



Caringbah Baptist Church
Half-Yearly Business Meeting
Pastors Report
July 2025

Jeremiah 29:11-13

For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Personal Reflection

It is hard to believe that we have travelled together for almost 12 months now, and as I reflect on that time, I can certainly see God's hand and His plan. Both Carolyn and I certainly feel blessed and have a real sense of hope for what God is doing, and most importantly for what he will do in us and through us. It has been an enormous blessing to be able to work as a team, serving Caringbah Baptist Church together.

From a personal point of view, we have settled into the routine of ministry as well as life in the Shire, we deeply value the support and encouragement that we receive from the church community.

A major focus during this first year together has been on understanding the history and culture of CBC, building relationships and getting to know the staff team and leaders, as well as the broader CBC community.

Reflecting on the year I have been encouraged by the services and community events over Christmas and Easter. We have seen a growth in our playgroup, kids and youth ministry, as well as a number of new people attending our services and an increase in people becoming members. There is a lot to be encouraged about!

Staff

Leading the staff team is an enormous privilege and a source of joy, we have an amazing team who work hard and constantly gives more time than they are employed for. We have had some changes to the team over the past year with Denise Smith and Amy Langford concluding in their roles, and we saw Niki Mann and Carolyn Altman join the team throughout the year.

One of the most significant contributors of the staff team is Broderick Storey who has picked up an enormous load over the years. His contribution to the team and his work across finances, operations, centre management and HR has kept CBC functioning during some tough seasons over the years as well as enabled CBC to flourish in healthier seasons.

Brod has recently indicated to the finance, leadership and staff team that he will begin turning his attention towards retirement and will begin to transition out his role from mid-September. He will be reducing his working days to two days per week for the remainder of the year while he hands over his responsibilities and works towards finishing well.

While there will be a dedicated time to farewell and acknowledge all that Brod has contributed towards the end of the year, I do want to express my deep gratitude and thanks to Brod for the way that he (and Sheridan) welcomed Carolyn and I into the life of CBC, and the many ways that he helped me get established and understand the history and culture that is CBC. I have deeply valued his wisdom, support, friendship and above all, his deep passion for following Jesus. He is a man of integrity and deep faith who will leave a legacy that we will build on for the season that is ahead of us.

Brod's transition will result in a significant change to the team going forward and I would value your prayers as I lead the team through these changes.

Leadership and Governance Structures

I am incredibly grateful for the constant support and encouragement I receive from the leadership team who are a dedicated team of women and men who are deeply committed to following Jesus with their whole lives and serving CBC with the gifts and experiences that God has given them.

In relation to the current leadership team, Mark Lindsay has advised us that due to family and personal commitments he will be stepping down from his leadership role at the Half-yearly business meeting. He also feels that part of his role in leadership was to help me transition well into the lead pastor role, which he has most certainly done.

I am incredibly grateful for the support and encouragement Mark has been to me personally, I deeply value his friendship and support him in the decision that he has made.

As I reflect on the leadership needs of CBC and seek to understand the function and purpose of the current leadership structure it seems to me that there are several opportunities for growth.

With more than 25 years of pastoral experience, some 20 years of consultancy work amongst Baptist churches and several senior leadership and executive roles, along with coaching and mentoring pastoral leaders, it has become clear to me that healthy and intentional structures of governance and leadership that are appropriate for the size and strategic direction of a church are crucial for the health and growth of the local church. Reflecting on my experiences over the years several things stand out to me, 1) a church will never outgrow its structure; 2) structures change depending on the size of the church; and 3) the lack of governance was a significant contributor to most issues I have had to deal with in many churches.

My experience over the past 12 months, and from what I have learnt from looking at CBC's history over the years (I have been slowly reading all the meeting minutes of the past ten years). The leadership of CBC, while supportive and empowering, has tended towards management rather than governance and there has been an enmeshment between governance and leadership rather than a distinction between the two.

