

# Regional Partnership: Riverina Presbytery Newsletter

February 2024



*The Regional Partnership is the Committee charged with oversight and responsibilities of the Riverina. We meet monthly and this Newsletter is a summary of the meeting held on **29 February 2024**.*

*At each Regional Partnership meeting we begin our conversation with discussion around theology, the Church and then in prayer together. The Regional Partnership, as part of the practice of Saltbush, grounds our work and conversation within our faith rather than our faith within our work.*

## Regional Partnership Chairperson's Report

Greetings to you all and my sincere apologies for how late this is. I have been unwell which has caused the delay. The year has started very briskly for everyone, and there has been a lot of activity looking at how we can resource and support our 12 Presbyteries. The first of the Discernment Summits has taken place with some great ideas for how we share our property and finances. These will be developed ready to be decided at the next full synod gathering in 2025.

## Review of Regional Partnership and Future Direction

The Regional Partnership Committee began our first meeting for the year with a review of how the partnership is operating. I would love to hear from any of you who have comments or suggestions that might help the Regional Partnership operate more effectively.

Some of our observations:

- Regional Partnership: FNC was borne out of a crisis which has since resolved.
- FNC have been bold in addressing issues, and the Synod constructive in terms of responding to the FNC needs.
- The remarkable thing about Regional Partnership is that we are working together as a broad Church in terms of the regions, the Synod, the Saltbush team and UME. As we have welcomed Riverina, this is an opportunity for both regions to be encouraged by each other and the wider church. If it unfolds further with other regional presbyteries, it's a wonderful model for the church.
- It isn't just a process to manage regulations, but a new model of relating and thinking theologically about who we are and who God is calling us to be.
- There is a need for us, as a Committee to think whole of church rather than only our local geographic area.
- Saltbush ministry and the team have provided significant leadership in enabling us to meet in new ways and with a focus far more on equipping ourselves to follow Jesus than was possible under the old Presbytery meeting style.
- How can we lighten the load and nourish faith in our congregations, rather than just focusing them on non-life-giving meetings.
- The role of Saltbush Regional Minister is critical in the partnership.

- The promise made to be transparent and trustworthy has been important. The work of Kingsley as Presbytery Services manager has also been vital. This is a real strength, as congregations are able to access to Synod with trust. It lays the foundation for Saltbush to partner with us, the property review to have been so successful etc. it is a credit to the Synod team.
- Team ministry is an important part of what we are doing. The hope is that all placements will reflect the need for effective and committed teams in all Presbyteries. If ministry agents don't model team ministry or cooperatively working together and practice of faith, then we can't expect congregations to do the same.
- Saltbush Regional Ministers as part of the Saltbush team has been a strong point and strongly impacting the success of the partnership.
- One of the key things about regional Partnership is the working together.
- How we provide ministry for our regional/rural areas has to be considered as part of the Presbytery Project. The Regional Partnership has no ability to decide anything long term. What we can do is feed in a range of possibilities and options that can be considered as part of the Presbytery Project going forward.
- Conversations like this continue to shape our way. There can be so 'set and forget' for Regional Partnership if it is to serve the congregations well. Regional Partnership must be able to represent the different regions in a broad church. Part of this conversation is how our theology and our structure can change and shape things differently for the future.
- The wider church doesn't understand Saltbush Ministry in general and hasn't grasped how and why the Saltbush team is involved in the Regional Partnership. This is concerning as it has been such a critical part of why it has worked as well as it has.
- Local leaders can help by asking for information that can help inform local congregations about what Saltbush and the Regional Partnership is.
- It has been a learning curve for the Synod as well. It has allowed us to see what is happening out in the real world. That is very good for us who work in the Synod office

**Please contact me with any comments, thoughts or reflections that might help us shape a more effective partnership for the future.**

### **Regional Partnership: Origins, Foundations and Structure (attached)**

The Regional Partnership Committee have approved this document and offer it as a way of understanding how regional Partnership came to be, what it hopes to achieve, and how it will shape a different way of engaging with Church processes.

