

Affiliation Discussion Guide

SEPTEMBER 2018 ASSEMBLY



Baptist Churches
of NSW & ACT

One of the significant pieces of feedback from the initial discussion about affiliation at our September 2017 Assembly was the encouragement to explore more concrete mechanisms for committing to and expressing our mutual interdependence. Regularly in the feedback, questions also arose about boundaries – sometimes theological, sometimes around engagement and participation, particularly financially.

Two initiatives being considered are being workshopped for further feedback today.

1. The development of an Affiliation Agreement

A clear, mutual commitment outlining the privileges and responsibilities of being affiliated with the movement.

The themes below, focusing around both the privileges and responsibilities of affiliation, have been raised in the affiliation consultations and feedback so far. Below is a possible framework for expressing them an Affiliation Agreement.

NOTE: an exact wording is not being suggested below, these are general areas only.

We agree to value the benefits of being together in association:

A. IDENTITY

- Shares values and foundational beliefs.
- Shared reputation in the wider community - the name “Baptist”. A sense of collective identity.
- The sense of collective voice.

B. PARTNERSHIP

- Mutual support and accountability - being part of the family.
- Shared partnership in mission - connected to a larger vision – Gen1K - healthy churches, church planting.

C. EMPOWERMENT

- Ministry resourcing support for:
 - leadership
 - kids/families
 - youth/young adults
 - SRE
 - community mission
- Ministerial resourcing - affiliation, ongoing training, marriages licences, professional standards etc.

D. PARTNERSHIP

- Administrative resourcing provided by the Association.
eg. insurance, administrative support, Safe Church framework and resources.

We agree to accept the responsibilities of being together in association:

A. COMMITMENT

- Affirming our Foundational Beliefs & Core Values.
- Valuing our interdependence alongside our local church autonomy.
- Implementing Safe Church policies and other agreed processes that promote healthy community and mission, and help guard our shared reputation.

B. COLLABORATION

- Contributing to the shared life and decision making of the Association.
- Protecting the unity of our Association and actively promoting healthy relationships between affiliated churches and between those churches and the Association.

C. COMMUNICATION

- Sharing supplied communication from the Association (with the corresponding responsibility for the Association to provide it appropriately).
- Completing the annual statistics return to allow an overall picture of the movement to be maintained.

D. CONTRIBUTION

- Contributing to the financial needs of the Association so together we may fulfil our shared vision.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Are these the sort of areas you would want to see in an Affiliation Agreement?
2. Is there anything missing?

2. Expressing our financial commitment through an Affiliation Fee

- Funding received from churches for our Association's budget has stayed static at around \$1.5m per annum for over 2 decades.
- Around 25% of our churches do not contribute to the budget and a further 20-25% contribute below \$1000 per annum.
- A previous supplementary source of income from Baptist Insurance Management is no longer available whilst churches continue to benefit from lower insurance premiums.
- In 2019 contributions from churches of over \$2.2m will be required to allow current Association ministry and services to continue.
- A key emerging need is to discuss the place of Affiliation Fees in the structure of our ongoing financial commitment to each other through the Association.

An affiliation fee could be calculated in a variety of ways. For example:

A FLAT RATE BASED ON AVERAGE WEEKLY ATTENDEES >18YRS

- \$100 per attendee could raise \$2.5m
- \$80 per attendee could raise \$2m
- \$40 per attendee could raise \$1m

OR

A SLIDING SCALE BASED ON ATTENDEES AND CHURCH SIZE

- the larger the church, the larger the amount per attendee.

A FLAT % OF GENERAL INCOME

- 5% could raise \$2.3m
- 4% could raise \$1.8m

OR

A SLIDING SCALE BASED ON GENERAL INCOME

- the greater the income, the higher the %.



QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Do you support there being an Affiliation Fee? Why or why not?
2. If not, what other measures should be taken to raise the funds needed for the Association to support churches and fulfil our collective vision?
3. Do you have a preference for how an Affiliation Fee should be calculated?
4. If churches do not contribute to the Association (through an Affiliation Fees or other contribution), what should happen?