



Baptist Union
of Victoria



October 2020 members' pack together *on mission*

You are invited to attend our BUV October 2020 Members' Meeting.

Please visit <https://events.humanitix.com/members-meeting-october-2020> to register



MEMBERS' MEETING INFORMATION PACK

BUV Members' Meeting

Friday 16th October 2020

6:00pm sharp

Meeting will take place ONLINE

Dear Member of Assembly,

We welcome you as an Ordained BUV Minister or nominated Delegate of your Baptist Church, Faith Community, or Agency, to participate in our October 2020 Members' Meeting. We prioritise the coming together in association to share and discern God's movement and will amongst us as Baptists in Victoria. Thank you for choosing to invest yourself and your time in participating and representing others at this Members' Meeting.

We recognise that there is time spent in preparation, reading and praying over the papers, and engaging with your church community in discussing questions and issues prior to the meeting. It takes effort, but we believe that as we see things move and change in response to our collective discernment, we can move forward together in our mission to advance the Kingdom of God.

This year due to COVID restrictions, we are unfortunately not able to gather together in person. Therefore, the meeting will take place using video conferencing. You are invited to join the meeting that will be held at 6pm on Friday 16th October. You will still need to register for the event as we are required to check eligibility for voting.

Voting will be undertaken by a specialist online voting company – True Vote. The voting process is anonymous and encrypted. The ballot paper will be an online ballot that you will be able to access via a link in an email * that will be sent to you during the meeting. This will be a simple process.

Voting will be open between 7pm Friday 16th October – 5pm Sunday 18th October at which point voting will be closed. True Vote will generate the vote report which will be scrutinised by BUV appointed scrutineers.

Voting results will be emailed to all members of Assembly by 5pm Monday 19th October and published in the **BUV Bulletin** on Wednesday 21st October, 2020.

*Alternative voting can be organised. Please note - only applies to those with no email address.

Please call the BUV office on (03) 9880 6100 by 2nd October.

Further information on the Voting process can be found here – <https://truevote.com.au/Home/FAQ>

Registration

YOU MUST REGISTER FOR YOUR TICKET TO THE MEMBERS' MEETING IN ADVANCE – there is no cost.

Register online: <https://events.humanitix.com/members-meeting-october-2020>

Registration closes at 5pm on Monday 12th October 2020

Members' Meeting Proudly Supported By:



Baptist Financial Services



MEMBERS' MEETING PROGRAM

Worship

Welcome & Acknowledgement of Country

Jo-Anne Bradshaw, Chair, Union Council

Bible Reading & Opening Prayer

Assembly Meeting

Voting - Jo-Anne Bradshaw

Union Council Appointments

Honorary Legal Advisor Reappointment

Review of BUV Intervention in Declining Churches Trial

Finance

- Pastoral Stipends, Superannuation

- Membership Fee

Financial Forecast - Debbie Uy, Director of Finance and Administration

Prayer for 2020 Ordinands

BUV 2021 Strategic Direction

Rev Daniel Bullock, Director of Mission & Ministries

Recognition, Welcome & Prayer for New Churches and Faith Communities

Closing Prayer

Jo-Anne Bradshaw, Chair, Union Council

OCTOBER 2020 MEMBERS' MEETING BUSINESS PAPERS

Union Council Reappointment

Mark Browning

Resolution: That Mark Browning be reappointed as a member of the Union Council of the BUV for 3 years from 16th October 2020

Nominated by: Syndal Baptist Church

Voting by ballot: Simple majority required

I am pleased to accept the nomination to continue to serve as Union Council member and support the development of flourishing churches and capacity of the movement more broadly.

I have been honoured to have had this role over the last four years and previously as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee of BUV. As a committed Christian since 16 years old, I believe the local church plays a critical part of our Lord's vision of mission and ministry.

