

# Lutheran Church of Australia



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## Department of Visual Arts

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### Guidelines for selecting consultants, artists and craftspeople

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#### 1. Introduction

When church groups commence a building or art project, they often have a small budget, and want to get ideas prior to engaging the consultant. They usually want “something for nothing”, and may ask for designs from a number of people. This is not good practice for the following reasons:

- a) Any designs should be based on a co-operative process rather than a quick sketch based on an incomplete understanding of requirements.
- b) Designs are the intellectual property of the designer/s, and differentiate them from those created by people with only technical knowledge. The worth of the design should be acknowledged in the selection process.

#### 2. Professional assistance

In designing a major project, be it a new church or a substantial work of art, it is recommended that a congregation seek professional assistance when appropriate expertise is not available within the group. This does not preclude voluntary assistance by congregation members within the group. However, the main design should be undertaken by the appropriate professionals who understand the relationship between art and worship, and can visualise each of the new elements in relation to its context.

#### 3. Establishing a project committee

The first step in a project is to elect a group of people to oversee the work. They should be chosen because they are the most appropriate for the job, and be given power to approve certain decisions. They should also be sensitive enough to know when it is right and proper to refer back to the congregation, especially with regard to the financing of the project. At this stage it should be possible to set some financial parameters. It is important that the committee designate one of its members to liaise with the committee and the designer, and that the lines of communication between all parties are clearly understood.

#### 4. Drawing up a written work brief

It is vital that a clear work brief is established by the project committee. This should outline what is required in the project, and indicate those things that are fixed and cannot be negotiated. It is also important that as much flexibility as possible is left for the designer’s professional integrity. The committee should not limit the designer unnecessarily, as it may not discover the range of possibilities available. It should also plan to rewrite the brief as required to reflect the development of the design.

## **5. Selection process**

Since the success of a project depends of the capabilities of the designer, great care should be taken at this design stage. The selection decision should be based on:

- 1) previous experience;
- 2) discussions with past clients;
- 3) interviews and proposed design procedures suggested by the consultants in submissions or interviews.

Prior to commencement of the selection process, the group should agree on the selection criteria, and should not base the selection only on the fees offered.

Competitions are not usually the best way to select a designer because the emphasis is on the finished work rather than the process. If designs are requested, the group should be prepared to pay for them as a matter of good faith.

The selection process should comply with Australian Standard AS4121, *Selection of Consultants*, which is regarded as good industry practice.

The group must also be aware of legislation that restricts certain practices (e.g. the *South Australian Architects Act* prohibits the supply of free designs) and should contact the relevant professional bodies or societies if in doubt. Check websites.

## **6. Signing an agreement**

When the designer is selected the group should sign a formal agreement, setting out the rights and responsibilities of both parties. For architects, the most common agreement would be the RAI/ACA Client and Architect Agreement. For artists, there are various standard agreements available from the Arts Law Centre in Sydney if the artist does not have a suitable agreement that is acceptable to the group.

## **7. Selecting a design**

Once the designer has been chosen and the fees agreed, the designer should be given a free hand to interpret the requirements of the brief in an imaginative manner. The designer is the professional, and should be trusted to know what will work best. Any doubts of the group should be expressed at this stage and changes made, or the project reconsidered. Once the design has been accepted by the group the whole group should be prepared to support the design when it is presented to the congregation.

It is important that the congregation approve the design before any further commitments are made. The total cost of the project, including any contingencies, must be clearly understood.

From here on, the project will be overseen by the group. The designer will be empowered to complete the work and the congregation will experience the joy of participation in the project as it takes form.

**Adopted by Department of Visual Arts 18 February 1996**

**For further information contact:**

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