

Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

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The Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT is a movement of more than 330 autonomous congregations committed to serving together with the vision of impacting our communities for Jesus Christ.

As a movement of churches we share a common commitment to **worship, evangelism, fellowship, teaching and compassion**, and together are able to support and resource ministries that would be impossible to do alone.

As a family we are diverse - we are multi-cultural and multi-generational, serving in metropolitan, regional, rural and coastal communities and overseas. We express worship and ministry in a myriad of ways.

Yet we are united under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and our commitment to core Biblical beliefs and Baptist distinctives. We are united in our desire to make a difference for Jesus ... locally, across our State, nation and world!

We welcome your interest in finding out more about what it means to join our family of churches. We would encourage you to prayerfully consider the enclosed material, reflecting in particular on the key reasons why your congregation would like to become part of our family of churches.

We see that such a move brings **a number of privileges** such as fellowship, resourcing, support, accountability and the opportunity to participate in exciting shared ministries - such as Global interAction, Morling College, New Start Church Planting, etc.

Yet there are also **responsibilities** ... of playing an active role within our family of churches - practically, prayerfully and financially.

Our Ministry Support and Development (MSD) Team and Baptist Ministry Centre Administrative Staff will do all they can to assist you in this process.

As a first point of contact, please speak with Rev Pete Davies on 0412 795 922. Email: pdavies@baptistnsw.asn.au

The following package contains:

1. **Privileges and Responsibilities' Sheet**
2. **Church Recognition and Affiliation Guidelines**
3. **Church Recognition and Affiliation Expression of Interest Form**
4. **Other Important and Helpful Information**
5. **"Fair Share" Financial Information**
6. **Church Constitution Information**
7. **Statement of Beliefs**
8. **Copy of Directions 2007 Vision Booklet and Local Church Workbook**
9. **Recent copy of Together in Ministry Magazine**

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Privileges and Responsibilities

"Why join?" is a common question asked by congregations considering applying for church recognition and affiliation with the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT.

It is a good question to ask and one that we would encourage church leaderships and congregations to prayerfully consider.

For it is one thing to seek affiliation for pragmatic reasons - such as getting insurance cover - it is another thing to join with a commitment to playing a part in the growth and development of our movement of churches, as together we seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ locally, across NSW and ACT, throughout the nation and across the globe!

This summary sheet seeks to cover some of what we see are the privileges and responsibilities of being a part of our movement of churches. We will welcome discussing this with you in more detail.

Some of the privileges

- ✓ Fellowship with other Baptist congregations in your area and across the State
- ✓ The opportunity to support a range of exciting shared ministries that would be out of reach of an individual congregation ... such as ...
 - *Global InterAction*
 - *Morling College*
 - *New Start Church Planting*
 - *Baptist World Aid Australia*
 - *Crossover Australia*
- ✓ The opportunity to play a part in supporting evangelism across NSW and ACT, Australia and overseas
- ✓ The opportunity through financial and practical giving to support the development of other churches across the State - including small rural churches and new church plants - as well as the development of pastors throughout NSW and ACT
- ✓ Access to a range of church health and development resources and ministry support through our MSD Ministry Team
- ✓ Access to legal and administrative resources and support through the Baptist Ministry Centre

- ✓ Access to children's and youth ministries' resources and support, including child protection policies and guidelines
- ✓ Access to other helpful ministry resources across a range of ministry areas
- ✓ Access for your pastor(s) to a range of growth and development opportunities

Some of the responsibilities

- ✓ The responsibility of joining our family of churches for the right reasons and with a commitment to playing a part in the growth of our movement
- ✓ A commitment to Baptist distinctives
- ✓ A commitment to protecting the unity of our family of churches
- ✓ A commitment to financially supporting our shared ministries through payment of affiliation fees and support of our Together in Ministry (TIM) Budget. (For more details see "Fair Share" sheet in this package)
- ✓ A commitment to co-operation with other Baptist Churches in your area
- ✓ The responsibility to play your part in decision-making forums such as Assembly and the encouragement of members of your church to be involved in denominational ministries and bodies

The MSD Ministry Team and the Baptist Ministry Centre Staff will be pleased to discuss any of the above points in more detail and provide further information.

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Guidelines

The following guidelines seek to step you through the church recognition and affiliation process.

Introduction

In introducing these new church recognition and affiliation guidelines, the MSD Council recognises a growing diversity in church models.

While united around core biblical beliefs, Baptist Churches - in particular new congregations - are increasingly diverse in their approach to structure, ministry, methodology and practice.

