



Mercy Ministry **Companions**

An Introduction

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Glossary of terms and acronyms

As you learn more about MMC and your new role in your ministry/organisation, you may come across some unfamiliar terms and acronyms. Some of these could include:

Dicastery	The name given to a department in the Church's administrative structure
Charism	Charisms, also known as spiritual gifts, are special abilities bestowed by the grace of the Holy Spirit to an individual or group for the service of others and the building up of the Body of Christ
Formation	Formation is an intentional, ongoing and reflective process. Building on the lived experience of individuals and communities, it focuses on growth in spiritual awareness, theological understanding, vocational motivation and capabilities for mission and service in the Church and the world.
Governance	Refers to the role of Trustees and Directors of Boards who have ultimate responsibility to be wise stewards of the MPJP, ministry or organisation. They are guided in their role by the relevant Church and civil law and the stated mission or purpose of the organisation
Ministry	'Ministry' and 'organisation' are sometimes used interchangeably when referring to the name of the organisation. 'Ministry' can also refer to the public activity or service undertaken by individuals and groups in the name of the Christian community
Mission	Mission refers to the purpose for which an organisation exists so 'mission' and 'purpose' are sometimes used interchangeably when referring to a faith-based organisation
Pontifical	Pontifical refers to a Church organisation directly responsible to the Pope rather than to the local Bishop/s

AMPJP	Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons
ISMAPNG	Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea
MCSAL	Mercy Community Services Australia Limited
MEL	Mercy Education Limited
MGA	Mercy Global Action
MHA	Mercy Health Australia
MIA	Mercy International Association
MIC	Mercy International Centre
MMC	Mercy Ministry Companions
MPJP	Ministerial Public Juridic Person

INTRODUCTION

Acknowledgment of Country

Mercy Ministry Companions acknowledges First Nations as the First Australians. Our National Office is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nation, and our Ministries operate across the country and across a range of other Indigenous lands and clans. We acknowledge the diversity of First Nations Peoples across this land. We respectfully recognise Elders both past and present and endorse the Uluru Statement from the Heart <https://ulurustatement.org/the-statement/>



Recognition of Heritage

We acknowledge the significant contribution of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers to MacKillop Family Services; of the Family Care Sisters (Grey Sisters), Good Shepherd Sisters, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and the Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) to the various works of Mercy Health and of the Marist Brothers, the Diocese of Sandhurst, the Christian Brothers and the parish of St Joseph's Warrnambool to the works of Mercy Education.



Welcome to Mercy Ministry Companions

Congratulations on commencing your role within one of the Community Services, Education or Health and Aged Care ministries which are part of Mercy Ministry Companions (MMC)!

We hope that the information and activities in this introductory resource enable you to become familiar with the broader family of MMC, its context and purpose. The ministry you are joining is making its own particular contribution to the growth and development of MMC within Australia. In your new role you are also becoming part of our global 'Mercy Family'.



Mercy Ministry Companions was approved by the Catholic Church in Rome on 24 September 2021.

MMC's establishment was initiated by the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea (ISMAPNG) following their 2017 Chapter when the direction was given to the new Leadership team to explore ways of ensuring that the Institute's incorporated ministries would flourish into the future. MMC holds civil and canonical (church-related) responsibility for the governance of the Community Services, Education and Health and Aged Care ministries previously governed by ISMAPNG.

This introductory resource, revised in 2025, is an Initiative of the MMC Mission Network.

Every effort has been made to acknowledge sources and provide current information. If there are any inaccuracies, please contact ministries@mercyministrycompanions.org.au

PART 1

What is MMC and why was it established as a Church Authority?

Mission

MMC was established as a ministerial public juridic person (MPJP) which means it holds the same type of authority as Bishops, Parish Priests and Leaders of Religious Congregations in Australia. The Trustee Directors of MMC report directly to Rome through the Dicastery of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life so it is a pontifical MPJP (i.e. under the authority of the Pope rather than the local Bishops)



MPJPs are a relatively new type of authority within the Catholic Church, reflecting a new and different model of 'Church' and Church governance from the traditional 'hierarchical model'. MPJPs draw on the skills and expertise of lay people, encouraging shared leadership and a collaborative approach to decision-making.

Activity:

View the short (3 mins) videoclip below for an overview of the emergence of MPJPs as a Church authority <https://ampjp.org.au/about-mpjps/> ✨➡

The second videoclip (2 mins) below provides a snapshot of the Association of Ministerial Public Juridic Persons (AMPJP), the peak body for MPJPs operating in Australia. Mercy Ministry Companions is a member of the AMPJP <https://ampjp.org.au/about-us/> ✨➡



PART 2

The Mission and Purpose of MMC

The Trustee Directors of MMC engaged in a collaborative process with Boards and ministry leaders to develop MMC's core statements. These are broad statements of mission or purpose, vision and values which guide MMC's long term growth and development. They were officially launched on October 2023 at the MMC annual conference.

