03.01
Information and Communication Technology POLICY

Theological Foundation

God calls us, the people of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA, or 'the church'), to communicate his love through Jesus Christ and be a place where love comes to life. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is a God-given resource that assists the LCA to share God's word with everyone (2 Tim 4:2a, 1 Cor 9:22) and build up Christian community (Eph 4:15,16). Not all communication is life-giving, however, and so this policy recognises the role and responsibility of the LCA to protect our people from harm (1 Pet 5:2) and to be Christ's witnesses to them (1 Thess 2:10) and also to those outside our church (Col 4:5; 1 Cor 8:9).

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable a consistent approach in the LCA to the effective and responsible use of contemporary digital resources in a manner that promotes the ministry and mission of the church and protects everyone who uses them.

Relevant to:

The policy and procedures apply to
- All ministries and activities of the church
- All pastors, lay workers, employees, members, volunteers and visitors.

Objectives

The objectives of this policy are to enable
- the effective use of available ICT resources across the LCA
- an integrated and reliable ICT platform to meet the needs of the LCA
- the protection of the LCA's intellectual property and physical resources and assets, and
- a safe environment for users of ICT in accordance with scriptural principles and legal obligations.

Policy Statement

The LCA is committed to the effective application of digital resources and media in a manner that promotes the ministry and mission of the church. In doing so, it promotes and enables responsible use of ICT through appropriate measures that protect people from harm. This includes its responsibility and obligation to comply with legislative requirements in relevant jurisdictions.

Procedural Guidelines

The application of the ICT Policy will support the following principles

1. **The effective application of ICT supports the LCA Strategic Direction 2013–2018.**
   Ministries will adopt strategic plans and procedures that demonstrate how their application of ICT supports their ministry and mission (Ref LCA Strategic Direction C2, C4), and guidelines for staff. Wherever possible, ministries will work cooperatively with each other in the use of ICT (Ref LCA Strategic Direction B.4).

2. **The effective application of ICT promotes and enables responsible use.**
   Ministries' procedures will ensure users are aware of their personal responsibility for their actions when using agency ICT resources and shall not expose the LCA and/or its agencies to loss, liability, litigation or adverse publicity through their use of ICT. Sensitive and/or confidential information will be handled in accordance with the LCA Privacy Policy (ref: Privacy Act 1988).

3. **The effective application of ICT safeguards hardware and soft data.**
   ICT resources will be treated as valuable assets. Procedures and systems will ensure fitness for purpose, the effective use of ICT and security against threats. Users will be trained how to use and care for ICT resources.

4. **The effective application of ICT protects people from harm.**
   Agencies' procedures will articulate that the following actions are illegal and outline the process for reporting of breaches to the relevant authority:

   (a) impersonating or misrepresenting another person
   (b) cyberbullying (ref: Prevention of Abuse and Harassment Policy)
   (c) intentionally transmitting computer viruses or harmful software
   (d) use of ICT to store or transmit inappropriate material
   (e) use of ICT for any type of criminal activity.

   In addition, the procedures will prohibit users from using ICT resources in a manner that might bring the LCA or its agencies into disrepute.

5. **The effective application of ICT complies with legislative requirements and LCA policies.**
   Agencies will be familiar with the relevant legislative requirements in their jurisdiction, as well as relevant LCA policies relating to the use of ICT, including but not restricted to those listed under 'References' below. Agencies will have relevant compliance procedures in place.

Responsible Bodies
- General Church Council (GCC) is responsible for the communication of and compliance with this policy and related procedures to LCA departments and across the LCA.
- District Church Councils are responsible for the communication of and compliance with this policy and related procedures within their districts, for monitoring compliance and reporting to GCC.
- Congregation/parish church councils are responsible for the implementation of this policy and related procedures, and for reporting compliance to their respective district.

- Governance boards of LCA and district-related agencies are responsible for the implementation of ICT policies and procedures that meet their particular requirements, and for ensuring that such policies and procedures are consistent with the LCA ICT Policy and procedures.
- The LCA Information and Communication Technology Advisory Committee is responsible for developing standards, model procedures, guidelines and checklists for approval by the Executive Officer of the Church.

Definition of Terms
1. **Compliance:** a process and framework for identifying/defining/adhering to the requirements of the laws, church, community and organisational standards and codes, accepted good practice, principles of good governance and accepted community and ethical standards. Compliance is based on twelve principles, which are grouped under four headings: commitment; implementation; monitoring and measuring; continued improvement.

2. **Information and Communication Technology (ICT):** all forms of contemporary digital resources, including methods of transmission of messages, storage of data, hardware and software.

References

1. Commonwealth and State/Territory Acts relevant to computer usage

2. LCA Policies

    06.01   LCA Prevention of Risk of Harm from a Known Sex Offender Policy
    06.03   LCA Child Protection Policy
    06.04   LCA Complaints Handling Policy
    06.05   LCA Prevention of Harassment and Abuse Policy
    06.07   LCA Standards of Ethical Behaviour
    06.09   LCA Privacy Policy

3. Associated documents

    03.01G   LCA Guidelines for Congregational Websites
    03.01G   LCA ICT Guidelines
    03.01SP LCA ICT Standards and Protocols

Document Controls

Document ID	03.01
Prepared by	ICT Advisory Committee
Reviewed by	EOC
Policy ownership	GCC
Approved for publication	21 Feb 2014
Reviewed	17 Mar 2016
Review date	2018