It is attached for your reading. Please circulate it as widely as you can with the encouragement to read it. I know it is lengthy, but it contains so many gold nuggets. This took the best part of a year to develop and has been prayerfully shaped. Perhaps your church council might read and discuss a section at a time as part of their opening worship/ devotion.

### **Change to Future Meeting Cycle**

The way our Regional Partnership meetings will happen has changed. We will still meet monthly, but our focus will include more time to meet with our congregations.

February, April, June, August and October will be ordinary meetings, attending to the needs of the participating Presbyteries and any strategic planning. Timing will be 9.30am to 1pm.

March, May, July, September and November will be relational meetings where the committee spends time with congregations and Ministers, getting to know and understand their missional goals and needs. Timing will be 9.30am to 12noon.

It is hoped this will help the Partnership better understand and respond to the needs of our congregations.

## Saltbush Regional Ministers Report - Riverina

Geoff noted the following:

- We had a great Saltbush gathering in February. We wrestled with the future ministry plan. This will be an important and ongoing conversation across the region to guide how Riverina develops its way forward and starts to engage with some of these difficult challenges we are faced with.
- Griffith - Sione and Ako announced at the gathering that they are leaving, in a month or so they will relocate to Sydney leaving Griffith without clear leadership.
- Sione and Ako have served the Riverina Presbytery and Griffith so faithfully and will be deeply missed. We thank them for their ministry and wish them every blessing as they begin this new adventure.

## Riverina Finance and Property Report

Riverina financial quarterly report will be presented at the April meeting.

## Euabalong - Sale of Church with Cemetery

The committee received a proposal to sell 24 Farnell Street, Euabalong. There is no congregation and hasn't been for many years. Rates unpaid for a long time, we expect those costs to be negotiated as part of the sale so there is no cost to the Church. The proposal was accepted by consensus that the property be sold.

## Saltbush Ministry Team Update

Mark Faulkner provided the following update:

- Thankful for gifts and graces that each of the Saltbush team bring in their different roles and for the people in particular this group that encourage us along the way.
- In terms of the Saltbush team, it is really significant for us that we are in ministry, not just resourcing. Each of the team including the Saltbush Ministers are always open to being contacted by Church Councils, Congregations and Presbyteries.
- Mark expressed appreciation for Jackie and Sue for the work they do in letting congregations in their regions know about Saltbush events Constantly reminding people of the ways they can be in touch and the ways they can participate has been very helpful.
- The Saltbush team over the years have connected with other Synods - VIC-TAS, SA, WA, QLD and New Zealand as well. We had one minister from NZ join us at our gathering in Lismore in December and another conversation from the Alpine presbytery in NZ this week. Those connections and wider conversations that will happen remind us that we are not the only Church, Synod, Congregation or Presbytery, regions that are working in a changing world. You hear very similar stories we are talking about across the channel, different people in different settings and places, part of Saltbush and our wider Church story.

## Regional Partnership elected members for Riverina.

The Regional partnership elected three members for the Riverina - Jackie Stremel, George Thomas and Jennifer Lawlor - we prayed for them and commissioned them at the February Gathering in Ganmain. We thank them for their willingness to serve. Their term begins 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024 for 12 months.

## Casual Preaching Payments Matrix

The recently circulated Casual Preaching Payments Matrix, developed by Synod Payroll, to clarify the payment options available for casual preaching has caused some confusion. We are currently working to provide a more simplified guide which will be circulated as soon as possible.

## Working with Children Check

A question was asked whether a WWCC is required for visiting overseas preachers. A call to the Office of the Childrens Guardian have provided the information below.

If the person is visiting from overseas and is preaching for a period less than 30 days, than a WWCC is not required. It is encouraged, though, that the congregation do due diligence in ascertaining the good standing of the person (contact me if you need assistance). If the person is here for 30 days or more, then they are required to obtain a WWCC, which must then be validated. They will need supporting documents to apply including passport, Australian visa and any overseas documents (in English) like bank statements.

