



fresh hope

ANNUAL REPORT

Churches of Christ in NSW
and the ACT for year ending
30 June 2022

Contents

- 03 Message from the Executive Ministry Director
- 04 Message from Churches of Christ Community Care CEO
- 07 Message from Conference Executive President
- 08 Mission & Ministry
- 18 Fresh Hope Engage
- 24 ACOM
- 26 GMP
- 28 Property Trust
- 32 Fresh Hope Communities
- 38 Financial Reports
- 44 Minutes of 2020 AGM

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The Ethos Team have continued to meet to refine the ethos work, incorporating feedback from Collective 21 and regional conversations in 2022.

From the Executive Ministry Director

Liminality, loss and love

How do we make sense of this seemingly longer-than-average season of liminality?

Liminality is a state of transition from one age or stage to the next. Throughout life, we experience these transitions on scales, large and small.

Our present collective liminality seems to be increased in duration and intensity. This makes for challenging leadership conditions, challenging relational conditions, challenging mental health conditions, and many more challenges.

These seasons are usually disorienting, perplexing and anxiety-producing. Questions and doubts, both old and new, emerge. In them, our desire for something concrete heightens. I am immediately drawn to the experience of Israel in the wilderness.

While we usually long for these seasons of uncertainty to be done, the transition also says that something has been lost – what was, is now gone. This involves grief. And processing it cannot be rushed. Interpreting it cannot either.

As meaning makers, all of us have been attempting to understand how to navigate these days that Mark Sayers calls the “grey zone”. The compass needle flicks without seeming to land anywhere fixed ... at least for long. How do you find north?

I honestly cannot tell you how thankful I am for Jesus, our ‘true north’ and fullest expression of the Father’s love. God’s love, as Romans 5:5 reminds us, “has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us”. Poured into our hearts. How do we linger here?

I am convinced that in times of adversity, the love of God shines all the brighter, which is precisely how Romans 5 begins: with our sufferings. Here, in suffering, we can become more aware of His love. This was Paul’s prayer for the Ephesians at the end of chapter 3; that they would comprehend the breadth, length, height and depth of Christ’s love that surpasses knowledge.

Based on another prayer of his for this same group in chapter 1 – that the eyes of their hearts be enlightened – he desired that it would be a ‘heart’ knowing. An acceptance in the innermost places that they are the beloved of God. This knowing is a gift from the Spirit who pours it in. This sounds like abundance – quite the opposite of a world threatened with scarcity. We can only respond to this reality with awe. How good is our God! How great is our God! Praise Him! Praise Him!

So, I see this continual process at work among us: adversity leads to awareness, leads to acceptance, which leads to awe. If this annual report reflects nothing more than an expression of awe and praise to God, I would be deeply thankful.

As churches of Christ NSW & ACT, we could report on the clarifying of strategies, which we have done. We could report on clarifying our collective identity and name, which we are doing. We could report on how we are positioning the resources of this network that the ‘centre’ stewards to exist for the ‘parts’ of the network, which will, Lord willing, be done. But, as Paul reminds us in 1 Corinthians 13, all this is nothing if we don’t have love.

Love remains with faith and hope as the greatest of the three. Love never fails. And, more than ever, this needs to be recaptured as the message of the Church.

Jesus said in John 13, “By this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another.” The message of love is lived as well as spoken and extends as a knowing to ‘all people’. This is simple Christianity. This is who we are – simply Christians.

But is our love for one another what we, Jesus’ disciples, are known for among ‘all people’? Sadly, collectively, we are not. We are more known for scandal, self-interest and sectarianism. But we know that’s not the whole story. Or even the real story.

Perhaps this longer season of liminality is exactly the disruption that is needed. I trust it is because Jesus remains enthroned as Lord over all. Something in the Church is dying. It is in process. And in this liminality and loss, something is also coming alive again. Something, maybe many things, are being recaptured in the Church. In liminality and loss, I guarantee it is love that will emerge triumphant. Because love never fails.

May what follows, as stories of the network you are a part of, cause your heart to see and praise a God who is love, as active in the world He so loves as He has ever been. May you also know the narrative of the deep love of God’s people for Him and others.

Daz Farrell
Executive Ministry Director,
Fresh Hope Network



From the Community Care CEO

Churches of Christ Community Care ('Community Care') is the ministry of churches of Christ in NSW that consists of Fresh Hope Care, Fresh Hope Venues, Fresh Hope Engage and Group Operations (Corporate Services).

The 2021-22 financial year has been one of change, excitement, unforeseen challenges and, at times, stress across our ministries and operations. Community Care has pulled together during this time, and there are amazing stories of individuals and teams going above and beyond with incredible acts of kindness and service.

During the year, Community Care Management and the Community Care Board, in consultation with Conference Executive, adopted the following organisational values, foundationally based within churches of Christ's ethos:

KINDNESS: Genuine care and consideration for each individual's needs and well-being promote human flourishing.

"... but the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control" (Galatians 5:22-23).

INTEGRITY: Excellence in our work, sincerity in our deeds, adhering to the highest ethical principles and doing what we say we'll do.

"Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil, cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9).

CONNECTION: We need to be connected to one another and to a cause greater than ourselves, which promotes human flourishing.

"From Him, the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work" (Ephesians 4:16).

OPTIMISM: From simple contentment to life's greatest joys, an optimistic outlook is contagious and helps us all get the most out of life.

Building on these values, the Community Care Board, in consultation with Conference Executive, resolved to adopt the name 'Fresh Hope Communities' from 1 July 2022. This is the trading name describing all the ministry initiatives, including Fresh Hope Venues, Fresh Hope Engage, Fresh Hope Housing Inc, Fresh Hope Care and Fresh Hope Operations.



As a leadership team, some of the challenges to which we have responded during the 2021-22 financial year include:

- The ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (which has increased the cost and compliance of our aged care service offerings and required us to temporarily cease our operations at The Tops, our development of accommodation at Greenstead Valley, Joadja, as well as some forced redundancies and broader support services hiring freeze.).
- Supply chain and workforce impact on our construction projects at Kiama (Cedar on Collins), East Maitland (Green Hills) and Marrickville (Nightingale Marrickville) as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic flow-on effects.
- Closure of our McCauley Lodge Residential Care Service in Thirroul (as a result of increased operating risks and viability issues for the continued operation of this residential care service).
- Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.
- Governance restructure of Churches of Christ Community Care.

The impact on our service delivery (in all areas) and financial performance throughout the COVID-19 pandemic has been significant. The impact in the 2021-2022 financial year was substantially greater than the previous financial year. Our dedicated and high-quality teams and team leaders within Community Care have managed this well.

Of particular note in this reporting period are Lynn Bailey (Director of Senior Communities), Sarah Ramsey (Head of Aged Care Services), and our Residential Care Service managers within our broader team.

These exceptional leaders have stewarded their responsibilities and accountabilities well throughout this season. Their continued contribution, commitment and service to Churches of Christ Community Care stand us well for the future.

The wider executive leadership team of Community Care – Scott Griffiths (Chief Operating Officer), Glyn Williams (Chief Risk Officer), Arianna Mason (General Manager of People, Culture and Strategy), Sam Buckerfield (General Manager Corporate Communications), Daniela Duarte (General Manager Impact and Engagement), Glen Hegner, (Chief Information Officer), David Hanrahan (Manager Major Projects) and David Tolman (Director Accommodation, Communities and Program) continued to provide outstanding support and service delivery throughout the 2021-22 financial year.

Community Care Board & Governance

The Community Care Board was established in April 2021 with founding Board Members from each service stream of Community Care. The creation of this Board has strengthened our governance, charter and committee framework capabilities. These are all the activities of aged care and retirement living, outdoor education training and Christian camping, community engagement, church community program partnerships and auspice arrangements and social, affordable and community housing.

For the 2021-2022 financial year, the Community Care Board Members included:

- Stephen Toomey (Chair)
- Karen Baker
- Daniel Dwyer (Chief Executive Officer)
- Daz Farrell (Executive Ministry Director)
- Chris Powell
- Kelvin Taylor
- Victor Tee
- Kirryn Zerna

Each of these Board Members accepted appointments until August 2022, while board recruitment occurred against a capability matrix (developed in conjunction by the Community Care Board and its Committees and Conference Executive).

For 2021-22, the Community Care Board Members will be:

- Raewyn Williams (Chair)
- Alana Cooper
- Daniel Dwyer (ex officio Chief Executive Officer)
- Daz Farrell (ex officio Executive Ministry Director)
- Elaine Griffin
- Chris Grover
- Tracy Harding
- Kirryn Zerna

Projects and Investment

Investment in developing Community Care's property assets and stock has been a key priority over the past three years. Currently, Community Care's aged care and retirement living stock is outdated and cannot serve our community's future aged care and retirement living needs. Significant planning and development has been underway in the preceding three-year period.

The expansion of Community Care's offering of camping and accommodation options has been a key strategic priority over the past three years. Investment in a new offering at Greenstead Valley, Joadja (in the NSW Southern Highlands), has commenced with installing eco-tiny homes available for hire. This is the first iteration of our future offering in Joadja. >>



New office in Rhodes Corporate Park

From the President, Conference Executive

The master planning and proposed staged construction of Community Care’s first location, Pendle Hill, continued to unfold in the 2021-2022 financial year. A successful rezoning was achieved via a Planning Proposal, resulting in a significant uplift in the density and diversity of services offered on the site.

The master plan includes a partnership with Pathways Church (Pendle Hill Church of Christ). It envisages a worship and meeting space for Pathways, residential aged care services, retirement living, affordable housing, allied health services and community facilities.

In the latter half of 2023, we look forward to the opening of ‘Cedar on Collins’, a 54-room retirement community in Kiama.

In April of this year, the ground was broken and progress is in full swing at our new site for the Green Hills Aged Care community. The new four-level residential care service will include 159 permanent beds and overnight respite capability. The innovative design of this new development will integrate the beautiful surrounding natural landscape, and the proposed models of care will cultivate an intentional and non-institutional ‘care household’ environment. Once completed, Green Hills will feature wellness and health services, a café and community functions space, as well as a range of outdoor activities to draw together the broader local community with our Green Hills community.

