

Revised and additional motions and explanatory material for Special Assembly, 27 February 2021

The following notification has been received from the 5 churches who moved the 3 motions which are the subject of discussion at this Assembly.

Proposed Amendments to Motions tabled at September 2019 Assembly

Proposed by the pastors and members of Campbelltown Baptist Church, Castle Hill Baptist Church, Chatswood Baptist Church, Newtown Baptist Church and Wollongong Baptist Church.

As pastors and members of the five churches that tabled the original motions at the September 2019 Assembly, we have appreciated the opportunities that we have had over the months since then to participate in the forums organised by the Taskforce on Affiliation, Baptist Values and Same Sex Marriage and to engage in conversation with the Assembly Council and other members of churches in our movement. (When the members of the five churches moved the original resolutions back in 2019, they also passed motions authorising their pastors to enter into conversations with the Assembly Council and other members of the Association and amend the motions as needed in response to those conversations.)

After reflecting on those conversations and the Taskforce's report, we have decided to make two amendments to the motions that we tabled last September, and table the amended version of Motion 3 without asking for it to be put to a vote at this Assembly.

Amendment to Motion 1, regarding Affiliation of Churches:

As we noted when we originally tabled the motions last September (and as the Taskforce observed in their report) the 1979 Statement of Beliefs plays a slightly different role in our associational life than the role played by the Basic Doctrines (1919) and the Core Values. Pastors seeking accreditation, for example, are required to affirm the Core Values and the 1919 Basic Doctrines, but simply to "respond to" the 1979 Statement of Beliefs.

Our intention in the motions was never to flatten out that difference. We can, however, see that our first motion might create an unintentional inconsistency in the fact that a church's continuing affiliation would depend on the church affirming the 1979 Statement in full when the same requirement would not be in place for their pastor's continuing accreditation (or for a number of key ministry roles in our association). In order to better express our original intention, we have therefore decided to amend the wording of our first motion, replacing its three references to "foundational beliefs, objects and values" with "basic doctrines, objects and values." The amended motion will now read:

Motion 1. With regard to churches

- When the Assembly Council is made aware of any church that no longer holds to the association's basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly Council investigates this matter in a timely manner.
- If, upon investigation, the Assembly Council finds that that the church no longer holds to our basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly Council, where possible, engage with the church and its leadership to encourage and urge the church to reconsider their position and affirm the beliefs and core values of the Association.

- If, after a further period of three months from the conclusion of the investigation, the church continues to reject our basic doctrines, objects and values, the Assembly Council is to begin the process of withdrawal of affiliation in accordance with section 17.5 (a) of the constitution. The name of the church should be brought to the soonest possible assembly.

Amendment to Motion 3, regarding the Property Trust:

Since moving the original motions we have been informed by the Honorary Legal Advisor of the Association that in his opinion the question of whether a church is or is not affiliated with the Baptist Association does not, in and of itself, determine the church's standing under the Property Trust Act. In light of that advice and at the request of the Assembly Council, we are happy to leave Motion 3 on the table and for it not to be put to the vote at this Assembly.

The version of Motion 3 which we will table at this Assembly (without asking for it to be put to the vote on this occasion) is slightly amended from the version which we originally tabled at the Assembly in September 2019. The original wording of Motion 3 ran the risk of conveying the implication that Assembly Council would be asked to amend the Property Trust Act under its authority, without reference to the NSW Parliament. This was not, of course, our intention, and the amended wording of the motion removes that problem.

The wording of the amended motion will be as follows:

Motion 3. With regard to the property held under the Property Trust

That the Assembly affirm in principle that churches ceasing to be affiliated with the Association should continue to have occupation and use of their property, as long as they continue to uphold the basic doctrines set out in the Baptist Union of NSW Incorporation Act and continue to exist as a congregation of at least 10 members meeting together for the public worship of God according to the usages of the Baptist denomination.

We would still be keen to see the larger overhaul of the Property Trust Act that is planned in the next few years include consideration of any changes that may be necessary to remove any residual uncertainty that may remain on this issue.