The same principle applies to visiting interstate preachers. The only difference is that they should already have the equivalent of a WWCC for their state.

**Please know that all preachers and church council members/office bearers are required by Government legislation to have a WWCC which has been validated by your congregation/ church council. You only need do it once in the period the WWCC is valid for.**

Should you need further clarification, please contact the Culture of Safety Team through [safechurch@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:safechurch@nswact.uca.org.au) or 02 9159 9629.

## Good News Stories

### Forest Advocacy Ministry: Jason John inducted as Forest Chaplain

On 18 February 2024, more than 40 Uniting Church members, forest defenders, Gumbaynggirr leaders, Mid North Coast Quakers and others gathered under the yew tree at Gleniffer Church for the induction of Rev. Dr Jason John as Forest Chaplain.

Uncle Micklo Jarrett said, "The Creator and Ancestral Beings came down to show us how to look after this land, how to look after animals, how to look after each other. The most important thing in our culture is relationships with each other, with people, with the land, with the waters, all the interwoven relationships between everything." Rev. Phil Dokmanovic said, "Jesus reminds people in the scriptures that it's often those that are on the margins who are the sacred or the blessed ones: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the meek, those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers.

Forest chaplaincy is a wonderful calling to remind those that are hurting, traumatised, struggling because of what they see and witness around them that they are blessed, they are sacred." See article and photos at <https://www.unitingearthweb.org.au/forests>

Please let me know if you have particular needs or if you have any good news stories to share. I would love to hear from you, please send to: [regionalpartnership@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:regionalpartnership@nswact.uca.org.au)

As we move into Holy Week and celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, may you reflect deeply on what it means to follow Jesus and to be the people of good news for God's world.

Blessings to you all.

**Bron**

Rev. Bronwyn Murphy  
Associate Secretary for the Synod of NSW and ACT  
On behalf of Regional Partnerships Committee

# REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP: ORIGINS, FOUNDATIONS, AND STRUCTURE

## PART 1: ORIGINS OF REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

### INTRODUCTION

As the earth turns and society changes, so does the Church. However, as the Church, we must choose what kind of change we want. One kind comes from resisting or avoiding change; the other comes from actively participating in the ever-evolving mission of God. The first leads to decline, while the second is part of our discipleship and embodies our understanding of what it is to be the Christian community of Christ - the Church.

As part of this, presbyteries are struggling to live as they once did as they realise that their work is becoming more about survival as an entity than supporting or enlivening the faith and mission of the congregations within their bounds, let alone meeting the ongoing demand of requirements as found in Regulations 3.1.3.

Regional Partnership was born from this dilemma. Responding to the exhaustion of local leaders and office bearers, increasingly fewer in number and older in age, the Regional Partnership sought new ways for individuals, congregations, Saltbush, regions and presbyteries, and Synod to work together.

The Synod Standing Committee thus approved a REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP as more than a structure: as part of building relationships, gathering and dwelling as community in new ways. It is, as yet a holding pattern while the Year of Discernment shapes the outcomes of the Presbytery Project.

This theological reflection for Regional Partnership helps us, as a broad Church, develop our understanding of who we are along the Way.

### PARTNERSHIP PARAMETERS

Regional Partnership is an intentional partnership between the people of participating presbyteries and Synod. This partnership enables the presbytery to focus on local mission and ministry while the Synod carries responsibility for supporting matters such as governance, compliance, property, and finance.

Participating presbyteries remain a presbytery under the regulations. They retain their unique identity, decision-making ability, and stewardship of real property and financial assets. As each presbytery refers its regulatory powers to the Synod, it operates with far less committee- and office-bearing responsibilities and more significant support in finance, property, governance, risk, and compliance.

