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HOPE
SYNOD 36



Report from

**Presbytery of Central
Queensland**



Report

Context

Give us a description of your part of the church. Who are you and what are you called to do?

The Presbytery of Central Queensland extends from Proserpine in the north, to Tannum Sands in the south. From Yeppoon in the east to Longreach in the west.

We pay our respects to their Elders and Leaders of the lands on which we meet, past, present and emerging, and pray for the future of their communities. May we walk gently and respectfully on this Land.

The Presbytery contains a diverse range of community contexts. We have seaside communities that have a mixture of retirees and sea-change families and itinerants. We have mining towns mixed with cattle/farming families.

However, in the face of drought, natural disaster, Pandemic, shrinking rural/remote communities and lack of infrastructure, our people have remained faithful to worship, witness and service. We have small and medium communities spread across vast distances, yet though distance may separate us, the Presbytery is united in Discipling, Transforming and making fit for purpose our communities in Christ.

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

Discerning a shared vision for mission: As a Presbytery we have been discerning together a shared vision for mission within our Presbytery. We have been exploring how, as the body of Christ in different contexts, we put Discipleship as our primary goal. This has meant engaging the wider resources of the church to help in education and development of our priorities.

Commitment to supporting congregations has been a significant focus for the Presbytery as congregations have emerged from Covid lockdowns to a new reality of being. This new way of being was supported by the Presbytery with our Project Connect. We are working with congregations to find their feet again and reconnect physically and maintain connection digitally. We have been supporting congregations in exploring new expressions of ministry beyond the traditional understanding. This has led to congregations forming new partnerships and beginning new ministry initiatives.

Developing Exciting Partnerships with Uniting Care Queensland. Part our discernment as a Presbytery focussed around greater connection with community and the groups that support them. Through UCQ we have started one Connect 100 project and are exploring another 3 projects. Once again, this priority leads us to a shared vision for mission in our community and unity is seeing discipleship, transforming communities and making our Presbytery fit for purpose.

Shared Life, Flourishing Communities

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

The discerned focus of the Presbytery is making Disciples. During Covid, online communities have been developed. These online communities have connected city to bush and those on remote properties to worshipping communities. This has evolved into online Alpha courses, bible studies and small groups.

The Presbytery has made the commitment that every Presbytery meeting will include time spent focusing on evangelism and discipleship. This has led to a networking of resources across the Presbytery.

The Presbytery sees our presence in remote communities like Longreach is of strategic importance. The Presbytery sees the ministry in these areas as a living hope and able to develop disciples in these communities.

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

The Presbytery is working in partnership with Uniting Care Queensland in establishing Connect-100 ministries. Our Rural Mission Minister project is helping support rural and remote communities with resources, connection with Presbytery and connecting with local Uniting Care Queensland services. This offers support to staff and congregations in what can be very isolated circumstances. We are currently exploring another 3 partnerships that will support the shared vision of caring for our community.

The Presbytery has been supporting congregations as they seek to understand their transformative place in their unique context. Through consultation and accessing resources from Trinity College and the wider church, new expressions of ministry are being undertaken in congregations.

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

After our discernment process as a Presbytery, we have been evaluating if our resources across the Presbytery are being used in the most efficient way. This has led to cooperation between congregations, amalgamations and sale of property.

With the assistance of Trinity College, we have been undertaking short courses with regards to Church Councils and Uniting Church Governance. As people move in and out of positions, this helps new people understand how we can be wise stewards of what God has given us.

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

As mentioned in the last two sections, our partnership with Uniting Care Queensland has brought new life and closer relationships in many communities throughout Central Queensland. This has also been strengthened by our close relationship with Associate Director of Mission Rev. Dr Adam McIntosh.

Through Presbytery Synod Interface and Presbytery Minister gatherings there has been a greater sense of connectedness with our brothers and sisters in the other Presbyteries. The sharing of resources and support has seen relationships strengthen helping in doing life together.

It has been an uplifting and connecting experience as we have co-located our presbytery offices in the Uniting Care building in North Rockhampton. We appreciate the new opportunities and resource that we have been privileged to utilise. This can only lead to closer and strengthened relationships within this space.

Threats and opportunities as we step into the future together

The Presbytery lives with the reality of shrinking remote and rural communities both in population and services. This creates a real challenge in filling essential roles within congregations and Presbytery. Further compliance requirements by Government have placed greater pressure on already over-committed volunteers. Even though technology has helped bring us together digitally, distance still poses many challenges in resourcing, caring and supporting congregations. Infrastructure for NBN, mobile service and power at times means communities are cut off and have difficulty accessing required resources.

With all this being said, we as a Presbytery have a choice to make, wallow in sorrow or rejoice in the hope of Jesus Christ and the message of joy we have to share in our communities. This is the opportunity that the Presbytery of Central Queensland is running with into the future. The opportunity to be a discipling, transforming and fit for purpose community of Christ. We are not alone in this endeavour as we work closely with our Anglican and Catholic brothers and sisters in Christ, to worship, witness and serve the communities of Central Queensland.

Proposals to the 36th Synod

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

Contact for report questions

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