

South Pacific Division: Officers

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 officers of the South Pacific Division (SPD) are those persons who have been elected to fill the roles of president, secretary, and treasurer. Each office may have an associate who is also a part of the officer group or adgroup. Currently in the SPD there are four persons in the adgroup. In the SPD the secretary is referred to as the division secretary and the treasurer is referred to as the chief financial officer (CFO). This article will consider the roles of the three senior officers and will not discuss associate officer roles.¹

The Election of Division Officers for the South Pacific Division

The senior officers of the division are elected at each General Conference session. This means that an officer is elected for a five-year term. Each officer may be elected for a further term or terms. If a vacancy occurs between sessions, it is filled by the General Conference Executive Committee, which takes into consideration the recommendation of the South Pacific Division executive committee.

The President of the South Pacific Division

The president of the South Pacific Division, along with all division presidents, is first a vice president of the General Conference. The Bylaws of the General Conference read:

The vice presidents of the General Conference elected for the divisions shall serve as chairs of the division executive committees operating in their respective territories; shall have oversight of the work in those territories under the direction of the division executive committees; and shall be designated within their respective division territories as presidents of the divisions over which they preside.²

South Pacific Division Working Policy summarizes the role of the president in these words:

The president is the first officer and shall report to the executive committee in consultation with the division secretary and chief financial officer. He or his designee shall serve as chairperson of the executive committee. He shall supervise the general work of the organisation in harmony with plans and policies voted by the General Conference, Division, or as the executive committee shall determine, and perform such other duties as usually

pertain to such office.³

The Role of the SPD President

By way of prerequisites, the formal position profile for the position of president lists the following:⁴

1. Must be a practicing baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with an uncompromising commitment to its mission. This will be demonstrated through an active relationship with Jesus Christ characterized by a deep desire for worship and service to God.
2. Must be an ordained Seventh-day Adventist Church minister with current ministerial credential.
3. Must have tertiary-level qualifications in pastoral ministry that also include the theology of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Master's-level qualifications are preferred.
4. Must have extensive experience in Seventh-day Adventist Church administration.

The roles or functions of the position of president are as follows:⁵

1. *Spiritual Leadership*

To be the senior pastor in the SDA Church in the division. As an ordained minister he has the general pastoral oversight of the church within the division territory and supervises, in consultation with the other division officers and union presidents, the general work of the church in the division.

To participate as appropriate in all the services of the church.

To be loyal to the mission and message of the SDA Church.

To preach and lead in worship as appropriate.

2. *Representing the Corporate Church*

To travel widely throughout the division, opening/dedicating buildings and events on behalf of the church.

To attend church, government, and community functions on behalf of the church.

To represent the South Pacific Division to the General Conference and the General Conference to the South Pacific Division.

3. *Governance*

To be the chair of major division boards and committees.

For example: Division Executive Committee

Avondale University College Council

Pacific Adventist University Council

Sydney Adventist Hospital Board

Adventist Media Board

Biblical Research Committee
Ellen G. White Coordinating Committee
Board of Ministerial and Theological Education
Institute of Public Evangelism
Adgroup
Administrators Council

To be a member of numerous other General Conference, union, and institutional committees and boards.

To be responsible for the maintenance of and compliance with division working policy.

To be responsible for implementing actions taken by the division executive committee through the responsible officers, departments, boards, and committees.

4. Leadership

To be mentor and work closely with the union presidents and division institution CEOs.

To be responsible for coordinating and driving strategic planning in the division.

To be responsible for the formulation and implementation of a strategic framework for the South Pacific Division that reflects the strategic framework of the General Conference.

To listen carefully to the church and be able to articulate a corporate vision that captures the will of the church.

To consult widely and take people of wisdom and experience into counsel.

To know how to delegate responsibility to those who have the authority and skill for a specific role or task.

To be responsible for the promotion of Seventh-day Adventist ethos and mission in all entities of the church throughout the division.

5. Communication

To communicate with the church using the division magazine, the Adventist Record, through a regular column.

To be able to communicate using email.

To be a good presenter utilizing visual media and the services of Adventist Media.

6. Troubleshooting

To have advanced problem-solving skills.

To be well experienced in intercession and mediation.

7. Legal Awareness

To be well aware of the legal implications of the work of the church and know when to seek the advice of legal counsel.

