



GYMEA BAPTIST CHURCH

GyMEA Baptist Church

2025  
**Annual  
Report**

*Lives changed by Jesus*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT	3
CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM	4
ELDERS REPORT	5
FINANCE REPORT	6
HOPEFIELD	7
MISSION PARTNERSHIP	8
CATALYST	10
SECRETARY'S REPORT	11
SAFE CHURCH TEAM	12
LIFE GROUPS	13
KIDS MINISTRY	14
EGDE AND YOUTH	15
YOUNG ADULTS	16
PLAYTIME	17
GBC SERVE	18
GUEST SERVICES	19
SERVICES REPORT	20
SCRIPTURE (SRE)	21
KIDS HOPE	22
CONGREGATION CARES	23
OPERATIONS	24
EMBRACE	25
MEN'S BREAKFAST	26
FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS	27

# SENIOR PASTOR'S REPORT

Lives Changed by Jesus is our vision as a community of faith. For 2025 it was also our theme and allowed us to focus on what it means to be people whose lives are continually being transformed by Jesus.

We explored this theme throughout the year in our sermon series and LifeGroups. In the first term we explored the characteristics of a life being changed by Jesus – a growing commitment to the mission of God, an increasing love for his family, an expanding generosity, etc.

In term 2 we partnered with Olive Tree Media to run Encounter, their latest offering that explored the way people in the Bible encountered Jesus and how people today continue to encounter him. It was, as expected, excellent and I was delighted with the response to this series that I heard. It was also really nice, personally, to be able to partner with Karl and Jane Faase again (Karl was the senior pastor at GBC from 1996-2014 and he and I worked very closely together for the majority of that time).

In the third term we turned our attention to Genesis 1-11: God's Story, Our Story. The response to this series was striking and I was very encouraged by the engagement with these foundational texts. We wrapped up the year with an exploration of the fruit of the Spirit. There were other special services that stand out to me. We dedicated children from four families, baptised ten people (the most in a long time), and welcomed Wissam Nasrallah from MERATH (with whom we have been partnering through Baptist World Aid) as a guest for a Sunday in July. Many of the other things you'll read about in the remainder of this report, so I won't steal anyone's thunder!

2025 was also significant for another, very important reason. After more than a year we appointed Adam Stewart as pastor for Community Engagement. At the same time we were able to focus Roxane Lawler's role on Belonging. This strategic alignment is exciting as we look forward to 2026. I was very grateful to the Nominating Committee – Hannah Fraser, Susan Kusch, Philippa Lowe, Derek Mullins, and Glen Nelson – for their prayerful engagement in the process.

In other significant decision the members approved plans to renovate our office and children's ministry spaces. While the work did not commence until 2026 the plans and decisions were made in 2025. The essence of the renovation is to move all of our offices upstairs and to renovate the current downstairs space to facilitate moving our creche and preschool ministries there. This improves safety for our children but also opens up some mid-size ministry space. Special thanks to Laura van Breda who drew up the plans, Grant Nelson for his significant contribution to our initial pricing, Glen Nelson, Brian Stewart, and David Beresford who have taken a lead role in implementing the plan.

I continue to be thankful for the opportunity to serve alongside so many of you as we seek to see lives changed by Jesus. Thanks to the staff team for their dedication and commitment to ministry. Thanks to the Church Council for their wisdom. Thanks to the Elders for their deep love and affection for our community of faith. And thanks to all who have prayed for, encouraged, and partnered with us!

**FROM MARC RADER**

# CHURCH LEADERSHIP TEAM



Sitting on the GBC Church Council involves actively serving the church community by participating in leadership, decision-making, and oversight roles that directly contribute to the overall health and mission of Gymea Baptist Church.

During 2025, this has included:

1. Decisions reached for the church building refurbishment; we are delighted this is now underway.
2. Set out and plan future needs of church staffing with all of the Council contributing to position descriptions of appointments.
3. Members of the Council sitting on the nominating committee as we sought to fill the role of an Associate Pastor - Community Engagement.
4. All of the Council being presented insight into and overview of the role of Associate Pastor - Belonging; a strategic shift to meet the evolving needs of the church.
5. Chair of the Council being invited to set up the position description, criteria matrix, interview questions, and be part of the panel interviews for the appointment of a church communications coordinator.
6. Ongoing financial stewardship: reviewing budget recommendations for 2026 and offering input into ministry Giving campaigns with the objective of smoothing out the peaks and troughs in regular giving.

7. Transparency and governance: Senior Pastor reporting; Safe Church – receiving reports and updates from the Safe Church committee; Ministry strategic reporting with Associate Pastors now invited to report on their ministries bi-annually to Council (commencing 2026).

List of Volunteers on the Church Council during 2025:

Philippa Lowe (Chair); Susan Kusch (Secretary); Glenn Smith (Treasurer) Cameron Shipway; Rob Seaton; Deborah Williams, Jordanne Collins; Derek Mullins (Elder)  
Snr. Pastor Marc Rader.

On behalf of the Church Council, I would like to thank the Members of GBC for your trust and continued support.

Thanks to Susan Kusch who came to the end of her tenure on Church Council in 2025, with particular appreciation for her serving the church community as both Chair and Secretary of the Council during her time. To my other Council members: Glenn, Jordanne, Debbie, Rob, Derek, Cameron and – newly appointed for 2026 – Paul Carter for your support, time and contributions - thank you!

**FROM PHILIPPA LOWE,  
CHAIR OF CHURCH  
COUNCIL**

# ELDERS REPORT

FROM DEREK MULLINS,  
CHAIR OF ELDERS

The elders at GBC are entrusted with spiritual oversight and congregational care, serving as part of the Pastoral Team. Elders are appointed for four-year terms and may serve up to two consecutive terms. The Chair of Elders also participates in the Church Council, strengthening communication and unity across leadership.

During 2025, the eldership comprised Greg Williams, Barbara Higgins, Sonia Beresford, Ian Giles, Bruce Harbour, and me.