I am currently a member of Syndal Baptist Church (since 2004) including a 6 year appointment on council as Treasurer which included a major building program. Previous to that at Warrnambool Baptist Church, Frankston Forest Baptist Church (including serving as Treasurer for 8 years) and at Sale Baptist Church.

My employment is in Financial Services (at a Big four bank) for the last 30 years in a variety of banking, risk, project, leadership, governance roles with control of a significant expense budget. Having also completed an Executive MBA, I believe my skills, experience and passion provide a strong fit to continue to serve for a further term.



OCTOBER 2020 MEMBERS' MEETING BUSINESS PAPERS

Union Council Reappointment

Darryl Kilker

Resolution: That Darryl Kilker be reappointed as a member of the Union Council of the BUV for 3 years from 16th October 2020

Nominated by: 10 members of assembly

Voting by ballot: Simple majority required

I am pleased to accept the nomination as Union Council member for a further term. I was first appointed a member of the Council in October 2014. I am committed to the BUV mission in building and promoting healthy churches and missional activities within our local communities. I am also a member of the BUV Audit and Risk Committee.

I have over 35 years of pastoral experience in the USA, Australia in New South Wales and Victoria in both rural and metropolitan churches. Most recently I served as Senior Pastor at Pakenham Baptist Church (2008-2020). At Pakenham Baptist Church we were blessed to be able to support two church plants and to be involved in a church building program.

Preparing the next generation of pastoral and church leadership is important for the building of the church now and for the future. I enjoy mentoring students who are taking the pathway to ordination.

I have been a member of various boards and committees during my years of ministry at both a church, local government and community setting.

I have been married to my wife, Joy for 34 years. We have two adult children who are married and one adult son living at home. We are also very proud grandparents. Originally born in the United States of America (USA), I migrated to Australia in 1989 and hold dual citizenship.

I believe my skills and experience, dedication and passion for pastoral and church ministry provides a strong and unique perspective on the Council. I look forward to being able to serve the BUV community in this way again.



OCTOBER 2020 MEMBERS' MEETING BUSINESS PAPERS

Union Council Appointment

David Talathoti

Resolution: That David Talathoti be appointed as a member of the Union Council of the BUV for 2 years from 16th October 2020

Nominated by: Dandenong Baptist Church

Voting by ballot: Simple majority required

David is married to Ihara and they have three children; Olivia, Elijah and Judah. David has been involved in church ministry since 2000 and is currently the Senior Pastor at Dandenong Baptist Church. Prior to this, David was the Youth and Young Adults pastor at Waverley Baptist Church (2006-2014). He was ordained in 2013 with his Diploma in Ministry (Ridley College), Bachelor of Theology and Master of Theological Studies at Whitley College. David later received his Doctorate of Philosophy from IICM in Florida, USA (2015).

Born in India, David migrated to Australia on a student visa. He discerned God calling him to ministry and changed career to follow God's calling. He has experienced first-hand the challenges of migration, and finding his place within an Australian Church. This leads him to empathise with new migrants and to understand the complexities within a multicultural church. He is passionate about serving in diverse communities and bringing cultures together as a united and vibrant body of Christ that seeks to serve others.

David finds great joy in teaching, counselling and seeing people grow in their relationships with God and each other. This love of teaching sees him currently investing in future pastors as an ordination candidate supervisor and also as part of the ordination discernment group committee.

Growing up with missionaries in the family home, David is acutely aware of the need for outwardly focused community connections. He seeks to find ways to effectively demonstrate the church's relevance and need for Jesus in today's secular world. Because of this, he was a school chaplain for five years and today serves as the Chairperson of the Cornerstone board.

"I am honoured to accept nomination as a Union Council member. I sincerely believes that my passions and experience afford me a unique perspective in promoting churches that bring Glory to God by being vital assets to local and global communities."



