



MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE ASSEMBLY OF THE BAPTIST UNION OF VICTORIA

Held at Karralyka Centre, Ringwood
22A Mines Rd, Ringwood East VIC 3135
23 May 2025

1. WELCOME, PRAYER AND WORSHIP

Union Council Chair, Mick Turnbull opened the meeting with a word of welcome and an Acknowledgement of Country. Mick shared the scripture from Romans 12:1-2 and 9-21, and prayed over the meeting, our churches and agencies. Worship was led by Isabel Baldwin from NewHope Baptist Church alongside some of the BUV Support Hub worship leaders.

Mick acknowledged and thanked Baptist Financial Services and Baptist Insurance Services as the generous sponsors for the Assembly dinner.

2. CELEBRATIONS AND WELCOME

Rev. Daniel Bullock, the Director of Mission and Ministries (DoMM) recognised and welcomed the following new Constituent churches and Faith Communities since the last Gathering in October 2024. A short video was played outlining the following church's journey to becoming a constituent church.

New Constituent Churches – 2024/2025

- Gospel Baptist Church Melbourne - *Ringwood (Chin - Hakha)*
- Melbourne Bangjoo Church - *Boronia (Korean / English)*
- Victoria Zokhuapeng Baptist Church – *Croydon North (Chin - Hakha)*
- Donnybrook Community Church – *Donnybrook (English)*
- Regeneration Church Monash – *Clayton (English)*

New Faith Communities

- Karenee Karen Baptist Church - *Bendigo (Karen)*
- Grace Alive Myanmar Church - *Melton West (Burmese / Chin Matu)*
- Cambodian Christian Community Church - *Dandenong (Khmer)*
- Heart of Salvation - *Weir Views - (English / Samoan)*

Representatives from each church went on to stage to receive their certificate of acceptance.

Daniel acknowledged the new campus of Catalyst Baptist Church (formerly Werribee Baptist Church) in Bacchus Marsh. He also mentioned the closure of the Constituent Churches: *Bacchus March Baptist Church* and *Southern Mallee Cooperative Parish*, and Faith Communities: *Melton Bethel Baptist Church* and *The Vine Church Rutherglen* and acknowledged their contribution to the BUV mission.

Daniel prayed for all the new churches and new communities.

Approved by Union Council
24 June 2025

3. ORDINATION

Rev. Daniel Bullock announced the 2025 Ordinands who are to be ordained on 25th October 2025. Ordinands were invited to stand while Daniel prayed over them.

2025 Ordination Candidates:

- **Bill Malcolm** – Crossway Baptist Church
- **Christopher Shalom** – Melbourne Karenni Baptist Community Church
- **Dachan Kim** – Coburg Baptist Church
- **Danilo Aquino** – Faith Christian Community Church
- **Garry Maningas** – Faith Christian Community Church
- **Jennifer Garavito Alarcon** – Brunswick Baptist Church
- **Jung in Kim** – Mill Park Baptist Church
- **Kap Lian Rengtom** – Australian Gospel Baptist Church
- **Matthew Jacoby** – OneHope Baptist Church
- **Nu Cuai** – Melbourne Matu Baptist Church
- **Paul Bremner**
- **Sally Danger** – Essendon Baptist Community Church
- **Sharyn White** – Ashburton Baptist Church
- **Sherman Huang** – Crossway Baptist Church

4. BAPTISTCARE UPDATE

Daniel invited Jenny Blok, the Chief Chaplaincy and Spiritual Care Officer of BaptistCare, to the stage. Jenny spoke of her journey working with the organisation and provided an update on the recent merge of the different Baptist Care agencies in Australia. Following the merge with Western Australia, the other care agencies from Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria underwent a successful merger in March, under the name of BaptistCare with redefined mission, vision and values. BaptistCare is now the third largest aged care provider within Australia.

With the reference to figures, Jenny explored the new projected outreach, and the large organisational restructure that occurred following this merger. Within the C-1 and C-2 Structure, Victoria and Tasmania will have a new Head of Operations that oversee state managers and staff, and a new National Head of Church Engagement role is to be appointed. There has been a large growth in chaplains following the merger, from ~40 to over 120, which is very positive. These chaplains deal with social housing, community service sites, schools, civil (hospitals and prisons), as well as over 14,000 staff.

