring they receive appropriate support, oversight, and accountability. To promote these positive partnerships, the Annual Ministry Planning Guide has been developed as a quick reference resource covering the following key areas:

- Mercy Partners Formation
- Available Grants for Ministries
- Board Approvals and Advisory Processes
- Ministry Reporting Requirements
- Marketing and Brand Support
- Connecting with Mercy Partners

This guide is reviewed and updated annually and is published on the Ministry Portal for easy access by all ministries.

The mission of Mercy Partners is to contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

Source: Mercy Partners Theological Framework

2. Ministry Portal

Mercy Partners has created an online Ministry Portal for the use of its ministries.

The Ministry Portal has been designed specifically for you (our ministries) and contains our Annual Ministry Planning Guide, all of the referenced policies, protocols and procedures, along with all the forms and templates. In addition, the Portal contains electronic copies of most of our Formation resources.

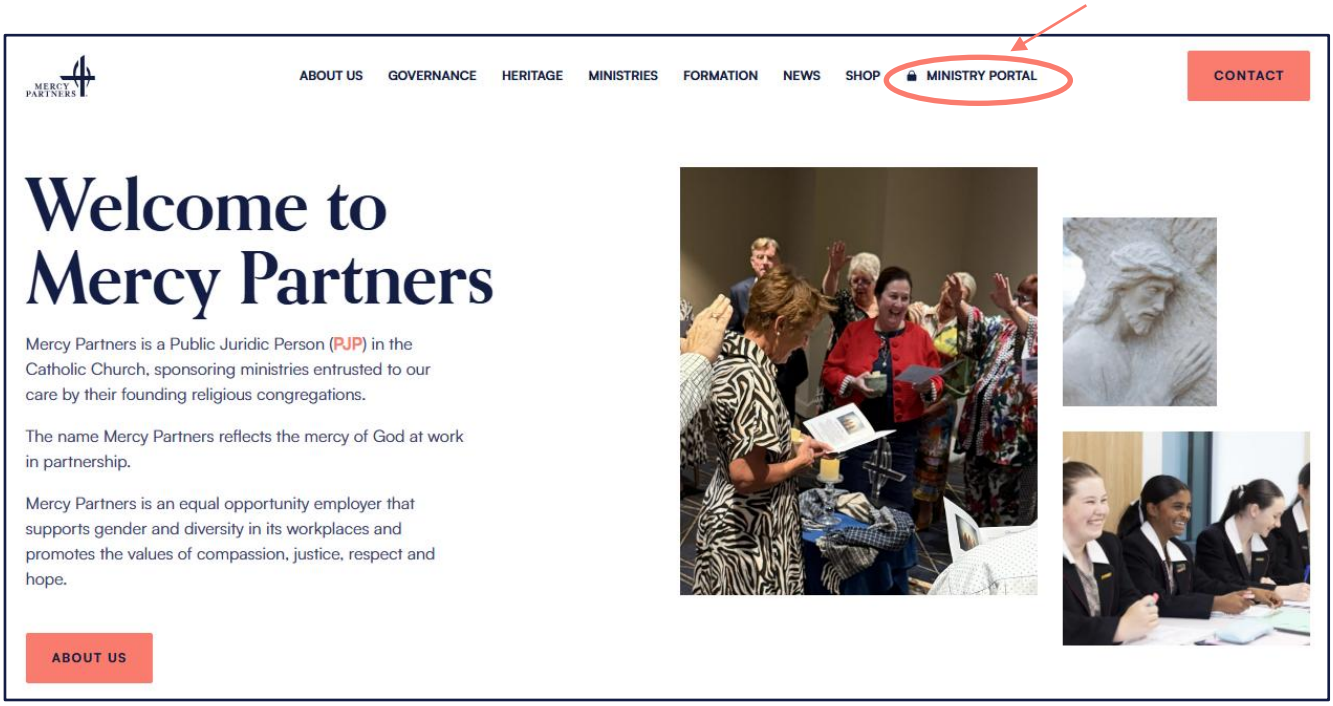
The Portal can be accessed 24/7 and contains the following key information areas:

- Formation Support
- Grants Available
- Board Approvals and Advice
- Ministry Reporting Responsibilities
- Marketing and Branding Support
- Connect with Mercy Partners

Please note that the information published within the Ministry Portal is generic and does not contain any specific information on individual ministries. The Portal is deemed to be commercial-in-confidence, so we ask that ministry staff do not share the published information to any unauthorised parties.

2.1 Access to the Portal

To access the Ministry Portal, navigate to www.mercypartners.org.au and click on the Ministry Portal link.



2.2 Ministry Portal Login Access

The Ministry Portal is only accessible to our ministries, their Board and staff. Login details have been provided to each ministry's Company Secretary/Business Manager. If you are unable to obtain the login details from your ministry's Company Secretary/Business Manager, please email Mercy Partners at info@mercypartners.org.au to request access. When requesting access, please advise your name, position and ministry.

2.3 Ministry Portal Files

All of the 'further reading' materials referenced within this Guide are available within the Ministry Portal. The only exception to this is a copy of each ministry's Constitution which each ministry will keep on file.

3. Formation

To fulfil its canonical responsibilities regarding leadership Formation, Mercy Partners provides Formation opportunities for key leaders, including Ministry Board Directors, Chief Executive Officers, Principals, and Mission Leaders, within its ministries.

Further reading: Responsibilities for Mercy Partners' Ministries Procedure

3.1 Ministry Board Formation for Mission Policy and Framework

Please refer to the Ministry Board Formation for Mission Policy and Framework for further details. This document outlines:

- Mercy Partners definition of formation, focusing on the communal rather than the individual experience.
- Formation responsibilities for ministry Boards and Mercy Partners.
- Formation principles.
- The Formation for Mission Framework.
- Self-Assessment of new Board Directors

Further reading: Ministry Board Formation for Mission Policy and Framework Template

3.2 Formation for Mission Framework

The Domains within Mercy Partners Formation Framework for Ministry Boards is detailed below.

