



Baptist
Churches
SA&NT

*a movement of local
churches, thriving in
Jesus, transforming
the world*



Annual — 23
Report 24

Our vision

We are a movement of local churches thriving in Jesus transforming the world.

Through our churches we see:

Worship

People's lives being transformed as they receive and celebrate God's presence

Community

Where people matter, choose to belong and actively serve others as they receive and share God's love

Service

People showing God's love as they generously serve others and prepare God's people for ministry

Prayer

People growing as a people of prayer

Formation

People's lives transformed so they become more like Jesus

Mission

Through God's reconciliation bringing justice, mercy, and proclamation, increasing numbers of people led to Jesus and leading others to Jesus

Our objectives

In keeping with this purpose and vision the ministry team and ministries of Baptist Churches SA & NT will, with godly stewardship, support, encourage, influence and extend the life and mission of the Churches by:

- inspiring imagination
- advocating mission
- facilitating connections
- cultivating leaders
- resourcing churches





*We exist
for Christ
reconciling
all things to
God*

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From the President



Rev Scott
Cadman

Our Baptist Theology holds the autonomy of the local church as very important. We are made up of local congregations worshipping, serving and witnessing to Jesus Christ, bringing our own distinct and unique sense of calling to serve our respective communities. But, we are also committed to being in fellowship with each other. While this can at times lead us to have differences of opinions and bring some relational challenges, at its best it is also a blessing. We are sisters and brothers in Christ regardless of our differences. In fact, our diversity is a wonderful expression of the depth and breadth of God's kingdom. In that light it has been encouraging again this year to see how this wider shared ministry continues to develop:

- We continue to seek ways to encourage, grow and partner with our indigenous congregations which with the amalgamation now number seven. Please pray for our indigenous churches and their leaders.
- We continue to explore the possibilities of Church planting in both new and established parts of the state.
- It is an ongoing joy that we keep welcoming new churches into BCSANT.
- There is a smaller number of churches at present looking for senior/sole pastors which speaks of God's provision for our churches.
- One of the great joys in this past year was the finalising of the amalgamation with the Baptist Union of Northern Territory. We are now the Baptist Churches of South Australia and Northern Territory (BCSANT). This is proving to be a welcome boost to all the churches. We also now have a representative, Neil Wright, from the Northern Territory, on our Assembly Board.
- There has also been significant work done between the Assembly Board, Baptist Care Board and Baptist Care Foundation in what is always a vital and at times challenging ministry amongst the most disadvantaged in our communities.

I would also like to express my appreciation for all the people on our various Baptist boards and for our Baptist office staff. We have good people in these roles who often have to wrestle with complex and difficult situations and their commitment, integrity, and openness to find the best way ahead is always commendable. Thank you to you all.

Finally as we enter another year in Christ's company and service may I leave you with these wonderful words from Ephesians.

"I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen."



From the Director of Ministries



**Rev Dr
Melinda
Cousins**



This has been a significant year for our Association with the adoption of our new name and logo as we formally brought together the 160-year history of Baptist Churches SA and the 54-year history of the Baptist Union NT. Our vision continues to be that we are a movement of local churches thriving in Jesus transforming the world.

We are a growing movement, both in people and churches. A large number of our churches are running Alpha courses, or other introductions to the Christian faith. Week after week, we are hearing stories of baptisms across our churches, as people express their commitment to following Jesus. We have been joined this year by four new member churches and are working with a number of others towards membership in the coming months.

God is growing leaders among our movement too. Our internship program this year has a cohort in Darwin and a cohort in Adelaide and our Accredited Ministry Formation had its largest intake in over a decade, with 15 candidates currently working their way towards accreditation and ordination across our movement. We have a significant number of pastors in their later years of ministry, and give thanks for their wisdom and experience as well as the many ways they serve our movement beyond their local churches. And we continue to pray that God will raise up people to serve in all areas of our churches' ministry and mission.