Jenny reiterated how large merging 5 states is, and now the executive team is in place, the aim is to fill ~80 manager positions by the end of July, focusing on having faith and deep spiritual maturity to bring the organisation together.

Jenny highlighted the new major focus towards Church Engagement, with the aim to assist chaplains and spiritual carers to build connections with Baptist Churches. This plan has three distinct areas:

1. Engagement – Reaching out to churches, having conversations and piquing curiosity, working and growing alongside churches and showing genuine interest.
2. Relationships – Churches invite spiritual carer or chaplain to speak at the church, in the local community etc.

- Partnerships – Pastor Volunteer Program where churches are trained through the Spiritual Care series. This training is to specifically help churches and communities and promote volunteering at BaptistCare.

For example, a church in Campbelltown, Sydney, hosts a food hamper initiative for those with financial struggles. The church expressed interest to work with BaptistCare, through the chaplain, to pick up BaptistCare aged care residents to the church, to have food and connect. These individuals have become volunteers at the church.

5. ASSEMBLY MEETING

5.1 FINANCE PRESENTATION

Debbie Uy, the Union Secretary addressed the Assembly and presented the 2024 Operational Result, followed by the presentation of the 2024 Financial Summary, BUV Support Hub Summary and the overview of the 2025 Budget.

5.1.1 2024 OPERATIONAL RESULT

Debbie presented the 2024 operational result as follows:

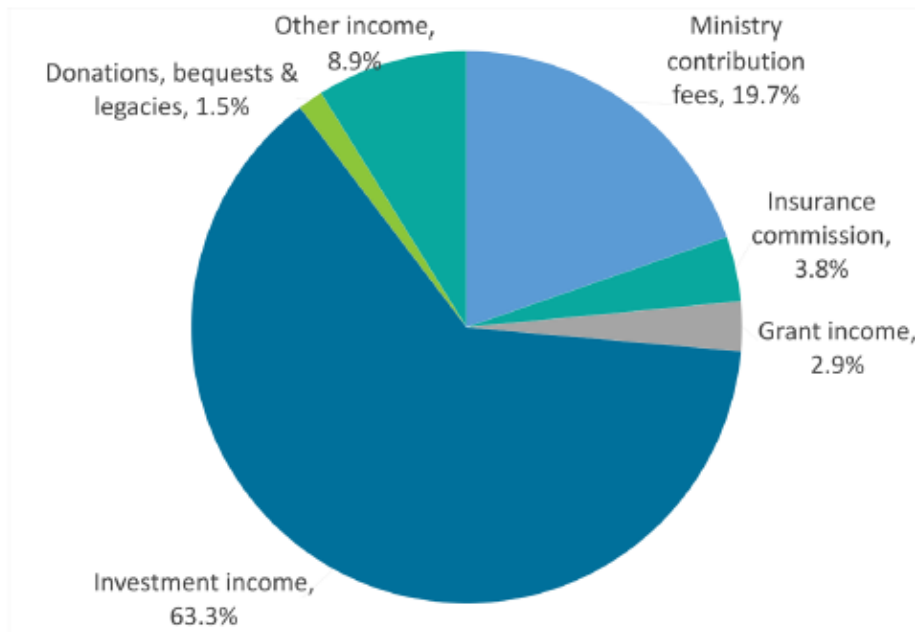
2024 Operational Result		
	2024	
	(ACTUAL)	(BUDGET)
	'000	'000
Total Operating Income	\$8,121	\$6,920
Total Operating Expenditure	(\$7,993)	(\$7,285)
Total Operating Excess/(Deficit)	\$ 128	(\$ 365)
Non-Operating Activity		
Gain/(Loss) on Revaluation of Financial Assets	\$1,132	\$ 0
Total Excess/(Deficit)	\$1,260	(\$ 365)
Church Development Fund Deficit	\$ 105	\$ 185
Total Comprehensive Income/(Loss)	\$1,365	(\$ 180)

The 2024 operations resulted to a surplus of ~\$128,000 which is attributed to the large increase in investments and other income. Minor increases were observed in insurance commission and grant income, however, a large decrease in donations, bequests and legacies was noted due the vacancy of