The Bible speaks of two strands of appointed office for the local church, one strand is concerned with oversight and particularly spiritual oversight, these are often referred to as overseers, bishops, and elders in the New Testament. The other office is that of deacon or servant, and rather than oversee or govern, this office does or carries out ministry. Connected to these two offices is pastoring and leading and we see in the New Testament that the pastor/leader is sometimes connected to oversight (Heb 13 & Romans 12) and sometimes they are connected to serving or doing ministry (1 Thess 5, 1 Peter 5).

Nowhere in the New Testament do we see one clear model or structure of leadership and/or governance. This suggests that there is no right or wrong model for the local church, just appropriate models for each individual church. Our task for CBC is to discern what is appropriate for both now and into the future, what kind of model or structure will allow us to grow and thrive? The only criteria we must ensure is that of a baptistic framework and that ultimate or final authority remains with the congregation as a whole and not with any one person or office.

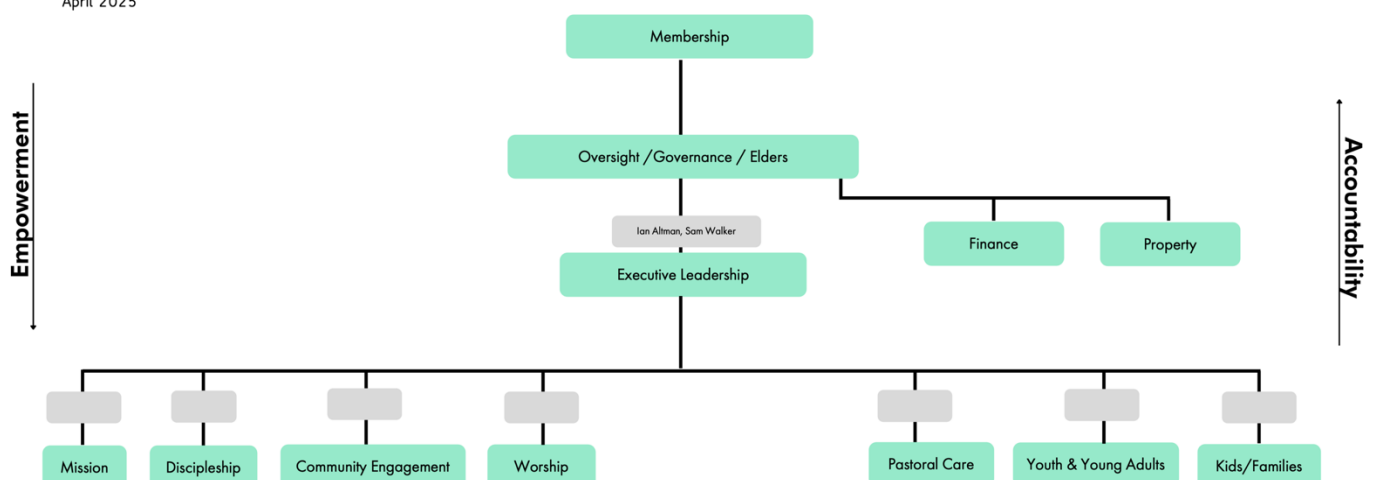
What does all this mean for CBC? It means that we have some work to do in understanding what congregational governance means for us today and into the future, and we need to do some work around what we are structuring for, this has to do with vision and strategy. Every structure will deliver the outcome it is set up to achieve.

What we do know is that the larger a church becomes, the more definitive the roles, functions and offices become. The larger the church, the more distinct governance and ministry groups become, the more professional leaders become and within a Baptist church, the congregation, while remaining the ultimate authority, empowers a group of leaders to lead and govern.

While more work needs to be done, the following structure or organisational chart is concerned with role definition, empowerment and accountability. The structure I feel that we need going forward is one that priorities governance and oversight, empowers leadership, provides accountability and facilitates ministry. The current draft structure looks like this:

Caringbah Baptist Church Structure

April 2025



There is still more work to do including a review of the constitution.

Vision and Strategy

With my feet well and truly under the desk and a growing knowledge of the history and culture of CBC, I feel that I am now able to think about the future and prayerfully consider and discern the future that God has in store for us.