We are also growing as a movement of diverse churches – not only South Australian and Northern Territorian, but also rural, remote, and urban; neighbourhood and regional; indigenous and non-indigenous; with multi-campus and micro-church models; and with congregations worshipping in at least 15 different languages. Our increasing diversity brings challenges in communication and working together well, but is a wonderful picture of God's Kingdom vision for every tribe and tongue. May we listen together to one another well and be open to how God is changing us all.

We have much to be thankful in how God has led us, how Jesus is at work among us today, and all that that Spirit is leading us into that is yet to unfold. I want to thank again the members of our BCSANT Support team who work with faithfulness and passion in their areas of giftedness to resource, support, and influence our movement. I particularly thank those who serve on Assembly Board, as well as the Boards of Baptist Care SA and the Baptist Care SA Foundation, as they give tirelessly of their time and energy to lead us in good governance while upholding our mission and vision. And I want to thank God for you and your local church as you continue to follow Jesus and make Him known. As you read this year's annual report, I pray that you will be excited to celebrate God's unfailing goodness to us, invited to see and explore your own place in our story, and challenged to seek with us what it looks like to follow Jesus into all He has for us next.



Church Development



Rev Mark Sanders

It has been a privilege to serve another year in the church development role for Baptist Churches of SA&NT. I continue to love meeting with pastors and leaders and visiting churches across our movement. It has been a particular joy to connect with some of the NT churches who are now part of our shared association.

My role gives me both a broad perspective of our overall movement health, as well as opportunities to see what's happening on the ground in specific churches. While all churches face the significant challenge of being effective in mission to a secular culture, I am greatly encouraged by the overall health of our movement. For many churches, 2024 has been a time of bouncing back from the challenges of the Covid season and being reinvigorated in ministry and mission.

Some things to note are:

- At the time of writing (July 2024) there are currently no church advertising to fill pastoral vacancies. We give thanks for the way God has provided pastors to fill vacancies over the past few years.
- More churches are accessing the Church Plant Seed Fund and others are exploring church planting and revitalization in various forms. This is an exciting development and I encourage any church with a vision to church plant to speak to me.
- Church Reviews have been carried out in a wide range of churches in the past year. A church review is an intentional process led by an external facilitator than enables a church to reflect on the past, consider present opportunities and challenges, and then look forward toward the future. If this would be helpful in your church please contact me.
- I have been working with the church health facilitators nationally to develop a National Church Revitalisation Strategy that will provide a resource to support Baptist churches nationally who facing the challenge of plateauing or declining health and missional effectiveness.
- There continues to be many stories of people coming to faith in Jesus and being baptised. Praise God! This confirms the growing sense that, as someone said to me recently "Australians are far more open to the gospel than most Christians realise". May we continue as churches to make the most of this season as we bear witness to the gospel.



Accredited Ministry Formation



Rev Dr Tony
Ling

I am very grateful to God for his equipping, and for the support from the BCSANT team who work tirelessly on behalf of our movement's pastors and churches. This year, Accredited Ministry Formation (AMF) commenced with a rush, resulting in a larger than normal peer group cohort. The cohort includes: Cathy Turner (West Beach), Mary Ackers (Knightsbridge), Andrew Foster (Broadview), Leona Stewart (Hills), Peter Swann (Glen Osmond), Dan Newton (Blackwood), Will Samson (Barossa) and Nat Mills (mid year, Coromandel). Continuing AMF were: Nick van Ruth (Hills), Iain Anderson (Alice Springs), Biak Zalian (Adelaide Chin), Thang Tungnung (Zo Baptist). It was a fitting close to Semester 1 spending a day of prayer in the City exegeting the landscape.

Alongside these women and men are those that help shape, encourage, prompt, pray for and support: the coaches, those delivering course material, the congregational support representatives, the spiritual directors, prayerful congregations, and the partners and families of the AMF candidates.

The Recognised Pastor Intensive took place in June 2024 with fourteen trainees. This included Myanmar pastors with translators, someone in remote Lajamanu in a donga via zoom on an iPad, a Chinese pastor, a Polish pastor, and a representative from Westcare.

The amalgamation between BCSA and BUNT has meant the NT Recognised Ministers are now Recognised Pastors within the BCSANT framework. It was a joy to meet with many of the NT pastors in June to consider options for ongoing development and support.

