

# Regional Partnership: Riverina Presbytery Newsletter

November 2023



*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 **30 November 2023**.*

*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 the Riverina Congregations.

I'm reading 'God is in the Manger' by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He talks of waiting as an active getting ready. A time of doing without, in order to receive what is to come. Allowing the time between now and the birth of Christ to pay attention to the things that matter so that the trivial commercialism of Christmas does not swallow us whole.

I pray your advent is filled with active waiting, preparing for the beauty of Christ to transform our living and our world.

**Reflecting on Scripture** is part of our meeting rhythm. This month we focused on Jesus and the Figtree and discussed what stance or posture the church needs, in order to discern and engage with the movement of the Spirit. The conversation invited us to consider what if God was moving, and we were not paying attention, or we resisted because we had our own agenda.

## Riverina Highlights

- The Lockhart Campfire was a lovely day exploring the Great Unravelling study guide and the closure of ministry service for Rev. Yvonne Ghavalas see pictures in the Riverina News section.
- Preparations continue in Cootamundra with Rev. Vinnie Ravetali, Rev. Tay Lee, Rev. Alimoni Taumoepeau and Fiji Parish attending, as they prepare for 70-90 Pacific Australia Labour Mobility (PALM) workers coming to Cootamundra. It's a huge thing for the town and the congregation and we give thanks to all those involved.
- We farewelled Rev. Keith Robinson and Ros, giving thanks for the work they have done in the Riverina.

## Riverina Finance Report

- The finance report is quite positive – which is not necessarily good news as it means key roles are unfilled and congregation have closed. Geoff Wellington is now the only minister in placement within the Riverina. While we hope next year will bring administration support, we have no firm plans to call ministers at this stage.
- Financial will be distributed at the February Saltbush gathering at Ganmain.
- Geoff is going on well-deserved leave and will be back in January.
- Thee Great Unravelling study guide and the closure of ministry service for Rev. Yvonne Ghavalas see pictures in the Riverina News section.

## Revised Draft: Future Ministry Plan – Riverina

As the Saltbush Regional Minister is the last placement in the Riverina, reimagining what future ministry might look like becomes urgent and important. It won't be the regional ministry model we've known.

We recognize a variety of support needed. Some will grow, some will participate in Saltbush: Uniting the Scattered Communities ministry, while others may well close, passing their legacy to the wider church to seed new ministries. As a Regional Partnership, it's about seeing possibilities in different ways within different places. This is a very new conversation, which will come to congregations as 2024 progresses, so watch this space.

## Lay Presiders

Revised Policy document was updated to simplify and address some of the issues we have encountered. Mark Faulkner committed that the Saltbush team look at how we might help congregations and home groups with no presiders to share in Holy Communion.

Cheryl Carter from Junee Illabo and Betty Loiterton from Wagga Wesley were accredited as Lay Presiders. Congratulations to Betty and Cheryl and thank you for your willingness to study and serve.

## Presbytery Project Update

Presbytery Project is looking at how to resource 12 Presbyteries with very different needs and capacities. 2024 is the Year of Discernment with four Summits planned. Presbytery reps will come to each Summit and consider possible options with the goal of bringing clear proposals to the 2025 Council of Synod meeting.

## Saltbush Ministry Team Update

- Yvonne Ghalvalas starts in the Saltbush team tomorrow. Her induction was held at the Far North Coast gathering on Saturday, 9 December 2023.
- Natasha He starts on 1 January 2024. Natasha and family will be living in Dubbo and her ordination is on 16 December 2023 at St Davids Dee Why.
- Advent Café is underway each Tuesday of Advent, exploring life and faith together. All are welcome to attend and to invite others.
- Saltbush Gathering in Ganmain, Riverina: Saturday, 24 February 2024. I look forward to seeing you there.



## Regional Partnership

It is important for people in the Riverina Presbytery to share how they are experiencing Regional Partnership. I welcome your thoughts and comments to be sent by email. We will also talk together at the Regional Partnership meeting in Ganmain on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

## Annual Elections for Regional Partnership

It is important for people in the Riverina Presbytery to share how they are experiencing Regional Partnership. I welcome your thoughts and comments to be sent by email. We will also talk together at the Regional Partnership meeting in Ganmain on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

In February, I will circulate the nominations and allow two weeks for your prayerful consideration before the ballot.

- Identify someone (or many) you think would have the gifts and skills to serve the FNC on Regional Partnership.
- Write their name and your reason on the expression of interest form (attached).
- Email the form [RegionalPartnership@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:RegionalPartnership@nswact.uca.org.au)
- If 3 or more people express interest in the same person, that equals a nomination.
- I will contact each person and invite them to accept the nomination.
- A bio for each nominated person will be sent out ready for voting by written ballot.

You do not need to:

- Ask the person you nominate.
- Join with others to plan nominations.
- Be approached by others asking you to nominate them.
- Nominate yourself.