I feel that we have a clear understanding about our current or strategic priorities which are represented by our 4,3,1 strategy. These have more to do with our mission, or what we do now, rather than vision which is concerned about where we are heading. In broad terms, mission draws us together, it's what we do now, while vision draws us forward, it is a preferred destination.

As I think and pray about the next season for CBC, the big question I am asking is around what does CBC look like in five years time? I have sat with this question for some time, wrestled with it at all hours of the day and night, shared it with some of the team and the leaders, and explored it with colleagues and mentors. I feel that I have a recurring theme that I keep coming back to, a measurable goal that we can work towards. At the moment it looks something like this: One thousand, One Hundred and Ten or 1000.100.10. What does that mean?

Reading the history of CBC, reflecting on the culture and understanding what God has done in the past, I get the strong sense that CBC is set up to accommodate a thousand people, especially if there are multiple services. This is not just a thousand people gathering on a Sunday, but a thousand people who are committed to one worship service, one small group and one ministry.

Embedded in CBC's DNA is the commitment to see people come to know Jesus. Imagine if we see a minimum of one hundred first time commitments to Jesus? We certainly haven't seen 100 people come to faith in the last five years.

CBC also deeply holds the value of mission. While we have been a strong supporter of mission, imagine if we were a church that not only supported mission, but one in which we sent people into mission. Imagine if we identified, equipped and sent at least ten people into ministry and mission over the next five years?

As I think and dream about the next five years, I imagine it this way:

Grow to thousand (1000) people who are committed to one worship service, one small group and one ministry.

See at least 100 first time commitments to Jesus who are then baptised and disciplined.

Send at least 10 people into ministry and/or mission across Australia and the world.

Grow – See – Send or 1000.100.10

Now this is very much my own sense of the future and together we need to test and discern what God is saying. While it is succinct and measurable, it does mean significant change, and we will need to understand those changes and the costs associated with them before we embrace these types of goals.

Going forward the leadership and staff team will wrestle and discern with the development and clarification of a five-year vision as well as develop a strategy to implement. Work will begin now, and we are setting aside some retreat time in October with the goal to bring something more concrete to CBC's Vision Sunday early in 2026.

Finances, Funding & Blessing

While the end of year figures are yet to be finalised, it is looking likely that we will end the year in a strong financial position and one with which we should thank God for.

Our weekly offerings have remained steady over the past three years averaging around \$11,400 a week and this financial year looks like being the same. The Centre income is higher than the average for the last few years, with \$172,294 already received at the end of May against a budget of \$139,821. Last year we received \$152,144 and the year before was \$145,711. In addition to offerings and centre income, we also receive rental income from the leasing of factory 3, by the end of the financial year it will be approximately \$208,000.

The budget being presented is largely unchanged and remains the same as last year and the year before with adjustments made for inflation across both income streams and expenditure.

Going forward I would love us to reimagine our budget so that it reflects a sense of vision and allows space to dream and embrace new (and not yet imagined) initiatives. I have asked the leadership and finance team to investigate the possibility of a new budget with the view to bring an update or recommendation to the AGM in November.

Personally, I am praying for our weekly offering to reach \$15,000 a week, this would give us room to dream and better resource our Children and Family ministry. Carolyn and I have increased our weekly giving as we pray for that increase.

We have now received the bequest from Jan's estate and \$870,000 has been transferred to CBC's account with BFS. This is huge blessing and in conversation with the finance and leadership team there is a strong sense that we set aside \$700,000 of those funds for the future, and that the remainder be used to fund strategic initiatives and projects for the immediate future. These could include:

- Updating video and IT in the worship space
- Upgrading internet and networking infrastructure
- Resourcing Children and Families
- Resourcing the worship ministry
- Replacing the scissor lift (which is out of compliance)

One project that is going ahead is an upgrade of the sound system in the auditorium. Last month we received an offer of \$75,000 to help fund an upgrade to the sound system, this was graciously received by the leadership and work will commence shortly. The upgrade will mean that we will have concert or professional standard sound quality across the whole auditorium as well as the ability to extend the sound out to the café area in front of the kitchen. This will be a significant upgrade which will not only improve the sound quality but will also give us the opportunity for music and theatre groups to use and rent the space outside of Sunday.