OCTOBER 2020 MEMBERS' MEETING BUSINESS PAPERS

Honorary Legal Advisor Reappointment

Elizabeth Shalders

Resolution: That Elizabeth Shalders be reappointed as BUV Honorary Legal Advisor for a period of 12 months from 16th October 2020

Nominated by: Union Council

Voting by ballot: Simple majority required

Elizabeth Shalders is a Senior Associate at Lewis Holdway Lawyers in Melbourne. She is dedicated solely to practising in the area of Not-for-Profit law and governance, and has nine years professional experience in this field acting for a number of Churches and other faith-based organisations, independent schools, public benevolent institutions, affordable housing bodies, overseas aid organisations, industry bodies and professional associations.

Elizabeth is a member of the Law Council of Australia's Charities & Not-for-profits Committee, the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission Professional User Group, the Law Institute of Victoria's Not-for-profits & Charities Committee and a member of the Expert Panel for Australian Research Council Project 'Restoring Public Trust in Charities - Reforming Governance and Enforcement'. Elizabeth also publishes and speaks in academic forums on a range of legal topics affecting Not-for-profit organisations.

Elizabeth is a member of NewHope Baptist Church.



OCTOBER 2020 MEMBERS' MEETING BUSINESS PAPERS

Review of BUV Intervention in Declining Churches - Clendinning Report

In 2014 BUV churches were invited to participate in a consultative conversation about how best to assist churches in long-term decline to make wise and healthy decisions about their future. In October 2016, the Assembly then resolved by a large majority to empower the Baptist Union staff team (for a period of three years, then be reviewed by an independent panel) to initiate appropriate processes in situations of long-term decline and when membership numbers drop below 12. This will include in some instances the establishment of a proxy leadership team, comprising leaders from local Baptist Churches and the BUV Office.

The Clendinning Report, included in Appendix A, is the outcome of an independent review of the implementation of this trial over these past three years.

Resolution: That the Union Council grant authority to the BUV Leadership Team to continue the implementation of intervention in declining churches and adopt the intervention policy and processes recommended by the Ken Clendinning report.

2021 STIPEND AND SUPERANNUATION

Recommended 2021 Stipend

Vote by simple majority.

Weekly Stipend	2020	Increase	2021
Cash (inc. Tax Exempt Benefits)	\$1,231	0.75%*	\$1,240
Cash or Manse Allocation (Tax Exempt Benefit)	\$410		\$410#
	\$1,641		\$1,650

* Average of CPI: -0.3% and WPI: 1.8%

Notional weekly rental amount has remained static at \$410 in 2019 and \$410 in 2020

To find out more about Stipend Guidelines head to www.buv.com.au/resources/stipends

Weekly Superannuation	2020	2021
	\$195.50	\$196.65

The superannuation is calculated based on the commercial equivalent salary (9.5% on \$2,070)

The All Groups CPI

Negative 0.3% through the year to the June quarter 2020.

Retrieved 20 August 2020 from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6401.0>

Wage Price Index

The trend index which is usually used as the basis for this measure has been suspended due to Covid-19. The seasonally adjusted figure for the whole of Australia for the year to June quarter 2020 for all employee jobs in Australia was 1.8%. In the past, the seasonally adjusted figure has not deviated significantly from the trend figure so for this year the seasonally adjusted figure will be used.

Retrieved on 20 August 2020 from: <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6345.0>

Median Rent

Median Rent at 31 March 2020

March quarter 2020	Median weekly rent
Melbourne	\$430
Regional Victoria	\$340
Victoria	\$410

BUV has adopted the policy to use the Victoria Median weekly rent.

Retrieved on 20 August 2020 from: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report>

2021 MEMBERSHIP FEE FOR CONSTITUENT CHURCHES

2020 Membership Fee

Church Income Contribution

\$0-\$85,332*	2.75% of Income (Minimum: \$150)
\$85,333+	3.75% of Income (Maximum: \$47,938)

*2020 Weekly Stipend: \$1,641 (\$85,332 per annum)

Proposed 2021 Membership Fee

Church Income Contribution

\$0-\$85,800*	2.75% of Income (Minimum: \$150)
\$85,801+	3.75% of Income (Maximum: \$48,298)**

* 2021 Weekly Stipend: \$1,650 (\$85,800 per annum)

** \$48,298 (2020 Limit) + 2021 Stipend Increase of 0.75%

RECOGNITION & WELCOME OF NEW BUV CHURCHES AND COMMUNITIES

The BUV has welcomed the following new Faith Communities and Constituent Churches since our last Gathering in October 2019.