Pastors completing their ongoing accreditation have been introduced to the new online Accreditation Currency with three 'cohorts' of accredited pastors uploading their required documents. And overseeing all this and more is chair Nathan Walker and the team representing the Accreditation and Ordination Committee. They serve our movement and our churches and pastoral teams in ways that continue to be God honouring and Kingdom centred.



Leadership Development



Rev Elliot
Keane

As always we have much to be thankful for! We see healthy examples of emerging leaders stepping into serving in their churches. We continue to learn how to support and develop leaders who are culturally and generationally diverse, and we remain committed to developing and equipping leaders across SA & NT.

This year, our pastors gathered at Adelaide Hills Convention Centre where we heard from Rev Victor Owuor, Director of Ministries in Western Australia. Victor encouraged us to 'Gospel' ourselves from self-glory and self-satisfaction. We also heard a stretching lecture on authority and power from Dr Christa McKirland, a NZ based systematic theologian.

4D Leadership Conference was an inspiring gathering, with leaders and volunteers from across our movement. We heard from Ed Vaughan and our own Melinda Cousins. Together, they lifted our eyes to what future church might look like. We explored what we as a movement and as leaders might need to lead and serve our churches and the mission of God. We were inspired by Godx talks from local church leaders, carefully crafted electives, and enjoyed gathering with others from across our movement.

Over the year we also gathered for professional development seminars on the Importance of ongoing renewal for long term effective ministry, Serving Well Today to Finish Tomorrow Well, and Domestic and Family Violence.

At the end of 2023, we celebrated our most culturally diverse cohort of 14 interns from 10 churches, including 1 from Darwin. This year we are journeying with 12 interns including our largest Darwin cohort of 3! We celebrate with our local churches that invest in emerging leaders through our Leadership Internship. Who can you tap on the shoulder for 2025?

We also love partnering with local churches to invest in next generation, CALD, Aboriginal and emerging leaders. The shape of ministry and mission is changing, so we continue to figure out together what leadership development needs to look like. Listening to the Spirit and following King Jesus, we continue to wrestle with shaping leaders for the future, leaders who are Christ-like, resilient, adaptable, creative, and courageous.

Pastoral Services



Rev Mark
Foley

Over this past year, the sense of community amongst our pastoral leaders and mutual support has been evident and encouraging. This is most noticeable in the way our pastors seek out and offer support to one another outside of any program or anything I might offer. I believe this is a reflection of the health of our movement and the collegiality of our pastors. This is not to say some pastors have not experienced challenges, however, in the midst of these, it is wonderful to know that great support was offered and received. During this year I have also been working with a task force of retired pastors to establish an active retirees list. The idea is that the skills and experience of some of our retired pastors can continue to be a blessing to our movement and our serving pastors.

The other change this year has been the merger between the NT and SA and the retirement of Leigh Philp in his role in supporting our rural pastors. We give thanks to God for Leigh's faithful ministry and the prayerful support he offered.

Following these two changes I am giving some thought to how best to support our pastors who serve in remote areas (rural and the NT). If you have any thoughts on what would be effective please let me know. To begin, we are facilitating a pre-gathering in August when our remote pastors are being invited to join us for an extra day prior to Pastors Gathering. This will allow time for us to consider some of the particular challenges and opportunities of serving in a remote setting.

Officially my role includes the following 3 areas:

1. Pastors Renewal Retreats. These continue to be the key means by which we encourage pastors to develop vulnerable and trusting relationship with each other. Over the coming year, we anticipate that the next cycle of women pastors retreat groups will commence. The pastors wives group is midway through its cycle and being greatly appreciated and the mens groups are nearing the end of their cycle. Already we have pastors waiting for the next cycle to begin which is encouraging.
2. Regional networks are becoming less common, however, it is anticipated that in the coming year, opportunity for pastors in similar contexts to gather and support each other. The shift to Professional Supervision is having a positive impact on the need for these types of connections.
3. Referring Pastors to professional services when required. When things get difficult for our pastors, BCSANT offers support for those who would value professional counselling or other support services. If this is required I will confidentially help pastors access these services.

