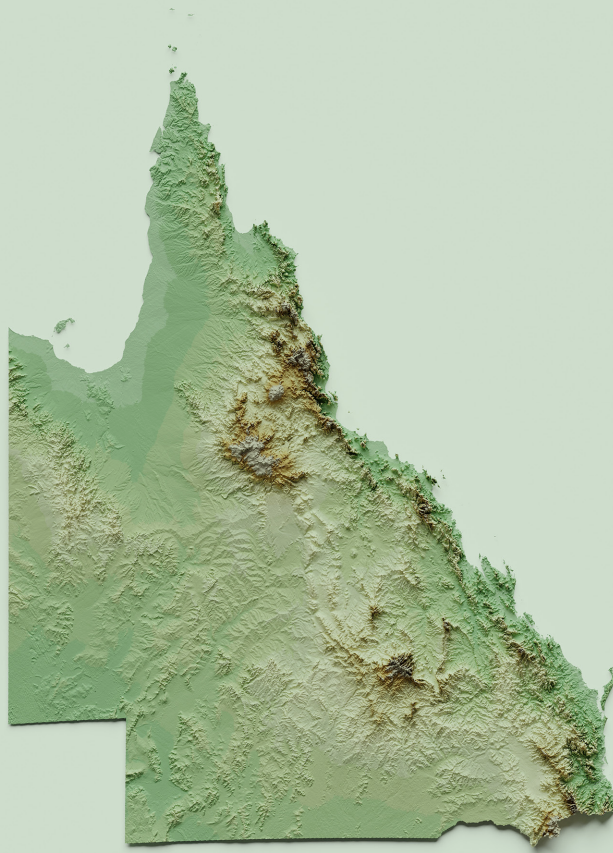


# Presbytery Capacity

A Draft Proposal for Presbytery Consultation



*renewal*



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

QUEENSLAND SYNOD SHARED AMBITION - REAFFIRMED AT THE 38TH SYNOD

*One church,*

active in every Queensland community,  
bearers of Christ's offer of life in all its fullness.

Together we are committed to a

*flourishing future*

for church and community.

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QUEENSLAND SYNOD STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS

**MISSION RENEWAL AND GROWTH**

We will accompany the Church, supporting renewed discipleship, new growth and missional development.  
We will deepen our covenant with the UAICC and advocate and act for Social Justice for all.

**FLOURISHING PRESBYTERIES**

We will co-create plans to support Presbyteries, developing  
new approaches to shared and delegated responsibilities.

**FORMING LEADERS**

We will embed, build, and optimise the Synod's leadership principles and pathways,  
and develop emerging leaders across Queensland.

**FIT-FOR-PURPOSE GOVERNANCE**

We will improve whole-of-church governance processes and structures, implement governance review  
outcomes for institutions, and develop the capability of governing bodies and councils of the Church.

**STEWARDED RESOURCES**

We will steward our resources and innovate and diversify funding sources to improve financial  
sustainability for the Office of the Synod and the wider Church in Queensland.

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

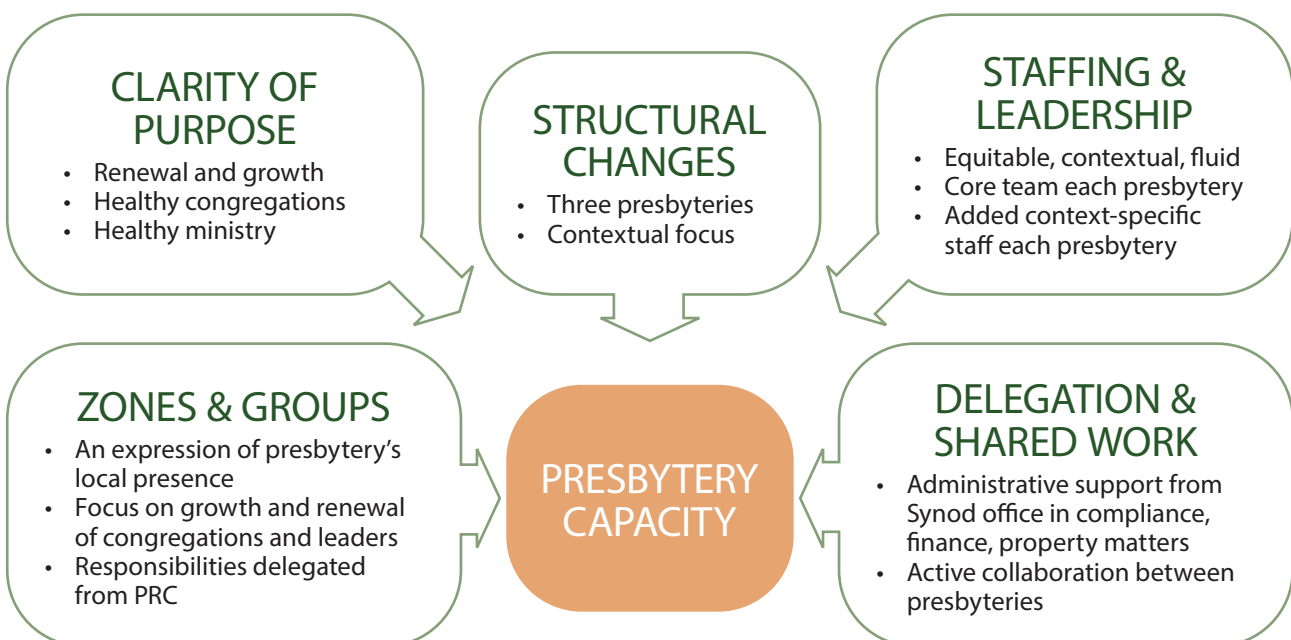
This draft proposal on *Presbytery Capacity* is part of the Synod's discussion about Presbytery capacity building with a focus on supporting renewal and growth across the Church in Queensland. The objective of this proposal is to re-imagine the structure, staffing and operating models of Presbyteries in Queensland, in order to boost the capacity for presbyteries to serve a growing and renewing Church.

This proposal was developed through discussions with presbyteries and Presbytery leadership teams, led by the General Secretary of the Synod. Consultation and inputs into the development of the model included the development of a discussion paper, seven consultations at presbytery meetings in late 2025, consultation with Mutharrak, regular talks with Presbytery leaders and other stakeholders, and feedback from Synod committees. The final draft was developed after a specialised, presbytery-appointed workshop in January 2026, including representatives from each of the seven existing presbyteries. This extensive process has shaped this current draft proposal. The Synod Standing Committee is now seeking formal consultation feedback, before a final proposal is developed for consideration at the 39th Synod meeting in October 2026.

## Summary of the Proposal

The proposal is to redesign Presbytery operating models through the establishment of the following:

- **Clarity of purpose:** To enhance capacity of presbyteries to support congregations, and lay and ordained leaders for a renewing and growing Church.
- **Structural changes:** To establish three presbyteries within Queensland, replacing existing presbyteries.
- **Staffing and leadership:** To develop equitable, contextual and fluid staffing models for each presbytery.
- **Zones and groups:** To use zones and groups of congregations, as an expression of the presbytery's local presence, and support the effective functioning of geographically and numerically larger presbyteries
- **Delegation and shared work:** To investigate the delegations to Synod, or shared work between presbyteries and the Synod office, and support stronger outcomes for congregations



## Consultation Questions

All Presbyteries in Queensland are asked to provide their feedback on the proposal and are requested to respond to the following three issues by May 31, 2026.

### **Issue 1 – The establishment of three presbyteries within Queensland, to replace all existing presbyteries from 1 July 2027, pursuant to Regulations 3.4.7 and 3.4.6.**

*Is the Presbytery **generally supportive** of the proposed three Presbytery model outlined in this paper?*

In accordance with the provisions of Regulations 3.4.6 and 3.4.7, each Presbytery is invited to make a submission and to provide any additional feedback you would like to give to Synod regarding the three Presbytery model.

