

“We invite public comments and questions on the www.lancejchristie.com website or private communications with Lance via email lancechristie7@gmail.com”

The Repeal of the New South Wales Stewards’ Foundation of Christian Brethren Act, 1989 as proposed by Ray Carter of NSW and supported by Lance J Christie

The following reasoning is an attempt to analyse and explain why the Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act NSW 1989 (the Act) must be repealed.

Firstly, members of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church form an Assembly Organisation under the NSW Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act 1989. This is confirmed in correspondence Ref IM21/28595, EAP21/13792 from the NSW Communities & Justice Law Reform and Legal Services to complaints made to Justice NSW, the Attorney General’s Office concerning **the** Plymouth Brethren. This, the first instance being sufficient for both the repeal of the Act and the supporting assertions herein.

The PBCC perplex people across many communities so this document is written to raise awareness based mainly on publicly available documents, some of which are listed below.

Secondly, the Act needs to be repealed immediately because it is beyond redemption.

Thirdly, because it was misrepresented in the NSW Parliament when the Bill was being debated back in 1989 as is recorded in Hansard.

Fourthly, it is essential that it be repealed because only then will the ATO, a Commonwealth agency, be fully equipped in its current investigation into PBCC affairs.

It is remarkable that the Bill stated that the Act was for the Open Brethren and even though this was repeated during the debate, in the deeper recesses of the Act there is provision for its use by Assembly Organisations which includes the Plymouth Brethren as an Assembly Organisation, becoming such an Assembly when “*styled*” on the Open Brethren Foundation as the Act allows. This was denied by Rev Hon Fred Nile MLC when questioned. It is remarkable also that, at the same time the PBCC are incongruously wont to say that the gulf between them and the Open Brethren is “*the deepest ditch in Christendom*”. The repeal of the Act should not be the only way to expose those behind it and those who benefit from it, but the whole matter must be exposed, expressly how the Act was represented in the Parliament and what the existing Act enables.

The Act subverts and replaces the normal law of Trusts in the State of NSW and should never have been passed in the first place. This, the Act is irretrievable in its present insidious form. Repeal should happen right now, April 2024, ie during the ATO investigation into the PBCC.

NSW MP Sue Higginson MLC in December 2023 asked the NSW Attorney General Michael Daley for the Act to be repealed. Attorney General Daley’s response was more akin to obfuscation than informative as was the separate response from NSW Justice legal team on

behalf of Attorney General Mark Speakman. Both Attorney Generals however deferred to the NSW Church Legislation Policy, a Policy that supposedly has provisions that can resolve the problems created. However, these provisions are totally inadequate and not fit for purpose! The NSW Office of Justice did, on behalf of Attorney General Speakman, note that the Act makes no ***“specific”*** provision for ex-members. This is an admission that ex PBCC members are entirely at the whim of the Committee of the Assembly Organisation so are “legally” in a condition of servitude! That there being no specific provision for ex members of an Assembly Organisation in the Act is indicative of the discretionary power that the PBCC has over Assembly members. Fred Nile indicated, as confirmed in Hansard, that Assembly members were such worthy members of the community that they deserve of an Act that created power over their financial affairs. This was done however without revealing that power over their affairs was awarded to the Assembly Organisation Committee. The Act endows power over PBCC members’ affairs beyond the normal law of the State to the extent of the creation of documents not available to the members or indeed to a Court. Clearly the Open Brethren Foundation on which the PBCC Assembly Organisation is “styled” as the Act allows, has not used the outside-normal-law provisions that the PBCC use to great effect. This begs the question as to why the Open Brethren ever allowed the unusual elements of the Act to be in their particular Trust law Act and why the PBCC does not have a Trust law of its own.

The Act allows the PBCC, which is an Assembly Organisation not a Company like the Open Brethren Foundation is, to sail under the Privacy Laws of Australia. This is how the PBCC has been able to maintain a completely opaque façade despite numerous requests for examination of their affairs by government agencies such as the ATO and Charities Commission to remain secret and why no media organisation, newspaper, blog or TV has ever been able to land a serious blow.

