

The Kyogle and Surrounds Ministry Unit. Diocese of Grafton

VACANCY CONSULTATION REPORT AUGUST 2023

Compiled by: Reverend Canon Sally Miller (MSO – North) and Reverend Ron Miller

AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE VACANCY CONSULTATION

Participants:

Consultation held Saturday August 19th, 10am – 12pm

11 in attendance

Average age 70+

Male/female representation fairly even

2 Discussion tables in groups of 5 and 6

Notes:

- 5 of the 11 participants had engaged in a Vacancy Consultation process previously.
- There was representation from St James Kyogle, none from Woodenbong or Urbenville.
- Only 1 of the LLM's was present; Noel, the LLM who generally takes the Urbenville service was not present.

Morning tea was available as the participants gathered, there was a sense of nervousness and agitation among those who came, they had many questions about what to expect.

THE VACANCY CONSULTATION

Welcome - led by John Doman (Warden)

Opening Prayer - by Reverend Ron Miller

Explanation of the procedure – by Reverend Sally

The focus of the consultation centred around five main areas:

- The Church NOW,
- The Church of the Future,
- Skillsets amongst us,
- Openness to change, and
- Skill sets of a new Rector

Each of the sections was led by Reverend Sally.

THE CHURCH NOW:

Participants were slow to start the discussion. Once the groups had started it was evident from both the discussion and the raw data material provided that the parish most values it's fellowship and sense of family in the church. They recognised the significant work of the Op Shop, and it's volunteers.

The main points articulated in relation to The Church Now were:

Worship:

- keen for learning through bible studies
- importance of the social aspect of church – especially the morning tea after.

Mission & Outreach:

- Op shop ministry and the number of volunteers involved

General:

- Welcoming community.
- Caring for one another in prayerful and practical ways

THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE – Dreams moving forward.

The primary focus of the discussion on both tables was the desire to have more people in church, particularly younger people, and families.

The main points articulated in relation to **The Church of the future** focussed on:

Worship & Discipleship:

- Creating a worshipping community where families, children and teens felt welcomed; Sunday School, Interdenominational Youth Group
- More LLM training (although I think this meant more LLM's to be trained)

Mission and Outreach:

- Greater involvement with other denominations in Kyogle
- A young mum's group – whilst it is not written in the notes, the table conversation was centred around the idea of support for teenaged and young mothers.
- Strengthening the Op Shop, specifically with someone to run the Op Shop.

Those gathered named the main obstacles of living into their future dreams as:

- Aging congregation.
- Sport on weekend
- Young people too busy to come to church and have no interest in it.
- Distance between the centres.
- Current LLM's very elderly and there are no new ones.
- finances have dwindled. one table was convinced that the Diocese took all their money in the form of Church 'taxes'.

SKILLSET OF THOSE IN THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Participants really struggled with this section and were initially unable to identify any real skills. After some prompting and whole group conversation each table was eventually able to offer some thoughts.

The main skills sets of the parish were identified as:

- Excellent buildings.
- Good parish council and wardens
- Work of the LLM's
- Well run and well organised Op Shop
- Welcoming people

OPENNESS TO CHANGE

Participants were given the Openness to Change sheets to fill out, with 1 being totally resistant and 10 being totally open. The table shows the results:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1		2		2		2	2	1	1
									11

The tone of conversation around the tables very much reflected this table.

DON'T CHANGE

The response to this question was troubling, as their initial conversations highlighted a great mistrust and misunderstanding of the Diocesan Restructure and it's process, particularly in one table group. The things they do not wish to see changed are:

- Any of our churches – keep all centres open.
- Maintain all of our weekly worship services.
- Morning tea.

SKILLSET OF INCUMBENT

The participants were very keen to affirm the giftedness of the previous incumbent.

The main skills they are seeking are:

- Good people skills and a willingness to visit people
- Willing to know and become a part of the wider community
- Good listening skills
- Encourager
- a good preacher/teacher
- comfortable working across the generations and ages
- energetic
- IT skills

The was conversation about the gender and family nature of the new incumbent, with some parishioners feeling that a younger person with a family would enhance their community connections and ministry.

Maurice Powell (LLM) concluded the process with thanks to Reverends Ron and Sally Miller and the morning was concluded with prayer.

This report has been prepared by: Reverend Canon Sally Miller. MSO North.

Raw Data Material held in the Diocesan Office