### **Issue 2 – Aspects of the preferred model: clarity of purpose, zones and groups, staffing and leadership, delegation and shared work.**

*What feedback do you have regarding the various aspects of the three Presbytery model or any other comments for consideration by the Synod Standing Committee?*

# 1. Theological Reflection

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) is a missional movement in which the congregation, as the gathered community of faith, shares in the ongoing ministry of Christ. The presbytery, through its oversight and the synod through resourcing, work to support congregations and faith communities in their diverse expressions of worship, witness and service.

In his 1979 retiring address as the first president of the UCA Assembly, Rev Dr Davis McCaughey stated:



*The councils of the church exist primarily to serve the basic unit, the congregation: to make sure that Word and Sacrament are available for Christ's people, so that they can worship, witness and serve. Presbytery, Synod and Assembly are constituted for that purpose. Of course they may have other things to do as well, but they ought to remember that the further they get away from the task of simply serving Christ's people gathered around Word and Sacrament the further they move from their own sphere of competence. //*

**- Rev Dr Davis McCaughey**

The missional heart of the UCA informs a structure in which the congregation is the primary focus of our communal life. Within the Uniting Church, the congregation is understood as being “the embodiment in one place of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, worshipping, witnessing and serving as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ” (Para 15, Basis of Union).

The Basis of Union envisions a church which knows that it continues to grow and change in response to a changing world. Together, we seek “a continuing renewal” (Para 1), understanding ourselves as “a pilgrim people, always on the way” (Para 3), acknowledging that Christ “constitutes, rules and renews” us (Para 4), and praying that “God will constantly correct us” (Para 18). Even as we speak of church governance in the Basis of Union, we declare first that “the faith and unity of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church are built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ” (Para 3), and that “Christ alone is supreme” (Para 15). A renewing church participates in the ongoing ministry of Christ which is the fulfillment and expression of the mission of God. Finally, the Basis of Union recognises prophetically that our church governance and laws are “always subject to revision in order that (we) may better serve the Gospel” (Para 17).

Consistent with this call to continuing renewal that is at the heart of the movement, the Uniting Church throughout Queensland has discerned a focus on growth and renewal in this period. New commitments, including a church planting, replanting and revitalisation strategy, and a set of priorities for our collective work, have been adopted. A key focus area is encouraging healthy, thriving congregations in communities across the state. Both Presbytery and Synod have a vital role to play, and the Synod’s commitments align with existing presbytery priorities in this area.

It is in light of this commitment to seeking a continuing renewal that this proposal to enhance presbytery capacity is offered. It offers both a bold vision, and an invitation to explore new ways by which presbyteries can effectively fulfil their primary responsibility to exhort, stimulate and encourage congregations, ministry agents and lay leaders to share in the ongoing ministry of Christ. Ensuring our presbyteries have appropriate capacity is crucial in fostering vibrant congregations, faith communities and lay and ordained ministry.

# 2. Model Development and the Consultation Process

## Process

Over the last 18 months, Presbytery Ministers explored the challenges facing presbyteries and envisioned potential new forms, functions, and resourcing models. At the heart of this conversation was the health and vitality of local congregations and the health and sustainability of ministry agents and lay leaders. The Presbytery Ministers considered what flourishing looks like and explored whether we have capacity to flourish under the current presbytery structures and ways of working. The 38th Synod meeting continued this discussion with Presbytery capacity being a focus of the meeting.

This led to a request to the General Secretary and Synod Standing Committee to facilitate further discussion and develop a proposal for consideration by the 39th Synod in October 2026.

This request, consistent with the ecclesiology and commitment of the Uniting Church to align its activities with its mission, and with the Synod's growth and renewal strategy, led to the preparation of a discussion paper. An initial consultation round was conducted across nine meetings (including all seven presbytery meetings), with 305 meeting attendees and receipt of 94 written responses.

A preferred model has been developed for this draft proposal, based on collated feedback and discernment at a dedicated Presbytery leaders' workshop in January 2026. Participants in the workshop were endorsed by their respective Presbytery Standing Committees, and were able to work with and hear from those from other parts of the state. It was a time of discernment and opportunity to engage with one another, to ask questions and work through how the model would function effectively in different parts of the state. The workshop allowed time for prayer, reflection and rigorous debate, culminating in consensus endorsement of what is outlined in this draft proposal.

This draft proposal will result in recommendations for consideration by the 39th Synod in October 2026.

Based on this process, the Synod Standing Committee has approved the current draft proposal for formal consultation with each Presbytery in Queensland. Each Presbytery is invited to consider this draft proposal and submit a written response to the General Secretary on three specified issues listed below by May 31, 2026.

### **Issue 1 – The establishment of three presbyteries within Queensland, to replace all existing presbyteries from 1 July 2027, pursuant to Regulations 3.4.7 and 3.4.6.**

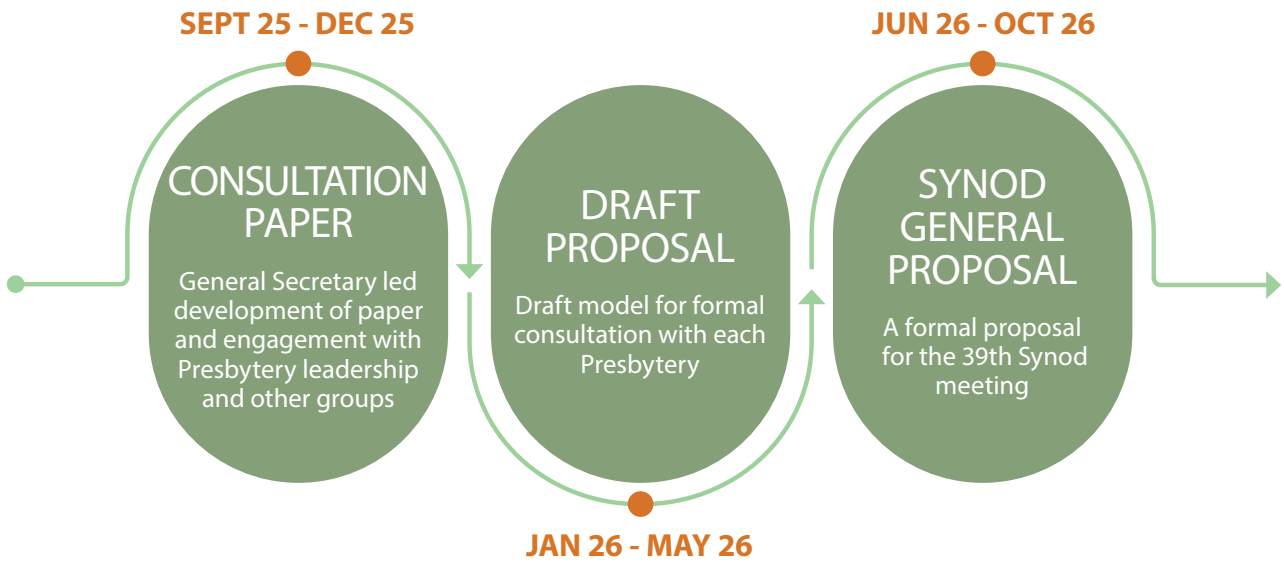
*Is the Presbytery **generally supportive** of the proposed three Presbytery model outlined in this paper?*

In accordance with the provisions of Regulations 3.4.6 and 3.4.7, each Presbytery is invited to make a submission and to provide any additional feedback you would like to give to Synod regarding the three Presbytery model.

### **Issue 2 – Aspects of the preferred model: clarity of purpose, zones and groups, staffing and leadership, delegation and shared work.**

*What feedback do you have regarding the various aspects of the three Presbytery model or any other comments for consideration by the Synod Standing Committee?*

The Synod Standing Committee will review Presbytery formal submissions to this draft proposal, and this will be the basis of a general proposal for the October 2026 Synod meeting. A summary of the process is outlined below.