Mission	Understanding of and alignment of the mission of Mercy Partners to the Ministry, 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, 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.

Appendix One of the Framework outlines the values, knowledge and competencies for Directors within each domain. These can be viewed on the Ministry Portal.

3.3 Formation for Mission Planning

New Board Directors complete a self-assessment of their values, knowledge and competencies as they commence on the Board. Ministry Boards assess their Formation needs based on the above framework and develop an annual Formation Plan. Mercy Partners also uses these self-assessments to select needed topics for the Ministry Board's Formation session facilitated by Mercy Partners. It is anticipated that all domains will be addressed over a three-year timeframe.

On the Mercy Partners Ministry Portal there are Catholic Identity Formation sessions available for selection in the Formation sessions facilitated for Boards by Mercy Partners. Please liaise with the Director of Formation to ensure that your session fits the needs of your Board.

Support material: Formation Self-Assessment

3.4 Formation Governance – Formation Responsibilities

The Mercy Partners Canonical Statutes and Constitution, along with the ministry Board Constitutions, outline the Formation responsibilities of both Mercy Partners and the ministry Boards.

Mercy Partners PJP Responsibilities	Ministry Board Responsibilities
Ensure that ministries operate within the teachings and laws of the Catholic Church.	Ensure that Catholic Social Teaching, Scripture, Theology, and the founding charism are reflected within the Board and across the organisation.
Confirm that the charisms and traditions of the founding religious congregations/orders continue within the ministries.	Lead the ministry's charism and heritage Formation.
Lead the delivery of Catholic Identity Formation to support ministry Boards, CEOs, and Principals.	Establish an annual Formation Plan for Directors using the Formation for Mission Framework and self-assessment from Directors as a guide.
Ensure that the Mercy Partners Board undertakes Formation based on its Formation for Mission Framework and Plan.	Report ministry Board Formation to Mercy Partners on a six-monthly basis using the current reporting template which is available from Mercy Partners by emailing formation@mercypartners.org.au.
Report the Formation of the ministry Boards and the Mercy Partners Board to the Holy See.	

3.5 Ministry Board Catholic Identity Formation

Mercy Partners co-ordinates with each ministry the delivery of at least one Catholic Identity Formation session each year. The Mercy Partners office will liaise with ministries to schedule this session.

3.6 Mission Leaders

Mercy Partners supports Mission Leaders through:

- The annual Mission Leaders Gathering, provides opportunities for networking and shared learning.
- The sharing of information regarding external formation experiences.
- Access to Mercy Partners Formation resources.
- Targeted Formation for Mission Leaders.

For ministries without a dedicated Mission Leader, Mercy Partners provides assistance with Formation planning and delivery as required.

3.7 Orientation and Induction

All new ministry Board Directors, Company Secretaries, Chief Executive Officers, and Principals are expected to participate in a Mercy Partners Induction Session. The Mercy Partners office will liaise with ministries to schedule these sessions. The induction includes:

- An overview of the governance structure of Mercy Partners.
- The functions of a Public Juridic Person (PJP) within the Church.
- The canonical and civil responsibilities of Mercy Partners as a PJP.

In 2027 this induction will move to an online program and there will be a Formation Induction that covers Partnering in Mission and Mercy of God for new Board Directors.

An induction refresher session is offered every three years to all ministry Boards. The Mercy Partners Director of Formation provides induction for new Mission Leaders.

3.8 Resources for Board Directors and Mission Leaders

Prayer Resources

Mercy Partners produces prayer resources for use with leaders and staff in meetings and formation events. Each set includes a "how to" guide, an Acknowledgement of Country, and multiple copies of each title. Available titles:

- Magnifica Humanitas
- The Synodal Way
- Catholic Social Teaching
- Parables
- Ancient Wisdom
- Laudato Si'
- Catholic Social Teaching
- The Corporal Works of Mercy
- The Spiritual Works of Mercy
- Fratelli Tutti

Mercy Partners Charism Books

The following charism books, produced by Mercy Partners, support leaders in deepening their understanding of the founding charisms or preparing for formation events:

- Keep the Lantern Burning — Presentation Charism
- Be as Shining Lamps — Mercy Charism
- Enflamed with God's Love — Franciscan Charism

Mercy Moments

Mercy Partners produces monthly Mercy Moments reflections for leaders. To subscribe, please complete the sign-up form.

Ordering Formation Resources

All formation resources can be ordered through the Ministry Portal within the *Formation Support* area. For enquiries, contact the Mercy Partners Office on email: formation@mercypartners.org.au.

It is part of the responsibility of all Public Juridic Persons
to provide formation opportunities for the leaders of the ministries they sponsor
so that aspects of mission and charism will develop in response to future realities.
(Source: Wright 2015)

4. Grants Available to Ministries

4.1 Nudgee Trust

The Nudgee Trust, established in 1869 and now entrusted to Mercy Partners, continues to provide financial support to our sponsored ministries through an annual grant round so they can deepen and extend their mission to those most in need. Since acquiring responsibility as Trustee for the foundation on 1 January 2019, Mercy Partners has distributed more than $8 million in grants across diverse initiatives to support Indigenous family services, refugees and the vulnerable elderly.

