



Baptist Union
of Victoria

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



DIRECTOR OF MISSION AND MINISTRIES



REV DANIEL BULLOCK

Director of Mission and Ministries

I'm pleased to report that 2023 was a year of celebrating initiative. We have heard and seen churches and communities of faith throughout our union taking initiatives with new activities or programs in new areas and with new people. It has been exciting to see and celebrate with churches as they take risks to see the kingdom of God released in new and different ways.

This focus on initiative was also supported by our annual internal research which identified a more positive outlook for the year. You can read more on this on pages 3 - 5.

Among our BUW Support Hub strategic priorities for 2023, some of the key initiatives we focused on were:

1. Developing a union wide prayer initiative and encourage participation – in 2023, we launched online corporate prayer meetings, Let's Pray Together and saw a gradual increase in attendance. We encouraged and incorporated prayer in each initiative we undertook and have initiated plans for a specific BUW Prayer Week to kick off the year annually from 2024.
2. Defining, demystifying and exploring what evangelism looks like in the future - In 2023, our discernment process focussed on evangelism with discussion at 6 consultation forums and Members' Dinner. We gathered information that will be utilised to develop our mission strategy into the future.
3. Roll out of Professional Pastoral Supervision (PPS) for all pastoral leaders – In 2023, we advised all pastoral leaders that from 2024, PPS will be a mandatory requirement of BUW accreditation. In addition, we added 40 Supervisors as BUW Recognised Professional Pastoral Supervisors and will continue to add to this number in the following months, ensuring all pastoral leaders can be accommodated.

In addition, we also participated in some fairly substantial advocacy in 2023 with education and information provided on The Indigenous Voice to Parliament, our Stand with Myanmar advocacy and fundraising campaign with Baptist Mission Australia campaign and our contribution to the national Baptist Converge event at Parliament House in October.

I wish to thank both our Union Council for their guidance through yet another year; and our Support Hub Leadership Team and their team members for another year of diligence and dedication; both working towards our vision of being a union of flourishing churches with Christlike followers who join with God's redemptive work in society.

“ To our member churches, communities of faith and agencies who have shown enthusiasm and initiative this year, I pray God's blessing and fruitfulness as you seek to flourish both as leaders and churches or communities.”

Rev Daniel Bullock

Director of Mission and Ministries

2023 VISION, MISSION AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The BUV's vision, mission, strategic focus areas and lenses remain consistent year on year. These are the pillars on which the BUV Support Hub operates.

VISION / MISSION

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



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

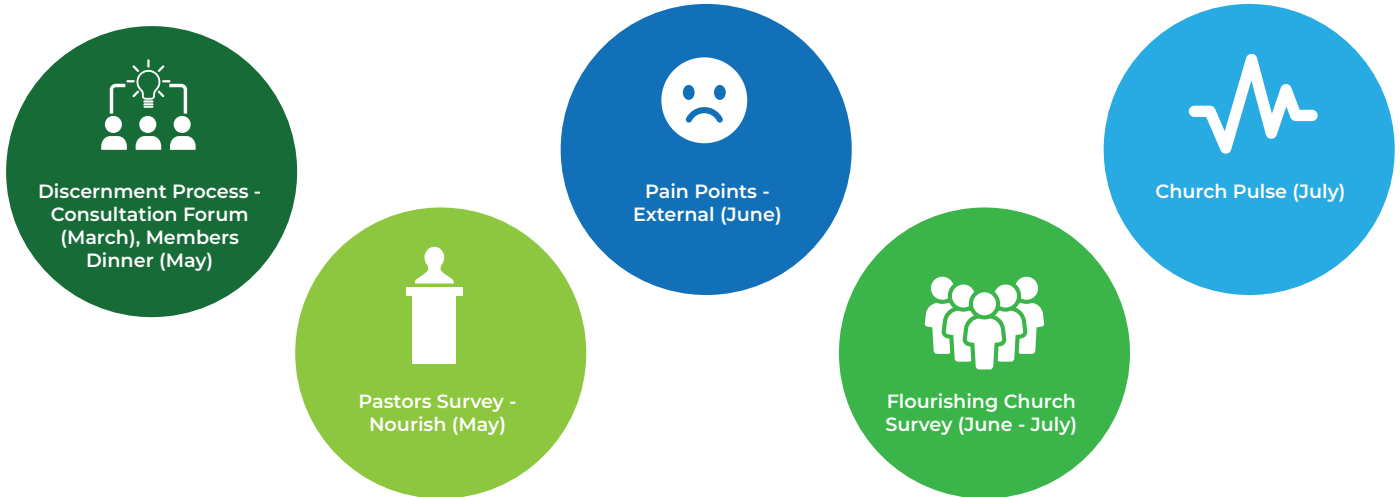
STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

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



INSIGHTS FROM BUV 2023 RESEARCH

BUV ANNUAL RESEARCH METHODS



The BUV initiates research each year using surveys throughout the year in order to assist in understanding the state of our union, the areas of strength and weaknesses, and the opportunities to focus on for the future. In addition, this year, we also specifically collected some information from the non- church going members of the community (external to the BUV), in order to understand the community landscape, areas of strength and weakness and the challenges community members are facing.

Although these insights are not included below, we also take into account the feedback we receive from our field staff who are talking with pastors and leaders of churches each day and our annual statistical surveys, that provide insight into attendance, membership and baptism trends, numbers participating in community outreach, and giving trends.

The follow research methods were used in 2023

1. Pastors Survey – Nourish (May)
2. Flourishing Church Survey (June – July)
3. Church Pulse – (July)
4. Discernment Process – Consultation forum (March), Members Dinner (May)
5. Pain Points – external (June)

Takeaways from the research above indicate an improved state for our churches compared to the past couple of years, with an alignment on our core priority, being mission.

Major sentiments across congregations were positivity, hope, enthusiasm and cautious optimism / anticipation. There was a definite improvement in the general sentiment for pastors and leaders, who reported more positivity and excitement about the future - although this can be balanced by a feeling of exhaustion at times.

Churches have seen a slight increase in attendance but most have not yet reached the consistency of their pre-covid level and are seeing some decrease in the frequency of attendance. Churches are making changes to stay relevant to the time, such as a renewed focus on prayer, preaching appropriate for newcomers, hospitality for newcomers, online programs and more of an outward focus.

Overall, the research results suggest that despite signs of a general lack of hope within the wider community, with specific fears such as cost of living and mental health anxiety, the church is well placed to provide support to community wellbeing into the future.

FLOURISHING CHURCH FRAMEWORK AND SURVEY RESULTS



2023 was the 3rd year of the Flourishing Church Survey



25% increase on the number of churches participating - resulting in more accurate overall view



Improvements made to questions to ensure greater understanding across the board



More statistically representative results



Likert scale now used – 1-10



7+ rating deemed by BUV to = “Flourishing”

In 2023, the Flourishing Church Survey was undertaken for the third year with improvements made from the first two years of learnings. The changes have been made to assist churches across the breadth of our union to more consistently understand each of the FCF elements. This ensured a more statistically significant result, a 23.5% increase in submissions on the previous year and all aspects of the framework being ranked as flourishing by a higher percentage of churches.

In 2023, the rating scale for the questions ranged from Not Applicable through Poor, Average to High, Excellent and To the Fullest Extent, with Flourishing defined as High or Above. In 2023, we changed the rating on the Likert scale to 1 – 10 with flourishing defined as a rating of 7 or above.

Due to the structural changes to the survey, direct comparisons of church’s scores for each FCF item is statistically unworkable. However, it is helpful to look at each element of the framework to compare the percentage of churches who classified themselves as “flourishing” year on year.

It was very pleasing to see that each element registered a significant increase in the 2023 FCF data of the % of churches who considered themselves to be flourishing. We believe this is due to there being a greater level of activity, connection and enthusiasm to be engaged together in congregations and communities after coming out of COVID, combined with the improvements made to the survey.

For example, Spirituality increased from 40% of churches rating themselves as flourishing in 2022 to 85% in 2023. Discipleship, often put in a similar category, rose from 43% to 69% of all churches rating themselves as flourishing. All other aspects of the framework saw more than 50% of all churches rating themselves as flourishing.

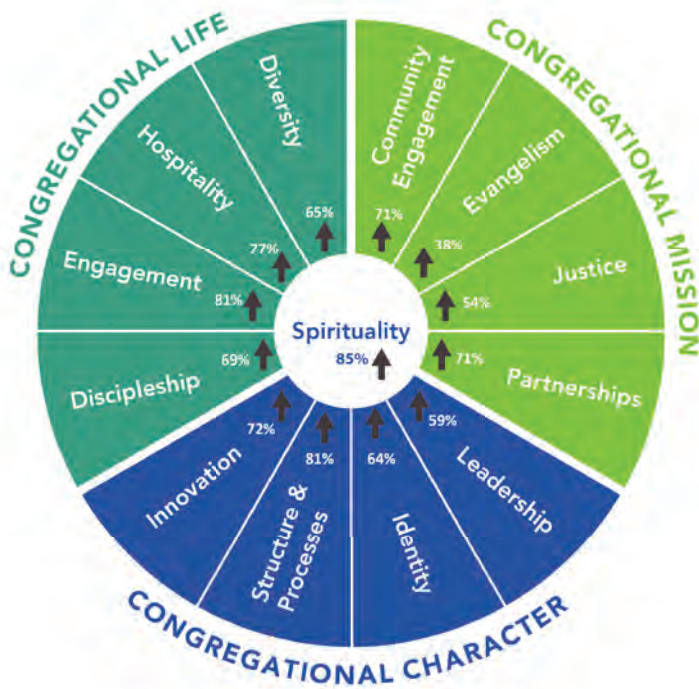
Although Evangelism remains our lowest rating, it did rise from 13% of all churches rating themselves as flourishing (high or above) to 38% of churches in 2023 defined as flourishing with a score of 7 or more out of 10. Given that in 2023 we had a focus on Evangelism in our discussion and discernment, this may also have affected the result favourably. Clearly more resourcing is required around this area.

