



Middle Ridge Uniting Church
264 Stenner St Middle Ridge

16th – 18th June 2023

Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC) Report, 21st February 2023 – 13th June 2023

Members: Rev Adam Tipple (Chairperson); Allison Kahler (Secretary); Ps Jenny Noble (Treasurer); Rev Yvonne McRostie (Presbytery Minister); Rev Marius Kruger; Kath Warner; Sharon Baker; Rev Rob Callow (Resource Minister)

Meetings: 28th March, 23rd May

Scheduled Meetings: 25th July, 26th September

The theme of this Presbytery Meeting is 'Singing the Lord's Song in a Strange Land'. As we think about the changing nature of our society, and the changing nature of the United Church, it is important that we do not lose sight of God, and each other. As a Presbytery we are facing challenges and pressures, and decisions will need to be made as to how we can change and adapt to meet the current environment. As we do this important work, let us engage with the hope that Christ shares with us, and with brotherly and sisterly love in our hearts.

Following the February Presbytery Meeting, the PSC has spent a significant amount of time discussing the Combined Presbytery Mission Pool (CPMP). We believe that it is time for the Presbytery to make some important decisions as to how this is administered. To that end we have presented the CPMP Discussion Paper as a starting point for our discussions. It is essential that Presbytery Members and Congregations engage with this material so that we can make good decisions at our June meeting, so we commend this to your reading.

In addition to the four options presented in that paper, we would also like to include another option which came in recently, 'Option 5 – Contribution based on Congregation size', which was helpfully suggested by the Granite Belt Congregations. This is attached as an Appendix to this report.

The CPMP discussion is not unique to the Downs Presbytery, as other Presbyteries are also having these challenging discussions.

We celebrate that we will have some new Ministry Agents coming to the Presbytery. We welcome Peter Cole who will be working as Chaplain for BlueCare Toowoomba, and Cynthia Taafe who has accepted a call to ministry at Crow's Nest District Uniting Church.

I want to thank the members of the PSC for their input to the life of our Presbytery, and for Rev Yvonne McRostie and Rev Rob Callow, and the valuable work they have been doing since our last meeting.

Other significant matters that the PSC have attended to since the last meeting are covered below in the dot points, with supporting documents available with the reports for the June meeting. If you would like more information about any of these matters or other Standing Committee work, questions on notice for our June meeting will be helpful.

Please note that financial matters will be covered in detail as part of our Treasurer's Report, and property matters as part of our Property Report.

Significant Matters

- At the March meeting the PSC held a joint workshop with the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) with regards to the Synod Resourcing Review currently being undertaken.
- In May the Presbytery executive attended a Presbytery Office Bearers' workshop at the Synod office, which has been helpful in building relations between our Presbytery and the Synod staff. The Moderator, Rev Andrew Gunton, expressed the importance for good governance and record keeping, and gave some good and practical recommendations which we are endeavouring to implement within the Presbytery.
- The Administration position in the Presbytery remains vacant and whilst we have had some discussions around the filling of this position, the Presbytery Standing Committee is still determining the best way forward, given the decisions that we need to make around the Presbytery budget and the Combined Mission Pool (CPMP).
- Rev Rob Callow continues a 0.5 placement as supply in the Presbytery Resource Minister role. The Standing Committee has approved the extension of this Placement until 30th September 2023. We are thankful for the work Rob has been doing in this role and the support he has been able to provide to Yvonne during this time. The funding for Rob's placement has largely come from the money we had budgeted for Administration which had not been used since Susan Popple left the role in October 2022.
- We hope to soon have an Opening/Commissioning service/event for the new Presbytery Office space.
- The Joint Nominating Committee (JNC) was formed for the Cunnamulla Burke & Wills Remote Area Ministry, consisting of Rev Yvonne McRostie (Chair); Rev Adam Tipple; Rev Rob Floyd (National Director Frontier Services), Jenny Noble and Rev Anise Liebenberg, and brings a proposal to our June meeting.
- Adam and Yvonne met with Luke Tanks from BlueCare our meetings are relational and very informative. Luke shared that there were some structure changes happening in BlueCare Communities which will overall make the service more effective. Luke is very generous with his time and has offered to personally address any concerns that we hear of. Luke also mentioned the positive impact Sharon is having in her role.

Prayer Points

- Ask for God's guidance as we discuss and make decisions about CPMP.
- Give thanks for the work of the Cunnamulla Burke & Wills Remote Area Ministry JNC, and pray for discernment as we consider their recommendation.
- Pray for our Ministry Agents as they lead congregations in a time of change, and for the new Ministry Agents coming to our Presbytery.
- BlueCare Community Care structure changes that people feel supported through the changes and that there will be stability in services.
- Give thanks for the amazing lay-people we have in our Presbytery, and the work they do which does not always get recognition.

Recommendations

1. That the report be received.

2. That the JNC for the Cunnamulla Burke & Wills Remote Area Ministry propose, 'That the Presbytery extend a call to XXXX (name to be shared at the Presbytery Meeting) for the position of Bush Chaplain, Cunnamulla Burke & Wills Remote Area Ministry, to commence 1st September 2023.'

Grace and Peace,

Rev Adam Tipple
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Appendix – CPMP Option 5 Contribution Based on Congregation Size

The CPMP contribution reflects the size of the congregation, based on the average weekly worship attendance.

The average attendance to be taken across one 'census month', e.g. October, to be the basis for the next year's CPMP contributions.

Each congregation makes a CPMP contribution per attendee.

The Presbytery Standing Committee sets the level of contribution per attendee based on the total number of attendees across the Presbytery, and how that would support the existing budget.

We estimate that this would be around \$200 - \$250 per attendee, so that for \$200 and an average attendance of 40 people per week, that would equal a \$8,000 annual CPMP contribution, or for \$250 and 40 people a week a \$10,000 contribution.

Advantages

- Provides transparency in how contributions are calculated.
- Provides a 'level playing field' in that the starting point is the same for everyone.
- Average attendance is likely to reflect the relative strength of congregations.
- A model already used in some other denominations, so has a track record of being successful.

Disadvantages

- Other congregational revenue streams and financial liabilities (such as from property) are not part of consideration.
- Relies on congregations being willing to provide accurate and timely information around attendance.
- Will result in change with some congregations paying more than currently, and some less.

