

THE ADDRESS OF THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR TO THE BUSH CHURCH AID SOCIETY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 2014



Let me begin this report by sharing with you a couple of snapshots of what God is doing through the ministry of BCA. The first is part of an email I received in the past few weeks from Rich Goscombe, our BCA Field Staffer in Wickham Western Australia.

'...I have been asking you to pray for the last few years, that the Lord would lead Aboriginal folk in the Town here to receive Jesus, and that they would begin to come to Church on a Sunday morning (and not just BBQ Church in the Park each month). Well, our prayers are being answered, with folk both confessing Christ, and coming along to join with us on Sunday mornings. Give thanks, and pray that we will be able to assist them in becoming established in the Church and God's Word...'

Many of you will know something of the backstory to this wonderful news. A family that moved across our continent to live in the 'rough side' of an unfamiliar town. Five years of hard yakka, walking the streets, knocking on doors, crossing social, cultural and racial barriers to share the love of Jesus. This Jesus is at work – people who were once far off are being brought near to God and to one another. Now the Goscombes are committed to continuing the journey with them, so a Christ-honouring culturally diverse community of God's people is firmly established in that place.

Next, let me take you to our recent NSW/ACT Annual General Meeting where we heard in person from Andy Goodacre, our Field Staffer in Launceston, and via video from a number of young people God has impacted through the Goodacres' ministry. For Andy and Liz the journey has been even longer – it has taken them from the UK all the way to the Apple Isle. They have even become fair-dinkum Aussies to boot. Through the Imagine Project and the Barnabas Team they are reaching students and discipling them so they become leaders of integrity who are committed to following Jesus for the long haul, sharing in His mission wherever life takes them. Even now, team members are using their gifts to serve in smaller communities around Launceston, sustaining youth and other ministries which would otherwise not happen.

It is stories like these that get me rejoicing, praying and eager to get out of bed in the morning to play my part in God's work through BCA. The evident answers to prayer and the fruit of changed lives are impressive enough, but what I find most exciting is the perseverance and Gospel-driven faithfulness of our Field Staff that God has been pleased to inspire and to use.

Behind that 'frontline' work is the vital contribution of our National Council and Head Office team, our Regional Officers and office staff, our many volunteers and our supporters who pray, give and encourage. I wish to outline several ways in which we have sought to renew and review our strategies and practices so they might be even more effective in reaching Australia for Christ.

At the Council and Executive level we have moved forward on several key priority areas.

❖ *Culturally Diverse Bush*

It has become increasingly apparent that we are called to minister in a culturally diverse bush. We have engaged an experienced BCA volunteer Don Hodges to review our current needs and opportunities in this area and how we might help them with appropriate resources. This is already bearing fruit and we expect further progress at our Field Staff Conference later this year.

❖ *Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian Leaders*

Our National Researcher/Adviser on Indigenous Matters, The Reverend Dr Joy Sandefur, has convened a task group to reflect and then report on how we might better support new and seasoned Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Christian leaders. I am especially thankful to Joy for continuing to lead this initiative during her recent health challenges.

❖ *Partnerships – Genr8*

We continued to work on establishing partnerships with organisations that share our core gospel commitments so that our respective contribution to Christ's mission might be strengthened. During 2013 we signed an agreement with Genr8 ministries to launch the Bush Scripture Initiative with the aim of seeing a paid SRE teacher for every state high school in rural New South Wales by the end of the decade. We began work on developing a partnership with the Ministry Training Strategy to develop ministry apprenticeship scheme that will allow us to offer a two-year learning and training opportunity for young people considering longer-term ministry in the bush.

❖ *New CRM and Brand Strategy*

At the process level a generous grant from the Genesis Foundation allowed us to engage the services of Dunham + Co to review our database capability and the way in which we communicate the essence of our mission to current and potential supporters. We are in the process of introducing a new CRM (Customer Relationship Management) package at present and Council will be considering the brand strategy work at our meeting tomorrow.

❖ *Ministry Assessment Matrix, Co-worker Programme, Risk Management Register*

The various sub-committees of Executive have also been busy. Our Ministry Priority Panel has designed and implemented a new ministry assessment matrix to ensure that all new BCA-supported ministries are consistent with our core values and objectives. The Personnel sub-committee has reviewed and improved our Co-worker Programme and is now doing the same for our Ministry Training Arrangement classification. The Finance and Property sub-committee has compiled an up-to-date Risk Management Register and has reviewed our Investment Policy.

