



**Baptist Churches**  
of South Australia

# ASSOCIATE BOARD MEMBERS INFORMATION PACK

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

BCSA acknowledges, with thanks, this document which has adopted significant proportions of the *TEAR (Australia) Associate Member Information Pack 2013*. Changes have also been made to reflect the Baptist context and values.

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## So...what is the BCSA Board and what does it do?

The Baptist Churches of South Australia Assembly Board (BCSA Board) is a group of committed people from member Baptist churches who volunteer their time, knowledge and skills to contribute to the governance of BCSA and its operations.

We hope all Baptist churches and their individual members see themselves as part of the wider BCSA Movement. The Board's specific governance role is not suited for everyone and there are many other ways you can be involved in the life and work of Baptist churches in SA. We encourage you to explore these other avenues as well.

## What is an Associate Board Member?

BCSA created the role of Associate Board Member (Associate) to ensure that Board conversations could be enriched by the perspective and contribution of the emerging generation. The Board also sees this as a fantastic learning experience for younger Baptist members to grow in their understanding of how a board operates and the vital role governance has for a Christian organisation.

Associates have no voting rights but are encouraged to contribute to discussions as they feel able. Associates may be asked to leave a meeting during a discussion of a sensitive nature or during an in-camera discussion.

## What is expected of Associate Board Members?

**Time:** An Associate will need to be able to contribute on average up to 6-8 hours per month which involves preparing for and participating in meetings. This includes:

- Reading the Board papers prior to each monthly Board meeting. There are usually about 60-100 pages of reports, policy documents and minutes, which are sent electronically in the week prior to the meeting.
- Travel to and attendance at each monthly Board meeting.
- Be willing to participate in at least one Board subcommittee (as agreed) when that committee is scheduled (monthly for some, quarterly for others). The Board committees include:
  - Accreditation and Ordination
  - Nomination and Remuneration
  - Audit, Risk & Compliance
  - Assets Management

Associates may have an opportunity to rotate through different committees to allow a broader exposure to the various areas of Board responsibility.

**Contribution:** Contribute as much or as little to meetings as you feel comfortable with. This includes:

- Asking questions when things don't make sense or are unclear;
- Voicing opinions and ideas on any governance matters relevant to the meeting;
- Participating in working groups or projects as requested.

**Board Code of Conduct:** Associates are expected to read and commit to the Board Code of Conduct, which includes maintaining the confidentiality of Board documents and discussions.

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## How many Associate Board Member positions are there?

The Board can have up to up to three Associates active at any point in time.

## How long is the term?

Associate Board Membership is for one year with an option for another year in negotiation with the Board.

## What might Associate Board Members get out of the experience?

An understanding of governance, particularly for a Christian organisation.

An opportunity to see the work of the Baptist Movement from a new perspective.

A better understanding of strategic planning and financial reporting.

An understanding of key issues and emerging trends in organisational governance.

An opportunity to meet and learn from experienced people on the Board.

A deeper understanding of the approach to decision making and leadership that is shaped by Baptist values.

A better understanding of the complexity of decision making in a Christian organisation operating within the wider secular Australian context.

## What are the benefits for BCSA?

- Hearing the voices of emerging generations in Board discussions.
- Leadership development of younger Baptists.
- Equipping young Baptists for key roles in our local churches.
- Greater engagement with young people within the Movement of churches in SA.

## Equipping and Supporting Associate Board Members

Each Associate will have a Board member appointed as their mentor whose role will be to orient them to the structure, purpose and processes of the Board. They will provide an initial orientation prior to the Associate attending Board and act as a guide and support person during the year.

## How often does the Board meet?

The Board meets in person, generally on the first Monday of each month except January – a total of 11 Board meetings a year – held at the Baptist Centre in Unley.

In-person attendance is usual and preferred, however Zoom participation may be an option in certain circumstances. Meetings start with dinner together at 5:30pm and usually end by 8:30pm.

Each of the various Board committees meets at different pre-scheduled times. The Ordination & Accreditation and Moderating Committees meets monthly, the Nomination & Remuneration Committee meets six times a year, and the Audit, Risk & Compliance and Assets Management Committees meet quarterly.

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## What are Board meetings like?

An agenda is included in each month's Board papers outlining the sequence and focus of the different aspects of the meeting. The papers are emailed to all Board members ahead of the scheduled meeting.

- Starting with a meal together at 5:30pm, the formal part of the meeting usually begins with a spiritual reflection/devotion and prayer led by one of the Board members.
- On occasion an outside individual who has been invited will then speak to the Board offering perspectives/insights on a particular matter before the Board.
- On other occasions a Board development session will occur instead e.g. a brief session on reading financial reports or understanding a legal aspect of governance.
- Reports from the Director of Ministries, the President, and the different committees may include various recommendations for Board consideration and discussion.
- Financial Reporting.
- Strategic discussions – engaging with matters relevant to BCSA.
- Compliance related governance work.
- Board review and prayer.

## Why don't Associate Board Members vote at Board meetings?

According to the BCSA Constitution, to be a voting member of the Board a person must be elected by the Membership which comprises all the member churches of the Association. Associate Board Membership is designed to provide young people who don't necessarily have the skills and experience to be directly elected to the Board with an opportunity to be involved in Board discussions. Age does not preclude any Associate from being nominated for full Board Membership.

## Do I have to represent youth?

As a young person you will provide a youth voice on the Board, but you are not expected to be representative of all young people.

## Who is eligible to be considered as an Associate Board Member?

An Associate Board Member is:

- At the time of application 16 – 29 years of age;
- A member of a member church of BCSA;
- Eligible for (or holds) a current Working With Children clearance.

## What sort of person is BCSA looking for?

Someone who is:

- Committed to BCSA's Strategy and Foundational Values;
- Committed to meet with God regularly through prayer and Bible study;

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- Already involved in their local Baptist church;
  - Able to dedicate time and energy to actively engage with the reading material and meetings;
  - Able to think strategically and analytically about issues;
  - Able to communicate their ideas clearly;
  - Able to listen actively; and
  - Willing to adopt the posture of a learner.

## How do you apply? What do you do next?

If you are interested in self-nominating you will need to find a BCSA Board Member or staff member, or a leader from your church who will sponsor you.

Before applying you are encouraged to pray and reflect on what the role requires and how it would fit with your individual situation.

If you are subsequently willing to apply please forward all three (3) completed sections below to the BCSA Director of Ministries, Rev Dr Melinda Cousins.

### SECTION 1

- A short CV, including the names and contact details of two referees: both of whom are members of SA Baptist Churches and preferably one of whom is your pastor.

### SECTION 2

Short (one paragraph each) answers to the following:

- How do you see yourself aligning with the description of the “Sort of person BCSA is looking for”?
- Tell us how you came to be involved in your local Baptist church.
- What ways are you currently involved in the life of your church?
- How does your faith influence your current involvement in church life and activities?
- What is your understanding of good governance?

### SECTION 3

A short, written statement by your sponsor in which they briefly outline their reasons for endorsing your nomination.

## Fully completed nominations can be submitted at any time

Nominations will be reviewed by the Nominations & Remunerations Committee and an interview with members of the Committee may be arranged with the nominee. A letter of support from the nominee’s church leadership may be requested. N & R may then recommend an individual for Board consideration. Any final decision will be made by the BCSA Board and the approved nominees will be invited to start their one-year term on the BCSA Board at a subsequent meeting.