Churches in Australia can practice their religion in peace as this is guaranteed under the Constitution. This is about as far as Australian politics respectfully intrudes into religion and is why a religion in Australia should reciprocate by not pushing into politics as the PBCC does. As an example, the PBCC purports to punish members who commit tax fraud by purportedly excommunicating them, when tax fraud is properly covered by the law of the land.

The Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act NSW 1989 enables extraordinary privileges for PBCC Trusts to minimise tax with internal untouchable documents supporting putting paid to transparency. This is what should surely be regarded as the fraud. Again, how did such an Act ever get passed in the first place? Hon Rev Fred Nile MLC is one of the few who could answer that question given that he was questioned along these lines during the debate of the Bill. When asked whether the Act provided for the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, he said no, it was for the Open Brethren alone.

Though the Open Brethren church does not appear to use the outside-normal-State law provisions of the Act, the extreme provisions for Trusts under the Act in theory are, as Fred said, for Open Brethren benefit alone. Why is it then that the PBCC, the PBCC Committee

and the PBCC Committee's Universal Business Team are the only church entities in Australia that have achieved such profitable results among all churches to the extent that it appears to have apparently caught the attention of the ATO. The basis of this high profitability must be revealed as it could only be achieved using the Act's unique tax concessions that are not allowed for ordinary taxpayers.

The Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act is a wealth creation device even enabling creation of documents that cannot be required in a court of law. Australians should be concerned that there exists any such Act that so strongly appears by this extraordinary situation to underpin the wealth and lifestyles of PBCC members. The evidence provided by ex-members reveals that while the Act enhances their financial state, it simultaneously debases the spiritual. Worse for the community, the Act undermines cherished democratic values, so the question begged is what is behind this Act purportedly for only the Open Brethren and what submissions preceded the Bill as it is clear and more realistic that the Act is equally or more provisioned for the PBCC given the Open Brethren failure to use it. The Australian public requires these questions to be answered for fairness.

Ex members of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church relate that how the church extends its power over members' business affairs is manifested by the PBCC Committee's requirement that the books of 3000 Plymouth Brethren businessmen's businesses from 19 countries around the world are supervised by the Church's business arm, the Universal Business Team in Sydney NSW Australia. Obviously, this is the Act in action and the the source of power is the Committee and the so called "Man of God", the President of the Committee.

It is incongruous that the PBCC touts that businessmen members face **excommunication** from the Church should they operate any taxation fraud, when, from anecdotal evidence this reportedly has never happened. In any case, what kind of business rule is that for a church in the first place? Christian churches are supposed to be concerned with spiritual matters and not indictable offences if they want to comply with Charity legislation. More than likely the business of excommunicating is a veiled threat to stop members from stepping out of line so that the UBT can continue working its magic profit making under the Act with minimal publicity.

No Christian church member should be in fear of being excommunicated from their spiritual connection with God just because of a mortal's tax fraud failure. Incongruously the PBCC throw this into the mix of his punishment right in his hour of need. Excommunicating like this, if it is to be taken seriously, puts a tax evader's soul at stake which is an unchristian overkill having more of the quality of a cynical subterfuge. More than likely this would be lost on ordinary PBCC businessmen for want of knowledge on the issue. In the PBCC, ignorance "of the world" is regarded as a virtue and the probable purpose of limited education and wider society interaction. More than likely this furphy is waved about to defray questioning of PBCC tax affairs.

Although the ATO investigation has begun, it may not reveal much because the UBT indeed operates within the law, ironically a NSW law that subverts normal NSW Trust law. State law may or may not be within reach of the ATO so a learned response would be welcome on this or any other aspect of this document. Common sense says that the ATO, a Commonwealth Authority, must have avenues of communication with the NSW Government in any case, to ensure there is no cover up.

