

THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

A VACANCY CONSULTATION REPORT

**FOR SAINT PAUL'S ANGLICAN
BYRON BAY**



13.10.2019

VACANCY CONSULTATION

CREATING A PICTURE OF THE PARISH:

Saint Paul's Anglican Church welcomes people of all race, religion and sexual orientation. As they gather they are keen to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land.

Saint Paul's Anglican Church in Byron Bay is the main centre of the Anglican Parish of Byron Bay. St. Oswald's Anglican Church which is located 7klms outside of Byron at Broken Head, and St. Columba's is situated in Ewingsdale which is also 7klms from the town centre are the two Anglican Worship Centres that make up the Parish. In 2017, in an attempt to use more user friendly language, St. Paul's Anglican Church changed its to St. Paul's Spirituality Centre and is now reverting back to previous name. Whilst there is a hope that exists within the parish that they will be able to maintain all three centres the likelihood of this happening seems unlikely.

Over the past two and half – three years the parish has genuinely been on a journey of exploration as to how they might have a stronger presence in the wider community. Under the direction of their previous Rector they have made changes to worship centre at St. Paul's, increased their use of creative liturgies and experimented with innovative forms of mission e.g. meditation, and Spiritsong. The main buildings at Byron have also been used by more community groups such as, Pilates, Hulu dancing, Weather Shelter.

There are a number of activities that operate in the Parish on a regular basis:

- Op Shop Ministry
- Evensong & occasional supper
- Coffee Mornings
- SRE (done by the Rector of Bangalow)
- Nursing Home and Home Communion
- Ecumenical Services

The average attendance is usually around 25 at St. Pauls, and perhaps half a dozen locals at each of the other centres. Whilst the PC was aware of the statistical evidence that SRE in schools does not bring children into the life of faith, they still believe that this is an important ministry in the life of the parish. It should be noted that the Rector of the parish of Bangalow is the only person teaching SRE in the School.

The parish council felt that many in the parish were distressed due to the fact that their previous rector left after a very short incumbency. Whilst they would acknowledge that it was probably the right decision for the parish and for the previous rector there was a sense of dismay and uncertainty as to what happens next.

They are keen to keep looking forward and long to be better connected to the wider community. They have a desire to promote the use their building in a way that offers a welcome and a gathering place for those beyond the Church and a place where relationships can be forged. Whilst the congregation is aged they have a passion to be seen as, and known for their acts of *loving service*.

During the time of the consultation Parish Council used words like: Key learnings; reflections, Resurrection, and moving on.

In relation to key learnings, the parish council felt that they need to research their local community much better than they have done in the past. Whilst they are keen to serve and to explore a different way of being church, they have no idea what the community are looking for from them, nor have they undertaken any surveys or research. They believe that this will need to be attended to in any new ventures that they commit to.

Another key learning/reflection has been for the parish to use the networks that already exist within the community to promote their presence as an Anglican Church.

NEXT STEPS:

The parish council are aware of what skill sets the parish has and what skill sets the parish lacks. They are also aware of their age and the rate of decline in the Anglican Church both locally and nationally. This reality brings with it some uncertainty for the parish and whilst they are thankful for the locum ministry that is being offered they are looking for direction and are keen to keep moving forward.

Recently representatives of the parish joined with members from two other local parishes to explore what ministries and resources might be shared across the region so as to enhance mission and ministry. The parish are keen to continue this conversation.

Like many small congregations The Anglican Parish of Byron Bay relies on the income generated from the Op Shop to meet its budget. The Parish also has monies invested in a mission/ministry fund which is to be used for the creation of and the implementation of new forms of mission and ministry in the parish. As well as the three places of worship, the Parish also owns prime real estate on the main street in Byron Bay. This premises is currently leased.

NEW LEADER

From the conversation it was clear that the next leader of the parish would need to be someone who could continue the journey that the parish have embarked on, and it is a journey of change. Having said that it is important to realise that any planned changes would need to be owned by the parish, and not just the vision or the dream of the next leader. The plans would need to be those of mutual dreaming.

They are hoping for a leader that is able to incorporate the dreaming of the parish with the dreaming of the Byron Shires master plan for the Shire itself.

It would be important that the next leader not only be a visionary or a change agent but a collaborative leader who is able to genuinely listen to the community and to the worshipping community.

They believe that the next leader should take an active role in pastoral care. This is not to suggest that the next leader commits to all the pastoral needs of the parish, but is able to provide oversight/training of pastoral care for those in need.

Finally, they would hope that the next leader of the parish is able to preach relevant sermons that give hope and inspiration to those that gather for worship.