



Trans-Tasman Union Conference Headquarters, Pacific Highway, Gordon, New South Wales, Australia.

Photo courtesy of Ron and Shirley Evans.

Trans-Tasman Union Conference, South Pacific Division

BARRY OLIVER

Barry Oliver, Ph.D., retired in 2015 as president of the South Pacific Division of Seventh-day Adventists, Sydney, Australia. An Australian by birth Oliver has served the Church as a pastor, evangelist, college teacher, and administrator. In retirement, he is a conjoint associate professor at Avondale College of Higher Education. He has authored over 106 significant publications and 192 magazine articles. He is married to Julie with three adult sons and three grandchildren.

The Trans-Tasman Union Conference (TTUC) was a constituent union conference of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, in the territory of the South Pacific Division of the General Conference.¹ Its

headquarters were located at 738 Pacific Highway, Gordon, New South Wales, Australia.

The TTUC was organized in 1949² and dissolved in 2000 by action of the South Pacific Division as part of a reorganization and reduction in the number of union administrative offices operating within the South Pacific Division.³ The Australian Union Conference and the New Zealand Pacific Union Conference, both newly formed union conferences, took over the administration of the local conferences and institutions in their respective territories that were previously administered by the Trans-Tasman Union Conference. The TTUC ceased to operate on December 31, 2000.⁴

The activities of the TTUC were governed by a constitution which was based on the model union conference constitution of the South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (SPD). Its real and intellectual property were held in trust by the Australasian Conference Association Limited, an incorporated entity based at the headquarters office of the SPD in Wahroonga, New South Wales.

The territory of the TTUC was "New Zealand, with adjacent islands, that part of the state of New South Wales lying to the north and the east of a straight line from the entrance of Lake Illawarra to and including Yerranderie, thence due north to Capertee River, following the river west to the 150th meridian of East Longitude, thence north to but excluding Cassilis, then a line running northwest from Cassilis to a point just west of the town of Coonabarabran but east of the 149th meridian of East Longitude and then direct to the South Australian border parallel with the Queensland border, including Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands, the state of Queensland, and the Northern Territory; comprising the Greater Sydney, North New South Wales, North New Zealand, Northern Australian, South New Zealand, and South Queensland Conferences."⁵

In the *2000 Annual Statistical Report of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists*, the TTUC was listed as having 6 constituent local conferences, which in turn had a total of 305 church congregations and 45 companies. Church membership at the end of 1999 was 41,259.⁶ The TTUC and its local conferences had 983 active employees. The total tithe receipts for the TTUC in 1999 were US\$16,837,816. Its tithe and offerings per capita were US\$417.64.⁷

Institutions and Services of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference

Auckland Adventist Hospital was a Seventh-day [Adventist Hospital](#) in [Auckland](#), New Zealand founded in 1976. It was under the administration of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Auckland Hospital Board. It was located at 188 St. Heliers Bay Road, St. Heliers, Auckland, New Zealand, and operated as a private hospital serving that community for a period of 25 years. The hospital provided a wide range of services.

The hospital's medical center included emergency, laboratory, physical therapy, and radiology services, a pharmacy, and specialist consulting rooms. It was sold by action of the Auckland Hospital Board and the Trans-

Tasman Union Conference Executive Committee on December 23, 1999, due to financial challenges.⁸

Longburn Adventist College (LAC) has existed since 1913 and is located at 100 Walkers Rd, RD 7, Palmerston North, New Zealand.⁹ When established, following the closure of the Pukekura Training School at Cambridge, New Zealand, it was renamed the Oroua Missionary College. In 1924, it was renamed the New Zealand Missionary College and retained that name until 1967 when the name Longburn College was adopted. In 1987, the name was again modified to include the identifying word, "Adventist."¹⁰

When the TTUC was organized in 1949 it assumed administrative oversight of Longburn. The college remained under the administration of the TTUC until December 31, 2000, when it came under the care of the newly constituted New Zealand Pacific Union Conference on January 1, 2001.