New Faith Communities

- 26/11/2019 **Melbourne Karenni Baptist Community Church**
- 26/11/2019 **Sion Church**
- 25/02/2020 **Shepparton Chinese Christian Fellowship**
- 25/02/2020 **Htoo Moo Plaw Baptist Church**
- 24/03/2020 **Shepherd Centre Church**
- 28/07/2020 **Cloverdale Karen Baptist Church**

New Constituent Churches

- 25/02/2020 **Melbourne Matu Baptist Church**
- 28/04/2020 **New Vision Baptist Church**
- 26/05/2020 **Htoo Moo Plaw Baptist Church**
- 25/08/2020 **Melbourne Thadou Baptist Church**

New Mergers

- 25/02/2020 **Wendouree Baptist Church** and **Pleasant Street Baptist Church** merged to form **Pleasant Street and Forest Street Baptist Church**

Name Change

- June 2020 **The Eighth Day Baptist Church** changed name to **West Melbourne Baptist Church**

2020 ORDINATION

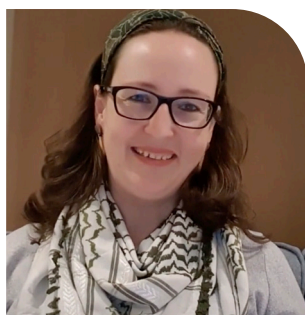
Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the BUV Ordination Service for 2020 Ordinands will be postponed to as early as is possible in 2021. An update will be provided to Members via the BUV Bulletin.

The three candidates 'Journeys to Ordination' were presented in the May Members Video Update which can be seen by clicking on this link https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLVtWy_j_yXpDTUx4BtmWwxCTIBbTwwGER

2020 Ordinands



Christine Wanstall



Kathryn Jensen



Robyn Song

2021 BUY SUPPORT HUB STRATEGIC DIRECTION

We are the support hub for a culturally diverse Union of Baptist churches, faith and missional communities, agencies and affiliates



VISION

To be a union of flourishing churches with Christlike followers, that redeems society



MISSION

To encourage, equip & empower leaders of our local churches to advance God's Kingdom

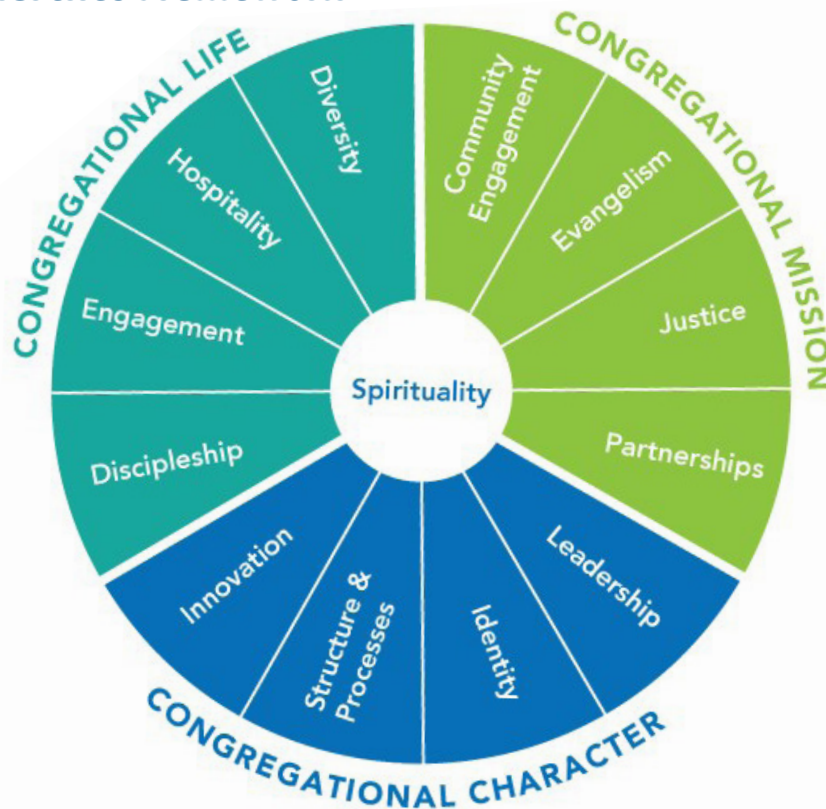
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