None of this would have been achieved without the leadership of our Chairman, Mr Fred Chilton, the collective wisdom of members of those bodies and the diligent and competent follow-through of our Administration Manager Mrs Robyn Williams. Thank you!

From our Regional Officer team we farewelled The Reverend Chris Baxter after six years of faithful and effective service. The excellent financial results for the NSW/ACT region in 2013 are just one indication of his great work. We welcomed The Reverend Rob Healy as our WA Regional Officer and The Reverend Adrian Lane in Victoria. Both have already made significant contributions.

Amongst the 'thank yous' (but not farewells!) special mention must be made of The Reverend Canon John Butler who steps down as BCA Vice President at this meeting. John's contribution to BCA as a committee member, locum and friend has been immense. I particularly wish to acknowledge the steady and gracious pair of hands he brought to the tiller as acting-National Director between the terms of Brian Roberts and me. Having attained his three score and ten John has decided to re-focus his time and energies but I have no doubt we will be able to arrange an island getaway or two for him and Dorothy in the years to come.

Finally, I want to say a big thank you to my wife Monica and our children Andrew and Matthew. With one son paused to finish University and another in Year 12 I am acutely aware of the march of time and God's grace in giving me such special companions to mark its passing.

"For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever! Amen." (Romans 11:36, NIV)



The Reverend Dr Mark Short
National Director - The Bush Church Society of Australia

The 2013 Year in Review

SUMMER 2013

- ❖ We welcomed Mrs Rebecca Jeavons as PA to the National Director.
- ❖ Jen Schabel began as student officer in the NSW/ACT office, promoting the work of BCA to younger generations.
- ❖ Stuart, Katherine and Christina Haynes moved to Moranbah, having previously served with BCA in Blackwater.
- ❖ David and Traci Mitchell (with Daphne) commenced a two year Ministry Training Arrangement placement in Karratha, working alongside Les and Jenny Gaulton.
- ❖ The Reverend Helen Chick concluded her BCA service in the Co-operating Parish of the Central Mallee.
- ❖ The Reverend Ian Palmer was consecrated as Bishop of Bathurst.
- ❖ BCA received and distributed \$125,000 across 8 Dioceses to fire and flood affected areas.

AUTUMN 2013

- ❖ We farewelled The Reverend Chris Clerke and Mr Don Allen from the Board of BCA. Chris and Marilyn served as Field Staff between 1972 and 1986 and Don spent 13 years on Council and also served as Chairperson of the Queensland/NNSW Regional Committee. The Reverend John Nicholls succeeded Don in this role.
- ❖ We welcomed David and Trudy Robinson as co-workers based in Northampton.
- ❖ Our Communications and Media Officer Mrs Alison Pearce went on maternity leave and was replaced by Mr Timothy Adkins. We rejoiced when Alison gave birth to Zoe.
- ❖ The Reverend Rob Healy was appointed Regional Officer for Western Australia. Rob and wife Kaye served with BCA in Karratha where Rob was assistant to The Reverend Philip Knife.

WINTER 2013

- ❖ David and Joanne Piper were appointed BCA Field Staff in Lightning Ridge. David had previously served as assistant to Mike Keith.
- ❖ Barry and Avril Luke were appointed as BCA affiliates to serve in Roxby Downs – Barry as a mining chaplain with BCA and Avril in administration at the Roxby Downs Community Church.
- ❖ Richard Lanham, BCA Youthworker in Sale Victoria was ordained deacon at St Paul's Cathedral Sale on June 22.
- ❖ James and Skye Coats (BCA Holbrook) welcomed their fourth daughter Amy Elizabeth.

- ❖ We farewelled and gave thanks for the life of Clem Kirkby, who died on August 7 aged 94. Clem is the son of BCA' s founding missionary Bishop Sydney Kirkby and had given many years of faithful service as our Honorary Archivist.

SPRING 2013

- ❖ The April Bottom Scholarship was awarded to Sarah Charlton from Broken Hill.
- ❖ The Reverend Chris Baxter went on long service leave at the conclusion of six year's fruitful service as Regional Officer for NSW/ACT. It was announced that his successor The Reverend Peter Adkins would begin in January 2014.
- ❖ We farewelled the Skeat family as Josh completed his three-year Ministry Training Arrangement at Burnie.
- ❖ Barry Luke and Stuart Haynes were ordained Deacon in Port Pirie and Rockhampton respectively.



Banjo Bilby – BCA for Kids' mascot