Although the overall scores for each element of the FCF were increased, when we look at the aggregate score for each church (as opposed to each element) for 2023, the number of churches rating as 'flourishing' over all elements (meaning reaching an aggregate score of 7 or above for the total of the 13 aspects) was lower than the previous year.

In 2024, no changes will be made, meaning we will have two years of data to directly compare.

Congregational Mission QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS:

- Missional Excellence: 28.7% of BUV churches who responded to the 2023 FCF Survey scored 80% or higher in Congregational Mission. Their open responses were analysed to identify patterns of flourishing churches in this area of the FCF.
- Program Churches (151-350 members): 37.5% of Program churches score 80% or higher, leading the charge in Congregational Mission scores.
- Cultural differences: 46.1% of Combined congregations (English & LOTE) score top marks (80% or higher) in Congregational Mission.
- Community Engagement: Churches who scored themselves highly in Community Engagement invested in various initiatives, including coordinating community events and activities, meeting practical needs in their community, engaging in community volunteerism, and allowing community groups to use their church facility.
- Evangelism Efforts: High-scoring Evangelism churches prioritise tracking conversion and baptisms, coordinating outreach opportunities, facilitating evangelism training and resources for their members, communicating church vision and values on evangelism, and encouraging personal outreach efforts.
- Justice: Churches championing Justice were characterised by support for the marginalised, including the poor and homeless, advocating for international issues, domestic violence victims, asylum seekers, and First Nations people.
- Partnership: Top churches in Partnerships show a strategic collaboration with other organisations, churches, missionaries, and local councils.



- Church size did not significantly impact overall FCF scores
- Regional differences were notable, particularly in the area of Discipleship, Hospitality and Community Engagement
- Variation in Leadership ratings were apparent across church cultures, with LOTE churches rating themselves highest in this area

LOOKING FORWARD TO 2024

The research undertaken through 2023, combined with our discernment process throughout the year, provides the BUV Support Hub Leadership Team a strong foundation with which to develop the 2024 strategic plan. An overall strategic direction is set, from which teams are able to make specific team plans.

PRIORITIES

Some of the overall shared priorities to draw your attention to are:

- Resource and encourage churches to be and share the good news of Jesus
- Promote an active concern for the wellbeing of society*
- Develop a comprehensive church planting strategy for the next 10 years
- Research, listen and discover ways to engage the emerging generation in communities of faith
- Develop a 10-year leadership pipeline
- Nurture the spiritual vitality of BUV pastors and church leaders
- Bring the Union together in prayer and worship
- Build on the Flourishing Churches Framework



*Renew Wellbeing helps churches open spaces of welcome and inclusion where its ok not to be ok.

BAPTIST UNION OF VICTORIA STATISTICS

34,553

Average Estimated
Community Reach / Week

28,635

Average Number
of Attendees / Week

28,889

Average no online views
/ week

1134

NO.
baptisms

24,356

NO. church
members

11

NO. newly pastors
ordained in 2023

65

NO. new
accreditations in 2023

74

NO. pastoral
renewals in 2023

409

NO. ordained
pastors in 2023

118

LOTE congregations
(end 2023)

30

NO. languages
spoken (end 2023)

8

NO. of micro churches
(end 2023)

23

NO. of faith communities
(end 2023)

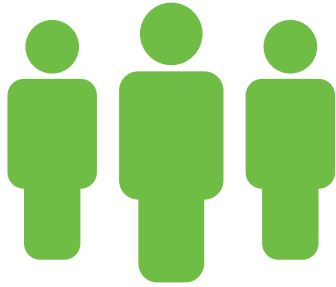
3

NO. missional communities
(end 2023)

224

NO. constituted churches
(end 2023)

BUY SUPPORT HUB STATISTICS



27.73

FULL TIME EQUIVALENT



18

FEMALE STAFF
MEMBERS



16

MALE STAFF
MEMBERS



44%

CULTURALLY AND
LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE

50%

FEMALE

50%

MALE

GENDER REPRESENTATION
ON LEADERSHIP TEAM

BUY SUPPORT HUB



HIGHLIGHTS

The BUV Support Hub exists to serve and support Baptist churches and communities of faith throughout Victoria. We are so pleased to have been able to assist pastors and leaders of the BUV throughout 2023 in the following ways:



CHURCHES

- We welcomed to the BUV 9 New Faith Communities, 2 new micro churches, and 3 new campuses
- We supported nine explorations of merger or partnership, five of which had an intercultural component
- We engaged with 14 congregations seeking to join the BUV as either faith communities or constituent churches
- We engaged with more than 20 BUV churches through coaching and mentoring for community engagement and church planting
- Missional Encouragement and Consultation with 48 churches and microchurches
- In partnership with Baptcare, supported new community initiatives through grants working with the most marginalised. (Dandenong, Phillip Island, and Werribee)
- Supported over 20 other churches in their missional initiatives through seed grants to begin community engagement projects, Renew Wellbeing spaces, and community meals to combat isolation

PASTORS & LEADERS

- 3310 points of contact with pastors and or church leadership
- 11 Candidates (36% CALD backgrounds, 45% women) were ordained
- 1 Pastors Ordination credentials transferred
- 65 New Pastors Accredited
- 365 Pastors attended Nourish days – encouragement and empowering days
- 457 Pastors undertook PSW sessions throughout the year
- 30 Pastors / Leaders undertook Prepare / Enrich Facilitator Training
- 20 Marriage Licenses were issued
- 35 Pastors / leaders were approved as Professional Pastoral Supervisors
- 85 leaders participated in the Multicultural Pastors' Retreat
- Rev Meewon Yang's leading role in our multicultural and refugee work across 25 years was recognized with the award of an Order of Australian Medal.
- over 70 leaders attended Discipling Multicultural Youth Symposium in collaboration with Whitley College
- 20 missional leaders and churches were Coached
- 10 placemakers were supported who are engaged in local communities with the good news of Jesus
- Nearly 900 leaders participated in Creating Safe Space workshops
- 61 treasurers, secretaries, executive pastors and administrators attended Finance and Administration workshops
- 15 leaders attended Be Safe training to be trained in essential safety measures platform
- 9 pastors and leaders from Myanmar served on a Myanmar Working Group to advise the BUV on issues relating to their home country and how best we could assist
- 25 young leaders were encouraged, empowered and equipped in second generation ministry through the Ignite leaders group

HIGHLIGHTS



ADVOCACY

- Several local Baptist church pastors joined our BUV Justice and Advocacy Group to advise and support Baptist advocacy efforts
- Resources for the BUV Justice and Advocacy Week were distributed to churches for use in early September. Resources are available for issues such as Myanmar, First Nations, Aged Care, Creation Care, Asylum Seekers, Homelessness, Global Poverty and Family Violence.
- The Government acted on sanctions proposed by a delegation of Baptists Pastors, supported by thousands of grass roots Baptists who took part in a postcard campaign to target Government action for the people of Myanmar
- Our Stand with the Myanmar campaign, in partnership with Baptist Mission Australia, not only raised over \$126,400, but also helped to raise awareness of the plight of people in Myanmar.

PRAYER

- A national ecumenical service was also facilitated by the BUV in support of the people of Myanmar
- Greater number of churches downloading our monthly prayer calendar and engaging in daily prayer for churches shared in the bulletin and on social media
- Greater number of people engaged with union wide online prayer services -Let's Pray together

OTHER

- Four hundred 1.5 and 2nd generation youth and young adults took part in our Ignite multicultural youth conference
- 55 congregation members attended our BUV Finishing Well seminar
- \$60,000 was received from major donors / high net worth individuals for our Church planting activities

TEAM REPORTS

CHURCH HEALTH & CAPACITY BUILDING

The Church Health & Capacity Building Team seeks to help churches to flourish internally and on mission. In 2023 the Team assisted numerous churches with various aspects of church life including church reviews, leadership development, team dynamics, strategic planning, improvements to governance and conflict resolution. Team members supported nine explorations of merger or partnership, five of which had an intercultural component. Churches are increasingly looking for opportunities to work together to ease administrative burdens and raise capacity for mission.



- MULTICULTURAL PASTORS RETREAT

The Team engaged with 14 congregations seeking to join the BUV as either faith communities or constituent churches. This entails support with considering Baptist ecclesiology, drafting constitutions, adopting Safe Church policies, and registering with the Australian Charities and Non-for-Profit Commission. It is encouraging to see this continued growth in the number and diversity of churches joining our union.

The BUV continues to be a leading denomination in intercultural engagement, with our multicultural consultants being invited to advise other state Baptist associations. In 2023 we ran several large events for LOTE churches and leaders – 85 leaders participated in the Multicultural Pastors' Retreat; nearly 400 youth and young adults took part in our Ignite conference; in collaboration with Whitley College, we ran a Discipling Multicultural Youth Symposium attended by over 70 leaders; and we played a leading role in organizing both an interfaith prayer service and lobbying campaign in support of the people of Myanmar. Rev Meewon Yang's leading role in our multicultural and refugee work across 25 years was recognized with the award of an Order of Australian Medal.

Team members continue to support the safety and integrity of our churches, which is crucial for our missional reputation. Nearly 900 leaders participated in Creating Safe Space workshops, which were translated into Karen, Mandarin, and Vietnamese this year. The BUV Safe Church Facebook Group is a valuable network for nearly 200 leaders. The Professional Standards Group revised our Complaint Process to make it more fit for purpose.

In 2023 we refined the Flourishing Church Framework to make it more user-friendly and increase the usefulness of data for analysis. We have also started to develop some resources to assist local churches to build on their survey results.

We look forward to celebrating special anniversaries of several programmes in 2024 and continue to seek ways to develop our support of churches and leaders.

Rev David Devine

Head of Church Health and Capacity Building

PASTORAL LEADERSHIP SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT (PLS&D)



The Pastoral Leadership Support and Development Team loved serving and supporting Victorian Baptist pastors in 2023, encouraging, equipping and empowering them to advance God's kingdom in their local contexts.

LEADERSHIP

In 2023, we aimed to encourage pastors in their leadership at our Nourish events with themes for May and October being "Becoming more like Jesus" and "Fuelling for Fruitful Ministry". Hundreds of pastors came together from all over Victoria, not only to be nourished and equipped but also to connect and share their journey with other pastors.