Nudgee Trust Microsite

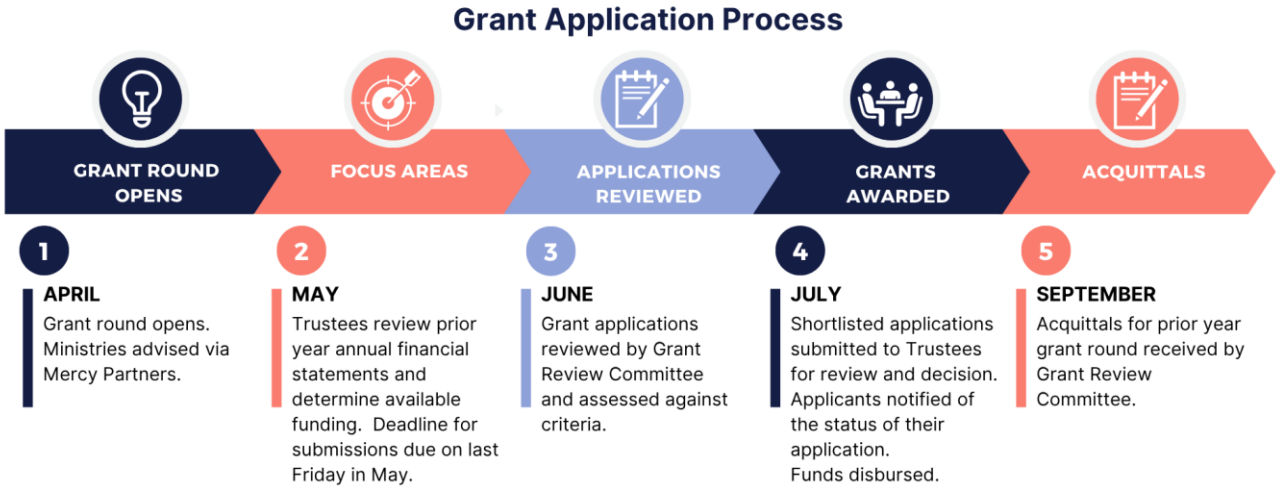
The Nudgee Trust has a dedicated microsite hosted within the Mercy Partners Ministry Portal. You can access the microsite by clicking on the below link.

Nudgee Trust - Mercy Partners

The microsite contains:

- clear information about the Trust's purpose, governance, and funding cycle
- easy-to-navigate grant guidelines and FAQs
- online submission and acquittal forms
- case studies showcasing previously funded initiatives.

Grant Application Process



Contact

For more information on the Nudgee Trust and their grants, please visit the Mercy Partners Ministry Portal or contact: Chris Townend on mobile 0404 821 772 or email nudgeetrust@mercypartners.org.au.

5. Board Approvals and Advice

5.1 Meetings of the Member

Throughout the year, ministries will require the Mercy Partners Board, as the Member for each ministry, to undertake their Reserved Power. Such Reserved Powers include:

- Appointing and removing Directors of the Company.
- Appointing the Chair and Deputy Chair from time to time and setting their respective terms in office.
- To approve any long-term financial commitment by the Company whether secured or unsecured more than the limits set by the Member (Mercy Partners) from time to time.
- Approving the purchase or disposal of a property.
- Approving a ministry entering into a loan agreement and encumbering property.
- Amending the constitution of a ministry.
- Approving the appointment, engagement, and removal of Auditors of the Company.

Such requests will be tabled at the Board meetings as Meetings of the Member. To submit Meetings of the Member agenda items, please send details and supporting paperwork to board@mercypartners.org.au.

Further reading: To review a comprehensive list of Reserved Powers, please refer to the Reserved Powers of the Member (Mercy Partners) in your ministry's Constitution which your Company Secretary will be able to provide you with a copy.

5.2 Board Meeting Schedule

The Mercy Partners Board meets regularly throughout the year as per the schedule below. Please note that Board meetings are not scheduled in December and January each year so please consider this when submitting approval requests.

The Mercy Partners Board requires time to discern requests from ministries and therefore we ask that papers are submitted in a timely manner to align with the submission deadline dates (below).

Deadline for Submissions	Board Meeting Date
Tuesday, 26 January 2027	Tuesday, 9 February 2027
Tuesday, 23 February 2027	Tuesday, 9 March 2027
Wednesday, 31 March 2027	Wednesday, 14 April 2027
Wednesday, 28 April 2027	Wednesday, 12 May 2027
Wednesday, 26 May 2027	Wednesday, 9 June 2027
Tuesday, 29 June 2027	Tuesday, 13 July 2027
Wednesday, 4 August 2027	Wednesday, 18 August 2027
Tuesday, 24 August 2027	Tuesday, 7 September 2027
Wednesday, 29 September 2027	Wednesday, 13 October 2027
Wednesday, 27 October 2027	Wednesday, 10 November 2027

5.3 Ministry Board Appointments and Approvals

As detailed in the Constitution of your ministry, each Board Director that is appointed or reappointed must be approved by the Mercy Partners Board for each term of their tenure. The ministry Company Secretary/Business Manager is responsible for obtaining the approval from the Mercy Partners Board.

The below table details the approval process for ministries to obtain approval of Board appointments or reappointments.

1	**Identify the Need**	**Supporting Documentation**
	• Review the Board Skills Matrix and identify gaps that need to be filled. • Source and in turn interview potential ministry Board Director candidates. • Select a potential candidate based on gaps in the ministry's Board Skills Matrix. • Ensure the candidate can obtain a Directors ID through ASIC.	Board Skills Matrix template (see below for link)
2	**Collate Documentation**	

	• Discuss and agree with the potential ministry Board Director about their tenure length and commencement date.
	• Collate the following:
	  ◦ Board Director's CV
	  ◦ Mercy Partners Ministry Board Director Application Form (completed by the candidate)
		Ministry Board Member Application Form (see below for link)

3	**Obtain Approval**	
	• Ministry Board endorses the appointment of the proposed Board Director.	
4	**Submit Application to Mercy Partners**	

	• The Ministry Chair writes to the Chair of Mercy Partners and seeks approval from the Board of Mercy Partners to appoint the recommended ministry Board Director. The letter should detail the process undertaken to recruit the candidate. Accompanying the letter should be:
	  ◦ Ministry Board Director Application Form (Mercy Partners form) ensuring that the position, start date and tenure term have been completed.
	  ◦ Board Director's CV.
	  ◦ Updated Board Skills Matrix (that includes both the existing Board along with the recommended new Ministry Board Director).
		Ministry Board Member Application Form
		
		Board Skills Matrix template
		
		(see below for link)

5	**Discernment**	
	• The Board of Mercy Partners reviews and either approves or declines the appointment of the proposed ministry Board Director.	
6	**Notice of Approval of the Appointment**	
	• Mercy Partners issue an appointment letter to the approved Board Director. This letter is copied to the ministry Chair and Company Secretary/Business Manager. • New Board Directors are invited to undertake induction into Mercy Partners.	
7	**Formation Self-Assessment**	
	• Mercy Partners invites the new Board Director to complete a Formation self-assessment.	