The activities of our ministries are inspired by the teachings of Jesus, underpinned by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and reflect contemporary engagement in the corporal and spiritual Works of Mercy.

As part of your Induction, you will also learn about the statements of mission or purpose, vision and values which guide your ministry or organisation. You will notice some overlap in these guiding statements and core values.

Mercy Ministry Companions is a ministerial public juridic person within the Catholic Church. As part of the global Mercy family and under the sponsorship of the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea, we are open to the voice of the Spirit as we reimagine the charisms of our founders.

Mission Statement

We collaborate in the mission of Jesus by fostering a heart for Mercy within our ministries, in the broader society and for our environment.

Vision Statement

As companions in ministry, we seek to bring about a compassionate and just society and Church by striving to alleviate disadvantage, exclusion and inequality.



MMC continues the Mercy tradition, providing Community Service, Education, Health and Aged Care ministries enlivened by the spirit of Catherine McAuley.



Values

Our core values underpin our attitudes and behaviours and influence the way we relate to our colleagues and to the people whom we serve in our professional capacities. The core values of MMC outlined are likely to be similar to, or consistent with, the values underpinning the ministry in which you are involved. Our core values underpin the mutuality of our relationships with God, each other and our common home.

Compassion

We respond with kindness and generosity to those we serve, our ministry colleagues and all with whom we interact

Hope

We see within our current situation possibilities and promise, which nurture and shape our future

Hospitality

We are welcoming of people and ideas, bringing an openness of heart, mind and spirit to our work and life

Justice

We treat everyone with fairness and advocate for the rights and responsibilities of all, especially those who experience disadvantage, marginalisation and vulnerability

Respect

We uphold the intrinsic dignity of each person, no matter their circumstances

PART 3

The Values informing our partnerships and professional practice

Each one of us has a contribution to make to the ongoing story of Mercy Ministry Companions. While we walk in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley and the other founders, we are not living in their time and place; rather, we are invited to make our contribution in our time and place, to be a 'face of mercy, compassion, justice, respect, hope and hospitality' to those we meet. Lived well, these core values underpin our 'right relationship' with God and with all who share our common home.

Thank you for the contributions you are already making or will make in your workplace/s. Your commitment to the common good and to using your professional and inter-personal skills in a spirit of collaboration and values-based service is appreciated.

For reflection and sharing:

- In your role, which values do you think are, or will be, the most important ones? Why?
- Choose one value which you think might be a challenge for you in your role. Why do you think it might be a challenge?
- What support or resources might help you to understand these core values more deeply so that they can guide your attitudes and behaviour?

The quality and effectiveness of our work is enhanced by partnerships established and nurtured with local communities, government agencies, peak bodies, other Church or faith-based agencies, non-government agencies, educational institutions, training providers, professional associations, philanthropic groups, benefactors and other funding bodies.

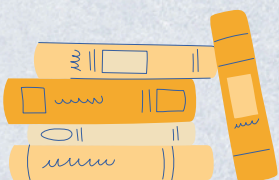
As MMC grows and develops, it is hoped that existing partnerships between ministries within MMC will continue to thrive and that new ways of collaborating across ministries will emerge

Shaping the ongoing story - welcoming each one's personal and professional contribution.

People who work or volunteer in a Mercy ministry or organisation bring to their new role a range of gifts and abilities, wisdom and insight based on previous experience. When effective working relationships are established in the organisation, they enable personal work satisfaction to grow. This contributes to the development of a healthy workplace culture. Our role becomes more than a job because we strive to make a difference in the lives of others. This is a hallmark of all the ministries which form MMC.

For reflection and sharing:

- What gifts and abilities do you bring to your new role?
- How will you contribute to building effective working relationships?
- What resources do you need to support your contribution?



Building a safe culture

Each of us has an obligation to conduct ourselves in ways which are consistent with the highest professional standards, especially in terms of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. As part of Orientation within your organisation, you will participate in Safeguarding training which outlines key principles and practices enabling you to interact appropriately with children and adults at risk and with your work colleagues.

Three recent Royal Commissions held in Australia, have shaped our approaches to building a safe culture within our ministries:

1. Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse released its final report in December 2017.
2. Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety released its final report in July 2023.
3. The Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability released its updated final report in November 2023.

