

Regional Partnership: Riverina Presbytery Newsletter

September 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 **11 September 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.

Message from the Chair, Regional Partnership

Dear Riverina Congregation,

One of the great joys of my role has been developing and chairing the Regional Partnership.

Creating something that supports and encourages congregations without depleting them of leadership, time and energy has been an absolute privilege.

However, I am also aware that I can no longer give it the time required to continue the creative process.

At my request, and in consultation with the General Secretary, Synod Standing Committee have approved a new Chair to take Regional Partnership forward.

I am deeply grateful to announce that Rev Simon Hansford has agreed to take on the role of Chairperson, Regional Partnership. His love for, and commitment to, the rural church is well known.

Synod Standing Committee has appointed him in this role with immediate effect.

I'm hoping that you are excited about the future with Simon leading. Thank you for your trust and support.

I wish you all every blessing. *Bronwyn.*

Regional Partnership Independent Review Report

The Regional Partnership Independent Review report is attached. A summary of recommendation can be found on page 23. Please note that some of the recommendations may not come into effect until after the Presbytery Project concludes.

Regional Partnership Risk Register Committee Recommendations

The Regional Partnership reviewed two risks from the Risk Register 1. Decreasing engagement of congregation members and 2. Not engaging in and growing mission. The Committee discussed the current controls, practices, and activities we are currently doing and if they are having an effect on those risks.

Devin North, Risk & Internal Audit Manager, Synod Mission Services joined the meeting to support the conversation and provided helpful insight on ways the committee could reflect, track and measure risks.

The Committee are committed to reviewing one or two risks at every monthly meeting and Devin has agreed to join the meeting to assist in the ongoing Risk conversation.

Growth Fund Proposal Alstonville and Byron Shire (FNC)

On 24 September, the Growth Fund application for Alstonville and Ballina Byron will be processed by the Growth Fund Committee. Daniel Yang, Phil Dokmanovic and Peter Worland will be in attendance for that conversation and we are hopeful for a successful outcome.

Opening of Lismore Regional Uniting Church

The opening of Lismore Regional Uniting Church is taking place on Sunday, 22 September. We rejoice with Lismore after the horrendous floods in 2022 which inflicted double the damage of the 2017 floods. The journey has been long, with many challenges and the outstanding work of volunteers will never be unrecognised.

Far North Coast are thrilled to be able to be invited to attend this momentous Sunday morning service.

Culture of Safety - New Synod Policies

As part of our ongoing commitment to developing a Culture of Safety please note these new policies that have been developed by the Culture of Safety team for your information and reference.

These policies apply to all congregations, presbyteries and entities across the Synod of NSW and ACT.

[Child Safe Policy](#)

This policy underpins our approach to Child Safe practices across the Synod, including the implementation of the National Child Safe Standards. This policy sets out the responsibilities of various bodies, councils and

[Complaints Policy](#)

This policy documents our commitment to dealing with complaints and concerns in a consistent and transparent manner. If you have a complaint or concern, there are a variety of people who can help you including Ministers, the Culture of Safety team or the Speak Out line.

Contact cultureofsafety@nswact.uca.org.au for further advice.

It is very important that all Ministers, staff and volunteers understand these policies and that church leaders ensure that the policies are implemented.

Saltbush Team Update

The Saltbush team will be leading two more Saltbush Café's before the end of the year; a shorter café in October around the lectionary and then a longer Advent Café in November/December.

If you do not get the Saltbush emails and invitations and would like to do so, please email us: saltbush@nswact.uca.org.au



Good News Stories

Synod Mission Services Team and Congregational Leaders Lunch at Wagga Pilgrim Uniting Church

On Thursday 12th September, the Synod Mission Services Team hosted a lunch for congregational leaders at Wagga Pilgrim Uniting Church.

The team consisted of:

Daniel Andrew, General Manager Communications, Collaboration & Information - Synod Mission Services

Luke Lee, General Manager, Treasury & Investment Services

Leanne Grant, General Manager Partnerships, Services, and Delivery Synod Mission Services

Rev. Dr Rob McFarlane, Presbytery Relations Minister – Secretariat

Approximately 18 people were present meeting the team, learning about each person's role and discussing congregation matters and how Synod may assist.

Thank you to Synod Mission Services Team for travelling to Wagga Wagga and to Wagga Pilgrim congregation for hosting the luncheon.

Jackie Strempel



Saltbush Regional Gathering at Coleambally Uniting Church

A Saltbush Regional Gathering was held at Coleambally Uniting Church on Saturday 7th September.

Our day began with meeting friends over a cuppa. About 40 people were in attendance in person or on Zoom.

The formal part of the day began with worship led by the Saltbush team of Revs. Mark Faulkner, Geoff Wellington, Tim Jenson, Yvonne Ghalalas and Natasha He.

The theme was *Salt in the Wound*. The Bible reading was Genesis 27:41, 28:10-22 (Jacob fleeing Esau and Jacob's dream at Bethel). We spent time reflecting on various aspects of this story e.g. Sacred ground, why Jacob left, ways to forgive?

How have wounds from your family changed your life?

When have you felt distant from God and alienated from others, only to find you have been on sacred ground?

How have you responded to God's movement and moments in your life?

This was followed by Holy Communion.

After lunch, Rev Dr Rob McFarlane briefly brought the group up to date on the Presbytery Project.

Mark sought additional ideas on how the Saltbush team could help Lay Leaders (ideas included retreats in person, online, 1 day or several days, lectionary discussions on a regular basis).

Geoff spoke on the new CRM Portal (the new Synod directory) and introduced Anthony Hill, a chaplain with Uniting based in Wagga Wagga. It was also great to catch up with Nigel Hawkin.

Geoff gave an update on the progress of Griffith Uniting Church Growth Fund Grant and JNC discussions.

Rev. Live Tutakama will be in Griffith for 2 weeks in November working with the congregation.

Sadly, there will be a closure service for Ardlethan on Sunday 29th September.

Synod General Secretary has appointed Rev. Simon Hansford as Chairperson of Regional Partnership. We praise and thank God for Rev. Bronwyn Murphy, for the gifts she brought to the partnership and the love she gave to each member.

Finally, a big thank you to our hosts for the day Coleambally congregation, for their hospitality (friendly cuppas and organising great food) and making us feel welcome.

Saturday was thought provoking, challenging, thinking about our faith and we thank the Saltbush team for their work in preparing for the day and encouragement.

Another aspect of the day is meeting friends from around the presbytery and sharing resources and ideas.





Our Church down the Lane

I thank The Lord for our Church Down the Lane,
We keep on meeting, through Sunshine and Rain.

I thank the Lord for our Spiritual Walk,
And for All the Others to whom we talk.

I thank The Lord for our music which we sing,
Which cheers Our Spirits, and makes Our Hearts ring.

I thank The Lord for the Company when we meet,
Every Sunday, such a Nice Greeting, we do keep.

I thank The Lord for our Coffee, Tea and Cake,
And the Blessed Helpers who took time to make.

I thank The Lord for Our Church down the Lane,
It is such a Blessing, that our Faith is not in vain.

I thank The Lord for Our Church down the Lane,
There is always someone to share, when I am in pain.

I thank The Lord for our Church down the Lane,
That by His Death, a Place in Heaven, we did gain.

(Kingscliff Uniting)

Please us me know if you have particular needs or if you have any good news stories to share, we would love to hear from you: regionalpartnership@nswact.uca.org.au

Blessings to you all.

Rev. Simon Hansford
Chairperson, Regional Partnership