



Report from **Bremer Brisbane Presbytery**

Context

The Presbytery is bounded by the Great Dividing Range in the west, and includes the Brisbane, Bremer, Lockyer, and Teviot Valleys. It includes the West Moreton District of South East Queensland, the regional city of Ipswich, and the western suburbs of Brisbane. It is experiencing strong growth. Most of this growth is urban, dormitory suburbs. Towns in the West Moreton area are experiencing significant social change as population growth occurs. Ipswich city is being rejuvenated; socially disadvantaged populations are transferring to places in Ipswich and towns in the West Moreton as costs of living in Brisbane increase. The western suburbs of Brisbane are still attractive places for professional and business people. The Presbytery includes significant educational and corrective services facilities.

Since the last Synod in Session the Presbytery has had a focus on growing healthy Christian communities. We have identified five key areas:

1. To form disciples for Christ
2. To build sustainable Christian communities
3. To organise for mission
4. To identify, foster and resource leaders
5. To engage with community.

Ministry/congregational life data

Area covered (sq/kms)	19,472	No. of pastors (Stream A)	12
Population	550,000	No. of pastors (Stream B)	2
No. of congregations recognised as such by Presbytery	32	No. of lay ministry teams	
Faith communities	2	Placements No. of congregational placements FTE	F/T: 18 P/T: 9
Ecumenical communities	0	No. of non-congregational placements FTE	F/T: 5 P/T: 1
No. of 'cluster' arrangements	3	No. of joint placements FTE (i.e. ministry agents, support staff, total number of people)	F/T: P/T:
Total weekly worship attendance across Presbytery	1564	Presbytery staffing FTE (i.e. ministry agents, support staff, total number of people)	3
Percentage of congregations in the Presbytery with Sunday children's and youth ministry with over 15 average attendance	30%		

Report

The Bremer Brisbane Presbytery is an active and engaging presbytery made up of over 30 diverse congregations and faith communities in a variety of settings from inner city to suburban to regional to rural communities. Each of the congregations seeks to be the embodiment of Christ's mission and ministry in the world. As such the Presbytery's five missional priorities have given us a focus and some criteria as we work towards our future. There are intersections and overlaps between these and the Synod's eight priority areas.

Form disciples for Christ: faith sharing, church planting, develop church planters, Holy Spirit, resource sharing, children youth and young adults.

Build sustainable Christian communities: worship gatherings, faith sharing, church planting, develop church planters, Holy Spirit, resource sharing, children youth and young adults.

Organise for mission: worship gatherings, faith sharing, church planting, develop church planters, Holy Spirit, formation for ministry, resource sharing, children youth and young adults.

Identify, foster, and resource leaders: church planting, develop church planters, formation for ministry, Holy Spirit, resource sharing, children youth and young adults.

Engage with the community: worship gatherings, faith sharing, church planting, develop church planters, Holy Spirit, resource sharing, children youth and young adults.

1. **Forming disciples for Christ.** The revision of the role for a presbytery person to facilitate discipleship and the new appointment of someone into that role. The regional youth activities Boost, Stretching Faith, the sharing of stories across the Presbytery, the Presbytery newsletter, encouraging people doing their period of discernment, work by Chapel Hill and Moggill in terms of youth and families ministry, the work by Toowong in looking at beginning a new evening congregation, university chaplaincy by Indooroopilly, Toowong and St Lucia churches, involvement in MSM course implementation. Forming disciples needs to be the key to what we do.
2. **Build sustainable Christian communities.** There is a close correlation between forming disciples and building sustainable communities. Sustainable communities need active disciples and active disciples by their very nature build Christian community. Some activities around the area of building sustainable Christian communities are the focus on mission and generosity, the development of Forest Lake and commitment to Ripley, ecumenical relationships and the Queensland Community Alliance. Support including financial for congregations, particularly for new initiatives. Resourcing for congregations and leadership with training programs and online resources. Imagine Ipswich and other connections between geographically similar congregations to discuss vision, mission and direction. Connecting congregations to local, national and overseas missional opportunities.
3. **Organised for mission.** Again the inter-related nature of these priorities is undeniable. Our mission is to form disciples to build sustainable Christian communities. At a presbytery level the work on the discipleship facilitator has been important as well as the re-invigorated Capability Group attempting to identify the needs and skills base within the Presbytery and beyond to facilitate skills-based training. The use of strategic project funding to initiate a faith community in Ripley, to subsidise ministry in Hattonvale and Rosewood, and the ongoing support for university chaplaincy are all examples of the Presbytery using its resources to facilitate mission. Organised for mission involves any of the leadership training undertaken at congregational and presbytery level. Congregations are doing good work with activities such as the various day camps that are organised for mission and create positive leadership training. Many congregations are engaged in mission activities locally, nationally (such as Frontier Services twinning arrangements with rural congregations) and with overseas partner churches, for example Glebe Road Ipswich with Timor Leste.
4. **Identify, foster and resource leadership.** The Presbytery support for the Renovator training program and increasing involvement in the Mission Shaped Mission program. The work of the Presbytery Capability Group in identifying needs and providing appropriate training. The number of ministers enrolled in the Grad Cert on Leadership all demonstrate an eagerness to facilitate the training and resourcing of leaders. There is the encouragement of people into the period of discernment, lay preachers and other lay training provided by congregations. Presbytery support for new initiatives with Chapel Hill youth worker.
5. **Engage with community.** Presbytery support through Strategic Projects to initiate a faith community in Ripley, to subsidise ministry in Hattonvale and Rosewood, and the ongoing support for university chaplaincy are all examples of the Presbytery using its resources to facilitate congregations to engage with community. There is also Presbytery support of the Queensland Community Alliance. Then each congregation has individual activities that help them engage with the community. Some of these include the work Indooroopilly is doing with asylum seekers, Forest Lake's community garden, Rosewood's work against unconventional mining, Moggill's coffee cart, a variety of missional activities in local congregations such as craft groups, dinners, playgroups, Mainly Music, café churches.

Key achievements/initiatives

The key achievements of the Presbytery have to be expressed in terms of the congregations that make up the whole. The establishment of the Presbytery office and Presbytery team has placed us in a better position to support the congregations. The team will be completed when the discipleship facilitator will join us later in the year. This will also allow us to continue the focus on discipleship and resourcing. The Presbytery has actively supported congregations, seeking funding for a new faith community in the Ripley Valley, chaplaincy services at the University of Queensland, ministry assistance at Hattonvale, Rosewood and Chapel Hill. The work on focusing on the role of the Presbytery in terms of congregational oversight with an emphasis upon regular consultations, guidelines for faith communities, visiting church councils all add to the achievements of the Presbytery as it seeks to support its congregations.

Challenges/risks as we progress

To remain focused on the mission, ministry and witness of the Christian faith with all of the other distractions and requirements of contemporary life. These include legislative requirements such as workplace health and safety requirements and safe ministry with children.

The ongoing requirements of fulfilling all the legislative requirements.

The challenge of leadership which includes appropriate and relevant training, sustainability against burnout, and the provision of generational change.

Ongoing financial viability of congregations and of the church as a whole.

Assisting congregations to see beyond local and parochial survival to 'buy into' a mission and discipleship culture.

Issues to be addressed

The issues that we as a presbytery need to address and that may be relevant for the Synod are a fear of change, the need for generational change of leadership, the continually increasing requirement and impost of legislative compliance in so many areas.

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