



THINK TANK



Sabbath Closing with Vania Chew of Adventist Record.

MISSION 2 SYDNEY

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Photos by Jungyook Ryan Park

More than 400 leaders from Greater Sydney Conference (GSC) gathered at ANZ Stadium, Sydney Olympic Park, for the Mission 2 Sydney Think Tank.

The Think Tank was designed to bring representatives from all across Sydney's churches together "to pray, to listen, and discuss innovative ways in which we can reach the secular mind in Sydney," said Pastor Terry Johnson, GSC President.

In his welcome to attendees Pastor Johnson challenged those in the room. Quoting the parable of the lost sheep, Pastor Johnson said there is great pain when "even one sheep is lost." He referenced the 13 million people that have left the church since the 1960, 4 out of every 10 and even higher percentages of young people. He also made the point that going out to seek for the lost sheep is a high-risk activity.

"I want you to risk and I want you to risk BIG during our Think Tank," Pastor Johnson encouraged attendees.

With that, the two-day conference, starting Friday night, began with a reminder of the history of urban outreach in the Seventh-day Adventist church.

It continued on Saturday with presentations covering unity in mission, church planting, how to change an established



Pr Adrian Raethel, GSC General Secretary facilitating a session.



church into a missional church, and stories of successful ideas that are already being implemented such as the centre of influence at Stanmore church and a “meet-up” photo club.

A highlight was the presentation from Mark McCrindle from McCrindle research. He broke down the demographics of Australia and the city of Sydney, outlining some of the challenges and the opportunities present both today and in the future. He encouraged the church that the way to reach out was through innovative, collaborative and responsive ways.

Keynote presentations were followed by prayer and then a time for discussion. iPads were provided for each table to answer the discussion questions and submit their answers to be collected and collated. From these answers, recommendations will be formulated and a strategy will be developed.

Overall, implementing change in the methods and trying new things like centres of influence, raising the spiritual temperature of leaders and members so that they are prepared for mission, and shifting the church culture echoed throughout the hall.

“Culture will trump strategy, every time,” noted Pastor Tom Evans, President of the North New South Wales Conference. “If the strategy conflicts with how a group of people already believe, behave or make decisions, it will fail.”

These recommendations will inform the strategic direction of the conference for the next four years. ■



Mark McCrindle (McCrindle) chats with a delegate.



Pr Tom Evans, North New South Wales Conference.