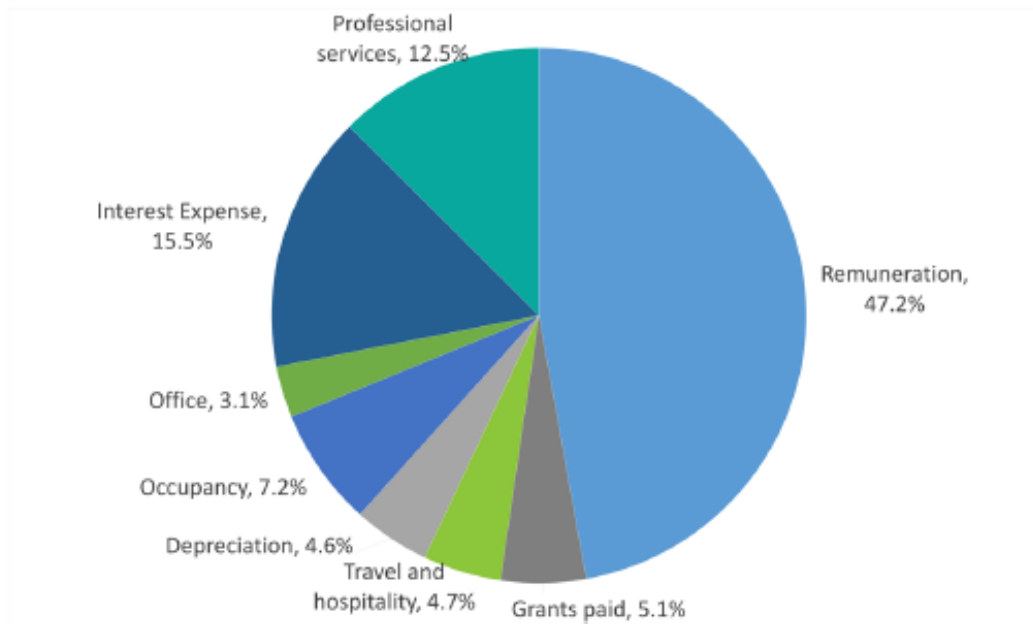
a Bequests Officer. In considering the gain on revaluation of financial assets and church development fund deficits, the Total Comprehensive Surplus for 2024 is ~\$1,365,000.