The Royal Commissions made the general population aware of many instances where inappropriate behaviour towards children and adults at risk was practised by adults who betrayed their positions of trust. The Commissioners found that the leaders of some organisations failed in their responsibilities to protect children and adults at risk in their care.

MMC and its ministries acknowledge this 'shadowside' of our history and now make every effort, through appropriate policies, practices, procedures and ongoing training, to ensure such inappropriate actions do not occur again to people in their care.

As part of your Induction, you will become familiar with the Safeguarding framework and associated documents for MMC and for your organisation. Both sets of resources provide firm foundations for maintaining a healthy culture and enabling us to meet our mandatory requirements for safeguarding in our organisations.

Activity:

View the link below to the MMC Safeguarding Commitment, Policy Framework and Contact details

www.mercyministrycompanions.com.au/safeguarding



PART 5

Catherine McAuley - the founding story which shapes the ongoing story

Every ministry which is part of MMC can trace its existence, either wholly or in part, back to Catherine McAuley, who founded the Sisters of Mercy in Dublin in 1831. Some ministries were commenced in partnership by groups of Congregations while, overtime, ministries begun by groups other than the Sisters of Mercy have become part of ministries within MMC. As noted within MMC's recognition of heritage:

In particular, we acknowledge the significant contribution of the Sisters of St Joseph and the Christian Brothers to MacKillop Family Services; of the Family Care Sisters (Grey Sisters), Good Shepherd Sisters, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters and the Knights of the Southern Cross (Victoria) to the various works of Mercy Health and of the Marist Brothers, the Diocese of Sandhurst, the Christian Brothers and the parish of St Joseph's Warrnambool to the works of Mercy Education.

The common thread running through the mission of each of our heritage partners is their commitment to showing God's mercy to others. They were inspired by the Gospel message shown in the life and the example of Jesus. These founders saw a need and wanted to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Their vision was to be of service to others by using the resources at their disposal to respond to the needs of the people around them. They soon attracted others who were inspired to join them. In our time and place we continue that spirit of service.

Activity:

As you watch *In God Alone*, the 22-minute docudrama of Catherine's life, think about the similarities and the differences between the needs of the people of Dublin in the 1830s and the part of Australia in which you are currently living and working.

www.mercyworld.org/film-in-god-alone











For reflection and sharing:

- Share some of the similarities and differences you noticed about Catherine's times and your own.
- In what ways might Catherine's story and the stories of other founders inspire you in your role?

The Ministries which form MMC

Within MMC, the Boards of Mercy Community Services Australia (MCSAL), Mercy Education Limited (MEL) and Mercy Health Australia (MHA) respectively have delegated responsibility for the operation of the Community Services, Education and Health and Aged Care ministries. The infographic below provides a snapshot of how many are touched by our ministries annually.

2024-25 MINISTRY SNAPSHOT

645 WOMEN & CHILDREN KEPT SAFE FROM FAMILY VIOLENCE		8500 BABIES BORN IN MERCY HEALTH HOSPITALS		167,710 INPATIENTS & OUTPATIENTS CARED FOR IN MERCY HEALTH HOSPITALS
670 YOUNG PEOPLE IN A SAFE HOME THROUGH RESIDENTIAL CARE WITH MACKILLOP	3000 RESIDENTS IN AGED CARE THROUGH MERCY HEALTH		1002 WOMEN AND CHILDREN SUPPORTED BY MCAULEY	
177 NDIS PARTICIPANTS THROUGH MERCY CONNECT		10,000 CLIENTS CARED FOR IN THEIR OWN HOMES BY MERCY HEALTH		6300 AT RISK FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY MACKILLOP
	74 PEOPLE WITH A DISABILITY SUPPORTED IN INDEPENDENT LIVING SERVICE	26 PARTICIPANTS IN THE MERCY LEADERSHIP: EMPOWERING MIDDLE LEADERS PROGRAM	3,900 PATIENTS CARED FOR IN PALLIATIVE CARE BY MERCY HEALTH	
119 PARTICIPANTS AT THE 2025 MMC CONFERENCE		24 PARTICIPANTS IN THE 2025 MERCY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM AND DUBLIN PILGRIMAGE		14,507 STUDENTS IN MERCY EDUCATION AND MACKILLOP EDUCATION SCHOOL



Mercy Community Services Australia

MCSAL

<https://www.mercyservicesaustralia.org.au>

- Mercy Connect
- MacKillop Family Services incorporating McAuley Community Services for Women