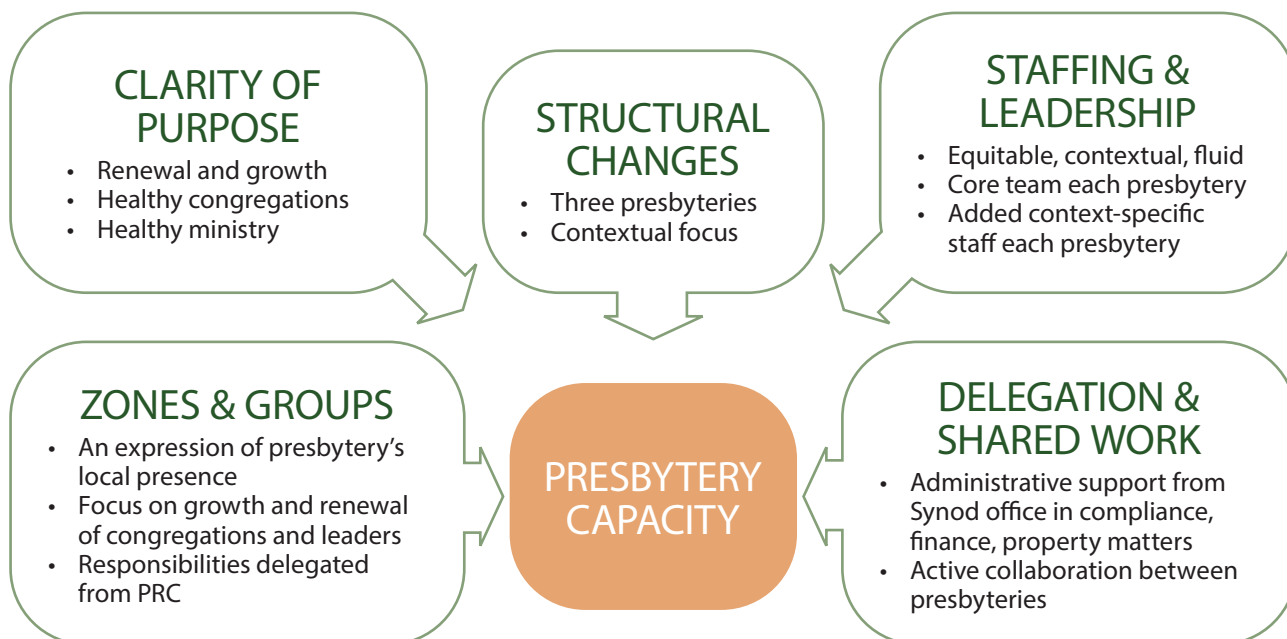


## Presbytery Capacity Resourcing Model Proposal

When the Queensland Synod began discussing Presbytery Capacity Building, it also needed to address how to support the resource needs of Presbyteries. The Synod Standing Committee approved a process to run alongside the Presbytery Capacity Building conversation, being led by the General Secretary, to develop a separate proposal for resourcing flourishing Presbyteries. Each Presbytery will also consider this resourcing model alongside the current paper.

# 3. The Preferred Model

## Summary



## A. Clarity of Purpose

The primary purpose for redesigning presbyteries within Queensland, is to enhance capacity of presbyteries to support congregations, and lay and ordained leaders for a renewing and growing Church. The structural changes, staffing, operating models, the use of zones and groups, and delegated and shared tasks outlined below are all oriented to supporting the growth and renewal of the church, and the development of healthy, sustainable ministry providing effective leadership to healthy, vibrant, growing congregations. The intent is a church that continues to grow and be renewed, growing disciples in the whole range of cultural, generational and geographic communities across the state.

## B. Structural Changes

It is proposed that the Queensland Synod will establish three new Presbyteries to replace the existing seven presbyteries across Queensland. The makeup of the proposed presbyteries is designed to facilitate effective support for congregations facing similar demographic, social and geographic concerns, and to enable provision of increased context-specific expertise within each presbytery.

Moving to a three-presbytery model will reduce duplication of staffing and effort, particularly in executive leadership, and administration functions, allowing for the provision of a wider range of specialist skills within each presbytery within existing budget constraints. This provision for increased staffing will enable enhanced support to be directed to congregations, and both lay and ordained leaders.

The proposal suggests a single regional presbytery and has been designed by presbytery ministers and leaders from existing regional presbyteries to ensure such a presbytery can provide effective support across the vast distances of Queensland. The proposal recognises changes in demography throughout Queensland, including changes to population distribution in western Queensland. The regional presbytery will be home to all the existing and proposed remote area bush chaplaincy patrols that cover substantial areas of western Queensland. It also factors in the Church Planting and Revitalisation strategy approved at the 38th Synod meeting that aims for 20% growth in congregations across Queensland by 2035.

The three proposed presbyteries are:

## Regional Queensland

This presbytery will cover the geographic bulk of Queensland, including coastal areas north from Maryborough, together with inland and remote western areas of the state. It includes major regional centres such as Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton, Gladstone, and Bundaberg. Approximately 1.4 million Queenslanders live in this region. This presbytery will develop specialist skills in supporting ministry in both major regional cities, and in rural and remote communities. This presbytery will incorporate all existing and proposed remote area bush chaplaincies, enabling it to develop expertise in supporting this form of ministry and presence. It will include the existing presbyteries of Carpentaria and Central Queensland, together with parts of Mary Burnett and The Downs.

A significant aspect within the life of this presbytery is the UAICC/Muth arrak congregations in northern Queensland. Continuing and further deepening the ongoing relationship and support of existing Muth arrak congregations will be a priority for this presbytery, alongside partnership with Muth arrak to explore other new opportunities.

### SEQ North

This presbytery will cover the area from the Brisbane CBD north to and including Gympie and the adjacent hinterland. Approximately 1.6 million Queenslanders live in this region. This presbytery will exercise expertise in working within existing metropolitan and tourism communities, together with substantial growth corridors. The presbytery includes the existing Moreton Rivers Presbytery, together with part of Mary Burnett presbytery.

A significant aspect within the life of this presbytery is the UAICC/Muth arrak congregation at Zillmere. Continuing and further deepening this relationship, alongside partnership with Muth arrak to explore other new opportunities will be a priority for this presbytery.

### SEQ South

The presbytery will cover the area from the Brisbane CBD south to the border, and west to include the eastern Darling Downs area. Approximately 2.5 million Queenslanders live in this region. Home to some of the fastest growing growth corridors in Queensland, this presbytery is likely to change substantially in the years ahead with new communities and new inter-city relationships emerging. The presbytery includes existing areas covered by South Moreton and Bremer Brisbane presbytery, together with communities in the east of the Downs presbytery (including Toowoomba, Warwick, Killarney, Granite Belt and Crows Nest).

This presbytery will establish relationship with UAICC/Muth arrak and seek opportunities for new First Peoples ministry within its bounds.

To address the challenges of change, each of the new Presbyteries will ensure that maintaining the missional and relational networks of those closest to the new Presbytery borders is encouraged, supporting cross-presbytery communication and collaboration wherever practicable.