Total cost of the upgrade is \$108,000, with the \$75,000 funding and the GST claimed back, the total cost to the church will be approximately \$22,000.

Strategic Priorities

Work continues on embedding our four strategic priorities into the everyday rhythm of CBC life and ministry. Our four Strategic Priorities are: Discipleship, Worship, Mission and Community Engagement.

Discipleship falls under Sam Walker. Sam is in the final stages of developing a new discipleship pathway that is focused on creating fully activated disciples of Jesus. The Discipleship Pathway will examine:

1. How we do Connections as a church;
2. Creating a new exploring faith course entitled "the Arc", (this now completed);
3. Creating a "Discovery Course", which lets people know about CBC;
4. Designing new platforms to make progression through the pathway easier.

Worship remains a significant aspect and a core function of CBC. We are incredibly blessed with the quality of those involved. While initial talks have begun around the shape and future of the worship ministry of CBC, we still need to set up a team and appoint a leader. Being such an important ministry of the church and one of our core strategic priorities, I feel that there is a need for dedicating staffing in this area. It is my hope and prayer that with growth within the church and potential increase in income from the Sports Centre, we might be in a position to consider staffing sooner rather than later.

Mission has entered into a season of transition; we have a small committee who now meet regularly and an updated Mission Policy. At the moment I am leading the mission team which currently consists of Lynn Bell, Matthew Jurd, Lyndal Salter and Christina Greenwood. I would like to see another male on the committee as well as one of the Young Adults from the evening service.

With regard to CBC's mission commitments and the significant change that the funding of the Light House and Asia's Hope has brought, the committee feel that we need to clarify CBC's vision for mission and set some strategic goals and measurable outcomes for the future. With that in mind the committee recommended to the leadership and finance team that we do not renew the funding commitments that were coming to end of their three-year cycle, while continue to honour those who have

another year of our commitment. We did receive one request for funding from Rachael Dojandy, as CBC is Rachael's sending church and as raising up and sending from within CBC is a priority we would like to see embraced, we accepted the request from Rachel which amounts to \$5000 a year.

The major task for the Mission Committee is to set a vision for CBC and clarify our mission partners for the next season. Part of the vision process will be seeking to establish and clarify a clearer way to fund our mission partnerships and commitments. Currently, the funds raised during May Mission Month are raised in arrears or funds already spent.

The Mission Committee is aiming to bring a new sense of vision and a recommendation to move us forward at the AGM.

Mission giving and support for the immediate future is as follows:

Ending	Continuing	New	One Off
Omar Dojandy The Wilkinsons The Oatley's	The Hartley's The Young's FEBC IJM	Rachael Dojandy	Light house

Community Engagement has been our intentional focus this year which has resulted in intentional advertising and letter box drops aimed at inviting and promoting our main outreach events like the Christmas Concert, Easter and Good Friday Family Picnic.

A group of people passionate about evangelism and community engagement met several times. One of the priorities coming out of those meetings was the need for intentional evangelism training that could be used in small group settings. A four-episode series has been filmed and is in the final stages of editing. The training material will be made available in the second half of the year.

One Meal has not happened as soon as we would have liked, this has been due to a serious illness suffered by the One Meal CEO. The good news is that he has now recovered and able to work with us again. We now have two meal providers and are in contact with the Bowling Club in Willarong Road about providing the remaining meals. We hope to have a starting date shortly.

The Community Engagement team will meet again shortly to plan and discuss a possible outreach event before Christmas. Early discussions have begun around a possible community golf day potentially called "The CBC Spring Classic".

Final Comments

As our first year together draws to a close, I feel extremely excited about all that God has in store for us, while also feeling a little overwhelmed at all there is to do.

In many ways I feel a bit like D L Moody who once said that he would need to live two lifetimes to complete all that God had called him to. "If God is your partner" said Moody, "make your plans big"! I am certainly doing that.

My prayer for us right now comes from Philippians 1:3-6 which says:

I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

May we partner together and be united in the work of the Gospel, seeking God's will and pursuing the ways of Jesus more than our own.

Your Chief Servant

Pastor Ian