Such partnership enables the regions/presbyteries and Synod to support and encourage the congregations in their mission and service. The focus is on what congregations of the presbytery need to flourish as they serve the mission of God.

The Regional Partnership is a body of people from the regions (presbyteries), Saltbush, Synod leadership, and property and finance working together as a broad church. Regional Partnership is a way to work and live as Church in places where past structures no longer offer life.

Regional Partnership seeks to be both a body for oversight within the life of our Church and a humble movement of change that builds reflection, decision-making and action on life-giving theological foundations.

## PART 2: THEOLOGICAL AND ECCLESIOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

### MISSIONAL FOCUS

In the book of Acts 2: 42.2 - 46, the life of the newly formed Christian community is one where followers of “the Way” *“devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers”* and *“day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.”*

In this same way, followers of Jesus still gather to devote themselves to the teachings of Jesus and the apostles. We continue to break bread and share the cup as we care for the wellbeing of others.

The Basis of Union (BoU) <sup>1</sup> of the Uniting Church in Australia reminds the Church of the strange way in which Christ reaches out to command people’s attention.

*‘Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people’s attention and awaken faith; he calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules, and renews them as his Church.’*

The Christian Church finds itself in diverse and changing times. Our belief in God’s creating, renewing and continual presence challenges us to consider what is this *“strange way Christ... renews...”*

The Regional Partnership finds itself in a strange place seeking renewal and re-formation within this time and circumstance. The Regional Partnership prays that this renewing is a reaching out of Christ through the Holy Spirit's command to refocus our attention on the mission of God rather than institutional preference and survival.

### RELATIONAL OVERSIGHT (EPISKOPE)

The Basis of Union describes the work of the Regional Council of the Church (Presbytery) as one where *“its function is to perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church”* and where *“it will in particular exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another’s faith, to bear one another’s burdens, and urging them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus.”*<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly, “exercising oversight” is the primary role of the Regional Partnership so that the Christian community might be the Church as active disciples of Jesus. Historically, the Church has spoken of this “relational oversight” as episkopé.<sup>3</sup>

The Regional Partnership’s exercising of relational oversight (episkopé) is to inform and shape the Church's life so that good ordering, unity, and entering into the mission of God are the focus of our common life. The Uniting Church understands this ministry of relational oversight (episkopé) exercised together to safeguard the unity and story of the Church of God so that it might be a sign and witness of God's coming kingdom.

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<sup>1</sup> Basis of Union Para 4.

<sup>2</sup> Basis of Union Para 15 (c).

<sup>3</sup> Episkopé is the Greek word used within the Church's life for the leadership of oversight by persons set aside for the role and by bodies of people. Episkopé is not simply a role but is seen as a leadership that is insightful, appointed, discerned and chosen, a God-presence with diverse expressions and distinctions.

In these times of change, a second essential role is encouraging our Christian communities with fewer Ministers and smaller gatherings to build up congregations and communities within their lives and faith. Saltbush refers to this as “exploring life and faith together.”

The Basis of Union says, “[The Elders/Leaders are] *responsible for building up the congregation in faith and love, sustaining its members in hope, and leading them into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world.*”<sup>4</sup>

As the episkopé is shared in different ways, so must the building up in faith and love, the nurturing of hope, and the opportunities to discern and participate in the Way of Christ (which we call mission) in the world broaden.

## THE CHURCH'S CALL

The Basis of Union describes how the Uniting Church in Australia understands the mission of God:

*“The Church, as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, confesses Jesus as Lord over its own life; it also confesses that Jesus is Head over all things, the beginning of a new creation, of a new humanity. God in Christ has given all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal, which is the end for the whole creation. **The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which members use their diverse gifts to build the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself.** The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things that Christ will bring; the Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal; here, the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come. On the way, Christ feeds the Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way.”*<sup>5</sup>

God in Christ is at mission in the world; the Holy Spirit guides and inspires the Church to:

- Share the Good News of Jesus Christ through word and action,
- Inspire and nurture new followers of Christ in life-giving communities of reconciliation,
- Respond in compassion to human need,
- Live justly and seek justice for all,
- Care for the whole creation,
- Listen to each generation and culture to live out the Gospel in fresh ways,
- Understand that serving God's mission is a partnership, but always, it is God's mission.