Our role continues to centre on prayerful, servant-hearted leadership. Throughout the year we sought to nurture the spiritual health of the church while remaining attentive to the pastoral needs of individuals and families. This calling expressed itself in:

- Participation in the Missions and Catalyst teams
- Oversight of Special Religious Education (SRE) at Gynea North Public School
- Leading corporate prayer and Bible readings in Sunday services
- Walking alongside those navigating personal and spiritual challenges
- Hosting the Thursday evening Zoom prayer meetings
- Leading and supporting LifeGroups
- Offering prayer after services
- Regular intercession for ministries, staff, and the congregation
- Serving through the Hopefield Community Hub
- Visiting members experiencing illness, frailty, or isolation
- Welcoming newcomers and assisting with guest integration

A continued emphasis during 2025 has been encouraging LifeGroups and their leaders. LifeGroups remain essential for fostering belonging, discipleship, and mutual care within our diverse congregation. We have also continued to explore ways of being more intentional in our exercise of congregational care across the whole church.

I am deeply grateful for the commitment and wisdom of my fellow elders. Each brings distinctive gifts and perspectives, enriching our shared ministry. I also wish to acknowledge Marc, Roxane, and Karen (who served as Congregational Care Coordinator until May). Their partnership and encouragement have been invaluable.

As the year concluded, Bruce completed his term as Elder, and I want to thank him warmly for his sacrificial service. At the November AGM, Marilyn Seaton, Matt Van Breda, and Lincoln Grice were newly appointed as Elders. I look forward to serving alongside them in 2026 as we continue to seek God's leading.

# FINANCE REPORT

## FROM GLENN SMITH, TREASURER

This past year we have seen a continuation of the steady improvement in our financial position, helping us reach some key milestones. These achievements support our ongoing mission to advance the Gospel and see lives changed by Jesus. As I reflect on the financial report for 2025, which is included in the documents for the March Annual General Meeting, I see there are many things for us to be grateful to God for.

Offerings rose in accordance with the 2025 budget, enabling the hiring of Adam Stewart into a full-time pastoral role. This has resulted in a fully staffed team, after several years of understaffing. With this, our key ministry of Community Engagement have a dedicated leader.

- **May Mission Month raised over \$204k, eclipsing our target and last year's figure.** The ministries of Baptist World Aid in Lebanon, Mother's Heart in Cambodia and the Tear Fund here in Australia are grateful for your ongoing support.
- **Over the past three years** we have steadily built up the bank account to a level that allows us to be **confident** that we can **pay our salaries and meet our other financial obligations** in a timely fashion.
- 2025 saw another **annual increase** in the expenditure on Youth and other ministry resource. We were able to **support a greater number of kids and leaders** to go to camp.

- For another year, we have seen very controlled spending. I am grateful to our staff for their thoughtful approach to expenses.
- With the oversight of some key members of our congregation, we **undertook remedial work** for the flooding damage which occurred in 2024. **We also commenced the process renovations, within our budget.**
- Our wider community is increasingly engaged with the expansion to the **Christmas Festival in December.** Again, this is driven by members of our congregation with relevant skills and a heart for the Gospel.

As we step into 2026 we are being encouraged to be "working out our salvation together". I pray that the sense of a shared spiritual growth will spill across all areas of our lives.

I would like to thank those, a little behind the scenes, without whom we would not be able to keep the finances, reporting and responsibilities in order.

My thanks go to Neil Evans, Ross Langford and Lawrie Green for their general council and the roles they play on the Finance Committee, Music Trust and Endowment. My thanks also go to the administrative team of Beryl, Marjy and Altavi who continue to be the day-to-day drivers of the activities required to successfully administer the Church finances. Thank you also to Tony Gilbert for conducting the audit.

# HOPEFIELD

## FROM VICKI SHERRY, CEO

As I look back over 2025, my heart is filled with gratitude, for God's faithfulness, for the extraordinary resilience of the people we walk alongside and for the amazing partnership of Gymea Baptist Church, without whom Hopefield simply could not exist.

**2025 marked a significant milestone for Hopefield, celebrating 30 years in the community. This milestone reminded us that our story is really God's story, a story of his gentle, yet persistent work of restoration in the lives of individuals and families. It is a story of hope and of lives changed by Jesus, including our own as staff, volunteers and supporters.**

The year also brought enormous challenges across our community. Cost of living pressures, domestic and family violence, mental health struggles, and housing instability were not just making national headlines; they were the stories that Hopefield staff confronted on a daily basis. The people who came through our doors had layers of complex needs, increasing the intensity of the work, yet in the middle of all the hardships, we witnessed moments of courage, breakthrough, connection, healing and hope.

Our Support Services team continues to carry some of the heaviest stories, journeying alongside families juggling crisis after crisis, supporting women fleeing domestic violence and helping people who feel completely unseen find a way forward. The launch of our Homelessness Outreach in Cronulla was one of the significant new aspects of our work over the course of the year. Supporting people living in cars, or on park benches, and listening to their stories without judgement, offering support and compassion made a real difference to 20 people and reminded us of the reason why Hopefield exists.

Across Clinical Services we saw over **1,400 appointments delivered with professionalism and care**. Our team supported people experiencing trauma and supported them on their journey toward recovery. **The team also trained the next generation of clinicians, with 5 placement students and volunteers undertaking their development at Hopefield.**

The EVE Project was again a place of courage, safety and incredible transformations. I had the privilege of participating in the end of year graduation lunch with the participants and there were some remarkable stories that I had the opportunity to hear first hand. Women rebuilding after trauma had found their voices, rediscovered purpose and taken bold steps once thought of as impossible towards a new future. I continue to be confident that this is a remarkable program that is not only outstanding in delivery of outcomes but uniquely placed within the broader sector.

Throughout 2025 we also **expanded our Community Hubs, grew our partnerships across our locations and launched a new partnership in the Northern Rivers region with Lismore Baptist Church**, a community still recovering from the devastation of the 2022 floods.

In the backdrop of all this work stands Gymea Baptist Church, faithfully holding us up. Your provision of rent-free premises, utilities, prayer covering, volunteers, financial giving and practical support is the quiet backbone that allows Hopefield to serve. Your on-going generosity through **Hopetember** continues to strengthen our domestic violence support, while Hopedrive literally keeps the shelves stocked in our food pantry, making it possible for us to deliver up to **85 hampers a week**. We saw so many people breathe a sigh of relief simply because food was available, freely and with dignity.

One of the most beautiful expressions of GBC's heart is the Christmas Hampers. Again this year, **36 households had a Christmas Day that was filled with food, treats and thoughtful gifts thanks to the generosity of GBC**. A very special thank you must also go out to **Sheena Hind who after 10 faithful years of coordinating this enormous effort, having blessed hundreds of families will be stepping down from this role**. We are so grateful for Sheena's diligence, compassion and big-hearted servant leadership. We will miss her in this role and honour her legacy.