Please refer to the Board Meeting Schedule section (5.2 Board Meeting Schedule) in this Guide for deadlines for submitting agenda items such as Ministry Board Director approvals or reappointments.

Further reading: *Board Skills Matrix*
Ministry Board Member Application Form

Ministry Board Director Appointments

To assist the Board of Mercy Partners discern proposed ministry Board appointments, ministries are required to ask the proposed Director to complete the Ministry Board Director Application form (available in the Ministry Portal). The Application Form has been updated to include a section on Individual Qualities and Formation.

Further reading: *Mercy Partners' Policy – Appointment, Reappointment, Resignation, and Removal of Directors*
Ministry Board Member Application Form

Induction for new Board Directors

Each Ministry Board Member is required to undertake induction with Mercy Partners every three years. The induction session will consist of:

- an overview of the governance structure of Mercy Partners,
- the functions of a PJP (Public Juridic Person) in the Church, and
- the canonical and civil responsibilities of Mercy Partners as a PJP.

A new induction program will be launched in early 2027.

Policy Guideline for Parent/Carer of Current Students as Directors of Education Ministries

Mercy Partners has introduced a Policy Guideline for Parents/Carers of current students as Directors of Education Ministries. This policy guideline has been introduced to provide a balance between the needs of the individual education ministries and that of Mercy Partners exercising good governance in relation to conflicts of interest and perceived conflicts of interest. The choice to appoint a current parent/carer is at the discretion of the Education ministry Board and is subject to the above-mentioned policy guideline.

Further reading: *Mercy Partners' Policy Guideline - Parent/Carer of Current Students as Directors of Education Ministries*

Board Skills Matrix

To assist the Mercy Partners Board discern the appointment of a new Ministry Board Member, ministries are asked to submit an up-to-date Board Skills Matrix when requesting approval of a new ministry Board Member. The Board Skills Matrix should detail both the existing Board's skills along with the skills of the proposed new Ministry Board Member.

To assist ministries with this, Mercy Partners has developed a new Board Skills Matrix template. This template can be customised with the specific skills required for your industry. Ministries should commence using the new template from 1 January 2027.

Support material: *Board Skills Matrix Template*

Ministry Board Resignations and Conclusions of Tenure

Ministries are asked to advise the Board of Mercy Partners should a ministry Board Director resign or end their tenure. Notice should be emailed to board@mercypartners.org.au. This notice will allow us to update our Ministry Board Tenures Register.

Further reading: *Mercy Partners' Policy – Appointment, Reappointment, Resignation, and Removal of Directors*

Appointment of CEO/Principal

Should a ministry's CEO/Principal resign, the ministry is required to advise Mercy Partners. Notice should be emailed to board@mercypartners.org.au.

Ministries are also required to adhere to following:

Guidelines detailing the roles and responsibilities of both the ministry and Mercy Partners has been developed to support the ministry Board's with the appointment of a new CEO/Principal.

Support material: *Guideline for the Appointment of a CEO* *(for non-education ministries)*
Guideline for the Appointment of a new Principal *(for education ministries)*

5.4 Stewardship Agreements

Each ministry Board Chair is required to execute a Stewardship Agreement between the ministry and Mercy Partners. The Agreement will have a five-year term and will outline the roles and responsibilities of both the ministry and Mercy Partners. Questions on the Stewardship Agreements can be emailed through to info@mercypartners.org.au.

5.5 Stewardship/Service Delivery Fees

The ministry pays Stewardship/Service Delivery Fees to Mercy Partners for the provision of Stewardship services undertaken by Mercy Partners. Stewardship/Service Delivery Fee invoices are raised quarterly as per the below schedule.

Quarter	Month Invoice Issued In	Invoice Due Date
January – February - March	January	**31 January 2027**
April – May - June	April	**30 April 2027**
July – August - September	July	**31 July 2027**
October – November - December	October	**31 October 2027**

Remittance advice of stewardship/service delivery fee payments should be emailed to accounts@mercypartners.org.au.

5.6 Ministry Annual General Meetings (AGM)

The ministry will liaise with Mercy Partners to find a mutually suitable date to hold their Annual General Meeting (AGM) each year to allow a representative from the Mercy Partners Board to attend and chair the ministry's AGM.

Please submit suggested AGM dates, location and times to board@mercypartners.org.au. Upon receipt, availability will be checked with the Board, and a Board member will be selected to chair the AGM (usually the Ministry Board Liaison). Confirmation of date, time and Board member availability will be advised to the ministry by Mercy Partners once all confirmed. Papers for the AGM meeting should be emailed to Mercy Partners seven days prior, and following the meeting, the minutes for the AGM can be emailed to board@mercypartners.org.au.

Ministry Financial Statements

In preparation for your ministry's AGM, the ministry is required to provide Mercy Partners with the below information to assist Mercy Partners in reviewing the ministry's financial statements prior to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). The below information has been collated into a Ministry Financial Statements Memo Checklist to standardise the provision of information. This checklist can be downloaded from the Ministry Portal.