With Mission at the centre, our plans are developed around **Four Strategic Focus Areas**, through the **Innovation, Multicultural, Digital and Younger Demographic Lenses**.



2021 BUV SUPPORT HUB STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Flourishing Churches Framework



The Flourishing Church framework and survey has been developed as a tool for your Church leadership team to assess the ministry of your church. The survey will form part of the BUV's Annual administrative surveys from 2021 and beyond. Answering these questions as honestly as possible will assist your church not only to identify areas of strength that can be built upon, but also areas of opportunity that may require additional / external resources and assistance. It also will provide the BUV Support Hub with direction as to where to focus resources and will serve as a measurement tool to report to the BUV Union Council.

Partnership opportunities

As Baptists, church planting has been a priority throughout our history. Today, church planting has a variety of expressions, some birthed from existing churches and some birthed out of missional ideas or by innovators.

This year, through the amazing generosity of the wider BUV, we have seen new partnerships develop that have paved the way for potential new missional initiatives – particularly in bushfire affected communities. It is this model - partnerships between churches and communities - that has the potential to see new missional initiatives and church plants flourish.

Our dream is that over time every existing church has the opportunity to partner with a new church plant or missional initiative.

In 2021 the BUV is continuing to progress church planting and has many opportunities for partnership. If your church is excited by the idea of a partnership to see a new church plant / idea come to fruition, BUV's Partnership Development Pastor, Andrew Naylor would love to talk with you.

BUV SUPPORT HUB UPDATES

BUV Support Hub Staff changes since Oct 2019

This year we have farewelled the following staff from our BUV Support Hub Staff team:

- Adam Southwood – BUV Comms
- Ryan Smith – Global Interaction
- Mark Purser – Baptist World Aid
- Geoff Maddock – Moved from our BUV Mission Catalyst team to State Director, Global Interaction

This year, we have welcomed the following staff to our BUV Support Hub staff team to replace existing vacancies:



Andrew Hill
BUV Mission Catalyst



Leanne Hill
(1 day) BUV Mission Catalyst



Andrew Naylor
BUV Partnership Development
Pastor



Peter Botross
(2 days) BUV Church Health
Consultant



Charlene Delos-Santos
(1 day) Multicultural Consultant
– Generations

Victorian Affiliate Staff Changes



Paul Manning
Baptist World Aid



Geoff Maddock
Global Interaction

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF BUV INTERVENTION IN DECLINING CHURCHES TRIAL - CLENDINNING REPORT

Introduction

In 2014 BUV churches were invited to participate in a consultative conversation about how best to assist churches in long-term decline to make wise and healthy decisions about their future. In October 2016, the Assembly then resolved by a large majority to empower the Baptist Union staff team (for a period of three years, then be reviewed by an independent panel) to initiate appropriate processes in situations of long-term decline and when membership numbers drop below 12. This will include in some instances the establishment of a proxy leadership team, comprising leaders from local Baptist Churches and the BUV Office.

This report is the outcome of a review of the implementation of this trial over these past three years.

