



Churches of Christ?!

This month is the last of my series on answering the questions asked of Churches of Christ and I acknowledge that all the questions are legitimate questions. These questions are essential questions for leaders because we no longer share our Churches of Christ convictions of the “freedom in faith” that defines our practices and movement.

Our last question in this series is “Where is State Office’s Leadership?”

My answer to the question “Where is State Office’s Leadership?” won’t make much sense at first, but the answer to where is State Office’s Leadership is ... “in you.”

Why is this the case?

State Office’s Leadership is in you because we are a movement not a denomination. We are a conference of churches not a business.

You and I are members of our local Church of Christ, our congregations collectively elect our Leadership. Our Leadership govern the activities of the church that empower us to participate in ministry and mission, advancing the Good News of Christ Jesus in our towns and suburbs.

Our Church Leaderships nominate Delegates to the Conference who represent our local churches at Convention (which is our AGM) or at Special Meetings of our Conference. *(You can come to these if you want, you may even like them!)*. Delegates representing our churches, have the responsibility to vote on the governance matters of our movement. These Delegates elect the State Board, State President and the State Minister (who are all members of Churches of Christ) and approve the resourcing of our State Office in the budget.

As I explored in June 2018’s *Need2Know*, the State Board exists to govern the Conference of our churches which it does through the State Office. It does not manage the local church nor give it direction. Here in lays the confusion for many around ‘State Office Leadership’. Because we are **interdependent** congregations there are levels of partnership and levels of autonomy that are embraced. In order to celebrate and acknowledge the autonomy of each church, the

vision and direction, teaching and discipleship of each church has been, and will continue to be, the responsibility of each congregation; save the formation and endorsement of Churches of Christ Ministers. Although even here, our churches have the authority to engage any minister they believe best suits their congregation.

The Leadership of the State Office is one of encouragement, guidance and support for our Congregations in the area of governance, compliance and legality for the safety of all our members. State Office leadership is not glamorous or grand (though we who work at State Office are very passionate that our churches are healthy and flourishing)! To use a racing analogy, State Office it is not designed to be in the driver’s seat driving the car but rather in the pits, as a support team making sure (as much as is possible) the car, driver and rules to race by are all “good to go.” Like a pit team, when needed and invited, we get in there to support the congregations as much as possible and get them back out there as best we can.

The State Office will often share notices from other churches, reflections for encouragement, support or tools for governance like the Child Safe Policy and its procedures and it does this through the Need2Know, Website, App and via email when and as needed. We even run events and invite local members and Ministers to attend these gatherings. I know many of you see these notices in your church newsletters or in the Need2Know where available.

Remember I said State Office Leadership is in you? If you don’t respond to State Office invitations; if you don’t encourage your Church leadership to participate with State Office or ask for help when needed; if you don’t expect your ministers to be engaged in the larger conversation of our movement and attend to their spiritual wellbeing at state gatherings; if you don’t talk with your Delegates about what is going on prior to Convention or a Special Meeting; **then “State Office’s Leadership” is silenced by our collective neglect or attrition.**

I can’t stress enough that State Office’s leadership is bound to the health and wellbeing of our congregations - spiritually, physically and financially; literally and

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Report to Members of Churches of Christ

I hear on the grape vine questions of “Where is the Conference Review up to?” “We haven’t heard much about the review lately” and “Not enough is being done to keep the review on the agenda” I want you to know that the Conference Review process hasn’t stopped. Work is steadily being done in the back ground since Convention 2017 and as stated will report back to the Conference in 2018.

Our reports each month in the Need to Know have been under the titles of Guiding Coalition, Financial Review Committee and Prayer Group. This is our 13th monthly report since the Conference Review started.

Both the Guiding Coalition¹ and the Financial Review Committee² report to the Review Committee.

The Review Committee was chaired by Doug Walladge up until June of this year. When Doug took on the Acting Presidents role after Alan Young’s resignation Doug stepped down from the chair of the Review Committee and Scott Combridge was appointed as Chair of the Conference Review Committee.

For transparency:

Guiding Coalition

The Guiding Coalition submitted your questionnaire sheets directly to the Conference Review Committee. Once submitted the Guiding Coalitions roles at this stage were completed.

Conference Review Committee

The questionnaires from the churches have been collated and consolidated by the Review Committee. In the last Need2Know (report 12), the Review Committee invited volunteers from the churches to assist the final stage of collation of data from the questionnaires. Very few people responded to this call. Given the lack of uptake, 6 people were invited to participate by further reviewing data from the questionnaire sheets for independent assessment. That work is now underway and will be concluded by the end of July. I need to thank both Doug Walladge, who has Chaired the Conference Review Committee since it’s inception, and Catherine Nikkerud for her great work in spearheading the preliminary work on the collation of Data from the 40 Churches and CareWorks that participated.

The Financial Review Committee

Originally, the Financial Sustainability Group Chaired by Malcolm May (Balaklava) was asked to “find the money to fill the hole in our budget.” The group thought that this was short-sighted and a long term solution needed to be found, not just a patch. To do so, the group recognised that they needed to better understand the workings of State Office Finances, our relationship to CareWorks and Life Care. Given that the major component of their task was now reviewing the financial situation of our Conference the Group was renamed Financial Review

Committee. Those needs satisfied, the FRC realised that the State Office/State Board budget were only half the picture of our financial situation. The other half of the equation lay in the Congregations who are the authority in our structure. Our churches were recently asked to share their financials with the Financial Review Committee. That process has taken time. Thank you to those churches who contributed to the review process by sharing their information with the Financial Review Committee. However, having received the church data it was immediately evident that due to the unique system of each church’s financial management, an amalgamated position of our Conference finances is at this point in time too timely and costly a process for the agenda of the review. This reality though, has given the FRC enough to report to the Review Committee.