As we step into 2026, my heart is full. Thank you GBC for being our steady foundation and our co-laborers in Christ. Thank you to every volunteer, every donor, every prayer, every staff member and every person who believes in the work of this ministry.

Together, we are seeing lives changed by Jesus, one story at a time.

---

# MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

## FROM DEREK MULLINS

In May 2023, GBC commenced a series of three-year mission partnerships, supporting one Australian initiative and two international projects. These partnerships continued throughout 2024 and 2025, alongside our ongoing support for front-line missionaries serving in various parts of the world.

---

### BAPTIST WORLD AID, LEBANON

Our long-standing partnership in Lebanon remains vital as the effects of the Syrian Civil War continue to impact communities more than a decade on. **This project focuses on marginalised Lebanese groups and Syrian refugees, with particular attention to improving educational opportunities for children and young people.**

Support is provided through primary education programs at a dedicated Education Centre, vocational training initiatives, a sewing atelier, and broader social support programs for parents and families. Recognising that many families face complex legal challenges, the project also offers legal assistance to help secure birth certificates and identification documents. These documents are essential for accessing housing, education, and other critical services.

---

### MOTHER'S HEART, CAMBODIA

In Cambodia, many women experience crisis pregnancies without access to adequate social support, leaving them vulnerable to poverty, abuse, and exploitation. Mother's Heart Organisation (MHO) responds by providing holistic care, building supportive community networks, and equipping women with the resources needed to establish safe and stable futures.

During 2025, 29 new women and girls joined the program, and 27 babies were safely delivered. By year's end, MHO was supporting a total of 153 women and girls across two locations.

Beyond immediate crisis care, the program promotes long-term independence through small business support, employment pathways, education, vocational training, and childcare assistance.

---

## TEARFUND, NORTHERN TERRITORY

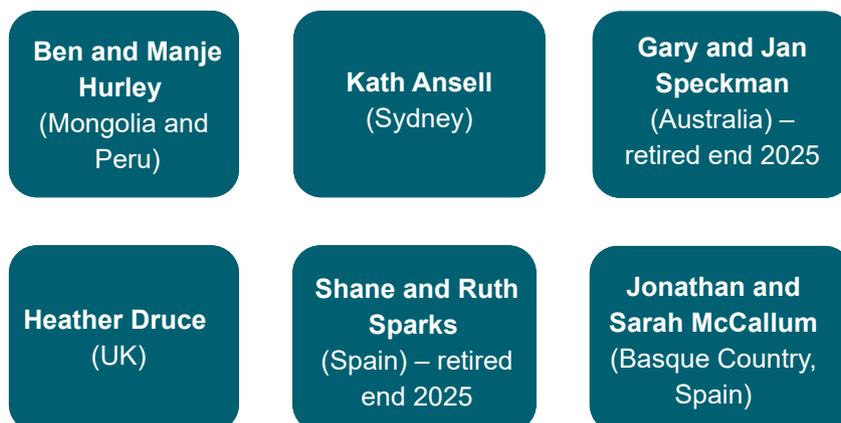
Following Strong Women Talking receiving significant government funding, GBC redirected its support in 2024 to the Faith and Family Wellbeing program based at Nungalinga College in Darwin.

In 2025, **Indigenous students from five remote communities participated in this 24-month course. The program equips church members to strengthen family life and provide support in areas such as grief, trauma, and domestic violence.**

Graduates are encouraged and supported to return to their communities and serve as local leaders, helping others navigate complex personal and social challenges.

---

## FRONT-LINE MISSIONARIES SUPPORTED DURING 2025:



---

## REFLECTIONS

The generosity of the GBC community has been evident throughout 2025. **More than \$205,000 was raised during May Mission Month in support of our missionaries and mission projects, surpassing our target. This reflects GBC’s commitment to being big-hearted and others-focused.**

During 2025, the Missions Team was further streamlined as **Sarah and Jordie stepped back in order to focus on other ministry commitments. In 2025, the Team comprised Derek Mullins and Joanne McLachlan.**

We are **deeply grateful to Sarah and Jordie for their huge contribution over several years and for the foundation they have laid for the future.** We are also very thankful for the staff and volunteers who stepped in to provide much needed help during May Mission Month, itself.

We would appreciate your prayers as we head into May Mission Month 2026 and rebuild the team, focusing on how we can improve our partnerships, make our support more impactful and foster the church’s vision for missions.



# CATALYST

## FROM TRACEY NELSON

The team aims to be a catalyst for change and a voice for God's justice.

Catalyst operates through 2 methods:

**CHOICE** is about awareness and seeks to educate and inspire people to make purchasing choices in line with what we believe God champions. Choice encompasses ethical consumption, including the Fair Trade market, Easter Egg campaign, and the Ethical Fashion Guide.

**VOICE** is an advocacy initiative focused on educating and inspiring people—especially from a Christian perspective—to speak up for those who cannot (Prov 31). It primarily uses social media, and we plan to build on that this year.

In 2025, the Easter chocolates promotion highlighted supermarkets' best selections from an anti-slavery, child labour, and sustainability perspective. There was also an option to Buy a Chicken card via Baptist World Aid.

The Ethical Fashion Guide encourages companies to examine their supply chains. In the global fashion industry, millions of workers endure injustice, abuse, low wages, and even modern slavery. Most money raised from the Fair Trade Cake Stall and BBQ was advanced towards printing the next edition of the Baptist World Aid Ethical Fashion Guide. It was a joy to witness a good turnout for the Fair Trade Market. GBC was able to demonstrate its commitment to helping others and highlight what the church has to offer. Volunteers were key to the market's success. Catalyst recognises the importance of tying into the bigger ministry and mission of GBC. It adheres to GBC's principles of being others-focused, on-purpose and big-hearted.

# SECRETARY'S REPORT

FROM SUSAN KUSCH

As this is my first secretary report and the secretary role itself has changed over time, I thought it might be helpful to start with a brief outline of the role.

The Secretary of the Church is appointed from the membership of the Church Council. Applications for membership, removal of membership, or transfer of membership are submitted to the Church Council through the Secretary. The Secretary also serves as the public officer of the church. Traditionally, this used to mean that the role functioned as the central administrative hub of church life — overseeing daily office operations, supporting the pastors, and managing correspondence. Responsibilities have typically included maintaining membership records and calendars, producing service bulletins, coordinating bookings, and assisting with financial administration and database management.