Office Relocation

COVID-19 has changed the way we work. This fact, coupled with the end of the lease at the Rhodes Ministry Centre office at 3 Rider Boulevard in July 2021, led us to relocate to a newer and more purpose-oriented facility in Rhodes Corporate Park. The relocation provided the opportunity to design and construct a workspace catering to the changes required in a COVID and post-COVID work environment, specifically allowing for more flexible working spaces, meeting rooms and video conference facilities. The new office location includes quiet pods, a kitchen, staff auditorium, collaboration spaces, teams meeting rooms and outdoor spaces.

People

The continued development of the People and Culture Team has been a priority in the 2021-2022 financial year in a challenging staffing and talent retention environment. Initiatives around mental health and caring for staff have been a high priority for the team, as has addressing the challenges of remote work, culture in a remote environment, and the physical restrictions occurring at our different locations as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and exposure.

With thanks

I would like to highlight the dedication, commitment, service and mentorship of the Chair of Churches of Christ Community Care, Stephen Toomey.

Not only has Stephen continued to be a tremendous support and mentor to me in my role as CEO, but also broader support to the Executive Leadership Team of Community Care. Stephen has been a longstanding advocate of the ministry of churches of Christ in a variety of roles over the past four decades.

Stephen received a significant and well-deserved honour this year, having been awarded the Medal of Order (OAM) for service to the community, particularly through the church in the Australia Day Honours List. I have witnessed Stephen’s leadership firsthand, and those of us who have worked closely with Stephen would agree that he leads the Community Care Board with tremendous diligence, patience and humility. I cannot think of someone more worthy of this honour.

To our Conference Churches and representatives, thank you for your continued prayers and support. Despite the obvious challenges, all of us working in Community Care look forward to the year ahead as a team.

We look forward to the opportunities of impacting the communities we serve on behalf of churches of Christ in NSW. To continue to partner in cultivating belonging in the communities we’ve been entrusted with.

Have you ever considered how trees in a forest work together? Perhaps you’ve thought of trees competing for sunlight, water and nutrients? Evidence shows that trees in a forest have evolved “to live in cooperative, interdependent relationships, maintained by communication and a collective intelligence similar to an insect colony”¹ (Grant, 2018).

In many ways, the former picture reminds me of how the Church can be seen to have competed in the past for people, resources and property. And the most recent revelations, a picture of how the Church in the present realises how we are to be with one another and could be into the future.

That is my experience as I see faith communities coming together, learning from one another, sharing resources and working together, as if we are part of one body ... we know well this image given by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12:12-17 and Colossians 1:18. Jesus also gave us a powerful image of this truth when he described himself as the vine and his followers as the branches.

Our EMD, Daz Farrell, often talks about “healing, integration and unity” as key pillars in strengthening our network. Our conviction is that this will be achieved by strengthening our churches through strengthening our leaders. I sense COVID-19 has called his Church to return to repentance, renewal and restoration for this purpose.

I extend my sincerest thanks to all who have contributed their time, energy and resources to the many functions of our Conference office. My thanks also to our church leaders, many of whom have opened their homes, their facilities and their hearts to engaging around our ethos, hosting regional gatherings and training events such as safe churches and prayer meetings to enable the strengthening of the network.

This past year, Conference Executive has been transitioning into becoming a governance board with an increased focus on discernment, spiritual and governance matters, and overseeing the network’s resources.

The change to three-year terms for Conference Executive members will enable this work to continue, bringing stability and increased corporate memory. We have also seen the implementation of a capability-based Fresh Hope Communities Board to oversee the highly regulated aged care sector.

This year also saw the inaugural ‘All Aboard’ dinner where the boards of Conference Executive, The Property Trust, Fresh Hope Communities and ACOM gathered (pictured right). It was a wonderful time of relational connection and seeing the threads of God’s work tying us together.

Finally, thank you to the Mission & Ministry team, which has worked tirelessly to be the feet of Conference Executive, serving, ministering and praying alongside our Conference churches.

Victor Tee
President,
Conference Executive



Discernmentarian

In 2021, the Board saw fit to include a Discernmentarian at the table in meetings. The role of a Discernmentarian is to raise awareness and assist in incorporating spiritual discernment in what might otherwise feel like a corporate business meeting. If God wants us to do his will and not our own, then some tangible measures to seek his guidance prayerfully should be part of the flow of the meetings. Several mechanisms have been included that allows board members to share their sense of the spiritual flow of the meeting. Assisting board members to understand the implications of bias and vested interests and willingness to be transparent about them, as well as the part ‘coming to holy indifference’ needs to play, is also part of the role. ‘Resting’ decisions made in principle for further ‘holy listening’ is, again, a powerful discernment principle the board seeks to practice. The role of Discernmentarian has also been cultivating deeper relational connections during retreat times, which fosters a more congenial Board presence in the meetings. Sue Whiteley has been acting in this role to date.

Mission & Ministry

Spiritual Leadership

The second half of 2021 saw NSW & ACT in a four-month lockdown, which impacted many of its programs.

Uprising was cancelled and Drastic had to move online. Thanks to Gil & Jade Corr who gave their energy and creativity to leading the Fresh Hope team through these challenges.

SYNC camp, led by Avril Mundy from Kingsway Church, was held as a summer camp in January due to its cancellation.

Navigate also had to cancel their winter school and instead offered a series of online gatherings. The group was able to enjoy a final in-person retreat together in December.

The uncertainty of border and gathering restrictions meant Collective 2021 and our AGM moved to online events. The one-day Collective event was noted as a highlight in a challenging season, with more than 150 leaders participating in key sessions with EMD Daz Farrell, elders Jean Flint and Beth Robinson, and giving feedback around the work of the Ethos Team.

In addition, three Network Leader Gatherings were held. Two, in latter 2021 provided wisdom around the challenges to church life in a season of controversy around the restrictions applying to non-vaccinated persons.

In early 2022, a number of leaders from the Network were invited to give a “word in season”.

We paused or “fallowed” a number of programs in 2022 – Navigate, Spiritual Mentoring and A Pilgrim’s Way. The goal was to create a space in which we could be attentive to the fruit of these through some survey and consultation work and to seek discernment for their future form and direction. The team has been deeply encouraged by the work of a number of churches in our network who have been investing in their own locally-shaped formation programs and groups.

More than 30 ministry leaders, chaplains, interns and Mission & Ministry staff gathered for Pilgrimage at the end of May, attending to learn more about the Network as they seek endorsement or consider affiliation with our network.

Our communications team continued telling stories of our churches serving their communities through lockdown and highlighted the impact of COVID-19 through their Frontline Workers series. In 2022, they shared the devastation and resilience of communities impacted by flooding in Northern NSW. We have also continued to produce stories from our past and recent history.

The team produced four podcasts – Lessons from Lockdown, Women in Pioneering, Discernment, and Restoration History.



Hellos and Goodbyes

There have been a number of changes within the team in the past year. It was with sadness that we farewelled John Crowther in July and Charlie Burke in September. Jade Corr went on maternity leave in December (welcoming beautiful baby Ada later in the month).

We were also sad to say goodbye to Marianne Crowther, who served as Senior Chaplain, in December last year and to Gil Corr who finished in his role as Youth Catalyst at the end of May this year. At the end of 2021 Stephen Cha & Jo Huntington joined the Pioneering team and Kym Dixon stepped into the role of Leader Health. In 2022, Ruth Lewis-Jones was welcomed into the Communications team and as the Fresh Hope Youth team facilitator. Emily Ferguson also rejoined the Communications Team.

– Anne Simpson



More than 30 pastors, chaplains, ministry leaders gathered for Pilgrimage at The Tops Conference Centre in May, 2022.

Generations

SYNC Summer Escape camp encourages future planning

The much-loved SYNC Camp returned in January as SYNC Summer Escape – offering more than 70 campers from Year 4-8 a new and agile format.

Traditionally held in the September school break, SYNC's leadership team decided to reschedule the event due to the extended COVID-19 lockdown in the Greater Sydney area.

Held at The Tops, campers participated in Christ-centred experiences in an upbeat and supportive environment.

Georgia Cross, a Program Developer with The Tops, shared how exciting the challenge was to create a new format that fit both the camp's objectives and the requirements of COVID.

"We focused on building the program from an outdoors perspective, looking at doing it through experiences ... focusing on the physical embodiment of these things outdoors. We focused on creating small groups, which was an intentional part of the program," she said.

"I take my hat off to our team that work behind the scenes on that and making sure everyone is safe and feels safe. All the kids and parents knew that there was a safe environment to come to."

Part of SYNC's success was the minimal impact COVID had on the camp and its leaders, which demonstrated the diligence and strategy both leaders and staff showed.

Avril Mundy, SYNC coordinator, affirmed the work of The Tops program and staff who balanced the needs of COVID safety with genuine connection and community.

"The Tops staff were brilliant; they were so good. The facilities were brilliant and everything was available. We could socially distance really well," she said.

Avril noted that offering SYNC Summer Escape has also permitted the organising team to dream about the future for young people and camp experiences, particularly in the current climate of the pandemic.

"How do you maintain ministry and ministry experiences in times when everything is restricted? There was a time to say no, and they were the right decisions at the time. But now I'm processing what does ministry look like for young people? I don't know the answers, but I'm trying things!"

– Gil Corr



Fuse, a twice-yearly youth rally hosted by local churches in our network, continues to be a highly-anticipated event in the annual calendar.

Generations

Online Drastic

With the many planned events and rallies being impacted by the pandemic over the past two years, an exciting opportunity was afforded to our youth this year with Drastic Camp being hosted online.

The last week of September traditionally has up to 250 young people come together for Drastic at The Tops Conference Centre, but this year young people gathered around laptops and phone screens to engage with the week-long conference.

Focusing on the theme 'What the World Will Never Take', students were able to engage with daily devotionals on the life of Jesus, community-building activities, challenges, and live-streamed youth rallies in the evening. Although the camp couldn't happen in person, the week replicated many of the camp's favourite parts in an online forum.

As part of the planning team, Pete Sargent, from Connect Church Engadine, knew it was important to still host this event for young people.