Scope

This review was to include:

- A review of the case study reports provided by staff from the Church Health & Capacity Building (CH&CB) and Mission Catalyst (MC) teams detailing various approaches taken to assist churches to consider viability and explore options including merger, closure and revitalisation.
- Consultation with Pastors and/or Leaders from some churches that have participated in Intervention projects, reflecting on their experience of the processes.
- Consultation with other BUV staff (eg Regional Pastors, Finance & Administration (F&A), Director of Mission and Ministries) or Union Council members regarding relevant aspects of the Intervention process.
- Identification of learnings from the Intervention Trial regarding the effectiveness of various approaches and recommendation of approaches to be adopted in future.
- Review of the current BUV Constitution, policies (including Use of Properties from Dissolved Churches) and procedures to identify any obstacles to healthy and effective responses to churches in long-term decline and recommend necessary amendments.

Methodology

In completing this review, I have consulted with a range of BUV documents, as well as reviewing ten case studies provided by staff. I have interviewed 13 persons, including BUV staff and some pastors involved with the intervention trial.

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF BUV INTERVENTION IN DECLINING CHURCHES TRIAL - CLENDINNING REPORT

Review

1. I would firstly commend the staff at BUV, particularly the CH&CB and MC Teams and their commitment to the process of implementing the strategies aimed to assist declining churches in exploring future possibilities. Their motives and approaches were primarily around finding ways to support local expressions of faith to become healthier and more missional, rather than just focusing on the particular properties or closing of churches. Reports indicate that the team members managed this quite sensitively, acknowledging the emotional and spiritual costs to the current congregations. This can be quite challenging at times as churches in critical or survival mode often are suspicious of the intentions of denominational staff, which in some cases is based on historical experiences but often on suspicions or myths. On the other hand, our Baptist value of working together in association against the notion of independence needs to be emphasised for the missional growth of our Baptist movement.
2. Most of the declining churches whom the BUV CH&CB Team have engaged with have been long standing congregations whose leadership had become tired and were aging. They have had a shrinking pool of available workers and were struggling to maintain any ministries into the community beyond Sunday services. Maintaining their properties were challenging and finance was limited. In some cases they had a part-time (one or two day) pastor or voluntary pastor.
3. While a number of the churches that formed part of this review initiated contact with BUV staff because of their decline, in other cases the churches were initially approached by the BUV staff and invited to participate in discussions about their future direction. All the churches in the case studies I examined agreed to meet and explore a way forward together with BUV staff. Some had had previous interactions with BUV team members regarding possible revitalisation, while others had now reached a stage of desperation, having not previously been actively seeking consultation with BUV staff. None of these churches were ones which resisted meeting with BUV.
4. The approach of the CH&CB team was to implement a discernment process in which a number of options were presented for consideration which was more helpful than coming with ready-made solutions or programs approach. The flexibility of the intervention processes and possible options was a key to the discernment process. However, where the church had already diminished to only 6-12 members then some of the options, especially around revitalisation, were not really viable. Another variation to the options could be planting a new congregation within an existing church which has some autonomy over its life and ministry. This option could involve a MOU and shared leadership meetings to be reviewed after 3 years with the possibility of becoming one church.
5. Though the CH&CB Team members may have had preferred outcomes in mind, they were pastorally sensitive to the needs of the particular congregations and sought to assist them in making wise decisions about their futures. This approach takes time and they followed the process quite closely, firstly exploring if revitalisation was possible and what capacity each church might have to be revitalised. As mentioned above, once churches had less than 12 members, revitalisation options are rarely viable.
6. There have been a number of quite positive outcomes from these interventions. An example of this is Sandringham Baptist, leading to the closure of the church with all their financial assets being returned to BUV and a mission grant being provided to a new church plant ('SandyLife'). Other examples are Bass Coast members having become members of Wonthaggi Baptist but continue as a congregation in Grantville and Mordialloc has merged with Beaumaris which is now one church in two locations. Others are still in progress with a range of possible outcomes being available.

