

The Anglican Diocese of Grafton

The Parish of the Lower Macleay Vacancy Consultation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Date of the Consultation: 28th October, 2017

Participants: 24 people participated in the Vacancy Consultation. The average age was 68+ and was predominantly female. Participants engaged well with the process and there was a good spirit throughout the consultation.

Focal Points: The focus of this Consultation centred around four main areas:

- The Church NOW
- The Church of the FUTURE
- Openness to Change
- Skills set & Leadership

The Church NOW

The Parish of Lower Macleay honours the place of the Eucharist in its Sunday Service. They believe that their worship is both reverent and joyful. They value the music ministry that currently exists and participation of the congregation during worship. They appreciate the teaching received during the sermon time and value enormously the contribution of the retired clergy in the parish. They see themselves as more *middle of the road* with an evangelical tendency.

Participants clearly identified that:

- I. Combining the two Sunday Services into one service has been a positive experience,
- II. Due to the reduced availability of retired clergy, Lay People will need to be more active in ministry. (Note: Participants showed great enthusiasm in being trained and equipped to assist in ministry).

Can you identify 3-5 main strengths of the Church NOW?

Blended Sunday Service: In more recent times the parish has combined the two Sunday Morning Services. This service is Eucharistic (which is highly valued amongst the participants) and honours both the traditional style of worship and a more contemporary style. The blending of these two services has been an extremely positive experience for the parish.

Play Centre: The ministry that occurs in the Play Centre is seen as another major strength and ministry opportunity in the parish. The Play Centre ministry has been established now for some years and the enthusiasm for this ministry has not diminished since its inception; it is still able to bring together a number of young Mums and their children. The Play Centre has been identified as a ministry that could be expanded upon.

Op Shop Ministry: Likewise the ministry of the Op Shop was affirmed as a strength of Parish life as it is now. Participants also felt that the Op Shop ministry could be built upon.

Bible Studies: It is clear from the raw data material that this parish values the importance of good teaching and the opportunity to engage in small groups/bible studies.

The Church of the FUTURE

Can you identify 3 -5 main priorities that you need to address in the next 3 years?

The raw data responses clearly identify 4 main priorities:

- Establish Multigenerational Worship
- Training & Equipping of the existing congregation
- Establish connections with the wider Community - e.g. create partnerships with numerous clubs in the community
- Develop personal growth

Other initiatives included:

- Expanding the Ministry of Play Centre thus preparing a way for Multi-generational worship
- Host an Open house Church – Church outside of the building.

Perceived obstacles in achieving these priorities revolved around:

- Ageing congregation
- Insufficient activities to attract multi-age congregation
- Worship times
- Resistance to change

Participants also identified 3 key areas of ministry that need immediate attention:

- Ministry at Hat Head;
- Nursing home ministry (Can be addressed if volunteers are trained).
- Parish Administration (Currently attended to by the locum/retired clergy).

OPENESS TO CHANGE.

There certainly has been a growing awareness in the parish of the need to change if the parish is to have a presence in the community in the future. The Raw Data material indicates that the majority of participants are open to change. These findings are supported by the Locum Minister. It is also interesting to note that the change of Sunday Services times mentioned above, was an initiative of the congregation.

SKILLSET & LEADERSHIP

Skill set in the Parish. The parish believes that they are a genuinely warm and welcoming community of faith who are relatively conflict free.

They perceive their main gifts to be in the areas of serving (mercy and love), pastoral care and intercessory prayer. A number of participants showed enthusiasm in building upon these gifts and committing to some pastoral care training thus enabling them to continue the ministry in the Nursing Homes. There are a number of musicians, tradespeople, managers, and teachers amongst the regular congregation. Those gathered were keen to explore how they might create and maintain a website with the limited skills that they have and have begun an exploratory conversation with the Rector of Port Macquarie.

Skill set of a new Rector:

The 4 main characteristics identified were:

- I. A People person – someone who engages with God and God’s people (relational).
- II. A strong Leader
- III. Encourager/Equipper – someone who can raise up the Body of Christ
- IV. Teacher/Preacher

This report is based purely on the Raw Data material gathered at the Parish Vacancy Consultation. It is recommended that it be read in conjunction with the Parish Profile, and the Parishes Annual Report.

Prepared by: The Venerable Gail Hagon
The Venerable Stuart Webb.

RAW DATA is held in the Diocesan Office.

RAW DATA MATERIAL

The Church NOW – 3-5 things you celebrate as the Church now.