5.1.2 2024 BUY SUPPORT HUB SUMMARY

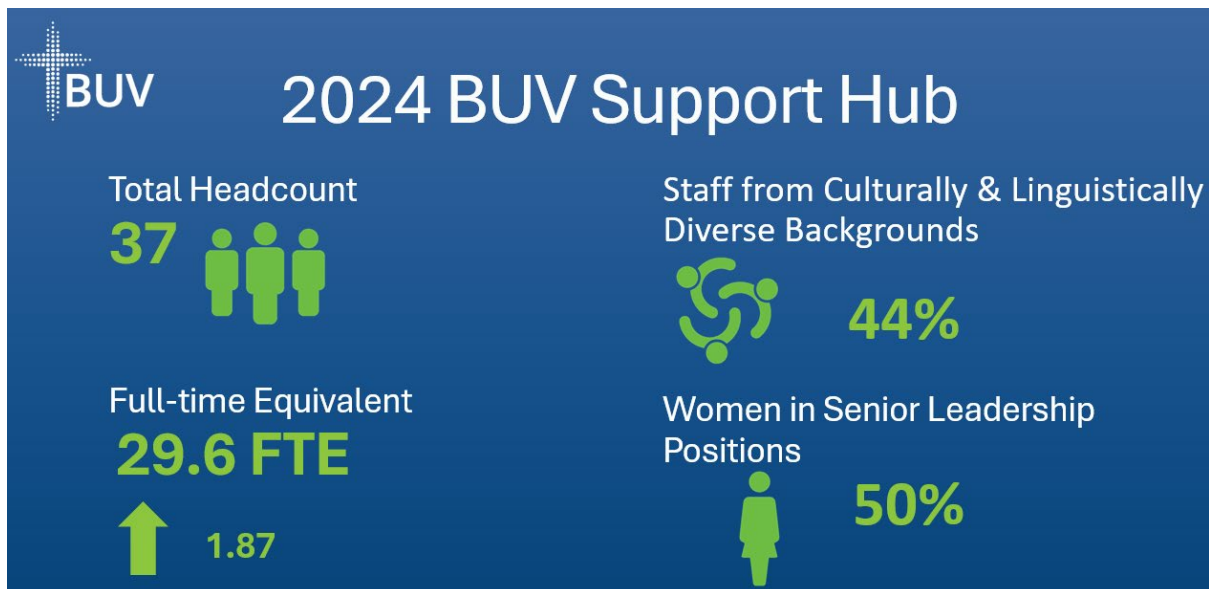
INCOME



EXPENDITURE



Expenditure was 10% higher than budgeted, at ~\$8,000,000 which was largely due to interest expense and professional services fees pertaining to the ongoing legal costs. It was noted that the higher interest expense indicates that more interest was paid into Church Trust Fund accounts. Expenditure decreases were evident in travel and office expenses, as well as remuneration due to positive vacancies.

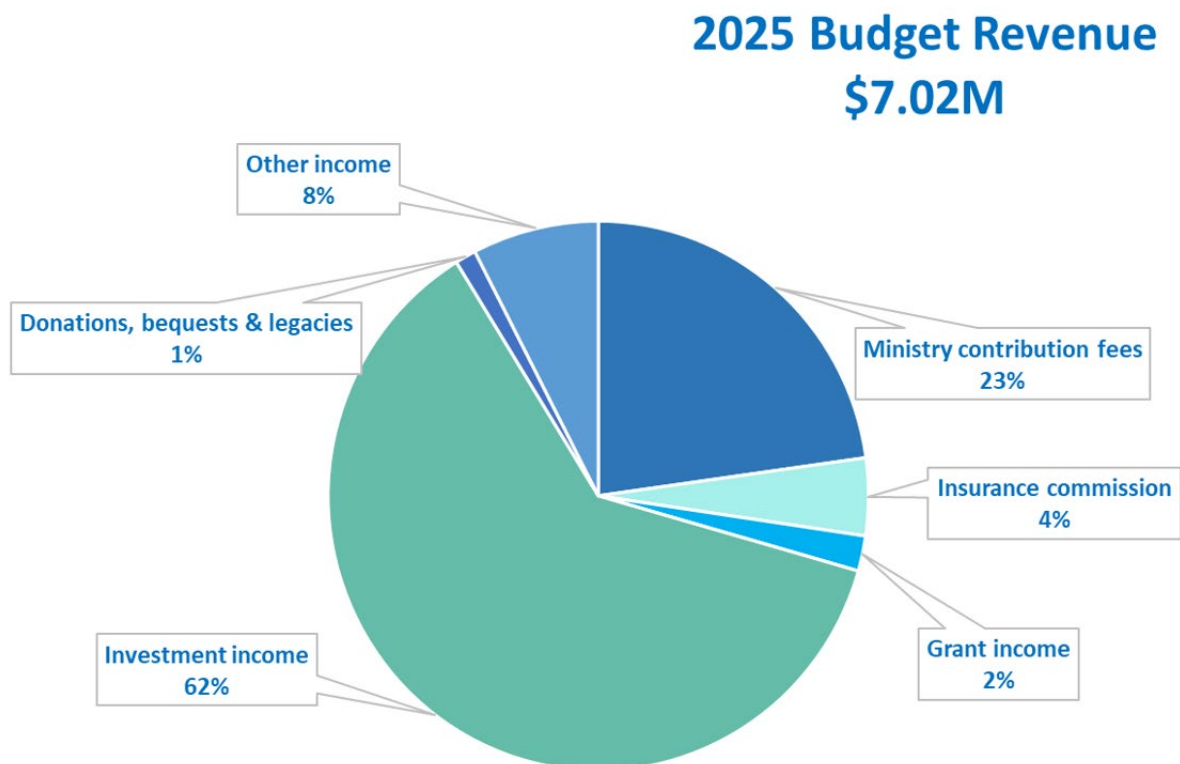


Overall, the BUV Support Hub was composed of 37 staff, with a slightly increased 29.6 FTE. 44% of staff are from CALD backgrounds, with a 50/50 composition of women and men in Senior Leadership.