During the year, we invited all pastors to start on the journey of undertaking professional pastoral supervision in preparation for this being a requirement for accreditation from 2024 onwards. By the end of 2023, many pastors had begun their journey and experienced the benefits that being supervised has on their ongoing ministry. We have now 35 BUV Recognised Professional Pastoral Supervisors available for pastors to choose from.

The Pastoral Search Advisory Group (PSAG), a dedicated group of pastoral leaders, met monthly through 2023. This group prayerfully assists pastors who are looking for a new ministry and churches who are looking for a pastor. We are so thankful for the wisdom of this team and the many appointments that were made.

At the end of 2023, we farewelled Rev Chris Barnden from his role as Regional Pastor (Metro). Chris has been an integral part of the Support Hub's PLS&D team, serving metro churches and pastors for 11 years.

SUPPORT

Our team supported pastors throughout Victoria with phone calls, in person visits and through peer support or pastoral cluster catch ups. Regional Pastors celebrated the joyful moments and the difficult challenges that pastors and their leaders faced, as well as undertaking pastoral reviews. We walked with pastors through grief and loss and helped several pastors access professional counselling services and pastoral recovery programs. Our Generations Pastor met one on one with pastors in generations ministry to help guide them through the highs and lows of their ministry journey and our Pastoral Coach led and supported pastors of our larger churches.

DEVELOPMENT

Both Emerge, our training and development pathway for emerging leaders, and the Baptist Generations Network for pastoral leaders in generations ministry areas, are wonderful opportunities for learning and development through input from seasoned leaders, peer learning from one another, and prayer. Communities of Practice for Senior Pastors and Associate Pastors deliver much input, learning and empowerment to all those who participated. Partners in Ministry assisted PLS&D team members in providing input and coaching, for which we received great feedback.

Rev Jonathan Stark

Head of Pastoral Leadership, Support and Development

MISSION CATALYST

In 2023, the Mission Catalyst Team engaged with a quarter of our BUV family of churches through missional encouragement and consultation. There were a number of different avenues through which this happened:

- Over 20 of our churches and micro churches were part of our intensive coaching and mentoring for community engagement and church planting.
- The Mission Catalyst team enjoyed a number of opportunities to share the missional heart of God for the world through preaching and speaking at various events in local churches
- A number of seminars and training events were held around Victoria through ministers' gatherings, ordination intensives and parachurch events.

In 2023, we partnered with Baptcare to award mission grants to catalyse missional engagement in a diversity of contexts.

- We supported 10 placemakers who are engaged in local communities with the good news of Jesus.
- We supported new community initiatives through grants working with the most marginalised and vulnerable. (Dandenong, Phillip Island, and Werribee)
- Supported over 20 other churches in their missional initiatives through seed grants to begin community engagement projects, Renew Wellbeing spaces, and community meals to combat isolation and loneliness in our communities. There are exciting things happening around our churches in Victoria.

In 2023, we were able to offer a grant to Dandenong Baptist Church for both their Cornerstone and Nourish ministries. Cornerstone works with the homeless and marginalised in Dandenong, caring for the community's practical needs by providing food support, referrals, and assistance with things like showers, laundry, mental health and primary health support. Nourish Church, also a ministry of Dandenong Baptist, is designed for the community and Cornerstone clients in mind, and is intentionally followed by a hot meal to provide further time for connection and conversation.

In a very different context, we were also able to support the work of New Life Baptist Church in Echuca-Moama with their Christmas outreach. However, this was not just a one-off event but the culmination of months of community outreach, love, pastoral and practical care in the wake of the 2022 floods in that area. This was an opportunity to speak of the hope-the hope of Christ- that motivated their love for their community in some of it's most challenging moments. What an opportunity to speak the joy, peace and hope of Jesus into a community they have loved so well.



Rev Beth Jackson

Head of Mission Catalyst Team

ORDINATION



We had 36 pastoral leaders in our movement engaged in the Ordination Formation Program in 2023 across both the discernment and formation years. The group was incredibly diverse in its composition; 33% female and 39% from non-English speaking congregations. The unique bond that is established in the cohort across cultural, social and theological difference is one that builds relationships of encouragement and support for years of ministry to come.

The ordinands attended intensives across 2023 on call and vocation, mission, discipleship, leadership, and pastoral care. The annual 3-day residential retreat was an opportunity to reflect on the call of making disciples in the variety of contexts in which they find themselves. The ordination candidates were supported across the year through supervision sessions as well as theological study and reflection.

In October, the BUV family of churches ordained 11 new pastoral leaders; 45% of whom were female and 36% were from non-English speaking backgrounds and churches. It was a day of worship, celebration, and thanksgiving for how God is calling and equipping women and men to serve the Church through our Baptist movement.

The year culminated with the Discernment for Ordination retreat in November, which saw 9 new candidates accepted into the Ordination Formation Program for 2024 following their year of discernment with their local church. We continue to see how God is providing our movement with gifted, able, and committed pastoral leaders both now and for the future.

Rev Beth Jackson

Head of Ordination



FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION



In 2023 the BUV Support Hub Finance and Administration team was able to support our churches, agencies, and their leaders during a year where the world and financial markets experienced instability as a result of the on-going conflict in Ukraine and the violence in the Middle East. These conflicts may sound distant to us, but due to these and other factors such as the increases in land tax, cyber security issues and other regulatory requirement issues presented during the year, Australians experienced skyrocketing cost of living challenges. The F&A team were able to assist and advise our churches who were dealing with the flow on effect of this, through one-on-one consultations, training and workshops.

The Church Administration Workshop, presented in partnership with BFS and BIS, was attended by over 70 church administrators, treasurers, secretaries, and pastors and was very much appreciated. The Administrators portal, Be Safe is now being used by 124 churches. The team responded to at least 773 enquiries and issues pertaining to Land tax, XERO, long-service leave scheme, fixed-contract changes,

ATO and ACNC returns and requirements. We were honoured to have overseen the Mission Grants Committee in close collaboration with the Mission Catalyst Team and 6 independent pastors who deliberated and recommended the deserving grant awardees. In 2023, the total amount granted for various missional initiatives was \$361,096.95. We are very excited to watch what will flow from these initiatives in God's timing and purposes.

Further, we continued to provide governance and financial oversight to Surrey Hills Baptist Early Learning Centre. The facility went through the rigorous Education Department audit and not only passed the assessment and rating audit but achieved 'Exceeding' ranking in all 7 Quality Areas. This is truly a testament of God's goodness in how we reach out to the community through this initiative.

The F&A team ensured the BUV Support Hub was up to date in our fight against cyber security attacks by updating IT infrastructures and providing cyber security training to BUV staff members. Other essential First Aid, Fire Warden and fire drill training was provided throughout the year.

It is an honour and privilege to be able to serve our Baptist family and we look forward to what this the future brings.

Debbie Uy

Director of Finance and Administration

COMMUNICATIONS

Throughout 2023, the Communications team, covering Communications, Events and Training and Partnerships, continued to serve both the Support Hub team, BUVA churches and agencies by sharing operational information to our stakeholders as well as sharing inspiring stories from around our union with members of Baptist congregations around Victoria.

Our day-to-day Communications work comprises the production and distribution of information from all departments to our churches, pastors, leaders and congregation members through our multiple communication channels – direct email marketing, BUVA Bulletin, TOGETHER E-Magazine, department specific newsletters, social media, website, devotions series, resources, surveys and podcasts.

In 2023, the Comms team was honored to facilitate the Stand with Myanmar campaign and Myanmar Sunday – a major fundraising, prayer and advocacy campaign for our brothers and sisters of Myanmar. We were able to partner with Baptist Mission Australia to present this campaign and were thrilled that the total campaign funds that were able to be distributed totalled over \$126,000. These funds were provided to organisations supporting three different Myanmar ethnic tribes that are represented heavily within the Baptist Union of Victoria.

Later in the year, we were fortunate to participate in Australian Baptist Ministries annual Converge advocacy campaign, also focusing on advocacy for the people of Myanmar. We were able to take 9 of our Victorian leaders from Myanmar along and gather at Parliament House with 30 other Baptist leaders from around Australia. As a direct result of ours and others advocacy efforts, the Foreign Minister has placed some sanctions on the Junta's financial institutions.

The Events and Training area of the Communications Team administers the annual events calendar with 114 events on the calendar in 2023, including our bi-annual gathering events in May and October with Nourish, Professional Standards and Members' Dinners.

Our Events Manager also provided administration and technical support for the Creating Safe Spaces training events which had almost 900 people participate through the year.

Our Partnership Development Pastor met with many churches, pastors and one on one with congregation members interested in leaving a legacy or contributing to our regular giving program for church planting. In addition to this, we developed and presented Finishing Well – a wonderful new event, in collaboration with Baptcare and other supportive partners, to help the more mature of our Baptist congregation members across Victoria access assistance for their latter quarter of life. The event covers everything from in-home and residential aged care, to grief counselling and Will preparation and much more, and has been very much appreciated by senior members of congregations.

Media management, speech writing, database administration and staff training are also responsibilities of our Communications team.

It has once again, been a pleasure to be able to serve our churches and agencies in an effort to draw closer to our vision to be a union of flourishing churches with Christlike followers who join with God in redeeming society.

Melissa Rule

Head of Communications



GOVERNANCE



UNION COUNCIL CHAIR REPORT



MICK TURNBULL

Chair, BUV Union Council

I was elected by our Members of Assembly as the new Chair of the Baptist Union of Victoria in May 2023, after 6 months as Acting Chair. It is both a privilege and honour for me to take on this role, to serve our Lord God, His church as well as our diverse Baptist movement across this state. It is a pleasure to be able to provide this report for the 2023 year on behalf of the BUV Union Council.

2023, like many previous years, provided a mixture of joy and sadness, highs and lows, as we sought to serve as the people of God in a modern and complex world. As you will see, however, in the pages of this Annual Report, our Victorian Baptist movement continued to grow and move forward positively in many areas with new churches and communities of faith added, leaders trained and emerging leaders identified, who will guide our movement in decades to come.