However, times have changed and, as the governing body of the church, the Church Council determines the scope and responsibilities of the Secretary's role, in accordance with our constitution.



In recent years, many of these administrative and organisational functions have been carried out by the Executive Assistant to the Senior Pastor. I am incredibly grateful to Karen Watkins for her faithful and diligent service in this area; she has been greatly missed in this role. I am also deeply thankful to Marc, Roxane, and Marjy, who have generously taken on additional responsibilities alongside their own roles to ensure these important tasks continue to be managed effectively.

The church continues to be well governed, carefully and faithfully led. Over the past year, Roxane and the elders undertook significant follow-up with members who had become inactive and worked to update our membership database. We currently have a strong membership of 285, with 239 Safe Church volunteers actively serving. We also celebrated 10 baptisms in the past year. Our quorum has consistently been met — and often exceeded — at all Annual General Meetings and extraordinary meetings.

At the end of 2025, I completed my final term on the Church Council and have therefore stepped down from the role of Secretary. I am deeply grateful for the privilege of serving during this time. I have been supported by Marc, the staff team, and council members past and present, and I thank them sincerely. It has been a joy to witness firsthand how faithful governance supports the mission of the church and contributes to lives being changed by Jesus.

# SAFE CHURCH TEAM

FROM MARJY ROBERTSON

The GBC Safe Church Team provides governance of our faith community to release people to find where God may be inviting them to participate here at GBC as we seek to see lives changed by Jesus by ensuring we are a trustworthy and on-purpose community of faith. The Safe Church Team plays a key role in ensuring that Gymea Baptist Church is and remains a community and space that is safe for people to come and explore the person of Jesus. The Safe Church Team provides oversight of GBC’s Safe Church Program.

## THIS COMPRISES OF:

- Monitoring and reviewing Safe Church Policies and Procedures
- Managing all Safe Church and Child Protection concerns and reports
- Responding sensitively to Child Protection concerns
- Supporting vulnerable people

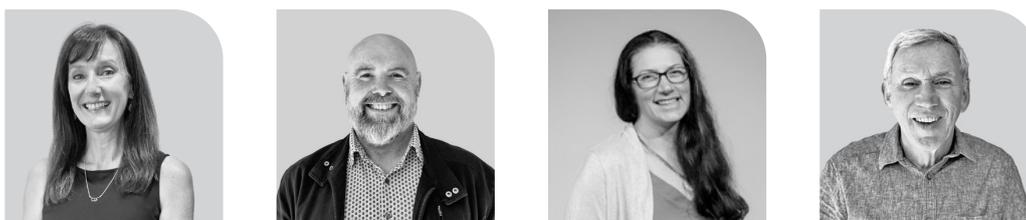
## THE HIGHLIGHTS OF 2025:

- Completion of the review and approval of updated Safe Church policies and procedures.
- Clear system for supporting vulnerable people, managing concerns and updating volunteers as needed.
- Implementing a routine system to review the Child Safe Standards. Publicising within the church the child safe standards and posters to remind young people and parents who to contact if they feel unsafe.

## WHAT WE ARE PLANNING FOR 2026:

- Refine our record-keeping systems
- Re-development of our GBC volunteer induction process
- Continue to support vulnerable people and manage concerns as needed

The following people have dedicated and committed time and energy to meeting regularly and I would like to thank the team in 2025 which consisted of Susan Kusch (Church Council), Greg Williams (Elder), Marjy Robertson (Staff), and John Cox (Member of good standing).



A reminder that you can see and review all our Safe Church policies and procedures or contact or report a safe church concern to our Safe Church Team via our website Safe Church tab or email [safechurchteam@gymeabaptist.org.au](mailto:safechurchteam@gymeabaptist.org.au).

# LIFEGROUPS

## FROM NICOLE JONES

The GBC LifeGroups ministry set out in 2025 to introduce a whole-church limited study series while we continued with our aims to support group leaders, strengthen discipleship and help people find connection and belonging. LifeGroups were a place to share the ongoing and transforming change that Jesus makes, and to reflect on the biblical evidence of a life being changed by Jesus.

We began term 2 with Olive Tree Media's Encounter series, which ran for 9 weeks and was taken up and supported by every existing LifeGroup. We also had 5 "pop-up LifeGroups" run for the term, resulting in approx. 30 new people attending groups for the series. The pop-up groups closed at the end of the term, but are keen to re-join for our next whole church series (stay tuned for 2027!), and most of the new attendees who had joined existing groups for the series stayed on as regular group members.

Throughout 2025 we had 26 groups meeting at various times in various places during each week, overseen by 36 leaders, with over 200 people attending (including 33 Youth and Young Adults). We had 31 Expression of Interest forms filled out and followed up and have had 3 already in early 2026. One group closed due to multiple members' health issues, and a new Sunday evening youth LifeGroup began.

Stan Kirkman has been a faithful member of the LifeGroups team for years, and we thank him for his passion for LifeGroups and his involvement in this ministry as he steps back (temporarily!) for a well-earned break.

LifeGroups remain an essential component of our discipleship (the "you and a crew" context), and we are so thankful for those who have been patient with, prayed for, and partnered in this ministry. As followers of Jesus, we have a precious opportunity to sow into each other's lives, and encourage one another in faith, within our LifeGroups.

**200+** People attending a LifeGroup

**33** of the 200 people in a LifeGroup are Youth and Young Adults

**36** LifeGroup leaders

**26** LifeGroups who meet through the week

**31** Expression of Interest forms filled out in 2025

# KIDS MINISTRY

## FROM BEC VERNUM

We at GBC are so blessed to have amazing young kids who are keen to be part of the mission to see lives changed by Jesus - and an amazing kids team supporting them.

With around **50-60 kids** in our 5 kids rooms each week we have seen wonderful growth in so many of our kids both personally and in their knowledge and love for Jesus. **I continue to be amazed by many of the questions these kids ask and their willingness to step out and be part of our church community.**

Our year looked a bit like this;

### TERM 1

"Big questions" took these inquiring young minds to the next level. We asked the kids what were the questions about Jesus, God, the Bible and life that they wanted answered and did our best to explore these together.