As an administrative officer of the South Pacific Division, to oversee the development, implementation, maintenance, and review of the Work Health and Safety management system in harmony with the SPD board's directives.

The Division Secretary of the South Pacific Division

The General Conference Bylaws describe the work of the division secretary:

Each division secretary shall work according to plans and programs voted by the General Conference in session and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the division executive committee. The division secretary shall serve as vice chair of the executive committee and shall report to the executive committee after consultation with the president. It shall be the duty of the division secretary to keep the minutes of the division executive committee meetings, to collect information and make such reports as may be required, and to do such other work as usually pertains to this office.⁶

South Pacific Division Working Policy describes the role of the division secretary in these words:

The division secretary shall serve as vice chairperson of the executive committee and shall report to the executive committee in consultation with the president. It shall be the duty of the division secretary to keep minutes of the executive committee meetings, to collect information and make such reports as may be required, and perform such other duties as usually pertains to such office. The associate division secretary shall assist the division secretary in their work.⁷

The Role of the Division Secretary of the South Pacific Division

By way of prerequisites, the formal position profile for the position of division secretary lists the following⁸

1. Must be a practicing baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a strong commitment to its mission. This would incorporate an active relationship with Jesus Christ, characterized by a deep desire for worship and service to God.
2. Must have a comprehensive working knowledge of the church and its operations throughout the SPD.
3. Must possess well-developed people management perception and skills.
4. Must have advanced experience and qualifications in leadership and/or management.

The roles or functions of the position of division secretary are as follows⁹

1. *Spiritual Leadership*

To assist the president in the general pastoral and administrative oversight of the church within the division territory.

To participate as appropriate in all the services of the church.

To be loyal to the mission and message of the SDA Church.

To preach and lead in worship as appropriate.

To provide professional and spiritual counsel to individuals and to church entities.

2. *Representing the Corporate Church*

To travel widely throughout the division, attending church, government, and community functions on behalf of the church.

To represent the division as required at union and local conference/mission sessions and camp meetings.

To build and maintain an effective working relationship with the personnel of the General Conference Secretariat and also with each of the world divisions as appropriate.

3. *Secretariat*

To be responsible for the efficient operation of the secretariat in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

To prepare and present the annual division secretary's report.

To ensure the preservation of administrative and historical materials pertaining to the division in accordance with policy.

To oversee the preparation and distribution of required agenda information for division meetings as required.

To ensure that adequate and accurate records are kept of division board and Committee meetings and that action and outcomes are circulated as appropriate.

To ensure that accurate statistical records are kept up-to-date.

To ensure a file is kept of personnel service records and ensure that this information is processed in accordance with policy as employees transfer between employing organizations.

4. *Governance*

To serve as chairperson, vice chairperson, or member of governing boards and committees as appointed.

5. *Training*

To conduct training events as arranged.

6. *Legal Oversight*

To ensure that legal matters in connection with denominational personnel matters are addressed as assigned.

To act as the South Pacific Division privacy officer.

As an administrative officer of the South Pacific Division, to assist in the development, implementation, maintenance, and review of the Work Health and Safety management system in harmony with the SPD board's directives.

The Chief Financial Officer of the South Pacific Division

The General Conference Bylaws describe the work of the division chief financial officer:

Each division treasurer/chief financial officer shall work according to plans and programs voted by the General Conference in session and according to plans and policies agreed upon by the division executive committee and shall report to the executive committee after consultation with the president. The division treasurer/chief financial officer shall be responsible for providing financial leadership to the division which will include, but shall not be limited to, receiving, safeguarding, and disbursing all funds in harmony with the actions of the division executive committee, for remitting all required funds to the General Conference in harmony with General Conference policy, and for providing financial information to the president and to the executive committee. The division treasurer/chief financial officer shall also be responsible for furnishing copies of the financial statements to the General Conference officers.¹⁰

South Pacific Division Working Policy describes the role of the division chief financial officer in these words:

The chief financial officer shall be responsible for the financial leadership of the organisation which will include management of all finances and assets. The chief financial officer shall operate in accordance with legislation, applicable professional standards, executive committee actions and denominational policies. The chief financial officer shall report to the executive committee in consultation with the president and be responsible for furnishing copies of the financial statements to the officers of the next level of church governance. The associate chief financial officers shall assist the chief financial officer in their work.¹¹

The Role of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the South Pacific Division

By way of prerequisites, the formal position profile for the position of division chief financial officer lists the following:¹²

1. Must be a practicing baptized member of the Seventh-day Adventist Church with a strong commitment to its mission. This would incorporate an active relationship with Jesus Christ, characterized by a deep desire for worship and service to God.