5.1.2 2025 BUDGET OVERVIEW

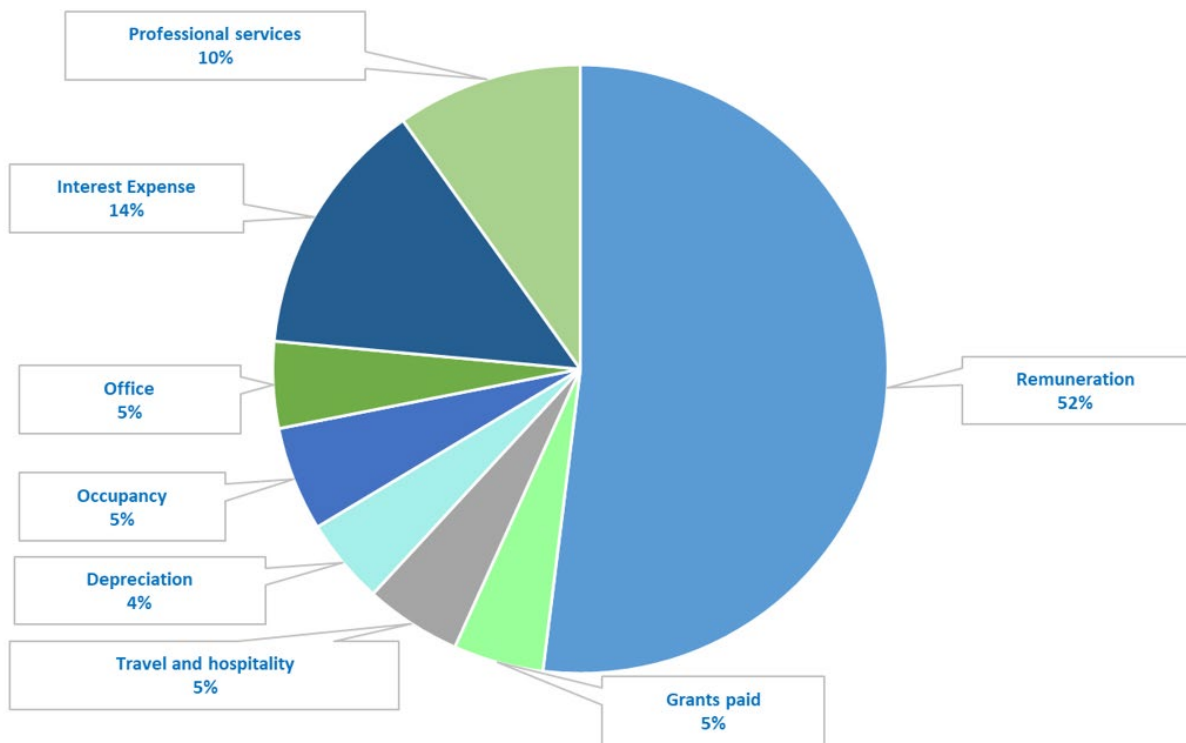
Debbie provided an overview of the 2025 budget as follows:

	BUDGET	
	2025 '000	2024 '000
Income	\$7,024	\$6,920
Total Expenditure	(\$8,084)	(\$7,285)
Operating Excess/(Deficit)	(\$1,060)	(\$ 365)
Non-Operating Activity		
Church Development Fund	\$ 105	\$ 185
Adjusted Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$ 955)	(\$ 180)



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2025 Budget Expenditure \$8.08



The 2025 budget closely follows the 2024 budget activities, but assumes greater cash and term investments, JB Were investments and increased salary and wages. The grants budget is assumed to be subsidised by \$104,517 from the Church Development Fund capital. The operating income for 2025 expects a 1.5% (\$104k) increase from last year's budget of \$6.9m, which is due to the assumption of increased ministry contribution fees, investment income, such as interests and dividends, and other income. Donations and bequests are expected to decrease as no partnership development resource is available.

