

Hillsong Splits From Assemblies of God in Australia to Become Its Own Denomination

Hillsong Church announced on Wednesday that it has formed its own denomination.

“It has become clear to us that we need to be able to credential our own pastors and restructure our church in a way that enables us to give due diligence to governance, risk, church health, safe church and many other policies that are crucial to the future progress of Hillsong, globally,” senior pastor Brian Houston says in a letter. “For this reason, we are now registered by the Australian Department of Births, Deaths and Marriages, as a recognised denomination with the ability to credential pastors in our own right.”

Until now, Hillsong was part of the Australian Christian Churches, which was previously called Assemblies of God in Australia.

Houston was elected the national president of the Assemblies of God in Australia in May 1997, and under his leadership, the movement continued to grow and expand its influence. The organization changed to ACC in 2007.

“I love the ACC and have been a part of this denomination since I was a five-year-old in New Zealand, and have held a credential in Australia with the AOG/ACC for virtually forty years,” Houston writes. “I also served as NSW State President for six years, and National President for twelve. It is a movement I have devoted many years of my adult life to both serving and leading. I believe wholeheartedly that Pastor Wayne Alcorn is doing a wonderful job in leading the movement,

and I want to make it clear that we have no grief or dispute at all with the ACC. Instead, this decision comes after almost two years of prayerful discussion within both our global and Australian church boards.”

Alcorn is the ACC national president.

“Despite the changing shape of the relationship between Hillsong and ACC, both parties are committed to working together towards a new effective partnership,” Alcorn says. “Discussions to that end are ongoing. I encourage you to be in prayer as ACC and Hillsong finalise discussions; the goal being that God’s Kingdom will only increase during this change.”

Houston says the move allows Hillsong to grow internationally.

“This recognition alleviates the issues that would occur if, for example, a concern arises that affects the credential of a Hillsong Church youth pastor in one of our campuses in Europe. The Australian ACC cannot be expected to have adequate information to address this issue or even know who the person is, let alone the resources to appropriately deal with the issue on a personal or pastoral level,” Houston says.

“I am very grateful to the ACC National Executive who have been both gracious and proactive in working with our church board and drafting a potential structure to redefine our relationship moving forward. Obviously, this would be subject to proper process. The goal is that we could become an associate church, and that we would continue to lean into the ACC and support, at some level, initiatives such as conferences, missions, and Alphacrucis; while foregoing voting and other rights associated with full member churches and ordained ACC pastors,” Houston says.

According to the Hillsong fact sheet, the church has more than 130,000 global attendees in the following locations:

- Australia: 89 services per weekend in 30 locations across New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania, Northern Territory, Western Australia and Bali, Indonesia
- Argentina: Buenos Aires
- Brazil: São Paulo
- Canada: Two locations in Toronto and Ottawa
- Denmark: Copenhagen
- France: Four locations across Paris, Lyon and Marseille
- Germany: Four locations in Konstanz, Düsseldorf, Munich and Berlin
- Israel: Tel Aviv
- Italy: Milan
- Netherlands: Two locations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam
- Norway: Nine locations in Oslo, Stavanger, Sandnes, Drammen, Tønsberg, Egersund, Karmøy, Kristiansand and Trondheim
- Portugal: Two main locations in Lisbon and Porto, with five other locations across the country
- Russia: Moscow
- South Africa: Nine locations across Cape Town, Pretoria and Johannesburg
- Spain: Two locations in Barcelona and Madrid
- Sweden: Four locations in and around Stockholm and Malmö
- Switzerland: Two locations in Zurich and Geneva
- Ukraine: Two locations in Kiev
- United Kingdom: 10 locations.
- United States: New York City, New Jersey, Boston, Connecticut, Los Angeles, Orange County, San Francisco and three locations in and around Phoenix.