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF BUV INTERVENTION IN DECLINING CHURCHES TRIAL - CLENDINNING REPORT

7. Though, some pastors and leaders agreed to participate in the process, not all were open to any significant shift to what they were currently doing. Such resistance comes from a multiple reasons, such as: pastors and leaders having their personal and professional identities closely tied to their current roles; pastors and leaders wanting to ensure they leave a legacy; emotional connectedness to the past history; fears and anxieties; personal sense of ownership of the ministry or property; grief and loss associated with potential change; suspicion of BUV 'just wanting to get their hands on our assets (property and money)'. This was particularly problematic where incumbent pastors have self-interest in the outcome; for example, the use of a manse or their personal or professional identity/status, or don't have any other perceived ministry options. Though it may not change the outcome, it will be essential to ensure that all current pastors of such churches are provided with pastoral support throughout the process from someone independent of CH&CB. This could be through the Regional Pastors. These resistances need to be named if they are to be addressed.
8. Often there was a 'welfare mentality' where the pastor or leaders were seeking to be rescued or resourced from BUV or elsewhere, including people to be provided for them from other larger churches.
9. The establishment of proxy leadership teams from other regional churches is a crucial part of the strategy when churches had reached a critical state. One question that arises is whether the proxy leadership teams need to be approved by the local church? There also appears to be a lack of clarity of their actual role and the extent of their involvement in the operations of the church during this period. There needs to be a clear mandate and agenda for the proxy leadership teams with regular reporting back with transparency to the local church. One of the issues identified was that of some influential persons (gatekeepers) not being included in the conversations but undermining behind the scenes. Consideration should be given to proxy teams to include one or two key influencers/leaders from the current church on the team.
10. Another key factor in contributing to the success of any interventions was the trusted and supportive relationships that already existed between the leadership of the church and representatives of the wider churches. The more successful interventions occurred where there was already in existence a strong relationship with BUV staff (or an interim pastor) with the church leadership that had been nurtured over a period of time. Such relationships need a long lead time to build such trust and confidence with BUV to counter past experiences, suspicions and myths. The role of Regional Pastors in developing such relationships over time will play an important part in building such trust. There is likely to be a greater measure of success with a positive intervention if there has been a relationship already established over time, rather than little previous positive contact with BUV staff.
11. Interventions are also more likely to succeed if there has been some engagement at a much earlier time than when membership numbers fall below 12. Earlier conversations when the membership is between 12 and 30 will enable more options to be put on the table moving forward. Once numbers get to 12 members it is very late to be able to consider revitalisation options due to lack of available workers. The earlier focus can then be more around what is healthy rather than the fears and anxieties of survival having dominance. That is, earlier proactive intervention by engaging with the church around possible revitalisation and renewal, when they get down to around 30 persons in attendance, will help in both building a positive relationship with BUV as well as consider more viable options. There are some questions around the most appropriate time to include the MC Team being invited into conversations with a declining church.