Among many other positive things in 2023, an absolute highlight for me was attending the BUV Ordination Service of 11 new pastors from various cultural backgrounds, and witnessing as they seek to follow God's calling, serving Him as leaders in our churches and communities of faith and making disciples across our state. It has also been exciting to hear and read of the many initiatives that churches and faith communities are undertaking to advance God's kingdom throughout Victoria.

The BUV is blessed to have a highly skilled group of leaders in Governance on our Union Council, all of whom operate in a volunteer capacity. At our May Members' Dinner, we appointed Rev Christine Wanstall and Sally Mullins as new Council members with terms until October, 2024. At our October Members' Dinner, we reappointed Mark Browning for a further 3 year term, Rev Darryl Kilker for a further one year term and Paul Holdway was reappointed as Honorary Legal Advisor. It was also our pleasure to add Grace Hmun to our Council as a co-opted member during the year.

I am thankful to these individuals for their willingness to serve and I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all Council members for their hard work and the significant time invested through monthly Council meetings, sub-committee meetings and regular planning days. Council members also support the Leadership Team of the Support Hub and often deal with significant amounts of legal and administrative work in between meetings.

I would like to take this opportunity to especially acknowledge our Director of Mission and Ministries, Rev Daniel Bullock, who provides outstanding leadership to the wider union and to our BUV Support Hub team, who work diligently to further the mission of our movement. I would also like to thank Debbie Uy, Union Secretary for her work in supporting the Union Council. Along with the other very talented members of the BUV Leadership Team, we can have confidence that the Support Hub of our Baptist movement is in good hands.

At monthly meetings, Union Council prioritise praying for our movement – for our churches and network of pastors and leaders and for our agencies and affiliates across our movement, as they seek to minister both spiritually and practically within the Victorian community. We look forward to continuing to see our movement in Victoria flourish in 2024 as we seek to bring glory and honour to our Lord God who has shown his great love towards us.

Mick Turnbull

Chair, BUV Union Council

2023 UNION COUNCIL MEMBERS



MICK TURNBULL
CHAIR



DEBBIE UY
UNION SECRETARY



DANIEL BULLOCK
DIRECTOR OF MISSION
AND MINISTRIES



PAUL HOLDWAY
HONORARY LEGAL ADVISOR



DAVID TALATHOTI



MARK BROWNING



SALLY MULLINS



DARRYL KILKER



CHRISTINE WANSTALL



GRACE HMUN
(CO-OPTED MEMBER FROM JULY 2023)

SUB COMMITTEES

AUDIT & RISK

MARK BROWNING – CHAIR
CHRISTINE WANSTALL
DEBBIE UY
NIEL MORGAN
ANDREW GIBSON
CHRIS KIRWAN
GRACE HMUN
DARRYL KILKER (UP TO OCT 2023)

CONSTITUTION REVIEW COMMITTEE

PAUL HOLDWAY - CHAIR
CHRISTINE WANSTALL
DEBBIE UY

NOMINATION COMMITTEE

MICK TURNBULL
DANIEL BULLOCK
DAVID TALATHOTI

COUNCIL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

MICK TURNBULL
MARK BROWNING
SALLY MULLINS

FINANCIALS

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The 2023 operational income of the BUV outperformed the budget by some \$769k for the full year due primarily to better than expected returns in investment income and donations, bequests and legacies. Interest rates continued to rise in 2023 favourably impacting interest income while dividend income also performed better than was anticipated. Other income was positively impacted by unbudgeted receipts. Further strengthening the operating results was savings in expenditure particularly in remuneration, travel and hospitality and professional services.

The increased receipts combined with savings in costs realised an operating surplus of \$238,245 which is \$769,391 better than the original budget. It is pleasing to note that grants paid exceeded budget by \$360k. Non operating income was positively affected by equity markets where an unrealised gain in the valuation of equities of \$1.786m was recorded for the year. Also included in non operating income is the revaluation of property assets (undertaken every two years) which fell \$4.393m. During 2023 three churches closed with their land and buildings transferred to the BUV. The value of these transferred assets was \$2,430,000.

	2023 ACTUAL	2023 BUDGET
INCOME		
Ministry contribution fees	1,535,855	1,546,212
Insurance commission	396,581	384,996
Grant income	305,206	376,042
Investment income	3,491,390	3,188,977
Donations, bequests & legacies	745,309	525,001
Other income	569,519	397,856
Total Operating Income	7,043,859	6,419,084
EXPENDITURE		
Remuneration	3,609,564	4,034,974
Grants paid	675,382	314,859
Travel and hospitality	300,927	451,986
Depreciation	342,432	336,969
Occupancy	398,847	420,877
Office	275,847	248,223
Interest Expense	873,975	662,442
Professional services	296,080	479,900
Doubtful debts	32,560	0
Total Operating Expenditure	6,805,614	6,950,230
OPERATING EXCESS/(DEFICIT)	238,245	(531,146)
NON OPERATING INCOME		
Gain / (Loss) on Revaluation of Financial Assets	1,786,826	0
Gain / (Loss) on Revaluation of Land & Buildings	(4,393,705)	0
Acquisition of property due to church closure	2,430,000	0
Total Excess/(Deficit)	61,366	(531,146)
Church Dev Fund & Grassroots Deficits	(207,120)	(271,488)
Bushfire & flood Appeals Funds distribution	(46,303)	0
Total Comp. Income/(Loss)	314,789	(259,658)

2023 OPERATIONAL FINANCIAL SUMMARY SNAPSHOT

OVERVIEW OF 2024 BUDGET

	2024 BUDGET	2023 BUDGET	VARIANCE
INCOME			
Ministry contribution fees	1,572,187	1,546,212	25,975
Insurance commission	300,000	384,996	(84,996)
Grant income	104,000	376,042	(272,042)
Investment income	3,793,040	3,188,977	604,063
Donations, bequests & legacies	658,000	525,001	132,999
Other income	443,090	397,856	45,234
Total Operating Income	6,870,317	6,419,084	451,233
EXPENDITURE			
Remuneration	3,935,380	4,034,974	99,594
Grants paid	349,200	314,859	(34,341)
Travel and hospitality	406,485	451,986	45,501
Depreciation	381,301	336,969	(44,332)
Occupancy	419,517	420,877	1,360
Office	289,685	248,223	(41,462)
Interest Expense	1,040,900	662,442	(378,458)
Professional services	463,000	479,900	16,900
Total Operating Expenditure	7,285,468	6,950,230	(335,238)
OPERATING EXCESS/(DEFICIT)	(415,151)	(531,146)	
NON OPERATING INCOME			
Gain / (Loss) on Revaluation of Financial Assets	50,000	0	50,000
Total Excess/(Deficit)	(365,151)	(531,146)	165,995
Church Development Fund	185,051	(271,488)	(86,437)
Adjusted Net Surplus / (Deficit)	(180,100)	(259,658)	79,558

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS

The 2024 budget will essentially support the same activities as in 2023

Cash & term investments to earn 4.14%
 JB Were investment income assumed at 4.3%
 Salary and wages rate increase 7.13%

The 2024 grants budget is subsidised by \$185,051 from the capital of the Church Development Fund.

INCOME

Budgeted income for 2024 increases 7.03% (\$451k) from the 2023 budget. This is mainly due to:

Assumed better investment income including interest and dividends compared to the 2023 budget.

Increased donations, bequests and legacies as more support for the Grow Give Go and other campaigns materialise.

EXPENSE

Budgeted expenses for 2024 have increased 4.8% (\$335k) from the 2023 budget. This is mainly due to:

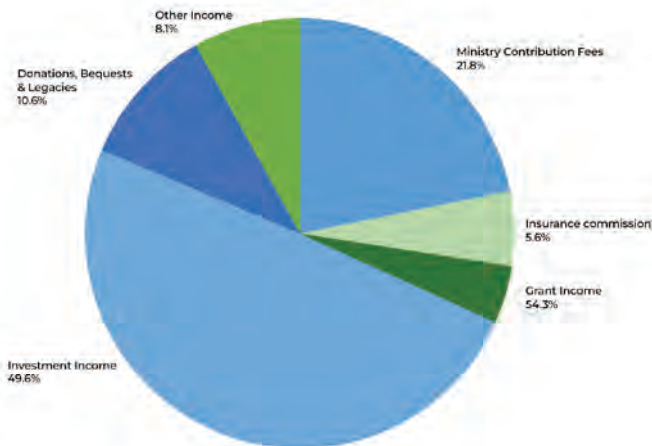
Increased interest expense \$378.5k being increased interest paid on accounts held in trust by the BUW on behalf of churches.

Increase in grants to be paid \$34k

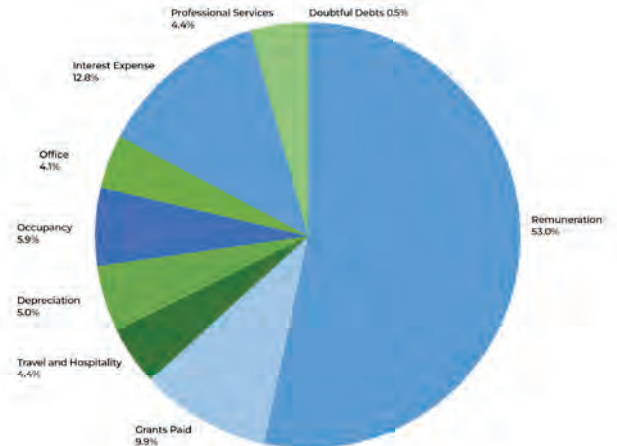
Decreased remuneration - \$99.6k. This is due to the transfer of two staff to BWA and BMA and taken off BUW's books, offset by the annual salary increase linked to the CPI and average weekly earnings.

Savings in travel and hospitality and professional services costs \$62.4k.

INCOME



EXPENSES



AGENCY AND AFFILIATE REPORTS



BAPTCARE

Baptcare supports people in all parts of the community, at all stages of their lives. Our mission and vision are lived through our WE CARE Values: Wellbeing, Ethics, Co-creating, Accountability, Respect and Effectiveness. We partner with people of all ages, cultures, beliefs and circumstances for fullness of life.