Those who can vote on nominations to Regional Partnership are members of the Uniting Church in the Region and those existing voting members of Regional Partnership.

**Please note: 3 expressions of interest = 1 nomination. Please prayerfully consider who will serve the Riverina.**

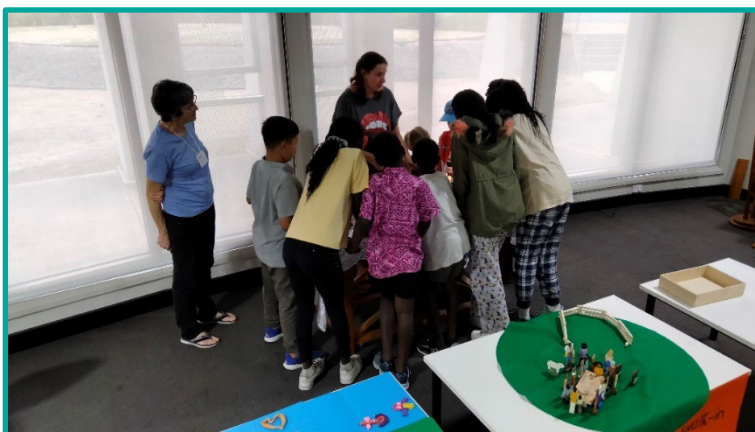
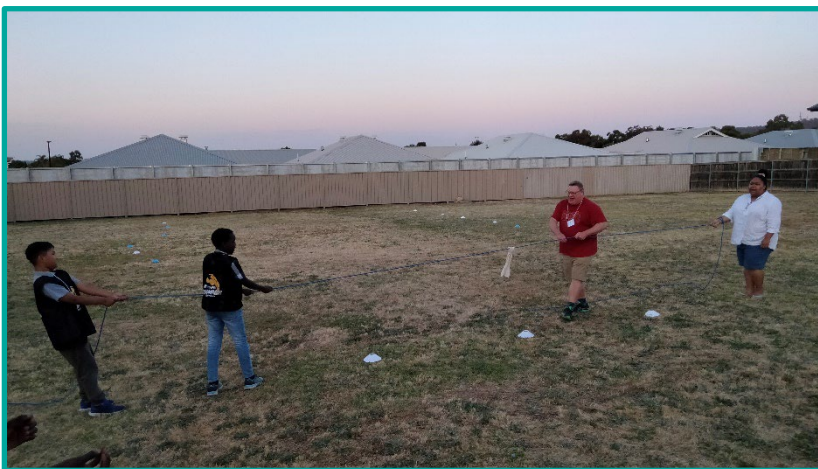
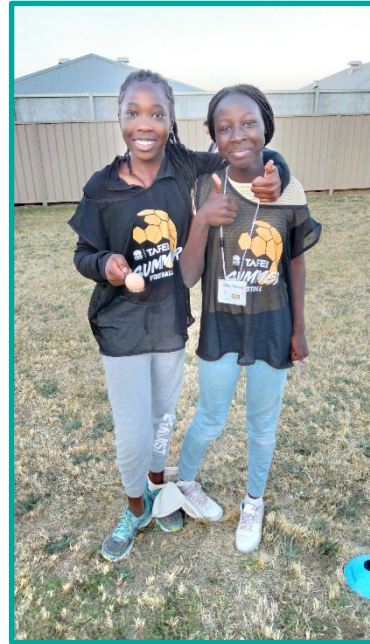
## Good News Stories

### Recent Youth Events in our Region

Shella and Inas, two Wagga Pilgrim girls - attended the **Pulse High School Youth Camp at Collaroy** in September School Holidays. Both girls had a fabulous time, enjoyed making friends with their roommates, and got to go to the beach for the first time! Thank you so much to Pulse, Wagga Pilgrim Uniting, and the Regional Partnership for sponsoring both girls.



**"Kids Camp In" at Wagga Pilgrim Church.** We had 12 kids come for 24 hours of sleepover, games, stories, and food. We discovered just how versatile Pilgrim Church really is - we pitched tents in the main part of the church. Fabulous smiles all round from the fun times. Thank you to all the leaders, including Joyce and Ofa from Pulse, who helped lead the camp.



Yvonne Ghavalas final services in Riverina and Induction at Lismore



*Pilgrim folk sending Yvonne out with prayer for her future ministry within the Saltbush Team*



*A unicorn onesie was the perfect parting present from Wagga Pilgrim!*



*Gathering at Lockhart – Closure of Ministry Service was held as part of a meaningful conversation around unravelling*



*Induction at Lismore Uniting Church*

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)

Blessings to you all.

**Bron**

Rev. Bronwyn Murphy  
Associate Secretary for the Synod of NSW and ACT

On behalf of Regional Partnerships Committee