### TERM 2

We walked alongside the church as we also looked at the "Encounter" series. Olive Tree Media had prepared a great children's program resource that we utilised with helpful kid-friendly videos to show. The kids engaged with the Catalyst team at Easter time and learnt about how we can make our Easter ethical by the ways we choose our chocolate and then they participated in an egg hunt, game, craft and lesson on Easter Sunday where our older Loft kids helped to serve the community by working with the preschool kids for the morning. We also once again participated in May Mission Month including a Mother's Day cake stall that was very well resourced by the kids and the wider church community. The kids had a great experience at assisting in a fun and practical way to the fundraising efforts.

### TERM 3

We engaged in the "Genesis" series alongside the wider church. We took the usual "Sunday school" stories and tried to look at them in a new way and engage a bit deeper about what they mean for us today. During the spring holidays we held a Kids' Worship Disco. These discos have become a great opportunity for kids to both engage with one another and their leaders, but also a fun opportunity to bring a friend to church that many of our GBC kids have utilised.

### TERM 4

We looked at the Fruit of the Spirit looking at "how to make a fruit salad". We explored how the Fruit of the Spirit is God's "recipe" for changed lives. Not only seeing what the Fruit of the Spirit is, but also how we can see our own and others life changed by the Holy Spirit as we apply the Fruit in our lives.

And of course we once again held our Festival of Christmas. So many of our kids team and kids themselves engaged in service at the festival as well as attended and invited and brought their friends!

Thank you!!! To everyone involved in kids ministry, the wonderful team of leaders, anyone who baked or prayed or just chatted to a kid one Sunday morning about what they did that day. Special thanks to all the kids that come with their hearts open and ready to learn more about how they can be a disciple of Jesus!



# EDGE AND YOUTH

## FROM JEREMY BROUGH



2025 was a great year in the life of GBC's youth ministry, as we sought to see the lives of our young people changed by Jesus. The one thing that stood out to me from 2025 was the consistent commitment to following Christ, from both the kids and the leaders. Here are some highlights from the year.

Firstly, one of my favourite events on the youth calendar are the camps that we are a part of, and 2025 was no exception. Camps pose an excellent opportunity for our youth to encounter and experience Christ, being outside of normal youth and life routines. From these encounters and experiences, we saw a number of kids make some serious commitments to grow in their faith and follow Jesus, some even making a first-time commitment to follow Jesus. It was so exciting and encouraging to see our young people, the next generation of the church, so passionate about their faith and about Jesus.

One of my ongoing goals for the youth ministry at GBC is to continue to grow and adapt the ministry to better fulfil the needs of our young people. As such, there has been multiple new programs formed in 2025. One such program is the new youth LifeGroup that was formed to give those interested an opportunity to engage in a Bible study, to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the Bible. This LifeGroup was born out of the expressed desires of the young people themselves as they were keen to participate in the Encounter series alongside the wider church community. Upon the conclusion of the Encounter series, the youth LifeGroup has continued for the remainder of 2025 and into 2026, becoming a staple of the youth ministry at GBC. My hope for 2026 and beyond is that the youth teams and I can continue to listen and discern the needs of our young people and implement new programs, ideas, and strategies to continue adapting the youth ministry of GBC, just as we have done in 2025.

Our Edge program, for years 5 and 6, ticks along from year to year without a hitch, but this year I have been incredibly amazed and encouraged at level at which our kids are talking about and **interest in the ownership of their own personal faith and relationship with Jesus.** Over 2025 myself and the Edge team had numerous conversations with kids about faith and what it means, and seeing the kids start to think about faith as their own was great to see at such a young age. There were even times during the year where kids would ask great and sometimes tricky questions, which gave us many opportunities to help them learn and grow. I am excited to see these kids continue to grow in their faith in the future.



To conclude, I would like to thank all those who have supported Edge and Youth in 2025, your support of young people is greatly appreciated. I ask that you continue to **support and pray for our young people as we help and guide them to become the next generations of our church,** who follow after Jesus. I also want to thank everyone who has served on the Edge and Youth teams in 2025. Your time, efforts and input into the youth ministry in 2025 have not gone unnoticed, and the ministry would not be in the position it is without your service. I pray that God brings many blessings on the youth ministry, our young people, and the Edge and Youth leaders in 2026.

# YOUNG ADULTS

## FROM JEREMY BROUGH

The Young Adults ministry in 2025 moved into a new season that is focused on the growth of our young adults and the young adult's community. Within these very early stages of this new season the ministry has already begun to see small shoots of growth that are deeply encouraging, and are a confirmation that God is at work in and through the young adult's ministry.

One of the foundational aspects of the young adult's ministry over the last 2 years has been the young adult's LifeGroups. Formed at the beginning of 2024, the young adult's LifeGroups have continued into 2025, cementing their place as a key and crucial aspects of the young adult's ministry. LifeGroups offer an important space for young adults to learn and grow in their knowledge of the Bible and faith but also give them an opportunity to grapple with the difficult questions of how life and faith work together. We have seen some exceptionally great friendships and connections formed from our young adult LifeGroups as the young adults come together to strengthen one another in their faith. However, the challenge that is being posed in 2026 is how to further grow the young adult LifeGroups in size and number as we invite and encourage more of our young adults to join and participate in a LifeGroup. So, thank you to all those who have led or been involved in and with the young adult's LifeGroups over the past 2 years, as your service has made and continues to make a significant impact on the lives of our young adults.

Another area of significant improvement in the young adult's ministry is the formation of the young adult's working group, that was formed in the latter half of 2025.

The young adult's working group, consisting of myself, Adam Aitken, Brianna Aitken, Tim Jones, and Sam Brough, are the people that have been gathered to take on the responsibility of spiritual direction and guidance of the young adult's ministry. Together this group has come up with a clear vision for the young adult's ministry, which we seek to achieved by focusing on the areas of belonging and discipleship. I want to thank Adam, Brianna, Tim and Sam for taking on this new challenge and responsibility within the young adults ministry, and I pray that God continues to lead and guide you as you seek after him in your new roles.

I ask that you continue to pray for our young adults community in 2026 and beyond. **We have over 50 young adults connected to GBC**, each of which are seeking Jesus in their own unique way. So, join me as we pray that their lives may be changed by Jesus so that they may know his love for them.

# PLAYTIME

## FROM MEDDWYN HINTON

In 2025, our four Playtime groups continued to gather each week in Hotham Cottage, welcoming families from both our church and the wider community.