2023 was my first full calendar year as Chief Executive Officer of Baptcare. It is a privilege to lead an organisation that is integral to the lives of so many people. Our team includes 3859 paid staff and 485 volunteers, working together to make life better for some of the most vulnerable people in our community. Throughout the year I was grateful for the guidance, support and wisdom of Tim Farren, Chair of Baptcare, and all members of the Baptcare Board.

I am pleased to report that our prudent and responsible measures addressing budgetary concerns have improved our financial position, significantly reducing our debt without negative impacts on our customers.

We are operating in a period of profound reform in the Aged Care sector, responding to mandated changes, recommendations and community expectations from the final report of the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety. This year we implemented the compulsory 200 minutes of care per aged care resident per day which came into effect on 1 October 2023, and prepared for further changes.

We implemented our Living Well Together approach at two pilot sites (Baptcare Brookview and Baptcare Strathalan residential aged care communities as pictured below), which we co-designed with residents in partnership with Monash University researchers. Early indications are that the Montessori-inspired innovations and interventions made through the project are having a positive impact for our customers. We were delighted to have the project showcased on ABC-TV News.

We continued to expand and refine our In Home Care service with the launch of our Community Care Platform in Gippsland. Baptcare Affordable Housing dramatically increased its social housing portfolio through completion and tenancing of 20 dwellings in Sunshine, eight of which are the first PassivHaus affordable housing dwellings in Australia, plus successful tender for two packages in the Community Housing Placement Program. Our Sanctuary and House of Hope programs provided shelter, food and spiritual care for people seeking asylum.

Our staff and trained volunteers remain at the forefront of all Baptcare activities. Our organisation continues to draw strength from our partners, including the Baptist Union of Victoria, Tasmanian Baptists, Baptist Churches of SA, Baptist Care Australia, and the many members of congregations who support and pray for Baptcare and our community. We are profoundly grateful for this ongoing support.

Geraldine Lannon

Chief Executive Officer



Baptcare

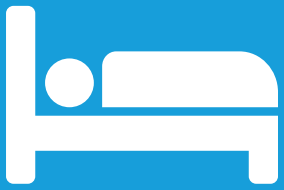


3859

STAFF WORKING
IN VICTORIAN,
TASMANIAN AND
SOUTH AUSTRALIAN
COMMUNITIES

809

TRAINED AND QUALIFIED FRONTLINE
HOME CARE WORKERS



1679

APPROVED BEDS
IN 16 RESIDENTIAL
AGED CARE
COMMUNITIES



4694

HOME CARE CUSTOMERS

80

PEOPLE SEEKING
ASYLUM SUPPORTED
THROUGH SANCTUARY
AND HOUSES OF HOPE



348

PEOPLE SUPPORTED
IN RETIREMENT LIVING
COMMUNITIES

308,168

HOURS GIVEN BY 485 BAPTCARE
VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING
OUR COMMUNITIES

199

CHILDREN SUPPORTED
THROUGH FOSTER
AND KINSHIP CARE



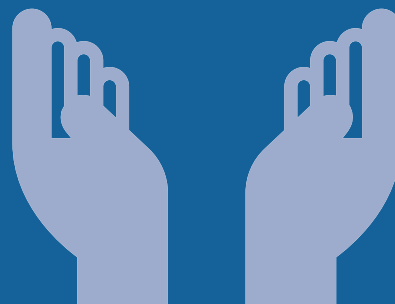
374

MINDSET TAS
PARTICIPANTS



3373

SPIRITUAL CARE
SIGNIFICANT
CONVERSATIONS
PER MONTH



191

DWELLINGS PROVIDED
BY BAPTCARE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
FOR PEOPLE AT RISK
OF HOMELESSNESS



CAREY BAPTIST GRAMMAR SCHOOL



OUR PURPOSE

Together we inspire, nurture and develop people who are equipped for life and ready to create positive change.

OUR VISION

An inclusive community that values the development of each individual and supports them to have a positive impact in our society.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This year we launched Carey's Strategic Direction for 2023 onwards, our purpose and vision, and our redefined school values - Care, Respect and Growth. Our strategy is a result of consultation with the entire Carey community, beginning with a community-wide inquiry in 2021 and many focus group sessions and workshops with students, parents, alumni and staff over the past few years.

In 2023, our 5 key strategic priorities were:

- Positive Learning
- Wellbeing, Self and Beyond
- Quality Staff
- Engaged Community
- A Sustainable School

The co-curricular program is an important part of the educational experience at Carey. Students once again shone in the performing arts, with the Senior School production of *The Addams Family*, Middle School production of *Oliver* and Donvale performing *Aladdin Junior*.

On the sporting field, the Carey students excelled. We were successful in winning APS Premierships in Girls Netball, Girls Hockey and Boys Soccer. It was pleasing to watch our students out there and enjoying sport.

Our Zero program in far north Queensland has continued to evolve and will be supported with a year long subject next year and a Zero mentor for each Year 10 student. The program is critical in getting students off their phones and into a range of environments. We look forward to this developing in future.

100 YEARS

In 2023, Carey celebrated its centenary – 100 years of delivering quality education based on the Baptist principles and ideals of faith. The centenary year was a great success. We hosted a range of significant events and it was a joy to witness the engagement and joy across all members of the community.

Key Centenary events included:

- Centenary Fair
- Centenary Book launch
- Musicals Through the Years
- Staff Centenary Conference
- Gala Ball
- Centenary Music Concert
- Centenary Sports Dinner
- Centenary Sculpture installation

SOCIAL IMPACT

Carey has made some progress on waste management and sustainability will be a key focus in 2024 and beyond.

Carey initiated or participated in several activities of social impact, including:

- Students involved in many programs such as Social Justice and Community Action days
- Homework Club- Carey students working with students in housing commission accommodation
- Students and staff working with Habitat for Humanity
- Supporting charities such as Amber's White Light, JMB Foundation, World Vision, Bapcare
- Partnerships with aged care
- Access and Equity Scholarships for refugees
- Annual visit to Robinson River remote indigenous community

We have also done a great deal of work on cyber security and have a team of staff from across the school who are trained and prepared to respond to a cyber-attack.

Carey has made some significant budget reductions in response to the changes to payroll tax and the additional escalating costs across the board. We will continue to examine spending to ensure value for money without compromising our broad educational offering. Fortunately, there has been no apparent decline in enrolments due to increased fees.

Jonathan Walter

Principal



CHAPLAIN'S REPORT 2023

A little over 100 years ago, the Baptist Secondary Schools Committee was praying and casting a vision for a school called Carey, a school that would encourage both Christian spirituality and scholarship. (Hedley Sutton, Baptist Secondary Schools Committee Member, The Propagandist, 1921).

In 2023, as we celebrated Carey's 100th year, there have been many reasons to be grateful because we have known God's hand and favour as a constant presence upon our school. At our Centenary Chapel Service in June, we heard from Carey alumni Rev. Tim Costello (1972) and Melissa Rule (1987) who is also a current parent. Both Tim and Melissa shared their personal perspectives regarding the impact Carey, and its community, had in encouraging their faith and inspiring them to consider the power of human connection and care. To that end, the William Carey Chapel continues to welcome students, staff, alumni, families, and the community, to reflect upon the place of faith in our lives.

Certainly, young people do resonate with the New Testament words found in James 2 which question a life of faith without works. Carey students and staff have enthusiastically involved themselves this year in acts of service and generosity through Habitat for Humanity, Homework Club, Anglicare Food Pantry, BapCare Christmas Giving Tree, World Vision, MITS, JMB Foundation and Amber's White Light.

Carey continues to provide the CARE curriculum in Prep through to Year 10, alongside regular Chapel Services creating opportunity to present the message of Christianity in a manner which is meaningful, engaging, and challenging. As Chaplains we are very aware this is a privilege that we don't take for granted, and we cherish these precious times with our school community, whilst also recognising the honour of being permitted to walk alongside and pray with those who are facing challenges in life.

Carey's theme for this 100th year has been 'Honouring the past. Embracing the future'. Personally, I am grateful for my 23 years at Carey Baptist Grammar School as I look to embrace my new stage of life in retirement. I leave Carey with wonderful memories, great friends, and a confident hope for what is in store for Carey's next 100 years.

Rev. Gerry Riviere (Senior School Chaplain)
on behalf of Rev. Scott Bramley (Middle School Chaplain)
and Pastor Rebecca Gaskell (Junior School Chaplain)



STRATHCONA BAPTIST GIRLS GRAMMAR

Strathcona Girls Grammar embodies a caring educational environment devoted to cultivating inquisitive, progressive, and ready-for-life unstoppable young women. Through a philosophy of academic excellence and a rich selection of co-curricular activities, Strathcona girls are strong, resilient, and empowered — at Strathcona, these are more than just words. Underpinning our Guiding Principles are our Strategic Pillars.



EXPERIENCE



CHARACTER



CONNECTION



MOMENTUM

These pillars represent the essential elements of focus contributing to Strathcona's ongoing success as we move to our centenary and beyond.

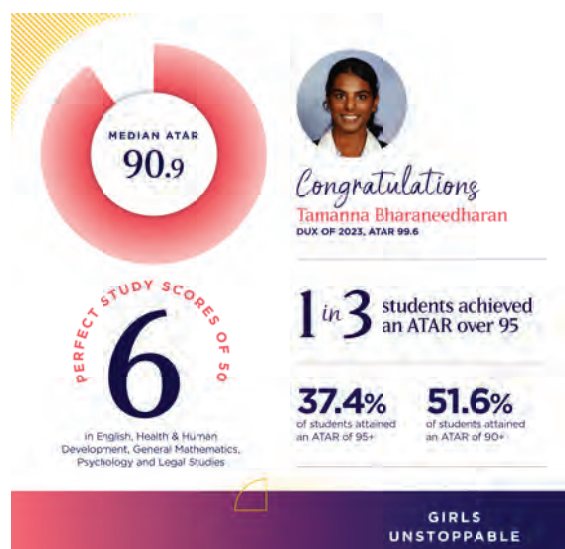
In the year 2023, our focus was firmly set on creating and nurturing bonds that would shape our community for years to come. It was a year characterised by an unwavering commitment to strengthening connections not only within our school but also beyond. Throughout the year, we witnessed girls from different year levels coming together to share their experiences, celebrate their achievements, and explore the very essence of the values that Strathcona proudly stands for.

