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10 September 2020

Church Structure Review Update

Over the past couple of weeks there has been mention of 'local church districts' and 'areas', this week we will discuss what a proposed local church district would look like.

A local church district would essentially group together churches, schools, aged care, ADRA projects, Faith FM and other ministries in a certain area so they would be able to strategically align together that region for mission. Each church district would have a district leader, the General Conference Working Policy describes the district leader as someone in an advisory and consultative capacity rather than administrative. They are there to represent the administrative office but their main focus is to work with the ministries in their church district so that they are aligned for a greater efficiency in discipleship and mission. To help achieve this, each district would have an advisory group including pastors, chaplains, managers and principals within that district who will be able to meet together to align for strategy and mission.

It is envisaged that all ministries in the church district would collaborate, be synergized and share as much as possible, which would allow their missional reach to grow (see figure 1). There are places in Australia which currently do this and are great at mission but having intentional districts would allow missional growth to occur Australia wide, and the potential changes to the structure would allow more resources to be distributed as needed in these local church districts.

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Both models that were presented propose local church districts, with initial modelling showing that there would be around 26 local church districts with the 1:4:1:1 model and around 35 local church districts with the 1:1:1 model. Each church district would have approximately 15 pastors in urban areas and 10 pastors in regional areas, but this would depend on the proximity of these churches in regional areas as the church district leaders want to be as supportive as possible, so these numbers could fluctuate depending on the locations. This is an exciting opportunity to have a more distributed leadership team than we are able to have within the current church structures.

As stated last week, having a local church district would ensure that there was local support and guidance for the ministries in areas such as mission and strategy. It would mean local knowledge and representation, which would in turn benefit the ministries as the leader would have an insightful understanding of how the church district could enhance its ministries and the different opportunities that district could focus on. It would allow the ministries to work together on strategy and shared initiatives in that region. It would also help the local church districts as the distribution of resources would be more specific, which would allow local churches and ministries to benefit further.

In essence the local church district is about working together and using our strengths to focus on mission and doing church better. Having districts will enhance a greater number of localised areas to be more intentional in their communities.

Please continue to use the Facebook page as a platform for discussion, or please feel free to send any queries or feedback to the Church Structure Review team at structurereview@adventist.org.au. Once restrictions are eased around travel and public gatherings, the town hall meetings will be an important forum for conversation, however, these platforms are places for discussion in the interim.

The potential is exciting and we would ask you to pray that as the Church in Australia continues on this journey we continue to focus on mission and ministry.

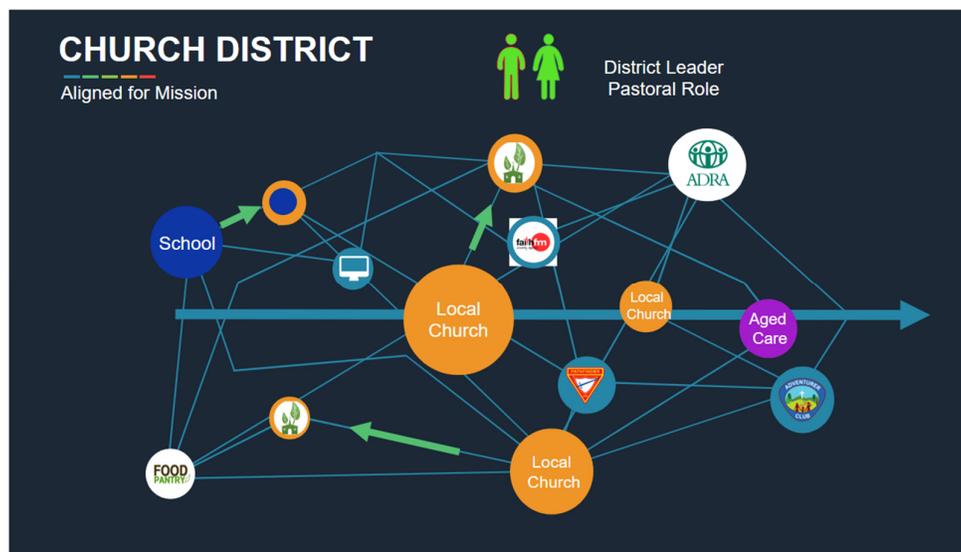


Figure 1

Warm Regards from the Church Structure Review Team

Jorge, Michael, and Peter