Significant Events in the History of the Organization

of the Trans-Tasman Union Conference

An Australian Conference with its territory being the country of Australia was organized in 1888.¹¹ A New Zealand Conference was organized in 1889.¹² Subsequently, a number of organizational changes occurred in rapid succession. An Australasian Union Conference was organized during the time of the Australian camp-meeting, January 15-25, 1894. It comprised District No. 7 of the General Conference Districts, and included the conferences of Australia and New Zealand. The stated object of the union conference was "to unify and extend the work of the third angel's message, under the general direction of the General Conference, in the Australasian field."¹³ It was anticipated that as the work expanded, other conferences would be organized.¹⁴

Arthur Daniells described the further steps taken to organize the conferences in Australia. He wrote: "At the beginning of 1894 it was felt that the Australian Conference had more territory than it could well manage, so the colonies of Queensland and West Australia were separated from the Conference, and placed under the care of the Union Conference as Mission Fields. Near the close of 1895 another change was made. New South Wales was separated from the Australian Conference by the organization of the New South Wales Conference. At that time the name of the Conference was changed from the Australian to the Central Australian Conference."¹⁵ On October 29, 1899, the Queensland Conference was organized,¹⁶ and on November 25, 1899, the South Australian Conference was organized.¹⁷ On January 1, 1900, Tasmania became a mission field under the care of the Australasian Union Conference. What had been known as the Central Australian Conference was renamed the Victorian Conference.¹⁸ It now comprised only the colony of Victoria.¹⁹ In 1915, the New Zealand Conference was separated into the North New Zealand Conference and the South New Zealand Conference.²⁰

Until 1949, the Australasian Union Conference, also designated as the Australasian Division after 1922 operated as a collection of conferences and missions.²¹ In 1949, four union conferences were organized within the

territory of the Australasian Division which also was known as the Australasian Inter-Union Conference.²² "1. Central Pacific Union Mission with headquarters in Suva, Fiji; 2. Coral Sea Union Mission with headquarters in Lae, Papua New Guinea; 3. Trans-Commonwealth Union Conference with headquarters in Melbourne, Victoria; and 4. Trans-Tasman Union Conference with headquarters in Gordon, New South Wales."²³ The conferences in Australia were divided between the Trans-Tasman Union and the Trans-Commonwealth Union. The Trans Commonwealth Union contained South New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania, South Australia, and Western Australia. The TTUC included Greater Sydney, North New South Wales, Queensland, and North Queensland. It also included the North New Zealand Conference and the South New Zealand Conference.

The territory of the TTUC remained fixed until the end of 2000. In 2000, a major reorganization of the union conferences in the South Pacific Division occurred at the division session. The number of union conferences was reduced from five to four.²⁴ The action which dissolved the TTUC read:

VOTED: to approve the formation of:

1. An Australian Union Conference comprising the nine conferences in Australia.
2. A New Zealand Pacific Union Conference made up of the North New Zealand Conference, South New Zealand Conference, French Polynesia Mission, New Caledonia Mission, Cook Islands Mission, and Pitcairn Island Church.
3. A Western Pacific Union Mission with headquarters in Fiji, comprising the Samoa Mission, Tonga/Niue Mission, Fiji Mission, Tuvalu Attached District, Kiribati and Nauru Mission, Vanuatu Mission, Malaita Mission, Eastern Solomons Mission and Western Solomons Mission.

