



## THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF GRAFTON

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### **Media Release Orara Valley 23 October 2020**

Plans for the future of Anglican Church ministry in the Orara Valley have been made public with a pledge that the area will not be without an active church.

The plans are part of a restructuring of Mission and Ministry within the Anglican Diocese of Grafton which embraces an area from Tweed Heads to Wauchope and west to Dorrigo

The restructuring program, which has been in the planning stages for more than 12 months, aims to improve the viability and effectiveness of Anglican ministry in the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast.

The Orara Valley currently has churches at Coramba, Glenreagh and Nana Glen.

The Synod of the Diocese of Grafton, the decision making body of the Anglican Church in the Northern Rivers and Mid North Coast, recently approved the closure of two Anglican Churches in the valley - Coramba and Glenreagh, within a period of two years.

The church at Nana Glen (which is about a 10 minute drive from both Coramba and Glenreagh) will remain open and provide ministry for people in the valley.

“We recognise that there are some areas in the Diocese that are less well resourced and face greater challenges for truly viable and growing ministry,” a Diocesan spokesperson said today

“The Parish of the Orara Valley is recognised as one of those places.

“For parishes like Orara, the Diocese is organising special priestly oversight to support the current members and help them to develop viable strategies for future ministry.

“Those strategies may mean that 'doing church' will look different in the future than what it does now.

“Congregations, within the Parish of Orara, are not of a size to justify retaining all three Valley churches especially with other Anglican churches in nearby Woolgoolga, Coffs Harbour and Grafton.

“The Orara Valley, in terms of regular congregation and finances, is one of our smallest parishes. It has not been able to pay a full time priest for many years and has relied on neighbouring parishes to provide priestly ministry.

“For these reasons the Synod has decided that churches at Coramba and Glenreagh will close.

“The Anglican Church at Nana Glen will remain open and active for people in the Valley.

“The people of the Valley have been closely consulted in this process of restructuring.

“What is required is focused ministry based on the needs of the people rather than simply being attached to another parish and reliant on them for their ministry.

“At this stage, interim ministry will be an ordained person who will help resource and raise up lay ministry and possible future ordained ministry.

“The Diocese of Grafton like many church organisations is at a cross roads as society has moved away from a time when church attendance and allegiance was the norm in society to a time when church attendance is the exception.

“Like many church organisations the Diocese has been working on how to reshape its current ministry structures to best serve the society of the 21st century, recognising the population trends in the region.

“As part of its looking to the future, the Diocese recently approved Restructuring for Mission and Ministry at its annual meeting of 130 representatives from parishes, schools and chaplaincies from across the Diocese.

“This seeks to improve the viability and effectiveness of our ministry by:

- Merging some less vibrant parishes to make a parish with adequate resources;
- Creating cooperative groups of parishes to generate initiatives through collective action;
- Consolidating ministry centres to decrease the management burden on parish ministry; and
- Encouraging new ministries that take place away from church property

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