"I think it was important to put on. From experience with my kids, it's one of the things they look forward to the most; getting together with other Christians outside their local bubble, and for them to understand that they're not on the journey alone," Pete said.

"They got to meet new people when we were doing the online thing. It was really good to connect with people and create that opportunity regardless of our circumstance."

Inevitably, the camp framework looked slightly different, with a primary focus on personal devotion time. This focus encouraged young people to dive into the Scriptures in a new way.

"Our kids took a lot out of meeting together prior to a sermon and focusing their attention on God prior to a talk," Pete said. "Our kids really enjoyed the devotions ... day two of devotions we spoke on Lectio Divina, and it was a way to read scripture a little bit deeper. Sometimes when we do small groups, it can be talking and talking, but I think the process of Lectio Divina made it a lot easier to include scripture in general conversation."

Melissa Kettlewell, from Southern Illawarra Church of Christ, attended the conference as a leader with her youth group and enjoyed the many aspects of the online experience.

"I found Drastic online to be a really interesting experience," she said. "It enabled more of our youth to attend than has ever before, as well as our leaders. Previously I have been the only one of our leaders who has been able to lead on Drastic, so I enjoyed being able to share the experience."

For Mel, the online conference challenged her perspective of what can be achieved in ministry through new and creative ways. Reflecting on what she learnt through the week, she said, "It doesn't matter what form fellowship takes. What matters is investing in our youth and taking time to share and contemplate God's word. Being online has reminded me of this."

A big thank-you to those who were a part of the planning of this event: Ruth Lewis-Jones, Peter and Brianna Sargent, Tina Phillips, and Gil and Jade Corr.

– Gil Corr



Mission & Ministry

Church Engagement

Life, Death and Resurrection

Emerging from lockdown in September 2021, Walter Brueggemann's framework of praying the Psalms through seasons of 'orientation, disorientation and re-orientation' has been helpful when reckoning with what Mark Sayers calls the 'grey zone' of uncertainty. We are certainly disorientated! In an unprecedented time for the Church, coming to terms with our mortality as the body of Christ has been and continues to be a journey of humility. We deny ourselves and carry our cross to follow Christ. This takes surrender, yet the spirit of darkness would have us always desire to turn stones into bread (Matthew 4:3).

Thomas Merton cuts through our anxiety with the clarion call, asking if we could let go of our "... compulsion to produce what nobody needs. But simply to glorify God by accepting His gift and His work." This means paying attention: 'Jesus, what are you up to, and how can we join you?'

Before there is resurrection, there must be a death. This is the point of despair for the life of the Church. What do you mean we must die? Isn't this counter-

intuitive to growing the Church? Yet facing our mortality could be just the antidote to new life.

The apostle Paul declares in his mission work through Asia that "... we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves, but on God who raises the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:8-9).

Our ability to rely on ourselves and our idols will always be futile. If we try and hang on to life, invariably, we lose it! We often think that if only we had more young people, or more families, or more generous givers, or more board members, then things might be better.

Instead, what if we had a few people that hungered and were thirsty for righteousness and justice's sake? What if we had a few people practising peace-making in their communities? What if we had a few people who prayed, 'not my will but yours be done on earth? What if our gathering reflected a liturgy of becoming Christlike for the sake of others and our world?

– Nathan Marshall



Achievements

- Walking alongside four provisional affiliating churches
- Engaging with three emerging pioneering communities
- Supporting three local churches that are closing this year, with others in transition
 - Working with church planting leaders ecumenically at a bi-monthly gathering
- Preparing our primer for mission course, Frontier, for a 2023 cohort
 - Engaging with churches across NSW/ACT in regional gatherings
 - Working with Micro-Church Australia
 - Visiting leaders, churches, services and with elders



Regional Conversations began in May 2022 as a way of engaging pastors and their elders in the work of the ethos. It was also an opportunity to gather and listen to pastors and ministry leaders in regional settings.

Mission & Ministry

Ministry Endorsements

Churches of Christ in NSW and the ACT currently has 174 endorsed people:

Existing	180 (As of 30-Jun-2021)
New	17
Concluded	23
Total	174 (As of 30-Jun-2022)

We currently have 51 authorised SRE Teachers from 25 churches across NSW.

I would like to acknowledge the conscientious work of Taksan Scott in ensuring that all endorsement and SRE teacher approvals are followed through effectively.

Safe Ministry

Safe Ministry implementation continues to be an area of progress and learning for many of our churches. Despite lockdown restrictions from July to October 2021, many churches have been able to adapt and host their first Creating Safe Spaces workshop during the 2021-22 period, including Bowral, Lyons/ Nationsheart (Canberra), River Community (Albury), Hope & Harvest Church (Auburn) and Katoomba Lighthouse. Several churches have hosted their second (or third) workshop, including Liberty (Greenacre), Kingsway (Caringbah), The Chapel (Belmore), Kingsford, Restore (Castle Hill), New Day (Wollongong), Epping, Penrith and Asquith.

It has been particularly pleasing to see non-English-speaking communities engaging more with the implementation of their safe ministry systems policies and procedures. Creating Safe Spaces and the related

Safe Church policies and procedures are now available in Korean.

We now have five workshop presenters (three based in Sydney, one in Canberra and one on the Central Coast), meaning we can extend our reach with regard to the delivery of the Creating Safe Spaces course.

In May 2022, the Endorsement Review Group (ERG) decided that all endorsed people must complete Creating Safe Spaces every three years, even if the course is not a requirement of the local church. This decision aligns with recommendations 16.43 and 16.47 of the Royal Commission and places a responsibility on religious institutions to ensure that religious leaders are adequately trained in boundaries, ethics in ministry and child safety. As of 30 June 2022, 92 per cent of endorsed people have completed the course within the past three years. This is a very pleasing upward trend.

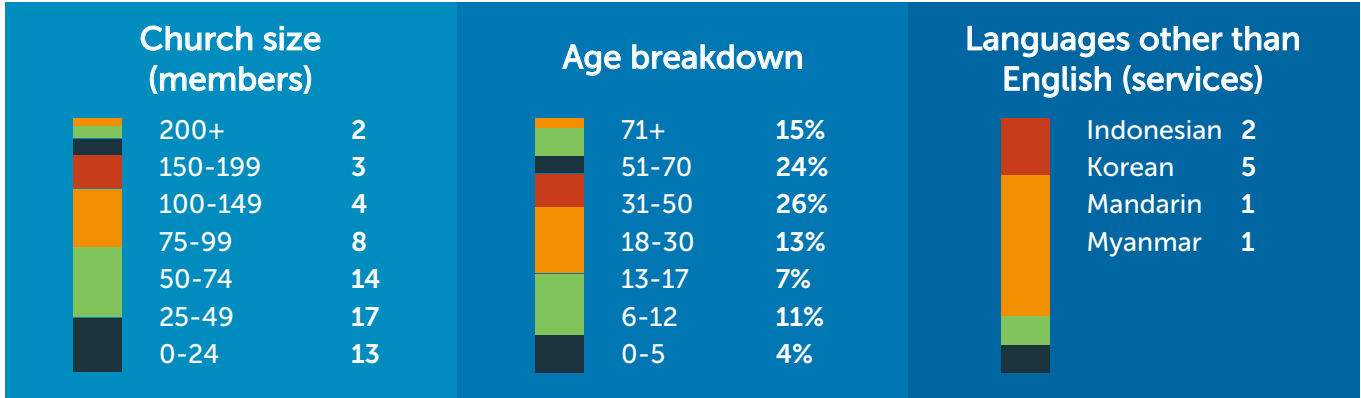
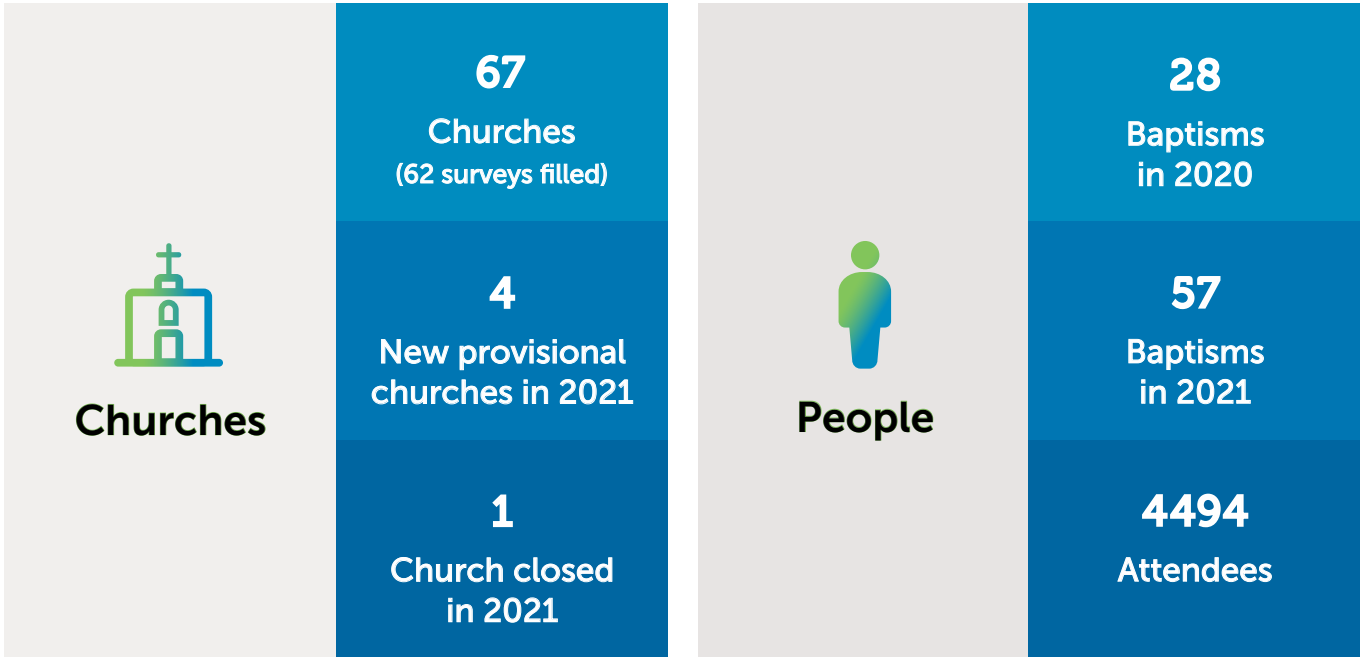
An important policy has been added to the suite of Safe Church policies and procedures in August 2021. The Conflict of Interest Policy is available on the Ministry Portal and is highly recommended for adoption as it outlines how local churches can appropriately manage their conflicts of interest regarding finances, appointments and the handling of allegations.

