



Ethical Investment Policy

Uniting Church SA

Preamble

At its simplest, all Christian discipleship is a response to Christ's 'great commandment' to love God and to love our neighbour as ourselves. (Matthew 22: 34-40)

The Church, in its worship and mission, including its investment policies and practices, seeks to bear witness to God's love for all of creation; and to resist that which diminishes life.

This perspective will prohibit investment in enterprises whose products or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe fundamental human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment.

Love of neighbour extends to caring for the natural environment which supports our neighbours' life; and it extends in time to those who follow us – and so long term considerations will also come into decisions relating to investments.

Our theological tradition teaches that we live in a world where God's intention that we live in love, peace and justice has been distorted. Accordingly, our choices are rarely pure or unambiguously good and true. Choices made in good faith are often a careful weighing up of 'the greater good' or the 'lesser of evils'. Such processes will inevitably be part of the context of investment choices.

Investment process

The investment process will ensure that all investment decisions are made having regard to the values expressed in the preamble and to our requirement to exercise good financial stewardship. Good financial stewardship can be achieved by the evaluation of negative screens together with a focus on appropriate economic returns and sustainability. The Church will, where appropriate, undertake a process of engagement with companies involved in unacceptable activities in the hope of a more just outcome.

Negative screen

We avoid investing in:

- Companies whose products, services or practices cause or perpetuate injustice and suffering, infringe human rights or cause unacceptable damage to the natural environment. Industries included are thermal coal extraction and exploration, armaments, uranium, gambling, alcohol, tobacco and pornography.
- Companies where their practices are unacceptable in areas such as human rights, occupational health and safety and environmental management and wherever companies support oppressive regimes.

We recognise that there will be occasions when companies breach any of the above principles in a minor way but we will apply the negative screen where, in the view of the investing Uniting Church organisation, the breaches warrant a change of investment.

We acknowledge that these decisions will always be complex involving a balance between positive and negative factors.

Neutral

The majority of investments will be in companies which are considered to be neutral. Such investments will be made on the basis of investment criteria which will assist us to exercise good stewardship and provide a reliable source of income and capital growth to the Church. The wise use of resources is, in itself, an ethical outcome.