In 2023 we saw the rapid rise of innovative technology, which promises to revolutionise the educational landscape in the years ahead. As we embraced this wave of change, we also recognised the importance of finding a delicate balance between traditional teaching methods and cutting-edge technology.

Strathcona now eagerly anticipates the year 2024 - Strathcona Girls Grammar's Centenary year which is bound to be a celebration of 100 Years of Excellence with many events planned. In 2024 we also look forward to welcoming Lorna Beegan the 11th Principal of Strathcona Girls Grammar



VCE RESULTS



- The Class of 2023 attained exceptional VCE results with Strathcona ranked as one of Victoria's top performing schools. Our median ATAR for 2023 was 90.9 which is the second highest score since 2016. 1 in 3 students achieved an ATAR over 95 and 51.6% over 90. Six students attained a perfect study score of 50 in subjects including English, General Mathematics, Health & Human Development (2), Legal Studies and Psychology.
- Our Dux of 2023, Tamanna Bharaneedharan received an outstanding score of 99.6.

SOCIAL IMPACT

As a school we are dedicated to maximising our social impact. In 2023, we contributed in the following ways:

- Reconciliation Action Plan Committee working towards finalising the Reconciliation Action Plan for the School
- As we prepare to celebrate our Centenary in 2024, Strathcona Girls Grammar now has the opportunity due to the generosity of generous donors to offer a 100% Scholarship to a student in Years 7, 8 or 9 for a 2024 commencement who would not normally be able to afford a Strathcona education.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- Battery recycling
- Organic recycling through Subpod worm farms
- Paper and cardboard recycling
- All campuses converted to LED lighting
- Early Years Centre Development aims to promote sustainability through the sharing of resources and facilities with the Junior School operations and the implementation of eco-friendly design principles and construction



GOVERNANCE IMPACT

- Ms Lorna Beegan has been appointed as the 11th Principal of Strathcona Girls Grammar School.
- Roll out of Cybersecurity awareness training to all staff

CHAPLAINS REPORT

Strathcona's theme for the year has been risky compassion based on the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10 and focused on Luke 10:27 - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and all your mind and love your neighbour as yourself.

At Chapel Assemblies, we have talked about the importance of loving people around us and loving ourselves.

We have shown hospitality to families in need through the work of Strathy Angels where we deliver meals each week made by members of our community. We will focus on service next year.

As Chaplain, I engage in pastoral care across the community of staff, parents and students. I feel greatly supported by our Christian Parents Prayer Group which includes about 45 families who pray each week for our students and wider community.

Rev Janet Costello

Chaplain



Strathcona
GIRLS GRAMMAR

KILVINGTON GRAMMAR SCHOOL

At the commencement of 2023 the School Executive finalised its strategic priorities. These priorities remain fluid to ensure that the School is always evolving with the times.

Kilvington Mission

To inspire students to strive for academic excellence, and to nurture their aspirations in a caring, family-oriented community to become people of depth, strength, integrity and character.

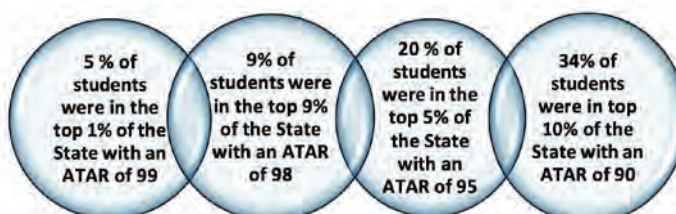


RESULTS

The Principal, Rob French congratulated the Class of 2023 cohort on the manner with which they tackled their studies and how they supported one another throughout the year. He is extremely proud of their ATAR results and said their collective achievement made a perfect end to the centenary year.

"It is worth noting that during the important lead up to VCE, Years 9 and 10, this cohort was predominately learning remotely. This makes their achievements more commendable." Rob French, Principal

SUMMARY OF THE CLASS OF 2023'S ATAR RESULTS



CENTENARY YEAR AND CONNECTION

2023 was our Centenary Year. From our special morning tea to launch the year to the spectacular Fair in March, Founder's Service at St Paul's Cathedral, Gala Dinner and burying of the time capsule, there has been much to celebrate. One significant feature of the year was how we were able to connect a large number of former staff and students to their old school, which enriched each of the major events and brought a sense of history to proceedings.

In giving thanks for all who have gone before us, it was also a good time in the School's journey to look ahead and continue to plan for a sustainable future, which sees our school thriving for years to come.

CARE AND COMMUNITY

In terms of community action, it proved to be a highly successful year with our four School Captains doing a wonderful job to support various ventures. The year was top and tailed by Random Acts of Kindness Day (\$1240 raised for Turkey earthquake disaster relief) and World Kindness Day, where all Year levels ran food or goods donations for their organisations.

CAPITAL WORKS

The opening of The HIVE (new STEAM and Library Centre) has been a major highlight and we will continue to explore the exciting opportunities this new space provides for our learners. We also have the chance now to explore the next stage of our master plan and building projects.



SOCIAL IMPACT

In Senior School once again each year level partnered a different organisation to raise funds and awareness:

Year 7 partnered with Eat Up (focus on food insecurity). Students heard from Lyndon Galea, founder of Eat Up and all students participated in one of four sandwich making sessions throughout the year, making a total of 4000 sandwiches.

Year 8 partnered with Next Gen Philanthropy (providing craft boxes for disadvantaged children). Students heard from Simonne Whine, founder of Next Gen and all students participated in collating 5000 craft boxes.

Year 9 teamed with Community Service Foundation (CSF)(focus on education in remote indigenous communities). Mercedes Reed spoke to an assembly during Reconciliation Week and students partook in a walk-a-thon from School to City to raise funds for a Cape York service project and CSF (\$4000). Further, \$720 was raised through footy colours day to CSF.

Year 10 once again joined with Robert Connor Dawes Foundation (RCDF). All students heard from a volunteer at RCDF, as well as from Beck Goldstein and her family's involvement in Connor's Run. Students went Grey in May to register and participated in Connor's Run in September, where we were the number 1 fundraising school, with \$17,083 raised.

Year 11 partnered with the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre and all students from ELC to Year 12 participated in Harmony Day. We ran a large food drive and raised \$7317 from our annual Cut for a Cause, with 19 students cutting their hair.

Year 12 partnered with the Lighthouse Foundation (focus on youth homelessness). Students ran an Easter Egg drive and participated in our Sleepout for a Cause, which raised \$10,000. The Year 12s also heard from the CEO of Lighthouse and the 30 students at the sleepout were visited by an organisation called 300 Blankets.

On top of this the Junior School also ran a clothes drive for remote indigenous opportunity shops and a Christmas gift drive for the Salvation Army.

All in all, a highly successful year that saw nearly \$50,000 raised for our charity partners.

Rob French

Principal

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

One highlight from 2023 was the Kilvington Centenary Service held at St Paul's Cathedral. A former student Michelle Crawford shared about her life of service shaped by the Kilvington motto: "Not for our own, but others' good". Jonathan Stark spoke to represent the BUV, and many students participated in prayers, readings and choirs. We were also delighted to welcome many former students to this special service. Back on campus, staff and volunteers from Mentone Baptist have continued to run a lunchtime bible study program for students called Three16, and a chaplain and youth worker from a local church called Compass has continued to connect with students on Thursday lunchtimes. The chaplain has continued to run chapel services, teach Religious Education, and be involved in pastoral care in the school community. The Kilvington community has continued to show exceptional generosity through food drives, toy drives, sandwich making, and fundraisers.

Janet Woodlock

Chaplain

WHITLEY COLLEGE - THE BAPTIST COLLEGE OF VICTORIA

A new chapter opened for Whitley in 2023, with Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson, former Dean of Research, stepping into the Interim Principal role after the departure of former principal Rev Professor René Erwich.

Under Darrell's leadership, and in collaboration with college staff and the College Council, Whitley developed a new strategic purpose that commits to growing in the following five areas:



With a clear strategic purpose, Whitley achieved the following:

- Strengthened church engagement with the delivery of short Bible courses at churches across Victoria, inspiring an influx of new enrolments, particularly among young adults.
- Developed a new ministry training and theology partnership with the Tasmanian Baptist Union, with the first enrolled students expected in May 2024.
- Significant growth of the TransFormation program with additional culturally and linguistically relevant content (developed in collaboration with BUV intercultural leaders), and increased enrolments, with students joining from a wide range of new churches.
- Successfully delivered evidence-based public events throughout the year, on important themes that addressed social and humanitarian impacts, attracting national and international speakers and attendees new to the College.
- Strengthened our position as a leader in theological research and thought leadership - undertaking research that is shaping theology and practice of mission, for conversations underway within the Commission for Mission of the Baptist World Alliance.
- Developed flexible units and delivery modes and improved our support for online students.
- Improved our student support processes with a greater focus on nurturing students in diverse and challenging contexts, and those with neurodiversity.
- Expanded our student services capability, to provide student nurture and enrolment services to the School of Professional Practice at the University of Divinity.

The following projects were delivered:

- 'The Whitley Video Project' - a series of videos on the Whitley study areas and student experience.
- 'Whitley website development' to better support new and current students with updated content and improved architecture. This project will continue in 2024 with a focus on interactivity and enhanced capability.
- 'The Whitley Building Project' progressed with an updated design to better serve the needs of our college community.
- The Whitley library was relocated from storage at Stirling Theological College to our temporary Box Hill location.

In terms of social impact, Whitley College achieved the following in 2023:

- Updated our Health and Safety processes and trained nominated staff members in CPR.
- Improved our student support protocols and individual care plans to offer alternative ways to study and take assessments.
- Supported our team through change and transition with a dedicated internal communications focus.
- Collaborated with stakeholders (BUV and College Council) for full transparency and value-added collaboration on important issues.