Across the year, around

# 50-60

families connected with Playtime

An average weekly attendance of about

# 80

adults and children enjoying play, craft, songs, stories and morning tea together

We celebrate the friendships formed and strengthened through Playtime.

Serving at Playtime is a gentle, consistent opportunity to participate in the church vision to see Lives Changed by Jesus. In ordinary conversations over coffee, in shared stories of parenting (and grandparenting) joys and challenges, and in the care shown to families, we have again seen God at work bringing restoration and renewal.

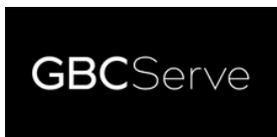
This year **we had some Playtime families join us at church for the first time** - and they loved the church community too.

We've also been encouraged by the growing connections between Playtime families and wider church events, with many joining us for Easter and Christmas celebrations and receiving children's books that share the story of Jesus. It is always a highlight to see families confidently invite new friends along to join them at Playtime, or church activities. The Playtime team live out our GBC value of being trustworthy to create a welcoming and fun space.

A challenge — and privilege — continues to be walking alongside families navigating complex life circumstances. Whether facing health concerns, isolation, or the everyday pressures of raising young children, carers have expressed gratitude for a safe, supportive community - a reminder of the importance of remaining others-focused and big-hearted in all we do.

I am deeply thankful for our committed team of volunteers who serve so generously. Their willingness to prepare crafts, set up spaces, listen well, pray faithfully, and create welcoming environments reflects their desire to share God's love. They are truly on-purpose, creating space in their lives to participate in God's mission. As we look ahead, we continue to pray that God will keep watering the seeds planted in this ministry. May Playtime remain a place where friendships flourish, faith conversations begin, and lives — of all ages — are changed by Jesus.





# GBC SERVE

## FROM MARJY ROBERTSON

The GBC Serve Team seeks to help members of our faith community find where God may be inviting them to participate here at GBC as we seek to see lives changed by Jesus.

---

### There are three main areas in which the Serve Team seeks to fulfil this mission:

Recruitment of volunteers

On-boarding of volunteers to confirm Safe Church compliance

Training of volunteers for specific roles

2025 had a focus on training and equipping of our volunteers and ministry teams.

---

### The highlights of 2025:

- **Volunteer 2025 Launch & Volunteer Half-time** – This was an amazing opportunity to bring together over 90 of our safe church volunteers across all our ministry areas for encouragement and training in Conflict Management.
  - **Increase uptake of serving** within community through Working Bee and the Festival of Christmas
  - **Increased multi-generations** across our ministry teams
  - **Continuation of a quarterly GBC Serve Newsletter** specifically designed to encourage and update all volunteers
  - **Recruitment and releasing volunteers** to form the Festival of Christmas Committee.
- 

### What we are looking forward to for 2026:

Strategic Training Opportunities to equip our volunteers

Recruitment of volunteers across Ministry Areas specifically within Playtime, KidZone, SRE, and Youth teams

Strengthening of prayer within our volunteer ministry teams

---

A huge thank you to each and every person at GBC who is actively serving within a ministry area. You have accepted the invitation from God to participate in His plans to see all things renewed and restored in Christ Jesus through the work of the Holy Spirit. As the Serve Team, we pray that as you serve, you would be growing in your discipleship as part of our strategic direction of Spiritual Journey. It has been amazing to witness the many ways in which God has worked through each volunteer.



# GUEST SERVICES

## FROM ROXANE LAWLER

Guest Services at Gynea Baptist Church continues to play a quiet but vital role in our 2025 theme, Lives Changed by Jesus. Every welcome at the door, every conversation during Meet & Greet, and every simple act of service helps create space where people can encounter Christ and experience genuine belonging.

Sunday mornings remain strong, with consistent check-in processes, warm welcomers, thoughtful farewells, and visitors regularly attending. In 2025 we averaged around 2-3 new visitors each week onsite, and an unknown number in our Online service.

The Giving Kiosk continues to function smoothly and effectively. In our PM service, the move to Self Check-in has supported a more relaxed and relational environment. Meet & Greet remains a highlight—an authentic ice-breaker that sets the tone for conversation and connection.

A significant development this year has been the commencement of PM dinners. A dedicated and faithful team of morning families generously prepare meals for our Sunday night attendees. These shared meals have deepened community, with a regular group of around 30 people staying each week.

Thank you to our incredible Guest Services volunteers who welcome, sweep, set out flags and chairs, and serve with joy each week.

# SERVICES REPORT

## FROM STEVE FOXE

The last year in GBC Services has been marked by growth, renewed creativity, and a deep sense of purpose as we pursued our 2025 theme: Lives Changed by Jesus. Every Sunday, it has been our desire to create an environment where people can encounter God through meaningful worship, prayer, and the preaching of the Word—and it's been encouraging to see our team take intentional steps toward that vision.

One of the key areas of celebration has been the continued growth of our Worship Team. We've welcomed new musicians and vocalists who bring not only musical skill but also a genuine passion for leading our church in worship. Their willingness to serve has enriched our services and strengthened our capacity to support our growing congregation.

We have also made steady improvements to the sound in the GBC Auditorium. Through careful adjustments, investment in training, and ongoing consultation with industry professionals, the quality and consistency of our audio experience has continued to improve. This remains a strategic focus for the year ahead as we seek excellence that removes distractions and helps people engage more fully with God.

Another major focus has been refining the flow of our services—shaping moments that help the congregation move naturally from worship, to prayer, to hearing The Message. These adjustments, though subtle, have contributed to a more cohesive and spiritually engaging experience.

Finally, a huge thank you to the many volunteers who make our livestream and digital services possible each week. Because of their dedication, our church community—both onsite and online—can continue to hear, worship, and grow together.

I am deeply grateful for every person who serves so faithfully in assisting with every aspect of our services. Together, we are truly seeing lives changed by Jesus.



# SCRIPTURE (SRE)

One way that GBC reaches out to see “Lives changed by Jesus” in our wider community is through our scripture program at Gymea North Public School. Derek Mullins is our SRE coordinator, who connects our scripture leaders and the school.

**GBC oversees 5 members of our GBC community and 3 members of other local protestant churches as they go into the school for 30-minute scripture lessons on Tuesdays. During 2025, 116 children from Gymea North Public School attended these scripture lessons.**

The team has reflected upon how great it is to be able to go into the school and share with the kids. The teachers at Gymea North have been very supportive of scripture during the year and the school also happily supported the promotion of the Fair Trade Market.