Despite the obvious closeness of the ATO Brethren and the Plymouth Brethren, joined together in the Stewards Foundation Act, amazingly the PBCC maintains that there is a great high wall of separation between PBCC and the Open Brethren. The height and thickness of this wall is of their own imagination and making and the size of it exacerbated by their isolation policy based on the philosophy of separation and hatred of the world. The separation is also regulated by the requirement for Assembly member businessmen to "*fleece the Egyptians*" for maximum financial benefit. Clearly this is a distraction, given that no fleecing or tax fraud is necessary to undercut any competitor in any business endeavour, because they are already extremely profitable thanks to the magic worked by UBT on PBCC member's businesses. The Foundation of Christian Brethren Act ensures that normal Trust law is not applicable to PBCC Businesses, so must be a subversion of normal NSW Trust law despite it being done "lawfully", courtesy of the Stewards Foundation Act.

The implications of the misrepresentation of the bill preceding the Act done by Fred Nile should cause great consternation among Australians and rightly so because the self-confidence of PBCC members is born of this. It appears that they are conditioned to be such by virtue of their limited education and social interaction which is designed to retain susceptible people in an almost childlike state insofar as their worldly understanding is concerned.

This condition, ensured through lack of interaction with the "world," is not due to any special inheritance. Whenever the PBCC Committee and ordinary PBCC Members are questioned as to how they enjoy their observantly extravagant lifestyles when compared with ordinary businesses people; name calling is about all they can resort to, such are the limitations foisted upon them.

Although this may seem childish to outsiders and not endearing, where done with fervour it puts off any reaching out to them. Any subterfuge pertaining to self-preservation should evaporate when the Greens pursue their stated aim, that being to "*shed a light on the matter*" in the NSW Parliament.

The PBCC insist that questioning by anyone daring to challenge the Committee of the PBCC constitutes them "*opposers*" who are either "*wicked*", "*corrupt*" or "*rival*" and therefore unworthy of answers. This should be seen for what it is which is not for the protection of a spiritual gift. Again, this is a diversion childishly purposed to divert attention away from the real question, which is why the Plymouth Brethren can live so luxuriously, ie via the Act.

The PBCC always follow up with legal threats if such questioning becomes persistent.

Yes the repeal of the Stewards Foundation Act should be regarded as helping PBCC members to develop their Christianity rather than being an endeavour to harm them and should galvanise assistance to all cult members and their families, not just those from the PBCC. In this sense of the NSW Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act is both essential and urgent, the tenets of which are diabolically unique in the world, or at least the civilised one.

It is informative that under the Act the PBCC Chapels are held under “*normal*” NSW Trust law, so it follows that Trusts holding vested private property are abnormal Trusts. Altering, merging and acquiring of the abnormal Trusts under the Act, can be done routinely and as frequently as the PBCC Committee chooses. Real benefit of “ownership” is separated and untraceable and all that can be seen is the title holder on a piece of paper which is waved about by the PBCC as indication of the independence of the title holder businessman. Vesting occurs when the PBCC businessmen borrow money at which time documents are created that cannot be required by a court of law therefore secret to them. This renders his title holding also out of his reach and consequently meaningless. The Act thereby facilitates humungous international deals done by untraceable companies / Trusts with minimal fuss or interference from Government Authorities, let alone Courts which leaves journalists stumbling. Hopefully the ATO will delve into all of these matters.

Similar in nature to this; though not borne of the Stewards Foundation Act, is the fact that the PBCC Committee make best use of its infallible façade in “facilitating” control of the wills of all members, shall we suggest naïve, Assembly members.

The PBCC Assembly Organisation Committee can, by virtue of the Act, have branches anywhere in the world, administering property held “*outside NSW*”. To all intents the Act is internationally portable wherever acceptance can be arranged; a deal as valuable as being able to fly in and out of Canberra in a big aeroplane, probably with a little stretch of the imagination, as invisibly as a diplomat.