Campbelltown Baptist Church

Castle Hill Baptist Church

Chatswood Baptist Church

Newtown Baptist Church

Wollongong Baptist Church

Comment and Notice of Motions from Assembly Council

In light of the motions (in their amended forms) being brought by the 5 churches noted above, Assembly Council has prayerfully considered what comment and response it feels led to bring to Assembly as we continue to progress discussion on these matters.

Assembly Council recognises that churches and individuals grapple with issues in a variety of ways. We also acknowledge that all churches and pastors will live out beliefs and values imperfectly. Assembly Council believes that we do not want to develop a culture within the Association that creates fear around grappling with issues that challenge us in ministry. We also recognise that different churches will necessarily live out faithfulness to our beliefs and values in ways consistent with their mission and ministry context.

Council is cognisant of the fact that if passed, putting these motions into practice, as required, would be its responsibility. Therefore, the Council is placing before Assembly two further motions, which relate specifically to the Motions 1 and 2 brought by the 5 churches. The purpose of these additional motions is to make it clear that what would trigger the intervention of Assembly Council would be a clear and public position by a church or pastor that stands in contravention of our beliefs or values, as distinct from hearsay or presumption.

These motions are:

Motion 1:

- A church will be taken to no longer hold to the Association's 1919 basic doctrines, objects or values when this is evidenced by that church's public stance and/or teaching, where such public stance or teaching is by its own admission its clear and settled position.

Motion 2:

- An Accredited or Recognised Pastor will be taken to no longer hold to the Association's 1919 basic doctrines, objects or values when this is evidenced by that Pastor's public stance and/or teaching, where such public stance or teaching is by their own admission their clear and settled position.

Assembly Council

Summary of Motions for the Special Assembly 27 February 2021

Proposed by the pastors and members of Campbelltown Baptist Church, Castle Hill Baptist Church, Chatswood Baptist Church, Newtown Baptist Church and Wollongong Baptist Church:

Motion 1. With regard to churches

- When the Assembly Council is made aware of any church that no longer holds to the association's basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly council investigates this matter in a timely manner.
- If, upon investigation, the Assembly Council finds that that the church no longer holds to our basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly council, where possible, engage with the church and its leadership to encourage and urge the church to reconsider their position and affirm the beliefs and core values of the Association.
- If, after a further period of three months from the conclusion of the investigation, the church continues to reject our basic doctrines, objects and values, the Assembly Council is to begin the process of withdrawal of affiliation in accordance with section 17.5 (a) of the constitution. The name of the church should be brought to the soonest possible assembly.

Motion 2. With regard to Accredited and Recognised Pastors

- When Assembly Council is made aware of any accredited or recognised pastor who no longer holds to the Association's basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly Council investigates this matter in a timely manner.
- If, upon investigation, the Assembly Council finds that the pastor no longer holds to our basic doctrines, objects and values, that the Assembly Council engage with the pastor where possible to encourage and urge the pastor to reconsider their position, in accordance with section 6.5 (j) of the Accreditation Guidelines.
- If, after a period of no more than three months from the pastor being given an opportunity to be heard by the Assembly Council either in writing or in person at one of its meetings, he or she continues to reject our basic doctrines, objects and values, the Assembly Council is to direct the Committee for Ministry to remove the pastor's name from the list of accredited pastors or the list of recognised pastors in accordance with the Accreditation Guidelines section 6.5 (j).

Motion 3. With regard to the property held under the Property Trust

- That the Assembly affirm in principle that churches ceasing to be affiliated with the Association should continue to have occupation and use of their property, as long as they continue to uphold the basic doctrines set out in the Baptist Union of NSW Incorporation Act and continue to exist as a congregation of at least 10 members meeting together for the public worship of God according to the usages of the Baptist denomination.

(Motion 3 to be tabled but not brought for voting at this Assembly.)

Motions from Assembly Council:

Motion 1:

- A church will be taken to no longer hold to the Association's 1919 basic doctrines, objects or values when this is evidenced by that church's public stance and/or teaching, where such public stance or teaching is by its own admission its clear and settled position.

Motion 2:

- An Accredited or Recognised Pastor will be taken to no longer hold to the Association's 1919 basic doctrines, objects or values when this is evidenced by that Pastor's public stance and/or teaching, where such public stance or teaching is by their own admission their clear and settled position.