The kids enjoy the lessons and it is often one of the highlights of the week for those that attend.

One of the new members of the team who started at the beginning of 2025, Margaret Cantrell, went into the Year 5 class. To get her started for the year Marjy came into the class with her and began by running the lessons while Margaret watched, and then Margaret began to run the lessons as Marjy stayed to support for a few weeks. This was a great opportunity for Margaret to begin her ministry with the support of Marjy.

Through her time starting the ministry Margaret has reflected that this has been a great experience getting to know these lovely and engaged kids, as well as a positive and rewarding experience for her to be able to reach out into the community.

I'd like to take this time to thank Derek for his ongoing oversight of the school/teacher partnership, and all the teachers for their commitment to the Scripture ministry.

If you would like to be part of the scripture team Marjy would love to hear from you! Having more regular or casual scripture teachers would be a great blessing to this valuable ministry.

**FROM BEC VERNUM**

# KIDS HOPE

## FROM LEANNE LANGFORD



Our Kids Hope mentoring program at GBC continues to reach out to vulnerable children in our local community. What a wonderful privilege we have to show our love and care beyond our own GBC community.

We represent 1 of around 200 churches across Australia who connect with their local primary school. This partnership allows us to **provide trusted and caring mentors to meet with students each week.** The Kids Hope model of one-on-one mentoring with the same child once a week enables each mentor to build a strong relationship with their student. This is the key to program’s effectiveness. It’s so rewarding to watch the students blossom over time in all aspects, but especially in their confidence and resilience.

Some feedback from the Kareela School chaplain;



Every child deserves to feel seen and valued, and Kids Hope does just that. It has the power to change the course of a child’s life, and its ripple effects extend to the student’s family and the wider school community. I am so thankful to have the Kids Hope program at Kareela Public School.



In 2025 we continued to provide mentors to both Kareela and Grays Point Primary Schools. We welcomed 2 new mentors, Margaret Cantrell and Cheryl Wagner to join our existing team, making **9 mentors in total.** Our mentors continuing on from the previous year were;

- John Cox
- Ron Lucas
- Janet Currie
- Glen Nelson
- Richard Dwyer
- Michael Roberts
- Leanne Langford

A big thank you to Annette Clarke who stepped aside at the end of 2024 after many years of fabulous mentoring. Thanks so much also to Irene Leithhead and Matt Bradley who faithfully mentored in 2024. Each mentor’s prayer partner/partners play a vital role in supporting our team and we warmly thank them for their continued support.

An exciting new addition to our long Kids Hope partnership with **both Kareela and Grays Point Schools** has been their **participation in HopeDrive.** Both students and staff have generously donated much-needed items. This has been a great encouragement to me and so reaffirming of our growing trusted presence in their school communities.

It’s such a pleasure to lead our magnificent team of mentors and I appreciate the commitment and creativity each one brings. It gives me great joy to see the little sprinkles of hope we bring to both school communities making a difference. God’s plan is evident in all we do.

# CONGREGATIONAL CARES

## FROM ROXANE LAWLER

GBC Cares reflects the heart of Gymea Baptist Church, and particularly ‘as the Father sent me, so I am sending you’. While aspects of this ministry have been in a season of consolidation, care has certainly not ceased. Much of our pastoral and practical support continues faithfully through LifeGroups and Elders, who have carried primary responsibility for walking alongside people in times of need.

Our Prayer ministry remains a quiet strength. Many long-standing members serve as faithful intercessors, holding individuals, families and our church before the Lord week by week. We receive an average of 3 requests each Sunday, ranging from health concerns to complex personal circumstances. This unseen faithfulness is foundational to lives being changed by Jesus.

Practically, our Meals Ministry has continued strongly, with more than 50 meals prepared and delivered to those facing illness, crisis or significant life pressures. This tangible expression of love has been deeply appreciated with feedback from recipients like:

*“We are feeling incredibly blessed and grateful, it really means the world to us.”*

Towards the end of the year, several Elders met to prayerfully consider how to reinvigorate GBC Cares—particularly the pastoral visitation and practical assistance aspects designed to fill gaps where LifeGroups cannot. We look forward to strengthening this ministry in alignment with our mission and values.

Thank you to all who cook, pray, visit and care so generously.



# OPERATIONS

## FROM MARJY ROBERTSON

The GBC Operations currently includes the Accounts Team, IT Support, WHS Team, Maintenance Team, Emergency Control Organisation, Renovations Committee, and Reception/Administration Support Team.

These teams are ensuring a physical safe environment that facilitates the flourishing of ministries at GBC. My role includes the administration of operational areas which includes organising regular maintenance, organising contractors on site, overseeing external bookings, and being the direct supervisor for the Operations Staff team including Beryl Davenport, Finance; Altavi Young-Atwell, Administration Assistant; Craig Ward, Cleaner; and Kiera Hinton, Casual staff.

**The highlights of 2025:**

- **WHS Team** – Implementation of a more efficient way to track incident reports. Completed CPR training for staff and volunteers.
- **Maintenance Team** – Faithfully attending onsite and completing multiple big and small maintenance jobs.
- **Flooding Prevention Committee & Restoration** works completed after the floods from 2024.

- **Emergency Control Organisation** – Fire Emergency training completed specifically for our youth teams who meet outside of a Sunday service to ensure safety in the case of an emergency during a youth program.
- **Renovations Committee** – Faithfully met and planned to advise the Church Council on the process and plans for the renovations spaces of the office and kids’ ministry spaces including sending plans out for tenders twice to ensure works would be completed within budget.
- **Forecasting for 2026 Budget** – With the consistency of being in this role for a couple of years, I was able to work with Glenn Smith to identify key areas where funds would be needed to ensure our spaces a safe and ready for ministry.

**What we are planning for 2026:**

- Create a Property Management Committee to assist Marjy in property management decisions, forecasting for budgets, and future planning for the property at GBC
- Assets Management Register completion
- IT Server migration completion
- Renovations of Offices, Kids’ Ministry Spaces, and mid-size meeting spaces completed.

I want to especially thank **Stan Kirkman**. Stan has been others-focused and on-purpose for many years committing his IT skills and knowledge to support GBC and Hopefield. Stan is finalising some projects for 2026 and is then planning to step back from this role to allow time and space for God to refresh him. Please say a special thanks to Stan!

