

IMPORTANT INFORMATION RE 2022 CHILD PROTECTION TRAINING/SEMINARS AND POLICY COMPLIANCE - BCSA & BUNT

CPCO UPDATE NO: 01/22 Issued 14/01/22

PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Hi to all CPCOs, Senior/Lead Pastors & Delegates.

Welcome to 2022!

As per the usual, dates for 2022 full day and update/refresher Child Protection Seminars will be forwarded to you in mid-January (within the next few days) as well as placed on the BCSA website.

Initially I will be releasing seminar dates up until June only.

This is due to several factors which include the pending introduction of the new/updated training model in May/June.

The new model will continue to include the current full day (5.5 Hour content), update/refresher face-to-face seminars, as well as live ZOOM update/refresher seminars. However, in order to provide greater accessibility to training, a range of additional updated options will be introduced in July 2022.

- **Online:** The release of a new/updated full day recorded and professionally produced modularised seminar via a Webfaction platform.
Like the interim COVID-19 online model, this updated version will come complete with access link, individual username, password, supporting information and assessment papers. The online version will not have to be viewed in one sitting/session. Participants will have individual access to the site for 14 days to complete the seminar. Extensions can easily be obtained upon request.
Whilst we have previously made available an online recorded seminar during COVID-19 restrictions, as well as for rural churches and those who are unable to attend face-to-face sessions, this new/updated version will be openly available and an integral component of the BCSA & BUNT training strategy.

Unfortunately, the recording and production of this updated online component was delayed on three occasions. Twice due to COVID-19 restrictions, and a third time due to the fact that whilst editing the latest seminar filmed in November, we identified some technical issues and as a result we need to record another full day seminar which has been scheduled for March. Apologies for the delay, however these have been matters outside of our control.

- **Online:** Recorded update/refresher seminars accessible via ZOOM/YouTube platforms.
These seminars will also require the completion and return of an assessment paper

Updated information in terms of how to register for online seminars will be forwarded to CPCO's as well as placed on the BCSA and BUNT websites closer to the release of these additional components.

I am also considering introducing a combination of an online information component supported by a 3-hour face-to-face seminar as another option for the full day (5.5 Hour content) equivalent. This would basically mean that the full day equivalent seminar would consist of a Saturday seminar from 9am to noon, rather than from 9am to 3:15pm once the online component has been completed.

You will receive regular updates re the above.

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION

It is important that I update all Pastors and CPCO's that the Department for Child Protection (DHS) has significantly ramped up the scrutiny of and analytical assessments of Child Protection Policies and compliance to levels of which I have never seen.

I cannot stress enough the need to be aware of and to the best of your churches ability ensure that you are implementing your Child Protection Policy. Obviously, we want to do this in order to first and foremost protect children and not just tick boxes!

The BCSA Child Protection Policy has recently in line with compliance requirements undergone an extensive review and submitted it to the Department for Child Protection in order to obtain updated child protection compliance status in line with SA Legislation. We are awaiting approval and acceptance of that policy.

The SA Department for Child Protection are now openly and aggressively threatening churches and organisations with heavy fines in relation to non-compliance status.

Whilst BUNT and churches in other states are not subject to the same legislative compliance standards, they are subject to child protection legislation and to not have and implement a credible child protection policy leaves them highly vulnerable on multiple levels. The BUNT Child Protection Policy is currently undergoing a full review and an updated version will be presented to the BUNT board for consultation and their approval in February.

Once SA compliance is obtained each BCSA church will be forwarded a one-page child protection check list and asked to return that check list declaring that they are aware of the BCSA Child Protection Policy and accept that policy.

I am then required to forward a full list of BCSA churches who return that declaration to the Department for Child Protection. Those churches will be recorded as having compliance status under BCSA. I then need to forward the same information to Baptist Insurance Services who will in turn forward it to our underwriters which is a condition of our insurance.

To give you an idea of the exhaustive work and complexities involved, it has taken some organisations over six months to satisfy the Department for Child Protection of an acceptable child protection policy such has been the meticulous scrutiny and continual returns of submitted policies. I understand that some may have valid questions relating to certain policy requirements, however if we do not meet the departments requirements, we cannot receive child compliance status and as a result cannot operate without it. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

In an attempt to work more effectively and cohesively with the Department for Child Protection I have set up a direct line of communication between the department and my senior policy consultant who specialises in this field.

We will also be commencing work in early 2022 on a BCSA and BUNT Vulnerable Person's Policy.

In my next email I will also release dates for CPCO ZOOM support/information sessions. These are important sessions where I can keep CPCO's, and Pastors updated as well as answer questions and provide ongoing support.

A reminder that the Child Protection and Professional Standards components of the BCSA website were updated last year. Under MINISTRIES and CHILD PROTECTION/PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS you will find a comprehensive range of information. The information placed on the site addresses the most common questions raised by Pastors and CPCO's.

Information includes:

- The role of the Director of Professional Standards
- Child Protection & General Information
- Training requirements
- Training acceptable to BCSA & BUNT
- Seminar dates and how to book (2022 Dates to be updated on 19/01/22)
- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Conduct Policy
- Person of Concern Policy
- Vulnerable Persons Policy – (Pending)
- Working With Children’s Checks and Processes
- National Redress Scheme
- Australian Baptist Ministries Child Protection Principles
- Child Protection Compliance Check List
- CPCO Support posts
- Survivor Support Program

Whilst much of the information on the BCSA website is in principle relevant and applicable to BUNT churches, the BUNT website is currently being reviewed and updated to reflect the same level of information specific to BUNT.

Well, that’s all for now.

Yet again though, thank you for all that you do in this space and your valued support and cooperation in such a complex area.

Never hesitate to contact me for any support and assistance in terms of any child protection and professional standards matters.

That’s what I’m here for.

God bless & regards,