Whitley looks forward to both delivering excellence in theological education and engaging with Baptist churches once again in 2024.

Rev Associate Professor Darrell Jackson

Interim Principal



**SCAN THE CODE
TO SEE OUR WHITLEY VIDEOS.**

BAPTIST CAMPING VICTORIA

MISSION

To deliver Christian Camping that inspires people for life

OUR STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS

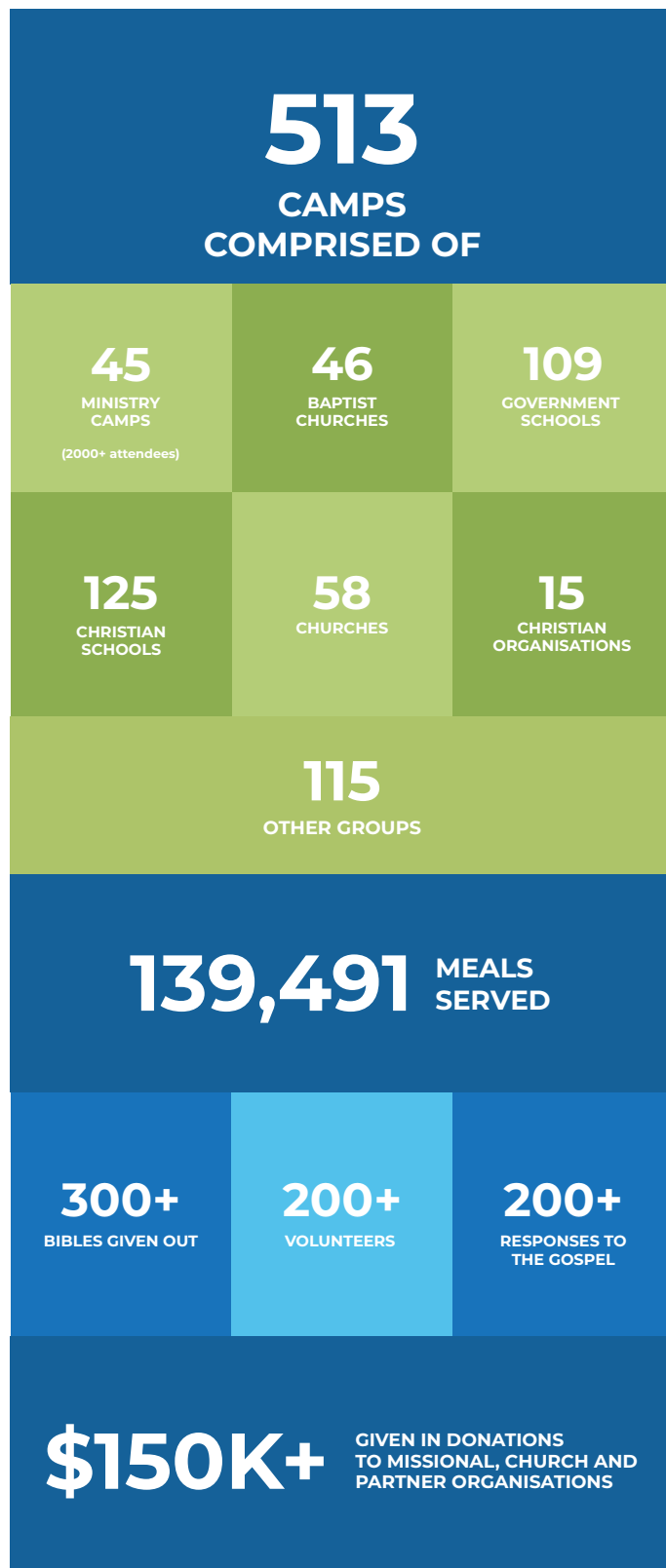
1. Camping - Serving people and groups to experience community in a Christian camping environment.
2. Ministry – sharing the gospel through camps
3. Training – equipping staff to deliver our vision and values, and build leadership capacity
4. Alliances – building relationships to enhance other Christian agencies, groups and churches through camping ministry
5. Community - build and maintain positive relationships with the community

In 2023, we started with the ongoing blessing of both new and existing BCV community groups and schools prioritising camping as a way to get active and reconnect with others in our beautiful natural environments. The Positive Start government initiative continued into the first half of 2023, and supported 22 schools to bring students on camp. We are encouraged by the repeat bookings of schools that first experienced our camps via this program. Each camp provides an opportunity for us to be a light on the hill and share the aroma of Christ with the schools and communities we serve.

The year was also one of significant change with the BCV Board appointing a new Director of Camping - Brad Sanders, following the announcement of my intention to retire after 28 years serving with Baptist Camping Victoria. Kendra and I are incredibly grateful for the decades that we have been able to serve both the churches and agencies of the Baptist Union of Victoria and the wider community through camping in Anglesea and beyond.

I now pass on the baton as Paul did with Timothy, so that we can continue to run the race set before us, looking always to Jesus.

So, we at BCV give thanks to the Father, for lives lived in service to Him, for the stories of seeds planted and watered through our 2023 camps and for the testimonies of how God has made them grow.



SOCIAL IMPACT AREAS

ENVIRONMENTAL

- Major upgrade to sewerage system at Mill Valley Ranch which will provide Class C recycled water which is suitable for irrigation
- Separation of recycling at Burnside Camp in Anglesea (new in 2023), composting of food scraps
- Environmental practices at Anglesea including thermostats and timers on heaters
- Proactive initiatives and education provided to camper groups about respecting natural vegetation that surrounds our camp grounds

SOCIAL

- Over \$20,000 provided in the form of discounts for ministry camps and alignment partners & funding dis-advantaged campers
- 137K provided in donations to community groups, churches and partner organisations
- Ethically sourced Coffee purchased via Social Brew

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

- OHS software provider engaged to improve our safety practices and monitor training and compliance
- Strengthened our employment relations practices via engagement of Employsure to review our contracts, policies, and provide employment relations advice

Geoff Caldwell

Director of Camping



BAPTIST MISSION AUSTRALIA

If you're reading this as a long-term partner in our mission community, please hear the collective thanks from our team across the globe!

Your generous and prayerful support is a Kingdom investment and enables our intercultural team members to share the hope of Jesus by word and deed with communities in Africa, Asia and Australia.

For more than 140 years, our people and our partners have bonded together, each playing their unique part in our wonderful faith story; each embracing God's gracious invitation to mission.

Together... we're sharing the good news of Jesus in understandable ways

Together... we're sharing God's love through word and deed

Together... we're journeying alongside local faith communities as they develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus

Together... we're praying, giving, going and sending to see vibrant faith communities emerge around the world

Together... we're sending 91 intercultural team members partnering in God's mission

And we truly can only do it together.

If you would like to explore opportunities for you and your church community to serve and partner with Baptist Mission Australia, please get in touch with us.

Serving Jesus Together





2023 MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

With your partnership and God's leading, we give thanks for some recent ministry highlights

In Cambodia, our team has established a new centre to support children with disabilities to grow in their ability to communicate and engage with their community.

In Mozambique, groups of Yawo are enthusiastically meeting with our team to explore God's Word and pray together.

In Malawi, Yawo faith leaders are studying theology with our team and believers are working together in income generating initiatives to support their families.

In Indochina, our team is getting alongside young people with disabilities who are being trained and employed.

In South East Asia, practical initiatives run by our team are opening doors for the Gospel to be shared, and a network of believers is growing.

In Australia, new opportunities have opened up for ministry among intercultural communities.

In the Silk Road Area, doors have opened for God's love to be shared with children with disabilities and their families through Occupational Therapy.

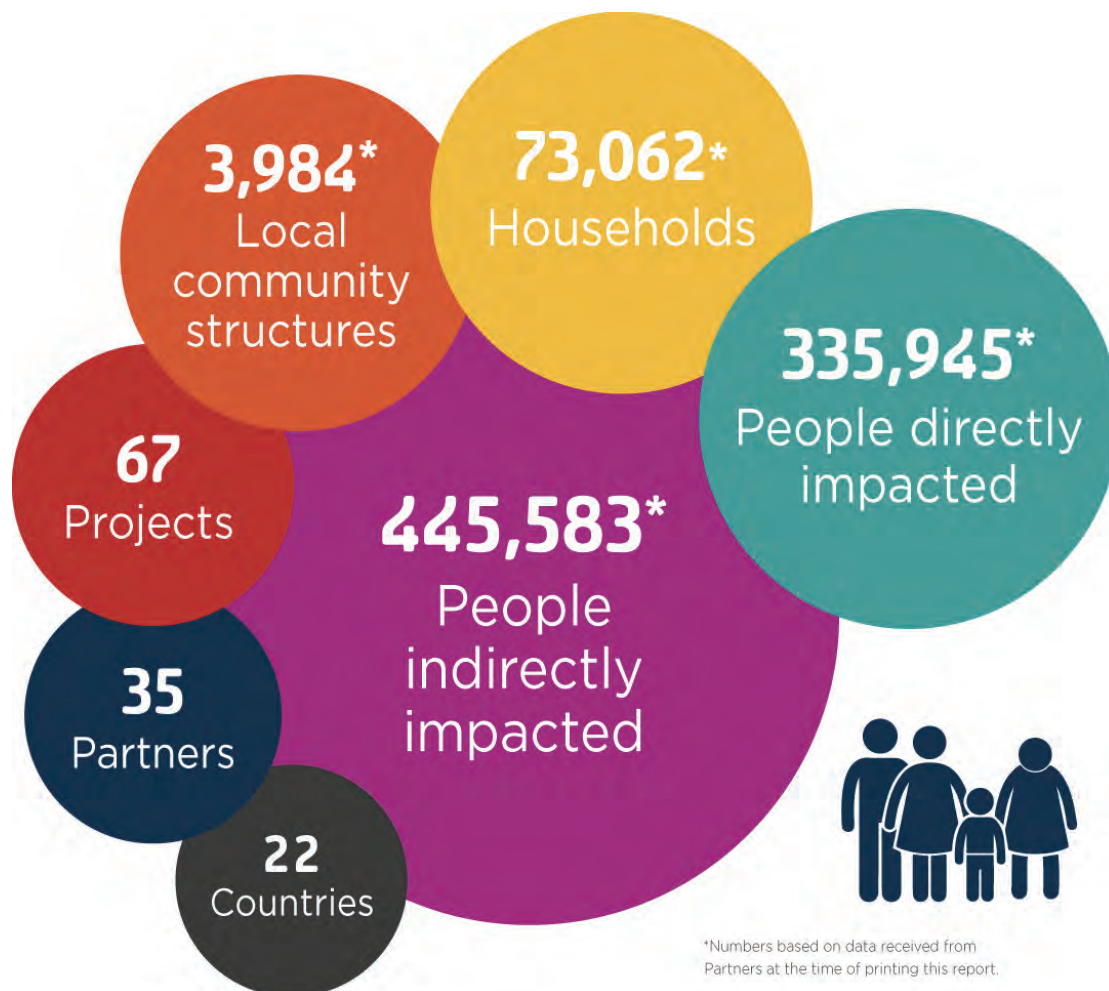
In South Asia, our team is working with local believers in the development of contextualised discipleship resources.

