



NewHope Church Council Executive Nominees

Annual General Meeting: Monday 25th of April, 2026

Join us on **Monday 25 May at 7:30pm** for our NewHope Annual General Meeting where together we will appoint Church Council members and hear updates on the life of the church.

At Members Meetings we gather to discern God's direction and take responsibility for the present health, future capacity and missional effectiveness of NewHope. We really hope you can be there, because as the Body of Christ, we are much stronger together!

While voting is limited to members of NewHope, in accordance with our Constitution, anyone from our NewHope family is welcome to attend and we hope you can join us. Please remember to [register](#) to attend either in-person or online. If you are unable to attend, we encourage you to register an apology.

Church Council Nominees Introduction

There are seven elected Church Council members with two year terms and two ex-officio members, Andrew Sercombe and Surette Southwood.

The Church Council members elected last year and continuing until 2027 are Tristan Ellett (Chair), Brett Rice, Steve Stavridis and Monique Jaksic.

The Church Council members reaching the end of their two year term and available for re-election, fully endorsed by Church Council are:

- Church Secretary - Amanda Carruthers nominating
- Finance Director - Craig Neilson nominating

Amanda Carruthers (Church Secretary)

Hello! I have loved worshipping and serving at NewHope since 1995.

Over that time I have been richly blessed by being part of our community as we live, love and serve together, growing in faith and deepening our





relationship with Christ, Who strengthens and calls us to His ministry, for His Kingdom purposes.

It has been incredible to be part of various ministries over the past 30 years, from worship and “Rock the Flock” in the 90s, youth leading, Unshackled and STEPPS in the early 2000s, being part of Croydon Campus for 8 years, Alpha, and more recently with YA small groups, prayer, and on Church Council. I can’t wait to see what God has in store for us as NewHope, for Blackburn North, and for Australia as we continue to seek Him in all things, and stretch our arms and hearts wide as we serve.

Martin and I have been married since 2003 and we have two teenage boys (Joshua and Judah).

During the day, I am a barrister and mediator. I enjoy using the skills needed for my work (such as advocacy, clarifying goals, and identifying options and solutions) in my role on church council and as church secretary.

I am passionate about the growth and development of the body of Christ on an individual and global scale. We are so blessed to be members of a congregation who daily seek to be salt and light, with the opportunity and desire to be Christ’s hands and feet in our community.

Craig Neilson (Finance Director)

I am married to Wendy and have a son Oscar (17 years old) who is involved in Youth and also Kids Church as a leader. We have been at NewHope for the past 8 years, after moving from Ashburton Baptist (where Wendy had been since she was born). I attended Blackburn North (NewHope) Baptist through my school and young adult years up until the time Wendy and I were married. We came back to NewHope after reconnecting with friends at the church, and also for Oscar to be exposed to the youth program through his school years.



Whilst we were at Ashburton, both Wendy and I were heavily involved in church ministry. I sat on the diaconate for 10+ years, and was the Church Treasurer for 10 years. Prior to that I sat on the Whitley board in the capacity of the college treasurer.

I’m a finance professional and have worked throughout my career in senior Finance Commercial roles, predominantly in the logistics industry.



I've spent time discerning, praying and reflecting, and have a strong sense that this is God's timing for me to continue to serve in the Finance Director role, particularly as we enter this new season with Andrew in the Senior Pastor role. I've got a strong passion for seeing NewHope Baptist Church continue to thrive and grow, and feel this is in God's plan for me to contribute in this capacity where I can.