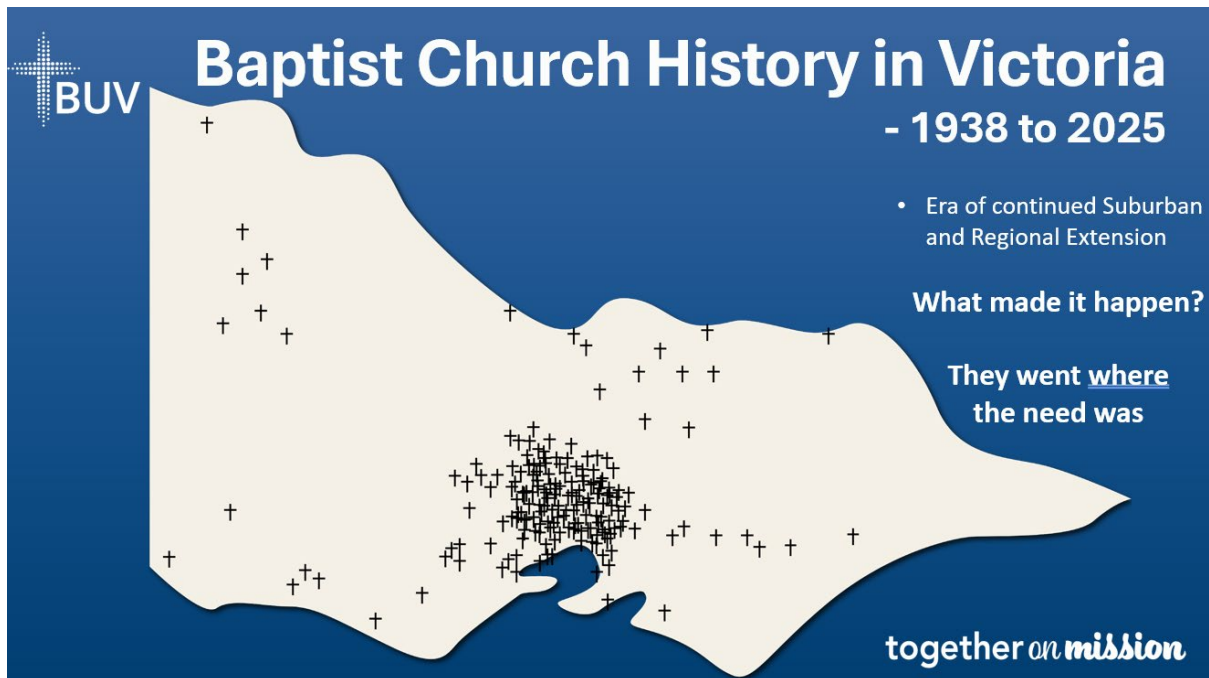
The operating expenditure for 2025 is budgeted at \$8m, which is a 11% (\$798k) increase from last year's budget. This is largely due to an increase in professional services and remuneration, because of a 0.67 FTE increase alongside the 7.19% pay increase. Minor increases across travel, occupancy and office expenses are assumed. A favourable increase in grants paid and interest expense is assumed, due to higher interest to be paid on Trust accounts on behalf of churches, and mission grants provided to churches.

Mick reminded Assembly that the 2024 Annual Report is available through the QR code provided and said grace over dinner.

A video of Baptist Financial Services and Baptist Insurance Services was played as the generous sponsors of the Assembly gathering.

6. BUV STRATEGIC UPDATE

Rev Daniel Bullock shared the BUV Strategy Summary for 2025 and presented the BUV 50-year Vision. Daniel briefly explored the justification and purpose for this vision, shared a scripture from Jeremiah 29:11 and Isaiah 30:21, and covered the Baptist Church History in Victoria spanning from 1838 to present.



BUV have placed a strong focus on the future whilst reminiscing of the mighty acts of God throughout history and people. Due to the population and community growth in suburban and regional areas, there is an obligation for Churches to also develop and grow in these locations. BUV's vision is to double the number of churches and have new expressions of churches to sustain this population growth. Daniel revisited the overall vision of 500 Flourishing churches, making disciples and transforming Victoria, and explored the Flourishing concept for churches.

BUV

2025 - 2075

- Developing Growth Corridors
- Developing Regional Areas
- Developing Inner City
- Developing Inter-Cultural Projects
- Developing Neighbourhoods

together on mission

BUV

A BOLD VISION

VISION
 To be a union of 500 flourishing churches, making disciples and transforming Victoria

- Made up of intercultural, Christ-centered churches
- with flourishing, godly pastors and leaders who have a focus on developing followers of Jesus,
- who hold to Baptist distinctives as guiding principles and maintain unity in diversity,
- who are entrepreneurial, adaptable and have a missionary-minded spirit,
- and are positively impacting and transforming society

together on mission

Daniel touched on the Intercultural Update which focused on the creation of the Intercultural Collaboration Group.

