



THINK TANK

BY DAVID JACK

2020

Gather 450 passionate, spiritual, committed, creative and enthusiastic Adventist Christians in a room and what do you get? Well, on 14th and 15th February 2020, the answer to that question was Think Tank 2020!

Think Tank is a unique opportunity for pastors and representatives from their churches in the Greater Sydney Conference to gather to pray, be inspired by challenging presentations and apply ideas and learnings to their own local church.

It would be easy to focus on the interesting and challenging presentations, the spirit filled worship or the real-life church case studies. These wonderful experiences were the catalyst for the conversation and reflection by members and leaders around tables. Led by our gifted team of church pastors, the conversation was all about the local church and its ability to be impactful. To make a difference. To fulfil our Adventist mission.

Building on the Focus Areas formed during Think Tank 2018 and voted at the Greater Sydney Conference Session 2018, the key question for Think Tank 2020 was:

If, as a church, we live out these focus areas, what difference will that make? What will be the impact?

Greater Sydney Conference Focus Areas

- Turn up the spiritual temperature
- Member empowerment
- Community engagement
- Growing inter-generationally
- Media engagement

Think Tank attendees were seated in church groups to debrief presentations and develop Ministry Plans for their local church. Ministry planning was focused around a target group

selected by each group that reflected their church member and/or local community profile. The top 5 target groups selected by church groups were:

- Youth
- Children
- Seniors
- Young parents/families
- Teens

Following was discussion around the **impact** they would like to achieve on the target group, the focus area that may hold the key to achieving **impact and initiatives** or ideas that could make a difference to the target group.

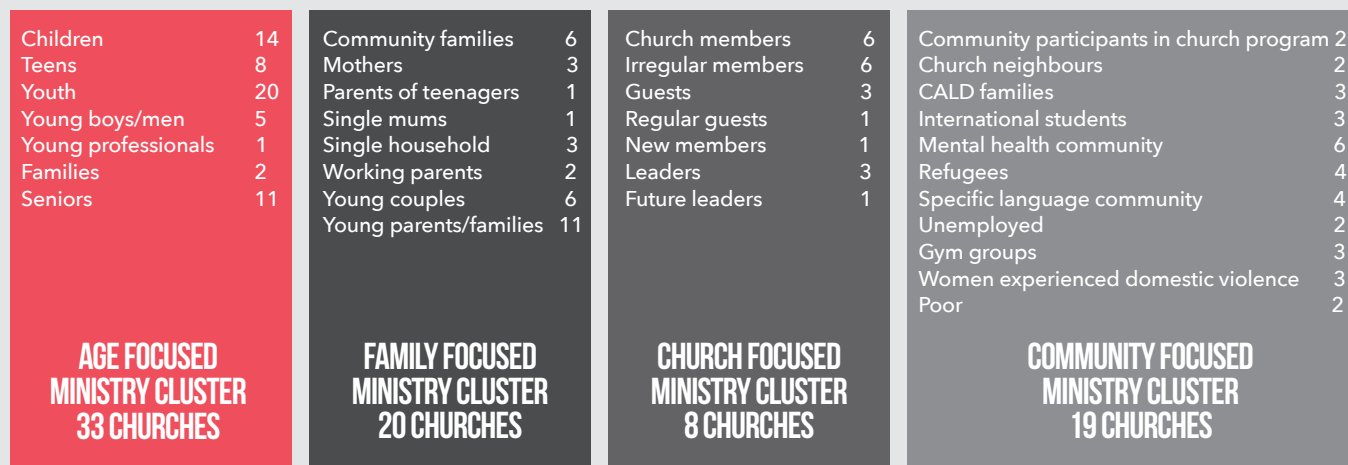
The infographic on page 9 presents the variety of target groups identified by church groups at Think Tank. These have then been grouped into clusters showing the number of churches which identified each target group and the total number of churches that identified at least one target group in each ministry cluster.

What is clear is that many churches are focused on the same target groups or ministry clusters and independently developing initiatives and ministries to meet needs and bring people closer to Jesus Christ.

Wouldn't it be great if the 19 churches identified in the Community-focused ministry cluster were to collaborate and work together to create initiatives and resources to meet the needs of the target groups they have identified? Or even implement new ministries and services together as partners?

And the same for the 33 churches in the Aged focused ministry cluster? Or the 20 churches in the Family focused ministry cluster? And the 8 churches in the Church focused ministry cluster?

INFOGRAPHIC: TARGET GROUP CHURCHES



At the conclusion of Think Tank 2020 Pr Terry Johnson provided an excellent summation of the outcomes of the weekend:

- Strong attendance and engagement throughout the entire weekend
- Nearly every delegate was in attendance right from Friday night through to the last session on Sabbath afternoon
- Encouraging to see the number of young people in attendance and the quality of their contribution.
- Pastors leading in the discussions was vital and appreciated
- We were blessed by a group of outstanding presenters
- Discussion, debate and ministry planning has been enthusiastically embraced by those who attended
- An impact focused discussion about our ministry and programs brings a new dimension to our planning.
- If our churches could be clustered around our shared ministry focus, and collaborate together on ideas, resources and implementation, it is possible that our ministry effectiveness would be enhanced.

Since Think Tank 2020, some churches have reported continuing the discussion with their leadership teams and Boards. Others have requested the worksheets used at Think Tank to enable them to engage their church in ministry planning. **Think Tank 2020 your local church, and the way God wants to position you to serve, to make a difference, to have an impact.**

Appreciation

Appreciation to the churches who engaged in Think Tank and the members who attended, contributing their time and ideas. Particular appreciation to the many young people who actively participated.

Appreciation to our team of pastors who provide invaluable leadership to our churches in Greater Sydney and actively led the discussion and ministry planning throughout Think Tank 2020.

Appreciation to an incredible cast of presenters and disruptors, who provided a platform for our discussion and ministry planning - Pr Terry Johnson (President, GSC), Pr Cheonneth Strickland (Secretary, GSC), Pr Glenn Townend (President, SPD), Pr Michael Worker (Secretary, AUC), Dr Ruth Powell (Director, National Church Life Survey Research), Adam Johnstone (Managing Director, National Church Development), Alina Van Rensberg (Assoc Director Church Support and Development Team, South Queensland Conference), and David Jack (Church member, GSC).

Appreciation to Redfern, Mt Druitt and Mt Druitt Samoan churches who encouraged us through sharing their ministry experiences.

Appreciation to the Epping Adventist Church worship team who enabled our worship of God.

Appreciation to Patricia Gonclaves and the GSC team who spent many hours planning and running Think Tank 2020.

Think Tank 2020 feedback from participants

"It's a rare opportunity to coordinate the church vision across Sydney and celebrate our diversity and various strengths. It has also ensured that everyone has done a minimum level of planning."

"We were able to come up with action plans for how to minister in our churches and communities. The talks were so insightful and really inspiring to spark change and focus on working together."

"Created an opportunity to apply the learning's from each presentation to our local challenges."

"Well done! A great way to bring the conference together with a shared vision and experience."