2. Have or be eligible for appropriate credentials.
3. Effective communication, personnel, and organizational skills, including an understanding of cross-cultural issues.
4. Hold appropriate business/accounting/management academic degrees.
5. Previous experience in church financial management.
6. A comprehensive knowledge of the theology, organization, and financial practices of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

The position profile also states that the objective of the role is to provide financial leadership for the South Pacific Division and all its organizations, including unions and institutions. This includes:

Governance

Strategy

Asset management

Financial management

Formulating financial policies

Oversight of all legal structures within SPD and for the health food department globally

Compliance with tax, accounting standards, charities reporting and corporate reporting

The roles or functions of the position of chief financial officer are as follows:¹³

1. *Spiritual Leadership*

To assist the president and the division secretary in the general pastoral and administrative oversight of the church within the division territory.

To participate as appropriate in all the services of the church.

To be loyal to the mission and message of the SDA Church.

To provide professional and spiritual counsel to individuals and to church entities.

2. *Representing the Corporate Church*

To travel widely throughout the division, attending church, government, and community functions on behalf of the church.

To represent the division as required at union and local conference/mission sessions and camp meetings.

To build and maintain an effective working relationship with the personnel of the General Conference Treasury and also with each of the world divisions as appropriate.

3. *Knowledge Base*

To have a working knowledge of hospitals, higher education, schools, church management, General Conference operations, banking and investment management, property management, risk management, fast-moving consumer goods, wellness industry, media, IT, and audit.

4. *Treasury*

To be responsible for the efficient operation of the treasury in the discharge of its duties and responsibilities.

To be responsible for the development of division financial strategy.

To oversee church investment functions.

To be responsible for the management of division financial and property resources.

To prepare and present the annual division chief financial officer's report.

To supervise and give overall direction for the preparation of the budgets of the division, Seventh-day Adventist (SPD), Ltd., Seventh-day Adventist Church (Pacific), Ltd., Seventh-day Adventist Church, Ltd., New Zealand Conference and SPD Property Fund.

To report to the relevant boards and executive committee on the financial operations of the division as appropriate.

To be responsible for finance agenda items to be presented to the various division committees.

To be responsible for the administration of estates where the treasurer is named as executor.

5. *Governance*

To serve as chairperson, vice chairperson, or member of governing boards and committees as appointed.

To prepare new policy and policy changes as they affect the finances and property of the church.

6. *Training*

To conduct training events for financial managers as arranged.

7. *Legal Oversight*

To be responsible for the oversight of taxation issues.

To be responsible for the oversight of division legal and corporate structures.

Presidents Chronology

Australasian Union Conference (1894–1922): W. C. White (1894–1897), A. G. Daniells (1897–1901), C. H. Irwin (1901–1905), O. A. Olsen (1905–1909), J. E. Fulton (1909–1916), C. H. Watson (1916–April 1920), C. K. Meyers (acting, April 1920–June 1920), C. H. Watson (June 1920–1922).

Australasian Union Conference/Australasian Division (1922–1948): J. E. Fulton (1922–1926), C. H. Watson (1926–1930), W. G. Turner (1930–1936), C. H. Watson (1937), E. B. Rudge (1938–1946), W. G. Turner (1947–1948).

Australasian Inter-Union Conference/Australasian Division (1949–1956): N. C. Wilson (October 1948–July 1951), F. A. Mote (acting July 1951–October 1951); F. A. Mote (October 1951–1954), F. G. Clifford (1954–1962).

Australasian Division (1957–1985): L. C. Naden (1962–1970), R. R. Frame (1970–1976), Keith S. Parmenter (1977–1983).

South Pacific Division (1985–): Walter R. L. Scragg (1983–1990), Bryan W. Ball (1990–1997), Laurence J. Evans (1997–2007), Barry D. Oliver (2008–2015), Glenn C. Townend (2015–).