## Presbytery Description & Size

Presbytery <sup>1</sup>	Description	Congregations & Faith Communities <sup>2</sup>	FTE Ministry Agents <sup>3</sup>
Regional Qld	All of Qld, outside the south-east areas noted below, including parts of the Darling Downs, west to the border and north to Cape York.	63 (incl. 5 UAICC) <i>(Estimate 70 by 2035<sup>4</sup>)</i>	46.35 (incl. 5 UAICC)
SEQ North	Central Brisbane north to Gympie	53 (incl. 1 UAICC) <i>(Estimate 65 by 2035)</i>	66.3 (incl. 1 UAICC)
SEQ South	Central Brisbane, south to border, west to and including Toowoomba, Warwick, Granite Belt	65 <i>(Estimate 78 by 2035)</i>	64.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>All Presbyteries</b>	<b>181</b> <i>(Estimate 213 by 2035)</i>	<b>177.45</b>

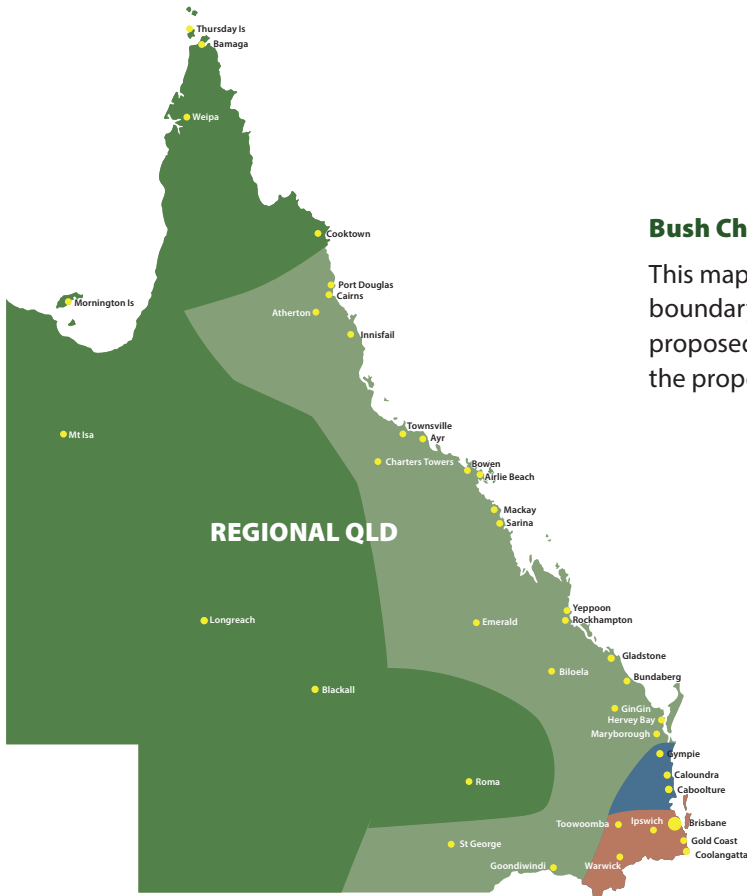
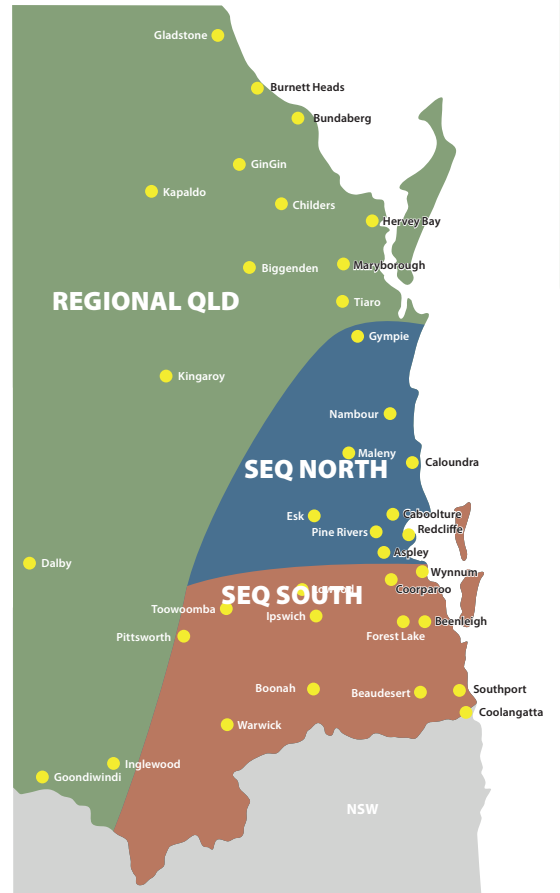
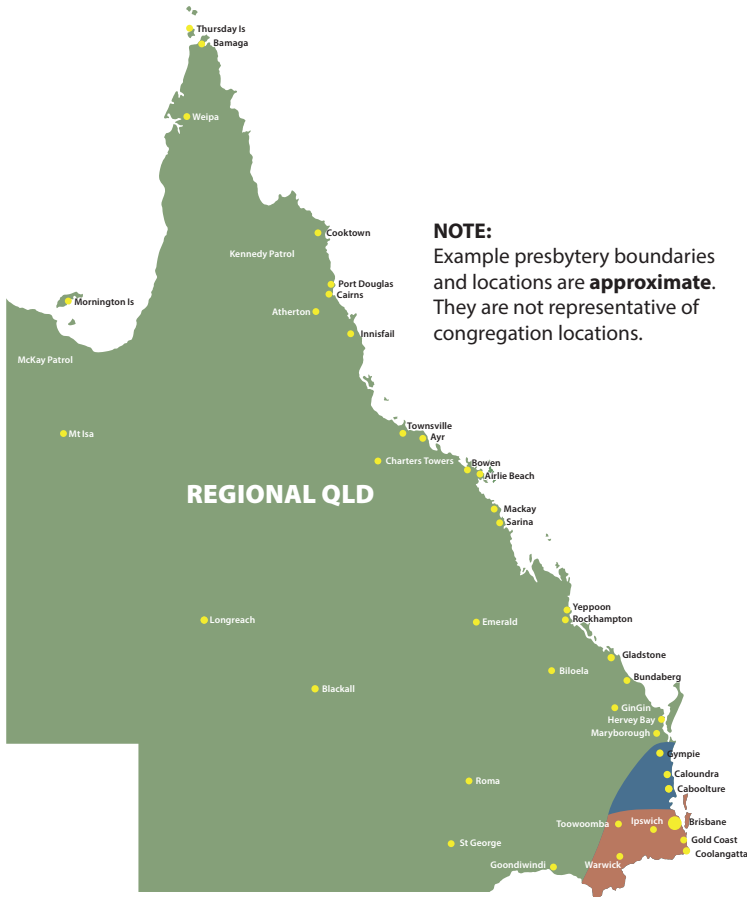
1: Presbytery names shown here are descriptive only, with final names to be determined as part of transition and implementation planning.

2: All communities of faith, however recognised under regulations. Data based on information gathered August 2025.

3: Includes all ministry agents in placement – congregation, presbytery, agency, Synod, community chaplaincy placements.

4: Estimated figures are based up growth targets in Synod church planting and revitalisation.

## Maps of Proposed Three Presbytery Model



### Bush Chaplaincy

This map outlines the combined boundary of the existing and two new proposed bush chaplaincies overlaid on the proposed model.

## C. Staffing and Leadership

Critical to the successful implementation of this presbytery approach is the provision of suitable staffing within each presbytery, providing a range of specialist skills to support the presbytery's work with congregations, faith communities and leaders, and ensuring the relational and incarnational presence of the Presbyteries to support congregations and faith communities.

The staffing model will be established upon three principles:

- **Equitable:** Recognising that the metrics that determine need in the geographically smaller presbyteries are not the same metrics as in the larger regional presbytery, means that staffing numbers may need to vary between presbyteries. The regional presbytery contends with smaller, financially poorer, less equipped congregations, which changes the tasks of Presbytery and its staff. Travel demands similarly vary widely between presbyteries.
- **Contextual:** The shape of a presbytery's staff may not be identical, rather driven by the distinctive needs of each Presbytery. For example, zone coordinators for the regional presbytery may not be needed in the geographically smaller presbyteries.
- **Fluid:** Whatever we start with today is a starting point for ongoing development, a regular assessment of the efficacy of the shape of the staff will be essential.