The Act allows the Assembly Organisation Committee a seal which, when stamped on a document, renders that document beyond the reach of the courts. This is all but unbelievable as it creates a parallel universe. Remember also that Hansard records that all this is done for a remarkable people. The whole deal appears to be inspired by Machiavelli’s book *The Prince*, which is a preamble for the power hungry to achieve power over others, fortunately for ordinary folk though, always at the expense of the users’ integrity! This ensures that greed, moth, rust and human failings will prevail in the end. So much for treasures laid up in the other place!

It is said that this book should only be read for learning how to nullify those bent on obtaining undue power over others. For good reason Shakespeare, the sympathetic author of *Romeo and Juliet*, children of forever-warring Princes and a man of the same times, responded “*such disease can only be overcome by Christian mercy and virtue.*”

Anyone who reads the Hansard record simultaneously with the Act, would be alerted to implications of a debate so brazen and an Act so vile. This may defy belief but should not be left at that! Debate of the bill preceding the passing of the Act was also, interestingly, a

confused affair, especially where Hon Rev Fed Nile was not sure whether the worthy people/businessmen it was said to be for were of the Open Brethren or the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church persuasion. However, when prompted in the Chamber, he settled on the Act being exclusive to the Open Brethren.

Australians, including the Open and Plymouth Brethren members, need to contemplate the implication of the power of the “*Man of God*”, president of the Assembly Committee since 2002 being from an Act of Parliament. Assembly Members of the PBCC apparently assume that his authority comes from the Almighty God which speaks for itself when his powers are by virtue of legislation passed in the NSW Parliament in 1989, the NSW Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act. This is an awful thing to contemplate given the innocents caught up in it.

The strictures placed on ex and current PBCC members can be traced back to the Act and never to the Bible. The strictures must be seen for what they are; they are the bulwarking of the Act itself caused probably by and done by the elite of the PBCC. The Act is the foundation of financial success way beyond the dreams of normal of Australian businessmen. If the Act were available to ordinary businesses, Australia’s taxation situation would be a shambles.

The PBCC Committee and the UBT should be caused to explain the financial planning behind the Rhapsody it plans for themselves here on earth, because NSW taxpayers are sick of facilitating the parallel universe that this private law creates. The transportability of the Act internationally entices other jurisdictions for this purpose. Three thousand companies from nineteen countries around the world including Australia would not be having their books done in NSW without there being good financial benefit to those 18 countries! This is the Act in action!

Coercive control of PBCC members must be a considerable business of the PBCC Assembly Committee by all reports from disgruntled ex PBCC Brethren. Ex members eventually realise that it was use of the Act by the PBCC that controlled their whole lives, financial and “spiritual” while they were inside the Assembly. Ex members must be assisted in their personal struggles to overcome the damage done to their families which means that the real source of that damage must be exposed.

The Act is clearly milked for enormous financial advantage by the UBT without regard to its devastating effect on members’ lives. This is dismissed because the UBT’s boss, the Man of God, apparently has some higher purpose. On the evidence he is an extraordinarily capable accountant able to garner best-advice-possible. He assuredly knows that the Act makes no “*specific*” provision for ex Members as does Justice NSW who acknowledged this. Whether or not any Assembly Member was involved in the onerous provisions of Act’s structuring may never be known though a study of the rules of coincidence may be of assistance.

How the PBCC punch through bona fide criticism on tax and charity matters not only intrigues outsiders but must be demystified for them. There needs to be a public deciphering of the “**riddle of the Act**” which is the purpose of this paper. **The excesses**

allowed by the Act can never be justified by the financial successes enabled by it, so it will be a worthwhile pursuit.

Should the ATO believe that the Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act is a “normal” law for taxation purposes, the investigation will not be complete. Much pressure beyond what is happening now will need to be put on the NSW Government with communication between the ATO and the NSW Government Agencies becoming a priority for that pressure. It should not be left to politicians, certainly not of the variety inclined to hide behind the cynical provisions of The NSW Church Legislation Policy, to sort this mess out.