Secretaries Chronology

Australasian Union Conference (1894–1922): L. J. Rousseau (1894), H. C. Lacey (1895–1897), Anna L. Ingels (1897–1898), Edith M. Graham (1898–1910), A. H. Piper (1911), C. H. Pretyman (1912–1918), C. K. Meyers (1919), W. G. Turner (1920–1922).

Australasian Union Conference/Australasian Division (1922–1948): F. A. Allum (1923), W. G. Turner (1924–1926), A. H. Piper (1927–1936), E. E. Roenfelt (1937–1940), H. E. Piper (1941), S. V. Stratford (1942–1945), W. G. Turner (1946), R. E. Hare (1947–1948).

Australasian Inter-Union Conference/Australasian Division (1949–1956): F. A. Mote (1949–1951), H. G. Moulds (1952–1953), vacant (1954), L. C. Naden (1955–1962).

Australasian Division (1957–1985): R. R. Frame (1963–1966), F. T. Maberly (1967–1970), K. S. Parmenter (1971–1976), R. W. Taylor (1977–1985).

South Pacific Division (1985–): Athal H. Tolhurst (1986–1991), Laurence J. Evans (1992–1997), Barry D. Oliver (1998–2007), Lawrence P. Tanabose (2008–2013), Lionel H. Smith (2014–2020), Mike Sikuri (2021-).

Treasurers Chronology

Australasian Union Conference (1894–1922): Echo Publishing Company (1894), N. D. Faulkhead (1895–1897), Edith M. Graham (1898–1906), A. Mountain (1907–1908), C. H. Pretyman (1909–1910), Edith M. Graham (1911), C. H. Pretyman (1912–1916), W. O. Johanson (1917–1918), C. H. Pretyman (1919–1920), T. W. Hammond (1921).

Australasian Union Conference/Australasian Division (1922–1948): T. W. Hammond (1922–1936), R. H. Adair (1937–1943), W. L. Pascoe (1944–1948).

Australasian Inter-Union Conference/Australasian Division (1949–1956): W. L. Pascoe (1948–1954), E. J. Johanson (1955–1956).

Australasian Division (1957–1985): E. J. Johanson (1957–1966), E. J. Howse (1967–1968), Lance L. Butler (1969–1980), W. T. Andrews (1981–1985).

South Pacific Division (1985–): W. T. Andrews (1985–1995), Warwick H. Stokes (1995–2000), Rodney G. Brady (2000–2021), Francois Keet (2021-).

SOURCES

“ADM 10.20: Elected Officers, Departmental Personal, and Discipleship Ministries Team Leader: Relationships and Responsibilities.” *South Pacific Division Working Policy*.

Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

“Position Profile: Chief Financial Officer, South Pacific Division.” Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

“Position Profile: Division Secretary, South Pacific Division.” Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

“Position Profile: President, South Pacific Division.” Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.

NOTES

1. Unless otherwise credited, the information in this article comes from the personal knowledge and experience of the author, who was the division secretary of the South Pacific Division between 1997 and 2007, and the South Pacific Division president between 2007 and 2015.
2. Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Bylaws, Article III, Section 4.
3. “ADM 10.20: Elected Officers, Departmental Personnel, and Discipleship Ministries Team Leader: Relationships and Responsibilities,” South Pacific Division Working Policy.
4. “Position Profile: President, South Pacific Division,” Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wahroonga, New South Wales, Australia.
5. These roles are derived from the knowledge and experience of the author and from the position profile of the president of the South Pacific Division.
6. Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Bylaws, Article VI, Section 2.
7. “ADM 10.20: Elected Officers, Departmental Personnel and Discipleship Ministries Team Leader: Relationships and Responsibilities.”

8. "Position Profile: Division Secretary, South Pacific Division," Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wairoonga, New South Wales, Australia.
 9. These roles are derived from the knowledge and experience of the author and from the position profile of the division secretary of the South Pacific Division.
 10. Constitution and Bylaws of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Bylaws, Article VII, Section 2.
 11. "ADM 10.20: Elected Officers, Departmental Personnel and Discipleship Ministries Team Leader: Relationships and Responsibilities."
 12. "Position Profile: Chief Financial Officer, South Pacific Division," Office of the Director of People Services, South Pacific Division of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, Wairoonga, New South Wales, Australia.
 13. These roles are derived from the knowledge and experience of the author and from the position profile of the chief financial officer of the South Pacific Division.
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