

**Soma Blue Mountains Inc.
Annual General Meeting 2017
Chairman's Report**

1. Your committee members

David Miles (ex officio), Stuart Brooking (Chairman), Andrew Clark (Vice Chairman), Jabin de Keizer, (Treasurer), Jess Dormer (Secretary), Melinda Kingsland, Paul Martyn, Laura Kate de Keizer, and retiring, Bruce Coomer who was previously secretary.

2. Overview

The committee has continued to meet each month throughout the year. We work to a prearranged schedule of topics which we review, and of course we deal with any current business. Increasingly we are trying to set in place policies to help govern our future decisions. In a few cases we have begun down that path on a particular topic, but then realised that the effort to determine a policy did not warrant the work we would need to work it out, due to the infrequency of it being needed and the many nuances that may occur.

Bruce Coomer stood down a few months ago. We have been served very well by Bruce as Secretary as he set up many helpful protocols and helped us keep on task during meetings. We're grateful for Jess Dormer taking up the 'electronic quill'. She is quickly growing into the big shoes.

Our thanks also go to Jessica Coghlan who has managed the SBM Inc books since our inception. This bookkeeper role was done under the guidance of our treasurers. Towards the end of this financial year we were pleased that Martin Gardiner was able to take up the ledger of bookkeeper, and working with Jabin de Keizer, help us refine some of our processes. Thanks to Bob Martyn again reviewing our financial books.

3. Legalities

We have maintained appropriate insurances and licences, paid our taxes and operated our accounts according to the constitution and the relevant laws, to the best of our understanding. Each meeting we review Work, Health, and Safety issues and troubleshoot upcoming issues. We have implemented a range of practical measures. This is legally required, prudent, and reinforces our desire for SBM to be a safe place in all respects.

4. Committee methods

We met on the second Tuesday of each month (except January) to work through the business matters. Each meeting we review our financial accounts, receive a report from the pastor and progress the various matters we have generated.

We deliberately seek to listen to committee members who have a different perspective than the one being presented in a discussion. This acknowledges that we are better as a group than we are as individuals. We seek to delegate both responsibility and power to individuals or groups and call them to account rather than decide every detail.

We also seek to place the needs of mission at the forefront of our deliberations and to guard against centralising our church activities unnecessarily. We want freedom for our church members to live life with those around them and not be burdened by feeding the centre.

We have a dynamic list of topics that we cycle through over the year in order to ensure we get the relevant reports and to make sure we don't 'forget' something of importance.

After several years of operation, we have decided for the coming year that we will meet every second month rather than monthly. We believe we have sufficient processes in place to reduce the number of meetings. We anticipate setting up working groups as necessary to fulfil the workload in between meetings. We also may hold an extra meeting for budget discussion, thus reducing the number of meetings from eleven to six or seven over the year. We will review this at the end of the 2018 to see if we are fulfilling our duties satisfactorily under this new arrangement.

In December/February we again did a review of our method of functioning as a way of self-critiquing. Bruce Coomer led us following a survey of the committee members. We'll do a similar thing in the upcoming meeting.

5. Pastoral Staff & Ministry

We are grateful for the work of our pastoral team. They serve us well, labouring in the Lord for our growth in grace, and equipping for ministry.

Dave Miles continues to set the pace for our local church, and for many other leaders around Australia. Dave is constantly concerned, and at work for the church, that we might live as Christ would have us live, and that we would fulfil our calling to live as missional communities.

We all benefit from the generosity of David and Glenda through the regular use of the Miles' home to host meetings, and indeed to host people long term in their home who contribute to the ministry. Glenda's hospitality and commitment is greatly appreciated.

We took a bold step to appoint two new staff members in January, Marty Gee and Andrew Gombossy. Both are part-time and have made considerable contributions to our church. Marty has led through regular teaching, mentoring leaders, leading a missional community and as an evangelistic exemplar.

Andrew's engagement has allowed for the exciting development of beginning a new gathering in Penrith. This began with two missional communities, totalling about 15 members, first meeting in the Coffee Club, then the Allison's home, but then in answer to prayer they found a ready access to Thornton estate and the use of the community centre. Despite being temporarily relocated at the moment, we hope they can soon return and that the ministry will continue to flourish. It may also provide a model that we may be able to replicate elsewhere in the expanding Western Sydney region.

6. Interns

We continue to encourage interns to SBM as a way to help train and disciple young people exploring ministry options. Andrew Gombossy's work began last year in this way.

Earlier in the year we welcomed Drew Buckley from Canada, who joined our fellowship and appreciated the opportunity to learn and grow in a new context.

We currently have Toby & Annie Dedden in process to begin with us as interns, and we look forward to their contribution as it unfolds.

7. Financial operations

Donations and expenses – Overall donations were an increase on the previous year, and nearly matched our expenses. We finished with about \$60,000 cash in the bank, of which \$35,000 was spoken for as provisions, and thus we had a total equity of around \$25,000. Our goal is to hold about 3 months operating expenses i.e. about \$40,000 to provide a good buffer.

Provisions – We set aside funds each month for various provisions, totalling 16% of our usual donations. These provisions assist us to be disciplined to give and save, for what we think are important areas of our church life. These come from our usual donations, not special donations given to particular purposes.

5% of usual donations are set aside for our international giving focussing on church planting. Most of these funds went to Yoshito in Japan to assist his Soma ministry there.

5% of usual donations are set aside for national giving to encourage local church planting. These have been used for a variety of purposes beyond our church.

2% of usual donations are set aside for ‘the poor’. Our aim is to have a fund available to use as part of our mission when people are in particular need. We encourage church members and missional communities to access these funds to assist their outreach.

2% of usual donations are set aside to provide for our digital presence, such as website updating and other areas that will assist our promotion.

1% of usual donations are set aside for equipment. After our set up several years back, we had a small amount left over and we are now adding to this so we can maintain and expand any equipment we need in our church activities. This has been used primarily for safety items, and sound equipment.

Special appeals – We were grateful for extra funds coming in to support the employment of Marty Gee in January.

8. Prayer

You can give thanks for the work of the committee. It works with openness. Ideas are challenged. Resolution occurs in a positive way. Work gets done. Keep praying for it too, that we may continue to serve the church as is our task.

In Christ's service,



Rev Dr Stuart Brooking, Chairman