- **Completed Financial Statements**
  a. Signed Director's report
  b. Signed Auditor's Independence Declaration
  c. Signed Director's Declaration
  d. Signed Independent audit report
  e. Confirmation that the board has passed a resolution covering the financial statements.
- **Chair's Report and CEO/Principal's Report (as included in the ministry's Annual Report)**
- **Company's Auditor Report**
  a. Confirmation that the Board or the relevant committee of the Board has met with the auditor and gone through the key findings in the audit clearance/close report. *NB. Mercy Partners requests that the 1st draft of the audit clearance/close report is provided to Mercy Partners to allow sufficient time for our Treasurer to review the report and contact the ministry with any queries prior to the AGM.*
  b. Supply Mercy Partners with a copy of the audit clearance/close report as required under auditing standards.
- **Reconciliation of Monthly Management Accounts to the Financial Statements**
  a. Confirmation that the Board received a reconciliation between the monthly management accounts and the audited financial statements.
  b. List of significant reconciling items.
- **Report by management to the Board on changes in the school's financial statements from the prior year**
  a. Where such a financial snapshot analysis is prepared, please provide Mercy Partners Limited with a copy.
- **External Benchmarking Surveys**
  a. Where the ministry has participated in an external benchmarking survey, please provide Mercy Partners with a copy of the survey results.

This information is required to be submitted to Mercy Partners no later than 14 days prior to your AGM.
This timeline will allow the Mercy Partners Treasurer sufficient time to review your submitted information and contact the ministry should they have any queries prior to the AGM taking place.

Support material: The Ministry Financial Statements Memo Checklist

Conducting Ministry Annual General Meetings Procedures

Mercy Partners, as the canonical sponsor and civil Member of each ministry, has standards and expectations for the conduct of ministry AGMs.

When conducting their AGM, the ministry is required to undertake the following:

- Preparation of Special Purpose Financial Report and Auditor's Statement
- Declaration of the Directors
- Preparation of an Annual Report
- Preparation for a prayer
- Preparation and distribution of the formal meeting notice at least 21 days prior to the meeting.
- Preparation and distribution of the AGM agenda and supporting papers one week prior to the meeting.
- On receipt of the Special Purpose Financial Statement, the Treasurer of Mercy Partners/Mercy Partner Board may request responses to specific questions from the Company Secretary/Business Manager prior to or at the meeting.
- The ministry Chair invites the Auditor to attend the AGM.

Conduct of the meeting includes the following:

- The meeting is being held on the ministry company's premises.
- The nominated Mercy Partner Board Member is to Chair the meeting.
- The ministry Chair or nominee conducts the prayer.
- The ministry Chair presents the ministry's Annual Report and speaks to that report. The report includes ways in which the ministry has addressed its mission, Catholic identity and made progress towards their Strategic Plan.

These procedures are intended to assist the ministry Boards to prepare for and facilitate the conduct of the AGM.

After the AGM, the ministry Chair and Company Secretary/Business Manager are to complete all statutory requirements and attend to any matters raised by Mercy Partners.

5.7 Updates to Ministry Board Director Contact Details

Should the Ministry Board Director's contact detail change, please remember to update Mercy Partners. Updates to Board Director contact details can be emailed to board@mercypartners.org.au.

Just as the founders of religious congregations responded to the needs of their times with love, respect, compassion, and mercy, we too are called in our age to respond.

6. Ministry Reporting Responsibilities

6.1 Ministry Board Reports (Quarterly or Half Yearly)

The reporting structure of the Quarterly or Half Yearly Report has been revised with a new structure being implemented. The reports are now to include the following:

- Report on Formation activities undertaken by the Board and Leadership in the reporting period (using the new Formation Report template).*
- Performance against Strategic Plan.
- Performance against Operational Plan.
- Performance against Financial Plan (Education ministries should use the new Financial Reporting template)
- Progress on Capital Projects.
- Identified risks in the operations of the ministry.
- Report on the progress of the ministry's Board succession planning.
- An Attestation Clause (as per the below) – this needs to be included in the final reports for the reporting year for each ministry.

Attestation Clause

The Board of <insert ministry name> certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief all matters pertaining to regulatory compliance and reporting, including reporting to Mercy Partners Limited, have been completed or are in the process of completion. In addition, the Board certifies that to the best of its knowledge and belief all matters of concern have either been addressed or are being addressed on the date of this report.

Signed by the Board Chair for and on behalf of the Board of <insert ministry name>.

* Education and social justice ministries should include Formation reporting in their half-yearly reports. All other ministries are to submit their Formation reports as part of their Quarterly Reports for the quarters ending in June and December each year.

Support material: Formation Report Template – please email formation@mercypartners.org.au to obtain a copy of the report template.
Financial Reporting Excel Template (applicable only to Education ministries)

The report should be no longer than six pages in total and the financials included in the report should be the most up to date monthly management accounts. While Quarterly or Half Year Reports are signed off by the ministry Board Chair, the report should also be provided to the ministry Board for their information.

Below is the reporting schedule when reports are due to be submitted to Mercy Partners.

Ministry	Reporting Timeframe	Reports Due
Education and Social Justice Ministries	January through to June	By the end of August
Education and Social Justice Ministries	July through to December	By the end of March
Health, Aged Care, Community and Disability Services and Social Enterprise Ministries	January through to March	By the end of May
Health, Aged Care, Community and Disability Services and Social Enterprise Ministries	April through to June	By the end of August
Health, Aged Care, Community and Disability Services and Social Enterprise Ministries	July through to September	By the end of November
Health, Aged Care, Community and Disability Services and Social Enterprise Ministries	October through to December	By the end of March

Ministry Board Reports should be submitted to board@mercypartners.org.au. Upon receipt of the reports, they will be tabled at the next Mercy Partners Board meeting.

6.2 Ministry Annual Reports

Each year the ministry will provide a copy of their Annual Report to Mercy Partners. Ministry Annual Reports should be submitted to board@mercypartners.org.au.

Should your ministry require an editorial from Mercy Partners for inclusion in the Ministry's Annual Report, we ask that a minimum of two weeks' notice is provided in the instance where the ministry drafts the editorial, or one month's notice where Mercy Partners is required to write the editorial.

Requests for Annual Report editorials should be submitted to board@mercypartners.org.au.