### General Comments:

- Subject to detailed financial modelling, presbytery staffing may be available up to a maximum of 20 FTE (Full time equivalent) staff in total across three presbyteries.
- Allowing for the principle of equity outlined above, there may be need to provision the regional presbytery with additional staff relative to the south-east presbyteries
- This will likely allow for between 6 and 8 staff within each presbytery, covering both ministry and administration.

### Staffing Model

The proposal is for a staffing design that provides each presbytery with suitable staff to meet common 'core' functions and then provision for the presbytery to utilise additional staff up to the available maximum to meet additional context-specific functions. Within each presbytery, transition and implementation process will involve detailed design, recruitment and placement processes, including exploring potential future roles for existing staff.

The core staff functions within each presbytery will include:

- Executive Leadership
- Pastoral Care
- Mission Development
- Administration & Business Management

Context-specific functions within each presbytery will be open to presbytery discernment and design, with final priorities and staff placement subject to detailed financial planning. Examples of functions or responsibilities to be considered include:

- Younger generations ministry
- Rural ministry
- Church planting
- Indigenous ministry
- Multi and inter-cultural ministry
- Teaching and formation
- Zone/Group Coordination

A brief outline of possible staff functions and responsibilities is attached at Appendix 3. The new presbytery staffing model will also be assisted by specialised support through the Synod Office including the work of the Mission Accompanying Team, the Presbytery Support Unit, property support team and a range of other administrative and specialised support.

### Staff and Office Locations

Every attempt will be made to have staff distributed physically across the presbytery, operating from a virtual or

hybrid office as the context of each presbytery may dictate. Staff appointments may include a mix of full and part-time and may include shared roles with other ministry placements within the presbytery. Consideration may be given to shared roles across multiple presbyteries, to facilitate ongoing collaboration. Appointment and placement processes will be considered within transition and implementation planning.

Also explored within transition and implementation planning will be consideration of Synod office assuming IT support role within each presbytery, including bringing all staff, officers, file systems, hardware, IT security and so on, into the Synod office IT system.

### Governance and Office Bearers

Alongside staff, effective officers and governance groups are vital to the work of presbyteries in supporting healthy ministry and health congregations. The re-alignment to three presbyteries will enable each presbytery to draw on a larger pool of skilled and experienced volunteers. Establishing effective recruitment and operating practices for governance groups such as standing committee, pastoral relations committee and property/resourcing committees will be a priority task in transition and implementation.

## D. Zones and Groups

To support the effective functioning of presbyteries, the effective and intentional use of zones and groups of congregations, as an expression of the presbytery's local presence, will help to ensure health and sustainability for leaders and contribute to the growth of congregations through delegated responsibilities by the Pastoral Relations Committee. This is consistent with the Basis of Union's description of the purpose of presbytery being to *strengthen one another's faith, to bear one another's burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus* (Para 15).

### General notes:

- Zones and groups of congregations will provide important ministry within the life of the presbytery. This ensures that the work of the zone provides a local presence of the presbytery.
- Zones will generally be organised geographically unless grouping along contextual congruence is more appropriate. For instance, a zone might be established consisting of various congregations based in mining communities. The final number and makeup of zones or groups will be a presbytery decision.
- The zone will focus on developing health and sustainability for ministry agents and lay leaders, and will share in the work of the presbytery to grow flourishing congregations. Various committees and staff within the wider presbytery will provide oversight of governance, administration, complaints and discipline.
- Consideration of resourcing requirements for zone operation, including any staff functions dedicated to supporting zones will be made during presbytery budget and strategy processes
- Presbyteries may, for example, opt to include Zone Coordinator roles within the overall staffing mix described earlier. A Zone Coordinator's tasks might include facilitating congregation consultations, supporting the development of congregation profiles, providing pastoral care, identifying education and formation opportunities, and supporting placements processes.

## E. Delegation and Shared Work

To support healthy Presbytery capacity and stronger outcomes for congregations, the establishment of the new presbyteries will include the investigation of further delegations to Synod, or shared work between presbyteries and the Synod office.

Delegation is, in this sense, used to mean the delegation of powers by a presbytery to another body. Such delegation is provided for in regulations, with the delegating presbytery able to determine both extent and time period of any delegation, and any ongoing review arrangements.

Alternately, the term shared work here denotes a less formal arrangement in which presbyteries agree to collaborate with one another, or with Synod, without formally delegating or relinquishing responsibilities.

### General Notes

- Synod office may undertake increased responsibilities for all presbyteries in the areas of insurance, legal support & advice, contracts & leases, redress (oversight), placements tasks, compliance (including safeguarding, Code of Ethics database, Blue Card database)
- Other areas that may be explored for further delegation to Synod office in a manner varying from presbytery-to-presbytery include: expertise relating to finance (bookkeeping, accounting tasks), incident and risk management, conflict management and technology support, property processes and management, HR, WH&S, complaints management, discipline support, and legislative, regulations & policy changes/updates. Synod office will assess its capability to provide such support, including assessing budget implications and alternate models such as fee-for-service provision.
- Ongoing discussion between presbyteries and Synod may lead to further collaboration or delegation in ministry areas too, expanding on existing shared work
- Presbyteries will actively collaborate where it is beneficial to do so, on:
  - o Life and witness consultations; including models and templates
  - o Healthy Ministry frameworks
  - o Office bearers support, training, and development
  - o Budgeting
  - o Encouraging cross-presbytery networks, particularly near new presbytery boundaries.

### The Model: Summary of what is changing

#### What stays the same?

- Presbytery as council, exercising regulated responsibilities in oversight of life and witness of congregations within its bounds
- Presbytery tasks to constitute decision-making bodies including Standing Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee, Property/Resourcing Committee
- Focus of presbytery on facilitating growth and renewal within congregations

#### What is different?

- The number and composition of presbyteries
- Staffing of presbyteries
- Use of zones and groups of congregations
- Delegated and shared work between presbyteries and Synod/Synod office

# 4. Implementation and Transition

Detailed transition planning will be undertaken, under the leadership of the General Secretary, to address the following areas as part of a General Proposal to the 39th Synod meeting:

- A detailed transition and implementation plan to allow for new presbyteries to commence operation from 1 July 2027, including the establishment of presbytery names, and the dates of inaugural meetings.
- Proposed timeline and strategy for meeting any existing Presbytery financial, ministry or property commitments.
- Comprehensive five-year budget based on feedback and financial modelling from the Presbytery Capacity Building discussions and the Resourcing Flourishing Presbyteries draft proposal.
- Establishment of an initial staffing model based on assessment of contextual needs and the comprehensive budget, including recruitment and appointment to core presbytery staff and ministry roles. Staff recruitment and placement processes may consider ways to welcome new skills, experience and expertise to presbytery roles, including from a range of cultural and generational backgrounds.
- A standard set of delegations to provide for initial collaboration between presbyteries and Synod office, including assessment of existing delegations
- A model set of delegations to support the intentional and expanded use of zones and groups, for further development and approval by each Presbytery
- A model set of presbytery processes, including shared approaches to life and witness consultations, vitality of call processes
- Presbytery operational matters including IT, office locations, standard policy suites, record keeping systems
- An outline of any planned changes to services offered by Synod office to presbytery and congregations to support the transition and implementation of the new approach
- Timeline and process for ongoing review of the new approach, including staffing, operating models and structures.
- Consideration of how presbytery operating models may best align with Synod ministry strategies such as the Church Planting and Revitalisation Strategy, Inter-Cultural Ministry Strategy, and Ministry with Younger Generations Strategy

It is anticipated that a transition and implementation project group will be established, consisting of presbytery and Synod representatives, and report frequently to each existing presbytery. All staffing and costs associated with transition planning will be met from within the Synod office operating budget for FY 2026/27.