Professional Supervision continues to improve in uptake across the network. As of 30 June 2022, just over 50 per cent of endorsed people have received regular professional supervision. We have been ensuring that supervisors are appropriately trained and accountable before they can provide their supervision services to endorse people in our network.

– Richard Reeve



Statistics



Mission & Ministry

Property and Projects

Over the past 12 months, churches of Christ in NSW & ACT has been engaging directly with churches across our network to provide a range of support and advice through our Church Partnership Program.

The property team developed a Property Asset Plan (PAP) for all Conference-governed properties that will be implemented over the next five years. The impact of this will see increased utilisation of our properties, repositioning of assets and a program of capital works to improve properties in compliance and fit for purpose use.

In a recent success story, one of our disused church/childcare properties in Western Sydney engaged with a community organisation called Community Xchange to establish an indigenous preschool. Using its community power and support, the preschool undertook a significant refurbishment of our property and committed to a three-year lease as they established their work and connections in the community.

Over the past 12 months, we have been involved in the following:

 **6**
Major Church Projects
(1 Regional, and 5 Metro Sydney)

 **20**
Church Partnership Projects

 **32**
ConfEx governed properties

These look like:

Major projects:

Project feasibility, concept, partnership and consultant management and development

Partnership projects:

- Licencing, leasing, rental, agreement and management of properties
- Project advice and feasibility
- Consultant support and engagement

- Legal and planning advice
- Compliance and WHS
- Construction and refurbishment management with builders
- Council engagement

ConfEx properties:


Utilisation of ConfEx properties for establishing churches and ministries, including refurbishment, maintenance and licencing.

Together our approach is to work with churches and their communities to best manage their properties, assets and resources.

In the next 12 months, we will continue to:

 **2**
Support Major Church Projects
(2 in Metro Sydney)

 **6**
Support Church Partnership Projects
(Across NSW & ACT)

 **32**
ConfEx governed properties
(With 41 leases and licences)

As we partner with churches and ministries in a wide range of property projects, we seek to ask: how will we measure the outcome of a project through a threefold lens.

We call this the Return on Investment (ROI) lenses of Missional, Community, Financial.

This will be achieved through linking the vision, mission, strategy and health now and into the future with project management strategies such as feasibility, due diligence, and stakeholder and community engagement to ensure viability and sustainability.

– Matt Young



CommunityXChange co-founder Fran McCarthy with Property & Projects manager Matt Young

Property Partnerships

Mt Druitt centre transitions into a pre-school

The old Mt Druitt Church of Christ and Childcare Centre that laid vacant since 2020 is again fulfilling its purpose to support local families and children this year through its new tenants – a not-for-profit called CommunityXchange.

Fran McCarthy, co-founder of CommunityXchange, and colleague Karen Isaacs, had been searching last year for a building to start their preschool learning centre for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

While on a walk one afternoon, Fran happened across the vacant childcare centre and couldn't believe her eyes. She found a phone number on the building, called it, and got Matt Young.

Remembering this moment, Matt reflected, "I have worked in and around Mt Druitt for many years now. To hear how this centre could be established as the starting point of this amazing vision – that excited me.

"This opportunity builds upon the history of Mt Druitt Church of Christ and their Child Care Centre, ministering since the 1970s. Our view is we must steward our assets for the generations ahead, so I see this as a significant win for the Mt Druitt community."

Fran's heart and vision for this centre resonates deeply with the values of our network's ministries.

"We are a preschool, but we want it to really feel like a home," Fran said. "My vision is in six months, there will be [indigenous] elders here on this couch, aunts and uncles outside with the kids, and mothers inside breastfeeding their babies and doing their weaving.

"It's going to be a sacred space – a healing space," she smiled.

– Josh Gibbon



Fresh Hope Engage

We are thankful to our many church partners who continued to find a way to serve vulnerable people in their local communities, particularly their adaptability during the lockdowns of mid-2021 and the continued ups and downs of post-COVID complexities. We are also thankful for the donations faithfully given to support these initiatives.

Crisis appeals have become a regular feature in Australia over the past few years, responding to floods, drought, fires and floods. In 2022, we have again supported relief efforts in the flood-affected regions of the Northern Rivers and Hawkesbury regions. Our churches in Tweed Heads, Lismore and Hawkesbury have provided much-needed assistance to families who have lost so much. This time, the Tweed Heads church base also flooded, and relief efforts continued in partnership with The Salvation Army at their location.

This year, we raised funds through GMP Extend, which provided a national reach. Funds raised far exceeded our expectations, and we would like to thank GMP for supporting this initiative and helping our churches with much-needed relief funds.

Church partnerships are being reviewed by the leadership of Fresh Hope Communities. Churches of Christ will work with church partners to assist them in reframing their programs and projects under new structures moving forward.

Our chaplains (pictured below) have demonstrated much resilience over the past year in their placements in schools, hospitals, corrective services and aged care.

Lockdowns have caused chaplains to work creatively, and in correctional services, chaplains have adapted by creating a chaplaincy hotline and using the phone for appointments. Chaplains in aged care have had to wear masks all year round and, when an outbreak occurs, have to don full PPE gear. This makes the personal aspect of chaplaincy quite challenging, but our chaplains have persevered and continued to minister to residents.

– Richard Reeve



Rural Fire Chaplain David Rankin (left) with Southern Illawarra pastor Stephen Cathcart.



Engage Partnerships

Local COVID Relief

Campbelltown City Council has established Campbelltown Church of Christ's (CCOC) Hub Community as a key food distribution outlet for emergency relief in the LGA.

A beautiful story of kingdom collaboration is unfolding in Campbelltown during lockdown, as CCOC hosts and joins with St. Vincent de Paul, Oz Harvest, Church of Nazarene, and Salvation Army to support locals struggling financially during lockdown.

Due to the trust CCOC has fostered with Campbelltown City Council and the momentum of the charity co-operative in the last year, the council has chosen to back this effort financially and contribute food hampers to the Hub Community Services' Food Pantry.

Last week the council provided its first contribution of 75 hampers of fresh and packaged groceries that were rapidly collected from CCOC by locals in one day. The council has pledged to meet community demand and will increase its contribution to 100 hampers this week with a goal to reach 150 to 200 hampers a day if needed. In combination with the charities involved, the CCOC's Food Pantry is now drawing in hundreds of locals to receive food relief each week.

Senior Pastor of CCOC, Ryan Graham, reflected that "God has been preparing us for such as time as this... there has never been such a great need in this area." During lockdown in 2020, four local charities that were pushed out of their premises due to restrictions approached CCOC to find shelter on their premises. With a heart for hospitality and collaboration, Ryan and the Hub Community team opened the doors of the well-established Food Pantry. Now with council promising funding for fridges, renovations, and more hampers, this ministry can multiply and serve the community in this moment of need.

Rachel Goldsbrough, Associate Pastor, oversees CCOC's community missions and leads the team of 27 volunteers that fuel Hub Community. Rachel noted that her team's intentionality in developing a culture of hospitality at the Food Pantry, community lunch, OP shop, and community garden has been key to building a reputation of excellence with council and charity partners. At community lunches the team waits on local guests at tables, aiming to provide an experience to individuals that fosters self-respect and self-worth. As a result, CCOC has become a home for many who don't have one. Rachel said, "When people come to crisis moments, they know they've got a place to belong."

Rachel encourages other churches that food relief is a powerful way to engage with our local communities at this time. Two of her tips in establishing a successful community ministry were to ask:

"What is the growth area of your team's culture? Get the culture right before you try to grow."

"What is the need of your community beyond the physical? Our community needed safety – emotionally, physically, and spiritually – so we aimed to become a safe place for people."

– Josh Gibbon



Fresh Hope Engage

NSW Flood Recovery

A series of severe rain events created flooding in late February, March and early April causing significant damage in the Northern Rivers area. Fresh Hope Engage released \$20,000 for immediate relief to Tweed Coolangatta Church of Christ, who were working to assist those impacted. GMP Extend also launched a flood appeal which has provided ongoing support in the recovery efforts. Support was also given by individuals and churches, including the provision of mattresses to Lismore and donated goods to Tweed Heads communities.

Mission & Ministry staff Jessie and Abi Skelly became informal disaster relief coordinators for the local community in Tweed Heads/Chinderah in the wake of

the floods. This initial response grew into a combined churches response, called Homegrown Collective, which have unified to support the people of the Tweed Shire.

The group held Serve Day 2022 in late June moved to a collaboration with four other local churches who have continued to support and work with those rebuilding their lives.

The group gave practical assistance, cleaned up local beaches and delivered food hampers.



Taking time to reflect on the road to recovery

What would be the first thing you would do upon waking up to your town in shambles after a flood? As today dawned in Lismore, Disaster Chaplain Ian Phillips chose to be still, have a coffee, and spend time in prayer before facing the devastation around him.

Despite the urgency he felt to get into the work of recovery, Ian noticed the Spirit prompting him to take a different posture. "During an emergency there's an urgency in everything," Ian said. "To pause is to push against your instincts to get up and get out. There's a lot of that drive going on. But to pull back and just say,

'Jesus, you're in this, and I rely on you in that.' You do that at the start of the day, and you've got to do that a few more times during the day.

"You don't know what's going to come in this day. I think it comes back to ... Jesus is with us. So, we trust him for the conversation, for the manual labour, for the PPE gear. Whatever may come, Lord be with us. That is my prayer now."

As Ian drove through the streets of Lismore this morning, surveying the damage and meeting people,



the belongings of his community lay strewn along the road.