These guidelines seek to reflect this diversity, while also providing helpful accountability processes for all churches seeking to affiliate with our movement of churches.

It should be noted that these guidelines do not recommend or stipulate a minimum number of people for church formation.

The number of people required for a viable and sustainable ministry will depend on the model and context of the new congregation.

For example, a healthy house-church model will not require the same amount of people and structure as a multi-faceted programme church model.

In introducing these new guidelines the MSD Council recognises that there will be increasing diversity in our movement. What we are primarily concerned with is the health and viability of the new congregation, its commitment to mission and its genuine desire to play a part in our family of churches.

It needs to be noted that while there is no minimum number required for church recognition and affiliation, congregations which desire to buy and own property will be subject to requirements under the Baptist Churches of NSW Property Trust Act. Further information on these requirements can be found on the Baptist Union website or by contacting the administrative team at the Baptist Ministry Centre.

Process

Please read and consider the following guidelines before completing Expression of Interest form.

1. All new congregations seeking to be recognised and affiliated with the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT should first make contact with the Director - Church Development Rev Pete Davies.

Pete will provide relevant paperwork and also arrange a time for himself or a member of the Evangelism and Church Development Taskforce to meet with your church leadership/congregation/core group - depending on your context.

2. You will then be asked to complete a ***"Church Recognition and Affiliation Expression of Interest" (EOI)*** application (enclosed in this kit).

This application will be returned to the Evangelism and Church Development Taskforce for its consideration and endorsement.

Endorsement does not result in immediate church recognition and affiliation.

Rather it is an endorsement of the ***"applicant church"*** to proceed towards recognition and affiliation, subject to meeting all requirements.

3. In some cases the applicant church - when submitting this expression - will have already met the requirements of ***By-Law 18 A2*** (see next page).

In most cases the Taskforce and MSD Ministry Team will work with the applicant church in moving towards meeting these requirements which include preparation of a Church Constitution.

"BY-LAW 18: ADMISSION OF CHURCHES

A. Admission

1. Upon application in the manner hereinafter provided and the recommendation of the Executive Committee, an Assembly may, by resolution, affiliate with the Union a church within the State of New South Wales, and such church shall have its name entered in the official register of the Union.
2. Every application by a church to be affiliated with the Union shall -
 - (a) Be in writing, accompanied by a copy of the church's constitution and a copy of the resolution of the church meeting requesting affiliation.
 - (b) Furnish evidence to the satisfaction of the Executive Committee that it subscribes to the doctrinal basis of the Union as set out in the Act of Incorporation of the Baptist Union of New South Wales and is recognised as a Baptist Church by the Ministry Support and Development Council."

4. Following Taskforce endorsement a recommendation will be brought to the MSD Council that the church be placed on *a list of "applicant churches proceeding to recognition and affiliation"*.

This will allow for the applicant church to seek insurance coverage under the MSD "umbrella". This cover will be formally transferred to the church upon affiliation. The cost of the cover while under the MSD umbrella will be met by the local church, unless otherwise agreed to by the Taskforce or MSD Council.

5. Following the above processes, the applicant church be assisted to meet the requirements of By-Law 18 A2 (see above).
6. Alongside this the MSD Ministry Team and Taskforce, along with the Baptist Ministry Centre staff, will be available to work with the church in areas such as church health, ministry vision, leadership structure, church administration and finances, legal requirements, child protection policies, etc.

This will allow the Taskforce and MSD Council to be confident in its recommendation to the Executive Committee for church affiliation.

7. Once By-Law requirements have been met, the applicant church will submit a copy of Church Constitution together with a letter providing details of formal church meeting at which a resolution seeking affiliation was passed. This letter should also contain a list of those people who will become members of the constituted church. A template is available on the Baptist website: ministries; church development; affiliation letter.
8. With this information, and satisfied with the health and viability of the applicant church, a recommendation will come to the MSD Council to recognise the Church and support its affiliation with the family of churches.
9. The MSD will then recommend to the Executive Committee to proceed with the affiliation of the church.
10. Following endorsement by the Executive Committee an appropriate Recognition and Affiliation Service will be organised with the Church where a representative from our denominational leadership will formally welcome the new church into the family of churches.

***** *Additional Notes and Guidelines* *****

Timeframes:

There is no specific or required timeframe for the above process, although the goal will be to move towards affiliation as soon as possible, while ensuring healthy processes are followed.