Along with these formal parts of my role, I enjoy taking the opportunity to meet with pastors to get to know them and pray for them. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to support our many godly, faithful and creative pastors and the ministry they exercise. Please continue to pray for them in their service.

Intercultural Ministry



Rev Darryl
Bishop

John's vision of a community of people from every nation, tribe, people, and language is the future to which the church is called. As followers of Jesus, we are beckoned to live not only out of our past as we look back to the cross and the resurrection, but also, we are called to live out of our future. We are called forward into this future hope made possible because of Jesus.

Over the past year, we have a further two Burmese pastors involved in our Accreditation & Ministry Formation program. Another five of our Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CaLD) pastors have completed the Recognized Pastors' Intensive. We were able to put processes in place to allow two of these pastors to complete the intensive even though their English was limited. At 4D Conference, many of us were deeply moved as we heard Charity Mwangi share of her ministry amongst the Kenyan community here in Adelaide .

God is up to something as we see Chinese Alpha being hosted at Knightsbridge, Enfield, and Springpark, as well as the ongoing program at Rostrevor Baptist. Edwardstown Baptist has a growing Chinese ministry under the pastoral leadership of Samuel Chan. He is also exploring similar shared ministry opportunities at Knightsbridge and Hallett Cove.

Across our movement, there are now 26 different churches or faith communities worshipping in languages other than English. In collaboration with Baptist Care SA, and with representatives from 10 different local churches an English as a Second Language (ESL) Community of Practice has been launched. Seminars exploring models and ways of doing multicultural church ministry have been conducted at Trinity and Andrews Farm. Casuarina Baptist in Darwin serves as a flagship for us as it intentionally incorporates ministry in other languages and showcases their cultural diversity within their regular Sunday services.

Through representation on the Intercultural Communities delegated body of Australian Baptist Ministries, we are continuing to listen and learn from what is occurring in other state associations. Specific projects include ministry to our young second-generation Australians and resources that take us beyond cultural awareness to cultural intelligence.

The Homogenous Unit Principle (HUP) which was an effective church growth strategy in the late 20th century is found wanting in our growing culturally diverse communities. The church of the future will reflect the cultural diversity of their neighbourhoods, and will be defined by justice, mutuality, respect, equality, understanding, acceptance, freedom, diversity, peace-making, and celebration across generations and across cultures.

What treasure has God deposited in each culture and ethnic group that He is redeeming in these present days and bringing into his church. For it is there that we will experience a foretaste of the new heavens and the new earth.

"The glory (treasure or worth) and honour of the nations will be brought into it (new Jerusalem). Nothing impure will ever enter it..."
Revelation 21:26-27



Next Gen and Young Adults Ministry



Rev Scott Berry

Another year has flown by, and it is a joy to see the way Tash Pillay (Kids Ministry) and Mary Ackers (Youth Ministry) are actively supporting and encouraging the Next Gen space all across SA and NT.

God continues to invite the next generation of leaders to step up and be involved in leading our movement deeper into the mission of God, and what a privilege we have to cheer this on. The coalface of this is primarily our camps ministries, but there are other opportunities for this too.

Part of engaging key leaders and providing direction for what we do comes from the Vision Team, which is in a fresh season with new members. It now consists of myself, Mary Ackers, Elijah Avila (Springpark), Dan Newton (Blackwood Hills), Larissa Ramsay (Kings) and Chris Bowman (Unley Park).

It is exciting to see things bubbling away for young adults across our movement. We have had some formal planned events, with young adults from 20 different churches gathering to worship and learn together. Last August at Enfield, Riley Smith invited us to deliberately take on the habits of spiritual formation that lead to genuine discipleship. In March at Hills Aldgate, we heard personal stories of thriving and surviving as a young adult from Chris Bowman (Unley Park), Ellen Beasy (Rostrevor) and Andrew Foster (Broadview). It is also exciting to hear stories of how youth and young adult groups across our movement are connecting and seeking to support and spur one another on in the faith in regional and informal gatherings.



