

Introduction

The Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), being declared a recognized denomination for the purposes of the Marriage Act 1961 with the Victorian Registry Office of Births Deaths and Marriages, has the ability to nominate, cancel and transfer marriage celebrants' licences for Pastoral Leaders. In undertaking this role, the BUV has committed to meet the legal requirements outlined by the Governor-General, including ensuring that BUV nominated persons to be registered as a marriage celebrant are:

- Active members of a Baptist Church
- Accredited pastors of the BUV
- Possess the necessary skills
- Are trained in the necessary knowledge, and
- Properly undertake the administration entailed in the role.

Nominating Pastoral Leaders

To be eligible for nomination as a celebrant with the BUV, the person must fit into one of the following categories of Pastoral Leaders:

Category A: On the Ordained and Accredited List

Category B: On the Recognised List and in sole pastoral charge of a congregation of a member church of the BUV (This does not include Interims)

Category C: On the Recognised List and whose core responsibilities include marriage preparation and/or marriage counseling

Category D: On the Recognised list and an **ordination candidate** who is in sole charge or whose responsibilities include marriage preparation and/or marriage counseling

Requirements of Pastoral Leaders BEFORE being nominated

1. If not already on the Accredited List, complete the BUV's Personal Development Plan process including attending a BUV Gathering Conference (May or October) to formalise accreditation status.
NOTE: Current Ordination Candidates do not need to complete a PDP until their year of Ordination
2. Attend a one day BUV Orientation Conference, which is held annually in February.
3. Attend a BUV Marriage Celebrants' Training Day, held in May and November each year.
4. If Category B or C, provide a letter from the Senior Pastor/church leadership confirming that the pastor's core responsibilities include marriage preparation and/or marriage counselling or that they are in sole pastoral charge of a congregation.
5. Complete training with Prepare/Enrich and provide paperwork to confirm this.
6. Complete the licence application form.

Requirements of Marriage Celebrants

- To read and become familiar with any updated marriage celebrant-related material that the BUV forwards from the Governor General or supplies directly.
- To advise both the BUV and the Registrars Office (PO Box 4332 Melbourne Vic 3001 or 9613 5812) when the celebrant changes address.

If in Category A

- If commencing a new ministry with another denomination or interstate, the celebrant is to advise the BUV before commencing the new ministry.
- Contact the BUV if no longer in ministry with the BUV, e.g. Para-church ministry; missions; secular work.

If in Category B or C or D

- Immediately advise the BUV if there is a change in ministry. These changes would obviously include changing to a new church, but also applies to being at the same church but no longer solely responsible for a congregation or have marriage preparation/counseling as a core responsibility.

How many licences per church?

With licences being in high demand we need to ensure that all churches have an even coverage of celebrants. Below is a guide to the number of licences a church would need:

1 – 150 attendees = one licence

150 – 250 attendees = two - three licences

250 – 500 attendees = three licences

500 – 1000 attendees = four licences

1000 – 3000 attendees = five to seven licences

We recognise that not all situations are the same and that there may be special needs within congregations. If you feel that your church does warrant more than the usual number of licences (see above) please contact Mel Price mel.price@buv.com.au outlining the reasons and also provide her with a record of weddings conducted in the last two years to ascertain increased need of a licence.

Important - Please Note:

Retaining a marriage celebrant licence is contingent on meeting the above requirements. If the BUV becomes aware that a celebrant has failed to fulfill these requirements, the licence will be removed.

Whilst the BUV will endeavor to advise the celebrant before submitting the removal papers for canceling the licence, the success of this is dependent upon the celebrant having provided current contact details. Therefore, the onus is on the celebrant to ensure that their licence is current and valid before performing a wedding.