And

FURTHER: That the above new organisational structure be operative from January 1, 2001, and

FURTHER: That this body direct the Division Executive Committee to amend the relevant sections of the Division Working Policy.²⁵

Some Highlights in the Trans-Tasman Union Conference

During the Time of Operation:²⁶

During the TTUC's time of operation it oversaw the transfer of the Northern Territory from South Australian Conference to North Queensland Conference, later known as the Northern Australian Conference, and endeavored to amalgamate the two Queensland conferences into one. This involved much study and

consultation but was not supported by the Northern Australian Conference. In the mid 1980s, establishment of the Resource Centre was a significant addition for the TTUC, and continues to successfully operate at the new Australian Union Conference. The TTUC also produced soul-winning material and, in particular, Revelation Seminar material, which was not only used widely by conferences but was used extensively throughout the Pacific Islands with great success. Recognizing the importance of proper worship coordination throughout the field, a worship coordinator was appointed in late 1990s, and this person worked in conjunction with the Institute of Worship to help local church worship coordinators make worship services attractive to all ages.

List of Executive Officers

Presidents: W. E. Battye, 1949-1959; D. Sibley, 1960-1967; W. J. Richards, 1968-1970; C. D. Judd, 1971-1978; H. C. Barritt, 1979-1980; A. H. Tolhurst, 1981-1985; H. G. Harker, 1986-1999; C. R. Stanley, 2000.

Secretary/Treasurers: R. R. Frame, 1949-1955; W. J. C. Sawyer, 1956-1963; L. L. Butler, 1964-1968; R. D. Craig, 1969-1983; R. A. Evans, 1984-1998; P. B. Brewin, 1999-2000.

SOURCES

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South Pacific Division Quinquennial Session Minutes. Action 2.5, October 31, 2000. South Pacific Division of the General Conference archives.

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NOTES

1. The author acknowledges the assistance of Peter Brewin, a retired church administrator, in compiling this article. Also contributing were Roselee Power, Ron Evans, Harold Harker, Michael Worker, Lorraine Atchia, and Sue Marshall.
2. H. E. Piper, "Special Session, Australasian Union Conference," *Australasian Record*, September 13, 1948, 2-3.
3. South Pacific Division Quinquennial Session Minutes, Action 2.5, October 31, 2000, South Pacific Division of the General Conference archives.
4. Ibid.
5. *Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook*, "Trans-Tasman Union Conference," accessed November 21, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1999.pdf>.
6. *138th Annual Statistical Report 2000*, accessed November 21, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Statistics/ASR/ASR2000.pdf>.
7. Ibid.
8. "Auckland Adventist Hospital Sold," *Record* [South Pacific Division], December 18, 1999, 4.
9. "Longburn Adventist College: Contact Us," accessed November 21, 2018, <https://www.lac.school.nz/contact/>.
10. "Longburn Adventist College," accessed November 21, 2018, <https://www.lac.school.nz/about-lac/>.
11. "Organization in Australia," *Bible Echo and Signs of the Times*, October, 1888, 152.
12. "New Zealand Conference Proceedings," *Australasian Record*, August 1, 1889, 236.
13. *Seventh-day Adventist Online Yearbook*, "Australasian Union Conference," accessed April 30, 2018, <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Yearbooks/YB1894.pdf>
14. Ibid.

15. A. G. Daniells, "Our People in Tasmania," *Union Conference Record*, January 1, 1900, 13.
16. A. G. Daniells, "Organization of the Queensland Conference," *Union Conference Record*, December 1, 1899, 12-13.
17. A. T. Robinson, "The Work in Victoria," *Union Conference Record*, February 1, 1900, 12.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
20. "The New Zealand Conference," *Australasian Record*, March 1, 1915, 3.
21. H. E. Piper, "Special Session, Australasian Union Conference," *Australasian Record*, September 13, 1948, 2-3.
22. Ibid.
23. K. S. Parmenter, "Australasian Division Mission Field Development," *Australasian Record*, May 14, 1973, 1.
24. South Pacific Division Quinquennial Session Minutes, Action 2.5, November 2, 2000, South Pacific Division of the General Conference archives.
25. South Pacific Division Quinquennial Session Minutes, Action 2.5, October 31, 2000, South Pacific Division of the General Conference archives.
26. Peter Brewin, last Secretary Treasurer of the Trans-Tasman Union, email to author, September 26, 2018.

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