Youth Ministry



Mary Ackers

It's been another great year in the youth ministry space, and I feel very privileged to have witnessed and worked alongside the dedicated leaders of our movement.

We celebrated another successful year of Easter Camp, welcoming 230 young people across the Wirraway and Mylor campsites. I want to extend a special thank you to the approximately 90 leaders we had across our camps. They each contributed to building an incredible culture where young people could ask hard questions, encounter Jesus, and dive deeper into their faith. Our leaders care deeply about helping young people to know God more, and I was blessed to see this in action through camp; leaders praying for youth individually, courageously going off script to follow the Spirit's leading, and helping to give young people language and tools to express their faith experience in new ways. Huge thanks to our camp Core Teams and Directors Andy and Rachel Stevens (Wirraway) and Hamish Millard (Mylor).

In February we hosted a brunch for key leaders of our Youth and Young Adult ministries. Many are excellent emerging leaders in our network, and I was further encouraged that almost half of this group were women! This was one of our largest gatherings of this nature, and the energy and buzz in the room gave me much hope and excitement for the future.

Keep encouraging and praying for your Next Gen leaders – they are passionate and excited to serve!



Children's Ministry



Tash Pillay

Over the past year, it has been a privilege to connect with leaders from across our movement through various means, including gatherings, one-on-one interactions, and camp. It has been heartening to observe the passion and commitment to nurturing the next generation.

This year marked the first time the Children's Ministry hosted an event featuring an interstate guest speaker. We were honoured to welcome Petrea Taylor from RiverLife Baptist Church in Queensland. She spoke on "Re-igniting Passion" for leaders of emerging generations, challenging them to stay rooted and focused on Christ. Petrea emphasized that our love for Jesus and our personal walk with him should be the driving force behind our ministry.

It was also a privilege to spend time with the Lai Church during their Children's Gospel Week. Children participated in a holiday program filled with worship, teaching, and activities. At the week's end, they were guided on their next steps in faith and encouraged to explore these with their leaders. I am greatly encouraged by the many young leaders in the CALD (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse) churches from Myanmar. These leaders are passionate, generous, and eager to learn, with a deep desire to see all the children in their communities come to know Jesus.

State Kids Camp (previously M&M Camp) was held in July, bringing together 70 kids and 60 leaders (including junior helpers aged 15-17) at Dzintari Campsite in Yankalilla. The theme this year was 'On the Case', where children were encouraged to follow clues to discover how to grow in their faith. They learned that they can grow in faith by spending time with God, spending time with others (community), serving (using their talents and gifts), and sharing their story (telling others about Jesus).

The leaders on camp were passionate, excited about Jesus, and displayed amazing leadership qualities. Their enthusiasm and dedication greatly contributed to the overall experience, inspiring the children and setting a powerful example of what it means to follow Christ.

Independent
Director of
Professional
Standards
&
Executive
Director (CPS)



Carl Collins

The unique relationship between Child Protection Solutions (CPS) and BCSANT has now began its eighteenth year. Over this time, we have developed and implemented a comprehensive range of proactive child protection systems, structures, and strategies that have been proven to be ahead of their time, from both legal and legislative requirements.

The ongoing challenge is to ensure the full implementation of the model as a matter of accountability and integrity. A significant part of my role is to provide ongoing and unlimited support to churches in order to achieve this.

The same levels of accountability apply to the Professional Standards component of my independent role.

Rather than provide an overview of the entire Child Protection and Professional Standards model here, I invite you to take a moment to look over the model via the BCSANT Website under Child Protection and Professional Standards. There you will find a complete overview as well as additional information about the unique independent arrangement between CPS & BCSANT.

The established BCSANT strategy and training modules at varying levels have been adopted by a wide range of denominations and independent churches across Australia, which highlights the success and strength of the BCSANT model.

In 2025 an extended range of combined face-to-face, and professionally recorded/filmed seminars, will be added to the training model to create an even wider scope of training options.

Over the last six years the online training components have been fully underwritten by Baptist Insurance Services and CPS. I want to acknowledge and thank BIS for their significant contribution and ongoing relationship with CPS.