Mission, then, is the work of God and the reason the Church was formed. It is God who reconciles, renews and invites the Church to participate. Therefore, the Regional Partnership oversees such congregations as they thoughtfully plan how to fulfil their calling to join God in seeking reconciliation and renewal for the whole creation, shaping the purpose and directing the witness of each.

## MISSIONAL PEOPLE

The Basis of Union discusses who is responsible for this relational oversight (episkopé): government in the Church belongs to the people of God by virtue of the gifts and tasks God has laid upon them. Christ alone is supreme in the Church, which is “*governed by a series of inter-related councils, each of which has its tasks and responsibilities in relation both to the Church and the world.*”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Basis of Union Par 15 (b).

<sup>5</sup> Basis of Union Par 3.

<sup>6</sup> Basis of Union Par 15.

Regional Partnership practices inter-related episkopé by the local region retaining its identity as a regional council-Presbytery but being in partnership with Synod Mission. The Regional Partnership is responsible for exercising theologically informed governance, management, and leadership.

Membership of Regional Partnership comes through each region discerning people with the gifts and graces for the role of relational oversight (episkopé). Regional Partnership is the framework that enables Presbytery and Synod to partner in serving and supporting the congregations as, together, we explore faith and life in a grounded 21st-century context.

## **CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND LEADERSHIP**

The Basis of Union reminds us that all its members are engaged in the ministry of Christ. All are called to serve as active disciples of Jesus Christ. *“It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ’s Church with a diversity of gifts and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.”*<sup>7</sup>

The Uniting Church in Australia expresses this call to serve Christ through the Christian community – the congregation. Congregations are the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ. Its members meet regularly to hear God’s Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share in the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world.<sup>8</sup>

Regional Partnership acts to give relational oversight (episkopé) to encourage and support the Christian community in its worship, witness, and service.

Regional Partnership will encourage Christian communities within its oversight to both gather and live out our faith and mission within the context in which we find ourselves and within the understanding of the polity and ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Regional Partnership will encourage Christian communities to use the property and financial resources they steward wisely to enable discipleship and mission. Regional Partnership will also redirect resources to areas it believes will enhance the ministry and mission of God in conversation with the NSW/ACT Synod.

The Uniting Church in Australia also recognises the role of the ministry of the Word and Deacon, Elders and Leaders, Ministry of Pastor, Lay Preachers and Lay Presiders as those with particular gifts to serve and build up the Christian community within an informed faith” as described in paragraph 11 of the Basis of Union:

*“The Uniting Church, from inception, will seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to recognise among its members women and men called of God to preach the Gospel, to lead the people in worship, to care for the flock, to share in government and to serve those in need in the world.”*<sup>9</sup>

The Regional Partnership will provide relational oversight (episkopé) for lay and ordained ministry within its regions. Regional Partnership recognises and encourages all forms of ministry that build up the faith and join in God’s reconciling mission for the whole creation.

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<sup>7</sup> Basis of Union Par 13.

<sup>8</sup> Basis of Union Par 15 (a).

<sup>9</sup> Basis of Union Par 14



## **INFORMED FOUNDATIONS**

The Regional Partnership is informed by Scripture, the Basis of Union, and Church practice in Australia and across the globe with partner churches. Its life is firmly rooted in the Uniting Church of Australia, and it expresses its work of relational oversight (episkopé) through the Basis of Union.

This foundation provides the Regional Partnership with a vision and direction that upholds a broad Church for the present future. The Regional Partnership recognises that within that broad Church, diverse ways of Christian community will be expressed and encourages an open and inclusive exploration of faith and life.