6.3 Ministry Board Chair and Board Liaison Meetings

In early 2025 Mercy Partners introduced regular meetings (either in person or online) between the Ministry Board Chair and the Mercy Partners Ministry Board Liaison. The purpose of these meetings is to discuss the ministry's Quarterly or Half Yearly Reports. A summary of these discussions will be reported back to the Mercy Partners Board at their regular Board meetings.

During these regular meetings with the ministry Chair, it is suggested that the below agenda items should be discussed.

- Formation matters
- Financial Performance
- Capital Works update
- Risk Management matters
- Any matter of concern/complaints or other significant items
- Ministry Board composition and succession planning

6.4 Ministry Board Meeting Minutes

The ministry will provide Mercy Partners with copies of their approved Board Meeting minutes, after each meeting once available. Meeting minutes should be supplied in PDF format and sent to Mercy Partners directly after they have been approved and signed off by the Ministry Board Chair.

Approved Board Meeting minutes should be submitted to board@mercypartners.org.au.

6.5 National Redress Scheme

Mercy Partners is the Authorised Administrative Representative under the National Redress Scheme for some of their existing ministries. An Authorised Administrative Representative is the first point of call from the Scheme should a claim be received. The Authorised Administrative Representative then liaises with the ministry directly regarding the claim.

For new ministries, there is the option to appoint Mercy Partners as their Authorised Administrative Representative. However, it should be noted that the ministry would need to be re-declared should they wish to appoint Mercy Partners as their Authorised Administrative Representative, which may take the Scheme several years to re-declare.

The building of partnerships cultivates a diversity of gifts and charisms, embracing lay leadership, and creativity responds to the changing needs of many ministries.

Source: Mercy Partners Theological Framework

6.6 Reporting of Media Incidents

The Board of Mercy Partners expects ministries to ensure incidents likely to be reported in the media or picked up by the media, which would impact the reputation of Mercy Partners in any way, are reported to Mercy Partners in a timely manner. This includes any positive or defamatory publicity.

Ministries are to advise the Mercy Partners Chair and CEO in writing to board@mercypartners.org.au in advance of any publicity.

Incidents may include but are not limited to:

- Accusations of impropriety such as harassment
- Discrimination
- Financial or legal misconduct
- Similar complaints.

6.7 Safeguarding

Mercy Partners is committed to creating and maintaining environments that support the safety, wellbeing, and participation of all people.

Mercy Partners ministries have a responsibility to safeguard children and at-risk adults through promoting their welfare, health and development in a safe and caring environment that supports their best interests and prevents abuse.

The ministry will report to the CEO (john.leahy@mercypartners.org.au) of Mercy Partners, in a timely manner, any significant incidents involving the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.

As part of the ministry's reporting requirements to Mercy Partners, ministries are required to provide an annual attestation confirming the ministry's full compliance with regulatory and statutory safeguarding standards and protocols. The timing of these attestations is as follows:

Ministry	Reporting Timetable
Education and Social Justice Ministries	In the report period ending in December
Non-education ministries	In the report period ending in June

Further reading: Safeguarding Children Young People and Adults Protocol

6.8 Board Meeting and Event Dates

Ministries are requested to provide Mercy Partners with a list of their Board meeting dates along with any planned Strategy or Formation meetings attended by the ministry Board. This will be used to assist with the planning and scheduling of Mercy Partners Formation sessions and visits to ministries.

In addition, to assist Mercy Partners with planning their events throughout the year, ministries are asked to provide a list of key events organised by the ministry each year.

Please email your Board meeting and events dates each year through to board@mercypartners.org.au.

6.9 Ministry Budgets and Future Financial Forecasts

Ministries are required to provide Mercy Partners with their budgets, once approved along with their future financial forecasts.

Please email your budgets and future financial forecasts to board@mercypartners.org.au.

7. Marketing and Brand Support

Mercy Partners is connected with each ministry through their story and identity, and it is critical for this to be reflected in all marketing and communications materials.

A unified and consistent approach to describing and acknowledging the relationship between the ministries and Mercy Partners is integral. This can be undertaken using a tagline acknowledgement and relationship descriptor.

7.1 Tagline Acknowledgement

In line with your Mercy Partners' Stewardship Agreement, ministries are required to publicly acknowledge their connection to Mercy Partners through the inclusion of a tagline **A Ministry of Mercy Partners**. This tagline should be included on such items as:

Digital

- Website – including the Relationship Descriptor (refer to the Relationship Descriptors section in this Guide for details)
- E-signatures
- Inclusion of the hashtag #AMinistryofMercyPartners and tag Mercy Partners Australia in your social media posts.

Marketing Materials

- Letterhead
- Newsletters
- Brochures including your Annual Report
- Other publicly facing documents
- Media release templates
- Formal event invitations templates
- Job advertisements.

Branding Material

- Ministry logo (tagline) – this is optional (refer to the Mercy Partners Logo Usage section in this Guide for details)

The positioning of the tagline on the above items is at the discretion of each ministry so that it aligns with its own branding requirements.

In addition, ministries are welcome to include the tagline on other branded items.

Tagline Artwork Approval

To ensure the tagline is implemented correctly, ministries are asked to submit draft artwork incorporating the tagline for Mercy Partners to review and approve.

Approval requests should be emailed through to info@mercypartners.org.au.

7.2 Relationship Descriptors

To assist with describing the relationship between ministries and Mercy Partners, the below acknowledgment can be used. This should be used on ministry websites (the suggested location is the ministry's About or History pages of their website), in brochures etc.

When using this acknowledgement on the ministry's website, it is recommended that ministries link their website to the Mercy Partners website (www.mercypartners.org.au).

Below is the relationship descriptor that needs to be updated with the ministry's name, original Congregation/Order owner name and transition date.

<insert ministry name> is under the canonical sponsorship and civil ownership of Mercy Partners. The ministry was entrusted to Mercy Partners by the <insert Congregation/Order name> on <insert transition date >.

