

# ***The Anglican Parish of Tweed Heads***



## ***Vacancy Consultation Report***

Compiled by: The Diocesan Archdeacon/MDO Gail Hagon, 2018 with the Mission Support Officer, Fr. Matthew Smedley.

**Notes:** 37 people in attendance at the Vacancy Consultation, with 110 people attending worship service just prior to the Vacancy Consultation.

Slightly more females than males

Average age 70+

**Overview:** The Vacancy Consultation Process began with an overview of the life of the Church nationally. The following observations were made:

- National in decline
- Aging Congregations
- Diminishing skillset
- Differences between urban and rural/regional ministry
- Longer Parish Tenures
- Fewer people going into full-time ministry

Some Statistics were offered in relation to our neighbouring Dioceses of Newcastle and Brisbane:

- Average of clergy
- Number of Parishes Vacant
- Availability of Locums
- Restructure and the amalgamation of parishes.

Particular points were also noted about our diocesan life:

- Decline in numbers
- Age of congregations
- Fewer priests being called to Northern Rivers
- Preference for one-centre parishes
- Fewer ordinands
- Number of ordained people that have left ministry in past 10 years
- The current number of vacant parishes in the diocese.

The Consultation Review itself centred around five main areas:

- The Parish **NOW**
- The Parish in the **FUTURE** (next 3 years)
- Openness to **CHANGE**
- Skillset of the community of faith
- Leadership

#### **EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW:**

The Parish of Tweed Heads is situated in a rapid growth corridor in the Northern Rivers of NSW. As such it has the potential to be a *lighthouse* parish in the life of the Diocese. This will involve some sound strategic planning.

Over a number of years the parish, both clergy and lay, have been involved in the life of the wider diocese by serving on Bishop in Council, Diocesan Committees and on the secretariat of the Cursillo movement.

There are a number of retired clergy that reside in the parish and are actively involved in the ministry of the parish. The parish also has a team of Licensed Lay Ministers.

The Parishes worship style is honouring of our Anglican tradition, whilst at the same time it is open and keen to explore new and creative ways of worshipping so that they can become an intergenerational community of faith.

Just recently the Parish has combined its two Sunday morning services into one service commencing at 9am. It was hoped that the releasing of the Priest from two services on a Sunday morning would allow the priest some extra time to create something new, something that could develop into intergenerational worship. There appears to have been little fallout by combining the two services. There were approximately 110+ at worship prior to the Vacancy Consultation.

Education for Ministry has been a strong influence in the parish, and as a result the gathered community of faith look for and appreciate good preaching and teaching.

Over the years the parish has expressed deep disappointment that there has been little or no contact with the local Anglican School, Lindisfarne. However, the past three years of ministry have seen a steady and growing relationship with the School and whilst it would be

safe to say that some parishioners wish that this relationship would translate to children in the pews on a Sunday morning, there is a growing awareness that this is not a reality.

The location of the present plant could well present a problem for the parish in terms of growth and outreach. From the Vacancy Consultation it would appear that some in the Parish recognise this fact and believe that a full audit of all plant and a review of their strategic plan are necessary. The current Rectory is not suitable for a Rector to live in.

In 2010 a history of the Parish was recorded to honour its 90 years of existence.

➤ The Parish **NOW**

The parish believes that three main characteristics that describe them as a parish NOW are:

1. Friendliness
2. Cooperative
3. Welcoming

They see themselves as a hardworking and caring community of faith, who are generous, faithful and compassionate. They believe that they are community minded and vigilant to community needs. Their main areas of connection with the wider community centre on the ministries of *Fred's Place*, the Ladies Breakfast and by establishing greater connections with the Lindisfarne community. They support the work of the Women's refuge and are well connected to agencies of care e.g. Hospital and Nursing Homes.

They value:

- The ministry to the aged
- Their fellowship with one another
- The music ministry

Over the past 3-5 years the new initiatives that they have embraced and appreciated the most are:

- *Fred's Place*
- Creative liturgies on printed sheets
- The care of the gardens
- And the use of IT

**CHURCH OF THE FUTURE:**

In looking at their future the Vacancy Consultation revealed that those gathered saw their main priorities for the next three years as being:

1. To review their strategic plan
2. To do an audit of their plant
3. Strengthen the links with Lindisfarne
4. To grow Intergenerational worship
5. Expand Pastoral care ministry
6. Equip the lay

Those gathered saw age, health and resistance to change as being the biggest obstacles in enabling them to achieve their goals.

Those gathered identified the following strengths (gifts) of the people in the parish:

- They are supportive
- Encouraging
- Friendly
- Loyal and respectful

They believe that the main gifts a new Rector would need in coming to the Parish of Tweed Heads to minister with them are someone who is:

- A clear communicator
- Someone with strong leadership skills
- A PR person, who is approachable, sensitive and aware
- A Teacher, and
- Someone who is open.

This report has been compiled by the raw data provided from the Vacancy Consultation by Archdeacon Gail Hagon.

The raw data material is held on file in the Diocesan Office.