The UK Exposure Trip was an opportunity for Daniel and Rev Beth Jackson, alongside Baptist Pastors, to explore the expressions of church, mission and ministry around the UK. Four consistent themes were observed:

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1. Prayer – The depth of their prayer, prayer is crucial/central to their mission and is a priority of churches.
2. Presence – Being present in a location, the place in which God places us, and commitment to that place and love for that place and people.
3. Partnership – Hard-work, collaborating with other people, churches and mission-minded people, engaging with community.
4. Purpose – Core of their work, believed church planting was their God given purpose.



Emphasising on the 50-year vision, Daniel encouraged the Assembly to consider their part in achieving this alongside the Union. With reference to the Dunkirk Evacuation in WW2, this metaphor illustrates the present opportunity and responsibility of churches of all sizes to participate in God’s mission with a pioneering initiative. Daniel inspired the Assembly to identify their role, whether it be prayer, giving, sponsoring or releasing members, as small actions can make a huge difference.

Daniel prayed over the Assembly and churches, and for their communities.

7. DISCUSSION AND DISCERNMENT

Daniel referenced the 2025 Consultation Forums that inspired the following topics and questions to discuss:

TOPIC 1 – CHURCH PLANTING FOR OUR GROWING POPULATION

1. As we address the need for new church communities throughout Victoria, how can our established congregations most effectively support and participate in church planting efforts by utilising our resources, people and collective experience?
2. What support, information, or resources would help your local church begin exploring the idea of planting or supporting something new - whether it’s a new congregation, a missional community, or a church in a different area?
3. What kinds of new church communities do you dream of seeing emerge - ones that could help shape and transform life across Victoria?

TOPIC 2 – PRIORITISING THE NEXT GENERATION IN FAITH

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1. What are your hopes for the future of your faith community and what might be the indicators of true intergenerational health?
2. Thinking of this future, what are the challenges to generational engagement (or to maximising engagement) you need to overcome?
3. What practical resources, training, networking or encouragement would be most beneficial to help overcome these challenges?

Daniel invited the Assembly to partake in table discussions to address these questions, with table facilitators to lead these discussions.

8. PANEL 2025 STRATEGY IN ACTION

Rev Daniel Bullock invited the following panel of pastors to discuss their strategy in action for 2025 and offer words of advice:

- **Rev Kathryn Jensen – *Donnybrook Community Church***

Donnybrook Community Church was planted in 2021 following inspiration from Brett Mitchell at Crossway. The church went through a two-part discernment process alongside prayer, which led to the church plant. This location was favoured due to huge population growth with a multi-ethnic community.

Kathryn shared John 1:14, with her advice of 'Just Do It'. Presence is key and the community must be involved to prayer walk alongside the church. Kathryn reflected on imitating Christ's humility in Philippians 2, by which the Church should have a servant-attitude and practice downward mobility for effective church planting.

- **Stephan Tan – *Regeneration Church Monash***

Two new churches were planted from the founding church due to theological conviction. Reflecting on Tim Heller, Stephen felt the best mission under Heaven is to plant churches, through three keys:

1. Position – Position yourself the same as the church.
2. Pipeline – Identify church planting residencies, staff positions, and put money aside for church planter training.
3. Partnerships – 3 essential partners: The founding church, BUV for support and knowledge, and a good church planting agency.

Stephen encouraged the Assembly to meet with him for interested church planters, as he would like to walk alongside and support a new church planter. He reiterated the three P's and suggested a focus on one P as the first step, such as partnership with the BUV.

- **Melissa Brunt – *Torquay Christian Fellowship***

The church has a prayer room with multiple prayer groups to focus on 'plowing up the hard ground upon your hearts'. The church participated a 24/7 whole week of prayer, which transformed and inspired the church to pray before a service, inviting all interested members to listen and pray. Melissa mentioned the consistent prayer for missionaries, with the final few minutes dedicated to record the prayers for one missionary to send. Melissa shared positive stories of this practice, with one missionary in Ukraine who was filled with tears over the words of encouragement, filling their heart with peace and tranquillity.