In Thailand, our team is journeying with the local believers as they set up a house for ministry and hospitality.

Scott Pilgrim

Executive Director

BAPTIST WORLD AID



At Baptist World Aid Australia, we believe God is at work in the world and calls us to love our global neighbors, to act justly and to love mercy, and work towards a better world so that all may enjoy fullness of life as he intends.

Throughout 2023, we've supported communities through local Christian Partners helping vulnerable people flourish and overcome poverty. We've targeted barriers to equality, so all people experience economic dignity. We've stood with children, youth, and women as they grow into agents of change in their communities and teach others to diversify income streams, improve agricultural practices and promote education and human rights; we've responded to urgent needs caused by disaster and crisis, and built local capacity to withstand additional shocks, fostering resilience.

This impact has been made possible through the generous partnership of individuals, churches, businesses, trusts, and foundations. In 2023, our Victorian partners gave \$2,314,064. Thank you. Your generosity has a significant impact.

2023 marked 10-years since the Rana Plaza disaster in Dhaka Bangladesh, followed later by the launch of Baptist World Aid Australia's first edition of the Ethical Fashion Report. The Ethical Fashion Report and Guide lifts the lid on what's happening in the supply chains of the biggest fashion brands – advocating for change for millions of workers in the global fashion industry facing injustice, abuse, low wages, and modern slavery.



Our 10-year Anniversary Special Edition Ethical Fashion Report revealed that those companies who have participated in our research for the full 10 years scored 11 points higher on average than the full 2022 cohort. While the Special Report shows remarkable advancements in areas like tracing, transparency and policies, outcomes for workers have failed to progress. In many countries, the people who make our clothes are still living in poverty despite working 12-hour days, six days per week.

In 2023, we were able to facilitate a response to protracted and compounding humanitarian crises in Myanmar. We launched an appeal with donations being directed to our Christian Partners in Myanmar providing urgently needed food and hygiene relief for over 300 internally displaced families as well as our Partners across the border who are caring for refugee families who've fled for safety to neighbouring countries. We facilitated 'We Must Not Forget About Myanmar' Campaign encouraging individuals to sign a postcard requesting the Federal Government take further action. This resulted in thousands of postcards reaching the Foreign Affairs Office – its been a loud call to action.

We finished 2023 amazed at God's work through Baptist World Aid Australia and aware of his call to champion his plan for a better world for all.

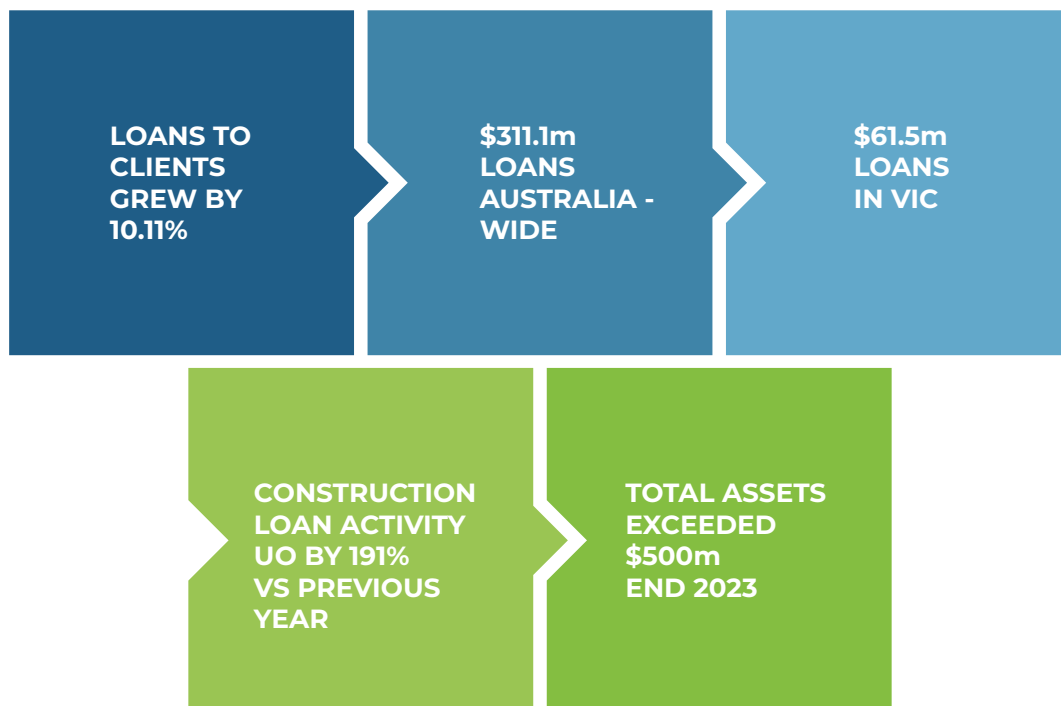
Rev Paul Manning
Church Relationship Manager (VIC/TAS)

BAPTIST FINANCIAL SERVICES

Baptist Financial Services (BFS) has had much to celebrate this year, as we continue in our purpose to enable Christian ministry to thrive. It's our vision to be a financial services provider of choice for ministries across Australia. We praise God for the ministry of Baptist churches throughout Victoria!

For over 40 years, we've helped ministries get the funding and support they need to build and expand their ministry operations. To date, we manage over \$500 million in assets and are continuing to grow to better support the churches and ministries we are here to serve.

Thank you for your faithfulness and for walking alongside us as we continue sowing resources into God's kingdom.



Throughout the year, BFS provided the support to enable significant ministry activity across Australia including supporting National Church Life Survey's research on church financial giving and thriving and resilient leadership; Global Leadership Network Australia; Christian Ministry Advancement (CMA) and the Church Finance Handbook which helps church administrators, pastors and treasurers navigate the complexities of church operations. In addition to this we offered support to many state-based Baptist ministries and activities.

You can visit our website <http://www.bfs.org.au> to learn more about us or to find out how to get involved further with BFS.

Jeremy Peet

Relationship Manager - VIC & TAS

BAPTIST INSURANCE SERVICES

The start of 2023 saw Baptist Insurance Services (BIS) continuing to investigate the global insurance market, as we believed that we would need to move our portfolio of property insurance to a Discretionary Mutual Fund model (DMF).

Continued years of severe weather events – floods, storms and bushfires – have seen reinsurers, companies who insure the insurance companies, become more cautious and pull back the amount of protection they were prepared to provide. This has resulted in some insurers withdrawing from the market altogether, resulting in far fewer insurance companies who are prepared to insure church portfolios.

In quotes obtained for property insurance cover, it was apparent that it would not be cost effective for our constituents, with increases over 50% with severely reduced cover and higher excesses. As we were able to establish a DMF by 30 September 2023, the overall increase to property protection was around 4%.

While we were able to obtain comprehensive property protection, we saw Public Liability, Professional Indemnity and Molestation covers substantially increased in costs. The number of insurers who will offer Public Liability and Professional Indemnity covers and include Molestation cover for a large portfolio such as ours, has reduced significantly. Since the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in 2013, each year we have seen Insurers relinquish Molestation cover as the claim costs have become too high for insurers to carry.

We were able to find an Insurer to cover the liability lines, however, costs increased by around 100%. Fortunately, in the savings made from establishing a DMF, we were able to offset the increase in our overall 'Standard insurance and protection package'.

Without the establishment of a DMF, we may not have been able to provide cover or the costs would have been at such a higher rate, most of our constituents would simply not have been able to afford it.

Covers included in our Standard Insurance and Protection package are:

- Property Protection
- Public Liability (including Molestation)
- Professional Indemnity
- Directors & Officers
- Corporate Practices
- Volunteer & Youth Personal Accident
- Pastors & Spouses Personal Accident
- Travel
- Cyber (for churches)

We are pleased to report that the DMF is successfully achieving its intended purpose: providing broad coverage for our members, including discretionary payments for items typically not covered by traditional insurance. By transitioning property and contents coverage to the DMF, we have also ensured stable pricing for our constituents, especially during a period when premiums in the traditional insurance market were rising.

Buoyed by the success of the DMF, we are now actively pursuing the inclusion of liability coverage for the next renewal period, from 30 September 2024 to 30 September 2025. Actuarial modelling for this inclusion has been very promising, suggesting that we can offer continued coverage certainty and price stability for our constituents.

Our goal remains steadfast: to provide comprehensive protection for the people and assets of our Baptist family, enabling them to pursue the mission God has called them to fulfill.



CONNECTING WITH THE BUV

If you'd like to know more and feel more connected to what's going on around the Baptist Union of Victoria, we'd love you to connect with in one of the following ways:

- Visit our website - www.buv.com.au
- Subscribe to TOGETHER Our Stories e-magazine
- Subscribe to the BUV Bulletin
- Follow us on Social Media
Facebook - Baptist Union of Victoria
Instagram - the_buv



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