



## MARRIAGE CELEBRANT POLICY

The Baptist Union of Victoria (BUV), being declared a recognised 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 celebrant licenses 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 be registered as marriage celebrants:

- Are active members of a Baptist Church
- Are Accredited Pastoral Leaders of the BUV
- Hold a current Working With Children's Check (WWC)
- Are trained in the necessary knowledge and
- Properly undertake the administration entailed in the role

**PLEASE NOTE** | A marriage license is not regarded as a right, possession or as a sign of status in the BUV; it is purely a resource for Pastoral Leaders to use in the exercise of the ministry of the Church. When a Pastoral Leader is not active in ministry within a Baptist Church, School or Chaplaincy, there is no need to hold a marriage license.

### ELIGIBLE PASTORAL LEADERS

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

**Category A** An Ordained and Accredited Pastoral Leader

**Category B** An Unordained Pastoral Leader who has a current Accreditation card and is Sole/Senior Pastor of a member Church of the BUV or a Faith Community affiliated with the BUV through a current Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

**Note** | this will not usually include Interim or Intentional Interim Pastors, although exceptional circumstance may apply.

**Category C** An Unordained Pastoral Leader who has a current Accreditation card and is Associate Pastor of a member Church of the BUV or a Faith Community affiliated with the BUV through a current MoU and whose core responsibilities include marriage preparation or counselling.

**Category D** An Ordination candidate who is Sole/Senior Pastor or who is Associate Pastor whose core responsibilities include marriage preparation or counselling in a member Church of the BUV or a Faith Community affiliated with the BUV through a current MoU.

**Category E** A Church planter who has a current Accreditation card and is part funded through a partnership with the BUV where the Church planter's community contact could be enhanced by holding a marriage license.

#### REQUIREMENTS OF PASTORAL LEADERS PRIOR TO BEING NOMINATED

- Pastoral Leaders in Categories A, B, C and E are required to have a current **Accreditation card**.
- Pastoral Leaders in all categories must have attended a **Marriage Celebrants Training Day**, which are held each year.
- Pastoral Leaders in
  - **Category B** may be asked to provide a letter from their Church Leadership confirming they are Sole/Senior Pastor in their Church/Faith Community.
  - **Category C** may be asked to provide a letter from their Senior Pastor confirming their core responsibilities include marriage preparation or counselling.
  - **Category D** may be asked to provide a letter from their Church Leadership confirming they are Sole/Senior Pastor in their Church/Faith Community or from their Senior Pastor confirming their core responsibilities include marriage preparation or counselling.
- **All Pastoral Leaders** must complete Prepare/Enrich training or give evidence of training in an equivalent tool of marriage preparation.
- Once the steps above are completed, Pastoral Leaders may complete the license application form. Forms are available from Priscilla Flett at [priscilla.flett@buv.com.au](mailto:priscilla.flett@buv.com.au)

#### EXCEPTIONS TO THE ABOVE

- Pastoral Leaders **moving to Victoria from interstate** who have held a marriage license for more than 5 years (in their previous State) are required only to be accredited to be eligible for a license within the BUV. Prepare/Enrich is encouraged if the pastoral leader has not completed this interstate.
- Military Chaplains in active service who move to Victoria from interstate may maintain their Accreditation in their home State. All they require is to be able to show a certificate of compliance (from the Australian Defence Forces or their State Union) and a letter of commendation that they are in good standing in order to be eligible to complete the license application from.

## HOW MANY LICENSES PER CHURCH?

With licenses being in high demand, the BUV needs to ensure that all Churches have an even coverage of celebrants. Below is a guide to the number of licenses a Church is likely to require:

Number of attendees	Number of licenses
1 to 100	1
100 to 250	2-3
250 to 500	3-5
500-1000	5-7
1000-3000	7-10

**PLEASE NOTE** | Even if a Pastoral Leader is individually eligible and fulfills the requirements, if their Church/Faith Community already has a full complement of licenses for a Church of its size, the Pastoral Leader may not be granted a license. At the same time, we recognise that not all situations are the same and that there may be special needs within congregations. IF you feel that your Church/Faith Community does warrant more than the usual number of licenses, please contact Priscilla Flett [priscilla.flett@buv.com.au](mailto:priscilla.flett@buv.com.au) at the BUV Office outlining the reasons and providing her with a record of weddings conducted in the last two years. This will help to ascertain the need for an additional license.

## REQUIREMENTS OF ALL MARRIAGE CELEBRANTS

- To read and become familiar with any updated marriage celebrant material that the BUV forwards from the Governor-Generals or supplies directly.
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- To advise both the BUV and the Registrar's office (PO Box 4332 Melbourne, VIC 3001 or phone 9613 8512) when you change address.
- If in **Category A** please advise the BUV before commencing a new ministry overseas, interstate or with another denomination or if no longer working in a Church/Faith Community, School or Chaplaincy affiliated with the BUV – e.g. a Parachurch ministry or secular work.
- If in Category B, C or D please advise the BUV immediately if there is a change in your ministry
- If in **Category B, C or D** please advise the BUV immediately if there is a change in your ministry role such that you no longer serve as Sole or Senior Pastor or you no longer have marriage preparation or counselling as a core responsibility.
- If in **Category E** please advise the BUV immediately if you discontinue your Church planting role.

## IMPORTANT | PLEASE NOTE

Retaining a marriage celebrant license is contingent on meeting the above requirements at all times, e.g. holding a current Accreditation Card.

*If the BUV office becomes aware that a celebrant has failed to fulfil these requirements, the license will be removed.*

Whilst the BUV office will endeavour to keep all celebrants up to date with all relevant information including advice about submitting removal papers for cancelling the license, successful communication depends upon the celebrant providing the office with their current contact details.

The onus is at all times on the celebrant to ensure that their license is current and valid before conducting a wedding.