Current Fellowships:

Under the new policy, all existing fellowships will be invited to consider applying for recognition and affiliation in accordance with the above guidelines. They will not need to go through the EOI process with the MSD Council able to make a recommendation to the Executive Committee to proceed with affiliation, once all requirements have been met.

Church Split:

Where an applicant group is the result of a church split the Taskforce can require a church consultancy as part of the application process.

Review:

Should the Taskforce determine not to endorse an EOI, an applicant church can seek the MSD Council to review this decision.

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process
Expression of Interest Application

Please complete the following and return to:

Carolyn Altman
Administration Assistant to Pete Davies
Director – Church Development
Baptist Union of NSW
25 Fullagar Ave
LITHGOW NSW 2790

If you need assistance in completing the form, please contact Carolyn on 0402 204585
or caltman@baptistnsw.asn.au.

Name of Church:

Service Meeting Address:

Church Postal Address:

Name of Pastor:

Pastor Contact Details

Postal Address:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

Name of Secretary/Administrator:

Secretary/Administrator Contact Details

Postal Address:

Phone:

Mobile:

Email:

- * Does the Church have any other affiliation or links with other Christian or Church bodies?

- * Has the church considered the responsibilities and privileges of becoming part of our family of churches - including "fair share" commitments? Yes/No

- * Has your congregation implemented or are you in the process of implementing child protection policies/protocols? Yes/No

- * Has the congregation met to discuss this affiliation proposal?

- * When was this meeting held?
(Please attach copy of any formal resolution)

- * Any other comments:

Signatures on behalf of the Church: (at least two to sign)

Date:

- *** Please attach any additional information you believe would be helpful.**

- *** Please submit Church Constitution (if already completed)**

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Other Helpful and Important Information

In seeking church recognition and affiliation with the Baptist Churches of NSW & ACT there are a number of other important practical matters which need to be taken into account.

The following check-list seeks to help you with this process.

✓ ***Website***

Make sure you visit our website www.baptistnsw.asn.au - a source of vital information for our churches.

Information is regularly updated and many ministry, administrative, financial and legal questions will be answered by visiting the site.

Most of this information package can be downloaded from the web - (See under Church Development section)

New churches will be provided with the user name and password for the administrative section of the site. For more details contact Greg Gough 9868 9220 or greggough@baptistnsw.asn.au.

✓ ***Email***

Email communication is an integral aspect of life today and to save on costly and inefficient paper mail-outs, most denominational communication comes in email form.

Under our email network, every Baptist Church in NSW and ACT is allocated with its own Baptist email address to which messages are regularly sent.

Contact Greg Gough at the Baptist Ministry Centre on 9868 9220 or greggough@baptistnsw.asn.au to set up your email address.

✓ ***Church Handbook Details***

Good communication requires up-to-date information and so we need your help in maintaining your church's contact details.

Following receipt of Expression of Interest application and endorsement as an "Applicant Church" you will be asked to provide up-to-date church contact details for inclusion in our Church Handbook. You will need to complete relevant material and have each person listed on the form give their consent for the publishing of these details under privacy provisions.

You will be requested to confirm the data on file each year, however updated information may be e-mailed to Greg Gough at any time.

Church statistics are also collected annually (number of church members, number of baptisms, etc) and included in the published handbook.

Please be in contact with Greg Gough on 98689220 or greggough@baptistnsw.asn.au when you need to change these details or to arrange to purchase a copy of the handbook.

✓ ***Church Founding Membership List***

The list of members current at the founding of the church should be forwarded to Carolyn Altman on caltman@baptistnsw.asn.au.

✓ ***Australian Business Number (ABN), Goods and Services Tax (GST), Pay as You Go (PAYG) and Tax Concession Charity (TCC)***

All our churches are required to have ABN registration and TCC endorsement. Additional registrations (GST and PAYG) withholding should be considered when appropriate to the circumstances of the church.

◆ **ABN** is a single identifier that churches use to:

- register for GST and claim input tax credits
- register for PAYG withholding
- deal with investment bodies
- apply to the Australian Tax Office (ATO) as an entity of a non-profit organisation and exempt for income tax purposes
- apply to the ATO for endorsement as a TCC
- apply to the ATO for endorsement as a deductible gift recipient for gifts and donations
- interact with the ATO and other government departments, agencies and authorities

◆ GST RELIGIOUS GROUP

As a GST Religious Group, the group members will not be required to charge GST and claim input tax credits on related transactions within the group. Before your church can register as part of a GST Religious Group, you have to apply for an ABN and register for GST and TCC status. Following the application for an ABN, the ATO will send you the ABN, GST and TCC registration.