Christian communities across the regions are the primary focus of the Regional Partnership; the Regional Partnership will listen and respond to them, encouraging and supporting them as they seek to express themselves as followers of Jesus in their local contexts. The Regional Partnership will work with them to question established ways of being that no longer resonate within our 21st-century context and encourage existing and new forms of Christian communities regardless of size or location.

## **PART 3 : STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES**

### **THE SALTBUSH TEAM AND REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP**

The Regional Partnership acts as the Pastoral Relations and Standing Committees of the regions.

The Saltbush Team are relationally entwined with the Regional Partnership and participating presbyteries, helping to shape the Regional Partnership to encourage and support the Christian community. It is an extension of their ministry.

Saltbush works across a broad spectrum of our Church: individuals, groups, congregations, councils, committees, presbyteries, the Regional Partnership, and Synod. The challenge of the ministry of Saltbush is not simply to sustain, structure or save the Church, but to ferment the *“strange way Christ [that] reconciles and renews....”*<sup>10</sup>

Saltbush holds the Regional Partnership accountable for living out an informed faith grounded in exploring the Way of Christ, enabling its work to be more than a crisis response. With Saltbush, Regional Partnership has enabled our participating presbyteries to gather for community and discipleship formation rather than business meetings. Saltbush as a team, ethos, and ministry informs and helps shape and flavour all these layers and ways of gathering in places where there are, and will be, fewer single placement of Ministry agents.

Saltbush leads two gatherings in each participating region each year, with the business component constituting less than thirty minutes of discussion. The rest of the day focuses on formation as disciples of Christ.

### **CHAIR**

While the Associate Secretary has guided and supported the creation of the Regional Partnership, a designated Regional Partnership Chair should be appointed. The Chair will, consistent with the regulations (3.6.2 (c)), constitute, preside over, and generally direct the business of the meetings of the Regional Partnership and offer general pastoral oversight and support to the Saltbush Regional Ministers as they carry out their ministry in the Region. The Regional Chair continues to be responsible for matters of discipline as described in the regulations (5.4) at the direction of the Regional Partnership acting as the Presbytery Standing and Pastoral Relations Committees.

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<sup>10</sup> *Basis of Union Par 4.*

## **SALTBUSH REGIONAL MINISTERS**

Saltbush Regional Ministers will be part of the Saltbush Team but work in their own regions. Their gifts and graces will reflect both the role of the Regional Partnership and the ethos, missiology, and grounded theological practice of Saltbush.

The Regional Partnership in each region will appoint Saltbush Regional Ministers in response to a recommendation by a Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) to call someone they believe has the gifts, graces, and call that match the ministry profile and Placement Description in the usual placement process of the NSW/ACT Synod.

The significance of the title “Saltbush Regional Minister” is that it anchors ministers in a functional and effective team and provides a mutually supportive base while enabling each Saltbush Regional Minister to have their own focus. It also alerts people in each region that the work is different from the traditional work of a Presbytery Minister.

The placement of Saltbush Regional Minister will be consistent with the regulations (2.7.3 and 2.9.1). It shall be accountable in two ways: firstly, to the Regional Partnership for matters of faith, discipline, and reporting (5.1.3 (d) and 5.4.3) while, secondly, under the oversight of the Director of Rural and Remote Ministry Initiatives for the day-to-day expression of ministry. Such accountability gives each role a greater sense of ministry than their local patch. It also provides consistency for relationships, gatherings and matters of oversight.

This model is consistent with the usual practice of ministers in placement being accountable to their church council or Presbytery while a separate person role oversees the day-to-day practice of ministry. While adding to the lines of accountability, it provides separation of responsibilities and manages conflicts of interest/competing interests or views.

## **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP LOCAL MEMBERSHIP**

Three to five regional members will be appointed to the Regional Partnership to bring diverse gifts and service to the Regional Partnership. Being a leader in Regional Partnership is thus about exercising gifts of leadership and vision as part of a broad Church in changing times.