The following people have been on-purpose to ensure GBC is a safe environment that facilitates flourishing ministries to seek lives changed by Jesus.

**RENOVATIONS COMMITTEE**

- Glen Nelson (Chair)
- David Beresford
- Marjy Robertson
- Brian Stewart (Stepped down in November 2025)

**2025 WHS TEAM**

- Glen Nelson
- Marjy Robertson
- Darren Robertson
- Laurence Montgomery
- Lawrie Green

**IT SUPPORT**

- Stan Kirkman

**FLOODING PREVENTION COMMITTEE**

- Glen Nelson
- Brian Stewart
- Lawrie Green

**VOLUNTEER RECEPTION/ ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT**

- Marilyn Hunt
- Julie Chisholm

**2025 MAINTENANCE TEAM**

- Glen Nelson
- Lawrie Green
- Rod Wolf
- Dave Hunt
- Robyn Southworth
- John Dougall
- Alan Williams
- Rob Lloyd

# EMBRACE

## FROM JANINE JOHNSON

In 2025 we enjoyed growth in attendance at our Embrace Ladies Luncheons averaging 59 ladies attending which has been very encouraging and shows that Embrace is filling a need amongst our ladies and those in the community. At the end of November we held our Embrace Christmas Celebration Luncheon where 67 ladies came.

Embrace's aim is to give the women at GBC an opportunity to connect, be built-up and share together in a relaxed atmosphere over lunch or morning tea.

We meet for lunch bi-monthly in the GBC Atrium and for morning tea on the alternate months at various local cafes. Embrace provides an informal, relaxed way for newcomers at GBC to connect with other women, invite a friend or someone they know from the community.

Our guest speakers at our bi-monthly Embrace Luncheons in 2025 were from a wide diversity and were greatly inspirational.

They included:

- February Luncheon
  - Lois Wolf, who cycles on her push bike in different parts of the world by herself. She shared some of her journeys and pictures of her adventures.
- May Luncheon
  - Heather Druce – one of our Frontline Workers based in the UK updated us on her work.
  - Sue Chin – Clinical Counsellor with Hopefield “How to help those who have experienced trauma”.
- July Luncheon
  - Cancelled due to building works being carried out at GBC

- September Luncheon
  - Jan Corbett-Jones – Chaplain with Kairos Prison Ministry “Helping women impacted by incarceration through the love, hope and faith found in Jesus Christ”.
- November Christmas Celebration
  - Shelley Harbour led us in Carol Singing
  - Roxane Lawler – Associate Pastor – GBC “Celebrating Christmas”

A special thank you to our Embrace Team who are all very passionate about the ministry of Embrace. These women bring their unique gifts, talents and skills to help make our luncheons and coffee mornings run smoothly. The Embrace team for 2025 were – Sonia Beresford, Sue McOrist, Michelle Cox, Marilyn Hunt, Lee Munro, Jan Martin, Terrie Paige and Linda Duke.

We have an average attendance of 15 ladies at our bi-monthly Café morning teas.

Over the past year the women in our Embrace community have got to know each other better, invited friends and neighbours from the community, formed new friendships, and have encouraged each other to grow together in faith.



# MEN'S BREAKFAST

## FROM BRUCE HARBOUR

Thanks to an amazing group of committed volunteers, we were able to host **4 Saturday morning men's breakfasts during the year.** These events provided a fantastic opportunity for men from different backgrounds to connect, converse and interact over a "healthy" sumptuous breakfast!

We were blessed by the following speakers who challenged us in different ways under their selected topics:

**Q1 – Jerry Lee** "God doesn't call the qualified, he qualifies the called. A leader who serves, to a servant who leads."

**Q2 – Stephen Hatton** "Should I forgive?"

**Q3 – Sam Hudson** "Have you got the right consumption : contribution ratio?"

**Q4 – Bruce Munro** "Where are you doing God's mission?"

The speakers had been requested not to hold back from delivering the message that they felt God wanted them to deliver and they certainly challenged us. Thanks again to everyone who worked together to run these events and to everyone who attended. To our God we give thanks and praise.





# FESTIVAL OF CHRISTMAS

## FROM LEAH JAMES AND ADAM STEWART

This year it was a privilege to serve as Chair of the Christmas Committee at GBC and to help lead the planning and delivery of the 2025 Christmas Festival. The festival's theme, "The Light of Christmas", intentionally pointed people toward Jesus as the true source of hope and transformation, and connected naturally with GBC's own theme Lives Changed by Jesus. Through light, art, music, food, and hospitality, the festival sought to make the gospel accessible and to create spaces where people could experience belonging, generosity, and community.

Reflections gathered through the feedback process indicate that this goals for the festival were recognised in tangible ways. Volunteers described a strong sense of unity and shared purpose, with many noting the joy of serving together across generations. There was consistent feedback about the warmth of the atmosphere and the way people lingered, connected, and engaged meaningfully with the nativity walkthrough, creative spaces, and each other. Several stories highlighted repeat engagement from previous years, suggesting that the festival is becoming a trusted and anticipated expression of GBC's presence in the community.

Attendance is estimated above **750 people across the three nights**, supported by **115 volunteers** serving in a wide variety of roles totalling **200 distinct service opportunities**.

A significant highlight was the successful engagement of local musical acts and food vendors who were not part of the GBC community. Their participation created natural opportunities for relationship-building and mutual connection, including the engagement of many of their family members and friends as festival attendees. These partnerships extended the reach of the festival beyond our congregation and reflect our missional posture and will continue to be a unique way to extend the community reach of this festival into the future.

Our main and ongoing challenge is managing scope and sustainability. This tension has been raised not only through feedback from this festival, but also in previous years through events such as the GBC Carols. There is strong enthusiasm to grow and improve the festival, but we must prayerfully consider how to balance this with realistic capacity and care for our volunteer base. Addressing this challenge will require continued attention to pacing, clear priorities, and intentional communication. In particular, sharing stories of the impact and success of the festival with volunteers will be key to them feeling valued, encouraged, renewed and inspired to serve again next year. As we move forward, sustaining both excellence and volunteer wellbeing must remain a strategic focus for the festival committee and our pastoral oversight.

2-10 Tea Gardens Ave  
Kirrawee, New South Wales

(02) 9521 4611

[gymeabaptist.org.au](http://gymeabaptist.org.au)