If you wish to join the GST Religious Group please send the following documents to Greg Gough, PO Box 122, Epping NSW 1710

1. A covering letter requesting membership of the Baptist Union of Australia “GST Religious Group” and describing the relationship between the organisation seeking membership and organisation which is a member of the Baptist Union of NSW.
2. A copy of the Australian Business Register (lists the organisation’s ABN and details where it has been registered for GST).
3. A copy of the organisation’s TCC endorsement.

◆ **GST** - registration enables the church to claim back GST paid on goods and services purchased by the church.

◆ **PAYG** - registration required when the church becomes an employer and remits to the ATO, tax with-held from employee salary payments

◆ **TCC** - Endorsement under the new measures provides charities with access to the concessions listed below:-

1. **Income tax exemption** - that the entity is exempt from income tax.
2. **GST concessions** - that the entity has the right to access the not-for-profit concessions for GST ie non-commercial activities, fundraising events, sub-entities and GST groups.
3. **FBT rebate and exemption** - that the entity is entitled to an FBT rebate for general staff such that the FBT is reduced to take account of the tax exempt status of the entity. Religious practitioners engaged by religious institutions will be exempt from FBT.

A church can apply for ABN, GST, PAYG TCC and exemption for income tax purposes on-line or physical lodgement.

You can apply for an ABN:

1. electronically through
 - the Australian Business Register (ABR) at www.abr.gov.au if all you want to do is apply for an ABN

- the **Business Entry Point** (BEP) (www.business.gov.au) where you can also attend to other government obligations, as well as apply for an ABN
 - the Business Entry Point at www.business.gov.au where you can also attend to other government obligations
2. on a paper form, available by phoning the Tax Office on **1300 130 248**, or
 3. Through a Tax Agent, who will lodge your application using the electronic lodgement system.

✓ ***Child Protection***

As a movement of churches we are committed to the protection and safety of children in our churches.

All new congregations should take time to consider this important matter and delegate responsibility for the development of child protection policies and protocols.

For further details, including a detailed Child Safety Policy template document, visit the children's ministry section of our website baptistnsw.asn.au.

✓ ***Some Other Legal/Care Issues***

As churches grow and develop a range of other legal/care issues will need to be addressed. These will include OHS and privacy policies. As required, Baptist Church House Staff and resources from the website will be of assistance.

✓ ***Insurance***

Once endorsed as an "*Applicant Church*" by the MSD Council your church will be entitled to insurance cover through Baptist Insurance Management Ltd. A package of insurance policies appropriate for a church has been prepared by Baptist Insurance Management Ltd.

The standard package of policies appropriate for all churches incorporates the following policies:-

Directors and Officers - covers the legal liability of church officers resulting from a Wrongful Act.

Professional Indemnity – covers legal liability of church officers for breach of professional duty.

Public Liability – covers the church's liability in relation to Third Party Personal Injury and/or Damage to Property.

Personal Accident – covers youth group leaders and participants involved in youth group activities

Contract Works to \$500k – covers building works to \$500k

Churches which own buildings normally also include:

Church Building and Contents Insurance

Churches undertaking substantial building works may also purchase:

Contract Works over \$500k – covers building works over \$500k

More details about insurance matters can be found at
baptistnsw.asn.au/admin/insurance.

✓ ***Banking***

Baptist Churches have access to the professional and helpful services of Baptist Investments and Finance Ltd (BIF). As well as competitive rates and excellent service for local congregations, banking with BIF supports the wider work of our family of churches. BIF is a significant financial contributor to a number of ministries including the key financial partner of the New Start Church Planting ministry.

It is also important to understand the ministry role BIF plays in facilitating church building works. When seeking to borrow funds, a credible future cash-flow forecast is a critical item in providing confidence to a lending institution to show that scheduled repayments would be met. Many lending institutions such as banks will not permit congregational pledges to be included in cash-flow forecasts, whereas the board of BIF places great significance on congregational pledges. BIF finances many church building works which would not be funded by any other financial institution.

However like all financial institutions, BIF can only lend to churches to finance building programmes to the extent that churches and individuals have funds on deposit with them.

