

Special Assembly February 2021 Text of message sent to congregation on 3 February 2021

To: The TBC Congregation

Dear Friends

On Saturday, 27 February 2021 a Special Assembly of the NSW & ACT Baptist Association is being held to vote on two motions developed by 5 member churches and another 2 motions proposed by the Assembly Council.

This Assembly, with the sole purpose of voting on the four motions, follows previous discussion and debate on the issues of Affiliation and Same-Sex Marriage and aspects of the motions proposed by 5 churches.

The motions seek to provide for the potential withdrawal of the affiliation status of churches who do not hold to the Association's basic doctrines, objects, and values, and for removal of accreditation of pastors on a similar basis. The motions, along with an Information paper, are attached. The Information paper has links to further attachments, including the basic doctrines, objects and values themselves, along with other helpful background such as the submission from Canberra Baptist Church.

The issue of Affiliation and Same-sex Marriage, and related matters, were the subject of some discussion and debate facilitated by a Taskforce appointed by the Assembly Council. *The Connector* issued on 12 January 2020 invited attendance at a Forum in Canberra. 3 people from Tuggeranong Baptist Church attended.

It is important to note that the Special Assembly is not a forum for a general debate on same-sex marriage. The Assembly is solely to put the motions and no further business will be conducted.

The TBC Leadership team considers the following points are relevant:

- The proposing churches framed their motions in the context of their concerns about same-sex marriage, possibly to provide a basis for action in relation to the stated value *of honouring marriage*. However, the motion provides for a much broader range of criteria for disaffiliation as it is framed in terms of adherence to all doctrines, objects and beliefs.
- Different views on this value or any other value should not be used as the basis to remove ministers from accreditation, nor to withdraw the affiliation of individual churches.
- The Constitution of the Association of Baptist Churches in NSW&ACT already provides for withdrawal of affiliation (Para 17.5).

In light of the above, TBC Leadership team believes that the motions should be opposed.

FEEDBACK SOUGHT AND MECHANISM

The leadership team seeks feedback that:

1. Affirms the team's decision to oppose the motions.
2. Alternatively, explains why it is advantageous to Tuggeranong Baptist Church Inc, other affiliated Baptist Churches and/or the Association of Baptist Churches in NSW & ACT, for the motion to be carried.

3. Does not address the subject of same-sex marriage itself, which motivated the 5 churches to frame their 3 motions, or any other value.
4. Seeks further information.

Feedback is to be provided in writing/email and sent to projects@tbcchurch.com.au before 14 February 2021.

THE SPECIAL ASSEMBLY ON 27 FEBRUARY 2021 FROM 9:30 AM– TUGGERANONG BAPTIST CHURCH
VOTING DELEGATES

We are allowed 5 voting delegates to the assembly and anyone can join in as a non-voting delegate up to the COVID Safe limit of 45 attendees at Canberra Baptist Church.

Follow this link to register as a non-voting delegate <https://www.thegathering.com.au/special-assembly-2021/>. If you wish to nominate to attend as a voting delegate, send a message to projects@tbcchurch.com.au before 14 February.

Blessings,

Ian Reid (for the TBC Leadership Team)