I also want to take this opportunity to thank all of our fantastic Child Protection Contact Officers across our churches, and pastors for their more than significant contribution in this space. Your support, cooperation, and 'buy-in' is something that I greatly value and appreciate.

And finally, a huge thank you to Melinda Cousins and the board for their ongoing support and opportunity to serve BCSANT.

Operations

(Baptist Office)



Glenn Dixon

For the last year, the larger projects that the office has been working on include:

- Renewing a short-term lease renewal through to the end of 2024 with our tenant, Healthcare Australia
- Engaging an architect to start the process of upgrading and improving the facilities at King William Road
- A number of small projects to keep our office building safe and well-maintained
- Continuing the administration process for amalgamation with the NT and the winding up of BUNT
- Updating our visual identity, website, legal name(s) and documentation following the creation of the new Baptist Churches of South Australia and the Northern Territory Inc entity
- Providing bookkeeping services to 22 of our churches in SA and the NT

This is amongst the usual day-to-day support we provide to the larger team in the office and to our wider church family.

This year we have seen some more changes in our staff. We thank Sheryl Klaffer who coordinated events after farewelling Cathy Turner (who now serves as a Pastor at West Beach Community Church). We also wish to thank Benito Carbone for his excellent work filling in for Ruth Grace while she has been on Maternity Leave. We welcome Ruth back in July 2024.

If there is anything that you think we could do, or do better, to support our churches in the areas of finance and administration, please do not hesitate to get in contact with me for a chat.

Finance



Bridget
Townsend

The Finance and Administration team supports the ministries of the Baptist movement as a whole. We have continued to provide accounting, banking, payroll, insurance and book-keeping to both SA & NT churches and reception services to Baptist Mission Australia, Baptist World Aid, Company of Grace, and Child Protection Solutions. A special mention and welcome to the Northern Territory as we are now Baptist Churches of SA & NT.

Contributions by the churches are invaluable and we are thankful to the member churches for their continual contributions. The budget for contributions was adjusted to more accurately reflect the 2.5% request of churches, resulting in the increased budgeted figure of \$350,000 for 2023/24. Actual contributions totalling \$305,755 were below this budgeted figure, a shortfall of \$44,225, but above those received last year. Our thanks to the churches for accepting their part in ensuring that we were able to sustain and maintain the level of services provided.

Finance

Continued

Facts and figures of interest:

- Baptist Financial Services (BFS) Distribution and Capital Contribution Grant were greatly appreciated and contributed vital support to the ministries of BCSA&NT.
- Providence Wealth continues to be our Investment Advisors in 2023/24.
- Healthcare Australia remains our tenant at the Baptist Centre. This is beneficial as the income generated from this tenancy ensures cash flow availability.
- Ministers Long Service Leave Fund currently has less in reserves than actual liability. This is due to the increase in superannuation and CPI percentages.
- The Redress Scheme Pool was set up in 2019 and churches will continue to contribute to this pool until 2028. We are thankful that we have had a low number of claims, resulting in the Assembly Board placing a moratorium on Redress Support Pool payments for 2023 & 2024.
- Book-keeping Services have increased to a total of 23 churches since inception in May 2019.

I would like to extend my thanks for the dedication and ability of the Finance and Admin team. Well done!



In 2024, I was privileged to continue investing in, growing relationships with, and encouraging churches in their mission journey, throughout South Australia and the Northern Territory.

Our May Mission Month theme was Mending! Joining with God in mending a beautiful, broken world. As I visited churches around SA/NT I was so encouraged by the uptake of our resources and the enthusiastic desire to be co-menders with God in his salvation plan. The resources will remain on our website until the end of 2024 allowing churches to continue to use them.

Baptist Mission Australia



Rev Lisa
Cornish

Luke, Rachel, Isaac, Tahlia, and Michaela Hutchinson completed their service in Cambodia in July after nearly six years. We thank them for their loving, dedicated service to the Khmer people and pray for them as they continue to establish themselves back in Adelaide. We are thrilled, however, that their service will not be completely ending with us as Rachel will travel to Cambodia several times per year to continue to develop and train staff in the Play Therapy Centre for children with disabilities she has established. Pray for Rachel and the family as she continues this important work.