For more information – www.bif.com.au

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Contact Us

Baptist Ministry Centre

Postal: PO Box 122
EPPING NSW 1710

Email: info@baptistnsw.asn.au

Phone: General Info and
Admin Enquiries 98689200

Finance 8572 3270

Insurance 9868 9213

Fax: 9868 9201

Ministry Support and Development Team

Rev Ken Clendinning (Director – Ministry Support & Development)
kclendinning@baptistnsw.asn.au
0421 289917

Rev Vivian Grice (Director – Pastoral Development)
vgrice@baptistnsw.asn.au
0412 598247

Rev Pete Davies (Director - Church Development)
pdavies@baptistnsw.asn.au
0412 795 922

Rev Andrew Palmer (Director - Children, Youth and Young Adults)
andrew@baptistyouthministries.org.au
0412 880007

Rev Frank Farag (Director – Cross Cultural Ministries)
frankfarag@baptistnsw.asn.au
0420 652656

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Paying Your "Fair Share"

In choosing to seek affiliation with the Baptist family of churches in NSW and ACT there is an expectation that each church will be committed to playing their part in the family.

This commitment includes contributing to the finances of the family which supports all our shared ministries - as outlined in other material in this package.

Affiliation Fees

Baptist Churches in NSW and ACT currently pay an *affiliation fee* for each member of their church. The fee is \$25 pa for each member. This figure is set by the Annual Assembly of our churches.

While we value this support, these fees provide less than 25% of the total funding required to support our exciting shared ministry initiatives.

Churches are invoiced quarterly for their affiliation fees, based on reported membership details.

Together in Ministry (Co-operative) Budget:

The TIM Budget funds our shared, co-operative ministries across NSW and ACT, including:

- MSD ministry field staff who work to serve our churches
- Baptist Ministry Centre administrative support team
- Cross-cultural ministry
- Youth and children's ministry
- Evangelism, church planting, church health, pastoral subsidies
- Significant contributions towards the operating cost of Morling College and Global interAction's operational costs in NSW

Without the generous support of our churches to the TIM Budget, many of these ministries would grind to a halt, as would significant services and support to local churches - many of which can be taken for granted, but are vital to the functioning of local churches.

The budget will vary from year to year, but at the time of writing it was approximately \$1.5 million.

Local churches are encouraged to include their TIM contributions in their annual budget.

Further details about how these funds are utilised across our family of churches can be found on our website baptistnsw.asn.au

Fair Share

As a guide to help local churches when considering their budgets, we have calculated what we consider to be a "*fair share*" of the financial load.

The "Fair Share" (ie sum of Affiliation fees and contributions towards the TIM Budget) is calculated on the basis of \$3000 pa for each 35 regular adult church attenders (this ratio can be calculated for any sized church - \$2000 for 23 persons etc).

It is recognised however that all churches are not the same. Some are able to give more than their "fair share", while others due to local circumstances might not be in a position to give as much.

We appreciate that for many new churches financial resources are limited and the above figures may seem quite high. However we would encourage all our new churches to commit to giving to our shared ministries and to further seek to increase this amount each year as they grow and develop.

This is a healthy stewardship exercise which will bring benefit to the local church and our movement of churches across NSW and ACT.

For more information about any of the above or other related financial or TIM Budget matters, please be in contact with either:

General Secretary, Mr Alan Soden
asoden@baptistnsw.asn.au

or

Finance Manager, Mr Ray Wong
raywong@baptistnsw.asn.au

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Church Constitution

Enclosed in this package is a copy of the *Church Constitution Template* which is aimed at serving as a helpful guide to new Baptist Churches in developing a constitution.

The template is only a guide.

Some churches choose to develop their constitution along similar lines to the template, while others prepare a document which looks very different to the template.

In developing a new constitution congregations will need to consider a number of important matters, such as:

- *Membership guidelines*
- *Leadership and Governance issues/structures*
- *How congregational participation will be encouraged*
- *Healthy accountability processes*

There are also a number of legal matters which need to be addressed and these are listed in the template document.

Some churches see the preparation of a constitution as an onerous, "must-do" task.

Others have creatively used the process to allow members of the congregation to consider together key doctrinal beliefs and Baptist distinctives, as well as practices which will allow for the development of a healthy, functional ministering congregation.

A copy of the constitution template can be found in the administrative section of the website baptistnsw.asn.au.

Copies of constitutions from other local churches (produced with their permission) are available by contacting Pete Davies.

Pete can also be contacted for more general information on this process. Some specific questions may then be referred to the denomination's Honorary Legal Adviser if required.

Church Recognition and Affiliation Process

Action Points:

Use this page to jot down any action points on which members of your church leadership need to follow-up as you work through the recognition and affiliation process.

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