Conflict free

Small groups/Bible Studies****

Good teaching**

Blended Sunday Service ****

Play Centre***

Op Shop**

The retired clergy who hold the parish together **

What do you value about Worship?

Two services blended into one ***

Music**

Congregation participation

Reverence

Joy

Eucharistic ***

Churchmanship?

Evangelical **

Your 3 -5 main priorities for the next 3-5 years?

Personal growth***

Training/Equipping for outreach**

How to communicate with young teens

Multigenerational congregation ****

Embrace change

How to connect with the community

Pastoral Care

What obstacles do you see in addressing these priorities?

Ageing congregation***

Commitment

Sport

Insufficient activities to attract multiage***

Service times

Resistance to change

What other opportunities/initiatives are there for you to connect?

Expand the Ministry of Play Centre.

Establish connections with the numerous clubs in town ***

Openhouse Church** (Church outside)

Hospitality outside in community.

Special services Pet Blessings, Thanksgiving for volunteers etc

How sustainable/viable is your current structure of ministry?

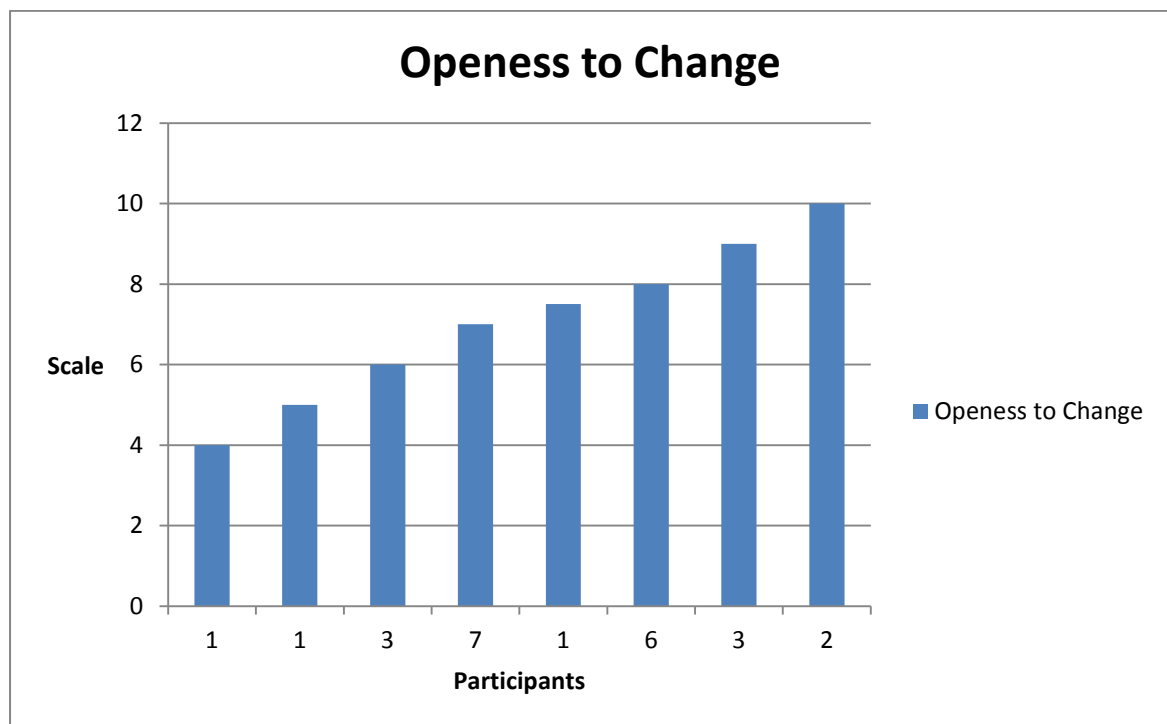
Not sustainable.

2 services to 1. Nursing homes (need to train volunteers if this is to be sustainable). SRE School Youth Group, loss of ordained ministers.

Hat Head services/church ***

Parish Administration.

How open to change are you?



Locum believes 65% are open to change.

Skill set in the Parish?

Trade people

Hospitality

Accounting

Managers

Teachers

Musicians

Pastoral Care, Serving (mercy and love) **

Genuine welcoming**

Intercessors**

Lay preachers

Organisational skills

Administration

Leadership

Strong leader***

Filled with HS

Able to raise up the body of Christ Encourager/Equipper**

Flexible

Open minded

Teacher/Preacher**

People skills* (including community connections, communications***