That brings us up to the present.

On the 1st September the Review Committee, Financial Review Committee, State Office senior personnel and the State Board will be meeting to collate what we have learned thus far. So that we can provide a comprehensive picture, we have also invited our Legal Advisor from Tri Meridian and Ian Painter of the CareWorks’ Board to attend this meeting to independently assist with future options, risk management assessments and management strategies for our Conference.

The intent of this meeting is to

- 1) get a picture of where we are at as a Conference based on a) what our members have said we want to do and b) the health of our movement.
- 2) formulate methods of sharing this information and meeting to discuss the ideas that come out of the meeting
- 3) holding meetings (as many as are needed) across our state so that we can process the outcomes of this first stage of the Conference Review and work towards the next steps
- 4) engage the next steps of the Conference Review as formulated by our statewide meetings.

Please pray for:

Wisdom as these servants of our Conference meet to seek Christ’s guidance in the meeting on the 1st September. Fellowship across our state for the meetings to follow and Hope for the work of our Conference through the Holy Spirit. Pray with me that Churches of Christ in South Australia will be a viable and vital movement in God’s Kingdom sharing Christ’s salvation through our ministries mission and evangelism.

Scott Combridge
CEO

¹Volunteers who visited our churches and conducted the Conference Review questionnaire.

²are a select group of business men and women in our movement who have volunteered their time to review our financial systems and position

State Youth Games 2018

On the June long weekend just gone, over 300 young people gathered together from different Church communities around SA and into Victoria to participate in the 22nd State Youth Games in South Australia.

We know how difficult it is to connect with youth and young adults from outside the church, so over the last few years we have developed SYG into a camp that appeals to a range of people from all backgrounds. We are aware of how many people assume the church is at best irrelevant and at worst self-righteous and boring, so we have strived to build an environment in which participants can experience a Christ-like community, full of generosity, kindness and (even) fun. Most of all, we know how tough it is to take the conversation deeper and talk about faith; and that's why we have designed State Youth Games to be full of low-key and respectful opportunities to do just that.

The games were played at a high level but in a spirit that is rarely seen today, the worship nights were pumping and the messages were on point with Justin Low bringing encouragement and challenge through God's word and, whether it was over a meal, a coffee at night's community cafe or sitting cheering on the side lines - every moment was filled with opportunities to meet new people and grow this awesome community.

We are heaps excited at the response we've had from people that participated at SYG and we'd love to share some of that with you:

"This camp gets better and better each year and I have made so many friends and been so

encouraged in my faith through this event. Thanks for all the hard work."

"I think State Youth Games is one of the best places to invite non-Christians. It has had a hugely positive effect on those we bring who are not Christian."

"Our whole group had such an amazing time together and bonded to whole new levels."

"SYG was so awesome. Everyone pumped for next year"

"State youth games fills such a unique space in SA. There is nothing quite like it and we can't wait for next year"

"What a wonderful event and opportunity to get youth and young adults together in community. Giving them opportunities to find and form their own beliefs and the way they want to live their lives."

"A massive thanks to everyone from Churches of Christ and the SYG Task Force who organised this camp - you do an incredible job! This ministry is such a blessing to our church and we would love even more opportunities like this"

Our plans are already well underway for State Youth Games 2018 and we will be announcing all the official info in the coming months.

For more information about State Youth Games, check out www.stateyouthgames.net.au or call Carl Milne at the State Office.

Carl Milne - Youth Events Coordinator





Join Safe Water September now!

[Safe Water September](#) (SWS) is a challenge to drink nothing but water for the entire month of September to raise funds for safe water projects in rural Zimbabwe. You can still eat food; but no coffee, tea, soft drink or milkshakes! For every \$20 you raise, one person gains access to life-changing safe water. This means kids are back in school, child and maternal deaths are dropping and communities are being transformed!

Take the SWS Challenge or sponsor those who do and make a life-changing difference!

Find out more at www.safewaterseptember.org.au



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metaphorically, because we are one.

State Office staff are passionate in their support for, and empowerment of, each autonomous congregation to be healthy, functioning and viable churches!

I know many of you are committed to mission overseas, giving to them because you are wanting their churches and activities to be effective. But what about ours? I want to draw your attention back to our own local church home mission. To advance the Good News here at home and to do so through the sharing of the Gospel through you, inviting people along to our worship services. I ache for growing churches supported by a robust State Board and State Office advancing our Conference of Churches. I dream of a Conference that, in LOVE, continues to support local Church ministry and mission while supporting overseas mission well into the future because we have survived well into the future; if we invest in our responsibilities at home first. This is my desperate Hope which forms my Faith in you.

As your CEO and in the recognition that State Office Leadership lies **with you**, I ask, "Will you recognise, support and empower the State Office? Are you committed along with your local church to ensure that our Conference of Churches of Christ here in South Australia is as healthy, functioning and viable as it can be? Are you active in the resourcing, support, encouragement and guidance of all our existing churches and praying for the ones yet to come? Are we a house united in prayer and activity for the advancement of God's Kingdom, diverse in our expressions unified in and through Christ Jesus?"

In my Leadership of the State Office, I leave the answer up to you!

Scott Combridge
CEO

Churches of Christ in SA and NT



Morialta Charitable Trust Fund has been supporting disadvantaged Children, Young People and their families in South Australia through its annual program of Distributions for 40 years. To enable the Fund to continue this support through Community Organisations in South Australia Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public.

Donations of \$2- and above are Tax Deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund at
PO Box 92, Crafers SA 5152.

Convention 2018

Moving on in.... Faith Hope Love

November 14: CareWorks AGM

November 15: GR Stirling Lecture

November 16: Celebration Night

November 17: A day of reflection, prayer, discussion, connecting, reviewing, and the AGM.