The Mercy Partners ministerial PJP assumes the role of the canonical sponsor of <insert ministry name>. The civil relationship is that Mercy Partners Limited is the sole Member of the organisation that operates the ministry. The day-to-day operations of the <insert ministry name> remains under the governance of their board.

Mercy Partners commits to ensure that their ministries flourish as Catholic ministries that contribute to the emergence of a world where the healing, liberating and life-giving mercy of God is experienced.

7.3 Mercy Partners Logo

Ministries of Mercy Partners are able to use the Mercy Partners logo. Mercy Partners also encourages the public identification of the ministry's link with Mercy Partners through the inclusion of a tagline into the ministry's logo.

To request use of the Mercy Partners logo, please provide details of how the logo will be used along with supporting artwork (if available). Once received, Mercy Partners will review the request and provide approval. Such logo use requests should be emailed to info@mercypartners.org.au.

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7.4 Acknowledgement in the Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia

Ministries are required to ensure that their services are listed under their correct name within The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia. The Directory is updated annually.

The ministries should also include Mercy Partners as the 'Parent Body' and not as the Governing Authority.

Access: The Official Directory of the Catholic Church in Australia

8. Connect with Mercy Partners

8.1 Communication Protocols

The following communication protocols will assist ministries with connecting with Mercy Partners. All listed email accounts are regularly monitored.

For any urgent matters, please call the Mercy Partners office on 07 3267 5840.

Business Area	Contact Email
Approvals and Reporting Including applications for Board Directors, renewal or resignations, submission of Half Year/Quarterly Ministry Reports, Board minutes and general correspondence with the Mercy Partners Board.	board@mercypartners.org.au
Invitations Including Ministry AGM and event invitations.	board@mercypartners.org.au
Formation Programs, Events and Resources To discuss your ministries formation program, available resources including videos, charism books and prayer resources etc.	formation@mercypartners.org.au
Accounts Including Stewardship/Service Delivery Fee invoice enquiries and account queries.	accounts@mercypartners.org.au
Marketing and Communications Including branding, website, and newsletter editorial submissions.	info@mercypartners.org.au
Annual Ministry Planning Guide Including any questions or feedback on our Annual Ministry Planning Guide.	info@mercypartners.org.au

8.2 Board Liaisons

It is important that each ministry builds a strong working relationship with the Board of Mercy Partners. To assist with this, each ministry has a nominated Board Director as their Board Liaison.

The Board Liaisons have been allocated to ministries based upon their expertise, interests and sometimes geographic location.

The Board Liaison for each ministry will:

- Schedule regular meetings (either in person or online) with the Ministry Board Chair.
- Review the ministry's Quarterly or Half Yearly Reports and Board's meeting minutes and raise any issues of concern or seek any clarification of matters with the ministry Board Chair.
- Report back to the wider Mercy Partners Board on the meetings and key highlights from the ministry's Quarterly or Half Year Reports.
- Chair the ministry's Annual General Meeting.
- Attend the ministry's key events.

Further reading: Refer to section 6.3 Ministry Board Chair and Board Liaison Meetings in this Guide for suggested agenda items for the Ministry Board Chair and Board Liaison meetings.

The table below details the Board Liaisons that have been allocated to your ministry. Biographies on each of our Board Directors can be found on our website.

Ministry	Industry	Board Liaison Officers
All Hallows' School	**Education**	Jenny Parker and Lee Anne Perry
Holy Cross Services	**Social Enterprise**	Cath Bartolo and Les Jones
Mater Misericordiae	**Health**	Les Jones and Cheryl Caughley
Mercy Community	**Aged Care, NDIS**	Cheryl Caughley and Cath Bartolo
Mercy Foundation	**Social Justice**	Jon Anderson and Patricia Bergin
Monte Sant' Angelo Mercy College	**Education**	Jon Anderson and Patricia Bergin
Mount Alvernia College	**Education**	Lee Anne Perry and Cath Parker
Our Lady of Mercy College Parramatta	**Education**	Jon Anderson and Patricia Bergin
Our Lady of Sion College	**Education**	Patricia Bergin and Jon Anderson
St Patrick's College Townsville	**Education**	Cath Bartolo and Lee Anne Perry
St Rita's College	**Education**	Cheryl Caughley and Cath Bartolo
St Ursula's College	**Education**	Cath Parker and Cheryl Caughley
Whitefriars College	**Education**	Patricia Bergin and Jon Anderson

Should a ministry wish to contact their Board Liaison, please forward communications through to board@mercypartners.org.au.

8.3 Ministry Events

The Mercy Partners Board recognise that ministries hold many events throughout the year. A list of key ministry events has been included below to assist ministries identify the type of celebrations that the Mercy Partners Board should be invited to attend.

- AGMs (which are chaired by Mercy Partners)
- Opening year masses
- An event towards the end of the year such as a Board Dinner
- Building openings
- Staff Awards (optional)
- Ad hoc events such as new Principal inductions

Ministries are not required to extend invitations to Mercy Partners to attend such events as:

- Student Speech/Awards nights/Presentation evenings
- Musicals
- Graduation celebrations
- Feast Day masses

We would ask that your event invitations be sent to board@mercypartners.org.au and not directly to Board Directors. Upon receipt of your event invitation the event will be added to our Board calendar and invitations emailed to the ministry's Mercy Partners Board Liaison. RSVPs will be collated and advised back to the inviting ministry.

Acknowledging Mercy Partners at Events

Ministries are asked to acknowledge Mercy Partners at their major events such as building openings etc. This acknowledgement should be in the form of:

- Use of the tagline "A Ministry of Mercy Partners" on the event invitation or any other event promotional material.
- Acknowledgement of Mercy Partners in the event booklet (if produced).
- Acknowledgement of Mercy Partners in the welcome speech – acknowledging both Mercy Partners and the Mercy Partners representative attending the event.