Mercy Health

Care first

Health and Aged Care

<https://www.mercyhealth.com.au>

VIC -

- Mercy Place Abbotsford, Ballarat, Colac, Dandenong, East Melbourne, Northcliffe, Templestowe, Lynbrook, Rice Village (Geelong), Corben (Mentone), Montrose, Nixon (Mordialloc), Parkville, Keon Park, Rosebud, Fernhill, Shepparton (Ave Maria), Shepparton South, Warrnambool, Wyndham.
- Mercy Health Bethlehem Home for the Aged (Bendigo),
- Werribee Mercy Hospital,
- Mercy Hospital for Women (Heidelberg),
- Mercy Palliative Care (provides services in the Local Government Areas of Brimbank, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Melton, Moonee Valley and Wyndham)
- WA - Mercy Place Lathlain, Mont Clare, Mandurah, Edgewater Mercy Hostel, Villa Maria Hostel (Lesmurdie)
- NSW - Mercy Place Albury, Mt St Joseph's Young, Our Lady Mercy Place Harris Park
- QLD - Mercy Place Cairns (Bethlehem)



Mercy Education

Education

<https://www.mercy.edu.au>

- Mercedes College - Perth, WA
- Academy of Mary Immaculate - Fitzroy, VIC
- Catherine McAuley College - Bendigo, VIC
- Emmanuel College - Warrnambool, VIC
- Mount Lilydale Mercy College - Lilydale, VIC
- Sacred Heart College - Geelong, VIC
- Sacred Heart College - Kyneton, VIC
- Santa Maria College - Attadale, WA
- St Aloysius College - Adelaide, SA
- St Aloysius College - North Melbourne, VIC
- St Brigid's College - Lesmurdie, WA
- St Joseph's College - Mildura, VIC
- Our Lady of Mercy College - Heidelberg, VIC

Activity:

View the map in the link below to see the location of ministries within MMC (note, map is currently being updated)

www.mercyministrycompanions.com.au/contact-us



PART 7

Our global identity

In addition to becoming part of MMC through your new role, you are also becoming part of the global Mercy family which is under the umbrella of Mercy International Association (MIA).

Three significant aspects of MIA's work are:

- Responsibility for Mercy International Centre (MIC), Catherine McAuley's original House of Mercy on Baggot Street Dublin [shown in the docudrama, In God Alone]
 - <https://www.mercyworld.org/our-centre/>
- Being an active presence at the United Nations in New York through Mercy Global Action (MGA)
 - <https://www.mercyworld.org/justice/un-advocacy/>
- Development of the Opening Doors Initiative
 - <https://www.mercyworld.org/opening-doors/>

Activity:

View the link below which shows the countries where you will find Sisters of Mercy and Mercy-sponsored ministries. The countries with a Mercy presence are shown in blue.

www.mercyworld.org/about/mercy-family



Opportunities for ongoing formation and professional development

Mercy Ministry Companions are committed to cross-ministry collaboration, bringing together people from Community Services, Education, Health, and Aged Care to learn, grow, and reflect on our shared mission. Through a range of key formation programs, we support your ongoing professional development and spiritual enrichment. Information regarding these will be circulated via the monthly *Connections* newsletter.

Orientation to Mercy Modules

For staff and volunteers new to a Mercy ministry, the eight Orientation to Mercy Modules are a valuable follow-up to your Induction and Welcome Day. These modules are designed for self-paced learning or small group engagement, helping you connect more deeply with our Mercy heritage

<https://institute.mercy.org.au/about-us/orientation-to-mercy-modules/>

Mercy Middle Leaders Program

The Mercy Middle Leaders Program is a cornerstone of our cross-ministry formation, designed to nurture leadership grounded in Mercy values. Learn more and register here:

<https://www.mercyministrycompanions.org.au/formation/formation-programs/middle-leaders-program/>

Formation Seminars

On occasion MMC will offer formation seminars that explore our mission, purpose, vision, and values. These are delivered online or in-person, providing flexible opportunities to learn and share experiences across ministries.

Accreditation

Participation in MMC formation programs contributes to accreditation requirements for those working in Catholic ministries. These opportunities support your professional growth while affirming your commitment to our shared mission.

Our Logo



Mercy Ministry Companions

This logo is the official visual identity of Mercy Ministry Companions which was established by the Holy See on 3 December 2021.

Its symbolism is three-fold:

1. the welcome place of Mercy Ministry Companions within the ever-maturing tradition of 'Mercy Service' which Venerable Catherine McAuley began (1829) in the name of God's mercy;
2. the vibrant diversity of ministries entrusted by the Institute of Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea to Mercy Ministry Companions;
3. the hope that, through these ministries and those yet to come, Mercy Ministry Companions will always be an authentic agent of God's mercy.

<https://www.mercyministrycompanions.org.au/who-we-are/our-logo/>



Mercy Ministry
Companions

Thank You