"It's a war zone – the amount of debris," he said. "All along the main streets in Lismore, there's just debris piled up all over the place. Piles and piles of debris."

Most people in Lismore prepared for the water to reach similar levels to the last flood in 2017. As the rain worsened on the weekend, people moved their household belongings and their business stock above the previous flood line. Sadly, this week's flood rose two metres higher than anyone anticipated.

"Almost everyone in the CBD area has lost everything," Ian said.

As the rain intensified last Sunday night, Ian and the team from The Winsome [a community support centre with medium-term housing relief] felt they should prepare the property for the worst.

They evacuated the building's residents to the Church of Christ hall on higher ground in Goonellabah and moved as much as they could from the ground floor to the second storey. However, many others waited till morning, which was too late.

"Earlier predictions were that the flood would peak at 6am," Ian said. "Well, the levee breached much earlier – halfway through the night. All these people went to bed thinking we'll get up early and see what it's like, but the evacuation orders came while many were sleeping."

Since Sunday, Ian and some volunteers have been camping in the old Church of Christ building with The Winsome residents. A family is sleeping in the boxing ring of the Gospel Gloves ministry and Winsome residents in the hall are using leftover rubber from the gym as makeshift beds.

Ian and the team are holding off recovery work at The

Winsome until they can get proper PPE gear to protect volunteers. However, from what they can tell, they've lost everything on the ground floor.

Ian noted he's been deeply moved by the community spirit he's witnessed in Lismore this week, as he's seen emergency services, other churches, and the general community rally together.

Ian spoke about a neighbour who called the SES to open up a house roof after hearing banging from inside, afraid his neighbours may be trapped. It turned out to be a false alarm, and no one was inside.

When the resident returned, they laughed together, and he said, "Thank you, mate. If I had been trapped in that roof, I am pleased you made the phone call even if I wasn't!"

Ian says he sees his and the church's responsibility today to be partners in the community and to walk with people in their work, loss, and grief.

"Churches exist in communities. We are partners in these communities. Irrespective of whether people have faith. As partners, this is what we do. This is where the love of Christ shines.

"I see the love of Christ expressed in a whole heap of people who don't know Jesus yet. I know that some people would want to shake an angry fist at the clouds, but I just see Jesus walking with us. He cries with us in our loss."

– Josh Gibbon

Fresh Hope Engage

NSW Flood Recovery

Tweed Church of Christ family trapped for days by flood. With her seven-day-old daughter in arms, Emmellynn Cottrell and her family found themselves trapped in the second storey of their Chinderah home as floodwater lapped at the lounge-room steps.

Emmellynn, her husband Isaac, her father-in-law Peter, and her three daughters rationed food for three days as they waited for the water to recede after the Tweed River broke its banks during the height of the northern NSW flood disaster earlier this month.

Electricity was down, and communication with family and friends was limited due to patchy reception and waning battery levels on their phones.

"I was reassured that the water wouldn't go up to the second storey, but it was just stressful with a newborn," Emmellynn said. "You know, she's a week old, so if something happened, there's no hospital to get to."

Emmellynn chose to be strong and non-anxious for her girls even though they felt quite scared by the situation. "My four-year-old gets stressed, so she was extra-stressed and emotional."

A couple of weeks on, Emmellynn's girls are still struggling to sleep, dreaming of monsters that sound like the thousands of croaking frogs that kept them up during the nights stranded by the flood.

"So, since then, we've just had to keep reassuring them that they're safe," Emmellynn said. "I don't know if it has actually hit me yet. The kids have been my focus, so I haven't cried or anything."

After the water drained out of the ground floor of their home, volunteers known as the 'Mud Army' quickly moved in to help clear out their waterlogged belongings. They sorted the Cottrells' belongings on the front lawn, laying them out for Isaac and Emmellynn to see what they could salvage.

"At one stage, I was just peopled out because I was overwhelmed by people asking, 'What do you need? What can we do?'"

"And when you're overwhelmed with everything, you just don't know what to say. It was easier when people just came and did stuff because I didn't want to tell people to clean up my mess."

The Cottrells, who worship at Tweed Heads Church of Christ, primarily live on the ground floor of the home, so this flood has been a heavy blow, ruining almost all their belongings except, strangely, their two fish aquariums.

Like many in the Chinderah area, the Cottrells are uncertain how insurance companies will respond during this time and are caught in a waiting game until they find out. Many in this area could not afford the

steep premiums for flood cover and must start from scratch again.

Despite this, Emmellynn says she has seen God's provision even more clearly now than before the flood, and their needs are being cared for before they even ask.

She recounted how many people had offered them support and help – from a meal to a day's work on their house.

A few days after the flood, a HelloFresh truck broke down on the highway filled with groceries. As the food wouldn't keep, the boxes of meals were handed out around the Cottrells' neighbourhood for free.

As Emmellynn shared these stories, the resilience of her faith, peace, and trust in God's provision for her and her family struck me as transcending human understanding.

"God's grace and provision has been really evident even with the flood. I've been meditating on that. Like, look God, you know we don't have much money, we need to rebuild pretty much everything. But he's just been providing. So, yeah, I'm not stressed about funds, which for me is huge."

Emmellynn's family and their neighbours will continue to rebuild their home for months and years.

As I left the Cottrells' home, one question hung in my heart: how can we in Churches of Christ be the source of God's provision to this family and many others in their area in the months and years to come?

– Josh Gibbon



Emmellynn and her father-in-law Peter stand next to the remnants of their belongings.



A marker of the height the water reached in the Cottrell's backyard.



Due to mould, walls had to be stripped back to the framework.



Every house in the neighbourhood has piles of ruined belongings on the front verge waiting to be taken away.

The Australian College of Ministries (ACOM)

One of the great challenges ACOM faces is to remain relevant and on the cutting edge of ministry training and formation as we seek to equip Christians so that they might be transformed, thrive and impact their communities with the Good News of Jesus.

ACOM's strength has always been its commitment to partnering with local churches and like-minded organisations. This partnership provides students engaging in ministry formation an environment where they can test drive what they are learning, within the communities of enquiry in which they are situated, so that they are better equipped for what God has called them to in their lives.

For many, this is a vocational ministry pathway serving in our churches and other ministry contexts. For others, like Kodie Ninness, a recent ACOM graduate and a Guest Experience Leader on the program team at The Tops Conference Centre, it's about preparation for ministry in the marketplace. Here's what Kodie had to say about his experience studying with ACOM.

"Studying with ACOM during my Tops Internship helped build my academic writing skills through the generous feedback from my markers and the assistance of my internship coordinator. In each of my subjects, I gained a new understanding of the Father

and His interaction with the world, which enriched my passion for the ministry context of Christian Camping. ACOM's online delivery method allowed me to work through the content in a way that best suited my learning style. Through completing my Diploma of Christian Studies, I now feel ready and able to pursue a bachelor's degree in Agricultural Business Management."

I'm excited by Kodie's testimony as it confirms that our approach to learning is on the right track: to transform society, we first need to be personally transformed. We wish Kodie all the best as he pursues his passions and calling in life.

With our focus on 'Taking the College to the Churches That They Might Thrive', we have developed a Local Church Internship Program that enables communities of all shapes and sizes to identify an emerging leader and partner with us in providing an accessible (four-unit) ministry training experience for people of all ages. This year, we had 12 churches around Australia with about 30 students involved.

We also released "four study courses free of charge" (Intro to Old & New Testament, Christian Doctrines and Spiritual Formation). Our heart here is to equip deeper, more fully formed disciples. We encourage you to

check them out via our website (www.acom.edu.au).

We continue to work on new training and equipping initiatives designed to increase opportunities for individuals exploring the start of their ministry journey, seeking ongoing professional development, or looking for the next challenge in the last third of their lives.

Much work has been done this year on our new Graduate Certificate in Professional Supervision. This is due to commence as a cohort study experience in 2023.

We are thankful for the opportunity to contribute to developing high-quality graduates who serve in key church and ministry positions around the country. We are pleased to report that this year we graduated 111 students across a variety of awards.

Neale Meredith
Principal & CEO
Australian College of Ministries



Graphe College, one of ACOM's partner colleges supports the training of Australian-based Tongan pastors.

Global Mission Partners (GMP)

The work of GMP seeks to make real the depth of ministry and life of Jesus Christ. This goal underpins our work.

Over the past two years, we have experienced much disruption, and GMP and our partners are not exempt. There has been a lack of face-to-face partner contact, and we have grown in our ability to work with and support our partners and they with us.

GMP is 'partner driven'. Our partners are people of Christian faith, creative, courageous and keen to do more. We emphasise knowing the locals and being known by them.

Through the International Church Partnership program, we are a constant and reliable partner amid unpredictable change. Our partners trust us. We can only do this because of your consistent support.

Your generosity humbles us. We resource partners in response to the impact of emergencies such as COVID-19, the Tongan volcano eruption and the Ukraine War. Through GMP Extend, we responded to bushfires in Western Australia and flooding in NSW and Queensland. What has been achieved in Tweed Heads and Lismore through care and compassion is inspiring.

Churches of Christ Overseas Aid (COCOA) is accredited by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – a significant achievement. COCOA projects seek to improve the livelihood of local people. Half of the projects supported through COCOA focus on community-building – bringing people together to try new possibilities.

Development really happens when projects stop being a set of activities and become a community-based activity that takes off with a life of its own – like the tiny Saw Mill Project in South Sudan.

This Saw Mill Project was designed to help the community of Chelkou build a high school and be a source of employment for poorer members of the community. Then six enterprising women used their income from working in the saw mill to buy goats, which they bred. With their increased capital, they started a local restaurant, 'The Women's Group Restaurant'. Now they have the potential for long-term income that the project never anticipated.

We count it a privilege to live and work in Australia and learn about the 'nations' that have existed here for many millennia. Indigenous Ministries Australia (IMA) has partnerships with the custodians of the lands of the Nyoongar, Kariyarra, Ngarla and Nygadju nations in Western Australia; the Kurna and Wirangu lands of South Australia; the Wurundjeri and Boonwurrung lands in Victoria; and the Barkindji and Bunjalung lands of NSW.