Melissa shared the importance of partnering with the local community groups to use the church building for activities such as a foodbank, childcare centre etc.

- **Rev Julie Hunt – Newport Baptist Church**

This church had 9 baptisms in one day which was a result of faithful prayer over the years. As these members transitioned from primary to secondary schooling, the church offered a Why-Grow program with series on Encountering Jesus, exploring the Gospels interactions with Jesus. The church experienced humility in learning alongside the younger members, allowing scripture to speak and challenge them, ultimately leading to their baptism.

Julie's advice was to start praying diligently, no matter the church size. The number of members is not restrictive for God to move and work. Churches should offer discipleship opportunities for members, with the humility to listen and learn from your younger members. Churches should journey with their members and be prepared to challenge and not judge.

- **Luke Williams – Follow Baptist Church**

The church recently purchased a factory to develop into a church in a new community. There were initial difficulties in obtaining a permit from the Cardinia Shire, with the Town Planner in clear disagreement of this proposal. Over time, the council continuously rejected the proposal despite the church meeting all requirements, even producing an extensive report on why the proposal should be rejected. An eventual town planning meeting was hosted, with the church and wider community attending. To the church's surprise, the Councillor rejected the Town Planner's proposal and granted the church a permit with a unanimous vote. Luke reflected on these encouraging quotes from non-faith councillors from this meeting:

- 'The council needs to enable and empower groups like Follow Baptist Church to work within the community'.
- 'Community groups, such as Follow Baptist Church, are well trusted and have more engagement with the community'.
- 'I think the council has more work to do... to set aside space for these groups to work with the community'.
- 'The church has never let us down in ten years, why should we let them down now?'

In engaging with the council, Luke reflected on Proverbs 18:6, about the gift of serving, and how Jesus ultimately came to serve, not to be served. There is no substitute for meeting people where they are at. The church's continuous serving has built trust within the community, and Luke has frequently met with the council to show interest and learn how the church can better serve the community's needs.

9. GOOD NEWS STORIES

Rev. Daniel Bullock facilitated an invitation for members of Assembly to share good news stories from their community, church or agency. Some of these stories were as follows:

- **Nathan Nettleton (South Yarra Community Baptist Church)**

Since the pandemic, the church has not utilised its building for service and have transitioned to online services instead. Through a random conversation during the May Assembly gathering last year, Earthen Vessels will be holding their first service this Sunday at the South Yarra property. A positive story of how a random conversation can lead to a church finding a new home.

- **Aaron Wardle (Wangaratta Baptist Church)**

A lot of community outreach within the last three years have led to a consolidating effort into Easter weekend programs. The council were supportive and gave the church a grant. Over 2,000 people came to the Easter community day, engaging with the church through conversations, food and entertainment, and celebrated Jesus for no cost to the community. From this, Aaron has built great rapport with the council and community groups and has been invited to meetings and groups to speak into. A positive note as Aaron is the only individual with a faith background in these spaces.

- **Leigh Bernoth (*The Vine Baptist Church*)**

A praise point for the youth who were baptised earlier this year. Leigh mentioned that the youth didn't inform their parents and abruptly chose to get baptised. This was a real blessing and encouragement to the church families that their children can make these important decisions.

- **Sherman Huang (*Crossway Baptist Church*)**

Sherman felt a burden to reach out to the second generation of Mandarin youth a few years ago. God put this burden on different hearts in the church; however, the church was unsure how to achieve this. A random lady requested the church to help a local school student dealing with tough situations, as God put this request on her heart. In the meantime, the church was praying on how to support the school. God brought the lady to the church café, and coincidentally was the same person Sherman was looking to speak to. Through this conversation, it was decided to create an afterschool program for Mandarin youth as the school had been closed to Bible education. After two months of prayer, the principal approved the church's proposal and continues to seek prayer and support.

Daniel mentioned the BUV Together Magazine for more inspiration about good news stories and reminded the Assembly of the upcoming Flourishing Church survey.

10. CLOSING

Mick reminded the Assembly of the upcoming BWA World Congress in July 2025.

Mick Turnbull thanked all in attendance and closed the meeting in prayer. Assembly meeting ending at 9:26pm.