# 5. Use of Terms in this Document

<b>Term</b>	<b>Use within the document</b>
Congregations	Includes congregations, small congregations and faith communities, however recognised under the regulations
Presbytery Resourcing	A parallel process underway to ensure the ongoing, sustainable, effective resourcing of presbytery operations within Queensland.
Staff	Both ministry and administrative staff, including those in ministry placements

# Appendix A: Regulations

## Specific Powers, Roles and Responsibilities of Synod in Dissolving and Forming Presbyteries

The Synod has the power to dissolve existing presbyteries under regulation 3.4.7, with two relevant conditions in this case:

- where any such proposal is initiated in the Synod, each Presbytery affected shall be given opportunity to consider the proposal and to make a submission thereon to the Synod before the matter is determined; and
- the Synod shall determine the basic requirements that must be met for the establishment or continuance of a Presbytery.

## Synod Powers to Dissolve and Form Presbyteries

The Synod has the power to form new Presbyteries under regulation 3.4.6, determining the name, bounds and arrangements for first meeting, with each listed condition and subclause relevant. The full regulation is listed here:

### 3.4.6 FORMATION OF A PRESBYTERY

- (a) *A Presbytery shall be formed by the Synod, which shall determine the name of the Presbytery, fix its bounds and arrange for its first meeting, provided that:*
- where any such proposal is initiated in the Synod, each Presbytery affected shall be given opportunity to consider the proposal and to make a submission thereon to the Synod before the matter is determined;*
  - where any proposal is initiated in a Presbytery, notice of the proposal shall be furnished to any other Presbytery affected, such Presbytery to have opportunity to make a submission thereon to the Synod before the matter is determined;*
- (b) *The Synod shall determine the basic requirements that must be met for the establishment or continuance of a Presbytery;*
- (c) *The minute of the Synod constituting the Presbytery shall be inserted in the first minutes of the Presbytery.*
- (d) *The time and place for the first meeting of a Presbytery shall be determined by the Synod, which shall appoint a member of the Church to convene, constitute and preside over the meeting till such time as the Presbytery elects a chairperson.*

## Church Regulations Assumptions

- Regulations will not change substantially during the transition and implementation period.
- The Synod will continue as an active participant in the Assembly Act2 process, including sharing lessons learned through this process
- That no new Congregation will be formed (Reg. 3.4.1); no existing Congregation will be dissolved (Reg. 3.4.3); and there will be no amalgamation or division of an existing Congregation (Reg.3.4.4).

# Appendix B: The Existing Approach

Currently there are seven presbyteries operating across Queensland, established by the Synod per regulations. Over time there have been some changes to presbyteries, with the current arrangement in place since 2020 when the former Calvary and North Queensland Presbyteries merged to become Carpentaria Presbytery.

## Operating Processes in Queensland Presbyteries

### Governance

Each presbytery within the Synod determines its own operating processes, principle and priorities. They decide their approach to governance and leadership within the framework provided by the Uniting Church regulations. Two presbyteries (Carpentaria and Central Queensland) operate a combined Presbytery Standing Committee and Pastoral Relations Committee model of governance, while the remaining presbyteries operate the three regulated governance bodies (Presbytery Standing Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee, Property Committee).

### Funding

The primary funding for the core operation of each presbytery comes from the Combined Presbyteries Mission Pool (CPMP). Congregations across the state contribute to this pool. Presbyteries collectively determine the distribution of CPMP funds to meet core operating costs. CPMP does not contribute funding to support Synod Office operations as it once did. Operating costs vary for each presbytery and disbursements from CPMP are based on need, rather than on the contribution from congregations within each presbytery. Funding to CPMP has declined over time as congregational financial capacity has declined and some congregations have closed. The fund is now insufficient to meet ongoing presbytery operating costs and support of First Nations congregations, requiring a contribution from the Synod office budget in recent years.

Beyond CPMP, additional funding sources vary from presbytery-to-presbytery, including internal income sources, mission development fund accounts and retained presbytery funds. The results is a range of operating and staffing models from presbytery to presbytery in accordance with both local priorities and presbytery resource capacity, as outlined in 4(b) below.

There are financial inequities between presbyteries, based on several factors. First, the number and health of congregations vary widely between presbyteries. Second, there are inherent differences in property values for which the presbytery is the "Responsible body". Thirdly, geography and related operating costs (such as travel) vary widely between presbyteries. The CPMP process has developed to assist with equity between presbyteries in terms of core operating costs, but these differences mean some presbyteries are able to independently fund and prioritise additional activities, while others cannot.

### Staffing

Staffing models vary from presbytery-to-presbytery. Core funding includes cost of a presbytery minister (two in the case of Carpentaria Presbytery), plus administration officers, with further specialist staffing based on each presbytery's priorities. Demands on presbytery staff have increased significantly over recent years, driven by the decline in congregational capacity evident in some locations and increasing compliance and administration demands, both external and internal to the church. Changes to the Synod office with the establishment of Presbytery Support Unit and Mission Accompanying Team may contribute to presbytery life.

The role of Presbytery Minister has become increasingly important, not only within the life of each presbytery, but also in the wider leadership of the Uniting Church. As these wider leadership contributions have become more important, time demands on the incumbents have increased. The Presbytery Minister role, as currently exercised, is in danger of becoming unsustainable and with increasingly limited capacity to effectively support congregations, faith communities and lay and ordained leaders.