The NSW Churches Legislation Policy allows that a Church for which Trust law has been created for 60% of its congregation need to vote for review of their Church Trust legislation if they want it to be reviewed.

This is **unworkable** because ex members of the politically connected Plymouth Brethren Christian Church Assembly Organisation are a fraction of the total number of Plymouth Brethren members among the total congregation including the Open Brethren. A fraction of a fraction in other words!

Ex-members can't vote for change in any case perversely for that purpose they are pre shunned and excommunicated so quickly that they become irrelevant. These are the realities of PBCC conduct under the Act.

Unless there is much publicity, PBCC members, by virtue of their servitude-inducing limited education and social interaction, will never put together where the controls over their person and their property originates, such is the complexity of the riddle of the Act. This complexity remains whether their property remains personal or is vested, or whether their membership is voluntary (or involuntary having been born into the situation) These are controls that are the very essence of servitude! Servitude is unlawful in the first instance. Under the Act, Assembly Organisation Committees have (disgracefully) lawful discretionary powers under their seal to create any document they please beyond the reach of the law. This is both a ludicrous and ridiculous thing to contemplate. Clearly this institutionalises abuse of Human Rights that are illegal under the Human Rights Commission Act and UN Conventions that Australia is party to.

Many ex-Brethren report that they have been coerced by their intimate partners to stay in the Church. The new NSW Coercive Control Act would be more useful to church going people who are not inclined to challenge their spouses in court if the Coercive Control Act allowed that any external antagonist, whether they be a cult or church leader with too much influence over one person in the intimate relationship; could be included in any action by the other, based on abuse of their Human Rights. The PBCC Committee including its branches, should be challenged on the using of one spouse against the other in a marriage, marriages supposedly held sacred in the church, on the basis that the spouse that the Man of God (the power wielder) influences becomes a proxy for nefarious purpose. This being a newish kind of business model less honest even than the oldest one, needs to be tested by

class actions in at least nineteen countries so that a strong message is sent to cults wherever they may operate.

The diabolical Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act without question needs repealing immediately as has been conveyed to the NSW Attorney General Michael Daley in December 2023 by the Right Honourable Sue Higginson MP MLC.

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**Lance Christie's Email to the Attorney General of NSW,
10th April 2024 and the Attorney General's Letter to Ray Carter,
18th November 2021**

From: lance christie <ljc3721@gmail.com>

Date: 10 April 2024 at 11:31:51 GMT+10

To: complaints@fac.s.nsw.gov.au

Subject: Complaint re provisions of NSW Stewards Foundation of Christian Brethren Act, 1989

Hello NSW Department of Communities and Justice

10th April 2024

With regard to your correspondence - IM21/25595 EAP21/13792

I fit the description of an ex-member of an Assembly of Christian Brethren congregation, the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church, for whom you have noted in the referenced correspondence that the Stewards' Foundation of Christian Brethren Act makes no "explicit" provision for ex members and is controlled by the PBCC Committee.

I represent 500 people in such a position, (names and addresses of whom around the world including Australia I can supply) where an Assembly of Christian Brethren "styled" after the Open Brethren Foundation as the Act allows. can have branches and control of property through unusual-in-the-world Trusts and a seal which when applied to a document renders that document out of reach.

Where the Act allows the Assembly Organisation Committee of the Plymouth Brethren Christian Church to have no "specific" responsibility in regard to ex-members ; inside Australia and outside as applies to myself, the concern I raise is that, demonstrably there was no provision for myself when I left the Assembly. At that time I had no knowledge that the PBCC could and in fact did not make proper provision for me. This was the very thing behind the devastation of my family life, my overall health and first the decimation and then elimination of my holdings in the substantial company I spent the prime of my life developing. I did this for the benefit of my seven children who, with their mother, separated

from me as per PBCC doctrine suited to the purpose of the Act.