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF BUV INTERVENTION IN DECLINING CHURCHES TRIAL - CLENDINNING REPORT

12. The closing and/or merging congregations takes time, especially when the church has had a long history. Pastorally, this cannot be rushed as congregations need time to process options and come to terms with a changing future. The recognition of the contributions of current and former leaders and members and celebrating history is crucial, including the heritage of the founding members. Even though a church may close or merge, if assets are invested in new housing corridors or missional settings, then recognition of where the assets have come from for birthing something new will be helpful.
13. Helping the remaining members find 'a new home' when the church was closing assisted in the transition while also helping them deal with their fears and anxieties and loss. A pastoral follow-up 3 to 6 months later to check on how these people are adjusting to new circumstances would be beneficial. In fact, including a 6 month review of the progress and implementation of any closure or merger would provide opportunity to monitor what has been helpful and what different approaches could possibly be made in the future.
14. While they do work close together, the CH&CB and the Finance & Administration (F&A) teams do have differing priorities in regards to possible church closures and mergers. It is essential that initial conversations with a declining church be held with the CH&CB team before any church involvement with F&A. However, earlier conversations between the CH&CB and F&A Teams needs to occur to ensure, when necessary, motions are worded correctly regarding the transfer of any property and assets, especially in regard to mergers and closures. F&A need to be kept in the loop throughout the Church Health engagement, though recognising that the process will not be a short one and needs to be pastorally and missionally driven. Any administrative procedures need to assist and support the congregational members in their decision-making and therefore seek to provide for best outcomes so needs to be dealt with sensitivity due to anxiety, loss and grief. F&A tend to prefer a shorter period of resolution, without considering the pastoral and emotional impact that needs to be worked through by the current church members.
15. It was crucial that Sections 4 and 5 of the Use of Properties from Dissolved Churches were implemented. Listening to the wishes of the church was important in helping them move to a decision to close or merge. While the final decision regarding the Advancement Fund lies with the BUV Assembly, consideration of the local community where the church existed is essential. However, the BUV needs to also consider the broader strategic priorities, particularly as it relates to new housing developments.
16. A number of documents were mentioned as not being clear, particularly in regard to lack of clarity of the process through Schedule B. The documents regarding the purchasing and selling of properties, while helpful, need preambles to give a more pastoral and missional context.
17. While not a specific area in the scope this review, an area for further consideration will be the growing number of CALD churches and their sustainability. Some of these churches will decline within a couple of generations due to the cessation of immigration from particular ethnic groups. Some groups bring substantial resources with them to be able to purchase properties, while others, especially asylum seekers and refugees have little resources. How do we provide access to properties for such groups while also sustaining a community of faith for the whole community, not just a particular ethnic group?

APPENDIX A

REVIEW OF BUV INTERVENTION IN DECLINING CHURCHES TRIAL - CLENDINNING REPORT

Recommendations from Report

In light of the review, the report recommends the following:

- A. That this trial intervention policy and processes be continued with some slight adjustments and regular 3 yearly reviews to monitor its implementation.
- B. The number of church members for the BUV to intervene with a mandatory conversation to be changed in Schedule B to a minimum of 12 members.
- C. When churches with only 12 to 30 members are considering the sale or purchase of a property, this be in consultation with the BUV Council (after conversation with the CH&CB team). Consideration also be given to having a regulation that requires joint decisions by the Union Council and the local church regarding the sale or purchase of property when the membership is between 12 and 30.
- D. Guidelines to be drawn up for the role and scope of Proxy Leadership Teams, particularly in regards to the level of involvement the team might have in the ongoing church operations during this period of intervention.
- E. Consideration being given, in each individual case, to the appointment of one or two of the current church members being included on the Proxy Leadership Team.
- F. That the local church agree to the makeup of any Proxy Leadership Team.
- G. That whenever an intervention conversation with a church is initiated that, where appropriate, independent pastoral support for any current pastor (and congregational leaders) be implemented. This to occur in consultation with the Regional Pastor.
- H. Whenever a church has declined to 30 members, then contact be made with the church, either via the Regional Pastor or CH&CB team to work with them in finding a solution to the decline.
- I. That the CH&CB team ensure support for the members of a congregation that is closing or merging to settle into a new spiritual home.
- J. That the CH&CB and F&A teams confer whenever an intervention process is implemented so that F&A is kept in the loop for a possible time when admin procedures need to be implemented for the closure or merger of a church.
- K. Introductory paragraphs be added to the 'Guide for Churches Purchasing Property' and 'Guide for Churches Selling Property' emphasising the value of the association of churches in working together to ensure the best outcome for the future ministry and mission of the Baptist Movement in Victoria.
- L. Ensure there is clarity of the process with the implementation of Schedule B.

Report for BUV by Ken Clendinning
September 2019