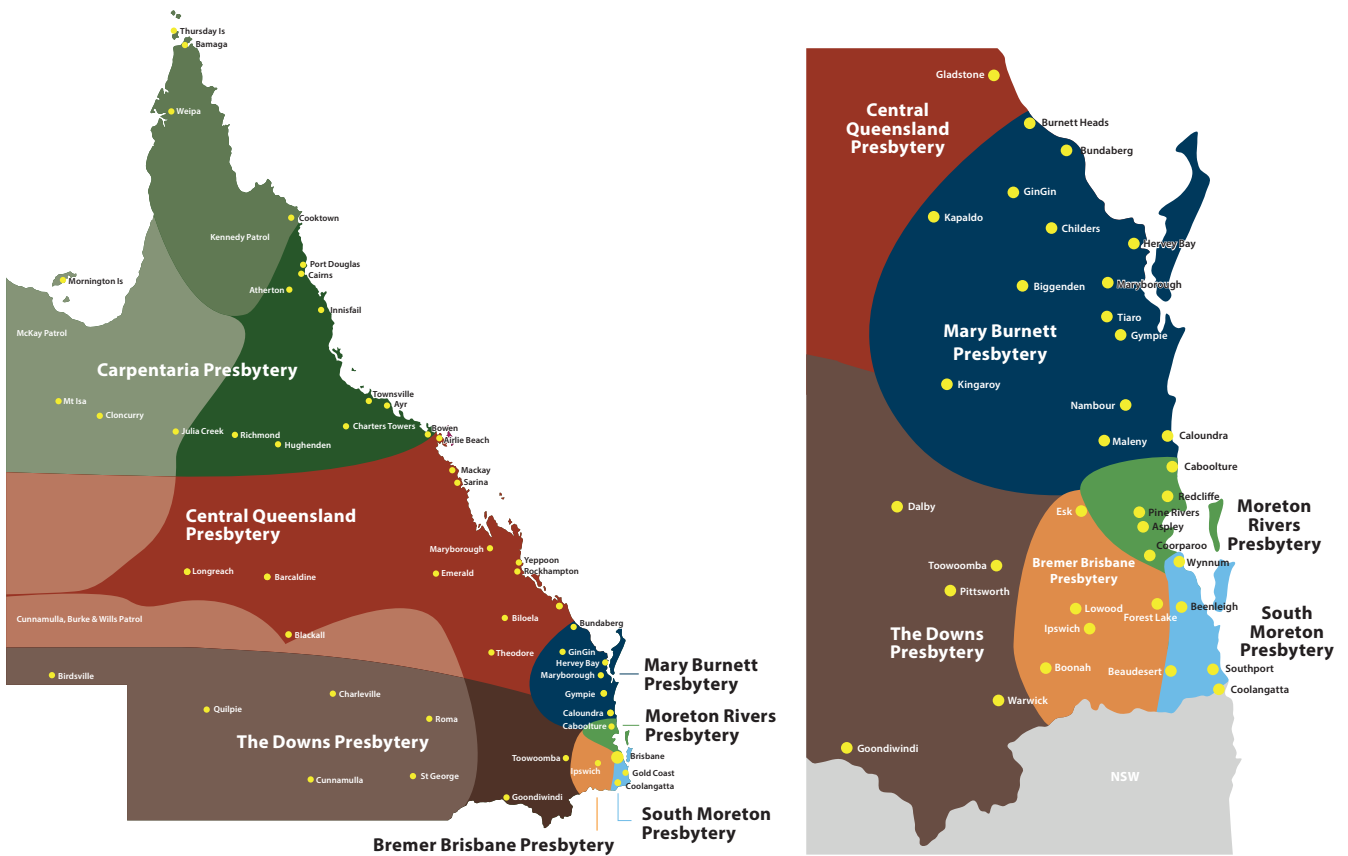
**Zones**

Some regional presbyteries use groups of congregations called Zones to overcome the challenges of large geographical areas. Carpentaria, for example, uses four zones within the presbytery to help organise and facilitate pastoral care, congregational support and the conduct of presbytery business. These include the three geographic zones of Northern, Southern and Cape/Gulf, together with the non-geographic Muth arrak Zone, which includes both urban and remote indigenous communities.

**Muth arrak - UAICC Qld Regional Committee**

Congregations and ministry leaders within Muth arrak Zone of Carpentaria Presbytery, comprising the bulk of the United Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress presence within Queensland, also relate to the Queensland Regional Committee of UAICC (Muth arrak). These relationships between congregations, Presbytery and Muth arrak are vital, both in the current Presbytery arrangement, and in any future presbytery re-shaping.

**The Current Presbytery Structure**



## Presbytery description

Presbytery	Description	# of Congregations & Faith Communities <sup>1</sup>	Total FTE Ministry Agents in Placement <sup>2</sup>	Staff in Ministry Locations
Brisbane Bremer	Brisbane (South-West), Ipswich, to base of Great Dividing Range	27	19.1	10
Carpentaria	Far North Queensland (Bowen to Cape)	28 (incl. 5 UAICC)	16.25 (incl. 5 UAICC)	0
Central Queensland	Proserpine to Gladstone, west to Longreach	19	9	0 (0 FTE)
Mary Burnett	Bundaberg, to Sunshine Coast	24	15.7	1
Moreton Rivers	Brisbane (North), Redcliffe, Caboolture	39 (incl. 1 UAICC)	41.9 (incl. 1 UAICC)	6 (3.2 FTE)
South Moreton	Brisbane (South-East), Logan, Gold Coast	28	25.8	17
The Downs	Toowoomba, Warwick, Darling Downs	16	10	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>All Presbyteries</b>	<b>181</b>	<b>137.75</b>	<b>34</b>

## Staffing (approved)

Role	Presbytery	Total FTE
Presbytery Ministers	All	8
Presbytery Admin	All	8.4
Youth/Children/YA	Moreton Rivers	1
Mission Specialist	Moreton Rivers	1
Mission Specialist	Bremer Brisbane (0.5 vacant)	1.5
Pastoral Support	Moreton Rivers (Vacant)	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>20.9</b>

# Appendix C: Possible Staff Functions

## Core Staff Functions

### Executive Leadership

- Strategic leadership
- Synod Liaison (including Presbytery/Synod Interface)
- Liaison with agencies including UnitingCare Qld, Wesley Mission Qld
- Major strategic projects
- Team Leader
- Presbytery Standing Committee and related
- Complaints against ministry agents

### Pastoral Care

- Placement matters, including Synod Advisory Committee on Ministerial Placements
- Ministry and lay leadership team pastoral care
- Pastoral Relations Committee and related matters
- POD and candidate liaison and care, including formation panels
- Formation provider liaison (e.g. Trinity College Qld)
- Coordinate Vitality of Call processes
- Coordinate oversight/care of Phase 3 placements
- Complaints against lay leaders

### Mission Development

- Coordinate life and witness consultations
- Coordinate regional mission development
- Coordinate mission planning
- Liaise with zones and groups
- Coordinate church planting and fresh expressions
- Liaise with Synod Mission Accompanying Team
- Synod Mission Collaboration and Coordination Committee (MC3)

### Administration (Pres and PM Support)

- Exec support to Pres Mins
- Event management/organisation
- Correspondence and relationships

### Compliance

- Liaise with Synod Presbytery Support Unit
- Administration (Business Manager/Finance/Property)
- Coordinate compliance
- Coordinate financial administration
- Coordinate property administration
- Liaison with Synod office property and finance teams
- Liaise with Presbytery and congregation treasurers
- Liaise with Presbytery Mission Resource/Property Committee

## Optional contextual functions to be considered

### **Zone/Group Coordination**

- Facilitating congregation consultation and vitality of call processes
- Placements tasks including support for profile development, JNC
- Pastoral support for ministry agents and lay leadership teams
- Identifying education, formation and mission development opportunities within the zone

### **Younger Generations Ministry Support**

- Supporting the development and implementation of ministry with younger generations (children, families, youth, young adults, intergenerational) within congregations
- Coordinating whole-of-presbytery events and activities
- Contributing to whole-of-Synod events and activities

### **Rural and Remote Ministry**

- Support and development for new approaches to mission and ministry in rural and remote areas
- Support for Bush Chaplains

### **Church Planting (incl FX)**

- Develop and implement presbytery church planting strategy
- Liaise with Synod MAT team and contribute to whole-of-Synod initiatives in church planting
- Coaching and support for church planters

### **Teaching/Formation Practitioner/s**

- Teaching and formation tasks within a presbytery formation or education program

# Appendix D: Congregation, Faith Community and Bush Chaplaincy Lists

## Regional Queensland

Existing Carpentaria	Existing Central Qld	Existing Mary Burnett	Existing Downs
Aitkenvale	Armitage	Bundaberg	Bottle Tree Remote Bush Chaplaincy
Atherton	Banana	Burnett Network (Childers, Biggenden, Gayndah, Mundubbera, Eidsvold, Murgon, Wondai, Kingaroy, Nanango, Yarraman, Blackbutt)	Chinchilla
Aurukun	Baralaba	Coral Coast (Bargara)	Cunnamulla and Burke & Wills Remote Bush Chaplaincy
Bowen	Blackwater	Hervey Bay (Torquay, Burrum Heads, Howard)	Dalby Jandowae
Burdekin	Callide Valley	Maryborough	Goondiwindi
Carpentaria Remote Bush Chaplaincy	Capricorn Coast (Yeppoon, Emu Park)	Maryborough	Maranoa (Roma, Injune)
Cassowary Coast (Innisfail, Mission Beach, Tully)	Clermont/Capella		St George (incl Dirranbandi)
Charters Towers	Central West (Longreach, Blackall, Barcaldine, Alpha, Jericho)		
Collinsville	Emerald Fernlees		
Cook Islander Faith Community Edmonton	Fitzroy (Rock North and The Caves)		
Cook Islander Faith Community Emmanuel	Gladstone & Tannum Sands		
Edmonton	Iona West (Mackay)		
Emmanuel Cairns	Moura		
Eternal Life Gordonvale	Northside Mackay		
Ingham/Halifax	Pioneer Valley (Walkerston, Mirani)		
Jensen	Proserpine Whitsunday (Proserpine, Cannonvale)		
Kennedy Remote Bush Chaplaincy	Rockhampton South (incl Mt Morgan)		
Kirwan	Sarina & Carmilla		
Korean Cairns	St Paul's Mackay (incl Calen)		
Korean Townsville			
Magnetic Island			
Mareeba			
Mornington Island			
Mossman/Mt Molloy/Port Douglas			
Mount Louisa			