Elliot Keane began in the newly established First Nations Engagement Facilitator role in 2024. Elliot will work nationally to support and establish relationships within both Indigenous and non-Indigenous faith communities as we seek to work together well and encourage each other as sisters and brothers in Christ. Pray for Elliot as he establishes both the role and his work in it.



This past year has seen the consolidation of a Baptist Mission Australia (BMA) / Grace Services (GS) partnership in association with BCSANT. This has provided a process for compliance with international standards and financial transfer requirements. It also provided valuable support to Grace Services in developing effective management and operational tools while not compromising local control of the service.

Central to this has been the continued assignment of Mark and Ngoc Pham to Company of Grace BMA to provide missional oversight. Mark Pham and his wife Ngoc are fully trained and accredited with BMA.

Under the new partnership, Hien Pham continues to serve as Company of Grace Director and has excelled in this role. Hien has visited supporters in SA over the past year.

Both Hien, Mark, Ngoc, and BMA have confirmed their commitment to Grace Services being a prime mission partner under their BMA entity. This has led to a formal partnership agreement and active BMA presence and engagement with the project in Vietnam.

The blessing of the BMA involvement is that it has seen a re-emergence of the relationship that had existed when the founder Rev Hoa Stone was alive.

The advance of this relationship has also seen Rev John Beasy appointed as a BMA consultant to continue to steer the strategic objectives of Grace Services towards alignment of this care mission to a local church ministry. The prime focus for this past year and looking forward is to see Grace Services fully integrated as a social service expression of a local church in Tu Duc district, Ho Chi Minh City.

A key step towards this end vision saw a Church planted within the GS context on 2nd December 2022. This local church has continued to meet and provides a key worshipping community for GS staff and a point of contact for local persons seeking spiritual nurture.

There has also been significant property development activity over the past 12 months.

a) The land adjacent to COG (Currently for House of Grace) has served as a facility for development of Grace Baptist Church (GBC) and a centre of care for children with disabilities.

- This is an integrated Christian ministry reflecting worship, evangelism, and social justice.
- A lift has been installed in this House of Grace building, and along with some minor maintenance jobs.
- The building is now fitted and ready for its purpose.
- The ground level will serve as a daycare centre for low-income families and the children of single mums.

Company of Grace



Rev John Beasy

Company of Grace

Continued

- The first level serves as a place for people who need short-term respite and care, especially those with children fleeing domestic violence.
- The 2nd level is reserved for Hien as her private living quarters.

b) With the support of international donors, a café and playground has been developing to allow significant connection with the local community.

With the growing range of services and access to the community, it remains a high priority for visiting teams to have full compliance with GS policies relating to child protection awareness and reporting processes. Child Protection Solutions (CPS) Director Carl Collins is active in this space and in conjunction with BMA ensures that visiting teams are adequately trained and have all the necessary clearances to be present in this unique space.



The past 12 months for Baptist Care SA has seen significant change and challenge, as well as many positive stories and outcomes for those we exist to serve.

Change is a constant in the community services sector, and it provides us with both challenge and opportunity. We are blessed to have a team that is so committed to our mission of expressing God's love and compassion for all people, especially those at risk or marginalised, by journeying with them towards the attainment of their full potential.

Baptist Care SA



Sue Raw
CEO

We released our Strategic Ambition for the next three years which has three key areas; 'what we will be known for', 'where we will grow' and 'measures for success'.

We will be known for:

- Restorative relationships
- Strong partnerships
- Being client-centred
- Making a difference
- Our great people

These aspects are critical to our people and the way we live out our mission. Our teams work daily with those who are vulnerable across so many parts of Adelaide and the regions. We work with young people removed from family, those living with a disability, those experiencing homelessness as well as addiction issues and so much more. The challenges are many and could be overwhelming, and yet we have so many examples of positive outcomes and changed lives.

I am incredibly humbled to lead the team we have and for the significant outcomes that are achieved daily.