The Regional Partnership meets once a month. The task of the Regional Partnership is to prioritise building up congregations in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading congregations (both existing and new forms or gatherings) to a fuller participation in Christ’s mission in the world.

Nominations for leaders on the Regional Partnership must be for people with gifts for this role and who have been a part of the Uniting Church in Australia for a reasonable time. The Regional Partnership should reflect the diversity of our Church in age, sex, and culture.

Each region will elect regional members through a discernment model.

An outline of the Regional Partnership member role will be distributed to the regions, and nominations separate from the nominees will be called for.

Discerning the gifts and graces possessed by individuals nominated for these roles is essential.

Where three or more expressions of interest for a person are received, this shall equal a nomination. The person nominated shall be contacted to test the nomination. With their permission, the names will be put forward for election by members of each region, including voting members of the Regional Partnership Committee.

Duly elected Regional Partnership members will serve for two years. They may be re-nominated to a maximum of two consecutive terms.

### **SALTBUSH MINISTRY TEAM LEADER OR THEIR DELEGATE**

The Saltbush Ministry Team Leader brings a broad view of the wellbeing and good ordering of the wider rural Church and the ethos and direction of Saltbush - Uniting the Scattered Community. Their placement profile and role description set out the ministry to which the Church calls them.

### **DIRECTOR OF MISSION - UME**

The Director of Mission - UME brings a broad view of the wellbeing and good ordering of the whole Church within the NSW/ACT Synod. The Director of Mission - UME has elected not to attend formal meetings but be available as invited or required. No delegate is necessary as the Chair of Regional Partnership and Director of Mission meet regularly to discuss relevant information.

### **CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER - SYNOD MISSION SERVICES REPRESENTATIVE**

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) brings a broad view of the NSW/ACT Synod towards the operational, financial, risk, compliance, property, and other components necessary for the good ordering of the Church.

### **SUPPORTING MEMBERS**

Other non-voting members of the Regional Partnership Members will attend and support the work of the Regional Partnership as required because of their roles within the life and ministry of the NSW/ACT Synod. These include:

- Associate Secretary,
- Saltbush Scattered Community Ministers,
- Presbytery Service Manager,
- Presbytery Relations Minister,
- Director of Vital Leadership,
- Direction of Education,
- Mission, Growth and Innovation Team,
- Synod Finance,
- Synod Property,
- Synod Safe Church,
- Synod Risk and Compliance,
- Synod Governance
- and others, as required.

The Regional Partnership acts under the Regulations of the Uniting Church in Australia as the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) (3.7.3) and the Standing Committee (SC) (3.7.2 (a) (i)) of each Region. It remains responsible for matters of ministry, pastoral care, and mission in relationship to governance in partnership with Synod Mission Services.

### **REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS**

The Regional Partnership will meet monthly with various online conferencing and face-to-face meetings each year.

Regional Partnership will shape its meetings to:

- Meet yearly face-to-face in extended meetings and gatherings of Christian communities across the region,
- Reflect on its Christological foundations and its work of episkopé,
- Hear from Christian communities within its bounds to establish relationships, encourage and support them,
- Attend to Synod business and governance matters,
- Give each Region the opportunity to discuss matters relevant to it as a region and the whole Regional Partnership.

## **PART 4: FINAL REMARKS**

Regional Partnership is an opportunity to bring a fresh attitude and focus to identifying new ways of being church. As congregations can develop new ways of being missionally active in their local communities, Regional Partnership can strongly support them by taking responsibility for matters of property, governance and compliance.

The Church can only be the Church as each congregation actively witness to Jesus Christ in word and deed. This can never be out-sourced to any committee regardless of how dire the circumstances might be. The goal of Regional Partnership is to release energy and focus for local congregations to be missionally active in their local communities.

Title:	Regional Partnership: Origins, Foundation & Structure
Creation Date:	March 2023
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