Kyle Slabb, of the Bundjalung nation, Fingal Head, NSW, comments, "God speaks to us through the land. The old people told us, 'Don't be frightened of the bush. The bush will look after you. Everything that you need is there. Provision for everything is there. There's food, there's shelter, there's everything. God is in all of it.' Sometimes the world is too fast, but I always take the time to listen to what God is speaking. These trees, and the wind, it's all speaking to us. In the Scriptures, it says that, 'His voice is heard in the storm, His voice is heard in the ocean, His voice is heard in the wind. We need to take time to listen and to hear Him.'"

John Gilmore
Executive Director
GMP



Property Trust

As Chairman of the Property Trust, and on behalf of its board, it is my pleasure to present

the Property Trust Annual Report for the period 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

Purpose of the Trust

The Property Trust (the, "Trust")¹ is an expression of our unity as a network of churches and an instrument of intergenerational stewardship of property and finances.

The Trust is an incorporated body that partners with the local church, to support their establishment, growth, and Gospel work.

The Trust helps to build churches by:

- providing loans for infrastructure;
- helping to grow churches through stewarding bequests to give as grants; and
- holding the real property of churches in trust to ensure that the land and buildings that people gave sacrificially are kept for the cause of restoration.

Trust Meetings and Members

The, "1947 Act" provides for the Trust to consist of up to nine members each appointed by Conference for nine-year terms, with vacancies for three members occurring each triennium.

Trust members serve without remuneration, and are provided with a meal during in-person meetings. The Trust also covers the reasonable accommodation and travel expenses of regional members to physically attend Trust meetings.² During the reporting period the Trust met on 9 occasions (1 in-person meeting at the Rhodes office, and 8 "online" meetings).

As at 30 June 2022 the Trust had two vacancies and was comprised of the members named below:

(Number of meetings attended shown in parentheses, with maximum number possible for the reporting period being 9)

Mr Andrew Billing	(9)
Ms Patricia Chan[*](re)appointed 11/2021	(5*)
Mr Steven Martin Chairman from 12/2021	(6)
Mr Philip Smith	(9)
Mr Shamus Toomey Registrar (from 5/2017)	(7)
Mr Willy van den Berg	(8)
Mr Allan Vincent Chairman 12/2020 to 11/2021 Deputy-Chairman from 12/2022	(7)

The Board Skills Matrix of the Trust records that its members have a range of professional skills and experience in the following areas:

- Aged Care;
- Building & Construction;
- Corporate Governance;
- Education (including Theological Education);
- Engineering;
- Finance (accounting, deposits, lending, etc);
- Health;
- Information Technology;
- Law;
- Ministry;
- Not-for-Profit operations;
- Human Resources;
- Property; and
- Work Health & Safety.

Executive Management of the Trust

The full-time Corporate Secretary & Executive Officer of the Trust is Mr James Cartwright ["Secretary"], who has over 19 years' experience in corporate governance, not-for-profit, and church property trust administration – as well as over 28 years' experience in administration, property, operations, and management. Mr Cartwright holds a Bachelor of Commerce from the University of Wollongong, and, a Graduate Diploma of Corporate Governance & Risk Management from the Governance Institute of Australia.

Trust services, including those provided during the reporting period

As an incorporated entity, the Trust can enter into contracts, apply for grants, and exercise legal agreements on behalf of our churches and agencies. These services include but are not limited to:

Safe custody of bank guarantees, contracts, historic certificates of title, leases, plans, etc.;

Property Sales;

Property Purchases;

Leasing and Licensing;

Building Contracts;

Administration of estates and trust funds;

Registration of churches with the Trust, including appointment of the Trust as trustee;

Investment (deposits) and Borrowing (loans) via the Fresh Hope Investment Fund;

Execution of statutory forms (development applications, construction certificates etc); and

Facilitating Grant Applications – eg. NSW Community Building Partnership.

During the reporting period the Trust supported Churches of Christ churches and agencies by providing the services as noted above, including the review, processing, and execution of more than

126 statutory applications, sale contracts, purchase contracts, licence agreements, annual fire safety statements, grant applications and other documents.

Fresh Hope Investment Fund

The Trust operates a charitable scheme known as the Fresh Hope Investment Fund ("Fund"). The Fund holds an exemption under the Banking Act 1959, is operated not-for-profit, and has been established for the charitable purposes of advancing religion, and, advancing and benefiting the work and objects of Churches of Christ in NSW (its churches and agencies).

Deposits and Loans interest rates

The Trust regularly reviews Fresh Hope Investment Fund interest rates for investors and borrowers, and during the reporting period determined to:

- maintain the standard variable investment (deposit) interest rate at 2.60%pa; and
- maintain the standard variable principal & interest (loan) interest rate at 3.90%pa

Cash Boost loans

During April 2022, the Trust officially launched the, "Cash Boost" loan product – small loans of up to \$20,000 for up to 5 years, with a low interest rate "pegged" to the standard deposit interest rate above.

Contacting the Trust

For Fresh Hope churches and agencies, the Secretary is the, "early-engagement" point of contact for property matters – via phone, email or letter, and also (by prior arrangement) in person. I encourage you to access Trust resources at <https://freshhope.org.au/members/church-resources/property-trust> and also to discuss your property matters with the Secretary of the Trust.

So, to discuss deposits and loans for churches, grant applications, and other property matters, please contact the Trust's Corporate Secretary and Executive Officer, James Cartwright via email james.cartwright@freshhope.org.au or phone 02 8573 6031.

Steven Martin
Chairman,
The Churches of Christ Property Trust
30 June 2022



Two birds, one stone

NewDay Kids Early Learning Centre's financial and community fruit

In 2010, the board of NewDay Church in Figtree, Wollongong realised their building was being underutilised during the week and the church needed another income avenue.

As they considered how to solve this issue, Chris Keller from NewDay said, "We asked the question, 'What can we do to better serve the community?'"

An idea was raised to start an early learning centre that could act as both a connection to local community and an income stream.

"Our vision anticipated opportunities to build connections with our local community, increase the utilisation of church facilities, and to achieve this in a financially sustainable manner," Chris said.

At the time this was a 'good idea', but the church lacked the resource and know-how to get it off the ground.

However, over a period of seven years the Property Trust team (led at first by Richard Reeve and later by James Cartwright) partnered with the NewDay board to get this dream off the ground.

Finally in 2017, after years of hard work and development, the NewDay Kids Early Learning Centre was launched.

The learning centre is now licenced to care for 58 children a day and has become a central part of NewDay's local community ministry.

"Solid friendships and relationships have been built which have created opportunity to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. Financial and in-kind support such as food hampers and supermarket gift vouchers have been provided to families on a couple of occasions," Chris said.

The learning centre has been a huge strength to the church in tough times, providing an alternate income avenue to keep other ministries afloat.

"From an occupancy and commercial perspective, NewDay Kids enjoyed 100% enrolments since mid-2019 which enables ongoing repayment of the Property Trust loan and a regular income stream (through rental and license payments) to NewDay Church," Chris said.

"This financial security is an immense blessing and alleviated significant financial pressures the church had previously endured."

The Property Trust as 'alongsiders'

A story like that of the NewDay Kids learning centre gives an insight to the commitment and heart of the Churches of Christ Property Trust team.

Steven Martin, chair of the Property Trust said, "We as a trust see ourselves as 'alongsiders' with churches. We are there with prayerful intention to support what they are doing."

The success of seven-year project like NewDay Kids, hinges on a depth of trust between a church and the Property Trust team, which begins with relationship.

"When an application comes to the trust, it often comes from relationship," Steven said. "James (corporate secretary of the Property Trust) is a key part of the relationship we build with churches – he often goes out, meets with pastors and boards and talks about what their needs are and how the trust can help and support."

James and Steven see discernment as a key task in their role of stewardship. Unlike a bank or other financial institution, financial growth is not their sole objective.

"We are here to use what we have to grow the kingdom," Steven continued. "The first step of discernment for us is – is this a kingdom initiative? Does it help THE Church and our churches as a network?"

To this end, James and Steven see the purpose of their stewardship and growing the assets they are responsible for to be about investing back into Kingdom projects and ministries.

Steven added, "Loans are not the only way the Trust supports churches financially. The majority of Mission and Ministry grants originate from resources of the Property Trust."

"That is part of our stewardship. We have estate funds under management that can be used for particular purposes, and we are so blessed to be able to return that to our network."

– Josh Gibbon



Fresh Hope Communities

Residential Aged Care

Fresh Hope Communities provides quality supportive aged care services in a setting where all residents' dignity, privacy and quality of life is paramount.

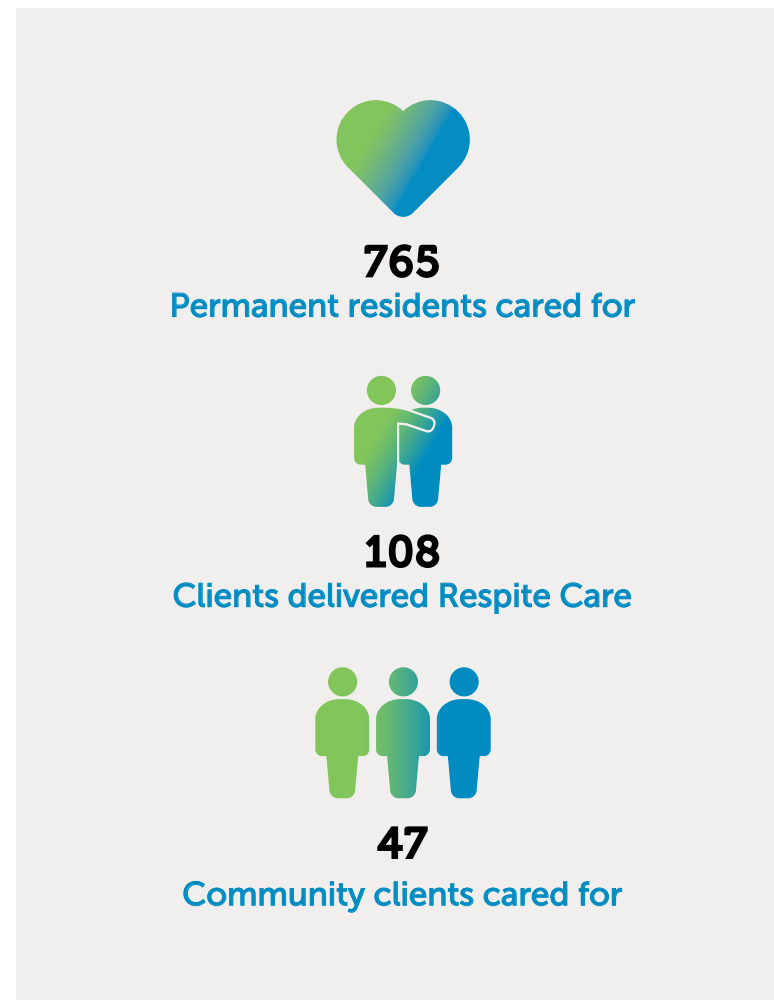
Residential Aged Care synopsis

The 2021-22 financial year has brought multiple challenges as we have continued to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic. These challenges include significant legislative changes within the sector, staffing shortages, natural disasters (floods) and market pressures.