We are grateful for all that God has done in the past 12 months and for our ongoing partnership with Baptist Churches.



Baptist World Aid Australia



Rev Steve
Woods

We continue to be grateful for the generous support of BWAA by churches and individuals in SA and NT. As many communities around the world suffer from the effects of poverty, conflict, natural disasters and changing weather patterns, your generosity literally saves lives and transforms communities daily.

There are 2 pieces of news I particularly want to share with you in this report.

Firstly, in 2024 we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our Child Sponsorship program. For 50 years, Baptist World Aid has been elevating the rights of children while connecting them with generous supporters in Australia. After consultation with children and youth in our programs, as well as their parents and local Partner Staff, Baptist World Aid has changed the way we promote Child Sponsorship to better protect the safety, privacy and dignity of children and young people.

We will no longer display the faces of children awaiting Sponsorship online (or at in-person events).

Faces will be covered by a friendly, yellow 'sticker', protecting the identity of the child until after a person signs up to become a Sponsor. When you become a Child Sponsor, you'll then receive photos of the child or youth you're supporting.

And secondly, it's great to welcome Mike Bartlett to the team as our Advocacy Policy Manager. Many of you will know Mike from his roles in SA churches and at the Baptist Office. Based in Adelaide, but regularly travelling nationwide, Mike represents Australian Baptists with Federal Government and in coalitions including Micah Australia. Mike also engages Australian Baptists in advocacy work – for example, by leading a united response by Australian Baptists to the government regarding injustice and conflict in Myanmar. I know Mike would be happy to engage with your church in helping you advocate for a Better World.

Thank you so much for your prayers and encouragement.

Baptist Financial Services



Glen Thornley

Every year seems to bring new challenges to our clients, and 2024 has been no exception. What many in the community are calling the 'Affordability Crisis' has just as much potential to impact church income as it does the personal income of the Church's members. I am pleased to say that to date, this has not been reflected in any increase in SA or NT Loans clients seeking accommodations in their loan agreements which continue on the whole to be well met – albeit with a little less margin for error in some cases. It is also pleasing to be able to say that, as at the date of writing BFS has not had to increase our rates since November of 2023.

Total funds on deposit for the region have remained steady at around \$40m and the loan balance has increased a little to about \$28m. Many clients are looking to source loan funds at the moment – but economic conditions are favouring a cautious approach.

2024 is the year in which BFS celebrates its 40th Birthday, and we were delighted to host Melinda Cousins representing BCSANT, along with representatives of all the State Associations, and associated National ministries, together with current and past staff and directors to a birthday celebration held at Sydney's Opera House on March 22nd. This was a far cry from the event on September 17th 1984 when BFS, or Baptist Investment Fellowship as it was originally known, was launched at a Dinner in Sydney's Woolworths Cafeteria. Since then, we have provided over \$750 million in loans, assisted over 1,500 Churches and ministries, and distributed over \$30 million in grants and sponsorships to Christian organisations and ministries, and hold around \$500 million dollars in client investments.

Please don't hesitate to reach out if we may be able to provide financial services to assist you or your congregation to Thrive in the work you are doing for God's Kingdom – it's why we are here...

Baptist Insurance Services



Glen Thornley

Last year we launched the long-anticipated Discretionary Mutual Fund. The savings this brought in our property cover helped to offset significant increases in most other insurances leading to a much smaller overall increase than we would otherwise have had. This year we intend to roll our General Liability cover into the DMF as well to mitigate another source of volatility.

The DMF structure has stood us in good stead – and in fact, our efforts are being emulated by several other faith-based insurance schemes that are suffering under the same market volatility.

This year has also led to the appointment of Bronson Justice as the new CEO of Baptist Insurance Services, who came direct from a Senior Management role with JLT Public Sector where he specialised in establishing DMFs for Local Government organisations. His depth of experience and knowledge has brought us immediate benefits and opened doors to BIS that we would have had trouble reaching previously. As I write, Bronson is overseas negotiating for us directly with major international underwriters. It is difficult to overstate how much we have benefited from God making Bronson available at this time, so please join me in welcoming him to the Baptist Insurance Services family.



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