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HOPE
SYNOD 36



Report from

Bremer Brisbane Presbytery



Report

Context

The Presbytery's function is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church in the area for which it is responsible. It will, in particular, exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another's faith, bear one another's burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus.

The Bremer Brisbane Presbytery (BBP) area extends from Toowong, south through Inala, Forest Lake to Boonah; north-west to Gatton and traces its way back along the rim of Wivenhoe and Karana Downs back toward Toowong. It includes Ipswich and its surrounds. (The Ipswich area and its surrounds are estimated to double in size in the next 30 years with Ripley - newer development area – to grow to 150,000 people by 2030)

The Presbytery is the home of many important public and private facilities within the state. Located within Bremer Brisbane are the Wesley, Ipswich and St Andrews Ipswich hospitals, the police academy at Darra, the Amberley RAAF base and seven correctional facilities. Additionally, there are five residential colleges in the University district

There are 29 congregations and faith communities at the time of writing this report, meeting in 33 locations.

Tell us what your key priorities since the last Synod have been.

In November of 2020, the Sustainability and Strategic locations adopted paper in 2019 (<https://bremerbrisbane.org.au/wp-content/uploads/8-Sustainability-and-Strategic-Locations.pdf>), the presbytery created the Mission Resourcing Committee (MRC). The primary responsibilities of the MRC can be summarised as follows:

- Ensuring the Presbytery and Congregations are missional and sustainable.
- Ensuring the Presbytery is locating missional opportunities in strategic areas.
- Ensuring appropriate resourcing for mission are available.
- Mission planning and life and witness consultations.
- Overseeing financial resources.
- Overseeing matters of property

In February 2021, the Presbytery described its purpose as engaging, equipping and encouraging healthy Christian leaders and communities. In November 2021, the Presbytery approved the first steps for Bremer Brisbane Presbytery's missional plan. These include:

- Church Planting: identifying and resourcing, with up to 3 plants in the next five years.
- Presbytery Relations Committee is working afresh on engaging, equipping and encouraging healthy ministry agents and congregations.
- Financial Matters: business planning, including utilising resources (property, people, MDF) to ensure BBP can fulfil its purpose and missional plan.
- Staffing: ensuring human resources are appropriately gathered and managed.

Shared Life, Flourishing Communities

In what ways have you been approaching the challenge of making disciples of Jesus:

- The primary expression of disciple-making is found within the congregational life of the Presbytery. When engaging with Church Councils (and in the consultation process), the Presbytery has encouraged several programs to assist congregations.
- In conjunction with Morton Rivers Presbytery (MRP), BBP holds a retreat for Ministry Agents.
- BBP is blessed to have YAYA (Youth and Young Adults), who oversee activities to help congregations and build community and disciples across the Presbytery. YAYA engage in Encounter (Youth Group gatherings), Easter Madness (led by MRP and supported financially and with human resources by BBP), Young Adult gatherings, and connections with congregational holiday programs.

In what ways have you been drawn into Transforming your Community:

- Many congregations are involved in genuine community engagement, often through ministries such as op shops and cafes. These act as a doorway to relationships.
- The Ripley church plant will begin with a model that directly meets the need of the community.
- Through ongoing connection with Aunty Jean and the Christmas gathering, strongly led by Indooroopilly UC.

In what ways have you been sought to reshape your part of the Synod, to be Fit for Purpose and wise stewards of all that God has given you:

- The establishment of MRC and its work.
- Compliance and information flow between the Synod, Presbyteries and Congregations are complex. Engagement with the Synod office with this and implementing a new database system in the Presbytery will help address this. Frustration with systems around SMC and Educate are being worked through.
- As per our Sustainability and Strategic locations paper, properties are being evaluated for best use, with some properties sold and others looking to be repurposed.
- As per our missional plan, financial planning has begun to ensure ongoing sustainability.

In what ways have you sought to collaborate with others across the Uniting Church as an expression of our commitment to doing Life Together:

- Through the Presbytery Minister cohort, numerous programs, ministry learnings and resources are shared across the Presbyteries. (Special acknowledgement to MRP for healthy ministry resources)
- The Combined Presbytery Mission Pool helps support financially ministry throughout regional Queensland. BBP is a net giver in this.
- BBP has benefited from the work of Uniting Care and Wesley Mission in many of the ministries in the geographical region. While we are yet to obtain a connect 100 connection and grant, the investment in connection from UCQ is outstanding.

- The Presbytery/Synod Interface continues to work towards beneficial outcomes.

Threats and opportunities as we step into the future together

STRENGTHS

- Several growing congregations are willing to resource the Presbytery.
- Willingness to church plant.
- Since Covid-19, a renewed collegiality and sharing of resources.

OPPORTUNITIES

- Expanding Communities (e.g., Ripley).
- Sustainability and Strategic Locations work.
- Entrepreneurial enterprises.
- Multicultural/CALD Ministry.

WEAKNESSES

- UC Ministry Agents trained in Church Planting/Regeneration.
- Communication across the different councils of the church.

THREATS

- A misunderstanding of the responsibilities of the councils of the church and talk of changing structure by Assembly.
- An ongoing need for resource compliance with limited staffing at both Presbytery and Congregational levels.
- Traditionalism trumping mission.

Proposals to the 36th Synod

It is proposed that the 36th Synod receive this report.

Contact for report questions

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