Challenges also bring opportunity, and our Residential Aged Care team members have once again demonstrated their creativity, compassion, commitment and resilience in delivering exceptional care under extraordinary conditions.

We have also been working in a post-Royal Commission environment where significant pieces of legislation are starting to flow through. The Commission has also increased its activity across the industry. While this is positive in regard to lifting standards of care across the sector, it does place additional pressure on services, particularly managers.

Team members have continued to support one another and have shown incredible resilience. Despite the geographic spread of our sites, the managers support one another, even sharing staff where possible. They continue to work to ensure they do everything to meet the needs of those we serve.



Anna Cairns

Green Hills Care Service Employee

Anna has been an integral member of the Green Hills Retirement Village team as a Care Services Employee (CSE) for just over four years.

Her passion for serving and caring for the elderly began many years earlier when she volunteered in the kitchen at an aged care facility in Esperance (WA). She then moved to NSW to be closer to her daughter.

"I have the greatest respect for the elderly, and I really enjoy being around them. They are wonderful people," she says. "Coming into aged care, you see such a wide range of people and personalities. I just love it."

Anna's role as a CSE involves administering medication, giving day-to-day care to the residents and can extend to helping in the kitchen and laundry. Her intentional and personal care for each resident and her understanding of each resident allows her to bring the right type of care at the right time.

Anna often matches the cheekiness of some residents, bringing smiles and laughter. "Every time I leave one of the residents' rooms, I always leave doing a little dance. She [a resident] always says it absolutely makes her day. She said to me, 'If you didn't do that dance, I'd think something was wrong. It brightens my whole day.'"

Like many aged care facilities, the COVID-19 pandemic put acute pressure on staff and residents. Anna recalls how the loss of physical presence and visits from family and loved ones greatly impacted the residents and their families. "The biggest challenge for residents was not having connection with their family," she says. "But to have the technology these days of Skype, Facetime and telephone to keep that going, to see family faces and hear their voices was a great thing."

Anna also shared that the team, led by the manager, Stephanie Elliott, kept spirits up by checking in on each other, celebrating birthdays and themed days. All these seemingly small things significantly impacted their ability to keep morale up and the residents and themselves entertained. "Stephanie is just so good to work with. She looks out for all the staff, and she's very approachable. You could be giving out breakfast trays, and she'll always come and lend a hand."

Despite the challenges, Anna remains optimistic about the future. "COVID has not been easy, and we all know that. But it's taking the circumstances, turning it around, and making it as positive as possible. I'm really looking forward to the new facility being finished here. I think it's going to be so exciting. I'm also looking forward to not wearing a mask one day – just for the residents to be able to see your face, your smile and expressions. It will be so good."

– Stephanie ObiriAsare

Fresh Hope Communities

Retirement Living

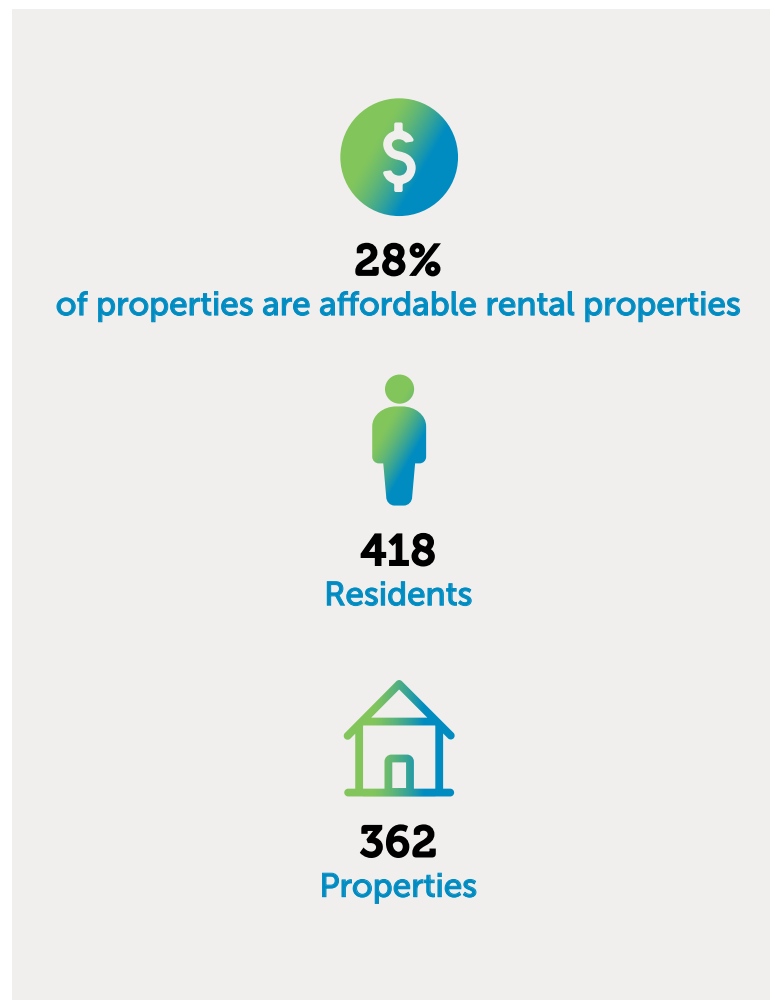
Fresh Hope Communities provides an independent retirement lifestyle for people looking to downsize by providing retirement services located in the security of close-knit communities.

Retirement Living synopsis

The biggest impact we have seen over the 2021-22 financial year is the longer-term and indirect impacts of COVID-19 on residents. This has been evidenced in terms of sudden cognitive decline, increasing social anxiety and related mental health conditions, and some quite serious medical conditions that have, in some cases, been impacted by residents delaying seeking treatment when symptoms first developed.

Given the nature of our communities, our managers are often the first to note extremely subtle changes in a resident's behaviour and communicate this with families who, through COVID lockdowns or distance, may not have noticed the extent of deterioration. They have been instrumental in engaging in the, at times, difficult conversations with residents and families about seeking further support for their loved ones.

Some exciting progress has been made on our newest retirement community, Cedar on Collins in Kiama. We were able to start construction on this 52-apartment development, and interest in Cedar has gained momentum. We look forward to taking appointments of prospective owners in 2022 with the view to opening in 2023.



Paul and Olga

From Henley Brae Retirement Village

Paul and Olga migrated from The Netherlands to Australia in 1960 with little more than the clothes they were wearing. After stepping from the plane, they recall being shuttled to the Scheyville Migrant Camp in Sydney's northwest where they stayed in one of the many huts.

"The Department of Labour and Industry came and interviewed all the newcomers," Paul recalls. "We arrived Sunday afternoon, and I started work on Monday morning as a mechanic. Even though I had a military and university qualification from The Netherlands, I had to go through university all over again."

Olga describes her first experiences. "I wanted to get a job straight away. A Dutch minister knocked on the door of our hut and said, 'I've got a Dutch women's group you could join.' I said, 'What do they do?' He said, 'Well, they do knitting and crocheting, drink coffee and talk.' I replied, 'Any jobs around?'"

Their determination to make the most of every opportunity has seen them through all life's challenges. They shared extraordinary stories, but the one thing that has marked their lives is their desire to immerse themselves in the community through volunteering.

Paul and Olga were just hitting retirement when they moved to Bowral. "Actually, when we came to Bowral without knowing anybody, we thought we've got to volunteer because that is the way to meet people. And that's what we've been doing for 17 years."

Olga began volunteering in the Bradman Museum, showing tour groups around and eventually looking after another 50 volunteers. Paul volunteered as a First Aid officer at the Men's Shed, sat on the advisory committee of Wingecarribee Shire Council and spent 17 years driving buses for community transport. He would regularly do between 300-400km a day, picking people up from various retirement homes and taking them to Sydney, Goulburn, Mollmook and Hornsby.

During these times, the word 'Henley Brae' would often come up. "People talk and comment. Number one, by a long shot, was Henley Brae. It was all complimentary – the freedom of movement, the way the place is set out – trees, beautiful rooms, the whole facility is really pleasant. We thought, 'If our time comes, let's give serious consideration to this place.'"

When asked about the impact of the past two years of COVID – the isolation, the lockdowns – once again, Paul and Olga share an incredibly inspiring perspective. "We normally liked going to Coffs Harbour and other places on a regular basis, and that all stopped. But we had a telephone and text messages and emails. We came through the latter stages of the war, where you had absolutely nothing. And for years, when we came here, we had no telephone. We sent letters home

once a week to our parents. But again, for us, this is what we had to cope with."

Their desire to integrate into the communities they lived in made way for them to give of themselves and truly become part of the fabric of the community. Olga says, "We have loved the camaraderie here [at Henley Brae]. The staff have always been wonderful."