What I am trying to convey is how the over-reach of the Act is ruinous to lives not only in Australia but is exacerbated by the fact that the NSW Church Legislation Policy can never be of help to an ex-Assembly Organisation PBCC, first because they become ex-members before realising the provisions in the Church Legislation Policy. Even when numbered among the members of the PBCC, their % of the total Open and PBCC Assembly Organisation is not sufficient to cause review of the Act.

Would Communities and Justice be prepared to receive a more substantive submission involving many of the people mentioned above on this issue to demonstrate this even more strongly?

I am currently in New South Wales from England visiting concerned friends so a timely response to this email would be very much appreciated

Kind Regards.

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Mr Ray Carter
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Dear Mr Carter

Thank you for your email to the Attorney General, the Hon Mark Speakman SC MP, received 22 September 2021 about the *Stewards' Foundation Christian Brethren Act 1989* (the Act). The Attorney General has asked the Department of Communities and Justice to respond on his behalf. I apologise for the delay in replying.

I note the concerns raised in your correspondence relating to ex-members of the Assembly of Christian Brethren congregation. As requested, I enclose a copy of your previous email on this subject.

As previously advised, the Act empowers the Stewards' Foundation of Christian Brethren to hold and deal with property as trustee for the members of the Assembly. The Act does not contain any explicit provisions in relation to past members of the Assembly.

Any requests for amendments to church property trust legislation enacted in NSW are subject to the NSW Church Legislation Policy.

The Policy sets out seven factors that the NSW Government must consider before enacting or amending any private property trust legislation in New South Wales. This includes the religious entity providing evidence to the Government of a broad consensus within the church community in support of the proposed legislation or amendments to existing legislation. For your reference, I enclose a copy of the Policy with this letter.

You may wish to seek independent professional legal advice in relation to the matters you have raised regarding the Act.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely
Briefings & Correspondence
Law Reform and Legal Services

18 November 2021

Encl. (2)

Supporting information can be found in the following links:

The UN Declaration of Human Rights, proclaimed in December 1948, can be read [here](#).

The Australian Human Rights Commission Act, 1986 Table of Provisions can be read [here](#).

An explanatory note about the Stewards' Foundation of Christian Brethren Act 1989 can be read [here](#).

The organisation Cult Information and Family Support (CIFS) published a report in 2006 titled 'The After-Effects of Cult Involvement as Experienced by Former Members: An Investigation'. It can be read [here](#).

Ray Carter's 2021 submission for the NSW Parliament for a review of the Stewards' Foundation of Christian Brethren Act, which also includes useful links, the Hansard record of the Second Reading of the Act in November 1989, and replies received by Ray in 2021 and 2022 can be seen [here](#).

A 2013 document published by the Attorney General's department on 'Church Legislation: NSW Government Policy' which sets out the matters the NSW Government will consider when determining requests from religious groups to enact or amend church property trust legislation, can be seen [here](#).

A paper entitled 'When is the Advancement of Religion Not a Charitable Purpose?' published by Pauline Ridge in 2020, can be read [here](#).

A paper from the ASPG Conference 2023 which examines how the NSW Legislative Council's Privileges Committee examines matters concerning alleged abuse of freedom of speech and debates, can be seen [here](#).

An extract from Hansard for 7th December 2023 which shows Sue Higginson's question to the Attorney General about the Act can be seen [here](#).

The Attorney General's response to Sue Higginson, dated 15th December 2023, can be seen [here](#).

A promotion for Michael Bachelard's book *Behind the Exclusive Brethren* can be seen [here](#).

Other useful web pages:

Brethren FAQ from the PBCC Website: <https://togetherwearebrethren.com.au/faq/>

Stewards Foundation Website: <https://stewardsfoundation.com.au/>

NSW: How Laws are Made and Changed: <https://education.parliament.nsw.gov.au/student-lesson/how-laws-are-madeand-changed/>

Australian Charities Act 2013: <https://www.legislation.gov.au/C2013A00100/asmade>