Mercy Partners Ministry Board Liaisons should be invited to such events. The ministry is welcome to invite the Mercy Partners representative to undertake formalities such as presenting awards, leading the acknowledgement of country, formalities around building openings etc. Mercy Partners requests that prior notice of such requests is provided, and a briefing is provided to the Board Liaison.

8.4 Key Ministry Contacts

To keep connected with all things Mercy Partners, please remember to update Mercy Partners should any key staff move on from your ministry. In particular, we ask if there are any changes to your Company Secretary/Business Manager, please let us know. Key contact updates can be advised to Mercy Partners by emailing info@mercypartners.org.au.

8.5 Newsletters

Mercy Partners Newsletter

Mercy Partners is always on the lookout for positive stories from our ministries which could be included in our newsletter. Mercy Partners produces four newsletters a year that are distributed in March, June, September, and December. Editorial submissions for the Mercy Partners newsletter can be sent to info@mercypartners.org.au.

Feature Stories

Ministries are welcome to submit feature stories for consideration into our quarterly newsletter. For feature editorials, they should be up to approximately 250-300 words and should be accompanied by several photos to support the editorial. In addition, ministries are welcome to include any web links that support their editorial or even copies of media releases that the editorial could be linked to.

Mission in Action Stories

Mercy Partners includes in it Connected newsletter a Mission in Action feature. This feature is linked to a page within our website that features links to good news stories from each of our ministries. Such stories demonstrate the legacy of the ministry's founding Congregation/Order and how the mission continues to live on within the ministry in today's world. The links to the good news stories are taken from the ministry's Facebook or LinkedIn accounts.

Newsletter Submission Deadline Dates

Edition	Submission Deadline Date	Newsletter Distribution Date
Summer Edition	**Friday, 19 February 2027**	Monday, 1 March 2027
Autumn Edition	**Monday, 24 May 2027**	Tuesday, 1 June 2027
Winter Edition	**Tuesday, 24 August 2027**	Wednesday, 1 September 2027
Spring Edition	**Tuesday, 23 November 2027**	Wednesday, 1 December 2027

Subscribing

To receive the Mercy Partners newsletter, please email us at info@mercypartners.org.au and we will arrange to add you to our newsletter email distribution list.

Ministry Newsletters

Should your ministry produce a newsletter, Mercy Partners would be grateful if you could send us a copy. Newsletters should be sent to info@mercypartners.org.au.

8.6 Ministry Photography

Should you have any updated photographs of your ministry that you are able to share with Mercy Partners, we would love to use them to freshen up our website or use them in our other marketing material or publications. Preferred format is jpg or png.

Please send through any new photography to info@mercypartners.org.au.

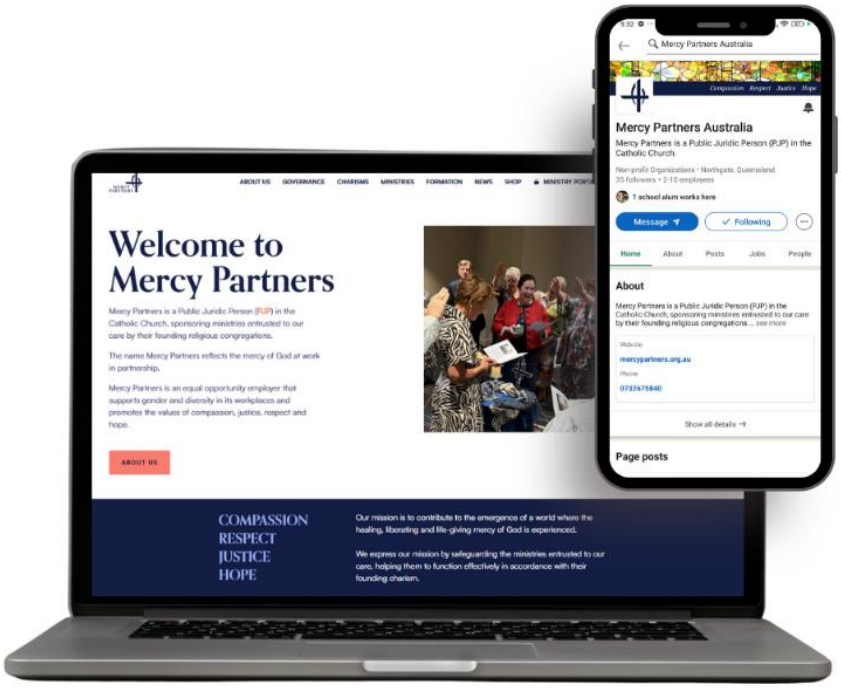
8.7 Mercy Partners Website and Social Media

Be sure to visit the Mercy Partners website that contains details about our formation resources and news items. You can now also follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Website
www.mercypartners.org.au

Facebook
www.facebook.com/mercypartnersaustralia

LinkedIn
www.linkedin.com/company/mercy-partners-australia



8.8 More Information

Should you require any further information on our Annual Ministry Planning Guide or any other component of Mercy Partners, please connect with Mercy Partners via the below email addresses and phone number listed below.

Business Area	Contact Email
Approvals and Reporting, Ministry Board Minutes and Reports	board@mercypartners.org.au
Ministry Event Invitations	board@mercypartners.org.au
Formation Programs, Events and Resources	formation@mercypartners.org.au
Account Queries	accounts@mercypartners.org.au
Marketing and Communications	info@mercypartners.org.au
General Enquiries	info@mercypartners.org.au

In addition, Mercy Partners can be contacted on phone **07 3267 5840**.

8.9 Communicating with the Archbishop

If a ministry is corresponding with its respective Archbishop regarding a particular matter or extending an invitation to an event, Mercy Partners should be copied into the communication. This will help ensure Mercy Partners remains informed of any matters, discussions, or events involving the Archbishop and can maintain awareness and consistency in its own engagement and communications.

Please use the email address board@mercypartners.org.au to a copy in any such communications.

MERCY PARTNERS



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