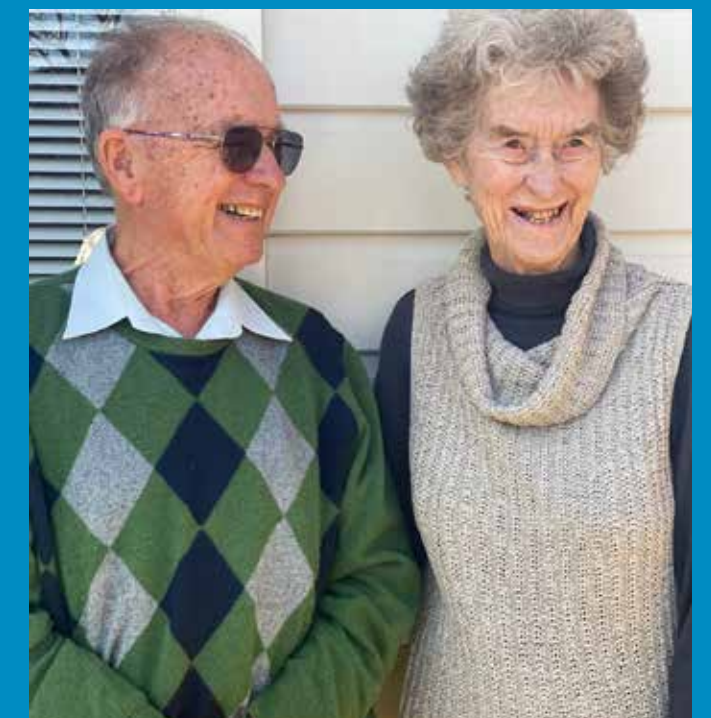
Paul adds, "The previous site manager, Donna, said to us, 'You're living the dream!' and it's true, you know. Given our background, all the trials and tribulations and all we have come through, this is peaceful, it's centrally located, we can still go out and about and do things."

These days they may not be volunteering as much, but they are still actively involved in the Henley Brae community. Amongst the gatherings for coffee, special community lunches and entertainment with other residents, Paul spends many a day painstakingly building a model of a Spitfire courtesy of a weekly British Defence force magazine he has been buying weekly from the local newsagent – fuelling his affinity with the aircraft from his Air Force days.

Journeying from another country, learning the language, and taking whatever jobs they could was not easy. But determined to make the best of it, they have poured out their lives in service to others and their community, living their lives with openness and humble generosity.

It's not hard to see what a blessing they are to the Henley Brae community.

– Stephanie ObiriAsare



Fresh Hope Communities

Venues

Fresh Hope Communities offers camps, conference facilities, accommodation, and outdoor adventure experiences for local community groups.

Venues synopsis

The past couple of years, with the prolonged navigation of COVID-19, delivered the most challenging period in our 50-year history. Due to the pause in our core programs and activities, like many other organisations, we pivoted to a Community Food service business during this period, which generated well over \$100,000 in revenue.

The team displayed strong resilience throughout this season. Their flexibility, adaptability, collegiate support to move with the constantly changing environment, sense of humour, and desire to support each other got us through with great staff retention.

We also adapted our activities, launched an online camp, and grew the holiday camp for kids during the school holiday break.

As restrictions began to ease, we were well placed to launch Tiny Homes for the public at our new Southern Highlands facility, Greenstead Valley, which is growing in popularity.

We are hopeful and looking forward to seeing our camps and venues full and buzzing with activity in the coming year. We're also excited to launch our Tiny Homes in Joadja as we move into the master planning stage and clear direction for its development.



499
Groups



161,438
Main meals catered



61,500
Guest days

(Guest days is the number of days that Guests had accommodation for confirmed bookings at the Tops)



Shared experiences build deeper relationship

When his high school organised a wilderness trip to Greenstead Valley, Jack told his teacher that he was anxious about going.

The camp experience would involve hiking through steep and difficult terrain, setting up camp each night and cooking in small groups. Jack had never been away and done anything like this before and felt like he wasn't fully prepared.

Jack was a part of a small group of students, most of whom were not in his friendship group. He was concerned that he would not get on with the others in his group. However, he found that through the shared experiences, he learned more about his classmates and discovered that they were different from what he had previously thought of them.

While walking together, his peers encouraged him to keep going, helping him with his heavy pack. At the campsite, students helped each other set up their tents and even gave Jack some helpful tips on cooking the evening meal.

On the final night of camp, the students shared what they had learned about themselves and others. Jack reflected, "I persevered through camp because my friends and peers were supportive. I've learned that people act differently in different environments, so I won't be so quick to judge people from only one experience."

Jack's teacher concluded, "It was moving to hear students acknowledge how they had perceptions of people in the group which were wrong. They acknowledged how foolish this was and expressed joy at new connections. Our group was three distinct friendship groups on the first day, but by the end, this was almost all but broken down, and I saw people make connections and learn to appreciate people they didn't know before – this is the value of these camps – personal growth and learning empathy for others."

– Stephanie ObiriAsare

AGM 20-21

Annual Conference – Minutes

Date 17 November 2021
Time 7.30pm-9.00pm
Location Epping Church of Christ and Via Zoom

MEETING OPEN

1. Welcome

The Chair opened the meeting at 7.30pm and welcomed members and delegates to the 2021 Annual Conference. The Chair led the meeting in prayer.

2. Apologies

Apologies were received from the following people and churches for the 2021 Annual Conference:

- Sandy Timbrell, Telopea Christian Centre
- Donna Clift, Tweed Heads Coolangatta Church of Christ
- Deb Cox, Blaxland Church of Christ
- Garth Portus, Salt Ash Church of Christ
- Karen Sainsbury, Tweed Heads Coolangatta Church of Christ.

3. Introduction

The Executive Ministry Director, Daz Farrell, made some introductory remarks.

4. Recognition and Honour

The Chair honoured the following men of faith who have passed away:

- Kevin Crawford
- Allan Rae
- Bill Harrison
- Barry Rice
- David Mansell
- Richard Powell.

The EMD honoured the outgoing Mission & Ministry Board and thanked them for their service.

The Chair thanked the members who served on Conference Executive for the 2020-21 Conference Year, noting that Stephen Cha, Simon Brailey and Karen Baker will not be re-nominating for appointment in 2021-22.

The EMD led the honouring of John Crowther.

Honouring videos from Pastor Allan Vincent from Dubbo Church of Christ, and Adam Miller from Penrith Church of Christ.

Brook Stewart from SeeChange Church led Conference in a prayer of thanks for John Crowther.

The meeting adjourned for a short break at approximately 8.07pm and reconvened at 8.17pm.

5. Notices of Motion (by poll)

The Chair thanked Epping Church of Christ for hosting the meeting.

The Chair noted that on 15 October, Notice of the Business to be Brought Forward at the 2021 Annual Conference was sent to all members, in accordance with Regulation (g) to the Constitution, and that on 8 November, explanatory information was distributed to all members regarding Notices of Motion 5 and 6.

In order to conduct the polling, all meeting attendees who were not Registered Delegates were moved into a separate, online 'break-out room'.

Notice of Motion 1

Notice of Motion 1 had been withdrawn, and no further discussion was required.

Notice of Motion 2

"That the minutes of the Annual Conference of Churches of Christ in NSW held 14 November 2020 as circulated be adopted as a true and accurate record of that meeting".

MOVED:
 Name: Larry Galbraith
 Church: Epping Church of Christ

SECONDED:
 Name: Ian Phillips
 Church: Tweed Heads Coolangatta Church of Christ

Motion CARRIED (by majority).

Notice of Motion 3

"That the Annual Reports 2020/2021 as circulated be adopted".

MOVED:
 Name: John Latta
 Church: Tweed Heads Coolangatta Church of Christ

SECONDED:
 Name: Andrew McInnes
 Church: Coast Community Church

Motion CARRIED (by majority).

Notice of Motion 4

"That pursuant to Clause 27 (d) of the Churches of Christ in NSW Constitution, the annual audit summary for 2020/21 as circulated be adopted."

MOVED:
 Name: Troy Blair
 Church: Rivergum Community Church

SECONDED:
 Name: Pat Cox
 Church: Blaxland Church of Christ

Motion CARRIED (by majority).

Notice of Motion 5

"That pursuant to clause 2 of the Churches of Christ in NSW Constitution, the application for affiliation from BASIC Church be confirmed".

MOVED:
 Name: Tim Drough
 Church: Mayfield Church of Christ

SECONDED:
 Name: Willy van den Berg
 Church: Blaxland Church of Christ

Motion CARRIED (by majority).

Notice of Motion 6

"That pursuant to Clause 28 of the Churches of Christ in NSW Constitution (the Constitution), the amendments to the Constitution proposed in Resolutions 1, 2 and 3 contained in the Schedule as circulated be confirmed."

MOVED:
 Name: Ian Phillips
 Church: Tweed Heads Coolangatta Church of Christ

SECONDED:
 Name: Troy Blair
 Church: Rivergum Community Church

Motion CARRIED (by majority).

6. Notices of Motion (by ballot)

Non-voting meeting attendees returned to the meeting.

Mr Ken Chueng of Kingsford Church of Christ, as Returning Officer, chaired the meeting in order to conduct the voting on the matters to be determined by ballot.

Notice of Motion 7

"That pursuant to Clauses 8 and 9 of the Churches of Christ in New South Wales Constitution, the following

member be appointed Conference President for the Conference Year commencing 17 November 2021: Mr Victor Tee."

Result: ELECTED by majority.

Notice of Motion 8

"That pursuant to Clauses 9 of the Churches of Christ in New South Wales Constitution, the following members be appointed to Conference Executive for the Conference Year commencing 17 November 2021:

Mr Paul CAMPEY from Coast Community Church

Ms Emily DROUGH from Mayfield Church of Christ

Ms Colette HARRISON from Bowral Church of Christ

Mr Michael McGARRITY from Connect Church Engadine

Mr Ian PHILLIPS from Tweed Heads Church of Christ

Mr Stephen TOOMEY from Hurstville Church of Christ".

Result: ELECTED by majority.

Notice of Motion 9

"That, the following member be appointed to the Property Trust from 17 November 2021 for a term to be determined by the Property Trust in accordance with the Churches of Christ in NSW Incorporation Act 1947: Ms Patricia Chan"

Result: ELECTED by majority.

7. Prayer for Conference Executive

The Executive Ministry Director led the meeting in prayer for Conference Executive.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at approximately 9:00 pm.



fresh hope

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