Napranum			
North Church Cairns			
St Andrew's Mt Isa			
St Luke's Weipa			
Torres St/Thursday Island			
Townsville Central			
West End Townsville			
Wulguru			

## SEQ North

Existing Moreton Rivers	Existing Mary Burnett
Albany Creek	BELLS
Albert St	Blackall Ranges (Montville, Maleny, Palmwoods)
Arana Hills	Bli Bli
Ashgrove West	Buderim
Aspley	Caloundra
Bald Hills	Coolum Beach
Bracken Ridge	Cooroy Pomona
Bribie Island	Glasshouse Country
Bulimba	Gympie (incl Imbil)
Caboolture (incl Beachmere, Upper Caboolture)	Kawana Waters
Chermside Kedron	Maroochydore
Clay Church	Nambour
Dayboro	Noosa Coastal (Tewantin, Sunrise Beach)
Deception Bay	Sunshine Coast Korean Faith Community
Elimbah	Uniting Life Mooloolaba
Emmanuel Enoggera	
Faith Works	
Geebung/Wavell Hts	
Kangaroo Point	
Kenani	
Merthyr Rd	
Morayfield	
Morningside	
Newlife Brisbane	
Newlife Moreton	
North Lakes	
Park Road Tongan	
Pine Rivers	
Redcliffe	
St Andrews Brisbane	
Samford Valley	
Sandgate	
St Luke's Hamilton	
St Paul's Stafford	

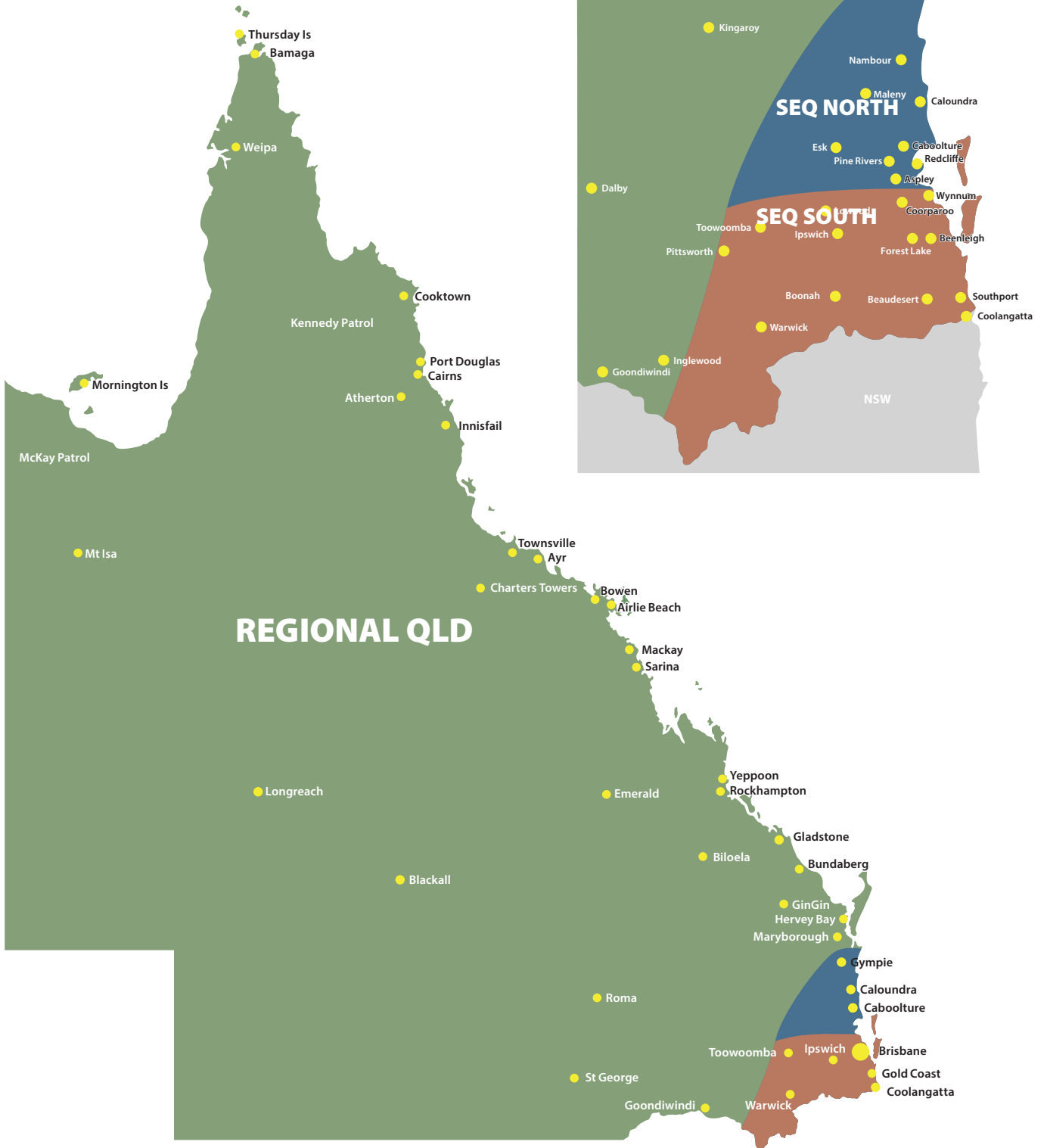
The Gap	
West End	
Windsor	
Zillmere UAICC	

## SEQ SOUTH

South Moreton	Existing Downs (Eastern)	Existing Bremer Brisbane
Acacia Ridge	Central Downs (Millmerran, Pittsworth)	Brisbane Korean
Ashmore	Crows Nest	Brisbane Valley
Banora Point	Eastern Downs (Allora, Nobby, Pilton)	Brisbane West
Bayside	Granite Belt (Stanthorpe, Severnlea, Summit)	Brookfield
Beenleigh Region	Highfields	Centenary
Brisbane Fijian	Lifeworks	Chapel Hill
Brisbane Taiwanese	Middle Ridge	Community Life (Forest Lake)
Burleigh Village	Oakey	Fassifern (Boonah, Flinders)
Elanora/Currumbin Valley	St Stephen's Toowoomba	Fernvale-Lowood
Flagstone	Warwick-Killarney (incl Freestone)	Gatton
Little Brown Church (Jimboomba)	Wilsonton	Goodna Samoan
Living Water		Goodna
Logan Central Multicultural		Graceville
Mudgeeraba		Harrisville
Nerang		Hatton Vale
Paradise Point		Inala
Pimpama		Indooroopilly
Real Life (Logan)		Ipswich
Redland City		Kenmore
Scenic Rim		Laidley
South Sudanese Nuer		Oxley
Southport		Ripley
Southside		Rosewood
St David's Coopers Plains		Sherwood
Sunnybank Hills		St Lucia
Tallebudgera		Toowong
Tingalpa		Vietnamese Hope
Tongan Logan City		
Redcliffe		
St Andrews Brisbane		
Samford Valley		
Sandgate		
St Luke's Hamilton		
St Paul's Stafford		
The Gap		
West End		
Windsor		
Zillmere UAICC		

**NOTE:**

Example presbytery boundaries and locations are **approximate**. They are not representative of congregation locations.



## Bush Chaplaincy

This map outlines the combined boundary of the existing and two new proposed bush chaplaincies overlaid on the proposed model.



I am confident of this,  
that the one who began  
*a good work*  
among you will bring it  
to completion by the day  
of Jesus Christ.

**PHILIPPIANS 1:6 NRSV**



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD