

Global Board Quarterly Report

Hillsong Church

September 2023



Contact: governance@hillsong.com



Message from the Chair

DR STEPHEN CROUCH

Dear Church,

I am delighted to present another quarterly report for this year. It is our commitment to communicate with you about the progress the board has made over the past few months. Our Global Board is fully focused on serving you through our vision:

A healthy church, changing lives through Christ

With our mission to build:

- ***Healthy church communities***
- ***Purpose-filled Jesus followers***
- ***Significant and sustainable social impact***

Hillsong Conference 2023 was a great time for joy, refreshing, and vision for those who were able to attend.

The Global Nominations Committee [GNC] have put forward two great candidates to be board members of our Global Board. I am pleased to welcome Dr Ana Loback (Hillsong London) to our board effective from October. A brief biography for Ana is on page 9. I am confident that she will make a great contribution to our church. Having served in our church for many years, Ana will bring key skills to our board table. The second candidate is working through our onboarding process, we are likely to announce her in our next report.

During the past three months, Pastors Phil and Lucinda have made significant progress in creating a new Key Support Team in Australia, whilst also visiting many of our global churches. This report shares their encouraging updates on leadership and organisational developments, all aligned with our global governance objectives.

The Pastor Credentialling team has been diligently refining pathways for pastors, ensuring both integrity and compatibility, to pastor our local campuses around the globe, and build a healthy church with trust and honesty.

I would like to highlight Hillsong's Safe Church office. This team passionately serves you and our church with a focus of protecting children, vulnerable people, and victims of sexual abuse. Jesus said, 'Let the children come to me, Don't stop them' (Matt 19:14). Whether dropping your children off at children's ministry or youth group activities, or through our pastoral care, college, and volunteer training, they actively pursue a safer church environment.

Earlier this year, Hillsong College became the subject of significant media scrutiny. The media attention (including social media) was relentless and often malicious. As a result, the Australian Skills Quality Authority [ASQA], commenced an audit into Hillsong College and its performance. After months of investigation, ASQA found a 'no non-compliance' with our practices or the law. I am grateful to our outstanding team of academics and teachers at our college who have worked tirelessly through this process whilst serving our students diligently.

As we complete various reviews, we will update you. We are still working through a review from the Australian Charities and Not For Profit Commission which commenced when Ps Brian Houston resigned in March 2022. We continue to co-operate with this review, which we expect will continue into the first half of 2024.

In August, Pastor Brian Houston was found not guilty of concealing a serious indictable offence. In his judgement, the magistrate found at the time between 1999 and 2004, Brian "was speaking of the issue publicly to his congregation, speaking to those watching the television broadcasts of these around the world, and speaking to journalists, is that he wanted people to know about it. That is the very opposite of a cover up".

In these transformative times, sadly our church has experienced ridicule, contempt, and some hatred because of our religious belief. In Australia, the NSW Government has just banned religious vilification. This law is yet to be changed nationally. Religious freedom, as promised by our national government, remains important and necessary.

On behalf of our board, we continue to stand united in our mission and vision, looking toward the future with hope and resolve.

May God's blessing saturate you, your family, and our church.

Dr Stephen Crouch
Chair



Summary of progress

BOARD RENEWAL

We are pleased to announce that Dr Ana Loback (Hillsong London) has been appointed as a director of the Global Board. A second candidate has been nominated by the GNC, her name will be released after the onboarding process has been completed. This follows the announcements made in the previously published [Global Board Report](#) in May this year, that Mário Rui Boto (Hillsong Portugal) and Andreas Nielsen (Hillsong Sweden) had been appointed, which now expands the board to eight members.

The inclusion of Mário and Andreas ensures we are focused on prioritising the needs of our churches as they represent our locations around the globe. These two board positions are rotated on a two-yearly cycle, ensuring that our global churches will have a voice at the board over time.

GLOBAL GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Since our recent Global Board update, under the leadership of Tolu Badders, Board Director and new Global COO (refer to page 5), the global governance framework development has commenced. The framework aims to provide support to all our local churches and assist in achieving our mission of building a healthier church. We are engaging global stakeholders, while respecting legalities and church expansion stages. Despite complexities, our dedication to a strong framework persists. More updates to come as this initiative advances.

PASTOR'S CREDENTIALING TEAM

A dedicated working team, established last year, have reviewed and redefined the pathway for pastors. Covering aspiring pastors to seasoned leaders, this approach ensures compatibility between roles and development. The group is diligently addressing policy, system, and resource dimensions for successful global implementation, emphasising integrity and trust in shepherding our congregations. (refer to page 6).

COMMUNICATION TIMELINE

This past year as a church we have gone through a season of significant transition as we began to take steps towards our mission-focused future. We made a commitment to provide clear and transparent communication to our church. In this report, we have provided a timeline from July 2022 to June 2023 of all the key updates shared (refer to page 10).

HILLSONG COLLEGE

In March 2023, the college received advice from the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) informing it of an impending ad hoc audit. ASQA is the federal regulator for the vocational education and training sector. It is important to note that the college typically undergoes regular audits once every five years as part of the standard renewal process for its registration. However, ASQA has the authority to conduct unscheduled audits if they deem it necessary.

The audit initiated was in response to concerns raised in the media and a few complaints that ASQA had received. During the audit process, the college team diligently provided substantial amounts of information and willingly participated in extensive interviews. These efforts were undertaken to demonstrate the quality of the college's training and to showcase compliance with all the regulations governing registered vocational colleges.

ASQA auditors concluded that the college exhibited full compliance in all areas they investigated. Furthermore, they found no outstanding complaints or unresolved matters. ASQA has issued a statement which can be found beside for reference:

“In March 2023, ASQA commenced a performance assessment (audit) of Hillsong College’s performance and compliance against the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015.

ASQA sampled the training products delivered by Hillsong College’s scope of registration, reviewed key areas of their practice related to training and assessment strategies, student support and progression monitoring, marketing and enrolment practices, third party monitoring and complaint handling processes. ASQA considered a range of evidence including information provided by students in surveys and interviews and documentation, and other existing information and records held by ASQA including intelligence and complaints.

ASQA did not make any findings of non-compliance against the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 and Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 in relating to this performance assessment and had notified Hillsong College of the outcome.”

As part of the audit’s outcome, the auditors offered constructive feedback on areas where the college could further enhance its operations. The college welcomes and values such feedback, as it aligns with the institution’s commitment to continuous improvement. For those interested, the audit report can be accessed through the provided [link](#).



Important Matters

SAFE PROGRAM AUSTRALIA

In 2001, Hillsong Church launched a ministry for adult survivors of sexual abuse. We called this ministry SAFE (Sexual Abuse Freedom and Education). The program sought to bring comfort and access to resources to those who had suffered from childhood sexual abuse. Guided by qualified professionals from our church community, this program started with acknowledging the deep distress and hurt abuse survivors experience. The program since progressed into a referral process through pastoral care to professional care.

SAFE CHURCH AUSTRALIA

Hillsong's Safe Church Australia was established in 2016 to better enable our growing church to protect vulnerable people in our communities.

Hillsong has adopted a strategic approach termed 'situational prevention'. This approach is favoured by child safety regulators globally as it promotes safe environments rather than focusing on safe individuals. It is achieved through the purposeful design of environments in ways that reduce problematic behaviour by any person in that environment. The Hillsong Church Australia outworks its strategic approach to child safety through Safe Church Australia. Details of their support have been made available on our website, see the link [here](#).

The key child safety responsibilities of Safe Church Australia are to:

- Oversee the church's working with children screening process for all pastors, and those staff and volunteers required to work with children and young people.
- Actively engage with the church's location and department managers to raise child safety awareness, providing advisory support.
- Ensure that our policies, processes, and practices are up to date and aligned with regulatory requirements.
- Receive and respond to complaints or concerns relating to the safety and well-being of children and young people.
- Facilitate mandatory reporting requirements to the relevant child protection agencies.

BRIAN HOUSTON FOUND NOT GUILTY

On 17 August 2023, our founding pastor Brian Houston was found 'Not Guilty' of an offence relating to failing to report a serious matter to the police without reasonable excuse.

"I have found that [Brian Houston] knew, or believed on reasonable grounds, that [the victim] did not want the matter reported to the police. He, therefore, had a reasonable excuse for not bringing the information he had concerning Frank Houston's crimes to the attention of the police."

"There are sound policy reasons why respecting the wishes of a victim of sexual abuse not to go to the police is not a criminal act. Firstly, victims of sexual abuse ought to feel safe to confide in others without being concerned that they are exposing those others to prosecution for a criminal offence. Secondly, given the highly personal and often devastating impact that sexual abuse and in particular child sexual abuse has upon the victims of those crimes, the decision to report or not report such matters to the police ought to rest with the victim. Potential for significant psychological harm exists if victims of sexual abuse or child sexual abuse do not have agency and autonomy over when and to whom they would make a disclosure."

"[In 1999, Brian Houston] was aware that the allegation was about 30 years old and that [the victim], now a mature adult of some 37 years, had not in that time reported the matter. This fact alone would have strongly suggested to [Brian Houston] that [the victim] did not want a police investigation."

[Between 1999 and 2004, Brian Houston whilst maintaining the victim's anonymity] "was speaking of the issue publicly to his congregation, speaking to those watching the television broadcasts of these sermons around the world, and speaking to journalists is that he wanted people to know about it. That is the very opposite of a cover up".

[edited for context]

Hillsong Church acknowledges the decision of the court. Our prayer is that those impacted deeply and irrevocably by the actions of Frank Houston will find peace and healing, and our former senior pastor Brian Houston and his family can look to the future and continue to fulfil God's purpose for their lives. We also acknowledge the impact that the criminal proceeding has had on those involved, and on our community. We will continue our commitment to ensuring that Hillsong Church is a safe place, particularly for vulnerable people including children.

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Around the globe there are different positions on freedom of religion.

The Australian Constitution provides that no law can be imposed, prohibiting the free exercise of any religion [s.116]. In the United States, the First Amendment to the Constitution provides "no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof". In Europe, the state church is embedded in the law, while other churches like Pentecostals are not.

Despite this, our church has experienced ridicule, contempt, and some hatred in part because of our religious belief and its outworking. Anti-discrimination laws around the globe typically protect groups from contempt, ridicule and hatred (referred to as vilification). In Australia, this law did not apply to religious vilification.

Last month in Australia, the NSW Government banned religious vilification by amending the anti-discrimination law. It is now unlawful to, by a public act, insight hatred toward, serious contempt for, or severe ridicule of a person or group of persons, because of their religious belief, affiliation, or activity.

Despite being promised, this law is yet to be changed nationally in Australia. This change remains important and necessary.





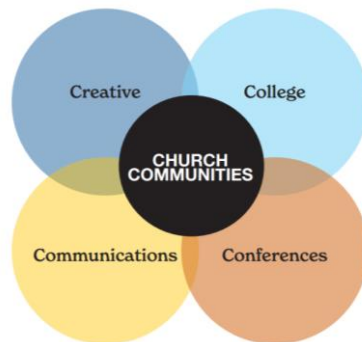
Message from the Global Senior Pastors PHIL & LUCINDA DOOLEY

Dear Church,

After the inspiring Hillsong Conference in Sydney, it brought us immense joy to journey to various corners of our global church locations. These visits, where we had the honour of connecting with both our dedicated staff and church family members, have deeply enriched our spirits and strengthened our faith.

Looking back at our time in Cape Town and the transformative staff retreat, we found ourselves humbled by the undeniable presence of the Holy Spirit. Our travels took us to Germany, where we were privileged to share across all locations and witness the remarkable progress guided by Freimut & Joanna Haverkamp. Continuing our journey, we arrived at Hillsong Sweden, under the leadership of Andreas & Lina Nielsen. Here, we were not only privileged to share our messages, but also blessed to receive encouraging prayers from their dedicated team of staff. Our trip concluded in Denmark, joining Thomas & Kat Hansen and their congregation to celebrate a momentous 10th anniversary. These moments stand as a powerful reminder of the faith and unity that spans our global church family.

As we rally around our shared vision and mission, your unwavering dedication and faithfulness as a church community have consistently inspired us. Our commitment to better serve and support our church communities led us to introduce a new Global Structure in March, designed to serve all our global churches, transcending geographical boundaries. This structure prioritises five key areas: church, creative, college, communications, and conferences.



As we focus our attention on strengthening our global structure, we are pleased to announce that Tolu Badders will be stepping into a new role as our Global Chief Operating Officer. Tolu, who has served as the Chief Operating Officer of Hillsong East Coast, has also shown her exceptional leadership as an Executive Pastor and leader of the New York Campus. Under Tolu's capable guidance, the development of our global framework holds immense strategic significance for our mission.

Furthermore, we are delighted to welcome Jonathon "JD" Douglass to our team as Creative Pastor, serving both the Global and Australia regions. With years of dedicated service, JD's deep connection to the Hillsong United Worship Team and experience as a Campus Pastor for Sydney City make him an invaluable addition. We are excited that JD's creative vision aligns well with our mission. As we look forward, we are actively considering candidates for the role of lead pastor for South Africa.



Tolu Badders
Global Chief Operating Officer



Jonathon "JD" Douglass
Global Creative Pastor

Finally, in the last three months following a thorough process of nominations, applications, and interviews, we have now established our new [Australia Key Support Team](#). As we move forward, we will keep you updated with any announcements and news.

May God continue to bless our church, our staff, our team of volunteers, and each one of you.

**Thank you
Phil & Lucinda**



Pastor Credentialing Team Progress Update

Dear Church,

As a representative member of the Hillsong Church Pastor Credentialing Team, I am pleased to update you on our progress. Last year, a dedicated four-member working team (see adjacent biographies) comprehensively reviewed Hillsong's existing credentialing process considering the five review recommendations (details on the next page).

We've completed the initial step, which was to *1. Reframe the process away from being a discipline and restoration for pastors into an inquiry into the fitness of a pastor*, by ensuring they meet the competence and character that warrant the confidence of our congregations and wider public.

The third step is also completed, which was for *3. Complaints about the Global Senior Pastor to be outsourced to an external, independent investigator*.

We have started progress on step five which is to *5. Develop a program of providing ongoing accountability and support for credentialed pastors*. Our working team have consulted with various experts and other denominations, in an effort to craft a robust credentialing pathway. This pathway integrates candidate evaluation with personalised mentoring and developmental initiatives, ensuring an alignment between their growth trajectory and their roles and responsibilities in ministry. This approach encompasses pastors at various stages, from those embarking on their journey through to seasoned leaders, including the role of Global Senior Pastor.

There are numerous policy, system, resource, and expertise dimensions that require careful consideration to ensure a new process can be successfully and consistently implemented across Australia and potentially, globally. With lead pastors Mário and Andreas, joining our Global Senior Pastor Phil, on the Global Board, offers a valuable opportunity for their contributions as the program advances.

We are confident in developing a credentialing program that will release and support high-quality and gifted pastors to shepherd and serve our people with integrity, safety, and trust.



Duncan Corby

Pastor Credentialing Team Members



DUNCAN CORBY

General Manager of Hillsong College

Duncan serves as the General Manager and Senior Lecturer at Hillsong College. A member of Hillsong Church for 40 years. He has contributed as a pastor for 28 years in various roles including Campus Principal and Academic Dean, as well as being a long-standing member of the College's leadership team. He is a graduate of the College's ministry training program and holds a Bachelor of Science and a Masters of Theology. He is currently enrolled in the Doctor of Philosophy program with Alphacrucis. He has long experience in teaching bible, leadership and apologetics, as well as preaching and teaching across the life of church.



ROBERT FERGUSSON

Teaching Pastor & Spiritual Advisory Member

Originally from the UK, Robert has been in ministry for over 40 years and one of the key team on staff at Hillsong Church for over 30 years. He is passionate about imparting practical life principles from the Bible and his primary responsibilities involve pastoral oversight and preaching and teaching. Robert is also a valued member of the Spiritual Advisory Team.



DONNA CROUCH

Executive Pastor & National Community Engagement

Donna has been part of Hillsong for 40 years, and on staff for over 38 years. In this time, she led youth, creative ministries, Hills campus, and CityCare, through significant periods of growth and impact. As a National Executive and director (2009-2019) for Australian Christian Churches, she gained significant experience into the credentialing and supervision of ministers. Currently Donna is studying a Doctor of Ministry (Alphacrucis University College) and represents Hillsong nationally in both government, not-for-profit and the interfaith sectors.



DARREN KITTO

Head of Campus Support Pastor

Since 1996, Darren has pastorally served at Hillsong Church. Joining in 1991, he studied at Hillsong College. In his 27 years of ministry, Darren held diverse pastoral and leadership roles. He impacted the global vision, overseeing Hillsong Aid, Hillsong Television, Hillsong Channel, and Hillsong Leadership Network. Presently, as one of the Australian Head of Campus Support Pastors, he is committed to people's spiritual growth and empowerment.



Global Board Progress Report

- In progress
- Action completed
- To be commenced
- Progress delayed

Global Board Review

1. Complete a clear transition of the Global Senior Pastor
2. Update the board appointment and renewal process
3. Embed a global governance framework and accountabilities
4. Oversee the development of a new strategic plan with clear goals and priorities
5. Place a greater focus on trust, culture, and health within our church, beginning with the board.

Responsibility	Progression
Global Board	●
Global Board & GNC	●
Global Board	●
Global Board	●
Global Board	●

Pastor Credentialing Process

1. Reframe the process away from being a discipline and restoration for pastors to being an inquiry into the fitness of a pastor
2. Form a new body within church to handle complaints relating to a credentialed pastor
3. Complaints about the Global Senior Pastor be outsourced to an external, independent investigator
4. Form a single credentialing body and provide psychological assessment for future candidates for ministry
5. Develop a program of providing ongoing accountability and support for credentialed pastors.

Responsibility	Progression
Global Board	●
Global Board	●
Global Board	●
Global Board	●
Global Board	●





Message from the Global Nominations Committee Chair

RUSSELL DACRE

Dear Church,

On behalf of the Global Nominations Committee (GNC), I am pleased to announce an additional appointment to the Global Board. This follows the appointment of Lead Pastor's Mário Rui Boto (Hillsong Portugal) and Andreas Nielsen (Hillsong Sweden) in May.

The new board member is Dr Ana Loback, who is based in our church in London, UK. She will join our roster of Global Board members, as listed on the following page. I am also pleased to announce that the Board have invited a further female nominee to join, this second candidate is working through our onboarding process, we are likely to announce her in our next report. These appointments continue to build on our progress towards our goal of five appointments to the board in 2023. Whilst our progress has been slower than planned (initial goal of the end of May 2023), I am pleased with the diligence undertaken by the committee and the thorough processes being followed.

Our goal remains to create enough nominations for a fifth appointment in 2023, and to ensure that all new directors are comprehensively inducted into their new roles. Our guiding principles remain to structure the Global Board composition with a diversity to reflect the global nature of our church, to have a maximum of 30% executive members and a minimum of 40% female membership. Whilst it has taken us longer to achieve, I am pleased with the progress being made. I look forward to reporting back in due course and seeing the global governance continuing to develop and improve. Please join me in welcoming Ana to the board.

With every blessing,

Russell Dacre
Chairperson, Global Nominations
Committee (GNC)



Global Board and New Director Appointment



Tolu Badders
B.S, B.A, M.A, M.S



Phil Dooley
Global
Senior Pastor
B.Bus



Dr Stephen Crouch
GAICD, FCA, B.Bus,
MEc, DBA
Chair



Russell Dacre
MBE, MBA
Deputy Chair



Siboniso Nxumalo
BCom, MBA



Mário Rui Boto
AdvDip



Andreas Nielsen



Dr Ana Loback
CBP, MBPsS, MSc, MRes, DrOP

CHURCH & SPIRITUAL LEADERSHIP

Over the course of 17 years at Hillsong London, Ana has contributed her heart and talents to the church community, serving on the worship team, leading connect groups, and offering support and coaching to church leadership.

CAREER & INDUSTRY

Ana Loback is a registered occupational psychologist, senior executive coach and global speaker with a focus on leadership. Ana holds qualifications from Harvard Business School, the University of London, and the University of East London, spanning Organisational Psychology, Sustainable Business Strategies, Executive Leadership, Communication, Executive Coaching, Positive Psychology, and Behavioural Science.

With a 15-year history in leadership and organisational development consulting across diverse global settings, she possesses extensive experience in coaching and advising C-suite executives and leadership teams from renowned global entities. Ana's expertise lies in helping leaders and teams unlock purpose and meaning, build exceptional work cultures and develop people.

BOARD AND GOVERNANCE EXPERIENCE

Ana served as a member of the UEL supervisory board for the MSc program, but she concluded her tenure earlier this year.

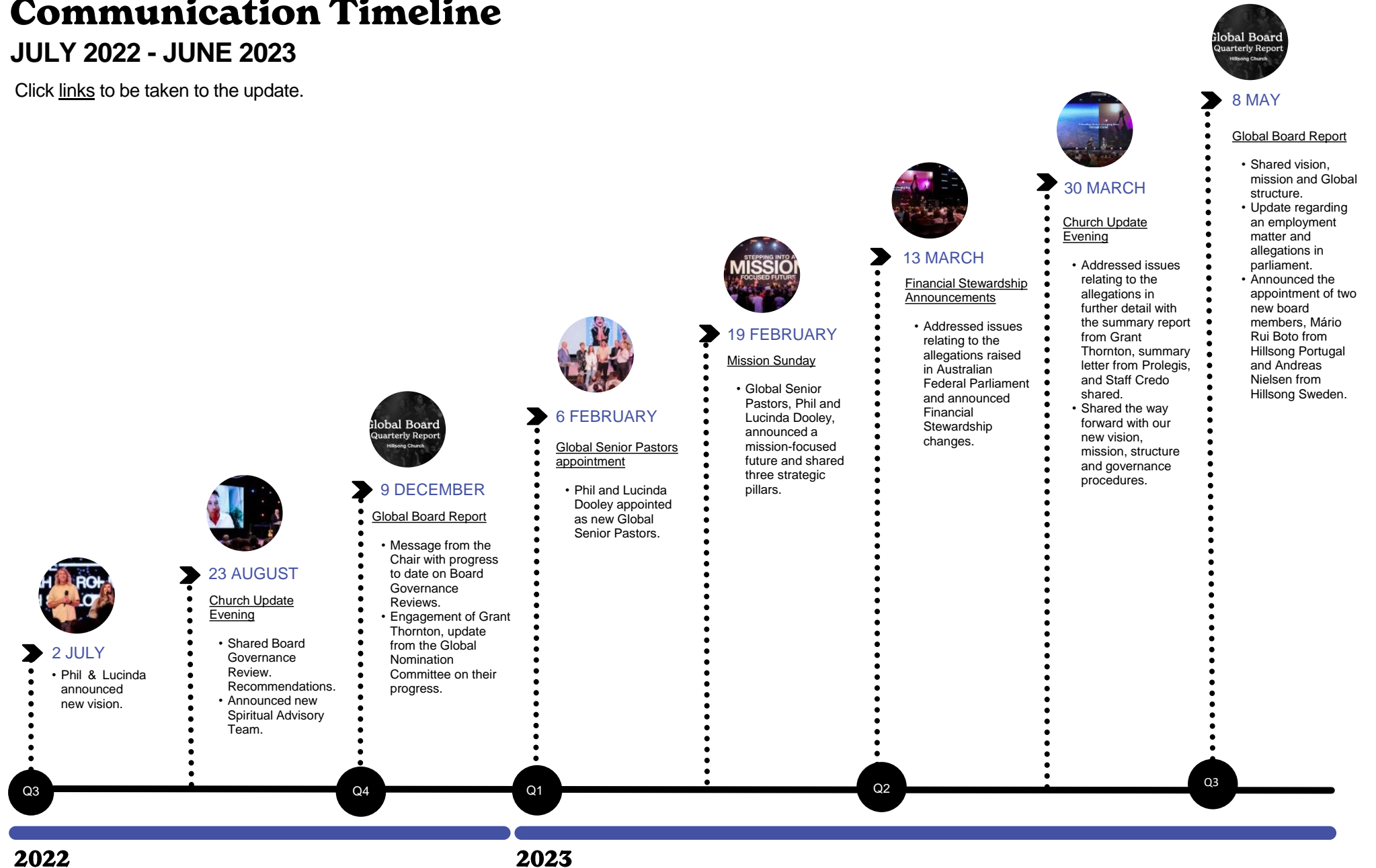
Please note that the profiles of our Global Board Directors are now available for viewing on the Hillsong Website, click link [here](#).



Communication Timeline

JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

Click [links](#) to be taken to the update.



2022

2023



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